EC Methodogical Guide
on Electoral Assistance

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This Methodological Guide is structured in three sections, four case studies and three annexes. The Guide has been designed to be used as a reference tool which can address specific needs arising at different stages of the project cycle, as it refers to electoral assistance.

Section I sets out the framework within which electoral assistance is provided, lessons learned from previous experience, the new "Electoral Cycle Approach", cross-cutting issues and the factors to be considered when embracing technology for electoral processes;

Section II presents activities that can be implemented in support of Electoral Cycles, indicating potential benefits and risks, and also picks up on the wider, cross-cutting effects arising from these suggested activities.

Section III deals with issues relating to EC internal procedures for Programming, Identification, Formulation and Implementation and also provides operational advice relevant to the specific phases.

The Case Studies illustrate the different ways the EC is implementing its electoral assistance activities. **The Annexes** contain operational tools and sources of information that can be used, plus all the selected background documentation in digital format.

Throughout this guide three types of boxes are used for (I) key concepts and ideas; (II) further information; and (III) lessons learned and examples. These are indicated using the following icons:

KEY CONCEPTS & IDEAS
Important concepts to be retained and advice relating to the different stages of a project cycle.

FURTHER INFORMATION
More detailed information on a specific issue and/or suggestions for further reading.

LESSONS LEARNED & EXAMPLES
Views and comments arising from our direct experience and from that of other organisations and external practitioners.

Preface

Democratisation, promotion of human rights and good governance are at the core of the European Union's identity and constitute key objectives of its foreign and security policy. They are not only a moral imperative but they are also the best guarantors for stability and prosperity, which brings dividends to the international community as a whole, in terms of trade, security, cultural and human exchange. By supporting the electoral process, the EU is able to project its identity abroad and support respect for human rights and democratic values, as enshrined in the Treaties.

The EU is one of the leading actors in terms of electoral assistance and election observation worldwide. The position of the European Commission as one of the key international donors in terms of electoral assistance has strengthened in the course of the last six years. From the adoption in 2000 of the EC Communication on Election Assistance and Observation until 2005, a significant increase in the volume of funding and in the complexity of the electoral assistance operations has been registered. Over this period the EC has provided more than 300 MEURO in electoral assistance projects in more than 40 countries, also increasingly responding to the challenge of supporting electoral processes in post-conflict situations such as in Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti. The EU Election Observation Missions (EUEOMs) have also achieved well justified success and visibility, and are considered to be of great political consequence, utilizing a standard setting methodology and exhibiting highly efficiently run operations. Since 2000 the EU has deployed 47 missions in 35 countries involving the participation of 4000 experts and observers for a total budget of 77 MEURO.

This Guide was prepared to offer to all EC staff and to all those whose regular work requires specific knowledge of particular EC electoral assistance issues (Members States, other donors, third country officials, consultants and service providers), a "hands on" and immediate operational tool that can assist them throughout all the stages of the project management cycle.

In the last two years, the EC has been reshaping its approach, rethinking the way electoral assistance is delivered and taking a leading role in the campaign to favor long-term support strategies ahead of supporting ad hoc projects aimed at specific electoral events. This Methodological Guide is part of the ongoing effort of the EC to place electoral assistance more firmly within the framework of democratic development and to become a pillar of the support to the governance sector. The Guide aims at developing a specific and strategic operational framework in the field of electoral assistance, in order to rationalise and make EC interventions more homogeneous, effective and in harmony with overall EU objectives. To this purpose, it encourages looking beyond the immediate electoral event to be supported and, via an "Electoral Cycle Approach", tailors the electoral assistance interventions towards the developing of the institutional capacity of the Electoral Management Bodies and the long term needs of the Civil Society.

It also highlights the important complementarity between electoral assistance and election observation and promotes the establishment of even stronger synergies between the two

activities, to ensure that EUEOMs' benefit from the experience gained through electoral assistance projects and that the recommendations of the election observation missions are taken into account for the next electoral assistance interventions.

The Guide combines the analysis of the lessons learned from past experience of electoral assistance with the investigation of future challenges, all within the context of the current regulatory framework of the EC cooperation agreements, partnerships and contractual regulations. In order to do so, this Guide:

- Outlines the lessons learned and presents a new operational approach in the field of electoral assistance;
- Defines activities that can be implemented in support of Electoral Cycles also introducing the cross-cutting issues and the factors to be considered when embracing technology for electoral processes;
- Specifies the elements of enhanced collaboration on the production of content, training, and participation in specialist networks with the major actors in the electoral assistance field;
- Indicates the available operational tools and resources to be taken into consideration for programming, formulating and implementing electoral assistance.

The Guide is accompanied by other initiatives to develop electoral assistance expertise and the Commission's internal capacity to work in this area such as training modules, concise fast facts sheets, practice notes and a resource booklet presenting the basic aspects of effective electoral assistance. This will lead to more effective interventions, in line with overall EC objectives and management principles, and improved contribution to the overall strategies to enhance coherence both at policy and programmes levels and to promote genuine elections and transparent administration of sustainable electoral processes.

In this context it is important to develop even stronger synergies between EC electoral assistance and its political complement, election observation, to ensure that the recommendations of EU Election Observation Missions are taken into consideration in the identification and formulation of the next EC electoral assistance projects.

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Section I
Framework, Lesson Learned and new Operational Approach

Chapter 1
Policy and Strategic Framework

Chapter 2
EC Electoral Assistance / Restrospective and Perspectives

Chapter 3
A New Approach Toward Sustainable Electoral Processes

Chapter 6
Formulation and Implementation Tools

Case Studies

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Chapter 1
Policy and Strategic Framework

1.1   Support to Electoral Processes

Elections are an essential step in the democratisation process even if they do not equate to democracy. They are a crucial opportunity for political participation and representation (organization of the political process, political discourse, media) and an important element in the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights (freedom of expression, of assembly and association, etc.). Elections also have an important impact upon the rule of law, their success relying on the legitimacy of institutional frameworks (election administration, involvement of the judiciary, etc.).

When addressing the objectives for the Community development policy (sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries, integration of these countries into the world's economy and the campaign against poverty in the developing countries) the EU Treaty underlines the fundamental political dimension of external relations, recalling the aim of developing and consolidating democracy and rule of law, and respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Promoting democratic governance is a key concern in all EC development cooperation programmes. Systematic policy and political dialogue with beneficiary countries draws upon supporting processes and facilitates reforms that are both legitimate and sustainable. Key governance principles such as accountability, transparency, ownership and public participation are mainstreamed in all EC cooperation programmes. At the same time, the EC portfolio of projects and programmes focusing on key governance issues such as the promotion of democracy and human rights, strengthening the rule of law, empowering civil society and implementing public administration reform, is growing annually.

The role played by the EC is particularly prominent regarding the promotion of democracy. Support is provided to projects and programmes aiming at promoting the participation of citizens in public dialogue, in elections and in politics, increasing the capacities of parliaments to exercise their legislative and oversight functions, consolidating key independent institutions to ensure protection of basic rights of citizens as well as promoting freedom of association and an independent and professional media.

The EC is heavily involved in supporting electoral processes by promoting the development of capacity of electoral management bodies to organize credible, sustainable and transparent elections; funding civic/voter education programmes; and deploying EU election observation missions. The synergies and complementarities between the two components of electoral support - electoral assistance and election observation, are strongly promoted, while keeping a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities associated with each of these activities.

Apart from a moral or idealistic imperative to support democracy, there is a pragmatic interest in democratisation, as it is considered having a positive impact on the alleviation of poverty and on the advancement of social and economic development. Looking back at the experience

of developing countries one can see that, in general, democracies and democratisation countries perform consistently better than authoritarian regimes on most social and economic development indicators. Looking at all developing countries over the last twenty years, democracies performed better and attained economic and social growth above average in their regions.

Democracy also helps the pursuit of peace and stability, as democracies are much less prone to conflict: 80% of all interstate conflicts involved autocratic regimes, and virtually all contemporary refugee crises originated in countries with non-democratic systems.

The desire for freedom and for a representative, open and pluralistic political system is not restricted to certain countries or parts of the world. The end of the 20th century was marked by a strong push for democracy all over the world. Nevertheless, even if the majority of democratising countries have not fallen back to authoritarian regimes and there is still a strong public support for democracy, it's true that in several countries disillusionment about democracy has replaced the enthusiasm shown during the early stages of the democratic transition.

It is important to realise that the establishment of democracy is not on its own the magical solution to eliminate poverty and to ensure social and economic development, in the same way that the organisation of elections is not the recipe for democracy. However, should the political transition embrace the substance rather than just the form of democracy, the chances are higher that this transition will contribute to the alleviation of poverty, the advancement of development and the promotion of peace. The way elections are organized and implemented will also affect their impact in the democratisation process.

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1.2   Legal instruments

"The promotion of genuine democracy and respect for human rights is not only a moral imperative; it is also the determining factor in building sustainable human development and lasting peace. Actions in support of democratisation and respect for human rights, including the right to participate in the establishment of governments through free and fair elections, can make a major contribution to peace, security and the prevention of conflicts. "EU support for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is established in the Treaties. Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) clearly states that the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law are fundamental European values. Human rights field missions and election missions are accepted as part of the mandate of the EU whose Treaty considers the protection and promotion of human rights as well as support for democratisation as corner stones of EU foreign policy and EU development co-operation.

(COM(2000)191 on EU election assistance and observation)

For over two decades now the EC has been active in the field of electoral support, and its approach, methodology and instruments in this area have developed considerably. By the end of the 90s', the initial wave of enthusiastic and often unconditional support of the international community for the electoral process gave way to a more reasoned and restrained approach. The EC, like other donors and providers of electoral assistance, began to adopt a deeper analysis of the impact of its support to electoral processes in the light of long term democratic and good governance developments in many post-conflict countries, emerging and transitional democracies.

In this context, the EC Communication of April 2000[1] on "Election Assistance and Observation" represented a watershed in the way EU approached electoral support. This Communication, while reinforcing the EC commitment to provide technical and financial assistance to electoral processes, set the tone for a more coherent strategy to electoral support. In 2003, the Commission presented a staff working paper[2] on the implementation of the Communication on Election Assistance and Observation, reviewing the procedures and practice of EUEOM deployment and developing further a strategy for Election Assistance and Observation.

The adoption in 1999 of the EC Regulations 975/99 and 976/99[3] played a significant role in paving the way for this change of approach by providing a new legal instrument covering the implementation of operations, and thus contributing to the general objectives of developing

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1   COM(2000)191

2   SEC(2003)1472, 19.12.2003

3   Reg 975/1999 and 976/1999 of 29.04.1999 on the development and consolidation of democracy and rule of law, and for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedom.

and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and promoting respect for human rights and freedoms. Specific paragraphs within these texts dealt with the provision of technical and financial aid by the European Community to support electoral processes regardless of the geographic location of the beneficiary country and covered such topics as support for independent electoral commissions, provision of materials and technical and legal support, the promotion of pluralism and participation of specific groups and support for the media.[4]

The Communication on Election Assistance and Observation also spells out the two components of the EU electoral support – assistance and observation, and states their complementary in the overall process.

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4   UNDP Global Practice Meeting on Electoral Assistance, 15.11.2004, Manila

The strategy for EU electoral support

- Guided by **clear objectives** and the **principle of partnership** between the EU and the country where elections are taking place. The Community **should help the host government to create and sustain an independent national capacity for the holding of elections based upon democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms**. This should be reflected in Country Strategy Papers for countries where it is relevant;

- Promotes the **development of national capacity** and gives support where appropriate to **national Election Commissions and to NGO and Civil Society Organisations involved in civic and voter education**;

- Promotes **long-term sustainability after an election**. Where appropriate, a technical assistance mission could continue to assist the government to remedy any weakness in the electoral administration and the rule of law;

- **Promotes pluralism**, both at political level and at the level needed to maintain the pluralist nature of society. This should include the **promotion of local NGOs and other local actors and strengthening their impact on local capacity building**. Equally important will be the promotion of an **independent and responsible media, and respect for the rights of freedom of association**. In some elections, there may be case for financing local NGOs but not government activities;

- Promotes **partnership with NGOs** and allows for lessons to be learned from their experience. A consistent and coherent effort should be made by the EU to identify and integrate European and local NGOs with appropriate mandates and relevant experience in EU electoral support. In particular the EU should promote the participation of women and people from national minorities in the election and decision-making process at national, regional and local level, whether as voters or as candidates; a free and pluralist media; and civic and voter education;

- Emphasises **support to local observers, who can play a key role in the development of democratic institutions**. Once democratic institutions are established and functioning well, EU observers should no longer be needed. However, domestic observer organisations receiving EU support must be sufficiently broad-based, well-balanced and neutral;

- Pays special attention to **proper electoral registration and the fair delimitation of electoral boundaries**;

- Promotes the **mechanisms of self-regulation** needed for a properly functioning democracy, including checks on all stages of the electoral process by representatives of all contesting political parties, a free media, and monitoring by "neutral" domestic organisations (typically NGOs or religious organisations).

(COM(2000)191 on EU election assistance and observation)

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1.3   EU Electoral Support: Electoral Assistance and Election Observation

...“Election assistance may be defined as the technical or material support given to the electoral process. It may imply professional help to establish a legal framework for the elections. It may take the form of a general input to the National Election Commission, for example providing voting material and equipment, or helping in the registration of political parties and the registration of voters. It may also imply support to NGOs and civil society in areas such as voter and civic education or training of local observers as well as support to the media through media monitoring and training of journalists...

...Election observation is the political complement to election assistance. It is defined as “the purposeful gathering of information regarding an electoral process, and the making of informed judgements on the conduct of such a process on the basis of the information collected, by persons who are not inherently authorised to intervene in the process”.[5] In broad terms, election observation is part of election assistance. Technically speaking, they are different activities but essentially they should be considered and programmed in a complementary manner”.

(COM(2000)191 on EU election assistance and observation)

> A methodological and linguistic distinction gained consensus between Election Assistance, seen as the provision of support targeting E-Day event, and Electoral Assistance seen as a more integrated and long term support to electoral systems, processes and institutions. It is understood that electoral assistance has to take stock of all the steps of the electoral cycle; on this post elections and inter-election periods are as crucial as the build up to the elections themselves, thus requiring regular inter-institutional contact and support activities before, during and after election periods for the sake of lessons learned and inter-institutional memory aiming at improved electoral processes in beneficiary countries.

The Commission's staff working paper on electoral support[6] further emphasises the parallel but distinct roles of observation and assistance in the electoral process:

“Assistance to electoral processes and observation are complementary activities. Observation while contributing potentially to better elections, involves the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of an electoral process and the presentation of recommendations. This provides an important basis for deciding on further assistance after elections”.

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5   International IDEA: Code of Conduct for the Ethical and Professional Asministration of elections - Stockholm 1997

6   Implementation of the Communication on Election assistance and Observation - SEC (2003) 1472, 19.12.2003

...Assistance on the other hand, can improve an electoral process before elections. Assistance is best programmed with sufficient time before the next elections are held. Assistance efforts can inform the political process vis-à-vis a country, as election reform issues often have a political component."

As a result of the work undertaken to produce this Guide and especially during the missions carried out to support EC Delegations, the interlocutors met, expressed the same positive perception of the role of EUEOMs vis a vis the EC Electoral Assistance projects. The two activities were not considered to conflict but rather to complement one another in the context of long term assistance to an electoral cycle, as they are run professionally and independently, and they contribute in an equal but different manner to the democratic development of the country.

This dual form of involvement of EU institutions, rather than giving way to potential conflicts of interest is in reality a significant value added for the promotion of governance and development objectives. On this it is important to underline that EUEOMs are independent and run by a Chief Observer that is also a member of the European Parliament. On other hand Delegations and National Authorities supported by the EC services at HQ are responsible for electoral assistance projects.

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In this context, the significance of the observers' recommendations in shaping future electoral reforms and electoral assistance projects acquires a necessary prominence. They also represent the basis for the establishment of the reform agenda (especially after the first and second generations of elections), as well as a platform for the international community to programme the next series of interventions to be discussed with the national authorities.

EUEOMs have been deployed in the great majority of cases in countries where the EC has also contributed technically and financially to the same electoral process. The EC services are tasked with ensuring the overall coherence and synergies between electoral assistance and observation. Exploratory missions of the EUEOMs fully take into account previous and, if relevant, on-going assistance provided in the country, as well as they take up and build upon the recommendations of previous election observation missions.

Within EU electoral support, both elements, election observation and assistance, are always clearly distinguished and managed by different services so as to fully guarantee that no conflict of interest between EC electoral assistance projects and the work of the EUEOMs in assessing the electoral process will arise.

EU election observation, in line with international standards[7] is based on the principles of full coverage, impartiality, transparency and professionalism. Although financed by the EU general budget, and thus also subject to strict rules of sound financial management, EUEOMs are fully independent in making their assessment of and in reporting on electoral processes. Throughout the EUEOMs life span, these missions remain politically independent from EC Delegations, separate from all the other EC assistance activities and independently led according to their mandate by a specifically appointed EU Parliamentarian.[8]

It is therefore important to establish even stronger synergies between the EC electoral assistance and EUEOMs to ensure that the EC Delegations and National Authorities are equipped to follow up and formulate their intervention by taking those recommendations into account. On this, EUEOMs, EC Delegations and EC services at HQ are increasing the collaboration. EUEOMs, during the drafting of their final reports, are invited to work with the EC services to draft recommendations in a format useful to identify and formulate specific activities in support of the next electoral cycle. These should be more detailed and operational and take into consideration EC project cycle management mechanisms and the overall functioning of the EU development cooperation with its interinstitutional linkages. Delegations should use the recommendations of the EUEOMs within the political dialogue and for the discussion with the National Authorities for the eventual future electoral assistance intervention.

1.4   Electoral Assistance in the Context of Democratisation and Sustainable Development

Elections represent a crucial opportunity to encourage and consolidate important elements of the democratisation process such as political participation and control and are a fundamental tool to reinforce democratic institutions and to provide legitimacy to elected authorities. These aspects are fundamental for sustainable development as this requires an environment of social and political stability and sound, accountable institutions, to which the elements of political participation, representation and control are central.

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7   Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Observers. Endorsing Organizations as of October 24, 2005: African Union, Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), The Carter Centre, Centre for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL), Commonwealth Secretariat, Council of Europe – European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), Council of Europe – Parliamentary Assembly, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), European Commission, European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO), Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS), IFES, International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union, International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI), Organization of American States (OAS), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), Pacific Islands, Australia & New Zealand, Electoral Administrators' Association (PIANZEA), Pacific Island Forum, United Nations.

8   See Handbook for European Union Observation Missions.

However, elections do not bring about democracy, and the early beliefs that elections alone signified the transition to or strengthening of a democratic regime and that the support to elections would necessarily result in the support of democracy has been challenged. This view has given way to approaches that looks beyond the immediate electoral event aiming for longer-term interventions to support electoral processes.

> The experience of almost two decades of electoral assistance in post-conflict countries and in emerging/transitional democracies has demonstrated that electoral assistance is more likely to have a positive impact and to be sustainable if placed within the broader contexts of support to democratisation and sustainable development. This represents a shift from concern over support to ad hoc, electoral events to the provision of long-term integrated sustainable support.

The means by which these goals are to be achieved have changed, the emphasis moving away from the imposition of standards and systems, which were predominantly conditioned by the experiences of the assistance providers rather than the actual situation facing the beneficiaries, towards the development of institutional capacity and national ownership through a constructive long term partnership targeting the consolidation of democracy.

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This might in turn entail the adoption of different parameters to assess the effectiveness of electoral assistance interventions. Evaluations should be conducted within the context of standards that are countersigned, accepted and acknowledged by the partner countries. International standards for democratic elections are to be considered during the formulation of electoral assistance intervention, it being necessary to agree with partner countries, in advance, upon the benchmarks concerning electoral standards to be adopted arising from the specific country's treaty with the United Nations, as well as any other non-treaty standards arising from membership of regional organisations and groupings, with a view to raising the bar. The Guide which has been prepared for EUEOMs on such standards[9] can be extremely useful in this respect as a reference tool providing clear information on which agreements and commitments are legally binding and which are political imperatives.[10]

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9   See Handbook for European Union Observation Missions.

10   A Guide for EUEOMs, Benchmarks for International Electoral Standards, ERIS, 2005

The focus of electoral assistance has now moved towards the quality and appropriate-ness of the methodological, operational and technological choices to be adopted for implementation, which began to be perceived not any longer as isolated event but as a process. In this context, past imperfections and limited results should be seen as an additional motive to support electoral processes in a less disorganized fashion and invest more in the institutions that administer the elections*.

* Andrew Ellis, "From Optimism to Realism: Ten Years of Electoral Development", in International IDEA, "Ten Years of Supporting Democracy Worldwide", May 2005.

1.5   Electoral Assistance as a Means to Prevent Conflict and Promote Good Governance

The power of the electorate to transform peacefully the political and democratic landscape of a country is repeatedly demonstrated through electoral processes in different countries, in different situations.

Elections can not only legitimise political authority and promote governance, but can also play a vital role in a society as a mechanism to regulate internal conflict and contribute to recon-ciliation and to the achievement of peace.

The provision of electoral assistance is often the key that enables a country to hold fair, cred-ible and transparent elections, to induce all parties concerned to accept the results as a legitimate outcome and to ensure that these parties will resort only to legal practices to attempt to redress their grievances. The holding of periodic democratic elections, whilst not being the panacea for all conflicts, remains a potentially major mechanism for conflict prevention and electoral assist-ance can be of fundamental importance in this context.

The impact of electoral processes goes further than the aspect of democratisation and the aspects of representativeness, legitimacy and accountability. Elections are a significant element in the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights (freedom of expression, of assembly, of association, religious, racial, gender equality, etc.) and have an important effect on the rule of law, their success relying on the legitimacy of institutional frameworks (election administration, involvement of the judiciary, etc.).

Electoral assistance is also very often an entry point for wider good governance interventions and the promotion of good governance principles. It can provide an important opening for wider Democratisation support, strengthening of civil society, promotion of human rights (including gender, minorities, indigenous peoples…), reinforcement of the rule of law and the justice system and decentralisation.

The establishment of legal and political institutions largely accepted by the community, working in an open, transparent and accountable manner towards popular participation, equal representation, decentralised control and protection of minority rights is the key not only for free and fair elections but also for the promotion of good governance in a country.

1.6   Criteria for Involvement in Electoral Assistance

Before the 2000 Communication on EU Election Assistance and Observation, decisions to provide EC electoral assistance were based solely upon the importance of specific electoral events in terms of the EU's strategic foreign policy as it referred to the country in question.

While reiterating that "an assessment of the desirability of supporting an election process should be made on a case by case basis, taking into account the EU's overall strategy, the political importance and potential for democracy of the election itself, the relevance of the country for the EU as well as its budgetary constraints", the 2000 Communication, drawing upon best practice, set forth a number of basic intervention criteria that paved the way for a more coherent approach to intervention. These criteria are:

- A request from the host government for Community electoral assistance;
- The general agreement of the main political parties and other stakeholders to a pro-gramme of EC electoral assistance;
- The existence of previous political monitoring or EU development programmes in the host country;
- An adequate time-frame for preparation;
- The freedom of movement, access to information and safety of the technical assistance team.

A number of additional criteria were then added by the Commission Working Paper on the Implementation of the 2000 Communication[11], namely:

- Complementarity: the organisation of elections is a State obligation requiring adequate resourcing by the State. Consequently, EC assistance should only be provided as a complement to state funding. An exception can be made in post-conflict or failed state scenarios, where the state authorities do not exist or have inadequate means.
- Better definition of intended results: assistance has to respect its ultimate objective, which is an improvement in the expression of the popular will through the electoral process, e.g. the support for the professionalisation of the election administration should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a contribution to increased transparency and the smooth running of the elections.
- Assistance given in a volatile environment has to be assessed for its impact as a conflict prevention tool. Electoral assistance can play a role in preventing violent conflicts since genuine elections create legitimacy, strengthen inclusion and allow for tension and conflicts to be managed in democratic ways.
- Finally there should be an assessment of whether a particular form of assistance is politically advisable. By analogy with the question of the advisability of deploying an EUEOM, there should be an analysis of whether there is a minimum democratic space and the political will in a country to allow genuine elections to take place. In the absence of such conditions, the provision of assistance to the authorities will only serve to support electoral machinery which has no useful purpose and whose existence might be used in an attempt to legitimise what is a flawed process.

The definition of these criteria for involvement requires the distillation of more objective and specific benchmarks and performance indicators in order to offer the EC Delegation a sharper evaluating tool. Very often, in terms of political advisability of the assistance and its impact, the line between the development cooperation and the dangers to endorse manipulated process is very thin.

> Generally speaking, last minute support of electoral events will remain a crucial feature of the EC assistance in specific circumstances (snap elections following coups, post-conflict scenarios). However, even so, such interventions need to address established long-term strategies from the outset.

The EC has taken steps towards a more pro-active role in promoting electoral reform well in advance of a specific electoral event. However, the growing demands that have been placed on

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11   "Commission staff working paper – Implementation of the Communication on Election Assistance and Observation, SEC (2003) 1472"

transitional countries to demonstrate their commitment to the democratisation process caused a surge in the number of requests for assistance coming from partner countries. As a result, in future more specific criteria will have to be developed in order to determine the nature of the EU response to the needs of EMBs and other relevant authorities.

Support for the implementation of such criteria and the enthusiasm which might accompany this process in terms of democratisation should not blind practitioners to the advantages to be gained from the establishment of specific benchmarks and indicators to monitor and evaluate the implementation and delivery of the assistance.

In EC-funded electoral assistance activities, it is crucial to develop more specific and measurable performance indicators while moving towards more sector based approaches. These indicators should be based upon a coherent electoral administration methodology and utilise appropriate tools. They should draw upon codified structures, accepted standards and common understanding. The aim would be to reduce the subjectivity and discretion in evaluating and assessing the impacts.

1.7   Political Dialogue and Development Cooperation

Political dialogue is fundamental to set up an effective and sustainable strategy for electoral assistance. The institutional reforms required to improve the electoral process rely critically on the political commitment and the political will to engage in such processes.

If a government or an EMB will not share the commitment to support the establishment of an effective and trustworthy electoral administration, then the provision of electoral assistance, on its own, will not bring the required integrity to the electoral process.

Political factors take on increased importance as the focus of the assistance moves from providing support to isolated electoral events to the provision of support as part and parcel of long-term strategies to further the democratic process and/or intensify support for sustainable development of the recipient countries. The need to take into account national "buy-in" to these strategies and to promote indigenous ownership of the strategies also adds to this pressure.

In order to increase national ownership and strengthen national institutions it is necessary to engage partner countries more in political dialogue which encompasses governance policies and public administration reforms. The path to the achievement of democracy will then be longer, but the path towards the achievement of the overall objectives of democratic development will also be steadier.

Political dialogue is also particularly important in post-conflict situations or when political tensions are acute. A thorough political analysis of the situation will be essential to develop adequate response mechanisms within the electoral assistance programme in order to contribute

to the creation of legitimacy, strengthen inclusion and provide alternative and democratic means to solve tensions, thus preventing violent conflicts.

Electoral assistance projects, though technical in nature, have an undeniable political dimension which must be recognised during the dialogue on development cooperation which takes place with stakeholders in partner countries. Such recognition can provide the EU actors with an additional awareness of the functioning of national key institutions.

The conclusions of EUEOMs, recommendations of monitoring and evaluation of projects and other kinds of assessments should be shared by the EC Delegations with the EU Member States, to reinforce and coordinate actions taken.

> Electoral assistance projects and programmes can also serve the purpose of opening possibilities for the EU to pursue a more effective political dialogue on the larger issues of human rights, Democratisation and civil society with these countries.

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1.8   Post Conflict Elections

Some ambiguity surrounds the issue of post-conflict elections and the type of situations which should be considered as such. For the purpose of this guide, post-conflict elections will be treated as a broad category of electoral events, including mainly, but not exclusively, cases of first elections after peace accords, revolutions and sued changes of regimes. They are generally characterised by the existence of a conflict ridden environment, violent opposition to the peace process, and heavy involvement of the international community in all aspects of the electoral process, including, on occasion, involvement in the very institutions responsible for the organisation of the elections.

Post-conflict elections are a fundamental building block in the peace-reconciliation-democracy path, a path which can be quite long and which can not be imposed from

the outside. They represent a necessary but not sufficient condition for a move towards genuine democratic development, and the presence of the international community has in many of these situations proven capable of helping warring parties leaders' engage in reconciliation and come to terms with the conventions applying to the expression of opposition in justifiable, democratic ways.

It should be noted that the first elections which follow a period of conflict may owe their support more to political expediency or the need for a peace enforcement/keeping mission to exit the country than their role in the overall democratisation process or, indeed, to considerations concerning the preparedness of the country to effectively hold such elections. Rafael Lopez-Pintor notes in his forthcoming publication[12] that elections in such circumstances "did not blur deep-rooted ethno-cultural cleavages" however they did "help former combatants cope (with such divisions) in a civilised, democratic manner." The presence of the international community in these situations proved, in fact, to be able to move warring parties' leaders towards reconciliation, to the acceptance of the rules of democratic confrontation.

> Recent examples of support to post-conflict elections include the assistance provided to the electoral processes of Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In this context, it has to be borne in mind that the way to democracy can be extremely long and must not be imposed from outside. Post-conflict elections, in fact, represent a necessary but not sufficient condition for moving towards genuine democratic development.

The political opportunism of specific groups and elites is not a justifiable reason for the EC to provide support to the electoral process. Communication 211/2001 on conflict prevention points to more pressing needs, "countries with conflict potential are those where the democratic process is least advanced, but at the same time where support to it is most needed". A strategic, diversified and long-term oriented intervention, in full co-ordination with other international actors, can be vital to secure the way to peace and reconciliation in the country.

In this type of operations, the usual cost-benefit considerations are often not applicable, as the assessment criteria respond more to the political objective of consolidating peace and creating the preconditions for future democratic developments. Electoral support in post-conflict situations, should be conceived from the outset within the framework of long-term objectives of sustainability and development. However, such interventions have to be assessed using different criteria from those which apply to the assessment of elections under "non-conflict scenarios". The rules of engagement for evaluating post-conflict elections have to differ from those which apply under non-conflict scenarios and this difference must reflect the reasons behind the conflict and the status of the overall EU's relation with the country in question.

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12   Rafael Lopez-Pintor, "Post conflict Elections and Democratisation", USAID publication (forthcoming), page 4.

Other general criteria to be taken into account concern the specific attitude in the target country towards the EU involvement, and the type and conditions of the international engagement. It is essential to take into account the additional costs of supporting the organization of post-conflict elections, with specific reference to contingencies, security costs and, indeed, all those linked to securing the complete process.

Similarly, the manner in which such participation is to be evaluated should respond to different criteria. This is not to say that expectations should be lowered, but just to acknowledge that the criteria are different and that evaluations should assess the country situation and the impact of the EU participation against the country's own past as well as within the specific regional context.

Chapter 2
EC Electoral Assistance / Restrospective and Perspectives

2.1 Historical Background

Since the beginning of the 90s, programmes of electoral assistance have played a significant, sometimes fundamental role in the democratisation processes of many countries emerging from totalitarian regimes, conflict and former dysfunctional political systems and dictatorships. The EC has been active for more than two decades in the field of electoral support and over this period the form in which this support has been provided has evolved considerably. Electoral support missions started in 1993 with the observation of the first multi-party elections in Russia and in 1994 with the first multiracial elections in South Africa. In 1994 the EC also provided financial and technical support to electoral events of specific and recognized relevance to its foreign policy as the legislative and presidential elections in Mozambique, the first elections after the end of the civil war. The Palestine Authority presidential elections in 1996 were supported both in terms of assistance and observation.[13]

Since then, the EU electoral support has grown considerably in number and scope. While election observation missions were mainly funded through Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget, the electoral assistance projects were mainly supported through the development cooperation funds, but continued to be programmed on an "ad hoc" basis without any standardized and strategic approach. At the end of the 90s', the initial wave of enthusiasm and often unconditioned support to electoral processes gave way to a more reasoned and realistic approach. While it was acknowledged that, in many cases, international assistance was crucial to prevent mass manipulation of the results, strengthen the legitimacy of emerging democratic groups and parties and to force ex-combatants to accept the rules of the democratic game, serious disappointments were also recorded in terms of the expected democratic developments in countries were elections had been made possible with international funding and expertise.[14] The EC, like other donors and providers of electoral assistance, began to analyse, in greater depth, the impact of its support to elections in post conflict countries, transitional and emerging democracies also in light of the long term democratic development.
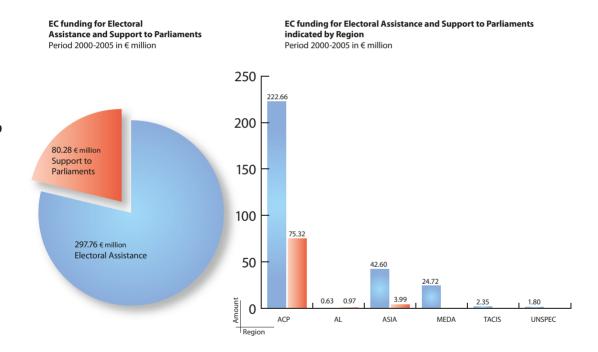
2.2 Activities and basic statistics 2000–2005

Since the adoption of the 2000 Communication, the EC has raised its profile as a worldwide provider of electoral support due mainly to the success and visibility of its election observation activities. The development of a clear and standardized observation methodology, the creation of a specific thematic budget line under which all election observation missions are funded, and

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13   COM(2000)191 on EU election assistance and observation

14   In the best cases, mere electoral democracies emerged and the donors showed superficial satisfaction with the achievements without taking in due consideration the complexity of transition processes.

the centralised planning and management which occurs at HQ level being the principal factors behind this success.

The EC provides considerable funds for electoral assistance projects in. Over the period 2000 to 2005, the EC allocated more than 300 MEURO to 80 electoral assistance projects in over 40 countries. This assistance was funded through the use of a number of financial instruments covering geographically different areas. These were complemented by thematic instruments and and horizontal budget lines. Implementation lay in the hands of the (Deconcentrated) EC Delegations and National Authorities supported by a number of services of the Commission (HQ based).

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**EC funding for Electoral
Assistance and Support to Parliaments**
Period 2000-2005 in € million

**EC funding for Electoral Assistance and Support to Parliaments
indicated by Region**
Period 2000-2005 in € million

80.28 € million
Support to
Parliaments

297.76 € million
Electoral Assistance

250

222.66

200

150

100

75.32

50

42.60

24.72

0.63   0.97   3.99

2.35   1.80

0

Amount

Region

ACP   AL   ASIA   MEDA   TACIS   UNSPEC

The EC has successfully implemented a large number of projects in collaboration with the national counterparts, such as for instance :

- Support to EMB general operations and provision of and timely provision of expertise to EMBs in Lesotho (2001), Cambodia (2002), Madagascar (2002), Nigeria (2003), Malawi (2003), West Bank & Gaza (2002–2005), Indonesia 2004, Central African Republic (2004) and Guinea Bissau 2004;

- Support for the electoral institution building process in West Bank & Gaza (2002) and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2005);

- Direct support to voter registration activities in Zambia and Ghana 2000, Chad 2001, Democratic Republic of Congo 2005;

- Support and funding of civic and voter education projects through CSOs in Namibia 2000, Uganda 2001, Yemen 2003, Mozambique 2003 and 2004 and Indonesia 2004;

- Provision of technical assistance to domestic observers in Ivory Coast 2000, Uganda 2001, Jamaica 2002 and Nigeria 2003;

- Provision of Budgetary Support in Mozambique 2003 and 2004;

- Support to post-conflict elections in Iraq 2005, Afghanistan 2004 and 2005, Kosovo 2000–2004, Liberia 2005 and DRC 2004/6.

2.3   Lesson Learned, Constraints, Achievements

A common feature of almost all past EC electoral assistance interventions has been the lateness of the identification and formulation phases and the absence of a strategic approach within which specific interventions can be placed. In the majority of cases where the EC intervened the intervention took place after those of other international donor's and electoral assistance providers, these being designed in response to specific requests for assistance submitted by the relevant authorities. Most EC interventions in electoral assistance are implemented through contributions to common pool funded projects, which can bring clear advantages in terms of coordination of activities and pooling of resources and expertise. However, the issue of visibility and the possibility to have a different strategic choice for the EC support should not be jeopardized and can be addressed both within the pool funded projects and with additional specific actions.

Providers of electoral assistance, partner countries and CSOs, have in some occasions developed an overall erroneous perception of the EC's ability to identify and establish its own priorities in the field of electoral assistance, and consequently would consider the Commission merely as a source of funds for financial support.

It should be acknowledged that, in some cases, the EC's input in the design of jointly funded operations was diminished by excessive delegation of responsibilities and lack of electoral assistance knowledge. Also the internal institutional set up of the EC, the variety of financial instruments to be used and the related rigidity of EC contractual-financial procedures did not help for the Commission to be properly equipped to play a different role in the electoral assistance field and to react swiftly enough to change this general perception.

> Specific measures and initiatives have been developed in order to allow the EC staff dealing with the different phases of the operations' cycle related to electoral assistance to play a more active role to promote the visibility and increase the weight of the EC in the steering committee of the different projects.

The organisation of an electoral process is highly technical in operational terms, and is also very complicated logistically. However, this should not cloud the fact that an election is, above all, a political event in all its components. The EC has not always been prepared to acknowledge the political significance of the electoral process, resulting in a failure to appreciate the political impact of technical aspects linked to, for instance, delimitation of boundaries, voter registration, candidate registration, tabulation of results and electoral dispute mechanisms.

The importance of having internal operational knowledge that can understand and interpret certain events make a big difference in deciding the areas and delivery methods for the support. This has been largely proved by the comparative success of those assistance projects where specific electoral expertise had been at disposal of the Delegations from the early stages of a given electoral event. Another common feature of many electoral assistance projects is the limited emphasis on the inclusion of adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In the early days of the electoral assistance field, the holding of the elections, alone, was considered as justification for the support, little or no attention being paid to the issue of how to improve the quality of the assistance or how to strengthen the capacity, accountability and independence of the institutions in charge of the process. Nevertheless, the achievements of the EC's assistance to electoral processes should not be underestimated. The level of commitment demonstrated by the EC through the quality and quantity of its electoral assistance efforts has been shown to deliver fundamental and effective support to numerous electoral processes.

> Experience confirms that EC Delegations can directly play a key role in the institution building and capacity development processes in post conflict countries, and emerging/transitional democracies by providing assistance to electoral processes. Experience also shows that EC Delegations, supported by electoral assistance expertise, are able working alone, and subject to EC contractual and financial procedures, to work more efficiently than many other organisations to develop the capacity of EMBs.

2.4   Challenges Ahead

Currently, the EC is one of the most important donors in electoral assistance terms. The key priorities for the future of EC assistance in this area, are to:

- Increase intervention capacity
- Improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions.

The EC must become a more strategic and pro-active player in the field and change perceptions of it being a bank ready to finance ad hoc election related projects implemented, partly or wholly, by other assistance providers, ready to finance isolated election-related projects.

This will require an increase in the internal capacity of the EC through specific training on effective electoral assistance and through the provision of practical tools and targeted support to operations. It will also be necessary to develop strategic partnerships and tighter collaboration with the other global players in the electoral assistance field. This will facilitate better programming and improved management of projects, as well as adherence to long-term and capacity building strategies.

Attention should be paid to the role and functions of the EMBs at times outside of the immediate election period. This kind of support finds its natural place within the context of development of democratic governance and empowerment of the country and should be programmed regardless of the immediate electoral urgency of that country. Effective assistance programmes
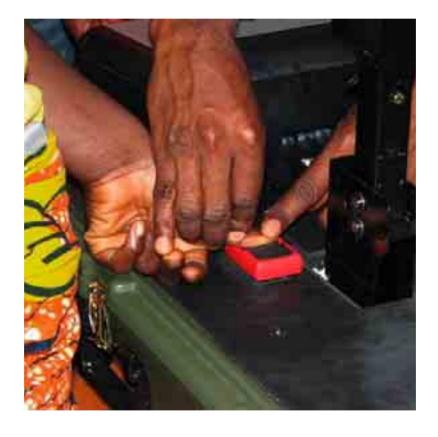
that aim at the reinforcement of the institutional framework will require less extensive but more qualitative support over time.

Improvement of the nature of implementation modalities and donor coordination mechanisms will play a fundamental role if political coherence and effective sustainable actions are to be forthcoming. Inevitably the costs of elections and the resources which are available play a part in determining what is, and what is not, sustainable. Cases have been recorded where the cost of the election has exceeded 1% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the country! It is therefore important to try to bring down the costs of organising elections and, in general, to take sustainability into account at all times.

The challenge is then for the EC to identify, with sufficient lead time, opportunities for direct support of national institutions and to continue to develop its partnerships with other organisations.

Finally, like all other donors and providers of electoral assistance, the EC will face more difficulties and challenges in the near future caused by the increased complexity and rapid pace of change of the electoral process due to the increased adoption of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). This trend has not been reflected yet in a marked change of approach in the way that donors contribute to these processes. Important questions surrounding the costs of implementation, the effectiveness of actions and the sustainability of the changes introduced will present those concerned with a challenge, one which cannot be ignored.

Chapter 3
A New Approach Toward Sustainable Electoral Processes

3.1   Overview of Recipients and Stakeholders

In most cases, the two fundamental areas of intervention for effective and sustainable electoral assistance are a) the support to the development of credible and transparent institutions for the administration of the electoral process, the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) and b) the support to the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) engaged in various forms with the electoral process.

Civic education and voter information activities must be supported on a long-term basis, which means that such activities need to be continued throughout the periods between elections. In this way projects can expect to redress some of the electoral inequalities which exist especially in relation to disadvantaged groups. The implementation of these activities requires the participation of independent stakeholders, even where the relevant EMBs has been given the authority to do so. Their involvement ensures diversity of opinion and approach, which can be a vital factor in the emergence of a different political will in a country.

Supporting activities targeting domestic or regional efforts to observe electoral processes, media monitoring, training of journalists, dissemination of information about electoral dispute mechanisms and training in electoral conflict management also play a crucial function in the promotion and defence of democracy in all countries. The existence of such activities can act as a check against the dangers of EMBs abusing their position. Similarly, support to international, regional and domestic CSOs engaged in such activities allows the EC to balance its interventions. This can be helpful if there is a danger of the EC being too closely linked to the ruling party or coalition.

At all stages of the project management cycle, and especially at the programming, identification and in the formulation stages, it is important to have a clear understanding of the nature of all the recipients and stakeholders involved in electoral assistance. The coordination at all stages and at the various levels is a fundamental and often underestimated component of every successful programme.

A)   ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES (EMBS)

Electoral Management Bodies (referred hereinafter as EMBs) is the definition now currently in use to describe the authority mandated in a given country to organize and conduct electoral processes.[15]

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15   See "Comparative Experiences in Electoral Management Bodies, Rafael López-Pintor, paper prepared for and presented at the UNDP Global Practice Meeting on Electoral Assistance, 15.11.2004, Manila.

The complexity of electoral management and the specialist skills which it requires necessitates the designation of an institution or institutions to take responsibility for electoral activities. Such bodies come in various shapes and sizes, with a wide range of titles to match, including, 'Election Commission', 'Department of Elections', 'Electoral Council', 'Election Unit', and 'Electoral Board'. The terms 'electoral management body' or EMB have been coined to refer to the body or bodies responsible for electoral management, whatever wider institutional framework is in place.

"An EMB is an organisation or body which has the sole purpose of, and is legally responsible for, managing one or more of the elements that are essential for the conduct of elections, and of direct democracy instruments – such as referenda, citizens' initiatives, and recall votes – if those are part of the legal framework. These essential (or core) elements include:

- Determining who is eligible to vote;
- Receiving and validating the nominations of electoral participants (for elections, political parties and/or candidates);
- Conducting polling;
- Counting votes; and
- Totalling votes".[16]

If these essential elements are allocated to various bodies, then all these bodies which have a share of these elements can be considered as EMBs. An EMB may be a stand-alone institution, or a distinct management unit within a larger institution which may also have non-electoral tasks.

In addition to these essential elements, an EMB may undertake other tasks which assist the conduct of elections and direct democracy instruments, such as the conduct of voter registration, boundary delimitation, voter education/information, media monitoring, and electoral dispute resolution. However, a body which has no electoral responsibilities other than, for example,

- Boundary delimitation (such as a boundary delimitation commission),
- Electoral dispute resolution (such as an electoral court),
- Election media monitoring (such as a media monitoring commission) or the conduct of voter education and information (such as a civic education commission)

is not an EMB as such because it is not managing any of the 'essential elements' of elections as identified above. Similarly, a state population or statistics bureau which produces electoral registers as part of the general process of population registration is not considered to be an EMB.

The EMB is by definition, in any given country where electoral assistance is provided, the main recipient of such assistance. The assistance to EMBs can be broadly grouped in four different categories: **a)** funding of electoral operations; **b)** technical advice, **c)** training **d)** procurement of

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16   Electoral Management Design Handbook, International IDEA, 2007.

materials. In some cases, it can encompass all four categories. The EMB can also be a significant stakeholder in many electoral projects targeting the civil society. The main risk in providing assistance to an EMB is that the institution might not be perceived as impartial or independent or might be actually controlled by the ruling party/coalition. Assistance aimed at enhancing the EMB technical ability to run the process might be considered detrimental in contexts where no equivalent improvements can be recorded. on the political side.

The EMB mandate can be entrusted to different authorities in different countries. There are three large families of EMBs diffused in the world: a) the "governmental" model, largely diffused in old Western democracies, where the Ministry of Interior or Home Office and the local municipal authorities conduct elections; b) the "French" or "Mixed" model, with electoral processes run by a governmental office with the super-vision of commissions normally composed of judges and representatives of political parties; c) the "independent commission" model, a more recent but very diffused development whereby electoral processes are managed by electoral commissions completely independent* from the executive branch of government. According to recent studies, the latter model has become the dominant one.**

* **Or "legally" independent, but not "completely" independent. In most cases they are financially dependent from the government.**
** **Rafael López-Pintor, at page 3 of his recent work "Comparative Experiences in Electoral Management Bodies" states that "Conclusive evidence from all regions of the world shows that in 80% of all democracies elections are run by independent electoral commissions either in a full manner (53%) or by supervising the work of agencies from the executive branch of government (27%). Only in 20% of cases, normally as a historical residue of older democracies, elections are exclusively conducted by governmental executive agencies at the central or local level".**

In similar contexts, the choice could be very difficult, but technical support can be often tailored at improving the transparency and efficiency of the institution, contributing in any case to a positive development of the political context.

B)   CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS)

Civil society and CSOs are often the recipients of electoral assistance projects, and will always feature as project stakeholders, in any electoral assistance projects. CSOs or NGOs are the privileged conduit to disseminate voter information and promulgate civic education at a "grass-roots" level or to target groups which may not be covered by the general public campaign. Donors often like to support civic education projects which are run by CSOs as it is an area which is often neglected

by the national authorities and because such projects offer the donors the opportunity to support the electoral process without being seen as supporting government or biased EMBs.

The preference or the special attention that donors pay to civil society in election years is well known in CSO circles, and this can lead to the cynical establishment of new organisations solely for the purpose of attracting funds from donors. However, the diversification of the spectrum of NGOs which could be recipient of EC grants is a desirable objective in many cases. Some small and peripheral NGO might have effective mechanisms to reaching out to certain disadvantaged groups. Some small NGO might also be targeted as a recipient of technical assistance projects before it qualifies to conduct civic education or voter information activities. Often a specific training on electoral procedures will enhance accuracy and consistency of the messages.

An important activity undertaken by CSOs, deserving of attention and support, is the conduct of surveys. These can be pre-electoral surveys (voter registration attitudes or audits, candidate preferences or knowledge of electoral procedures) or post-electoral surveys (voters list audits, turnout, voter attitude, difficulty of the ballot and so forth). They are a useful means to gauge the knowledge base of potential voters and help the design of targeted voter information programmes. Post-electoral surveys are also effective means of assessing the impact of voter information/civic education projects, and of gathering important information on the elections that can be used for future reforms.

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C) DOMESTIC OBSERVER GROUPS

Domestic observer groups are essential to enhance the transparency and integrity of the electoral process. As their members come from civil society, they often represent rather large coalition of interest. As such many of the observations made in the previous section, apply equally in the case of domestic observer groups, both in the positive and in the negative sense.

They fulfil a very specific important function in the electoral business as they can cover the entire spectrum of the electoral activities much more extensively than any international observer group. One of the goals of international observation is in fact to become progressively redundant and leave the observation duties in established democracies to regional and national groups.

A weakness often mentioned in the evaluation of domestic observers' performance is the disproportionate importance attributed to anecdotal evidence and their excessive criticism of particular aspect of the process without having credible and substantiated elements to prove the claims.

Alongside political parties and media, civil society is a vitally important outlet for democratic activity, representing a vehicle for popular participation and civic activism. Civil society groups can effectively encourage the emergence of the popular and political will, so vital for democracy in any society. However, for a democratic process to deepen and consolidate, it needs to be protected. Such protection includes the development of appropriate legislation, the articulation of rights, upholding of the rule of law, the creation of equitable electoral conditions, the accountability of government, a professional media and constructive engagement by political forces. Monitoring these elements is vital for understanding the direction of change in a country, and for lobbying in favour of a positive development, and it exemplifies the importance of the work of civil society organisation.*

* **Promoting and Defending Democracy. The Work of Domestic Election Observer Groups Around the World. ERIS 2005**

A very significant recent trend in EC practice regarding the support of domestic observer groups is the provision of technical assistance (fund-raising included) rather than just financial support. This type of support, which also encourage the creation of one or a few national platforms or networks, prevents the proliferation of ad-hoc groups thus ensuring that more targeted and sustainable support is provided to groups of highly committed people. Such an approach, more importantly, addresses the methodology of domestic observation groups, targeting the respect of existing international and specific regional electoral standards.

D)   POLITICAL ENTITIES (POLITICAL PARTIES, CANDIDATES AND COALITIONS)

Political entities are an essential ingredient of any electoral process, but they are seldom the target of EC-funded assistance for obvious reasons of neutrality and for fear of the EC being portrayed as supporting one or another political faction. Their assistance has therefore been always a remit of international foundations with political affiliations. While this remains an essential consideration in evaluating assistance options, it must be emphasised that there is considerable scope for the provision of neutral technical assistance to political parties, which, as yet, has not been addressed. This has been the cause of many disagreements between party officials and election administrators. Programmes to facilitate the political entities' understanding of the technical requirements to effectively contest the electoral process (electoral law, media law, political party law, EMB procedures) can be viewed as an important way to foster democratic development and pluralistic discourse in any society.

An effective way to provide this type of support while ensuring the neutrality of the project could be to channel the support through the EMB. This could be a good promotion vehicle for the EMB itself and add considerably to its credibility. However, the interests of EMBs and political

parties can conflict here if the parties contest EMBs' procedures, meaning that channelling the support through the EMBs may raise distrust among the parties. The most significant technical needs that can be addressed by specific information and training programmes are related to voter registration procedures, political parties registration requirements as legal entities, political parties/candidate verification requirements for specific electoral events, financial disclosure and campaign funding provisions, appeal and complaints procedures (see also the UNDP Guide for engagements with political parties).

E)   MEDIA

Media play a very influential role in any electoral event and need to be monitored and sup-ported in equal measure. Freedom of speech and equal access to the media are cornerstones of any meaningful democratic process. Without the guarantee of these civil and political rights the conditions for a credible election is compromised.

There are three dimensions to media activities that require attention in relation to elections. The first concerns the media as a mechanism for the initial dissemination of information to voters, and the more general dissemination of election information. The media can be used to provide information to the electorate, to expose incompetence and corruption, to build or destroy political parties and candidates, and to calm or inflame a particular situation depending upon its actions. Journalists carry a huge responsibility to report in a fair and factual manner. Such professional-ism is hard to find in countries which have recently shaken off autocratic political structures and where the free press is embryonic, hence there is a need to support the media and to assist it in its relationships with key electoral stakeholders. Such assistance can include training journalists specifically in election reporting.

The second dimension to the media relates to the use of the media by political groups to disseminate particular political messages. The legal framework within which elections are organised should include a Media Law covering how outlets are funded and licensed, and how space is allocated to political parties in electoral campaigns. Equal or equitable access to media is an issue which needs more coherent and continued support and which can only be analysed by methodologically sound media monitoring programmes. The EC could draw upon the significant expertise gained by the EUEOMs in media monitoring techniques and offer targeted technical assistance to domestic efforts to set up media monitoring exercises.

A third dimension concerns the relationship between the EMB and the media, where much can be done to improve the image of the EMB in the eyes of the stakeholders and the overall transparency of the electoral process by encouraging and supporting the the EMB to provide continuous and correct information.

F)   OTHER ACTORS

There are a number of national institutions, so far not mentioned, that can be involved in electoral assistance programmes, depending on the activities to be implemented and the kind of aid delivery method chosen. Typically, the Ministries of Planning and the Interior will be involved in any electoral logistic operations, while the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs will be counterpart in the case of financial support and procurement actions funded with external funds but to be carried out according to the countries' national rules. The Security Forces can also be called in to support logistics and security of materials and polling and counting centres.

Other subjects of potential support include Media Regulatory Agencies and in certain cases the Judiciary, when the support is directed to media development or to electoral complaint bodies.

The Legislative (Parliament) may also be considered suitable for electoral assistance support in relation to the production or revision of electoral laws.

The Ministry of Education can be involved in authorising, implementing and monitoring civic and voter education in schools, and decentralised state institutions can also be involved in electoral operations, thus deserving attention in assistance programmes.

3.2   The new Approach

As mentioned previously, although elections do not equate to democracy, they remain an essential step in the democratic development of any country. Sometimes several elections are necessary to put a country firmly on the democratic path, and the transition from an electoral to a participatory democracy could take as long as a decade, or even more.

In such situations support from external donors takes on increasing importance following the first elections, as it will be the case that not all the checks and balances which are required for an effectively functioning democracy will be in place. Furthermore, pre-established power groups are likely to exist which can take advantage of the situation to hijack the democratisation process, in furtherance of their interests, or seek to re-introduce autocratic rule through a cynical exploitation of the weaknesses of a young democracy. This is the context in which electoral assistance is now viewed, one of supporting the democratic transition of the partner countries and the evolution and consolidation of the institutions that guarantee it.

In recent times, the emphasis in supporting electoral processes moves more decisively towards forms of assistance that take into consideration the operational complexities and the periodicity of the electoral processes. This takes into consideration the activities to be provided to ensure strengthening of capacity and the transfer of appropriate skills and technology to the concerned institutions or organizations which deal with the electoral process. Accordingly, there is a consequent need to programme the intervention some years in advance of the electoral date and subsequently to provide support following the elections and over the period between elections.

It is the aim of all democratic countries to develop and maintain a sustainable and impartial electoral administration, and it is the declared aim of every electoral assistance undertaking. Even mature democracies, in their continuous effort to improve and refine their own electoral systems, are constantly in search of costs absorption methods and improved sustainability. The overarching aim of all electoral support projects is to ultimately turn the electoral process into free and fair operation that is credible, transparent, inclusive run in a cost effective and sustainable manner by accountable institutions. In this operation the rights of all those entitled to participated (voters and candidates) are guaranteed.

In ideal conditions, every electoral assistance project should aim at: building the nation's capacity to finance its own elections; supporting core and permanent structures, establishing its legitimacy in the eyes of the electorate and, keeping in sight the long-term objective of the assistance beyond the immediate upcoming electoral event. Sustainability can be pursued in a number of ways, through a number of different activities, but it must always be placed in the right context and must proceed along with the other institutional developments.

Building institutions that are too advanced for, or alien to, the country's political and institutional environment could be the first step towards their failure. Examples of good sustainability of projects has been enhanced through actions such as: the centralisation and computerisation of voters databases; the introduction of decentralised secure ballot printing (for large countries), the development of more transparent and competitive bidding and procurement procedures, the purchase of reusable materials, the provision of multi-media self-learning training and information

Programmes, the pursuit of consistency in electoral procedures at various levels, and, the use of experienced public servants from other state institutions as election staff when required.

However, sustainability is reached only with long term planning, strong dedication and strategic thinking, all aspects that tend to fade away or get pushed aside in young democracies, especially in the immediate run up to an electoral event, when the time is short and the political pressure is high. EMBs often have to strive to uphold such practice in the face of strong opposition and even obstruction from other state institutions that do not accept its independence. New technologies, can help significantly, in efforts to reach this goal, but only when sufficient trust and credibility has already been gained by the EMB concerned.

Despite all the declared intentions, complete sustainability cannot be the immediate goal of electoral assistance projects, at least in the first two or three generations of elections of any partner country.

Sustainability, after all, can only be effectively pursued when the EMB has established itself as a credible and independent institution vis-a-vis all the stakeholders involved. Quite paradoxically, however, an EMB can often establish itself only by demonstrating its ability to run genuine and credible elections. This results sometimes in a desperate search for magic solutions and in a constant pressure on EMBs to organize their first two or three electoral events - when the external assistance is offered in abundance - well above the real sustainability threshold of the concerned countries.

This is a crucial moment in the democratic transition of every young democracy that might require additional constitutional reform and significant legal adjustments. However, these needs are often neglected, and this neglect can mean that dangerous developments are allowed to go unchecked. It is a stage where the EC can play a fundamental role in ensuring support in a crucial transitional period.

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The consequence of all this is that the first generation of elections in many new countries or emerging democracies, even if assessed very positively by observers and political analysts, might be conducted according to procedures and models not necessarily recommendable in the long run. Sometimes, especially in cases where the international community has been very heavily involved not only in the assistance but also in the organisation of elections, a complete rethinking of these conceptual models becomes necessary at a stage where many electoral assistance providers have already moved on and where analysts have already assessed the country to be proceeding firmly on the democratic path.
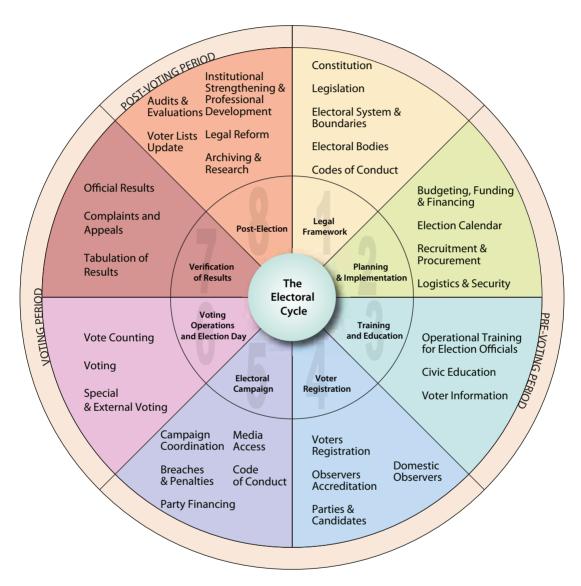
3.3   The Electoral Cycle

The notion of elections as one-off events every four or five years is no longer central to the EC external assistance policy. Intervention on this basis is not attractive on cost-benefit terms where impacts on governance and development are taken into account.

The point was made earlier, in this guide, that this piecemeal approach resulted in the wastage of resources and the replication of assistance programmes, each focussing on a single electoral event of immediate concern. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that in many cases the strategy to support one-off electoral events still holds a strong attraction over the donor community and garners strong sympathy in the political spheres of many donor countries for the visibility and impact that this assistance guarantees in return.

The alternative approach sees the electoral process as an ongoing or cyclical activity rather than being event driven at discrete points in time. Apart from the good governance and sustainability issues by which is better to support the EMBs rather than single electoral events, there are other important considerations that support this approach, such as: increasing participation to the democratic process and sharing of democratic values; sound management practices; efficient use of national resources; desirable development of synergies with other state institutions. These are all elements that could bring the electoral costs significantly down.

In particular, the evaluations and recommendations that follow every electoral event (such as EMBs' internal debriefings, peer-reviews, international and domestic observers' reports, external audits) should set the agenda for the following package of reforms. The diagram below prepared in collaboration with IDEA, attempts to illustrate visually the complexities of the electoral cycle, and, hence, the activities the EC can consider for support. It is divided into eight phases, throughout the pre-voting period, the voting period, and the post-voting period.

The Electoral Cycle

POST-VOTING PERIOD

8 Post-Election
- Institutional Strengthening & Professional Development
- Audits & Evaluations
- Legal Reform
- Voter Lists Update
- Archiving & Research

1 Legal Framework
- Constitution
- Legislation
- Electoral System & Boundaries
- Electoral Bodies
- Codes of Conduct

PRE-VOTING PERIOD

2 Planning & Implementation
- Budgeting, Funding & Financing
- Election Calendar
- Recruitment & Procurement
- Logistics & Security

3 Training and Education
- Operational Training for Election Officials
- Civic Education
- Voter Information

4 Voter Registration
- Voters Registration
- Observers Accreditation
- Parties & Candidates
- Domestic Observers

5 Electoral Campaign
- Campaign Coordination
- Media Access
- Breaches & Penalties
- Code of Conduct
- Party Financing

VOTING PERIOD

6 Voting Operations and Election Day
- Vote Counting
- Voting
- Special & External Voting

7 Verification of Results
- Official Results
- Complaints and Appeals
- Tabulation of Results

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The ideal scenario from a governance development point of view is that at the beginning of every new electoral cycle, which basically starts at the end of the previous one, a more refined and qualitative set of reforms should be programmed and supported. This in order to achieve the goal of accountable and professional EMBs which are able to guarantee respect for the democratic rules which are required for an election to proceed satisfactorily, regardless of political pressure. In this context all actors would be able to play their roles in the electoral process without interference.

Several election-related activities, like voters' lists updates, civic/voter education or transparent financial regulations for political parties, if addressed in between elections, could bear a tremendous beneficial effect to the organization of the following electoral events. If, on the contrary, addressed only in the immediate vicinity of the elections, these would generally be less effective, less transparent and more costly. In addition, the effective mobilization of the external assistance itself becomes more problematic, as there is often no time to invest appropriately funds received only few months before elections.

3.4   Short and Long-term Strategies within Electoral Cycles

The development of long-term strategies and their continuing sophistication does not necessarily entail the end of the short-term support to electoral events, but it does call for a different approach to the identification and formulation of short-term support and better appreciation of the context in which this short-term support is being provided. There will always be politically sensitive electoral events called with very little notice in many areas of the world that will require urgent support, as a result of sudden changes in the regime, political crisis or unexpected breakthroughs in long drawn out conflicts.

In the past, in such situations it was often believed that the elections, per se, would result in a significant leap forward for democracy. This view invests elections with tremendous significance in terms of the development of democracy and requires the unreserved support of the political parties and the electorate to hold true (the Bosnian elections of 1996 are the most striking example). On the contrary, any type of short-term support could instead be linked to broader Democratisation and governance programmes as part of a cohesive and coordinated strategy.

Very often however, a fundamental dichotomy remains evident in many external assistance programmes involving the desirability of investing in capacity development (inherently a long-term process) and the wish to achieve the best possible results within the short time frame represented by the election period. Beyond the usual formulations and common places to elicit a quick disbursement of funds for a given electoral process, it is objectively difficult to pursue capacity development objectives within a short term assistance project that is often essentially operational in nature and has immutable deadlines. If the same level of funding which is given by donors to support elections, for example twelve months in advance of the elections, was given to support activities for a twelve month period following the elections, then more could be achieved in terms of working with key institutions towards sustainable impacts.

A good understanding of the various components, and stages of the electoral cycle is a prerequisite for better planning and it better places individuals to reflect on sudden calls for urgent

electoral support and facilitating the clarification from the outset what is achievable in the short-term and what should be the object of different, longer-terms projects or programmes.

The understanding of the different needs and deliverables at each stage of the electoral cycle could be critically important for EC Delegations, Commission Desk Officers, Geographical Coordinators and National Authorities allowing them to plan more adequately their overall long term assistance strategy in the Country Strategy Paper. In particular, the immediate post-election period should be considered as ideal for the selection of programmes and/or projects of electoral assistance deserving the Commission's attention.

3.5   Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Development[17]

The promotion of accountable, sustainable and professional EMBs is the best tool available to those providing electoral assistance to ensure genuine and credible elections. Long-term strategies of support should include both institutional strengthening and capacity development, even though the two sets of activity may overlap, to a certain degree, serving two different but interdependent functions. Institutional strengthening refers mainly to the support needed in the early stages of the establishment of the electoral authority and to the adoption of proper legal provisions that safeguard its organisational structure and appointment mechanism while guaranteeing its independence and efficiency (both at the central and at the local level).

"Capacity Development is the process by which people and organizations create and strengthen their capacity over time. Support to Capacity Development is the inputs and processes that the external

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17   This section need to be read against the EC publication on Institutional Assessment and Capacity Development, Why, What and How, EuropeAid, EC, Sept 2005

actors - whether domestic or foreign - can deliver to catalyse or support capacity development of persons, organizations, or a network of organisations".[18] In the election field, capacity development refers to the enhancement of the managerial, administrative and operational skills of the staff employed by the electoral authority and it is an activity constantly needed, not just one for new recruits. Thus, institutional strengthening and capacity development are two sets of activities linked to one another. The strengthening of the institutional pillars of the electoral institution is what allows it to survive strong personnel turnover and retain enough institutional memory to train new staff and document relevant processes.

There exist activities that can both develop the institutional capacity while contributing to the strengthening of the EMB, such as specific internal audit processes or legal reform projects. Other more sophisticated but increasingly necessary programmes focus more on the rationalisation of the organisational and territorial structure of the EMB, and seek to offer professional advice on management strategies, budgeting techniques and financial and procurement procedures.

In addition, typical capacity development programmes contain strong training and mentoring components and a variety of other components such as: exchange programmes with other national institutions and other EMBs; learning on the job; documentation and knowledge management courses, and, regional networking (conferences, seminars, and training which facilitates the exchange and testing of experience and materials[19]).

All these activities are best programmed and implemented when a new electoral cycle is about to begin, otherwise they are very likely to be set aside by the more urgent and immediate needs of an impending election.

Very often electoral assistance projects are planned in a manner to include capacity building elements, but there are often no mechanisms to check and evaluate to what extent these components effectively involve the national staff in doing the job, or learning on the job, or being mentored.

The expectations for a project are often measured on the basis of the overall success of the election and little attention is paid to the evaluation of the extent to which the capacity of those working within the electoral administration has been enhanced.

3.6 Equal Access: Rights of Minorities, Women and Electoral Processes

The issue of equal access for disadvantaged groups, as voters and candidates, remains a largely neglected activity during the implementation of electoral assistance programmes.

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18   Institutional Assessment and Capacity Development, Why, What and How, EuropeAid, EC, Sept 2005

19   Specific links can be forged by sponsoring key members from EMB, political entities and CSOs to participate to global conferences. Example: PIANZEA (Pacific Islands Australia New Zealand Election Administrations) meet biannually in a rotated host country.

The time constraints so typical of event-driven assistance projects are mainly to be blamed for this neglect, but this also reflects the difficulty from the providers of assistance to implement effective measures for disadvantaged groups. This set of issues encompasses all the various components and stages of the electoral cycle. Equal access is about ensuring the protection of civil and political rights of disadvantaged or marginalised groups.[20]

This could include women, disabled persons, elderly persons, prisoners[21] and political or ethnic minorities. All electoral processes should give adequate consideration to the issue of equal access and to effective implementation and measures, and should not focus only on the legal framework. The starting point is that the legal framework explicitly guarantees equal rights for women and minority, including civil, political and electoral rights. The aim should be to facilitate equal rights, and to achieve the participation of all disadvantaged groups in activities such as:

- Voter registration (including the ability to register and vote close to where they reside)
- Adequate representation in political parties and on party lists,
- Allocation of seats (quotas) in national parliaments and local chambers,
- Participation to political gatherings, access to media, security and freedom of movement, opportunity to work in the election administration and not only as polling station staff,
- Inclusion in voter information or targeted civic education campaigns,
- Respect of the secrecy of the individual vote and finally,
- Removal of architectural barriers to all the above mentioned activities.

3.6.1 Promoting the participation of women in the electoral process

Among the various equal access issues, gender-related themes remain extremely relevant politically and numerically preponderant. Mainstreaming them in electoral assistance projects requires time and dedicated resources. It is highly unlikely that short-term projects could address these issues

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20   See *www.aceproject.org*

21   To be noticed that in many countries prisoners are not eligible voters.

properly, apart from last-minute arrangements to open special polling stations or to disseminate specific posters targeting women. In order to achieve any meaningful result, there are at least three areas that deserve prior study and analysis that must be followed by initiatives to be put in place.

a) A first area of intervention includes political participation themes, starting from the assessment of the percentage of previously elected women candidates to their access to political parties' nomination mechanisms, and then expanding a possible review of the legal framework to facilitate the participation of women, for instance consideration of specific provisions such as quota systems.[22] It has to be remembered that political participation goes beyond parties. Women are often active in civil society, and this can act as a stepping stone for their participation in the political process. The media and the trade unions can provide avenues for women's political participation and are also good in allowing women to "cut their political teeth".

b) A second area of intervention could be directed at assessing the preparedness and the quantity of women working in the electoral administration, reviewing recruitment policy and selection criteria of the institution and, assessing the eventual limitations for women applicants to respond to applications. This will form the basis for decisions as to whether targeted training or access courses are required.

c) A third area of activity is access to voter information and education. An assessment of the media landscape and parties' information campaigns could assess what messages are likely to enhance women's knowledge of, and participation in, the electoral process and where and how women are prone to get the information they need to make their choices. Studies of women's participation based on previous registration and different voters' turnout in different areas could

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22 See the IDEA publications on women quota and participation: The Implementation of Quotas, the African Experience, IDEA, November 2004; The Implementation of Quotas, the Asian Experience, IDEA, December 2003; The Implementation of Quotas, the Latin American Experience, December 2003. See also Women & Elections, a guide to promote participation of women in electoral processes, UN, March 2005.

be the platform upon which to provide specific support to women's groups or NGOs with a specific focus on informing, supporting and educating women.[23]

In these three different areas, there are additional factors that strongly influence all the aspects mentioned above and need to be taken into account, either by the EMB or by civil society organisations. Typical examples are literacy levels and education (knowledge of their political and civil rights, reluctance of women to vote for other women), freedom of movement and security (ability to leave the house/family for meetings, political or social intimidation), and financial independency (where and how to obtain the resources to stand as a candidate, and how to ensure security for their families in this process). The following table resumes the mechanisms for strengthening women's participation:

Enhancing Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Post-Conflict Countries
Prepared by Michael Maley, the table is extracted from a paper prepared for an expert group meeting convened by the Office of the UN Special Adviser on Gender and Advancement of Women, 19–22.01.2002

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Mechanisms for strengthening women's participation
The foregoing discussion serves to highlight a range of areas in which women's participation in post-conflict electoral processes is likely to face obstacles. The following table identifies a number of possible approaches to overcoming them. The list does not purport to be exhaustive, nor will all of the approaches mentioned be feasible in a given operation; it is rather intended to be a smorgasbord from which policy makers can choose.

Areas of concern	Possible ways of addressing them	
International Standards	(i)	Ensure that documents setting out international standards for the freedom and fairness of elections properly reflect the critical importance of universality, and the rights of women set out in Part 3.
	(ii)	Encourage international bodies to take a tougher line on election deficiencies in general, and those which compromise the legitimate participation of women, in particular.
	(iii)	Develop benchmarks for levels of participation by women in different aspects of election processes which constitute the minimum requirement for an election to be deemed "free and fair".

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23   See the IDEA Voter Turnout since 1945, a Global Report, 2002

Policy Development	(i)	Ensure that guarantees of the rights of women are spelt out in peace agreements, at the same time when the international community's bargaining power is at its peak.
	(ii)	Set up alternative forums for policy consultation in which women are properly represented.
	(iii)	Review proposed legal frameworks for elections to identify elements of the proposed mechanism which may in practice hamper women's participation. In particular, critically review the need for residency requirements in any electoral law.
Displaced populations	(i)	Implement special mechanisms to ensure the enfranchisement of displaced persons, along the lines identified in the Participatory Elections Project.
	(ii)	Where feasible, make use of the facilities of international bodies to provide external voter registration and polling.
Voter registration	(i)	Consider using pre-existing data as the source for, or a supplement to, the voter register.
	(ii)	Critically evaluate proposed registration mechanisms to ensure that they will not disadvantage women in practice.
Electoral Systems	(i)	Use list systems of proportional representation in preference to single-member constituency systems.
	(ii)	Adopt a system of representation which provides incentives to political players to support the registration of, and voting by, women. (For example, allocate seats to different areas only after polling, based on numbers of people actually voting or, more radically, allocate seats to different areas according to the number of women voting.)

Candidacy	(i)	Develop specific training and publicity packages to encourage women candidates to contest elections.
	(ii)	Provide incentives to political parties to endorse women for winnable seats.
	(iii)	Establish quotas for required numbers of women candidates in a party list.
Media	(i)	Make state resources available, on a non-partisan basis, to enable women candidates to project their messages.
Access to electroal education	(i)	Develop and resource special electoral education and public outreach programs focused on the situation of women.
	(ii)	Develop and resource long-term education programs in the country to consolidate women's right to participate politically.
Polling	(i)	Critically evaluate proposed polling mechanisms (particularly proposed times and places of polling) to ensure that they will not disadvantage women in practice.
	(ii)	Where there has been a history of intimidation of voters at the polls, examine the feasibility of establishing separate polling stations for men and women.
Election observation	(i)	Encourage bodies (both domestic and international) which engage in election observation to seek gender balance in their teams.
	(ii)	Encourage such bodies to review their observation guidelines and manuals to ensure that observers will give appropriate emphasis to the need to ensure women's participation in the process.

3.6.2 People with Disabilities

Extending the right to vote to citizens with disabilities is an emerging area for assistance. The first assessment to be done should consist of a screening of the legal framework to identify potentially discriminating regulations and to work out how this potential can be defused or eliminated. Some election practices create barriers for voters with disabilities, such as those which fail to provide for mobile registration/polling stations for the sick, infirm or elderly. Similarly, without Braille ballot papers blind voters are disenfranchised, while difficult physical access to the registration/polling centre will discourage or stop the physically handicapped.

One type of assistance in this area is to support EMBs identifying specific strategies to enfranchise voters with different types of disabilities by looking at emerging international standards on the electoral rights of disabled citizens and provide links to experts in disability and electoral access and to disability organizations.[24]

Another area worth exploring is the disabled citizen's rights to stand as a candidate, work in an EMB or as polling staff, and finally as a domestic observer. In terms of assessing the mainstreaming of this set of issues in a project proposal, there are fundamentally two approaches that need to be adopted:

a) determine whether there are adequate legal provisions and related implementing procedures to ensure equal opportunity in an electoral process and

b) evaluate how this component can adequately feature in specific assistance projects. It is evident in any case that only long-term projects can adequately address any access-related issue.[25]

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24   See ACE Focus On: Elections and Disability *http://focus.aceproject.org/disability*. See also *www.electionaccess.org* website managed by IFES and specialized on disability access issues in elections looking at constitutional rights of disabled citizens and Laws and Regulations in each country, rights and standards and best practices. See also "Elections Today", Winter 2001 Issue, which has a focus on disability and elections (*www.ifes.org*)

25   See EC Gender Toolkit in mainstreaming gender equality in EC development cooperation

3.7   Embracing Appropriate Technology for Electoral Processes[26]

The technology developed in the last part of the 20th Century, in particular ICTs, has in many ways dramatically altered the way in which elections are conducted. While the basic election tasks of voter registration, voting and vote counting have conceptually remained much the same since the beginning of the modern democratic process, the extension of the franchise, growth in population numbers have meant that the logistics of modern elections depend very much on technology.

In fact, the continuous and accelerating development of ICTs applications available for electoral purposes are factors to be reckoned with by all donors, practitioners and electoral assistance providers. ICTs has already dramatically changed the way elections are conducted in many developed countries, and it would be unrealistic not to accept that this process will go on and affect more and more emerging democracies and even those countries emerging from periods of conflict, regardless of their level of preparedness.

To consider the way in which technological development can affect the electoral process it helps to categorise technologies into:

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26   This part is developed using as main source the section "Elections & Technology" of the (ACE) Administration and Cost of Elections Project, the Electoral Knowledge Network. *www.aceproject.org*

- Communications, telecommunications, radio, networks and the Internet;
- Computer hardware/software, word processing/spread sheets, database management systems;
- Specialised electronic/mechanical devices, non-electronic innovations and materials.

For the purpose of this Guide, the focus will remain on the technological developments linked to the increased use of ICTs. In this context, the basic question for all working in the electoral management/assistance field no longer centres on whether technology developments are acceptable in electoral processes, but what kind of technology is suitable for a particular electoral process.

The real challenge is how to ensure a sustainable, appropriate, cost effective and transparent use of technology in post-conflict elections and in fragile or emerging democracies. There is obviously no fixed solution that can be applicable everywhere, different situations requiring different solutions.

Technology is not just hardware and software, trained staff, effective procedures, technical support and ongoing maintenance are also crucial. New technology or systems are best introduced in the first half of an inter-election period, rather than the second half.

Michael Maley, *IDEA and CIDA Conference on Effective Electoral Assistance*, **Ottawa, May 2006.**

As a general rule, the level of technological upgrades suitable for a given country should always be directly related not only to the capacity but also to the trust and independence enjoyed by the EMB, as these are the elements that will in the end determine their acceptance by the public opinion and, as a consequence, increase the trust in the electoral process.

However, there are other factors that often influence the decision making process, and they are often not very sound ones. Sometimes undue influence towards one solution or another is exerted by interested vendors, or even by donors who wish to introduce a technology similar to the one in use in their own countries. At other times, it might be political groups in power that view the use of technology as the ultimate and the most effective method to control the electoral process. Advances in technology are not to be conceived as the major forces of change in the elections sector, although such developments have created new opportunities for political and economic interest groups. This trend is not immutable, and has arisen as a result of a coming together of broad political changes in society with policies adopted by the private sector and governments. In this framework, donors, practitioners, academics and electoral assistance providers have an important role to play in influencing the technological choices to be adopted in a given electoral process.

Areas of electoral activity where the application ICTs has become an established practice include boundary delimitation, voter registration, regulation of party/candidates, public outreach, electronic voting and the aggregation of results. These are also areas where continued development in this direction is foreseeable in all countries still in need of electoral assistance.

A)   BOUNDARY DELIMITATION

The creation or the periodical revision of electoral district boundaries is a politically sensitive activity that might have a decisive influence on results.[27] The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS)[28] provides a more efficient, more accurate and transparent way to analyse demographics by electoral district. The results of the use of this technology need to be made accessible to all stakeholders, for example in the form of unhindered access to all maps and statistics. This is an activity that must be carried out with sufficient notice in any electoral process (at least one year) but that is often neglected and takes place in conditions of limited resources and reduced visibility. The introduction of technological upgrades like the GIS does not necessarily guarantee an adequate transparency of the exercise. A more transparent and synergy-oriented approach would move towards the area known as "e-government".[29] In this context, the civil registry, voters' lists and fiscal records would all be linked into one single database handled by a specialised government agency.

B)   VOTER REGISTRATION

Voter registration is an area where ICTs has been extensively used for more than a decade. The very nature of this activity, where large quantities of sensitive data belonging to the voters need to be entered, securely stored, then allocated to electoral district authorities and officials at the polling stations for the production of the voters lists, has actually led to the development of software applications for just these purposes. Modern registration systems are moving towards the creation of permanent and centralised databases after the data-entry process. In many established democracies, synergies with civil registry and other public administration services are already implemented or being explored. This road is not applicable everywhere and in many

27   See also, *http://www.ifes.org/research.html* Manual: Delimitation Equity Project, IFES, Center for Transitional and Post Conflict Governance with funding from the USAID.

28   A geographic information or geographical information system (GIS) is a system for creating, storing, analysing and managing spatial data and associated attributes. In the strictest sense, it is a computer system capable of integrating, storing, editing, analysing, sharing, and displaying geographically-referenced information. In a more generic sense, GIS is a tool that allows users to create interactive queries (user created searches), analyse the spatial information, and edit data.

29   E-goverment refers to government's use of ICTs to exchange information and services with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government. e-Government may be applied by legislature, judiciary, or administration, in order to improve internal efficiency, the delivery of public services, or processes of democratic governance.

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cases it might be preferable to maintain independent databases of voters kept by the EMB in cases where dangers of manipulation are high.

On the other hand in post conflict countries and emerging/transitional democracies there is an overall switch on civil and voter registration processes using digital devices to record biometric features, such as, for instance, fingerprints. In facts, this is borne out by the sharp increase in funding requests received from EMBs and National Authorities of EC partner countries to EC delegations for support to procure and technical assistance to use digital kits for civil and voter registration processes.

The EC fully recognises the added value of supporting national authorities in charge of civil registration and electoral management bodies in charge of voter registration. For several, understandable reasons, these two processes are almost invariably carried out separately in the recipient countries especially if recently emerging from a conflict, without any synergies planned or implemented. The costs of supporting parallel and sometimes unsustainable activities in support of projects of voter and civil registration in partner countries have been at times excessively expensive and ineffective.

In this context, after the publication of this Guide, the EC will carry out a study on the institutional, operational and financial implications of civil and voter registration processes linked to the increasingly extensive use of ICTs. This Guide briefly touches on these issues, however their importance merits further investigation, in view of the political sensitivity and the financial implications of funding these types of projects. The EC and national authorities must equip themselves to be able to assess the importance of these developments under differing operational conditions,

institutional set up and political scenarios. So far no such studies have been undertaken, over the matter in the electoral assistance field, and there are no instruments that can help EC, national authorities and recipient government officials in making informed decisions, apart from the rhetoric and the advertising claims of the private companies active in this flourishing sector.

It is important to underline the fact that the increasing use of ICTs in these processes represents an opportunity not only to improve accuracy and expediency, but also to establish standards of transparency and accountability. There are several benefits to be attained, all leading to a general improvement in public administration services and the promotion of good governance objectives.

However, the use of ICTs also poses a number of challenges in relation to the choice of the approach to be adopted. In fact, opportunities for manipulation of personal data, fraudulent mismanagement in public affairs and electoral fraud can actually increase with the computerisation; There are thus a number of critical issues that require investigation:

- The level of politicisation and public confidence enjoyed by the public administration and EMBs,
- The level of computer literacy of the average civil servant,
- The level of ICTs infrastructure needed to support such projects,
- The long-term sustainability of the hardware and software applications to be introduced,
- The selection criteria of the companies,
- The level of security and data protection features to be introduced,
- The synergies and cooperation between different ministries and state agencies.

C)   REGULATION OF PARTIES AND CANDIDATES

Technology can be used to assist parties and candidates registration by EMBs. Many of the computer software products available in office automation suites can be used for party and candidate regulation purposes. The types of parties and candidate regulation processes that can benefit from application of technology include: party registration, including party member verification processes and party information databases; candidate nomination, including nominator verification processes and candidate information databases; providing information to parties, including voter register data and other general communications; party and campaign financing, including candidate/party donations control and monitoring, candidate/party expenditure monitoring, controlling public funding and audit software; reporting by parties, including software for contribution and expenditure reporting.

D)   PUBLIC OUTREACH

Technology can be a very effective tool for reaching and informing voters of issues related to elections. A wide range of different technologies can be used by election management bodies (EMBs) to communicate with voters. The different applications of technology that can be used to reach voters include: Informing voters about technology, using demonstrations and simulation exercises, onsite training and websites; Audio visual applications, including radio, television, film, audio tapes, video tapes, DVD, cinema, laser/hologram, multi media; telephones, including telephone information services, call centres and interpreter services, Short message service (SMS); Automated direct mail; Internet, including email publication, web publishing and interactivity; Computer kiosks; Desktop publishing; Technology for special needs groups, including language services, hearing assistance and visual assistance.

E)   ELECTRONIC VOTING

As reminded by Robert Krimmer, "although recent developments might give the impression that e-voting is an invention of the last decades, in fact this was one of the first applications of computers in public environments. The first voting machines date back to the end of 19th century and the idea of modernising elections through electronic means has generated thinking on the way in which electronic voting can change the nature of democracy. The historical development of E-Voting can be illustrated in five phases:

1. Turn of 20th Century: Development of first election automation machines
2. After Second World war: First ideas of nationwide instant electronic voting
3. 1970's: Development of Electronic Direct Recording Machines
4. 1990's: With Internet worldwide (trans) national remote electronic voting becomes possible. First trials.
5. New Millennium: Countries with full coverage of electronic voting machines – first multi-national recommendations/standards available and discussed in practice. First legally binding national remote electronic voting".[30]

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30   Electronic Voting 2006, Robert Krimmer (Ed.) Overview of the Proceedings of 2nd International Workshop co-organized by the Council of Europe, ESF-TED, IFIP WG8.6 and E-Voting.CC

62   Various forms of e-voting are already in use in established democracies by trade unions, professional associations and also national legislative bodies for their internal voting needs. In the last fifteen years electronic voting has been successfully introduced in very large democracies either wholly (India, Brazil and Venezuela) or partially (Switzerland, and United States). Many EU member States are at the forefront of the new developments and are experimenting with possible systems.[31] The EC is supporting a series of extensive pilots to validate the E-POLL[32], an electronic polling platform for wide scale use in elections in Europe following the Commission Communication on E-Government: The role of E-Government for Europe's future (Com (2003) 567 final). Motives for implementing electronic voting procedures are manifold, amongst the most important are, as noted in the 2004 Council of Europe recommendation for electronic voting[33]:

- Enabling mobility of voters
- Facilitating the participation in elections from abroad
- Raising voter turnout
- Widening access for citizens with disabilities
- Reducing cost
- Delivering voting results reliably and more quickly

31   Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Spain, Ireland, Sweden, Estonia, Belgium, Austria, and The Netherlands. On this, the European Science Foundation support every year an E-Voting conference, *www.e-voting.cc/2006*

32   Electronic Polling System for remote Voting Operations, *http://www.e-poll-project.net/*

33   Legal, Operational and Technical Standards for E-Voting. Recommendation Rec (2004) 11 and explanatory memorandum, Council of Europe.

There is therefore an increasing interest in electronic voting as confirmed at 2nd International Workshop on E-Voting organised by the Competence Centre for Electronic Participation and Electronic Voting, supported by the Council of Europe (CoE), the European Science Foundation (ESF), the International Federation of Integrated Processing and the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration. This workshop was organised as an activity of the "Towards Electronic Democracy" project, established by the ESF in order to:

- Discuss and evaluate how advances in interactive decision-analytic tools might help develop E-Democracy.
- Develop E-Government systems which involve their citizens more fully in the public decision making process.

Recent examples of elections held in contexts with a high degree of polarisation and mistrust in the role of the electoral administration such as Venezuela and some counties of the USA are a good testimony of this. Apart from the turnout, the other widely acknowledged benefits of electronic voting are reliability, fast results aggregation and reduction of operational costs. An element most often cited against electronic voting is the complicacy of the procedures, but this is not necessarily the case, as EVMs can be in fact designed in a very voter friendly manner.

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Electronic voting can be divided in two broad categories: voting in controlled environments (e.g. polling stations and other public places under the control of polling officials by using electronic voting machines, or EVMs) and in uncontrolled environments (e.g. by-mail voting and internet voting).[34] The trend towards systems of electronic voting is to be considered somehow normal in established democracies, where the main challenge for electoral administrations is to stop the increasing downward trend in terms of voters' turnout. The use of e-voting applications is likely to become problematic in situations where the elections are considered by the ruling elite as an instrument to confirm and expand their grip on power, or where stakeholder perceive support to be based upon such motives. In fact the trust in the e-voting process is not dependant on the actual level of security but on the user's belief how secure the system is. This belief is largely dependent on the transparency of a system and consequently the main challenge to electronic voting is the lack of transparency.[35]

The key challenge remains the verification of results in a transparent manner and the possibility to audit all the stages of an automated voting process. It is now considered necessary, in the interests of transparency and security, to insert in all electronic voting processes an audit

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34   For a detailed analysis of a the benefits and the risks of e-voting see K. Vollan "Observing Electronic Voting", NORDEM Report 2005 (forthcoming) and Krimmer, R., Volkamer, M.: Observing Voter's Anonymity: Guide on how to Observe Electronic Voting.

35   Idem, Electronic Voting 2006, Robert Krimmer (Ed.) Overview of the Proceedings of 2nd International Workshop

paper trail. The most effective and transparent forms of audit in this respect are the so-called 'voter verified audit trails' (VVATs), also known as 'voter verified paper ballots'.

These entail the production of paper records of the vote, to be verified by the voter after casting the vote, which can be used for eventual recounts in case of challenges. It is, in simple words, the link between the casting of the ballots and the compilation of the results. A slightly different version of this mechanism is when the vote may be verified by the voter but it is not mandatory (voter verifiable audit trail). Both versions can only be used in controlled environments as the voter has to be physically present to verify the vote. The presence of these features must be considered as a necessary precondition every time consideration is given to providing assistance to the installation of an automated voting process in a partner country.

The general impression is that in years to come in emerging/transitional democracies and post conflict countries e-voting is likely in only isolated cases and just in controlled environments, i.e. with the use of EVMs in polling places. This as a consequence of the costs involved (if no economy of scale can be applied) and the level of trust in EMBs which is required.

F)   RESULTS AGGREGATION

This is the area where the most easily and rapidly applicable electronic solutions are being developed and used extensively. Even if voting and counting remain anchored to manual pro-cedures, results aggregation can be easily computerised to reduce the waiting time between the vote and the announcement of the results. This is a key step to ensure the transparency of the entire electoral process and it is comparatively much more affordable than other electronic upgrades. In cases where the application of the automated aggregation of results is adopted independently of electronic voting systems, they will mainly require the data-entry of the results at the most localised level above of the polling station and the transmission of the results to central data processing facility. Applications to automatically aggregate results are one of those technical developments which can be easily supported and can be funded almost everywhere. It is an activity that remains inherently observable and can be easily double-checked with parallel vote counting exercises undertaken by observer groups, provided that observers and political parties were granted access to each step of the results aggregation process and that adequate security protocols have ensured the integrity of the system and of the results. In any case, the publication of results at the polling station level and at all subsequent levels remains the most important indicator of transparency and trust in the whole operation.

There are a number of clear advantages and disadvantages in adopting any of the above mentioned systems or even more advanced ones. Advantages include speed, efficiency, accuracy, synergy potential and lower costs, while among the disadvantages are the initial high cost, the high dependence on suppliers and vendors in terms of maintenance and upgrades, limited ability of the national staff to operate such applications, doubts over long-term sustainability and the degree of mis-trust found in the electorate. Donors and providers of electoral assistance have to be careful not to commit themselves to high cost ICTs solutions without having, beforehand, carefully considered the investment through feasibility studies, pilot tests, simulations and expert analysis to weigh up all advantages and disadvantages of each course of action in the relevant time and place settings. The risk of becoming hostages in a vendor-driven process is extremely high, especially in cases where specific technological solutions for electoral activities are determined in the legal framework that regulates the electoral process. Once heavy investments are made in this sense, it could be extremely difficult to pull out without impacting negatively the political process and the democratic dialogue, especially in post-conflict cases. In conclusion, the use of advanced technology requires adequate legal frameworks and practices in order to ensure the transparency of the processes and the access of party monitors and observers to all steps of the results aggregation procedures. Otherwise, it can become a matter for strong distrust.

The Future of Elections
(Excerpt by Elections & Technology, www.aceproject.org)
Technology will continue to change, more and more radically the way in which elections are conducted throughout the world. New ICTs solutions will make widespread frauds and human error every day less and less possible, and the elections results known almost in real time. However, technology will also concentrate an enormous amount of power in the hands of few, making manipulations possible only at the central level. The importance of independent EMBs will then be even more crucial in the future. In any case, it is important that electoral assistance providers and donors keep themselves up to date with the changes that the technological developments might bring about in order to decide what innovations will be worth supporting in developing countries. Below there are some predictions on how elections might look like in the next future.

The demise of the paper ballot and mechanical voting machines
Paper ballots and mechanical voting machines have served the election process well. Depending on the electoral systems and voting procedures, paper ballots can be relatively easy to produce, easy to mark and easy to count, but they can be used only once and can be expensive to print and distribute. In addition, some types of paper ballots may not be the best method for recording votes and may be prone to fraudulent use, such as vote buying. Counting paper ballots manually, although relatively reliable, can be cumbersome and prone to errors, which may result in the need for multiple counts of the same ballots. To curtail these problems some countries have developed different types of mechanical voting machines to make vote recording and vote counting more reliable. However, these machines may be cumbersome to operate and store. Mechanical voting machines as well as paper ballots are slowly being replaced in several countries by electronic voting machines.

The demise of the polling place
The physical polling place, which has to be rented, staffed and equipped, might become an expensive anachronism in many places where alternative and secure electronic delivery mechanisms can be used. The move to offer access to government facilities by making the Internet available in public places may replace the need to organise a physical voting place.

The rise of electronic voting methods
As electronic devices become cheaper, more powerful and more secure, it is expected that these devices will be more widely used, particularly for vote verification, vote authentication, vote recording, vote counting, vote tabulation and vote consolidation at local, regional and national levels.

Internet voting

While security and identity concerns have lead to caution toward the use of Internet voting, some countries are considering it seriously, for at least some elections, not only to make it easier for the voter but also as an effort to boost voting, since the end of the 20th century witnessed a tendency for voter absenteeism. It can be expected that many of these concerns will be addressed and that Internet voting will become safe, secure and widespread. The potential of the Internet to change the dynamics of both the election process and the wider political process should not be underestimated.

Internet referendums and initiatives

The widespread accessibility of the Internet is already leading to the rise of so-called digital democracy, whereby ordinary citizens can vote directly on issues and legislative proposals. Most of these voting exercises are taken as indicative and not binding. This development enables voters to take control of the political process in a way that was not feasible before. Whether this will have a positive impact on the democratic process remains to be seen.

Electronic identities

As more and more daily activities such as paying bills and accessing bank accounts are handled electronically, there is a greater need to develop secure and reliable electronic identity systems to ensure that citizens can participate with security in the new electronic world of commerce and government. Many countries already have a digital national identification system and a digital voter registration system or a combination of both. Besides the usual identification information such as name, birth date and birth place, some of these systems also store digitalised personal biometric data that can be used for electronic identity verification and authentication.

Electronic information delivery

The 20th century is often described as the information age. Never before has so much information been so easily accessible to such a large and diversified number of people. It is expected that the continuing advances in technology will lead to an ever-increasing availability of information. This could have a profound impact on the democratic process as information dissemination and retrieval expand beyond the traditional methods dominated by mainstream media. For election management bodies, the emerging electronic information service delivery methods can increase the options available for reaching voters and other clients with a wide range of information products.

Electronic service delivery
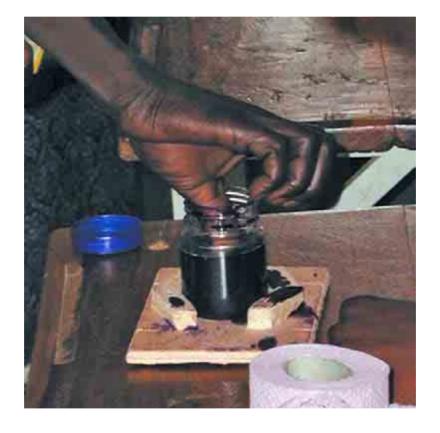
Many additional services provided by election management bodies have the potential to be made available electronically. Voter registration, political party registration, candidate nomination, disclosure of donations and expenditure, provision of expert advice, and other services rendered by electoral authorities are already starting to be delivered electronically.

Wireless electronic infrastructure

New technologies that are being used for election purposes may seem, at first glance, to be most appropriate for developed countries. The first years of the 21st century, however, have witnessed important advances in the use of new technologies by countries with weak infrastructures. Most notable is the development of wireless electronic infrastructure. Delivered by satellite, microwave or radio transmission, this technology is enabling electronic service delivery to remote locations. Combined with cheap, mass-produced electronic registration and voting devices, such wireless electronic delivery systems are expected to enable electronic voting systems to reach any person, anywhere in the world.

Remote service delivery

With electronic service delivery, there is no need for the service provider to be in the same suburb, city or even country as the user. A scenario can be envisaged whereby a local election management body can establish its office anywhere that is convenient and deliver services remotely via Internet, wireless and satellite communications or by new technologies that are invented.

Chapter 4
Issues and Entry Points

Chapter 4
Issues and Entry Points

4.1   Introduction

EC projects and programmes can have an entry point practically at any stage of the electoral cycle and should be generally planned and identified about two to three years before the electoral date, but could have even a longer lead time[1]. On the other hand, short-term projects with specific objectives may be part of an ongoing electoral assistance programme and can be easily inserted in the framework of an already existing assistance effort. Nevertheless, donors still tend to concentrate their attention on the six to twelve months period leading up to an electoral event and mainly on high visibility issues, such as training material, voter education, procurement and transport of ballot boxes and ballot papers.
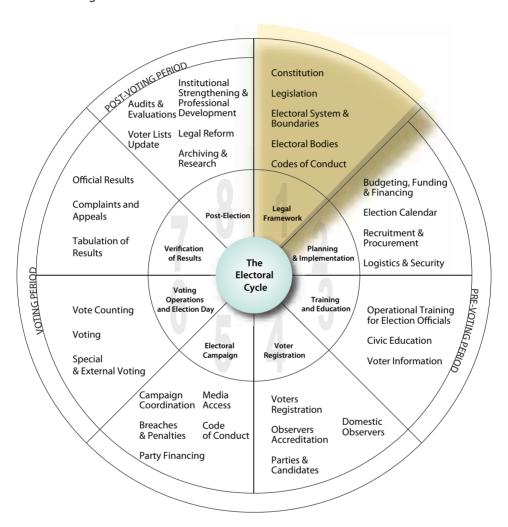
While this assistance can still be useful, its impact on democratic development and the strengthening of the electoral institutions in a given country is much more limited, as too much is linked to the immediate and short term objectives and to the pre-election period of an electoral process.

Domestic stakeholders and international donors should look at all stages of the electoral cycle; particularly to the phases one and eight i.e. post election and legal reform, since these have a longer lasting influence on the process and contribute to good governance development. By looking at the eight phases of the Electoral Cycle and considering it as a whole, donors could coordinate funding to cover areas which are not always given assistance because of the dominance of the focus on the electoral event itself.

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Whichever projects are identified and formulated and whatever entry points are established it is imperative to consider cross-cutting issues such as access, equal opportunity, sustainability, transparency and ownership.

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1   In particular when the assistance targets the whole electoral cycle (4–5 years).

4.2   **Phase 1 –** Legal Framework

The Electoral Cycle diagram

Constitution
Legislation
Electoral System & Boundaries
Electoral Bodies
Codes of Conduct

Budgeting, Funding & Financing
Election Calendar
Recruitment & Procurement
Logistics & Security

Operational Training for Election Officials
Civic Education
Voter Information

Voters Registration
Observers Accreditation
Parties & Candidates
Domestic Observers

Campaign Coordination   Media Access
Breaches & Penalties   Code of Conduct
Party Financing

Vote Counting
Voting
Special & External Voting

Official Results
Complaints and Appeals
Tabulation of Results

Institutional Strengthening & Professional Development
Audits & Evaluations
Voter Lists Update   Legal Reform
Archiving & Research

POST-VOTING PERIOD
VOTING PERIOD
PRE-VOTING PERIOD

Post-Election   Legal Framework
Verification of Results   Planning & Implementation
The Electoral Cycle
Voting Operations and Election Day   Training and Education
Electoral Campaign   Voter Registration

4.2.1 **Constitutional Reform**

The foundation of every democracy lies in its Constitution and in the legal-institutional framework that governs the electoral process. Support projects in this field might represent a very delicate and rather intrusive form of assistance, but are often fundamental to break a deadlock or start the democratic development process. In particular, it is crucial to define the basic rules of the democratic game where there is a change of regime or a new State emerging from the break up of a previous larger entity.

These activities are of enormous, but rather neglected, importance, even in the case of the elections which follow the first open election. It being necessary to consolidate and adjust the legal framework and the electoral system to the specific needs of any given country taking on board lessons learned and observers' recommendations.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Constitution Election laws Political party laws and political finance laws Criminal law and penalties Nationality and residency laws (eligibility, franchise) Election system; Electoral districts and boundaries; Boundary Delimitation as an exercise Electoral Management Body [EMB]	Constitutional or institutional problems Fundamental freedoms not fully guaranteed Incumbents' advantage; discrimination of certain groups; inconsistency in laws Electoral system unfair Gerrymandering EMB partisan or not independent	Legal advice to Parliament and/or to EMB in terms of legal reform Mediation for consensus building and deadlock breaking Instill ethical codes and encourage enforcement of legal action for violations Electoral design expertise (including quota introduction) Showing comparative examples of EMB composition and benefits	A fairer system will reduce potential for conflict; clearer, impartial laws will provide a base which all stakeholders can use to protect democratic principles; Eligibility laws clarified increase possibilities of enfranchising all voters Boundaries represent the updated demographics A more independent EMB taking decisions without political interference	Parliament will not pass draft reforms which may disadvantage ruling party; perceived foreign interference if aid and leverage is used	Non-discriminatory eligibility criteria for women / disadvantaged to become candidates Quota for seats or nominations for women/ disadvantaged	Consult non-elected political groups, civil society and EMB on any electoral legal reform	Ensure the legal provisions are cost efficient (choice of system, frequency of elections, calendar)

The main danger associated with this type of assistance is related to the possible allegations of partiality in the case of reforms perceived as being in support of a particular party, or by the attempt of importing reforms whose rationale lies in the constitutional arrangements and electoral systems of mature western democracies rather than the particular characteristics and special needs of the beneficiary country in question.

Over the last ten years, there have been several examples where international institutions were clearly mandated through peace agreements or other types of negotiated accords to directly shape the constitutional and legal set up of newly formed States or newly emerging democracies. In Cambodia, Mozambique, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Timor-East, Iraq, and Afghanistan and, in other cases, electoral assistance and general legal reform programmes provided less visible but significant legal advice to the legislative bodies and to the electoral administration to change and modify their constitutional and legal framework.

Activities in this area might include the drafting of constitutional provisions and enacting of temporary Constitutions and reform of electoral legislation embracing topical issues such as: the system of representation; the electoral authority; voter eligibility rules; boundary delimitation, competencies and functions of electoral tribunals and complaints bodies. In addition, it is more and more frequent that this support might entail advice on the drafting of political party laws, political finance laws and audit regulations for political parties' expenditure, media laws and public administration laws.

This is a type of assistance where the EC can play a pivotal role with all its partner countries through various forms of good governance projects not necessarily specifically linked to electoral events, and also by placing experts at different institutional levels in the partner country (legislative bodies, judiciary, electoral administration, other governmental agencies) according to the specific situation. Given its weight as a donor, the EC could also offer mediation for consensus building and deadlock breaking in constitutional processes or constitutional reforms. In terms of more definite electoral expertise, there are two areas of intervention that deserve specific attention in this context, the system of representation that a given country chooses and the functions of the EMB.

In post-conflict scenarios it is of vital importance that a legal framework or a new Constitution is not imposed on the basis of internationally driven agendas but that it is built upon domestic consensus and consultation with all relevant Stakeholders. The citizens should also have access to information about the process and a chance to be heard, by means of Referenda and in other ways.

4.2.2 Systems of Representation
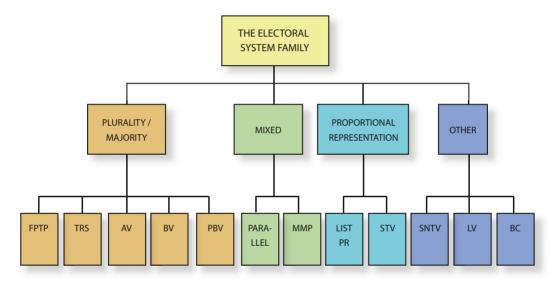
The choice of the system of representation, more commonly referred to as electoral system, is "one of the most important institutional decisions for any democracy".[2] While in the past the choice of the system of representation in many western countries was often the result of a combination of circumstances, in more recent years there has been a clear movement towards more conscious electoral design selections and developing consensus on the system to be adopted.[3] The relevance of such an approach has become clearer to many emerging democracies which often inherited or adopted the electoral system of their former coloniser or their powerful neighbours. In simple words, electoral systems translate the votes cast in an election into seats. There are mainly three large families of electoral systems: proportional representation systems, plurality-majority systems and mixed systems. Within these three groupings there are a countless variations and different combinations (depending mainly on the mathematical formula, the ballot structure, the electoral district magnitude, but also on a number of more detailed factors

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2   See Electoral System Design, The New International IDEA Handbook.
3   See Electoral System Design, The New International IDEA Handbook.

such as the setting of quotas and/or thresholds which will produce different results depending upon the specific forms selected).

In general terms however, proportional systems tend to ensure the highest possible correspondence between a party's share of valid votes and the seats assigned to it, the plurality-majority systems tend to ensure the highest vote winner has the possibility to govern, and the mixed systems tend to combine the advantages and disadvantages of the other two families. The table below, elaborated by IDEA, illustrates most effectively the range of electoral systems.

FPTP: First Past the Post, **TRS:** Two round Sistem, **AV:** Alternative Vote, **BV:** Block Vote, **PBV:** Party Block Vote, **PARALLEL:** Parallel System, **MMP:** Mixer Members Proportional, **LIST PR:** List Proportional Representation, **STV:** Single TransferVote, **SNTV:** Single Non-Transferible Vote, **LV:** Limited Vote, **BC:** Modified Borda count

The recent worldwide interest in the issue of electoral systems reform demonstrates the importance which is now paid to this issue in all democracies. In general terms, there is no such thing as the perfect electoral system. Choice, between one and another, is always the result of a political compromise that is acceptable at a particular point in time or as a result of an imposed decision taken by the ruling party/ies. It is because of the danger that a system is imposed by those in power that it is now generally acknowledged that this question should be addressed at the constitutional level. In post-conflict settings, the electoral system chosen is always the result of a compromise reached to satisfy opposing interests, sometimes as the only one which is possible. However the practical consequences which follow from such decisions are frequently ignored or underestimated. So, it is frequently the case that after one or two electoral cycles the shortcomings of the system chosen become apparent, requiring adjustments to the electoral system.

It is important as the country stabilises that adequate attention is paid to changing elements of the electoral system in a manner that could accompany and facilitate rather than hamper democratic development. The need to change or modify the electoral system often clashes with the interests of the groups in power. In this context, mediation and the guarantor role played by the EU could be fundamental to reach a compromise among the parties that further the democratic development.

Very often the needed reforms are not about the system but just about some of its components (quotas, thresholds, mathematical formulas, numbers and sizes of districts, etc.). Nevertheless, any minor change might have significant effect on the administration of the election as well as having major budgetary implications.

After a reform is achieved, a fundamental area of support is related to the understanding of the consequences of the change in the process. It is often the case that the full implications of the changes are not fully clear in all its connotations to the same promoters of the reform.

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4.2.3 Boundary Delimitation

Very much connected with the electoral system's choice is the definition of electoral districts' boundaries. In many countries, the electoral boundaries are fixed and preestablished by the Constitution or by law. In such cases the electoral constituencies are usually the country's administrative divisions. A change in the electoral system might require a complete overhaul of the electoral districting system.

The periodic revision of electoral boundaries is particularly necessary in systems where single-member districts or uniformly small multi-member districts are in use, but it is a sensitive activity for established democracies as much as post conflict societies. If not reviewed periodically, inequities in the distribution of population might be manipulated to gain or deny adequate representation in a particular district. Delimiting electoral districts' boundaries can be a complex, expensive, labour-intensive and time-consuming process.[4]

The social and political context within which the delimitation exercise takes place must be fully considered. The authority mandated with the task, which could be either the state's EMB or an independent authority, must remain free from political interference. To ensure fairness in the delimiting exercise and avoid the perception of manipulation of boundaries as in "gerrymandering" a boundary authority must consider:

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4   See *www.aceproject.org*

- The geographical features of a country,
- The existing administrative boundaries voters/candidates identify themselves with,
- The population distribution where districts should have as close as possible the same magnitude,
- The contiguity where the district should be unbroken and inter-connected)
- The communities of interest and
- The protection to avoid the dilution of the voting strength of minority groups.

In post-conflict settings, an additional criteria is the distribution of the displaced population and the distribution of returning refugees.

"Gerrymandering" is a controversial form of modifying electoral boundaries seeking for electoral advantage. The word "gerrymander" is named for the American politician Elbridge Gerry and is a portmanteau of his name and the word "salamander," which was used to describe the form of a tortuous electoral district Elbridge Gerry created in the attempt to disadvantage his electoral opponents. Printed in 1812, the political cartoon on the right shows the electoral districts drawn by the Massachusetts legislature to favour the incumbent Democratic-Republican party candidates of Governor Elbridge Gerry over the Federalists, from which the term gerrymander is derived. The cartoon clearly depicts the bizarre shape of one district as a dragon.

4.2.4 Electoral Management Bodies Strengthening

The recent international experience has demonstrated that independent electoral commissions are the preferred institutional model to facilitate democratic development and promote stability and governance, especially in countries emerging from long-drawn conflicts.

The history of independent electoral commissions is in fact "the history of an institutional device for the enhancement of the legitimacy of the electoral process".[5] This conclusion, widely

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5   Rafael López-Pintor, "Comparative Experiences in Electoral Management Bodies", page 2.
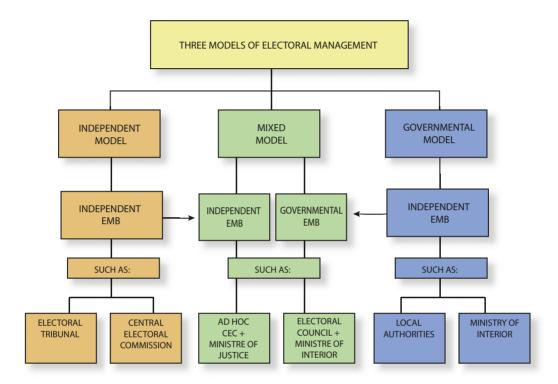
acknowledged after twenty years of electoral assistance is the result of the fact that independent EMBs must always attempt to satisfy two almost contradictory criteria (i) building the trust of all involved in the electoral process, and (ii) assuring the neutrality and transparency of the process.

The independent EMB model poses a number of challenges, both for the countries that adopt the system and for the electoral assistance provider that supports its establishment. Principal amongst these is the establishment of legal mechanisms to ensure its independence from the executive branch of the State and its sustainability in the long term, especially in case of first elections after the end of a dictatorship or of a conflict.

There are also a number of critical issues which arise at various stages of the EMB's involving the safeguarding and consolidation of its institutional role:

- How it is to be appointed
- How to guarantee independence
- The structure and functions of the institution
- The decision-making processes
- The budgeting and funding procedures
- The procurement methods and regulations
- The identification and the hiring of human resources
- The capacity building within the organisation
- The professional and career development
- The training of its staff

The importance of these issues, and their role in the development of the EMB, will vary according to the establishment mechanism, the constitutional set up and the specific development process that was chosen for each specific EMB. However, the identification of an appointment procedure that guarantees independence and neutrality and the adoption of funding mechanisms and budget regulations that are directly supervised by the executive, will be, in all cases, the fundamental challenges to be solved. These two issues are always linked, and truly independent EMBs might experience financial problems with their legislative bodies exactly due to this interdependence. The table below prepared by IDEA illustrates the three broad models or types of EMB:

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                    THREE MODELS OF ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT

      INDEPENDENT              MIXED               GOVERNMENTAL
        MODEL                  MODEL                  MODEL

      INDEPENDENT    INDEPENDENT    GOVERNMENTAL    INDEPENDENT
         EMB      →     EMB            EMB      ←      EMB

       SUCH AS:           SUCH AS:              SUCH AS:

ELECTORAL    CENTRAL    AD HOC      ELECTORAL    LOCAL       MINISTRY OF
TRIBUNAL     ELECTORAL  CEC +       COUNCIL +    AUTHORITIES INTERIOR
             COMMISSION MINISTRE OF MINISTRE OF
                        JUSTICE     INTERIOR
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Independent Model EMBs: these exist in those countries where elections are organised and managed by an EMB which is institutionally independent and autonomous from the executive branch of government, and which has its own budget which it manages. An Independent Model EMB is not accountable to a government ministry or department. It may be accountable to the legislature, the judiciary, or the Head of State.

Governmental Model EMBs: these exist in those countries where elections are organised and managed by the executive branch through a ministry, such as the Ministry of the Interior, and/or through local authorities. These electoral structures operate under the executive branch and are answerable to a Cabinet minister.

Mixed Model EMBs: have dual structures, with a policy, monitoring or supervisory component that is independent of the executive branch of government (as for the Independent Model) and an implementation component located within a department of state and/or local government (as for the Governmental Model). The relationship between the components of a mixed model EMB is not always clearly defined in legislation or interpreted by stakeholders.

> The final sustainability objective depends heavily on the ability of the organisation to evolve into a highly professional and technically competent institution capable of offering guarantees to all those involved in the process while remaining independent from all of them, even under extremely difficult circumstances; for example when the executive is dominated by a particular coalition that tries to exert undue influence on the EMB by conditioning the approval of the budget.

No matter which Model is used, the EMB should be certain that it can ensure the legitimacy and credibility of the processes for which it is responsible. As indicated in the International IDEA Electoral Management Design Handbook, this can be done if electoral management is founded on fundamental guiding principles:

- Independence
- Impartiality
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Service Mindedness
- Professionalism
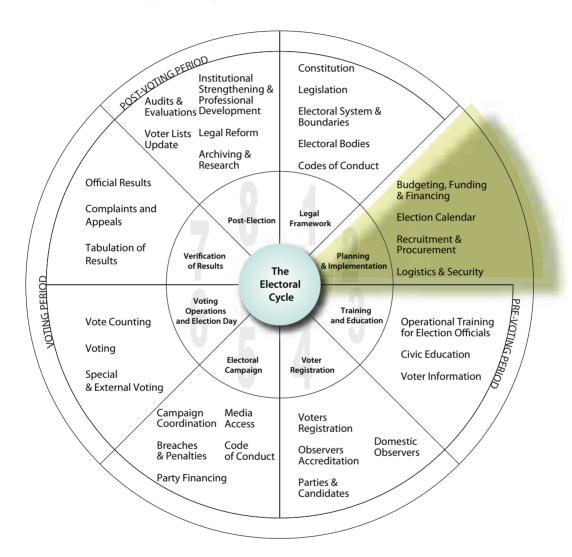
These guiding principles form the basis of electoral administration, and are essential to ensure both the actual and the perceived integrity of the electoral process. The support that the EC can provide to EMBs establishment and to their eventual reform must be carefully measured and coordinated with the overall ongoing reform process.

In addition, financial support should always be linked to strict conditionalities that take into account the two key issues of the appointment system and the long-term sustainability. The majority of the EMBs established in EC partner countries need professional advice in the areas highlighted above, regardless of the contingent needs related to a specific electoral event.

Past experience in supporting EMBs shows that financial support, while welcomed by the institutions, can have limited impact if it is not provided in a structured programme with clear budget lines, appropriate technical advice where needed and realistic benchmarks or success indicators.

4.3   **Phase 2 –** Strategic Planning and Implementation

The Electoral Cycle diagram showing the three periods: POST-VOTING PERIOD, VOTING PERIOD, and PRE-VOTING PERIOD, arranged around "The Electoral Cycle."

POST-VOTING PERIOD
- Institutional Strengthening & Professional Development
- Audits & Evaluations
- Voter Lists Update
- Legal Reform
- Archiving & Research

1. Legal Framework
- Constitution
- Legislation
- Electoral System & Boundaries
- Electoral Bodies
- Codes of Conduct

2. Planning & Implementation
- Budgeting, Funding & Financing
- Election Calendar
- Recruitment & Procurement
- Logistics & Security

3. Training and Education
- Operational Training for Election Officials
- Civic Education
- Voter Information

4. Voter Registration
- Voters Registration
- Observers Accreditation
- Parties & Candidates
- Domestic Observers

5. Electoral Campaign
- Campaign Coordination
- Media Access
- Breaches & Penalties
- Code of Conduct
- Party Financing

6. Voting Operations and Election Day
- Vote Counting
- Voting
- Special & External Voting

7. Verification of Results
- Official Results
- Complaints and Appeals
- Tabulation of Results

8. Post-Election

The Electoral Cycle

Strategic planning refers to all the preparatory activities for a forthcoming electoral event which should take place after the conclusion of the previous electoral cycle and ideally after a reform process that refined and adjusted the inconsistencies and the problems that emerged during the previous cycle.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Budgeting; Funding (contributions) and Financing (payments); Calendar/timeline Human & Material Resource planning; Operational planning & implementation;	Poor planning, lack of coordination and incorrect assumptions Insufficient or unrealistic budget Underestimation of time needed State and donors' funding delayed	Technical Advice (timeline/budget development) Prompt allocation of funds from pledges Capacity development and training Institutionalisation of best practices Contingency plans	No unforeseen delays Smooth flow of funds on time No last minute requests for funds Paying staff on time avoiding strikes Staff can be recruited and trained on time Materials can be procured and distributed on time	Number of voters, polling stations, polling staff and materials, logistical support (and therefore whole operational budget) has been miscalculated Miscalculation of timeframe for each activity Political delays; laws passed late; deadlocks; parties pull out/enter the process Recruitment not perceived as transparent and fair	Equal Opportunity Recruitment Gender balance Equal salaries/ conditions	Ensure an open and transparent procurement of election materials Open recruitment of EMB staff	Ensure the material procured in sustainable manner according to the need and the cost Rehire polling staff Maintain consistent user-friendly procedures and forms where possible Document all operational processes Archive systematically all materials (manuals,forms, posters)
Procurement: specifications and pilot tests Logistics: transport, infrastructure, weight/freight, fragility/damage Security and storage of materials [sensitive – ballots, ink, forms and non-sensitive – screens, boxes]	Vendor and/or donor influence Late procurement of materials; or specifications wrong; difficult to transport Sensitive materials are neither accounted for nor tracked while being transferred. Wrong amount of materials sent to the wrong place	Advice to design efficient financial and procurement procedures; Buyers' guide; test materials; security/storage; IAPSO Develop distribution planning and tracking systems	Contribute to high-cost materials (ballot papers) and increase efficiency of delivery of materials; best practice tendering; ensure appropriate- ness, quality and security of materials	Delays increase costs; poor specifications may cause irregularities; corruption in contracting			

In post-conflict situations, planning elections is a rather unique activity, as it usually involves high levels of international assistance and, in general, it enjoys attractive conditions, in operational, logistical and financial terms. This being well endowed in terms of human and financial resources can cause problems for EMBs tasked with planning electoral events in the "post" post-conflict situation when the international assistance is already drastically cut.

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To avoid an unforeseen institutional crisis, sustainability-oriented measures should be factored in early by the electoral experts. Budgets and timescales should be realistic and planned as a priority for capacity development actions for staff and other stake-holders. Transfer of knowledge and responsibility should be gradual and institutional to avoid continued dependence on extensive international support .

In the context of emerging and transitional democracies, strategic planning typically includes the identification of the new activities and the preparation of the budget for the future electoral event. The Budget preparations for a new cycle are very delicate and time consuming activity for an EMB, in view of the complexity and the breadth of this exercise. Often the budget needs to be approved by the legislative and on the approved national budget depends the identification and planning activities of the assistance programmes. The reality is that in the majority of the cases electoral assistance programmes tend to fill the gaps left open by the national budget rather than planning it in coordination.

The financial management of an EMB is an underestimated task, and in case of large assistance programmes the presence of international expertise in planning and budgeting which interfaces with the planners in the national counterpart organisa-tions could be a vital asset to avoid unrealistic budgets and jeopardise the meeting of binding deadlines.

Proper planning and budget preparations are also essential to determine several timescales/ deadlines, as the financing availability determines the kind of operations to be launched. The determination of an election calendar/timeline is essential to the efficiency and legality of an election. It is good practice for EMBs and electoral assistance providers to plan the entire electoral calendar starting backwards from the tentative electoral date.

The two main sub-components of a sound and long-term operational plan the human resources plan and the materials plan. These both depend on the type of territorial structures introduced at each stage of the electoral cycle and on the type and nature of the electoral opera-tions being planned which can include: new voter registration campaigns or updates; new elec-toral boundary or boundary revisions; party and candidates' registration, the type and number of elections; etc...

The procurement actions to be launched in connection with the aforementioned might require some months to be completed and are subject to the law and regulations of the partner country, varying considerably from country to country, and depending upon sources of funding. Prior to any procurement action, clear and detailed technical specifications for every type of

election material to be purchased need to be produced (with the support of the technical assistance available) and approved as soon as possible. Also, the nature of the election material used will influence the transport arrangements which are required for any given electoral operation.

Very important in this context is the so called "retro-planning exercise" whereby each steps of the organisation of the electoral process is planned taking as the starting point the scheduled end date for that operation and then calculating backward the time needed to complete the whole operation considering all the elements (procurement, logistics, human resources etc...).

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The recruitment of human resources, to meet short and long-term needs, is a delicate activity and follow strict guidelines. Issues of transparency, equal opportunity, gender balance, political affiliation and training needs are often neglected especially in relation to hasty recruitment for registration events and election days. There are various factors which can go wrong in an electoral process, but often, majority of the problems which arise relate to poor planning, in terms of:

- Lack of coordination,
- Incorrect assumptions,
- Insufficient or unrealistic budget,
- Underestimation of time needed to complete certain operations,
- Delayed disbursement of funds,
- Late procurement of materials and recruitment of personnel,
- Unclear or complicated procedures

In order to properly plan a complete electoral cycle, sound experience in, and a and thorough understanding of, electoral administration is required. However, these skills can be rapidly acquired by new staff under proper mentoring. The main challenge is how to insert the planning process of an election as a standard or routine element of the electoral process. Outside of good planning, there are external factors that may affect the electoral process, such as: political upheavals (coups, terrorist attacks and natural disasters).
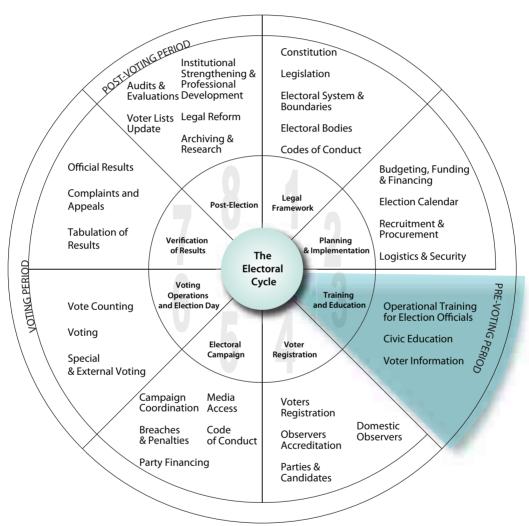
> When EMBs are assisted there is a risk of loss of institutional memory and of a failure to document processes. Electoral assistance should work to minimise such losses by supporting the EMBs in organising and filing relevant information and drafting/publishing complete (structured) reports that contribute to the preservation of the institutional memory and the training of staff rather than replacing these functions.

Contingency planning is therefore important to anticipate any possible scenario within reason. A proper strategic plan for the electoral process must then also consider risks such as security and political unrest. In these cases it is recommended to conduct a SWOT analysis considering the Strenghts, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing the EMBs and the electoral process to be supported. Lastly, effective strategic planning can reduce vendor/donor influence which tries to weaken the influence of State ownership.[6]

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6   See PCM Guidelines

4.4   **Phase 3 –** Training and Education

4.4.1 **Staff Development & Training**

Human resource management in any sector requires staff development and training. In elections this component is particularly delicate because of their periodic nature. Electoral processes, in the majority of their functions, are activities that require a very high level of specific training, but the set of skills needed to become an electoral official can often be easily developed in new staff.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Human Resource Management Recruitment, Staff Needs Assessment, Contracting and Payment Personnel: temporary and permanent staff Managerial; Specialists Administrative Operational training; Training cascade or self-learning videos	Late recruitment of staff; large number of election staff to be trained in too short a period; poorly trained The quality of training weakens the further it cascades.	Training Short-Term Election Staff in – registration, voting, counting using various forms (cascade; training-of-trainers; interactive methodology, monitoring, training kits – video, manuals, equipment) Effective training strategy and materials Technical advice to EMBs Production and dissemination of material	The more effective the training the more efficient the staff allowing less possibility for irregularities. More effective methodology and user-friendly materials adopted creating a change in learning culture	Training not effective if not monitored; cascade training often expensive due to travel expenses and becomes weaker further down; delays in procedures being approved delays the whole training program;	Gender balance in training Wording of materials and images used should avoid male/ ethnic/ able bias	Allow observers/ media to observe/ film training or voter education sessions	Consolidate experience and develop capacity of EMB staff.
Institutional: documentation of processes, correspondence, guidelines	Loss of institutional memory and lack of documenting processes	Professional Development of Election Management - make tools (ACE, BRIDGE) accessible, develop regional network, work placements/ exchange	An election administration which can make informed decisions on all aspects of the election process from planning to contracting	Staff not motivated or change jobs; higher cost; not applying theory to practice			

In post-conflict cases however, the situation is generally complicated by the lack of previous electoral events to look at as applicable models, and by the overall difficulty of achieving widespread acceptance of the need for democratic and transparent practices in the preparation and administration of an electoral process. Staff Development and training are sometimes cast aside in situations where there is a large international presence and, where the political urgency to hold elections is considered more important then the development of the indigenous capacity to administer the electoral event. However, this neglect has important implications in terms of the long term impact and sustainability of the process.

Typically, an EMB has to recruit and train a very large number of staff in a short period to cover registration, polling and counting activities and then afterwards to reduce the numbers. In addition, EMBs suffer, typically, from a high turnover of experienced staff. The provision of continuous programmes for staff development is the only means to ensure the preservation of the institutional memory, to strengthen the institution and at the same time cope with the loss of qualified personnel.

Staff development and training, at various levels, should begin immediately after the overall planning of the electoral cycle has been approved. In terms of training there needs to be a staff training needs assessment covering: all levels of electoral officials (managerial, technical, administrative and operational); and, all types of contract (permanent and temporary).
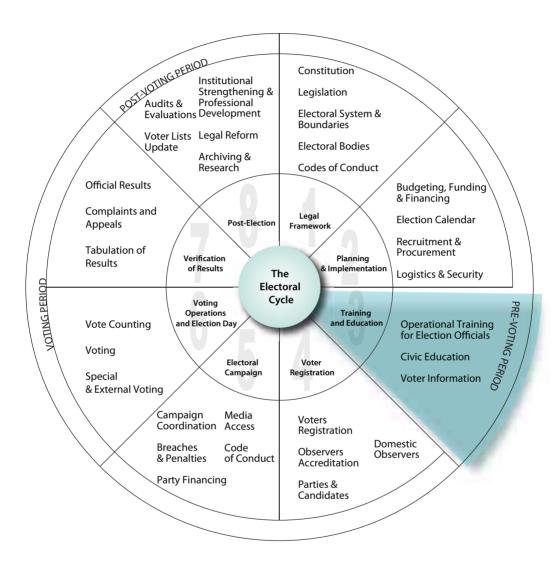
The types of training can be: on-the-job, with a mentoring approach; special targeted courses; and cascade operational training. A variety of different tolls and materials are available for use, including manuals and videos for training sessions or self-learning. Clear procedures and forms, tested on focus groups of electoral staff, can facilitate comprehension on a large scale where consistency is vital and irregularities damage the credibility of the process.

Often EMBs are either modelled on civil service institutions and tend to bring with them unnecessary bureaucratic procedures or are new and still in the process of defining functions and departments. Institutional strengthening does not look only at the development of individual capacity but also at the consolidation of the efficiency of the departments which make up the institution.

The main areas where continuous development is always needed are:
ICTs, communication equipment, communication strategies, reporting procedures, financing/auditing mechanisms, information sharing/knowledge management, policy making, production of guidelines, development of internal unit capacity, division of labour, documentation/archiving of processes/materials, and institutional memory.

There are new forms of staff development that spring from internal or institutional audit activities that can be institutionalised as routine activity and consist mainly of a systematic check or an assessment of the effectiveness of an organisation or department, typically carried out by external independent assessors, and aimed at maximising staff performance and institutional capacity. Such audits can highlight target areas that need support in terms of resources or further development, or identify activities performed in-house that might be worth outsourcing.

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The Electoral Cycle diagram showing the following periods and activities:

POST-VOTING PERIOD

1. Legal Framework
- Constitution
- Legislation
- Electoral System & Boundaries
- Electoral Bodies
- Codes of Conduct

2. Planning & Implementation
- Budgeting, Funding & Financing
- Election Calendar
- Recruitment & Procurement
- Logistics & Security

3. Training and Education (PRE-VOTING PERIOD)
- Operational Training for Election Officials
- Civic Education
- Voter Information

4. Voter Registration
- Voters Registration
- Observers Accreditation
- Domestic Observers
- Parties & Candidates

5. Electoral Campaign
- Campaign Coordination
- Media Access
- Breaches & Penalties
- Code of Conduct
- Party Financing

6. Voting Operations and Election Day (VOTING PERIOD)
- Vote Counting
- Voting
- Special & External Voting

7. Verification of Results
- Official Results
- Complaints and Appeals
- Tabulation of Results

8. Post-Election
- Audits & Evaluations
- Institutional Strengthening & Professional Development
- Voter Lists Update
- Legal Reform
- Archiving & Research

The Electoral Cycle

4.4.2 Voter/Civic Education Campaigns

Under this umbrella heading there are three types of activities:

1. the provision of voter information in the form of a basic public information campaign conducted by EMBs just before important events such as voter registration or elections. This activity is mainly based on delivering simple messages such as when, where, how to register and/or vote and is conducted mainly through mass media;

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Voter Education + Public Information -To inform all voters of when, where and how to vote -To educate voters on the electoral system and the right to vote and encourage participation	Reaching out to all voters – target groups Voter apathy, disillusion, fear, confusion High number of invalid ballots and illiteracy level	Voter Education – supporting CSOs, EMB in disseminating messages through TV/radio spots, print and events	motivate and inform voters of election processes and their role; increase turnout; monitor impact, reduce conflict, counterbalance political propaganda with impartial information	Campaign not effective due to poor conceptualisation, planning and depleted funds	Target women/ disadvantaged in voter education Consult women's NGOs networks	Allow observers/ media to observe/ film training or voter education sessions	Fund CSO/NGO civic education programmes in between elections
Civic Education - To enhance civic awareness and participation beyond the electoral event, how democracy functions, importance of representation and accountability, good governance Public Outreach Strategy - Coordination of EMB and CSOs and Media to avoid duplication and maintain consistency in information. -Methods Mass media vs "grass-roots" - Knowledge Needs Assessment Conduct surveys to assess knowledge base and gaps and during and after the election to assess impact of programmes	For voters to understand their political rights and the electoral system beyond voting mechanisms Reaching out to all citizens	Civic Education – supporting CSOs, local cultural community initiatives – sport, theatre, music, dance, schools, information centres [info-tents]	enhance understanding of the political system and representation, reduce misunderstanding and conflict, civic participation at grass-roots level, link to cultural/civic events	CSOs not competent; poor financial accounting; lack of consistency in message; programmes not implemented if not monitored			
Electoral Education - To integrate electoral education into the national curricula, train teachers on content and tools, set up Election Education Centres [EECs] static or mobile	State and Ministry ownership; access by schools to programmes/ centres	Design an Electoral Education Programme – supporting schools, teachers, Min of Education	Interactive learning for children to understand basic principles of democracy, governance and elections through mock-elections, multi-media, quiz; long–term benefits include a more robust democracy and an impact on parents and community, and increased participation in the future	Long time to get approval, design and establish, lack of continuous funding, lack of ownership by Min of Education/ EMB, not designed to suit cultural context	Include orphans, disabled, street kids, children from all groups of society	Invite parliamentarians to speak and answer questions	Commitment of Min of Ed/ state budget and of donors for long–term programmes

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2. a second type of activity is voter education which is usually the domain of the EMBs and CSOs. The main aims of this activity are, in addition of informing all voters of when, where and how to vote, to educate voters on the electoral system, increase the citizens' awareness of the value of their right to vote and encourage participation in elections as a primary form of participation in political life at the community level;

3. the third activity is civic education at large, intended as a long term process which goes beyond the election period and links into the broader area of good governance, touching on concepts of democracy, participation, civil and political rights, and representation. Typically, this is an activity where civil society organizations should take the lead.

In post-conflict situations, the differences between these three types of activities tends to be blurred by the lack of time and by the need to start the education campaign from scratch. Nevertheless, civic and voter education remain the most fundamental components in a post-conflict election, where traumatised citizens need to understand the advantages of participating in the peaceful choice of governance and must be given confidence that their choice is free and safeguarded.

> Grass-roots and neutral information campaigns may be especially important in societies with a very low level of trust and can help address the problems of illiteracy and lack of access to information that often accompanies conflicts.

In relation to civic and voter education, difficulties arise concerning: reaching all voters; addressing voter's needs and concerns; and, targeting disadvantaged groups in order to reduce abstention and isolation and the number of invalid ballots.

Assistance to deal with these difficulties is normally available for EMBs, as it is often neglected by State financing, even when there is sufficient lead time for proper planning. Despite the constant donor willingness to provide technical and financial support in this field, the assistance often suffers from a lack of adequate coordination and implementation means within the same EMB structure and it is often carried out in emergency situations.

Forms of support that should be allocated funding for voter education materials and their dissemination, include: voter awareness and voter attitude surveys, essential tools to set up effective programmes of technical assistance and, the production of adequate civic and voter education strategies.

In supporting CSOs, the emphasis should be on the provision of technical expertise to understand electoral laws and regulations, but also electoral operations, electoral technology, financial management and sound accounting practices. Longer term assistance could enhance civic awareness on how democracy functions, and on the importance of representation, accountability and

good governance. This should extend beyond the immediate electoral event, on how democracy functions, the importance of representation, accountability and good governance.

In terms of a public outreach strategy, good coordination between potential donors, EMBs, CSOs and media is essential to avoid duplication and maintain consistency of information. In this field the lead role should be always be part of the EMB mandate, but as it is considered not to be essential.

The proper organization of an EMB-coordinated effort to enhance the public outreach strategy as a whole would provide enormous advantages in terms of visibility and effectiveness for donors. The delivery methods could vary from mass-media to grass roots but all levels, all target groups and all geographical areas should be covered. Surveys need to be conducted to assess the knowledge base and gaps in it both during and after the election in order to assess the impact of the programme or of the public outreach strategy as a whole. Assistance could be provided in the form of a sponsored forum facilitating a coordinated effort from all Stakeholders involved in civic/voter education to ensure consistency, widest possible coverage and reaching target groups.[7]

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7   See Engaging the Electorate: Initiatives to Promote Voter Turnout From Around the World

4.4.3 Civic and Voter Education in Schools

One element of civic education which has a long term perspective is specific to future voters, schoolchildren. The aim is to integrate electoral education into the national curricula, train teachers on content and tools, and eventually to Election Education Centres to familiarise children with democratic principles so that by the time they reach voting age they will have already "voted" in school elections, been candidates or helped organise an event.

4.4.4 Domestic Observation

Support to domestic observation has been a strong point of the EC support to electoral processes for several years. In recent years, the emphasis on this kind of support has moved towards technical assistance and local empowerment. it is here important to underline that often domestic election observation can be coupled with voter education activities.[8] Domestic observation is vital for the transparency and ownership of the electoral process in addition to the activities of political party agents. Domestic observers should play a neutral role and report objective findings which can either highlight shortcomings in the elections or alleviate potential for conflict. Their large numbers, geographical spread and knowledge of the local situation means that they are very aware of any irregularities, intimidation or corruption in their local areas. At the same time they can be subject to local pressure as they may live in the area and may also be perceived to lack credibility by being associated with a CSO rather than an institution.

The methodology employed, the accuracy of the findings set out in reports, the presentation of reports, and the holding of press conferences will all influence the credibility of any domestic observation. If handled unprofessionally it can weaken the credibility and importance of their role. The EC has gained valuable experience in observation in the past decade and is well placed to provide technical assistance to facilitate better coordination, to enhance credibility of domestic observers, and to empower. It is vitally important that election observation organisations enjoy the respect and confidence of the public. Therefore, it is advisable to recruit persons with a high profile to lead the organisation. Indeed, well-known and highly respected individuals may automatically bring visibility and legitimacy to the project. Frequently, domestic election observers have benefited from sharing their experiences with other organisations, particularly from exchanges between organisations that confront the same challenges. Often it is not necessary to 're-invent the wheel'. Lessons can be learned from other election observer groups and mistakes avoided. Working as a coalition can bring rewards – with each organisation lending to the project a variety of assets including expert knowledge, human resources or organisational structure.

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8   Promoting and Defending Democracy. The work of Domestic Election Observers Groups around the world. ERIS 2005

Many organisations cannot function effectively without financial, technical and political support, often from external sources. Economic support from national business sectors and individual donors can also be vitally important in ensuring an organisation's sustainability. Strategic and operational planning should be started well ahead of elections.

It is important that the work of the election administration and the judiciary is monitored effectively and that observers follow events during the election campaign to assess its fairness and respect for citizens' and candidates' fundamental freedoms. The compilation of voter registers is significant, because it can affect citizens' fundamental rights to universal and equal suffrage and, where inaccuracies exist, distort the election contest. The tabulation of results after the election is a critically important period, which should be monitored closely. Even if the scope of activities should be as broad as possible, organisations should not, as a rule, try to undertake too many new projects simultaneously.

In most circumstances, it is preferable to recruit volunteers at the grassroots level. This ensures observers are familiar with the environment in which they will work, and that costs associated with their deployment will be kept to a minimum. Monitors must be non-partisan and must be seen to be non-partisan. Observers are usually required to abide by a Code of Conduct or sign a pledge to this effect.

A Code of Conduct should also set out the main rights and duties of observers, which are usually based on neutrality and objectivity. It is crucial that election observation is based on well-tested methodology. Observers will require training in their tasks and in the purpose and

objectives of election observation well-prepared observers are more likely to detect and deter election violations. Highly specialised methodology and training are required for certain activities, for example, media monitoring, campaign expenditure monitoring and monitoring the adjudication of election disputes.

In other circumstances the 'cascade' training method has served domestic observers well in a variety of situations. It is important that observer organisations develop a high visibility. This serves as a deterrent to those that might seek to manipulate the process and also serves to reassure voters. Therefore, it is advisable to develop a media strategy, which may include appointing a spokesperson for the organisation, periodic public appearances and timely statements on sensitive issues.

Monitoring organisations need always to consider the desirability of observing an election process. In certain circumstances, it may not always be wise, for example if a process is fundamentally flawed well before polling takes place. In other situations, specific approaches may be required, for example where security concerns exist.
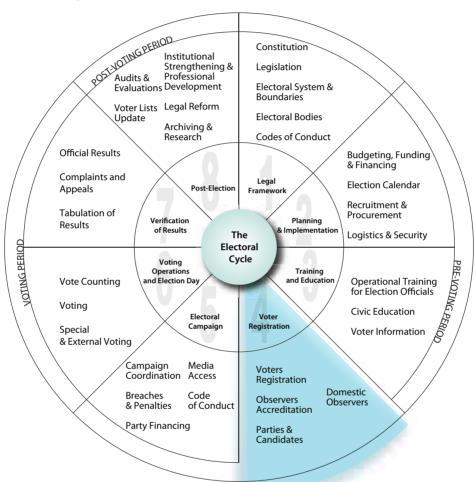
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New challenges to election monitoring include the emergence of electronic voting. Election observation organisations will need to develop new methodologies to respond to these innovations. This may necessitate the recruitment of computer specialists and the establishment of new oversight rights, for example for observers to check the software programmes used and data transmission systems.

The EC, via the project "NEEDS[9]", organises a series of Fora around the world, designed to increase the capacity of domestic election observer groups. At each such Forum organisations active in election observation are invited for a focus on specific themes, such as:

- Use of ICTs in the electoral process and the implications for election
- Observation methodology
- Monitoring political party financing and campaign spending
- Media Monitoring and media freedoms during an election campaign
- Monitoring electoral violence

In post-conflict situations, domestic observation can play a crucial role in areas where an international presence is not possible. It also gives ownership of the process to groups in society who may traditionally be excluded from participation in the decision-making process.

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9   *www.needs-network.org*

4.5   **Phase 4 –** Registration and Nominations

4.5.1 **Voter Registration Systems and Processes**

Voter registration is the activity directed at the identification of those citizens who are eligible to vote in a given election. It is generally aimed at the production of lists and of a register of voters based on the eligibility rules in force in a given country. Without voter registration the eligibility of the votes can only be determined on election-day at the polling station, as it happened sometimes in post-conflict elections, such as in Bosnia 1996 and Afghanistan 2004 out of country voting, causing serious frauds and legitimacy problems.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	**CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS**	**TYPE OF ASSISTANCE**	**POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES**	**RISK ASSUMPTION**	**ACCESS**	**TRANSPARENCY**	**SUSTAINABILITY**
Demographics, statistics, census Registration: new, update, continuous, civil registry IT programmes, maintenance High tech vs low tech	Registration plan incompatible with the electoral calendar Inappropriate, non-sustainable and expensive technology Inaccurate and incomplete voters lists potentially disenfranching voters. Environmental impact (waste)	Feasibility Studies Technical and Technological advice Support to centralise and maintain permanent voters' database Test Pilots Simulation of voter registration exercises Support to registration activities (data-entry, registration kits, delivery and collection of material)	Improve the accuracy of the voters' list to ensure all voters can vote and avoid duplications and omissions which may erode confidence in the fairness of the election; in line with census; boundaries drawn in accordance with demographics	Burdened with an expensive ICTs program, non-sustainable high maintenance, potential obsolescence	Ensure women, students, migrant workers, IDPs, have access to documents and time to register	Domestic observers, party agents and media have the right to monitor the process Voters and parties have right to complain/appeal	Aim for a central, computerised database which can be continuously updated. Ensure the equipment and software can be maintained domestically

Voter Registration is arguably the most crucial and expensive component of an electoral process and the one to which the sustainability studies of the most advanced electoral administrations are increasingly turning their attention.

In post-conflict situations, where prewar civil or voter registers might have been completely destroyed, voter registration might have to start from scratch and often special eligibility rules might have to be approved to obviate the lack of a voter register and proper ID; for instance in the Iraqi Transitional Elections of January 2005, voters where mostly identified by being listed in the "Oil for Food" Program.

Given its high costs, voter registration is one of the activities where donor intervention is most often sought by EMBs in partner countries. It is, in fact, an area of growing demand for EC electoral support as well and the trend is expected to continue. Voter Registration can often be a highly contested activity, and one of the major sources of complaints.

A)   THE TYPES OF VOTER REGISTRATION

There are various forms of voter registration and in general an EMB is called to choose a system that is the most appropriate for the country, feasible and financially sustainable. Here, there are three options: a periodic list; a continuous or permanent register or list, and, a civil registry.

A periodic register of voters, or periodic list, is established for a specific electoral event, and electoral administrators do not intend to maintain or update the list for future use. Normally the list is drawn up immediately before the election, although this need not be the case. This system is relatively expensive and time-consuming since it requires direct contact with all eligible voters before the election. It may be particularly useful where infrastructure is lacking to maintain a continuous list, where population mobility is high or where there is opposition to the maintenance of lists of citizens by the government. The periodic list may also be preferred by quasi-governmental agencies, such as electoral management bodies or commissions.

A continuous/permanent list of voters is maintained and regularly updated by the electoral administration. This system depends on an appropriate infrastructure to maintain the list. Maintenance typically involves adding the names and other relevant information of people who satisfy eligibility requirements, and deleting the names of those who no longer meet the requirements (e.g. through death or change of residence). Since the continuous list is updated on a regular basis there is no need for a final registration drive immediately before an election, although a period is often designated for revising the list during the election campaign. The continuous list may be maintained either locally or nationally.

To facilitate list updates, many election authorities form data-sharing partnerships with other government bodies. For example, when citizens change their place of residence, they may inform the tax bureau, the post office, the housing authority or the health system. In many countries with a continuous register, partnerships allow the election authority to receive regular updates of changes to these bodies' files. This makes it possible to update the electoral register without any direct contact between the voter and the election authority. In some cases, on learning about a change of address, the election authority may send the voter a new voter registration card with a request to update and confirm the information that appears on it.

A third option for registering voters is the civil registry. This may contain a variety of information on all citizens, such as name, address, citizenship, age and identification number. In certain countries, particularly in Europe and Latin America, the voters list is produced from information contained in the national civil registry. In countries with a civil registry, a major question is whether the body responsible for it (often the interior ministry) should be responsible for the voters list. Some countries give the

same institution responsibility for both registries; others choose two agencies, each with responsibility for one of the lists. If a civil registry is in place, producing a voters list is relatively efficient and cost-effective. This is because the major costs are borne in the first place by the civil registry. And while it is relatively expensive to maintain a civil registry, the information recorded may be used for multiple purposes, reducing the government's overall data management costs. The major drawback of this system is its major strength. Even though the high cost is justified, data sharing among government institutions may give rise to controversy. Concerns may be expressed about the loss, or potential loss, of privacy. If the concerns are widespread, a civil registry may be simply unacceptable despite its usefulness.

www.aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/vr

In basic terms, there are two categories of voter registration exercises: those of a passive nature; and those of an active nature. It is the variety of alternatives within these two categories which complicates the exercise in operational terms.

The **passive form** is diffused mainly in established democracies, where voter lists are just a derivation of the civil registry and the general Database of citizens is kept by a public administration service Generally located either within the Ministry of Interior or decentralised and completely entrusted to local administrations.

The **active form** is found in many emerging and transitional democracies and especially in cases of countries emerging from armed conflicts where voter registration is kept as a separate activity and it is generally conducted by the election administration, with the citizens being called to express their intention to participate to an electoral process through a positive act of registration.

Even if there are still relevant cases where "ad hoc" voter registration exercises are organised in order to conduct specific electoral events, the establishment and maintenance of a permanent register or list of voters, continuously updatable, is now acknowledged as a common goal for many election administrations, and the area where most often the EC is called to provide support.

In post-conflict countries or countries emerging from long periods of dictatorship, where no civil registry or other forms of identification exist, voter registration is often the most fundamental activity to be organised in order to be able to run elections.

B)   THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

A voter registration process is generally composed of several steps. Most typically, a voter registration process includes the following activities:

- Enactment of procedure,
- Production of manuals and training of registration staff,
- Identification of eligible applicants,
- Data-entry process of the applicants' information,
- Production of preliminary voter lists and their display,
- Claims and objections period with the consequent process of entering additions,
- Deletions and changes in the central register,
- Production of final voters lists and the related production of voter cards,
- Distribution of voter cards and the distribution of voters lists to polling stations.

The combination and the temporal sequence of these activities vary considerably according to the specific voter registration system and methods chosen. Voter registration systems can be **104** divided into three broad categories based on the level of technology applied to the process:

a) **Low-tech approaches**: generally entailing the manual transcription of voters' data into paper lists performed at the voter registration centres, generally kept at the local or provincial level. This is often preferred in the first generation of post-conflict elections. Sometimes registration forms are transported to the central level and data-entered in a central database;

b) **Medium-tech approaches**: whereby voters' data are generally entered using scanners and software so called Optical Mark Reader (OMR)[10] or Optical Character Recognition (OCR)[11], at the local level and then scanned and aggregated in national voters lists maintained at the central level but available for updates at the local level;

c) **High-tech approaches**: with electronic forms and immediate data-entry performed at the voter registration centres through notebook computers, sometimes with the information transmitted in real time to a centralized processing facility or stored electronically for periodical delivery through external memories or compact discs. These systems often involve digital picture taking, biometric recognition features (such as fingerprints or iris capturing) and might include the contextual production of voters' cards and their delivery on site.

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10   Optical mark recognition is the process of capturing data by contrasting reflectivity at predetermined positions on a page. By shining a beam of light onto the document the scanner is able to detect a marked area because it is more reflective than an unmarked surface.

11   Optical character recognition involves computer software designed to translate images of handwritten or typewritten text captured by a scanner into machine-editable text, or to translate pictures of characters into a standard encoding scheme.

As mentioned earlier, voter registration is one of the areas of the electoral cycle where the influence and the application of ICTs is growing continuously. While technology could be an important tool to reduce costs and improve sustainability, the danger for EMBs, electoral assistance providers and donors is that they become hostages to the Vendors, who have been known to opt for technological solutions which that might not be suitable, cost effective and/or sustainable for the partner country in the long run. It is important to remember that the "depreciation costs" are high in terms of the equipment procured and are aggravated by a failure to properly store and look after this equipment. In this context it is convenient to study at the identification/formulation stage, the institutional context of a given country, its capacities, the potential and synergies ICTs can offer. The EC, as mentioned earlier, is launching a particular study to assess these synergies and to discover where it might be possible to bring together, effectively, projects to support civil registries and voter registration. Indeed, the EC is often asked to support, technically and financially, these two processes with two different projects, often without proper assessment of the possibility to link the two activities.

Another risk is the failure of the whole system due to the low quality of the collected voters' data or to mistakes in its processing during registration updating, which jeopardise the significant investments made in technology. Thus, a careful feasibility and sustainability analysis covering the whole electoral cycle should be made before embarking on large scale support to "Medium or High-Tech" solutions. For this purpose, there are multiple intervention points to support a registration process. These can be classified at three different levels, corresponding to the different temporal span at which intervention is recommended prior to an election:

a) Support to the EMB to design a new permanent registration system, immediately after the end of an electoral cycle and up to 18 months before the next elections;
b) Support to the EMB to conduct a specific voter registration process which requires the use of new technology and a change in the approach of system, (until one year before elections) including simulation exercises to adapt the methodology according to the Results obtained of the simulation;
c) Simple procurement of voter registration material (up until six month before the election) or technical support to domestic groups observing voter registration (between one year to six months before elections).

4.5.2 Political Parties and Candidates Registration

Another completely different form of registration arises where political parties and candidates must initiate action if they wish to contest in an election. This activity typically takes place immediately after the voter registration (either fully fledged process or an update period) in order to check the eventual registration requirements imposed on candidates.

Specially flexible "ad hoc" rules might have to be devised for post-conflict situations, where the level of literacy could be extremely low and there might still be widespread fear among the individuals in exposing themselves as candidates. Sometimes there might be education requirements for candidates or more bureaucratic obligations (collection of signatures of support, financial disclosure) imposed on candidates and parties.

The verification of parties and candidates' eligibility to participate in an electoral event might be a time consuming process (especially dealing with appeals against exclusion) that must be factored in, as it might have a serious impact on the ballot design and the ballot production process. Problems often arise when verifying eligibility, such as: late submission or partial completion of registration forms by the political parties; ineligible candidates; and political parties which had boycotted the registration seeking political gain through their eleventh hour involvement in the registration process.

Assistance in this area is twofold. Firstly, it involves helping the EMB to brief the parties regularly on the registration requirements. Secondly, it supports the training of the parties on the relevant legal, procedural and administrative requirements so that all have an equal understanding of how and when to register. Other specific forms of assistance to political parties, like fund-raising or campaign techniques, "get the vote out" strategies, and so forth should continue to remain outside of the sphere of influence of the EC's electoral assistance interventions being left to international foundations or politically oriented NGOs.

New possible areas of application look at ensuring that the parties are properly involved in voter registration and education efforts. If all these issues are not addressed prior to the election campaign period, a number of problems might arise during the campaign itself. The most common ones are untimely and biased dispute resolutions, non-enforcement of party financing regulations, impeded access to campaign sites, inequitable access to inequitable access to, and biased coverage by, the media.. An example of additional activity that could be carried out involves targeted civic education programmes which should be conducted before the campaign period to benefit all contestants and reduce the potential for conflict.

4.6 **Phase 5** – Electoral Campaign

POST-VOTING PERIOD

Institutional Strengthening & Professional Development

Audits & Evaluations

Voter Lists Update

Legal Reform

Archiving & Research

Official Results

Complaints and Appeals

Tabulation of Results

Constitution

Legislation

Electoral System & Boundaries

Electoral Bodies

Codes of Conduct

Budgeting, Funding & Financing

Election Calendar

Recruitment & Procurement

Logistics & Security

VOTING PERIOD

Vote Counting

Voting

Special & External Voting

Campaign Coordination

Media Access

Breaches & Penalties

Code of Conduct

Party Financing

Voters Registration

Observers Accreditation

Parties & Candidates

Domestic Observers

Operational Training for Election Officials

Civic Education

Voter Information

PRE-VOTING PERIOD

Post-Election

Legal Framework

Verification of Results

Planning & Implementation

Voting Operations and Election Day

Training and Education

Electoral Campaign

Voter Registration

The Electoral Cycle

7 8 1 2 6 5 4 3

The electoral campaign represents the most active political period of the electoral cycle. Assistance during the electoral campaign period involves a wider range of Stakeholders and not just the EMB, and this period is one characterised by high tension, strong political messages, and regular misunderstandings between the electoral authority and the political parties on the interpretation of the campaign regulations. Tension may rise even higher in post-conflict elections, with the heavy use of intimidatory strategies and inflammatory language.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Finance Registration and Nominations Conduct of the campaign Media access Dispute resolution	Political Parties' late or incomplete registration Potential for conflict: Untimely and biased dispute resolutions Non-enforcement of public financing regulations Impeded access to campaign sites Inequitable access to and biased coverage by media	EMB & Political Parties: Dispute resolution / complaints mechanism / assist in developing "Codes of Conduct"/ facilitate dialogue through seminars, workshops Facilitation of political dialogue, support to preparation of codes of conduct Expertise for the development of transparent financial regulations Training of political parties on campaign regulations Technical assistance for media monitoring projects	Reduced conflict as rules of the game are clear More transparency and trust in the system Fairer playing field in terms of political finance and media access Better party development; democratic internal practices; more concrete platform; equal opportunity for women candidates; better finance/campaign management; more responsive to needs of constituents Media monitoring provides statistical and objective information about coverage	Any assistance given to parties may be perceived as biased unless given completely equally Ruling party may be reluctant to receive any assistance programme Opposition may exploit the need for support from international donors Finance regulations are hard to impose and hard to track without resources and access to financial documents of parties If media monitoring methodology is not comprehensive standard the credibility of the findings will be lost	Women's access to media Women's freedom to participate in political events Training women candidates Train women journalists Disadvantaged/ ethnic groups have the legal access and funds to form a political group/ party	Media Monitoring ensures fair and equal coverage of political contestants in print, TV and radio. Party finance regulations encourage transparent use of funds for campaign	Party development and training on internal democratic practices.

The support needed is more linked to the preparatory activities to be carried out before the campaign than the campaign period itself. In addition, the types of assistance which can be offered have to be clearly designed to be impartial and open to all parties and candidates. For post-conflict elections, careful security and event management rules (without hindering freedom of association and speech) must be put in place to avoid clashes. Confidence-building activities like mediation and negotiation services for the signing of codes of conducts for political parties are one of the most needed forms of expertise.
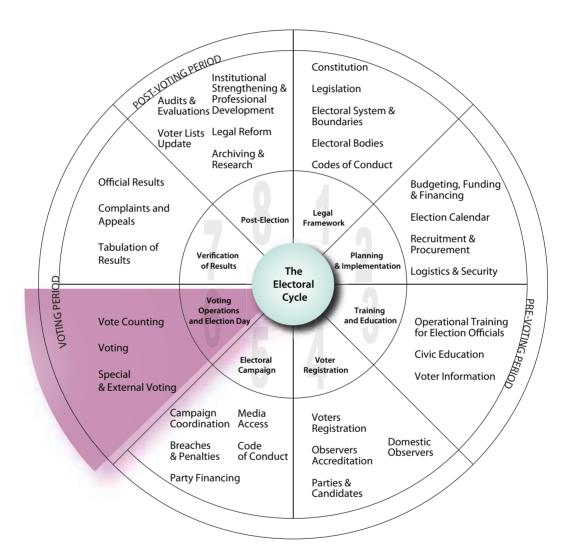
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The typical technical and neutral assistance project can include political dialogue facilitation, support to the preparation of codes of conduct, the provision of expertise to assist in developing transparent financial regulations, training of political parties together on campaign regulations, and technical assistance for media monitoring projects. Two emerging areas where an equally non-partisan approach is advocated are: strengthening of the political parties' knowledge of electoral operations and regulations; and, the provision of legal support to understand electoral dispute mechanisms and regulations.

Traditional activities carried out by international NGOs and foundations deal with the parties' campaign and media strategies, strengthening of the party caucuses within legislatures and making parties accountable for their commitments to address gender imbalances at the leadership level. This work is closely linked with institutional development, since more effective, democratic and transparent parliamentary party caucuses allow legislatures to work more effectively.[12]

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12   UNDP Practice Note, 2004

4.7   **Phase 6** – Voting operations and E-day

This is the culminating stage of every electoral process. By the time voting operations start, all activities related to the voting operation have been duly planned and put in place. In the run up to E-Day, the main challenges relate to the nationwide logistical movements of election material, both sensitive and non-sensitive, their secure storage and timely delivery.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Distribute all materials sensitive and non-sensitive in time to all levels Polling staff recruited and trained on procedures (with copies of law, manual) adequately before E-day Voters clearly know where to vote and are on the right list Clear procedures and complaints system in place Troubleshooting on E-days Materials, procedures sent in advance to all out-of-country polling centres	Late, missing and/ or wrong material Poorly trained or biased staff not following procedures Disenfranchised voters Irregularities or fraud and the potential for conflict Lack of communication or means to solve problems Lack of resources/ capacity to conduct out-of-country voting	Logistics plan; sorting, packing and distributing materials, support resources for staff, storage, tracking and transport Training cascade plan; funding training sessions; Printing laws and manuals and distribution costs Create communication and database to track complaints Provide signs and queue control for all polling stations Provide assistance to operational needs on E-days Technical and financial support to out-of-country	All materials are delivered to the right place on time and are accounted for therefore not disenfranchising voters or delaying the poll and jeopardising credibility of process Staff are fully trained or at least briefed on correct polling and counting procedures to minimise irregularities Problems can be monitored and solved on the day minimising risk for conflict	In multi-constituency elections wrong ballots sent to wrong polling stations. Voters' List is inaccurate or incomplete or wrong one sent and eligible voters turned away Staff commit irregularities due to misinterpretation of procedures or lack of training/ manual which could invalidate all votes at their station and create a conflict situation High number of invalid votes could cause contention if it affects result	Aim for 50% women polling staff Ensure women can vote individually and in secret Consider access for disabled and pregnant, old and infirm should not wait long in the queue	Domestic observers, party agents and media have the right to monitor the process Voters and parties have right to complain/appeal	Retrieval and safe storage of re-usable election materials. Archive all materials used (manuals, posters, forms) Maintain database of staff

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It goes without saying that these challenges are much more complicated in post-conflict situations, where usually tight timelines, poor infrastructure and the potentially volatile security situation cause an additional set of concerns that require tailor made solutions. In these cases, voting operations rely on an almost military style and costly operational plan with solid and secure logistical support such as helicopters, armoured vehicles, military or police escorts. The integrity of the ballots papers and ballot boxes becomes premium to the credibility of the election, especially if political parties or guerrilla/terrorist groups attempt to sabotage the process.

The main form of support to these activities is the provision of financial means for the timely procurement (and/or the physical provision) of communication and transport equipment to support the distribution and recollection processes relating to all materials.

Some of the challenges encountered in this highly stressful period are mainly related to poor planning, to the use of inappropriate and non-sustainable technologies, the high cost of last-minute deliveries, late, missing or wrongly delivered materials delivered, poorly trained or

biased staff not following procedures, disenfranchised voters not on the voters list or not knowing where to vote, irregularities and/or fraud, and the potential for conflict.

In terms of assistance often donors and governments often use their assistance to bail out the EMB by providing emergency funds for logistics, like the hiring of helicopters or the provision of other emergency transport solutions.

4.7.1 External Voting or Out-of-Country Voting

External Voting, or Out-of-Country Voting, has already been in use for a number of decades in mature democracies, and provides a means for citizens residing abroad to participate to their countries' elections, generally through the opening of special polling stations in embassies or through postal voting.

However, this phenomenon assumed new prominence, in international electoral assistance terms, with the first Bosnian Elections in 1996. The Dayton Accords, that ended the war in former Yugoslavia, expressly recognised that the rights of those individuals that forcefully fled their places of residence during the 1992–1995 period deserved special services. Since then, the protection of the voting rights of refugees and displaced person has become a standard feature for large electoral operations in previously war-torn countries (Kosovo, Timor-East, Afghanistan, Iraq).

External voting operations for refugees represent a special case in the world of electoral assistance, both because of the extremely high costs associated to setting up these operations outside the borders of the country and the specific legal issues that always surround the organisation of registration and voting operations on host countries' soil. In fact, they represent "elections within elections", as special legal and technical regulations have to be put in place to make them possible, in addition to all the other conditions which characterise in-country elections.

External registration and voting operations must be conducted in a way that allows monitoring by the political parties and candidates, otherwise they can become a matter for political dispute and complaint.
See also *www.aceproject.org* and the forthcoming International IDEA Handbook on External Voting.

In fact, the practical implementation of registration and voting services for refugees is always destined to clash with the legal framework of the various "host countries" legislation, and guaranteeing a level of accessibility, equity, security, transparency and integrity equal to the one afforded to in-country voters is often an insurmountable task. Special negotiation skills are required to smooth out the practical implementation of these operations which must generally, be formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Apart from the specific problems
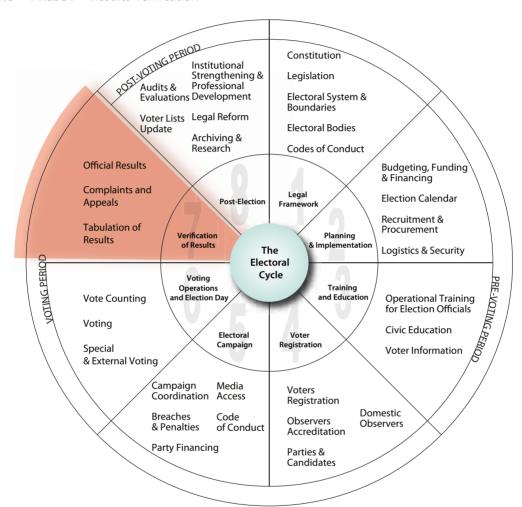
linked to the specific host countries' legislations, the main legal problem in large external voting operations is the determination of the voters' eligibility and the very high cost of the process.

A difficult problem which is always present is to establish who is a refugee and whether non refugees living abroad should be afforded the same level of registration and voting services. External registration and voting operations can be implemented in various forms, according to the logistics and the time available in advance of the election date. Generally, they can be conducted in-person or by-mail, or by a combination of the two options. In-person operations are considerably more expensive than by-mail ones, but of course offer a much more comprehensive set of guarantees in terms of transparency and integrity. On the contrary, by-mail operations provide much more accessibility and equity opportunities.

The funding of these type of operations is certainly in line with the EU principles to promote and protect the social and political rights of minorities and disadvantaged groups, and deserves particularly careful consideration in specific post-war contexts. The implementation of external voting operations is best done through professional agencies that can couple specific expertise in the refugee protection field, with a sound logistical basis. Where partner country governments decide to set up external voting operations on their own, a case-by-case evaluation is necessary before the decision to fund them is made.

4.8   **Phase 7** – Results Verification

The Electoral Cycle diagram showing:

POST-VOTING PERIOD

8 – Post-Election:
- Institutional Strengthening & Professional Development
- Audits & Evaluations
- Voter Lists Update
- Legal Reform
- Archiving & Research

7 – Verification of Results:
- Official Results
- Complaints and Appeals
- Tabulation of Results

1 – Legal Framework:
- Constitution
- Legislation
- Electoral System & Boundaries
- Electoral Bodies
- Codes of Conduct

PRE-VOTING PERIOD

2 – Planning & Implementation:
- Budgeting, Funding & Financing
- Election Calendar
- Recruitment & Procurement
- Logistics & Security

3 – Training and Education:
- Operational Training for Election Officials
- Civic Education
- Voter Information

4 – Voter Registration:
- Voters Registration
- Observers Accreditation
- Domestic Observers
- Parties & Candidates

5 – Electoral Campaign:
- Campaign Coordination
- Media Access
- Breaches & Penalties
- Code of Conduct
- Party Financing

VOTING PERIOD

6 – Voting Operations and Election Day:
- Vote Counting
- Voting
- Special & External Voting

Center: **The Electoral Cycle**

The results verification process is an activity that spans the period from the counting and announcement of results at the polling station level to the final allocation of the seats announced by the designated authority. In between, there is the aggregation of the results at various intermediate levels, the national aggregation and the announcement of preliminary results by the EMB, the final announcement of results by the delegated authority and any consequent challenges to the final results. All steps of this process require transparency, expediency and effectiveness.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Results Tabulation Complaints & Appeals Announcement of Results	Lack of transparency and credibility Fraud and manipulation of result tabulation Biased complaints and appeals process Impact of announcement of results (how and when they are announced) & potential for unrest	Support to tabulation process and to secure transmission of results Support to Complaints & Appeals process Support to setting up Media & Results Centre Parallel Vote Tabulation / Quick Count	increase transparency by providing a speedy sample of results; deters cheating; public ownership and access	Poor implementation can yield inaccurate results; suspicion if methodology is not explained to all stakeholders The purpose of the Quick count can be misunderstood as real results	Announce percentage of women who won seats	A transparent aggregation and tabulation of results culminating in a Media Centre Tracking system for complaints and appeals process	Develop domestic expertise in managing the software for results and setting up a media centre

The credibility of the entire electoral event might depend on how these activities are dealt with. Even without any political interference or bias, a poorly managed results verification exercise creates undue suspicions and can impact negatively upon the electoral process. In post-conflict cases, this represents often the most sensitive phase of the electoral process, especially when there is no time to ensure adequate transparency at all stages of the process and the electoral officials might not be in full command of the procedures. In extreme cases, forms of centralised counting might be preferred for security reasons (Iraq), although, in normal circumstances this solution is adopted only for special category of voters like refugees, absentees and special needs voters (Bosnia, Kosovo, Timor East, Afghanistan).

The main challenge for the results verification process is how to balance speed with accuracy and transparency. This turns very often into a communication problem – how to present an image of efficiency and transparency at such a stressful and delicate time. Again, this is particularly true in post-conflict situations where careless announcements might trigger off avoidable violence.

The general trend in established democracies is a movement towards automated processes of results aggregation that would remarkably increase the speed of the results aggregation while, simultaneously, maintaining full access of observers and political parties to the process.

In systems where the voting process is not automated, the ideal manner to guarantee the integrity of the results while safeguarding the necessity for the fast delivery of results would be to set up an electronic tabulation system at the level immediately above that of the polling station. The results would then be transmitted to a national processing centre for the national aggregation, in full sight of observers and political parties. This could be combined with the establishment of a Result Display Centre to provide the media in real time with all the information available on the various stages of the process.

This activity is generally part of a good communication strategy that serves the purposes of highlighting to the general public the overall efforts that the electoral administration puts in place to organise a transparent and efficient electoral process. In post-conflict elections with significant international participation, slow but transparent counting and vote verifications operations are to be preferred, even though this might prolong the process by several days or even weeks.

The handling of electoral complaints, the outcome of which may impact on the results, is often an underestimated activity. In general terms, the resolution of electoral disputes is an activity that encompasses the entire electoral process and should be guaranteed throughout the various stages of the cycle, given that its importance becomes paramount during the results verification period. The need to ensure a fast and efficient processing of the appeals and challenges related to the results is often fundamental to the legitimacy of the entire electoral process, especially in post-conflict situations and in emerging democracies. The main challenges related to the issues are how to ensure a proper understanding of the complaint procedures among the various stakeholders that might have an interest in appealing, political parties above all, and how to ensure an adequate level of electoral knowledge and neutrality among the judges of the adjudicating authority in case it is not a special electoral tribunal.

The types of assistance which can be offered are mainly related to software development, auditing procedures and the setting up of a system which ensures a secure transmission of results. Apart from user friendliness and security, software applications for results aggregation must also be auditable and open to scrutiny. Specific electoral assistance projects can deal with the entire results verification process from the transmission of results to the announcement of them to the media. Support to electoral complaint procedures should not be underestimated and can be easily detached to other electoral projects.

Alternative verification procedures which can play an important role in enhancing the transparency of the process include the "Sample Based Parallel Vote Tabulation" and the "Sample

Based Quick Count". These are generally implemented by CSOs or domestic observer groups. When implemented in ideal conditions, their margin of error ranges between +1% and -1%.

These are to be distinguished from the "Comprehensive Parallel Vote Tabulation" method, or "Comprehensive Quick Count" method which is an attempted verification of results based on the actual observation of the vote count at all polling places in an election. On the other hand an "Exit Poll" is a survey of voters exiting politically representative polling places, asking them about their ballot choices and motivations.[13]

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13   *Beyond Free and Fair. Monitoring Elections and Building Democracy*, Eric, C. Bjornlund.

4.9   **Phase 8** – Post Elections

The last stage of the electoral cycle signifies the beginning of the new one. This grey area, which often occupies a temporal space larger than all the other stages of the cycle together, is also sometimes referred to as the "in between elections period" to highlight what was tradition-ally regarded as a dormant period for the EMBs.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION		ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE			CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS		
COMPONENTS/ ACTIVITIES	CHALLENGES/ PROBLEMS	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	POTENTIAL BENEFITS/ OBJECTIVES	RISK ASSUMPTION	ACCESS	TRANSPARENCY	SUSTAINABILITY
Audits and Evaluations Recommendations Institutional Strengthening & Capacity Development Reform	Lack of continuity, loss of institutional capacity in the EMB Drastic drop in donors' interest State disinterest in EMBs' needs Ensuring that EMB and observers' recommendations are turned into effective actions	Sustainable programming – Build election assistance into other sectors: governance, education – Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to see the gaps and how to assist – Audit of Electoral Processes, a comprehensive audit of all practices and costs – Project Formulation and budget	Provides a forum for discussion between stakeholders (EMB, political parties, observers, CSOs) and recommendations for future election assistance and planning Election assistance seen in the framework of governance and education, focus on institution building, decreasing election costs, support to local elections; short term projects vs long-term Programmes, not see election as an event but as a cycle or in developmental terms	One-off post-review seminar with recommendations not being followed up Lack of political will, donor support, benchmarks and success indicators cause the project to lose focus or stagnate, loss of funds	Assess voter turnout with disaggregated statistics Assess women's participation in parliament Plan to increase women's participation in parliament, local elections, EMB and voting	Include CSOs and other stakeholders in any post-election conference or planning	Ensure long term planning following the electoral cycle

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In reality, this is potentially the most important phase of the cycle in any sort of environment, be it a post-conflict or a highly stable one. The post election period is, in fact, not the end but the real beginning of a new cycle and plays a crucial role in taking on board lessons learned and recommendations for a range of different issues. Covering areas such as legal reform, technological development, strategic planning and funding, the period between electoral events provides a perfect opportunity to tackle many issues which could not be dealt with before due to lack of time or resources in the previous run up to the elections.

For an EMB, the post election period would be the perfect moment to discuss and launch electoral reform, new technologies or modifications to existing ones, functional and structural changes, and to commence institutional strengthening and capacity development. The challenge is to overcome the election fatigue and lack of motivation that hits without distinctions the electoral administrators and the elected legislative bodies alike, since the participation of these stakeholders must be fully committed to the reforms and changes to be introduced. The second,

often insurmountable problem is related to the lack of funding. Unfortunately, the same lack of motivation and political disinterest that is found at the national level is also present among the donors. In the best case, there is always a shift in the funding priorities to other sectors and other activities.

Gaining from the momentum of post-election consolidation activities, and observers' recommendations, the EC could play a crucial role in the identification of those aspects of the process that require reform, or radical change, at a time when there is less political tension and a greater interest among political parties to seek out compromise positions. This is typically a good time for the EC to discuss with the national counterparts in the context of an on-going dialogue, a specific action plan, a possible peer review, or other audit or reform activity which could address the given country.

Chapter 5
Resources, Services and Delivery Methods

Chapter 6
Formulation and Implementation Tools

Chapter 5
Resources, Services and Delivery Methods

5.1   Description of EC Resources for Electoral Assistance

The consideration of the resource question begins with an examination of the the financial instruments, proposed by the EC, for the next programming period, 2007–2013.These represent a thorough revision of the previous of external relations instruments for EC external assistance which were announced in the EC Communication 626/2004

In the context of the future financial framework (2007–13) and as part of its efforts towards simplifying external actions instruments, the Commission proposed, on 29 September 2004, a package of new instruments replacing in total more than 30 existing regulations. After nearly two years of negotiations between the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament the elements for a compromise and a global political agreement was reached proposing the following structure:

European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)

ENPI covers community assistance to: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Russia, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. It comprises a specific Cross-Border co-operation component covering border regions in the Member States.

Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)

DCI covers three main components:

*   Community assistance (geographic programmes) to developing countries not covered by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) or the 10th European Development Fund (EDF): Latin America, Asia, Central Asia, East of Jordan, South Africa;
*   Support for ACP Sugar Protocol countries;
*   And five thematic programmes (human and social development, environment, non-state actors in development, food security, migration and asylum) supporting actions in all developing countries, global actions and external projections of EC internal policies.

European Instrument for Democracy Human Rights (EIDHR)

EIDHR will contribute to the development of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has been designed to complement the various other tools for implementation of EU policies on democracy and human rights, which range from political dialogue and diplomatic initiatives to various instruments of financial and technical cooperation, including both geographic and thematic programmes. It will also complement the more crisis-related interventions of the new Stability instrument. EIDHR will be still managed by EuropeAid.

Instrument for Stability (IS)

The specific aims of IS are:

- In a situation of crisis or emerging crisis, to contribute to stability by providing an effective response to help preserve, establish or re-establish the conditions essential for the proper implementation of the Community's development and cooperation policies ("crisis response and preparedness" component);
- In the context of stable conditions for the implementation of Community cooperation policies in third countries, to help build capacity both to address specific global and trans-regional threats having a destabilising effect and to ensure preparedness to address pre- and post-crisis situations ("global and regional trans-border challenges" component).

The three remaining instruments (Nuclear Safety Instrument, Industrialised Countries Instrument and Instrument for pre-accession assistance) are not relevant for electoral assistance purposes.

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Within this scenario, the long term programming for governance and democracy promotion will fall mainly within the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). EIDHR will continue to play an important role in the promotion of democracy mainly through activities with civil society.

Future support for snap elections or for specific election-related activities (eg, voter registration processes, results tabulation or support to domestic election and media monitoring) if not included in the other instruments, could be covered by the Instrument for Stability (IS). In particular, the Instrument for Stability is meant to streamline the EC's ability to respond to crisis and to further the achievement of democratic development objectives. It should complement the pursuance of future EU policy challenges through measures not already foreseen by the other main policy driven instruments, and it's anticipated that it should take into due consideration the specific nature and particular need for flexibility that electoral assistance activities require.

Presently the EC resources available for electoral assistance are:

The European Development Fund (EDF) is the main instrument for Community aid for development cooperation in the ACP countries and the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT). The EDF does not come under the general Community budget - it is funded by the Member States, covered by its own financial rules and managed by a specific committee. Each EDF is concluded for a period of around five years. Since the conclusion of the first partnership convention in 1964, the EDF cycles have generally followed that of the partnership agreements/conventions. The current 9th EDF was concluded at the same time as the Cotonou Agreement, and the 10th EDF is now under preparation. This instrument is fully available to promote human rights, democracy

and rule of law programmes, in accordance with the basic principles of governance set out in its Art. 8, Art. 9 and Art. 11 of Cotonou Agreement.

The EU Community's **General budget**, in its 'External Actions' section covers the EC aid resources deployed in the rest of the world, under the geographical instruments other than EDF, such as TACIS[1] (Eastern Europe and Central Asia), ALA[2] (Asia and Latin America), MEDA[3] (Mediterranean and Middle-East) and CARDS[4] (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia & Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). This assistance is available, inter-alia, to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law, through programmes focused primarily but not exclusively on assistance channelled via governments, much of it targeted at tackling the root causes of poverty.

The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is a specific budget line dealing with thematic programme that has available approximately € 100 million/year under Chapter B7–7 of the budget to support human rights, democratisation and conflict prevention activities. Its specificity is that these activities are to be carried out primarily in partnership with NGOs and international organisations. In the field of electoral assistance it is used primarily for civic education and voter information campaigns, public awareness-raising programmes, capacity building and technical assistance for domestic observers groups. The EU Electoral Observation Missions are exclusively funded by EIDHR.

The Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) is a flexible instrument designed to allow the Community to respond urgently to the needs of countries threatened with or undergoing severe political instability or suffering from the effects of a technological or natural disaster. Interventions under this instrument are generally aimed at re-establishing the minimal civilian structures necessary to ensure political stability in contexts of crisis and emerging crisis, and the maximum duration of implementation of any RRM project is six months;

5.2 Overview of EC Services involved and related responsibilities

The EC is responsible, in cooperation with the related counterpart of the beneficiary country, for programming, identifying and formulating the projects/programmes, providing finance and monitoring progress and evaluating the results in order to support institutional learning and improve for future projects/programmes. In the area of Electoral Assistance the EC's primary role is to support institutions/agencies/consortia that implement electoral assistance activities. EC Delegations worldwide are now operating under the deconcentration principle. They thus have
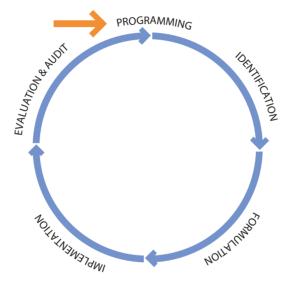
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1 Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States

2 Financial and Technical Cooperation with Asian and Latin American countries

3 Financial instrument of the European Union for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

4 Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation for the Western Balkans

the leading role, together with the relevant National Authorities, over the identification, formulation, implementation and evaluation phases. At HQ level the support to Delegations and National Authorities in all these indicated phases is handled by a number of different services according to the different phases of the operations' cycle. The timing of these activities is shown below:

Programming: Each Delegation together with specific geographical/country service in RELEX and DEV is responsible, in consultation with RELEX B1 (Human Rights and Democratisation Unit), inclusion for the programming of electoral assistance within each Country Strategy Paper. RELEX B1 has the general responsibility of mainstreaming electoral assistance in the programming exercises. RELEX B1 is also "chef de file" for the programming of the EIDHR funds for all the EUEOMs and for small scale electoral assistance activities implemented by CSOs mainly on domestic observation and voter education.

Identification, Formulation, Implementation and Evaluation: These tasks are the responsibility of the deconcentrated Delegations in cooperation with the national counterparts. AIDCO geographical services, via their geographic coordinators, are responsible for providing support to the Delegations over the operational phases under the various financial instruments (EDF and BUDGET) available. The exception is the EIDHR where the Central Management Unit, AIDCO 04, deals with EUEOMs (centrally managed, minor involvement of Delegations) and with specific centrally managed small scale projects related to electoral assistance implemented by CSOs.

Quality Support Operations: The recent restructuring of AIDCO addressed the need to concentrate sector/thematic knowledge in one single Directorate. As far as electoral assistance is concerned, the creation of the Unit for Governance, Human Rights, Democratisation and Gender in

the Directorate for Operations Quality Control, has allowed to acquire internal electoral assistance expertise. The objective and various activity carried out by the Unit are targeting the anticipation of the needs and the facilitation of the tasks of EC Delegations, Geo-coordinators and Country Desks at HQ when dealing with electoral assistance issues. The Unit focuses on four types of support:

a) Operational guidance and implementation strategies for the management of projects/ programmes, themes and mainstreaming. This guidance, drawing from general sector policies defined by DG RELEX and DG DEV, provide quality standards for projects and programmes, templates for key documents, reviews of best practice (including those con-cerning approaches, procedural matters and training) for HQ staff and Delegations.

b) Quality Support, on demand, at all stages of the programme cycle in order to provide assurance in the application of the recommended quality standards.

c) Support on demand in all phases of the operations' cycle.

d) Monitoring of activities.

> The main objective is to rationalise the approach to electoral assistance, ensure coher-ence between development cooperation and delivery mechanisms and ensure the creation of a specific strategic operational framework, which is in fact the context within which this Methodological Guide has been conceived.

5.3 Programming Electoral Assistance

The appreciation of the constant impact that electoral assistance exerts on the democratic development of any country should be borne in mind when a new multi-year strategy of assist-ance is planned by the relevant Commission services and the relevant Delegation in coordination with the beneficiary country counterparts in the Government. The key document that outlines the strategic areas of activity for the immediate and medium-term EC interventions of development cooperation in a specific partner country is the Country Strategy Paper (CSP).

In this context it is crucial to give adequate consideration to the general circumstances of the electoral cycle and to the available entry points in the medium and long term. Programming interventions for the purpose of electoral assistance should be based on clear recognition of the position in the electoral cycle occupied by the partner country and on what is required to promote democratic development and good governance.

At this stage it is necessary to consider the political advisability of, and the results from, intervention in a given process. A thorough analysis of the political, legal, social and cultural situation in the country is essential. Different tools are available from different sources, providing

different levels of information: Governance Analyses, State of Democracy, Power Analyses[5]. Donor Coordination and exchange of information are essential at every phase of the electoral cycle.

A statistical tool that can be used in the same assessment exercise is the Electoral Democracy Index (EDI), a measure of political rights as related to the election of governments. It was recently created for the 2005 UNDP Report of Democracy in Latin America.*

The four components, right to vote, clean elections, free e The four components: right to vote; clean elections, free elections and elected public officials, were selected as the main elements that define a democratic regime. The EDI is measured on a scale 0,00 to 1,00 with 0,00 indicating the absence of democracy and any reading above 0.00 indicating the existence of a degree of electoral democracy, higher scores referring to higher degrees of electoral democracy.

The EDI gathers together information on some key elements of democracy but, as recognized by the authors, "it is a relatively limited measurement of the exercise of democracy". In fact, the concept of the democratic political regime based on the most widely-shared beliefs about fundamental political rights.

* Democracy in Latin America, toward a Citizen's Democracy, UNDP 2005

Once the CSP contains adequate references to democratic development and promotion of governance, it will be consequential to proceed within the already set overall cooperation framework to a proper identification and formulation of adequate electoral assistance projects. In this context, the relevance of a project is related to an agreed strategy of governance development, already mentioned in the CSP and should be attuned to the real problems of target groups and beneficiaries. It is crucial that electoral assistance projects ensure consistency with the overall national development policies, EC development policies, and development priorities for non-state actors

This holistic approach to the electoral process should also trigger almost naturally a long term vision in the programming of electoral assistance, and a gradual approach to the advancement of good governance goals.

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5   IDEA Democracy Assessment Handbook, Freedom House, EC Handbook on Good Governance.

The experience acquired so far has also demonstrated the very high political and social impacts resulting from electoral assistance projects produced in partner countries and for relatively low costs. In this context, the governance sector should remain the favoured terrain on which to place electoral assistance programmes. However, it is also true that, given the large spectrum of activities covered, electoral assistance projects can also easily fit into other focal or non focal sectors of Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programmes.

5.4   Identifying and Formulating Electoral Assistance

If the CSP has included proper reference to the relationship between electoral support and the overall governance development objectives of the EC, the identification and formulation of projects becomes a key activity in terms of the design of an effective assistance. The complexity and the type of activities that compose each phase of the electoral cycle have demonstrated the presence of ample opportunities for the EC Delegations to identify entry points with significant lead times. As mentioned previously, the knowledge of where the partner country is in the electoral cycle is a key prerequisite for the partner country is a crucial passage for the identification of the most adequate activities to be supported. The case studies of this Guide offer an overview of the approaches which have been used and of how they can be improved, and also introduce tools which that can help in the identification/formulation stage .

An option that is considered to be very useful by Delegations, in assisting them to make key decisions concerning project identification and formulation, is the deployment of missions from the Operations Quality Support Directorate which can combine the assessment of the electoral related needs of the partner country with the identification of an identification fiche and/or formulation of a financial proposal. Where it is not possible to deploy such missions, the commissioning of external electoral assistance experts is an option which the Delegations can pursue.

In electoral assistance terms, the combination of identification and formulation phases seems logical, and can sensibly reduce the time needed for the approval of the project, but it however also requires immediate coordination with other proposed donor activities. More importantly, it has to be synchronized with the activities of other electoral assistance providers.

It is also advisable that when there is a reasonable possibility for the EC to participate by pooling its resources in projects managed by other organisations, such as UNDP or bilateral agencies, then identification and project formulation missions should be carried out jointly with the other organisations. This would allow for the development of a common understanding of the partner country's needs and for the Delegation to negotiate from the outset the conditions for its participation in the pooled project or for the division of responsibilities concerning the areas of intervention.

Joint missions would support the Delegations a and the counterpart authority in the production of the necessary Project Documentation[6]. The missions will look at the following issues: the overall results sought from the electoral assistance the activities to be carried out and the related operations, implementation methodologies and the technologies required for the given electoral process; the assessment of the capacity of the procurement entities; and, the timing and costs of various phases in the registration and electoral processes, including all the relevant procurement aspects. Support in the form of domestic and external expertise should be openly enlisted in all of these activities.

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A joint report will be setting out the respective positions of of the involved organisations. Joint finding from these types of missions form a basis for the preparation of the EC Financial Proposal, the Financing Agreement, and the Contribution Agreement with the implementing organisations. In the case of the presence of different donors to the pool fund, it is recommended the drafting of a Memorandum Of Understanding between the donors, EMBs and other partners at country level to articulate the results sought from the electoral assistance and describe the financing and delivery modalities.

When identifying and formulating projects in collaboration with a partner country, the EC should take into account any relevant recommendations coming from EUEOMs and/or previous assessment missions to that country and also seek collaboration with the EUEOMs for the drafting of electoral assistance activities in support of its recommendations.

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6   For the EC the Project Identification Fiche (PIF) and Financial Proposal (FP)

5.4.1 Access to Global Knowledge Tools on Electoral Assistance

There are a considerable number of instruments which are already generally already widely accessible through Internet that can be used for deepening specific knowledge on election-administration/management related issues. Task managers have to consider the use of these when confronted with decision to make regarding the identification, formulation and implementation of electoral assistance projects.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) specialises in the production of specific content for electoral administrators and electoral assistance providers, and offers a number of global knowledge tools that could be used also by donor or other interested parties. On this the EC and IDEA have established a strategic partnership where IDEA offers electoral assistance knowledge developed in the last ten years also in collaboration with all the other major actors in the field through the unique global knowledge tools on Electoral Assistance. On its side, the EC, rationalizing its field experiences and illustrating the best practices with this Methodological Guide and other operational tools, offers the practical expertise from the implementation side.

IDEA is one of seven organisations behind the **"ACE Project"**, where ACE stands for Administration and Cost of Elections[7]. In its new phase, as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, the project encourages professionals to generate, share and apply knowledge, to solve problems, to help develop common methods, and to improve the professionalism of those engaged in implementing electoral activities. IDEA's partners in the ACE project are, UNDP, UNDESA, International IDEA, IFES, EISA, IFE and Elections Canada. ACE provides comprehensive and authoritative information on elections, promotes networking among election-related professionals and offers capacity development services in one web portal. The members of Project are leaders in the provision of targeted technical assistance in electoral management. Recently, the EC has provided funding, under the EIDHR, which is being used to support the practitioners network established by the ACE Project and therefore is a partner of the project with the seven founding organizations offering also knowledge and implementation experiences in election observation and electoral assistance.

The project itself comprises three components:

Component 1: Knowledge Services: ACE Knowledge Services offer a framework for the design, planning and implementation of elections consistent with the maintenance of a core set of principles. Products include:

ACE Encyclopaedia: an online repository of information covering twelve themes in elections management, with an emphasis on the issues of cost, sustainability, professionalism and trust in the electoral process. The encyclopaedia also includes a glossary, interactive electoral quiz and

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7   *www.aceproject.org*

help desk, comprehensive coverage of timely topics in elections and an archive of materials from the Administration and Cost of Elections Project.

Comparative Data: comparative data on election practices worldwide made available by the EPIC project.

Elections Today: a news resource that features articles, electoral happenings, an election calendar and polling results from national presidential and parliamentary elections.

Electoral Materials: a wide and structured on line collection of electoral resources from all over the world.

Component 2: The Practitioners Network: this brings together election professionals and practitioners from different countries having diverse and complementary experience and specialisation into the first ever global knowledge network established in the field of elections. The Practitioners Network is supported by a regional infrastructure of affiliated Regional Electoral Resource Centres, established in strategic geographical locations worldwide which will serve as hubs for the main objectives of the Project for the generation and sharing of electoral knowledge. Members of the Practitioners' Network share common interests, common goals and common professional responsibilities and are the source for generating and sharing knowledge, global experiences and best practices. They participate in Thematic Groups according to their preferred thematic and/or geographical areas of expertise and specialisation. Through the facilities and services of the Electoral Advice section, members of the Practitioners' Network "meet", interact, collaborate on election-related subjects and share expertise and know-how on elections. Their interaction generates election-related knowledge that is then codified, retained, shared and adapted to be applied in local contexts and re-used by other election practitioners who are confronted with the same or similar challenges and which are faced with the problem of adapting them to meet local challenges in the form of expert advice, best practices, lessons learned and peer review.

In this context EC Delegations and their national counterparts, as well as practitioners working in electoral assistance projects, have the possibility to submit specific queries concerning the implementation of electoral activities and of receiving answers which are posted on the site for all to see, especially other EC Delegations, practitioners struggling with similar problems.

Component 3: Capacity Development: ACE places a particular emphasis on the power of training, professional advisory services and peer partnerships—especially among electoral management bodies—to increase the capacity of electoral actors to administer free and fair elections. Overall, the objective of this third component is to, more forcefully, take advantage of the wealth of knowledge and expertise both in the materials and the networks of the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, so that member organisations are provided with a menu of capacity development services.

Another capacity building oriented instrument for election professionals is the BRIDGE Course on Election Administration. The acronym BRIDGE stands for "Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections" (*www.bridge-project.org*). This is an interactive modular course which contains 10 topic areas similar to the one developed for ACE and the electoral cycle. The course can be run in any country with accredited facilitators and interpreters. In most cases the participants on these courses are election administrators in developing countries. The concourse can also be used by any EC professional or consultant involved in electoral assistance programming who wishes to develop a more technical understanding of the electoral process[8].

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8   The BRIDGE partners include the IDEA, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD) and the Australian Election Commission (AEC). The course can be conducted module by module or on in a mixed or partial format on a needs basis or conducted as a Train-the-Facilitator programme. Each module is designed to take 3 days but tailor-made courses can be designed to suit the needs of a target group. The modules include: Standard and Principles, Electoral Systems, Public Outreach, Boundary Delimitation, Voter Registration, Contestants, Preparation for the Electoral Event, Voting and Counting, Observers, Strategies.

BRIDGE New Curriculum Framework 2006–2007

Foundation Module – Introduction to Electoral Administration
20 Modules in 3 Clusters / each module = 2–3 days

Electoral Architecture	Working with Electoral Stakeholders	Electoral Operations
Legal Framework	Access to Electoral Processes	Voter Registration
Boundary Delimitation	Voter Education	Pre-election Activities
Electoral Systems	Electoral Contestants	Training of Electoral Officials
Structure of Electoral Management Bodies	Electoral Observation	Polling, Counting and Results
Electoral Technology	Media and Elections	Post Election Activities
	Electoral Assistance	External Voting
	Gender & Elections	Security
	Electoral Dispute Resolution	

Other professional tools and publications are present on many specialised web sites, the most important of which are listed in an Annex to this Guide. One recent publication, the "Cost of Registration and Elections", a joint UNDP/IFES handbook, examines the global costs of registration and elections, breaks down key elements and analyses important trends. This will prove extremely valuable in shaping ideas on electoral costs or in preparing electoral assistance projects.

5.4.2 Sources for Project Identification and Formulation

The information gathered and the evaluations elaborated by potential previous Needs Assessment and/or Project Identification/Formulation Missions, together with the analysis of the specific entry points available for assistance in the partner country's electoral cycle, should offer the Task Managers in Delegations and the relevant EuropeAid geographical services a reliable picture for the identification and formulation of the projects.

Important sources for project ideas can come from EUEOMs or other observer groups recommendations made at the end of the previous electoral event, from post-election internal performance reviews, from parliamentary debates on reforms or from civil society demands. Consultation forum with key stakeholders in the middle of the project identification stages are also an excellent mechanism to promote local ownership and define the most appropriate intervention areas.

The EC publication "Aid Delivery Methods, Project Cycle Management (PCM) Guidelines is essential on this matter. In particular the section dealing with the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) and the Logical Framework Matrix (LFM)[9] describes a technique and an effective analytical/management tool which must always be applied. In this context, special attention should be paid to risk analysis and risk management aspects. While there is a standard approach to any LFA, the inherently volatile political nature of the electoral process will mean that there will always be developments which are difficult to anticipate. Risks analysis and related management techniques deserve continued attention and constant analysis which must be reflected in the project formulation process.

In designing a project it is healthy to remember that there is no such thing as a perfect election and that events can always arise which can completely change the situation. Sometimes it is a completely unforeseeable factor, like critical weather conditions, political uprising or a candidate's death that causes the critical situation, but other times the crisis could be a consequence of an underestimation of certain factors in the design and planning. Time is always the most precious commodity in an electoral process because an adequate provision of a contingency plan can save an election.

In this context it is imperative to include in the Financial Proposal measurable indicators which will play an important role in an ex-post evaluation of the project, thereby allowing for the improved formulation of future electoral interventions in that country. A full range of electoral indicators is to be found in the annexes with indications of possible sources of verification sources and international standards.

5.4.3 Specific Elements to be considered in the Formulation Stage

The most critical issues that need to be answered in formulation phase are related to the relevance, feasibility, effectiveness and sustainability[10]. Electoral assistance projects, on the one

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9   See Section 5 of the Project Management Guidelines

10   Section 4 of the PCM Guidelines offers a detailed analysis and explanation of the mentioned criteria. In particular page 30–32

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hand, given the time constraints under which are usually identified and formulated[11], often do not pay adequate attention to these criteria, but on the other hand have an enormous potential to meet them all. Each stage of the electoral cycle offers many identification and formulation opportunities, as long as there is sufficient lead time for their proper implementation.

For example, technical and financial support to be given to a partner country for the purchase of electronic voting machines (EVMs) should be considered only after the successful completion of a number of other steps, such as the centralisation and digitalisation of the voter register, the establishment of sound mechanisms for the electronic transmission of results and so forth. The achievement of these objectives could be pursued by giving long-term support to projects that seek the introduction of modern and efficient organizational models within the EMBs (for example composition, decision-making process, territorial structure, management organization, budgeting and planning skills) and promote the growth and the progressive participation in civil society. The feasibility of electoral projects depends mainly upon the setting of objectives that are realistically achievable given the environmental and time constraints and the specific capabilities of the national counterparts concerned. Risk management is strictly related to the feasibility study and the cost analysis of electoral processes. Typically, there are three levels at which risk can occur: political, financial and operational.

The political Level is the most important one. The overarching consideration is to ascertain whether the political and legal framework fulfil the pre-conditions to hold credible, transparent, free and fair elections on time, but in addition each project must take into due account whether the political situation is likely to affect the electoral time frame, and if there is the political will to support the scheduled process or rather a hidden desire to delay it to score some eventual political gain. Another important element is the opportunity for the EC to provide assistance to a process which may legitimise a government which does not respect all the political and civil rights of the electorate, and whether, despite this situation there, is still some positive outcome for the democratic development of the partner country that can be achieved.

In most of the countries the EC Delegations may benefit from the findings of the Need Assessment Missions (NAM) of the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the UN. In fact, following a request from a given Government through the UNDP, a DPA NAM takes place where the principal objectives of the mission are to provide an assessment of the overall environment in which to hold democratic elections in the given country. The findings could be then taken in to consideration by the Delegations and EuropeAid/DEV/RELEX services or by the specific formulation missions of external experts organized to prepare the necessary project documentation.

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11   Specific consideration should be given in this context to the different timing for the preparation of the FP in the various geographic instruments: in MEDA and TACIS the FP at the end of the identification stage, while for ACP and ALA the FP is prepared only after the complete formulation of the project.

The Financial Level. The main questions revolve around the following questions: whether the global budget is sufficient or not to cover all the costs; if contingency costs have been adequately factored in, if the release of funds either from the State Budget or from non-state actors will be in sync with key activities in the electoral cycle; and, whether deadlines for payments will be met. Before allocating and releasing the funds, it is important to verify if the budget is excessive, in particular, if some of the weightier components like logistics, electoral materials or personnel have been over-estimated due to artificially high cost estimates or costing based upon "non-rational " and non-essential allocations of resources. On these issues the latest edition of the "CORE - Global Survey on the Cost of Registration and Elections" can be used to provide sound estimates of the costs of registration and elections operations are indicated. In fact, as the table below shows, there are several factors that can impact on the overall budget:

The Operational Level: This is frequently considerably underestimated, and there will always be a tendency to doubt that the planned operations can be conducted in the given time frame within the given budget. In this context, a fundamental aspect of many projects is the procurement of material. The importance of proper procurement planning is often neglected, and many of the contingencies and unforeseen events in elections are the results of poor procurement strategies. Sometimes this can be the consequence on unclear objectives, and sometimes it can be the result of a failure to understand or apply the required procurement procedures to be applied. The importance of the procurement exercise and the length of time that it can take makes all the more important the need for the national authorities to submit to the EC Delegations the official request for electoral assistance as early a stage as possible to start project identification and formulation activities.

"**The number and time sequence of elections** are variables that make it difficult to compare electoral costs among different countries. It is not always easy to split budgets and assign costs to different elections. A distinction between **personnel costs and operational costs** is generally used as the main structuring criteria in an electoral budget. Over time, there are fixed costs for the ordinary functioning of an electoral administration; these costs are incurred independently of the occurrence of elections in a given year. **Variable costs,** meanwhile, are those related to the actual conduct of elections. Almost the entire budget for a specific election consists of variable costs.

With the term funding source, three main distinctions can be made. One is between **separate electoral budget** that is part of the consolidated budget of the nation and **election-tied funds** that form part of the budget of public agencies whose main responsibilities have little or nothing to do with elections (i.e. civil registries, police and postal services). Another distinction, between **national and international funding of electoral budgets,** is of utmost relevance in the case of post-conflict

elections and even second-generation elections in emerging democracies. A third distinction, between **public and private funding**, is applicable primarily in regards to the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns.

Electoral-budget costs that can be readily identified on a budget document are called direct costs. There are also **diffuse costs**—those that may prove difficult or impossible to accurately assess even if properly identified. An additional and very important distinction is between **integrity costs and core costs.** This distinction may be essential for an adequate understanding of the funding of elections, most notably in emerging and post-conflict democracies. It has much to do with conditions ensuring a safe, politically neutral environment and a level playing field"*.

* **Getting to the CORE - Global Survey on the Cost of Registration and Elections. UNDP Bureau for Development Policy and IFES Center for Transitional and Post Conflict Governance.**

This weakness is exacerbated in post-conflict elections, where the sudden "abundance" of donor funds is inversely proportional to the time constraints, and where sustainability considerations are necessarily a priority. The ability to deliver the electoral material and the needed services in time is essential as a delay in the electoral date could cause problems of different nature; from financial to political to even reopen a conflict. An efficient and properly managed procurement process will not only be more cost-effective but will also minimize the chances of subsequent technical problems arising as it forces the buyers to assess and evaluate the nature of the goods or services to be procured in advance.

The sustainability analysis refers instead mainly to the benefits to be attained, which should take into consideration any improvement in political stability brought about by the elections as well as more technical benefits, such as establishment of good procedures, equipment that can be reused, development of the electoral officers capacity to run the process more independently and the acquisition of any other particular skills. In addition, a first suggestion of the level of resourcing required and the cost implications must be sought.

An analysis of the results of the monitoring of previous assistance projects and of any evaluations conducted upon them, is essential groundwork, at the operational level, for the identification and formulation of assistance packages which will address the key problems and achieve the objective set out for the projects.

There are as well a set of quality assessment criteria provided in the so called "Quality Frame" that can be used at the end of every PCM stage to ensure adequate analysis and consistent decision-making[12]. The main information elements that should be available by the end of any formulation, in order to effectively guide and support implementation, are shown below:

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12   PCM Guidelines, page 22. They can be applied at three levels: task mangers at the Delegation or HQ, QSG or other consultants and top managements.

SITUATION ANALYSIS / KEY ASSESSMENTS
Policy & programme contact
Stakeholder analysis & Institutional capacity assessment
Problem analysis
Lesson learned and review of ongoing/planned initiatives
Strategy selection

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Overall objective and purpose
Target group, location and duration
Result and indicative activities
Resources and costs

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS
Coordination and management structures
Financial and management / financing arrangements
Monitoring evaluation and audit

FEASIBILITY & SUSTAINABILITY
Economic and financial
Environmental
Technical
Social & governance
Risk management
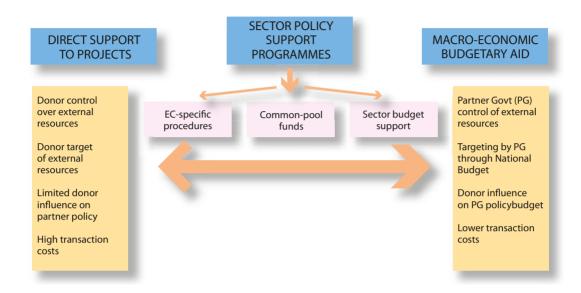
5.5   Delivery Methods in EC Electoral Assistance

The balance/mix of aid delivery methods (approaches and financing modality) to be used should be based on an assessment of the social, economic and political/ electoral development context of the country one is working with and the respective priorities of the development partners. The decision on the delivery method is a crucial one to be made also in electoral assistance, as it entails the setting into motion of implementation via financing/operating modalities. These might differ from one another and offers examples of overlapping elements among them. Three of the main considerations to be balanced in this decision include:

- The degree of control which the Delegation wish to maintain over their resources;
- The level at which Delegations and their partners wish to engage in dialogue - policy or project; and
- The level of transaction costs associated with managing EC and other donor funds.

These considerations are summarised in the table shown below adapted from the EC Project Cycle Management Guidelines:

DIRECT SUPPORT TO PROJECTS	SECTOR POLICY SUPPORT PROGRAMMES	MACRO-ECONOMIC BUDGETARY AID
Donor control over external resources	EC-specific procedures / Common-pool funds / Sector budget support	Partner Govt (PG) control of external resources
Donor target of external resources		Targeting by PG through National Budget
Limited donor influence on partner policy		Donor influence on PG policybudget
High transaction costs		Lower transaction costs

As resumed below, three different EC Approaches for implementation and related financing modalities. are basically possible and these are discussed in the following section.

5.5.1 Sector Approach vs. Project Approach

The **Sector Approach:** is defined as a way of working together with the Government and other partners. The aim is to broaden the government's ownership over electoral policy and resource allocation decisions within the electoral sector, in order to increase coherence between policy, spending and results.[13]

As a result, Governments and Electoral Management Bodies, in consultation with partner donors and other Stakeholders in the electoral process, may develop an updated sector policy and action plan which is can be defined as the Sector Programme. Such a programme would include:

1. An approved sectorial policy document and overall strategic framework
2. A sectorial medium term expenditure framework (MTEF)
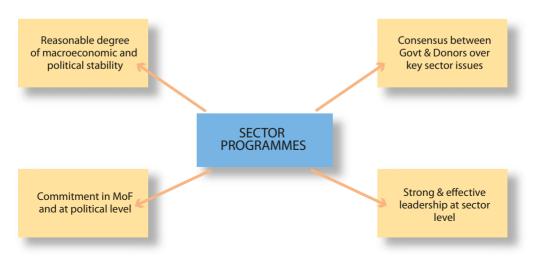3. A government-led Donor co-ordination process.

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13   EC Support to Sector Programmes at a Glance, Brussels, September 2004

Table below highlights the features that distinguish a Sector Approach from a conventional project approach:

Sector-wide approach	Conventional project approach
• Country holistic view on entire sector	• Focus on projects to support narrowly defined objectives
• Partnerships with mutual trust and shared accountability	• Recipient accountable to donor
• External partners' co-ordination and dol-lective dialogue	• Bilateral negotiations and agreements
• Increased use of local procedures	• Parallel implementation arrangements
• Long-term capacity/system through learning by doing	• Short-term disbursement and success of projects
	• Blueprint approach

Source: Adapted from World Bank (2004), "SWAps in Latin America: A World Bank Perspective", Powerpoint presentation, Tegucigalpa, 8–10 November.

Experience shows that any Sector Programme requires a reasonable degree of macro economic and political stability, consensus between Government and Donors over the key sector issues, commitment of partners (perhaps involving a MoU), and at political level and strong and effective leadership at sector level.

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Sector Programmes in general should have six components as indicated below:

These fully-fledged components are rarely accomplished in their entirety during an electoral process. So far, the possibility to utilise a "sector wide approach" for an electoral assistance programme has been quite remote. Nevertheless the new "electoral cycle approach" of the EC on electoral assistance is not entirely compatible with the conventional project approach and has strong "Sectorial Features".
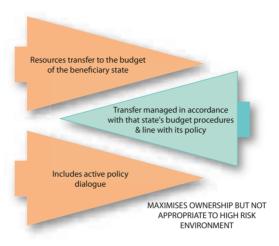
EC contractual and financial procedures remain an appropriate delivery instrument in the EC electoral assistance field for:

- Delivering financial and technical assistance in support of change management and capacity development processes where the conditions for supporting sector programme and providing budget support do not yet exist
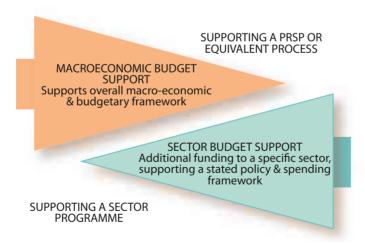- Cooperation with non-government agencies/organisations and civil society groups

5.5.2 Sector programmes financing modalities on Electoral Assistance

As indicated below, there are three financing modalities to implement Sector Programmes related to Electoral Assistance:

A) IMPLEMENTATION VIA BUDGET SUPPORT: This involves a resource transfer to the budget of the beneficiary State to be managed independently by the third country agency through the exclusive use of its budget and financial management systems.

Resources transfer to the budget
of the beneficiary state

Transfer managed in accordance
with that state's budget procedures
& line with its policy

Includes active policy
dialogue

MAXIMISES OWNERSHIP BUT NOT
APPROPRIATE TO HIGH RISK
ENVIRONMENT

This method aims at maximising national ownership and consistency with national development policies and minimizes at the same time the transaction costs, answering at the same time to the mutual concerns of recipient governments and donors to concentrate resources. There are two types Budget Support: General Macro economic Budget Support and Sector Budget Support.

SUPPORTING A PRSP OR
EQUIVALENT PROCESS

MACROECONOMIC BUDGET
SUPPORT
Supports overall macro-economic
& budgetary framework

SECTOR BUDGET SUPPORT
Additional funding to a specific sector,
supporting a stated policy & spending
framework

SUPPORTING A SECTOR
PROGRAMME

This modality has been so far used only once in EC electoral assistance, to support the Mozambican electoral processes 2003–2004, and it is not likely to be used very often given the limited control on electoral expenditure and on technical decisions that it offers to the donors and technical assistance providers. Elections, because they are time specific and of such political

importance, are not easy to assess in national development terms, rather they are a precondition of such assessment. For this very reason, this option could be favoured by partner country counterparts, as it is characterised by a quicker delivery of funds and limited control on the immediate electoral expenditures, and focuses more on the development of sound public finance management and fulfillment of the overall national policy objectives.

On the other hand, this "opening of credit" forces the national governments to strengthen accountability mechanisms and to adopt higher degree of transparency and openness towards the entire donor community and the Parliament on overall budgetary issues. It is unlikely that this approach will feature prominently in future in the electoral assistance field, although it has the advantages of empowering the national institutions, facilitating control through the use of agreed benchmarks and indicators, and making available to national institutions the strategic but non-intrusive native of technical assistance. These are all components capable of playing a significant role in the management of funds allocated for the organizations of the elections.

B) IMPLEMENTATION VIA COMMON POOL FUNDING: in many electoral assistance projects, funds are channelled through other international agencies belonging to the UN family that have more flexibility to set quickly up and manage basket funds to deliver electoral assistance. This modality has advantages in terms of donor coordination, in terms of management of resources, and recruitment, accordingly yielding competitive advantages in situations where electoral assistance has to be delivered fast and efficiently in situation of such as snap elections in sudden crises.

Participation in multi-donor pool funding mechanisms, such as basket funds as indicated above, requires that a mechanism is established to receive financial contributions from bilateral and/or multilateral donors on a specific project, sector country or region. The implementation powers of the EC are in these cases generally entrusted to international organisations, as forms of joint management[14]. However, in future such pool fund management may be entrusted to recipient country's agencies or to other EU Member States and changes to the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulations are under consideration to allow these possibilities[15].

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14 Art. 53.7 FR applicable to Budget and Articles 12 and 16 of FR applicable to EDF.

15 Pool fund management by national agencies of member states is currently possible under the financial regulations applicable to Budget only in case this is sanctioned in the relevant basic act (54.2 FR applicable to Budget). To date, only PHARE and CARDS have modified it. For the EDF, pool fund management is currently possible only in case of co-financing (Art. 14. 3 FR applicable to EDF)

To date, the EC has almost invariably delegated the management of its funds to UNDP which has evolved as the privileged EC partner for this sort of undertaking. This is being facilitated by the fact that UNDP has been given the mandate under UN General Assembly* to co- ordinate electoral assistance at country level between national and international actors also as regulated by an internal agreement between UNDP and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs (EAD/DPA) inside the United Nations Secretariat.

Joint and co-financed intervention by the community is a very appropriate way to support the electoral process. Nevertheless, it is common for the EC to be approached to provide EC assistance to elections in over a very limited time frame where sometimes the specific expertise, tools and procedures allowing for a rapid and cost effective support.

* Resolution 46/137 of 17 December 1991

The UNDP has a competitive advantage in view of: its the long involvement in the provision of electoral assistance, its way of recruiting international electoral experts, its mandate for donors' coordination (where UNDP services in this area are very often requested by the partner country), and, its ability to pre-finance activities once the contribution agreement with the EC is signed. This last element often makes the difference when a rapid implementation choice needs to be made. The EC funds are channeled to the UNDP according to the procedures and regulations set out in the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) between the European Community and the United Nations[16].

Pool fund management through UNDP has enabled the EC over the last five years, to provide very significant contributions in the form of support for electoral assistance projects which have positively influenced the conduct of elections and democratic development in many partner countries. However, the great majority of these contributions were formulated and agreed upon in speed and directed to support events and not processes. The time constraints that have typically characterised EC-UNDP cooperation in electoral assistance to date have sometimes caused misunderstanding at the implementation level generally related to limited visibility of the EC contribution or to a lack of political say of the EC in the decision-making process of electoral support activities. The different language and definitions used by the two organisations in the respective project proposals has often been the source of some confusion.

In this context, on 21st April 2006, the Director General of EuropeAid, Mr. Koos Richelle, and the UNDP Associate Administrator, Mr. Ad Melkert endorsed the EC/UNDP Operational Guidelines

16   Chapter 7 of the Practical Guide to contract procedures for the EC External action available on *http://ec.europa.eu/ comm/EuropeAid/tender/practical_guide_august2006/annexes_intlorgs_en.htm*

for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects. In full respect of the provisions laid out in the existing FAFA, the Guidelines outline practical measures for the strengthening the already established cooperation between the EC and the UNDP in the domain of electoral assistance. Drawing upon the lessons learned and the complex operational challenges especially faced in the **Democratic Republic of Congo,** the guidelines clarify implementation aspects, and tighten up and improve the EC/UNDP collaboration in this field so as to further promote the effectiveness and efficiency of electoral assistance initiatives. These Guidelines were produced with a view to reducing the time needed to formalise and implement future country specific cooperation agreements by anticipating the needs and facilitating the tasks of EC Delegations and UNDP Country Offices.

In addition to this, the EC Delegations and UNDP Country Offices are supported respectively by the Directorate for Quality Support Operations of EuropeAid and relevant expertise from UNDP Bureaus, such as the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP in New York) and the Bureau for Resource mobilisation and Strategic Partnerships (BRSP, Brussels).

C) IMPLEMENTATION VIA EC CONTRACTUAL AND FINANCIAL PROCEDURES: in cases where it is politically important for the EC to intervene alone and where there is enough time and resources, at all phases of the electoral cycle, implementation of assistance projects based upon EC contracting and financial procedures has proven to be successful, thanks mainly to the inclusion of significant capacity development components.

This approach requires longer-term preparation and the consistent commitment of the Delegation, both in terms of project formulation and in terms of implementation and evaluation, which might considerably strain the EC resources in an electoral year. On the other hand it pays

high political dividends. It has worked well in contexts where the EC has equipped itself with specifically recruited electoral expertise. Considering the rigorous procedures for the procurement of supply, services and works, in cases where EC rules apply, the procedures to follow are those in laid out in the Practical Guide to contract procedures for the EC external action[17]. For this, Delegations should make sure that they receive requests for assistance from the national authorities, well in advance so that they can start the project identification and formulation quickly. In this context, the component of coordination with other donors and other actors takes on an important role.

The difficulties in implementing projects in such a manner are generally linked to late requests for electoral assistance from the national authorities and EMBs, late and/or erroneous technical specifications for the procurement of Electoral Material and Services, the relative scarcity of Implementing Agencies in electoral assistance for the management of large contracts.

In these cases it is necessary to negotiate the submission of an early request from the National Authorities and EMBs and this will also be facilitated by: early identification and formulation of projects (including precise technical specifications for the procurement of electoral material and services); the adoption of the Electoral Cycle Approach; and, efforts to apply accelerated procedures for procurement.[18]

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D) DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS OF FINANCING MODALITIES AND VISIBILITY: some very important success stories of EC electoral assistance are the result of mixing financing modalities. This has allowed the EC to formulate the assistance packages with various degrees of control and engage in dialogue with the partner countries at different levels and with different actors according to the situation. A standard example of mixing aid delivery modalities is by contributing to multi-donor basket funds on the one side and by launching in parallel separate calls for proposals for the implementation of specific projects to support issues arising at the various stages of the electoral cycle, for instance, the civic education and voter information areas.

This is an option that proved to be feasible in several contexts and carries the advantage that it requires coordination with other donors on the implementation of the main electoral tasks while leaving the EC free to pursue EU objectives by assisting non-state actors and supporting the development of the civil society in general. The support can take different shapes and can crosscut different areas of the electoral process. Other typical forms of assistance could include the provision of technical assistance or grants to domestic observation groups or media monitoring organizations. These types of activities need to be approved at least one year before election in order to be successful and require adequate mechanisms for financial management to be put in place with the domestic partners.

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17   *http://ec.europa.eu/comm/EuropeAid/tender/practical_guide_august2006/index_en.htm*

18   Accelerated procedure, as a matter of exception, is subject to derogation to the ordinary procedure which require an approval of the relevant EC services before such procedure is launched.

Whatever delivery methods selected, the Delegation needs to ensure the appropriate EC visibility during the implementation phase. Specific measures and initiatives shall be undertaken to ensure participation and adequate perception of the EC efforts among all the stakeholders of the electoral process. The Delegation would strengthen the important objectives for a broader EU visibility. To this extent, expenses for visibility actions are considered eligible project expenses to target: the Beneficiary population, the EU Decision makers (Council, Parliament...) plus the international donor community and the European taxpayers.

Delegations should seek to take a more pro-active role in promoting EC-funded activities, should take on additional responsibilities in steering committees and to increase its efforts to monitor the implementation of programmes/projects, making use of external expertise. In this respect, Delegations may consider recruiting temporary electoral operations/electoral assistance experts, for instance via the Technical Cooperation Facility Instrument (TCF). These experts would report to the Delegation and country's counterpart as per the work of the implementing partner and advising accordingly the EMBs as main beneficiary of the support.

The Delegation can also play a facilitator role for the long term recruitment of a EU Electoral Advisor that could be hired via bilateral funds of EU Member States and respond directly to the Troika, as was the case in Mozambique. This can play a very crucial liaison from the very beginning of an electoral cycle to help the Member States and Delegations to understand better the technical intricacies arising at each and every phase of the electoral cycle. The overall objective of this position would be enhance the EU capacity to follow up increasingly sophisticated electoral processes, in technological and operational terms. It was recorded as a successful experiences in several countries and the expert in fact could produce punctual reports and briefing for the Troika, as well as providing useful information for political reporting purposes of the Members States to the respective HQs.

5.6   Accelerated Procedures and Specifications for Electoral Material and Services subject to derogation

Time constraints can arise in the procurement of material and services particularly when EC contractual and financial procedures are in play. EC Delegations, based on the specific political considerations and the eventual time constraints faced, can consider requesting the use of accelerated procedures on a case-by-case basis. In line with the anticipated revision of the external assistance instruments and in order to ensure an effective and integrated response, it would be ideal for the implementation of electoral assistance activities to be placed within very tight time frames to have the possibility to access to the accelerated financial procedures available within the EC regulatory framework. This is absolutely crucial at least for interventions in post-conflict scenarios and snap elections. The time needed to launch tendering procedures and call for

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proposals according to the standard procedure is very often a hampering factor in the formulation and implementation of electoral assistance projects.

A particular aspect to take in consideration is the attention to be paid to the technical specifications of electoral material or services to be acquired. As electoral material and support services increasingly involve ICTs and become more sophisticated (e.g. use of GIS to delimitate boundaries, digital voter registration kits with biometric recognition features, OMR/OCR scanners, interactive voter register, electronic voting machines...) it is of utmost importance to forge close collaboration between Delegations, EMBs and implementing partners in order to accurately draft the technical specifications. It could also be wise to hire short term specialised expertise material. Mistakes and delays in the specifications could lead to the acquisition of non-appropriate and costly material, and have a significant negative impact on the electoral process.

Chapter 6
Formulation and Implementation Tools

6.1   Supports via Specific External Expertise

The identification, formulation and follow up of targeted interventions for electoral assist-ance can be greatly facilitated by the hiring of external electoral experts that support the National Authorities[19] and EC Delegations and report to both. This can be done mainly via the Technical Cooperation Facility modality (TCF) in case of ACP countries or similar instruments, selecting the expertise through the specific lots of the Framework Contracts.

The advantages of having specific technical expertise involved is an element that has made the difference in several cases of successful electoral assistance delivered by the EC and requested by the beneficiary country. One particular advantage that the early presence of electoral experts to support National Authorities offers is a value added in understanding and deciphering a number of complicated technical activities or policy options that every election administration is confronted with. External expertise can support the National Authorities and can help the EC Delegation and donor community to understand the eventual political implications hiding behind certain techni-cal choices or discern better the real needs from vendor driven proposals.

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In general, electoral expertise enables National Authorities and EC Delegations to gain a significant political and technical edge on methodological and strategic options for specific election activities (e.g. digital voter registration instead of scannable forms) that are under con-sideration in the partner country. This would allow in turn for a knowledge advantage, with the Delegations and National Authorities placing themselves in an informed and privileged position regarding the dialogue with the EMB when certain requests of funding highly expensive electoral equipment are made.

> In particular, when large programmes of financial assistance are being formulated (implemented either via EC contractual and financial procedures or through pool funds) and the provision of technical assistance within the national structure is foreseen, it can be crucial for the National Authorities to have one or more expert at a very early stage, to guide the entire formulation, supervise the implementation stages and advise at the same time the EMBs and other national institutions dealing with the electoral process.

The specific characteristics and the quantity of experts required will vary from country to country, and the emphasis will shift from one profile to another according to the specificity of the activities the EC and the beneficiary countries desire to get engaged in, the demands highlighted by the partner country, and the particular type of aid delivery method chosen. Typically, there are

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19   With the term National Authorities is meant the specific national institutions tasked with the interactions and coor-dination with the EC Delegation in their country for the management of the EU cooperation funds. In ACP countries for the management of EDF funds, for istance, these institutions are called "National Authorizing Offices".

six main different types of experts based upon background and professional experience that can be contracted by National Authorities and EC Delegations engaged in electoral assistance:

Electoral Assistance Experts, to directly support National Authorities, EMBs and Delegations on the different activities that can be implemented in support of the different phases of electoral cycles, to advise on technology to be acquired by the EMB, to assist in the procurement of specific electoral material and to provide qualified advice based on best practices on the identification, formulation, implementation and/or evaluation of the electoral assistance project.

Election Administration Experts, to provide advice to the partner country's EMB, report to National Authorities and Delegations, and to recommend future organisational and operational reform of the EMBs in view of an electoral event. They will also provide inputs into the EMB's strategies and procedures, with a specific view to enhancing the EMB capacity development and its interaction with other national agencies.

Legal Experts, to provide advice to the partner country's EMB and/or legislative body, and report to the National Authorities and Delegations, on the legal framework governing the election taking into consideration the country's constitution, the election law and other legal documents of interest to the process (media regulations…). They will analyse the country legislation and provide advice on the reform of the election administration, election complaints and appeals, political party registration, voters' registration, candidate registration, the electoral campaign, the media (in conjunction with the media expert), constituency boundaries, delimitation, polling, counting and the tabulation on votes

Finance and Administration Experts, to coordinate the financial disbursements from the EC to the partner country Ministry of Finance and/or EMBs and the cash flow from the MoF to the implementing agency, ensuring to Delegations and National Authorities the appropriate harmonisation of reporting, budgeting, accounting and procurement systems;

Electoral Operations Experts, to provide direct expert advice on logistical and operational aspects of the various EMBs' activities, in particular voter registration, polling day preparations and aggregation of results. To report to National Authorities and Delegations on the same issues

Election Database/Computer Experts, to advise the EMBs on technological solutions and provide technical advice on crucial policy choices of voter registration, electronic tabulation of results, electronic voting. To report to National Authorities and Delegations over the issues.

Media/Civic-Voter Education Experts, to provide advice to the partner country's EMB, report to National Authorities and Delegations, over the media landscape or the country and on the civic/voter education activities that can be implemented in support of electoral cycles. To advise on the laws and regulations defining media access and implementing media monitoring programmes.

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Standard minimal requirement of the successful candidates: have at least 8 years relevant, professional and managerial/advisoty experience in the given country should be considered as an asset. They must be proven and extensive track record in the different phases of implementation of electoral assistance projects according to their field of specialization. They must have experience in election administration and comparative experience in dealing with electoral legislation and electoral systems. Previous experience in the given region and in particular in the given country are to be considered asset. They must be fully fluent in the working language of the given country while knowledge of other official EU langauages should be regarded favourably, they must be able to provide high level advice in the field of their specialisation to all the stakeholders in the given electoral processes.

Experts may be able to fit a number of the assistance profiles outlined above, depending upon their qualifications and their previous operational experience. For instance there are cases of experts that can perform as electoral assistance expert and/or election administration experts. Others can equally well perform as election administration and/or legal expert. Such possibilities are not so open for Election Database/Computer Experts, although these experts can often make excellent electoral administration experts.

It is important to underline that in recruiting experts, experience in election observation does not equate to experience in the electoral assistance field in the above mentioned positions. This is also true for election observer experience at core team level (even less as short or long term electoral observer). While it is possible for an expert experienced in electoral assistance projects to operate effectively on observer mission (even in core team positions), it is much more difficult for an expert with observer experience to provide detailed support and advice in technical categories outlined.

As per punctual short-term technical assistance for less than 200,000 EURO in the election field to third countries benefiting from the Commission's External aid programmes, the system Framework Contract (FWC) shall be used[20]. To use the Framework Contract, the appropriate lot has to be chosen in order to implement the relevant action[21]. The objective of the Framework Contract is to provide, via individual assignments through Specific Contracts, short-term technical assistance which can be mobilised at very short notice. The Technical assistance may be requested at any stage of the project cycle and may cover any aspect within the electoral assistance field.

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20   All related documents at *http://www.europa.eu/EuropeAid/tender/cadre05/index_en.htm*

21   Until the end of 2007 electoral assistance actions are covered with the LOT 7 Culture, Governance and Home Affairs, within the sub sector of Support to Democratisation

Despite the strong demand and need for specialist technical services, there is a scarcity of specialist European partners dealing, it has to be noted the extreme scarcity of specialized European partners dealing solely with electoral assistance for the EC; both as a national electoral institutions and NGO level. Electoral Assistance is an area that would deserve in fact a different attention from both the European civil society and private sector both at profit and no-profit level.

When the expertise to be recruited is for a project which is to be implemented in conjunction with an other international organisation, the Delegation can and should and can require that the selection is made with the full agreement of its international partner. In this context the Delegation can request advice to EuropeAid, which maintain a roster of international experts in electoral assistance and election observation.

6.2   Coordination with other Actors

Electoral assistance to partner countries cannot happen in a vacuum. There are always a number of international and regional actors in the field of electoral assistance that must be consulted and taken into account every time there are new activities to be planned in a given country, both in the long and in the short term. There are a number of international NGOs and EMBs that have developed a specific expertise in the provision of international electoral assistance and these can often be a useful source of information and inspiration before any real coordination on specific projects begins. In the annexes you will find an indicative and non-exhaustive list of the International and Regional Actors with which the EC has collaborated with over the last five years.

A field of action that increase perusal is the collaboration with other continental and regional players in the field. Such partnerships can be extremely helpful to tailor assistance programmes to the real needs of the partner countries and to develop a sense of acceptance and ownership of the assistance programmes (especially with CSOs) that is sometimes missing at the grass-root level when an assistance program is perceived as being imposed by above or by the former colonial powers. Neighboring and regional associations such as the African Union (AU), SADC or the ECOWAS have recently demonstrated signs a willingness to develop a conflict resolution and democracy advocacy role in the stream of what the Organization of American States (OAS) has been doing already for certain time. These institutions are now showing interest and requesting EC technical assistance to set up programmes, often in the hope that they will become the privileged beneficiary or counterpart through which to pass and promote specific lines of democracy development that are considered a priority for the EU strategic goals.

The EC is also developing strong links with a number of regional players which have already established themselves in the field of democracy and electoral assistance and which could play a

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role in implementing peer review mechanisms. They could be the ideal vehicle to establish civic education and capacity building programmes in partner countries where the domestic landscape doe not yet offer the EC adequate guarantees in terms of deliverables, sound management and accountability.

In addition, the EC consider support to electoral networks a means of helping election managers to cope with the rapidity of change in the environments in which elections take place. In fact, nowadays, there are a number of well-established networks where electoral practitioners work together to find solutions to common problems and to build innovations through sustained sharing of ideas, information and experiences.

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Electoral networks foster capacity development among electoral managers and serve as useful forums to address common concerns such as EMB independence, EMB funding, or the use of technology in elections. Specific common regional goals are emphasised, such as cooperation in the improvement of electoral laws and practices, promotion of participation by citizens, political contestants, and non-partisan NGOs in electoral processes, and the establishment of resource centres for research and information[22].

The conferences of the Global Electoral Organisations Network are worth mentioning in this respect since they bring together regional associations, EMBs, and election officers from all over the world. The proceedings of these conferences focus on the promotion of knowledge and experience gained in the development of electoral procedures, joint research on matters relating

22   International IDEA Handbook - Electoral Management Design

to important election processes and issues, and promotion of international discussions on electoral issues with a view to furthering democratic values and governance.

6.3   Cost of Elections

Elections, apart from their social importance and political sensitivity, are often one of the most complicated logistical undertakings that a given country might get engaged in. In established democracies, the cost of election per voter ranges from 1 US$ to 3 US$ per registered voter[23], depending on a number of logistical and geographical factors but also on the particular choice of electoral system.

The most expensive type of elections that the international community is called to contribute to are "first generation" elections such as take place in a post-conflict country or in a newly formed State. These type of elections tend to be much more expensive due to a number of activities that need to take place for the first time over a relatively short time frame and the highly volatile security environment which frequently exists. The most expensive activities in these contexts typically relate to: the high capital costs for the setting up of the election administration and its territorial structure (the so called "securisation" of the elections), the first voter registration exercise for the determination of the lists of eligible voters from scratch, the procurement of election materials and its consequent distribution, the recruitment and training of inexperienced staff, the development of an initial Stakeholders' capacity, extensive voter information and education campaigns.

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Other relevant costs that might have a big impact on the budget are transportation (including 4WD vehicles, boats, helicopters or and planes) and security. In some extreme cases like Afghanistan and Iraq, these costs might reach almost 50% of the budget. The evaluation of the effectiveness of the EC engagement in these processes has to conducted, taking into account political and peace building objectives, and this needs to be recognised in PCM terms. However, EC support to subsequent elections, especially the "so called" second or third generation ones, whilst still heavily charged with political connotation should be viewed as long-term programmes for the promotion of good governance and tackled with a strong PCM outlook. Often, however, the EC is called in to assist in hastily organized electoral processes and to solve specific immediate problems in critical areas without a proper contextualisation effort to place the assistance overall in terms of the development of good governance development.

Second or third generation of elections in partner countries, might still incur high implementation costs, related, for example, to higher voter registration rates, systematic improvements to existing technology, however cost reductions should arise over time, for example, due to the

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23   Getting to the CORE - Global Survey on the Cost of Registration and Elections. UNDP Bureau for Development Policy and IFES Center for Transitional and Post Conflict Governance., *http://www.undp.org/governance/docs/ Elections-Pub-Core.pdf or www.ifes.org/CORE*

re-use of equipment and polling station kits. Ideally, a country should aim to bring its electoral costs down to an average of 3 to 5 US$ per registered voter within two, or a maximum of three electoral cycles. However, there are many relevant logistical factors (security concerns, geographical extension of the country, weather conditions) that might work to keep integrity costs high and technical/political factors can also have this effect such as electoral systems and voter registration.

Electoral reforms do have a serious impact on the electoral costs. For example, an apparently simple switch from a proportional system with single member constituencies and closed ballots to a proportional system with multi-member constituencies and open lists requires, at its very minimum, an expensive and time consuming boundary delineation exercise to determine the electoral constituencies, more complex candidates registration and Verification procedures, a different ballot design for every constituency and consequently higher printing and distribution costs. The table below illustrates the potential cost and administrative implications of twelve Electoral Systems[24]:

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	Drawing electoral Boundaries	Voter Registration	Ballot Paper Design and Production	Voter Education	Number of Polling days	By-elections	The Count
FPTP	High	High	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
BV	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium
TRS	High	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium
AV	High	High	Low	High	Low	High	Medium
PBV	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
List PR	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
STV	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	High	High
Parallel	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
MMP	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High
BC	Medium	High	Medium	High	Low	High	Medium
SNTV	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	Low
LV	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium

Legend: 🙂 Low cost and complexity   😐 Medium cost and complexity   ☹️ High cost and complexity

Cost reductions should also be achieved through improvements in planning and training which are often not among the priorities in first time elections. It is in fact expected that many lessons can be learnt from the conduct of previous elections, but they need to be systematised in organic and holistic capacity development plans. This is the moment where the EC support can make a real difference in the stabilisation process of partner countries and ensure that elections become a routine exercise of democracy.

Voter registration is perhaps the most expensive activity in an electoral process and it can provide another example of how a methodological change can impact the electoral costs. A switch from an "ad hoc" manual voter registration to a permanent system of registration has enormous financial implications for the first electoral cycle of introduction, as it will require the purchase of technological applications that can range from Optical Mark Reader (OMR) scanners to digital registration kits and the establishment of one or more data processing centres for the registration forms.

Other key operational decisions to be taken by the EMB can considerably affect the electoral budget. For example, the decision to print and distribute voter cards to the entire voting population can have important implications, or the reduction of the number of voters allocated to polling stations to facilitate the polling would require an augmentation of the polling sites and of the staff to be trained and paid. Increased security features to be applied on the ballot papers will result in a serious increase in the printing costs. The majority of these decisions should be taken during the planning stages in order to draw a realistic schedule of activities and a consequent budget plan. The table below compare the costs of election for registered voter in stable democracies, transitional democracies and in post conflict country with a presence of long lasting peace-keeping operations.[25]

Stable Democracies: 1–3 $		Transitional Democracies: 3–8 $		Longer Lasting Peace Keeping Operations: 8–45 $	
Chile	$ 1.2	Mexico	$ 5.9	Angola	1992
Costa Rica	$ 1.8	El Salvador	$ 4.1	Cambodia	1993
Brazil	$ 2.3	Paraguay	$ 3.7	Mozambique	1994
Benin	$ 1.6	Lesotho	$ 6.9	Afghanistan	2004
Botswana	$ 2.7	Liberia	$ 6.1	Haiti	2005
Senegal	$ 1.2	Uganda	$ 3.7		
India	$ 1.0	Russia	$ 7.5		
Australia	$ 3.2				

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25   Getting to the CORE - Global Survey on the Cost of Registration and Elections. UNDP Bureau for Development Policy and IFES Center for Transitional and Post Conflict Governance, *www.undp.org/CORE* or *www.ifes.org/CORE*

6.4   Budget preparations and cost assessments

The emphasis on sustainability and professional development of the partner countries national institutions brings to the spotlight the need to provide budgetary expertise to EMBs. Specific assistance in this field requires a set of skills that encompasses finance, administration and overall electoral expertise. The production of realistic and accurate electoral budget proposals is a crucial activity in the life of an EMB, as a budget proposal, after been prepared, requires to be defended and justified in the Parliament before being approved. After a budget is approved it becomes extremely difficult to elicit funds for unforeseen activities as this could expose the EMB to allegations of lack transparency and political manipulation. Sometimes election-tied funds may also form part of the budget of different state agencies and local institutions, and this is often neglected or forgotten during discussion with potential donors. Where the EC is to get involved it is imperative that it is party to the budget discussions from the earliest possible.

A budget in an election year should be typically divided in two parts: one covering the routine operational costs for the functioning of the EMB structure and another covering the specific cost related to the organisation of the elections (also called fixed and variable costs). In case there is more than on electoral event in a calendar year, separate sub-sections should be produced for each electoral event. A budget can also be broken down in items that relate to the main activities (vote registration, voter education, field operations) or by departmental sub-divisions of the EMB (election operations, public information and outreach, political party services etc) or could even be a combination of the two.

When the discussion is about very important operational changes, like the adoption of a new system of voter registration or a change in the system of representation, or the introduction of EVMs, the presence of experts might be necessary. On the other hand, there is a set of common sense measures, often underestimated in importance, that can require amendments in the legal framework which previously had seemed satisfactory in cost terms. These measures are based on simple principles of effective management and adherence to them should be requested by donors and electoral assistance providers when they receive a request for technical and/or financial support. These measures concern the combining of various levels of elections on the same day, the holding of elections in the dry season, centralisation of voters register database, procurement of strategic products with characteristics of durability, longevity and sustainability and the rehiring of experienced polling staff of proven impartiality.

INDICATIVE COSTS -TABLE PREPARED BY IAPSO

VOTER REGISTRATION KIT FOR 2500–3000 VOTERS ISSUING VOTER ID WITH PICTURE

OPTION 1: LOW-TECH VOTER REGISTRATION		OPTION 2: OMR FORMS REGISTRATION		OPTION 3: DIGITAL REGISTRATION	
1 kit box	$10	1 kit box	$10	1 kit box	$1,100
1 Polaroid camera M 484	$300	3,000 registration forms	$390	1 Polaroid camera M 484	$170
68 sets of AA batteries	$95	3,000 laminates	$260	68 sets of AA batteries	$10
150 packets of films	$1,050	1 Polaroid camera M484	$300	150 packets of films	$25
1 photo cutter	$40	68 sets of AA batteries	$95	1 photo cutter	$500
1 photo background	$12	1 photo cutter	$40	1 photo background	$500
1 tripod	$25	1 photo background	$12	1 tripod	$450
5 glue sticks	$3.50	1 tripod	$25	5 glue sticks	$65
1 scissors	$1.50	3,000 photo fixes (glue)	$30	1 scissors	$425
6 cards and stubs books	$300	150 Polaroid films	$1,050	6 cards and stubs books	$160
3,000 laminates	$260			3,000 laminates	
6 thumbprint pads	$20			6 thumbprint pads	
50 plastic seals	$3			50 plastic seals	
Total price per kit	**$2,120**	**Total price per kit**	**$2,212**	**Total price per kit**	**$3,405**
PRICE PER VOTER	**$0.71–0.85**	**PRICE PER VOTER**	**$0.74–0.88**	**PRICE PER VOTER**	**$1.14–1.36**

Option 1 provides a voter's card with a photo, but does not provide pictures in the actual voters' list. Furthermore, all forms need to be manually typed into a database system with the obvious risk of error at that stage. The advantages are that it is simple low-tech solution, it is well-tested and the risk of malfunctioning equipment is minimized as much as possible.

Option 2 uses OMR-technology where forms are filled at the registration centre, an ID-card with picture (using Polaroid cameras) is issues and later the forms scanned at the central location to create the voter registry. The solution can include pictures in the central voter registry and thus the printed electoral lists as well as finger prints if needed. There are of course risks of mistakes in filling out the forms and at the scanning phase. The advantages are that a central continuous voter registry can be created without intensive labour and that the once the forms are scanned the voter registry can be validated finding duplicates (if finger prints are included). A central data centre will have to be equipped with scanners, servers, workstations and associated software.

Option 3 is a fully digital registration kit where data are captured electronically directly at the registration centre an ID-card including photo issued. Data are later consolidated centrally to build the voter registry. The advantages are obviously that the data are stored digitally at the registration point and data can be verified on the spot as it is entered. The risks are that equipment can malfunction and there is no paper trace to revert to at a later stage. If biometric data (fingerprints) are wanted a fingerprint scanner are needed as well as a validation test to check for duplicate registrations. A fingerprint scanner is approximately $450 a piece. A central data centre equipped with servers and workstations to store compile and store the voter registry.

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INDICATIVE COSTS - TABLE PREPARED BY IAPSO			
ELECTORAL MATERIAL NEEDED FOR E-DAY			
PRODUCT	**OPTION 1**	**OPTION 2**	**OPTION 3**
Ballot boxes	Made of solid transparent plastic. The lid is secured with security seals. Can hold a minimum of 500 ballot papers size A4 (Tanzania, Afghanistan and East Timor) **Price: $22**	Made of corrugated plastic with "windows" at each of the four sides. The box is collapsible for easy transport and distribution (DRC) **Price: $8**	Made of corrugated cardboard, a collapsible disposable ballot box **Price: $5**
Indelibile Ink	dipping bottle, 25% silver nitrate solution, 60ml **Price: $12**	dipping bottle, 5% silver nitrate solution, 100ml **Price: $10**	markers, 25% silver nitrate solution **Price: $2.50**
Pollng booth/screen	Self-standing polling booth with shelf, made of strong corrugated cardboard, assembled height 150cm, collapsible for shipping and storage **Price: $8.50**	Tabletop polling screen, made of strong corrugated cardboard, assembled size 68x30x71cm **Price: $3**	
Polling day kit	Packed in a solid sealable plastic kit for easy distribution consisting of: 1 barrier tape 5 tissues 2 note pads 1 pencil sharpener 1 ball of string 6 pencils hb 1 eraser 12 standard pens 1 ruler 1 scissors 5 tamper proof plastic envelopes 4 thumb print pad 1 calculator 1 lantern 2 black plastic bag **Price: $45**		

6.5   Procurement of Electoral Materials and Services

The principles of accountability and transparency will be actively promoted not only for their impact in terms of acceptance of the process and to manage effective use of resources but also to promote a culture of good governance. Election materials and their distribution are among of the most expensive items for elections apart from payment for election workers[26]. The budget for the election materials has to be estimated well in advance, as any delay or shortfall in the procurement or distribution of materials could have serious implications on the respect of the electoral schedule, with potential and consequent dangers for the stability of a given country. Depending on the used financial modality, and on the foreseen amount, different procurement procedure has to be applied for purchasing of equipment and supply. It is therefore extremely important to take into consideration, since the very beginning the complexity and in particular the length of the procedure to be used in concrete case, for purchasing equipment and supply under electoral assistance programme. The procurement procedure has a signification impact on time schedule of entire action. However, procurement needs are generally the last ones to be considered and sometimes not even factored in during the preparation of the electoral calendar. The inclusion of a procurement strategy and the consultation of procurement/operations experts in the electoral planning process are crucial to ensure the success of any electoral assistance projects[27]. A successful procurement strategy should comprise four main objectives:

a) Delivery of all the goods and services in due time for voter registration or electoral event without delay or shortfall,

b) Ensure that all Stakeholders have trust that the procured materials do the job effectively,

c) Provide value for money or cost-effectiveness through a transparent and competitive process,

d) Be sustainable whenever possible and not develop expectations which cannot be met in subsequent elections.

When the assistance project is faced with the purchase of a particularly sophisticated and expensive items likely to generate high interest among the vendors and to encourage corrupt practice, then there are specific mechanisms that can be used to defuse tension and increase the transparency of the selection process in an open bid, like pilot or validation tests. EC Delegations, when confronted with such situations of heavy involvement in the funding of certain specific products or technologies, should ask the national counterparts to put in place such additional events before the awarding of large contracts.

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26   See UNDP/IAPSO Guide on Procurement for Elections (under preparation), *www.iapso.org*

27   There are usually nine steps in the UNDP/IAPSO procurement process which would define an ideal timeline: 1. Identify Need; 2. Planning; 3. Specification; 4. Sourcing; 5. Solicitation; 6. Bid Evaluation; 7. Negotiation; 8. Award; 9. Management

A good example of the advantages offered by such mechanisms comes from the experience of Democratic Republic of Congo. The EC is by far the largest contributor to the UNDP Trust Fund that has been established to fund voter registration and the series of five electoral Events set out in the Pretoria Agreement. The voter registration law, adopted in April 2004, called for a process of digital voter registration which would provide the issuing of voter cards immediately on the registration site to the registrants. In order to respect the timelines agreed, UNDP had to face an urgent procurement request for 10,000 digital registration kits, for an approximate value of $ 44.7 m. The bidding process was managed by the Inter Agency Procurement Service Office, and as a final stage a validation test for the three short-listed companies was put in place. The validation test consisted on a one week full simulation of the registration, where the companies had to demonstrate the practical feasibility of their proposed voter registration kits.

The exercise carried out in Democratic Republic of Congo was crucial to determine whether the kits produced by the companies were able to perform according to the specifications and whether they could be implemented in the congolese context. The test provided a number of crucial technical indications that enabled the finalization of a realistic operational plan, but equally important, proved to be a formidable civic education event for a country that has had to date no familiarity with democratic elections. The full transparency under which the exercise was conducted was also crucial to defuse the tension over the selection process and also the mounting political pressure that accompanied the onset of the agreed deadlines.

6.6 Considerations When Funding the Procurement of Election Materials

Specific knowledge on how to access fast and transparent procurement services can considerably increase efficiency, quality and transparency of an electoral process whilst reducing costs and delivery times. Procurement of goods and services for elections can be divided into four main categories, corresponding to four main different phases of the electoral process, that should be borne in mind when procurement actions are planned:

- Election administration (hardware and software equipment, vehicles, communications, printing services),
- Voter registration (hardware and software equipment, printing and distribution of registration forms and voters cards, scanning machines, digital cameras),
- Election Day activities (printing and distribution of ballot papers, ballot boxes, voting screens, indelible or invisible ink, tamper-proof materials, forms and stationery),
- Results tabulation (tabulation software, results & media centre hardware and other communication equipment).

The two areas that should be looked at with specific attention when identifying and formulating electoral assistance programmes or projects are voter registration and Election Day materials.

A) VOTER REGISTRATION

Voter registration is by definition the most expensive and time consuming pre-electoral activity. In addition to that, in the majority of EC partner countries, voter registration systems are far from sustainable and require before any election periodic updates that generally happen over a period of time that can span from two weeks to several months, and are carried out in registration centres throughout the country in order to ensure the best coverage possible of the territory. The current trend to increase sustainability and local ownership is to help the partner countries to move from "ad hoc" registration events in conjunction with electoral processes to permanent and centralised voter register databases, continuously updated, open to scrutiny and possibly interacting with the civil registry in order to be able to generate voters lists whenever needed with a very short notice.
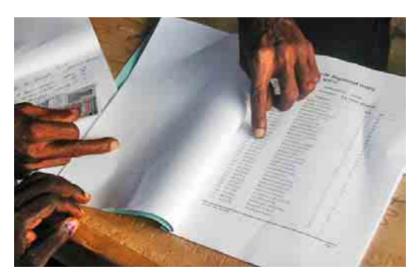
The transition from "ad hoc" registration events to a permanent registration system is often one of the most challenging processes in the democratic development of many emerging democracies and the EC is being increasingly asked to provide assistance in this field. In any event, it is an activity that has very serious implications on planning and budgeting, as it dictates all other deadlines. Registration has also important implication in terms of logistics, as it involves production, storage, distribution and recollection of bulky materials.

The sensitive materials to be procured depend on the kind of registration system to be implemented, whether this is completely manual or electronic (low tech, mid tech) or or completely digitalised , and on what features are included in it (quantity of personal data, photos and fingerprints).

For manual registration, the sensitive material to be purchased is mainly serialised printed registration books with tear-off receipts. Where pictures are taken, the other materials required are instant cameras with batteries, films, cards and plastic covering, laminating machines, and database software.

In case a mid-tech registration option is used, the sensitive materials include Optical Mark Reader (OMR) or Optical Character Recognition (OCR), related software and back-up generators.

When high technology applications are used, such as digital registration, the sensitive material will include portable computers, printers, digital cameras, scanners, software, external batteries and generators. IIn addition to these, transport of registration materials (sensitive and non-sensitive) will have to be arranged, irrespective of which ever system is used.

B)   ELECTION DAY MATERIALS

Among the several kinds of electoral materials to be procured for Election Day, special attention from assistance point of view must be paid to ballot papers, ballot boxes and ink. Other essential sensitive materials like voting screens, results forms, tamper-evident bags and seals, though important, are more easily procurable and replaceable.

Ballot papers are the single most symbolic and identifiable material of any electoral process. Their cost is high even in the simplest form of election and their sensitivity from a political point of view is enormous. This factor can place serious pressure on the EMB to organize and manage transparent bids. The cases where The EC rarely has purchased ballot materials, such cases being limited to post-conflict elections. It must be appreciated that changes of electoral system often determine changes in the ballot size and ballot types. These can have underestimated and very significant financial repercussions on the budget.

> The most important consideration from a procurement point of view concerns the careful preparation of the specifications well in advance of of the tender. The specifications should clearly set out those items which are sensitive, and these are likely to include the security features, (watermark, serialized perforated stubs and counter foils, barcodes) legal specifications (candidates' names and photos, colors of party logos) and a number of logistic arrangements for their transportation, secure storage, distribution and recollection. Format and features might vary considerably from electoral level to electoral level and even from electoral race to electoral race and this has a bearing on the size and format of other material such as ballot boxes and tamper-evident bags but also on how the ballots should be piled and stacked.

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Ballot boxes can be made of cardboard, plastic, metal or transparent fiberglass. There is generally one ballot box for each level of election per polling station. Other common features include a lid with a slot to place the ballot and a various forms of locks or holes on the side of the lid in which to place numbered seals. Boxes can be permanent, collapsible or disposable.

Boxes should not be too heavy which would increase freight for transport and should have sufficient capacity for the maximum number of ballots per polling station otherwise a second box per station would be required. The box size is extremely important as it dictates the storage capacity for planes and warehouses. Ballot boxes should be chosen to last for a number of electoral events, but particular considerations (security or logistical constraints) might impose the need to purchase boxes that can be assembled and dismantled very easily.

In other contexts, opposite considerations might prevail (geographical and weather conditions) and weatherproof or metalmetal boxes can be preferred. These must be procured in advance and are not easily replaceable. The inking of the voters' finger after casting their ballot is increasingly considered an essential measure to prevent multiple voting, especially in contexts where there is lack of trust in the registration figures and post-conflict situations where on-the-day-registration could be allowed. The ink must be enough to mark all potential voters and contain a specific mandatory quantity of silver nitrate to remain on the voters' finger until polling operations are concluded. Generally, there are two types on ink: indelible and invisible. Indelible ink usually lasts until a few days after the election and can be easily seen if the voter tries to vote again. Invisible ink is used usually in post-conflict elections when intimidation may be prevalent and voters may fear repercussions for having voted. The use of invisible ink is combined with a battery-run ultra-violet lamp which shows up the ink mark on a voter's finger so polling staff can check if the voter has voted before or not.

In Afghanistan in 2004, the polling kits provided for the polling stations contained indelible ink in the form of a marker and an ordinary water soluble marker for general use. In some cases polling staff confused the two markers and voters were potentially able to wipe the ink off. The extent of the confusion was deemed to be very limited and not sufficient to cause any serious alteration of the results. The perplexity caused by the event among the stakeholders and its potential destabilizing force were definitively superior to its real fraudulent impact.

6.7   Electoral Procurement Assistance

Identification of specific assistance on procurement issues is not an easy task. The Operations Quality Support Directorate at EuropeAid can provide immediate direction to orientate the support strategy of interested delegations, but this is an area where consultation of external electoral experts could be considered.

Where the EC is considering a partnership with UNDP, its Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) represents an important source of advice on procurement and their services can be provided and requested by the EC Delegation to UNDP country offices in the context of the negotiation of contribution agreements for electoral assistance projects. With over twenty years of experience in supporting the aid and development community, this UNDP office has developed in the recent past specific expertise in electoral procurement, identified as one of the crucially weak areas in electoral assistance.

The advantage of IAPSO is that it provides in-house expertise in order to make the best assessment of quality materials available within the given time and financial constraints. The agency also provides training for UNDP country offices as a tool to build capacity on procurement at a local level, and consultancy services are aimed at increasing professionalism in all aspects of local and international procurement.

The assistance provided includes procurement consulting, training, and procurement agency and e-procurement solutions throughout the entire election cycle, from budgeting and procurement planning to procurement of all election materials. In addition, a distinct competitive service that IAPSO offers is the management of accelerated and cost effective procurement bidding for electoral supplies based on long term Agreements with selected vendors resulting from open, international competitive bidding exercises. This concept provides the shortest possible lead time providing value for money without compromising the principles of transparency and accountability which are essential in any electoral process.

In addition, IAPSO can provide procurement advisory services for EMBs through UNDP country offices to ensure transparency and cost-effectiveness. Advisory services include needs assessment, procurement planning, budgeting, assessing and pre-qualifying local suppliers and service providers and setting up local long-term agreements.

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6.8   Suppliers of Electoral Material

There are specialized websites where detailed but not exhaustive information can be found on a number of suppliers and vendors of electoral material. The ACE project (*http://aceproject.org/ero-en*) includes a link that provides some information about specific products and vendors, whilst IFES set up a dedicated site (*www.ifesbuyersguide.org*). This link provides a fairly comprehensive list of vendors of classic election materials, however it does not provide any objective assessment of the quality of products or the companies' performance.

Both websites are however not exhaustive sources, especially on the suppliers of new technologies for voter registration and electronic voting. The IAPSO (*www.iapso.org*) website also offer a sub-page (WebBuy) where institutions and organisations can subscribe and obtain up to date information on a large set of electoral items and their price variations according to the specifications.

6.9   Training on Effective Electoral Assistance

It is a fact that there is some crucial electoral knowledge that needs to be strengthened in the majority of the partner countries, as well as among EC staff. Almost all of the requested interventions contain proposals to introduce new technological applications, such as establishment of permanent voters' databases and their integration with the civil registry, electronic systems for the aggregation of results and even electronic voting machines, but also the development of institutional capacity within the EMB and within the CSOs.

In general terms, it is essential to provide EC staff with a better understanding of the challenges and the potential enshrined in electoral assistance. In particular, the target audience ffor future training will be EC staff whose regular work requires specialist knowledge of particular election administration issues and/or whose work is related to electoral assistance, like Delegations' Advisors, Country Desks and AIDCO Geo-coordinators.
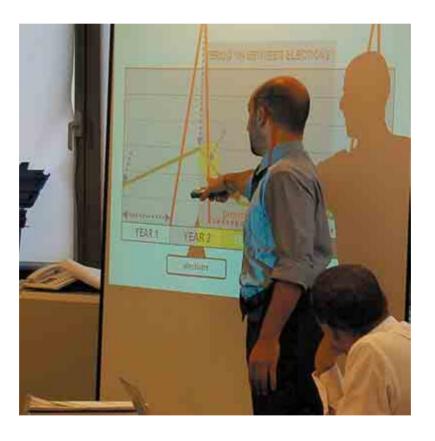
Consequently, targeted courses for EC officials have being prepared on "effective electoral assistance" in collaboration with UNDP and IDEA, to cover the entire scope of the related activities.

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The training sessions are centred on this Guide, with the support of a Facilitator's Manual, and a Participants Manual. Training activities encompass both formal lectures and group work, with a view to maximising interactive elements and the sharing of professional experience. The courses also place special emphasis on operational and budget aspects. The courses include an introduction to the basic notions of electoral assistance and its differences with observation, an overview of various stages of the electoral cycle and a review of the entry points for assistance through the analysis of case studies. Principles, methods and tools for electoral assistance are

shown in the light of their connection with capacity building and governance development objectives. The first two "EC - UNDP Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance" were delivered in Brussels and Dar es Salaam in the second semester of 2006.

In future, this kind of training sessions could be organized for EMBs, electoral consultants and implementing agencies to illustrate the best practices and the new EC operational approach aiming at the improvement of the application of PCM to electoral assistance. This could be done in a similar manner to the training sessions being implemented for the improvement of the quality of the performance of the EUEOMs by the EIDHR funded project "Network of Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support (NEEDS)". The project brings together some of the leading European organisations and individuals involved in the field of election observation aiming to increase the capacity of both the EU and civil society organisations to conduct credible and effective election observation missions.

Case Studies

Case Studies
West Bank & Gaza strip, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mozambique

The case studies presented below have been drafted following the finding of specific missions to the four partner countries. The countries were selected because in each the EC chose to implement its project in a different way: using EC contractual and financial procedures to target a specific electoral event; through a UNDP managed pooled fund; by the adoption of EC contracting and financing procedures as part of a Democratisation programme; and, through the provision of funds to increase the State Budget.

The missions were preceded by a thorough desk study of all the internal EC official documentation[1] and other electoral assistance providers on the ground. The interlocutors met were EC Delegation officials, Project Managers, EMBs officials, other donors and providers of electoral assistance, civil society representatives and other election administration and observation experts present in the country.

Every interlocutor met was given a detailed illustration of the mission's scope of work in the attempt to optimise the information gathering process. This was done by presenting the ToR, the wok rationale for the Methodological Guide, objectives and expectations, topics to be covered, timelines and deliverables. As a methodological supporting tool, the indications contained in the "Guide to the Evaluation of Procedures and Structures currently operational in the Commission's External Cooperation Programmes[2]" were followed in the field missions, even though the objective was not to carry out standard evaluations.

Before departure for the field visits, preparatory meetings to discuss the electoral assistance projects were held with the relevant Country Desks at DEV and RELEX and with EuropeAid Geo-Coordinators at the Headquarters level. At the end of the mission, the related reports were submitted to all relevant EC services for comments and than the mission reports became the content of the case studies.

The EU has always been at the forefront of the Middle East Peace Process and a privileged interlocutor to sustain the Palestinian institutions' commitment to this process. The special role played by the EU in this process, invested the EC with the responsibility to support the building and development of sustainable electoral institutions. Beyond the support provided to specific electoral events, the assistance provided by the EC represents an important and comprehensive example of institution building in a transitional context.

What makes this case particularly interesting is the type of technical and financial support provided, which was provided using EC contractual and financial procedures via a service provider and not through another electoral assistance provider in a pool funding environment.

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1   Country strategy papers, national indicative Programmes, project identification fiches, financial proposals, evaluations, observers' reports.

2   The criteria indicated in the Guide are: a) relevance to objectives and to in-country needs, b) efficiency in providing inputs promptly and cost effectively, c) effectiveness in achieving planned results, d) impact on overall objectives, e) sustainability over time.

West Bank & Gaza strip
Building the electoral Administration

The beneficiary of this support was the Electoral Management Body (EMB), which organised the Presidential Elections in January 2005 and the Legislative Elections in 2006.. Involved in this EMB were the Central Election Commission and its operational arm, the National Elections Office (NEO), both for the organization of the Presidential Elections of January 2005 and of the Legislative Elections of January 2006.

In addition, support to Civil Society Organizations (CSO) was provided to conduct civic awareness raising and voter information dissemination activities. The latter notably targeted minority groups as well as provided training for legal and judicial professionals in electoral dispute mechanisms[3].

A)   BACKGROUND

The EU has a particularly important strategic role in the Palestinian context: it is one of the members of the "Quartet", the mechanism put in place to supervise the implementation of the Peace Process together with the US, Russia and the UN. One of the most important achievements of the Quartet, is the creation of the Electoral Reform Support Group (ERSG), co-chaired by the European Commission Technical Assistance Office (ECTAO). This body is specifically tasked with supervising the electoral reform process and the coordination of the international donors' activities for the holding of elections.

In this context, the ECTAO played a key role in promoting the establishment of Central Election Commission (CEC) and the development of its capacity as independent and accountable institution, both financially and technically. This was done directly by the ECTAO, with the assistance of highly professional electoral expertise contracted for the purpose. The EC assistance package was initially formulated at a stage where the Legislative Elections were planned for 2003, within the context of the "Road Map" for peace adopted in late 2002 under the auspices of the Quartet.

The key development that triggered the formulation of the electoral project was the establishment, in October 2002, of the CEC as a non-partisan and independent body[4]. Following various delays in setting a date for the second Legislative Elections for the Palestinian Assembly, the project was progressively adjusted during its implementation to ensure the building up of a

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3   300,000 EURO via a EIDHR targeted project managed by UNDP

4   The CEC was established through a Presidential Decree and replaced the previous partisan High Electoral Committee dominated by the ruling movement Fatah.

credible and accountable institution and for the preparation of strategies, operational plans and sustainable budgets for voter registration, pre-polling and polling activities.

The flexibility to adjust the EC assistance project "on the run" according to the development of the political situation, switching emphasis from supporting one specific electoral event to institution and capacity building, proved to be the fundamental move for the successful outcome of the entire international electoral assistance plan.

The preparation of such a detailed and flexible long-term plan by the ECTAO was only made possible through the support of electoral expert hired through a specialised company, selected among those short listed as service providers for the implementation of EUEOMs[5]. The company was specifically contracted to provide a wide range of services to support the CEC's first steps as independent institution and assist the ECTAO in the formulation of the following assistance plan.

The company deployed professional electoral experts that provided advice on all election technical issues (particularly the production and implementation of a voter registration and election plan and its related budget), developed public information strategies for the CEC and for the involvement of civil society in electoral activities, (including domestic observation, voter education, political parties and media), granted secretariat and administrative services to the ERSG, and drafted the Financing Agreements between the EC, the Ministry of Finance and the CEC for further financial and technical assistance.

B) PROVIDING DIRECT SUPPORT TO NEWLY BORN INSTITUTIONS

Once the CEC was established as institution, towards the end of 2003, the ECTAO launched the new assistance plan that included a Financing Agreement worth € 10 M and a call for proposal for a direct Technical Assistance Project to the CEC of € 1,6 M. The financial support included support for the purchase and establishment of all the components[6] needed to organize a transparent voter registration process, and the holding of elections in accordance with the applicable laws and in line with accepted international standards.

In addition, following an explicit request from the CEC to the ERSG[7], the Technical Assistance Project placed European electoral experts directly within the CEC and the NEO ranks to provide

5   The global allocation for WB&GS in 2002 was 5,45m. A special global allocation budget just for the PA.

6   Salary of the election administration staff, salary of the electoral agents, voter registration material and the related operational costs, equipments, polling materials, public outreach activities, training, transport facilities, audit and evaluation.

7   The EC and the CEC later jointly agreed to contract experts just on Electoral Operations, Procurement, Logistics, Co-ordination and administration while renouncing to the experts on Field Operations and Election Administration. On the other had it was hired an EC Lead Electoral Advisor to the CEC who was asked to play a coordinating role of the EC experts and provide policy advice to the CEC and its NEO.

first hand assistance in key aspects of the electoral administration and operations. Both projects were drawn from the country assistance budget allocation under MEDA for the Peace Process[8].

The provision of this assistance package "test marketed" new mechanisms to provide direct assistance to an entity "sui generis" like the Palestinian Authority (PA) while upholding at the same time all the necessary guarantees required by the EC administrative procedures. The € 10 M Financing Agreement signed by the EC with the PA Ministry of Finance (MoF) in December 2003, called for the opening of a specific sub-account by the MoF in the Single Treasury Account, into which the grant could be credited in phased disbursements.

The CEC opened a specific project account in order to manage the funds allocated to it by the MoF in accordance with the budget approved in the Financing Agreement and fully integrated into the national budget of the PA for 2004. The MoF regularly transferred the funds, after ECTAO's approval, based on checks of cash-flow forecasts of the CEC, from the Single Treasury sub-account to the CEC's project account. The financial disbursements were linked to the CEC/NEO's operational needs and gradual consumption of resources, as well as to the PA's fulfilment of specific benchmarks, related to a commonly agreed donors' trigger policy mechanism[9]. Furthermore, a contract, a contract was awarded to an auditing company to perform an ex-post audit of the 2004 expenditures as well as an ex ante financial control of the project,where each transfer request of the CEC had to be first double checked by the auditing company, which would then provide a report and a comfort letter to ECTAO before this could approve the transfers.

This exercise was acknowledged as useful by all parties concerned, but was introduced into the project at a time of frantic election preparations (when the Presidential Elections had been already called), but This was necessary because the expert team lacked a financial specialist/auditor. Hence there was no-one who could assist the CEC in setting up, from the outset, procurement procedures in line with the EC requirements.

The financial assistance started to flow at the beginning of 2004, and the placement of EC election experts within the CEC and NEO premises began shortly afterwards, in March 2004. During the initial stages of the Project's implementation, pending the PA decision on the date of the Legislative Elections, the timing of the trigger for the release of funds was adjusted to facilitate the consolidation of the institution through the conduct of a proper voter registration process.

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8   EC Decision 19–08–035. The TA contracts were financed from the Reform Support Instrument.

9   This mechanism was agreed upon by ECTAO within the ERSG and had been elaborated with significant inputs from the previous team of electoral experts attached to the ECTAO.

C)   A NEW POLITICAL TWIST: THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
       BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE ONES

The death of the PA Chairman in late 2004 created a completely unforeseen scenario, leading to the PA's call for snap elections to be held in Janaury 2005. This event brought about a new shift in the focus of the EC assistance which now had to be geared towards providing support for the Presidential Elections.

Those elections, as certified by all observation missions active in Palestine at the time contributed to the democratisation process. The CEC emerged from the sudden challenge as an accountable and independent institution, despite the considerable political pressure it had to withstand from a variety of political bodies. In particular, the NEO technically managed and administered the process in a competent and neutral manner.

Thanks mainly to the technical assistance provided by the EC election experts, the NEO was able to produce in very limited time a realistic electoral budget and, with the help of the ERSG, and to mobilise donors' support in those segments of the process where it was most needed.

182   It is unanimously acknowledged that without the presence of the EC election experts and the EC financial support it would have been impossible to conduct the Presidential Elections. The EC support to the CEC and its NEO, both financial and technical, enabled the CEC to put in place the essential elements for the conduct of credible and genuine elections at extremely short notice. It proved that the support of the institution was the best vehicle to promote sustainability and good governance.

A few months after the Presidential Elections, the new President, amid strong political opposition, called for the holding of the Legislative Elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) with a new electoral law that introduced a mixed member proportional system. Political considerations aside, the technical challenges for the CEC and the NEO were significant, with the need to overhaul the voter register, the definition of boundaries for the new lectoral districts to be used, and the registration of new parties and a large number of candidates.

The EC assistance project, with further modifications and in collaboration with other electoral assistance providers ensured adequate financial and technical coverage to the final act in a very long electoral cycle.

The Legislative Elections of January 2006 marked another important step in the building of the democratic institutions of the Palestinian Territories, and the opinion of the international and domestic observers was that the CEC proved its professionalism and independence. In particular, the CEC satisfactorily administered the voting and counting process and all the technical preparations, from the registration of voters (21% increase) to the registration of parties and candidates, including the drawing of new electoral boundaries. In fact, the CEC took another step…. by not

giving way under substantial political pressure and resisting numerous attempts to de-legitimise its authority coming from various sources.

In terms of the specific performance of the EC election experts, it has been recognised that they played a key role in preparing the financial and technical support to the EMBs, in the establishment of the CEC, in the preparations and conduct of the voter registration campaign and in the polling and counting operations for both electoral events. By providing direct assistance to the NEO, the election experts played a meaningful role, in the capacity building process, even though the unforeseen political developments did not permit to dedicate too much time to this component.

The coordination between the electoral experts, though excellent on a personal level, was somewhat limited by the fact that they belonged to three different companies causing some obvious time-consuming activities to ECTAO and NEO. In fact, due to the lack of a specific framework contract to cover electoral assistance projects of an amount superior to € 200,000, the technical expertise required by the CEC had to be tendered in late 2003 using regular EC service contract award procedures, and grouped in various lots, each of which was then separately tendered. The outcome was that three different companies were awarded the five available lots.

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D) CONCLUSIONS

The support to the Palestinian electoral process is a case of successful institution building almost entirely engineered by the EU. Throughout the process, the ECTAO has been the driving force that allowed the creation of the CEC and its NEO and the successful conduct of two genuine and transparent electoral events such as the Presidential and the Legislative Elections, even at a time when the support of other international actors was much less clear and determined than in most recent times.

The specific and incidentally fortunate unfolding of the events demonstrated that financial support for EMBs should be programmed at least two years in advance of the election date, an be in place at least 12–14 months before the elections in order to be effective. Even though a number of incidental factors contributed to its successful outcome, this case represents a model of how electoral assistance to EMBs can have a meaningful impact on the democratic development of the partner countries institutions.

This case also demonstrates how an "ad hoc" decision to integrate the ECTAO with specific electoral expertise during the preparatory phase of the assistance program was absolutely fundamental for the successful outcome of the entire process. The sound and flexible formulation of the project proposal was instrumental in achieving the mentioned results and in overcoming the contingencies and the new political developments encountered during its implementation. The long-term support to the electoral institutions proved to be a more effective and less expensive

vehicle to promote democratic developments, than the support geared exclusively towards specific electoral event through short-terms project. In future projects the complex award procedures could be avoided by creating[10] a shortlist of specialized consortia, companies, international institutions or NGOs with adequate experience in election support for the provision of services for the implementation of EU Election Assistance projects[11]. In addition to that, a regular use of the internal EC roster of Election Administration Experts would de facto put Delegations and national counterparts in the best conditions to select the needed expertise[12].

The unanimous opinion of all interlocutors was that the fielding of EUEOMs in a context where EC projects of electoral assistance had been implemented did not constitute a problem and was never perceived as a potential conflict of interest by any of the stakeholders. This result substantiates the notion that, the two activities should rather be seen as complementary ones in the context of long term assistance to the electoral cycle of a country, and that if run professionally and independently, would contribute in an equal but different manner to the democratic development of the beneficiary country. Despite the significant achievements, a number of question marks are still open for the future sustainability of the CEC. Professional and tailored support in a number of areas will still be needed, as well as political support to defend the institution by continuous attacks aimed at undermining its independence. In addition, an effective and transparent electoral complaints mechanism still needs to be put in place.

From a technical point of view, the most urgent issues for future assistance will concern the institutionalisation of best practices, reorganisation of the various NEO departments, introduction of transparent hiring and recruitment procedures, professional development of staff both in electoral and in general skills, including specific advice in budgeting techniques and procurement procedures.

All this needs to be translated in continued financial and technical support, with more exit-strategy oriented benchmarks. Last but not least, specific support for given electoral events will also continue to be needed, but this will have to continue in the context of the overall strategy mentioned above if the sustainability and full independence of the institution is the objective.

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10 At HQ level and for the benefit of those Delegations called to implement electoral assistance projects.

11 A possibility would be creating a shortlist along the lines of what has been already created for the implementation of EU Election Observation Missions for the EIDHR. It could be considered to establish a shortlist valid for several years for the provision of services for the implementation of both, election assistance projects and election observation missions.

12 This would contribute to avoid what happened here in West Bank & Gaza strip where an electoral expert proposed by a company and selected by ECTAO and NEO had to be removed for incompetence.

Indonesia
Prioritising Areas of Support
Through Pool Fund Management

In 2004, Indonesia completed an historical first transition from a democratically elected administration to another with a complete overhaul of electoral system. The reason for its inclusion as case study in this Guide, apart from the overriding political significance of the EU contribution to the consolidation of the democratic institutions in the largest Islamic country in the world, has a particularly important procedural value. It demonstrated the feasibility of targeted EC support to pre-selected assistance activities even through a Pool Fund Management mechanism when done during the identification and formulation phases.

The EC assistance consisted of an important technical support to the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs)[13] and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in areas where less attention was paid by the national authorities. The project also took into account the recommendations of the 1999 EU Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), following an approach that is likely to become the standard practice in identifying future electoral assistance projects.

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## A)	BACKGROUND

After the 1998 events that led President Soeharto to resign after 32 years of authoritarian rule, the Reformasi process culminated in the democratic elections of 1999, the first since 1955. Despite all that, the 1999 elections did not mark a meaningful change from previous practice in terms of election administration, and were characterised by inefficiencies, as well as a lack of transparency and accountability. However, between 2000 and 2003 Indonesia underwent profound constitutional changes of its political and electoral system.

A new and independent Election Commission was appointed (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum, hereinafter KPU*)[14], a new legislative chamber established and new electoral systems were introduced for all the crucial institutions.

As mentioned previously, the 2004 Legislative and Presidential Elections were staged in the context of landmark constitutional amendments and new electoral laws. The amendments included a direct election for the President and Vice-president, the establishment of a Regional representative's council as a second chamber, the introduction of a proportional, open list sys-

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13   The General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Commission (PANWAS)

14   A new independent, permanent and non-partisan KPU of 11 members and a new articulated territorial structure of election commissions down to district, sub-district and village level replaced the previous 53-member Commission which included political party representatives.

tem for the upper legislative chamber and the termination of the presence of armed forces in parliament through allocated seats.

The need to consolidate the positive experience of 1999 and subsequent reforms, by means of the provision of technical assistance was widely ackowledged within the international donor community. Experience in many transition countries suggested that often the second generation of elections could be even more important than the first ones in terms of consolidation of the Democratisation process.

This was reflected in the EC Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for the period 2002–2006, which set priorities for co-operation between the EU and Indonesia, inserted a specific focus and addressed specific attention to good governance and the need to strengthen public institutions. Good governance was defined and understood in the CSP as encompassing support to both public administration and to the democratisation process.

In addition to the contribution to the UNDP managed Partnership for Governance Reform project, the EC decided to provide support for the establishment of a viable institutional framework to ensure the rule of law and the sustainability of the democratic process. It was considered that without providing specific support to elections, all efforts for the governance reform would have remained elusive. Electoral support was therefore deemed necessary to achieve the political and policy goals outlined in the CSP of strengthening the young Indonesian democracy.

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In 1999, the Indonesian Government (GoI) requested the UNDP to coordinate the electoral assistance activities of all the international donors and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to this effect on 24 April 2003. Under this, all technical and financial assistance was channelled and coordinated through a specifically established UNDP Trust Fund. The "Election Support Programme" counted the contributions of 15 donors for a total of 32 MUSD where the State allocated from its budget for the elections an envelope of 321 MEURO[15].

In consultation with KPU and the CSOs, the EC identified as areas of particular concern for its action the development of capacity building activities for the new KPU, a wide voter information and education campaign to inform the electorate about all the changes in the electoral system and the training of a large electoral staff at all levels.

The numbers in this case speak for themselves: the Legislative Elections of 5 April 2005 were conducted in approximately 575,000 polling stations, with more than 5 million poll workers involved and the participation of 120 million voters. This event, considered to be the largest and most complex electoral event conducted in a single day, was to be followed only three months later by Presidential Elections (first round July 5 and the second round on September 20). Though the presidential rounds of elections were less complex, new ballot papers had to be produced

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15   Estimated amount and without including the costs for the Presidential Elections and voter registration.

and distributed and the electorate mobilised making a total of three electoral events organized in less than 6 months.

B)   IDENTIFYING AND CHANNELLING THE EC PRIORITIES

The EC Delegation, faced with the significance of the challenge, decided to contract two electoral experts through the Framework Contract procedure to conduct a project identification and formulation mission in June-July 2003. However, due to the limited time available before the elections, it would have been impossible for the EC to implement an electoral assistance project in the areas identified as of primary concern utilising EC conctracual and financial procedures. In additon, the UNDP had, at that time, been selected by the GoI as the overall coordinator for electoral assistance activities for the international community[16].

In this context, the UNDP management indicated as well to possess the necessary flexibility to accommodate the EC resolution to support specific aspects of the process. This resulted in the joint definition of the activities to be funded in the financial proposal and in the definition of the contribution agreement with UNDP. The Technical and Administrative Provisions of the Financing Agreement included five key areas of assistance, 1) Capacity Building and Training of KPU poll workers[17]; 2) Voter and Civic Education projects to be implemented by a consortium of CSOs, VICI[18], pre-selected by the Delegation; 3) Technical Assistance and Training to Election Supervisory Committee (PANWAS) to enhance transparency of the election process, 4) Enhancement of the PANWAS reporting structure and involvement of domestic Election Monitoring Organisations (EMOs) in supervising the electoral process, 5) Evaluation and Audit of the overall EC support component[19].

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16   USAID was the only donor who did not participate to the UNDP Election Support Programme.

17   The KPU had originally wanted to reorganise its structure and to enhance the capacity of the personnel but with less than one year before the Legislative Elections it was decided to focus on the urgent task of preparing for the elections. KPU also decided that the donor community could provide assistance in areas which they did not have a sufficient budget from the state which were training and voter education. The electoral experts in charge of drafting the project identified a gap in the KPU allocations and donors' pledges for this area of training. While other agencies, such as IFES and AEC could contribute to electoral training strategies and content development, EC specifically targeted the need to bring the training to more than 5 million poll workers which was a huge cost in terms of human resources and materials including production of videos and manuals.

18   The name of the consortium was the "Voter Information and Civic Initiative Program" (VICI) which included five CSOs: Political Education for women (SP), Electoral Education in Eastern Indonesia (CEIA), Voter Education Campaign through the Media (INSIDE), Electoral Education and Monitoring (KIPP), and Voter Education (PAJ). An additional but separate sub-component was the EU Visibility Campaign to provide a communication strategy informing Indonesian citizens on the reasons behind EU assistance and Europe's vision of a democratic Indonesia.

19   A 30-day mission of one electoral expert took place between October and December 2004 to evaluate the impact of the EU support to the electoral process. To be commended the Delegation had decided this mission was to take place in conjunction with the UNDP evaluation mission after the elections.

The activities outlined in the EC Financing Agreement were judged complementary to the activities indicated in the UNDP programme document. However, given the fact that EC project formulation mission was carried out long after the UNDP had formulated its project proposal, a number of amendments to the UNDP Programme were made necessary. For this, two additional project documents were developed in the UNDP overall Election Support Programme to accommodate and incorporate the EC activities: Support to PANWAS and Support to Voters' Information Campaign with a specific EU Visibility component.

Remarkably, the project document indicated also the establishment of a European Technical Assistance Team (ETAT) that worked following terms of reference agreed by both UNDP and the EC Delegation. There were four experts that worked under the UNDP in the implementation of the Election Support Programme in areas identified by the EC as priority for its own support: the CSO Expert, the Training Expert, the Communications Expert and the Expert on Conflict Resolution and Reporting Systems.

C) THE PECULIARITY OF THE "ELECTION SUPPORT PROGRAMME"

The EC Delegation contributed with € 7 M for specific jointly agreed activities to be carried out within the UNDP Trust Fund[20]. This was considered the best way to address the shortcomings identified in 1999 by the EU Election Observation Mission. In order to facilitate preparatory activities, UNDP committed itself to pre-financing EC project activities to the level of € 4,197,046 via a retroactivity clause. UNDP covered any project-related operating costs not included in the EC contribution. Where EC and UNDP both provided financial contributions to the same category of activity, the specific actions to be covered by each party were clearly identified in the Annual Work Plan and Budget concerned. The EC disbursements for the implementation of the project were executed after verification of the conformity of the expenses with the needs established in the work programme and in accordance with the availability of annual budgetary payment appropriations.

The KPU was designated by the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs (MENGKO) as the national implementing agency for the UNDP-managed Election Support Programme. As per the MoU signed between the UNDP and MoF, the funds coming from international donor were channelled through UNDP to MENGKO, and from it to the beneficiary institution (KPU, PANWAS or CSOs) through cash flows based on cost estimates. MENGKO had the supervisory role and would allow the disbursements only after performing all the checks requested by its procedures.

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20   The EC was the largest donor to the UNDP Trust Fund, followed by the Netherlands and Australia. The USAID contribution to the electoral process was, as usual, outside the UNDP Trust Fund and provided funding to the agencies IFES, IRI, NDI and Asia Foundation among others. The EC Contribution of € 7 M, targeting the Legislative Elections only, was earmarked and divided into 1,155,600 for KPU Capacity Building and Poll workers' Training; 1,732,360 for PANWAS, 360,000 for EU visibility and 2,847,849 for VICI.

This specific mechanism had been expressly requested by the GoI to keep track and ensure consistency in the donors' contributions and had been already put in place before the EC decided to join the Trust Fund for its contribution to voter education. In addition to that, the KPU and MENGKO established two separate Project Appraisal Committees (PACs), one for reviewing and recommending CSOs proposals on voter education activities and a second one focusing on election monitoring proposals.

The PAC for Voter Education was chaired by the KPU and included in its board Government members, UNDP officials and other interested parties such as the Partnership for Governance Reform. The second PAC for Election Monitoring was chaired by the Partnership for Governance and was composed of representatives from UNDP, civil society and other relevant bodies. The EC Delegation was entitled to participate in both PACs with regard to the appraisal and approval of CSO proposals to be funded from the EC contribution.

However, the lateness of the ECs decision to join the UNDP Trust Fund required extra coordination efforts given that the EC had pre-indicated in VICI the CSO consortium beneficiary of its contribution to implement voter education activities. In practical terms, the EC contribution to the voter education component of the UNDP Trust Fund did not pass through the PAC but was directly awarded to VICI. In fact, MENGKO, UNDP and KPU had also already put in place a different selection mechanism for the identification of the CSOs eligible to receive the grants. A specific sub-item in the MENGKO budget had therefore to be opened to accommodate the VICI arrangement.

D)   CONCLUSIONS

The EC Delegation followed a sound approach in planning, identifying, formulating and evaluating the overall support to the electoral process. In fact, all the support activities put in place by the EC were envisaged already in the CSP, and electoral experts were contracted to help in the identification and formulation of very pertinent activities. This approach can be definitively reproduced for similar circumstances, with the qualification that identification/formulation missions must take place no later than 15 months before the electoral date.

Even when the participation to Trust Fund is not clearly decided, the formulation of the projects must take place earlier, and if possible already at the time of the UNEAD/UNDP needs assessment missions. Ideally, joint identification/formulation missions between the UNDP and the EC to ensure appropriate consistency in the respective project documents are the most adequate manner to agree and coordinate on the specific forms of the assistance package.

The other important novelty of this Trust Fund, firmly wanted by the EC Delegation, was the specific identification of the EC supported activities, including conducted a separate final evaluation of the EC-funded activities within the UNDP programme. This proved useful both to the Delegation and UNDP to obtain a separate and focused feedback while still carrying out a

joint evaluation exercise. The EU Evaluation Team reported that the success indicators for support to KPU and PANWAS were met, with clear objectives identified in the project formulation based on needs assessment mission, and those objectives were supported with adequate, earmarked funds channelled in time through UNDP and experienced technical advisors to ensure the implementation of the project.

As the funds allocated to PANWAS were more than sufficient for the number of staff to be trained and materials to be produced, the EC contribution was able to enhance the institution and the transparency of the process with more complaints being lodged and dealt with than 1999. One weakness was perhaps that PANWAS only went down to sub-district level and with different smaller observer groups covering the village level and polling stations the link for passing information or complaints between the observer groups and PANWAS was not effective.

For the training component, the EC funds were instrumental to ensure the basic level of electoral knowledge throughout an enormous platform of polling officials. The KPU had in fact allocated only a small budget for training, and this was mainly stipends for participants to attend training sessions. The EC funds were instead in particular useful for producing and broadcasting a training video and for producing and distributing manuals, as the total amount of funds needed clearly exceeded the original KPU estimate.

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The advantage of having available specific funds for such concrete items as training tools and materials became apparent when the KPU wanted to use the trust fund to pay salaries for more training sessions at the expense of producing the agreed materials. At that point the Training Expert in the ETAT team could defend the choice of producing the training material despite the contrary opinion of the KPU, a choice that proved to be successful.

More mixed results were achieved in the voter education component of the project. The pre-selection of the beneficiaries of the EC part of voter education component of the Trust Fund (the Consortium -VICI) with pre-approved activities did not fit into the open competition scheme that the UNDP Election Support Programme and the KPU put in place for the selection of CSO voter education grantees. The KPU at a certain stage refused to implement it. As mentioned, this required a separate Programme Document by the UNDP whereby the identified VICI consortium became also the implementing agency instead of the KPU.

The pre-determination of the beneficiaries for the EC contribution proved to be time consuming in the light of the specific rules for the foreign contributions dictated by the GoI, well before the EC contribution was decided. This would have required the development of specific synergies between the various actors (MENGKO, UNDP, EC and selected NGOs) that were missing.

In addition to that the consortium was beset by internal problems, with some NGO members complaining they had received little or no funding[21]. The funds allocated to VICI were considerable given it was a consortium of only 5 local CSOs and that there was no open, competitive bid but just a discretionary selection. The main lesson learned is the EC should not consider funding any CSO or consortium for such a large amount (or any other significant amount) within an electoral support intervention without an open and competitive bid just and without the consortium providing a proven track record of successfully implementing projects.

The project component on EU visibility was a positive idea to promote a better understanding of EU and of its support to the electoral process in Indonesia. This was done through a communication strategy on the reasons behind EU election assistance and Europe's vision of a democratic Indonesia. Such an approach was important to allow the EC to provide assistance without compromising the perception of its local partners as pandering to foreign interests. In this context however, a higher profile and more focused actions from the Delegation would have helped to further strengthen the messages. In fact, the EC was, as in many other cases, the largest contributor to the UNDP Trust Fund, but this was not perceived as such by public opinion and among the national/international stakeholders of the electoral process.

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The unanimous opinion of all interlocutors was that the fielding of the EUEOM in a context where a project of electoral assistance had been implemented also with EU financial support did not constitute a problem and was never perceived as a potential conflict of interest by any of the stakeholders. This result substantiates the notion that the two election assistance and observation should rather be seen as complementary activities in the context of long term assistance to the electoral cycle of a country, and that if run professionally and independently, they both contribute in different ways to the democratic development of the beneficiary country.

The EUEOM 2004, prior to its dissolution, organized in collaboration with the Delegation a post-election review in November 2004 and presented the conclusions and recommendations from the final report. The comprehensive set of recommendations elaborated by the EU EOM were well received by the national authorities and represent, as already done in the past, an excellent platform upon which new Programmes of assistance can be identified. However, to date they have not yet been followed up substantially in any reform measures or assisted projects. While having no immediate operational activities to conduct until planning for 2009 elections starts, the period following the last elections would provide an ideal opportunity for KPU to reorganise itself, look at the budget and procurement, procedures and forms, enhance communication strategies, institution building and capacity of staff in administration as well as in general electoral

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21   The consortium responded selectively to the Executing Agency's request for information with some erroneously claiming a "special relationship" with the EC and for this not required to respect MENGKO rules as recipient of EC funds. This made the supervision and monitoring of the activity labour and time intensive for both KPU and UNDP Programme.

knowledge and specific departmental needs, by setting up a human resource staff development programme with ongoing training courses.

However, support to the KPU institution strengthening process stalled after the cases of corruption involving senior KPU commissioners and election officials and the upcoming appointment process of new commissioners. Those cases of corruption should not diminish the historical value of what the KPU achieved between 2003 and 2004, and more importantly the general trust it enjoyed by all stakeholders during the electoral process.

The KPU played a pivotal role in the consolidation of the democratic framework of Indonesia, and should receive as soon as possible from both the GoI and the international community the impetus to reorganise itself and improve its organisational and operational structure. This is the phase of the electoral cycle that should be used to consolidate and strengthen the institution with targeted projects, when it is possible to work without the Damocles' sword of an upcoming electoral process. Political support is equally indispensable from the Government in order to avoid dangerous reconsideration of the notion of the electoral authority as an independent institution that might be advanced by some political quarters.

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Madagascar
Inauguration EC Cyclical Electoral Assistance

In the aftermath of the political crisis that followed the 2001 Presidential Elections, the EC took the decision to embark itself on a long-term capacity development plan to the Malagasy institutions. After the Legislative Elections of December 2002, this plan brought about a first experimental form of continuous support to the development of the electoral institutions of Madagascar. The electoral assistance program was done using the European Development Fund (EDF) and via standard EC contractual and financial procedures. It was based both on the lessons learned from the previous assistance projects and the recommendations of the EU Election Observation Mission (EU EOM).

The envisaged assistance targeted all the institutions involved in the organisation and supervision of the electoral process, with the main beneficiaries being the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform (hereinafter referred to as MIRA), the National Electoral Council (hereinafter referred to as CNE) and the Parliament. In a different guise than West Bank & Gaza strip, the long-term support to the electoral institutions proved again to be an effective and cost-effective vehicle to promote democratic developments. The project proposal, elaborated with the support of an electoral expert team, identified important priorities for the EC and added a significant technical dimension to its already high political profile.

A)   BACKGROUND

Like many other former French colonies, the Malagasy electoral system is inspired by the family of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) largely in use in continental Western Europe and it was originally shaped along the French model of election administration. In this context, MIRA is the institution in charge of administering and organizing the electoral process[22], mainly through two offices, the Directorate of Democracy Promotion and the Directorate of Territorial Administration and its core territorial administration structure. MIRA competencies extend from voter registration to party and candidates registration, distribution and recollection of all election material, aggregation and announcement of preliminary results. In addition to MIRA, the CNE has special prerogatives.

The CNE was created in the wake of the 1992 Referendum that established the Third Republic to be the moral guarantor of the electoral process and of the genuineness of its results. However,

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22   This family of EMB entails operational and organizational competences mainly concentrated within the executive, with the judiciary in charge of specific activities (revision and verification of the registration of parties and candidates to specific electoral events, electoral complaints and announcement of the final results). Specific supervisory powers are eventually attributed to other bodies according to the circumstances.

apart from the emblematic significance of having such a body established for a fundamental democratic passage like the 1992 Referendum, its supervisory powers had remained for very long time rather symbolic[23]. It was only before the early Legislative Elections of 2002, under the strong pressure of the international community (that subordinated its assistance to the fulfilment of certain specific conditions) that the mandate and powers of the CNE underwent a significant transformation[24].

It was in this context of reform that the EC Delegation decided to support the early Legislative Elections of 15 December 2002 with electoral equipment (transparent ballot boxes and other material for a total amount of 1.5 M €) financed under tied budget support as well as a € 191,000 project for the fielding of a short-term Technical Assistance Team (hereinafter referred to as EC TAT). This EC TAT was meant to help, on the one hand, the CNE to cope with its newly and suddenly gained role of prominence and increase its overall visibility as well as to improve, on the other hand, the consolidation of election results sheets.

The EC TAT arrived in Madagascar one month before the electoral date with a scope of work centred on empowering the CNE to effectively perform its tasks and prepare the ground for its eventual future evolution towards becoming an independent and impartial institution. Given that the holding of early Legislative Elections was only agreed upon during the Dakar Conference of 8–9 June 2002, the EC was prevented from putting in place a more comprehensive and longer term support package. Within the extremely short timeframe available, the main component of the project focused on the design of a "revitalisation" strategy for enabling the CNE to effectively exercise its supervisory powers in certain crucial stages of the electoral process[25].

A second component was to ensure a prominent role for the CNE in the dissemination of the results of the elections, before the official announcement by the MIRA. Through the setting up of a small statistical unit (3 persons), the CNE succeeded in announcing preliminary results within one week after of the elections, thus forcing the MIRA to announce the ofsficial results a

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23 The institution had been long perceived as an emanation of the executive, both for the high presence in its ranks of representatives appointed by the executive and for the specific nature of its mandate, which was more reactive to specific government enquiries than proactive. Other important reasons for the limited effectiveness of the past CNE had to do with the unclear definition of its operational tasks, lack of territorial structure and lack of resources, both human and material.

24 The composition of the CNE became much more neutral: six members are appointed by the judiciary and various professional orders and the seventh is appointed by the Head of State. The Chairperson is chosen among the 7 National Counsellors by a secret voting procedure for a 5-year mandate. The CNE was also given a territorial structure, the Local Election Offices (BLE), operating at the district level. More recently the CNE has been also provided with Communal Election Representations (CCE) and a central Administrative Secretariat. The CNE is now expected to carry out effectively civic education and voter information functions, as well as to perform meaningful supervisory duties on all electoral operations.

25 Revision of the voter lists, the electoral campaign, the distribution of the electoral material and the control of the results from the polling station level up to Constitutional Court.

few days later. In the past, official results used to be announced four or five weeks after the vote, which encouraged allegations of electoral fraud[26].

A final component of the process was to increase the overall CNE visibility as independent guarantor of the process, especially in the sensitive and traditionally long period (up to five weeks) that goes between counting the votes and the announcement of the final results. In this context, support was also provided to the organisation by the CNE, in the form of a post-election conference with the participation of all the stakeholders.

Even though the above mentioned immediate objectives were identified in this original project, the overall underlying objective to accompany the CNE towards evolving into a fully fledged electoral body was built into it. The various project components had in fact been designed with a view to familiarising the Malagasy public opinion with the CNE functions and attributions in view of its desirable evolution towards a more operational role. In addition, the planning for a post-election seminar was meant to serve the double purpose of setting the agenda for the following cycle of electoral reform and at the same time identify priority areas for the future EC intervention[27].

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B)   THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOTION OF CYCLICAL ASSISTANCE

The main conclusions of the post-election seminar called for the upholding and reinforcement of the supervisory powers of the CNE, the improvement of its civic education programmes and its overall visibility, the adoption of appropriate steps to facilitate the CNE's gradual evolution into a fully fledged electoral management body (independence from political powers, establishment of a permanent technical secretariat, budgetary independence, territorial structure). The seminar, organised by the CNE (with the technical support of the EC TAT) immediately after the announcement of the final results of the 2002 Legislative Elections was in fact the event that highlighted the need for continuous assistance to the electoral institutions and triggered the formulation of the new cycle of EC assistance. The seminar had also the merit to consolidate and crystallise within the main Malagasy stakeholders the EU EOM recommendations at a stage when the memories of the previous process were still very vivid in all the concerned stakeholders.

The conclusion of the post-election seminar allowed the EC Delegation and the relevant Commission services at headquarters level to adequately define their priorities and then formulate a two-year assistance program within the wider context of the support to good governance development, that was duly included in the Country Strategy Paper 2001–2006. In this context, it is important to note how the majority of the activities foreseen in the programme were ones

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26   E.g. 1996 Presidential elections Zafy versus Ratsiraka.

27   The event focused mainly on four aspects, civic education, voter information, organizational structure of the CNE vis' a vis' the MIRA and electoral complaints. All the mentioned aspects were debated and analysed in the light of what was the actual CNE's mandate, statute and functions.

which other stakeholders had also identified as being critical ones. The approved project called for €1,950,000 to be divided into two main components, Capacity Building for the Parliament and Support to the Transparency of the Electoral Process. The first component (€ 378,000) was mainly aimed at improving the professional capacity of parliamentarians and senators through specific training courses and seminars, but also to inform the wider public of the Parliament's activities through public information activities and exchange courses abroad.

The second and larger component of the project, for a value of € 1, 317,000, was equally divided between two activities, support to MIRA for the practical implementation of the joint distribution campaign of ID cards, birth certificates and voters' cards and a support programme to empower the CNE by means of: training of BLE members, drafting of a commented version of the electoral code[28], establishment of the permanent Secretariat, annual supervision of the update of the voter lists, media support and strategy, information campaign on electoral voters' rights, update of the Civic Education Charter and establishment of a website.

In the context of the preparation of this project, financial support of € 0,5 M was also provided through a tied budget support programme for the elaboration and production of self-copying results sheets. Designed to prevent frauds[29], those results sheets were successfully used for the Communal Elections of November 2003.

The distribution of voters' cards in conjunction with identity cards, even though amidst delays in setting up the specific operational tasks, ended satisfactory. Beyond the technical problems that caused the delays, the strength of this component was the attempt to integrate into one activity the distribution of two documents that are pre-conditional for the inscription of the Malagasy citizens in the voter lists. This exercise also forced the MIRA to cooperate effectively with the CNE, and allowed the CNE to gain for the first time a valuable operational insight on these activities. Another merit of this project component was to highlight several constraints that systematically plagued the annual voter lists revision exercise[30]. The distribution exercise could not certainly address itself those systemic flaws, but was such activity that demonstrated that those problems could only be tackled with a total reform of the voter lists concept.

The support to the CNE was crucial to finally empower the institution and enable it to become a real player in the electoral process. The increased functions attributed to the CNE by governmental decree are to be considered to a great extent a direct consequence of the pressure and of the specific conditions inserted by the EC in the project.

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28   In collaboration with prominent NGO, KMF-CNOE

29   As witnessed in the 2001 Presidential elections

30   It is highlighted in the 2nd CNE Mediator report that timing of this annual exercise is rather unsuited for large participation given the weather conditions and the scarcity of financial resources at the end of the financial year. In addition to this, the issuing of three different set of documents has traditionally been carried out erratically throughout the country and varied according to communes.

The total amount allocated to this project proved to be insufficient to address effectively all the specific tasks included in the two components. In particular, the fact that a small technical assistance team could not be permanently deployed to monitor the implementation of the various activities while delivering capacity building assistance, eventually influenced the results achieved. Another important feature was the technical support provided by the electoral experts contracted under the previous assistance project to formulate the post-election assistance, establishing a natural link between the two phases. The project included as well a number of specific conditions, both for the distribution of the documents[31] and for the continued support to CNE[32], which were adhered to and even triggered in some cases some specific regulatory action from the executive.

C)   CONCLUSIONS

The EC Delegation in Madagascar demonstrated a remarkable vision in two particular aspects of the electoral assistance intervention. The first relates to the linking of the two main project components as parallel facets of the democratic development, and the second is about the direct connection emphasised in the project between electoral support activities and the overarching objectives of governance development set out in the Cotonou Agreement. The initiative of using funds still available within an ongoing project to identify and formulate already the next cycle assistance and avoid interruptions was also very inspiring.

The timing of the intervention gave the EC Delegation the ability to choose strategically its objectives in accordance with its long term policy goals. The implementation of the project also added further weight to the EC Delegation political profile, and corroborated it with specific insight knowledge of the political and administrative framework of the country. This placed the Delegation in a position of prominence coordinating the role of the international community in support of the next electoral events and the overall democratic reform.

The overall objective of this assistance, while already identified in the continuous support towards the long-term evolution of the CNE towards an independent EMB (including professional development and training Programmes for its territorial structure), took also into due account several activities that deserved significant and immediate support for the upcoming electoral event, like the digitalisation of the voter lists and the development of a software application for the results aggregation process.

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31   Gratuity of the voter cards, distribution campaign to be organized in concomitance with the annual revision of the voter lists, full involvement of the CNE in the operational planning.

32   Establishment of a permanent Administrative Secretariat for the CNE, the actual increase of the CNE functions, and the enlargement of the length and prerogatives of its president, provision of adequate human and material resources to CNE.

The new phase of the EC intervention in support of the electoral institutions has already started. A new Financial Proposal was recently approved. Overall, the new assistance plan includes a more balanced approach between support to the institutions and to the CSOs which have expressed interest in having a more proactive role in the democratic development of the country and in having election-related initiatives. The importance of this kind of action for the EC is twofold, as it prevents it from being perceived as close to the ruling party and it contemporarily empowers civil society in a sector that has so far received limited support.

The upcoming electoral event, where the CNE for the first time will be required to deliver concrete results for a number of activities that have only recently been attributed to it (supervision of all electoral operations and discretionary intervention powers in case of observed or reported violations) and perform efficiently in its civic education and voter education activities through a sizeable but very new territorial structure[33], will be an important test for assessing its capacity to evolve into a fully fledged EMB. The EC support in this sense is absolutely crucial.

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From an organisational point of view, the main immediate challenges remain linked to the creation of a digitalised database of voters and the improvement of the results aggregation process. In this context, the attention paid by the to local pilot projects for the development of software applications for both the digitalization of the voter lists and the tabulation of the provisional results is an important and innovative capacity building element that might have beneficial effect for the entire electoral process. The level of technical knowledge of the local experts involved in the initiative is sufficient to ensure the development of sound applications and that the draft work plan is based on sound principles of sustainability. However, specific actions must be taken to ensure adequate data protection mechanisms and transparency measures at all levels. The eventual EC support to these two initiatives must be linked to specific conditions and to the deployment of an international IT expert with network administration privileges within the future databases.

The initiatives in support of the CSOs that should be considered by the donor community lie in the domain of civic education, voter information and public awareness-raising projects, especially targeting disadvantaged groups. Also in order to enhance the transparency of the electoral process and to increase the confidence in it of public opinion and stakeholders, the EC could consider to fund Media monitoring programmes to CSOs society groups who are planning to monitor professionally the use of and access to media during the electoral processes. The training of lawyers and judges on the legal framework of the electoral process, especially targeting electoral dispute mechanisms should also be funded and organised via specific seminars and public information activities

Like in all the other case studies selected for this Methodological Guide, the unanimous opinion of all the stakeholders met in Madagascar was that the fielding of an EU EOM in a context where projects of electoral assistance had been implemented by the EC did not constitute

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33   111 BLEs, that will in turn coordinate 1558 CCEs

a problem and was never perceived as a potential conflict of interest by any of the stakeholders. On the contrary, the view that the two activities can be seen as complementary and mutually beneficial in the context of long term assistance to the electoral cycle of a country was welcomed and deemed feasible.

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Mozambique
Experimenting Budget Support in Electoral Assistance

Mozambique and the EC have a long history of partnership and cooperation, with the EC heavily supporting all Mozambican electoral processes since the first multiparty elections in 1994. However, the specific form of aid delivery method used to support the 2003–2004 electoral processes, represented a groundbreaking innovation that might open up a different way of looking at the electoral assistance for the EC.

The application of the principles of Budget Support in the field of electoral assistance, which is traditionally project-driven implemented via EC contractual and financial procedures or even more implemented via pool funding UNDP-managed, while chosen because it was the sole expeditious way available to meet the late request for assistance by the Mozambican Government, it opened up the possibility to combine in the future the specific needs of electoral assistance with the Budget Support modalities. The inevitable need to set benchmarks and conditionalities in electoral assistance programmes will most likely require specific adjustments that could make the Sector Budget Support Approach a better compromise to combine the general budget mechanisms with the specific needs of electoral assistance.

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The 2003/2004 support programmes to Mozambican elections, even though did not mark any improvement in the technical administration of the electoral process, has showed that the EC might have other important instruments of leverage to promote future reform and consolidate democracy in the long run.

For the 2003–4 programmes, the main beneficiaries of the EC support were the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the National Election Commission (hereafter referred as CNE) and its implementing arm, the Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (hereafter referred to as STAE).

A)   BACKGROUND

Since the General Peace Agreement (GPA) signed in 1992 that ended more than 15 years of civil war, the EC has played a very important role in contributing to all the multiparty elections which have taken place in the country. The 1994 Presidential Elections, heavily supported by the UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMOZ), marked a successful and peaceful transition with a high voter turnout (88%), but the national electoral authorities played in practice a very limited organizational role. The UNDP was in charge of coordinating the technical assistance to the CNE through a multi donor trust fund into which the EC has contributed significantly.

A renovated CNE conducted the first local elections in 1998, but those were held in only 33 urban local authorities instead of the 148 administrative districts[34]. The voter turnout was extremely low (15%) in consideration of the RENAMO boycott. For these elections the EC put in place an assistance project EDF funded through standard EC contractual and financial procedures for an amount of € 9.5 M. The project was parallel to an UNDP-managed Trust Fund, which maintained the overall decision-making powers on the election operations and amounted to € 7 M. The EC project mainly provided funds and technical assistance to the CNE/STAE to procure the materials needed for voter registration, polling materials and to their transportation. The EC project included the provision of technical assistance for the STAE for the preparation of the relevant documentation to deal with procurement and tendering using EDF procedures.

For the 1999 Presidential Elections, again a new CNE was established reflecting the representation of parties in the National Assembly. As a result of the low turnout and concerns over the registration during 1998 Municipal Elections, a completely new registration exercise was conducted for the 1999 Presidential and Legislative Elections. The EC support to this electoral process amounted to € 21 M, against a total budget estimate of € 35 M. The project provided for EDF funding via standard EC procedures and also made a contribution to the UNDP Trust Fund for the provision of technical assistance. The EC decided for this form of support after deploying a needs assessment mission that evaluated the 1998 process and taking the first request for support prepared by the Mozambique Government in October 1998 as its starting point.

International and domestic observers generally praised the elections, especially voting and counting but raised severe concerns over the tabulation of results at provincial and national levels and over possible inflation of the voter register with high numbers of duplicates and deceased voters. However, given that the organisation of the process could start in earnest only eight months before E-Day day due to the very late adoption of the new legislative package, the overall outcome was assessed as a positive step in the democratic development of the country.

B)   THE LATE EC INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2003/2004 PROCESS

After the positive developments of the previous electoral cycles, the EC did not include electoral assistance as a priority in the Country Strategy Paper for the period 2002/2007. However, after a specific request from the Mozambican authorities, the EC Delegation agreed to support the 2004 Presidential Elections as requested by the NAO. Such request of support came extremely late in the process, and the EC Delegation was forced to explore new avenues for mobilising the necessary funds in the limited timeframe available. Unfortunately, while all the EC efforts were directed towards the mobilisation of resources and the identification of the procedures that could be adjusted to the specific method selected for the funding, not enough attention was

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34   Renamo claimed that a significant number of its supporters were disenfranchised during the voter registration process and boycotted the elections.

paid to the insertion of all the necessary performance indicators and benchmarks to ensure that previous identified systemic problems in the implementation of the electoral processes could be properly addressed.

In this context of urgency, EDF funding for the Local Elections 2003 and the Parliamentary and Presidential ones in 2004 was proposed on the grounds that it was a necessary requirement for the stabilization of the Mozambican democracy and, thus an overarching objective of the 9th EDF and of its National Indicative Programme. In order to maintain consistency with the overall donor strategy and the large EDF programme of budget support that were already in place in Mozambique, the EC Delegation proposed that the procedure for channelling the additional EDF contribution to the electoral process be in the form of direct Budget Support. Due to the very late request, there were no regular financial mechanisms available to implement it apart from an increase of the overall macro-budget support envelope with the attachment of various conditions detailed in a MoU on electoral processes 2003–2004 that was signed by UNDP (representing a group of donors), the EC and the Government (MoF).

The conditionalities in the MoU included an Action Plan detailing all activities, cost estimates for both electoral events and sources of verification, a coordinating group (Donor Working Group) which coordinated CNE/STAE for clarifications and to assess inputs needed from the international community, regular reports on implementation and budget expenditure and finally evaluation mechanisms including final reports from UNDP and EU Election Advisor, the EUEOM, other observers' missions, CNE and STAE. These conditionalities in the MoU, despite not being in line with budget support principles, established some necessary degree of control over the financial support provided to the electoral process and provided a guarantee that the funds would be spent on ensuring that the elections would be run on time.

The EC decision to increase the overall contribution to the budget support project by channeling funds through the Ministry of Finance also required that the STAE present a detailed election budget to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and that the MoF could disburse the funds only accordingly. Earlier planning and budget preparations by the STAE would have helped the MoF in this task as would earlier budget support if this mechanism is to be repeated. In the rush of the moment, no provision of direct technical assistance was contemplated from the EC. This with the exception of an Election Advisor contracted bilaterally by member states and reporting directly to the EU Troika, that played a crucial buffer role between the donors and the EMBs. The UNDP had also a very limited technical presence and could not influence the process[35].

The entire cost of the electoral process in 2004 was € 21 M, with the EC contribution totalling € 16.4 M. The downward trend in electoral costs showed the increased stability of the State

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35   The UNDP on the other hand had just one MUSD via a multi-donor trust fund to provide electoral assistance to STAE, while it originally featured 5 technical advisors but was then reduced to just a CTA and ICT expert under precise indications of the STAE.

institutions and a growing share of the costs covered by the State budget, the other side of the coin was that the Mozambican Authorities were still largely dependent upon the EC's contribution for the conduct of their own elections.

In addition to funding the organisation of elections and to balance the support given to EMBs, the EC funded through EIDHR call for proposals for micro and macro projects a number of CSOs dealing with the electoral processes. This ensured that the running of elections were balanced with a better access to information through a freer and more interactive media to potentially disadvantaged groups about the electoral process and their citizens' rights linking it to objectives of Governance in the broader context.

The 2003 and 2004 elections, despite the good logistical organization and the absence of violent episodes on election days, highlighted the same pattern of problems (inflated voter lists, usage of three different voters rolls, unclear number of registered voters and polling stations, high number of duplicates) typical of previous electoral processes, with the addition of aggravated problems in the tabulation of results, adjudication of disputed ballots, observed frauds and very low turnout.

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For the Presidential Elections of 2004 in particular, the most critical area of concern was the use of three different voters' rolls on E-Day (namely the 1999, the updated 2003 and the updated 2004 lists). This likely disenfranchised again several voters due to the inconsistent use of the three sets of voters' lists[36]. The tabulation of results took a long time with technical and administrative shortcomings which created suspicion and cast doubt on the integrity of the final result[37]. Political considerations aside, from a purely technical point of view, the 2004 process, marked a step backwards in the overall governance development of the country. Those elections, despite being the third generations of national elections and the fifth overall electoral event in the country, were unanimously considered to have been badly managed.

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36 The registration period took place in only 17 days and the objective was to register new voters those who had moved residence and clean the roll of the names of dead people and duplicates. The official number of voters given was more than 9 million which did not seem accurate considering the Mozambican demographic factors, a more realistic figure is between 6.7 and 7.8 million. The STAE director also stated in November that the voters' list had been computerised, corrected and consolidated when on E-Day it was clearly not the case. Some voter rolls were sent to the wrong stations some did not arrive. STAE failed to produce a full list of polling stations, which would have indicated not only the locations, but also the corresponding numbers in the voters roll per station. It is easy to produce fictitious results sheets if there is not means to verify the actual number of stations and to compare the number of the sheets with that of stations.

37 This process was further marred by the lack of transparency with CNE refusing access to observers. A new software package designed by a company linked to Frelimo was provided at the last minute without consultation and had weak security features. It also had been programmed to accept a higher number 566 extra than the total number of polling stations. The software rejected valid results in some cases. 8.7% of results sheets were rejected in controversial circumstances by CNE.

The partisan model chosen for the CNE[38] to guarantee transparency in the electoral process and adequate participation of the opposition, in practice ended up hampering the development of a civic and institutional conscience within the election administration organs. The CNE decisions, very often taken along party lines and not necessarily in the interests of the institution or of the electoral process, led to an over politicized EMB and eroded the CNE image of independent and impartial institution. The disappointing performance of its operational arm, also over-politicised and directly linked to the government, was also much at the center of the discussion. The controversial by-election in Moçimboa da Praia held 6 months after the Presidential Elections showed that despite criticisms from the Constitutional Court and various observer reports, the CNE continued to follow its political agenda[39].

C)   EVALUATING BUDGET SUPPORT AS A MEANS TO PROVIDE ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

The solution of increasing the Macro-Budget Support to the State was a creative way to respond positively to the short notice of the GoM's request for electoral assistance. It was also the only possible manner to trigger the quick delivery of funds needed to make the process possible. The absence of any reference for supporting the elections in the CSP had in fact placed the EC Delegation in a very difficult political position once the NAO knocked at its door for electoral support. However, a price was paid in term of quality of the delivered results. On the other hand, the systemic shortcomings identified in the 2004 electoral process could not have been properly addressed in any case given the limited timeframe available.

The solution to fund the electoral process through an increase to budget support, though it might appear on the surface as a rather passive choice, in reality it provided the EC Delegation with a great amount of political capital that can now be spent in the ongoing negotiations on the future electoral reform. The level of sophistication of the Mozambique's politics is such that there are various reasons for the EC to remain engaged at this level, and to use the leverage provided by the Budget Support Approach to elicit commitment to reform at the government level.

The advantage of a Budget Support Strategy is that it makes the partner government more accountable to the donors and to its own Parliament for its entire budget. In theory, this form of support, while forcing the partner government to open up its entire budget to external scrutiny and audit, is to be rewarded by a less intrusive approach by the donors' community that would then

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38   In fact, the current CNE is composed of 19 members, one chairperson practically appointed by the Government, two vice-chairpersons and 16 ordinary members nominated by political parties in proportion to their representation in Parliament. In practice, 10 CNE members are affiliated to Frelimo, and 8 to Renamo.

39   The main controversy in this particular case lay over the unusually high number of invalid votes 5.4% compared to 2.6% in 2003 and the losing Renamo candidate's allegations that votes for him had been deliberately invalidated by STAE staff.

judge the partner government's performance based on the achievement of the overall objectives of sound financial management and poverty reduction rather than single activities.

In the context of urgency of the pending Mozambican elections, the instrument served well its purpose of making the elections possible. The overall result would suggest that budget support as a mechanism worked in electoral assistance terms, despite the serious reservations of many.. Some of the most common concerns expressed on the use of the budget support strategy for electoral assistance are related to the lack of specific control on the expenditure and that there is no way to earmark funds against precise technical/political benchmarks to ensure that those are spent on addressing systemic problems. In other words, the instrument does not allow for any specific leverage on technical aspects of the process.

In the Mozambican context, this was complicated by the limited technical assistance requested by the STAE and provided by UNDP. The perplexities related to the usage of the budget support for electoral assistance come as well from the very designers of such approach, who consider the election sector too much result-driven and politically sensitive to be included in a general Budget Support Approach. However, in countries like Mozambique, where the EC will remain among the most important supporters of the electoral processes, it definitely might be appropriate to explore the possibilities offered by the Sector Budget Approach. This might in fact represent the necessary compromise solution between the instances highlighted above even though it has to be underlined that in the electoral assistance field the project approach rests the most indicated one.

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Mozambique will soon face soon three different levels of elections (Provincial Elections in 2007, 33 Municipal Elections in 2008, and Parliamentary and Presidential elections in 2009). For the next stage of the EC support, there are three different levels of intervention that need to be taken into account: a) constitutional-legal reform, b) technological support to election operations and improvement of systemic flaws, c) targeted support to civil society.

The legal-constitutional reform is crucial to obtain any results in the other levels too. Any specific technical support to the solution of the significant technical issues on the table will not resolve the endemic problems encountered so far if there is no change in the CNE and STAE modus operandi. This requires serious changes in the way the two main political parties look at the role of the EMB. The EU political pressure should remain focused on pushing for a drastic change in the CNE structure, modus operandi and decision-making mechanisms, and this could be achieved through the provision of specific legal assistance to draft provisions for the electoral reform package that takes into due consideration the technical implications.

The EC intervention, however, requires a crucial decision on the type of aid delivery method that will be privileged. The option of a Sector Budget Support might offer the right compromise between the need to demonstrate a high level trust in the national authorities while at the same

time providing technical expertise to capacity build the CNE and the STAE in certain crucial areas where clear deficiencies have been demonstrated.

Sector Budget Support is specifically appropriate if two essential requirements are met: 1) the existence of a sound macroeconomic framework; and 2) a satisfactory level of accountability in the management of public finances. In adopting a Sector Budget Support approach, a decision needs to be taken on whether the use of the resources provided by the Commission should be "targeted" (or earmarked) for use on specific budget lines or provided in an un-targeted manner. Due to the specific nature of elections Targeted Sector Budget Support could be the most suited mechanism if budget support is to be used at all.

To make "The Electoral Process" a sector it must be linked to the priority of poverty reduction and this it can be easily done via the recognition that elections are one of the most important ways to facilitate and encourage citizens to participate to decisions that affect their lives and hold their representatives accountable for results. Elections therefore represent a critical passage to enhance citizens' participation to political life and the interlinked objectives of poverty alleviation, human development, and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. However, before considering the support to electoral processes as a sector, the EC needs to verify that the general pre-conditions that characterise this approach are in place in this context. In other words, strong and effective leadership at sector/ ministry level (and impartiality in the EMB's case), commitment to the process in government (also in reform of election-related laws), broad consensus between government and donors on key policy and management issues for the sector (for example choosing a new registration system), and finally a reasonable degree of macroeconomic and political stability leading to budget predictability. In assessing and shaping these pre-conditions EC could play a useful role in influencing a more democratic process[40].

After the political dilemma of what will be the structure and modus operandi of the next CNE and STAE, the challenges at the technical level will mostly focus on whether a new voter registration project should be launched soon. The technical solutions to be adopted must address the operational concept in its entirety, from the voter registration model, to permanent and updated voter lists, publication of polling stations in advance, publication of results at the poling station level, and results tabulation. A thorough feasibility study on voter registration, including a voter registration survey attitude should be undertaken to be able to make informed decisions on what model to support and eventually to fund. However, any conceptual discussion on the model and methodology for voter registration should not cancel the need to undertake a thorough analysis of the current problems with the voter lists independently of the future voter registration model.

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40   In addition, if an Electoral Process Sector approach was designed it would have to be assessed as other Sectors against the seven key areas checking budget stability, institutional capacity and financial management record, strategic objectives such as a series of three electoral events in the overall framework of the electoral cycle in 5 years, donor coordination system and accountability and monitoring mechanisms.

The other important pillar of the future EC support will remain the civil society. Compared to 1994 and 1999, the voter turn-out in 2004 was disappointingly low at 36%, even if the voters' rolls had been inflated. In order to reverse this worrying trend, there needs to be a survey funded and conducted or a needs assessment on voter attitudes in order to ascertain and analyse the reasons why many voters did not vote. This comprehensive survey could be the basis for all subsequent civic education programmes to target the needs of voters and motivate them since it is through participating and exercising their civic rights and responsibilities they can make things change rather than wait for the divide between electorate and elected bodies widen. Such a survey is useful too for political parties and MPs to consider how better to respond as representatives to their constituents.

On a more general note, the Delegation has to be praised for having facilitated the recruitment of a EU Electoral Advisor that was hired bilaterally by two EU member states. This played a very crucial liaison role with the STAE, managed to push for some important decisions supported by the EC and helped the member states to understand better the technical intricacies of the processes. The overall objective of this position was to enhance the EU capacity to follow up the electoral processes in Mozambique.. This is certainly an example that other Delegation should follow by temporally hiring electoral operations expert via framework contract to increase their efforts to follow technically the implementation of the programmes/projects even when executed in a pool funding set up.

Annexes

List of International, Continental and Regional Actors

Here below you will find an indicative and non-exhaustive list of International, Continental and Regional Actors that were directly or peripherally have been involved with EC electoral assistance in the last five years[1].

INTERNATIONAL, CONTINENTAL, REGIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

UN EAD/DPA, United Nations Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs, was established in 1992, initially as the Electoral Assistance Unit, to provide technical support to the focal point in carrying out his functions. The main role of the Division are to evaluate requests for electoral assistance, to identify and maintain United Nations electoral standards, to undertake needs-assessment missions, to assist the organizations of the United Nations system and other organizations in the design of electoral assistance project activities, to develop operational strategies for electoral components of peacekeeping operations, to maintain a roster of electoral experts, to facilitate the international observation of elections and to serve as the institutional memory of the United Nations in the electoral field. *www.un.org/Depts/dpa/ead/eadhome.htm*

UNDP, United Nations Development Programme, within the UN System, at the country level, UNDP plays a lead role in the provision of policy advice and programmes to strengthen sustainable democratic institutions and processes (e.g., electoral bodies, parliaments, judiciaries etc.). The emphasis of its role and interventions in the electoral area is on long-term capacity-building of electoral institutions and processes, including civil society awareness and participation. The UNDP also plays a key role at the country level in the coordination of electoral assistance among donors and national and international actors. This includes both financial coordination involving the channeling of donor funds for electoral support as well as the coordination of electoral support through meetings and donor coordination forums. In most cases, when United Nations electoral assistance is provided to a country, the resident coordinator/resident representative represents the United Nations system in such an undertaking. At UNDP HQ, the Bureau for Development Policy teams up with the regional bureau concerned to provide support for the priorities and needs identified at the country level, in close liaison with the Electoral Assistance Division. *www.undp.org*

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1   The content related to each actors has been drawn by: their official web sites, the UNDP Guides on Political Parties, the UNDP Guide on Civil Society Organizations dealing with Electoral Systems and Processes, the Handbook on Election Management Design of IDEA and by the internet links *http://www.idea.int/parties/* and *www.democracyagenda.org*

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OSCE/ODIHR, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is the specialist institution of the OSCE dealing with elections, human rights, and democratisation. Based in Warsaw, Poland, the ODIHR promotes democratic election processes through the in-depth observation of elections and conducts election assistance projects that enhance meaningful participatory democracy. It also assists participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments by providing expertise and practical support in strengthening democratic institutions through longer-term Programmes to strengthen the rule of law, civil society, and democratic governance. *www.osce.org/odhir*

International IDEA, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) was set up in 1995 with a mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide. The Institute works with both new and long-established democracies, helping to develop and strengthen the institutions and culture of democracy. It operates at international, regional and national levels, working in partnership with a range of institutions. IDEA uses comparative experience, analysis and extensive dialogue with practitioners to identify examples of good practice, and to produce tools and guidelines on democracy support. It has regular publications, an expanding website and a range of databases. It builds networks of experts, develops training materials and provides strategic advice on issues related to its work programme. The IDEA works with the international democracy assistance community as well as in-country with local stakeholders in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Arab states and the South Caucasus. *www.idea.int*

IOM: International Organisation for Migration, established in 1951 as an intergovernmental organisation to resettle European displaced persons, refugees and migrants, IOM has now grown to encompass a variety of migration management activities throughout the world. It has now also gained considerable experience in organising and managing external registration and voting on behalf of concerned governments, mainly to support refugee and displaced populations in the electoral processes. *www.iom.org*

OAS, Organisation of American States, through its Unit for the Promotion of Democracy (UPD), has observed elections in a majority of its member states and provided electoral assistance to some other member countries of the Americas, helping to ensure transparency and integrity in the voting process. Guided by the principles of the Democratic Charter, the OAS also supports efforts to decentralise governments, modernise political parties, strengthen national legislatures, and consolidate democratic values and culture. It also works to promote a greater role for civil society in decision-making. *www.oas.org*

AU, the African Union, the youngest among the continental organisations, recently undertook within its Department of Political Affairs the strengthening of the Human Rights and Democratisation Division in order to face request of electoral support, both in observation and technical assistance. It provided electoral assistance for the first time in Liberia for the Presidential Elections of 2005, but it is itself in the need of technical assistance before it can turn into a proper electoral assistance provider. *www.africa-union.org*

Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) is a regional inter-parliamentary body which brings together twelve parliaments. The objectives of the Forum include the promotion of multiparty democracy, good governance, gender equality and political stability in the region as well as respect of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. In line with the above objectives the Forum has taken a keen interest in election observation in its member states. Based on these observations the Forum has developed and adopted Electoral Norms and Standards for the SADC region which serve as bench marks against which to assess the management and the conduct of elections in the region. Concurrent with the adoption of Norms and Standards for elections in the SADC region, the Forum also decided to abandon its earlier focus on the observation of polling and counting activities and extend its missions to the other phases of an electoral process namely the pre election and post election phases: *www.sadcpf.org/index.php*

SPECIALIZED ORGANIZATIONS AND CONSORTIUM
HAVING GLOBAL COVERAGE

EC Framework Contract - LOT 7: Culture, **Governance and Home Affairs**; The EC for actions under 200000 EURO established a framework contract of consortium of companies and organizations that provided services for all the steps of the Project Cycle. As per electoral assistance the related lot, till the end of 2007, is the one Culture, Governance and Home Affairs. Electoral Assistance is dealt with the sub sector of Support to democratisation including: Democratisation processes (incl. civic education); Social and political roots of conflicts (conflict prevention); Elections (census, support to electoral processes and supervision…); Role and functioning of the Parliament; Citizenship (representative legitimacy, participation and political accountability). The consortium have in general a broad spectrum of activities and are the companies/organizations selected on a two year basis. The selected consortium respond to request of specific experts and services in electoral assistance received generally by Delegations but also by HQ as per exploratory missions for EUEOMs. Their specific "in house" electoral assistance expertise depends of the presence of specialized electoral experts working full time in the organizations of the consortium, The list of the consortium can be found at: *http://ec.europa.eu/comm/EuropeAid/tender/gestion/index_en.htm*

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IFES, the International Foundation of Electoral Systems, founded in 1987, is an international non-profit organisation dedicated to building democratic societies. Headquartered in Washington, DC, IFES is a U.S. organisation also registered in over 20 countries in which they have field offices. IFES provides technical assistance to new and developing democracies in the areas of election administration, civil society building, human rights, rule of law and governance. In 2004, IFES established the Center for Transitional and Post-Conflict Governance to conduct programmes that enhance political stability in fragile or failed states in order to advance democracy through a political process. The Center seeks to reduce the destabilising effects on governance from national, regional and transnational threats involving terror, corruption, and crime that emerges from violent, conflictive, fraudulent, or disputed political processes; ineffective or non-existent civil societies; and inadequate systems of justice. *www.ifes.org*

The Carter Center, the mission of the Carter Center is to help create a world in which every man, woman, and child has the opportunity to enjoy good health and live in peace. Founded in 1982, the Center is a charitable organisation that has helped to improve the quality of life for people in more than 65 countries. Through its Democracy Program, the Center conducts international election monitoring; works to strengthen the capacity of civic organisations to participate in government policy-making; and promotes the rule of law. Observers analyse election laws, assess voter registration processes, voter education efforts, and the openness of campaigns – focusing on competitiveness, unhindered participation in the election process, and access to the media. *www.cartercenter.org*

The MacDougall Trust, is an independent educational research charity established in 1948. The Trust seeks to advance knowledge and encourage research in: political or economic science; the functions of government and the services provided to the community by public and voluntary organisations; methods of election and the selection of government and other representative organisation leaders; and, representative democracy, its forms, functions, development and associated institutions. It does this mainly by publishing a periodical entitled 'Representation: the Journal of Representative Democracy' and by maintaining and developing the Lakeman Library for Electoral Studies. *www.electoral-reform.org.uk/ers/mcd*

ERIS, Electoral Reform International Services is a division of the Electoral Reform Society of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (ERS), which was founded in 1884, to develop democracy in Britain and abroad. ERIS' aim is to offer a comprehensive advisory service for all democracies, was formed as an independent and non-political institute. With a team of staff based in London and a regional office in Africa, ERIS works in partnership with national electoral commissions and civil society organisations or on behalf of international donors to provide specialist electoral and democratisation assistance. *www.eris.org.uk*

European Network of Election Monitoring Organisations, the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) was set up as an international network of election monitoring organisations in 2001. The network promotes the involvement of civic organisations in election monitoring. As an effective way to engage, educate and empower citizens, ENEMO pro-motes election-monitoring standards of network members, supports international and exchange projects among ENEMO members, develops European-wide information resources on electoral legislation and systems, and provides international support to members. *www.gong.hr/enemo*

NDI, theNational Democratic Institute, a US-based non profit organisation supported by the US Democratic Party and working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and to promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government. With the Carter Centre, NDI has developed and implemented projects to empower domestic observers organisations to carry out parallel vote tabulation or quick counts. *www.ndi.org*

IRI, the International Republican Institute, is a non-profit organization dedicated to advanc-ing democracy worldwide. The IRI conducts a wide range of international Programmes to promote and strengthen democratic ideals and institutions. IRI programmes are individually structured to meet the needs of the participants in the host country. These programmes include training on such issues as civic responsibility, the legislative process for newly elected government officials and the mechanics of organising political parties and election campaigns. *www.iri.org*

GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKS OF EMBS AND ASSOCIATION OF EMBS

Association of Central and Eastern European Election Officials, **(ACEEEO)** is a non-partisan association established in 1991. The main objectives of ACEEEO are to foster free, democratic and fair elections; to promote the institutionalisation and professionalisation of democratic processes and procedures; to support the development of open and democratic election systems in the region; and to provide a non-partisan and politically neutral forum for the exchange of information among election officials and experts. Activities include support on electoral technology, campaign finance reform, and citizens' participation in electoral processes. *www.aceeeo.org*

The Inter-American Union of Electoral Organizations (UNIORE) was established in 1991 to promote cooperation between the electoral organisations and associations created under the Tikal and Quito protocols. It extended the potential scope of cooperation to provide support and assistance, as far as practicable, to member organisations which requested them. The Costa Rica-based Centre for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL), established in 1983, acts as the executive secretariat of these networks.

Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations, **(ACEO)** is an association established in 1998 to promote cooperation and mutual assistance among electoral authorities in the Caribbean and the use of election processes that ensure free, fair and peaceful elections. These objectives are achieved, in part, through strengthening independent and impartial electoral organisations and administrators; promoting public confidence through transparent electoral procedures; providing a forum for the exchange of experiences, information and technology pertaining to elections; and establishing a Caribbean based resource centre for research and information. *www.ifes.org/caribbean*

Association of African Election Authorities, **(AAEA)** was founded in 1997. It is a membership organisation dedicated to the professionalisation of election administration through information exchange and regional networking. The Association promotes free and fair elections; independent and impartial elections by organisations and administrators; public confidence in the election process through open and transparent electoral procedures; and participation by citizens, political contestants, and non-partisan NGOs in electoral processes. Activities include election observation, training, roundtable discussions, and educational exchanges. *www.ifes.org/afrassoc1*

Southern African Development Community (SADC) Electoral Support Network at regional levels. While some electoral support networks specialise in election monitoring or observation, many support EMBs in areas such as electoral research, training and voter education and information. Electoral support networks can be effective partners for EMBs, using links into local communities and access to funds – particularly donor funds in emerging democracies – to augment the skills base of EMBs and to enhance information flows to and from EMBs.

PIANZEA, the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network, is a semi-formal association of electoral administrators working in the Pacific region. The network was founded 1997 and its goal is: To continue and maintain in the Pacific spirit, a close association of Pacific Electoral Administrators within an established networking arrangement to facilitate and encourage the free flow of electoral information among member countries and to provide assistance where possible. American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Solomon Islands are the administrations recognised as being members of PIANZEA and its Secretariat is hosted by the Australian Electoral Commission.

Global Electoral Organisation (GEO) is the development of regional associations of electoral organisations and the increasing internationalisation of elections through advocacy for international standards for democratic elections led to the establishment of a global forum for discussion of EMB collaboration. The Conference of the Global Electoral Organisation (GEO) Network, which was first convened in Ottawa in April 1999, is a worldwide meeting of regional associations of election officers.

Elections Canada (*www.elections.ca*), **Instituto Federal of Mexico** (*www.ife.org.mx*), **Australian Election Commission** (*www.aec.gov.au*), **South African Election Commission** (*www.elections.org.za*) **and the Brazilian Supreme Electoral Tribunal** (*www.tse.gov.br/internet/index.htm*) are all independent electoral administration in their respective countries which in addition to domestic services have an international arm to provide electoral assistance. These have developed over the years a strong expertise in electoral support programmes and they generally provide capacity building and technical advice on demand and may second experienced staff to international electoral assistance missions.

Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, (EISA) is a not-for-profit company established in 1996. Its mission is to strengthen electoral processes, good governance, human rights and democratic values. Activities include research, capacity building, advocacy and other targeted interventions. The organisation services governments, electoral commissions, political parties, civil society organisations and other institutions operating in the democracy and governance fields throughout Africa. Key programme areas include Democracy, Conflict Management and Electoral Education; Elections and Political Processes; and Balloting and Electoral Services. *www.eisa.org.za*

Akina Mama wa Afrika, (AMwA) is an international, pan-African, non-governmental development organisation set up in 1985. Co-ordinating local, regional and international initiatives, Akina Mama serves as a mobilising, networking, information, advocacy and training forum for African women, building their leadership capacities to influence policy and decision-making. In 1996, AMwA set up the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) as part of its Africa Programme. *http://www.akinamamawafrika.org/*

Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), was set up as an international NGO in 1996. FAS seeks to encourage women's participation in political processes. It also conducts peace and fact-finding missions to evaluate and redefine the role women play in conflict resolution and peace-building in post conflict areas. Key activities include voter education, election observer missions, training workshops, and support for information and experience exchange among women and their associations in numerous parts of Africa. *www.fasngo.org*

Gender Links, was established as a non-profit organisation in 2001. The organisation aims to increase participation and representation of women in the electoral process and in political office. It also seeks to transform gender relations in and through the media by conducting research on gender disparities in the internal structures and editorial output of the media. Areas of activity include efforts to strengthen the media and communication skills of gender activists and women in decision-making. In addition, Gender Links leverage its skills and expertise by providing research and advisory services on gender and governance more broadly. *www.genderlinks.org.za*

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Institute for Education in Democracy, (IED) is an NGO established in 1993. Its mission is to promote democracy in Africa. Since its inception, IED has provided non-partisan leadership in monitoring the democratic process in Kenya and other parts of Africa through programmes on electoral processes, voter education, research and provision of technical assistance. It is committed to a non-partisan approach and promotes the view that an informed citizenry is an empowered citizenry that can take part in the development of their country. *www.iedafrica.org*

Research Group on the Democratic, **Economic and Social Development of Africa**, Set up in 1990, (GERDDES-AFRICA) is a non-partisan, pan-African network that seeks to promote democracy in the service of social and economic development, and cultivates African expertise in conflict prevention and management. The GERDDES programme organ, the International Research Centre on Democracy and Development (IRCD), takes part in organising and monitoring elections and engages in social and political mediation. *www.gerddes.org*

Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, is an independent regional information resource centre which seeks to enhance the effectiveness of key development processes in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. One of SARDC's key objectives is to assist governments, organisations and people of the SADC region to move quickly and effectively toward the empowerment and involvement of people in development. The Sustainable Democracy programme provides documentation and publications on elections in the southern African region. Other Centre activities include collection and provision of relevant and accessible information, based on national and regional perspectives; and capacity building for collecting, storing and accessing information on a sustainable basis. *www.sardc.net*

SPECIALIZED ASIAN ORGANISATIONS

Asian Network for Free Elections, (ANFREL) was formed in 1997 as a regional network of election monitoring and human rights organisations. Its aims are to support Democratisation and related processes and initiatives in Asia. Activities include capacity building, training and support of election monitoring by local groups as well as lobbying and dissemination of election results and democracy-related information. ANFREL has represented international efforts to ensure the integrity, credibility and transparency of electoral processes in countries such as Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, East Timor and Thailand. *www.anfrel.org*

Asia-Pacific Civic Education Network, (APCEN) is a network of civic educators within the Asia Pacific region. Its main purpose is to establish effective communication linkages between groups that seek to promote civic education in their respective countries. The primary activities of the Network are to disseminate information about civic education reform through its electronic network and website as well as to organise and conduct conferences and workshops on civic education, democracy and democratic governance. *http://apcen.edfac.usyd.edu.au/*

SPECIALIZED LATIN AMERICAN ORGANISATIONS

Centre for Electoral Promotion and Assistance, (CAPEL) is part of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, an independent NGO established in 1980. It offers technical electoral advice and promotes elections and the values of a democratic culture and full political participation without discrimination. Activities include election monitoring, research and analysis, as well as training courses and seminars for electoral officials in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. *www.iidh.ed.cr/comunidades/RedElectoral*

Conciencia, is a non-partisan, non-profit association that believes that responsible political participation constitutes a citizen's undeniable duty. Its mission is to increase peoples' awareness about citizenship by transmitting democratic and republican ideals that encourage people to exercise their citizenship as a right and as a responsibility, and actively participate in community and civic life of Argentina. Conciencia carries out programme activities to inform and educate and has 36 chapters spread all over the country. It also established and supports a pan- American network in 16 countries. *www.concienciadigital.com.ar*

ORGANISATIONS WORKING MAINLY WITH POLITICAL PARTIES ASSISTANCE

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), is the primary international organisation of parliaments, and a focal point for worldwide dialogue and the exchange of knowledge on parliaments and representative democracy. Its promotion of Representative Democracy programme emphasises advancing parliamentary knowledge, assisting parliamentary elections and supporting parliamentary institutions. *www.ipu.org*

Parliamentarians for Global Action, this network of over 1,300 legislators from 114 parliaments is engaged in promoting democracy, peace, justice and development throughout the world. *www.pgaction.org*

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the association consists of the national, provincial, state and territorial parliaments and legislatures of the countries of the Commonwealth. Members share the association's mission to promote knowledge and understanding about parliamentary democracy, and respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms. For more information: *www.cpahq.org*

African Parliamentary Union, this Association based in Abidjan, the union is a continental interparliamentary organisation involving 35 national parliaments. Besides bringing together African parliaments, the union also facilitates ties to parliaments in other regions, and contributes to promoting democracy and reaching the objectives of the Organization of African Unity. For more information: *www.parliament.gh/APU/APU.htm*

Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, with 22 member parliaments, the union's mandate includes strengthening contacts and promoting dialogue among Arab parliaments; coordinating the activities of Arab parliaments in various International forums, and with different regional organisations, particularly within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union; and working on enhancing democratic concepts and values in Arab countries. For more information: *www.arabipu.org*

Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, the forum seeks to provide opportunities for parliamentarians from 27 member countries to identify and discuss matters of common concern and interest. It promotes greater regional cooperation particularly on: the further advancement of peace, freedom, democracy and prosperity; the expansion of free trade and investment, and sustainable development and sound environmental practices; and regional peace and security. *www.appf.org.pe*

Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas, the forum has 26 member states that work on common objectives such as strengthening the role of the legislative branch in democracy and human rights; promoting the development and harmonisation of legislation among member states; and contributing to integration towards sustainable and harmonious development in the hemisphere. *www.efipa.org/news_en.htm*

Inter-Parliamentary Organization of the Association of South East Asian Nations, this eight-country organization promotes closer cooperation among member parliaments on issues related to achieving the objectives of ASEAN, namely, peace, stability and progress. *www.aipo.org*

Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, the forum brings together 12 parliaments from southern Africa to support the growth of democracy in the region, motivated by a legacy of struggle against the deprivation of human rights and civil liberties. Forum activities include those related to election observation, conflict resolution and raising the number of women in parliaments. For more information: *www.sadcpf.org*

Inter American Development Bank, is the main source of multilateral financing for economic, social and institutional development projects as well as trade and regional integration programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its governance work focuses on judicial reform, public sector management and social sector projects involving civil society. In 2003, the IDB's Modernisation of State Strategy stipulated working indirectly with parties to strengthen democratic systems. Projects with a political party component include a partnership with UNDP and other organisations in Nicaragua (see page TK). The IDB is also engaged in a technical cooperation project with the OAS to study political party systems in the Andean countries and Central America. For more information: *www.iadb.org*

NIMD, Netherlands Institute for Political Parties, is an institute of political parties for political parties. The mandate of IMD is to encourage the process of democratisation in young democracies by providing support to political parties as the core pillars of a multiparty democracy. IMD works in a strictly non-partisan and inclusive manner. The main objective behind IMD is to support the process of democratisation in young democracies by strengthening political parties as the pillars of parliamentary democracy in order to help create a well-functioning, sustainable, pluralistic system of party politics. *www.nimd.org*

Westminster Foundation for Democracy, was funded through grants from the British Government and accountable to Parliament for its resources through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy assists projects to build pluralist democratic institutions. Initiatives generally fall into one of eight sectors: civil society, human rights, legal organisations and reform, independent media, parliaments and other representative institutions, political parties, trades unions, and women's rights and political participation. WFD does not engage directly with individual parties, although it does support cross-party projects. Otherwise, it relies on the British political parties to establish contact with, offer assistance to and strengthen individual political parties or movements with which they have a political affinity. *www.wfd.org*

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, linked to Germany's Social Democratic Party and funded through the German Government, the foundation works in all areas of governance, including by providing training and technical assistance to political parties in emerging democracies. *www.fes.de*

Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, an independent foundation that works in 60 countries, the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung is committed to initiatives that foster liberalism, defined as advances in individual freedom. Its mandate calls for strengthening democratic structures, reducing state interventionism, advocating decentralization and privatization, and cutting bureaucratic regulations. *www.fnst.de*

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, affiliated with the Christian Democratic movement, the foundation offers political education, conducts scientific fact-finding research for political projects, grants scholarships to gifted individuals, researches the history of Christian Democracy, and supports and encourages European unification, international understanding and development policy cooperation. *http://www.kas.de*

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, this private non-profit organization, is dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States. Activities include research, publishing, convening people, and, on occasion, creating new institutions and international networks. One programme focuses on democracy and rule of law. *www.carnegieendowment.org*

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Centre for Democracy and Development, the centre aims to promote the values of democracy, peace and human rights in Africa and especially in the West African sub-region. It works through advocacy, training and research in the areas of governance, human rights, peace and security, environment, gender, and social and economic development. *www.cdd.org.uk/index.html*

Centre for the Study of Global Governance, based at the London School of Economics, this is an international institution dedicated to research, analysis and dissemination of information about global governance. It encourages interaction between academics, policy makers, journalists and activists, and conducts research on such key facets of globalisation as global governance, global civil society and global security. *www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/*

Council for a Community of Democracies, the council seeks to strengthen collaboration among governments and democracy advocates in building an effective worldwide community of democratic nations, based on agreements at the June 2000 Warsaw Community of Democracies Conference. Its mandate includes promoting partnerships in support of democratic practices among democratically elected parliaments and delegations to the United Nations, and international organisations. A Democracy Library, accessible through an on-line request, features an array of related resources. *www.ccd21.org*

Netherlands Institute of International Relations (Clingendael), promotes understanding of affairs, particularly on the issues of European integration, transatlantic relations, international security, conflict studies, policy-making related to national and international energy markets, negotiations and diplomacy, and the United Nations and other international organizations. *www.cligendael.org*

Open Society Institute (OSI), backed by the Soros Foundation, the Open Society Institute aims to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal and social reform. Within nations, the institute pursues a range of initiatives to support the rule of law, education, public health and independent media. Across borders and continents, OSI works to build alliances on issues such as combating corruption and rights abuses. *www.soros.org*

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAEA Association of African Election Authorities
ACE Administration and Cost of Elections - Electoral Knowledge Network
ACEEEO Association of Central and East European Election Officials (Hungary)
ACEO Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations
ACP African Caribbean Pacific countries
AEC Australian Election Commission
AIDCO EuropeAid Co-operation Office
ALA Asia and Latin America (ALA) countries
ALA Financial and Technical Cooperation with Asian and Latin American countries
AMwa Akina Mama wa Afrika
ANFREL Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL),
APCEN Asia-Pacific Civic Education Network
AU African Union
AV Alternative Vote
BA Budgetary Aid
BC Borda Count
BDP Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)
BLE Local Election Office (Madagascar)
BRIDGE Building Resources in Democracy Governance & Elections
BRSP Bureau for Resource Mobilization and Strategic Partnership (UNDP)
BV Block Vote
CAPEL Centre for Electoral Promotion and Assistance
CARDS Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation for the
        Western Balkans
CCE Communal Election Representation (Madagascar)
CEC Central Election Commission (West Bank & Gaza strip)
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of all form of Discrimination against Women
CEIA Electoral Education in Eastern Indonesia (Indonesia)
CEPPS Consortium for Election and Political Process Strengthening
CFSP Common Foreign Security Policy
CNE National Election Commission (Mozambique)

CNE National Electoral Council (Madagascar)
CO Country Office (UNDP)
CoE Council of Europe
COM Communication
CORE Cost of Registration and Elections
CPRW Convention on the Political Rights of Women
CSO Civil Society Organization
CSP Country Strategy Paper
CTA Chief Technical Advisor
DAC Development Assistance Committee
DCECI Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument
DESA (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN)
DEX Direct Execution (UNDP)
DG DEV Development Directorate-General
DG Directorate-General
DG RELEX External Relations Directorate-General
DGG Democratic Governance Group
DPA (UN) Department of Political Affairs
DRC Democratic Republic of Congo
DVD Digital Video Disk
EAD Electoral Assistance Division (of DPA at UN)
EC European Commission
ECTAO EC Technical Assistance Office for West Bank & Gaza strip
ECTAT European Commission Technical Assistance Team (Madagascar)
E-Day Election Day
EDF European Development Fund
EDI Electoral Democracy Index
E-government Government's use of ICTs to exchange information/services with citizens
EIDHR European Initiative on Democratisation and Human Rights
EISA Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
EMB Electoral Management Body
ENEMO European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations
ENPI European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
E-Poll Electronic Polling System for remote Voting Operations
ERSG Electoral Reform Support Group
ESF European Science Foundation
ETAT European Union Technical Assistance Team (Indonesia)
EU European Union
EUEOM EU Election Observation Mission

EuropeAid Aid Cooperation Office (EC)
EVM Electronic Voting Machine
E-Voting Electronic Voting
E-Voting.CC Competence Center for Electronic Participation and Electronic Voting
EVS Electronic Voting System
EXM Exploratory Mission
FA Financing Agreement
FAFA Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement
FAS Femmes Africa Solidarité
FP Financing Proposal
FPTP First Past The Post
FWC Framework Contract
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GEO Global Electoral Organization
GERDDES-AFRICA Research Group on the Democratic/Economic/Social Development
GIS Geographic Information Systems
GoI Government of Indonesia
GoM Government of Mozambique
GOTV Get-Out-The-Vote
GPA General Peace Agreement
HQs Headquarters
HQ EC Headquarters in Brussels
IAPSO Inter Agency Procurement Service Office
ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD International Convention of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
ICTs Information and Communications Technologies
IDEA (International) Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IED Institute for Education in Democracy
IFE Mexican Federal Electoral Institute
IFES International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IS Instrument for Stability
INSIDE Voter Education Campaign through the Media (Indonesia)
IOM International Organization for Migration
IPU Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRI International Republican Institute
JEAP Joint Electoral Assistance Project
JIOG Joint International Observer Group
KIPP Electoral Education and Monitoring (Indonesia)
KMF-CNOE Comité National d'Observation des Elections (Madagascar)

KPU Indonesian Election Commission
LF Logical Framework
LFA Logical Framework Analysis/Approach
LFM Logical Framework Matrix
LTAs Long Term Agreements
LV Limited Vote
M Millions
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs Millennium Development Goals
MEDA Instrument of the EU for implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
MENGKO Indonesian Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs
MEURO Millions of EURO
MIRA Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform (Madagascar)
MMD Multi-member district
MMP Mixed Member Proportional
MoF Ministry of Finance

MoU Memorandum of Understanding
MP Member of Parliament
MUSD Millions of US Dollars
MTEF Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NAM Need Assessment Mission
NAMFREL National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Philippines)
NAO National Authorizing Officer
NDI National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NED National Endowment for Democracy
NEEDS Network of European Experts for Democracy Support
NEO National Elections Office (West Bank & Gaza strip)
NEX National Execution (UNDP)
NGO Non-Governmental Organizations
NIMD Netherlands Institute for Political Parties
NIP National Indicative Programme
NORDEM Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights
OAS Organization of American States
OCR Optical Character Recognition
ODHIR Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE)
OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMR Optical Mark up Reader
ONUMOZ United Nations Peace Keeping Mission in Mozambique
OSCE Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

OSI Open Society Institute
OVI Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PA Palestinian Authority
PAC Project Appraisal Committee
PAJ Voter Education (Indonesia)
PANWAS Election Supervisory Commission (Indonesia)
PBV Party Block Vote
PCM Project Cycle Management
PG Partner Government
PHARE (Pologne, Hongrie Assistance à la Reconstruction Économique) Programme of
community aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe
PIANZEA, The Pacific Islands/Australia/New Zealand Electoral Administrators Network
PIS Project Identification Sheet
PLC Palestinian Legal Council
PMU Programme Management Unit
PR Proportional Representation
PRSP Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PVT Parallel Vote Tabulation
QSG Quality Support Group
RELEX External Relations
RRM Rapid Reaction Mechanism
SA Sector Approach
SADC-ESN Southern African Development Community Electoral Support Network
SADC-PF Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum
SARDC Southern African Research and Documentation Centre
SHD Sustainable Human Development
SMD Single-member district
SMS Short message service
SNTV Single Non-Transferable Vote
SOV Source of Verification
SP Political Education for women (Indonesia)
SPSP Sector Policy Support Programme
SRSG Special Representative of the Secretary-General
STAE Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (Mozambique)
STV Single Transferable Vote
SURF Sub-regional Resource Facility (of UNDP)
SWOT Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TA Technical Assistance
TACIS Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States

TCF Technical Cooperation Facility
TED Toward Electronic Democracy
TEU Treaty of the European Union
TOR Terms of Reference
TOT Training of Trainers
TRS Two-Round System
TSE Tribunale Supremo Eleitoral (Brasil)
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNIORE The Inter-American Union of Electoral Organizations
VICI Voter Information and Civic Education Programme
VVATs Voter verified audit trails
WB&GS West Bank & Gaza Strip
WP Working Paper

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- A seminar organised in Stockholm in June 2005 for the preparation of a training module for Donors and International Organizations providing electoral assistance. In this same occasion the concept of "Electoral Cycle" was defined and also visually represented by designing eight different phases corresponding to the new approach of the EC in Electoral Assistance.
- A conference organized in Ottawa in May 2006 that reunited most representatives of the world's donors, implementing agencies, electoral management bodies and worldwide electoral assistance experts to discuss about effective electoral assistance.

The aims of the meetings were to share experiences, gather different perspectives and to reach a common understanding of how to make electoral assistance more effective and electoral processes more sustainable. On these occasions the EC had the possibility to share lessons learnt and gain precious insights from experienced election academics, practitioners and other donors. This Guide also coincides with the participation of the EC as full partner in the new phase of the Administration and Cost of Elections Project: The Electoral Knowledge Network, a global tool for generating, sharing and applying knowledge on electoral administration.

The Guide has also benefited from the joint review on the implementation of electoral assistance projects with UNDP which is EC's main partner in the field. In this framework of activities, the UNDP Bureau Development Policy (BDP), the UNDP Bureau of Strategic Partnership and Mobilization of Resources (BRSP) and the UNDP Inter Agency Procurement Services (IAPSO) made considerable advice on policy, harmonization of procedures, implementation matters and procurement of electoral material.

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This review has also led to the preparation and signature on 21 April 2006 of the "EC UNDP Operational Guidelines on Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects" between EuropeAid Director General, Koos Richelle, and UNDP Associate Administrator, Ad Melkert. Following this agreement a four days EC UNDP joint training course on Effective Electoral Assistance has been developed in collaboration with International IDEA to support EC and UNDP officials to better identify, formulate and implement electoral assistance activities.

Last, the Guide profited of two seminars for Deputy Chief Observers for EUEOMs organized in October 2005 and October 2006 in the context of the NEEDS project where the links between EU election observation and EC electoral assistance were discussed and of the second International Workshop on E-Voting organized in Austria on August 2006 by the Competence Centre for Electronic Participation and Electronic Voting with the support of the Council of Europe, within the project of the European Science Foundation "Towards Electronic Democracy"

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