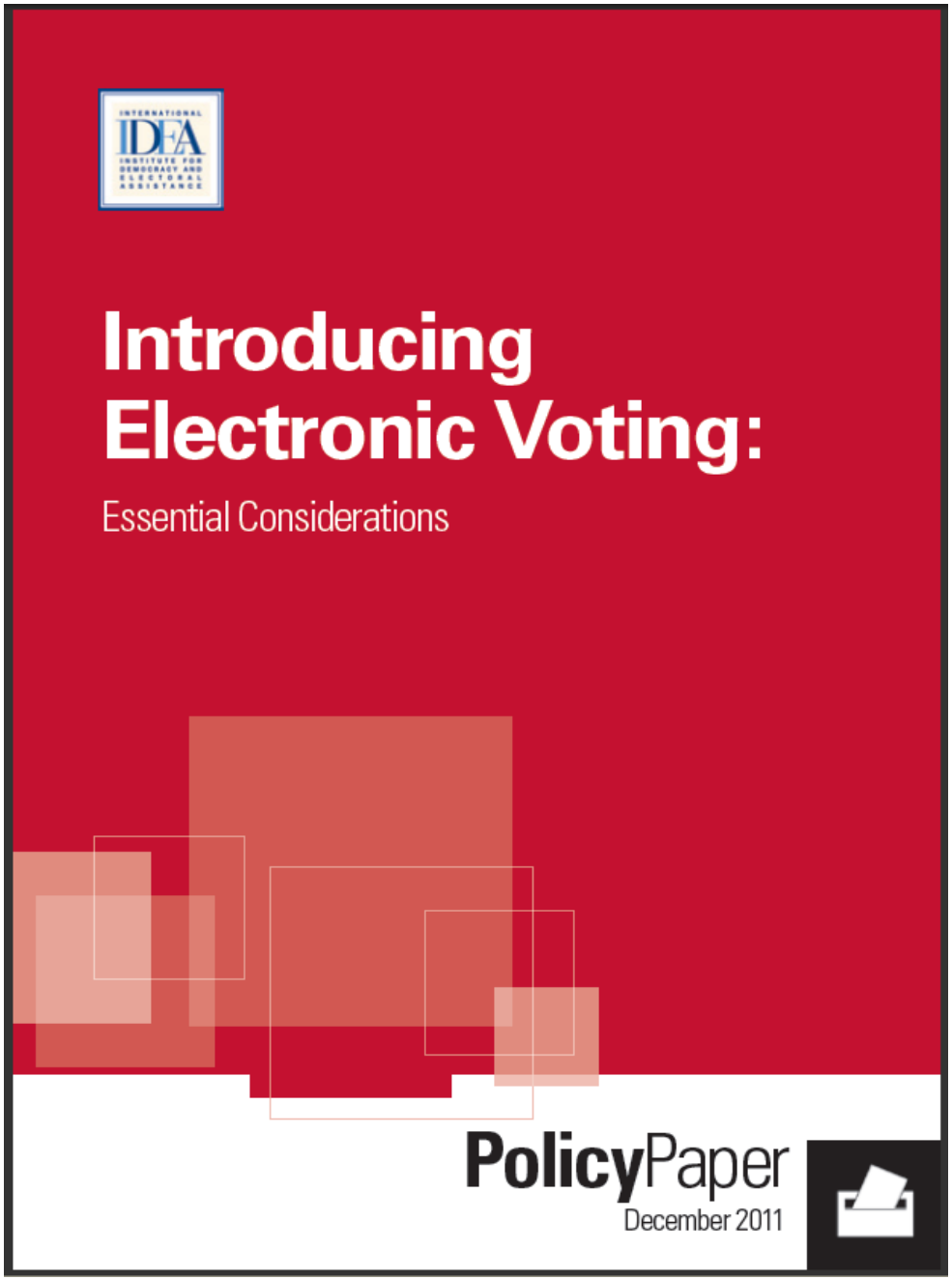
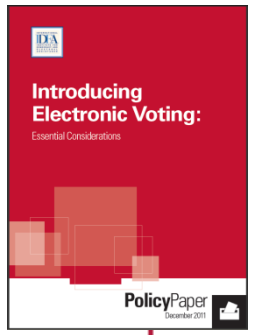

Introducing
Electronic Voting:
Essential Considerations
PolicyPaper
December 2011

PROBLEM
SOLUTION

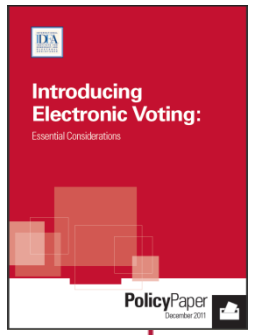
Some basic facts

- E-voting technologies are used in some of the biggest world democracies for more than a decade
- E-voting is being piloted in more than 40 countries
- A paper –based elections in India would cost at least twice than the current e-enabled elections



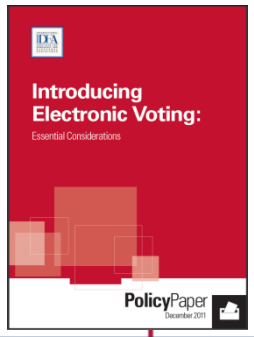
Why is it so controversial?

- Breaks away with the most central rituals of an electoral process
- Reduces enormously human control and transparency throughout the process
- Places the system knowledge in the hands of few



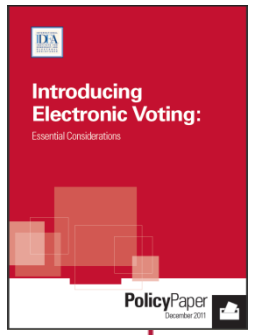
Conventional wisdom on e-voting

- Makes the electoral process more effective
- Increases the security of the process
- Speeds up results processing
- Tool for building trust and advancing democracy



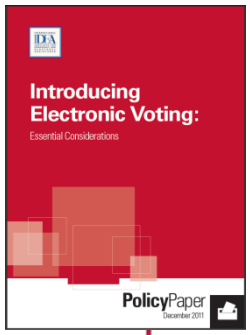
The Solution or The Problem ?

- Immediate Vote Count and Tabulation
- More accurate results and elimination of human mistakes
- Improved graphic layout of ballots
- Prevention of frauds at the PS level
- Potential turnout benefits
- Increased accessibility for disadvantaged categories
- Empowering EMBs professional development
- Cost savings (mainly through Internet Voting)



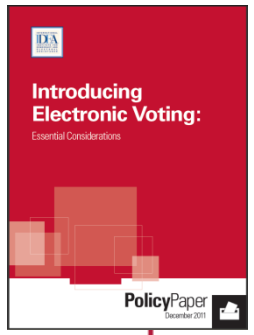
The Solution or The Problem ?

- Less transparency in vote count and tabulation
- Limited openness and understanding of counting
- Difficult interfaces for senior voters
- Risks of massive manipulation from inside / hacking
- Risks for the secrecy of the vote
- Increased infrastructure and environmental requirements
- Less control by EMBs and vendor dependence
- Increased costs for purchasing and maintenance



Proprietary Codes vs Open Source

- Does code sharing really weakens the security of the system?
- Or is it Security by Obscurity?
- Code sharing is only one small step towards full technical transparency



Essential implementation rules

1 Define goals clearly. Is e-voting the solution you're looking for ?

Essential implementation rules

2

Be aware of the challenges. No e-voting system is perfect, and there is no standard out there

Essential implementation rules

3

Get the buy in of key stakeholders

Essential implementation rules

4 Provide for auditing and certification

Essential implementation rules

5

Allow enough time for technical implementation and social acceptance

Essential implementation rules

6 Plan for training, professional development and civic education

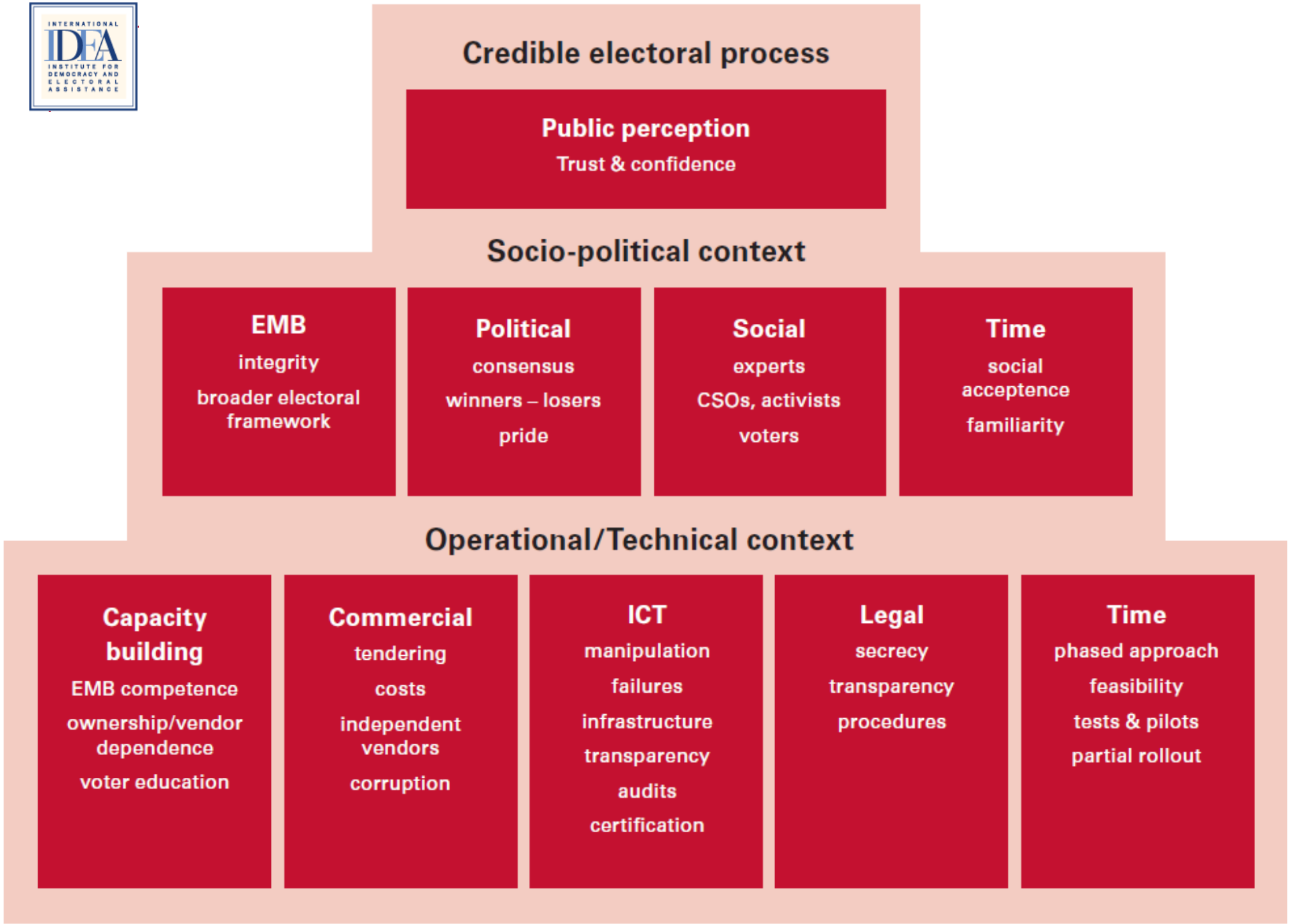
Essential implementation rules

7 Calculate the real costs of ownership and not just the one-off purchase ones

Essential implementation rules

8

E-voting will not make up for the lack of trust

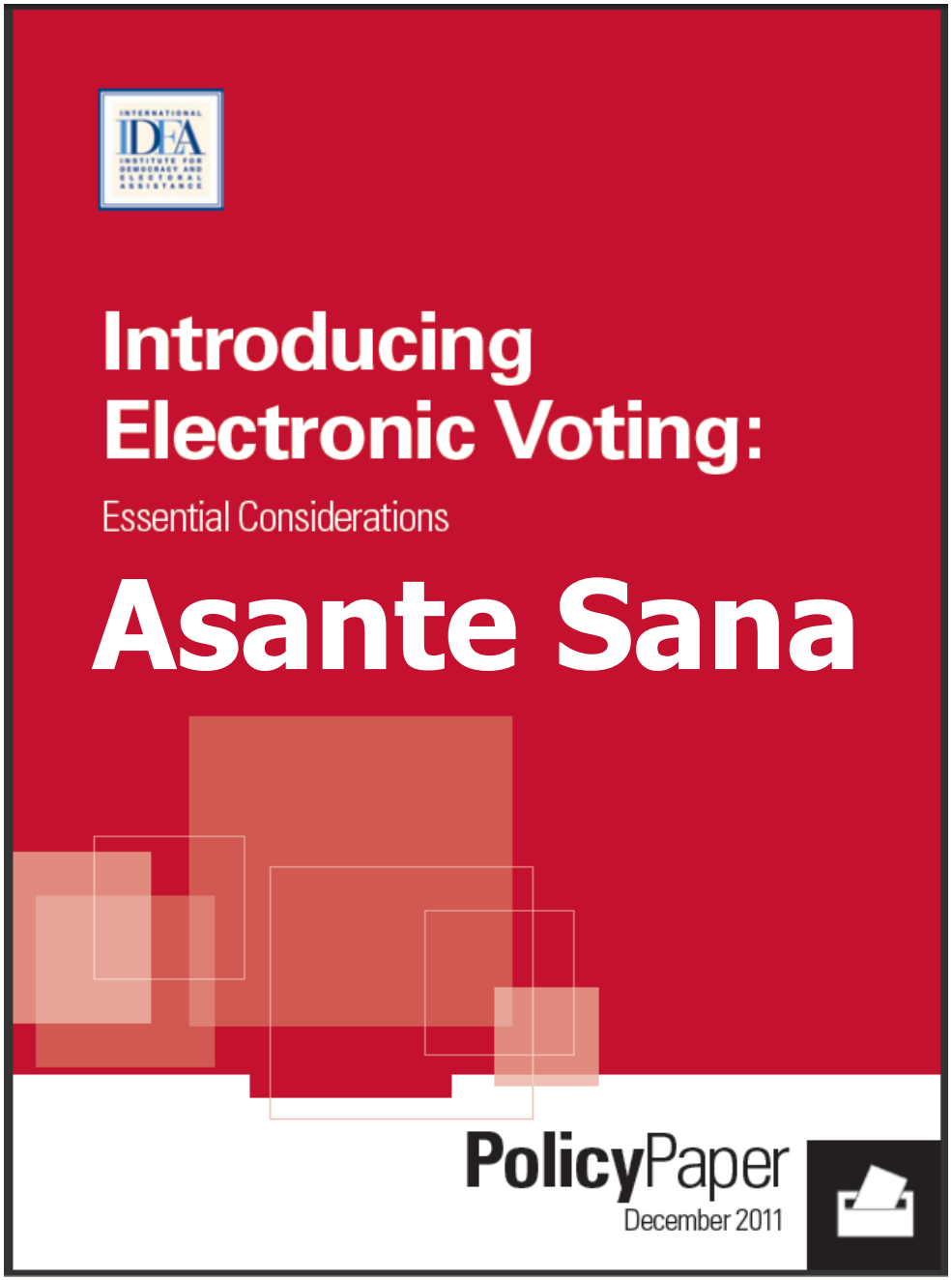

Credible electoral process
Public perception
Trust & confidence
Socio-political context
EMB
integrity
broader electoral framework
Political
consensus
winners – losers
pride
Social
experts
CSOs, activists
voters
Time
social acceptence
familiarity
Operational/Technical context
Capacity building
EMB competence
ownership/vendor dependence
voter education
Commercial
tendering
costs
independent vendors
corruption
ICT
manipulation
failures
infrastructure
transparency
audits
certification
Legal
secrecy
transparency
procedures
Time
phased approach
feasibility
tests & pilots
partial rollout

Building trust in e-voting

- It took 16 years to move from a digital VR to fully enabled e-voting elections (1986 -2002)
- Initial emphasis on civic campaign, including surveys, usability and feasibility studies
- Focus on EMB capacity building, including phased digitalisation of the results aggregation process
- Hardware acquisition and software development with a growing involvement of national expertise
- Selection and piloting solutions in various environments
- E-voting for 1996 local elections in selected sites
- Post-electoral audit to ensure quality overhauls
- Nationwide introduction in 2002 legislative elections

The solution is in the problem

What is the real problem?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