European Commission
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International IDEA

Joint Training on
Effective Electoral Assistance

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Voter Registration Methodologies

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Day 3
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 operational element of the electoral process
Crucial display and test of the EMBs operational capacity and credibility
Typical voter registration operation:
- Constitution -> election law -> regulation / procedure
- operational plan -> procurement and training
- Field operation collecting data on eligible voters
- Data processing
- Production of preliminary voter lists and their display
- Claims and objections period with the consequent process of entering deletions and additions
- Production of final voters lists and the at times related production of voter cards
- Distribution of voter cards and the distribution of voters lists to polling stations
- E-day: final voters list controls who can vote where
Three conceptual systems:

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

• **Low-Tech**

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

- Polaroid instant camera
- Fingerprint pad
- Fingerprint
- Polaroid film
- Registration Forms
- Laminating Pouches
- Envelopes
- Pencil
- Photo die cutter
- Photo-fix
- Voter’s card
- Completed OMR Forms
- Batch Header Form (one per day)
- Transport to data centre
- Envelopes
Mid Tech Approach – Tanzania

The Major System for PNVR Preparation that comprised by Different modules:

- Security Module
- Scan Module
- Tiff images
- OMR Module
- HTML Pages
- Register Publishing Module
- Search Module & Quality Check
- System Production Management Module
- System Administration Module

File Store
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.

Hi-Tech Approach
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.
TA to Voter Registration

- 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 be done at the end of a electoral cycle

- In any event not later than 18 months before elections.
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
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).
Sustainability Issues

- Technology might reduce costs and improve sustainability
- It opens up risks for donors and assistance providers to become hostages of the vendors
- Cost-effectiveness depends on the re-usability of the hardware for other elections administrative purposes
- Technological changes are not accompanied by adequate training and voter education efforts
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