

United Nations Development Programme

Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support

Workshop on Electoral Operational Planning Final Report and Recommendations

Freetown, 1-3 June 2011





Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support

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Introduction

The Workshop on Electoral Operational Planning was held in Freetown, Sierra Leone, from 1 to 3 June 2011. It was organised by the UNDP Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS), with the support of UNDP's Regional Service Centres in Dakar and Johannesburg, the UNDP Country Office (CO) in Sierra Leone and in association with members of the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force in Brussels and the UNDP Procurement Support Office in Copenhagen.

As part of its scope and activities, GPECS organises workshops to address challenges Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) may face while organising elections. These workshops serve as platforms for decision makers, experts and professionals to share their experiences and good practices in order to strengthen their capacities and build regional electoral networks and communities of practice. Through the publication of the results of these exchanges, GPECS helps codify lessons learned and develop regional standards, innovative policies and tools for the administration of electoral processes.

The overall objective of the workshop was to strengthen the functions of planning, budgeting and procurement among UNDP staff, staff of EMBs and relevant stakeholders working on electoral processes. In the context of the increased involvement of UNDP Country Offices in electoral



Mr. Gianpiero Catozzi UNDP/GPECS Regional Electoral Advisor

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assistance, it was important to bring together staff from UNDP COs and EMBs who have worked and will work together. The workshop allowed participants to exchange with colleagues on their own experiences, needs, and practices highlighting different perspectives and different political/institutional environments.

The workshop agenda encouraged practical and concrete discussions between participants and between speakers and participants. For each topic, a presentation was made, followed by a case study and a group discussion on a practical scenario. Every step relied on interactive discussions illustrating problems and questions with comparison of practices between countries and institutions.

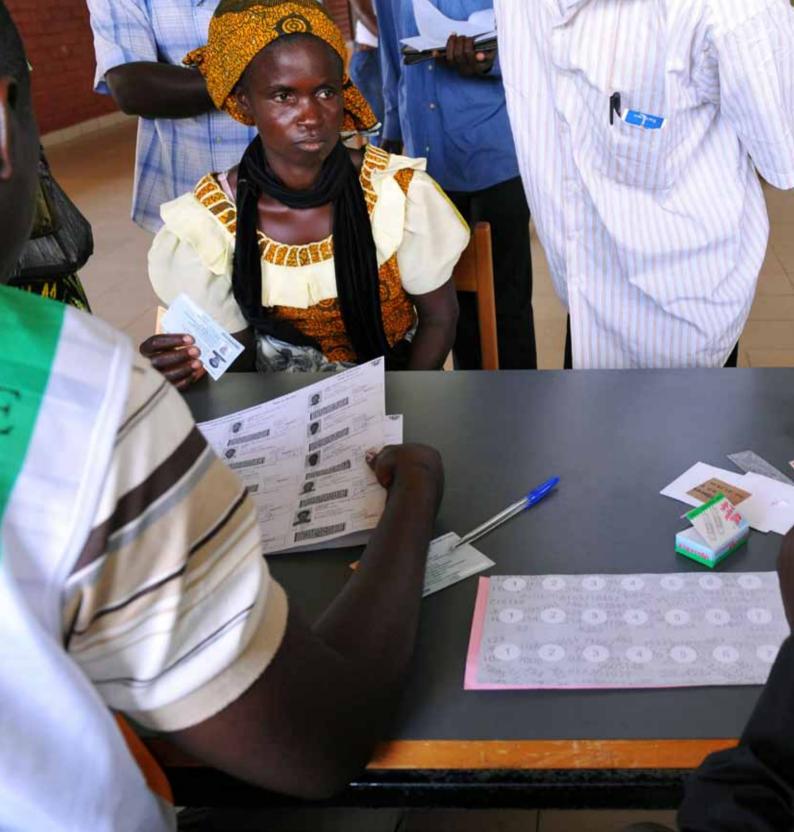
The morning of the first day was devoted to an overview of the electoral assistance that the United Nations can provide to member states and the policy framework in which such assistance takes place. During the afternoon,

the presentations, case studies and group discussions addressed the question of strategic and operational planning. The questions of budgeting and procurement were addressed during the second day. The introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the voter registration process was discussed as an overall case study during the third day to address the practical implementations of the topics of planning, procurement and budgeting. At the end of the workshop, participants discussed and proposed recommendations for each topic.



Mrs. Christiana Thorpe, Chairperson National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone

The workshop allowed participants to exchange on their own experiences, needs, and practices highlighting different perspectives from different political/institutional environments.



Overall Framework for UN/ UNDP Electoral Assistance

1. UN/UNDP electoral assistance policy and strategic framework

Electoral Assistance policy framework

The notion of self-determination of peoples is one of the central principles of the United Nations and the promotion of democracy is one of its main objectives. In 2010, the General Assembly adopted the Resolution 64/155 (2010) for "strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization."

In this resolution, the General Assembly "recommends that, throughout the time span of the entire electoral cycle, including before and after elections, as appropriate, based on a needs assessment and in accordance with the evolving needs of requesting Member States, bearing in mind sustainability and cost-effectiveness, the United Nations continue to provide technical advice and other assistance to requesting States and electoral institutions in order to help to strengthen their democratic processes..." The UN system has been engaged in a wide range of activities intended to support the efforts of Member States to promote democratic electoral processes and build sustainable democratic institutions. In order to ensure consistency in the handling of requests of Member States for Electoral Assistance (EA), the General Assembly (GA), in resolution 46/137 of 17 December 1991, took steps to create an institutional framework to support activities in this area, recognizing the role of three main UN electoral assistance actors:

- The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who is the focal point for electoral assistance activities
- The Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA/ EAD), which provides technical support to the Focal Point
- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which provides technical assistance for electoral activities

The New Note of Guidance

In October 2010, the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and UNDP jointly published a revised Note of Guidance on Electoral Assistance. In order to face new challenges and to ensure the coordination and coherence of the UN's action in the field of electoral assistance, this new Note of Guidance takes into account developments and lessons learned over the last decade, and establishes clear guidance on the role and responsibilities of DPA and UNDP in electoral assistance. The UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance has a normative role on the global action of the UN system in electoral assistance, while UNDP, as the UN's main provider of technical electoral assistance, is in charge, through its Country Offices (COs), of the design and implementation of electoral assistance projects.

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The UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance role and responsibilities are:

- To ensure system-wide coherence and consistency
- To lead in UN system wide coordination of electoral assistance
- To facilitate the development of institutional memory and dissemination of electoral policies, in collaboration with UNDP and other UN agencies

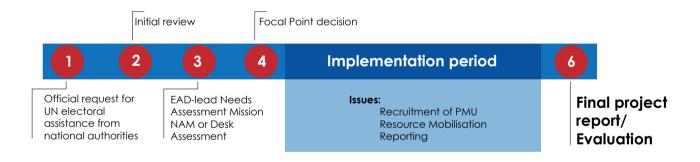
The United Nations Development programme (UNDP) role and responsibilities are:

- Leading the UN system in Democratic Governance
- UN system's provider of electoral assistance
- To identify and formulate electoral assistance at the request of Member States
- To implement and monitor electoral assistance
- To work close with all stakeholders and ensure stakeholders coordination
- To manage basket funds and ensure resource mobilization
- To proceed with procurement of electoral materials and ensure logistical support
- To support capacity development ACE, BRIDGE, JTF Trainings etc.

UN Electoral Assistance procedures

The provision of UN electoral assistance can be triggered by (i) a decision of the Security Council or the General Assembly establishing a mandate for the UN to provide electoral assistance; or by (ii) a request for electoral assistance from an appropriate national authority.

Once launched, it follows a standard procedure:



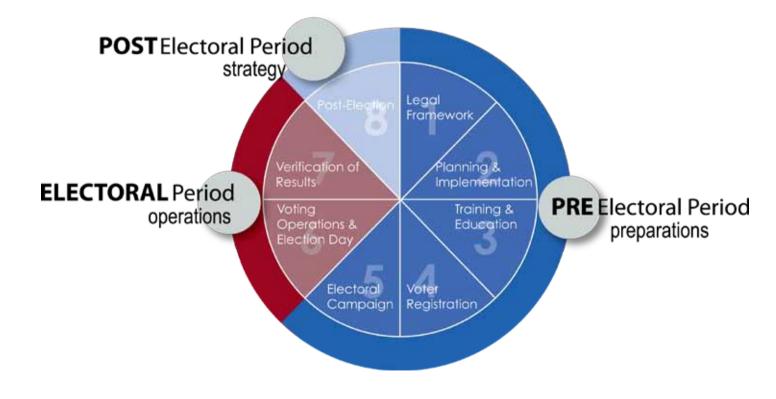
2. GPECS approach, objective and support

The Electoral Cycle Approach

The Electoral Cycle is a visual plan and a management tool that helps stakeholders to appreciate elections as continuous processes rather than isolated events. It shows the periodic character of elections, thus shifting the focus from democratic elections alone to the reinforcement of democratic governance.

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By adopting an electoral cycle approach, stakeholders can better plan the different activities necessary to build democratic, credible and professional electoral processes and institutions. The approach highlights the interdependence of activities and stakeholders throughout the cycle.





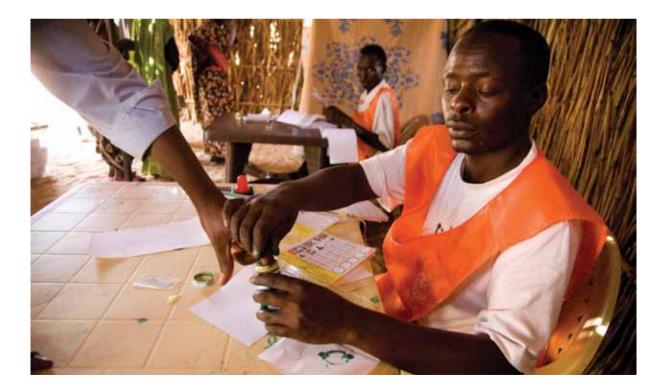
Electoral Assistance that

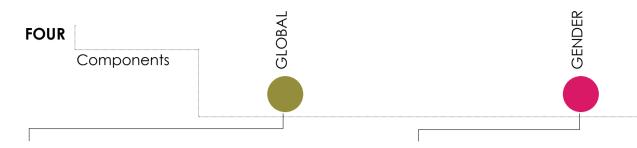
ensures global coherence responds to specific regional realities supports individual country needs promotes women political participation

The Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS)

GPECS is a UNDP global programme of the Bureau for Development Policy's Democratic Governance Group (BDP/DGG). The Programme is helping countries improve their electoral laws, processes and institutions and enhance the participation of women in electoral processes. The programme is made possible through an initial contribution from the government of Spain.

GPECS seeks to enhance the credibility, transparency, effectiveness and sustainability of electoral institutions and processes, with a particular emphasis on capacity development, south-south exchanges, inclusive participation and women's empowerment. It has four components:





GLOBAL

At the global level, GPECS supports the codification of lessons learned and the development of new policies. The programme provides leadership, advocacy and capacity development in the field of electoral cycle support. Its activities intend to inform global policy development based on field experience and to ensure at the same time that projects are informed by developments in the larger community of practice.

4. GENDER

In addition to these three levels, GPECS includes the cross cutting issues of inclusive participation and empowerment of women. More and more countries are turning towards democratic elections. Despite this progress, women are unequally participating both as voters and as candidates in elections. GPECS provides advocacy on the issue, focusing also on enhancing the role of women in electoral management.

Expression of Interest

Any Country Office can apply for funding from the GPECS. Moreover, in 2009 the GPECS Steering Committee decided that "at least 50% of the funding at country level should be directed to Sub-Saharan Africa". COs willing to apply for GPECS support have to follow four steps:

- Interested COs submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) via the GPECS Regional Electoral Advisor (REA)
- The REA will assist COs with drafting and finalizing the Eol
- The REA forwards the Eol to GPECS Programme Management for scrutiny and subsequent submission to the GPECS Steering Committee
- Once the Eol is approved by GPECS Steering Committee, the REA assists the CO with the project formulation

REGIONAL

2. REGIONAL

At the regional level, GPECS supports South-South cooperation and promotes knowledge development, regional exchanges of good practices between regions, and capacity development through the organization of workshops and seminar, and the development of communities of practice. It also participates in the development of knowledge products, innovative policies and tools responding to region-specific needs, and offers its support to regional institutions in the domain of electoral assistance.

GPECS operates through UNDP regional offices to facilitate better service delivery and responsiveness: Dakar for West and Central Africa; Johannesburg for Eastern and Southern Africa; and Bangkok for Asia-Pacific. These offices render both regional and country support and coordinate, among other things, the expressions of interest and the implementation of all GPECS activities. Advisors and the Management team are also located in headquarters locations of New York, Brussels and Copenhagen.

3. NATIONAL

NATIONAL

At the National level, GPECS provides electoral assistance to Country Offices, EMBs and others takeholders. The national component is the largest among the four and accounts for approximately half of all GPECS activities. GPECS advisory services include project formulation, expression of interest (EOI) monitoring, as well as direct support and advice to Country Offices and EMBs on electoral systems and processes, electoral administration. electoral operations. budgeting and procurement.



What is the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance (JTF)

The JTF Provides planning and operational support to UNDP country offices and EU delegations working together in electoral assistance

www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org

European Commission



United Nations Development Programme

Partnership on Electoral Assistance

WORKSHOP ON ELECTORAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING : SIERRA LEONE 2011

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Recognising a de facto partnership in electoral assistance on the ground at country level (cemented by the largescale support that the EC provided to UNDP to assist with the implementation of electoral assistance for the DRC electoral process in 2004-2006), in 2006, the EC and UNDP signed the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects (reviewed, revised and re-signed in 2008) that allowed for the creation of the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance.

The Joint Task Force (JTF) is formed by EC and UNDP staff dealing with electoral assistance at HQ levels. The overarching purpose of the JTF is to further strengthen and facilitate the EC-UNDP partnership in the electoral assistance field and aims to improve the overall efficiency and adherence of the projects to the common EC/UNDP strategic approach. The specific objectives of the JTF are grouped into three areas, with their own activities:

 The JTF provides operational guidance and implementation strategies for the management of joint EC-UNDP electoral assistance projects. Concretely, the JTF supports relevant EC and UNDP services at HQ and field levels in the drafting process of EU documents (Project Identification Fiches and Financial Proposals, EC-UNDP Contribution Agreements) and/or of UNDP Project Documents in preparation for the EU contributions. It also ensures contractual compliance with EC-UNDP agreements in the electoral assistance field;



Mrs. Raquel Rico-Bernabe UNDP/JTF Electoral Assistance Specialist

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- It furnishes liaison and interactions with the different services involved, at headquarters and field level, throughout the operations cycle to ensure the application of the recommended quality standards; and
- It provides training and participates in the development of content and the dissemination of information on electoral assistance issues. The JTF organizes joint EC-UNDP workshops on Electoral Assistance on a yearly basis on subjects relevant to EMBs across the world. It also undertakes studies and publications on issues of Electoral Assistance interest.



Strategic & Operational Planning

1. Good practices in strategic and operational planning

Strategic planning

A strategic plan helps the EMB operate in and understand its changing environment. It is a management tool that assists the EMB in producing its own decisions and defining its own actions within the constitutional and legal framework in which it operates. With its strategic plan, an EMB can set the objectives it will endeavour to achieve in terms of its service to the public, its own organisational strengthening, how it integrates with other state agencies, and how it intends to improve in the execution of its mandate.

The strategic plan is also a public document that serves as a record of what the EMB stands for, what it does and why, and what it intends to achieve. It is a marker against which stakeholders can measure the EMB's performance and at the same time a protection against vendor/donor's willingness and capacity to influence the EMB agenda.

The strategic plan should include elements such as:

- Vision what the EMB aspires to achieve
- PUrpose (objective/mission) the fundamental focus of the EMB
- Values the ethical concepts on which the EMB's activities are based
- Outcomes and focus areas what the EMB is aiming to achieve
- Key results the effects that the EMB wants to have on its environment
- Indicators measurable targets that assist in determining how well the EMB has achieved its intended results
- Relationships to environment the relations the EMB will maintain with stakeholders such as voters, government, civil society, political parties, media, international partners, etc.
- EMB data organization chart, profile of staff and responsibilities
- Performance management strategy (PMS) how the EMB will promote the improvement of individual, team and organizational performance
- Policy on data management status and format and management of Commission documents
- Prospective plan institution growth and change

EMB's strategic plan should cover one national election cycle. The holding of an election or of a set of elections – Presidential, Legislative and Local – may result in significant changes both inside and outside the Commission, thus making the strategic plan obsolete. The developing of a strategic plan should ideally take place after a reform process informed by a review of the previous electoral cycle.

Strategic plans must consider risks and opportunities inside the Commission as well as within its environment by the conduct of a SWOT analysis considering the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing the EMB and the electoral process.

It is important that the EMB consults with its stakeholders in the development, monitoring and review of its strategic plan. Communication and interactions promote stakeholders' awareness and appreciation of the EMB's challenges and strength as well as the EMB's awareness of the expectations and priorities of its stakeholders.

A good planning strategy is two-faceted — strategic and operational. The two facets are distinct but equally important.

Operational planning

Operational planning, on the other hand, should clearly define the projects, activities and tasks that should be implemented to attain the objectives stated in the strategic plan. An operational plan focuses on one or more major electoral events and specifies who in the EMB does what, when, how and why. The key issue is to specify each task and its timeframe according to the electoral law, and to determine the staff responsible for completing it.

The operational plan should acknowledge all possible constraints and risks that could affect the implementation of planned activities and take into account the availability



Mr. Okechukwu Ndeche, Director of Operations, INEC Nigeria

Strategic plan must consider risks and opportunities inside the Commission as well as within its environment by the conduct of a SWOT analysis considering the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing the EMB and the electoral process. of resources, and the legal and operational deadlines for effective electoral service delivery.

Operational planning is most effective when the staff implementing the activities is involved in their planning. To foster efficiency, core managers and staff need to have confidence and ownership of the operational plan they will implement. They have to be implicated at every stage of the operational planning process in order to propose and agree on activities, realistic timeframes for execution and required means to achieve objectives.

2. Electoral Assistance planning and project implementation

Strategic planning for electoral assistance projects

As for EMBs, strategic planning is central to the development of a UN-supported electoral assistance project. A number of different factors, including the type of election, the legal framework, the national capacities and the environment in which the election takes place, will largely determine how electoral assistance is planned and implemented. Ideally, the EMB should have developed a strategic and operational plan prior to the design of any UN assistance project. This helps to ensure that assistance is appropriately targeted towards needs.

A strategic plan should take both external and internal (to the organisation) factors into consideration. A project formulation mission has to consider the UN-led needs assessment mission recommendations that preceded the project formulation mission. Yet they should go further and take into account the country office internal organisation and its environment through the conduct of a specific 'SWOT' analysis. It is particularly important that the lessons learned from previous electoral assistance experiences are taken into account and that careful consideration is given to the time and resources required.

The strategic planning has to identify where in the electoral cycle assistance is needed and feasible, and build timelines of events and work processes. It should also identify all stakeholders and include a strategy on how the project will mobilise and build partnership among domestic and international stakeholders.

Strategic planning for electoral assistance projects

A strategic plan for a UN electoral assistance project should include elements such as:

1. Situation analysis:

- Legal and political environment
- Review of the previous electoral cycles
- Description of the national electoral management institutional framework
- National government capacity assessment
- Historic of UNDP electoral assistance in the country and CO capacity
 assessment

2. Justification of the action:

 How the action responds to national needs and contribute to the achievement of UNDP broad objectives

3. Strategy of action:

- Broad outcomes
- Project objectives and expected outputs
- Project focus areas of intervention
- Activities necessary to reach the objectives
- Implementation strategy
- Capacity building strategy

4. Management arrangements:

- Chosen implementation modalities (NEX/DEX or NIM/DIM)
- Project institutional framework
- Project Support Unit (PSU) organigramme, role and responsibilities
- Performance Management System (PMS)
- 5. Monitoring and evaluation
- 6. Reporting
- 7. Results and Resources Framework
- 8. Risk Log

Formulating an electoral assistance project CHECK LIST – MUST DOs

- 1. Framing UNDP implementing/executing modalities
- 2. Taking into account NAM recommendations
- 3. Developing close interaction with EMBs and other stakeholders
- 4. Defining management arrangements (cochaired UNDP/EMB)
- 5. Ensuring resource mobilisation

Electoral projects implementation modalities: NEX vs DEX and NIM vs DIM

UNDP arranges for its support to projects to be provided in one of four ways: These modalities apply to different situations and are not synonyms with each other.

- 1. National execution/ implementation (NEX/NIM). This refers to project management by a governmental entity and is the norm;
- 2. Execution/ implementation by a United Nations agency;
- 3. Execution/ implementation by an NGO; or
- 4. Direct execution/ implementation (DEX/DIM). This refers to cases where management is by UNDP itself; it is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

For UNDP programme activities carried out under the harmonized regime (where a Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) is signed), the term 'execution' is redefined as the overall ownership and responsibility for UNDP programme activities at the country level. All activities falling within the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) signed by Government and UNDP are, therefore, nationally executed.

The term 'implementation' is redefined as the management and delivery of programme activities to achieve specified outputs, as set forth in the Annual Work Plans (AWPs).

Under the harmonized regime, execution means ownership of the country programme documented in the CPAP. Therefore, projects are no longer 'executed.' Rather, they are implemented by implementing partners who are responsible for producing outputs and use of resources.

Most UNDP country programmes are nationally-executed. This means that there is a national actor that assumes overall ownership of the country programme and its results. National implementation (NIM), on the other hand, is one of a number of modalities available to implement parts of a country programme through joint programmes, projects and/or work plans. Under Direct Implementation (DIM) modality, UNDP is taking full responsibility for project implementation. Different procedures exist, or are being updated, for national implementation (NIM), direct implementation (DIM) by UNDP, NGO implementation, United Nations agency implementation and implementation by inter-governmental organizations.



Mr. Moriba Sinayoko Directeur National Adjoint de l'Intérieur au MATCL

I had confined UNDP in a specific role, but I now understand better that the collaboration with the organisation can be deepened, especially in terms of budgeting and procurement methodology. Although NIM/NEX should be the norm for UNDP, because it allows for ownership, capacity development, self-reliance and sustainability, it should be used when there are adequate capacities in government to undertake the functions and activities of the project. On the other hand, based on the DPA-UNDP Note of Guidance on Electoral Assistance, DIM (in CPAP countries) and DEX (in non-CPAP countries) are considered the default modality.

Under national implementation modality, the rules and procedures of the government are used as long as they are consistent with internationally recognised practices. The government is thus accountable for the effective use of UNDP's resources and the achievement of project objectives.

Direct implementation is used when the host government lacks the required management or substantive capacity and requests UNDP to directly implement project activities, or when the parties prefer UNDP implementation for other reason such as neutrality. It can also be used when activities require unique technical sector experience or access to international networks as well as when project implementation requires speedy delivery and decision-making, such as in crisis situations.



Funding mechanisms for Electoral Assistance projects

1. COST-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS

Cost-sharing is a co-financing modality under which contributions can be received from donors for specific UNDP projects. Cost-sharing agreements - the signature of which is decentralized to the country office – allow for multiple donors to contribute to a given set of agreed results and project outputs as captured in the project document. Cost-sharing agreements provide a fast funding mechanism that has the advantage of being easy to manage because Country Offices can sign these agreements using a standard format. Yet donors can earmark their contributions or insist on specific agreement clauses that differ from the agreed standard text.

2. TRUST FUNDS

This is a co-financing modality established as a separate accounting entity under which UNDP receives funds for an activity specified by the donor. Trust funds are usually more time consuming because approval to create a Trust Fund must come from the Associate Administrator of UNDP. As a result, trust funds go through a specific clearance process, often involving various HQ units before they can be formally established. Contributions from the European Union to UNDP electoral projects always come in the form of a closed trust fund.

3. 'BASKET FUND'

'Basket fund' arrangements in the context of electoral assistance are first and foremost instruments aimed at improving coordination among donors and partners. Basket funds do not represent a new funding mechanism per se. Rather, in such arrangements, funding continues to be received on the basis of UNDP's standard cost-sharing or trust fund arrangements. However, the improvement in collaboration among partners and donors made possible by this kind of arrangements allows for better planning and allocation of resources.



Electoral Budgeting and procurement

1. Good practices in electoral budgeting and procurement

Electoral budgeting

BUDGETING APPROACHES

There are two main approaches to the formulation of an electoral budget:

- Baseline approach
- Zero-based approach

A baseline approach is taking the last funding period's allocation and simply adjusting it for the next period. Yet costs are likely to vary substantially from one election to another due to environment change, inflation or technological innovations, thus making the past budget inaccurate. Many EMBs nonetheless still use the baseline budgeting approach because it is the generally accepted public-sector approach in the country.

A zero-based approach involves taking each funding period as a clean slate and estimating the funds required to achieve the EMB's objectives for that period. The approach can appear time consuming during the budget drafting, but it allows for more accurate budget categories and realistic costs and is therefore more cost-effective on the long run. Moreover, the zero-based approach encourages EMBs to link costs to specific outputs such as voter registration or ballot paper printing, thus making it easier to determine how effectively funds have been spent for each project and activity.

Types of costs

Despite the approach used, while drafting their budget, EMBs have to consider two types of costs:

- The fixed running costs of the EMB structure, such as headquarters and regional office rental, salaries of permanent staff, IT equipment and vehicles for permanent staff, etc.; and
- The variable costs related to the implementation of an electoral process itself, such as polling materials, voter education materials, salaries of temporary staff recruited for specific stages in the electoral operations, vehicles for temporary staff, etc.

BUDGETING METHODOLOGY

An accurate budgeting requires a good evaluation of the period or periods covered by the budget and a deep analysis of the elements that may affect it – e.g. political context, market environment, census methodology, choice of technology, political requirements, etc. Once these elements are known, expenditures need to be precisely separated according to the activities and the outputs listed in the operational plan. Then quantities and costs have to be evaluated as accurately as possible and funding sources can be identified for each category of costs.

Budgetary challenges and risks

The main budgetary challenge is the uncertainty about the financial commitments from Government or international partners, the approval of budget or the arrival of funds. When dealing with multiple donors' funds, the earmarking of funds can be very complicated to deal with and exchange rates have to be carefully studied and actualized.

Internal disagreement between EMB departments as to fund allocation or change in the strategy of action can also provoke significant difficulties for budgeting. Given these uncertainties and the inherent volatility of electoral processes it is necessary to work with multiple scenarios.

Electoral procurement policies and procedures

Depending on their legal status, EMBs can either be bound by government guidelines and practices or be able to determine some or all of their procurement policies and procedures. Some EMBs have to use a generic government or public-sector purchasing agency for all procurement. This obligation may not be effective for EMB procurement, given the short and strict time lines that confront EMBs in acquiring electoral goods and services. In some cases, EMBs can set up their own internal purchasing boards to manage their procurement independently thus taking accountability for the whole process.

Questions about the probity or suitability of EMB procurement decisions can reflect on the overall credibility of the EMB and thus of the whole electoral process. EMBs need to ensure that their purchasing processes are fully transparent and meet international standards. Before setting up their own internal purchasing boards, EMBs need to be certain that they have sufficient resources, skills and control systems in place.



Mr. Ramakrishnan Iyer, Deputy Director UNDP PSO Copenhagen

Electoral procurement carries a number of challenges and risks. Time is an essential constraint on electoral processes; elections have short timelines and inflexible legal deadlines that might conflict with procurement requirements and procedures.

2. Electoral assistance budgeting and procurement

Electoral project budgeting

It can be extremely complicated for national governments and EMBs to put together a realistic overall budget for elections; however, it is a task that is also critical for proper implementation of an assistance project. A budget should be considered a dynamic document and is subject to constant adjustments in ever-changing political and operational environments.

The starting point of any budget is to know the operational plan(s) in as much detail as possible. Only then can line items, timings and quantities be written into the budget. As the operational plan changes, so will the budget and close coordination between the operations team and the budget team is essential. It is important that the budget of any electoral project takes as its frame of reference and is integrated within the EMB budget per se in order to avoid duplication and to promote transparency and accountability. Integrating also helps all stakeholders be aware of the overall cost of the process and helps with functional and integrative planning of expenditures from all partners.

Technical assistance can be provided by UNDP to EMBs in formulating their own budget, but EMBs do not always share their budget with UNDP or donors. Yet, in other cases EMBs and UNDP work closely together in collaborative budgeting exercises aiming at streamlining the many different types of budgets. Sometimes a calendar year contains several electoral events and thus has several sub-event budgets. A project budget is focused on project outputs, isolated from other relevant budgets. An electoral event budget assesses the costs of a specific electoral exercise, where as an international consolidated event budget would include all electoral financial requirements and aggregate the funding requirements for both EMB and miscellaneous assistance projects into a consolidated budget. In this way, an internationally consolidated budget covers the comprehensive electoral exercise, and makes project assistance budgets become complementary to the EMB budget and thereby easier to avoid overlapping activities and identify financial gaps.

Electoral project budgeting challenges and risks

Electoral project budgeting has to follow the same exigencies of preparation, precision and flexibility as electoral budgeting in general but also requires specific considerations due to UN broad objectives and administrative procedures. While budgeting an electoral project, it is important to take into account the importance of long-term institutional capacity development. The Government and/or the EMB should be involved in the project budgeting and expenditures should be oriented toward the reinforcement of national institutions' capacities in all domains. An electoral cycle budget will assess funding from a longer term perspective and include the 'low season inbetween elections for capacity development activities which an EMB will need to carry out, and ideally include development of institutional synergies with other support activities.

The fluid nature of election budgets makes it immensely important to include contingency lines in the project? Budgets, and similarly to ensure funding for this in advance.

UNDP budgeting values, requirements and conditions have to be respected and the question of financial reporting has to be considered at all stages of the project formulation and implementation.

Procurement for electoral support

UNDP operates in 166 countries, 138 of which are programme countries. UNDP's annual programme delivery has been growing steadily since 2000 and reached US\$4.3 billion in 2006, of which US\$2.5 billion was spent for goods and services. UNDP Procurement Support Office (PSO), is the corporate body responsible for developing and providing policy guidance to UNDP COs and also engaging in direct transactional

procurement actions for the COs. The PSO provides targeted training courses to UN/ UNDP/Government Staff to enhance local capacity; ensures quality control and policy adherence, as mandated by Executive Board of UNDP; and promotes "delivering as ONE" through inter-agency mechanisms and harmonization efforts.

UNDP procurement is based on the principles of best value for money (including delivery time); fairness, transparency, and integrity; effective competition (national or international); and interest of purchaser.

The UNDP procurement process follows five main steps. The first two steps can be seen as preparatory or planning phases:

- Needs analysis and identification of requirement; and
- Internal capacity, market intelligence and supply dimensions.



During the preparatory phase, procurement officers should identify who will be responsible for procuring and managing the inputs. Then they should undertake a risk mapping of the political and market environment and define accordingly the procurement strategy and time plan. Finally, they should evaluate the internal capacity of the UNDP office to execute the actions and develop a capacity development plan if necessary. The quality of the preparatory phases will greatly impact the efficiency and success of procurement per se:

- Solicitation and evaluation;
- Preparation and award of contract; and
- Contract and asset management.

PROCUREMENT METHODS

Different procurement methods are used depending on the cost and type of goods and services purchased:

- Low value shopping (< USD 2,500)
- Request for Quotation (< USD 30,000)
- Request for Proposals (> USD 100,000)
- Invitation to Bid (goods > USD 100,000)
- Individual Contracting (engage individuals)
- Direct contracting (through sole source)
- Reimbursable Loan Agreement (engage individuals from institutions)
- Non Reimbursable Loan Agreement (engage individuals from institutions at no cost)

Fast track procedures

Fast track policies and procedures (FTP) were developed to improve UNDP's ability to respond quickly and flexibly to changing needs and opportunities on the ground. They allow administrative actions to be accelerated for COs to respond quickly in special situations. These procedures are often used for electoral support especially in countries facing an emergency situation or in post-conflict countries.

FTP come into effect during well-defined Fast Track situations:

- A crisis has been declared
- A Humanitarian Coordinator has been appointed;
- A Flash Appeal is under preparation;
- OCHA has engaged in emergency response actions and activated the cluster system based on a request from the national authorities.
- An emergency grant has been approved by BCPR
- SURGE support has been activated
- Strategic and/or time-critical response required

When an FTP is adopted, procurement procedures are simplified to a maximum. A single level up-scaling of delegated procurement authority are assigned to the Resident Representative and automatic piggybacking on other UN or Agency LTAs is authorized. The "low-value shopping" threshold is increased up to USD 5,000 and "Delivery Time" becomes a key driver in the selection of suppliers. Moreover, solicitation notice can be brought back to five days.

Five steps need to be followed in order to obtain FTP approval

- 1. Country Office completes online activation form
- 2. Resident Representative approves activation of Fast Track online
- 3. Regional Bureau (RB) informed automatically and approves activation on a non-objection basis within 48 hours (two working days).
- 4. BOM, BCPR and other interested parties copied on the activation
- 5. The Regional Bureau retains full oversight accountability

Electoral project procurement Challenges and Risks

Electoral procurement carries a number of challenges and risks. Time is an essential constraint on electoral processes; elections have short timelines and inflexible legal deadlines that might conflict with procurement requirements and procedures. FTP can be, as we saw, a solution to overcome this constraint.

The uncertainty inherent in large scale and complex project such as elections is another strong constraint on electoral procurement. It is often difficult to define goods and services requirements – e.g. specifications, quantities and costs – especially regarding items involving new technologies such as ICTs.

Electoral procurement can seem to have contradictory objectives. Achieving best value for money and respecting short timelines, while ensuring sustainability and reinforcing capacity can often be hard if not impossible to achieve.



Case study: UNDP Niger acquisition of ballot paper

Context

The Government of Niger requested the United Nations assistance in the preparation and organisation of the 2010/2011 presidential, legislative and local elections. A Needs Assessment Mission was conducted in June 2010 and a basis was established on which the UN would provide electoral assistance to the government.

The Direct Implementation (DIM) modality was chosen and a Programme Management Unit (PMU) was established. In order to promote national capacity building, UNDP chose the National Electoral Commission (NEC) as an implementing partner for some activities, while UNDP kept the responsibility for disbursement of funds for most other activities. The Country Offices applied and received approval of the fast track procedures considering time-critical response required.

For the activities to be implemented directly with NEC, a Memorundum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the two partners creating a de facto mixed model (DIM/NIM). The NEC applied procurement procedures conforming to the national procedures defined by the Department of Control of Public Procurement Regulation (DCRMP) and agreed in the MoU.

Responsibilities of each party

The NEC was responsible for the implementation of activities including the acquisition of the ballot paper. The NEC thus led tendering processes and bid evaluations in accordance with national procedures and international standards; signed contracts based on formats reviewed and approved by UNDP; and was accountable for the delivery of all services and goods purchased. The NEC had to submit technical and financial report to UNDP. For all matters not specifically covered by the MoU, UNDP rules and regulations applied.



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The PMU provided technical assistance to the NEC in the preparation of fund requests to UNDP as well as in the monitoring of tendering processes and bid evaluations. UNDP participated and ensured participation of contributors in the bid evaluation process through a Selection Committee. It also managed funds and effected payments on the basis of invoices and certification by the NEC that services were actually delivered.

The procurement process

The exceptional situation in Niger requiring the organization of six electoral events in seven months (Referendum, Local [municipal and regional], Legislative, Presidential, Presidential run-off elections) was rather challenging. One process alone involved the sourcing, printing, packing and distribution of approximately 400-500 million ballot papers and electoral documents during six days, as per the legal framework.

The Chairman of the NEC passed a decree establishing the specifications of the ballots (weight, colour of the print, security features, etc.). On this basis, the NEC

prepared the call for tender with technical support from the PMU. The invitations to tender were launched locally, based on a list of printers whose technical capabilities had been assessed beforehand by a ballot printing expert recruited by UNDP.

The tender opening took place in the upmost transparency in presence of a bailiff, bidders' representatives, and members of the Experts Committee in charge of the



Mr. Salissou Moussa, Focal Point for Elections, UNDP Niger

The difficulty for UNDP was to respect its procedures despite very short timelines and inflexible deadlines in an exceptional situation requiring the organization of six electoral operations in seven months in Niger tenders analysis and evaluation. The Experts Committee was chaired by the NEC but also included two UNDP members, a representative of the European Union and a member of the Department of Control of the Public Procurement Regulation (DCRMP).

Once the evaluation of the Experts Committee was completed, the files were transmitted to the Awarding Committee for review and approval. Two experts provided by UNDP performed the printing technical monitoring.

Several follow up missions conducted by the EC/UNDP Joint Task Force and UNDP GPECS to finalise the EMB budget, the procurement specifications, the recruitment of the PMU and ensure resource mobilisation helped the implementation of the project.

Key challenges

The multiplicity of elections and very short time despite UNDP fast track procedure approved. The difficulty for UNDP was to respect its procedures despite very short timelines and inflexible deadlines. Measures for effective risk mitigation were introduced very late in the process.

The NEC was not yet entirely professionalized and even less permanent. NEC members were lacking training and knowledge of UNDP procedures. The Experts Committee was forced to meet in several sessions to complete the analysis.

The communication within the NEC and between the NEC and the PMU was insufficient. The NEC plenary meetings endorsing the decisions were not held on a regular basis, and consultations between the NEC and the PMU in the preparation of ballot models were not always held.

Lessons learned from Niger 2010/2011 electoral cycle

- The Project Management Unit (PMU) should have been established earlier.
- Difficulties appeared in the effective implementation of the MoU.
- Lack of establishment of measures for effective risk mitigation during formulation
- The independence of the NEC was very important in the conduct of the procurement process
- The need for a permanent NEC was obvious on many occasions
- The need for the earliest possible availability of ballot artwork and security features (what's the lesson?)
- The use of experts in technical monitoring of ballots design and production was a good practice, including the control of contingency printing
- Designating the NEC as an implementing partner strongly strengthened its technical capacities in procurement
- The introduction of the single ballot was cost effective, reduced fraud as well as the rate of blank or null ballots
- The support of the Joint Task Force EC/UNDP, and the GPECS allowed the project to overcome many difficulties
- The partnership between UNDP, the European Union and other technical and financial partners throughout the whole electoral process, was an example to follow



The Introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Voter Registration Processes

1. The introduction of ICTs in Voter Registration processes

Voter registration (VR) is one of the most complex, time-consuming and expensive operations of electoral administration. It consists of collecting and storing data on all adult citizens in order to create the list of those who are eligible to vote. Because it involves making decisions regarding voters' eligibility criteria as well as voters' access criteria (Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), out-of-country residents Voter Registration, mobile teams vs. fixed Voter Registration centres etc.), voter registration can be the most controversial segment of the electoral process. In order to avoid conflict and enhance the legitimacy of the election —particularly in post-conflict countries— the voter registration process has to be inclusive, transparent and well understood by all stakeholders.

To attain this goal, EMBs increasingly rely on the use of new technologies. A well-chosen and managed technology can improve the security and the integrity of the voters' list and therefore help build confidence in the election's outcome; nevertheless, technology is not a cure-all and can even make registration more difficult for specific groups, thus making the electoral list less inclusive and more controversial. Moreover, the introduction of technology in the electoral process represents significant immediate and long-term costs and often implies important legal and procedural adaptations. Thus procurement of new technology in voter registration requires careful care and consideration.

Advantages and disadvantages of electronic voter registration

Electronic voter registration (EVR) can simplify and increase the accuracy of data collection and treatment. It allows data entry at local level and automatic compilation of provisional and final registers, thus avoiding an enormous paper trail and reducing the number of human interventions. ICTs can also facilitate the detection of double registrations by loading any existing voter register onto the digital kits and using them to search for existing registrations (through the use of national ID card numbers, etc.), or through the use of Automated Fingerprint Identification Systems (AFIS) or other biometric data capturing tools that can search for double registrants in a database.



Mr. Niall McCann, Coordinator Joint EC-UNDP Task Force

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Furthermore, electronic voter registration can improve the quality of service provided to voters by allowing lists of polling centres to be pre-entered onto the kit, thus potentially



allowing voters to choose – based on the law – where to vote and to obtain their ID on polling day. Furthermore, if voters can register in one location but vote in another (not traditionally possible through the use of other Voter Registration methods) and thus avoid travelling long distances to both register and to vote, voter turnout can be significantly enhanced.

Nevertheless, electronic voter registration presents significant disadvantages. First and foremost it represents an enormous investment, with UNDP experience showing costs of up to \$6,000 per kit, to which one must add, crucially, significant back-end server and database management costs as well as often unbudgeted management and maintenance costs. Kits are sensitive and require enormous logistical back-up (e.g.

batteries, fuel, vehicles) that can increase dramatically the cost and difficulty of data collection particularly in challenging physical environments. The enormous cost of kits makes it unlikely for EMBs to be able to buy one kit for each voter registration location, forcing them to make staggered registration with the risk of provoking public scepticism and political unrest.

In addition, the field of biometric-dependent duplication detection is not yet perfectly reliable. It requires enormous back-end server processing power that often leads to the abandonment of nationwide duplicate checks or obliges EMBs to rely on outsourcing checks. Kits can often simply fail to either biometrically enrol voter fingerprints or capture them at all.

Outsourcing challenges the integrity of the process and the confidence in the EMB and raises the question of sovereignty. Moreover, automatic checks should never be sufficient to remove voters; a human decision is required to validate suspected double registration.

Addressing the question of sovereignty is fundamental in the introduction of ICTs in voter registration. These kinds of advance technologies that require highly skilled, thoroughly trained staff, often force governments to rely on international suppliers and expertise that might have little interest in capacity development and often retain intellectual property rights over the source code of the software they provide as part of the kits and database, thus preventing any sustainability of the technology and maintaining the government in a state of dependency.

Finally, it is important to note that despite their enormous cost, ICTs do not necessarily lead to increased public confidence and do not necessarily make it any easier for EMBs to combat the three major challenges of updating a voter register – removing deceased voters, automatically including voters that reach voting age, and allowing voters to transfer their registration to a new location.

The future of electronic voter registration

The cost of electronic voter registration might be significantly reduced in the future through the use of cheaper tablet and smartphone devices, with open source software applications. Moreover, the use of mobile devices will allow EMBs effectively to take staff and the kits closer to the people, thus improving the registration inclusiveness.

Another significant change that may see an increase in the use of electronic voter registration in the future is the potential synergy and eventual merging of voter registration with civil registration. Such synergies may allow for a regularly updated permanent register and help to justify, in the long-term, the initial cost of electronic registration. However, the fact that the voter register might be managed by another state agency could result in a loss of independence for EMBs and the issue of privacy of personal information is still a major concern in some countries that do not use a civil register system.

2. Electoral assistance and ICT procurement for elections

The introduction of technologies in voter registration involves a change in the whole methodology of data collection and treatment. It therefore has procurement implications going far beyond the simple acquisition of the chosen ICT. Electronic voter registration requires at least one data centre with IT equipment, facilities, power supply, communication, software and maintenance. Special staff and trainings by the vendor for IT specialists, operators, supervisors, data experts, etc. are also necessary to use the technology. Additionally, EVR has important logistical implications such as inland distribution of materials and equipments, storage, packing, consumables, data transfer, technical assistance and maintenance, etc. All of these elements have budget and procurement implications that have to be taken into account.

Needs in voter registration can differ greatly from one country to another and the types, quantities and costs of equipment depend highly on a range of factors that have to be considered carefully – intended operation, size of project, country situation, local

resources available, sustainability, etc. Technology experts are thus essential to meet the needs efficiently and have to be involved as early as possible in the procurement process to identify needs and choose the appropriate technology.

Because voter registration is subject to high visibility and implies high reputational and political risks, the procurement process related to it requires the full participation of the end user (that is, the EMB). The involvement of the EMB is even more essential because the success or failure of some equipment depends not only on the equipment itself but also on the performance and responsibility of the people using it.



Lessons learned

- Consideration should be given to all local particularities socio-political, logistical, cultural, environmental, etc.
- It is important to integrate procurement plans and strategies in the project formulation phase (from early stages of project inception)
- Planning and budgeting should fully consider procurement, implementation of systems (especially if new or complex technologies), as well as the operational and related processes (as staffing, training, logistics, etc.)
- Relevant technical experts and procurement experts should be involved as early as possible already in project design/formulation
- Introduce validation testing/pilots as part of the evaluation process
- Give careful consideration to open source vs known platforms ("ease of use, ease of training" vs cost effectiveness)
- Necessary buffers should be integrated in the plan to reduce the impact of potential delays or increases in costs
- Roles and responsibilities should be clarify and managed with stakeholders

 e.g. Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and implementing actors
- There should be a close collaboration between EMB, UNDP programme and operation sections in the procurement planning process.
- The implementation of the project should be initiated as early as possible

Case study: NEC Sierra Leone Planning, and procurement process

In 2010, the Sierra Leone NEC evaluated the previous national electoral cycle (2005-2009) before drafting a new strategic plan for the 2010-2014 period that set out 14 goals, including the improvement of voter registration using modern technology. The technology chosen involves digital kits with the collecting of digital fingerprints (two thumbs prints, for later biometric analysis) and photographs in an electronic database.

Prior to the launching of the procurement process, the NEC identified the number of Voter Registration Centres (VRCs) necessary nationwide, in order to determine exactly the required number of kits. The NEC allocated VRCs to electoral areas based mainly on population data and used GIS/GPS technology to effectively plan and coordinate the identification and allocation of VRCs.

With the support of UNDP, the NEC established the specifications and supply requirements of the materials – e.g. registration forms, booklets, consumables, etc. – and equipment – e.g. mobile kits, database, servers, generators, etc. – as well as storage arrangements and logistical issues such as the deployment and retrieval of material.

The registration is planned to be done nationwide in 60 days with the help of 800 mobile field kits for an estimated voter population of 3.5 million. At an estimated average rate of 7.5 minutes per registration, the 750 kits (50 kits will be kept as buffer stocks) may register 3.6 million voter over the 60 days period.

Lessons learned from Sierra Leone

- Biometric technology...
- can assist in generating a permanent register to be updated continually in intervals
- can help minimise the risk of having a bloated register
- offers a possibility of integration with the on-going national civil registration process
- is very complex and costly
- creates serious challenges for storing, deploying and retrieving equipment
- poses the risk of not being able to capture all eligible voters due to insufficient number of equipment, or due to the failure of either the kits or the software to capture thumbprints of sufficient quality for biometric analysis.
- raises the question of sustainability.

Case study: IIEC Kenya Electronic Voter Registration



Mrs. Peninah Immaculate Kassait, Director of Voter Registration and Electoral Operations in the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) of Kenya

The workshop was an opportunity to listen to the Nigerian and Sierra Leone experiences on biometric voter registration and learn about the challenges they encountered; what work and what didn't work for them. These exchanges will go a long way to improve registration operations in the region. The Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) of Kenya piloted an Electronic Voter Registration (EVR) system alongside its standard Optical Mark Reader registration form methodology (OMR) in 18 of the country's 210 parliamentary constituencies for the voter registration process it conducted in 2010 in advance of the referendum on the new constitution.

The IIEC was able to register 12.4 million voters in 45 days across the country using both systems. In spite of the fact that registration commenced later in the constituencies where EVR was piloted (due to procurement delays), the register for these constituencies was produced earlier than for the "OMR" constituencies, as the scanning of OMR forms, which was decentralised to the 17 regions, took 3 months to complete.

The Electronic Voter Registration system (EVR) procured by the IIEC from an international supplier, was both extremely expensive (a total of \$5.8 million for the pilot in 18 out of 210 constituencies), and omitted from the original tender process the "back-end" hardware and software that is crucial to the success of an EVR system with biometric analysis functionality: the ability to cross-check the data on all the kits against each other, giving the ability to detect whether someone had registered in more than one centre. A separate contract had to be signed again for \$100,000, this time through UNDP to do a single source contract, to help provide this function.

Lessons learned from Kenya

- Undertaking mapping of registration centres in advance of the registration exercise enabled the commission to identify gaps
- OMR is important for paper trails, however, use of EVR reduces errors and the amount of time used in scanning the documents
- EVR is an extremely expensive technology. Although duplicates can, in many cases, be detected by the use of biometric-analysis systems, procurement of adequate back-end IT equipment is crucial, and adds considerably to the cost of the overall system.
- Detecting duplicate registrations assists in ensuring the integrity of data collected from voters, but only where EMBs can show to the public that duplicates have been detected and removed.
- Experienced internal or external IT expertise is essential when drafting specifications for the procurement of expensive IT systems. Furthermore, rolling out an EVR requires the input of other senior EMB staff in the design phase (i.e. prior to procurement). Factors such as the deployment methods, other related logistics, and the need to alter voter education strategies add substantially to the cost of rollout and need to be factored in.
- Late procurement of the EVR system resulted in high expenses in the distribution of materials
- Scanning of OMR was time consuming and labour intensive, thus EVR, although commencing later, concluded quicker



Recommendations of Participants

At the end of the workshop, participants were divided into four groups, each of which were asked to give recommendations on one of the topic covered by the workshop (planning, budgeting, procurement and introduction of ICTs in voter registration) and present them to the assembly for discussion. Through the discussion, the participants highlighted 6 main recommendations to improve the quality and efficiency of electoral administration:

Foster EMB independence

The credibility of the electoral process depends on the impartiality of its management body and this impartiality depends on EMB independence.

To foster EMB independence, the administrative and operational divisions of the EMB should be permanent. Permanency promotes professionalism and dedication, and protects administrative and operational personnel from political volatility. It also has a strong impact on capacity building and institutional development, which are important means of independence.

An EMB should prepare its own budget without any intervention from other state authorities, and set up its own internal purchasing boards, respecting national and international standards and procedures.

Strengthen the coordination between EMBs and development partners

The efficiency and cost-effectiveness of electoral management depends on the strengthening of the coordination between EMBs and development partners at all steps of the electoral process.

Electoral project plans and budgets should take as their frame of reference and be integrated within the EMB plan and budget in order to ensure that assistance is appropriately targeted towards needs, avoids duplication, and supports transparency and accountability.

The sharing of experiences and lessons learned between electoral practitioners within workshops and conferences should be encouraged. EMBs should also be better trained on international standard practices and procedures. Nevertheless, the everyday communication/collaboration between EMBs and development partners should be reinforced.

Improve the inclusiveness and transparency of all steps of the electoral process

Electoral processes are complex and require the support of national authorities, development partners, political parties and other political actors, media and, above all, the electorate. In order to enhance the credibility of the electoral process and therefore make more likely the acceptance of the election's results, it is essential to include relevant stakeholders at all steps and to make the process as transparent as it can be for the general public.

Strategic and operational plans as well as budget and procurement documents should be released to the press. The EMB members should be more open to the media, communicate more on the progress of the electoral activities and improve their interinstitutional communication.



Reinforce the preparation of activities through the optimisation of all electoral cycle periods

Planning, budgeting and procurement are deeply interdependent tasks that need to be realized in a timely fashion with strong cognisance of the importance of adopting an electoral cycle approach.

In order to foster efficiency and avoid errors during implementation, it is necessary to reinforce the preparation of electoral activities, by closely linking planning, budget and procurement. Groundwork, research, analysis and training are, in this regard, of upmost importance not only for planning but also during the budgeting and procurement processes. They are, however, time-consuming tasks that require optimising the use of all electoral periods, particularly the pre- and post-electoral ones.

Information about the electoral cycle approach should be better disseminated and advocacy initiatives should be conducted targeting donors and national authorities.

Increase the flexibility of planning, budget and procurement processes

Electoral processes are long and complex accomplishments full of contingencies that need to respect a strict deadline. In order to improve the efficiency and celerity of electoral management, it is important for all stakeholders to be flexible in their approach to planning, budgeting and procurement.

EMB and development partners should adopt an incremental approach in order to be able to adapt to contingencies and new situations. This flexibility should be integrated into both the EMB's and development partners' procedures.

Ensure the sustainability of institutions, processes and technologies

The question of sustainability is a question of efficiency, cost-effectiveness and sovereignty. It concerns all the activities undertaken during the electoral process and should guide approaches to human resources and procurement.

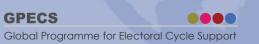
There is a need to deepen capacity development at all steps of the electoral process through training and collaboration to make EMBs less dependent on international technical expertise. In this regard, national expertise including from national private firms should be encouraged.

Procurement processes have a fundamental role to play in the affirmation of the sustainability principle. Beyond the question of capacity development, the sustainability of purchased material is of upmost importance, even more when procurement targets new, innovative and expensive technologies. The case of the introduction of ICT in voter registration is exemplary to illustrate the importance of sustainability. When choosing a technology, strong attention should be given to capacity development, transfer of technology and intellectual property rights.





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