

IFES Support for the CEC Public Information Campaign – 2004 Presidential Elections in Georgia

Project Purpose/Objective(s):

The purpose of the programme is to provide financial and technical support to the Central Election Commission (CEC) Public Information Unit to conduct a public information campaign in support of the January 4, 2004 Presidential elections. The CEC has established a new Public Information Unit and this proposal has been developed in full consultation with staff of the Public Information Unit.

Within the context of this programme, the following objectives will be pursued:

- Development of a voter information campaign that targets informing voters about the new voter registration process and on polling day ‘rights and responsibilities’.
- Development of a campaign that is motivational – encouraging people to register to vote and to turn out to vote.
- Provision of additional technical support to the Public Information Unit in the form of skilled Georgian experts in this field.

Background:

The widespread allegations of fraud and organizational shortcomings attendant to recent elections in Georgia have led to a lack of public confidence in the electoral process. The 2 November 2003 parliamentary elections recently annulled by the courts have validated and entrenched that view.

Among the shortcomings in election administration identified in recent elections, has been the failure of the CEC to provide voters with information about the election, and voters’ rights and responsibilities according to the election law. The newly appointed CEC has clearly identified this as an area on which they wish to focus, while accepting that the short timeframe and lack of experienced staff in the CEC will limit what can be achieved for these elections without support from the international community.

The aim of this proposal is to:

- Develop a public information campaign that targets the new voter registration process and to provide information to voters on their ‘rights and responsibilities’, and
- Develop a campaign that addresses motivational issues (get out the vote/registration) and provision of basic information about the process;
- Utilise the full variety of media resources – television, radio, newspaper, posters, internet and supports community education efforts of domestic and international NGOs with accurate information.

Given the spate of recent changes and proposed amendments to the electoral law, uncertainties surrounding voter registration procedures, and the changing ranks of the CEC, it is essential that the media and public are kept fully informed about these changes.

This will be the first public information campaign the CEC has implemented since the 2000 Presidential elections, which was also supported by IFES. However, this is the first time that the CEC has tried to institutionalize this sort of activity by forming a public information unit that has responsibility for all public information.

Approach:

The programme will be comprised of expert support for the new Public Information Unit – one project coordinator, one media specialist and one administrative support person.

This expert team will work with the CEC Public Information Unit and IFES staff to develop a media strategy and public information campaign that will focus on the voter registration phase and voting rights and responsibilities for voters. The campaign will use TV and radio as the primary outreach tools given the time available. The TV and radio campaigns will be supported with press releases, information leaflets and posters. Domestic and international NGOs working in regional Georgia with voters in community information meetings have agreed to assist with distribution of these materials.

Activities

1. *Media Strategy Development* – The Public Information Unit will develop a media information and outreach strategy. This will include a strategy for reacting to issues quickly and appropriately as well as a proactive information effort to ensure the public are informed about key activities related to the election preparation and conduct.
2. *Voter Registration Campaign Formulation and Implementation* – With the CEC having decided to adopt an active registration model for compilation of voter lists, an information campaign will be developed and implemented for delivery from 15 December – the commencement of the registration period. The preliminary plan envisages a saturation campaign based on TV and radio in both Tbilisi and regional Georgia. Posters linked to the TV campaign will be produced for use in Tbilisi and larger urban centres. Rural areas are not targeted in this regard as the CEC believes PEC staff will register most people by door to door efforts. Information cards/leaflets will also be produced for distribution throughout Georgia.
3. *Voting Day Information Campaign Formulation and Implementation* – A campaign advising citizen's of their voting rights and responsibilities will be implemented in the week before polling day. As with the voter registration campaign, this effort will focus on informing and motivating voters. Television and radio will be used as the primary modes of communication in this effort.

Leaflets, posters and a planned media outreach effort will also be used to provide targeted information about the voting processes to the public.

4. *'Hotline' and Internet Outreach*– Support to the '09' public enquiry number regarding the 4 January elections will be provided. The CEC will ensure that the information service has accurate information, training on election procedures and complaint issues. Two advisors will be available to answer more difficult technical questions. The CEC's internet presence will continue to be maintained and strengthened.
5. *Post-election Evaluation and Report* – An evaluation workshop will be conducted after the election to further support the CEC's effort to institutionalise its public outreach efforts in a permanent Public Information Unit. The information, feedback and analysis gathered at this workshop will consolidate 'lessons learned' and form the basis of the development of a strategy for the Parliamentary elections and for the longer term sustainability of a public information unit in the CEC.

Results

The programme will generate the following tangible results:

1. Accurate and reliable 'official' public information produced by the CEC.
2. Public face of the CEC is strengthened and election administration that is more transparent and accessible to the public.
3. A CEC with a cohesive media strategy that is both proactive and reactive (if necessary).
4. Development of a more permanent public information unit within the CEC.
5. Substantive recommendations for improving public information in the future.

Indicators

Measurement and evaluation of the programme will be based upon the following indicators:

1. Better informed and knowledgeable public with regards to election procedures and voter rights.
2. Efficient, timely and professional management of media by the CEC.
3. Public informed according to the requirements of the law (in accordance with deadlines).
4. Increased voter turnout.

Quality Assurance

Several factors likely to guarantee the quality implementation of this programme have emerged.

Assumptions and Risks

To mitigate the risks, IFES proposes to provide additional human resources to the Public Information Unit, bringing needed expertise and experience. The CEC have limited their proposed efforts to key activities that appear to be manageable within the timeframe available.

Implementation

Operational Plan/Timetable

1. Develop a Media Strategy

<p>The CEC Public Information Unit will develop a media and outreach strategy in conjunction with IFES and senior CEC management.</p> <p>The media and outreach strategy will include a motivational ‘election slogan’.</p>	<p>Completed by 15 December</p>
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2. Voter Registration Campaign

<p>Identify a creative agency to develop the TV and radio campaign.</p> <p>Develop and approve creative campaign strategy</p> <p>Work with local and international NGOs to develop information leaflets and materials.</p> <p>Ensure proper and full coverage across the country for the TV and radio campaign</p> <p>[Note that this component will be partially funded from USAID funding]</p>	<p>Creative Agency Identified by 7 December</p> <p>Creative and Production Phase completed 14 December</p> <p>Broadcasting commences 15 December</p>
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3. Voter Information Campaign

<p>Work with the creative agency to develop the TV and radio campaign for the ‘voting day information’ phase.</p> <p>Work with local and international NGOs to develop information leaflets and materials.</p> <p>Ensure proper and full coverage across the country for the TV and radio campaign.</p> <p>Produce 10,000 posters for distribution across the country showing the process for voting – for use in Precincts and prior to polling day.</p> <p>Produce 80,000 leaflets on voters rights and responsibilities on polling day</p> <p>Produce and distribute ‘postcard’ reminder to ‘Go and</p>	<p>From 18 December to 4 January</p>
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Vote'	
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4. Hotline and Internet

CEC website to be maintained in Georgian and English '09' Public Enquiry facility to be trained in election issues, provided with support materials and with two 'experts' on election issues who can deal with the more technical issues.	Throughout the project to 6 January, 2004
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5. Evaluation Workshop

Conduct evaluation workshops with the public information unit, representatives of the media and with NGOs active in community information efforts to evaluate the implemented outreach strategy.	by 15 January, 2004
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- OSCE will be responsible for funding the implementing partner organisations. Implementation will be the sole responsibility of IFES.
- Physical means and staffing requirements are as listed in the budget provided.
- Monitoring, and evaluation procedures are shown in this document. A post project report will be provided after evaluation of the programme as provided.
- All training material, manuals and training activities will be conducted with the full approval and involvement of the CEC.

Budget:

- *For Detailed breakdown per cost category see attached budget*
- *There are no long-term possible financial implications*
- *OSCE will be the sole funding agency*