



# EMBS, STRATEGIC PLANNING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Joram Rukambe, International IDEA

*Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance*

Maputo, 24 June 2008

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# Presentation Outline

■ **Objective:** *Describing how Strategic Planning can be used to enhance EMB Professionalism, & Defining the role of Donor Support in realising this goal*

- Background and Context
- Professionalizing EMBs through Strategic Planning & Staff Development:
  - Definitions
  - Explanations
- EMB Professionalism & Effective Electoral Assistance





## Background and Context

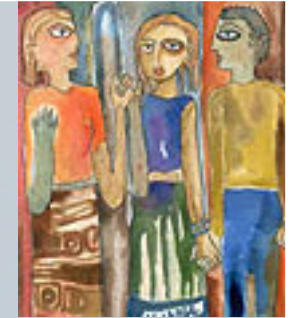
Well-managed and transparent elections are critical for democratic consolidation

Democracy is unthinkable without free and fair elections which serve as the basis for the electorate to express their **will** on who should govern them and how they should be governed

# Democratic elections -

The **will of the people** can only be guaranteed when those who are charged with administering elections are professional, independent, and able to inspire public trust and in elections

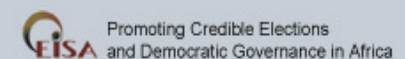
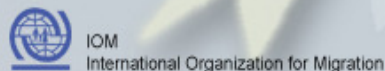




# *When is an EMB Professional?*

- When it **encompasses experiences, skills and acumen** that are necessary for understanding the workings of democracy
- When it is able to **uphold the law, principles, values and norms** for democratic elections; and
- When it is able to **deliver high quality electoral services**

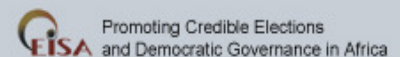
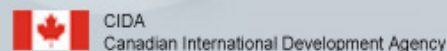
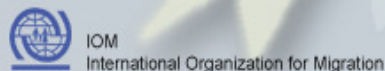
In collaboration with:



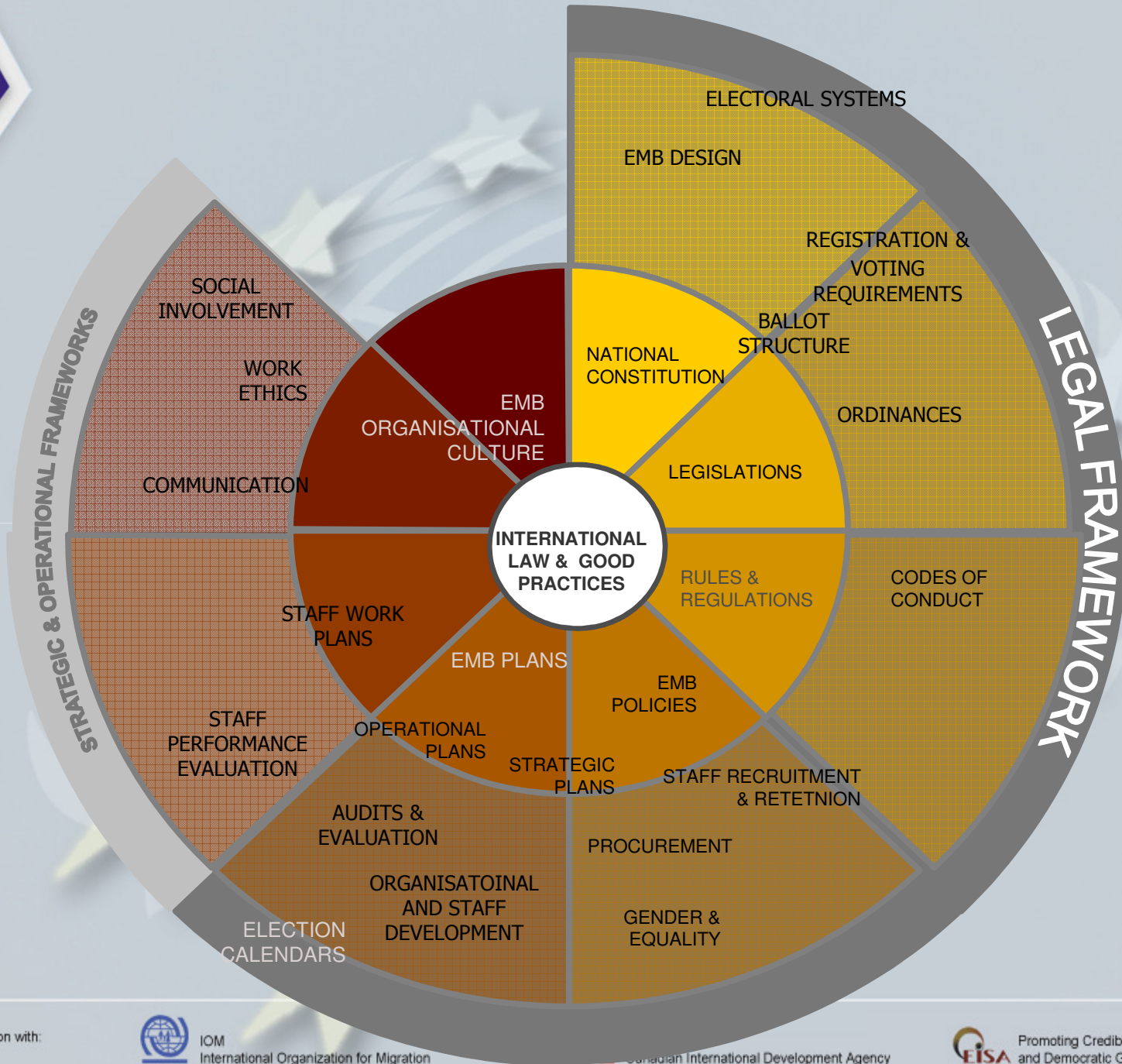


• **Efforts to professionalise EMBs** require **sound legal & operational framework** that helps to define EMB Mandate, Objectives, Priorities, Activities, and best possible Strategies to realise these

In collaboration with:







In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration

Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



## Strategic Planning as tool for EMB Professionalism

- Apart from compliance with legal provisions, an EMB which wants to professionalise its conduct, must embrace Strategic Planning as a tool for enhancing its institutional efficiency and effectiveness
- **An EMB without a strategic plan is like a pilot without a compass**

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# What is Strategic Planning?

- Simply put, it means **what** to do, **why** it should be done, **how** it should be done and **who** should do it
- For the EMB, a strategic plan (or a corporate plan) is a road map that guides and motivates the EMB for a defined period of years, serving as a marker against which stakeholders can measure EMB performance
- It is not a '**once-off**' activity, and requires regular allocation of resources (time, money, and people) to develop and support it

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa





# Basic Elements of a Strategic Plan

- **Vision** – EMB aspirations
- **Mission** – EMB fundamental focus
- **Values** – EMB core beliefs and norms
- **Outcomes** – EMB expected outcomes/deliverables
- **Indicators** – measurable targets that help to determine EMB performance
- **Performance Management Strategy**

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# From Strategic Planning to Operational Planning

- Strategic plans must be broken down into practical operational plans based on, for example, on each phase of the electoral cycle
- Operational plans maybe further broken down into divisional plans, unit plans, and individual work plans to ensure proper performance management and monitoring

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# From Operational plan to Elections calendar

- An electoral calendar refers to the integrated elaborate activity plan that an EMB develops in preparation for an election
- Core elements of an election calendar:
  - Activities & milestones
  - Time frames
  - Dependencies
  - Individual staff responsibilities





# Towards a Strategic Plan for EMB Staff Training and Development

- A key area of focus in EMB Strategic Planning is the professional development of staff through a number of ways

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa





# EMB Professionalisation starts with

- Effective Policies for Staff recruitment, retention, and development
- EMB must strive to become an '**employer of choice**' through its staff recruitment, retention, promotion, and development policies and strategies
- It must show it values skills, innovation, diversity, personal growth, and must seek to reward these (through traditional & non-traditional reward systems)
- EMB must develop career paths for its permanent staff as a way to retain best skills

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# Staff Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

- To enhance their professionalism, some EMBs use civil servants; others do not; while others use both own staff and civil servants especially during elections
- In some quarters, the use of civil servants is discouraged because civil servants are considered partisan in favor of the ruling party
- Yet in other contexts, there is a belief that the use of civil servants gives the EMB access to a diverse pool of skills and hence this practice is encouraged
- In some countries, EMB staff are recruited through public advertisement and interviews.
- Special efforts are also made to attract historically disadvantaged groups including women, minorities and PLDs.

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# Professional Election Administration

- Goes beyond the technical and management qualifications of one particular field
- To run elections effectively, you need to be more than a human resource specialist; more than a supply-chain specialist, and more than seasoned accountant or lawyer, etc
- You need to understand the environment in which elections take place
- You need to be a professional with profound understanding of political dynamics and sensitivities: someone who knows how to involve stakeholders before taking final decisions; someone who interprets and implements election laws and policies correctly and fairly; someone who treats key electoral stakeholders respectfully, equally and fairly

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa





# Values characterising professional EMBs

- **Integrity:** being non-partisan and independent and ensuring that election rule and policies are interpreted and implemented without fear and favour
- **Impartiality:** being fair and affording all stakeholders equitable and honest treatment at all times - promoting a 'level playing field' for all
- **Transparency:** ability to be open and truthful and ensuring stakeholder access to key election information and records
- **Efficiency:** optimal use of resources of all kinds to ensure sustainability
- **Service-mindedness:** maintaining high-quality services to all stakeholders: including 'special voters'





# EMB Professional Development

- Once the EMB has recruited staff, it must undertake a vigorous process of staff training and development
- EMB Professionalisation takes place during each of the three key phases in the electoral cycle:
  - During the **pre-electoral period** when EMBs adopt appropriate strategic/operational plans, including staff recruitment, retention, and promotion strategies: *seeking out and keeping best skilled personnel*
  - **During elections** with staff training on operational issues (how to register voters, candidates, and conduct voting and vote count)
  - During the **post-electoral period** through effective staff capacity development programmes and long-term strategic planning





## EMB Professionalisation through Staff Training and Development

- Apart from temporary staff recruited during election period and who need training on how to conduct election duties, EMBs must have continuous organisational and staff development (OSD) for their permanent staff
- This must seek to address the mid- to long term skills requirements of EMB permanent staff
- OSD is critical for establishing a strong link between the EMB strategic goals and the skills levels required to realise such goals

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



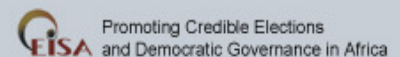
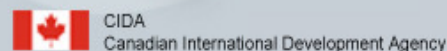
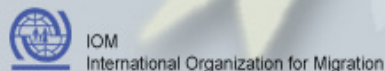
Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# OSD

- Depending on the needs analysis, areas which OSD could cover include:
  - *Communication and interpersonal skills development*
  - *Team Building*
  - *Critical and strategic thinking and problem solving*
  - *Self-management*
  - *Conflict resolution skills*
  - *Project management*
  - *Development technical and managerial skills needed in specific EMB division/unit*

In collaboration with:







# Staff Development Strategies

- Mentoring
- Short ad hoc training both within and outside EMB
- Staff Exchanges and visits to other countries/EMBs
- Formal Training and Development Courses:
  - Courses in Elections and Governance (American University, Griffith University, University of Paris, University of Pretoria);
  - Professional development courses: *Basic Election Administration Training* (BEAT) developed and administered by IFES); and *Building Resources in Democracy, Elections, and Governance* (BRIDGE) under IDEA and partners.
  - Regular election staff training in the UK under the auspices of the Association of Election Administrators (AEA);
  - Similar efforts by Mexican & South African EMBs to provide continuing professional development to staff members which serve as entry-level requirements for appointing as election officials.

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa





## Factors which may hinder EMB professionalism

- An illiberal electoral framework and organisational culture that discourage good electoral governance including EMB professionalism
- Political climate characterised by fear and intimidation
- Deficiencies in the EMB institutional framework: temporary EMBs which may not have time to provide adequate training to staff; governmental or partisan EMBs which may not have adequate insulation from undue influence from politicians and the Executive
- Lack of funding or late release of donor funds for EMB capacity building





# EMB professionalism and Effective Electoral Assistance

- EMB Professional development remains one of the areas which have not received adequate donor attention over the last few years
- Where attention was given, it has been *ad hoc* and poorly coordinated, lacking sustainability and effectiveness
- Much of donor support towards elections has been more towards procurement of election materials, election observation, and less towards EMB professional development
- The reason for this is that until recently election assistance has sought to address elections as 'events' and not 'processes', and many donors have sought to fund registration/voting activities because of the high visibility such activities afford to donors.

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# EMB Professional Development and Effective Electoral Assistance

- Since EMB Professional development requires a lot of resources on a sustained basis, there is a need for efforts to explore avenues for:
  - conducting EMB professional development at regional instead of national level (multi-EMB as opposed to single-EMB training)
  - Training a pool of trainers who go back to their countries/EMBs to conduct training using a methodological approaches such as BRIDGE, for example
  - Promoting inter-EMB staff exchanges and visits especially during elections for staff to exchange experiences and learn from each other through peer mentoring and coaching

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa





# EMB professionalism and Effective Electoral Assistance: Recommendations

- Collaborating with regional associations/institutions could prove more useful in terms of creating multipliers/drivers of change within specific regions
- Supporting the ACE Electoral Capacity Building Project which is currently being piloted in SADC and aiming to strengthen EMB professional and institutional capacity to deliver credible elections.
- This presents a useful window for inter-donor cooperation to give effects to our commitment using the electoral cycle approach in seeking to implement effective electoral assistance

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa





# Effective Electoral Assistance

- Long term donor electoral assistance could be packaged to address EMB capacity requirements in areas such as:
  - Long-term (strategic and operational planning) covering multiple electoral cycles
  - Short-term planning: election calendar development
  - Continuous learning & skills development
  - Election Audits, Institutional Performance Evaluation
  - Electoral Reform, etc.

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



# Conclusion

- Although much has been done by the donor community to support fledgling democracies to perfect the art of running elections in the last few years, this assistance has been more like giving fish to a hungry person instead of teaching them how to fish
- **Long-term strategic planning, including staff professionalisation, is the only way to foster long-term institutional capacity for free and fair elections in new democracies**

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa



**-End-**

- **Thank You!**

In collaboration with:



IOM  
International Organization for Migration



CIDA  
Canadian International Development Agency



Promoting Credible Elections  
and Democratic Governance in Africa