



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

Domenico Tuccinardi, *Project Director – NEEDS-International IDEA*

Brussels 1 – 4 February 2011

In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



The Policy Shift

EU Methodology

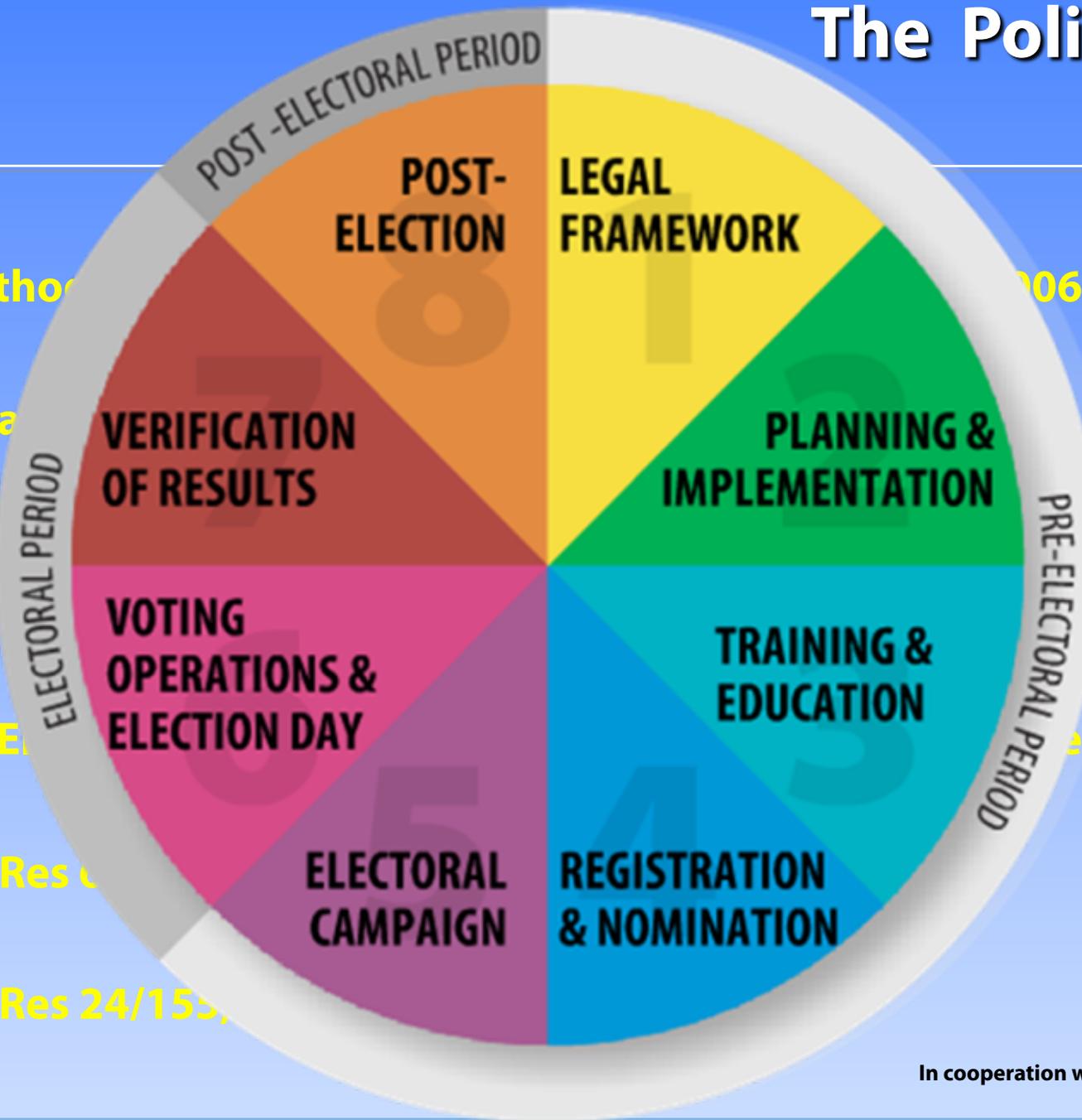
EMB Handbook

SG Report
Genuine Progress

UNDP Election

UNGA Res 60/18

UNGA Res 24/155



2006

End of Period

September 2007

In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



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**

In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



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

In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



The Question

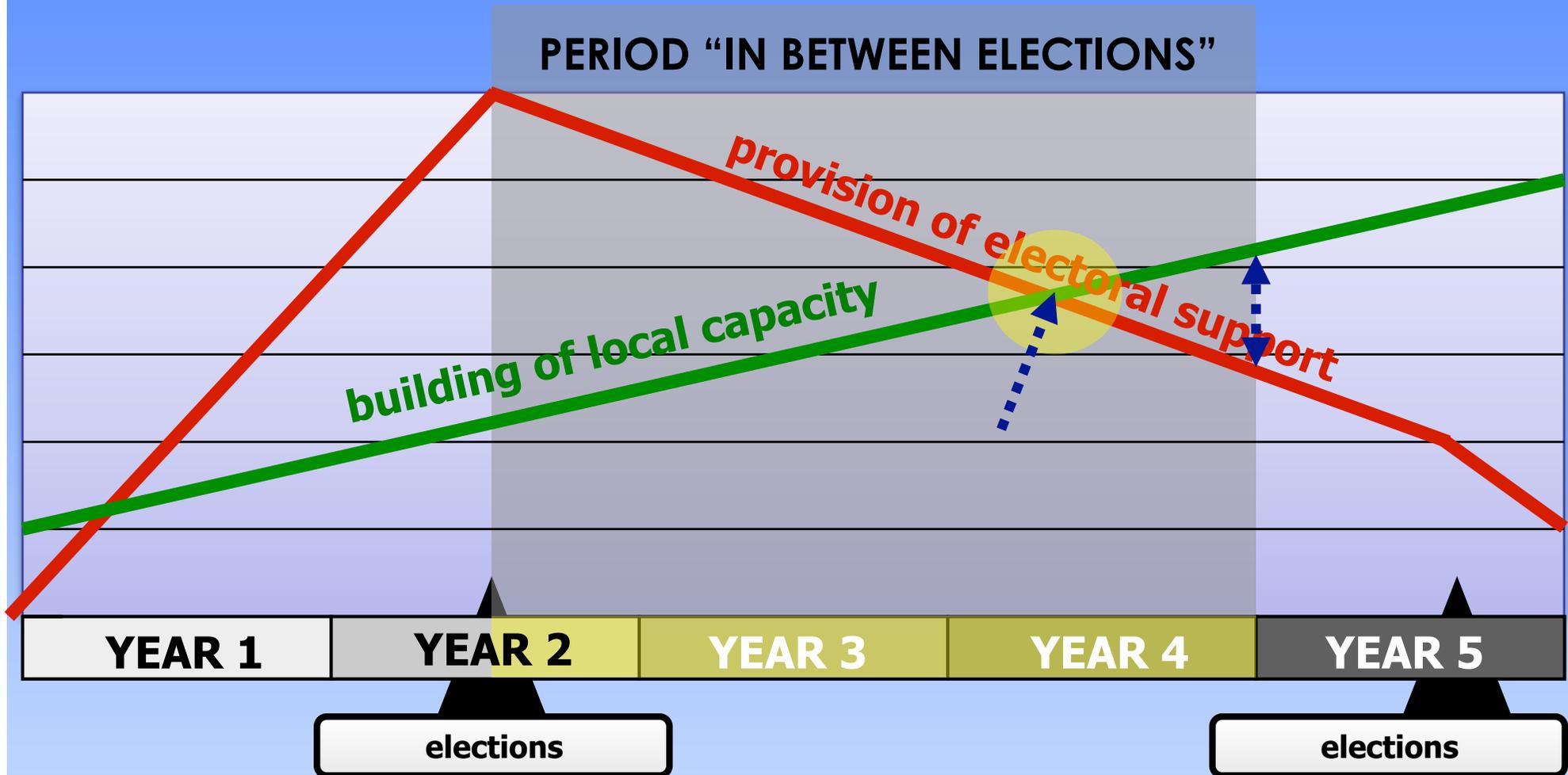
Has the electoral cycle approach become just an excuse to perpetrate endless cycles of electoral assistance?

In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



The basic tenet of process-driven support



In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



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

In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support



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**

In cooperation with

NEEDS
Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support