



PRRVT

PROCESS AND RESULTS VERIFICATION FOR TRANSPARENCY

A Citizen Election Observer's Guide



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Foreword



One of the most important democratic advancements over the past 35 years has been the rise of independent nonpartisan citizen observers.

Building upon the efforts of organizations like the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) in the Philippines and similar initiatives, local organizations and networks in every region of the world now seek to defend the rights of voters and to ensure, in line with Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that "[t]he will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; [and that] this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections." While democracy is much more than elections, meaningful democracy is not possible without those elections being credible; and independent nonpartisan citizen observers play a critical role in defending the right to vote and ensuring elections around the world are more inclusive, transparent and accountable.

Citizen observation remains essential as electoral integrity is under attack as never before. Around the world, those who would seek to gain unfair electoral advantage continue to try to manipulate elections for their benefit and to subvert the will of the people. They do so by excluding eligible voters from electoral processes, particularly those from historically marginalized groups; making those processes more opaque; and undermining accountability. Further, while technology has made elections more efficient, it has also been used to proliferate disinformation. These challenges are further exacerbated by the

rise of external illiberal influences, China, Russia and others, that actively seek to undermine credible elections by eroding trust in electoral institutions, increasing cynicism, and disrupting the electoral information environment. All of these factors have weakened public confidence in electoral processes and outcomes.

One of the most powerful tools citizen observers have to promote credible elections is the ability to provide rigorous and systematic information on voting and counting, and to independently verify the accuracy of official election results. Using long established statistical principles and sophisticated technology, citizen observers are able to deploy carefully selected and highly trained observers to a representative sample of polling stations and receive, verify and analyze reports from those observers in near real time.

This serves as a powerful deterrent against manipulation by empowering citizen observers to more precisely measure the scale and scope of any issues arising during voting and counting that may compromise the integrity of the process, as well as to predict the official results within a statistical margin. When this data confirms official results, it can provide important information to enhance public confidence that results reflect legal ballots cast. However, if results have been manipulated, the timely sharing of evidence can not only expose the fraud, but may point to the true result.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) prefers to call this advanced citizen observer methodology PRVT - Process and Results Verification for Transparency. While previously referred to as either a Quick Count or a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT), these terms today are no longer accurate and do not reflect how the methodology has evolved.

The term PRVT makes clear that the methodology inherently includes observing the processes of voting and counting - from before the opening of polling stations through the announcement and posting of results. This is essential because if the voting and/or counting processes are systemically compromised then the results cannot truly reflect voter preferences. Further, the term “verification” avoids confusion and makes clear that it is election management bodies (EMBs) who are officially responsible for voting, counting, tabulation, and announcing of official results.

The NDI is releasing this updated guide 35 years after NAMFREL first conceived of the methodology for independent, non-partisan election observation, and 20 years after we published our original guide.¹ We undertook this update because, while the basic principles underlying the methodology are essentially the same, how citizen observers conduct PRVTs has fundamentally changed. In every region of the world citizen observation organizations have improved their methodology in response to new electoral challenges or by taking advantage of new opportunities.

As a result of their efforts, citizen observers are no longer implementing PRVT version 1.0, but PRVT version 5.0. Unlike 20 years ago, PRVTs now routinely include process information on voting and counting; utilize advanced technology to enable observers to report in near real time; apply sophisticated verification techniques to ensure accurate data;

engage in more robust external communications; and more often draw upon complementary information to enhance analysis of PRVT data. While their objectives remain the same, PRVTs today bear little resemblance to their predecessors.

Nonetheless, many lessons included in the original guide remain as true today as when they were first written, including:

Not every election warrants a PRVT - As detailed in *Chapter 2: Deciding to Conduct a PRVT*, there is a long list of factors that should be carefully considered before undertaking a PRVT. For example, some electoral systems don't lend themselves to using the PRVT methodology and other observation approaches should be employed.

PRVTs are all or nothing exercises - Because PRVTs are based on statistical principles, they demand a much higher level of operational rigor than other observation methodologies. The most challenging part of a PRVT is not the statistics, but the operational demands they impose upon citizen observer organizations.

PRVTs are not a silver bullet - PRVTs focus explicitly on voting and counting at polling stations on election day as well as the subsequent tabulation and announcement of results. PRVTs should be undertaken as a part of a comprehensive observation strategy that encompasses the entire electoral process.

This guide is deeply indebted to citizen observers who first pioneered the PRVT as well as to the myriad of organizations that have implemented and advanced the methodology since. It is the product of the efforts of hundreds of citizen observer organizations located in every region of the world and reflects the state of the art in conducting PRVTs

1. *The Quick Count and Election Observation: An NDI Handbook for Civic Organizations and Political Parties* by Melissa Estok, Neil Nevitte and Glenn Cowan

while also pointing to future innovations. These include applying the methodology developed for PRVTs to advance other democracy strengthening objectives. Through these efforts local capacity has been strengthened resulting in more vibrant civil society and stronger, more resilient democratic institutions.

NDI is honored to have worked with citizen observation organizations around the world over nearly four decades, and to have contributed to their efforts to expand their capacity and self-reliance to

promote electoral integrity. I also want to recognize NDI Senior Elections Advisors Julia Brothers, Michelle Brown and Mario Mitre, as well as NDI Elections Director Richard L. Klein, and all the members, current and past, of the Institute's Elections team for their efforts to support citizen observers to conduct PRVTs, and produce this valuable resource.

At this moment when democracy and electoral integrity are under increasing threat, citizen observation and the PRVT methodology could not be more crucial.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Daschle". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Thomas Daschle

Chairman, National Democratic Institute

October 2023

Acknowledgments

Over the past 35 years, citizen organizations around the world have implemented over 170 PRVTs, often leading to watershed moments in their country's political history. This guide rests upon the commitment and hard work of each of thousands of civic activists and organizers who have led these efforts. NDI has had the privilege of working alongside these civic leaders as well as learning from them. It is the hard-earned expertise developed through those partnerships that has made this guide possible.

The authors would like to thank Laura Grace and Lexi Boiro, who worked to connect the puzzle pieces of the guide together – making this guide a coherent document – and carried the drafting and production process forward. Pat Merloe, who served as NDI's institutional leader on elections for decades and has been a champion of citizen observation since the beginning, provided feedback on the guide's initial drafts that helped to shape what it has become. Current members of NDI's Elections team, including Alexander Pommer, Amanda Domingues, Anis Samaali, and Johandra Delgado, offered feedback that ensured the guide was reflective of the diversity of PRVT experiences. Kion Bordbar provided behind-the-scenes support with the details of finalizing the guide. Monika Emch and Sophie Venus served as proofreaders, making sure we crossed all T's and dotted all I's in the guide, and Phil Brondyke brought the text to life through layout and graphic design.

This guide rests upon the knowledge and experience of numerous civic activists with whom NDI has interacted over the years, as well as current and former NDI staff and consultants, and colleagues

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Many PRVT leaders have become mentors and technical advisors to the citizen election observation community over the years. NDI would like to thank these individuals for their leadership and infectious enthusiasm, which have brought many other PRVT leaders into the fold. While not a comprehensive list, some of these individuals include Amanda Pleasant, Anta Faye Niang, Armel Yapi, Belinda Musanhu, Ben Lynch, Ben Mindes, Boniface Chibwana, Cheikh Tidiane Cisse, Claudia Paz, Courtney Hess, Cynthia Mbamalu, Dana Diaconu, Daniel Ukpai, Dario Jovanovic, Dickson Omondi, Dipo Odumosu, Elana Kreiger-Benson, Eka Siradze, Emmanuella Tuo, Francis Madugu, Franck Diea, Franklin Oduro, George Chiusiwa, George Ofosu, Gram Matenga, Holly Ruthrauff, Ian Goredema, Irakli Naskidashvili, Iryna Kachurivska, Jahl Dulanto, Jared Ford, Jose Cruz, Josseline Matute, Julio Donis, Kholipha Koroma, Laz Apir, Linda Patterson, Luc Lapointe, Luvy Rocha, Mahsuma Petrovic, Maka Meshveliani, María José Pérez, Mario Cerrato, Maroun Sfeir, Martha Lucía Ortega, Meghan Fenzel, Mellisa Nelson, Mersad Avdic, Michael McNulty, Milimo Mbilwa, Neichi Minn, Olena Botsko, Olga Sedova, Paul James, Pemphero Manyawa, Percy Medina, Phil Brondyke, Rahma

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No list could be comprehensive, and many others have led innovations in PRVTs over the years, including many leaders in complex security environments who have done so at great personal

risk. NDI is grateful to these individuals for their leadership. Moreover, none of this would be possible without the efforts of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) and its regional networks to elevate citizen election observation around the world, stand in solidarity with election observers around the world, and connect citizen observers to learn from each other.

This guide rests upon the knowledge and understanding provided by Neil Nevitte, Melissa Estok, and Glenn Cowan through *The Quick Count and Election Observation: An NDI Guide for Civic Organizations and Political Parties*, which has served as a key reference for PRVT practitioners since its publication in 2002.

The production of this guide was made possible by a grant from the U.S. Department of State. Many of the citizen observer organizations, PRVTs and innovations mentioned were supported fully or in part by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the National Endowment for Democracy, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Government of the Netherlands, and the Swedish International Development Agency and other international donors. We wish to express our gratitude for their support to citizen observers and the important role they play in promoting and protecting electoral integrity.

Over the next 35 years and beyond, NDI hopes to continue to stand alongside civic activists seeking to advance electoral integrity around the world. We will continue to learn from each other, and hope this guide will serve as one tool among many in doing so.

Julia Brothers, Michelle Brown, Mario Mitre, and Richard Klein



Introduction

Democracy, at its core, is an embodiment of a society's commitment to human dignity. Democratic processes and institutions help ensure that all citizens – regardless of their background – can have a say in the overall direction of their country and benefit from the work of government. Elections, as a central aspect of the democratic process, are an exercise of citizen participation and empowerment that are grounded in full representation, inclusion and human dignity. They allow citizens to run for office, advocate for political platforms, vote for people to represent them in government, and hold incumbents accountable for their performance. While election outcomes often represent inflection points in the political trajectory of a country, people's perceptions of whether an election – including what happened before, during and after election day – was fair and credible can also have long-term repercussions on citizens' fundamental trust in broader democratic processes and institutions.

During the democratic breakthrough elections of the 1990s and managed political transitions at the turn of the 21st century, many societies lacked confidence in the process, raising concerns about the credibility of voting, counting and tabulation, and highlighting the need for independent checks on results. Responding to this need, nonpartisan citizen election observers, sometimes called "domestic monitors," were instrumental in safeguarding the electoral process, especially on election day. Successful citizen interventions that leveraged strong methodologies for independent, timely and accurate assessments have both helped build trust in fairly run election processes, and mitigated voting and counting fraud. However, as oversight of election day increased, malign actors began to manipulate conditions in the pre-election period to influence election day outcomes, such as skewed voter registries, media capture, and voter suppression. To

meet this challenge, election observers around the world modified their methods to better monitor pre-election conditions and shored up public awareness and confidence in the broader election cycle.

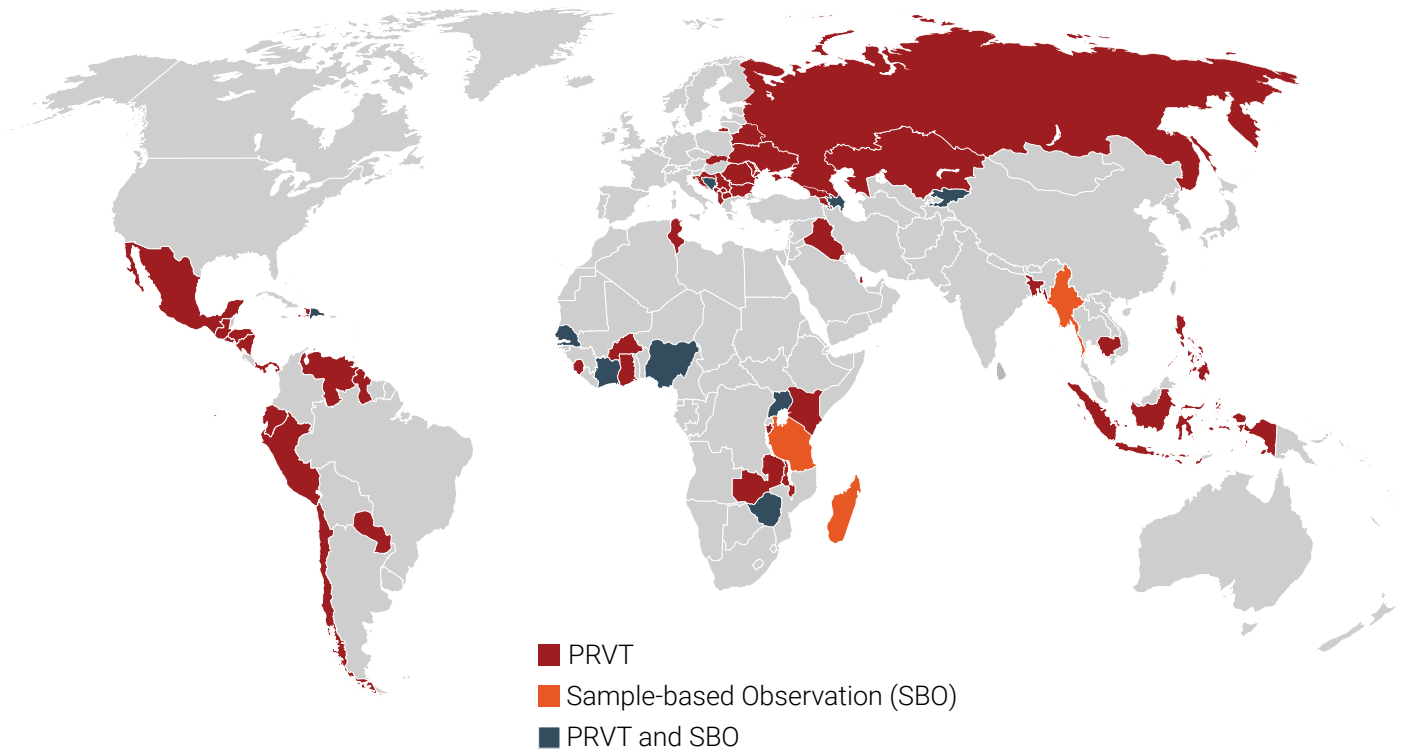
However, confidence and oversight in elections is under threat as risks to electoral integrity continue to evolve in the modern era. Democratic backsliding and closing political space are stifling access to accurate information about elections and curbing independent actors' ability to hold institutions accountable. Increasing disinformation and waning confidence in election management bodies (EMBs) has renewed distrust in the process and results. Throughout the world, an increasing trend of results denialism – particularly by losing candidates or parties rejecting the election outcome with specious evidence – has called into question the credibility of many elections. In some cases, these efforts preemptively undermine the results, predisposing the public not to trust them before they are even announced. These efforts are often accompanied by strategic disinformation campaigns designed to undermine voting, counting, results transmission or tabulation procedures, or the competence or independence of election administration.

As democratic institutions fight to regain public confidence and promote transparency, trusted, impartial citizen election observers are particularly well-positioned to provide objective and timely information about elections and to verify the credibility of their outcome through a PRVT (Process and Results Verification for Transparency).

This approach was previously known as a Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) or a "Quick Count". For more information on the PRVT Acronym, please see Chapter 1. A PRVT is an advanced and proven election monitoring methodology that allows

PRVTs and Sample-based Observation Around the World

Countries in which a PRVT or Sample-based Observation has taken place.



nonpartisan citizen observers to systematically assess the quality of opening, voting, closing, counting and tabulation processes at a national scale and independently verify the official results.

Citizen observer organizations are at the forefront of modernizing PRVT data collection, advancing electoral analysis, and pioneering the use of other sample-based monitoring techniques outside of election day. They continue to share and build upon each others' experiences, through individual exchanges and as a part of international networks, in collaboration with the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM) and its regional bodies. Their best practices and lessons learned serve as the basis for the guide.

In 2002, drawing on the experience of a wide array of observer organizations from every region of the world, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) outlined PRVT best practices in a first-of-its-kind manual, *The Quick Count and Election Observation*.² Since its publication, the use of PRVTs around the globe greatly expanded – citizen observer organizations have conducted PRVTs to assess nearly 170 elections in more than 50 countries. In this time, PRVTs substantially evolved to meet new electoral integrity challenges and take advantage of technology advancements. This updated guide is designed to capture these innovations of the last 20 years.

2. *The Quick Count and Election Observation: An NDI Handbook for Civic Organizations and Political Parties* by Melissa Estok, Neil Nevitte and Glenn Cowan, 2002, <https://www.ndi.org/node/24021>

What PRVTs Can Do

By using statistical principles and rapid reporting technologies, PRVTs enable nonpartisan citizen observer organizations to provide the public with more accurate, timely, and comprehensive information about the conduct of an election and, when appropriate, to quickly predict where the credible results of the election should fall. PRVTs are a powerful tool in safeguarding electoral outcomes and can generate public confidence in the broader process. Specifically, PRVTs can:

- » increase public confidence in well-run elections,
- » remove uncertainty and mitigate potentials for post-election violence,
- » deter fraud and expose and quantify it when it occurs,
- » enhance transparency and civic participation,
- » and build and expand the capacity of local organizations.

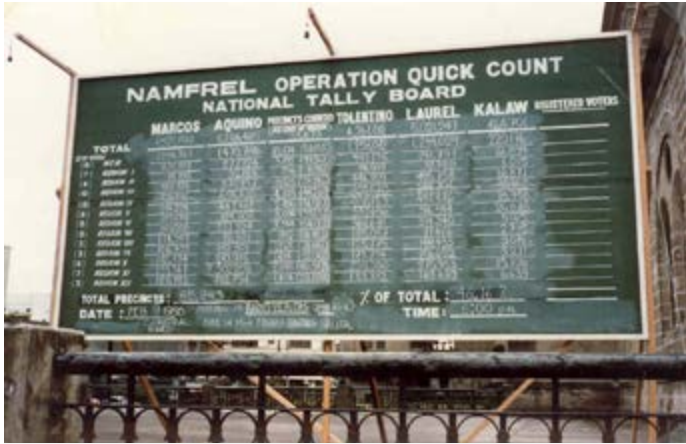
The History and Evolution of PRVTs

Since their first application in the late 1980s, citizen observer organizations have successfully conducted PRVTs in every region of the world, playing key roles in historic elections. In these experiences, PRVTs have most frequently confirmed the official results and increased public confidence in well-run elections but have also been crucial to thwarting attempts to subvert electoral integrity. Through years of democratic advancements, political transitions, and in some cases, backsliding, PRVTs have adapted and changed to respond to current and emerging trends, threats, and opportunities. Citizen observers have iterated and innovated, learning from each other and applying good practices and lessons learned to refine and amplify the power of the PRVT.

The concept of a PRVT was first conceived in the Philippines in 1986 by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL). In advance of the 1986 snap presidential elections to cement President Ferdinand Marcos' reign, NAMFREL

organized 500,000 citizens to try to deploy to every single polling station in the country and collect their results under the movement "Operation Quick Count." Though the official Philippine Commission on Elections (COMELEC), tried to declare Marcos the winner of the election with 53.6% of the vote, NAMFREL's analysis of the hand-collected results – a tally from most of the country's polling stations – showed that opposition candidate Corazon Aquino had won. NAMFREL's Quick Count exposed the manipulation of the results, which ultimately led to the demise of the Marcos regime.

In Chile a similar effort was pursued to verify the results of the 1988 plebiscite determining whether to continue General Augusto Pinochet's presidency. However, given the inherent difficulty in trying to collect results from all of the country's 22,000 polling stations, the Committee for Free Elections (CEL) used a statistical sample to verify the results. CEL accurately forecasted the victory of the "No" campaign opposing Pinochet, which led to a concession from the ruling Junta and a peaceful transition of power. The PRVT was viewed as a major



A photo of history: The chalkboard recording the regional tallies during NAMFREL's Operation Quick Count of the Philippine election.

NDI Photo

factor to deter vote count manipulation, and CEL's statistical innovation demonstrated that **quality coverage** (in this case, collecting results from a manageable sample of polling stations – instead of every station) can produce accurate predictions.

PRVT Version 2.0: Process Matters

Initial PRVT efforts focused exclusively on the credibility of election results. However, subsequent PRVTs, which integrated systematic monitoring of election day voting and counting procedures inside polling stations and enhanced observation of the pre-election environment, highlighted that **process matters**. In particular, the quality of pre-election and election day processes impact the integrity of votes cast at the polling station. For instance, election fraud – such as voter suppression or ballot box stuffing – undermines the degree to which the ballots cast in a polling station actually reflect the will of the people. Focusing simply on the results is therefore not sufficient, and a PRVT that identifies such fraudulent conditions may refrain from predicting results as to avoid confirming a manipulated vote count.

In 2013 in Zimbabwe, challenges in the pre-election period and preparations for election day – including significant structural disparities in voter registration

Rapid Reporting via SMS

SMS-based election observation reporting was first piloted by the Center for Democratic Transition (CDT) in Montenegro for the 2006 referendum on independence. The 200 observers in CDT's sample sent in text message reports that were automatically entered into a database, providing CDT with up-to-the-minute turnout and results information. CDT also used mass SMS messaging to quickly send information and instructions to observers. Using this rapid reporting system, CDT

was the only organization to project that the 50% turnout requirement had been met by mid-day. The system also allowed CDT to quickly determine that the referendum outcome would be "too close to call," since the projected results fell within the statistical margin of error. Based on the numeric analysis provided by the system and qualitative reports taken by phone, CDT issued a public statement calling on citizens to await the official results and expressing confidence in the voting and counting process, helping stabilize the political environment and enhancing its own credibility.³

3. More information on the origination of SMS in election observation can be found here: "[SMS as a Tool for Election Observation](#)", *Innovations*, 2008.



Transmission of PRVT observation data by coded SMS remains one of the most reliable and fast ways to communicate data from polling stations.

NDI Photo

between opposition and ruling party geographic strongholds, media bias, and intensifying voter intimidation – were such that polling station results would not genuinely reflect the will of the people. To prevent validating a bad election, the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN) decided that they would systematically monitor the election day process but not release results. They framed their effort as a **sample-based observation (SBO)** instead of a PRVT (see Chapter 2 for more information). Even without results prediction, the SBO evaluated the quality of the election day processes at a national scale, and quantified the scope of problems that occurred, which included widespread disenfranchisement of urban voters that would have additionally undermined the credibility of the electoral outcome.

PRVT Version 3.0: Increased Speed and Quality

Over the last decade, more and more organizations used PRVTs to analyze the voting and counting

process on election day. At the same time, substantial improvements in technologies allowed for greater **speed and quality** in PRVTs. PRVT observers who had once used phone calls – or even in some cases, hand collection of forms – to report their findings could now report data near instantaneously via SMS (Short Messaging Service). Data centers were able to stay in more reliable and regular contact with deployed observers through blast texts, creating significant efficiencies in observer management.

Meanwhile, more sophisticated data management systems allowed for better data collection with less manual data entry – freeing up organizations to spend more time on verifying observer data (quality assurance). As a result, PRVT data quality has improved over the last decade, enhancing the conclusions and predictions that can be drawn from that data. **These advances came at a critical time, as elections around the world were increasingly moving from watershed moments to more competitive and close races where more precision and scrutiny is necessary.**

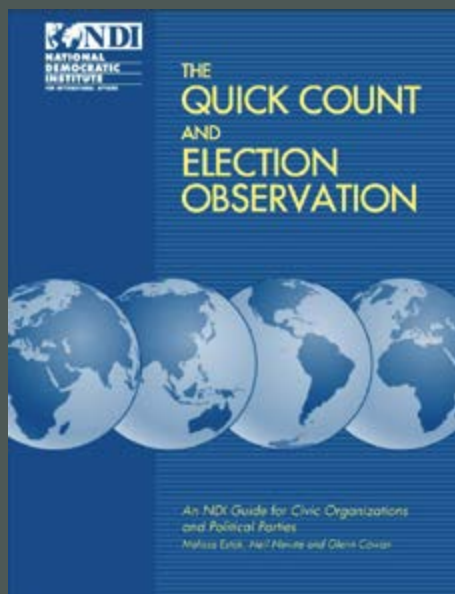
PRVT Version 4.0: Additional Data and Improved Communications

As electoral margins continued to narrow, disinformation increased, and electoral disputes became more common, observer organizations built upon technological and efficiency gains to gather **more data and prioritize strategic communications**. While organizations were once limited to releasing assessments at the conclusion of the election day process well after polls had closed, advances in devices (such as mobile and smartphones) and wider availability of communication networks (such as 5G and Wi-Fi) meant that organizations could receive and analyze reports at key intervals during election day. This allowed organizations to release more findings about the process throughout election

How to Use this Guide

This guide is intended first and foremost for nonpartisan citizen election observers interested in PRVTs, including those with past PRVT experience that would like to learn about new approaches. Donors, technical assistance providers and others may also benefit from this guide to help inform programmatic and funding decisions that support observer organizations' methodological and operational needs. In addition, political parties could use this guide to improve field operations and provide a basis for understanding what credible results should be in their own contests, which can help strengthen post-election stability.

This guide is divided into two broad sections. The first section, which includes Chapters 1-5, provides the basis for **understanding, planning, and preparing** for a PRVT. Anyone interested in leading or supporting a PRVT – including organizational leadership and donors – should read at least these first five chapters, as they include the fundamental frameworks, prerequisites, and groundwork for a successful PRVT. The second half of this guide – Chapters 6 through 13 – is more focused on the **details and strategies for implementing a PRVT**. This section may be most useful to technical staff involved in managing the effort, conducting data analysis, and presenting findings to the public.



As discussed in this guide, there are a number of reasons why a PRVT may not be viable or appropriate for a context or an organization. Some organizations may not be ready or able to do a PRVT but may be interested in conducting other forms of observation. The content of this manual may still be helpful in highlighting organizational, training and data collection techniques that

can bolster election day observation efforts and better place organizations to conduct PRVTs in the future.

In addition, PRVTs focus only on the quality and veracity of election day processes at polling stations and **should be implemented as a part of a broader long-term observation effort** to evaluate the integrity of the overall electoral process. For more information on aspects of

long-term observation and other election-day observation methodologies, readers can refer to some of NDI's other observation guides such as: [How Domestic Organizations Monitor Elections: An A to Z Guide](#), [Building Confidence in the Voter Registration Process: An NDI Monitoring Guide for Political Parties and Civic Organizations](#), [How Citizen Organizations Can Monitor the Abuse of State Resources in Elections: An NDI Guidance Document](#) and [Unleashing the Potential for Open Election Data](#) and other resources at the [Open Election Data Initiative](#). These guides are available at ndi.org/publications.

day – including, for example, information on the opening process, periodic turnout predictions and/or other quality checks that help enhance transparency before the process has concluded. Rapid reporting also allowed organizations to relay issues that arise on election day to key stakeholders so that they can be addressed in a timely manner. Organizations also became savvier in the use of social media outreach and data visualization, using infographics and other digestible formats to distill complex information for the public. Organizations also shifted to share PRVT findings where many voters and stakeholders actually seek information – increasingly online, via social media or in messaging apps – and adjusting communication plans and content accordingly.

PRVT Version 5.0: Complementing PRVT Data

After decades of lessons learned, best practices and evolutions, organizations continue to build on their PRVT experience and pilot new methods for capturing information on the quality of the electoral process. For instance, more organizations are capturing images of official results forms (also called protocols) at the polling station level for their records, and utilizing open election data, including analysis of the distribution of polling stations or countrywide disaggregated results – to increase transparency and identify relevant problems as a complement to PRVT data. In addition, the specificity of PRVT data gives clear, actionable information about the electoral process on what can be improved. Organizations are actively using PRVT data to more effectively push for electoral reform. Some experienced organizations are also applying systematic monitoring methodology and statistical analysis outside of election day, for instance using sample-based observation to track public service delivery issues or statistical analysis to audit the quality of the voters list.



The Open Election Data Initiative helps citizen observer organizations advocate for, and make use of, open election data to increase electoral integrity.

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SECTION 1

Understanding, Planning, and
Preparing for PRVT

Chapter

1

*Overview of PRVT
Methodology*

1.1 PRVT Methodology

PRVT is an election day observation methodology that enables citizen organizations to systematically assess the voting and counting processes, and independently verify whether or not official results can be trusted. PRVTs employ statistics and technology in order to provide the most accurate and timely assessment of voting and counting and, indirectly, the tabulation process, by which individual polling stations results are transmitted to a central location and added together to determine the overall result for an election. **PRVT is the only methodology that can independently verify official results in near real time.** In practice, PRVTs involve citizen organizations deploying observers to a statistical sample of polling stations to observe the setup, opening, voting, closing, counting and announcement of polling station results. PRVT observers provide timely data by reporting throughout the day, using everyday technologies (such as mobile devices and available communication networks) to report to a data management system for data verification (quality assurance), summation and analysis.

While all nonpartisan observation aims to engage citizens, deter manipulation, and share information, PRVTs prioritize the timely sharing of highly accurate, systematic information. PRVT is a systematic methodology because it intentionally captures geographically representative and complete information (whether it is good or bad) about the process.⁴ Unlike other methodologies, PRVTs limit the number of observers to prioritize higher quality and efficiency. Other methodologies seek to deter manipulation by having more observers physically present. In contrast, PRVTs primarily deter

PRVT Acronym

PVT initially stood for “Parallel Vote Tabulation,” reflecting an early strategy of collecting polling station results and tabulating them in parallel to the official process. Similarly, “Quick Count” was another term used that focused on timely verification of results. Today, systematically assessing the quality of the voting and counting process is an integral part of the methodology. Here systematic means intentionally capturing geographically representative and complete information (whether positive or negative) about the process. The terms “Quick Count” and “Parallel Vote Tabulation” or “PVT” no longer reflect how the methodology has evolved.

Thus, as the methodology has evolved so has the terminology: Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT) captures the idea that the PRVT verifies the quality of voting and counting – as well as the tabulation process and official results – and in doing so assesses whether or not those results can be trusted. In elections where voting and counting are largely problematic, the PRVT may determine that official results cannot truly reflect voter preferences, though it cannot necessarily predict what the alternative official results should have been.

malfeasance by announcing in advance that there will be an independent ‘check’ on election results. As such, timely and strategic communication is integral to the methodology and the overall assessment of an electoral process (see *Chapter 5: Managing Political and Public Relations*).

4. Other observation methodologies, such as proportional deployment and Sample Based Observation (SBO) follow this systematic approach.

As PRVT is an election day methodology focused on what happens at polling stations, it should be implemented as part of a comprehensive observation strategy that considers key pre-election conditions that could hinder genuine election results that reflect the will of the people as well what transpires away from polling stations on election day. Contextualizing PRVT findings in light of the overall pre-election and election day environment is key to its accuracy and an essential part of a PRVT communications strategy.

1.2 The Goals of PRVT

PRVTs can serve several simultaneous goals. Depending on the electoral context, different goals may be more salient than others. From the outset, organizations should develop clear goals for a PRVT and should keep them in mind throughout implementation.

Accurately Assess the Voting and Counting Process

PRVTs provide the most accurate assessment of the voting and counting processes. This is because PRVT observers deploy to a statistical sample and, in line with statistical principles, their observation data is representative of all polling stations. For example, if the PRVT shows that 10% of polling stations in the sample opened late, then that means that approximately 10% of all polling stations across the country opened late - even ones without an observer present. As a result, **it is possible to identify issues--whether human error or fraud--during the voting and counting, and to measure the scale and scope of such problems**. Other methodologies provide less accurate and systematic information on the conduct of voting and counting because observer deployment is not statistically representative of the entire country.

Assess the Process



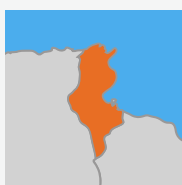
Zimbabwe | 2013

As mentioned in the introduction, the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN) determined that the pre-election processes in the 2013 Zimbabwean general election were so flawed that election day results could not reflect true voter preferences. However, ZESN still wanted to potentially quantify the scope of any problems, so they conducted a sample-based observation (SBO). Their SBO showed that urban voters had been systematically disenfranchised on election day.

Independently Verify the Process and Official Results

PRVT is the only election day observation methodology that can verify election results. Because PRVTs assess voting and counting in a polling station, they can verify that the results collected in stations genuinely reflect voter preference. And because those verified results are collected from a statistical sample of polling stations, they can be added together to estimate the true result within a predicted range. If the voting and counting process are assessed positively, and if all the official results fall within their predicted range, then the official results reflect the ballots cast. However, as previously noted, interpretation of PRVT data should not be done in isolation and should take into consideration the legal framework, electoral context, and pre-election period.

Independently Verify



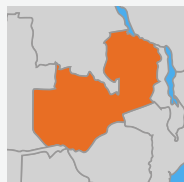
Tunisia | 2014

Tunisia's 2014 presidential election was the first direct presidential election after the Tunisian Revolution of 2011. The findings of the PRVT conducted by the citizen observation network Mourakiboun greatly contributed to enhancing the confidence of political contestants and the public in the integrity of the election process.

As Appropriate, Instill Confidence in Official Election Results

The PRVT findings can help instill confidence that the official results reflect the ballots cast when the overall process is assessed as credible. In nascent democracies, there may be little confidence in the official election results, even when they accurately reflect voters' preferences. Further, there are incentives for losing candidates, parties, or initiatives to reject credible official results. In either situation, the PRVT can help assess those claims and, as appropriate, help instill confidence in the official results and the EMB.

Increase Confidence



Zambia | 2021

In Zambia's 2021 presidential election, the independent election commission announced that the incumbent president Edgar Lungu had lost to Hakainde Hichilema. The Christian Churches Monitoring Group's (CCMG) PRVT findings stated that the election day process was inclusive and confirmed that the official results announced reflected the ballots cast. President Lungu conceded to Hichilema, which led to a peaceful transfer of power.

Deter or Detect Manipulation of Official Results

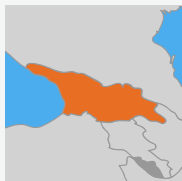
When PRVTs are widely publicized in advance of an election and implemented by a credible organization or coalition, they can deter manipulation. PRVTs cannot eliminate all possible incentives for manipulation. However, they can shift malfeasance away from the election day processes to other elements of the electoral cycle that may be harder to effectively manipulate and more prone to detection. PRVTs can, and have, detected and exposed widespread manipulation of election results. PRVTs conducted by independent civil society organizations have identified large-scale manipulation in the election day process and altering of results.

Deter Manipulation



Peru | 2000

In Peru's 2000 presidential election, the incumbent president Alberto Fujimori sought a controversial third term. The citizen observer organization Transparencia (Asociación Civil Transparencia) conducted a PRVT which revealed irregularities and that Fujimori did not meet the threshold needed to avoid a runoff. Initially the election authorities delayed announcing results but, due to Transparencia's PRVT results, pressure built, and the required runoff was eventually declared.



Georgia | 2003

In Georgia's 2003 parliamentary election, the election authorities published results showing that the ruling party had attained the highest number of votes. However, the main opposition party claimed they had received the most votes. Indeed, the PRVT conducted by the independent monitoring organization the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) showed the opposition had won and the count had been manipulated. The opposition called for nonviolent civil disobedience resulting in the "Rose Revolution" and power changed hands peacefully.

Give Voters Confidence to Participate

When citizen observer organizations widely publicize their PRVT efforts, it can give voters confidence not only to go out and vote on election day, but also to vote their conscience. This can be particularly important for elections where there is little confidence in the EMB or where past results have been manipulated. However, it can also be valuable for hotly contested elections – even those run by capable EMBs and those with a history of trusted official results.

Suggest the True Election Result

When a PRVT shows that voting and counting were conducted properly, the PRVT may predict what the true result should have been had votes been accurately tabulated. In addition, when there are delays in the official results, PRVT results may be released, helping to lower uncertainty and reduce tensions. In both scenarios, PRVT findings are not the official election results, but can suggest what the official results would be or inform the public of a close election.

Suggest True Result



Indonesia | 1999

Indonesia's elections in 1999 were the first truly free elections in the country's history. Indonesia's daunting physical geography and limited infrastructure resulted in a near collapse of the government's mechanism to aggregate results. For several weeks, the only credible results available were those provided by the Rector's Forum PRVT. The publication of the PRVT results helped keep rumors in check and prevented the onset of civil unrest.

Reduce Potential for Post-Election Violence

PRVTs can reduce the potential for post-election violence in two ways. First, PRVTs provide independent evidence that can either support or refute claims that official results have been manipulated. This can reduce tensions and help encourage the resolution of disputes through established legal channels. Second, PRVT findings can offer valuable insights to those seeking to mediate post-election disputes by providing independent information to impartially evaluate competing claims.

Reduce Potential for Violence



Bulgaria | 1990

Bulgaria held their first post-communist election in 1990. The combined opposition forces (UDF) were certain of victory against the Socialist (formerly Communist) Party. The opposition was convinced they could not lose if the election was well conducted. When official results indicated a Socialist victory, tensions rose dramatically at a large opposition rally in the capital. The Bulgarian Association for Fair Elections and Civil Rights (BAFECR), a nonpartisan organization trusted by the opposition, had implemented a PRVT. Their PRVT findings demonstrated to the opposition that it had lost but had not been cheated. The demonstrators went home peacefully.

Provide Actionable Recommendations for Improvement and Electoral Reform

PRVTs can also help organizations bring more transparency to the election process and deliver more actionable recommendations. PRVT findings provide information on specific problems and where those problems occurred. This systematic evidence can help inform recommendations for improving the process and feed into electoral reform efforts. As more organizations have learned to successfully implement PRVTs, their specific findings from one election can serve as a benchmark and comparison for future elections and PRVTs.

Strengthen Organizational Capacity of Citizen Observers

PRVTs often require organizations to establish and expand formal and informal relationships with other civic groups to ensure national coverage, to promote the participation of women and other marginalized communities, or to provide technical expertise. Staff also typically develop new skills, particularly related to statistics and data analysis as well as using communication technologies and data management systems. Further, PRVTs require citizen observer organizations to more effectively recruit, train and deploy a national network of observers. PRVTs provide citizens the opportunity to engage in elections in a nonpartisan manner.

Set the Stage for Future Activities

PRVTs can set the stage for citizen observer organizations to undertake democracy building activities beyond elections. Successful citizen

observation sets a precedent for citizens to engage in the political process. Civic organizations who conduct PRVTs can emerge with reputations for honesty and effectiveness, and citizens may welcome continued activities in related areas. The relationships, networks of citizens, skills, and capacity strengthened through a PRVT can be used for a wide variety of democracy promotion activities. Many organizations that have conducted PRVTs have subsequently taken on programs to promote accountability and transparency in government, to educate citizens on democratic principles, and to advocate for democratic reforms or specific policy programs. In *Chapter 12: Next Steps*, several example activities are outlined.

1.3 The Benefits of PRVTs

The PRVT methodology provides a number of benefits, improving upon the quality, speed and relevance of observation data.

PRVTs Use Statistics to Increase Quality

PRVTs employ the power of statistics to improve the accuracy of findings and the efficiency of operations. As detailed in Chapter 3, PRVT statistics allow for a highly precise assessment of the voting, counting, and tabulation processes. ***The use of statistics reduces organizational burden, increases data quality and makes data processing more manageable.*** For example, LP3ES (Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information) deployed 1,500 observers to a sample of polling stations instead of having to deploy nearly 500,000 to cover all of the stations for the 2004 Presidential Election in Indonesia. By deploying to a statistical sample, PRVTs reduce the number of observers that must be recruited, trained and managed. With fewer

How PRVTs Assess the Tabulation Process

Tabulation is one of the most vulnerable elements of an electoral process because – for those seeking unfair advantage – manipulating the tabulation process has a direct impact on the outcome, and it is difficult to detect. Tabulation often has multiple levels: from a polling station, to a subregional tabulation center, to a regional tabulation, and finally to a central collation center where they are added together to determine the overall result. Official results may be altered at any point in the tabulation process – whether due to intentional and unlawful manipulation or mathematical errors if the election law allows for results to be legally altered after counting at the station.

Additionally, manipulation of the tabulation process is difficult to observe. Even if observers are deployed to tabulation centers, they have no way of knowing if results arriving at that center have been altered in transit. Further, observers may fail to notice arithmetic mistakes when hundreds or thousands of numbers are being added together by computer. Thus, unlike other electoral processes, manipulation of the tabulation can go undetected even when scrutinized by observers. Given the inherent importance of the tabulation process, as well as the underlying risks of manipulation, tabulation requires added scrutiny to build public confidence and deter fraud. As described below, PRVTs bring greater transparency and uniquely provide an independent assessment of not just the voting and counting process, but the tabulation process as well.



Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) data clerks scrutinize data in Zambia's 2016 general election.

NDI Photo

observers, organizations can thereby improve training and management, which results in better data. Additionally, a sample reduces the number of polling stations observed and the amount of data required, thereby speeding data collection, verification, and analysis.

By comparison, efforts to deploy large numbers of observers may be useful for citizen engagement and might deter on-site fraud, but they rarely

produce quality data in a timely manner. Large scale deployment (including attempts at “comprehensive deployment” or “full coverage” of 100% of polling stations) presents organizational and operational challenges. This includes outsized recruitment and management demands, larger – and, thus, lower quality – trainings, and overwhelming amounts of data that take much longer to collect, verify and analyze.

Tabulation Process - Points of Vulnerability

Tabulation at National Center

observation possible



Transportation to National Center

observation not possible



Tabulation at Regional Center

observation possible



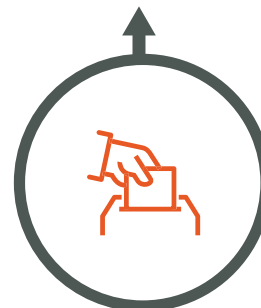
Transportation to Regional Center

observation not possible



Polling Station

PVT observation of voting, counting, and results certification



The multiple points of vulnerability in the vote tabulation process makes it challenging to observe fully and systematically. However, the PRVT assesses the process indirectly by determining whether the results of the tabulation are consistent with polling station-level results.

PRVTs Findings are Rapid Due to Reporting Technology

PRVTs employ sophisticated technologies to speed the observation effort. Communications technologies (such as mobile phone networks and internet) allow observers to report in near real time directly to a data center. This speeds reporting and enables two-way communication, strengthening observer management and improving response rates. Information is processed at a data center using a data management system. This not only speeds data collection, verification and analysis, but also improves data quality as reports are received directly into the

The Importance of Speed

During election day and throughout the tabulation process, one of the scarcest resources is time. In PRVTs, speed is of the essence as all data must be collected, verified, and analyzed before the official results are announced. PRVT findings – about the quality of the election day process and the predicted election results – are most salient immediately following the election when public confidence is most tenuous, when rumors and political allegations are rife, and when potentials for conflict are high. In fact, most PRVT goals (discussed in detail above) rely on accurate and timely findings that are available *before* an EMB announces official results (even if the PRVT findings are only publicly released after the official EMB announcement of results). Both statistics – which allows PRVTs to be more efficient and accurate – and technology – which allows PRVT data to be transmitted and analyzed rapidly – enable PRVTs to have a critical impact on the election environment.

system, thereby reducing error from data entry and allowing the data center to focus on data verification.

PRVTs Verify the Process and the Official Results

In credible elections, official outcomes truly reflect the preferences of voters. While holding regular elections has become a widespread norm, powerful incentives still exist for contestants to unfairly gain power through official results that do not reflect voters' preferences. Additionally, there are more and more cases where a candidate who is losing (or who thinks they may lose) attempts to undermine the process after the fact as a way to gain power or leverage. At the same time, the lack of trust in electoral institutions and processes can undermine public confidence in official results, even when they do reflect voter preferences.

The casting and counting of ballots and their tabulation on election day represent critical points in the process, and each introduces an opportunity for manipulation. For example, if significant numbers of eligible individuals are not allowed to vote (or if ineligible individuals are permitted to vote), then the official results may not reflect the true preferences of voters. If a significant number of ballot papers are tallied for the wrong candidate or incorrectly rejected, then the official results may not reflect the true preferences of voters. Additionally, the tabulation process is also critical to the election process and is particularly sensitive to manipulation.

As stated earlier, PRVTs first provide a reliable assessment of the election day process, including the setup, opening, voting, counting, closing, and results announcement process. While the PRVT directly assesses the process at polling stations, it can also indirectly indicate issues with the tabulation process. The following outlines the most common scenarios

	Scenario 1: <i>Well Conducted Process at Polling Stations and well done Tabulation</i>	Scenario 2: <i>Problematic Process at Significant Number of Stations</i>	Scenario 3: <i>Good Process at Stations but Manipulation in the Tabulation Process</i>
Evaluate the quality of election day processes at polling station?	Yes, PRVT can evaluate processes at polling stations.	Yes, PRVT can evaluate process at polling station.	Yes, PRVT can evaluate process at polling station.
Indicate whether official results can be trusted?	Yes, PRVT can evaluate processes at polling stations.	Yes, PRVT can indicate whether official results can be trusted.	Yes, PRVT can indicate whether official results can be trusted.
Provide a predicted range for each official result?	Yes, PRVT can evaluate processes at polling stations.	No, not applicable due to poor quality process.	Yes, PRVT provides a range within which the official results should fall.
Indicate whether tabulation process was significantly manipulated?	Yes, PRVT can indicate whether official results can be trusted.	Not applicable due to poor quality process.	Likely yes, when an official result is far outside of the PRVT predicted range.

and the strengths of the PRVT methodology in each one:

Scenario 1: Well Conducted Process at Polling Stations and Tabulation

When the PRVT finds that voting and counting processes were properly implemented, then the organization can calculate the PRVT predicted range for the official results for each candidate, party or referenda option as well as for invalid ballots and turnout. This is because in addition to reporting on the conduct of voting and counting, PRVTs also collect information about vote totals in observed polling stations. PRVT results data can provide statistically valid predicted ranges within which official results should fall. PRVTs predict a range,

rather than an exact result, because findings are based on a statistical sample of polling stations, rather than a complete accounting of all polling stations in the country. The PRVT predicted range demonstrates what the official results should be for all polling stations – even those not sampled (see *Chapter 3: Fundamental PRVT Principles* for more detailed discussion of PRVT’s statistical principles).

When the official results for an election fall within their respective PRVT predicted ranges, then the PRVT provides greater confidence that the results reflect the ballots cast at polling stations and the tabulation process was not manipulated. This is even the case when the PRVT predicted ranges do not provide a definitive outcome for the election

– for example, when the predicted ranges for the two leading candidates overlap (this and other scenarios are discussed in more detail in *Chapter 10: Summarizing Data, Analysis, and Developing Findings*).

Scenario 2: Problematic Process at Significant Number of Stations

When the PRVT demonstrates that voting and/or counting processes were manipulated on a large scale, then it is likely that official results cannot truly reflect voter preferences—regardless of the tabulation process. This is why every PRVT should thoroughly assess the voting and counting process before attempting to validate official results. In this case, no predicted ranges are calculated because the process producing those results was not credible.

Scenario 3: Good Process at Stations but Manipulation in the Tabulation Process

As noted, when the voting and counting processes at the polling station were credible, then the PRVT can predict ranges within which the official results should fall. When the voting and counting process were conducted properly at the polling stations, but any of the official results fall outside of their respective PRVT predicted range, then this provides evidence that the tabulation process was manipulated and that the official results do not reflect the ballots cast at polling stations. When the PRVT provides evidence that tabulation has been manipulated, PRVT predictions may suggest the true results (see *Chapter 3: Fundamental PRVT Principles* and *Chapter 11: Planning for Election Day and Sharing Findings*).

1.4 The Limitations of PRVTs

The PRVT methodology is not an all-encompassing solution for evaluating electoral integrity. Like all

observation methodologies, it has strengths, but also has limitations. No methodology can deter or expose all types of electoral manipulation.

Focuses on Election Day

PRVT is explicitly an election day observation methodology that involves deploying observers to monitor voting and counting at polling stations. It does not, on its own, involve an assessment of the broader electoral context, analysis of the legal framework or observation of the myriad of pre- and post-election processes. As such, PRVTs are best employed as part of a comprehensive effort to observe all salient elements of an electoral process, and interpretation of PRVT findings should be informed by these complementary observation efforts. In some cases, the broader electoral context, legal framework or pre-election environment may be so compromised that a PRVT should not be conducted as it will likely only serve to give credibility to official results that cannot truly reflect voter preferences (see *Chapter 2: Deciding to Conduct a PRVT*).

Focuses Inside Polling Stations

PRVTs primarily focus on processes inside polling stations. They do not capture what happens outside of polling stations. In some contexts, there are threats to electoral integrity—like intimidation or roadblocks—either in the vicinity of polling stations or away from polling stations altogether. In contexts where there are election day concerns away from polling stations, augmented deployment strategies, like additional mobile observers (as discussed in *Chapter 6: Tailoring Your PRVT to the Electoral Context*) may be appropriate.

Requires High Observer Response Rate

PRVTs require a very high observer response rate of essentially 100% - that is, all observation data from all the sample stations. This is because the statistical sample is carefully drawn to ensure it is representative of all polling stations. If the response rate is significantly less than 100%, the sample is compromised and cannot reliably and accurately represent all polling stations. The sample would no longer meet the high standards of precision and accuracy required in today's tense electoral contests (see Chapter 3 and 11). (By comparison, in other methodologies, the observer response rate may have a greater range of viability: a high response rate is best, but a lower response rate may still be acceptable).

As a result, ***the most challenging part of a PRVT is not drawing the statistical sample of polling stations or analyzing the statistical data, but operationally ensuring that observation reports are received from essentially 100% of the sampled polling stations.*** PRVTs are operationally challenging as they must be implemented with shorter time frames since recruitment and deployment plans rely on a sample drawn from the final polling station list, which is generally only available shortly before election day. However, by reducing the number of observers deployed, using sophisticated technology, and employing innovative approaches to recruiting and training observers, organizations are able to routinely have response rates at essentially 100%. This ensures the actual sample is representative and the findings are statistically valid. Organizations unable to achieve essentially a 100% response rate often find that their sample is no longer viable and

their observation findings are no longer statistically representative.

Produces Predicted Ranges, Not Exact Vote Share

PRVTs produce predicted ranges rather than exact vote share percentages (or exact number of votes received). Because the PRVT methodology is based on inferential statistics and uses a statistical sample, it predicts a range – based on the margin of error – within which the true value falls. While this small level of uncertainty is unavoidable, PRVTs have proved able to detect manipulation at the polling stations, and during the tabulation process when the official results fall outside of the predicted range. Beyond their main objective of assessing the accuracy of election results, PRVTs often also provide information on the outcome of an election (i.e. Who has won? Is a runoff necessary? Has a turnout threshold been met?). However, because PRVTs produce projected ranges rather than exact results, they are not always able to definitively determine an election's outcome. For example, in a presidential election where the lead candidate must attain 50% + 1 vote threshold to avoid a runoff, the PRVT might predict that candidate's range as 48% to 53%. In this case, the PRVT cannot definitively show whether a runoff is, or is not, needed. Here the quality of the election day process can hopefully provide evidence to trust or question the official results. A similar situation can arise in a parliamentary election where a party must clear a certain threshold to be eligible for seat allocation. As explained in *Chapter 3: Fundamental PRVT Principles*, predicted ranges are sometimes understood as a mid-point estimate within a margin of error.

Emphasizes National Trends Not Specific Subnational Areas or Individual Incidents

Typically, PRVTs provide highly accurate representative data about national trends in the conduct of voting and counting on election day. However, because PRVTs are typically based on a nationally representative sample, they are primarily designed to measure the broad scale and scope of countrywide problems. National PRVTs are generally not intended to speak to the conduct of an election for a particular subnational area (such as a particular state, region, province, or constituency). While a few incidents may occur in a specific region and the details from those incidents can be useful, those cases are meant to augment the PRVT process data which is representative of the country. In some cases, organizations may also draw an additional sample of polling stations in specific subnational areas, such as the capital or a highly contested region, in order to be able to identify trends in voting and counting for a particular part of the country (see *Chapter 6: Tailoring Your PRVT to the Electoral Context* for further details).

1.5 What PRVTs are Not

Especially in contexts with little or no history of PRVTs, there can be confusion among stakeholders about what a PRVT is. Sometimes, PRVTs are confused with other methodologies. In others, there is uncertainty about what PRVT results mean. It is vital to conduct a proactive communication strategy to dispel these misconceptions as discussed below (and in more detail in *Chapter 5: Managing Political and Public Relations*).

PRVTs are NOT Exit Polls

PRVT observers do not ask voters about their perceptions of the voting or counting process or for whom they voted. Voter perceptions are important and exit polls are a helpful tool to understand them. However, voters may not feel comfortable sharing their honest opinions about how they voted – especially in environments where there are concerns that elections may be manipulated. Further, voter knowledge about the election process may not be accurate and their insights on the process are based on the short time they spend in their polling station and do not include the counting process. As such, exit polls rely on individuals' honesty, comfort, knowledge, and personal experience – all of which can be highly variable and often unreliable. Instead, PRVT observers are trained to directly monitor the entire voting and counting processes and report the official vote count in the polling station. These direct observations serve as the basis of the PRVT to verify the process, and in a well conducted process, predict results. For more information on the differences between PRVT and exit polls, see Appendix A.

PRVTs are NOT Simply Collecting Official Polling Station Results

In current PRVT methodology, citizen observers do not only collect official results, but they also collect data about the voting and counting process that led to those results. Manipulation may occur in advance of election day or on election day during voting or counting. Without analysis of the pre-election context and the conduct of voting and counting, it is not possible to determine if the official polling station results can be trusted at all. If results are collected and added up from polling stations without observers

PRVT Compared to Exit Polls

PRVT measures the votes as actually cast and through an assessment of the process, can indicate if the official results can be trusted.

Exit poll measures individuals' recollections of how they voted.

PRVT data gets specific, actionable information for improving the election day process next time.

Exit poll measures opinions and respondents may refuse to answer or feel compelled to lie.

PRVT does not measure effectiveness of voter information campaigns.

Exit poll can assess gaps in voter information campaigns.

being present to monitor key processes throughout the day, then there is the enormous risk of validating a fraudulent or poorly conducted process. PRVTs avoid this risk by having trained observers watch the entire process at a single polling station from setup to completion of counting and closing. Some approaches, such as crowdsourcing results data posted outside polling stations or collecting copies of results sheets without assessing the preceding voting and counting process risk validating a flawed process. In addition, such an approach does not provide information on how the process could be improved.

PRVTs are NOT Independent Counts of the Results

PRVTs observers do not count the ballots themselves or produce their own independent result for polling stations. Only election officials are legally permitted to count ballot papers. Instead, PRVT observers monitor the counting process and report the official result for the polling station as determined and announced by the election officials. Their reports

include checks to ensure the results accurately reflect ballots cast, including information on whether the ballots were counted properly, whether counting was conducted in the presence of party representatives, and whether party representatives agreed with the official results.

PRVTs are NOT Official Election Results

PRVT observers collect official polling station results to provide predictions of the official result. However, the PRVT result predictions are not official election results. Only the constitutionally mandated body, such as an EMB, can determine and announce official election results and declare the winners of elections. Rather, PRVT findings provide information based on publicly available polling station results to evaluate the accuracy of the official results. While not official election results, PRVTs have still served to deter the manipulation of official election results, encourage EMBs to announce the accurate results, and can serve as the basis for overturning official results that have been manipulated.

Chapter

2

*Deciding to Conduct
a PRVT*

Chapter 1 addressed the core tenets of PRVT methodology, as well as the goals and limitations of the PRVT. Once organizations understand the power of the PRVT, and its limitations, it is time to decide if carrying out a PRVT is right for an organization and a given election.

The decision to undertake a PRVT should not be made lightly and all PRVTs must be tailored to the local context. While PRVT is a powerful methodology, it is not applicable to all situations. As discussed in Chapter 1, PRVTs require a near perfect response rate to be successful: there are no “partial” PRVTs. Thus, PRVTs should only be undertaken when there is a high chance of operational success.

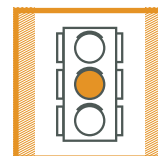
The decision whether to employ the PRVT methodology should be made well before election day, as organizational setup and planning can take months or even years. This helps ensure that there will be sufficient time to: secure funding, conduct appropriate outreach, develop a detailed plan, and implement the myriad of operational components. While organizations that initially decide to conduct a PRVT can later change to another methodology, the rigors of the PRVT methodology make it extremely difficult to decide late in the electoral process to conduct a PRVT.

This chapter walks through this decision-making process, and what factors should be considered, including: the electoral and political context; the applicability of the PRVT methodology; practical requirements for a PRVT; the organization’s internal capacity to conduct a PRVT; the organization’s own goals; and the organization’s own credibility; timing; and funding.

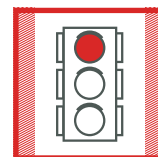
2.1 Electoral and Political Context

The decision whether to conduct a PRVT should begin with an analysis of the context and the challenges, real or perceived, to electoral integrity. The central question to consider is the degree to which there are concerns about manipulation of the official election results: a likelihood of fraud; a lack of public confidence in election results; or false accusations by political contestants. PRVTs are most appropriate when there are significant concerns that the official election results may be manipulated, particularly during the tabulation process.

» **Significant concerns with the election context, legal framework, or pre-election process.** As discussed in Chapter 1, when the concerns about the electoral context, legal framework or pre-election processes are so severe that the election is fundamentally flawed before election day, and any result cannot reflect the preferences of voters, organizations should be extremely cautious employing a PRVT as it can validate a result that does not reflect voter preferences. In some cases, an initial decision to conduct a PRVT may make sense, but changes to the context, legal framework or conduct of the pre-election period result in a PRVT no longer being appropriate. In such cases, a Sample-Based Observation (SBO), which assesses election day processes using statistics but does not predict results, may be more appropriate. For more information on SBO, see the text box in Section 2.7.



» **Another PRVT will be conducted.** When another credible, nonpartisan organization is conducting a PRVT,

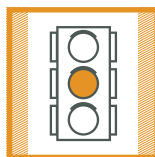


organizations should consider other ways to support a more transparent process. Multiple PRVTs will produce statistically equivalent findings, but they will produce slightly different predicted ranges for results. Thus, multiple PRVTs can cause confusion and undermine confidence in all PRVT findings. Instead of a PRVT, organizations may consider other complementary methodologies (including those mentioned in *Chapter 6: Tailoring Your PRVT to the Electoral Context*).

2.2 Applicability

The PRVT methodology relies on inferential statistics to draw valid conclusions about all polling stations in a specific electoral contest. This statistical approach requires that the total number of polling stations for that electoral contest must be relatively large. Thus, PRVTs are not appropriate for all types of elections. They are most applicable for national elections with a single constituency—such as presidential elections, national referenda and parliamentary elections with a national proportional representation (PR) system. This is because the number of polling stations for that contest is relatively large and inferential statistics can be applied. (See Chapter 3 for additional discussion of statistical principles and requirements.)

» ***PRVTs are less applicable for parliamentary/legislative elections with multiple constituencies (single member constituencies, multiple members constituencies or subnational PR systems), as well as for systems using term ranked voting (also known as preferential voting).*** In many of these cases, a PRVT would involve individual samples for every constituency or subnational area—which, in most



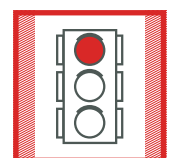
Mourakiboun Observer studies his PRVT form.
Courtesy of Mourakiboun

cases, is not feasible in terms of operations and resources. Additionally, if a constituency has relatively few polling stations, it is not possible to use inferential statistics and, therefore, a PRVT would require deploying observers to all polling stations. A more appropriate strategy would be to conduct a national SBO that provides information on the overall conduct of voting and counting across all constituencies, which does not verify the official results for any election. Depending on the experience and capacity of the organization, this approach could be coupled with a limited number of PRVTs that could verify results for specific constituencies or areas of special political significance.

2.3 Procedural and Practical Requirements

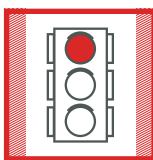
The PRVT methodology has several practical requirements related to access, available information, and logistics. If these prerequisites are not met, a PRVT may not be possible or will be significantly more challenging to implement.

» ***There are legal restrictions that***

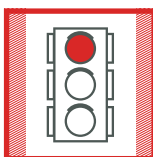


limit human and political rights. International standards for democratic elections require that citizen observation organizations enjoy full human and political rights, including freedom of association, expression and movement. Burdensome or repressive laws and regulations that restrict an organization's ability to: formally register, obtain accreditation, organize their effort, access information (including about the election process), or share their findings can seriously restrain a PRVT. In highly restrictive environments, a PRVT may not be feasible. Some countries prohibit any entity from releasing informal election results and attempt to prevent PRVT organizations from sharing their findings. But, as stated in Chapter 1, PRVT results predictions are not official election results. Rather, PRVT findings provide information based on publicly available polling station data to evaluate the accuracy of official results.

» **An accurate and complete list of polling stations is not available in sufficient time.** Observer organizations must have timely access to a complete and accurate list of all polling stations in order to conduct a PRVT. The list must be available well in advance of the election so that a sample can be drawn before observer recruitment and training. A PRVT is not possible without a polling station list and even delays in receiving the list will greatly hinder a PRVT. Advanced advocacy to the EMB can help to ensure timely access to a polling station list (See *Chapter 5: Managing Political and Public Relations* for considerations on EMB outreach).

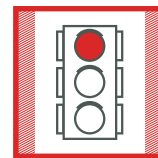


» **Observers are not permitted to continuously monitor voting and counting in polling stations.**

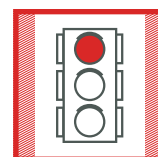


International best practice is to allow observers to remain in a single polling station throughout voting and counting. However, some legal frameworks do not permit observers to be stationary and instead require them to periodically leave the polling station or to move between polling stations. Others do not permit observers to be present for certain processes (for example prohibiting observation of counting). If observers cannot witness and verify the entire voting and counting process in a polling station, a PRVT is not feasible. In some cases, the use of election technology – such as electronic voting machines – may complicate observation and additional approaches or methodologies may be needed to verify the process.

» **It is unsafe to deploy observers to all parts of a country.** All election observation involves risks for the observers, but in some situations, violence or conflict creates “no-go areas” and makes it impossible to deploy observers to certain parts of a country. In such situations, a response rate of essentially 100% is not attainable and therefore a PRVT is not possible. Where it is initially determined safe to conduct a PRVT, organizations must commit to continuously monitoring the security situation and make preparations to ensure observer safety. If the security environment changes or if the organization cannot manage risk to observers, a PRVT may no longer be possible.

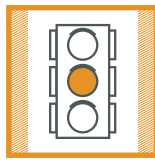


» **Ballot papers are not counted where votes are cast.** According to international best practice, ballot papers should be counted where voters cast their ballots. The PRVT methodology is based on direct observation of the



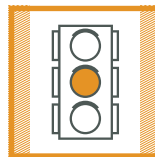
entire election day process so that observers can verify that polling station results are credible. In some electoral systems, ballot papers are moved to a central polling location or to a tabulation center before being counted. In other systems, significant numbers of absentee ballots—cast elsewhere—are mixed in with polling station ballots before counting. In either case, a PRVT may not be possible because the voting and counting process cannot be verified for all ballots.⁵

- » **Accreditation procedures are onerous and effectively prohibit observation.** Most countries require election observers to be accredited by the EMB. If accreditation



procedures are overly burdensome, this can, in practice, prevent observers from deploying to polling stations (even if the legal framework officially allows it). It is critical that observer organizations—and their supporters—advocate well in advance for reasonable accreditation procedures.

- » **Insufficient infrastructure. Poor infrastructure not only makes it more difficult to employ communication technologies, but makes it more challenging and costly to recruit, train and deploy observers.** In

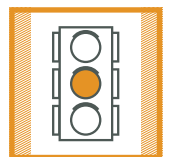
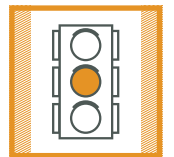


some cases, poor infrastructure may practically prevent a PRVT, while in others it may necessitate innovative solutions or increase the cost and time required to conduct a PRVT.

2.4 Organizational Capacity

The most challenging part of a PRVT is not employing statistics or using technology, but implementation. Ensuring that essentially 100% of observers deploy to, and report from, a sample of polling stations is the most difficult part of a PRVT (and is significantly more difficult than implementing other methodologies). Additionally, the timeline for implementing PRVTs is challenging as recruitment and training cannot be finalized until the official list of polling stations has been obtained and a statistical sample drawn.

- » **Citizen observer organization(s) lack national coverage.** PRVT samples must be representative of polling stations in the entire country and thus require a truly nationwide network of observers. Organizations conducting a PRVT should assess their geographic reach and, as needed, undertake additional efforts or form new partnerships to fill gaps in coverage.
- » **Citizen observers lack sufficient organizational or technical capacity.** PRVTs require considerable capacity, and even organizations with past observation experience may struggle to meet the specific requirements of a PRVT (like a 100% response rate). In some cases, organizations may first undertake another systematic methodology, such as SBO, to build their capacity to conduct PRVTs in future elections. In others, technical assistance can help organizations build capacity



5. In some cases, a PRVT may still be possible if PRVT observers are allowed to travel with the ballot boxes and materials to the tabulation center and can clearly monitor the boxes the entire time.

Building Credibility: Leading Principles for a PRVT

Citizen observer organizations must maintain widespread credibility to ensure a PRVT is trusted and successful. Typically, an organization's credibility is dependent upon their independence, impartiality, competence and reputation. This includes:

- » **Independence:** In a PRVT, outreach to stakeholders is critical, so that key actors understand the goals, methods, and findings of a PRVT. However, organizations should maintain independence from the EMB and political parties by ensuring that details about PRVT deployment and PRVT data remains strictly in its own hands.
- » **Impartiality:** PRVTs should be truly nonpartisan, conducted on behalf of all voters, regardless of political preferences. Organizations should take steps to ensure nonpartisanship and a reputation of neutrality. This may include: requiring every individual involved in the PRVT have no formal political involvement and that
- they sign a code of conduct committing to strict nonpartisanship. In some polarized environments, it may mean demonstrating impartiality by balancing different viewpoints and political interests among individuals involved in the PRVT.
- » **Competence:** PRVTs are highly technical exercises and organizations need to be seen as technically competent to build confidence in PRVT findings. Organizations can best demonstrate competence by being transparent through stakeholder outreach. Among other methods, this can involve holding regular briefings, inviting stakeholders to witness PRVT preparations (such as simulation exercises).
- » **Positive Reputation:** The findings from a well conducted PRVT need to be trusted and respected. Organizations that already have a reputation of implementing complex programs can be well positioned to issue PRVT findings and help with accepting the results. New organizations or coalitions have formed advisory councils to help guide them and attain more credibility with stakeholders.

to successfully conduct PRVTs. (For more information on PRVT organizational requirements, see *Chapter 8: Recruiting, Managing, and Training PRVT Observers*).

2.5 Organizational Credibility

For PRVT findings to be widely accepted, organizations need to have credibility with an array of audiences. Important stakeholders including the EMB, political parties, civil society, other

observers, the media, the international community and, most critically, with the public. As appropriate, organizations should proactively work to strengthen their credibility with these stakeholders prior to election day to help ensure the PRVT goals are met (See *Chapter 5: Managing Political and Public Relations*).

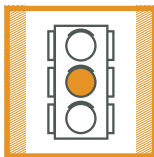
2.6 Timing

Timing is critical to a PRVTs success. PRVTs are often implemented within a shorter time frame

than other methodologies. Recruitment and training cannot begin until a sample of polling stations is created (which itself depends upon EMBs providing a list of polling stations). Thus, PRVTs require planning to begin well in advance – often six months to a year before an election.

» **Insufficient time to plan and**

conduct a PRVT. In some cases, such as snap elections, there is little advance notice. In such situations, it may be necessary either to reduce the sample size of the PRVT or conduct an SBO rather than a PRVT to make implementation more manageable given limited time.

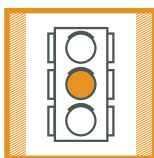


2.7 Resources

PRVTs are resource intensive efforts. While they generally involve fewer observers, the cost per observer is much higher than other methodologies because recruitment is more challenging, and trainings are more intensive. Costs also increase due to management needs, including a lower observer to supervisor ratio and a larger core team. Therefore, funding for the entire PRVT should be secured well in advance.

» **Insufficient funding to conduct**

a PRVT. While a PRVT may be appropriate and applicable, there may not be sufficient funding to conduct a PRVT. There are elements of a PRVT for which funding can be raised during the process (such as for an election day data center). However, the vast majority of funding needs to be secured before recruitment begins as a sample should not be changed once it is determined. (See more in Chapter 3.)



2.8 Moving Forward

This chapter provided key considerations for deciding whether to conduct a PRVT and whether it is feasible. In some cases, a PRVT may not be appropriate or possible, and organizations may decide to employ other methodologies, like SBO, to observe election day.

Organizations that decide to conduct a PRVT need to firstly determine how this effort will contribute to a comprehensive assessment of the election. As noted, PRVTs findings need to be understood in a broader context of the legal framework, the political and electoral context, and the pre-election period.

In some situations, organizations employ multiple election day methodologies simultaneously. Various election day methodologies have their own strengths and weaknesses and hence can complement each other. However, organizations implementing multiple election day methodologies should remember that the PRVT requires a level of rigor that other approaches do not. Thus, core operations, including staff, observers and data management systems, for PRVTs should not be combined with other methodologies (See *Chapter 6: Tailoring Your PRVT to the Electoral Context* for further discussion).

Sample Based Observation

What is SBO?

Sample based observation (SBO) is a subset of the PRVT methodology that enables citizen observers to systematically assess election day processes. Both SBOs and PRVTs employ statistics and technology, with observers deployed to a representative sample of polling stations and reporting in near real time. However, SBOs do not seek to independently verify whether official election results can be trusted. While SBO observers report on the conduct of counting, they do not record or transmit the official polling station results.

As a result, SBOs, while still demanding, require less organizational rigor than PRVTs. This is because data on the quality of the voting and counting requires less precision than results data. Even small changes in the PRVT results predictions – like a percentage point difference – can have profound effects on the findings and be the difference between verifying and questioning official results. In contrast, the assessment of the voting and counting processes is typically more tolerant of small changes. A one percentage point difference – finding 92% versus 93% of polling stations opening on time – is unlikely to alter the conclusions drawn about the process.

Why conduct an SBO?

Organizations generally employ the SBO rather

than the PRVT methodology because:

There are no serious concerns about the counting and tabulation processes. In such cases, the added effort to conduct a PRVT may be better expended focusing on other aspects of the election.

The legal framework precludes a PRVT. For example, if ballot papers are not counted at polling stations, but instead are moved and counted at a tabulation center. In such cases, an SBO is possible, but a PRVT is not.

The political or electoral context is not appropriate for the PRVT methodology. For example, it is technically possible to conduct PRVTs in first-past-the-post legislative elections by conducting a PRVT for every single race. However, most organizations conduct a national SBO to comment on the overall conduct of the elections.

The election is already fundamentally flawed before election day. When the legal framework, the political and electoral context, and/or the pre-election period is so fundamentally flawed, the official results cannot truly reflect voter preferences. In such cases, it may be more appropriate either to plan to conduct an SBO from the start or to change methodologies from PRVT to SBO.⁶

The organization lacks the capacity to conduct a PRVT. As noted, PRVTs require

6. In some cases, organizations still employ the PRVT methodology, but may not release the PRVT results predictions as they do not reflect voter preferences.



Members of CODEO discuss their plans and timeline for observation.

NDI Photo

more organizational rigor than SBOs. Some organizations may currently lack the capacity to successfully conduct a PRVT. In such cases, the SBO methodology might be employed to reduce organizational burden, while building the organization's capacity to conduct PRVTs in the future.

Conducting a PRVT may be deemed too risky.

PRVTs are high risk efforts as they involve publicly verifying official results. However, some elections do not warrant undertaking that risk. In some cases, organizations may not be prepared to accept the level of risk associated with a PRVT. While all observation involves risk, the risks associated with SBOs are much less than those with PRVTs.

What is an "SBO+?"

While SBOs do not involve verifying official results, in some cases they do include verifying turnout—an effort sometimes called an "SBO+" or

"SBO Plus". Verifying turnout can be important as it impacts the legitimacy of the elections. There are three main scenarios where organizations may want to verify turnout as part of an SBO:

1. In first-past-the-post parliamentary elections, it is possible to verify aggregate national turnout for all races even if it is not feasible to conduct PRVTs for each election.
2. While SBO+ increases the operational burden, it still requires less organizational capacity than a PRVT. Thus, it can serve as a stepping stone to build capacity for a future PRVT.
3. Verifying turnout can be less risky than verifying the results. Thus, some organizations may be more comfortable undertaking the risk associated with verifying turnout when they are not verifying results.

While this guide focuses on PRVTs, the guidance herein can be helpful to organizations conducting SBOs. Section 2 details best practice in designing methodology, managing observers, managing and analyzing data, preparing communications and planning for scenarios – all of which are relevant to SBOs.

Chapter

3

*Fundamental PRVT
Principles*

Chapters 1 and 2 considered the goals of PRVTs and the issues to consider when deciding whether to conduct a PRVT. If an organization decides to carry out a PRVT, it is critical to understand the core principles that underpin the methodology. PRVTs are grounded in statistical principles, and all aspects of planning, preparation and outreach will be shaped by these principles. PRVT fundamentals – specifically related to sample size, sampling methodology, response rates and margin of error – will impact budgets, organizational management, how observers are recruited and trained, and how data is collected, managed, and analyzed on election day.

Leaders (and supporters) of PRVT efforts don't need to be statisticians, but they do need to understand how statistics work and why they can trust the methodology. This chapter will review the underlying principles that make PRVTs work and why PRVT planning and implementation may look different than that of other kinds of observation. A more detailed examination of statistical analysis is discussed in depth in *Chapter 11: Planning for Election Day and Sharing Findings*.

3.1 Inferential Statistics

Unlike opinions or qualitative assessments, statistics are scientifically based and the principles behind them are not subjective or open to interpretation. Statistics work because they are bound by principles, and it's those principles, *not people*, that guide methodology and analysis. Thus, statistical findings will be the same regardless of the individuals involved. Organizations that embrace the use of statistics can mitigate human bias in observation findings and protect themselves from criticism by using evidence-based conclusions.

Statistics are not limited to academic research. In fact, they play a major role in daily life, including

ensuring the quality of medicines, the collection and use of marketing data, and tracking and improving service delivery. PRVTs use statistics to provide nationally representative data on the quality of the electoral process and the election results.

Statistics can be divided into two broad categories - descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics describe the properties of a population – such as measures of central tendency (i.e. average) and measures of the dispersion (i.e. variance and standard deviation) of that entire population. For instance, describing the composition of individuals in a city – the percentage of women and men, or the average age – would be descriptive statistics because it gathers and summarizes information about each and every person in that city. Descriptive statistics are precise and have no margin of error because they measure every member of the population.

Inferential statistics, however, extrapolate about the experience of an entire population based on the experience of a representative sample of the population. For instance, proper inferential statistics can allow us to *infer* the total percentage of women in a city by using a sample, without having to directly count every single woman in that city. Inferential statistics lack the precision of descriptive statistics and can only estimate the experience of the entire population within a range (i.e. margin of error). However inferential statistics are often a more practical approach to analyzing a population, particularly if collecting comprehensive data from every unit in an entire population is overly expensive, time consuming, or otherwise challenging. In this way, inferential statistics can provide a more manageable option for collecting reliable information about a population. The PRVT methodology relies on inferential statistics.

However, inferential statistics follow certain principles. For accurate inference, they require 1) special sampling techniques that produce a **random representative sample** and 2) operationally collecting and verifying data from essentially **100% completion of that sample**. In the case of a PRVT, this means essentially a 100% response rate from all sampled

polling stations in order to ensure calculations are accurate and provide nationally representative findings. Therefore, to use inferential statistics, PRVTs must successfully deploy observers to – and receive all data from – a predetermined random representative sample of polling stations.

Key Definitions

- » **Population:** *All the relevant individual cases that exist within a certain boundary.* In inferential statistics, the population is the entire group one is trying to extrapolate information about.
- » **Unit of Analysis:** *The precise object that is being examined in population statistics.* If the goal is to generalize about an entire population, then the unit of analysis is often the individual. Different types of PRVT data have different types of units of analysis, as discussed below.
- » **Point Estimate:** *The single predicted value, demonstrating the average of all the recorded observations in the sample.* The point estimate will fall within a predicted range (determined by the margin of error), and any point within that range is just as likely to occur as any other.
- » **Sample Size:** *The number of units within a population used for determining estimations of a broader population.*
- » **Variance:** *Measures the degree of variability in the data.* Variance refers to the degree of spread in a dataset, including the dispersion of observations and their standard deviation. Data with less variance is more *homogeneous*, and data with greater variance is more *heterogeneous*.



An infographic from the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG)'s PRVT of the 2021 elections in Zambia highlights the margin of errors in the predicted results (+/- 1.4% and +/-1.3%) by demonstrating the "PVT Range" within which the results could fall. Official results from the Election Commission of Zambia (ECZ) clearly fell within this margin of error, meaning the official results were not manipulated. Note: this graphic uses the term PVT as that is how the organization referred to the methodology at the time of the election.

Courtesy of CCMG

- » **Margin of Error:** *The window within which the true value for the population is highly likely to fall.* While statistics are a proven tool to draw accurate conclusions about a larger population, all sample-based statistics have a margin of error. The margin of error is *not* a measurement of quality and does not indicate the degree of "mistakes" in the data. Rather the margin of error is a measurement of *precision* – a smaller

margin of error means a more precise estimate. The margin of error is determined by three key factors: the confidence interval (typically 95% in social science), the sample size and the degree of homogeneity or variance of the data received. Organizations will know those first two components well before election day, once the sample size is determined. However, they cannot control for the variance of election day data. Therefore, it is impossible for an organization to know the final margin of error for their PRVT predictions before all their data is collected. Calculation of the margin of error is

discussed in more detail in Chapter 9.

- » **Confidence Level:** *The degree of confidence in how the sample data can be compared to the population.* The conventional practice for statisticians is to rely on a confidence level of 95 percent. Technically, the confidence level expresses, as a percentage, the probability with which one is certain that a sample mean will provide an accurate estimate of the population average. Thus, a 95% confidence level indicates that 95% of all sample averages (19 out of 20 times) will, indeed, correspond to the mean for the population.

These key definitions create the underlying framework for inferential statistics and shape how findings should be understood and displayed. All findings using inferential statistics will have a point estimate, margin of error and stated confidence

interval, and may demonstrate predicted range - i.e. the point estimate plus the margin of error and minus the margin of error, which demonstrates the full range within which the true value should fall. Including the range alongside the point estimate

PVT Findings

According to ISFED PVT data received from observers, voter turnout across the country was **56.2%**, (with a margin of error of $\pm 0.7\%$), which is significantly higher than the voter turnout during the first round of elections - 46.6%.

Based on the information received about the Election Day process, ISFED is confident in its PVT results. ISFED received information from **99.9%** of its observers deployed at random representative sample of polling. Below are the results of the presidential candidates. For each result the margin of error is $\pm 0.8\%$ and is calculated at 95% confidence interval.

Candidate	PVT result	Margin of error	Lowest Possible Result	Highest Possible Result
#48 Salome Zourabichvili	59.1%	0.8%	58.3%	59.9%
#5 Grigol Vashadze	40.9%	0.8%	40.1%	41.7%

An excerpt from ISFED’s PRVT statement from the 2018 presidential election showing how inferential statistics may be presented, including a point estimate (“PVT result”), margin of error, range and defined confidence interval (95%). According to ISFED’s PVT, the true result of the presidential outcome for the entire country should fall between 58.3% - 59.9% for Zourabichvili, and 40.1%-41.7% for Vashadze. Note: this graphic uses the term PVT as that is how the organization referred to the methodology at the time of the election.

Courtesy of ISFED

helps ensure that audiences do not overly focus on the point estimate and better understand that there is a margin of error on either side of it. The table on the previous page shows how this information is used in the case of a PRVT.

3.2 Population and Units of Analysis

Before drawing a sample, it is important to identify the two different PRVT populations and the units of analysis. For PRVTs, the populations include (1) all the votes cast by voters in a country (to understand election results) and (2) all polling stations in a country (to understand the quality of the electoral process at a national level). Within these populations, PRVTs collect two types of data:

- » **Process data:** *information on the conduct of the election day process at the polling station* - PRVT observers use a standardized form that allows them to examine the integrity of voting and counting processes by asking clear questions about election conduct. This informs the observer organization about whether to have confidence in the vote results by evaluating the conduct of the election day process and provides data on the quality of the elections processes and procedures that is nationally representative. This allows observers to make conclusions such as in Country X, 92% of polling stations opened on time. For all qualitative data related to the process, the unit of analysis is the polling station.
- » **Turnout and results data:** *information on the outcome of the election* - PRVTs also collect information regarding actual ballots cast and vote shares among electoral contestants in order to predict election vote shares, invalid ballots, and voter turnout with a high level of precision (i.e.,

low margins of error). For results data, the unit of analysis is the actual ballots cast by voters at the sampled polling stations.

Although process data and results data each rely on a different unit of analysis, PRVTs use a practice called “cluster sampling” so organizations can draw and deploy to a single sample of polling stations. During the analysis process, results data is calculated separately, using additional steps to account for the different unit of analysis. The cluster sampling approach means that the way results data is calculated and predicted – including point estimates for vote shares and their accompanying margin of error – is more complex than that of a simple random sample. Analysis of both process and results data is discussed in detail in *Chapter 10: Summarizing Data, Analysis, and Developing Findings*.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample size refers to how big a sample (or subset) of the population you'll be using. **For PRVTs, the sample size is the number of polling stations your observers will need to cover.** Sample size will determine many aspects of your observation structure, including how many observers you need to recruit, how many supervisors you need, how many trainings you need to conduct and where, how sophisticated your data management system will need to be and how your data center may need to be staffed.

There is no single best formula to determine the proper sample size. Identifying a sufficient sample size requires deliberating and balancing several different factors, such as observer quality, management capacity and resources, public perception, and the margin of error. **Importantly, sample size should not be determined based on a percentage of the larger population – for instance,**

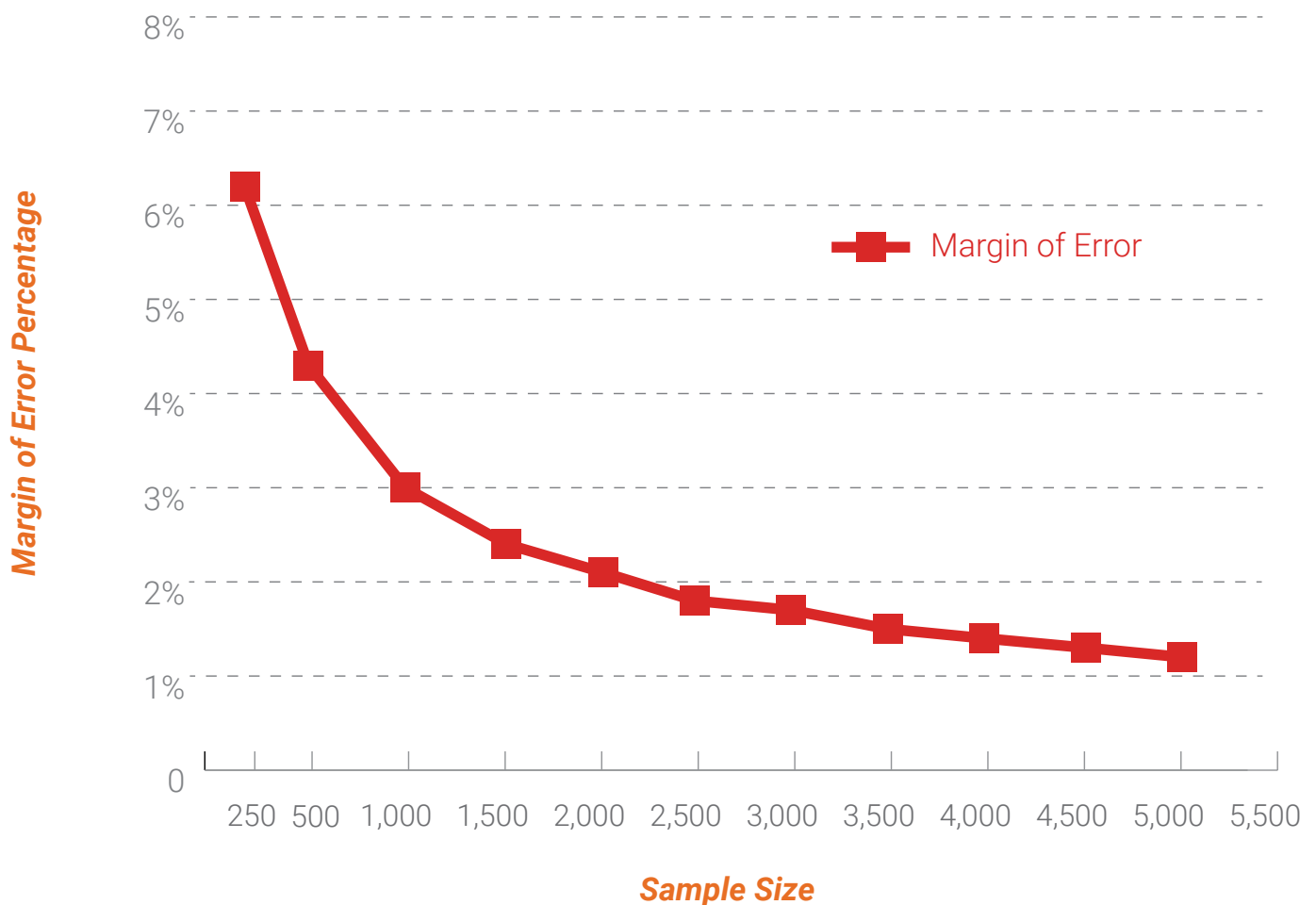
10% of the total number of polling stations. The size of the sample as it relates to the larger population is largely irrelevant to the principles of inferential statistics.

» **Observer quality:** There is a natural tension within any citizen monitoring effort between quantity and quality of observers. The more observers an organization recruits, the more polling stations it can observe. However, the fewer observers, the more organizations can effectively control the quality of its observers by only recruiting well-qualified and reliable observers, and ensuring they are properly trained. Reasonably sized samples allow organizations to focus on quality over

quantity. This is critical for a successful PRVT as poorly trained and/or unreliable observers present risks to a complete, representative sample (for instance, not deploying on election day or deploying to the wrong station) and data accuracy (for instance, providing inaccurate or incomplete information on an observation form).

» **Management capacity and resources:** All organizations have a finite management capacity. As sample size increases, more resources will have to be dedicated to observer recruitment, trainings, management, and reporting. If an organization tries to manage more observers than it has capacity for, it can result in poor observer

Sample Size Relative to Margin of Error



deployment and reporting, and potentially collapse the overall monitoring effort. In addition, organizations will have inherent resource constraints that will dictate the size of their sample.

» **Public perception and political considerations:**

Stakeholders may not have a strong understanding of statistics, including how a relatively small sample size can provide nationally representative data and accurate election results predictions. Organizations will need to develop outreach strategies to enhance stakeholders' understanding of PRVTs (discussed further in Chapter 5) but sample sizes will also have to be large enough to pass a general “laugh test” that the public and stakeholders will accept as credible. In addition, organizations should

ensure that samples contain data points in every geographically meaningful area – for instance, in every district or constituency. This can help build public confidence in the sample by demonstrating that every community is represented. Achieving this is easily done through stratified random sampling, discussed in more detail below.

- » **Margin of error:** Another major consideration in determining sample size is the margin of error. Sample size is one of the factors that will impact the margin of error, as larger sample sizes enhance the precision of predictions. As sample size increases, margin of error decreases. However, incremental gains from increasing the sample size only hold true to a certain extent. Once a sample size is sufficiently large there are diminishing returns in the size of margin of error.

<i>Country (Year)</i>	<i>Total Number of Polling Stations</i>	<i>PRVT Sample Size</i>
Montenegro (2020)	~1,250	~270
Armenia (2021)	~2,000	~300
Georgia (2021)	~3,700	~800
Malawi (2019)	~5,000	~800
Serbia (2020)	~8,250	~500
Zimbabwe (2018)	~11,000	~750
Tunisia (2019)	~13,500	~1,000
Guatemala (2019)	~21,000	~1,000
Côte d'Ivoire (2020)	~24,000	~750
Ukraine (2019)	~30,000	~1,300
Kenya (2017)	~41,000	~1,700
Nigeria (2019)	~120,000	~1,500
Indonesia (2004)	~500,000	~1,500

Minimal Sizes for Sampling

Inferential statistics rely on a sufficiently large number of sample points to produce representative data (a concept referred to as the Law of Large Numbers).⁷ Therefore a sample size can be too small to produce reliable estimates. For national elections, this will rarely be an issue. However, there may be an instance where organizations want to examine the results of a single town or constituency with a small number of polling stations. In instances where the polling station population is limited (for instance around 150 stations) it would be more accurate to cover all the polling stations in that constituency than to use a sample that is too small to be reliable.

7. The law of large numbers is the theorem that as the number of identically distributed, randomly generated variables increases, their sample mean approaches the expected value of the population, and tends to become closer to the expected value as more trials are performed.

Organizations may seek to reduce their margin of error if they are anticipating particularly narrow margins between candidates or to runoff thresholds. Factors such as the heterogeneity of the population could also drive the need for a larger sample size. Diverse populations are more likely to have greater variability which can also impact your margin of error.

While these are all important factors to ensure a sample is adequately sized, the ideal sample size is sufficient, but not too large. **Simply put, a sample needs to be large enough to achieve an acceptable margin of error and pass public scrutiny, but should not be so large that it begins to burden your organization's ability to successfully execute a PRVT.** Sample sizes should be designed to maximize chances for a proper deployment and high response rate. PRVT sample sizes *typically* range between 500 - 1,500 polling stations, although successful PRVTs have used samples outside of this range. For example, the chart below shows a select list of countries where citizen election monitors have conducted PRVTs, the total number of polling stations nationwide in that country (listed from smallest to largest) and the number of polling

stations ultimately included in the PRVT sample by the observer organization.

3.4 A Random, Representative Sample

The accuracy of inference is dependent on the **randomness** and **representativeness** of the sample. These principles provide stringent parameters on how samples are drawn and how observers will be deployed.

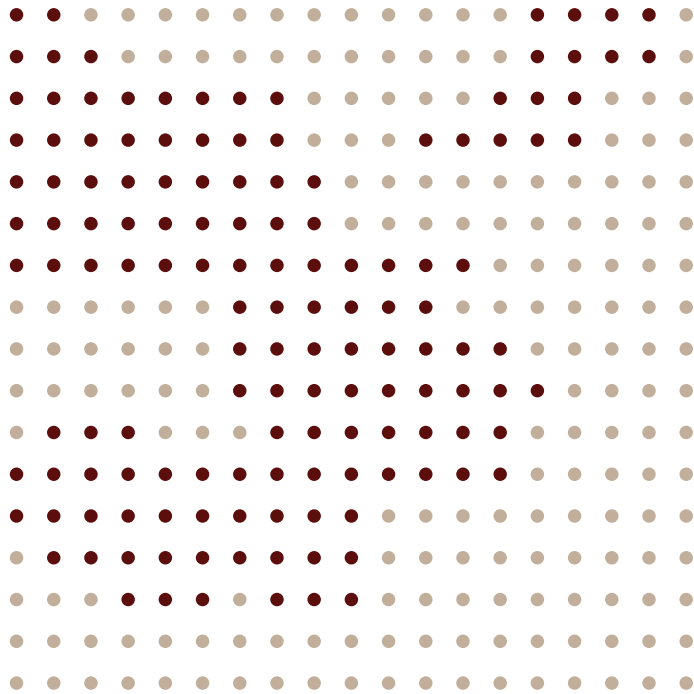
Randomness means that every polling station has the same likelihood of being selected in the sample. Randomness is critical because it removes potential bias in the sample. Any bias introduced into a sample will reduce its ability to accurately predict outcomes. **Therefore, when properly drawing a random sample, there should be no substitutions or changes to the polling stations selected, even for particularly small, remote, hard-to-reach or otherwise challenging polling stations that will inevitably appear in the sample.** Attempts at removing or replacing such stations often introduce bias and undermine the quality of the sample. Nor should a

Population and PRVT Sample Distribution

This diagram shows the distribution of different types of polling stations in an entire country (i.e., population) next to the PRVT’s selected sample of polling stations, which is representative of the country. Because the sample was stratified by polling station type, the proportion of each type of station in the sample will match the proportion in the whole country.

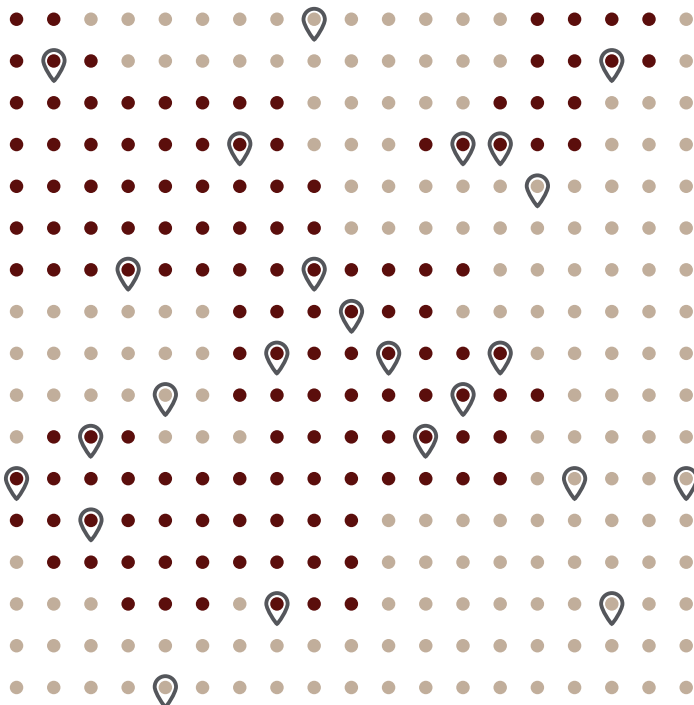
Polling Station Distribution

- Urban Polling Station
- Rural Polling Station



PRVT Sample Distribution

- 📍 Sampled Polling Station



random sample be redrawn until you find one that is more convenient. To achieve a truly random sample, organizations will have to dedicate resources and develop checks – in training, materials, management, and reporting – to ensure that observers have been deployed to the correct polling station, even if that station is difficult to reach. (Support to observers is

discussed in detail in *Chapter 8: Recruiting, Managing, and Training PRVT Observers.*)

Representativeness refers to how the sample reflects broader population, in particular the distribution of polling stations. Randomness helps achieve representativeness. Additionally, we help

Population and Sample Distribution Chart Example from CCMG (Zambia)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Population of All Polling Stations and All Registered Voters</i>		<i>PRVT Sample of Polling Stations and Registered Voters</i>	
	<i>Total Polling Stations</i>	<i>Polling Stations (N)</i>	<i>Sample Polling Stations</i>	<i>Sample Polling Stations (N)</i>
Central	1,143	9%	140	9%
Copperbelt	1,719	14%	214	14%
Eastern	1,437	12%	177	12%
Luapula	1,017	8%	126	8%
Lusaka	1,602	13%	197	13%
Muchinga	793	7%	99	7%
Northern	1,103	9%	135	9%
North-Western	794	7%	99	7%
Southern	1,394	11%	170	11%
Western	1,150	9%	143	10%
Total	12,152	100%	1,500	100%

This excerpted table from citizen election observer organization CCMG shows the distribution of their sample of polling stations as compared to the total number of all national polling stations. The complete table (see Appendix B) also compares the distribution of registered voters and female registered voters at sampled polling stations with the number of registered voters and female registered voters at all polling stations.

ensure representativeness in PRVTs by using strata in sampling.⁸ This is because voting patterns and behavior, including support for political contestants, are often distributed by key factors, such as geography, polling station size or classification (for instance, large/small, urban/rural), or other relevant and reliable population data. Practically speaking, stratifying simply means grouping or sorting the population by the chosen strata prior to drawing the sample.

If a group determines that relevant strata based on expected electoral behavior represent the capital, urban areas and rural areas, the proportion of sample points belonging to each strata should match the proportion in the overall list of polling stations.

The sample should be drawn early in the PRVT planning process, especially if observers will be recruited from the communities where they will observe (see more in *Chapter 8: Recruiting, Managing, and Training PRVT Observers*). As mentioned in Chapter 1, drawing a sample will require a complete, accurate and up-to-date list of polling stations⁹ where ballots are physically cast and counted (i.e. not just polling centers which may contain multiple polling stations or streams). The polling station list must be complete and clearly disaggregated by relevant administrative geographies. Lists ideally would also include the number of registered voters per polling station which is helpful in understanding the degree to which your sample is representative of all voters.

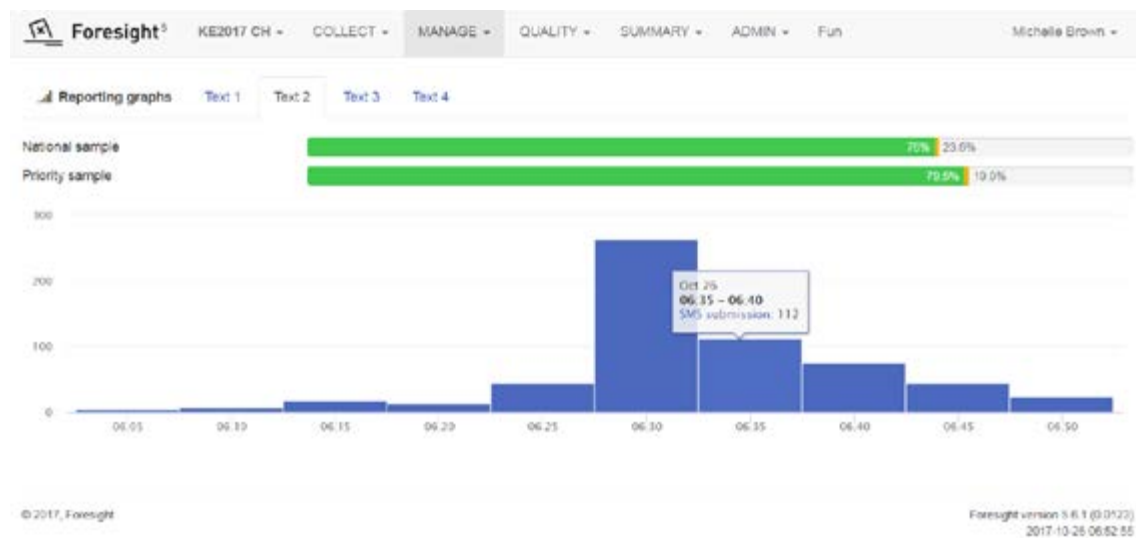
Random samples can be drawn using a variety of statistical software or in a simple spreadsheet but

Out of Country Polling Stations

In many countries, citizens or diaspora residing abroad can vote in elections. While this is typically a very small number of voters and unlikely to impact the results, in some cases, it may be a significant voting bloc. In cases where out-of-country voting is substantial enough to impact the outcome, organizations should include out-of-country stations in its sampling population. This may require recruiting observers abroad near selected out-of-country stations to monitor the process and collect and transmit their results. Dropping out-of-country stations from a sample, especially when they represent a large population, would result in a sample that is not representative of the entire voting population and could undermine the accuracy of PRVT results predictions.

must follow the principles mentioned above. A well-drawn sample will accurately reflect the population at-large; for instance, the geographic distribution of polling stations in the sample will be proportional to that of polling stations nationally. In many cases, especially in countries with relatively low caps on polling station size, the geographic distribution of percentage of registered voters by sample stations should also be consistent with that of the nationwide population.

8. Sampling does not require stratification, but it is a best practice for PRVTs.
9. For planning purposes organizations may use an old polling station list if the assumption is that there won't be major changes to it, as the list can help organizations understand how they can expect their observers to be distributed geographically. Any provisional sample must be revisited once a final polling station list is available, which could lead to last minute deployment changes.



A screenshot from Foresight, one of the PRVT systems, showing that 76% of reports have been received so far. The chart below shows the number of reports by time and method (i.e., SMS or phone call).

NDI image

3.5 Importance of Completion Rate

The quality of inference for a PRVT will also depend on the response rate from observers because non-responses – essentially missing data points – introduce bias into the findings. Missing data points are unlikely to be missing at random. For instance, organizations are much more likely to get responses from observers who are deployed to easy-to-reach polling stations, or places with reliable telecommunications infrastructure, which may lead to urban polling stations being over-represented in the data reported. Similarly, hard-to-reach locations or polling stations in active conflict areas would be more likely to be underrepresented in observers' reports. Since we know voting patterns are likely to differ along those lines, such a disparity will threaten the accuracy of the PRVT findings.

Some users of inferential statistics may be tempted to make up for gaps in response rates by “weighting” the data—essentially applying higher or lower values to certain data points to overcome disproportionality in the responses. However, weighting for non-responses can be a complex endeavor, and one that

relies on an analyst making assumptions based on historical or auxiliary statistics that may not be available or reliable in some countries. In fact, a lack of trust in official data is often one of the reasons a PRVT is necessary in the first place.

A response rate of essentially 100% ensures the integrity of the sample and removes the need to make possibly incorrect assumptions in an attempt to “weight” the sample for missing data points. With the use of manageable sample sizes; good training regimes and pre-election simulations or practice exercises; and advances in technology, near 100% response rates in PRVTs are attainable and frequently achieved. For instance, **between 2015 and 2021, organizations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ghana, Georgia, Guatemala, Honduras, Kenya, Kosovo, Malawi, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nigeria, Serbia, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, Zambia, Zimbabwe**, and many others achieved response rates of over 98%. This includes particularly challenging circumstances, such as limited infrastructure or closed political space.

In practice this means that organizations will have to ensure adequate resources and strategies are in place to ensure all observers deploy to the sample

stations and report data from them. This includes developing special plans for recruiting and deploying observers to hard-to-reach sample points.

Chapter

4

Strategic Planning and Preparation

After reviewing the key considerations and statistical principles that will shape an entire PRVT effort in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, it should be clear that PRVTs are both a politically and logistically demanding exercise that rely on strong leadership and sufficient staffing, resources, and planning. Each of these aspects is an essential building block to supporting an independent and nonpartisan PRVT that produces reliable data the public can trust. This chapter will cover:

- » **Organizational structure and leadership**, which can determine whether a PRVT is perceived as credible and support a nationwide network of observers;
- » **Staffing**, which will shape how well the PRVT is implemented;
- » **Budgeting, fundraising, and technical assistance**, which ensure the effort is properly resourced, while limiting risks; and
- » **Project planning and timelines**, which are crucial to manage the multiple, often overlapping, activities that are required for PRVTs in the lead up to election day.

4.1 Organizational Structure

The success of a PRVT starts at the institutional level—specifically the structure, profile, and composition of your organization. There are typically two ways that PRVT efforts are organized: with a **single organization**, or with multiple organizations participating under a **network or coalition**. While there is no “right” model for PRVTs, there are considerations for each and underlying best practices that may impact how they operate. For instance, PRVTs benefit from a centralized structure with a strong headquarters. This helps support consistency and standardization in recruitment and training, which, in turn, maximizes data quality and the ability to deploy to and collect data from the sample. It also promotes faster and better data management, cleaning, and analysis. **Regardless of structure, all organizations engaging in PRVTs should have clear mechanisms in place that codify how decisions are made, encourage accountability in leadership positions, and promote nonpartisanship among staff.**



The National Election Watch (NEW) is an example of a coalition organizational structure. NEW was founded in 2001 and it is a coalition of CSOs observing elections in Sierra Leone.

Courtesy of NEW

Structure	Pros	Cons
<p>Single Organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Streamlined leadership facilitates quick high-level political decisions required during PRVTs » Easier to promote understanding and buy-in from project staff » Stronger institutional knowledge over time, retaining and iterating lessons learned and best practices over a series of elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Single high-profile leadership may be more vulnerable to the high-stakes of a PRVT and personality-politics could be utilized to prop up or discredit an effort » May be more difficult to achieve the robust nationwide network of observers that PRVTs require
<p>Coalition or network of organizations</p> <p><i>For examples of coalition structures, see Appendix C.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Multiple, diverse organizations in an effort may improve the perception of independence, represent broad civic support, and dilute criticism » Allows the opportunity to bring in diversified and specialized skill sets to an effort. » Can promote a well-distributed network, especially in rural areas or other hard to reach zones, where recruiting or deploying observers may prove difficult. » May more easily facilitate inclusion within observation structures and operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Often complicates decision-making, which can be particularly detrimental in the fast-paced nature of a PRVT. » Requires negotiation on how human resources are used and deployed, including how to utilize each organization's networks and strengths, and addressing gaps in geographic coverage » Requires negotiation around the allocation of finances and other resources (for instance, office space); particularly with large PRVT grants which require central management, and often, a single recipient » Requires clear decision-making protocols and, often, internal MOUs to better define partnerships, branding, and how to handle sensitive PRVT data.

4.2 Leadership

The leadership of your organization will influence the overall political will to conduct a PRVT in accordance with proper statistical principles, and staffing decisions will impact the overall effectiveness of the effort. Importantly, both the real and perceived neutrality of staff and leadership can make or break a PRVT. If staff and/or leadership are viewed as having a political agenda, it may undermine the credibility of the entire PRVT exercise. Civic organizations conducting PRVTs often rely on high-level leadership, such as a **board of directors or steering committee** to provide strategic direction, and to elevate the credibility of their work. Such structures may be particularly important in the case of a coalition or network, which allow multiple organizations to be represented in a governing body. Ideally this committee will:

1. Be comprised of prominent and respected individuals;
2. Reflect the diversity of the country, by balancing gender, racial, ethnic, geographic and other critical constituencies;
3. Bring a variety of different backgrounds and skill sets together that could be beneficial to the effort (such as fundraising, inclusion, communications, research, etc.)
4. Be free of any conflicts of interest with the PRVT exercise and/or the electoral outcome;
5. Be available and committed, particularly during key timeframes for decision-making;
6. Be widely perceived as credible, independent and impartial in order to manage relationships with stakeholders.

The size and responsibilities of a board/committee

may vary from organization to organization and even for each election. Observer organizations should use their leadership strategically, understanding that members will likely not have time for day-to-day management issues, and over reliance on their input for operational activities could create bottlenecks. It's critical that all members of a board/committee have buy-in about the basic principles of PRVTs, the organization's PRVT goals, and the broader PRVT methodology. Expectations for leadership's involvement and support should be established early in the effort. There should be regular briefings, such as monthly meetings, to ensure that leadership is informed of developments, are adequately consulted on key issues, and can facilitate public diplomacy, as needed. Many organizations also involve the board/committee in scenario planning for developing and approving findings and public statements.

Prioritizing a Diverse and Inclusive Team

To build organizational credibility and strengthen an observer network, it is important that leadership and staff reflect the demographics of the country, and efforts should be made to promote the inclusion of women, minorities, youth, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. This may mean reaching out to partners and other specialized organizations to help in recruiting from more diverse pools, and/or adopting an internal quota for staffing. Building an inclusive observation effort does not just mean having a diverse network of observers but ensuring that marginalized voices are integrated into the organization's overall observation design and analysis.

4.3 PRVT Roles and Staffing

While boards can help navigate political questions and provide strategic vision, organizations will need an implementing body to manage the day-to-day operations of the PRVT. For single organizations, this includes assigning key personnel whose time will be completely dedicated to the PRVT and developing a clear staffing plan and division of labor that prioritizes the PRVT. For a coalition or network, this may mean establishing an umbrella coordinating body, such as a secretariat, to centralize management and daily operations to execute the joint effort. PRVT efforts will need to include the following staffing roles—some of which may be new positions, some of which may be covered by existing staff with those capacities, seconded to the PRVT on a full-time basis:

Headquarters Staff Roles

1. The **PRVT manager** provides day-to-day project oversight, ensuring that the program timeline, recruitment, training, communications and outreach, funds disbursement, and all other strategies are carried out in accordance with established deadlines. They supervise all other project staff and ensure open communication between all members of the project team. The PRVT manager often designs recruitment and training materials and takes the lead on developing observation forms. They work with the finance team to develop, execute, and reconcile program budgets, including procurement processes. They work with ICT staff to ensure all technology and communications needs for trainings, simulations, and election day are met. The PRVT manager is integrally involved in developing and/or reviewing communications
- and often overseeing execution of the communications plan at all stages of the project.
2. **Regional or zonal coordinators** are based at headquarters but are responsible for specific regions or geographic zones. They serve as a primary point of contact between observers and field supervisors in their assigned zone and the PRVT management team. Their responsibilities may include ensuring adherence to recruitment and training plans so that all sample points in their zone of responsibility are covered by trained observers; coordinating accreditation; overseeing, printing, and packing observer materials; overseeing and following up from simulation exercises for observers in their zone; and assisting field supervisors to address any problems that arise on election day. They may provide input on observation forms and training materials.
3. **Expertise in the election law**, regulations and other legal concerns. Knowledge of the relevant legal framework is needed to inform design of observer forms, training, accreditation and safeguards for observers and the overall effort. While this does not have to be a stand-alone position – legal framework analysis may be done by the Executive Director, PRVT manager or other on staff or hired counsel – it is an important staffing responsibility.
4. An in-house statistician, data scientist, and/or technical assistance provider supplies **data analytics support** for the PRVT. They may design or contribute to the sampling strategy and may draw the sample. They ensure that all election observation data is complete and oversee data cleaning to ensure accuracy. Based on data gathered, they identify relevant trends and communicate findings to the PRVT manager

and executive leadership to inform statement drafting. They may be responsible for developing and analyzing monitoring and evaluation tools for the project. The data analytics support staff may also be responsible for monitoring critical incidents collected by the incident team and, in collaboration with the PRVT manager, determining how to communicate these incidents to the board/committee.

5. **Communications staff** are responsible for identifying external communications goals for the PRVT and executing a plan to meet those goals, in coordination with the PRVT manager. In developing the external communications plan, they will identify key messages; target audiences; communications tools and tactics; and metrics of success. They are involved in the development, translation and dissemination of statements, web stories or blog posts, social media updates, infographics, videos, and animations to spread the word about the PRVT and its findings. Communications staff will maintain relationships with the media and other stakeholders, and maintain contact lists for disseminating publications. They are responsible for organizing press conferences as needed. More information on the responsibilities and objectives for communications staff is included in Chapter 5.
6. **Logistics support staff** ensure that all materials needed for the PRVT are acquired and distributed in a timely fashion. They may assist with packing and distribution of observer and training materials, as well as assuring resource needs and location for the data center. Logistics support staff may also be responsible for maintaining internal communications systems, in collaboration with the ICT support team.

7. **ICT support staff** ensure that all technology needs for observer training, simulations, and election day are met. They understand the data management system and maintenance and are responsible for implementing data security protocols. They procure network connectivity equipment and service(s), including needed devices (i.e., computers, phones) and all other technology needed for the data center, in accordance with the project budget and procurement policies. They monitor and maintain stable network connectivity for the PRVT data center, including primary and backup connections and appropriate load balancing.

Database developers or procurement

If an organization does not have access to a pre-existing data management system to collect and manage PRVT findings, they will need to have trusted staff identify and procure one that meets the needs of their observation. Alternatively, if they have qualified developers on staff and sufficient time, they can build a new system. In either case, a new system should be tested well before election day to ensure all the key features work properly for the PRVT exercise. There are a number of databases that are already designed to meet the specific needs of a PRVT. To learn more about PRVT databases, see Chapter 10.

8. **Data operators** work on a short-term basis during simulation exercises and election day. On election day, they are responsible for following up with observers to ensure data completeness and

confirming data accuracy, as directed by the data analytics staff.

9. **Financial, auditing and administrative management support staff** oversee execution of the project budget in accordance with organizational and donor policies. They coordinate reconciliation of expenses with project staff. They ensure timely payments of

invoices, observer stipends, salaries and other programmatic expenses, and may draft, sign and collect contracts. They are responsible for maintaining accurate and up to date accounting records, bank reconciliation, and other documents for timely preparation of financial reports.

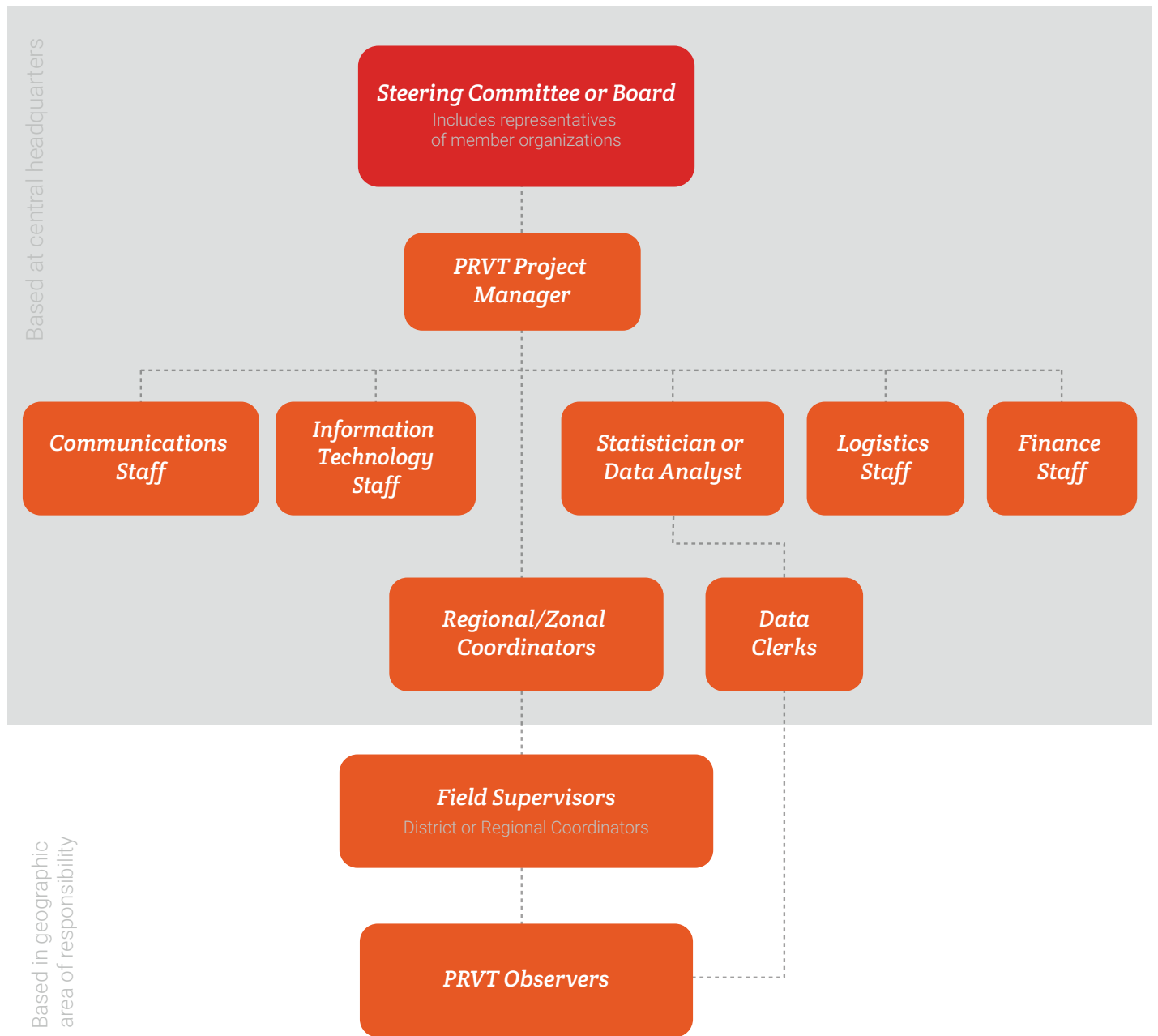
For more examples of sample staffing plans, see Appendix D.

Other PRVT Roles: The Observation Network

The staffing of your observation network may be impacted by your organizational structure or other activities. For instance, if your coalition already has constituency-based focal points around the country for other activities - such as long-term observation or civic education - then these focal points could potentially serve as field supervisors. This can integrate two separate but simultaneous field efforts and reinforce pre-existing field structures.

- » **Field supervisors or coordinators** are based in their geographic area of responsibility. For many organizations, these individuals are responsible for recruiting and managing observers for sampled polling stations in their area of responsibility. The field supervisors may also facilitate accreditation for their observers, manage the logistics of observer training in their area and serve as trainers themselves (See *Chapter 8: Recruiting, Managing, and Training PRVT Observers* for more details on training models). They ensure that all recruited observers attend training, participate in simulation exercises, and deploy on election day—and that any observer unable to participate is replaced prior to election day. They will serve as a field-based point of contact for observers on election day, assisting with any issues that may arise.
- » **Polling station observers** are the field-based observers that will deploy on election day and collect information on the election day process and the results at their sampled polling station. Recruitment and training of observers is discussed in Chapter 8.

Example of Common PRVT Organization



The success of a PRVT relies on the organizational capacity of field supervisors, the commitment of observers, and the coordinated efforts of a strong headquarters team. For more examples, see Appendix D.

Staffing Decision: PRVT Data Ownership, Access and Use

Even though PRVTs require substantial staffing, the sensitive nature of predicting election results means a very limited number of people should have access to results data before it is public. Leaks and other unauthorized use of results information can completely undermine a PRVT's message and be exploited by partisan actors. Organizations should have very clear protocols regarding highly sensitive PRVT data, including who has access to it and when, and who makes decisions regarding its release. This often includes those staff and advisors who fully understand the methodology and risks involved, and who take part in scenario planning. This usually includes: the PRVT Manager, data analysts and/or technical assistance providers, and leadership. **Critically, data ownership lies within the monitoring organization, and groups should resist pressure by external stakeholders—including close or trusted actors—to share PRVT data before it is released, or to share “raw” data outside of the organization.**

4.4 Budgeting

Because of their specialized nature, PRVT budgets often require significant resources for training, deployment, and data collection and management. Specifically, PRVT budgets need to include realistic estimates for the following line items:

- » Staff time
- » Office equipment (printers, staff computers, etc.)
- » Trainings (travel, venue rental, lodging, per diem)
- » Material development (translation, paper, and printing costs)
- » Observer deployment (stipends, phone credits, travel allowances for observers and supervisors)¹⁰
- » Communication with observers (SMS and other bulk communications services)
- » Data collection and analysis (database development costs if needed, other data processing or communication software)
- » Contractual services (legal fees, advisors, cyber security support)
- » Administrative costs (accounting, etc.)
- » External communications needs (advertising costs, press conference needs, graphic designer, social and traditional media subscriptions or services, etc.)
- » Data Center needs (for more information about Data Center needs, see *Chapter 9: Data Transmission, Management, and Quality Control*)
 - Any hardware and devices: Laptops, phones, chargers, headsets, cables
 - Venue rental
 - Access to necessary networks and backups: mobile and internet connections
 - Hosting and any backups for the data management system
 - Security
 - Data clerk stipends and hospitality (i.e.: refreshments and meals)

10. Typically, observers use their own devices (such as a personal cell phone) to communicate and report their PRVT data on election day. This practice is more sustainable over the long term and reduces burdens on both the observer organization and the observer.

Strategically Managing Additional Funds

Any additional, last-minute funds should be used to bolster (rather than detract from) the PRVT. **Ideally, new funding could augment PRVT operations (for example: increasing data operators) or provide general organizational capacity (for example: increased communication resources, more robust trainings, or post-election monitoring).**

Chapter 6 of this guide includes other ideas on how additional deployment strategies can best complement a PRVT.

However, some donors may ask organizations for competing projects or new approaches that could divert resources and support from the PRVT. For example, added funding that is earmarked solely for deploying more observers is complicated. Additional observers may help deter fraud and increase civic participation, but those added observers would not necessarily contribute to a PRVT, since the sample cannot expand or change at the last minute. On the contrary, adding observers would increase recruitment, training and management demands on headquarters, distracting from PRVT preparations.

As such, before undertaking new funds for a parallel project, it's critical to ensure that funding comes with additional staffing, training and deployment resources. The initiative (and the data it produces) would need to be separated and independent from the PRVT, which also presents a challenge to how the effort is presented publicly.

Given all the costs associated with trainings and observer deployment, the size of the sample will impact the budget, as will the technologies used in data collection and analysis.

PRVTs require organizations to move large amounts of money quickly over large geographic areas, particularly around trainings and observer deployment. Therefore, it is critical to plan ahead and have strong financial management structures that account for the activity timeline and ensure funds are available when needed and used for its intended purpose. This includes accounting and auditing plans that document and track money transfers and limit the risk of funds not being accounted for. Good financial management also relies on a strong understanding of donor timelines, approval procedures, funding mechanisms and reporting requirements.

4.5 Fundraising and Donor Relations

PRVTs are resource intensive exercises that require sufficient time, funding and expertise to successfully implement. This may require support from local or international donors, as well as third party technical assistance providers. Organizations seeking funds for PRVTs will need to work with donors to ensure that sufficient funds are provided. PRVTs cannot be conducted successfully with an insufficient budget, and organizations should not attempt to cut corners that could undermine the quality of the exercise in order to meet unrealistic donor expectations. To avoid this, organizations may need to educate donors on the needs and priorities of a PRVT and should present them with a realistic budget.

Organizations will also need to ensure, as much as possible, that grants are awarded, and funds are

received in a *timely manner*. Because of how closely PRVT activities are aligned to budget disbursements, it's critical to confirm the timing of sufficient funds at the onset of a project when financial planning can be integrated into all aspects of the broader strategy.

Last minute funding can impose a logistical and administration burden on organizations during the most critical time.

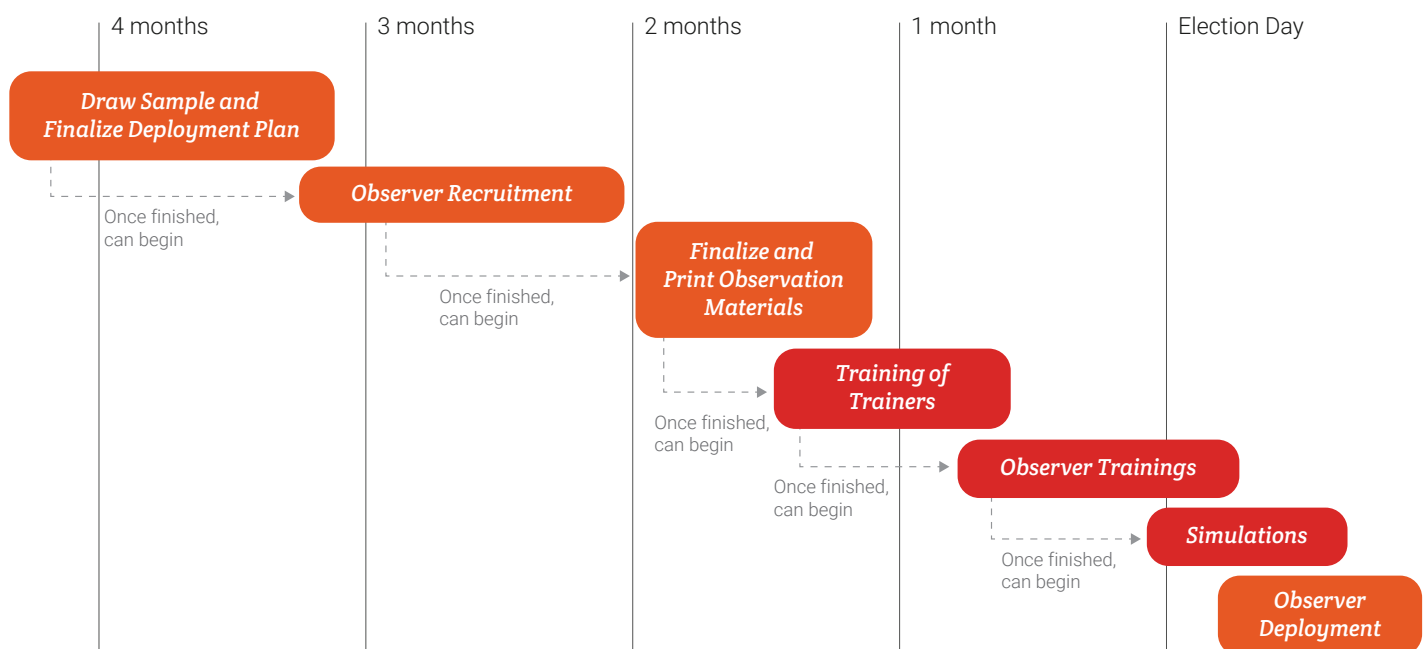
Given the many nuances of PRVTs, organizations will want to take the time to develop good relationships and regular communication with donors. Beyond funding, donors can be an invaluable resource for organizations and can provide support in high-risk situations and during unexpected crises. Organizations need to be open with donors about risks and concerns, especially as it relates to observer security, and manage expectations in terms of the PRVT. For instance, donors should be given realistic expectations of how long data collection may take and when results predictions are likely to be

published. In turn, donors should not ask for sensitive PRVT data prior to release, as that could increase political, security and reputational risk for the citizen observer organization and could also result in rushed data cleaning and quality checks.

4.6 Technical Assistance

Technical assistance providers, given their pre-existing relationships and comparative experience, may be particularly helpful in navigating donor relations, producing realistic and well-informed budgets, and managing expectations. Organizations implementing PRVTs may hire or partner with technical assistance providers, such as international or regional NGOs or consultants, to ensure expert review and guidance throughout the PRVT process. Given the high-stakes nature of a PRVT, even organizations with significant experience and expertise opt to work with a technical partner to take

Illustrative Project Timeline



advantage of the latest innovations and deal with challenging political situations. Many organizations establish an MOU with their technical assistance provider around the PRVT to outline expectations, commitments, and responsibilities, especially as it relates to sensitive PRVT data.

4.7 Project Planning and Timeline

PRVTs include numerous time sensitive, simultaneous, and dependent activities. In addition, PRVTs tend to have shorter timelines for implementation because many elements cannot commence until the sample is drawn. It is crucial to develop a clear strategy for implementation, including a timeline and activity plan, as early as possible and well in advance of election day. The planning process should be inclusive of all key staff and leadership to ensure that there's buy-in at all levels of the organization.

In order to develop an effective timeline and activity plan, organizations should have a strong understanding of both the electoral calendar as well as the sequencing of PRVT activities. For instance, you will need to know when a finalized list of polling stations will be available (which will impact your ability to finalize your sample and deployment), when contestant lists are finalized (which will impact your ability to finalize your observation forms), and when the accreditation process begins (which will impact your ability to ensure observers are allowed to observe at polling stations) and factor in the time needed to procure or develop and distribute materials to observers for training and deployment.

A PRVT timeline should not be drafted in a vacuum and needs to fit into an organization's overall elections plan. Some organizations may be

conducting other kinds of election-related activities, such as voter education or long-term observation. Keep in mind these activities as you plot your timeline, even if they are largely isolated efforts, and try to identify where they could impact the PRVT. For instance, a press conference or other public event should be noted so that PRVT public outreach is not scheduled on the same day or is closely coordinated.

Major PRVT activities *generally* follow this sequencing, although activities may happen concurrently, and external factors can influence the order:

- » Recruit necessary staff – starting with headquarters positions (may need to be adjusted after sample size decision)
- » Determine sample size
- » Plan PRVT strategic communications, education and outreach
- » Draw sample
- » Train supervisors on observer recruitment
- » Recruit observers
- » Accredite observers
- » Draft and finalize PRVT forms and other training materials
- » Print and pack training materials
- » Finalize election day data collection and management systems
- » Train trainers
- » Train observers
- » Plan election day scenario with leadership
- » Setup data center
- » Recruit and train data operators
- » Conduct simulations

- » Statement drafting planning and preparation
- » Deploy on election day
- » Release of PRVT preliminary statement, including PRVT results.
- » Implement post-election strategy

You can find example timelines in Appendix E.

Once you outline major PRVT activities, consider what tasks must be completed to let each activity advance. For example, observers must be recruited before they can be trained. The forms and all the training materials must be finalized and printed before trainings can begin. The data collection method – and at least that part of the data management system – must be ready before training so that observers can do a practical data reporting exercise during training. The data center needs to be set up and data operators trained before the first simulation. Even though activities on a PRVT timeline may naturally fall under clearly delineated responsibilities – such as PRVT management, field operations, or communications – they should all exist on a master timeline so everyone can see how all the major components work together, overlap and in some cases depend on one another. Organizations should continuously review and revise their operating timetable based on internal and external developments.

To build out the timeline, organizations should clearly link major PRVT tasks with responsible staff members and define a division of labor. Keep in mind that different staff will fulfill different roles, and that different roles will have different timelines. For instance, the finance staff will likely be busy during the initial granting process at the beginning of the PRVT, and at different moments of financial disbursements and reporting, while field supervisors and zonal coordinators will be much busier in



ISFED members in Georgia meet to discuss the timing of their mid-day findings.

NDI photo

the last few weeks and months leading up to the election. Clear timelines and divisions of labor can help balance the workload among project staff and identify areas where more human resources may be needed. It's also imperative that project plans and timelines are communicated with staff clearly and in a timely manner.

With so many concurrent and interdependent activities and outputs, coordination, and oversight are essential to ensure everything works together. PRVT managers and leadership will need to have a strong understanding of what both headquarters staff and organizers in the field are doing and make sure that expectations and deliverables are clearly communicated and understood.

Chapter

5

*Managing Political
and Public Relations*

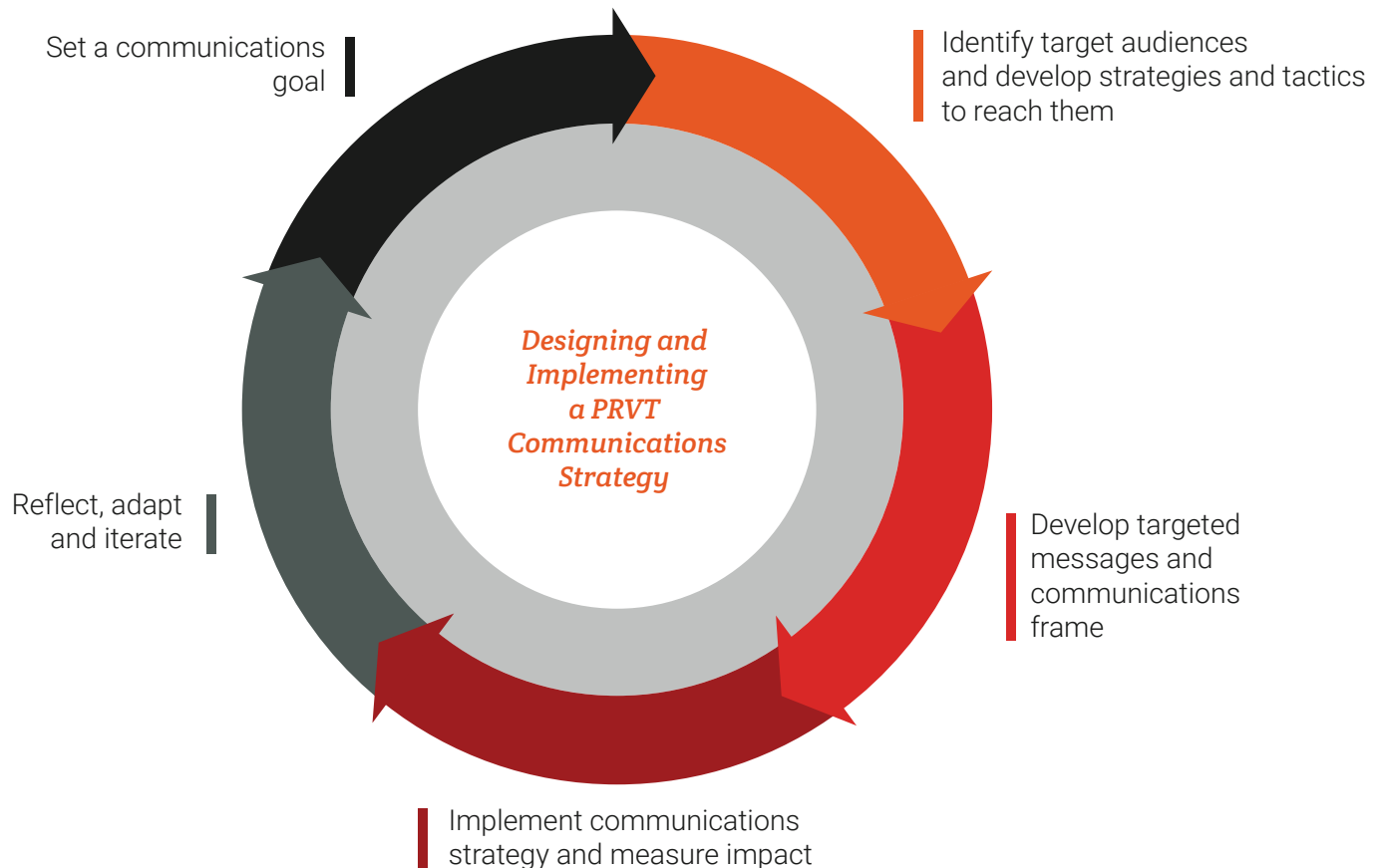
A key aspect of PRVT planning is an outreach strategy that addresses how the observation effort will be trusted, influential, and salient for key stakeholders. An outreach plan will need to clearly communicate the PRVT goals and limitations discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, and the key statistical principles that undergird the methodology, detailed in Chapter 3. This chapter will discuss key steps to build a broad understanding of these elements of the PRVT, build trust in PRVT findings, and respond to any communications crises that arise (election day communications are in Chapter 11.) Additional guidance on developing and implementing a communications strategy can be found in NDI’s Raising Voices in Closing Spaces guide, available at raiseavoice.net.

5.1 A Communication Strategy

Effective and strategic communications are vital to the success of all citizen observation efforts, and PRVT findings will have the desired impact only if there is awareness and trust in the effort among candidates, political parties, media, election authorities, civic activists, the international community, and the general public.

Communicating effectively about a PRVT is not a linear or singular process. Rather, messages and tactics evolve based on how your message is being received by your target audiences. Also, this cycle will likely evolve during the implementation of the PRVT,

The PRVT Communications Cycle





as your communication goals and target audiences change.

A PRVT is not conducted in a vacuum, but rather within the context of a high-stakes political process with actors with different – and often competing – interests. Some actors will be suspicious of how the information produced by the PRVT will change the political game they are used to playing. Others will have unrealistic expectations of how the PRVT will protect their interests. Political actors might publicly disparage the PRVT while publicly accepting its findings; just as easily, the opposite could be true. Furthermore, these roles may change over time.

Against this background, communication throughout the life of the PRVT project should seek to address different but complementary goals. Some goals will relate to the awareness and understanding of the public at large. Others will be more targeted at gaining the trust—and sometimes collaboration—of key actors. Generally, PRVT communication goals include:

- » **Deterring fraud** by setting the expectation that the PRVT will expose any systematic attempt to compromise the election or manipulate official results.

- » **Raising awareness** of the legitimacy and importance of citizen election observation, the organization's plans to observe the election process, and the information the PRVT will—and will not—generate.
- » **Building trust** in the PRVT, including by highlighting the organization's track record and nonpartisanship, and by educating others on statistical principles, and how the PRVT methodology differs from other efforts.
- » **Advocating** for the right of citizens to observe all aspects of the electoral process, including through timely accreditation by the EMB and access to information required for PRVT planning and implementation.
- » **Sharing** the PRVT findings on the election day process and the verification of official results. This could include highlighting positive developments, flagging potential issues that need to be addressed, or highlighting concerns that put the integrity of the elections at risk.
- » **Recommending** evidence-based changes to laws, regulations, procedures, and practices to make future election processes more inclusive, transparent, and accountable.

Depending on the context, organizations may need to prioritize certain goals—and address obstacles—in their communication strategy. For example, if there is not an established tradition – and expectation – of citizen observation in a country, or if an organization is observing for the first time, extra effort may be needed to build trust in the organization, in the concept of citizen observation, and in the methodology.

Building trust around PRVTs can be especially challenging given their technical complexity and reliance on statistics, which are often met with

skepticism and mistrust. Educating all relevant actors and building trust in the PRVT is critical given the political sensitivity and importance of its findings, both in terms of the quality of the election day process and predicted results. This will require a systematic effort to develop effective messages, conduct targeted outreach with key actors, and design and implement a successful media strategy.

5.2 Developing a Media Campaign

A comprehensive media strategy should include both broad goals, which remain constant, and specific **objectives** that will change throughout the life of the project. The table below outlines potential objectives.

Example Media Strategy Objectives by Time Period

Pre-election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Raise awareness of the organization and the importance of nonpartisan citizen election observation. » Raise awareness that the PRVT is being conducted, to build interest before election day and increase the impact of its findings. » Raise awareness of the PRVT as a proven methodology to assess the election day process and verify the results. » Provide information about what a PRVT is (and is not) and how it works, in language that most citizens understand. » Educate on why the selected sample size is “big enough” to enable an independent verification of results. » Provide evidence-based information of the pre-election process and environment, to share context the election-day monitoring. » Call on all actors to participate in the election peacefully and with respect to the electoral legal framework. » Announce when and where the organization will share information with the public on election day.
On or around election day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide regular updates on the conduct of the election, and issue timely recommendations as needed. » As soon as possible, provide an assessment of the conduct of the whole election day process and, if appropriate, the predicted election results.
Post-election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provide recommendations for reforms that would make future elections more inclusive, transparent, and accountable to citizens. » Recognize observers for their hard work, commitment, and contribution to the PRVT and a more transparent election process.

In addition to clear communication goals and objectives, a media campaign should identify a **topline message**. This is the heart of what others need to know about the organization and the PRVT that is reinforced in all communications (see “Developing Key Messages” below). It is also important to identify **target audiences** (discussed in more detail in the next section) - and the place they typically receive information – to identify the best communication channel. Communication channels are increasingly online and could include:


- » **Press briefings, notices, and conferences.** These are useful ways to give journalists access to the most relevant information so they can amplify it through the media. Targeted interviews with trusted journalists or participation in live interviews may provide additional opportunities to communicate information on the organization and explain the methodology, findings and/or recommendations. Some organizations pre-record their leadership reading statements, and share the audio file with journalists, along with written copies of their statement. It is key for the communications staff to maintain an updated contact list for local, national, and international local media to ensure that this outreach is effective.
- » **Specialized briefings for key stakeholders (including the EMB, political parties, other civil society organizations, international observers) before election day.** Private briefings to the EMB, political parties, civic organizations and others allows these

20 YEARS CRTA: Strongly Independent
↓ ABOUT US

Chaotic Election Day As Result of the Poor Electoral Process

LATEST NEWS / 04.04.2022

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Election day went in an atmosphere full of tensions that on several occasions escalated into physical violence, manifesting the unpreparedness of election administration and the lack of citizens' trust in institutions.

Extremely poor organization of the voting process and tensions on the election day were the expected outcome of the continuous degradation of the integrity of the electoral process in its entirety, which was marked by strengthening and sophistication of mechanisms of electoral corruption, and endangerment of citizens' voting rights.

In Serbia, CRTA conducted a press conference on its PRVT findings on the voting and closing processes, and [published a web story](#) reiterating its main messages.

Courtesy of CRTA

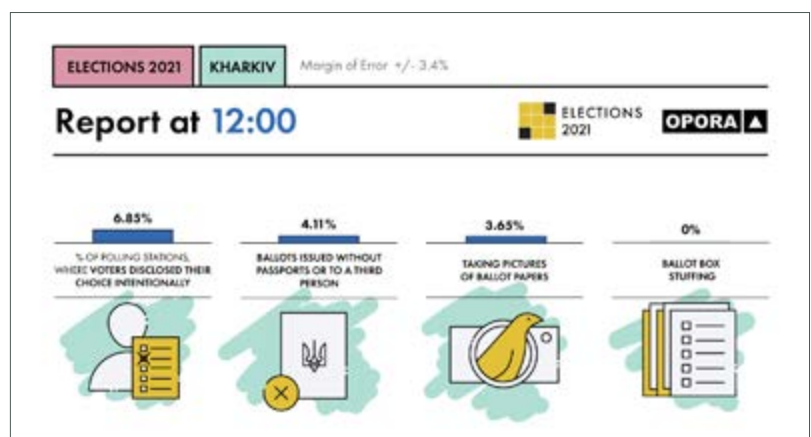
stakeholders to ask questions and better understand the methodology, increasing trust in the PRVT. It can be helpful to designate a key point of contact for each stakeholder who will maintain communication throughout the project. In a single PRVT organization, this role is often played by the executive director and the communications director. In a PRVT coalition, this responsibility is sometimes split among members of the steering committee.

- » **Guided visits.** Providing opportunities for different actors, like the media, international observers, or the EMB, to see parts of the PRVT – such as select observer trainings or the simulation data center – can help raise awareness about the effort. Showcasing professionalism can help increase trust in the organization and the PRVT.
- » **Online and other digital methods.** As technology evolves and becomes more accessible, it is important to understand how and where different audiences seek information. Preferred digital platforms –whether web-based, on social media or using other emerging technologies– vary between countries, and even between different groups of citizens, and change over time. To make the best use of digital outreach, organizations should understand: how different platforms work; how information can best reach audiences (and whether it is possible to pay fees to target certain groups); and, importantly, what gaps or blind spots exist on a platform, such as certain vulnerable groups lacking access.



CRTA staff briefs members of the international community on the PRVT as part of a [tour of the data center](#).

Courtesy of CRTA



Ukraine's Civil Network OPORA produced [digital infographics](#) to report on the quality of the 2021 election process.

Courtesy of OPORA

» **Traditional mass media.** Traditional media can reach audiences not active on other platforms. While advertisements on traditional media, especially print and radio, are impactful, they can be expensive and might not easily fit in PRVT budgets. Some organizations take advantage of airtime earmarked for public service announcements or participate in live interviews to deliver their message. Organizations should ensure to engage a balanced set of outlets both to ensure broad dissemination of the message and protect their reputation of impartiality and nonpartisanship.

5.3 Targeted Outreach to Key Audiences

While mass communicating key messages is important, reaching out strategically to different actors at different stages in the process is key to building credibility as a serious, unbiased citizen observation organization. This is especially important if statistics-based observation has not been conducted in the country in prior elections, and domestic actors, including the media, are not familiar with the principles involved. Targeted outreach also builds awareness that a PRVT will be conducted, increasing its impact by ensuring that its findings get appropriate attention. Educating electoral authorities and contestants about the information a PRVT will provide helps set the right expectations and becomes a disincentive for political contestants to commit fraud on election day. As described in the next section, the framing of the message might be different for different stakeholders, which may include:

» Election Management Bodies

- Outreach to the election authorities is critical,

and usually most effective when done in a constructive, non-confrontational tone. After all, PRVT organizations and EMBs have a shared interest in ensuring that the election is both fair and credible. Besides building mutual trust, this direct contact helps establish a common understanding of what is expected from each side. For example, the EMB might not be convinced that the PRVT is allowable under the legal framework, especially if it's confused with exit polls or other kinds of surveys. In that case, it might be necessary to educate EMB members and representatives on the methodology, how it is related to citizen observation and not to surveys or polls, how it provides an overall assessment on the process, rather than anecdotal evidence, and how it can help increase trust in the official results announced by the EMB.

- Building mutual trust with the EMB, and confidence in the organization's methodology, also has practical benefits. Given that observation requires access to the election process, all citizen observation needs some level of openness from the EMB. This is especially true for PRVTs, which depend on the prompt accreditation of observers and timely receipt of the final list of polling stations needed to draw a statistical sample in time for planning, recruitment, training, and deployment.

» The Media

- Outreach to the media helps educate journalists covering the election process about systematic citizen election observation, answer questions, and correct misunderstandings. When conducting a PRVT in particular, it is important for the media to better understand the power of nationally representative data



OPORA prepares for the press conference on their findings.

NDI photo

to provide an accurate assessment of the process, and how it differs from anecdotal information or isolated incident reports. In turn, this will help journalists strengthen their coverage of the election by elevating the PRVT findings over other sources of information. Sharing a timeline on when and how information on the PRVT will be available on election day with journalists in advance will help ensure a broad and timely coverage of its findings.

» **Political Parties and Candidates**

- Targeted outreach to parties and candidates – including independent candidates contesting the election – can help build awareness and confidence, set expectations, and reduce the chance of parties misinterpreting or misrepresenting PRVT findings. Reaching out to parties across the political spectrum will also help bolster the organization’s nonpartisan reputation and lay the groundwork to deterring candidates from rejecting election outcomes if the PRVT verifies the process and results. Building trust with party leaders can

also build support for PRVT recommendations among those who may be in a position to enact them.

» **Civic Organizations and International Community**

- Developing and maintaining strong relationships with other civic organizations and the international community (including international observers) could help orchestrate a coordinated response in case of a crisis. For example, these allies could help build pressure on election authorities if they put the PRVT at risk by withholding accreditation or information (like the polling station list), or if they introduce unreasonable requirements for observation.

» **Donors**

- It is important to maintain constant communication with donors to educate them about the PRVT methodology, the kinds of information it can provide, and how it will impact funding needs, timelines, and operations (see more in *Chapter 4: Strategic Planning and Preparation*). Donors, some of whom might also support the work of EMBs, might also be potential allies in calling for the necessary access and information needed for a PRVT.

Tested Talking Points about PRVT

The following eight questions and answers are taken from the PRVT Process and Results Verification for Transparency Infographic included as Appendix F.

1. What is a PRVT?

A PRVT is a proven, advanced observation methodology used by independent nonpartisan citizen election observers as part of an overall observation effort to provide accurate, systematic, and comprehensive assessment of election day processes and the accuracy of the official results so stakeholders can make a more informed decision as to whether an election meets their expectations.

2. Why do a PRVT?

PRVTs, when properly done by citizen organizations, reduce uncertainty in the election environment by providing careful analysis of observer findings. They most frequently confirm official results and increase public confidence in well run elections. Where PRVTs expose fraud, or identify problems in the process, they provide an objective basis for understanding the negative effects and for seeking peaceful resolution of complaints. PRVTs, thus, reduce potentials for political conflict.

3. How does a PRVT work?

On election day, trained observers deploy to a statistical sample of polling stations, where they

examine crucial aspects of voting and counting at assigned locations, reporting on strengths and irregularities that affect the quality of the election. Observers also note the number of ballots cast and the votes recorded by officials for each contestant. At predefined times during the day, observers send their observation information to a PRVT data center, where it is carefully analyzed and combined into observation statements providing accurate characterizations of elections, and confident verification of official election results.

4. What kind of information can a PRVT provide?

PRVTs provide an independent verification of the quality of the election process and the official results. Identifying the absence or magnitude of problems during the voting and counting processes is vital; without an understanding of this data, the adding of results could be based on fraud, such as stuffed ballot boxes or dishonest recording of votes. Assuming the integrity of the election process is maintained, PRVTs can predict, with precision, voting results and voter turnout. On the other hand, PRVTs cannot provide an assessment of what happened at a specific polling station or even a region of the country. It also cannot provide information on what happened outside polling stations. Rather, PRVTs focus on overall national trends of what happens at polling stations on election day.

5. How can you tell what happened nationwide (or verify results) with a sample that small?

A PRVT uses the same statistical techniques as other processes where getting information from the whole population is either impossible or impractical. For example, environmental agencies can assess the quality of drinking water by testing a very small (but random and representative) subset of all the water in a reservoir. Similarly, public opinion polls can assess the perceptions of the entire population by interviewing a relatively small number of citizens. In the same way, a PRVT can assess the quality of the voting and counting process throughout the country, and make a prediction of the overall election results, by collecting data from a relatively small representative, random sample of polling stations.

6. The media are reporting on some severe incidents. Is this a bad election?

No election process is perfect. By relying on statistical principles, the PRVT provides an unbiased and accurate assessment of the overall conduct of the election, and provides context for irregularities in the process, both in terms of their prevalence and their overall impact.

Relying only on media or other reports risks giving the impression that irregularities were more common than they actually were, and plant unwarranted doubts about the process among the public and electoral contestants. In contrast, PRVT findings give systematic information about the overall process. This provides stronger evidence of whether irregularities were isolated or widespread, and how much they affected the credibility of the overall process. In either case, incidents submitted by observers can provide additional nuance or details to bolster PRVT findings.

7. What is the difference between a PRVT and an exit poll?

A PRVT relies on direct observation of the voting and counting process by trained observers, and provides an independent verification based on polling station level official results. This both provides useful context on whether the results reflect the will of the people as expressed at the ballot box and verifies the nationwide results based on ballots cast and counted at polling stations. In contrast, exit polls' results predictions are based on citizens' reporting – not always truthful – about how they voted, and provide no information about whether the integrity of the election has been maintained.

8. Why does your statement say your findings are based on fewer observers than you deployed? [If the organization deploys non-PRVT observers]

The ability of the PRVT to assess the conduct of the election nationwide depends on observers

reporting from a random, statistical sample of polling stations. Additional observers deployed help increase citizens' participation in the election process, increase its overall transparency, and deter fraud. However, the findings on the quality of the election and the accuracy of official results are only based only on reports from the PRVT sample to avoid bias and ensure their statistical validity.

5.4 Developing Key Messages

Prior to engaging electoral actors and citizens, it is critical to develop an overall – or topline – message regarding the PRVT. This is the distillation of the key point(s) to reinforce in all communications. Organizations may need to develop different topline messages for different communication objectives. For example, a message raising awareness of the importance, and value, of a PRVT would be different from a message advocating for electoral reform based on PRVT findings.

Given the importance of a topline message, it is important to ensure that it will be understood, and accepted, by target audiences. While clear language will make the message easier to understand, whether it is accepted depends on whether an audience shares the assumptions and values implicit in a message. For example, a topline message might be based on the assumption that ordinary citizens have the right to oversee the work of officials as they organize elections. However, if election officials do not share this assumption, they might not accept the message on the importance of conducting a PRVT and might even take steps to block the organization's

efforts. To avoid this scenario, it is important to identify the set of assumptions and values implicit in a message and assess whether those are shared by the audience. Similarly, the organization should seek to understand stakeholders' perceptions of prior citizen election observation efforts. This is especially important if a PRVT was conducted previously, either by the same organization or by others.

Crafting Specific Talking Points

While a topline message should remain constant, and be reinforced in all relevant communications, **how an organization frames its message will likely be different for different actors**. These differentiated talking points should align with each actor's interests and incentives in a way that makes them more likely to accept the message. For example, certain benefits of a PRVT may be more relevant to an EMB, while other benefits may resonate more with a political party or a civic organization. Therefore, organizations should craft specific messages for these and other actors, including the media, civil society, academia, the international community, and the public at large. However, these messages should be consistent with each other and with the topline message.

Remember: narrative is powerful. As humans, we

Example: Crafting Specific Talking Points

Topline message: A PRVT, properly done by a citizen organization, reduces uncertainty in the election day environment. PRVTs most frequently confirm election results and increase confidence in well-run elections.

EMB: In well run elections, a properly conducted PRVT provides an unbiased, overall assessment of the election day process throughout the country. In other countries, this has helped put isolated incidents in a broader context, and in this way, built trust in the election and the electoral authorities. An independent verification of the official results could also help bolster public confidence and reduce the risk of political actors calling the election into question.

Political parties: Our organization does not have any political affiliation. As an independent, nonpartisan organization, our PRVT seeks to provide an unbiased assessment of the election day process nationwide and put any potential incidents in a broader context. By conducting an independent verification of the official results, we seek to inform citizens and election contestants about whether the official results reflect the will of the people as expressed in the ballot box.

Civil society: Citizens have the right to participate in their elections as voters, candidates or activists, but also as observers. A PRVT will allow citizens to engage in the process as nonpartisan, independent observers, collecting information on the quality of election day and the accuracy of polling station results. This exercise provides impartial and civic-led safeguards to the electoral process, which can deter attempts at fraud on election day. A citizen-led PRVT would also set precedent for the involvement of ordinary citizens in increasing the transparency and accountability of other political processes.

Media: Journalists have a vital role to ensure that citizens and electoral actors have accurate information on the election. However, this is challenging given the number of polling stations where elections will take place, and the different political contexts that exist in different regions of the country. By having observers in a representative random sample of polling stations across the country, we will be in a position to provide a timely and accurate assessment of the election day nationally, as well as an independent verification of official results.

General public: Elections are about more than parties and political competition. They also are an important opportunity for citizens to have a voice and participate in our country's political processes. Our organization is providing opportunities for citizens to observe the election process on behalf of all citizens, regardless of political preference. Our methodology, called a PRVT, will allow us to provide an unbiased assessment of the election process nationwide, deter fraud, and determine whether any issues have a significant impact on the process. We will also conduct an independent verification of the official results to make sure they reflect the choice citizens make at the ballot box.

are hardwired to tell and connect to stories. Stories create an emotional and empathetic connection and stay with people for longer than facts or statistics. Telling stories is how we teach people, connect with them, and gain their trust and friendship. Using stories to meet communications goals and convey messages can be a powerful and effective approach. The [Raising Voices in Closing Spaces](#) guide has additional information on the power of storytelling and how to incorporate it into your communications.

Evaluating and Fine Tuning the Message

Developing the main message and targeted talking points is not a linear process, or a one-time effort. Rather, it is important to constantly evaluate whether the target audiences are interpreting the message correctly, or if a different framing might be more useful. At the same time, organizations should be aware of incorrect or misleading messages that exist in the information space that could affect stakeholders' perception of the PRVT. This would allow organizations to develop counter messages to bolster trust in the organization and the methodology.

5.5 Staffing for Communications

As mentioned in Chapter 4, communications staff are an integral part of the PRVT team, and key to ensuring that its findings have the desired impact. Organizations conducting PRVTs should ensure that communications staff has the time, resources, and knowledge to:

- » Design and manage a communications strategy.
- » Support the core team in building and maintaining key relationships, including with election officials, candidates and political parties, other civic

Faux NGOs and Fake PRVTs

As the PRVT methodology has become more respected, some governments have propped up and supported faux non-governmental organizations. Faux non-governmental organizations vary significantly depending on the context but generally are vocal supporters of government or key government leaders or ruling parties. These organizations have then published fabricated PRVT findings and results. In these circumstances, it can be helpful to encourage the media, stakeholders, international observers and others to consider these questions that focus on the specifics of methodology of purported PRVTs (and have your own answers ready as well):

(Before election day) What is the sample size for the PRVT?

(Before election day) How are observers geographically distributed for the PRVT and were they stationary or mobile observers?

(Before election day) What kinds of information about the voting and counting process are observers going to collect?

(Before election day) What situations, if any, might occur which mean you cannot predict results?

(After election day) What was the response rate for the sample?

(After election day) What were the ranges (i.e., margins of error) for each candidate?

organizations, journalists, and the international community.

- » Organize press briefings and conferences, and draft press statements.
- » Develop social media and multimedia content, including posts, infographics, and videos (For examples, see Appendix G and H).
- » Depending on the context, translate communication materials to ensure they are accessible to different linguistic communities within the country and, if appropriate, the international community.
- » Manage and track relevant social media accounts and performance of posts.
- » Manage and track the success of any ads placed, seeking to identify factors of success (e.g., format, wording, target audiences, etc.).
- » Track media coverage and social media activity related to the organization and the PRVT.

5.6 Developing A Communications Plan

Strong communications strategies require not just target audiences and plans to communicate with them, but also a specific timeline for outreach. This should include timing for outreach to each stakeholder, key campaign and electoral process events, and times when press releases, briefings, and statements should be published. The timeline should be informed by the broader PRVT timeline and should reflect a clear understanding of the electoral calendar and when different stakeholders may be most available and open to establishing a working relationship.

In preparation for election day, media interviews or social media posts can help update these actors and the public about the PRVT. As described in Chapter 11, on election day the organization will need to have a detailed plan on when specific statements and other communications such as social media posts will be published.



Organizations like Côte d'Ivoire's Indigo [use social media](#) to highlight how they prepare to conduct a PRVT. This helps raise awareness of their observation activities, build trust in the PRVT methodology, and acknowledge the hard work of observers, data center staff and core teams.

Caption translation: *Indigo's HQ hosted a second data clerk training this morning. These data clerks collect field data sent by the #observers. District supervisors also participate in this training.*

Courtesy of Indigo



SECTION 2

Implementing a PRVT

Chapter

6

*Tailoring Your PRVT to
the Electoral Context*

This chapter will discuss how to conduct a preliminary assessment of electoral integrity risks, and how to use that information to inform your PRVT exercise. This may include augmenting your PRVT activities and observation goals with some expanded observation methodologies. In Chapter 4, you developed a clear plan for staffing, funding, and implementing your PRVT. This thorough planning process will allow you to assess whether and how your organization might be able to respond to unique challenges in your electoral context, as discussed below.

6.1 Conducting an Initial Electoral Integrity Assessment for Election Day

Though all PRVTs follow the same underlying statistical principles, each country and context are unique. What may be a major election day problem in one country may not be a concern at all in yours. At the outset of a PRVT exercise, it's critical to identify and understand the threats to electoral integrity you anticipate. Your team should conduct a risk assessment to better understand the vulnerabilities and complexities of the voting and counting process and beyond.

This assessment will influence the kinds of data you collect on your observation forms (as discussed in more detail in *Chapter 7: Designing Observation Forms*), how often data is reported throughout the day, how you communicate externally, and, possibly, whether you expand your PRVT exercise to include additional analysis. This exercise should also identify any gaps or specific issues that could impact the PRVT itself.

Some questions to consider as part of this exercise include:

- » What voting, counting, or tabulation issues were seen in previous elections? What kinds of complaints were filed? What were major criticisms of the process?
- » To what extent will these problems be visible inside polling stations?
- » What particular challenges face women and other marginalized groups on election day?
- » Is there a statistical need to observe in special polling stations, such as prisons, hospitals, internally displaced person camps or polling stations abroad?
- » What aspects of the voting and counting process would you want to measure?
- » Have there been major changes to the electoral framework since the last elections? Have there been any changes to election day procedures, such as the use of new voting or counting technology?
- » How might challenges in the pre-election period impact the voting or counting process?
- » Are there parts of the process that are particularly vulnerable to distrust or disinformation?
- » What are the rules around recounts and annulments after result forms have left the polling station? For instance, can polling station results be challenged at a higher level with the potential for annulment?
- » Are there any other issues with the results collation process? For instance, can official results forms be legally changed or “cured” at the collation center level if an error is identified?
- » What challenges might observers face in terms

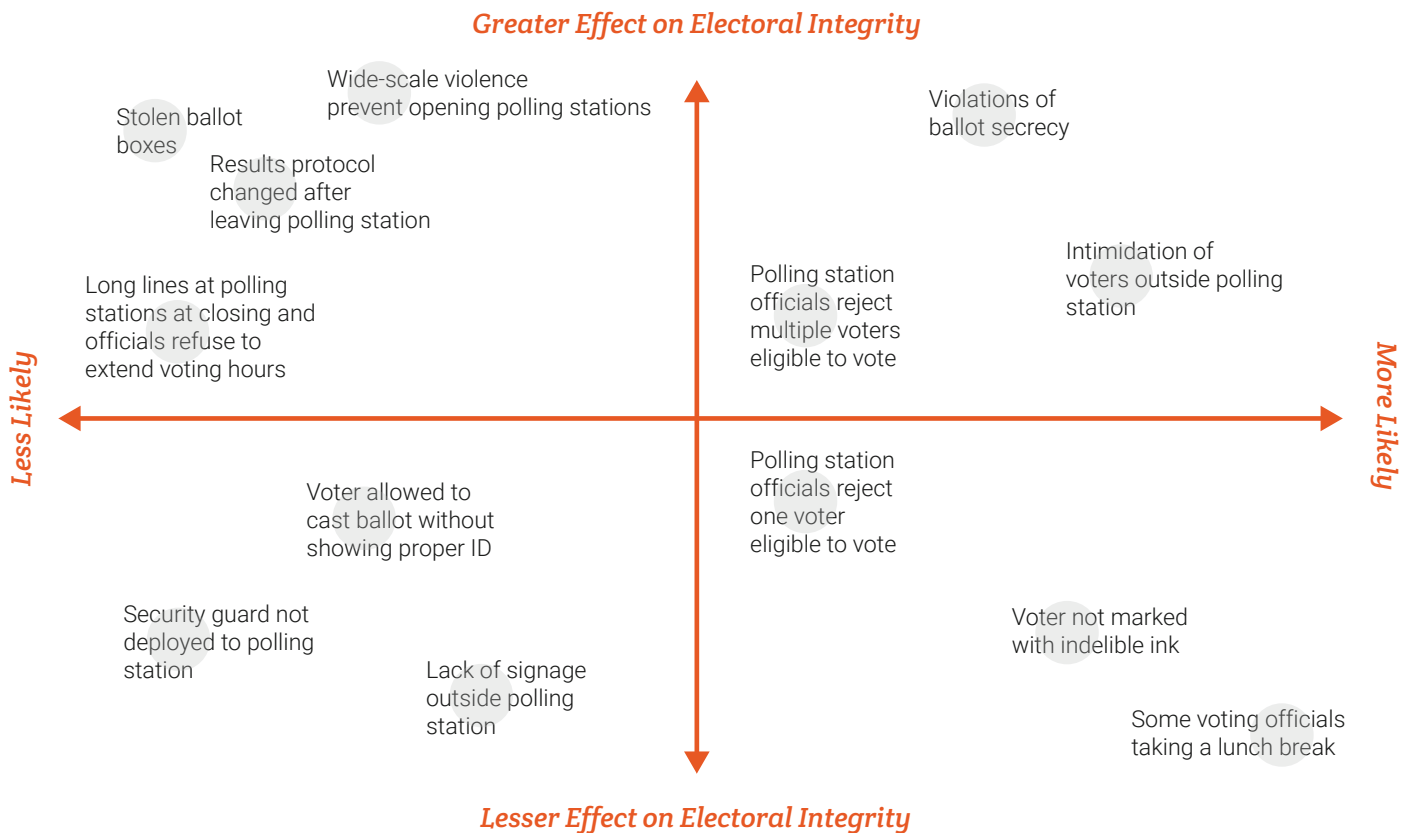
of safety, security, access to accreditation, and access to information within or outside the polling station? Are observers able to use technology (e.g., mobile phones) inside the polling station to report to the data center throughout election day?

- » Are nonpartisan observers authorized to lodge complaints at polling stations, either during the process or when official results forms are finalized? Can they file legal challenges? If so, how should your effort address those possibilities?

For each electoral risk you identify, consider both its **likelihood** and **impact**. The likelihood is how much or how little we anticipate the problem occurring on

election day. The impact may be determined by how many voters would ultimately be affected or the level of influence on the results at that polling station. For instance, the violation of a minor procedural error, such as asking voters to stand two feet from the check-in table, may be *likely* but will not have a significant *impact* on the election and should not be a priority for observers to track. Meanwhile, someone stealing the ballot box would have a significant impact on voters and on the outcome at that polling station but is highly unlikely to occur. Ideally, this process will help narrow your observation questions to only issues that could have a significant impact on the process, are relatively likely to occur, and can

Relative Impact of Events at Polling Stations



The focus of your observation should be informed by an analysis of what issues are most likely to happen that represent a higher threat to electoral integrity. This analysis will be different from country to country, and even from election to election.

conceivably be witnessed by PRVT observers in a polling station.

This assessment may also highlight some areas where additional observation or alternative methodologies may be warranted to bolster your overall analysis or meet other specialized needs. However, adding any additional components to a PRVT can strain the exercise and potentially remove focus from the core objectives. That's why it's important to discern activities that can actually enhance the PRVT from those that do not. **If you are considering adding or expanding activities around your PRVT for other reasons – for instance, to heighten visibility or meet EMB, donor, or public expectations – it's imperative to build structures and sufficient staffing that can protect the PRVT; that also means making sure that core PRVT staff, technology and resources are not diverted in support other initiatives.** In addition, if your organization or coalition members are conducting or considering new activities – it's imperative that you consider whether those activities could bring into question your political impartiality, independence, and/or professional competence.

6.2 Considering Augmented Deployment Strategies

As discussed in Chapter 3, PRVTs must follow standard statistical principles in their design of a nationally representative and random sample. Given their specific contextual concerns, some organizations build upon this standard PRVT deployment with augmented deployment strategies, like adding additional observers to sample points and deploying to an additional sample at the subnational level.

Deploying Two Observers Per Polling Station

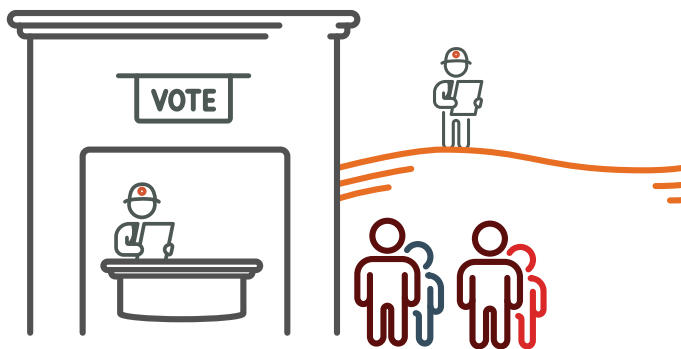
Election day involves several different processes occurring at once, including voter check-in, ballot allocation and casting, poll closure and counting, as well as less tangible issues, like intimidation within the polling station. Some monitoring organizations have used observer teams – sending two observers to a polling station instead of one – to maximize efforts or mitigate challenges on election day. Deploying observers in teams - or in shifts - of two can provide for more robust observation inside the polling station. It can also enhance observer security, decrease the likelihood of losing a sample point, reduce the prospects of incomplete or mistakes in data, and promote accountability among observers. This model can be particularly effective in closed environments where there is a lack of trust and concerns of fraud both within and outside the polling station. Observer teams should also be given serious consideration where observation is a relatively new activity or where observer security or data accuracy is a concern.

However, the two observer model is more resource intensive than single observer deployment. It creates more work for supervisors and staff who must recruit, and train double the number of observers, and it may make data collection and verification take longer. Therefore, one observer per polling station is more common in PRVTs around the world. Your deployment strategy should be determined by a cost-benefit-analysis and may be influenced by funding limitations or restrictions by election management bodies.

Observing Outside Polling Stations

In some countries, concerns about both real and

potential challenges outside of polling stations are becoming more common, for instance, intimidation of voters as they approach the polling station, vote-buying, bussing of voters, illegal campaigning, etc. Some organizations are experimenting with following the sample-based model to deploy PRVT observers both inside and outside of a polling station. Outside observers can identify and highlight problems that may not be caught by inside observers and can add important context to PRVT findings. They can also check-in and provide support to PRVT observers inside polling stations, boosting morale and providing context that could help confirm and improve their data.



Some organizations field mobile observer teams outside of polling stations to get a sense of the election day environment and degree of irregularities that are not unique only to the voting process occurring inside a station. The information collected by mobile teams (often focused on critical incidents) may fill in the context but cannot supersede or substitute for credible data gathered via the sample that is nationally representative. More systematic outside observation should follow the same PRVT principles, such as deploying to a statistically sound sample, staying there all day, and reporting all data back, in order to be nationally representative. Either method would require significant additional resources, time and effort.

Incorporating Subnational Elections to a National PRVT

Though PRVTs typically focus on a national election (such as a presidential or legislative contest), subnational elections, for instance gubernatorial or mayoral races, can play a critical role in democratic consolidation and building confidence in the electoral process. Organizations may utilize an additional sample that acts as a subnational PRVT to verify the accuracy of results of critical races occurring simultaneously with national elections, or to gather a stronger understanding of trends in a particular region, city or constituency.

Introducing a subnational sample into a PRVT, however, is effectively introducing an additional PRVT that must be simultaneously implemented. This is because all observers from the additional sample also follow PRVT principles, including deploying to the correct polling station and reporting their findings with a 100% response rate from the designated geographic area. This means that instead of simply having to complete the nationwide sample for your national PRVT, you'll also need to complete your subnational sample(s).

Additional subnational samples will also increase the number of observers you must recruit, train, and deploy, and will require data management planning in order to track which observer belongs in which sample. It will impact the workload on election day as there will be a large amount of data that needs to be collected, verified and analyzed. It will increase communications as the additional analysis and findings will need to be worked into the statement and workflow for producing graphics. In addition, these subnational geographies often have too few polling stations to sample them with statistical confidence, which means the local "sample" often requires complete observer coverage of that

particular city, constituency or state. Therefore, sampling at the subnational level can be incredibly resource and time intensive and brings additional complexity to a national PRVT. Such an exercise should only be considered by organizations with prior PRVT experience, and only if there's a clear benefit to the observation. Organizations that do take on additional samples often limit them to only one or two subnational contests.

6.3 Conducting Advanced Results Analysis

PRVTs allow observers to speak to the quality of the process and vote count for all polling stations in the country. However, there can be value in examining official results information in different ways to increase transparency and provide better recommendations for the future.

Collecting Images of Results Forms

Advances in technology, including broader access to devices such as smartphones, allow observers to take and send photos as part of their observation. This can be an effective and easy way for observers to capture and document official results forms at their sample stations. While PRVT observers will already record key results data – such as vote shares and invalid ballots – via their primary PRVT form, images of official results forms (also called protocols) can help data operators verify observer reports. This can be particularly helpful for quality checks, as lengthy official results forms increase the chance of human error in transposing and transmitting results data. In addition, protocol images can provide additional context to the results analysis. For instance, it can help you determine the degree of



A pile of official results forms that have already been cross checked with PRVT reports.

NDI Photo

clerical errors by polling officials or other problems on the forms themselves.

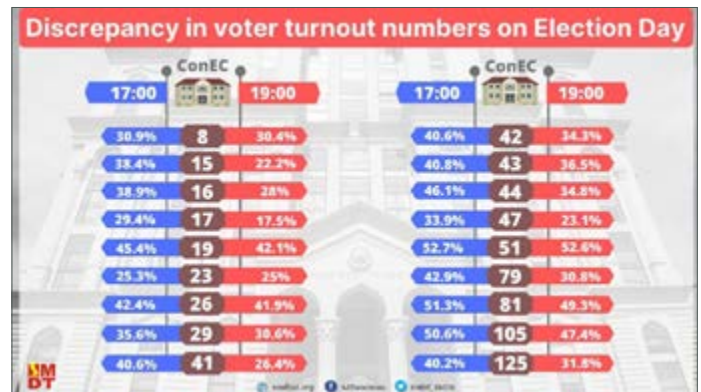
While sending protocol images may be relatively easy for observers, you will need to decide early on if you'd like to incorporate this approach into your larger data collection flow. Systems will need to be in place to receive and organize the images, and image capture and transmission will need to be a part of observer training. Organizations have gathered protocol images over messaging platforms such as WhatsApp or Telegram. In some cases, they have used web forms or web-apps to upload photos directly to their PRVT data management system (see more information on data management systems in *Chapter 9: Data Transmission, Management, and Quality Control*). However, protocol collection is only a supplementary activity. One cannot determine the quality of the election simply by examining protocol forms, nor can the results indicate whether or not fraud occurred during the voting process.

Analyzing Open Election Data

To improve transparency and meet basic standards

of open data, more and more EMBs are making election results – disaggregated to the polling station level – available online, sometimes immediately after the counting process. Analysis of such results can help reveal patterns in voting behavior, anomalies, or other areas for concern. For instance, the observer organization the Election Monitoring and Democratic Studies (EMDS) in Azerbaijan conducted an analysis of polling station results following the 2020 snap parliamentary elections. Their analysis revealed suspicious vote share patterns reported in several districts (for instance, a ruling party candidate receiving exactly 86% of the vote in every polling station in the district). They also noted suspicious and contradictory turnout figures from what was included on the results protocol and what the EMB had reported throughout election day.

Since gathering and analyzing this kind of information can be done centrally without additional fieldwork, this typically doesn't require a significant amount of additional resources or staff. However, organizations should plan to conduct such an analysis after they've completed their PRVT, which provides the means to predict the credible range in which official results should fall – and does so based on verification of voting and counting processes. PRVT results data will typically be available well before total polling station level results from the EMB will be – which sometimes can take days to complete. In addition, online polling station results may not be available in a format that is easily analyzable. For instance, results may be segregated over a series of files or tables spread across web pages, or downloadable only in PDF format. Therefore, extra time will have to be allotted to download, convert, and consolidate the data into a single analyzable dataset, such as in a CSV (Comma-Separated Values) or JSON (JavaScript Object Notation) file. If interested, you should review if, how, when, and in what format election results have been



EMDS from Azerbaijan compared several open election data sources posted by the Central Election Commission, including official turnout figures released throughout election day and polling station level results once counting and tabulation were completed. Their analysis discovered a number of districts where CEC turnout information appeared to be inflated on election day and was higher than what was ultimately captured in the final results.

Courtesy of EMDS

posted in the past and inquire about the EMB plans for the upcoming election. Resources like the Open Election Data Initiative (www.openelectiondata.net) include valuable information about how to extract and convert various data formats and analyze large datasets like polling station results.

If polling station level results are not available online, you should consider advocating and issuing recommendations in the post-election period to encourage EMBs to embrace more open election data. EMB transparency, especially on results, is critical in boosting public confidence in elections and protecting themselves from disinformation or confusion about the outcome.

6.4 Observing Collation Centers

In most countries, ballots are counted at the polling station level then moved to a secondary level for consolidation. These centers, often referred to

Using AI to Analyze Protocol Images

The availability of protocol image forms on EMB websites holds opportunities for even more complex and sophisticated analysis. In 2018, NDI partnered with several academics to use [computer vision and deep learning tools to “read” and identify irregularities](#) – for instance, missing stamps and signatures – on results forms from about 30,000 polling stations in Kenya’s 2013 presidential election.¹¹ The study found that there were no overarching geographic or political trends related to where irregularities were found, and they did not disproportionately advantage or disadvantage any candidate or party. NDI continues to explore the use of deep learning (DL), artificial intelligence (AI), and computer vision techniques as innovative methods to increase the capacity of citizen organizations to gather and analyze large amounts of information in a short amount of time. Such applications can help free up resources for election monitoring organizations and allow them to focus on higher level analysis and to issue more relevant and timely findings during elections.

11. “Hidden in Plain Sight? Irregularities on Statutory Forms and Electoral Fraud,” Zach Warner, J. Andrew Harris, Michelle Brown, and Christian Arnold, 2021. *Electoral Studies* 74: 102411. Paper available for download at: <https://zachwarner.net/download/Warner-et-al-Hidden.pdf>

as collation centers, tallying centers, or District Election Commissions (DECs), are usually located at the secondary EMB management level, such as constituency, district or county. For national elections, polling station level results aggregated at the collation center are then centralized to the capital for final tabulation and certification. Since results at the collation center level cannot be transmitted until every single protocol in the jurisdiction is received and verified, consolidation at this level can take days in some places.

Given the role that collation centers can play in the results transmission and tabulation process, there’s often an interest in deploying observers to them. This is particularly true in cases where there might be fears that official results forms may be illegally changed, ballots destroyed, or other serious violations committed at collation centers. In addition, under some electoral frameworks, polling station results can be legally changed or canceled at the collation center, to correct an error, or in response to

credible challenges. In these cases, it’s imperative that the PRVT be able to track whether a sample station’s results have been altered.

While observers at collation centers can provide additional context and report critical violations in results collation, PRVTs are still the best way to verify the credibility of the tabulation process and to catch any count manipulation that may happen “upstream.” However, if the time and resources are available, adding collation center observation to a PRVT effort may be appropriate if there is a crisis of confidence related to violations at that level. Observation can have a deterrent effect there, and if the process is credible, findings can help counter suspicions.

Collation center observation can be particularly challenging, as most tallying procedures do not have clearly defined start and end times – or well-defined procedures – and may take days to complete. Incorporating collation center observation into a current effort requires time and resources, and if not integrated and implemented properly, can

The background of the top half of the page is a dark blue and green abstract composition. It features a grid of white dots and lines that recedes into the distance, creating a sense of depth. A bright, glowing green beam of light originates from the left and curves towards the right, passing through the grid. The overall effect is futuristic and digital.

Chapter

7

Designing Observation Forms

In Chapter 3, you determined your sample size and the total number of observers you need for your activities on election day. In Chapter 6, you analyzed the upcoming election environment and conducted a risk assessment on election day. Once you have identified the top critical threats and issues in the current environment, you are ready to use that analysis to design your observation forms and reporting times. These forms will be a core component to structure your observer training, data analysis, and communications plans. Later, in Chapter 8, you will learn how to set up your plan for recruiting, managing, and training observers. As part of the training, the observers will practice filling in and reporting their forms and they will participate in a full-scale simulation. In Chapter 9 and 10, you will learn how to design your data transmission, management, and analysis plans based on what information you will collect on your forms, and then think through how to best communicate this data publicly in Chapter 11. However, before you manage the next steps of the process, you will need to develop clear, streamlined, and effective forms. In this chapter we will go over the different types of forms, best practices for their design, as well as considerations for how and when to report the forms.

7.1 Fundamentals of Observation Forms

A key goal of the PRVT is to provide a systematic and reliable assessment of critical election day processes. Election regulations usually detail procedures at each polling station, and, typically, lay out the selection and duties of polling station personnel. However, in some instances, the official laws or rules are incomplete, arbitrary or in some way fall short of electoral best practices.

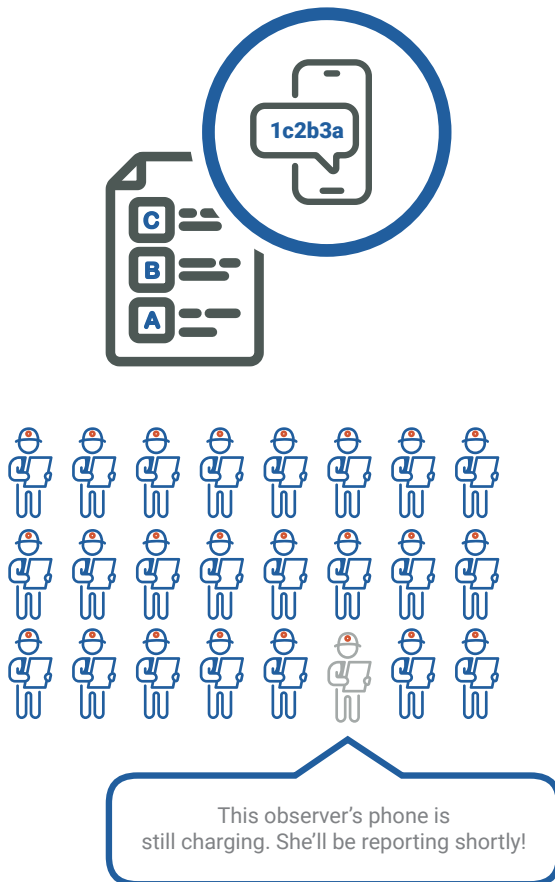
PRVTs examine not just adherence to these laws, but also those critical processes you narrowed down to during your electoral integrity risk assessment in Chapter 6. All PRVT findings are based on data collected by observers through filling out and reporting PRVT forms. Additionally, organizations can only analyze and communicate publicly about the aspects of the election for which they collected valid data. Therefore, a clear, concise, and well-designed form is the fundamental way that you can ensure quality data on the most critical and relevant aspects of the election. You are not looking to comment on every aspect of the process, but rather only those that are the most critical and relevant. The PRVT methodology makes use of sampling, which emphasizes quality over quantity, and the same principle applies to the forms. Ideally, forms should **concisely and exclusively** cover the most important processes – keeping observation, reporting and analysis at a manageable level. On the other hand, a long, sloppy form with unclear or confusing questions means observers send unwieldy amounts of sloppy data that, ultimately, leads to sloppy findings.¹²

Typically, there are two key forms used for the PRVT on election day. The first is the **PRVT form**, (sometimes called a ‘checklist’) which collects systematic data about polling station processes, including the vote count. PRVT form data is periodically reported by all PRVT observers and aggregated to produce national assessments of election day. The second form is the **Incident form**. This form is anecdotal and reported only when a sufficiently important incident occurs at the polling station. This chapter will focus on these two key forms, although there may be additional forms for your observation effort depending on your goals (discussed in *Chapter 6: Tailoring Your PRVT to the Electoral Context*).

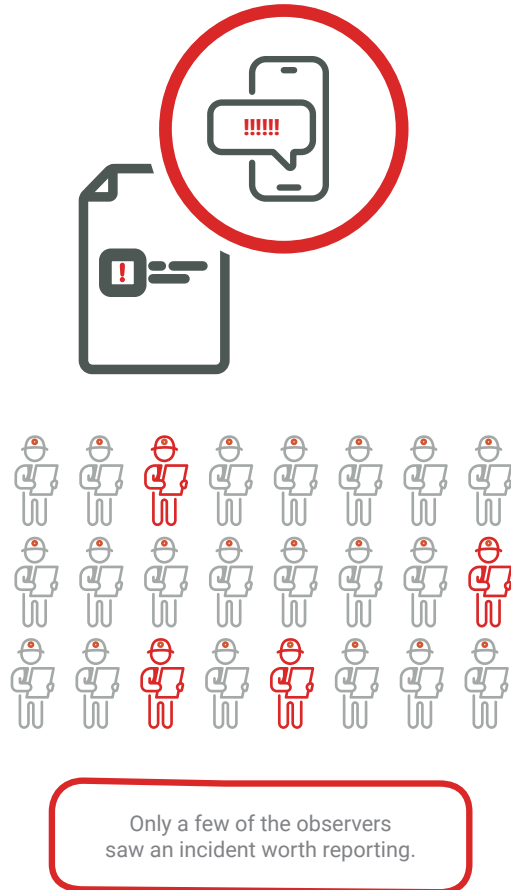
12. An expression used in the early days of computing applies here: “garbage in, garbage out (GIGO).”

Types of Observation Forms

PRVT Observer Form



Critical Incident Form



Designing Good Questions

Designing questions for observation forms is an important task that requires careful attention to detail as well as discipline to keep the forms as short and focused as possible. **Each question on the PRVT form should be “closed-ended,” having a predetermined set of answer options.** This requires more thoughtfulness up front, but it saves an enormous amount of time on election day when time is one of your scarcest resources.

You might be tempted to include a few open-ended questions. For example, if observers record the fact

that the police might have intervened in election day activities at a particular polling station, then it is natural to want to know the details of what exactly happened. But the short PRVT form is not the place to record this information. As noted, details of incidents that could have a significant impact on the electoral process should be gathered through the Incident form. Answers to open-ended qualitative questions might well produce “interesting findings,” but this kind of data is prohibitively cumbersome to analyze in a systematic way.

In addition, experience with form design and PRVT analysis suggests some useful rules to follow. In

effect, **each and every proposed question** should be able to pass a series of “tests,” these include:

- » **The Usefulness Test.** For each question, the analyst should be able to specify why it is critical to have that particular piece of information quickly, and precisely how the data from that question will be used in analysis and communications. If there is no compelling reason for having the information quickly, or if it is not clear how the data from the question will be used, then the question should not be asked.
- » **The One Concept Test.** Each question should focus on measuring one concept. Using more than one concept in a question is confusing to observers and affects the reliability of answers. For example, the question “did all voters put their ballot in the ballot box and sign the list of registered voters? Yes/No” is asking about two things: the placing in the box and the signing. Such a question should be reformulated to cover the most critical concept or should be divided into two questions if both are critical.
- » **The Observability or Presence Test.** The questions on a PRVT form measure multiple processes in a polling station. However, the observer is not all seeing and can only take note of the actions they witness. On one level, this means the observer must be physically present and their view of key processes cannot be obstructed. Therefore, a question about the intent of an official would not be appropriate since the observer cannot know what is in the mind of the official. This also requires that the process under measurement can be truly and practically observed. For example, asking a question about whether the voter’s identification was checked, requires the observer to notice the presence of an action: the voter giving their ID to the official to check. Often it is much harder for an observer to naturally notice that something did not take place. In addition, an observer can only be actively paying attention and looking for a few things at once. It’s not realistic to expect the observer to be constantly scanning each part of the room and looking for ten different things simultaneously.
- » **The Validity Test.** Validity refers to how well an indicator (the data produced by answers to a question), actually reflects the underlying concept being measured. Consider exactly what concept is being measured and what is the most direct and clear question to measure that concept. For example, a question asking whether a voter could not vote is likely too broad and does not help identify the precise problem. It does not allow you to have a targeted recommendation which addresses the reasons why the voter could not vote. A better question would be more specific: “Were any voters refused a ballot?” And even a “yes” to that question does not immediately imply wrongdoing. It may imply the voter did not bring the proper form of ID or was at the wrong polling station.
- » **The Reliability Test.** Reliability has to do with the consistency of the measurement. The goal is to reduce the variation in responses between observers. Put another way, the goal is to have individual observers watching the same event and record that event in exactly the same way. When questions are worded ambiguously (or measuring more than one concept), observers are more likely to record different answers when measuring the same event. When it appears that different observers interpreted the question in different ways, the question and its answers are no longer reliable, and the resulting data cannot be used. Note that validity and reliability are the most serious threats to credible PRVT observation data.

- » **The Answer Options Completeness Test.** The answer options for questions must satisfy two minimal conditions. First, the answer options should be exhaustive and balanced. This means that the structure of the answers given should collectively cover all of the possible meaningful ranges of responses. Second, the answer options must be mutually exclusive. That is, the range of values in one answer option should not overlap with those of other answer options. For example, a question about party agents might ask “Did a Party A agent sign the declaration of results for the election?” A set of complete answer options, which are also mutually exclusive would include “Yes,” “No,” and also include a third option of “Party A agent not present.”
- » **The Answer Option Efficiency Test.** The answer options to a question should achieve the maximum efficiency by keeping the number

of options to a minimum. Keeping the number of answers as small as possible means less design will be needed for the database. But more importantly, it helps to keep down the volume of data that has to be cleaned, analyzed and communicated. The fewer the number of answer options used in a form, the faster and more accurately the data can be analyzed and communicated.

Avoiding Bad Questions

Lessons from past experience also suggest that some practices should be avoided. These include:

- » **Repetitive Questions.** To keep forms efficient, refrain from asking several questions that ultimately measure the same concept about the process. Be efficient with the number of questions on your form since each additional question increases the workload affecting the trainings, printing of the forms, the data management system, reporting on election day, data quality control, analysis and communicating. In addition, you don’t want to end up in a situation where the findings from one question appear to contradict the findings from the other question. Such a situation would require more follow up and place a greater load on the analytical team. You also typically do not want to repeat the same question throughout the day because the time period each repeated question is measuring risks being unclear. Such questions add confusion and complexity to the exercise and risk failing the reliability test since one observer may interpret it differently from another observer.
- » **Tracking Questions.** Your observers will work long hours tracking the processes happening simultaneously in different areas of the polling station—if voters are checked for ink at the door;

Test Your Questions

- » Does the question have a clear need and purpose?
- » Does the question cover a single concept?
- » Is the question valid? Does it measure the concept intended?
- » Is the question reliable and will all observers interpret it the same way? Does it measure only one concept?
- » Does the question have complete answer options?
- » Does the question have an efficient set of answer options?
- » Does this question ask about a process that can actually be witnessed in practice?

if voters are inked at check-in; if voters marked their ballots in secret (to name just a few). Be kind to your observers and be practical. Refrain from adding complicated ‘tracking’ questions that require observers to closely “track” a process. For example, asking “Did a voter not vote because...? 1. Voter did not have ID; or 2. Voter had ID but was not on the list; or “ etc.... Such a tracking question implies that the observer will be paying constant attention to only one part of the process.

- » **False precision.** Analysts want to work with precise results but attempting to achieve very high levels of precision is seldom warranted. Extra precision usually involves collecting more data, which increases the workload for observers, data and communications systems, and analysts. In addition, it complicates the external communications. In most cases, excessive precision does not provide a substantive payoff when it comes to the basic interpretation of the evidence. Consider the following example: There may be a question on the form asking, “at what time was the station ready for the first voter.” And according to the law, the station should be open by 8:00am. The answer options should reflect the major categories concerned, whether the station was open on time, whether it was open a little late and whether it was open very late (and possibly not at all). Thus, it would make sense to have three answer options such as: open by 8:00am, open from 8:00am to 8:20am, and open after 8:20am/reporting time. It would **not** make sense to have too many options that would be unnecessary. For example, you would **not** want as set of six answer options such as: open by 8:00am, open from 8:00am - 8:05am, open from 8:05am to 8:10am, open from 8:10am to 8:15am,

Incorporating an inclusion focus in PRVT

Through PRVT, organizations may seek to systematically collect information about the accessibility of election day processes for marginalized populations. In many cases, organizations include questions on their forms regarding incidents of harassment, intimidation, or physical violence on election day, and include a follow up question – either on the observation form itself or when collecting incident data – to understand how many of these incidents targeted or impacted different types of citizens, such as women, youth, ethnic minorities or other marginalized groups. Some organizations include questions on their form related to physical accessibility of polling stations for people with disabilities, or resources for assisted voting for the visually impaired. To ensure you are accurately capturing barriers to inclusion, it is essential to seek out perspectives of people who experience these potential obstacles. While organizations may seek to include select questions related to physical accessibility of polling stations on their forms, it can often be difficult to capture all aspects of accessibility while keeping the form streamlined. For a more comprehensive assessment, you may want to partner with an organization that specifically observes accessibility issues, to join together in post-election advocacy or other activities.

PRVT Observer Form

Code

P	
----------	--

You must observe at your **assigned polling station**. You must arrive by **6:30 am**. Send all Reports via SMS to XXXX at your assigned time.

Observer Name/Number: <Name /Number> Supervisor Name/Number: <Name/Number>
 Polling Centre Name & Address: <Name Address>
 Polling Station (room): <number>

Remember! While marking the answers to the question, you should contact the Incidents Center where is indicated!

1 SMS – Arriving at the Precinct – Send SMS at 07:15

AB Fill in the official polling station number you are present at

--	--	--

AB

AC Were you allowed to observe?

Yes 1	No 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------	----------------------------------

AC

2 SMS – Set up and Opening – Send SMS at 08:30

BC How many polling officials were present in your assigned polling station?

--

BC

BD Were ballot papers present?

Yes 1	No 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------	----------------------------------

BD

BE Was indelible ink present?

Yes 1	No 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------	----------------------------------

BE

BF Number of registered voters according to voter register for this polling station

--	--	--	--

BF

BG At what time was the station ready for the first voter?

At 08:00 (1)	From 08:00 to 08:20 (2)	After 08:20 (3) <input type="checkbox"/>
-----------------	----------------------------	---

BG

3 SMS – Voter Turnout at 12:00 – Send SMS at 12:15

CA Number of voters' signatures in the list by 12:00 (cell no. 4a of the Results Form)

--	--	--	--

CA

4 SMS – Voting Process – Send SMS when the station closes (~ 8:00pm)

DA Were people's fingers checked for ink at the door?

Yes 1	No 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------	----------------------------------

DA

DC Were officials asking for the voter's identification?

Yes 1	No 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------	----------------------------------

DC

DE Was the voter signing their name in the voters register?

Yes 1	No 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------	----------------------------------

DE

DF Were voter's fingers marked with indelible ink upon receiving a ballot paper?

Yes 1	No 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
----------	----------------------------------

DF

DG Was secrecy of the voter ballot violated due to someone entering the booth with the voter?

Yes 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	No 2
-----------------------------------	---------

DG

DH Did any case of physical violence/intimidation/pressure occur?

Yes 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	No 2
-----------------------------------	---------

DH

☒ 5 SMS – Closing and Count – Send SMS after closing of the Precinct

EA	Were all ballot box seals intact before the count began?	Yes 1	No 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EA	
EC	Did a Party A agent sign the declaration of results for the election?	Yes 1	No 2	Agent not present 3	EC
EF	Did a Party B agent sign the declaration of results for the election?	Yes 1	No 2	Agent not present 3	EF
EG	Did a Party C agent sign the declaration of results for the election?	Yes 1	No 2	Agent not present 3	EG
EH	Was a copy of the Results Form publicly affixed outside the polling station?	Yes 1	No 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	EH	

☒ 6 SMS – Vote Count – Send SMS as soon as the vote count ends

FA	Total voters' signatures in the list (cell no. 4c of the form)		FM	Votes for Candidate E	
FB	Number of Valid ballots cast (cell no. 5 in Results form)		FN	Votes for Candidate F	
FC	Number of Invalid (Spoilt) ballots cast (cell no. 6 in form)		FP	Votes for Candidate G	
FD	Votes for Candidate A		FQ	Votes for Candidate H	
FG	Votes for Candidate B		FR	Votes for Candidate I	
FH	Votes for Candidate C		FS	Votes for Candidate J	
FK	Votes for Candidate D		FT	Votes for Candidate K	

☒ SMS – “Blank” QUESTIONS You may receive additional questions on E-Day. Copy any such questions on space/s provided below and report to XXXX

HA		Yes 1	No 2	HA
HB		Yes 1	No 2	HB
HC				HC
HD				HD

open from 8:15am to 8:20am, and not open by 8:20am/reporting time. Such precision would not result in more meaningful findings nor be worth the additional time and effort required.

7.2 Designing the PRVT Form

Typically, the questions in the PRVT Form are grouped into sections, each covering a major aspect of observation of the election day process:

- » **Arrival at the polling station:** To observe the entire election day process, PRVT observers should arrive prior to the set-up of the station so they can assess whether the officials are properly following all procedures and best practices. Sometimes this section of the form covers questions related to an observer confirming their location in some way and that they were allowed to enter and freely observe at the location. (See Section One of the example PRVT form.)
- » **Setup and opening process:** The officials need to go through the process of preparing the polling station so that it is ready to receive the first voter and allow voters to cast their votes. This section may contain questions related to the presence of officials, how their roles might have been assigned, whether the key materials were present and whether the polling station opened at the time set in the laws or regulations. It may also contain the number of voters registered on all relevant types of voters lists. (See sample questions listed in Section Two of the example PRVT form.)
- » **Turnout throughout the day (if applicable):** In some countries, polling station officials are required to count and announce the number of signatures on the voters list at specific times throughout the day and report it to the EMB, which aggregates and announces a national figure. If this data is available and important to collect in your country, your observers can collect these periodic updates from the officials and report them in the PRVT form. (See the third section in the example PRVT form.)
- » **Voting process:** Tailored to specific country procedures and concerns, this section includes questions assessing key voting safeguards, such as checking voters for ink (i.e., to eliminate multiple voting), confirming voter identities and presence on the voting list, and inking voters after they receive a ballot. Other questions may evaluate ballot secrecy, and whether those who were in line when the station was closed were allowed to vote. (See the fourth section of the example PRVT form.)
- » **Counting and closing:** Once the polling station is closed to voters, there are a series of processes that occur related to closing the station and counting the votes. Questions in this section may ask which party agents were present, determining and showing valid and invalid ballots, counting the ballots, documenting the ballot figures in the official results form, registering any complaints, publicly posting the results form, and preparing the materials for transfer. (See the fifth section of the example PRVT form.)
- » **Vote count and results:** The PRVT is a methodology for systematically verifying the quality of the process and—when that process has integrity—predicting the range within which each candidate’s results should fall, as well as percentages for final turnout and other relevant results such as the invalid vote percentage. Prior to finalizing your forms, you will need to understand and confirm that all of your calculations are using the exact same figures from

Aligning Your PRVT Results Form with the Official Results Form

In many countries, you can request an example of the official results form in advance of election day. This allows you to understand which figures are collected on the official form and which figures, if any, may be documented elsewhere. Then as you are designing the results section of your PRVT form, you can 'mirror' the necessary figures on the official form. The results section of your PRVT form needs to contain all the relevant figures for all the calculations you will be making (i.e., invalid vote percentage, turnout percentage, party/candidate percentages). You do not want to make your tired observers do any math, but rather ensure that you are collecting all the necessary raw numbers, which can then be calculated by the data management system. **Importantly, you will want to confirm that any calculations you are making for percentages are done using the exact same figures and formulas as the EMB.**

For example, on the official results form, there may be a figure for the total number of signatures on the voters list and there may be a figure for the number of valid votes cast and the number of invalid ballots. You will want to make sure that when you are calculating the percentage for turnout that you are calculating it in the exact same way as the EMB. If official turnout is calculated by taking the total number of signatures and then dividing it by the number of registered voters, then you will need to ensure that you are collecting both of those figures on your PRVT form. In that example you would NOT want to calculate the turnout percentage by taking the number of valid ballots and adding to it the number of invalid ballots and dividing that sum by the number of registered voters because the EMB does not calculate it in the same way.

Similarly, you will want to confirm and understand exactly which figures are used for calculating the results for each candidate. Is the percentage for candidate A calculated by taking their total votes on the official results form and dividing it by figure on the form for the total number of valid ballots? Or is it calculated by taking their total votes and dividing by the number of signatures on the list? In some countries, "invalid" votes are treated as one of the candidates, and therefore included in the denominator when calculating vote share for each candidate. In addition, you may want to include some figures that can help you with the quality control process and can provide a 'check' on the other figures.

Remember: These calculations can, and do, vary from country to country. Do not make any assumptions about these calculations but rather confirm the calculations with the EMB and the legal framework.

the official results form as the EMB (discussed in detail in the text box above). You will need to be sure that all of those relevant figures are included in your PRVT form (as demonstrated in Section 6 of the sample form).

» **Extra "blank" questions:** Many organizations include a few additional, 'blank' questions with different kinds of answer options on their forms. If something important happens and it is not already covered on your form, then you might use one of the blank questions. This allows the organization

Innovation: Preparing for the Unforeseen with “Blank” Questions

You do all you can to anticipate potential challenges to electoral integrity when and you prepare your forms. However, even with all that preparation, an unforeseen but crucial issue might arise on election day. In the 2012 Parliamentary elections in the Republic of Georgia, long lines were seen outside of polling stations in Tbilisi. Rumors began to circulate that the polling stations were overcrowded, a situation that could have a negative impact on the process. The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) was conducting a PRVT and in reaction to the concern, they devised a question while observers were still deployed about whether polling stations were crowded. The core team was able to add the question to their database management system and then trained a set of data operators on the question and potential answers. Those data operators then called every PRVT observer in the sample to collect their data. ISFED was able to successfully get the information and show that while things may have looked chaotic outside of some polling stations in the capital, it was actually not crowded inside of most stations (97.5% of polling stations nationwide were not crowded).

Building on ISFED’s experience, the Election Observation Group (ELOG) in Kenya used the innovation to plan for the unforeseen. In the 2013 Kenyan elections, ELOG built in an ‘additional’ question section in their form with two blank ‘yes/no’ questions and two blank numerical



CRTA leadership is reviewing the language to send out for their pre-formatted ‘blank’ question.

Courtesy of CRTA

questions. ELOG then trained their observers on the purpose of the blank questions, how the additional questions might be used on election day, and how to report the questions if they were used. Indeed, ELOG did use the blank questions and was able to help clarify a concern regarding ‘rejected’ ballots.

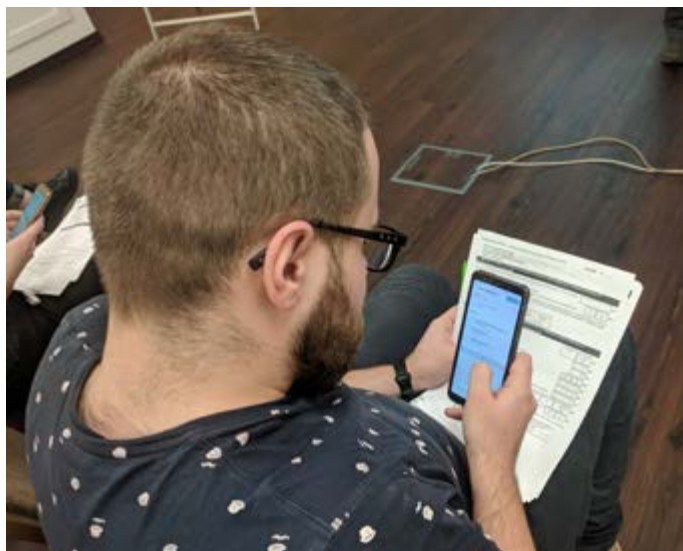
Other organizations have made use of the innovation as well. The Civic Network OPORA was able to address a concern regarding people intimidating voters in the 2015 local elections in Ukraine, and the Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) was able to measure a potential issue with the electronic voters lists in the 2016 Parliamentary elections in Serbia. While incorporating this innovation requires very little effort, it has had a large impact, allowing organizations to respond to unanticipated concerns that may occur on election day.

to send out a clear and concise question to observers on election day and so they can immediately report their answer back. See the final section of the example PRVT form and the text box below to learn how this can work in practice.

Streamlining the PRVT Form

There is an inverse relationship between overall quality of observation and number of process questions on the form. As more and more questions are added to the form, the less likely the observer will be able to properly focus on the aspects that are critical to the election's integrity. It is the job of the core team to help focus the observation on the most important issues. The PRVT form needs to help observers focus on the key issues and areas on election day. Keep in mind how most polling stations are laid out. Different processes happen in different areas: inking might be checked at the door, the table with the voter list is in a different physical location than the area with the voting booths and the area with the ballot boxes. Because of the layout and set-up, observers cannot look at all of the locations at the same time.

Through the form and the trainings, observers should know which areas and processes require their attention and focus. In addition, remember that observing election day is a long process often starting very early in the morning and continuing for many hours - often well into the night. Observers will get tired, and it will be hard for them to maintain their attention for that long. Be kind and make sure the observers are spending their time and attention on only the truly important things. Many experienced election observation organizations **try to keep the questions about the process to no more than 20 questions** on the PRVT form. Practically speaking, it is best to minimize the number of pages for the form



A member of OPORA's Critical Incident Team practices reporting.

NDI photo

as well as that will cut down on the preparation time and mean less collating and stapling.

7.3 Designing a Critical Incident Form

While the PRVT form is the “main” form and is filled in by all observers to systematically evaluate the process, there may be situations where an observer witnesses and records information about a serious problem. In such cases, the **Incident Form** is used to collect and report details. Typically, the incident form is conditional, meaning that if none of the listed incidents occurs, then there is no need to fill and report the form.

If there is an incident of intimidation or if an observer is forced out of their station and can no longer observe, then the PRVT core team needs to know as soon as possible so that they can address the issue. To help “triage” incidents, some organizations split incidents into two categories: ‘critical’ incidents that may impact the PRVT directly and/or require

immediate action (i.e., violence or intimidation, observation blocked); and ‘regular’ incidents, which are less urgent (i.e., campaigning at the polling station). Critical incident forms can capture information about who was involved in and impacted by the incident, as well as where and when it took place. This can be helpful for gathering additional context for violations when they occur. Critical incident reports should explicitly include information about whether specific groups or individuals are disproportionately impacted by the incident, allowing for additional focus on gender and inclusion issues, including barriers to participation for marginalized groups. However, it is important to note that many of these incidents may occur outside of the polling stations where PRVT observers are located, so many organizations also allow for supervisors or other types of observers who are not stationary in one polling station to submit incident reports. Details collected via this form can be used as individual illustrations of larger trends identified through the main PRVT form. Remember that incident information is anecdotal and is not as powerful as the data from the PRVT form that provides information on national trends. Putting too much emphasis on incidents might dilute your message and the findings that are based on the systematic PRVT data and can make the process appear worse than it really was.

7.4 Considering Additional Forms (As Needed)

As mentioned in Chapter 6, you might have additional types of observation and so you have additional types of forms. Two common complementary efforts are observation at the Collation Center level or observation outside of the polling station. See

Appendix I for an example of a Tabulation Center Form and Appendix J for an example of an Outside Observation Form.

7.5 Reporting the Forms

Your reporting strategy, including when different sections of the PRVT Form is reported, will affect the design of your forms. Your reporting plan needs to be devised in such a way that when an observer is transmitting their information, the PRVT core team and data management system can ascertain the following:

- » Which observer and thus which specific polling station in the sample is this information for?
- » Is this information for the PRVT form or the Incident form? Or some other form?
- » Which section of the form, meaning which part of the process is being reported on?
- » Which specific question and answers are being reported?
 - **What to include in observer reports:** The timing and number of reports will vary depending on the communication network infrastructure and the information needs of the PRVT, among other considerations. In addition, the context and legal framework will impact reporting times. For example, the exact time and length of voting on election day varies widely from country to country. Some are short and start the voting process at 7:00am and end at 3:00pm. Other countries have a longer day and voting might not end until 8:00pm. As seen in the example PRVT form, each part of the election day process is grouped into sections and meant to be reported at specific times of the day. An organization may choose to group sections together and report them at once or

each section might be its own report. Most organizations have observers send at least four reports: a report about the observer's arrival; a report at the end of the voting process; a report that includes the results data, and a final report covering the closing and counting process. Some organizations have observers send additional reports, for example if they are collecting turnout data or aligning with key processes in their election day procedures.

- **When to send reports:** The sample PRVT form includes six reports. Each section includes a prompt to remind observers of the approximate time that particular process should be finished and that should be data reported. In this example, the polling stations open at 8:00am, so the observer is to monitor that process and send their second report by 8:30am. Election officials are scheduled to report turnout at noon, so the third section is to be reported at 12:15pm. The voting process ends at 8:00pm so the observer would report that section soon after 8:00pm. The fifth and sixth reports do not have a reporting time because the process will end at different times for each station. *However, keep in mind that more reports aren't necessarily better. There are tradeoffs.* As you increase the number of reports, you also increase the cost and time in terms of data collection and cleaning and potential strain on the analysts and data management system to evaluate the data from each report. While it can be beneficial to be in touch with observers often, too many reports can waste time and energy. You want your observers to be spending their time observing the process, not constantly making reports to the data center.
- **How to send reports:** You will also need to determine how observers will send their reports

Preparation & Testing: Simulation Forms

As you will read in Chapter 8, part of observer training includes having observers practice completing and sending their entire PRVT and Incident forms. As you will read, it is best practice for your PRVT to conduct two full-scale simulations of election day, with all observers participating. For each simulation, there needs to be a simulation form for the observer to use so they do not mark up their election day forms. Typically, the simulation form(s) consists of at least one of the key sections from the PRVT form. Trainings and simulations are both good opportunities for assessing the observers' understanding of the questions on the forms, their ability to report, and for testing the communication systems. During one of those events, it may become clear that a question is not being understood the same way by all observers (violating the principle of reliability). In that case, the question needs to be discarded or if it is feasible, the observers need an additional briefing to ensure they understand.

and incorporate that method into your form design. Note that in the sample PRVT Form, observers use SMS to send all six reports. In such cases, observers are trained to code their messages in a specific way that references the question letter followed by the number associated with their answer, as laid out on the form. Ultimately, your form design should be tailored to your specific reporting method. (Chapter 11 discusses different considerations, including your context, PRVT needs and communications infrastructure.)

Chapter

8

*Recruiting, Managing,
and Training PRVT
Observers*

In Chapter 3, you learned about the key statistical principles behind the PRVT methodology, including using a random, representative sample of polling stations to draw conclusions about the overall electoral process. However, the most difficult part of the PRVT is not drawing a statistical sample or analyzing data, but recruiting, managing, and training observers to ensure essentially a 100% response rate on election day. As such, PRVTs are extremely challenging—both for first time organizations and for organizations that have past experience in less demanding methodologies. In Chapter 4, you gathered an understanding for the types of management structures required for a PRVT, both within the PRVT core team and in a national network. This chapter will guide you through how you can use the management structures you have built to carry out these processes in an efficient and effective manner.

8.1 Understanding How PRVTs Differ from Other Methodologies

Like other election observation methods, PRVTs require the recruitment, training, deployment and management of a nationwide network, including both observers and supervisors to coordinate them. However, PRVTs require a high level of quality, uniformity and responsiveness from the network. Unless essentially 100% of observers deploy to, monitor and report from sampled polling stations, then the PRVT findings will not be statistically valid and the PRVT will fail. To meet this need, PRVTs differ from other approaches in significant ways:

» First, PRVT observation networks must be **truly nationwide** as sampled polling stations can be anywhere in a country. Observation networks for

other election day methodologies may have gaps and, in some cases, intentionally focus on only specific parts of a country.

- » Second, there is less time to build a PRVT observation network as recruitment cannot be finalized **until the sample is drawn – which is dependent upon obtaining a list of polling stations**. Other election day methodologies can build their observation network long before election day.
- » Third, PRVTs **require essentially a 100% response rate** for the findings to be statistically valid. Thus, observer recruitment, management, and training must be done with near perfection for a PRVT to be successful. Other election day methodologies do not require a similar level of organizational rigor.
- » Fourth, PRVTs must **collect, verify, and analyze all data very quickly**. Thus, PRVTs must move data more quickly and accurately than other observation methodologies require.

As such, PRVTs require a very high level of consistency, speed, accuracy and efficiency, which impacts organizational structure, observer management, lines of communication, and approaches to training and deployment. In practice, this may differ greatly from how organizations using other methodologies organize. **Thus, even organizations with past experience in other observation methodologies often have to fundamentally change past practices to meet the demands of the PRVT methodology.**

8.2 Building a PRVT Network

A PRVT network is a nationwide organization of citizens that serve as polling station observers—

who monitor and report data from their assigned, sampled polling stations, and field supervisors—who ensure that all observers in their area deploy and report 100% of their data. Some organizations may additionally assign field supervisors to serve as mobile observers on election day. PRVT networks are typically structured and managed to ensure a near 100% response rate and timely and accurate data reporting from sampled polling stations. These best practices may differ from other observation networks in a few ways:

- » **Streamlined Structure:** PRVTs networks tend to be streamlined with only one layer of supervisors rather than many. This approach speeds implementation and enhances consistent

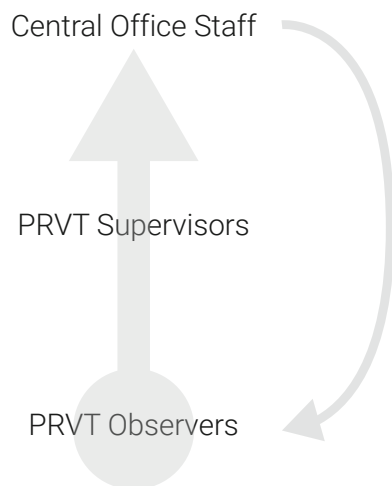
communication.

- » **Manageable Responsibilities:** PRVTs tend to have a relatively large number of field supervisors, each responsible for a relatively small geographic area and limited number of polling station observers so that they can directly interact with and support their polling stations observers.
- » **Centralized Lines of Authority:** PRVTs generally require all polling station observers to be managed by a single field supervisor (even if the observers were recruited from different organizations) responsible for their area. Clear lines of authority can help reduce miscommunication and enhance organizational efficiency.

PRVT Management

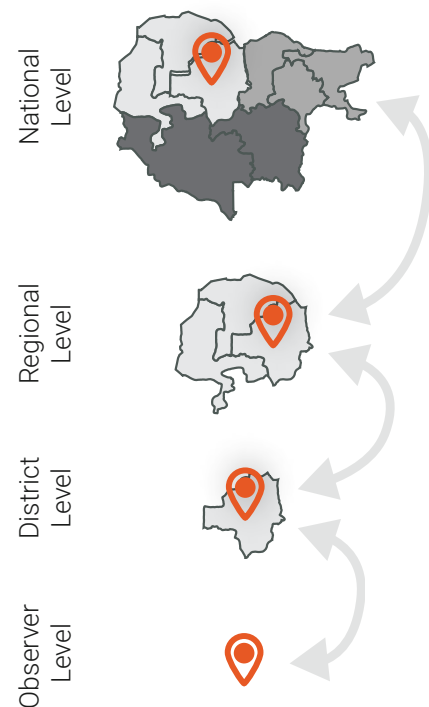
Management of a PRVT should be streamlined into a few layers as possible.

Typical Communications Flow



Communication from observers typically flows upward, through observer supervisors; however, central office staff needs to be able to contact observers correctly to verify information.

Other Observation Activity



- » **Direct Communications:** PRVTs use communication technologies to allow observers to communicate directly with headquarters and vice versa. This direct two-way communication reduces the time it takes to move information across the network and reduces the potential for miscommunication. At the same time, headquarters needs to remember to also maintain direct two-way communications with supervisors to empower them so they can be responsible for the conduct of the PRVT in their geographic area.

8.3 Recruiting for a PRVT

You will need to recruit people to serve as field supervisors and observers to build out your PRVT network. This serves to engage citizens in the election process but can also build your network and reputation for other election and non-election related activities.



MOE-Gt trainers lead a training of observers.

Courtesy of Moe-Gt

For PRVTs, recruitment is typically conducted in two phases. First, field supervisors are identified; later, polling station observers are recruited. Because their role and location are less dependent upon the sample, field supervisors can be recruited earlier (even before a list of polling stations is received). The recruitment for polling station observers, on the other hand, can only be finalized once the list of polling stations is available and the statistical sample is drawn (As addressed in *Chapter 3: Fundamental PRVT Principles*). Some organizations ‘over’ recruit, meaning that while they have a list of sampled stations, they may try to recruit 5-10% more than the total so they have ‘reserve’ observers. These reserve observers are also trained as PRVT observers and are used to replace any PRVT observers that drop out at the last minute.

Key Observer Criteria

You should establish clear criteria for recruitment to meet the needs of a PRVT and ensure a high-quality network. Not all individuals make for good field supervisors or observers. By limiting the number of individuals needed for the PRVT, the methodology allows organizations to be more selective when recruiting individuals. PRVTs tend to consider the following criteria for both supervisors and observers:

- » **Location of observer in relation to their sampled station:** The location of supervisors and observers is absolutely critical because essentially 100% of observers must deploy to and report from their sampled polling stations, or else the PRVT findings will not be statistically valid and the PRVT will fail. In most contexts, field supervisors reside in their assigned geographic area and polling station observers typically reside close enough to be able to observe at their sampled polling station on election day with minimal logistical arrangements. When observers reside near the sampled station,

they are more likely to have easy access to the polling station. However, there are some contexts where due to intimidation it may be more desirable for the observer to be from a different locality. Additional measures will likely be needed to recruit and/or deploy observers to a few logistically difficult to reach sampled locations.

- » **Independent:** The PRVT should be perceived as independent of the EMB and any government agencies responsible for conducting elections. Supervisors and observers should not be current or recent employees of the EMB or any government agency responsible for conducting elections, nor have any other close ties to those bodies.
- » **Nonpartisan:** The PRVT is being conducted on behalf of all voters, not on behalf of any particular political party. Supervisors and observers have a right to have political views, but they should not be current or recent formal members or office holders of a political party. Further, supervisors and observers should carry out their duties in a strictly nonpartisan manner.
- » **Reliable:** The PRVT will succeed only if 100% of supervisors and observers fulfill all duties in a timely manner. This includes being reliable on election day, as well as before election day, during required preparations, and after, during post-election follow-up.
- » **Effectively communicate:** Supervisors and observers need to be able to read and write in the language used to conduct the election. They must be able to understand the official EMB documents as well as to complete observation reporting forms. In some contexts, they may also need to be able to communicate in one or more local languages that are used by polling officials, party

Observation as Civic Service

Moreover, PRVT observers donate their time for training and election day observation as a form of civic service. Election observation requires very long hours, arriving at polling stations before they open early in the morning and staying until all ballots are counted and results are announced. Often, observers use their own personal funds for phone credit to communicate with the data center, transport to the polling station, and other costs. Those who are keenly interested in elections are most likely to be willing to dedicate their time – and in some cases, personal resources – to the project.

In many cases, there is a great deal of risk associated with being a PRVT observer, particularly in polarized contexts. Observers may be taking on additional security or other risks, and they often do so as a form of duty to their country's democracy.

agents and voters in their area.

- » **Access to, and comfort with, communication technologies:** PRVTs rely on technology to rapidly and uniformly move information within the observation network. Not all supervisors and observers have to personally own whatever device is being used for communicating (such as mobile phones), but they at least need to have access to it (through a family member or a friend). Critically, they should be comfortable using the device. (Generally, PRVT organizations don't provide devices to observers as this can be prohibitively expensive and it is unsustainable.)
- » **Interest in elections:** Not everyone is engaged in elections. Individuals who aren't interested

in elections are unlikely to prioritize PRVT responsibilities, leading to less than 100% implementation.

Ensuring Inclusion of Women and Other Marginalized Groups

It is not enough to simply recruit supervisors and observers. It is important that observation networks reflect the diversity of citizens. As such, you should promote inclusion of all elements of society, in particular women and other marginalized groups, at every level of the PRVT network. To promote more inclusive elections – and be perceived as trustworthy to all citizens – observer organizations must be inclusive themselves.

You should work to ensure that at least half of supervisors and observers are women. This may require developing specific strategies for recruiting women, developing relationships with women’s groups, setting quotas for recruitment of women observers and supervisors, and taking steps to lower the barriers for women participating in the observation effort.

You should also take steps to ensure that persons

with disabilities and members of other marginalized groups serve as supervisors and observers. This may also require developing specific strategies, building relationships with specific organizations, or taking specific steps to lower the barriers for these groups to participate, including allocating funds in the PRVT budget for reasonable accommodations to support their participation.

In many countries young people make up the largest portion of the electorate but may feel disconnected from politics. Further, opportunities to serve as supervisors and observers in some societies may be disproportionately offered to older individuals. While people of all ages can ably serve as supervisors and observers, specific efforts should be made to engage with young people and recruit them to serve in the observation network.



A training of observers in Myanmar.

NDI Photo

CASE STUDY

Inclusive Recruitment Strategies for Women and Young People in Côte d'Ivoire

In planning for a PRVT in 2020, Indigo Côte d'Ivoire sought to prioritize women and youth participation as observers, but knew from early planning stages of the project that societal and cultural factors could present challenges in recruitment. Barriers to education for women, gender roles in household responsibilities, and political disenchantment among young people were just some of the barriers to overcome. Indigo understood that barriers to women's participation would likely be highest in the most rural areas of the country, but lower in urban areas, like the capital. Indigo thus instructed supervisors in charge of recruitment in urban areas to aim to recruit 100% women observers, versus a 50% target in more remote areas.

Given that young people make up a large proportion of the electorate, Indigo prioritized their participation as well. Many young women who wanted to participate faced initial opposition from their parents, who were nervous about them spending a night or two away from home for training and observing from early in the morning until late at night on election day. Supervisors were specifically instructed to offer to call the



In its public communication, Indigo highlighted the gender parity among PRVT observers.

Courtesy of Indigo

parents of any observer candidates to explain the program and answer any questions they may have.

Finally, Indigo planned to include supplementary funds for childcare for any woman who traveled to attend training with young children, which allowed the observers to participate where they may not otherwise have been able to, and to dedicate their full attention to the training.

In the end, Indigo successfully recruited 47% women observers and 63% of observers were young people under the age of 35.

8.4 Accrediting PRVT Observers

Polling stations are controlled spaces with limited access, ensuring that only authorized persons are present and that no one disrupts the voting or counting process. The EMB grants permission to citizen observers (and others) to be present at polling stations on election day through a process called accreditation as described in the legal framework. All PRVT observers must be accredited in order to observe at their sampled polling station. In addition, it is good practice to accredit supervisors (even if they do not plan to enter a polling station) to facilitate their movement and interaction with officials on election day.

To receive accreditation, you will need to provide information to the EMB. Ideally, the information required is minimal, for example: the organization's name and number of observers they wish to accredit. Sometimes, EMBs also require information about individual observers and supervisors, like their name and national identification number. (If



Accreditation badges for ELOG observers being prepared to be sent out to the field.

NDI Photo

deployment location details are requested as part of the accreditation process, PRVT should provide general geographic information to ensure that exact polling station sample locations are not disclosed.) Accreditation is often granted through the national EMB, though some countries decentralize the process to regional or local branches. In most cases, organizations can apply for accreditation on behalf of their observers, though rarely, each observer is required to apply in person. Once accreditation is approved, the EMB typically provides badges to be distributed to your network (ideally in time to disseminate them at observer training).

You should understand the detailed accreditation process ideally before starting the recruitment process. This includes: what data is required; where, how and when it must be submitted; where, how, and when accreditation badges will be provided; and how you will deliver those badges to your network. All of these activities need to be factored into the overall PRVT timeline and budget. If you expect badges will only be received after trainings are held, then you will need to plan (and budget) for secure dissemination of those badges to supervisors and observers. Given the complexity and operational impact of accreditation on PRVTs, organizations should advocate with EMBs to ensure that accreditation requirements are not administratively onerous for the organization or burdensome for individual supervisors or observers.

8.5 Managing Your PRVT Network

As mentioned above, PRVT networks need to be well managed to ensure a near 100% response rate on election day. This involves managing observers' data to support communication and data systems, as well as managing individuals in the network to support

their involvement and participation (in the PRVT and in future endeavors). Another piece that cannot be overlooked is the importance of keeping the entire observation network motivated. More broadly, organizations should look at how to retain individuals from election to election or for other non-election related activities.

Collecting Observer Data

The PRVT core team must, at a minimum, have contact information for all supervisors and observers to enable routine and direct communication with the PRVT network. Depending on accreditation requirements (or other PRVT needs), you may need other data about individuals in your network, possibly including address, national identification number or voter registration number and a photo. You may also collect demographic information about the network. This can include information such as: gender, age and ethnicity. Such information is valuable for evaluating and demonstrating the degree to which the network is inclusive. Additionally, some organizations make electronic transfers to provide supervisors and observers with funds to help cover the cost of their participation, which requires banking or other financial information.

Observer data is typically collected and stored centrally with the PRVT core team. You should take care to verify all network information. Mistakes can lead to individuals missing their training; not being accredited, not receiving funds or not being reachable on election day. Additionally, your team should ensure that data is securely stored, and privacy of network members is upheld.

Communicating with Your Observation Network

Direct and routine communication with observers

Data Security and Privacy

Organizations need to collect data from their PRVT network for communication, accreditation, demographic and financial reasons. However, this information is very sensitive, and—if not protected—it could put people at risk. Organizations should carefully balance the need for information with the imperative of protecting individuals from undue risk. This is particularly salient in authoritarian settings where citizen observation may be seen as a threat or in conflict or polarized settings where certain groups deem the electoral process illegitimate.

Before collecting information, you should inform individuals why the information is needed and how it is going to be used. All personal data should be transmitted and stored securely. Clear rules should be established for who has access to what information—and no one should have access to more information than is necessary. While organizations typically have to provide some information about their field supervisors and polling station observers to EMBs for accreditation, such information should generally not be made public otherwise.

can help to strengthen your network management. Communications can provide the network with information about training, accreditation and deployment. As much as possible, this information should be tailored to specific supervisors and observers, providing information about where and when an event is taking place, as well as other logistical and financial issues.

Observer Replacements

All observation efforts experience instances of

observer “drop out,” due to overcommitment, concerns about risk, or other personal issues. Dropouts are particularly challenging for PRVTs, as it is critical to get essentially a 100% response rate. While dropouts cannot be eliminated, they can be reduced by recruiting and training more observers than sample points, strategically timing recruitment, and regularly engaging with observers to keep them motivated.

When individuals drop out, it is critical that they are quickly replaced to ensure deployment to 100% of the sampled polling stations on election day. *In replacing dropouts, it is important to still adhere to recruitment criteria.* Depending on your context, you may need special plans to ensure replacement or ‘reserve’ supervisors and observers are trained and accredited. For example, in contexts where travel to a polling station on election day is more feasible, some organizations decide to over-recruit, train, and accredit reserve observers from the start so they are ready to replace dropouts as needed.

Motivating your Observation Network

From the moment that observers and supervisors are recruited, it is critical to keep them motivated. Unmotivated individuals are less likely to perform assigned tasks well (if at all) and more likely to drop out. This creates a serious challenge for the PRVT. *A highly motivated observer is more likely to: attend their training, retain information, deploy to their sampled polling station, and send in their observation reports at the assigned times.*

You can motivate members of the observation network through a number of techniques that serve to reinforce one another, including:

- » Share information about the PRVT and why it’s important;

- » Communicate regularly, reminding them about key tasks and giving them updates on the PRVT;
- » Reach out using a mix of technology and individual contact;
- » Highlight the activities of the PRVT network and feature specific supervisors and observers when communicating;
- » Share findings and recommendations from PRVT;
- » Provide promised stipends on time; and
- » Thank the members for their efforts to promote electoral integrity.

Retaining your Observer Network

After an election cycle is over, you can evaluate your network. This evaluation should be data driven and based on information from network activities (such as training attendance or accuracy of data on election day). Good supervisors should be retained from one election to the next, or even considered for additional responsibility for future elections. There is less incentive to retain PRVT observers from election to election as the sample of polling stations will change and often new observers will be needed. However, good PRVT observers could be promoted to supervisors or contribute to non-PRVT observation efforts. Further, they can also potentially contribute to other projects (see more discussion in Chapter 13).

8.6 Training Your Network

A successful PRVT requires that **all** field supervisors and observers are fully trained in advance of election day. You should ensure that every field supervisor and polling station observer 1) knows their assigned duties, 2) has a common understanding of how to complete their observation forms, and 3) is able to

report their observation data on election day. This section details considerations to make your trainings more effective and prepare your PRVT network for success on election day.

Training Structure

There are generally three approaches to training field supervisors and polling stations observers: Step Down; Master Trainer or Self-Paced. All training approaches have their pros and cons, and you should consider what is most appropriate for your organization, your network, and your context.

Training Plan

A training plan—that details how many trainings and when and where they will take place—should be developed well in advance so that observers can be informed at the time of recruitment.

Trainings should generally be conducted as close to election day as possible. This reduces the likelihood of post-training dropouts, while increasing the likelihood that participants retain the information provided. In some cases, it may be necessary to train supervisors and observers well before election day. Consideration should be given, in such cases, to conducting refresher trainings closer to election day or requiring supervisors and observers to complete a self-paced online refresher course.

The length of training for observers (and supervisors) should be at least one full day. Generally, less time will not be sufficient to fully train observers and give them the chance to practice the necessary skills. Train-the-trainer sessions (whether for master trainers or supervisors serving as trainers) are typically two or three days long to allot time for training content, as well as how to conduct the training, and how to deal with any logistical/financial issues that may arise during the training.

In developing the training plan, the size of each training should be kept relatively small to increase opportunities for participation and potential for knowledge transfer. Ideally, each training would include 15 to 20 participants. This may mean dividing observers into multiple trainings for dense geographic areas and/or combining multiple areas with smaller numbers of observers for one training session.

You will need to budget for training costs associated with observer participation, trainers and support staff, and venues. Participant costs will generally not only include travel, meals and accommodation, but potentially also financial resources for using any communications technology for practical reporting exercises at the training. It may also include an advance on funds for election day deployment.

Training Attendance

It is critical that every single PRVT observer attends their training. Anything less than 100% attendance will increase chances of dropped sample points, threatening the statistical validity of the PRVT



Complete PRVT training session attendances is critical.

NDI Photo

Training Approach	Advantages	Disadvantages	Use in a PRVT
<p>Master Trainers: The PRVT core team trains a small cohort of master trainers, who in turn train all supervisors and observers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ability to recruit individuals specifically with training skills. » Easier to maintain consistently high-quality trainings as fewer trainers cover all trainings. » Can serve as quality control team for supervisors. » Encourages relationships between supervisor and observers when trained together. » Empowers supervisors and establishes a clear relationship between supervisors and observers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Requires more time to conduct trainings, as fewer sessions can be held simultaneously. » Observers may perceive master trainers as their primary point of contact, rather than their supervisors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Generally the most appropriate model for PRVTs as it is easier to maintain quality control. However, there are circumstances when time is insufficient or organizational imperatives make step down training more appropriate.
<p>Step Down: The PRVT core team trains supervisors who in turn train observers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Allows for training a large number of observers in a shorter period of time, since multiple trainings can take place simultaneously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Requires recruiting supervisors who are also good trainers (which may not be practical). » Makes quality control more difficult and may result in uneven outcomes across trainings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » While the step-down approach has many advantages, the challenges of quality control (especially important in PRVT) usually make it less suitable for PRVTs.
<p>Self-Paced: PRVT core team develops an online training course, enabling supervisors and/or observers to take training remotely and at their own pace.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Allows individuals to be trained when and where it is convenient to them. » Can reduce the cost of trainings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access to the Internet and devices. » Very hard to maintain quality control and ensure all participating have gained necessary information. » Supervisors and observers do not know one another. » Participants may miss the camaraderie of in-person trainings or not feel part of the larger organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » When employed as part of a PRVT, self-paced trainings are most useful in conjunction with either the step down or master trainer approach to reinforce lessons learned or as a refresher course when most individuals have recent experience. In closed societies a self-paced training approach may be the only viable option, despite its challenges.

findings. This is complicated by the fact that the trainings should be conducted as close to election day as possible to maximize information retention and minimize post-training dropouts.

Training attendance can be improved by providing participants with detailed information as early as possible. Ideally at the time of recruitment, participants would be told: the date, location, start time and end time of their training; all logistical details for the training, and what costs, if any, will be covered (potentially including, meals, accommodation, transportation, and the cost of using any communication technology). This helps set expectations and allows participants to plan accordingly, both of which increase participation.

Training Content

PRVT trainings need to be extremely focused on preparing participants to fulfill their duties as supervisors and observers. The objective is not to solicit input from participants, but to train them on how to observe voting and counting and to ensure that every observer performs their tasks in the same way. At the same time, trainings should be as participatory as possible and recognize that the participants bring their own expertise and knowledge.

You should ensure that the training agenda reflects PRVT priorities. The most critical elements of a PRVT training – and those that should occur early in the agenda – include:

- » **simplified** election day procedures;
- » how to observe on election day;
- » how to complete the PRVT observation forms; and,
- » how to send in observation reports to the data center.

Inclusive Training Considerations

Remember in selecting venues or determining training logistics to take into account that different participants may have different needs. In particular, as feasible, seek to lower the barriers to participation of women and other marginalized groups. For example, it may be appropriate to organize childcare at the venue to enable mothers with small children to participate. Persons with disabilities may require traveling with an assistant, or a venue that does not require participants to go upstairs. In addition, trainers should be instructed to pay specific attention to ensuring all participants have opportunities to speak and to engage with the training, particularly in contexts where sociocultural norms may discourage women or other groups from speaking up.

In addition to these topics, the agenda should also briefly cover: what is citizen observation; what is the PRVT methodology; information about your organization, and the timeline of activities. **However, counterintuitively these sections should be covered only after the most critical elements have been discussed.** In addition, much less time should be allocated to these topics. The training should also include information on logistical, security, and financial issues. Generally, these topics should be done towards the very end of the training. For more information, a sample training agenda can be found in Appendix L.

You will want training materials to be drafted, finalized and printed before trainings begin. The training materials need to be sufficient to fully prepare participants to carry out their duties. As such,

Addressing Observer Security Concerns

Election observation generally – and PRVTs in particular – involve risk for all individuals involved, but especially for supervisors and observers.

Trainings are an important opportunity to inform individuals of risks to observation, and to ensure they know your security plans for election day.

Your organization should take the safety of the entire observation network very seriously, particularly in politically volatile or authoritarian settings. Well before the training, all organizations should conduct a risk assessment to identify different threats and provide practical solutions to maximize safety, and ensure that anyone, regardless of background, can reasonably participate. This assessment should recognize that some potential observers, particularly women and historically marginalized groups, are likely to be at greater risk than others. Some areas of the country may be more dangerous than others.

All supervisors and observers should be informed of the potential risks associated with observing. Ideally, this should happen at the time

of recruitment to avoid people later dropping out and reiterated again at the time of training. Individuals are in the best position to decide for themselves the level of risk they are willing to accept. However, people need information to make informed decisions about whether they find that the risk associated with serving as a supervisor or observer is manageable.

Your organization should create a Security Plan tailored to your specific context. The Security Plan should be clear to all members of the core team and communicated to both supervisors and observers through training content, materials and other reminders as needed. Some organizations may set up an emergency hotline for supervisors and observers to call if they feel threatened. Most organizations have their supervisors and observers wear clearly identifiable observation gear (such as t-shirts). In some contexts, however, this may not be appropriate and supervisors and observers dress in plain clothes to not draw attention to themselves.

training materials typically include a code of conduct, the training evaluation form, all sample forms and related manuals—ideally along with information about observers' assigned polling stations and supervisors.

Training Format: Practical Experience Exercises

As part of the training, participants should practice filling out the extra samples of the forms. If time

permits, it can be useful to conduct a role play of a scenario they might encounter on election day. **At a minimum, the participants should review all of the questions on all forms and discuss any challenges they anticipate they may have in answering them.** Participants should also practice sending in their observation reports using the designated reporting system.

These exercises not only help prepare observers for

election day (and test the reporting system) but can be used to evaluate the training program. Challenges completing or reporting the observation form may be limited to individuals – indicating someone who needs additional training. Problems seen in most participants from select trainings may indicate a problem with the quality of a trainer. Alternatively, problems seen among all trainings may reflect systemic issues with recruitment, form design, or reporting system that will need to be addressed and rolled out to observers before election day.

Code of Conduct

Many organizations require every member of the observation network, including observers, supervisors, data operators, and PRVT management staff and leadership to sign an organizational code of conduct that commits them to carry out their duties in an independent and impartial manner. Some organizations ask observers to sign the code of conduct at the time of recruitment, while others do so during training. Even when the EMB has its own code of conduct that observers must sign in order to be accredited, it is good practice for observer organizations to also have their own complementary code of conduct. A sample code of conduct can be found in Appendix K.

Evaluation

Many organizations require participants to complete both a pre-training test and a post-training test/evaluation. These tests can serve to identify individuals who may require additional training or support or in some cases may need replacing. It can also be used to evaluate the quality of training preparations and trainers. If possible, organizations should endeavor to conduct “after action reviews”

to more holistically assess strengths and areas for improvement of training programs. A sample pre- and post-test form can be found in Appendix L.

8.7 Preparing for a PRVT with Simulation Exercises

Given the complexity of PRVTs, it is important to take proactive steps to ensure the quality of the process and to identify—and correct—weaknesses in advance of election day. Trainings are a key opportunity to test your network (for example, by testing observers’ understanding at the end of the session). Another important opportunity to test your operation are simulation exercises. Occurring after training, but before election day, simulation exercises can help to prepare your network for a PRVT. Simulation exercises mimic core activities for election day, testing every aspect of the reporting system, including people, the communication network and your reporting infrastructure. Specifically, well designed simulations can test:

- » Observers and their understanding of PRVT forms and reporting instructions;
- » Data management systems and data operators;
- » Communications networks being used; and
- » Any back-up systems in place

Critically, simulations serve a primary purpose of uncovering problems before election day. Most organizations -- from the very experienced to the brand new-- will discover problems and areas to improve, and it is important to welcome the discovery and discussion of these problems so they can be addressed. Simulations also serve to motivate the

observation network in advance of election day.

Conducting a Simulation

Each simulation exercise involves individuals completing a simulation form (discussed in Chapter 7) and sending in one or more simulation reports at designated times. In some cases, only observers participate in the simulation exercise and the role of supervisors is to ensure that 100% of their assigned observers participate. In others, both observers and supervisors both participate.

Most organizations find it helpful to conduct two simulation exercises before election day. One simulation exercise serves as an initial test of the reporting system and assessment of the observation network so you can identify and correct identified challenges. The second simulation exercise provides an opportunity to assess any fixes to issues identified during the first simulation exercise.

You should work with your team to analyze data from the simulation exercises, identify problem areas, and take steps to address those issues.

Some issues may be related to individual observers.

For example: observers who don't correctly follow reporting instructions may need additional training; or individuals who drop out of the project at the time of simulation may need to be replaced.

Some issues may be systemic. For example, if reporting instructions are misunderstood by most observers, clarifying information can be provided to the entire network to help ensure correct data is received on election day. If problems are uncovered with the reporting or data management system, then corrections or updates can be made.

Simulation exercises are also an excellent way to build confidence in the PRVT. Organizations

frequently invite representatives from EMBs, political parties, civic groups, international observer groups, members of the diplomatic community, and/or the media to witness for themselves a simulation exercise while it is underway. This helps demystify the PRVT, show the sophistication of the observation effort, and demonstrate that an organization is prepared for election day. Typically, organizations invite people to attend second simulation exercises as most issues will have already been identified and resolved, increasing confidence in the PRVT.

8.8 Managing PRVT Deployment

Election day is generally a very long day for supervisors and observers. It is absolutely essential that 100% of observers deploy to their sampled polling stations, observing the entire day—from before officials arrive until the process is complete—and periodically reporting their forms as instructed. Observers and supervisors will require sufficient management and support to complete their duties on election day, and your team can help by planning and preparing in advance and supporting on election day:

Logistics

Supervisors and observers will require both materials and finances to assist them to observe on election day. They will need to bring their observation materials, including:

- » **Observation manual and forms.** Ideally, these materials are personalized for each individual supervisor and observer.
- » **Accreditation badge** which was provided by the EMB that provides them access to polling stations

on election day.

- » **Designated device** for reporting their forms (e.g., fully charged mobile phone)
- » **Observation identification kit** (including items identifying them as observers from your organization, such as a t-shirt, vest, and/or cap).

Ideally, all of these materials would be provided at trainings. However, in some cases (such as accreditation badges) it may not be possible, and those materials need to be provided separately. In addition to materials, supervisors and observers generally also need financial resources to help offset the cost of observation. These costs need to be budgeted and a plan made for how supervisors and observers will receive such resources in good time.

Communicating with Observers

The core team, now located at the data center, should communicate with observers during the run-up to and on election day. Reminders should be sent to supervisors and observers to help prepare for election day and ensure they deploy to their assigned polling station. Where necessary, you may also send information about any last-minute updates. You should also thank your network for their contribution to the PRVT. (Also see Chapter 9).

Deploying on Election Day

Election day tends to be a long day for everyone involved in the PRVT. The night before election day, supervisors and observers should make sure that they have all of the observation materials, that they know their assigned location, that any communication technology is fully charged and operational, and that they get a good night's sleep. In some cases, observers deploying to remote or difficult to reach polling places may need additional



OPORA's PRVT observer kit. It includes observation forms, a phone to send in reports, appropriate clothing and observer identification, a copy of the election law, first aid kit, snacks... and one observer.

Courtesy of OPORA

logistical support to reach their assigned polling station.

Observers should arrive at polling stations before they are scheduled to open and remain there until official results are announced and posted. As they conduct their election day duties, observers should follow best practices to make their observation more effective and avoid problems. (See *Appendix M: Best Practices for Observer Conduct*). Polling officials are responsible for polling stations, and it is within their rights to revoke accreditation and remove observers who do not follow the rules. (Recall that removal from

a polling station can lead to the failure of the PRVT by lowering the sample response rate below 100%).

Observer Reporting

Observers should monitor voting and counting and complete the PRVT form as instructed and send their reports according to pre-designated times and methods. As discussed in Chapter 7, supervisors and observers are also provided critical incident forms to be completed and reported immediately any time a serious issue occurs in the process. In some cases, it may not be possible to access the communication network from the polling station (for example, there is no cellular signal at a sampled polling station). In such cases, an observer should not leave the polling station during voting or counting to send their observation report. Rather they should wait until the entire voting and counting process is complete and official results are announced and posted before leaving the polling station to send observation reports. That said, if an observer is in danger, they should immediately seek safety and follow steps in the security plan. (For more information on security planning, see *Chapter 8: Recruiting, Managing, and Training PRVT Observers*).

Efforts should be made before election day to identify which polling stations may not have access to the

communication network. In some cases, it may be possible for supervisors to visit such polling stations and then report on behalf of those observers when the supervisors have moved to a better-connected location.

8.9 Wrapping Up After Election Day

Immediately following election day, all supervisors and observers should submit their materials, such as hard copies of their observation forms and any copies of the official results forms, if applicable. This allows for comparison of information received through the reporting system with original documentation in order to resolve any discrepancies and, in some contexts, may be submitted to formal adjudication processes. Additionally, the dropping off of materials provides the organization with an opportunity to thank and recognize the supervisors and observers. If feasible, organizations may consider conducting evaluation workshops—or other methods of soliciting feedback—with some or all supervisors and observers. This enables groups to get valuable lessons learned and best practices for future observation efforts.

Chapter

9

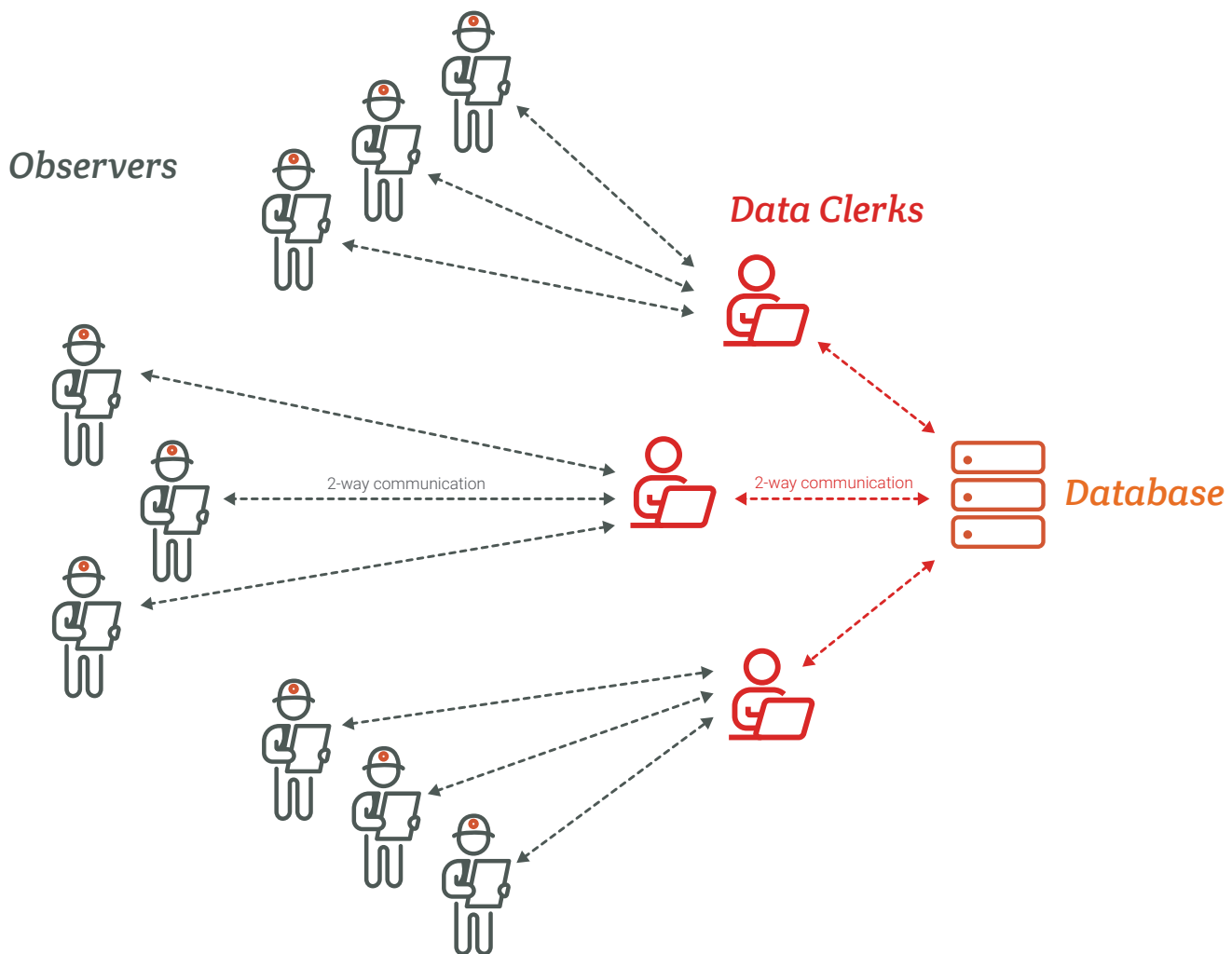
*Data Transmission,
Management, and
Quality Control*

In Chapter 7, you learned how to develop observation forms that capture key information about election day processes. In Chapter 8, you learned how to prepare your observation network for election day. In this chapter we will cover methods for communicating and transmitting information between the observers and the data center. Data center staffing, requirements, and set-up are also covered in this chapter. And finally, the key components of the data management system (e.g., database) are also outlined and discussed.

9.1 Managing Two-Way Information Flows

A key challenge of conducting a PRVT is to collect, verify, and analyze large volumes of information—and to do so reliably and quickly. PRVTs require efficient communication and it is important to plan exactly how information will flow on election day. There are two sets of information flows to consider: (1) **From observers to the data center,**

Example of How Two-way Communications to the Field Might Look



Effective communication on election day requires mechanisms for observers to submit information – such as observer reports – to the data center, as well as for data center to send information to observers, such as to confirm the receipt of their reports.

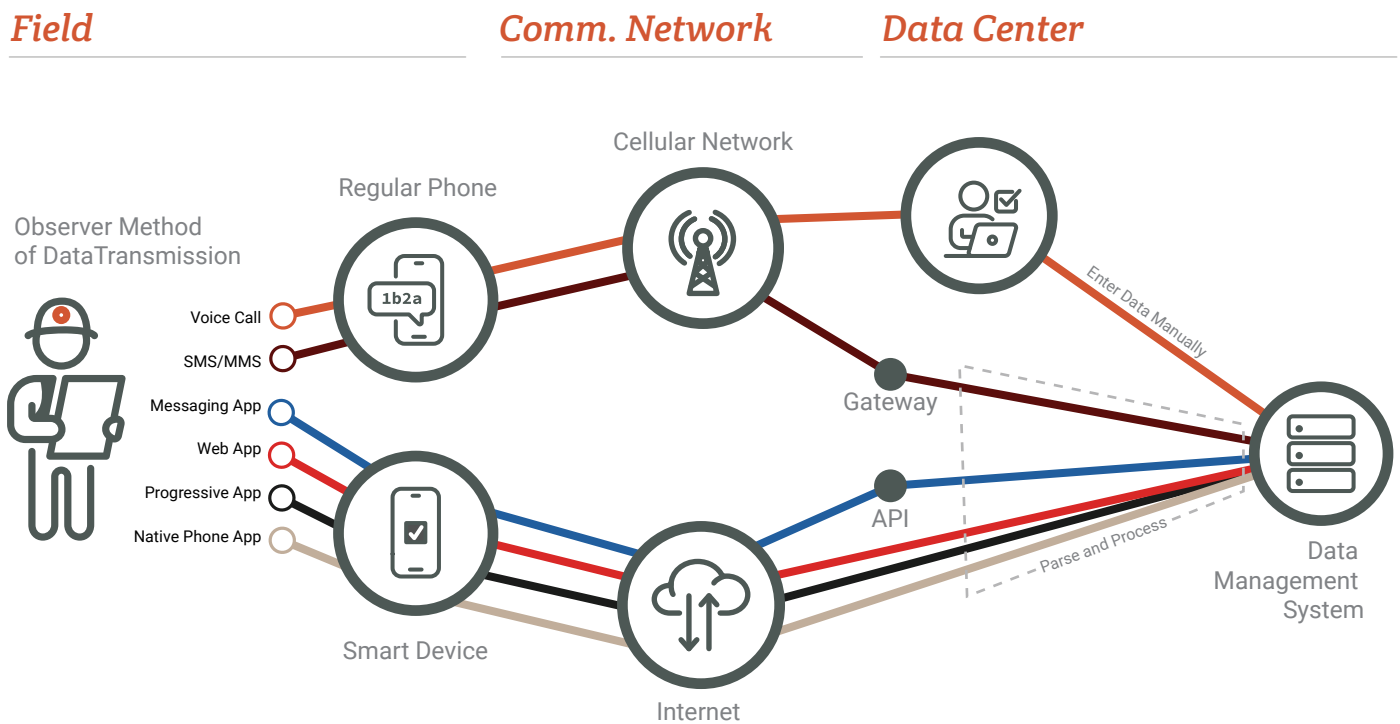
including how observers report their PRVT forms and, where applicable, incident forms; and (2) **From the data center out to observers**, which may include automated messages from the data management system or calls from a data center operator. Both types of information flows can be monitored through a central data management system (i.e., a complex database).

Managing Information Flow from Observers to the Data Center

Earlier you designed your forms and determined the times at which sections of the PRVT form need to be reported. As you determine what technologies and

methods to use to transmit information, the “keep it simple” edict applies. Basically, the observers will have some device (e.g., a phone or smartphone) and will use that device to transmit their information using the method selected (e.g., phone call, or SMS, or a progressive web application) over a network (cellular or internet) to the data center. It is important to emphasize that a key difference between other activities and the PRVT is the amount of information transmitted in a short period of time. If an organization has 1,000 observers, and they are all instructed to report after their polling station is open, then the network and data management system need to be able to collect and process such a high volume of information (without any loss).

Observer Methods of Communicating to the Data Center



Which tools observers use to submit their reports can evolve over time, as citizens adopt new technologies in their everyday lives, and those technologies become accessible throughout the country. In general, you will want to select a reporting method that is simple for most observers to use and allows you to receive quality information quickly.



Data clerks confirming reports in the Christian Churches Monitoring Group's data center for the Zambian Election.

NDI Photo

Keep the reporting methods simple and consistent

If, for example, the primary method of reporting the PRVT form is via SMS, then have all observers use that method. Having all observers use the same primary method for reporting the PRVT form greatly simplifies the design of the forms, the training, the conduct of the simulations, the training of the data center staff, and the data management system. As mentioned earlier, time is one of the scarcest resources on election day and you will not have the time to keep track of which PRVT observers are using which method of reporting.

Design to allow for prioritization of certain data

In Chapter 6, you considered complementary activities you may conduct alongside your PRVT and determined which information is most important to your organization. The transmission system should also reflect those priorities and be structured in a way that allows you to see your most important data. If both PRVT observers and other types of observers are deployed, it is helpful to have methods for separating (or 'walling off,' if necessary) the information flows from each component. For example, it could be that the PRVT observers and the hotspot observers are both reporting by structured SMS but to different phone numbers or gateways, allowing the data management system to know

which observer is which and make it easy to prioritize PRVT data or vice versa. Some organizations categorize incident forms, delineating urgent incidents from less urgent ones. This allows the organization to prioritize dealing with the most critical incidents before moving on to less serious ones.

Take advantage of available technology and communication networks

Since you want to keep the method of reporting simple and consistent, and your observers are deployed throughout the entire country, it makes sense to take advantage of what devices and networks are already available. At the time of writing

Technology Advances (and Some Caveats)

- » Innovations in technology can dramatically speed up the transmission and processing of information. However, be aware that adopting a new technology is likely to cost more than a method that involves technology that observers are already familiar with—both in terms of direct costs as well as training time. And adopting a new technology often translates into more preparation time so that users can adjust to it and so that it can be properly stress tested before election day.
- » Take into account the conditions of all of your observers—not just the ones in the capital whose situation you are most likely to be familiar with. The PRVT is a national exercise, and you will have observers in urban areas and observers in rural areas. Those in the rural areas are likely at a disadvantage in terms of their access to, and understanding of, certain devices as well as their access to the stable and consistent communication networks. Additionally, it may be that some marginalized groups have less access to the latest technologies and infrastructure.
- » Depending on the context, some technologies can more easily be used by observers than others. Since the observers are your most important ‘user,’ you will want to get their feedback about different ways of reporting and how well each works for them. On the other hand, keep in mind that technologies which make it easier on the observer often require more work and time to set up and configure by others in the organization (e.g., the project manager, trainers and the developer of the data management system). As mentioned previously, having all observers use the same primary method of reporting makes data management much simpler and smoother.
- » When choosing technologies (especially hardware) to support the observation effort, keep in mind sustainability issues and which software and hardware can continue to be used after the elections for other activities.
- » Given that observers will likely be using their own devices to submit their reports, software solutions that are device-specific (e.g., native mobile apps) will require even more substantial testing to ensure they work correctly for all observers on their various types of devices. This could significantly increase the time, and money, required to develop the software.

this guide, people in many countries have a mobile phone (reducing the cost to purchase such devices), use SMS in their daily life (reducing the time needed for training) and can access the cellular network in most, or all, parts of the country. Because of these factors, SMS is currently a common method of reporting for many organizations. In some countries, a majority of the population have smartphones and access to mobile internet is more widely available. In these cases, some organizations report through a messaging app or a progressive web application.

Managing Information Flow from Data Center to Observers

Just as you need to carefully consider the technologies and methods for how the observers will send their information into the data center, you need to devise the plan for how the data center will communicate to the observers. There are two types of communication you'll need to plan for:

1. **Proactive communication to all observers - to communicate reminders, updates or urgent messages.** These messages should be sent through the primary communication channel (discussed above) and/or through back-up channels if needed. Since this type of communication is typically to all observers, it can be useful to have an automated way of sending those messages out.
2. **Specific messages to individual observers to collect missing reports or clarify submitted data.** While an individual observer is sending their reports and then continuing to observe, their data goes through a series of reviews and analysis: Which observers have not yet reported but should have? Which observers have reported? Of the reports received, what appears contradictory or needs confirming? Is additional

information needed, as may be the case with critical incidents? The complexity of the issue often drives which method to use. For example, a reminder message to observers with overdue reports can be an effective strategy to recover missing data. But if one needs to gather details or clarify an answer, then a phone call with a data operator and the observer where they can resolve the issue through a live conversation might be best.

9.2 Designing a Data Management System

Given that observers will be periodically sending information to the Data Center in high volumes and that their information needs to be processed and acted upon quickly, there needs to be a Data Management System that can collect, process, verify, categorize, and analyze the information. The main features and tasks of such a system are detailed below.

Observer Contact Information and Polling Station Assignments

Earlier you recruited and trained observers and supervisors, as well as any other types of observers that will be deployed on election day. During that process (as outlined in Chapter 8), the PRVT core team collected detailed contact information for all types of observers and supervisors. By this point in the process, you have drawn your sample, assigned observers to their specific stations, and you know which supervisor is managing which observers. From the trainings or the simulations, you might also have notes about which polling stations are remote and/or where communication networks appear to be less reliable.

Protecting Observer Data

It is critical to remember your security risks and your duty to protect your observers by **only collecting the minimum personal information necessary** to recruit, train, and accredit the observers. Someone should be identified as “data steward,” the one in charge and accountable for keeping the data and related systems secure.

If by this stage you no longer need some information, especially information considered to be personally identifiable information (PII) (e.g., national ID used for accreditation, IP addresses, and cookie identifiers), then just prior to election day is a good time to review your data practices and remove any unnecessary data. You should review:

- » How the data is stored (i.e., properly encrypted) so that it cannot be accidentally leaked
- » Where the data is stored and how many copies there may be (e.g., on a local server, a cloud server, spread across multiple computers)
- » Who has access and what controls are in place so the only those authorized can access

certain types of data

- » Which data should be deleted or removed from your system(s)

These steps help protect supervisors and observers, and help you comply with your donor’s privacy requirements.

Some countries or regions also have specific legal requirements about the handling of personal data. For example, the **European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)*** requires that personal data is protected. Generally, personal data is any information that can allow a (living) person to be directly, or indirectly, identified. This can be something obvious like a person’s name, home address or online username. It can also be information that is less obvious but still allows for identification, such as an IP address, or online cookie identifier. The key concept about what constitutes personal data is that it allows a person to be identified. Keep in mind that pseudonymized data can still fall under the definition of personal data.

*[Full text of regulation](#)



Tunisian civil society organization Mourakiboun's data center for the 2014 elections.

Photo courtesy of Mourakiboun

Receiving Reports from Observers

Prior to the simulations, and ideally, prior to the start of the trainings, you have a system ready for collecting and processing the information from the observers. The system should ensure that all data is received and stored without any loss.

Communication to Observers

In addition to receiving information from observers, the system needs to have a method for communicating back out to observers. This might be a mix of methods depending on the type of communication needed. For example, if the message is simple, like a reminder or an urgent announcement

applicable to all observers, then something like a bulk SMS 'blast' makes sense (and of course requires that all contact information for the observers are in the system). Alternatively, it could be that the observer sent information which appears to be incorrect, then a phone call from a data center operator which allows for a live conversation may be a better way to inquire and clarify.

Tracking Reporting and Response Rate

At a minimum, the system needs to be able to process the observer reports and show which observer/stations from the sample have sent a

specific report and which observers/stations are still missing and need to be collected. Knowing how many stations from the sample have reported as a proportion of the total sample is how the response rate is calculated. In addition, you've developed a schedule for when each report should be sent by the observers and know when to expect them. (With the possible exception of the final reports on the closing process and the results, as the timing of those will vary.)

Report Management

For the reports received, the data management system can help with prioritizing information, such as flagging or marking those incidents sent in that may be 'critical' and need immediate attention. This allows for those reports to be reviewed first and any issues to be elevated to the proper person or team to handle (and, in severe cases, elevated to other stakeholders). The other main task of the system is

to assess the individual report sent by each observer and determine if that report is truly complete or if the responses to one or more questions were not included.

Data Verification and Quality Control

Over time, advances in technology and reporting methods, increased sophistication of data management systems, and well-trained observers have allowed organizations to spend less time on data collection and completion and more time on ensuring data quality. Quality control checks can include confirming that an individual observer's data is logically consistent across their reports. For example, they may have reported in the morning that the number of registered voters is 100 and in a later report, they have reported that the number of people who have turned out is 120. If so, then the station should be flagged as needing to be checked. Another



A data clerk from the Election Observation Group (ELOG) calls an observer to correct data in the 2013 Kenyan General Election.

NDI Photo

category of quality checks includes identifying any stations that may be outliers or anomalies from other stations in your sample. In some cases, you may have data from a previous election that can help serve as another layer of checks.

You might have additional information or formats that help with data integrity. More and more organizations are collecting not only reports from observers containing process and results information, but observers are also collecting and sending photos of the official results sheet. Comparing the image of the official result sheet with the observer information can be especially helpful in elections where there are more than 15 candidates. Understandably, observers can get tired by the time they are sending in the results information, and they may make small mistakes. Having methods for double checking their data is crucial and ensures you have confidence in your own PRVT data and findings.

Summarizing the Process Data

Once a response rate of essentially 100% is reached for each report, then the system should aggregate and calculate the data at the national level. As applicable, the system should also allow for any subnational summarization that might be helpful in understanding the national trends. Let's say that 80% of the sampled polling stations opened on time. Data summaries at a lower level might show that most of the stations that did not open on time were located in one particular district or city. The next chapter will go into more detail on summarizing and analyzing data, but a key point to note here is the need for the system to **allow the data to be exported**. Data exports can be critical in helping analysts go deeper into the data and/or better pinpoint specific trends as well as find specific stations that may need to be called for

Sophisticated data management systems: Apollo, Foresight, and Magnifier

Systematic election observation like PRVT involves simultaneously collecting, parsing, and summarizing hundreds of data points from observers and determining what it means – fast. Over the years, NDI has worked with local developers from around the world to design three sophisticated data management systems: **Apollo**, **Foresight** and **Magnifier**. All three systems have the core features necessary to allow analysts to manage observers' reports, ensure quality control of the data, and extract findings. The Nigeria-based TimbaObjects Technologies Ltd. developed and support their "Apollo" system. The "Foresight" system is developed and maintained by Irakli Naskidashvili, a developer who originally worked at the local monitoring organization in Georgia. "Magnifier," was developed by Creativo Center. They are developers from an observation organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apollo, Foresight, and Magnifier have been deployed in countries around the world including Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

confirmation. For more information on data access, including access to exported data, see text box on Data Security and Privacy in Chapter 8.

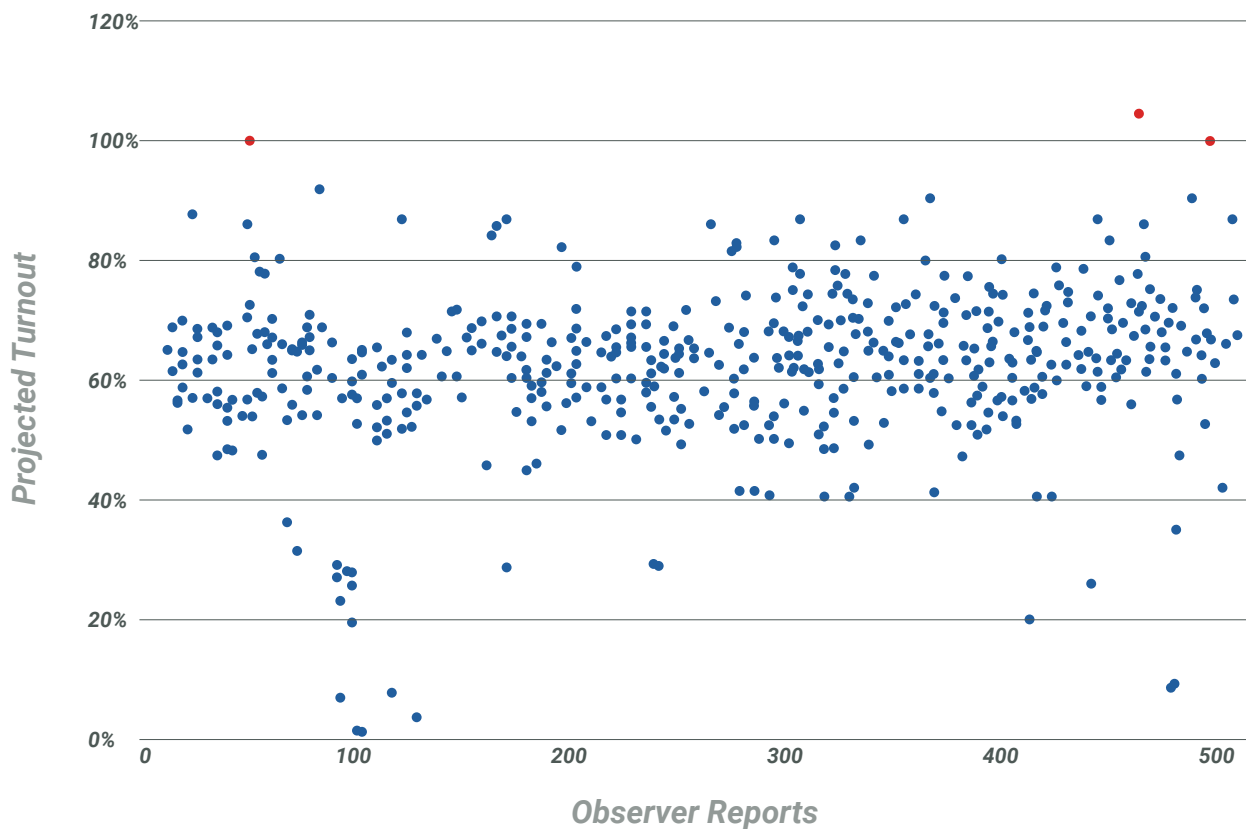
Stability and Summary of Turnout, Results Data and Margins of Error

The results data, which might include data on turnout, invalid votes, and/or the candidate/party/ referendum results, needs to be error-free and precise. Often charts, sometimes called ‘tracking’ charts, plot the specific data for each polling station and help analysts spot outliers (such as stations with

more than 100% turnout, or an unusually high rate of invalid votes). The chart below is an example of such a chart for final turnout. The x axis are individual polling stations as they report and the y axis is the turnout percentage. This kind of chart makes it easier for the analyst to see that one station appears to have a turnout of more than 100% and two other stations have 100%, while several stations have very low turnout around 5%. The observers at those stations can be called back and the data can be checked.

In addition, there are other charts which help the analyst understand the stability of the data as it comes in. The data management system also needs

Tracking Turnout



A tracking chart provides a visual way to easily detect outliers that could skew results. To ensure that the PRVT results are accurate, you will want to verify with the observer that the information you received reflects the official polling station results.

to calculate the margin of error for each piece of the results data. There may be charts that help to visually highlight where any candidates/parties overlap or that mark where a threshold is required (e.g., elections requiring the top candidate to get 50% plus one vote to avoid a runoff election) and notes overlap with any candidate margins of error. While the next chapter goes into more detail about how the margins of error are calculated and interpreted, it's important to emphasize here that the data management system needs to help the analyst and quality control team to rapidly check and confirm any data that looks strange or anomalous.

Data Security Practices

For all the different hardware and software used, the security of the system and the data needs to be protected and meet current data security best practices. At the time of writing this guide, some example categories and practices include:

- » **Securing communication data in transit** through enforcing encryption for all network connections,
- » **Securing data at rest** through using standard encryption and protecting systems against malware (including any backups of data stored elsewhere),
- » **Properly managing keys and passwords** through using two-factor authentication and not using vendor-supplied defaults for system passwords,
- » **Employing access controls and management** through having different accounts and credentials for different levels of roles as well as protocols for reviewing or revoking access,
- » **Applying updates and patches** through a system of keeping all code and environments up to date and for maintaining any production facing systems (e.g., core libraries or web services),

Data Center: Importance of Redundancy and Backups

Every stated need of a data center requires a backup. Unfortunately, experience shows that primary methods can and do fail. For example, if the data center is using a conference room at a hotel, then you should inquire with the hotel and ensure there is backup power (e.g., generator) in case the main power goes out. If internet is required, then there should be a primary internet and a backup source of internet in case the first one goes down. You should also conduct regular backups of the information collected through the data management system. If the primary observer reporting mechanism includes sending a structured text message to a gateway that aggregates the messages, then there also needs to be a secondary, backup system in case that fails. For example, another gateway and/or a set of data operators with phones who can call out to observers or to whom the observers can make calls to report their data.

- » **Detailed monitoring and logging** through a system which logs access to data and tracking where data was sent and stored, and
- » **Securing application security and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)** through assessing permission and data needs, testing endpoints for leakage and regularly testing security systems and processes.

9.3 Establishing a Data Center

After the forms have been designed and the observers are trained, the next phase begins:

selecting and setting up a central data center where the core team can set up and implement systems to collect data for the simulation(s) and observer reports on election day, and to quickly communicate out to observers and supervisors.

Choosing a Data Center Location

Most organizations book a space well before election day and then set it up a few days before their first simulation and through election day until the tabulation process is completed. Data centers may be rented (or borrowed) and there are several areas to consider when choosing a data center location, including:

- » **Physical Space and Security.** At a minimum there needs to be one large room that can accommodate any computers and equipment, the PRVT core team and, if there are data center operators, then enough room so that the operators be seated in a way so as to reduce noise for their calls with observers. It is also helpful to have another room or area where the leadership and/or management team can meet in private and have potentially sensitive discussions about the data and findings. Some organizations have also secured additional rooms to use for visitors and press conferences. Given the often-sensitive nature of the PRVT and the data collected, it is also important to control who can and cannot

Do you have all the backups you need?

- » For observers contacting the data center: a primary method of reporting their data (e.g., SMS a specific number) and a backup method such as phone numbers for the data center so observers can call.
- » If you are using a gateway to collate messages, like a shortcode service, what alternative service or method is the backup?
- » For any third-party service providers: Will they be “on-call” and responsive to any problems during election day (which often means on weekends and/or late at night)? What is the secondary method if they are not accessible?
- » For the data center sending information out to observers: Ensure you have the needed contact information for both your primary and your backup method of communication. For example, if the primary method is via notifications on an app, and the backup method is an SMS, then you will need to have the observers’ username (for the primary method) and the observers phone number (for the backup method).
- » For the technical needs of the data management system: If you need a primary internet connection, have a secondary internet connection ready.
- » For the data center: What is the backup electricity source? If it is at your office, do you have a backup generator? If the venue (for example, a hotel) provides any infrastructure you will depend on to conduct the PRVT (e.g., electricity, internet), make sure that you coordinate with them to ensure they have a back-up plan and, if they don’t, that you can arrange for one.

enter the overall space as well as each room. Some organizations have a list of authorized guests and personnel and have visitors sign in. Many organizations employ a color badge system to identify anyone in the center and have a main intake or 'greeting' area to control access to the center.

» **Technical Requirements & Infrastructure.**

The data center location will also need to meet technical requirements and your needs for collecting data from observers, communicating out to observers, and managing all of data. **The specific technologies used will vary by country and context and should be planned for and resourced well in advance. At a minimum, all data centers need reliable and redundant electricity and internet.** Consider the following data flow as an example: observers use their mobile device to send a structured SMS to a gateway (like an API) that aggregates the messages and supplies them to the data management system, which processes the data. Each part of that process may have different technical needs and implications for the data center. The gateway may involve only software and access to the internet (e.g., "shortcode" service) or it may also involve configuring devices to collect messages, like smartphones, which need to be plugged into power and connected to the internet (either Wi-Fi or mobile data, and preferably both). Your data management system will certainly need power and a way to access the gateway (such as via the internet) as well as a way to periodically create offsite backups of the data (such as through the internet to a cloud hosting service). The information flow from the data center out observers might involve the data management system sending messages out through a gateway

to observers, or it might involve data operators using mobile phones to call observers, or some combination of both.

Data Center Staffing

Once the Data Center is set up and ready for the simulation, the members of the core team (e.g., Executive Director, PRVT manager, Communications Director, Zonal Coordinators, Analysts, Database Developer or Manager) often relocate from their permanent office to the data center. Operating out of the same space makes communication and decision-making much faster and more efficient. If data operators will be used, then there needs to be a sufficient number of them to cover and process the information from the observers and follow up on critical incidents. They will likely need to be divided up into shifts to allow for teams to remain rested and to continue swift communications with observers, especially as data collection and verification continues overnight and often into the day following election day. Shifts of data operators should begin an hour or two before polling stations open and cover all of election day, until the last station concludes the count and closes (often the next morning or afternoon of the day after the election). Here again, it is always better to over prepare and have more shifts than may be needed as it's easier to cancel a shift than to scramble at the last minute to try to put a new shift together. Remember that food and drink also need to be provided for the operators during all the shifts. Each staff member should know when they will be needed for key tasks at the data center and when they can rest. Chapter 11 provides examples of 'minute-by-minute' schedules that organizations have used to plan, manage and clearly communicate who is needed for what and when.

Chapter

10

*Summarizing Data,
Analysis, and
Developing Findings*

In Chapter 9, you learned how to establish a system for collecting and verifying data. Once you are confident that your data is complete and accurate, it is time for analysis. Analyzing data within the short-time constraints of election day is not an easy task. This is why analysts prepare well in advance of election day by gathering contextual information, developing a clear plan for analysis on election day, and helping to establish a schedule for sharing and discussing findings with the leadership team.

10.1 Understanding Context

Election day does not happen in a vacuum. Because of this, **your findings from the pre-election period should be summarized and ready to use, and give context to, your election day findings.** There may be other reputable organizations which have been monitoring parts of the election process and releasing findings that are useful to have ready. In addition, you may want to compile any relevant past data that could serve as comparison points and context for understanding the current election. This might include having previous election data for national turnout, regional turnout, urban versus rural turnout, as well as invalid vote rates. If you have successfully conducted a PRVT in a previous election and you are asking the same relevant question as the last one, then it is useful to have that kind of data ready as reference. You may also have access to complementary observation data from other efforts your organization undertakes such as observers reporting on the situation outside polling stations. You likely also have a protocol – or even better – a Memorandum of Understanding, which outlines who can access the data, who will join analysis meetings before the statements are finalized, and who will need to verify the validity of the findings before

they are released. (Access to election day data is also discussed in *Chapter 4: Strategic Planning and Preparation*).

10.2 A Clear Analysis Plan

It is essential that analysts develop a clear plan before election day which addresses:

- » How exactly will they work with the observer data when they start to arrive on election day?
- » Which parts of the PRVT dataset will be examined first?
- » In what order will the PRVT data be examined?
- » How will they proceed if findings indicate that there may have been some problems?
- » Which are the problems that seem most likely to arise on election day?
- » How will the questions about those issues on the PRVT main form be checked?
- » How will anecdotal data – such as from the PRVT incidents form, or from other non-PRVT observers (like ‘hot spot’) – be handled? While anecdotal data is not meant to be aggregated or analyzed, some incident information might be useful.

These questions should be discussed in advance with those responsible for presenting PRVT results to the public. The goal is to make efficient use of the time and eliminate as many “surprises” as possible. Additionally, analysts should have a protocol for how they will give the findings to the communications team to use for any graphics or templates. Graphic presentations of data make observation results more accessible to the media and to the public (covered in more detail in *Chapter 11: Planning for Election Day and Sharing Findings*).

10.3 Summarizing and Analyzing the Process Data

Only once all of the data is collected and passed through the quality control checks, is it ready to be summarized and analyzed. On election day, there are three major steps for analyzing the data: **(1) Scanning the data** for any “outliers,” unexpected responses, or problems with the observers’ data reporting or with the process in the station. **(2) Searching for systematic patterns** of irregularities and determining if their distribution is clustered in certain areas or arbitrarily dispersed. **(3) Ascertaining the impact of any irregularities**, such as whether or not they have a material impact on the outcome and whether they seem to disproportionately favor any particular party or candidate.

Step 1: Scanning the Data

The analysis of the process data usually begins by scanning the data and analyzing the distribution responses to each process question in the report. The task here is to identify “outliers” – those responses that signify that something is unusual and might have gone wrong. Consider a question about when the polling station opened (such as question BG in the example PRVT form referenced in *Chapter 7: Observation Forms*). In this example, there are three answer options: “At 08:00,” “From 08:00 to 08:20,” and “After 08:20.” In a well-run election, most stations would be opened as expected (in this case, at 8:00). If a large proportion of polling stations were open between 8:00 and 8:20, then these would be “late” but not *necessarily* problematic. Far more concerning are those cases where observers report that the station opened “after 8:20am.” Those precise

polling stations should be identified and, to the extent possible, the reason for late opening should be determined. The corresponding incident data for those stations may help in identifying why the stations hadn’t opened yet. These stations should be followed by the relevant Data Center team to determine if they did open later, or not at all – thus disenfranchising many voters. Such cases will require further investigation and following by the analyst and core team. When reporting to the public that, say 10% of the polling stations were “not opened on time,” the media typically ask two questions: *which* polling stations? and *why* were they not opened? The first question can be addressed by having a list of the stations where observers reported that the station did not open on time ready. The second question may be harder to answer in the initial press conference, but the reply could at least be: “We are investigating the matter and will provide you with an update as we gather more information.”

Further investigation might reveal that a polling station was not opened because it had very few voters registered there and it was merged with a polling station in the next room, a polling station that also had very few registered voters. As long as all voters had a real opportunity to vote, there is no reason to assert that the problem was sufficient to undermine the election. It could be that when the time of opening question is cross-checked with the questions about the presence of materials, those same stations are missing key materials and that is the reason for not opening on time. This kind of pattern searching is covered in the next step. The contextual data you collected prior to election day is also important. With the contextual data it becomes possible to say whether the 10% that were not opened on time is higher or lower than in previous elections.

Also keep in mind that not all questions may work as

well as intended on election day. The questions may have been phrased in a confusing way such that not all observers interpreted and responded to it in the exact same way needed to pass the reliability test (as referenced in *Chapter 7: Designing Observation Forms*). Thus, that specific question may need to be dropped as the data might be unreliable. Or if it is an especially important issue, then one of the pre-coded, blank questions may be used to send out the question with more clear wording.

Step 2: Searching for Systematic Patterns

In the first step, you identified problems (e.g., polling stations not opening on time) and the potential scale of the problem (e.g., occurring in 10% of stations nationwide). You hopefully have a sense of why the problems occurred (e.g., lack of materials). Step 2 essentially involves searching for systematic patterns. If the problems are distributed somewhat randomly and the scale is not large, then the likely cause of the problems is simple human error. However, this must be determined systematically, and there are two ways to proceed: (1) examine the geographical spread of the problem; and (2) cross-tabulate problematic polling stations from one question to problematic polling stations of other questions.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, you may have stratified your sample in some way. You might have stratified the sample by geography (e.g., capital region, east, west, north and south), or by type (e.g., capital, urban, rural), or a combination of both. The analyst can use that information to determine if the problematic stations are concentrated in a particular region or not. For example, if the problem cases are clustered in the capital city, then you can use that information when calling the observers in both types of stations (problematic and not) in the

capital city to help determine the cause. Problems that are geographically concentrated may be due to a logistical (e.g., key materials didn't arrive there) or an administrative reason (e.g., poorly trained officials). The critical incident team may be tasked with following up with those observers who reported critical incidents and their related supervisors.

While these inquiries are being made, the analysts can also scrutinize the data by cross-tabulating the problematic polling stations of one question with problematic polling stations for other questions. This can shed light on the shape and depth of the problems with those stations. These cross-tabulation checks will allow the analyst to determine if most of the problems across most categories are concentrated within the same set of polling stations, or if they are spread out.

Step 3: Determining the Impact of Problems

In Step 3, analysts determine the impact of “the problems.” At issue is the question: Does the scope and scale of the problems identified in Steps 1 and 2 have a systematic and/or material impact on any particular political party or candidate? And if so, then an often harder follow up question is: Does the scope and scale of the problem potentially impact or alter the outcome? The data from the process reports are a part of the same sampled stations as the data reported for the results. **Because there are both process and vote count data merged in the same dataset, it may be possible to determine whether process problems are related in systematic ways to vote count results.** (This is where the analyst may need to get an export from the database to conduct this additional analysis.)

Again, if the problematic polling stations are somewhat large in scale but seemingly randomly scattered across different geographies, then the

There Are No Perfect Elections

There is no such thing as a perfect or error-free election. Elections are difficult to implement and are conducted by humans. And humans make mistakes. The fact that there are problems or errors does not necessarily mean that there was fraud. Election day mistakes are made in every country. In some cases, these mistakes are a matter of unintentional human error. In countries where corruption has plagued elections for decades, people understandably tend to view any irregularities with a great deal of suspicion. It is a mistake, however, to leap to the conclusion that each and every problem indicates election fraud. Human errors occur, usually at random, without conforming to any particular pattern. In addition, random error usually means that the “mistakes” are spread across areas affecting all parties or candidates rather than favoring one particular candidate or party. This is why searching for systematic patterns (in step 2) and assessing the potential impact (in step 3) are so important. Problems that are relatively randomly distributed should certainly be reported, but the more important task for analysts is to determine the consequences of non-random problems.

problem may indicate an issue to be addressed, but it may not disproportionately impact one party over another. If, however, further analysis shows that a disproportionate number of problems that disenfranchised voters occurred in areas where the opposition had strong support and/or problems that indicated multiple voting disproportionately occurred in areas where the ruling party had high vote share, then those problems may have affected the outcome of the election—especially if the winning margin was very small. Because process data relies on exactly

the same statistical principles as those used to generate the results predictions, analysts can use the process data to help determine whether the problems found in the process data at the national level are randomly distributed or whether they are systematic and may have an impact on a particular party and the outcome.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, while each process question has a margin of error, resources are not usually spent on calculating them. For the process information, we are concerned with relatively larger scales and shifts in the data. For example, having 80% of stations open on time for this election may be a vast improvement if in the last election, only 65% of the stations were open on time. If 78% of stations opened on time in the last election, then there is likely no statistically significant difference when compared to the same question for the current election.

10.4 Analyzing Results and Turnout Data

Before you can begin to summarize the results data, you have to meet two thresholds: First, you collected reports from essentially all sampled stations, and second, the process data shows the process was not significantly corrupted.

» **Threshold 1: High Rate of Response:** As covered in previous chapters, you determined your manageable sample, you recruited and trained your observers, you tested your observers, and you made sure to attain essentially 100% response rate for election day reports. If you do not have a sufficiently high response rate, then you likely cannot release the results data. If you have only partial data back from the sample, then your sample is likely biased and no longer representative of the country. As outlined in Chapter 3, missing data is unlikely to be randomly

distributed. You cannot make up for the missing data by ‘weighting’ it. PRVTs are almost always high-risk endeavors or what some call a ‘bet the country’ moment. And the process of weighting data involves making some (possibly inaccurate) assumptions about the data that is missing. And if being casual and inaccurate about results was allowable, then you would not be doing a PRVT in the first place. The fact that a PRVT is happening is likely due to a lack of trust or belief in official results data. It may be that the reason you do not have a high response rate is because your observers were unable to observe due to factors outside of your control –such as being unlawfully removed from stations or an outbreak of violence. In those situations, you cannot release PRVT predictions for the results, but you can highlight how your observers were treated and highlight the other problems as well.

» **Threshold 2:** *Process Data Shows Election Was Sufficiently Well Conducted:* If the process data shows significant problems happening at a large scale, then the process may be so corrupted and undermined that the outcome will not reflect the will of the people. In this situation, it does not make sense to project the results, as to do so would risk validating a seriously flawed process. In Chapter 11, this is highlighted as a possible scenario to discuss in advance of election day.

Calculating Percentages and the Margins of Error

Once you have met the thresholds above regarding response rates and the quality of the process, and all of the relevant results data has undergone a thorough quality control process, you are ready to summarize the data and calculate margins of error.

Comparing Process Data and Results Data

	Process Data	Turnout and Results Data
Population	All polling stations in the country	All ballots cast by voters in the country
Unit of Analysis	Polling station	All ballots cast by voters in the sample polling station
Sampling Method	Simple random sample	Two-step cluster sampling
Point Estimate Formula	$p_i = \frac{a_i}{m_i}$	$p = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k p_i \frac{m_i}{\bar{m}}}{k}$
Margin of Error Formula	$MoE = 1.96 * \sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$	$MoE = 1.96 * \sqrt{\frac{1}{k\bar{m}^2} \sum_{i=1}^k a_i^2 - 2p \sum_{i=1}^k a_i m_i + p^2 \sum_{i=1}^k m_i^2}$

*Margin of Error shown at 95% confidence level.

Remember that when you designed your forms, you confirmed and documented how the EMB calculates all of the relevant percentages (e.g., turnout, invalid votes, candidate/party vote share). For example, you already know if the calculation for turnout is based on all ballots cast, only valid ballots, or uses a count of the number of signatures on the voters list. You may recall in Chapter 3 that the unit of analysis for the results data are the ballots cast at sampled polling stations. And that the margin of error formula used for results data takes into account the two-step cluster sampling process. The margin of error for each candidate/party should be calculated using the final data received on election night.

What affects the Margin of Error on Election Night?

As noted in Chapter 3, the margin of error formula for calculating turnout, invalid ballots and candidate/party/referendum results accounts for the fact that

$$\text{MoE} = 1.96 * \sqrt{\frac{1}{k\bar{m}^2} \sum_{i=1}^k a_i^2 - 2p \sum_{i=1}^k a_i m_i + p^2 \sum_{i=1}^k m_i^2}{k-1}}$$

the sample is a two-staged cluster sample. The first stage involves randomly selecting a polling station and the second stage involves taking all of the ballots cast in that station. The formula below accounts for the variance within clusters and between clusters as well as accounts for clusters of different sizes (i.e., difference in total number of ballots).¹³

Where:

a_i is the number of observations (ballots) for a candidate or referendum option for a particular cluster (polling station)

m_i is total number of observations (total valid ballots) for a cluster (polling station)

m̄ is the average number of observations (ballot) per cluster (polling station). This accounts for clusters of different sizes.

p is the proportion of all observations (ballots) meeting some criteria at all clusters (polling stations). This means the vote share percentage for a candidate or referendum at all polling stations.

k is the total number of clusters (polling stations). This is sometimes written as 'n'

The confidence level is typically 95% meaning that critical value "z" is equal to 1.96

Recall that three factors can affect the margin of error for a candidate/party/referendum option (or for turnout or invalid votes): the confidence level used (typically 95%), the size of the sample, and the amount of variation in the data. The first two factors

you know before election day. The third factor – the amount of variation in the data on election night, is what allows you to properly calculate the margin of error for each candidate/party. The higher the variation in the data, the larger the margin of error. The two tracking charts below show the candidate vote share for two elections. The first is from the Ghana 2012 Elections and the second is from the Kenya 2013 Elections.

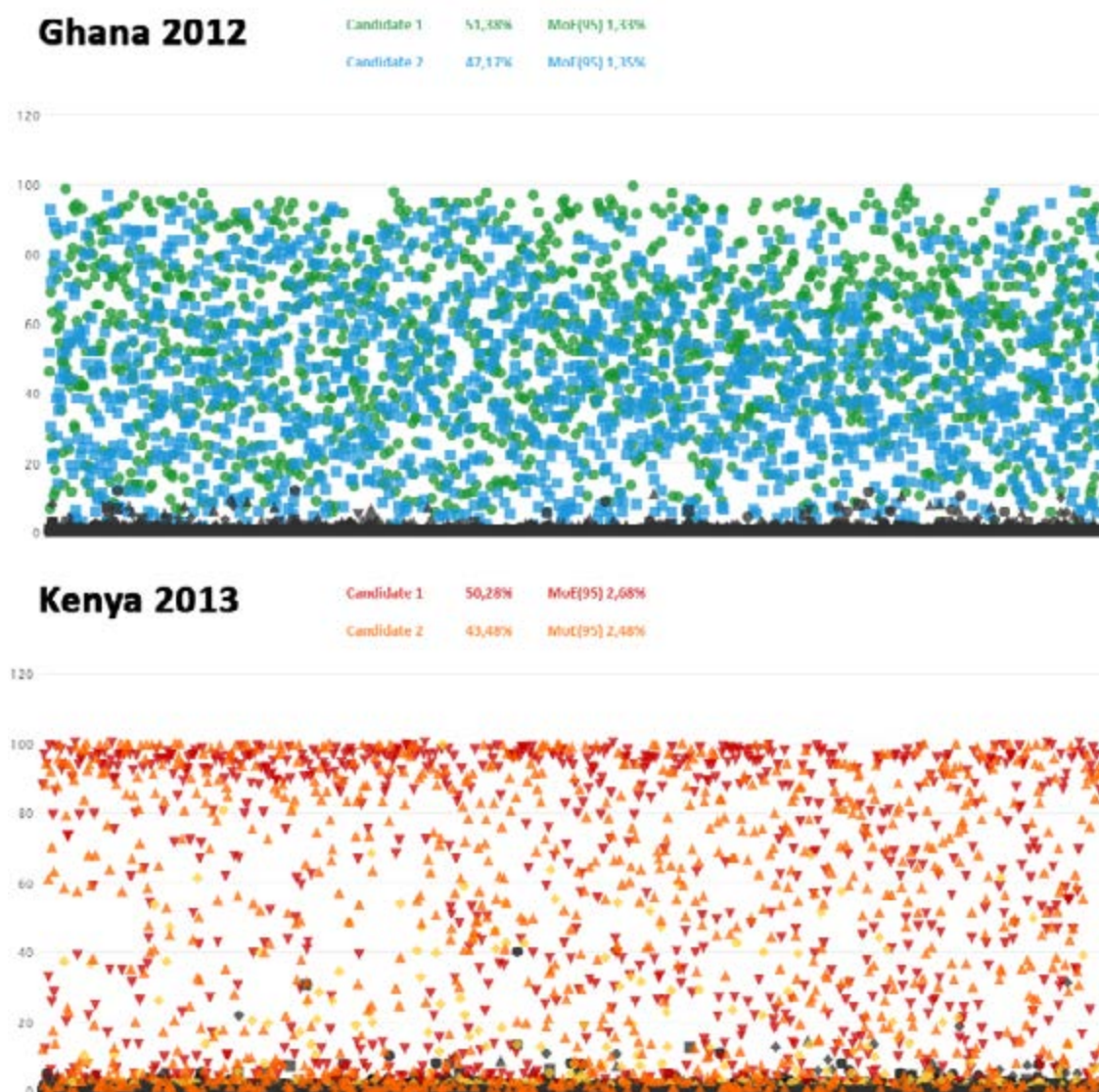
For each polling station, the vote share for Candidate 1 and Candidate 2 are plotted in the order that they reported to the Data Center. In Ghana, CODEO's PRVT predicted that Candidate 1 (green) received 51.38% with a margin of error of +/-1.33% and Candidate 2 was predicted to receive 47.17% and with a margin of error of +/- 1.35%. The vote share for both candidates is sometimes small—such as 20%, sometimes in the middle—such as 40% and 60% and sometimes high—

13. For two-stage cluster sampling with large samples, the lead term could be 1-f rather than 1. The f term is a correction term used for very large samples where $f = k/N = \text{sample size} / \text{total number of polling stations in the population (country)}$. However, in practice f will be close to zero and can be ignored.

such as 95%. The variation in the data is rather small and so the margins of error for each candidate is rather small. Now look at the Kenya example. For the Kenyan 2013 Elections, ELOG's PRVT predicted that Candidate 1 (red) received 50.28% with a margin of

error of +/- 2.68% and Candidate 2 (orange) received 43.48% with a margin of error of 2.48%. When looking at that chart, you can see that the vote share percentages for both candidates had much more variation: a candidate either received around 95% of

Variance in the 2012 Ghanaian and 2013 Kenyan Elections



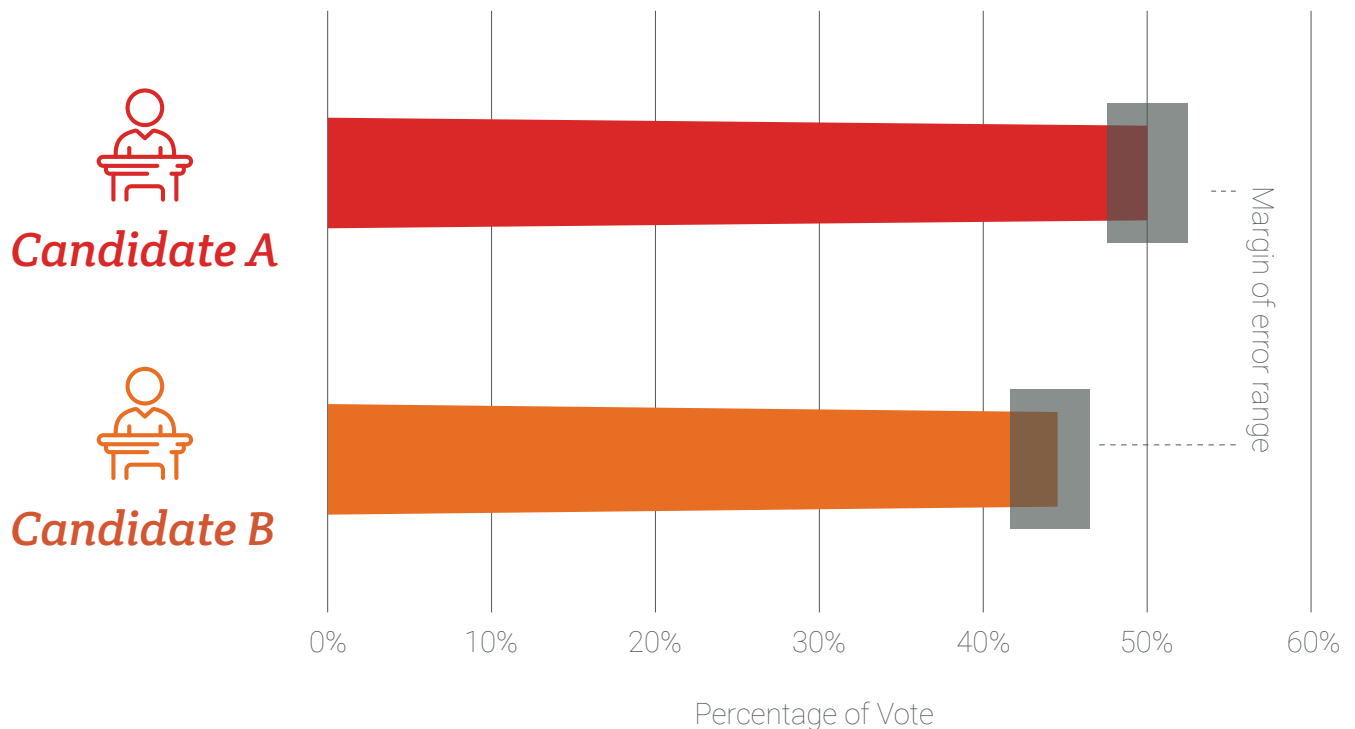
The greater variance in votes received by each candidate in Kenya resulted in a higher margin of error than in Ghana, where the variance was less.

the votes or they received around 5% of the votes. The Kenyan 2013 election was highly polarized and there is more variation in the voting patterns than in the Ghana 2012 election (at least for Candidates 1 and 2). Thus, the margins of error for the Candidates in the Kenyan election are much larger than the margins of error for the candidates in Ghana.

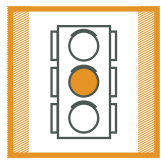
Displaying the Margin of Error and Understanding the Corresponding Range

The margin of error is added and subtracted from the candidate’s point estimate (also called the estimated vote share percentage) to show the predicted range within which the true official results should fall. At a 95% confidence level (commonly used), that means

	Percentage of the Vote	Margin of Error	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Candidate A	50.2%	+/- 2.7%	47.5%	52.9%
Candidate B	44%	+/- 2.3%	41.7%	46.3%



the true results should be anywhere within that range 95 out of 100 times.

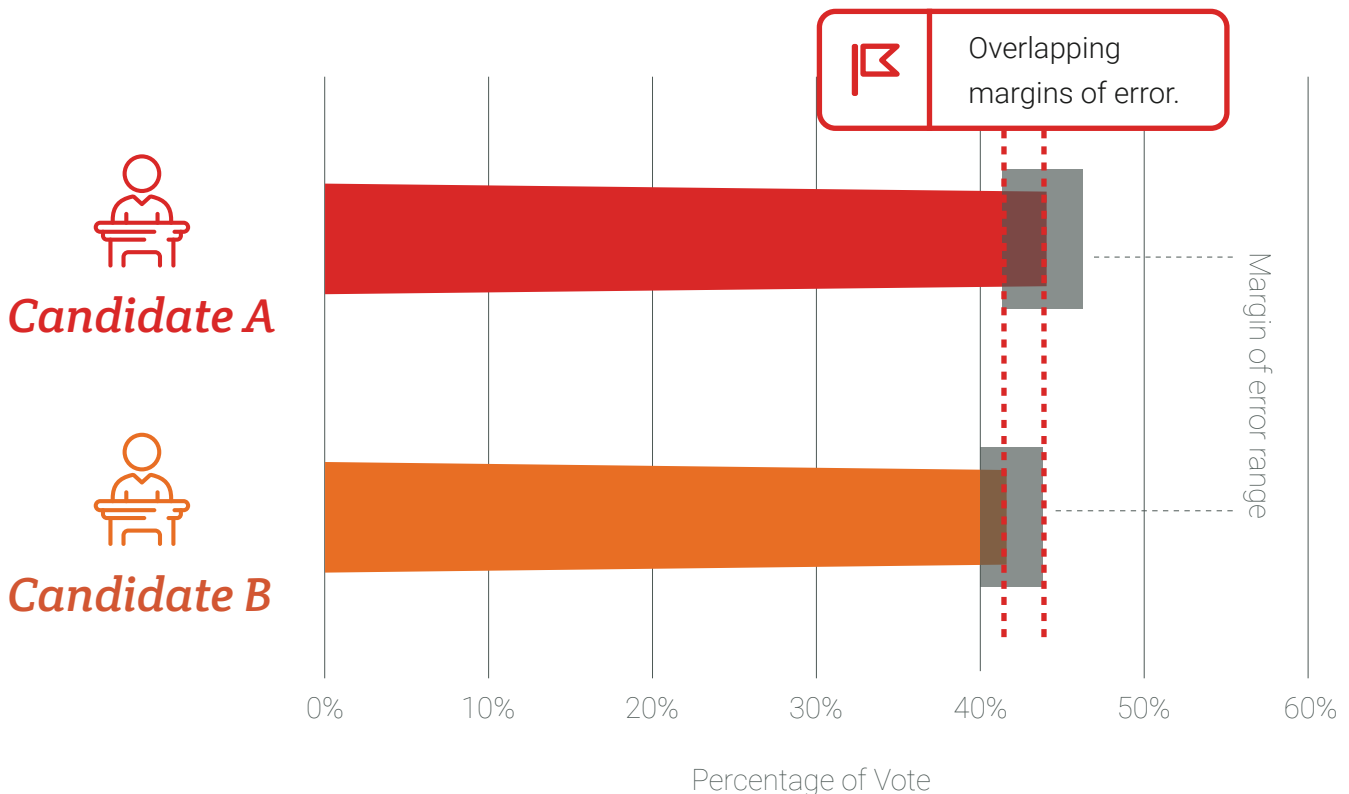


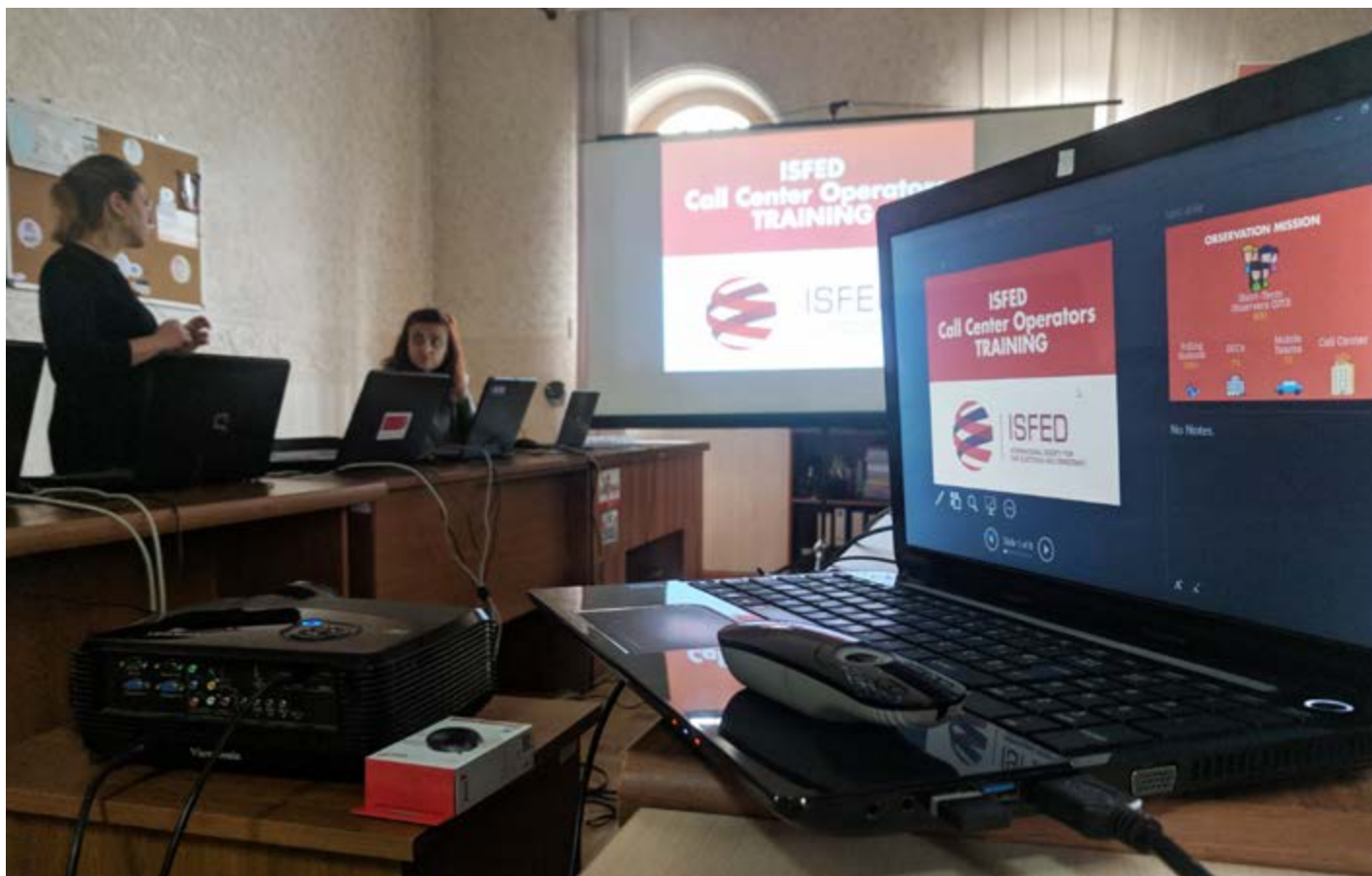
You may be in a scenario where a key electoral threshold is within the range predicted. And in that case, you cannot definitively say whether the specific threshold was cleared or not. For example, the leading candidate might need to attain 50% of the vote plus one vote in order to avoid a runoff. The PRVT data may predict that the leading candidate (Candidate A) has 50.2% with a margin of error of plus or minus 2.7%. This would mean that the true

official results can be anywhere between 47.5% (50.2% - 2.7%) and 52.9% (50.2% + 2.7%).

Relatedly, the ranges for top two candidates might overlap: Your PRVT might predict that Candidate A has 45% of the vote with a margin of error of 2.1% and that Candidate B has 43% of the vote with a margin of error of 1.8%. Consider the table below showing the vote share percentages and the ranges. In the below situation, you cannot statistically know whether Candidate A is first or whether Candidate B is first.

	Percentage of the Vote	Margin of Error	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Candidate A	45%	+/- 2.1%	42.9%	47.1%
Candidate B	42%	+/- 1.8%	40.2%	43.8%





ISFED prepares for the training of their Call Center Operators.

NDI photo

Another example where this might happen is the threshold for being allocated seats in a parliamentary election. A party may need to receive 6% or more of the vote in order to qualify for seat allocation. Your PRVT data might predict that the party has 4.8% with a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$ and you cannot statistically know whether that party crossed the threshold. The scenarios on the previous pages are, unfortunately, one of the limitations of using a sample. However, remember that the results data is not to be looked at in isolation but examined in the context of the findings from the process data.

For public statements and graphics, it is best practice to show the ranges predicted by the PRVT and not just the percentage and margin of error. This helps emphasize that **the true value is equally likely to**

fall anywhere in the range, whether it is at one side of the range (e.g., 42.9%) or the middle of the range (e.g., 45%). Often the media tends to overly focus on the point estimate percentage and downplay the margin of error. (See *Chapter 11: Planning for Election Day and Sharing Findings*, Appendix H for example infographics demonstrating results predictions and the margin of error, and Appendix N for sample statements containing a table listing each candidate's percentage, their margins of error and the corresponding ranges). Remember the margin of error is not a measurement of quality or the number of "mistakes" in the data. Instead, the margin of error is a measurement of precision – a smaller margin of error means a more precise range within which the true result should fall.

10.5 Turning the Data Summaries into Findings

As experts, it is your job to take the summarized data and use your knowledge of the election and the current context to synthesize that information into overall findings and recommendations for your statements. As noted in the section on the previous pages on analyzing the process data, you want to think through the potential impact of your data. You don't want to just "cut and paste" the data summary into a statement and fail to provide context and what your overall findings mean for the integrity of the process. In addition, you may have some of the supplementary details ready as a reference to use in case you are asked a follow up question during a press conference or interview.

Using Caution Before Predicting the Results and Releasing Statements

On election day, organizations come under intense pressure to "call the election," and often to release the PRVT predictions of the results as early as possible. Pressure might come from different media outlets who are anxious to break the news and to meet their deadlines. Pressure might come from donor organizations that funded the PRVT and might feel entitled to get the earliest results first. Pressure might come from within the board or staff of your organization, perhaps from those who want to be the first to release results. Typically, pressure to release the results predictions as soon as possible comes from all of these sources. Luckily, *Chapter 11: Planning for Election Day and Sharing Findings* helps you to prepare for, and discuss among the leadership,

these different scenarios and pressures.

The leadership and analyst team must be committed to ensuring that data and findings are only released after confirming that all of the data are accurate and have been thoroughly checked.

It would be a very serious mistake to release data that is incomplete or has not undergone a thorough data quality control process. The consequences of releasing unreliable, or worse—incorrect— data can be disastrous. Unfortunately, there have been real world cases where the release of preliminary data was misleading and undermined the legitimacy of the PRVT and the organization. **Despite the pressures that will undoubtedly come, caution must be taken. Only once you feel confident that all the data has been checked and rechecked, that it has been systematically checked for patterns and impact, and that you have synthesized and placed the results in context, should you then release the predictions of results.**

Chapter

11

*Planning for Election
Day and Sharing
Findings*

In Chapter 4, you learned how to establish a clear management structure for your PRVT. This structure will determine how you decide when to release data and in what manner, as well as who plays what roles on election day. The process of releasing findings hinges upon your organization's ability to quickly collect, clean, verify, and analyze election day data, as discussed in Chapter 9 and 10. When conducting a PRVT, election day will have many moving parts and interlocking processes, each managed by different members of your team. Some of these processes are related to the operation of the data center, others to the implementation of your communications strategy. All, however, will have a major impact on both the political and logistical success of your PRVT. In this chapter, you will learn how to conduct scenario planning, which will build upon aspects of the electoral context analysis you learned about in Chapter 6. This chapter will also cover planning for election day communications, a core component of your overall communications strategy, discussed in Chapter 5.

11.1 Planning Ahead

On election day, events will move quickly, and you will need to make decisions – sometimes difficult ones – in a short period of time. Planning ahead will help expedite this decision-making process and help ensure agreement within your organization. It will also help you issue timely reports and reduce the lag between the availability of analyzed data and the release of findings.

Preparing for Different Scenarios

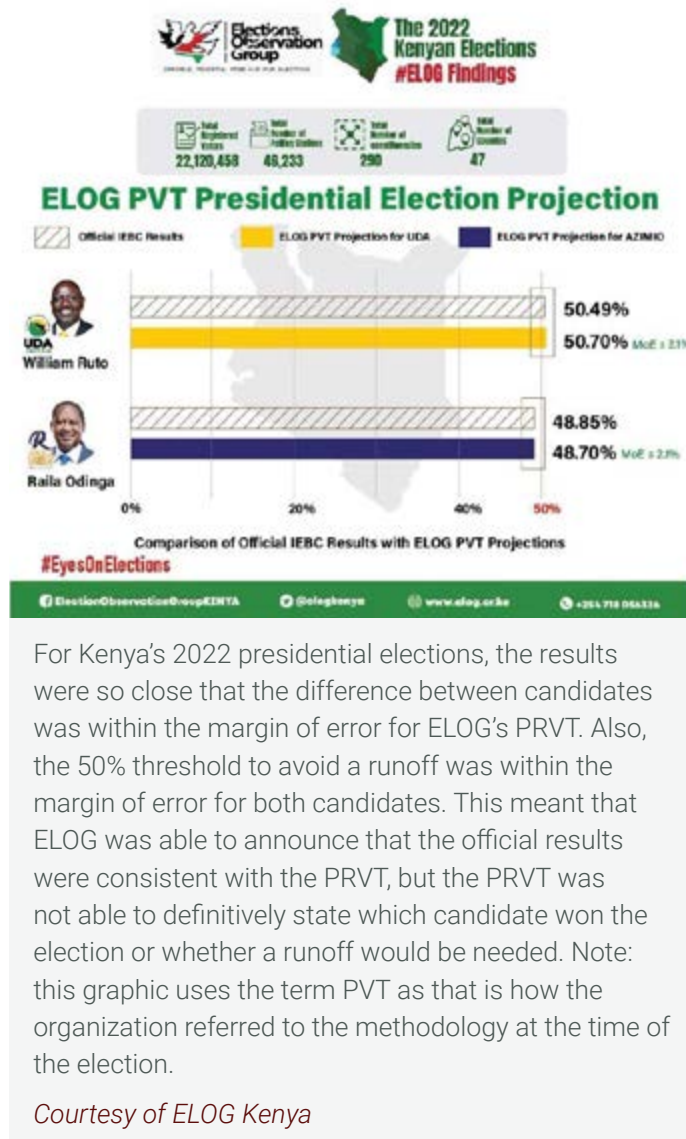
To conduct an effective scenario planning, your organization first should determine who will be the main decision-makers when it comes to the PRVT. Is it the organization's board of directors? The coalition's

steering committee? Or a subset of the PRVT leadership, such as the executive director, PRVT manager and communications manager? Based on the findings of your pre-election observation, and your analysis of the political dynamics in the country, this group of people should be able to identify a series of likely scenarios about election day:

- » Is it likely to be a credible election?
- » Do you expect generalized irregularities?
- » Are there conditions that could result in election day violence?
- » What outcomes do the public expect?
- » What outcomes could happen that the public would not expect?

To speed drafting on election day, it is helpful to think about potential situations ahead of time and reach consensus within the organization on how you would want to communicate in each of these scenarios. That will allow you to craft the appropriate messages and corresponding graphics with the luxury of time and clarity of mind that you will not have on election day. Some scenarios to consider include:

- » **Pre-election and PRVT findings indicate that election reflects the will of the people.** PRVT verifies that the official results are consistent with the votes cast at the polling stations.
- » **Pre-election findings make it evident that the conditions do not exist for the election to reflect the will of the people.** For example, if the main opposition candidate is disqualified and not allowed to run for office, the election might not provide a meaningful choice to voters.
- » **The PRVT falters on election day, and you do not have statistically valid data to assess the overall process or validate official results.** This failure could be due to external factors, such as the



denial of accreditation for all your observers, or the refusal to allow your observers access to polling stations. However, a PRVT failure could also have its roots in internal factors. For example, your observation database might be unable to handle the volume of election day reports, or results information submitted by observers is unreliable (either due to poor data quality or low reporting rates) as a result of insufficient training.

- » **The PRVT's assessment of the election day process cast serious doubts on the integrity of the election process, and it is clear that the election results might not reflect the will of the**

people. In this scenario, publishing the PRVT's result predictions could validate a fraudulent or deeply flawed election.

- » **There are credible reports of conditions outside the polling stations that are not conducive to a credible election.** For example, violence that keeps people home, or security officials systematically impeding access to the polling station to voters without an official party identification, could cast serious doubts in the ability of the process to reflect the will of the people.
- » **The difference between candidates is within the PRVT's margin of error.** This would not allow you to establish who won the election, or which candidates will move on to a second round.
- » **A meaningful electoral threshold is not met.** Examples include thresholds for referendum validity, the percentage of votes needed to win in a first-round election, or the threshold to participate in the distribution of legislative seats.
- » **Conversely, the threshold is within the PRVT's margin of error,** and you cannot say if a referendum is valid, a candidate won in the first round, or a party is eligible to participate in the distribution of seats.
- » **The official results fall outside the PRVT's predicted range,** implying possible manipulation during the vote tabulation process.
- » **Your PRVT results are put in doubt** by inconsistent exit polls or other organizations claiming to be conducting separate PRVTs.

Develop Statement Templates

You can develop templates based on those scenarios that are most likely or have the greatest risk. Once you have identified potential scenarios and decided

how you would communicate the PRVT's findings under each set of circumstances, it is useful to draft actual templates for your communication pieces – statements, press releases, social media posts and graphics – based on the most likely scenarios. For example, a draft statement would include standard pre-drafted language about the methodology and the framing of findings and have placeholder language for the actual percentages and margins of error. This preparation will allow you to spend time on election day fine tuning your message, rather than deciding what to say in a crisis situation. However, it is important to have some degree of flexibility to account for potential nuances or differences between the scenario as originally envisioned and actual observations on election day. Also, make sure to identify who will be responsible for updating the templates, and which person or persons will be responsible for approving the final version of all external communications. Remember: you should develop templates in all languages in which you plan to publish your statements and other communications pieces.

The number of statements may be different for each organization. It depends on different factors, including the organization's goals, the time at which polling stations open and close, when and how quickly you expect to get reports from essentially all your observers (as discussed in *Chapter 7: Designing Observation Forms*), and whether releasing information could help maintain the integrity and peacefulness of the process. For example, your organization might choose to develop templates for three statements based on PRVT data:

» **Setup and Opening.** This statement is usually released a few hours following the official opening of the polling stations. It includes information collected in the Setup and Opening section of the observer form, such as whether polling stations

were set up in a manner conducive to the integrity of the election. For example, it could reflect whether materials necessary for the process – including ballots, ballot boxes and indelible ink, for example – were present, whether the setup of the stations was conducted according to the defined procedures, and whether stations opened on time. It provides an opportunity to remind the public about the PRVT—including a brief description of how many observers were deployed and a reminder that findings will reflect the overall conduct of the nationwide process—and set expectations about future statements. Overall, it is an opportunity to help build trust in the process, if warranted, highlight aspects of the process that the EMB should immediately address, and/or call electoral contestants to act in accordance with legal frameworks or any electoral code of conduct.

» **Voting and Closing.** This statement is usually released a couple of hours after the official close of the polling stations and is based on the Voting and Closing sections of the observer form. It includes findings on whether the integrity of the voting process was maintained, for example by ensuring that all eligible voters were permitted to cast their votes, and to do so in secret. It also reflects whether there was any improper campaigning on election day, or if the process was marred by any violence, threats, or intimidation. This statement provides an opportunity to call for electoral contestants and citizens in general to maintain the peace as votes are counted and tabulated.

» **Vote Count and Results.** This statement is usually presented the morning after the election. However, the exact timing of when an organization can release a statement about the counting process and release predicted results depends on how quickly it can receive, process, and analyze reports



Yiaga Africa's publication of its PRVT's predicted results for the 2022 Osun gubernatorial election. The chart clearly indicates the margin of error for each candidate and makes it easy to visualize that the official results are consistent with the PRVT—and that the PRVT verified the results announced by INEC. However, the PRVT cannot definitively tell for sure which candidate won the election. Note: this graphic uses the term PVT as that is how the organization referred to the methodology at the time of the election.

Courtesy of [YIAGA Africa](#)

from essentially all observers in the sample. While this statement includes information from the Closing and Results sections of the observer form, it usually presents those findings within the context of the broader election process. For example, it assesses whether the results reflect the will of the people as expressed at the ballot box. If so, it provides a prediction of each candidate's vote share and its margin of error, possibly showing whether there is a clear winner and who it is. This report usually includes technical information about the PRVT, including the sample size, and might provide some initial recommendations for reform. Sample statements are included in Appendix N.

As you develop your statement templates, it might be useful to take into account some additional considerations:

- » **Frame your message within the appropriate context.** For example, your statements might reference your assessment of the election process, and whether it bolstered or compromised electoral integrity. In addition, your post-election statement should acknowledge that the election is not yet over, given that the vote count might still be in progress for some down-ballot races, the results tabulation process might not have finished, and the processes to resolve electoral disputes and declare winners would not have taken place.
- » **Make your content as easy to understand as possible.** A PRVT statement is not an academic document. Its impact will depend in large part on whether it is easily understood by all your target audiences, from the election authorities to political parties to ordinary citizens. Also, the more straightforward the statement, the easier it will be for journalists to share accurately with the public at large. Particularly, make sure to present statistical information in ways that are more easily understandable. For example, instead of saying that Candidate A received 49% of the vote +/- 1.2%, you can save your audience from the mental calculations, and add that Candidate A received between 36.8 and 39.2% of the votes. Graphs showing the margin of error also make it easier for readers to visualize whether official results can be verified by the PRVT, or if it is statistically possible to determine a winning candidate.
- » **Make explicit the real-world implications of the results.** For example, did a candidate clearly receive more than 50% of the vote, making him/her the winner of the election? Is the race going to a second round? If so, is it clear who the two

second round contenders will be? Did the turnout pass the threshold to make a referendum legally binding? Similarly, be straightforward when the implication of the results is not clear. For example, if a candidate received between 49 and 51% of the vote, make it clear that statistically it is impossible to say if there will be a second round or not.

Planning Minute-by-Minute

To help coordinate the work of the team and set expectations of what each team member should be doing when, it is useful to draft a minute-by-minute plan for tasks planned for election day and the day after. This plan should include information related to:

- » PRVT Operations
 - Arrival times of staff and data operators
 - Observers' reporting times
 - Planned communication with observers
 - Data clerk shift changes and transportation, (including departure and arrival times for transportation provided to data operators and/or data center staff, if provided)
 - Meals and tea/coffee breaks
 - Deadlines for data analysis
- » Communications
 - Deadlines for each of the planned election day statements
 - Deadlines for graphics and social media posts (for examples of graphics, see Appendix H)
 - Anticipated visits to the data center
 - Time and location of any press conferences
 - Time and location of press conferences planned by the election authorities, political

parties or candidates, or other observation organizations

The plan needs to be as specific as possible. For example, if you plan to communicate with observers throughout the day, the plan should include the specific messages to send, the times they will be sent, which method that will be used (for example, SMS text message or phone calls), and who is responsible for sending them. Similarly, the plan should include all the different times when you will share information publicly, including the formats you will use (e.g., press statement or social media post), necessary steps to prepare the content (e.g., draft tweet), and who is responsible for sharing the content.

11.2 Timing Your Communications

On election day, there usually is high public demand for information on the process, which the media tend to fill with anecdotal reports. Sometimes, the media's emphasis on isolated incidents or skewed narratives by political parties and candidates could generate a general perception that the quality of the election process is poor. In contrast, the PRVT provides a broader perspective of the quality of the election nationwide. It puts incidents and irregularities in proper context and helps determine their scale and impact on the overall process. If warranted, this information could defuse tensions and provide a disincentive for losing candidates from questioning the validity of the election. At the same time, using PRVT data to expose fraud can save an election from being stolen.

However, the impact of the PRVT information is directly related to when it is made public. Findings

Sample (Abridged) Minute-By-Minute Plan

A minute-by-minute timeline is a useful tool to make sure that there are no gaps in your PRVT planning, and that workload is balanced among your team. Below you can find a sample excerpt of a minute-by-minute plan adapted from an example used by a citizen observer organization.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
6:00	Data center opens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » SMS PRVT team » PRVT center coordinators
6:30	Arrival of the rest of the team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Project team
6:45	SMS 1 starts	
7:00	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
7:15	Data quality checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » SMS PRVT team
7:15	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Data analysis team
7:15	Summary of incidents shared with Field supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » PRVT manager
7:30	SMS 2 starts	
7:45	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
8:15	Data quality checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » SMS PRVT team

Time	Activity	Person Responsible
8:15	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	» Data analysis team
8:15	Summary of incidents shared with Field supervisors	» PRVT manager
8:30	Press release developed	» PRVT panel
8:45	Press release printing	» Logistics team
8:45	Translation and visuals developed	» Communications team
9:15	Press conference at press center (live stream on Facebook)	» Communications lead » Executive Director
9:20	Press release with visuals send to media	» Communications team
9:20	Press release sent to embassies and the international community (ENG)	» Communications team
9:25	Shared info on social media and upload on website	» Communications team
10:00	SMS 3 starts	

A copy of a detailed minute-by-minute plan example is included as Appendix O. This example has been adapted to protect the privacy of specific individuals, and tasks appear as assigned to teams. However, in your own minute-by-minute plan, assigning tasks to specific individuals will ensure that all tasks are done on time and your team avoids any duplication of efforts.

that arrive too late (e.g., when tensions have devolved into violence) have less impact than if it had been released earlier. On the other hand, PRVT observer data – especially for vote counting and results information – is bound to arrive slowly, making your data incomplete. As new reports arrive, the findings of your observation will change, so you will need to wait until you are sure the findings are stable before sharing them.

Even with this uncertainty, it is helpful to include the expected timing of each statement – and the steps needed for this timing to be respected – in the minute-by-minute plan. For example, if you plan to release a statement on the opening process, you might want to include the following in your election day schedule:

<i>Time</i>	<i>Task</i>
8:00 am	Polling stations open
8:30 am	Observer reports arrive
8:30 am - 9:30 am	Data recovery and data quality
8:30 am - 9:30 am	Analysis of incidents
9:00 am - 9:30 am	PRVT analysis
9:20 am - 10:00 am	Statement drafting (update template)
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Statement translation (update template)
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Graphic production (update template)
10:30 am - 11:00 am	Statement printing
11:00 am	Press conference
	Email statement
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	Social media posts

Releasing PRVT Results Predictions

One special consideration to keep in mind is whether you should release the election results predicted by the PRVT before or after the election authorities release preliminary results. The table below provides some pros and cons for each option.

Timing of Release	Pros	Cons
Before preliminary results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Puts the EMB and electoral contestants on notice that the organization knows the range where the real results fall. » Creates a disincentive for electoral actors to manipulate the vote tabulation process.¹⁴ » Helps fill an information vacuum, for example, if the official tabulation process takes longer than expected. In turn, this could help lower post-election tensions among contestants. » Creates incentives for your organization to be highly disciplined in reporting, collecting, verifying, and analyzing the data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Could be perceived as undercutting the authority of the election authorities, potentially damaging their relationship with your organization. » If you have not conducted thorough data verification on results data reported by observers, it is possible to publish inaccurate predictions, which could cast doubt on legitimate official results. » Your organization does not have the opportunity to 'check' your PRVT results against the official results.
After preliminary results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Reduces potential tension and competition with the EMB. » Provides an additional data point to compare to and allows you more time to conduct additional verification of your data before publishing PRVT findings, especially if they are not consistent with official results. » Provides an additional talking point, allowing you to comment on whether official results are consistent with PRVT predictions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » It could be difficult to change the narrative of who won the election, especially once the declared winner is already celebrating. » Conflicting information about the elections could help inflame tensions, especially if the official results are inconsistent with PRVT findings. » Your organization could be accused of altering the PRVT predictions to match the official results. » PRVT findings may garner less attention from the media, key stakeholders, and the general public, limiting opportunities to influence the integrity of the process overall.

14. If your organization does not wish to release PRVT predictions before official preliminary results are announced, informing the EMB and/or the public that the PRVT results prediction is complete, but findings are being held can still deter fraud and reduce tension.

11.3 Communicating in a Crisis

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the importance of planning for the most likely scenarios for election day and the PRVT, including what messages you would want to communicate under each of these scenarios. Similarly, you might want to draft potential responses to uncomfortable or sensitive questions regarding your organization, its leaders, its sources of funding and any foreign links, the methodology used, any potential partisan links (including among observers), incorrect or inaccurate information shared, etc.

However, even with planning there is always a possibility that an unforeseen scenario could materialize on or around election day. Some of these unforeseen circumstances might require direct outreach to specific electoral actors. You might need to enlist the help of election authorities if observers are not allowed inside their assigned polling stations, or from the police if observers are detained. Other unforeseen scenarios will require public communications that are not covered in your scenario planning.

For example, while you will do everything in your power to limit the possibility of releasing any incorrect information in your PRVT findings, things move fast on election day and mistakes can happen. If a communication mistake should arise, it is in your organization's -- and the country's -- best interest to take responsibility for the mistake and immediately undertake steps to correct it. Any attempts to place blame for the mistake puts those involved in danger, so you should take care in your communications not to implicate individuals. Under no circumstances should your organization double-down to insist on the finding if you know that a mistake was made.

While the unexpected nature of these crises makes it difficult to plan for them, there are steps that you can take to make the process smoother if they do materialize. For example, it is useful to monitor social media to identify and react to any attempts at spreading disinformation about your organization or the PRVT. You can also develop relationships with electoral actors – such as the election authorities, police, political parties – at the national level (and your regional coordinators can establish similar contacts at the local level). Remember that how the EMB, parties and candidates, the media, international observers, and others perceive the PRVT depends on how you build relationships and reputation before election day.

Even if you can't foresee what the crisis itself will look like, you can establish internal protocols to respond to any crisis. This protocol would define who in the organization should be involved in the discussions, who would make the final decision on the messages your organization will want to send, and who has final authority to approve the final language of any public communication. Having these pieces in place will ensure that when a crisis materializes, you can focus on responding to it swiftly and effectively.

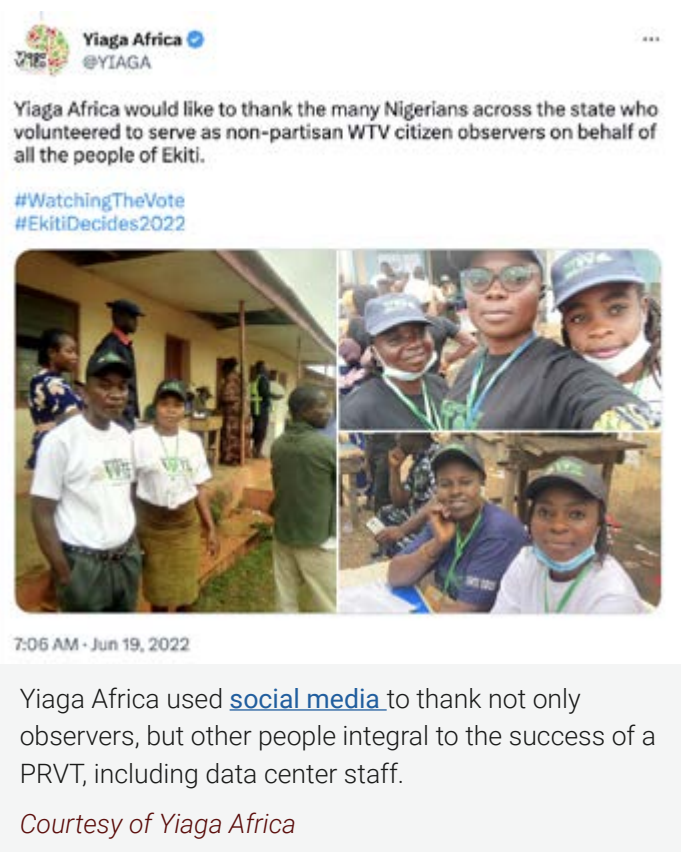
11.4 Preparing for Immediate Post-Election Activities

The release of a preliminary statement is not the end of your observation efforts and the PRVT. As mentioned earlier, the process does not end on election day. The crucial processes of tabulating votes, resolving electoral disputes, and declaring winners will still be ongoing for days or weeks after you issue your preliminary statement. In the period

immediately following the election, there are some tasks to consider to help you monitor the process, increase the impact of the PRVT, and ensure that the project is closed appropriately.

Continued observation: If you initially identified the post-election period as posing specific risks to electoral integrity, your observers might still be actively monitoring results tabulation, or preparing to monitor electoral dispute resolution. You might also analyze official results and other open election data to complement the PRVT findings and enrich the final report. In those cases, make sure to continue to communicate your findings in a timely and objective manner, seeking to contextualize any reported irregularities in the proper context.

Targeted media scanning: After election day, it will be useful to continue scanning the media for information on the election process, especially if it is related to the PRVT. At the very least, you will want to pay attention to announcements from the election authorities related to potential annulments of polling station results, especially as any annulment could affect the PRVT's own predicted results. Your organization will also want to collect information on the media coverage and public reaction to the PRVT. In some cases, this will highlight areas where you can further clarify your findings; in others, you could identify vacuums of information that you could help address by continuing your outreach efforts with journalists or election stakeholders. Especially if there is a lack of official information, or if there is tension between political contestants, continuing to socialize the PRVT findings on the conduct of the election and results verification could help reduce tensions. Keeping an eye on the media could also help you identify areas where civil society, opinion leaders, academics and political parties start coalescing around specific ideas for reforms.



Crediting and thanking your observers: The success of the PRVT depends in great part on the work and commitment of observers, data operators, supervisors and others involved in the project. Reaching out to observers to share the statement and thank them for their service and commitment would show the result of their work, help make them feel like part of the team, and make it more likely that they will choose to participate in future projects. This communication could happen over SMS messages, email, social media (including videos) or a combination. Going a step further, some organizations have held in-person gatherings to present observers with certificates of participation. In some cases, these ceremonies have even involved donors, ensuring that they also are aware of observers' hard work and importance to the success of the PRVT.

Closing PRVT operations: You and your team will need to take care of some logistical loose ends in the

days after the election. This will include, for example:

- » Ensuring that all your observers are paid the funds promised to them; this is crucial for your organization's reputation and its ability to recruit observers and data operators in the future.
- » Closing the data center, including disconnecting, inventorying, and packing all equipment and materials; canceling the contracts for any temporary services, such as backup internet service or SMS gateway; and making final payments to vendors.
- » Recovering any necessary forms, equipment and other materials from network supervisors and observers.

Identifying lessons learned: The days following the election, while the experience is still fresh, you should provide an opportunity for the PRVT team to identify areas where the organization performed well, and where efforts could be strengthened for the following election. You could organize one or more meetings to get feedback and ideas for improvement from key PRVT staff, including board members, data center staff, network supervisors, regional coordinators, communications staff, and the finance team. You might also find it useful to seek input from high performing individuals, both observers and data operators. The information gathered through these sessions can empower your organization to seek targeted technical assistance and funding for projects that both take advantage of the organization's strengths and allow it to improve in other areas. You can also identify staff, supervisors or observers who could take on greater responsibilities in future activities, and those who would need to be replaced. This would allow you the opportunity to realign roles and responsibilities in ways that help strengthen your staff and network in preparation for post-election activities.



Phones at a data center are being prepared to be packed up.

NDI photo

Chapter

12

Next Steps

The release of the PRVT findings and closeout of the project is not the end of the road. The post-election period provides an opportunity to build on those findings, as well as on the tools and skills acquired by the organization during the implementation of the PRVT.

12.1 Pivoting from Observation to Reform Advocacy

In many countries, the electoral legislation or regulations require observation organizations to present a **final report**. Even if this is not the case, it would be useful for you and your organization to draft a final report that includes findings and recommendations on the legal framework, the pre-election process and environment, election day, and the post-election period. This document

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 - 1.1 Electoral Context – Environment, Political and Security Context
 - 1.2 Election Administration
 - 1.3 Watching the Vote in Edo and Ondo States
- 2. The Pre-Election Environment**
 - 2.1 Observing the Political Party Primaries and Summary of Findings
 - 2.2 Observing the Edo and Ondo Pre-Election Environment
- 3. Election Day Observation**
 - 3.1 Election Day Deployment and Observation
 - 3.2 Highlights of the Mid-day Situation Findings
 - 3.3 Election Day Process and Results Verification
- 4. Communication and Stakeholders Engagement**
Media and Communication Outreach for 2020 Edo Governorship Election
- Recommendations



Table of contents, When Votes Count: Yiaga Africa Watching the Vote Report on the 2020 Edo and Ondo Governorship Election.

Courtesy of [YIAGA Africa](#)

POST-ELECTION STAKEHOLDERS REVIEW WORKSHOP ON GHANA'S 2020 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Key Recommendations of 2020 General Elections

2. Improving Election Results Collation, Transmission, Announcement and Declaration - Part 1

The EC should:

- Revisit the proposal to move the time for close of polls from 5pm to 4pm to allow for early counting of ballots and some collation of results
- Consider the proposal to create collation centers at the electoral area level to reduce the workload and overcrowding at the constituency collation centers.
- Prioritize the training of presiding officers and political party agents in the completion of election results forms or pink sheets
- Digitalize election results forms (pink sheets) by using hand-held scanners with inbuilt chips to allow for instant transmission of election results and subsequent upload onto the EC's website

CODEOGHANA.ORG

As you release your final report, digestible infographics can help to drive home your key recommendations. CODEO Ghana released a series of infographics illustrating recommendations based on the observation findings.

Courtesy of CODEO Ghana

would provide a comprehensive assessment of the overall process, giving a broader and more accurate assessment of the process and aspects of the process that pose risks for electoral integrity. (See Appendix P for a sample table of contents for a final report, which illustrates the information an effective report would contain and communicate.)

Based on this analysis, a final report also provides you an opportunity to further develop a comprehensive and mutually reinforcing set of recommendations for reforming the legal framework,

from regulations published by electoral authorities to legislation enacted by parliament. In this sense, the timely release of the final report provides an opportunity to engage with civic and political actors and build momentum to promote reforms that would make future election processes more inclusive, transparent, and accountable.

12.2 Contributing to Democracy Between and Beyond Elections

While the main objectives of a PRVT are to contribute to transparency of elections, and to empower citizens to engage in the process, carrying out a PRVT will

also bring benefits to your organization. Externally, the PRVT can help elevate your organizational profile and solidify your organization's reputation among civic activists, political leaders, and government officials as a serious, independent, and capable actor. Internally, it can help you strengthen your observer network and further develop your organizational, technical and communication skills. Post-election activities could also help you broaden your network beyond the relatively small number of PRVT observers and empower local-level coordinators or local subnational partners. In addition, ideally the PRVT will set a precedent for citizens and independent civic organizations to monitor political processes and the work of government institutions.

Myanmar: Building a Consolidated Database of Reform Recommendations

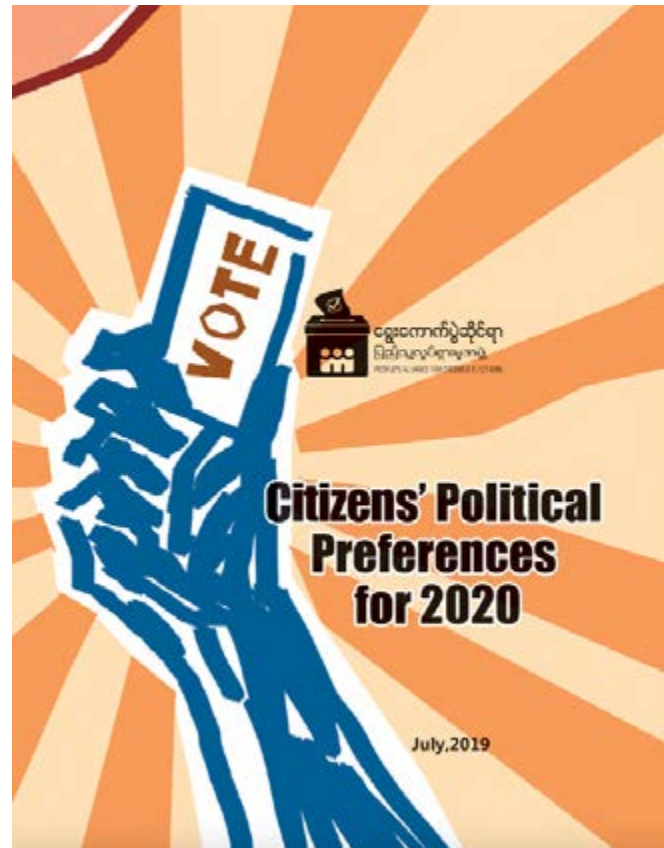
In November 2015, Myanmar conducted its first democratic elections after decades of military rule. For the first time, the Union Election Commission recognized the right of citizens to monitor the election process and provided the necessary access and information for the People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE) to conduct systematic observation. Even though the election system was not conducive to a PRVT, PACE conducted a Sample Based Observation, deploying citizen observers to a representative random sample of polling stations throughout the country.

Following the election, PACE collaborated with other citizen observer organizations to compile, categorize, and prioritize a comprehensive database of reform recommendations from both citizen and international observers. Civic activists used this prioritized list of recommendations to make Myanmar elections to be more inclusive, transparent, and accountable. Some of these recommendations were adopted by the Union Election Commission prior to by-elections conducted in 2017 and 2018.

This increased capacity, elevated profile, and broader operating space would create ideal conditions for your organization to continue contributing to your country’s democracy between election cycles. The table below describes some post-election activities that organizations have conducted after a successful PRVT. However, you should make sure that complementary post-election activities do not put at risk the reputation as a neutral organization you will need to effectively observe future elections.

NDI’s guide Supporting Social Accountability Campaigns with Sample-Based Observation provides additional information on how social accountability campaigns can use evidence collected through citizen engagement to drive responsive reforms.¹⁵ Like a PRVT, this approach includes mobilizing observers to a statistical sample to evaluate a process. Social accountability SBOs can help define the scale and scope of problems, inform, and propel advocacy, and create space for citizen oversight—just as a PRVT does in elections.

15. The guide is available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230326015601/https://www.ndi.org/publications/supporting-social-accountability-campaigns-sample-based-observation>



In Myanmar, a robust network and strong central team enabled the citizen observation organization PACE to conduct a series of public opinion polls on issues related to elections and the democratic transition process.

Courtesy of [PACE](#)



Ukraine’s Civic Network OPOPA used the momentum and systematic data from the PRVT to convene a series of forums on electoral reform.

Courtesy of [OPOPA](#)

Illustrative Post-Election Activities

Political process monitoring

Your organization could monitor the work of government officials as they make decisions or execute laws and regulations. For example, you could design and implement systematic methodologies to assess the work of parliament, the development of government budgets or the execution of public funds.

Campaign promises scorecards

During your observation of the campaign period, you have an opportunity to gather information on candidates' proposals and promises. This information would allow you to follow up after the winners had been sworn in to methodically assess if, when and how they deliver on their campaign promises.

Electoral reform

The period following an election provides a window of opportunity to promote electoral reform. Different actors – from the EMB to the media – will still be focused on the recent process, and perceived weaknesses in the process will still be fresh in their minds. Also, new elected officials, especially if control of the legislature passed to a previous opposition party, might want to seek relatively easy ways to cultivate an image as reformists before delving on substantive policy reforms. The PRVT's systematic information on strengths and weaknesses of the current process could be leveraged during dialogues with the EMB and legislators on reforms to make future elections more inclusive, transparent and accountable.

Service delivery monitoring

You could systematically follow the provision of government goods and services to citizens. For example, you could conduct a survey to assess the administration of COVID-19 vaccines, the physical conditions of public schools, or the rate and location of new infrastructure building.

Social media monitoring

Increasingly, online disinformation and hate speech are deepening social divisions and eroding trust in legitimate political processes. Your organization could conduct systematic monitoring of social media to detect efforts to weaken democratic institutions, sow divisions, or target marginalized groups.

Civic education

The geographic coverage of your network, and observers' commitment to democracy, could provide an opportunity to conduct long-term civic education at the community level. This education would contribute to your country's long-term democratic development and empower citizens to participate in the country's political process. Engaging citizens directly could also help bolster your profile and reputation at the local level and might make it easier to find committed observers in preparation for the next election.

As you explore possible post-election activities, you might find it useful to consider:

- » What processes pose the greatest challenge to your country's democracy? Is it the lack of transparency at the highest levels of decision making? Petty corruption that prevents the government from effectively delivering results to citizens? A toxic information environment that could devolve into real-life violence or attacks on women, ethnic, religious or sexual minorities, or other traditionally marginalized groups?
- » What are the timelines of the process you want to monitor? Is it something you can monitor at any time, like the quality of health services? Or are there specific times when it happens, like passing the national budget?
- » What is your organization's capacity to carry out these activities? For example, do you have a strong national network that would allow you to monitor service delivery at the local level?
- » What resources would you need to conduct these activities, and where can you get them? Would donors be interested in supporting one type of monitoring activity over others? Is there any technical assistance that you would require to complement and strengthen your in-house capacity?

These questions would help you identify the post-election activities that both take advantage of your post-PRVT skills and strengths and have a significant impact on your country's democratic development.



OPORA hosts an Election Camp to discuss electoral reform and lessons learned from the 2017 Parliamentary Election.

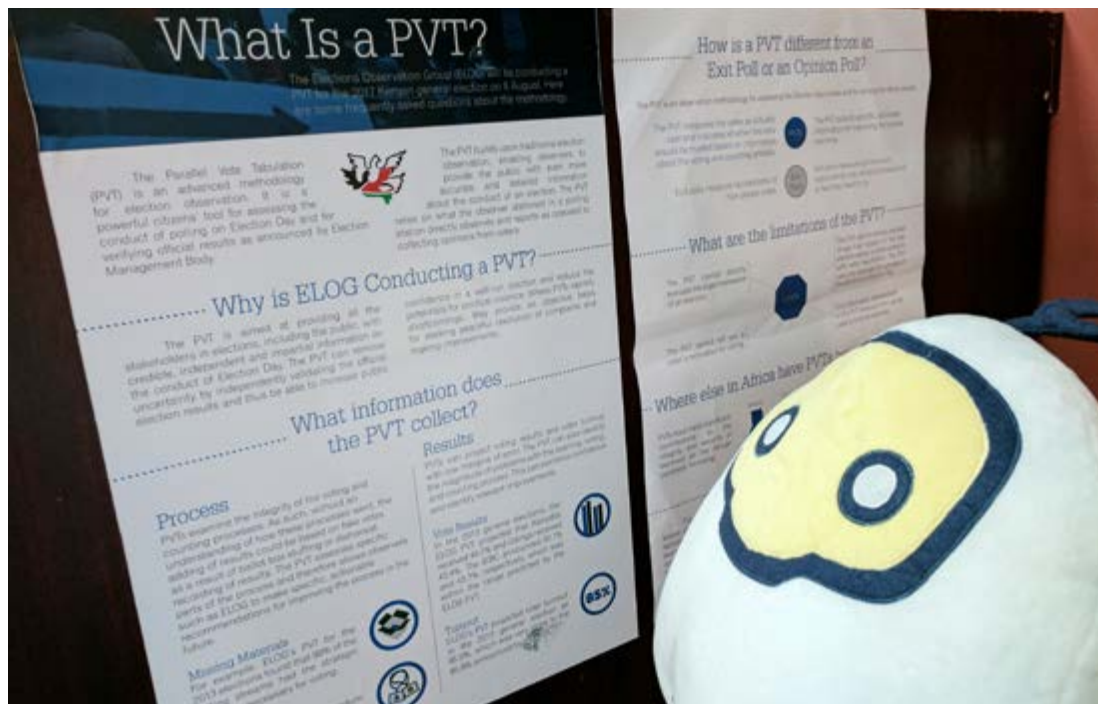
NDI photo

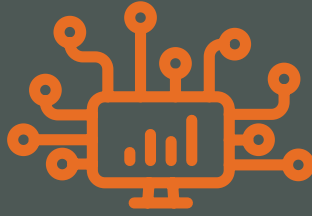


Conclusion

As democratic resilience - and authoritarian learning - continues to evolve with the changing political and technological environment, new opportunities to improve credibility in electoral outcomes – and profound ways to undermine it – have emerged. PRVTs remain one of the most effective approaches for collecting and using credible and unbiased information to increase transparency, hold institutions accountable, build trust in electoral processes, and speak truth to power. Though anti-democratic resurgence, results denialism and growing disinformation campaigns seek to undermine the availability of accurate electoral information, PRVTs continue to offer new and adaptive ways to broaden citizen oversight, thwart manipulative tactics, and deliver thorough and independent assessments of the electoral process.

The evolution of PRVTs does not end here. PRVTs allow observation organizations to remain nimble and well-organized to changing electoral landscapes and have ripple effects that improve other monitoring and advocacy work. Citizen election observers will continue to innovate and advance systematic monitoring methodologies, particularly as results tabulation and transmission processes become faster and more technologically sophisticated. We thank all the organizations whose experiences contributed to this guide, and we look forward to future iterations of PRVT activities to support how citizens safeguard and bolster electoral integrity and democratic institutions.





APPENDICES

PRVT Reference Material

PRVT: A Better Methodology to Predict Election Results than Exit Polls

On election night, there is often an information vacuum regarding election results, which can be exploited by electoral actors to make unsubstantiated claims that could result in tension and potential violence. Even in the presence of a Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT), it might be tempting for actors to turn to exit poll projections – which typically are released earlier than PRVTs since they don't have to wait for votes to be counted – to fill this vacuum as a way to provide certainty and reduce post-election tension.

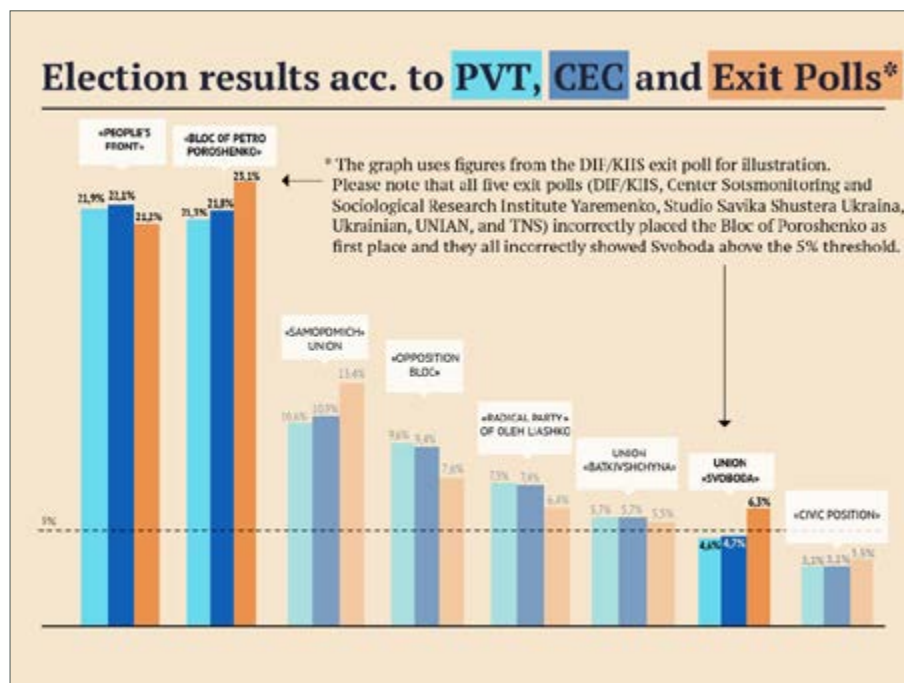
However, while exit polls can provide valuable information about voter preferences and motivations, they face significant methodological challenges that could result in projections not accurately reflecting

the votes as cast by citizens. As illustrated in the chart below, produced by the Civil Network OPORA in Ukraine, PRVTs are more likely to accurately predict official results, and to provide a correct reflection of the post-election political reality.

The sections below describe exit polls' methodological challenges in predicting election results, and how the PRVT avoids or mitigates those challenges.

Brief overview of how an exit poll produces results

Exit polls, like PRVTs, are based on inferential statistics. To conduct an exit poll, a survey firm first designs and draws a multi-stage sample. The first



Comparative analysis by OPORA on the accuracy of election results predicted by exit polls and the organization's PRVT, when compared with the Central Election Commission's (CEC) official results. Exit poll results incorrectly predicted that the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko received the most votes, and that Union Svoboda passed the threshold to enter Parliament.

Courtesy of OPORA

stage is for the firm to select a random sample of polling stations (the polling station is considered the primary sample unit) and to deploy interviewers, or enumerators, to this sample on election day. As the second stage, an enumerator randomly selects a person to interview (referred to as the 'respondent'). For example, the enumerator may select every 12th person leaving a polling station and ask if they will take part in the survey. If the person agrees, then the interviewer can go through the questionnaire and ask for the person to report their answers. Once each interviewer has reached their goal for the target number of interviews (e.g., approximately 20 interviews) at that polling station, their information is entered into a database.

Once the interviews are complete, the firm's analysts adjust the data to accommodate for sampling issues, such as to account for different levels of turnout among sample polling stations. For example, if the election commission reports that turnout in the west of the country was higher than in the east, the analysts assign responses from the west a higher weight in their calculations. The analysts also have to adjust the data to account for people who refused to be interviewed. To do so, the analysts must make assumptions about what characteristics they will use to create the weights to adjust for the non-response, as different groups of people tend to have different voting behavior. For example, if the proportion of responses from women is too low in the survey as compared to the proportion of women in the country and women as a group tend to vote differently than men, then the analysts may assign a higher weight to

responses from women.

Exit polls have a human problem: People can refuse to participate

Typically, many people that an exit poll enumerator tries to select refuse to participate because they do not have the time or, in some political contexts, because they are afraid. The rate of refusal can be high in exit polls: even in a "well-executed exit poll, about half of persons approached will refuse to participate."¹⁶ Again, the exit poll analysts will need to create weights to account for the low response rate. However, there is a risk that those who responded may be systematically different from those who refused to respond and so the weighting can lead to skewed, or biased, results. PRVTs typically have extremely high 'response rates' for their sample (close to 100%), which removes the need to weight their data and avoids the risk of biasing their results.

Exit polls have a social pressure problem: People may lie

Even if turnout data is available and trustworthy and even if the response rate is 100%, the answers people give to the enumerator may not be truthful. This phenomenon is well known in survey research, and it is referred to as social desirability bias.¹⁷ Simply put, individuals may not reveal how they truly voted and may instead provide a response they think the enumerator wants to hear. A person may answer the question of how they voted in a way he or she believes is socially acceptable, or less risky, rather than telling the truth. In contrast, a PRVT measures

16. James Greiner and Kevin M. Quinn. Long Live the Exit Poll. *Daedalus*, Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Fall 2012, Vol. 141, No. 4, Pages 9-22. (doi: 10.1162/DAED_a_00170)

17. For further discussion of this phenomena, see Anton J. Nederhof. Methods of coping with social desirability bias: A review. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, July/September 1985, Vol 15, No. 3, pages 263–280. (doi: 10.1002/ejsp.2420150303)

the actual votes cast at the polling station, not the recollections or self-reported information from voters, so there is no risk of misreporting.

Exit polls have a technical problem: The weights used during analysis might be incorrect

Exit polls' samples are designed based on the voters registered at each polling station, but they attempt to project results that reflect actual cast votes. To address this imbalance, analysts must weight data based on assumptions of the rate at which different types of voters participated in the election, the demographic characteristics of actual voters, and the voting behavior of those who refused to participate in the exit poll. Often, exit polls use turnout data available from the election commission to weight data. However, this poses a potential methodological conflict, as inherently trusting official turnout data used in designing exit poll weights compromises their ability to provide an independent verification of official results.

In contrast, PRVTs predict election results using all the votes cast in each sampled polling station, so there is no need to adjust for turnout, or weight data based on the characteristics of those who voted. In addition, because PRVTs use all the votes cast in sample polling stations, they have a higher level of precision (i.e., smaller margins of error) than exit polls.

Exit polls have a fraud problem: Exit polls do not measure the quality of processes that produce the official results

As the exit poll enumerators are placed outside of the polling stations, they do not know what is happening

inside the station where the votes are cast. An exit poll cannot assess whether the voting or counting process was fraudulent or fair. For example, if the exit poll results match the official results, how can we know if we can trust the official results? A PRVT can tell you if the process of casting and counting votes in each polling station was good or if it was flawed—and if it was flawed, a PRVT can reveal how it was flawed. PRVT observers are trained to evaluate the entire election day process. If that process goes well, only then does the analytical team compare the PRVT results to the official results. If the process is problematic, then the PRVT can measure what went wrong and provide evidence as to why the official results are not to be trusted.

If there is a difference between the exit poll results and the official results, how do you know which is correct?

Exit polls have had difficulty correctly predicting the results of several high-profile elections including some where there were no allegations of fraud. Accordingly, you would need “substantial additional evidence external to the exit poll to suggest that the official count, not the exit poll, is suspect, in which case it is not clear how much value an exit poll adds.”¹⁸ By contrast, over the years PRVTs have routinely predicted accurately the results of credible elections and helped detect instances of fraud and manipulation in flawed elections.

18. Ashoka Jahvani Prasad. What is the Relevance of Exit Polls in a Democracy?. Different Truths, December 28, 2016. Available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20190224041839/http://differenttruths.com/opinion/what-is-the-relevance-of-exit-polls-in-a-democracy/>.

Table assessing representativeness of sample by polling stations and by registered voters

Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) - Zambia

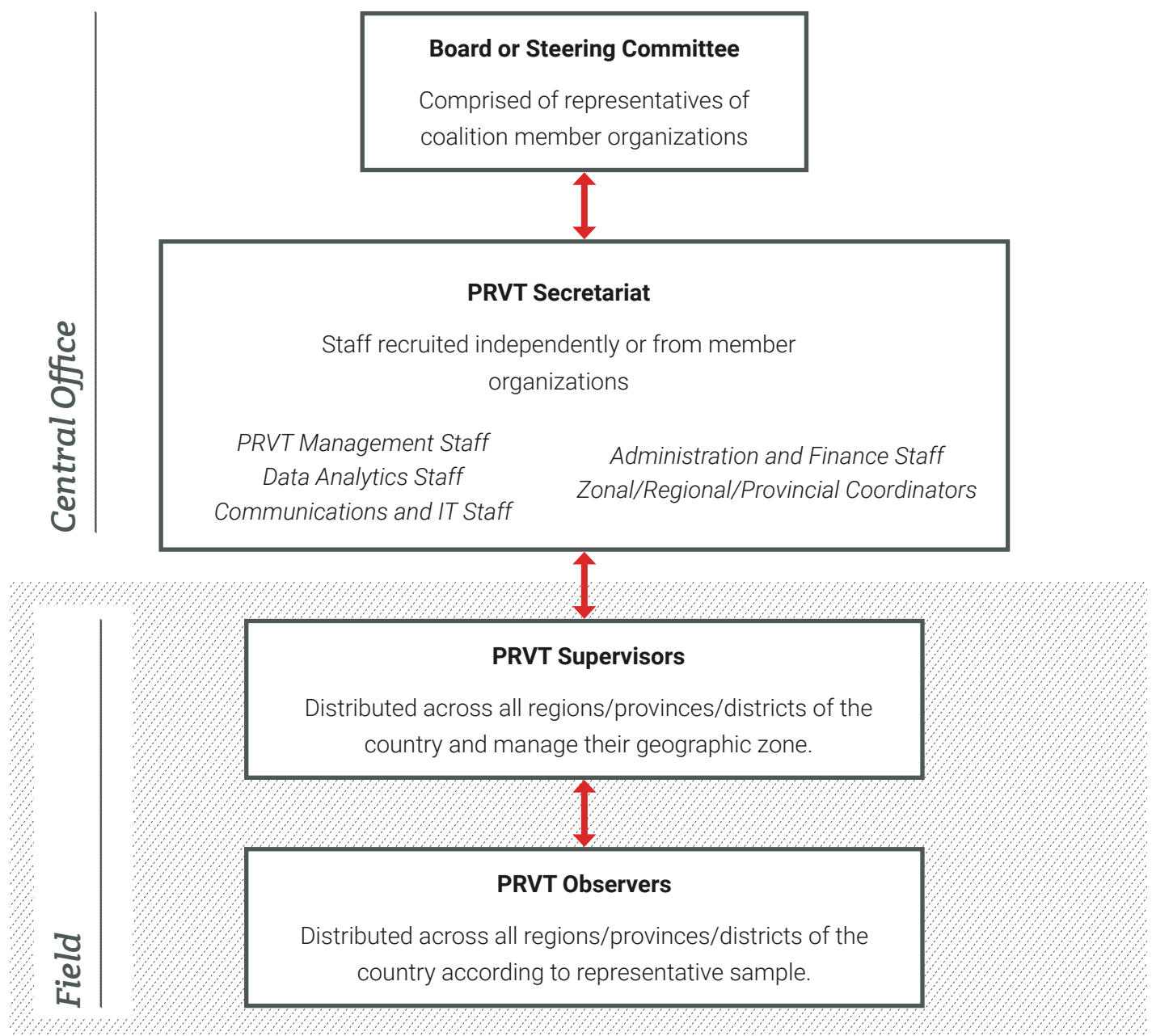
Annex 6: Comparison of Distribution of All Polling Stations with Distribution of CCMG PVT Sampled Polling Stations by Province												
Province	All Polling Stations						CCMG PVT Sampled Polling Stations with Stationary Monitors					
	Polling Stations	Registered Voters	Female Registered Voters	Percent Polling Stations	Percent Registered Voters	Percent Female Registered Voters	Polling Stations	Registered Voters	Female Registered Voters	Percent Polling Stations	Percent Registered Voters	Percent Female Registered Voters
Central	1,143	666,600	349,563	9.4%	9.5%	9.3%	140	81,722	42,926	9.3%	9.4%	9.3%
Copperbelt	1,719	1,025,897	518,072	14.1%	14.6%	13.8%	214	127,655	64,429	14.3%	14.7%	13.9%
Eastern	1,437	896,339	492,707	11.8%	12.8%	13.1%	177	111,026	61,466	11.8%	12.8%	13.3%
Luapula	1,017	567,003	312,433	8.4%	8.1%	8.3%	126	69,970	38,504	8.4%	8.1%	8.3%
Lusaka	1,602	1,243,619	644,692	13.2%	17.7%	17.2%	197	152,599	78,532	13.1%	17.6%	16.9%
Muchinga	793	401,658	216,200	6.5%	5.7%	5.8%	99	50,076	27,277	6.6%	5.8%	5.9%
Northern	1,103	606,346	325,590	9.1%	8.6%	8.7%	135	73,396	39,938	9.0%	8.5%	8.6%
North-Western	794	386,677	205,689	6.5%	5.5%	5.5%	99	48,560	25,905	6.6%	5.6%	5.6%
Southern	1,394	782,067	422,149	11.5%	11.1%	11.3%	170	95,057	51,153	11.3%	11.0%	11.0%
Western	1,150	447,293	263,945	9.5%	6.4%	7.0%	143	56,628	33,495	9.5%	6.5%	7.2%
Zambia	12,152	7,023,499	3,751,040	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1,500	866,689	463,625	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: CCMG 2021

Note: The CCMG PVT sample was also stratified by districts and constituencies with proportion sampling and with sample points in all provinces, districts and constituencies.

Coalition Structure and Staffing Chart Example

When working in a coalition to carry out a PRVT, it is important to find balance between rapid decision making and emphasizing inclusion of coalition members at various levels of the structure. As with any PRVT structure, it is important to have as few layers as possible. The secretariat should include coordinators who are based out of the central secretariat, managing PRVT supervisors and field activities in their respective geographic zones. The Board, or Steering Committee, often provides oversight and high level advice and sometimes represents the coalition in the media.



Sample Staff Job Descriptions

YIAGA Africa PVT Team Job Descriptions, 2019

YIAGA Executive Director

- » Provides financial, operational and programmatic oversight of the PVT project.
- » Communicates in a timely manner with the YIAGA board of directors around program updates as well as scenario and contingency planning.
- » Maintains contact with the donor community, the Independent National Electoral Commission and other major stakeholders.
- » Maintains contact with the media and may serve as a lead spokesperson during press conferences.
- » Sets the tone and vision for the execution of the PVT project in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, including through adoption and dissemination of organizational codes of conduct, ethics policies, human resources policies, inclusion and mainstreaming policies, and whistle blowing policies. Organizes regular training for staff around policies and their application to the work environment.
- » Oversees recruitment and staffing; addresses any staff management issues in a timely manner and supervises performance management.
- » Reviews and provides substantive input in a timely manner to the overall PVT program timeline and objective two capacity strengthening plans as-needed.
- » Reviews the findings of any program audits conducted and liaises with appropriate team managers to address major findings and recommendations in a timely manner.
- » Serves on the PVT Project Advisory Committee.
- » Serves as a permanent member of the YIAGA-NDI Election Statement Drafting Committee.
- » Maintains regular communication with NDI around substantive developments that may impact on program implementation, including but not limited to political, organizational, financial, donor relationship, force majeure or security issues.
- » Recruits through an open process and submits details of proposed key personnel on the program (PVT Director, PVT Training Manager, and PVT Finance Manager) to NDI for prior approval before making verbal or written commitments to the candidates in question.

PVT Director

- » Dedicates 100% of his or her staff time to the PVT project.
- » Directs and executes the project plan, ensuring that the Cooperative Agreement and associated memorandum of understanding, PVT program timeline, capacity strengthening plans, recruitment plans, training plans, communications and outreach plans, funds disbursement plans, monitoring and evaluation plan and any other major program documents are implemented in accordance with agreed upon deadlines.
- » Supervises the work of all other PVT staff to ensure the efficiency and the quality of work as well as adequate communication and collaboration between PVT program, finance, media, IT, M+E and operations staff as needed. Organizes regular staff meetings.
- » Attends press conferences and is prepared to speak on technical issues around PVT or election observation methodology as well as key observation findings as called upon.
- » Communicates with the PVT Training Manager regarding strategies for recruiting and training observers in sufficient numbers in regions affected by the sample. Reviews training plans and guidance on recruitment, training, accreditation and deployment of observers.
- » Reviews all observation forms, training manuals, contact management forms and other supporting training materials for the project.
- » Works with finance manager to review plans and deadlines for funds disbursement to ensure timely execution of program activities.
- » Works with finance manager to identify needed procurement for the program and to ensure that purchases are made in compliance with internal YIAGA and USAID guidelines.
- » Works with finance manager to review guidelines and plans for reconciliation of field-based program expenses and ensures that guidance is communicated to the PVT Training Manager in time for inclusion in any relevant program training documents.
- » Works with finance manager to develop appropriate program budgets for each phase of the NDI PVT subgrant and reviews any drawdown requests.
- » Works with media manager to develop a communications and outreach plan for the PVT program specifying planned outputs, key messages, target audiences and dates. Collaborates closely with the media manager to ensure adequate support from the media team as-needed around communications plan deadlines.
- » Provides final review of communications products, including spots, jingles, social media infographics and posts, press releases, statements, and videos.
- » Works with IT Manager to ensure adequate support to internal communications and election day communication systems as well as regular maintenance and update of YIAGA online platforms (website, social media, etc.)

- » Oversees contracts issued to State Focal Points, Master Trainers, data clerks or other contractual PVT program staff and manages related compliance issues.
- » Manages and provides final oversight of the drafting of periodic narrative program reports to NDI.
- » Regularly informs the YIAGA Executive Director on progress of internal operations and alerts the YIAGA Executive Director to potential opportunities and challenges in a timely manner.
- » Serves on the PVT Project Advisory Committee.
- » Serves as lead statement drafter on the YIAGA-NDI Election Statement Drafting Committee.

PVT Training Manager

- » Dedicates 100% of his or her staff time to the PVT project.
- » Reports directly to the PVT Director.
- » Takes the lead on designing observer forms, training manuals, contact management forms and supporting training materials.
- » Designs training content and agendas.
- » Develops training plans, as well as guidance on recruitment, training, accreditation and deployment of observers. Seeks timely review of policies from PVT Director.
- » Manages the Master Trainers and training reporting process.
- » Supervises and provides quality control, including through the establishment of clear access protocols, over the entry and maintenance of State Focal Point, LGA supervisor and observer data in a centralized database.
- » Drafts and ensures application of a protocol for data security, including regular back-up of sensitive data.
- » Supervises Zonal Program Officers in the execution of their tasks; supports Zonal Program Officers to understand and ensure uniform application of program guidance on recruitment, training, accreditation and deployment of observers in their geographic zones of responsibility.
- » Closely oversees the review of the lists of observers submitted by LGA Supervisors and verification of their place of residence; where necessary instructs them to re-recruit.
- » Designs a structure and drafts clear guidance for internal communication between program staff, including establishing lines of reporting and timelines and channels for communication (SMS, phone call, written report, etc.).
- » Oversees successful execution of simulation exercises during training activities and before election day. Identifies and proactively troubleshoots problems on the basis of simulation data in conjunction with the PREO + M+E Officer/Data Analyst.
- » Develops a plan for election day communications, identifies needed technological support and coordinates

with the IT team to ensure appropriate staffing and technology deployment to maintain the system and pre-identified back-up systems.

- » Ensures that Master Trainers and Zonal Program Officers receive needed resources such as training materials, forms, observer checklists, observer identification cards, accreditation, and materials.
- » Manages the packing of training materials.
- » Serves as a liaison between the organization's leaders and the field network.
- » Serves as a permanent member of the YIAGA-NDI Election Statement Drafting Committee.

PREO and M+E Officer/Data Analyst

- » Dedicates 100% of his or her staff time to the program.
- » Reports directly to the PVT Training Manager.
- » Understands the data communication system and system maintenance.
- » Supports the PVT Training Manager to implement a project access protocol for elections data, including observer data.
- » Implements program data security protocol, including regular back-up of sensitive data.
- » In coordination with the PVT Training Manager sets up an appropriately staffed and resourced project data centre around key data collection periods.
- » Oversees the recruitment and training of project data clerks.
- » Analyzes any election data gathered under the program; oversees completion and cleaning of records.
- » Identifies relevant trends based on elections data and communicates findings with senior PVT managers and YIAGA-NDI Election Statement Drafting Committee in a timely manner. Collaborates closely with NDI technical advisors to integrate best practices for statistical data analysis into work.
- » Supervises regular (biweekly) pre-election observation reporting by LGA Supervisors. Works closely with Zonal Program Officers to correct missing, incomplete or inconsistent records and to gather follow-up data on submitted critical incidents in a timely manner.
- » In consultation with the PVT Training Manager, develops guidance for calling LGA Supervisors to follow up on submitted observation data.
- » In consultation for the PVT Training Manner, develops appropriate guidance for communicating reporting critical incidents to senior YIAGA staff.
- » In collaboration with the PVT Director, assists with drafting and circulating timely, regular, data-driven pre-election observation statements.
- » In consultation with the PVT Training Manager, drafts text blasting schedule around critical program

activities.

- » Reviews and compiles training evaluations. Develops additional tools as-needed and in collaboration with the M+E Manager to track monitoring and evaluation indicators for the project; gathers regular monitoring and evaluation data and ensures that tracking tools are maintained up-to-date.
- » Assists the PVT Program Director with relevant data and information for the drafting of periodic narrative program reports to NDI.

Master Trainers

- » Report directly to the PVT Training Manager.
- » Attend all scheduled Training of Trainers activities.
- » Conducts trainings for State Focal Points and LGA Supervisors; may provide quality control of observer trainings on as-needed basis.
- » Send in a timely manner as relevant, pre-tests, post-tests, attendance sheets, contact management sheets and evaluations to the PVT Training Manager.

Zonal Program Officers (12)

- » Report directly to the PVT Training Manager.
- » Manage and remain in regular contact with State Focal Points and LGA Supervisors as-needed within geographical area of responsibility.
- » Attend Training of Trainers; serve as Master Trainers.
- » Oversee all logistical arrangements for trainings within their geographical zones of responsibility; review and approve proposed training venues, oversee disbursement and reconciliation of funds in their assigned zones.
- » Verify and validate all observer details submitted for observers recruited in their assigned zones. Communicate details of any observers potentially to be re-recruited or replaced to the PVT Training Manager as soon as possible. May make updates to observer records in accordance with the established access protocol.
- » Serve as data clerks during all regular (bi-weekly) pre-election observation reporting days.
- » Review and provide input to the PVT Training Manager of observer forms, training manuals, contact management forms, agendas and supporting training materials.
- » Responsible for packing and providing quality control of training materials in their respective zones.
- » Assist State Focal Points and LGA Supervisors to address problems on Election Day and report any critical situations to senior PVT management.

Sample PRVT Implementation Timeline

Date	Activity		
	Election Commission	LTO	PRVT
5 March		1st LTO Report Release	
25 February - 10 March		2nd LTO observation period	
11 March		3rd LTO observation period	
19 March	Publishing of candidate names		
	Start of campaign period		
5-15 March			Draw and finalize sample
13 March			Recruitment of master trainers
18 March			Materials Finalization - Recruitment
20-26 March	Vetting of ballot paper templates by party/ candidates' representatives		
25 March		3rd LTO Report Release	

<i>Date</i>	<i>Election Commission</i>	<i>LTO</i>	<i>PRVT</i>
19-20 March			Materials packing
15 March		2nd LTO report release	
21-22 March			Training of trainers
25-26 March			District Supervisors training on recruitment
28 March			Training on database/recruitment
29 March		3rd LTO report release	
30 March		Meeting of Board on LTO/PRVT	
25 March - 7 April		4th LTO observation period	
8 April		4th LTO reporting day	
8-21 April		5th LTO observation period	
5 April			End of observer recruitment
15 April		EC accreditation deadline	
15-20 April			Recruitment of master trainers

<i>Date</i>	<i>Election Commission</i>	<i>LTO</i>	<i>PRVT</i>
17 April			Finalize all materials
12 April		4th LTO report release	
19 April	Public Holiday - Good Friday		
22 April	Public Holiday - Easter		
22 April		5th LTO reporting day	
22 April - 5 May		6th LTO reporting period	
26 April		Meeting of leadership	
27 April		Meeting of board on LTO/PRVT	
8-21 April		5th LTO observation period	
27-30 April			Finalize all materials; printing and packing
26 April		5th LTO report release	
1 May	Public Holiday - Labor Day		
2-3 May			Training of master trainers

<i>Date</i>	<i>Election Commission</i>	<i>LTO</i>	<i>PRVT</i>
2-10 May			Recruitment of data clerks
6-14 May			PRVT observer and supervisor trainings
6 May		6th LTO reporting day	
6 May - 19 May		7th LTO reporting period	
10 May		6th LTO report release	
12-15 May			Data center set up
15 May			Data clerk training
16 May	Distribution of polling materials to councils		Simulation I
17 May			PRVT Scenarios Meeting - Board and NDI
17-18 May	Distribution of polling materials to stations		
18 May		Pre election Press Statement	Simulation II - visit to the data center by stakeholders (EC, Press, Development partners, CSOs)
19-20 May	Opening and pre-checking of polling materials at polling stations		

<i>Date</i>	<i>Election Commission</i>	<i>LTO</i>	<i>PRVT</i>
19 May (06:00 hrs)	End of campaign period		
20 May		7th LTO reporting day	Pre-Election Checklist Reporting
21 May	ELECTION DAY (06:00hrs to 18:00hrs), mid day press statement on opening and setup of polling stations		
22 May			Press statement on the voting and counting processes
22-24 May			Data chasing/cleaning
24 May			Collection of forms
25 May		Meeting of Board on LTO/PRVT	
by 29 May	Determination and announcement of presidential results		
29 May		Meeting of Board on LTO/PRVT	
June		Final report	

External Communications: PRVT Infographics and One Pager

NDI has developed an infographic to explain the PRVT methodology to members of the public and other stakeholders.

Observer organizations have adapted and translated the infographic into multiple languages and variations, including for an SBO. Other organizations

produce text-based one-pagers explaining their observation methodology. You will find examples of these adaptations below. Keep in mind that these examples use the "PVT" acronym but refer to the same methodology as PRVT.

Mourakiboun, 2013

كيفية سير العملية

تجرى الانتخابات في مكاتب الاقتراع على صفة سرية

يشترط للاختصاصيين على مدار اليوم

يؤدون التقارير على تراجم الانتخابات

تتم إرسال التقارير بسرعة إلى مركز تحليل بيانات الفرز السريع

تتميز النتائج كما أعلن عنها بالتحليلات

تتميز النتائج على هذه البيانات

يتميز تحليل

الفرز السريع للأصوات

ما هو الفرز السريع للأصوات؟

يتميز الفرز السريع للأصوات على تنظيم عملية التصويت والتصويت والفرز خلال الاستطلاعات التي يتم تنظيمها على مستوى الانتخابات المحلية من مكاتب الاقتراع وذلك بمساعدة طاقم الاختصاصيين المرشحين على من الكائن.

لماذا نقوم بالفرز السريع للأصوات؟

إذا تأملت مجموعات المجتمع المدني الفرز السريع للأصوات على النموذج المطبق، سيجب أن تكون في العدم من درجة الإقبال في البيئة الانتخابية من خلال توفير تحليل شامل للنتائج ملاحظة العملية الانتخابية وإعادة ما تؤكد الرضاوية وزيد من ثقة المواطنين في نزاهة إدارة الانتخابات، جميع مكاتب الفرز السريع للأصوات أي محاولة تلاعب أو مشاكل في العملية الانتخابية نفسها، فهو يوفر ذلك أساساً موسوماً بما فيه الامتثال للشفافية والنزاهة إلى حد ما، إضافة إلى ضمانات النزاهة السياسية.

أنواع بيانات الفرز السريع للأصوات والأمن

النتائج

يمكن للفرز السريع للأصوات، أن يوفّر معلومات سريعة ودقيقة عن الانتخابات، ويمكنه توفير معلومات إضافية حول عملية التصويت والفرز، يمكن أيضاً أن يوفّر معلومات إضافية حول النزاهة السياسية.

العملية

يتميز الفرز السريع للأصوات بكونه عملية سريعة ودقيقة يمكن أن يتم تنفيذها على مستوى الانتخابات المحلية، ويمكن أن يتم تنفيذها على مستوى الانتخابات الوطنية.

الفرز السريع للأصوات

يمكن أن يتم الفرز السريع للأصوات على مستوى الانتخابات المحلية، ويمكن أن يتم تنفيذها على مستوى الانتخابات الوطنية.

البيرو

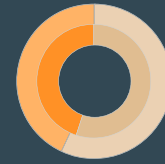
في سنة 2000، أقيمت الانتخابات الرئاسية في بيرو، حيث كان هناك 12,000 مراقب في مراكز الاقتراع الرسمية في جميع أنحاء البلاد، وكان ذلك في إطار عملية مراقبة الانتخابات.

من أجل أن تكون عملية الفرز السريع للأصوات ناجحة، يجب أن تكون عملية التصويت والفرز سريعة ودقيقة، ويمكن أن يتم تنفيذها على مستوى الانتخابات المحلية، ويمكن أن يتم تنفيذها على مستوى الانتخابات الوطنية.

من إيجابيات الفرز السريع للأصوات

الاحصاء الآلية للانتخابات بما في ذلك إصدار الفرز السريع للأصوات، تزيد من نسبة مشاركة المواطنين، تعزيز المساءلة السياسية والحكومية وتوفير أساساً للديمقراطية، بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يمكن إستغلال البيانات التي توفرها الشبكات والشعاب خلال القيام بالفرز السريع للأصوات خارج الانتخابات

PRVT | PROCESS AND RESULTS VERIFICATION FOR TRANSPARENCY



What is a PRVT?

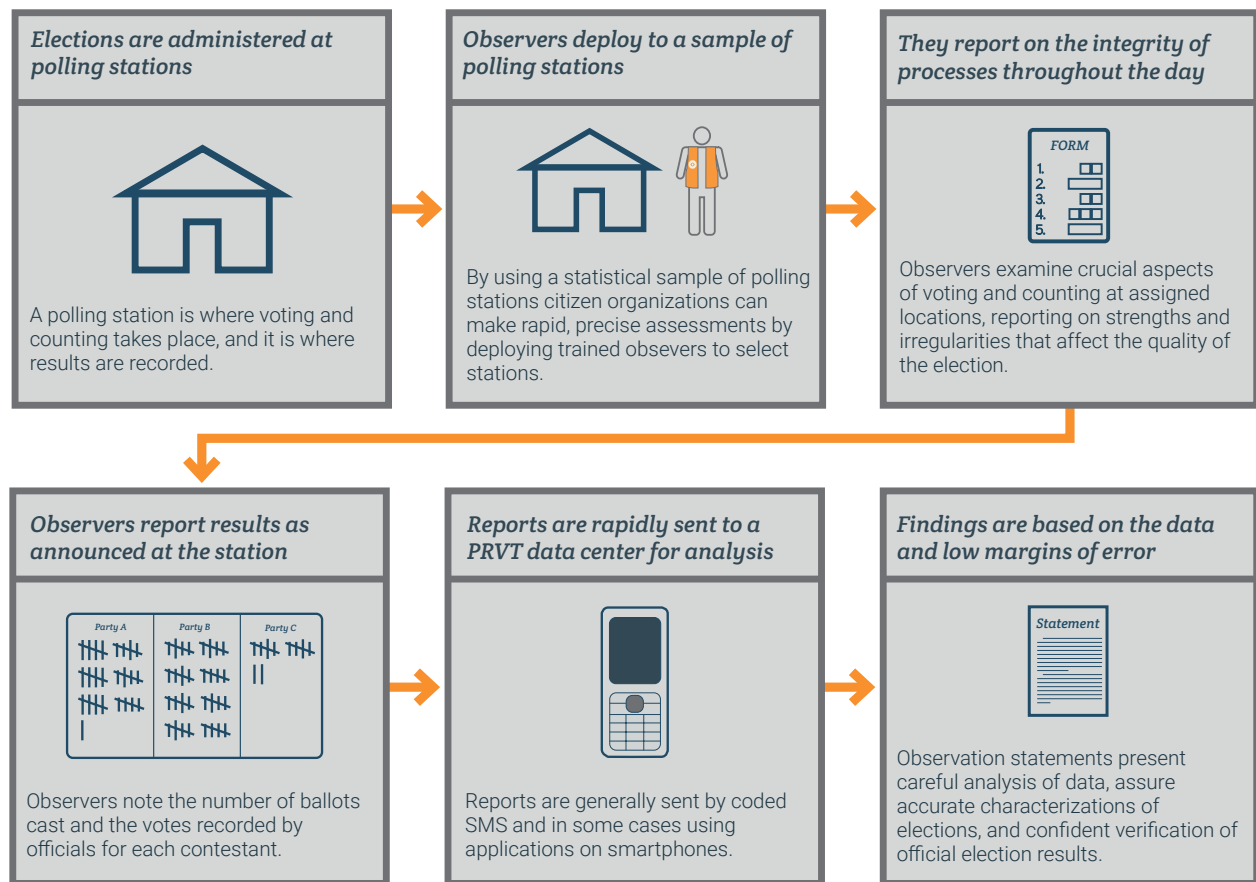
A PRVT is an advanced and proven election monitoring methodology that allows nonpartisan citizen observers to systematically assess the quality of opening, voting, closing, counting, and tabulation processes at a national scale. When appropriate, PRVTs enable nonpartisan citizen observer groups to quickly predict where the credible results of the election should fall. Unlike exit polls, PRVTs do not ask citizens how they voted; rather, they rely on trained observers collecting data at polling stations.



Why Do a PRVT?

PRVTs, properly done by citizen groups, reduce uncertainty from the election environment by providing careful analysis of observer findings. They most frequently confirm official results and increase public confidence in well run elections. Where PRVTs expose fraud, or identify problems in the process, they provide an objective basis for understanding the negative effects and for seeking peaceful resolution of complaints. PRVTs, thus, reduce potentials for political conflict.

HERE'S HOW THEY WORK



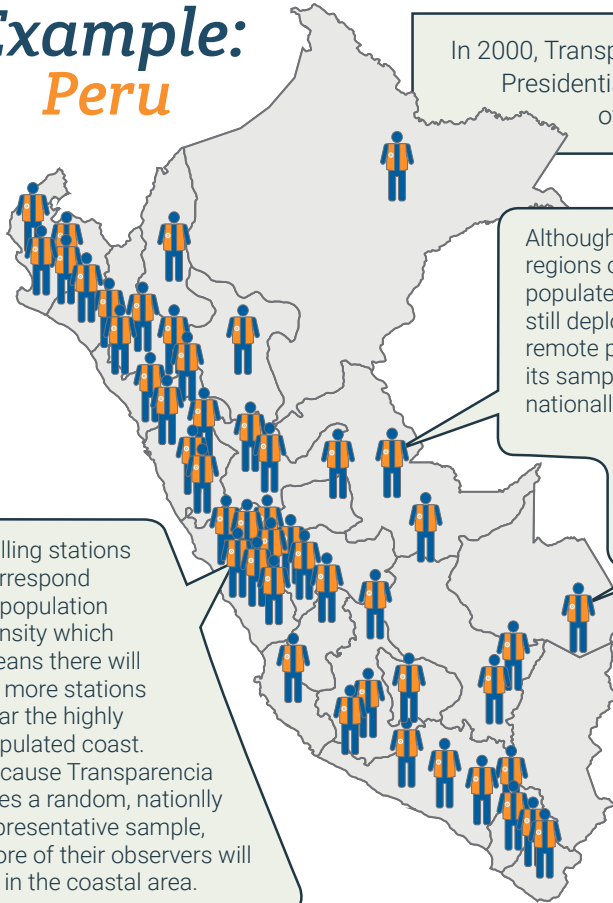
Since 1988, NDI has assisted citizen groups to perform over 180 PRVTs in more than 50 countries. Based on 25 years of technical assistance to groups executing PRVTs, NDI successfully employs peer-to-peer approaches, builds cross-border support networks, and promotes PRVT expertise. To learn more, please visit www.ndi.org/pvt.

PRVTs? Not PVTs?

The methodologies are the same; just the name has changed. Previously, the election observation community referred to this systematic observation methodology as Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT). That acronym is no longer reflective of the comprehensive election day monitoring conducted by citizen observers today. It's more accurate and less confusing to refer to these systematic monitoring efforts as Process and Results Verification for Transparency (PRVT).

Example: Peru

In 2000, Transparencia fielded 1,200 PRVT observers for the Peruvian Presidential Election. This graphic is based on their deployment of observers and their findings.



Although the eastern regions of Peru are sparsely populated, Transparencia still deployed observers to remote polling stations in its sample. By ensuring a nationally representative sample, Transparencia could accurately analyze the process throughout the entire country.

Polling stations correspond to population density which means there will be more stations near the highly populated coast. Because Transparencia uses a random, nationally representative sample, more of their observers will be in the coastal area.

PRVTs Can

- Confirm Results**
- Mitigate Potential Violence**
 - Ghana
 - Nigeria
 - Sierra Leone
 - Mexico
 - Indonesia
 - Zambia
 - Bulgaria
- Deter or Expose Fraud**
 - Peru
 - Philippines
 - Georgia
 - Ukraine
 - Panama

TYPES OF PRVT DATA

Process

PRVTs examine the integrity of the voting and counting processes. Without an understanding of this data, the adding of results could be based on fraud, such as stuffed ballot boxes or dishonest recording of votes.



Missing Materials

Data could indicate, for example, that 34% of polling stations did not receive their voter lists.



Party Agents

Data could indicate that at 92% of polling stations, agents from all parties signed official results.

Results

PRVTs can project, with precision, voting results and voter turnout, as well as identify the absence or magnitude of problems with voting and counting. This can reinforce confidence and identify needed improvements.



Vote Results

PRVT data could, for example, project that Party A received 55% of the vote while Party B received 42%.



Turnout

Data could, for example, project voter turnout at 66.2%.

BEYOND PRVTs

Systematic election observation, including through PRVTs, increases citizen participation, enhances political and governmental accountability and provides a basis for advocacy. In addition, the skills that networks and organizations develop for PRVTs can be employed outside of elections.

What Is a PVT?

The Elections Observation Group (ELOG) will be conducting a PVT for the 2013 Kenyan general election on 4 March. Here are some frequently asked questions about the methodology.

The Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) is an advanced methodology for election observation. It is a powerful citizens' tool for assessing the conduct of polling on Election Day and for verifying official results as announced by Election Management Body.



The PVT builds upon traditional election observation, enabling observers to provide the public with even more accurate and detailed information about the conduct of an election. The PVT relies on what the observer stationed in a polling station directly observes and reports as opposed to collecting opinions from voters.

Why is ELOG Conducting a PVT?

The PVT is aimed at providing all the stakeholders in elections, including the public, with credible, independent and impartial information on the conduct of Election Day. The PVT can remove uncertainty by independently validating the official election results and thus be able to increase public

confidence in a well-run election and reduce the potentials for political violence. Where PVTs identify shortcomings, they provide an objective basis for seeking peaceful resolution of complains and making improvements.

What information does the PVT collect?

Process

PVTs examine the integrity of the voting and counting processes. As such, without an understanding of how these processes went, the adding of results could be based on fake votes as a result of ballot box stuffing or dishonest recording of results. The PVT assesses specific parts of the process and therefore allows observers such as ELOG to make specific, actionable recommendations for improving the process in the future.

Missing Materials

For example, ELOG's PVT for the 2010 Referendum found that 96% of the polling streams had the strategic materials necessary for voting.



Party Agents

ELOG's PVT in the 2010 Referendum found that "Yes" or "No" Referendum Agents were present in 93% of polling streams in the country.



Results

PVTs can project voting results and voter turnout with low margins of error. The PVT can also identify the magnitude of problems with the opening, voting, and counting process. This can reinforce confidence and identify relevant improvements.

Vote Results

In the 2010 Referendum, the ELOG PVT projected that the "Yes" vote received 68.8% and the "No" vote received 31.2%. The IIEC announced 68.6% and 31.5% which was within the range predicted by the ELOG PVT.



Turnout

ELOG's PVT projected voter turnout in the 2010 referendum as 72.4%, which was very close to the 72.2% announced by the IIEC.



How is a PVT different from an Exit Poll or an Opinion Poll?

The PVT is an observation methodology for assessing the Election Day process and for verifying the official results.

The PVT measures the votes as actually cast and indicates whether the data should be trusted based on information about the voting and counting process.



The PVT collects specific, actionable information for improving the process next time.

Exit polls measure recollections of how people voted.

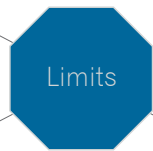


Exit polls measure opinions and respondents may refuse to answer and/or feel they need to lie.

What are the limitations of the PVT?

The PVT cannot directly evaluate the legal framework of an election.

The PVT cannot tell you a voter's motivation for voting.

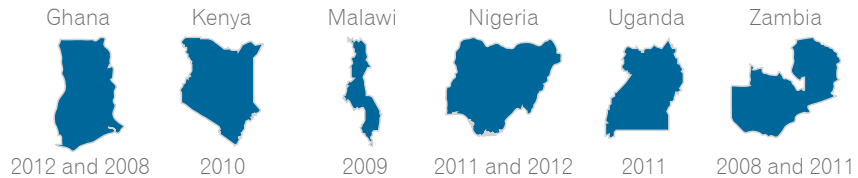


The PVT cannot directly evaluate things that happen in the pre-election period, such as problems with voter registration. The PVT can only evaluate the process of the election on Election Day.

Only information standardized on the PVT observer form can be used to form an estimate.

Where else in Africa have PVTs been conducted?

PVTs have made significant contributions to the integrity and security of elections on the African continent, including:



Why is the PVT innovative?

The PVT is based on sound, time-tested statistical principles. It uses a nationally representative sample of polling places. On that basis, the PVT can provide the most comprehensive and accurate picture of the election process for the entire nation. Without bias, observers deployed

through PVT can truly reflect voting patterns and conduct during voting day.

The speed of transmitting information through PVT also means that votes can be calculated instantaneously, and that the release of the official vote counts by the IEBC can be immediately verified.



Elections Observation Group
Kauria/Mageta Close, off Muthangari Road Lavington
P.O box 4037-00506, Nairobi

Phone: 0717759244 / 0731991921
Email: info@elog.or.ke
Website: www.elog.or.ke

External Communications: Video Resources



Plateforme des OSC pour l'Observation des Élections en Côte d'Ivoire (POECI)

2015 Presidential Elections

[PRVT Methodology Overview \(French\)](#)



International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) - Georgia

2014 Local Elections

[PRVT Methodology Overview \(English\)](#)



Participación Ciudadana - Dominican Republic

2020 General Elections

[Election Observation Deployment Plan and Staffing Overview \(Spanish\)](#)



Coalition of Domestic Elections Observers (CODEO) - Ghana

2020 Presidential Elections

[PRVT Methodology Overview \(English\)](#)



Mirador Electoral - Guatemala

2019 Presidential Elections

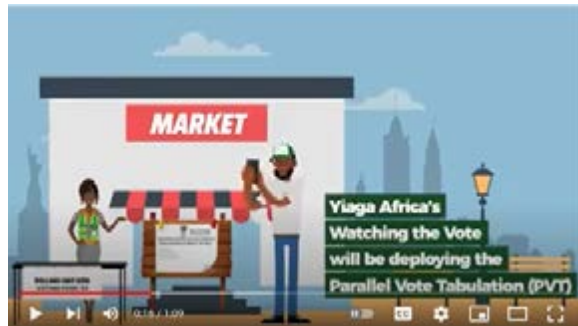
[PRVT Methodology Overview \(Spanish\)](#)



Mourakiboun - Tunisia

2019 Presidential Elections

[Data Center Tour \(Arabic\)](#)



Yiaga Africa - Nigeria

2020 Edo and Ondo State Gubernatorial Elections

[PRVT Methodology Overview](#)

Other PRVT videos:

- » Interview with a data clerk: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1108779319240923>
- » Interview with a board member on preparations for releasing PRVT results estimates: <https://www.facebook.com/CODEOElections/videos/1113075995477922/?t=0>
- » PRVT and its use of Technology (2018): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWh2YHMeI_4&t=2s
- » PRVT Results Verification (2019): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cD5-uMhtUyI>
- » PRVT Methodology Overview (2014): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLQMOQ-OLig>
- » Reporting systems and data verification (2019): <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=419436025434236&ref=sharing>
- » Election day at the PRVT data center (2019): <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2501701820102380&ref=sharing>

Election Storytelling

Unlike education and information-driven videos, storytelling focuses on a personal story and highlights morals, values, ethics, or social norms. A storyteller can democratic values in a personal way without sounding inauthentic or moralizing.

There are plenty of stories, so the biggest challenge for organizers is to ask what the storylines work with the issues to highlight. For example, if youth voting matters for the organization, the stories about first-time voters could be a series of funny, motivational, or overcoming challenges.

Asking people in your target audience, "What is your story?" is an excellent way to identify potential stories at events or public locations. Sometimes news organizations also appeal for stories, and you can do so too on social media. "Tell us your funny voter registration story."

Stories provide learning and are often more memorable than an information-based presentation. Humans are hard-wired to understand a story format, which helps in the viewers' understanding and retention. It is not unusual to remember and repeat a well-crafted story rather than the facts presented at an event. Science backs this up with how our brains work with stories.

"Scientists are discovering that chemicals like cortisol, dopamine, and oxytocin are released in the brain when we're told a story. Why does that matter? If we are trying to make a pointed stick, cortisol assists with our formulating memories. Dopamine, which helps regulate our emotional responses, keeps us engaged. When it comes to creating deeper connections with others, oxytocin is associated with empathy, an essential element in the building, deepening, or maintaining good relationships."¹



Personal Stories

During the 2016 elections in Ghana, the Coalition of Domestic Election Observers (CODEO) posted a number of videos on their Facebook page featuring different individuals undertaking key roles for the PVT. One video featured Ama, a data entry clerk, discussing her background and motivation. The videos offer personal insight into the people behind the observation and their dedication to democratic progress, something an election statement alone can rarely provide.

<https://fb.watch/4RI4TU7Kdr/>

¹ <https://www.harvardbusiness.org/the-science-behind-the-art-of-storytelling/>

Format

Social media is the best place for election organizations to post short and engaging stories because election work is often about reaching as many people as possible with stories that are impactful. Stories are a feature on the major social media platforms because they are so compelling, but stories that disappear after some time are not viewed or shared over time. If the organization is editing the stories, keep them online and available. Stories that disappear could be useful for "My election story" that could be viewed by the posters' friends and encourage voters.

Storytelling for writing books, movies, and presentations are plentiful online, so many resources are available. Social media's best format is often linear or chronological such as problem, action, and result. A personal experience and effort solve the problem, and there is a positive outcome or a moral or lesson. It is helpful not to overthink this. Sometimes, the story is more of a testimonial or statement, which works well for social media.

Interesting Point of View

The storyteller's unique perspective is personal, and this is particularly helpful in telling stories about marginalized people or those with a unique perspective that is not typically shared.

- A blind voter's story of voting and unique challenges faced.
- Voting in an isolated mountain community.
- Issue interests of a minority community through stories.
- An older person who has never voted who registered to vote.
- A voter who needs assistance and how they go about making choices about who will help them.

A Dramatic Question

There are themes and storytelling arches, but the easiest way to do this is to ask a question that keeps the viewer's attention and will be answered by the end of the story. There are often many questions that are left unanswered that might be interesting to ask as the basis of a story.

- Why does it take more time for some voting places to report? Have the administrator tell the story from the last election about long lines and staying up to count.
- How does out-of-country, military, or prisoners vote? Interview voting staff and ask them to tell their story of the last election.
- Where do amputees get inked? There are often questions about this and fears that those missing fingers can vote more than once.

- What is the basis for making some of the rules, laws, and practices? Historians or those who wrote the regulations can provide insight into how voting practices have developed over time. A story from someone impacted by the change in the law is an engaging way to share this story.
- Who is in charge of the voter list at the election administrative office? This is often a mystery, and the challenges they face in list maintenance is engaging.
- Why do more older adults vote than younger people? Young people can share their stories about encouraging others to vote.

Tap into Emotions

Stories connect the audience to emotions such as happiness, sadness, surprise, fear, anger, or humor. Many of the code of conduct or voter behavior issues can fall into these categories.

- If they are candidate-driven intimidation, stories can focus on all multiple candidates from different parties.
- A story from a journalist or a bystander who saw violence at a rally.
- In every election, there is a story of someone who took bribes from multiple parties and voted for none of them.
- The story from the police department staff dealing with rally permits.
- A father that allows his daughters to vote without his supervision countering family voting traditions.

Storyteller Consent

Election stories are likely to be positive and motivational and are not likely to reinforce negative stories about participation in elections. Sometimes, violence in elections needs to be addressed. Finding ways to show resilience, law-following, and uplifting stories of people helping during a crisis can discourage violence more than news promotion of the event.

A filmmaker will want to make sure that video subjects or storytellers are not embarrassed, humiliated, or uncomfortable. It is essential to get consent and permission to film someone and share their stories on social media. Often, people will be self-conscious and want to tell their story more than once, so they don't stumble, and since filmmakers, in this case, are not hard-hitting journalists, this is easy to agree to do. You may want to have a simple agreement allowing the person to sign-off on their involvement. The World Health Organization has an example [Photo Consent and Release Form](#) available as a .doc file that can be downloaded and tailored: <https://bit.ly/3wT55is>

Further Resources

- Case Studies, Tips & Examples from The Opportunity Agenda: <https://toolkit.opportunityagenda.org/narrative/more>
- Framing for Activists, George Lakoff: <https://georgelakoff.com/framingforactivists/>
- Power of Narrative in Raising Voices in Closing Spaces Guide: <https://www.raiseavoice.net/4-what-do-you-want-to-say/#the-power-of-narrative>
- “How the American Cancer Society Learned to Touch Hearts to Boost Donations,” Carmine Gallo, Forbes: <https://bit.ly/32d3BkY>
- Case Study: It Gets Better Project: <https://itgetsbetter.org/stories/>
- Case Study: En La Viña del Señor: <http://xn-enlaviadelseor-vnbg.com/>

Creating Videos

Getting Started

Your Mobile Phone is the Equipment

Your mobile phone is the only equipment you will need to make a video and post it to social media. There is so much amateur video online that people no longer expect to see professionally produced content, but they are looking for engaging and authentic content.

Election monitoring organizations or coalitions often involve many decision-makers, so the biggest challenge is not to try to debate too much about what goes into each video post. Try to do short videos on only one topic for social media. The comments, shares, and re-posts will inform leaders what videos work with the audience. There can even be Facebook A/B testing to target audiences to provide direction if you plan on spending money on ads.

Start with Easy Videos

Easy videos require a mobile phone, an outdoor location with a backdrop that reflects an election, and a script to make sure key points are covered. Many viewers drop off in the first three seconds, so lead with a strong opening hook, compelling profile, results, impacts, exciting takeaways, or problem-solution in a way to capture attention.

Quick stand-up speaker videos work well to disseminate important, timely information such as legal or process changes, monitor recruitment, or election day reminders. They don't require editing, so the biggest challenge is making the script engaging for the audience. Scripting will help the speakers hit the main points, ensure exciting content, and make sure the message does not go off-track.

Scripts are verbal and should sound like an ordinary conversation when read aloud. There is no sentence structure, so don't let anyone correct the grammar or punctuation. The language should work for the audience, and word choices sound like an actual discussion.

Tips from Witness.org

Plan Your Shots: Mobile phones have limited storage capacity. Be selective in what you record.

Capture Detail: Physically move closer to record details and move back to show a wider perspective of events.

Keep Shots Steady: Choose your shot and hold it steady for at least 10 seconds.

Get in Close: Move closer to your interviewee so the microphone can pick up better audio. Be aware of loud noises that could drown out interviews.

Be Aware of Lighting: Mobile phones do not record well in low light. Record interviews in a well-lit location. For the best images always keep the sun to your back.

Excerpted from Witness.org Tip Sheet for Filming with Mobile Phone

Example Video One: Three Things

Lists are a popular way to take several subjects that are not directly connected and put them together. In our script, the organization leader will identify three problems from the last election and describe advocacy and plans to fix them for this election. Since this is one spokesperson, there is no need to edit, and it can be filmed multiple times until everyone is happy with it. Because viewers leave in the first three seconds, there is an engaging hook so that viewers will watch all of it. The video's timing is roughly 30 seconds, and this is short enough to post on Facebook, Instagram, and other platforms.

Speaker: "There are three problems the Election Monitor Organization wants to change."

"Number One---Polling places in the South had long lines, so we are advocating the Election Commission to open more locations this time—we have shared a list with them for more stations." The speaker shows the paper list in his hands.

"Number Two—Candidates complained that there were not enough debates-- and we agree. This year we will work with other non-partisan civic groups to host three national debates and one in each province.

"Number Three—Election rumors were common last election. On election day, we will be reporting real-time information for the media and people on Facebook. Fact-checking rumors is our job."

End with a call to action. "Join us by following us on Facebook to learn more and to volunteer."

This type of video could also be done as a Facebook Live, but very few leaders can do a live broadcast without direction, scripts, and practice. It is often better to film this several times to find the version that works best.

Video Two: Voter Registration

Everyone has seen television journalists stand in front of the registration line or an election office because this is a backdrop that supports the storyline. Your video should look for a similar location or create one of your own with a background of volunteers in their monitor outfits or with signage or props. Focus on your message and viewpoint with a strong opening hook, an interesting story, and include a call to action.

The following script can be done outside a student area with registration.

Speaker One: "This is not a line to get the latest phone; these young people are registering to vote in South City.Youth Vote mobilized them -- Here is Carlos with Youth Vote."

Carlos: "We are mobilizing our generation to bring three friends with them to register --- we ask those who register today to tell another three friends on social media. We want everyone to make a plan with friends, ---our voices and priorities matter in government decisions."

Speaker One: "Bring three friends and tell three friends."

Carlos: "Yes--We want friends to persuade others and explain why voting matters to them.We are also doing Youth Vote education in social venues, which is a lot of fun. Join us on Facebook."

Speaker One: Sounds like a party—Youth Vote on Facebook.

Short Topic Ideas

Video can be created ahead of time by anticipating content and upcoming calendar events. The video should build an audience and reach them with the election and organizational goals in mind. There will be plenty of upcoming news or problems in the election calendar that require an immediate response closer to the election, so start early in the schedule by having some videos ready well in advance.

Videos to Create in Advance

- Changes from the last election and what voters, parties, or monitors can expect this time
- What we are watching with election law, election administration, or legal rights
- Trends in these elections
- Five election difficulties from last time, and how to fix them
- The election monitor plans this year
- Video recruitment to sign up early as a monitor
- Leadership or monitor training online
- Three questions and answers with an Election Commission leader

- If there are education or behavior change efforts, these should start early—family voting, vote-buying, code of conduct violations
- Meet our monitor leaders--an introduction
- Behind the scenes—monitor prep for elections
- Marginalized populations voter education
- Interview experts or victims on violence against parties, women candidates, vulnerable voters
- Inoculate against anticipated disinformation or respond to fact-based falsehoods
- Monitor recruitment, training, deployment
- Do's and don'ts of being a monitor
- Walk-through of election day process
- Profile of a monitor or multiple monitors
- Review of election law changes
- PVT sample and how it represents the whole

Videos during the election period

- Pre-election environment concerns and/or highlights from pre-election observation (use clips from press conferences)
- True/False disinformation clarification
- Voter registration and lists checking efforts and deadlines
- Comments on decision-making by the election administration
- Monitoring campaign finances, the media campaign events, violence
- Introduce and tour the PVT Data Center
- Election monitoring from poll open to close in front of polling places or highlight the monitor reports throughout the day
- Election tabulation process
- Parallel vote tabulation (PVT) results
- Election statement in a review



Election Example

During the 2019 elections in Nigeria, **YIAGA AFRICA** released videos highlighting various components of their election observation effort and relevant voter education issues. One video focused on political party agents' participation in the electoral process. The video featured YIAGA AFRICA's PVT Director explaining the need for political parties to observe the process, yet the video also cut to infographics showing data collected from PVTs in prior years. A second video "Technology & PVT" focused on the introduction of electronic voting technologies in Nigeria, following a similar format.

1. <https://youtu.be/Qxogx-9fagw>
2. https://youtu.be/eWh2YHMeI_4

Video Alternative: Graphic Images

Graphic templates can be stand-alone as a social media post, be used as text over short videos, or used together as a carousel where three content images revolve. There are time restraints

of busy observers, overwhelmed organizers, and fast-breaking news, so short videos and templates can be done months in advance and be included in an archive or repository for later use. During the lead up to the election and on election day, announcements should take minutes using these templates.

The challenge with so many media platforms is that it requires time to produce content for each, so it is best to select your primary platform and then share content onto secondary and tertiary platforms if important or as time allows. For example, editing can take an hour to post a video to YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and Telegram. Canva.com is a free service to automatically size and create templates ready for posting. You could even drop in a short video 5 seconds of a voting line and put a text over it that says "Vote-- Remind Friends." Templates to make in advance of the election period:

- Quote box: blank or with a leader photo
- Fake news or True/False
- Law Clarified
- Join the monitors: recruitment
- Poll Update: blank for location, story, time
- Polls Open
- Turnout #s: with a date timestamp
- # of Observers:
- # of Arrests:
- Protest:
- Polls Close
- PVT: Result announcement
- Send your vote video: a general appeal
- Citizen news: to send citizens to a website, SM, or YouTube for updates

Quotes provide some credibility by allowing respected figures, unique perspectives, monitor leadership to make a statement that moves the narrative along. Consider identifying these individuals and putting their comments in an archive to be used throughout the election process. Statements can be written in advance, rehearsed, and saved for future use. Sometimes a question-and-answer process helps a speaker respond in shorter sentences. Short quotes or responses are more comfortable to use, so turn on and off the camera for each answer, so there is no editing before posting.

More Advanced Video Techniques

More advanced videos involving editing and transition but the most straightforward editing tools are already on your phone. Apple phones or computers have iMovie installed, and HUAWEI has “Video Editor” for free. There are free trial apps for Magisto and Adobe Premiere Clip, but the in-phone editing functions are faster and easier to use for beginners. Each phone has tutorials on how to use this, and YouTube also has a broad selection of how-to videos.

Editing brings the ability to tell stories or share detailed information in a limited time through film clips, images, templates, voiceover, and text. Video ideas should come from the communications plans, ideas from similar organizations, or from influencers of your target audience.

How to create a storyboard and script

Simple videos describe how to script an ad or an interview by writing it out and filming it numerous times until there is one you like. The script or a storyboard allows better organization of the shots and key messages. Boards can be as simple as creating boxes on a sheet of paper and drawing stick figures. The most crucial point is to take one idea and think it through before filming.

1. Draw a scene, include a picture, or write what the video will show. A storyboard or a description allows others to have input or approve the content before filming.
2. Create a script for voiceover and insert a quote if it is needed. Video is not news, so you can tell people what to say, practice or film it several times. It is interesting to see someone taking action while talking by walking, moving arms, or having a prop.
3. Set up the best to film, and film in short clips of ten seconds or less. It is easier to edit the best clips into 3-4 seconds.
4. A voiceover explains the details that the visuals cannot. The voiceover comes after the film is edited and the statements are uploaded into the program. The voiceover can then be read and sometimes adjusted with the visual content.
5. At the end of each video, there needs to be a call to volunteer, donate money, or share on social media, even if it is a simple graphic post with the organization's contact information.

1. Hook

Visual: photo montage from last election of four pictures of monitors in and around stations.

Voice over: (Organization name) monitors are ready for (date) election day to protect your vote. There are three changes this year you need to know...

2. Bridge

Visual: Leader talking while shuffling packets for briefing to show action and logo. Include the person's name and organization for the first 3 seconds of talking.

Quote: First, the Election Commission is cleaning up election rolls—if you did not vote last year or have moved, plan to register. Two, polling places will change in some cities—these will be posted closer to the election on our website. Three—local offices will be on the ballot this year, so there will be more candidates to consider.

3. Further explanation

Visual: Show a sample longer ballot or list of offices on the ballot.

Voice over: There are a number of offices on the ballot this year—Parliament Members, and local races for Mayor and Council.

4. Call to Action

Visual: Logo with website and Facebook name with text and Find the Voting Facts Volunteer to be a Monitor

Voice over: To learn the facts on voting or to be a non-partisan monitor, visit our website, or find us on Facebook.

Video Shots

Mobile phones now are as advanced as over the shoulder news cameras. The biggest challenge is the microphone on phones is often at a distance from the speaker; this can be resolved by moving close to the speaker or buying a low-cost phone extension microphone. Another tip is to use voiceover narration for the script and edit one quote filmed close to the speaker.

Frame the shot and then film while holding hands in place. The biggest hack is to film better shots over less time, which makes editing fast and easy. Most video clips will be three to five seconds, so filming two minutes of short clips is more manageable than editing two hours of content that requires viewing, searching, and cutting.

- Film ten-second action cuts to get three-five seconds of usable video to edit from each shot. The three seconds of action can be a background of text ads (canva.com) or a part of a longer video.
- Set the scene, so the backdrops say elections, even if it means creating signs, standing in front of a mock voting exercise, a voter registration line, or the election administration office.
- Action and excitement look better than a sitting conference, so engage in conversation, film monitors walking into training, or ask monitors to cheer, jump, or show excitement.
- Consider filming outside, where there is sufficient and flattering lighting, so this does not have to be fixed.
- To get a quote, ask questions, and try to get three-four seconds of a good selection. Statements can be practiced or rehearsed and filmed multiple times.

Different Shots

Filmmakers move around to get a shot from different angles and to frame the action better. Don't move the camera when shooting; the movement comes from the action filmed and editing many three-second videos together. Organize and prepare for the image and then record for 10 seconds for each activity to get three-four seconds of quality footage. Not all the clips need to be used in the final film, but this provides many exciting angles and options to choose from during editing.



Close shot of activity: This shows the detail of the action. For example, hands reviewing a voter list, a phone entry of PVT, or finger reviewing a sample ballot.



Close up of the face: Who is doing this action? Look for the close-up worker's expressions that reflect the event's tone and mood, such as fun, relaxed, or serious.



Behind the shoulder of someone working: This shows a point of view of the person. For example, an over-the-shoulder of filling out a form, looking through a list, or entering PVT numbers shows people and the work.



Wide shot shows the whole scene: This is a dynamic way to show a busy office, lines at centers, or other election action. Find a location in the room or outside with a good backdrop and wait or organize an action to happen in front of the setting.

Side shot of the activity also helps to frame an action shot. This voting shot would not work from a different angle because the voter, workers, and the line would be missing from a different angle.

Look at your script and the location and identify five shots that reflect the message.:

- Close shot of activity _____
- Close up of a face/object _____
- Behind the shoulder showing activity from this angle _____
- Wide shot showing scene and background _____
- Side shot of the action _____

Audio

Add the statements to the audio line along with the film in an editing program. Narration is done last and can help bridge a gap of silence. Narration is the most flexible to change, so the visuals and quotes are easily worked around, so watch the visuals and read the script in a quiet space. It is sometimes necessary to record this multiple times before you are pleased with it.

The audio should follow the script, but sometimes the film is longer than the audio. Go back to the original script and add more detail behind the scenes, with statistics or commentary. For example, if the story on youth registration has three seconds of students waving, consider adding the youth turnout percentage, the number of those who registered, or a comment that registration is a celebration.

Music is added during pauses at the beginning, end, or throughout the video. There is free music online freemusicarchive.org and YouTube music, but local artists sometimes allow a non-political organization to use a small piece of their music or instrumentals if asked.

Video Timing for Social Media

Social media with the largest target audience is the priority for resources and promotion. For example, suppose Facebook is the primary communications channel. In that case, the T-shirts, conference banners, and the website should include the Facebook page as the location to get the latest news.

Social media changes as platforms add more options, but the following is current guidance and lengths.

- Research shows videos should be 30-50 seconds with short headings or subtitles (less than 50 characters) are more likely to be viewed with or without sound.
- Facebook shared that 47% of the value in video views is in the first three seconds.
- There are more views within 25-60 seconds, according to Facebook research. Facebook recommends that small businesses try keeping videos to around 15 seconds as much as possible.
- Roughly 85 percent of Facebook videos play without sound, so add captions or text to tell your story visually. A transcript of the voiceover or summary is essential for the deaf and hearing-impaired.
- Facebook stories are two minutes or less, but disappear after 24 hours, making this problematic to build viewership, but are quick to produce on the Facebook platform itself through existing content.
- Videos on news feed--Facebook videos can be up to 240 minutes long.
- YouTube provides the most open and popular portal for viewers who watch it like TV, but this depends on social media popularity with a target audience.
- Instagram ads can be for two minutes, but less time (10 seconds) is better for more views.
- WhatsApp video is 15 seconds.
- TikTok videos are a maximum of 15 seconds.

Further Resources

Short guides on Video Production such as conducting interviews, depth of field, sound recording for mobile video by Witness.org:

<https://library.witness.org/product-tag/video-production/>

Editing Videos Using Your Mobile Gadgets by Video for Change :

<https://video4change.org/editing-videos-mobile-gadgets/>

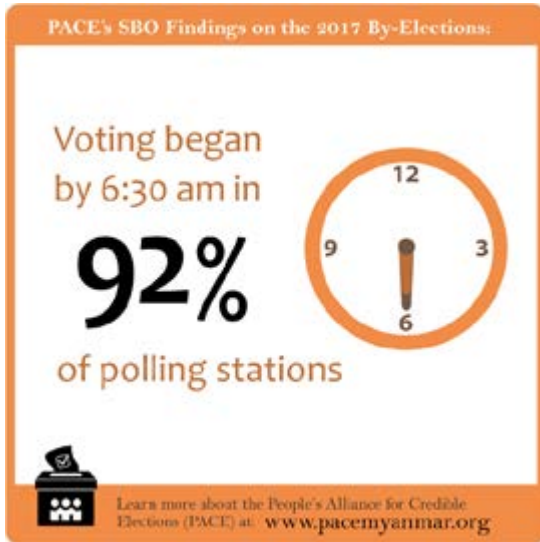
YouTube Creator Academy has guides on content strategy, production and channel optimization: <https://creatoracademy.youtube.com/page/education>

Social Media and How to Use It Effectively in Raising Voices in Closing Spaces Guide: <https://www.raiseavoice.net/6-where-will-you-say-it/#social-media>

Harnessing the Power of Art and Popular Culture in Raising Voices in Closing Spaces Guide: <https://www.raiseavoice.net/7-can-we-try-something-different/>

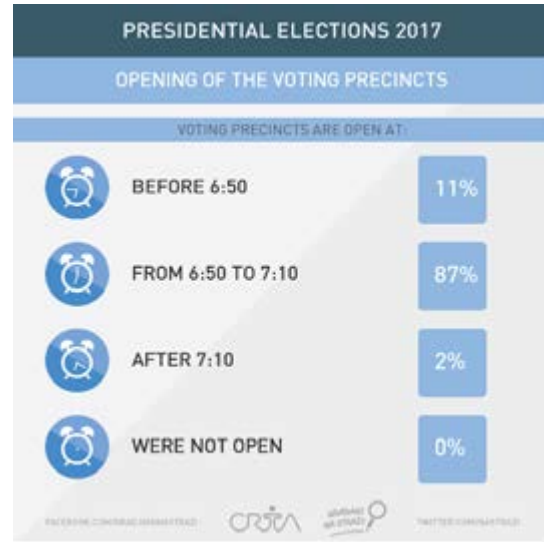
Evaluating the Effectiveness: Is it Working? in Raising Voices in Closing Spaces Guide: <https://www.raiseavoice.net/8-is-it-working/>

Examples of Infographics and Other Multimedia Communications



People's Alliance for Credible Elections (PACE) - Myanmar

2017 By-Elections



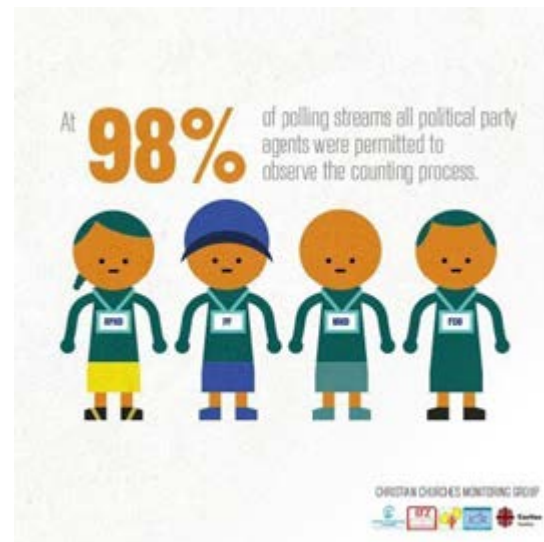
Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA) - Serbia

2017 Presidential Elections



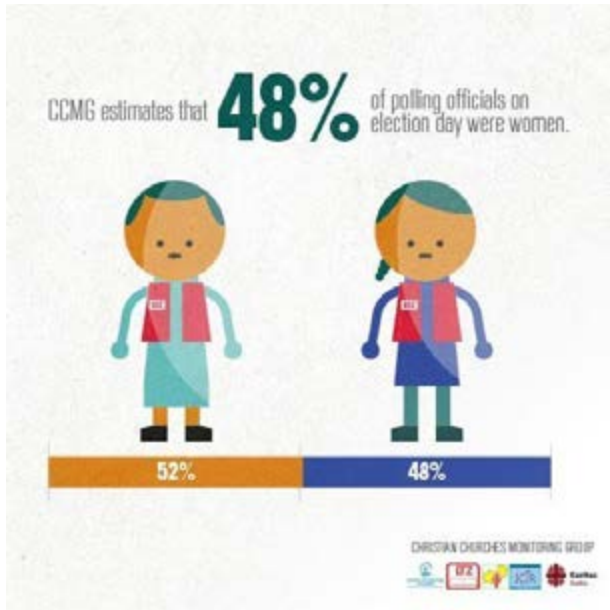
Indigo - Côte d'Ivoire

2020 Presidential Elections (French)



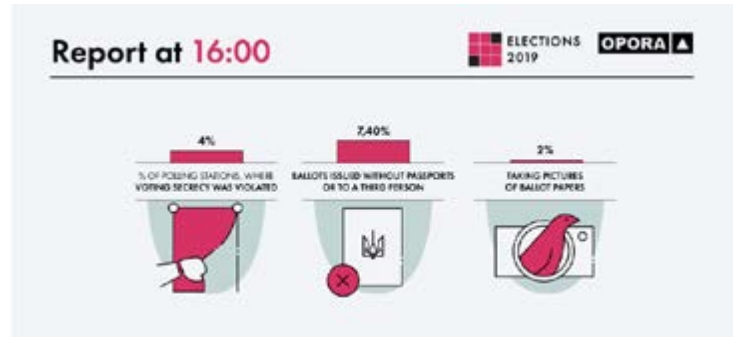
Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) - Zambia

2016 Presidential Elections



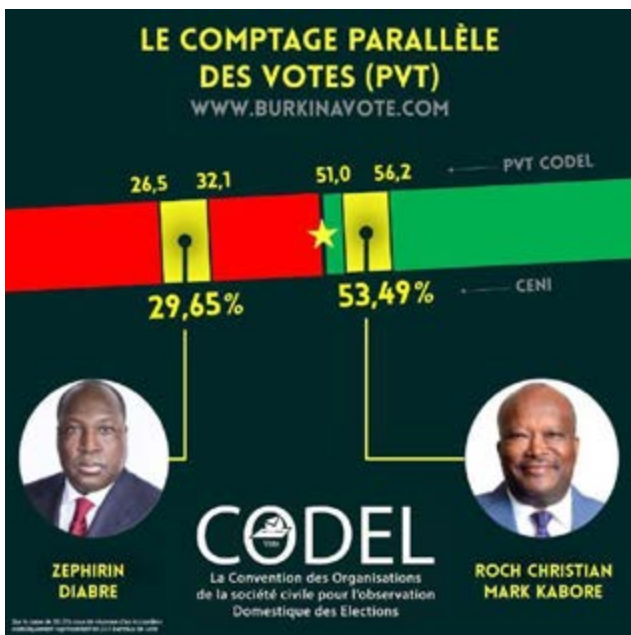
Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) - Zambia

2016 Presidential Elections



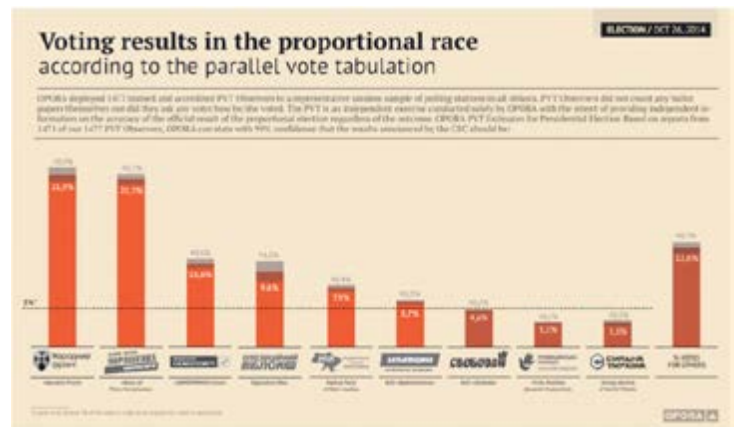
Civil Network OPORA - Ukraine

2019 Presidential Elections



Convention des Organisations de la société civile pour l'observation Domestique des Elections (CODEL) - Burkina Faso

2015 Presidential Elections (French)



Civil Network OPORA - Ukraine

2014 Parliamentary Elections



Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI) - Kosovo (Albanian)

2021 Parliamentary Elections

English translation of caption: “DiA has deployed 500 trained and accredited short-term observers in a representative randomized sample of polling stations nationwide. PVT methodology is an independent assessment aiming at providing information on the accuracy of the official results of the parliamentary elections. DiA’s results are based on the reports of our 500 STOs, and hereby, DiA can declare with a 95% level of confidence that the results of the CEC must be within the overall margin of error of 1.71+/- %.

* The preliminary results do not include votes of out-of-country and conditional voting.

** The 5% electoral threshold applies to the political entities that do not compete for reserved seats.

*** Margin of error for the results of each political entity is provided above their results.”



Mourakiboun - Tunisia (Arabic)

2014 Presidential Elections

Tabulation Center Form

Elections Observation Group (ELOG) - Kenya

ELOG TALLY CENTRE OBSERVATION CHECKLIST – August 2017 General Elections TS ID <pre-printed>

Observer Name/Number	<pre-printed>	Supervisor Name/Number	<pre-printed>
Constituency	<pre-printed>	Constituency Tally Centre	<pre-printed>

Be at your assigned constituency tally centre by **5:00 pm**. Send all Reports via SMS to **40570** at your assigned time.

1st Text to 40570 – ARRIVAL (Answer questions upon arrival at the tally centre and report in at 5:30 pm)

KA Were any election officials present upon your arrival? Yes (1) No (2) **KA**

KB Were you permitted to observe? (If no, complete a Critical Incident form) Yes (1) No* (2) **KB**

Format Text Message: Write in below your numeric answers to the questions above.

All checklist texts must begin with "TS" followed by your six digit ID code						Answer to KA (must be 1 or 2)		Answer to KB (must be 1 or 2)	
T	S					K	A	K	B

Send text exactly as written above to **40570** immediately. (Example: TS999999KA1KB2)

2nd Text to 40570 – TALLY PROCESS (Answer questions during tallying and report immediately after the presidential tally is over!)

MA At what time did the constituency tally centre open? By 6:00 pm (1) 6:01 to 7:00 pm (2) 7:01 to 8:00 pm (3) After 8:00 pm (4) **MA**

MB How many polling stations are in the constituency? (Ask Returning Officer) [][][][] **MB**

MC Were party agents present for Jubilee? Yes (1) No (2) **MC**

MD Were party agents present for ODM? Yes (1) No (2) **MD**

ME What other candidate or party agents were present? (Tick all that apply) None (0) WIPER (1) ANC (2) CCM (3) Ford K (4) Independent (5) Other (6) **ME**

MF Were any party agents not permitted to observe the tallying process? Yes (1) No (2) No agents present (3) **MF**

MG Were results tallied on a projected screen so that everyone could view the process? Yes (1) No (2) **MG**

MH Did anyone attempt to harass or intimidate election officials at any time? (If yes, complete a Critical Incident form) Yes* (1) No (2) **MH**

MJ Was the tallying process postponed or disrupted at anytime? (If yes, complete a Critical Incident form) Yes* (1) No (2) **MJ**

MK Did any party/candidate agent request a second tally of the presidential results? Yes (1) No (2) **MK**

MP Did any party/candidate agents file a written complaint regarding the constituency tally process? (Tick all that apply and complete Critical Incident form) No (1) Yes, ODM* (2) Yes, Jubilee* (3) Yes another party* (4) **MP**

MQ Did all party/candidate agents sign the Collation of Presidential Results (Form 34B)? (Tick all that apply) Yes (1) Jubilee refused to sign (2) ODM refused to sign (3) Another party refused to sign (4) No agents present (5) **MQ**

MR Did the Returning Officer successfully transmit the results electronically to the National Tally Centre? Yes (1) No (2) **MR**

MS How many polling stations had not been processed by the time you left the tally centre (answer "0" if the tally process for presidential results was complete) [][][][] **MS**

Format Text Message: Write in below your numeric answers to the questions above.

All checklist texts must begin with "TS" followed by your six digit ID code						Answer to MA (must be 1 - 4)		Answer to MB (must be a number)		Answer to MC (must be 1 or 2)		Answer to MD (must be 1 or 2)			
T	S					M	A	M	B	M	C	M	D		
Answer to ME (can be multiple numbers)						Answer to MF (must be 1, 2 or 3)		Answer to MG (must be 1 or 2)		Answer to MH (must be 1 or 2)		Answer to MJ (must be 1 or 2)		Answer to MK (must be 1 or 2)	
M	E					M	F	M	G	M	H	M	J	M	K
Answer to MP (can be multiple numbers)				Answer to MQ (can be multiple numbers)				Answer to MR (must be 1 or 2)		Answer to MS (must be a number)					
M	P					M	Q	M	R	M	S				

Send text exactly as written above to **40570** immediately.

3rd Text to 40570 – CONSTITUENCY LEVEL PRESIDENTIAL VOTE COUNT (Record official figures from Form 34B & report immediately after tallying!)

NA Number of <u>Registered</u> Voters	<input type="text"/>	NG Votes for Kaluyu Japheth Kavinga	<input type="text"/>
NB Number of <u>Rejected</u> ballots	<input type="text"/>	NH Votes for Kenyatta Uhuru	<input type="text"/>
NC Number of <u>Valid</u> votes cast	<input type="text"/>	NJ Votes for Mwaura Michael Wainaina	<input type="text"/>
ND Votes for Aukot John Ekuru Longoggy	<input type="text"/>	NK Votes for Nyagah Joseph William Nthiga	<input type="text"/>
NE Votes for Dida Mohamed Abduba	<input type="text"/>	NM Votes for Odinga Raila	<input type="text"/>
NF Votes for Jirongo Shakhhalaga Khwa	<input type="text"/>	NP Total votes cast (rejected + valid votes)	<input type="text"/>
		NQ Overall, do you think the tally process went well?	<input type="text" value="Yes (1)"/> <input type="text" value="No (2)"/>

Format Text Message: Write in below your numeric answers to the questions above.

All checklist texts must begin with "TS" followed by your six digit ID code		Answer to NA – Number of registered voters	Answer to NB – Number of Rejected Ballots
T S	<input type="text"/>	N A	<input type="text"/>
Answer to NC – Number of valid votes	Answer to ND – Votes for Aukot John Ekuru Longoggy	Answer to NE - Votes for Dida Mohamed Abduba	
N C	<input type="text"/>	N E	<input type="text"/>
Answer to NF – Votes for Jirongo Shakhhalaga Khwa	Answer to NG - Votes for Kaluyu Japheth Kavinga	Answer to NH - Votes for Kenyatta Uhuru	
N F	<input type="text"/>	N H	<input type="text"/>
Answer to NJ - Votes for Mwaura Michael Wainaina	Answer to NK - Votes for Nyagah Joseph William Nthiga	Answer to NM - Votes for Odinga Raila	
N J	<input type="text"/>	N M	<input type="text"/>
Answer to NP – Total votes cast	Answer to NQ (must be 1 or 2)		
N P	<input type="text"/>	N Q	<input type="text"/>

Send text exactly as written above to 40570 immediately.

I affirm, to the best of my ability, that all of the information recorded on this form is accurate and truthful.

Signature _____

Observer First Name _____

Surname _____

ID Number _____

Arrival Time _____

Departure Time _____



Outside Observation Form

International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) - Georgia

October 2, 2021 Local Self-Government Elections

Observer's form - Observation of the Outside Perimeter of the PEC

PEC code

S	
---	--

District:	PEC:	Address:
Observer:		Observer's mobile phone number:
District Representative:		District Representative's mobile phone number:

Remember! When marking the answers to the question, you should call the Incidents' Center where the ► is indicated!

1 SMS - Arrival at the outside perimeter of the polling station - Send SMS at 08:00 am to 591940073

QA Fill-in the number of the polling station on the outside perimeter of which you are present at

--	--	--

 QA

Each SMS starts with the symbol S and the PEC Code	Question QA (Most likely less than 900)
S	Q A

Example: P1234QA05

2 (Interim) SMS - Observing the process from 08:00 am (from the start of polling) till 13:00 - Send SMS at 13:00 pm to 591940073

WA	Is there any gathering of suspicious persons happening outside of the election precinct? <i>(only one possible answer)</i>	No (0)	Yes, within the perimeter of 100 meters (1) ►	Yes, beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (2) ►	Yes, both within and beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (3) ►	WA		
WB	Which party coordinators are mobilized outside of the election precinct? <i>(Several answers possible)</i>	None (0)	Georgian Dream (1) ►	United National Movement (2) ►	Gakharia-for Georgia (3) ►	Other (4) ►	Unclear (5) ►	WB
WC	Is any person (party / NGO / other) tracking voters (this excludes exit polls) outside of the election precinct? <i>(Only one possible answer)</i>	No (0)	Yes, within the perimeter of 100 meters (1) ►	Yes, beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (2) ►	Yes, both within and beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (3) ►	WC		
WD	Which of the following violations were detected outside of the election precinct? <i>(Several answers possible)</i>	Physical/ Verbal confrontation (1) ►	Pressure / Intimidation (2) ►	Vote Buying (3) ►	None (0)	WD		
WE	Are the police present outside of the election precinct?	Yes (1)	No (2)	WE				
WF	Are there any campaign materials placed / graffiti wall made at a distance of 25 meters from the polling station?	Yes (1) ►	No (2)	WF				
WG	Is there an organized (multiple) mobilization / transportation of voters to the polling station to vote taking place?	Yes (1) ►	No (2)	WG				
WH	Is there any kind of suspicious communication of the PEC members (giving instructions / providing information about voter/ lists, other) with persons outside of the election precinct taking place?	Yes (1) ►	No (2)	WH				
WK	Other cases / trends / incidents that are not listed in the questionnaire and you consider it suspicious / worth paying attention to?	Yes (1) ►	No (2)	WK				

Each SMS starts with the symbol S and the PEC Code	Question WA (0 or 1 or 2 or 3)	Question WB (0 or 1,2,3,4 or 5)	Question WC (0 or 1 or 2 or 3)	Question WD (1,2, 3 or 0)	Question WE (1 or 2)	Question WF (1 or 2)	Question WG (1 or 2)	Question WH (1 or 2)	Question WK (1 or 2)
S	W A	W B	W C	W D	W E	W F	W G	W H	W K

Example: S1234WA1WB12WC0WD23WE2WF1WG2WH2WK2



October 2, 2021 Local Self-Government Elections

3 (final) SMS – Observing the Process from the start of polling at 08.00 am till the end (20:00 pm) - Send SMS at 20:00 pm to 591940073

XA	Is there any gathering of suspicious persons happening outside of the election precinct? <i>(only one possible answer)</i>	No (0)	Yes, within the perimeter of 100 meters (1) ▶	Yes, beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (2) ▶	Yes, both within and beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (3) ▶	XA		
XB	Which party coordinators are mobilized outside of the election precinct? <i>(Several answers possible)</i>	None (0)	Georgian Dream (1) ▶	United National Movement (2) ▶	Gakharia-for Georgia (3) ▶	Other (4) ▶	Unclear (5) ▶	XB
XC	Is any person (party / NGO / other) tracking voters (this excludes exit polls) outside of the election precinct? <i>(Only one possible answer)</i>	No (0)	Yes, within the perimeter of 100 meters (1) ▶	Yes, beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (2) ▶	Yes, both within and beyond the perimeter of 100 meters (3) ▶	XC		
XD	Which of the following violations were detected outside of the election precinct? <i>(Several answers possible)</i>	Physical/ Verbal confrontation (1) ▶	Pressure / Intimidation (2) ▶	Vote Buying (3) ▶	None (0)	XD		
XE	Are the police present outside of the election precinct?	Yes (1)	No (2)	XE				
XF	Are there any campaign materials placed / graffiti wall made at a distance of 25 meters from the polling station?	Yes (1) ▶	No (2)	XF				
XG	Is there an organized (multiple) mobilization /transportation of voters to the polling station to vote taking place?	Yes (1) ▶	No (2)	XG				
XH	Is there any kind of suspicious communication of the PEC members (giving instructions / providing information about voter/ lists, other) with persons outside of the election precinct taking place?	Yes (1) ▶	No (2)	XH				
XK	Other cases / trends / incidents that are not listed in the questionnaire and you consider it suspicious / worth paying attention to?	Yes (1) ▶	No (2)	XK				

Each SMS starts with the symbol S and the PEC Code	Question XA (0 or 1 or 2 or 3)	Question XB (0 or 1,2,3,4 or 5)	Question XC (0 or 1 or 2 or 3)	Question XD (1,2 , 3 or 0)	Question XE (1 or 2)	Question XF (1 or 2)	Question XG (1 or 2)	Question XH (1 or 2)	Question XK (1 or 2)									
S	X	A	X	B	X	C	X	D	X	E	X	F	X	G	X	H	X	K

Example: **S1234XA1XB12XC0XD23XE2XF1XG2XH2XK2**

SMS – In case of extra question, fill out the respective graphs below and send to 591940073

YA

Yes (1)	No (2)
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YA

YD

.....
-------	-------

YD

Each SMS starts with the symbol S and the PEC Code	Question YA (1 or 2)
S	Y A

Each SMS starts with the symbol S and the PEC Code	Question YD
S	Y D

Sample Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is applicable to all election observers that have volunteered to work for the Election Observation Project. The Project reserves the right to immediately terminate the services of any observer who fails to abide by this Code of Conduct.

» **Adherence to National Laws and Electoral**

Guidelines: An election observer shall observe and abide by the Constitution and laws governing the conduct of elections as well as, regulations and guidelines issued by the electoral management body from time to time.

» **Non-partisanship:** An election observer shall refrain from participating in the design and implementation of programs and activities of any political party or organization or identifying himself or herself with a politically-related activity of a leader or official of any political party or organization or any person who is actively engaged in seeking a public political office.

» **Impartiality:** An election observer shall treat every political party and every candidate in the election for a public office fairly and equally. Observers shall refrain from giving any form of assistance to any party/candidate in connection with the elections. They will refrain from communicating with voters with a view of influencing how they will vote.

» **Objectivity:** An election observer shall be objective in assessing any electoral process or conduct of any candidate or agent or supporter of any political party or candidate in an election.

» **Non-Intrusiveness:** An election observer shall not interfere with the work of an election official but may ask any question he or she deems proper for purposes of clarifying any matter related to his or her work provided this is done in a manner that does not unduly affect the work of the official. The observer will at all times recognize the authority of the Electoral Commission (EC) but will remain accountable to the Election Observation Project.

» **Accuracy:** An election observer shall exhibit a high degree of professionalism and shall ensure accurate reporting based on facts or information that may come into his or her possession in the course of his or her work.

» **Confidentiality:** An election observer shall refrain from making any personal comments or expressing his or her opinion on any matter pertaining to his or her work as an election observer to the media or the public. Apart from the normal reporting protocols established by the observation project, an observer shall maintain secrecy with reference to the electoral process.

» **Diligence:** An election observer shall be diligent in discharging his or her duties as an observer and shall furnish any information or report that is required to be furnished to the competent authority within the specified period of time and in any other circumstance without any undue delay.

» **Cooperation with other Election Observation**

Bodies: An election observer shall cooperate with other stakeholders in the electoral process

including representatives of other domestic election observation groups, international election observer missions and security agencies as per guidelines issued by the EC.

- » **Security Consciousness:** An election observer shall at all times be security conscious and not place themselves in situations that could compromise their personal safety. Observers shall refrain from carrying or displaying arms or weapons of any kind during the conduct of their duties.
- » **Accountability:** Observers will not abuse funds or any other resources provided to them for the purposes of smooth observation by the Election Observation Project.
- » **Behavior:** Observers shall not behave in any manner that is likely to bring the Election Observation Project into disrepute. In addition, observers shall not be intoxicated in the discharge of their duties.
- » **Enforcement Clause:** Any election observer who acts or conducts himself or herself in a manner that is inconsistent with any provision of this Code of Conduct shall be dismissed.
- » **Pledge to Observe the Code of Conduct and Neutrality:** Observers must sign the Neutrality Pledge for Observers.

Sample Pre/Post-Test and Workshop Evaluation Form

Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) – Zambia



CCMG 2021 PVT Monitors Training-Pre-Training Test

This workshop has been designed to train you on how to observe the 12th August 2021 elections. CCMG will deploy specialized Monitors to specific polling stations across the country on 12th August 2021. During this training, the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) methodology and your roles and responsibilities will be explained in detail. These questions are not an exam but part of the training process. Please take time to answer ALL of the following questions.

1. PVT Monitors may:
 - Be members of political parties
 - Travel from a different ward to observe on election day
 - Observe at any polling station in the district
 - All of the above
 - None of the above

2. When will a PVT Monitor be accredited by the Electoral Commission of Zambia?
 - On election day; at the assigned polling station
 - On election day; from your Ward Supervisor
 - None of the above

3. What identification documents are required for a voter to be allowed to vote?
 - Driver's license
 - Birth certificate
 - Voter ID (Voter's Card) and National Registration Card
 - Passport
 - Grade 12 Certificate

4. As a CCMG PVT Monitor, if you are not allowed to observe at your assigned polling station, what should you do? Tick all correct answers.
 - Engage the Presiding Officer and when not successful go back home
 - Call your respective Ward Supervisor and call the CCMG Data Centre
 - Complete a critical incident report and immediately send to the CCMG Data Centre
 - Call your ECZ provincial office and ask for help

5. As a PVT Monitor on Simulation Day, what do you do if you discover that your assigned polling station is really far away from where you live and difficult to get to?
 - Trade your polling station with another Monitor.
 - Choose a closer polling station
 - Call your Ward Supervisor and try to find a closer polling station
 - Call your Ward Supervisor and make appropriate arrangements to get to your assigned polling station on 12th August, 2021
 - Assign a trusted friend or family member, who lives in that area, to cover the station



6. If you are a PVT Monitor and you have no mobile network coverage at your assigned polling station to text or call the CCMG Data Centre to send your reports, what should you do? [tick all that apply]

- Leave your assigned polling station to look for network coverage to send your text or call the CCMG Data Centre.
- Stay at your polling station, observe all the processes and at the end of the day go to a place with network coverage and send all your text messages.
- Locate another polling station with network coverage, observe and report all the processes as instructed.
- Ask your Ward Supervisor to assist in sending the messages when he/she visits your polling station

7. Which of the following actions are in breach of the ECZ's Code of Conduct for an Monitor? [tick all that apply]

- PVT Monitors during Election Day share their opinion with members of the media and other stakeholders on their assessment of the Election Day processes and the electoral outcome.
- PVT Monitor refrains from expressing their choice of candidates for the elections.
- PVT Monitor fails to go to their assigned polling station on Election Day but instead sends observation reports to the CCMG Data Centre from their home.
- PVT Monitor argues with the ECZ officials at his/her assigned polling station about the Election Day procedures.

8. If you are a PVT Monitor, what time should you report to your assigned polling station?

- At the close of voting at 18:00 hours.
- Periodically throughout the day.
- At 05:30 hours, before the opening of the polling station.
- At 06:00 hours, when voting starts.

9. If you were Constituency Supervisor, what would be your strategy to manage two Monitors, each one in a remote area within your constituency?

Best Practices for Observer Conduct

Observers should:

- » Introduce themselves to the polling officials and other individuals at the polling station, such as party agents and security guards;
- » Position themselves so that they can clearly see voting and counting processes and so that the ballot box is always in their view;
- » Conduct themselves in a strictly independent and impartial manner at all times; and
- » Ask questions and seek clarification from polling officials and other individuals about the voting and counting process.

Observers should not:

- » Tell the polling officials what to do. The polling officials, not the observers, are in charge of polling stations.
- » Attempt to fix problems. Observers can often bring issues of concern to the attention of polling officials, but they should not try to resolve problems themselves.
- » Disrupt the voting or counting processes. Even if there are serious concerns about the conduct of the election, observers should observe, document and report rather than disrupt the process.
- » Ask voters for whom they voted. Observers should do nothing that can be considered compromising the secrecy of the vote.
- » Count ballots themselves. Observers should observe the counting of ballots by the polling officials, but should not count them themselves.

Sample Statements

2021 Zambia General Elections - Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG)

In 2021, Zambia CCMG conducted a PRVT for the general elections as a part of a comprehensive election monitoring effort focused on multiple aspects of the electoral process. CCMG's statement below contextualizes the conduct of election day within the overall process.



CCMG Preliminary Statement on the 2021 General Elections

“CCMG issues preliminary statement on 2021 general elections, will release PVT estimates for presidential election as appropriate to ensure the official results reflect the ballots cast”

13 August 2021

The Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) as part of our comprehensive monitoring of the 2021 elections deployed over 1,600 monitors and mobile supervisors to every province, district and constituency on Election Day. Today, we provide the preliminary findings on the conduct of voting and counting based on their reports from across the country. Reflecting that elections are a process and not just election day, we are also sharing a summary of pre-election issues. We will provide a more detailed assessment and evaluation of the pre-election period in our final report. We have completed our PVT and will release our PVT estimates for the presidential election following our analysis of the observation data and as appropriate. These estimates will allow CCMG to determine whether announced results are consistent with, and a reflection of, the ballots Zambians cast. CCMG continues to monitor the electoral process and we will make our overall assessment of the 2021 general elections once the process is complete.

Summary of Pre-Elections Issues

Throughout the pre-election period, CCMG deployed 330 long-term observers (LTOs) to every constituency of the country to report on electoral preparations; the campaign and political space; implementation of COVID-19 mitigation protocols; politically-motivated violence and related acts; the use of government resources in campaigning; and partisan acts by traditional and religious leaders, among other issues. CCMG also deployed monitors to a statistical sample of over 1,000 registration centres during the voter registration process.

National Registration Card (NRC) Issuance: An NRC is required both to register and to vote and thus the issuance of NRCs is a critical part of the electoral process. The official mobile NRC exercise was conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) from August through November 2020. The MoHA exceeded its target for NRC issuance during the mobile exercise, with over 1.5 million Zambians able to obtain an NRC, many of whom were first-time voters. However, the process was affected by: 58 unannounced mobile issuance exercises; lack of transparency on schedule and procedures; denial of access for CCMG monitors to NRC issuance centres; and unexplained large differences by province in issuance rates against MoHA official targets, with for example, Luapula having a success rate against the MoHA target of 181% and Western having a success rate of 52%.

Voter Registration: The ECZ determined to conduct an entirely new voter registration exercise for the 2021 elections. While Zambia has used both new and updated voter registries in the past and there are strengths and weaknesses to both, there was insufficient stakeholder engagement prior to implementation to build broader consensus and confidence in the process. The ECZ



conducted voter registration from 9 November to 12 December with an extension from 17-20 December, which CCMG monitors documented largely adhered to procedures and resulted in very few questionable registrations of ineligible persons. The registration process resulted in a record of over 7 million voters included on the certified voters register. However, late announcement of the registration period, a shorter registration period than in the past, unreasonably long lines in some registration centres, significant disparities in registration centres staffing levels across provinces, lack of transparency about procedures, staffing and kit deployment and failure to provide CCMG monitors with detailed registration information were significant shortcomings in the registration process. The refusal to permit an independent audit of the register further undermined transparency and was a missed opportunity to enhance confidence in the final register.

Campaign Period: Politically-motivated violence has become disturbingly common, with CCMG monitors reporting over 70 incidents during the campaign period. Our monitor reports show that both PF and UPND members and supporters were the main perpetrators in politically violent acts in about a 2 to 1 ratio, respectively. While the police have largely allowed the violent acts to continue with impunity, they themselves have used excessive force on several occasions against UPND party members and supporters. CCMG monitors reported on 28 instances of the limiting of campaign space due to the Public Order Act or COVID-19 mitigation protocols, with almost all these limiting campaign space for UPND. On the eve of the election the President decided to deploy the military across the country, citing the need to control political violence. However, this measure could have had a positive or negative effect on citizens exercising their democratic right to vote.

ECZ Engagement and Information Sharing: The ECZ succeeded at organizing both registration and election day processes that largely adhered to procedures and had small numbers of ineligible participants. However, the ECZ did not regularly engage with civil society organisations (CSOs) on key electoral processes and inquiries for essential information about the electoral process either went unanswered or were responded to very late. In addition, transparency was reduced by the failure to share timely and comprehensive information about key electoral processes. Despite inquiries, the procedures and staffing and kit deployment plan for voter registration, voters registered at the end of each phase, procedures and deployment plan for the use of voter verification devices and Election Day procedures were never publicly shared. In addition, the very late announcement of accreditation procedures and requirements, some of which were new and burdensome, gave stakeholders little time to plan.

Media: While CCMG did not undertake media monitoring, we have reviewed the reports of MISA-Zambia on the issue. Those reports note that the media coverage of opposition parties, including UPND, was significantly less than that of PF. Particularly concerning was the inequitable coverage of political parties by the public broadcaster, the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), which is mandated to provide equitable coverage. In



In addition, the 2020 shutdown of Prime TV and the IBA finding of professional misconduct by Muvi TV raise serious questions about media freedom. CCMG met with both ZNBC and IBA to engage on these issues.

Political Use of the Legal System: During the runup to the elections, there were multiple arrests and charges filed against opposition party members or private citizens that either appeared to have a political motive and/or infringed upon their human rights. These cases set a dangerous precedent of using the legal system for political purposes.

Election Day Preliminary Findings

CCMG's preliminary findings are based on reports from a nationally representative sample of 1,500 polling stations located in every province, district and constituency of the country as of 12h00 on 13 August.

Accreditation: Election day accreditation for citizen monitors was unnecessarily burdensome and lacked uniform procedures across all districts. This was contrary to best principles stated by the Election Commissions Forum of the SADC Region to which the ECZ is a member. Despite these challenges, CCMG was able to accredit all 1,500 stationary monitors plus additional supervisors for Election Day. However, for 31 CCMG monitors, the ECZ did not provide them with an official accreditation card. On Election Day, several CCMG accredited monitors were initially not permitted into polling stations. While all but one of these issues were ultimately resolved, it delayed monitoring of the process in some polling stations.

Opening of Polling Stations: Polling stations opened on time with 96% open by 06h30 across the country. On average polling stations had six polling officials. PF and UPND had party agents at 99% of polling stations and at 80% of polling stations there was at least one party agent from other parties. At less than 1% of polling stations were any materials reported missing during setup and at over 99% of polling stations the presidential ballot box was shown to be empty before being closed and sealed.

Voting: At over 99% of polling stations the basic voting procedures were adhered to with: voters' fingers being checked for indelible ink; voters being required to show their NRC and Voter ID card; polling officials checking for voters names in the voters register; polling officials stamped the presidential ballot paper before issuing it to voters; and voters' fingers were marked with indelible ink. However, there were reports of polling stations running out of ink for the official stamp as well as indelible ink that may have delayed the voting process. At 3% of polling stations, voting was suspended at some point during the day. At 97% of polling stations, no one voted who appeared not to be eligible, while at 2% of polling stations, CCMG monitors reported that a few individuals (one to five) were allowed to vote, even though they did not have both an NRC and voter ID card or already had indelible ink on their fingers or



their names were not on the voters register. At 6% of polling stations, the setup allowed polling officials and/or party agents to see how voters marked their ballots.

Voter Verification Devices (VVDs): Polling locations with multiple polling stations have long posed challenges for voters as it may not be clear to voters which is their assigned polling station. This issue was exacerbated for this election as 907 of the 12,152 polling stations had duplicate names¹. VVDs were used at approximately 13% of polling stations with the devices most common in Lusaka and Western provinces. While VVDs could potentially have played a role directing voters to the correct polling station, their late introduction served to raise predominantly confusion and concerns about their use on Election Day.

Voter IDs and Ballot Papers: The ECZ Election Officer's Handbook calls for polling officials to write Voter ID numbers on the ballot paper counterfoil. Because both the ballot paper and the counterfoil have a unique serial number, the writing of Voter ID numbers on the counterfoil makes it possible, though it could be challenging, to determine how a voter marked his/her ballot thereby compromising the secrecy of the ballot.

Closing of Polling Stations: Polling stations were scheduled to close by 18h00. At 97% of polling stations voters in the queue at 18h00 were given an opportunity to vote. While 44% of polling stations were closed by 18h00 and a further 47% closed by 20h00, 7% of polling stations closed after 20h00. Polling stations closed particularly late in Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces where 15% and 14% respectively closed after 20h00.

¹ For example, according to the ECZ's Registered Voters Per Polling Station 2021 there are four polling stations at the Children of Bethreham School in Wusakile ward in Wusakile constituency. However, three of the polling stations are named Children of Bethreham - 1 while one is named Children of Bethreham - 2. What distinguishes the three polling stations with the name Children of Bethreham - 1 is their polling district, but this information is not printed on Voter ID Cards.(see <https://www.elections.org.zm/download/3847/>)



Province	By 18h00	By 20h00	After 20h00
Central	47%	50%	3%
Copperbelt	28%	55%	14%
Eastern	49%	49%	3%
Luapula	61%	35%	3%
Lusaka	28%	53%	15%
Muchinga	45%	49%	5%
Northern	57%	40%	2%
North-Western	56%	35%	9%
Southern	41%	47%	8%
Western	53%	43%	4%
Total	44%	47%	7%

Source: CCMG 2021

Counting: PF party agents were present for the counting of ballot papers at 98% of polling stations while UPND party agents at 99% of polling stations. Ballot papers were counted at the polling station 98% of the time. At 10% of polling stations there was insufficient light during counting making counting the ballots more challenging. At 98% of polling stations the presidential ballot papers were shown to all party agents and monitors present so they could see how each ballot paper was marked. At 90% of polling stations the presidential ballot papers were sorted into individual piles by candidate. At 97% of polling stations, all of the presidential ballot papers were counted according to ECZ procedures. At less than 1% of polling stations did a PF or UPND party agent disagree with the presidential results.

Violence: There were multiple acts of violence on Election Day. It was widely reported that the PF chairperson for North-Western province was killed and the former Mayor of Lusaka from PF was stabbed. CCMG condemns all political violence in the strongest terms, and those responsible for these acts must be held to account. There were also a number of confrontations where voters at polling stations believed that there were persons carrying pre-marked ballot papers in their bags. Long queues also resulted in several instances of disruptions in the queues at polling stations. Overall, though, incidents of harassment or intimidation were reported at



2% of polling stations, while incidents of violence at 3% of polling stations during voting and counting.

Internet Access: There were numerous reports of internet access being limited on Election Day. The global internet monitor NetBlocks² confirmed that social media platforms Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and messaging apps Messenger and WhatsApp were restricted on multiple internet providers. Such internet shutdowns undermine transparency of the election process and curtail the right of voters to receive information about the elections.

Inclusion: Approximately half of all polling officials were women and 39% of security officers at polling stations were women, while 43% of PF and 37% of UPND party agents were women. At 48% of polling stations voters had to climb stairs to reach the polling station limiting access to the physically impaired. Only 44% of polling stations had Braille Jackets to assist the visually impaired. At 96% of polling stations persons with disabilities, pregnant women, nursing mothers and the elderly were allowed to go to the front of the queue. At 6% of polling stations someone other than a polling official assisted multiple people to vote. At 6% of polling stations men were seen repeatedly voting on behalf of able-bodied women.

COVID-19: At 95% of polling stations there were hand washing or sanitizing facilities while at 99% of polling stations polling officials were wearing masks. However, social distancing was only maintained inside of 87% of polling stations. Furthermore, just 14% of polling stations were voters' temperatures taken upon entering the polling station. At 85% of polling stations no one was turned away due to COVID-19 mitigation measures, but at 12% of polling stations a few potential voters (one to five) were not permitted to vote.

PVT: CCMG informs all voters and contesting parties that we have our PVT estimates for the presidential election which provide independent non-partisan verification of the accuracy of official results. CCMG calls on ECZ to go above the letter of the law to be fully inclusive, transparent and accountable as they tabulate results; to only announce results that reflect the ballots cast at polling stations; and to release polling station level results to all election stakeholders in a single electronic file in accordance with Open Election Data Initiative standards³.

Conclusion

Today, CCMG has provided our summary findings on the pre-election period as well as our preliminary findings on the conduct of voting and counting on Election Day. However, the

² <https://netblocks.org/reports/whatsapp-and-social-media-restricted-in-zambia-on-election-day-18lpLY8a>

³ <https://openelectiondata.net/>



process is not yet complete and CCMG continues to closely monitor the process. We will make our final assessment of the overall election once the process is complete.

Further, we encourage all Zambians to remain calm during the tabulation of results, and we call on all political parties to avoid any actions that could heighten tensions as the official results are announced and to resolve any potential electoral disputes through peaceful means and legal processes. We also encourage the security forces to carry out their duty in an impartial manner without favour to anyone.

CCMG commends the voters who went to polls, often waiting in long lines, to exercise their right to vote. We note that many voters were young people likely voting for the first time. We also recognize the efforts of our fellow citizens who served as election officials at polling stations and made voting possible. Finally, we thank the more than 1,600 CCMG volunteers who diligently monitored voting and counting on behalf of all Zambia. All of your efforts together serve to strengthen our democracy.

God Bless Zambia

Fr. Alex Muyeba, JCTR
CCMG -Steering Committee

Fr. Emmanuel Chikoya, CCZ
CCMG – Steering Committee Chair

Fr. Cornelius Chibamba, ZCCB
CCMG – Steering Committee Member

Bishop Andrew Mwenda, EFZ
CCMG-Steering Committee Member

2022 Serbia Presidential, Parliamentary, and Belgrade Elections - Center for Research, Transparency, and Accountability (CRTA)

In 2022, CRTA conducted a comprehensive observation of Serbia's general elections, including an election day PRVT. The pre-election and election day environments showed challenges that undermined the integrity of the electoral process, and [CRTA's statement](#) on the voting process reported their findings from observing election day, while putting them in context with the conduct of the overall electoral process.

Election day went in an atmosphere full of tensions that on several occasions escalated into physical violence, manifesting the unpreparedness of election administration and the lack of citizens' trust in institutions.

Extremely poor organization of the voting process and tensions on the election day were the expected outcome of the continuous degradation of the integrity of the electoral process in its entirety, which was marked by strengthening and sophistication of mechanisms of electoral corruption, and endangerment of citizens' voting rights.

However, the major damage to the quality of elections occurred before the election day, reflecting in the negative synergy of parties' attempts to obtain support through undemocratic methods, the lack of institutional efforts to protect law and public interest, and the unprofessionalism of the majority of the most influential media.

Continuous repetition of serious electoral breaches was recorded at 5 percent of polling stations in Serbia and in Belgrade, which endangered the integrity of the election day at these polling stations, however, the scope of these incidents did not influence election outcomes in Serbia and in Belgrade.

During the election day, the lack of preparedness of polling boards to adequately organize the voting process in accordance with established procedures was identified. This is reflected in the fact that



Pavle Dimitrijevic, Rasa Nedeljkov, Vujo Ilic delivering the CRTA statement following the 2022 Serbian general election.

Courtesy of CRTA

18 percent of polling stations were not prepared in accordance with established procedures in Serbia and 6 percent of polling stations in Belgrade. The most frequent irregularities included: parallel lists of voters in and around polling stations, breaches of secrecy of voting, pressures on voters and vote buying.

After the closing of polls at 20:00, the presence of voters willing to vote was recorded at 11 percent of polling stations in Serbia, however, in less than half of these polling stations in Serbia they were not allowed to vote. Voters willing to vote were present at 27 percent of polls in Belgrade, while their right to vote was denied at 12 percent of the total number of polling stations in Belgrade. Breaches of secrecy of voting were recorded at 14 percent of polling stations in Serbia and 10 percent in Belgrade. Cases of recording at polling stations by members of polling boards or voters were identified in a significant number in Serbia (11 percent) and in Belgrade (8 percent). The presence of unauthorized persons at polling stations was recorded at 6 six percent of polls in Belgrade and 4 percent of polling stations in Serbia.

The most frequent irregularity on the election day was related to parallel lists of voters at polling stations, which were observed at 11 percent of polling stations, both in Serbia and in Belgrade.

Another frequent irregularity relates to breaches of procedures for voting outside the polling station (voting “at home”), which were recorded at 12 percent of polling stations in Serbia and at 10 percent of polls in Belgrade.

Besides parallel lists of voters, vehicles cruising around polling stations also influenced the electoral atmosphere. This phenomenon was particularly pronounced in Serbia, at 8 percent of polling stations, and at 2 percent of polling stations in Belgrade. Organized driving of voters to polling stations was recorded at 4 percent of polling stations in Serbia and 2 percent of polls in Belgrade. Gatherings around polling stations, with allegations of the presence of cases of vote buying and “carousel voting”, were recorded at 4 percent of polling stations in Serbia and 4 percent of polling stations in Belgrade.

CRTA’s election observation mission submitted seven complaints to the police, including five related to cases of potential vote buying and two related to allegations of “carousel voting”.

CRTA’s observers recorded cases of physical and verbal attacks at and around polling stations across Serbia, and received information about other violent incidents as well.

Cases of verbal attacks or intimidation of CRTA's observers were recorded at five polling stations from the side of members of polling boards and from the side of third persons in front of three polling stations. Polling boards also pressured CRTA's observers by either restricting or influencing them to sign in the Record of Observers of the Work of the Polling Board, at 3 percent of polling stations in Belgrade and 1 percent of polling stations in Serbia.

Domestic or foreign observers were present at 18 percent of polling stations in Serbia, and at 85 percent in Belgrade only.

In relation to the voting process concerning voters from Kosovo, very challenging conditions for the exercise of their voting rights occurred, just like in the recent referendum. The manner of organization of voting at 46 specific polling stations did not allow voters from Kosovo to fulfill their voting rights under the same conditions as other citizens of Serbia, and the integrity of the election day was seriously endangered. The voting process was very poorly organized, crowds were reflected in dozens of voters present at polling stations at the same time, thus breaching the secrecy of voting, while other types of irregularities were recorded as well: not using the UV lamp and invisible spray, parallel lists of voters, voting on someone's behalf, presence of unauthorized persons at polling stations. A large number of voters arrived at polling stations in organized transport, and cases of fainting in waiting lines occurred as well.

2022 Ekiti State Gubernatorial Election, Nigeria - Yiaga Africa

In 2022, Yiaga Africa conducted a PRVT for the Ekiti State off-cycle gubernatorial election in Nigeria. The statement below shows an example of how organizations can present clear key findings at the beginning of their statement, with additional data points presented at the end.



Process and Results Verification Statement on the 2022 Ekiti Gubernatorial Election

Sunday, June 18, 2022

Delivered at Delight Hotel, Ado Ekiti

Introduction

For the Saturday, June 18 governorship election in Ekiti state, Yiaga Africa employed the Parallel Votes Tabulation (PVT) methodology and deployed 500 observers in pairs to a representative random sample of 250 polling units, 25 mobile observers in all 16 local government areas (LGAs) and 16 LGA results collation observers. This deployment strategy enabled Yiaga Africa to provide timely and accurate information on the election day process commencing from the set-up, voter accreditation, voting, and counting and to independently verify the official results for the Ekiti gubernatorial election as announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The process and results verification statement is based on reports from 245 to 250 (98%) sampled polling units in Ekiti State.

Yiaga Africa commends INEC for the marked improvement in logistics management and the deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for the election. The retinue of National Commissioners and Resident Electoral Commissioner deployed for the election improved the quality of oversight and fast-tracked escalation and response to election day challenges. Yiaga Africa commends civil society groups and media organizations for the sustained oversight of the electoral process before, during, and after the election.

While polling units generally opened in record time, there were a few polling units that recorded late commencement due to the late arrival of polling officials. Yiaga Africa had highlighted its areas of interest in the election to include tracking the deployment and functionality of the BVAS for voter accreditation, and the use of the Permanent Voters Card (PVC) in determining the conclusiveness of the election and the new framework for election results management. Considering the important role of the data on PVC collection in this election, Yiaga Africa had called on INEC to publish the final data of PVC collection rate ahead of the election; however, the Commission failed to make public the final data of collected PVCs per polling unit. Yiaga Africa also observed non-compliance with the election guidelines in some polling units. According to the INEC guidelines (Section 20(iii)), polling officials were required to tick the appropriate box against a voter's name labelled FA (denoting Failed Accreditation) at the left margin of the voter's detail on the register. Yiaga Africa observed that the voter register deployed to the polling units had no box labelled FA.

Key Findings on Election Day Process

Yiaga Africa's WTV observers monitored accreditation, voting and counting at polling units in all 16 LGAs. Yiaga Africa received and confirmed 29 critical incidents. The following are key observations on election day processes.

Set up and opening of polling units

1. **Early Opening of Polls:** Yiaga Africa WTV observed the early arrival of polling officials and materials at polling units across the state. As of 7:30 am, Yiaga Africa WTV observers reported that INEC officials had arrived at 75% of polling units.



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Sunday, June 18, 2022

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2. **Early Start of Polls:** By 8:30 am, 23% of polling units had commenced accreditation and voting. This, however, increased to 99% by 10:30 am. This is consistent with Yiaga Africa's observation findings in the 2018 elections, where officials had arrived at 78% of polling units by 7:30 am and 91% of polling units opened by 9:00 am.

Deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)

3. **The Functionality of the BVAS:** Yiaga Africa observed the deployment of the BVAS to all polling units. In 92% of polling units, the BVAS functioned properly. However, in 8% of polling units, the BVAS malfunctioned and it was fixed.

In 96% of polling units, the BVAS had zero records for the total number of accredited voters on the BVAS before the commencement of the process.

In 34% of polling units, some voters were refused accreditation because the BVAS did not verify their PVC or authenticate their fingerprints or facial biometrics.

Deployment of INEC Officials, Security Agents and Party Agents

4. **Deployment of polling officials and women representation:** 96% of polling units had more than three polling officials present, and 55% of polling units had at least two female polling officials present while 40% of the presiding officers were women. Yiaga Africa notes that some polling units with high numbers of registered voters had more than 4 polling officials.
5. **Deployment of Party Agents:** All Progressives Congress (APC) polling or party agents were seen at 100% of polling units, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were seen at 98% of polling units and Social Democratic Party (SDP) polling agents were seen at 98% of polling units.
6. **Deployment of security personnel:** Security forces were observed at 99% of polling units. In 90% of the polling units, they were professional and non-partisan.

Considerations for persons with disabilities

7. **Deployment of Assistive Materials and Set up of Polling Unit:** The Braille ballot guides were observed in 61% of polling units, the poster with written instructions on how to vote was seen in 66% of polling units and form EC 40H (PWD voter information and statistics) was seen in 76% of polling units.



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Critical Incidents Reports

Yiaga Africa received and confirmed 29 critical incident reports from its WTV observers. The incident reports capture instances of infractions that could undermine the electoral process. These included:

1. **Voter Inducement/Bribery:** Vote buying was reported by WTV observers in Alowodolu / Ojo - The Apostolic P.S Compound with PU code 13/09/04/00 in Ijero Ward D of Ijero LGA. Party agents from APC were reportedly sharing N7,000 to voters who showed how their ballot paper was marked. A similar report on vote-buying by APC was received from Open Space at Bamitale Along St. Mary's Road in Ikere. Also, in Ogidi - in Ipoti Ward A, party agents from PDP and SDP were seen bribing voters. At C. A. C. Gramm. Sch. / Ola Oluwa II with PU code 014 in Ado-Ekiti, APC party agent was also reportedly giving N5,000 to voters who confirmed they had voted for the party.
2. **Polling Unit Not Opened:** WTV observers in premises of Staff Nur & Pri. School. Balemo, Oke Ila with PU Code 13/01/07/006 in Ado Ekiti reported that as of 12:00 noon, neither INEC officials nor materials had arrived at the polling unit.
3. **Secrecy of the Ballot Compromised:** Secrecy of the ballot was compromised as people could see how voters marked the ballots in Igede Ward II 13/13/06/014 in Irepodun/Ifelodun LGA. Party agents for the APC, PDP and SDP clustered around the voting cubicle and saw how voters marked their ballot papers.
4. **Voters' Names Not Found on the BVAS:** Yiaga Africa also received and verified three reports of missing names of registered voters on the BVAS. The voters were prevented from voting despite holding INEC-issued PVCs. Upon further investigation, Yiaga Africa discovered the voters were allocated to new polling units but INEC failed to communicate the reallocation to the voters, and neither did the Commission update the voter records on the online portal for voter status verification.
5. **Ballot Box Snatching:** Yiaga Africa received reports of ballot box snatching in two polling units with codes 13/05/06/005 and 007 in Ilawe Ward IV, near St. Patrick's School.
6. **Failure of Polling Officials to Use BVAS for Accreditation:** Yiaga Africa received a report from Ilabo in Ire ward II, Front of Fagbemigun's House with PU Code 016 of Oye LGA, that polling officials failed to use the BVAS to verify voters' fingerprint or for facial recognition. This led to the disruption of the process by aggrieved party agents.
7. **Suspension of Counting:** WTV Observers in PU 006, Ward 7, Saint Paul's primary school, Ise/Orun LGA reported that at the end of sorting and counting, there were discrepancies with the outcome as the total votes cast did not tally with the number of accredited voters. This led to the disruption of the process by aggrieved party agents.



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Results Verification

Based on reports from 98% (245 of 250) of sampled polling units, Yiaga Africa's statistical analysis shows that the All-Progressives Congress (APC) should receive between 50.5% and 54.1% of the vote, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) should receive between 19.0% and 22.4% of the vote, Social Democratic Party (SDP) should receive between 20.4% and 24.6% of the vote, while no other political party should receive more than 5.5% of the vote. The PVT statistical analysis is based on the number of registered voters and not the number of PVCs collected.

Table 1: Comparison of INEC Official Results for the 16 LGAs with Yiaga Africa WTV PVT Estimates for Select Political Parties for the 2022 Ekiti Gubernatorial Election

Party	INEC Official Result	Yiaga Africa WTV PVT estimates				Match
		Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimated Range		
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
APC	53.2%	52.3%	±1.8%	50.5%	54.1%	✓
PDP	19.2%	20.7%	±1.7%	19.0%	22.4%	✓
SDP	23.3%	22.5%	±2.1%	20.4%	24.6%	✓

Note: No other party received more than 5.5% of the vote share

Source Yiaga Africa WTV Ekiti 2022

INEC official results for the 2022 Ekiti state governorship election is consistent with Yiaga Africa's WTV estimate (specifically, it falls within the Yiaga Africa's WTV estimated range). Had the official results been changed at the ward, LGA or state collation centres, the official results would not have fallen within the Yiaga Africa WTV estimated ranges. Because the official results fall within the estimated ranges, candidates, parties, and voters should have confidence the official results for the Ekiti 2022 gubernatorial election reflect the ballots cast at polling units on Saturday, June 18.

It is important to highlight that the counting process at polling units was transparent and included representatives from the four political parties that received the most votes.

- At **100%** of polling units, an APC party agent signed the EC.8A results form, at **99%** of polling units a PDP party agent signed the EC.8A results form, at **97%** of polling units an SDP party agent signed the EC.8A results form.



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- At 99% of polling units, APC party agents were given a copy of the EC.8A results form. At 97% of polling units, PDP polling agents were given a copy of the EC.8A results form. At 96% of polling units, SDP party agents were given a copy of the EC.8A results form.
- At 96% of polling units, the polling official posted the official polling unit results for the public to see.

Turnout Projections

INEC's turnout and rejected ballots for the 16 LGA released are consistent with Yiaga Africa WTV PVT estimates. Yiaga Africa is able to estimate that turnout is between 35.7% and 38.7% ($37.2\% \pm 1.5\%$), while INEC's official result is 36.47%. Similarly, Yiaga Africa estimates rejected ballots are between 1.8% and 2.6% ($2.2\% \pm 0.4\%$) while INEC's official result is 2.46%.

Conclusion

Yiaga Africa commends the people of Ekiti for their resilience and commitment to a non-violent election. We encourage the voters to sustain their participation in the electoral process beyond the elections by holding political parties and candidates accountable for their campaign promises.

Yiaga Africa encourages INEC to uphold the principles of transparency by publishing the total number of PVCs collected in Ekiti on its website. In addition, Yiaga Africa calls on INEC to audit the newly created polling units and ensure equitable distribution of voters to the polling units. In cases where voters have been allotted to new polling units, INEC should update the voter records on its website and communicate the changes to prevent voter disenfranchisement.

Yiaga Africa commends and appreciates the Ewi of Ekiti, His Royal Highness, Rufus Adeyemo for his interventions in appealing to the moral conscience of the NURTW which may have inspired the prompt deployment of materials by the NURTW. This royal intervention has contributed in no small measure to the early commencement of polls and the success of the election.

Yiaga Africa commends the professionalism of the security agents who worked to maintain peace on Election Day. We commend the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for the arrest of mercenaries deployed by political parties to buy votes. We urge the EFCC and security agencies to investigate and prosecute all citizens involved in electoral fraud, especially those involved in vote trading. Yiaga Africa also calls on the security agencies to remain non-partisan and professional towards the Osun governorship election.

Yiaga Africa would like to thank the many Nigerians across the state who volunteered to serve as non-partisan WTV citizen observers on behalf of all the people of Ekiti. Yiaga Africa commends the dedication of the permanent INEC staff in Abuja and Ekiti state who organized the election and the commitment of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members who served as poll officials. Yiaga Africa would like to thank other sister election observer groups and the international community for their solidarity and support.



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Yiaga Africa, through the WTV initiative is committed to promoting more credible elections by providing independent information on the conduct of elections and independently verifying the accuracy of election results.

#WatchingTheVote is For All Nigerians, Beholden to No One, and Driven by Data.

Long live Ekiti state, long live Nigeria.

Thank you.

--- End ---

Samson Itodo
Executive Director
Yiaga Africa

Ezenwa Nwagwu
Board Member
Yiaga Africa

Additional data

Accreditation and Voting

- At 92% of polling units, the BVAS functioned throughout the day and in 8% of the polling units, the BVAS malfunctioned but was fixed.
- At 99% of polling units at which the BVAS functioned, every potential voter's permanent voter card (PVC) was checked by the BVAS.
- At 92% of polling units at which the BVAS functioned, every potential voter's fingerprints were checked by the BVAS.
- At 90% of polling units at which the BVAS functioned, facial authentication was done for voters whose fingers could not be authenticated using the BVAS.
- At 92% of polling units, voter details were not systematically checked against the register of voters.



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- At 100% of polling units, indelible ink was applied to the cuticle of a finger of every accredited voter.
- 92% of polling units were set up so no one could see how the voters marked their ballot papers. Nevertheless, at 8% of polling units, it was possible to see how a voter's ballot paper was marked when it was put in the ballot box at some point throughout the day. Voters crowded the polling officials in 22% of polling units.
- In 4% of polling units, women were particularly affected by incidents of intimidation, harassment or violence. This includes women as voters, polling officials, security, party agents or observers.
- 95% of polling units completed accreditation and voting by 3:30 pm, while by 4:30 pm, 99% of polling units had completed accreditation and voting.

Counting

- At 98% of polling units, polling officials showed how every ballot paper was marked to everyone present.
- At 14% of polling units, polling officials recounted the ballot papers.
- At 96% of polling units, the official results were posted for the public to see.
- At 80% of polling units, presiding officers used the BVAS to scan/take a snapshot of the Result Form EC8A and transmit to the IReV.



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Appendix I

The below table is a comparison of INEC official results with the Yiaga Africa WTV estimates for all 16 political parties contesting the Ekiti 2022 gubernatorial election.

Appendix II Comparison of INEC Official Results with Yiaga Africa WTV Estimates for All Political Parties In the Ekiti 2022 Gubernatorial Election						
Party	INEC	Yiaga Africa WTV				Match
	Official	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimated Range		
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
A	0.05%	0.0%	+/- 0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	✓
AAC	0.12%	0.1%	+/- 0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	✓
ADC	1.64%	1.9%	+/- 0.9%	1.0%	2.8%	✓
ADP	1.02%	0.9%	+/- 0.1%	0.8%	1.0%	✓
APC	53.16%	52.3%	+/- 1.8%	50.5%	54.1%	✓
APGA	0.11%	0.1%	+/- 0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	✓
APM	0.08%	0.1%	+/- 0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	✓
APP	0.58%	0.6%	+/- 0.1%	0.5%	0.7%	✓
LP	0.06%	0.0%	+/- 0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	✓
NNPP	0.15%	0.1%	+/- 0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	✓
NRM	0.10%	0.1%	+/- 0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	✓
PDP	19.17%	20.7%	+/- 1.7%	19.0%	22.4%	✓
PRP	0.25%	0.2%	+/- 0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	✓
SDP	23.36%	22.5%	+/- 2.1%	20.4%	24.6%	✓
YPP	0.18%	0.2%	+/- 0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	✓
ZLP	0.08%	0.1%	+/- 0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	✓

Source: Yiaga Africa WTV Ekiti 2022



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Appendix II

Distribution of All Polling Units and PVT Sampled Polling Units for the 2022 Ekiti Gubernatorial Election							
S/No	LGA	Registered Voters	Polling Units	Percent of Total Polling Units	Sampled Polling Units	Percent of Total Sampled Polling Units	Observers
1	ADO EKITI	179,070	344	14.1%	35	14.0%	70
2	EFON	30,076	119	4.9%	12	4.8%	24
3	EKITI EAST	61,357	112	4.6%	12	4.8%	24
4	EKITI SOUTH WEST	53,712	188	7.7%	18	7.2%	36
5	EKITI WEST	59,220	184	7.5%	20	8.0%	40
6	EMURE	37,122	94	3.8%	9	3.6%	18
7	GBONYIN	53,785	115	4.7%	12	4.8%	24
8	IDO / OSI	57,766	144	5.9%	16	6.4%	32
9	IJERO	64,524	145	5.9%	14	5.6%	28
10	IKERE	65,651	125	5.1%	12	4.8%	24
11	IKOLE	71,971	189	7.7%	19	7.6%	38
12	ILEJEMEJE	18,791	91	3.7%	9	3.6%	18
13	IREPODUN / IFELODUN	70,467	174	7.1%	18	7.2%	36
14	ISE / ORUN	46,696	114	4.7%	12	4.8%	24
15	MOBA	53,293	116	4.7%	12	4.8%	24
16	OYE	65,422	191	7.8%	20	8.0%	40
	GRAND TOTAL	988,923	2,445	100.0%	250	100.0%	500

Source: Yiaga Africa WTV Ekiti 2022

Kenya 2013 Presidential Election - Elections Observation Group (ELOG)

In 2013, ELOG conducted a PRVT for Kenya's presidential elections. The official results stated that the leading candidate had won 50.7% of the votes, narrowly passing the threshold to avoid a runoff election. The official results fell within the PRVT margin of error, meaning the PRVT verified the official results of the election. However, the threshold for a runoff also fell within the margin of error for the leading candidate's vote share. ELOG's statement carefully navigated these dynamics.



The Official Results are Consistent with Elections Observation Group's Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)

9th March 2013

Background

The Elections Observation Group (ELOG) is a permanent national platform composed of civil society and faith-based organizations committed to promote citizen participation in the electoral processes, through non-partisan, impartial domestic observation and objective reporting of elections.

ELOG has been closely monitoring the pre election environment processes since June 2012 during which 542 long term observers were deployed to observe and report on the pre-election environment. Our primary goal in collecting this valuable information is to contribute to a peaceful election and to enhance the integrity of the election process.

We deployed 580 constituency supervisors and over 7000 observers in all the 290 constituencies. Out of these, approximately 1000 were deployed as Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) observers in sampled polling stations to enable ELOG to confidently comment on electoral processes and also provide an independent verification of the results announced by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC). The PVT observers were deployed to a nationally representative sample of polling streams in all of the 290 constituencies.

PVT involves deploying highly trained, accredited observers to a representative random sample of polling streams to assess the conduct of the voting and counting process as well as to verify the official vote count. Unlike exit polls, PVT does not involve observers asking voters for whom they voted. PVT observers record the official figures as announced by the presiding officers at the sampled polling streams. The official vote counts from the representative random sample of polling streams are subjected to rigorous integrity checks and then analyzed to draw projections.

ELOG successfully conducted a PVT for the 2010 referendum on the Constitution. In the African elections, PVT has been applied successfully in countries such as Nigeria (2011& 2012), Ghana (2008& 2012), Uganda (2011) and Zambia (2008& 2012). In most of these exercises, the PVT helped to reduce mistrust in the tallying process by providing rapid independent verification of the voting process.

ELOG's 2013 PVT employed a nationally representative, random sample of 1000 polling streams drawn by experienced statisticians from the official list of polling streams provided by the IEBC. The sample contains polling streams in all 290 constituencies.

Election Day Process

Opening and Setup

With a few cases of late opening of polling streams, ELOG was generally satisfied with opening and setup process. We were equally satisfied with the security measures in place and the availability of strategic materials.

Voting

Our findings noted that the voting process generally went well albeit with some challenges, namely; malfunctioning of the electronic poll books and a high number of assisted voters.

Closing and Counting

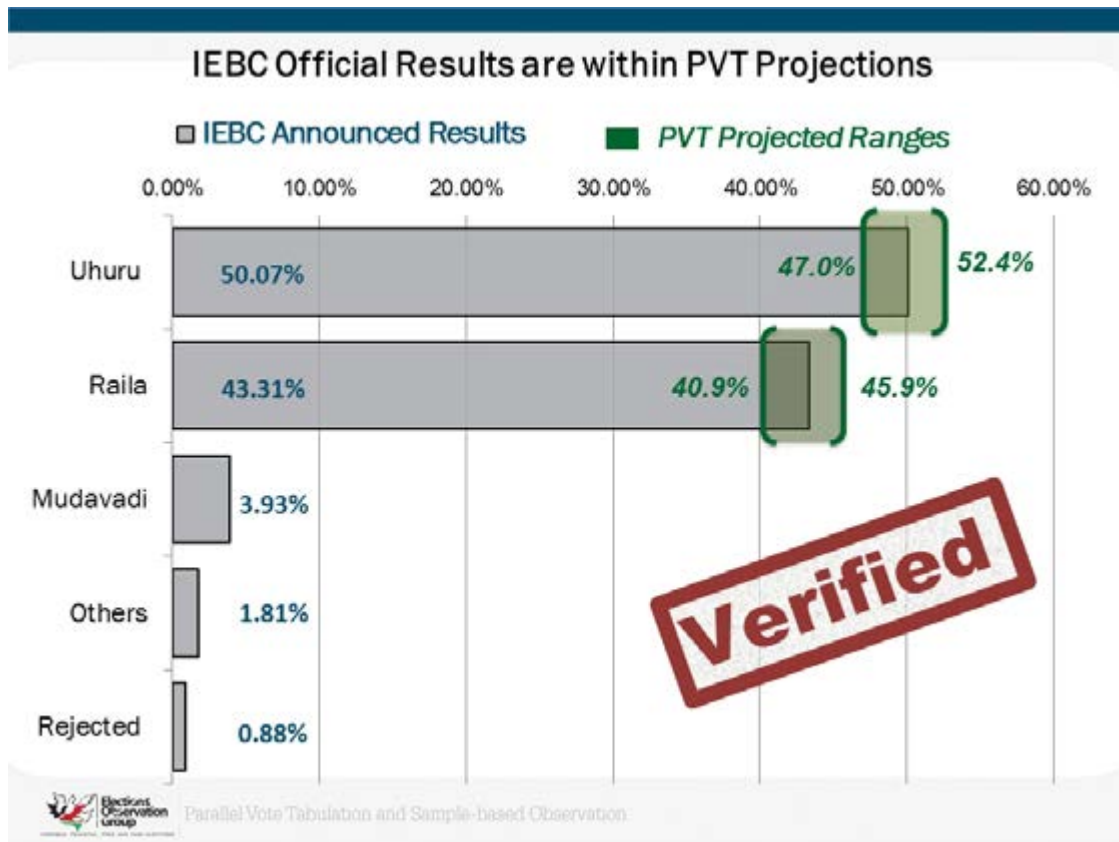
On the closing and counting process, our findings indicated as follows:

- An ODM/WIPER party agent (representing the CORD coalition) was present in 87.9% of all the polling streams. Where they were present, the ODM/WIPER agent signed the declaration of results for the presidential elections in 94.9% of these polling streams.
- A TNA/URP party agent (Representing the Jubilee Coalition) was present in 90.0% of all the polling streams. Where they were present, the TNA/URP agent signed the declaration of results for the presidential elections in 95.6% of these polling streams.
- A UDF party agent was present in 60.8% of all the polling streams. Where they were present, the UDF agent signed the declaration of results for the presidential elections in 87.6% of these polling streams.
- Agents from other parties were present in 88.5% of all the polling streams. Where they were present, they signed the declaration of results for the presidential elections in 88.3% of these polling streams.
- A copy of the presidential results form (Form 34) was affixed publicly outside of many polling streams (89.1%).

ELOG 2013 PVT Results and Final Turnout

IEBC's official results are consistent with ELOG's PVT projections. ELOG wishes to note and to remind all Kenyans that it is the IEBC which is constitutionally mandated to declare and announce the *final, official* results of the elections. Based on the PVT, ELOG has verified that the IEBC results fall within our projected range for all the eight presidential candidates.

Below are the ranges projected by the ELOG PVT for each of the candidates. These ranges are determined by the PVT estimates and the margins of error. Please note that the official result announced by the IEBC for each candidate falls within the range projected by the PVT. Thus, the PVT can confidently verify that the official result for each candidate is accurate.



Comparison of PVT Projections with Official IEBC Results

Candidate	PVT Projection	Margin of Error	Range		Official IEBC Result
			Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
Kenyatta Uhuru	49.7%	2.7%	47.0%	52.4%	50.07%
Odinga Raila	43.4%	2.5%	40.9%	45.9%	43.31%
Mudavadi Musalia	4.2%	0.8%	3.4%	5.0%	3.93%
Peter Kenneth	0.6%	0.1%	0.5%	0.7%	0.59%
Dida Mohamed	0.5%	0.1%	0.4%	0.6%	0.43%
Karua Martha Wangari	0.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.36%
Kiyiapi James	0.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	0.33%
Legilisho					
Muite Paul Kibugi	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.10%
Rejected	0.9%	0.1%	0.8%	0.9%	0.88%

Turnout

The PVT projection for final turnout is 85.6% with a margin of error of +/- 1.7% is consistent with the IEBC's results of 85.9%.

In Conclusion:

ELOG is confident that the Election Day process has been generally credible. We call on the IEBC to immediately make public any information relevant and material to the results as announced. **More specifically, we call on the IEBC to make public the individual results (Form 34) from all polling streams.**

We urge any party or person who may feel aggrieved by the outcome of the elections to seek redress through the courts of law. We call upon the courts to act expeditiously on any complaints that may be filed, and apply fairness which is essential to ensure equal protection of the law and the guarantee of effective peaceful redress. ELOG will continue to observe the process as it unfolds.

We congratulate Kenyans for making history by turning out in large numbers to exercise their right to vote. We want to acknowledge the peaceful manner with which Kenyans have conducted themselves and urge that peace continues to prevail.

May we dwell in unity, peace and liberty.

God Bless Kenya

Thank You

2020 Côte d'Ivoire Presidential Election - Indigo

For Côte d'Ivoire's 2020 presidential election, Indigo deployed observers for a PRVT. The PRVT showed that a large proportion of polling stations did not open due to violence, and Indigo's pre-election observation showed that violence and intimidation marred the overall election environment as well. Indigo issued a statement on the day after election day to share their overall findings.



PTI ADVOCACY GROUP PRESS RELEASE

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT **2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

Sunday, November 1, 2020

AN ELECTION MARRED BY VIOLENCE THAT DID NOT ALLOW FOR BROAD, PEACEFUL PARTICIPATION

Despite public authorities' efforts to guarantee a secure vote, the opposition's calls for an 'active boycott', the extreme volatility of the socio-political context, the relative psychosis that gripped many localities in the country, isolating people in their homes, the proliferation of acts of violence and vandalism, the logistical difficulties in deploying election materials and the large number of polling stations that could not open in certain districts of the country did not allow for broad, peaceful participation for a significant portion of the population.

BACKGROUND

The first round of the presidential election of October 31, 2020 took place in a relatively volatile environment strongly affecting the serenity of the vote. In fact, the long-term observation of the political and electoral process, carried out by Indigo Côte d'Ivoire (Initiative for Dialogue and Participatory Action Research in Côte d'Ivoire) across the country, noted numerous pre-election security incidents linked to the call for civil disobedience against a "new mandate" for the incumbent President, and the rejection of the candidacies of certain opposition leaders. This state of affairs contributed to a serious deterioration of cohesion within communities in many different localities. A large number of towns and villages throughout the country have been the scene of violent confrontations between populations, on the one hand, and between populations and law enforcement agencies, on the other. This upsurge of political violence at the community level remains, without a doubt, one of the main risk factors to be considered throughout the electoral process.

In view of this deleterious context, the PTI Advocacy Group made recommendations aimed at urging the various parties to dialogue and consultation, in order to guarantee the rights and freedoms of supporters of each political tendency, in particular the right to vote and to demonstrate.

Yesterday, Saturday, October 31, 2020, the presidential election was organized by the Independent Electoral Commission (*Commission Électorale Indépendante* - CEI). As planned, the PTI Advocacy Group, through Indigo Côte d'Ivoire, deployed nearly 1,000 observers for election day monitoring.



METHODOLOGY

As part of its program, Indigo Côte d'Ivoire, by way of the PTI Advocacy Group, has conducted a long-term citizen observation mission, deploying 120 departmental observers since March 2020. These trained and CEI-accredited observers covered the entire pre-election period from March to October 2020.

To observe the October 31, 2020 elections, Indigo Côte d'Ivoire has recruited, trained and deployed 750 fixed observers, 47% of whom are women and 63% of whom are young people, responsible for monitoring voting operations inside polling stations, and 120 mobile observers responsible for scrutinizing the socio-political and security environment in which the polls took place. Election day observation followed a systematic methodology that guarantees the representativeness of observation data at the national level.

This press release is based on the reports of **99% of Indigo Côte d'Ivoire observers deployed in the field on election day.**

OBSERVATIONS OF THE DAY

An election is the moment when a society comes together to experience and live out democracy, but the context that prevailed on election day, October 31, 2020, shows that a large segment of the Ivorian population did not experience this election in peace.

Indigo Côte d'Ivoire notes that **23% of polling stations** nationwide remained closed all day. The disturbances observed, notably barricades that paralyzed some areas, threats to CEI agents, and attacks on polling centers that led to the destruction of election materials, are the reasons for the systematic non-opening of these polling stations. CEI agents who were warned of the threat resorted in some cases to relocating polling stations without taking the necessary measures to inform voters. The districts most affected by polling stations that could not open were those of Goh-Djiboua, Lacs, Lagunes, Sassandra-Marahoué, Yamoussoukro, and the Vallée du Bandama.

The voting process was marred by major security incidents. **In 5% of polling stations** observers reported cases of intimidation, harassment, or violence against CEI agents. Attacks on polling stations, where materials were destroyed, and threats to the security of election officials led to the early closure of polling stations before the prescribed closing time. Observers from Indigo Côte d'Ivoire reported that **15% of polling stations** closed before 5:30 p.m. In **6% of polling stations**, voting was suspended before the counting and announcement of results could be completed.

1% of observers reported observing incidents of intimidation, harassment, or violence during the count, and in 1% of polling stations the Indigo Côte d'Ivoire observer was turned away from the station just before or during the counting process. **2% of observers** reported that the counting process could not take place inside the polling station. Representatives of RHDP



candidate Alassane Ouattara were present during the counting process in **66% of polling stations, compared to 15% for independent candidate** Kouadio Konan Bertin. In accordance with their watchword, representatives of opposition candidates Henri Konan Bédié and Pascal Affi N'Guessan were not present in the polling stations.

From this citizen observation, it emerges that the areas affected by the systematic non-opening of polling stations during the day constitute a significant part of the Ivorian electorate who were unable to freely express their right to vote or, for those who were able to do so, it was in a context of fear and anxiety.

PTI Advocacy Group observers also monitored hate speech and disinformation on social media on election day.

Thus, **184 instances of hate speech** were collected from 14 groups, pages and profiles, of which 57% came from groups and 32% from individual pages. Profanity and defamation still dominate the world of hate speech. However, threats, open or veiled, associated with incitement to murder and revolt reveal that the protagonists have taken a new step in the move to action. In fact, at least **2 out of 10 instances of hate speech were either threats or incitement to murder.**

With respect to online disinformation, observers noted a persistence of contextually incorrect content whose objective was to make people believe that something happened when in fact it did not. This is, for example, the case of the alleged presence of ECOWAS observers in Gagnoa, while the images used were actually connected to their visit to the Lycée Classique, a high school in Abidjan. Another tendency observed consisted of attributing untruthful and unsourced remarks to certain political figures, including Mr. Soro Guillaume and Mr. Mamadou Koulibaly, after the polls closed. There were also manipulated visuals, among others. Several maps of incidents were, according to political affiliations, widely distributed in the afternoon of Saturday, October 31, 2020. These maps, which presented some indicators of the election climate in the different areas of the country, were likely to sow confusion in people's minds. In addition, false alarms fueled, for the most part, by rumors tending to point out certain major incidents that occurred in certain localities circulated in most of the partisan and general discussion forums. This was the case, for example, with the alleged burning of the Royal Palace in Sakassou.

391 incidents were recorded and verified on election day by Indigo Côte d'Ivoire

Five (05) incidents of violence against Indigo Côte d'Ivoire observers were recorded in Guiberoua, Jacqueville, Yamoussoukro, and Divo. These individuals were attacked by demonstrators and suffered verbal and physical violence because of their involvement in citizen election observation.



Incidents of intimidation and violence during the voting and counting process were observed in Daloa, Grand-Bassam, Lakota, and Abobo. In addition, observers reported suspicions of ballot box stuffing in some polling stations in the localities of Abobo, Fresco, Bondoukou, Tiébissou, Cocody, Sassandra, Dabou, Zouan-Hounien, Sinfra, Bouaké, Guiglo, and Yamoussoukro.

Incidents of violence in connection with the active boycott launched by the opposition degenerated into community clashes with loss of human life and significant material damage, notably in Sakassou, Oumé, Tiébissou, Gagnoa, Saïoua, Yamoussoukro and Yopougon Kouté.

Observers also indicated that people who did not have the required documents and were not registered on the polling station's list of voters were authorized to vote in Arrah, Abobo, Adjamé, Cocody, Marcory, Tiassalé, Man, Daloa, Issia, Sinfra and Vavoua.

Conversely, Indigo Côte d'Ivoire observers recorded a significantly lower number of incidents in the districts of Denguele, Woroba, Savanes, and Zanzan. In these localities, apart from a few logistical challenges, voting went relatively well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of this electoral process marked by violence and which did not allow for broad and peaceful participation, the PTI Advocacy Group makes the following recommendations:

TO THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (CEI)

- Proceed with the publication of an exhaustive list of polling centers and polling stations that did not open on election day;
- Proceed with the publication of the results, polling station by polling station, in a format that facilitates analysis of this data and within a reasonable period of time;
- Promote collaboration by facilitating the access and permanent presence of observation missions to polling sites and by communicating, if necessary, special dispensations to the agents on site so as to eliminate any suspicion of opacity around the operations;

TO POLITICAL PARTIES

- Urgently establish a framework for inclusive political dialogue to prevent another election-related crisis;
- Prioritize an inclusive dialogue among political actors in order to establish the necessary conditions for the organization of credible, inclusive and peaceful elections;
- Call on their supporters to show restraint, respect for human life and for public and private property;
- Urge their supporters to renounce provocation and to cultivate political tolerance;



TO THE POPULATION

- Refrain from hate speech inciting violence and murder and avoid disseminating information calling for violence, hate speech and false news on social networks and any other platform of exchange.
- Refrain from engaging in violent acts that endanger peace and social cohesion.

Abidjan, November 1, 2020
THE PTI ADVOCACY GROUP

This is an English translation of the original statement in French.

Example Election Day Minute-by-Minute Plans

Sample Timeline

Note: The below timeline is adapted from an example used by a citizen election observation organization. Names and identifying information have been redacted.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
6:00	Data center opens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » SMS PRVT team » PRVT center coordinators
6:30	Arrival of the rest of the team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Project team
6:45	SMS 1 starts	
7:00	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
7:15	Data quality checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » SMS PRVT team » Data clerks
7:15	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Data analysis team
7:15	Summary of incidents shared with Field supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » PRVT manager
7:30	SMS 2 starts	
7:45	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
8:15	Data quality checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » SMS PRVT team

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
8:15	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	» Data analysis team
8:15	Summary of incidents shared with field supervisors	» PRVT manager
8:30	Press release developed	» PRVT panel
8:45	Press release printing	» Logistics team
8:45	Translation and visuals developed	» Communications team
9:15	Press conference at press center (live steam on Facebook)	» Communications lead » Executive Director
9:20	Press release with visuals send to media	» Communications team
9:20	Press release sent to embassies and the international community (English version)	» Communications team
9:20	Shared info on social media and upload on website	» Communications team
10:00	SMS 3 starts	
10:15	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	» Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
10:20	First call to observers	» Operators
10:30	Data quality checks	» SMS PRVT team
10:30	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	» Data analysis team
10:30	Summary of incidents shared with Field supervisors	» PRVT manager
10:40	Press release developed	» PRVT panel
10:45	Translation and visuals developed	» Communications team

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
10:50	Press release printing	» Logistics team
11:10	Press conference at press center (live steam on Facebook)	» Communications lead » Executive Director
11:10	Press release with visuals send to media	» Communications team
11:15	Press release sent to embassies and the international community (English version)	» Communications team
11:15	Shared info on social media and upload on website	» Communications team
11:30	Data center open for tours for invited guests (continue until 18:00)	» Executive Director » PRVT Manager » Communications Lead
13:00	SMS 4 starts	
13:15	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	» Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
13:20	Second call to observers	» Operators
13:30	Data quality checks	» SMS PRVT team
13:30	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	» Data analysis team
13:30	Summary of incidents shared with Field supervisors	» PRVT manager
13:40	Press release developed	» PRVT panel
13:45	Translation and visuals developed	» Communications team
14:00	Press release	» Communications lead » Executive Director
14:10	Press release with visuals send to media	» Communications team

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
14:15	Press release sent to embassies and the international community (English version)	» Communications team
14:15	Shared info on social media and upload on website	» Communications team
16:00	SMS 5 starts	
16:15	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	» Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
16:20	Third call to observers	» Operators
16:30	Data quality checks	» SMS PRVT team
16:30	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	» Data analysis team
16:30	Summary of incidents shared with Field supervisors	» PRVT manager
16:40	Press release developed	» PRVT panel
16:45	Translation and visuals developed	» Communications team
16:50	Press release printing	» Logistics team
17:10	Press conference at press center (live steam on Facebook)	» Communications lead » Executive Director
17:10	Press release with visuals send to media	» Communications team
17:15	Press release sent to embassies and the international community (English version)	» Communications team
17:15	Shared info on social media and upload on website	» Communications team
18:00	SMS 6 starts	

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
18:00	Data center closed to guests	
18:15	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » Project team » PRVT panel
18:20	Fourth call to observers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators
18:30	Data quality checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » SMS PRVT team
18:30	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Data analysis team
18:30	Summary of incidents shared with field supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » PRVT manager
18:40	Press release developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » PRVT panel
18:45	Translation and visuals developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communications team
18:50	Press release printing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Logistics team
19:10	Press conference at press center (live steam on Facebook)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communications lead » Executive Director
19:10	Press release with visuals send to media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communications team
19:15	Press release sent to embassies and the international community (English version)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communications team
19:15	Shared info on social media and upload on website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Communications team
19:30	SMS 7, 8 and 9 start	
19:30+	Fifth call to observers (upon receiving SMS 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators
TBD	Data in + summary of incidents (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Operators » Project team » PRVT panel

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
TBD	Data quality checks	» SMS PRVT team
TBD	Example incidents selected for statement to support PRVT findings	» Data analysis team
TBD	Press release developed	» PRVT panel
TBD	Translation and visuals developed	» Communications team
TBD	Press release printing	» Logistics team
TBD	Press conference at press center (live steam on Facebook)	» Communications lead » Executive Director
TBD	Press release with visuals send to media	» Communications team
TBD	Press release sent to embassies and the international community (English version)	» Communications team
TBD	Shared info on social media and upload on website	» Communications team

Chronogramme du Quartier General de la POECI (POECI Headquarters Timetable)

CHRONOGRAMME DU QUARTIER GENERAL DE LA POECI

Vendredi 12 oct – Deuxième exercice de simulation

07h00	Ouverture du centre de collecte des données
07h30	Agent(e)s de collecte des données arrivent – équipe du matin – pour le premier exercice de simulation
08h00	Commencement du deuxième exercice de simulation (08h00 à 17h00)
08h00	L'équipe du matin se met au travail
08h00	Formation supplémentaire sur la base des données pour les agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe du matin
08h45	Pause-café
09h00	Comoé, Goh-Djiboua et Zanzan – les observateur(trice)s envoient leurs SMS (Rappel en masse par SMS)
09h15	Appels à ceux qui n'ont pas envoyé leurs SMS ou ont envoyé des messages incomplets – observateur(trice)s de Comoé, Goh-Djiboua et Zanzan
10h00	Lacs, Savanes et Woroba – les observateur(trice)s envoient leurs SMS (Rappel en masse par SMS)
10h15	Appels à ceux qui n'ont pas envoyé leurs SMS ou ont envoyé des messages incomplets – observateur(trice)s de Lacs, Savanes et Woroba
11h00	Lagunes et Vallée du Bandama - les observateur(trice)s envoient leurs SMS (Rappel en masse par SMS)
11h15	Appels à ceux qui n'ont pas envoyé leurs SMS ou ont envoyé des messages incomplets – observateur(trice)s de Lagunes et Vallée du Bandama
12h00	Fin du travail – équipe du matin
12h00	Déboursement des primes de transport aux agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe du matin
13h00	Déjeuner
13h00	Agent(e)s de collecte des données arrivent – équipe de l'après-midi – pour le premier exercice de simulation
13h00	L'équipe de l'après-midi se met au travail
13h15	Formation supplémentaire sur la base des données pour les agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe de l'après-midi
14h00	Formation équipe de gestion des incidents
14h00	Abidjan - les observateur(trice)s envoient leurs SMS (Rappel en masse par SMS)
14h15	Appels à ceux qui n'ont pas envoyé leurs SMS ou ont envoyé des messages incomplets – observateur(trice)s d'Abidjan

15h00	Montagnes et Sassandra-Marahoué - les observateur(trice)s envoient leurs SMS (Rappel en masse par SMS)
15h15	Appels à ceux qui n'ont pas envoyé leurs SMS ou ont envoyé des messages incomplets – observateur(trice)s de Montagnes et Sassandra-Marahoué
16h00	Bas-Sassandra, Denguélé et Yamoussoukro - les observateur(trice)s envoient leurs SMS (Rappel en masse par SMS)
16h15	Appels à ceux qui n'ont pas envoyé leurs SMS ou ont envoyé des messages incomplets – observateur(trice)s de Bas-Sassandra, Denguélé et Yamoussoukro
17h00	Fin du travail – équipe de l'après-midi
17h00	Fin du deuxième exercice de simulation
17h00	Déboursement des primes de transport aux agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe de l'après-midi
17h00	Pause-café
17h00	Point du deuxième exercice de simulation et remarques
18h00	Dernières préparations (Uniquement les gestionnaires et l'équipe TIC)
Le soir	SMS en masse de remerciement pour le premier exercice de simulation

Samedi 13 octobre – Election Day

05h00	Ouverture du centre de collecte des données
05h30	Arrivée des agents de collecte des données – équipe du matin – et superviseur(e)s du district (Car de ramassage prévu)
05h30	(Envoi des SMS de masse pour réveiller les observateurs(trices))
06h00	L'équipe du matin se met au travail
06h00	(Envoi des SMS de masse rappelant aux observateurs(trices) de se rendre aux bureaux de vote)
07h10	Délai fixé pour envoyer le premier SMS (d'arrivée) (rappel en masse par SMS)
07h15	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé le premier SMS (d'arrivée)
08h00	Délai prévu pour l'ouverture des bureaux de vote
08h30	Délai en principe pour envoyer le 2 ^e SMS (d'ouverture) (rappel en masse par SMS)
08h45	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets pour le 2 ^e rapport (d'ouverture)
09h00	Pause-Café
09h30	Appeler les observateurs(trices) pour vérifier les données (le cas échéant)
11h30	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé le 2 ^e SMS (d'ouverture)
12h00	Délai fixé pour envoyer le SMS de 12h00 et le SMS de démarrage si le bureau de vote n'a pas encore démarré (rappel en masse par SMS)

12h15	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé le SMS de 12h00 ou qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets
13h00	Appeler les observateurs(trices) pour vérifier les données (le cas échéant)
13h00	Déjeuner
14h00	Possibilité de faire sortir un communiqué de presse de mi-journée
16h00	Fin du travail pour l'équipe du matin – Paiement des transports
16h00	Les agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe du matin – partent
16h00	Arrivée de l'équipe de l'après-midi
16h00	Commencement du travail pour l'équipe de l'après-midi
16h30	Pause-Café
18h00	Délai prévu pour les bureaux de vote de se fermer
18h00	Délai en principe pour envoyer le 3 ^e SMS (du vote) (rappel en masse par SMS)
18h15	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé le 3 ^e SMS (du vote) ou qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets
20h00	Dîner pour une moitié des agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe de l'après-midi – et d'autre personnel
21h00	Dîner pour l'autre moitié des agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe de l'après-midi – et d'autre personnel
Le soir	Délai fixé pour envoyer le 4 ^e SMS (de dépouillement) (rappel en masse par SMS)
Le soir	Délai fixé pour envoyer le 5 ^e SMS (de l'annonce des résultats) (rappel en masse par SMS)
Le soir	Délai fixé pour envoyer le 6 ^e SMS (des résultats officiels) (rappel en masse par SMS)
Le soir	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé le 4 ^e SMS (de dépouillement) ou qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets
Le soir	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé le 5 ^e SMS (de l'annonce des résultats) ou qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets
Le soir	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé le 6 ^e SMS (des résultats officiels) ou qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets
Le soir	Appeler les observateurs(trices) pour vérifier les données (le cas échéant)
Le soir	Préparation de la conférence de presse sur le déroulement du processus
01h00	Le centre de collecte des données ferme
01h00	Agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe de l'après-midi – et superviseur(e)s de district partent (car de ramassage prévu)
La nuit	SMS en masse sur la fermeture du centre de collecte des données

Dimanche 14 oct – Le lendemain de l'élection

06h00	Ouverture du centre de collecte des données
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06h30	Arrivée des agents de collecte des données – équipe du matin – et superviseur(e)s du district
07h00	L'équipe du matin se met au travail
07h00	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé des SMS ou qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets
07h00	Appeler les observateurs(trices) pour vérifier les données (le cas échéant)
08h00	Pause-Café
09h00	Briefing du board (Conseil d'administration et coordination) pour préparer la conférence de presse
11h30	Début de la Conférence de Presse (11h30 à 12h30)
11h30	SMS de masse sur la conférence de presse
12h30	Arrivée des agent(e)s de collecte des données - équipe de l'après-midi
13h00	Fin du travail pour l'équipe du matin
13h00	Déboursement des primes de transport aux agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe du matin
13h00	Déboursement des primes aux agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe du matin
13h00	Déjeuner
13h00	Commencement du travail pour l'équipe de l'après-midi
13h00	Appeler les observateurs(trices) qui n'ont pas envoyé des SMS ou qui ont envoyé des SMS incomplets
13h00	Appeler les observateurs(trices) pour vérifier les données (le cas échéant)
14h00	Pause-Café
18h00	Fin du travail pour l'équipe de l'après-midi
18h00	Déboursement des primes de transport aux agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe de l'après-midi
18h00	Déboursement des primes aux agent(e)s de collecte des données – équipe de l'après-midi
Le soir	SMS en masse de remerciement

Sample Final Report Table of Contents

CODEO Ghana, 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

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