

Helpdesk Research Report: Monitoring and evaluation of electoral support

Date: 25.09.2012

Query: Please provide an overview of approaches to monitoring and evaluation of electoral support. Please include information on indicators for measuring: the performance of an electoral event; and the impact of donor support to components of the electoral cycle.

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1. Overview

Electoral support interventions by international actors have increased greatly since the 1990s. They comprise primarily of electoral observation and electoral assistance. Electoral observation should be of an impartial nature based on the principle of non-interference. Electoral assistance, in contrast, is of an advisory nature and refers to technical or material support to electoral processes. Electoral assistance may be provided during all phases of the electoral circle. It can be directed at a broad range of activities and at a wide range of electoral stakeholders (electoral authorities, political parties, civil society, domestic observers and media) (Binder, 2009).

The international community has moved toward an understanding that electoral assistance and electoral observation should not be focused purely upon election day and the immediate lead-up to elections. Rather, elections should be seen as a sequential process or cycle involving a long series of steps. As the ACE project suggests, the cycle involves all stages in the process of elections: 'from the design and drafting of legislation, the recruitment and training of electoral staff, electoral planning, voter registration, the registration of political parties, the nomination of parties and candidates, the electoral campaign, polling, counting, the tabulation of results, the declaration of results, the resolution

of electoral disputes, reporting, auditing and archiving. After the end of one electoral process, it is desirable for work on the next to begin: the whole process can be described as the electoral cycle' (in Norris, 2012: 10).

Despite the investment in electoral events and electoral support, there is limited discussion in the literature on specific approaches to measuring the performance of electoral events. In addition, there is broad consensus that monitoring and evaluation remains the most neglected and underdeveloped component of electoral support programmes. Given these resource limitations and the time-frame for this helpdesk report, this report discusses electoral performance and electoral support broadly, in some cases drawing on literature on democracy assistance. It has not been possible to address individual components of electoral events and electoral support, or to provide any comprehensive discussion on various approaches and methods of evaluation of electoral performance and support more generally.

This report is divided into three main parts. The first part looks at 'Approaches to measuring the performance of electoral events', drawing on:

- social surveys;
- expert indices and measures;
- public international law measures;
- Elkit and Reynolds framework;
- OAS index of democratic elections.

The second part explores 'Approaches to donor evaluation of electoral support', briefly discussing:

- logical framework approach;
- country impact studies;
- participatory evaluation approach;
- mixed approach;
- social surveys;
- programme theory evaluation.

The last part of this report provides a range of lists/examples of indicators for measuring electoral events and evaluating donor support. Similar indicators are often applied for the two tasks. These indicators have been drawn from scholarly literature, donor handbooks and guides, and specific donor logframes and project reports.

2. Approaches to measuring the performance of electoral events

While it is possible to find lists of indicators used to measure the performance of electoral events (often also used to evaluate donor support to electoral events) (see Section 4), there is limited discussion in the literature concerning specific approaches to measuring their performance.

Elkit and Reynolds (2005) state that one of the key questions when trying to gauge the freeness and fairness of an election is where to draw the boundary when it comes to deciding what issues are

relevant. Norris (2012: 12) provides specific standards for measures of electoral integrity and malpractice¹:

- They should be '*conceptually valid*', meaning that the empirical data and aggregate measures relate logically and consistently to the overarching notion which is being operationalized.
- *Transparent* methods should be used for gathering data and then constructing summary indices, so that evidence can be subject to scrutiny and replication tests by independent scholars or observers, using consistent scientific methods and standard techniques.
- Measures should also be universally *generalizable*, rather than idiosyncratic, so that they can be applied to monitor elections held in diverse global cultural regions, under different types of regimes, and during alternative time-periods.
- To have any practical impact, indices of electoral integrity should ideally also be *politically legitimate*, meaning that they are regarded as authoritative and usable by the international community and domestic stakeholders.
- They also need to be measured with sufficient precision to allow analysts to identify the source and gravity of any violations of electoral integrity, and thus determine suitable remedies, rather than being so abstract and general that they prove too blunt for accurate diagnosis'.

In terms of selecting specific indicators, Queiró (2007) outlines that they should: be relevant, representative and able to be drawn from available data sources; reflect the practices of key donors; and allow for aggregation and the calculation of values. He believes that there is a need in the area of democratic governance for more indicators and for systematic, quantified data.

The following are some specific approaches to measuring the performance of electoral events discussed in the literature.

I. Social Surveys

Public opinion surveys, such as Gallop polls, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) national surveys and World Value Surveys, have been used to gauge various aspects of the quality of elections. Survey respondents are asked about their perceptions of violations of electoral integrity and their broader attitudes towards political institutions and democratic institutions, such as trust in electoral authorities and confidence in the responsiveness of elected officials. Respondents are generally asked about their perceptions, rather than their direct experience – which respondents may be reluctant to acknowledge. For example, the Gallop World Poll 2012 asked: '*In [country], do you have confidence in each of the following, or not? How about...Honesty of elections?*' Yes/No'. The World Value Survey asked respondents the following questions: '*In your view, how often do the following things occur in this country's elections?*' Respondents are asked to respond using a 4 point scale ranging from 'very often' to 'not at all often':

- votes are counted fairly;
- opposition candidates are prevented from running;

¹ **Electoral integrity** is defined as 'shared international principles, values and standards of democratic elections which apply universally to all countries and which should be reflected at all stages during the electoral cycle, including the pre-electoral period, the campaign, polling day and its aftermath. Violations of electoral integrity, by contrast, constitute **electoral malpractices**' (e.g. illegal acts on polling-day, vote tabulation fraud or ballot stuffing) (Norris, 2012: 2).

- TV news favours the governing party;
- voters are bribed;
- journalists provide fair coverage of elections;
- election officials are fair;
- rich people buy elections;
- voters are threatened with violence at the polls;
- voters are offered a genuine choice in the elections (Norris, 2012).

Norris (2012) provides guidance on the formulation of survey questions: Items selected for surveys should be designed to reflect different stages in the electoral cycle rather than focusing solely on problems occurring on polling day. They should also reflect widely accepted international conventions, principles and standards (e.g. the requirement that votes should be fairly tabulated; that voters should not experience intimidation or violence at the polling station). Questions should not address areas where international agreement is absent (e.g. whether there should be limits on campaign spending or contributions).

Advantages of mass surveys include the following.

- **Disaggregation:** Representative surveys allow evaluations to be disaggregated demographically in order to analyse variations among groups in perceptions of the quality of elections.
- **Legitimacy:** Social surveys rely on the perceived concerns or actual experience of elections among a representative sample of the public living within the actual country. They may thus be considered as more legitimate than evaluations conducted by external experts, such as international observers (Norris, 2012).

Disadvantages of mass surveys include the following.

- **Self-censorship:** The meaningfulness and reliability of responses may be questionable when surveys are conducted in autocracies with a widespread absence of freedom of information and expression. In such cases, respondents may be wary of voicing open criticism against the government and political processes.
- **Learning curve:** Public perceptions of electoral integrity can be expected to be learnt over time. People living in countries with little or no prior experience of democratic contests or access to information about elections in other countries may lack the necessary cues to frame their expectations and evaluations (Norris, 2012).

II. Expert indices and measures

In order to address some of the limitations of social surveys, it is beneficial to compare the results of public perception surveys with expert evaluations. These include the following.

(i.) *Index of Electoral Malpractice:* This dataset, developed by Sarah Birch, classifies elections in 61 states from 1997 to 2007. The Index seeks to cover all stages of the electoral cycle, including processes of voter registration, vote counting and media. Electoral malpractice is measured using 14 separate items, coding information about each election contained in electoral observer mission reports on five point scales. Scores in each election are then aggregated, with equal weighting given to each item, to construct the overall summary Index of Electoral Malpractice. While observer mission

reports can provide a rich source of information, Norris (2012) cautions against the possibility of systemic bias from relying upon this single source.

(ii) *National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)*: This measure, developed by Susan Hyde and Nikolav Marinov, seeks to measure the degree of competitive elections, based on whether opposition is allowed; whether more than one party is legal; and whether there is a choice of candidates on the ballot. It relies on an extensive list of secondary sources, including academic election handbooks, online resources, news media and official reports. It thereby allows comprehensive analysis of countries worldwide. By only measuring electoral competition, however, the measure excludes many important conditions that international standards seek to monitor (see Norris, 2012).

(iii) *Quality of Elections Data (QED)*: The QED, developed by Judith Kelley, draws on US State Department official reports, comparing elections from 1978 to 2004. The dataset summarises the overall election quality of any electoral contest using an ordinal scale, as well as the quality of the legal framework, campaign environment, electoral administrative capacity, election violence and polling day fraud. Given that this index is based on US State Department reports, it can be expected to be influenced by American foreign policy priorities, rather than independent or scholarly concerns, which can undermine the legitimacy of the resource (see Norris, 2012).

(iv) *Freedom House's classification of electoral democracies*: Freedom house rates countries worldwide on an annual basis using a standard instrument with evaluations gathered from expert assessments. Questions on the electoral process are: is the head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections; are the national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections; and are the electoral laws and framework fair? (see Norris, 2012).

III. Public international law measures

Public international law (PIL) provides a framework for democratic election standards that is based on obligations in international and regional treaties and instruments (e.g. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) to which state parties have already voluntarily committed, as well as on international customary law. Such obligations provide the basis for identifying election standards against which to assess various aspects of the electoral processes. Observers can report systematically on the degree to which a state has met its international obligations (see Figures 1 and 2). Figure 1 provides an indication of whether components of the electoral process satisfy universal standards/obligations. Figure 2 uses the example of universal suffrage in the context of voting operations, shows the standard/obligation, as well as several dimensions or measures for the obligation, plus various indicator questions and the possible data sources.

While PIL provides much guidance about state's obligations and the rights and responsibilities of those within its jurisdiction, it does not address all issues in the electoral process (e.g. campaign finance issues). There are also questions related to the weighting and priority that should be given to various constituent parts in order to arrive at an overall assessment. Measures should include both qualitative and quantitative analysis of each constituent part of the election (Roberts and Carroll, 2010).

Key:
 ✓ = obligation that is relevant to specific constituent parts

	Legal Framework	Electoral System and Boundary Delim	Election Management	Voter Education	Voter Registration	Parties, Candidates and Campaigns	Voting Operations	Vote Counting	The Media	Electoral Dispute Resolution
Expression of the Will of the Electors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Genuine Elections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Periodic Elections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Universal Suffrage	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Equal Suffrage	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Secret Ballot	✓			✓			✓	✓		
Rule of Law	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
State must take necessary steps	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Right to Vote	✓			✓	✓		✓			
Right to be Elected	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		
Right to Participate in Public Affairs	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Equality/Absence of Discrimination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Freedom of Opinion and Expression	✓			✓		✓			✓	
Access to Information	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prevention of Corruption	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Freedom of Assembly	✓			✓		✓	✓			
Freedom of Association	✓			✓		✓				
Freedom of Movement	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Right to an Effective Remedy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Right to a fair and public hearing	✓		✓	✓						✓
Right to Security of the Person	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Table 1. Constituent parts and their relevant international obligations.

Source: Roberts and Carroll, 2010, 428

Standard (based on PIL obligations)	Measure	Indicator/checklist question	Data source
1. Universal suffrage requires that the broadest reasonable pool of voters be guaranteed participatory rights	1. State steps to promote participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were any limitations placed on people trying to vote? • Did the state take steps to prevent third parties from inhibiting voting? • On what basis was voting limited? • Were particular groups or supporters of a particular party prevented from voting? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is so, who and why? 	Long and short-term observers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with parties, voters, election authority • Direct observation
2. Eligible voters should not be inhibited from participating in the electoral process	2. Eligible voters participate freely in the electoral process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were there procedures that inhibited voters from participating, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited voting hours? ○ Inconveniently placed polling stations? ○ Literacy exams? ○ Burdensome documentation requirements? ○ Fees? 	Long and short-term observers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal analysis • Direct observation

Table 2. Universal suffrage in the context of voting operations

Source: Roberts and Carroll, 2010, 430

IV. The Elkit and Reynolds Framework

Elkit and Reynolds (2005) developed a framework to gauge the freeness and fairness of an election. Their framework covers issues that go beyond polling day and the vote count (e.g. access to public media and boundary delimitation) but excludes the very broad determinants of political competition that speak more indirectly to elections and voting (e.g. party funding and candidate selection). It does not seek to assess the inherent fairness of an electoral system or regulation but rather to assess whether the rules, as written, are applied fairly. This approach may be criticised as some rules may be quite undemocratic.

The model incorporates 11 steps ranging from the initial legal framework to the closing post-election procedures, including areas such as districting, voter education, registration, the regulation and design of the ballot, polling and counting, along with some broader areas such as campaign regulation, complaints procedures and the implementation of election results. Each step includes 3-10 questions that act as indicators, the answers to which will gauge the quality of election administration and conduct for that step. The framework allows for within, as well as cross-regional and over time comparisons of election quality.

* For an overview of framework indicators, see 'Elkit and Reynolds: Election Assessment Steps and Performance Indicators' in Section 4 of this report.

V. The OAS Index of Democratic Elections

The OAS supplements its election day questionnaires carried out by election observers with the collection of information about a wide range of indicators that tap into all aspects of the concept of democratic elections.

The Index of Democratic Elections relies on four conceptual attributes: Inclusive Elections, Clean Elections, Competitive Elections, and Elective Public Offices. The Index relies on a process of expert coding. The relevant components and subcomponents of the four conceptual attributes are assigned values based on measurement scales used in coding exercises. This transforms various sorts of information into quantitative data. Munck (2009: 103-104) outlines that coding decisions should be made in a consistent yet flexible manner, ensuring that standards are applied universally while taking into consideration local contexts. 'In contrast to coding, which consists of the initial transformation of information into quantitative data, the aggregation of data – the reduction of the multiple pieces of quantitative data produced through coding into a smaller number of pieces of quantitative data – is a mechanical process that can be easily computerized'. The Index involves the aggregation of the four conceptual attributes. All four attributes are considered necessary; meaning that poor performance on one attribute cannot be compensated or made up for by strong performance on another attribute. The index does not seek to provide a total measure, in that it does not tap into all politically relevant aspects of the electoral process. As such, the value of the index should be carefully considered, along with other information, particularly of a qualitative nature (Munck, 2009).

* For an overview of electoral indicators that fall under the Index's conceptual attributes, see Section 4 of this report.

3. Approaches to donor evaluation of electoral support

A survey of the literature demonstrates that monitoring and evaluation remains the most neglected component of electoral assistance programmes (McDevitt, 2008). The European Commission (EC 2006) reports that a common feature of many electoral assistance projects is the limited, or in some cases complete lack of, emphasis on the inclusion of adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. A recent evaluation of UK Department for International Development's (DFID) electoral support through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-managed projects found that monitoring and evaluation in this area is an underdeveloped field. There was little evidence of the use of formal impact evaluation in electoral assistance (ICAI, 2012).

While there is a broad consensus about inadequate evaluation in the field of electoral support and democratic assistance more generally, there is debate about appropriate approaches for evaluation. Thomas Carothers represents 'a mainstream school of thought that that accepts the inherent subjectivity of political change that is difficult to measure objectively in a causal attribution framework. In this view, there is no substitute for in-depth, qualitative analysis that confronts the complexities of a recipient country's political situation. The remedy is to do contextual-rich qualitative research that places the citizens at the centre of evaluation. By contrast, the [Centre for Global Development (CGD)] Evaluation Gap Working Group reasserts the primacy of experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation as the most reliable designs for determining the net impact of a program. CDG's remedy to the knowledge gap and evaluation deficit is to mobilize significant investments in longer-term, comparison-group impact evaluations on priority questions established in international collaboration with key stakeholders' (Wong, 2008: 3).

Impact evaluation in the political aid field generally suffers from seven methodological issues (Crawford, 2001, vi; Wong, 2008):

1. *'The significance of political context* as an important determinant on programme impact, and therefore the need for a background study analysing patterns of political change at the national level.
2. *The multiplicity of actors and factors in complex political change* and the difficulties of differentiating the contribution of a single actor. There are difficulties in distinguishing the contribution of internal and external actors, as well as in separating out one donor from others.
3. *The phenomenon of the 'missing middle'*, requiring at times an 'act of faith' to leap from micro level outputs to such macro level objectives as 'greater respect for human rights'.
4. *With and without scenarios and issues of counterfactuality*. Are external actors being credited for developments that would have happened anyway, without their assistance?
5. *External – internal relationships*. In partially attributing perceived (macro level) developments to the activities of external actors, have the interrelationships between internal and external actors been sufficiently addressed? External efforts may be dependent on local support. Alternatively, countervailing forces in the particular country may undermine external actions.
6. *Time-scale*. How possible is it to evaluate the impact of projects and programmes that have only recently been completed, given that democratic change is a long-term process?
7. *Unintended impact*. External intervention involves a dynamic, inter-active process and can have unintended side effects. Does the search for positive impact ignore the possibility of such negative impact?'

General approaches to M&E of electoral support

DFID/FCO have provided some general advice on M&E in their 'How to note on electoral assistance'. The note emphasises that sufficient resources should be allocated to the design and implementation of a sound M&E process in electoral support programmes. They also advocate that:

- 'Monitoring should as far as possible be done by or *in conjunction with the [Electoral Management Body (EMB)]*, and an early assessment should be made of any capacity building requirements.
- *Involving stakeholders*, in particular civil society, in the monitoring of activities like voter registration or boundary delimitation can help build legitimacy and transparency.
- Assessment of programme success should cover not just the successful conduct of a particular election but also its *contribution to wider democratisation goals*.
- A *baseline* against which progress can be measured as objectively as possible is vital for ongoing monitoring and the post-programme evaluation.
- *Quantifiable indicators* are important but need to be *selected and analysed with care* as they can be misleading. For example, the number of spoiled ballots may be an indicator of voter education, but may also be influenced by the quality of ballot design or the level of assistance available in voting stations. An increase in electoral complaints may indicate improved knowledge of the complaints procedures or a deterioration in electoral standards.
- A *balance of quantitative and qualitative indicators* is most likely to provide a robust basis for objectively measuring the success of the programme. Surveys are a particularly useful tool, measuring both perceptions and objective data such as levels of participation, knowledge and

awareness. Reports from election observation missions also provide useful qualitative information.

- Quantitative indicators should as far as possible be *disaggregated* by gender, region and other social groupings to identify any patterns of discrimination or exclusion' (DFID/FCO, 2010: 20-21).

A UNDP 'Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide' also provides some general tips on monitoring, evaluation and audit:

- 'Set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism before project implementation. *Define realistic indicators* that can easily be measured objectively. Maintain records of monitoring meetings and decisions made during them.
- Be aware that monitoring of the project outputs and progress towards outcomes, and reporting corporately on them, is the responsibility of the UNDP Country Office. At the same time, UNDP should be encouraging EMBs to evaluate their own processes critically and constantly.
- Ensure that the *budget for monitoring and evaluation is adequate* at the design stage of the project.
- *Define the scope of the project evaluation within the project document*, which should state the goals or objectives of the evaluation. Determine what capacities should have been developed as well as what capacities were in fact developed (and how).
- Monitor the functionality of partnerships and information sharing networks.
- Identify whether innovative methodologies were used and were successful.
- *Monitor results*. For example, the important thing is not the number of voter education workshops that are held, but rather what attendees of the workshop learned about voting and how that knowledge was or was not translated into action.
- *Identify the level of participation among stakeholders*, including donors. It is usually preferable for UNDP to assist the EMB; ideally, the EMB should be driving the monitoring and evaluation process, not just participating in it.
- *Share and examine monitoring data* with donors and Country Office management.
- Assess which particular interventions or results *contributed to strengthen democratic governance*, sustainable development and human rights
- Assess the *contribution of this project to any broader international programme* of electoral assistance activities.
- Ensure that once a project is completed, *lessons learned are passed along* to the stakeholders that will continue to be involved in the strengthening of the electoral process' (UNDP, cited in McDevitt, 2008).

Specific approaches to M&E of electoral support

The following is a brief overview of some of the key specific approaches to evaluation of democracy assistance, including electoral support, noted in the literature.

I. Logical framework approach

The logical framework approach (LFA) has been commonly relied upon by donors to conduct monitoring and evaluation. The purpose of the LFA is to specify goals, purpose, outputs and activities in ways that enable results to be identified at every level. It is based on traditional, scientific inquiry

and relies mainly on quantitative methods (Burnell, 2007; DFID, 2001). It is geared towards project evaluation and is most appropriate where clear outputs can be achieved within a specific time span and where quantitative data is more readily available. It is thus argued by some that it is an inappropriate approach for evaluation of wider programme goals, particularly in areas concerning democracy and governance. Such areas of programming involve political analysis and the reform of institutional relationships and culture, making time frames difficult to predict and change difficult to measure (see Crawford and Danida, cited in Wong, 2008). The LFA is oriented toward tracking progress to pre-established objectives in a linear fashion. Democratisation, however, is not a linear process of positive and gradual change and follows instead a non-linear pattern with progressions and regressions. As such, the LFA is unlikely to be able to capture the dynamic political context in which democracy assistance activities take place (Crawford, 2001).

Another difficulty with adopting the LFA to evaluate electoral and democracy assistance involves issues of attribution. The approach is unable to eliminate the influence of other factors. As such, LFA evaluations cannot demonstrate with any degree of certainty that the changes observed would not have occurred in the absence of the particular donor intervention (Burnell, 2007; Wong, 2008).

II. Country impact studies

Donors have engaged in broader national impact evaluations of democracy assistance. Crawford's review of such studies is positive; however, they are critiqued in that they remain donor-led enquiries for donor use (cited in Wong, 2008).

USAID's approach to country impact studies involves three stages of research:

- (i) baseline political context desk study;
- (ii) desk account of USAID programmes with initial identification of impacts from documents;
- (iii) field work with key interviews to identify and trace impacts with 'plausible connections' to higher levels of political change, using the 'process tracing' method similar to aspects of the logical framework approach (Wong, 2008).

In 2005, USAID commissioned an extensive cross-country analysis of its democracy assistance. The final study, 'Effects of US Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building: Results of a Cross-National Quantitative Study' (Finkel et al. 2006), is a comparative analysis that employs complex growth models. It examines the relationship of USAID democracy assistance to changes in national-level indicators for freedom and democracy from the Freedom House and Polity data sets, controlling for alternative explanations. By exploring alternative explanations in a systematic way, the study overcame a key weakness of prior country case studies, which failed to address problems with attribution (Sarles, 2007).

III. Participatory evaluation approach

Under such an approach, national stakeholders control the evaluation process and provide the key input of local knowledge and analysis. It involves a shift from participants as objects to subjects of the evaluation process. This allows for greater ownership of assistance programming. In this respect, evaluation itself is seen as a democratic tool in creating citizen action (Wong, 2008; DFID, 2001).

Burnell (2007) highlights that participatory evaluation is talked about more than practiced, even among organisations that support such an approach, such as Sida and International IDEA. There are several challenges associated with such an approach (see Wong, 2008; Burnell, 2007):

- It can be difficult to involve local researchers in evaluations.
- It can be seen as interfering with the objectivity and detachment of independent evaluation.

IV. Mixed approach

Wong (2008) highlights that more sophisticated evaluations adopt an integrated methodology that combines the quantitative performance orientation of the LFA with a qualitative participatory approach. This can allow for a demonstration of linkages between inputs, activities and outcomes through the logframe; with additional information on intended and unintended effects and impacts through a participatory approach.

V. Social surveys

Survey research has emerged as a rigorous evaluation tool for measuring the impact of democracy programmes. USAID has adopted such an approach in its programmes. Relying on democracy surveys, it seeks to: measure attitudes, perceptions and behavioural characteristics before beginning a programme; monitor change during the life of the project; and evaluate the final effects at the end. These attitudes, perceptions and behavioural attributes of citizens help to define levels of democracy and identify specific changes that can be attributed to USAID programme interventions. Specific clusters of questions and indices developed from the surveys are used to monitor and evaluate programmes. Such public surveys can be beneficial not only for evaluation but also as a medium for mobilising support and discussion around democratic reforms (Sarles, 2007).

VI. Programme theory evaluation

This approach, adopted by Sida, focuses not on results but on the underlying assumptions and rationales for programmes in question. It does not aspire to capture the crucial issue of impact. Rather, it seeks to reveal unrealistic assumptions and unclear theoretical connections. It differs further from the logical framework approach in that while the LFA is focused on different levels of goals, in programme theory evaluation the focus is on the mechanisms and actions involved in a project. This allows for aggregation and evaluation of project logics across sets of projects, rather than consideration solely of an individual project.

Programme theory evaluation can be seen as a tool for learning. It can be adopted at any time during the project cycle, whereas impact evaluations can only be undertaken after the completion of a programme. Similar to participatory approaches, such programme theory evaluation involves intended beneficiaries and local stakeholders in the process. This can open the way for more participatory techniques and stakeholder involvement (Uggla, 2007).

There are challenges to the implementation of programme theory evaluation:

- In many cases, there is no explicit theory that can be distilled from programme documents. As such, evaluators have to first attempt to piece together a theory to test.
- Uncertainty over how to judge and evaluate programme theories; determining criteria for success.
- Issues related to attribution (Uggla, 2007).

4. Indicators for measuring electoral events and evaluating donor support

The following are various lists/examples of indicators adopted by scholars and donors to measure the performance of electoral events and to evaluate donor support to electoral interventions. Similar indicators are often applied for the two tasks.

I. Elkit and Reynolds: Election Assessment Steps and Performance Indicators

Step	Performance indicators	How to measure
1. Legal framework	1.1. Is a consolidated legal foundation easily available? 1.2. Is a comprehensive electoral timetable available? 1.3. Were the elections held without extra-legislative delay? 1.4. Can the electoral legislation be implemented? 1.5. Is the electoral framework broadly perceived to be legitimate?	Expert panel assessments
2. Electoral management	2.1. What is the perceived degree of legitimacy/acceptance of the EMB by parties and voters? 2.2. What is the perceived degree of the EMB's impartiality? 2.3. What is the perceived quality of the EMB's delivery of service in these elections? 2.4. What is the perceived degree of the EMB's transparency?	Polling evidence for perceptions Expert panel for de jure and de facto analysis of EMB impartiality Survey of stakeholders for EMB quality and transparency
3. Constituency and polling district demarcation	3.1. Is the constituency structure reasonable and broadly accepted? 3.2. Is information about constituencies and lower level districts (demarcation, sizes, seats) easily available? 3.3. Are fair and effective systems for boundary limitation and seat allocation in place used according to the rules?	Expert panel Stakeholder surveys
4. Voter education	4.1. What percentage of voters in need of voter education is exposed to voter education which	Surveys Other data from register,

	<p>facilitates their effective participation?</p> <p>4.2. Have 'at risk' groups been recognized and their identified needs addressed?</p> <p>4.3. What percentage of ballots cast is valid?</p> <p>4.4. In terms of voting age population, what percentage of those eligible to vote for the first time in this election actually voted?</p>	polling, and election results
5. Voter registration	<p>5.1. What proportion of the voting age population is registered to vote?</p> <p>5.2. Is the register free from serious bias based on gender, age, ethnic or religious affiliation, or region?</p> <p>5.3. Are qualified people able to be registered with a minimum of inconvenience?</p> <p>5.4. Are there appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that the information in the register is accurate?</p> <p>5.5. Are there appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that the public can have confidence in the register?</p> <p>5.6. Are the criteria for registration fair and reasonable and compliant with accepted international standards?</p>	Data from register Expert panel analysis
6. Access to and design of ballot paper. Party and candidate nomination and registration	<p>6.1. Are parties allowed, and can parties and candidates who fulfil the requirements of registration be registered without bias?</p> <p>6.2. Are independent candidates allowed and registered if they fulfil legal requirements?</p> <p>6.3. Is the method of voting or the design of the ballot paper non-discriminatory?</p>	Expert panel assessments nomination and registration
7. Campaign regulation	<p>7.1. If there is a system to provide access to state-owned media, is it implemented equitably?</p> <p>7.2. If a system for allocation of public funds to political parties is in place, it is implemented?</p> <p>7.3. Is there an independent mechanism for identifying bias in the state media and is identified bias subject to swift correction?</p> <p>7.4. Are state resources by and large used properly by the political parties and candidates?</p>	Expert panel assessments
8. Polling	<p>8.1. What is turnout as a percentage of total registration?</p> <p>8.2. What is turnout as a percentage of the voting age population?</p> <p>8.3. Is there a low level of serious election related violence?</p> <p>8.4. In how many polling stations did polling happen according to rules and regulations?</p> <p>8.5. Are there systems in place to preclude and/or</p>	Data from election results and observer reports Expert panel assessments based on data

	<p>rectify fraudulent voting?</p> <p>8.6. Is polling accessible, secure, and secret?</p> <p>8.7. If there is substantial desire for election observation, is the desire satisfied?</p> <p>8.8. If there is substantial desire for political party election observation, is the desire satisfied?</p> <p>8.9. Are there systems in place to preclude vote buying?</p> <p>8.10. Is the level of intimidation so that voters can express their free will?</p>	
9. Counting and tabulating the vote	<p>9.1. Is the count conducted with integrity and accuracy?</p> <p>9.2. Is the tabulation transparent and an accurate reflection of the polling booth count?</p> <p>9.3. Are results easily available to interested members of the general public?</p> <p>9.4. Does counting take place with no undue delay?</p> <p>9.5. Are parties and candidates allowed to observe the count?</p>	Expert panel assessments based on data from observer reports
10. Resolving election related complaints. Verification of final result and certification	<p>10.1. Are serious complaints accepted for adjudication?</p> <p>10.2. Is there an appropriate dispute resolution mechanism which operates in an impartial and non partisan manner?</p> <p>10.3. Are court disputes settled without undue delay?</p> <p>10.4. Do election observation organizations confirm that the elections were without serious problems?</p> <p>10.5. If legislation prescribes a timeframe for the constitution of parliament, is this timeframe met?</p> <p>10.6. Is a person with a reasonable case able to pursue their case without unreasonable personal or financial risk?</p> <p>10.7. Are seats taken only by those persons properly elected?</p>	<p>Expert panel assessments</p> <p>Reports</p> <p>Legislation</p> <p>Expert panel assessments</p>
11. Post-election procedures	<p>11.1. Are properly documented election statistics easily available without serious delay?</p> <p>11.2. Are EMBs audited and the results made publicly available?</p> <p>11.3. Is there capacity for election review?</p>	Expert panel assessments

Source: Elkit and Reynolds, 2005, 152-154

II. USAID – Handbook of Democracy and Governance Indicators: Elections and Political Processes

Objective: More Genuine and Competitive Political Processes

Intermediate Results	(Sub) Intermediate Results
2.2.1 Impartial electoral framework	2.2.1.1. Substantive, inclusive debate on new electoral laws and/or changes to laws and regulations
2.2.2. Credible electoral administration	2.2.2.1. Impartial and transparent electoral authority 2.2.2.2. Effective administration of the electoral process
2.2.3. An informed and active citizenry	2.2.3.1. Increased understanding of the political system among targeted citizens 2.2.3.2. Increased consumption of political information among targeted citizens 2.2.3.3. Increased political participation among targeted citizens
2.2.4. Effective oversight of electoral processes	2.2.4.1. Effective electoral process monitoring 2.2.4.2. Media fulfills role as watchdog in the electoral process
2.2.5. Representative and competitive multiparty system	2.2.5.1. Political parties have institutional structures which reflect internal democratic procedures, that are judged to be transparent, inclusive, and accountable and that are accepted by the party leaders 2.2.5.2. Political parties have established functioning political party administrative structures that advance institutional stability in the long-term 2.2.5.3. Increased institutional capacity of each political party to identify, represent, and expand its defined constituency in the electorate
2.2.6. Inclusion of women and disadvantaged groups	2.2.6.1. Laws pertaining to elections and political processes provide for non-discrimination against women and disadvantaged groups 2.2.6.2. Women's and disadvantaged groups' legal rights are protected through effective enforcement of non-discriminatory laws pertaining to electoral and political processes 2.2.6.3. Increased participation by targeted women and disadvantaged groups on election day 2.2.6.4. Electoral administration is free from bias, impartial in its oversight, and devoid of discrimination against women and disadvantaged groups 2.2.6.5. Effective voter education provided to facilitate women's and disadvantaged groups' understanding of and ability for political participation 2.2.6.6. Political parties are supportive of the participation of women and disadvantaged groups in political processes

2.2.7. Effective transfer of political power	<p>2.2.7.1. Procedures for the transfer of power are established and followed</p> <p>2.2.7.2. Newly installed officials are prepared to fulfil their responsibilities</p> <p>2.2.7.3. Agencies of government, including military and security and opposition groups, accept the authority of the newly installed officials</p> <p>2.2.7.4. The public recognizes the legitimacy of the process by which new officials are chosen</p>
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Source: USAID, 1998, 59-64

The following are an example of the specific indicators that fall under a couple of the Intermediate Results listed above.

Intermediate Result 2.2.1: Impartial Electoral Framework

Indicator	Definition and Unit of Measurement	Relevance of Indicator	Data Collection Methods/Approx. Costs	Target Setting/Trendline Interpretation Issues
Degree to which electoral law/rules conform with international standards	International standards: a) internal consistency and clarity; b) comprehensiveness; c) degree to which transparency is required; and d) degree of avenue of redress available to electorate	There is a broad consensus on international standards for electoral/political legal framework	Interviews with domestic and international monitors/panel of experts. Cost: Collateral with mission activities/moderate (monitoring)	Should demonstrate progress toward conformity with international standards in successive election cycles

Intermediate Result 2.2.2: Credible Electoral Administration

Indicator	Definition and Unit of Measurement	Relevance of Indicator	Data Collection Methods/Approx. Costs	Target Setting/Trendline Interpretation Issues
Degree to which significant political actors (parties and candidates) accept the legitimacy of the electoral authority as manager and arbiter of the electoral process	Definition: Significant parties: those with the ability to command five per cent of the national vote and/or with the ability to disrupt the peace with violent demonstrations or riots. Unit of	Acceptance of legitimacy of electoral authority by key political actors is crucial to the credibility of election administration	Interviews with party leaders-leaders' assessments of election administration. Cost: Low/moderate (access to party leaders)	Increasing acceptance of legitimacy of electoral authority

	measurement: A matrix utilizing low to high significance and low to high acceptance			
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Source: USAID, 1998, 66, 71

* For a full list of all of the indicators for the various results, see pp. 66-112 of USAID (1998).

III. DFID Indicators for evaluating electoral support

DFID/FCO how to note on electoral assistance: monitoring and evaluating electoral support

	Possible indicators
Political awareness and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of citizens trained on elections, rights and responsibilities ● % of registered voters who vote ● % satisfaction with the conduct of the election
Political inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of women/minority members represented in parliament ● % of women/minority candidates ● % of women/minority members of executive committees of political parties ● # of women/minorities reached by voter education ● % of minorities surveyed expressing confidence in their ability to participate freely in the election
Electoral process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of electoral appeals concluded by finding against the EMB ● registered voters as a % of eligible voters (based on census data) ● # of observers trained ● # of polling staff trained ● % of citizens surveyed who feel able to cast their vote without pressure
Political violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● # of incidents of political violence reported in the national media in the pre-election period, on election day and post-election; ● % of citizens surveyed who express confidence in capacity of police to prevent electoral violence
Political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● % of registered political parties with approved manifestos, codes of conduct and audited accounts ● % of registered political parties with regulations on internal political governance that are observed by the party leadership ● % of registered political parties producing annual plans and budgets, and reporting on sources of finance ● % of surveyed citizens able to identify policy differences among parties

Source: DFID/FCO, 2010, 21

DFID note on specific indicators

Number of people who vote in elections supported by DFID Number of countries supported by DFID in freer & fairer elections

Type of Indicator	Technical Definition / Methodological summary	Rationale	Formula / Data calculation	Additional comments
Cumulative (number of unique visits to the polling booth)	This indicator refers to the total number of people who vote in elections related to national parliament, presidential, specific referendums or local elections in DFID partner countries	This indicator gives a sense of scale of reach of DFID's electoral support. Of course there is no measure of the quality of the support or outcome	Aggregation of all voters across all constituencies (or councils etc.)	This indicator is not – and cannot be - fully attributable to DFID but gives a sense of impact of one area of governance support activity undertaken by DFID

Source: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/ind-meth-note-elections.pdf>

DFID logical framework – Kenya

Impact, Outcomes and Outputs	Indicators
Impact: National elections in 2012 are perceived as free, fair and largely free of political violence	Indicator 1: Levels of political violence and displacement in the post and pre-election period 2012 greatly reduced Indicator 2: Independent monitoring reports election as largely free and fair
Outcome: Election management, conflict and security institutions deliver transparent, inclusive elections, manage most disputes peacefully and reduce the scale should violence occur	Indicator 1: Inclusive voter registration and vote Indicator 2: Public order management and deaths from election related violence perpetrated by police Indicator 3: High public confidence in 1. Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to deliver free, fair elections and 2. police to manage election related conflict
Output 1: IEBC delivers more: accurate register, equitable boundaries and credible vote recording, transmission and tallying process.	Indicator 1.1: Progress of ballot, transmission and tallying systems against action plan Indicator 1.2: Number on voters register. % of errors on register. Indicator 1.3: New boundaries demarcated that provide greater equity by constituency population
Output 2: Police independently monitored and better able to manage election related conflict and violence	Indicator 2.1: Establishment of professional standards unit and Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA). % of election related referrals resolved

	<p>Indicator 2.2: Level of collaboration between the police and IEBC in planning safe elections</p> <p>Indicator 2.3: Number of police leadership trained in command & control and public order management</p>
<p>Output 3: Enhanced early warning and early response capabilities of government and local communities to address potential violent conflict including monitoring of hate speech</p>	<p>Indicator 3.1: Ratio of "rapid response" initiatives coordinated by NSC; NCIC; UNDP and PeaceNet to major incidents reported to UWAINO</p> <p>Indicator 3.2: Conflict Management strategy developed and implemented by IEBC</p> <p>Indicator 3.3: % of population having heard hate speech in their area in previous 3 months</p>
<p>Output 4: Voter and civic education improves Kenyans understanding of the operation of the election and how to register as a voter. Education along with domestic observation reduces the risk of fraud and the impact of mis-information</p>	<p>Indicator 4.1: Percentage of registered voters reached through NCEP/Uraia civic education (gender disaggregated)</p> <p>Indicator 4.2: Number of: i. civic educators trained at county and constituency level; ii. radio programmes; radio infomercials, TV programmes and TV election infomercials</p> <p>Indicator 4.3: % Kenyans aware they would have to vote for County women's representative, governors and senators</p> <p>Indicator 4.4: Timing and accuracy of Parallel voter tabulation report</p>

Source: <http://projects.dfid.gov.uk/IATI/document/3355155>

IV. EC Indicators on electoral assistance

	Indicators
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of persons reached by voter/ civic education campaigns (with gender disaggregation) • % of electoral staff having benefited from capacity building actions • % of errors (omissions or incorrect information) in voter registry • % of complaints leading to timely, transparent and motivated decisions

Source: Queiró, 2007

V. UNDP Indicators for evaluating electoral support

Sudan support to elections and democratic processes project

Outputs	Indicators
1. Comprehensive civic and voter education programme developed and implemented	<p>Indicator 1: Number and distribution of quality civic and voter education activities throughout Sudan's 25 states, including rural areas, with participants disaggregated by gender</p> <p>Indicator 2: Knowledge-level of basic electoral and democratic processes following civic and voter education activities</p>

2. Media support and monitoring programme developed and implemented	<p>Target 1: Increased elections reporting in 25 states in Sudan with accurate media reporting on main electoral events</p> <p>Target 2: Volume and quality of reports on elections media coverage throughout Sudan in accordance with internationally accepted standards</p>
3. Programme to support domestic observation of the electoral process developed and implemented	<p>Indicator 1: Credible domestic observation of electoral process throughout 25 states of Sudan and in rural areas</p> <p>Indicator 2: Volume and quality of domestic observation reports on the planning processes for elections and the events of registration and polling day</p>
4. Programme of support to the National Elections Commission (NEC) developed and commenced	<p>Indicator: Elections planning and procedures in accordance to electoral law and internationally accepted norms</p>
5. Programme of support to the Political Parties Affairs Council (PPAC) developed and commenced	<p>Indicator: Monitor activities, including financial records, and resolving disputes of Sudanese political parties in accordance to the Political Parties Act and a code of conduct agreed upon by main parties</p>
6. Support to other stakeholders and the capacity strengthened of the judiciary, the police, women and youth to play their mandated roles in the democratic process	<p>Indicator 1: Training activities with “other stakeholders” of the judiciary, the police, women and youth throughout Sudan.</p> <p>Indicator 2: Level of knowledge by other stakeholders throughout Sudan for their elections-related role.</p>

Source: UNDP ‘Support to elections and democratic processes’ project document, 20-24

East Timor programme

Outcome	Indicators
1.1.8 Election management bodies have increased capacity to administer and oversee national and local elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral administration process occurs in accordance with the law • Quality of the voter register measured by the number of complaints lodged • Level of voter turnout and percentage of spoiled ballots • Percentage of political parties which accept electoral results • Periodicity of free, fair and efficiently administered national and local elections • No. of voter education campaigns addressed to women and vulnerable groups

Source: UNDAF Timor-Leste 2009-2013, M&E Framework, 61

VI. OAS Index of Democratic Elections

The following is a summary of electoral indicators relied upon in the OAS Index:

Aspects	Components
I. Inclusive Elections	1. Universal and equal suffrage 2. Conditions for the use of the right to vote i. Registration ii. Electoral roll iii. Polling station access iv. Vote casting
II. Clean Elections	3. Integrity of voter preferences 4. Faithful recording of voter preferences
III. Competitive Elections	5. Right to run for office 6. Basic guarantees for an electoral campaign i. Equal security ii. Equal opportunity iii. Right to a free press and to information iv. Freedom of association, assembly, expression, and movement
IV. Elective Public Offices	7. Regular elections for top national offices 8. Irreversibility of electoral results

Source: Munck, 2007, 24

* Pages 20-23 of the Munck report provide guidance for collecting information on the indicators. It specifies what information is relevant to each aspect of the concept of democratic elections, what are the relevant sources, and when the observation and collection of information regarding each aspect should take place.

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Additional resources:

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Suggested citation:

Haider, H. (2012). *Monitoring and evaluation of electoral support* (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report). Birmingham, UK: Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, University of Birmingham.

About Helpdesk research reports: This helpdesk report is based on 3 days of desk-based research. Helpdesk reports are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues, and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts are contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged