

## AT THE SERVICE OF ELECTORAL ACTORS

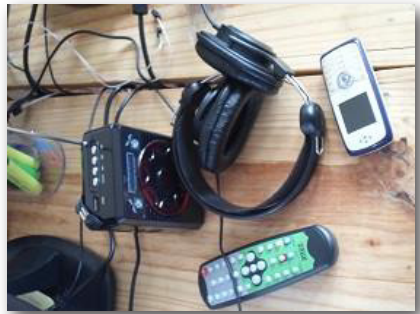
The media play a crucial role in voters' awareness and information, they are also a determining factor regarding how people form opinions that will influence their choices when voting. To ensure the respect of the free will of the voters, it is essential to observe and analyze media coverage all along the electoral process. Not only during the election campaign, but also beforehand. It is equally important to monitor the institutional communication of Electoral Management Bodies, to keep a track of how their perception and portrayal in the media.

Media monitoring is at the heart of any assessment of media coverage of electoral processes. This implies the supervision of all (or key) media broadcasts, following a systematic, objective and standardized methodology to monitor their output and analyze their content. All forms of media can be monitored, be they audiovisual such as radio or television, written press or online sources.

Media monitoring is a long-term activity, which requires committing qualified human resources. It is not a goal in itself, but rather a tool that will only be effective if it has clear objectives. We can distinguish between four different types of media monitoring objectives, although they may also be intertwined:

- 1 Media monitoring at the service of public and institutional communication.** The aim being to support electoral management bodies' communication strategies and assess their visibility, as well as the technical aspects of the electoral process, in order to adjust public communication depending on the actual needs and goals.
- 2 Monitoring incitement to violence, through the media.** This generally implies hate speech and any other message that incites violence, discrimination, social and political tensions, etc.
- 3 Monitoring related to electoral campaign regulations.** This serves as a complementary tool to verify campaign spending, abuse of public resources and the use of any banned symbols during the campaign (e.g. national flags and symbols).
- 4 Monitoring political pluralism;** to verify whether the press, primarily state-owned media, ensures equitable coverage of political actors (or equal coverage, as established in relevant regulations concerning the role of the media during electoral campaigns).

The European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES, [www.eces.eu](http://www.eces.eu)) in partnership with the Research Institute on Communication and Media of the Osservatorio di Pavia ([www.osservatorio.it](http://www.osservatorio.it)) has developed several media monitoring projects, among others, in Burkina Faso and Madagascar.



## MEDIA MONITORING AT THE SERVICE OF THE INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION'S (CENI) INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION.

### BURKINA FASO 2015/2016:



**PACTE**  
BURKINA FASO

As part of the Project to Support Credible and Transparent Elections in Burkina Faso (PACTE-BF), media monitoring is developed as a tool to support the CENI's institutional communication.

#### **This particular media monitoring captures:**

- 1** The quality of coverage of the technical aspects of the electoral process of the CENI and its representatives.
- 2** The main themes that shape the electoral period and how they are portrayed.
- 3** The tone of the coverage regarding the CENI and the different aspects of the process.
- 4** The propensity of different media to offer balanced, neutral and precise coverage or, its contrary –the tendency towards bias and lack of objectivity regarding the organization of the electoral process.

The Media Monitoring Unit analyzes a sample of media outlets prepared in consultation with the CENI and produces analytical reports that are used by the PACTE-BF Institutional Communication Expert in formulating corrective advice and strategies to adapt and improve the CENI's communication.



# MONITORING OF POLITICAL PLURALISM AND MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

## MADAGASCAR 2013-2015:



As part of the Project to Support Credible and Transparent Elections in Madagascar (PACTE-Madagascar), ECES supported media monitoring conducted by the Committee for National Election Observation – Civic Education (KMF/ENOC) on the quality of the media coverage of the electoral process and on the compliance with regulations related to political pluralism. The monitoring also focused on unfounded opinions and hate speech conveyed by, and through the media. The PACTE project followed on from the INCIPALS project (Citizen's Initiative for the Consolidation of Peace, Leadership and Stability). INCIPALS has been designed in response to the recommendations of the electoral observation missions and the self-assessment of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Within the context of this project, the Media Monitoring Unit conducts an integrated content analysis of the media coverage to provide information with tools to promote self-regulation and professionalization of the media and of the CSOs.



## BENIN 2015:



Within the context of the Technical Assistance Mission to the Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA) of Benin, aimed at contributing to the consolidation of democracy in Benin by strengthening the electoral administration's capacities to organize and conduct the presidential elections of 2016, a Media Monitoring Unit has been created.

The Media Monitoring Unit was in charge of assessing the media coverage of the electoral process and the CENA. On the base of a media sample established with the CENA, the Media Monitoring Unit produces analytical reports that are used by the Institutional Communication Expert to support the communication strategy of the CENA.

