

Annex E: Supporting Electoral Processes: Sub-plans

The development of sub-plans that canvass the range of supporting electoral processes is recommended. It is beyond the scope of this introductory guide to provide detailed information on how to develop each type of sub-plan. However, to support the visible inclusion of supporting electoral processes in operational planning, Annex E provides a summary of operational planning considerations for procurement, logistics, public outreach, recruitment and staffing, procedures and training and security.

Operational Planning Considerations

Procurement

Every electoral process has a range of associated procurement tasks that should be integrated properly into operational planning. Quality and timely procurement is essential for successful elections, and a plan to articulate this activity is recommended. Procurement may occur via a standalone procurement plan or a combined procurement and logistics plan.

To facilitate quality and timely procurement, public sector and EMB procurement guidelines should be followed and communicated to all EMB work units. It is often necessary for several work units to collaborate early to identify the types and quantities of materials required for all core and supporting electoral processes (e.g., election administration, voter registration, voter education, polling activities, counting activities and results tabulation). Procurement of assistive devices (e.g., tactile ballot guides) and personal protective equipment (hand sanitizer, masks, etc.) may also be required. Electoral procurement is likely to include highly specialized items that may require special transportation and storage and that may need to be obtained from outside the country. There can be significant lead times for procurement and, for overseas purchases, additional timeframes for customs clearance. Additionally, procurement is an important area where an EMB can make decisions to reduce the environmental impact of an election. For example, procuring printed materials on recycled paper, reusable items and biodegradable single-use items.

EMBs are responsible for public funds, and procurements often account for a sizable portion of the overall operational budget. Since costs tend to increase as procurement timelines shorten, it is imperative to prioritize procurement in operational planning.

Logistics

Logistics is a diverse and essential supporting electoral process, and it is recommended to develop a logistics plan. Logistics planning involves ensuring that materials, equipment, staff and communications infrastructure are in place in time for the successful conduct of elections and that all election material is transported and stored afterwards in accordance with the procedures. Logistics planning may include:

- Advance logistics (the activities required to set up or establish a plan for logistics activities to occur);

- Procurement logistics (necessitating close work with the work units responsible for procurement and the range of core and supporting electoral processes to assess material requirements);
- Inbound logistics (arranging for the movement of materials and equipment into the warehouse);
- Distribution logistics (distribution planning and packing); and
- Movement logistics (transportation and retrieval of materials and equipment, materials storage and environmentally responsible materials disposal and movement of personnel, taking into consideration geographic specificities).

Logistics planning must be flexible and include contingency planning. It is important that logistical requirements (information needs, timeframes, procedures, etc.) be articulated and communicated across all work units. Operational planning also plays a role in ensuring that work units understand that any delay in completing the activities they are responsible for is likely to have an adverse effect on the ability to meet logistical targets within budget and/or on schedule.

Public Outreach (Voter Education, Media and Stakeholders)

Effective public outreach provides important information to the public on electoral processes, increases transparency and informs key stakeholders about their roles. A public outreach plan should be a key activity considered in the operational plan. Alternatively, EMBs may wish to divide these elements into separate plans (such as a voter education plan and a liaison and external relations plan). A public outreach plan needs to consider the role of tailored and well-timed public outreach activities to support all core electoral processes. Important considerations for public outreach planning include objectives; audiences (target audiences and goals for each audience); public outreach key messages, activities and responsibilities; budget and resource management; and risk management.

The free flow of information is an essential element of credible elections, and the media (traditional, new and social media) is an important channel through which to disseminate electoral information. Media management is important for effective public outreach. Considerations may include:

- Media management training needs for the EMB (traditional, new and social media);
- Who is authorized to speak to the media and engage on social media platforms on behalf of the EMB;
- Accreditation processes for media presence during polling, counting and results tabulation;
- Briefing and training on electoral processes for the media; and
- Media engagement and information dissemination strategies to be implemented.

Public outreach planning should aim to facilitate proactive public communications and engagement, anticipate and proactively counter misinformation and disinformation, as well as provide a framework for crisis communications.

Recruitment and Staffing

Elections require the recruitment of many staff (often temporary) who are seconded from other agencies or engaged directly via external recruitment. Having the right number of staff who are broadly representative of the

community and recruited at the right time is essential for successful elections. It is also important that staff are seen as politically neutral; this affects decisions about from where to recruit temporary staff (e.g., teachers may be seen as politically neutral, unlike public servants from central government agencies). Recruitment planning is also an important area through which EMBs can implement their commitment to GESI considerations.

Staffing costs are often a significant proportion of electoral budgets, and the process needs to be managed effectively. Operational planning for recruitment and staffing should consider:

- The anticipated number of staff required at headquarters and in the field for each core and supporting electoral process, across all phases of the election;
- How staff can be engaged across all sexes and gender identities, abilities and social and cultural groups;
- Appropriate training, equipment and supervision for staff to fulfill their roles successfully;
- Qualifications and experience levels needed, which should be listed in position descriptions;
- Transparent, consistent and documented terms of employment and employment agreements that adhere to relevant legislation and government policies;
- Development of staffing registers to support recruitment for future elections;
- A code of conduct that all staff (permanent, temporary, headquarters and field) must follow and that reflects the EMB's guiding principles, ethics and values, as well as international best practice³²; and
- Payment systems.

Procedures and Training

Elections are time-bound and highly regulated, requiring detailed and clear procedures for, and delivery of training to, different groups of people for different aspects of the operation. Procedures and training are required for a range of activities — not just for poll workers and counting staff but also for staff involved in voter registration, public outreach, logistics and other activities. This should be included in the operational plan and schedule and, ideally, supported by a procedures and training plan.

The effectiveness of procedures and training is essential to the way staff perform their duties and affects the credibility of an election. Operational planning for procedures and training should consider:

- The activities and audiences for which procedures and training will be developed;
- The types of procedures documentation and resources to be developed for each activity and timeframes for their development;
- The training methodologies to be implemented (options might include a single tier of direct training sufficient for activities other than polling and counting, a traditional cascade training model for polling and counting, or a modified model;³³ engaging a group of core trainers; training delivered on a “just in time” basis, etc.);

³² For a sample code of conduct, see International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (1996).

³³ A cascade model involves training small groups of people in content and training techniques; they, in turn, train small groups of people in the same content and training techniques. The process continues until the content (functional skills) has cascaded to the lowest staff level (ACE Project, 2020).

- Training locations, including consideration of transportation requirements and implications (cost and environmental);
- Training materials to be developed, with consideration for the skills and capabilities of trainers, facilitators and participants and the infrastructure available at training locations; and
- Tools to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of procedures and trainings.

Security

Safe and secure electoral operations are essential to ensuring an electoral outcome that is trusted by the community, stakeholders and the international community. Because an EMB often shares its security responsibilities with external stakeholders, such as security agencies, coordination is essential for successful electoral security. Security management is an important element of operational planning, and the development of a security plan that assesses risks, and treatments for them, is recommended.

Operational planning for security generally focuses, at a minimum, on the physical security of premises and materials; the personal security of voters, candidates, party officials, electoral officials and the general community; and the security of election information, communication and technology systems. It should focus on security across three distinct phases of the election: pre-election, during voting and after voting. Key considerations include:

- Security risk assessments;
- Security coordination and information sharing mechanisms;
- Physical security requirements for premises, equipment and materials;
- Mechanisms to support the personal security of stakeholders;
- Security and backup for ICT systems and infrastructure;
- Scenario planning for emergencies, including escalation and response protocols;
- Briefings or trainings for security personnel on electoral operations and GESI sensitization;
- Communications protocols and equipment for staff at headquarters and in the field; and
- Incident reporting.