



European Commission  
United Nations Development Programme  
**Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance**



# EC-UNDP Workshop on **Formulating and Implementing Electoral Assistance Projects in the Context of the EC UNDP Partnership**

## **Electoral Cycle Challenges**

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*Brussels 1 – 4 February 2011*

In cooperation with

**NEEDS**  
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



# The Policy Shift

☐ EU Methodology

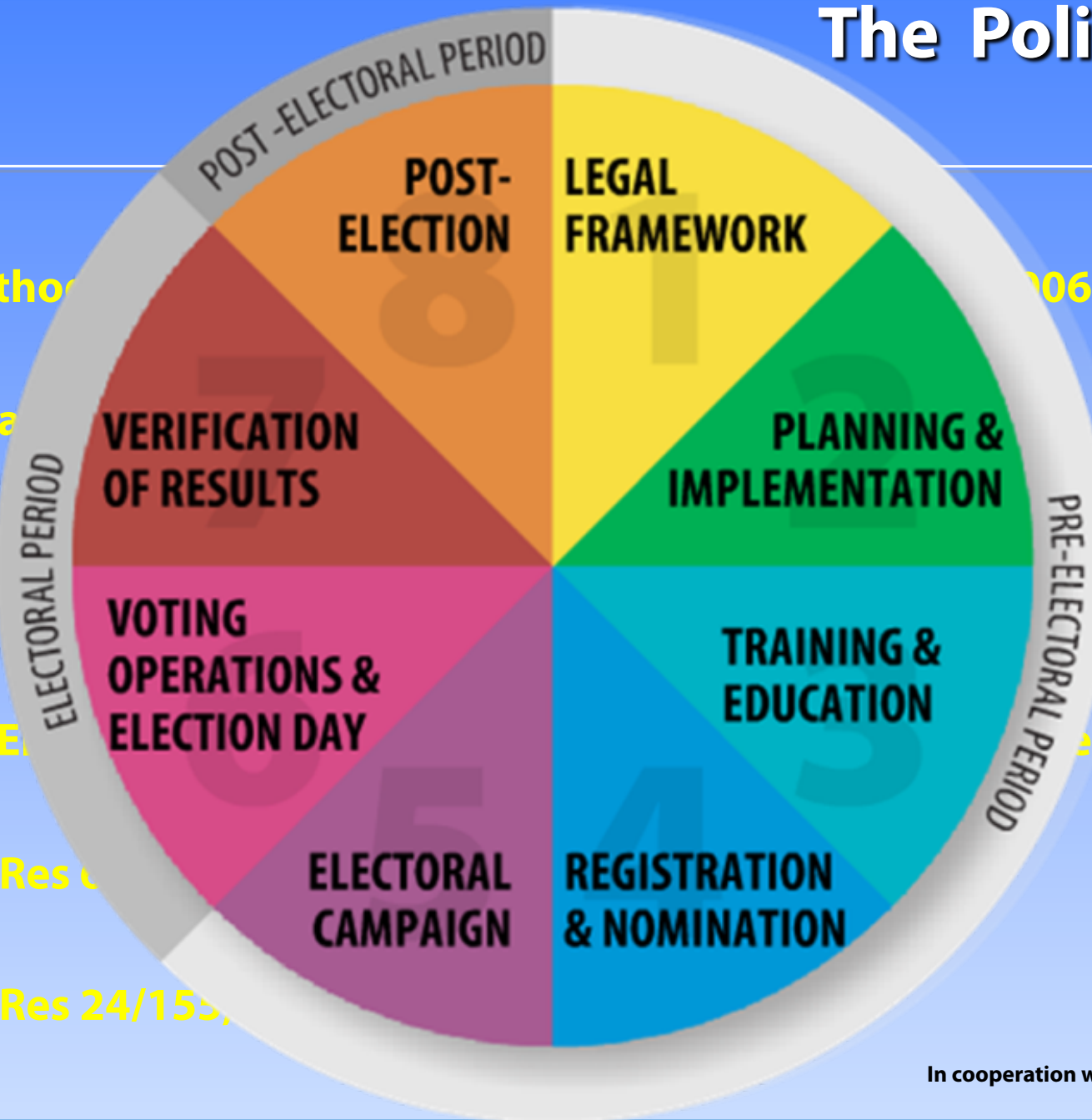
☐ EMB Handbook

☐ SG Report  
Genuine Progress

☐ UNDP Election

☐ UNGA Resolution

☐ UNGA Res 24/155,



2006

End of Period

January 2007

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# The current practice

- ❑ Electoral cycle approach integral part of the UNDP-EC programming since 2008
- ❑ Adopted by EMBs and other electoral assistance providers as a major planning and training tool
- ❑ Included in relations and training of development cooperation agencies to explain and advocate to shift from event-driven to process-driven assistance
- ❑ The projects documents include a clear emphasis on capacity building activities and projects have now an average duration of three years

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# Implementation Challenges

- ❑ Operational imperatives proved to be stronger than policy recognition of the importance of long-term support
- ❑ Lack of political will prevents any real immediate effort on capacity and institution building
- ❑ Are the new electoral cycle approach programs just spending long-term money on long-term projects run by outsiders or are they spending it on domestic capacity with outsider exit?
- ❑ There is a disconnect between the policy acceptance and the measures needed to make it work in the field

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# The Question

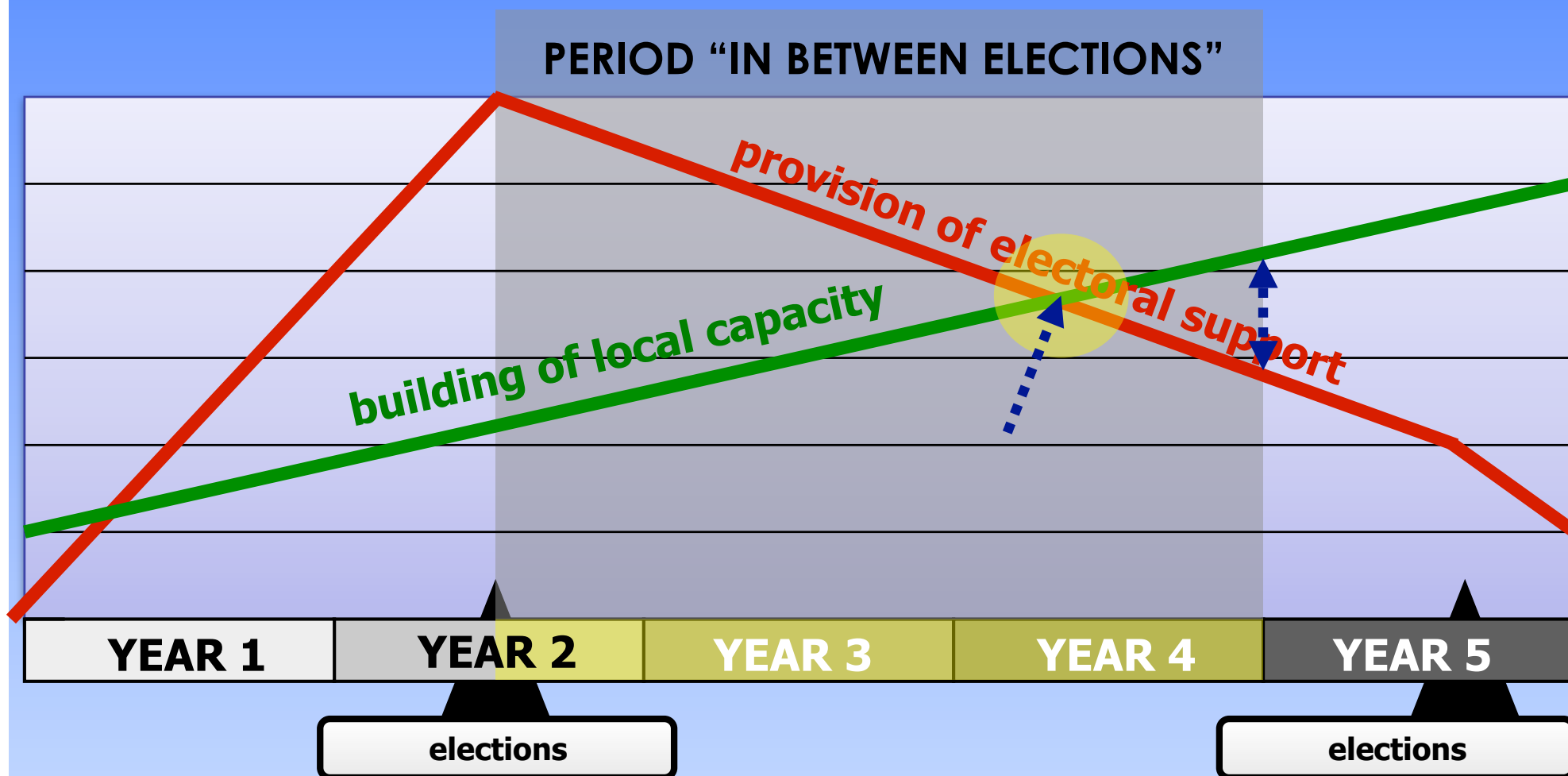
***Has the electoral cycle approach become just an excuse to perpetrate endless cycles of electoral assistance?***

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# The basic tenet of process-driven support



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# Possible misunderstandings

- ❑ Recent cases of electoral-related violence in partner countries have called into question the impact of electoral assistance in the democratization process
- ❑ Other cases of non-acceptance of results in countries recipients of assistance have cast clouds on the value and impact of cyclical assistance
- ❑ The limited UN advisory capacity is often not taken into account
- ❑ Technically well run elections do always not always equate to democratic advances in the partner country

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# Conclusions

- ❑ Very often, electoral assistance programs can be frustrated by lack of electoral and political reforms
- ❑ Electoral reforms are not performed through EMBs but through engaging legislatures
- ❑ Electoral cycle cannot therefore be the panacea for the lack of political will
- ❑ Need to unpack such lack of political will
- ❑ Are cases of closely fought elections also a prove that “level playing field” conditions are being better achieved?





# Towards a Democracy Cycle?

- ☐ Electoral cycle remains an invaluable planning tool to identify entry points for democracy assistance
- ☐ It shows how the window of opportunity for engaging in a political dialogue that produces reform is right after the end of an electoral process
- ☐ Yet, we seem unable to take this passing train. What are we missing?
- ☐ Need to move beyond electoral assistance in many cases through a more integrated form of democracy assistance