

IFES Worldwide

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support in strengthening electoral democracy. As the global leader in democracy promotion, IFES advances good governance and democratic rights by providing technical assistance to election officials; empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process; and applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle. Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 135 countries, from developing democracies to mature democracies.

IFES in Pakistan

Since 2002 IFES has provided technical and commodity assistance to strengthen Pakistan's democratic institutions. This included assisting the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in poll worker training, building capacity of legislators to perform civic functions, polling voters to assess opinions of elections, reforming the voter registration system, partnering with national civil society organizations to educate rural women about voting procedures and increasing stakeholder knowledge of the electoral dispute resolution process.

After the 2008 elections, IFES worked closely with local organizations and the ECP to promote electoral reforms. A key product of IFES' assistance to the ECP was the development of the Commission's Five-Year (2010-2014) Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan includes the reform recommendations made by stakeholders from the 2008 General Elections and after. IFES provided technical support to the ECP in reforming the voter registration system in collaboration with National Database Registration Authority, the manager of Pakistan's civil registration database. IFES also assisted the Free and Fair Elections Network to monitor incidents and trends of electoral and political violence and draft a unified, model electoral law package.

Through its work with the Federal Election Academy (FEA), IFES has also supported the sustainable development of the ECP's internal training wing. Through the FEA, IFES has supported the training of over 223,000 officials on a variety of election related subjects. These trainings include: 211,000 verification officers, 146 ECP officials, 46 trainers for the future District Returning Officers and Returning Officers, and over 8,000 poll workers and other election officials.

Current Electoral Assistance Activities

IFES' cadre of national and international experts works closely with the ECP to accomplish the Commission's Strategic Plan goals. As the next General Elections approach, the ECP and IFES will concentrate on preparations for Election Day and voter outreach while at the same time continuing to implement the Strategic Plan. IFES' current activities include:

- **Unified election law.** IFES is providing technical advice to the ECP's Electoral Legal Framework Committee in developing improved electoral regulations, and drafting legal and regulatory reform proposals.
- **Training of election officials.** IFES is working closely with FEA to conduct trainings for temporary election officials and ECP permanent staff. As part of its training strategy, IFES has committed to assist the ECP in train polling officials for by-elections, as well as supporting nationwide polling staff training in preparation for the upcoming General Elections.

- **Electoral operations.** IFES is working with the ECP to formulate a long-term procedure for updating electoral rolls, implementing new technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and strengthening election complaints adjudication and other election procedures.
- **Gender mainstreaming.** IFES is developing a gender strategy aimed at facilitating the recruitment of more women into the ECP and encouraging women to participate in the electoral process. Gender mainstreaming is part of every aspect of IFES' work in Pakistan.
- **Voter education and outreach.** IFES supports the ECP's first-ever voter and civic education plan. A main component of the plan focuses on District-centered voter outreach, which will utilize the ECP's wide network of field offices across Pakistan to develop a more direct relationship with voters at the grassroots level. IFES is also poised to assist local NGOs to increase their capacities and voter outreach strategies.

IFES has a strong focus on facilitating coordination between all electoral actors and stakeholders to pursue unified objectives and complementary programming. IFES serves as Secretariat and advisor to the Election Support Group (ESG), a forum of international and domestic entities supporting the strengthening of all aspects of the electoral environment in Pakistan. Members of the ESG include diplomatic missions, international donor organizations, implementing partners and influential domestic observer groups. IFES also collaborates with other implementing agencies in the democracy-support arena, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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