

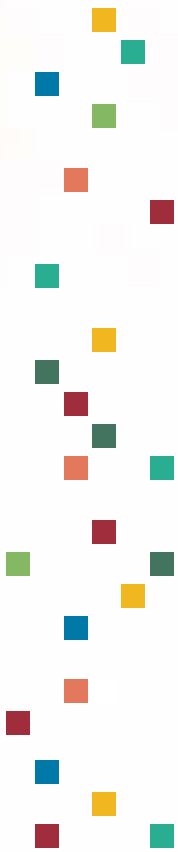


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Inclusive Electoral Processes:

A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting
Gender Equality and Women's Participation



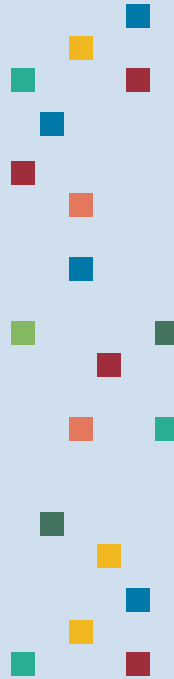




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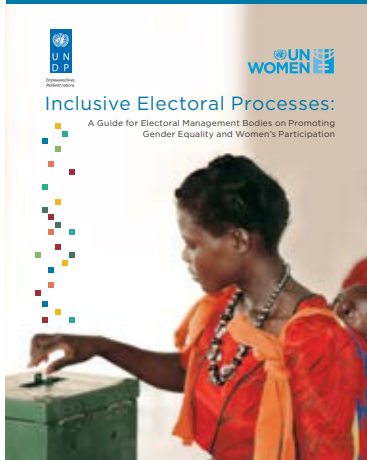


United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women



Inclusive Electoral Processes:

A Guide for Electoral
Management Bodies on
Promoting Gender Equality
and Women's Participation



Main Contributors

Julie Ballington
Gabrielle Bardall
Sonia Palmieri
Kate Sullivan

Design:

Green Communication
Design inc.

Cover Photo:

UN Photo/Milton Grant

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Table of Contents

Acronyms	v
Foreword UNDP and UN Women	vi
Foreword Electoral Management Body	vii
Introduction	1
PART A: INCLUSIVE ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES	13
1. Understanding Gender-sensitive EMBs	15
2. Mapping Electoral Management Bodies	17
2.1. Gender assessment or mapping	17
2.2. Gender mainstreaming in post-election evaluations	18
2.3. Gender Equality Action Plan	20
2.4. Post-election legislative reviews	20
3. Committing to Gender Equality	23
3.1. Policies, plans and mission statements	23
3.2. Gender policy	24
3.3. Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming: Gender focal points, units and committees	24
4. Gender Balance in the Electoral Management Body: Board and Staff	29
4.1. EMB Board or Commission composition	29
4.2. EMB Secretariat and Staff composition	31
4.3. Women as temporary and/or polling staff	35
5. Creating a Gender-sensitive Culture in the EMB	37
5.1. Facilitating work/life balance	37
5.2. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying	39
6. Enhancing Gender Equality Capacities through Training	41
6.1. Mandatory training for all staff	41
6.2. Gender mainstreaming in all EMB training	42
6.3. Training staff with specific responsibilities	43
6.4. Training women to build capacity	43
7. Collecting and Analysing Sex-disaggregated Data	45
7.1. Voter registration data	46
7.2. Voter turnout data	46
7.3. Candidate registration data	48
7.4. Staffing data	48

PART B: ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND EVENTS	51
8. Making Electoral Events Inclusive	53
9. Registration of Voters	55
9.1. Gender equality considerations in the registration process	56
9.2. Gender-targeted interventions for voter registration	61
10. Nomination and Registration of Candidates and Political Parties	65
10.1. Implementing candidate quota nomination rules	66
10.2. Applying campaign finance rules	69
11. The Voting Process	73
11.1. Ensuring women’s right to a secret ballot	74
11.2. Gender equality considerations with polling arrangements	75
11.3. Gender-targeted measures to facilitate women’s polling	76
12. Ensuring Safety in the Electoral Process	81
12.1. Assessing and monitoring VAWE	81
12.2. Prevention and mitigation measures by the EMB	83
12.3. Security sector coordination	85
13. Working with Electoral Stakeholders	87
13.1. Working with political parties	87
13.2. Working with the media	89
13.3. Working with CSOs	90
14. Voter outreach	93
14.1. Outreach strategy and policy	93
14.2. Messaging	95
14.3. Target audiences	98
14.4. Delivery methods	100
Conclusion	103
Annex A: List of Electoral Management Bodies participating in the EMB Survey	104
Annex B: Sample Form to Collect Voter Turnout Data in Nepal	105
Annex C: Electoral Gender Mapping Framework	106
Endnotes	119
References	126
List of Tables and Figures	
Figure 1: Promoting Gender Equality in the Electoral Cycle	4
Table 1: Possible outcomes of a gender mapping exercise in an EMB	20
Table 2: Sample Indicators for a Gender Equality Action Plan	21
Figure 2: Gender mainstreaming interventions	54
Table 3: Registration requirements	57

Acronyms

ACE	Administration and Cost of Elections (Electoral Knowledge Network)	IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections	JMI	Jordan Media Institute
CEB	Chief Executives Board	JSCEM	Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, Australia
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women	NADRA	National Data Registration Authority, Pakistan
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality, South Africa	NCMC	National Conflict Management Committee
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Cards	NGO	Non-governmental organization
CPRW	Convention on the Political Rights of Women	OAS	Organization of American States
CSO	Civil society organization	ODIHR	(OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
DPA	Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations	TSM	Temporary special measure
EEIC	Electoral Education and Information Centre, Nepal	UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
EMB	Electoral management body	UN	United Nations
GEO	Global Electoral Organization	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GPECS	Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support	UNEST	UNDP Support to the Timorese Electoral Cycle
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
ICT	Information communication technology	UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
ID	Identity document	VAWE	Violence against women in elections
		VM	Vulnerability mapping
		WSR	Women's situation room

Foreword

UNDP and UN Women

Women's full and equal participation in political and electoral processes can be considered to be one of the litmus tests for women's empowerment and gender equality. When women participate in elections – as voters, candidates, electoral administrators, or party supporters – they can express their own needs and interests. Decisions better reflect the electorate. Political processes are more inclusive. Democracy is strengthened.

While significant attention has been paid to women's political participation in the electoral process, less focus has been placed on the bodies which administer elections – commonly known as electoral management bodies (EMBs) – and the role they play in encouraging women's participation. The entry points for doing so across the electoral cycle are numerous and include voter registration, voter education, candidate registration, and ensuring women's access to polling places on election day.

As this Guide outlines, it is important for EMBs to ensure that their internal processes and practices are gender-sensitive. This includes making a clear commitment to gender equality through a gender policy, or by including gender-sensitive elements in the EMB's strategic plan; ensuring that women are represented throughout the entire organization, including in leadership roles; providing gender-sensitive training to all staff; and ensuring that all the data collected by EMBs are disaggregated by sex. By adopting these practices, EMBs can become models of gender-sensitive institutions.

For UNDP and UN Women, the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women in political and electoral processes is a top priority. Many Country Offices across all regions are engaged in programmes to build the capacity of EMBs to advance women's political participation. This Guide highlights the important work being carried out by the UN and by EMBs, offering concrete examples of steps which can be taken to remove remaining barriers.

This Guide showcases innovative and effective programming interventions, through which our organizations will continue to support women's political empowerment. It reflects the highly collaborative relationship between UNDP and UN Women on political and electoral participation, and provides good practice examples of where our relationship with EMBs can be strengthened. Forging these strategic partnerships is essential in delivering quality outcomes for women.

We thank all those who generously gave their time to provide insights into the workings of EMBs around the world. We hope this publication serves as a useful resource for practitioners in this field.



Helen Clark
Administrator
United Nations
Development Programme



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Executive Director
UN Women

Foreword

Electoral Management Body

Electoral Management Bodies know well the critical role they play in the administration of elections and, indeed, the importance of their contribution to this key cornerstone of democracy. The world over, we are staffed by individuals dedicated to the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and accountability. We know that confidence in the outcome of an election is, to a large extent, dependent on our professionalism and the transparency of our processes. We work with a broad range of stakeholders, from those who have much to gain from the outcome of the election to those who are not sure how to participate.

EMBs dedicate their work to ensuring that every eligible citizen who wishes to participate in an election may do so. Women, who have historically been marginalized in the electoral process, are a key constituency in this work. As this Guide demonstrates, through targeted interventions, training and recruitment, EMBs can increase the level of women's electoral participation as voters. EMBs can also ensure that, where legislation is in place, the rules for registering a certain number of women candidates are adhered to.

This Guide documents a wealth of good practice examples of actions taken by EMBs in all regions in order to increase women's electoral participation and ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the work of the institution. It also highlights the importance of dedicated, high-level commitments to gender equality. I hope my own experience as the president of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina (December 2009 – September 2011) serves as a useful role model in this respect.

Our joint efforts and commitment to improve women's electoral participation, both as voters and as candidates, have to be well-coordinated and therefore this Guide will certainly serve as an important reference for our future activities and actions.

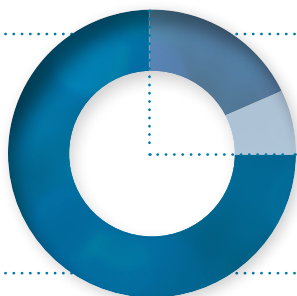
I thank UNDP and UN Women for their constructive partnership with EMBs across the world in developing this Guide and for their continuing support in promoting women's electoral participation.



Mrs. Irena Hadziabdic
Central Election Commission Member
Bosnia and Herzegovina

EMBs have a key role in promoting women's electoral and political participation. An EMB can get its 'house in order' so that when it conducts elections and carries out its work, it has the necessary capacity and resources to ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed at every stage.





Introduction

Inclusive elections, where all those eligible have the opportunity to vote to choose their elected representatives, are central to democracy. Ensuring that women and men can and do participate without unfair barriers is a core component of delivering an inclusive election. This Guide presents the positive work being done by the very institutions that manage elections, known as Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), to ensure women are able to play a key role within these institutions, as well as more broadly in the processes by which an electoral event is conducted and in the electoral event itself.

Although not commonly acknowledged, EMBs have a key role in promoting women's electoral and political participation. While there are different models, EMBs are tasked with the responsibility of conducting the election and managing all the stages in the lead-up to an election event, such as voter registration, candidate registration, polling preparations, and voter education and outreach. These institutions are staffed by individuals who abide by service values that prioritize impartiality, probity, accountability and the highest ethical standards. Confidence in the outcome of an election is highly dependent on the professionalism, transparency, integrity and trust of an EMB, and the way in which it administers the election.

In most countries, these institutions play a crucial role in the design and/or implementation of electoral policies. With their in-depth knowledge of electoral legislation, EMBs are uniquely placed to support gender equality and women's empowerment in the electoral process. A close examination of an EMB's institutional structures, processes, rules and norms can help identify

ways and means to increase women's participation. Unpacking any potential obstacles to women's participation requires an examination of how institutional structures, processes, rules and norms contribute to their perpetuation.

Many EMBs that have prioritized advancing gender equality and women's empowerment have been able to proactively create an enabling environment for women's participation. This good will notwithstanding, many lack the know-how or have not developed the strategies and plans to put this good will into practice. So far, there has been limited evidence or guidance for EMBs on how to ensure women's meaningful and equal participation in electoral administration and initiatives that have sought to empower women in electoral administration have not been well documented.

There are different ways to ensure that the goal of gender equality is achieved, including by (a) integrating a gender mainstreaming perspective throughout the institutions responsible and in all the work they undertake, whereby every facet gives consideration to

differential impacts on men and women, and (b) by integrating gender-specific or gender-targeted interventions to tackle specific areas, including through affirmative action measures. A successful gender equality strategy includes a combination of the two.

i. Purpose and structure of this Guide

This Guide seeks to provide assistance to those working to increase the participation of women in electoral processes and electoral administration. Women remain the largest group marginalized from electoral and political processes in many countries, although women as a group are not homogenous (with differences, *inter alia*, in age, class, caste, race, disability, ethnicity, economic and social standing). The Guide presents existing practices and options for reform that may assist EMBs and assistance providers such as UNDP, UN Women and other UN agencies in their work. It does not prescribe a particular methodology or path, but provides options for use that are based on real world experience.

The entry points identified would primarily be implemented or undertaken by EMBs and, thus, these bodies are the primary audience of this Guide. In many

developing and transitional democracies, EMBs are being assisted by international organizations as they evolve and institutionalize their operations. This Guide is therefore also designed to assist these actors in their work of supporting the design and implementation of gender-sensitive electoral assistance activities.

EMBs are often considered the impartial arbiters of elections. As such, they are not responsible for the recruitment, training or funding of political candidates – be they men or women. While women continue to be underrepresented in electoral politics, actions to redress this situation such as electoral system reform (including the adoption of temporary special measures), campaign finance reform or the training of women candidates generally do not fall under the remit of an EMB and are amply covered in other publications. This Guide considers the work undertaken by EMBs and other bodies involved in delivering an election.

When contemplating change, it is useful to know what others have done. This report provides examples of actions taken by EMBs in all regions in order to increase women's electoral participation and ensure gender mainstreaming throughout the work of the institution.

The report is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of all such activities, but instead to be a sampling in order to add real experience to the principles and theoretical ideas of what can be done. The report does not attempt to prescribe a particular approach and recognizes that the issues and solutions will vary according to each country's national context. What has worked well in one place and time may not be appropriate in all countries, but may prompt ideas for other actions within the specific context.

The material will also be of interest and use to others who work to support credible and inclusive electoral processes and the work of the EMBs, such as civil society organizations, political



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parties and the media. While there is generally a lack of documentation of initiatives in this area, examples have been drawn from more than 50 countries. We hope that this Guide will stimulate new initiatives and more rigorous work in this area.

This Guide is divided into two parts. The first concerns the institution of the EMB itself and strategies by which its internal policies and processes can become more gender-sensitive. While improving the participation of women within the institution at all levels, including in leadership, is one of those strategies, ensuring that an institution is gender-sensitive also involves an examination of its internal policies and working methods. **Part A**, then, is about how an EMB may get its ‘house in order’ so that, when it conducts elections and carries out its work, it has the necessary capacity and resources to ensure that a gender equality perspective is mainstreamed at every stage and that none of its activities inadvertently discriminate against women.

Part B details the work and activities of EMBs and the entry points that can be used to promote women’s electoral and political participation. In many respects, EMBs are the impartial implementers of the laws and regulations that govern elections. Because of their close involvement in implementing these rules, EMBs also play a significant role in their development and amendment. Part B, then, begins by explaining EMBs role in implementing the legal framework and then considers some of the mechanics of the electoral process – from voter registration and candidate nomination, to voting and ensuring women’s safety during the electoral period. Part B concludes with an examination of the work of EMBs in raising awareness among the electorate on the rights of women to vote and stand for election, through voter outreach.

Methodology

Two original UNDP surveys were used to gather information for this Guide. The first survey sought to identify gender mainstreaming practices within EMBs across regions of the world through a set of 25 standard questions. Thirty EMBs reported their activities and,

in five additional countries, the EMB survey was completed by the UNDP Country Office on behalf of the electoral body, for a full survey sample size of 35 cases. This ‘EMB Survey’ asked a series of questions about activities designed to encourage women to register and to vote and questions about gender mainstreaming in the internal working of the organization and staffing. The list of the 35 countries that completed the survey is provided at the end of the report (see Annex A).

A second survey sought to gather information about UNDP programming on electoral assistance from Country Office projects. This ‘UNDP Survey’ was completed by 51 Country Offices and includes information about how electoral assistance activities have targeted women’s empowerment, if at all. Additional material on UNDP and UN Women activities was gathered from standard project results reporting exercises conducted annually. We acknowledge that some of the countries discussed may have undertaken further activities in this domain since the circulation of the surveys.

Examples of activities from other international organizations were obtained through desk research. In addition, online resources and networks like the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and iKNOWPolitics were consulted, along with domestic and international electoral observer reports, electoral management body websites and communications with electoral management bodies. The research could not cover every election or EMB and there will be other innovative and effective actions that have been used to encourage women voters and to implement gender mainstreaming within electoral management bodies.

The Electoral Cycle Approach

This Guide follows the electoral cycle approach in tracking the various components of the work of an EMB through a full electoral cycle – the time between one election and the next election to the same body (usually national). This approach¹ has been developed in recent years to assist with the planning and implementation of electoral assistance given the complex and interdependent nature of electoral work.

A summary of this Guide, presented in table form, lists the possible actions that are discussed in the report in terms of the electoral cycle. Work within every EMB follows the electoral cycle – whether this is done so implicitly or explicitly – so this summary table provides a practical guide on the steps that could most usefully be contemplated at each phase of the cycle: pre-election period, election period, post-electoral or inter-election period.

When contemplating the electoral cycle, it is important to recall that, while some actions that relate to a given process – such as polling – will take place during the electoral period, the decisions about what is required and the planning will have taken place between elections or in the pre-election preparation period. In particular, many processes that affect women as voters and women in the EMB will be informed or constrained by the legal framework. To allow for full assessment and consideration of the gender gap and formulation of appropriate solutions, much of the work discussed in the Guide will be most effective if performed as part of the post-election review phase and the planning phases that take place in the period between elections. For example, where voter outreach may be needed in order to change a culture where women do not participate in elections, this needs to be planned well before the election period and, if possible, delivery needs to start in the pre-election period.

Figure 1:

Promoting Gender Equality in the Electoral Cycle

Pre-election period

(the years between the post-election period and the announcement of the next election)

REGISTRATION

- Conduct a mapping of registration procedures
- Ensure provision of sex-disaggregated data
- Ensure need for proof of identity is not a barrier
- Consider need for flexibility in regulations for displaced peoples
- Consider need for taking registration to the people
- Consider need for women-only registration teams
- Include gender-sensitive actions in the role descriptions, checklists and training
- Deliver gender-sensitive outreach about registration as needed

NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES & PARTIES

- Ensure the enforcement of nomination rules regarding number of women candidates
- Ensure enforcement of campaign finance rules regarding gender equality

VOTER OUTREACH

- Plan gender-sensitive voter outreach programmes – message, audience and delivery method
- Deliver voter outreach programmes for women that give consideration to best delivery methods
- Work with media on gender-aware outreach and reporting
- Work with civil society organizations on gender-aware outreach

Internal EMB Organization

- Assess needs through a gender mapping or assessment exercise
- Commit to gender equality by developing a gender policy and action plan
- Use the recruitment and promotion process to achieve gender balance at all levels
- Consider the appointment of gender focal points or a gender equality unit
- Institute process to collect sex-disaggregated data
- Include sex disaggregation in data analysis
- Provide training on all new procedures and in gender awareness for all staff

Election period (announcement to results)

Post-election period (after the election results)

PLANNING FOR ELECTION DAY

- Conduct a mapping of polling procedures
- Consider polling place location and provision of equipment
- Consider need for women-only polling stations or booths within the polling station and/or mobile polling stations
- Plan how to recruit women and men to work in polling places
- Conduct gender sensitivity training for polling staff
- Include gender sensitivity in role descriptions and checklists
- Ensure ballot paper and instructions made accessible for people who cannot read
- Consider need for flexibility in regulations for displaced peoples

POLLING PLACE MANAGEMENT

- Ensure safety of polling station staff and voters by adopting appropriate measures
- Deliver priority in queue for pregnant women and mothers
- Organize women-only queues and/or polling stations or booths within the station (where appropriate)
- Deliver mobile polling stations (where needed)
- Consider arrangements for collecting sex-disaggregated data

VOTER INFORMATION

- Deliver voter outreach about election day (planned and designed in pre-election period)
- Give consideration to best delivery methods

ELECTION ASSESSMENT

- Include gender issues in the assessment of the past election
- Review operations manuals and outreach materials from a gender perspective
- Include sex disaggregation in data analysis

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Assess whether any regulations require revision, including to ensure enforcement (e.g., candidate quota)
- Assess whether any regulations or processes require review to produce sex-disaggregated data

STRATEGIC AND ACTION PLAN

- Conduct a mapping of EMB policies and processes to identify any gender inequalities
- Set gender-related goals for registration and voting
- Set voter outreach policy and goals
- Include internal gender mainstreaming goals
- Consider appointment of gender focal points or a gender unit

ii. Terminology

Electoral assistance refers to all initiatives and activities that are intended to improve the quality of electoral processes and institutions in partner countries.² Electoral assistance stresses the transfer of professional skills, operational knowledge and long-term capacity and institutional strengthening, of different stakeholders of an electoral process.³

United Nations technical assistance on elections includes the legal, operational and logistic assistance provided to develop or improve electoral laws, processes and institutions. UN technical assistance primarily focuses on election administration and institutions, such as electoral management bodies, and the UN should systematically consider gender issues in all aspects of its technical electoral assistance.⁴

Electoral management body (EMB) are the structures and individuals responsible for carrying out the many activities involved in the planning and administering of elections. While a single body may be primarily responsible for most of these activities, it is also common for electoral administration tasks to be distributed across multiple bodies.⁵ In some contexts, different line ministries perform electoral administration functions such as voter registration and media regulation.

Gender balance refers to the participation of an approximately equal number of women and men within an activity or organization. Examples are representation in committees, decision-making structures or staffing levels between women and men.

Gender equality means equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that women's and men's opportunities, rights and responsibilities do not depend on whether they are born female or male. It implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration.⁶

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policy or programmes, in all areas and at all levels.⁷ Gender mainstreaming in EMBs

ensures that women's and men's concerns, needs and experiences are taken fully into account in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all activities. Through this process, the EMB seeks to reduce the gaps in development opportunities between women and men and work towards equality between them as an integral part of the organization's strategy, policies and operations, and the focus of continued efforts to achieve excellence.⁸ The term 'gender integration' is also used in some contexts.

Gender-sensitive takes into consideration the diversity of various groups of women and men, their specific activities and challenges.⁹

Gender-specific or gender-targeted interventions seek to tackle specific areas where women are unrepresented or disadvantaged, including through the adoption of temporary special measures, and are part of a comprehensive gender mainstreaming approach.

Sex-disaggregated data are collected and tabulated separately for women and men. They allow for the measurement of differences between women and men on various social and economic dimensions.¹⁰

Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) are specific targeted measures taken to accelerate the equal participation of women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. Given the legal commitment of states to produce de facto or substantive equality of women with men in a timely manner, special measures may need to be adopted to enhance women's electoral and political participation.¹¹

iii. The Normative Framework

Over the past three decades, much attention has focused on ensuring the improved participation of women in public life. The normative framework in relation to women's electoral and political participation is established in human and political rights declarations, covenants and conventions, United Nations reports, resolutions and action plans and existing United Nations electoral assistance policy on gender equality.¹²

Women's full participation in political and electoral processes has its origins in the principles of

non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of political rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted in 1948, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW, 1952) and other regional conventions that explicitly state that the enjoyment of such rights shall be without distinction of any kind, including sex or gender.¹³ Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966) elaborates the rights of all citizens not only to take part in the conduct of public affairs, but also “to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors” and “to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his [sic] country”.

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, reiterates the right of women “to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government”. More specifically, Article 7 stipulates that:

State Parties shall take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

- a) *To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;*
- b) *To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.*¹⁴

While the ICCPR is clear that no discrimination on the basis of sex is permitted in the exercise of the right to vote and the right to participate in public life, CEDAW places a further, positive obligation on states parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate any such discrimination. Moreover, Article 4 of CEDAW encourages the use of temporary special measures (TSMs) to accelerate compliance with Article 7. While this is often thought of in terms of measures to increase the number of women in elected office, temporary special measures can also be used to give full effect to Article

7 in relation to electoral procedures and process and the appointment and composition of electoral management bodies.

Women’s right to participate fully in all facets of public life has continued to be a cornerstone of UN resolutions and declarations. From the UN Economic and Social Council Resolution (E/RES/1990/15), to the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995), the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions 2006 (E/2006/27-E/CN.6/2006/15) and the General Assembly Resolution 66/130 (2011) on Women and political participation, governments have consistently been urged to implement measures to substantially increase the number of women in elective and appointive public offices and functions at all levels, with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all government and public administration positions.¹⁵

States that are parties to international conventions share the responsibility for upholding and implementing these obligations across a range of institutions. EMBs have clear responsibilities to ensure that their actions and decisions are compliant with their nation’s international obligations, which may require additional resources.



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iv. The UN System's gender equality and electoral assistance frameworks

Supporting Member States' national efforts in ensuring inclusive political processes and promoting women's political participation is high on the agenda of the United Nations system (see box). UN entities and personnel are obliged to respect, and aim to further, the rights and standards enshrined in the UN's normative framework on gender equality.

In 1997 the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the strategy of "mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" by "assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels". A UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women was endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) in April 2012 as a means of furthering the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment within the policies and programmes of the UN system and implementing the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2.

Strategic Plans Guiding Gender Equality Actions at UNDP and UN Women

UNDP's Strategic Plan^[1] and Gender Equality Strategy^[2] 2014-17 clearly mandates the organization to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women are integrated in every aspect of the organization's work, including electoral support. UNDP supports advocacy, policy and legal reforms to accelerate the equal participation of women, including young women and marginalized groups, in decision-making across all branches of the state. This includes promoting women's participation as voters and candidates in electoral processes and supporting women's representation in governance institutions, including electoral management bodies, constitutional committees, parliaments, public administrations and the judiciary. UNDP provides technical assistance to establish or strengthen mechanisms to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in electoral and governance processes. This includes providing direct



support for gender mainstreaming in electoral management bodies, gender units, committees and commissions, and women's caucuses and networks.

UN Women's Strategic Plan (2014-17) directs the entity's work in six priority areas, one of which promotes women's leadership and participation in decision-making. Impact 1, "Women lead and participate in decision making that affect their lives", calls on UN Women to provide specific gender expertise, capacity-building and policy support on advancing women's political empowerment, including guidance on a range of issues such as Temporary Special Measures (TSMs), and how to work most effectively with different stakeholders. UN Women works to advance women's leadership and political participation primarily by:

- Bringing gender equality concerns to political and electoral processes
- Building capacities of women as candidates and/or voters
- Supporting initiatives to increase the proportion of women engaged in electoral mandates and elective positions to impact on legal reform processes, to influence debates about legislative and electoral system reform
- Assisting women to organize themselves as a political constituency

United Nations electoral assistance is governed by a policy framework that is developed, issued and disseminated by the UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance, the Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs (in the Department of Political Affairs, DPA). This policy framework is grounded in the UN's normative framework of human and political rights and provides prescriptive guidance that applies to all UN entities providing electoral assistance. In the area of electoral assistance, the UN system is now guided by the recent adoption of the following policy directives and guidelines:

- *Policy Directive on Principles and Types of UN Electoral Assistance* (2012), which not only highlights the importance of "the participation and representation of traditionally marginalized groups, in particular women and minorities", but suggests that assistance will include assessments should include analysis and recommendations "to ensure gender mainstreaming in all UN electoral assistance activities and that priority is given to the promotion of the participation and representation of women" (e.g., a gender checklist is used to collect data that will inform the recommendations)
- *Policy Directive on UN Support to Electoral System Design and Reform* (2013), which sets out UN policy for designing or reforming electoral systems
- *Policy Directive on Promoting Women's Electoral and Political Participation through UN Electoral Assistance* (2013), which provides clear strategies and entry points for gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance (see section 2.1.5 on the range of interventions)¹⁶
- *Policy Directive on UN Support to the Design or Reform of Electoral Management Bodies* (2014), which encourages the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women at all levels in the design of electoral management structures, appointment of the governing body, development of regulations, recruitment of staff and in all other processes of the EMB.

In line with the UN System-wide mandates on gender mainstreaming cited above, these guidelines and policy documents establish responsibilities for all UN

entities involved in electoral assistance to ensure that their engagement with national stakeholders promotes gender equality and women's empowerment.

v. Addressing gender inequalities in, and through, electoral assistance

The policies that mandate promoting gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance as a whole are relatively new. In this context, the UNDP's 2014 compilation of *Lessons Learned in Electoral Assistance* found that a gender equality perspective is not yet systematically applied in all elections projects. That is, more often than not, there is no consistent attention paid to whether, or how, electoral assistance projects can systematically promote women's empowerment. Moreover, an explicit gender equality outcome was not included in most project designs, although there may have been gender equality results emerging from the assistance.

In working towards the goal of women's equal political participation, there is scope for more implementation of the UN electoral policies and the strategy of gender mainstreaming. UN Country Teams are often involved in electoral assistance programming, either on a long-term basis with institutional development projects or during election periods. In many cases, UNDP is the key international actor involved in electoral support and administers a donor basket fund and coordinates meetings on behalf of the international community. In other cases, UN Women may be working on joint (with UNDP) or standalone projects with national partners aimed at promoting women's participation in elections. A gender equality perspective can be incorporated in electoral assistance in the following ways:

- Electoral needs assessments and project documents on elections promote gender equality, including (but not limited to) an assessment of the potential value of adopting temporary special measures.
- Gender is stated as a priority goal from the beginning of the election project document, including in its formulation and design.
- A gender advisor is included in the project or the project has an accessible and ready source of gender advice.
- A wide range of stakeholders including government, legislators, electoral experts, political parties, gender experts and women's organizations on the ground is consulted to inform specific recommendations for gender mainstreaming and promotion of women in electoral processes.
- Gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted interventions are considered in the project.
- Longer-term programmes of assistance are devised with a range of interventions aimed at candidates, voters and electoral management bodies.

vi. Applying the framework to EMBs

The normative framework and the UN System's policies on gender equality and electoral assistance provide a clear mandate to work with EMBs from a gender equality perspective. Areas of intervention are determined through the electoral needs assessment process and project formulation. As this Guide will outline further, a number of questions can frame the design and implementation of gender equality-focused interventions for EMBs:

The baseline: The Country Team should know whether the electoral management body has undertaken any gender mapping or gender audits. If the electoral management body has not, this could be encouraged in either the assessment or start-up phases of the intervention. What electoral statistics are disaggregated by sex and how does this conform to wider policies on national statistics?

An action plan: What is the electoral management body's plan to mainstream gender concerns and ensure equality of access to the electoral process? Does the electoral management body require assistance in the implementation of some, or all, of its action plan? What is the role of other stakeholders, such as civil society groups, government departments, the parliament, media and political parties, in the implementation of the action plan?

Structure and composition of the EMB: What are the laws establishing the EMB? How is the body constituted and how is gender equality taken into consideration? Does the electoral management body need assistance with developing gender-sensitive human resource policies? Is there a capacity gap in terms of gender experts in the area of elections and the absence of the necessary awareness on gender and elections among management and staff?

Electoral process assistance: If the EMB requests assistance with electoral processes (such as voter registration and voter information and education), what evidence is there of a gender assessment of the proposed assistance? Will the intervention support or improve equality of access to electoral processes for men and women or will it have a disproportionate effect on one gender? If support is for law review processes or other reviews, how will gender equality be mainstreamed into the review? What gender expertise is available to assist?

Advisory teams and consultants: If the Country Office is assembling a team of consultants and advisors to assist the EMB, what is the gender composition of the team? Is it gender-balanced and what roles do women play? If the intervention will continue over a number of years and the team members change, how can gender balance be maintained? What is the level of gender awareness and expertise in the team?

Policy framework: Is there a specific national legal and policy framework on gender in electoral processes? Does it need revision with regards to either the legislation or the regulations? What are the gaps between policy and practice?

Intervention budgets and reports: Can a percentage of the EMB's budget be devoted to gender mainstreaming and improving equality of access? Can the entire budget be gender disaggregated? How will statistics in the report be presented?

Serious consideration of these questions – in any institution – requires political will, capacity and resources. The next two sections of this Guide present examples of good practices implemented by EMBs around the world in response to these questions.



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PART A

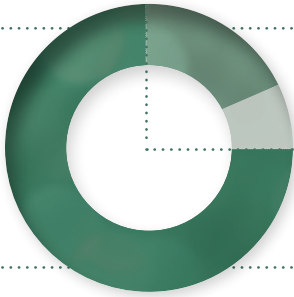


Inclusive Electoral Management Bodies

1	Understanding Gender-sensitive EMBs	15	5	Creating a Gender-sensitive Culture in the EMB	37
2	Mapping Electoral Management Bodies	17	6	Enhancing Gender Equality Capacities through Training	41
3	Committing to Gender Equality	23	7	Collecting and Analysing Sex-disaggregated Data	45
4	Gender Balance in the Electoral Management Body: Board and Staff	29			

Inclusive, gender-sensitive electoral management bodies have the capacity to implement gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted strategies to achieve gender equality.

.....”



1 Understanding Gender-sensitive EMBs

For gender inequalities to be addressed, attention should be paid to how they are structurally embedded in social, economic, cultural and political norms and institutions. The process of gender mainstreaming and assessment seeks to uncover and redress those structural inequalities.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that examines every process, every structure and every output of an institution in terms of its potentially differential impact on men and women. Gender mainstreaming places the achievement of gender equality and the elimination of all discriminatory practices at the core of the institution's objectives and work; it normalizes – rather than marginalise – the achievement of gender equality. In tandem, institutions can develop and implement gender-specific or gender-targeted interventions to tackle specific areas, including through affirmative action measures. This dual approach leads to more inclusive, gender-sensitive institutions.

A gender-sensitive EMB is one that responds to the needs and interests of women and men in its policies, operations, infrastructure and work.¹⁷ By definition, inclusive, gender-sensitive electoral management bodies have capacity to implement gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted strategies to achieve gender equality. They have the necessary resources – human, financial and structural – to ensure gender equality is considered at every step of the electoral cycle. More specifically, a gender-sensitive EMB may consider:

- Promoting gender equality in all stages of the electoral process and in the EMB's daily work as a strategic objective
- Conducting a mapping or assessment exercise to determine where it is effectively working to achieve

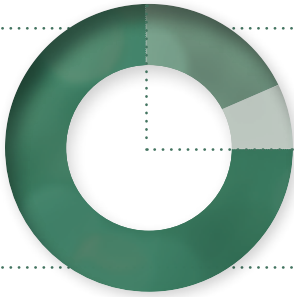
gender equality outcomes and where there is room for improvement

- Developing or amending its strategic plan to include gender equality outcomes and activities
- Dedicating infrastructure and resources to gender mainstreaming, such as a committee or a network of gender focal points across the organization
- Aiming for gender balance in all positions, including those of senior management and leadership, and making a concerted effort to ensure gender sensitization of temporary staff at peak polling periods
- Ensuring that its recruitment policies afford equal opportunities to women or men and that staff have the necessary leave benefits and entitlements required to balance work and family obligations
- Providing adequate professional development and training opportunities on gender equality and gender mainstreaming for all staff and ensuring that gender equality is a component addressed in all staff training
- Implementing systems and processes to ensure relevant sex-disaggregated data throughout the electoral cycle, including from voter registration to voter turnout.

Part A explains each of these elements in greater detail and provides good practice examples from the field.

A gender mapping provides an opportunity to reconsider the structure and organizational culture of the EMB as well as the activities it undertakes with respect to election management and administration.

.....”



2 Mapping Electoral Management Bodies

Assessing gender equality and how women’s participation is being actively promoted means considering all policies, decisions and actions taken by the organization from a mainstreaming perspective. For an EMB, a gender equality assessment needs to include all internal organizational activity as well as all elements of the conduct of elections.

“For the most part, practical gender mainstreaming is about running through a checklist of questions to ensure you have not overlooked anything. It is about asking the right questions so that you can use resources effectively. Gender mainstreaming is a necessary process for achieving both gender equality and other policy goals in the most effective and efficient manner.”¹⁸

2.1. Gender assessment or mapping

These questions are most often asked through a gender assessment or gender mapping exercise. Any such mapping can examine the current situation for women’s electoral participation, but it may also be accompanied by consideration of gender equality inside the EMB to be comprehensive. A well-structured mapping exercise

can deliver an all-embracing analysis of the situation and provide a base for planning the changes necessary to close identified gaps.

The EMB may start a mapping exercise by looking at its own composition and practices. In many countries, gender assessments may have been conducted in other parts of the public sector and these could provide examples and models to follow. In addition, there may be a government office for women or for gender equality that can provide guidance. It is important to draw on all relevant national expertise, even if the structure of the electoral management body is different from other public institutions.

A ‘**Gender Mapping in the Field of Elections**’ was undertaken by the Election Commission of Nepal in 2010, with support from UNDP and IFES. The mapping investigated the legal and institutional framework, looking at challenges to women’s participation in the electoral process and their employment status with the ECN. The Commission committed to consider the mapping report ‘based on the findings, propose recommendations’ to be followed. Material was also collected through interviews and group discussions with a wide range of people who had been involved in elections. The study made comprehensive recommendations, including the establishment of gender focal points within the ECN and capacity-building programmes for ECN staff. As a follow-up, the ECN appointed a gender focal person, adopted a Gender Policy in 2013 and is developing an Action Plan for implementation of the policy; in early 2014, it established a dedicated Gender Unit.¹⁹



The mapping exercise may be designed and communicated as the evidence-gathering phase of a broader process of achieving gender mainstreaming. It is a stock-taking exercise used to identify existing good practices and processes as well as any gaps. It is about gaining a full picture of the gender impacts of the organization's structure, management and functions as well as the gender impacts of electoral administration. On the basis of these findings, the assessment provides an opportunity to propose recommendations for change and improvement.

A gender mapping or assessment can be undertaken through a series of interviews or focus group discussions with a range of individuals. Annex C presents a sample gender mapping tool that can help to structure these discussions based on mappings conducted in Nepal, Moldova, Libya and Lebanon. In all cases, the exercise will return better evidence if information, views and ideas are sought from different stakeholders as well as from the EMB staff and leadership. Women's advocacy groups and CSOs who work to encourage women to participate in the election, electoral observers, voter educators, academics and the media are all likely to have information and ideas to contribute, as are political parties. Staff who work in polling centres and who conduct voter registration are also likely to have observations about issues faced by women during the process. All these sources provide relevant information for an EMB to consider when devising strategies for the promotion of gender equality.

2.2. Gender mainstreaming in post-election evaluations

In addition to a targeted gender mapping exercise, gender equality should be integrated into all other assessments and evaluations. Post-election assessments are a feature of most EMBs and these could include a gender assessment element. In particular, as such reviews often focus on good practices or reforms needed in the electoral procedures, the review can usually survey the impact of any changes on women as voters and as electoral staff. Similarly, an annual institutional report by

Examples of gender-focused assessments include:

- In **Afghanistan**, the EMB's Gender Unit held 'lessons learned' workshops each year with input from a range of stakeholders and used the resulting reports as a tool for change through wide dissemination and reference to it during planning. The process recognized the importance of hearing a broad range of opinions as well as regularly evaluating the effectiveness of implemented activities.²⁰
- **Moldova:** In 2011, the Moldovan CEC committed, in its strategic plan, to mainstream gender equality throughout its activities. Following participation in BRIDGE workshops on gender and elections, a reference group was formed to oversee a gender audit of the Moldovan electoral process. The reference group consists of Commission members, staff, UNDP partners and civil society. The audit provided information on areas where the CEC can address gender equality in its policies and procedures as well as on areas that may require amendment to the legal framework to ensure gender equality.
- **Pakistan:** UN Women and UNDP supported the Electoral Commission of Pakistan with technical expertise and guidance to integrate a gender equality perspective into strategic electoral management frameworks and documents. A post-election review in 2013 led to concrete recommendations for legislative reforms to the complaint and dispute management system related to the disenfranchisement of women voters.²¹

- **Tanzania:** Two conferences were held in 2010 with representatives from women's associations, women sections in religious institutions, the Ministry of Community Development Gender and Children, media, academic institutions and development partners. The aim was to identify issues and gather ideas for change to encourage women to participate in elections as voters, candidates and when working as poll workers.²² In 2011, following the election, UNDP supported the electoral commission in learning lessons by commissioning four major studies that sought to objectively explain the reasons for low turnout, low voter registration and low participation by women.



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the EMB provides an opportunity to analyse organizational results and outcomes by gender as well as report all statistics in a disaggregated manner (see section 6).

EMBs can also establish or measure participation issues against baselines through their post-electoral reporting and assessment. The period between elections can be used to analyse their actions and strategize to identify improved approaches. The relatively calm period between elections presents an opportunity to revise internal policies and to offer internal training on gender issues or training opportunities for women members. International and domestic observer mission reports, which include gender analyses, may be important sources of information. Some examples of EMB post- and inter-election period actions include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** A post-election analysis is made after every election that includes a gender equality perspective. The analysis includes statistics on the number of women candidates, elected candidates and voter turnout.²³
- **Canada:** Various post-election reports include a gender equality perspective related to turnout rates, reasons for not voting and women's participation as candidates.²⁴
- **South Africa:** Election satisfaction surveys (conducted on election day) are commissioned to examine the electoral and political involvement of specific groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities. Quantitative data is backed up by qualitative data from focus group discussions – women are specifically targeted in these focus groups.²⁵

Following the mapping exercise or post-election assessment, the EMB, and its stakeholders and partners, will have a better idea of areas for priority action. In most cases, it may be useful to divide the findings of the gender mapping exercise into two parts: areas that require attention for gender equality to be achieved within the electoral management body and areas that require attention for gender equality to be achieved in the country's electoral processes.

Table 1: Possible outcomes of a gender mapping exercise in an EMB

Sample indicator of gender inequality in the electoral management body	Sample indicators of gender inequality in electoral processes
Number of women and men on the governing body, board or commission	Voter registration rates do not reflect population
Number of women and men in management levels or the staff as a whole	Voter turnout participation rates are not disaggregated by sex
Number of women and men at training and development events (including study visits and secondments)	Number of women and men as voter registration officials does not reflect population
No formal equal opportunity or gender equality policy	Polling procedures and arrangement are not gender-sensitive
Lack of facilities in the electoral management bodies (bathrooms, family and prayer rooms, etc.)	Electoral violence rates are consistently measured to be higher against candidates of one sex
Lack of sex-disaggregated data at all levels	Voter education materials are not gender-sensitive

2.3. Gender Equality Action Plan

Once the EMB has finished the mapping exercise, it may consider developing an **Action Plan**. Like all action plans, it should be specific in explaining the challenge identified, the possible areas of action, responsible actors, the resources available and the timeframes. In this regard, it is possible that an EMB may not be able to address all issues in the action plan in one electoral cycle. In this case, the plan could be clearly prioritized and the EMB should commit to returning to the unfinished work after the next election. The action plan may also include a monitoring mechanism. Table 2 (following page) provides some sample actions and targets that could be included in an Action Plan to address gender inequalities.

2.4. Post-election legislative reviews

A gender mapping of the relevant laws and regulations may also be needed for a comprehensive review of the electoral process from a gender equality perspective. If there are barriers to women's participation within the law, then one possible remedy is a change in the law. The case of Afghanistan is illustrative. The 2010 post-election review conducted by the IEC identified at least three areas for potential legislative change to enhance women's representation, including tightening the language which provides for the gender quota; reconsidering the electoral regulations requiring public servants to resign before they nominate as a candidate for election; and making some allowances for women candidates in accepting in-kind support from international donors for campaign expenses.²⁷

Table 2: Sample Indicators for a Gender Equality Action Plan²⁶

Inequality identified in mapping	Action to be undertaken	Specific measures and targets to achieve change	Responsible
Numerical gender inequality in the staff at all levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of women in mid- and senior-level management positions • Determine whether legal reform is required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree a target for the proportion of mid- and senior-level management positions to be held by women (such as gender balance over the next five years) • Provide all mid-level women executives with leadership and management training within a certain time period • Entrust a group of individuals within the EMB the responsibility to monitor progress on the target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMB leadership • Human resources Department • Training department and/or public service ministry or equivalent
No formal equal opportunity policy or anti-discrimination and harassment policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies on equal opportunity and anti-discrimination and harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all existing policies and procedure manuals from a gender equality perspective • Survey staff about their recruitment and workplace experiences • Adopt a policy and review periodically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMB management • Human resources Department • Gender focal point/s
Lack of sex-disaggregated data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to ensuring that voter turnout data collected and reported by the EMB is disaggregated by sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing laws and regulations and amend any clauses that may prevent collecting sex-disaggregated data • Review all data collection methods and forms • Where needed, add 'sex' as a variable on all electronic databases that deal with voter registration and turnout • Where needed, add 'sex' as a variable on all forms that collect turnout data, such as polling station results forms • Ensure that instructions on collecting sex-disaggregated data are included in training manuals or other directives for polling staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMB management • Parliament • Electoral Operations section • Training section • Voter Information section

The role of parliaments in reviewing the electoral process

Parliamentarians are primary stakeholders in the electoral process and may invest significant time and resources to reviewing the administration of an election or specific aspects of the process. In some parliaments, a dedicated parliamentary committee is tasked with this review. In **Australia**, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) reviews every federal election, inviting submissions from all interested parties. The Australian Electoral Commission prepares a lengthy submission including recommendations for legislative change and its Commissioners appear before the Committee at least twice: at the beginning of the inquiry and towards the end, to respond to some of the evidence received by the JSCEM from other stakeholders. Similar parliamentary committee reviews are conducted in **New Zealand** (by the Justice and Electoral

Committee), **Canada** (by the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee) and in **Iraq** (by the Legal Committee of the Council of representatives). While these specialized parliamentary committees may not be appropriate in all contexts, they can play an important oversight function.

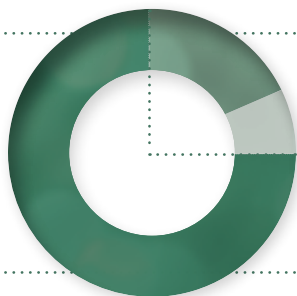
This process serves to highlight the importance of having women parliamentarians represented on all parliamentary committees, including those that review elections. When women MPs take part in these inquiries, they may be able to raise issues that affected them, and other female candidates, in the election. Parliamentary committee inquiries result in numerous recommendations for government to action. While not necessarily gender-sensitive, the Australian JSCEM's report into the conduct of the 2010 federal election included 37 recommendations, 35 of which were to amend or repeal various sections of electoral law.²⁸



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SUMMING UP:

- A gender assessment or mapping can be a useful first step in assessing the extent to which an EMB can be considered inclusive.
- Participants can include the staff and leadership of the EMB itself as well as the range of stakeholders who interact with the EMB such as political parties, independent candidates, parliamentarians, media representatives, gender equality advocates and academics.
- The outcomes of a gender mapping can reflect the structure and organizational culture of the EMB as well as the activities it undertakes with respect to election management and administration.
- The assessment could ideally result in an action plan, setting key targets and timeframes for action.



3 Committing to Gender Equality

A focus on addressing and overcoming gender inequality within an EMB needs to start at the highest planning level by stressing a commitment to gender equality in vision and mission statements.

Ensuring that gender is part of all strategic and action plans means that statements in the vision are incorporated into the work of the EMB. A specific gender policy is a good way to outline all work related to gender in one place. In other cases, including gender considerations into the Strategic Plan and all other policies could ensure that gender equality is considered in all areas of the organization and that everyone sees it as part of their work.

3.1. Policies, plans and mission statements

In addition to including statements on gender equality in the strategic plan, gender provisions can be included in the vision and mission statements; in guiding principles and values; and in goals and objectives related to internal organization and related to the election. In the EMB Survey, eight of the 35 countries (23 percent) said that they had ‘gender-specific objectives and targets in their strategic/operational plan’: Afghanistan, Canada, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa and Tanzania.

Examples of including gender awareness in guiding principles and values:

- **Afghanistan:** The Guiding Principles of Election Administration include statements on neutrality and impartiality, transparency, professionalism,

responsibility and accountability. Each of these mentions the needs of women as voters, candidates and employees.²⁹ The 2006-2009 Strategic Plan noted that “particular efforts are to be made to reach out to the women and disabled population”. One goal was that “in the upcoming years the IEC focuses on increasing and facilitating the participation of women in the electoral process and addresses issues of women’s participation in the electoral process – as candidates, voters, electoral officials”.³⁰

- **Costa Rica:** The TSE has an Internal Policy for Gender Equality and its Action Plan forms part of the Annual Work Plan of the institution, which involves defining specific responsibilities and resourcing to achieve the Internal Policy and its Action Plan. This electoral body has also made commitments in the Action Plans of the National Policy for Gender Equality.³¹
- **Nepal:** The Election Commission of Nepal included gender equality and social inclusion provisions in the first Strategic Plan (2008 – 2013). The second Strategic Plan (2015-2019) also contains concrete principles, goals and measures to mainstream gender equality and social inclusion as crosscutting issues.
- **Pakistan:** The Election Commission of Pakistan’s five-year strategic plan for 2010-2014 emphasized the need for gender mainstreaming: “[T]he ECP will strive to establish a fair gender balance in its ranks by creating conditions for women to be able to work

in the organization” and focuses on the inclusion of marginalized groups in strategic goal 14, which is “to formulate laws and strictly implement them to ensure that marginalized groups including women, minorities and persons with disabilities are able to participate in the political and electoral processes.”³²

- **Sierra Leone:** The Strategic Plan includes a very specific example of a goal related to gender balance in staffing. In a section covering human resources, it states that “the existing human resource capacity needs to be augmented in various ways, with special attention to the inclusion of women.” It also includes the goal that “election day personnel will have been recruited and trained, with special emphasis on the inclusion of women and the disabled.”³³
- **South Africa:** Part of the organizational values listed within the Strategic Plan are “being sensitive to race, culture, language, religion, disability and gender issues”, which includes “taking note of diversity in experience and ability’ and ‘caring and showing respect for others”.³⁴ The Commission strives to uphold Chapter 2 of the Constitution (the Bill of Rights) by ensuring equity in the treatment of voters on the basis of gender, disability, race, ethnicity, language, religion and the urban/rural divide. The Commission partners with other constitutional institutions such as the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE). The CGE conducts election observation specifically to evaluate whether processes promote gender equality.

3.2. Gender policy

Ensuring gender equality in any organization requires political commitment. An explicit manifestation of that commitment is a **gender policy**. These clearly acknowledge the place of gender equality within the work practices, processes and outputs of an EMB. They may also be accompanied by an action plan to ensure gender equality is achieved, monitored and evaluated across each of the priority areas.

A gender policy should not be confused with the general clause in a constitution, for example, that states men and women are equal before the law, nor with a

national gender policy often developed for governments by the national women’s machinery. In this context, it is a policy specifically developed by an EMB for its own strategic direction and adherence. It might begin with those areas of inequality identified in the gender assessment (see Table 1 above), moving to a general action that seeks to remedy that inequality and then outlines specific targets to monitor progress of that change. An example of the Gender and Inclusion Policy from Nepal is provided in the box.

3.3. Institutionalizing gender mainstreaming: Gender focal points, units and committees

To ensure that there is a driver of gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment, responsibility for advancing and monitoring the related work throughout the organization can be institutionalized. If the gender mainstreaming process is to be implemented by all in the organization, then the body responsible should have senior status within the organization and have access to all decision-making. In some cases, a dedicated gender expert or **focal point** is recruited to work on promoting gender mainstreaming across the organization. However, as this is not always possible because of budget or recruitment constraints, existing EMB members or staff may be nominated as gender focal points. In this case, it is important to ensure that the focal points have enough time, and are provided with relevant training, to take on this responsibility.

In another formulation, a **network of individuals** – men and women alike – across the organization, from different areas, may be responsible for ensuring that all staff take gender equality considerations into account in their daily operations. By creating a network of focal points, rather than appointing a single focal point, the institution’s capacity to analyse work from a gender equality perspective may be increased and the process of gender mainstreaming may gain more visibility and legitimacy. An example is provided by the case of **Afghanistan**, where a Gender Advisor was identified in each of 34 provinces amongst the full-time staff members. These staff received extensive training on management and leadership, empowerment, gender issues,

Election Commission of Nepal: Gender and Inclusion Policy, 2013

The ECN identified several challenges to fair, impartial, transparent and credible elections in relation to gender and inclusion principles, identifying the need to:

- (1) Make policies and laws relating to election, gender-sensitive and inclusive
- (2) Implement policy provisions related to gender and inclusion in elections
- (3) Promote effective public awareness by reaching out to the targeted community with issues concerning gender and inclusion
- (4) Mobilize necessary resources for providing services and facilities in elections, as provisioned by policies and laws relating to gender and inclusion.

The ECN developed a gender policy on the basis of implementing the commitment expressed to recognize the concept of gender and inclusion by the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007, and the commitments expressed in the national, regional and international treaties and agreements that are ratified. The ECN also seeks to address the issues of gender and inclusion raised through different media by women, *dalit*, oppressed caste/ethnic nationalities, backward community/class, backward region, Madhesi and other minorities.

gender planning and budgeting, and conflict management. The advisors strengthened relationships with women's organizations, highlighted gender-related issues and participated in planning, budgeting and implementing of activities within their province.³⁵

Alternatively, a **gender committee or unit** may be created. These would be akin to internal operational committees that are established in all organizations to focus on a particular aspect of work or a certain

The purpose of the policy is to ensure participation of all citizens in democratic elections and therefore it is necessary to formulate gender and inclusion policies through policy, structural and legal provisions and to implement them. Against this background, this new policy has been formulated to consolidate the process of democratization as adopted by the state through increased participation, in every stage of election process, of women, men and third gender and *dalit* of all community, class and regions that are deemed backward from the point of view of gender and inclusion and the oppressed, marginalized and excluded citizens.

The policy lays out the vision and objectives:

Vision

To make proportional and inclusive representation of citizens in all state structures through elections as per constitutional provisions and to develop the Election Commission as a sensitive institution in terms of gender and inclusion perspectives for making election fair, impartial, credible and transparent.

Objectives

1. To mainstream gender in all processes of election
2. To incorporate inclusive viewpoint in all the processes relating to election
3. To develop the Election Commission as gender-sensitive and inclusive institution

process (e.g., senior management committees). Given the gender composition of most EMBs, establishing such a committee or unit would likely include men as well as women, highlighting the message that gender equality concerns everyone. If an EMB is geographically dispersed, the responsibility will need to be spread and replicated throughout the different structures. The leadership of the EMB may have an important role in overseeing the work of the unit and ensuring it has the relevant resources to be able to conduct its work.

EMBs in several Latin American countries have, in recent years, made institutional pledges to promote gender equality by creating focal points or units to promote women's participation in electoral processes. Although the institutional capacity, technical expertise and resources of these units differ from country to country, their creation has been an important step towards institutionalizing policies and practices to promote women's participation. For example, Paraguay established a Special Gender Unit in the EMB that made sex-disaggregated data on the electoral process available for the first time.³⁶

In the EMB Survey, 10 of the 35 countries (29 percent) said that they had "appointed a gender focal point": Afghanistan, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal and Tanzania. All these countries except Namibia and Mozambique had "created a gender focal point team with participation of senior managers".

Some instances where dedicated gender equality infrastructure has been established:

- In **Afghanistan**, a Gender Unit was established in June 2009 with the mandate "to increase women's political participation through long-term change at the Election Commission including through capacity-building, gender mainstreaming and making the Commission a female-friendly institution." The Gender Unit advises and supports all other departments to "adjust their policies, processes, budgets and activities in order to ensure that women are included in every way as political actors and as staff." The Unit tries to ensure that gender is accounted for in all activities of the Election Commission, from procurement and human resources management, to electoral regulations and security.³⁷
- In **Costa Rica**: In 2000, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (EMB) appointed the Gender Commission, which consisted of staff members of the institution. The Gender Commission is chaired by a (woman) magistrate or (woman) electoral judge. This Commission has played an important role in defining and developing the internal policy for gender equality and equity of this electoral body.³⁸
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, one of the seven members of the electoral commission (CENI) was designated as a gender focal point and assisted in the creation of a Gender Unit within the CENI. The Gender Unit is composed of two women, a coordinator and an assistant. The objective of the Gender Unit is to develop mechanisms to promote gender mainstreaming within the institution. It is also tasked with controlling the application of the CENI's gender policies at the central and local levels.³⁹
- In **Ghana**, authorities of the Electoral Commission (EC) have established a gender desk in recognition of the importance of women participation in the electoral process.⁴⁰
- In **Honduras**, an Office for Gender Equality (*Oficina para la Equidad de Género*) has been established within the Electoral Tribunal (*Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones*).⁴¹
- In **Iraq**, in 2011, the IHEC had a gender unit representing all the departments and chaired by a female commissioner and a United Nations adviser was advising the group.
- In **Mexico**, a special Technical Unit for Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination (*Unidad Técnica de Igualdad de Género y No Discriminación*) was created within the National Electoral Institute.
- In **Nepal**, the government has mandated that every public service organization, including the Election Commission, appoint a senior staff member as the gender focal point.⁴² In addition, the Electoral Commission of Nepal has created a Gender Unit and also appointed a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Focal Point.
- In **Paraguay** in 2009, the Electoral Tribunal created a special Gender Equality Unit responsible for producing sex-disaggregated data, analysing the electoral process from a gender perspective, coordinating with political parties on strategies to promote women's participation and collaborating with national and international institutions.⁴³
- **Yemen's** EMB has a special Gender Unit for promoting the interests of women in the electoral process. The Gender Unit is established in the Ministry of

Local Administration to ensure that women are integrated at all levels of the local authorities work. It is headed by a woman.⁴⁴

In other cases where the EMB did not institute a gender focal point position directly, the EMB was able to employ the services of gender advisors engaged by UNDP. For example:

- In **Nepal**, UNDP employed a Gender Specialist in 2011 to support the Electoral Commission of Nepal in carrying out its gender and social inclusion activities. Concurrently, the ECN has appointed a gender focal person in the Commission at the rank of Joint Secretary. The UNDP Gender Specialist, based at the ECN offices, works with the Commission to draft

key documents, including a gender mainstreaming policy, action plan, terms of reference for the ECN gender focal person and a concept note for the newly established Gender Unit, and assists with the planning and implementation of all of the Commission's gender-related activities.⁴⁵

- In **Sudan** in 2010, a UNDP Gender Advisor was co-located with the NEC and provided policy advice on the integration of a gender equality perspective into the election planning process.
- In **Tunisia** in 2011, a UNDP Gender and Elections Advisor was co-located at ISIE and worked with the staff members, primarily responsible for outreach and training.

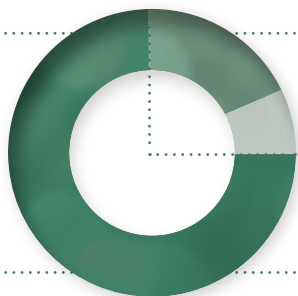


SUMMING UP:

- A focus on addressing and overcoming gender inequality within an EMB may start at the highest planning level.
- EMBs may clearly articulate their commitment to gender equality and what it means in the national context.
- This can be done by ensuring that the body's strategic plan or mission statement has gender-sensitive objectives, targets and means to achieve those.
- This may also be done by developing a focused gender policy that lays out the vision and objectives of the EMB
- Once a declaration has been made, resources would need to be allocated towards its implementation.
- Gender focal points, or a gender equality committee or unit, may be effective in institutionalizing an EMB's commitment to gender equality.

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.....”



4 Gender Balance in the Electoral Management Body: Board and Staff

An EMB is usually responsible for the determination of policy on electoral administration as well as for the implementation of logistical operations.⁴⁶ In some EMBs, the determination of policy is done by a multi-member Board or Commission, while the Secretariat (election staff) administers the election.⁴⁷ Women's presence in the Board and the Secretariat is needed to achieve gender balance.

The Board or Commission is often the policy decision-making body of the EMB; if changes regarding gender equality are to be made within the EMB, it usually has an important role to play. It is best placed to ensure that the EMB complies with international obligations and targets on gender equality in its policies, including in its own composition. Women need to be included in the Commission to be able to contribute to the policy- and decision-making processes of EMBs.

The Secretariat is the policy implementation arm of the EMB. The inclusion of women in this body may help to ensure that the processes by which elections are administered do not discriminate against women. Secretariats may also aim to ensure that women are included among temporary polling staff, particularly in situations where it is culturally insensitive for women voters to interact with men whom they do not know. This section outlines measures that can be taken to ensure women's presence among EMB staff.

4.1. EMB Board or Commission composition

The dominance of male leadership in the boards of EMBs was confirmed in some of the responses to the EMB Survey:

- **Mozambique:** In the CNE of Mozambique in 2011, two of the 13 commissioners (15 percent) were women.⁴⁸
- **Nepal:** In 2012, all of the commissioners in the ECN were men. One female commissioner, of the total of five members, was appointed in 2013.⁴⁹
- **Tanzania:** In the National Electoral Commission of Tanzania, two of the seven commission members (28.5 percent) were women in 2011.⁵⁰
- **Tunisia:** In the ISIE constituted in 2011, two of the 16 commissioners (12 percent) were women.

The modes of selection and appointment of EMB Boards vary greatly. In some countries, temporary special measures like gender quotas have been adopted to ensure that women are members of the Board or Commission. The electoral law may specify a gender quota for the EMB or it may be specified in broader gender equality legislation.

Examples of appointment or recruitment gender quotas for electoral management bodies:

- **Albania:** The Law on Gender Equality in Society (2008) and the Electoral Code (2008 and recently amended) mandates that all public-sector institutions – including the members of the 89 Commissions of Electoral Administration Zones – must have at least 30 percent of each gender among its members and staff at the national and local levels.⁵¹



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- **Bolivia:** The law defines the composition of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal as follows: the Supreme Electoral Tribunal shall be composed of seven members, of whom at least two shall be of indigenous origin. From the total number of members of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, at least three will be women.⁵²
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The election law requires that the “composition of an election commission shall in general reflect the equal representation of both genders”, which is interpreted as each gender comprising a minimum of 40 percent of the total number of members of the Election Commission. The law further states that efforts will be made to ensure that the least represented gender in Municipal Election Commissions and Polling Station Committees reaches a minimum of 40 percent of the total number of members.⁵³
- **Iraq:** The Electoral Law requires that the Board of Commissioners, composed of nine Commissioners, include at least two women.⁵⁴
- **Kyrgyzstan:** The election law states that membership of the Central Election Commission shall have no more than 70 percent of the same sex.⁵⁵
- **Timor-Leste:** In 2007, a quota was set in the national elections mandating that women comprise a minimum of four of the total 15 commissioners.⁵⁶

In another formulation, a gender-related objective may be inscribed in national legislation without providing specific benchmarks or quotas:

- **Ethiopia:** The Election Law states that the composition of the board shall take into consideration national contribution and gender representation.⁵⁷

Usually, such quotas only work well when one person or organization is responsible for the overall composition of all members of the EMB board or commission. In many countries, the EMB is constituted by individuals nominated by different political parties, so no one person or body has oversight of the overall gender balance. For example, in **Moldova**, there is a gender parity law, but, as Commissioners are appointed individually (by the President of the Republic and political parties), no one person or body has oversight of the overall composition of the Commission from a gender equality perspective.⁵⁸ This is also a challenge in **Benin**.⁵⁹ In these cases, each political party can be called upon to be aware of the need for gender balance, but can be difficult to enforce a gender quota.

Some EMBs identified a further challenge in that women often do not put themselves forward for senior level positions in electoral management. In **Tunisia** in 2011, the group that was selecting the ISIE members was tasked with observing “the principle of male/female equality” among commissioners and staff. Within the ISIE leadership, there were two women among the 16-member Commission. Although efforts were made to get more women involved in staffing of the regional level offices of ISIE, they were only able to reach 18 percent women in the regional administrations and 11 percent in the local administrations, in large part because women did not put themselves forward.⁶⁰

In some countries, gender-balanced representation on the EMB commission has been reached without a legal stipulation. If the political will exists, gender balance can be reached in a board that is appointed, for example.

- In **Malawi** in 2011, there were equal numbers of women and men on the commission, despite there being no law or regulation to enforce this.⁶¹
- In **Ghana** in 2007, three of the seven commissioners were women. All commissioners were appointed by

the president in the absence of a law or regulation ensuring gender equity.⁶²

- In **Sierra Leone** in 2008, three of five commissioners, including the chair, were women.⁶³

4.2. EMB Secretariat and Staff composition

The Secretariat is the policy implementation arm of the EMB. The staff of the Secretariat can range from temporary civil service appointments to career professionals in electoral administration generally headed by a full-time administrator.⁶⁴ The method of appointment of Secretariat staff varies depending on the model of the EMB. In a governmental EMB, staff are usually comprised of public servants appointed by the executive through the same rules that apply to all public service appointment. For independent model EMBs, the staff are usually appointed by the EMB in accordance with its own recruitment procedures and employment conditions.⁶⁵ There is no optimal number of staff in a Secretariat of an EMB; however, the size of the country and its population, economic and geo-political issues and the EMB’s powers and functions may determine the size and work schedule of the EMB membership and its Secretariat.⁶⁶

Equal employment opportunities

Ensuring that women and men are included in the staffing of an EMB, at all levels, is crucial to achieving gender equality. In Nepal, steps to redress discriminatory staffing practices were identified as part of the institutional mapping through focus group interviews with staff members and external partners and through a review of policies. Where men constitute the majority of the electoral staff, a commitment to increase the number of women may be an important step. In many countries, laws mandate equal employment opportunities, particularly in the public sector, which can include the EMB.

Examples of equal employment opportunities:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** The Gender Equality Law prohibits any gender discrimination in recruiting, employment and employment benefits, including in the EMB.⁶⁷
- **Kenya:** The law establishing the Electoral Commission states that not more than two thirds of employees may be of the same gender.⁶⁸
- **Nepal:** Throughout the Strategic Plan (2015-2019) of the Election Commission of Nepal are included a precise course of action and activities that encourage and guarantee equal opportunities and affirmative actions in the area of gender equality and women's participation.
- **Republic of Congo:** National legislation provides for gender equality within the recruitment process in all public bodies.⁶⁹
- **Republic of Maldives:** By law, both sexes have equal employment opportunities.⁷⁰
- **Romania:** The state guarantees equal opportunities for men and women to occupy public, civil or military positions.⁷¹
- **South Africa:** In accordance with the Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998), the Electoral Commission develops an Employment Equity Plan determining numerical goals based on race and gender.⁷²
- **Tanzania:** Governmental circulars provide for the presence of women as staff in the National Electoral Commission secretariat.⁷³
- **Timor-Leste:** The EMBs (STAE and CNE) encourage, through internal EMBs directives and policies, the recruitment and promotion of women within their structures.
- **Uganda:** The government has a general policy on equal access to employment by all.⁷⁴

Internal policies can also provide the basis for ensuring equal opportunities for staff, regardless of whether they are prescribed by the law. Where an EMB is empowered to design its own rules and frameworks for recruitment and promotion, it would be important to ensure that these align with national employment frameworks. For example, in Afghanistan, the permanent staff of the IEC is recruited based on Afghan civil service law and procedures. IEC regulations require that gender balance be taken into consideration in the recruitment process⁷⁵ and the IEC Gender Unit shares the vacancy announcements with wider stakeholders, especially with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, to disseminate information to eligible candidates. Vacancy deadlines are extended in cases where there are not sufficient female applicants. In Pakistan, the Election Commission's Action Plan has translated the national public service rules into its own action plan that women will constitute 10 percent of the staff of the ECP secretariat.⁷⁶

In the EMB Survey, 15 of the 35 (43 percent) respondents stated that they have “a formal equality opportunity policy for staff”: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, Maldives, Moldova, Mozambique, the State of Palestine, South Africa, Tanzania and Uzbekistan.

Of these, five stated that they have a “gender parity policy and action plan for its achievement”: Afghanistan, Canada, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tanzania.

Certain **recruitment measures** can also improve gender balance in organizations. The *EISA Gender Checklist for Free and Fair Elections*, for example, asks EMBs to consider whether their selection procedures and appointments of decision-making and personnel at all levels provide for equal opportunity between women and men and whether advertisements for the positions include an equal opportunity phrase and encourage women to apply.⁷⁷ EMBs can also check how the job description is written to ensure job specifications and selection criteria and that all desired qualifications are gender-neutral. All post descriptions may be screened to ensure that there is no underlying assumption as to the gender of the eventual occupant and that tasks are scrutinized to make sure that they can be performed

equally by men and women. In many countries, women are underrepresented within certain professions or qualifications, so a job specification that stipulates these qualifications will make it hard for women to apply. It is therefore important to ensure that any requirements for qualifications and experience should be considered in terms of whether men and women have had an equal chance to accumulate the required levels, given the context of the country.

A good practice is to include in the **job description** a statement of the equity process and, in some cases, to explicitly invite applications from women and other underrepresented groups. In the EMB Survey, 17 of the 35 countries (48 percent) said that they had “a statement on non-discrimination in the recruitment process”: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, the State of Palestine, Romania, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. One example can be found in Ethiopia, where the laws that regulate the employment and benefits of civil servants both state that women are encouraged to apply for recruitment and promotion and give specific measures to be taken to ensure this process.⁷⁸

Consideration can also be given to the pay and conditions offered; where and how the job is advertised; where and when the interview is conducted; and who constitutes the interview panel. When interviewing for senior management positions, asking all candidates about gender awareness or gender expertise in the interview and using it as a selection criteria may underline how seriously the organization is about gender equality.

In the EMB Survey, 12 of the 35 respondents (34 percent) stated that they had “gender equality selection criteria in job descriptions”: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Mozambique, the State of Palestine, Tanzania and Uganda.

Some EMBs have preferred to **recruit on the basis of merit**, on the assumption that there is no hidden or implied gender difference in the selection criteria, qualifications and selection process. In practice, this may be difficult to prove. Some examples of this approach are:

- **Kazakhstan:** During the hiring process, gender affiliation is not considered and there is no distinction between men and women.⁷⁹
- **Moldova:** The law requires the elimination of any kind of discrimination, including on the basis of gender. Posts are filled following a gender-neutral competitive examination.⁸⁰
- **Uganda:** Recruitment or promotion in the Election Commission is done on merit irrespective of one’s gender.⁸¹

Specific measures to promote women may be needed to ensure that they hold senior leadership positions, particularly where an examination of promotion policies and practices has identified women’s overall underrepresentation at this level. For example, in Tanzania and Namibia, management positions in the EMB are recruited on merit, but where women and men (or other marginalized groups) have equal qualifications, priority is given to the disadvantaged sex or group.

In the EMB Survey, 10 of the 35 countries (29 percent) stated that they have “affirmative action/positive measures policy to promote women staff members”: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Tanzania. Career development for women can also be promoted through mentoring and coaching programmes and networking within and between organizations (see section 6 on Training). Some consideration may be given to whether candidates for promotion necessarily need to perform their new duties ‘on day one’ or whether they may be capable of performing these after a reasonable period of training and experience. In societies where women have had less access to education or to some areas of work, the latter will allow for more inclusive promotion (and recruitment) decisions.

An important consideration is that staff selection panels should aim to be gender-balanced. An EMB’s human resources staff may pay attention to societal or cultural biases that inhibit equal employment opportunities to avoid men and women being ‘streamed’ into certain areas of activity over others.

An additional consideration is the selection criteria used to choose members of **national delegations** of the EMB to various forums, such as regional and international meetings and trainings. In Iraq, since 2012, all United Nations-funded trainings and study tours must ensure that at least one quarter of the delegation slots go to women staff of the IHEC. The sixth annual Global Electoral Organization (GEO) conference

held in Korea in October 2013, hosted by UNDP and the National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea, recommended that all future meetings of GEO should include a target of at least 30-percent representation of women in country delegations. The GEO Conference is the leading international forum for election professionals and aims to facilitate networking and information sharing.

Examples of legislative and non-legislative measures to increase the participation of women in temporary positions include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** According to the election law “efforts shall be made to ensure that the number of members of the sex that is less represented within the Municipal Election Commission and Polling Station Committee reaches a minimum of 40 percent of the total number of members.”⁸²
- **Cameroon:** Priority is given to recruiting women presiding officers in voting centres to protect women’s rights.⁸³
- **Ethiopia:** There is no regulation stating the proportion of women as temporary election staff, but there is a strong practice of assigning at least two female electoral officers out of five in each of the voting centres.⁸⁴
- **Lebanon:** All-women polling stations are staffed by female staff.⁸⁵
- **Maldives:** Temporary staff is recruited based on merit and the interview process, regardless of the applicant’s gender.⁸⁶
- **Nepal:** The guidelines issued by the election commission state that at least half of voter registration enumerators, voter education volunteers and community mobilizer should be women. Each voting centre must have a woman to mark the fingers of voters and another woman to manage the women’s queue.⁸⁷
- **State of Palestine:** Ahead of the 2006 elections, the Election Commission ensured that there was at least one woman staff member at each voting centre so that any women wearing a veil could unveil in front of a female polling officer to have her identify verified. This provision applied in the places where women-only voting centres were not available.⁸⁸
- **Pakistan:** Women are appointed as presiding officers for all-female polling stations. In some of the mixed polling stations, especially at urban centres, women can be appointed as presiding officers. The Government of Pakistan prescribed a 10-percent quota for women at entry level (full-time staff in the ECP).⁸⁹
- **Tanzania:** Most polling officials are primary school teachers and, as women dominate in this profession, most polling officials are therefore women.⁹⁰
- **Timor Leste:** In the 2007 and 2012 national elections, quotas for the number of women were set for voting centre officials.⁹¹

4.3. Women as temporary and/or polling staff

As outlined above, targets for gender balance in staffing may be determined by an official recruitment policy based on the principle of parity or staffing quotas or may be based on voluntary guidelines or targets within the EMB or state's recruitment policy. Any policies set at the central EMB level should also, where possible, be applied to field staff such as registration and polling staff. In some countries, specific practices are used to select women as temporary or polling staff. There may be local, context-specific considerations that also need to be taken into account (such as security, see also section 12).

When an EMB relies on the secondment of staff from other public bodies to undertake temporary electoral duties, consideration can still be given to the principle of equal opportunity. If the EMB can choose the other public bodies from which staff will be seconded, it may consider choosing bodies that already employ men and women or a range of bodies that, taken together, employ an equal proportion of men and women. When the secondment system is being designed, the EMB should be empowered to take the final staffing decisions if a goal of equal representation is to be met.



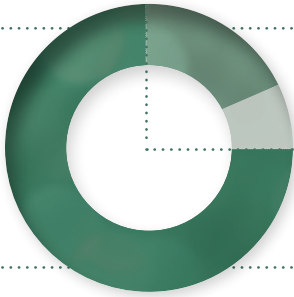
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SUMMING UP:

- Women's presence in EMBs – in all capacities, including leadership positions – is critical to ensuring that the institution and its work meet gender equality targets and obligations.
- There are several ways that women's presence can be secured, including through the adoption of TSMs, such as gender quotas for the appointment and recruitment of Commissioners and secretariat staff.
- Developing equal opportunity policies and gender-sensitive recruitment and promotion practices, such as those that allow for the preference of women over men for promotion where both candidates are of equal qualification, may result in greater gender balance among staff.
- It is key that women be employed at the time of the election in order to encourage – and, in some cases, to facilitate – the participation of women voters.

*Gender-sensitive workplace cultures create a space
in which everyone feels comfortable to do their
jobs effectively.*

.....”



5 Creating a Gender-sensitive Culture in the EMB

In addition to developing legal and policy frameworks, instituting dedicated gender mainstreaming infrastructure and addressing gender balance in the EMB's staffing, an EMB can examine the workplace culture from a gender equality perspective.

This organizational culture is established through the norms, rules and practices in the workplace. It reflects the acceptable standards and conditions in which staff might work. Gender-sensitive workplace cultures create a space in which everyone feels comfortable to do their jobs effectively. There are two main elements to a gender-sensitive workplace: facilitating work/life balance for all and, where necessary, allowing special consideration for working women; and eliminating all forms of discrimination, including harassment and bullying.

5.1. Facilitating work/life balance

Women's increased participation in the paid workplace has required significant change in the way organizations are structured and organized. The number of hours worked per week, family-friendly policies including leave provisions, and implementing special considerations for women in the work place are a few areas that all institutions, including EMBs, can consider in making themselves more gender-sensitive.

During the electoral period, the work of the EMB is intense and there are often expectations that all staff will **work long hours** to ensure the election is conducted efficiently. These expectations are a common problem for women in many electoral workplaces. For instance, the **Afghanistan** Gender Unit noted that female staff were concerned with the "sudden orders to work longer days or Fridays" which "disadvantage women as they have non-negotiable obligations at home, and are not free

to travel after dark".⁹² Such orders may also adversely affect male staff.

This can be addressed through a specific policy that considers the impact on staff, in particular women with families, of the demands made during the electoral period. For example, instead of electoral planning that assumes staff will work normal hours plus 50 percent of overtime, consideration might be given to converting the overtime into extra staff or shift-work arrangements.

Parental leave could be considered a minimum requirement for any organization that employs women. In addition, many **family-friendly policies** may be adopted, including on-site child-care facilities or child-care vouchers, special arrangements for breastfeeding mothers, a family room and arrangements to return to work on a part-time basis. Compassionate leave or special leave may be offered to men and women to respond to personal emergencies where no other leave options are available.

Other work-life balance arrangements can be offered to encourage women's participation and retention. Among these are the availability of a female prayer room or common room, flexible working arrangements to take account of the school term or caring for sick family members, offering part-time or job-sharing opportunities, providing occasional family companion travel benefits and limiting the amount of required annual travel or covering the costs of communication with home while on travel.

In Canada, gender mainstreaming in the EMB affects many areas. Equity information is collected systematically and individually through a form provided to new employees when they start in their position. The analysis of the workforce is conducted on a quarterly basis and distributed to senior managers. Minimum areas of selection (geographic limits, known as ‘area of selection’, determine where prospective candidates must reside or work to be considered for job openings) were established in January 2011 to expand accessibility to senior-level positions at Elections Canada. Selection is conducted rigorously and based on merit. Reasonable accommodations may be made to promote gender inclusiveness or offer a more gender-sensitive environment in the electoral administration. One example of reasonable accommodation is the reduction in overtime during the 40th and 41st general elections. Moreover, measures were implemented in that respect, e.g., introduction of shift work, etc. Elections Canada continues to provide information (Intranet, training, workshops) on employment equity to managers, including information on the agency’s workforce, to maintain a high level of awareness by managers on employment equity issues. Elections Canada has established a diversity committee that promotes equity and multiculturalism. The committee organizes numerous activities each year such as a meet and greet on diversity, video presentations and the publication of articles in Elections Canada’s in-house newsletter.⁹³



Some examples of family-friendly working arrangements are:

- **Costa Rica:** The institutional gender policy recommends the harmonization of staff members’ family and work responsibilities, including situations involving domestic violence, single parents, and care of elderly, sick, disabled and juvenile age group including the creation of a day-care centre.⁹⁴
- **Georgia:** A gender policy includes the provision of a flexible working day for mothers of young children. The election administration employee is granted benefits during her pregnancy, childbirth, newborn adoption and childcare. The CEC maintains a database of the administration staff, including information on the number of mothers with small children under the age of 11. This data helps prioritize needs and adapt the forms of support for the families with small children.⁹⁵
- **Romania:** The EMB has adopted flexible working arrangements for mothers with small children, including provision of extra time for mothers to meet breastfeeding responsibilities.⁹⁶
- **Timor-Leste:** In the 2009 local elections and 2012 national elections, the training for the electoral staff contained specific measures to prioritize pregnant women, women with children and family-friendly measures.

There may also be scope to institute **gender-specific strategies** to ensure that women are comfortable in the workplace. For example, the provision of a female toilet indicates that women are a normal part of the work environment. In some countries, facilities for women were not included in the original building design and had to be built as more and more women entered the

institution. This was the case in Nepal, where the rise of women staff members within the ECN necessitated the building of more toilet facilities in 2011. The security of the workplace and safe access and transport for women, particularly early in the morning or late at night, are other important considerations.

5.2. Eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying

Workplace culture should not allow for the discrimination of any staff member, on any ground, and should ensure that the workplace is a safe environment for people to carry out their duties. It is important to ensure that practices do not discriminate against, or exclude, anyone or make them uncomfortable. For instance, a mind-set that women cannot be stationed in particular areas or will not be able to travel locally or overseas or unaccompanied is discriminatory and is likely to be demoralizing for women. The underlying causes of discrimination need to be identified and removed, including any unintentional or indirect discrimination. Gender discrimination is often based on beliefs and practices that have been in place for years and so may be regarded as normal and go unnoticed.

Management may send a message that it is seeking to foster a gender-sensitive workplace by including such a commitment in its Strategic Plan and operational goals and by adopting a number of gender-aware policies. Gender policies specifically aim to challenge procedures and ideas that many take for granted and have not been seen as discriminatory. Of course, such

policies then need to be communicated, implemented and monitored. A good practice in this regard may be to institute mandatory professional development seminars on discrimination in the workplace, so that all individuals are aware of the regulatory framework and the likely consequences of breaching these provisions (see section 6 for more on training).

In the EMB survey, eight countries (23 percent) reported that they have an “(anti)-sexual harassment policy”: Afghanistan, Canada, Costa Rica, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Maldives, the State of Palestine, South Africa and Tanzania. In Afghanistan, the Gender Unit held a series of workshops for staff who were vulnerable to harassment, including support staff such as cleaners and cooks.⁹⁷ In addition, all staff received harassment awareness training including appropriate workplace behaviour and how to address harassment.⁹⁸

In establishing its own policy and internal regulations, the EMB may actively support and implement any national legislated anti-discrimination measures. In Canada, for example, Guidelines on Inclusive Workplace (Canadian Human Rights Commission) and Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the workplace have been established.⁹⁹



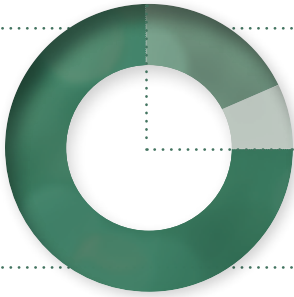
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SUMMING UP:

- The existing norms and practices in many institutions and organizations may affect women or make them feel uncomfortable in their work environment.
- EMBs may review their workplace culture to ensure it is gender-sensitive, allowing all staff to feel legitimately included, safe and, ultimately, more productive.
- Addressing workplace culture requires that attention be paid to the way in which individuals are able to balance their work and family responsibilities.
- Organizations also have a duty of care to their staff. Any form of discrimination, including bullying and harassment, should be eradicated through laws and regulations and through workshops and professional development courses.

Training opportunities are important for effective gender mainstreaming in an electoral management body.





6

Enhancing Gender Equality Capacities through Training

Gender aware EMBs require staff that can understand, and implement, gender mainstreaming strategies. Both the understanding and the capacity to implement can be fostered through a range of training interventions, targeted at specific groups within the organization.

For example, gender awareness training and workshops on specific gender policies can be delivered to staff to foster widespread appreciation for gender equality and the need for gender sensitivity in the EMB. Specialized training, including on-the-job instruction, might be provided to gender focal points or the staff (men and women alike) who have been tasked with specific gender mainstreaming responsibilities. Specific professional development opportunities might also be developed for women to promote their growth in the organization.

In implementing gender-sensitive training, there are several considerations to take into account. First, regardless of who delivers the training (consultants or internal trainers), the content should reflect the gender equality aims of the institution. Second, consideration should be given to the venue and timing of the training so that it is accessible for all staff. Being aware of the number of women, compared to men, who participate in trainings is also important and may be noted in the report or evaluation. Third, the composition of training teams is another consideration. Ideally, where there are two or more trainers and facilitators, the team should be gender-balanced. In some contexts, however, all-women training sessions will be more appropriate. In these situations, participants may report feeling better able to express themselves openly, higher levels of peer support and greater gains from their training. Last, all trainers engaged by the EMB, regardless of the focus of their specialization, could be required to undergo

gender awareness training so that their courses in turn are more gender-aware.

There are several ways in which gender equality can be considered in EMB staff training:

1. Mandatory gender awareness training can be delivered to all staff at all levels
2. Gender equality considerations can be mainstreamed into all training undertaken by EMB staff to ensure electoral procedures are gender-sensitive
3. There can be specialized training, including for gender focal points or on specific policies or topics
4. There can be training to ensure equal employment opportunities and build capacities in specific areas

6.1. Mandatory training for all staff

Training on the basic concepts and premises of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and gender analysis may be mandatory for EMB staff. In the EMB Survey, only four of the 35 countries (11 percent) said that “gender training is mandatory for all management and staff”: Costa Rica, Kazakhstan, Mozambique and Tanzania. In Tanzania, the EMB actively seeks out and facilitates courses concerning women’s empowerment.

Some examples of the use of training to improve gender awareness are:

- **Afghanistan:** Ahead of the 2010 elections, the Gender Unit organized training for female staff, the gender focal point staff and the commissioners on gender awareness in elections. The training covered attitudes, skills and knowledge.¹⁰⁰ The IEC's female staff members hold regular meetings to identify and discuss workplace needs and challenges. Each meeting includes presentations on specific gender- or election-related subjects as part of capacity-building. The recommendations from each meeting are shared with senior management.¹⁰¹
- **Mexico:** In 2010, the Electoral Tribunal (*Tribunal del Poder Judicial de la Federación*, or TPJF) took part in a joint initiative with UNDP, UN Women and the Secretariat for External Relations of the Government of Mexico entitled Gender Equality, Political Rights and Electoral Justice in Mexico: Towards Strengthening the Exercise of Women's Human Rights. This project included actions to train judges at the Tribunal on incorporating a gender perspective into their work. Staff at the TPJF noted that special training on "judging from a gender perspective" resulted in a series of crucial legislative initiatives and very progressive sentences, including on the implementation of the law on quotas.¹⁰²
- **Nepal:** The Electoral Commission of Nepal has organized and conducted comprehensive training programmes focused on women participation in electoral processes for the ECN staff, security forces, government personnel etc.
- **Ukraine:** All public servants receive awareness training to counter gender stereotypes.¹⁰³
- **Timor-Leste:** The EMBs developed and conducted countrywide training programmes, including the gender equality and women's participation topics. Also, the EMBs conducted thematic awareness campaigns throughout the 2007 and 2012 national elections as well as during the 2009 local elections.
- UNDP's Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) tailored the **BRIDGE module on gender and elections** to offer a comprehensive five-day course on women's participation in electoral competition, management and participation. Since 2011, over 500 participants from more than 60 countries have received this training.

Training on specific gender policies, including anti-discrimination, harassment and bullying training, should also be made available to all staff. When a new gender policy is introduced, training on the policy for all staff will ensure that the policy is recognized and understood across the organization. Senior managers need training about the policy to ensure that it is incorporated into all decision-making, policy creation and operational planning. If harassment, including bullying and sexual harassment, is an issue for staff feeling safe at work, then harassment awareness training is important for all staff, men and women. This type of training enables people to recognize what constitutes harassment, the impact that it has on others, how it is contrary to the organizational policy and what to do when they experience or witness harassment at work.

6.2. Gender mainstreaming in all EMB training

Gender inequalities can impact on all elements of the electoral cycle. Accordingly, all training offered by the EMB or its subsidiary organs may include gender mainstreaming elements. This includes training that is routinely provided to election staff on electoral operations. In Afghanistan, the training for voter registration staff included activities on ensuring that a husband cannot register on behalf of his wife and that woman can choose to have a fingerprint instead of a photo.¹⁰⁴ The BRIDGE Gender and Elections module could be offered to provide a basis for gender analysis and action in all training materials. Additional information is provided in section 14 on voter outreach.

6.3. Training staff with specific responsibilities

Some staff may require specialized, or more in-depth, gender training because of the specific responsibilities they have with regards to gender mainstreaming.

Gender focal point training

In addition to gender sensitivity training for EMB staff in general, it is also important to ensure that the gender focal point(s) within the EMB has access to adequate training and support. This is especially true in countries where the position has been newly introduced and little previous experience or capacity has been developed. This is often achieved through on-the-job training and/or customized training, with support of technical assistance partners and gender experts.

Gender sensitivity training for polling staff

Training is always an important part of the preparation for an election. While polling staff are trained in the process and rules of the election, training on gender awareness or sensitivity is also important and may be included for all staff. It is important for polling staff to know whether the electoral management body is committed to encouraging women to vote and eradicating family voting. The training can also provide an opportunity for staff to practice dealing with particular situations, such as some women's preference not to register to vote with a photographic ID (for more on this, see section 9). Such training makes it easier for poll workers to enforce regulations.

6.4. Training women to build capacity

Formal organizational policies on equal access to training opportunities may be introduced by the EMB. In the EMB survey, 19 of the 35 countries (54 percent) said that they have a “policy on equal access to training and development opportunities for men and women”: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Maldives, Moldova, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.

Examples of targeted training programmes:

- In **Ghana** in 2009, targeted programmes such as the training for Gender and Disability Desk Office of the Electoral Commission was provided by UNDP to facilitate its work of promoting full involvement and participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the electoral process.¹⁰⁵
- In **Liberia**, UNDP gender experts worked alongside national counterparts in the EMB to support their capacity development. This type of assistance supported the capacity of the individual gender focal point as well as strengthened the priority given to gender issues within the larger organization.¹⁰⁶ The gender technical capacity support to the NEC resulted in the establishment of a Gender Co-ordinator's Office within the NEC.¹⁰⁷
- **Nepal:** The EMB in Nepal developed, organized and conducted series of gender trainings through reputed experts and Bridge accredited facilitators. Also, thematic training programs were conducted targeting persons with disabilities, disadvantaged minorities, etc.
- **Timor-Leste:** Persons with disabilities were particularly the focus of training programmes and awareness campaigns organized by the electoral administration of the country. Also, targeted voter education campaigns were conducted for young and first-time voters, women and elders in remote areas.



The EMB may regularly assess training needs of its staff, including specific needs of women staff, and pursue training and capacity support opportunities accordingly. The EMB may intentionally seek out and facilitate training opportunities for women staff members or facilitate their participation in specialized training. When women are routinely not being appointed for particular roles because of a lack of specialization, such as ICT or GIS skills, then technical training and educational opportunities will be important in creating equity. In many countries, women have been disadvantaged because of past policies on schooling girls, so targeted training may be needed to remove this disadvantage.

For instance, in Afghanistan, earlier policies of not teaching girls to read meant that the Election Commission had difficulties in recruiting enough women for the women-only registration and voting centre teams.¹⁰⁸ One approach has been to deliberately train women for jobs that were traditionally done by men. Educational support can also provide incentive and capacity at higher levels of education. The IEC supports staff who are completing their higher education in private universities with their tuition fees and, for female staff, provides support for transportation costs as well as the university fee. The Afghan IEC also uses public holidays and events, such as International Women’s Day, to highlight the contribution of women in the workplace and offers employee achievement awards for women employees.

EMBs may also take advantage of other training and development being offered in the wider public sector for women. Such training can reinforce national messages of gender equality and also provide access to specialized advice that the EMB may be too small to have in house, such as gender analysis or mainstreaming. Inclusion in external training and professional development, including international study visits, is one area where gender discrimination may be found, often because of assumptions that women cannot be away from home due to family responsibilities. EMBs should ensure that all potential participants are asked what is required to enable their participation and, where reasonable, adjustments to plans made to accommodate family responsibilities.

Mentoring

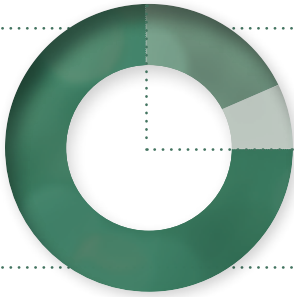
Mentoring of female staff on a career track for promotion is one way to ensure that women staff stay at the electoral management body and are in a strong position when promotion is being considered. In the EMB survey, seven of the 35 (20 percent) countries said that they have “mentoring of female staff”: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Mozambique and Tanzania. In Afghanistan, the IEC has developed mentoring programmes to transfer skills and knowledge to promote women’s advancement within the commission.



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SUMMING UP:

- Training opportunities are important for effective gender mainstreaming in an EMB.
- Unless staff understand the principles and rationales for revisiting the structures, work and operations of an EMB from a gender equality perspective, it may not be done.
- There are several options for training, including gender-aware training for all staff, mainstreaming gender into all training provided by the EMB, providing specialist training for those responsible for mainstreaming and targeting women with professional development opportunities and mentoring.



7

Collecting and Analysing Sex-disaggregated Data

The collection and dissemination of data is an essential task for an inclusive EMB. However, data is not always disaggregated by variables such as sex or age. Sex-disaggregated data on a range of points is helpful for an EMB to analyse, report and use it in policy and planning decisions. Knowing the gender breakdown of those registered on the voter list, of voters on election day and of staff at all levels is crucial to allow assessment of gender balance in elections as well as in the development of policies that may redress any identified imbalances in women's participation and access. Post-election period assessments could benefit from analysis and reporting using sex-disaggregated data on registration, voter turnout and staff who worked on the election.

Understanding the precise nature of women's political participation, on the basis of sex-disaggregated data, is important, including in the aftermath of conflict. The Secretary-General's report on women, peace and security S/2010/498 in 2010 presented a set of indicators for use at the global level to track implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).¹⁰⁹ Among the indicators for voluntary reporting by Member States is a new indicator on women's political participation as voters and candidates. This indicator tracks the extent to which women register and actually vote and also the extent to which women contest national elections as candidates. Tracking women's participation may require special emphasis in UN electoral support activities to support national partners to provide this data. In most countries, the actual number of voters (voter turnout) is usually not disaggregated by sex, making it hard to know the turnout rates for women voters. The same applies for women candidates. In order to report this data, special provisions may be needed to ensure that sex-disaggregated data are collected during polling processes.

Data collection

There are several ways in which sex-disaggregated data collection can be institutionalized in an EMB. The first step is to ensure that, when data collection exercises are designed, a category for 'sex' or 'gender' is included as one of the data fields. Second, the data on 'sex' should be recorded at the time of the data collection because of the costs and inefficiency associated with revising large amounts of data retroactively at a later stage. Recording 'sex' or 'gender' is most likely to already be collected when an applicant registers to vote. However, including a 'sex' or 'gender' field on forms and in other databases is often all that is needed for the data to be collected.

Staff and polling officials may require training to understand the processes; otherwise, this should be included in standard training of electoral officials. A gender mapping or assessment will help an EMB identify any gaps in its collection (and dissemination) of sex-disaggregated data.

7.1. Voter registration data

Disaggregated registration data is captured in many countries where ‘sex’ or ‘gender’ is one of the details recorded about each registered person. Where ‘sex’ or ‘gender’ is not one of the details that is recorded, then a change in the law or regulations may be needed in order to gather this data. When the records are stored electronically, analysis by sex or gender within each electoral area and for the whole country is easy. If other details such as age or ethnicity are also recorded, then these, too, can be reported in a sex or gender breakdown and compared to population data. Although high-tech systems can facilitate the collection and analysis of disaggregated data on registration, only simple technology is needed to implement effective data disaggregation. Recent reforms to record voter registration information have allowed for sex disaggregation in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Tunisia, Tanzania and the State of Palestine.¹¹⁰ In countries where the register is kept manually, such as the Central African Republic and Mozambique, disaggregating is still not possible unless it is manually recorded.

In the EMB survey, 18 of the 35 countries (51 percent) said that they “disaggregate voter registration data by sex”: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa and Tunisia. In several countries, the registration rates are monitored to track areas where there may be low registration rates of women or young people. In these areas, voter outreach and information campaigns may be deployed to target the under-registered groups.¹¹¹

7.2. Voter turnout data

Collecting and reporting data on the proportion of women and men who voted (voter turnout) is not yet the norm in most EMBs. Without this data, it is not possible to know if there is a gender gap in turnout overall or for a particular geographic area or age group in any given country. Some EMBs and stakeholders raise concerns that the secrecy of the vote can be undermined by the disaggregation and reporting of voter turnout by gender. However, this is not the case. First, only turnout data should be disaggregated, not voting results. Second, sex-disaggregated statistics are useful and instructive only at cumulative levels: the level of towns, cities, regions and the country as a whole. EMBs can therefore determine how to report turnout results at a level that is meaningful and open while also protecting the secrecy of each individual voter at the voting centre, constituency or regional level. Thus, reporting of sex-disaggregated turnout (not results) should not be seen to infringe the secrecy of the vote.

When there are separate female and male voting centres (see section 11), turnout data for men and women will be part of the standard report of turnout by voting centre. When sex is recorded on the voter list, then a polling staff member could be given the task of tallying the number of men and women who cast a vote at each voting centre by recording it when votes are tallied at the end of polling. The tally or results forms that record the overall number of voters, ballots papers, spoiled ballots, etc. could include a field on the number of women and men who voted. If a voter list is used in voting centres to check voter eligibility and then marked when



voting papers are issued – but sex is not recorded on the voter list – polling staff may record the number of women and men receiving ballots separately on the tally sheet including a data field specifically for that purpose (see Annex B for a sample form used to collect this data in Nepal). In this manner, sex-disaggregated data can be collected. Overall, however, recording of sex-disaggregated data is greatly facilitated where the voter list used is electronic and/or if the voter registration list already contains the voters' sex or gender.

Recording sex-disaggregated voter turnout data officially and systematically is a good practice. However, in cases where this is not possible, a non-scientific snapshot of turnout may be recorded by domestic and international observer groups to record such data, unofficially. If, as in most cases, there are insufficient observers to record data in every polling station all day long, then observer groups may seek to develop a sampling plan that will provide a statistically representative record. This sampling plan may include demographic issues, geographic distribution and gender-sensitive planning for the time that data is recorded (i.e., if women are responsible for childcare outside of school hours or restricted in movement after dark, collecting data in the evenings skews results). Many of the established international observer organizations have proven methods for sampling voting centres to give a representative picture of the whole country and these methods could be used to choose the voting centre where sex-disaggregated turnout data is collected. Despite the growing accuracy of observation sampling, this method should not replace official data collected systematically by the EMB.

In the EMB survey, 12 of the 35 countries (34 per cent) said that they “disaggregate turnout data by sex”: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, the State of Palestine, Republic of Congo and South Africa. Some examples of where sex-disaggregated voter turnout is collected and reported are:

- **Nepal:** The ECN used a dedicated template in each polling centre during the 2013 Constituent Assembly elections to record sex-disaggregated data on voters.
- **Timor Leste:** The electoral law requires each voting centre to record the sex of each voter and to report these numbers.
- **South Africa:** The introduction, in 2009, of scanning each voter ID card at the voting centre meant that sex- and age-disaggregated turnout data can easily be drawn from the database. One intention was to use this data to better target voter education before the next election.¹¹²

Reforming regulations

In order to collect and report sex-disaggregated data, changes in election regulations may be needed. For example, in Pakistan, UN Women and UNDP provided support to the Electoral Commission of Pakistan to report sex-disaggregated data. The existing data collection Forms XIV, XVI and XVII of the ECP (Election Rules 1977) did not include the provision to record and report sex-disaggregated data for registered voters and voter turnout. This, in turn, meant that the ECP did not report this data. Proposals were made for how the data could be sex-disaggregated by amending forms XIV, XVI and XVII, which were approved by the ECP in January 2013, paving the way for sex-disaggregated data in future elections.¹¹³

Similarly, the Permanent Electoral Authority in Romania noted that it did not collect sex-disaggregated data as there was no legal requirement to do so. The relevant legislation specifies only that the following categories of information will be included on the electoral register: a) date of birth; b) personal identification number; c) country of domicile or residence; d) address of domicile; e) address of residence; f) series and number of the voting card; and g) series and number of the identity card.¹¹⁴ The Permanent Election Authority noted that, unless the law or regulations were changed, it would not be possible to collect sex-disaggregated turnout data.

In contrast, sometimes the regulatory requirement for sex-disaggregated data collection is not enforced. One EMB noted, “There are provisions to collect turnout data disaggregated by sex, but the local presiding officers do not do so at the moment.”¹¹⁵



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As previously mentioned, post-election period assessments may include analysis and reporting of sex-disaggregated data on registration and voter turnout. This would be an important tool to analyse whether there is a gender gap between women and men in voting and if such a gap exists, to adopt measures to address it in the next elections. The potential value of this data is also recognized as one of the indicators for voluntary reporting by Member States in Resolution 1325.

7.3. Candidate registration data

While data on the number of women elected to national parliament is widely reported, sex-disaggregated data on candidate registration is not. When sex is one of the details required on the candidate nomination form and the details are stored electronically, then this data should be easy to collect and report. If sex is not one of those details, then the law or regulations may need to be changed so that this data can be collected.

Sex-disaggregated candidate registration data are not only important to report as an indicator of the level of women's political participation in a country; they are also a useful tool for analysis of political party performance. An example of this occurred in Moldova, where, after the 2011 elections, the CEC of Moldova analysed and made available for the public and all interested organizations the statistics on the following: women's participation in electoral races for mayor; women's presence in electoral races for local and district councils on

party lists; and women elected as mayors in comparative perspective. These statistics were available per electoral competitors also so that they, and the general public, could compare political party performance in the area of gender equality.¹¹⁶

Another reason to collect this data is to monitor compliance with candidate quota nomination laws, where they exist. In countries where a target is set for women's nomination as candidates, such as 30 percent or 50 percent, the reporting of candidate data by sex is required in order to ensure that the law is being implemented. In some countries, there may also be a 'placement' provision of women candidates, such as one that women should occupy every third position on a political party list. Reporting of candidate data may also necessitate information on the placement of women on party lists in order to confirm compliance with legislated quotas.

7.4. Staffing data

The sex of temporary and permanent staff at different levels within the EMB is usually easy to record. Collection and monitoring of this data can be built into the basic human resources function. The percentage of women in each staffing level for permanent staff can be compared to the level in other public bodies and to a gender balance of 50 percent. Collection of additional data points may be necessary to determine whether women are equally represented at different levels of responsibility within EMB institution and polling station staff.

In the EMB survey, 12 of the 35 countries (34 percent) said that they "maintain a database of electoral staff disaggregated by gender": Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, the State of Palestine and South Africa. One example of the detail of data collected is in Georgia, where the Central Election Commission's database on the administration staff notes whether the woman is single, widowed, a mother as well as the number of children the woman has and whether those children are young or adult. This data has been collected "in order to prioritize needs and accordingly the forms of support".¹¹⁷

Data analysis and reporting

Collecting data has no impact unless it is analysed, reported and disseminated. Most of this reporting and analysis is conducted during the inter-election period. For instance, it is good practice to include sex-disaggregated data of the different staffing levels in an annual report on the work of the electoral management body and to include sex-disaggregated voting centre staff and voter data in all reports about the election. Likewise, an EMB may seek to promote disaggregated data collection for external areas as well as internal (i.e., data on voter registration, turnout, candidates, etc.). When cross-referenced with other statistics commonly collected in these areas (regions, age, etc.), this data can provide a powerful and detailed snapshot of women's political participation. Good analyses can help EMBs better understand the challenges and successes; for example, by comparing disaggregated registration data with disaggregated turnout data, EMBs can assess whether there is a correlation or gender gap

that may require action. Some examples of detailed and useable reporting are:

- **Burundi:** Supported by UN Women, the CENI produced a tool for the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data in five areas of participation. EMB staff was trained on the tool during a BRIDGE module in 2014.
- **Ethiopia:** The post-election evaluation of the 2010 General Election analysed the level of participation of women as voters, electoral officers, observers and candidates.¹¹⁸
- **Timor Leste:** A report on turnout compared the sex-disaggregated voter turnout data in each district with the census data on the number of men and women in each district because, while women make up 49.1 percent of the total population, this value varies across the districts with a low of 46.5 percent in the capital city to a high of 50.9 percent. The pattern in the voter turnout across districts matched the census pattern.¹¹⁹



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SUMMING UP:

- The collection and dissemination of data is an essential task for an inclusive EMB.
- EMBs are well-placed to ensure that the data they collect are disaggregated by sex. This data allow an EMB to identify any gender gaps in registration, turnout or staffing levels and where such gaps are identified, to monitor any progress in closing them.
- Ensuring that any data collected are sex-disaggregated may require legislative reform or changes to electoral regulations.
- Comparing data on the number of women and men who register, turn out to vote and participate as candidates with the number of eligible women and men in the population, helps to determine the extent of gender differences in electoral and political participation.





PART B

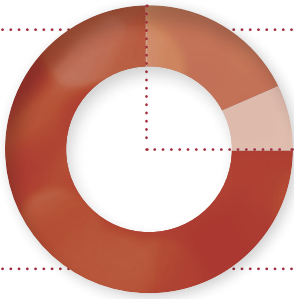


Addressing Gender Inequalities in Electoral Processes and Events

8 Making Electoral Events Inclusive	53	12 Ensuring Safety in the Electoral Process	81
9 Registration of Voters	55	13 Working with Electoral Stakeholders	87
10 Nomination and Registration of Candidates and Political Parties	65	14 Voter outreach	93
11 The Voting Process	73	15 Conclusion	103

Interventions that have been specifically designed to ensure women's participation in electoral processes enable EMBs to deliver on their international commitments to promote gender equality.

.....”



8 Making Electoral Events Inclusive

EMBs are the key administrators of the electoral process and therefore their design, composition and performance is a critical variable in the credibility of an electoral process and the acceptance of the results.¹²⁰ The inclusive participation of women in electoral processes is also an important consideration for the credibility of elections and is a clear aim of UN electoral assistance programming.¹²¹

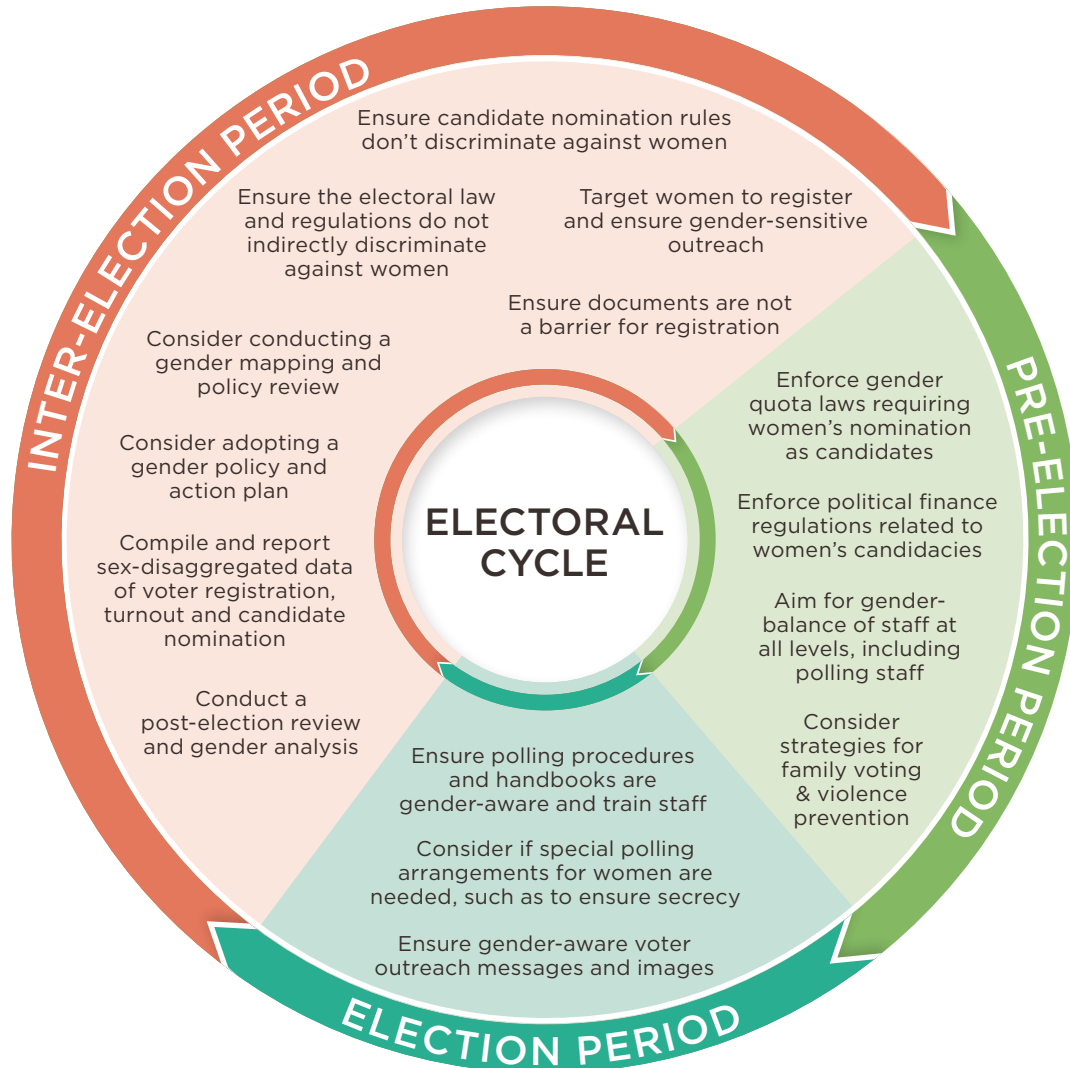
Part B seeks to provide examples of documented practices on how to ensure women's equal participation in the electoral process and electoral event. It illustrates interventions that have been specifically designed to ensure women's participation in electoral processes, enabling EMBs (or other bodies as applicable) to deliver on their international commitments to promote gender equality. It also provides some options for international assistance providers to consider where relevant.

Part B reviews the work that is undertaken by EMBs and other bodies to prepare for the electoral event, highlighting gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted interventions that can be implemented to promote women's participation. This includes how EMBs have addressed some of the potential obstacles women may confront, including lack of identity documentation, long distances to travel that can affect registration or voter turnout, family voting and lack of access to information on the electoral process. Part B concludes by presenting good practices in voter outreach strategies to improve awareness of women's political rights.

The Regulatory Framework

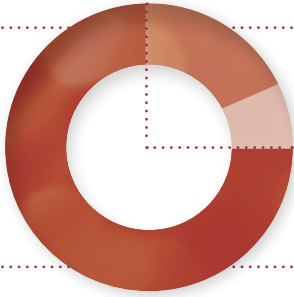
Elections are, for the most part, fierce political contests. Each of the individual processes that contribute to the successful conduct of an election – from voter registration to the counting of ballots and dispute resolution – is prescribed in legislation or regulations. This legal framework ensures that all participants and stakeholders (including voters, candidates and political parties) abide by an agreed set of rules for the conduct of an election. A strong legal framework also allows for a penalty system to be enforced when those laws are breached.

The functions and powers of an EMB and the full electoral framework are defined in the legal framework of a country that deals with electoral processes and may come from a variety of sources. These include the constitution, international agreements, national laws (including an electoral code, general laws on elections and/or laws establishing the EMB), state laws, regulations, proclamations and directives issued by the EMB or other authority, administrative policies and codes

Figure 2: Gender Mainstreaming Interventions

of conduct.¹²² All of these sources constitute the legal framework and may be reviewed to ensure that there is no overt or indirect discrimination against women. Consideration of changes to the law and regulations often occur first in the post-election period as part of the review of the election. Ideally, any changes are made in the period between elections so that the impact of the changes can be incorporated and communicated before the election period starts.

From a women's empowerment perspective, it is important that the laws to be implemented by the EMB, such as the registration of voters and enforcement of gender quotas, all be upheld and that any relevant non-compliance sanctions be enforced. Where necessary, the EMB may also have a role in proposing amendments to existing laws to parliament to make them more effective or, indeed, to reform discriminatory legislation.



9 Registration of Voters

Effective voter registration and polling laws and regulations are designed to ensure the principle of ‘one person, one vote’ and to produce a credible election. The registration of voters is an essential preparatory step in an election. In some countries, certain rules can make it hard for a particular group of voters to participate.

Two components of registration that are often reported as barriers for women registering to vote are usually specified in the law: (a) the forms of identification needed in order to register; (b) the information that is included on a registration card. These requirements may also affect participation on polling day.

In most countries, a list of those eligible to vote at a given election, known as a voter register or voter list, is prepared. Alternatively, a civil or other population registry may be used to establish the list of eligible voters. An accurate voter list is fundamental to electoral integrity because it ensures that all those who are eligible to vote are able to vote and that no individual votes more than once. Several elements are key to an integral voter register, including its level of accuracy, the transparency of its development and maintenance, and the ease with which voters may register, check their details and change them if incorrect or outdated (for example, following a change of address or change of name after marriage).

Voter registration methods

Voter registers are usually constructed either ‘actively’ or ‘passively’ and on a continuous or periodic basis. In ‘active’ systems, voters are required to visit, in person, a place of registration in order to register or, during a subsequent exhibition period, to notify changes in name or address. Sometimes, a new register is created for each election and people have to register each time, often during specific registration ‘windows’ leading up to an election (periodic registration). In other countries, the register is continuously updated and voters may only need to register once and then update details as they change. Another variation on the active methodology is where registration teams may go door-to-door to conduct an enumeration in order to register people.¹²³ In some countries, people can check and change their details on the Internet or by post. In all of these ‘active’ cases, however, it is the responsibility of the voter to complete the registration process.

Most of the **planning and conduct of registration takes place in the pre-election period** or in the years between elections. Any consideration of a change in the methods to ensure women’s equal participation should be made before the pre-election planning period to allow for full implementation before the election period starts.



Alternatively, in ‘**passive**’ systems, the electoral management body may create a voter register by extracting information from an existing list such as a civil registry, citizenship, national ID card database or residency lists.¹²⁴ Other common sources of information for integrated voter registries include tax lists, immigration records, national defence rosters, driver’s licence agencies, vital statistics databases, subnational electoral lists (region, state, provincial, territory level) and information provided directly by voters. In these cases, voters usually do not need to take any action in order to be on the voter register. In fact, they may only need to take action if they do not want to be on the register for any reason, by contacting the EMB directly or opting out in a designated check-box on related government forms. Where this method is used, a gender analysis of the way in which the citizenship or residency list is created can help ensure that women are not being disenfranchised at that point.

Whether there is a continuous voter registration process, a periodic update of the list or a newly created register for each election, most registration activity takes place before the electoral period and may continue until the week of polling.¹²⁵

Reviewing registration from a gender equality perspective

There are advantages and disadvantages to each method of creating a voter register and decisions on

which method to use will be dependent upon the local context. A gender analysis of the registration process should highlight those advantages and disadvantages for women as well as any areas in which women may be excluded, either directly or indirectly. At the outset of an electoral process and during the establishment or renewal of the voter register, the EMB needs to be aware of those gender-specific risks that can inhibit women voters from registering.

It is important to note that most of the planning and conduct of registration takes place in the pre-election period or in the years between elections. Voter outreach on the registration process is also crucial to ensure that all women can participate (see section 14 on voter outreach). This section outlines certain challenges that can arise for women in the registration process and identifies specific initiatives that have been implemented to facilitate women’s participation, some of which will be more applicable in a particular country than others, depending upon the national context.

9.1. Gender equality considerations in the registration process

There are three ‘mainstream’ requirements of the registration process that may adversely affect women’s registration: proof of identity; photographic identity cards; and registering in person (summarised in table 3).

Some of the challenges that can affect the registration of women on the voter roll include:

- Cultural norms that seek to suppress or prevent women’s participation in elections
 - Not having the necessary identity documents needed to register, such as citizenship papers or family books
 - The requirement of photographic identification for women who wear a veil or other religious dress
 - Electoral registers that are ‘static’ and not easily open to women to change their names and residence (which is often the result of marriage)
 - Registers based on data sources that do not include all women or include women as a subset of men, such as a register based on heads of families or households
 - Restricted access to the place of registration, because of its opening hours or safety concerns
 - Insufficient information on when and how to register, particularly for women who cannot read or do not speak the official language
-



Table 3. Gender sensitizing registration requirements

Registration requirement	Possible adverse effect on women	Gender-responsive initiatives
Proof of ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for obtaining citizenship or other forms of ID are discriminatory or complicated • Women may be prevented from registering by being unable to access key documents, either through circumstance or because documents are held by a husband or father 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMB explore all options to overcome particular challenges • Community leaders or electoral officials may act as witnesses to verify a woman's identity • National ID cards are issued to specific groups without ID or citizenship documents (e.g., rural women), including through national campaigns and outreach
Photographic ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in some cultures may not be comfortable removing a veil to have a photograph taken • Women in some cultures may be sensitive to the public display of voters' photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographic IDs may not be required or other verification is allowed, e.g. fingerprints or witnessing • EMBs may offer dedicated spaces in which photographs are taken in private • EMBs have deploy women-only teams or use women-only centres • EMBs do not keep copies of, or publicly display, voters' photographs
Registration in person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the place of registration may be restricted for women, because of opening hours and safety concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority queues for women registering to vote may be established • Confidential or anonymous registration may be allowed in relevant contexts

Proof of identification

When identity documents such as a citizenship certificate or passport are needed in order to register, women may have difficulties because they are often less likely to have the necessary identification papers or these papers may be held by a husband or father. Attention also needs to be paid to regulations that may limit or prevent women from obtaining citizenship certificates or documents, such as requirements that a male relative or spouse verify a woman's identity or lineage. In some countries, women are actively prevented from being granted citizenship or have a different civil status, as this may afford other rights than the right to vote, like the right to inherit land or property or pass on nationality to children.

Checks are also needed to ensure that the specified papers are used in all cultural contexts; for instance, if a marriage certificate is needed for a newly married

woman to change her registration details, but such certificates are not part of a particular culture or religious marriage practice, then this rule excludes some women. When a particular group does not have identification papers, then actions can be taken to ensure that these people can still register. The following are examples of actions that have been taken to ensure women have their ID papers:

- **Nepal:** In early 2013, many women could not register to vote, as they did not hold necessary citizenship certificates. A directive was issued by the Election Commission of Nepal allowing women to register with a local-level official as an additional method of verification.¹²⁶
- **Egypt:** Started in 2011, the Women's Citizenship Initiative project was developed by UN Women and the Ministry of State for Administrative Development (MSAD) with other partners. The 'Your ID, Your

Rights' campaign aimed to ensure women's basic citizenship rights during the democratic transition in Egypt by issuing national ID cards to poor and marginalized women living in rural or remote areas. The project aimed to issue two million national ID cards for Egyptian women.¹²⁷

- **Sierra Leone:** As many potential voters lacked the necessary identification papers, the election law allows for a community leader or other credible witness to testify that women and men are qualified to vote.¹²⁸
- **Timor Leste:** Between 2010 and 2012, the EMBs (STAE and CNE) engaged in a voter registration update exercise that focused on women and vulnerable groups. The processes included different phases: voter registration for new voters, voter data update, exhibition and challenges and publication of the electoral roll.¹²⁹

Registering in person

Access to the registration process may be a widespread concern when considering women's participation. Given that the most common method of registration is for voters to go to a registration office, the location of the office and the times at which it is open need to be considered in terms of easy access for all women. Opening times can be particularly important and need to consider when women are most likely to be able to visit the registration office. In Belarus and Iraq, timing of electoral offices explicitly takes this into consideration to ensure access for women and other caregivers. In Tanzania and many other countries, disabled, aged, pregnant and breast-feeding women are given first priority in queues during registration.

Security during registration is also important. In Iraq, the electoral authority uses separate queues for women and men and deploys observers and security forces composed of men and women (see other examples in the section below on conflict situations).¹³⁰ In some contexts where individuals feel that the public act of voter registration puts them at personal risk because of the information required, some countries permit 'anonymous' or 'confidential' voter registration. This refers to the

practice of placing certain individuals on the voters list in such a way that their names or other characteristics (e.g., addresses) do not appear in any published or circulated version of the voters list.¹³¹

- In **New Zealand**, an application to be placed on the 'unpublished roll' requires the following kinds of supporting documentation:
 - » Copy of protection order for domestic violence
 - » Copy of restraining order in force
 - » Statutory declaration from police on the danger
 - » Supportive letter from barrister, employer or justice of the peace¹³²
- Similarly, in **Canada**, women temporarily residing in a women's shelter may register to vote by special ballot without disclosing the address of the shelter.

Some countries reduce or avoid the question of photo identification and in-person registration by creating the voter register directly through other sources of population data.

- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, citizens with ID cards do not need to take action to register on the Central Voter Register. Active registration is only required for out-of-country voters.¹³³
- In **Canada**, the EMB continually updates the National Register of Electors using information provided by government agencies from income tax forms, citizenship applications, driver's licence records, provincial permanent voter lists as well as other information sources.¹³⁴
- In **Egypt**, voter registration depends on a national identity database. All citizens who are at least 18 years old obtain a national identification card automatically and by default and become a registered voter without the need to follow other procedural steps for registration. Despite this provision, it has been noted that rural women do not always claim their National ID cards and need support to inform and encourage them about this provision.¹³⁵

While this might mitigate some of the challenges identified, registers based on other data sources that do not include all women, or include women as a subset of men, such as a register based on heads of families or households, will be incomplete. It is important that a wide range of databases be used to ensure all eligible women can be registered.

Photo identification

Including a photo on the voter card or requiring voters to show a form of photo identification is common in newer democracies and is often introduced as a means of avoiding fraudulent voting on behalf of another person. However, including a photo is not the only way to combat this problem and other forms of identification may be appropriate in some contexts. All options need to be considered, including from a gender equality perspective, to ensure that the chosen option safeguards an inclusive voter list and guards against fraudulent voting.

For cultures where women wear the veil, the inclusion of a photo on the ID card can be a barrier to women's participation in the election. If these issues are not addressed, then women may choose not to register because they are not comfortable with having a photo ID. For instance, one concern that may arise is the necessity of removing the veil in order to have the photo taken and again when identity is checked at the voting centre. Others may be concerned by the existence of the ID card that may be seen by strangers. Some problems have also been reported when a copy of the photo is kept and again may be seen by strangers who are looking at the database or a printed record. Similarly, in some countries, voter registration lists are posted publicly to encourage voters to confirm and, if necessary, correct their registration status. Women may be particularly sensitive to having their images displayed in public in such a manner, for religious, cultural or social reasons.

Where the use of photos for identification has already been adopted, there are approaches to implementation that may make it easier for women who wear the veil to participate. Using women-only registration teams (see below) addresses the first issue.

Some examples of procedures to deal with the other aspects of this issue are:

- **Afghanistan:** Women are not required to have their photo on their voter registration cards. Instead, they may choose to have a fingerprint on their voter ID cards instead of a photo (although the fingerprint serves no visual identification purpose).¹³⁶
- **Australia and Great Britain** do not require voters to display photo identification – or, consequently, reveal their face – when casting the ballot. While registering voters need to state the identification number displayed on their IDs (which normally contains a photo), there is no requirement to actually show the registration clerk the ID card. Tendered or provisional ballots may be used to address concerns of fraud in these cases.¹³⁷
- **Bangladesh:** The electoral authority ensures that offices for updating the voter register offer a private space where women can remove their headscarves/hijabs in order to have their photos taken for the voters list.¹³⁸



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Special considerations in conflict and post conflict situations

General Assembly Resolution 66/130 of 2012 calls on all States to enhance the political participation of women on equal terms with men, including in situations of political transition, in voting in elections and referendums and eligibility for election to publicly elected bodies. Having identity papers is often a particular problem in post-conflict contexts. It is estimated that around three quarters of displaced people in a conflict situation are women; hence, this may be a significant gender equality issue that needs to be addressed.¹³⁹ The United Nations ‘Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’ (1998) include the right of the internally displaced to vote and to have access to the means necessary to exercise this right. Often, the first hurdle for

internally displaced people is the lack of identification papers due to the haste in which they may have left their homes and the difficult living circumstances since they left. Refugees who have fled across the border can also face similar hurdles. When provision is made for registration, there may be problems of insufficient information or a lack of translation into appropriate dialects or languages. Security, and fear of harassment, violence and discrimination, can also be a major issue that deters displaced people from registering on the voter list, particularly if they have to return to the areas that they left in order to register. The rules and processes for registering displaced peoples need to be considered during the pre-election period or between elections. However, if the cause of displacement occurs in the run-up to or during the election, then special arrangements may need to be put in place.

Some examples of flexibility to ensure that displaced people can register are:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** For the first post-conflict voter registration exercise in 1996, people who did not have the necessary identification documents were able to submit a declaration containing their name, address in 1991, identity number (if known) and their current address. The declaration had to be made in the presence of a magistrate, a religious authority, a municipal official or two reputable persons whose names appeared on the provisional voter list. The 1991 Yugoslavia-wide census details were used to check eligibility.¹⁴⁰
- **Burundi:** In 2010, Burundian women were assessed to be at a greater risk of low voter registration because more women than men lacked ID cards. In response, UNDP in partnership with CSOs and supported by the EMB and the Government of Burundi, launched a large-scale awareness campaign to encourage all Burundians, and especially women, to turn out to obtain their national identification cards as requisite for voting. Owing to increased sensitization and material support from donors, the Government of Burundi successfully delivered almost 1 million voter ID cards, 58 percent of which were for Burundian women.¹⁴¹
- **Kosovo:** After the conflict, the voter list and civil list were created simultaneously. People without identification documents could apply in the same way as in Bosnia and Herzegovina (above). The EMB also set up an investigation department that reviewed unsuccessful applications and so provided a final opportunity to have their status verified. Analysis of the cases showed that “roughly 70 percent of the inquiry cases were for women and most of those cases were for young women.”¹⁴²
- **Sierra Leone:** The deadline for requesting a ‘transfer vote’ (which allows a voter to register in one place and vote in another) was extended to nine days before the 2002 election to assist those who were moving back to their home areas after fleeing violence.¹⁴³ In addition, special registration centres were set up for returning refugees, who had to provide documentation that they had returned under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.¹⁴⁴

9.2. Gender-targeted interventions for voter registration

In addition to ensuring that the usual process of registration does not adversely affect women, EMBs have implemented targeted strategies to facilitate women's participation, namely women-only registration teams, mobile registration, voter outreach to women and gender-specialized training on registration.

Women-only registration teams

In countries where the cultural norm is that women do not mix with men who are not family, registration of women should be conducted by women-only registration teams to maximize their participation. In the EMB survey, only Afghanistan and Mozambique said that they had provided 'women-only registration teams', while only Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan provided 'separate queuing arrangements for men and women at registration stations' or 'separate arrangements to reduce violence and/or facilitate women's registration and safety'.

Some examples of the use of women-only registration teams are:

- **Afghanistan:** Women are registered by teams of women staff. However, the electoral management body was not able to create as many of these teams as they had intended because the low number of literate women that resulted from previous decades of girls not being sent to school.¹⁴⁵
- **Yemen:** There is a separate operational committee to operate and oversee women's participation in elections. Every Registration Centre has a separate room for women and men to register. Women seeking to register will be processed by women staff.¹⁴⁶

Security may also be a concern during voter registration and consideration may be given to the need for women security officers. In the EMB survey, 11 of the 35 countries (31 percent) said that they had "deploy[ed] female observers and security officers" for the registration process: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda.



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Mobile registration

One way to avoid problems of electors, especially women, having insufficient time and resources to go to the voter registration place, is for the EMB to take the registration process to the people. Where mobile registration is made available, it is vital that voters are provided with information on the timetable and location of the registration in their area.

In the EMB survey, 12 of the 35 countries (34 percent) said that they had provided "mobile registration stations in rural areas to combat distance": Benin, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda. These stations are usually provided in regions and constituencies that are geographically vast and remote, where citizens need to travel long distances. In addition to these cases, registration by mail is available in some countries (Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Germany, Ireland, United Kingdom) and, although less frequent, Internet registration is possible in others (Australia, Canada, Denmark).¹⁴⁷

It is important to note that mobile registration and enumeration can be costly, but, in many instances, it may be the only way to reach voters in remote areas.

Providing voters with information to register

Voters need information about how to register, where to register and when the registration centre is open. Women may also need encouragement to register, in particular where cultural norms imply that elections are a male domain, where there is illiteracy or where there is widespread political apathy. In most countries with high illiteracy rates, women constitute the largest proportion of illiterate voters. In some contexts, it will also be necessary to ensure that information is provided in local languages.¹⁵²

In the EMB survey 22 of the 35 countries (63 percent) said that they had provided “awareness-raising with NGOs/national women’s organizations to encourage women to register” Afghanistan, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda.

Some of these outreach activities include:

- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** Awareness campaigns were conducted in 2009 and 2010 to increase the number of women on the electoral roll, including targeted voter registration sensitization campaigns for women in remote provinces.¹⁵³
- **Sudan:** UNDP administered over US\$1.2 million of small grants to 41 CSOs in 2009. The grantees were trained on voter education methodology for the registration process, including outreach to women.
- **South Sudan:** UN Women, in partnership with UNMIS Elections Team Gender Unit, supported training of trainers in all 79 counties of South Sudan around the registration process. “You must register” posters, and a civic education guide, were widely distributed.¹⁵⁴

Gender-specialized training for registration staff

Including gender-sensitive procedures and rules may not be enough to guarantee gender-responsive voter registration. Even when registration teams are trained, specific actions may not be prescribed in their job descriptions or followed through on the ground. Gender

Another approach to bring registration to the people is for the EMB to conduct a full or partial enumeration. An enumeration is done to prepare a voter list for an election through a house-to-house survey.¹⁴⁸

- In **Bangladesh**, registration teams went door to door with a mobile unit to take the photos for the ID cards and collect the necessary information.¹⁴⁹
- In **Mauritius**, a house-to-house enquiry to register electors is carried out each year. All houses are visited and all qualified members of every household, irrespective of gender, are registered.
- In **Nepal**, around 28,000 enumerators were involved in 2011 in the nationwide voter registration programme, drawing mainly on teachers from community schools. A 50-percent target was set for engaging women as enumerators and educators and in other positions in the ECN.¹⁵⁰
- In **Pakistan**, the ECP coordinated with the National Data Registration Authority (NADRA) to encourage women to have Computerized National Identity Cards (CNIC) so that they can be registered as voters. House-to-house enumeration is carried out to add those who have CNIC to the list. CSOs are also encouraged to motivate women to register for the CNIC.¹⁵¹
- **Timor-Leste:** In elections held since 2001, mobile teams for the voter registration and polling day have been available. The mobile teams cover hospitals, prisons, army barracks and other remote locations.



Zimbabwe: Striving for gender-sensitive voter registration

In July 2013, Zimbabwean women from across the political spectrum held a peaceful march and presented a petition demanding a gender-sensitive voter registration exercise.

A survey by several women’s organizations revealed that the ongoing voter registration exercise had failed to recognize women’s specific needs due to the lack of responsiveness to their needs based on their gender roles as mothers and caregivers. It noted that the elderly, women with disabilities and pregnant women were not given special attention, as some registration points were not accessible and some officials refused to accommodate those potential voters’ special needs.

The petition was presented to the Registrar General’s office, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Finance Ministry and Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee.¹⁵⁵

equality considerations may be forgotten or superseded by other demands once teams are on the ground.

Ensuring that the procedures are followed requires that they be incorporated into the instructions, checklists and role descriptions used on a daily basis by registration agents. In **Afghanistan**, the duties of the Card Production Officer clearly specified that it is the duty of

the officer to “ensure the privacy of women being photographed” and remind women that they can choose to have their fingerprint taken instead of a photo.¹⁵⁶ The training for registration workers included activities on ensuring that a husband cannot register on behalf of his wife and that a woman can choose to have a fingerprint instead of a photo.¹⁵⁷



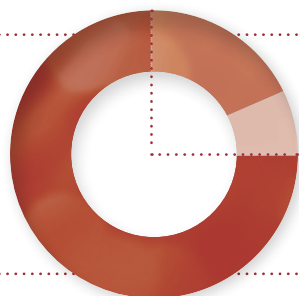
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SUMMING UP:

- As a prerequisite for voting, the registration process requires particular attention from a gender equality perspective.
- Existing registration methods, including the requirement to have identification papers where women have not been issued these by the national authorities, may unintentionally affect women’s participation.
- A gender analysis of the registration process may be helpful to identify the possible changes that can be made to improve rates of women’s registration.
- EMBs can consider different initiatives to target women specifically, such as through women-only registration centres or queues, mobile registration and providing information on the requirement to enrol and gender training for registration staff.

The EMB should ensure that all relevant laws are implemented and that they do not directly or indirectly discriminate against women.





10 Nomination and Registration of Candidates and Political Parties

EMBs are responsible for a wide range of activities, including key tasks of receiving and validating nominations of candidates and political parties, registering voters, conducting polling, counting and tabulation, and announcing results.¹⁵⁸ EMBs may also disburse public funding and oversee campaign expenditure and disclosure, although these tasks can also be the responsibility of different line ministries (such as the interior or justice ministries), a registrar of political parties or another body.¹⁵⁹ The EMB should codify the procedures required for the registration of parties and candidates and ensure that all relevant laws are implemented in a non-partisan way.

Nomination procedures are those that establish the eligibility of candidates to be included on a ballot.¹⁶⁰ In most countries, many candidates register with an endorsement of a political party (or affiliation to a political party or grouping), especially under a list-proportional representation system, while some systems permit independent candidates. Legislation is likely to specify the time frame for dealing with applications for registration and ensure that all parties and candidates receive equal treatment.¹⁶¹ The qualifications for approval as a party or candidate might typically include: age; nationality; financial security; level of support from electors; and lack of conviction for criminal or electoral offences.¹⁶² Nomination also frequently involves the payment of a deposit. The EMB may consider advertising candidacies rules across different media to ensure that women have access to the information and that times and locations for lodging nominations are accessible for all citizens.

While the qualifications will vary from country to country, consideration needs to be given to whether the rules directly or indirectly discriminate against women. For example, if the candidacy deposit is set too high, candidates from poorer sectors may be discouraged or prevented from registering. As women constitute the majority of poor in most countries, this requirement may indirectly disadvantage women candidates. Consideration also needs to be given to other laws that impact on candidate and political party registration, notably laws requiring that a certain proportion of nominated candidates should be women or from other underrepresented groups or laws that mandate a reduction in public campaign finance allocations if a certain proportion of women are not candidates. Sometimes, the determination of whether all requirements have been met may involve the court or the electoral administration may be empowered to make definitive rulings.¹⁶³

10.1. Implementing candidate quota nomination rules

More than 80 countries have legislated temporary special measures (TSMs) in the form of gender quotas, which are aimed at increasing the number of elected women to decision-making bodies, notably parliaments.¹⁶⁴ These laws will require implementation and enforcement during the candidate and party registration period. In many countries, the authority to monitor and enforce compliance with gender quotas rests with the body charged with candidate nominations – often the EMB. They may have the authority to require political parties to reorganize or resubmit their lists of candidates so that they comply with the quota regulation or they may penalize political parties that fail to meet gender requirements including imposing financial penalties and disqualifying them from competing. The responsibilities for EMBs to oversee and enforce quota legislation are outlined in the examples below.

In many countries, political parties that do not comply with quota laws are sanctioned. Sanctions to penalize political parties that fail to comply may include the following:

- Rejection or disqualification of candidate lists that do not meet the candidate nomination quota (Ecuador, Paraguay, Argentina, Senegal)
- Legal sanctions (Rwanda, Kenya (parliaments that do not meet the set quota are considered unconstitutional), Argentina, Nepal, Burundi, Tanzania, Belgium, Costa Rica and Senegal)
- Political drawbacks (in Belgium and Brazil, positions unfilled with women are left open)
- Financial penalties for parties that do not meet the set quota of female candidate (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Croatia, France, Georgia, Ireland, Kenya, Niger, Portugal and the Republic of Korea)
- Censure or sanction by government monitoring mechanisms (Equality or Equal Opportunity Commissions or monitoring bodies)
- Political parties disqualified from competing due to non-compliance with the law (Kyrgyzstan)

Examples of legislation regarding candidate quotas on nomination to be enforced by the EMB are:

Armenia

- Neither gender may exceed 80 percent in the list of every five candidates on the proportional representation list (starting from the second entry) (Article 108, paragraph 2, Electoral Code of Armenia, 2011).
- The Central Electoral Commission shall reject the registration of the electoral list of a political party, an alliance of political parties if the electoral list does not meet the requirements defined by Article 108(2), including the legislated candidate quota (Article 110, Electoral Code of Armenia, 2011).

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Every candidate list shall include male and female candidates who are equally represented. Equal representation is reached when each gender is represented with a minimum of 40 percent of the total number of candidates on the list (Article 4.19 [4]).
- The under-represented gender shall be distributed on the candidates list in the following manner. At least one (1) minority gender amongst the first two (2) candidates, two (2) minority gender candidates amongst the first five (5) candidates, and three (3) minority gender candidates amongst the first eight (8) candidates, etc. (Article 4.19 [4]). If a list does not comply, only the part of the list up to the number fulfilling the requirements in the law shall be accepted by the Central Elections Commission (Article 4.19 [8]).

Ecuador

- According to the Electoral Law 2009 and 2012, Article 99, in the candidate lists, for the elections through the system of proportional representation, the names of men and women candidates will be presented alternatively until the end of the list.
- The candidate lists will be rejected by the Electoral Commission if they do not comply with the gender parity provisions of the Constitution and the Electoral Law (Electoral Law 2009/2012, Article 105).

Guyana

- On each political party list, one third of the candidates must be women (Representation of the People Act, Section 11B).
- If the list does not comply with the quota, the Commission shall notify this and allow the party to rectify it. Only when deemed correct by the Commission, can the list be approved (Representation of the People Act, Sections 14 & 17).

Kyrgyzstan

- As amended in 2011, the Electoral Law specifies a 30-percent quota for either sex on electoral lists (Code on Elections, Article 60 [3]).
- Lists that fail to meet the quota requirement will be rejected by the Electoral Commission (Code on Elections 2011, Article 61 [3]). No more than three positions can separate men and women (Code on Elections 2011, Article 60 [3]).

Mongolia

- In 2011, a legislated candidate quota was introduced into Mongolia's electoral legislation, requiring that at least 20 percent of candidates on lists presented by political parties for both types of contests

(majority and proportional) shall be women (Article 27.1, Election of the Parliament (State Great Hural), 15 December 2011).

- The General Election Commission or district committee shall decline to register the list of candidates if it violates provisions under the Article 27, including the requirement on the legislated candidate quotas.

Paraguay

- Parties are required to have internal party mechanisms to ensure the participation of no less than 20 percent women in elective offices (Electoral Code, Article 32 [r] [1]). Women must be placed on at least every fifth place on candidate lists (Electoral Code, Article 32 [r] [2]).
- Party lists that do not meet the quota will not be approved by the Electoral Commission (Electoral Code, Article 32 [r] [3]).

Source: IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, *Global Database of Quotas for Women*, www.quotaproject.org



EMBs can also work in different ways to encourage compliance with the quota provisions, rather than just relying on enforcement mechanisms:

- In **Afghanistan** ahead of the 2014 elections, the IEC implemented several measures to promote nomination of women candidates. In response to the low registration rate of women, the IEC sought to address the financial barriers female candidates faced. Decisions included the reimbursement of the deposits paid by Provincial Council female candidates and support to publish posters (for male and female provincial candidates). These measures helped to increase the number of women candidates and to enable the quota requirement to be met.¹⁶⁵ During the 2009 Provincial Council and 2010 lower house elections, a few provinces did not have enough female candidates to fill the allocated seats. With only three to four days left for the closing date of candidate nomination, the IEC conducted a series of discussions with women councils and NGOs working for women and succeeded in identifying additional female candidates in time for the nomination deadline.
- In **Tunisia** in 2011, the EMB worked out agreements to bring transgressing parties into compliance with the law.¹⁶⁶



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Applying quotas on nominations in Latin America

The EMB has a crucial function to impartially apply the electoral law, but can sometimes also play a quasi-legislative role in promulgating regulations and, in some cases, a quasi-judicial role in passing judgment on electoral complaints.¹⁶⁷ In Latin American in particular, electoral tribunals exist in many countries, which are the highest authorities on electoral matters and usually a specialized organ of the federal judicial branch.¹⁶⁸ The electoral tribunal has the responsibility to ensure that all acts and rulings pronounced by the electoral authorities meet the constitution and the laws derived from it.¹⁶⁹

An interesting trend has emerged in Latin America with electoral tribunals robustly interpreting electoral quota legislation to ensure political parties' compliance. In one recent comparative study of decisions made by electoral tribunals,¹⁷⁰ presidents of the electoral tribunals of Argentina and Costa Rica remarked that the prevalence of quota legislation in this region had “reconceptualized the role of the State” in ensuring the fundamental rights of all citizens – men and women – to participate equally in the political sphere.¹⁷¹ They argued that the State is now understood to have a more active role in working to eliminate barriers to women's political rights on the understanding that merely adopting electoral gender quotas equates only to a “partial compliance” with CEDAW. In this context, the electoral tribunals have become the guardians of ensuring compliance with the quota laws. The following decisions illustrate the enforcement of quota laws in Latin America:

- In **Argentina**, the *Cámara Nacional Electoral* found in its decision 1864/95, 21 April 1995, that, even where the majority of a party's membership has voted against the implementation of the quota, that vote cannot justify the

party's non-compliance with the quota legislation. The CNE further ruled that the quota needed to be applied to 'real' – that is, 'winnable' – positions on the party's electoral list, a decision that was reiterated in subsequent decisions (1866-95, 2951-01, 3507-05).¹⁷²

- In **Costa Rica**, while the quota rule of 40 percent was implemented in the 1998 elections, the electoral authorities did not reject lists that did not meet the quota requirement. The *Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones* ruled in 1999 that the quota law should be interpreted in the following way: lists should comprise a minimum of 40 percent of either sex and that women should have 40 percent of electable seats, interpreted as the number of seats the party received in the district in the previous election.¹⁷³
- In **Mexico**, the *Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación* voted to reject the candidate lists of five different parties and two coalitions competing for seats in the 2012 elections if they did not correct their lists to meet the 40-percent quota. In 2011, before the Tribunal's decision, women represented 28 percent of the candidates on the majority electoral list and 40.2 percent of the candidates on the proportional representation list. Following the TEPJF's decision in 2012, those percentages rose to 41.5 percent and 49.5 percent, respectively.¹⁷⁴
- In **Peru**, the *Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* ruled (decision 721-2010-JNE, 26 July 2010) that the percentage of women on a party's electoral list could be rounded up to the next integer. For example, if a party presents a list with 29.6 percent of women, it would be taken as 30 percent. The Tribunal also ruled (670-2010-JNE, 23 July 2010) that a party list will still be declared invalid if certain candidates decide to withdraw their candidacies even after the list is approved.¹⁷⁵

10.2. Applying campaign finance rules

In the past five years, political finance reforms have been adopted in 27 countries that explicitly aim to address gender inequality through the system of public funding.¹⁷⁶ These reforms mainly target the candidacies of women by political parties, where public funding is used as an incentive or penalty for compliance or non-compliance with legislated electoral quota laws; a portion of funds is either allocated or reduced in line with the quota law. Public funding provides parties with financial incentives to meet the quota target or penalizes them if they fail to meet the agreed proportion of women candidates or elected representatives.¹⁷⁷

Where EMBs have responsibility for overseeing campaign finance, they will also be responsible for implementing these laws. In **Albania's** 2013 election, each candidate list had to include at least one male and one female in the top three positions and, in total, the list should have comprised at least 30 percent of each gender. To meet the quota, many parties included women at the bottom of the lists in unwinnable positions. As the provision that would have denied registration to non-compliant lists was repealed in 2012, the EMB issued fines instead to the three largest parliamentary parties for failing to meet the gender quota in some districts: the Socialist Party was fined in six electoral zones, the Socialist Movement for Integration was fined in four electoral zones, and the Democratic Party was fined in 4 zones, with a total fine of 14.000.000 ALL. These penalties are taken from the budget which will be allocated to political parties.¹⁷⁸

In **Georgia**, according to the political party law, political parties that have at least 20 percent of either sex on candidate lists will receive an additional 10 percent of public funding. In the 2012 election, however, the financial incentive did not have the intended impact. While several parties complied with the law and received additional funding, the two parties that won seats in parliament did not. The CEC proposed amendments to

the law regulating the financial incentives for political parties (Organic Law of Georgia on Political Unions of Citizens) in July 2013 that parties receive a 30-percent supplement from the state budget (up from 10 percent) if the nominated party list includes at least 30 percent of each gender (up from 20 percent) for each group of 10 candidates.¹⁷⁹

Examples of legislation regarding disbursement of public funding and proportion of women candidates

Albania

- For each electoral zone, at least 30 percent of the multi-name list and/or one of the first three names on the multi-name list must be from each gender (Article 67, paragraph 6, Law no. 10 012, 2008 amended by the law no. 74/2012).
- Failure to comply is punishable with a fine of ALL 1 million (EUR 7,120) in the case of elections to the Assembly and ALL 50,000 (EUR 346) for elections for local government bodies for each electoral zone.

Burkina Faso

- Lists of candidates must include at least 30 percent of either sex (Law on Quotas, Article 3).
- If a party reaches or exceeds the 30 percent quota, it will receive additional funding (Law on Quotas, Article 5 & 6).
- If a political party fails to meet the quota provision, its public funding for election campaigns will be cut by 50 percent. (Law on Quotas, Article 5 & 6).

Ireland

- According to the Electoral Act 1997, section 17, as amended by the Electoral (Political Funding) Act 2012, section 42, the political parties, after the

implementation of the law in national elections, will lose 50 percent of their state funding, unless at least 30 percent of their candidates are women and at least 30 percent are men. After a period of seven years, the political parties should have a 40-percent gender quota in their candidate lists in order to receive full state funding.

Panama

- The Electoral Law 54 of 2012 states that 50 percent of the public financing destined to political parties must be allocated for the training of party members and, from this, 10 percent must be specifically used for the training of women.

Portugal

- Candidate lists, for the elections to the national parliament, European Parliament and local governments, shall be composed in a way such as to promote a minimum representation of 33 percent of each sex (Decree 72, 2006).
- If a list does not comply with the quota law, this will be made public and there will be financial sanctions in relation to the level of inequality on lists (Decree 72, Article 7).

Source: International IDEA, Political Finance Database, <http://www.idea.int/political-finance> and IDEA, IPU and Stockholm University, *Global Database of Quotas for Women*, www.quotaproject.org



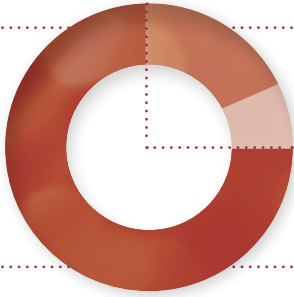
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SUMMING UP:

- EMBs' responsibilities include receiving and validating nominations of candidates and political parties and election campaign finance.
- The qualifications for approval as a party or candidate are prescribed in laws and regulations. While the qualifications will vary from country to country, consideration needs to be given to whether they are directly or indirectly discriminatory against women.
- Temporary special measures (TSMs) in the form of gender quotas are legislated in over 80 countries, which EMBs and other bodies implement and enforce. EMBs may review regulations to ensure that political parties comply with the quota regulation or they may penalize political parties that fail to meet gender requirements including imposing financial penalties and disqualifying them from competing.
- Where EMBs have responsibility for overseeing campaign finance, they will also be responsible for implementing laws in some countries that provide parties with financial incentives to meet the quota target or penalize them if they fail to meet the agreed proportion of women candidates or elected representatives.

EMBs are required to take into account the specific challenges that women may confront in the voting process and to take specific measures to protect against them.

.....”



11 The Voting Process

In accordance with international treaties and commitments by states, all citizens have the right to vote and be elected in genuine and periodic elections where secrecy of the vote is guaranteed.¹⁸⁰ As the bodies usually responsible for organizing elections and providing voting arrangements, EMBs aim to ensure that the conduct of elections is in line with the law and international commitments.

In this respect, EMBs are required to take into account the specific challenges that women may confront in this voting process and to take specific measures to protect against them. There are many potential issues that can disadvantage women in the voting process. Women may be deterred from casting their vote because of the cultural norms, they may not be encouraged to vote according to their own preferences, they may lack

the necessary information and confidence to vote or the voting centre may be inaccessible. To be credible, all registered voters need to have the opportunity to cast their vote in secret, free from intimidation, and to have that vote counted as part of the official electoral result. In most countries, voting takes place on one day, making the conduct of an election the biggest logistical event conducted in peacetime. Most electors

Some of challenges that can hinder the participation of women voters include:

- Biased cultural norms that prescribe that women should not be involved in politics or that politics is the domain of men
- Traditions of family or enforced proxy voting that deprive women of a free choice
- Cultural or religious norms that prohibit women from interacting with men who are not relatives, including voting centre staff and other voters
- Problems in reaching the voting centre due the distance, difficulty of the journey, lack of time away from home or work and caring responsibilities, which may also affect men
- Concerns about the safety of the journey to the voting centre and security at the voting centre
- Difficulties reaching the voting centre when the voter does not currently live in the district where they need to cast their vote. Voters may be away from their 'home district' due to movement for work or study or because they are displaced due to war or natural disaster, which may also affect men.
- Illiteracy levels that are still disproportionately high amongst women and particularly amongst women who have migrated to a different language area and are therefore less likely to learn the new language



vote at polling stations, located in voting centres, which should offer electors space to cast their vote in a private and in secret.

A gender assessment of the polling processes may consider these and other issues. In order to ensure an inclusive election, barriers should be considered and steps taken to remove them, particularly in the area of ensuring women can cast their vote in secret. Possible actions relate to the logistics of the voting centre and the training and conduct of voting centre staff.

11.1. Ensuring women's right to a secret ballot

International commitments stipulate that all voters have the right to vote in secret. The right to vote in secret is preserved for all citizens regardless of sex.¹⁸¹ But, where there is a tradition of men casting votes 'on behalf of' the family, then strong local law is needed to ensure that the EMB can act to protect women's right to vote in secret. This could include targeted measures to protect against family voting and/or other violations of voter secrecy and free choice. A strong legislative and regulatory framework, including meaningful penalties for those who break the law, and a willingness of the police and judiciary to prosecute make it easier for the EMB and other bodies to enforce the law.

Directives from the EMB stating the right of all women to vote in secret may be an important first step in establishing EMB leadership in this area. The EMB would

need to follow up its public pledges with actions and take its commitment seriously.

Proxy voting

In some countries, provision is made for male and female voters who cannot vote on the day of the election to cast an early vote and for voters who are out of the country to cast a vote abroad. In some places, these voters nominate another registered voter to be their proxy and to cast their vote on their behalf. Such measures are taken to allow as many people as possible to cast their vote in the election and are known as 'proxy voting'. Proxy voting is legal in many countries and is viewed as a tool to legitimately protect the franchise of voters with limited mobility.¹⁸²

Family voting and/or enforced proxy voting

A different phenomenon is that of 'family voting' and/or enforced proxy voting, which is often confused with legal proxy voting. Broadly, family voting refers to the situation in which the heads of family (often extended family and often male heads of family) influence other family members in how they cast a vote. It is commonly practised in jurisdictions that have a tradition of an extended and/or customary family structures that allow the dominant member of the family to take important decisions or carry out important activities affecting the family. Family voting can be a serious violation, especially when it is malicious, i.e., when it is carried out with the intent of influencing or removing the freedom of choice of a voter.¹⁸³ In these cases, family voting violates the central principle of voter secrecy.

Family voting often stops women from casting a vote of their own choice. In many situations, while the woman physically casts her own vote, she is under a strong cultural expectation to obey her husband or father and vote for the candidate or party that she has been instructed to vote for. The influence may extend to accompanying the female family members to the voting centre in order to oversee the casting of the vote (group voting) or the male family member obtaining the ballot paper on behalf of the woman (enforced proxy voting).¹⁸⁴

Family or tribal or village voting can also derive from a situation in which the leaders of the group perceive that the threat or benefits of a particular candidate



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winning are such that they instruct all of ‘their’ people to vote for the benefit of the group. These benefits may be bribes promised by a candidate or they may relate to wanting a candidate who will ‘look after the interests’ of the group. It may also be enforced through coercion and intimidation, including threatening women with divorce if they do not follow the voting instructions of their family, tribe or clan.¹⁸⁵ While this infringes the rights of the whole village or tribe to form their own electoral choices, it has a disproportionate impact on women who are often excluded from decisions about leadership.

Another situation in which family voting arises is in cultures where there is a belief that a man would be shamed if the women in his family voted for a candidate that he did not approve of. In some cases, women may feel that they need family permission to register and to cast a vote and accept direction on how to vote. It may also be the case that women are informed that to act against such instructions would be a sin or grounds for corporal punishment, divorce, social exclusion and possible loss of their rights as a parent.¹⁸⁶

Mitigating family voting

When family voting is a cultural norm, the electoral management body may need to consider if polling staff recruited from the local area could also be under cultural pressure to allow family voting or could be concerned as to adverse consequences for the women if they do not allow the family to control their vote.¹⁸⁷ Following are actions that may be implemented in polling day management. These actions address a number of different issues, some of which may be more applicable in a particular country than others, depending upon the local context.

- Tightening the electoral code before the election or enacting clearly defined operational instructions to protect the secrecy of the vote, including prescribing specific measures for orderly operation of polling station, providing sufficient space and isolation booths in polling stations, only allowing one voter at a time in isolation booths and issuing ballot papers one at a time.
- Prioritizing training of poll workers to comply with secrecy provisions.
- Conducting targeted public outreach to educate voters on their right to secrecy, especially among vulnerable populations such as women and illiterate voters.
- Promoting confidence and transparency by ensuring that, once a vote is cast, the EMB will protect voters’ secrecy and their choice will never be revealed.

The Macedonian State Election Commission has developed a strategy and taken measures to mitigate the practice of family voting. As part of a programme aimed at preventing family voting, the State Election Committee issued a directive to all staff that prevention of family and proxy voting was important.¹⁸⁸ It also published a strategy against family and proxy voting with the aim of ensuring a consistent framework for all government and donor projects created to address the problem. The framework acknowledges that the issue must be dealt with using continuous activities throughout the electoral cycle.¹⁸⁹

11.2 Gender equality considerations with polling arrangements

Polling locations

There are several factors in the location of the voting centre that may have an impact on women who want to vote. The distance that people need to travel, the availability of public transport near the voting centre and the safety of the local area are important considerations. Women are more likely to vote if there is a voting centre near the places that they frequent, such as the market, schools or clinics. In tribe- or clan-based areas or where there has been ethnic, religious or gender-based violence, voters may not feel comfortable if they have to go into areas controlled by others.

The actual building used as a polling station can also have an impact. Consideration may be given to whether there are stairs, physical obstacles to access the station or security concerns and to the type of building, such as a school or religious building. When choosing the location of the voting centre, it is important to think about the comfort of those in the queue and that there are female toilets available. Polling stations should also be spacious enough that women voters need not face

physical contact with men in certain countries because of cramped conditions within or around a polling centre. Security is a primary concern.

These factors may be incorporated into the criteria or checklist used when selecting voting centres and when deciding how many voting centres will be needed. For example, in Nepal, voting centres were on the ground floor of buildings for easy access.¹⁹⁰ In Uzbekistan, special rooms for mothers and children were provided at all voting centres, as well as first aid posts.¹⁹¹ In Jordan, voters were allowed to use any voting centre within their district. This flexibility was useful for many women voters who experience restricted freedom of movement.¹⁹² In Afghanistan, given the cultural context, separate voting stations staffed with female officers were established for female voters.¹⁹³

Mobile polling stations

In some countries, taking the polling station to the voters with mobile units is used in rural areas and to assist people who cannot travel far due to disability, illness or age. Domestic responsibilities, like caring for children and the elderly, together with prohibitive transport costs from remote places to the polling station, can prevent women from voting.¹⁹⁴ Mobile polling stations can increase the voter turnout of women, as well as of men, in remote areas.

Provision for mobile polling stations is usually included within the law or regulation for polling day and procedures for implementation should be clearly articulated. Special equipment will be needed and staff trained and the location of the mobile stations advertised. The secrecy of the ballot needs to be maintained during any mobile voting and steps taken to ensure that voters do not vote again at another voting centre. If a mobile polling station visits an extended family, village or tribal area, then the polling staff should ensure that each person is casting his or her own vote and not coming under family pressure on how to cast that vote.

In the EMB survey, six of the 35 countries (17 percent) said that they had provided “mobile voting centres in rural areas”: Canada, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Namibia and South Africa. Canada provides mobile or flexible voting options for voters in special conditions.

While these are not specifically targeted at women, they benefit broader participation of women in particular. Specifically, Elections Canada makes mobile stations available to all voters in need. This, however, is not specifically aimed at women. Women temporarily residing in women’s shelters may register to vote by special ballot without disclosing the address of the shelter.¹⁹⁵

Given the cost of mobile polling, in some cases, the EMB will need to consider whether using mobile polling stations will address the challenges that women may face in accessing the polling station, particularly in rural or remote areas. Measures may need to be taken to provide voters with the privacy to make their own choice and cast a secret vote. The same considerations apply to other forms of remote voting – such as voting by post or by Internet – that are used in some countries.

Regulations for displaced peoples

It is estimated that three quarters of displaced people in conflict situations are women. After a natural disaster, at least half of the displaced people are likely to be women.¹⁹⁶ Thus, the issue of refugees and internally displaced peoples are also important gender issues. The United Nations ‘Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’ include the right of the internally displaced to vote and to have access to the means necessary to exercise this right. Provisions for absentee voting are often central to ensuring that internally displaced people can vote, either for the area where they normally live or where they are currently living. For some large refugee populations, facilitating the provision of out-of-country voting can be a key element of a peace process and a condition of any political resolution. Clear information should be provided in appropriate languages. Security of the voting centre and its location related to sensitive conflict areas is also important in encouraging internally displaced people to vote.

11.3. Gender-targeted measures to facilitate women’s polling

CEDAW encourages the use of temporary special measures until such a time that women achieve *de facto* equality. In some countries, this could mean that the provision of separate voting centres and facilities for

Some examples of flexibility designed to ensure that displaced people can vote are:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** To assist internally displaced peoples in the first post-conflict election, voters were not required to cast their ballot at a particular voting centre and a countrywide final voter register was distributed to all voting centres.¹⁹⁷
- **Kosovo:** In the first post-conflict election, internally displaced peoples could choose to cast their vote in the municipality where they currently lived or in their original municipality.¹⁹⁸
- **Sierra Leone:** A special procedure was established for ‘transfer voting’, which allowed refugees and internally displaced peoples to register in one location and vote in another to accommodate the timing of the election relative to their movement from camps to resettlement.¹⁹⁹

voting is required to ensure full equality of access to a secret vote for the entire electorate. In such cases, the provision of such separate facilities would not be discriminatory, but would be considered enabling for equal suffrage.

Women-only voting centres or rooms may be useful, depending on the context. In some countries where family or enforced proxy voting is a problem, the use of female voting rooms may inhibit men from casting ballots on behalf of a woman. In cultures where women do not interact with men who are not relatives, having a separate space with women staff for all components of the voting process increases access for women voters. When women wear a veil and/or gloves and their face is checked and/or fingerprints are inked as part of the identification process on voting day, having female staff and a room where there are only women present increases the accessibility of polling.

Decisions about using women-only voting centres or rooms need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of such a choice. Possible disadvantages may include: the added cost and complication involved; whether segregated stations are effective; and whether women-only polling stations are subject to distinct types of fraud and/or violence. Some research has suggested they may create more vulnerability for women in some countries. In some contexts, women-only polling stations are unlikely to open at all on election day, thereby disenfranchising all women registered to vote at these locations, and so robust protection measures may be needed. Such policies should be carefully considered for each context before being introduced. If the decision to use separate polling stations is made, it should be taken early in the planning stage to allow time to find enough suitable locations, female staff and related budgets. A change to the law may be needed to allow for separate male and female voting places.

In the EMB survey, five of the 35 countries (14 percent) said that they had provided “women-only polling teams and stations”: Afghanistan, Egypt, Lebanon, Mozambique and Pakistan.



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Some examples of the provision of women only polling facilities include:

- **Bahrain:** There is a separate area in each voting centre for women.²⁰⁰
- **Chile:** Uses separate voting places for men and women. In the few mixed voting centres, men and women place their ballot papers into separate boxes.²⁰¹
- **Egypt:** Uses separate voting centres in some areas. Separate queues may also be used at mixed centres.²⁰²
- **Kuwait:** Has segregated voting centres for men and women.²⁰³
- **Pakistan:** Uses either separate voting centres or separate voting rooms in combined voting centres. Voting centres designated for women are staffed by female personnel. Female polling security is also made available.²⁰⁴
- **Lebanon, Yemen and Jordan:** Use separate voting stations.²⁰⁵
- **Papua New Guinea:** Used separate booths to ensure the safety of women voters in the Highland areas during the 2012 election, after piloting it in a by-election.²⁰⁶
- **Uzbekistan:** Special rooms for mothers and children and first aid posts are provided at all polling stations.

Women-only queues

In some places, voting centres may be mixed, but women and men are asked to stand in separate queues as they wait to vote. The primary objective of separate queues is to respond to security or cultural norms and to protect women from contact with men as prohibited by cultural or religious standards. This separation may allow women additional time to consider their own choice in the vote without pressure. Separate queues may be legally mandated within the electoral law, adopted systematically by the central electoral management body or implemented in an ad hoc manner at the discretion of the polling station president.

In the EMB survey, eight of the 35 countries (23 per cent) provided “separate queuing arrangements for men and women at voting centres”: Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malawi, Pakistan and Tunisia. Another place where women queue separately is Sierra Leone, where, in many locations, men and women formed separate voting lines outside the voting centre.²⁰⁷

Priority queues

Often, voters need to queue for some time before they can receive their ballot papers and cast their vote. Some people will find the long queue to be a hardship, e.g., pregnant women, parents with young children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Anything that reduces the length of time that voters spend in the queue will make it easier for everyone to take part in the election. However, for voters with particular needs, receiving priority in the queue can be a crucial determinant for whether they are able to cast their vote. The training and checklist for the staff that monitor the queue need to include instructions about who is given priority and how it is handled. Some examples of priority in the queue are:

- **Nepal:** Pregnant women and those with babies (amongst others) are given priority in the queue.²⁰⁸
- **Cameroon:** Pregnant women are given preferential treatment in the queues.²⁰⁹
- **Uganda:** Mothers and elderly people are given preference at voting centres.²¹⁰

- **Timor-Leste:** In some voting centres, there is a priority queue for nursing mothers and women with babies.²¹¹
- **Tanzania:** Pregnant women, nursing mothers, women with disabilities and elderly women have the right to preference and support from electoral administrators.²¹²

Illiterate voters

In countries with high illiteracy rates, women are likely to make up the majority of those who cannot read. All initiatives that promote electoral access for illiterate citizens will have a positive impact on women's participation. This may include the instructions that are provided to voters, voter education materials, signposts in the voting centre and the use of logos and/or photos as well as names on the ballot paper. Planning for polling station signage and voting instructions should consider disparate literacy levels. Details of the layout, design and content of the ballot paper are often specified in the law, including how to determine which logo to use for each party or candidate or whether to use photographs. In all countries, but especially in contexts with low literacy (which primarily affects women), there may be a need for clear provisions on what to do in case a voter mistakenly spoils their ballot before casting it in the ballot box and asks for a replacement or 'second chance'.

Some examples of actions taken to make voting easier for those who cannot read are:

- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** Photographs and symbols were used on the ballot papers in 2006. Because of a large number of candidates in the legislative elections, candidates were informed ahead of election day of their number and the page of the ballot where their name would appear, so they could advise their supporters. Because of high levels of illiteracy, the electoral law allowed for some flexibility in how the ballot could be marked (including marking an "x", "+", "✓", etc.) so long as the ballot demonstrated a clear choice and did not violate the secrecy of the vote or otherwise invalidate the ballot paper.
- **Sierra Leone:** Ballots contained the political party logos to make the process accessible to the approximately 80 percent of voters with limited literacy.²¹³

Specialized training and tools for polling staff

Rules, procedures and training may need to be implemented for all staff, especially temporary staff or polling station staff who have the most contact with the population. While voting centre staff may be trained to be gender-sensitive, if actions are not included in their role descriptions or checklist, they may be forgotten in the business of election day. To make sure that the procedures are followed, they may need to be incorporated into the instructions and checklists and role descriptions. For example, in Nepal, the voting centre monitoring checklist for the polling officers included the monitoring of assistance provided to pregnant women (amongst others).²¹⁴

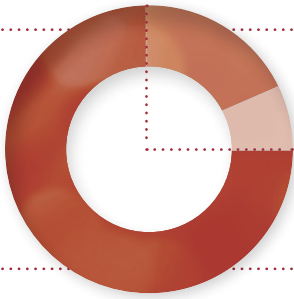


SUMMING UP:

- Many women around the world still face cultural and logistical obstacles in casting their ballots, despite their right to exercise their vote.
- EMBs would do well to ensure that, wherever possible, electoral laws and regulations, as well as their own internal processes, do not disenfranchise or disadvantage women.
- EMBs may consider implementing different actions to combat any practices or obstacles that impede voting, such as setting up polling stations in a way that enables all citizens to cast their votes independently and in secret, ensuring that voting centres are in locations that women can access and establishing, where necessary, women-only polling centres or queues.

Violence against women in elections is an increasingly apparent trend that may require a concerted response from EMBs, often in partnership with other stakeholders including the security sector, political parties and CSOs.

.....”



12 Ensuring Safety in the Electoral Process

EMBs can play a role in preventing and reducing political violence against women in the electoral process. Violence against women in elections (VAWE) can be defined as any random or conspiratorial act to discourage, suppress or prevent women from exercising their electoral rights as voters, candidates, party supporters, election workers, observers, journalists or public officials.²¹⁵

Violence against women may be employed to influence the process or outcome of elections, such as preventing women from winning competitive races for political office or discourage women from voting or otherwise participating in the electoral cycle. Such acts can be psychological, physical, sexual and/or economic in nature and include loss of livelihood, intimidation, physical or sexual assault, residential displacement and murder.²¹⁶ Acts of VAWE may take place in the context of family, community or state, in public or private sphere and may be more pronounced in conflict or crisis contexts. In any of these contexts, they become acts of political violence when they negatively impact women's political participation in an electoral process or in their access to electoral justice.²¹⁷

12.1. Assessing and monitoring VAWE

In order to determine if and how an EMB may mitigate VAWE, a mapping or assessment may be needed. An EMB may undertake a mapping or assessment to identify hotspot areas and design appropriate mitigation and monitoring mechanisms. VAWE considerations can also be mainstreamed into general electoral security assessments and/or VAWE-specific assessment may be conducted. International and local organizations

and CSOs may also be involved in electoral security assessments and EMBs may consider using these as appropriate.

An innovative approach to identifying VAWE was undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI), which conducts a Vulnerability Mapping (VM) in order to identify individuals and areas at risk. It is intended to reveal “the susceptibility of any voter or section of voters, whether or not living in a geographically identifiable area, to being wrongfully prevented from or influenced upon in relation to the exercise of [his/her] right to vote in a free and fair manner, through intimidation or use of undue influence or force of any kind on [him/her].” The mapping is intended to capture and analyse patterns of the following datasets:

- List of vulnerable houses/families
- List of persons to be tracked/prevented from intimidating/wrongly influencing voters
- Summary of vulnerability
- List of persons causing vulnerability
- Identification of vulnerability and action thereon
- Report on persons causing vulnerability

The source document survey is then certified by the Sector Officer or Sector Magistrate and signed by the District Election Officer.²¹⁸ By identifying vulnerable individuals, the survey can obtain information on women at risk in the elections and provide the EMB necessary information to protect them.

Beyond the initial assessment, EMBs may also initiate ongoing monitoring and reporting on VAWE through their regional representation. Regional and local EMB offices could be called on to identify and report on VAWE trends in their areas so that appropriate measures can be adopted. In Afghanistan, a roundtable discussion organized by the EMB Gender Unit recommended that the EMB create a mechanism to collect and collate details of threats to women candidates and voters.²¹⁹

EMBs may also draw upon collaborative partnerships with international or non-governmental organizations to enhance risk assessments. For example, International IDEA has collaborated with several EMBs, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nepal, Nigeria and Kenya, on an Electoral Risk Management Tool. The EMBs have adopted the Tool as part of their strategies for preventing electoral violence. The ERM Tool aims to build the capacity to understand, analyse, prevent and mitigate outbreaks of election-related violence, enabling the EMB and other bodies to respond as needed.²²⁰ Such tools should ensure the inclusion of a gender equality

perspective and consider the different types of violence that women and men may face during elections.

Partnership may also include working with long-term international and/or domestic electoral observation missions to collect data on VAWE in order to respond to it. In recent years, many organizations have been increasingly integrating gender equality considerations into their observation by disaggregating data, increasing the use of long-term observers who collect data on the political environment, employing dedicated gender advisors as part of their observation core teams and developing specific guidelines for monitoring women's political participation in elections. By actively coordinating with these groups and requesting feedback on VAWE observations, EMBs can draw on the resources invested by these researchers to improve on their performance during the course of an electoral cycle.

There is potential for more coordination in this area as monitoring tools increase in use and quality. Many technology-based solutions are being introduced around the world, such as HarassMap (Egypt) and WomenUnderSeige (Syria), which use public media and crowd-sourced data to record incidents of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) can also be vehicles of VAWE.²²² Therefore, it is important to adapt solutions that can respond to virtual threats and attacks against women in politics (such as acts of intimidation and defamation perpetrated via social media).

Collaborative monitoring mechanism: Women's Situation Room

The Women's Situation Room (WSR) is a monitoring process that mobilizes women and youth to ensure peaceful and democratic electoral processes. WSRs are a tool that aims to mitigate violence in elections through the engagement of all electoral stakeholders in peace advocacy, intervention, mediation, coordination, political analysis, observation and documentation. Liberian women peace leaders introduced the concept during the 2011 Liberian presidential and legislative elections. The scheme was replicated in the 2012 Senegalese elections, in Sierra Leone in preparation for the November 2012 presidential, parliamentary and local elections and was also in the 2013 Kenyan elections. The theme of the WSR "Peace is in our Hands" seeks to promote a collective process of consensus-building among the political stakeholders and state entities. The main strategies applied by the WSR involve mobilizing women and young people to ensure peaceful elections through capacity-building, training of young people and election observers, robust media campaigns and advocacy and lobbying.²²¹



12.2. Prevention and mitigation measures by the EMB

VAVE impacts women in many roles and the responses of EMBs must adapt diverse responses accordingly. EMBs may need to identify gender-specific forms and threats across all areas of electoral participation and may consider proactive steps to address them. This includes in the areas of voter registration, candidate registration, campaigning and election day and polling station practices. It also includes specific actions by the EMB during the post-election phase as well as explicit leadership by the EMB in this area.²²³ One study on violence against women in South Asia identified different forms of violence and intimidation spanning the electoral cycle, such as tactics to discredit women as candidates, the use of derogatory language and pictures against women candidates in local elections to ridicule them in the general public, procedural errors on voter lists, harassment at polling stations and looting of ballot boxes.²²⁴

Voter Registration

At the outset of an electoral process, during the establishment or update of the voter register, the EMB may assess VAVE risks that can inhibit women voters from registering. For example, in some contexts where individuals feel that the public act of voter registration puts them at personal risk because of the information required, some countries permit ‘anonymous’ voter registration (also known as ‘confidential’ or ‘silent’ registration). This is most commonly used for cases of domestic violence. Silent registration refers to “the practice of placing certain individuals on the voters list in such a way that their names or other characteristics (e.g., addresses) do not appear in any published or circulated version of the voters list”²²⁵ (see section 9). The EMB may also work to ensure that registration centres are secure and that women feel safe going to register in places that may be far from where they live.

Candidate Registration

Likewise, candidate nomination and registration procedures may be assessed for any potential threats of VAVE. In some countries where women’s holding of public office is still not the ‘norm’, women aspirants

and candidates may face potential risks from within their party structure or from the outside public. Women might be not aware of the timeframe for presenting a candidacy or the timeframes might be short (women with fewer financial resources, less mobility and restrictions on travel may be challenged or face risks where registration timeframes are very short). Similarly, the administrative requirements for a candidate dossier and the geographic placement/office hours of the receiving office can be a source of conflict and security concerns for women aspiring to office. For example, a woman aspirant in a conservative society may face intimidation from her family or her community when confronted with the requirements to quickly raise a significant candidate fee or if travel to present her candidacy at a distant EMB office is needed (if women are unable to travel alone).²²⁶ EMBs can help to eliminate such barriers.

EMBs may also provide incentives to parties that commit to women’s empowerment and take a strong position against VAVE and sanction violators. For example, in **Liberia**, the National Election Commission worked with political parties on a code of conduct. One of the aims was to avoid “the marginalisation of women through violence, intimidation and fraud”. Parties agreed to “the principle of non-discrimination, not to use abusive language, and not to agitate on the basis of sex and gender”.²²⁷

Campaign Period

In some countries, an estimated three quarters of acts of VAVE are directed against women candidates or political party supporters during political campaigning before elections.²²⁸ Responses to address violence against women active in politics may include targeting flashpoints for violence within the internal structure of political parties. In addition to those actions to mitigate electoral violence in general, EMBs may consider different targeted actions to reduce the occurrence of VAVE during the campaign period. For example, EMBs may consider introducing a zero-tolerance policy towards perpetrators of VAVE, including taking strong and prompt action against any party or individual that seeks to forcibly prevent a woman from contesting an election on the basis of her sex. Actions may include

taking firm responses to incidents of violence and establishing special units with parties to promote women's participation and review for VAWE and the documentation of acts of VAWE associated with parties.

EMBs are often best placed to recognize violations and may thus refer cases to appropriate security and justice authorities and/or provide evidence in cases. In non-criminal instances where the EMB has an enforcement capacity, they may impose direct sanctions. These may reflect sanctions imposed in cases of non-respect of gender quotas, such as financial penalties, censure and written/verbal sanction,²²⁹ incomplete nomination documentation or incomplete number of endorsements or signatures required to register.

EMBs may also introduce and enforce campaign finance rules that promote even access to politics and de-politicize contentious aspects of money in politics. Studies of campaign finance have revealed that “women potentially face greater psychological barriers than men in asking for money for their personal use”²³⁰ and they may also face resistance or threats at home in seeking funding for their political campaigns. These are exacerbated by tight fundraising deadlines. Within parties, competition for limited funding may also create friction and intimidation. EMBs may consider addressing these issues in a number of ways, including recommending the establishment of nomination fees at accessible rates and/or offering incentives such as fee waivers or reductions for women candidates. EMBs can also work with the media to promote transparency and gender-sensitivity in the electoral process during the lead-up to elections, especially in the coverage of women candidates.

A number of international organizations are working with media to promote gender-sensitive reporting. For example, in Jordan in 2013, a workshop was conducted by the Jordan Media Institute (JMI) in partnership with UNESCO on gender-sensitive reporting on elections. International IDEA and UN Women developed the publication ‘Election Coverage from a Gender Perspective: A Media Monitoring Manual’ in 2011, which identifies how monitoring gender variables in media coverage of elections may inform the work of the EMB.²³¹

The media's role in preventing and reporting VAWE may be integrated into other elections trainings, such as the BRIDGE training programme for electoral administrators.

EMBs may also coordinate with civil society organizations to educate the population about the nature of VAWE and how to prevent it, especially at the community level. This may be performed as part of an EMB's ongoing civic and voter education programmes. Civic education may include general sensitization to the issue of women in politics or it may also be directed specifically to the issue of VAWE – through, for example, the use of posters or radio clips explaining that threats or violence in the home to prevent or coerce a wife or daughter violates their political rights.

Election Day

In some contexts, EMBs may have a far-reaching impact on VAWE on election day itself. Operational decisions including the location, staffing and layout of polling stations can impact the perception of VAWE risks. Some studies show that women voters are more likely to be victims of polling day intimidation than men and that violence against women voters occurs most frequently in rural settings.²³² Polling station placement may need to be especially sensitive in these areas, notably avoiding polling stations that require extensive travel through recognized danger-zones or in locations known to be politically sensitive due to ethnic or religious associations.

The training and guidance provided to poll workers and security forces can protect vulnerable populations against specific threats or deepen a climate of insecurity and manipulation for voters. Training of security forces can be particularly important to prevent and mitigate violence that may occur at the polling station on election day. Educating EMB staff across all levels of the organization to understand the distinct forms and manifestations of VAWE may be necessary to ensure that incidents are addressed by the first-line responders. Attention may also need to be directed to ensure that poll workers don't inadvertently condone VAWE or even directly commit VAWE themselves.

EMBs may also consider urging women to act as political party agents in polling stations, especially women-only stations. They may encourage civil society monitoring groups to include gender issues as part of their observation and/or provide accreditations to organizations dedicated specifically to gender monitoring on election day and ensure that women take part as observers.

Post-Election Period

In addition to the above concerns before and during elections, the EMB may also have a role to play in preventing and mitigating VAWE during the post-election period. EMBs and other bodies may investigate and prosecute violators in acts of VAWE to the full extent possible in their mandate. They may consider monitoring for violence, collect evidence and document the situation. As in other areas of electoral disputes, although formal litigation is managed by the court system, the EMB can have significant leverage in conflict management and electoral justice. EMBs may also use the post-electoral period to review performance in this area and plan for future improvements.

Example of EMB involvement in conflict mitigation in Zambia:

The Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) is empowered to establish Conflict Management Committees employed to address electoral complaints and issues. The National Conflict Management Committee (NCMC) is composed of representatives from 24 different state and non-state stakeholder organizations including police, the drug enforcement agency and the anti-corruption commission, as well as political parties and civil society organizations. Its leadership is appointed by the ECZ. The NCMC and its affiliated District Conflict Management Committees can be forums to hear complaints by women candidates and voters. The Committees have the authority to impose penalties if violations are determined to have occurred.²³³

EMB Leadership

Finally, EMBs can demonstrate leadership on the issue of women's participation by ensuring gender mainstreaming in their internal staffing and by upholding its policies on violence, intimidation or harassment, where such policies exist. If these do not exist, EMBs can adopt codes of conduct that identify specific issues relating to harassment and violence against women employed by the EMB.

In Bolivia, the Law against Harassment and Gender-based Political Violence (Law No. 243 of 2012) establishes mechanisms for the prevention, treatment and punishment of individual or collective acts of harassment and/or of political violence against women in order to guarantee women the full exercise of their political rights (Article 2). It defines 'political harassment' and 'political violence'; protects all elected or appointed women candidates in the exercise of their public-political function (Article 5); and requires the authorities and/or public servants of the electoral body who are aware of acts of harassment and political violence to submit all information to the Public Prosecutor (Article 26).

In addition to strong and progressive internal regulations and codes of conduct, designated Gender Advisors and/or Gender Units within an EMB can make important contributions to education, prevention and response activities. Likewise, the EMB may ensure adequate training for temporary polling staff who are often best positioned to prevent many of the threats of violence or intimidation against voters. Various other interventions for mitigating VAWE are beyond the scope of this Guide. As political parties are the most common perpetrators of violence against women in elections, they have a key role to play in reducing and preventing this type of violence.²³⁴

12.3. Security sector coordination

EMBs are important supporting actors in developing security responses to VAWE, with the responsibility to coordinate with the responsible security forces to ensure safe conduct of elections for all electoral stakeholders.²³⁵ These stakeholders include poll

workers, candidates and voters. EMBs can advise and lead gender-sensitive risk assessment and planning for election day, which may include planning for scenarios where police are required to intervene in sensitive situations. For example, in **Afghanistan**, the EMB identified the necessity of body searches at polling stations and gender-sensitive security planning became a critical issue. The shortage of female poll workers to conduct these searches on women voters was resolved through the support of UNDP and coordination among the EMB, the provincial governors and the Ministry of

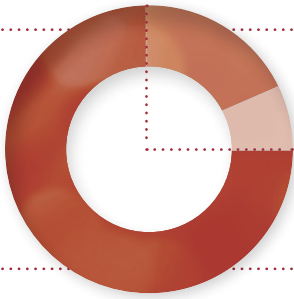
the Interior, which recruited and deployed over 11,000 female agents to conduct body searches for women on election day in 2010.²³⁶ In **Kyrgyzstan** in 2010, UNDP worked with the Central Elections Committee to create a space for dialogue and partnerships between civil society, law enforcement agencies and the electoral commission, which contributed to the prevention of electoral violence.²³⁷ In **Niger** in 2010, UNDP facilitated training and sensitization of national security forces by focusing on gender and election protection issues and gender-based violence during voting.²³⁸



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SUMMING UP:

- VAWE impacts women in many roles and EMBs should be aware of the gender-specific threats across all areas of electoral participation, including in the areas of voter registration, candidate registration, candidate campaigning and voters on election day.
- Violence against women in elections is an increasingly apparent trend that requires a concerted response from EMBs, often in partnership with other stakeholders, including the security sector, political parties and CSOs.
- Some good practices in monitoring and analysing patterns in the incidence of violence against women are evident, including through civil society based initiatives.
- EMBs can act to mitigate VAWE on election day itself. Operational decisions, including the location, staffing and layout of polling stations, impact the perception of VAWE risks. Women voters are significantly more likely to be victims of polling day violence than men and violence against women voters occurs most frequently in rural settings.



13 Working with Electoral Stakeholders

EMBs must ensure that all stakeholders not only abide by the electoral rules, but also that there is an environment conducive to the exchange of political views and policy platforms. A good practice in facilitating that environment is to work with a variety of partners and stakeholders, including political parties, the media and civil society organizations.

Much of the campaign material that voters see comes from the media and from the contesting political parties and candidates. This is oftentimes male-dominated, with many more men than women amongst candidates, party leaders, journalists and news presenters. Coverage of the election can make the process appear to be an exclusively male activity. While EMBs have varying levels of control in regulating the media and the campaigns run by the contestants, they may be able to use their influence as a respected and politically independent institution to promote gender balance in this area. In some cases, EMBs have a role in regulating the media during an election or a separate media regulator may be established.

Using examples of what has been done and results from the EMB survey, the following section outlines the partnerships that have been developed by EMBs with political parties, the media and civil society organizations.

13.1. Working with political parties

Electoral management bodies have a number of channels for influencing political party behaviour in this area that do not compromise an EMB's independence or political neutrality. Where an EMB has a role in registering political parties or candidates or in overseeing their public funding, it will have established communications with the party secretariats that they can use to

encourage good behaviour. Establishing a code of conduct for political parties has been used in some cases to ensure gender sensitivity in the campaign:

- In **Nepal**, the political party code of conduct includes a clause that electoral campaigns should not promote hate against anyone based on gender (amongst other personal factors). This clause is important because character assassination has been a common part of electoral campaigns, especially against women candidates.²³⁹
- In **Liberia**, the National Election Commission worked with political parties on a code of conduct. One of the aims was to avoid “the marginalisation of women through violence, intimidation and fraud”. Parties agreed to “the principle of non-discrimination, not to use abusive language, not to agitate on the basis of sex and gender”.²⁴⁰

EMBs may also set the framework for the registration of political parties and the conditions that parties must adhere to in order to be and stay registered. If this is the case, the EMB could consider implementing a requirement that parties refrain from hate speech or the denigration of women in their campaign activities. Parties that do not meet this standard could face sanctions, such as de-registration or other penalties, where the EMB oversees registration.

The EMB may also be responsible for implementing sanctions against political parties where they do not comply with the law; an example would be the application of sanctions to political parties for their failure to meet candidate registration criteria, such as a reduction in public funding (see section 10). Although many of these sanctions have their basis in the legal framework, in many countries the task of monitoring, documenting and prosecuting violations of the law falls on the EMB. The EMB must therefore promote compliance with the laws by ensuring that political parties are adequately informed of their obligations in this area.

Some EMBs have outreach and the provision of information to political parties and candidates as part of their mandates. This form of support can play a vital role in encouraging female candidates to participate and providing them necessary information to do so. For example:

- In **Afghanistan**, the IEC organizes a monthly gender and elections meeting which is attended by government and non-government stakeholders. It has been an effective forum to exchange information and coordinate efforts among various stakeholders, including women candidates and electoral staff and observers.²⁴¹
- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the CENI implemented a coordination unit and dialogue framework for women politicians and candidates. Through regular exchanges of information and sharing concerns of candidates, the CENI sought to promote levels of understanding of electoral procedures. The CENI also provides training opportunities for women candidates via its gender unit.²⁴²

The EMB may also work with political parties on non-campaign issues. The EMB could consult political parties when conducting a gender audit and when undertaking post-election analysis. In many cases, parties can bring additional evidence to such discussions and assist in identifying solutions where women's participation is minimised or threatened. The EMB can also remind parties of the importance of women's representation in party structures, not just as candidates for election.

EMBs play a vital role in promoting women's empowerment through their internal staffing practices and through the actions that they take to ensure women's access to the electoral process and also as advocates for gender equality in broader areas of political participation and public debate. These areas include promoting national dialogue, informing women candidates of key information on the electoral process and offering broader information to political parties on gender inequalities.

In countries where women's political participation is limited, the EMB and its partners may play an important role in bringing the issue to the forefront in the national debate. They may do so through their own direct initiatives or by bringing together political parties with other groups, including government department, the parliament and civic advocacy groups. This form of leadership is especially significant during times of legislative reform. For example:

- In **Albania**, UNDP and UN Women have provided support to engage parties in discussions about amendments to the law, specifically, the introduction of the 30-percent quota for women.²⁴³ In 2013, the CEC and partners engaged in a series of roundtable discussions with electoral stakeholders to improve the mechanisms for the compliance with gender representation in elected bodies. By examining the tendency of political parties to bypass the quota law, the CEC identified vulnerabilities in the current system to address in the forthcoming electoral reform agenda.²⁴⁴
- In **Cambodia** in 2011, UNDP facilitated seven high-level dialogues among political parties, the National Election Committee and the Ministry of Interior. These dialogues provided noticeable impact on the improvement of the electoral reform in Cambodia, which included reforms benefiting women's participation such as the amendment of electoral law to extend the voter registration period from 30 to 45 days prior to the 2012 commune council elections and an extension of the validity of the expired ID card until end of December 2013.²⁴⁵

Examples of working with the media to promote women's participation and provide gender-sensitive content include:

- In **Armenia** in 2009, gender sensitization trainings were offered to journalists to enhance their capacity to better present gender-related issues and combat gender stereotypes in media. In a complementary activity, UNDP supported publication of the textbook 'Gender and Journalism' for university students and lecturers.
- In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the President of the Central Electoral Commission liaised with broadcasters about male-dominated election debates and called on them to include women in the candidate debates on television.²⁴⁶
- **Nepal:** The media code of conduct prohibits reporting that could potentially cause "adverse effects upon the principles of gender equality and social inclusion", including reporting that uses discriminatory language and messages likely to provoke violence.²⁴⁷ It also calls on the media to actively encourage women (and other marginalized groups) to participate in the election.²⁴⁸
- **Papua New Guinea:** UN Women organized a BRIDGE training on gender and elections for the media ahead of the 2012 general elections.
- **Yemen:** The EC-UNDP Joint Election Assistance Project, working with civil society organizations, ran a training programme on gender-responsive reporting for 16 journalists. The training covered relevant legislation, stereotyping of women in the media and the importance of women's political participation.²⁴⁹
- In **Angola, Botswana, Mauritius, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa**, national workshops and trainings were convened on 'Gender, Elections and Media' for media practitioners, organized with a regional NGO, Gender Links.

13.2. Working with the media

Media organizations and journalists play an important role during the election period by providing information for voters and shaping public opinion. Ensuring that the media have full and accurate information regarding the electoral process is essential to ensuring that voters have the necessary information to participate and are not confused or disenfranchised by incorrect information. While EMBs need to ensure that they maintain political neutrality, a good press pack and briefings for the media on the importance of encouraging women to vote can generate much useful coverage.

Electoral management bodies can use a variety of communication channels to make media organizations aware of gender issues in the election and to encourage the media to join the project of encouraging women to participate. In particular, media may benefit from gender-awareness training. The objectives of such trainings include promoting gender awareness and skills of the media, helping the media to understand how gender equality is integral to citizenship, democracy and freedom of expression, identifying key gender issues in the elections and assisting the media in thinking through the gender dimensions of their election coverage.²⁵⁰ Furthermore, the safety of journalists covering elections is equally important to ensure that women and men journalists, either based locally or abroad, are able to work safely and without harassment during election time, in line with the 'UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity'.²⁵¹



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13.3. Working with CSOs

It is common in most countries for a variety of civil society organizations to be engaged in issues related to elections. Many CSOs actively promote women's participation, and can be key allies and partners for an EMB that is working towards equal participation of women in the electoral process.

Outreach

Many CSOs engage in voter information and education efforts. While this is more fully discussed in section 14, CSOs offer the opportunity for providing information campaigns that can be more targeted than those implemented by an EMB. CSOs can be an excellent conduit to share civic and voter education materials because of their reach, especially in remote communities. For example, a CSO that is purely focused on women from minority groups is likely to find it easier to reach such women with voter information messages than an EMB. CSOs may complement the efforts of EMBs to deliver face-to-face or in-person sessions that are an effective method for most learners. While an EMB cannot provide face-to-face educational sessions for the entire electorate, targeted sessions for specific populations can be highly effective when working with CSO partners, especially in areas where there are low voter registration or turnout rates among women voters.

Providing gender expertise

CSOs that specialize in gender equality can bring this expertise to bear on the electoral process, providing advice, assistance and access to networks that EMBs may not have themselves. An EMB engaging in gender audit exercises and post-election reviews may find it beneficial to do so with civil society partners. CSOs offer perspectives on electoral arrangements that an EMB, being fully consumed by them, may not see, as well as being able to harness the experiences of women from diverse backgrounds and levels of political literacy.

CSOs can also look into some of the political elements of women's participation in elections that would not be appropriate lines of enquiry for an EMB, such as how party policies will affect women and how candidate recruitment works for women. CSOs may also be involved in domestic observation of the electoral process or in violence monitoring programmes and their findings may provide useful recommendations to

EMBs. For example, in South Africa, the Electoral Commission collaborates and partners with women's groups and civil society organizations, such as the gender media watchdog Genderlinks. The latter collect data on candidate lists, analyse media coverage of women and party manifestos, run workshops for women candidates or aspirant candidates and publicly give feedback and affirmation where deserved or criticism where women are being disadvantaged. In another example, in Burundi in 2010, several NGOs collaborated on an election violence monitoring programme, *Amatora Mu Mahoro*. The project's sex-disaggregated data on election violence provided the first insight into the forms of election violence most often faced by Burundian women.²⁵²

Lastly, CSOs can offer valuable information and feedback to the EMB on gender equality considerations related to election planning, logistics and operations.

The EMB could invite CSOs to provide feedback on key stages in the electoral process, such as voter registration and polling day arrangements or on the design of voter outreach materials. For example, in Tunisia, as a way of coordinating with women's organizations, the Board of Elections (ISIE), with UNDP support, convened a meeting of civil society organizations in July 2011 as a way for ISIE to review the content of voter education materials developed by civil society and to develop a common platform for civic education. Twenty-one associations and three networks were represented and discussions focused on messaging around equality, the right to vote and secrecy of the ballot. The participants recognized the critical role played by the non-governmental sector in complementing ISIE's voter and civic education programmes.²⁵³



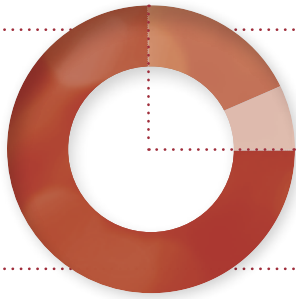
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SUMMING UP:

- EMBs must ensure that stakeholders abide by electoral rules and that there is an environment conducive to the exchange of political views. A good practice in facilitating that environment is to work with a variety of partners and stakeholders, including political parties, the media and civil society organizations.
- EMBs may also work to bring a range of stakeholders together, such as by holding joint information sessions with political parties, CSOs and relevant government departments.
- Electoral management bodies may sensitize media organizations to increase awareness of gender issues in the election.
- Working with civil society has also helped in reaching out to, and engaging, wider networks of women and in bringing gender expertise to the attention of EMB staff.

Specific messaging may be required to encourage women to participate – as candidates and voters – and to clarify that they can choose how they cast their own vote.





14 Voter outreach

In addition to organizing the logistics of an election, EMBs are often entrusted with the task of explaining the electoral process to the electorate from an impartial perspective. Their role is not to explain or defend the policies, manifestos or platforms of the various political parties and independent candidates, but rather to educate the population on how to enrol, how to cast a ballot correctly and why it is important to participate in this democratic process.

This educative process, known as voter outreach, can be divided into two main types:²⁵⁴

- **Voter education** typically addresses voters' motivation and preparedness to participate fully in elections. It includes voter information outreach, which provides basic information enabling qualified citizens to vote, including the date, time and place of voting, the type of election, ID documents necessary to establish eligibility, registration requirements and how to vote.
- **Civic education** deals with broader concepts underpinning a democratic society such as the respective roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, political and special interests, the mass media, and the business and non-profit sectors, as well as the significance of periodic and competitive elections. It should ideally be undertaken on an ongoing basis or over the long term.

While voter outreach programmes are generally delivered to all potential voters, increasingly, targeted programmes are being designed and delivered in many countries to particular groups such as women youth and indigenous peoples.

Planning and design of all outreach will take place during the pre-election period or, in some cases, during the period between elections, especially if voter registers are to be updated. Information about how to take part in a particular process such as registering to vote or changing voter registration should be concentrated in the weeks before the event. On the other hand, education designed to provide broader civic education information should be delivered over a longer period, usually between elections.

This section highlights good practices among EMBs in delivering voter outreach programmes that promote women's participation. This can begin with a strategy or overall communications policy, identifying the key messages that need to be consistently relayed and targeting relevant interventions to specific groups, such as women, youth and men.

14.1. Outreach strategy and policy

The organizational goals or strategic plan of the EMB may lay out the broad objectives of the organization's voter outreach programme. More detailed planning objectives may also be stipulated in a communication or outreach policy. When multiple information or

education campaigns are planned – for instance, on how to register or how to vote or encouraging specific sectors, like women or youth, to participate, – then a good practice may be to create an overall communication strategy to ensure that the different campaigns are complementary.

Stakeholder partnerships

Civil society organizations, political parties and the media are likely to play a part in delivering all types of voter outreach. Many of these groups have good access

to women and to communities across the country. EMBs can work closely with these organizations to ensure that the correct messages are being passed on. An overall voter outreach plan is also good practice when working with CSOs to deliver the programme because it serves as a master plan and a mapping tool of all activities, their content, geographic coverage and how they relate to each other.

CSOs may use materials created by the electoral management body or create educational material themselves in close coordination with the EMB. In some cases where

Some examples of plans and policies that include voter outreach targeting women include:

- **Malawi:** Long-term planning for the 2009 election included a civic and voter education programme between elections to ensure that voters were well-informed and motivated to participate meaningfully in elections. The goal was to build a culture of support for the principles and practices of democratic elections. Two of the objectives identified women and young women as particular targets.²⁵⁵
- **Nepal:** The Voter Education Policy 2007 and 2013 specified that the “designing of the voter education should consider targeting marginalized groups” and included a number of provisions for gender equality and social inclusion such as to design and deliver customized messages according to the type of audience in the voter education programme and to recruit a diverse workforce to enhance gender and social responsiveness of the programme.²⁵⁶ The ECN has given particular importance to the voter education activities focused on women’s participation and information. Following these efforts, the participation of women as voters in the 2013 elections was high.
- **Pakistan:** The Action Plan related to education includes the conduct of a baseline survey to “determine participation rates” including of women and to discover “factors influencing participation and knowledge about the electoral process”. The results will be used in creating the voter education strategy.²⁵⁷
- **South Africa:** The civic and voter education policy leading up to the 2009 election took a targeted approach to ensure that groups who are often missed in general education programmes were reached. Women were one of the target groups.²⁵⁸
- **Tunisia:** The EMB focused heavily on mainstreaming gender into their external outreach processes that targeted greater civic engagement in the elections with a distinct gender equality perspective. The primary goal was to increase access to information from CSOs on the procedures decided by the ISIE, harmonizing the content of awareness-raising tools and ensuring their compliance with the procedures decided by the ISIE and, finally, raising the awareness of CSOs about their roles in informing voters.²⁵⁹
- **Timor-Leste:** The EMBs organize and conduct comprehensive and extensive voter education, civic education and outreach campaigns focused on women participation, information and education.²⁶⁰

skilled civil society groups specialize in grassroots education, the EMB may work jointly to design materials or adopt materials developed by a CSO. Offering to check the accuracy of materials created by other organizations and sharing key graphics and descriptions can help to ensure that voters are provided with consistent, accurate information.

In the EMB Survey, 27 of the 35 (77 percent) respondents stated that they had provided “awareness campaigns with civil society organisations”: Afghanistan, Armenia, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Moldova, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, Republic of Congo, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

14.2. Messaging

An effective voter outreach campaign has a very clear message that is delivered consistently in a number of different ways. During the election period, voter information messages need to explain how to vote and encourage voters to turn out and vote. In the period between elections, outreach messages can focus on broader messages about democracy and the importance of taking part as voters and candidates and promote the political participation of women.

When creating voter outreach materials, attention should be paid to avoiding subliminal messaging. For instance, a poster showing only male voters may give a message that only men vote. Outreach materials should show women of all ages participating in every task and in every role – as registration and polling staff, as observers and security forces, as registration applicants and as voters. If poorly designed, images intended to show security around polling stations may discourage voters who fear violence instead of relaying a message of security. Overly complex slogans that use sophisticated language may alienate voters by making the process seem too complicated, rather than encouraging broad participation. Voter education in multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies should reflect national

diversities and not discourage participation of a specific group. To avoid conveying unintended messages, the language and images used in voter outreach are often tested through pilot sessions and revised before being launched to national audiences.

With respect to gender equality, there are two very important messages to be communicated: first, that women have the right to vote and stand for election and that their participation often needs to be encouraged; and second, that the ballot is secret – no one else needs to know how an individual’s vote has been cast.

Women’s right to participate

Encouraging the participation of women and of all citizens is an important message in all contexts. In many established democracies, participation rates in elections are in decline and many electoral management bodies are running voter awareness programmes to encourage participation. In newer democracies, certain groups may need to be reminded that they can take part or need to be encouraged to have their say. In all contexts, campaign messages can be designed to appeal specifically to women. Some examples of EMB and CSO initiatives include:

- **Benin:** The EMB employed rousing messages designed to energize women’s participation, including: “Women in Parliament! Women in the Communal Councils! Stand up, Women of Benin, Your Time Has Come! The Nation Needs You!”
- **Burundi:** The ‘Vote and Be Elected’ campaign trained almost 260 women to work around the country and educate other women about registration and voting and to support female candidates to develop their campaigns.²⁶¹
- **Lebanon:** The ‘Use Your Voice’ nationwide media campaign “aimed at promoting women’s participation in the electoral process. The campaign featured five prominent Lebanese women who appeared on television, radio, public transportation, and billboard advertisements.” The campaign was organized by the National Democratic Institute and the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections.²⁶²

- **Marshall Islands:** A local civil society organization, Women United Together in The Marshall Islands, conducted a voter education project with a particular focus on the political empowerment of women. Workshops covered the concept of democracy and representative government as well as details of registration and the secrecy of the ballot.²⁶³

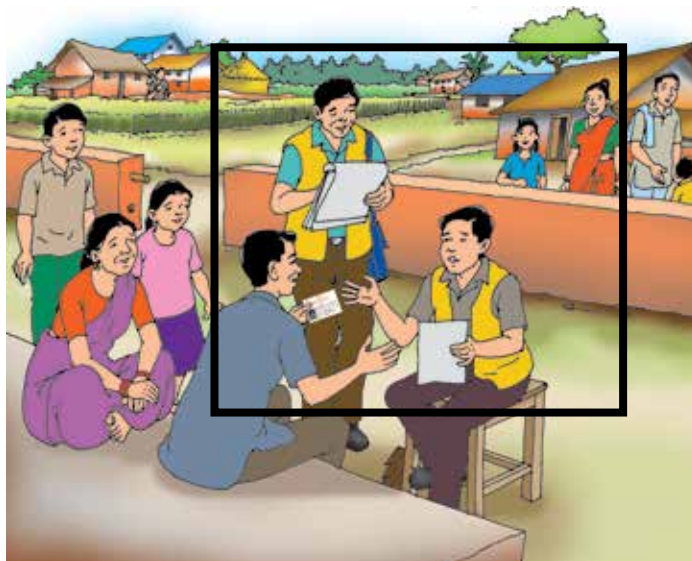
Targeted messaging for women voters has proved effective in many contexts. In Indonesia, targeted messaging informed over 2 million new women voters of their rights and responsibilities in 2009 and, in 2011, over 50 percent of the civic education budget was allocated to targeted women's messaging based on this success. In 2009 in Iraq, targeted messaging was considered to have helped increase women's turnout to 45 percent in the provincial council elections.

Portraying women in active roles

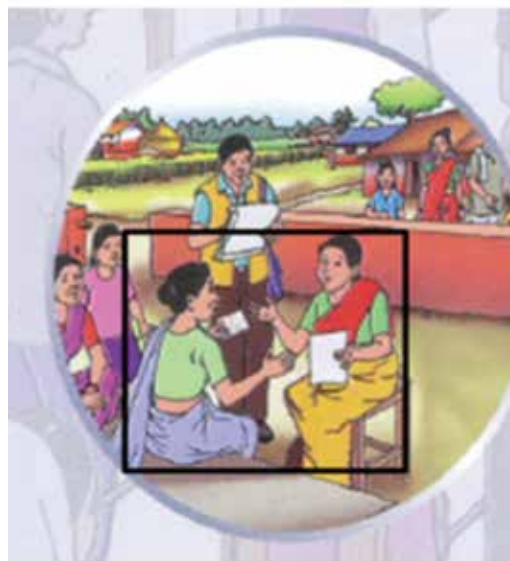
In outreach messages and images, it is important that women be shown in active roles as voters, candidates and electoral staff. Subtle details can be important; for instance, only showing women standing behind men may give the impression that women are following the men rather than being active and voting for themselves. Some examples of voter outreach that show women in a positive, active role are:

- **Kenya:** Voter information posters show a woman voter and a woman working in the voting centre. Some posters include in the queue of voters a woman with a child and women in different forms of local dress, including a woman in a veil.²⁶⁴

Information materials illustrating the voter registration process in Nepal



Original image showing men in an active role and women in a passive role



With assistance from UNDP and IFES, the image was revised to (a) show women in an active role and (b) show a gender balanced team of enumerators (one man and one woman) as per the ECN guidelines.

Images courtesy of the Electoral Commission of Nepal.

- **Nepal:** With assistance from UNDP and IFES, voter outreach materials produced by the ECN show women in an active role during the registration process. IFES and UNDP have provided support to the ECN to ensure that new outreach materials are gender-sensitive.
- **Timor-Leste:** In the last four elections held between 2009 and 2012, dedicated materials and activities encouraging women to participate in elections were produced. STAE and UNEST have also produced a campaign highlighting women as role models.²⁶⁵

Secrecy of the vote

Particularly where family voting is common (see section 11), it is important both to deliver specific messages to women and men about the right of women to

make their own choice when voting and to emphasize the right to vote in secret.

In the EMB Survey, 28 of the 35 respondents (80 percent) said that they had provided “education on secrecy of ballot and combating family voting”: Afghanistan, Armenia, Belarus, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Moldova, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Uzbekistan.

Cultural norms may also give rise to certain myths used to dissuade women from voting. Where an EMB becomes aware of this practice, it is important to counter myths with accurate information and to encourage

Some examples of voter outreach aimed at cultural change and combating family voting include:

- **Albania:** Messages that women have the right to vote for the candidate of their choice were delivered in humorous TV ads that were developed by the Central Electoral Commission and the National Platform for Women.²⁶⁶ The CEC has taken several measures to prevent family voting. There is an ongoing need, particularly in rural areas, to raise awareness about women’s rights, gender equality and women’s political rights. Civic and voter education campaigns are implemented by CEC in media (TV and newspapers) designed with specific outreach to women voters.²⁶⁷
- **Moldova:** The CEC aimed to motivate women to participate as voters and as candidates in 2011 local elections by stressing that, at some point in history, women were not allowed to vote or be elected and that therefore the value of the political rights that Moldovan women have should not be underestimated. They produced a public service announcement that reminded listeners of the process of cultural change in other countries: “Did you know that New Zealand was the first country in the world to give women the right to vote in 1893?” and “Did you know that the first woman was elected as mayor in 1887 in the USA?”
- **The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:** Confronted family voting with “One voter – one vote” and “I have a right to vote” education programmes ahead of parliamentary elections. These projects, implemented by UNDP, aimed to put the issue of family voting on the political agenda and to raise voter awareness of the issue.²⁶⁸
- **South Africa:** The Black Sash convened women-only workshops, which included discussion of “intimidation techniques used by men to influence women during voting” to help women avoid such intimidation.²⁶⁹
- **Vanuatu:** Many women who attended workshops said that they “did not realise they could vote independently of their husband’s and chief’s direction, or that their vote was secret.”²⁷⁰ Voter education was developed accordingly.

participation. A positive example is highlighted by the case of Ghana, where voter information messages dispelled a popular myth about the voting process. Many believed that the ability to read and write was a requirement to be eligible to register to vote. To dispel this, a voter information campaign explicitly clarified that the registration team would fill in the form for illiterate voters after asking the appropriate questions.²⁷¹

14.3. Target audiences

Voter outreach can target the voting population at large or be tailored to particular groups. When the voter outreach programme is delivered to the general population, it is important that gender equality considerations be mainstreamed into the messages and delivery. In the EMB Survey, only half of the respondents said that they “mainstream gender in voter information”: Afghanistan, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa and Tanzania.

When voter outreach is targeted to women, the target may be all voting-age women or a subset of women defined by location, age or circumstance, such as rural women or young women. When tackling particular issues – for instance, that women should not vote or that family voting is acceptable – then the messages need to be targeted at men as well as women. Voter outreach may also be used to educate new voters and ‘future’ voters by targeting educational institutions. This form of outreach may seek to educate first-time voters to their rights and responsibilities as voters, explain the process or assist in first-time registration. Outreach to youth populations seeks to sensitize children and adolescents to the basics of democratic participation in order to promote their future active participation as voters.

Women as the target audience

When the goal is to encourage women to participate in greater numbers, then voter outreach tends to specifically target women and use messages designed to appeal to women. In the EMB Survey, 19 of the 35 respondents (54 percent) said that they had provided “voter education targeted at women”: Armenia, Benin, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Iraq, Lebanon, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Mozambique, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. In Papua New Guinea, separate voter awareness group discussions for women and men were organized ahead of the 2012 election.²⁷²

International partners and CSOs have also provided outreach targeted to women:

- **Tanzania:** One component of the UNDP voter education programme was to encourage women to register, using radio, newspaper adverts and a leaflet.²⁷³ The ‘Women and Election 2010’ booklet encouraged women to stand as candidates and to vote. The booklet reminded women that it is their right to choose the candidate that they want to vote for. The booklet also contained details about pregnant women, nursing mothers, women with disabilities and elderly women having the right to get preference and support from election administrators in E-day. Messages encouraging women to vote were repeated on TV, radio, in newspaper and on posters.²⁷⁴
- **Sudan:** To ensure active participation of women in the 2010 elections, public awareness programmes targeting women as voters and as candidates were developed and carried out. CSO networks partnered with UN Women to train women community leaders to deliver the gender-specific messaging. A women-specific media campaign was established through the Ministry of Communication. In partnership with UN-Women, the UNDP election project has also supported civic education media campaigns targeting prospective voters and encouraging women’s candidature.

Women-only classes or sessions can be effective in certain contexts. Such sessions seek to provide ‘safe space’ for women to express their specific concerns and questions without pressures that may be associated with co-ed groups. Using female trainers or facilitators in such sessions may contribute to an enabling learning environment. In countries where gender-specific voting violations are a specific problem, such as high levels of family voting or targeted violence against women in elections, segregated training sessions may be needed.

Civic education in schools

In the EMB Survey, 22 of the 35 respondents (63 percent) said that they had provided “civic education in schools”: Afghanistan, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Georgia, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Maldives, Moldova, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Romania, South Africa and Uganda.

Specific examples include:

- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Prior to the 2010 general elections, the Commission introduced for the first time civic education at schools (around 40 schools were visited as part of a programme on raising awareness about the importance to vote). The project was done in cooperation with the NGO Association of Election Officials in BiH.²⁷⁵
- **Costa Rica:** Training takes place in schools, colleges and universities. Civic education is given not only on the exercise of voting, but also about democratic values, active citizenship and participation.
- **Georgia:** The goal of a civic education project was to “increase students’ awareness about the elections, their civic rights and duties as well as to support students in conducting the self – governmental elections at schools”.²⁷⁶
- **Ethiopia and South Africa:** Civic education has been incorporated into the national school curriculum.
- **Timor-Leste:** During the 2012 national elections, the EMBs (supported by UNEST, UNDP and UNICEF) developed nationwide campaigns targeting youth and first-time voters.²⁷⁷

For example, where family voting occurs, conducting women-only discussions and information about the right of women to cast their own vote is likely to be more effective. Voter outreach sessions delivered to existing groups of women, such as volunteer organizations, associations and clubs, are a good way to reach many women who would not attend separate training sessions.

Targeting students

In many countries, students are targeted through the school curriculum to provide civic and voter education. In most countries, young voters are often registered in fewer numbers than older voters, and are less likely to turnout on election day. Providing voter outreach in schools is one way to encourage civic engagement from a young age.

Targeting men about women’s participation

In countries where there are cultural or societal barriers to women’s participation, it may be necessary to target outreach to men and male community leaders. Where family voting is an issue, men may need to be made aware of the rights of women to make independent political decisions and cast their own vote. In the EMB Survey, 13 of the 35 respondents (37 percent) said that they had provided gender-sensitive “voter education targeted at men”: Afghanistan, Armenia, Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

In addition, working with male trainers and focal points to transmit these messages can be effective. Some examples of male-targeted outreach include the following:

- **Afghanistan:** Information on culturally sensitive registration and voting procedures and messaging that women should participate and cast their own vote were provided by CSOs to elders and tribal leaders. Messages were also delivered in male-only meetings with the request that the men take the information home to tell the women in their households.²⁷⁸ These messages included slogans such as “Brothers: the women who vote have the same values as you for the future of Afghanistan” and “Women are the citizens of this country, they have a right to elect or be elected.”²⁷⁹

- **Malawi:** The Commission held regular meetings with traditional authorities to tell them about the civic and voter education aimed at encouraging women to vote.²⁸⁰
- **The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:** The Election Commission held a seminar series on the issue of family voting with male community leaders in advance of elections.²⁸¹
- **Yemen:** The Ministry of Education and Guidance created a guide ‘to advocate women’s political rights’ for use by male preachers.²⁸²

14.4. Delivery methods

Delivery methods are important in terms of the effectiveness of reaching the target audience, the ease with which the audience can understand the message and the extent to which that delivery method is taken seriously. Literacy is one important consideration, as is access to media. Women remain disproportionately affected by illiteracy in all parts of the world and, in some regions, girls face considerable difficulties acquiring basic reading and writing skills.²⁸³ Using a range of different delivery methods for the same message will have a greater impact than using just one delivery method. Delivery methods also differ greatly in their cost, including materials and personnel required. All of these considerations need to be balanced when creating a cohesive outreach plan.

In-person sessions

Face-to-face or in-person sessions are an effective method for most learners. While an EMB cannot provide face-to-face educational sessions for the entire electorate, targeted sessions for specific populations can be highly effective. In many countries, CSOs can complement the efforts of EMBs, especially in areas where there are low voter registration or turnout rates among women voters. Such sessions are particularly useful for groups with low literacy levels or who have been traditionally marginalized in electoral processes. In most regions of the world, women represent a majority of these populations.

Radio and other audio messages

Radio remains one of the most widely accessible media formats in the world and, as such, is a key source of

public information, especially for those who are illiterate. In addition to delivering information, it can also generate information through debates and call-in programmes, where listeners can ask their own questions. One of the benefits of radio is that it can be created in a range of languages at relatively low cost. Audio clips can easily be disseminated via a website at no additional cost once the material has been produced.

Some examples of the delivery of messages using radio are:

- **Jordan:** UNDP supported the establishment of a local community radio station in Zarqa governorate to be used by youth, people with disabilities and women to raise their concerns about local issues important to them.
- **Nepal:** During the 2013 national election, different media channels such as TV and radio spots, newspaper ads, posters and leaflets were used to deliver gender-sensitive messages to the voters; messages through the mobile phone were also included, as were social media such as Facebook and Twitter.²⁸⁴
- **Sierra Leone:** The Open Government Initiative provided a platform to discuss women’s issues and organize radio programmes as well as town hall meetings that encouraged the participation of women and discussed some thematic issues from gender specific perspectives.²⁸⁵ Also, the BBC, local broadcasters and civil society organizations created and broadcast voter education targeted at women and youth.²⁸⁶
- **Tanzania:** The Tanzania Media Women Association and UN Women trained 125 village community radio broadcasters and provided 1,500 solar-powered radios for established listening groups. The training allowed local groups to record and broadcast their own election-related programmes on “topics such as ‘Women and their participation in elections as voters’, ‘Qualities of a good leader’, ‘Why you should elect women candidates’, ‘How to prevent voter bribery in elections,’ and ‘What you need to vote’.”²⁸⁷

In the EMB Survey, 22 of the 35 respondents (63 per cent) said that they had provided “special radio and other media campaigns that reach women in rural areas”: Afghanistan, Armenia, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congo, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, the State of Palestine, Pakistan, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

Mock elections or polling day rehearsal

Many voters, including first-time voters, may be unsure of how to mark their ballot papers and what to do in the voting centre. In countries where tradition has limited women’s participation or where family voting is widespread, women may be unsure about how to vote in an election. In these circumstances, conducting mock elections can provide a hands-on tool to educate women about the mechanics of the process. For example, in Mali, a television programme aimed at educating young people on the electoral process showed a model ballot with candidates’ pictures and party logos so that voters could familiarize themselves with the ballot before they went to the voting centre.²⁸⁸ In South Africa, CSOs used voting exercise and rehearsals in their workshops for women to dispel fears about the voting process.²⁸⁹

Songs, drama and videos

In cultures with an oral tradition, song and theatre are a common method for delivering important messages. Including the message in popular soap operas has the same impact. Songs and short video clips are also an important way to reach young people through new technologies. Some examples of the use of songs and drama are:

- **Lebanon:** As part of the annual voter registration updates in 2013 and 2014, UNDP and the Ministry of Interior produced a short video clip encouraging voters to check their data on the voter register and to correct any mistakes. The video used humour and portrayals of familiar characters to highlight the kind of mistakes that could prevent someone from voting. Over the space of one month, the clip was widely broadcast on TV, radio and shown in cinemas.²⁹⁰
- **Nepal:** During the 2013 national elections, the ECN organized and commissioned 272 thematic street dramas focused on women’s participation that were performed nationwide.²⁹¹
- **South Africa:** “A film was created about women in rural areas and the problems they face and how to organise voter education in those areas.” The film was disseminated widely and shown on mobile video units in areas that did not have TV access.²⁹²
- **Tunisia:** UNDP sponsored the writing and recording of a song, *Enti Essout* (My people, you are the voice), where each singer described his or her past and present social experience and dreams for a better Tunisia. The song became very popular on radio as well as online on YouTube.²⁹³

Resource centres

Voter information and resource centres, which provide information and a venue for training, can be important to make the voter education visible and easily accessible. Resource centres may be open for the entire local population or open to the full population but target specific groups such as women. In some cases, such as Timor Leste, they may target well-educated users to further legislative agendas, but, most often, they provide access to information for grassroots populations with otherwise limited access to civic education.

Some places where resource centres have been established include:

- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** IFES has supported six democracy resource centres around the country for nearly 10 years. They served almost 2,000 users per month and the centres offered a variety of literature and Internet access and organized ongoing educational activities. Targeted activities and educational materials were developed in local languages and dialects and designed for use by illiterate populations. The centres served as regional bases for ongoing grassroots education in remote areas.

- **Georgia:** Sixteen regional resource centres were created to support the involvement of the public in the electoral process, to raise the levels of voter education and improve the links between the election administration and stakeholders in the regions. Citizens have the opportunity to meet and to use the facility for training, networking, discussion and other relevant initiatives. Primary targets are women and the young generation of national minorities residing in the country. A number of the centres are established in targeted geographic zones with high populations of ethnic minorities.²⁹⁴
- **Nepal:** UNDP assisted the ECN in establishing an Electoral Education and Information Centre (EEIC) in its premises as well as a Media Centre. The Centres support voter education, public outreach, media engagement and access to information by the public on electoral systems and processes.²⁹⁵

Information Communication Technology

Many other examples of creative approaches to civic education exist around the world, including using the Internet and information communication technology.

Taking voter awareness into popular social media sites can be effective in some contexts. Where the infrastructure and access exist, the Internet is a powerful tool to reach broad audiences. In Georgia, the CEC encouraged direct contact with voters via social networks, web-based forums and a photo contest. In March 2011, the CEC launched the photo contest “Select” to involve the young voters in the election administration activities. The contest was managed via social network Facebook during one month. As a result of the contest, the CEC announced two winners and held an exhibition of the best 50 photos selected within the contest at its premises. In Iraq in 2013, social media was widely used by IHEC, including by introducing a banner in the local version of Yahoo! with election messages that emphasized women’s participation.

Information on the EMB website is important and can include written material, pictures and audio for download. EMBs may also choose to communicate through social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Care should be taken, however, that such new channels are complemented by time-tested delivery channels, such as radio.



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SUMMING UP:

- Because the electoral process can be complex and overly legalistic, voter outreach and education are essential to ensuring that all citizens understand how they can participate and why they should.
- Specific messaging may be required to encourage women to participate – as candidates and voters – and to clarify that they can choose how they cast their own vote.
- These messages can be targeted to women specifically, but they can also be given to young people and to men.
- Delivering these messages may require several methods, from mainstream TV, newspaper and radio media outlets, to holding women-only focus groups and mock elections.



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CONCLUSION

Electoral management bodies are central actors in promoting women's electoral and political participation. Inclusive EMBs are those that ensure that their own internal systems and processes do not discriminate against women and, where necessary, institute gender-targeted measures to redress any past discrimination. In addition, inclusive EMBs work to promote women's participation in the electoral process by considering the gendered impact of mainstream electoral processes such as registration, voting and voter outreach.

EMBs worldwide face some common challenges. Maintaining their independence in a highly political environment is a long-standing challenge, but, more recently, EMBs have begun to face more gender-specific challenges, such as the availability and diffusion of sex-disaggregated data. In some countries, women's safety and security are also pressing concerns for EMBs. Challenges may also be cultural and require approaches designed to enable social change and attitudinal shifts. Inclusive electoral management requires EMBs to critically review their current structures and to address gender mainstreaming in a variety of areas. Gender audits and mapping are helpful in identifying areas for improvement. Training is a key focus in training all EMB staff on gender sensitivity issues and in ensuring that professional capacity-building training is available for women staff members in order to support their growth within the organization.

Despite continuing challenges, electoral management bodies worldwide are advancing women's empowerment in electoral administration and political participation. EMBs are often at the forefront of progressive change and always have a vital role to play in supporting gender equality in political access and participation. Their innovations and successes offer insight to building stronger channels of opportunity for women voters, candidates and electoral administrators around the world.

Annex A: List of Electoral Management Bodies participating in the EMB Survey

Afghanistan	Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan
Armenia	Central Elections Commission of the Republic of Armenia
Belarus	Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus for Elections and National Referenda
Benin*	Independent National Electoral Commission
Bosnia and Herzegovina	BiH Central Election Commission
Canada	Elections Canada
Central African Republic*	UNDP-CAR
Costa Rica	Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones
Democratic Republic of Congo*	UNDP-DRC
Egypt	High Electoral Commission (HEC)
Ethiopia*	UNDP-Ethiopia
Georgia	Central Election Commission of Georgia
Ghana*	The Electoral Commission of Ghana
Iraq	IHEC (Independent High Electoral Commission)
Kazakhstan	Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan	Central Commission on Elections and Referendums (CEC)
Lebanon	Ministry of Interior & Municipalities
Lesotho	Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho
Madagascar	Commission Electorale Nationale Independante (CENI)
Malawi	Malawi Electoral Commission
Maldives	Elections Commission of the Republic of Maldives
Mauritius	Electoral Supervisory Commission
Moldova	Central Electoral Commission of Moldova
Mozambique	Secretariado Técnico de Administração Eleitoral (STAE)
Namibia	Electoral Commission of Namibia
State of Palestine	Central Elections Commission
Pakistan*	Election Commission of Pakistan
Republic of Congo	General Direction of Electoral Affairs (DGAE)
Romania	Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) of Romania
South Africa	Electoral Commission of South Africa
Tanzania	National Electoral Commission of Tanzania
Tunisia	Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Elections (ISIE)
Uganda	Electoral Commission of Uganda
Ukraine	Central Election Commission of Ukraine
Uzbekistan	Central Election Commission (CEC) of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Note: the surveys were completed in 2011-2012

* The EMB survey was completed by the UNDP country office on behalf of the EMB.

Annex B: Sample Form to Collect Voter Turnout Data in Nepal

Form Number 45, courtesy of the Electoral Commission of Nepal. Polling officials are required to cross through each number as they process a voter of the relevant sex.

Form Number 45

Under Section 82 Election Commission of Nepal • District Election Office
District, Constituent No • Male/ Female Voter turnout Form

Male										Female									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
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491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500

Name of the Staff/ Volunteer for preparing the Male/ Female Voter Turnout list
Signature:
Position:
Date:

Verifying Polling Officer's Name:
Signature:
Date:

Annex C: Electoral Gender Mapping Framework



Electoral Gender Mapping: A framework to review the status of gender equality in electoral processes and institutions



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

1. Introduction

Every election is an opportunity to strengthen women’s political participation and make progress toward gender equality targets established in international resolutions. Electoral gender mapping exercises have proven useful in identifying gaps and opportunities to promote women’s participation in elections – as voters, as contestants and as electoral management staff. Any such mapping can examine the current situation for women as voters and candidates and within political parties, which is an important early step. To be comprehensive, however, it can also be accompanied by an examination of the state of gender equality inside the body that administers the election, the electoral management body (EMB) or equivalent body (ministries). By looking at an EMB’s composition, structures and work practices, it is possible to identify areas for potential reform that would further facilitate women’s electoral participation.

This draft Electoral Gender Mapping (EGM) framework has been developed following similar exercises carried out in Nepal, Moldova, Libya and Lebanon and drawing on lessons learned from numerous country offices in the UNDP publication ‘Promoting Gender Equality in Electoral Assistance: Lessons Learned in Comparative Perspective’. The EGM framework aims to assist all relevant stakeholders in identifying gaps and opportunities to further women’s electoral and political participation and, as such, it looks within and outside the EMB to the broader electoral environment. Determining exactly what method is most appropriate will be dependent on the specific structures and legal frameworks in place by which elections are administered. It is important to remember that the gender assessment is an evidence-gathering process; it aims to identify areas for future work and options for programming, but it does not prescribe solutions.

2. Electoral Gender Mapping Framework

The EGM framework aims to provide those conducting a mapping with a methodology to facilitate the review. This review begins with a stock-taking of current practices and a discussion about possible improvements. By structuring the mapping, this framework serves as a useful first step towards identifying potential gender equality reforms, whether in the legal framework, in the EMB or in other institutions.

A comprehensive mapping will involve several distinct phases, depending on the needs on the ground and the extent of the review. Consideration should be given to how the EGM will be done in practical terms. A standard EGM will involve a desk review of relevant legislation and reports, an in-country analysis or mission involving interviews with key stakeholders, an in-country debrief and a drafting of a report. A team will usually be constituted to undertake the review.

2.1. Steps and Scope of the EGM

There are several steps involved in an electoral gender mapping. Not all phases have to be implemented and there should be some consideration of which phases will be most appropriate in each national context.

<p>STEP 1: Identify a reference group</p>	<p>This group is responsible for oversight of the review. They set the framework to be followed and will need to verify accuracy and appropriateness of the data collection and interview process. They must agree upon a final draft before it is submitted to UNW/UNDP (and/or the EMB if a review is being done by or in collaboration with the EMB). The reference group may comprise at least two members, usually including UN staff/consultants, and may also involve a key stakeholder/s from the EMB and/or civil society.</p> <p>Team members should have a good understanding of the concepts of gender equality and gender mainstreaming as well as of electoral and political processes.</p>
<p>STEP 2: Appoint the mapping team</p>	<p>This team is responsible for doing the detailed work of the review, including the data collection and interview process. They will also be responsible for drafting the report for consideration and comment by the reference group. The team should comprise two to five members, usually including UN staff/consultants and potentially participants from the EMB and/or civil society.</p> <p>Team members should have a good understanding of the concepts of gender equality and gender mainstreaming as well as of electoral and political processes, to enable completion of all areas of the framework. One team member should be designated to draft the report or to coordinate the drafting by other team members.</p>
<p>STEP 3: Setting the framework</p>	<p>In this phase, the reference group and mapping team need to set the parameters of the EGA to meet local conditions and circumstances. There will be discussions to determine which areas of inquiry should be pursued. During this phase, it is also useful to consult broadly to ascertain views on the proposed framework from outside the reference group and mapping team, including from other EMB members and staff, NGOs, international partners, political parties and any national gender equality bodies.</p>
<p>STEP 4: Data collection in-country</p>	<p>Depending on local circumstances, the information can be collected through research, through direct interviews and through wider discussion seminars.</p> <p>Questions are provided in this toolkit to frame discussions with a range of stakeholders in an effort to collect as much information as possible. Discussions should lead to a shared vision of the priorities and recommendations for action to address these priorities. The effectiveness of the assessment should be judged against the outcomes that emerge to promote women's participation and actions that are taken to ensure that the EMB becomes more gender-sensitive.</p>
<p>STEP 5: Analysis, report and recommendations</p>	<p>During this key phase, the mapping team will be drawing conclusions from the information collected and presenting a narrative analysis and recommendations for future work. The team should draft the report with the findings of the assessment and may, of course, discuss the draft recommendations with the EMB, UN country team and other national stakeholders.</p>
<p>STEP 6: Endorsement of findings and action plan</p>	<p>The final assessment report should be endorsed by the team, the EMB and other partners involved and those who will work on implementing the recommendations. The country team may need to translate the EGM recommendations into formal programme activities and devise an action plan and timetable for implementation.</p> <p>At the very least, a mapping will give electoral stakeholders an opportunity to reflect on the importance of women's political participation. Taking stock is a first step, after which stakeholders can draw up and implement a roadmap for reform with concrete objectives, actions and deadlines suited to the national context. Ideally, this will be outlined in an official action plan to be implemented by the relevant stakeholders, notably the EMB.</p>

2.2. Key participants and stakeholders

The EGM team may engage a diverse range of stakeholders in meeting and interviews, including:

- Electoral management practitioners (including ministers, commissioners, election staff)
- Members of parliament
- Political party members and candidates for election
- Civil society organizations and gender activists
- Academics that monitor women's electoral participation
- Election opinion researchers (e.g., Gallup)
- Media journalists and other election commentators, including on social media
- Representatives of international and regional organizations

A more reflective discussion can be facilitated by engaging a diverse group of participants. The diversity of that group may enhance the legitimacy of the assessment process and ensure that the plurality of views is considered. This should, however, be balanced with the need for confidentiality and the impact of seniority in some bureaucracies: junior staff, for example, may not be comfortable participating in a group with senior management.

Other actors, such as political parties, gender experts, representatives of civil society and national women's machinery, representatives of international donor organizations and the local media may also be invited to participate. These actors tend to bring some outside perspective to the discussion.

2.3. Sources of data

While a mapping can be guided by the questions that follow in the next section, evidence should be corroborated with independent sources of data, particularly on the legal arrangements around elections, the political participation of women to date and the general situation of women in the country. Documents and data sources that can be used to compile this information include:

- Ratification status of human rights treaties (CEDAW, ICCPR)
- Latest Country Report to CEDAW Committee and the Committee's Concluding Observations
- Constitution
- Electoral laws and associated regulations
- Political party constitutions and manifestos
- List of men and women in leadership positions in the major political parties
- Government and opposition parties' policies or programmes concerning gender equality
- Laws relating to gender equality passed by the parliament
- National statistics on the status of women, including women's literacy and education levels; labour force participation; wealth ownership; birth rates; maternal mortality rates; etc.
- Proportion of women in the executive, as members of parliament and as local level representatives (currently and in the recent past)

- Proportion of women candidates at the last elections, by party (including independent candidates)
- Number of men and women registered and voted in the last election
- List of men and women working in the electoral management body (in the EMB Board or Commission, in senior management positions, in the secretariat and as temporary staff)
- Corporate policies of the electoral management body, including strategic plan, recruitment and promotion policies, training and professional development policies, anti-discrimination policies, communications policies, provisions for maternity/paternity leave
- Reports of domestic and international election observers
- Studies or reports on women's political participation in this country

3. Electoral Gender Mapping Questions

The EGM framework specifically identifies areas for discussion and assessment among stakeholders and decision-makers in the electoral process. The method involves answering questions about the policy frameworks and work of the electoral management structures concerned. These questions are grouped under six topics:

1. **The legal and policy framework for women's political participation**
2. **The status of women's political participation**
3. **Women's participation in election campaigns and political parties**
4. **Women as voters – registration and polling preparation and arrangements**
5. **Gender-sensitive electoral management bodies**
6. **Coordinating electoral assistance**

The framework is designed as a starting point; the early stages of the mapping process must be devoted to customizing the framework to the local circumstances to ensure the most useful outcomes. Not all questions are relevant or appropriate in all countries or all electoral management systems.

1. **The legal and policy framework for women's political participation**

Area of investigation: International conventions and instruments have provided a normative framework to advocate for changes to electoral and other laws to ensure women's increased presence in decision making in line with international targets. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2122, among others, have served as key pillars in this normative framework, encouraging legal reforms to promote women's access to political decision-making bodies, including establishing targets for numerical representation. The adoption of parity legislation or laws introducing reforms like electoral quotas has been effective in increasing gender balance in elected institutions.

- 1.1 Which of the main UN human rights treaties is the country party to? CEDAW? ICCPR?
- 1.2 Is the country a party to regional treaties and conventions that relate to gender equality? If so, to which ones?
- 1.3 Does the constitution guarantee equal rights for men and women? If yes, what specific provision guarantees their equality? When were these written into the constitution?
- 1.4 (If relevant) Was there a public discussion/consultation in the process of drafting the constitution? How were women able to provide input into the negotiations?
- 1.5 Do any laws relating directly to the election and regulation of political parties include references to women and gender equality? Please provide law name, date and key provisions.
- 1.6 By what kind of electoral system is the country's legislature and/or head of state elected? What are the implications of the system on women's rates of election?
- 1.7 Are there any temporary special measures in place to ensure women's participation and representation, e.g., reserved seats, legislated candidate quotas, voluntary candidate quotas and incentives for political parties to place women in electable positions?

2. **The status of women's political participation**

Area of investigation: Women's political participation is enabled by a range of factors, including political will, cultural and behavioural change, the education of girls and women, the support of male gender equality champions and networks of women – be they from civil society, academia, the media or the private sector. Obstacles, however, are also numerous and pervasive and are manifest in discriminatory cultural norms and attitudes, discriminatory legal and policy frameworks, insufficient commitment from political leaders to gender equality and a lack of understanding of the benefits of gender equality. Understanding the cultural context surrounding women's current political participation in a country is useful in identifying appropriate recommendations to improve that level of engagement.

- 2.1 Please provide sex-disaggregated data for the current and previous parliaments and the government.
- 2.2 Please provide data on the number of women registered to vote and voter turnout from the last election.
- 2.3 How conducive is the general environment for women's political engagement? Are there social, economic, cultural, religious or other impediments to women's participation?
- 2.4 Is the status of women broadly the same across the country or are there different trends related to the location or ethnic status of women?
- 2.5 Are civil society, academia and media promoting women's involvement in the electoral process? How effective have they been?
- 2.6 How active are the women members of parliament? Do they prioritize gender equality work? How do they liaise with civil society?

3. Women's participation in election campaigns and political parties

Area of investigation: An in-depth understanding of the factors that favour and hinder the election of women to office is needed. It is necessary to understand what have been the influential factors in past elections in the campaign environment and specifically related to political parties and how they are organized. This section should look at the achievements and challenges to women's participation as candidates (specifically, the electoral system, temporary special measure/quotas, training, financial support, media access, etc.).

Questions to: Women MPs, women candidates, political party members, CSOs, experts

Election environment

- 3.1 What is the electoral system in use and how does it affect women's election rates? Are there any gender quotas in place? Has any research been done on the 'electability' of women candidates versus men? Would more women candidates mean more women potentially being elected?
- 3.2 Does the EMB collect sex-disaggregated statistics on candidate registration? If so, is this data collected at the time of nomination and how is it kept up-to-date? Where or how does the EMB publish any sex-disaggregated data that it holds?
- 3.3 If not, what are the major obstacles to collecting these statistics? Are there legal barriers to collection and/or reporting this data? Is this data collection being considered for future implementation?
- 3.4 What are the key factors that determine 'electability'? Is sex a key constraint? Are other factors more influential, like support of political parties, clans or political finance?
- 3.5 How influential is money in politics? Are there any regulations that make the allocation of public funding dependent on political parties' fulfilment of gender equality requirements (e.g., the promotion of women's participation in decision-making)?
- 3.6 Does the EMB regulate any aspect of public campaign funding, e.g., spending bans and limits for political parties and/or candidates; banning contributions from specific sources such as foreign donors for political parties and/or candidates; limiting the length of the campaign period; or requiring that all financial donations to political parties and candidates be publicly disclosed? If so, is this information publicly available and disaggregated by sex of candidate?
- 3.7 How prevalent are practices like 'vote-buying' or 'family-voting'?
- 3.8 Are there campaign related codes of conduct? How do such codes handle gender equality issues?
- 3.9 Are there opportunities for the EMB to conduct or participate in post-election review? Have lessons been learned and collated on women's participation in elections as voters and candidates?

Political parties

- 3.10 Are there statistics on the overall gender composition of political parties? Leadership, membership, etc. Do political parties have women's wings or groups?
- 3.11 How inclusive are political parties in representing the views, interests and needs of women, through internal regulations, policies or leadership rhetoric?
- 3.12 Are political parties encouraging women's participation and representation, e.g., through specific outreach to women voters and candidates or by taking measures for women to get elected to office? How are women represented in political party leadership?
- 3.13 Are any temporary special measures other than quotas discussed or implemented by political parties?
- 3.14 How are candidates selected by political parties? Are there primary election contests? How many women run for party primaries and how many succeed? Can parties adopt measures during candidate selection/primaries to increase the number of women?
- 3.15 Do political parties have platforms on gender equality? If so, what are they? Could they be improved?
- 3.16 Do political parties have male and female speakers at rallies and interviews?

Monitoring women's participation as candidates

- 3.17 How many civil society monitoring groups or domestic observers are monitoring elections? Have any groups paid particular attention to gender equality concerns?
- 3.18 Is there monitoring of the election campaigns for gender equality? In particular, is there any analysis of media coverage rates of male and female candidates? What is the gender breakdown of news anchors and reporters?
- 3.19 Are there laws or regulations related to hate speech on the basis of gender? How and by whom are these enforced?

Mitigating violence against women in elections

- 3.20 Have female candidates encountered and reported intimidation or interference with their campaign efforts in the past? Have these differed from problems encountered by men? To whom are these incidences most commonly reported?
- 3.21 Have female voters encountered and reported intimidation and interference with the exercise of their vote? To whom are these incidences most commonly reported?
- 3.22 Does the EMB or other state institution collect information on election-related violence? Is this information sex-disaggregated to ascertain any differential impact on women candidates or women voters?
- 3.23 Are there policies, programmes or initiatives in place to mitigate the incidents of violence against women in elections as voters and candidates? If so, how do they operate in practice? Have any of these been evaluated for their effectiveness?

- 3.24 Who are considered to be key partners in preventing violence against women in elections? How are these partnerships developed and sustained?

4. Women as voters: Registration and polling preparation and arrangements

Area of investigation: Women must be able and empowered to exercise their civic rights, notably the right to vote in elections. A gender-sensitive EMB should ensure that women's and men's concerns and experiences are taken fully into account in the design and preparation of all voter registration and polling arrangements. Three areas of work in particular can be focused on: ensuring that all eligible women are registered to vote; ensuring that all eligible women are able to cast their own vote (in secret); and ensuring that all women are informed to vote through outreach and education. Other stakeholders may also be involved.

Questions for: EMBs or other bodies charged with administering elections, ministries, CSOs involved in voter education

Voter registration

- 4.1 Does the EMB collect sex-disaggregated data on voter registration? If so, when is the data collected and how is it kept up-to-date? Where or how does the EMB publish any sex-disaggregated data that it holds?
- 4.2 If not, what are the major obstacles to collecting these statistics? Are there legal barriers to collection and/or reporting this data?
- 4.3 Are there known shortcomings or obstacles in the voter registration process that are disadvantageous to women? If so, how has the EMB sought to overcome them?
- 4.4 Are there any issues related to need for photographs, documentation, etc. where women may have more difficulty in complying with the requirements?
- 4.5 Do the times and places for registration present any problems for specific groups of men or women? Is there a need to provide separate registration locations for women or separate entrances to a common registration location? Has this been tried and how was it received by women and men?
- 4.6 If the voter register uses or is based on other data sources such as population or civil registries or property registers, are these registers known to have full representation of women across the population? If there are deficiencies in these other registers, is the EMB empowered to take steps to ensure full registration of women on the voter register?
- 4.7 If it is common for women to change their names upon marriage, how do women ensure that their electoral registration is up-to-date and matches any other identification they hold? Is this done automatically by state bodies?
- 4.8 Are there cultural traditions that tend to inhibit the registration or participation of women? Are authorities taking any measures to overcome them?

- 4.9 Does the EMB produce training materials for those involved in registering voters? Does this material include information on how to ensure an inclusive registration process for men and women?
- 4.10 Does the EMB produce public information materials on voter registration? Does this material include key messages on the rights of women and men to register and vote?

Polling arrangements

- 4.11 Does the EMB collect and report gender sex-disaggregated data on voter turnout? If so, when is the data collected? Where does the EMB publish any sex-disaggregated data that it collects?
- 4.12 If not, is this type of data collection being considered for future elections? Are there logistical or legal barriers to collecting and/or reporting the sex of voters at an aggregate level?
- 4.13 What actions has the EMB taken to provide an enabling environment for women voters?
- 4.14 Have there been instances of ‘family voting’? Have there been instances of proxy voting? What action did the EMB take?
- 4.15 Do the EMB’s instructions for polling officials include information on equal access to voting for women and men and on ensuring that all voters have the opportunity to cast their own ballots?
- 4.16 Is there a need to provide separate voting locations for women or separate entrances to a common voting location? Has this been tried and how was it received by women and men?
- 4.17 Are voters required to produce identification or other documents to vote? Does this requirement impact equally on men and on women?
- 4.18 What are the polling days and hours? Do these times provide sufficient opportunities for men and women to vote?
- 4.19 Are polling locations well known and are voters notified of them ahead of time?
- 4.20 Are there alternative polling methods for those who cannot attend a polling station? Are these methods equally accessible to men and to women and do they ensure that all voters would remain free of intimidation in casting their vote?
- 4.21 If police or other law enforcement officials are present in polling stations, what is the gender breakdown of those on such duty?

Promoting women’s participation in voter outreach

- 4.22 How are gender equality issues, and women’s political participation in particular, covered in the EMB information and education work?
- 4.23 Are there other bodies or groups that undertake information and education on electoral matters? How do they mainstream gender equality?

- 4.24 Does the EMB track the impact of its information and education work through surveys or other assessment methods? If so, are the results of this research disaggregated by gender?
- 4.25 Have voter outreach initiatives found different levels of electoral awareness and understanding among men and women?
- 4.26 Has the EMB developed strategies that aim to ensure women have an equal level of electoral knowledge as men? For example, have specific information and education campaigns, materials or initiatives been devised specifically for women? If so, how effective have these been?
- 4.27 If there is family voting in a country, how has this been addressed in information and education? Does the EMB target messages against family voting at men as well as women?
- 4.28 In any materials produced by the EMB or other actors, is there an equal representation of men and women in passive and active roles? In particular with materials that show the voting process, are women depicted equally as polling officials, voters, observers and security personnel?
- 4.29 What methods are used to deliver education and information? Does the plan for the campaign or initiative include strategies to target women through the use of specific delivery channels or specific delivery times and places?
- 4.30 Is there a need to deliver education and information directly to women in women-only groups? If this is done, how has it worked?

5. Gender-Sensitive Electoral Management Bodies

Area of investigation: As the bodies charged with conducting elections, EMBs (and their equivalents) are key to promote women's political participation. A first step is getting the EMB's 'house in order' and ensuring that women are able to contribute – at all levels – to the decisions by which elections are organized and managed. A gender-sensitive EMB should seek to reduce any gaps in women's participation and work towards gender equality as an integral part of its strategy, policies and operations and should ensure that the workplace promotes work/life balance for all staff.

Questions for: EMBs or other bodies charged with administering elections

Structure and staff composition of electoral management

- 5.1 How are elections managed? Is there a centralized coordinating body or is it managed by separate bodies? What is the structure of those bodies and how are they established or constituted?
- 5.2 Is the staff of this body or of these bodies recruited or appointed? Are they permanently engaged, seconded from other public service bodies or temporarily engaged only during electoral periods?

- 5.3 What have been the historical trends for women's membership of the EMB itself (as staff, in the senior leadership of the Board, Commission or Committee or as individual officer holders)?
- 5.4 Have targets or quotas been established for women's inclusion in the staffing structure at various levels (e.g., women in management positions, women presiding officers, polling officials)?
- 5.5 If the EMB's staff are covered by wider public sector rules in terms of recruitment/appointment, promotion, etc., do these rules include provisions on gender equality and equal opportunity?
- 5.6 Does the EMB provide information in annual or other reports that includes the gender and level of the staff and other corporate data disaggregated by sex?

Subnational electoral management bodies

- 5.7 Are subnational bodies established to run regional or local elections (or conduct voter registration)? How are these bodies established and staffed?
- 5.8 What is the gender composition of these subnational bodies in terms of membership and in terms of leadership positions? If the national EMB does not have this information, has it attempted to collect the information?

Registration and/or polling station committees

- 5.9 Does the EMB establish registration or polling station committees or similar for running elections? How are these committees appointed?
- 5.10 What is the gender composition of these committees in terms of membership and in terms of leadership positions? If the national EMB does not have this information, has it attempted to collect the information?
- 5.11 If the EMB appoints short-term staff to work throughout the country during the election period (including in registration and polling stations), how does it recruit these staff? What is the gender profile of these short-term staff?

Gender policies and infrastructure

- 5.12 Does the EMB have a strategic plan and, if so, does it include objectives related to gender equality?
- 5.13 Does the EMB have a gender policy or gender action plan?
- 5.14 Has any mechanism been established to implement a gender mainstreaming strategy, such as gender focal points or an internal gender equality committee?

Access to training and development opportunities

- 5.15 Does the EMB have a policy on staff access to training and development? How are decisions taken on participation in training and similar events?
- 5.16 Does the EMB provide training on gender equality or include gender equality in wider training programmes? Has the EMB sent members or staff to such training offered by

international partners? Are opportunities provided to enhance the professional development of women, particularly on leadership?

- 5.17 Does the EMB provide specialized training for gender focal points or staff involved in the development and implementation of gender policies or gender mainstreaming strategies?
- 5.18 If the EMB has a pool of regular trainers or a pool of accredited BRIDGE facilitators, what is the gender breakdown of this pool? Is the gender composition of training teams monitored?
- 5.19 How often have staff of the EMB travelled abroad for election observation, conferences, seminars or the like over the last two years? What has been the percentage of women participants and men participants in these events? Does this figure closely correlate to the overall gender composition of the EMB and its staff or to the gender composition of the EMB and management levels of the staff?
- 5.20 How many formal training workshops organised by international organisations (UNDP, IFES, etc.) has the EMB participated in over the last two years? What has been the percentage of women participants and men participants from the EMB to these events? Does this figure closely correlate to the overall gender composition of the EMB and its staff or to the gender composition of the EMB and management levels of the staff?
- 5.21 Are there any factors that may inhibit the full participation of women in training and development opportunities, whether organized by the EMB or by partners (e.g., international trainings in languages spoken less often by women; training at times and places that present difficulties for women)?

Facilitating work/life balance

- 5.22 Is the EMB's office situated in a safe place for women and men to access at all times when required?
- 5.23 Does the EMB office have equal facilities for men and women in terms of bathrooms, break rooms and, if required, prayer rooms?
- 5.24 Are there special facilities for women who are breastfeeding? Is childcare available on the premises or is there a subsidy for EMB staff to cover the costs of childcare?
- 5.25 Does the EMB provide its staff with maternity/paternity leave or leave to facilitate caring responsibilities? Is the EMB covered by existing policies in this area as part of the public sector?
- 5.26 What is the impact of the election period – long hours, weekend work, extensive travelling – on the staff and their personal responsibilities managed (e.g., are staff entitled to time in lieu or financially compensated)? Is the impact different for men and for women?

6. Coordinating electoral assistance

Cooperation between UN entities and other electoral assistance providers creates opportunities for innovation and more effective use of resources. Collective planning

allows international assistance providers the chance to mainstream gender equality more efficiently across programmes. The policies of donor and bilateral organizations can be extremely influential in determining how gender mainstreaming is addressed in electoral assistance. They can demonstrate commitment, establish standards and tools for improved gender outcomes and enhance accountability mechanisms that create more investment in gender mainstreaming and, ultimately, increased women's participation.

- 6.1** What entities provided electoral assistance during the previous elections? How much of this assistance included targeted initiatives to improve women's political participation? What donors provided support?
- 6.2** Has there been international assistance that focused on women as candidates and/or within political parties (e.g., support for special measures, training, support to CSOs, facilitating media access)? Did this have any impact on the work of the EMB?
- 6.3** Did the EMB receive support from international donors ahead of the last election? What were the main types of interventions? How was the support received?
- 6.4** Did the support include gender mainstreaming advice and assistance? If so, please explain the types of interventions and the target audience (voters, candidates, electoral staff) and the impact they had. If not, why was that?
- 6.5** How many international advisers and consultants have been engaged in electoral assistance in the country (if there has been long-term assistance, use figures for the last electoral cycle)? What is the gender breakdown in terms of numbers, level and roles?
- 6.6** If there has been international assistance, did any evaluation of the assistance include evaluation of its gender impact?
- 6.7** What key lessons have been learned in the delivery of gender-targeted electoral assistance? Who are the primary facilitators of women's participation as voters and candidates as evidenced by past efforts? How could programming have been handled differently? What are the recommendations for the future?
- 6.8** What type of support for gender mainstreaming would be most useful in the future (such as provision of gender expertise, BRIDGE training, sharing of experiences with other EMBs, etc.)?
- 6.9** What recommendations are there about how to better support women so that they are successful in the electoral cycle (through direct support to women, support for EMB activities or mainstreaming effort, etc.)?

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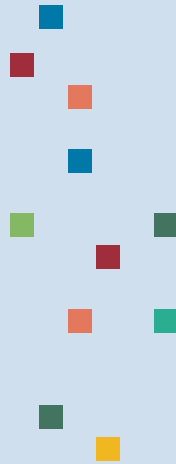
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This Guide focuses on the role of electoral management bodies in promoting gender equality and encouraging women's participation. It presents the positive work being done to ensure women are able to play a key role within these institutions, as well as more broadly in the electoral process and event.

