

Final Report

**MANAGING ASSISTANCE IN SUPPORT OF
POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES**

A Practical Guide

Contract No. AEP-5468-I-00-6006-00

July 1999

By:
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

Written by:
Benjamin Crosby, MSI
Catherine Barnes, MSI
Carrie Manning, MSI

**Submitted to:
USAID/G/DG**

Kkelly@msi-inc.com
MSI No. 3224-011

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT APPEARS AS IT WAS RECEIVED

Inside Front Cover

Title Page

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Contents

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
I. INTRODUCTION	6
A. Purpose of This Manual	6
B. Structure of the Manual	6
C. A Systematic Approach For Defining Elections Assistance Programs.....	7
II. OBJECTIVES FOR ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE.....	8
A. Who Wants the Assistance?	8
B. Motives for Assistance.....	9
C. A Framework for Assistance	10
III. ASSESSMENT AND DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM.....	12
A. Approaches to Defining the Problem.....	12
B. Assessing the Context for Assistance	13
C. Donor Environment Issues	18
IV. DEFINING AND ASSESSING OPTIONS FOR ASSISTANCE	23
A. Approaches to National Election Assistance.....	23
B. Approaches to Local Election Assistance	41
C. Approaches to Post-Election Assistance	44
D. Approaches to Political Party Assistance	46
V. LINKING OPTIONS TO STRATEGY	52
A. Placement of Elections Assistance in the Country Strategy.....	52
VI. MANAGING ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE.....	54
A. Conditioning Factors	54
B. Cooperation with Other U.S. Agencies.....	56
C. Cooperation with Partners:.....	56
D. Financing Mechanisms	58
E. Coordinating Assistance with other Donors.....	60
APPENDIX A	62
APPENDIX B	67
APPENDIX C	69

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Managing Assistance In Support of Political and Electoral Processes has been developed for Democracy and Governance (DG) officers in the field. It is designed as a practical manual, aimed at helping DG field officers anticipate and effectively deal with the myriad issues and challenges that may arise as they design and manage election assistance programs in transitional environments. The manual guides users through a series of key steps: identifying stakeholders and their motives, defining the problem and assessing contextual factors, selecting options for assistance, linking those options to the mission strategy, and managing electoral assistance. It is intended to be suggestive rather than directive. It recognizes that while there exists a certain “conventional wisdom” about elections programming drawn from years of experience, the high number of variables involved precludes a “one size fits all” approach. An overview of the manual is provided below.

Objectives for Assistance

At the outset, DG officers need to take into account who wants assistance and why. They also need to understand that as the number of potential stakeholders increases, so too will the variance in interests and motives. It is not difficult to imagine a scenario in which a host-country government and local political actors, the USAID mission in the field, USAID/Washington, the State Department, the U.S. Congress, special interest groups, assistance providers, and multi-lateral organizations all have a stake in assistance. In such instances, the task of reconciling expectations for and about aid can become a real challenge. Ultimately, for an intervention to be successful, the assistance must be welcomed or “owned” by those receiving it irrespective of the good intentions and active engagement of those providing it. If there is a sense that assistance is being imposed, the chances for a successful intervention will likely diminish.

So, why would stakeholders want assistance in support of political and electoral processes? Assistance may be seen as a means to ending conflict, extending the franchise, or making politics more competitive. It might be intended to ensure the integrity of the election process, or improve the responsiveness and accountability of government. At a fundamental level, however, assistance will have one of two motives:

Political Motive: A political motive is one concerned with the validity of the election outcome. Political motives are generated from a suspicion that a particular election result may or will be tainted. The overriding concern is whether or not elections will produce a government that will be able to act as a legitimate interlocutor with the U.S. Government.

Developmental Motive: Developmental motives are those concerned with strengthening the electoral system and building local capacity. While there is concern that an election’s outcome be legitimate, it is assumed that if the electoral system is strong and election management capable, the outcome will be credible.

While political motives may (and hopefully will) result in a strengthened system and bolstered capacities, they will do so as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. As a result, caution should be exercised concerning any assumption that politically motivated assistance will have lasting results at a systemic or institutional level. While a broad distinction between political and developmental motives has been made for analytical purposes, it should be noted that these are not necessarily neat categories, nor are they always mutually exclusive.

Consistent with this understanding of the motives behind political and electoral processes

assistance, the manual has adopted the following framework for assistance:

Legitimizing Assistance: This type of assistance is an outgrowth of political motives. It seeks to assure that the outcome of a particular election is valid and that the process is accepted and viewed as credible by key domestic and international stakeholders. Legitimizing assistance is typically given in advance of post-conflict and breakthrough elections, and tends to be driven by the embassy side of the mission.

Institutionalizing Assistance: Institutionalizing assistance is developmentally oriented. It seeks to strengthen the electoral system and build the capabilities of institutions and actors involved in campaigns and elections. Institutionalizing assistance may be given during the consolidation phase of democratization, with the USAID mission taking a leading role.

By clearly defining the objectives for assistance, as the framework invites, there will be less likelihood of unwarranted expectations and a greater chance of achieving appropriate results.¹

Assessing and Defining the Problem

Once DG field officers identify and understand the motives behind the proposed assistance, it will be necessary to clearly define the problem at hand and to assess the context for assistance. There are two ways to approach problem definition. The first is through an *a priori* definition. This definition assumes that there is a need for a particular type of assistance and that the need is both appropriate and important. The second option is a diagnostic approach. Through an assessment, it tries to identify those areas where interventions are needed to strengthen the

¹ The framework was originally developed for *Technical Assistance for Election Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned* and applied to *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned*, both prepared for USAID by Management Systems International. For a more detailed analysis of types of assistance and their applicability, please refer to these publications.

process. This approach benefits from some sort of methodical examination of the election system. The choice to opt for an *a priori* definition or a diagnostic approach will be influenced by the degree of urgency behind a request for assistance, time and resource considerations, and the amount of information available about the election system in question. Since elections do not occur in a vacuum, it is extremely important that DG field officers assess the context in which elections, and ultimately assistance, will take place. Context will be a key factor in deciding what type of activity or combination of activities is appropriate and feasible. In assessing context, DG field officers should take into account the following:

- *Type of Election:* The choice of voting system and types of offices to be elected, as well as the political and historical juncture into which an election fits are extremely important factors.
- *Political Considerations:* The configuration of the political environment will determine the conditions under which an election will be carried out, and will greatly influence the competitiveness and significance of the election.
- *Social-Cultural Factors:* A range of social and cultural factors will affect both the conduct of elections and provision of assistance. These may include ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity, urban/rural divide, illiteracy, tribal or clan affiliations, and/or gender inequality.
- *Economic Situation:* Since elections are expensive, the state of a country's economy will have a direct effect on elections. If election management is to be effective, the government must be able to cover costs of staffing, commodities and services.
- *Institutional Issues:* The reform and management of electoral systems is carried out by government institutions. Therefore, the condition and capacity of these

institutions to implement changes and fulfill their responsibilities is critical to an efficient and professionally-run election.

- *Security Concerns:* All too often, whether as a result of war or civil unrest, violence mars elections in transitional environments. The level and intensity of violence needs to be assessed in order to determine its potential impact on the political campaign, the election process, and the assistance program.

In addition to these immediate contextual factors, the broader donor environment will also be important. For example, the DG field officer should take into account:

- *U.S. Policy Considerations:* Foreign assistance serves as a primary tool of U.S. policy and reflects national political, economic, and security priorities. Policy considerations will affect the timing, objectives, nature and scope of assistance in support of political and electoral processes.
- *Program Priorities/Strategic Objectives:* Priorities for assistance programs may be set at a number of levels including the U.S. Congress, the State Department, USAID/Washington and embassies and missions in the field. A set of objectives has already been developed as part of USAID's "Results Framework," although these deal primarily with developmental objectives and may not always be a perfect fit for politically-motivated programming.
- *Available Resources/Source of Funding:* Nothing will so quickly determine the nature, scope, and duration of assistance activities as the availability of resources. Financial realities will dictate whether election assistance is even feasible. And, at some point, essentials may need to be separated from non-essentials. The source of official funding will also play a role in who determines if funds will be spent and how they will be spent.
- *Capabilities of Institutional Partners:* When selecting implementing organizations, the

DG field officer will want to consider each partner's expertise, track-record, rapid-response capability, and flexibility. For post-conflict and breakthrough elections, heavy reliance will likely be placed on American partners. But as the country moves toward consolidation, direct funding of local organizations is probable.

- *Issues of Timing/Timetable for Elections:* Timing of assistance at an operational level, and the timetable for implementing it are critical to the effectiveness of the intervention. If the timing is poor, or there is insufficient time to complete the project, objectives may need to be modified or activities postponed.
- *Donor Coordination Options:* With the participation of several donors, there is an opportunity to pool resources and assign responsibilities in a manner that best meets each agency's mandate, priorities, and capabilities. Coordination is also necessary to avoid redundancy, provide coherence to the assistance effort, and manage the numerous demands before the election commission.

The question of context is dealt with extensively in Section III of this manual. The impact of context on programming is illustrated in Table 7, which can be found in Appendix B.

Options for Assistance

There are a variety of options for assistance available to the DG field officer. Assistance can be given in support of national elections, local elections, the post-election period, and/or political party development. These options are discussed in Section IV of the manual. An overview of tools for assistance is also provided in Appendix A.

There are four sub-categories of national election assistance:

- *Legal Framework:* The legal framework for elections refers to the legal standards

methodology and procedures for organizing elections and fulfilling voting rights.

- *Election Management*: Election management refers to the process by which the legal framework is operationalized.
- *Voter Information/Education*: Voter information refers to the provision of basic facts that enable qualified citizens to vote. Voter education moves beyond the mechanics of voting to encompass broader concepts such as the one-person one-vote principle.
- *Election Observation and Complaint Resolution*: Election observation is a method by which the efficiency, transparency and professionalism of campaigns and elections are judged. Complaint resolution mechanisms also safeguard the integrity of the electoral system and the accountability of its participants.

Within each of these sub-categories, the type of assistance can be fashioned to accommodate either political or developmental motives. For example, legitimizing assistance in support of the legal framework typically aims to facilitate the development of basic “rules of the game” sufficient to provide for a legitimate outcome under difficult circumstances. This assistance might involve broadening and diversifying participation in the debate on election law reform, securing key amendments to election legislation, and brokering a code of conduct between all political participants.

Institutionalizing assistance, on the other hand, will seek to develop a body of legislation on campaigns and elections that is comprehensive, coherent and consistent, and which most ideally suits the socio-economic context and political realities of the country in question. Program activities might be directed at a comprehensive overhaul of the legal framework (including the introduction of a Universal Electoral Code), the institutionalization of public hearings and public notification, and training in legal and regulatory drafting.

Each sub-category of national election assistance is explored through the lens of the legitimizing/institutionalizing framework. A series of tables (1-4) provided compares and contrasts the various assistance approaches. Appendix B illustrates which sub-categories are appropriate under differing circumstances-- and how they may be modified to accommodate those circumstances. For a thorough analysis of national election assistance, see *Technical Assistance for Election Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned*.

The discussion of national election assistance is followed by an overview of activities in support of local elections. Local election assistance is primarily concerned with the accountability of local officials. The local election process can be more complicated than the national, presenting unique challenges for election managers, political actors and assistance providers. While the general sub-categories of assistance are the same as those for national elections, they reflect the distinguishing features of local elections. For example, if local decision-making bodies are to be elected for the first time, assistance providers may be faced with creating, rather than modifying a legal framework. For a detailed discussion of local election assistance, please refer to *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned*.

Another option for offering assistance is post-election assistance. Post-election assistance occurs immediately after an election, and before seating of the new legislature or government. This category of assistance is aimed at facilitating a smooth political transition by providing a flexible funding mechanism for a variety of activities that must begin immediately after elections. These activities may be directed at establishing and strengthening the legal framework of, familiarizing political actors with, building public confidence in, and minimizing threats to the new political system. Post-election assistance serves as a means of upholding the momentum for reform, demonstrating a sustained U.S. commitment, providing an opportunity for relationship building, and

positively influencing the stability of the new political system. For more information, see *Post-Election Assistance: Securing A Smooth Transition*.

Support for political party development is an important facet of democratization efforts. It is imperative that assistance programs take into account the role and character of political parties. The manual explores some of the most basic and important of political parties functions (also see Appendix C) and how external assistance can be used most effectively to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability. Viewed through the lens of the framework, legitimizing assistance focuses on “leveling the political playing field” and providing for greater political competition. Institutionalizing assistance, however, places its attention on building the organization and governance capacity of political parties. For a comparison of legitimizing and institutionalizing political party assistance, please refer to Table 5. A more in-depth assessment is presented in *Political Party Development Assistance: Reflections and Recommendations*.

Linking Options and Strategy

Once the DG field officer has selected an assistance option, he/she will be confronted with linking that option to the mission’s country strategy. Typically, election assistance will fulfill one of the following roles outlined in Section V:

- *Integral*: In this case, the assistance activity fits directly into the mission’s country strategy. More than likely, the assistance has a development motive and will link to one of the mission’s regular strategic objectives (probably in the area of Elections and Political Processes) through one of its intermediate results.
- *Special Objective*: Here, a demand for elections assistance may arise that was not contemplated in the assessment carried out to develop the mission’s country strategy.

- This may be the case when a breakthrough election is announced or when changes in the political environment create an opening for election assistance.

- *Emergency Assistance*: If a snap election is called, the mission may have little or no time to formulate a special objective. Even if the assistance is completely unrelated to any of the mission’s strategic objectives intermediate results, care must be taken to designing activities that can produce measurable results.

For extensive guidelines on the development of indicators and reporting of results, please refer to the Results Framework prepared by the Elections and Political Processes team in the Democracy and Governance Center at USAID/Washington.

Managing Assistance

At the point that assistance moves from the conceptual to the implementation phase (to be undertaken by USAID’s cooperating partners), the focus of the DG officer will turn to the management of electoral assistance. Section VI explores a range of issues central to effective management. These include conditioning factors, such as: the timing of assistance; the ability of the mission to manage the proposed activities-- and the receptivity of the host-country government; co-operation with other U.S. agencies; working with institutional partners; funding mechanisms; and donor coordination.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Manual

This manual is intended to serve as a practical guide in assisting Democracy and Governance (DG) field officers in the development of electoral and political processes programs and activities. It is aimed at helping them frame election issues in newly emerging or still consolidating democracies in a broader democratic and political perspective. It is also designed to help them anticipate and think through the problems and complexities that inevitably arise, so as to better address them through programmatic solutions.

Quite clearly, no two elections are alike -- each election will undoubtedly require a unique response on the part of the mission and/or its partners. Nevertheless, a significant number of useful practices and lessons have emerged from USAID election programs around the world, so that possible approaches can be suggested for the various substantive areas of electoral processes. The approaches suggested in this handbook are based on material gathered through a year-long assessment of electoral assistance activities, carried out by USAID missions and their partners over the past eight years. This work has been compiled in a series of four synthesis papers and 10 country case studies.² For more information on these

² It might be noted that the approach here differs substantially from an earlier effort entitled *Managing Democratic Electoral Assistance* by David Hirschmann with Johanna Mendelson (Washington D..C., United States Agency for International Development, 1995). Unlike the present effort, Hirschmann and Mendelson did not develop specific papers and case studies in the process of preparation of the handbook, but drew primarily from extant literature, project reports, and interviews. They do, however, provide a wide array of helpful and still timely insights and suggestions on many of the issues to be covered in this document. It should also be noted that at times we have drawn liberally from that work.

supplementary materials, please refer to the suggested readings list at the end of this manual.

At least two caveats apply here: first, handbooks, manuals, and guides frequently suffer from a temptation to develop the “one size that fits all” approach and may become highly prescriptive. There is no such effort here. Though structured as a handbook, this manual is meant to be suggestive, not directive. It is clearly recognized that many of the approaches found useful in one set of electoral environments will be less than helpful in another. Constraints and conditions for the implementation of assistance will be major determinants for which suggestions are useful and which are not. Second, a common pitfall is the temptation to be exhaustive -- which is clearly not the case here. With those two caveats in place, to the extent that the approaches and suggestions herein are helpful, the manual will have served its purpose.

B. Structure of the Manual

After a brief introduction to a framework for defining elections assistance, the manual takes the reader through the various steps involved in the development, management, and reporting of activities in support of political and electoral processes. It is confined to those areas most pertinent to the design, implementation, and management of activities in the field. It is written from the point of view of what the DG officer needs to know, and should take into consideration when designing elections activities.

The manual is divided into six sections and three appendices. The first section explores the objectives of elections assistance. Who wants assistance? Who will benefit from it? What are the motives behind the assistance-- and what is the importance of those motives? A clearer understanding of why the assistance is being undertaken is vital to appropriate expectations about what the assistance will achieve, and provides a more sound foundation for design and development of the activity. A framework for identifying the objectives of elections assistance is then introduced. A brief discussion of

matching elections assistance to fit within missions' strategic objectives follows.

The next section examines problem definition and assessment of the context for assistance. It is often said that if the problem is clearly and precisely defined, the solution will be obvious. While this adage is perhaps exaggerated, careful analysis of the problem is extremely important. Two methods for problem definition are discussed: 1) an *a priori* definition of the problem-- where there is little time or need for formal assessment of the election system and/or its context; or 2) a *diagnostic* approach which benefits from a methodical assessment. The next step is developing a clear view of contextual factors affecting elections and elections assistance, e.g. the state of the electoral system, the type of election proposed, competitiveness of local politics, and institutional capacity for managing electoral processes.

In the fourth, and largest section of the manual, the problem of defining and assessing options for assistance is addressed. A common framework (based on whether the objectives for assistance are primarily related to obtaining a legitimate outcome or institutionalizing the electoral system) is used for the discussion of national election assistance, and moves through an examination of options for assistance in support of the legal framework, election management, voter education, election observation and complaint resolution. This is followed by an overview of approaches and options for local and post-elections assistance. Activities in support of party development are also discussed. Throughout this section, feasibility questions, comparative approaches to assistance and program examples are highlighted.

The fifth section deals with the problem of linking the identified assistance options to mission strategy. It examines the role and placement of the activity within missions' country strategy, the development of useful indicators and the reporting of results.

The final section of the manual addresses management issues, covering such elements as capacity for management of election assistance activity, timing of assistance, cooperation with other U.S. agencies, management of implementing partners and donor coordination.

Finally, three appendixes are provided to provide an overview of tools for electoral assistance, comparative assistance options based on context, and essential political party functions and associated skills.

C. A Systematic Approach For Defining Elections Assistance Programs

Since elections assistance is generally provided to address some perceived concern or difficulty with either a country's electoral system or a particular election and its possible outcome, this manual adopts an overall problem solving approach. This approach is one that moves in an orderly way, moving from defining the objectives for assistance and the problem to be addressed to defining and assessing options, managing and implementing the options selected, and finally to monitoring and measuring impact of the assistance provided. At the same time, however, the approach stresses two fundamental elements that condition and are equally critical to any potential intervention-- the context and objectives for the assistance.

Post-conflict, breakthrough, and consolidation elections are terms that speak to different types of conditions under which electoral assistance will take place. The type of assistance required under post-conflict conditions is likely to be vastly different than that for a consolidating election. Less commonly acknowledged, however, are the objectives that motivate a decision to provide assistance for an election or electoral process. Is there concern that the outcome of a post-conflict election will not be viewed as credible? If so, the type of assistance recommended is likely to be different than if the concern is over the efficiency of the institutions managing the process.

II. OBJECTIVES FOR ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE

A. Who Wants the Assistance?

Who are the stakeholders? The question of who wants the assistance is of critical importance. Normally, for interventions to be smoothly implemented and successful in achieving their objectives, the assistance must be welcomed or “owned” by those receiving it. It is not always the case that those on the receiving end actually requested or proposed the idea for assistance in the first place. Not infrequently, multiple stakeholders may want or have an interest in receiving assistance.

As the number of stakeholders increases, so does the probability that their interests and objectives will vary. Consider the following scenario:

Sometimes, particularly in a flush of democratization zeal, suggestions will be made by mission personnel that while clearly in conformity with USAID objectives, have little chance of being fully accepted by host country actors and decision-makers. With significant funding behind externally developed ideas, acceptance can be generated. However, it should be remembered that there may be a cost in terms of diminished ownership and subsequent problems in effective implementation.

When there is a sense that assistance is being imposed on the recipients, the chances for a successful intervention will likely diminish.

Stakeholders may include host country governments and political actors, the U.S. government, special interest groups, and multi-lateral organizations. Each of these is discussed in greater detail below:

- Host country governments, especially those with few resources and with a poorly developed or just emerging electoral

infrastructure, will frequently request assistance.

- Other governmental actors such as legislators, election commissioners, or the courts often solicit assistance.
- Host country political actors including political parties and electoral NGOs may also request assistance.
- The idea for assistance in support of some aspect of elections processes may come directly from the USAID mission or from one or another component of USAID/ Washington, e.g. the Office of Transitional Initiatives (OTI).
- Other U.S. government agencies, such as the U.S. State Department and the National Security Council, have an interest in playing a role in the democratization of countries considered to be in the U.S. national interest. This is particularly true for those countries still in the process of emerging from authoritarian regimes, conflict states, or states experiencing troubled transitions.
- Yet another stakeholder, one often at odds with both the State Department and USAID in terms of objectives, is the U.S. Congress. Congress can easily mandate electoral assistance to a particular country and can just as easily block such assistance. It can also, through shifts in priorities, restructure allocations to either facilitate or impede electoral assistance. It also has the opportunity to exercise its influence through review and audit of USAID activities.
- U.S. civil society may also have significant interest in elections assistance. This is particularly true with respect to country lobbies, e.g. the Ukrainian, Armenian, Mexican, and Dominican lobbies.
- Other special interest organizations dedicated to campaigns, elections and human rights-- e.g. the League of Women Voters, Kids Voting, Freedom House,

Americas Watch, or the Washington Office on Latin America-- may also take a position on elections assistance.

- Assistance providers, e.g. the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) are strong advocates of elections assistance. These organizations have attempted to exercise influence through powerful members of Congress and their staff.
- Finally, interest in elections assistance may come from international organizations with concern for democratization, such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization for American States (OAS). All of these organizations have electoral assistance components, and frequently coordinate with U.S. assistance efforts.

B. Motives for Assistance

What are the factors that motivate stakeholders to want to provide assistance for elections?

There are any number of factors that might arise. Assistance may be provided to help bring about an end to conflict by providing an opportunity for non-violent political competition. It is also a high priority where U.S. security interests are perceived to be somehow at risk. It might contribute to the evolution of a more competitive political environment. Support could facilitate greater equity of representation. Or, it might address concerns about the integrity of the process. It could also be part of an overall package of assistance to enhance, improve and sustain the institutions necessary for the democratic development of the country.

While there are clearly a great number of possible/ potential reasons for lending assistance to electoral and political processes most, if not all, will fall under one of two categories: political motives and developmental motives.

Political motives are those generated from a concern about the outcome of the election. There may some suspicion that a particular election might or will be tainted. Worries exist about whether an outcome will be a legitimate one, producing a government that will be able to act as a legitimate interlocutor with the U.S. government.

Political motives are frequently behind assistance provided for post-conflict elections, where there is not only the desire for a peaceful transition process-- including a reasonably fair election-- but where the U.S. government may have demonstrated predilections at play (e.g., Bosnia, Mozambique, and Angola)³. Collateral concerns over issues such as an anti-drug policy may also provide the impetus for elections assistance (e.g. Mexico in 1994). Where a country is undergoing its first election ever, or after a prolonged period of authoritarian rule (referred to here as a “breakthrough election”), there is usually considerable concern that the election will be sufficiently well-managed so as to produce a result reflecting the will of the people. This was the motive behind electoral assistance in Nigeria and Liberia, and was one of the primary motives for support of the election process in Indonesia.

In contrast, developmental motives are those stemming from a desire to strengthen the electoral system. While politically motivated assistance may also (and hopefully will) result in strengthening the system, it will be as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. It is assumed that if the electoral system is strong and the election management capable, then the outcome will be credible.⁴ Developmental motives tend to be more long term and emphasize the development of sustainable

³ For greater description, see this project's election case study on Mozambique by John Blacken and Terrence Lyons. *From Post-conflict to Municipal Elections*, USAID: Washington D.C.

⁴ See Catherine Barnes, Franca Brilliant, Benjamin L. Crosby, Nicole Dannenberg, Terrence Lyons, Stephen Nix, *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 12.

capacity, since electoral assistance cannot and will not be provided indefinitely. This was the intent of programs designed to improve the legal framework in Ukraine and the voter registry and national identification system in Ghana.⁵

While a broad distinction is made between political and developmental motives for analytical purposes, it should be noted that these are not necessarily neat categories, nor are they mutually exclusive. Quite frequently, in fact, there will be parallel efforts with both political and developmental ends. Further, although USAID may be the primary source of funding for assistance, it is not always the originator of the idea for assistance to a particular country. Likewise, the sorts of motives expressed will vary quite widely depending upon who is doing the asking and/or providing. What is important to remember here is that pressure or demands on USAID for assistance may be from multiple sources with very conflictive objectives. It is not at all unusual for a mission to manage several electoral assistance projects -- some of which have long-term developmental objectives while others have short-term political agendas.

It is also important that the DG field officer(s) charged with management of electoral assistance to recognize differences in motives with other donors since not infrequently, USAID will be called upon to coordinate its activities with other assistance providers. Clarity about the motives of other stakeholders is vital to the effective coordination and optimal use of resources. Other donors may have longer-term, developmental objectives in mind, while U.S. mission objectives are more clearly political, or vice-versa.

Finally, the importance of the election at hand to the interests of the U.S. government will be a strong factor in determining not only if there will be assistance but the source and scale of that assistance. The comparatively massive levels of

⁵ See Franca Brilliant, Denise Dauphinais and Terrence Lyons, *Ghana Elections Case Study*, USAID: Washington D.C., 1999; and Stephen Nix and Ronald Shaiko, *Ukraine Elections Case Study*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1998.

elections support provided to El Salvador and Nicaragua during the 1980s and 90s were largely driven by the United States' very substantial and sustained interest in the stabilization of Central America. U.S. interests in Mozambique, Ukraine, Liberia, Angola, Haiti, and Cambodia also assured comparatively high levels of support for electoral processes in those countries.

It is important for the DG field officer to recognize that fundamental differences between political and developmental motives can create problems in having activities fit the mission's strategic plan. Strategic plans tend to emphasize developmental objectives, and likewise tend to be relatively long-term in focus.⁶ Much of elections assistance, however, is politically motivated with short term objectives, many of which do not fit comfortably into a mission's existing democracy strategy. In certain cases it may be possible to construct a special objective for the proposed assistance, but in others the lead-time will be so short that it falls under the category of "emergency assistance." The primary problem presented with such types of efforts, aside from fitting with mission strategies and potential sidetracking and dispersion of resources, is the lack of time for development of concrete results indicators and criteria for subsequent evaluation of impact and performance.

C. A Framework for Assistance

By focusing on the motives behind elections assistance, a simple framework for developing electoral support activities emerges: those activities related to political objectives can be classified as *legitimizing assistance* while those associated with more developmental objectives

⁶ A brief examination of the Results Framework for Elections and Political Processes for the Agency's Strategic Plan reveals that relatively few of the proposed intermediate results are likely to be met through short-term (i.e., 30-180 days) assistance. The reason clearly, is that the IR's are developmentally rather than politically, focused.

are classified as *institutionalizing assistance* (see box below).⁷

With legitimizing assistance, the process is viewed as a means to an end, i.e., a valid election. Once the anticipated legitimate outcome is achieved, active concern for the process ends. With institutionalizing objectives, however, there is a clear and explicit recognition that a strong, capable electoral process is not necessarily produced with one legitimate election, and the successful implementation of a single election does not necessarily spell the end of assistance.

Election Assistance Framework

Legitimizing assistance seeks to assure that the outcome of a particular election is valid, that the process is accepted, and that it is viewed as credible by key domestic and international stakeholders. The impetus for legitimizing types of assistance often comes from the Embassy side of the U.S. mission and its interest that the election produce a credible result.

Institutionalizing assistance is developmentally oriented. It seeks to construct or strengthen those institutions and actors involved in the electoral process, either as managers and implementers (election commissions, monitoring groups, the judiciary) or as participants (political parties, candidates, civil society) in the process. Again, the primary concern is with strengthening the electoral process per se, with no particular eye to the result—strong and capable institutions can be relied upon to produce sound and credible results.

Although there are certainly exceptions, legitimizing activities tend to occur in the early stages of transition to democracy. Concerns about the integrity of the process are particularly keen in post-conflict or breakthrough situations. When institutions are new, questions will arise about whether they will work effectively. New institutions are more easily manipulated and

errors that lead to distorted results are more likely to occur. There are also worries about whether the process will be acceptable to the general electorate, i.e. one in which it will readily participate. Once past the initial stages of democratization and into consolidation, and especially where there is an incipient record of successful elections, attention tends to shift to making the process smoother and strengthening the electoral system.

While the distinctions are not always neat, and overlap is not at all uncommon, the activities associated with legitimizing and institutionalizing objectives tend to be different in character, focus and duration. These distinctions are discussed in greater detail in Section IV. It is important to recognize that any institutionalizing assistance activity carries with it some concern for a legitimate outcome. In many, if not most instances, the reverse is true for legitimizing activities with respect to developmental outcomes. Nevertheless, most activities are characterized by an emphasis on one objective or the other. By clearly defining the objectives, as the framework invites, there will be less likelihood of unwarranted expectations, and more likelihood of achieving appropriate results.

⁷ This framework was originally developed in *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned*, prepared by MSI for USAID, July 1999.

III. ASSESSMENT AND DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

Before developing a plan for electoral assistance, there must be some assessment and definition of the problem to be addressed. Although the need for problem definition is perhaps all too obvious, not infrequently little attention is actually paid to diagnosing or identifying the nature of the problem and how financial or technical support can aid in its solution. Clearly, the benefits of thorough problem definition lie in better solutions as well as more efficient and effective technical assistance; however, it is just as clear that conditions do not always permit thoroughness. In certain cases, urgency or time constraints will not allow for a thorough assessment of the problem while in others, there will not be sufficient resources, either human or financial, available for more than a cursory or informal examination of the problem.

A. Approaches to Defining the Problem

There are two general ways in which a problem might be assessed. First, an *a priori* definition of the problem may be developed. This sort of definition does not benefit from a formal assessment of the election, its context, and the needs for assistance. The *a priori* definition assumes that there is a need and that the need is important. *A priori* definitions may have their source from those demanding assistance or they may arise from a strong desire and sense of urgency within the U.S. government to support the process in some manner even if there is no time for a serious assessment of needs. Consider the following examples:

- A local NGO may assert that an upcoming election is at risk of fraud but that a strong domestic monitoring effort could deter manipulation. The NGO could simply be taken at its word with no further assessment. A decision could be made to support the activity. The risk is that the NGO is simply arguing one side of the problem or that more urgent or serious problems are being

overlooked, leading to a less effective use of the mission's scarce resources.

- A decision might also be made to honor requests by a government to provide substantial commodities assistance. This may occur, for instance, where the U.S. deems it important to support local government efforts to create a political opening. Sometimes such decisions are made without verification that the government has a real need for the assistance, or if it is even serious about a political opening. This risk can be cause for a considerable waste of resources.

Often, legitimizing assistance-- or what Hirschmann classifies as *emergency assistance* will be the result of a *a priori* problem definition.

While *a priori* problem definition does not have the benefit of formal assessment, it is possible to carry out some informal effort to validate the need and importance of the proposed activity. Interviews with local knowledgeable (from universities, interest groups, parties, the media, etc.) about needs, priorities, and available resources for carrying out such activities can be helpful in assessing both the feasibility and the usefulness of the proposed activity. Likewise, conversations with other donors might also produce useful insights or perhaps be suggestive of minor modifications to improve chances for the intervention's success.

A second approach to problem definition is through a *diagnostic approach*. This is a more formal assessment that may be either comprehensive or a relatively rapid appraisal. The diagnostic approach benefits from some sort of methodical examination of the election system. It identifies those areas where interventions are needed to strengthen the process and the institutions responsible for managing and implementing elections. Frequently, this type of assessment is a precursor to longer-term, more developmentally focused interventions. For instance, in order to improve the effectiveness of the local electoral management body, it may be necessary to do a formal organizational survey that includes

interviews with key personnel and stakeholders, a review of past performance, and resource analysis. While such formal assessments are much more expensive, these costs are frequently compensated by a more successful, better-targeted intervention and the likelihood that capacities developed will be more sustainable.

Formal assessments often require substantial lead-time. A full diagnostic of the electoral system may take several months to complete before useful results can be expected. They generally require multiple member teams and more management effort on the part of the mission officer (development of scopes of work, contracting, etc.) before actually getting to the intervention itself.

Frequently contributing to the degree of complexity of the assessment is how much knowledge is actually available about the election system in question. In systems undergoing transition, little may be known or data and knowledge highly dispersed. In such cases, the process of developing a clear idea of the state of the system can be time-consuming.

B. Assessing the Context for Assistance

Electoral systems do not operate in a vacuum--they are part of a larger context that will closely influence the direction of the system, its potential, and effectiveness. Similarly, electoral systems do not start from scratch-- there is always a set of pre-existing institutions, customs, laws, and procedures that will influence how electoral assistance activities will play out. Developing a clear picture of the institutional and political context and how each can or will affect proposed assistance is key to the design of effective interventions.

The choice of voting system and the types of offices to be elected are an extremely important part of the election context. What offices are being elected? Executive? Legislative? If the latter, will proportional representation or a majoritarian system be used? There are different levels of complexity associated with each type of voting system and election. Majoritarian

(first-past-the-post, single-member district) systems, for example, are more straightforward than proportional representation. Elections to all types and/or level of office might be held simultaneously. Or, they could be conducted separately.

1. Types of Elections⁸

Categorizing elections is a helpful mechanism in that each category suggests a shorthand description of the political and historic juncture into which the election fits. In so doing, it points to the type of contextual issues that are likely to require attention, and possibly to the kind of assistance that may be appropriate.

Categorizing Elections

Post-Conflict Elections: These occur in the aftermath of war or civil conflict and are often part of a negotiated peace settlement. Elections may be marred by outbreaks of violence in violation of a cease-fire. There are usually issues of demobilization and disarming of combatants, and the establishment of new public security forces.

Breakthrough Elections: A first and sometimes second round of elections taking place after a lengthy period of authoritarian, one-party, or military rule to shift to a constitutional government based on civilian rule and competitive elections. There is frequently considerable uncertainty and disagreement on how electoral rules (should) operate. A country may slip back into authoritarian rule during this phase.

Consolidating Elections: These are third or fourth elections which serve to advance the process of democratization, and have in some measure, become routine. There remains some uncertainty and a need to strengthen the elections process further and to widen and deepen participation. Assistance centers on maximizing performance and building institutional capacity. Efforts to refine election legislation, to introduce technological or procedural innovations, and to improve strategic planning and organizational

⁸ See David Hirschmann and Joanna Mendelson, *Managing Electoral Assistance: A Practical Guide for USAID*, Center for Democracy and Governance, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1995, p. 10. While much of this section is owed to Hirschmann and Mendelson, pp. 6-7, their content is more of an elaborated set of categories.

management are likely to result in changes at the operational level that could benefit from assistance.

Procedural: This is a regular election held in accordance with times and procedures set out in the constitution; the institutions are relatively mature and capable and the rules relatively well understood and accepted. There may be little reason to provide assistance to procedural elections.

Local elections are particularly complicated, as a result of the higher number of candidates, the number of elections taking place and variations in legal requirements, voting systems and differences in administrative practice between districts. In some cases, local elections may be held on a rolling basis. If local and national elections are held at the same time, inconsistencies between local and national election laws and procedures may arise. While there may be some benefits to the simultaneous conduct of elections such as cost, they present a myriad of other challenges to candidates, election managers and voters.

2. Political Considerations

The configuration of the local political environment will have a major impact on the conditions under which an election will be carried out, how the election will be implemented, the competitiveness of the election, and its significance.

An important question both to national and local elections is the degree of centralization. In some presidential systems, where the executive has vast powers and the legislative branch is relegated to a very minor position, parliamentary elections will likely be of little significance. Similarly, in countries, where decentralization of power and authority is absent or novel, local elections tend to be treated with skepticism and characterized by low turnout as was the case for the 1998 local elections in Mozambique.⁹

⁹ See Terrence Lyons and John Blacken, *Case Study of Local Elections in Mozambique*, USAID: Washington D.C., 1999.

The competitiveness of the system will also affect the significance and legitimacy of the election. If a single party is dominant or the opposition is too weak or splintered to make inroads on the ruling party's power, elections may be perceived of as little importance, or worse, as illegitimate. Dominance of a single party or glaring inequities between parties in terms of resources and capabilities can contribute to raising distrust and tension. High levels of tension and distrust between political parties can lead to campaign violence, a boycott of elections, or attempts to discredit the election by the loser. Elections may need to be canceled altogether. From another perspective, polarization and fragmentation will also undermine the prospects for the development of stable and sustainable coalitions in the legislature. Actions such as an election boycott make it difficult for donors to provide assistance without appearing partisan. Even assistance to election management bodies and election observation efforts may be seen as favoring the incumbent regime.

Diagnostic Questions Box One

What political and voting rights are enshrined in the law?

Is there a history or tradition of multi-party competition and fair elections?

To what extent is the political system open?

Is there a level playing field?

What is the significance of the elections? Are the offices to be elected meaningful ones?

How polarized are the political parties? Is campaign violence or a boycott possible?

What impact will traditional patron-client networks have? Special interest groups?

Are there opportunities for political participation outside of political parties, e.g. special interest groups?

To what extent does the government support electoral institutions? To what extent is

government receptive to assistance to electoral institutions?

Frequently, traditional patron-client networks may also entrench or reinforce the disparities between political parties. The hierarchical distribution of rewards, patronage, and protection from the top in return for support from below may create strong vertical alliances or political pacts between politicians and religious leaders, union organizers, factory-owners, landlords, tribal chiefs or clan leaders. These networks also tend to limit the role of rank and file party members as well as the electorate in choosing representatives. The designation of candidates may be so tightly controlled by elites as to make the actual election simply an endorsement rather than a real choice.

Since the political balance in most societies is made up of competing interests, it is important to determine the range of outlet for political participation and expression. In democratic or democratizing societies, there are a wide range of organizations outside political parties capable of representing and mobilizing interests and demands. These interest groups, e.g. ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups, labor unions, consumer groups, business associations, the military, or students,¹⁰ can be powerful counterbalances and/or allies to political parties and highly influential in setting policy agendas.

Where interest groups are allowed to flourish, their capacity and willingness to deliver certain constituencies may spell victory or defeat. While many (if not most) interest groups are not allied with specific political parties, they do have policy points of view which are frequently coincidental with particular political parties. In

¹⁰ In political science literature, such groups are referred to as interest or pressure groups. The term civil society group has recently gained considerable currency and acceptance in the donor community, is mostly interchangeable with interest group. However, for some, civil society group has a more non-governmental, non-business, non-political connotation and would exclude business associations, for instance. Here, we use the terms interchangeably.

many countries, interest groups are also important sources of campaign financing and have been given a corresponding measure of influence in both parties and government. In more traditional societies, such groups tend to be limited to political and economic elites. One should be aware then, of whether or not the balance of civil society groups tend to favor the interests of one party rather than another, and if these interests are lined up with the government or with the opposition.

3. Social/Cultural Factors

Social and cultural factors have important implications for the management of elections and provision of assistance. In post-conflict and transitional environments the extension of voting rights to previously disenfranchised groups may be key to the legitimacy of an election. Where legal guarantees exist but are not uniformly implemented or enforced, additional efforts may be necessary to ensure the meaningful participation of previously marginalized groups. Extension of the franchise may be a requirement of a negotiated peace agreement or represent the expectations of the international diplomatic and donor communities. But meeting these requirements may imply the need to introduce a new voting system.

Bringing previously excluded groups into the process is not an easy task. Years of distrust will probably breed suspicion among those groups for whom solutions are proffered. And opposition will be provoked among other segments of society that didn't want those groups included in the first place. If concessions are offered to one group, but not another which feels equally marginalized, problems of another dimension will be generated.

Significant differences in language, literacy, urban/rural populations, tradition, and gender all pose challenges to effective election management. If there is more than one important language group, campaign, voter education, and election materials (such as ballots) will need to be prepared for each. Illiterate populations require more human contact and illustrative

information during the voter registration process and throughout the election campaign. Illiterate populations are often concentrated in remote areas with little media or outside access. In general, a widely dispersed rural population tends to have fewer resources, is less educated, has less access to information, and presents significant logistical problems for elections organizers. Urban areas, on the other hand, are likely to have numerous sources of information, a better resource base, a higher degree of political sophistication and activism among the electorate, and are easily reached by electoral authorities.

Where custom and tradition are deeply rooted, familial, tribal, religious or clan affiliations can have a significant impact on voting patterns. In some contexts, traditional leaders may be satisfied with a symbolic role, while in others a substantive role will be expected. Candidates frequently bargain with traditional leaders to secure their endorsement and the votes of the clan or his/her followers in exchange for some benefit, such as an appointed office. Election managers and donor agencies will also need to take into consideration cultural norms that dictate what is deemed appropriate and acceptable with respect to the campaigns and elections process.

Cultural norms may present a particular problem with respect to women's participation in patriarchal societies and some Muslim countries. Even if women have the right to vote, they may still be limited by voter registration requirements such as property ownership or employment. Husbands may not permit their wives to vote or may influence their choices, enforcing them through such practices as proxy or open/family voting. Women may also limit their own participation out of fear.

4. Economic Situation

The state of a country's economy may have an important effect on elections. Elections cost a great deal of money. The ability of a government to pay the cost of staffing, commodities and services required is key to effective election

management. Because of lack of experience, planners frequently underestimate the cost of conducting competitive elections. Worse, legislatures may make drastic cuts in the national budget allocation for elections.¹¹ Legislatures have also been known to incorporate significant modifications to an election law with little or no consideration of implied costs, causing an "unfunded mandate" of sorts for election authorities. Although one or more donors may assist in funding some of the "big-ticket" items or in making up a shortfall, such assistance is rarely given for more than one or two elections. At the end of the day, a national government is ultimately responsible for funding the conduct of elections in full compliance with legal requirements.

In ideal terms, assistance for elections should be in accordance with the funding capacities of the country. In some instances large-scale assistance may create unrealizable expectations on the part of local authorities. In cases where donors have been extremely generous with assistance for post-conflict or breakthrough elections, such as in Mozambique in 1994¹², support for subsequent elections may appear meager in comparison, and election authorities may find they need to seriously reduce their expectations regarding what can be done for the elections. When developing assistance programs, donors should think carefully about the institutions, structures and systems they will promote, create, and install and try to make sure that they are congruent with the carrying capacity of the host country government-- both in financial and human resource terms.

Economic malaise may also affect elections somewhat less directly. Economic decline may cause maintenance on basic infrastructure to be deferred or ignored. Roads may deteriorate to the point that they become impassable, thus impeding the distribution of voter information and election materials. Power outages may leave a large proportion of the population without electricity or telephones, impeding the work of

¹¹ Hirschmann, and Mendelson, p. 10.

¹² See Blacken and Lyons, op cit.

elections offices, the dissemination of political and voter information messages via radio or television, or as has happened in some countries, even disrupting the vote count. All of these can easily extend the time needed for elections preparations and the determination of results. It also raises the cost of elections should it be necessary to purchase generators, battery powered light sources, or radio equipment.

5. Institutional Issues

The reform and management of electoral processes is carried out by government institutions. The condition and capacity of these institutions to implement changes and fulfill their responsibilities is critical to a smooth, efficient, and effective election process. While the country's election management body (EMB) may be nominally in charge of the process, it will more than likely be dependent on an array of other institutions to perform a variety of tasks directly and indirectly related to the election. Except in unusual cases,¹³ the election management body has little control or authority over these other institutions and is dependent on them to perform their tasks in a timely and effective manner. Before embarking on activities

Diagnostic Questions Box Two

Does the EMB have the resources and capacity to carry out the election?

What other government agencies/offices are responsible for assisting in election preparations? Resources? Capabilities?

Is there concern that these agencies/offices will not be open, responsive, accountable?

Are staff members competent, adequately trained? Are they being paid? Is corruption a problem?

Are responsible institutions having difficulty

that require the support and actions of

¹³In Costa Rica, the Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones is given significant authority over other government institutions and command of the country's security forces 60 days prior to the election.

government, the USAID planner would be well advised to take a very close look at the capacity and capabilities not only of those officially designated for election management but others less directly involved.

Governmental institutions in emerging democracies frequently suffer from multiple problems such as low status, inadequate budgets, corrupt or unprofessional officials, poorly trained and badly paid staff, poorly maintained facilities. Some government institutions, frequently because of the lack of budget resources, are little more than shells. Staff is nominally assigned but may be mostly absent or not have the resources to carry out their responsibilities. They may not be paid for weeks or months at a time. All these elements will have a significant impact on the capability and incentive to carry out needed reforms and for government agencies perform their tasks in an effective manner. Consider the following examples:

- If the country's legislature is inefficient or lacks the capability for sound technical analysis or legislative/regulatory drafting, then reform of the legal framework for elections will proceed slowly if at all. Or, reforms may be poorly drafted and incapable of being implemented, or may even be unconstitutional.
- If the courts are corrupt or overloaded, there will be difficulties in presenting and processing complaints of election law violations. If judges are not trained in election law, then the resulting decisions will likely be controversial and/or overturned by higher courts. In some countries, election law is so arcane that it requires highly informed specialists to understand the procedures to present a complaint successfully. Not infrequently, none are available.
- Where civil registry offices are understaffed and under-budgeted, adequate information on which to base a voter registry may be unavailable. Files may not be maintained in

adequate or orderly condition, thus impeding accessibility.

While governmental institutions generally provide the bulk of effort for elections, other institutions, such as NGOs or the media, are also important to the implementation of effective electoral processes. NGOs are often used as the base for election-monitoring. In some countries, NGOs are well developed with considerable management capability and are able to quickly and easily take on tasks such as monitoring and voter education. In others, NGO and civil society organizations are repressed or undeveloped. The effort needed to develop the appropriate capability in these NGOs for election-related activities may be substantial and time-consuming.

The media can be an important support for election activity, especially where it is free and relatively competitive. In countries where important elements of the media, radio and television, are controlled by the state or narrow interests, it will be less useful. In many emerging democracies, radio is by far the most important component of the media. Most of the population will have access to radio, while considerably less will have television, and even less access to newspaper. In developing activities for dissemination of voter information, it will be important to assess the comparative advantage of each source.

6. Security Concerns

Whether as a result of war or civil unrest, violence all too often mars elections in transitional environments. There are many levels of violence, some of which can make the prospect of genuine elections untenable. Sometimes, however, elections are arranged as part of a peace process or as a means of reducing tensions or restoring order, such as in the case of the 1999 elections in Indonesia or the 1997 elections in Liberia. Sporadic violence may continue to be a problem throughout the election process-- it may be random or targeted with the intent of disrupting the elections or undermining the peace process. Voters, election workers,

candidates and political party leaders, domestic monitors, journalists, and international assistance providers may all be at varying degrees of risk. Targeted violence can erode participation and damage recruitment. In El Salvador, the targeting of Christian Democrat Mayors and candidates during the 1980s seriously affected the party's ability to recruit candidates and undermined local organization.

The level and intensity of violence present should be assessed in order to determine its potential impact on the political campaign and electoral process.

Diagnostic Questions Box Three

To what extent will freedom of speech, association and movement be affected?

Will campaign activity be reduced, and will it restrict mobilization of campaign workers?

How will the threat of violence affect the recruitment of poll workers and domestic monitors?

Can election managers effectively plan for and carry out elections under violent conditions or the threat of hostilities?

Will journalists be able to cover and report on the process in any meaningful way?

What role will the military or internal security forces play?

What are the prospects that foreign assistance will actually make a difference? Will assistance providers be able to effectively implement their programs?

C. Donor Environment Issues

There are several issues that must be taken into consideration in weighing possibilities for elections assistance – issues that are driven by the broader donor environment, many of which

have little or nothing to do with issues arising from the proposed recipient country.

1. U.S. Policy Considerations

Foreign assistance is not only for development or humanitarian purposes, it also serves as a primary tool of U.S. policy. It reflects national political, economic and security priorities. The legal basis for elections assistance programs is found in Title IV of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, which cites the building of democratic institutions as a goal of U.S. foreign aid. Section 116 (e) of the FAA, a part of the human rights initiative, embraces political development as a basic right. It states that human rights funds “may not be used, directly or indirectly, to influence the outcome of any election in any country.”¹⁴

Policy considerations affect the timing, objectives, nature and scope of assistance in support of political and electoral processes, as well as the profile of U.S. assistance efforts. Diplomatic pressure may be used to urge a foreign government to move in the direction of democratization, in effect forcing a breakthrough election. Once such an election is called, the U.S. Embassy is usually the driving force behind the provision of legitimizing assistance. The influence of policy considerations will be most intensely felt in post-conflict settings, and countries of strategic significance to the U.S.

While U.S. interests generally favor democratic progress, elections assistance is not necessarily inevitable or straightforward. There may be restrictions on foreign aid or sanctions in place against certain countries resulting from violations of loan repayment requirements, human rights conventions, nuclear non-proliferation pacts, or acts of war. Such restrictions may apply to the country as a whole or only to aid directed at the government. Even the latter will present problems, however, as election management bodies are typically government agencies. While assistance is not

necessarily precluded, it will require special approval or waivers from the appropriate U.S. government authority.

2. Program Priorities/Strategic Objectives

Limited resources, contextual factors, and policy considerations help shape the priorities of U.S. foreign aid. In certain contexts, there may be more of an emphasis on privatization than on democratization; rule of law programming may be deemed more urgent than political party development; or voter information programs may be more feasible than civic education ones. At one level, the priorities will be set by the U.S. Congress, at another by the State Department and USAID, and at yet another by embassies and missions in the field. Within USAID, the agency’s “Results Framework” will shape foreign assistance. If one looks under the agency objective for elections and political process (2.2),¹⁵ i.e. more genuine and competitive process, there are seven distinct intermediate results which aid seeks to affect:

- 2.2.1 An impartial electoral framework
- 2.2.2 Credible electoral administration
- 2.2.3 An informed and active citizenry
- 2.2.4 Effective oversight of the electoral process
- 2.2.5 A representative and competitive multi-party system
- 2.2.6 Inclusion of women and disadvantaged groups
- 2.2.7 Effective transfer of political power

Under most circumstances, USAID missions will not have the resources to pursue each of these simultaneously. In fact they are not all feasible at the same point in time. As a result, limited resources may be funneled into one or two intermediate results, while the remainder are left to other donors or to a later time. As noted earlier, the results framework deals mainly with institutionalizing assistance, which is developmental in nature. Actually, much of U.S.

¹⁴ Hirschmann and Mendelson, p. 4.

¹⁵ See the *Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators*, USAID-D/DG, DN-ACC-390, pp. 57-114.

assistance may be more appropriately categorized as assistance intended to secure a legitimate outcome to the elections. Such legitimizing assistance often reflects different priorities than those expressed in the IRs and may require creation of a special objective.

3. Available Resources/Source of Funding

Financial realities will determine whether elections assistance is even feasible. Funding availability will affect the scope, nature and duration of assistance. At some point essentials will need to be separated from non-essentials.¹⁶ Decision-makers must determine whether their stated objectives can be met and preferred projects fulfilled at the existing level of investment. Decision-makers also need to guard against the tendency to cut programming without modifying expectations. All too often, corners are cut, while intended objectives/outcomes remain constant, resulting in considerable gaps between objectives and impact.

There are a variety of means to reduce overall costs. Performance personnel, i.e. those who can provide logistical, organizational and administrative support, may be used instead of more expensive technical personnel, i.e. experts in the fields of law, election management, or political party building. Programming can be narrowed and less diversified. Civic education may give way to more specific voter education or even to targeted voter information projects. Local organizations may be funded directly in place of USAID's institutional partners based in the U.S. Emphasis may be given to provision of services rather than institution-building, or short-term interventions may be used instead of foreign advisors in the field for a protracted period. There also may be opportunities to leverage funds if other donors can be brought into the equation.

The source of official U.S. funding will also play a role in who determines and how funds are used. While USAID serves as the primary

conduit for aid in support of political and electoral processes, some funds come directly from the State Department. This has often been the case in post-conflict settings, particularly when refugees are involved, and when a multi-lateral organization, such as the UN, is identified as the leading assistance provider. In the case of Bosnia, the Dayton Accords named the OSCE as *the* organization responsible for conducting elections. In such circumstances, U.S. funds "pass through" the multi-lateral organization with USAID's institutional partners being sub-contracted or their personnel seconded to implement various aspects of assistance.

4. Capabilities of Institutional Partners

USAID relies heavily on the political party institutes and IFES for implementation of political and electoral process assistance, so it is important to understand both the capabilities and limitations of these organizations. Decision-makers will want to consider each partner's expertise, track-record, rapid-response capability, and ability to remain flexible in unstable environments. Familiarity with comparative systems and approaches and the use of multi-national teams, rather than a U.S.-centric orientation, may also be desirable.

It is entirely possible that some of the institutional partners will already be in-country running programs under funding from other donors, such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), or USAID funded programs that are not election-specific. Or, institutional partners may have already carried out a technical assessment of the pre-electoral environment. Such factors are likely to increase their ability to respond rapidly to a request for assistance and to "hit the ground running." In post-conflict and breakthrough elections, circumstances often dictate that institutional partners take the leading role in the implementation of assistance. Importantly, the partners often have the established relations with local NGOs and can easily cooperate with and reinforce their efforts. Choosing the right partner is not always obvious since the State Department and USAID may have differences of opinion about the use of

¹⁶ Hirshmann and Mendelson, p. 20.

international versus local partners, or even which partners to use.

As countries move toward consolidation, the odds are greater that USAID will give some direct funding to local NGOs to carry out activities such as voter education, election monitoring, parallel vote tabulations, media monitoring, and a variety of training programs. The advantage of using these groups is that they usually have a better understanding of the target audience and programming environment. At the same time, there are some limitations. The institutional capabilities of the organization(s) in question should be critically assessed. Does the organization have the ability to manage the assistance, both programmatically and administratively? How broad a scope can it accommodate with respect to programming? Decision-makers will also need to be cognizant of the pressures to get foreign funding. In essence, the money chase may mold the identity of the organization rather than its own constituency, mandate or expertise. There is also the possibility that the NGO is biased toward particular groups in society, such as intellectuals, urban dwellers, and/or ethnic or linguistic groups. If so, how would this affect the quality and integrity of the proposed programming?

5. Issues of Timing/Timetable for Implementation

Without question, the timing of assistance at an operational level, and the timetable for implementing it, are important to the effectiveness of the intervention and its prospects for success. The former refers to whether or not the intervention is initiated at the appropriate time in the legislative, political, or electoral process. For example, when will modifications to the election law be debated and adopted? When does voter registration open? When does the nomination period close? And, what is the deadline for the formation of polling sites?

The latter term relates to the amount of time allotted for completion of the assistance project.

Is it sufficient? Pressures on USAID to pursue ambitious interventions or tackle complex problems can lead to the approval of unrealistic projects in certain contexts. Decision-makers need to be very straightforward with their local co-operating partners and institutional partners about the amount of time available for the completion of the project once the concept is approved, paperwork signed, and funds transferred. It should also seek counsel from its institutional partners about the minimum amount of time required to successfully fulfill its favored projects. It may be necessary to reconsider the stated objectives and modify or postpone certain types of assistance.

The length of time required for USAID to process cooperative agreements, contracts, and even extensions continue to be viewed by its institutional partners as a setback. Proposed projects can rapidly lose their feasibility if this process takes months. Ultimately, both USAID and the institutional partners may find themselves in an uncomfortable situation, i.e. contractually obligated to implement a project that clearly cannot be completed within the time remaining, therefore undermining the prospects for success. It may also lead to redundant expenditures over time. Ultimately, both will be held accountable by independent evaluators, the GAO, and the U.S. Congress.

Such a situation also causes frustration among and tensions with local cooperating partners, who may be in the heat of campaign activities or election preparations by the time assistance teams arrive on the ground. At that point, they may be unable to provide the attention or support required to implement the project. Many express a sense of being overwhelmed and lament, "if only you had arrived earlier." And, in some cases, tension can arise between assistance providers under pressure to complete their mission and election managers trying to provide the minimum conditions for holding the election. This situation may be particularly acute if there are many donors or assistance providers demanding the attention and support of election managers.

6. Donor Coordination Options

As indicated above, the involvement of multiple donors may be a factor. There are a wide-range of organizations that provide electoral assistance. In addition to bilateral donors such as Canada, Japan, France, the UK, and the Scandinavian countries, there are a number of international organizations that provide electoral assistance. These include the United Nations through the UNDP, the Commonwealth Nations, the European Union, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. NGOs such as the German political foundations, the British Know-How Fund and Westminster Foundation, or Americas Watch in the United States may also provide electoral assistance. Most of these groups have vast experience in electoral assistance, established methodologies and practices, and particular political interests that may or may not be entirely compatible with USG interests.

If there are a large number of donors, coordination will be required to avoid redundancy, provide coherence to the assistance effort, and manage the number of people and requests inundating the election commission. With the participation of several donors there is an opportunity to pool resources and assign responsibilities in a manner that best meets each agency's mandate, priorities, and capabilities. For example, if USAID prefers to undertake training and educational programs, but not provide commodities assistance, then another donor may assume that responsibility. Similarly, if one agency is in a position to respond more quickly than the rest, this may greatly influence the division of labor. Political sensitivities may also play a role. In some contexts, an American presence may be welcomed, while in others it could be contentious, perhaps even becoming a central issue in the election campaign. Under such circumstances, it may be best for other donor countries to play the leading role with the U.S. keeping a lower profile.

At the same time, coordination can be a tricky business, with each agency seeking to “wave the

flag” and be able to claim “bragging rights.” And, it is possible that the political or developmental objectives of other countries or donor agencies are quite dissimilar from those of USAID. As a result, there may be some resistance to coordination or difficulty in articulating a common vision. There may also be a tendency on the part of some donors to over-estimate capabilities, to promise more than can be delivered, or to extend institutional mandates.

IV. DEFINING AND ASSESSING OPTIONS FOR ASSISTANCE

A. Approaches to National Election Assistance

As suggested earlier in this manual, there are two fundamental motives for providing electoral assistance at the national level. One is political and seeks to assure the credibility/ legitimacy of the election. The second is developmental and its aim is to consolidate electoral systems and build institutional capacities. Whether an objective is essentially political or developmental will drive the very nature of the assistance rendered.

Legitimizing assistance is typically given in post-conflict settings, in advance of breakthrough elections, or in countries experiencing troubled transitions.

Institutionalizing assistance in support of the electoral process may be provided as the country moves toward consolidating elections. For more information on national elections assistance, please refer to *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned* (USAID 1999). Readers are also encouraged to refer to the appendices to this manual which outline tools for assistance, present comparative assistance options based on contextual factors, and elaborate upon political party functions.

For the purposes of this discussion, national election assistance refers to aid given in anticipation of a particular electoral event at the national level. This would include parliamentary and presidential elections, but might extend to a national or constitutional referendum, a plebiscite, or elections to a constituent assembly.

An overview of assistance approaches for national elections, as seen through the lens of legitimizing and institutionalizing assistance, is provided below. The technical categories used to define various assistance approaches were developed as part of the “Elections and Political Parties Assessment Project.”

1. Legal Framework

The *legal framework* for elections refers to the legal standards, methodology, and procedures for organizing elections and fulfilling voting rights. These are typically established in a country's constitution and further clarified and defined in subsequent statutes and regulations known as enabling legislation.¹⁷ In some instances, however, a constitutional referendum may be held at the same time as breakthrough elections or in their aftermath. And, depending upon timing and other pressures, elections may be conducted according to presidential decree or minimally amended legislation. A complete overhaul of the legal framework, including the drafting of entirely new legislation, may not be feasible until a country moves toward consolidating elections.

Countries may employ stand-alone legislation on presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections or some combination thereof. For example, language on election to legislative bodies, both at the national and local levels, may be incorporated into one law. These laws can be reinforced by other legislation governing voting rights, voter registration, and campaign financing. Portions of mass media law and the administrative code may also come into play. Some countries use universal electoral codes (UECs) that “bundle” all legal provisions governing campaigns and elections into one piece of legislation.

A central question facing legislators as they draft new constitutions and or election laws will be the type of *voting system* to be employed. The term voting system may be applied to a combination of factors including the system of representation (including the use of set-asides to guarantee the representation of some minorities), threshold requirements, and ballot access requirements. It is often a decision made without due deliberation or with little or no comparative information. Yet, the choice of a voting system

¹⁷ Barnes, Brilliant, Crosby, Dannenberg, Lyons, and Nix. *Technical Assistance for Election Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned*. MSI: Washington, D.C., July 1999, p. 22.

will have a profound effect on a country's ability to achieve the political results intended of reform. It can, for example, impact: the growth and consolidation of political parties, the stability of governments, legislative cohesiveness and effectiveness, minority representation, constituency relations, the influence of special interests, the role of extremist groups, and even voter turn-out.¹⁸ Debate on the matter can be politically charged. Nonetheless, the sheer number of voting methods and their varying advantages and disadvantages illustrates that no one system is clearly right or always appropriate.¹⁹

DG field officers will need to concern themselves with the consistency of all legal and constitutional documents governing campaigns and elections, the clarity of their provisions, and the feasibility of requirements set forth therein. They will also need to be mindful that the U.S. model may not be suitable given other contextual issues discussed in the proceeding sections. Special attention should also be paid to whether or not proposed modifications to law are likely to achieve the political results intended by its designers, election participants, and/or the international community.²⁰

a) *Legitimizing Assistance*

Legitimizing assistance with respect to the legal framework often places an emphasis on:

- Broadening and diversifying participation in the debate on election law reform
- Expanding and safeguarding voting and political rights and enhancing the integrity of the election process through select amendments to the election law and the preparation of administrative regulations

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁹ For a concise discussion of comparative model and their relative advantages and disadvantages, see, Dahl, R. *Opportunities for Innovation in Electing Legislatures of the Russian Federation: A Comparative Review of Voting Systems*, IFES: Washington, D.C., October 1996.

²⁰ Hirschmann and Mendelson, p. 11.

FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS

BOX ONE: Legal Framework

What is the nature and status of the legal framework?

Which institutions have the right of legislative initiative to alter the framework for elections?

Is there enough time for amending election legislation? How complex is the amendment process?

What are the immediate priorities for modifying the legal framework?

Does the voting system function adequately? If not, does the political will exist to change it?

What are the likely political and operational ramifications of reform?

How transparent and participatory is the reform process?

- Facilitating the constructive engagement of all political participants in the election process and providing for their accountability through the development of codes of conduct

Such issues are likely to be viewed as central to the legitimacy of the election's outcome. The aim then is to put into place "rules of the game" that are sufficient to provide for a legitimate outcome rather than attaining an ideal legal framework.

b) *Institutionalizing Assistance*

As a country moves toward consolidating elections, greater opportunities may arise for a comprehensive overhaul of the legal framework for elections. If so, international implementing organizations play a role in:

- Undertaking a methodical assessment of election system performance and auditing extant laws governing campaigns and elections
- Providing comparative models and analytical and drafting services in support of the preparation of new laws or a universal electoral code

- Encouraging the institutionalization of practices intended to make the process of election reform more transparent, such as the routine use of public hearings and public notification
- Conducting training to foster the development of legal and regulatory drafting skills among parliamentarians and election managers

PROGRAM EXAMPLES
BOX ONE: Legal Framework

In Ukraine, IFES worked with the parliament over an extended period to achieve a comprehensive overhaul of the legal framework for elections. Its role was formally recognized by the parliament, with its advisors functioning as outside counsel. IFES effectively used a series of public opinion polls to build a consensus for reform among political elites. Ultimately, new legislation incorporated many international standards and addressed public concerns in Ukraine. A new voting system was adopted and the role of the CEC and the judiciary in adjudicating election related grievances was established.²¹

In Macedonia, NDI undertook an audit and prepared a commentary on the election law. A televised hearing on electoral reforms was subsequently arranged. This represented the first time that civic groups and ruling and opposition parties met, and in such a public manner, to discuss a new election law. A reported 80% of the recommendations stemming from this project were adopted.²²

The aim here is to develop a body of legislation on campaigns and elections that is comprehensive, coherent, and consistent and which most ideally suits the socio-economic context and new political realities of the country in question.

2. Election Management

Election management refers to the process by which the legal framework is operationalized.

²¹ Nix, Steve and Shaiko, R. *Ukraine Elections Case Study*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1998.

²² See NDI World Wide Web Site at <http://www.ndi.org/maced.HTM>.

Election practitioners note that the organization of credible elections is a highly complicated undertaking that requires not just clear laws and procedures, but also detailed planning, efficient organization, complicated scheduling, intricate monitoring of activities, and meticulous execution.²³

Election management bodies (EMBs) are the institutions responsible for implementing the laws designed to protect voting and political rights and provide for the conduct of elections. These bodies may be autonomous or highly integrated into the government structure. They may be partisan, non-partisan, or mixed with respect to their membership. EMBs will be either permanent or temporary bodies and their duties may be executive or policy-oriented. Policy-oriented election commissions tend to focus primarily upon issuing regulations and instructions, rendering decisions, adjudicating election-related grievances, and applying administrative remedy. In this case, the day to day administrative function is left to a staff secretariat. An executive committee would have all these responsibilities. The level of impartiality, efficiency, and accountability of the EMB, and the degree to which it operates in a transparent manner, will be major determinants of whether or not the electorate and election contestants trust in the integrity of the process and accept the legitimacy of the results. As official institutions, EMBs may pose a particular challenge with respect to relationship building from such perspectives as national sovereignty, institutional mandate, and professional sensitivities.

A central responsibility of most election management bodies, and one of particular interest to donor agencies, is *voter registration*. Most countries' electoral laws require voter registration as a prerequisite for voting. This process is difficult, time consuming, labor-intensive, and expensive. It has been the source of innumerable problems in many transitional

²³ Baxter, J. and Hawthorne, A. *Guide for the Planning and Organization of Local Government Elections in the West Bank and Gaza*. IFES: Washington, DC, January 1998, p. 1.

Assistance Approaches At a Glance

Table 1: Legal Framework

LEGAL FRAMEWORK	LEGITIMIZING ASSISTANCE	INSTITUTIONALIZING
1. Broadening and Diversifying Participation in Electoral Reform	International pressure may be brought to bear to ensure that a spectrum of political parties, experts, and NGO representatives are given an opportunity to share their input on draft or proposed political/electoral reforms. Institutional partners may facilitate a dialogue by providing a forum for debate/discussion. Where access continues to be denied or alternative proposals disregarded, they may use their status to present concerns raised by local groups.	Emphasis is placed on building the status and credibility of interest and advocacy groups relative to political parties. Efforts may also seek to institute such practices as public notification as a means of alerting the public to a
2. Building a Consensus for Electoral Reform		Building a consensus for political/electoral reform through public information and advocacy methods including public information and advocacy opinion polls and focus groups. The process of building a consensus brought to bear on decision-makers takes time, and is often a key component of institutionalizing assistance.
3. Assisting in the Amendment Process	Due to the relatively short lead time characteristic of breakthrough elections, it may be impossible to undertake a comprehensive overhaul of the legal framework. Assistance providers may focus on securing key amendments to existing legislation, such as extending the franchise, securing observer rights, and providing for greater transparency and accountability. Comparative information and analytical and legal drafting services may be provided.	
4. Assisting in Regulatory Drafting	Particularly if the election law is vague or contains gaps and when the election management body has little experience in preparing administrative regulations, assistance providers can play a valuable role. They may provide comparative information and analytical/legal drafting services. Some issues may be handled through administrative regulations.	
5. Facilitating the Adoption of Codes of Conduct	In post-conflict and some breakthrough situations, a significant effort will be required to ensure the constructive engagement of all political players. The threat of violence or a boycott by opposition parties can severely undermine the legitimacy of an election. In such environments, assistance providers can help facilitate a routine dialogue between political players and with the EMB. They may also aid in the development/adoption of a code of conduct to establish the "rules of the game" and the commitment of all participants to those rules.	
6. Providing Legal Information/Advice	In some countries, legal advice centers have been set up to provide information on legislation governing campaigns and elections, to collect information on violations of the law, and to offer free legal advice to voters and political participants.	Assistance may be provided to help create legal advice centers and build their capabilities.
7. Assessing Election System Performance/Auditing Election Laws	The relatively short-lead time characteristic of most breakthrough elections does not typically provide for a thorough assessment of the legal framework. Nonetheless, it may be possible for the party institutes and IFES to undertake a preliminary assessment of the political or electoral environment and to make recommendations for essential, i.e. immediate, changes to election law and procedures. Observer missions, as part of their report, may also include recommendations for electoral reforms.	Institutionalizing assistance tends to focus on improving the consistency of election laws and bringing them into line with local realities. If the political will exists to undertake such reforms, institutional partners may evaluate election laws, constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions, and contextual factors that will impact the feasibility of such reforms.
8. Assisting in Legislative Drafting Process		An extensive overhaul of the legal framework may be required (including new laws, not just on elections, but also on campaign finance, political parties, voter registration, and voting rights). Assistance providers may provide comparative information and analytical/legal drafting services (e.g., Electoral Code). On-site advisors may provide c

		legal drafting services.
9. Training in Legislative and Regulatory Drafting		In cases where a parliament has just been created and then been changed into a decision-making body, members and staff may be minimal at best. If legislative and regulatory bodies have no experience with preparing and reviewing legislation, the capabilities of these institutions, training may be needed for legal drafting.

Note: These grids are provided for illustrative and comparative purposes. The types of assistance listed are not exhaustive nor are legitimizing and institutionalizing.

countries, resulting in questions about the integrity of the election process and legitimacy of the election result.

Beyond facilitating the realization of voting rights, the process of voter registration also plays a valuable role in the election management function. It assists election managers in determining the number and location of polling sites, the number of ballots to be printed, the amount of election commodities to be allotted to each polling station, and the number of poll workers to be recruited and trained. Certainly, the process of voter registration provides the first test of the capacity of election management bodies.²⁴ Some countries have opted to conduct elections without a voter registry, although this decision can have serious ramifications with respect to ballot security and makes the accurate projection of necessary resources difficult.

FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS BOX TWO: Election Management
What is the legal mandate of the election management body?
What are its institutional characteristics, e.g. temporary, partisan?
How susceptible is it to manipulation? How open and accountable is it?
What are the capabilities of the EMB and its subordinate structures? What about institutional memory? Has there been a significant turnover of personnel?
What system of voter registration (if any) has been used traditionally? Is it adequate?
Is the registry relatively accurate and up to date? Has extension of the franchise or population migration affected this?
How is it maintained? Is it centralized? Who is responsible for this?
Is registration automatic or voluntary?

a) *Legitimizing Assistance*

Very often, legitimizing assistance within the realm of election management focuses on the basic commodities and organizational tools necessary to pull off an election on schedule and in accordance with the law. Specifically, this assistance has included:

- Procuring a range of commodities to facilitate voter registration, process voters at polling sites, and integrate the election management system
- Applying modern technologies to the voter and candidate registration and vote tabulation processes
- Assisting with budgeting, operational planning, and administration
- Promoting professional and uniform administration of elections through voter registrar and poll worker training programs

While activities such as poll worker training can have a developmental aspect, they are often introduced as part of a package of legitimizing assistance.

b) *Institutionalizing Assistance*

Institutionalizing assistance in support of election management functions seeks to build the capabilities of EMBs by:

- Providing consulting services in the areas of strategic planning and organizational management
- Supporting the introduction of new financial controls and accounting and personnel systems
- Undertaking a massive overhaul of the voter registration system, including commodities assistance, technological applications and support, and training

²⁴ Hirschmann and Mendelson, p. 14.

- Conducting specialized training for departments within the election management body, such as information technology and public information
- Advising on the design, implementation, and evaluation of training programs for professional staff and part-time election workers

Beyond building the capabilities of the election management body, such activities tend to reinforce an institutional memory, instill professional ethics, and reduce dependencies both on other government or political institutions and on outside assistance.

PROGRAM EXAMPLE
BOX TWO: Election Management

Significant problems with voter registration in Ghana prompted USAID to make a substantial investment aimed at creating a system that was accurate, current, and credible. This project known as STEP, "Supporting the Electoral Process," was initiated by IFES a year in advance of the opening of registration and some 18 months before the legal deadline for completing the computerized registry. It was comprehensive in nature, involving on-site advising, commodities support, the application of modern technologies, forms development, training, and a public information component. Beyond significantly improving the quality of the registry, the process was made more efficient and secure. Some 60,000 registrars and 80,000 party agents were trained. Ninety percent (9.1 million people) of eligible voters were registered. Political parties were provided with copies of the registry to check for omissions and discrepancies. Observers noted vast improvements relative to previous elections. The impact of this project was considerable, but such efforts can be costly. In this case, the price tag was over 10 million USD despite the fact that the cost per voter (.99) was comparatively cheap.²⁵

3. Voter Information/Education

The term *voter information* refers to the provision of basic facts that enable qualified citizens to vote. Voter information programs typically address the date, time, and place of

²⁵ Brilliant, F., Dauphinais, D., and Lyons, T. *Ghana Elections Case Study*. USAID: Washington, D.C. 1999.

voting, identification necessary to establish eligibility, registration requirements, the method of marking one's ballot, and special voting services. A distinction may be drawn with respect to *voter education* that tends to move beyond the mechanics of voting to encompass broader concepts such as the one person one vote principle, secrecy of the ballot, and the importance of transparency and accountability.²⁶ Voter information/education programs may be carried out by a number of institutions, including the election management body, political parties, and non-governmental organizations. These institutions will utilize a variety of methods and media depending upon contextual factors discussed earlier in this manual.

Election management bodies are likely to have some responsibility for providing voters with information on their voting rights and the election. This information tends to deal with the mechanics of registration and voting and must be free of any bias. It is often referred to as official voter education. Political parties also engage in voter education efforts. Their information tends to focus heavily upon "get out the vote (GOTV)" activities. Messages on the process of voting are usually intertwined with partisan information on how to identify and mark the party or its candidates on the ballot. The aim is to ensure that the party faithful show up at the polls on election day and mark their ballots correctly to influence undecided voters. Non-governmental organizations may also serve as conduits for voter education aimed at the general electorate or targeted communities. They may assist election management bodies in the provision of basic services or carry out their activities independently.

Decisions about which communication media are used, and to what extent, will depend both upon the context in which the election campaign is being conducted and upon the characteristics and capabilities of the available mass media outlets. For example, are media outlets state-owned, private, or mixed? What are their

²⁶ Barnes, Brilliant, Crosby, Dannenberg, Lyons, and Nix, pp. 52-53.

Assistance Approaches At a Glance

Table 2: Election Management

ELECTION MANAGEMENT	LEGITIMIZING ASSISTANCE	INSTITUTIONALIZING
1. Operational Planning Activities	This type of assistance typically covers a range of activities that may include election calendar development, a needs assessment, resource identification and mobilization, and budgeting. These activities may be carried out through a limited visit by expatriate personnel in advance of the election campaign (perhaps in the form of a PETA) and possibly coinciding with the establishment of a new EMB, calling of elections, or a donor coordination meeting.	Activities as part of institutionalizing assistance strategic planning by EMBs (see line 7).
2. Commodities Assistance	In the case of post-conflict or breakthrough situations, elections may not be possible without commodities assistance in terms of capital equipment, supplies, and services. As part of this effort, expatriate personnel may start with a needs assessment. They may also become responsible for procurement, shipping, inventory, storage, delivery, oversight, and final disposition (this requires a constant presence throughout the election process). The application of modern technologies to the voter registration and election processes may also necessitate commodities assistance (see below).	Commodities assistance may provide for the voter registration and election management structure or may be in the form of modern technologies to the voter registration and election processes.
3. Application of Modern Technologies	In the case of post-conflict or breakthrough elections, there may be little or no time to apply modern technologies. In special circumstances, where there is no infrastructure for holding elections and where there is considerable lead time and a massive donor effort, an infusion of technology may be possible. Assistance may be provided in the form of technical expertise, training, and commodities. Technical advisors may need to be on site well in advance (e.g., opening of voter registration) and remain throughout the course of the election.	Application of modern technologies may go far to improve the security and integrity of elections and the cohesiveness of the election management structure. Technologies might be applied to voter registration, counting and tabulation, and security controls or network. Assistance may be provided in the form of modern technologies or commodities. Technical advice may be carried out on-site.
4. Financial Support	In some resource scarce environments, USAID through its institutional partners has covered payroll costs for poll workers and professional staff of EMBs.	
Administrative and Logistical Support	Expatriate <i>performance personnel</i> may serve as "adjunct" staff members to the EMB fulfilling such tasks as accrediting election observers, procuring equipment, distributing election materials, developing logistics plans, or data-processing.	
5. Technical Advice	Expatriate <i>technical advisors</i> are often used to assist election commissioners and EMB staff in a range of areas, such as regulatory drafting, voter registration, information technology, campaign finance, election management, adjudication of grievances, statistics, computer programming, cartography, media relations, voter education, training.	Again, expatriate <i>technical advisors</i> are often used to assist election commissioners and EMB staff in the legal, management, and creation of a permanent EMB, the re-organization of legal and procedural reforms and introduction of legal and procedural reforms and advisors.
6. Training	Legitimizing assistance is likely to focus on the training of registrars, poll workers, or select personnel such as data-processors (in the event of the introduction of new technologies). If time permits, a TOT program may be put into place. If not, direct training by expatriate personnel may be necessary. Training provided as a component of legitimizing assistance may or may not have a lasting impact at the institutional level.	Training as part of institutionalizing assistance may include the implementation, and evaluation of "in-house" training of select personnel (particularly if new departments are created). Training may require specific timeframes and may be conducted as part of an on-going elections assistance project. Or it may also be provided through participation in regional or international training programs.
7. Strategic Planning/ Organizational Management		This type of assistance usually involves a reorganization followed by strategic planning activities. The reorganization, application of modern technologies, changes in operating procedures, and professional operational planning, strategic planning and management.

Managing Assistance In Support Of Political And Electoral Processes

		election to address institutional capabilities and assistance is on improved professionalism of carried out by on-site advisors or periodic visits to
--	--	---

Note: These grids are provided for illustrative and comparative purposes. The types of assistance listed are not exhaustive nor are legitimizing and institutionalizing

capabilities? Reach? Influence? In some cases, indirect methods of voter information/education will be used. These involve one-way communication by means of electronic and print media. Examples include special programming or public service announcements on radio and television; articles, advertisements, or special inserts in newspapers and other periodicals; and any medium that can be printed with an election message such as posters, leaflets, banners, stickers, buttons, t-shirts or shopping bags.

In other cases, direct methods are deemed more appropriate. Direct methods exhibit a more interactive relationship with the target audience. They typically involve some sort of special event to convey an election message. Rock concerts, festivals, sports competitions, plays produced by community theaters or travelling troupes, town hall meetings, games, and mock elections have all been used for such purposes. Television and radio shows have also begun to incorporate a call-in format.

FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS BOX THREE: Voter Education
What Institutions are responsible for and/or engaged in voter information/education activities?
What is the nature of these institutions, i.e. partisan, official? What are their capabilities?
What are the interest and awareness levels of the electorate? Have there been significant legal or procedural innovations adopted for this election?
Are there certain segments of the population with special needs?
What are the options with respect to mass communication? What is their nature, i.e. state-owned, independent?
What are their capabilities, reach, and influence? Does this vary by region?

a) Legitimizing Assistance

As part of legitimizing assistance, the responsibility for implementing voter information/education programs may fall heavily upon international implementing

organizations. They are likely to take a leading role in designing the campaign, overseeing production aspects, and assuming production, distribution, and in some cases broadcasting, costs. Legitimizing assistance has employed direct and indirect methods of voter information/education or some combination thereof:

- Preparing a voter information/education program on behalf of the election management body
- Providing funding to and guiding the creative, production, or distribution efforts of responsible institutions
- Sub-contracting local service providers to carry out voter information/education activities

Typically, these voter information/education activities are done on behalf of election management bodies and with the assistance of local partners. Such partners might include non-governmental organizations, political parties, marketing agencies, and production companies.

b) Institutionalizing Assistance

As in the other categories, institutionalizing assistance will focus on enhancing the capabilities of election management bodies, political parties, non-governmental organizations, and even academic institutions to carry out voter information/education programs. Such activities might include:

- Providing training in the design, implementation, and conduct of official or non-official voter information/education programs
- Offering sub-grants to NGOs (by institutional partners) active in voter information/education with the aim of institution building
- Facilitating the introduction of school-based voter education programs

- Fostering strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors with respect to the financing and implementation of voter information/education campaigns.

Once the capabilities of local partners have been built or strengthened to the point that they can be relied upon to carry out comprehensive and quality voter information/education programs, USAID may begin to give direct grants for this purpose. It should also be noted that as voter education begins to move into the realm of civic education, funding has shifted from USAID to USIA and other donor organizations.

PROGRAM EXAMPLE
BOX THREE: Voter Education

In Slovakia, a successful voter education campaign demonstrates the results that can be achieved when partnerships are formed between the public and private sectors. The Slovak Foundation for a Civil Society was able to raise \$130,000 and in-kind contributions valued at 2 million USD. IRI provided polling data to the organization which identified young people as a constituency for change. This data was at odds with conventional wisdom in Slovakia. This was central to the development of a specially tailored voter education campaign directed at young and first-time voters. The campaign, *Rock Voleib*, was modeled on the American *Rock the Vote*. It used rock stars and athletes, public service announcements, special events, and a cutting edge website. Its public service announcements were aired on national radio, television, and in theaters. On election day, they were broadcast on MTV Europe. Voter turnout for the election was 85%. Some 240,000 first-time voters participated, two-thirds of whom cast ballots in favor of the democratic opposition.²⁷

4. Election Observation and Complaint Resolution

Election observation is a method by which the efficiency, transparency, professionalism, and integrity of campaigns and elections are judged. In transitional societies, this task may be carried out by international election observation

²⁷ *Democracy's People: Marek Kapusta*, in the IRI Newsletter (Winter 1998). IRI: Washington, D.C., p. 4.

missions, domestic monitoring groups, and/or political parties. Election observation is particularly appropriate in certain contexts, such as the emergence of new states, in post-conflict settings, during transitions from authoritarian to democratic rule, and following internal strife.²⁸ International observation may be most necessary in these contexts, with political parties and domestic monitoring efforts playing an ever increasing role as a country moves toward consolidation. In established democracies, the integrity of elections is usually safeguarded by the mass media, citizen watch-dog groups, and a multi-party system, whereby political parties keep an eye on each other. In addition to traditional election observation, a number of variations are being used extensively by USAID and its institutional partners. These include media-monitoring, parallel vote tabulations (PVTs), and monitoring of human rights abuses and violence during the election campaign.

The existence of accessible and responsible *complaint resolution* mechanisms is also crucial to safeguard the integrity of the electoral system and the accountability of its participants.²⁹ In most settings, election complaints may be brought before election management bodies, judicial bodies, or both. Election management bodies offer what is known as administrative remedy. Complainants may have to exhaust all administrative remedies before lodging their complaint with a court of law, which is in a position to offer judicial remedy. This will depend upon provisions within the legal framework for the resolution of election related complaints. In consolidated democracies, the judicial branch is key to ensuring that voting and political rights are upheld. In many transitional environments, however, the judiciary may undermine the process or may even be

²⁸ Tostensen, A., Faber, D., de Jong, K., *Towards an Integrated Approach to Election Observation? Professionalizing European Long-Term Election Observations missions, Part I: A Syllabus for Election Observation Training*, An ECDPM Policy Management Report, No. 7, September 1997.

²⁹ Barnes, Brilliant, Crosby, Dannenberg, Lyons, and Nix, pp. 74-76

Assistance Approaches At a Glance

Table 3: Voter Education

VOTER EDUCATION	LEGITIMIZING ASSISTANCE	INSTITUTIONALIZING
1. Preparation of a Voter Education Program	If local institutions do not have the time, resources, or expertise to undertake voter education, USAID's institutional partners and on-site technical experts may do so. This involves the design of the voter education campaign, all production aspects, and even covering broadcasting costs (although free airtime is usually sought). Often, an institutional partner will prepare a voter education program "on behalf" of an EMB.	
2. Advice on Development of Voter Education Programs	It is common for on-site personnel to advise EMBs, NGOs, and political parties on the design, implementation, and evaluation of voter education campaigns. They are often in a position to provide valuable information, whether polling data or comparative models, to local institutions.	
3. Providing Service Contracts/ Sub-Grants for Voter Education Activities	Institutional partners may sign a service contract or award a sub-grant to a local partner, for example an NGO, marketing agency, or production company to undertake a non-partisan voter education campaign.	At this phase, the institutional partner may use the building the institutional capacity of a local partner may be perceived by USAID as a less cost implementing voter education programs and, thus
4. Training in Voter Education Approaches and Techniques	See Appendix 3 on political party activities.	Training may be provided to responsible staff implement, and evaluate voter education program target audiences. NGOs and political parties may "Vote" and voter education activities.
5. Facilitating Strategic Partnerships	At this phase, there may be some opportunity to create constructive working relationships between EMBs and local NGOs or between the public and private sectors. An EMB without the human resources to carry out a voter education program might be convinced to contract a local NGO (provided it has the necessary capabilities) to do the job. Foreign companies operating in the host country, might also be approached to provide funding for non-partisan efforts.	Efforts can be undertaken to institutionalize strategic public and private players including EMBs, NGOs, schools and institutions of higher learning, associations, industries, and clubs that can contribute to efforts.

Notes: During the consolidation phase, voter education may give way to civic education which may be primarily funded by foundations, for example the United States Information Agency.

These grids are provided for illustrative and comparative purposes. The types of assistance listed are not exhaustive and institutionalizing activities mutually exclusive.

marginalized. This is particularly true when the judiciary is not able to fairly and competently adjudicate election-related grievances. In this case, complainants tend to turn to international observer missions or media representatives rather than to domestic institutions such as the courts.

a) Legitimizing Assistance

In many contexts where legitimizing assistance is provided, international implementing organizations play a major role in monitoring the campaigns and elections process, including the adjudication of grievances process. Their activities may include:

- Fielding international observer missions
- Supporting the monitoring efforts, if they exist, of political parties and local NGOs
- Conducting/supporting media monitoring and parallel vote tabulation activities
- Tracking and publicizing election related complaints and their resolutions
- Mediating disputes between election contestants
- Helping to facilitate peaceful transitions of power

While local monitoring, PVT, and media monitoring operations may exist, they may be quite dependent upon foreign financing, training, and support, for example to secure observer credentials or obtain press coverage.

b) Institutionalizing Assistance

Institutionalizing assistance in the area of election observation and complaint resolution will be directed toward creating or strengthening local institutions and building their capacities. For example:

- Training political parties and NGOs to conduct domestic monitoring of campaigns

and elections. Specialized training in parallel vote tabulations and media monitoring

FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS
Box Four: Election Observation and Complaint Resolution

What institutions have the right to have election observers in the polls. What are the legal restrictions?

Is the electoral environment conducive to domestic monitoring or will an international observation mission be required?

Will a spectrum of political parties be able to mount a comprehensive observer effort?

What about NGOs? What are their capabilities? Are they truly independent?

Is the judiciary independent, or is it subject to manipulation?

Is the judiciary capable? Does the bench have training and experience specific to campaigns and elections?

How knowledgeable are political participants about their rights to file complaints and the legal and administrative requirements for doing so?

- Proving instruction to participants in the electoral process on how to better document, lodge, and argue process and results-oriented complaints

PROGRAM EXAMPLE
Box Four: Election Observation

The National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) in the Philippines is frequently held out as a model for the conduct of parallel vote tabulations (PVTs). By the time snap presidential elections were called in 1986, the organization had years of experience conducting traditional election observation and had built a strong grassroots network. It was considered credible and unbiased organization. NAMFREL mobilized 500,000 volunteers to assist with the conduct of a quick count for the presidential elections. Its aim was to deter any tampering during the official tabulation process. Its volunteers obtained results from 75% of the polling sites. The results of the quick count showed Corazon Aquino leading. Official results gave President Marcos the victory. A military revolt soon followed, reinforced by public and international pressure. Within three weeks of the election, Marcos was forced to relinquish power and the duly elected leader was installed.³⁰

³⁰ See Barnes, Brilliant, Crosby, Dannenberg, Lyons, and Nix, p. 83.

ASSISTANCE APPROACHES AT A GLANCE

Table 4: Election Observation and Adjudication of Complaints

Election Observation & Complaint Resolution	LEGITIMIZING ASSISTANCE	INSTITUTIONALIZING ASSISTANCE
1. Fielding an International Election Observation Mission	International Observer Missions may be required in post-conflict and breakthrough situations where domestic monitoring efforts do not exist or are severely undermined. International Observers can focus international attention on a given election, demonstrate support for the democratic process, raise public confidence, deter or expose fraud or irregularities, mediate disputes, contain conflict, legitimize the outcome, and facilitate a peaceful transition to power. These types of missions have also been used to exploit political openings. The effort may employ a combination of long-term and short-term observers to ensure adequate coverage (both geographically and over time).	
2. Supporting a Domestic Monitoring Effort	If an indigenous monitoring effort exists, USAID and its institutional partners can provide support in a number of ways. They may develop poll watcher training programs for NGOs and political parties. Training may be undertaken directly or through TOT. Expatriate personnel may also advise NGOs and political parties on their respective monitoring efforts. In the case of NGOs, commodities and/or financial support may also be provided. International observer groups and/or technical assistance providers may serve to boost the morale and status of domestic monitoring groups.	At this stage, assistance, whether in the form of training, commodities, or a sub-grant may serve to build the technical and management capabilities of the PVT organization. Assistance may also serve to consolidate an informal network of NGOs to include media monitoring or PVTs. Grants from USAID in support of their domestic monitoring efforts may also be provided.
3. Conducting Media Monitoring	There are a number of options for media monitoring. USAID might contract a foreign or local organization to undertake this effort directly. Or, one of its institutional partners could sub-contract such an organization. Another approach would be to provide training to equip a local organization to carry out media monitoring. Commodities, such as televisions, VCRs, and computers might also be provided to the local partner.	Institutionalizing assistance whether in the form of training, commodities, or a sub-grant may seek to build the technical and management capabilities of the PVT organization for media monitoring. Proven NGOs may utilize the support of this activity.
4. Providing for a Parallel Vote Tabulation	Virtually the same options exist with respect to PVTs. USAID might contract a foreign or local organization to undertake this effort directly. Or, one of its institutional partners might sub-contract such an organization. Another approach would be to provide training to equip a local organization to carry out a PVT. Commodities such as computers may also be provided to the local partner.	Training, commodities, or a sub-grant may be provided to build the technical and management capabilities of the PVT organization. Direct grants from USAID in support of a PVT may also be provided.
5. Tracking and Publicizing Election Related Cases	Given the inadequate development of judicial institutions and the short timetables indicative of most post-conflict and breakthrough elections, there may be little opportunity to adequately prepare election officials and judges. Often, election observation groups or technical assistance providers will track and publicize the handling of election related cases in an attempt to create pressure on EMBs and the courts to equitably and consistently deal with complaints.	
6. Training Efforts directed at judges, political parties, NGOs, and journalists.	In the case of legitimizing assistance, it may be possible (and advisable) to instruct political participants on how to adequately document, file, and defend sound election-related cases with EMBs or the courts.	Institutionalizing assistance provides more formal mechanisms for the resolution of election law and handling of processes. Training may also be provided to journalists to develop a "public watch dog" mentality for campaigns and the capacity of NGOs and political parties to document and publicize election-related cases may also be necessary.
7. Establishing Special Courts		Some countries have opted to create special courts. If such an institution is created, there may be an opportunity to provide training and commodities assistance.

Defining and Assessing Options for Assistance

Note: These grids are provided for illustrative and comparative purposes. The types of assistance listed are not exhaustive and institutionalizing activities mutually exclusive.

- Training those responsible for adjudicating grievances and issuing administrative and judicial remedies in the specifics of campaigns and elections law
- Training journalists to fulfill their public information and watchdog functions during campaigns and elections, particularly with respect to investigative journalism
- Resolving jurisdictional problems through amendments to the law and institutional re-organization, including the introduction of specialized courts.

B. Approaches to Local Election Assistance

One of the primary motivations in providing local election assistance is to increase the accountability of local officials. This type of assistance typically follows the introduction of a devolution of power scheme. Within the context of this manual, the phrase local election assistance is used in reference to aid given in support of any sub-national election, executive or legislative, from state to ward and everything in between. The local election process can be considerably more complicated than the national one, thereby presenting unique challenges for assistance providers. Depending upon the timing and complexity of the elections, a variety of jurisdictional questions, and the degree of decentralization of the election management process, DG field officers may be required to decide whether a nation-wide assistance program is feasible or whether targeted assistance in select districts would be beneficial. For more information on local elections and associated programming, please refer to *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned* (USAID, 1999).

1. Legal Framework

Assistance in support of local elections often occurs in conjunction with a country's move to devolve government power. It is highly likely, then, that new institutions have been created at

the local level or that existing institutions will be directly elected for the first time. As a result, there may be no legal framework for the conduct of local elections. There may be opportunities for international implementing organizations to facilitate an open debate on the adoption of a devolution scheme or local election law, to furnish comparative models, and to provide analytical and legal drafting services in support of this process.

If support of the legal framework for local elections is a possibility, the DG field may want to address a number of issues:

- Where does the government stand on the issue of devolution? Has a municipal government law been enacted? Have local bodies been directly elected in the past, or is this the first time?
- Does legislation on local elections exist? Is this legislation being prepared at the national level or within each jurisdiction? Are various voting systems being used? Is there fundamental legislation on voting rights and elections with which local election laws must comply?

PROGRAM EXAMPLE BOX FIVE: Legal Framework

In Russia, USAID was confronted with local elections in 89 constituent republics, covering a vast territory and occurring on a rolling basis. Legislation was drafted and voting systems selected locally. Many local legislatures had served as "rubber-stamp" bodies in the past and had little experience in legislative drafting. In response, IFES assembled a team of Russian and American lawyers to prepare a set of model local election laws. Each utilized a different voting system and demonstrated how this choice affect other aspects of the election process. Each was fully compliant with Russia's Voting Rights Act and addressed the concerns of election observers. These models were provided to local election managers and legislators

throughout the country to facilitate their decision-making and legal drafting processes.³¹

- Which bodies have the right of legislative initiative with respect to election law? Do these bodies have any experience in legislative drafting? What is the timetable for preparing or amending such legislation?

2. Election Management Bodies

The introduction of direct elections or other reforms at the local level, may necessitate substantive changes to the election management structure. New election management bodies may need significant assistance in such areas as budgeting, strategic and operational planning, commodities procurement, provision of basic services, and poll worker training. Existing election management bodies may be just as likely to require help with respect to re-organization and re-training as a result of reforms. They may also benefit from assistance in the implementation of new legal provisions and procedural innovations or the application of modern technologies.

Before deciding to proceed with assistance in the area of election management, DG field officers may want to consider the following questions:

PROGRAM EXAMPLE BOX SIX: Election Management

USAID faced a number of challenges in West Bank/Gaza. The local election law was vague. There was an obvious incompatibility between legal requirements and administrative realities. Jurisdictional problems were anticipated between existing institutions and the yet to be formed Supreme Committee for Local Elections. Prior to the calling of elections, IFES was brought in to initiate a strategic planning exercise. It conducted an audit of the local election law, assessed election system performance during the 1996 legislative and executive elections, and conducted interviews with a range of stakeholders. A comprehensive guide was then prepared for those who would be appointed to the new EMB. Its aim was

³¹ See *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned* USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 20, 25.

to enhance the new institution's strategic planning and management capabilities.³²

- What institutions are responsible for local elections? Is responsibility decentralized? Will existing election management bodies (EMBs) be used (modified) or new ones created? What is the role, i.e. consultative or supervisory, of the national EMB, if any? What are the capabilities of the EMBs? Do they have previous experience with local elections? Is there any institutional memory? How dependent are the EMBs on local administrations?
- What is the condition of local voter lists? How are they maintained? By whom?

3. Voter Education

Voter education campaigns in support of local elections are likely to take on additional dimensions relative to national elections. This is because voters will need to be informed about local government reforms, about the roles and responsibilities of new local government bodies, and about the importance of local elections to the vitality of their community. Confidence building measures may need to be a part of this process. In some contexts, voter education activities have been used to inform the public about and to build pressure on the national government for the devolution of power.

With respect to programming activities in the area of voter education, the DG field officer will need to know:

- Are there institutions capable of carrying out voter information, e.g. EMBs, political parties, or NGOs within each jurisdiction?

³² See *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned* USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 39; and *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 26.

- Can a nationwide voter information effort be carried out, or are different voting systems and laws being used in each jurisdiction?
- How familiar are voters with the role and responsibilities of local decision-making bodies? What is the interest and awareness level in the local elections process?
- Are there sub-groups within each jurisdiction that have special needs?
- What communication outlets exist within each jurisdiction? What are their capabilities, reach, and influence?

PROGRAM EXAMPLE

BOX SEVEN: Voter Education

In Honduras, USAID was able to work directly with a local partner to address the challenges of devolution. Although legislation on municipal reform was adopted in 1990, the direct election of local councilors was not provided for under existing legislation on local elections. A local and proven NGO, AMHON, proposed that the law be amended to allow for separate ballots for local elections. Over an extended period, it combined public advocacy and voter education efforts to place pressure on political elites. The proposal was eventually adopted, resulting in direct election of local councilors. Once elections were called, AMHON carried out a voter information campaign on balloting under the new system.³³

In South Africa, one of the key problems in the administration of local elections was voter registration. A public opinion survey undertaken for NDI found that a significant portion of the population had not registered to vote and did not have information about how to register. On the basis of the survey's findings, NDI was able to convince the EMB to extend the deadline for registration and expand voter education efforts. The data was used to design the most compelling arguments to sway people to register and

vote. NDI further assisted the EMB in producing posters and registration handbooks.³⁴

4. Election Observation and Complaint Resolution

The engagement of international observers in local elections is not unheard of, particularly if they are held simultaneously with national elections or represent a major political opening; i.e. when devolution precedes political and electoral reforms at the national level. Otherwise, assistance might be given to political parties or NGOs to facilitate domestic monitoring efforts. The adjudication of grievances process presents its own challenges as judicial institutions at the local level may not be adequately developed to accommodate process and results-oriented electoral disputes. At a minimum, political parties and NGOs may receive training on how best to track and document violations of election law and file complaints under existing mechanisms.

In assessing the feasibility of election observation or complaint adjudication activities, the DG field officer will need to determine:

- Are there institutions, i.e. political parties or NGOs capable of carrying out election observation in each of the local jurisdictions? Do these institutions have the legal right to observe elections?
- Do judicial institutions exist within each jurisdiction to handle election-related disputes? How developed are these local judicial institutions? Are they independent? Do they have the experience and knowledge necessary to adjudicate such cases?

PROGRAM EXAMPLE

BOX EIGHT: Election Observation

³³ See *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 62; and *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 29.

³⁴ *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 28.

China provides an interesting example of local elections which represent a major political opening. Since 1994, IRI has taken advantage of this opening, sending international observer missions to monitor 50 local elections in 10 provinces. It has offered extensive recommendations on legal and procedural reforms, many of which have been adopted. In Fujian Province, for example, 29 of 40 recommendations were adopted over a period of three years. Although China remains a one-party state, two-fifths of those elected to village committees are non-communists. These institutions are beginning to wrest real power away from local Communist Party structures. This engagement of the local elections process may set an important precedent for national breakthrough elections.³⁵

- Are there other options for filing complaints, i.e. with EMBs or national courts? What are their capabilities?

C. Approaches to Post-Election Assistance

Post-elections assistance can be defined as programming that occurs between elections and the seating of the new legislature or government. It is aimed at facilitating a smooth political transition and preparing recently elected officials to fulfill their roles and responsibilities under a new political system. For more information on post-election assistance, please refer to *Post-Elections Assistance: Securing a Smooth Transition*.

The post-elections assistance category is meant to provide a flexible funding mechanism for a wide variety of activities that must begin immediately after elections, such as:

- Establishing and strengthening the legal infrastructure of the new political system
- Familiarizing all political actors with the new political system
- Building public confidence in the new political system

³⁵ See *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned* USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 20; and *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned*, USAID: Washington, D.C., 1999, p. 30.

- Dealing constructively with potential threats to the new system

Such activities address substantive issues that might well be integrated into longer-term electoral and political process or governance programs. Before the introduction of distinct post-election programming, the only option to pursue such assistance was to tack it onto elections programming through some sort of modification or await a new round of funding requests. The length of time required to secure approvals, however, might well exceed the transition period. In short, distinct post-elections programs were envisioned to fill a void, thereby ensuring the continuity of assistance during the sensitive period after elections. The result of such an approach has been to uphold the momentum for reform, demonstrate a sustained U.S. commitment, provide an opportunity for relationship-building with new political actors, and positively influence the stability of the new political system.

As with other forms of assistance, there is a potential multiplier effect to be gained from well-designed programs aimed at one of these needs. Strengthening of the legal infrastructure of the new political system may, for example, contribute to greater accountability and transparency. Increasing political actors' understanding of the new political system may help to reduce the threat of intervention by remnants of the old regime. And, measures taken to address any one of these issues is likely to generate greater public confidence in the transition.

FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS BOX NINE: Post-Elections Assistance

Are new or significantly modified governing institutions being introduced?

Is there time to carry out post-elections assistance before the new government is installed?

What is the level of experience of newly elected officials? What priority issues will they face immediately upon assuming office?

What is required in terms of a constitutional and legal framework to consolidate the new political system?

Are there indications that a peaceful transition of power is in danger? Who poses that threat?

Were the military and internal or special security forces an integral part of the previous regime or political system? How are they to be demobilized?

Does the public understand the roles and responsibilities of the new governing institution(s) as well as their own as citizens? Do they and the losing parties have confidence in these institutions?

A variety of approaches to post-elections assistance and their intended effect are discussed in greater detail below.

1. Establishing a Legal Framework

In transitional settings, elections do not simply determine who will hold which public offices. They bring into being a new set of governing institutions, whose respective roles may not yet be well-defined. Establishing a constitutional and legal framework that defines the rules of governance is a crucial task during the post-election period.

2. Minimizing Threats

This type of assistance can take many forms. For example, it might include efforts aimed at helping military forces demobilize and return to their barracks. It could assist in the reform of political and security forces to minimize paramilitary activity and direct intimidation by the old-guard. Or it might explore possibilities for creating mechanisms for dealing with human rights abuses by the old regime such as truth and reconciliation commissions, amnesty laws or special tribunals.

3. Orienting Political Actors

Even where a constitutional framework does exist, it is possible that political institutions are being put into place for the first time. This may be the case for breakthrough elections and first local elections held as part of the devolution of a power scheme. As a result, the primary goal of such assistance is to provide political actors with

a clear understanding of the new institutions and rules of the game.

4. Building Public Confidence

Voter apathy toward elections stems from a sense that the results matter little to people’s daily lives. It can also result from the way in which public affairs are conducted. Politicians often feel that with the passing of elections and the absence of international attention, there is less reason to act in good faith under the new political system. Many of the other program activities already described will help increase public confidence in the transition. There are also ways to address the issue directly. Public opinion surveys on attitudes toward and an understanding of the transition process could identify areas of weak public confidence, the results of which might then be used to develop strategies and messages for addressing them. For example, town meetings might be called between newly elected and incumbent officials so that citizens could air their concerns about the transition process.

PROGRAM EXAMPLE
 BOX NINE: Post-Elections Assistance

Due to existing sanctions, USAID was prohibited from providing any pre- or post-elections assistance to the Government of Nigeria. Instead, it opted to train newly elected officials in the period between elections and transfer of power. Utilizing its rapid response unit, the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), the Democracy and Governance Center, and institutional partners on the ground, USAID initiated post-elections assistance within days of the election. Johns Hopkins already had a grassroots network in place and was selected to carry out training for elected officials at the local level. The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), which helped create the Transitional Monitoring Group (TMG), a network of 45 NGOs during the election campaign, shifted quickly into training activities for governors-elect. Management Systems International (MSI), under contract to the DG Center, organized training for those elected to both houses of the parliament. State legislators-elect were also invited to participate in this training. These activities were carried out during a four-month period. Once the newly elected assumed office, assistance

programming shifted from post-elections to governance.³⁶

D. Approaches to Political Party Assistance

Political parties are commonly taken for granted as the essential building blocks of a democratic political system, without which democracy cannot function. Yet in most countries undergoing transitions to democracy, parties are the weakest part of the new political system. In most cases, opposition parties have been banned for all or much of the country's recent history, and thus have little or no experience with loyal opposition. As a consequence, one finds low levels of organizational capacity coupled with a poor understanding of the role and structure of such opposition.

Elections have been the starting point rather than the culmination of the democratization process throughout much of the developing world. Instead of growing up organically as representatives of particular social groups, parties tend to spring up in response to calls for elections. Elections may be announced with very little lead-time for coherent parties to form. Would-be political leaders are suddenly presented with the need to create a vehicle with which to compete for political power, and to do so within a very short time period. As a result, opposition political parties in countries undergoing democratic transitions are often little more than a handful of leaders in search of a constituency. By contrast, longtime ruling parties must transform themselves from party-states, with all of the power and resources that implies, into competitive and more responsive political parties.

It is imperative that assistance programs aimed at strengthening democratic processes and institutions take account of the role and character of political parties. This section of the manual provides a framework designed to stimulate thinking about the most important

³⁶ Phone interview with Ron Shaiko, Center for Democracy and Governance, USAID/WDC.

functions of political parties and how external assistance can be used most effectively to enable parties to perform these functions well. For a more detailed discussion of political party development in transitional societies and related programming, please see *Political Party Development Assistance: Reflections and Recommendations* (USAID, 1998).

It should be noted at the outset that assistance to political parties corresponds roughly to two very different U.S. government goals for supporting political and electoral processes. In some instances, the U.S. government's primary goal is to lend legitimacy to a given electoral process. Party assistance programs most appropriate for this objective are those that focus on creating a 'level playing field' and enabling greater political competition between parties in contrast to longer term institutionalizing goals such as building the organizational or governance capacity of political parties.

FEASIBILITY QUESTIONS

Box TEN: Political Party Development

Do the beginnings of a multi-party system exist? Did the emergence of a spectrum of political parties pre-date the calling of elections or stem from it?

What are the cultural and social attitudes toward political parties?

Are other entities, such as public associations or trade unions, for example, able to field candidates in elections?

How will traditional patron-client networks influence the prospects of individual parties?

What are the legal rights and responsibilities of political parties?

How level is the playing field?

What is the level of tension and distrust between the parties? Is a boycott of elections likely?

What are the resources and capabilities of the parties? At the national level? Locally?

How cohesive are party structures?

Does the party represent anyone other than a very narrow set of actors?

This does not mean, however, that the types of assistance described below are mutually exclusive. Rather, they are complementary and partially overlapping (see Appendix 3). An electoral process that is to be viewed as legitimate requires a real choice between at least two parties, something that is impossible without at least one opposition party capable of surviving between elections and proposing a credible governing program.

a) *Legitimizing Assistance*

Elections are critical to democracy, and parties are critical actors in elections. Parties competing in elections give voters a choice of representatives and policies. But for parties who want to participate in elections, they must feel

Assistance Approaches At a Glance
Table 5: Political Party Development

POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY	LEGITIMIZING ASSISTANCE	INSTITUTIONALIZING ASSISTANCE
1. Campaign Strategy	Legitimizing assistance in advance of a breakthrough election is likely to be dominated by efforts to help political parties develop and execute a successful campaign strategy. Although these types of activities are intended to "level" the political playing field, depending up the range of parties receiving assistance and the proximity of elections, this assistance may be labeled "partisan" by certain local actors.	Typically, institutionalizing assistance will still focus on helping parties to refine their campaign techniques for use in both current and future elections.
2. Polling	Either the provision of polling data or instruction in basic polling techniques. Political party representatives taught to apply this information to message development/campaign strategies.	Training in polling techniques. Political parties trained to become more competitive and more responsive to their constituencies.
3. Message/Platform Development	Campaign managers and candidates are taught to boil down their party's platform into messages and a slogan which voters can understand and with which they will identify.	Assistance focuses on facilitating message development and developing a distinct party image, creating a core electorate.
4. Recruitment	Assistance in methods for recruiting campaign volunteers, poll watchers/workers, and candidates.	Institutionalizing assistance in this area includes training and incentives for leaders, and members.
5. Coalition Building	Political parties may be encouraged to reach out to like-minded political parties and special interest groups in the interests of forging a coalition and increasing their electoral prospects.	At this stage, coalition-building efforts may focus on formal or on an issue basis) as well as strategic alliances.
6. Get Out the Vote	Assistance provided to political parties in designing and implementing GOTV campaigns designed to turn out the party faithful and sway undecided voters on election day.	Development of systems for transport, list development, and organization and recruitment of block-captains.
7. Communication	Instruction to candidates and party leaders in such skills as public speaking, debate, and image development, appearing on camera, holding a press conference, and interacting with voters.	Similar instruction is likely to be provided to party leaders with emphasis on developing communication plans, strategies, and materials.
8. Campaign Financing	Advising on resource mobilization in the midst of a campaign may focus on identifying/maximizing existing resources, utilizing in-kind contributions, understanding campaign finance laws.	Instruction in resource mobilization and fund-raising, and sustainability of the party organization and its core.
9. Poll Watcher Training	If political parties have the right to observe balloting and counting of votes on election day, assistance may be needed to mobilize, coordinate, and train poll watchers. In some cases, political parties may also have the right to appoint workers to polling boards, whose function will be different than that of the poll watchers and will require specially-tailored training.	Efforts as part of institutionalizing assistance to help parties to develop, administer, and evaluate their own poll watchers and poll workers.
10. Complaint Mechanisms	Nascent political parties will need to learn their rights and responsibilities under laws governing campaigns and elections. Information on available complaint mechanisms and how to collect evidence, file a complaint with a sound legal basis, and present a case is often necessary.	
11. Leadership Training		Assistance aimed at building the ability of political leaders and candidates at all levels (including training in public speaking, debate, and image development).
12. Internal Democracy	Due to time constraints, activities as part of a legitimizing assistance effort may zero in on making the selection of candidates by political parties a more democratic process, i.e. one that is transparent, and inclusive rather than being handled by party elites behind closed doors.	Assistance efforts in this area would focus on developing decision-making, intra-party communication, and election selection processes.

13. Party Building		Activities intended to broaden the organizational the creation of local chapters, and build the capa
14. Governance		Once political parties gain power, activities i effectively in government through coalition-procedure, caucuses/committee formation, offic advocacy group relations.

Note: These grids are provided for illustrative and comparative purposes. The types of assistance listed are not exhaustive nor are legitimizing and institutionalizin

they can be competitive. And in order for them to accept the outcome, they must have confidence in the fairness of the electoral process. Programs focused on helping parties to compete effectively in elections are the most common type of party assistance programs. There are several reasons for this. First, and as noted above, since 1990 most democratic transitions have been signaled by elections. Second, the State Department and USAID have been more willing to fund election-related party work than other kinds of party assistance programming. Finally, parties typically are more interested in receiving campaign training assistance.

Legitimizing assistance to political parties in anticipation of election campaigns have traditionally included the following:

- Developing and implementing campaign and communication strategies
- Conducting public opinion polling and applying the results to campaign strategy and message development
- Developing and delivering campaign messages
- Recruiting volunteers
- Designing and implementing get out the vote campaigns
- Training and deploying party poll-watchers and/or poll-workers
- Documenting and seeking redress for electoral disputes and violations

Legitimizing assistance may have useful side effects for longer-term party development as well as for the survival of the democratic political system. Helping to ensure that elections are carried out in a manner acceptable to all parties is an essential first step in the development of political parties and in the consolidation of the political system. Successful participation in elections (whether the party wins

or loses the elections) helps to focus a party's attention on key aspects of party building between elections – internal party communications, media relations, grassroots party organization, etc. However, it is important to point out that these are only potential side effects. Whether or not they become real depends on whether parties are able and willing to make use of them.

b) *Institutionalizing Assistance*

- While the ability to field competitive candidates in elections is an essential function of political parties, it does not guarantee the development of broad-based, viable, or internally democratic parties. Party leaders may be more focused on winning elections than on building inclusive and sustainable parties. After elections, the organizational gains made during a campaign are often not maintained. Getting and keeping the attention of party leaders when they are in government is also a major challenge. In turn, party leaders may be wary of making changes in their party's formal or informal procedures and structures for fear it might weaken their authority. There are several types of assistance activities useful to overcoming some of these challenges:
- Building local party chapters, broadening the organizational/geographic base
- Increasing and broadening party membership, especially select constituencies, such as women and youth
- Pursuing leadership development initiatives at the national and local levels

- Using polling, surveys, and focus groups to make parties more competitive/responsive³⁷
- Facilitating message and platform development as a means of developing a distinct party image, creating a common vision, and strengthening links with voters
- Raising funds necessary to sustain political parties' competitiveness in election campaigns and institutional viability
- Enhancing internal party democracy through via party bylaws, participatory decision-making, intra-party communication, and transparent leader/ candidate selection
- Helping parties in government participate more effectively via coalition-building, legislative drafting, parliamentary procedure, caucuses/committee formation, office operations, and constituency, media, and advocacy group relations.

While, many of the party development skills mentioned here are most relevant for new or poorly institutionalized parties, some may also have relevance for long-established but “ossified” parties. It is also clear that the commitment of party leaders is key to the success of programs, and that provincial and local party leaders tend to be more receptive to training than national level leaders. The need to guard against the “misappropriation” of training, i.e. when techniques are adopted to make parties stronger without making them more internally democratic, is also worth noting. And given the institutional weaknesses of new parties, their limited absorptive capacity, especially over short periods of time, must be kept in mind.

³⁷ For example, NDI conducted focus groups with villagers in Benin to determine the issues most important to them. NDI followed this with a survey of party leaders about their issues of priority. The large disconnect allowed NDI to show the party leaders how out of touch they were with their constituents.

PROGRAM EXAMPLE
Box ELEVEN: Political Party Development

Despite experience gained during several post-communist elections in Poland, campaign skills remained confined to a national political elite. In anticipation of the 1997 elections, NDI embarked upon a program to foster the campaign skills of local political party chapters. It conducted training activities and individual consultations for 70 local party chapters. The results of NDI's efforts became evident as the campaign unfolded and were characterized by a *Washington Post* report that indicated Polish political parties were doing what have never been done before. "They knocked on doors . . . went hoarse chatting up voters . . . and carried questionnaires from Krakow to Poznan . . . to ask Poles what they wanted from their public servants."³⁸

In Mongolia, victories at the ballot box failed to produce the consolidation of political parties. Most districts lack party offices. The politics of "personality" displaced the leading role of the party. Elected officials tended to "go it alone" rather than submit to party principles, positions, or discipline. In response, IRI assisted parties with professionalization, grassroots organizational development, coalition-building, and communications strategies. The Chairman of Parliament expressed a commitment to creating viable and effective party structures at the district level. National party leaders drafted three-year strategic plans. Each district party leader developed a communications strategy. In 10 districts, voter outreach plans were also devised. Two major parties supported a coalition candidate for the 1993 presidential election and were able to sustain the coalition for the 1996 parliamentary elections, pursuing joint candidate slates, a unified platform, and compatible campaign messages.³⁹

³⁸ NDI Quarterly Report (1st Quarter, 1997) for USAID Grant No. 181-0021-G-00-5220.

³⁹ Results Summary provided by IRI.

V. LINKING OPTIONS TO STRATEGY

A. Placement of Elections Assistance in the Country Strategy

It is frequently the case that elections assistance is a response to external (to the USAID mission) pressure to provide some sort of support to the electoral process. This type of assistance, referred to as legitimizing assistance throughout this manual, is typically implemented in close proximity to the date of the election. As a consequence, there may be little time to take appropriate steps to ensure that the activities undertaken are actually a good fit with the mission's overall strategy. In the development of institutionalizing assistance, however, there should be ample opportunity to assure conformance to mission strategy. DG field officers may anticipate at least three different roles for elections assistance. These include:

1. Integral

Here, the assistance activity fits fully with the mission strategy. It's design will more than likely be a direct outgrowth of the assessment process required for strategy development. It is highly likely that this assistance activity will reflect a developmental focus and will be linked to one of the mission's regular strategic objectives, most likely in the area of Elections and Political Processes, via one of its intermediate results. In designing the activity, close and strict attention must be paid to the indicators developed for the intermediate result to ensure that the scope of work calls for the appropriate activities. Much like the formulation of strategic objectives in other areas, the process of design can be aided and often much improved by the inclusion of local partners as part of an extended objective team.

2. Special Objective

A demand for elections assistance may arise that was not contemplated in the assessment carried out to develop the mission's country strategy. Thus, there may be no comfortable fit with any existing objective or its intermediate results.

This may be the case when a breakthrough election is announced or when changes in the political environment permit election assistance. Demand may also be created from outside the mission. A significant amount of funding may become available if an upcoming election is determined to be important to USG interests. Where this is the case and/or where large scale activities are proposed, a special objective may be developed.

As indicated in the term, these objectives are designed to fit specific activities, and are frequently of relatively short duration (i.e., to cover a specific period, but which may be a year or longer, in the run-up to an election campaign). Before the special objective is designed, an assessment should be carried out. Input from the assessment can then be used to formulate the intermediate results and indicators for the special objective. While termed a special objective, the process of design is not significantly different than for other mission strategic objectives.

3. Emergency Assistance

When a snap election is called for, the mission will likely have little time even to formulate a special objective. But there may be sufficient interest and/or demand for the mission to develop activities as a type of emergency assistance in support of the elections process. While this assistance may be completely unrelated to any of its strategic objectives or intermediate results, attention should nevertheless be given to designing activities that can produce measurable results. If there is little or no time for a formal assessment, techniques for rapid assessment⁴⁰ can be helpful in providing necessary input to designing the activity. It is also useful to conduct a post-mortem once the activity is finished as an informal evaluation or as a mechanism to analyze the usefulness and feasibility of follow-on activities and to assess the need to include elections programming in the mission's strategic

⁴⁰ Hirschmann, op. cit., 1998.

framework. It should also be noted that legitimizing activities often fall under the emergency assistance rubric.

4. Developing Indicators and Reporting Results

The Agency's manual on the development of indicators and reporting results contains extensive guidance on indicators, data gathering and the reporting of results for the Results

Framework prepared by the Elections and Political Processes team in the Democracy and Governance Center in USAID Washington.⁴¹ Missions should refer to this manual in developing results packages for electoral and political process activities. While this guidance should be of enormous utility in the preparation of strategic objectives, it can also be useful in framing scopes of work and reporting results even in the cases of emergency assistance.

⁴¹ See the *Handbook of Democracy and Governance Program Indicators*, USAID-D/DG, DN-ACC-390.

VI. MANAGING ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

A. Conditioning Factors

Just as design of electoral assistance can be complex, there are several factors that can either facilitate or impede the smooth and effective implementation and management of electoral assistance activities.

1. Timing of Assistance

Timing is frequently, if not always, critical to effective implementation. A clear idea of how long the activity is likely to take given the available resources and programming context is crucial. It is equally important to know when the activity should be initiated in order for it to be conducted in a timely and opportune manner. The larger and more complex the activity, the longer the lead-time necessary. Preparing the initial assessment for the activity, drafting a scope of work, preparing a contracting mechanism (RFA or buy-in, usually), analysis and award of a contract, and arrival of an expatriate technical assistance team or the recruitment of a team of local assistance providers can be a lengthy process. The time required from germination of the idea for the activity to placement of a technical team on the ground may be anywhere from three months for a relatively small short-term intervention to one year or longer for a multi-million dollar project requiring resident advisors and complex logistics. Even a relatively simple assessment task can take three months before the team is authorized and ready to begin fieldwork.

It is important to measure the nature and time requirements of these tasks against the type of activity and objective to be accomplished. Once a date is set for the election, programming needs to take into account that certain activities must be accomplished by established deadlines in advance of that date. For instance:

- If the U.S. government would like to see legal modifications such as the inclusion of language on domestic monitors, advisors

need to be on the ground while legislation or amendments are being drafted and debated in parliament. Lobbying for changes in the midst of the election campaign before an election commission without the power or authority to change laws will be ineffective.

- For voter registration assistance, technical advisors need to be in place well before the registration process begins. Once the process has been opened, they will have no opportunity to suggest modifications or changes for improving the system.
- It is usually preferable to initiate assistance to political parties before the beginning of the candidate nomination process. Not infrequently, the Embassy, the USAID mission, or the institutional partners will identify a cut-off date in order to avoid any perception of partisanship. This cut-off date represents the last deadline for campaign related assistance to the parties.
- Since polling site commissioners are established and poll workers assigned shortly before election day, they have an extremely compressed timeframe in which to complete an assortment of tasks. As a result, training programs and training materials should be ready for use by the date that they are appointed.

2. Management Capacity

The ability of the mission to manage the proposed election activity will be critical to achievement of stated objectives. It is therefore extremely important that before the mission decides to go ahead with an election activity or project, it carefully assess its ability to take on and effectively manage the tasks involved. For the most part, the Democracy and Governance sections of USAID missions are relatively small -- with one or perhaps two U.S. direct hires. In some cases, there is no democracy officer or if there is, the position is frequently filled through a Personal Services Contract.

It should be remembered that election activities by the mission are perceived (wrongly or rightly) as highly political activities. As a result, there will be a premium on effective management. Where activities are poorly managed or begin to get out of hand, the risk of negative repercussions (such as accusations of interference or partiality) for the Embassy and the U.S. Government increases rapidly.

Because of its political nature, elections assistance can be management intensive-- with a considerable number of meetings to coordinate among various stakeholders. Assistance in support of elections is usually considered a team activity between the Embassy, the USAID mission (and OTI office), and USIA, thus coordination will be required at the country team level. Further coordination and more meetings will be necessary between host country institutions involved in or receiving aid, and with the implementing partners. Finally, because elections programming is often intensive and time-compressed, so too will be the nature of management activity.

If the elections assistance fits directly into the mission's results framework, it is likely to have been initiated by the mission itself. If not, it may be a response to an urgent request from the government or a host-country NGO, or perhaps one that has been thrust upon the mission by the Embassy or in response to interest from Washington. In either case, it is probable that the mission's planning has not anticipated the activity and it may be perceived as an extra management burden for the mission. The DG field officer is less likely to be taken by surprise, however, if he/she maintains a reasonable state of awareness of political events, and is attentive to concerns about the electoral environment raised by the Embassy, USIA, and others in country team meetings.

The mission, particularly the democracy office, needs to be cognizant of its management limitations and look for mechanisms that can ease the management task. Careful selection of implementing partners can often save considerable management time. New

opportunities for greater involvement of FSNs in the mission have been provided by the Agency's re-engineering initiatives. It is no longer unusual in missions to find most of the democracy programming managed by FSNs. This can be a considerable advantage in that most FSNs have a more comprehensive grasp of local politics and its subtleties than recently arrived direct hires, as well as a base of experience to judge what sorts of activities are feasible and which aren't.

3. Local or Host-country Receptivity

It perhaps goes without saying that host-country receptivity to the proposed activity is important to success and effectiveness. Someone should want and welcome the assistance. Without a minimum degree of receptivity, implementation will be extremely difficult. Perhaps the best case is when one or another host country stakeholder makes a clearly defined request for some type of assistance, and when that request squares nicely with the mission's country strategy. However, it is more often the case that there will be at least an equal measure of initiative from the mission, given the need to make activities conform to country strategy. Even if the initial idea for the activity was generated by the mission, a serious effort should be made to obtain input and involvement from local stakeholders such as NGOs, government institutions, or political parties. There are also instances when there is strong external pressure on the USAID mission to "do something" during an election and where considerable funding accompanies that pressure. Nonetheless, participation and involvement of host country stakeholders in the design process can spell the difference between success and failure.

Although it may seem unlikely that USAID would disburse funding without a receptive host-country destination, it does happen. As was mentioned earlier, there are a wide variety of motives for providing assistance, not all of which are generated from host-country interest. Assistance can and has been designed with little or no collaboration or input from local actors; and implementers can be identified and projects begun with little or no discussion with host

country stakeholders. While it is unusual for assistance to be rejected, a decision to proceed under such circumstances may result in an assistance effort more likely to suffer setbacks or require modifications to the original scope of work.

While electoral assistance might find strong receptivity on the part of some actors, others may be less than enthused or even vehemently opposed. Once again, it is important to recall that elections assistance is politically sensitive and that support can easily be perceived as partisan. This may be particularly true with assistance to political parties-- hence the U.S. mandate to work with all parties. Even seemingly innocuous support to election management commissions, which are usually government agencies, might be seen as an endorsement of the government and/or the ruling party. In the event of a full or partial boycott of the election by opposition groups, non-partisan voter education or get-out-the-vote activities will take on a political hue. If assistance goes to international or domestic monitoring groups, it may be viewed by the government as an attack on its legitimacy. Or, the presence of international observers might be viewed by some opposition and dissident groups as conferring legitimacy to what they anticipate will be a corrupt process. Where assistance is likely to provoke heated criticism on the part of important actors, caution should be exercised.

B. Cooperation with Other U.S. Agencies

Given the highly political and sensitive nature of elections assistance, cooperation and collaboration with other U.S. government agencies is generally necessary if not always obligatory. If the funding source for assistance is through ESF, the State department usually plays a key role in decisions regarding if, how, and when such funds will be used.

In Washington, USAID and the State Department coordinate their operations, although it is acknowledged that joint planning and other forms of cooperation could be improved. In some cases, particularly with

regard to assistance in post-conflict settings, OTI may also be involved and will need to be factored into the coordination process. In Washington, coordination is maintained through USAID regional bureaus and country desk officers and their counterparts in State. In U.S. missions, it has become established in-country practice for election work to be seen as a U.S. government team initiative involving the USAID mission (including OTI if present), the Embassy, and USIA. Unlike most development activity, elections assistance is not seen as the exclusive domain of USAID. Not infrequently, USIA develops and funds elections support projects, particularly in the area of media monitoring.

Quite frequently, other members of the U.S. mission country team (e.g., CIA, DEA) expect to play an active role. Depending on the nature and political sensitivity of proposed or ongoing election assistance activity, they may become involved in the conceptual and planning stages and will expect to be updated regularly throughout the implementation phase. Also, and in contrast to most development projects, implementers of elections activities are often required to provide regular briefings to the country team.

C. Cooperation with Partners:⁴²

1. International Partners

There are several types of international partner organizations, each of which provides its own peculiar set of strengths and weaknesses. The most prominent of these are the two political party affiliated groups the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republican Institute (IRI), and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). All three groups work extensively with USAID. The three groups are currently (1999) partners on the CEPPS Cooperative Agreement

⁴²This section draws heavily, and often verbatim from Hirschmann and Mendelson's, op. cit., earlier elections manual for the Democracy Governance Center.

issued through the Democracy and Governance Center in USAID/Washington. In addition, NDI and IRI are core grantees of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and receive significant funds from other sources. Recently, IFES has begun to participate with private firms and other organizations to compete for contracts and cooperative agreements let by USAID.

All of these organizations have strengths that make them particularly valuable partners for USAID. On the positive side, they have extensive experience with USAID headquarters and field missions and strong capacity and experience in the development of proposals and designs for project activity. They have notable capabilities for rapid response, particularly in emergency situations, through a large cadre of volunteers; initiative and on the ground adaptability; a network of American and foreign experts; pre-existing relationships with other bi- and multi-lateral donor agencies; and a strong commitment to developing democracy skills and to working with local partners. On the other hand, as noted in an earlier manual produced by USAID, these groups are sometimes unwilling to engage in full assessments, strategic planning, or full evaluation. They may be unwilling to coordinate or be coordinated; they sometimes conflict with USAID over policy; they tend to focus on those areas in which they have comparative advantage and structure problems to coincide with their capabilities; they may demonstrate bias toward certain local organizations; and they are sometimes overstretched.⁴³

These groups work both in competition and cooperation with each other. They frequently demand some level of autonomy from the USG team when carrying out their activities in the field. The advantage is that it allows them more flexibility to work in countries or situations in which the USG would not work, or in which it has not received an invitation. They are particularly sensitive regarding autonomy in the development of voter and civic education materials, local NGO support, political party

⁴³Ibid., p. 27.

training, and monitoring and assessing elections. The issue of autonomy is complicated by the fact that host country officials and organizations do not always grasp the difference between these organizations and the U.S. government.⁴⁴ They may also be confused with the donor agencies or implementing partners of other countries or multi-lateral organizations also providing aid.

Professional organizations (CAPEL, American Bar Association, and regional election associations or institutes such as the ACEEEO) are characterized by their access to a pool of very highly trained and experienced practitioners. They may specialize in particular areas -- the ABA in assistance with legal framework issues -- or they may be regional -- like CAPEL in Latin America. These practitioners are often influential, but may collaborate on a *pro bono* basis. One drawback of some of these groups is their regional focus and subsequent lack of international or cross cultural experience and comparative insight. Their experience with USAID is often quite limited. Some of these organizations which rely heavily on volunteers are able to send personnel only for very short term visits and may not be able to provide follow up.

Universities are another potential partner for implementation of assistance activities. Some have long experience with USAID. Their access to high quality resources among academics, their ability to write proposals and manage large contracts, and their access to cutting edge thinking and specializations all serve them well. On the down side, they may have less easy access to practitioners than other service providers, academic schedules may present problems for timing, and overhead costs may make them more expensive than other potential partners.

2. Local Partners

Use of local partners for implementation of elections activity can be extremely advantageous and effective, but it is not without drawbacks.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Frequently, local organizations, because of their familiarity with the local political-economic-administrative environment, traditions, customs, and practices, are in a better position to analyze legal codes, monitor elections, or provide voter education. There are many impressive examples of local NGOs and NGO networks playing critical roles in elections around the world: NAMFREL in the Philippines, BAFE in Bulgaria, CENTRAS in Romania, and the Alianza Civica in Mexico. Given the need to mobilize large numbers of people, monitoring efforts will invariably require use of local NGOs or NGO networks.

When local and international partners work together on mission projects, or when the international organization provides funding to the local organization (as a sub-grant, service contract, or as a pass-through when political sensitivities dictate an indirect relation with U.S. assistance) the relationship can be a sensitive one. The international partner should be fully respectful of the local group's expertise, insight, and experience. In many instances, the former will rely heavily on the local partner for analysis of the political/electoral environment and interpretation of customs and practices. At the same time, their capabilities should not be over-estimated. Not infrequently, when a promising NGO is found, there is a temptation to smother it with money and/or to assume that it is capable of any task, and thereby contribute to its demise. The fact that local leaders often find it difficult to say no to significant windfalls of resources contributes to the problem. Hirschmann and Mendelson argue that international NGOs should not attempt to run or micro-manage domestic groups, they should be allowed to face their own crises and learn from their own mistakes.⁴⁵ Consideration needs to be given to institutional strengthening and sustainability of the NGO so that it can meet growing expectations. In certain cases, it may be necessary to make training and other types of assistance a condition to receive a grant to carry out particular activities.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

It is imperative that local NGOs be carefully examined by the mission before involving them as partners. Some local NGOs come with serious problems or defects: leaders may be incompetent or corrupt, there may be hidden agendas at odds with mission interests, there may be significant intolerance of other organizations or groups based on ethnic or religious differences, or the group may have overly partisan inclinations. Partisanship is often a thorny issue, and sometimes not particularly obvious. In states emerging from authoritarian or one-party rule, groups eager to assist in the first multi-party election are almost always tied to an opposition party or have their own activist agenda. When faced with this option, it is important to provide instruction stressing the importance to the electoral process of non-partisan behavior, the essential requirements of a non-partisan code of conduct, and the need for a public commitment to non-partisanship. Where partisanship is so intense as to provoke distrust, it is preferable to avoid using local NGOs.

During the assessment process it is also important to determine the institutional capacity of the organization. What can they do? What might they be capable (with added training or more financial resources) of doing? What will it take to make the group a reliable service provider? It is also important to assess their "grant-worthiness." This relates to the administrative and financial management of the organization. To receive funding they must be able to meet minimum audit standards. If they do not have adequate financial capacity, is another organization available to act as financial intermediary? Or would they be able and willing to provide their services as part of a larger network arrangement?

D. Financing Mechanisms

There are several mechanisms available for financing electoral assistance activities. Each mechanism has advantages and disadvantages-it is therefore incumbent on the DG field officer to carefully examine which type will most

adequately suit the needs of the mission and the circumstances in which it is to be implemented.

1. Cooperative Agreements

Missions may develop cooperative agreements with either international or domestic partners. Cooperative agreements are used by both USAID/Washington (e.g., Consortium for Elections Practices and Processes, CEPPS) and by missions. Cooperative agreements are most commonly used for activities where partners are NGOs, universities, or non-profit organizations and for obtaining long-term technical assistance. Since cooperative agreements do not have contracted scopes of work, they can be responsive and flexible instruments, especially in changing circumstances. At the same time, however, cooperative agreements can be less advantageous than other instruments since it is harder to hold the cooperating partner to USAID standards and results.

2. Task Orders

Task orders (also known as buy-ins) may be used to access Indefinite Quantity Contracts (IQC) held by one or more implementing organizations. Currently, the only IQC specifically awarded for elections activity is held by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. However, there are other IQCs. For instance, the IQCs awarded for Civil Society might be used to support activities related to strengthening voter and civic education capacities of certain CSOs. Task orders require specific scopes of work and thus provide less flexibility than the cooperative agreement. They may be used for both short and long-term activities, and do not have to be competed for award.

3. Grants

Grants are commonly used to acquire the services of local partners (NGOs, CSOs, local academic or training institutes, etc.). Missions often create a sub-granting mechanism within a cooperative agreement with one of the international partners. The partner then has the

responsibility for establishing rules and procedures for awards and management of the sub-grants. Direct grants and sub-grants provide a way of responding to relatively small requests for financing and for responding to immediate needs for assistance. Once awarded, however, it may be difficult to hold the grantee to USAID standards and results.

4. Contracts

Contracts are generally awarded to private sector firms but appear to be used very infrequently. On the plus side, firms can provide strong financial and managerial capacity-skills particularly useful for large, complex projects; and broad nets of highly qualified and experienced consultants from which to recruit. Because the relationship is contractual, they can be held accountable for satisfactorily fulfilling the contracted terms of reference. However, contracts usually require considerably more work and lead-time than other mechanisms since they must be competed (there are some exceptions-sole-source contracts, which require specific waiver of competition, and purchase orders for under \$25,000), and then follow strict standards for award. Also, private firms tend to be more expensive because of high overheads. They may not have permanent internal expertise, or in-country support networks.

While not specific financing mechanisms for elections activity, there may be opportunities to use existing contracts or cooperative agreements in other areas to support elections activity. As mentioned earlier other IQCs might be accessed, but existing mission contracts or cooperative agreements for activities other areas might also be able to accommodate certain kinds of election related activity as well. For instance, in Honduras, advocacy efforts to change the election law to establish separate ballots for local elections, and then voter education activity to provide instruction on the new system was financed through a Municipal Development

project implemented by the Honduran Municipalities Association (AMHON)⁴⁶

E. Coordinating Assistance with other Donors

Coordinating efforts at some level, even if only information, can provide significant benefits from merely avoiding duplication and stepping on one another's toes, to leveraging a relatively small amount of resources in to a much larger effort. Coordination can also help to assure more timely, sequenced and appropriate assistance at both the pre-electoral and post-electoral stages. Early on in any proposed activity, the DG field officer needs to contact other bilateral and multilateral donors, international financial institutions, and non-governmental organizations to find out what they are planning or are actually providing in the way of election support or assistance.

Methods for coordination can consist of relatively low level activities such as establishing an e-mail network to exchange information to the development of joint

decision-making bodies to manage collective activities.

Even in the best of circumstances, coordination is no simple task. The DG field officer should be aware that while there may be significant benefits to coordination, there are usually significant costs attached. Joint activities are not simple matters to carry out. Who will take the lead? Will changes need to be made in anticipated objectives in order to accommodate another group's interests? Even relatively low level efforts such as information exchange have costs: there will be briefings to be prepared and read, meetings to attend. If one takes the lead in coordination, there will be additional costs of management, invitations, compiling summaries of meetings, and the like. Even with simple information exchanges, the DG field officer must be prepared to listen to others and receptive to comments be they positive or critical. Unless there is a clear track record of other groups in coordinated activities, the officer should be warned against overly high expectations.

⁴⁶*Case Study on Honduras*, MSI, 1998.

Appendixes

APPENDIX A

TOOLS FOR ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE⁴⁷

TABLE 6: APPROPRIATE TOOLS BASED ON ASSISTANCE TYPE

I. PRE-ELECTION TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

There are several types of pre-election technical assessments (PETA). Regardless of which is selected the USAID official and the partner tasked with carrying out the PETA need to be clear about what might be expected.

- Decision-making. A PETA may provide important input to decide whether or not to go ahead with an electoral assistance activity or program. The main purpose is to determine if the political/institutional conditions are right or not for proceeding with electoral assistance.
- Technical needs assessment. PETAs may be helpful in defining the nature and scope of assistance, in priority-setting, donor-coordination activities, and in establishing the rationale for choosing one kind of activity over another. The host-government may view this as the first step in the assistance process, i.e. a commitment to material support of some kind.
- Assessing strengths and weaknesses. These assessments examine the institutional framework (e.g., the legal framework, election management structures, voting rights, complaint mechanisms), the quality and integrity of the process, and the prospects for a legitimate outcome. It may

⁴⁷ This section draws heavily from a number of sources, including *Managing Democratic Electoral Assistance: A Practical Guide for USAID* by David Hirschmann and Johanna Mendelson, *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned* prepared by MSI, and a series of "How-To" manuals produced by IFES.

also serve as a baseline against which developments during the course of the election and over time can be measured.

PETAs may be multi-functional, and different types carried out by different institutional partners. PETAs are most frequently carried out in post-conflict settings or for breakthrough elections and/or where little is known about the political/institutional environment for elections.

II. ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

On-Site Technical Assistance (OSTA) refers to any number of possible activities, or combination thereof, carried out by USAID's institutional partners in the field.

Personnel

Performance personnel: Where there is a shortage of qualified personnel or lack of local capacity, institutional partners may provide expatriate personnel as adjunct staff to support or supplement the work of the election management body to assist in and assure implementation during the actual course of the election.

Technical experts: USAID's partners may provide *technical experts* to advise and/or train parliamentary bodies, the EMB, the judiciary, political parties, or NGOs on select components of the political and electoral process. They tend to be specialists in specific technical areas such as constitutional or electoral law, voter registration, campaign finance, or information technologies. They may be on-site during the course of a particular election (working alongside performance personnel) or for a protracted period of time, or provide intermittent short-term assistance.

Commodities

Commodities may be in the form of capital equipment, supplies consumed during the course of the election, or services (specialized tasks performed for the election). In post-conflict and breakthrough elections, commodities assistance

may be crucial to the very conduct of elections. In certain contexts, commodities may be vital to implementation of electoral reforms, such as in the application of modern technologies to voter registration or vote counting processes.

The list of commodities provided by USAID is extensive and includes: ballots, indelible ink, optical scanners, ballot boxes, secrecy booths, generators, light sources, radio equipment, audio-visual equipment, cameras, vehicles, computers (and all related hardware and software), office equipment, batteries, film, and a host of basic supplies. A needs assessment will usually be required to determine what and how much assistance should be provided. With commodities assistance comes the responsibility of seeing that equipment and supplies are properly procured, shipped, inventoried, stored, delivered, used, and (if applicable) recovered.

While commodities are primarily given to election management bodies, some equipment and supplies may also be given to foster the institutional development of non-governmental organizations active in voter education, public advocacy, and domestic monitoring (including media monitoring and parallel vote tabulations). Commodities assistance is expensive and, in some cases, may involve recurrent costs. As such, budgetary constraints, options for leveraged assistance, and local sustainability and replicability need to be taken into consideration.

Financial Support

Direct or indirect financial support to the EMB or NGOs may be provided. Occasionally, where the EMB does not have the funds to pay poll workers or technical staff, institutional partners may cover payroll to ensure that adequate staff to conduct the elections are in place. More frequently, institutional partners may finance activities of a local NGO through a service contract or a sub-grant. A service contract is usually for implementation of a specific task or activity, such as a voter education campaign or a media monitoring effort. A sub-grant, on the other hand, may focus more on institution building, for example making sure the NGO has

the necessary equipment, training, management and technical expertise required to fulfill its mandate. An informal domestic monitoring group might, for example, develop the know-how to perform parallel vote tabulations or transform itself into a public watchdog organization. Some NGOs may qualify for direct grants from USAID.

*Training*⁴⁸

Training is an important element of technical assistance. It may be directed at voter registrars, election commission staff, poll workers, parliamentarians, judges, candidates, campaign workers, political party staff, domestic monitors, and NGO activists. Training to support political party participation in campaigns and their organizational development is discussed in detail in Appendix 2. The training program may be designed, instructional and reference materials designed, and training in the first instance carried out by the institutional partners' on-site personnel. Limitations of time and resources may necessitate that expatriate experts directly train poll workers or domestic monitors. If not, a training of local trainers is favored.

Legitimizing assistance for elections typically features training for poll workers and domestic monitors. Beyond providing an orientation to election law and polling site procedure, training efforts seek to foster a sense of ethical conduct among participants. While poll worker and domestic monitor training is usually initiated as part of a broader legitimizing assistance program, it is expected that the newly trained cadre will work in future elections, thus providing an institutional capacity building benefit.

Training efforts for consolidating elections focus on building the capacity of election management bodies and responding to significant changes to election law and procedure. Appointment of a

⁴⁸ For a more detailed discussion of training, please refer to *Technical Assistance for Elections Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned*, especially Chapter 3, "Election Management."

permanent election managers or re-organization of an existing EMB, application of modern technologies, or adoption of a continuous voter registry, for example, may all require specialized training programs. Appropriate EMB staff might receive training in financial or personnel management, regulatory drafting, information technology, or public relations. At this stage, attention might also turn to training judges in the specifics of campaigns and elections law. The introduction of special court to adjudicate election related grievances will probably signal the need for training. Parliamentary committees tasked with overhaul of the legal framework for elections may find training in legislative drafting particularly useful. NGOs might benefit from training in how to carry out voter education, media monitoring, or parallel vote tabulation projects.

- Local experts and practitioners have also begun to serve as members of international election observation missions for the party institutes, IFES, and the regional associations.
- One example of a cost-saving measure is an off-site review of and commentary on campaigns and elections legislation. This type of effort, however, is limited by an inability to interact with local political actors or assess the electoral environment.

III. OFF-SITE OPTIONS

Perhaps not the main focus of electoral assistance, off-site options may serve either to supplement on-site activities or as a lost-cost alternative:

- US-based training programs, for example, may incorporate a political and electoral process component appropriate for election officials, political party representatives, and select NGO activists.
- USAID's institutional partners may also be conducting training programs in neighboring countries that could accommodate third country participants. In the case of some conflict or authoritarian environments, specially tailored training programs are offered "across the border." For such programs to work, however, participants need to have some freedom of movement between countries.
- Quite a number of regional associations have begun to crop up, such as the Association of Central and East European Election Officials (ACEEEO) based in Budapest, that provide routine opportunities for professional development.

TABLE 6: APPROPRIATE TOOLS BASED ON ASSISTANCE TYPE

Note: The following table serves to illustrate the types of mechanisms used for legitimizing (L) and institutionalizing (I) assistance under a number of technical categories. The table is not intended to be exhaustive. An "X" suggests that an activity is predominantly, though not exclusively, a legitimizing or institutionalizing activity.

ASSISTANCE MECHANISM	LEGAL FRAMEWORK		ELECTION MANAGEMENT		VOTER EDUCATION		ELECTION OBSERVATION & COMPLAINT RESOLUTION	
	L	I	L	I	L	I	L	I
PRE-ELECTION TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT								
Feasibility Assessment	X		X		X		X	
Needs Assessment	X		X		X		X	
Electoral Environment Assessment	X		X		X		X	
ON-SITE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE								
Personnel								
<i>Performance Staff</i>			X					
<i>Technical Advisors</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Commodities								
<i>Capital</i>			X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Supplies</i>			X					
<i>Services</i>			X					
Training								
<i>Voter Registrars</i>			X	X				
<i>Poll Workers</i>			X					
<i>EMB Staff</i>		X	X	X		X		X
<i>Domestic Monitors</i>							X	
<i>NGO Activists</i>					X	X	X	X
<i>Parliamentarians</i>		X						
<i>Judges</i>								X
OFF-SITE OPTIONS								
Legal Review	X	X						
Participation in Intl. Election Observation								X
US-Based Training		X		X		X		X

Third Country Training	X		X		X		X	
Professional Assoc.'s				X				

APPENDIX B

Table 7: Comparative Assistance Options Based on Context

Note: This table is designed to demonstrate how context, as presented here through different types of elections a number of feasibility question, will affect when and how different assistance options can be used. Users are cautioned that the options discussed are neither exhaustive nor exclusive. It must also be noted that while each type of election has only one or a few particular types of elections occur can vary considerably. For more detailed information on real-life election contexts, please refer to the following case studies which generally conform to the hypothetical scenarios that are presented. References appear in "Suggested Readings":

Scenario 1: Mozambique Case Study **Scenario Two:** Slovakia Case Study **Scenario Three:** Ukraine and Ghana

	FQ 1: Significant changes to voting system/legal framework	FQ 2: Political will exists to change voting system/legal	FQ 3: Enough time to change voting system/legal framework?	FQ 4: Permanent election management body exists?	FQ 5: Is EMB independent?	FQ 6: Is the voter registry accurate/	FQ 7: Does EMB have means to carry out election?	FQ 8: Are new groups within society	FQ 9: Will electoral reforms directly affect voters?	FQ 10: EMB or NGOs have ability/ means to carry out voter	FQ 11: Political parties and NGOs have the right to monitor	FQ 12: Lack of confidence in the election process?	Sample Assistance Options
Scenario 1 Post Conflict	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	LF: The need, political will, and time to the voting system and legal framework. Rights for observers and extension of EM: Massive commodities assistance necessary to pull off the election. Voter registrar and VE: A multi-faceted voter education to build confidence, prepare newly enfranchised and to address legal and procedural EO: If legal rights for domestic monitors will be required. In any event, observers will be required. In any event, serve to build confidence, contain violence

KEY: **FQ**-Feasibility Questions **LF**-Legal Framework **EM**-Election Management **VE**-Voter Education **EO**-Election Observation

		FQ 1: Significant changes to voting system/legal framework	FQ 2: Political will exists to change voting system/legal	FQ 3: Enough time to change voting system/legal framework?	FQ 4: Permanent election management body exists?	FQ 5: Is EMB independent?	FQ 6: Is the voter registry accurate/	FQ 7: Does EMB have means to carry out election?	FQ 8: Are new groups within society	FQ 9: Will electoral reforms directly affect voters?	FQ 10: EMB or NGOs have ability/ means to carry out voter	FQ 11: Political parties and NGOs have the right to monitor	FQ 12: Lack of confidence in the election process?	
Scenario 2 Breakthrough	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	<p>LF: Despite the obvious need for legal political will for it exist. Limited change <i>may or may not</i> be possible. Focus</p> <p>EM: The lack of political will for reform the EMB's independence and a lack of chance possible, focus on updating voter</p> <p>VE: In this context, it will be important understand their legal rights, how the their involvement is required to reduce</p> <p>EO: If legal rights for domestic monitoring of domestic monitoring key. Int valuable to deter/detect fraud and prevent</p>	
Scenario 3 Consolidation	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	<p>LF: A comprehensive overhaul of the might entail an audit of existing laws, performance, and provision of analytical</p> <p>EM: If a permanent election commission focus on strategic planning, organizing voter registration, and election commission</p> <p>VE: At this point, voter education efforts of the EMBs or local NGOs to sub-grants. On-going activities likely</p> <p>EO: Again, efforts will focus on enhancing parties and local NGOs to conduct transparent PVTs and media monitoring may also</p>	

Sample Assist

KEY: FQ-Feasibility Questions LF-Legal Framework EM-Election Management VE-Voter Education EO-Election O

APPENDIX C

TABLE 8: ESSENTIAL POLITICAL PARTY FUNCTIONS AND ASSOCIATED SKILLS

Note: Political parties are distinguished from all other organizations in that they seek to contest and hold public office directly. The essential functions of political parties, as well as the basic skills needed by parties if they are to carry out those functions effectively, are summarized in Table 8: *Essential Political Party Functions and Associated Skills*. The top row of the table sets out six defining functions of political parties (A-F). While other organizations, such as interest or advocacy groups, perform some of these functions as well, only parties perform, or strive to perform, all of them. Under each of these functions is a list of the skills needed by parties in order to carry them out (rows 1-16). An ‘x’ indicates a carry-over of the skill described at the beginning of that row.

This Table is designed to help program planners think about political party development in terms of strategic objectives, results, and intermediate results. The first step, of course, is to assess both the overall political context and the strengths and weaknesses of existing parties. Priorities for party assistance will also depend upon the specific goals of the US government in providing assistance. For example, is the purpose to legitimize a given electoral process, or is it to build long-term capacity. Depending upon overall program goals, any one or combination of the functions arrayed in the top row might serve as the basis for a political party development ‘result’ under a democracy and governance strategic objective. The skills which head up each of the succeeding rows can be read as possible intermediate results.

For example, suppose a D/G program’s strategic objective includes ‘improving the capacity of political parties to compete effectively in elections’ as one of its results. Under column D, the Table provides an idea of the skills parties need to compete effectively in elections. One

could design a party development program for this ‘result’ around this particular skill set, with improvements in each skill set denoting an ‘intermediate result’.

Note, however, that these same skills are also important for other essential party functions. For example, the ability to mobilize resources is necessary for a party to perform any of the six functions. In addition, the first six skills identified as important for helping parties to compete more effectively in elections also strengthen parties’ ability to perform three other basic functions: articulate ideas and interests and mobilize followers; aggregate and broker interests and demands; and recruit, select, and appoint office-holders. Thus one can also read the table from left to right, starting from the skill sets that head each of the rows. For example, a program that included activities designed to help parties mobilize resources, reach out to followers and potential followers, and formulate and communicate a message would contribute significantly to parties’ ability to perform the first four functions, and others besides.

<i>A. Articulate ideas/interests and mobilize followers</i>	<i>B. Aggregate and broker interests and demands</i>	<i>C. Recruit, select, and appoint office-holders</i>	<i>D. Compete in elections</i>	<i>E. Translate demands into government programs</i>
1. Mobilize resources		x	x	x
2. Understand policy issues, legal structure, government structure	x		x	x
3. Reach out to followers and potential followers	x	x	x (organize a campaign, use media effectively)	x
4. Formulate and communicate a message	x	x (may require a different message/incentive structure)	x (especially use of media)	
5. Build internal organizational structure to facilitate outreach	x	x	x (organize a campaign)	
6. Provide political socialization	x	x (in form of a 'party line' to attract and guide office-holders)	x	
7.	Have knowledge of or links to other political and societal groups	x	x (possible coalition building)	x
8.	Build external negotiating/brokering skills		x (for possible coalition building)	x
9.		Build internal brokering skills		x
10.				Be able to generate viable policy alternatives
11.		Provide selective incentives to attract candidates (material and non-material)		
12.				Have knowledge of alternative strategies and institutional arrangements to achieve policy goals
13.				Communicate policy actions, successes and failures to broader public
14.				Understand legislative process, legal system and judicial framework

15.				Act in concert with other social and political groups
16.				Act effectively in parliament, ministries, and local government

Suggested Readings

The following are a series of technical papers and case studies prepared for USAID as part of the Elections and Political Parties Assessment Project. These serve as the basis for, and as a supplement to, the current manual.

Technical Papers

Barnes, C., Brilliant, F., Crosby, B., Dannenberg, N., Lyons, T., and Nix, S. *Technical Assistance for Election Administration: Approaches and Lessons Learned*. MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Crosby, B., Dannenberg, N., Timberman, D., and Walker, M. *Political Party Development Assistance Reflections and Recommendations*. MSI: Washington, D.C. 1998.

Hirshmann, D. and Barnes, C. *Distinguishing Features of Local Elections: A Preliminary Investigation of Approaches and Lessons Learned*. MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Manning, C. *Post-Election Assistance*. MSI: Washington, D.C. 1999.

Case Studies

Blacken, J. and Lyons, T. *Mozambique: From Post-Conflict to Municipal Elections* MSI: Washington, D.C., 1998.

Brilliant, F., Dauphinais, D., Lyons, T. *Ghana Elections Case Study*. MSI: Washington, D.C. 1999.

Management Systems International. *Developing a Strategy for Elections Assistance: The Case of Benin*. MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Management Systems International. *Direct Election of Municipal Officials: The Case of Honduras*. MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Management Systems International. *Elections Assistance in Mali*. MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Management Systems International. *Elections Assistance in Peru*. MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Management Systems International. *Elections Assistance in the Philippines*. MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Management Systems International. *Electoral Assistance in Slovakia: Coordination, Flexibility, and Creativity Under Difficult Political Conditions* MSI: Washington, D.C., 1999.

Nix, S. and Shaiko, R. *Ukraine Elections Case Study*. MSI: Washington, D.C. 1998.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAI	African American Institute
ABA	American Bar Association
ACEEEO	Association of Central and East European Election Officials (Hungary)
AMHON	Honduran Association of Municipalities
CAPEL	Latin American Center for Electoral Support (Costa Rica)
CEPPS	Consortium for Election Practices and Processes
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EMB	Election Management Body
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act (1961)
FSN	Foreign Service National
GOTV	Get-Out-The-Vote
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (Sweden)
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contracts
IFES	International Foundation for Election Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
MSI	Management Systems International
NAMFREL	National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Philippines)
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSC	National Security Council
OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
PVT	Parallel Vote Tabulation
TOT	Training of Trainers
UEC	Universal Electoral Code
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
USIA	United States Information Agency

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Note: *The following glossary is specifically tailored to this manual. Terms are defined within the context of campaigns and elections and related assistance programming and do not necessarily reflect their broader meanings and applicability.*

Accountability: A situation in which those who are elected are duly installed in elective office, recognize their responsibility to the electorate, and understand that voters retain the right to vote them out of office for failing to fulfill their obligations.

Ad Hoc Committee: A temporary commission established within a particular house of parliament, between houses of parliament, or between branches of government, eg. the legislative and executive branches, to develop new or modify existing legislation on elections.

Administrative Remedy: The redress of election related grievances by an election commission or other administrative body.

Blue Ribbon Panel: A specially constituted group of experts, often appointed or endorsed by the president, to develop policy guidelines, reform proposals, or draft language for consideration by the executive and legislative branches of government as part of the election law reform process.

Breakthrough Election: An election that serves to legitimize a regime change from autocratic, authoritarian, one-party, personal, or military rule to a constitutional government based on civilian rule and competitive elections. Also referred to as founding election or transitional election.

Cascade Training: A training of trainers (TOT) technique whereby a core group of trainers are given instruction and subsequently tasked with preparing and mentoring a secondary cadre of trainers. The secondary group would be responsible for directly training poll workers or a tertiary group of trainers.

Civic Education: The provision of on-going instruction on the fundamentals of democratic society such as constitutional limits on power, power vested in the people, separation of powers, checks and balances, transparency and accountability in government, genuine and periodic elections, and the respective roles of government, political and special interests, the mass media, the business and non-governmental sectors, and citizens.

Civil Registry: A comprehensive database that is maintained by the state and includes vital information on all citizens. Voter registries can be generated from this database.

Consolidating Election: Elections that serve to advance the process of democratization in a society that already has an elected government.

Continuous Register: A list of voters that is maintained and continually updated to include the newly eligible and those who have changed residence and to eliminate those who have died or moved away.

Enabling Legislation: Laws and statutes that clarify and define in detail the procedures, legal standards, and fulfillment of voting and political rights provided for under a constitution.

Election Law Working Group: A temporary grouping of legal experts and/or political party representatives formed either within an election management body or a parliamentary body to draft language for new legislation or develop specific proposals for modifying existing legislation on elections.

Election Management: The process by which the legal framework is operationalized.

Election Management Body: Any entity, whether an election commission, judicial body, or government ministry, tasked with planning and preparations for and administration of elections and referenda.

Election Observation: A method by which the efficiency, transparency, professionalism, and integrity of campaigns and elections are judged by international organizations, independent domestic monitoring groups, and political parties.

Equality: The equivalent weight of one's vote in relationship to others to ensure equal representation.

Executive Commission: An election management body that is directly responsible for the day to day preparations for elections and which works on a full time basis.

Fairness: The existence of a level playing field for all participants in the electoral process.

Freedom: The existence of circumstances that allow voters to cast their ballots secure in the knowledge that their rights of freedom of expression, association, assembly, and movement have been upheld throughout the election process and without fear of intimidation.

Impartiality: The independent and non-partisan administration of elections in full and consistent conformity with the law.

Institutionalizing Assistance: The provision of aid based on developmental objectives and with an eye to the electoral process.

International Election Commission: An election management body in which foreign representatives are given membership or leadership to better ensure the functionality of the commission and/or the integrity of the election process.

Judicial Remedy: The redress of election related grievances by a court of law.

Legitimizing Assistance: The provision of aid based on political objectives and with an eye to the legitimacy of the result of a particular election.

Legal Framework: The legal standards, methodology, and procedures for organizing elections and fulfilling voting rights established in a country's constitution and further clarified and defined through enabling legislation.

Mixed Election Commission: An election management body comprised of independent and partisan members. Partisan members of the commission may either have voting rights or serve in an advisory capacity.

Parallel Vote Tabulation: A process whereby monitors record election results at individual polling sites and compare them with officials results. A PVT may record results from all polling sites in a country or use a random sample and statistics to project the outcome.

Parliamentary Committee: A permanent committee established within the parliamentary body to address issues of voting rights and political and electoral processes.

Partisan Election Commission: An election management body that has a representative mix of all political parties represented in parliament and/or contesting the election.

Periodic List: A voter registry devised anew for each election.

Permanent Election Commission: An election management body that operates on a continuous basis.

Policy Making Commission: An election management body that works on a part time basis and is responsible for setting policy for overall administration of the electoral process, writings rules and regulations, and resolving election complaints. Day to day planning and preparations for elections are carried out by a staff secretariat.

Post Conflict Elections: Elections that occur in the aftermath of war or civil conflict and are often part of a negotiated peace settlement.

Procedural Election: A routine election held in accordance with the times and processes set out in the constitution.

Process Oriented Complaints: Disputes arising from the campaign and election process regarding the abridgement of the voting or participatory rights of the electorate, candidates, and political parties. These are stem from technical violations of the law but that do not go to the results.

Quick Count: A parallel vote tabulation that employs random sampling and statistics to project the election outcome based on the results from a limited number of polling sites.

Results Oriented Complaints: Disputes that go to the heart of the outcome of elections.

Secrecy: The casting of ballots by each qualified voter in the privacy of a secure voting booth and in a manner that the marked ballot cannot be viewed upon being deposited in the ballot box.

Secretariat: The full time staff of a policy making commission that is responsible for day to day administration of the electoral process.

Temporary Election Commission: An election management body that is appointed to administer a particular election and which is disbanded once election results have been finalized.

Transparency: The development of rules and regulations governing elections in an inclusive and open manner and the administration of elections and counting of votes and determination of results in a visible and verifiable way.

Voter Information: The provision of basic details about the mechanics of the election that enable qualified citizens to vote, such as information on eligibility, registration, and identification requirements, date and time of voting, location of polling sites, and the availability of special voting services.

Voter Education: The communication of broader concepts on the right to vote and on the electoral process, such as the relationship between human rights and voting and political participation, the importance of the secrecy of the ballot, markers of a free and fair electoral process and their connection to the legitimacy of the election result. This may also include information on new voting rights, such as

direct election of representatives, and the roles and responsibilities of newly constituted decision-making bodies, as may occur as the result of devolution of power.

Universal Electoral Code: A comprehensive piece of legislation in which provisions governing all aspects of the election process, for example executive and legislative elections, national and municipal elections, constitutional and public referenda, campaign financing, political parties, mass media, voter registration, and administrative and civil procedures are packaged. Electoral codes, rather than distinct pieces of legislation are often used in civil law countries.

Universality: The existence of effective, impartial, and non-discriminatory registration procedures for voters and candidates.

Notes