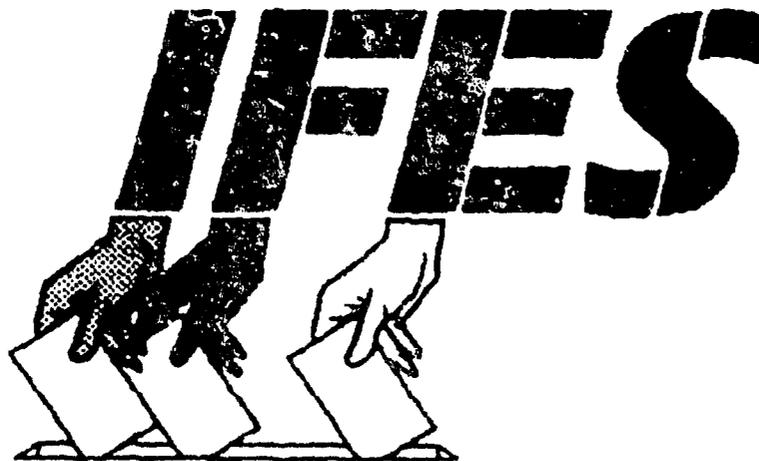


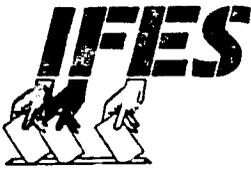
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***HOW TO ORGANIZE AND CONDUCT
AN ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION***



***International Foundation
for Electoral Systems***

December 15, 1992



FOREWORD

Since 1987, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has been on the cutting edge of the worldwide democratic revolution. Working in cooperation with the Agency for International Development, IFES has consistently supported AID's agency wide goals to promote democracy by providing critical technical electoral assistance to more than 45 countries.

IFES continues to be one of the few non-governmental organizations solely dedicated to the areas of electoral process and civic education. The wealth of experience and knowledge that IFES has gained over the last five years forms the basis of the IFES Election Manual Series.

Because the field of electoral assistance is still relatively new, there is little in the way of written materials. Consequently the completion of the IFES Election Manual series represents an important contribution to the literature in the field of electoral assistance.

Each set contains following five manuals:

1. How to Organize a Pre-Election Technical Assessment
2. How to Organize an On-site Technical Assistance Project
3. How to Organize an Effective Poll Worker Training Project
4. How to Organize a Program in Civic Education
5. How to Organize and Conduct an Election Observation Mission

The primary purpose of these manuals is to assist IFES in systematizing the implementation of technical assistance in the five areas of pre-election technical assessments, on-site technical assistance, poll worker training, civic education and international election observation. It is especially hoped that development of these manuals will ultimately enable more efficient and effective programs that serve the ultimate purpose to provide necessary technical electoral assistance to countries in need.

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These manuals are interrelated and all follow the same general format. They also incorporate a common evaluation strategy found at the back of each manual. The purpose of this strategy is to evaluate the effectiveness of the different types of electoral assistance activities.

The manuals are designed to be readily adapted to include the most up-to-date information possible. The binder format enable the user to keep the manuals current by replacing pages with updated material. This way the manuals can be as adaptable and dynamic as the democratic process itself.

IFES expresses its appreciation to the Office of Economic and Institutional Development of Bureau of Research and Development, US Agency for International Development and acknowledge their support in making the IFES Election Manual Series possible under Cooperative Agreement No. PDC-0023-A-00-1089-00.

IFES also thanks its dedicated staff members, who worked very hard to produce most of the material that went into each of these manuals. Special thanks to Joseph Bauer, who spent many long hours writing and editing the manuals. He also played the key role of managing the entire manual production process.

Special thanks are also in order for IFES Chairman F. Clifton White, whose vision and guidance has been critical to building IFES, and the Members of the Board of IFES for their support.

Completion of the IFES Election Manuals will offer a valuable new resource for the field of electoral assistance. It will enable IFES and other organizations in the electoral assistance field to provide even more efficient, effective and meaningful support for the world's emerging democracies.

****NOTE:** It is forbidden to use any part of the IFES Election Manual Series without proper attribution. It is expressly forbidden to copy any portion of the IFES Election Manual Series without the written permission of IFES.

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HOW TO ORGANIZE AND CONDUCT AN ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

I. Project identification, design, management

A. Project Identification

1. Satisfaction of IFES pre-conditions for undertaking an election observation

- **Invitation from the host government**
- **A democratizing country**
- **Available funding**

Offering appropriate technical assistance to requesting countries is a fundamental purpose of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and is consistent with its philosophy of assisting democratic change. Assistance should be considered appropriate when it is tailored to the specific needs of each country, when it takes into consideration the country's long-term goal of building a sustainable institutional base for a democratic electoral system, and when it is provided at the request of the host government. A request from an indigenous organization should be ratified by the host government. To reach a decision as to whether or not to observe a particular election, IFES considers a number of factors. Some of these factors are pre-conditions for conducting an election observation mission, others are factors which should be noted but do not necessarily affect the decision-making process.

The two most important pre-conditions for IFES to conduct an election observation mission are an invitation from the host government and the availability of funding, either from U.S. AID, UN, or from private sources. If these two pre-conditions exist, IFES should then assess the constraints involved in the process. These include an assessment of whether or not the central electoral commission enjoys sufficient autonomy from the government necessary to allow it to administer the election in an independent and non-partisan manner. Another factor to be assessed is whether the security situation in the country will allow voters and international election observers to go to the polls on election day without threat to their personal safety. A negative assessment on either one of these issues may lead IFES to conclude that it would not undertake an election observation mission in the country concerned.

The context in which the election will take place is an important factor. The IFES mission is to support and strengthen democratic governance; therefore, the presence of IFES at a particular election should further this goal. Generally, IFES will give priority to observing elections in a host country where the

country is in the process of making the transition from a one-party state, of whatever ideology, to a multi-party state. On occasion, IFES may also observe an election in a country where there is international concern regarding manipulation of the election process under an existing multi-party system.

IFES should not be regarded as an organization which represents the point of view of the U.S. Government. IFES is international and non-partisan in its approach and in observing elections should seek to establish equally effective lines of communication with both government, opposition and non-government groups in the host country.

It would be unusual for IFES to conduct an election observation mission in a country where it has done no pre-election work. However, should this situation arise, IFES project staff must ensure that they arrive in-country well in advance of the delegation to ensure in-depth briefing of delegation members. In a country where IFES has had an ongoing involvement with identifiable partners (on-site technical assistance project, poll worker training project or civic education project), IFES should consider its role in an international observer mission. Perhaps the IFES role should be limited to one of coordinator, logistics support, technical advice, etc., rather than that of "observer".

2. Timing of the request to conduct an election observation in relation to electoral calendar.

An election observation mission usually can be initiated successfully during the immediate pre-election campaign period; however, the timing of such a mission must include sufficient time to plan, assemble and brief the team. If pre-election work has been done by IFES, staff should arrive in-country a minimum of one week prior to the elections, with delegation members arriving a minimum of three days before polling day. However, in the absence of IFES pre-election work, staff should be in-country at least two weeks in advance.

In general, a decision to observe an election should not come before a country has clearly embarked on a path toward a national referendum or multi-party elections and has committed to an election date with a high degree of certainty that the elections will be held on that date.

3. IFES' objectives in undertaking this project

- a. Why did IFES initiate this observation, or respond positively to the request to undertake this observation?
- b. What are IFES' institutional objectives for this project?
 - 1) Fulfill IFES annual operating plan
 - 2) Gather information on different electoral models to share with other countries
 - 3) Make contacts who could provide assistance in other countries

IFES undertakes election observation missions in order to accomplish one of several possible objectives. Primarily, IFES would undertake an election observation mission at the request of a donor with whom IFES has maintained a long and valued relationship or a donor with whom IFES sought to develop such a relationship. Most importantly, IFES has been chartered to advance the electoral process in evolving free and democratic societies; therefore, such a mission would fulfill an important aspect of the IFES mandate. IFES election observers should collect information regarding the electoral model used in the host country as well as documenting the observations on the electoral process. This information will be critical to producing the election observation report as well as providing a basis for information dissemination to other countries.

It is essential that IFES be clear and explicit about what its objectives are in carrying out an election observation mission prior to the design and implementation phase. Clarity on this question is critical when determining the scope of the mission, when resolving any potential conflict with the funder or the host country, and especially when evaluating the mission to determine if all objectives have been fulfilled. Each of these projects should recover all direct and out-of-pocket costs and also generate support for IFES' Resource Center, information dissemination and administration, thereby achieving another objective of the IFES annual operating plan.

B. Scope of Work from funder (or SOW in IFES Election Observation proposal)

1. Goals, objectives, activities:

- a. Are they mutually satisfactory to IFES and to funder?
- b. Are they feasible, given constraints?
- c. Criteria for evaluation

In designing the scope of work for an election observation project IFES should ensure that the goals, objectives and activities are mutually understood and satisfactory to both IFES and the funder. It is imperative that all parties concerned achieve consensus regarding mutual expectations and constraints before the project begins.

The observer mission requires a three-way commitment linking the host government, the donor, and the international observer organization. Acknowledgement by the host government of the need for an independent observer mission and the extension of an invitation to an organization to facilitate the program is required.

The scope of work must be feasible, given the constraints identified when the initial decision to conduct the observation mission is taken, e.g., civil unrest, timing of the election, etc. Additionally, the scope of work should include measurable criteria for evaluation of the success of the project.

2. Budget

- a. What to budget for?
- b. Arriving at budget agreement with funder

As the terms of reference and objectives of the mission are defined, IFES must begin to develop a project budget. This budget should include all elements of direct and indirect costs based on previous IFES experience and additional information provided by the funder or the host government. Backup documentation and the basis of estimation for individual line items should accompany the budget. A primary objective of the budget process is to make the proposed budget as complete and realistic as possible. The proposal and budget for an election observation mission may serve as the basis for negotiation with the funder(s) in determining the final scope of work and contract budget.

The IFES Election Observation Mission budget should be drafted in cooperation with the IFES Director of Finance and Administration. The budget is included as part of the project proposal and is subject to review and approval by IFES executive staff as well as the funder.

C. Negotiating other project parameters

1. Arrangements with host country

- a. What are the host government's expectations?
- b. Who is the primary point of contact in the government for the observation team?

As IFES discusses the scope of work of an election observation mission with a USAID mission, a U.S. embassy or other funder, it is essential to ensure that the host government is brought into the discussion, either with IFES directly or through the funder as intermediary. IFES should request copies of correspondence between the funder and the host government regarding the initiation of the observation mission, and the understanding that the government has regarding the objectives and priorities of the election observation.

The funder should be asked to provide a written summary of its discussions with the host government and non-governmental organizations, and a list of government officials and interested parties, with names and titles, who will be the observation team's primary or initial points of contact. This written documentation should also spell out the kind of assistance, if any, that the observation team should expect from the government, for example, local transportation, office space, or the facilitation of discussions with officials inside and outside of the government.

2. Arrangements with U.S. Embassy or USAID mission
 - a. Lodging, transportation
 - b. Setting up initial meetings

Discussions with the funder and/or the U.S. embassy should also clarify the degree and kind of support that they intend to provide for the team, such as car and driver, office space, access to communication facilities, and the facilitation of contacts with information sources in-country. If the project is U.S. AID funded and, if judged to be appropriate, the USAID mission and/or the embassy may be requested to make reservations for the team at a suitable hotel in the capital and to meet the team upon their arrival at the airport. In addition, they may be requested to set up some initial meetings with representatives of the government, political parties and the central electoral commission.

As soon as both IFES and the funder are in general agreement with the arrangements spelled out in the proposal, a Project Authorization should be filled out, covering the proposal, and sent to the appropriate AID/Washington representative. This will meet AID's requirements for its Core support. Authorizing documents will be prepared for each funder/donor (UN, Host Country government, etc) as appropriate.

II. Selection of Election Observation Mission Team

A. Selection criteria

1. Language
2. Country knowledge and/or experience
3. Knowledge of civic education
4. Issues in democratization
5. Election Law
6. Training

As the goals and objectives of the project are being determined, the Program Officer should begin to identify the IFES staff, volunteer observers and/or consultants who may be best suited to accomplish the mission. The size of the team is largely dependent upon the scope of work, the available budget and the size of the country.

A team may have a minimum of two members; however, it is highly unlikely for the team to have more than a maximum of twenty delegates. IFES usually does not pay consultants' fees to election observers, with the possible exception of the team leader/report writer. The team should have sufficient background and experience to ensure that all aspects of the observation mission will be completed satisfactorily.

The initial step in the selection process should be a search of the IFES Resource Center Database. Information on consultants who have been part of prior IFES projects or who have provided detailed information on Individual Data Sheets will be available on-line to the Project Officer. Consultant information may also be gathered through referrals by other Program Officers and Program Officers' previous experience. Secondary sources include universities, private consulting firms, or referrals from consultants.

Each potential team member should be interviewed, perhaps more than once, with a foreign language component if the Program Officer is unsure of the consultant's skills in that area. An Individual Data Sheet must be completed and, if possible, a writing sample should be obtained.

There are a number of criteria that must be considered as the team is selected. A combination of skills is required, such as language capability; knowledge of the country, including in-country or regional experience; experience as an election administrator; more general experience in the democratic process; and familiarity with different election laws and systems and related issues. It is rare that team members

will individually possess all of these skills; however, it is important that as many as possible exist within the team as a whole.

Depending on the country, some skills may be difficult to incorporate into the team. It is important that observers be selected according to how they can best perform as a team and how their collective skills may be applied to complete the scope of work. The Program Officer should consider as many combinations of team members as possible and always be prepared with alternate selections. It is generally desirable to have consultants who volunteer time and only require reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, as this has become the norm for international election observer teams.

B. Performance criteria

- 1. Ability to express oneself in primary language of host country**
- 2. Interaction with host country officials and NGO as well as USG officials in-country**
- 3. Successful completion of scope of work**
- 4. Independence and impartiality**

Whatever the team member's special skills, adequate command of English, both orally and in writing, must be required. The team leader should, wherever possible, have excellent command of the host country's official language and each team member should be expected to interact with host government officials and U.S. government representatives effectively and with sensitivity to the country's culture. The team members will also be expected to contribute substantially to the observation team's completion of the scope of work and the project objectives as set forth in the project proposal. Each team member must display absolute independence with respect to the observations and impartiality in rendering findings and conclusions. It must be made clear to all concerned that these expectations will be foremost among the criteria on which the individual's performance will be evaluated.

C. Interviews

- 1. Determining level of language skills**
- 2. Writing sample**
- 3. Professional recommendations**

In making decisions regarding the composition of the team, the Program Officer must consider additional factors. One member of the team should be designated (and interviewed) as the team leader. The team leader will act as the team's primary spokesperson while in-country, and will be responsible for bringing

the team to consensus on its procedures, priorities, activities and final statement. The team leader serves as the contact for the Program Officer in-country and should be able to provide administrative direction for the team while in-country.

One team member should also be designated the report coordinator. The report coordinator is responsible for reviewing the report as drafted by the team, noting any weak areas, before presenting it to IFES for editing. While the report coordinator may not be required to make specific report writing assignments, the coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all issues raised in the scope of work are addressed by the report. This person will be the initial contact for the Program Officer should questions arise during the report editing process. It is recommended that those consultants with previous experience and familiarity with IFES procedures be chosen as team leaders and report coordinators.

Logistics questions should be included in the interview. How does the consultant respond to the time commitment requested? How rigid is the consultant's schedule immediately following the close of the project? What kind of advance preparations should be made?

D. Final selection of team members

Final selection of members of the observation team is usually subject to the approval of the funder and/or the U.S. representative in the field. After the selection of team members is complete, a scope of work should be drafted for attachment to the Subcontract Authorization. The scope of work is also passed to the Contracts Officer to be included in the draft contract. In some cases, if the observer mission is U.S. AID funded, approval from the U.S. embassy and USAID mission as well as AID/Washington technical and grants officers is required. Field approval is usually based on the team members' qualifications as presented in their resumes or other documentation.

Approval from the funder generally is based on qualifications and availability as well as the proposed consulting fee (if required). Request for approval is normally accompanied by documentation of the proposed consultant's salary history and (for AID-funded projects) by two authorization forms, the Authorization to Subcontract and the Travel Authorization. The request for approval from the field is usually considered a simultaneous request for country clearance.

Until approval for consultants is received from the field and/or the funder, it is important to remind potential consultants that IFES' intention to contract with them for the observation mission is conditional. All contracts should be reviewed and approved by the Program Officer before being given to the consultants for signing. To minimize potential conflicts, consultants should not begin travel or work until consulting agreements have final approvals.

Observers should be briefed as to the climate, the type of clothes to pack and the type of conditions that can be expected in-country regarding travel and accommodation. Election observer missions are always taxing, sometimes extremely arduous and even potentially dangerous.

III. Project and team management

A. Travel, shots, visas, advances

- 1. Travel regulations**
- 2. Advances to include transportation funds**
- 3. Check out of computer equipment from IFES**

Many tasks must be completed before the team arrives at the IFES offices and before departure for the destination. Once team members are identified, they should be contacted by the IFES Administrative Assistant to make arrangements for air travel, visas, inoculations, medical insurance coverage and lodging arrangements in Washington, if necessary. Travel advances are determined by the Administrative Assistant, (and must be approved by the IFES Program Officer,) who is also responsible for ensuring IFES compliance with all applicable government regulations regarding travel and per diem as well as those of the funder (when applicable). For this reason, it is preferable that the Administrative Assistant, rather than the consultant or program staff, make these arrangements.

B. Briefing book

- 1. Suggested contents and format**
 - a. Project proposal, including SOW**
 - b. Correspondence with funder and/or host government**
 - c. Consultants' resumes**
 - d. Background information on country**
 - e. News articles on democratization and elections**
 - f. Documents: Constitution, electoral law, etc.**
- 2. Distribution**

Briefing books should be prepared for each team member, with an additional copy for the Resource Center. The briefing book should include, in the following order:

- Project Proposal and Consultant's Scope of Work
- Relevant Correspondence between IFES Washington office, funder and host government
- Team members' resumes
- Background information on the country
- News articles on the democratization and election process
- Documents such as the country's constitution and electoral law
- A copy of a model IFES report

Each team member should receive his or her briefing book with enough time to review it before arrival at the IFES office.

C. Team planning meetings

1. Scope of work agreement (team and funder)
2. Performance criteria and IFES expectations
 - a. Performance in-country
 - b. Quality and timeliness of project outputs
3. Resources (materials, people, examples)
 - a. Observation/documentation samples
 - b. Other training materials or programs
 - c. Sample laws or other documents
4. Individual work assignments
 - a. Role and responsibility of team leader (in country)
 - b. Role and responsibility of project coordinator
5. Procedures for communications
6. Time sheets and travel expense reports

To the extent practicable, the two days prior to the team's departure are reserved for briefings and planning meetings in Washington, D.C. This time allows the team members to meet each other, IFES staff to brief the team, and any last-minute information, instructions and concerns to be shared.

During the briefing day(s), the team will meet with several members of IFES Staff. Team members are briefed on IFES philosophy and guidelines for conduct in-country. The report writing responsibilities are also outlined in this meeting. In addition to the briefing books, team members may be provided at this time with resource materials selected to provide a basis for completion of the various elements of the scope of work.

The IFES Program Officer and team members should review the outline of the proposed project report. This time should be used to confirm the connection between the project proposal, each individual's scope of work, and the design of the project report. The proposed report outline should be used as a basic guide to document observations, findings and recommendations for each of the outline topics. The Program Officer should indicate which team member shall serve as the report coordinator and/or team leader, with an explanation of the role and responsibility of each team member.

The team should remain output oriented to ensure that all work assignments are completed and the findings are fully supported by observations. By the end of the meeting, each participant should have

a clear understanding of how he or she functions within the team, with detailed responsibilities to be assigned among team members as in-country work draws to a close. The Program Officer should stress the importance of the independent and impartial conduct of the Election Observer Team.

The Program Officer should have adequate in-country hotel and telephone information for team members and their families prior to or at least by the day of the team's departure. Team members should be directed to communicate safe arrival in-country directly to IFES or through the U.S. embassy or USAID mission.

The Administrative Assistant and Contracts Officer will brief team members on their travel advances, with instructions regarding completion of time sheets and expense reports. Insurance coverage and emergency information should also be covered in this meeting. Team members, after reviewing contracts with the Contracts Officer, should sign them and receive copies signed by an executive staff member.

D. Country-specific briefings

1. **AID and State Department**
2. **Host country embassy**

Current political information and confirmation of expectations are part of the AID/Washington and State Department briefings. These meetings are an opportunity for Department of State and AID officials in Washington to become familiar with the team, provide up-to-date country information and review the host country's expectations of the team including expectations for the verbal and written reporting of the team's findings. It is a time for the team members to ask any questions they might have about their scope of work or about the country's current political climate.

The final set of briefings consists of calls on the host country's Washington embassy and any other persons that the Program Officer believes may provide substantive country information. These persons include professors, consultants or anyone else who has significant country experience.

E. Team management and monitoring

1. **Project reporting to funder**
2. **Communication**
3. **Support**

Following the departure of the team, the Program Officer is responsible for team management, activity monitoring and providing the funder with regular reports concerning the progress of the project in

meeting goals and objectives and complying with the budget. At the end of the project, the Program Officer is responsible for producing the final report in conjunction with the designated report coordinator (see Section V. Report Writing). Decisions regarding team procedure or unexpected situations should be referred to and decided by the Program Officer. The Program Officer will also coordinate the team's Washington-based support staff, obtaining additional information, making alternate arrangements as necessary and obtaining concurrence on in-country decisions considered to be unusual. The Program Officer should communicate with the team as needed to be aware of current activities. Specific instructions as to methods and frequency of communications between the in-country team and Washington should be included in the briefing book and reviewed with project staff. The use of PC hardware and software (such as WordPerfect or Lotus) should be specified in advance to ensure full compliance. If the project report is to be drafted in a language other than English, the Program Officer should ensure compatibility of software and the availability of appropriate translation services.

F. Team management -- In-country

- 1. Logistics**
- 2. Pre-election program**

IFES project staff should arrive well in advance of the team members in order to confirm all arrangements in-country and to meet with USAID staff and embassy representatives. Accreditation procedures should also be confirmed to ensure that international election observers are easily identifiable on election day and therefore granted ready access to all aspects of the polling process. Once all team members have arrived in the host country's capital, this information should be communicated by IFES project staff to IFES Washington.

When IFES election observation missions are U.S. AID funded, it has been the practice for USAID or the embassy to arrange initial protocol and contact meetings with the government ministries and electoral officials with whom the team will be working. Often the first protocol meetings will be with the minister of external affairs and with the minister of the interior (or whichever ministry has oversight authority regarding elections). It is also common that the team will meet with the director of elections or with the election commission, if one exists. It may be desirable for an official from the U.S. embassy to accompany the observer team on these first visits, but at the same time, the non-governmental nature of IFES and the non-partisan, non-political stance of the election observer team should be emphasized.

The purpose, goals, and terms of reference must be clearly expressed at these early meetings with the host government. It is also important that this information must be conveyed with consistency. Therefore, the initial introductory statement for the team should be made by the team leader or one individual who has been designated by the team. Observers should have a prepared written statement ready before they begin their host-government meetings. Such a standard statement regarding IFES and

the objectives of the observer mission can assist all members of the team in keeping their description of the terms of reference consistent. A brief, factual press statement should be released in-country to announce the presence of the IFES team and the non-partisan nature of the mission. Members of the delegation should be provided with specific guidelines for dealing with inquiries from members of the press/media (see Appendix II for details).

Arrangements should be made for the IFES in-country headquarters to be staffed at all times and groups should be instructed to communicate with headquarters at least once a day to report on their findings. This regional data allows the leaders and staff to be fully informed at all times and to be in possession of the national picture for the purposes of drafting a post-election statement.

G. Team Management -- Polling day and beyond

- 1. Election day program**
- 2. Post-election assessment**

On election day, the designated leaders of the regional groups should ensure that observers follow a plan which allows them to cover a large number of regional polling stations to observe the opening of the polls and the sealing of the ballot boxes. A variety of polling stations in both urban and rural areas should be observed and in particular polling stations where indications of likely problems have been given by local political parties and domestic monitors. For details of election day tasks, refer to Section IV. J.

Observers should refer to the election day questionnaire issued by IFES; however, they should ensure that time is spent actually observing the process rather than strictly adhering to the questionnaire. The observations and instincts of the experienced people on the election observation team are as important as the answers to set questions. However, sufficient data should be collected to assist IFES in preparing the final report. One member of the team should be responsible for collecting such data.

Observers should not, under any circumstances, interfere in the election day procedures, unless advice is specifically requested by election officials. Any problems should be conveyed to the domestic and political party observers and noted for inclusion in the final report.

As polling stations close, observers should arrange to witness the counting procedures at a polling station previously visited, or at a station where reports have been received of problems during the day. Observers should exercise their own judgement, depending on the security situation, as to whether it is wise to travel far from their hotel to witness the counting process which will usually continue into early hours of the morning, if not all night.

On the following day, all observers return to the capital, unless special circumstances require their continued presence in a particular region. For example, following vote tabulation and ballot box transfer through to the end of the process. A preliminary statement should be issued to the press following an intensive debriefing session for team members only. Reports from other international observer groups should be taken into consideration. On no account should the issuing of a statement be subject to time pressure applied by the press or other groups.

As a preliminary statement is often issued prior to the final outcome of the count, it should be made clear that a comprehensive report will be made available following the final results. Wherever possible, at least one team member/IFES staff person should remain in-country for the final results and, if appropriate, run-off elections.

The statement should be immediately faxed back to IFES Washington and widely distributed both in-country and internationally.

IV. Project Implementation

A. Pre-election briefings

1. Context of democratization
2. Timing of elections

Election day observation is only one aspect of the task of an election observation team. Prior to election day the observers must acquaint themselves with all aspects of the election process, including the context of democratization in the country, the legal framework for the conduct of the elections and the pre-election environment as perceived by the different players in the election. IFES arranges for team members to acquire this background information through a series of briefings and materials.

The briefing process falls into three parts. The first part consists of the briefing book which is designed to supplement any face-to-face briefings received by team members prior to their departure. The briefing book should address and answer some of the following issues. Many of these issues will be explored in more detail at the second and third stages of the briefing process which consist of meetings with a wide variety of groups in-country. However, given the limited time available for team members to become experts on the country and its election process after arrival, the briefing book will ensure that questions raised in-country will be of a more informed nature.

Team members should be well versed in the country's history, geography and development. This background information serves to put the election into context. Briefings should cover the following questions:

- **The geographical situation and regional security situation.** Is the country alone in the region in conducting multi-party elections or surrounded by democratic neighbors? What effect has this setting had on the holding of elections? A map should be provided.
- **The historical setting.** Does the country have a history of independence/colonialism; of democracy/dictatorship; of peace/violence; of regional cooperation/isolationism? What has the impact of these factors been?
- **Societal, cultural and ethnic implications.** Is the society split into different classes of people by reason of wealth/heritage/education? Is the culture western-oriented? What are the dominant religions? What is the position of women? Is the country divided along ethnic/tribal lines? What provisions are made for guaranteeing of minority rights?

What is the human rights record of the government/opposition? Are politics personality or issue oriented?

- **Political changes and current electoral processes.** How long has the current government been in power? What factors have brought about a multi-party election? Is there an organized opposition? When was the current electoral law adopted? Was the law adopted with the agreement of all political players?
- **Economic climate and infrastructure.** Does the government control the means of production? What efforts, if any, have been made in the direction of privatization? Is the country's trade dependent on one major export only? What is the average monthly wage and the rate of inflation? Has recent change, for better or worse, occurred in the economy? Is there a 'black market' economy? Is the currency convertible? Is the country receiving and implementing advice received from the IMF and the World Bank? Is the country a member of a regional trading bloc?
- **Recent and current events towards democratization.** Why has the government legalized opposition parties and called a multi-party election? Is the opposition free to organize? What laws have been passed to enable a multi-party election to take place? Does the public understand that they have a choice of political parties?
- **Democratizing institutions.** Has an independent central electoral commission been established? Have political parties been allowed to register freely? Is there an independent judiciary? Does the media operate freely?
- **Constraints.** Is there civil order in the country? Are political parties allowed to operate freely, both according to the law and in practice? Is there a real separation of powers? Do communications allow the majority of the population to be informed about the electoral process?

The second stage consists of briefings in the country's capital prior to election day by representatives of the media, election officials, political parties, non-governmental organizations and government representatives. A briefing program of at least two days duration should be in place on arrival, organized by the primary points of contact established by IFES in advance (see Section I. C. Negotiating other project parameters). These briefings should allow the observers to gain a broad perspective of the immediate pre-election environment. In addition to answering many of the crucial questions, these briefings will indicate the kind of concerns and problems anticipated by the key players in the election process.

Following two days of intensive briefing and acclimatization, team members should be deployed at the latest on the day before election day to the regions where they will observe the voting process. Decisions on deployment should be made in coordination with other international observer groups and domestic monitoring organizations. A group leader for each regional observation group of not less than two people, plus an interpreter (if needed), should be appointed.

The third stage consists of similar briefings given by regional representatives to ensure that election observers have a first-hand knowledge of local issues on election day. These briefings in the respective regional capitals should be conducted by local representatives of the national organizations that briefed the full observer team in the nation's capital.

Briefings should also address the reasons for the timing of the election. During in-country briefings observers should raise questions and formulate their own recommendations for establishing the future timing of elections, reserving their final judgement until an assessment can be made of the impact that the timing had on the outcome of the elections. The following questions should be considered:

- Was the timing of the election chosen to benefit the government? Is there a fixed term for elections? If not, why was the timing chosen and by whom? Did the government call an unexpected election to deny the opposition time to organize? Were parties and candidates able to campaign country-wide or did the weather render travel during the campaign difficult/impossible in some areas?
- Did the central electoral commission draw up a detailed election timetable to ensure that the timing was realistic and allowed for all the administrative planning to be implemented in time or was the timing politically decided by the government?

B. Electoral laws and institutions

The briefing book should contain all the laws and regulations pertaining to the election as well as information as to when they were adopted and against what background. An in-depth understanding of the laws governing the elections is crucial to the task of informed election observation. Whereas the observers are not in a position to propose amendments to the existing legislation prior to the current elections, recommendations for future elections are one of the most important elements of the final report.

The main laws governing the electoral process are the constitution and the election law. The issues to be addressed pertaining to the laws and regulations should include:

- **Constitution and legal framework.** Is there a real separation of powers? Does the judiciary operate independently of the government? How are judges appointed? Was the constitution adopted as part of the judicial framework for this multi-party election? If not, are there plans for a new constitution following the election? Was international assistance sought in drawing up the constitution? On what basis was the decision for a parliamentary or a presidential system made? What role did the opposition parties play in these decisions?
- **Election laws.** What body drafted and adopted the electoral law? Was it the result of compromise/consensus? Does the electoral law itself contain sections dealing with the media and campaign financing? If not, are there separate laws dealing with these two issues? Does the electoral law provide details of the duties of the different levels of electoral commission before, during and after the election? Are there clear instructions concerning party/voter registration? Is it clear how complaints are to be resolved? Is the electoral law unique to the country or based on existing models in other countries? Was international assistance provided in drafting the law?
- **Structure of governing bodies and relationship to election administrators.** Is the mechanism of government independent from the ruling party's infrastructure? Is the central electoral commission able to operate independently of the government? Does the central electoral commission have any decision-making power and have its own electoral budget?
- **Impact of election system.** How was the election system designed, by whom and when? What were the criteria for choice, i.e., to ensure wide representation of parties in parliament/to limit the number of political parties? Was the system chosen for technical reasons, to facilitate the task of the election officials and the voters, or for political reasons, as a compromise between the current parliamentary parties? Was the system chosen on the basis of informed study of the wide variety of electoral systems around the world or was it designed to fit specific national needs?

The team members need to gain a thorough understanding of the functions and responsibilities of the various electoral institutions. Issues to be addressed include:

- How many levels of electoral commissions exist?
- What is the division of responsibility between each different level and where is this defined?

- Is the central electoral commission a permanent body or is it appointed/elected before each new election?
- If no permanent body exists how long in advance is the commission named and by whom?
- How are the members selected - on the basis of past experience, legal background or party affiliation?
- Does the central electoral commission have its own election budget and a permanent staff?
- What type of infrastructure is available to the CEC?
- How effectively have past elections been administered? Is this election the first one to be administered under this election law? How effectively was this election administered?
- Can the electoral commissions at central and local level operate independently of, respectively, the central and local authorities?

C. Political parties and conduct of electoral campaign

Election observers need to have an overview of the political party spectrum and the public perception of the various parties.

The following issues should be addressed:

- History, platforms and leadership of the political parties. Current representation in Parliament, if any.
- Is there equal access to sources of finance and publicity? How is this regulated -- by media law, public financing law? Was the law applied in practice?
- What is the size of party membership? Are there branches all around the country or only in the major cities or particular region(s)? Does the party have the capacity to organize, campaign and present candidates nationwide?

- Visibility of campaign - posters, television or radio broadcasts and newspaper coverage. Is the leader of the party a well-known personality? Is the personality of the leader more important than the party platform?
- Are party representatives able to identify their main groups of supporters and carry out voter education for these groups?
- Is the party represented at all levels of the election commissions? If not, why not? Have they been prevented from nominating representatives? Did lack of organization or representation result in their missing the deadline for nomination? Are they excluded by virtue of not being represented in the current parliament?
- Do all the parties accept the legitimacy of the electoral process? Will they all participate in the elections? Will all parties accept the election results even if they lose?
- Has the party been able to register its candidates without difficulties? If difficulties were encountered, were these the result of disorganization on the part of the party, or perceived discrimination by the officials? What right of appeal exists against refusal of registration to a party or candidate?

The task of election observers is not confined to observations on election day. The free and fair nature of an election includes the campaign period and an assessment as to whether the governing party, or any other party, was unfairly advantaged/disadvantaged during this period.

- Do parties, candidates, election officials and voters agree that the campaign was free of intimidation and violence?
- What type of complaints were raised and who dealt with the complaints?
- Were the electoral laws applied in practice?
- Do voters believe in the secrecy of the ballot process?
- Have opinion polls been conducted during the campaign period and are they considered to be reliable?
- How has the media covered the campaign?

- Is a high voter turnout expected? If so, why -- because of intimidation, legal obligation to vote or enthusiasm for the process?
- Do voters appear to understand that they have a choice of political parties in what may be the first multiparty election for decades?

D. Civic and voter education

Observers need to assess whether sufficient civic and voter education has been carried out in order to ensure that the participants in the electoral process are fully informed of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the elections.

Civic education:

- Does the population have a broad understanding of the nature of civil society and free and fair elections?
- If so, where have they acquired such understanding? -- through the formal education system, the media, non-governmental organizations, political parties, the election commission, the government?
- Have provisions been made to ensure that ethnic minorities are able to fully participate in the electoral process? Are media on voter registration, voter procedures and the ballots available in their languages?
- Have special measures been taken to allow illiterate persons to participate in, and understand, the process? Do the parties use symbols on the ballots and on their advertising materials?
- Have special efforts been made to involve women and young people in the political process?

Voter education:

- Have voter awareness campaigns been conducted by political parties, election commission, non-governmental groups, the government, the media?

Observers should raise the following questions in discussions with voters and other participants in the electoral process both before and on election day:

- Are these voter awareness campaigns judged to have been impartial?
- What has been the content of the campaigns? Has the information been clearly presented and in what form -- training sessions, through the media, through the distribution of leaflets?
- Has the information reached all sections of the population and all areas of the country, including remote rural areas?
- How far in advance did the voter awareness campaigns get underway? What has been their apparent impact on the voter?

E. Voter registration

Voter registration is one of the most fundamental aspects of any election. Without well maintained and regularly updated voter registries, the administration on election day is put under severe strain. Observers should therefore be well informed on all aspects of the voter registration process, including:

- Is there a permanent voter registry at central or local levels? If so, how often is it updated and how? Is it perceived as being accurate?
- Is the list computerized? If not, do plans exist to computerize the lists?
- What access do the public and political parties have to these lists and when? Does the possibility exist for the voter to amend the list prior to the election and/or on election day itself?
- Does the voter receive a special voter's card prior to the election? What information does this voter card contain?
- Who distributes the voters' cards and how? Were there problems with distribution? How were they resolved?
- What kind of security exists to avoid duplication or counterfeiting of the voter's card? Were there indications of counterfeiting? How were they investigated and/or resolved?
- What safeguards are in place to avoid multiple registration? Were any reports of multiple registrations reported? How were they investigated and/or resolved?

- What are the provisions, if any, for registration of absentee voters?

F. Poll workers

The poll workers play a crucial part in the administration of elections. Their level or lack of training may have a direct impact on the effectiveness of the election process.

- How were the poll workers selected? How many poll workers are there at each polling site? Do they receive a stipend?
- What is the level of training of the poll workers?
- Have training seminars been conducted by the central electoral commission or other bodies?
- Have written guidelines for poll workers been issued to facilitate understanding the electoral law which is usually written in technical legal language?
- Are election day operations carried out manually or by computer? If computerization has just been introduced has the necessary training been carried out?
- Does the first counting of the ballots take place at the polling site and do the same poll workers carry out the count?
- What provisions have been made for training the election officials at regional and central level?

G. Ballot design and security

The complexity or simplicity of the ballot directly affects the efficiency of the voting process. Observers should familiarize themselves, if possible, with the format of the ballot. However, in some countries it may not be possible to obtain a sample ballot in advance of election day. In any case, observers should be aware of the following:

- Does the law provide for a single or multiple ballot?
- Are the multiple ballots the same size and color?

- Is it easy for the voter to fill in the ballot and to insert it into the ballot box?
- Do voters fold the ballot(s) or put them into an envelope to ensure the secrecy of their vote?
- Who printed the ballots and where?
- What are the measures to ensure that ballots cannot be counterfeited, e.g., watermarked paper, serial numbers?
- What storage facilities warehoused the ballots after printing and prior to distribution to the regions?
- How were ballots distributed from printing or storage to polling stations? What security measures were taken? How long before election day did this take place? Were there any problems? If so, how were they resolved?

H. Election commodities, design and distribution

The observers should be familiar with quantity and design of the standard commodities that they should expect to find at every polling station on election day. These typically will include:

- Sufficient quantities of the ballots?
- Ballot boxes of sufficient size to ensure that all ballots can be accommodated?
- Ballot box seals?
- Voting screens to ensure the privacy of the vote?
- Indelible ink or other security material envisaged in the electoral law?

Observers should be informed whether these commodities have been supplied from outside the country and who has provided them. The following questions should be addressed concerning the distribution process:

- When did distribution take place?

- Did distribution take place under military or police escort? Did party representatives accompany the commodities to the polling sites?
- How did distribution take place - by air, road, rail? Were there problems? If so, how were they resolved?

I. Role of election observers

It is crucial that international election observers understand their role in the process, especially with regard to their relationship to domestic observers. Domestic observers will almost always be in a better position to monitor the details of the election process than international teams. However, international teams bring an added sense of security to the process and an indication of international interest and involvement in a country that may have been isolated for many years. Their presence usually helps to deter fraud. The following issues should be clarified:

- What is the legal status of the observers? Is there a difference between the status of international and domestic observers?
- What international or domestic organizations are fielding observers?
- What is the estimated scope of the election day observation coverage? What percentage of polling stations will be visited?
- What are the different roles of international and domestic observers? Will domestic observers remain all day in one polling station while international observers concentrate on visiting the maximum number possible?
- What is the attitude of the government, the political parties and the election officials to observers? (welcome/tolerant/grudging acceptance)
- How much involvement did the government have in the organization of election day deployment of international observers? Did they provide security arrangements, travel arrangements, stipends and/or logistics in the regions? Did this assistance compromise the task of the election observers?
- Did the government decide which polling station to allocate to which domestic observer and why - to simplify accreditation, to interfere in the process?
- Did the political parties have party poll watchers at the majority of the polling sites?

- What kind of training have the domestic monitors and party poll watchers received and from whom?
- Did political parties or domestic monitoring organizations conduct a parallel vote count? Was such a count envisaged in the electoral law?

J. Election day tasks

1. Opening of the polls
2. Voting procedures
3. Counting of the ballots

On the basis of all the information collected by team members in the pre-election period, observers on election day are expected to note how the process works in practice, report on their observations and to formulate recommendations. These recommendations should focus on improvement of the electoral systems and their impact on future elections. Observations on election day should be annotated on the election observation questionnaire provided by IFES. (A sample questionnaire is attached).

Observers should leave their hotels or lodgings in time to arrive at a polling station prior to the opening hour. En route attention should be paid to the atmosphere in the streets -- empty/crowded, relaxed/tense.

Election observers should arrive at a polling station prior to the official opening hour to observe the pre-opening procedures. These may include demonstrating to the observers that the box is empty before sealing as directed by the electoral law. In some cases, members of the election commission and the first voter in line may be asked to sign a document witnessing that the box is empty. This document is then dropped into the box before sealing.

Observers should introduce themselves to the president of the polling site and check whether all commission members are present, which parties are represented by poll workers and whether all the election commodities are in place.

There may already be long lines of voters outside the polling station. Observers should note whether these are orderly and good natured and whether the police or military are present if so mandated or permitted by the law.

Once voters enter the polling place, observers should note whether any problems occur in finding the name of the voter on the registration list and whether poll workers and voters appear to understand the

procedures. They should check whether the president of the polling site has received written guidelines for reference.

Observers should note how election officials deal with voters whose names do not appear on the list and whether they proceed according to the election law or act so that voters are unnecessarily disenfranchised.

Observers should check whether written instructions are posted up in the polling stations for the voters and how long it takes each voter to cast their vote from the moment of entering the polling station.

Observers should verify that voters enter the booths one at a time. Note should be taken of whether there are sufficient booths to ensure that voters can enter without delay, once the identification procedures have been completed and the ballot issued.

Voters should not linger in the polling booths. If they do so, observers should try to ascertain whether this appears to be the result of indecision concerning the candidates or confusion concerning procedures.

Voters should be able to place their ballot(s) in the ballot box without difficulty. This will be aided if the polling station is laid out in such a way as to facilitate the free movement of voters in one direction through the voting procedure.

Observers should talk to voters outside the polling stations. Observers should check whether those who have already voted felt the procedures had been clear and that they had been able to exercise a voluntary, secret and informed choice. They should also check how long voters waiting to vote have been in line and how long they are prepared to wait.

Observers should ask election officials as the day goes on how many of the eligible voters have already voted in order to obtain a feel for whether the length of polling hours is sufficient.

At the close of the polls, observers should be inside a polling station ready to observe the counting process, or to observe the transport of the ballots to the district counting center.

They should check the following points and note them on the election observation questionnaire provided by IFES:

- What time do the polls close?
- What was the turnout?

- Are all parties represented at the count?
- Are domestic observers present?
- Do the officials follow the procedures indicated in the election law?
- Are any problems encountered in applying these procedures? If so, how are these regulated?
- Does there appear to be the possibility of fraud during this counting process or do adequate safeguards exist and what are they?
- What provisions have been made for ensuring that the officials can continue counting well into the night? Is there a functioning electricity supply? If not, are lamps or candles provided? Do the officials receive anything to eat or drink? Are they too tired to conduct an efficient counting process?
- How long does the count take?
- Do all officials take part or only the president?
- How are decisions on invalid ballots reached -- by consensus, by the chairman?
- How are dissenting opinions recorded?
- Does the process appear to be orderly and transparent?
- Who signs the protocols once the count is completed?
- How are the ballots transported to the district counting centers? Do security forces and political party representatives accompany the ballots? Are the results conveyed in advance by telephone or radio to the district counting center?
- What happens to the ballots at the district counting center and how are the results from there communicated to the Central Electoral Commission?
- Who observes the count at the district level and does this appear to be conducted in a transparent manner? It is often at this level that problems occur.

- What arrangements are made for the counting of absentee ballots?
- Are the official returns closely mirrored by any parallel vote count being conducted?

K. Post-election assessment

1. Preliminary statement
2. Post-election meetings

Once all observers have returned to the capital to compare findings, a preliminary statement should be issued to the press. This factual statement will summarize the findings of the observer team and will not reflect unsubstantiated rumors or speculation from any source. Mention should be made of the campaign environment as well as of the conduct of election day.

Only after the preliminary statement has been issued should members of the team meet officially with representatives of political parties, government and non-governmental organizations to gauge their reactions to the process and to assess the impact of the election. The following issues should be addressed:

- Are the results universally accepted?
- Is it likely that the atmosphere will remain calm or do certain groups threaten to break the peace?
- How does the current government intend to deal with any problems arising?
- Has this election laid the groundwork for a legitimate government to take power?
- How much time will elapse before the newly elected representatives can take office?

V. Report writing and evaluation

A. Division of Tasks among the team members

A preliminary division of report writing tasks should be made in discussion with the report coordinator and team leader prior to travel with the guidance of the IFES Program Officer. Because members of the observation team will be travelling in small groups to different areas of the country to observe the elections, each sub-group will be asked to report on their regional findings. These regional reports are then integrated with the report from the leadership team which normally remains in the capital city. Recommendations are formulated as a result of a full team discussion in elaborating the preliminary election statement.

One member of the team should be designated as report coordinator. Often this person is also the team leader. The role of the report coordinator will be specified in their contract and statement of work, and will generally call on the team leader to coordinate the assignment of sections of the report to team members; receive each member's draft section and make sure that it fulfills the expectations of the scope of work; and assemble the draft sections into a coherent report to be submitted as the team's draft to IFES. Usually, IFES requires that the team's draft report be received at IFES within approximately ten days after departure from the country where the observation took place. However, if the counting process is slow, final results may take a couple of weeks or more to be announced. It is usually preferable to await the final results or the beginning of the grievance process for inclusion in the report.

B. Table of Contents (Example)

The format of the report, to be agreed between IFES, the funder and the team and to be coordinated by the designated report writers, will be based on the scope of work for the project.

In writing the report, the expectations of IFES, those of the funder and the host country must all be addressed. IFES and the report writer must identify the primary and secondary audiences that the report is being written for, i.e., the funder, the host country. In addition to sections dealing with the description of all aspects of the election process, the main emphasis of the report should be on a detailed description of the election process in practice and concrete recommendations for future elections pertaining to all aspects of the election process and follow-up work.

IFES suggests that the final report contain all of the following subjects. The recommended format has each of these subjects being a chapter in the report. In some cases, not all of these subjects will require a stand-alone chapter; however, IFES expects that all of these subjects will be covered in the report.

1. **Executive Summary**
2. **Introduction**
3. **Context of democratization**
4. **Election day observation:**
5. **Assessment and recommendations in following areas:**
 - **Relevant laws and regulations**
 - **Timing of elections**
 - **Electoral institutions and officials**
 - **Political parties**
 - **Conduct of the campaign**
 - **Status and evaluation of public confidence**
 - **Civic Education**
 - **Registration of voters**
 - **Poll workers**
 - **Computerization**
 - **Role of election observers**
 - **Budgetary demands of the election process**
6. **Assessment of post-election environment**
7. **Conclusion and recommendations for follow-up work**
8. **Appendices**
 - **Sample ballots**
 - **Laws and codes**
 - **Electoral documents**
 - **Organizations contacted**
 - **Persons interviewed**
 - **Press cuttings and articles**
 - **Election day reports from team members**

Reactions and recommendations for the future should be contained in the final report. Based on the requirements of the funder, the pre-election budgetary estimates may need to be compared to actual expenses incurred. Additionally, a variance analysis may also be provided in the final report.

C. Editing the Report: The role of IFES program staff

1. **If consultants' draft is not satisfactory**
2. **Review process: from draft to final version**

The team's draft report should be received by the IFES Program Officer who has been acting as the project manager. The Program Officer acts as the report editor. The first task of the editor is to determine whether the observation team has fulfilled their scope of work as defined in their contracts by covering adequately all of the specified elements in the draft report. If there are gaps in the information provided in the draft report, the Program Officer should quickly inform the team members of the areas where more work is needed. Additionally, the Program Officer must ensure that all observations and findings are documented and support the recommendations specified in the observation report. For this reason, the Program Officer should not approve payment of consultants' fees until the draft report has been thoroughly reviewed.

Ideally, the observation report should be reviewed by at least two IFES staff members in addition to the Program Officer before it is finalized. Usually, the secondary reviewers/editors will be the Senior Program Officer, the Program Director or the Deputy Director. IFES usually delivers the completed report to the funder within three weeks of the observation team's departure from the country.

VI. Monitoring and evaluation strategy

Election observation missions can and should be evaluated on several levels, using a variety of evaluative tools, with several different audiences and purposes in mind. Each type of evaluation listed below is described in terms of the questions: 1) What is being evaluated? 2) Why is it being evaluated? 3) How is it to be evaluated? and 4) Who is the audience for the evaluation and how is the evaluation passed on to the relevant audience?

A. Evaluating team members' performance

The performance of each individual observation team member should be evaluated, for two primary purposes:

- to assess whether the scope of work and other formal expectations have been fulfilled sufficiently to justify payment of consultant's fee, if any; and
- to leave an evaluative record of the consultant's work in their IFES file. This will provide an audit trail to the Consultant's SOW and performance review by funder (if required) and enable IFES staff to better judge their suitability for future IFES assignments.

The IFES Program Officer who managed the election observation mission should solicit feedback from the USAID mission, the U.S. embassy or other funder with whom the consultant interacted in the field, regarding the team's performance and, if possible, individual members, in particular the team leader and the report coordinator, according to the pre-established criteria. The Program Officer should add evaluative comments on those performance criteria, based on Washington briefings and debriefings and on the form and substance of the observation report. The Program Officer's evaluation of the election observation mission team members should be written and placed in the consultant's confidential file at IFES.

B. Evaluating project design and support

IFES' project design and support to the observation mission should be evaluated by the team members with the primary evaluative criterion being: Did IFES enable the consultants to do as good a job as possible in carrying out the observation mission? The purpose of this evaluation is to give feedback to IFES on its general administrative procedures in designing and supporting election observation missions, so that the design and support can improve with future observation missions.

The Program Officer asks the election observation mission team members to give feedback for this evaluation after the completion of the observation mission. The Program Officer should request that the observation mission team members give a written response evaluating elements such as the following:

- make-up of the observation mission team: size; complement of skills, of personalities; appropriateness of choice of team leader and report coordinator
- preparations for the election observation mission: briefing book; accuracy of verbal description of project task; quality and helpfulness of Washington briefings
- IFES support to team while in-country
- length of stay in-country
- length of time given for report writing
- overall project design: feasibility and appropriateness of scope of work

The team members' written evaluation should be sent to the Program Officer, who will share the comments with other program staff and use the consultants' suggestions to make improvements in election observation project management.

C. Evaluating project's responsiveness to funder's and host country's needs

The project as a whole should be evaluated in terms of how well it responded to the needs of the host country and the funder. Evaluation of this question can be profitably carried out both immediately after the completion and delivery of the election observation report, and several months later.

1. Immediate project evaluation

The evaluative questions that the IFES Program Officer should discuss with the project funder, and, to the extent possible, host government officials, include the following:

- Was the project scope of work sufficiently comprehensive and sufficiently focussed to meet the needs of the funder and the host country?
- Were the individual objectives of the scope of work fulfilled, through the observation team's work in-country and through the election observation report?

- Was the IFES response to the need and the request for an election observation generally satisfactory?
- Did the presence of international observers contribute to a peaceful process; the confidence of the voter in the integrity of the process and to legitimizing the election?
- What, if any, are the near-term ways in which IFES can continue to be responsive to the needs of the funder and the host country in continuing their support for free and fair elections?

The means for gathering answers to these questions, from the funder and from host country officials, may vary. Informal means, such as telephone calls, often can solicit a more frank and comprehensive response. It is important, however, to also solicit written responses to these questions, if possible.

The funder and host country evaluation of the observation mission should be collected, written down (if given verbally), and commented on by the IFES Program Officer, and included in the permanent project file. It is suggested that a separate evaluation file be established, perhaps in the director's office, so that evaluations can easily be shared with other IFES staff members, funder, and board members, as appropriate. The funder and host country evaluation should also be presented at the project evaluation meeting convened by the regional Program Director. (See item D, below.)

2. Longer term project evaluation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the observation mission and the election observation report in opening on the host country's progress toward democratic elections, in terms of the host country's response to the report and the recommendations, it is useful to solicit feedback from the USAID mission, U.S. embassy, or other funder within a period of two to four months after the election observation report has been delivered. One tool for gathering that feedback might be a questionnaire such as the following, to be sent to the U.S. ambassador, DCM, political officer, USAID director, or other appropriate representative of the funding institution.

If possible, a similar questionnaire might be sent to an appropriate host country official(s) as well.

1. Briefly, has any progress toward implementation of any of the election observation team's recommendations, been made since the time of the observation team's visit?

2. What further assistance (material, financial, technical) has been provided to the government's electoral process since the time of the IFES observation?
3. How was the IFES Election Observation Report used in guiding donors in providing follow-up assistance?
4. If an external donors' conference was held subsequent to the receipt of the IFES Election Observation Report in the host country, how, if at all, was the Report used as an aid to donors' discussions regarding assistance to future elections in the host country?
5. In general, how would you characterize the response of the host country government to the IFES Report?
6. To your knowledge, will the IFES Report be used as a planning tool or a catalyst for discussion and action by government officials responsible for future election administration? Did the Report produce any discernible effects on the Government's planning, policy, or procedures related to the election process?
7. How widely distributed was the IFES Report to individuals and groups outside the Government? In general, how would you characterize the response of non-governmental groups and individuals to the Report? What use, if any, did these groups or individuals make of the Report?
8. On a 1-10 scale, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of the observation team's visit in carrying out the objectives set by the U.S. Embassy/USAID mission/other funder? Explain.
9. On a 1-10 scale, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of the observation team's visit in carrying out the objectives set by the host country government? Explain.
10. On a 1-10 scale, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of the IFES Election Observation Report in addressing the needs and concerns of the funder? Explain.
11. On a 1-10 scale, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of the IFES Election Observation Report in addressing the needs and the concerns of the host country government? Explain.
12. On a 1-10 scale, how would you rate the expertise and the professionalism of the observer team, as reflected in their work in-country and in their written report?
13. What were the most notable weaknesses of the observer team and the IFES Election Observation Report?

14. What were the most notable strengths of the observer team and the IFES Election Observation Report?
15. Do you have any other comments on the IFES Election Observation Mission in the host country? (regarding, e.g., the length of stay, the timeliness of the visit, etc.)
16. How would you evaluate your dealings with IFES Program Staff in Washington? What recommendations would you make for improvement in the manner in which IFES responds to election observation requests?

D. Evaluating project fulfillment of IFES' objectives

IFES implicitly or explicitly sets *institutional objectives* for each project that it undertakes, including election observations. At the completion of the project, the relevant IFES staff should gather to review those objectives and to evaluate whether they have been accomplished. Institutional objectives for carrying out an election observation mission might include the following:

- to satisfy a request from a funder with whom it is important to maintain or build a good relationship;
- to further the groundwork for short-or long-term assistance in the country;
- to fulfill in part the IFES annual workplan;
- to generate the revenue that comes from the overhead category in the project budget;
- to provide election observation experience to an IFES staff member or consultant.

An evaluative discussion regarding each project should be convened by the regional Program Director, to include representatives from program staff, financial and administrative staff, and executive staff, to examine how well the project has fulfilled the institutional objectives of IFES. Such discussion should determine whether a project has been profitable, in every sense of the word, to IFES and whether similar projects should continue to be undertaken.

E. Follow-up activities

IFES should assess the value of, and investigate funding for follow-up activities, such as a post-election assessment, a "lessons learned" seminar for election officials and/or assistance in creating a permanent electoral body and defining the tasks of such a body.

Sources of reference:

Guidelines for International Election Observing, the International Human Rights Law Group, 1984

Handbook for observers of elections, Council of Europe, 1992

Appendices:

Sample questionnaire for election day

Sample guidelines for dealing with the press

Sample budget

APPENDIX I

ELECTION DAY CHECKLIST

I. OPENING OF THE POLLS

- A. What time did election officials arrive at the polling station?
- B. Were all election day materials delivered in time for the officials to set up the polling station and open at the time specified in the Election Law?
- C. How many election officials were present when the polls opened? If any were missing, what were the reasons?
- D. Did the polling station open promptly? If not, what caused the delay?
- E. Were voters already in line when the station opened?

II. AT EACH PRECINCT

A. Personnel

Were all designated commission members present?

Were all parties represented on the commission/as poll watchers? Which ones were present/absent?

Were other accredited individuals present, i.e. international and domestic observers, members of the press.

B. Election commodities

Were the following present in sufficient and correct quantities:

- ballots
- ballot boxes

- private voting booths
- voter registries
- voter information posters
- ballot stamps
- pens in the booths
- other commodities specific to this election

III. PROBLEMS TO IDENTIFY

- Chaotic organization of voter movement inside the voting station
- Inadequate voting privacy
- Multiple voting
- More than one person in voting booth
- Insufficient number of ballots/voting booths
- Inaccurate voter registries
- Insufficiently trained election officials
- Large numbers of voters requiring assistance with the process
- Security forces inside the precinct
- Party propaganda inside the precinct
- Presence of unauthorized persons at the precinct
- Disruption of voting by disorder/violence
- Any other violation of the election law procedures

IV. COUNTING OF BALLOTS

- A. What time did the polls close?
- B. Who was authorized and present at the count?
- C. Were the prescribed procedures followed by election officials?
- D. Did the process get underway in an orderly manner?
- E. Did all election officials appear to understand the process?
- F. Were the persons counting the ballots sufficiently rested to carry out their task accurately? Was there sufficient light, space, heat to allow reasonable conduct of the counting process?
- G. Were the invalid ballots correctly identified and noted?

- H. Was the number of invalid ballots sufficiently high as to cast doubt on the voter's understanding of the process?
- I. How long did the counting process take?
- J. Were the official counting records correctly completed at the end of the count and signed by all authorized persons?
- K. Was it possible for domestic observers and party poll watchers to obtain copies of the official record of the count?

APPENDIX II

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH THE PRESS

I. Pre-election

Usually IFES will issue a brief, factual statement to the press following the arrival of the delegation in-country. This serves to explain the reasons for the presence and the non-partisan nature of the delegation. Delegation members who are approached by the press should limit their comments to the facts contained in the statement. These facts include the composition of the delegation, the pre-election briefing program and the organization of the delegation country-wide on election day.

II. Election day

Members of the delegation should avoid making any comments to the press concerning their observations on election day. Such comments can be taken out of context and observations may not be borne out in other regions where the delegation is deployed. Therefore, a comment as apparently harmless as "everything seems to be fine here" can be quoted to show that international observers have judged the process to be free and fair. Journalists should be informed that a press statement, endorsed by the whole delegation, will be issued after the return of the regional teams to the national capital. This statement will represent the summary of the teams' observations placed in the national perspective.

III. Post election

Following the issuance of the delegation statement, members of the delegation are welcome to make comments to the press both in-country and in their respective home countries, expanding on the content of the delegation statement. Following their return home, delegation members should be encouraged to write articles about the election in their national/local newspapers.