EC-UNDP-IDEA Joint Thematic Workshop on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Electoral Processes

30 November – 2 December 2009

Summary Report

1. Introduction

The 1st three-day Joint Thematic Workshop on The Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Electoral Processes was organized by the European Commission (EC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) in Brussels from the 30th November to the 2nd of December 2009.

The workshop was organized in the context of the Global Training Platform and of the Subgroup on Effective Electoral Assistance within the Train4DEV initiative. Thus, the workshop was given in collaboration with the usual partners of the subgroup: Government of Spain, International Organization of Migration (IOM), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and Organization of American States (OAS). In addition, two regional partners were brought on board for the organization of the workshop, namely the SADC Electoral Commission Forum and the Brazilian National Council of Justice.

The workshop targeted staff members appointed from the EC, UNDP, IDEA, CIDA, IOM, EU Member States, other donor agencies, regional/international organizations as well as members of Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs). Owing to the specific thematic area, participants were sought from countries that have worked with issues related to the introduction/use of ICTs in voter registration processes over the last five years in the context of UNDP managed projects with contributions from EC.

Altogether, there were **99 participants**, **a resource team of 23 presenters** and a **core organizing team of 6** in the workshop.

2. Training Outline

The workshop was conducted over three consecutive days (Monday-Wednesday) and mixed presentations on vital subjects within the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Electoral Processes with case studies, discussions and working groups. Building on and similar to previous trainings, the primary objectives of the workshop was to familiarize and give the participants, an overview of option and models available for introducing technology in electoral processes; A comparative review of ICTs use in Civil and Voter Registration, especially focusing on the sustainability and effective use of biometrics-recognition systems in the voter registration activities. Analyze possible synergies between civil registration and voter registration, census and other statistical services and to discuss of the main operational challenges in the identification, formulation and implementing phases of EC-UNDP support to civil and voter registration.

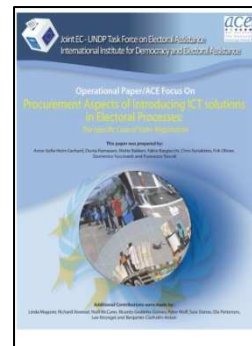| Day 1	**Opening, EU-EC and UN-UNDP Framework, Lessons Learned and New Approach**
	Objective: The first day was dedicated to familiarizing the participants with the broad framework of EC and UNDP policy and strategic framework to introduce ICTs in electoral Processes. Two panels covered the Introduction and challenges of introducing ICTs in Electoral Processes. The Content and activities of EU election observation missions, challenges of observing Electoral Processes introducing ICTs in Voter registration and Evoting was also covered.
Day 2	**Case Studies in Voter Registration and Data Transmission**
	Objective: The second day was devoted to the issue of technological innovation in the electoral process. Objective: The second day was devoted to the issue of technological innovation in the electoral process. Particular focus was dedicated to voter registration methodologies and biometric electronic voting systems and presentations included a variety of case studies ranging from Moldova, Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde and synergies between voter and Civil registration in Zambia and Benin. This second day also drew attention to the Main First Findings of the *EC funded Study on The Use of Information & Communication Technologies in Electoral Processes: Focus on Civil & Voter Registration and Data Transmissio*n. At the end of the day the participants were divided into four different workgroups to discuss the topic of the day; ICTs and Synergies between Voter and Civil Registration – Key Challenges and the Way Forward. After the discussions every group presented their discussions in plenary.
Day 3	**Further Case Studies, Validation Exercises and Procurement for ICTs in Electoral Processes**
	Objective: Day three and the final day emphasized the advantages and disadvantages of using ICTs in electoral processes and the importance of appropriate use of new technologies under various contextual circumstances. Particular focus was dedicated to Data transmission, Internet Applications, Operational Planning and Budgeting of Biometric voter registration. These presentations were followed up by case studies in DRC, Conakry and Zambia concerning procurement issues of biometric voter registration. In the afternoon participants once again were divided into four different workgroups to give feedback on the JTF Operational Paper/ACE Focus On *"Procurement Aspects of Introducing ICT Solutions in Electoral Processes: The Specific Case of Voter Registration"*. After the discussions every group presented their discussions and feedback on the operational paper in plenary.

3. Training Resources

The three-day face-to-face workshop was delivered by the members of the EC-UNDP Joint Task Force, staff of International IDEA and CIDA, IOM and OAS as well as senior electoral experts that regularly collaborate with the JTF or with other international organizations participating in the workshop.
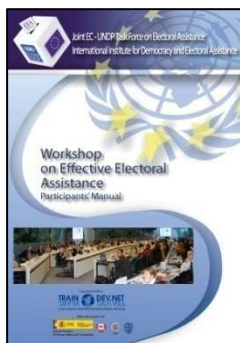
The primary sources of the workshop were:

1. Joint Task Force Operational Paper/ACE Focus on "Procurement Aspects of Introducing ICT solutions in Electoral Processes: The Specific Case of Voter Registration and Electronic Voting"

This paper is a direct result of the operational lessons learned since 2004 through the partnership between the European Commission (EC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This paper argues that electoral procurement has a much larger scope that is often acknowledged, cutting across a wide array of different activities within the same electoral cycle. It should therefore be seen as an integral part of electoral assistance projects – both in their planning, formulation and implementation. The paper analyses and illustrates the lessons learned from the implementation of the many electoral assistance projects in support of countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, that requested and received electoral assistance for the introduction of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in their voter registration processes and for the procurement of the related electoral material.

2. The eLearning Course on Effective Electoral Assistance

The overarching objectives of this eLearning course are to share experiences and to introduce to EC and UNDP staff, to beneficiary EMBs, to practitioners and other development agencies dealing with electoral assistance, the policy and strategy framework that governs both EU and UN involvement in elections and the electoral cycle approach in order to build capacity for formulation and implementation of future electoral assistance projects.

3. The Participants Manual of the
Workshop on Effective Electoral Assistance

The manual have been primarily used for the EC-UNDP-IDEA Workshops on Effective Electoral Assistance. It provides extensive overview over the electoral cycle approach to electoral processes and thus touches upon issues related to the legal framework of elections, professionalization of EMBs, strategic and operational planning, civic and voter education, voter registration, domestic observation, media regulations, assistance to parties and parliaments, voting operations, managing results and electoral dispute resolution. In this context, it outlines the policy and strategic framework of EU/EC and UN/UNDP involvement in electoral assistance, overviews the identification, formulation, implementation and monitoring phases of these projects and looks into how the two organizations work together in this domain. The manual also deals with procurement issues and fund management as well as global tools and network

such as the ACE Electoral Knowledge Network and BRIDGE. The manual, which served the purpose of establishing the thematic workshop within the context of electoral support more widely, is based on the following main sources:

> ➢ The EC Methodological Guideline on Electoral Assistance;
> ➢ The UNDP Electoral Assistance Implementation Guide;
> ➢ International IDEA Handbook on Electoral Management Design;
> ➢ The ACE Focus on Effective Electoral Assistance.

4. www.ec-undp-electoralassistance.org

The Joint Task Force website (http://www.ec-undp_electoralassistance.org) was continuously updated the weeks before the workshop thus making extensive information and learning material available online.

Three weeks before arrival (9th November) the participants received access to the Workshop Participants Manual and the eLearning Course on Effective Electoral Assistance, so that the main foundation issues of effective electoral assistance were dealt with the manual and eLearning.

Agenda flyer

One week prior to arrival (23rd November) the participants received the Joint Task Force Operational Paper/ACE Focus on "Procurement Aspects of Introducing ICT solutions in Electoral Processes: The Specific Case of Voter Registration and Electronic Voting".

Both the workshop manual and the Operational paper were provided in printed format at the workshop venue, as well as a DVD of the eLearning Course on Effective Electoral Assistance. Moreover a numerous handbooks and papers on electoral assistance related subjects were made available on CD rom. A flyer was also produced in order to provide participants from day one all the practical information.

4. Perspectives on Costs

The workshop was free of charge, the only costs participants were required to cover were those related to travel and accommodation. Also, it was requested that resource persons, representing various EC and UN institutions (delegations and country offices etc), the International IDEA and partner organizations (IOM, CIDA and OAS) all came with economic backing from these organizations. The practical/logistic organization of the training was carried out internally by Joint Task Force and the workshop venue was facilitated by the EC. Owing to these efforts, the total costs of the workshop were therefore kept at the minimum.
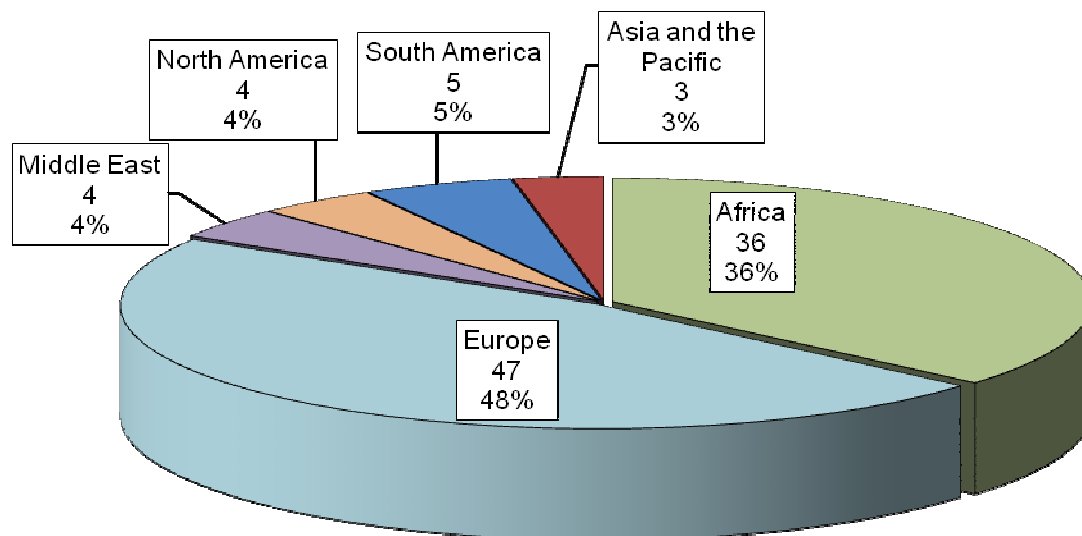
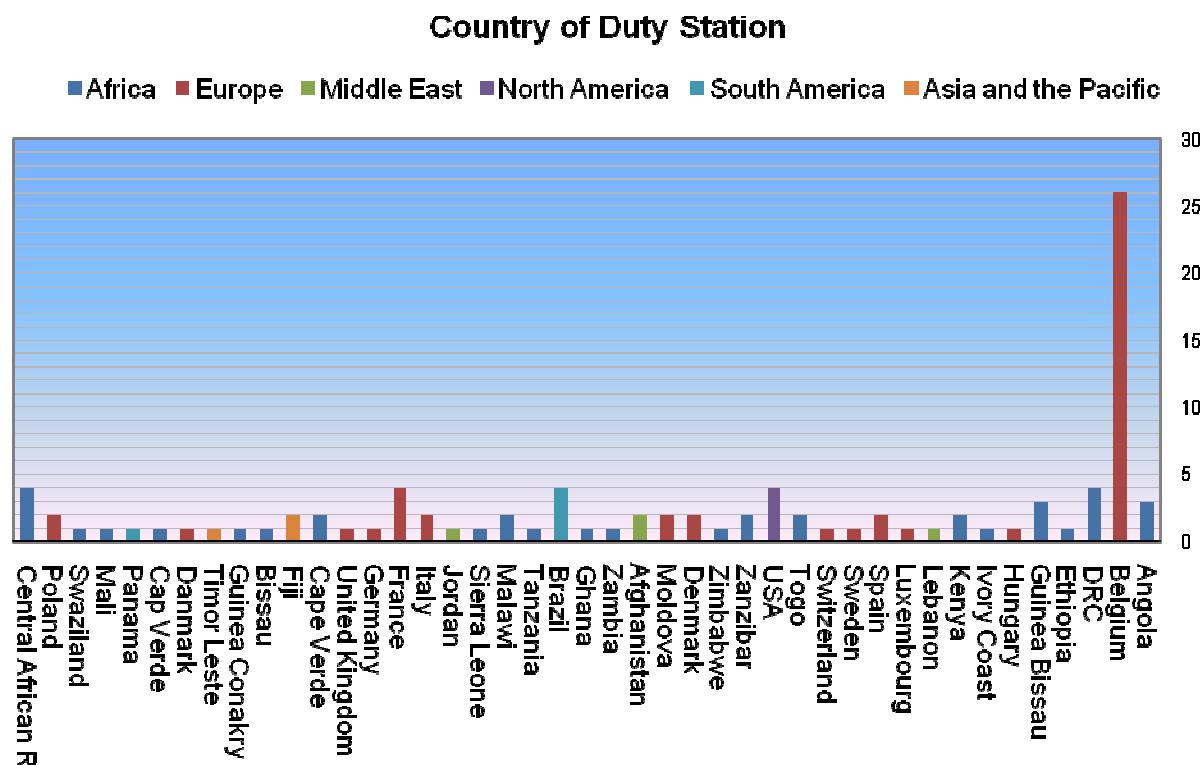**5. Participants Statistics**

The workshop participants came from all over the world with the highest percentage share working in Europe (47 participants or 48 percent). The second highest percentage shares were working in Africa.

The numbers of representatives were highest from Democratic Republic of Congo, USA, France, Central African Republic and Brazil (4 participants). As expected, considering the location of the workshop, a substantial number of the participants had their working placement in Europe. Unsurprisingly; a large majority (26 out of 46) were stationed in Belgium.
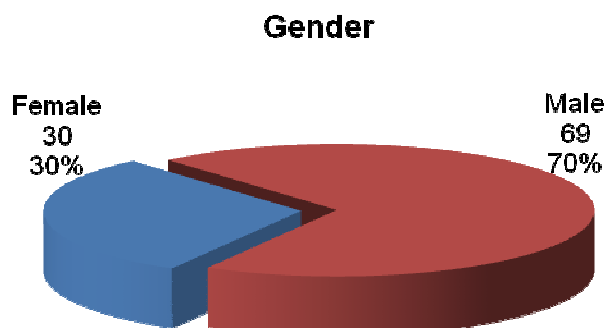
From the Middle East there were participants from Lebanon, Jordan and Afghanistan. From South America; Panama and Brazil and from North America participants from the USA. Finally the two countries from Asia and the Pacific were represented namely Fiji and Timor Leste.

Participants by Region of Duty Station

North America
4
4%

South America
5
5%

Asia and the Pacific
3
3%

Middle East
4
4%

Africa
36
36%

Europe
47
48%

Country of Duty Station

■Africa ■Europe ■Middle East ■North America ■South America ■Asia and the Pacific
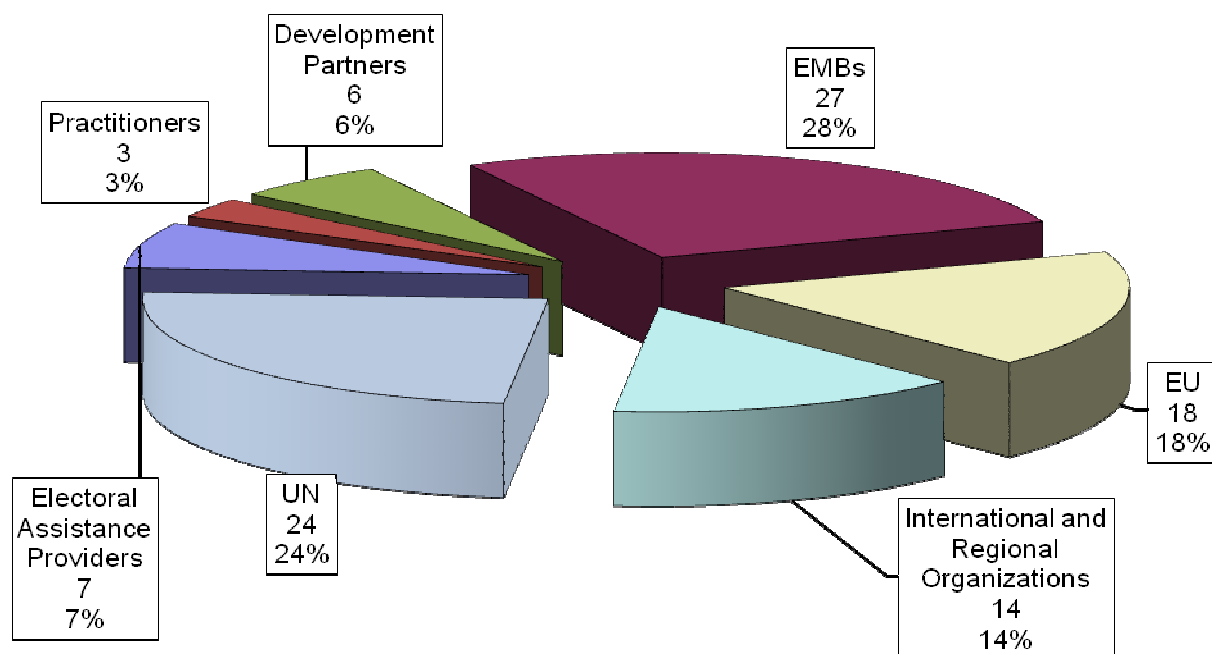
Looking into the gender balance, men represented 70 percent of the audience. Men outnumbered female participation in Europe (33 men and 14 women) whilst the balance were little more even when focusing on those working in Africa (23 men and 13 women). Regarding institutional belonging, the UN and EU staff made up 42 percent of the participants with UN staff counting 24 and EU 18 in numbers.

Gender

Female
30
30%

Male
69
70%

Trainings Global Statistics
Participation by target institution

Development Partners
6
6%

Practitioners
3
3%

EMBs
27
28%

Electoral Assistance Providers
7
7%

UN
24
24%

EU
18
18%

International and Regional Organizations
14
14%

Institutional belonging of participants apart from EU/EC and UN/UNDP– overview:

Electoral Management Bodies: Electoral Commission of Fiji (ECF), Electoral Commission of Ghana (ECG), Malawi Electoral Commission (ECM), Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC), Government of Cape Verde (DGAPE and NOSi), National Electoral Commission Tanzania (NECT), National Electoral Commission of Angola (NECA), Government of Angola (INATEL and CDI: MAT), Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova (CECMD), National Electoral Commission of Togo (CENI), Interim Independent Electoral Commission of Kenya (IECK), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Brazilian National Council of Justice, Electoral Commission of Central African Republic (ECCAR), National Electoral Commission of Guinea Bissau (NEC), Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), Elections and Boundaries Commission of the Kingdom of Swaziland. EMBs showed a substantial interest in the workshop by making up 28 percent of the participants.

International and Regional Organizations: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS), Barcelona International Peace Resource Center, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Kabul and Geneva, European Space Agency (ESA), International Crisis Group. International and Regional Organizations were represented in the audience by 14 percent.

Development partners: Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Delegation for the Italian Presidency of the G8, The Embassy of Canada in Afghanistan, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs and France Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Development partners made up 6 percent of the participants.

Electoral Assistance Providers: European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democratic Support (NEEDS), Centre for Interparty Dialogue and Democracy of Mali (CMDID) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). Electoral assistance providers represented 7 percent of the participants.

Practitioners: Practitioners made up 3 percent of the participants.
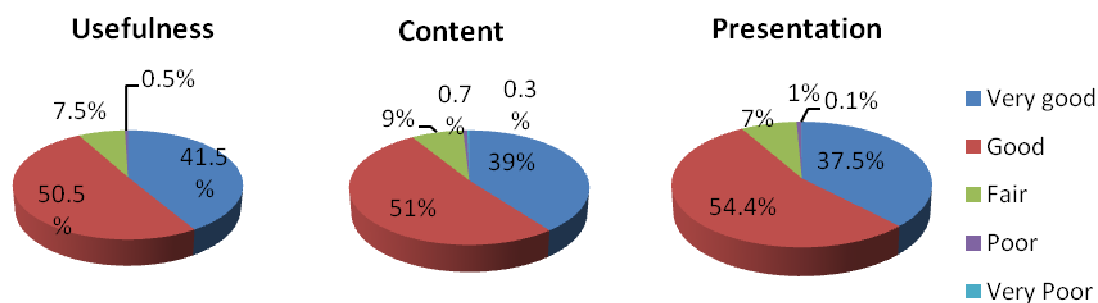
6. Evaluation

An evaluation was organized whereby all participants were asked to gauge the content and usefulness of overall topics as well as the performance of presenters for each and every day of the training. The statistics below - summarizing the participants' view on the training as a sum of all presentations - witness to the successfulness of the workshop in terms of usefulness, content and presentation. The different listing values, through the participant has to chose, were 'very good', 'good', 'fair', 'poor' and 'very poor'.

Looking at the Workshop as a whole, summarizing the views that participants had on the presentations in total, altogether 91-92 percent evaluated the workshop being either "very good" or "good" in terms of Usefulness, content and presentation. 7 percent indicated that they were fairly satisfied whereas only a small fraction ticked off for "poor" or "very poor".
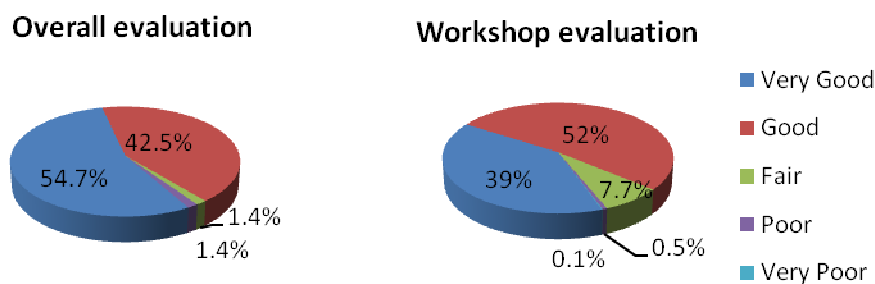
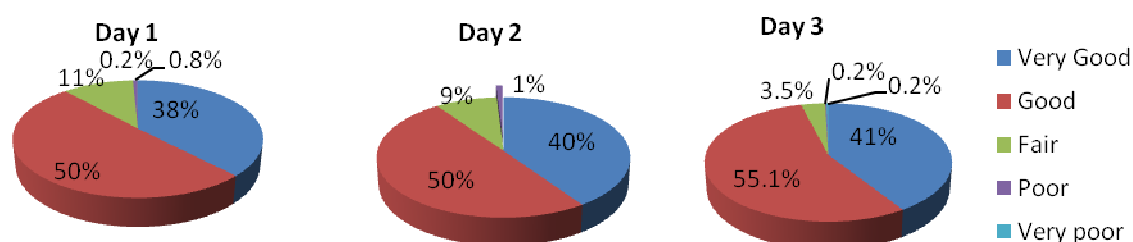| Response rate of evaluation |
| :--- |
| Day 1: 49 |
| Day 2: 43 |
| Day 3: 35 |
| |
| Total number of participants = 99 |

To the question on the overall evaluation of the eLearning Course on Effective Electoral Assistance, participant answer for more than 97 percent in the three categories as "very good" or "good". We can draw from these results that the participants felt that the event as a whole, not only looking at presentations as such but also taking into account organizational and logistical aspects, opportunities for networking etc. was carried out in a highly satisfactory manner.
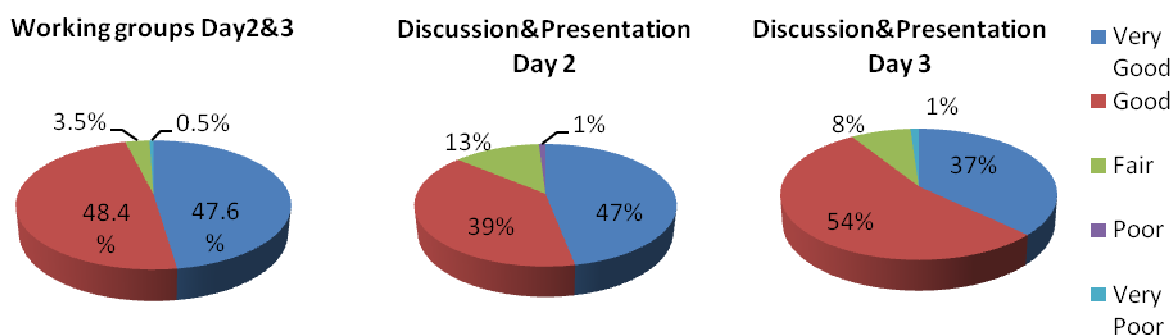
Looking closer at the day by day satisfaction – which represents the summary of content, usefulness and presentation – with the workshop it becomes clear that all three days got high ratings of the participants.

All three days reached high level of satisfaction signified by the number of participants that rated the presentations of these days as "very good" or "good" : 88 percent for the first day, 90 percent for day two and 96 percent for day three".
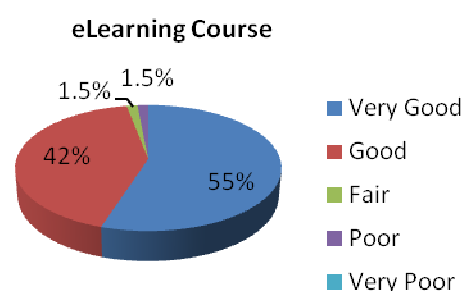

In day two and three the participants had the possibilities to work together in working groups both of which were seen as highly valuable (95 and 96 percent rated the working group as "very good" or "good" on day two and day three, respectively). This may have contributed to the higher scores of the two latter days as opposed by the first. Another explanation may be that the first day of the workshop was typically dedicated to introductory sessions and more theoretical perspectives – it was on day two and three that participants were taking into the nitty-gritty issues of ICTs and voter registration and case studies. Finally, it may also be a sign of "getting warmed up". During the course of the days, when participants get to know each other and comfortable in each others' company, they are more likely to engage with the group as a whole and with each other thus increasing the learning outcome and satisfaction.
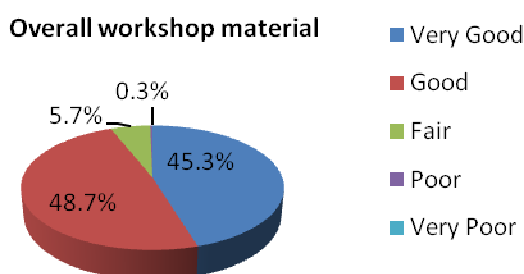

As mentioned, the working groups were highly valued by the workshop participants. While not reaching the same levels, also the feedback from the working group discussions were rated high by the participants. Altogether 86 and 91 percent regarded the presentation of the discussions as either "very good" or "good" on day two and day three, respectively. One reason for why the feedback from the

working group session were regarded as less useful then the working group discussions themselves may be that all groups were working on the same set of questions which meant that, in the end, the working groups repeated each other during the plenary session. One possibility in the future would be to give each group different sets of questions.

As mentioned above, participants were encouraged to complete the eLearning Course on Effective Electoral Assistance upon their arrival in Brussels. One of the questions of the evaluation related to the participants perception of the eLearning course upon which 97 percent of the participant ticked off the boxes for "very good" or "good". Only a few participants deemed the eLearning course as "very poor" or "poor". Thus, it seems that this eLearning course answered to the expectations and proved helpful for the participants.

For the evaluation question on the related workshop material, altogether 93 percent rated the materials as either "very good" or "good". The material dealing with topics and issues related to day three reached the highest level of satisfaction 100 percent in terms of the three categories, as "very good" or "good". Day two, seems to be the less satisfying day with 86 percent valuing the materials as either "very good" or "good".

7. Issues and options

Listed below are some of the comments that were pointed out by several participants and some of the options available in order to confront these issues.

Working groups: Create different working groups which focus on different sets of questions. This way, the working groups will answer and cover more topics and we would avoid a situation where the working groups are repeating one another during the panel session where the groups are reporting back on the issues they were discussing. Also, by creating parallel working groups on specific topics, it would make it possible for participants to sign up for the working group dealing with a topic lying close to their specific interest.

Time: Participants noted that there were not enough time for discussions/interaction and the sharing of experiences.

Power Point: More effective access to power point presentations slides – presenters could be asked to send their power point slides to the organizers before the workshop so that these could be uploaded on the website prior to the training which would make it possible for participants to download/print the presentations in advance. The problem with this is of course that many presenters prepare their presentations at a rather late stage. The power point presentation covering the day's presentations could be printed in hard copies and handed out to participants in the morning. This is the most likely solution that would be adopted.

8. Photos from the event

9. Upcoming activities

Thematic Workshop on Elections, Violence and Conflict Management

The JTF, in collaboration with its partners through the Train4Dev initiative, the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and the Barcelona International Peace Resource Center, will organize a Thematic Workshop on Elections, Violence and Conflict Management in March 2010.

Elections and electoral processes provides a means by which social conflict can be channeled into a constructive popular deliberation and dialogue with common rules for choosing representatives of the people to fulfill executive and legislative functions. Robust democratic institutions are usually understood as the ultimate guarantor for social peace. By providing a framework within which people can voice their concerns through peaceful debate, elections are critical tools for social conflict management. Credible elections contribute to the creation of legitimate governments that enjoys popular support for programmes and policies and that has the capacity of ensuring community security. However, because electoral processes are intrinsically about the attainment of political power often in high-stake contexts, elections – as a process of competition for power – can often be catalysts of conflict. This is especially so when political contesters aim to secure their turf by mobilize along extremist lines to win support. Moreover, if the electoral process is not perceived to be free and fair and/or where those seeking to retain or gain political power have few or no qualms about resorting to extraordinary measures in order to win, violence and conflict may emerge.

Against this background, the Thematic Workshop on Elections, Violence and Conflict Management objectives to look into ways in which electoral assistance programmes and projects can take on board means for preventing the escalation of election-related violence and conflict throughout the electoral cycle. It aims to identify strategic approaches that may help to anticipate and prevent violence and conflicts typically accompanying electoral processes and outline options and tools for programming design.

Upcoming eLearning Courses

Electoral Procurement and the Use of ICT in Electoral Processes

This eLearning course puts electoral procurement and the use of new technologies in electoral processes at the centre of attention. It covers topics related to establishing procurement strategies, procurement plans, risk assessments and budgeting in electoral processes on the one hand and the guiding principles and procurement for introducing technological upgrades on the other.

The Application of the FAFA in Electoral Assistance

The Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) was signed on the 29th April 2004 by the European Community and several UN agencies that included UNDP. The EC and UNDP later in 2004 signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement mainly focusing on Democratic Governance. Electoral Assistance is the field that saw more collaboration between the EC and UNDP since 2004.This course takes participants through the fundamentals of the rules of the FAFA applied to the electoral assistance field also taking in to consideration also the specific Joint EC UNDP Operational Guidelines on Electoral Assistance signed between EC and UNDP in April 2006 and reviewed in December 2008.

Elections and Conflict Prevention

The Joint EC UNDP Task Force and the UNDP Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery are collaborating on the production of an eLearning course on elections and Conflict Prevention based on the recently published "**Elections and Conflict Prevention: A UNDP Guide to Analysis, Planning, and Programming**". Electoral processes provides a means by which social conflict can be channeled into a constructive popular deliberation and dialogue with common rules for choosing representatives of the people to fulfill executive and legislative functions. However, because electoral processes are intrinsically about the attainment of political power often in high-stake contexts, elections can often be catalysts of conflict. The eLearning Course on Elections and Conflict Prevention aims to identify.