

Presidential and Parliamentary Elections 2008

Assisting Georgia: Promoting International Standards

Autumn 2008



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Why coordination?

The OSCE Mission has been engaged in election assistance coordination since the very beginning of its existence. In 2003-2004 it was one of the main managers in the multi-million Euro Georgian Election Assistance Programme. It was at this time that the OSCE jointly with UNDP first called the Technical and Ambassadorial Working Groups into existence – a model for information sharing and coordination that was repeated once again during the 2006 local and the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. Both working groups contributed decisively to the further improvement of electoral standards in Georgia.

– **Ambassador Terhi Hakala, Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia**

In Georgia the CoE has had and maintains excellent cooperation with International Organizations, NGOs, and other subjects linked to elections. Particularly the Technical and Ambassadorial Working Groups lead by OSCE and UNDP have provided an excellent opportunity to exchange knowledge and information. The fruitful coordination and cooperation created an excellent climate and insured that election related CoE activities supported but did not duplicate those of other organizations.

– **Igor Gaon, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe**

Regular exchanges of information and discussion about election issues were essential during each of the 2008 elections. This approach avoided duplication of efforts and helped us all to work efficiently. In particular, the Technical and Ambassadorial Working Groups lead by OSCE and UNDP, provided ongoing feedback to the election administration well before the Election Day and this helped to improve many aspects including the publication of election results.

– **Mary O’Hagan, Director of NDI**

The international community demonstrated exemplary cooperation and coordination in assisting electoral processes in Georgia. Effective interaction both at ambassadorial and technical levels, which was led by the UNDP and the OSCE, helped ensure the international community speaking in one voice. The coordination of efforts facilitated concrete steps toward furthering the goal of free, fair and transparent elections in Georgia. It ensured adequate funding for the electoral processes at the same time avoiding duplication of activities.

– **Robert Watkins, UN Resident Coordinator**

The election is a complex event with different aspects and players. Political parties, media, election administration, governmental, non-governmental, international and multinational organizations and diplomatic corpus are conducting various activities within a limited time period. In this context the coordination of activities is especially important. The Ambassadorial and Technical Working Groups organized jointly by OSCE and UNDP successfully played this role during both the presidential and parliamentary elections. The working groups were a place for exchanging ideas and information and for planning future activities to promote free and fair elections in Georgia.

– **Levan Tarkhishvili, Head of the Central Election Commission**

Georgia is a new democracy that needs to develop democratic institutions and processes. Fair and transparent elections are the basic precondition for such development. Despite 17 years of experience in holding elections, effective coordination between state, non-state, and international actors was the crucial element in the success of the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. Notwithstanding the shortcomings of these recent elections, past elections literally could not be successfully organised because such coordination and experience sharing did not exist.

– **Giorgi Chkheidze, Chairman of the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association**

Coordination and Cooperation – Key to Successful Election Assistance



The 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections were a challenge to the international community – a challenge that was successfully met. This was mainly due to the fact that the main actors in the donor community with their specific programmes, interests, concepts, structures and procedures coordinated their election assistance activities.

Under the leadership of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, key donors met on a regular basis to agree on policy issues. Programme activities were coordinated within the framework of the OSCE-led Technical Working Group. A matrix was drafted outlining key challenges to the electoral processes and indicating best practice solutions offered by key election stakeholders.

These efforts were complemented by numerous project-related meetings such as those of the EC Delegation focusing on the coordination of operations in minority regions and of the CEC furthering the alignment of election administration training programmes.

All of these efforts fostered dialogue among donors and between donors and partners and contributed to effective and sustainable coordination and cooperation among all election stakeholders.

Nevertheless, all actors continue to strive for even more efficient delivery of assistance. Donors, partners and beneficiaries are committed to coordination of their programmes, projects and activities. Building up on best practices and lessons learned they aim at developing long-term assistance strategies.

This brochure, with chapters and pictures contributed by respective donors and partners, provides an overview of election assistance being rendered during the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2008.

Key donors

Council of Europe	Estonia
European Commission	Germany
International Foundation for Electoral Systems	Latvia
International Republican Institute	Lithuania
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs	Poland
OSCE Mission to Georgia	Switzerland
Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency	Ukraine
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	United Kingdom
Soros Foundation	United States of America
UNDP	
USAID	

Table of Content

Key Stakeholders	5
Central Election Commission	6
Council of Europe	8
European Commission	11
OSCE Mission to Georgia	13
United Nations Development Programme	15
United States Agency for International Development	17
Outstanding Projects	21
Educating and Informing Voters	23
Professionalizing the Election Administration	29
Streamlining the Complaints and Appeals Process	33
Monitoring the Use of Administrative Resources	37
Further Improving the Voters' List	41
Facilitating the Timely Publication of Election Results	45
Observing the Electoral Process	51
Promoting a Code of Conduct for Political Parties	55
Ensuring Minority Rights	59
Furthering Participation in the Elections	65
Public Opinion and Elections	69
Outlook	75
Annexes	77
Election Assistance – Overview of Identified Problems and Responses	78
Important Web Links	88
Contact Information of Principal Donors and Partners	89

Abbreviations

ABA/CEELI	American Bar Association/Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative
CEC	Central Election Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
CRA	Civil Registry Agency
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Center
DEC	District Election Commission
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EC	European Commission
ECMI	European Centre for Minority Issues
GYLA	Georgian Young Lawyers Association
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IRI	International Republican Institute
ISFED	International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
nGnl	new Generation new Initiative
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIMD	Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSGF	Open Society Georgia Foundation
PEC	Precinct Election Commission
PSA	Public Service Announcement
PVT	Parallel Vote Tabulation
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Sida	Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency
TI Georgia	Transparency International Georgia
UNAG	UN Association of Georgia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Venice Commission
YRI	Young Republican Institute

Key Stakeholders

In this Section:

Central Election Commission	6
Council of Europe	8
European Commission	11
OSCE Mission to Georgia	13
United Nations Development Programme	15
United States Agency for International Development	17

Central Election Commission



What did we aim to achieve?

The 2008 presidential elections were held under extreme time constraints. Consequently, a number of shortcomings were noted by local and international observers. The Central Election Commission examined all relevant comments and recommendations in detail and undertook appropriate measures to tackle these deficiencies in the parliamentary elections. The main aim of the election administration was to minimize the problems that occurred during the presidential elections to enable it to move forward toward free and fair elections.

What were our programme components?

Despite the short timeframe to prepare the Parliamentary Elections of 21 May 2008, the CEC carried out a wide range of reforms in order to improve its legal and procedural framework. The five main components of this reform were:

- Simplification and improvement of complaint procedures;
- Raising the professionalism of commissioners through training;
- Increasing public awareness about parliamentary elections through voters' education and information;
- Making further improvements to the voters' list;
- Upgrading the system of election result tabulation and announcement.

Who were our implementing partners?

To achieve these goals the CEC identified local and international partners, namely:

- UNDP and IFES for the training component;
- OSCE, VC, GYLA, ISFED, TI Georgia and nGnI for complaint procedures;
- IFES, NDI and the Estonian Government for tabulation and announcement of election results;
- GYLA, UNDP, and IFES for raising public awareness;
- IFES, CoE and ISFED for improvement of the voters' list.

What did we accomplish?

Election Code Reform: Between elections, the CEC was actively involved in election code reform. As a result, the Organic Law "Election Code of Georgia" was amended and CEC regulations introduced. All these measures aimed at simplifying procedures and clarifying instructions to all levels of the election administration. The key improvements were:

- Reducing the threshold for political parties from 7% to 5%;
- Abolishing additional voter lists and E-day registration of voters;
- Increasing the number of DEC members from 5 to 13, in order to include representatives of opposition parties;
- Increasing DEC authority;
- Simplifying the protocol that PEC members had to fill out on election night;
- Streamlining and simplifying the complaints and appeals procedures;
- Reducing the number of signatures for registration of a political party from 50,000 to 30,000 (less than 1% of the total voters);
- Granting observers and other election stakeholders access to video camera footage recorded at the PEC level;
- Increasing the rights of domestic observers to observe elections in every precinct.

Training of Election Officials: For free, fair and transparent elections a competent and impartial election administration is essential. For this purpose a comprehensive training program was implemented. Staff members of the election administration at all levels and members of District and Precinct Commissions – more than 50,000 commission members overall – participated in training sessions on voting and counting procedures, complaints lodging procedures, relations with observers, etc. The training program was organized jointly by CEC, UNDP and IFES.

Special trainings were provided to judges who were assigned to deal with election-related complaints and appeals. CEC organized a special one day workshop for representatives of registered political parties and observer organizations, as well as representatives of accredited media.

Improvement of the Voters' Lists: Special attention was paid to further improvement of the voters' list. Citizens had the opportunity to check their names on the list on the CEC website, by calling the CEC hotline, or through SMS. The CEC gave the electronic version of the voters' list to all political parties. At the request of the opposition parties, the CEC extended the deadline for checking the voters' list for three days. Nearly 30,000 duplications and 10,000 deceased voters were removed from the voters' list and 42,000 entries were corrected.

Confidence Building of Election Stakeholders: The CEC signed a memorandum with four Georgian NGOs reflecting a common interpretation of the Electoral Code's provisions on the use of administrative resources and participation of officials in campaigning. This memorandum will likely serve as a model for similar joint actions.

Under the initiative of IFES, CEC introduced a Code of Conduct for its members. The code outlined the rights and obligations of Commission Members. They committed to be neutral and objective in accomplishing their duties and duly protect voters' rights. The DEC and PEC Commission Members signed similar documents.

The CEC launched a wide-ranging media campaign aimed at better informing the Georgian public on election rules and procedures. Outreach campaigns focused especially on minority populated areas. The CEC provided information material, ballot papers, and voters' lists in minority languages and in Braille.

Publishing of Election Results: The May 2008 Election Day confirmed the effectiveness of the undertaken reforms. One of the major innovations was the direct transmission of PEC results to the CEC: as soon as it was received by the central computer via fax, each protocol was displayed on a monitor in the operation room and in the media centre, making the entire process transparent.

Additionally, the new procedure of receiving and examining complaints, developed in cooperation with OSCE experts, significantly improved interaction of the election administration and the courts with observer organisations and political parties.

Where do we want to go?

Continued and close cooperation between the election administration and domestic and international election stakeholders is essential for further improvement of the electoral process – both in the field of election legislation and of technical assistance. The CEC looks forward to further developing partnerships with all election stakeholders as they are keys to increasing the implementation of international election standards.

Council of Europe

Programme: Action Plan to Support Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia in 2008

Cost: Euro 417,780

Duration: September 2007 – December 2008



What did we aim to achieve?

The Council of Europe (CoE) is an intergovernmental organization whose principal aim is the protection of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law. The CoE has established co-operation and assistance programs for the new member states to allow them to draw on the Council's experience. For the CoE, elections are an important step in the process of democratization since they provide an opportunity for political participation; the development of political processes and media; and freedom of expression, assembly and association. Therefore, the CoE is committed to supporting electoral processes by promoting capacity building of electoral management to organize elections in compliance with international standards; funding civic/voter education programs; and deploying election observation missions. The synergies and complementarities between the two components of electoral support: pre-electoral assistance and observation, are strongly promoted taking into account the distinction between the roles and responsibilities associated with each of these activities in order to support the five principles of Europe's electoral heritage: *universal, equal, free, secret and direct suffrage*.

The main objective of the Action Plans designed by the Council of Europe to Support Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Georgia in 2008 was to strengthen the capacities of electoral stakeholders both during the pre-electoral period and in the long-term. The Action Plan was implemented in partnership with multiple institutional and civil society partners through different projects in various fields of the electoral process.

What were our programme components?

The Action Plan was composed of several projects and activities designed by the Council of Europe to improve the electoral process in Georgia and bring electoral legislation and practice closer in line with European standards. The activities included:

- delivering high-level messages to the government, opposition and electorate from the Secretary General, the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly on Council of Europe expectations regarding improvement of the electoral process;
- capacity-building activities for the Central Election Commission;
- dissemination of information and monitoring of the Door-to-Door campaign to update electoral rolls;
- dissemination of information on the process of verification of the accuracy of the voters' lists;
- distribution of materials related to elections;
- organisation of workshops concerning European electoral standards, including training of judges on electoral disputes;
- training of media professionals;
- monitoring of professional media coverage during the election campaign;
- promoting the participation of women in the electoral process;
- raising awareness of election-related activities in minority populated districts of Georgia; and conducting seminars on free and fair elections in co-operation with the Tbilisi School of Political Studies.

Who were our implementing partners?

Council of Europe activities were implemented in co-operation with the European Commission. National partners included the Georgian Central Election Commission (CEC), the Supreme Court of Georgia, the High School of Justice, the Georgian Public Broadcaster, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA), International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), International World Vision in Georgia (IWV), the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), the Tbilisi School of Political Studies, and the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD).

What did we accomplish?

Expert Advice to the CEC: Prior to the extraordinary presidential elections, the CEC sought technical assistance from the Venice Commission (VC) in the areas of voter registration, capacity building and public information. The VC expert assisted the election administration specifically in planning and training, information management, field co-ordination, logistics, procurement and security. Prior to the parliamentary elections, the Georgian Government requested a VC expert in electoral complaints and appeals procedures. This request was fulfilled by the presence of a VC expert for a period of 45 days (before, during and after the elections) to assist the electoral administration in carrying out complaints and appeals procedures.

Improving the Voters' List: In order to improve the quality of the voters' list, the CEC organised a door-to-door campaign throughout Georgia before the presidential elections. In co-operation with ISFED, the CoE supported this action by informing citizens of the upcoming door-to-door campaign through direct contact, posters, leaflets and TV spots. Also, to increase the quality of the CEC's work on the door-to-door campaign, the CoE, in co-operation with ISFED, organised monitoring of the campaign with, as required, permanent correction intervention.

A comprehensive voters' list audit was finalised in October 2008. The project was conducted in all 75 election districts in Georgia and implemented in co-operation with ISFED, which, at the same time, monitored improvement of the Unified Voters' List carried out by the CEC.

Printing and Disseminating Election Related books: During the period 2007-2008, the information office of the CoE in Tbilisi printed and disseminated the following books in order to provide education in the field of elections: "Media and Elections", "Election Evaluation Guide", "Good practice in Electoral Matters and Georgia", and "Local Elections 2006 – Lessons Learned".

Organising Events on Election Related Issues: During the period 2007-2008, the CoE conducted a series of workshops, training sessions, and conferences on different aspects of elections. In co-operation with GYLA, the CoE held workshops on the holding and supervision of elections including: rights and duties of domestic observers; basic principles of European Electoral Heritage; and, for judges, on electoral disputes with a focus on electoral complaints and appeals (in the framework of the European electoral heritage).

Seminars on free and fair elections were conducted in co-operation with the Tbilisi School of Political studies. The main goal was to draw lessons from the recent elections (presidential elections) and to analyse and popularise the conclusions of the observers' missions provoking dialogue concerning elections (more than 250 young people participated in these seminars).

Training Media Representatives: Media related training included seminars for media professionals on professional coverage of election campaigns. The goal of the seminars was to raise awareness among journalists concerning responsible coverage of election campaigns and to elaborate measures to achieve this. The CoE also organised seminars for the staff of public broadcasting services on the professional coverage of election campaigns (to raise awareness among producers and political journalists). Other activities included a conference devoted to the responsibility of media during the elections process, a television debate on the professional media coverage of election campaigns, and monitoring of professional media coverage during

the election campaign using international methodological standards of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Promoting Participation of Women in the Elections: In co-operation with International World Vision in Georgia, the CoE implemented a project: “Promotion of the Participation of Women in the Electoral Process,” to promote gender equality in Georgian public life. Four round tables with the target groups were conducted in the region of Kutaisi, Batumi and in Telavi. A TV forum was aired on a popular talk show on “Mze” TV. In addition, a social video was finalised and aired by Georgian broadcasters.

Raising Awareness Among Minorities: In minority populated districts of Georgia, election-related awareness-raising activities were implemented in co-operation with ECMI. The project was targeted at increasing both the qualification level of the lower election administrations (442 PEC members in 34 PEC) and awareness of the voters in the minority populated parts of Georgia.

Where do we want to go?

Considering that Georgia is a full-fledged member of the CoE, this organisation will continue its assistance to Georgia to ensure the building of a sustainable democracy of which free and fair elections are an important part. Therefore, the CoE will continue its activities in Georgia related to electoral issues, including preparing a legal opinion on the Electoral Code; participating in drafting a new book, “Georgian Elections 2008 – Lessons Learned”, organising observation of the local elections in Adjara by the Congress of the CoE in autumn 2008; and assisting Georgia in drafting new electoral legislation in co-operation with OSCE and UNDP and with consideration of the legal opinion drafted by VC and ODIHR.

European Commission

Programme: Instrument for Stability: Support for Increased Transparency and Credibility of Parliamentary and Regional Elections in Spring and Summer 2008

Cost: Euro 2,000,000

Duration: 18 months (May 2008 – October 2009)



What did we aim to achieve?

This intervention from the side of the Instrument for Stability was the EC's immediate response to a crisis situation, and sought to address failings in the electoral processes, media coverage and voter awareness. It built on work carried out by the EC, the Council of Europe, the OSCE Mission to Georgia, the UN and other bilateral donors during the preparation of the presidential elections.

The EC intervention aimed primarily at the strengthening of civil society to provide for fair, transparent and free electoral process. It covered not only the parliamentary elections held in May 2008, but also the elections of the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara in autumn 2008. The support helped to involve the broader society through extensive voter education and information campaigns.

The adequate preparation of the electorate and monitoring of the elections contributed to preventing the escalation of political crises into open clashes between the ruling party and the opposition due to allegations of election fraud. Since the opposition claimed widespread irregularities and fraud, notably in regions inhabited by national minorities, the intervention intensively covered those regions and assured their civic inclusion in the electoral processes by providing them with information and educative activities in their mother tongues.

What were our programme components?

With its assistance the European Commission designed a program:

- To help Georgia resolve legal and administrative problems in the pre-election phase (esp. auditing of voters' lists) as well as enhance the capacities of bodies advising on election day procedures (esp. complaints and appeals procedures);
- To ensure appropriate and adequate training for election officials as well as an intensive voter information campaign for the parliamentary elections; and
- To enhance the capacities of election monitoring bodies and to improve voter awareness throughout the electoral cycle through civic education ensuring the best possible conditions for free and fair elections.

Who were our implementing partners?

UNDP, Council of Europe, Advanced Social and Political Research Institute from the University of Latvia, BBC World Trust Service, Georgian Young Lawyers Association together with International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, Eurasia Partnership Foundation – Caucasian Research Resource Centre, and Public Movement Multinational Georgia.

What did we accomplish?

- Development of an operational training manual. Support staff (facilitators and trainers) and then staff of Precinct, District and Central Electoral Commission (PEC, DEC, CEC) were trained for the Parliamentary.

- Implementation of an extensive voter information campaign in the pre-election period which covered all regions with a combination of media spots ,which delivered voter information, Election Bus tours, a hotline consultation service and other activities (public discussion and role plays about electoral procedures and the latest Election Code amendments).
- Production of a publication summarizing the lessons learned from presidential and parliamentary elections was prepared by the Council of Europe in close cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Georgia.
- Follow-up after the elections to ensure that vote count and tabulation were done in a proper and transparent way, also that appeal and litigation procedures for complaints were observed and the election code was amended in line with experience from the parliamentary elections.
- Consultations and trainings on election reporting at the Public Broadcaster with close involvement of civil society. Following the elections the Public Broadcaster initiated a project to elaborate an information-strategy for reporting on political events.
- Preparation of analytical surveys which will be conducted to provide information about the impact and changes of voter attitudes during the 18 month period of this action. These data will be used to design and conduct adequate and comprehensive voter education programmes to be used later for civic education.
- Special voter information and election monitoring activities in minority regions in the pre-election period and on Election Day. In the post-election period special voter education programmes in minority languages were designed and conducted.

Where do we want to go?

Elections represent an important element in democratisation processes and good governance. Therefore, the European Commission according to its European Neighbourhood Policy will continue to support Georgia in improving its elections wherever possible. Special attention will be paid to the upcoming Adjara elections.

OSCE Mission to Georgia

Programme: Promoting OSCE/ODIHR Electoral Standards

Cost: 100,000 Euro per year

Duration: Ongoing – renewed on a yearly basis



What did we aim to achieve?

By joining the OSCE, Georgia has committed itself to election principles and rules agreed by the 56 OSCE participating states and outlined in the 1990 Copenhagen Document. As a reflection of this mandate, the Election/Democratisation Unit of the OSCE Mission to Georgia saw its main role as assisting Georgia in bringing its electoral processes further in line with OSCE/ODIHR standards and CoE/VC principles.



What were our programme components?

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has extensive experience in observing elections. In Georgia it has observed all elections since 1999. Once the election process has been completed, ODIHR carried out an in-depth analysis of the entire process, which it presented in its final reports describing the election's political context; the legislative framework; the performance of the election administration; voter and candidate registration; the election campaign; the media; participation of women and national minorities; and the voting, counting, and tabulation processes. The final reports provided recommendations for the host government on how the process might be improved and brought more closely into line with OSCE commitments.

Based on these recommendations the OSCE Mission designed its project work. Hereby it also took into account recommendations of other international and domestic election observation organisations. Jointly with the Georgian authorities it drew lessons learned and followed up with ODIHR recommendations. Its programmatic work focused mainly on facilitating donor coordination and information sharing at technical and ambassadorial levels, monitoring of the election administration through domestic observation organisations and providing expert advice about outstanding electoral questions (e.g. appeals and complaints).

Who were our implementing partners?

The OSCE closely cooperated with CoE/VC and ODIHR. For the implementation of projects it contracts outstanding international experts and the Georgian NGO, ISFED.

What did we accomplish?

Reform of the Election Legislation: In March-May 2007, the OSCE Mission in close cooperation with CoE ran an Election Legislation Working Group (EWG) that was chaired by the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and comprised of representatives of political parties, civil society, the Central Election Commission and Ministry of Justice. The EWG discussions led to a better understanding of the CoE/Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR commitments and principles and facilitated agreements among the political parties about electoral issues that were implemented in the December 2007 election code amendments.

Promoting Strategic Planning in the CEC: Throughout 2007 the OSCE Mission provided long-term expert advice to the Central Election Commission. The expert, staying for nearly five months in Georgia, assisted the CEC in developing a comprehensive strategic plan, in designing and implementing human resources, in strengthening the PR department and in improving

internal and external management and communication. The expert's work was complemented by ISFED monitoring of CEC and DEC activities thereby focusing on the communication and information flow between both institutions.

Chairing the Technical Working Group: The OSCE Mission held Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings on a regular basis that were attended by international and domestic organizations working directly on election issues, interested embassies and the Central Election Commission. These meetings facilitated an exchange of information on electoral assistance projects and on ongoing CEC activities.

Co-Chairing the Ambassadorial Working Group: The TWG work was complemented by meetings of the Ambassadorial Working Group (AWG), co-chaired by UN and the OSCE Mission. At these meetings OSCE Ambassadors, EU and CoE representatives received briefings about electoral issues, discussed the electoral processes with election stakeholders and formulated actions to be taken at the political level.

Holding Round Tables on Lessons Learned: After both the presidential and parliamentary elections the OSCE Mission jointly with NDI conducted a series of Round Tables on Lessons Learned with civil society actors, CEC, government officials and the opposition in order to identify gaps and to come forward with recommendations for the upcoming future elections.

Improving Complaints and Appeals Procedures: In spring 2008, another outstanding expert analysed the handling of the complaints and appeals process during the presidential elections. He came up with a set of recommendations for legislative and procedural improvements (e.g. develop templates for filing and accepting complaints) and advised interested domestic stakeholders on the handling of complaints and appeals.

Conducting a Voters' List Audit: Throughout summer 2008, the Mission together with CoE financed ISFED to conduct a comprehensive voters' list audit. The auditing covered all 75 districts of Georgia using a nationwide representative sample of 8800 voters. By applying a list-to-people and people-to-list approach, ISFED was able to give a quality evaluation of the voters' lists. Based on the findings, it provided concrete recommendations for improving the voters' lists and its software.

Where do we want to go?

The Election/Democratisation Unit of the OSCE Mission to Georgia intends to continue to play its very specific role in strengthening democratic institutions and processes on the national and local level, promoting effective democratic governance and political participation. It will further provide targeted assistance in electoral matters, hereby focusing on:

- closely monitoring the performance of the election administration with the support of domestic election observer organisations;
- strengthening the election administration through capacity building in order to increase their transparency and professionalism;
- increasing the professionalism of all stakeholders in the electoral process by providing targeted expert advice;
- jointly with CoE and with the financial support of the EC editing a book about "Lessons Learned" from the presidential and parliamentary elections;
- in close cooperation with ODIHR, Council of Europe and UNDP facilitating expert advice and public discussion with an aim to reform the election legislation in compliance with the 1990 Copenhagen Document and VC Code of Best Practices.

United Nations Development Programme

Programme: Developing Capacities of Democratic Institutions for Fair Electoral Processes and Active Civil Participation

Cost: USD 3,293,054

Duration: November 2007 – December 2009



What did we aim to achieve?

Through its various project activities the United Nations Development Programme aimed at developing the capacities of key electoral stakeholders over a period of two years, through technical support before and after the presidential and parliamentary elections of 2008.

What were our programme components?

The programme included four components, which served as a basis for ensuring free and fair elections by qualified electoral administrations, well-informed voters, stable Unified Electoral Code and increased civil participation.

The components covered: a) capacity development of the electoral administration; b) support to the information and communication activities of the electoral administration; c) assistance towards sustainability of the Unified Electoral Code (UEC); and d) a public awareness campaign on electoral standards and procedures and promotion of civil participation in the decision making process.

Who are our implementing partners?

UNDP's main implementing partners were the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA).

What did we accomplish?

Training/Capacity Building: Before the January 2008 Extraordinary Presidential Elections and the May 2008 parliamentary elections, UNDP provided assistance to the Central Election Commission in planning procedural training strategies and schedules, developing manuals and instructions, and training permanent and temporary members and support staff of the electoral administration. In anticipation of the presidential elections, cascade type training was provided to approximately 47,000 members of the election administration, including 76 District and 3,630 Precinct Election Commissions.

The training plan was revised and adjusted for the parliamentary elections. The training format and modules reflected the changes to the Unified Electoral Code and the increased number of District Election Commission members. The updated plan concentrated on counting, tabulation, complaints and results transmission procedures. In three training cycles 50,000 people were trained. Overall, 1,964 training sessions were held for the 3630 Precinct Election Commissions and 76 for the District Election Commissions.

Voter Education/Information: To promote informed citizens' choices and encourage adequate and balanced reporting on the parliamentary elections, UNDP supported the Central Election Commission in improving the pre-election information and communication campaign. This envisioned the dissemination of election-related information to citizens throughout Georgia, including rural areas and regions populated with ethnic minorities. UNDP supported a large-scale voter education programme through TV/radio ads and multi-language publications. The programme also included professional training of media representatives in election reporting by the Reuters Foundation.

Public Awareness Campaign and Promotion of Civic Participation: With funding from UNDP, GYLA conducted a public awareness campaign before the 2008 parliamentary elections. A bus informing citizens about electoral standards and procedures toured throughout the country. During the bus tours, information materials such as leaflets, T-shirts and caps were disseminated and role plays simulating polling procedures were conducted. TV/radio ads in national and regional broadcast media informed voters on the procedures and called for their participation in the elections.

Where do we want to go?

UNDP is continuing its programmatic activities following the 2008 parliamentary elections. With the activities outlined above, UNDP addressed the immediate pre-electoral needs. After the elections, UNDP summarized the overall lessons learned and designed a longer-term electoral assistance programme that focuses on building the long-term capacities of key election stakeholders to enable them to work independently and effectively in the future.

For the time being, UNDP is concentrating on the Adjara elections scheduled for autumn 2008. Here it intends to continue its capacity building programme of the election administration at all levels by focusing on E-day and complaints and appeals procedures. UNDP voter education activities will be expanded in order to include public debates and information campaigns about the values of active citizenship.

Long-term programmatic elements include:

- an advocacy campaign that will address citizens to ensure civic engagement and participation in decision-making;
- continued training of the permanent electoral administration based on the internationally recognized methodology “Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections” (BRIDGE);
- support to participatory political debates about the election code. This will include round table discussions attended by local experts, NGOs, members of the electoral administration, representatives of the government, parliament and all relevant stakeholders. The process will be undertaken in close cooperation with local and international partners, including the Council of Europe, Venice Commission and the OSCE. For that purpose, UNDP will provide the Central Election Commission with legal expertise.

United States Agency for International Development

Programme: Democracy and Governance

Cost: USD 6,000,000

Duration: ongoing



What did we aim to achieve?

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) worked to ensure the long-term viability of Georgia's democratic transition through support for: national and local level government reform; political party and parliamentary strengthening efforts; advancements in the rule of law; broader public participation in political life; the integration of national minorities; and free, fair and competitive elections.

What were our programme components?

USAID dedicated over \$6 million to support the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Georgia. Of this assistance, \$2 million was allocated for the presidential elections (see below), \$2 million for parliamentary elections (see below) and \$2 million for long term institution building of the Civil Registry Agency (CRA). USAID and UNDP launched the Civil Registry Reform Phase II activity in 2007. The program sought to build the capacity of the CRA to: (1) develop a legal framework for civil registration; (2) digitize existing civil registration archives; (3) strengthen CRA IT capabilities; (4) refurbish CRA offices; and (5) increase public awareness of the reform.

Who were our implementing partners?

USAID's main implementing partners were IFES, NDI, IRI, UNAG, and UNDP.

What did we accomplish during the presidential elections?

Following the call for snap elections on 5 January 2008, the United States Government rapidly mobilized assistance in a compressed pre-election period. USAID supported substantial assistance efforts in the following three areas:

Independent Media, Media Outreach and Voter Education: IFES issued 15 sub-grants to independent media organizations to promote independent coverage of the election. IFES consultants worked with the Georgian Public Broadcaster on live televised debates and with the CEC on public outreach, media center operations and trainings for journalists in Tbilisi and surrounding regions. As a result, over one hundred local and regional journalists received elections training and live televised debates were held in more than 20 regional TV stations. In order to encourage greater citizen participation in the electoral process, IFES also issued sub-grants to produce over 500,000 printed materials (newsletters, brochures, and posters) and multimedia products (Public Service Announcements and radio shows) that educated the public, in particular ethnic minorities, about changes in electoral legislation and the importance of voting. The International Republican Institute (IRI) worked with new Generation new Initiative (nGnI) and the Young Republicans Institute (YRI) to conduct voter education theatrical performances across the country and disseminate information through Get-Out-The-Vote efforts. USAID also supported the UN Association of Georgia (UNAG) in the development of Elections.ge, an election-oriented online news portal.

Election Reporting and Tabulation: The National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted a Pre-Election Assessment, which identified several areas in which to improve the transparency and accountability of the electoral process. One key recommendation was the transmission of the protocols directly from PECs to the CEC, and the subsequent posting of protocols on the CEC website. IFES implemented this finding through the procurement of more than 1,000 faxes for PECs. Discrepancies discovered between observers' copies of the protocol and the protocols posted on the website helped positively pressure the CEC to implement more accountability and transparency measures in the counting and tabulation process.

International Election Observation Missions (IEOM): USAID supported two IEOMs during the presidential elections:

- The 24-person NDI delegation, which released an observation statement proposing several short term and long term recommendations to all elections stakeholders.
- IRI's 26-member international delegation, which observed the election process at more than 120 polling stations across Georgia.

What did we accomplish during parliamentary elections?

Subsequent to the presidential elections, USAID/Georgia conducted an analysis of lessons learned in order to guide the plan of assistance for the parliamentary elections. The Mission identified and prioritized the following five areas, and election programming was restructured to respond to these needs:

Training Election Administrators: IFES collaborated with UNDP and the CEC to train election commissioners at all levels. In total, about 47,000 election commission members, as well as 184 trainers and facilitators, were trained, and over 15,000 Election Day procedure posters were produced and posted in 3,630 PECs throughout Georgia. The training of DEC and PECs was assessed overall positively by the OSCE/ODIHR EOM, and the greater knowledge among election commissioners contributed to an Election Day environment and electoral process that was a marked improvement over the presidential elections.

Improving the Vote Tabulation Process: IFES completed the distribution of wireless fax machines to 140 PECs across the country. Through these efforts with IFES and further fax provision by the CEC, 1/3 of all PECs were able to send their preliminary results directly to the CEC. The remaining 2/3 of PECs utilized fax and scanner capabilities at the regional offices of the Civil Registry Agency, whose technical capacity has significantly improved as a result of USAID assistance to the Civil Registry Reform project. As a result, election results were processed more quickly than in the previous election, with almost all results received (and all party list protocols posted on the CEC website) within two days of the close of polls.

Enhancing the Accuracy of the Voters' List: Through work with IFES and UNDP, USAID has helped the CRA and the CEC reconcile differences in their databases through strategic planning and targeted technical assistance. In addition to the intensive USAID-supported collaboration between the CEC and CRA (see also below), an IFES technical consultant helped the CEC to improve the voters' list between the presidential and parliamentary elections: 8,000 deceased, 1,000 underage people and 27,000 names appearing in the voters' list twice were removed from the list, and 42,000 names, addresses and dates of birth were corrected. Additionally, during the pre-election period, a public awareness campaign allowed citizens to receive confirmation of their registration and precinct and district information via SMS service.

Strengthening NGO and Political Party Oversight of the Elections: In addition to party observer and legal department training, IRI supported an nGnI election observation mission and parallel turnout tabulation (PTT). 612 nGnI observers, 75 regional coordinators and 40 mobile groups covered PECs countrywide, including Upper Abkhazia and Liakhvi. The PTT covered 800 polling stations, and the margin of error did not exceed +/-1%.

As well as its high profile Political Party Code of Conduct, NDI supported an International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) election observation mission with parallel vote tabulation (PVT). ISFED fielded 1932 observers plus a small team of lawyers for election-related questions. The PVT was conducted in 626 precincts and in all precincts that counted special precincts—the statistical error of margin was +/- 0.8%, with a 95% confidence level. As a result, official preliminary results were verified.

The American Bar Association/Rule of Law Initiative conducted five trainings for political party lawyers, and it produced an Election Law Manual for Lawyers, which provides legal guidance to lawyers who handle election complaints.

Expanding Media Outreach and Voter education: USAID financed get-out-the-vote and voter education activities from IRI; issue advocacy awards from IFES; and journalist and media training from the Eurasia Partnership Foundation.

Where do we want to go?

USAID will continue to provide assistance to advance democratic reform within Georgia's electoral and political systems.



Certification of election officials conducted in the parliament

Outstanding Projects

In this Section:

Educating and Informing Voters	23
Professionalizing the Election Administration	29
Streamlining the Complaints and Appeals Process	33
Monitoring the Use of Administrative Resources	37
Further Improving the Voters' List	41
Facilitating the Timely Publication of Election Results	45
Observing the Electoral Process	51
Promoting a Code of Conduct for Political Parties	55
Ensuring Minority Rights	59
Furthering Participation in the Elections	65
Public Opinion and Elections	69



Equipment for conducting mock elections

Educating & Informing Voters

WHY

Within a period of a few months, Georgian citizens witnessed extraordinary presidential and parliamentary elections. Since each election was conducted with significant amendments to the legislation and election procedures, the general public needed to be informed about electoral details on very short notice.



ISFED/GYLA activists preparing for the voter information campaign

IFES: Informing Citizens

Project Title: Promoting Citizen Participation and Voter Awareness of Elections

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: for
18 sub-grantees of IFES/ISC (\$451,774)
Voter information – for presidential election posters (\$21,930)
Voter information – for parliamentary election posters (\$16,000)

Donor: USAID

Timetable of work: November 2007 – June 2008

WHAT

The project aimed to promote voter awareness and increase citizen participation in elections, especially among underrepresented groups.

HOW

In order to increase voter awareness, IFES a) developed and distributed to PEC's and DEC's posters on voting procedures, secrecy of the vote, and the marking of ballots; b) assisted CEC in developing its PR strategy and drafting voter education materials, including in national minority languages; c) awarded up to 18 sub-grants to local NGO's focused on voter education in Tbilisi and regions of Georgia;

CHALLENGES

Distribution of the posters by CEC proved to be challenging during the presidential elections. Hence, IFES took responsibility for leading the distribution process for the parliamentary elections.

RESULTS

Six types of posters (3,500 copies each) were developed for the presidential and 7 new types of posters (3,700 copies each) for the parliamentary elections. The overwhelming majority of PEC's displayed the posters at their entrances on parliamentary Election Day. 18 sub-grantees of IFES/ISC conducted round tables, discussions, and voter seminars in a number of regions, including national minority areas, reaching as many as 400,000 voters. CEC conducted a vigorous voter education campaign using a large variety of TV PSA's and posters

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“IFES made a serious contribution to the process of improving the knowledge of the election administration and more importantly, improving the overall knowledge of the election process of the Georgian public. In the future, the election administration and other local actors should play a more active role in promoting citizen participation and voter awareness in elections; and this project can serve as a model for future activities in this direction.” – Natalia Chkheidze, Head of the Public Relations Department, Central Election Commission

NEXT STEPS

IFES is in the process of drafting a strategy for future elections.

ISFED/GYLA: Bus Tours Throughout Georgia

Project Title: Developing Democratic Institutions in Georgia through Civil Participation

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 271,204 Euro

Donor: EU/UNDP

Timetable of work: April 2008 – May 2008



WHAT

The aim of the project was to educate the general public on the importance of their active participation in elections and electoral procedures and to equip them with theoretical and practical skills on Election Day procedures.

HOW

A public awareness campaign for the 2008 parliamentary elections was implemented through bus tour campaigns in 11 of the 12 regions of Georgia.

Twenty-five events in 11 regions were organised. Overall 4 teams consisting of 12 members each, made 25 visits and organized voters' education activities, distributed materials (leaflets/brochures), and organized plays simulating E-day procedures.

Educational materials were distributed to the public explaining voter registration and E-day procedures and educating citizens about the importance of their participation in the elections. All materials were also printed in minority languages.

The bus team members together with the voters conducted mock elections. In doing so, the voters became familiar with the details of Election Day procedures.

The organizations also prepared and ran video and audio spots on Election Day procedures and the importance of citizens' participation in pre-election and E-day procedures.

CHALLENGES

CEC supported ISFED and GYLA's nation-wide awareness campaign by providing necessary equipment for the Election Day simulations.

To inform the vast majority of citizens of Georgia on the importance of election procedures ISFED and GYLA prepared 4 video spots, 2 leaflets, posters and various billboards – also in minority languages.

In order to achieve high involvement of the local population of minority populated regions in the activities, the organizations selected bus tour team members (trainers) from minority representatives.

RESULTS

Within the framework of their project, ISFED and GYLA

- Raised awareness of the Georgian population on election related issues;
- Educated and motivated voters to participate in the 2008 parliamentary elections; and
- Informed voters on the importance of checking themselves on the voters' list.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“To increase the public’s awareness is one of the main tasks of both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Only the educated voter can make intelligent and thoughtful decisions during an election. Thus, the success of a project such as this plays an essential role in the development of democracy and insures free and fair elections.” – Levan Tarkhnishvili, Head of the Central Election Commission

NEXT STEPS

GYLA and ISFED will continue with their bus tours – especially during the Adjara Supreme Council Elections. In addition, both organisations – with financial support from EC and UNDP – will conduct advocacy campaigns with the aim of identifying problems within communities, organizing round tables between representatives of parliament, local government, the local NGO community, and active members of society; and developing strategies, initiatives and concrete proposals to solve these problems.



GYLA / ISFED bus tours through Georgia informing voters about elections

UNDP: Educating and Informing Election Stakeholders

Project Title: Developing Capacities of Democratic Institutions to Promote Fair Election Processes and Civil Participation

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 495,065 Euro

Donor: EC, Government of Georgia, UNDP

Timetable of work: November 2007 – December 2009

WHAT

UNDP aims to address immediate pre-electoral needs as well as provide longer-term electoral assistance to promote sustainability of the Electoral Administration and enable electoral stakeholders to work independently and effectively in the future. UNDP's election-related programme has four components: qualifying the electoral administrations, supporting a stable Unified Electoral Code, informing voters, and increasing civil participation. Within its election programme, UNDP aimed at voter education and information as well as training for journalists.

HOW

UNDP applied its local and international expertise to ensure the effectiveness of the project activities. For the public awareness campaign prior to the 2008 parliamentary elections, UNDP teamed up with the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (see Bus Tours). International experts were invited to assist with assessment and preparation of the civic education activities. UNDP disseminated election-related information to citizens throughout Georgia, including rural areas and regions populated with ethnic minorities.

- Two TV advertisements in 4 languages (Georgian, Russian, Armenian, Azeri) were produced and aired by all main broadcasting TV channels.
- Two radio advertisements in 4 languages (Georgian, Russian, Armenian, Azeri) were produced and aired by all main broadcasting radio channels.
- Various publications on voting procedures were printed and disseminated country-wide. Among them were three different posters (30,000 in total), three different flyers (300,000 in total) and a guide (150,000 copies) printed in Georgian, Russian, Armenian, Azeri languages.

In addition, UNDP launched a large-scale voter education programme. TV and radio ads were aired by national and regional channels and various publications disseminated by DECs and a contracted distributing company. Finally, 36 media representatives were trained in election reporting.

RESULTS

The UNDP programme contributed to raising awareness among the population about election related issues. As a result, voters violated fewer Election Day procedures during the parliamentary elections.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“The voter information programme initiated and implemented by UNDP in co-operation with non-governmental organizations deserves special mention. Innovative approaches in voter education, such as the bus tours and election simulation role plays, proved very successful.”
– Levan Tarkhnishvili, Head of the Central Election Commission

NEXT STEPS

Over the long-run, voter education activities will be expanded to form a broader civic education campaign, including public debates on democratic values, dissemination of civic education materials through the media and further training of media representatives.



Women voting during presidential elections

Professionalizing the Election Administration

WHY

The 2008 elections saw significant changes to the election administration. Political party representation was introduced at Central and District levels. The number of Precinct Election Commissions was increased. Additional staff was hired. All these issues proved a serious challenge for the election administration. Nearly 50,000 election officials had to be trained. However, not all officials upheld the election legislation and adhered to the principles of neutrality and impartiality.



Election officials sealing the ballot box

CEC/UNDP/IFES: Training of Election Officials

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 180,000 Euro (joint funds of IFES/UNDP/CEC)

Donor: USAID/IFES, UNDP, CEC

Timetable of work: December 2007 – November 2008



WHAT

In close cooperation with the Central Election Commission, UNDP and IFES provided large-scale training assistance to the election administration in preparation of the 2008 extraordinary presidential elections. The overall assessment of the elections revealed several deficiencies that were taken into consideration by the donors. It was agreed with the CEC that UNDP and IFES would expand their support for the 2008 parliamentary elections.

With this project, CEC/UNDP/IFES aimed at developing long-term capacities of the election administration. By doing so, they hoped to contribute to greater sustainability of the election administration and to enable it to work independently and effectively in the future.

HOW

In initiating the project, IFES contracted a BRIDGE accredited facilitator/consultant with extensive election training experience in Georgia.

For the presidential elections, cascade training was provided to approximately 47,000 members of the election administration, including 76 District and 3,630 Precinct Electoral Commissions. The training plan was revised and adjusted for the Parliamentary Elections. Training format and modules reflected the changes to the Electoral Code. The updated plan concentrated on improving the training content in counting, tabulation, complaints and results transmission processes, as well as in instituting proper monitoring to ensure effectiveness of the results. Overall, 1,964 training sessions were conducted for the Precinct Election Commissions and 75 for the District Election Commissions.

RESULTS

The transfer of knowledge and experience to the CEC was emphasised. The institutionalization of the process of early preparations was promoted. For the 2008 Parliamentary elections, UNDP and IFES achieved the following:

- Recruitment and training of 24 regional coordinators and 131 trainers;
- Training of all DEC members (76 DEC: 988 persons);
- Training of all PEC members (3,630 PEC: 47,190).

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“One of the most crucial parts of an election is training of the election officials who must become familiar with amendments to the legislative framework in a short period and later must play the decisive role in pre-election and Election Day processes, as well as in tabulation of results. With this in mind, the Central Election Commission of Georgia decided to pay special attention to setting up a system, which would allow training of nearly 50,000 election officials in a very limited time period – no more than 6 weeks. It was evident that we needed some external assistance for developing the concept and ensure its implementation. IFES and UNDP are our most helpful partners in this regard. The existence of professional election commissions is vital for holding fair elections. We highly appreciate the assistance we receive from IFES and UNDP in achieving this goal.” It is important to note that the CEC Training Office played an increasingly active role in the preparation and conduct of training activities. The next step

is to further develop the capacity of the CEC Training Office in order to fully transfer training functions from international partners to the CEC.“ – Levan Tarkhishvili, Head of the Central Election Commission

NEXT STEPS

The project is not limited to short-term assistance in the pre-election period. The broader objective is to promote the sustainability of the electoral administration. Until the end of the project cycle in December 2009, IFES and UNDP will implement the following:

- Complement the training on election procedures with a specialised training programme and specific modules for between the ballot-boxes period;
- Continue its work with the Central Election Commission to better inform the District and Precinct Election Commissions about the importance of professional training, increase their motivation, and ensure full involvement in the training process;
- Assist the Central Election Commission in improving its internal communication mechanisms to timely inform election officials about changes in electoral procedures;
- Support the development of specific and systematic civic education training programmes targeting the regions of Georgia populated with ethnic minorities;
- Help introduce effective mechanisms for evaluation and selection of election administration facilitators and trainers;
- Promote the use of standardised electoral guides and manuals by all electoral stakeholders, including political parties, candidates, observing organizations and media.



Evaluation of IFES-UNDP-CEC training of election officials



OSCE training of CEC officials on election standards

Streamlining the Complaints and Appeals Process

WHY

Only a small number of complaints and appeals were resolved during the 2008 presidential elections. Not all complaints submitted to Precinct Election Commissions were accepted or responded to at that level. Appeals to the District Election Commissions, CEC and courts were overwhelmingly rejected for legal, procedural and technical reasons that were often not clearly explained or justified. The Final Report of the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission on the 5 January 2008 presidential elections outlined that the post-election complaints and appeals process presented serious challenges to the fulfilment of certain OSCE commitments.



Central Election Commission discussing appeals and complaints

OSCE: Improving the Handling of Electoral Disputes

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 21,300 Euro

Donor: OSCE Mission to Georgia

Timetable of work: February – March 2008

WHAT

The aim of the project was to improve handling of electoral disputes for the 2008 parliamentary elections. The OSCE Mission to Georgia - at the request of the Chairman of the Central Election Commission (CEC) - commissioned an expert to study the situation and provide advice.

HOW

The OSCE Mission identified a skilled, highly experienced expert who was assigned to assess the situation during the presidential election, analyze and categorize the complaints and appeals received and considered; make recommendations for improvements in electoral law, administration and the approaches pursued by various stakeholders; and support the design of further technical assistance. The work was conducted in close cooperation with the election administration, political parties, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.

CHALLENGES

The expert analyzed the legal framework for handling electoral disputes. While the election code in general provided an adequate basis for the organization of democratic elections, it contained inconsistencies and ambiguities and was open to wide and varying interpretations. Thus it created challenges to the whole process. Information compiled by different stakeholders on complaints and appeals was not organized in a way that permits systematic analysis.

RESULTS

Some legislative recommendations proposed by the OSCE Expert were taken into consideration while amending the election code. The complaints and appeals procedures were simplified and clarified to some extent.

The CEC took into consideration the specific suggestions by the OSCE expert for inclusion in its Dispute Regulations – and elaborated a specific regulation on electoral complaints/appeals handling for the 2008 parliamentary elections.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“In the Georgian reality, the election code was far from perfect. The presidential elections once again made this clear to all stakeholders. The election code proved to be vague, especially that pertaining to the consideration of complaints. The OSCE Mission to Georgia provided an expert who identified such provisions and documented different interpretations of norms apparently used by the state actors during the presidential election. Following his recommendations, a number of provisions of the Code regarding complaints were simplified and amended. As a result, the handling of complaints from the side of the election administration and judiciary improved during and after the parliamentary elections.” – Giorgi Chkheidze, Chairman of the Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association

NEXT STEPS

In the future the resolution of electoral disputes must be approached much more carefully; the election administration and the courts need to show more willingness to pursue indications of electoral violations. This should include both more effective supervision of electoral activities and a commitment to determining the facts underlying properly submitted complaints and appeals.

The election legislation should be further improved to eliminate inconsistencies and the possibility for wide and varying interpretation.

The OSCE Mission will support further capacity-building for electoral dispute resolution including training of all involved election stakeholders.



Demonstration held after the presidential elections

GYLA/ISFED: Monitoring the Post-Election Situation

Project Title: Rebuilding Public Confidence in the Electoral Process

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 79,811 Euro

Donor: Sida/NDI

Timetable of work: May – July 2008

WHAT

GYLA and ISFED monitored the postvoting process at the District Election Commissions and Central Election Commission. The post-election period monitoring completes the cycle of full monitoring for the May 21 parliamentary elections: pre-election, Election Day, and post-election. Based on the monitoring of the whole electoral process the organizations could assess the parliamentary elections in all its stages.

HOW

GYLA and ISFED deployed 164 observers to District and Central Election Commissions to monitor the whole election process starting from receiving protocols from polling stations through the vote tally in District Election Commissions and final summarization of election results and complaints consideration. The observers monitored whether all activities of election administrations met the regulations prescribed by the legislation. The observers observed the process of addressing the complaints lodged on Election Day at all levels of the election administration and at relevant judicial authorities. The observers lodged complaints in case of any observed violations of the law at District Elections Commissions and at the Central Election Commission.

CHALLENGES

The organizations coordinated trainings for the observers. Trainings concentrated on voting procedures, observers' rights, and methods of appeal. The observers were provided with the necessary forms (prepared in advance) for applications/claims and used those applications whenever they identified shortcomings during the election procedures conducted at District and Central Election Commissions. They were equipped with cell phone pre-paid cards in order to be in permanent contact with the headquarters.

RESULTS

- Complaints submitted to the election administration were discussed in a transparent manner;
- Most of the submitted complaints were reviewed;
- Shortcomings and violations of the electoral procedures were identified and relevant measures were taken;
- Objective and correct information was disseminated to the public;
- Activities of the election administration were evaluated and appropriate recommendations were drawn up.

NEXT STEPS

The organizations plan to include post-election monitoring in their upcoming election observation missions, to intensify cooperation between the partner organizations, and to install flexible communication systems between the headquarters and the observers in the regions.

Monitoring the Use of Administrative Resources

WHY

In every election since 2003, election reports have cited the misuse of administrative resources as a problem in Georgia. Significant changes took place in the election administration after the Rose Revolution. At the same time, a number of problems that had cast shadows over previous elections were still evident, including an imbalance in the electoral administration, and the persistent lack of separation between state and party structure and the consequent potential for the misuse of state resources.

Transparency International: Monitoring the Use of Administrative Resources

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 98,082 Euro

Donor: European Commission/Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC)

Timetable of work: December 2007 – December 2008



WHAT

The aim of the project was to promote free and fair elections in Georgia through (a) promoting fair competition among election subjects, (b) minimizing the use of administrative resources for campaigning purposes, and (c) improving the Central Election Commission's (CEC) ability to address campaign violations.

HOW

In order to raise awareness about the misuse of administrative resources in elections and to build the capacity of regional civil society to address this issue, TI Georgia held meetings with regional NGOs and media representatives and briefed them on the concept of the misuse of administrative resources and how to monitor it. TI Georgia also printed leaflets that explained the different types of administrative resources and how to report their misuse, and distributed them throughout the country.

TI Georgia's own monitoring of the misuse of administrative resources focused on all six types of hard and soft resources: coercive, regulatory, legislative, institutional, financial, and media. To enable citizens, political parties, journalists, NGOs, and any other interested parties to report the misuse of administrative resources in Tbilisi and in the regions, and to consult with TI Georgia as needed, TI Georgia set up a toll-free number to be used as a hotline.

TI Georgia also monitored the CEC to scrutinize its involvement in preventing and when necessary, addressing cases of the misuse of administrative resources.

In the end, TI Georgia summarized the main findings of its monitoring and prepared recommendations for preventing the misuse of administrative resources in future elections.

CHALLENGES

Regarding investigation of the use of coercive resources, such as intimidation of voters, opposition party members and Precinct Election Commission members, as well as of businesses, the biggest challenge was a reluctance of those pressured to expose themselves. This caused difficulties in terms of verifying the received reports and requesting that the government properly address the issue.

RESULTS

TI Georgia's monitoring of the misuse of administrative resources significantly increased public awareness about this problem. The misuse of administrative resources became one of the most frequently highlighted issues in public and working discussions around the electoral process. Additionally, TI Georgia's focus on this issue helped to address some of the identified instances of the use of administrative resources for campaigning purposes during the election period. In particular, after TI Georgia's statements on distributing of diesel vouchers and collecting of ID cards/data through so-called social workers, the government terminated the two programs and announced that these programs would be continued after the finalization of the election results. Also, in response to TI Georgia's statement about increased pressure on teachers, the education minister travelled to the regions, where he met with school teachers and principals and requested that the schools remain neutral and free from politics. The minister also issued a special public statement highlighting this issue.

Targeted monitoring of the use of administrative resources and the increased attention to this topic also encouraged the Central Election Commission to develop a special document, in partnership with the Georgian monitoring organizations, explaining the legal provisions related to the use of administrative resources in the Election Code of Georgia.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“Monitoring the misuse of administrative resources is of significant importance in Georgia since this is one of the primary problems of Georgia’s electoral process. Increased attention on this issue achieves two important results: on the one hand, it raises public awareness of the concept of the misuse of administrative resources and its negative outcomes and on the other hand, it establishes additional control on the government that leads to reducing its influence over the electoral process” – Eliso Chapidze, Deputy Editor in Chief of the daily Georgian newspaper “Rezonansi”

NEXT STEPS

At the final stage of its monitoring, TI Georgia prepared recommendations on how to prevent the misuse of administrative resources for campaigning purposes in future elections and presented them to the Government Task Force and other stakeholders. TI Georgia will follow up on these recommendations after the elections in order to instigate more active and open discussions about the problem and contribute to its resolution.



Election campaign posters of the two main contesting parties during parliamentary elections

Further Improving the Voters' List

WHY

In the past, the CEC undertook substantial efforts to improve the quality of the voters' list. Despite these efforts, perceived and real inaccuracies in the voters' list remained a major concern. Many stakeholders continued to express concerns regarding the accuracy of the voters' list, claiming specifically that the number of voters was inflated due to the presence of deceased persons, multiple records, and nonexistent buildings as registration addresses. During the 2008 parliamentary elections, OSCE/ODIHR observers reported that in some 21 per cent of polling stations visited on Election Day voters were refused the right to vote because their names were not on the voters' list.



Registration of voters on election day

USAID/IFES/UNDP: Assisting the CEC in Managing the Voters' List

Location: Tbilisi

Cost: \$ 2,800,000 (UNDP component)

Donor: USAID, DFID, UNDP

Timetable of work: 2007 –2008



WHAT

USAID and DFID have actively been engaged in two phases of reform for the Civil Registry Agency (CRA). Civil Registry Reform Phase II is a 17-month-long activity, which enhances the capacity of the CRA to act effectively and transparently in the following areas:

- Developing a legal framework for the civil registration sector;
- Digitizing existing civil registration data archives;
- Improving the IT system and network and providing new software to CRA;
- Refurbishing CRA's territorial offices; and
- Increasing public awareness of the reforms associated with the civil registration sector.

These activities supported the elections. Prior to presidential and parliamentary elections, international experts reviewed voters' list preparedness, database security, and the voters' list updating process.

HOW

Through work with IFES and UNDP, USAID has helped the CRA and the CEC reconcile differences in their databases through strategic planning and targeted technical assistance. In addition to the intensive USAID supported collaboration between the CEC and CRA, an IFES technical consultant helped the CEC to improve the voters' list between the presidential and parliamentary elections: 8,000 deceased, 1,000 underage people and 27,000 names appearing in the voters' list twice were removed from the list, and 42,000 names, addresses and dates of birth were corrected.

Additionally, during the pre-election period, a public awareness campaign allowed citizens to receive confirmation of their registration and PEC and DEC information via SMS service.

CHALLENGES

IFES and UNDP addressed several issues with CEC staff including the number of differing agencies involved in managing citizen data, the process of updating the voter registry, database integrity, data structures and data security.

RESULTS

IFES and UNDP held constructive dialogue and provided technical recommendations for improvements. As a follow-up, the CEC changed its rules of procedure.

NEXT STEPS

IFES intends to follow up with technical advice on database management and voters' list updating.

ISFED: Auditing the Voters' List

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 150,000 Euro

Donors: Council of Europe and OSCE

Timetable of work: February 2008 – September 2008



WHAT

With this project, CoE and OSCE aimed to support development of democratic values and principles in Georgia. Specifically, the project contributed to the process of ensuring the right of individuals to vote through a comprehensive voters' list audit.

HOW

In the beginning of March 2008, ISFED signed a memorandum of understanding with the CEC and on 20 April 2008 received the full version of the final voters' list used for the 2008 parliamentary elections.

The voters' list audit was performed using a national representative sample of 8,800 voters. ISFED conducted the voters' list audit in all 75 election districts of Georgia, excluding Upper Abkhazia and conflict zones. ISFED used two voters' list auditing methods – List-to People and People-to List.

The project was implemented via ISFED's central office, 5 regional offices and 75 district coordinators. Additional support was rendered by a voters' list audit expert, controllers and data entry operators.

CHALLENGES

Conducting the VLA after the elections was not easy as many citizens felt exhausted with election related issues and were less enthusiastic to communicate. At the same time, some state institutions remained sceptical and thus created challenges for implementing certain project activities.

RESULTS

As a result of the voters' list audit, the percentage of errors in the voters' list and its accuracy were assessed, and the work of the election administration related to the voters' list was evaluated. The concrete findings of the project were published via ISFED's election update and final narrative report as well as on the official web page of the organization. Based on the analysis of the concrete problems, ISFED developed a set of recommendations for further improvement of the voters' list.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“Conducting VLA is always important in order to see and evaluate the quality of the Voters' List.” – Eka Siradze-Delaunay, Executive Director of ISFED

NEXT STEPS

A set of recommendations for additional improvement of the voters' lists will be submitted to the election administration. ISFED as well as OSCE and CoE will follow up on implementation of the recommendations and further facilitate the process of improvement of the quality of the voters' list.



Voters searching their name in the voters' list

Facilitating the Timely Publication of Election Results

WHY

During the 2006 local elections, international observers noted significant delays in posting election results on the CEC website. Taking into consideration the political context in which 2008 elections were held, main stakeholders agreed that delays in the publication of results at the PEC level could foster uncertainty and reduce trust in the electoral process. The timely publication of results was thus perceived as critical to avoiding the consequences of an information vacuum after the closure of the polls.



Voters familiarizing themselves with the election results in their precinct

IFES/NDI/CEC/Estonia: Publication and Analysis of Election Results

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: 130,000 Euro (USAID); 5,400 Euro Lithuanian Government
– Estonian Government for the purchase of fax machines

Donor: USAID - Lithuanian Government - Estonian Government

Timetable of work: September 2007– November 2008

WHAT

Before the presidential elections, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) conducted a Pre-Election Assessment, which identified several areas in which to improve the transparency and accountability of the electoral process. To this end, one key recommendation was the transmission of protocols directly from PECs to the CEC, and the subsequent posting of protocols on the CEC website.

With their specific initiatives, IFES and NDI supported early publication of election results at the PEC level, and also facilitated post-election analysis of results down to the PEC level.

HOW

In September 2007, NDI began consultations with the CEC, employing the assistance of an international expert, to identify obstacles to the timely publication of election results. NDI was active in promoting changes to the legislative framework to require swift publication of election results at the PEC level for all types of elections. IFES procured more than 1,000 faxes for PECs. During the presidential elections, the Lithuanian CEC supported the Georgian CEC in their PR campaign about the publication of election results.

Despite these incentives, gaps remained. The posting of protocols on the webpage was delayed in some instances. Observers discovered discrepancies between observers' copies of the protocol and the protocols posted on the website. Further action was needed.

After the presidential elections, the group analyzed the problems and developed a strategy for improvement. With support of international experts the CEC developed special software for the processing of the election results. In addition, the following procedures were elaborated – all aimed at increasing the transparency of the process of calculation of preliminary results: After the counting of the votes, the protocols of the PEC were faxed to the CEC. At the CEC they were scanned as soon as received and loaded to the website of the CEC. In parallel, the election results were entered in a computer programme in a 24 hours regime. The information was uploaded on an ongoing basis. So, anybody who wished had an opportunity to observe the vote tabulation procedure from any place in the world.

All these arrangements provided much faster processing of preliminary results. Preliminary results were published within 30 hours after the closure of the polling stations. Qualified support from the side of the civil registry and significant assistance of international experts contributed to further transparency of the results tabulation.

CHALLENGES

Regarding immediate publication of election results, the biggest challenge was a lack of phone lines for fax machines in the majority of polling stations. This challenge was overcome by IFES and CEC purchasing GSM faxes and by PECs without faxes using the Civil Registry network for transmitting the faxes. The IT solution for receiving, processing and printing the faxes was programmed and supervised by Estonian experts.

Regarding analysis of election results, the biggest single challenge was the change in polling station boundaries. The realignment was time consuming.

RESULTS

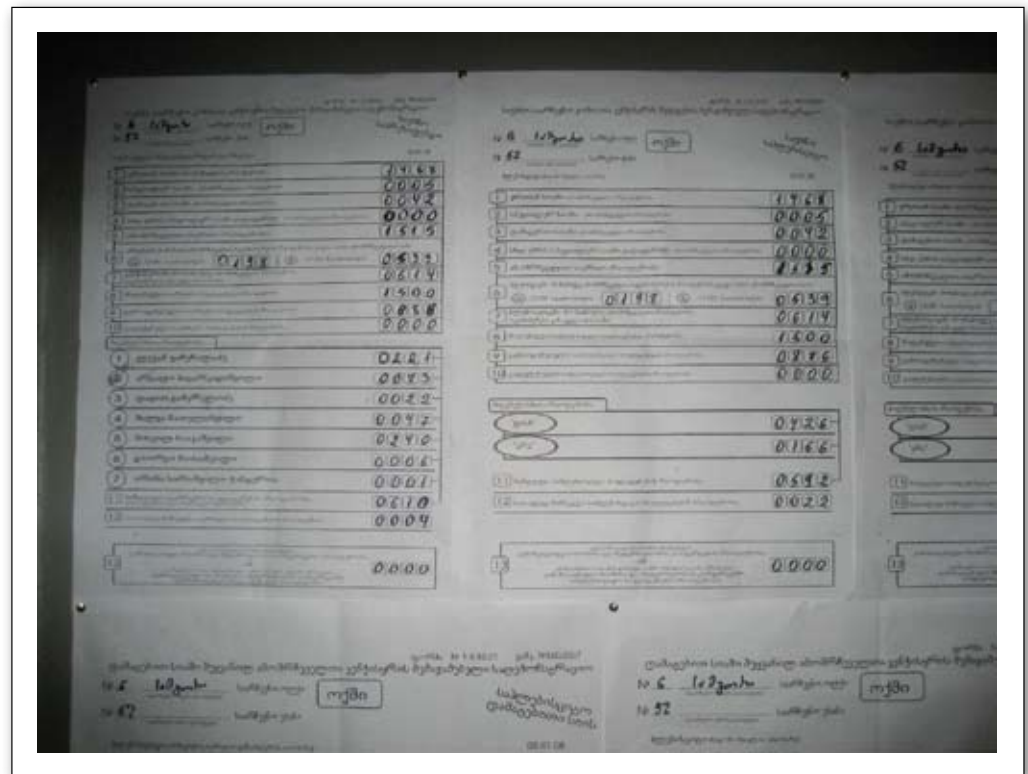
The election code was amended in order to require the CEC to publish election results by precinct immediately on its website. Steps taken in the parliamentary election allowed the most rapid publication of precinct results to date in Georgia.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“One of the most crucial parts of an election is publication and analysis of election results.... NDI and IFES staff and experts helped us to develop a system for delivery of election protocols from PECs to the CEC in the shortest timeframe. Later, we analyzed together the data and identified ways to improve. As a result, CEC received and published the results from more than 3,400 PECs within 36 hours. The publication of results for the 2008 parliamentary election is widely recognized as one of the success stories, and we can say that without NDI and IFES assistance and advice it would not have happened. Now that this system is in place, CEC can handle this issue independently.” – Levan Tarkhishvili, Head of the Central Election Commission

NEXT STEPS

Regarding analysis of election results, NDI has obtained sets of election results from the 2004, 2006, January 2008 and May 2008 elections. For the January and May 2008 elections, data matching to account for changes in polling station boundaries is currently underway and, when complete, will enable comparison of these two elections to show changes in voting behaviour at the precinct level. Analysis of the election results will continue through fall 2008 and will then be shared with partners.



PEC protocol of the results of the presidential elections

NDI: Mapping of Election Results

Location: Georgia

Cost: This is not a free-standing project. It is an activity conducted alongside others funded by the same donor.

Donor: Sida

Timetable of work: March – August 2008

WHAT

There have been no maps of election results in Georgia at the precinct level. NDI has found that mapping election results at the smallest available geographical unit can help inform many strands of programming, including targeting election observation, planning campaigns, targeting party resources, and diagnosing problems with election processes that need to be addressed.

WHY

The project created the first set of digital precinct maps of election results in Georgia, which will serve as a tool for all election stakeholders to analyze election results and their implication for their own future work.

HOW

Work is underway to construct a database of election results that will enable direct comparison of voting patterns at precinct, district, and national levels to identify trends. NDI is working with the Caucasus Research Resource Center to plot the varying degrees of voter turnout and political party support at the polling station level on digital maps for both the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. These maps and additional election analysis will then be shared with all election stakeholders.

CHALLENGES

The biggest single challenge was taking into account changes in precinct boundaries between the two elections. Additional resources were mobilised to overcome this challenge.

RESULTS

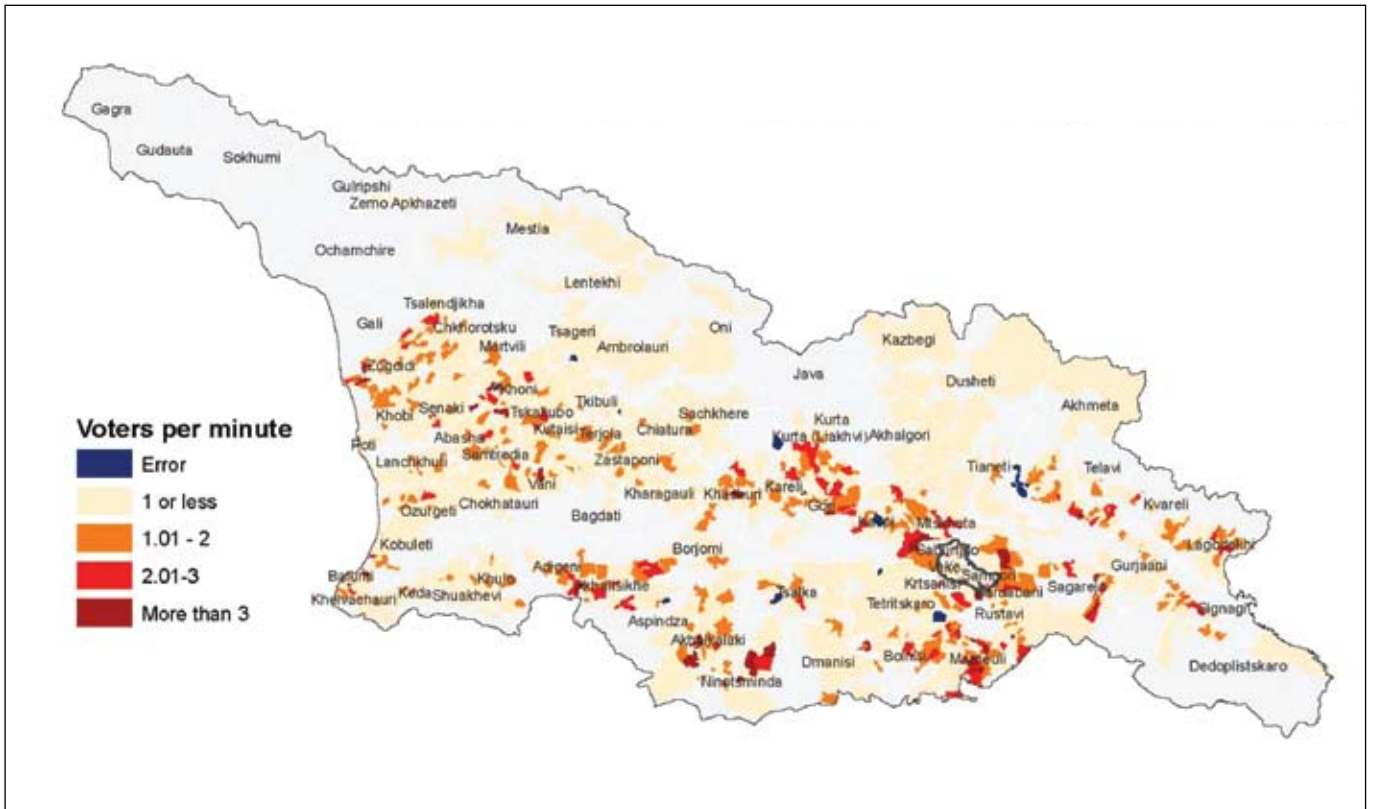
NDI developed in cooperation with CRRC and local contractors the first set of digital maps of precincts in Georgia. When completed, these maps and accompanying analysis will identify historical and geographic trends in voting behaviour that can inform future decisions of all election stakeholders.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

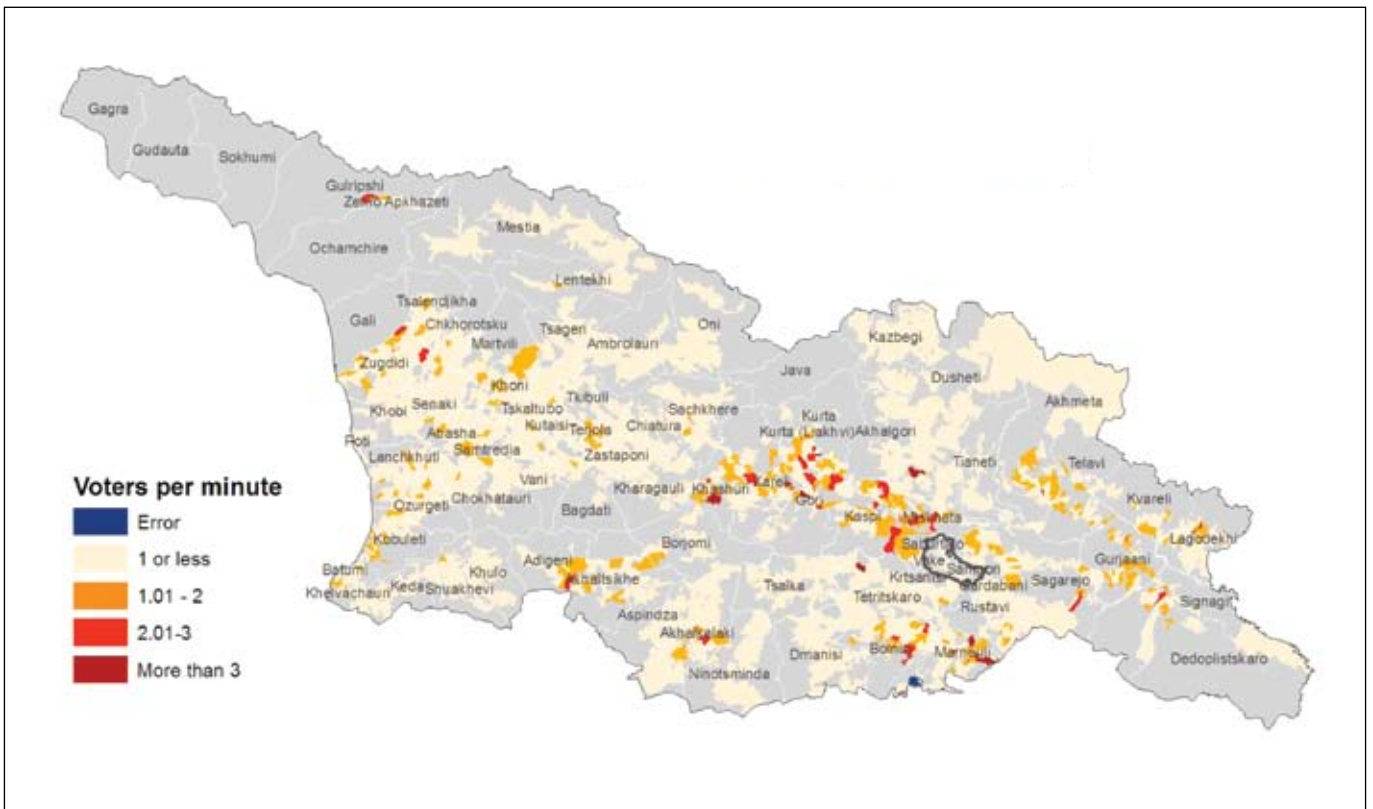
“Post election analysis is helping to evaluate what was done, understand the nature of problems and develop strategies and tactics for improvement. In this sense the project ‘mapping of election results’ developed by NDI is a first and unique one for Georgia. It helped CEC to see the whole picture of presidential and parliamentary elections, as well as the tendency of improvement. In future, CEC is planning to develop an institutional capacity for such analysis.”
– Levan Tarkhnishvili, Head of the Central Election Commission

NEXT STEPS

NDI will share maps and accompanying analysis with the election administration, newly elected MPs, political parties, and other stakeholders. NDI also hopes to train election stakeholders in use of this new tool.



Presidential Election: Voters per 1 minute (in last 3 hours)



Parliamentary Elections: Voters per 1 minute (in last 3 hours)



Central Election Commission informing the international community about its reform strategy

Observing the Electoral Process

WHY

Due to the short notice and changes to the election code, training for election commission members was limited. This resulted in widespread confusion, and legal and technical violations at polling stations. Partisan as well as non-partisan observers were equally insufficiently prepared to adequately monitor and support a transparent election process. With a brief pre-election period and substantial election code changes occurring before the May 2008 parliamentary elections, improving the capacity of partisan and non-partisan observers took on added importance.



Director of OSCE/ODIHR giving an interview about the main findings of the ODIHR election observation

NDI: Development of a Partisan Observation Network

Location: Throughout Georgia
Cost: This is not a free-standing project. It is an activity conducted alongside others funded by the same donor.
Donor: UK Embassy
Timetable of work: March 2008 – May 2008

WHAT

The project sought to build political parties' capacity to monitor balloting and adherence to the law in polling stations on Election Day.

HOW

NDI conducted a series of single-party trainings for six election subjects on partisan observation. The trainings sought to prepare parties' central offices and regional organizers to better manage their observation programs, and also identify and train 10 new party trainers from each election subject who then worked with NDI to train their parties' district organizers and precinct observers. NDI developed and distributed an observers' manual to 23,000 partisan observers from the six participating election subjects. NDI also developed trainers' materials for use by party trainers and party district organizers in training their precinct observers. Following trainings, NDI held consultations with all six election subjects to help them organize their central party operations and mobile election-day teams to support their partisan observers.

NDI also worked closely with the American Bar Association (ABA) as it organized a series of trainings for political party lawyers. Trainings covered the law on rights of election stakeholders, election-day procedures, complaints and litigation processes, and post-election legal processes. NDI worked with parties to identify lawyers to participate in the trainings, which were funded and conducted by the ABA. NDI provided follow-on work with the party lawyers and central party offices to integrate the lawyers into parties' election observation networks.

CHALLENGES

Parties reported that the short pre-election period, and, in many cases, the need to field both observers and commission representatives, presented significant organizational challenges. Parties also reported that bribery and intimidation hampered their observers' ability to do their work and, in many cases, resulted in their resignation.

RESULTS

The program sought to address past problems with party observation by reaching activists at all levels of the parties—central, regional, district and precinct—and by building the internal support and accountability systems for party observers. It did this by integrating ABA-trained party lawyers into the parties' observation networks, introducing the concept of mobile E-day teams to support observers, designing a system for parties to train all of their observers, and working with headquarters to establish clear communication and reporting mechanisms. Seven parties created trainer positions within the party, after NDI provided training-of-trainer sessions and hands-on training opportunities to 55 new party trainers.

Six election subjects developed integrated observation networks (four of these nationwide) that linked their precinct observers with trained party lawyers, headquarters staff and in many cases mobile E-day teams.

23,000 observers' manuals were distributed in Georgian and (in the minority areas) Russian,

providing copies for partisan observers in all PECs nationwide for all six participating subjects. Analysis of the complaint process is ongoing, though from initial assessments, it appears the parties were more effective at filing complaints both before and after the elections.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“NDI’s trainings were very important because this was the first time our party ran alone, and many of our people were new to partisan observation. On Election Day, there were many cases where our observers were not initially allowed to file a complaint, but the training helped observers know how to respond, and in most cases, our observers were successful in asserting their rights to file a complaint.” – Irina Imerlishvili, Head of Election Service, Republican Party

“This program was a very good addition to our party observer system. Even our experienced activists learned something new in these trainings. Development of party trainers in this field was a particularly good step, and we plan to continue using these trainers in the next elections and for other party work.” – Irakli Kavtaradze, MP and International Secretary, United National Movement

NEXT STEPS

NDI will continue work with political parties, and in particular the party trainers developed under this program, as part of a new regional party building program funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The program will support parties and civic groups in developing and utilizing regional networks and internal training capacity.



PEC member checking whether the voter had already been inked

NDI: Training of Domestic Election Observers

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: This is not a free-standing project. It is an activity conducted alongside others funded by the same donor.

Donor: Sida

Timetable of work: May 2008 – July 2008

WHAT

The project sought to increase transparency, deter election irregularities, and improve use of the complaint process in the post-election period.

HOW

NDI provided financial, technical and strategic support to domestic election monitoring groups—the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) and the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA)—in designing and implementing a post-election monitoring program. ISFED and GYLA fielded specialized teams to monitor DEC and CEC in shifts to provide 24-hour coverage.

RESULTS

NDI supported development of a well-trained, post-election monitoring operation that included more effective monitoring of and participation in the complaints process. Better training prior to the elections, and better post-election organization, positioned observers to better deter fraud and file electoral complaints that were backed with proper evidence.

The quality of complaints submitted to election commissions and courts by NGOs in the parliamentary election improved significantly from the presidential election, and far fewer complaints were dismissed on technical grounds in the parliamentary elections.

The project also increased the capacity of these two organizations to conduct post-election monitoring in the future.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“The new format of post election monitoring with ISFED was very important, since it gave us an opportunity to thoroughly observe DEC activities, how the DECs were considering complaints, and what their approach was while reviewing complaints from us and other complainants. The current legislation allows for multiple interpretations, and it was interesting to observe how different DECs approached the complaints process. This helped us understand where the gaps are in the legislation and what should be changed, what shortcomings existed in the process of training DEC officials, and how they and both non-partisan and party observers could be better trained in the future.” – Giorgi Chkheidze, Chairman of GYLA

“The new methodology elaborated by ISFED and GYLA which envisioned 24-hour post-election monitoring of the District Election Commissions, enabled both organizations to obtain detailed information on the activities carried out by the DECs and evaluate their appropriateness accordingly.” – Eka Siradze-Delauny, Executive Director of ISFED

NEXT STEPS

A similar model was implemented during the Adjara elections held in November 2008.

Promoting a Code of Conduct for Political Parties

WHY

The tense political environment and acute lack of trust between the parties was not conducive to dialogue or peaceful resolution of disputes that could arise between parties during the election. There was an urgent need to develop and monitor standards for the parties' campaigns and conduct during elections.



NDI press conference about the code of conduct for political parties

NDI: Promoting a Code of Conduct for Political Parties

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: This is not a free-standing project. It is an activity conducted alongside others funded by the same donor.

Donor: USAID

Timetable of work: March 2008 – June 2008

WHAT

The Code of Conduct sought to involve political parties in the development and enforcement of standards for their parties' campaigns and conduct during elections. The Code thus provided agreed upon standards that could help parties raise concerns with other election stakeholders, while also holding their own activists accountable. The Code also sought to strengthen public confidence in the electoral process by providing a visible means for parties to resolve disputes and avoid conduct damaging to Georgia's democratic development.

HOW

NDI worked closely with the nine signatory parties in developing and monitoring adherence to the Political Party Code of Conduct. NDI was in communication with these parties throughout the campaign, on Election Day, and in the post-election period and worked to facilitate the resolution of disputes. NDI's long-term observers followed up on every complaint NDI received and, where sufficient basic facts were available and could be verified, NDI discussed these complaints with relevant political actors, the election administration and government officials. NDI issued regular reports during the campaign and a final post-election report detailing parties' progress in implementing the Code.

CHALLENGES

Parties found it difficult to disseminate the Code of Conduct not only as a document, but also as a new concept, to the grassroots of the party. For this reason, the Code was more successful in resolving problems post facto rather than preventing them from occurring. In the future, with more time, greater emphasis could be put on internal discussion and development of such standards.

RESULTS

Parties defined clear terms for appropriate behaviour during elections—including avoiding harassment or inflammatory rhetoric and respecting the rights of other parties to campaign freely—and then took steps to hold other parties and their own activists to those standards. Parties took an unprecedented step in making a public commitment to take responsibility for the conduct of their leaders, candidates, members of the election administration, observers and activists. Parties displayed a willingness to distribute the Code to their regional branches and ensure activists at all levels could make use of its provisions.

Of the 247 total complaints raised under the Code, 233 were addressed. Most importantly, 74 of these were resolved because the party in question took corrective action. Further, cases that NDI raised with the government and election administration also received positive action to investigate cases of election irregularities.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

"In my opinion, the Code of Conduct developed with NDI for the pre-election period of the May 21 parliamentary election was very important, not only for those parties who signed it but for the whole society because the principles in the Code serve the process of democratic,

transparent and free elections. UNM has actively worked with NDI under the Code, and I think such cooperation should continue.” – Irakli Kavtaradze, Member of Parliament and International Secretary of the United National Movement

“The Labour Party faced serious challenges in the pre-election period, from difficulty accessing billboard space for the campaign to pressure and intimidation of party activists and commission members. We were able to raise and even resolve such issues through NDI mediation under the Code of Conduct.” – Kakha Dzagania, Member of Parliament and Secretary on Ideological Issues of the Labour Party

“We believe that adopting NDI’s Code of Conduct was very important because it was the only real mechanism for resolving complaints in the pre-election campaign. We think it is necessary to develop this idea, and for future elections it should be extended by adding more mechanisms for monitoring and mediation.” – Kakha Kukava, Secretary-General of the Conservative Party of Georgia

NEXT STEPS

All parties have expressed an interest in developing a separate Code of Conduct to cover the period between elections.



Remember that your vote is secret! Take part in the elections!

Ensuring Minority Rights

WHY

Past elections revealed a low level of participation and lack of knowledge of voters' electoral rights. Voters, especially in minority areas, were not sufficiently informed about the elections. Often voters neither had full information about the parties and the candidates participating in the elections nor a full understanding of voting procedures.



Women voter in a region densely populated by minorities

ISFED: “I Vote for the First Time”

Location: Kvemo Kartli, Shida Kartli, Samtskhe Javakheti and Adjara

Cost: 14,650 Euro

Donor: Eurasia Foundation

Timetable of work: February 2008 – June 2008



WHAT

Within the framework of the project ISFED aimed at educating and enhancing first-time voters' participation in the parliamentary elections.

HOW

For this project ISFED conducted 100 interactive one-hour trainings for first-time voters. Out of 100 “I Vote” trainings, 70 trainings were conducted for first and second year students of both accredited and non-accredited universities, institutes, technical schools and colleges of Georgia, while 30 trainings were conducted for those applicants who could not pass National Exams and thus could not enter educational institutions of Georgia.

“I Vote” trainings were thematically divided into four parts:

- Electoral rights and duties of voters
- Election-related issues (electoral procedures, voters' lists, etc)
- Election monitoring and observers' rights
- Civil society and active citizenship

At the end of the project an evaluation seminar was held to assess the project implementation and lessons learned.

Trainings were conducted in an interactive manner. Each training was accompanied by a set of visual charts, which covered information about types of elections, principles of elections, and principles of active citizenship and advocacy. ISFED disseminated “I Vote” brochures both in Georgian and Russian to first time voters.

RESULTS

ISFED trained 536 applicants, who could not pass National Exams, and 1477 first and second year students.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“I am totally satisfied with the training. I think such trainings will contribute to changing a lot. There should be more training like this prior to the elections.” – Training participant (Batumi Region)

NEXT STEPS

The project evaluation seminar analyzed the project implementation and outlined the lessons learned. ISFED concluded that there is a need to organize similar trainings throughout Georgia and to disseminate more informational materials. ISFED plans to continue implementation of similar projects in the future.

ECMI: Informing Voters

Title of the project: Election Related Awareness Raising Activities in Minority Populated Districts of Kakheti and Samtskhe-Javakheti Regions of Georgia

Location: Kakheti and Samtskhe-Javakheti

Cost: 10,815 Euro

Donor: Council of Europe

Timetable of work: April 2008 – May 2008

WHAT

Within the framework of this project, ECMI aimed at raising general public awareness about election procedures and delivering election-related information to ethnic minority voters in languages they understand (Russian, Azeri, Armenian). Specifically, ECMI provided the electorate in minority regions with basic information about voting procedures and the importance of taking part in the elections.

HOW

ECMI printed 69,000 leaflets in Georgian, Armenian, Azeri and Russian languages. The leaflets informed voters about the parliamentary election system, voters' rights, and Election Day procedures. The text of the leaflets was compiled in coordination with CEC.

ECMI staff and groups of external public awareness campaigners disseminated information leaflets and brochures and held public community meetings to raise awareness in 64 villages of Kakheti region and 31 villages of Samtskhe-Javakheti region in May 2008.

Similar information was broadcast on TV and radio through Public Service Announcements. A local TV station in Kakheti region informed voters about their rights in Georgian and Russian languages. The TV station "Tanamgzavri" broadcast in Azeri and Georgian languages. Radio station "Hereti", with Kakheti-wide coverage broadcast briefly before the elections. In addition, an open discussion was held in the radio station "Hereti" in the pre-election week with the participation of a lawyer selected for expertise on election-related procedures.

Prepared information on election procedures was also published in two local Kakheti region newspapers, "Spektri" and "Kakhetis Khma", during pre-election week.

Coordination with CEC and certain NGOs during the projects' implementation also took place. The CEC uploaded ECMI's election-related leaflets on its website, while GYLA actively distributed these ECMI publications during its bus tours throughout Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions of Georgia. In response, a number of ECMI's staff members and volunteers were involved in election simulations organized by GYLA during its bus tours in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti regions of Georgia.

CHALLENGES

Communities were found to have a low level of public awareness concerning election procedures.

RESULTS

The public awareness raising meetings and activities provided voters with helpful election procedure related information and played an important role in contributing to their overall understanding of the importance of their election choices.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“As a voter I can express my satisfaction with the information provided during the public awareness meeting by ECMI in Samtskhe-Javakheti region. It was important for me and my family to obtain correct information on how to participate in elections and to learn more about our civil position in a proper manner.” – Silva Makarian, Community resident from village Baraleti, Samtskhe-Javakheti region

NEXT STEPS

The issue of the language of voters’ education publications must be addressed in the future, especially concerning the Azeri language and the use of Latin or Cyrillic scripts. In addition, it is of utmost importance that both international and local NGOs, as well as relevant state institutions, implement initiatives to address civic education of voters in general prior to the next election, in addition to carrying out more specific election-related public awareness raising activities during the pre-election period.



Man presenting his ID and voter invitation card during parliamentary elections

TI Georgia: Educating the voters and observing the elections in Kvemo Kartli

Location: Kvemo Kartli

Cost: 25,408 Euro

Donor: Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC)

Timetable of work: April 2008 – May 2008



WHAT

The aim of the project was to foster free and fair parliamentary elections in Georgia through (a) educating ethnic minority voters about voting procedures, methods to verify voters' lists and address other pre-election problems, and the parliament's role and its activities (in order to assist them in making informed choices) and (b) training and deploying election monitors in the five targeted districts on Election Day.

WHY

The presidential election in January 2008 was touted as the first competitive election in Georgia's history. That election, however, was not universally praised. Problems were identified specifically in the areas largely populated by ethnic minorities. The OSCE/ODIHR, Council of Europe, OSCE/PA, and European Parliaments' joint International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) assessed voting as bad or very bad in 24% of polling stations in Samtskhe-Javakheti, 10% in Kvemo Kartli and Shida Kartli, and 9% in Kakheti. In the post-election interim report, the IEOM reported unusually high voter turnout in the last hours of voting, including in areas in Kvemo Kartli.

HOW

TI Georgia identified eight local Community Activists in Kvemo Kartli: two from Bolnisi, two from Gardabani, two from Marneuli, one from Tsalka, and one from Dmanisi, and three facilitators/teachers (experienced people who had been previously involved in TI Georgia's Civic Forums in Kvemo Kartli project), who were responsible for conducting voter education activities in the targeted districts.

The Community Activists distributed TI Georgia's brochures that provided information about citizens' rights vis-à-vis parliament and its members; best ways to get information from parliament and monitor MPs' daily work; voting results on most important laws and why monitoring of those results is important; MPs financial and property declarations, MPs annual funding allocated for constituency offices, statistics of MPs' attendance records, etc.; as well as about voting procedures and voters' rights.

Brochures (5,000 copies) were distributed by going door to door.

Facilitators were responsible for conducting community meetings with Kvemo Kartli populations to educate them about the issues covered in the brochures.

To monitor Election Day, TI Georgia deployed 110 stationary and 10 mobile election monitors in the five districts. TI Georgia selected those precincts that had a higher number of voters and where the majority of registered voters were ethnic minorities. In the end, TI Georgia covered 40% of precincts and 51% of voters in those five districts.

CHALLENGES

All monitors were recruited from outside the monitored region in order to prevent possibilities of local residents being intimidated by local police or any other local government agencies. Nevertheless, attempts of intimidation were the single greatest difficulty encountered during the Election Day monitoring.

RESULTS

The community meetings demonstrated the high level of interest among the Kvemo Kartli population towards the issues related to elections and citizens' rights vis-à-vis their elected officials. Voter education meetings and TI Georgia's publications allowed voters to better understand the role of parliament and of individual members of parliament, as well as to learn about the concept and the negative outcomes of the misuse of administrative resources. TI Georgia was the only organization that disseminated such information in the targeted region. The Kvemo Kartli Region, along with the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, was always known as one of the most easily manipulated regions with the highest voter turnout. According to the results of the 2008 parliamentary election, Kvemo Kartli had the lowest turnout throughout the country. The turnout remained high in Samtskhe-Javakheti. TI Georgia believes that the quality work performed by its observers contributed to preventing multiple vote attempts thus inflating the turnout.

On Election Day TI Georgia's monitors submitted 137 appeals on both voting and counting process violations. Based on TI Georgia's appeals, the results of seven precincts were annulled.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

"TI Georgia's monitors were very active in the region of Kvemo Kartli prior to and on Election Day. They educated voters from this region about their rights and voting procedures, and they made sure that Precinct Election Commission members complied with the requirements of the law. In order for ethnic minorities to be integrated into Georgian society it is important to work on ensuring free and fair conduct of elections in the regions populated by ethnic minorities. In order to achieve this, the Central Election Commission should work more intensively with the Precinct Election Commission members from these regions and NGOs should conduct intensive voter education and election monitoring campaigns." – Mekhtizade Shovgi Kamal Ogli, Advisor of the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Georgia

NEXT STEPS

TI Georgia's strategy for Kvemo Kartli monitoring was to concentrate on quality rather than quantity. Thus, instead of attempting to cover all polling stations in the selected districts, TI Georgia chose to identify the largest polling stations and deploy fewer, but well-selected and well-trained observers to these polling stations. The outcomes of the election observation proved that this was the correct strategy and that it ensured high-quality monitoring of the election process.

One of the most important parts of election monitoring is the appeals process. According to Georgian legislation, the timeframes for appeals are so short that it is impossible to appeal to the local courts immediately without having at least one representative in each district. To address this problem it is necessary to: (a) revise the timeframes set out in the election code allowing more time for appeal submission and (b) have observer organizations allocate more human resources for post-election day monitoring and appeal administration.

Due to the time constraints, it was difficult to conduct an intensive voter education campaign. The government's tendency to change election-related laws at the last moment does not allow election observer organizations to adapt to new changes, incorporate them timely in their printed materials, and conduct quality meetings countrywide.

Furthering Participation in Elections

WHY

The lack of trust in democratic processes is one of the main reasons that voters, especially women, do not participate in electoral processes. It is notably challenging for women to assert themselves in Georgian political life. Besides overcoming widespread reservations about women as public figures, they need to stand their ground against the inherently male-dominated power structures of their parties. In the past, candidates have not figured largely in the parliamentary campaign itself, as each party is regularly represented in the media only by one or two spokespersons. Furthermore, political debate is centred more around a few personalities at the top of a party and less on issues and constituent needs and concerns.



Voter taking part in the presidential elections

Heinrich-Boell-Foundation: Mobilisation of Women from Ethnic Minority and Refugee Communities

Project Title: Ensuring the Participation of Disadvantaged Groups in Electoral Processes, Namely of Women from Ethnic Minority and Refugee Communities in Georgia

Location: Samtskhe-Javakheti, Lower Kartli, Adjara, Samegrelo and Imereti; intensified activities in Akhalkalaki, Marneuli, Batumi, Kutaisi and Tbilisi

Cost: 399,980 Euro

Donor: European Commission/European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights

Timetable of work: 2007 – 2009

WHAT

The project contributed to fostering access of disadvantaged groups to active political life in Georgia, hereby contributing to increased transparency of and confidence in democratic processes in Georgia.

The Heinrich-Boell-Foundation hoped to make the election process more transparent and comprehensible for women, ethnic minorities and IDPs, and thereby mobilise them to participate in election processes at various levels in the run-up to and during parliamentary elections.

HOW

Trainings on Gender and Participation Issues – Participants learned practical skills on how to conduct effective political campaigning as well as election related issues. In addition they familiarised themselves with issues of gender monitoring of local municipality budgets, and women's and women's groups' involvement in local governance and gender mainstreaming. **Follow-up Trainings** – The women were taught how to monitor their elected representatives at various levels during the post-election period, gendered monitoring of local municipality budgets, and women's and women's groups' involvement in local governance and gender mainstreaming issues.

Participation Programme – Through various activities, dialogue between the electorate and political actors were fostered. Confidence in (multi-ethnic) communities was reinforced, and participation of citizens in decision-making and mechanisms for political accountability was encouraged.

Organisation of Public Debates - A series of discussions tackled specific issues of the respective populations' prevailing concerns. These discussions helped institute an open and critical debate culture in the target communities.

Round Table Discussions – Politically active women who had already been trained got an opportunity to test and further develop their presentation and argumentation skills in discussions with members of parliament (both women and men) as well as representatives of the government and non-government institutions that were focusing on gender issues.

CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge to the project was the shift of the date of the parliamentary elections which were originally scheduled for autumn 2008. However, following the referendum of January 5, 2008, the decision was made to hold them in May 2008. The other challenge was the premature termination of cooperation with one of the project partners (IACEW). Both events necessitated renegotiating project plans, changing budget outlines and activity timelines.

RESULTS

During the trainings, the participants were trained according to the CEDAW convention model, which includes most women’s international human rights’ instruments, and at the same time is well applicable to most contexts throughout the world.

Starting in 2007, regular public debates have been conducted in Kutaisi, Akhaltsikhe and Batumi.

A media information campaign has been carried out in the regions and in Tbilisi: a monthly newspaper inlay was composed, edited and distributed; TV debates were held in the regions; internet video and photo competitions were conducted; and in 11 regions of Georgia two articles were printed monthly. Regional journalists were trained on the issue of gender and elections.

NEXT STEPS

Currently the project is in the middle of the implementation process and ends in September 2009.



Women queuing up to vote

NDI: Training of First Time Candidates

Location: Georgia

Cost: This is not a free-standing project. It is an activity conducted alongside others funded by the same donor.

Donor: USAID

Timetable of work: March 2008 – June 2008



WHAT

The goal of the project was to increase the ability of first time candidates and incumbent MPs to represent their parties before voters in the parliamentary elections.

HOW

NDI worked with candidates from six election subjects to improve their campaign and communication skills. Trainings were tailored to each party's specific needs and focused on effective tools for communication, targeting, tailoring messages to different constituencies, and in particular work on camera. NDI conducted these as a series of single-party trainings for incumbent MPs and first-time candidates from across the country. NDI also held specialized training for women candidates.

CHALLENGES

The compressed pre-election period and late selection of candidates provided significant challenges for parties to bring their candidates together far enough in advance of the election to allow time for training techniques to be widely implemented.

RESULTS

Monitoring of the media indicated that a broader selection of candidates was presented in the national media. Many candidates trained by NDI made their first appearances on TV talk shows following NDI training.

Majoritarian, party list and women candidates from six election subjects built their capacity to develop strategic communications and tailored messages for their most important constituencies.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

"NDI training gave our candidates the tools they needed to reach out to our constituencies and be an effective voice for the party. These were essential guidelines for any politician." – Paata Jibladze, Secretary General of the Labour Party

"NDI's Women Candidate Training was very interesting and useful. I have never had a chance to gain such experience. Sharing Western experience and comparing it to the Georgian reality was very important, as were the concrete recommendations given for applying these communication tools in the pre-election campaign. I'm grateful to NDI for this training." – Magda Anikashvili, Member of Parliament and member of the Christian-Democratic Movement

NEXT STEPS

Successful candidates will be included in NDI's induction trainings for members of parliament in fall 2008.

Public Opinion and Elections

WHY

It was apparent following the 2008 presidential election that there was concern among the public about the electoral process. There was a clear need to assess public opinion and share this information with all election stakeholders.



ISFED/GYLA conducting mock elections

ECMI: Attitudes Towards Elections in Minority Regions

Title of the project: Election Related Awareness Raising Activities in Minority Populated Districts of Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti Regions of Georgia

Location: Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti

Cost: 17,885 Euro

Donor: Council of Europe

Timetable of work: April 2008 – May 2008

WHAT

ECMI analyzed voter attitudes and conducted research on the reasons for minority voters' choices when casting their votes.

HOW

A total of 3000 voters, 700 of whom belonged to various ethnic groups, were interviewed in Kakheti region, 1425 persons in Kvemo Kartli region and 875 persons in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The survey was conducted by ECMI staff. In addition, several researchers were hired, as well as up to 100 interviewers. The ECMI research team developed a survey questionnaire, which was printed in 4 languages: Georgian, Armenian, Azeri and Russian. ECMI held 7 trainings for the preliminarily recruited interviewers in different locations. Supervisors of interviewers were allocated for each target region. Under the survey, persons belonging to the following ethnic groups were interviewed: Georgians, Armenians, Azeris, Russians, Ossetians, Greeks, Kists, Ukrainians, Avars, and Udins.

CHALLENGES

The survey was conducted to gain insight into how minority voters' make their choices when casting their votes and regarding the voters' election culture in general. Why do voters select particular candidates/parties? What are their main criteria for making their choices? How well aware are they of particular party programmes? Is the choice based on personal considerations or for other reasons?

A significant number of persons abstained from giving interviews after having heard of the topic of the survey, and some refused to answer more sensitive questions. A number of Azeri and Armenian respondents (mostly in Kvemo Kartli region) had poor command of literary Azeri and Armenian languages respectively. Thus, significant efforts were needed to preliminarily determine the preferred language to use for the questionnaire and interview itself.

RESULTS

Undertaking this survey in three minority-populated regions provided an opportunity to study election attitudes from the perspectives of a diversity of persons belonging to different ethnic backgrounds and levels of integration into Georgian society and provided a valuable resource base for conducting more targeted voter information campaigns in the future.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

The ECMI survey provides a good insight into differences among the political cultures of different ethnic groups. This study is an important tool not only for researchers, but for the Georgian government, as well as the Central Elections Commission for addressing the issue of voter awareness and voter information campaigns in the future" – Lawrence Scott Sheets, Caucasus Project Director, International Crisis Group

NEXT STEPS

ECMI hopes that its findings will contribute to the implementation of initiatives by the CEC, as well as both international and local NGOs, in future elections in Georgia. If they take into account the expressed need for better understanding of election-related procedures, they will be able to more adequately meet specific needs and expectations of the voter population in the minority regions.

In addition, ECMI’s findings on minorities’ attitudes towards political parties might help political parties registered in Georgia to better plan their pre-election campaigns, hence contributing to the creation of a healthy, competitive pre-election environment in general. Consideration of these factors will improve preparedness of the voting population of the minority regions of Georgia for the upcoming local self-government elections and in the long run contribute to the conduct of free and non-fraudulent elections.



Polling station ready for the election day

NDI: Rebuilding Confidence in Electoral Processes

Location: Throughout Georgia

Cost: This is not a free-standing project. It is an activity conducted alongside others funded by the same donor.

Donor: Sida

Timetable of work: March 2008 – August 2008

WHAT

This project supported efforts to rebuild public confidence in the electoral process. Specifically, NDI organized pre- and post-election opinion research measuring public attitudes toward elections and shared the research with local program partners to encourage them to take that opinion into account.

HOW

NDI worked with the Caucasus Research Resource Center to design and field two nationwide surveys and two rounds of focus groups to assess voter perspectives on the electoral process before and after the May 2008 parliamentary elections. Following completion of the second survey, analysis of public attitudes will be shared with the election administration, government, political parties and civil society to assist in their respective electoral efforts.

CHALLENGES

Fielding a large-scale survey in time to get results back so partners could act on the results prior to Election Day was a challenge, which, however, was successfully met.

RESULTS

This project is ongoing. The second survey was completed in late July and results were shared with the relevant stakeholders. It was proving extremely useful for them to receive public opinion about the electoral environment, as there was an apparent disconnect between some parties and their supporters.

Overall, the research has shown demand for democracy remains strong in Georgia. However, there is also a significant body of opinion that believes Georgia's transition to democracy is incomplete, and this is affecting participation in the democratic process. All stakeholders thus have an interest in getting a better assessment of public opinion and incorporating it into their work.

WERE WE SUCCESSFUL?

“Based on the public opinion survey conducted by NDI, the Christian-Democratic Movement was able to get access to free air time one week before the parliamentary elections. This was instrumental in ensuring our party had equal opportunity to deliver our message to the public.” – Giorgi Targamadze, Member of Parliament and Chair of Christian-Democratic Movement

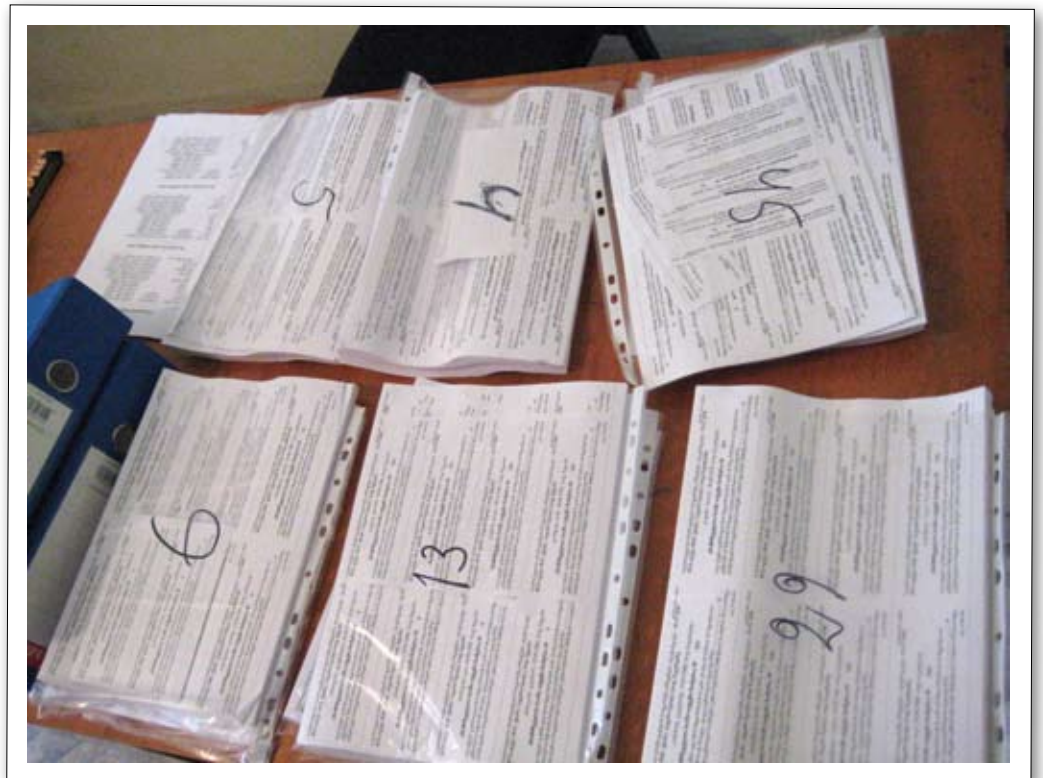
“NDI's pre-election survey was outstanding in its structure and content. It emphasized important details that gave the Republican Party new insight into voters' attitudes and the electoral environment.” – David Usupashvili, Chair of the Republican Party

“In the recent elections, focus groups and public polls supported by NDI played a significant role in a) providing the Central Election Commission, political parties, and NGOs with information for planning and evaluating programs, b) allowing them to identify deficiencies in their strategies and improve them, and c) providing information to the general public. It is very

important that such surveys were supported by international and well-known organizations like NDI, as NDI's involvement minimizes the possibility of speculation about the objectivity of the survey and its quality.” – Levan Tarkhishvili, Head of the Central Election Commission

NEXT STEPS

The Swedish International Development Agency and UK Embassy are jointly funding NDI to conduct follow-on public opinion research in Adjara before and after the Supreme Council elections in November 2008.



Voter invitation cards ready for distribution



NDI briefing the Technical Working Group members about the latest NDI opinion poll

Outlook

In this Section:

Outlook

76

Outlook

These success stories are the results of the fostering of donor-donor and donor-partner dialogue. Most impressive is the example of the cooperation between the CEC, international organisations and embassies to facilitate the timely publication of election results. Joint efforts led to the success. While, after the presidential elections, the publication of results at the PEC level took more than a week, following parliamentary elections, the CEC published the election results within just 30 hours.

There are still lessons to be learned, however. Donors, partners and beneficiaries will certainly benefit from continued donor coordination. Domestic stakeholders should be further encouraged to come up with their requests for assistance support. Donors could more intensively discuss policy directions and long term strategies. Donor procedures could be further harmonised and best practices additionally encouraged.

All this should contribute to even more effective and sustainable coordination and co-operation among all election stakeholders in order to advance the following issues:

- To draft a new electoral code based on recommendations of VC/ODIHR;
- To train CEC officials on the electoral code;
- To transfer full responsibility for the voters' list to the Civil Registry;
- To enable CEC undertaking full responsibility for raising voter awareness on electoral processes and for training DEC and PEC officials;
- To encourage the government and the CEC to continue focusing on education of voters particularly in minority regions;
- To facilitate the simplification of the process of complaints and appeals; and
- To actively promote women's involvement in politics.

The international community welcomes the continued engagement of the Georgian Government in electoral issues. Assuming that the government assumes greater ownership of the electoral process, donors might consider reduce their financial support for election-related government activities and focus more on support for non-governmental organizations.

Annexes

In this Section:

Election Assistance – Overview of Identified Problems and Responses	78
Important Web Links	88
Contact Information of Principal Donors and Partners	89

Election Assistance – Overview of Identified Problems and Responses

Legislative Framework		
Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Election Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pertinent inconsistencies, gaps and ambiguities leaving room for wide and varying interpretation • Last minute changes of the election code <p><i>Main Issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigning outside of polling stations • E-day registration • Registration of domestic observers • Counting of envelopes • Marking of dead/abroad in the voters' list • Validity of documents issued by election administration (for complaints/appeals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papers on inconsistencies (ODIHR) • Proposal of amendments to the election code (Domestic NGOs) • Lobbying with the legislature and the opposition to ensure further amendments to the election code can be implemented in line with international standards and not in contradiction to other provisions of the law (USAID-NDI) • Round Table (USAID-NDI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In consultation with various stakeholders drafting election code amendments and adopting them before the start of the campaign
<p>CEC instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity and detail of election day procedures: not addressing in sufficient detail issues not covered by the UEC • Availability of the manual to PEC members only when training was nearly completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to the CEC in drafting decrees, acts, and instructions • CEC Training on Election Day Procedures (USAID-IFES) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC drafting clear rules for the commission, where it should be stipulated in detail how the CEC sessions are conducted, and when the agenda of the sessions is distributed to all CEC members
<p>Limited knowledge of election standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on holding and supervision of elections (CoE) • Seminars on free and fair elections for students (CoE) • Sub-grants for production of printed materials and multimedia addressing changes in electoral legislation (USAID-IFES) 	

Electoral Practices		
Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Confidence in election process - voter information/education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low participation of voters, especially women and youth • Lack of public knowledge by voters about election procedures • Suspicion among voters that cameras will re-cord their electoral choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voter education addressing issues such as voters' rights, secrecy of ballot, one person one vote (USAID-IFES/Domestic NGOs/CoE/UNDP) • Voter information campaign on issues such as date, time, place of voting, type of elections (USAID-IFES-UNDP-Domestic NGOs) • Training specifically targeted at women voters (CoE-World Vision) • Capacity Building of CEC PR Department (IFES) • Voter education programs on Georgian Public Broadcaster (US Embassy, Public Affairs Section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC elaborating a comprehensive voter education plan on issues like secrecy of vote and family voting • CEC conducting public awareness campaign about the elections hereby focusing on unbiased voter information and reaching out to all society groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Info on "voting steps" - Check yourself in voters' list - Maintain hotline • CEC using its website more widely as a means of public information to publish relevant information, including results, mass media related plans of coverage of the campaign, financial reports of election contestants
<p>Composition of Election Commissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater political inclusiveness at CEC, but not at DEC level • Lack of neutrality of commission members/ voting in a partisan manner • Opposition parties underrepresented in managerial positions • Under-representation of women and minorities in the election administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VC/ODIHR Legal Opinion 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government/opposition agreement on reshaping of the composition of the election administration • Promoting the representation of women and minorities at all levels of the election administration

Electoral Practices		
Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Election Administration – transparency and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstable election administration having undergone numerous reforms and frequent changes of CEC head • Commissioners with little access to first hand information • Last minute calls for meeting and late issuance of the meeting agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging continuous dialogue and cooperation with all stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC developing and publishing strategic plan with clear budget outline and deadlines • Holding regular public meetings at CEC and DEC level • CEC publishing election expenses budget
<p>Election Administration – improving professionalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of effective collaboration and information sharing among the departments • “Just do my job” attitude among personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring professional, timely, uniform and adequate training for DEC and PECs about voter registration and rights of election observers (UNDP/USAID-IFES/CEC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC restructuring Human Resources and Training Department with competency to certify election officials and to conduct training • CEC introducing regular staff meetings/meetings of heads of departments • CEC instituting weekly reporting requirements for all levels and offices of election administration • Encouraging adherence to code of conduct developed by CEC
<p>E-day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent application of inking procedures • Multiple/proxy voting • Ballot box stuffing/carousel voting • Presence of unauthorized persons • Overcrowding • Campaigning inside and outside the polling stations • Insufficient knowledge and skills of partisan and non-partisan observers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive, timely and uniform training of election administration members at all levels with particular emphasis on counting/tabulation procedures through interactive sessions (role play, case studies) with close monitoring of the training activities (UNDP/USAID-IFES/CoE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC developing clear step-by-step election day procedures and printing of an eye-catching aide memoire for election officials on voting and counting procedures • Redrafting training materials and distribution of training handbooks/manuals to all election stakeholders

Electoral Practices		
Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Tabulation and announcement of election results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow counting • Arbitrary rules of counting E-day votes • Problems with completing protocols • Unusually high turnout in some polling stations during the last hours of voting • Slow posting of results on the web page 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the performance of the election administration at all levels and assistance to the CEC to increase number of faxed protocols (USAID-IFES/NDI) • Upgrading software for results tabulation and delivery to the web (USAID-IFES/Estonia/NDI) • Mapping of results of presidential and parliamentary elections (Sida-NDI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC clarifying instructions on counting of signatures, envelopes, issued ballot papers and ballots cast • CEC redesigning summary protocols consistent with the election code: clear reference to all types of lists and votes • CEC improving information delivery from PEC/DEC to CEC • CEC posting protocols to the website as soon as and in the order that they receive them • Increasing CEC web page capacity
<p>Complaints and appeals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC failing to follow important legal procedures in adjudicating complaints • CEC and courts stretching the law beyond sound interpretation to favour the ruling party's candidate and public officials • Public being afraid to submit complaints and witness statements on politically motivated offences • Lack of sufficient clarity of procedural provisions dealing with admissibility and adjudication of election related complaints • CEC failing to follow important procedures in adjudication of complaints • CEC regulations not adequately addressing how complaints are to be dealt with • CEC members lacking adjudication skills and basing decisions on political interests • Written CEC decisions on complaints lacking sufficient elaboration of facts and law on which they were based, not notifying complainants of their right to appeal decisions to court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings for party legal department staff and party observers on the adjudication of complaints (USAID-IRI) • Trainings for political party lawyers, based on an Election Law Manual for Lawyers, which provides legal guidance to lawyers who handle election complaints (USAID-ABA/CEELI) • Advanced Training (campaign finance and campaign fraud) for lawyers, with a focus on financial crimes associated with elections, including illegal campaign contributions and the abuse of administrative funds (US Embassy-Department of Justice) • Assessment of complaints/appeals process (OSCE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC adjudicating complaints and appeals in open sessions, ensuring that discussions of the complaints are organized, systematic and thorough, with identification and discussion of the relevant facts, issues, law and evidence • CEC considering duly all complaints filed with election commission • CEC members having copies of the complaints in advance, and voting in a transparent manner • CEC decisions including adoption of the legal reasoning behind the decision • CEC notifying complainants in writing of the CEC decision, and providing a sufficient explanation of the facts, issues, law and evidence on which the conclusion was based

Electoral Practices		
Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Complaints and appeals (continued from previous page)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints not being sufficiently detailed • Local administration and courts actively discouraging observers and opposition supporters from filing complaints • Professional court hearings, but written judgments of courts not laying out sufficient reasoning and lacking sound legal basis • Police not sufficiently investigating allegations of intimidation, kidnappings and attacks on opposition supporters and close family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative support to amendments of the election code (esp. in order ensure that any signed and stamped protocol provided by PECs is accepted as legitimate for the purpose of filing complaints and appeals) (OSCE) • Round Table discussion on electoral disputes (ISFED) • Training of lawyers and judges on receiving and adjudicating appeals (CoE) • Training of election commissioners on the procedures for receiving and adjudicating appeals (USAID-IFES/UNDP/CoE) • Training of political parties and domestic observers on filing complaints (CoE) • Addressing problems to the Task Force (International and domestic NGOs, embassies) • Providing guidelines for the police to investigate allegations (OSCE/CoE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC notifying the complainant of his/her right to appeal the decision to court and specifying within which time frame • Conducting an information campaign about complaints/appeals procedures • Conducting an information campaign about complaint hotline
<p>Minority rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of voter information/education of minorities • Gaps in voters' list in minority areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue printed materials, multimedia, theatrical performances, debates, and other televised and radio materials about election day procedures and rights in ethnic minority areas (USAID-IFES-IRI/nGnl) • Voter education on electoral procedures through local media and speakers programs (US Embassy, PAS) • Brochure on the use of administrative resources in Azeri and Russian languages (TI Georgia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue translation of all important voter information into minority languages • Provide crucial legal documents (voters' lists, protocols, manuals, election code) in minority languages

Electoral Practices		
Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Voters' list</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door-to-door list verification • Lack of accuracy • Last minute changes to electoral districts • Cancel E-day registration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of technical assistance and strategic planning to compare and rectify differences between the CRA and CEC databases (USAID-IFES) • Support the Civil Registry Agency IT unit to analyze CEC database, and actively change the database in the run up to the elections (USAID-UNDP/CRA) • Conduct a public awareness campaign that allows citizens to confirm their registration and precinct and district information via SMS service (USAID-UNDP/CRA) • Conduct voters' list auditing (CoE/ISFED) • Campaign for voters to check their names in the voters' list prior to elections (CoE/ISFED, USAID) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce necessary legislative changes in order to cancel E-day registration • Considering permanent voter roll • CEC incorporating data of voters included in additional list on E-day into the general voters' list and ensuring there is a clear mechanism for incorporating the changes made by voters during the review period into the final voters' list, as well as eliminate such discrepancies as multiple entries and deceased people in the list • CEC cooperating with the Ministries of Justice and for Refugees and Settlement on improvement of structure and quality of the list • CEC maintaining updated voters' list on the web with improved searching system
<p>Domestic non-partisan observers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of each step of electoral process not provided for (intimidation, expelling from polling stations, not receiving protocols) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of ODIHR "Handbook for Domestic Election Observers" (OSCE) • Support to non-partisan, professional monitoring organisations (USAID-NDI-Sida/ISFED and IRI/nGnl, OSGF: nGnl, GYLA) • Support to Parallel Vote Tabulation (USAID-NDI-OSGF/OSI: ISFED; Ukraine/PMMG; IRI/nGnl) • Support to pre-trial detention monitoring (TI Georgia) • Support to monitoring in minority areas (TI Georgia, Multinational Georgia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC informing all election stakeholders on efforts undertaken by CEC to improve the completeness and accuracy of the voters' list in order to build confidence • CEC considering applying same registration rules to domestic observers as to international observers (reducing 30 day registration deadline, submitting observer lists to DEC's) • CEC developing Election Day guide for observers

Electoral Practices		
Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Domestic non-partisan observers (continued from previous page)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of partisan observers (UK-NDI, USAID-IRI) • Specific training for observers on how to file complaints (USAID-IRI, EC-OSGF: GYLA) • Voter information on PVT (ISFED, Multinational Georgia) 	
<p>International observers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of the role of international observers: not filing complaints • Issuing election statements on the day after elections • Lack of human resources to observe E-day and post-election day events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the early pre-election period (CoE, NDI) • Long-term observation (ODIHR) • Post E-day teams (NDI) • US Embassy Observation Mission • Embassies/Parliaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC developing guide for international observers

Campaign Environment and Media Situation

Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Highly polarized political environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trust • Pervasiveness of allegations of intimidation and pressure on public sector employees among others • Speculation about post-election demonstrations • Accusations of preparations for a coup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing a code of conduct for political parties/electoral subjects (USAID-NDI) • Training of party representatives on a constructive, issue-based campaign (USAID-IRI) • Moderating interparty dialogue and debate (USAID-IRI) • Conducting surveys and focus groups (USAID-IRI, Sida-NDI) • Creation of a searchable database of parliamentary votes and training of electoral subjects and others on using the parliamentary record in the campaign (USAID-NDI) • Vote Match (NIMD - postponed) 	
<p>Abuse of administrative resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blurred clear distinction between state activities and the former president's campaign • Implementation of social welfare programmes combined with campaigning for the former president - reported cases of distribution of vouchers as subsidies from the president and canvassing in favour of the former president • Presence of the former president at major events giving the events the appearance of presidential events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaboration of a code of conduct for public officials indicating contact points in case of complaints (USAID-NDI) • Increase transparency of campaign spending through monitoring (TI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify election code stipulations and modify CEC rules/regulations • Introduction of a committee at CEC level to monitor election campaign funding/spending • CEC jointly with NGOs publishing a memorandum of understanding about interpretation of legislation in regard to misuse of administrative resources

Campaign Environment and Media Situation

Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Widespread allegations of intimidation and pressure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure on opposition supporters by police and local officials to desist from campaigning, threats of arbitrary arrest or job dismissal • Isolated instances of violence against opposition activists including kidnapping • Collection of signatures and photocopying of ID cards by heads of schools, hospitals and state-owned companies; • No strong sanctions against such practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of law enforcement officials in their role in regard to elections – development of public service announcements on the role of the police on E-day (US Embassy, Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement) • Promoting issue based media coverage • Supporting civil society actors in tackling intimidation cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, consistent message being delivered to all officials, including the police, that interference in the electoral process, including any form of pressure or intimidation on political activists, public sector officials, businesses or voters is unacceptable and will not be tolerated • Publishing instructions for law enforcement officials on their role during elections • Training of law enforcement officials about their role during elections
<p>Lack of equal and equitable TV coverage of the candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media under strong influence from their owners and political patrons • Campaign coverage in news programs lacking balance • Temporary suspension of broadcasts of Imedi TV • CEC media monitoring not identifying substantial imbalances • Very high costs of paid political advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of media coverage of candidates (ODIHR observers/CoE/TI Georgia) • Translation and dissemination of “Practical Handbook on Professional Media Coverage of Elections” (CoE) • Training on journalists’ rights and obligations during the election period (USAID-IFES/GEC) • Journalist and media training on election related issues (USAID) • Training of journalists on issue based election campaign coverage (UNDP/CoE) • Conference on democratic responsibility of media during election campaigns (CoE) • TV debates on professional media coverage of election campaign (CoE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarifying provisions of the code related to campaign silence • Considering regulation of campaign coverage in news bulletins and political debates to ensure equitable treatment of all contenders by public and private media

Political Parties and Political Dialogue

Problem	International / Domestic Community Response	Georgian Government Response
<p>Political dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dialogue between majority and minority parties • Opposition candidates' deep mistrust of the election administration and the authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table discussions with the participation of government and opposition parties (NDI) • Bilateral diplomatic dialogues • Ambassadorial Working Group (UNDP-OSCE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President of the Parliament conducting several rounds of negotiations with the opposition about electoral issues (election date, election system)
<p>Constructive, issue-based campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opposition candidates focusing on charges of electoral violations rather than on policy issues • Opposition persistently questioning the fairness of the electoral process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of candidates, especially first time and women candidates (USAID-NDI, IRI) 	
<p>Representation of women in political life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one woman candidate in the elections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of women candidates (USAID-NDI) 	

Important Web Links

Administration and Cost of Elections/ACE Electoral Knowledge Network
aceproject.org

BRIDGE – Building Resources in Democracy, Governance & Elections
bridge-project.org

Central Election Commission of Georgia
www.cec.gov.ge

Council of Europe
www.coe.int

European Commission External Cooperation Programmes – Governance and Democracy
ec.europa.eu/europeaid/what/governance-democracy/index_en.htm

EC-UNDP Partnership on Electoral Assistance
www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org

International IDEA/International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
www.idea.int

IRI/International Republican Institute
www.iri.org

NDI/National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
www.ndi.org

OSCE/ODIHR – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
www.osce.org/odihr-elections

UN Department of Political Affairs/Electoral Assistance Division
www.un.org/Depts/dpa/ead/overview.html

Contact Information of Principal Donors and Partners



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