



CENTER for DEMOCRACY &
ELECTION MANAGEMENT

SCHOOL *of* PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Election Management Bodies (EMBs)

Composition, Roles and Types

Election Management Bodies

- Elections are complex and specialized processes which are most effectively managed by a body with specific electoral management responsibilities.
- The design of electoral administration can determine both the outcomes and credibility of electoral processes.
- EMB is an organization or body legally responsible for some or all elements essential for the conduct of elections; stand-alone or within a larger institution.



Core Elements

- Determining who is eligible to vote
- Receiving and validating the nominations of participants (parties or candidates)
- Conducting polling
- Counting the votes
- Tabulating the votes
- A body which has no core responsibilities, not considered an EMB



Other Elements

- National or regional electoral policies
- Planning electoral services
- Training electoral staff
- Conducting voter information/education
- Delimitation
- Logistics
- Identification and registration of voters
- National register
- Political parties' finance regulation
- Primaries
- Regulating media conduct
- Opinion polls
- Accreditation
- Adjudication of disputes
- Advising on reform issues, etc.



Three Basic Models

- **Independent Model**
- **Governmental Model**
- **Mixed Model**

Independent Model

- 55% of 214 countries and territories
- Independent from executive branch of government, may be accountable to legislative, judicial branch, or head of state
- Powers extend to developing regulatory framework independently under the law
- Manages its own budget
- Most popular model among new and emerging democracies
- May be isolated from political and electoral decision makers



Government Model

- 26% of 214 countries and territories
- Elections organized and managed through executive branch through a ministry (for example Ministry of Interior, Justice, etc.)
- Led by a minister or civil servant and answerable to cabinet minister
- Powers often limited to implementation
- Budget falls within a government ministry
- Usually have no members
- Credibility may be compromised by perceptions of governmental or political influence



Mixed Model

- 15% of 214 countries and territories
- Usually, elections are organized by governmental EMB, with some level of independent oversight (policy, monitoring or supervisory component independent of government)
- Powers, functions, and strength vary greatly but usually limited to implementation
- Credibility and lack of staff with electoral skills



Other considerations

- Permanent or temporary?
- Centralized or decentralized?
- Partisan or non-partisan?
- Transitional: Bosnia, Cambodia, East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq.

EMB Guiding Principles

- Independence of decision making and action
- Transparency
- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Efficiency
- Professionalism
- Service-mindedness
- Codes of Ethics



“The consolidation of democracy requires that institutions that manage the electoral process have to be independent, competent, and perceived as completely fair by all the candidates and parties participating in the process”

Jimmy Carter, Dominican Republic, 1990