How to note

On Electoral Assistance

DFID Department for International Development

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Contents

1 Introduction

This *How To* Note provides guidance for UK country posts on when and how to support elections internationally. It is issued jointly by FCO and DFID, and covers both diplomatic engagement and development assistance. It sets out the main processes involved in planning and delivering electoral assistance, including the critical area of risk management. It also introduces some of the issues and policy choices that may arise around electoral assistance, and provides guidance on where to find more information on technical matters.

There is a clear international consensus on the importance of democracy and the electoral process. The vast majority of countries around the world are formally committed to respecting democratic principles, through international human rights instruments, membership of regional bodies and under their own constitutions. In practice, however, democracy depends on a complex web of norms and institutions that can take many years to develop. There are many ways we can support this process of democratic consolidation, including working with parliaments, judiciaries, accountability institutions and civil society. Electoral assistance is one of the options available.

This *How To* Note reflects a shift in UK and international practice concerning electoral support. In the past, the common practice was to mobilise short-term assistance for the conduct of particular elections, with little continuity and few sustainable results. We now recognise that, if we are serious about supporting democratic development, we need a long-term engagement throughout the development of the electoral system, grounded in careful analysis of the power dynamics and political constraints.

The UK has therefore adopted the Electoral Cycle Approach (ECA), now recognised as representing best practice internationally in electoral support. The ECA is both a diagnostic and a planning tool which helps us map out the different phases and dimensions of the electoral process. It can be used to plan a strategic, multi-annual engagement with the electoral system, linked to other forms of democracy support. Where our engagement is more limited, it can help us identify strategic issues on which to focus.

This *How To* Note is set out in three sections. The first section considers the question of why the UK should support elections. It looks at various opportunities and risks around elections, including the risk of violence. It then sets out a series of questions that country posts may consider when deciding on the nature and scale of UK assistance to the electoral process in a particular country.

The second section provides a guide to planning and managing support to the electoral process. Drawing on existing UK practice, it sets out common tools and approaches, organised into five phases:

    i)   define clear goals and objectives;
    ii)   identify and manage risks;
    iii)   agree support modalities;
    iv)   ensure value for money;
    v)   communicate effectively;
    vi)   election day and its aftermath.

The third section introduces some of the most common practical and policy choices that posts may encounter when delivering electoral assistance. It briefly summarises the issues involved, and provides guidance on where to go for more technical information. The topics covered include:

- the design of the electoral system;
- electoral management bodies;
- political party development and campaign financing;
- boundary delimitation;
- equality and inclusiveness;
- the role of the media;
- voter registration;
- political party and candidate registration;
- civic and voter awareness;
- electoral dispute resolution;
- election security;
- voting operations;
- results verification; and
- election monitoring.

> *"We reaffirm that democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural system and their full participation in all aspects of their lives. We also reaffirm that while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy, that it does not belong to any country or region, and reaffirm the necessity of due respect for sovereignty and the right of self-determination. We stress that democracy, development and respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing."*
>
> UN World Summit, Outcome Document, September 2005, para. 135

2 Why should the UK support elections?

2.1 Opportunity and risk in the electoral process

The UK is strongly committed to supporting democracy internationally. Democracy is the system of government that best meets the hopes and aspirations of people around the globe. It provides mechanisms for allocating political power and managing conflict that are essential for stable and peaceful societies. Over the long term, we believe it supports the emergence of accountable and responsive states, able to safeguard human rights and promote social and economic development.

Democracy is a home-grown product and cannot be imposed from the outside. International norms make it clear that each country must choose its own form of government, and the influence of the international community over those choices is generally limited. Most countries, however, have committed themselves to respecting democratic principles, through international human rights instruments, membership of regional bodies[1] or in their own constitutions. Many are engaged in a long process of strengthening the norms and institutions required to put those principles into effect. Together with our international partners, the UK stands ready to support that process of democratic consolidation.

There is a broad range of options that we can offer to help strengthen democracy. We can support democratic processes, including elections, political party development, constitution making, and strengthening local democracy through decentralisation and participatory development. We can support democratic institutions, including parliaments, judiciaries and accountability institutions. And we can support citizen engagement in public life, through civic education programmes and support to civil society organisations like NGOs, media, trade unions, faith groups and business associations.

> *"Democracy rests on foundations that have to be built over time: strong institutions, responsible and accountable government, a free press, the rule of law, equal rights for men and women, and other less tangible habits of mind and of participation, debate and association. Elections alone do not create a free and democratic society."*
>
> William Hague, Foreign Secretary, September 2010

Electoral support is one of the options on this menu. Although the electoral system is only one of many institutions required to make a functioning democracy, elections are a necessary part of the democratic process, and provide both opportunities and risks for democratisation. In many cases, elections help reinforce democratic values and strengthen democratic institutions[2]. But in weak institutional environments, elections can give rise to pressures and tensions that can undermine democracy and erupt into violence.

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[1] Key documents of the African Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Commonwealth of Nations all contain broad commitments to democratic principles.

[2] Econometric analysis from eighty developing countries shows that a higher frequency of elections (if they are free and fair) improves policy and governance (Chauvet and Collier 2009).

Starting in the early 1980s in Latin America and accelerating around the developing world after the end of the Cold War, a rapid spread of elections led people in many countries to hope that a decisive shift to democracy was underway. Today, however, there is widespread disillusionment with the results in many parts of the world. Many countries have adopted periodic elections without a strong democratic culture or a supportive institutional environment. The result has been a proliferation of hybrid political systems – some where election results are manipulated and serve merely to legitimise the regime; others where power is shuffled back and forth among entrenched political elites while doing little to advance democracy and development.

Where political power is located in informal institutions, elections are unlikely to produce fundamental shifts in power – although they can be characterised by bitter conflict for control of state resources. In conditions of poverty and inequality, especially where rent seeking and political patronage are entrenched, the electoral stakes can be extremely high. Election to public office offers livelihoods and privileges not just for the elected leaders, but also their clan, faction or ethnic group. This leads to a 'winner-takes-all' form of political competition, in which losing carries unacceptable costs for both government and opposition, and the incentives to resort to electoral fraud and violence are high.

On the other hand, regular fair elections can be part of an incremental process of democratic consolidation, even where the broader institutional context is deficient. Even imperfect elections can in some circumstances have a positive impact by obliging political leaders to account for their performance in government, creating opportunities for new parties and leaders to emerge, and providing openings for greater civic engagement in governance and public life.

> **Elections in imperfect conditions**
> In **Nigeria**, the electoral process demonstrates a range of shortcomings, undermining public confidence that the results fully reflect the will of the people. Yet political analysis suggests that in some circumstances even imperfect elections can play an important role. Nigerians see them as a symbol of civilian rule and preferable to military dictatorship. Moreover, unsatisfactory elections in 2007 have led to a strong public demand for improvements in 2011.
>
> Similarly, in **Pakistan**, despite shortcomings in the legislative framework for elections, local elections have given communities a means of holding their representatives to account and of legitimising a civilian led democratic government which is slowly gaining authority.

DFID's approach to building peaceful states and societies[3] includes supporting the emergence of inclusive political settlements. It stresses the importance of allowing different groups in society to participate in the political process on equal terms, to prevent exclusion from becoming a source of conflict and fragility. Electoral assistance can provide one means of advancing this goal.

Elections in post-conflict settings can be an important milestone, helping forge a new political settlement and bringing former warring parties within the constitutional process. In Sierra Leone, for example, a succession of reasonably free and fair elections since 2000 has helped consolidate the peace. But in conflict-prone settings, elections are also likely to be flash points. They create incentives for the

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[3]   DFID, "Building Peaceful States and Societies: A DFID Practice Paper", 2010.

contending parties to campaign on the basis of ethnic and other group identities in ways that can be highly divisive. As shown in Iraq in 2005 and Kenya in 2007, elections can create an atmosphere in which violence can escalate dramatically. The timing of post-conflict elections is therefore a critical choice (see box).

> ### *The timing of post-conflict elections*
> Elections are necessary in almost all post-conflict situations, but also lead to heightened risks of a return to instability.   Electoral timetables should be realistic and set with care, taking into account the risks and trade-offs involved. If there is any choice, it is usually best to delay elections for two or more years after a ceasefire, giving time for tensions to recede, the security situation to improve and political parties to form. As a general rule, the longer the interval, the better the prospects for democracy in the long run. However, delay may also be destabilising, if it creates a political vacuum or leaves in place an unelected transitional administration intent on lining its own pockets. Where a new constitution is to be adopted by referendum, it would be logical to defer the first elections until after the constitution is in place. However, this is a high-risk strategy, as failure to approve the new constitution could throw the rest of the transition off course.
>   Once an electoral timetable is established, delays should be avoided at all cost, as they may trigger conflict. This puts considerable pressure on the preparation process. In some instances, international organisations have taken over the conduct of the elections (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina and East Timor). In other cases, national EMBs have been left in the lead, but with intensive support from an international supervisory mission (e.g. Liberia, Iraq, DRC).
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> *FCO, "Post-Conflict Elections", 2010*

Yet despite the risks, elections do take place in most countries. They can provide an important stage in the process of democratic reform and they represent an opportunity for realising the rights of citizens[4]. In each case, we need to form a view on the opportunities and risks they present, and decide when and how the UK can make a positive contribution.

2.2 Deciding on UK support to elections

UK support to elections may involve different combinations of diplomatic, technical and financial support. The exact scale and composition of UK assistance will vary substantially, depending on the country context. In aid-dependent and post-conflict countries, the international donor community may be called upon to meet a large share of the cost of elections. In such cases, any UK support would be provided jointly with other international partners, and should form part of a broader, multi-annual approach to supporting the democratic process. In countries that are not dependent on external financial assistance, we may choose to make discrete investments from the development budget, the Conflict Pools or other UK funds to support particular election-related processes or activities. Alternatively, our role may be limited to using our diplomatic influence to reinforce democratic norms and manage tensions.

Given the diversity of circumstances that can arise, we cannot be too prescriptive about the appropriate UK support for elections – a judgement is always needed in each individual case. We can, however, set out some general questions to frame the decision.

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[4]   The right to vote through genuine periodic elections is contained in Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by 167 countries.

1. If there is a UK strategy for the country in question does it emphasise the electoral process and democratic development? Any major investment in electoral support needs to be linked to higher objectives in the country plan, such as building peaceful states and societies, strengthening democracy or improving conflict management.

2. Will the elections play an important part in the country's political development? Are they part of a post-conflict recovery or state-building process? Are they part of a credible process of democracy consolidation, creating opportunities for strengthening democratic norms and institutions?

3. Are there risks in the electoral process for the country in question that international support may be able to mitigate? Are there risks of fraud by the incumbent or opposition or high levels of administrative disorder during the election that may undermine public trust in the electoral process? Is there a risk of electoral violence, and escalation into wider conflict?

4. What are others doing? Almost all major electoral support programmes are provided jointly with international partners. Has a consensus emerged on the significance of the elections? Are there appropriate mechanisms in place to share the costs and the risks? Does UK influence in the country in question depend upon it contributing to a broader international effort?

5. Are basic conditions in place for a credible election? The UK must maintain a clear position regarding fair electoral processes, based on agreed international standards. We will necessarily engage with imperfect electoral processes, as this is precisely where our support is needed. However, if the electoral system is so skewed in favour of the incumbent that no real competition is possible, we would not engage directly with the electoral authorities, to avoid condoning electoral fraud or legitimising authoritarian practices. In such cases we might work with civil society actors trying to improve the electoral process and uphold basic democratic principles, especially human rights, the rule of law and freedom of expression.[5]

   Factors suggesting we should not provide direct support for the conduct of elections would include:

   - opposition leaders or parties barred from participation;
   - the franchise removed from sections of the population;
   - opposition parties denied freedom of speech, assembly and organisation, or prevented from accessing the media; and
   - insurmountable practical impediments, such as the lack of a settled constitutional and legal framework or an independent election management body.

   In authoritarian or semi-authoritarian states, or even in one-party states with whom we may co-operate in other development areas, the UK would not

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[5]   See FCO, "Tools to support democracy", undated.

consider direct support to electoral authorities, unless we were convinced that a significant political transition was underway.

6. What level of financial and human resources are we willing to commit to the election? Experience suggests that a major UK role in elections can be extremely demanding on staff time for both FCO and DFID.

7. Does electoral assistance offer good value for money (VFM), compared to other possible investments in democratic development and the potential costs of not providing support? This may be a difficult assessment to make, as while the costs of an election are quantifiable, the benefits may not be. A VFM case should include the strategic significance of the election, the risks of not providing support (especially risks of violence), the cost per voter compared to similar countries, the efficiency of the proposed delivery mechanism (e.g. a trust fund with other donors), procurement arrangements and so on (see section 3.4 below).

3 Planning and delivering electoral support

Where the UK has decided to support the electoral process, it is critical that we plan our engagement strategically, to make the most efficient and effective use of resources. Over the past few years, there has been a decisive shift in the way the UK and many of its international partners engage with elections, away from *ad hoc* support for specific electoral events or activities towards a more strategic engagement with the electoral process as a whole. Engaging strategically includes:

- planning a multi-annual engagement across the whole electoral cycle, with attention not just to the organisation of a specific election but to the long-term development of the electoral system and other democratic and accountability institutions;
- a coherent engagement across HMG, to ensure that financial and technical assistance dovetails with diplomatic influence;
- a broad engagement with multiple national stakeholders;
- joint or coordinated engagement with international partners on both financial assistance and influencing, including making effective use of multilateral and regional channels;
- clearly articulated objectives for UK support agreed between FCO and DFID, with effective results management and impact evaluation; and
- a structured process for understanding the political context and identifying and managing risk.

This section provides a guide to strategic planning for electoral support, organised according to the following elements:

Strategic Planning of Electoral Support
1. define clear goals and objectives; 2. identify and manage risks; 3. agree support modalities; 4. ensure value for money; 5. communicate effectively; 6. election day and its aftermath.

Where we are planning significant levels of financial support, all or most of these elements will be relevant. Where the engagement is more limited, a selection can be made as appropriate.

3.1 Define clear goals and objectives

All electoral support should begin from a clear statement of goals and objectives that are specific to the country in question. While all electoral support may share a common high-level purpose ('strengthening democracy'), the particular opportunities

and risks are unique to each country context, and should be clearly identified in the design of the assistance.

The starting point is a good understanding of the political and institutional context, including the strengths and weaknesses of the current electoral system. Political analysis should begin from the premise that there are likely to be powerful interests at play. We need to understand the political landscape, and who are the likely winners and losers from different possible reform options. Analysis should consider any past history of electoral violence, and the risk factors that emerge from that history. It should contextualise the assistance in a broader process of political development of the country in question, to assess the realistic opportunities for change.

Useful background analysis may be available from work such as a Country Governance Analysis, Drivers of Change study, Strategic Conflict Assessment, Gender and Social Exclusion Analysis or reports from previous election observation missions. Posts may also consider conducting specific analysis of the electoral process itself, looking at factors such as the causes of past violence, the strengths and weaknesses of the current electoral system and the capacities and political status of different stakeholders, including the Electoral Management Body (EMB).[6]

This analytical work is increasingly done jointly by FCO and DFID, if necessary with external input. Conducting analysis jointly with other international partners, or sharing the outputs with them, may also be a useful way of promoting coordination, where political sensitivities permit.

The analysis should inform a clear statement of what the electoral support is designed to achieve. The goals should be agreed between FCO and DFID, and set out in the form of a joint strategy or results framework, as well as in DFID project documentation.

The design of the assistance should then closely mirror the strategic objectives. Where the primary rationale is a positive one (i.e. to seize opportunities for democratic consolidation), then the assistance would normally take the form of a multi-annual programme of support to the electoral process as a whole, delivered jointly with international partners and dovetailing with other support for strengthening democracy. If, on the other hand, the rationale is mainly preventative (i.e. minimising risks of violence or political crisis), the assistance may focus more on short-term mitigation (see section 3.2 below). Often, a combination of objectives will be involved, and the support should be balanced accordingly.

It is important to be realistic about the level of ambition. Where democratic norms are weakly institutionalised, achieving elections that meet international standards within a single cycle may be too ambitious a goal. It may be more appropriate to define our objectives in terms of contributing to a long-term process of democratic development. If our engagement is primarily about risk mitigation, then our objectives may be limited to the peaceful conduct of a particular election.

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[6]   See DFID, "Political Economy Analysis *How To* Note", July 2009.

Where the UK is providing broader support to democratic governance, such as voice and accountability programmes with civil society or capacity development for parliament, we should make clear how electoral support fits into a wider process of democratic development, and ensure that our goals are complementary.

The following table sets out the Electoral Cycle Approach in the form of a checklist of issues that can be used when designing assistance. The time-frames for tackling these issues will vary considerably. Systemic issues, such as boundary delimitation, may require years to reform whereas other issues can be tackled within one election cycle.

The Electoral Cycle Approach Checklist of Issues	
Systemic issues	**Planning issues**
♦ Electoral system ♦ EMB mandate and structure ♦ Political party financing ♦ Boundary delimitation ♦ Equality and inclusiveness ♦ Codes of conduct ♦ Media regulation	♦ Election budget ♦ Support modalities ♦ Electoral calendar ♦ Operational plans ♦ Development of procedures ♦ Staff recruitment and training ♦ Logistical preparations ♦ Communications and stakeholder relations
Pre-election period	**Election operations**
♦ Voter registration ♦ Party primaries ♦ Candidate and party registration ♦ Accreditation of observers ♦ Civic and voter awareness ♦ Electoral campaign ♦ Media coverage	♦ Printing and distribution of ballot papers ♦ Security arrangements ♦ Voting operations ♦ Counting of votes ♦ Tabulation ♦ Announcement of results ♦ Dispute resolution ♦ Election observation
Post-electoral period	
♦ Documenting procedures and lessons learned ♦ Audit and evaluation ♦ Follow up on observer mission recommendations ♦ Dialogue on systemic reforms	

3.2 Identify and manage risks

All elections entail risk. There are operational risks to the successful conduct of the elections, including mismanagement, delays and budget overruns. There are risks relating to the integrity of the elections, including fraud by the contending parties and loss of public confidence in the process. There may be security risks, including intimidation of voters, violent conflict between parties and their supporters, public protests and inappropriate responses from security forces. Risk management must therefore be tightly integrated into the management of electoral assistance.

Tools for identifying risk

Country posts are increasingly using **Electoral Risk Registers** to identify and manage risk. These are matrices setting out plausible risks, their likelihood of occurrence, the severity of impact, indicators to provide early warning that they are occurring and steps to be taken in mitigation. They need to be accompanied by an active process of monitoring each risk, drawing on multiple information sources (press reporting; incident tracking; monitoring by NGOs; dialogue with parties and the EMB; information from other donors). It may be appropriate to assign responsibility for monitoring each risk to a particular staff member. There should be regular status updates against each risk. Risks and mitigating actions may need to be updated periodically through the pre-election period. Mozambique, Ethiopia and Malawi are among the country posts that have produced detailed Electoral Risk Registers. Nigeria is undertaking innovative analysis of state-level 'hot spots' for violence.

Monitoring of operational risk can be done by identifying a **critical path of electoral preparations**, linked to an agreed timetable. Elections present complex management and logistical challenges, and if steps such as voter registration, training of staff and procurement of supplies are not completed in time, it can cause a spiral of disruption with implications for both the timing of the election and the budget. The EMB will generally produce an electoral timetable as part of its operational planning. This can be used to derive a critical path for monitoring purposes.

> *The Mozambique Risk and Contingency Framework 2009*
> included scenarios such as:
> - opposition unfairly excluded from candidate lists;
> - escalation of localised, inter-party conflict;
> - opposition boycott due to distrust of electoral management body;
> - abuse of incumbency;
> - poor management and logistics undermining viability of the poll;
> - perceived bias on the part of the electoral management body;
> - inappropriate responses to incidents by security agencies;
> - long-delayed or disputed election results.

In volatile political environments, posts may find a process of **scenario planning** helps sharpen their thinking around different eventualities and how to respond to them. For example, FCO and DFID in Mozambique produced a Risk and Contingency Framework to help identify circumstances that might lead to violence before, during and after polling day. Staff made use of meetings with political parties, civil society, the media and international partners to populate the framework. For each scenario, the framework elaborated the political implications, likelihood of occurrence, level of impact, early warning signs, possible preventive and responsive actions and next steps. For scenario planning to be effective, there should be a periodic assessment as to which scenario currently applies (including hybrid situations), and scenarios may need to be updated to reflect changing conditions or new information.[7]

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[7]   For guidance, see UK Government Office for Science, "Scenario Planning Guidance Note", October 2009.

Risks of violence

There is a range of analytical work available exploring the risk of violence around elections. Electoral violence is coercion used to achieve specific political ends. It can include acts, threats and intimidation, directed against voters, candidates, electoral officials, polling stations and election material.

There are structural or long-term factors that can increase the likelihood or severity of political violence.

- Societies with marked political, economic or social inequalities between different groups (e.g. ethnic, caste or religious groups), and where political competition divides along the same lines, are particularly prone to violence. The risks are heightened where political campaigning involves de-legitimising or demonising particular groups.
- Electoral systems that leave ethnic or religious minorities with little incentive to engage in the political process (as in Sri Lanka) are more likely to create incentives for violence.
- The availability of rents from natural resources – such as revenues from logging or the extractive industries – raise the stakes of elections and the incentives to resort to violence.
- A history of political violence in the country in question, or even in the region, can lower the threshold for political forces to resort to violence – particularly where the state lacks a monopoly over the use of force.
- Where electoral violence is deployed strategically by political contestants, it requires certain organisational elements – such as politicised security services, armed groups within political parties, the recruitment of disaffected youth into gangs, a ready supply of small arms or the financial resources (e.g. drug money) to purchase them. Where these elements are present, the risk of violence is higher.

> In Kenya in 2007, mismanagement of the elections and widespread allegations of fraud led to violent protests by opposition supporters and a crackdown by security forces. While violent incidents were not unexpected, many observers were surprised by the rapid spread of communal violence across the country. Subsequent analysis has attributed this to a number of factors:
> - the fact that the electoral campaign was fought on ethnic lines;
> - hate-speech and the role of the media;
> - the close election result;
> - the overly powerful executive coupled with a winner-takes-all electoral system;
> - marked ethno-regional inequalities;
> - mismanagement of land;
> - poverty and youth unemployment;
> - the presence of armed groups, and a history of impunity for violence.

There are also trigger factors that can provide early warning of a heightened risk of violence.

- Where the electoral process is poorly organised, the EMB lacks independence and allegations of fraud are widespread, the losing party is more likely to reject the results and resort to street protests.
- Close-run elections where the results are unpredictable are more likely to attract fraud and violence.

- Where security forces lack the independence or professionalism to respond appropriately and proportionately to street protests, escalating violence is more likely.

The forms of violence may vary at different points in the electoral cycle, calling for different forms of mitigation.

- **18 to 3 months before election day:** violence is most likely to be associated with the incumbent and security forces, and can include violence against opposition party leaders and members; intimidation or removal of judges, election officials, police chiefs and journalists; incitement to violence in the media or places of worship; action by security forces against opposition meetings and rallies. Violence by opposition forces may take the form of factional clashes, marking territory as 'no go zones', hostage taking, kidnap and extortion. In countries with a single dominant party, party primaries may be a trigger for violence.
- **Last 3 months before the election:** the risks include attempts to intimidate voters to suppress turnout, clashes between rival party groups, attacks on rallies or candidates, and intimidation of electoral officials and observers.
- **Polling day** is often surprisingly peaceful, even following campaign violence, due to the heightened international attention, but risks include intimidation of voters and direct attacks on the conduct of the election, include attacks on polling stations and destruction of ballot boxes.
- **Between voting and proclamation of results:** risks include armed clashes between political party members and supporters and vandalism of property.
- **Following proclamation of results:** this is the most dangerous period, which may be marked by street protests, violent responses from security forces, and in the worst cases an escalation of sectarian violence.[8]

See Annex A for a more detailed list of risk factors for electoral violence.

> Further information:
> - Annex A: Indicators of electoral violence for more detailed risk factors
> - UNDP, "Elections and conflict prevention: a guide to analysis, planning and programming", August 2009

Mitigating actions

All forms of electoral assistance have the potential to mitigate against the risk of violence, if planned with this objective in mind. A well-managed election is inherently less risky than a poorly managed one. Electoral assistance should be flexible enough to respond to risks as they emerge. Some of the most effective risk-management approaches include:

- Negotiating **codes of conduct** among the contending parties, setting out standards for campaigning, can be one of the most effective means of moderating behaviour. Through a code of conduct, parties publicly renounce hate speech, voter intimidation and other misconduct (*see 4.3*). In advance of

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[8] UNDP, "Elections and conflict prevention: a guide to analysis, planning and programming", August 2009.

the 2009 elections in Ghana, an African Union mission of eminent persons, including former presidents of Ghana and Mozambique, brokered a code of conduct between all political parties, paving the way for a successful election and orderly transfer of power.

- **Coordinated diplomatic intervention** by the international community can be an effective way of responding to emerging problems. In advance of the 2008 elections in Pakistan, the multi-donor Political Development Group developed a set of ten messages to be communicated to government through diplomatic channels. This may have contributed to greater restraint on the part of security agencies, including a public announcement by the Army Chief of Staff that the military would not interfere in the elections. Where the government is adequately open, it may be preferable for the international community to engage privately with the government on the international standards required for the election to be considered genuine. Regional and sub-regional bodies may be able to serve as mediators.

> In Sudan, DFID and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office are working together to ensure there is a political agreement between the North and the South of the country that underpins and therefore stabilises relationships during the referendum for South Sudan. This includes support to official negotiations between the North and South governments and support for civil society, to try and ensure that the views of citizens, affected by any agreement, are recognised and respected.

- **Election observation** is a tried and tested strategy for reducing the risk of electoral fraud or violence. While states are under no obligation to invite international observer missions, they often do so in order to secure greater legitimacy for the election (on the question of when it is appropriate to accept a request for observation, see section 4.14 below). Observation (including by the country post itself) can focus on high risk areas or issues. For example, in the 2007 Kenya elections, analysis suggested that fraudulently denying opposition leader Raila Odinga victory in his parliamentary seat would be the best method of eliminating him as a presidential contender. The UK High Commissioner and the US Ambassador therefore personally observed the ballot in Odinga's constituency.

- **Working with security agencies** can help mitigate the key risks of over-reaction to public protests and other election-related incidents. Long-term support programmes can be designed to encourage impartiality, professionalism and restraint among the leadership, to

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The Malawi Electoral Commission in cooperation with "GTZ Forum for Dialogue and Peace" and the "Minibus Owners Association of Malawi"

maintain international human rights standards. In the run up to an election, there may be a need for specific training for police on the electoral law and their role in the electoral process (*see 4.11*). For a potentially volatile election, training and equipment can be provided for appropriate methods of crowd control and for investigating allegations of misconduct. Before doing so, however, we must carefully assess the risk that UK-supplied equipment or assistance may be used improperly.

- **The media and civil society** should form part of the electoral risk assessment and can be given systematic support to encourage them to play a responsible role. They can also be supported for public campaigns around peaceful elections. In Malawi in advance of the 2009 elections, the international community financed a series of non-violence campaigns, with media spots and bumper stickers ("Peaceful Elections – Yes We Can"), which helped create a calm environment for the elections. In Nigeria, the South African NGO IDASA established a centre to collect and map reports of violent incidents from local civil society. The resulting information on patterns of violence was used to plan localised interventions on conflict management. In Kenya, Ushahidi used social media to map incidents of electoral violence. In Mozambique, the UK has funded a project to establish a dialogue platform in which political parties, state electoral bodies and civil society organisations can meet to discuss and share information on preparations for elections. Open communication lines have helped reduce the threat of violence.
- **Development of rapid and impartial complaints handling mechanisms**, and promotion of their role among political parties and the public, can be an important investment in conflict management. Where there are seen to be legitimate avenues for addressing grievances, the chances of violence are diminished. Formal complaints mechanisms like the courts, while a necessary part of the electoral machinery, may be too slow where there is a risk of violence. Informal mechanisms involving tribal elders, religious leaders or civil society mediators may be more effective for conflict resolution.

3.3 Agree support modalities

Electoral assistance is an area where there has been relatively little attention paid to aid effectiveness principles. The urgent, event-driven nature of the assistance and the political sensitivity of the terrain have left little room for country leadership of external assistance, at the expense of sustainable impact. While recognising the difficulties, we should try as far as possible to apply the principles of country ownership, as well as the OECD-DAC draft principles on electoral assistance.[9] We should also try to work as far as possible with other international partners, so that the costs and risks are spread among the donor community.

> *Draft OECD-DAC Principles on Electoral Assistance 2010*
> - Take the local context seriously
> - Be alert to electoral risk
> - Don't misuse electoral aid
> - Ground electoral aid in complementary diplomatic policies
> - Recognise the role of regional organisations
> - Embrace a full concept of ownership
> - Build on donor coordination
> - Be as comprehensive as possible
> - Think and act across the electoral cycle
> - Push for integration with wider democracy support
> - Emphasise citizens' understanding and engagement
> - Include a focus on local elections
> - Make connections to work on accountability
> - Don't neglect gender
> - Respond more consistently to flawed elections
> - Keep learning about impact, and act on it.

The EMB is the primary counterpart for support to the conduct of elections. Where an EMB has a sufficient level of capacity, the preferred option is to provide programmatic support – that is, a pool of funds that can be allocated flexibly by the

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[9]   OECD-DAC, "Draft Principles of International Elections Assistance", March 2010.

EMB towards an agreed budget and programme of activities. This is usually done through a multi-donor trust fund.

Alternatives include project support to the EMB for discrete activities, particularly where political sensitivities or concerns about EMB capacity call for tighter control over UK funds. In addition, separate funding arrangements can be established for election-related activities that are not the direct responsibility of the EMB, such as civil education and election observation. In some countries, the UK has chosen to participate in a parallel trust fund specifically for civil society-based electoral assistance.

For the core international support for electoral operations, there are clear advantages to a multi-donor basket fund. A well-designed basket provides the scale and flexibility for integrated support for the electoral system. It is an effective tool for harmonisation, ensuring that different donors do not pursue inconsistent approaches through parallel support, while reducing the transaction costs for the EMB of managing multiple streams of assistance. It enables donors to share the political risks of electoral support, making it an effective fundraising tool. Perhaps most importantly, the flexibility of programme funding provides the EMB with both the opportunity and the incentive to engage in effective planning and budgeting.

Designing a basket fund is a time-consuming process, requiring lengthy negotiations among partners. Some of the key issues likely to arise during the design include:

- **Choice of basket fund manager:** Most electoral basket funds are managed by UNDP, whose neutrality makes it the most acceptable choice for many partner countries. Alternatives to the UN include a bilateral partner (in Uganda, Danida manages an electoral basket fund; in Nigeria, USAID delivers part of the UK's support through US NGOs) or a civil society implementing partner (e.g. the Asia Foundation in Pakistan). The fund manager must have in place both the necessary technical expertise and the capacity to manage the funds efficiently. A realistic assessment needs to be undertaken of in-country capacity of potential fund managers. Where capacity is lacking, it may be necessary to press for changes before the programme is agreed, ideally in co-ordination with central UK engagement with the relevant organisation. There may be contexts in which funding additional staffing positions or providing secondments will provide part of the solution.

- **Level of donor control over expenditure:** Basket funds can be designed with different levels of donor control, depending on the capacity of the EMB and the level of fiduciary risk. In rare instances, such as in Rwanda, the basket fund is managed by the EMB itself. More commonly, financial management and procurement is assigned to a fund manager, with the EMB and international donors making funding decisions jointly. It is important that procedures be kept as light as possible, to enable the support to be flexible and responsive. Where individual donors insist on earmarking funds or retaining parallel approval processes, it can slow disbursement and diminish country ownership. It is worth investing time up front in negotiating the procedures, to avoid problems emerging down the track.

- **Management and oversight:** Most basket funds have a donor Steering Committee to provide oversight, and a dedicated management structure for delivery of financial and technical assistance. This separation of functions is important. The basket fund manager is required to build up a close relationship with the EMB, and sometimes interprets its role as remaining neutral in the event of 'disagreements' between donors and government. As a result, it may not be well placed to respond to problems of a political nature, such as infringement on the independence of the EMB. Donors therefore need separate channels for raising issues of concern with government. The Steering Committee can also incorporate donors funding the elections outside the basket, to serve a wider coordination function. For example, in Tanzania UNDP ran the electoral basket fund, while the UK chaired a donor group and led on dialogue with government.

Programme support provides a platform for donors to engage with the EMB on its planning and budgeting processes. Planning and budgeting for elections is a complex process, given the range of activities and agencies involved. Operational planning for elections should begin as early as possible in the electoral cycle. The usual practice is for EMBs to begin from a tentative election date and work backwards, identifying the milestones that must be achieved in each phase of the preparations. The resulting timetable provides an essential tool for monitoring progress. Some activities need to occur early in the electoral cycle. For example, any changes to the electoral system should be introduced in time for public debate, parliamentary approval and implementation. Likewise, the introduction of new technologies for voter registration or voting should allow time for design, testing, procurement and training.

> ***Election procurement needs***
>
> UNDP lists the most common needs for procurement of goods and services for elections under the following five categories:
>
> - **Election Administration:** equipment and refurbishment of buildings, IT hardware and software, vehicles, communication tools, printing services, staff training.
> - **Civic & Voter Education:** technical equipment, equipping call centres, website development, design and printing of posters, leaflets and banners, production of TV and radio spots, conferences, CSO training etc.
> - **Voter Registration:** IT hardware and software, printing and distribution of registration forms, voter cards, data processing, equipping Data Entry Centres, training, technical assistance, logistics and distribution.
> - **Election Day Activities:** ballot boxes & seals, voting screens, polling kits, indelible or invisible ink, tamper-proof materials, material for alternative polling station structures, printing and distribution of ballot papers, polling forms, procedural manuals, electoral lists, candidate lists, training of polling staff, logistics, distribution, storage and security.
> - **Result Tabulation:** software, results and media centre hardware and other communication equipment.
>
> Source: EC/UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance website: www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org

There needs to be careful planning of recruitment and capacity development for the EMB itself. EMBs have huge, short-term staffing needs during the run-up to the election, and very high turnover thereafter, making it difficult to build sustainable capacity. In Pakistan, for example, almost 500,000 people, many of them teachers and health workers, are trained as polling staff before each election. A realistic timetable for recruitment and training is therefore essential.

Election budgets are usually prepared by the EMB and processed through the Ministry of Finance for approval by parliament. Where donors are meeting a substantial share of costs, there may be scope for dialogue over the composition of the budget to ensure value for money – for example, by introducing international comparators for costs of material and by discouraging approaches that are over-ambitious or too elaborate for the country context (for more on value for money, see section 3.4 below). Experience suggests the need for caution over the introduction of overly sophisticated new information technologies (see section 4.7 below).

It is rarely possible to anticipate all eventualities in the planning process, and budget overruns are common. Contingencies need to be built into the budget. The international community is often requested to provide *ad hoc* support for specific items in the run-up to an election – for example, where delays have raised the costs of printing and distributing election materials. It may also be appropriate for donors to set aside some additional funds to enable a quick response to unforeseen needs.

3.4 Ensuring Value for Money

Support to elections, as for all government programmes, must demonstrate that everything possible has been done to ensure that value for money is being achieved.[10]
Value for money analysis should be done as part of the design process of the programme and DFID economic advisers should be involved. Analysis should be carried out jointly with partners where possible.
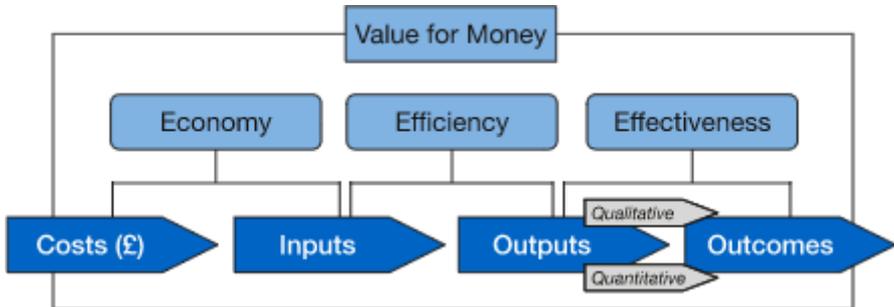
Measuring value for money involves estimating the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of programmes. The ideal is a full cost benefit analysis that measures outcomes (impact) and gives a rate of return, a benefit to cost ratio or a net present value for comparison with alternative investments and, where appropriate, alternative programme designs that would deliver the same outcomes.

Preparing value for money analysis is not without cost. The time spent should be proportionate to the cost of the programme. The focus on value for money should not compromise flexibility where the UK needs to react quickly, for example in post-conflict situations where stabilization issues are paramount. In such cases, a full explanation will be needed on where and why there are gaps in analysis.

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[10] DFID offices should follow guidance from Finance and Corporate Performance Division on economic appraisals and the new programme document format, and emerging guidance from Policy Division on governance indicators and measuring value for money.

Even where time and resources allow, full cost benefit analysis may not be possible and DFID is prepared to take risks in supporting programmes in countries and sectors where the evidence base is weak. The benefits of developing democratic and accountability institutions are harder to quantify than building a road or power station and practice is developing in this area. In order to make the case for the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions, it will be necessary to try to capture the full social benefits of democratic institutions. Innovative approaches include use of survey responses which may help with quantifying the relative importance citizens attach to living in a more democratic state. Results available from similar programmes in other countries or general research[11] may also help provide an evidence base for an intervention as long as they are assessed for relevance and robustness. DFID Evaluation Department and Policy and Research Directorate Division can advise on the wider evidence available and the DFID Elections Hub will collect examples of good practice.

Whether or not a full cost benefit analysis can be carried out, a coherent theory of change or impact chain needs to be set out, with supporting evidence that is quantified as far as possible. This could include, for example, the expected positive impact on the economy of the election as a whole[12] or the cost of elections deteriorating into violence.[13]

Cost effectiveness

> ### Cost of elections
> The cost of elections varies significantly around the world. The key variable is the level of experience of the country in question with multi-party democracy. In countries with well-established electoral systems and developed administrative and communications infrastructure, the cost averages between US$1 and $3 per voter. In countries that are still establishing basic electoral processes, costs are significantly higher – for example, $6.90 per voter in Lesotho and $7.50 for post-transition elections in Russia. By far the highest costs are in post-conflict countries, particularly in challenging geographic and security environments. In post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina (an unusual case where no voter registration was conducted prior to polling day), the first local elections cost $8 per voter. The 2004 Afghanistan elections cost in the region of $23 per voter (excluding security operations by international forces). Nearly 40% of this was the cost of voter registration among a population of unknown size where identity card ownership was limited. Registration was done through mobile registration centres, that had to be well protected and equipped with communications (usually satellite phones). In general, the costs of elections fall rapidly as the transition is consolidated. For example, elections in post-war Cambodia in 1993 cost US$45 per voter, but this fell to $5 by 1998 and $2 in 2003.
>
> IFES, "Cost of registration and elections", 2005

If cost-benefit analysis is not possible, cost-effectiveness analysis should be carried out, looking at whether the programme is using the cheapest, most economic method to achieve its primary objective (this relates to the 'economy' box in the diagram above). This analysis should set out unit costs for the programme and for alternative

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[11] E.g. Halperin, M., Siegle, J.,and Weinstein, M., "The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace", New York: Routledge, 2005

[12] Chauvet L. and P. Collier (2009), "Elections and Economic Policy in Developing Countries". *Economic Policy* 24(59), 509-550.

[13] For example, the Kenyan Minister of Finance estimated that the violent election in 2007 cost the economy $1 billion: http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/206930

programme designs. It should also set out comparators for other programmes and countries. Unit costs can be for the election as a whole e.g. the cost of the overall election per voter (see box) as well as costs for specific parts of the election process e.g. the purchasing of voting booth equipment, which should be at competitive rates. Where costs are higher than elsewhere, this should be explained, for example, in terms of the wider political context. Partner governments that use aggregated totals for election costs may hide, deliberately or otherwise, over-inflated costs in some areas. The commercial case section in the new DFID business case 'How To' Note will provide guidance. Cost-effectiveness analysis should always be considered alongside some estimate of the benefits of different options even if these are difficult to quantify.

Risks

The DFID economic appraisal guidance explains how the risks to programme delivery need to be set out. There is additional guidance on risk in the DFID business case 'How To' Note. Risks relating to election integrity, security and instability should be identified along with measures on how risks will be mitigated. The residual risk remaining after mitigation then needs to be set out clearly. It is important that programmes are not over-ambitious and that expected returns to the programme realistically reflect the risks. While country contexts are specific, the success or otherwise of election programmes in other countries may be a useful guide and it is important to demonstrate learning from previous programmes. Objectivity can be increased by using peer reviewers from a mix of professional cadres to assess the robustness of the analysis.

Monitoring and evaluation

A robust approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) should be built into electoral support. Amongst other things, this will enable a robust post-programme economic evaluation. The DFID business case template and 'How To' Note should be referred to. We need to be sure that implementing partners are fully aware of the importance of sound M&E and devote sufficient resources during design and implementation. Monitoring should as far as possible be done by or in conjunction with the 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. Larger programmes should consider carrying out full impact evaluations, consulting with Evaluation Department in DFID.

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. See box for some suggested indicators.

Monitoring and evaluation plans should describe how analytical gaps evident in the economic appraisal will be filled to enable a more complete quantification when the programme is evaluated.

Possible indicators in monitoring and evaluating electoral support

Political awareness and engagement
- # of citizens trained on elections, rights and responsibilities
- % of registered voters who vote
- % satisfaction with the conduct of the election

Political inclusion
- % 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
- % 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
- # 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
- % 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

Note that DFID Policy Division is undertaking further work to determine best practice in measuring impact and value for money in all areas of governance and the How to Note will be updated accordingly .

3.5 Communicate effectively

Electoral assistance needs to be supported by effective communication, at several levels. First, as well as routine sharing of information between the FCO, DFID and other HMG agencies in country, there is a need for good communication with London. This is particularly the case where there are risks of violence. Country posts should share their risk analysis, scenarios and contingency plans on a regular basis with London, and provide regular updates on progress with electoral preparations. Simple traffic-light assessments against individual milestones and risks can be an effective way of communicating the current status of the process.

Second, there is a need for coordinated messaging across international partners. In volatile environments, particularly where there is a range of international interests at play, a divergence of voices among the international community can undermine international influence. This includes encouraging a 'One UN' approach, covering political and programmatic engagement, technical advice and reporting. Platforms enabling the international community to develop common positions and strategies and make joint representations to government help to mitigate against this tendency. Experience suggests that dialogue with partners can consume the largest share of staff time.

To this end, the UK typically works with other EU member states, especially in developing countries where the Cotonou Agreement provides a framework for dialogue on democratic norms. But we also have an interest in bringing other international partners into the dialogue, and in strengthening international and regional mechanisms.

It is helpful to have a clear division of labour between aid management and diplomatic bodies. In developing countries, the donor community will have established mechanisms for dialogue on governance, and may choose to establish additional coordinating bodies specifically for electoral support. These structures can be used for agreeing common positions on policy, technical and operational issues. They can be strengthened by linkages with diplomatic bodies such as Heads of Missions groups, where political issues can be taken up with the partner country at a higher level. In crisis situations, where no other forum is available, the international community may choose to establish an *ad hoc* International Contact Group to coordinate the diplomatic response.

> In Nigeria in 2007, the UK used a three-tier system of messaging around different types of issues, delivered jointly with EU partners and the US.
> - Minor developments (positive or negative): private messages were delivered to relevant individuals such as the President, a minister or state governor by the High Commissioner, by telephone or in a private meetings;
> - Medium-impact developments: a written message was delivered, often followed up by a meeting with a suitable high-ranking individual. On occasion, a UK minister or other senior public figure was asked to back up the message;
> - Crucial positive/negative developments: the UK and its partners delivered public messages of praise or concern, with back up telephone calls from a UK minister or the prime minister.

Third, electoral support benefits from breadth of engagement, not just with government and the EMB, but also with political parties and parliamentarians, sub-national government, the media, business, faith groups, trade unions, NGOs and

other interest groups. As part of the design of electoral support, we should identify a wide range of stakeholders, and use our contacts with them to reinforce the importance of international electoral standards (*see box on page 24*). Where the EMB is working effectively, we should emphasise this in both public and private communications, and if necessary help protect the EMB against unfounded allegations.

Occasionally it is appropriate to communicate directly to the public, particularly where an explanation of our own actions is required. This needs to be done with sensitivity. We should be very clear and transparent about the standards we expect for elections in terms of procedural fairness, while at the same time stressing our own impartiality as to the result. Options include op eds in national newspapers and public speeches by the Ambassador/High Commissioner.

3.6 During and after election day

UK staff are often involved in the observation of elections on polling day – either by contributing staff to joint international observation missions or through supplementary observation activities. This offers an additional set of eyes on high-risk issues and locations, providing early warning of emerging problems. Polling day observation also provides insights into the effectiveness of UK electoral support. Posts should also be prepared for the possibility of observation initiatives by UK civil society, as happened in Sudan in the 2010 election, which may require careful handling and messaging to distinguish their role from that of HMG.

An effective polling day operation requires joint planning across UK departments, which should be completed well in advance. To be effective observers, staff need briefing or training and tools such as checklists to aid observation.[14] Duty of care obligations towards staff need to be carefully considered, with staff briefed on security risks and provided with suitable travel arrangements, and their movements carefully monitored. A budget needs to be set aside to cover logistics. For example, in Malawi in 2009, 51 DFID observers visited 128 polling stations in 18 of Malawi's 28 districts, at a total cost of £13,500.

Following polling day, there is a natural tendency for government and donors alike to succumb to fatigue. In fact, there are likely to be pressing issues in the aftermath of an election requiring financial resources and staff time. Any project of support for a specific election should generally have an end date some time after the election date.

The processes of vote counting, tallying and announcement of results are the most risky parts of the election, in terms of both fraud and violence. Posts should monitor the evolving situation against identified risks and scenarios, and implement mitigating measures where required. For example, if the EMB appears to be under political pressure regarding publication of results, joint statements by the international community urging restraint may be appropriate. If disputes are emerging, representations to political parties urging them to use proper complaints procedures

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[14]   See FCO, "Top Tips for organising a UK Election Observation Team", undated. The EU has also produced a Handbook for EU Election Observation Missions. Organisations such as BRIDGE provide more comprehensive training courses.

may be appropriate. If a transition of government is involved, diplomatic interventions may help it to take place smoothly.

An international observation mission will typically release preliminary findings the day after the election, and a final report some weeks or months later containing recommendations for the future. If the UK is providing continuing electoral support, it should include agreeing with the partner country how to take forward these recommendations. The immediate post-electoral period provides a window of opportunity when proposed reforms may not be seen purely in terms of short-term electoral cost and benefit.

Finally, the post-electoral period is a time for ensuring that the achievements of electoral support are carried forward in other democratisation and accountability programmes. For example, there may be a need for support to parliament to assist with the induction of new parliamentarians and the formation of parliamentary committees. Voter information campaigns during the election period can be followed up by more long-term voter and civic education efforts, to support the consolidation of democratic values.

Responding to problematic elections

The question of how the UK and its international partners should respond to flawed elections can give rise to difficult judgement calls. The international response may have the effect of extending legitimacy to or withholding it from the election and the party claiming victory. The international reaction may also affect whether a flawed election leads to a wider deterioration in political governance or escalation in conflict.

When confronted with a flawed election, we should in all cases be clear about the democratic principles and international standards to which we are committed, particularly the importance of procedural fairness. All member states of the United Nations are committed to the principle of free elections through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states:

> *"The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures."*

This was expanded in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which grants to every citizen of a State Party to that Convention, without distinction, the right to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections, as well as a range of other rights of political participation.[15]

We also recognise that these standards require considerable institutional capacity to implement, and that fully compliant elections are a long-term goal in many countries. When confronted with shortcomings, our usual response will be to work with the partner country to improve the situation for subsequent elections. This need not entail any explicit judgment from the UK on the legitimacy of the election result.

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[15]   For the full text of international and regional instruments governing electoral standards, see European Union, *Compendium of International Standards for Elections*, 2nd ed., 2008.

When confronted with clear violations of electoral standards, as documented by impartial observers, the UK response would normally be decided at ministerial level. Where an incumbent government is determined to override the results of an election, or an opposition group seizes power by unconstitutional means, there may be little the international community can do in the short term. We may seek to mediate between rival political forces, or in cases involve major human rights abuses we may consider some form of sanction against the offending party. Note, however, that there is little evidence that punitive actions by external actors have significant influence in the midst of a political crisis.

> ***Possible constituent elements of international standards on elections***
>
> International standards require that elections must be:
>
> - **Periodic:** held at regular intervals as established by law;
> - **Genuine:** provide a real and informed choice for voters, without unreasonable restrictions on political competition or the formation and conduct of political parties;
> - **Free:** citizens should enjoy freedom of expression, association, assembly and movement, should be able to cast their ballots in secret and free from intimidation, violence or retribution, with the media able to cover the campaign without interference or unreasonable restrictions. Domestic observers (both partisan and non-partisan) should be free to observe all stages of the elections, including the tabulation of results.
> - **Fair:** ensure equal conditions for all participants in the election process, according to the law, including equal access to the media (especially state media). There should be clear separation between the state and political parties, with no party having unfair access to public resources for campaign purposes. The election administration should be professional and neutral, and ensure that voting, counting and tabulation takes place without fraud or manipulation. Candidates, parties and voters should have access to prompt and effective redress in case of any violations of electoral laws or human rights.
> - **Universal suffrage:** all eligible citizens should be given the right to vote through an effective, impartial, non-discriminatory and accurate voter registration procedure. There should no poll taxes or registration fees, no restrictions on women, minorities or other groups, and arrangements should be made to enable the elderly, disabled and internally displaced persons to vote.
> - **Equal suffrage:** each citizen's vote should have the same value.
> - **Secret ballot:** voters should mark their ballots alone, and in such a manner that they cannot later be identified to a specific person. No polling station should be so small that announcement of results might compromise the secrecy of the ballot. 'Group voting' by prisoners or the military is unlawful.
>
> Adapted from OSCE-ODIHR, *Election Observation Handbook*, 5th ed., 2005, pp. 14-19

When advising on options, we may consider the following.

i) **Diplomatic demarche** outlining the violations and demanding redress, where possible delivered jointly with others. We would usually seek a joint position with other EU members. For African, Caribbean and Pacific states, the Cotonou Agreement sets out formal commitments on democracy, human rights and the rule of law and a structured process of dialogue in the event that they are breached. Where other countries have greater influence (e.g. France in Francophone countries), they often lead the process. Where there are no standing structures for international coordination, it may be appropriate to establish an *ad hoc* International Contact Group to coordinate the diplomatic response.

ii) **Intervention by a UK minister** or other senior figure may have greater weight than a diplomatic demarche, especially if there is a personal relationship with a leading figure in the country in question.

iii) **Regional organisations**, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Council of Europe in Europe and Central Asia, the Organization of American States and the African Union and African sub-regional bodies, are gradually developing a stronger voice on democratic governance, and we should seek every opportunity to promote their involvement in upholding electoral standards. This may also be the most effective avenue in contexts where Western influence is resisted. For example, since the 2009 *coup d'état*, Madagascar has been suspended from participating in Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU) activities until constitutional order is restored. The African Union can organise mediation, using eminent persons from the region. This was done very effectively in Kenya following the 2007 elections, when the UK mobilised rapid support for a joint UN/AU Panel of Eminent African Personalities, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, which conducted six weeks of negotiations leading to agreement on a Government of National Unity. In the Balkans and Eastern Europe, the EU accession process contains explicit political conditions, and has helped support significant democratic reforms in Turkey in recent years. In the wider European neighbourhood, the OSCE and the Council of Europe can provide mediation and technical expertise.

iv) **Organisations such as the UN or the Commonwealth** can call on states to respect democratic principles, and in appropriate cases take stronger measures such as (in the latter case) suspending or expelling members.

v) Where there are significant human rights violations involved, there may be options for involving the **UN human rights machinery.** Bodies such as the Human Rights Council have the authority to appoint Special Rapporteurs to investigate incidents. There are over thirty UN rapporteurs covering thematic issues (including freedom of expression) and another eight for particular countries. Countries are required to report periodically to UN treaty bodies on their progress on implementing their human rights commitments. All UN member states have their record reviewed in public every four years through the Universal Periodic Review process. 'Shadow reporting' by civil society organisations may also be a way of bringing issues to international attention.

vi) There may also be a range of options available within **development programmes**, preferably with a group of donors acting together. At the most serious end of the spectrum are the responses to a breach of conditionality where donors have agreed with the partner government in advance that the free and fair conduct of elections will be a condition of their aid. In the case of a breach donors have a range of responses available, but the response needs to be proportional to the breach. The response should depend on: i) the seriousness of the specific events that led to a breach; and ii) the impact that any decision will have on poor people and longer term poverty reduction efforts.

vii) In the most serious cases, we may consider cutting back on diplomatic, military or cultural cooperation, or even **targeted sanctions** such as travel bans against members of the regime.

Where the actions taken are publicly visible, we should clearly communicate what is being done and why – in particular our focus on the integrity of the process, rather than the result. It is important that the public in the country in question understand the democratic principles involved and how they have been violated. This may help strengthen the hand of national advocates for democracy. It is also important that the UK parliament, media and other stakeholders are offered a clear rationale for the UK response.

Responding to violations of electoral standards

Bangladesh: In January 2007, Bangladesh entered into a political crisis in the lead-up to an election, when opposition parties accused the outgoing government of violating the constitution and announced a boycott. The military intervened, postponing elections and installing a new caretaker government. The intervention, undertaken with the stated purpose of restoring law and order and rooting out high-level corruption, enjoyed widespread public support. An integrated approach including diplomatic pressure, financial and technical support encouraged the military-backed caretaker government to announce a 'roadmap' for restoring democracy. The international community chose to work closely with the caretaker government to make use of a window of opportunity to tackle some difficult political reforms. A new election was eventually held in December 2008.

Nicaragua: Since the re-election of a Sandinista government under Daniel Ortega in 2006, Nicaragua has seen increased authoritarianism, declining governance standards and a narrowing of the democratic space. This culminated in November 2008 with the government's manipulation of municipal election results, to widespread international condemnation. The episode caused a breakdown in relations with the international community, with most European donors and the US suspending assistance pending a return to democratic norms.

Ethiopia: In 2005, the UK and other donor countries enjoyed close diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, which was one of the first budget support countries. However, disputed election results in 2005 were followed by a violent crackdown on opposition protests, in which nearly 200 people lost their lives and thousands of opposition leaders, supporters and journalists were detained. Amid international condemnation of these actions, the UK and other donors terminated budget support, marking a major change in the development partnership. The UK redirected its funds into other forms of support.

4 Issues arising through the electoral cycle

The final section of this Note provides a brief introduction to some of the topics most likely to arise at different points in the electoral cycle. Many of these topics are highly technical in nature. The intention here is simply to offer an introduction to some of the issues and choices involved, and to indicate where to look for further information.

4.1 The electoral system

In the past, electoral systems tended to be treated as a given – often a product of historical factors. Over the past decade, we have gained a greater understanding of how the design of electoral systems can influence the incentives and behaviour of political actors, particularly in divided societies. However, there are also limits to what electoral engineering can accomplish. Attempts to reform electoral systems can encounter powerful vested interests and trigger unpredictable consequences, making international involvement a delicate matter.

Opportunities to reform the electoral system may arise following a major conflict, when the political settlement is being renegotiated. Not withstanding a major conflict, they occur infrequently, and usually early in the electoral cycle, when the immediate political consequences of change are less apparent, making agreement easier to secure.

Electoral systems and conflict management

Electoral systems can have an important influence on conflict dynamics, by providing incentives or disincentives for coalition building. In a divided society, a purely majoritarian system can lead to winner-takes-all forms of political competition, and may leave minority groups permanently excluded from political power. Conversely, a system that obliges the winner to appeal for votes across geographically dispersed areas of the country will lend itself to coalition building, and may be stabilising. South Africa and Northern Ireland have both used proportional representation to increase breadth of representation.

However, there is no single or technical solution to using electoral systems to manage ethnic conflict. One approach is 'consociationalism' – the use of ethnic quotas and special majorities to encourage cooperation and deal making between the political elites of different groups. This is the theory underlying 'ethnic federations' like Nigeria and Ethiopia and post-conflict settlements in the Balkans. However, by making ethnicity the basis of representation, consociational systems can also reinforce ethnic identity. An alternative approach is to use majoritarian systems combined with a focus on national identity building to encourage integration. This approach has been used to build stability in Rwanda since the genocide, but is associated with some sharp restrictions on civil liberties.

The electoral system is a product of multiple laws and institutions, including the constitution, electoral laws, laws governing political parties and campaign finance, criminal law and nationality and residence laws. Electoral systems can be divided into three broad families.

i) **Proportional representation systems** (seats in multi-member districts allocated according to the proportion of votes secured by each party) are often said to be fairer, with the results more accurately reflecting the spread of

votes. They tend to produce greater diversity in representation and encourage the formation of coalitions, which can increase inclusiveness and allow a better balance within an ethnically diverse state. However, they are also complex to understand, may offer weaker links between voter and representative, and may result a less stable the government.

ii) **Plurality/majority systems** (first-past-the-post systems, where the candidate with the most votes represents each electoral district) are easier to understand, may offer more robust accountability of representatives to voters and can provide more stable governments. However, they can produce artificially large majorities and lead to the permanent exclusion of smaller parties and minority groups. They also favour the dominant candidate within each electorate, which can work to the disadvantage of women.

iii) **Mixed systems** combine aspects of both approaches in parallel, for example by introducing an element of proportional representation to compensate for the disadvantages of a plurality/majority system.

Further information: IDEA, "Electoral System Design: The New International IDEA Handbook", 2005

4.2 Electoral management bodies

The electoral management body (EMB) is the primary counterpart for most electoral assistance. Functions typically assigned to an EMB include determining voter eligibility, registering parties and candidates, conducting the polling and counting and tallying votes. Other common roles include voter registration, setting constituency boundaries, voter education, media monitoring, regulation of campaign finance and electoral dispute resolution.

Best international practice suggests that the EMB should be an independent commission, designed to be entirely independent of the executive, although there are examples of elections conducted by a line agency such as a Ministry of Interior. Factors influencing the independence of the EMB include:

- the process of selection and appointment of commissioners, their status and qualification and their security of tenure;
- sources of funding for the EMB;
- its range of powers and functions;
- its oversight and accountability framework.

In practice, few EMBs are fully impartial and independent of the executive, and political appointments are commonplace. This is not necessarily a problem if there are clear rules and procedures for the conduct of elections. Public perceptions of the independence, impartiality and professionalism of the EMB are a key factor in the legitimacy of the process. EMBs should be encouraged to be as transparent as possible, and to have an active outreach strategy to political parties, the media and the public.

Building linkages between EMBs in different countries can help promote independence and professionalism. The Commonwealth has recently launched a

network of EMBs to promote best practices and facilitate peer support and technical assistance between Commonwealth countries. Another resource is the Association of African Electoral Administrators based in Ghana.

> ### *Political interference with the Kenyan EMB*
> In the 2007 Kenya elections, the international community was slow to respond to warning signs regarding the independence of the EMB. Well prior to the election, President Kibaki unilaterally appointed EMB commissioners, in defiance of a political agreement to allow parliamentary parties to nominate commissioners. The commissioners he appointed were without previous electoral experience and lacked the neutrality and professionalism required of the post, undermining what had been a widely respected institution. The loss of public confidence in the EMB, together with multiple process failures during the election itself, combined to create an environment in which a close-run election triggered widespread violence.
>
> One of the lessons from these elections was that the management of the international basket fund for supporting the EMB had become too close to the counterpart institution to respond effectively to emerging problems. Contributing donors need to maintain a capacity for independent supervision of the assistance, and to ensure that any warning signs are followed up by robust diplomatic intervention.

During the election period, we should watch for any signs of inappropriate executive interference with the EMB and refer the issue for an appropriate diplomatic intervention. However, where a government is determined not to allow independent administration of an election, there may be little the international community can do to change that.

Further information:
- IDEA, "Electoral Management Design: The International IDEA Handbook", 2006
- UNDP, "Electoral Management Bodies as Institutions of Governance", 2000

4.3 Political party development and campaign financing

Political parties play an essential part in the electoral system, bringing people together into common political platforms, facilitating alliances among different interest groups, and selecting and training candidates and leaders. However, in many developing countries, they are weak institutions.

While there is a good case for supporting political party development, it is a sensitive area that needs to be approached with care and careful analysis of the country context. UK government support for party development should always be neutral and be seen to be neutral. It should not seek to influence the internal politics of any country or give any preference for one legitimate democratic political party over another. Support can be provided through a variety of organisations. The choice is usually determined by which organisation has the most experience and the best relationships in the country in question. Options include the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the US party foundations (the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute), the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) and others. The range of possible approaches includes technical and financial support across all parties, supporting links between 'sister parties', and providing direct grants to qualifying parties.

Political party development can focus on various levels, such as leadership training, administrative capacity, supporting inter-party dialogue and the development of peaceful youth wings. It can include technical assistance for developing policy platforms, media relations, membership development and fundraising. Training on the electoral process itself can be useful, to help parties understand the rules and minimise misunderstandings. The UK government often supports the participation of women, youth and minorities in party structures. DFID is increasingly involved in supporting political parties to engage in development and poverty reduction. This includes improving the participation of poor people in party politics, helping parties formulate pro-poor policy platforms, and building capacity among all parties to make the best use of parliamentary channels to influence policy. Where international involvement is particularly sensitive, we can offer in-kind assistance (e.g. libraries and printing facilities) to all parties on an equal basis.

In unstable contexts, codes of conduct for political parties can be an effective strategy for managing conflict (*see 3.2*). A code of conduct can be a mandatory regime included in the electoral law, or a voluntary instrument negotiated among the political parties, often with external mediation. It sets out the behaviours expected of political parties during the campaign, covering areas such as non-interference with journalists, other parties and the conduct of the election itself, anti-corruption, the non-use of inflammatory language, intimidation and violence, and acceptance of the election result. It may include independent monitoring arrangements, with structures for dialogue in the event of disputes. For example, a 2009 code of conduct in Ethiopia established a system of national and regional political party councils which serve as a forum for dialogue and amicable dispute resolution.[16] Experience suggests that codes of conduct may need to be followed up with an active process for communicating the agreed standards to local party activists.
Party financing is a difficult area to regulate. The key issues are ensuring financial transparency and accountability. Over the past decade, there has been a sustained upward trend in campaign expenditure, which can increase improper influence and present barriers to new political entrants. There are various options available for regulating party finance. There is a trend towards providing public finance to political parties (either in addition to or instead of private financing), to limit the influence of fundraising on politics. The state may also offer in-kind support, such as free access to the public broadcaster.   There may be prohibitions on foreign and anonymous funders, and limits on individual donations. A common option is transparency rules, giving the public the right to know the sources of party financing and the details of party expenditure.

Party financing rules can be supported by sanctions such as fines, criminal prosecution and political sanctions (e.g. loss of seats). In practice, however, they can be difficult to enforce, and there are few successful examples anywhere in the developing world. In Bangladesh, Transparency International estimates that campaign spending limits for parliamentary candidates were exceeded by a factor of three. 'Softer' approaches to regulation – voluntary agreements and codes of conduct backed up by media and civil society scrutiny – may therefore be equally effective.

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[16]   Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, "Proclamation on the Electoral Code of Conduct for Political Parties", August 2009.

4.4 Boundary delimitation

In electoral systems with single-member districts or small multi-member districts, periodic redrawing of district boundaries is required in order to prevent inequities emerging through changes in population. In some systems, district boundaries are established by law and are difficult to change; in others, they are the responsibility of the EMB. Revision of boundaries is a complex and highly political process, which is prone to manipulation to advantage particular political forces (gerrymandering) or discriminate against minorities. There is a risk that purely technical support that is not informed by close political oversight may become contentious. To avoid problems, it is important that the criteria for delimiting boundaries are clear and transparent, with a published methodology and guidelines, and that the process allows for public hearings and appeals.

> ### *Redistricting in Sierra Leone*
> In Sierra Leone, the EMB undertook a revision of parliamentary constituency boundaries following a new census in 2004. It was able to achieve a more equitable distribution of seats, decreasing those in over-represented areas favourable to the governing party and increasing seats in opposition areas. This was a remarkable accomplishment, facilitated by the fact that the governing party had won an overwhelming majority in 2002 elections.

4.5 Equality and inclusiveness

The UK places a strong emphasis on promoting equality and inclusiveness, in particular gender equity, within its electoral support. Women have a right to representation and an effective voice, and evidence suggests that a critical mass of women in parliament leads to a greater focus on women's interests within the legislative process. International standards also require electoral rights to be provided to every adult citizen without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth. Political systems that allow all social groups to participate fairly are most effective at managing conflict.

There are a wide range of possible entry points for promoting inclusiveness.

- Electoral laws can explicitly guarantee equal rights for women and other marginalised groups subject to discrimination in areas such as voter eligibility, nomination of candidates and the allocation of parliamentary seats.
- A focus on the rights of women and other marginalised groups should be mainstreamed into assistance for EMBs. For example, prior to the 2010 elections in Sudan, UNIFEM provided a Gender Adviser to the EMB and its state election committees to help ensure a woman-friendly voting environment, and to mainstream gender into media handling and training for

poll workers and electoral observers.[17] EMBs should be encouraged to ensure fair representation of women and disadvantaged groups in their own management and staffing.

- Civic and voter education messages can be tailored to encourage women and minorities to register and vote.
- Voter registration procedures can facilitate access by disadvantaged groups, including the elderly and disabled, for example through the use of mobile teams.   Polling stations should also be organised to facilitate access for the sick, elderly and disabled.
- Political parties should be encouraged to allow women and disadvantaged groups fair access to their nomination procedures, and to include them in their organisational structures.
- Civil society organisations, trade unions, religious organisations and the media may offer stepping stones for women and minorities to enter politics.

One option for consideration is using quotas for women in party candidate lists or the allocation of parliamentary seats. These can be 'hard quotas', entrenched in the electoral law, or 'soft quotas' in the form of voluntary commitments by political parties. Quotas have produced mixed long-term impact, and are the subject of considerable debate. They can generate artificial results, such as women standing as proxy candidates for male relatives.

There are also dangers that women elected pursuant to hard quotas may have less legitimacy and that quotas can become an upper limit on women representatives. On the other hand, a strict quota system in Rwanda has helped create a critical mass of women within parliament, with concrete benefits for women and there is some evidence of a positive effect from randomised control trials in India.

There are many other activities that can promote women's participation in political life, including civil society-based campaigns and networks, developing links between civil and political society, support for cross-party women's caucuses, training for women seeking public office, and using civic and voter education to encourage voters to be more open to women as leaders. To be effective, such activities must be pursued throughout the electoral cycle, and not just in an election year.

Further information:
- DPKO/DFS - DPA, " Joint Guidelines on enhancing the role of women in post-conflict electoral processes", October 2007
- NDI, "A guide to women's voting rights", 2003
- OSCE-ODIHR, "Handbook for monitoring women's participation in elections", 2004
- UNDP, "Electoral financing to advance women's political participation: a guide for UNDP support", 2007

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17 Grant, Emma, "Increasing women's representation in politics: a scoping study of DFID practice", DFID, April 2010, p. 6.

4.6 Media

Freedom of expression and a free media are fundamental to the electoral process. Voters must have adequate information about parties, candidates and their policies to make an informed choice, while equal access to the media for political parties is essential for a fair election. EMBs make extensive use of the media to disseminate information to voters. Importantly, the media is also an actor in its own right, scrutinising the electoral process and exposing any shortcomings. The way the media reports on the electoral process will have a major influence on its legitimacy and potentially its outcome.

The relationship between the EMB and the media is therefore a complex one. The EMB is a customer of the media for its dissemination activities, and at the same time the subject of media reporting. It may also be given a regulatory role over the media, to enforce electoral rules and standards.

The role of the media in elections is often laid down in regulations or codes of conduct which should be accordance with the international standards on freedom of expression. Public broadcasters are generally required to provide all political contenders with fair coverage and equitable access. There may be prohibitions on inflammatory language and misrepresentation. Sometimes restrictions are placed on reporting on the day of the election. Particular care needs to be taken to prevent premature announcement of results, which can compromise the integrity of the process and trigger violent conflict. Compliance with these standards may be monitored by the EMB, an independent media regulator and election observers.[18]

Support to the media can substantially enhance its role throughout the electoral process. Some of the key areas where media support has demonstrated impact are voter education and registration; citizen engagement with political candidates; equitable media access for candidates; women's political participation; wide engagement on policy-based debate; and violence prevention, mitigation and resolution.

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[18] The OSCE has a Special Representative on the Freedom of the Media, who observes media development across member states and can provide early warning when international standards are breached.

In Indonesia, a DFID-supported UNDP programme is conducting a major campaign targeted at women voters to encourage the election of more women to the legislatures. It featured a series of radio and television advertisements highlighting women's concerns, such as food prices and opportunities for children. In DRC, the UK helped fund a radio station established by the UN peacekeeping mission to provide quality independent reporting of the election. In Bangladesh, the BBC World Service Trust partnered with the public broadcaster to air debates among mayoral candidates. The debates were watched by over twenty million people and helped encourage informed choice among voters. The project was subsequently developed into a multi-year project that supported sustained political dialogue throughout the electoral cycle. In Mozambique, a UK-supported project developed a code of conduct for the media in advance of 2008 local elections.

> **Media and electoral violence in Kenya**
> A proliferation of new, private FM radio stations was found to be a contributing factor to the violence following the 2007 election. In the absence of effective regulation, talk radio shows and live coverage of political events became vehicles for the propagation of inter-ethnic hatred. The problem was partly a lack of experience among radio hosts in handling talk radio contributions in volatile situations, suggesting that training programmes may have helped. It should also be noted that vernacular radio stations played an important role in calling for calm after violence erupted.

Media landscapes are changing rapidly with increasing implications for electoral outcomes. New technologies and social media are providing new opportunities for electoral campaigning and for citizens to monitor or report election violence and hold electoral management bodies and other authorities to account. Social media – including SMS messaging and online social networking sites – can also be used to foster hate and incite violence. Mainstream media markets are tending to become more fragmented and in many countries media is increasingly co-opted by political, religious or other forces in society with marked implications for public debate and electoral outcomes. Incorporating such factors more substantively into election risk analyses and governance assessments may be appropriate.

Further information:
- International Federation of Journalists, "Election Reporting Handbook", undated
- NDI, "Media Monitoring Handbook - Chapter 4: The Basics of Monitoring", undated
- BBC World Service Trust/International IDEA, "Support to Media in Electoral Processes, Workshop Report and Conclusions"
- The BBC World Service Trust operates an Advisory and Response Facility for DFID Governance Advisers seeking further information or guidance on media and elections: contact Kate.noble3@bbc.co.uk
- ACE Electoral Knowledge Network information on opinion polls and regulating media coverage of them.

4.7 Voter registration

Voter registration is often the most complex and expensive component of the electoral process, and the one where external assistance is most commonly sought. Registration involves identifying which citizens are eligible to vote, and producing a list or register of voters for use on polling day. It is often a contested process, and if flawed may compromise the entire election.

There are various methods of registration available. Registration may be 'active', requiring citizens to express their intention to vote through a positive act of registration, or 'passive' – compiled from an existing civil registry or other database. In established electoral systems, the register will usually be a permanent one, managed by the EMB. In post-conflict settings, however, if the population is highly mobile and conditions are not in place for maintaining a permanent register, it may be preferable to use a periodic voter register, compiled for a single election. However, this a relatively expensive and time-consuming option.

Successful voter registration in Bangladesh
For the 2008 Bangladesh elections, the UK supported a UNDP-managed Preparation of Electoral Roll with Photographs (PERP) project. This project provided essential support for a highly successful registration of 81 million voters from scratch over a 15-month period. The process was a collective national effort involving civil servants, the army and civil society. Voter registration required 8,500 laptop computers and webcams, 10,000 fingerprint scanners, 3,040 scanners, 500 servers and 1,100 desktops, all procured through PERP. Training was provided for 3,706 assistant registration officers, 42,052 supervisors and 195,785 enumerators. The resulting voter list was found to be more than 95% accurate, and provided a major boost to the credibility, skill level and self-confidence of the EMB.

A voter register that is as accurate as possible is the first defence against electoral fraud. It involves ensuring that the voter list is kept up to date, that duplicates are eliminated and that voters who are deceased or no longer resident in the district are removed. Political parties often go to great lengths to ensure their supporters register, including transporting them to registration sites, but parties should be prevented from registering supporters in other districts as a form of electoral manipulation.

Voter lists should be made public, with provision for audit and appeal. Some countries also issue voter registration cards, including photographs and/or fingerprints, to protect against multiple voting.

Voter registration is a critical area for promoting equality and inclusiveness in the electoral system. Registration is often accompanied by specific campaigns designed to encourage women and excluded groups to register.

Voter registration is being changed dramatically through the introduction of information and communication technologies (ICT). There is a trend towards the use of biometric data, particularly in post-conflict contexts where other civil data is unavailable. In DRC, for example, international support enabled the EMB to acquire 10,000 biometric voter registration kits (including laptops, fingerprint scanners, colour printers and field generators), allowing voter cards to be issued on the spot. ICT also plays a key role in the storage and transmission of voter data, although with potential trade-offs between efficiency and data security.

However, experience shows that the introduction of new technologies needs to be done with considerable caution. New ICT systems are expensive, challenging to implement and can leave the EMB hostage to foreign vendors. The equipment needs to be appropriate for the country context, including the climate and the general level of ICT proficiency among the population. Technology that is unfamiliar to the public may be viewed with suspicion, compromising the legitimacy of the process.

4.8 Political party and candidate registration

Political parties and candidates standing for election are required to register with the EMB, which verifies their eligibility. This can be a time consuming process, given the inevitability of appeals against exclusions. A common issue in political party registration is low capacity within the political parties themselves, which may have little understanding of the legal and procedural requirements. EMBs should have an active outreach programme to the parties, to ensure they understand the requirements. Other common issues that EMBs may face include late registration, partial completion of registration forms and parties changing their minds at the last minute as to whether or not to boycott the election.

4.9 Civic and voter awareness

A number of forms of public education and awareness-raising may be used to support elections and the broader democratic process.

i) **Voter information** is the dissemination of basic, factual information to citizens on how to participate in the election.

ii) **Voter education** addresses voters' motivation and willingness to participate, and includes more complex messages – e.g. the value of voting; the link between human rights and elections; the role, rights and responsibilities of voters; the secrecy of the ballot and so on. These concepts require explanation, and should ideally be reinforced over a period of time.

iii) **Civic education** means communicating broader concepts about democracy, including the roles and responsibilities of citizens, the structure and function of government and the significance of elections.

While basic voter information is usually organised by the EMB, voter and civic education are costly, long-term processes involving the participation of other actors, including NGOs, faith groups and other state bodies (including through school curricula). Different forms of media may be appropriate for different segments of the population. In many developing countries, television, the internet and print media is mainly limited to urban populations, while radio is more effective in rural areas. Accessible formats like pop songs and soap operas may be appropriate.

Voter and civic education programmes need to begin well in advance of the election period (and, where appropriate, voter registration), and should be linked with other democratisation initiatives. Surveys can be used to gauge initial levels of awareness and monitor the impact of the campaign across different population groups. The messages, language, media and distribution methods chosen should also be relevant to vulnerable and marginalised groups. While civil society organisations and grass-roots organisations have a comparative advantage in this area, care needs to be taken with their selection and training to avoid inconsistent or biased messages.

4.10 Electoral dispute resolution

Disputes are inherent to the electoral process, however well managed, and can arise at any stage of the electoral cycle. A good electoral system provides legitimate avenues for resolving disputes and ensuring that electoral contests are played according to the rules. However, this is an area that is often underemphasised in electoral assistance.

Dispute resolution can be both formal and informal. Formal systems are usually judicial in nature, although the EMB may also have a role in hearing complaints. There may be special electoral tribunals, or electoral divisions within ordinary courts. Formal dispute resolution involves a number of elements, including a clear statement of rules and principles, clear jurisdiction, a right for affected candidates or parties or citizens to bring complaints, timely and independent and impartial adjudication, an appeals procedure, a clear enforcement mechanism and the capacity to prosecute those responsible for criminal acts. Timeliness is key, as a delayed remedy may be meaningless within the context of a particular election (e.g. if a disqualified candidate is reinstated too late to participate).

In fragile contexts, informal dispute resolution mechanisms may be equally effective. Many disputes are resolved through informal negotiations between political parties, or mediated by civic leaders or other respected personalities. In the event that mediation fails, parties still have the option of seeking a remedy from the formal system. Some disputes, such as electoral fraud, are more appropriately resolved through established independent and transparent procedures, in the interests of consolidating democratic principles in the longer term.

> **Electoral dispute resolution in DRC**
> In DRC, a special division of the High Court was established for the rapid settlement of electoral disputes. While the court functioned competently, a high percentage of the appeals (60%) were rejected on purely technical grounds, indicating that parties had a poor understanding of the process.

Note that for electoral dispute resolution to work, all parties need to be aware of the appeals process and have confidence in its integrity. The EMB is responsible for ensuring that political parties and candidates are aware of their rights.

> Further information:
> - OSCE-ODIHR, "Resolving electoral disputes in the OSCE area: towards a standard election dispute monitoring system", 2007
> - International IDEA, "Handbook on Electoral Justice", forthcoming.

4.11 Election security

The provision of security for elections – and public confidence in the level of security – is often a critical area for electoral assistance. Insecurity can suppress voter turnout, particularly among women and where voters travel long distances on foot to vote. Intimidation and threats of violence can therefore be used to manipulate the electoral process. Violent incidents during the electoral period can easily spiral into wider conflict, if the security forces fail to respond quickly and effectively.

The security forces may also be the source of the problem. They may be allied with particular political actors, or competing for power in their own right. Where there is a history of conflict, security forces may be alienated from sections of the population, compromising their ability to play a legitimate security role. Design of electoral support should therefore include careful analysis of the political role of the security forces, their public image and their ability to act neutrally.

Providing security for elections involves a complex series of operations, including protecting candidates and policing public events during the campaign period, ensuring the safe delivery and storage of electoral materials, and protecting voters, voting places and officials on election day. In fragile contexts, a visible presence of security forces on polling day can help reassure voters and lower tensions. While election security is usually a civilian policing function, there are countries (such as Bangladesh) where army deployment for elections is considered legitimate. In post-conflict settings, where regular electoral machinery is not yet in place, the security forces may also be called upon for logistical support, including transport of ballot boxes, but must be subject to effective supervision by the EMB and/or international forces. EMBs can be encouraged to lead on joint planning for electoral security with police and security forces.

It is vital that the police understand the mechanics of the election and their own role in the process. A common form of international support for election security is training of security forces in the ballot process and electoral norms. They need to understand the available dispute resolution mechanisms, so they can support the peaceful resolution of electoral disputes. They need the ability to respond appropriately and effectively to incidents. Training in public-order policing may therefore be appropriate. The risks of an improper response subsequent to UK-supplied training must be assessed.
It is also important that the public understands the role of the police. Election security can therefore be supported by public awareness campaigns informing the public of the powers and responsibilities of the police and their own rights, so that any infractions are clearly visible.

Another form of support is provision of equipment. In DRC in 2006, the UK provided radios to the police in advance of the election, giving them for the first time an effective command and control capacity across the territory. As well as supporting the election, this proved to be a useful entry point for later UK support for security sector reform. However, the provision of equipment is a potentially risky form of support, as it may be used for improper purposes. It needs to be based on a careful risk analysis and effective supervisory arrangements. Care also needs to be taken to assess whether the provision of security equipment falls within the definition of ODA. Support from the UK Conflict Pools provides greater flexibility in this respect.

Support for electoral security is not limited to working with security forces. It is important that the police have good relationships with the communities they serve, built up well in advance of the election, to give them early warning of trouble and enable them to calm tensions and build confidence. Working with civil society intermediaries, we can support dialogue between security forces and local authorities, elders, religious leaders and youth groups.

4.12 Out-of country voting

External or out-of-country voting is a difficult and often controversial issue in countries with large numbers of migrant workers or refugees. According to International IDEA, around half of all countries permit some form of external voting, whether proxy voting, postal or electronic voting or personal voting in overseas diplomatic missions. Eligibility for citizens abroad may be limited, for example by reference to time spent out of the country, which calls for additional verification procedures. Following major refugee movements, the question of where refugees and displaced persons should register to vote – i.e. in their place of origin, or their place of preferred future residence – can be highly controversial and open to manipulation. International experience suggests that, where voting is organised in refugee camps, the results should not be published as such, as camp populations are vulnerable to retaliation.

> Further information:
> * International IDEA, "Voting from Abroad: The International IDEA Handbook", 2007

4.13 Results verification

Results verification spans the counting of votes and announcement of local results through the aggregation process and the release of preliminary and final results by the EMB. This critical phase of the process must be very well managed, balancing speed of delivery with accuracy and transparency, to ensure the credibility of the election.[19]

At this point in the election, it is essential that the process be perceived as fair. The process must be clearly explained to the media and the public through a good communication strategy. EMBs often establish a media centre, to provide the media with timely access to information. However, there are dangers in releasing localised results as soon as they become available, as this can give a misleading impression that a particular candidate is going to win. However, there are also risks in delaying results, which can raise public fears that the results are being manipulated.   The timetable for releasing results should be announced in advance, and throughout the process, both national officials and international actors must take care to avoid careless public statements.

4.14 Election monitoring

Independent monitoring of elections by international and/or domestic observers is one of the most important tools for managing risks of electoral fraud and violence. They also provide informed recommendations on how to improve the election process which can form the basis for action following the election. Although the terms are often used interchangeably, the literature distinguishes between three different types of independent scrutiny of elections:

* **Election observation:** gathering information and making informed assessments, but without intervention

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[19] See discussion of parallel vote tabulation in section 4.14 below.

- **Election monitoring:** observing the electoral process and intervening if laws are violated

- **Election supervision:** certifying the validity of the electoral process.

Election observers can scrutinise many different aspects of the electoral process: the accuracy of voter registration; the freedom of political parties to present their platform and express their opinions; the fairness of media coverage; the effectiveness of the polling process; compliance with electoral laws; the integrity of the vote count; and the effectiveness of electoral dispute resolution. They can be tasked with monitoring conflict risks – for example, whether law-enforcement agencies respond appropriately to incidents. They often make recommendations for improvements to the electoral system. Comprehensive observation therefore involves a lengthy engagement, beginning well in advance of election day.

> ***Checklist of issues for determining whether to observe an election***
>
> Basic agreement with the host country
> - Receipt of an official invitation
> - General support for observation by principal political parties and groups
> - Prior understanding that observers may be withdrawn in certain circumstances
>
> Initial assessment of likely character of the election
> - Existence of basic rights and freedoms
> - Existing constitution and election laws in the host country
> - Credibility of the electoral authorities in the host country
> - Circumstances affecting the observers' capacity to determine the relevant factors for the credibility of the election
> - Guarantee of rights for observers
>
> Practical considerations in mounting an observation mission
> - Adequate lead time for preparations
> - Availability of essential planning information
> - Availability of professional expertise
> - Financial and other resources
> - Co-operation with other observer missions (including domestic observers)
> - Safety of observers.
>
> *IDEA, "Determining involvement in international election observation", 2000*

Governments often request international observation, to provide legitimacy. We would generally support a request for international observation where the basic conditions for free and fair elections are in place, and where practical conditions allow for a successful observation mission. International IDEA has produced a useful checklist of issues to consider in determining whether to observe an election (see box above).

The EU, the UN, the OSCE and the Commonwealth all have more than a decade of experience with election monitoring in diverse environments, and offer well-established standards and procedures (there is an International Declaration of Principles and Code of Practice on election observation). Commonwealth Observer Groups (COGs) tend to be smaller and less costly missions, usually led by former government ministers and staffed by a combination of politicians, civil society

activists and experts. In some cases, the UK is required to lobby well in advance to secure an international observation mission.

Observation by regional organisations is becoming increasingly important.   The African Union (AU)[20] aims to observe all elections in Africa through its Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit, while the Pan-African Parliament has produced some technically rigorous election observation reports. The regional bodies, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), may in the past have had difficulties in criticising their members, but in recent times ECOWAS has taken decisive action on democratic issues. For example, Guinea was suspended after the 2008 coup, while Niger was suspended in October 2009 because of the failure of the ruling party to hold presidential elections as required by the constitution. The AU has censured various member states, including Guinea, Madagascar and Mauritania, following unconstitutional changes in government.

> DFID Uganda's Deepening Democracy Programme is supporting the Democracy Monitoring Group (DEMGroup), a consortium of civil society organisations, to monitor the entire electoral cycle, from voter registration through to declaration of results. One of the themes for assistance will be to promote the political participation of women, as candidates, electoral officials and voters. DEMGroup will carry out thorough analysis on issues surrounding women's participation, and monitor the efforts of political parties to reach out to women. It will organise a series of high profile events bringing together different stakeholders to discuss gender issues in the electoral process, and will work closely with journalists to increase their awareness of gender issues. It also hopes to produce a code of conduct on women's participation.

Respected international NGOs such as the Carter Center, NDI, IRI, Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS) and the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa have extensive experience in organising international observation missions and acting as centres of technical expertise for election monitoring.

Domestic election observation is another important element, where civil society organisations are able to organise freely and find adequate resources. Local monitoring organisations have the advantage of scale, able to field far more personnel than international groups. The Philippine NGO NAMFREL, for example, deploys up to 500,000 observers across 80,000 polling stations.[21] Knowledge of the political culture, language and territory also enables domestic observers to see problems that would go unnoticed by foreigners. Perhaps most importantly, mobilising national civil society around elections can make a wider contribution to democratisation.

However, even where domestic observation is well organised, there may also be a need for international observers to provide international visibility. It is not uncommon for several observation missions to operate in parallel. While some diversity in

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[20] The African Union has a Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance that will come into force once it has been ratified by 26 member states. As of May 2010, 29 states have signed the Charter, but only two (Mauritania and Ethiopia) have ratified it.

[21] ERIS, "Promoting and defending democracy: the work of domestic election observer groups around the world", undated, p. 82.

approach and methodology may be valuable, country posts could explore whether there are options for promoting coordination to improve the overall impact.

Where the risk of electoral fraud is high, domestic observers may undertake a parallel vote tabulation (PVT). Taking a representative sample of polling stations, observers record local results and transmit them to a data collection centre. These sample results can be tabulated rapidly to produce an accurate prediction of the election results. A PVT is able to detect many instances of electoral fraud, making it an effective deterrent. A PVT played a pivotal role in Georgia's 2003 'Rose Revolution'. Conducted across 20% of the polling stations, the PVT detecting significant levels of fraud, leading to peaceful demonstrations in front of parliament and a decision by the Supreme Court to annul some of the official results.[22]

Further information:
- ERIS, "Promoting and defending democracy: the work of domestic election observer groups around the world", undated
- IDEA, "Determining involvement in international election observation", 2000
- OSCE-ODIHR, "Election Observation Handbook", 5th ed., 2005
- Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors.

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[22]   *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Annex A: Risk factors for electoral violence

This list of risk factors for electoral violence is taken from:

UNDP, "[Elections and conflict prevention: a guide to analysis, planning and programming](#)", August 2009

Contextual	• A pervasive culture of ethnic rivalries and violence • A proliferation of personality-driven political parties • Corruption and a fragile justice system • Perceptions of unresolved historical injustices • International dynamics (e.g. international pressure for elections against the wishes of one of the parties)
Process factors	• Elections are seen as an event instead of a longer-term process • Lack of adequate ground rules (codes of conduct) or contested legal contexts • Zero-sum approaches to decision making • Weak facilitation of meetings and forums. Protocol dictates that powerful individuals lead negotiations, no matter how (un)skilled they are in process issues or the extent of their emotional or social intelligence. • Lack of organisational development assistance for election-related bodies. • Resistance to and rejection of advice from well-meaning election experts • Neglect of 'the attitudinal dimension of divided societies'—which refers to situations in which different groups within a state do not perceive themselves as parts of the same national community • Lack of emphasis on attitudes and value-based leadership (e.g. the belief that a procedurally flawless election will guarantee acceptance of the results and healing of relationships) • Fundraising from 'undisclosed benefactors'
Relationship factors	• The attitudes and behaviour of politicians and officials often have destructive effects on relationships, especially as election time draws closer • Lack of trust in EMB or among the members of the EMB • 'Elite-driven style' of elections as opposed to simple and transparent communication processes
Political factors	• Weak governance could mean that governments may act as potential instigators of violence • Extreme political fluidity and recurring inter-party conflict • Lack of political party guidance/capacity • Intra-party divisions and power struggles often leading to a proliferation of political parties along lines of overlapping social differences of identity and class • Non-consensual political re-demarcation of election district boundaries • Unclear mandates of EMBs, exacerbated by the electorate's high expectations that the EMB should intervene in cases of corruption • Unresolved issues from previous elections and failure to correct

	• past mistakes • Political culture of 'the politics of the breadwinners' due to the fact that elected officials do get a salary and would therefore protect their jobs at all costs • Political culture of seeing elections as a game of 'winner takes all' • Political culture of blaming versus proactive dialogue • Premature victory claims • Non-acceptance of election losses even when the results are affirmed or verified by neutral third-party missions • Exclusion "may lead to violent conflict because it provides the grievances that generate potential support for protests", but many excluded groups, on the other hand, do not resort to violence
Media	• Bias of and level of access to the state media • Absence of broadcast legislation • Unregulated proliferation of personality-driven and political candidate sponsored radio and TV stations that engage in hate speech and incitement to violence • Lack of codes of conduct, which allows undisciplined and conflict-generating programs and talk show hosts to fuel violence (as in Guyana previous to 2006 and Rwanda)
Administrative inadequacies	• EMBs without adequate capacity or lacking in impartiality and transparency • Unresolved issues from previous elections, e.g. the failure to record and learn from past mistakes • Logistical flaws and inaccurate databases and voter lists • Failure to secure and tighten operational procedures, e.g. tallying, announcement of the results • Poor communication (i) between election commissions and parties, and (ii) from those entities to voters. • Lengthy and inadequately explained delays in the announcement of election results • Absence of transparency in election result tabulation • Lack of transparency in procurement of election-related resources, including supplies and personnel • Absence of an effective and impartial judiciary or other system to resolve and provide remedies for complaints
Corruption	• Abuse of state resources • Vote rigging • Impunity enjoyed by political leaders • Actors involved in illegal economic activities sponsoring candidates or controlling media
Security and policing	• Over-reactive policing • Police inaction to apprehend culprits • Lack of capacity to investigate • Availability of small arms

Annex B: Further guidance material

Where possible, documents have been hyperlinked; internal UK documents are available on the [DFID Elections Hub](#).

UK government documents

DFID, "Building Peaceful States and Societies: A DFID Practice Paper", 2010

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Annex C: Organisations engaged in electoral assistance

UN Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), Department of Political Affairs	**About** The foundation of UN electoral assistance is Article 21 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which provides that "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections…." **What they do** Although the Department of Political Affairs plays a central coordinating role, electoral assistance projects are implemented by a variety of UN entities including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the UN Volunteers and the UN Office for Project Services. http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/ead/ S-3070 Electoral Assistance Division Department of Political Affairs United Nations Secretariat New York, NY, 10017 United States of America Tel: +1 212 963 8737 Fax: +1 212 963 2979 Email: eadroster@un.org
European Commission	**About** External co-operation programmes of the European Commission. **What they do** Support to elections takes the form of electoral assistance projects and EU election observation missions (usually for national elections). These are independent but complementary activities implemented through different financial instruments (geographic funds for the electoral assistance and centrally managed EIDHR funds for the observation missions). http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/human_rights/election_observation/index_en.htm European Commission EuropeAid Co-operation Office B - 1049 Brussels Belgium
European Commission (EC), the UNDP-EC Task Force on Electoral Assistance	**About** The "Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance" (JTF) is formed by EC and UNDP staff dealing with Electoral Assistance at HQ levels in Brussels, New York, Mexico City and Copenhagen. The purpose of the JTF is to "further strengthen and facilitate the EC-UNDP partnership in the electoral assistance field and aims to improve the overall efficiency and adherence of the projects to the common EC/UNDP strategic approach." **What they do** The tasks of the JTF include: a) Operational Guidance and implementation strategies for the management of joint EC UNDP electoral assistance projects; b) Liaison and Interactions with the different services involved, at headquarters and field level, throughout the operations cycle to ensure the application of the recommended quality standards; c) Training, development of content and dissemination of information. The website has a wide range of links to many resources, tools and guidance: http://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/ Joint Task Force 35 Square de Meeus, 6th floor 1000, Brussels – Belgium Telephone: +32 2 274 10 20 Fax: +32 2 274 10 29 E-mail: info@ec-undp-electoralassistance.org

OSCE **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights**	**About** The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is based in Warsaw, Poland. It has several departments dealing with democratisation, human rights, elections, Roma and Sinti issues, and tolerance and non-discrimination. It is active throughout the OSCE area. **What they do** On elections, the ODIHR deploys election observation missions to OSCE participating States to assess the implementation of OSCE commitments relating to elections. The Office also conducts technical-assistance projects and legislative reviews. http://www.osce.org/odihr/ OSCE Secretariat Wallnerstrasse 6 1010 Vienna Austria Tel: +43 1 514 36 6000 Fax: +43 1 514 36 6996 Info@osce.org
Commonwealth Secretariat	**About** The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 countries that support each other and work together towards shared goals in democracy and development. Support for elections, in particular through providing observation missions, is a key role. **What they do** Commonwealth Secretaries-General constitute Commonwealth Observer Groups (COGs) at the request of a member government. Observer Groups are asked to report on the credibility of the electoral process, whether the conditions exist for a free expression of will by the electors and if the election results reflect the wishes of the people. Each Group's report also contains practical recommendations to help improve election arrangements for the future. In addition to sending Commonwealth Observer Groups the Secretary-General also sometimes sends Commonwealth Expert Teams (CETs). These are smaller and less high-profile. http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Internal/39079/election_observation/ Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HX, UK Phone: +44 (0)20 7747 6500 (switchboard) Fax: +44 (0)20 7930 0827 Email: info@commonwealth.int
International IDEA	**About** The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance is an intergovernmental organization. Based in Stockholm, they have offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America **What they do** Its programmes aim to a) Provide knowledge to democracy builders, b) Provide policy development and analysis and c) Support democratic reform. http://www.idea.int/ International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) Strömsborg, SE-103 34 Stockholm, Sweden Tel: +46 8 698 37 00 Fax: +46 8 20 24 22 E-mail: info@idea.int

[SADC Parliamentary Forum](#)	**About** The Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) was established in 1997 in accordance with Article 9 (2) of the SADC Treaty as an autonomous institution of SADC. It is a regional inter-parliamentary body composed of 13 parliaments representing over 3,500 parliamentarians in the SADC region. These member parliaments are Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South, Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Forum seeks to bring regional experiences to bear at the national level, to promote best practices in the role of parliaments in regional cooperation and integration as outlined in the SADC Treaty and the Forum Constitution. Its main aim is to provide a platform for parliaments and parliamentarians to promote and improve regional integration in the SADC region, through parliamentary involvement. **What they do** The Forum has taken a keen interest in election observation in its member states. In this regard the Forum has observed elections in Namibia and Mozambique in and Zimbabwe Mauritius and Tanzania in Based on these observations the Forum has developed and adopted Electoral Norms and Standards for the SADC region which serve as bench marks against which to assess the management and the conduct of elections in the region. http://www.sadcpf.org/ SADC Forum House Parliament Gardens Love Street Private Bag 13361 Windhoek Namibia Telephone: (+264 61) 287 00 00 Fax: (+264 61) 254 642/247 569 Email: info@sadcpf.org
[Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa (EISA)](#)	**About** EISA has evolved from an election NGO servicing Southern Africa into a more diversified organisation working throughout the continent with national, regional, Pan-African and global partners. Outside the southern African region, EISA has current and past field offices in countries like Burundi, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Sudan. **What they do** The Institute's work covers not only elections but also other democracy and governance fields like political party development, conflict management, legislative strengthening, the African Peer Review Mechanism and local governance and decentralisation. http://www.eisa.org.za/index.html PO Box 740 Auckland Park 2006 South Africa Tel +27 11 381 60 00 Fax +27 11 482 61 63

International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)	**About** The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support to electoral democracy. Offices throughout the world. **What they do** Undertakes field work, research and advocacy. Provides comprehensive support and information on all aspects of elections, including briefing papers on most elections globally. http://www.ifes.org/ See also the IFES Election guide, which provides summaries of all national and sub-national elections undertaken globally, covering processes and outcomes. http://www.electionguide.org/ IFES 1850 K Street, NW, 5th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006 Tel: +1.202.350.6700 Fax: +1.1.202.350.6701 info.communications@ifes.org
National Democratic Institute (NDI)	**About** Describes itself as a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organisation based in Washington DC. **What they do** Provides consultancy, capacity development and research on democracy and democratic processes. Their website says "NDI works on five continents with political parties, governments, parliaments and civic groups to establish and strengthen democratic institutions and practices. The Institute uses a multinational approach that reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies. That philosophy has been applied in more than 110 countries since NDI's founding in 1983." http://www.ndi.org/ National Democratic Institute 2030 M Street NW, Fifth Floor Washington, DC 20036-3306 TEL: + 1 202 728 5500 FAX: + 1 202 728 5520
The International Republican Institute (IRI)	**About** Established in April 1983, IRI describes itself as "a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide by developing political parties, civic institutions, open elections, good governance and the rule of law". Funded primarily through grants from the U.S. State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development and the National Endowment for Democracy. It is not affiliated to the Republican Party. **What they do** Conducts training programmes on themes such as political party and candidate development, good governance practices, civil society development, civic education, women's and youth leadership development, electoral reform and election monitoring, and political expression in closed societies. Also publishes the influential "Election Watch" pre and post election monitoring reports. http://www.iri.org/ **1225 Eye Street, NW,** **Suite 700** **Washington, DC 20005** **USA** Tel: +1 202 408 9450

Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS)	**About**: Electoral Reform International Services is a UK not-for-profit non-governmental organisation which provides support to strengthen democratic institutions, processes and culture around the world. ERIS covers the full spectrum of democracy assistance and advice. **What they do**: ERIS designs, creates, and manages major projects; provides experts to assist election management bodies and other key democracy institutions, the media, and civil society; recruits and manages UK election observers on behalf of the FCO for European Union and OSCE election observation missions and works with citizen observer groups; offers a range of training courses (including for election observers), organises conferences and publishes reports. In future ERIS plans to collaborate in particular with grassroots organisations which are working to prevent election-related conflict, to hold elected representatives to account, to empower women, ethnic and religious minorities, and in general to promote citizen participation in the democratic process. ERIS has 800 democracy experts on its database, has worked in 70 countries and has provided experts for the UK and other governments, international agencies, election management bodies, non-governmental organisations and other key democracy institutions. http://www.eris.org.uk/ 6 Chancel Street London SE10UU United Kingdom Tel: +44(0)20 7620 3794 Fax: +44(0)20 7928 4366 Email: erisuk@eris.org.uk
Carter Center	**About** Founded in 1982 by former President Jimmy Carter, the Carter Center "seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health". It is funded y individuals, corporations and charities. It has several programs (Peace, Democracy, Human Rights, Conflict Resolution and one each on the Americas and China) **What they do** Among other things, under its democracy program the Carter Center fields observation missions to elections throughout the world. As well as observing elections, it seeks to develop standards for elections (in liaison with the UNEAD and NDI). http://www.cartercenter.org/homepage.html The Carter Center One Copenhill 453 Freedom Parkway Atlanta, GA 30307 Tel: + 1 (404) 420-5100 or + 1 (800) 550-3560 Email: carterweb@emory.edu

Westminster Foundation for Democracy	**About** The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) was established in 1992 to support the consolidation of democratic practices and institutions in developing democracies. It is an independent public body sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), specialising in parliamentary strengthening and political party development. **What they do** WFD draws directly on the expertise and involvement of all the Westminster political parties and works both an a party-to-party and cross-party basis to develop the capacity of local political parties and politicians to operate effectively in pluralistic and vibrant democracies. The Foundation's parliamentary work aims to strengthen good governance through developing sustainable capacity among parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and parliamentary structures to ensure transparency and accountability. http://www.wfd.org/pages/home.aspx?i_PageID=1811 Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Artillery House, 11/19 Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RT United Kingdom Tel +44 (0) 20 7799 1311 Fax +44 (0) 20 7799 1312 Email wfd@wfd.org
The Electoral Knowledge Network	**About** **The Electoral Knowledge Network arose from** the ACE (Administration and Cost of Elections) Project by IDEA, IFES and UNDESA. Founded in 1998, ACE is a collaborative effort between nine organisations: IDEA, EISA, Elections Canada, the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE), IFES, UNDESA, UNDP and the UNEAD. The European Commission is an ex-officio member. **What they do** Provides a comprehensive online knowledge portal that provides information on electoral processes, including discussions on key themes and individual elements of the electoral cycle. Has links to much research and useful information on specific issues, as well as individual elections. http://aceproject.org/
The Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA)	**About** Association of 1,500 former and current parliamentarians, from the European Parliament and almost all EU member states, plus Norway and Switzerland. AWEPA has Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council and is on the list of ODA Eligible Organisations of OECD/DAC. **What they do** Works in partnership with African parliaments to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Africa, keep Africa high on the political agenda in Europe, and facilitate African-European parliamentary dialogue. http://www.awepa.org/index_en.html The Association Of European Parliamentarians With Africa Prins Hendrikkade 48 1012 AC Amsterdam, The Netherlands Tel: +31 20 524 5678 Fax: +31 20 622 0130 Email: amsterdam@awepa.org