EC-UNDP Workshop on

Formulating and Implementing Electoral Assistance Projects in the Context of the EC-UNDP Partnership

Voter Registration

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Presentation

- Appropriate Technology Debate
- Key Point and Challenges
- Should and Should NOT
- Areas of Implementation
- Focus and Activities
- Technology and Market Forces Drives History?
- Best Practises and the Future
The term *appropriate technology* came into some prominence during the 1973 energy crisis and the environmental movement of the 1970s.

The term is typically used in two ways:

- utilizing the most effective technology to address the needs of developing areas,
- and using socially and environmentally acceptable technologies in industrialized nations
In practice, appropriate technology is often something described as using the simplest level of technology that can effectively achieve the intended purpose in a particular location.

The term *appropriate technology* can also take a different meaning, often referring to engineering that takes special consideration of its social and environmental ramifications.
While the principles of elections largely remain the same

Information
Communication
Technology

has in the past 25 years dramatically changed the operational methodology for elections
Continuous and increasingly fast developments in ICT applications available for electoral purposes

EC/UNDP are receiving many requests from Governments and EMBs for support to civil and voter registration and digitalization of results aggregation processes.

Factors to be reckoned with by all EMBs, donors, practitioners and electoral assistance providers.

ICTs has already dramatically changed the way elections are conducted in the western world.

Unrealistic not to accept that this process will go on and affect more and more emerging democracies and post conflict countries in a leapfrog manner.

We need to do our job and equip ourselves better…
Luddist Approach versus Advertisement Approach
Joint Study on ICTs Civil/Voter Registration and Data Base Transmissions within the Global Training Platform
EC, UNDP, IDEA, CIDA, IOM, OAS and…ACE
Focus on civil/voter registration and transmission of electoral data
Comparative assessment
Auditing procedure
Conduct an analysis of most appropriate manner of procuring these technologies and the related specialized services
Any effort to make electoral assistance more effective must tackle the issue of the increasing use of technology in the electoral process.

Cross Cutting Issue
What kind of technology is suitable for a particular electoral process?

- **Challenge**: how to ensure a sustainable, appropriate, cost effective and transparent use of technology in post-conflict elections and in fragile or emerging democracies?

- No fixed solution that can be applicable everywhere, but different ones for every context. General rule:

- The level of technological upgrades suitable for a given country should always be directly related to the trust and independence enjoyed by the EMB, as this is the element that will in the end determine their acceptance by the public opinion.
Technology should be:

- implemented in time before an electoral event
- legally supported
- operationally appropriate
- cost effective
- transparent and add to integrity
- sustainable
“Not”

Technology should NOT be:

- driven by vendor or donor interests
- considered a proof of “development”
- suppress more important needs
Quality and appropriateness of the methodological, operational and technological choices to be adopted for implementation on an electoral cycle

- Perceived not any longer as isolated event but as a process.

- Past imperfections and limited results should be seen as an additional motive to support electoral processes investing more in the institutions that administer the elections in a good governance perspective.

- Importance of international/domestic observation missions, evaluations, post election seminar and peer review mechanisms.

- Importance of the synergies between election observation and electoral assistance.
Areas of Implementation
Voter Registration
Always the most controversial aspect of an electoral process

An accurate and accepted voter registry is pivotal to a credible electoral process

For most countries it is the largest, most complex, costly and time consuming component of the electoral process

Crucial display and test of the EMBs operational capacity and credibility
VR Process

**electoral period**
- E-Day - Voter List used to identify and admit voters to polling
- VR Audits
- VR legislation in place
- Operational Plan, Procurement and Training
- Data Collection exercise in the field and data processing

**post-electoral period**
- Voter Lists and Cards distribution
- Production of final Voter lists and eventual voters cards

**pre-electoral period**
- Voter List Production and Display for Claims
- Operational Plan, Procurement and Training
- Data Collection exercise in the field and data processing

- VR Audits
- VR legislation in place
- Operational Plan, Procurement and Training
- Data Collection exercise in the field and data processing
Three conceptual systems:

1. Stand-alone “ad hoc” / periodic voter registration (active)
2. Stand-alone continuous / permanent voter registration (active)
3. Civil registration-based voter register (passive)
Three levels of technological methodologies:

- **Low-Tech**
  - Data on paper - locally based - Timor 1996, OCV Afghanistan 2004

- **Medium-Tech**
  - Paper into database - centrally based - West-Bank/Gaza 2004

- **High-Tech**
  - Direct to computer - centrally based - DRC 2006

-> Endless variations of VR methodology
It generally entails the manual transcription of voters’ data on lists at voter registration centres and are kept at the local/provincial level. Registration forms are taken to the central level and data-entered in a central database. Most preferred in post-conflict scenarios.

Low-Tech Approaches
Optical Mark Recognition (OMR)
First used in large scale Electoral Assistance Mission Bosnia and Herzegovina 1997
Mid Tech Approach

Pencil
Registration Forms
Completed OMR Forms
Batch Header Form (one per day)
Transport to data centre
Voter’s card
Envelopes

Official
Polaroid Instant camera
Fingerprint pad
Fingerprint
Photo-fix
Photo die cutter
Photograph
Laminating Pouches
Voter’s card
Transport to data centre
Envelopes

Pencil
Usage of electronic forms and data-entry performed at the local level on laptop computers

Information transmitted in real time to a centralized processing facility or stored electronically for periodic delivery through external memories

Might involve biometric features (digital pictures, fingerprint or iris capturing) and on-site production of voters cards
The “Automated Fingerprint Identification System” automatically checks one or many unknown fingerprints against a national database of known prints.

The intended purpose is to prevent multiple enrolment in an election.

Long Time required for aggregation of data and double entry control in DRC, Togo, Nigeria, Haiti and Angola via AFIS.

Postponement of elections in Haiti, DRC, Angola and Togo.

Funded by State Budgets or Cofunded.
The Future?

Digital Camera
The digital camera is embedded onto the unit’s Official Panel and may be used to capture a voter’s digital photograph during registration.

Color Touch-screen
A touch-sensitive, full-color LCD screen displays easy-to-use controls for PenCom officials to use to incorporate or edit data.

Signature Pad
The signature capture device may be used to capture a user’s signature in electronic format during registration or authentication.

Local Capture of Information
The application contained can capture data manually inserted in the Vanguard. This data can be, voters information, as well as Voting Results.

Transmission of Data
The kit is capable of transmitting all data and results from distributed locations to a central site.

Printer
The attached printer can be used to print a voter registration card.

Fingerprint Reader
The main fingerprint capture device may be used to capture a fingerprint in digital form during registration or authentication.

The Future?
The Future of Electoral Technology?

- Synergies between civil and voter registration?
- Digital identities with biometric identification, digital certificates?
- Polling stations disappear replaced by internet voting and/or voting via mobile phone?
- Individualised voter education via internet?
- Direct/digital democracy
The Future of Voter Registration

- Western countries have moved to computerized and permanent voter registration systems
- Increasing demand from EU partner countries to use EC Development Funds for digital voter registration
- Lack of adequate feasibility studies. Possible synergies with civil registration are not explored before planning
- Open debate between models: independent voter registration versus the civil registration based voters register
Increasing demand for high-tech VR systems
Feasibility studies and design, global as well as local
Pilot projects
Procurement of new technology
Operational planning & procedures
Training and voter education
Implementation
Type and Timing of TA

- Support to EMB to design and introduce a new model or system of voter registration
- To begin at the end of the previous electoral cycle
- In any event not later than 18 months before elections.
Type and Timing of TA

- Support to EMB to conduct a specific voter registration process which requires the introduction of a new technology or system upgrades.
- Assistance to provided between two years and one year before the elections.
- In any case, not later than one year.
Type and Timing of TA

- Simple procurement of voter registration material
- Between one year and six months before the elections
- Technical support to groups observing voter registration (between 1 year and six months before elections).
Biometrics. an Appropriate Technology?

- Political Factors, Sept 11 2001, Fight Against Terrorism, interests in population databases
- Nature of Vendors and Service Providers being large conglomerate working also with defense sector
- End of Production of Polaroid 35 mm Camera
- Technological Developments
- Business Opportunities
- Accuracy and/or Perception of Accuracy of Biometrics...
- Easy Concept of Biometrics and AFIS
- Inclusion in Legal Frameworks, DRC and Togo
- Changing funding scenarios, Angola, Nigeria, Mozambique...
- Vendor Driven? Supply Driven?
change is induced by social needs expressed in new political demands, affected by new technical possibilities and by development in S&T exerted by changes in the political panorama in a given moment.

Hence advances in technology and market forces are not to be conceived as the mayor forces of change in the election sector in the past decades, somewhat they shaped new situations for competing political and economic forces.
Technology might reduce costs and improve sustainability

It opens up risks for governments, donors and assistance providers to become hostages of the vendors

Cost-effectiveness depends on the re-usability of the hardware for other elections or public administration purposes

Technological changes are not accompanied by adequate training and voter education efforts
Feasibility Studies
Study Tours
Technical Specifications drafted considering comparative experiences adapted to the country’s needs
Software and Hardware to be adapted to the country’s electoral laws and practices
Gradual Introduction at least 16-12 months prior to Election Day
Divide the country on different operational areas in view of rationalizing the resources
Accent on human resources, training, on site assistance from service providers
Cost Effectiveness and Sustainability
Pilot Tests, Validation Tests, Mock Registration
Civic Voter Education aimed at increasing all stakeholders’ trust in the technology
Plan synergies with civil registry and voter registration, ID for police etc..
Consider to extend the length of the operations