ECES

**EUROPEAN CENTRE
FOR ELECTORAL SUPPORT**

Strategic Planning for
Electoral Management Bodies
Using Quality Management Principles

Pro-Electoral Integrity

Support to Electoral Integrity in Africa
via the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security
of the African Union Commission

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
and International Cooperation

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1. PREFACE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY BY ECES FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR

This publication is produced in the evolving context of elections which are increasingly impacted by globalisation, emerging technologies, and regional political instability and conflicts. It is also one of the outcomes of the established partnership between ECES and the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (AUC-PAPS), and our joint project ""Pro-Electoral Integrity: Project in Support to Electoral Integrity in Africa" - funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

With the objective of the project to build resilience of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) and networks of EMBs to overcome challenging electoral contexts in order to effectively organize elections, this paper looks at and provides guidance on the fundamental aspect of strategic and operational planning using quality management principles.

The release of this publication is intended to contribute to the upcoming 7th Annual Continental Forum of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) on 14-15 November 2022 in Maputo, Mozambique, supported by ECES in the context of the above mentioned Pro-Electoral Integrity Project. The EMBs Forum will be convened under the overall theme: "Building Resilience of Election Management Bodies to Safeguard Democracy in Africa."

In this publication we aim to provide guidance on how to craft a sound strategic plan, departing from the constitutional and legal basis of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs). A strategic plan should always spell out the vision, mission, and broader objectives of the EMB, but needs also to be responsive to emerging and evolving challenges. This calls for innovative solutions and methods on how to build effective strategies to deliver elections, considering their most pressing challenges.

At ECES, we work to strengthen the capacities of EMBs to assist them to identify and monitor their opportunities and threats, as well as to recommend appropriate solutions to achieve their mandated functions of delivering elections according to their vision, mission, and objectives.

We promote electoral and democratic strengthening through the provision of advisory services, operational support, and management of large projects by mainstreaming capacity and leadership development via peer exchanges, to share comparative experiences and promote political dialogue.

In this context, ECES has crafted and copyrighted its strategy called "A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support - EURECS", which is implemented via specific copyrighted methodologies and tools. EURECS is an

innovative delivery mechanism to implement electoral and democracy assistance activities that are consistent primarily with European values and EU policies targeting the facilitation of cooperation on electoral matters between the EU, the EU member states and their partner countries. To that end, this paper highlights our work in the last 12 years in sensitizing EMBs to adopt adequate methodologies to craft a strategic plan, which is the fundamental roadmap for all EMBs.

Elections are complex processes that require effective coordination of multiple operations,[1] activities, and sub-activities that are mutually dependent and synergistic, which often run simultaneously, and are bound by strict regulations and deadlines underpinned by the legal framework of the country in question. Failure to meet these requirements and deadlines can have severe consequences not only on the operation of the election itself but on the political stability of a country. In this context, strategic planning is an essential component for EMBs, tasked with organising and delivering electoral processes.

A strategic plan for an EMB is a document that defines long-term institutional objectives and goals of an EMB and the activities needed to achieve these objectives to at best fulfill its mandate of delivering free and fair elections. Strategic planning[2] provides an EMB with purpose and direction in the implementation of its mandated functions. It allows their members to be aware of the overall goals, the target electoral stakeholders, and interested parties.

A strategic plan will allow the EMB to plan the upcoming elections, and establish the structure needed for the effective delivery of future ones. This will bring various benefits to the EMB such as facilitating stakeholders' participation in electoral processes, enabling voters' trust, linking the EMB's departments, improving leadership skills, setting clear objectives while addressing associated risks, determining and mobilising resources, as well as developing best practices, taking advantage of promising innovations, technologies, trends, and building on lessons learned. This, in turn, will allow the EMB to position itself as credible, professional and accountable.

This has become ever more important with globalisation, the rise of political and social instability as well as the COVID-19 pandemic which all add to the complexity of organising an election. We have also witnessed new global threats and challenges to democracy and electoral processes that EMBs must now face. For instance, new factors such as the extensive and global use of the Internet, technology and digitalization, and exponential migration leading to out-of-country voting must now be considered by EMBs. To understand and adapt to this fast-changing environment as well as to the complex nature of election processes and contexts, EMBs need to have a practical, efficient, and solid strategic plan as well as a coherent methodology.

Integrating internationally recognised quality principles for management in a strategic plan allows added certainty and transparency in the processes, procedures, and regulations

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[1] These operations include but are not limited to voter registration, and candidate/political parties registration, voter education, electoral logistics, vote casting (election day operation), declaration of results, finance campaigning, resolution of electoral disputes.

[2] Strategic planning can be defined as the set of activities and techniques for the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an organisation, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources for carrying out these goals.

required to deliver elections. The effective implementation of a strategic planning using internationally recognised quality principles will also:

- Provide an analysis by the EMB of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- enable the staff to know their roles and how they can individually and collectively contribute to broader organisational goals and targets, if adequately communicated and translated into clear actions at all levels of the EMB,
- help to define measurable indicators to assess progress and determine how and if strategic goals have been achieved.
- make the EMB's vision, fundamental focus, and values, clearer and more visible. This, in turn, will contribute to building a long-lasting trust between the government and the citizens, but also a wider range of stakeholders.

Recognising that whilst each EMB and electoral environment is different, there are common characteristics in the development of a strategic plan that need to be considered for all EMBs and common aspects in every election. These include but are not limited to timing, legal frameworks or human resources-related matters, voter registration, candidate registration, voter education, electoral logistics, vote casting, declaration of results, finance campaigning, and resolution of electoral disputes.

In light of the above, the objective of this paper is to provide a practical guide to strategic planning for EMBs using quality management principles - such as those established by the International Organisation of Standardisation (ISO) - to the electoral field.

One tool of the EURECS methodology also created by ECES is LEAD-Q or "Leadership and Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators". This instrument was designed to assist electoral administrators and EMBs in various parts of the world to strengthen internal efficiency, effectiveness and reliability. It prescribes a set of rules, routines and procedures developed to address common weaknesses within EMBs, targeting a quality management in their electoral processes.

This paper is therefore based on our collective knowledge in the field of electoral support to various EMBs on several continents. We intend to share best practices in the use of these tools, methods, and processes towards addressing existing gaps while ensuring an open and broad platform for interested parties' engagement that will allow active participation. We hope that this publication will contribute to facilitate a better understanding of the importance of a clear path on the development of an Effective Strategic Planning, and is equally addressed to EMBs and elections practitioners.

We will first provide an in-depth description of quality management principles and link them to the electoral context. Secondly, we will explain the five independent steps constituting our strategic planning methodology. ECES's methodology for strategic planning starts with the EMB diagnosis, then the working plan is built. After these two first steps, the model can be developed.

The model will identify the objectives and goals of the EMB, determine the strategies and risks of the tasks at hand and execute its activities and programs. what unfolds from a good strategic plan is the possession of relevant strategic documents such as process maps and manuals which will contribute to a better knowledge management of the EMB for future elections.

We are very proud to have gathered our expertise and share best practices and comparative experiences on how to use tools aimed at addressing existing challenges in EMBs' strategies, while ensuring effective methods to remedy eventual gaps. We hope that this publication will contribute to facilitate a better understanding of the need to develop effective strategic planning for EMBs, whilst at the same time highlighting essential principles that must be considered not only in the development of this planning but also its follow-up and implementation.

Fabio Bargiacchi

Founder and Executive Director

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2. List of Acronyms

AFIs	Actions for Improvement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
EC	European Commission
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFI	External Financing Instrument
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EMB	Electoral Management Body
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
EODS	Election Observation and Democracy Support
EPEA	Electoral Political Economy Analyses
ERMES	European Resource for Mediation Support
ESDP	Electoral Services Development Plan
ESTA	Electoral Security Threat Assessment
EU	European Union
EU EAM	EU Election Assessment Mission
EU EAT	EU Election Assessment Team
EU EAT	EU Election Assessment Team
EU EEM	EU Election Expert Mission
EU EFM	EU Election Follow-up Mission
EU EOM	EU Election Observation Mission
EU ExM	EU Exploratory Mission
EURECS	European Response to Electoral Cycle Support
EuropeAid	EC Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund
EW	Early Warning
FPI	Foreign Policy Instrument
FWC	Framework Contract
GIS	Geographic Information System
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Resources
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IFP	Instrument for Peace
International IDEA	International Institute on Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
IRI	International Republican Institute
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KM	Knowledge Map

KMM	Knowledge Management Model
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LEAD	Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders
LEAD-Q	Leadership and Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators
MEPA	Master in Electoral Policy and Administration
NDI	National Democratic Institute
OCV	Out Country Voting
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDCA	Plan Do Check Act
PEV	Preventing Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence
PRAG	Procedures and Practical Guide
QMS	Quality Management System
SMART	Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time based
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SWOT	Strengths Weakness Opportunities Threats
SSSA	Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (Pisa, Italy)
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
VR	Voter Registration

3. Introduction

ECES, as a supporter of management and democracy in Electoral institutions, is always seeking new and better tools aimed at improving the services offered to Electoral Management Bodies, committing to a process of continuous improvement to organise and manage electoral processes.

One of the most adopted practices in the world of management is the implementation of "Quality management principles" with a focus on processes and results; for this reason, we have developed "Strategic Planning using Quality Management Principles" containing different methods and tools to help Electoral Management Bodies to ensure effectiveness and be more efficient.

The design and implementation of these practices are influenced by different needs, laws, regulatory requirements, the particular services provided, the processes used and the size or structure of the Electoral Management Body.

The "Strategic Planning using Quality Management Principles" is also a capacity development methodology which is the result of lessons learned over the last 12 years of ECES in assisting electoral administrators in various parts of the world to strengthen internal efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability according to their electoral legal and operational framework.

Organisations expect a Strategic Plan to work out exactly as articulated – but they often do not come close to performing what was planned. More than that, they sometimes provide a path towards something different than the outcomes originally envisioned. What we know for sure is that Strategic planning is the best way to ensure the implementation of viable future electoral cycles. So, when is the best time to undertake a planning process for Strategic Planning?

For an EMB, planning is an ongoing, structured, integrated process intended to accomplish the EMBs' set of objectives and improve the outcomes from one electoral cycle to the next. To accomplish effective, proactive, and long-term planning, an EMB must establish a formal planning process as an essential and consistent component of the ongoing operation and management the electoral activities.

The EMB senior managers that have the most versatile understanding and experience of an electoral cycle must lead the process. A planning process can be facilitated by outside consultants with some coordination and cooperation with stakeholders but ultimately the EMB's technical leadership must do the work and shape the outcomes for it to be a nationally owned electoral process.

In addition, the EMB senior managers should take responsibility for bringing together a core planning group to support the election planning process. EMB management should choose some of its unit supervisors in certain roles as they are likely both qualified and experienced, likewise, the core planning group should be identified by professional leadership and chosen with great care. The casting process is based not only on the corresponding experience, but also on the understanding of the electoral cycle of the different activities and sub-activities of the process which will have to be defined in the Strategic Plan. Taking the time to put the right team in place is essential to creating a realistic and effective planning process.

Once any eventual post-election arbitration is concluded, is the best time for an EMB to produce a Strategic Plan to think ahead to each electoral event within an election cycle

process. With no immediate operational and political pressure, this period will allow EMBs to focus their energy, time, and required resources, and define long-term sustainable programs and capacity development with the need to pay attention to the role and functions of an EMB with its long-term activities.

Writing a Strategic Plan is nowadays a widely recognised tool for achieving the objectives the EMBs set for themselves, in a short, medium, and long-term framework. However, a unique perspective is gained when the efficiency and the quality of management are measured according to very precise standards and norms.

Nevertheless, EMBs are not corporations and are not guided by profit, therefore the efficiency is not expressed in monetary value, even if the costs of electoral operations can be substantially lowered if proper management and operational standards are implemented. The key ingredient here is the public interest, the transparency and ultimately the trust the voters will have in an electoral management body. This is an indirect investment in the democratic foundation of a country and bolsters the credibility of the electoral systems put in place to advance democratic principles of government.

The accountability of the EMB toward the taxpayers and the voters is greatly enhanced by acquiring a certification that is widely recognised, thus reflecting the international standards of quality management.

In a nutshell, strategic planning for EMBs and other related institutions can be substantially enhanced by following the principles of Quality Management, which are widely recognised internationally and standardised under a body of norms and regulations.

4. Strategic planning and Quality Management Principles in the Electoral Context

Quality Management Principles

Quality Principles provides a framework for **planning**, executing, monitoring, and improving the performance of activities. **Planning** is not a singular event, rather it is an ongoing process. **Plans** evolve as the organisation learns and circumstances change. A plan considers all quality activities of the organisation and ensures that it covers all guidance and requirements needed including the law requirements. It is important for an Electoral Management Body to regularly monitor and evaluate both the implementation of the plan and the performance of activities. Carefully considered measurement methods facilitate this monitoring and evaluation of activities.

- **Leadership**
  Leaders at all levels must establish unity of purpose and direction, and create conditions in which people are engaged in achieving the Electoral Management Body´s objectives.

- **Process approach thinking**
  The process approach involves the management of electoral processes, and their interactions, so as to achieve the intended results in accordance with the quality policy and strategic planning of the organisation. Management of the electoral processes as a whole can be achieved using the electoral improvement cycles with a **risk-based approach** aimed at taking advantage of opportunities and preventing undesirable results.

- **Engagement of people**
  Competent, empowered and engaged people at all levels throughout the Electoral Management Body are essential to enhance the organisation's capability to create and deliver added value.

- **Improvement**
  Improvement is essential for an Electoral Management Body to maintain current levels of performance, react to changes in its internal and external context, and create new opportunities. Successful organisations have an ongoing focus on improvement.

- **Evidence-based decision-making**
  Decision-making can be a complex process and it always involves some uncertainty. It often involves multiple types and sources of inputs, as well as their interpretation, which can be subjective. It is important to understand cause-and-effect relationships and potential unintended consequences. Facts, evidence data analysis, and availability of information lead to greater objectivity and confidence in decision-making.

- **Relationship management**
  Relevant interested parties and stakeholders influence the performance of an Electoral Management Body. Sustained success is more likely to be achieved when the organisation manages relationships with all of its stakeholders to optimise their impact on its performance. Relationship management with its provider and partner networks is of particular importance.

Strategic planning using Quality Management Principles for EMBs utilises effective communication, data, and strategy to successfully incorporate the discipline of quality into

the organisation's overall activities and culture. EMBs can integrate Quality Management Principles into strategic planning through frameworks designed to achieve long-term success. It is a common advantage for the organisation, employees, and interested parties.

Personnel participation

The implementation of a Strategic Plan relies on the commitment and work of its staff. Every individual from top-level managers to more junior employees are involved in the implementation process. EMBs need to provide trainings to its personnel in the tools, concepts, and techniques used for the correct implementation. These implementation processes cannot function without the involvement and encouragement of upper management.

How can an Electoral Management Body perform its strategic quality planning?
When implementing strategic planning using Quality Management Principles, a full Improvement cycle PDCA (**Plan-Do-Check-Act**) must be followed:
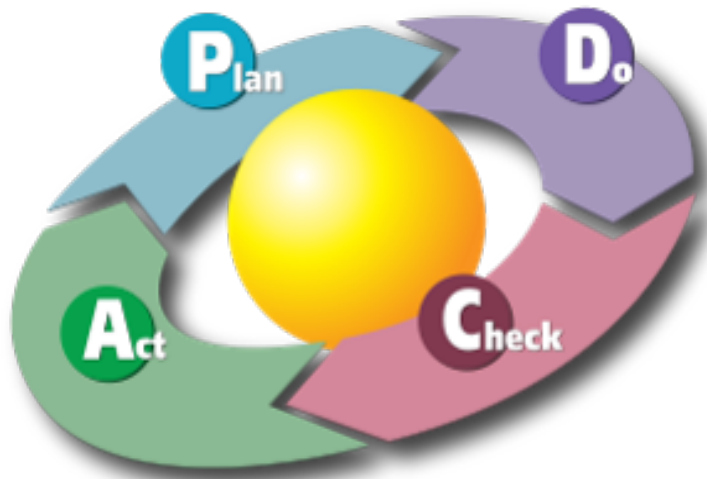
  a. **Plan**. The Electoral Management Body defines what must be integrated into the Strategic Plan as a starting point, making sure this is based on an initial diagnosis of the status of the organisation. This should include:

    1. Objectives
    2. Strategies to achieve them
    3. Programs and other plans
    4. Actions to be taken in order to achieve them
    5. Measurements methods (These are planned, established and then monitored)
    6. Risks and Opportunities and actions to address these

  b. **Do**. The EMB determines all the formal documents needed to assure that all specific requirements including Process requirements, Legal and regulatory and stakeholders' requirements (Applicable ones) are determined and easily understood, suitable and available by everybody developing the work when needed.

    1. Strategic Planning and other Planning (Operational Plans for the election, Needs Assessment Plans, Budgets etc.)

2. Quality Manual
3. Mapping of electoral processes
4. Procedures for all electoral processes
5. Executive instructions
6. Records
7. Others

c. **Check**. The EMB makes sure all indicators are established on every single aspect of the determined processes and on every department using a methodology to assure that they are:

1. Determined
2. Measurable
3. Achievable
4. Monitored
5. Reported periodically in order to contribute to expedited decision-making by Top Management.

We also establish formal procedures to verify the development of the Implementation through internal and external audits and Management review processes that are formally established following specific requirements to assure an overall overview of the most relevant aspects of the organisation

d. **Act**. EMB determines very effective tools to easily identify (by everyone involved in the processes) any deviation or non-conformities that may arise in the progress of every process.

1. **Corrective Action.** Action is taken to eliminate the cause of an existing nonconformity, defect or other undesirable situation in order to prevent a recurrence.
2. **Preventive Action.** Action is taken to eliminate the cause of a potential nonconformity, defect, or other undesirable situation in order to prevent its occurrence.
3. **Non-conformity.** Non-fulfillment of a requirement that is stated either in an EMB's procedure, manual or applicable law.
4. **Audit Finding.** Results of the evaluation of the collected audit evidence, against audit criteria.
5. **Improvement Action.** Set of activities that the EMB carries out in order to enhance performance

5. ECES Methodology for an effective development of a Strategic Plan for EMBs

Through clear "Phases", the value is created with a precise implementation system to lead the Electoral Management Body to the expected results.

Each stage is linked to the next one, to give certainty on the methodology applied.

5.1. Phase 1 "Plan" (Planning of the strategic planning)

5.1.1. Diagnosis - Where do we stand?

We apply a very effective and internationally recognised tool, used to determine the actual status of the EMB in regard to Strategic Planning.

Expected outputs from 5.1
Diagnosis results report.

5.1.2. Working plan to develop the Strategic Planning document.

The working plan for developing a strategic plan will help to communicate, monitor, and follow up on the progress of specific actions needed during the implementation of the document. It represents the formal step-by-step roadmap for building the Strategic Plan. It shall clearly articulate the required stages to achieve the expected results.

The working plan needs to be structured through the following phases:

a.- Plan (Phase 1)
b.- Identify (Phase 2)
c.- Determine (Phase 3)
d.- Execute (Phase 4)
e.- Control (Phase 5)

Expected outputs from 5.2:
Working Plan was reviewed and authorized.

Note: Working plan can suffer modifications from the results of the SWOT Analysis (see below).

5.1.3. Defining the main organisational structure of the EMB and the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) (Context of the EMB, internal and external).

The purpose of a SWOT analysis is to objectively review important internal and external factors relevant to the strategic direction of the **Electoral Management Body** that can affect the ability to achieve the intended results. A SWOT analysis can give a proper framework for a "better decision making" on how to prepare for potential issues and continue to move the **EMB** forward depending on the results of the analysis and the context of the EMB]

Performing a SWOT analysis is an excellent way to set a course for success, prepare for possible changes and get the answers you need to create the best possible strategic plan.

It is a core component of a strategic plan to improve the direction of daily operations.
A regular basis monitoring, reviewing, and documenting any changes is required.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths
Characteristics of the organisation or project that gives an advantage over others

Weaknesses
Characteristics that place the organisation or project at a disadvantage relative to others

Opportunities
Elements that the organization could exploit to its advantage

Threats
Elements in the environment that could cause problems

Expected outputs from 5.3:
SWOT analysis
Capability analysis. (Human Resources knowledge gaps) *see "knowledge management model" section.*

5.2.   Phase 2 "Identify" (Objective and goals identification)

5.2.1.   Developing "SMART" Strategic Objectives and Operative Goals

SMART methodology is used to establish objectives and goals to assure they are achievable, measurable, realistic, and established for clear periods of time.

SMART METHODOLOGY

S M A R T

| Specific | Measurable | Achievable | Relevant | Time Based |
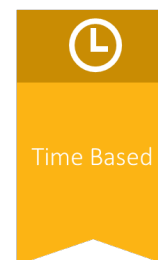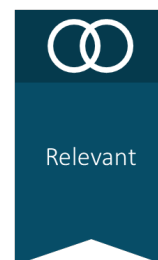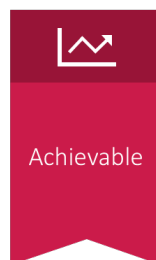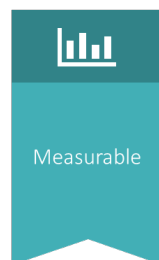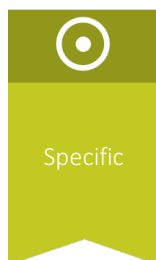
SMART is a very effective tool to help guide goal setting by the EMB, allowing Electoral managers and employees to create, track and accomplish short and long term goals.

1. Specific

Electoral Management Body´s goals should be clear and specific This is to allow the EMB to focus its efforts and motivate it to achieve them. When drafting goals, the EMB shall try to answer the five "W" questions:
- **What** does EMB want to accomplish?
- **Why** is this EMB goal important?
- **Who** is involved?
- **Where** is it located?
- **Which** resources or limits are involved?

2. Measurable

It is important to have measurable goals so that you can track your progress and stay motivated. Assessing progress helps you to stay focused, meet your deadlines, to achieve your goal.
A measurable goal should address questions such as:
- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

3. Achievable

An EMB's goals also need to be realistic and attainable to be successful. In other words, they should stretch your abilities but still remain possible. When an EMB sets an achievable goal, it may be able to identify previously overlooked opportunities or resources that can bring them closer to it.
An achievable goal will usually answer questions such as:
- How can I accomplish this goal?
- How realistic is the goal, based on other constraints, such as financial factors?

4. Relevant

This step is about ensuring that an EMB´s strategic goals matter to you, and that they are also aligned with other relevant goals. We all need support and assistance in achieving our goals, but it is important to retain control over them. So, make sure that your plans drive everyone forward, but that you are still responsible for achieving your own goals.
A relevant goal can answer "yes" to these questions:
- Does this seem worthwhile?
- Is this the right time?
- Does this match our other efforts/needs?
- Am I the right person/Department/organisation to reach this goal?
- Is it applicable in the current socio-economic environment?

5. Time-based

Every goal of an EMB needs a target date so that you have a deadline to focus on and something to work toward. This part of the SMART goal criteria helps to prevent everyday tasks from taking priority over your longer-term goals.

A time-bound goal will usually answer these questions:
- When?
- What can I do six months from now?
- What can I do six weeks from now?
- What can I do today?

Organisation shall periodically review performance so management will have the time to address corrections if things are not going in the right direction.

Expected outputs from 5.4:
Strategic Objectives and Operative Goals using SMART tool and aligned to the Strategic Plan

5.3. Phase 3 "Determine" (establish strategies considering risks and lessons learned)

From EMB´s objectives and goals, clear strategies to achieve these goals must be determined and categorised.
Risks and Opportunities identified from the Diagnosis must be determined, with clear actions to address them.

Note 2: Resources needed will be taken into consideration for Strategies development.
Note 3: Specific Risk management model is used to identify and address actions.

5.3.1. Strategies

Strategies are defined as a general direction set for the EMB to achieve a desired state in the future. Strategy results from the detailed strategic planning process.
ECES Strategic plannig model defines strategies in 3 different types:
1. Organisational strategy
2. Operational strategy
3. Transformational strategy

Common considerations across all different types of strategy are, personnel, processes, and systems including technology. All of them must be accompanied by an action plan.

1. Organisational Strategy: Stakeholders' Experience

The first of the three different types of strategies is Organisational Strategy. This focuses on how your stakeholders and interested parties will perceive the Electoral Management Body. It

primarily concerns the approach of the EMB towards all interested parties, including **where** and **how** services will be deployed.

"**Where**" services will be deployed, will answers questions such as:
- Which segments will we target? (Youth, Women, Persons with Disability etc)
- Which geographies will we cover?
- What special services will we bring to cover needs?

"**How**" services will be deployed, will answers questions such as:
- How specific activities of the EMB will unfold from this type of strategy?
- What capabilities does the EMB have vs capabilities needed (Gaps)
- What approaches will the EMB apply to create certainty, and build trust?

Electoral managers create the EMB's strategies, then they clarify the strategy and create alignment among other strategies across the organisation following a clear and coherent path.

High-level Executives shall bring advanced, highly credible practices into the strategy to provide tools, models, and facilitation that enable better strategy development.

2. Operational Strategy: People & Processes

The second of the three types of strategies is Operational. It is focused on EMB's personnel and their processes. The purpose of this type of strategy is to concentrate on the necessary actions to achieve the EMB´s objectives and goals by determining the specific action plans and how to ensure compliance with them.

Operational strategies can answer the following questions:
- Which capabilities need to be created or enhanced?
- Which Electoral processes need improvement or a complete redesign?
- Do we have the people we need and do they have the right skill base? (Ex: talent retention plans through Strategic Learning and Development programs)

Organisational strategy needs to focus on employee retention and talent development.
Note: See knowledge management section clause 6 for more details on how to develop, transfer and retain *knowledge*

Process approach

The process approach is a method of thinking - applied to understand and plan the sequence and interactions of processes in a system.

It's a method to plan the processes and the interactions of these processes as part of the management.

*Organisational leaders are currently working in the operational strategy domain reaching up into the strategy domain and communicating it to bring clarity and cohesiveness to the organisation's operating model typically working **vertically** within a single unit while resolving issues at the unit boundaries.*

*More mature organisational leaders' practices working cross-functionally and in multiple verticals moving from one vertical to another in a **process approach** environment, looking at the organisation as a "whole system".*

"Consistent and predictable results are achieved more effectively and efficiently when activities are understood and managed as interrelated processes that function as a coherent system"

Why is the process approach so important?
Organisations are typically structured into departments that are managed by a department head. The head is responsible for what comes out of the department. Most departmental heads never interact with external stakeholders. As such, sometimes they are unaware of stakeholders' needs.

If key performance indicators are set by departments this could create organisational conflicts between departments. This can happen because heads of departments will try to maximise the performance of their departments to the possible detriment of other departments.

The **"process approach thinking"** introduces horizontal management, controlling processes which flow across departmental boundaries. Someone is accountable from start to finish. They see the whole picture from process initiation to process completion. They understand what the stakeholders in the process want and have delegated authority to act to realise this. An employee's first loyalty is to their assigned projects, products, or services - rather than their own departments.

Note 8: See Mapping Processes in Clause 7 for more detailed information

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3. Transformational Strategy: Systems including Technology

The third of the three types of strategies is Transformational. It focuses on how your systems, tools, and methods including technology can enable and transform the Electoral Management Body. This involves the EMB's organisational transformation, and can for example include digitalisation.
This type of strategy goes beyond typical organisational strategy as it requires some highly disruptive changes in people, processes, and technology.

These efforts will require highly experienced and knowledgeable technical resources.
Examples of Systems and Technologies for Transformational Strategies:
➢ Implementation of a Quality Management System
➢ Mobile Technologies
➢ Internet of things (IoT)
➢ Artificial Intelligence
➢ Data building Analytics
➢ Process automation
➢ Cloud-baseded technology.

Not all strategy work is the same. Each strategy type requires a unique set of skills, resources, varying approaches, and specific plans to execute that strategy.

5.3.2. Electoral Risk management

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS
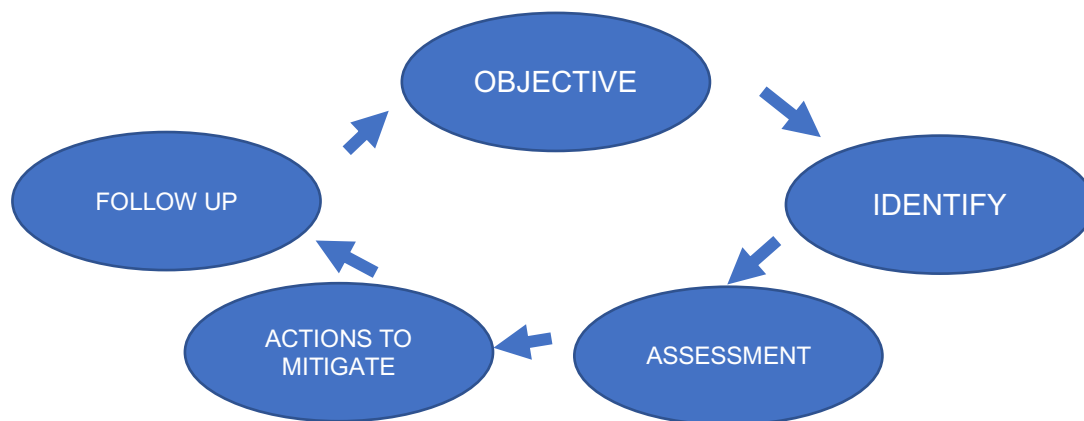
EMBs exist to create value for their stakeholders, beneficiaries and citizens. By setting objectives, developing strategies, following through and continuously improving processes, value is created.

When planning, it is not always as simple as making the plan and sticking to it. There's always the risk that certain events could affect the success of these plans. It is the job of management to make adequate preparations to ensure that processes are in place to continue hitting objectives.

A well-implemented Risk Management process could set the foundation for many high-quality, long-term relationships allowing management to oversee the continual creation of value on a complete, integrated, organisation-wide level.

Risk management process:

1. Objective:

Establish the context: internal and external scope of the EMB to be able to determine organisational objectives. (See SWOT analysis on phase 1)

Risks are integral to any electoral process. It is a measure of the potential inability to achieve an objective within defined safety, cost, timing, technical constraints etc. A risk is a future event and can be often dependent on the planning, preparation, and resources of an EMB.

2. Identify risks:

As risks relate to the EMB's objectives; these should be well-documented and include the corresponding potential for gaining a competitive advantage as a result of process improvement.

The possible risks areas that may occur during the implementation of a strategic plan

should already be identified within the plan to be able as much as possible to react in a proactive and predictive ways.

Identifying risks will depend on characteristics of the legal framework, context, and social environment of each country.Risks can include:
- Legal reforms
- Security threats against participants, infrastructure, and material
- Terrorism
- Political instability
- Lack of coordination and cooperation with stakeholders
- Lack of trust in the EMB
- Freedom of choice for electors
- Non-compliance of code of conduct from relevant parties
- Funding delayed or availability of budget referring to proposed activities in the Strategic Plan
- Availability of human resources
- Use of new technologies
- Late delivery of supplies – shortage – supply chain disruption

An effective and efficient strategy to manage risks involves anticipation, identification and interpretation of risks, and updating the capabilities of an EMB for each and every identified and anticipated risk. The analysis of threats and risks is a continuous task throughout the electoral process.

3. Assessment:

Analyse severity and likelihood risks: For each of the risks identified, assess the severity and likelihood of each risk.
Integrate risks: Based on the results of previous risk analysis, aggregate all risk distributions and align the analysis with the determined impact on Key Performance Indicators
Prioritising risks: Determine a ranked order of prioritisation for each of the risks identified. Risks can also be actively assessed, in a dynamic pattern. In the last decade the role of Early Warning systems in electoral operations is constantly growing. EMBs can develop EW mechanisms to signal potential disruptions and conflicts with enough leeway for the decision makers to take action, thus avoiding major operational blockages.

4. Actions to mitigate:

Risk management strategies: This involves strategies for mitigating the risks identified.

5. Follow up:

Monitoring and reviewing results: The continuous improvement of the risk management process by way of monitoring and assessment of the risk environment; basically, what works and what doesn't, and figuring out how to improve the process.

Expected outputs from Phase 3 (5.5 and 5.6):
Categorised Strategies with specific actions
Risk and Opportunities Mapped, and clear actions to address them.

5.4.   Phase 4 "Execute" (establishing the operational plan to implement the strategic plan)

A strategic action plan of an Electoral Management Body can contain other specific plans and programs unfolding from its strategy, **explaining how you are going to make your strategy a reality**. It takes the purpose and goals outlined and adds the details needed to turn thought into action.

To assure development, monitoring and follow up for each initiative (Specific plan, program and activities) the EMB will need to:

- Define the initiative (Program, Plan) aligned with the strategy and objectives to be achieved.
- Name an owner of the initiative. (Who is going to be responsible for development)
- A timeline of when initiative shall start and expected to be completed.
- Allocate Resources
- Implement the "action plan" (A Gant chart can be used to determine specific activities needed and also for monitoring purposes)

Note 4: Resources needed will be taken into consideration.

5.4.1. Example of some Programs and plans unfolding from the Strategic Plan

HUMAN RESOURCE PLAN.

The human resources plan in an organisation determines the structure, organisational chart of the EMB, and the needs of certain type of resources like development of competences and knowledge in order to contribute to the achievement of organisational goals. To do this, it is necessary among other things to study how many people needs to be included in the organisation's workforce and what profiles they must have in order to adapt to the company's culture.

The plan will need to define the capabilities of each staff member, determine what roles each worker can and should develop, and take into account the dimension of the EMB's structure. The strategic human resources plan will in turn be subdivided into other plans such as the administration, selection, recruitment, training, and development of the organisation's workforce.

Any plan will be characterised by different plans such as administration, recruitment, staff selection, motivation, training, and occupational safety and hygiene. The importance of the human resources plan is increasing in organisations and this importance is directly linked to different processes such as talent and Knowledge management. Proper talent and knowledge management represent the organisation a cost-saving.

Key elements to develop an effective Humans Resources Plan of an Electoral Management Body:

i.   Define and/or evaluate the EMB chart, depending on the sector and the size of the EMB. Defining the different hierarchical levels, work's chains, and internal procedures.

ii.   Determine the composition of the management team.

iii.   Identify the "Knowledge and competencies" management model for EMBs that will also be supported by different sub-processes. (See ECES Human Resources plan for more details)

iv.   Recruitment, Selection and Hiring Procedure.

v.   Performance evaluation process.

vi.   Occupational health and safety activities program including Work Environment survey.

Note: See the ECES Human Resources Plan model for more detailed information

THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PLAN

A needs assessment plan is the process of identifying and determining gaps between an EMB's current and desired state. The process outlines which aspects a team should prioritise, improve on or which resources are required to meet its goals.

Since so many factors are often present in any given situation, it is not always easy to know what exactly may be keeping the EMB from reaching its desired goals. A needs assessment plan minimises this uncertainty by exploring the EMB´s specific needs and the actions that can be taken.

1. Identify the needs of your EMB
2. Collect as much internal and external useful information as possible
3. Use the data you've collected
4. Determine needs that will be addressed considering budget
5. Define the timeframe for executing the Strategic Plan and its implementation

THE ELECTORAL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN / OPERATIONAL PLAN

Purpose of the Electoral Service Development plan

It is important to understand the difference between an "Electoral Service Development Plan" and a "Strategic Plan". The strategic plan is about setting a direction for the EMB, devising goals and objectives and identifying a range of strategies to pursue so that an EMB might achieve its goals. The strategic plan is a general guide for the management of the organisation according to the priorities and goals of stakeholders. The strategic plan DOES NOT stipulate the day-to-day tasks and activities involved in running the organisation.

On the other hand, the Electoral Service Development Plan (ESDP) presents detailed information specifically to direct personnel to perform the day-to-day tasks required in running the EMB. Organisational management and staff should frequently refer to the ESDP in carrying out their everyday work. The ESDP provides the what, who, when, and how much:

- **what** – the strategy & activity and tasks that must be undertaken
- **who** – the persons who have the responsibility for each of activity/tasks
- **when** – the timelines in which strategies/tasks must be completed
- **how much** – the number of financial resources provided to complete each activity/task

The purpose of the ESDP is to provide 24rganization personnel with a clear picture of their tasks and responsibilities in line with the goals and objectives contained within the Strategic Plan.

Basically, the ESDP is a plan for the implementation of strategies contained within the Strategic Plan. It is a management tool that facilitates the co-ordination of the EMB's resources (human, financial and physical) so that goals and objectives in the strategic plan can be achieved.

The ESDP should set out the key activities to be adopted and implemented and pinpoint the various main operational areas. It should determine who will be accountable for each with all its possible constraints and risks. The strategic plan should fix the overall principles for the work of the EMB in a manner that complies with the electoral law and regulation. An EMB's Electoral Service Development Plan -based on the Strategic Plan- should then relate these principles to the specific electoral duty involved and formulate a thorough plan with a realistic timeframe for execution with the required means and program related to each of the activities. The work plan must point to individual work developments and their integration, targets, and tasks. The plan is essential to work out any major electoral process. It is pertinent to all electoral organisers, whether they are in control of a national EMB or voter registration or polling site. It should be simple, flexible, and credible.

Clear written procedures for implementing the tasks of the electoral organiser should be provided to announce the purpose, scope, and direction of the process so to know what to expect and what the specific focus will be.

The strategic plan should include a provision for a Planning Review to ensure that the strategy is focused, effective and complies with the overall electoral process. In addition, this is to ensure that day-to-day operations are all directed toward achieving set priorities. The early identification of up-and-coming problems is crucial. In addition, an indispensable step will be to assess the last electoral process with its strengths and weakness and how to ameliorate or/and simplify some of the different activities. The plan should include the identified problems and to make certain they will not be repeated. The same issues and problems often come up time after time during the electoral process.

Working on these issues can save time and money when planning the next electoral event and can help a EMB to operate in.

Planning for Resources of the ESDP
Electoral goods (ballot boxes, polling kits etc), paper supply (ballot paper, voting envelope etc.), services (contracting staff, building infrastructure, transportation, storage) ICT technologies, hardware and software equipment etc. represent some of the most important and costly parts of an election. Any delay or shortfall in the procurement or distribution of

electoral materials or timely receipt of required services can have serious implications for an election, potentially affecting its schedule or even outcome. Elections procurement can be challenging such as obtaining the required quality, best value with proper delivery service, and respecting short timelines. Properly administered and cost-effective electoral activities are essential to the credibility, acceptability, and sustainability of an election.

Election costs can vary considerably from region to region and from one election to the next. The running of an EMB and all its activities during an electoral process require adequate allocation of funds for their implementation. If there is not an inadequate allocation of money for the implementation of an activity, chances are it will fail. The point is that thought must be given to all possible costs that might be incurred, including the EMB's running costs, procurement costs, voter registration costs, polling costs, etc. A well numerated, sensible, and clear budget, which sets out a breakdown of the total proposed expenditure per activity and category is essential.

An EMB budget can only be done until it has a plan. The complexity of budgeting and planning for an election is trying to get it done quite simply. An EMB must know what it is going to do with the resources that are going to be required, and how much those accomplishments will cost? If an election will be held for the first time or no free and fair election was ever held in a country, it can be more complex due to no-past experiences. If for example some newer technologies are proposed, EMBs should be very clear about the need of them, its costs-effectiveness and how they will be used and by which expertise with clear justifications.

Treatment of spending and expenses management for an electoral budget can be processed in a different way in elections that can be:

➢ Fully managed by an EMB

    When an EMBs is responsible to administrate a budget with treatment for spending and expenses management, they will be held accountable for how funds are spent or mismanaged. It will depend on government procedures. EMBs may not have total financial independence and may be influenced by government decisions. The better an EMB can justify its Strategic plan with the support of an operations plan and budget, the better it will be able to accomplish its strategy and tasks independently.

➢ can be eventually spread across the budgets of different government agencies
➢ or elections administered by national authorities with substantial financial support from the international community
➢ or are fully managed by international organisations that have their own procedures for procurement and expense managing

 Within the recent context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of procurement and logistics is more evident than ever. They have created disruptions and hazards in an increasingly interconnected global market. Paper used in production to create ballots, ballot envelopes, voter registration forms and other essential election materials have become a major concern due to the shortage and the sudden rise in prices. Secure ballots generally require specialised production with high-quality paper types not always readily available.

Recent factors that shape market trends can put the supply of paper for elections at risk. Paper orders that once took a week can now take months. Some of the costs for electoral goods have increased dramatically and with the recent surge in electricity prices puts some vendors in some countries under severe cost pressure. The transport of ballot papers and other materials produced abroad has also increased considerably. COVID-19 impact is multi-dimensional and can be evidenced in all modes of transportation: air, sea, and land.
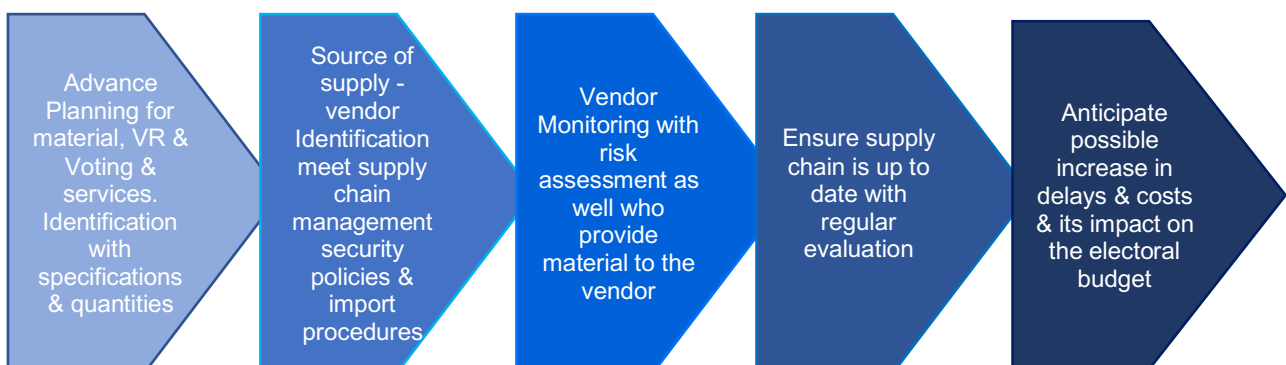
With the COVID-19 pandemic and various supply chain challenges across the globe, the print industry has experienced some of the worst supply chain disruptions and price volatility in many decades.

Challenges for election administration created by the global shortage are supply chain disruption, timing, and cost in futures elections.

Elections officials should contact their suppliers to verify that they have sufficient materials to fulfill orders and contingency plans for unforeseen circumstances. Electoral goods for future elections should plan well in advance and be ordered early. Election material supply chain fulfillment is requiring the longest order lead time in decades due to unpredictable and delayed delivery times. Even the most reliable suppliers are facing supply chain issues outside of their control, including a shortage of raw materials, subcontractors breaking contracts, delivery delays, rising costs, and labor shortages.

An EMB and its suppliers should always establish a supply chain risk management plan which will help to address vulnerabilities and disruptions at all stages of the electoral goods & services supply chain. Priority should be given to identifying local sources of supply but where procurement on the international market is necessary, reputable suppliers with experience in election material supply should be sought wherever possible. However, given the sensitive nature of electoral materials, the EMBs should ensure total transparency when the materials are locally sourced, with observer groups and civil society organisations being continuously informed and briefed on the progress of the operational process.

Ways to future-proof supply chain:

Advance Planning for material, VR & Voting & services. Identification with specifications & quantities → Source of supply - vendor Identification meet supply chain management security policies & import procedures → Vendor Monitoring with risk assessment as well who provide material to the vendor → Ensure supply chain is up to date with regular evaluation → Anticipate possible increase in delays & costs & its impact on the electoral budget

Electoral Digital Technologies

All EMBs implement various new technologies with intention of improving efficiency and effectiveness of the electoral process.

An election technology plan can be developed within the Strategic Plan. In case new technologies will be included or updated, clear and information on cost will permit to implementers, and other stakeholders to make decisions on adopting or not a new digital technology, understand its implications of pursuing high-tech or low-tech, and find the most cost-effective solutions.

Digital technologies are based on digitised information used in different phases of the electoral process by EMBs such as Geographic Information System, voters' registration, voters' identification, counting, tabulation, the transmission of results etc.

Other digital technologies include biometric voter registration, blockchain, cloud computing, and others digital technologies are in use or foreseen. If properly adapted and implemented well in advance to an electoral process, the new technologies will bring greater operational efficiencies possibly at reasonable cost. It brings potential advantages but also risks and challenges.

When a new system is being considered to replace another, an assessment is needed to consider the impact of the change, that also meet standards and principles associated with democratic elections. The transition phase from one technology to another can be both delicate and complex and needs to be carefully achieved well in advance and not starting implementation too close to elections to ensure that complications do not happen and that the system can continue to be successfully carried out.

As an example, electoral result transmission can be justified for the need to fasten the transmission of results and can increase an EMB credibility if the system is accurate, verifiable, secure, auditable and transparent. In every network of results transmission, there should be adequate supervision and management for the monitoring of network data with capacity to manage high volumes of results transmitted simultaneously. An important issue is the guarantee that information will not be modified or intercepted by external actors before arriving at its destination. It will require trainings to the users and the level of training that is necessary depends on how complex the technology is. A pilot operation must be conducted before introducing an innovation in an electoral process to serve as an experiment and prove technical feasibility. Adopting new technologies also includes several risks as hardware and software failure such as power loss or data corruption, malware – malicious software designed to disrupt computer operation; viruses – computer code that can copy itself and spread from one computer to another, often disrupting computer operations, human error as well as natural disasters etc.

To fulfill the EMB responsibilities to the electorate and other stakeholders in compliance with the legal framework, an Electoral plan shall be addressed covering the full electoral which is a visual plan and management tool for all stakeholders.
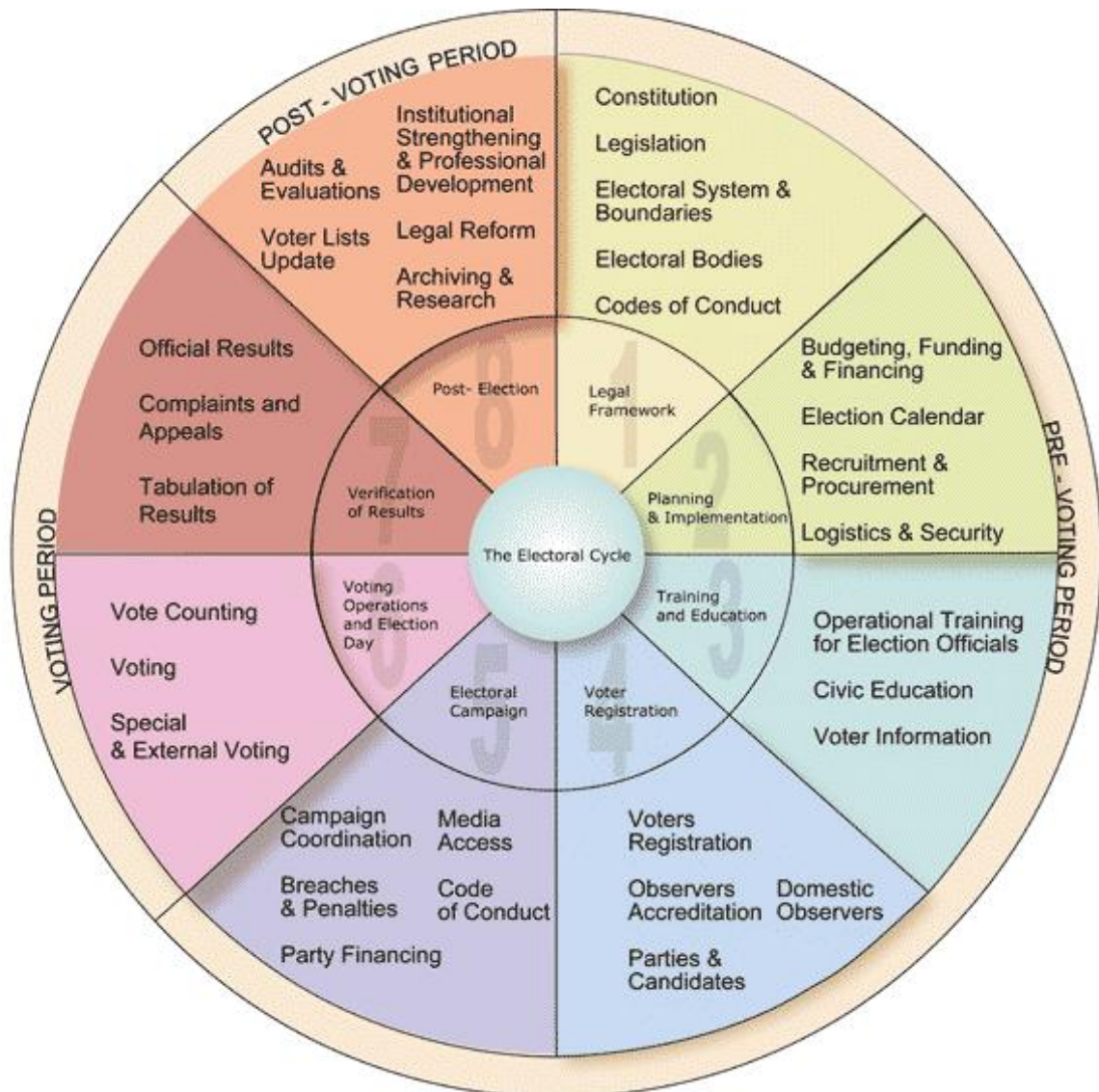
Timetables identifying key events in the electoral process can range from simple to more thorough plans setting out in considerable detail what must occur by certain periods giving a specific time frame to each activity. Below some of the activities but it is not limited to:

 ➢ **Setting up an EMB-** Some elections start from scratch and an institution or institutions be responsible for electoral activities need to be completely rebuilt
 ➢ **Budgeting & funding sources- the** process of evaluating the different activities covered by the budget and creating an accurate spending plan to allow in advance the EMB the necessary funds to finance the costs of an election. It can allow funding sources to be identified for each activity of costs.
 ➢ **Geographic Information System / Election planning-** EMB can simplify through GIS the registration management, elections operations, voter outreach, and results reporting
 ➢ **Voter registration** - Requirement of an eligible person to be enroll to be permitted to vote (Enrollment could be automatic, based on the civil registry, depending on jurisdiction)
 ➢ **Registration of political parties and candidates** - Process through which a political

organisation /candidate gains legal recognition to participate in an electoral process

- ➢ **Procurement & guidelines -** In order to avoid delays in the conduct of procurement activities during an election process, EMB issues guidelines prior to every election to guide Procuring Entities in the conduct of their procurement during the said period.
- ➢ **Electoral logistics -** Before, during, and after steps and requirements needed to conduct an election
- ➢ **Vote casting**. - Process which delivers verifiable results of all votes cast and voting procedures during an electoral process
- ➢ **Vote counting results transmission and declaration of results -** Process that establish the way to count the votes, methods used for transmitting electoral results and declaring official results in an election
- ➢ **Electoral education** - Process to provide the electorate with necessary information regarding electoral process and to promote citizens informed choice when voting in any election and the necessary media engaging according to law, to encourage citizens participation before, during and after electoral process
- ➢ **Accreditation -** Requirement for observers, media and political party monitors to be able to function effectively and be accredited by the EMB to monitor the process
- ➢ **Oversight of campaign financing** Refers to all funds raised to promote candidates and political parties, their policies and procedures according to law
- ➢ **Electoral legal framework and resolution of electoral disputes and complaints** - Process of appeals in which any activity of electoral process can be legally challenged and the related issues until resolution according to law
- ➢ **Out-of-Country voting -** Refers for citizens residing abroad to allow external voting for national elections
- ➢ **Special voting service -** to expand voting opportunities to register voters to vote by alternative means to cast their ballot on election day who are otherwise not able to vote (mobile ballot boxes, postal voting, and proxy voting)

The electoral calendar is used to facilitate the planning and preparation of the various activities in time so to help an EMB to meet its deadlines. In addition, it informs voters, candidates/political parties, and the media about the process with starting and ending dates.

The implementation of any activity needs a timeline, that is a time period during which work is performed to achieve the desired outcome. The time period can be as short as a day, or it can be several months.

The purpose of inserting a timeline for each activity is to give order to the great many tasks that need to be done for an election process. There are often limited resources and therefore, at any given time, decisions need to be made as to priorities and where work effort should be focused.

The first step in planning is to check which dates should be kept in mind for administering the election and to select the best time for all phases in planning the election.

Examples
- ➢ Deadlines set in the electoral law
- ➢ Times required to implement the activities
- ➢ Deadlines for print orders
- ➢ Time required for production
- ➢ Procurement procedures
- ➢ Time transportation and delivery of electoral material

➢ Vacation and holidays
➢ Security based deadlines

It is advisable to indicate in the timeline which the EMB unit is responsible for each activity and whether it is in collaboration with government bodies, with support from electoral technical assistance, etc. to find out who does what.

Example of a timetable identifying various activities

Key preparatory steps:

Timeframe / start date & end Date	Activity	Responsible Body / Unit responsible
	EMB Set up	
	Rules of Procedure & Regulations for the EMB	
	Structure of the EMB HQ Secretariat & Regional Offices	
	Terms of Reference for EMB staff & Recruitment	
	Development of Electoral Calendar	
	Development of Strategic & Operational Plan	
	Development of budget requests and financial planning	
	Outline possible areas for donor assistance	
	Preparatory work for media strategy	
	Voter Registration	
	Design of voter registration update framework	
	Funding of VR Updating Process Identified and Secured	
	Identification & Facilitation of Update Locations	
	Preparation & production of VR Training Materials	
	Training of Update Staff	
	Design of VR website & hotline	
	Development of VR media awareness campaign	
	Printing & Distribution of VR Public Information Materials	
	Development of Judicial Guidelines for VR Challenges	
	Updating of Preliminary Voter Register	
	VR Challenge Period	
	Consolidation of Updates to Preliminary VR	
	Publication of Final VR	
	Printing and distribution of Final VR	
	Allocation & publication of voters to polling locations	
	Printing & Distribution of Voter Lists for Polling Stations	
	Out-country voter registration	
	Agreement between various stakeholders on responsibilities	.
	Training of Embassy staff on VR process	
	Public information campaign for expatriate citizens	
	VR updating process at Embassies	
	Expatriate voters merged into Final VR & allocate to polling stations	
	Publication of numbers of expat voters in locations	

	Candidates / list registration	
	Development & Adoption of candidate/list registration procedures	
	Consultation with stakeholders on candidate/list registration	
	Printing of candidate/list nomination/registration forms	
	Appointment of staff responsible for candidate registration & development of instructions for registration staff	
	Announcement of start of candidate/list registration	
	Period for the nomination of candidates/lists	
	Period for appeals on the registration of candidates/lists	
	Publication of final registered candidates/lists	
	Issuing of accreditation documents/lists to candidates	
	Polling Stations	
	Determining criteria for selection of polling locations	
	Reviewing issues of access for persons with disabilities	
	Identifying suitable polling locations with mapping & codifying PS	
	Identifying provisional number of polling centers available	
	Allocation of voters to polling locations	
	Determining criteria for polling officials	
	Determining guidelines for polling center layout and polling station	
	Allocation of staff to specific centers and stations & production of their accreditation	
	Production of accreditation for polling staff	
	Voter education to inform voters of their PS location + hotline to inform voters	
	Out-Country-Voting	
	Confirming locations for OCV at Embassies	
	Preparation for polling at Embassies	
	Tabulation & transmission of result to the EMB	
	Polling Procedures & forms	
	Printing of election law/ regulations for elections officials	
	Development of procedures and protocol for opening & closing of polling station	
	Development of procedures counting of votes	
	Development of results & transfer protocols & procedures for posting/transferring results	
	Design, printing & distribution of official manual for polling officials	
	Training	
	Development of checklist for polling center and polling station manager	
	Development of cascade training program	
	Preparation, design & printing of training materials	
	Identification of training venues and dates & recruitment of staff with training responsibilities	
	Delivery of cascade training to all polling officials + OCV polling officials	
	Delivery of training materials to OCV polling officials	

Procurement	
Checklist of material for each polling station	
Defining specifications & quantity for electoral material (ballot papers, ballot boxes, polling booths indelible ink, seals, stamps etc.)	
Procurement & delivery of electoral material	
Transport cost (air/sea/road) and delivery material until polling stations and withdrawal of material to EMB warehouse(s)	
Storage & Distribution	
Defining Provisional Storage locations and Distribution Plan	
Storage of sensitive & non-sensitive materials and equipment	
Defining timeframe & procedures for delivery of materials	
Defining procedures for handover & return of materials	
Identifying regional movement plans & routes	
Identifying transportation requirements	
Observation	
Develop accreditation rules for national & international media, observers and political agents	
EMB appoint staff to Observer Coordination Unit & develop Code of Conduct for Agents & Observers	
Information released on accreditation procedures & print & issue of accreditation documentation	
Apply procedures for observation at Embassies	
Election Disputes	
Designating EMB focal point for disputes & defining procedures for submitting challenges	
Campaign regulation	
Establish campaign regulation	
Public Information on Campaign Obligations	
Development of Code of Conduct on Campaigning & monitoring of pre-campaign period	
Campaign Monitoring	
Campaign Silence Monitoring	
Imposition of sanctions for non-compliance with spot-checks on funding of activities	
Campaign Financing	
Establish campaign finance regulations & development of monitoring methodology	
Informing state bodies on responsibilities	
Preparation on campaign finance reporting format	
Public Information on Campaign Finance rules	
Establishment of Campaign Finance Monitoring Unit	
Imposition of sanctions for non-compliance	
Media Campaign	
Establish media campaign regulations & development of media monitoring methodology	
Informing state & private bodies on responsibilities	
Training to candidates/lists & media on obligations	

	Establishment of Media Monitoring Unit and MMU staff	
	Launch of official media campaign period	
	Issue of interim reports on compliance	
	Results	
	Procedures for transfer, tabulation & announcement of results	
	Development of data-transfer software & procedures for publishing national results	
	Training of officials in results process	
	Cross-checking results with protocols	
	Security	
	Define regional/district security plans	
	Establish national & regional Operational Room structure	
	Developing multi-scenario contingency plans	
	Evaluation of existing communication infrastructure	
	Preparation of a communication plan for election period	
	Liaison with political parties, observer groups on security issues	
	Establishing security movement for sensitive electoral materials.	

All activities of an electoral process will be identified one by one with enough information to allow the organisation to monitor development.

Specific procedures for each Key electoral process shall be determined.

Note: These are just examples of plans and programs that could unfold from the Strategic Plan, and can differ from one organisation to another.

Expected outputs:
Determination of other plans, programs, activities to be executed and aligned to Strategies determined

5.5. Phase 5 "Control" (assessing and ensuring successful implementation of the strategic plan)

Overall Evaluation of the Strategic Plan and determination of monitoring, follow up, and measurement methods. (Indicators, Management Review, Internal Audits, Performance Evaluation, etc.)

Note4.- The overall evaluation is done permanently during the period established, evaluating the applicability in time of the strategic planning is needed.

5.5.1. Evaluation of Strategic Plan

Evaluation, through the constant review of the context of the organisation in order to ensure the applicability in time of what has been planned. (See SWOT analysis, clause 5.3)

5.5.2. Monitoring, follow up and measurement methods

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Indicators are used to measure development and performance.

A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) refers to a quantifiable measurement used to measure an organisation´s success against objectives. They are also used to assess the state of a program or plan by defining its characteristics and tracking changes over time.

Clear indicators are the basis of an effective monitoring and evaluation system.

Indicators should be developed at the beginning of implementing any program or the plan and should be aligned with objectives previously determined.

There are certain steps needed to effectively determine indicators.

STEP 1
Identify what needs to be measured

STEP 2
Use SMART tool to develop High-Quality Indicators (See specific SMART tool on phase 2)

STEP 3
Establish reference or starting point.

STEP 4
Set targets and goals

STEP 5
Determine the frequency for monitoring (Data collection)

Management Review

As part of the Systematic assessment to review and evaluate the effectiveness and performance of the EMB's Strategic Plan, a management review shall be performed at planned intervals. This will focus on the reviewing and updating the Strategic Plan as needed with reference to suitability, adequacy, and alignment with the Strategic Plan of the organizational context (considering internal and external factors).

The management review shall be carried out taking into consideration the following:

- Status of actions derived from previous management reviews
- Changes in the internal and external context of the organisation (SWOT analysis)
- Information on the performance and effectiveness of the organisation (Indicators, services, Nonconformities, Audit results, performance evaluation, and any other evaluation)
- Adequacy of resources
- Risks and opportunities
- Suppliers' evaluation
- Improvements

Some benefits from the management review:

- Allow top management to review actual results relating to the performance of the organisation
- Look at trends in problems encountered with a view to improving practices to eliminate their causes
- Review data on the performance in meeting the quality objectives and key performance measures for the organisation
- Learn from successes and failures
- Monitor subsequent corrective and preventive actions
- Identify opportunities for improvements.

Personnel Performance evaluation

This is the process of evaluating how effectively employees are fulfilling their job responsibilities, including technical assistance, and contributing to the accomplishment of an EMB's goals.

Managers shall provide feedback to employees.

Results from performance evaluation will demonstrate where training and development are needed and also know whether these have been effective.

Performance evaluation allows managers to make better decisions about possible compensations and promotions.

It is a developmental tool used for the all-round development of the employee and the organisation. The performance is measured against such factors as job knowledge, quality and quantity of output, initiative, leadership abilities, supervision, dependability, co-operation, judgment, versatility, behavior etc.

Specific objectives of a performance evaluation:
1. To effect promotions based on competence and performance.
2. To confirm the services of probationary employees upon their completing the probationary period satisfactorily.
3. To assess the training and development needs of employees.
4. To decide upon a pay raise where (as in the unorganised sector) regular pay scales have not been fixed.
5. To let the employees know where they stand insofar as their performance is concerned and to assist them with constructive criticism and guidance for the purpose of their development.
6. To improve communication, performance evaluation provides a format for dialogue between the superior and subordinate and improves understanding of personal goals and concerns. This can also have the effect of increasing the trust between the rater and the rated.
7. Used to determine whether HR programs such as selection, training, and transfers have been effective or not.

Seven steps for an effective performance evaluation.
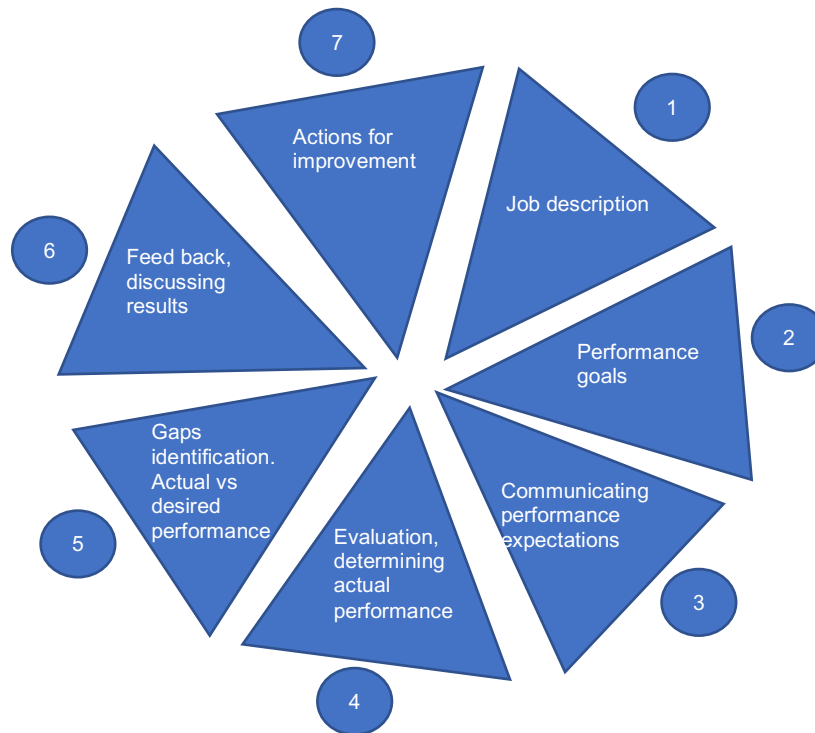
Internal Audits

An Audit is the systematic process of collecting and evaluating information about an EMB's level of compliance, fulfillment of requirements and achievement of expected results.

The benefits of an Internal Audit include:

- To ascertain the degree of compliance with established standards, policies, and procedures;
- To minimise losses and maximise profits;
- To ascertain whether the information generated in an organisation is accurate and reliable;
- To ascertain the level of integrity of the data provided to management;
- To provide informed advice and feedback to management on the next steps and growth opportunities;
- To seek opportunities for improvement

Internal Audit principles:
1. **Ethical conduct:** Trust, integrity, confidentiality and discretion are essential to auditing
2. **Fair presentation:** Audit findings, conclusions and reports reflect truthfully and accurately the audit activities
3. **Professional care:** Auditors must exercise care in accordance with the importance of the task they perform
4. **Independence:** Auditors must be independent of the activity being audited and be objective
5. **Evidence-based approach:** Evidence must be verifiable and be based on samples of the information available.

It is important to maintain proper documentation of the audit process. Internal audits conclude with a closing meeting where findings are shown to management in order to address improvements. A proper audit report shall be addressed and retained to be used for traceability and learning from experiences purposes.

Forms to Identify, Analyze and Monitor Improvement Opportunities

This step involves the design and implementation of tailored forms specific to each organization, through which deviations, errors, complaints and opportunities for improvement can be identified, and systematically monitored.

Such a form will also allow the EMB to analyse what could have happened and address corrections and corrective actions to solve problems.

Documenting such incidents through this form and ensuring they are tracked, helps create evidence of all improvement actions including changes to processes, plans, procedures etc. This helps maintain organizational knowledge and ensures that, once an improvement action is identified, this followed up on until changes have successfully been to address the cause.

Other evaluations shall be taken into consideration for improvement purposes such as:

- Stakeholders' and interested parties' satisfaction
- Suppliers' evaluation
- Work environment survey(s)

Expected outputs:
- Strategic Planning evaluation templates (KPIs, Management Review, Performance evaluation, Internal Audit etc.).
- All evaluation templates linked with the "Action for Improvement" form
- Action for improvement template that will help give evidence of the effectiveness of actions.

6. Leadership & Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a process that facilitates knowledge sharing and establishes learning as a continuous process within an organisation. Therefore, knowledge management and learning go hand to hand in organisations. Defining knowledge management as a process of collection, distribution, and efficient use of the knowledge resource throughout an organisation.

Some definitions:
- Knowledge management is a strategy to be developed in any organisation to ensure that knowledge reaches the right people at the right time and that these people should share and use information to improve upon the organisation's functioning.
- Knowledge management as a set of procedures, infrastructures, and technical and managerial tools, designed toward creating, sharing, and leveraging information and knowledge within and around organisations.

It is in this context; we believe that the management of knowledge adds value to learning at an organisational level which could be used by an organisation and its members for self-renewal. In other words, for knowledge creation and management to develop, organisational learning has to come first.

The knowledgeable leadership should be evident throughout the Electoral Management Body and it should operate at all hierarchical levels. Effective EMBs rely on **leadership** rather than leaders. The role of knowledgeable leader is to provide **strategic visions**, motivate others, effectively communicate, act as an agent of change, coach others around, model good practices, and carry out the knowledge agenda.

Moreover, it is also understood that knowledgeable leaders should explain the goals of knowledge management to all concerned so that people can identify their roles in achieving those goals. They need to provide guidance on any changes taking place in the electoral processes and also priorities needed to reach electoral goals.

Role of leadership in knowledge management
While it is true that in every EMB leaders set examples for others, it is assumed that leaders have a direct impact on how the organisations should approach and deal with knowledge management processes as well as practices. Moreover, if knowledge management does not permeate to all levels in the EMB, beginning at the top, it is unlikely that knowledge management programs will ever catch on or be effective.

Leaders across all levels of the organisation have a unique and important role to play in managing knowledge, it is particularly important for the top managers to be involved in knowledge-sharing processes.

The knowledge management process should aim at motivating all employees, providing them with equal opportunities and developmental avenues, measures and rewarding performances, behaviors, and attitudes that are required for effective knowledge management.

Knowledge management should give importance to leaders and especially to their leadership styles in making things happen for knowledge management processes and practices to flourish.

Commitment to high-level roles will determine the number of resources allocated, and the amount of time that is allowed for members to conduct the creation and sharing of knowledge for the knowledge management programs.

Senior managers need to understand the value of **"availability of information"** to knowledge management and be willing to support and play an aggressive role in decision-making.

"The better you know, the better decisions you will be taken", and that's a lesson for life.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT MODEL

Variable	Activities Knowledge Management Process	Components
V1	IDENTIFY	Knowledge needed by the organization (Diagnosis) Knowledge possessed by the organization (Diagnosis) Gaps in knowledge (Diagnosis)
V2	ACQUIRE	Selection of knowledge Conditions for acquisition Organizational learning capacity Knowledge sources identified
V3	USE	Knowledge Utility Purpose of knowledge Applicability
	RETAIN	*Knowledge Repository* *Knowledge to be stored, keep..* *Protection of knowledge*
V4	SHARE	Knowledge Users Related Processes

V1 IDENTIFY
Determine the knowledge needed on different processes of the EMB in order to achieve goals.
Determine the knowledge possessed by employees, lessons learned, databases, documents, etc.
Identify GAPS of knowledge to address a clear path on how is organisation going to address those GAPs of Knowledge through the application of Variable No 2.

V2 ACQUIRE
Select the knowledge needed to acquire and also its sources (Training, workshops, studies, etc) You convert organisational assets of knowledge from external or internal sources that will contribute to improving the performance of the organisation.

V3 USE
It is important to clearly identify the useful part of knowledge when selecting which information to obtain.

Previous analysis of processes and measurement results can identify where knowledge and

competencies are needed.

By using the knowledge, you assure its transfer to the organisation but also you create added value.
The purpose to acquire knowledge is to use it for the benefit of the organisation.

"Remember if you don't use it, you will lose it"

V4 SHARE
The benefit of knowledge sharing in EMB is that employees with expertise pass everything they know on to others. That way, they turn it into an asset everyone can draw from, into collective knowledge their colleagues can apply to their work.

Share knowledge with colleagues, talk about it, and see the aids in using it for the benefit of the organisation.

By using and sharing you will assure you will **retain** and transfer that knowledge to the organisation.
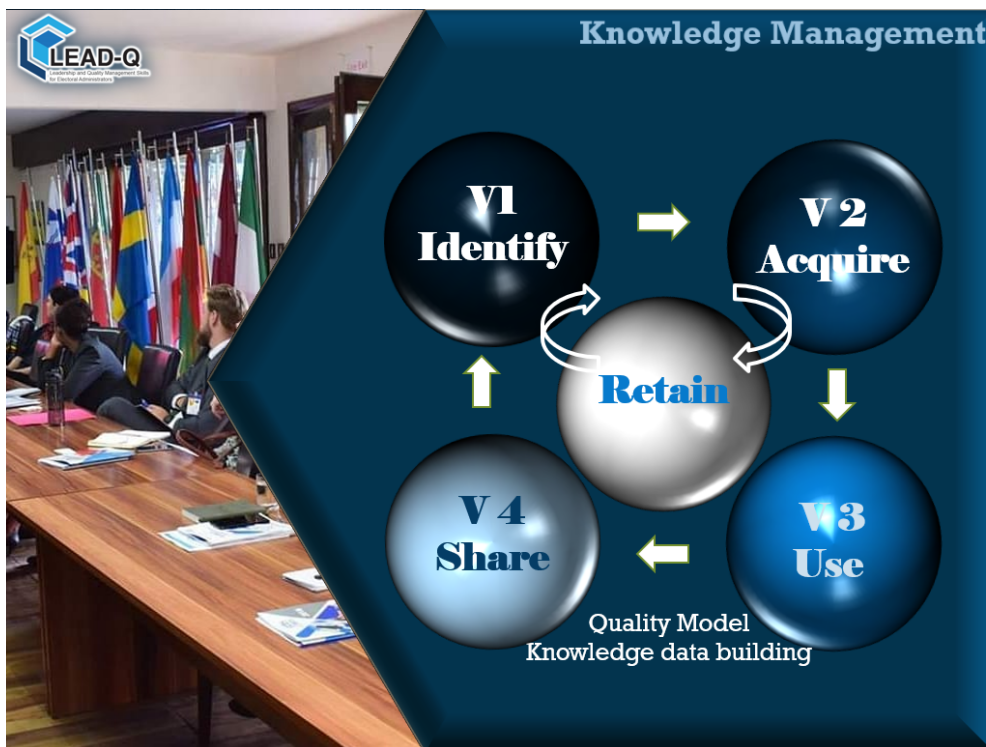
Identifying Critical Knowledge

When establishing a *"Knowledge Map" (KM)* priority, consulting organisational leaders and experts and others "in the know" to understand your organisation's short- and long-term goals is essential. Experts can also help pinpoint areas where impending retirements, turnover in human resources, and other factors are creating knowledge gaps and risks.

Typically, busy and not KM experts, organisational leaders/experts need explicit guidance on how best to convey knowledge needs and rank them by urgency and strategic importance.

Here are some examples of how this can be done:

Create a Knowledge Map for Risk management

Once a focus area is established, your KM team will need a system to bring together leaders, experts, and other stakeholders to outline the specific needs, roles, tasks, systems, relationships, and subdomains that the KM effort will target. KM teams use various approaches to uncover knowledge needs, including manager input, knowledge audits, and analysis of existing resources. However, knowledge mapping is the most effective way to gather input and create consensus on what constitutes critical knowledge.

A knowledge map is a visual representation of organisational knowledge and how it is **created, shared, and used** throughout the enterprise. Knowledge mapping can focus on a process, role, competency, or learning need, function, or strategic priority. With this organising structure as a pivot, the map encompasses both documented knowledge assets and the expertise and know-how stored in employees' heads.
To create knowledge maps, the team will need to work to look at specifics in a process or department and answer some questions:

1. What knowledge is needed? (Gap analysis) (Variable 1)
2. Who has that knowledge, or how can it be accessed? (Variable 2)
3. For what purpose the knowledge will be needed? (Variable 3)
4. With what departments or processes knowledge will be linked? (Variable 4)
5. When is the knowledge needed?

EMBs can use this information to understand the movement of knowledge and perform a gap analysis between the current state and the needed state. The resulting knowledge map will now show any discrepancies between how knowledge currently flows and how it should flow.

**Feedback from Experts & Experienced Employees**

Besides (or even instead of) consulting solely with organisational leaders, your KM team might want to gather input from experts and experienced employees to understand what knowledge they have as well as potential problems in knowledge access and flow. Some organisations use formal interview processes to extract information from experts and other key personnel prior to retirement or at key milestones (e.g., at the end of major projects). Others use community leaders, process owners, and/or official subject matter experts to identify critical knowledge on an ongoing basis.

Prioritise Knowledge Needs

After identifying knowledge gaps and needs, you'll need to decide what to tackle first. Use a simple tool such as *Probability vs Impact* for Knowledge Loss Risk Matrix to prioritise knowledge needs.
Areas with the highest likelihood and consequences of knowledge loss should be the top priority. Knowledge is more likely to be lost if it is not documented and resides only in the minds of one or a handful of employees. Knowledge whose potential loss carries the greatest consequence is vital to the organisation's strategic priorities, services, and/or ongoing operations.

Probability vs. Impact Matrix
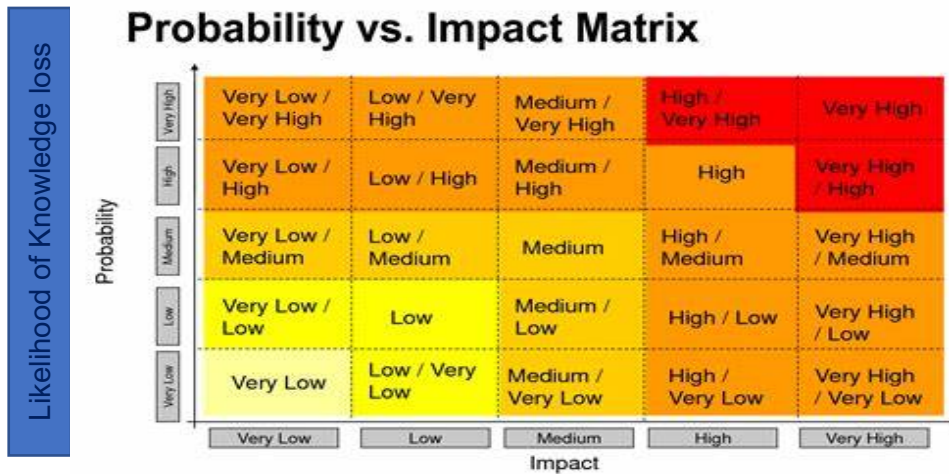
Consequences of Knowledge loss

Strategies are defined as long-term guidelines. They aim at ensuring the permanent achievement of the overarching goals. These strategic guidelines can only produce the desired effects if they are communicated effectively. In addition to oral **communication**, they must be **communicated** through written **documents**.

Good documentation practices get documents needed to unfold from strategies. In order to assure effective **communication** on what is needed to be done and fulfill requirements and achieve organisational objectives and goals, the organisation must rely on a coherent documentation process.

Taking into account the above, and linking it to international standards regarding documentation processes, we decided to adopt this model shown in the image below to unfold documents from the Strategic Plan.

7. **Strategic** documents as the result of Strategic Plan Communication **process**

Documentation process.

Strategic Plan / Quality Model

Mapping processes

International Conventions, national laws, Manuals, Procedures, Instructions, Norms, Guides, SIPOCs, other documents.

Records.

Strategic Plan

As we have highlighted, a Strategic Plan in the documentation process provides an organisation with purpose and direction, which defines the organisation's long-term vision and shows that the organisation intends to make its vision a reality. It describes how an organisation will adapt to take advantage of opportunities and minimise the impact of identified Risks, considering the constantly changing environment in order to maintain strategic fit (balance) between the goals and capabilities. It is a disciplined effort that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organisation is, whom it serves, what it does, and why it does it, with a constant focus on the future.
The term strategic planning is essentially synonymous with strategic management.

Some benefits of Strategic Planning.

- Better strategies aligned with identified goals using a logical and systemic approach.
- Enhance the communication process within an EMB and external stakeholders.
- Empowers individuals
- Assistance in establishing Operational Plans.
- Capacity to adapt to changing environments
- Coordination of work (Tasks)
- Establishes discipline
- Helps achieve organisational goals
- Assistance to evaluate and control
- More efficient utilisation of resources
- Better decision making
- Provide a broader perspective
- Contribute to transparency

Mapping of processes

The mapping of processes intends to translate knowledge and simplify expressions on how an organisation operates, contributing to the flow of activities and consistency.

They are used to clarify the step-by-step flow of the process, timing, handoffs, and identifying outputs that can be measured and studied.

8 Key electoral Processes that can and shall be mapped by an EMB:

- **Voter registration**
- **Registration of political parties and candidates**
- **Electoral logistics**
- **Vote casting** (Election Day operation)
- **Vote counting and declaration of results**
- **Electoral Education**
- **Oversight of campaign financing**
- **Resolution of electoral disputes and Adjudication of electoral complaints**

Electoral legal frameworks must be taken into consideration for the design and development of these 8 key electoral processes.

It has to be taken into account that the processes listed above are not separate entities, but they form together the backbone of the electoral operational plan and are linked directly or indirectly within a synergistic mechanism expressing the electoral cycle.

Some benefits of mapping electoral processes:

- Making the process more visible across the organisation
- Identification of Improvement opportunities
- Better communication between departments
- Consistency over the way activities are addressed
- Avoiding duplicity of tasks
- Identification of links between departments in activities that involve 2 or more departments.

International Conventions, National Laws, Manuals, Procedures, Instructions, and other Documents

International Electoral Conventions and National Laws

Electoral procedures, and in particular those more specific to rights and freedoms in the

framework of electoral processes, should be harmonised with the international conventions ratified and signed by the country, as well as national laws developed in this regard.

The electoral procedures should take into consideration all international conventions and national laws developed in this regard, which are part of the legal framework of the country where the electoral procedures take place. In this regard, special attention should be paid to the elaboration of procedures respecting the obligations stipulated in the legal framework.

Each EMB should assess and define its legal status within the framework of international standards and strive to abide by internationally recognised norms, such as UN Conventions, Regional Agreements, and best practices formalised in other documents put forward by observer groups or organisations.

Elections are a continuously improving field, with more legal norms and standards being accepted worldwide. Technology is another key factor driving the modernisation of electoral processes and operations. As elections will inevitably move towards digitalisation in the coming decades, more legal norms and conventions will cover these technological, social, and political dimensions of the electoral processes.

Manuals, Procedures, and Instructions

These documents are useful resources for personnel that establish guidelines and protocols for all the major principles and decisions of a department or processes within the organisation.

All needed requirements to be met are clearly identified (Law, Processes, and stakeholders requirements)
Deviations and Nonconformities can therefore be identified, helping to reduce variations within a given process.

Top management shall ensure that the responsibilities and authorities for relevant roles are assigned, communicated, and understood within the organisation.

Organisational Structure

An organisational structure allocates employees designated work roles and responsibilities and helps management to coordinate and control activities.

The purpose of an organisational structure is to clarify relationships, lines of authority, and ways of communicating in a way that best suits the organisation.

It is indispensable to count the number of people needed but also assure they have the knowledge and required competencies for every position. EMB has to be very careful when selecting personnel to assure they comply with expectations and requirements for each position (See job profiles/description section)

Job Profiles/descriptions

A written document that contains relevant

information regarding the positions on an Electoral Management Body.
Job profiles describe duties, responsibilities, abilities, and requirements a candidate shall meet for a certain position.

Personnel files and records.
Personnel files, store the employment history of each employee from the day they began working to the time they retired or terminated employment.
It helps to supply crucial information to managers regarding the employees.

Personnel records give the managers all the information to formulate and implement policies concerning employment. They also help the management and the human resource department in creating good guidelines for the hiring and recruiting of new personnel.

The records also help on future hiring of personnel on grounds of sex, age, race, and disability because the personnel records will give a clear factual about the kind of workers that perform highly in the organisation Absence levels, sickness, lateness, labor turnover, accidents, disciplines and other forms of issues that prevent the person from performing their day-to-day tasks.

A personnel Records System is highly recommended to be acquired

The information that is stored in an organisation's personnel records system includes very important information that could be used in many occasions that may arise. One of the pieces of information that it contains is the personal details of all the employees. This information is necessary for the security of the company so that it can also find its employees through various means in case needed. The systems also contain other information which includes work details. In this part, the system contains details of the work patterns of the employee, work contacts, and photographs. These are very helpful for the company because it can also have information about the employees who are performing and those who are not performing.

The system can also have the personnel's job and salary details. This means that the system can access information about the working records of the personnel and also the salary records of the personnel. The system also has specific details of the personnel's job details and where he or she is working and at which department, branch etc. The hours that the personnel is supposed to work are also contained in the system and hence when the person needs to be called in by the management it is easy to locate him or her. The system also contains information about the emergency contacts of the personnel in case anything happens. This is very helpful because employees can have their emergencies handled by their families who will be called in by the organisation's administration.

The system can also keep the contract information and so the management will be well-updated if any contract is ending. The system will also give the management an idea of what the personnel has been performing (Performance evaluation results) and hence if it is necessary for the contract to be renewed. This means that the management is updated on all the employees' contracts and information about the people who are supposed to retire or those who are supposed to have their contracts renewed is also available to the management by the system. The record system can also show the various developments that the personnel has gone through since the appointment day. This helps in determining the various training the employees have gone through and how they are trained to optimise their productivity.
All of these can also be integrated into physical files if there is not enough budget for acquiring a system.

Training and development program

Employee training and development programs are essential to the success of organisations worldwide. Not only do these programs offer opportunities for staff to improve their skills, but also for employers to enhance employee productivity and improve the organisational culture.

Employee development is the continuous effort to strengthen work performance through approaches like coaching, training sessions, and leadership mentoring. Training is a specific event that teaches new information or skills, often provided to new or newly promoted employees.

Employee training and development programs are critical for enhancing employee performance.

Benefits personnel will experience with training and development programs:

- Improving task management
- Targeting required skills
- Encouraging continuous improvement
- Instilling confidence
- Clarifying expectations
- Enhancing engagement

Organisational Records management

Keep valuable information readily accessible for organisational requirements and also for audits where and when needed.

Traceability will be easier to achieve with well-integrated record management.

Records shall clearly be:
identified, classified, stored, secured, capable of retrieved, trackable, and destroyed when no longer required or permanently preserved if needed.

Records management will help managers to improve decision-making as they provide important information on the performance of processes.

Logical Framework for an EMB's Strategic Plan

At the end of an EMB's Strategic Plan, a logical framework will help strengthen project design, implementation, and evaluation.

The Logical framework approach is a methodology mainly used for designing, monitoring, and evaluating the development of a Strategic Plan. Most donors will require one as part of strategic planning, and it's generally the first thing an evaluator will ask for. There is no agreed standard for a logical framework. As an example, some EMBs call the goal outcome, while others call it an objective or an impact.

The Logical Framework approach takes the form of a project table, often referred to as a "Logframe". The logframe is a planning tool consisting of a matrix such as a table that lists

EMB activities, short-term outputs, medium-term outcomes, and long-term goals. It is supposed to show the logic of how the activities will lead to the outputs, which in turn lead to the outcomes, and ultimately the goal.

The columns represent a narrative type of description of the events that take place as an activity is implemented: Activities, Outputs indicator/ Expected Goal, Baseline, Target, means of verification, Risks & Assumption.

- **Outputs indicator / Expected Goal / Overall objectives:** results that have been or that are to be achieved after a period of time, but not immediate.
- **Baseline:** the value of a performance indicator before the implementation of activities
- **Target:** the specific, planned level of result to be achieved within an explicit timeframe
- **Means of verification:** specify the source of the information for the measurements or verification specified in the indicator's column
- **Risks & Assumptions:** external factors that could have an influence, whether positive or negative, on the EMB events described in the last narrative column of the log frame. The list of assumptions should include the factors that may impact the EMB activity's success. A good log frame design should be able to substantiate its assumptions which are a hypothesis on risk, especially those with a high potential to have a negative impact. The "Assumptions" column is important in clarifying the extent to which the program objectives depend on external factors.

8. Conclusions

In this publication, we laid out the reasons why strategic planning is key for any EMB to achieve its short and long-term goals, considering the complex contexts of elections and taking into account new factors such as globalisation, technologies, and rising political instability. It has become crucial for all electoral organisations to execute their strategies carefully.

An essential component of the strategy of an EMB is to identify and prepare for future changes and their subsequent challenges. This anticipation is the strategy's main purpose: minimising the threats and maximising the opportunities which are brought about by change. In other words, EMBs must integrate risk and knowledge management in their strategies to deliver elections.

Moreover, we have seen how strategic planning allows determining organisations' current position, and projected performance, and assists the organisations in determining the resources available and how to best allocate them. Although EMBs mainly rely on the quality of its permanent staff, it may also need to engage large numbers of temporary staff appointed and trained during election periods. It can be a challenging task that stems from the fact that temporary electoral staff are appointed for short periods of time and often have little or no relevant work experience.

Overall, strategic planning for an EMB can mitigate some of the most prevalent challenges. Described as a global management tool used in managing the operations of any EMB component, strategic planning is an instrument that helps the internal improvement of the EMB in the establishment of working guidelines known by all electoral stakeholders such as political parties, the media, or civil society. Strategic planning improves the overall performance of the EMB and provide for reliability.

Lastly, it is important to be aware that the process of strategic planning is not a guarantee that an organisation will enhance its performance. Successful implementation of a strategic plan requires sufficient resources and a clear understanding of its content by all stakeholders. To be effective, a strategic plan must be considered as a living document, always integrating progress and lesson learned, as electoral cycles go.

"The final plan is not where success abides. Effective performance of the plan is always needed.'

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ECES is an independent, non partisan and not for profit Foundation headquartered in Brussels with a global remit. ECES was established at the end of 2010 and has implemented activities already in **more than 50 countries**, mainly, but not only, in Africa and the Middle East, primarily with funding from the EU and EU Member states.

ECES promotes **electoral and democratic strenghtening** through the provision of advisory services, operational support and management of large projects mainstreaming capacity and leadership development via peer exchanges and comparative experiences, dialogue and the prevention and mitigation of electoral conflicts.

ECES has crafted and copyrighted its strategy called **"A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support - EURECS"**, which is implemented via **specific methodologies and tools** also copyrighted by ECES. EURECS is an innovative delivery mechanism to implement **electoral and democracy assistance activities that are consistent primarily with European values and EU policies targeting the facilitation of the cooperation on electoral matters between the EU, the EU member states and their partner countries.**

ECES together with the College of Europe, Interpeace, Mediateur, Foundation Hirondelle and the Institute of Research and Education on Negotiation (ESSEC) is implementing on behalf of the EU the ERMES project, the European Resource for Mediation Support. ECES is providing the key expertise and the office for the project that is a strategic tool for the EU role in mediation and dialogue.

In this context ECES is also a member of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office network, **the biggest and leading civil society European platform of 40 independent organisations and think tanks from 16 European countries committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of conflict**

As mentioned above ECES was formally established at the end of 2010, However, the idea of ECES emerged long before it was founded. The experiences that led to ECES as well as founding members **hail from the African continent as main recipients of EU and EU member states funds for electoral assistance in the context of the EU-Africa partnership**.

While ECES Executive Director and founder Fabio Bargiacchi worked as Election Specialist at EuropeAid, he was asked to coordinate and co-author the production of the EU Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance (2006). In the absence of a European not-for-profit organisation specialising in electoral support, he facilitated the establishment of a partnership between UNDP and EU with the signature of the EC-UNDP Operational Guidelines for Electoral Assistance. Fabio later contributed to the Joint EC-UNDP Task Force Electoral Assistance (JTF) and oversaw its activities. This entailed identification, formulation, and support for the implementation of *all* UNDP electoral assistance projects funded by the EU.

In his capacity as Coordinator for the Joint Task Force, Fabio Bargiacchi met Abbot Apollinaire Muhulungu Malu Malu[3]. He shared the vision of establishing a **European centre dedicated to electoral support** as an alternative to the existing options that dominated at the time mainly from North America. There was a need to see the **views and values of the EU and EU member states reflected** in electoral support. The European approach to electoral support invested significantly in laying the foundation for a strong partnership and within that trustful space, facilitate and enhance rather than restrict national ownership.

From there onwards, the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) matured, and ECES was launched in December 2010 when Abbot Apollinaire Mulhongo Malu Malu, the first President of ECES management board, was invited by the European Commission to attend the European Development Days. Fabio Bargiacchi began his tenure as ECES Executive Director in 2011. ECES has since **continued to grow and filled a gap** that prove its founding principles still relevant.

ECES raison d'etre is to deliver efficient, sustainable, impactful, and cost-effective electoral support to EU and EU member states partner countries. ECES, through its programmes, projects and activities, is committed to:
- Stimulate increased cooperation between EU and EU member states in electoral assistance (team Europe) and the partner-country;
- Considerable efforts to guarantee visibility, co-steering of projects for national ownership, flexibility and cost effectiveness, and;

- Earmark more funds to activities instead of administration and human resources costs.
In 2022, ECES is one of the **main implementing partners of the EU** in terms of electoral and democracy assistance has grown and strengthened its internal capacity, is position and outreach.

We have understood that to deliver on the ground, we need to **invest in our internal operations** that enable us to deliver effectively. ECES have made significant investments to establish systems and working methods that give us and our donor the reassurance that we **do ourselves what we expect of our project beneficiaries** in terms of sound and transparent management of people, assets, and funds.
Our **12 copyrighted methods to date** are in part targeting our beneficiaries and in part, our own internal functioning. These aspects of our work are inextricably linked and thus equally important.

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[3] Former president of the Electoral Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2005-2006), president of the Network of Electoral Management Bodies of the Southern and Central African Regions (SADC ECF and RESEAC) and founding member of the Network of French speaking Electoral Management Bodies (RECEF).

ECES is TRACE certified for its **financial management transparency**. The TRACE certification process is based on internationally accepted standards of financial transparency and required ECES to complete global anti-bribery training, adopt a code of conduct and update due diligence information annually. As a TRACE certified organization, ECES is a pre-vetted partner for multinational companies and organisations seeking to carry out their activities with those who share their commitment to commercial and financial transparency.

ECES is also certified by ISO on its standard 9001:2015 meaning it has adopted a **Quality Management System** that aims to (i) demonstrate its ability to consistently provide services that meet donor/beneficiary and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and (ii) to enhance donor/beneficiary satisfaction through the effective application of the system, including processes for improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Fabio Bargiacchi

Fabio Bargiacchi is the creator and the founder of ECES. He is a member of ECES' Management Board and has been serving as Executive Director of ECES' Management Unit since July 2011. Over the last 11 years in this position he, together with his colleagues and collaborators, have led ECES to become one of the four most important electoral assistance providers for implementing projects funded by the EU and EU Member States. ECES is nowadays recognised as one of the most important electoral assistance actors globally, along with UNDP, IDEA, OSCE, IFES, NDI and IRI.

As Founder-Executive Director, he led ECES to obtain the TRACE and ISO 9001 certifications for its financial and quality management standards having implemented activities in over 50 countries mostly, but not only limited to Africa and the Middle East. He has played and maintains a strategic role in resource mobilisation and supervision of all activities which has resulted in ECES' funding coming mainly from the EU and its Member States as well as other donor agencies.

As of January 2022, Fabio also led ECES to obtain an important number of copyrighted certificates including innovative methodological tools for the implementation of ECES' strategy, called the "European Response to Electoral Cycle Support" (EURECS), of which he is the main author.

These innovative copyrights are a **testimony to the leading work of ECES** across the globe, and to its commitment to continuous improvement to further contribute to democratic and electoral processes worldwide. The dates of the copyrights are far more recent than the application and implementation of the methodologies, many of them have been part of ECES toolbox since its foundation. However, the time given these methodologies to evolve through various contexts before consolidating them has created more versatile, relevant, and effective methodologies.

Date	Title of methodology
13.10.2016	Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders LEAD
18.10.2016	Implementing EURECS - Standard Operating Procedure SOP
18.10.2016	A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support EURECS
25.07.2019	Electoral Political Economy Analyses Methodology EPEA
12.08.2019	Preventing Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence PEV
21.08.2019	Communication and Visibility Guidelines
25.11.2019	Electoral Security Threat Assessment ESTA
06.04.2020	Leadership & Quality Management Skills for Electoral Administrators LEAD-Q
10.05.2020	INNOV-Elections
13.04.2021	Electoral Translator
30.09.2021	The Roster Database
17.10.2021	Peace Mediation in Electoral Processes Methodology

Fabio's work in the elections field dates back to the early 1990s. From 1997 onwards, he has continuously extended his expertise in the field of electoral support at the international level. In the period 1997-2004 he held a variety of posts in the field of electoral assistance and observation with the EU, the UN and the OSCE. He operated for long term assignments in countries such as Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, West Bank and Gaza, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, Haiti, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo Suriname and Indonesia where he worked as Senior Election Operations Expert, Training/Reporting Advisor and Coordinator of EU Election Observers, among other senior positions.

Fabio also developed a deep knowledge in project cycle management, particularly in the Democratic Governance field as explicitly shown by his experience working for the European Commission at the Delegation of the EU in Maputo (Mozambique) from 2001 to 2003 and at

the EU Headquarters (European Commission, EuropeAid) in Brussels between 2004 and 2006 as Election Specialist. From January 2007 to December 2010, Fabio served as Coordinator of the "Joint EC UNDP Task Force On Electoral Assistance" (JTF) and Senior Electoral Assistance Advisor at the UN/UNDP Brussels Office. During this period, he contributed to the establishment of the same Joint Task Force and oversaw its activities for the identification, formulation and support for the implementation of all the EC-UNDP electoral assistance projects.

From October 2004 to December 2006, he worked as Election Specialist at the Directorate for Operations Quality Support of the EuropeAid and he was the coordinator and main author of the "EU Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance". Fabio was, thus, involved in more than 70 UNDP projects amounting up to a sum of more than 600 million EURO from October 2004 till December 2010. Bargiacchi was also at the forefront of the conception and delivery of all the Joint EC UNDP IDEA effective electoral assistance, face-to-face and distance e-learning training from September 2005 till February 2011. From January 2011 to February 2012, he worked as Chief Technical Advisor for the EU funded "Project in Support of the Electoral cycles for the five Portuguese Speaking Countries in Africa (Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe) and Timor Leste", implemented by the UNDP. This was the first ever trans-national electoral assistance project that focused exclusively on capacity development.

Considering his experiences with OSCE, UN/UNDP, EU and ECES, Fabio has dealt with electoral and democratisation processes in over 60 different countries and worked on the identification, formulation, implementation or evaluation of more than 100 electoral assistance projects since 1997.

From 2014 until 2019 Fabio was a Member of the Board of the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), serving as Vice President and Acting President from 2015 to 2017 while at present he brought ECES to be part of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office network, the biggest and leading civil society European platform of 40 independent organisations and think tanks from 16 European countries committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of conflict.

Fabio is a BRIDGE accrediting training-facilitator and the main creator of the training curriculum "Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders, LEAD" conceived together with the Centre for Creative Leadership. He is a graduate of Political

Science following studies at the University of Florence (Cesare Alfieri) and at the "Universite Libre de Bruxelles" and holds a Master of Arts on Society, Science and Technology after studies at University of Roskilde (Denmark) and University of Oslo (Norway). In the last 15 years, he has authored, coordinated, co-authored and contributed to a series of election-related publications and papers:

- SDG16: An enabler for accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda amid COVID-19 for the Think 20 in the context of the G 20 in Italy of Octobre 2021
- Challenges and opportunities for the implementation of e-voting in Nigeria: lessons from international experiences (2021)
- Delivering Electoral and Democracy Support during the COVID 19 period. ECES preparedness and response: Innov-Elections (2020)
- ECES Standard Operating Procedures for the Implementation of the European Response to Electoral Cycle Support (2019)
- ECES Communication and Visibility Guidelines (2019)
- "The potential of EU Funded electoral assistance to support the prevention of election related conflict and violence: Lessons from the Southern African Region"
- EURECS - A European Response to Electoral Cycle Support (2016)
- Using International Standards. Council of Europe Handbook for Domestic Election Observers (2013)
- Missing a Trick? Building Bridges between EU Mediation and EU Electoral Support in Conflict-affected Countries - Expert Seminar Report, (2012)
- Essential Consideration of Electronic Voting published by International IDEA (2011)
- ISPI Working Paper on the Electoral Cycle Approach: Effectiveness and Sustainability of Electoral Assistance (2011)
- EU and Peace building, Policy and Legal Aspects: EU Electoral Support: (2010)
- EC-UNDP Operational Paper on Procurement Aspects of Introducing ICTs in Electoral Processes: the specific case of biometric voter registration (2010)
- EC-UNDP Operational Guidelines. Implementation of Electoral Assistance Programmes and Projects (2006 and 2008)
- ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance (2007) UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide (2007) EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance (2006).

José Enrique

José Enrique currently holds the position of ISO Lead Electoral Assessor to the program since April 2018.

His main professional objective is to contribute in a concrete and positive way in the good performance of the projects under his charge, which allows him to develop his experience and knowledge to the benefit of any organisation and a better society, reaffirming the values of honesty, loyalty and constant progress in an environment of continual improvement.

He has an extensive knowledge and experience as an assessor-consultant, trainer and Auditor on Management Systems in different types of private and public organisations including electoral bodies.

His experience dates for more than 20 years in implementing Management Systems for

different standards such as:

- ISO 9001:2015
- ISO TS/54001:2019
- ISO 14001:2015
- ISO 45001:2018 among others.

José Enrique has been a permanent member of Latin American Quality Institute that serves as liaison officer of ISO for all Latin America.

José Enrique Also acts as a speaker in international forums presenting subjects regarding Management Systems such as the "Planning Model" and "Knowledge management model" among others.

José Enrique is cofounder and active Chief Executive Officer of "JE Consultores" a company in México that provides services that include auditing, training and implementation of Management Systems.

Julia Onnasch

Julia Onnasch is the Head of Programme at ECES HQ, working in particular on quality assurance and process improvement. Amongst other activities, she is currently supporting the design, development and implementation of a quality management system at ECES Headquarters. Before this, she successfully worked on the certification of the Independent Election Commission of Jordan against the ISO electoral standard TS/54001:2019. This involved the preparation of procedures for all key management, operational and support processes across the electoral cycle, establishment of measurement methods, and planning of 2020 parliamentary elections in-line with the international standard. Prior to joining ECES, Julia has previously acted as a consultant for a Jordanian NGO, assisting them in the design of a new documentation system. Prior to this she worked as an Analyst for international organisations and political risk and security consultancies. She holds an MA from King's College London with the faculty of Social Science and Public Policy.

Scipion du Chatenet

For the last 25 years, Scipion du Chatenet has worked for international organisations or large consortium at management level (as project manager and operations specialist). Scipion spent five years working for the UN-DPKO/Field Administration and Logistics Division (Rwanda, Angola, Croatia, Iraq). He also worked in soldiers rehabilitation into civilian life in 1992 for the International Labour Organisation in Cambodia and in 1993 with the World Food Program in Mozambique. Scipion got involved in 1994 in the first democratic election in South Africa. Since then, he has gained over 18 years' professional work experience in elections in senior management positions through electoral observation, assessment missions, and technical assistance with the European Commission , United Nations agencies, International Foundation for Electoral System, European Center for

Electoral Support, Electoral Reform International Services and for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe / ODHIR. He has worked with elections in more than fifty different countries on six continents. Upon availability, he has been an Operations & Security Trainer for the Needs project and for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Estonia for operations and security expert candidates. In 1991, he was a consultant at the United Nations Secretariat in New York at the Investment Management Services. He has a diploma in finance from N.Y.I.F. in the USA.

He held the position of Head of Project in the Union of Comoros (PACT I), where he worked for ECES with the national independent electoral commission in setting up the legislatives elections alongside local elections (2014-2015). And from October 2019 till July 2020, Scipion is working as the ECES Senior Finance and Administrative Manager for the EURECS project in Ethiopia.

Victoria Florinder

Victoria Florinder is currently working as team leader for the European Resources for Mediation Support - ERMES III project managed by the College of Europe. ERMES enables the EU to provide assistance to conflict parties, third party mediators and groups participating in inclusive peace processes, in the context of local, national or international armed conflicts, or for preventive purposes. Victoria was previously working for the European Centre for Electoral Support as Head of Programmes, Senior Conflict Management Advisor and Project Director for South Africa and Ukraine. Victoria is a resourceful and committed mediation and dialogue expert, with +12 years of experience in conflict resolution and election related conflict and violence. She has authored and co-edited publications around election violence prevention through mediation. Victorias geographical experience ranges from West Africa, Ukraine, Middle East, the Caribbean and Southern Africa.

Stefan Coman

Stefan Coman, MA, LL.M, has extensive experience in post-conflict democratization, elections, diplomacy and journalism. He is a specialist in transitional countries, with experience in Liberia, Ukraine, Pakistan, Romania, Czech Republic, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Sudan. Mr. Coman has worked on international post-conflict elections projects, as mission coordinator for NDI observation mission to Liberia, EU chief technical adviser in Sudan and South Sudan, elections analyst in Pakistan and Afghanistan, elections operations adviser in Iraq and Afghanistan. Previously, he worked at the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he served as the assistant to the spokesperson and worked in bilateral and multilateral relations with Eastern and Central European countries. As a journalist, Mr. Coman has worked as an accredited correspondent with Radio Free Europe and the BBC. Trained as a lawyer, Mr. Coman has an academic background in international policy and international law.

Rindai Vava

Rindai Chipfunde-Vava is an electoral, Gender & Civic society and capacity building expert with 23 years of experience. Since 2019,She is currently serving as Preventing Electoral Violence (PEV) Project Co-ordinator in Ethiopia for European Centre for Electoral Support.

She was instrumental as ESN-SA Host Director for EU/ECES funded Project to "Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa" (PEV-SADC (2012-2016) covering 14 countries .She was also the Capacity Building Expert and Senior Electoral Advisor and acted as Project Director of the Project in Support of a Peaceful and Inclusive Electoral Process in Zanzibar – PROPEL(2016) that delivered mediation support and political dialogue for electoral stakeholders. She was also the Deputy Co-ordinator and Capacity Building Advisor of the EU funded Project to "Prevent, Mitigate and Manage Election-Related Conflict and Potential Violence in South Africa" (PEV-RSA) (2018-2020) implemented by the IEC in partnership with the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES)

Since 2000 she was the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and Host Director for SADC-Electoral Support Network of domestic observer groups based in Southern Africa covering 14 countries. Under her leadership ZESN has deployed over 10 000 election observers each General election since 2000 to date, Long term observers, and done successfully parallel voter tabulations, voter rolls audits, setting up Election Situation Rooms, civic and voter education campaigns and advocacy for electoral reforms. She sits in many boards and also served as Mission Leader of the ESN -SA election observer missions in many SADC countries as well as heading many CSOs Electoral Reforms Advocacy Missions to SADC,AU and many international fora.

Rindai formerly served as the Zimbabwe Country Coordinator for Southern African Human Rights NGOs Network (SAHRINGON) and as the Programs Coordinator for the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights). She has observed over 20 elections under the different bodies), as well as in many countries in Africa, Asia, North and South America. She is a BRIDGE Accrediting Facilitator and certifying training in the Leadership & ECES Conflict Management for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD) methodology and worked in many countries like Nigeria, Zanzibar Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana, Malawi. etc.

She has been engaged as a Consultant by UNDP to do a civic and Voter education strategy in Nauru, Zimbabwe etc and also as a BRIDGE and LEAD training Expert for EMBs & electoral stakeholders in Somalia, South Africa,Tanzania, Rwanda, Nigeria,Sudan and Zimbabwe. Moreover, she has expert knowledge and understanding of key electoral issues and development at the national regional and global level from having worked over 23 years to support democratic and electoral processes.

Rindai is a Civic Society Expert working in building and managing coalitions & networks as well as vast experience in managing domestic electoral observation, civic and voter education, development of materials and campaigns and setting up Election Situation rooms. She is also an expert on gender and elections as well as capacity building expert of electoral stakeholders.

She was part of the Evaluation Team Member of the EU-funded Review of the African Union

Election Observation Methodology. She took part in the Electoral Institute for Sustainable, Democracy in Africa (EISA) development of Principles for Election Management, monitoring, and observation in SADC region (PEMMO) by Electoral Commissions Forum (ECF-SADC and Electoral Support Network (ESN-SA) and took part in the revision of the SADC Principles and Guidelines governing Democratic elections in SADC. She is also a Founder member of Global Network of Domestic Observers (GNDEM) and currently a Steering Committee Member. She was part of the team that participated in the launch of Declaration of Global Principles for non-partisan election observation and monitoring by citizen organisations and Code of Conduct for non-partisan citizen election observers and monitors by GNDEM.

She is a holder of BSC in political science, Masters degree in Policy Studies and Post Graduate Diploma in Peace and Security (Uppsala University, Sweden) a Stanford University fellow and Commonwealth Fellow.

Rindai contributed towards many publications such as ZESN Election Reports 2000-2018, Election observers manuals, civic and voter education manuals, election strategies,CORE Election Observation Manual, South African Institute for international Affairs- Chapter on Resuscitation of Political Parties in Zimbabwe. She was also part of the team developing a comprehensive handbook on election conflict prevention stemming from 14 countries in southern Africa and Handbook on Preventing & Mitigating Electoral Conflict & Violence (2018). She has presented papers at many local,regional and international conferences.

Sylvestre Somo

Sylvestre Somo Sylvestre is a Senior Electoral Expert, Senior Trainer and Senior Project Officer at the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES) working with different projects. He is a researcher and Human Right Activist. He worked at the Independent Electoral Commission of the DRC at its inception in 2003 serving as a Senior Personal Assistant to the Chairperson of the Commission, coordinating the interaction with civil society, political parties and facilitating collaboration with external financial and technical partners. From 2013 to 2016 he worked as the Senior Technical Advisor for the CENI providing technical support and advice to the Commission. With more than 18 years of experience working with EMBs across the globe, he has acquired knowledge on project management working with NGO and State programs such as the Stabilization Program of the DRC. For the peacebuilding process in the DRC, Sylvestre actively participated in the peace negotiations in Goma 2008 and Kampala 2013 as a member of the technical team for the dialogues.

Sylvestre Somo participated in 18 election observation missions in Africa, North America, South America and Asia from 2003.

Sylvestre Somo is a graduate of Computer Science of the Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais (Puc-Minas), he has a post-graduation degree in Electoral Laws and an MBA in Project Management at the same university. Sylvestre holds several specialized training certificates including the Civilian Service, Human Rights and Gender Awareness of the Peace Operations Training Institute and Certified Trainer in "Leadership and Conflict Management Skills for Electoral Stakeholders (LEAD)"

Zoé Depasse

Zoé Depasse is a Junior Project and Communication Officer at ECES. She holds a Bachelor's degree in law as well as a Master's degree in international public law from Brussels University. She then completed a Master's in international politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (SOAS). She had to opportunity to work in development law at the United Nations and the International Development Law Association in Rome. She also has experience in European Institutions as she was selected for a traineeship in the AGRI DG of the EU Commission. Through those previous experiences, she developed a solid interest in project development and finance that led her to ECES. She is fluent in English, Spanish and French.

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