



Connecting People



IFES works to promote access to the democratic process by empowering citizens through the innovative use of technology.

Growing pressure to embrace new technology makes finding a suitable solution challenging for lawmakers and election officials.

In some instances, new technology is envisioned as part of a long-range plan for improving efficiency and communication, streamlining program delivery, integrating various systems, lowering costs of operation and minimizing manpower requirements. In other circumstances, modernization and automation is spurred by a sense of urgency to overcome a specific problem.

Smartphones have empowered individuals to double as citizen monitors, spreading information, pictures and video in real time. By employing these forward-looking tools, IFES has become a leader in the use of technology that enhances efficiency and transparency of election administration around the world. We are committed to enfranchising citizens through innovative uses of technology that maximize impact through proper application.

IFES promotes the use of election technology that suits the needs, limitations and complexities of a nation. We support election management bodies in selecting and tailoring technology to the local context to maximize results and long-term sustainability.

IFES' efforts to promote fair elections expand beyond technical assistance. We also aim to empower citizens to take a part in the electoral process, by using technology such as smartphones to vote, inform or become citizen observers. Technology is increasingly playing a leading role in these initiatives.

Strengthening citizen participation creates greater incentives for countries to hold credible, accessible and transparent elections.



Participation

In **Uganda**, IFES partnered with the country's election commission to improve the voter registration process through new technology. IFES helped design an innovative platform so voters could verify their registration and find the location of their polling station, all by sending an SMS query through their mobile phone.

In **Burundi**, IFES drew on its Election Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) program to implement *Amatora mu Mahoro* (elections in peace). Using the Ushahidi web platform, Burundians were able to visually track incidents of violence, peacebuilding events and community tension. The incidents were reported via SMS, and mapped on a web platform. Comprehensive, reliable data enabled Burundians to map potential hot spots of violence and direct necessary resources to ensure electoral tensions did not escalate into full-scale violence.

In **Indonesia**, IFES is working with local partner organizations to establish a comprehensive Internet portal on elections. This website

On Election Day in Uganda, over 1 million registered voters sent an SMS query and over 5 million users accessed the voter registration website.

will allow users to view content to improve their knowledge of and deepen their engagement in the electoral process. Content includes election laws and regulations; election results and analysis; observer reports; press reports; white papers; and free online books.

IFES and its partners leverage technology and implement tools for citizens to overcome information-related barriers to participation in the election process. IFES is focused on expanding these initiatives to foster greater participation in the electoral process.



Information and Education

Mobile and online tools complement traditional methods of voter and civic education. They provide flexibility to electoral authorities and engage citizen participation in multiple ways.

IFES uses mobile and online technologies to improve the speed and accuracy of monitoring initiatives. Risk and conflict mapping programs, SMS-based reporting and web-based data management are a few tools IFES has implemented. In **Burundi, Nigeria** and the **Maldives**, the Ushahidi platform mapped data on electoral and political conflict, civic education efforts and peace activities. In the Maldives, PoliticalViolenceWatch.org has become the national resource which maps its political crisis. In **Togo**, SMS messaging is used to quickly report incidents of election violence.

Online tools increase the reach of information and education initiatives. IFES recently launched SWMENA.org, which allows local organizations to leverage data on the status of women in Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen. IFES' ElectionAccess.org is the only global information resource devoted to the political and electoral rights of persons with disabilities. IFES also produces ElectionGuide.org, which tracks election dates, results and institutional details.

These technologies will continue to be key tools in democracy development. IFES' partnerships with leading organizations promotes innovative and effective use of emerging technological tools.

Mobile subscriptions have grown 45 percent worldwide, annually, over the last four years.



A screenshot of the ElectionGuide website. The header features the site's name "ElectionGuide" in a large, bold font, with a tagline below it: "Democracy assistance & elections news from the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS)". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Welcome", "Home", "Calendar", "Digest", "CALENDAR", "MYGUIDE", "NEWSLETTER", "MAP", "GENERATE DATA", and "GLOSSARY". The main content area is divided into two sections: "Upcoming Elections" on the left, which includes a world map with several orange dots indicating election locations, and "Digest Latest" on the right, which lists recent news items with dates and times, such as "Asia Foundation Report on Governance in ..." and "An Integrated Approach to Elections and ...".



Effective Administration

IFES' expertise in elections technology comes from 25 years of experience supporting electoral institutions around the world. In 2010, IFES advised and assisted the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on the conduct of a feasibility study into the use of electronic voting machines (EVM). This study assessed the strengths and weaknesses of paper balloting; benefits of using e-voting and counting technologies; key system requirements if these technologies were used in **Pakistan**; comparative costs of using different technologies; and legal changes that might be required.

IFES also advised and assisted the **Philippines** Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to hold a vendor fair to provide citizen awareness and receive input; provided ongoing technology advice to COMELEC, the COMELEC Advisory Council, the Technical Evaluation Committee and the Automated Election System Project Management Organization; and conducted a post-election assessment. Currently, IFES is working on an

evaluation of the pilot Internet voting system used for the September 2011 elections in **Norway**.

Technology is also applied to heighten the effectiveness of programming in areas beyond electronic voting. IFES has worked with electoral authorities in **Sudan** in the development of customized software that aids election administration; in **West Bank/Gaza** on a geographic information system (GIS) initiative to address discrepancies in the process of electoral district demarcation; and in **Lebanon** to conduct a risk assessment for electoral conflict in each electoral district and then mapped this information using GIS mapping software.

The breadth of IFES' experience in technology implementation provides assurance to election managers, donors and stakeholders that IFES maintains state-of-the-art programming in this area. IFES possesses a roster of leading experts in election technology who can guide electoral institutions through the challenges these technologies can bring to electoral processes.



Thought Leadership

While there is significant potential for technology to make the election process more efficient, transitioning the use of technology into the electoral process often takes place in an environment of inconsistent information, which can constrain informed decision making and limit benefits. IFES has recognized that the potential for technology use can be both efficiency-generating and disruptive. As a result, IFES has undertaken research and programming initiatives to effectively guide electoral bodies, donors and other stakeholders in pursuing informed transitions to technology use in elections.

IFES issued two publications that provide much-needed guidance on best practices and basic principles in the use of technology in elections. *Direct Democracy: Progress and Pitfalls of Election Technology* provides a general overview of key issues involved in the adoption of technology in the election process. By contrast, *Electronic Voting & Counting Technologies: A Guide to Conducting Feasibility Studies* provides a detailed guide to

electoral authorities and others on appropriately designed feasibility studies to guide decision making on electronic voting technologies. IFES experts also contribute articles to publications, conferences and workshops focused on the use of technology. These initiatives are critical for sharing lessons learned.

All IFES research and thought leadership initiatives provide electoral authorities and stakeholders with the tools and information necessary for informed decision making on technology implementation.

Of the world's 4 billion mobile phones in use, 1.08 billion are smartphones and 3.05 billion are SMS enabled.





*IFES has worked in over 135^a countries,
promoting innovative uses of technology
in every region of the world.*

About IFES

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

As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by:

- Providing technical assistance to election officials
- Empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process
- Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle

Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 135 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

For more information, visit www.IFES.org.



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Sustainable Democracy.

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