

# THEMATIC WORKSHOP

**4<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Mombasa Kenya**

*“Information Technology and Elections Management:  
Informed Decisions for sustainable Outcomes”*

## ICT and National Ownership

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***ICT and National Ownership***



# Dealing with Question of:

- *Whether over-reliance on technology threatens national ownership of the electoral process.*
- *Does Technology mean end of national ownership?*

## Agenda

1. Introduction
2. National Ownership
3. Best Practices
4. Issues to Ownership
5. Uganda's Experience
  - Biometric Voter Registration.
  - Election Results Tallying , Transmission and Dissemination system (ERTDS).
6. Conclusion



# 1.Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is increasingly becoming an important tool in the electioneering process

Election Management Bodies (EMB's) are compelled to leverage ICT's in process of delivering democratic elections. The introduction of ICT into the electoral process is gaining a lot of interests among the voters and other stakeholders

## **Key Areas Include:**

- a) General Administration of the EMB's activities.
- b) Boundaries Delimitation/Administration
- c) Voter Registration and Update,
- d) Voter Verification and Authentication
- e) Vote Tallying, Transmission and Dissemination of Elections Results,
- f) Electronic Voting
- g) and Election Observation & Monitoring



## 2.National Ownership

**“The involvement of the EMB, the electorate and stakeholders in the entire electoral process, owning up the outcome and commitment to support it overtime”**

### **Relevant National Actors**

- The EMB's,
- Political Parties
- The Government
- Civil Society Organizations
- Development Partners/Donors
- and Technical advisors (such as IFES, DDP).
- Vendors,



## 2.National Ownership- Cont...

### Considerations:

- When Procuring ICT systems , the choice of the technology to use depends largely on the **appropriateness** of the technology in respect to Specific environments ;
  - infrastructure development
  - social and political factors
  - cost of implementation
  - and sustainability
- General acceptance of the ICT's in the electoral process must begin at the inception stage within the EMB's (user "Buy-In") and early involvement/participation of the stakeholders.

**It is perceived that public acceptance of the use of ICT relates closely to the degree of public confidence in the implementing EMB, this is true to some extent, however, on the contrary, ICT usage can greatly improve the public image of the EMB.**



## 2.National Ownership- Cont...

- For example during the 2011 General Elections, Uganda posted the entire National Voters Register on the internet and also made it accessible via SMS
  - Eased tension
  - Reduced complaints among the stakeholders
  - Resorted to specific complaints rather than general.
  - and above all, the Voters Register was generally accepted.

**This was in addition to issuing a physical copy of the voters register on CDs and in Print.**



## 2.National Ownership- Cont...

- Some of the IT innovations are actually pushed by the opposition, the legislators , donors , international community or a combination, thereof, given the technological advancements; In this stance
  - EMB's are ill prepared for the implementation of such innovations in the usually short timeframes, and therefore the risks are high.
  - EMB's should proactively predicate their technological need and plan accordingly; as opposed to shying away.



### 3.Best Practice

- a) **Inclusiveness:** of the public and all stakeholders in the process of choosing and using the system and ownership of the electoral process
- b) **Appropriateness:** Ability for the new technology to address the very problems for which it is being acquired.
- c) **Transparency:** Of the decision making process in regards to the technology acquisition and transparency of the technology (e.g. Voter Registration, Tallying and transmission of results, and e-voting).  
*“Transparency promotes public trust in the integrity of the system”*
- d) **Accountability:** impact of the technology on the integrity of the electoral process should be understood by average voter.
- e) **Accuracy and Speed:** Applicable in vote counting, transmission and broadcasting. ICT tools should not be seen delaying election process.
- f) **Security:** The systems should be secure and auditable
- g) **Sustainability and cost effectiveness:** EMBs should be able to implement the systems in the long run and with minimum reliance on external technical support from Vendors, external financial support, etc.



## 4.What are the issues ?

### a) Planning for the technology

- Plan early , include in the Strategic Plan /Election Roadmap
- Design according to the requirements
- Test the system thoroughly
- Implement and Continuously improve
- keep voters and the stakeholders well informed through stakeholders' workshops and regular press briefings/releases

### b) Procurement pit falls:

- Characterized by so many interests
- Lead time is about one Year to Procure
- Start early
- Follow the Applicable Laws and Regulations in your specific countries

### c) Mis-trust of the EMB's

- Due to poor public image
- Mis-interpretation of the intention of the introduction of the new ICTS by the public  
– continuous civil and voter education is required

### d) Sustainability :

- a) Recruitment of Profession ICT Staff and Retaining them
- b) Maintenance Support and Financing
- c) Accessibility to the source code, full licensing of the technology and Training
- d) Plan for upgrades



## 5. Uganda's Experience?

### (a) Biometric Voter Registration System

- Introduced during the 2011 General Elections
- Captures the photographs, 10 fingerprints, Biodata, demographic data, and uses FRS and AFIS to detect multiple registration.
- Deployed 4000 registration kits with 8000 operators to register in 7000 parishes.
- Stationed 1000 generators at sub-county level for charging of batteries
- 112 Data Servers at each of the Districts for consolidation of voters data.
- System stored data on a USB-Stick and External Hard drives
- Registered an additional 5million voters in 40 days ( total current voter population is 14 million)
- 400,000 duplicates identified and de-activated from the voters register using FRS, AFIS and texture names matching.



## 5. Uganda's Experience- Biometric Voter Registration (Cont...)

### What were the Challenges?

- **Procurement:** *Electoral Commission planned for a new biometric system; however, the procurement process was challenged by the vendors and was finally halted. The alternative was to join the Ministry of Internal Affairs which was procuring similar equipment for the National ID Project*
- *The Procurement was through single sourcing , vendor driven and therefore little attention was given to details .*
- *Lost time and then a bit of rush to try fit into the election roadmap which had fixed dates in accordance to the constitutional deadlines.*
- *Lack of finances to implement Phase II ,the project is more than a year behind schedule;*
- *Vendor dependence, the vendor has to be involved in everything that we needed to do.<<<< Lack of Ownership??? And reluctant to train local staff ?>>>>*
- *ECU does not own the equipment and therefore has difficulties in conducting continuous registration*



## 5. Uganda's Experience

### (b) Election Results Tallying , Transmission and Dissemination System(ERTDS);

**Objective** : *To improve Election Results Transmission and Dissemination in a transparent, auditable and secure way.*

- Introduced during the 2011 General Elections
- Financed by DDP and technical support given by USAID/IFES
- Results tabulated by the system at the District Tally Centres and transmitted in real-time through the internet to the National Tally Centres (NTC)
- Broadcasting polling station results to computers terminal installed at the NTC for the Media, the Observers and Political Party Agents.

***This level of transparency eased tension at the National Tallying Center***



## 5. Uganda's Experience- ERTDS ( Cont...)

### What were the Challenges/lessons?

- ERTDS was not on the original Election Roadmap, as result the implementation started very late under very strict deadlines. In fact the procurement process started 6 months to polling, testing of the system was done up to the eve of polling. Training of operators was also insufficient.
- Because of strict timeframe, there was not enough time for the EC IT Staff to “**Own up the system**”. All development and customization was done by the provider, no access to the source code, so even the most obvious change had to be corrected by the provider. License was for a limited time of 18 months – more of one-time use. **In this case the Question of Ownership arise!**
- The transmission relied on Mobile Telephone Networks; some districts did not have network coverage. At least two service providers for each tallying centre were used. Mobility of the system came in handy.



## 5. Uganda's Experience- ERTDS ( Cont...)

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EU EOM) Report;

*“The Electoral Commission is to be commended for meeting best international practice by publishing election results polling station by polling station, which ensures full transparency as well as greater confidence and trust in the results for Uganda’s citizens. The introduction of electronic transmission of results from district tally centres to the National Tally Centre marked a further improvement”*



## 6.Conclusion

- ICT's are enabling tools and therefore serve to enhance the existing processes for efficiency and speedy delivery of elections.
- If carefully planned and managed it can be cost effective and saves money in the long run.
- EMB should ensure best practices when acquiring the ICT's with a view of ensure successfully implementation and eventual ownership.

In that aspect of being an ICT tool, the Question of “**Ownership**” by the EMBs and the stakeholders is inevitable.



Thank you