

The Development of Professional Electoral Management

What Is a Professional Electoral Administrator?

259. Compliance with the legislative framework, including electoral regulations, procedures and manuals, is a prerequisite for the achievement of professionalism by an EMB. The term ‘professional electoral administrator’ implies a person with a range of skills beyond those associated with technical or management qualifications in other specific fields. In addition to these, a professional electoral administrator needs:

- a. an understanding of strategies for strengthening democratic development;
- b. a commitment to the principles that are the foundation of electoral good practice; and
- c. a strong commitment to high-quality electoral service to all stakeholders.

260. Specialist professional credentials and relevant management and technical experience assist EMB members and staff in becoming professional electoral administrators. As well as these skills, professional electoral administrators are committed to the principles of electoral good practice, which include:

- a. *integrity*, meaning the ability to act in a non-partisan and independent manner by not acting to benefit political interests and/or corruptly, and by ensuring that the electoral law, rules and codes of conduct are followed;
- b. *impartiality*, meaning the ability to be fair and to afford stakeholders equitable and honest treatment or a level playing field, and the ability to treat all stakeholders in an even-handed, non-partisan manner;
- c. *independence*, meaning the ability to carry out the work without influence from or being under the control of an external force, such as the government or the ruling party;
- d. *transparency*, referring to the ability of the EMB to be open and truthful, and to the availability to stakeholders of timely information and access to EMB records;
- e. *efficiency*, meaning that optimal use is made of resources of all kinds, that electoral funds are used wisely, and that activities are designed and conducted in a sustainable and cost-effective manner;

- f. *service-mindedness*, ensuring that all activity is aimed towards the delivery of high-quality services to all stakeholders, and in particular voters; and
- g. *professionalism*, meaning the meticulous and accurate implementation of electoral procedures as a key element for the delivery of credible elections. EMBs need to ensure that all election officials, whether core staff or temporary workers, are well trained and acquainted with the necessary skills to apply high professional standards in the implementation of their technical work. Professional training prompts public trust that the entire process is ‘in good hands’.

Together, these are the qualities of a professional electoral service.

261. No matter how great their commitment to their work, the bulk of members appointed to EMBs are not experienced in the full range of responsibilities associated with leading and managing electoral processes. Professional development for EMB members is as essential for attaining and maintaining high-quality EMB performance as is the development of EMB secretariat staff.

As the chief electoral officer of Ghana has observed, people in the community do not know how the election administration works, and are just as likely to seek information from EMB secretaries, drivers or security staff whom they know as they are from operational staff. The EMB therefore ensures in its training that all staff have a basic understanding of the mission and principles of the EMB.

262. An EMB’s capacity to perform all its electoral functions and responsibilities effectively depends very much on the capacities and performance of its secretariat staff. The capacities of EMB secretariat staff can be enhanced by implementing appropriate recruitment strategies and vigorous training and development programmes for temporary and permanent staff. Most of the issues faced will be similar for all three models of electoral management, Independent, Governmental and Mixed, although they may manifest themselves in different ways.

263. Public concerns about the professionalism of an EMB can lead to calls for institutional reform (see the case studies on Senegal and Zimbabwe). However, EMBs with a strong set of values can deliver elections whose results are accepted by stakeholders even though they are still in the process of developing professional staff, as, for example, in Yemen (see the case study).

Use of Public Service Staff for EMB Secretariats

264. Many EMBs rely on public service staffing for their secretariats. This may be required in governmental EMBs and in other models where this is government policy. Independent EMBs which have their own employment rules may find it difficult to offer their staff good

career prospects, due to the small number and specialized nature of many of the secretariat positions, and thus may find it more effective to rely on public service staff. Such reliance on the public service does not by itself inhibit the development of professionalism. An example is the Election Commission of India, which co-opts large numbers of public servants to assist with election preparation, and runs a professional electoral management system. Allowing an EMB to set its own rules for its secretariat staff who are public servants is beneficial. These rules could prohibit transfers from the EMB at specified periods, and could also provide conditions of service appropriate to the high-pressure environment of electoral events.

265. In any case, EMBs will at some point have to deal with the mobility of any public service staff assigned to the EMB. Staff who have gained electoral experience move on to other government positions, leaving a skill and experience gap. For those public service staff in governmental EMBs under the Governmental and Mixed Models who remain available for electoral tasks, there is a long period between elections when they do work which can be of a completely different nature. Regular development measures such as refresher courses, and the archiving of electoral materials in such a way that they are easily accessible, can assist in maintaining electoral skill levels.

Permanent and Temporary Staff

266. No EMB can justify or afford to maintain permanently the number of staff needed for all polling stations (which in a country such as Indonesia require over 4 million staff). Efficiency considerations may also preclude the permanent maintenance of secretariats or subsidiary EMBs at regional and local levels, or the full permanent staffing of functions that are only activated during an electoral period. For governmental EMBs under the Governmental and Mixed Models, much of the management structure for major electoral events may be based on temporary appointments or made up of staff seconded from other areas of the public service. Temporary EMB secretariat staff are often not recruited long enough before elections, nor do they stay long enough after elections, to be trained thoroughly for their work.

267. Each EMB needs to devise appropriate strategies to promote the effective use of temporary staff. These strategies could include timely recruitment processes; measures to ensure the availability of experienced temporary staff for each electoral event, such as the payment of availability retainers; and measures to maintain contact with temporary staff between electoral events, such as databases of contact information, newsletters, reunion meetings or refresher courses. Such measures can be particularly appropriate for EMBs in countries where there is no fixed interval for elections.

268. This type of approach is not possible, however, for an EMB such as that of Mexico, where temporary polling officials for each election are chosen through a lottery system. Significant lead time, and a very well funded recruitment and training effort, are then essential.

Conditions of Employment: EMB-specific or Public Service Staff

269. Staff of governmental EMBs under the Governmental and Mixed Models, and of independent EMBs which use public servants as staff under the Independent and Mixed Models, are usually employed under conditions broadly equivalent to those of public servants of similar rank and seniority. In Portugal the public service regulations allow the EMB flexibility in its employment practices. Special allowances for electoral work, particularly to compensate for the long hours involved during electoral periods, may also be available.

270. In independent EMBs which are responsible for their own staffing, the salaries and conditions of senior secretariat staff are often pegged to those of senior public servants. In Romania, EMB staff are employed on contract with conditions equivalent to those of the staff of the legislature. Salaries and conditions that are better than the public service standard may be offered to attract the highest-quality permanent and temporary staff and as compensation for the long hours of electoral period work. However, the continued payment of higher salaries to officials of independent EMBs between elections has resulted in some claims that this illustrates an inefficiency inherent in this model.

271. Where government policies aim to reduce staffing levels of public agencies, EMBs (as in Hungary) have often resorted to the use of external individual or corporate contractors, especially for technical development and support tasks, often at higher basic costs than public service base rates, but without the EMB paying costs such as pensions and allowances. This may cause disquiet among EMB staff who fear for the permanency of their own positions and are aware that their base rate of pay is inferior. It may also affect the sustainability of the EMB's operations.

Staff Pensions

272. Many EMBs link their staff pension to that offered by the public service, and it is natural to do so in EMBs where secretariat staff are public servants. It is cost-effective and convenient for these EMBs to maintain the pension link to the public service, and it may provide more secure or higher retirement benefits for EMB staff.

273. However, this practice can raise questions, especially for independent EMBs under the Independent and Mixed Models, about how 'independent' of the government the EMB is. In Canada, the EMB's pension package is linked by law to the public service pension without compromising its independence. In Romania, EMB staff pension benefits are as for staff of the legislature. On the other hand, in Lesotho, linking EMB staff pensions to the public service scheme has reinforced the perception that the EMB is not independent of the government. Some EMBs, even small ones, as in Botswana and Liberia, have their own pension scheme.

Career Patterns of Professional Electoral Officers

274. An EMB may seek to create career opportunities that are open to electoral professionals by preferring internal applicants who have specified professional electoral management qualifications to fill some vacant posts. In larger EMBs, as in India, Mexico or Nigeria, career opportunities may exist at regional as well as at the central level.

Procedures for Recruitment of EMB Staff

275. EMBs use various methods for recruiting secretariat staff. Governmental EMBs and other EMBs that rely on public service staff may not be free to implement their own recruiting practices. In Indonesia, the EMB may have to take whatever secretariat staff are allocated to it by the civil service.

276. Good practice is to hold an open selection process, as in Georgia and Palestine, advertising widely for candidates and specifying clearly the skills, qualifications and personal attributes required for each position to be filled. This is possible even where EMB staff are public servants, as the Australian example shows. It is more difficult where governmental EMB secretariats have part-time or fixed-period electoral tasks, and electoral skills may not be prominent in the profile required of staff.

277. As organizations that must set an example of acting equitably, EMBs need to implement recruitment and staffing policies that are conducive to gender balance in EMB staff, and that promote the employment of women to achieve this. Women need to be afforded opportunities equal to those offered to men for employment, training, promotion and benefits for all EMB permanent and temporary positions. This may require the EMB to introduce both gender-sensitive employment practices and training to ensure that all staff are aware of and committed to achieving the benefits of these. Some customary traditions, such as requirements in some societies for separate polling stations for women and men, may affect the details of implementing gender balance.

278. The implementation of gender balance in an established EMB permanent secretariat may take time and involve careful consideration of policies for filling vacancies. While this constraint does not apply when a new EMB secretariat is being established, the issue of gender balance may be lost in the hurry to find suitable people when recruiting for all levels of a complete EMB secretariat at one time – a lesson identified in retrospect in South Africa.

279. Some countries use the political parties to assist in identifying suitable EMB secretariat staff. In the USA, it is common for party nominees to participate in election administration, especially at local or 'county' level. The Mozambique EMB secretariat consists of staff at national, provincial and district levels who are appointed by parties in the legislature to represent them in key departments across the EMB.

280. One of the biggest recruitment tasks faced in a country is that of recruiting short-term electoral staff, particularly polling station staff. In Hungary, local governments recruit polling station staff. The EMBs in Namibia and South Africa request government ministries to second staff to be approved and appointed by the EMB for short-term contracts. In rural South Africa, traditional authorities are used to identify unemployed youth, who are interviewed by the EMB to assess their suitability for appointment as election officials at local polling stations. Other avenues for recruiting temporary EMB staff for polling station work include corporations and voluntary organizations.

281. In Uruguay, any civil servant may be compelled to undertake election work; in Mexico and Spain, this compulsion may extend to any voter. In Mexico, the electoral law requires the EMB to hold a two-stage lottery of all eligible citizens to make an initial selection of temporary staff for polling stations. Those selected are trained, after which a final selection is made, allocating staff to specific roles at polling stations according to their education level. A person summoned to staff a polling station who refuses without a legitimate cause will face a penalty.

282. Screening of candidates for permanent or temporary EMB staff appointment is a necessary component of the recruitment and appointment process which enhances its transparency. Screening aims to ensure that staff recruited have the specified qualifications, are of good character, and are not likely to be politically active or otherwise unsuitable. The screening process is best kept simple, quick, and under the control of the EMB rather than of political parties (as in the USA) or other organizations.

Procedures for the Appointment of EMB Secretariat Staff

283. The overriding consideration in appointing EMB secretariat staff is a fair selection procedure that results in the selection of the most suitable candidates. An EMB may often delegate the power of appointment to the head of the secretariat or to one of its members, who may then delegate the appointment of lower-ranking officials to other secretariat staff. In a few instances, the power of appointment is vested solely in the head of the secretariat, as in Botswana. Often the appointment of temporary staff for voter registration and polling station work is done by election committees or returning officers, or their equivalents, at electoral district or local level.

284. It is good practice for EMB staff to be required to sign the EMB's code of conduct as a condition of appointment. It is also good practice to inform the public about senior appointments to the EMB and its secretariat by placing this information on the EMB web site, in newspapers and in other media. To speed the integration of new staff into the EMB, it is important that the EMB develop a comprehensive orientation programme that is compulsory for all new staff within the first weeks of their appointment.

285. In some countries, such as Mexico, the EMB has full hiring and firing powers over its secretariat staff. The law requires that all management, supervisory and technical officials of the EMB be members of the Professional Electoral Service, which is essentially a specialized

civil service devoted entirely to electoral work. Citizens may have provisional access to the Professional Electoral Service by way of taking training courses, winning a contest for membership, or passing an examination. Full membership can only be obtained after passing required annual performance evaluations, undertaking further training, and having been involved in the management of an election. Initial recruits in 1992 were obtained through responses to a national media campaign.

Staff Training and Development

286. One of the pillars of professionalism in electoral administration is the proper training and development of core permanent EMB staff (if any), temporary management staff appointed for specific electoral events, and the large numbers of field staff that may be temporarily engaged for large-scale events such as elections, referendums or census-style voter registration. The principles of good electoral practice, such as impartiality, transparency, voting secrecy, equality of access, accountability and efficiency, form the basis of all EMB staff training. Staff training and development is a continuing activity. Changes in electoral procedures and technology, and the time that elapses between elections, mean that even the most experienced staff cannot rely entirely on experience to ‘know’ their current tasks.

287. Because staff training and development is not immediately tangible, as ballot boxes or voter education and information materials are, there can be difficulties in persuading governments to approve EMB budgets that contain sufficient funds for this task. The management of staff training and development also needs to occupy a sufficiently senior position in the EMB’s organizational structure to ensure that it has a strong input into organizational priorities, including internal budget determination.

As the chief electoral officer of Canada has observed, voters expect the same high standard of service from every one of his 190,000 staff whether they be long-term electoral professional employees or temporary staff who have only received two hours training.

EMB Organizational and Staff Development for Permanent Staff

288. Organizational and staff development (OSD) for the staff of an EMB addresses their long-term capacity-building and skills requirements, and also takes into account staff career development. OSD aims to unify the strategic objectives of the EMB and the skills required to attain these with the career and personal development goals of its staff. An active OSD element will contribute to the sustainability of the EMB.

289. It is important that an EMB develops both short-term and long-term strategies to address its OSD requirements. OSD requires a substantial, and preferably separate, dedicated

budget, so the EMB will need to prioritize its training and development needs. For example, the Russian EMB has decided that training of core staff is its priority, not training of polling station staff.

290. OSD is based on a needs assessment, which an EMB may conduct in-house or by bringing in outside contractors or management consultants. This needs assessment identifies all EMB tasks, compares the skill levels of staff with these tasks, and identifies the gaps – from which specific organizational and individual staff training needs, and the appropriate training methodologies, can be determined. OSD programmes aim to train each EMB staff member to do his or her tasks with maximum efficiency and professionalism.

291. Depending on the needs analysis, areas which OSD could cover include:

- a. generic skills development, for example in:
 - i. written and verbal communication;
 - ii. creativity, innovation and enterprise;
 - iii. team building;
 - iv. critical and strategic thinking and problem solving;
 - v. self-management;
 - vi. dispute resolution skills;
 - vii. project management;
 - viii. using technology;
 - ix. leadership, management, coaching and supervisory skills; and/or
- b. the development of technical skills relevant to the specific EMB division.

292. Staff development may take a number of basic forms, such as customized short-term informal training in the form of staff meetings and reviews, retreats and seminars, the mentoring of staff by senior EMB or another organization's officials, and long-term formal training in the form of courses or academic development programmes. Continuous horizontal and vertical communication within the EMB not only contributes to development objectives but also greatly assists in maintaining organizational focus and improving staff performance.

Using International Experience

293. Through both bilateral and multilateral cooperation, many EMBs have been able to send their staff to observe electoral management in other countries, or on secondment to other EMBs for training and exposure to different ways of electoral organization. This is a quick and relatively inexpensive way of gaining new ideas and exposure to good practices in electoral administration. In addition, regional electoral associations can facilitate the exchange of information and the secondment and training of electoral administrators (see also chapter 11).

294. International advisers and consultants have the potential to help EMBs solve difficult specific problems, to advise the EMB members and staff on how to ensure that its operations meet international standards, and to build the EMB's own internal problem-solving capacities.

They may be specialists in particular electoral and technical fields or skilled electoral managers. However, EMB projects which use advisers and consultants with experience in other countries need to be structured to ensure skills transfer and capacity building through formal or informal one-to-one mentoring of the EMB's staff, in order that the project's achievements do not depart with the advisers.

Mentoring

295. The one-to-one mentoring approach to the professional development of selected permanent staff is not limited to projects with international consultants, but can be used to good effect internally by an EMB. For mentoring to be successful, the conditions and goals of each mentoring programme need to be clearly established. Mentor programmes can also assist an EMB to achieve some of its equity goals – for example, increasing the number of women or other targeted social or ethnic groups holding more senior management or technical positions. In addition to internal mentoring programmes, it may be possible to arrange short-term secondments of EMB staff to work with a mentor in another public-sector agency or private-sector organization.

Education and Development Courses for EMB Staff

296. There is a strong case for EMB staff being seen to be professional by gaining graduate or postgraduate qualifications in electoral management and governance. More institutions of higher learning are offering courses on aspects of governance and electoral administration. Pioneers in this have included the American University (USA), Griffith University (Australia), and the University of Paris II (France). The University of Calgary (Canada) has explored ways of conducting formal training in electoral governance.

297. International electoral assistance agencies have also developed relatively short professional development courses for electoral administrators, such as the BEAT (Basic Election Administration Training) course developed by IFES (formerly the International Foundation for Electoral Systems), which has been implemented in Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

298. The most comprehensive professional development course available for electoral administrators is the Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) course, jointly developed by International IDEA, the UN Electoral Assistance Division and the Australian Electoral Commission. BRIDGE courses are presented by accredited BRIDGE facilitators. BRIDGE is made up of stand-alone modules, so that any course can be tailored to an EMB's specific professional development needs. All BRIDGE modules are available in English. Some or most of the modules are also available in Arabic, French, Portuguese and Russian, with other languages including Spanish planned.

299. In the UK, the Association of Election Administrators (AEA) conducts regular training and education for election administrators. EMBs (local authorities) in the UK usually require

that candidates for election-related positions have the relevant AEA qualifications. The South African EMB has been developing a formal training and education curriculum for election practitioners and an accreditation mechanism for qualified election managers. The Bangladeshi EMB has set up the National Training Institute in Dhaka, which conducts intensive training for electoral staff at all levels, both face-to-face and electronically. There are strict entrance, accreditation, and continuing professional development requirements for membership of the Professional Electoral Service of the EMB in Mexico.

Box 3: Some Important Steps towards Developing Electoral Administration as a Profession

- a. the introduction of formal training and qualifications;
- b. the establishment of a professional and sustainable electoral management body to safeguard and promote the professional interests of electoral administrators and regulate their ethical conduct;
- c. the creation of a pool of resources and a network of expertise which electoral practitioners can refer to and consult in performing their professional work; and
- d. the development of a career path and opportunities for electoral administrators.

Operational Training

Training Methods

300. Intensive training of temporary staff before every electoral event is a critical element of electoral service delivery and staff performance. The provision of a high-quality service, based on the principles of integrity and good electoral practice, is the underlying message of all training for temporary staff. It is important for an EMB to develop a database of temporary staff who have been trained and worked satisfactorily during electoral events so that such staff can be contacted for reappointment for future electoral events.

301. Experience has shown that it is more effective to focus training for temporary staff on the specific operational elements of their responsibilities. Training in tasks such as voter registration, polling and counting is invariably more effective if complemented by simulation

exercises, such as role-playing or mock exercises. Evaluation of each training session by the participants is essential for improved training performance.

Cascade Training

302. Cascade training entails the training of a core group of trainers in both electoral technical matters and training techniques – the ‘training of trainers’ who in turn train others ‘face to face’ at a lower level. The second level trains the third level and so on, until all targeted staff are trained. Cascade training’s relative cost-effectiveness and ability to train large numbers of people in a short period of time mean that it is widely used in both new and established EMBs. It is especially useful for tasks undertaken by large numbers of staff, or where training has to be undertaken simultaneously or almost simultaneously over large geographical areas – for example, for voter registration and polling staff. Trainers at each of the successive levels may all be EMB members or staff, or may include external trainers – such as professional trainers, academics, or respected members of civil society organizations. Using a mix of EMB staff and external trainers can have advantages for stakeholder buy-in and sustainability.

303. Cascade training is effective if the training at different levels is sequenced within relatively short time periods, and the training at the final level of the cascade, for example for polling station staff, is most effectively done just a few days before the electoral event occurs to avoid the training being forgotten before it is used. Using this method requires that a large number of trainers understand fully the contents of the training sessions and the training methodology. Any failure or misunderstanding at the top of the chain will be passed on to the lower levels and may impact negatively on the whole exercise. Quality control measures – such as limiting the number of levels in the cascade, and spot-check monitoring of training sessions – assist in ensuring that all training sessions are conducted accurately and consistently.

Training by Mobile Teams

304. One alternative to cascade training is training by a small number of mobile teams of trainers, which conduct training for all election staff at all levels. This method has the advantage that the information is imparted accurately by competent teams of trainers. However, it requires more time, since a small number of teams are responsible for the training of all electoral staff across the country. While this may be an effective solution for electoral events held in very small geographical areas, it is not generally feasible elsewhere. If a large number of staff need to be trained and the mobile team starts training long before polling day, there is also a risk that the groups trained early will have lost the knowledge gained before they come to put it into practice.

Simultaneous Training

305. Another alternative to cascade training is simultaneous training, whereby all temporary

staff are trained on a single day or series of days. This could be used if there is very little time to prepare for an electoral event, or where a large-scale training event is useful to an EMB as an image-building exercise or to stimulate interest in or education about an electoral event, as in Cambodia in 1993. However, it requires a very large number of competent trainers who would generally need to be externally recruited and trained in the technical content, needs very intensive planning to implement, and is costly. Using video technology to brief temporary staff with previous experience on the changes that have been made to procedures since their last election might be another way to carry out a simultaneous training activity.

Training Materials

Instructions

306. Instructions in the form of easy-to-read sheets or checklists have long been used to complement cascade training of some tiers of electoral staff, for example, polling station security officials, polling station staff and counting staff. Examples may be found in countries such as the Solomon Islands in 2001 and Yemen in 2003, and the material can be made available in electronic format where facilities for this exist.

Training Manuals

307. Most EMBs rely on training manuals to impart skills to election officials. Manuals that are accurate, user-friendly, well written, and easy to interpret and apply are an indispensable training aid. It is effective to develop separate components of a manual to cover categories of staff with different duties, and to include in the manuals simple checklists of their essential tasks and a set of questions that trainees need to answer to verify their knowledge. Hard-copy manuals can be supplemented by soft copies from which additional materials can be printed. Sufficient copies of manuals can be printed to allow election officials to take them home after training, either for further reading or for reference while they are working. In Hungary, electronic training facilities are used, including an electronic manual and a test on its contents.

308. EMBs can also consider producing manuals on electoral processes for their various stakeholders, such as political parties and candidates, party agents, the media and election observers. The better the understanding stakeholders have of the electoral processes, the easier a competent EMB's work is likely to be.

Simulations and Videos

309. Simulation of electoral processes, such as the conduct of voter registration, polling and counting processes, is a popular training method. Simulations and similar hands-on and interactive training experiences are generally regarded as the most effective method of training temporary EMB staff and are worthy of being included in every training session.

310. The use of videos and graphics to illustrate and reinforce training texts and messages, and make presentations to smaller groups, is growing in popularity with trainers. These materials are useful to support, rather than be the basis of, electoral training. Video materials can be most effective when developed as short, focused segments that can be used to illustrate specific work activities and to guide simulations. Before developing training sessions relying on video content, an EMB needs to be sure that appropriate video facilities are available and affordable at all training locations.

Factors Which May Inhibit EMB Professionalism

311. There are numerous problems which an EMB may have to overcome to achieve an acceptable level of professionalism. Some may be within the EMB itself, such as behavioural, planning or resource prioritization issues. Others may be the product of factors in the EMB's external environment, including:

- *The political climate* within which elections take place largely determines the credibility and legitimacy of elections. In environments of political fear, intimidation and violence, and in societies with no respect for rule of law, or where governments have no transparency or accountability, it is difficult to manage credible elections. Nevertheless, a professionally oriented EMB can still work hard under such circumstances to demonstrate a commitment to ethical principles and by so doing contribute to efforts to build confidence in the electoral process. Examples of EMBs which delivered acceptable results under the most trying circumstances include the EMBs of Afghanistan (2004), Iraq (January 2005), Mozambique (1994), Nicaragua (1990), Palestine (2006) and South Africa (1994).
- *A sound electoral legal framework* is essential for the successful planning and conduct of electoral events and also for the professionalization of the EMB. Where the legal framework falls short of the acceptable norms, the EMB may encounter difficulties in delivering electoral events that are acceptable to all stakeholders, and may thus appear to be unprofessional. In order to avoid political disruptions and other uncertainties that may undermine the electoral process, it is preferable that changes to the legal framework be finalized long before the date of an electoral event. This allows the EMB sufficient time to educate the stakeholders about the changes, make the necessary modifications to its procedures, and train its staff. It also allows the parties and candidates time to adjust their plans if necessary. The experience of many EMBs, however, particularly in emerging democracies, is that last-minute changes to the legal framework are common.
- *Lack of continuity* undermines professional development where EMBs are temporary bodies. While a permanent EMB tends to have time and resources to train its staff in between elections, a temporary EMB has limited time in office – in many cases not exceeding 90 days – which makes long-term training and capacity building very difficult. The heavy reliance of a temporary EMB on temporarily seconded public servants may also undermine EMB professionalism, especially because the office from which they are seconded may not be able to release the same staff to the EMB for every electoral event.

- *Lack of adequate or timely funding* can also undermine an EMB's professional development programmes. Some EMBs, especially in fledgling democracies, struggle to get enough funds for electoral events. When funds are eventually made available it may be too late to conduct meaningful training of staff, especially temporary electoral staff. Funding may also include conditions that inappropriately limit the EMB's choice of types of staff training or development.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Professional EMB members and staff need appropriate skills and, most importantly, a commitment to the principles of electoral management, including integrity, impartiality, independence, transparency, efficiency and service-mindedness.
- The use of public-service staff in EMB secretariats can provide the benefits of public-sector experience, but can create challenges for EMB professionalization, especially in governmental EMBs, where electoral work may not be the vocation of EMB staff. EMBs that can hire their own staff and are not subject to public service rules may be able to offer incentives to attract higher-quality staff. The existence of attractive career paths in EMBs will assist in the professionalization and retention of staff.
- EMB staff requirements are cyclical, with very high peaks that cannot justify the maintenance of sufficient permanent staff throughout the whole electoral cycle. Each EMB needs to devise appropriate strategies to promote the effective use of temporary staff, which may include timely recruitment processes, availability of incentive and training opportunities, and mechanisms for regular contact.
- Equitable recruitment and employment practices – including open merit-based selection processes, gender balance, and a fair and safe working environment – fulfil an EMB's internal responsibility as an institution that promotes equity in public life.
- Investment in EMB staff training and development is critical for improving overall EMB effectiveness. This could be through internal courses, professional associations, academic qualifications, or mentoring and skills transfer by consultants and senior managers, or through the use of an electoral management curriculum such as the BRIDGE course developed by International IDEA, the Australian Electoral Commission and the UN Electoral Assistance Division.
- Operational training, especially for temporary staff, has been found to be most effective if it concentrates on specific technical processes, and includes simulations, backed by good-quality materials such as manuals and checklists, instructions, appropriate audiovisual aids, and rigorous training evaluation.
- EMBs typically need to provide operational training quickly for large numbers of electoral event staff. Mobile team training requires a relatively long training timetable, and simultaneous training a relatively large number of trainers. Cascade training is commonly used, although it requires strict timing and quality controls to ensure that accurate and complete information reaches the lower levels of the cascade in a timely manner.
- EMBs may have to overcome negative influences on their professionalization, such as conflict environments, flawed legal frameworks, the temporary nature of an EMB, or insufficient or late release of funds.

Sweden: Governmental in Form, Independent in Practice: A Decentralized Election Management System

Maria Gratschew

The Institutional Structure of Electoral Management

The Swedish EMB is best described as a decentralized institution divided into three levels that are separate from each other – central, regional and local. The structure of electoral administration corresponds to the structure of institutions of governance in Sweden in general.

The local authority (the *kommun*) is the local EMB, responsible for recruiting and training polling station officials, for setting up and equipping polling stations and for the first count of votes which takes place in the polling stations. The regional EMB, the County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen), is responsible for the second and final count of votes from the whole region, which takes place at counting centres, and the declaration of the results of elections to the county councils and municipal assemblies. The central EMB, the Election Authority (Valmyndigheten), has a range of responsibilities, including the (voluntary) registration of political parties' names and the names of the parties' official candidates, voter education, the production and design of ballot papers, and deciding the number of parliamentary seats allocated to each electoral district. The central EMB declares the results of elections for the national Parliament (the Riskdag) and the European Parliament.

The tasks carried out by the local or regional EMBs are not directed by the central EMB, but are laid down in the laws and documents that establish them as electoral authorities – the Elections Act and its associated regulations.

The central EMB is not fully institutionally independent from the executive branch of government: it is expected to report to, and in some cases consult with, the Ministry of Justice. The public administration in Sweden is structured so that all statutory authorities fall within the area of work of a government ministry, even though they may not be subject to direct supervision. The major channel of the relationship with the ministry lies in the submission of the annual report, which in turn forms the basis of financial review by the State Auditors (Riksrevisionen). The central EMB has full responsibility for implementation of the Elections Act, but does not establish government policy.

The local EMB is accountable to the management and board of the municipality, which is an elected body. Local and regional EMBs that have received additional funding from the central EMB for tasks relating to voting at 'special institutions' (such as hospitals and prisons) have to report on this specifically to the central EMB.

The administrative director of the central EMB, the Election Authority, is appointed by the government. The central EMB is a small organization with not more than 13 full-time employees. Consultants are used mainly for work on technical and Web communication issues. The central EMB works under the supervision of the Board of the Election Authority, a five-member body which provides the EMB with advice but is not involved in day-to-day practicalities. There are 21 regional EMBs (one within each of the 21 county administrative boards) and 290 local EMBs (one within each of the 290 local municipalities).

An eight-member board, the Election Review Board, is appointed by the Parliament immediately after an election. Electoral disputes are managed by this board, and there is no appeal against its decisions.

The indigenous people of Sweden, the Sami, elect members to their own regional parliament. These elections are managed by one of the regional EMBs, together with the central EMB and the staff of the Sami authority, as specified in the law governing the Sami Parliament.

Historical Background

During the first half of the 20th century, elections were administered by local and regional authorities under the supervision of the Ministry for Internal Affairs. Very few staff worked with electoral administration, and most of them also had other responsibilities. The civil register, which still provides the basis of the electoral register, was produced by the Board for Civil Registration and Tax Collection (Centrala Folkbokföring och Uppbördsnämnden). When the National Tax Agency (Skatteverket) was set up and took over responsibility for the civil register in 1971, it was practical to centralize electoral management at the same time. This was reinforced by a change in the electoral system, creating a single national district for the allocation of some of the parliamentary seats, and therefore making it difficult for regional authorities to perform the allocation of seats for the national Parliament.

After almost 30 years as a small office incorporated within the National Tax Agency, at the end of the 1990s the staff of the Electoral Office initiated discussions aiming at changing the electoral management structure. Three main reasons for the proposed change were cited. First, the Electoral Office was working under the rules of the National Tax Agency, and was not able to work with the freedom, speed and versatility that its work demanded. Second, with the development and increased use of new and Web-based technology, the Electoral Office identified the need to establish its own lines of communication. Third, it was argued that the issues involved in managing elections are of such a different and particular character that they should be managed by a separate body.

The electoral management system of Sweden was changed by the Swedish Parliament in January 2001, following a long process of deliberation, consultation and formal consideration by relevant bodies. The new central EMB was in place and fully functional by July 2001, and the first election to take place under the new EMB structure was the parliamentary election of 2002. In short, the structure of electoral management has moved from being a decentralized system in the early 20th century, to a centralized system as part of a larger authority, to being an effectively independent body while still falling under the remit of a government ministry.

The Election Authority believes that the changes since 2001 have made its work much easier, and that the regional and local EMBs have become more visible. However, there were initial disadvantages associated with the change, as services and expertise that were available within the National Tax Agency were lost when the separate central EMB was established. The

new EMB has been forced to invest in building up and recruiting its own expertise and capacity in relation to public procurement and computer technology.

The Legislative Framework

There are no provisions for EMBs in the constitution. They are, however, mentioned in the Elections Act (Vallag 1997:157, chapter 1, sections 15, 16 and 17), which specifies that there shall be a central EMB, regional EMBs and local EMBs. It does not specify whether these bodies should be independent, or affiliated to any other authority or institution. It simply provides that the government decides which body should form the central EMB. The Parliament, by the decision of 2001 to establish a separate central EMB, has already done so. (Since the inception of the Election Authority, powers relating to the establishment of new authorities have changed. It is today the power of the government to establish new authorities.)

The constitution outlines general principles of equal and universal suffrage, of periodic elections, electoral districts, the Election Review Board and the electoral system. The Elections Act specifies the tasks of:

- the local, regional and central EMBs;
- the polling station staff; and
- the Election Review Board.

It also specifies in detail the division of tasks between the EMBs, and defines provisions relating to:

- electoral districts and boundary delimitation;
- procedures regarding the registration of political parties and candidates;
- the production and design of ballot papers;
- procedures for voting, including advance voting, absentee voting or voting from special institutions (such as prisons or hospitals);
- vote counting and the allocation of seats;
- the identification of replacement candidates or elected members in the event of resignations or deaths;
- how to appeal against election results;
- voting rights; and
- special rules applicable for elections to the European Parliament (Sweden has incorporated those rules and regulations laid down for elections to the European Parliament in European Union legal instruments into its Elections Act).

Financing

The central EMB requests its annual budget from the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice then receives these funds from the Ministry of Finance, in accordance with a parliamentary decision on the budget proposal by the government. The central EMB has normally received the amount it requested.

The regional EMB receives its funding from two sources: its own general budget as the County Administrative Board, which covers permanent costs such as staff and premises, and the budget of the central EMB, which covers the additional costs that relate to elections. On

average, the regional EMB receives about 0.30 euros (EUR) from the central EMB for each registered voter in its region, depending on the type of election. This funding from the central EMB is only given to the regional EMBs during an election year.

The funding of the local EMBs is separate from that of the other two levels, as municipalities receive funding from the government for their whole area of work, which includes the work of the local EMB. The Municipal Assembly determines the overall municipal budget annually. Expenditures for general elections and referendums are included in that budget. The one exception is the cost involved in voting that takes place at 'special institutions'; funding for this is requested from the budget of the central EMB. Some local municipalities have disliked having to cover the cost of elections other than those for representatives for the local electoral districts – for example, national referendums or elections to the European Parliament – since their budgets are 'local' and not supposed to cover 'national' events. However, as of 2006 the municipalities have greatly increased responsibilities for advance voting for all types of general elections and national referendums, which will add to the election costs they are responsible for covering.

The cost of meeting high technical standards is reflected in EMB budgets. The local and regional EMBs form part of existing administrations, the central EMB is established with the status of a separate authority, and adequate resources appear to be assured.

The Professionalism of Electoral Officers

There are no official education programmes or courses in electoral administration in Sweden. The training provided to staff members is designed internally. The central EMB has taken part in general training in issues relating to public procurement, as it manages the production of high-cost material such as ballot papers, advertisements and public information on elections. The central EMB has conducted in-depth training for the staff of the regional EMBs since the 1970s and for the staff of the Sami Parliament during recent years.

The staff of the Election Authority can be divided into three main groups – technical staff, subject experts and support staff. While institutional memory was maintained when nearly all the staff associated with elections transferred to the new central EMB in 2001, the central EMB faces problems common to small institutions, such as dealing with the near-simultaneous retirement of several key personnel or keeping up with constant developments in new technology.

Although all vacancies must be publicly advertised, in practice the staff of the central EMB are mainly recruited from election officials at the regional or local level. As local EMBs are responsible for recruiting officials for the polling stations, they undertake major recruitment and training processes before each election. The recruitment process varies between municipalities: some recruit mainly from political parties, trying to ensure political balance, some seek officials from outside the political process, and some use a combination of both.

At regional level, between one and three members of staff are responsible for managing elections, and have other tasks within the county administrative boards during other times. As the regional EMBs are responsible for the final counting of votes, they recruit additional temporary staff for this purpose.

Relations with Other Institutions and Agencies

Relations and cooperation with other institutions are key to the work of the central EMB.

Since the National Tax Agency is responsible for both civil and electoral registration, these two institutions cooperate continuously. The central statistical office (Statistics Sweden, Statistiska Centralbyrån) supplies survey data for electoral purposes, while the Election Authority provides the election results data to Statistics Sweden for publication. The authority responsible for issues relating to real estate assists in the work of boundary delimitation. Sweden's diplomatic missions abroad are also partners in the electoral process, as external voting is part of their function. The Ministry of Justice remains an important partner of the central EMB, and desk officers of both institutions have close and regular contact.

Electoral Reform Management

The political environment in Sweden is comparatively stable. Election results and the work done by the EMBs are not often criticized or disputed, and EMB recommendations are usually treated with respect.

The central EMB is, however, able to suggest changes and improvement to electoral legislation or practices through the Ministry of Justice, and regularly does so. There have been cases when the central EMB has been the catalyst for change, while at other times it simply acts as a participant, or makes suggestions to the Ministry of Justice, on issues that need consideration. If a decision involves controversy, committees, politicians and officials from the EMB and the government seek to reach agreement through consultation, not through voting.

Japan: Mixed Model Electoral Management for a Mixed Parallel Electoral System

Kaz Kuroda and Maiko Shimizu

The constitution of Japan adopts representative democracy and guarantees universal suffrage, equality of vote, and the secret ballot. It also includes the basic principles of the election system in the chapter on Rights and Duties of the People, which apply both to elections for members of the National Diet and to elections for members of local assemblies and heads of local authorities.

Universal suffrage in elections for public office is guaranteed to all Japanese nationals 20 years of age and older. Since 1945 there has therefore been no discrimination on suffrage according to gender, race, social status, property, or the amount of tax paid. Requirements as to the amount of tax paid to the National Treasury, which existed in the former election law under the Meiji constitution, were completely abolished in 1925, and in 1945 after World War II, women were finally given the right to vote.

The Public Offices Election Law actualizes the principles contained in the constitution relating to elections for national and local public offices. Previously, there was no unified legislation on elections. Each election, national or local, was held under individual pieces of legislation (the Lower House Election Law, the Upper House Election Law and the provisions concerning the election of local authorities in the Local Autonomy Law). In 1950, all these acts were consolidated into the Public Offices Election Law.

Institutional Structure

The types, responsibilities and composition of the EMBs are as follows.

The responsibilities of the *Central Election Management Council* relate to the election of the members to the House of Representatives under the proportional representation (PR) element of Japan's Mixed Parallel electoral system, and of the members of the House of Councillors under the PR element of the electoral system. The Central Election Management Council is an independent body, composed of five members appointed by the prime minister based on nominations by the Diet. The term of office is three years.

Prefecture electoral management committees have responsibilities related to the election of the members of the House of Representatives from the single-member electoral districts, the members of the House of Councillors from electoral districts, the governors of prefectures, and the members of prefecture assemblies. Prefecture election management committees are

composed of four members selected by prefecture assemblies. The term of office is four years.

Municipal (city, town and village) electoral management committees have responsibilities related to the election of the heads of municipalities and the members of municipal assemblies. They have four members selected by municipal assemblies. The term of office is four years.

Every prefecture and municipality establishes such an election management committee which is one of the administrative committees of the authority, parallel to other local authority committees such as those for education, public safety, local labour relations and agriculture.

In addition, electoral management committees are set up in the special wards of the Tokyo metropolitan government and in the administrative wards of 12 designated cities.

These committees are wholly responsible for the management of their respective functions. Local government in Japan is based on the presidential system, where governors, mayors and councillors are directly elected, and functions on the principle of the separation of powers and internal checks and balances to ensure democratic local administration. An ordinary local authority thus consists of an executive branch and a legislature. The legislature (the elected council) of the prefecture or municipality determines budgets, enacts local legislation and makes decisions on its policies. The executive branch implements the policies decided by the legislature. It includes governors, mayors and their executive committees. To prevent the over-concentration of power in one place, the executive branch also includes a number of administrative committees which are independent of the governor or mayor, for instance, the board of education, or public safety committee, and election committees.

Local authorities are empowered to manage their own financial affairs, and sources of revenue are guaranteed in a number of ways. Their major revenue sources are local taxes, a local allocation tax, government grants, and local loans. Article 7 of the Local Allocation Tax Law requires local authority estimates (income and expenditure) to be determined by the Cabinet, submitted to the Diet and subsequently published. This allows for verification that the local authority revenues will be sufficient to provide a given level of service and meet legal obligations. If revenue is insufficient, the central government may consider amendments to the local tax system, increase the local allocation tax, or take other action. The arrangement also helps local authorities match their economic and fiscal policies with those of central government and acts as a guideline for fiscal management.

A system of resident registration has also been set up to identify accurately the residents within a local authority's jurisdiction. The register contains consolidated records of all residents within the community, forming a database for voter registration and other matters involving residence. It also makes notification procedures easy for the purposes of national health insurance, taxation, compulsory education, and so on.

Sources of Technical Advice and Recommendations

There are a number of sources for technical advice and recommendations relating to elections.

The Central Election Management Council provides the prefectures, cities, towns and villages with technical advice and recommendations and with directions for the legal and appropriate management of the election of members of the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors based on the PR system.

The minister of public management, home affairs, posts and telecommunications is empowered under the Local Autonomy Law to provide the prefecture, city, town and village electoral management committees with technical advice and recommendations as well as directions for the legal and appropriate management of the election of members of the House of

Representatives on the single-member electoral district system, as well as elections to the House of Councillors.

The prefecture electoral management committees also provide the municipal electoral management committees with technical advice and recommendations.

Efficiency and Costs in Vote Counting

A characteristic of election officials in Japan is their orientation to professionalism and a drive towards constantly increasing efficiency, especially regarding the vote counting.

There are two main reasons for the electoral commissions' efforts in reducing the time for vote counting. The first originated from the extension of the opening hours of polling stations, from 6 pm to 8 pm. Because salaries are higher in the evenings than during the daytime, costs increased when the opening hours of the polling stations were prolonged and electoral commissions have been keen to speed up the counting process.

The second reason is media pressure: the press has demanded timely information disclosure and sought accurate results from the electoral authorities on the day of polling. This has even led to competition among electoral commissions to reduce the time for vote counting. Some electoral commissions have chosen to make public their estimated time for vote counting in each municipality, demonstrating the element of competition. Other electoral commissions have chosen to introduce electronic voting machines, but because of the perceived complexity, cost, and security issues regarding e-voting, the machines have not yet become popular. In a further approach to cost reduction, a number of electoral commissions, such as that in Yokohama city, have instead decided to conduct the vote count on the day after polling, but delay their declaration of results by doing so.