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# Myanmar

## IFES in Myanmar

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supports citizens' rights to participate in free and fair elections. IFES' independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions.

IFES has been working in Myanmar since 2012 when it began supporting electoral stakeholders to build a transparent, credible and inclusive electoral system through a voter education program to advance the inclusion of women in the electoral process. In early 2013, IFES began its electoral support program by providing electoral assessments on a range of topics to the Union Election Commission (UEC) and launched a strategic planning process. Since then, IFES has opened two offices: one in Yangon and one in Naypyitaw.

In Myanmar, IFES focuses support on several key areas:

### Election Technical Support

IFES provides international electoral expertise and best practices to the Union Election Commission (UEC) on key aspects of the Myanmar electoral process on topics including updating the voter list, election dispute resolution and polling procedures. IFES supported the UEC's efforts to update the national voter list and create the first ever digitized and centralized voter database. IFES has also supported the UEC in developing a Polling Manual, Operations Checklist, and Electoral Dispute Resolution Manual as well as on enhanced integrity measures such as inking fingers to prevent multiple voting, tamper-proof seals for ballot boxes and posting the results at each polling station.

### Training for Election Day

IFES supports the UEC to build the capacity of its national and regional staff, including training over 2,000 master trainers who will reach 480,000 poll workers. IFES also provides international electoral expertise to the UEC in support of the development of training materials including manuals, fact sheets and vinyl posters with step-by-step voting procedures and training videos that will inform poll workers as well as election sub-commissions at the region/state, district, township and ward/village tract levels. In addition, IFES supported the UEC's efforts to establish a Training Center in Naypyitaw and an Information Center in Yangon. The Training Center provides a space to bring together members of civil society organizations (CSOs) with the UEC to address issues of transparency, accountability and inclusion in the electoral process.

### Voter Education

IFES has provided international expertise to inform the UEC's national voter education plan to motivate individuals to vote, and to provide information about how and where to vote. The plan includes a mass media voter education program that uses television, radio, billboard advertisement, SMS and social media to inform voters about the



electoral process, including checking their names on the voter list, and the importance of voting. To ensure marginalized groups are able to participate, IFES has partnered with 17 local civil society organizations who work with women, youth, persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities. IFES conducted a nationwide pre-election survey on electoral engagement to support this work and will conduct a post-election survey to compare findings.

## Stakeholder Engagement

IFES has supported the UEC in its role as a convener of multi-stakeholder engagement meetings with political parties and civil society organizations to support an inclusive approach to the electoral process. These meetings have improved voter education coordination and provided a forum in which to share electoral resource documents such as laws, factsheets, manuals and other electoral resources. National stakeholder meetings are regularly attended by all registered political parties and more than 60 civil society organizations. The UEC met with more than 800 representatives from 352 civil society organizations and 208 members of political parties. This engagement spans the full election cycle, including post-election assessment and recommendations for improving the electoral process and advocating for reform for the next cycle.

## Inclusion

To support the inclusion of marginalized groups – including persons with disabilities, women and ethnic minorities – to become engaged in the electoral process, IFES partners with local civil society organizations to build their capacity to support the electoral process. For example, IFES supports local partner Yaung Chi Thit to implement *She Leads*, a women's leadership program training 500 women to become leaders in their communities; Myanmar Independent Living Initiative (MILI), who hosts cascade advocacy trainings for disabled person's organizations; and The Serenity Initiatives to host Myanmar Electoral Resources and Information Network ([www.merin-online.org](http://www.merin-online.org)), an online repository of all electoral information and a CSO network.

## Conflict Analysis

IFES stays up to date about developments in conflict-affected areas of Myanmar and informs its work with a conflict-sensitive perspective.

For more on IFES Myanmar, please visit <http://www.ifes.org/myanmar>.

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