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Inclusion

on Citizen Stakeholders Platform Participation System

GUIDE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Standards Dialogue Rountable Recommendations Improvement







This Toolkit for Citizen Observers is composed of five guides covering respectively:

- **Guide for Civil Society on Sustaining Peace through Elections**
- **Guide for Civil Society on Election Observation Reporting**
- **Guide for Civil Society on Observing Elections from a Gender Perspective**
- **Guide for Civil Society on Electoral Reform**
- **Guide for Civil Society on Monitoring Social Media during Elections**

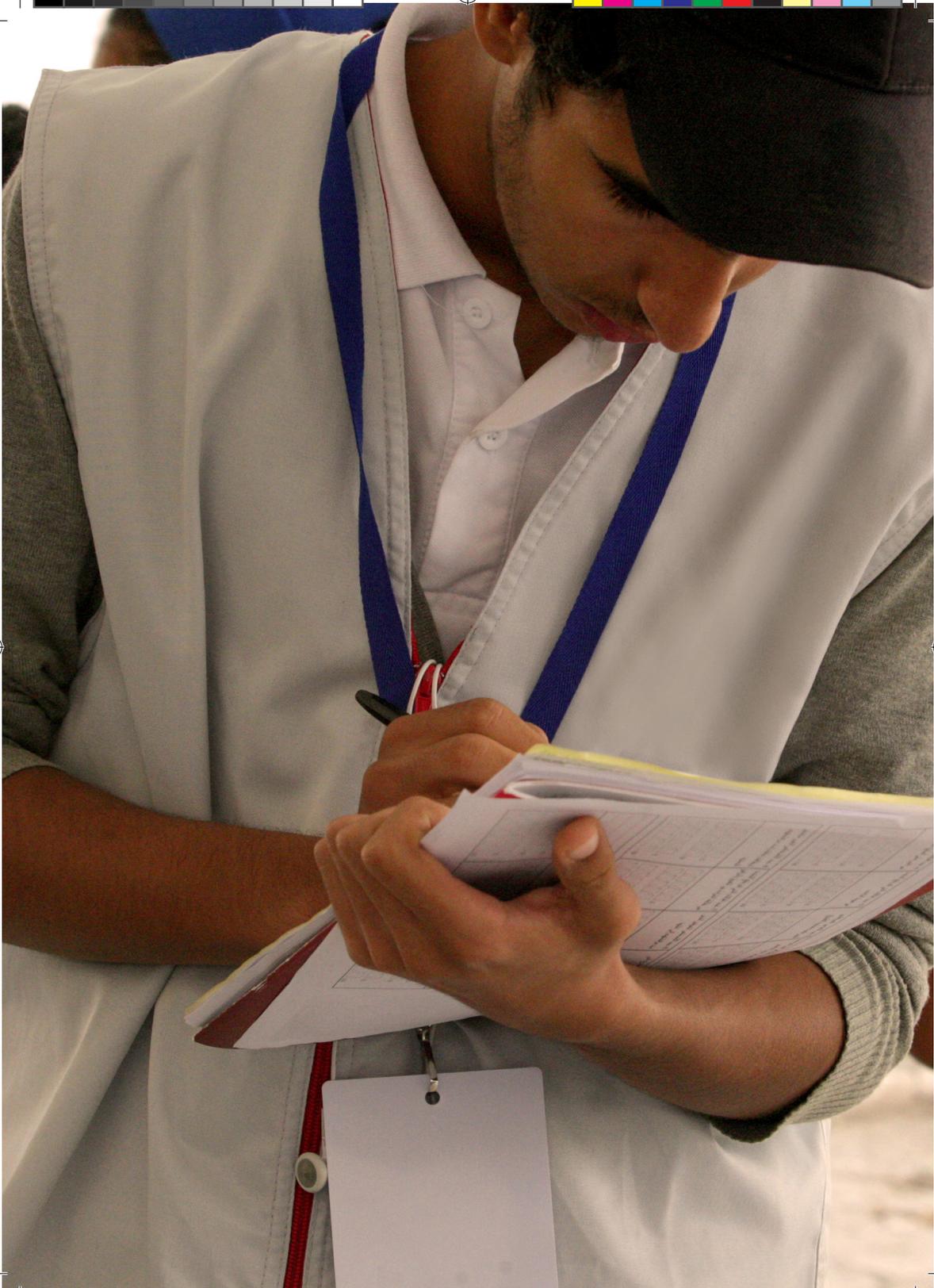
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ACRONYMS

CAAAP	Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica
CERC	Constitution and Electoral Reform Committee (Nigeria)
CSO	Civil society organisation
DoGP	Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organisations
DRI	Democracy Reporting International
EMB	Election management body
EOM	Election observation mission
EU	European Union
IDP	Internally displaced person
ISFED	International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (Georgia)
INEC	Independent National Election Commission (Nigeria)
LEPP	Law on Elections and Political Parties (Guatemala)
MEC	Malawi Election Commission
MESN	Malawi Election Support Network
NCA	National Constituent Assembly (Tunisia)
NDI	National Democratic Institute
OSCE ODIHR	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PWD	Person with disabilities





INTRODUCTION

Over the past 30 years, election observation by both domestic and international organisations has become a widely accepted practice around the world. It is commonplace for civil society organisations (CSOs) in the country and intergovernmental or nongovernmental international organisations to observe various stages of an electoral process and to present an assessment after election day on the degree to which the elections have met international and regional standards for democratic elections.

Typically such groups issue their preliminary findings immediately after election day, and then present more comprehensive findings in a final report in the weeks and months that follow. Often the final report includes a set of recommendations on how to best address issues identified during the electoral process, to bring elections into line with regional and international standards for democratic elections. The simple act of issuing recommendations already demonstrates that election observation is a constructive activity which aims to improve elections in line with international and regional standards.

However, following elections there is often a general 'election fatigue' and most often these recommendations made by observers remain unaddressed by electoral stakeholders during the inter-election period. It is also the case that parliaments and other stakeholders have a myriad of other challenges, so getting attention for electoral reforms can be difficult. Observer groups that make recommendations may miss the opportunities for maintained focus. This happens for a variety of reasons, such as a non-conducive political context, competing organisational priorities, lack of funding or lack of expertise on electoral reform. In other cases, CSOs advocate for electoral reforms, but without a coherent strategy, so their efforts may not be sufficiently organised or properly timed. In such cases, election recommendations can provide a framework for these advocacy and monitoring initiatives.

Citizen election observation (and the recommendations that result) is not an end in itself. Such efforts are only one part of the citizen-based promotion of election integrity, which continues throughout the election cycle. While election observation provides evidence-based recommendations for reform, CSOs should advocate for those reforms throughout the inter-election period, and continue to monitor the degree to which they have been considered and implemented prior to the next election. In this way, recommendations can act as an instrument of democratic accountability, enabling citizen oversight of democratic reform.

Advocating for electoral reform is part of the responsibility of citizen election observer groups. The Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organisations (DoGP) commits endorsing organisations to:

'where practicable, advocate for improvements in legal frameworks for elections and in their implementation, for violence-free, accountable,



open and responsive electoral and political processes, for removal of unreasonable restrictions and other barriers to full citizen participation in electoral and political processes and to contribute more broadly to advancing democratic governance¹;

This step-by-step guide is aimed primarily at citizen observer groups and other CSOs that are interested in leveraging their potential to play an influential role in improving electoral processes throughout the electoral cycle. It provides user-friendly guidance on how citizen observer groups and others can effectively follow up on observer recommendations using the existing networks, visibility and capacity that they developed during the elections. By promoting the implementation of election recommendations, citizen observer groups have demonstrated the potential impact of election observation.

Using the guide

This guide focuses on two main types of follow-up activities for CSOs:

1

electoral reform promotion and advocacy that raises awareness and encourages stakeholders to address election recommendations prior to the next elections

2

tracking of recommendations to monitor progress towards their implementation and reporting regularly on the findings.

These two types of activities would ideally be undertaken at the same time.

The choice and design of initiatives will depend on a number of factors – both internal and external to the CSOs themselves. Internal factors include organisational priorities, resources and capacity, while external factors include the overall political context and attitudes of stakeholders towards election reform. These issues will be discussed in-depth in the guide.

¹ Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organisations¹, para 21(k), endorsed by more than 290 citizen observer groups in 93 countries worldwide and supported by 13 key intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organisations, launched at the UN headquarters in 2012, available at www.gndem.org.



Who should use this guide?

As mentioned, the primary audience for this guide is citizen observer groups: CSOs that take on election observation, but which may lack extensive experience in democracy promotion. Citizen observer groups usually issue reports during the election period, however they may not issue specific recommendations that can help to link their findings to advocacy initiatives enabling concrete improvements to the process. The guide provides assistance to election observers in the formulation and promotion of recommendations, and ways to monitor their implementation.

Other CSOs outside of the election observation sphere may also have an interest in focusing on election recommendations that relate to their specific area of work. For instance, a CSO that promotes the rights of persons with disabilities may be interested in promoting the adoption of recommendations that address such issues, while a CSO focused on women's rights may be more interested in recommendations that address issues related to the participation of women in elections and political life.

This guide may be useful to other stakeholders in the process who have a role in the implementation of recommendations, including political parties, parliament, the election management body (EMB), and other state institutions. At the same time, even if their work is of a different nature, international and regional organisations that take part in election observation may also benefit from the information presented in the guide, as they too have an interest in promoting follow-up to recommendations. Finally, European Union (EU) Delegations and other donors may also be interested in the information contained in the guide, so that they may consider support to CSOs to do follow-up work as part of an approach that encourages maintaining support for democratic elections, as well as democratic reform more broadly, throughout the electoral cycle.



CHAPTER 1: ELECTION OBSERVATION AND DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

In recent years, citizen election observation has become an accepted part of the electoral process in many parts of the world. Citizen election observation (also known as domestic nonpartisan election observation) provides an opportunity for citizens to engage in their own democracy and hold government institutions accountable for the conduct of genuine, credible elections. CSOs that conduct election observation often mobilise thousands of volunteer election observers on election day – who transmit findings from across the country in order to form an overall assessment of the election day process. Recognising that elections are not one-day events, citizen observer groups typically monitor and assess pre- and post-election processes as well, since such processes can have a significant impact on the credibility of an election process.

Through citizen election observation, CSOs gather a great deal of information about the election process. These findings are usually reflected in public reports that assess the overall integrity of the process, and the degree to which it was held in line with national law, as well as international and regional standards for democratic elections. The reports and statements of citizen observer groups identify specific problems with the election process, and often with the democratic process more generally. Through the formulation of recommendations, citizen observers suggest how state authorities and election stakeholders can improve the process, in line with the international and regional obligations and commitments of the country. Recommendations are often based on longstanding issues that the CSOs have been advocating for some time. In such cases, the observation, reporting and recommendations can give further evidence and visibility to these issues.

Sometimes CSOs that represent or promote the rights of a specific group choose to conduct a focused observation effort that assesses the participation of that group in the election process, identifying any barriers. For example, a women's organisation may wish to look at the participation of women at each stage of the election process, observing the election with a 'gender lens'. The organisation could then issue a report focused on women's participation, identifying barriers at each stage of the process and providing recommendations on which actions should be taken to remedy these issues.

Public reports of citizen observer groups should provide impartial, independent information to the public on how an election was conducted. In this way, such observer groups provide a key citizen oversight function. However, the reports and accompanying recommendations also provide a basis for these groups to advocate for electoral reform during the inter-election period, so that improvements



can be put into place prior to the next elections. The promotion and advocacy of electoral reforms often become part of a broader democratic reform effort to make government institutions more accountable to citizens. The degree to which a reform process is inclusive and transparent is also an important indicator of the strength of democratic accountability more generally in the country.

The promotion of election recommendations should start as soon as possible following an election, as changes often involve amendments to legislation and even the constitution, which take time, particularly in an inclusive and transparent process. Changes to the legal framework should be made well in advance of elections, so that any new rules of the game are clear for all electoral actors to make preparations on an equal basis².

Citizen observer groups can promote electoral reform through a number of initiatives that are explored further in the guide. These include:

• Post-election stakeholder roundtables

Following the elections, it is a good idea for domestic and international observer groups to meet together and discuss their recommendations, ideally to harmonise them into a single set or to agree on priority recommendations. Post-election roundtables can also be a good opportunity for observers to present and discuss recommendations with other election stakeholders.

• Awareness-raising activities

When CSOs have set their priorities for electoral reform, they must find ways to get their issues on the policy agenda. There are a number of ways that CSOs can raise awareness of needed reforms, both with the public and policymakers. These include public events, social media campaigns, discussion programmes and signature petitions.

• Election reform committees

Once electoral reform is on the policy agenda, it can be useful to convene election reform committees to discuss and agree on detailed proposals for specific reforms. Election reform committees are sometimes officially formed within the parliament, which gives status to the work of the committee, but may make it more difficult for CSOs to participate. Civil society can also convene election reform committees, which can be inclusive of a broad range of stakeholders, but may also be sidelined from the official legislative process.

² The ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance states that no substantial modification shall be made to the electoral laws in the last six months before an election, except with the consent of a majority of political actors; the Council of Europe Venice Commission Code of Good Electoral Practice suggests that no significant changes should be made within a year of an election, except in exceptional circumstances and with broad political support.



• Legal commentaries

At certain points in the reform process it may be useful for an expert or group of experts to analyse either the current election-related legal framework or draft legislation and present the findings in a legal commentary. Such commentaries can be publicised as part of the advocacy efforts and may contribute constructively to the policy debate.

• Tracking and reporting on the implementation of recommendations

CSOs may wish to track the implementation of the recommendations and issue periodic public statements on the progress or lack thereof. Through such statements CSOs can remind policymakers, stakeholders and citizens of the recommendations as well as maintain their own public profile.

Such CSO election reform advocacy initiatives are part of a broader democratic accountability agenda. Many of the issues highlighted by election observers – such as transparency of government institutions, media access, political finance and inclusive decision-making are not only election issues, but apply much more broadly to democratic governance. CSOs which carry out such follow-up efforts can use the same public advocacy and monitoring skills to promote other aspects of democratic accountability.



CHAPTER 2: FORMULATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of observer recommendations is crucial for successful electoral reform advocacy and monitoring activities. Because the recommendations themselves provide the framework for such activities, they must be well constructed – both in terms of how they are written as well as what action they are recommending. If recommendations are unclear or impractical, then it will be challenging to conduct an advocacy campaign around them that connects with citizens as well as stakeholders, making success difficult to ensure.

When drafting recommendations it is important to remember their **purpose**. Recommendations suggest meaningful reforms to address the problems identified by election observers during the election process, as reflected in their election reporting. Recommendations are meant to help solve problems and offer assistance to authorities in meeting their country's international and regional obligations.

Recommendations should focus on improvements to legal frameworks and their practical implementation, as well as enhancing the administration of elections, including in terms of transparency and accountability. They should address any violations of fundamental freedoms in the election process and include the removal of any barriers to electoral participation by women, youth, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and other marginalised populations³. They may address the environment in which elections take place, including the conditions for the campaign and the media framework. They should also promote the peaceful conduct of elections. If a government fully implements a set of recommendations, there is an assumption that the framework should allow for transparent, credible and inclusive elections.

Below are a number of considerations to keep in mind when formulating recommendations:

Start early

Citizen observers should start thinking about recommendations from the beginning of their observation effort. For many citizen observer groups, priorities around electoral reform are likely to be long-term issues that are well-known prior to the elections taking place. In addition, other unexpected issues may arise during the course of an election process that may need to be addressed through recommendations, particularly when new legal provisions or operational arrangements are put in place for the first time.

³ See DoGP, para. 15.



Therefore, observer groups should already consider their plans for advocacy at the stage of designing their observation strategy and then reflect these aims consistently in their election reporting and recommendations on the basis of their observation.



Citizen observers therefore could, where relevant, consider a number of hypotheses prior to the election period that they can confirm or not with the findings of their election observation activities. These hypotheses may be based on previous citizen accountability activities the CSO has conducted, such as monitoring of parliament and other government institutions, or monitoring of the EMB's inter-election activities. The data collected during observation is essential to demonstrate that there is a genuine need for reform (or not). Without showing a real need, there will be little interest in recommendations. The more clearly and precisely problems can be described, the better the chances of raising interest in recommendations. In addition, other unexpected issues may arise during the course of an election process that may need to be addressed through recommendations, particularly when new legal provisions or operational arrangements are put in place for the first time.

Citizen observer groups should formulate draft recommendations on an ongoing basis throughout the election period. These should be in line with the positions taken before elections.

CONSIDERING ELECTORAL REFORM? START FUNDRAISING!

As citizen observer groups and CSOs begin to plan possible electoral reform initiatives, they must consider fundraising for these efforts as early as possible, ideally prior to the election period. Despite the emphasis on the 'electoral cycle approach', many donor organisations have their own funding cycles and/or may lack awareness regarding the need for electoral reform advocacy during the inter-election period. Donors should be encouraged to build electoral reform advocacy into their election-related programming for the previous election – not wait for the next election's programming, which will come too late for activities to be effective or even feasible. Post-election roundtables in particular need to take place within several months of the elections and therefore must be planned and funded prior to the elections taking place. Following the post-election roundtable, further funding will be needed to take advantage of any momentum for election advocacy. These activities need not be expensive, but they could require at a minimum the sustained attention of at least 2-3 staff members.



Review previous recommendations

If a citizen observer group has observed previous elections, then it is likely that the group issued recommendations on those occasions. It is also useful to consult the reports of other domestic or international observer groups to find out what recommendations they have made previously.

Citizen observers should keep in mind the previous experience of the implementation of recommendations/electoral reform when planning and conducting their activities. If previous recommendations have not been implemented and are still valid, they should be repeated, although they may be re-worded according to the current context.

Questions to ask include:

- **Have any of the recommendations been implemented, either partially or fully, and are these recommendations still applicable?**
- **If not, were there any attempts made at reform?**
- **What are the obstacles to the implementation of specific recommendations?**
- **What are the positions of specific stakeholders on each recommendation?**

Be clear

Recommendations should be written in clear, everyday language that can be easily understood by citizens and stakeholders alike. Jargon and acronyms should therefore be avoided. Recommendations should be concise, but still long enough to describe what action should be taken. It can be challenging to write clear, concise recommendations, and it may take some time to get them right. Using a chart for recommendations (see annex 1 for sample recommendations chart) may be helpful as it can include the problem that a recommendation addresses, the relevant regional/international standard, the stakeholder responsible and whether legal or constitutional change is required.

Reference standards

Election recommendations will be stronger if they are based on domestic legal standards (such as constitutional provisions), or international or regional obligations or commitments agreed by the country, and explicit reference is made to these. As international and regional standards (as well as the national legal framework) are the basis on which election observers make their assessment, they provide a strong foundation on which to base recommendations. If citizen observer groups find it challenging to identify which standards are at stake, they may wish to consult with a professor of law, human rights lawyer or other legal expert prior to issuing recommendations.



Be diplomatic

Remember that recommendations are being offered in a spirit of cooperation and try to word them in a polite and diplomatic way. Generally it is better to avoid the word 'must'. 'Could' is more polite than 'should', although if fundamental freedoms are at stake 'should' may be more appropriate. 'Consideration could be given to' is also generally a good wording for recommendations.

Be realistic

Recommendations should be based on what is practically implementable from a technical perspective. Observers should be cautious about what they recommend – it is better not to make a recommendation than to make one based on a false assumption or which may bring other problems. Consider **which stakeholder(s)** the recommendation is aimed at and **what concrete action** is necessary. Some recommendations will only require political will to be implemented (e.g. enforcing existing rules), while others may require changes to the legal framework (administrative procedures, legislation, or constitutional provisions). In some circumstances, it may be prudent to point out that an issue needs attention without prescribing a concrete solution. For instance, recommendations may call for stakeholders to 'review' some aspect of the legal framework or to conduct an audit of the voter register, rather than calling outright for changes to be made.

Don't overprescribe

Observer groups should remember that there may be more than one way to fix a problem and rather than being overly prescriptive about a solution, it is better to focus on the principle and allow the responsible stakeholders (for instance the EMB) to decide on the appropriate remedy.

Be focussed

Observer groups should also limit themselves to suggesting the most relevant recommendations, and therefore the recommendations should not be too numerous. Experience shows that 20-30 recommendations are typically sufficient in most contexts. The inclusion of too many less relevant recommendations can dilute the key messages, muddle an advocacy strategy and allow stakeholders to pick and choose the less important points to address.

Be coherent

Citizen observer groups should ensure that the recommendations they make work together as a package. It is not useful to make recommendations that contradict each other, or that will not work in the existing political and electoral context.



Remain within the mandate

Citizen observer groups should remain within their mandate when making recommendations. Therefore, observers should ensure their recommendations are 'election-related', while still recognising that many human rights and rule of law issues have a bearing also on the election process. For example, while the voting rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are a concern for election observers, the housing policy that affects IDPs would not be a relevant issue. Some issues fall into a grey zone, for example citizenship issues that directly affect the right to vote, and therefore may need to be considered.

International observers do not generally make recommendations regarding changes to the electoral system itself, as this is considered a sovereign decision. Citizen observers, however, may have more space to manoeuvre, as they are citizens of the country. Still, it is worth remembering that such issues are very sensitive and may also be politically charged, and so should be treated with caution. Often changes to the electoral system are seen as a quick solution that can solve all problems, but that is not the case. Frequently changing the electoral system does not promote stability of the legal framework and therefore may be counterproductive.

Consult with others

Over the course of the election process it is useful for CSOs to consult with election stakeholders on draft recommendations. When speaking with the EMB, political parties and other state institutions it may be useful to find out if they support your recommendations in principle, or have other suggestions to offer.

It is also a good idea to compare recommendations with those of other observer groups - domestic, regional and international - to check if they are thinking along the same lines and to ensure you do not contradict each other. Such early checking may help to promote the eventual 'harmonisation' of recommendations with other observer groups during the post-election period (see Chapter 4 'Initiating post-election dialogue'). Ideally, harmonisation allows CSOs to agree on a common set of priority recommendations.

⁴ See Democracy Reporting International (DRI) Briefing Paper 'Electronic Voting Machines: The Promise and Perils of a New Technology' available at www.democracy-reporting.org, and DRI video 'Electronic Voting Machines in Pakistan' at <https://youtube/L1Y0CIDAHZA>.



Good recommendations should be:

- Evidence-based
- Tied to national/regional/international standards
- Realistic - not overly burdensome or expensive to implement
- Consistent (and work as a package)
- Specific, but not overly prescriptive
- Concise

TECHNOLOGY AS A SILVER BULLET?

While it may be tempting to suggest high-tech solutions to solve problems, these may instead introduce new problems into the process. New election technologies offer a number of advantages, but also bring a number of challenges, including to the transparency of elections. Electronic voting machines, for example, do not allow for observers and others to visually track the casting of a ballot paper, which also may affect voter confidence in the process. Such technologies also may not be sustainable, as they are costly and need to be maintained over time by knowledgeable technicians. Ownership and accountability may become issues if vendors are the only ones able to run the system.

For technological solutions to be successfully introduced, they should have the consensus agreement of a broad range of stakeholders, including crucially the main political actors. They should be based on a comprehensive feasibility study and should be piloted before any decision is made to adopt them⁴.



CHAPTER 3: SELECTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In the immediate post-election period, citizen observer groups should think strategically about how best to follow up on the recommendations they have made, or those of other observer groups. How can they design follow-up projects that further their overall organisational aims, and make the best use of the skills and capacity they have developed? How can they seek to maintain the visibility that they have gained during the election period? What resources are available or potentially available to conduct electoral reform advocacy, tracking of recommendations or other follow-up activities?

A number of considerations for selecting which recommendations to focus on are discussed below. Further information on strategic planning is included in Chapter 5 'Developing a strategy and establishing a platform on electoral reform'.

How to analyse recommendations?

When considering the selection of recommendations for advocacy, it can be a useful first step to analyse the election recommendations – those of your own citizen observer group, those of other observer groups, or both – and consider what will be necessary to successfully implement each one.

Recommendations can be analysed in a matrix. If an observer group's recommendations are already organised in a matrix (see Chapter 2 'Formulation of recommendations'), then it is possible to add a few columns to the existing matrix. In particular, for each recommendation it is useful to consider:

- what type of action is required
- the financial implications
- the timeframe
- the feasibility of the recommendations
- who is responsible for making changes
- who agrees with the change
- the obstacles to change.

As the political context evolves, the analysis of recommendations may need to be reviewed and updated.

The matrix can be extended later to monitor the implementation of the recommendations (see Chapter 8 'Tracking the implementation of recommendations').

How to select the recommendations on which to focus?

Based on the analysis of recommendations, there are a number of ways that CSOs can determine on which recommendations they should focus their advocacy efforts:



• By priority

Some observer groups choose to designate certain recommendations as ‘priority recommendations’ based on their level of importance for transparent, credible and inclusive elections. These may be, for instance, recommendations directly affecting fundamental freedoms and therefore judged to be more crucial. Other observer groups may decide to divide recommendations into ‘short-term’ and ‘long-term’, particularly if another electoral event is foreseen in a short timeframe.

Some groups may wish to focus follow-up activities on the ‘most important’ or ‘most urgent’ recommendations. This depends very much on the political context, including the level of political will to enact reforms. In a situation where political will exists and there is a time pressure to improve the electoral framework, for instance because of another election taking place within a short timeframe, it may make sense to focus on short-term recommendations, which include those recommendations that do not require a change to legislation or the Constitution. In this way, certain changes can be made, for instance to the regulations of the election management body or the content/quality of training, that may provide for a noticeable improvement to the election process in a short period of time.

In a situation where political will is lacking and it is unlikely that any significant reforms will take place, a citizen observer group may choose to promote a number of ‘priority recommendations’ to demonstrate the unwillingness of the government to implement reforms and to maintain public and international focus on certain crucial issues in the post-election period.

• By theme

Does the CSO have a particular issue on which it would like to advocate? For instance, if an organisation is focused on the participation rights of a specific group, such as women, youth, a national minority, IDPs or people with disabilities, then the selection of recommendations to advocate for may be relatively straightforward, as it may wish to prioritise those recommendations that concern the specific target group. Advocacy efforts based on targeted observation of a group’s participation rights can be very effective – see ‘Good Practice Example: Nigeria’ below.

If a CSO is interested in a particular aspect of democracy promotion, such as media freedom, rule of law issues or transparency in political financing, then it may wish to focus on recommendations related to this specific issue area. Other CSOs with thematic expertise that are not necessarily engaged in election observation may also be involved and consulted.

• By stakeholder

In some cases it may be useful to focus on a set of recommendations that can be implemented by a particular stakeholder. This may be useful if a CSO has established good cooperation, for instance with the EMB or a judicial body. It may also be the case that a range of political parties are able to implement recommendations related to certain issues such as campaign codes of conduct, campaign finance, internal party democracy or women’s participation.



• By legal change required

Generally there are a significant number of recommendations that can only be implemented through legal changes, including changes to the electoral code or other election-related legislation, or through constitutional change. Generally speaking, recommendations requiring constitutional change can be particularly difficult and time-consuming to implement, unless there is a change of context that galvanizes political forces to take action. Legal changes may be more possible to advocate for, but also may be complex as the CSO involved will need to understand the legislative process and engage with MPs and legal experts to be effective. Recommendations that can be implemented with a change to regulations, such as those issued by the EMB, or other administrative procedures, may be the first to be implemented, if there is the political will to do so.

If a CSO has a legal background, ties to the parliament or experience with legal advocacy, then it may wish to focus its advocacy efforts on recommendations that require legal changes.

Good practice example

NIGERIA

Disability coalition translates sample-based, focused observation findings into concrete recommendations

In 2016, a coalition of disability rights groups formed the 'Leave No One Behind: Disability Votes Count' campaign to conduct a 'persons with disabilities (PWD) accessibility audit' of two state elections in Nigeria (Edo and Ondo). The campaign deployed specially trained observers, themselves with disabilities, to a random, representative sample of polling stations to collect data on 25 questions focused on specific PWD accessibility issues. The audits produced useful, representative evidence that the groups used as a basis for specific, concrete recommendations that were presented at press conferences and shared with key stakeholders. In both states, the campaign secured commitments from state and national electoral commissioners of the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) to address the issues they had identified. The campaign continues to share its audit findings and raise these issues through media appearances, press conferences and directly with INEC and other advocacy targets. The campaign sent a memorandum detailing its recommendations to the Constitution and Electoral Reform Committee (CERC) set up by the Nigerian government. Next it plans direct advocacy to relevant committees and the leadership of the National Assembly.



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND
disability votes count

SAMPLE BASED OBSERVATION INDICATE

..... **Polling Unit Materials**

INEC FORM EC40H

At 70%
of polling units, INEC officials did not record the data of PWDs participation in form EC40H

ONDO 2016 #Ondodecides /Leave No One Behind: Disability Votes Count

The Leave No One Behind campaign raised awareness about the issues it had identified during election observation using clever infographics, such as this, shared through social media.



CHAPTER 4: INITIATING POST-ELECTION DIALOGUE

In the months immediately following election day there is a window of opportunity for citizen observer groups to present their final assessments and raise awareness regarding their findings, as there is continued focus among the public, stakeholders, institutions and the international community on the election process, in particular if the electoral process was controversial. Observer groups should take advantage of this opportunity to present their final observation reports, including recommendations for improving the election process, consider harmonising their recommendations with other observer organisations and initiate dialogue on potential election reform.

Final press conference

Citizen observer groups typically hold press conferences to present their final election observation reports to the public. Such events are a good opportunity to highlight key recommendations that the organisation would like to advocate for in the period between elections, and to explain the election observation findings that are the basis for each key recommendation. It is also a chance to announce any plans the group may have for tracking the implementation of observer recommendations. In this way, the press conference can also provide an opportunity to launch post-election follow-up initiatives.

Post-election stakeholder roundtable

In addition to the presentation of the final report in a press conference, it can be very useful for citizen observer groups to organise and/or actively participate in **post-election stakeholder roundtables** to compare and discuss recommendations with other citizen observer and international observer groups. It can be helpful if such a process begins before recommendations are issued to encourage consistent messages. At the same time, post-election stakeholder roundtables can also offer an opportunity for groups to present their recommendations to various key stakeholders, such as the EMB, government, political parties, international actors and media, for discussion and consideration. Such forums may also consider whether there is the possibility to initiate a process of electoral reform.



Coordinate with others

As the importance of 'election follow-up' becomes increasingly recognised, it is important not to have too many parallel uncoordinated initiatives regarding post-election roundtables, as stakeholders may tire of discussing the same issues in different forums. It is therefore crucial that citizen observer groups coordinate their planning with other citizen and international observer groups.

It is common that in countries where the EU observes elections, it organises a post-election stakeholder roundtable during the return visit of the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM), when the Chief Observer returns to the country to present the final report to the host government and the public⁵. Generally such roundtables include political parties, the EMB and civil society, although their format and size may depend on the political context of the country. In any case, citizen observer groups should seek to be actively involved in such events and plan their own activities to build on them. Indeed, these events can be a key opportunity to coordinate follow-up activities with regional and international organisations and observer groups, which are increasingly recognising the need to engage with civil society on such initiatives⁶.

Be inclusive

It is important to be as inclusive as possible when discussing election reform, as inclusive processes are the most likely to be successful. At the same time, if there are too many people at the table, it may be more difficult to agree on priorities, or to have a focused discussion. To address this, it may be possible to divide into working groups according to category of recommendation (e.g. campaign finance or media), or to have a series of meetings for more in-depth discussions, including any sensitive or complex issues.

In difficult political contexts, such roundtables, if possible to organise, may be a rare chance for civil society or opposition parties to speak with government authorities and vice versa. In such cases, the process of creating space for dialogue may even be more important than the outcome.

⁵ See Hanbook for EU Election Observation (3rd Edition), p.185

⁶ See, for example, the OSCE ODIHR Handbook on Follow-up to Electoral Recommendations (2016), p. 32: 'Co-ordination between national and international agencies providing support to the implementation of recommendations increases the likelihood of support being effective, as it reduces duplication and creates opportunities for a cohesive follow-up process.'



SAMPLE AGENDA FOR ROUNDTABLE

- 1 Introductory remarks
- 2 Review of key election observer findings
- 3 Presentation of recommendations (by organisation, if several participating)
- 4 Discussion of recommendations by thematic issue (e.g. media, election administration, complaints and appeals, etc.) including background for the recommendations
- 5 Identification of priority recommendations for different stakeholders and organisations
- 6 Consideration of next steps
- 7 Concluding remarks (development of roundtable declaration - if possible)

Aim for harmonisation

Ideally, post-election stakeholder roundtables provide an opportunity to harmonise recommendations between different citizen and international observer groups, which may require a specific roundtable without key stakeholders. As different observer organisations are likely to have different priorities and methodologies, it may not always be possible to agree on a common set of recommendations. However, the more observer groups can coordinate, the more likely it will be that momentum continues for electoral reform activities. By harmonising their recommendations, or at least developing consensus around a set of key recommendations, observer groups also avoid stakeholders being able to 'cherry pick' which set of recommendations they would prefer to follow.

A way forward?

If at all possible, a stakeholder roundtable should have a tangible outcome - some type of declaration or agreement/roadmap that presents a way forward for further dialogue around electoral reform. Depending on the political context, it may be useful to have a press conference at the end of the event to present conclusions and any agreed next steps.

In some cases, election stakeholder roundtables have led to multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the **formation of electoral reform committees**, which meet on a regular basis to discuss possible reforms or even to draft joint policy proposals. In other cases, roundtables may also be a one-off event, but can still provide an important baseline for further follow-up activities by citizen observers and other CSOs, including both electoral reform advocacy and monitoring progress on the implementation of recommendations. See Chapter 7 'Electoral reform promotion and advocacy initiatives', for further information.



National Dialogue Process

In some circumstances, CSOs have decided to go beyond initial post-election stakeholder meetings and conduct a nationwide dialogue process, including regional and even sub-regional meetings with a broad range of stakeholders. Such consultations can provide a forum for a broad-based, grassroots approach to raising awareness of the need for reform, consulting with a wide range of target groups on specific recommendations and generating further dialogue.

Such nationwide dialogue may be more necessary in specific contexts. For instance, in deeply divided or post-conflict societies, it may be useful in attempting to develop consensus around politically sensitive issues. In large federal states, regional parliaments and other sub-national stakeholders may play important roles in implementing certain recommendations.

Good practice example

MALAWI

Nationwide post-election review forms basis for electoral reform advocacy

Following the May 2014 tripartite elections, which were characterised by a number of irregularities, the Malawi Election Support Network (MESN), comprised of 27 non-governmental, faith-based and community-based organisations, responded to public calls for electoral reform by leading a process together with other stakeholders to push for electoral reforms to be implemented prior to the next elections. As a first step, MESN issued a final election report with specific recommendations to address the identified challenges. It then conducted a post-election review process, including three regional dialogue meetings followed by a national conference, with civil society groups, faith-based organisations, academia, political parties, government ministries and departments, traditional leaders, youth and women's groups, to identify priorities for reform.

Based on the views expressed at these consultations, a National Task Force for Electoral Reforms, co-chaired by MESN and the Malawi Election Commission (MEC), carried out further engagement meetings with key stakeholders and identified four priority objectives for electoral reform:

- enhance the political legitimacy, inclusiveness, and representativeness of all officials;
- improve the coherency, integrity and adequacy of Malawi's legal framework;
- improve the impartiality, effectiveness and credibility of election administration and management;
- improve the civic competence of citizens on electoral matters.





The Task Force's reports were submitted to the Malawi Law Commission in January 2016, which later set up a Special Law Commission to review the electoral laws, and an agreement was also reached in October 2016 with the MEC and the Centre for Multiparty Democracy on priority non-legislative reforms that could be implemented immediately. In March 2017, the Law Commission submitted its report with draft bills on the laws to be changed, incorporating most of the Task Force's recommendations. Throughout the process, MESN issued periodic public reports on the status of the electoral reform process and progress on the implementation of the recommendations.





CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING A STRATEGY AND ESTABLISHING A PLATFORM ON ELECTORAL REFORM

Now that priority reforms have been identified, how can electoral reform be promoted? Who should be involved in electoral reform promotion, advocacy and tracking activities? It is important to establish a platform, coalition or committee early on that will organise follow-up activities. However the shape of the effort will depend on the specific aims, capacity of the organisations involved, as well as the overall political context (e.g. is there political will to take on electoral reform, or is the activity more about awareness-raising?). If there were previous efforts to promote electoral reform, it is useful to consider those experiences and any lessons learned, and to build on prior successes.

While citizen election observer groups are often in a strong position to conduct follow-up activities including advocacy campaigns and the monitoring of reforms because of their election expertise, they may not have significant public or political clout to have an impact. Therefore it may make sense to bring together a diverse range of other organisations with an interest in reform into a broader platform. Given the importance of electoral reform for the country, it is important to have a unified effort, if possible, that is formed in the national interest. This may mean that some CSOs have to put their differences aside to work together on the concrete goal of electoral reform.

CHALLENGES

Citizen observer groups and CSOs considering electoral reform should be aware that there are a number of potential challenges that they may face. Acknowledging any challenges from the beginning and discussing how they can be overcome is an important part of strategic planning and is key to a successful effort.

Common challenges for electoral reform efforts include:

- lack of funding
- difficult political environment
- low level of public or political interest in electoral reform
- potential competition between citizen observer groups
- lack of legal expertise or other thematic skills.



Strategic planning

Careful strategic planning is an essential initial step in organising a post-election electoral reform advocacy effort. While electoral reform is part of the broader political process, and therefore unpredictable, it is still necessary to put plans in place so that when opportunities arise, they can be acted upon. Being clear upfront about the aims of the effort will also help to ensure the coherence of the initiative, a shared understanding among the organisations involved, and will to promote transparency to other stakeholders, including potential donors.

Here are some questions to consider when creating a platform:

What is the current composition of your organisation/coalition?

Some citizen observer groups are coalitions or umbrellas made up of CSOs representing a broad range of interests, while others are a single organisation. If a citizen observer group is already a coalition or umbrella, then it may already have a broad representation of CSOs relevant for election reform activities. If a citizen observer group is a single organisation, it may wish to establish a wider platform for electoral reform activities.

- Consider what types of organisations are involved in the existing coalition/umbrella and who they represent. As electoral reform should be an inclusive process, it may be useful to involve organisations representing other demographics (e.g. women, minorities, disabled, youth/students, religious groups, IDPs, etc.). Of course, if your effort is to focus on a particular target group, a broad-based coalition may be less necessary.

- Also consider the public perception of the organisation/coalition. For electoral reform, it is useful to be seen to have considerable expertise on election-related issues, but at the same time to be as broad-based as possible, representing various citizen interests and specific types of expertise. It is most crucial to be widely perceived to be nonpartisan – independent of any political interests.

What are your aims?

It is important to set out the aims for your electoral reform effort upfront. What are the specific election issues that your group plans to address? What changes do you hope to see as a result of these efforts? If the platform includes a diverse range of CSOs, then it is important that each organisation participates in the strategic planning process and shares the overall goals of the platform or coalition.



If the set of recommendations that the platform plans to advocate for includes specific thematic issues such as transparency, rule of law, media freedom, campaign finance, women's participation, disabled rights, minority rights, IDP issues, etc., it may be useful to build alliances with CSOs that focus on these issues and include them in the platform.

What is your organisational capacity?

Follow-up activities including electoral reform advocacy and tracking the implementation of recommendations will build on many of the skills and expertise that a citizen observer organisation has built up through election observation. It is important to consider the comparative strengths that different groups bring to the coalition/platform, so that they can complement each others' efforts.

At the same time, electoral reform advocacy may require some additional skills, which an organisation may wish to take into consideration when deciding on the composition of the platform – bringing in other CSOs with specific expertise that it may lack. Depending on the design of the activities, relevant expertise may include:

- policy advocacy – specific to electoral reform or human rights issues
- legal expertise, including in-depth understanding of international standards
- legislative drafting and review
- communication skills, including social media campaigns
- engaging with parliament and political parties
- organising large-scale and high-level events
- opinion survey techniques.

At least as important as specific skills and expertise, it is necessary to consider the administrative and financial capacity of the groups involved in the platform. Unlike many election observation efforts, electoral reform requires a sustained long-term approach and it will be necessary to have administrative and financial structures in place to manage and coordinate the effort over several years. Generally platforms or coalitions choose a group as the secretariat to lead the electoral reform effort. This organisation should have the human resources necessary to ensure sound financial management and regular project and financial reporting to any donors, as well as efficient coordination of project partners.



What is the overall political context?

The overall political context will shape what is possible with follow-up activities and affect the design of strategy, including the composition of the coalition/platform.

- **In an open political environment where there is political will to consider electoral reform**, or where the possibility exists, then the platform may need to directly engage in the reform debate. As a result, the platform may need to include organisations with policy and legal expertise. These may include think tanks, academic institutes, rule of law/human rights CSOs, parliamentary support organisations or legal drafting centres. While it remains important to have effective external communications for sharing information with the public on the progress of electoral reform and there may be moments when mobilising citizens is necessary, the main focus may instead be on engagement with a range of specific stakeholders.

- **In an open political environment where political will for electoral reform is lacking or it is not on the policy agenda**, activities may focus instead on advocacy efforts on electoral reform to get the issues on the decision agenda. The platform may decide to have a multi-faceted approach to raise public awareness and build demand for electoral reform through a media campaign and other grassroots outreach strategies, as well as targeting specific institutional and political actors, to identify possible entry points and build the case for specific actions to implement recommendations. In such contexts, it may be important to include policy-making organisations as well as CSOs with grassroots networks.

- **In a closed political environment** such as one with an authoritarian regime where political will is lacking, the aim of an election advocacy campaign may be to raise public awareness of the key barriers to transparent, credible and inclusive elections. In such a case, it may be important to have a broad platform, if political conditions allow, to demonstrate support for reform to the general public. It may also be important to focus on public outreach outside of traditional media, which may be dominated by the state.



Good practice example

TUNISIA

CSOs conduct joint advocacy based on common recommendations

Tunisia held its first post-revolution democratic elections in October 2011. The elections were observed by a wide range of international and local organisations, many of which made recommendations to improve future elections. Several months later, an event organised by international observer groups to harmonise election recommendations brought media attention to the need for electoral reform, but also underlined the need for national observation groups to build common election advocacy platforms in order to speak with one voice about election reform towards decision-makers at the National Constituent Assembly (NCA).

In 2013, a platform of eight politically diverse national observation and advocacy groups came together through a process of consensus building to advocate for electoral reform⁷. Based on their 2011 election observations and recommendations, and keeping international observer groups' recommendations in mind, the platform members developed 75 specific recommendations on improving the election law that provided the basis for joint advocacy actions. The platform agreed on key legal reform messages that were communicated to the NCA through advocacy actions conducted either jointly or individually.

Advocacy actions included bilateral meetings with NCA General Legislation Committee members in charge of electoral reform and publicity tools such as media interviews and the organisation of a joint press conference. CSOs were able to implement advocacy actions based on their recognised election-related expertise developed during and after the 2011 observation work. Eventually advocacy efforts led to the adoption in February 2017 of a new and progressive law, with changes including: campaign finance, the status of election observers, youth participation, gender balance and voter secrecy for the illiterate⁸.

⁷ The platform included: Association tunisienne de droit constitutionnel, Association tunisienne pour l'intégrité et la démocratie des élections, I Watch, Jeunesses sans frontières, La ligue des électrices tunisiennes, Observatoire Chahed, Réseau Mourakiboun and Réseau Ofiya.

⁸ The project was financed through the former Instrument for Stability, IFS-RRM/2011/ 266-128.



CHAPTER 6: RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

While observer recommendations are presented as a package, each one deals with a separate issue and will likely require the involvement of different stakeholders to be implemented. Some recommendations may require the involvement of a number of stakeholders.

For each recommendation, consider who are the stakeholders that need to be addressed for changes to be made? Who are your supporters? Who are the potential opponents? Who are those that are not yet decided and can be persuaded? Stakeholder analysis can be useful for this.

Who are the key stakeholders?

First, it may be useful to organise recommendations by the stakeholder/institution most involved in its implementation. For instance, a number of recommendations involving legal changes will be directed at the parliament and government, while other recommendations involving changes to regulations or the implementation of legal frameworks may be directed to the EMB. Other key stakeholders may include the judiciary, political parties, media regulatory bodies, Ministries of Interior, police, civil society or other institutions.

Who are the primary and secondary decision-makers?

Institutions such as the parliament and the EMB are typically large, and their decision-making processes may be complex. Therefore a second step should be to define stakeholders as specifically as possible within the institutions, to define who the decision-makers are, and who else will be important internally for influencing the decision.

For the parliament, this may be a particularly complicated exercise. While there may be an expert body within the parliament that is responsible for drafting or proposing legislation, which will be important, it will also be necessary to engage with political parties represented in parliament, their leaders, parliamentary factions, and even individual MPs to encourage support for specific reforms that correspond to the recommendations. Depending on the structure and resources of the parliament, committee staff and staff members assigned to specific MPs may be crucial players. The level of transparency and access within the parliament will also determine the type of engagement you will be able to have with decision-makers, which will shape potential advocacy activities. Often governments propose legislation or control the legislative agenda and therefore need to be engaged too.

Defining the target audience

Based on the above analysis, it should be possible to define the 'target audience(s)' for each specific recommendation. These are the institutions and/or individuals



who your efforts will seek to influence. If you know the current attitudes of the stakeholders to your objective, then note whether they are positive, negative or neutral.

For each target audience, consider the best way to influence them. If they are positive towards your objective, you may still need to convince them of the importance of the issue and the need to take action. If they are negative towards your objective, then you may need to change their mind. If they are undecided, then they may understand the issue, but need to be further convinced of your position with solid, evidence-based arguments.

In addition to individuals and organisations, the public is a key target audience – both as a stakeholder affected by reforms, but also a potential way to influence other stakeholders through public pressure. Public support can be built at the central as well as regional levels.

Depending on the political context, the international and diplomatic community can be another important target audience as well as a stakeholder. In some countries, the international community can play a key role in pushing for electoral reform. EU Delegations and EU Member States, for example, are committed to follow up on the reports of EU EOMs as well as the reports of other election observation bodies (e.g. the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights – OSCE/ODIHR), and promote the implementation of their recommendations⁹. In particular in countries where there has been an EU or OSCE/ODIHR EOM, EU Delegations may take a leading role in encouraging electoral reform – through a combination of the political dialogue the EU conducts with the host country as well as in its development cooperation actions, including support to civil society efforts.¹⁰

The design of electoral reform advocacy activities will depend on the context and a number of other factors. The next chapter will consider different types of potential activities.



⁹ See the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2012-2015) at https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/131181.pdf.

¹⁰ For more information on the EU's approach to election follow-up, see EU brochure 'Beyond Election Day: Best Practices for Follow-up to EU Election Observation Missions' (May 2017) at https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eom_brochure_2017.pdf.



Good practice example

GEORGIA

CSOs Drive Efforts to Change the Electoral System

Back-to-back parliamentary, presidential and local elections have brought discussions on electoral reform almost every year in Georgia, and CSOs have used these opportunities to promote their election recommendations. The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) has led the CSO electoral reform agenda, together with the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association and Transparency International Georgia. Through their reform efforts, CSOs have learned that results are better achieved by joint advocacy and coalitions.

In recent years, the key electoral reform issue has been the change of the parliamentary electoral system, as the mixed majoritarian-proportional electoral system has repeatedly produced disproportionate results, which benefit ruling parties while putting the opposition at a disadvantage. It has also failed to ensure the equality of the vote and often resulted in a large number of 'lost votes' in the majoritarian constituencies. In its final report on the 2012 parliamentary elections, ISFED recommended that 'the existing election system must be reconsidered to ensure that the principle of equality of vote is observed and the will of citizens is proportionally reflected in the supreme legislative body.'

However, making changes to the electoral system proved to be rather difficult as it required the amendment of the Constitution. Following the 2012 elections, a parliamentary working group was established to consider electoral reforms. CSOs took an active role, and while a number of their recommendations were adopted, for example on campaign finance, major changes to the electoral system were not considered. Another working group established the following year prior to local elections had a similar result.

In 2015, civil society launched a new campaign for electoral system reform. Eight CSOs and 14 political parties signed a joint agreement establishing broad consensus on the electoral system. The agreement provided momentum, but political will from the ruling party was still lacking. Nevertheless, some incremental changes to the system were achieved and the campaign put the issue on the political agenda. In 2016, two constitutional amendments aimed at electoral system reform reached the Parliament, but neither was passed.



After the 2016 elections resulted in a constitutional majority for the ruling party, electoral system reform became a prominent issue. ISFED and partner CSOs joined the State Constitutional Commission established by parliament to discuss constitutional amendments, providing frequent updates to the public and presenting their views. At the same time, CSOs met with political parties and the international community, and established contacts with the the Venice Commission, which was to provide its opinion on the draft amendments.

A majority of opposition and CSO representatives in the State Constitutional Commission demanded a change of the electoral system. Draft amendments introduced by the Commission provided for proportional representation, but with caveats that did not fully eliminate shortcomings. Despite opposition by political parties and critical opinions issued by CSOs and the Venice Commission, the draft amendments were quickly passed by the ruling party. While some last minute improvements were made as a result of Venice Commission comments, the ruling party announced that the new fully proportional electoral system would not be implemented until 2024, with the 2020 elections to be held under the current system.

With the delay in the implementation of the proportional representation system, the reform was viewed by CSOs as only a partial success. This experience demonstrates that advocacy for significant electoral reform is a long-term endeavor requiring sustained commitment from CSOs - recommendations made in 2012 may now only be implemented in 2024. Still, this could represent an important step forward for establishing a level playing field for democratic elections in Georgia¹¹.

¹¹ The EU supported Georgian civil society involved in electoral reform through a series of projects: ENPI/2013/323-438 [CL] 'Election observation and parallel vote tabulation of Georgia's 2013 Presidential Election', ENPI/2012/296-516 [CL] 'Improving the quality of CSO policy dialogue with the Georgian Parliament', ENPI/2012/296-516 [CL] 'Improving the quality of CSO policy dialogue with the Georgian Parliament'.



CHAPTER 7:

ELECTORAL REFORM PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

What considerations should groups have in mind when designing advocacy initiatives? What are the specific efforts that citizen observer groups and CSOs can conduct to advocate for different types of recommendations?

Some recommendations require changes in the legal framework, which may call for engagement with political parties and others in parliament (if the political will exists). Other recommendations may be about the enforcement of existing rules, which may need public campaigns to pressure decision-makers. Careful consideration is needed to tailor the initiative to the context and type of recommendation.

External communications are key to any successful advocacy campaign. This requires good media relations, a communications plan and effective public reporting.

Analysing the overall political context

As mentioned, the overall political context matters and will help to shape the activities you develop. Before embarking on electoral reform activities it is important to consider:

Is there an electoral reform process already underway? Are political parties and/or other stakeholders discussing it? Or is there a reform process ongoing in another sector (e.g. youth, women, etc.)?

- If so, then electoral reform activities should be designed to support the ongoing process. This will require engaging with others to determine how the platform can best add value.
- If not, then the challenge will be to conduct activities to put electoral reform issues on the agenda.

Is there political will to consider and implement election recommendations?

- If so, then the platform can plan activities to engage directly with decision-makers to develop and support an electoral reform process.
- If not, then it may be necessary to consider ways to persuade decision-makers to consider electoral reforms, through citizen pressure as well as direct engagement.



Is there a political environment conducive to the conduct of media communication and political advocacy activities?

- If so, then the platform can promote citizen awareness of the need for electoral reform through traditional media and outreach activities, as well as social media and the internet.
- If not, then the platform can develop innovative ways to promote citizen awareness, for instance by developing model election laws or other parallel civic activities, while keeping IT and personal security considerations in mind.

Is it a post-conflict environment?

- If so, there may be transitional arrangements in place for elections that make discussing electoral reform challenging, and electoral reform activities may need to be more long-term in scope. Any activities should focus on encouraging inclusion and participation, the prevention and mitigation of potential violence and the need to maintain peace¹². Such activities must be conflict sensitive in nature, as electoral issues can act as a potential trigger for violence.
- If not, activities should still be conflict sensitive – promoting principles of inclusivity and transparency at all times.

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT	CIVIL SOCIETY OPTIONS
OPEN POLITICAL SPACE, POLITICAL WILL FOR ELECTION REFORM	Fully participate in reform debate; proactively submit recommendations; mobilise citizens in support of your priorities; public opinion research
OPEN POLITICAL SPACE, BUT NO POLITICAL WILL FOR GENUINE ELECTION REFORM	Advocacy to get electoral reform on the policy agenda; build public demand for reform through a media campaign and other outreach activities; engage decision-makers; explain problems and how reform will solve them
CLOSED POLITICAL SPACE NO POLITICAL WILL	Advocacy to have an inclusive reform process; parallel civic process – sample election law; vigilant watchdogging; engagement of the international community; public opinion research

¹² See National Democratic Institute (NDI) guide Monitoring and Mitigating Electoral Violence through Non-partisan Citizen Election Observation at <https://www.ndi.org/monitoring-and-mitigating-electoral-violence>.



Designing activities to promote the implementation of election recommendations

In designing initiatives to promote electoral reform, civil society platforms will need to strike a balance between activities to raise citizen awareness about the need for electoral reform, which requires maximum public visibility and activity at the grassroots level, and activities to engage and persuade decision-makers and stakeholders, which contribute expert analysis to the debate. While these types of activities may appear at odds with each other, they are both necessary to promote electoral reform. The balance between grassroots awareness-raising and expert advocacy will depend on the political and election context and will change over time, as the electoral reform process unfolds.

The appropriate timing for electoral reform promotion activities should also be considered. While there may be more attention on reforms immediately after elections, reform efforts can be organised at any moment, but in any case sufficiently prior to elections.



Possible types of initiatives to promote election reform

1. AWARENESS-RAISING EFFORTS

Following the elections and a possible post-election roundtable, what is the overall attitude towards electoral reform issues in the country? In most cases, unless there is pressure from either citizens or the international community following a difficult election process, electoral reform will generally not be on the political agenda.

What are the specific issues and reforms that have been identified for advocacy? To be successful in raising awareness on the need to address these election issues, it is crucial to highlight how they affect people's daily lives. Then the issue can be linked to the specific recommendation. Only if people accept that there is a need for reform, will they engage in pushing for solutions. By informing and mobilising citizens around key problems and recommendations, it may be possible to generate enough public demand for decision-makers to put issues on the agenda.

Such activities require an excellent communication and outreach strategy. Groups should develop outreach/awareness-raising efforts based on who the target audiences are, research on how those audiences get their information and how they are influenced, what messages may resonate with them, etc. Groups must do the planning and preliminary research (even if informal) on this to be effective.



Considerations for awareness-raising activities include:

- Make a compelling statement of the electoral issues your group has observed and what should be improved. **Why should people care about them?** What disadvantages do they bring for everyone?
- Select up to 10 **priority election recommendations** written in concise, accessible language that will be understood by average citizens. These 'citizen demands' should form the core of your awareness-raising campaign.
- Create **visually interesting communications (website, social media pages, etc.)** that are easy to navigate and available in relevant languages of the country. The material should be constantly updated with photos, videos and events to keep it interesting for visitors.
- Promote **organisational transparency**, including through the platform's website. Be open about the platform's objectives, membership, leadership and funding. Include contacts so that visitors can request further information and media know how to reach you quickly for comment.
- Consider the most **strategic timing** – for example, to coincide with EU or other follow-up missions (when applicable), political dialogue or by-elections.

Awareness-raising activities may include:

- **Advertising spots** on radio and TV to promote key messages on election reform.
- **Discussion programmes** on radio and TV to provide space for more in-depth discussion and explanation by experts of specific aspects of the electoral reform agenda. CSOs could develop a series of programmes on different electoral reform topics.
- **Social media campaigns** to promote the platform's key messages and especially to engage young people. One social media campaign in Pakistan used the hashtag '#reformnow' to raise awareness about key electoral reforms and the urgency of enacting them at least one year prior to elections, in line with good electoral practice. Any discussion programmes can be livestreamed on social media and clever spots can encourage people to share information with friends.
- **Rallies, marches or other public events** (e.g. concerts) to attract national media attention to the campaign. Events can be held at regional as well as national levels. Discussions on electoral reform can be live-streamed on a website and Facebook.
- **Signature petitions** to demonstrate support for 'citizen demands' on election reform and increase pressure on MPs for electoral reform. CSOs can also distribute **postcards advocating reforms** to be sent by citizens to MPs.



Tips for Effective Message Development and Communication

In the context of election reform advocacy, CSOs will need to develop a strong rationale, messages and talking points for each priority recommendation that the groups are advocating for, and the rationale and messages for each recommendation will need to be tailored to each target audience taking into account its interests and incentives.

For *each recommendation* the following questions should be considered:

1

What is the **rationale** for this recommendation?

2

Who are we trying to reach? These are the target audiences.

3

What is our **message** for each target audience?

4

What is the **best way to reach** this target audience?

Good practice example

MALAYSIA

Coalition engages citizens through grassroots movement for electoral reform

Bersih 2.0 is a coalition of 93 civil society organisations that campaigns for clean and fair elections and against corruption. The coalition has adopted a set of 8 demands on electoral reform, which it presented to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral Reform in detail in 2011, and for which it continues to advocate.

The coalition sponsors broad-based campaigns to raise awareness among citizens and put pressure on decision-makers, including public events, innovative online campaigns and mass rallies. In August 2015 it held a two-day rally that attracted a large number of participants in Malaysia and 85 cities globally, calling for reforms to stop corruption and for clean and fair elections. The rally raised over €500 000 from 27 000 donors to cover the costs of the rally and sustain Bersih's continuing electoral reform efforts.¹³

In 2017, Bersih organised the Delineation Action and Research Team to promote accountability and transparency in the electoral boundary delineation process, including through a number of court cases lodged to defend citizens' rights in the delineation process. Despite the refusal of the electoral commission to meet with them, Bersih continues to hold public events and forums around the country to raise awareness about the lack of progress on its election reform demands in the run-up to the general elections expected in 2018.¹⁴

¹³ 'Bersih 2.0 releases 2,126-page accounts for Bersih 4, wants Najib to reciprocate on RM2.6b donation' Malay Mail Online, 6 October 2015.

¹⁴ For more information about Bersih 2.0, see <http://www.bersih.org/>.



2. ELECTORAL REFORM COMMITTEES

Ideally, advocacy efforts will result in a concrete electoral reform process. Such processes should be as inclusive as possible, including political stakeholders, election officials, civil society and others. In some cases, an electoral reform committee is created to consider election recommendations and possible reforms, either within the parliament itself or outside of parliament between stakeholders.

While **parliamentary or government committees** have a certain amount of status as official bodies, and may ultimately be most effective in achieving electoral reform (especially for legal measures), they may be less inclusive as they tend to include only representatives of parliamentary political parties. Civil society may be excluded from the formal proceedings of such parliamentary committees, but this can be compensated for through open parliamentary hearings and external events to encourage citizen oversight and review draft legislation at key stages.

In other cases, electoral reform **committees or working groups may be convened and led by civil society**. Such a model has the built-in advantage of promoting transparency and citizen engagement. At the same time, even if they have the participation of political parties, proposals by such committees may be sidelined at the stage of introducing draft legislation into parliament, and their recommendations may be disregarded.



Good practice example

PERU

Civil society builds national consensus on the need for electoral reform

Following the 2016 elections, post-election dialogue was held between Transparencia and other CSOs, together with international organisations such as the EU, International IDEA and UNDP. Each organisation presented its recommendations, which, while not identical, were pursuing similar objectives, and planned further efforts for electoral reform. At the same time, Transparencia began its own post-election dialogue meetings throughout the regions, to understand people's concerns .

Based on their deep understanding of people's perceptions of elections and politics, Transparencia, Proética and feminist organisations have led a campaign to advocate for four priority recommendations: the need for internal party democracy, an end to 'dirty money' in elections, a ban on candidates with criminal backgrounds, and affirmative action to promote women's participation.

Based on its credibility gained through 20 years of citizen observation, Transparencia works with media to clearly communicate on the problems with politics, why electoral reform matters, and the potential solutions (see infographics).

Through this campaign, Transparencia has helped build a national consensus on the need for electoral reform, bringing its priority issues to the national agenda. While convincing Congress to pass legal changes remains a significant challenge, Transparencia, Proética and other CSOs continue to contribute technical proposals and work with others, including international organisations providing technical assistance to lawmakers, to pursue reforms prior to the next elections.

At the same time, during the recent 2016 elections, a set of organisations representing historically excluded populations began to play a prominent role in the debate over a more inclusive electoral legal framework. For example, #No Tengo Miedo and Society and Disability were involved in promoting the implementation of measures that would facilitate the suffrage of the transgender community and people with disabilities. Other CSOs such as Centro Amazónico de Antropología y Aplicación Práctica (CAAAP) and Ashanti worked on the positioning of the indigenous and Afro-Peruvian population in the electoral campaign, and specifically on the promotion of more effective rules of representation for these groups¹⁵.

¹⁵ The EU has supported domestic observers in Peru through the following projects: EIDHR/2015/369-276 (CL), Contrato de servicios para implementación de observación electoral domestica; EIDHR/2015/371-667 (CL).



REFORMA ELECTORAL

Es la posibilidad de **CAMBIAR LAS REGLAS** para todas las elecciones del Perú.

ES PROPUESTO POR:

- El Jurado Nacional de Elecciones (JNE)
- El Poder Ejecutivo
- La Comisión de Constitución del Congreso
- Más de 60 proyectos de ley adicionales.

SU FIN ES OBTENER:

- 1 PARTIDOS REPRESENTATIVOS:** Se proponen elecciones internas supervisadas. **En la actualidad se permite:** Tener representantes o candidatos elegidos a dedo o por intereses.
- 2 CANDIDATOS LIMPIOS:** Se proponen mayores filtros. **Que participe un candidato con prisión preventiva, denuncias o condenas.**
- 3 PARTIDOS TRANSPARENTES:** Se proponen nuevas sanciones y más incentivos. **La participación de partidos que no declaran sus ingresos y gastos.**

UNA DE LAS PRINCIPALES PROPUESTAS ES:
Que la ONPE y el JNE supervisen las elecciones internas para que exista una verdadera **DEMOCRACIA INTERNA**.

DEMOCRACIA INTERNA ?
Son las elecciones dentro de cada partido para escoger a sus representantes y candidatos a cargos públicos.

80% de peruanos ESTÁ DE ACUERDO CON ESTA INICIATIVA.

RPP NOTICIAS Fuente: IFF / Integración Margenta/Novazul 6.2017



3. LEGISLATIVE COMMENTARY

At certain stages in an electoral reform process it may be useful to develop expert commentary on existing or proposed legislation.

For example, some election recommendations may point to flaws in the legal framework itself, such as ambiguities, gaps or inconsistencies between different relevant laws. In such cases a review of the legal framework for elections, or of relevant pieces of legislation, will be able to highlight areas of weakness and make more specific recommendations that can eventually form the basis of draft legislation or amendments. In some cases, CSOs have drafted model legal provisions or amendments that include their election recommendations.

If there is an electoral reform committee in place – either as a parliamentary committee or external – then it may be producing draft amendments or new legislation that can and should be reviewed by civil society when drafts are made available. Timely access to draft legislation is very important in such cases, so that the legal review can have an impact on the ongoing debate, and there is adequate time to consider any suggested improvements.

Commentary on draft legislation should be drafted by legal experts with an understanding of international and regional standards for elections and the specific political context. This may be a combination of people – for instance, the platform may have its own experienced legal expert, but it may also be useful to bring in an international election expert with comparative knowledge. If the platform does not have legal expertise internally, then it could consider identifying an external legal expert, for instance from a university or other institute. It could also consult with international technical assistance providers, as well as international or regional organisations, which may be able to share their assessments.

If several experts work on the legal commentary, then it should be consolidated into one clearly written document that is ideally accessible to those without legal expertise. Another option is to publish an executive summary in addition to the review. Typically civil society platforms would seek to publicly present the legal review – for instance with a press conference or an expert roundtable. There are a number of helpful resources for those conducting legal reviews, including to reference regional and international election standards¹⁶.

¹⁶ See OSCE ODIHR Guidelines for reviewing a legal framework for elections (2013), NDI Guide: Promoting Legal Frameworks for Democratic Elections (2008) and EU Compendium of International Standards (2016).



4. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS

Another way that civil society platforms can demonstrate public support for electoral reform is through public opinion surveys. For example, surveys can show the extent of public confidence in relevant institutions and actors (e.g. judiciary, elections commission, political parties, parliament, the media, etc.) or whether the public believes that electoral fraud has affected the results of previous elections. Such survey results can be widely distributed through the internet and on social media using clever infographics, and can help to persuade both the public and decision-makers on the need to address shortcomings through electoral reform.

Good practice example

KYRGYZSTAN

Coalition conducts opinion polls as part of electoral reform advocacy effort.

By regularly conducting countrywide telephone opinion polls on specific election-related issues, a CSO, the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society, produced data that informed its election observation and advocacy efforts. For example, in June 2017, the Coalition conducted a poll on the introduction of biometric passports, which were the only form of ID allowing voters to participate in the presidential elections held in October of the same year. The poll assessed the public's attitude towards biometric registration, public awareness of the transition to biometric passports, and the level of participation broken down by region and age group. The poll also showed how effective the information campaigns had been, asking citizens how they had been informed about the biometric registration process, and showed where there had been technical issues. The coalition applied this data in its pre-election advocacy efforts and also used the data to inform its election observation.



CHAPTER 8:

TRACKING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to advocating for election observer recommendations to be addressed, it is also important for civil society and others to track the progress or lack of progress on addressing recommendations by the government and other key actors. Such recommendation tracking can help to keep election recommendations on the agenda during the inter-election period, and to try to open dialogue if stalled. It also provides a useful way for citizen observer groups and others to remain active and visible during the inter-election period. Citizen observer groups are well-placed to track their own recommendations and those of other election observer organisations, and this information can be important to citizens and national stakeholders alike, as well as to the international community. Such information will also be useful to future election observation efforts.

While it is common practice for citizen observer groups to make recommendations after elections, there are few instances where they have monitored the implementation of recommendations in a comprehensive way, with regular reporting on the progress made or lack thereof. Such tracking of recommendations can be implemented with relatively few resources, since it mostly requires an organisation/platform to be well-informed, which is typically the case in any event. Strong report writing is also important, as this is necessary for communicating key messages effectively.

Monitoring the implementation of recommendations can be done as a standalone activity, or it can be combined with other activities to promote election reforms. CSOs can collect information on the implementation of recommendations through roundtables and consultations on electoral reform, through meetings with key stakeholders, CSOs and representatives of institutions such as the EMB and parliament, and through media reports.

A matrix can be helpful for tracking the implementation of recommendations over time. A sample matrix template is introduced and explained below.

Matrix for tracking recommendations

A sample matrix for tracking recommendations can be found in the annex. The sample has 13 headings, which can be modified to meet the circumstances of the CSO conducting the monitoring. It may be useful to use Excel or a similar programme for the matrix, which allows for easy sorting and also provides ample space for adding text.

¹⁷ Based on NDI's Recommendations Tracker for observer delegations (unpublished).



It is important that information is entered and categorised in an accurate and consistent manner, which will require active oversight from more experienced members of the team. While the initial entering of the recommendations is a rather straightforward task, decisions on categorisation and the priority level should be reviewed by an experienced staff member. Analysis of the steps towards implementation of the recommendations requires a clear understanding of the contextual factors and should also be done by senior staff¹⁷.

CSOs may wish to set up a website with the tracker so that the information can be easily accessed by the public and other stakeholders. In this case it is even more crucial that the information made live is accurate and concise.

The sample matrix for recommendation tracking includes the following column headings:

1 Number of the recommendation (useful for organisational purposes).

2 Date of entry

3 Organisation (that made the recommendation) – if you are tracking recommendations of other domestic or international observer organisations.

If you are tracking only those of your own CSO, or recommendations between organisations have been harmonised, then this heading is not necessary.

4 Priority level (H/M/L) – Assess how important the recommendation is based on your own CSO understanding and the original prioritisation (if any) of the organisation making the recommendation. This should indicate the level of impact the reform will have on the electoral process, regardless of the timeframe. Recommendations related to human rights and fundamental freedoms should generally be high priority.

5 Category – Categories may include: legal framework, election administration, voter registration, candidate/party registration, election campaign, campaign finance, media, women's participation, complaints and appeals, election security, violence, women's participation, PWD, etc.

6 Recommendation – Include text of the recommendation, source document (e.g. final report, legal review or other) and date.

7 Background – What specific problem is this recommendation seeking to address? This context should be specified in the observer report, which can be referenced in the table.

8 Institution/individual addressed (by the recommendation) or the authority responsible for making the change (e.g. Parliament).



9 Legal change? Does this recommendation require change to the Constitution or to legislation? If so, specify.

10 Action taken/official response – Include date of any action or statement.

11 Further action needed – What remains to be done for full implementation of the recommendation.

12 Inclusivity - Which actors were consulted in the decision-making, and which actors need to be consulted (e.g. political parties, EMB, civil society, media).

13 Analysis/notes – include a brief analysis of the response to and implementation of the recommendations by relevant actors. The analysis should consider the following:

- a.timing in relation to the next election,
- b.impact of reaction or non-reaction,
- c.reasons for delay in response or action (assessing whether or not the delay is reasonable).

During the course of the monitoring, it may be useful to 'sort' the results either by priority level, category, institution addressed or legal change, to understand which type of recommendations are being address and which are not. This information will contribute to the analysis that CSOs include in their periodic reporting.

Reporting on the implementation of recommendations

CSOs tracking the implementation of election recommendations should issue periodic public reports on the progress made by stakeholders in addressing them. Depending on the level of activity around electoral reform, CSOs may decide to do this annually, or more or less often – depending on the level of interest in electoral reform and the capacity of the CSO. If no actions have been taken and no discussion of recommendations has taken place, then it may be useful to issue a brief report mid-way through an election cycle to point this out and use it as an opportunity to advocate for an electoral reform process.

Reports should focus on analysis of any changes made and attempts at reform. Have there been changes made that correspond to the election recommendations? If so,



how inclusive was the process, how did it come about and what is the impact? If not, what are the specific obstacles to reform or to certain recommendations being addressed? Reports can also address if certain recommendations are still relevant, or if the context has changed so that they are no longer required or another solution is necessary. The length of such a report will vary depending on the complexity of the reform process and the amount of progress made. An executive summary may be helpful for providing an overview of the state of play regarding electoral reform. To support the preparation of such a report, groups may wish to use the 'periodic follow-up report template' (Annex 3), which assists in the collection of information by stakeholders.

While CSOs and others will be interested in the 'score' of the country in implementing recommendations, groups should use caution when providing numbers or the percentage of recommendations implemented. Firstly, some recommendations are more important than others, so while it may be relatively straightforward for authorities to implement a certain number of recommendations on 'peripheral issues', those dealing with fundamental freedoms may be the most crucial and the least likely to be addressed. Also, recommendations often remain 'partially addressed' or are addressed in a different way than originally envisioned, which can be challenging to calculate. Finally, it is also the case that recommendations are not always well drafted or may not still be relevant in a changing political context.

The analysis of progress made on the implementation of recommendations can be complicated and may require the attention of several experienced people to draft balanced language and look not only at the recommendation, but also at the intention of the recommendation to judge whether it has been sufficiently addressed.

Sharing findings on the tracking of recommendations

It may be useful for CSOs/platforms to have a press conference or a roundtable to present findings on progress made in addressing election recommendations. Such events provide visibility for the CSO/platform and an opportunity to share key messages on electoral reform with stakeholders and the public through the media. If the findings are shared in a press conference, then it is useful to develop a one-page press release that gives a summary of the findings and their significance, including a quote from the director of the CSO/platform.

If a roundtable is held to coincide with the sharing of findings on progress in implementing electoral reform, then the event can look at what has been done and what is still to be done, and develop a strategy for addressing remaining recommendations.

Good practice example

GUATEMALA

Guatemalan citizen observers gain electoral reforms amid overall civic demands for change

The Mirador election observation coalition monitored a broad range of issues in the 2015 elections, including campaign finance, electoral violence, barriers to participation for women, indigenous people and LGBTI communities, and media, and conducted a parallel vote tabulation to provide a check on the results. The final report included a number of recommendations to improve the process.

The elections took place in a highly charged political environment, following a number of high-level corruption investigations that led to the resignation of senior political figures, including the president, and which sparked months of civic protests against corruption. In the months following the elections, CSOs including those in Mirador Electoral, leveraged the overall political climate to advocate for their electoral recommendations to be included in the landmark Law on Elections and Political Parties (LEPP). The final LEPP reform package included about two-thirds of Mirador Electoral's recommendations.

The advocacy effort allowed CSOs to push for changes on the issues they had highlighted in their election monitoring reports. For instance, Accion Ciudadana, part of Mirador Electoral, used its campaign finance monitoring effort to show that parties' expenditures were greatly exceeding campaign income limits. This indicated that parties weren't actually disclosing all of their income - suspected to be in part from narcotics traffickers. These findings helped strengthen demand for greater disclosure requirements on both income and expenditures, which were included in the LEPP.

While some key recommendations were not included in the reform package, Mirador Electoral recognises that electoral reform is a gradual process. Through the process that led to the adoption of the LEPP, citizens and CSOs alike saw that their involvement made a difference, and will be motivated in the future to continue to push for other reforms, including on improved representation of women and indigenous groups.





ANNEXES





ANNEX 1: SAMPLE RECOMMENDATIONS CHART

#	Problem/context	Recommendation	Responsible stakeholder	Constitutional or legal change?	Relevant standard
1					
2					
3					
4					



ANNEX 2: SAMPLE MATRIX TO TRACK ELECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Organisation	Priority (H/M/L)	Category	Recommendation	Background	Institution addressed	Legal change?	Action taken	Further action	Inclusivity	Analysis notes
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											



ANNEX 3: PERIODIC FOLLOW-UP REPORT TEMPLATE

Organisation name :
Period Covered:

1. Summary of follow-up actions	Any recommendations implemented?
2. Actions taken by government agencies 1. 2. 3.	
3. Actions taken by parliament 1. 2. 3.	
4. Actions taken by political parties 1. 2. 3.	
5. Actions taken by election management body 1. 2. 3.	
6. Actions taken by civil society (including to promote or advocate for recommendations) 1. 2. 3.	
7. Actions taken by media (including coverage of electoral reform topics) 1. 2. 3.	
8. Actions taken by international community 1. 2. 3.	
9. Next steps 1. 2. 3.	



ANNEX 4: FURTHER AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Resources on election recommendations and follow-up

- EU brochure - Beyond Election Day: Best Practices for Follow-up to EU Election Observation Missions (2017)
https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eom_brochure_2017.pdf
- OSCE ODIHR Handbook on the Follow-up of Electoral Recommendations (2016)
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/244941?download=true>
- European Parliament Briefing Paper: Following-up on Recommendations of EU EOMs (2012)
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/following-up-on-recommendations-of-eu-election-observation-missions-pbBB3012123/>
- Declaration of Principles for International Observation - Guiding Principles and Coordinated Approaches for Follow-Up on EOM Recommendations (2010)
http://electionstandards.cartercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/DoP_2010_GuidingPrinciplesFollowUp.pdf
- Electoral Reforms – EU Observation and Pakistani Priorities: Discussion Tour Report, Democracy Reporting International (2013)
http://democracy-reporting.org/?dri_publications=discussion-tour-report-eu-observation-and-pakistani-priorities

Resources on electoral reform and legal advocacy

- GNDEM Seminar 'Asia – Middle East Civil Society Exchange: Promoting Post-Election Accountability' (2014), select presentations
<http://www.lokniti.org/AsiaMiddleEastCivilSocietyExchange.php>
- 'Post-Election Programming Options,' presentation by National Democratic Institute (2015)
- Outreach and External Communication: A Field Guide for the West African Observers Network
https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Outreach%20and%20Communication_WAEON_EN.pdf
- Changing Laws: A Legislative Lobbying Toolkit, Fiji Women's Rights Movement and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (2010)
<https://rrrt.spc.int/publications-media/publications/item/60-changing-laws>



Resources on monitoring of observer recommendations

Intro guide to recommendation tracker and recommendations tracker, National Democratic Institute

Resources on legal review and international standards

- OSCE ODIHR Guidelines for reviewing a legal framework for elections (second edition, 2013)
<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/104573>
- NDI Guide: Promoting Legal Frameworks for Democratic Elections, National Democratic Institute (2008)
<https://www.ndi.org/node/24100>
- Major Electoral Law Reform in Pakistan: Assessment and Recommendations for the Draft Elections Bill 2017, Democracy Reporting International (DRI Briefing Paper 76, January 2017)
http://democracy-reporting.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/DRI-PK_PCER_Electoral_Reforms_Bill_v2.2_2017_01_24.pdf
- EU Compendium for International Standards (fourth edition, 2016)
<https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/compendium-en-n-pdf.pdf>

Resources on election assistance

- Working together in electoral assistance: Formulating and implementing electoral assistance in the context of the EU-UNDP partnership, UNDP Joint Task Force (2013)
<https://www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/undp-contents-publications-EU-and-UNDP-working-in-electoral-assistance-English.pdf>
- Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance, European Commission (2006)
https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/election-assistance-methodological-guide_en.pdf





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