



Risk Management in Elections

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Risk Management in Elections

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Key recommendations

1. The leadership of an electoral management body (EMB) should endorse risk management as a means of strengthening its capacity to deliver credible elections.
2. Where the senior management of an EMB recognizes the potential of risk management but faces limitations due to resources and time, it should take an incremental approach to its institutionalization.
3. EMBs with an advanced understanding of the benefits as well as the capacity to adopt and implement the concept should make a comprehensive effort to embed risk management into all parts of their work.
4. Regardless of whether an EMB is taking the incremental or comprehensive approach to the institutionalization of risk management, it should always start by taking stock of existing organizational resources that can be utilized for this purpose.
5. When institutionalizing risk management, an EMB should ensure that the processes and structures created are sustainable.
6. In addition to internal arrangements, an EMB should create a multi-agency forum for exchange of risk data and coordination of prevention and mitigation efforts.

Executive summary

Elections are complex undertakings. Regardless of where they take place, election management bodies (EMBs) face numerous risks in organizing them. Such risks are linked to the legal, operational, technical, political, security, and other aspects of electoral processes. When risks become certainties, the consequences can be serious in well-established as well as transitional democracies. Risk management has been endorsed by many professions for dealing with complex tasks, and is now emerging as an area of increased importance among EMBs, electoral assistance providers and democracy researchers.

This Policy Paper demonstrates the importance of the institutionalization of risk management in elections. The paper begins by discussing key terminological and methodological aspects of risk management in order to derive election-specific definitions and to point to the key ingredients of risk management in elections. Second, it takes stock of existing electoral risk-management practices, based on the results of a global survey of 87 countries carried out by International IDEA, as well as by pointing to international electoral assistance initiatives which contribute to these efforts.

Drawing on broader experiences of the institutionalization of risk management presented in the case studies as well as election-specific experience accumulated by EMBs through the use of International IDEA's Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERM Tool), two practical options for implementing policy recommendations are identified. The first is an incremental approach to the institutionalization of risk management that will ensure that an EMB is able to take the process 'slowly but surely'. This approach is easy to adopt as it can be designed to start with the utilization of existing resources and to grow at a pace that fits a particular EMB.

The second option is a comprehensive approach, which is appropriate when broader institutional reform is on the agenda and where the resources are available. An 'all-at-once' process will be more complex but, if managed effectively, the result will be achieved much faster and with greater certainty.

EMBs should tailor risk management process in a way that reflects the size and structure of an organization, as well as resources, communication patterns, decision-making routines and so on. Risk-management standards such as those of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) provide useful reference points for ensuring the quality of the risk management process. Experiences from the global survey and case studies demonstrate that risk management designs may differ, even within different categories of EMBs, such as within the independent, governmental, or mixed EMB models defined by International IDEA.

The specifics relating to the different institutional, legal or managerial frameworks as well as the particulars of risk management processes are beyond the scope of this Policy Paper. These should be elaborated in knowledge resources designed to help implement policy decisions. The case studies in the Annex provide useful insights into electoral risk-management practices implemented by EMBs in Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, India, Mexico and South Africa, as well as a comparative overview of the key aspects of the institutionalization of International IDEA's ERM Tool in Kenya, Nepal and Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Electoral management bodies (EMBs) are mandated to direct some of the most complex operations undertaken by democratic societies—the administration of elections. Regardless of the maturity of democratic traditions and the strength of political institutions in a country, the administration of elections is always a challenging mission paved with risks.

Although risk management is becoming increasingly recognized and understood by public and private sector organizations that manage dynamic and complex tasks, the concept has only been sporadically seen as a matter of importance during the administration of elections. This may be due to its novelty in bureaucratic organizations more generally, or to the limited exposure to the concept among international electoral assistance providers and democracy researchers. Nonetheless, there have been three recent promising developments. First, a number of EMBs have either introduced or started to consider the introduction of risk management processes in their work. Second, many EMBs already implement policies that embody some of the key risk management principles even without formally endorsing the concept. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this paper, and in the case studies in the Annex. Third, the users of International IDEA's Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERM Tool) have attested to its utility in the management of electoral risks across diverse countries and electoral contexts.

The overarching purpose of this Policy Paper is to provide comprehensive arguments about the importance of the standardization of risk management in elections. More specifically, it aims to assist electoral policymakers and practitioners, including electoral assistance providers and donors, to gain a better understanding of the concept of risk management in elections, its significance and the options for its effective utilization. In support of this argument, the paper draws on the generic risk-management frameworks and the electoral risk-management practices already implemented by EMBs in both established and transitional democracies.

Electoral risks and consequences

The administration of an election entails enabling citizens to participate, as both voters and candidates, in choosing their political representatives. However, administering such a process is not an easy task because elections are extraordinarily complex undertakings. The complexity of electoral processes can be explained by highlighting their various dimensions. First, there is complexity in the strict timelines, deadlines and chronology in which election activities unfold. Hence, delays in one activity will disturb or create pressures on the implementation of all consequent activities. For example, delayed voter registration would cause a delay in political parties' and candidates' nominations, which in turn would delay or shorten the campaign period.

Second, there is complexity in the geographical scope of the activities being implemented. Some activities, such as procurement, are usually planned and implemented centrally. Others, such as voter information and education, may be planned and implemented centrally or at the regional or local level. Third, there is complexity in terms of the

level of public involvement in specific activities. For example, compared to the voter registration process, which should encompass all eligible citizens, the registration of political parties and candidates will have much lower levels of public participation. The voting operations phase is the most complex, due to the scope of all three dimensions: ensuring that all registered voters are able to cast ballots in designated polling places on a single day.

Due to these complexities associated with organizing elections, it is inevitable that something will go wrong in every election. Legal ambiguities, organizational inconsistencies, overly optimistic operational timelines, lack of funds, missing or misplaced election materials, malfunctioning equipment, electoral malpractice and disputed election results are just some of the daunting scenarios that concern election officials in both established and transitional democracies. In this respect, researchers highlight the weaknesses of electoral processes implemented by transitional as well as established democracies (Norris, Martínez i Coma, Nai and Grömping 2016: 10–11; James 2014: 156–58).

The consequences of contentious elections are often serious. In established democracies, they can harm trust in democratic institutions and processes, and also undermine the credibility of an EMB. For example, technical difficulties led to delays in the announcement of election results in the United States in 2000. Similarly, technical difficulties led to partial re-runs of the 2013 elections in Western Australia (Bourke 2014; Woodley 2014) and the 2010 county council elections in Västra Götaland, Sweden (Simpson 2011; Werme 2011). In conflict-affected societies, such outcomes can lead to political instability and trigger turmoil or violence, which can be directed against vulnerable groups such as women or minorities. The post-election violence in Kenya in 2007–08, in Nigeria in 2011 and in Côte d'Ivoire in 2010–11 are well known cases in which the announcement of election results triggered communal violence and armed conflict, causing loss of life and the destruction of infrastructure (Höglund 2013; Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security 2012: 24–26; Alihodžić 2013: 56–58; Norris, Frank and Martínez i Coma 2015).

While there is generally a wealth of literature on risk-management concepts, as well as on risk management in specific sectors such as industrial activities, finance, security and climate change (see e.g. Ennouri 2013; Razali and Tahir 2011; US Department of Homeland Security 2011; Schinko, Mechler and Hochrainer-Stigler 2016; McNeil, Frey and Embrechts 2005; Bijl and Hamann 2002), there is a shortage of literature on institutionalization of risk management in elections. Rare examples (e.g. International IDEA 2013; Amri and Kie 2016) focus on management of specific risks, for example, in relation to electoral conflict and violence or the use of information and communications technologies in elections.

There is also a wealth of generic risk management principles, guidelines and tools. With respect to principles and guidelines, one of the most authoritative reference point is the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), specifically ISO 31000:2009, which provides the principles, the framework and a process for managing risk (Association of Insurance and Risk Managers, Public Risk Management Association and Institute

of Risk Management 2010: 3). The documentation for ISO 3100: Risk Management emphasizes that the 31000 standard ‘can be used by any organization regardless of its size, activity, or sector . . . to increase the likelihood of achieving objectives, improve the identification of opportunities and threats, and effectively allocate and use resources for risk treatment’ (ISO n.d.). Practical tools for organizations interested in adopting risk management are available in different formats, such as handbooks, databases and software.¹ However, while risk management principles are universal, users of generic tools require knowledge and skills in order to customize them for use in addressing the exact needs of an organization. This is particularly true for electoral processes. It is important, therefore, to reinterpret and customize generic risk-management definitions and concepts specifically for electoral processes.

¹ See e.g. the websites of the Institute of Risk Management, <<https://www.theirm.org/knowledge-and-resources/risk-management-standards>> and Capterra, <<http://www.capterra.com/risk-management-software>>, which provide multiple references to risk-management knowledge and software resources.

2. Terminology and methodological considerations

Terminology

There are many definitions of a risk. Their common denominators relate to the probability of the existence of threat and harm that can be prevented or mitigated. One of the most frequently cited definitions refers to the ‘probability or threat of damage, injury, liability, loss, or any other negative occurrence that is caused by external or internal vulnerabilities, and that may be avoided through preemptive action’ (Skorna, Bode, Baecker, Brocke and Fleish 2010: 465; Schlegel and Trent 2016: 2; Amri and Kie 2016: 1). This generic definition is easily applicable to electoral processes given that:

- *damage, liability and loss* can relate to sensitive and non-sensitive electoral materials such as a voter register, ballot papers, ballot boxes, election results, election equipment and election facilities;
- *injury* can relate to physical or psychological violence directed against electoral actors such as voters, electoral officials, candidates, observers and media actors;
- *external vulnerabilities* can relate to the environmental or social contexts in which elections take place, which may include social and political exclusion, ethnic, religious and political tensions, the presence of non-state armed groups, gender-based violence and environmental hazards; and
- *internal vulnerabilities* can relate to the legal, technical, operational, financial or other risks involved in implementing electoral activities.

Definitions of risk management commonly refer to processes for identifying and analysing threats in order to take preventive and mitigating action. The following definition of electoral risk management is therefore proposed:

Electoral risk management is a systematic effort undertaken to improve knowledge about and situational awareness of both internal and external risks to electoral processes, in order to initiate timely preventive and mitigating action.

It is also essential to distinguish between generic *management* and *risk management* terms as these concepts are sometimes thought to overlap. While it is difficult to give a precise definition of ‘management’ because scholars from different disciplines view and define it differently (Prasad and Gulshan 2011: 5), one generic definition points to ‘the process of decision-making and control over the action of human beings for the purpose obtaining predetermined goals’ (Vance 1958: 3).

Risk management, however, is defined as policies, procedures and practices involved in identification, analysis, assessment, control and avoidance, minimization or elimination of unacceptable risks (Kildow 2014: 31).

Box 2.1. International IDEA's Electoral Risk Management Tool

The Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERM Tool) is designed to empower those who have either the mandate ensure, or an interest in ensuring, that elections are peaceful and credible. Intended users of the tool include electoral management bodies, security-sector agencies, civil society and other state or non-state actors. The tool consists of three modules:

1. Knowledge base: guides on electoral risk factors (internal and external)
2. Analytical instruments: based on geographical information system (GIS) analysis
3. Action points: the prevention and mitigation guide

The three modules are integrated into a single software application in order to promote a 'learn–analyse–take action' approach. Since the ERM Tool was launched as a global public good in October 2013, the software license has been granted to over 140 organizations from more than 60 countries.

Source: International IDEA, <<http://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/electoral-risk-management-tool>>

In simple terms, *managers* are responsible for the organization and coordination of activities. While managers may be involved in the identification of possible risks to their businesses, a *risk manager* has explicit responsibility for initiating the identification of risks, and monitoring and assessing whether activities are being implemented as intended. If deviations are observed due to internal or external vulnerabilities, the risk manager will inform managers about what is happening so that action can be taken in order to avoid or minimize negative impacts.

Methodological considerations

There are many ways to structure risk-management processes in an organization. Even the simplest Internet search yields many relevant papers, organizational charts, videos and documents on risk management. The way in which risk-management processes and structures are designed is typically contingent on the type of organization, its size, area of work, decision-making processes and experiences.

The common denominators in most risk-management systems are (a) risk identification, (b) risk measurement, (c) reporting and (d) decision-making. These four elements also constitute the building blocks of International IDEA's ERM Tool (see Box 2.1) which is the only instrument specifically developed to assist with the management of electoral risks. Experiences gained through the use of the ERM Tool by EMBs worldwide provide insightful methodological orientation points. The four elements are explained in the following subsections.

Step 1: Risk identification

Risk identification entails systematic consideration of the possible scenarios that could have a negative impact on achieving organizational goals. This process should be led

by risk-management experts but should also include managers and other relevant stakeholders. Electoral risks can materialize due to the presence of underlying risk factors. For example, legal risks might materialize if the legal framework for the conduct of elections is ambiguous, flawed or contested by electoral actors. Technical risks might materialize if EMB personnel are not properly trained in the technical procedures, or if the technologies used in the electoral process fail. Some risks may affect specific groups, such as women and marginalized groups.

With respect to risk identification, International IDEA has classified and described 26 internal and 10 external risk factors that might trigger or contribute to triggering election-related violence. The Guide on Internal Factors (Alihodžić and Asplund 2013a) points to factors which are election-specific and do not exist outside of the electoral context. They relate to risks surrounding electoral actors, events, practices and materials across the electoral cycle. The Guide on External Factors (Alihodžić and Uribe Burcher 2013), however, points to factors that originate and exist outside the electoral context. They include exogenous conditions that can negatively influence electoral processes. The list of internal and external factors is presented in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Internal and external risk factors related to electoral processes

Internal risk factors*	External risk factors
1. Contested electoral legal framework	1. Socio-economic conditions
2. Poor electoral planning and management	2. Social and political exclusions
3. Poor training and education	3. Changing power dynamics
4. Inadequate electoral dispute resolution	4. Gender-based discrimination and violence
5. Troubled voter and party registration	5. Presence of non-state armed actors
6. Heated electoral campaign	6. Presence of organized crime
7. Problematic voting operations	7. Grievances relating to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes
8. Contested election results	8. Human rights violations
	9. Unethical media conduct
	10. Environmental hazards

* These are clusters; the full list expands to 26 internal factors

Sources: Alihodžić, S. and Asplund, E., *The Guide on Factors of Election-related Violence Internal to Electoral Processes* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2013a); and Alihodžić, S. and Uribe Burcher, C., *The Guide on Factors of Election-related Violence External to Electoral Processes* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2013)

Users of International IDEA's ERM Tool are encouraged to organize multi-stakeholder workshops and use above-mentioned guides when identifying risks to electoral processes

in a given country and/or election. Furthermore, these two guides are incorporated into the ERM Tool's digital library. This enables users to modify existing factors and generate and describe new factors so that the knowledge resources can better reflect local terminologies and specifics.

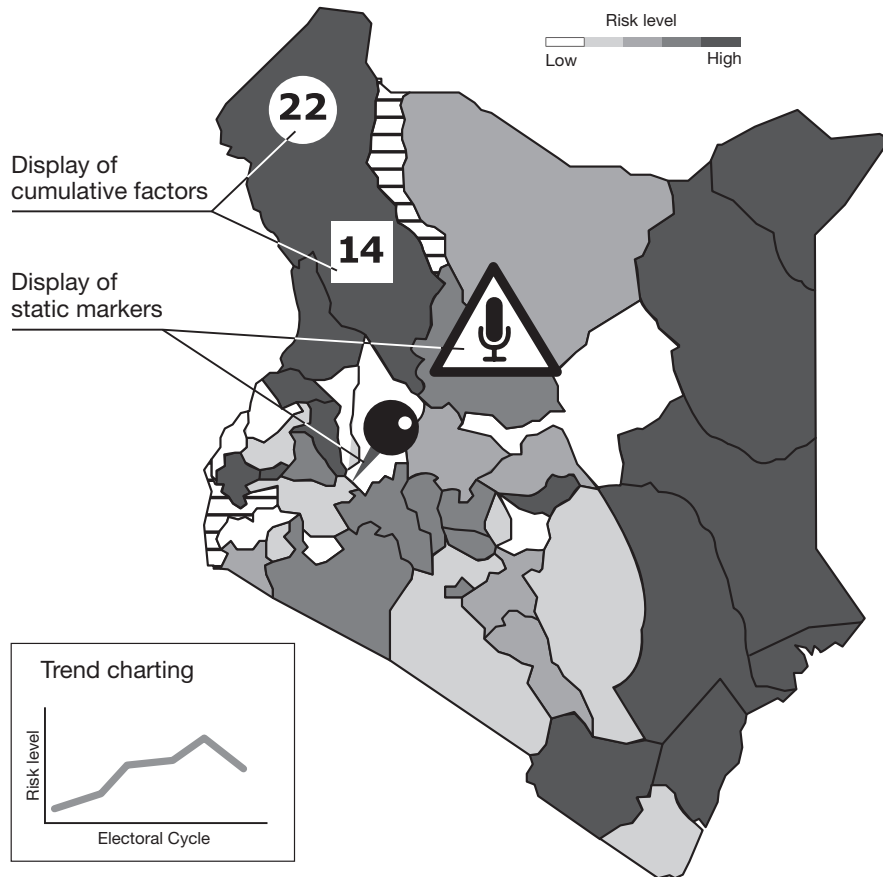
Step 2: Risk measurement and analysis

Risk measurement relates to data collection and analysis. While risk identification is based on making an educated assumption about what might go wrong—as well as where and when it might do so—risk measurement entails collecting evidence (data) that will indicate early on whether the hypothesized problems are materializing. In elections, risk measurement requires the creation of an operational plan for data collection and analysis throughout the entire electoral cycle. In particular, it may be useful to collect sex-disaggregated data, as this is a cost-effective way to address many electoral risks, including low participation, and prevent electoral violence (Bardall 2013, 2015). Although data collection plans can become highly complex, there is no alternative to systematic data collection and analysis when it comes to detecting problems.

International IDEA's ERM Tool includes several features specifically devised to enable the user to establish methodological rigor in the design and implementation of data collection and analysis. Thus, observable indicators and possible data collection and analysis methods are defined for each risk factors. Also, the ERM Tool's software includes pre-packed data collection questionnaires. Furthermore, the tool utilizes innovative information communication technologies (ICTs), including the geographic information system (GIS) for data management, analysis and visualization. Users can customize scales for measuring risk levels, upload data in various formats into the unified database, and visualize the state of risks in the form of colour codes, numerical values and static markers displayed on a geographical map, or by charting trends. Figure 2.1 shows a mock-up example of such a map, and offers an insight into the range of mapping and charting features available.

Geographical risk mapping is useful for communicating complex risk concepts in a simple and understandable way. However, if the data are collected in successive rounds, geographical colour-coding cannot provide an insight into changing trends. *Trend charting* is useful in providing analytical outputs about the dynamic factors whose risk properties may frequently change. Therefore, geographical risk maps and trend charts complement each other well. *Geographical static markers* are used for presenting the exact location of an event or incident. The density of static markers in a region will be indicative of the risk levels. Finally, *numerical figures* presented on geographical maps allow presentation and reading of a very exact data, such as for example number of complaints (Alihodžić 2013: 61–62).

Figure 2.1. Example of a colour-coded map with static markers and numerical data



Source: Alihodžić, S., 'Electoral violence early warning and infrastructures for peace', *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 7/3 (2013), pp. 54–69.

Step 3: Reporting

Reporting is related to informing managers about the issues that require their attention and action. Reporting procedures may differ from one organization to another. With respect to addressing risk in elections, reports can be shared with the EMB leadership, as well as with senior managers in the secretariat, and regional and field offices. A simple rule of thumb might be to share information with all those who have a mandate or the capacity to take preventive action or to mitigate negative impacts. It is often the case in elections that external stakeholders, such as security-sector agencies, are better positioned to address external threats. Reporting on electoral risks might sometimes therefore extend beyond the EMB structure.

The ERM Tool methodology promotes creation and dissemination of risk alerts as a way of enhancing the effective reporting about electoral risks within an EMB. The value of effective risk alerts is in conveying complex information related to electoral risks in a simple and timely manner, while reinforcing users' confidence in the objectivity and thoroughness of the method applied to generate these materials. Risk alerts are usually only few pages long. This implies that, in addition to being easy to understand, they are relatively easy and quick to generate following the receipt of data. Finally, risk maps include legends and information about the data sources, short analytical narrative and prevention and mitigation options for decision-makers' considerations.

In terms of reporting, the feedback on decisions and actions taken with respect to each risk alert is critical in enabling institutional learning and enhancement of the effectiveness of risk management processes and measures taken. Accordingly, the ERM Tool integrates a Risk and Action Register (RAR) that captures details related to specific risk alerts. These include the type of risk, affected regions and phase of the electoral cycle, as well as actions taken and results achieved. Finally, it allows users to distinguish between risk alerts which are active and cases which are closed.

Step 4: Decision making

Decision making relates to the discussions, consultations and coordination through which concrete actions are identified and initiated. The aim is to act promptly and to focus attention and resources on critical areas. The use of reports will help to create the situational awareness needed for informed, tailored and conflict-sensitive decisions that weigh feasible alternatives against one another. EMBs can do little to eliminate structural (external) factors, such as social grievances or the presence of organized crime, which might affect electoral processes. It is therefore good practice in elections to create a multi-agency forum composed of actors capable of coordinating preventive and mitigating action. For example, International IDEA (Alihodžić and Asplund 2013b) presents approximately 100 action points for collaboration between state and non-state actors in addressing electoral risks across the electoral cycle.

The ERM Tool's method takes into account that prevention and mitigation efforts can take different forms and include different actors. It introduces a three-layered approach for the prevention and mitigation of electoral risks, in particular those relevant to election-related violence. The three layers refer to:

1. *Improved electoral management and justice.* This layer points to specific electoral planning, implementation and dispute resolution strategies that can be used by EMBs and electoral dispute-resolution bodies to avoid controversies and technical flaws, in order to minimize the potential for outbreaks of violence.
2. *Improved electoral security.* This layer points to specific electoral security measures which can be undertaken by security sector agencies throughout the electoral cycle to protect electoral actors, events, facilities and materials from violence.

3. *Improved infrastructure for peace.* This layer points to putting in place standing capabilities for peacebuilding and prevention from the local to the national level, which can employ strategies to address conflict drivers, and coordinate and mobilize state and non-state actors, civil society organizations (CSOs), traditional and religious leaders, reputable individuals and other organizations and individuals with the capacity to contribute to preventing and defusing election-related tensions.

It has been argued that all organizations have ‘some form of risk management activities in place, but these are often ad hoc, informal and uncoordinated and focused on operational or compliance-related risks, and fail to focus systematically on strategic and emerging risks, which are most likely to affect an organization’s success’ (Frigo and Anderson, 2011: iii). This may also be true for EMBs. Therefore, efforts to promote the standardization of electoral risk management should first seek to gain an understanding of the extent to which this concept is already present in the work of EMBs.

3. The state of risk management in elections worldwide

In 2014 International IDEA conducted a survey of 87 countries to find out whether the EMBs in these countries had institutionalized procedures and tools for risk management, as well as which procedures and tools were being used, and whether there was a risk-management practice or a tool that was not formally institutionalized but contributed to managing electoral risks.

The survey found that 18 countries had some kind of formal risk management solutions or processes in place; 34 countries made use of practices which are not necessarily formally considered or named as risk-management tools but which nevertheless produce relevant outcomes; and 35 countries did not make use of any kind of risk-management tool. It should be noted that the information in the following sections reflect respondents' views on what constitutes risk management, which in some cases does not correspond to the definition of risk management outlined in this paper.

The following information is derived from the survey. Where available, additional references are provided.

Formal risk-management solutions

Formal risk-management solutions can be divided into two categories:

1. *Comprehensive risk-management solutions.* These require the adoption of a wide-ranging risk management framework. These may be either external or internal solutions.
2. *Partial risk-management solutions.* These involve tools and procedures applied to specific areas of an EMB's work.

Comprehensive risk-management solutions

Comprehensive risk-management solutions involve tools and procedures applied to all areas of an EMB's work. Examples of comprehensive external risk-management solutions include the adoption of ISO risk management standards in Armenia and Moldova (Republic of Moldova Central Election Commission 2014); the adoption of risk-management procedures by the governments of Canada (see Annex), Colombia (Secretaría de Gestión de Riesgos 2014), and Spain; and the adoption of International IDEA's ERM Tool in Kenya and Nigeria (see Annex). Examples of internal solutions include those devised by EMBs in Costa Rica, New Zealand, Norway and South Africa.

Elections Canada is using the Federal Government Integrated Risk Management Framework (Government of Canada 2013), while Colombia applies the Internal Standard Control Mechanism (Modelo Estándar de Control Interno, MECI) (Secretaría Distrital de Hacienda 2016). The Supreme Tribunal of Elections in Costa Rica has developed a 'Crisis Management Handbook' to address potential risks and emergency situations which includes the protocols that have to be followed by the response team in regard to strategic communication and policy issues.

In New Zealand, the Electoral Commission has instituted a risk-management framework (Chief Electoral Office New Zealand n.d. :16) that is used to identify, analyse and monitor risks relating to projects, electoral events and corporate affairs. Project-related risks are reported to the management team fortnightly. Operational, event and corporate risk is reported through to the management team weekly, and to each meeting of the Board of the Electoral Commission.

In Norway, tools devised and customized include communication plans, business continuity plans (designed to prevent interruptions of operations), and the CIM Crisis Management System (One Voice n.d.).

Partial risk-management solutions

Partial risk-management solutions involve tools and procedures applied to specific areas of an EMB's work. For example, risk management is applied to the compilation of election results in Denmark. In addition, different municipalities may have their own individual risk-management strategies. Partial risk-management solutions can also be seen in the use of ICTs in Estonia, where a special IT-centred risk-management system is in use (Kalvet 2009), and in the security aspects of electoral processes in Guatemala (ACE Electoral Knowledge Network n.d.), where contingency and security plans are prepared for each area and emergency. A committee is also in permanent contact with the government's security and aid agencies, hence contributing to emergency response during electoral process in Guatemala.

Risk management can also be seen in the creation of crisis-management plans in Georgia (Election Administration of Georgia 2016) and early warning systems in Madagascar, where training of mediators is conducted so that they can serve as the interface between the EMB and voters (United Nations Development Programme 2013). In Tanzania, an EMB is using the Logistic Management System and the Communication and Incident Management System (National Electoral Commission of Tanzania 2011), while in the United Arab Emirates the risk-management plan focuses on the breakdowns of electronic voting machines (Al-Khouri 2012).

Practices contributing to risk management in elections

Practices contributing to risk management—defined in the survey as procedures that are 'not formally institutionalized, but contributing to electoral risk management in your organization'—are in use in 35 of the countries surveyed. Stakeholders' meetings between EMBs, political parties, CSOs, security agencies, and so on, have been used in many countries in different forms. For example, political party liaison committees are formed in Botswana (Mokgosi 2012: 40, 42, 48) and Malawi (UN Development Programme, Liaison committee fostering peace ahead of elections in Malawi n.d.). In Benin, ad-hoc meetings take place between EMBs and state security agencies throughout the election period (i.e. during the election campaign, voting and the announcement of results).

In Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Mozambique, consultative forums with political parties and other electoral stakeholders are organized by the EMB. In Burundi, a multi-stakeholder CSO-led GIS platform monitors electoral violence (Crouzel 2014: 11). In Cameroon, ad hoc consultative meetings with all stakeholders at the national, provincial and local levels are organized as part of electoral risk-management efforts. In Djibouti, coordination with other election stakeholders is maintained, while the efforts of the EMB in Ethiopia focus on promotion of the political party code of conduct (Colloquium on African Elections 2009).

In Sierra Leone, District Monitoring Committees (DMCs) are organized to monitor events on the ground and participate in conflict mediation (Jackson 2013). In Zambia, electoral risk-management mechanisms include political party liaison committees (district and national); conflict-management committees (district and national); voter education and publicity; and checks and controls in respect of elections (Electoral Commission of Zambia 2016). In Zimbabwe, strategies and procedures reported as mechanisms for risk management include multiparty liaison committees and codes of conduct (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission n.d.).

ICT-related procedures have been used in Albania with regards to database and website security, in Gabon relating to biometric registration, and in Hungary and Lithuania in relation to the quality assurance of electoral IT systems. Specific training for EMB staff has been used to build risk-management capacity in Burundi, where EMB staff at all levels received training on electoral dispute resolution (Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante Burundi 2014).

Meanwhile, training on electoral violence and early warning has been implemented in Chad, Chile, Ethiopia and Swaziland. In Lithuania, the Central Election Commission (CEC) publishes informative posters describing potentially risky electoral situations. The recent example from Lithuania includes the campaign to eliminate voter bribery and other corruption cases in elections (CEC of Lithuania n.d.).

Operational planning has been used in Ecuador and Latvia, where contingency plans for places with no electricity are put in place. In Lebanon, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, which is responsible for organizing elections, received support from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in designing security plans during elections (IFES 2010). In Yemen, the British Department for International Development (DFID) provided financial assistance for risk-based elections security planning (Foreign and Commonwealth Office 2015).

International IDEA's ERM Tool is used in Bosnia and Herzegovina (International IDEA 2013), Libya (Zayid 2015) and Tunisia (International IDEA 2014). Austria manages risks in elections by arranging meetings with its subordinate EMBs, through continuous improvement of forms, assessment of costs, timeframes, workflow and workload. Biometric registration is highlighted as a risk-management tool in Gabon, while Mauritania relies on internal regulations governing the structure and composition of the EMB. Mauritius has carried out an evaluation process and Uruguay has reacted 'as problems arise'.

Finally, surveyors reported 35 countries where the EMB did not implement any risk management practices at the time.²

International initiatives contributing to risk management in elections

It is indicative from the survey findings that, in addition to devising internal risk-management solutions, EMBs often adopt practices and tools offered by international assistance providers. In addition to International IDEA's ERM Tool, it is worth mentioning other endeavours which could facilitate easier institutionalization of risk management in elections. A number of international electoral assistance providers and observers, such as the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), IFES, International IDEA, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe—Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), the Organization of American States (OAS), The Carter Center, the UN Department of Political Affairs (UNDPA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), as well as researchers in the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP), have developed methodologies and tools for improved collection and analysis of elections-related data some of which are focused on specific electoral risks. This list is not exclusive.

For example, The Carter Center's ELMO (ELectional MOnitoring) system is an open-source data collection and reporting system for election monitors (The Carter Center n.d.). IFES' electoral integrity portfolio (IFES n.d.) promotes the use of rigorous electoral integrity assessments, while its Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) methodology provides a framework for systematic information gathering, standards for verification, and analysis of tensions and community indicators (IFES n.d.). The EIP contributes to the development of knowledge resources, analytical frameworks, and tools for assessing, observing, analysing, and advancing the quality of elections (Norris 2014; Norris, Elklit and Reynolds 2014; Martínez i Coma and Frank 2014; Norris, Martínez i Coma, Nai and Grömping 2016). In addition to promoting debate on electoral integrity issues in Africa, EISA provides support and methodological guidance to EMBs and election observation efforts (EISA n.d.). The NDI (2014) and OSCE/ODIHR (2010) have advanced methods and instruments for monitoring and observing electoral processes.

The Open Society Institute for West Africa (OSIWA) has developed the Election Situation Room (ESR) methodology for receiving and consolidating election data collected by civil society organizations. Monitors use text messaging to share data with an online mapping platform (International IDEA 2015). The UNDPA (2016, 10–13, 18–19) and UNDP (2007, 16–20) provide guidelines for assessment of risks of election-related violence and risks to electoral assistance programming, respectively. Some products are the result of partnerships. Examples include ISO quality-management standards devised through international collaboration to ensure high standards of

² More information about the survey is available on request (email: elections@idea.int).

organization, efficiency and management throughout the electoral cycle (OAS 2014). Another example is the Secure and Fair Elections (SAFE) Curriculum (International IDEA/UNDP/EIP 2015).

Products and systems such as those outlined above are at the heart of any risk-management process. An improved understanding of this concept and enhanced methodological rigour in data collection will help EMBs in their adoption of risk-management practices.

The extent to which risk management is already utilized by EMBs suggests that the concept is gaining ground. However, cases in which institutionalization efforts are comprehensive are still rare. Instead, risk management is often narrowly focused or implemented under the umbrella of conflict and violence prevention. The existence of generic risk-management frameworks, authentic EMB experiences (see Annex A) and those gathered through the implementation of International IDEA's ERM Tool illuminate the substance and scope of risk management in elections more broadly. Options for the institutionalization of risk-management processes are explored and elaborated in the following chapter.

4. Implementation options

Frigo and Anderson (2011: iii) identify seven generic 'keys to success' that have proved valuable in successful enterprise risk management initiatives, namely:

1. support from the top of an organization;
2. using incremental steps;
3. focusing initially on a small number of top risks;
4. leverage of existing resources;
5. building on existing risk-management activities;
6. embedding risk management into the business fabric of the organization; and
7. ongoing updates and continuing education for directors and senior management.

Based on the generic literature, good practices in elections and expertise accumulated through the implementation of the ERM Tool in several countries, two approaches to the introduction of risk management in EMBs have been identified: an incremental approach and a comprehensive approach.

Incremental approach

An incremental approach to the institutionalization of risk management may be appropriate in contexts where senior management has recognized the potential of the concept but faces limitations in terms of the resources and time available to embed it within the organization. The incremental approach will give an EMB the flexibility to choose specific areas where risk management will be applied. These may be the issues of greatest importance for an organization or areas where the impact of risk management is most likely to deliver the intended results. This limiting of scope will allow an EMB to test and understand different options, such as the best way to build the capacity of staff or how to alter institutional structures to ensure the cost-effectiveness of risk-management processes before the concept is applied across the whole organization. In this respect, incremental steps focusing initially on a smaller number of risks and leveraging in existing resources and processes would be appropriate.

A number of challenges to the successful implementation of an incremental approach have been identified. First, institutionalization efforts might be scrapped with a change in EMB leadership, as the new managers might lack an understanding of (or a feeling of ownership or responsibility for) ongoing efforts. Second, the effort may be put on hold due to emerging financial restrictions in a period of budgetary turmoil, and not be picked up again. Third, partial efforts might lead to partial results, which in the organization of elections where all activities are interconnected could make it difficult to objectively evaluate the results.

Comprehensive approach

A comprehensive approach to the institutionalization of risk management is a demanding exercise. The ambition to accomplish ‘everything at once’ will require the undivided attention of and commitment from senior and middle management, sufficient and sustainable resources for new staff and their operating costs, the existence of expert advisory support, usually by the engagement of external consultants, and sufficient time for systematic capacity building across the organization.

Adopting a comprehensive approach to risk management in elections also involves a number of key challenges. First, in deciding to endorse risk management, the EMB leadership might underestimate the institutional commitment needed to implement a comprehensive approach and therefore not devote sufficient resources to its realization. Second, the operationalization of risk management within an EMB could be delegated to a person or team with a limited mandate to engage with and ensure the compliance of all relevant managers and departments. Third, recruited experts, such as risk-management consultants or newly employed staff, may have a limited understanding of the specifics of an EMB’s core business, and hence struggle to design a model that is an easy fit with the organization. Fourth, the risk-management system could introduce another layer of bureaucratic complexity to the work of the EMB without demonstrating its cost-effectiveness by preventing risks from materializing.

Given the level of organizational commitment required, the decision to endorse a comprehensive approach will often be linked to a broader reform or wider capacity-building efforts. For example, the comprehensive approach might be appropriate if an EMB is undergoing restructuring initiated internally or exists under the umbrella of a broader bureaucratic reform in the country. Furthermore, this approach might be feasible for EMBs that receive international electoral assistance through which external funding and expertise is provided. In such cases, the long-term sustainability of risk-management processes, after external resources and expertise are removed, would need to be considered.

An incremental or comprehensive option may therefore be more preferable under different circumstances (see Table 4.1). During the initial decision-making related to the institutionalization of risk management within an organization, both approaches should be considered and their benefits assessed by the policymakers in the EMB, electoral assistance providers and development organization. An exhaustive mapping of existing resources for data collection and analysis should be undertaken before the strategy is put in place.

Table 4.1. Incremental and comprehensive approaches to the introduction of risk management in electoral management bodies

Key factors	Incremental approach	Comprehensive approach
Initiative	The senior management of an EMB explores ways to improve the quality of the work of the organization	<p>The senior management of an EMB has an advanced understanding of the concept</p> <p>An EMB is undergoing a broader internal reform process</p> <p>There is a wider government initiative to institutionalize risk management in state institutions</p> <p>A partnership with international electoral assistance providers offers such capacity building projects</p>
Resources	Focus on maximizing the use of existing human and financial resources	Human and financial resources are included in the core business
Time	Medium- to long-term efforts stretching over more than one electoral cycle	Short-term effort implemented within a set timeframe, ideally in the post-election period
Learning patterns	<p>A combination of internal trial and error efforts</p> <p>Limited external technical and advisory support</p>	External consultants are engaged in planning, monitoring and evaluating in order to make recommendations on requirements and improvements

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The concept of risk management is still not widely used by electoral management bodies, and is not widely promoted by international electoral-assistance providers and donors, or debated among researchers. Nonetheless, those EMBs that have built in and implemented some aspects of risk management, either through internal initiatives or external influences, remain dedicated to it. This is most evident in their commitment to invest funds in a long-term process of building risk-management capacity. Therefore, when it comes to the standardization of risk management in elections, the question is not if but when most EMBs will formalize such processes.

However, the lack of comparative knowledge, the complex mandate and the resources required mean that the process of embracing risk management within an institution such as an EMB is not an easy one. Therefore, the primary objective of this Policy Paper has been to provide a basic theoretical understanding of the concept, as well as comparative references and suggestions on policy options that will help EMBs adopt risk management in the way that is most effective for them.

It is also anticipated that the paper will galvanize interest from electoral-assistance providers, development organizations and researchers at the country, regional and global levels. This would help to advance the concept through better coordination of knowledge creation while also offering targeted expertise and resources.

An informed policy decision by the EMB leadership will be an important milestone in the institutionalization of risk management. However, the implementation process needs to be tailored to an EMB's institutional, legal and managerial arrangements. The mechanics of key technical processes, such as risk identification, data collection, communication and decision making, and ensuring gender sensitivity, will require in-depth consideration. These are beyond the scope of this paper and should be elaborated in specific knowledge resources designed to help with the operationalization of the respective policy decisions.

Recommendations

This Policy Paper recommends the standardization of risk management in elections. Key recommendations are:

- 1. The leadership of an EMB should endorse risk management as a means of strengthening its capacity to deliver credible elections.**

Electoral commissioners and senior managers often encounter situations in which important decisions must be made under pressure. In these circumstances, good situational awareness and an understanding of the risks associated with different policy options and operational decisions will be an asset. Commissioners and senior managers should therefore be the main initiators and advocates of the institutionalization of risk management within their organization.

2. **Where the senior management of an EMB recognizes the potential of risk management but faces limitations due to resources and time, it should take an incremental approach to its institutionalization.**

Risk management is a complex process that requires sufficient resources and methodological rigour. If an EMB suffers from budget restrictions, or if there is a lack of understanding of the costs and benefits of risk management, it may make the organization's leaders hesitant. The challenge may be even greater if this institutionalization commences during the busy period in which preparations for elections are ongoing. This is primarily due to the fact that the monitoring and analysis of a large number of risk factors can require more attention and resources than an EMB is able to commit at the time. Taking an incremental approach will provide sufficient time for the trialling of different concepts, and for institutional learning, thereby increasing the likelihood of success. Essentially, such an approach will help demonstrate, within a reasonable timeframe, the efficiency and strategic benefits that risk management brings to an organization.

3. **EMBs with an advanced understanding of the benefits of risk management, as well as the capacity to adopt and implement the concept, should make a comprehensive effort to embed risk management into all parts of its work.**

Although more demanding, some EMBs may benefit from taking a comprehensive approach to the institutionalization of risk-management practices. This may be particularly relevant in cases where the senior management of an EMB has an advanced understanding of the benefits of the concept and the capacity to adopt and implement it. This approach may also be suitable if an EMB is undergoing an internal reform process as a result of which its institutional structure is altered and resources are reorganized.

4. **Regardless of whether an EMB is taking the incremental or comprehensive approach to the institutionalization of risk management, it should always start by taking stock of existing organizational resources that can be utilized for this purpose.**

Experiences and the survey have both shown how many EMBs successfully introduce risk management by leveraging existing resources. EMBs should be creative in their use of existing resources such as staff, skills, ICT tools, and communication and data collection routines. In addition, an EMB will often be in a position to utilize partnerships and networks with other state and non-state actors for collecting risk data and implementing specific prevention and mitigation activities.

5. When institutionalizing risk management, an EMB should ensure that the processes and structures created are sustainable.

The complexity of electoral operations and organizational structures means that adding risk-management roles to existing staff responsibilities will need to be designed and implemented carefully. A stand-alone ERM unit would be able to take on the bulk of the risk-management work and ensure that risk-management duties for other staff remain light and do not reduce their capacity to deliver the core business. In addition, continued education for directors and senior managers is vital.

6. In addition to internal arrangements, an EMB should create and maintain a multi-agency forum for exchange of risk data and coordination of prevention and mitigation efforts.

Not all risks encountered by an EMB can be prevented and mitigated through internal arrangements or unilateral actions. This is because many aspects of electoral processes are vulnerable to external risks. For example, risks may derive from social and political exclusions, gender-based discrimination and violence, environmental hazards, unethical media reporting and so on. A formal collaboration with other state and non-state actors through a multi-agency forum, for example involving security-sector agencies and civil society organizations, will allow effective and holistic risk analysis and coordination of prevention and mitigation efforts.

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Annex A. Case Studies

Case Study 1

Electoral risk management: an Australian perspective

Kevin Kitson, Australian Electoral Commission

Australia is a prosperous and stable society with a well-established democracy and a strong tradition of peaceful electoral participation. It has a population of around 24 million and an eligible voting population of 16 million. Enrolment and voting are compulsory but only 15 million people are enrolled. A government term is three years, which is one of the shortest electoral cycles in the world.

Electoral risk in Australia: a historical perspective

In a context of broad social cohesion and an absence of major social anomie, with few socio-economic incentives to disrupt voting, generally uncontested results and a perception of only marginal distinction between the primary political contestants, it is perhaps no surprise that Australia has been able to conduct credible elections with only minor incidents. Fraud in Australia occurs as a result of individuals casting more than one vote, but there is no record of ballot box stuffing or other examples of coordinated interference with ballot papers. Multiple voting occurs in error: at each election, a number of elderly voters inadvertently cast more than one vote having forgotten that they had previously voted early or by post.

There are also instances of deliberate multiple voting, typically two or three times, where the primary reason appears to be mischief rather than any endeavour to disturb the legitimate outcome of the election. In no instance where more serious voting fraud has been committed—the most notable example being someone who voted 14 times—has there been any potential for the additional votes to affect the primary outcome. Enrolment fraud—claiming an entitlement in a different area to the one in which a voter is genuinely entitled—is rare, although at the 2013 election in one electoral division some 27 people were found to have falsely claimed entitlement as part of what appears to have been a concerted effort to provide extra support for a particular candidate.

With no history of violence and only rare instances of minor physical altercations between party political workers, typically over the placement of posters, Australian elections are characterized by an absence of any police let alone military presence. Disputes occur, mostly during vote counting scrutiny processes, but they are generally settled by agreement between scrutineers and polling officials. Where that does not occur, matters can be settled through court challenges but even they are rare. While

the AEC has not directly used the International IDEA tool, it does follow a path that largely mirrors the structure of the internal and external factors proposed in the model.

A changing picture emerges

Australia faces an election risk management challenge that is driven essentially by external factors. Its national security settings are centrally determined by the primary national security agency. In 2013 the agency assessed the threat level as medium; but in early 2014 it adjusted that rating to high, reflecting the assessed level of intention to damage Australian interests, with Australia's alignment with the United States and its role in conflicts in the Middle East perceived to be the motivating factors.

Australia has been fortunate, thus far, in having experienced only isolated incidents of extremist-inspired violence. The impact of those incidents on election security is difficult to estimate but there is no known threat to the next major electoral event in Australia. Nonetheless, given that Australia's history of terror-related incidents is characterized by 'lone wolf' attacks, there is little in the standard methodology of threat identification to assist with predicting and mitigating the risks to an election event. Factors that might tip such extremists from contemplation to taking action are most likely to occur in geographical, political or socio-economic settings external to Australia.

The AEC approach to addressing electoral risks

In exploring the internal factors related to electoral security, the AEC has focused on two primary threat circumstances: the threat to voters and officials during the voting period and the threat to the security of completed ballot papers in the post-polling period. The AEC's consideration of mitigation options has been set against the following expected conditions: a zero to low visibility of police in the vicinity of polling places to maintain the traditional atmosphere around Australian elections and the inability to 'target harden' most of the places used as polling places.

Legislation

The primary legislative instrument for elections in Australia, crafted in 1918 with most significant amendments occurring in 1984, does not contemplate violent disturbance and thus does not make provision for AEC action in the event of such disruption. The AEC is currently revising senior management guidelines for the suspension and resumption of polling in the event of a major violent event at a polling place.

Planning and preparation

The AEC has embarked on a rigorous overhaul of its election risk planning framework, engaging much earlier and at more senior levels with Australia's broad intelligence and

security community. Two by-elections have given the AEC an opportunity to test new approaches and to refine procedures and training. Independently, the AEC has engaged specialist security risk consultants to carry out an independent assessment.

Training and information

Current AEC training for its temporary workforce of some 70,000 officials deals only lightly with the issue of how to respond to an incident at a polling place. In the past, an incident was most likely to take the form of a minor injury to a voter or polling official. The AEC is still developing training materials to alert officials to the more serious context without overwhelming them with diverse scenarios that could distract from the primary task.

Registration of voters and candidates

The greatest challenge in voter registration for the AEC is in encouraging citizens to comply with their civic obligation to enrol and vote. Requirements for political registration are designed to allow broad participation so there are few constraints on eligibility to contest. This raises the prospect of potentially divisive political contestants entering the field, with concomitant risk issues for peaceful campaigning.

Campaigning

With qualification for entry to political contests unconstrained by restrictive criteria and not characterized by the active exclusion of any groups or sectors, Australian elections are open to all. This creates the potential for the campaigns for some contestants to promote divisive or polarized views, but there is no substantial precedent for such campaigns to result in voter intimidation let alone violence. History, however, is an unreliable guide to the future and the expanded availability of multiple channels of social media makes estimation of the potential for inflammatory campaigning more difficult and presents similar problems for real time monitoring.

Voting operations

In 2013, at a recount of the Upper House (Senate) papers for the state of Western Australia (WA), a total of 1370 ballot papers were lost and never recovered. The AEC does not know whether they were misplaced, stolen or inadvertently destroyed. Despite being a very small proportion of the overall papers (1.5m) for the WA senate and despite the fact that, from the first count, there was no dispute about the allocation of the votes, the AEC itself petitioned the Court of Disputed Returns to declare void the entire Senate election for WA. The rerun cost aud 23m and incalculable damage to the reputation of the AEC.

Verification of results

In tallying results on election night, AEC staff enter data through the operation of some 16 million keystrokes. Despite various layers of verification, transposition errors do occur. While they are generally rectified quickly, the opportunity exists for those who would detract from the process to claim more nefarious motivation than simple error. The AEC's response following some incidents in 2013 will be to publicly self-identify those errors in as close to real time as possible. Where disputes remain unresolved, political contestants have the right to petition the High Court, sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns, to seek a review of process.

Conclusion

Australia's federal elections have been, for the most part, distinguished by the absence of many of the challenges to free, fair and transparent elections. With robust and tested legislation, and in the prevailing societal conditions, many of the threats to public confidence in elections in Australia can be managed by rigorous adherence to process and procedure, allied with transparency when errors are detected. Nonetheless, the wider security environment in Australia could, perhaps for the first time, have a heavy impact on public engagement with the process. Polling places—and indeed much of the infrastructure around the AEC—are, in the language of counterterrorism, soft targets. Under current conditions, the Australian community is unlikely to react positively to the advent of a more visible security presence around polling places. The AEC and its partner agencies in the Australian security and law enforcement communities will therefore need to develop a fresh partnership to deliver a proportionate response.

Case Study 2

Electoral risk management practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Irena Hadžiabdić, Central Election Commission, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina are characterized by a high degree of polarization of political parties on elementary issues, such as the organization and future of the country, and a homogenization of voters along ethnic lines. In this context, the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina is mandated to implement the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Law on Political Party Financing and specific parts of the Law on the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition, in accordance with article 13 of the Law on the Agency for the Prevention and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption, the CEC assesses the eligibility of candidates for Director and Deputy Director of the Agency.

Assessment and analysis of electoral risks in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The CEC gained its initial experience in electoral risk management (ERM) through its piloting and use of International IDEA's ERM Tool. During the pilot, data collection and analysis were focused on three topics: support for the introduction of electronic voting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, confidence in the administration of elections and confidence in the counting process. Findings allowed the CEC to make informed decisions with respect to reform processes, and to build the confidence of voters and political parties in the work of election administration and electoral processes more generally by focusing special efforts on regions where the results revealed problems.

At the formal end of the pilot project, the CEC continued to use the tool to analyse electoral processes with the aim of detecting weaknesses and areas for improvement. Accordingly, the ERM Tool was used in the post-election period to evaluate the performance of the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), and analyse invalid ballots and requests for recounts. The evaluation of the MECs' work included analyses of human resource capacity, financing, knowledge of electoral rules, respect for deadlines and cooperation with the CEC. The results showed that the performance of three MECs was assessed as weak, 12 as satisfactory and 46 as good, while 80 MECs were evaluated as excellent.

The main risk factors in 2014 were associated with natural disasters. Following heavy rain in May 2014, 54 of the 143 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were affected by flooding or landslides. In addition, 183 polling station locations were flooded and 42,544 residents had to be evacuated, 25,353 of whom were persons with

voting rights.³ In some cities or municipalities, the floods destroyed infrastructure and premises as well as equipment, including ballot boxes.

The CEC used the ERM Tool to collect information from the MECs about flooded polling stations, landslides, evacuated populations and the degree of damage caused. The mapped information helped the CEC, other institutions and international organizations working in Bosnia and Herzegovina to assess the risks to electoral processes and take the necessary action before election day to ensure that the elections could proceed in accordance with the timetable.

Another challenge faced by the CEC in 2014 was the unsatisfactory performance of polling station committee (PSC) members, who were identified as the weakest part of election administration. Several factors contributed to this situation: insufficient training, inadequate compensation, the influence of political parties, a trade in the seats on PSCs among political parties and the resignation of trained PSC members close to election day. Members of the PSCs are nominated by political entities but appointed and trained by the MECs.

In addition, a number of people reported that unknown persons had misused their personal documents to register them to vote by mail. The CEC informed the Prosecutor's Office of all these irregularities and requested an investigation.

Prevention and mitigation of electoral risks

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Law contains an efficient framework for electoral dispute resolution and mechanisms to sanction perpetrators of electoral offences. The inter-sectoral working group on changes and amendments to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Law is currently working on amendments to the Election Law. One of the issues to be addressed is improving the work of the PSCs and the appointment of their chair and deputy chair. This will further strengthen the integrity of electoral processes.

With respect to operational planning, the CEC continually assesses security issues, the social and financial challenges to the organization of electoral processes, and early warning signs of any other factors that could jeopardize the electoral process. An election must be called at least 150 days before the election date. Once called, the CEC initiates the formation of the Election Security Board within the Ministry of Security. This consists of representatives of all the security agencies and the CEC. The Board is tasked with coordinating and safeguarding the transportation of election materials, and providing secure election premises and a secure environment throughout the election process.

³ Parlamentarna skupština Bosne i Hercegovine, Izvještaj o stanju, posljedicama katastrofe, mjerama i potrebama, Dopunjeni izvještaj, 26 maj 2014.godine [Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Report on conditions, consequences of natural disaster, measures and needs, Version amended on 24 May 2014], <file:///ideadc01/_RedirectedFolders\$/seaali/Downloads/Izvjestaj%20o%20stanju%20u%20BiH%20(1).pdf>, accessed 7 September 2016.

With respect to the impact of social factors, the CEC assesses the likelihood of demonstrations and other protests that could affect the conduct of elections, as in the case of the widespread riots that took place in February 2014. To ensure sufficient funding for the implementation of election operations at the municipal level, the CEC issues timely requests to address the issue to municipal mayors and municipal councils, along with requests for the allocation of sufficient funds.

Moreover, it has become a convention that the CEC organizes a post-election conference that gathers representatives of election administration, political parties, and relevant governmental and non-governmental domestic and international organizations with a mandate or interest in elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The evaluation of the previous electoral process always proves useful for understanding the risks to the next electoral cycle.

Ways forward

The ERM process has not yet been formally institutionalized due to the lack of sufficient human resources, but the use of International IDEA's ERM Tool enabled the CEC to understand and manage electoral risks. Therefore, the post-election conference that took place in March 2015 included ERM as one of the key discussion points. The thematic breakaway session dedicated to ERM allowed the familiarization of all participants with the concept, as well as discussion of how to extend the use of the ERM Tool to all MECs. Another option under consideration was the use of the Carter Center's data collection and reporting system (ELMO) to feed the ERM Tool with real time data. Through this discussion, participants identified the main electoral risks that should be monitored and addressed during preparations for and the conduct of future elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- inadequate training for election management staff;
- insufficient training for political parties and the media;
- resignations of PSC members from their positions;
- trade in PSC positions between political parties;
- inadequate compensation for PSC members; and
- problems with registration of out-of-country voters.

The CEC periodically assesses the results of the actions taken and reports on their impact in its annual report to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Case study 3

An overview of Elections Canada's risk-management activities

Karine Morin, Elections Canada

Elections Canada is responsible for administering the Canada Elections Act, which governs the election of members of parliament to the House of Commons. The Act regulates a broad variety of areas, including but not limited to: the appointment and duties of election workers; candidate nominations; political financing; voting days, times and locations; voting procedures at polling stations and by special ballot; ballot counting; and electoral offences and related penalties. The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Canada is an agent of parliament who is directly responsible to that institution and remains independent of the government of the day. Elections Canada, the office through which the CEO carries out his or her mandate, is normally staffed by some 500 employees working in the National Capital Region of Canada. During a general election, more than 230,000 positions are filled by election workers across the country.

Context of the 42nd general elections

Under the leadership of the CEO of Canada, the agency conducted the 2015 general elections on 19 October 2015—the first fixed-date election at the federal level. Elections Canada conducted a comprehensive review of its risk environment prior to the elections. In particular, it identified the key business and regulatory risks faced by the agency and their potential impact as follows:

1. *Court decision.* After the 2011 general election, a court case examined whether administrative breaches of statutory provisions made apparent that election officers did not comply with required procedures in a number of cases. The failures to comply were most notable in the areas of: registration, improperly completed registration certificates, voter identification, vouching that did not follow the rules, and recordkeeping.
2. *Electoral reform.* The agency needed to operationalize legislative reform that introduced wide-ranging changes in four categories: electoral operations, political financing, enforcement and governance. Ensuring that over 230,000 election workers and more than 23 million eligible voters understood the new rules in time for the election turned out to be a big challenge.
3. *Redistribution of electoral districts.* At the call of the election, the latest electoral boundary readjustment came into effect, increasing the number of federal electoral districts from 308 to 338. Its implementation required substantial resources from and effort by Elections Canada headquarters and in the field, including the meticulous work of assigning electors to the

correct electoral district. Other complexities included informing electors of their correct electoral district, especially in cases where there was a change; and recruiting a significantly higher number of poll workers to staff polling stations in 30 additional electoral districts.

4. *Challenges to information technology infrastructure.* During the 2015 general election, the agency centralized several key systems to ensure better efficiency, electoral integrity and improved service to electors, including in the areas of enhanced online voter registration and voters list revision. Given the new systems and supply arrangements, three primary high-level risks were identified as part of the integrated electoral risk management framework. First, critical public-facing systems—such as the online voter registration service and online training modules for election workers—could have been compromised by a cybersecurity incident. Second, reliance on external service providers meant reputational risk for Elections Canada in a scenario where information technology services and infrastructure managed by a third party failed at a critical juncture. Finally, there was a risk that external arrangements with third parties could result in the loss or inadvertent release of sensitive electronic data or paper records.
5. *The voter identification policy.* Leading up to the 2015 election, Elections Canada harmonized the voter identification process in a new policy that set requirements for voter identification criteria and provided guidelines on consistently applying the requirements. The new policy was designed to improve accessibility for electors, particularly for those who may have difficulty providing documentary proof of residence.
6. *Compliance with election rules.* During and after the 2011 general election, significant concerns arose about the integrity of the electoral process—specifically, about deceptive communications with electors.

Prevention and mitigation: an integrated risk-management framework

In response, the CEO examined preventive and enforcement measures that should be taken to deal with these issues. He outlined a number of recommendations, some of which required legislative changes and many of which involved changes to administrative practices. The latter resulted in Elections Canada developing and implementing key initiatives within the agency, including an Electoral Integrity Program that bolstered its risk management governance structure and clarified roles and responsibilities for risk management at different levels, in all sectors that manage controls.

Table A.3.1. Elections Canada, risk-management governance structure

ENTITY	RESPONSIBILITIES
Corporate Strategy Office (CSO)	Electoral business risks management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident management for business risks • Developing and maintaining the corporate risk register
Electoral Integrity Office (EIO)	Regulatory risks management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assurance • Incident management for regulatory risks • Summary reporting
Office of the Chief Electoral Officer	Overall involvement; ongoing remedial action biweekly progress reports
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information technology (i.e. impact of centralized web-based programs and Elections Canada's expectations of service providers) • Compliance at the polls, including instructions to 600 trainers responsible for training poll workers in the 338 electoral districts • Change management, communications and establishing a strong and positive narrative (e.g. how Elections Canada is responding to external drivers in a proactive and efficient manner to make the general election a success)
Executive Committee	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and managing risks according to the approach set out by the CSO and the EIO • Ensuring an integrated approach to risk management
Sector heads	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining issues in collaboration with the EIO and CSO, as required • Allocating resources to risk mitigation • Implementing mitigation measures (calendar, timelines, etc.) • Providing updates and reports to the EIO and the CSO

Key risk management programmes

Elections Canada overhauled its administrative practices in the light of its risk management review. New measures included improved recruitment practices, modernized training, simplified procedures and clearer instructions for election workers. Other efforts aimed to better control the quality of work performed at polling places and to enhance voter registration services so that voters' lists would be more complete, reducing the need for electors to register on election day.

The Electoral Integrity Program

Following the 2011 general election, Elections Canada established its Electoral Integrity Program with the objective of formalizing and improving its ability to respond to events that could interfere with voter participation. The programme has two main components:

1. *Incident management.* Elections Canada monitors the election environment in order to be better prepared to detect and respond quickly to any incidents that threaten the integrity of the election. As a result of the Electoral Integrity Program, Elections Canada is now better equipped to anticipate and respond to incidents triggered by external threats that may affect the integrity of the electoral process. An e-mail enquiry service and a centralized online complaint form used by electors, election workers, candidates, parties and other stakeholders in previous years highlighted shortcomings in the electoral process, including aspects of the voting process that were misunderstood by the public. This allowed Elections Canada to effectively prepare for the 2015 general election.
2. *Quality assurance.* Elections Canada oversees a new legislated, mandatory audit of poll workers' performance that is to be carried out for each general election and by-election by an external firm. As of the 2015 general election, an external firm will report on whether deputy returning officers, poll clerks and registration officers properly exercised their powers and performed specific duties and functions. Those duties include validating electors' proof of identity and address; registering electors on polling days; administering attestations of residence as part of the voter identification regime; and keeping records. The purpose of the audit is not to validate the election results but to measure the performance of poll workers in applying the procedures.

Next steps: measuring the success of an election in Canada

Parliament and Canadians rely on the CEO to administer free and fair elections, diligently implement electoral reform and assure them that the core elements of electoral management are in place. Four objectives were at the centre of the 2015 general election: building trust; providing sound electoral management; strengthening the integrity of the electoral process; and enabling the franchise by ensuring that all electors have opportunities to register and vote with ease.

One important way in which the CEO of Canada can achieve the above-mentioned objectives is through a transparent and balanced reporting framework. In his reports, the CEO provides parliament with the benefit of the agency's experience. In this way, the agency contributes to improving the electoral process and helps parliament anticipate and remedy potential risks to the next election. Following the 2015 general election, the CEO will publish three reports to provide a comprehensive perspective on the event: a chronology of Canada's 42nd general elections; a retrospective of the elections; and the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations for improving Canada's electoral framework.

Case Study 4

Management of conflict and security risk for elections in India

S. Y. Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India

A pluralistic society like India, with undercurrents of diversities, caste polarizations, communal divides, economic inequalities and varying regional and linguistic aspirations, presents multifarious challenges. The highly competitive nature of an election makes it prone to a variety of security threats, to voters, candidates, infrastructure, polling materials, and the women and men managing the electoral process. At times, electoral violence is used as a tactic to intimidate non-committed or hostile voters from coming to vote. The increased role of money power, muscle power and criminalization in politics has compounded these problems, becoming a major threat to free and fair elections. One also has to be alert to the possibilities of non-violent methods of intimidation in the form of silent booth capturing (where party loyalists occupy a polling booth and cast votes instead of legitimate voters). It is therefore essential for election managers to protect the election process from all kinds of threats and risks through intelligent anticipation, careful planning and stringent management using all available laws, rules and resources.

Electoral risk in India

Pre-election conflicts are primarily about possible manipulations of electoral rolls. Campaign period troubles include disruption of opponents' campaigns, intimidation of candidates and voters, and a general atmosphere of threat and violence. Polling day conflicts comprise preventing people from voting, violence at or around polling stations, booth capturing and vote rigging, damage to electoral voting machines and threats to election personnel. Post-election tensions include counting day conflicts, the victimization of voters and clashes between the winners and losers.

The biggest external threat to elections, however, comes from Maoists and other extremist elements. Extremist outfits use the visibility of electoral campaigns to conduct attacks against the government and its symbols in order to terrorize and gain publicity. They consider elections a big threat to their position and often indulge in calling for mass boycotts of the election process by issuing threats to the voters. In the 1999 elections, 33 police personnel were killed in Maoist and extremist-related incidents. However, in more recent elections held in the Maoist-affected states of Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal, the spate of violence abated phenomenally, mostly on account of the efforts of the election machinery, particularly the security forces.

Communal and caste issues also affect electoral security. The most common incidents are political attacks and murders; the use of illegal arms and explosives; attacks on rival

party offices, rallies and meetings; and forced entry into polling stations leading to the intimidation of voters. Communal elements exploit the high voltage atmosphere of elections to their advantage to polarize voters along communal lines. Caste conflicts similarly contribute to tensions among various classes in society.

Prevention and mitigation: ensuring safe elections

In India, the Election Commission's foremost concern is to conduct a peaceful poll where the voters, polling officials and security personnel face zero risk to their lives. The list of measures taken is comprehensive:

- Vulnerability mapping of potential trouble zones and identification of likely offenders.
- Classification of polling stations according to their sensitivity to decide the level of security required.
- Optimum possible deployment of forces to keep troublemakers away.
- The transfer of election-related officials posted in home districts or posted for over three years in their current position to prevent partisanship.
- Deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), since political parties often mistrust the local police and demand deployment of forces from outside the state.
- Conducting elections in several phases to efficiently utilize the CAPF by rotating them.
- Video surveillance of all suspicious activities and persons.
- Seizure of all illegal arms and ammunition and persuading many arms licence holders to deposit their arms in the police station to avoid a breach of peace.
- Relocation of sensitive polling booths and the creation of auxiliary booths for pockets of voters under potential threat.
- Tracking of the movements of polling parties to and from polling stations using GPS and monitoring of all election day activity by maintaining a fool-proof communications network (ComET).

Some measures deserve a more detailed explanation.

Vulnerability mapping

The exercise to ensure safety and security on polling day begins much earlier in the form of vulnerability mapping. Pre-poll efforts consist of a meticulous exercise to identify

critical polling stations and critical clusters at the micro level, based on the likelihood of intimidation or threat. The guiding factors in identifying sensitive and trouble-prone areas/polling booths are: (a) the past history of the constituency or the polling area; (b) the past incidence of booth capturing, violence, riots, large-scale impersonation, and so on; (c) information regarding an abnormal law and order situation in a particular area; (d) specific complaints made by political parties and candidates; (e) the political profile of candidates; (f) political rivalries; (g) the number of history sheeters in the area (i.e. criminals whose records are maintained by the police in history sheets); (h) the number of absconders, or criminals who have run away or evaded arrest; and (i) the caste and communal configuration of the voters and the level of accompanying social tensions.

An important feature of these security measures is the execution of pending non-bailable warrants. The Election Commission often receives complaints that many hard-core criminals, against whom the court has issued non-bailable warrants of arrest, continue to roam free, and acting with impunity. It is alleged that these criminals enjoy political patronage and their protectors ensure that they are not arrested by the police. These elements are then used by politicians to help them during elections. A few months before polling day, the Election Commission starts to monitor the execution of all non-bailable warrants to ensure that all absconding criminals are rounded up. This contributes a great deal to peaceful elections.

Confidence-building measures

Violence-free elections are also essential for the people's active participation. Voter awareness campaigns build confidence among the people. In recent elections, public faith in the safety and security arrangements of the electoral process resulted in record voter turnouts, especially among women.

Polling day security

During the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, a surveillance system was devised for remote and especially vulnerable polling stations in some tribal districts of Gujarat. Cell phone cameras from 47 locations in over 150 polling booths were linked to the central server at the CEO's and DEO's offices. Using special software, these cameras were timed to take a picture once every three minutes.

Security of political officials and candidates

During the electoral process, it is also necessary to provide adequate protection to political party officials and candidates. This is necessary to guard the process from derailment since, in the event of a party candidate being killed or dying during the electoral process, the entire election has to be aborted in the constituency and fresh elections must be held.

Communication plan for election tracking

Good and smooth communication among election officials is essential for security planning and rapid response to incidents. The Commission has devised a micro-level communication plan for this purpose. Contact details are collected and pre-tested for all polling areas, including the means of communication at the polling station with at least three individuals who can be contacted or who can inform the election managers of any mishap. The plan also identifies three young 'runners' who, in the event of phone lines failing, will be sent to pre-identified telephones or police posts to inform the authorities. Many observers have reported the deterrence value of ComET in putting fear in the minds of potential trouble makers that they cannot escape the hawk eye of the ECI. In one case in the Maoist affected district of Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, when a polling party was nearly ambushed, a fast report on the ComET network brought in paramilitary reinforcements by helicopter, which scared away the attackers, preventing a major catastrophe.

Dealing with the threat within

The threat to the security of elections is not only external. The conduct of election officials can be a critical factor. Corrupt or politically aligned officials can manipulate the system. The Commission does not spare even the most senior police or civil service officer if their neutrality is even slightly suspect. An informal dossier is kept and updated a few weeks before the election. Complaints against officers by political parties are examined seriously. If the Commission feels that an officer is prejudicial to non-partisan elections, a transfer is made immediately.

As another matter of precaution, the Ministry of Home Affairs is directed by the Commission to ensure that all international borders are sealed at least one week in advance of the polls to prevent any movement of anti-national elements from across the borders to disrupt the election process. Inter-state borders and inter-district borders are also sealed well in advance to prevent the infiltration of anti-social and disruptive elements from neighbouring states or districts where polls are being held.

To sum up, the high degree of credibility that the Indian Election Commission enjoys is due not just to its fiercely independent structure, but also to the enormous detail that goes into its operational and strategic planning to secure every aspect of the conduct of elections. Safe, free and fair elections in India over the years have been responsible for maintaining one of the most stable democracies in the world. Gone are the days when violence and booth capturing were widespread. Today a good election no longer makes news in India. It is the norm, made possible by an effective ERM.

Case Study 5

Electoral risks in Mexico's 2015 electoral processes

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A holistic analysis of electoral risk during the 2015 elections in Mexico requires close attention to the political, social and cultural variables that formed the setting in which the elections took place. The history of democracy in Mexico from the last third of the 20th century is marked by disputes over the key template for distributing political power in a democratic way. This was the backdrop to eight electoral reforms.

The transition to democracy in Mexico began in 1977 with the first great electoral reform. It provided arrangements for a peaceful democratic transition, and there was a gradual evolution in its design and implementation. The party system was reinvigorated to allow previously excluded parties to register, the number of seats in the Chamber of Representatives was increased, and the first measures were passed granting all registered parties access to public funding and the media. Seven further reforms followed in 1986, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2007 and 2014. These reforms strengthened the representative system, improved the conditions for competition through financing and revitalized the design and powers of the electoral body. With strong political parties and citizens capable of expressing their preferences freely, electoral institutions were able to provide the conditions to enhance political pluralism in Mexico. All this has allowed peaceful and democratic power transitions, including two presidential alternations, and alternations of several governorships and seats in the Lower Chamber and the Senate.

Electoral management challenges: internal risks

The elections of 7 June 2015 were carried out under the eighth electoral reform, as a result of which the electoral authority was granted 74 new powers. Two fundamental reforms led the changes in the institutional structure and the operation of elections.

The first was the transition to a new model of collaborative federalism, which created the National Electoral Institute to substitute for the former Federal Electoral Institute. In addition to having a body responsible for organizing federal elections for the president, senators and deputies, Mexico has now created a new body responsible for organizing elections at the national level, with the support of the new Local Public Electoral Bodies (OPLEs) in each of the 32 states.

The second was the challenge of designing and implementing a system that provides oversight of the key aspects of the electoral process in real time. This was intended to

ensure maximum transparency of information, and to enable the review and rating of both federal and local operations in a short period of time (37 days). In addition, the system should allow the detection of possible illegal actions by sharing or giving access to tax authority data through a shared platform.

In the midst of these transition and adjustment processes, the INE faced the challenge of organizing the most complex election in the democratic history of Mexico. In addition to the Federal elections scheduled for 7 June 2015, 16 entities held concurrent elections. In total, political parties and candidates competed for 2,179 public posts: 500 federal deputies, 9 governorships, 641 local deputies, 993 mayors and 16 heads of delegations in the capital city. The duration of a campaign in Mexico is about 60 days, depending on the type of election, which is in addition to an average of 40 days for pre-campaign activities.

To compete in the elections, 12,912 candidates registered from 10 national political parties and more than 20 local parties. There were also 22 independent candidates. During voter registration, a total of 83,563,243 citizens were placed on the voters' list. With respect to recruitment and training of poll workers, 1,210,056 polling officials were chosen randomly. The total number of polling stations was 148,940 which was almost 6,000 more than in 2012. Due to the complexity of the election, of the 68,383 jurisdictions in Mexico, 15,134 were declared as requiring 'special attention'. These were defined by a broad set of variables, of which high levels of insecurity, high rates of migration and literacy rates were the most relevant factors.

In terms of financing and media access, USD 666,962,894 was granted to all political parties in subsidies. At the national level, USD 355,130,596 was distributed, while locally the amount was USD 311,832,299.[312m] In the media, 29,754,900 advertisements were played during the campaign and election periods at the local and national levels by all broadcasting stations in the country. Finally, 79,050 campaign accountability reports for were delivered: 12,000 at the federal level, which is a 205 per cent increase on the 2012 elections, and 67,050 at the entity level.

The social and political context: external risks

The 2015 elections took place in a context of violence and political turmoil, due to the constant operation of organized crime cartels in various states where elections were held, and to various violent acts directed against participants in the electoral process. Specifically, drug cartels were active in 11 of the 32 entities that make up the Mexican Federation. More than 100 violent acts, such as threats, assassinations and attacks, occurred during the electoral process: eight candidates were murdered and 15 crimes of different kinds were committed against family members or colleagues, including kidnappings, threats and physical attacks.

The episodes of greatest complexity and risk resulted from the political and social mobilizations that occurred in the state of Oaxaca, where one part of the teachers' union threatened to disrupt elections. The union took several government offices by force, destroying electoral materials and attacking election officials.

Prevention and mitigation

The National Electoral Institute has a range of procedures and instruments, implemented internally and in collaboration with other government agencies, which are put in place to improve situational awareness of risks to electoral processes, as well as to take preventive and mitigating action. For example, in the climate of insecurity accentuated by the electoral competition, the INE was able to activate the risk reduction protocol in specific cases and entities. This protocol is designed, in connection with the federal government, to offer guarantees to candidates and voters during the last 30 days of campaigning, and on election day. The effort was focused on preventing and mitigating social unrest through peaceful means in order to protect election campaigns from any attempt at violence. Similarly, when faced with the threats by the teachers' union in Oaxaca, the preventive action of the state and the institutional work of the INE undertaken 48 hours before the election deterred similar threats to electoral processes. As a result, the elections were conducted peacefully and without violence. The turnout, at 47.71 per cent of the voters' list or 39,872,757 Mexican citizens, was the highest recorded in a non-presidential election since 1977.

Given an environment of high administrative complexity and a convulsive political and social context, several efforts were made to prevent risks related to violent scenarios materializing on election day.

First, every effort was made to ensure that public trust in the credibility of electoral processes was beyond question. Mexican citizens perceive elections as the legitimate way to choose their political representation and to access power. Despite the many challenges that democracy in Mexico still faces, elections are owned by the people. Their choice is peace, not violence.

Second, the coordinated efforts of the Government and the INE made it easier to institutionalize processes in which risks were detected and addressed at different levels. Political sensitivity and technical expertise walked hand in hand to address the red flags in the electoral process.

Finally, the Mexican democratic system and the electoral process proved to be sources for peace and not catalysts for violence. The election result shows that there was partisan alternation in 102 of the 300 contested districts and five of the nine governorships subject to election. The parliamentary majority changed in 5 of the 16 Congresses, while the largest party did not achieve 30 per cent of the vote. Under these circumstances, political pluralism was strengthened at all levels of government, fostering greater political representation and easing the coexistence of differences through democratic institutions. Democratic elections do work.

Case Study 6

Electoral risk management practices in South Africa

Granville Abrahams, Electoral Commission of South Africa

The Electoral Commission of South Africa was established under the terms of Chapter 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in order to strengthen constitutional democracy. Its governing principles are that the Commission should be independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law. The Commission must also exercise its powers and perform its functions without fear, favour or prejudice. Risk management is present in all facets of the functioning of the Electoral Commission.

Risk management framework

Although faced with various risks to its businesses, the Commission has not yet adopted an all-inclusive framework for managing electoral risks as a whole. Risk management in the organization is necessitated as a Treasury requirement, in project management and in arrangements to address operational needs or instability in a specific geographic area.

Treasury management framework

As a publicly funded institution the Electoral Commission is bound by the risk management framework of the Treasury. The main requirement of this framework is the maintenance of a risk register. The register serves three main purposes: (a) as a source of information for reporting on the key risks throughout the institution; (b) as a tool for management to focus its priorities; and (c) to help auditors focus their audit planning on the institution's biggest risks.

Project management

The Commission adopts a programme management approach to general elections, and each key deliverable is treated as a project. The programme contains approximately 60 projects, which are monitored within a project management system. Each project has risks identified and strategies to mitigate these risks.

Operational needs

The main purpose of the *political party liaison structure* is to act as a consultative body during preparations for elections at the national, provincial and municipal levels. The structure provides the Commission with a mechanism for identifying risk factors. In

addition to acting as an early warning system on developments that may pose a potential risk, political party liaison structures offer a platform for preventive or mitigating actions. The National Political Party Liaison Committee also acts as a sounding board for legislative review and key policy decisions, some which may have a direct bearing on the management, mitigation or avoidance of risks.

The Commission has a dedicated project focused on *coordination of conditions for free and fair elections* that is inclined towards conflict management and mediation. This inclination arises from the nature of the external risk factors in elections dating back to 1994, while also addressing the challenges arising from the service delivery protests (see below), and inter- and intra-party conflict in the new South Africa. Provincial coordinators for free and fair elections are appointed six months prior to an election. The profile of this position requires that the holder should either be experienced in mediation or have a sound legal background. In addition to mediating in conflicts, where circumstances allow they identify and report on risks to elections. A panel of mediators is set up, trained and deployed in each of the nine provinces to assist with mediation as and when required.

Legislative workshops and training are held with represented as well as unrepresented political parties. Training is also given to media houses in preparation for their election coverage. This addresses the risk of a journalist who for example might normally cover sport and not specialize in elections, which does not happen all that often, covering the process in an uninformed way.

Main risk factors in elections: internal and external

The main *internal risk* in local government by-elections is the ‘bussing in’ of voters (fraudulent registration) with the intention of influencing the outcome. Electoral law requires voters to register where they are ordinarily resident, and they must vote where they have registered. There is however no requirement to provide proof of address, which provides an opportunity for those with fraudulent intent to attempt to influence the outcome. In addition, there is a perception among some opposition parties that presiding officers who are members of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) are not impartial. This arises from the fact that SADTU is an affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and COSATU is in an alliance with the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC). About 50 per cent of presiding officers are teachers. This, however, is a reflection of the fact that 60 per cent of the polling places are schools, and educators provide access to those schools.

To ensure situational awareness of internal risk factors, a team of senior managers and technical project software experts provides a programme management function to the Chief Electoral Officer for the management of all general election projects. From a very early stage, monthly meetings are held to monitor progress and identify the risks to achieving milestones timeously. The frequency of meetings increases as the elections draw closer. The programme management office analyses progress, dependencies and interdependencies, and identifies possible risks and their extent.

External factors include: (a) intra-party tensions, sometimes resulting in political intolerance, as well as power struggles and leadership disputes in smaller parties; (b) enforcement of the Electoral Code of Conduct and related prosecution capacity; and (c) service delivery protest—public protest against municipalities to expedite improvements in services. The latter has become a popular platform for voicing disapproval in South Africa. At times, however, it becomes violent and the very essence of the protest is contradicted when public property is destroyed. While service delivery protest happens throughout the year, elections provide a bigger platform and it is inevitable that the elections become a target.

Situational awareness of external risk factors is ensured through the work of the Election Priority Committee, which is jointly chaired by the South African Police and the Electoral Commission. This Committee reports to the Justice Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster, which is chaired by the Minister for Defence with the Minister for Police (safety and security) as deputy chair.

Prevention and mitigation

To prevent and mitigate the main threat to electoral processes, ‘bussing in’ during the election voter registration phase, the following steps are taken as the need arises.

- Use of GIS to determine existing voters who are registered incorrectly.
- Use of an existing electronic voters’ list on a portable scanning device to determine whether the applicant is already registered in another ward, before using a second device to proceed with the application.
- Use of posters and pamphlets to publicize the fact that voter fraud is a criminal offence and may be punished by imprisonment.
- Plotting all registration applications on a map based on the addresses provided to determine whether the applicant’s addresses are inside the contested ward.
- Refusing an application under the terms of the legislation by publishing a notice and allowing applicants the opportunity to contest the decision.

The police and defence force is ultimately responsible for safeguarding the election. In the Election Priority Committee, the Commission takes joint decisions on how to deal with conflict that might negatively affect the election. As a contingency, the Commission trains a platoon of soldiers and police in each province as a backup should the situation arise that it is not safe for electoral staff in a polling station. In preparation for the 2014 National and Provincial Elections the JCPS cluster introduced a protocol to assist with the prosecution of electoral offences throughout 2014. The Protocol sought to facilitate coordination and prioritization of the prosecution of electoral offences by establishing a partnership between the police, the judiciary and legal aid to assist those being accused.

The Treasury requirement is that all state-funded institutions must maintain an up-to-date risk register. The risk register model used at the Electoral Commission, however, only focuses on the key risks that have a direct impact on its strategic objectives. The register provides details on the following: (a) causes; (b) consequences; (c) estimated inherent risk; (d) identifying existing controls; (e) reassessing the risk after control measures have been put in place (mitigation); (f) determining the effectiveness of the control (effectiveness of mitigation); (g) determining the risk exposure after assessing the effectiveness of the control; (h) risk treatment, additional controls to manage the exposure to risk; and (i) updated status. The Commission is currently committed to implementing the ERM Tool on a trial basis for the local government elections in 2016.

Conclusions

Risk management has been present in the operations of the Commission in different forms. This has manifested itself either as an element of project management, in compliance with Treasury framework, or as a result of external factors posing a threat to free and fair elections. As a result, risks have been managed in a piecemeal way. The concept of electoral risk management provides a systematic approach to ensuring the retention of institutional knowledge, ultimately making a major contribution to strengthening democracy since failed elections do not instil confidence in democracy.

Case Study 7

Electoral risk management in Kenya, Nepal and Nigeria

Erik Asplund and Nicholas Matatu, International IDEA

Introduction

A 2014 International IDEA survey of 87 countries found that EMBs in 18 countries had formal risk management procedures in place. This case study illustrates how the EMBs in Kenya, Nepal and Nigeria used the International IDEA ERM Tool to either reinforce or introduce a risk management approach to their operations.

Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, Kenya

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) risk identification and management portfolio is currently housed within the Directorate for Audit, Risk and Compliance (DARC). The DARC has 12 permanent staff members, including a director and two managers. The risk management component of the DARC is composed of four permanent officers. The DARC reports on an ongoing basis directly to the Commission Secretary/Chief Election Officer as well as to the Management and Audit Committee, which is composed of a select number of directors and commissioners. Once approved, reports are shared among all the IEBC Commissioners and the Chairperson. The DARC advises the IEBC on risk areas and oversees the development and implementation of risk management, operational, financial and information systems.⁴ The DARC also ensures compliance with regulatory and operational requirements. The current arrangement evolved through the improvement of risk management procedures and tools within the IEBC over several electoral cycles.

The Kenyan Parliament disbanded the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) in 2008 due to its alleged role in electoral manipulation. The ECK was replaced with the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC) and then two years later by the IEBC, which was set up by the 2011 IEBC Act. The DARC was established under the broad powers given to the IEBC to establish the directorates deemed necessary to implement its mandate. The DARC was established primarily in response to a governmental circular issued in 2009 instructing all government institutions to set up risk and compliance departments. From the outset, the institutionalization of a risk management system in the IEBC's operations was a strategic priority included in

⁴ For more information see the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission website, <<http://www.iebc.or.ke/index.php/component/content/article/51-secretariate/97-directorate-of-risk-and-compliance>>, accessed 1 April 2016.

the IEBC seven-year strategic plan (2011). It contains a number of steps: develop a policy framework on risk management; build the IEBC's capacity in risk management; develop mechanisms for identifying, assessing and mitigating risk; establish an effective internal audit unit; and institutionalize a culture of performance management in operations (IEBC 2013: 31).

In its management activities the IEBC has, among other things: developed an internal audit plan and charter, implemented periodic audit reviews, established a risk register, conducted risk assessments of the electoral environment prior to the 2013 general elections and by-elections, carried out electoral-violence hotspot mapping and undertaken gender awareness training for managers, regional coordinators, constituency elections coordinators, risk champions and security officers (IEBC 2015; IEBC 2014: 21–22).

In October 2011 the IEBC and International IDEA initiated a joint project that aimed to build the capacity of the IEBC to prevent and mitigate election-related violence through improved and more conflict-sensitive decision-making, and enhanced collaboration between the IEBC and other relevant stakeholders in Kenya. The project was managed by the IEBC's Directorate of Research and Development (DRD) in collaboration with the DARC. During the project the IEBC made use of the ERM Tool to identify, monitor and analyse risks as well as recommend options for preventing and/or mitigating election-related violence. The project also established data collection and information-sharing channels for early warning and response within the IEBC and through partner organizations represented in the UWIANO [Cohesion] Platform for Peace (a principal multi-stakeholder initiative for conflict prevention in Kenya).⁵ During the elections, UWIANO partners were able to report on the real time data coming from its network of election officers and grassroots monitors to the National Election Centre in Nairobi, where all the data was processed using the ERM Tool (Asplund 2013). Once the joint project was concluded in June 2013, the IEBC started the process of institutionalizing the use of the ERM Tool within the commission (IEBC 2014: 142), first by a DRD ERM Unit and then in January 2015 as part of the DARC. The decision to institutionalize the project was partly based on an internal and external evaluation. Today, the risk management component of the DARC is tasked with continual monitoring of the security, technical, operational and legal risks, and advising on mitigation measures in collaboration with external stakeholders ahead of the 2017 general elections (IEBC 2016: 31).

The Election Commission of Nepal

In the Electoral Commission of Nepal (ECN), risk management is currently housed within the Electoral Statistics, Geo-Information and Risk Analysis section (ESGIRA). The ESGIRA section has seven permanent staff members, including an Under Secretary. The risk analysis component of the section contains one section officer and one computer operator. The ESGIRA section reports on risks on an ongoing basis

⁵ Partners included the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC), the IEBC, PeaceNet and UN Women.

directly to the Electoral Management Division, which in turn reports to other section heads as well as the ECN Commissioners and Chair. The ESGIRA section provides risk assessments on ECN operations throughout the electoral cycle, maintains a risk register, updates the Polling Centre Master List (PCML) and maintains electoral data.

The ECN began to institutionalize its electoral risk management system after concluding a joint ERM Tool-related project with International IDEA. The main objective was to build capacity within the ECN to assess electoral risks that might affect the peaceful conduct of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 2013. This involved the production of electoral risk maps, risk charts and risk alerts in coordination with the Joint Election Operation Centre (JEOC) in order to assist the ECN to make well informed and conflict-sensitive electoral decisions, and to take specific actions to prevent and mitigate electoral risks and violence (Aman 2013).⁶

Shortly after the elections and the successful implementation of the joint project, the ECN sought to institutionalize electoral risk management. It took steps to (a) incorporate an ERM function into its organization structure; (b) create a legal and procedural framework (c) allocate ‘internal’ physical and human resources; (d) clarify the roles, responsibilities, authorities and accountabilities relating to this work; (e) generate ownership and sustainability; and (f) ensure effective and efficient operation. The ECN established an ERM Unit in June 2014, which was merged into a new Electoral Statistics, Geo-Information and Risk Analysis Section (ESGIRA) in September 2015. The decision to establish the section was based on the adoption of goal 17 of the ECN’s strategic pillar V: that an ‘Elections risk management system is implemented’.⁷

Although the initial focus of the International IDEA and ECN ERM Tool project was primarily on security risks, today the ESGIRA section also focuses on the legal, political, administrative and technical risks that could lead to inefficiency, ineffectiveness or incidents of violence throughout the electoral cycle.

Independent National Electoral Commission, Nigeria

In evaluating the paradox of the 2011 elections in Nigeria—which were the best run in the country’s history (USIP 2011) but also the most violent (Human Rights Watch 2011)—the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) decided to institutionalize the Interagency Consultative Committee on Electoral Security (INEC 2012: 31), a platform that brought together the INEC and 11 state security agencies to coordinate security for logistical and operational exercises (European Union 2011). The INEC, however, was also eager to develop a more proactive approach to electoral

⁶ The JEOC was established one month before the elections. Its main purpose was to receive information from field offices during preparations for and the conduct of the elections. The JEOC is coordinated by an ECN senior officer. Participating agencies include the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Nepal Army, the Nepal Police, the Armed Police Force and the National Investigation Department. The JEOC was also operational during the elections to the 2008 Constituent Assembly.

⁷ See the Election Commission of Nepal website, <<http://www.election.gov.np/election/en/overview-28.html>>.

security. Ahead of the 2015 elections, the INEC designed a risk preparedness framework based on the three pillars of: (a) planning and implementation; (b) knowledge and training; and (c) monitoring and reporting.

Planning and implementation

The ICCES was central to the design of a comprehensive election security management system for INEC at the national and the decentralized levels before, during and after elections. Through meetings on a regular basis, the main roles of the ICCES were to assess security threats, design locally focused security plans and harmonize the training and deployment of security personnel on election duty.

Knowledge and training

Through its Electoral Institute, the INEC launched a number of initiatives aimed at improving the capacity of its staff in relation to electoral security. Basic Security on Election Duty (BaSED)—an online e-learning platform for INEC officials on election duty—was rolled out ahead of the 2015 elections. INEC also developed Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Training (EVMAT), aimed at civil society organizations working to prevent and mitigate elections-related violence.

Monitoring and reporting

In 2014 the INEC established an ERM unit to identify, monitor, analyse and report on electoral risks as part of a project to implement the ERM Tool. The initiative was part of a joint project between INEC, International IDEA and the African Union. The ERM unit was under the supervision of the Chairperson's office and consisted of a coordinator, a full-time data analyst and seven part-time data analysts seconded from other INEC departments, backed up by 37 desk officers from INEC's state offices.

The ERM unit first identified electoral risks in an expert workshop held in December 2013 and subsequently collected data from further expert meetings, desk officers' reports, media and stakeholders' reports throughout 2014. Data collection further intensified in the three months before the elections. The unit tracked electoral risks related to a number of factors ranging from INEC operational tasks to the potential impact of the Boko Haram insurgency on the electoral process. Once the unit had collected and analysed the data, it prepared frequent risk reports for INEC Commissioners and the ICCES.

During the elections, INEC established a Situation Room in Abuja and Election Support Centres at its state offices designed to monitor the process and ensure rapid intervention in case of reports of unrest or technical difficulties. The ERM unit was embedded in the Situation Room to compile risk data from state offices, call centres, the media and INEC's various tracking platforms. INEC Commissioners and directors in the Situation Room also remained in constant contact with security agencies, political

parties and the civil society situation room. Since the conduct of the 2015 general elections, INEC has continued to implement this risk preparedness framework—making extensive use of the ERM Tool—during by-elections in the states of Bayelsa, Kogi and Rivers.

Conclusion

The examples from Kenya, Nepal and Nigeria demonstrate how risk management approaches can be integrated into an EMB's day-to-day work. One common element is that all three EMBs established risk management units that operate in parallel with election management operations. The creation of specialized units with dedicated staff ensures that regular electoral activities proceed unhindered while the EMBs are able to monitor and identify any deviation from implementation or negative external influences that jeopardize their efforts.

In Kenya, Nepal and Nigeria, risk management is a new element of electoral administration. In all three cases the EMBs were initially concerned about security risks, but found the ERM Tool useful as a management tool covering all aspects of their operations. They gradually incorporated legal, political, operational and technical risks into their risk management frameworks.

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Elections are complex undertakings. Regardless of where they take place, election management bodies (EMBs) face numerous risks in organizing them. These risks are linked to the legal, operational, technical, political and security aspects of electoral processes. When risks become certainties, the consequences can be serious in both well-established and transitional democracies.

Risk management has been endorsed by many professions for dealing with complex tasks, and is now emerging as an area of increased importance for EMBs, electoral assistance providers and democracy researchers.

This Policy Paper demonstrates the importance of institutionalizing risk management in elections. It discusses key terminological and methodological aspects of risk management in order to derive election-specific definitions, and outlines the key ingredients of risk management in elections. It also takes stock of existing electoral risk-management practices, based on the results of a global survey of 87 countries carried out by International IDEA.