

## Preventing Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence (PEV)

The European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) has developed a unique two-pronged approach to prevent and manage election-related conflict and violence. The PEV approach forms part of ECES already copyright protected strategy “European Response to Electoral Cycle Support (EURECS)”<sup>1</sup>.

The PEV approach is the broader framework of a number of activities, also copyright protected by ECES namely the training curriculum Leadership and Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD)<sup>2</sup> methodology and the research methodology, Electoral Political Economy Analysis (EPEA)<sup>3</sup>.

### What is the PEV approach?

The PEV approach is composed by several ECES copyrighted activities, fitted into two phases: one preventative phase and one management phase. The preventative phase entails understanding the rules of the game in a certain electoral context via the EPEA, identify key electoral stakeholders that hold potential to assist in election conflict prevention, and capacitate them using the LEAD curriculum. This preventative phase is about establishing a level of readiness amongst national and grassroots actors and assist, coordinate and advise on a robust response to electoral conflicts by tackling its root causes. The second phase focuses on intervening to manage an already erupted electoral conflict. This is done by utilising the platform of electoral stakeholders that was established under phase one. It also entails triggering interventions amongst the national and grassroots actors to employ conflict management and mediation & dialogue skills in electoral contexts. The second phase must always be documented as case studies to draw lessons on interventions and see how to use the lessons learned in other situations, contexts and elections. As such, the PEV approach also serves as: i) systematic data gathering on election conflict prevention: causes and effects and, ii) case studies that is fed into the LEAD curriculum taught to other electoral stakeholders as a real life sample of election conflict prevention at work.

### Why is it unique?

The uniqueness of the PEV approach also lies in the sequencing of phase one and two: the phases *can* and *should* overlap for achieving the best impact. The PEV approach should be

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<sup>1</sup> The main aim of the EURECS is to offer an innovative delivery mechanism for electoral and democracy assistance to implement projects and programs that are consistent with European values and EU policies. It is built to help prevent, mitigate and manage electoral related conflicts, in line with international standards, commitments and obligations. <http://www.eces.eu/eurecs>

<sup>2</sup> The LEAD curriculum is developed by and for electoral stakeholders in view of bringing together key actors to explore key-concepts of the electoral cycle, its fragile phases, the monitoring and reporting techniques of election related violence but also with the fundamentals of leadership and confidence-building actions among the different electoral stakeholders using innovative adult learning technics and role play. The LEAD methodology is copyrighted since 2016. <http://www.eces.eu/lead-training>

<sup>3</sup> The EPEA methodology is copyrighted since 2019. This methodology studies the interaction of political and economic processes in society, distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals as well as processes that create, sustain and transform those relationships over time from an electoral point of view, namely how these processes overlaps and influence the electoral process. <http://www.eces.eu/en/posts/the-electoral-political-economy-analysis>

employed all around the electoral cycle and focuses on preventing root causes to electoral conflicts that can arise from within the electoral cycle i.e. internal. This approach requires partnerships and close collaboration with the competent body mandated to administer elections in the country, referred to as the electoral management body (EMB). The preventative stage equally focuses on preventing root causes that are external to the electoral cycle itself, with that we refer to as a conflict that has its origin in other socio-economic factors but plays out in the electoral space, and impact negatively on electoral events or targeting electoral stakeholders.

This two-pronged approach is unique to the election conflict prevention field since it offers a systematic response to electoral conflicts and violence that is not dependent on a specific set of conditions, law and rules, or a specific type of election. It combines prevention with management and seeks to work with all electoral stakeholders. The tools and skills that are left behind are durable and remains relevant over time.

The PEV approach has been developed by ECES via lessons learned from having implemented more than 82 projects to assist aspects of or entire electoral processes, whereby amongst those, three EU-funded projects had a clear-cut election conflict prevention aim allowing ECES to refine and crystalize the approach into a defined strategy applicable to all elections and contexts. These projects employing the PEV approach are (were): PEV-SADC (Preventing Election Related Violence and Potential Violence in the Southern African Development Communities – SADC region) 2013 - 2016, PEV-RSA (Project to Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election Related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa) 2018 – 2020 and, PEV-Ethiopia (Project to Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election Related Conflict and Potential Violence in Ethiopia) 2019 – 2021.

The “PEV” brand is therefore something that ECES is already associated with and hence, all the more reason to link the approach to our organisation via a defined and well-tested approach i.e. “**Preventing Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence (PEV)**” - approach.