

ANNEX 1: BASELINE ASSESSMENT: OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FOR EMB– POLITICAL PARTY ENGAGEMENT

Legal Framework and EMB Mandate

1. To what extent is the EMB meeting legal requirements to engage with parties?
2. What, if any, legal restrictions are there on EMB-engagement with political parties (e.g., that an EMB must engage all registered parties, or that limit certain interactions between EMBs and parties)?
3. To what extent does the EMB have autonomy to establish policies or seek a legal opinion from the courts or other national institutions?
 - a. Beyond the courts, are there other national institutions (such as a human rights commission, or a media commission, or gender working groups or commissions) that the EMB may be able to seek guidance from regarding communication and coordination with parties and candidates if the legal framework is silent on EMB–political party engagement?
4. What parts of the electoral process that involve parties fall within the purview of the EMB?

Oversight and Compliance Responsibilities

1. What are the points in the electoral cycle when the EMB engages with political parties? Are these interactions seen holistically as part of overall party engagement and communication strategy?
2. When the EMB educates political parties and even enforces party behavior if it deviates from the legal framework, how are these aspects of its mandate communicated?
3. What mechanisms does the EMB have in place to ensure transparent decision-making about eligibility to run or holding parties and candidates accountable for political finance reporting deadlines or campaign behavior, as relevant?

EMB Composition and Reputation

1. If relevant, what allegations, accusations or disinformation exist against the commission?
2. What data, evidence, or checks and balances are available to dispel such accusations? (what do third-party sources, such as studies by think tanks or academics, or election observation reports say about EMB neutrality and professionalism)?
3. Does the EMB communications strategy include key messages and processes for countering false information about partisanship?
4. To what extent does the EMB demonstrate its values (including impartiality) through actions (e.g., transparent decision-making, use of mechanisms for parties to share concerns and work with the EMB to resolve problems)?

5. What opportunities exist outside of the election period to promote trust and a reputation for impartiality by engaging and communicating with political parties? For example, do parties and candidates engage in post-election lessons learned meetings? Are they consulted as part of the EMB's strategic planning process?)

EMB Resourcing

1. Is funding allocated for political party engagement and communication, including salaries for liaisons or dedicated departments responsible for engaging with parties?
2. Is funding for political party communication a single budget line, or does it appear across the budget under different activities (for example, rolled into a line for candidate nomination and party registration, or election dispute resolution)?
3. To what extent are resources allocated for political party communication and engagement for the interim period between elections?
4. What external resources exist, if any, that could fill any EMB budget shortfalls?
5. What are the costs of the EMB's current mechanisms for communication and coordination with parties and candidates? Are these the most cost-effective mechanisms available to the EMB? Are new or different tools available that could help lower costs (e.g., travel for events, paper and printing expenses)? Would these new forms of communication and coordination positively or negatively impact EMB transparency, accessibility, or inclusivity?
6. What partnerships could the EMB leverage to offset the costs of communication and coordination with political parties? For example, are there other government agencies or offices with which the EMB could partner to share costs for outreach and events?

EMB Leadership Capacity

1. To what extent does the current EMB chair engage effectively and naturally with parties? Are other senior officials within the EMB well suited to engage parties across the political spectrum?
2. What traits or strategies have effective leaders exemplified or employed in your institution's history that can be replicated?

Political Party Landscape

1. How are decisions made about which parties to invite to consultations, roundtables, or other interactive engagements? Are criteria transparent, equitable, representative, and made public?
2. What channels does the EMB use to receive information or feedback from parties (e.g., website forms, political party call-in lines, regular committee meetings)?
3. Which communication and engagement channels do political parties prefer to use?
4. Which political parties or candidates, if any, may be left out of opportunities to receive or share information. What barriers may contribute to this lack of communication and coordination?
5. Is the EMB inviting or requiring both men and women to participate in events, and does it reach out to both men and women in its communications? Are men and women attending and participating equitably in consultations and meetings in practice?