

Election Management In Nigeria

2015 - 2025



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Acknowledgements

This book is a chronicle of the plans, activities, events and engagements planned and implemented by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) between November 2015 to December 2025 under the two-term Chairmanship of Professor Mahmood Yakubu. It recounts in some detail, the most significant accomplishments of the plans, policies and events undertaken by or happened in the Commission in the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process. In the period under review, the Commission conducted the 2019 and 2023 General Elections, 19 Off-Cycle Governorship, three Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Area Council, and hundreds of supplementary, bye and re-run elections at the Federal, State and Area Council levels. Within this one decade, the Commission consolidated reforms started by previous Commissions while at the same time initiating new ones; deepened the use of technology by developing and deploying the INEC Voter Enrolment Device (IVED), the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), and the INEC Results Viewing Portal (IReV); broke a 25-year jinx by expanding voter access to polling units; regularized the Commission's general election calendar; facilitated the enactment of a new electoral legal framework; strengthened stakeholder engagements; expanded the breadth and scale of information to the public on the Commission's activities; and upscaled the professionalisation and welfare of staff.

These, and several other accomplishments, are critical to the Yakubu Commission's overarching goal of creating new knowledge on the electoral process, developing and deploying innovations in the conduct of elections as well as strengthening of institutional memory. In furtherance of the Commission's objective of conducting free, fair, credible and inclusive elections, electoral assistance and support was provided to State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs), Election Management Bodies (EMB) in the ECOWAS region as well as the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC). It is the achievements and challenges of the Commission in these 10 intense years that are presented in the over 200 pages of *Election Management in Nigeria: 2015-2025*. It is a documentation of the key events, plans, activities, successes and challenges of the Commission as well as suggestions of possible directions election administration and management in Nigeria might be going in the future.

In preparing, acknowledging, recounting and documenting these achievements and challenges, it is clear that several debts were incurred along these 10 long years. Apart from the support of the active and retired National and Resident Electoral Commissioners, the diverse engagements with staff of the Commission and various stakeholders contributed in no small measure to the activities and narratives here presented. The role of the Directors of the Commission's various Departments and Directorates in providing background information on the activities of their respective departments is hereby gratefully acknowledged. Similarly, the contributions of other staff in the various departments that are too numerous to mention is acknowledged with thanks. Special mention must be made of the roles Dr. Jennifer Obiorah Ikechukwu of the Planning and Monitoring Directorate and Dr. Nkwachukwu Orji, former Resident Electoral Commissioner for Anambra State, played in helping with putting together the preliminary pages and in providing useful suggestions.



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Election Management in Nigeria: 2015-2025 was put together by the Technical Team of the Hon. Chairman, comprising Professor Mohammad J. Kuna (Special Adviser), Professor Bolade M. Eyinla (Chief Technical Adviser) and Mr. Rotimi L. Oyekanmi (Chief Press Secretary). A debt of gratitude is owed to them and other staff in the Office of the Honourable Chairman. In addition, mention must be made of the contributions of Professor Okechukwu O. Ibeanu, a one-time National Commissioner for his continued interest and advice on elections and the democratic process in Nigeria.

Abbreviations

ABIS	Automated Biometric Identification System
ADC	African Democratic Congress
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AEOs	Assistant Electoral Officers
AFIS	Automatic Fingerprint Identification System
AMAC	Abuja Municipal Area Council
APCON	Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria
APDC	Appointments, Promotions and Disciplinary Committee
APO	Assistant Presiding Officers
AS	Administrative Secretary
AU	African Union
AV & C	Accreditation, Voting and Counting
BaSED	Basic Security in Election Duties
BEI	Board of the Electoral Institute
BOSTEAC	Board of Survey and Technical Equipment Acquisition Committee
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy Governance and Elections
BVAS	Bimodal Voter Accreditation System
CAPIO	Carmelite Prisoners' Interest Organisation
CBT	Computer-Based Test
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CDM	Complaints and Dispute Management
CEC	Chief Electoral Commissioner
CEI	Independent Electoral Commission of Cote d'Ivoire
CENA	Autonomous National Electoral Commission of the Republic of Benin

CENI	Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante, Niger Republic (Independent National Electoral Commission)
CICIE	International Centre for Electoral Training and Training
CO	Collation Officer
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease
CROMS	Collation and Returning Officers Management System
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSRVS	Collation Support and Results Verification System
CT-DASS	Compliance and Threat Data Acquisition and Sharing System
CVR	Continuous Voter Registration
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DDCM	Direct Data Capture Machine
DSS	Department of State Services
EADR	Electoral Alternative Dispute Resolution
EBS	Excel Based System
EC	Electoral Commission
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
ECOMIB	ECOWAS Peacekeeping Mission to Guinea Bissau
ECONEC	ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDL	Election Day Logistics
EDP	Election Day Procurement
EDS	Election Day Support
EDSM	Election Day Security
EDT	Election Day Training
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EFLoc	Election Facility Locator

ELF	Electoral Legal Framework
EMB	Election Management Body
EMSC	Election Monitoring and Support Centre
EOLC	Electoral Operations and Logistics Committee
EOs	Electoral Officers
EOSC	Electoral Operations Support Centre
EPM	Elections and Political Party Monitoring Department
EPMC	Election and Party Monitoring Committee
EPP	Election Project Plan
ERM	Electoral Risk Management
ERMS	Election Results Management System
ESM	Election Staff Management
ESP	Election Security Personnel
ESTA	Election Security Threat Assessment
ETSC	Electoral Training Study Cycle
EUSDGN	European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria
EVMAT	Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool
EWTC	Estate, Works and Transport Committee
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGPC	Finance and General-Purpose Committee
FHC	Federal High Court
FOSIECON	Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions of Nigeria
G & I	Gender and Inclusivity Department

GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation)
GOCOP	Guild of Corporate Online Publishers
HoD	Head of Department
HoU	Head of Unit
HWC	Health and Welfare Committee
ICCC	INEC Citizen's Contact Centre
ICCES	Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology Department
IDEA	Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INEC PRES	INEC Portal for Recruitment of Election Staff
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
INEC-SANS	INEC Security Alert and Notification System
IOMIS	INEC Operation's Management Information System
IReV	INEC Result Viewing Portal
IRI	International Republican Institute
ITVRC	Information Technology and Voter Registration Committee
IVEC	Information and Voter Education Committee
IVED	INEC Voter Enrolment Device
JTF	Joint Task Force
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators

LGA TECHs	Local Government Area Technical Staff
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LSC & CC	Legal Services, Clearance and Complaints Committee
MDAs	Ministries Departments and Agencies of Government
MMS	Media Monitoring System
NASRDA	National Space Research and Development Agency
NBA	Nigerian Bar Association
NCS	Nigeria Customs Service
NEC	National Election Commission
NECON	National Electoral Commission of Nigeria
NECs	National Electoral Commissioners
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NICVEP	National Inter-Agency Advisory Committee on Voter Education and Publicity
NIPR	Nigerian Institute of Public Relations
NLC	Nigerian Labour Congress
NMA	Nigerian Medical Association
NOA	National Orientation Agency
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NSA	National Security Adviser
NTI	National Teachers' Institute
NUJ	Nigeria Union of Journalists
NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
OCV	Out-of-Country Voting
OMIS	Operation's Management Information System

OPC	Outreach and Partnerships Committee
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
PBAs	Principal Business Areas
PEAR	Post-Election Audit and Review
PETAD	Policy on Election Technology Acquisition and Deployment
PFRAS	Parties Financial Reporting and Auditing System
PMSC	Planning, Monitoring and Strategy Committee
PO	Presiding Officer
PPM	Political Party and Candidate Management
PSI	Public Service Institute
PSIN	Public Service Institute Nigeria
PU _s	Polling Units
PVC	Permanent Voters Card
PwDs	Persons with Disability
RA	Registration Area
RAC	Registration Area Camps
RATECHs	Registration Area Technical Staff
RECs	Resident Electoral Commissioners
RERC	Registration and Election Review Committee
SARS	Special Anti-Robbery Squad
SC	Security Committee
SCR	Smart Card Reader
SIECs	State Independent Electoral Commissions
SOS	Save Our Soul

SP	Strategic Plans
SPA	Strategic Program of Action
SPIP	Strategic Program Implementation Plan
SPOs	Supervisory Presiding Officers
TAC	Technical Aid Corps
TB	Tenders Board
TEI	The Electoral Institute
ToT	Training of Trainers
UI -LISA	University of Ibadan Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Statistical Analysis
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
VCC	Voters Code of Conduct
VEP	Voter Education and Publicity
VETS	Virtual Election Training System
VPs	Voting Points
VPS	Voting Point Settlements
WDF	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

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Foreword

The decade between 2015 – 2025 has been one of the most momentous in the history of the management of elections in Nigeria. There have been several milestones, many challenges and useful lessons in the conduct of elections and the management of the process within this period. *Election Management in Nigeria: 2015-2025* is the first, most comprehensive record of these milestones, lessons and challenges of the of my two-term tenure. From the reform of the electoral legal framework (ELF), through to the provision of voter outreach and inclusivity programmes, to the focus on election security, to the deployment of electoral technologies and to stakeholder engagements designed to build confidence and trust in the electoral process, the Commission demonstrated how measured, custom-tailored and forward-looking reforms can be, driven by lessons-learned and peer review processes ultimately meant to improve the conduct of elections and trust in the electoral process. This book presents the reforms and advances made in the development, management and deployment of voting procedures, voter registration, voter management, electoral technologies, relations with political parties and other electoral stakeholders, election security as well as in the planning, monitoring and implementation of the Commission's election projects and plans.

There have been, over the period under review, significant milestones that have dramatically impacted the electoral process. The introduction of simultaneous accreditation and voting (CAVs); the development and deployment of the INEC Voter Enrolment Device (IVED) and Bi-Modal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS); the expansion of voter access to polling units that ended a 25 year old jinx transforming polling units in Nigeria from 119, 974 to 176,846; the promotion and expansion of inclusivity measures to persons with disability (PwD), internally displaced persons (IDPs) and to women and youth; the development and deployment of the INEC Results Viewing (IReV) portal and several other portals to manage the submission of the list of candidates and agents from political parties, election observers and the media; the deployment of additional technology to facilitate the coordination, planning, monitoring, early warning and implementation of electoral activities through the EMSC; as well as the expansion of the Commission's role in the provision of electoral assistance to Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) across the West African Region count as some of the most significant achievements of the Commission in the period under review. Several other achievements have been presented in the little over 200 pages of this book, with pictures and infographs that will serve as an authoritative source on the history of the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process in Nigeria in the past ten years.

Despite these achievements, the 2015-2025 decade was not without its challenges. Issues such as multiple litigations in which the Commission is joined, conflicting orders from courts of concurrent jurisdiction, electoral violence as seen in the various attacks on the Commission's facilities and personnel, vote trading, and the challenge of logistics that led to the postponement of elections since 2011, continue to pose challenges to the smooth conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process. Additionally, technical challenges with equipment and connectivity failures have sometimes hindered the smooth conduct of elections.

In response to these challenges, the Commission implemented various reforms, including voter education programs, capacity building for electoral officials, and collaboration with security agencies to ensure the safety of voters and electoral officials. In addition, several policies guiding the development, acquisition and deployment of electoral technology and the management of the electoral process

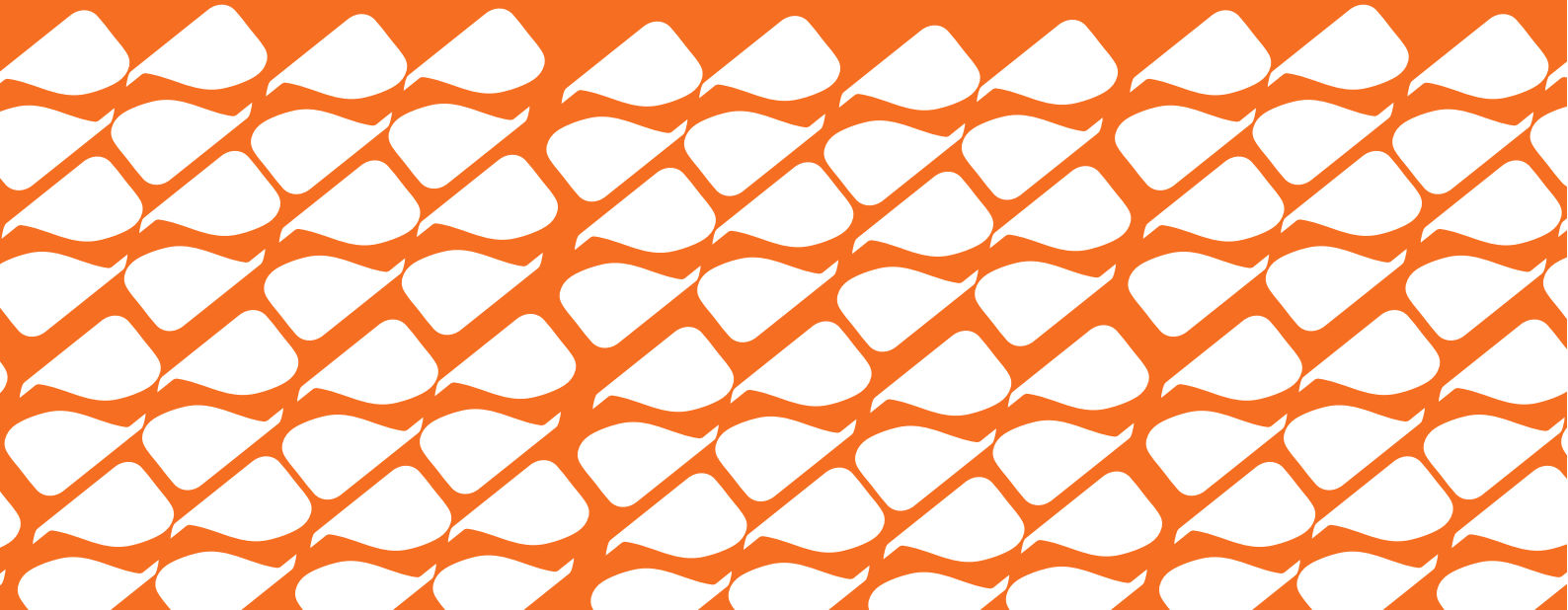
As the Commission looks to the future, the conduct of elections and the management of elections will continue to evolve and present fresh challenges. Such challenges will necessarily either require the consolidation of old, or the formulation of new reforms. Lessons from the conduct of elections and the management of the process will necessitate that new lessons be learnt, requiring the tweaking of old, or the introduction of new electoral technologies. The Commission must fully embrace both successes and failures, intensify confidence and trust building measures, expand the drive towards inclusivity and continuously be ahead in addressing potential threats to the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process. Only in and through these, can it ensure the conduct of free, fair, credible and inclusive elections and the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

Professor Mahmood Yakubu

Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission
(INEC)

01

Introduction



Introduction

Election Management in Nigeria: 2015-2025 is a chronicle of the activities, achievements, innovations and challenges the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the 10-year period of the Chairmanship of Professor Mahmood Yakubu, from his assumption of office on 9th November 2015 until he exited on 6th December 2025. To be sure, Professor Yakubu is the first Chairman of the Election Management Body (EMB) in Nigeria to spend two terms in office. This chronicle therefore provides an account of the Commission's efforts to build on the efforts by previous Commissions in the conduct of elections, the management of the officials and staff of the Commission as well as the supervision of the electoral process during his tenure. From the conduct of the Kogi Governorship election on 21st November 2015 to the Anambra Governorship Election on 8th November 2025, the Yakubu Commission conducted elections into 4,500 constituencies across the country, spanning two general elections in 2019 and 2023 and several Off-Cycle Governorship, bye- and re-run elections into various federal, state and FCT Area Council constituencies. During this period, probably the most momentous in the history of election management in Nigeria thus far, giant steps were taken towards attaining greater transparency and accountability in the conduct of elections ranging from the introduction of fixed dates for general elections; more efficient voter management practices; the expansion of voter access to Polling Units (PUs), the implementation of better and more inclusive voting opportunities for marginalized groups; regularization and systematization of stakeholder engagements; greater openness

in information management and dissemination; development and deployment of fit-for-purpose electoral technologies; as well as devoting greater attention to the welfare of staff, both regular and ad-hoc.

Election Management in Nigeria: 2015-2025 discusses these and related issues in eleven (11) chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Commission, its vision and mission, its brief history, as well as its organisational structure. Chapter 2 focuses on the administrative and organisation reforms which began during the Jega Commission which were sustained, reinforced and deepened by the Yakubu Commission, including but not limited to the restructuring of the Commission's administrative and organisational machinery, the creation of standardized codes for all Forms, introduction of merit-based criteria and affirmative action for promotion, transfer of promotion examinations to the Public Service Institute (PSI), management of labour relations and the construction of a new annex headquarter building in Abuja. The third chapter focuses on the efforts of the Commission on the reform of the Electoral Legal Framework (ELF), especially in the enactment of the new Electoral Act 2022, which brought about significant improvements in the electoral process, as well as in the review and production of regulations, guidelines and manuals for elections in the wake of the new EA 2022. The chapter also highlighted the impact of the new ELF on electoral litigations, landmark cases with significant impact on election administration, the deployment of Electoral Alternative Dispute Resolution (EADR) mechanisms in addressing intra and inter political party disputes, and the impact of all these on the Commission and the electoral process. Chapter four deals with the Commission's efforts

at the continuous improvement of the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process through regular process reviews, research, production of new knowledge as well as the deployment of innovations expanded in the discussions in Chapter 4 by presenting a comprehensive overview of the development, expansion and deployment of electoral technology in the period under review, highlighting the principal approach of the Yakubu Commission in the use of existing electoral technology as a deliberate policy of the consolidation of previous advances and the in-house development and deployment of various web-based technologies in response to emerging situations and stakeholder needs. Chapter 5 examines the introduction of a more modern, compact and versatile equipment for voter registration, voter accreditation and uploading of polling unit results and the automation of some of the Commission's routine process and procedures with the development, piloting and deployment of ICT applications. Chapter 6 examines the Commission's effort at the regularization of stakeholder engagements in which political parties, civil society organisations, the media, security agencies, MDAs and development partners are important elements of its consultative decision-making process. Key issues in electoral governance in the conduct and delivery of credible elections, including the design, formulation, planning, coordination, implementation, tracking and monitoring of policies and activities as well as the challenges and lessons learnt in the pre-election, election and post-election phases of the electoral cycle are discussed in Chapter 7. While Chapters 8 highlighted the Commission's efforts in civic and voter education and strategic communication with the

public through various channels and platforms, Chapter 9 chronicled the various measures adopted for the expansion of voter access and voting rights, the promotion of inclusivity in the electoral process, as well as policy proposals for expanding voting rights to certain categories of persons. While a key mandate of the Commission is the conduct of elections, it is however, the duty of the security agencies with the Nigeria Police Force as the lead agency, to secure the environment for the conduct of elections. Chapter 10 discusses the security architecture and challenges in the conduct of electoral activities, highlighting the various attacks on the Commission's personnel and facilities nationwide and the impact of insecurity on the work of the Commission. Lastly, the relationship between INEC and other election management bodies and development partners is the subject of Chapter 11, highlighting the activities of Professor Yakubu as President of the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissioners (ECONEC).

On the whole, *Election Management in Nigeria: 2015-2025* provides an insight into the tenure of Professor Mahmood Yakubu as the two-term Chairman of INEC. It reveals the enormity of the issues and challenges that confronted him and his Commission, and how he dealt with them. It avails the reader the unique opportunity of understanding the dynamics and intricacies of election management and the contributions of Professor Mahmood Yakubu to the quest for free, fair, credible and inclusive elections in Nigeria.

1.1 About INEC

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established on 5th August 1998. It is one of the 14 Federal Executive Bodies listed in

Section 153 (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended). The composition and powers of the Commission are contained in Paragraphs 14 (1&2) and 15 (a-c) of the Third Schedule and Sections 225 A and 226 (1-3) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). The independence of the Commission is enshrined in Sections 158 (1) and 160 (1) of the Constitution, while its control over funds and powers to supervise and monitor political parties are specified in Sections 1, 2 (a-c), 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 25, 33 and 87 of the Electoral Act 2022).

By virtue of the provisions of Section 6 (1) of the Electoral Act 2022, the Commission operates a three-tier organisational structure with headquarters in Abuja and functional offices in each of the 36 States of the Federation, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), as well as in the 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) across the country. The State and FCT Offices of the Commission are run by Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs), while the LGA Offices are headed by Electoral Officers (EOs). The RECs are given delegated authority by the Commission as provided for in Section 15(h) of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and Section 6 (2) of the Electoral Act 2022, with the overall responsibility of overseeing its work in the States and FCT. RECs are assisted by Administrative Secretaries (AS), who are directorate cadre staff, with responsibility for the general administration and coordination of all electoral activities in the State and FCT offices.

As outlined in Section 15 (a-i) of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and Sections 2-7 and 148 of the Electoral Act 2022, the powers and functions of the Commission include:

1. Organising, undertaking, and supervising all elections to the offices of the President and Vice-President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, and the membership of the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the House of Assembly of each State of the Federation.
2. Registering political parties in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and an Act of the National Assembly.
3. Monitoring the organisation and operation of the political parties, including their finances, conventions, congresses, and party primaries.
4. Arranging for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties and publishing a report on such examination and audit for public information.
5. Arranging and conducting the registration of persons qualified to vote and preparing, maintaining, and revising the register of voters for the purpose of any election under this Constitution.
6. Monitoring political campaigns and providing rules and regulations which shall govern the political parties.
7. Ensuring that all Electoral Commissioners, Electoral and Returning Officers take and subscribe to the oath of office prescribed by law.
8. Delegating any of its powers to any Resident Electoral Commissioner.
9. Carrying out such other functions as may be conferred upon it by an Act of the National Assembly.

The 1999 Constitution also vests in the Commission the powers to organize recall of members of the National and State Assemblies by their constituents (Sections 69 and 110), delimit electoral constituencies (Sections 71 and 112) and register and regulate political parties (Section 225). Furthermore, Section 2 (a-c) of the Electoral Act 2022 empowers the Commission to conduct voter and civic education, promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes, conduct any referendum required pursuant to the provisions of the 1999 Constitution or any other law or Act of the National Assembly and issue regulations or manuals for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of the Constitution and the Electoral Act and for its administration thereof. Lastly, Section 103 of the Electoral Act 2022 empowers the Commission to conduct elections into the offices of Chairman, Vice Chairman and members of Area Councils of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and the recall of such members of the Area Councils should the need to do so arise.

The independence of INEC is guaranteed by the Constitution and the Electoral Act. According to Section 158 (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), 'in exercising its power to make appointments or to exercise disciplinary control over persons, the Independent National Electoral Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other authority or person.' Section 160 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) stipulates that the Commission has the power to make its own rules or otherwise regulate its own procedures

and shall not be subject to the approval or control of the President. Under Section 65 (1c) of the Electoral Act 2022, INEC can, within seven (7) days, review results declared by a returning officer under duress or where such a declaration was made contrary to the provisions of the electoral laws. This is without prejudice to the jurisdiction of a Court of competent jurisdiction or election tribunal to review the decision of a returning officer. In addition to the operational independence guaranteed by the above-mentioned provisions, the financial independence of INEC is also guaranteed by Sections 81 and 84 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) as well as Section 3 of the Electoral Act 2022.

INEC is the second-largest government agency in Nigeria, in terms of its staff strength, ranking second only to the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). As of December 2023, the Commission's staff strength was 15,013 full-time staff members across the country. The Commission also appoints ad-hoc personnel for election duty (more than 700,000 were recruited during the 2023 elections). The permanent INEC staff are recruited in line with civil service rules. In June 2005, the Electoral Institute was established as part of the Commission's efforts to develop the capacity of its staff and professionalize the administration of elections in Nigeria. The Institute, headed by a Director-General is based in Abuja with learning centres in Oghara (Delta State) and Minna (Niger State).

Box 1: Powers of the Independent National Electoral Commission

The independence of INEC is guaranteed by the Constitution and the Electoral Act. According to Section 158 (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), 'in exercising its power to make appointments or to exercise disciplinary control over persons, the Independent National Electoral Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other authority or person.' Section 160 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) stipulates that the Commission has the power to make its own rules or otherwise regulate its own procedures and shall not be subject to the approval or control of the President. Under Section 65 (1 c) of the Electoral Act 2022, INEC can, within seven (7) days, review results declared by a returning officer under duress or where such a declaration was made contrary to the provisions of the electoral laws. This is without prejudice to the jurisdiction of a Court of competent jurisdiction or election tribunal to review the decision of a returning officer. In addition to the operational independence guaranteed by the above-mentioned provisions, the financial independence of INEC is also guaranteed by Sections 81 and 84 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) as well as Section 3 of the Electoral Act 2022.

1.2 Vision, Mission, and Core Values of INEC

As an organisation, the Commission is guided by a broad vision, and driven by a more specific mission, all of which are expressed in nine (9) core values.



Vision

The vision of INEC is to be one of the best Election Management Bodies in the world that meets the aspirations of the Nigerian people.



Mission

The mission of INEC is to serve as an Independent and effective EMB committed to the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections for sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

Core Values of INEC

INEC shall be guided by the following values in the performance of its duties:

Autonomy: INEC shall carry out all its functions independently, free from external control and influence.

Transparency: INEC shall display openness and transparency in all its activities and in its relationship with all stakeholders.

Integrity: INEC shall always maintain truthfulness and honesty in all its dealings.

Credibility: INEC shall ensure that no action or activity is taken in support of any candidate or Political party.

Impartiality: INEC shall ensure the creation of a level playing field for all political actors.

Dedication: INEC shall be committed

to providing quality electoral services efficiently and effectively, guided by best international practices and standards.

Equity: INEC shall ensure fairness and justice in dealing with all stakeholders.

Excellence: INEC shall be committed to the promotion of merit and professionalism as the basis for all its actions.

Teamwork: INEC shall create a conducive environment that promotes teamwork among its staff at all levels.

1.3 INEC Since 1999

There have been six (6) Commissions since the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in August 1998. These are: the Akpata Commission (August 1998 – January 2000); the Guobadia Commission (May 2000 – May 2005); the Iwu Commission (June 2005 – May 2010), the Jega Commission (June 2010 – June 2015) and the successive Yakubu Commissions (November 2015 – November 2020 and December 2020 – December 2025). From 1998 to 2025 these Commissions have between them, conducted seven (7) successive General Elections and hundreds of Off-Cycle Governorship, re-run, court ordered and bye elections. Although the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process at the beginning was largely basic, the Commission was continuously learning lessons for the continuous improvement of the electoral and political processes. Thus, lessons learnt from previous elections were progressively applied to subsequent elections to improve the Commission's electoral regulations and procedures, deepen the use of technology, strengthen the electoral

legal framework as well as to deepen the professionalization of staff.

Although the gradual improvements witnessed some challenges in the 2003 and 2007 General Elections, adjudged the worst since 1998, the Commission from 2010 had continuously striven towards a better organized, more transparent, credible, and inclusive electoral process. The 2010 Commission began an era of a more systematized and coordinated approach to electoral reforms not only in the processes and procedures for the conduct of elections, but also in election management and administration. These reforms ranged from the reorganisation of the Commission's administrative structure to changes in the electoral legal framework, introduction of a knowledge and innovation-driven election planning and administration, expansion in the use of electoral technology, as well as the promotion and expansion of inclusivity in the electoral process for women, youth, persons with disability (PwDs) and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

1.4 Organisational and Administrative Structure

The Commission is made up of a Chairman, who is the Chief Electoral Commissioner (CEC) of the Federation, and 12 members known as National Electoral Commissioners (NECs). Both are at the apex of the Commission's organogram as the policy-making organ. The Chairman of the Commission, doubles as the Chief Electoral Commissioner and Accounting Officer as the buck stops on his table in terms of policy making and implementation as well as general administration.

specific Standing Committees or directorates of the Commission and have assigned supervisory roles in a cluster of three or more states.



The Commission operates a Committee System through the Standing Committees of the Commission. There are 15 Standing Committees with their Terms of Reference clearly spelt out in Articles 14 and 27 of the Commission's *Rules of Procedure, 2014*. The Chairman of the Commission appoints the Chairmen and members of these Committees from among the NECs, while Directors of relevant Departments and Directorates serve as Secretaries to the Committees. Recommendations of the Standing Committees are forwarded as memoranda to the Commission for consideration and approval. The following is a list of the Standing Committees of the Commission:

1. Appointments, Promotions and Disciplinary Committee (APDC)
2. Board of Survey and Technical Equipment Acquisition Committee (BOSTEAC)
3. Board of the Electoral Institute (BEI)
4. Election and Party Monitoring Committee (EPMC)
5. Estate, Works and Transport Committee (EWTC)
6. Finance and General-Purpose Committee (FGPC)
7. Health and Welfare Committee (HWC)
8. Information Technology and Voter Registration Committee (ITVRC)
9. Information and Voter Education Committee (IVEC)
10. Legal Services, Clearance and Complaints Committee (LSC&CC)
11. Electoral Operations and Logistics

Committee (EOLC)

12. Outreach and Partnerships Committee (OPC)
13. Planning, Monitoring and Strategy Committee (PMSC)
14. Security Committee (SC)
15. Tenders Board (TB)

The Secretary to the Commission is the head of the Commission's bureaucracy and administrative Secretariat and she is responsible for the proper keeping of records and proceedings of the Commission. The Secretary is also responsible for the control of all staff of the Commission in line with the Commission's extant rules and direction. INEC's 14 Departments and 9 Directorates at headquarters are as follows:

(a) Departments

1. Electoral Operations
2. Voter Education and Publicity
3. Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)
4. Voter Registry
5. Human Resource Management
6. Legal Drafting and Compliance
7. Litigation and Prosecution
8. Finance and Accounts
9. Procurement
10. Election and Party Monitoring
11. Gender and Inclusivity

12. Estate, Works and Transport
13. Research and Documentation
14. Training

(b) Directorates

1. International Cooperation and Protocol
2. Planning and Monitoring
3. Commission Secretariat
4. Health Services
5. Administration
6. Stores
7. Audit
8. Security
9. Inter-Governmental Relations

In 2005, the Commission established the Electoral Institute as part of its efforts to improve knowledge creation and documentation as well as to develop the capacity of staff towards the professionalization of the conduct

and management of elections in Nigeria. The Institute which is made up of two core departments – Training and Research and Documentation, has a Board, with a National Commissioner as the Chairman, and is headed by a Director General, assisted by an Administrative Secretary (AS), while the two departments under the Institute are headed by Directors.

The Commission operates offices in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory. The state offices are headed by Resident Electoral Commissioners. Each State and FCT Office has an Administrative Secretary who is the head of Administration, who assists the RECs in the day-to-day administration of the State Offices. The Administrative Secretaries in most cases, are substantive Directors on GL 17 except when they are in acting capacity. There are seven (7) Departments and two (2) Units in each state office, headed by Heads of Department, usually Deputy Directors on GL 16. Resident Electoral Commissioners are expected to keep their supervisory National Commissioners informed of activities and events in their jurisdiction.

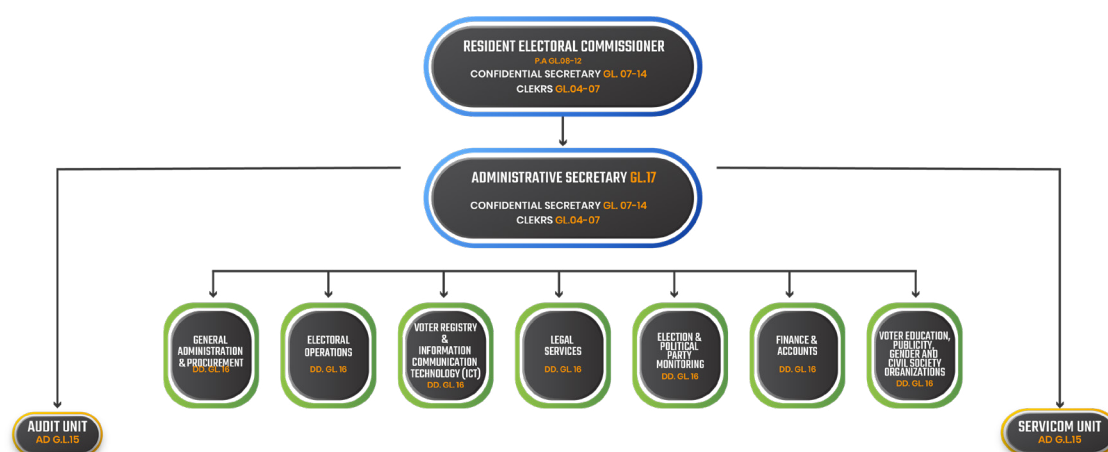


Figure 1.2: The Organisational and Administrative Structure of INEC at the State Level

To further devolve its functions, the Commission operates offices in the 774 Local Government Areas of the federation. Structurally, each LGA office is headed by an Electoral Officer (EO) and is assisted by three (3) Assistant

Electoral Officers (AEOs) and other staff. The AEOs oversee Operations, Administration, and Clusters of RAC (Registration Area Camps). Below is the administrative structure of the Local Government Area offices.

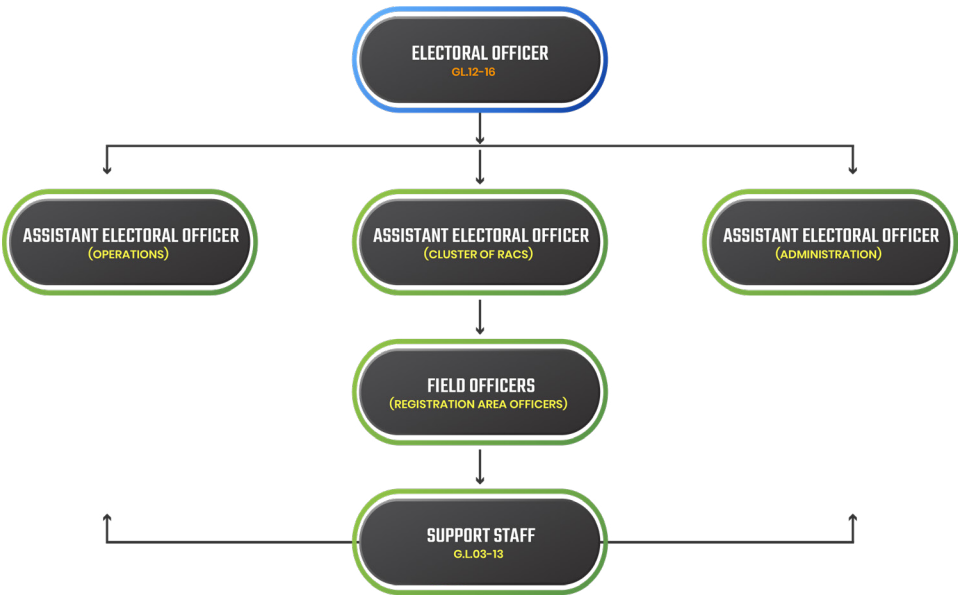


Figure 1.3: The Organisational and Administrative Structure of INEC at the Local Government Level

1.5 The Commission

As indicated earlier, the Commission is composed of the Chairman who is the Chief Electoral Commissioner and 12 other members, called National Electoral Commissioners appointed on the basis of two persons from each of the country’s six (6) geo-political zones.

The appointment of the Chairman and National Electoral Commissioners is as provided for in Section F, Part I of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). Altogether, 26 National Commissioners have served or are serving in the period under review, as indicated in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: List of National Commissioners and their Tenures, 2015-2020 and 2020-2025

A: 2015-2020							
S/N	Name	State of Origin	Geo-Political Zone	Post	Years in Service	Remark	
					From	To	
1	Prof. Mahmood Yabuku	Bauchi	NE	Chairman	9th Nov. 2015	8th Nov. 2020	
2	Prof. Okechukwu O. Ibeanu	Anambra	SE	Nat. Comm.	5th Dec. 2016	4th Dec. 2021	
3	Alh. Baba Shettima Arfo, mni	Borno	NE	Nat. Comm.	9th Nov. 2015	8th Nov. 2020	
4	Mrs. May I. Agbamuche-Mbu	Delta	SS	Nat. Comm.	5th Dec. 2016	4th Dec. 2021	
5	Dr. Mohammed Mustapha Lecky	Edo	SS	Nat. Comm.	9th Nov. 2015	8th Nov. 2020	
6	AVM Ahmed Tijiani Mu'azu (Rtd.)	Gombe	NE	Nat. Comm.	5th Dec. 2016	4th Dec. 2021	
7	Barr. Festus Okoye	Imo	SE	Nat. Comm.	25th Jul. 2018	24th Jul. 2023	
8	Hajiya Amina B. Zakari	Jigawa	NW	Nat. Comm.	9th Nov. 2015	8th Nov. 2020	
9	Prof. Anthonia T. O. Simbine	Kogi	NC	Nat. Comm.	9th Nov. 2015	8th Nov. 2020	
10	Malam Mohammed Kudu Haruna	Niger	NC	Nat. Comm.	5th Dec. 2016	4th Dec. 2021	
11	Late Prince Solomon A. Soyebi	Ogun	SW	Nat. Comm.	9th Nov. 2015	8th Nov. 2020	
12	Dr. Adekunle L. Ogunmola	Oyo	SW	Nat. Comm.	5th Dec. 2016	4th Dec. 2021	
13	Engr. Abubakar A. Nahuche	Zamfara	NW	Nat. Comm.	5th Dec. 2016	4th Dec. 2021	Resigned
14	Mrs. Augusta C. Ogakwu	Anambra	SE	Sec. to the Comm.	1st Aug. 2013	1st Aug. 2018	
15	Mrs. Rose Oriaran-Anthony	Edo	SS	Sec. to the Comm.	6th Dec. 2018	5th Dec. 2022	
B: 2020-2025							
1	Prof. Mahmood Yabuku	Bauchi	NE	Chairman	7th Dec. 2020	6th Dec. 2025	
2	Malam Mohammed Kudu Haruna	Niger	NC	Nat. Comm.	16th Feb. 2022	15th Feb. 2027	Reappointed
3	Mrs. May I. Agbamuche-Mbu	Delta	SS	Nat. Comm.	16th Feb. 2022	15th Feb. 2027	Reappointed

4	Prof. Abdullahi Abdu Zuru	Kebbi	NW	Nat. Comm.	15th Sep. 2021	14th Sep. 2026	
5	Dr. Baba Bila	Yobe	NE	Nat. Comm.	16th Feb. 2022	15th Feb. 2027	
6	Mr. Sam Olumekun, mni	Ondo	SW	Nat. Comm.	16th Feb. 2022	15th Feb. 2027	
7	Barr. Festus Okoye	Imo	SE	Nat. Comm.	25th Jul. 2018	24th Jul. 2023	
8	Prof. Rhoda H. Gumus	Bayelsa	SS	Nat. Comm.	16th Feb. 2022	15th Feb. 2027	
9	Prof. Kunle Cornelius Ajayi	Ekiti	SW	Nat. Comm.	22nd Oct. 2021	21st Oct. 2026	
10	Prof. Muhammad Sani Kallah	Katsina	NW	Nat. Comm.	22nd Oct. 2021	25th Nov. 2024	Resigned
11	Mr. Kenneth Nnamdi Ukeagu	Abia	SE	Nat. Comm.	16th Feb. 2022	15th Feb. 2027	
12	Late Maj. Gen. Modibbo A. Alkali (rtd) mni	Adamawa	NE	Nat. Comm.	16th Feb. 2022	28th April 2025	Dec. 28 April 2025
13	Prof. Sani Muhammad Adam, SAN	Plateau	NC	Nat. Comm.	15th Sep. 2021	14th Sep. 2026	
14	Alhaji Abdul-Razaaq Tukur Yusuf	Katsina	NW	Nat. Comm.	12th May 2025	11th May 2030	
15	Professor Sunday Nwambam Aja	Ebonyi	SE	Nat. Comm.	12th May 2025	11th May 2030	
16	Mrs. Rose Oriaran-Anthony	Edo	SS	Sec. to the Comm.	6th Dec. 2022	5th Dec. 2026	

Members of the Commission 2015 – 2020



Professor Mahmood Yakubu being sworn-in as Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) by President Muhammadu Buhari on 9th November 2015



Professor Mahmood Yakubu handed the reins of the Commission to retired Air Vice Marshal Ahmed Mu'azu, as the acting chairman of the Commission on conclusion of his first term in office on 9th November 2020



Professor Mahmood Yakubu on his last day in office as Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission INEC on conclusion of his first term in office on 9th November 2020

Members of the Commission 2015 – 2020



Prof. Antonia Taiye Okoosi-Simbine (left), Late Prince Solomon Adedeji Soyebi (middle) and Mrs. Amina B. Zakari at their swearing-in ceremony as National Commissioners on 9th November 2015



Alhaji Baba Shettima Arfo (left) and Dr. Muhammed Mustafa Lecky at their swearing-in ceremony as National Commissioners on 9th November 2015.

Members of the Commission 2015 – 2020



Prof. Okechukwu Ibeanu (left), Malam Mohammed Haruna (middle) and AVM Ahmad Mua'zu (rtd) at their swearing-in ceremony as National Commissioners on 7th December 2016



Dr Adekunle Ogunmola (left), Mrs. May Agbamuche-Mbu (middle) and Engr. Abubakar Nahuhe at their swearing-in ceremony as National Commissioners on 7th December 2016.

Members of the Commission 2015 – 2020



Barr. Festus Okoye at his swearing-in ceremony as National Commissioner on 21st July 2018.

Secretary to the Commission 2015 – 2020



Mrs. Rose Oriaran-Anthony Secretary to the Commission

Members of the Commission 2020 – 2025



Professor Mahmood Yakubu being sworn-in as Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for a second term by President Muhammadu Buhari on 9th December 2020



Professor Mahmood Yakubu receiving a welcome card from Mrs. Zainab Ndako on behalf of INEC Staff on assuming duty as Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for a second term on 10th December 2020

Members of the Commission 2020 – 2025



National Commissioners Prof. Sani Adam, Prof. Abdulahi Abdu Zuru and Dr. Baba Bila being sworn in on 15th September 2021



National Commissioners Prof. Kunle Ajayi (in suit) and Prof. Sani Kallah being sworn-in on 25th October 2021

Members of the Commission 2020 – 2025



National Commissioners Mallam Mohammed Haruna, Mr. Sam Olumekun mni, Prof. Rhoda Gumus, INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, National Commissioners, Mrs. May Agbamuche-Mbu, Mr. Kenneth Ukeagu and Major General Abubakar Alkali (rtd), after their swearing-in by President Muhammadu Buhari on 16th February 2022



National Commissioner, Alhaji Abdulrazaq Tukur Yusuf being sworn-in on 12th May 2025 by President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

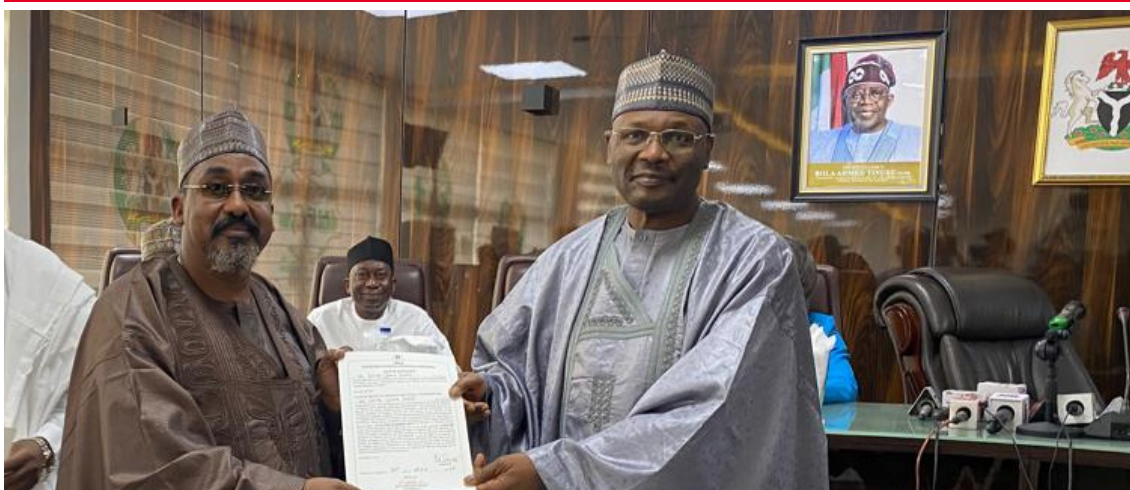


National Commissioner, Professor Sunday Nwambam Aja, National Commissioner, being sworn-in on 12th May 2025 by President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

Members of the Commission 2020 – 2025



Professor Mahmood Yakubu swearing in former INEC Directors, Shehu Wahab, Aminu Idris and Oluwatoyin Babalola as Resident Electoral Commissioners at the Commission Headquarters on 12th December 2023.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu presenting Letter of Appointment to Dr. Sa'ad Idris, former D.G. of the Electoral Institute as Resident Electoral Commissioner at the Commission Headquarters on 30th May 2025



Professor Mahmood Yakubu presenting Letter of Appointment to Feyijimi Ibiyemi Saseyi, former Administrative Secretary, Lagos State as Resident Electoral Commissioner at the Commission Headquarters on 30th May 2025

1.6 Resident Electoral Commissioners

The Commission has 37 Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) for each of the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). While RECs are appointed by the

President, their posting is determined by the Commission. In the period under review, RECs served in states other than their State of Origin, but within their geo-political zone. The list of RECs from 2015 to 2025 is as indicated in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2: List of Resident Electoral Commissioners, 2015 – 2025						
S/N	State of Posting	Name	State of Origin	Geo-Political Zone	Years of Service	
					From	To
1	Abia	Mr. Sylvester O. Ezeani	Anambra	SE	2015	2016
		Dr. Iloh Joseph Valentine-Chuks	Enugu	SE	2017	2022
		Prof. Ike C. Uzochukwu	Anambra	SE	2022	2025
		Bar. Chukwuemeka Ibeziako	Anambra	SE	2025	To Date
2	Adamawa	Late Baba Abba Yusuf	Borno	NE	2015	2016
		Barr Kassim Gana Gaidam Esq	Yobe	NE	2017	2022
		Barr. Hudu Yunusa Ari (Dismissed)	Bauchi	NE	2022	2023
		Muhammed Bulama Nura	Yobe	NE	2025	2026
3	Akwa Ibom	Barr Mike Igini	Delta	SS	2017	2022
		Mr. Ehimeakhe Shaka Isa	Edo	SS	2023	2025
		Bar. Obo Effanga	Cross River	SS	2025	To Date
4	Anambra	Mr. Edwin Offor Nwatarali	Enugu	SE	2015	2017
		Dr Nkwachukwu Orji	Ebonyi	SE	2017	2022
		Mrs Queen Elizabeth Agwu	Ebonyi	SE	2024	To Date

5	Bayelsa	Mr. Barritor Kpagih	Rivers	SS	2015	2016
		Mr. Austin Okojie	Edo	SS	2016	2017
		Dr. Cyril Omorogbe	Edo	SS	2028	2019
		Pastor Tom Udoh	Akwa Ibom	SS	2019	2020
		Dr. Cyril Omorogbe	Edo	SS	2020	2021
		Dr. Emmanuel Alex Hart	Rivers	SS	2021	2023
		Barr. Obo Effanga	Cross River	SS	2023	2025
		Mr. Ehimeakne Shaka Isah	Edo	SS	2024	To Date
6	Bauchi	Alh. Ibrahim Abdullahi mni	Adamawa	NE	2017	2022
		Alh. Muhammad Bulama Nura	Yobe	NE	2022	2025
		Umar Ibrahim	Taraba	NE	2025	To Date
7	Benue	Prof. Istifanus Ishaku Dafwang	Plateau	NC	2014	2017
		Dr. Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda	Plateau	NC	2017	2021
		Prof. Samuel G. Egwu	Kogi	NC	2022	To Date
8	Borno	Mr. Samuel Madaki Usman	Taraba	NE	2015	2016
		Alh. Mohammed Magaji Ibrahim	Gombe	NE	2018	2023
		Alh, Abubakar Ahmed Ma'aji mni	Gombe	NE	2024	2029
9	Cross River	Dr. Sylvester Okey Ezeani	Anambra	SE	2014	2016
		Dr. Frankland Briyai	Bayelsa	SS	2017	2019
		Dr. Emmanuel Alex Hart	Rivers	SS	2020	2021
		Dr. Cyril Omorogbe	Edo	SS	2021	2022
		Prof. Yomere Gabriel	Delta	SS	2022	2025
		Dr. Johnson Alalibo Sinikiem	Bayelsa	SS	2025	To Date
10	Delta	Elder Aniedi Ikoivok	Akwa Ibom	SS	2014	2017
		Pastor Monday Udoh Tom	Akwa Ibom	SS	2019	2024
		Mr. Etekamba Umoren	Akwa Ibom	SS	2024	To Date

11	Ebonyi	Dr. Lawrence O. Azubuike	Imo	SE	2015	2016
		Late Prof. Godswill Obioma	Abia	SE	2017	2020
		Dr. Chukwuemeka Joseph Chukwu	Abia	SE	2020	2022
		Mrs. Onyeka Pauline Ugochi	Imo	SE	2022	2027
12	Edo	Barr. Mike Igini	Delta	SS	2014	2015
		Mr. Sam Olumekun mni	Ondo	SW	2016	2020
		Dr. Johnson Alalibo	Bayelsa	SS	2020	2022
		Dr. Anugbum Onuoha	Rivers	SS	2024	2029
13	Ekiti	Mr. Sam Olumekun mni	Ondo	SW	2014	2016
		Prof. Abdul Ganiy Olayinka Raji	Oyo	SW	2017	2019
		Dr. Adeniran Rahmon Tella	Osun	SW	2020	2022
		Prof. Ayobami Salami	Oyo	SW	2022	2023
		Dr Olubunmi Omoseyindemi	Lagos	SW	2023	To Date
14	Enugu	Prof. O.E. Onukaogu	Abia	SE	2014	2017
		Mr. Ononamadu Emeka J.	Imo	SE	2017	2022
		Dr. Chukwuemeka J. Chukwu	Abia	SE	2020	To Date
15	FCT	Prof. Jacob S. Jatau	Nasarawa	NC	2014	2017
		Alhaji Yahaya Bello	Nasarawa	NC	2017	2023
		Dr. Mahmuda Isah	Kebbi	NW	2023	2025
		Aminu K. Idris	Nasarawa	NC	2023	To Date
16	Gombe	Barr. Kassim Gana Geidam	Yobe	NE	2014	2015
		Alhaji Umar Ibrahim	Taraba	NE	2017	2022
		Alhaji Umar Ibrahim	Taraba	NE	2022	2025
		Dr. Saad Umar Idris	Bauchi	NE	2025	2030

17	Imo	Dr. Gabriel Ada	Cross River	SS	2014	2017
		Prof. Francis C. Ezeonu	Anambra	SE	2017	2022
		Prof. Sylvia Uchenna Agu	Enugu	SE	2022	To Date
18	Jigawa	Prof Riskuwa A. Shehu	Sokoto	NW	2017	2018
		Mr. Mahmuda Isah	Kebbi	NW	2018	2023
		Prof. Muhammed L. Bashar	Sokoto	NW	2022	2027
19	Kaduna	Alhaji Hassaini Ahmed Mahuta	Katsina	NW	2014	2015
		Alhaji Abdullahi A. Kaugama	Jigawa	NW	2015	2020
		Dr. (Mrs.) Asmau S. Maikudi	Katsina	NW	2021	2022
		Mr. Mahmud Isah	Kebbi	NW	2023	2023
		Mal. Aminu Kasimu Idris	Nasarawa	NE	2023	2025
		Prof. Ahmad Saidu Babura	Jigawa	NW	2025	To Date
20	Katsina	Late Alhaji Ibrahim Bagobiri	Sokoto	NW	2015	2015
		Alhaji Jibril Ibrahim Zarewa	Kano	NW	2017	2022
		Prof. Yahaya Makarfi Ibrahim	Kaduna	NW	2022	To Date
21	Kano	Late Alhaji Munkaila Abdullahi	Jigawa	NW	2014	2015
		Prof. Riskuwa Arabu Shehu, oon	Sokoto	NW	2018	2022
		Amb. Zango A. Abdu, mni	Katsina	NW	2022	To Date
22	Kebbi	Alhaji Jibrin Ibrahim Zarewa	Kano	NW	2015	2015
		Barr. Ahmad Bello Mahmud	Zamfara	NW	2018	2023
		Alhaji Abubakar D. Sarkin Pawa	Zamfara	NW	2023	To Date

23	Kogi	Alhaji Hussaini Halilu Pai	FCT	NE	2014	2016
		Prof. James Iorliam Apam	Benue	NE	2017	2022
		Dr. Hale Gabriel Longpet	Plateau	NE	2022	2027
		Dr. Ogundu Oliver Tersoo	Benue	NC	2025	To Date
24	Kwara	Alhaji Garba Attahiru Madami	Niger	NE	2018	2023
		Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar Sadiq	Niger	NE	2023	2025
		Dr. Hale Gabriel Longpet	Plateau	NC	2025	To Date
25	Lagos	Mr. Akin Orebiyi	Ogun State	SW	2015	2016
		Mr. Sam Olumekun mni	Ondo State	SW	2017	2022
		Mr. Olusegun Agbaje mni	Ekiti State	SW	2022	2023
		Prof. Ayobami Salami	Oyo State	SW	2023	To Date
26	Nasarawa	Late Alhaji Abdullahi Danyaya	Niger	NE	2014	2015
		Dr. Uthman Abdulrahman Ajidagba	Kwara	NE	2018	2023
		Alhaji Shehu L. Wahab	Kwara	NE	2024	To Date
27	Niger	Alh Nasir O. Ayilara	Kwara	NE	2014	2017
		Professor Samuel G. Egwu	Kogi	NE	2017	2022
		Alhaji Yushau Ahmed Garki	FCT	NE	2022	To Date
28	Ogun	Chief Timothy A. Ibitoye	Osun	SW	2014	2015
		Prof. Abdul Ganiy Olayinka Raji	Oyo	SW	2019	2021
		Late Barr. Olaniyi Olaleye Ijalaye	Ondo	SW	2022	2024
		Mrs. Fayejimi Saseyi Ibiyemi	Ondo	SW	2025	To Date

29	Ondo	Mr. Olusegun Agbaje	Ekiti	SW	2015	2017
		Barr. Mutiu Agboke	Ogun	SW	2017	2017
		Amb. (Dr) Rufus O. Akeju	Lagos	SW	2018	2023
		Barr. Oluwatoyin O. Babalola	Ekiti	SW	2023	To Date
30	Osun	Dr. Adekunle Ladipo Ogunmola	Oyo	SW	2015	2015
		Mr. Olusegun Agbaje mni	Ekiti	SW	2018	2021
		Prof. Abdul Ganiy Olayinka Raji	Oyo	SW	2021	2022
		Dr. Mutiu Olaleke Agboke	Ogun	SW	2022	To Date
31	Oyo	Amb. (Dr) Rufus O. Akeju	Lagos	SW	2015	2016
		Barr. Mutiu Agboke	Ogun	SW	2018	2022
		Dr. Adeniran Rahmon Tella	Osun	SW	2022	To Date
32	Plateau	Mr. Kwange Godwin Mbatsavbee	Benue	NC	2015	2016
		Alhaji Hussaini Halilu Pai	FCT	NE	2017	2022
		Dr. Agundu Oliver Tersoo	Benue	NE	2022	2025
		Malam Mohammad Abubakar Sadiq	Niger	NC	2025	To Date
33	Rivers	Dame Gesila Khan	Bayelsa	SS	2014	2015
		Elder Aniedi Ikoiwok	Akwa-Ibom	SS	2015	2017
		Barr. Obo Effanga	Cross River	SS	2018	2022
		Dr. John Alalibo Sinikiem	Bayelsa	SS	2017	2018
		Prof. Yomeri Gabriel	Delta	SS	2025	To Date
34	Sokoto	Alhaji Sadiq Abubakar Musa	Kaduna	NW	2014	2015
		Alhaji Jibril Ibrahim Zarewa	Kano	NW	2017	2018
		Alhaji Sadiq Abubakar Musa	Kaduna	NW	2018	2022
		Dr. Nura Ali	Kano	NW	2022	2025
		Umar Yusuf Garba	Kano	NW	2025	To Date

35	Taraba	Mr. Habu Zarma Hinna	Gombe	NE	2016	2017
		Late Alhaji Baba Abba Yusuf	Borno	NE	2018	2019
		Alhaji Umar Mukhtar Gajiram	Borno	NE	2020	2025
		Alhaji Umar Mukhtar Gajiram	Borno	NE	2025	To Date
36	Yobe	Mr. Habu Zarma Hinna	Gombe	NE	2014	2016
		Alhaji Ahmad Makama	Bauchi	NE	2017	2022
		Alhaji Ibrahim Abdullahi mni	Adamawa	NE	2022	To Date
37	Zamfara	Alh Jibrin Ibrahim Zarewa	Kano	NE	2010	2014
		Alh. Abubakar Umar Wara	Kebbi	NW	2014	2016
		Dr. (Mrs.) Asama'u Sani Maikudi	Katsina	NW	2017	2021
		Prof. Ahmad Saidu Babura	Jigawa	NW	2021	2025
		Dr. Mahmuda Isah	Kebbi	NW	2025	To Date

COMMISSIONERS WHO DIED IN SERVICE

2015 - 2025



Late Maj. Gen. Abubakar M. Alkali (rtd)



**Late Baba Abba Yusuf
(Taraba)**



**Late Barr. Olaniyi Olaleye Ijalaye
(Ogun)**

RESIDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS

2015 - 2020



**Dr. Joseph Chuks
Iloh (Abia)**



**Barr. Kassim
Gaidam
(Adamawa)**



**Barr. Mike Igini
(Akwa Ibom)**



**Dr. Nkwachukwu
Orji (Anambra)**



**Ibrahim Abdullahi *mni*
(Bauchi)**



**Monday Udo Tom
(Bayelsa)**



**Dr. Nentawe
Goshwe Yilwatda
(Benue)**



**Mohammed Magaji
Ibrahim (Borno)**



**Dr. Frankland O.
Briyai (Cross River)**



**Dr. Cyril Omoregbe
(Delta)**



**Late Prof. Godswill
Obioma (Ebonyi)**



**Dr. Emmanuel Hart
(Edo)**

RESIDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS

2015 - 2020



Muslim Omoleke
Administrative Secretary
(Ekiti State)



Emeka Ononamadu
(Enugu)



Umar Ibrahim
(Gombe)



Prof. Francis Ezeonu
(Imo)



Malam Mahmuda Isah
(Jigawa)



Abdullahi Kaugama
(Kaduna)



Prof. Riskuwa A. Shehu
(Kano)



Jibril Ibrahim Zarewa
(Katsina)



Barr. Ahmad Bello Mahmud
(Kebbi)



Prof. James Apam
(Kogi)



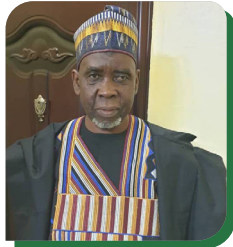
Garba Attahiru Madami
(Kwara)



Sam Olumekun mni
(Lagos)

RESIDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS

2015 - 2020



Dr. Uthman A. Ajidagba
(Nasarawa)



Prof. Samuel Egwu
(Niger)



Prof. Abdulganiy Raji
(Ogun)



Amb. (Dr.) Rufus O. Akeju
(Ondo)



Olusegun A. Agbajemini
(Osun)



Barr. Mutiu Agboke
(Oyo)



Hussaini Halilu Pai
(Plateau)



Obo Effanga
(Rivers)



Sadiq Abubakar Musa
(Sokoto)



Late Baba Abba Yusuf
(Taraba)



Ahmad Makama
(Yobe)



Malam Mahmuda Isah
(Zamfara)



Yahaya Bello
(FCT)

RESIDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS

2020 - 2025



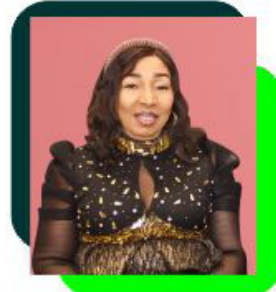
Chukwuemeka C. Ibaziako
(Abia)



Mohammed Bulama Nura
(Adamawa)



Obo O. Effanga
(Akwa Ibom)



Mrs Queen Elizabeth Agwu
(Anambra)



Umar Ibrahim
(Bauchi)



Isah Shaka Ehimeakhe
(Bayelsa)



Prof Samuel G. Egwu
(Benue)



Ahmed A. Ma'aji mni
(Borno)



Dr. Johnson Alalibo Sinikiem
(Cross River)



Etekamba Udo Umoren
(Delta)



Onyeka Pauline Ugochi
(Ebonyi)



Dr. Anugbum Onuoha
(Edo)

RESIDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS

2020 - 2025



Bunmi Omosoyindemi
(Ekiti)



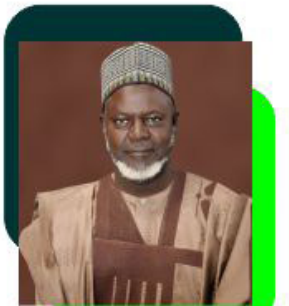
Dr. Chukwuemeka J. Chukwu
(Enugu)



Dr. Sa'ad Umar Idris
(Gombe)



Prof. Sylvia Uchenna Agu
(Imo)



Prof. Muhammad L. Bashir
(Jigawa)



Prof. Saidu Babura Ahmed
(Kaduna)



Amb. Abdu A. Zango
(Kano)



Prof. Yahaya Markafi Ibrahim
(Katsina)



Abubakar Dambo S/Pawa
(Kebbi)



Dr. Agundu Oliver Tersoo
(Kogi)



Dr. Hale Gabriel Longpet
(Kwara)



Prof. Ayobami Salami
(Lagos)

RESIDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS

2020 - 2025



Shehu Abdul Wahab
(Nasarawa)



Ahmed Yushau Garki
(Niger)



Mrs. Feyjimi Ibiyemi Saseyi
(Ogun)



Oluwatoyin Babalola
(Ondo)



Dr. Mutiu Olaleke Agboke
(Osun)



Dr. Rahmon A. Tella
(Oyo)



Abubakar M. Sadiq
(Plateau)



Yomere Gabriel Oritsemlebi
(Rivers)



Umar Yusuf Garba
(Sokoto)



Mukhtar Gajiram Umar
(Taraba)



Ibrahim Abdullahi
(Yobe)



Malam Mahmuda
(Zamfara)



Aminu K Idris
(FCT)

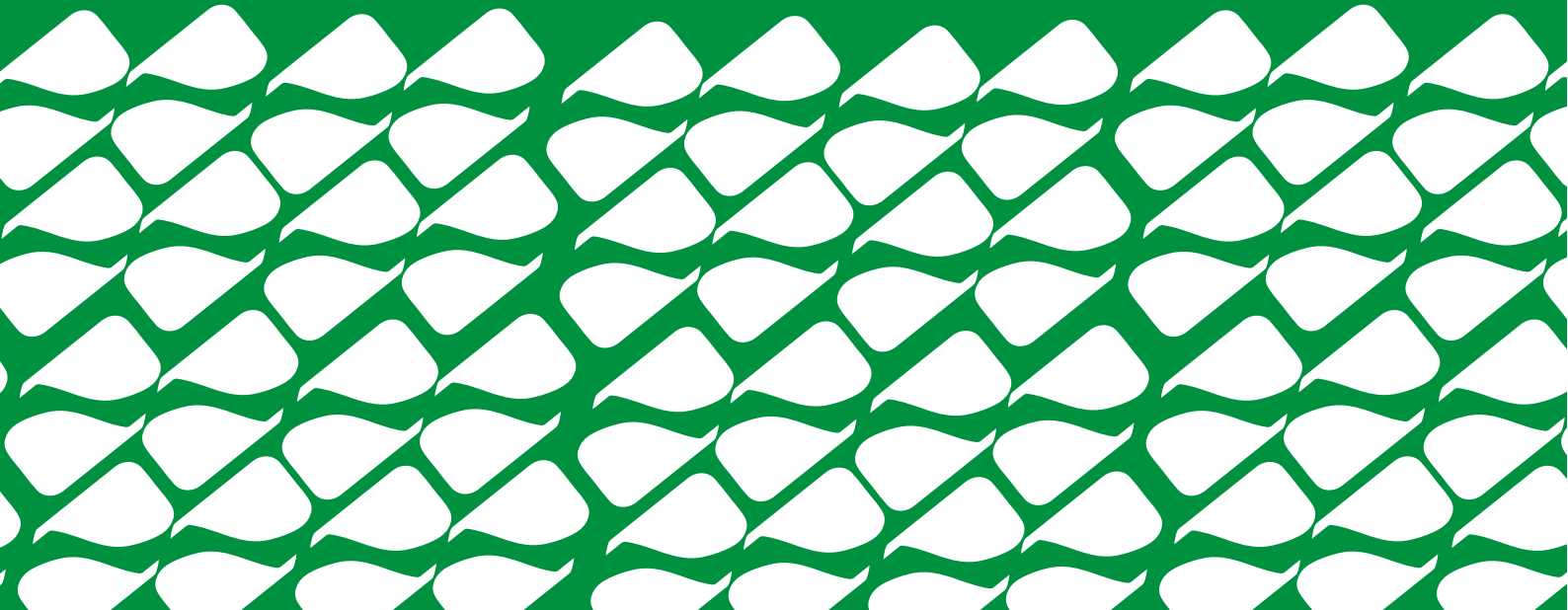


Figure 1.4: Summary of Elections Conducted from 2015-2025



02

Administrative Re- organisation



Administrative Reorganisation

Stakeholders in the political and electoral processes are in general concerned about the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections, focusing largely on those direct election-related activities implemented by the Commission during elections. While these election-related activities are of the utmost importance in ensuring credible elections, critical too are the sets of administrative processes and procedures on which the election-related activities depend. Between 2015 and 2025, the Commission underwent important changes in its structure, procedures and processes, designed to improve administrative efficiency and staff productivity. These changes had tremendous positive impact on the Commission's administrative

structure, and more significantly in the elimination of duplications of roles that was hampering efficiency and effectiveness. These changes included the restructuring and streamlining of the Commission's organisational structure; the re-organisation, numbering and renaming of the Commission's forms in a single, easily referenced compendium; the introduction of a merit criterion and gender quota in the promotion of staff; the transfer of the management of promotions to the Public Service Institute (PSIN), the development of peaceful labour relations and enhancement of staff welfare as well as securing a new office complex. All these constitute major activities and processes which helped the Commission more effectively manage its administration as well as the electoral process.

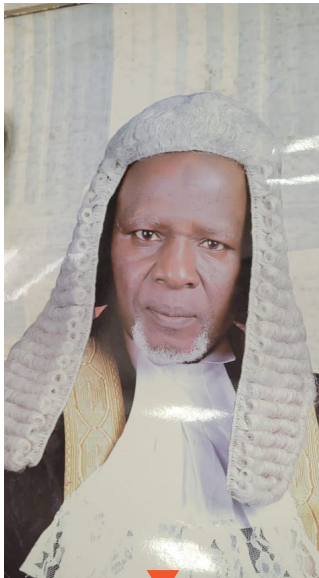


Professor Mahmood cutting the tape to unveil the INEC Creche at the Commission's Headquarters on 8th March 2024



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with Chairman, House of Representatives' Committee of Electoral Matters, Hon. Aisha Jibril Dukku in a group photograph with INEC Officials and Staff Members during the maiden INEC Award Night at NAF Centre on 6th September 2018

During the tenure of Professor Mahmood Yakubu, five staff members from the Legal Department were conferred with the Rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN)



Tanimu Muhammad Inuwa, San



Alhassan Akeje Umar, San



Abdulaziz Sani, San



Sulayman Olawale Ibrahim, San



Wendy Nwenenda Kuku, San

2.1 Administrative Reforms

2.1.1 Restructuring the Commission

To improve efficiency in election

management, the Commission's administrative organisation has been restructured several times since 1999. At its establishment in 1999, the Commission had eight departments and three units. At some point, the leadership decided to streamline the number of departments to six

departments, three directorates, and three units. After the 2003 General Election, the Commission created additional departments and a longer activity reporting chain. By July 2010, the Commission had 16 departments and an Electoral Institute that was comprised of four departments. In April 2013, the Commission expanded its administrative structure to 20 departments and an Electoral Institute. The Commission is currently made up of fourteen (14) departments and nine (9) directorates as indicated in figure 1.1 above. Since 2016, the Directorate of Procurement became a full-fledged department, while the Department of Legal Services and Clearance was split into two departments: Legal Drafting and Clearance and Litigation and Prosecution. As to be expected, more departments and directorates has led to the creation of new, as well as the merger or dissolution of old divisions, desks and units.

2.1.2 Re-organisation of Codes and Names of INEC Forms

In the discharge of its legal mandate, the Commission makes use of forms which are tools for documentation, information, and the building of institutional memory. While some of the forms are prescribed in law, others are required by the Commission for the effective implementation of its administrative processes and the conduct of elections. Before 2019, not all the forms designed and used by the Departments and Units were approved by the Commission. This resulted in a lack of synergy and coordination in the coding and usage of forms, raising validity and authenticity questions. For example, the code CF001, for the form for Affidavit in Support of Personal Particulars designed by the then Legal Department, had nothing indicating it is related to the Commission.

Consequently, the Commission's decision in 2019 to reorganize and streamline the process of the design and coding of its forms was premised on the following fundamental objectives:

- a. To standardize the numbering of forms using a uniform format, linking the forms with the originating Departments.
- b. To bring all the forms in use in the Commission together in a compendium for ease of reference and access to information.
- c. To ensure validity by subjecting all forms to the Commission's approval before they can be used.
- d. To strengthen the documentation process, thus contributing to institutional building.

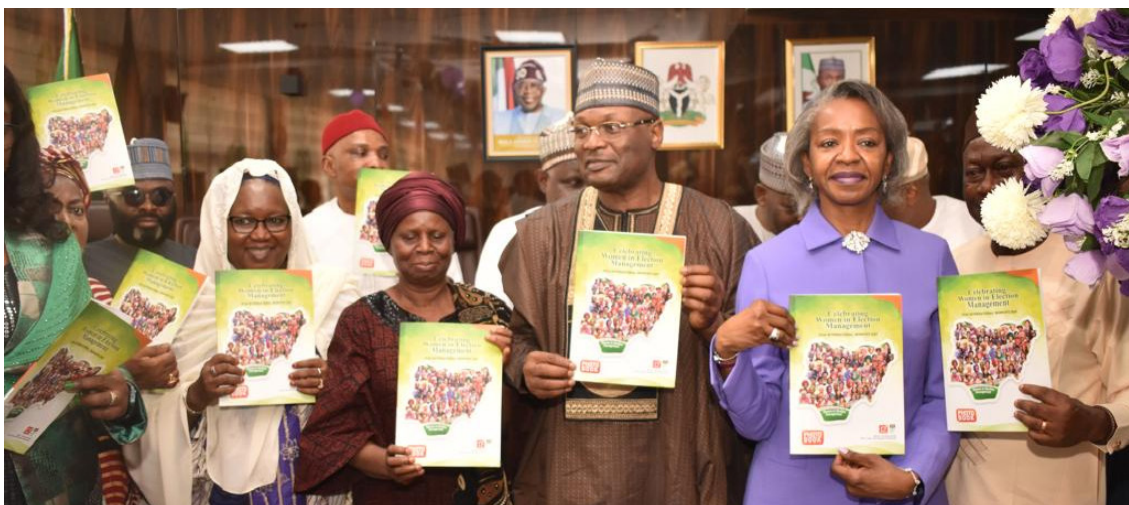
With this administrative measure, departments can design forms required for their operations, although these must be presented to the Commission for approval. The Commission Secretariat is assigned the responsibility to appropriately code all the forms approved by the Commission. Besides the publication of a compendium of the Commission's forms, another outcome of the reform is a new coding convention with the allocation of specific numbers, unique to each Department, with a uniform prefix, EC (Electoral Commission, in the codes for all the forms). Therefore, the form CF001 is now coded EC 9. Thus, the Commission has not only unified the coding system but now has a single official source of truth, the Commission Secretariat, for the validity of all its forms.

2.1.3 Introduction of Merit Criterion and Gender Quota in the Promotion of Directors

In the past, Deputy Directors from States with two or more Directors on post were barred from participating in promotion examinations, and no slot was created for gender or professional cadres. This negatively affected staff morale and productivity. However, on 8th June 2020, the Commission approved the removal of the cap on Deputy Directors who are due for promotion sitting for the promotion examination. This was done by creating an overall merit quota, distinct from State quota, for which every due candidate could compete for. In addition, the Commission introduced a quota for gender and removed professional cadres from the State quota. The overall best candidate in the promotion examinations is allotted the merit slot while the best female candidate is allotted the gender slot. This policy has widened the criteria for the selection of directors and provides a level playing field for all due Deputy Directors to participate in the promotion exercise.

2.1.4 Transfer of Promotion Examinations to the Public Service Institute (PSIN)

The written examination component of the staff promotion examination in the Commission was previously handled by several private management consultants. Different consultants administered the examination for different Grade Levels with a lead consultant as the coordinator. This approach to managing staff promotion examinations involved high costs, and challenges relating to coordination, accountability, and transparency of the process. In 2021, the Commission considered and approved the engagement of a public service management consultant to address the challenge. The Public Service Institute of Nigeria (PSIN) was consequently engaged to manage the staff promotion examinations for the Commission. So far, PSIN has conducted three written examinations for senior staff promotion exercises. The centralization of the written examination component and handing over the conduct to the PSIN has enhanced coordination, efficiency, transparency, and accountability of



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with National Commissioners acknowledging the role of women during the 2024 International Women's Day

Gender in INEC Leadership



2 out of 12 National Commissioners (16.7%)
5 out of 37 Resident Electoral Commissioners (13.51%)
11 out of 26 Directors (42.3%)

The Secretary to the Commission
12 out of 37 Administrative Secretaries (32.43%)



May Agbamuche-Mbu
National Commissioner



Professor Rhoda Gumus
National Commissioner



Rose Oriaran-Anthony
Secretary to the Commission



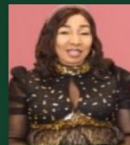
Oluwatoyin Babalola
Resident Electoral Commissioner, Ondo State



Professor Sylvia Agu
Resident Electoral Commissioner, Imo State



Pauline Ugochi Onyeka
Resident Electoral Commissioner, Ebonyi State



Dr. Queen Elizabeth Agwu
Resident Electoral Commissioner, Anambra State



Mrs. Feyijimi Ibiyemi Sasoyi
Resident Electoral Commissioner, Ogun State

*More women occupy leadership positions in INEC
Under Professor Mahmood Yakubu,*



Professor Mahmood Yakubu and the DG NYSC Brigadier General Suleiman Zakari Ka-zaure on 10th June 2016, presented a letter of employment to Daniel Oluwatobi who lost his sight as a result of a road accident while on election duty

the senior staff promotion exercise. Migration from paper-pencil to computer-based tests (CBT), which is in line with best practices in examination administration, is the next phase in the promotion examination reform process.

2.1.5 Labour Relations

Over the years, the functions of the Commission have been deemed an essential duty. However, the Commission's personnel were not excluded from forming or joining a trade union. The possibility of INEC staff forming or joining a trade union undermined the essence of performing an essential duty. This implies that the Commission's personnel can withdraw their services or embark on a strike with attendant disruption of the electoral process. Following the official classification of the functions of the Commission as an essential duty by a Ministerial Order by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in a gazette dated 14th February 2024, the Commission's personnel were excluded from forming or joining a trade union. However, to ensure that the interests of the Commission's personnel are protected, Section 11(2) of the Trade Unions Act provides for the setting up of a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) which serves as a medium for consultation between the Commission and staff. Indeed, staff elected the first JCC on the 27th of August, 2025 with Mrs. Vera Awoh Akujobi as the President. The JCC was inaugurated by the the Chairman of the Commission on the 4th of September, 2025.

Additional reforms in the Commission's staff management policy involves the development of a posting policy. Before the reform, job schedules were duplicated, and officers were not assigned specific portfolios based on

qualifications and skill sets which had attendant inefficiencies in the work process. Staff posting was undertaken without any clearly defined criteria and based on exigencies of duty. Following the Commission's posting policy of 2021, officers are now assigned portfolios and there are no longer cases of two or more directors in any given department performing the same function. Similarly, clear criteria for intra/interstate transfers and appointments/posting of officers were outlined. This has enhanced the optimization of the Commission's organisational structure.

2.1.6 Progress of Staff

The peak of any officer's career in the public service, especially at the directorate cadre, is a Permanent Secretary, and in the case of the Commission, the Secretary to the Commission. Previously, the Secretary to the Commission was appointed from the federal ministries, and staff of the Commission were rarely appointed as Resident Electoral, or National Commissioners. Following the enactment of the Electoral Act 2010, the Commission received the statutory powers to appoint its Secretary from within the Commission. Directors in the Commission were allowed to apply for the position once there was a vacancy. Applicants are required to undergo a rigorous screening and interview process by the Commission before a candidate is selected and sworn in by the Chairman of the Commission. Since 2010, the Commission has selected three Directors from within its ranks to fill the position. While two of the candidates served for one term of five years each, the current Secretary to the Commission is serving a second term of four years. Similarly, serving Directors and some retired ones have been appointed as Resident Electoral Commissioners and National

Commissioners. The appointment of this crop of Directors from within the Commission with over 30 years of cognate experience is a morale booster for officers within the service. Their experience has been brought to bear on the Commission's electoral process and management because they require little or no training with a shorter learning curve. The provision of medical assistance to staff, official vehicles to all directors as well as buses to all staff across eleven (11) routes in and around the city - including Keffi, Maraba, Nyanya, Bwari, Kubwa, Dakwa, Deidei, Gwagwalada, Lugbe, Kuje and Orozo - constituted additional layers of welfare support to staff.

2.1.7 New Headquarters Office Annex

Over the past several years, it has become clear that the current headquarters building of INEC at Plot 436, Zambezi Crescent in Abuja which came into use in 1999 is inadequate to serve the Commission

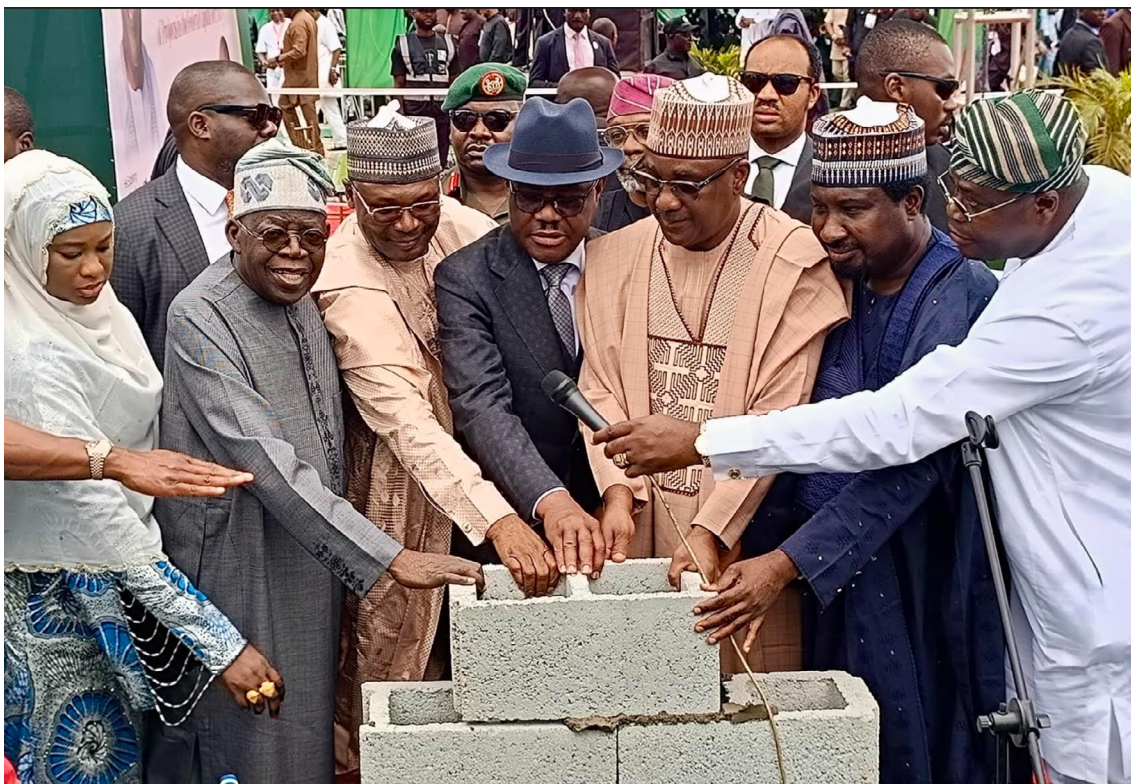
optimally. Therefore, the Commission has considered or adopted many stopgap measures in response to this challenge including renting additional accommodation on Blantyre Street, building temporary structures on open areas and converting unused spaces within the headquarters into offices and meeting rooms and attempting, albeit unsuccessfully to purchase the adjacent WAEC building. However, the Commission was eventually able to find a permanent solution to this challenge by acquiring the land opposite the headquarters to build a new annex that will house the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC), an auditorium, meeting and office rooms, an Electoral Museum, as well as parking spaces. The building under the auspices of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) had its Groundbreaking Ceremony on June 17th 2025. This is a major achievement that will bring together all Headquarters staff in one location and thus help reposition the Commission to perform better in the future.

Box 2: Administrative Reorganisation of the Commission and Its Impact

Between 2015 and 2025, the Commission underwent important changes in its structure, procedures and processes, designed to improve administrative efficiency and staff productivity. These changes had tremendous positive impact on the Commission's administrative structure, and more significantly in the elimination of duplications of roles that was hampering efficiency and effectiveness. These changes included the restructuring and streamlining of the Commission's organisational structure; the re-organisation, numbering and renaming of the Commission's forms in a single, easily referenced compendium; the introduction of a merit criterion and gender quota in the promotion of staff; the transfer of the management of promotions to the Public Service Institute (PSIN); the development of peaceful labour relations and enhancement of staff welfare; as well as securing a new office complex. All these constitute major activities and processes which helped the Commission more effectively manage its administration as well as the electoral process.



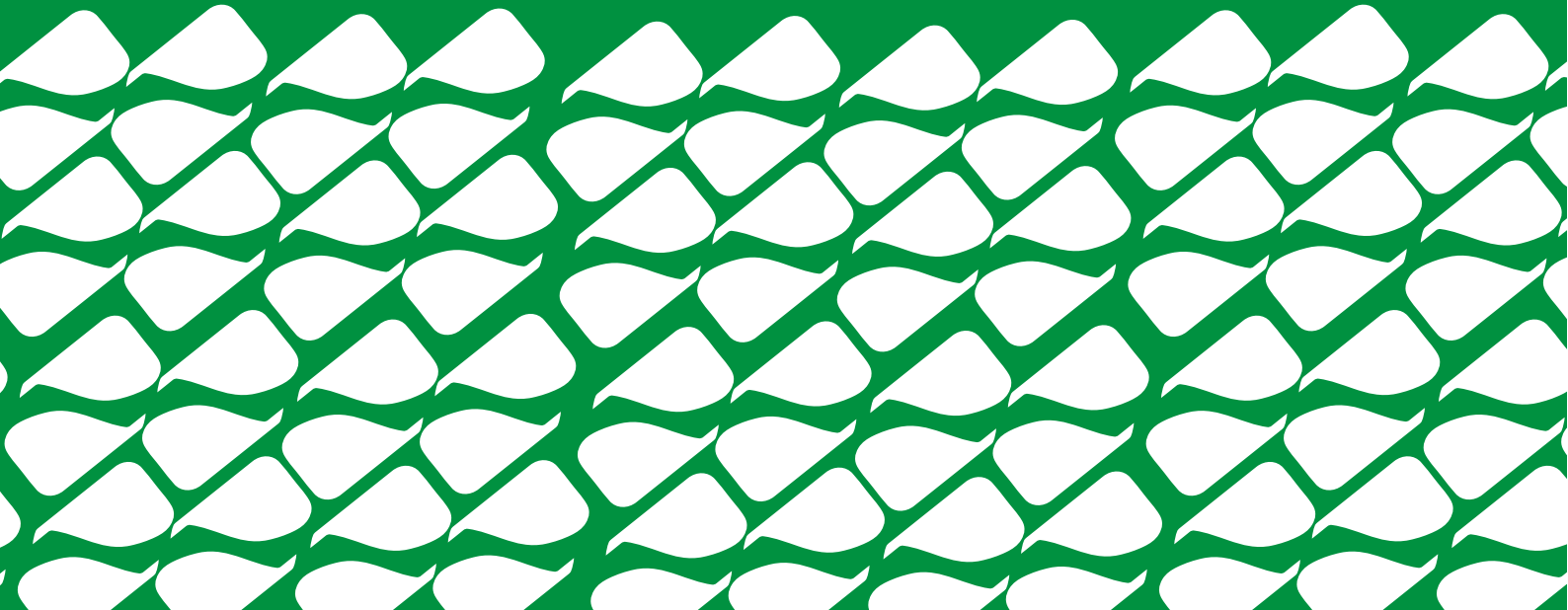
3D Drawing of the new INEC Headquarters building on Zambezi Crescent, Maitama, Abuja



Ground-breaking Ceremony of the new INEC Office Annex Complex on the 17th of June 2025

03

Legal Reforms, Litigation and the Electoral Process



Legal Reforms, Litigation and the Electoral Process

The electoral process is governed by law. The fulcrum anchoring the conduct of elections consisting of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), the Electoral Act 2022, Regulations, Guidelines, and Manuals of the Commission and Case laws derived from decisions of the Courts. In the period from 2015 to 2025, the Commission was actively involved in the review of the extant Electoral Legal Framework (ELF), making concrete recommendations and proposals with significant inputs into the deliberations of the Constitutional Review Committee of the National Assembly as well as the Senate and House Committees on INEC and Electoral Matters. This is with the aim of enhancing the Commission's ability to deliver on its mandate, strengthen its credibility and, therefore, the transparency of the elections.

3.1 Reform of the Legal Framework Since 2015

The reform of the electoral legal framework is one of the most significant activities by the Commission. The Commission's input was based on the lessons learnt and experiences of its officials in the conduct of elections, recommendations from the Commission's internal post-election reviews, review of the recommendations from both international and domestic election observation missions, as well as the outcome of litigations in the form of case laws. While some of the

recommendations are within the powers of the Commission to address by administrative action, others require legislative action by the National Assembly through amendment of the electoral legal framework and action by other electoral stakeholders.

3.1.1 Role of the Commission in the Enactment of the Electoral Act 2022

The repeal of the Electoral Act 2010 and enactment of the Electoral Act 2022 involved various activities. A key activity was the Commission's retreat with the National Assembly in Lagos in October 2021 with the objective to analyse the existing legal framework in relation to real-field situations, study the National Assembly amendment Bill on the Electoral Act 2010 and to articulate the position of the Commission on key issues in the electoral legal framework to strengthen the transparency and credibility of the electoral process.

3.1.2 Comprehensive Review and Production of the Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections 2022

The Commission's Regulations and Guidelines derive from and must be in consonance with the Constitution and Electoral Act. Consequently, with the enactment of a new Electoral Act in 2022, the Commission undertook a comprehensive review of the Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections in 2022 that has 106 main clauses and a Schedule dealing with the conduct of elections in health emergencies. The review not only reflected the changes that were introduced in the new Electoral Act, but it also incorporated earlier regulations and guidelines issued between 2019 and 2022 that bore

directly on the conduct of elections. It also clarified the 'margin of lead principle,' which specified the conditions under which an election may be declared inconclusive.

Other improvements brought into the Regulations and Guidelines include: a) Establishment of fixed dates for the conduct of elections; b) Introduction of a schedule on the conduct of elections in health emergencies; c) Regulations on the use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS); d) Introduction of the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV); e) Introduction of the Electoral Operations copy of result sheets; and f) Introduction of the EC40G PU; and g) Prohibition of the use of telephones in the vicinities of polling booths and by Collation Officers.

3.2 Major Improvements in the Electoral Legal Framework Since 2015

The Independent National Electoral Commission is guided by the electoral legal framework in carrying out its mandate which include registration and maintenance of the Register of Voters, registration and monitoring of political parties, establishing procedure at election, and all other activities incidental to the electoral process. In the period between 2015 and 2025, there were several amendments to the Constitution and the Electoral Act that ushered in important innovations to improve the process.

3.2.1 Improvements in the Constitution

- a) **Power of Independent National Electoral Commission to De-register Political Parties (Section 225A)**

After the conduct of the 2015 General Elections, it was proposed that all political parties that have not met the conditions for registration and/or did not win any executive or legislative seat should be de-registered. This proposal was accepted in 2017 and a new Section 225A was inserted in the Constitution to empower the Commission to de-register such parties. This resulted in the deregistration of 74 political parties on 6th February 2020 by the Commission.

- b) **Minimum Age for Contesting Elective Positions (Sections 65, 106, and 135)**

These sections reviewed the age requirement for contesting elective offices downwards, allowing younger persons (from age 25) to run for elective offices.

- c) **Fixing Dates of Elections (Sections 76 & 132)**

Elections to each House of the National Assembly shall be held on a date to be appointed by the Independent National Electoral Commission in accordance with the Electoral Act. This amendment puts to rest the question of whether the National Assembly can fix a date for an election.

- d) **Funding of INEC (Section 84: 8)**

The recurrent expenditure of the Independent National Electoral Commission, in addition to salaries and allowances of the Chairman and members, shall be charged upon the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation.

e) **Recall Procedure (Sections 76 & 110)**

There shall be presented to the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission a petition on that behalf signed by more than one-half of the persons registered to vote in that member's constituency alleging the loss of confidence in that member and which signatures are duly verified by the Independent National Electoral Commission".

f) **Where an Incumbent Wins a Re-Run Election (Sections 135: 2a & 180: 2a)**

In the determination of the four-year term, where a re-run election has taken place and the person earlier sworn in wins the re-run election, the time spent in the office before the date the election was annulled, shall be considered.

g) **Power of the Commission to Make Rules and Regulations (Section 160: 1)**

Subject to subsection (2) of this section, any of the bodies may, with the approval of the President, by rules or otherwise, regulate its own procedure or confer powers and impose duties on any officer or authority for the purpose of discharging its functions, provided that in the case of the Independent National Electoral Commission, its powers to make its own rules or otherwise regulate its own procedure shall not be subject to approval or control of the President

h) **Exclusive Power of the Federal High Court (FHC) to Determine Tenure of Office (Sections 251: 4 & 272: 3)**

S251(4.) holds that the FHC shall have and exercise jurisdiction to determine any question as to whether the term of office or a seat of a member of the Senate or House of Representatives has ceased, or his seat has become vacant

S272(3) holds that subject to the provisions of Section 251 and other provisions of this Constitution, the FHC shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine the question as to whether the term of office of a member of the House of Assembly of a State, a Governor or Deputy Governor has ceased or become vacant

i) **Time for Presentation and Determination of Election Petitions (Section 285: 5-8)**

Sub-section (5) holds that an election petition shall be filed within 21 days after the date of the declaration of the result of an election

Sub-section (6) orders that an election tribunal shall deliver its judgment in writing within 180 days from the date of filing of the petition; sub-section (7) holds that an appeal from a decision of an election tribunal or Court of Appeal in an election matter shall be heard and disposed of within 60 days from the date of the delivery of judgment of the tribunal or Court of Appeal; while sub-section (8) states that the court, in all final appeals from an election tribunal or court may

adopt the practice of first giving its decision and reserving the reasons therefore to a later date.

j) Time for Presentation and Determination of Pre-Election Matters - Section 285(9-14)

Subsection (9), affirms that notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Constitution, every pre-election matter shall be filed not later than 14 days from the date of the occurrence of the event, decision, or action complained of in the suit, Subsection (10) orders that a Court in every pre-election matter shall deliver its judgment in writing within 180 days from the date of filing of the suit, while Subsection (11) holds that an appeal from a decision in a pre-election matter shall be filed within 14 days from the date of delivery of the judgment appealed against. Subsection (12) orders that an appeal from a decision of a Court in a pre-election matter shall be heard and disposed of within 60 days from the date of filing of the appeal and subsection (13) orders that an election tribunal or court shall not declare any person a winner at an election in which such a person has not fully participated in all stages of the election. Subsection 13(a) clarifies that for the purpose of this section, where there is a natural disaster, war or any State or national emergency or any other “*force majeure*” that prevents the filing of a pre-election matter, election petition, sitting of a court over a pre-election matter or the sitting of an election petition tribunal or appellate court, the period of the natural disaster, war, State or national emergency or any other “*force majeure*” shall not be reckoned

with in the computation of time under subsections (5), (6), (7), (9), (10), (11) and (12) of this section. Finally, subsection (14) clarifies ‘pre-election matter’ by noting that ‘for the purpose of this section, “pre-election matter” means any suit by – (a) an aspirant who complains that any of the provisions of the Electoral Act or any Act of the National Assembly regulating the conduct of primaries of political parties and the provisions of the guidelines of a political party for the conduct of party primaries has not been complied with by a political party in respect of the selection or nomination of candidates for an election; (b) an aspirant challenging the actions, decisions, or activities of the Independent National Electoral Commission in respect of his participation in an election or who complains that the provisions of the Electoral Act or any Act of the National Assembly regulating elections in Nigeria have not been complied with by the Independent National Electoral Commission in respect of the selection or nomination of candidates and participation in an election; and (c) a political party challenging the actions, decisions, or activities of the Independent National Electoral Commission disqualifying its candidate from participating in an election or a complaint that the provisions of the Electoral Act or any other applicable law have not been complied with by the Independent National Electoral Commission in respect of the nomination of candidates of political parties for an election, timetable for an election, registration of voters and other activities of the Commission in respect of preparations for an election

Box 3: Timespan for the Presentation and Determination of Pre-Election Matters

Subsection (9), affirms that notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this Constitution, every pre-election matter shall be filed not later than 14 days from the date of the occurrence of the event, decision, or action complained of in the suit, Subsection (10) orders that a Court in every pre-election matter shall deliver its judgment in writing within 180 days from the date of filing of the suit, while Subsection (11) holds that an appeal from a decision in a pre-election matter shall be filed within 14 days from the date of delivery of the judgment appealed against while subsection (12) orders that an appeal from a decision of a Court in a pre-election matter shall be heard and disposed of within 60 days from the date of filing of the appeal.

3.2.2 Improvements in the Electoral Act

Improvements to the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) included the following: -

- a) **Time for the Release of Election Funds (S3:3):** The election funds due to the Commission for any general election are to be released to the Commission not later than one year before the next general election.
 - b) **Register of Voters to include Disability Status (S9: 1B):** The Commission shall compile, maintain, and update, on a continuous basis, a National Register of Voters (in this Act referred to as “the Register of Voters” which shall include the names of all persons — with disability status disaggregated by type of disability.
 - c) **Storage of Register of Voters (S9:2):** The Commission shall keep the Register of Voters in its National Headquarters and other locations as the Commission may determine:
- Provided that the Commission shall keep the Register of Voters in (a) the electronic format in its central database; and (b) manual, printed, paper-based record, or hard copy format.
- d) **IDP Voting - S24(1):** In the event of an emergency affecting an election, the Commission shall, as far as practicable, ensure that persons displaced as a result of the emergency are not disenfranchised.
 - e) **Notice of Elections (S28:1):** The Commission shall, not later than 360 days before the day appointed for holding of an election under this Act, publish a notice in each State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory — (a) stating the date of the election; and (b) appointing the place at which nomination papers are to be delivered.
 - f) **Candidates in a Bye-Election (S28:4):** There shall not be substitution of candidates in a by-election except where a candidate of a political party in a

by-election dies, the party shall submit to the Commission the name of its substitute candidate within seven days of the death of the candidate in the Form prescribed by the Commission.

g) Only Candidates at a Primary Election can Challenge the Nomination of a Candidate at an Election (S29: 5-6):

Any aspirant who participated in the primaries of his political party who has reasonable grounds to believe that any information given by his political party's candidate in the affidavit or any document submitted by that candidate in relation to his constitutional requirements to contest the election is false may file a suit at the Federal High Court against that candidate seeking a declaration that the information contained in the affidavit is false (S5). Where the Court determines that any of the information contained in the affidavit is false only as it relates to constitutional requirements of eligibility, the Court shall issue an order disqualifying the candidate and the sponsoring political party and then declare the candidate with the second highest number of valid votes and who satisfies the constitutional requirements as the winner of the election (S6).

h) Publication of List of Candidates (S32:1-2):

The Commission shall at least 150 days before the day of an election publish by displaying or causing to be displayed... a statement of the full names of all candidates standing nominated. Any registered political party that observes that the name of its candidate is missing from the

list published in accordance with the subsection shall notify the Commission in writing, signed by its National Chairman and Secretary, supported by an affidavit not later than 90 days to the election.

i) Death of a Candidate before Declaration (S34: 3):

If after the commencement of a poll and before the announcement of the result and declaration of a winner, a candidate dies, the Commission shall, being satisfied of the fact of the death, suspend the election for a period not more than 21 days; and in the case of election into a Legislative House, the election shall start afresh and the political party whose candidate dies may, if it intends to continue to participate in the election, conduct a fresh primary within 14 days of the death of its candidate and submit the name of a new candidate to the Commission to replace the dead candidate: Provided that in the case of presidential or gubernatorial or FCT Area Council election, the running mate shall continue with the election and nominate a new running mate.

j) Power of the Commission to Determine Mode of Elections (S41:1):

The Commission shall provide suitable boxes, electronic voting machines, or any other voting device for the conduct of elections.

k) Inspection of Election Material by Political Parties (S42:3-5):

The Commission shall, not later than 20 days before an election, invite in writing, a political party that nominated a candidate in the election to inspect its

identity appearing on samples of relevant electoral materials proposed for the election and the political party may state in writing within two days of being so invited by the Commission that it approves or disapproves of its identity as it appears on the samples (S3). Subsection (4) went further to order that unless the political party disapproves of its identity under subsection (3) in writing, it shall not complain of unlawful exclusion in the election under this Act in relation to its identity appearing on electoral materials used for the election. Subsection (5) holds that a political party that fails to comply with an invitation by the Commission under subsection (3) shall be deemed to have approved its identity on samples of electoral materials proposed to be used for an election.

- l) **Accreditation/Authentication of Voters (S47:2 & 3m):** This is a very critical provision in the Act, and holds that to vote, the presiding officer shall use a smart card reader or any other technological device that may be prescribed by the Commission for the accreditation of voters, to verify, confirm, or authenticate the particulars of the intending voter in the manner prescribed by the Commission (2), while (3m) further directs that 'where a smart card reader or any other technological device deployed for accreditation of voters fails to function in any unit and a fresh card reader or technological device is not deployed, the election in that unit shall be cancelled and another election shall be scheduled within 24 hours if the Commission is satisfied that the result of the

election in that polling unit will substantially affect the final result of the whole election and declaration of a winner in the constituency concerned.

- m) **Power of the Commission to Determine the Mode of Voting and Transmission of Election Result (S50:2n):** Voting at an election and transmission of results under this Act shall be in accordance with the procedure determined by the Commission. Overvoting. Subsection S51(2n) states that where the number of votes cast at an election in any polling unit exceeds the number of accredited voters in the polling unit, the presiding officer shall cancel the result of the election in that 'provided that the Commission shall have the power within seven days to review the declaration and return where the Commission determines that the said declaration and return was not made voluntarily or was made contrary to the provisions of the law, regulations and guidelines, and manual for election (S65).
- n) **The Register of Members of Political Parties (S77:2 & 3):** Every registered political party shall maintain a register of its members in both hard and soft copy (2) and 'each political party shall make such register available to the Commission not later than 30 days before the date fixed for the party primaries, congresses or convention (3).
- o) **Register of Party Symbols - S79: 1, 2 & 6):** The Commission shall keep a register of symbols and names for use at elections (1) and register the symbol and name of a political party if it is satisfied

- that ‘no political association uses the name, symbol, logo or acronym of the deregistered political party within five years’ of deregistration.
- p) **Merger by Political Parties (S81):** Any two or more registered political parties may merge on approval by the Commission following a formal request presented to the Commission by the political party for that purpose. Furthermore, ‘political parties intending to merge shall each give to the Commission nine months’ notice of their intention to do so before a general election.
 - q) **Notice by Political Parties (S82:5):** Failure of a political party to notify the Commission as stated in subsection (1) shall render the convention, congress, conference, or meeting invalid.
 - r) **Campaign in Public (S94: 1):** For the purpose of this Act, the period of campaigning in public by every political party shall commence 150 days before polling day and end 24 hours before that day.
 - s) **Tenure for Area Council (S111 & 112):** This provides for the procedure for the removal of the Chairman of an Area Council, the tenure, and how to fill a vacancy when it occurs.
 - t) **Nullification of Election (S36:2)** Where an Election Tribunal or Court nullifies an election on the ground that the person who obtained the highest votes at the election was not qualified to contest the election, the Election Tribunal or Court shall declare the person with the second highest number of valid votes cast at the election who satisfies the requirements of the Constitution and this Act as duly elected.

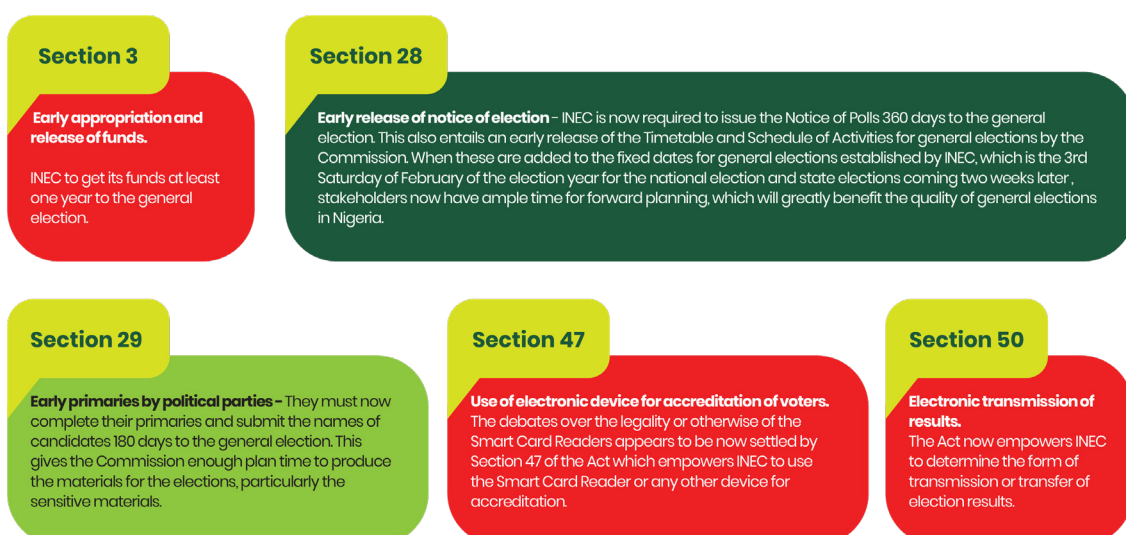


Figure 3.1: improvement of the Electoral Legal Framework

Section 51

Redefinition of overvoting – Unlike the 2010 Electoral Act which defined overvoting in terms of registered voters, the new Act defines it in terms of accredited voters. This will greatly reduce the challenge encountered by the Commission whereby elections are easily declared inconclusive because of tying it to registered voters, even where turnout is low.

Section 54

Ensuring inclusive elections.
INEC is now mandated to ensure that persons with disabilities and other vulnerabilities are properly assisted to participate in the process.

Section 65

Power of the Commission to review results. The law now empowers the Commission to review the result of elections to ensure that declarations are made voluntarily and that results emerge in accordance with the law, regulations, guidelines and manuals for elections.

Section 84

Type of Primaries
there are now three types of primaries in the law namely, Direct, Indirect and Consensus, giving political parties a wider range of options for selecting their candidates.

Section 88

Election finance – various new limits have been set for amounts of money that political parties and candidates can spend in elections, as well as the amounts that can be donated to them.

3.3 Outlook of Electoral Litigation

Litigations constitute very important elements in the management of the electoral process. They are also very costly and time consuming, weighing heavily on the Commission's resources. In a situation where the Commission is joined in as respondent in every single court case on electoral and political party matters, it distracts it from focusing on the core mandate. Issues in the litigations involving the Commission range from intraparty crises, candidate nomination processes, political parties' registration, deregistration, leadership/factional crises, timelines of pre-election matters, election outcomes, *ex parte* orders, as well as the status of INEC Regulations, Guidelines and Manuals.

Some of the main issues that have dominated electoral litigation involving the Commission between 2015 and 2025 include:

a) Intraparty Crises

Membership, leadership, and factional crisis within political parties are generally the internal affairs of the

party and are non-justiciable. Several decisions of the Supreme Court established that issues of membership and leadership of political parties are non-justiciable and not within the jurisdiction of courts. In the case of **Manasseh v. Goshwe (2024 6 NWLR pt. 1934, page 219-220 R.12)**, the Supreme Court held thus: "Matters about a political party's congress to elect officers at any level of its executive committees, the constitution of such executive committees, and matters related to the administration of the party are its internal affairs. The only issue open to litigation as a pre-election action by virtue of section 84 of the Electoral Act 2022 is dispute on a party primary election, conventions and congresses."

b) Nomination of Candidates

Judicial authorities have established that the nomination of candidates by political parties are the internal affairs of political parties, and that a Court of law has no jurisdiction to adjudicate and determine which candidate a political party should nominate or sponsor. This principle was established in the case of **LADO V. CPC (2011 LPELR-8254 (SC))**. However, an exception to this principle was enunciated by the Supreme Court

in *Manasseh v. Goshwe* (supra (2024 PT 1934), where it held in interpreting Section 84 (14) of the Electoral Act 2022), that: an aspirant can challenge the nomination of a candidate at the Federal High Court if he complains of non-compliance with the Electoral Act and party guidelines during the conduct of primary elections.

c) **Timeline for Pre-Election Matters**

Timelines for pre-election matters are provided under section 285 of the 1999 Constitution. Supreme Court held in **Nnaji v. Ndubuisi (2024 5 NWLR PT1930)** that non-compliance with the timelines in the election and pre-election matters renders any step taken or process filed after the expiration of time, invalid. The timelines are as follows:

- pre-election matters are filed not later than 14 days from the date of the occurrence of the event complained of. S.285 (9 of 1999 Constitution as amended).
- The trial court has 180 days to deliver its judgment in pre-election matters from the date of filing of the Suit, S. 285 (10 of 1999 Constitution as amended).
- Appeals in pre-election matters are filed within 14 days from the date of delivery of the judgment appealed, (S. 285 (11) of the Constitution).
- Determination of appeals in pre-election matters is within 60 days from the date of filing of the Appeal, (S.285 (12) of the 1999 Constitution as amended).

d) **Election Outcomes**

Election outcomes are subject to post-election litigation at Election Petition

tribunals. They can be challenged on the following grounds as provided for under Section 134 (1) of the Electoral Act, 2022:

- A person whose election is questioned was at the time of the election, not qualified to contest the election.
- The Election was invalid by reason of corrupt practices or non-compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act.
- The Respondent (winner was not duly elected by the majority of lawful votes cast at the election.
- Two persons are entitled to challenge the outcomes of an election at the election petition tribunal as provided for under Section 133 (1) of the Electoral Act, 2022. They are: (i) a candidate in an election and (ii) a political party that participated in the election.

e) **Ex Parte Orders**

Ex Parte orders are judgements that are issued by a court without hearing the other side and they usually have a life span of about 14 days. By virtue of Section 287 (3) of the 1999 Constitution, (as amended) all authorities and persons including the Independent National Electoral Commission, shall observe and ensure compliance with Orders/Judgements of the Court, especially Orders made directly at the Commission. The Supreme Court equally held in the case of **Uwazuruike & Ors v. AG Federation (2013 LPELR-20392)** that “The well laid down position of the law is that anyone who is served with or becomes aware of a valid Order of Court should ensure that he obeys it in full. Failure to obey a valid Court Order may amount to a wilful breach of it which could lead to a contempt proceeding with serious

consequences". The binding nature of *ex-parte* orders can significantly impact electoral processes. However, by virtue of Section 84(15) of the Electoral Act, 2022, no interim or interlocutory order, made by any court shall affect the date or time of the holding of an election. This implies that while *ex parte* orders may be issued, they should not interfere with the scheduled dates or procedural duties of INEC in conducting elections. The rationale behind this provision is to maintain the integrity and timeliness of the electoral process, which could be jeopardized by frivolous court interventions, especially those that have not been fully argued by all interested parties. Therefore, while *ex parte* orders are legally binding, their practical impact on INEC's operations is constrained by statutory provisions designed to uphold the smooth conduct of elections.

f) Status of INEC Regulations, Guidelines and Manuals

These are subsidiary legislations made by the Commission pursuant to its powers under section 148 of the Electoral Act, 2022. They are meant for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of the Electoral Act. They have the force of law as established in

the case of **NDP v. INEC (2013 6 NWLR pt. 1350)**. Where INEC regulations, guidelines, and manuals conflict with the Electoral Act or Constitution, the Electoral Act or the Constitution as the case may be, prevails. See **INEC v. NNPP (2023 LPELR – 6015 S.C)**

g) Registration of Political Parties

Section 75(1) gives the Commission the power to register political parties upon satisfying the requirements stipulated under the 1999 Constitution (as amended). However, where the Commission decides not to register an association as a political party, such a decision may be challenged at the Federal High Court within 14 days.

h) Deregistration of Political Parties

The commission is empowered to deregister a political party under section 225A (a) (b) and (c) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). This power was affirmed by the Supreme Court in the cases of **INEC v. ADC and NUP v. INEC** to the effect that the Commission has power to deregister any political party that does not satisfy the requirements of Section 225 A of the 1999 Constitution as amended.



Figure 3.2: Deregistration of Political Parties

There were 92 political parties in Nigeria in February 2019. One political party, Boot Party was registered by Court order prior to the election, but did not participate in the 2019 General Election

On 6th February 2021, INEC in exercise of its powers under Section 225A of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), de-registered 74 political parties, reducing the number of political parties in Nigeria to 18. Later in July 2019, the Youth Party was restored by Court Order bringing the number of political parties in Nigeria to 19



3.4 Landmark Cases in Electoral Process

Several landmark cases have significantly shaped the administration, functions, and powers of the Independent National Electoral Commission. These cases addressed various aspects of electoral processes, from candidate selection to the powers of INEC to conduct elections and issue regulations, guidelines and manuals. These range from cases that had far-reaching impact on election administration and the powers and functions of INEC e.g. **INEC v. Deregistered Political Parties**, to that between **INEC v. SDP**, on the disqualification of underage Deputy Governorship candidates, and to that between **APC v. INEC** on the nomination of candidates in Zamfara State for the 2019 General Election, etc. The following is a selection of such landmark cases: -

a. NUP v. INEC (2021 LPELR-58407(SC (PP. 25 Paras. A)

This case addressed the position of the law on the powers of the

Independent National Electoral Commission to deregister a political party. The powers of INEC to deregister political parties in Nigeria are rooted in Section 225A (a) (b and (c) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Fourth Alteration No.9 Act 2017). Where INEC exercised its power in strict compliance with the said provisions, then such an exercise is valid, and even the Court would lack the vires to set aside and nullify the valid exercise of that power by INEC.¹

b. APP V. INEC (2021 LPELR-53529) (CA (PP. 10-17 Paras. F)

This appeal case stressed that the guidelines issued by INEC having been made pursuant to Section 153 of the Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended) has a force of law and binding on parties. Therefore, the party must comply with the timetable and schedule of activities for the election to substitute its candidate, especially when it was shown that the timetable

¹See also National Unity Party V. INEC (2020 LPELR-51135 (CA); INEC V. Youth Party (2021 LPELR - 54802 (CA and Better Nigeria Progressive Party v. A-G of the Federation & ANOR (2022).

follows the provisions of the Electoral Act. However, the Supreme Court in **INEC v. NNPP (2023 LPELR-60154 (SC))** held that INEC's Guidelines on submissions of names of candidates sponsored in an election by political parties cannot override the provisions of the Electoral Act and the 1999 Constitution (as amended). It is the right to substitute its withdrawn candidates, especially when it is done not later than 90 days to the election. INEC cannot rely on its own schedule and timetable to refuse a request for substitution of candidate by a political party properly brought under the Electoral Act.

c. ***Buhari v. PDP & Ors (2022 LPELR-58940) (CA PP. 47-48, Paras. B-D)***

This case discussed the duty of INEC to ensure that a valid candidate emerges from party primary elections, highlighting its oversight role in candidate selection processes.

d. ***APC v. Marafa (2020 6 NWRL PT1721)***

The Supreme Court in this case affirmed that where a political party failed to comply with the law in the conduct of congresses and primary elections, the Commission is empowered to reject nominations submitted by the party. In that case, INEC issued the timetable and schedule of activities for the 2019 General Election among which was a directive to political parties to conduct their primaries and submit list of candidates between 18 August 2018 and 7 October 2018. The All Progressives Congress

(APC) failed to comply with the mandatory provisions of the Electoral Act, 2010 in the nomination of its candidates in Zamfara State. The list of candidates was presented to the National Headquarters of the Party by the State Chapter of the Party, which was rejected by the National Headquarters. The list was then presented to INEC, but the Commission refused to accept same. The matter was litigated up to the Supreme Court. In a unanimous decision held by the five-man panel that sat on the appeal, it was held that the primaries conducted by the party for all the electoral constituencies in the State violated the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), the Electoral Act, and the party's constitution. It was further held that all the votes cast for the APC in the state during the 2019 General Election amounted to "wasted votes" with an order that the candidates from other the political parties with majority votes and required spread should be declared the winners. Consequently, INEC pronounced the PDP candidates as winners in all the electoral constituencies in the state.

e. ***Nyesom v. Peterside & Ors (2016 LPELR-40036) (SC; Okereke v. Umahi & Ors (2016 LPELR-40035 (SC))***

The need for INEC to bring the usage of the Smart Card Reader (SCR) within the ambit of the Electoral Act was discussed in this case. The Supreme Court commended INEC for the innovation of the Smart Card Reader to bolster the transparency and accuracy of the accreditation process and

to maintain the democratic norm of “one man one vote” by preventing multiple-voting. However, the Court believed INEC Guidelines and Manuals cannot be elevated above the provisions of the Electoral Act to eliminate manual accreditation of voters. This will remain so until INEC takes steps to have the necessary amendments made to bring the usage of the Card Reader or any electronic device for voter accreditation within the ambit of the substantive Electoral Act.

f. Iheanacho & Anor v. INEC & Anor (2019 LPELR-48820 (CA Pp. 44-57))

The Court of Appeal addressed INEC’s duty to remain independent in the conduct of elections and clarified the conditions under which an election can be declared inconclusive.

g. Aladum v. Ogbu & Ors (2023)

This case clarified the powers of INEC in relation to political parties, emphasizing INEC’s regulatory authority over party activities to ensure compliance with democratic principles. These cases collectively underscore the broad and critical powers of INEC in ensuring the integrity and effectiveness of electoral processes in Nigeria.

h. YPP vs INEC

At the close of nominations for the 2019 Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi Off-Cycle Governorship Elections, 13 political parties fielded underaged Governorship / Deputy Governorship candidates for the elections contrary to Section 177 (1b) (Governorship) and Section 187 (2) (Deputy-Governorship) candidates as provided for by the 1999 Constitution (as amended). The Commission’s decision to decline to include the 13 candidates who did not meet the constitutional requirements for contesting in the elections was challenged in court by YPP, drawing on the provisions of Section 30 (1) of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) which orders INEC not to reject any candidate submitted by a political party ‘for any reason whatsoever.’ In a landmark judgement in **YPP vs. INEC**, the Federal High Court under Justice Abang affirmed and upheld the Commission’s position, arguing that the Electoral Act cannot override the Constitution, and that it was the Constitution disqualified the party’s candidate; the Commission merely informed the party of the disqualification of its candidate by the Constitution.

3.5 Electoral Alternative Dispute Resolution (EADR)

The ADR Division of the Commission intervenes in resolving electoral disputes; leadership and factional crises in political parties, as well as disputes arising from the conduct of party primaries, and the conduct of elections. Some contractual disputes involving the Commission were also resolved through ADR. The following are only two of several cases in which the Commission intervened through the ADR Division.

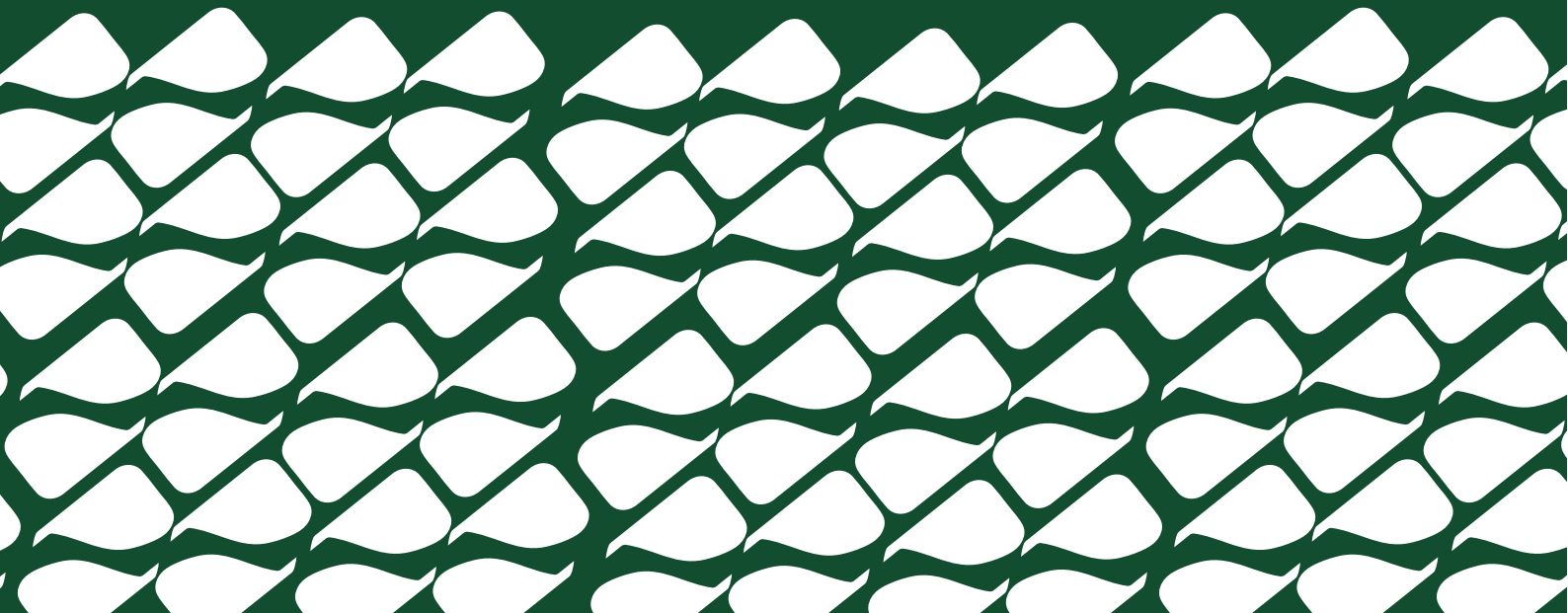
- a. **NLC v. Labour Party** - The President and members of NLC believe that the Labour Party is an offshoot of NLC while the Chairman of the Labour Party contends that the Party is an independent, autonomous entity separate from NLC. This dispute was resolved through ADR.
- b. **African Democratic Congress (ADC)** - The former Chairman of the Party being the founder of the party wanted to remain in that position against the Party's Constitution, while other party leaders contended that the party's Constitution should be strictly adhered to. The matter was resolved through ADR.

Box 4: Landmark Judgements and their Impact on the Electoral Process

Several landmark cases have significantly shaped the administration, functions, and powers of the Independent National Electoral Commission. These cases addressed various aspects of electoral processes, from candidate selection to the powers of INEC to conduct elections and issue regulations, guidelines and manuals. These range from cases that had far-reaching impact on election administration and the powers and functions of INEC e.g. INEC v. Deregistered Political Parties, to that between INEC v. SDP, on the disqualification of underage Deputy Governorship candidates, and to that between APC v. INEC on the nomination of candidates in Zamfara State for the 2019 General Election, etc.

04

Knowledge Production, Peer Learning and Elections



Knowledge Production, Peer Learning and Elections

One of the most significant and dominant features of election management in the last 10 years is the systematic effort of the Commission to generate new knowledge about elections and plough back this knowledge into the planning and conduct of subsequent elections and the management of the entire electoral process. This effort was driven by the continuous effort to periodically review and audit all electoral activities, especially the conduct of elections. Such process reviews were held in-house with staff directly involved in the conduct of elections during debriefing sessions, and with stakeholders such as political parties, civil society organisations, the media and security personnel. Many of the innovations introduced by the Commission since 2011 resulted from such intense process and audit reviews.

This lessons-learnt-cum-knowledge production process became more intensified since the 5th of December 2015 Bayelsa Governorship election when the Commission first introduced the simultaneous accreditation and voting mode in contrast to the separate accreditation and voting that had been in practice since 2011. That shift in the voting procedure arose in response to observations by staff and other stakeholders in the electoral process that drew the Commission's attention to the cumbersome nature of the separate accreditation and voting procedure that was discouraging some voters from coming back to the polling units to vote after accreditation. Since then, election review and audit

processes have been key in assisting the Commission take major policy decisions and introduce innovations in the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process. Training and capacity building programmes also serve as the basis not only for imparting new knowledge, but also as platforms for lesson-learning.

4.1 Training and Capacity Building Programmes

In June 2005, the Commission established the Electoral Institute as part of its efforts to develop the capacity of its staff and to professionalize the administration of elections in Nigeria. The institute offers diploma and certificate courses in election administration. These training programmes have contributed to the development of a pool of election administration professionals across the country. The following is a list of the activities, training programmes, workshops, and seminars for staff and Commissioners, including international observation missions and capacity-building training.

1. **Election Day Training:** Regular conduct of training for all categories of election officials for the smooth conduct of free, fair, and credible polls during general, off-season and bye-elections.
2. **Review of Training Documents:** Regular review of Training Manuals, Synopsis of Election Day Activities, Digital Training Videos, BaSED Handbook and Guide for Election Day Activities for Security Personnel at every election.

3. **BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) Training Programmes:** Training and Certification of Headquarters Trainers, State Training Officers, Administrative Secretaries, Directors and Heads of Electoral Operations Departments nationwide conducted with the support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).
4. **Electoral Training Study Cycle (ETSC):** Successful implementation of the ETSC - a capacity building programme for staff of the Commission on electoral administration and management conducted nationwide.
5. **Review of TEI Curriculum and Instructional Materials:**

Review and systematization of TEI curriculum, together with a Facilitator's Guide for the training of stakeholders in the electoral process were undertaken to streamline the delivery of the various courses in the curriculum.

6. **Conduct of Virtual International Workshop:** The organisation of a five-day Virtual International Workshop in collaboration with the International Centre for Electoral Training and Research (CICIE) of the National Electoral Institute (INE) Mexico, where 80 INEC staff across the federation gathered virtually to deliberate and exchange ideas on electoral processes and political developments in Nigeria and Mexico.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu, National Commissioners and IFES Country Director Mr. Seray Jah in a group photograph with INEC staff during training on election technology in Abuja on 18th October 2022

4.1.1 The 2023 General Election

Ahead of the conduct of the 2023 General Election, specific electoral training programmes were offered to enhance the professionalism of permanent and ad-hoc election personnel. The specific training and capacity building programmes provided included:

1. Training of Commission and ad-hoc staff on Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) processes.
2. Production and Review of training materials (Manual for Election Officials, CVR Manual. Manual for Election Security Personnel, ESP Handbook, Facilitators' Guide, Basic Security in Election Duties (BaSED) Handbook to mention but a few.
3. Collaborative training services for other departments of the Commission in their dealings with other electoral stakeholders. A typical example of this collaboration was the "Political Party Polling Agents Training Workshop and Training of Trainers (ToT) in Preparation for the 2023 General Election" organized in collaboration with the Elections and Political Party Monitoring (EPM) Department, held on Monday 6th and Tuesday, 7th February 2023.
4. The Training Department in collaboration with the State Offices of the Commission organised training for about 1.4 million ad-hoc staff comprising the following categories:
 - a) Supervisory Presiding Officers (SPOs) – about 17,685 personnel
 - b) Presiding Officers (POs) / Assistant Presiding Officers (APOs) – 707,384 personnel
 - c) Collation Officers - 17,618 personnel
 - d) Registration Area Technical Officers (RATECHs) – 8,809 personnel
 - e) Local Government Area Technical Officers (LGA TECHs) – 774 personnel
 - f) Security Officers - about 20,000 personnel
 - g) Registration Area Camps (RAC Managers) - about 6,009 personnel
5. Various other Trainings were conducted as follows:
 - a) Root Training: The organisation of root Training for NYSC members while at Orientation Camp and post-orientation camp period, before the conduct of elections. This enabled passing to the NYSC members, knowledge of voting processes and procedures even before they were recruited as Ad-hoc personnel.
 - b) Security Training: This was used to conduct the security personnel training for the 2023 General Election. The Institute reviewed and updated the Manual for Training of Security Officials and collaborated with the various security agencies in an attempt to integrate Election Security

Training into the Training Curriculum of the Training Institutes of the various Security Agencies.

- c) Post Election Training Audits: Conducted to review all training activities. For example, post-election training audits were

held after the conduct of trainings for Bye, Rerun, and the Off-Cycle 2022 Governorship Elections. The audit assessed the training and proposed measures toward enhancing future trainings.



Group photograph of INEC Officials during the training on Gender, Disability and Inclusive Elections in February 2024

4.2 TEI: Research and Documentation

In addition to leveraging on training activities to create new knowledge, the Research and Documentation Department of the Commission has also been active in this process. The Department conducted surveys on various aspects of the electoral process, including voting behaviour, the use and acceptability of technology by voters, vote trading, election violence as well as internal party democracy amongst other issues. This effort also included the development and implementation of programmes such as the Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT) and the Election Security Threat Assessment (ESTA). In addition, several policy dialogues led by experts were convened to deliberate on various aspects of electoral administration and management. The following sections below provide some details into the activities of the Department.

4.2.1 Surveys

Several surveys were conducted on a number of important issues directly related to elections and the management of the electoral process. These include: -

- a) Survey on the Application of ICT in Nigerian Elections (Pre-Election Research Study on Smart Card Reader, 18 – 21 November 2018.
- b) A Study on The Impact of Voter Education on Voter Turnout in Elections, 3 – 6 December 2018.
- c) Critical Issues and Challenges that Impacted the Conduct, Outcome, and Performance of INEC in the 2019 General Election, 6 – 10 August 2019.

- d) Appraising the Patterns of Internal Party Democracy and Implications for the Conduct and Outcome of the 2019 General Election, 6 – 10 August 2019.
- e) Survey on Enhancing Election Participation in Nigeria (INEC-UI-LISA), 5 – 9 November 2019.
- f) The 2021 CVR Exercise: Assessment and Constraints to Participation, 12 November 2021.
- g) Civic and Voter Education Assessment (INEC-WDF), 22 – 26 March 2020.
- h) Dynamics of Voter Apathy and Vote Trading in the 2022 Ekiti Governorship Election, 10 – 14 May 2022.
- i) Free, Fair, Credible, and Inclusive Election: Critical Issues in the Conduct of the Osun State Governorship Election, 2022, 9 – 11 May 2022.
- j) Enhancing Participation in the Continuous Voter Registration Exercise in Edo and Ondo States, 23 - 25 May 2024.
- k) Training Impact Assessment Survey Edo Governorship Election, 30 September – 7 October 2024.
- l) Training Impact Assessment Survey Edo Governorship Election, 20 – 27 November 2024.

4.2.2 Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT)/Election Threat Security Assessment (ESTA)

The Election Violence and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT) and the Election Threat Security Assessment (ESTA) were

developed to assist the Commission determine the potential triggers of violence before, during and after elections. It assists the Commission in identifying the key elements, factors, issues and possibly individuals and groups that pose potential threats to an election and to the electoral process. Such information is usually shared with security agencies so that proactive steps could be taken to deploy resources and think of strategies to address the threats. Areas where the tools were developed included:

- a) EVMAT for the Osun State Governorship Election, September 6th – 9th, 2018.
- b) EVMAT for the 2019 General Election (Six States, 1 Per Geopolitical Zone Kano, Kaduna, Ogun, Ondo, Adamawa, Taraba, Rivers, Delta, Kogi, Benue, Abia, Anambra), Dec 15th -18th, 2019.
- c) EVMAT for the Bayelsa State Governorship Election, Sep 24th-28th, 2019.
- d) EVMAT for the Kogi State Governorship Election, Sep 27th-30th, 2019.
- e) EVMAT for the Edo State Governorship Election, Aug 5th, -8th, 2020.
- f) EVMAT for the Ondo State Governorship Election, Aug 27th-31st, 2020.
- g) EVMAT for the Anambra State Governorship Election, Sep 1st-4th, 2021.
- h) EVMAT for the FCT Area Council Election, Dec 7th- 11th, 2021.
- i) EVMAT Instrument Review Workshop, Kano, Mar 1st – 2nd, 2022.
- j) EVMAT for the Osun State Governorship Election, May 13th-17th, 2022
- k) EVMAT for the Ekiti State Governorship Election, May 10th-13th, 2022
- l) EVMAT for the 2023 General Election (Six States, 1 Per Geopolitical Zone Imo, Katsina, Yobe, Niger, Lagos, Rivers, FCT), Jan 15th- 25th, 2023
- m) EVMAT for the Bayelsa State Governorship Election, Sep 25th -27th, 2023.
- n) EVMAT for the Kogi State Governorship Election, Sep 22nd-24th, 2023.
- o) EVMAT for the Imo State Governorship Election, Sep 27th – 30th, 2023.
- p) EVMAT for the Edo Governorship Election, Jul 22nd – 25th, 2024
- q) EVMAT for the Ondo Governorship Election, Jul 24th – 27th, 2024.
- r) ESTA for the Edo State Governorship Election, Aug 19th – Sep 19th, 2020.
- s) ESTA for the Ondo State Governorship Election, Sep 10th – Oct 10th, 2020.
- t) ESTA for the FCT Area Council Election, Jan 25th – Feb 25th, 2022.
- u) ESTA for the General Election, Jan 25th- Mar 30th, 2023.
- v) ESTA for the Edo Governorship Election, 15th July-17th Sep 2024.
- w) ESTA for the Ondo Governorship Election, 15th July-November 2024.

4.3 The Electoral Institute (TEI) Stakeholder Engagements

The TEI has also regularly drawn stakeholders from the academia as well as practitioners across the political and electoral processes to provide perspectives on critical aspects of elections and democracy. Such efforts have been rendered through policy dialogues, roundtables as well as seminars, conferences and public lectures as listed in the following three sub-sections.

4.3.1 Policy Dialogues

- a) Towards Peaceful Gubernatorial Elections in Edo and Ondo States: Critical Factors and What Role for INEC, Aug 23rd, 2016.
- b) Violence in Elections: Causes, Agents and Mitigation Strategies, 18th Oct. 2016.
- c) Inclusiveness in Elections: A Fresh Case for the Delineation of Wards and Constituencies, Nov 29th, 2016.
- d) Anambra Governorship Election: A Postmortem and Lessons for Ekiti and Osun Governorship Elections, Apr 30th, 2018.
- e) Dynamics of Delegation: Reforms in Recruitment, Training, and Deployment of Ad-hoc Election Personnel, Jun 28th, 2019.
- f) The Administration of Elections in Ekiti: A Litmus Test for INEC Preparedness Towards the Conduct of Free, Fair, and Inclusive 2023 General Elections and the Electoral Act 2022, May 10th, 2022.

4.3.2 Roundtables

- a) Trends of Inconclusive Elections and the Challenge of Strengthening Credibility of the Electoral Process, Aug 16th, 2016.
- b) Anambra Governorship Election: An Appraisal and Lessons for Ekiti and Osun Governorship Elections 2018, Apr 20th, 2018.
- c) INEC's Preparedness for the Successful Conduct of Bayelsa 2019 Governorship Election, Oct 22nd, 2019.
- d) Incidence of Vote-buying/Trading: Implications for Democratic Consolidation & the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria, Dec 12th, 2018.
- e) Revisiting the template for INEC's Election Operations & Logistics: A focus on 2019 General Election, Jul 17th, 2019.
- f) Participation and Inclusivity in the Ondo State Governorship Election, Oct 15th, 2024

4.3.3 Documentaries, Conferences and Public Lectures

- a) Documentary on the Evaluation of the Electoral Process in Nigeria (2015-2019)
- b) Youth Empowerment and Participation In 2019 General Election, May 31st, 2018
- c) Voter's apathy towards Continuous Voter Registration (CVR and Elections in Nigeria, Jan 20th, 2020
- d) Security and Elections: Implications for Anambra State Governorship and 2023 General Election, Jun 8th, 2021

- e) The Electoral Act 2022: Imperatives for Political Parties and the 2023 General Election, Jun 29th, 2022
- f) The 2023 General Election: Lessons Learnt in Preparation for Kogi, Bayelsa and Imo States Off-Cycle Governorship Elections, Aug 28th, 2023

4.4 The Development and Deployment of E-Learning Infrastructure

One of the most significant advances in the Commission was the development and deployment of e-learning infrastructure for the conduct of electoral training. The e-learning platforms were meant to supplement of the conventional classroom situation by making online content available to trainees without being physically in a classroom. The exposure to online content on the electoral process will help a lot in prepping potential ad-hoc election personnel to familiarise themselves with the Commission's processes, procedures and laws governing the conduct of elections.

4.4.1 INEC E-School

It was against this background that the Commission approved the development and deployment of the E-learning Training Platforms for the 2023 General Election. These Platforms were to ensure the effective and widespread training of over one million ad-hoc personnel that were recruited and trained for the conduct of the election. Due to the huge number of trainees, digital and online training was necessary to enhance the quality and delivery for training of all recruited ad-hoc staff, that become the nucleus

of INEC E-School, the goals of which was to enhance the overall reach and effectiveness of electoral training.

4.4.2 INEC Training Bot

It was in the same vein that the INEC Training Virtual Assistant was developed and deployed on the Telegram Mobile Application as *INEC Training Bot*, which, once downloaded onto a device, provides information and answers questions on virtually all aspects of the electoral process.

4.4.3 INEC Virtual Electoral Training System (INEC VETS)

The Virtual Election Training System (VETS) was designed and developed to offer online courses, interactive simulations, and educational resources for regular staff and ad-hoc personnel involved in election administration, processes or the conduct of elections, and it supplements other online mechanisms and channels for the delivery of content to potential ad-hoc trainees. Beyond ad-hoc trainees however, this platform has the capabilities for online training of regular staff on electoral administration and management. The online content developed for the system is therefore meant for both regular staff and prospective election workers that have been screened through the Commission's processes, to familiarize themselves with different election-related tasks or to build capacity without the need for a physical classroom. The system aims to provide training to election officials, poll workers, or staff on various aspects of elections, and the management of the process

4.5 The Role of Policy, Discussion, and Position Papers

One indication of the Commission's commitment to knowledge production and the building of institutional memory is the production of several policy, discussion and position papers between 2015 and 2025. These papers were used to: -

- a) present the Commission's position on critical issues in the electoral process.
- b) educate the public about important aspects of the electoral process, including providing guidelines and codes of conduct.
- c) initiate public debates aimed at building national consensus on key electoral matters.
- d) engage key electoral stakeholders to build partnerships.

- e) clarify misconceptions and counter misinformation about important electoral matters.
- f) stimulate intellectual debates on issues that are beneficial to the development of Nigeria's electoral processes.
- g) document the Commission's experiences on diverse electoral matters as part of its institutional memory and
- h) bring key aspects of the electoral process to be compliant with existing electoral legal framework.

Thus, between 2015 and 2025, the Commission produced and disseminated eight (8) key policy, discussion and position papers that led to major transformations in the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process as detailed in the following sub-sections below.

Box 5: Producing New Knowledge on Elections Through Post-Election Reviews

One of the most significant and dominant features of election management in the last 10 years is the systematic effort of the Commission to generate new knowledge about elections and plough back this knowledge into the planning and conduct of subsequent elections and the management of the entire electoral process. This effort was driven by the continuous effort to periodically review and audit all electoral activities, especially the conduct of elections. Such process reviews were held in-house with staff directly involved in the conduct of elections during debriefing sessions, and with stakeholders such as political parties, civil society organisations, the media and security personnel. Many of the innovations introduced by the Commission since 2011 resulted from such intense process and audit review meetings.

This lessons-learned-cum-knowledge production process became more intensified since the 5th of December 2015 Bayelsa Governorship election when the Commission first introduced the simultaneous accreditation and voting in contrast to the separate accreditation and voting mode that had been in practice since 2011. That shift in the voting procedure arose in response to observations by staff and other stakeholders in the electoral process that drew the Commission's attention to the cumbersome nature of the separate accreditation and voting procedure that was discouraging some voters from coming back to the polling units to vote after accreditation.

4.5.1 The State of Voter Access to Polling Units (PUs) in Nigeria

One of the enduring challenges that the Yakubu Commission inherited was the issue of inadequate number of PUs and the inappropriate location of some existing polling units across the country. This was what **Discussion Paper No 1/2021 on The State of Voter Access to Polling Units in Nigeria** published in January 2021 sought to address. The challenge was basically because of the increasing number of registered voters in each General Election and location of certain PUs in unsuitable areas such as in private compounds, royal palaces, government houses, political party buildings, facilities that are in dispute, as well as very isolated or inaccessible locations such as forests or shrines. When the 119,973 PUs were created by the defunct National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) in

1996, it was projected that such PUs would serve about 50 million registered voters. In spite of the provisions of Section 42 of the Electoral Act 2010 which empowered INEC to establish sufficient number of polling units in each registration area and allot voters to them and the increased number of registered voters to 60.82 million in 2003, 61.56 million in 2007, 68.83 million and 84 million in 2019, the number of PUs remained the same resulting in congested or lack of PUs in many new suburban areas and settlements on Election Day. In fact, the situation became so critical that in some States the average number of voters in some polling units was well over 4,000 and there was the specific case of a polling unit, Mararaba Garage II in Karu Local Government of Nasarawa State, with 15,061 registered voters.

Table 4.1: Number of Registered Voters, Average No. Per PU and Voter Turnout Centres, 1999-2019

Year	No of Registered Voters	No of PUs	Average No of Registered Voters Per PU	% Voter Turnout
1999	57,938,945	119,973	482.9	52.26
2003	60,823,022	119,973	506.9	69.08
2007	61,567,036	119,973	513.1	57.49
2011	73,528,040	119,973	612.8	53.68
2015	67,422,005	119,973	561.9	43.65
2019	84,004,084	119,973	700.1	35.66
2023	93,469,008	176,846	529	27.05

Source: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Headquarters, Abuja

Over time, the Commission attempted to find an acceptable solution to this situation, but it was impossible to gain the confidence and concurrence of all electoral stakeholders. The bold attempt by the Jega Commission in 2014 to deal with the situation by creating 30,027 new polling

units failed because of unfounded allegations of lop-sidedness in their distribution nationwide. This led to the introduction of Voting Points (VPs/ Voting Points Settlements (VPS) that were basically sub-units of parent PUs but with a separate poll team supervised by a Presiding Officer (PO).

Despite this, the issue of congestion lingered on with some polling units catering to over 10,000 voters resulting in delays, disruptions, violence, and apathy on Election Day. Therefore, **Discussion Paper No 1/2021** presented the Commission's concerns about the challenge of voter access to PUs by providing a historical background to this challenge, outlining some key issues and providing three solutions for addressing the challenge. These solutions were: -

- a) **Conversion of Voting Points and Voting Point Settlements to Polling Units:** This involves converting the existing 56,872 VPs & VPS into full-fledged polling units and relocating some of the newly created PUs to unserved or under served areas;
- b) **Formal Application by Residents of New Areas/Settlements for Polling Units:** In this solution, residents of new areas or difficult terrains will be required to apply for PUs through an established procedure at set time intervals. Such applications will go through a review process, stakeholder consultations and publication of the application's outcome prior to establishment of the Polling Unit; and
- c) **Creation of Polling Areas within Defined Areas in a Constituency:** As envisaged in Section 13 (2) of the Electoral Act 2010 (now Section 40(2), EA 2022), this would require the harmonisation of the proposed polling areas with National Population Commission's enumeration areas. Following several internal discussions and debates, the Commission concluded that given the need and urgency to expand voter access to polling units within the available timeframe for doing so before

the general election, the option of converting the already established and existing 56,872 voting points and voting point settlements into full-fledged polling units was the most feasible and least controversial.

The Commission then went on to articulate the assumption and justification underlying the choice of this option and the methods to be adopted in undertaking the conversion. In doing this, the Commission identified eight (8) issues for consideration. These were: -

- a) That voter access to Polling Units is at the heart of the voting rights of Nigerians and therefore fundamental to democracy and its consolidation.
- b) That voter access to Polling Units goes beyond the physical act of establishing of PU; rather, it also entails the location of such PUs in accessible places and ensuring that the environment of each PU guarantees the observance of the Commission's guidelines and safe voter experience on Election-Day, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c) That over politicization underscored by unfounded conspiracy theories have been the major obstacles to expanding voter access to PUs. This has caused unnecessary delays in establishing and relocating PUs prior to major elections.
- d) That declining access to PUs for Nigerian voters is potentially disenfranchising millions of Nigerians. It has become so critical that it must be addressed urgently if the credibility of our electoral system is not to be profoundly damaged.
- e) That the problem of voter access to voting services affects every part of

the country. Therefore, a national consensus built on genuine consultations is both necessary to address it.

- f) That stakeholders have a central role to play in addressing the challenge, especially by committing to supporting the Commission's efforts to find solutions and assisting to depoliticize the issue. Indeed, no lasting solution to the problem is possible without the full understanding and support of the major stakeholders in the country.
- g) That experiences from other jurisdictions across the world show that continuously expanding voter access to PUs is a good practice. These experiences also show that the problem of declining access to PUs is not unique to Nigeria. In most countries, however, expanding voter access to PUs is essentially the administrative responsibility of agencies charged with the function by law. There is need for Nigeria to also approach it as such; and
- h) That with over 5,000 specific requests for the establishment of new PUs, the Commission will be failing in its responsibility if it does not address the declining voter

access to Polling Units across the country prior to upcoming major elections

Following the release of the of the discussion paper, the Commission embarked on massive sensitisation campaign and consultative meetings with all electoral stakeholders to canvass its position. During the campaigns and consultations, the Chairman made presentations at the National Council of State and engaged with a wide spectrum of stakeholders including leaders of political parties, civil society organisations, traditional rulers and religious leaders, the media, security and other institutions under the auspices of the Interagency Consultative Committee on Election Security, as well as socio-cultural groups and organisations. During these engagements and consultations, the Commission progressively secured a consensus and the buy-in of all electoral stakeholders on the need to expand voter access to polling units based on the recommendation that all existing voting points and voting point settlement be converted to full-fledged polling units and for the relocation of all polling units from unsuitable area.

Box 6: Expansion of Voter Access to Electoral Services: The Creation of New Polling Units

One of the enduring challenges that the Yakubu Commission inherited was the issue of inadequate number of PUs and the inappropriate location of some existing polling units across the country. This was what **Discussion Paper No 1/2021 on The State of Voter Access to Polling Units in Nigeria** published in January 2021 sought to address. The challenge was basically because of the increasing number of registered voters in each General Election and location of certain PUs in unsuitable areas such as in private compounds, royal palaces, government houses, political party buildings, facilities that are in dispute, as well as very isolated or inaccessible locations such as forests or shrines. When the 119,973 PUs were created by the defunct National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) in 1996, it was projected that such PUs would serve about 50 million registered voters. In spite of the provisions of Section 13(2) of the Electoral Act 2010 (now Section 40(2), EA 2022), which empowered INEC to establish sufficient number of polling units in each registration area and allot voters to them and the increased number of registered voters to 60.82 million in 2003, 61.56 million in 2007, 68.83 million and 84 million in 2019, the number of PUs remained the same resulting in congested or lack of PUs in many new suburban areas and settlements on Election Day. In fact, the situation became so critical that in some States the average number of voters in some polling units was well over 4,000 and there was the specific case of a polling unit, Mararaba Garage II in Karu Local Government of Nasarawa State, with 15,061 registered voters.

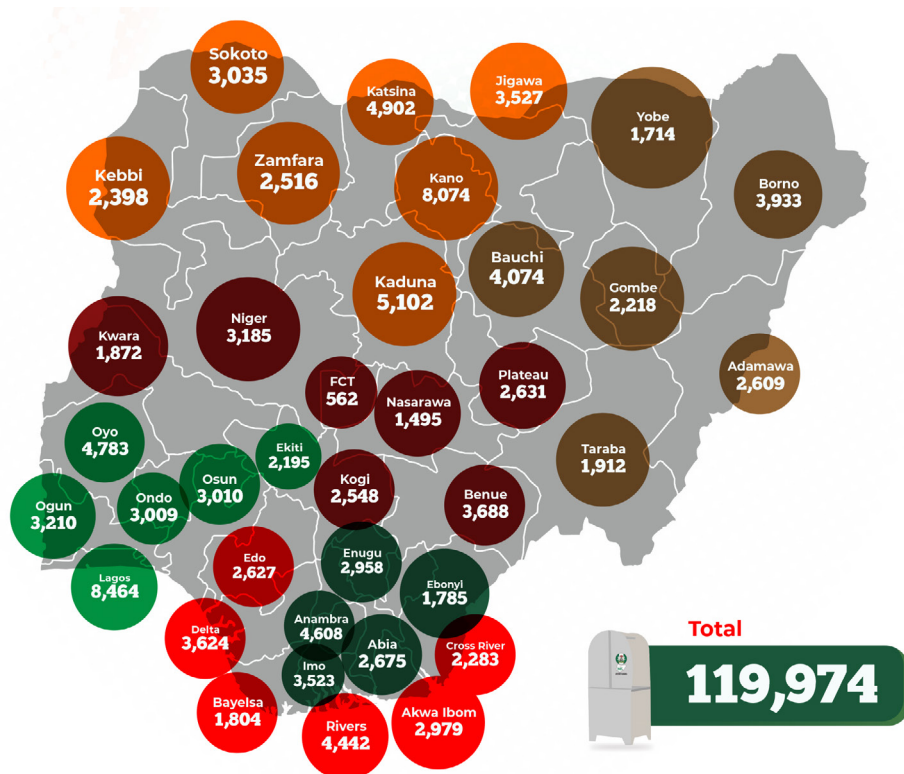


Figure 4.1: Distribution of Polling Units Prior to the Conversion of Voting Points/Voting Point Settlements Nationwide

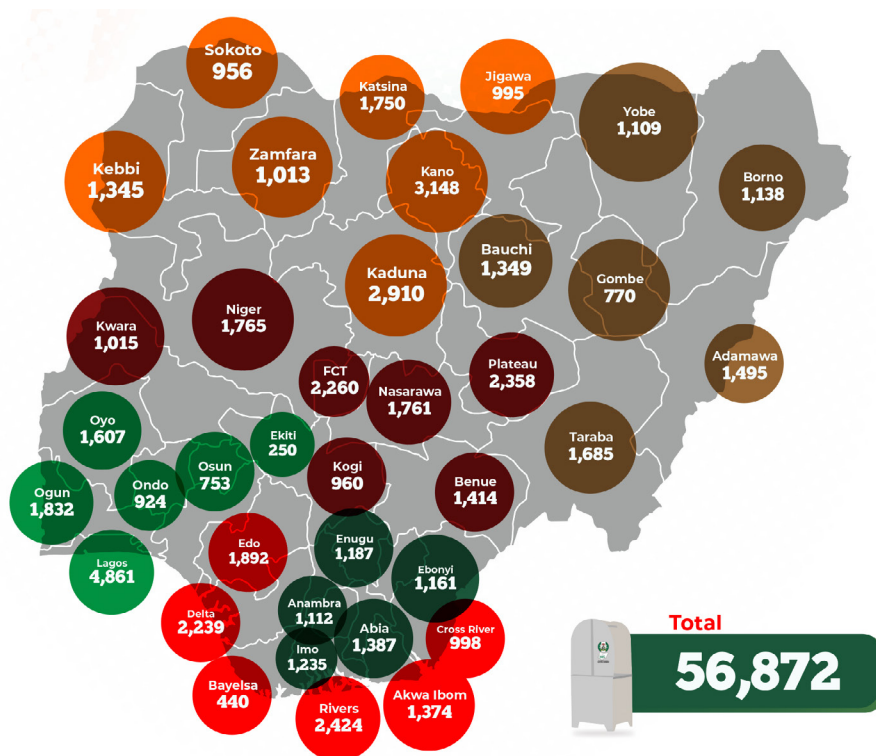


Figure 4.2: Voting Points and Voting Point Settlements Converted to Polling Units Nationwide

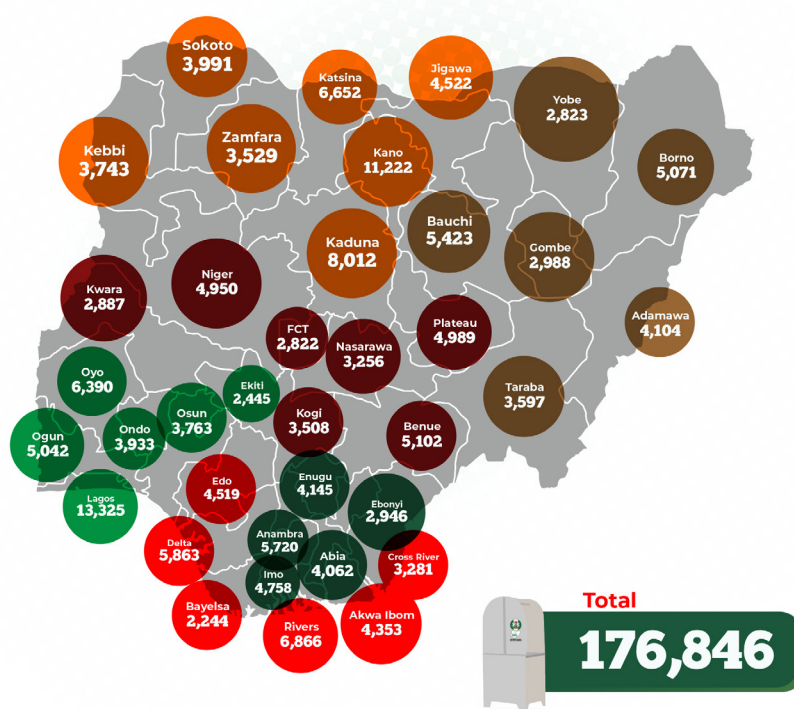


Figure 4.3: Distribution of New Polling Units in Nigeria

4.5.2 Electoral Constituencies in Nigeria

The delineation of electoral constituencies and the allocation of seats in legislative houses is one of the contentious issues in representative democracy. In Nigeria, Sections 71 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) entrusted INEC with the responsibility to a) 'divide each state of the Federation into three Senatorial districts for the purposes of election to the Senate' and b) 'divide the Federation into 360 Federal Constituencies for the purposes of elections to the Houses of Representatives.' Furthermore, Section 112 empowers INEC to divide every State in the Federation into such number of State Constituencies as is equal to three or four times the number of Federal Constituencies within the state. These provisions of the 1999 Constitution were derived from the actions of the defunct National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) which in 1996 delineated and delimited the country into three Senatorial Districts per State and one for Abuja and 360 Federal Constituencies. However, the provisions of Sections 91 and 112 of the Constitution stipulate that a State House of Assembly shall consist of three or four times the number of seats which the State has in the House of Representatives divided in a way as to reflect as far as possible, nearly equal population. Based on these two sections of the Constitution, the maximum number of seats in a State House of Assembly could be four times the number of seats in the House of Representatives, that is 40 seats as for Lagos and Kano, while the minimum would be three times the number of seats the State has in the House of Representatives, that is 24 seats as is the case in 13 States of the Federation. The Assembly seats in the other 21 states varies from 25 to 34 thereby creating ambiguities

in the number of Assembly seats. This variations and inconsistencies in the number of seats in each State Assembly was further compounded by calls for the 'restoration' of constituencies it is claimed to have been suppressed across the country. The so-called suppression was as a result of the reduction of the number of Federal Constituencies in the 1999 Constitution from 450 to 360 in the 2nd Republic (1979 – 1983) and from 593 in the aborted 3rd Republic (1991 – 1993). Indeed, some of the communities whose constituencies were re-delineated because of the creation of subsisting electoral constituencies in 1996 following the creation of new of Local Government Areas and consequential boundary adjustments instituted legal action against the Commission for the restoration of their so-called suppressed constituencies.

It was against this background that the Commission produced ***Discussion Paper 2/2021 on Electoral Constituencies in Nigeria: Division, Revision and Alteration*** to provide historical and technical details on the contentious issues of constituency delineation, highlighting the critical areas of concern and suggesting possible solutions to addressing the issue. Specifically, the discussion paper sought to: a) provide information to both the National Assembly and the general reader about the history of constituency delineation and seat allocation in Nigeria; b) address some recurrent misconceptions about the responsibilities of the Commission in the division, revision and alteration of constituencies; c) present the challenges that the Commission has confronted in implementing its constitutional role in this regard; d) evaluate the current demands and agitations for constituency division, revision and adjustment, including several claims that have been the

subject of litigations in Courts; and e) propose solutions that will make it possible for the Commission and the National Assembly to overcome the challenges and successfully carry out their constitutional responsibilities in the division, revision and alteration of electoral constituencies.

Following the publication of the discussion paper, all stakeholders have come to the realisation that the division, revision and alteration of electoral constituencies in Nigeria is a herculean task requiring synergy between INEC, the National Assembly and several other agencies, including the National Population Commission, the Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation and the National Boundary Commission.

The summary of the key recommendations of the Discussion Paper are as follows:

1. The relevant laws should be amended to stipulate a percentage of deviation from the population quota allowed. A tolerance limit of 15% deviation is recommended in line with international best practice.
2. Clearer and more stringent criteria should be specified, and the principles to guide the use of the alternate factor should be clearly spelt out.
3. Federal Constituencies should, as much as possible, be part of a Senatorial District to avoid anomalies, such as a Federal Constituency straddling two Senatorial Districts.
4. In the absence of amendments to the existing legal framework, the Commission should issue Guidelines to capture the necessary criteria, publicise the

Guidelines and use them for extensive engagement with stakeholders throughout the process of delimitation.

5. Establishment of an Inter-Agency Framework on Constituency Review.
6. Need for a post-review conflict management.
7. The Guidelines for delimitation should provide for a robust programme of engagement and participation of stakeholders, as well as for wide publicity.
8. After the delineation exercise, the Commission should consider a review of the Polling Units to make them consistent with the new state of delimitation.
9. Delimitation processes should be carried out in an open, transparent and impartial manner.
10. All future delimitation exercises should employ modern technologies such as GIS and Interactive digital maps integrating census and registration data.
11. There should be a separate Act of the National Assembly defining in detail all the criteria for delimitation; and
12. In accordance with the Electoral Act, members of the Inter-Agency Constituency Review Committee if established should swear to the Oath of Neutrality. They should also undertake to abide by the principle of confidentiality.

4.5.3 Electronic Transmission of Election Results

The Independent National Electoral Commission published **Position Paper No.1/2021 on Electronic Transmission of Election Results** in September 2021 as part of the Commission's effort to articulate and disseminate its position on the issue of electronic transmission of election results. This was necessitated by the controversy that arose during the National Assembly's effort to repeal and re-enact Electoral Act 2010. The thrust of the controversy, which was characterised by entrenched partisan positions, incomplete information, unsubstantiated fears, groundless conspiracy theories and profound misconceptions centred on the proposed Section 60 (5) in the new Electoral Act on how election results shall be transmitted for the purpose of collation. The position paper, based on the outcome of the deployment of the electronic results management system in pilot tests during two off-cycle governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States, six senatorial, three Federal Constituency and 15 State constituency bye-elections was therefore designed to a) explain the desirability of electronic transmission of results as an electoral reform issue in Nigeria; b) clarify the position of the Commission on some of the central issues around electronic transmission of results; c) build a consensus on electronic transmission of results as an electoral reform issue based on a shared understanding of its desirability towards the 2023 General Election; d) address some prevalent misconceptions and concerns about the application of technology to the electoral process and to result transmission in particular; and e) articulate the essential legal framework to support an effective and

secure implementation of electronic transmission of results. In order to canvass its position on the desirability of electronic transmission of election results, the Commission identified advantages that will accrue from such action some of which include: a) increased trust in the transparency, integrity and credibility of election results; b) timely and efficient election results management and declaration process; c) reduction to the minimum the level of negative human intervention in the result management system; d) accountability, better auditing and improved record keeping and archiving of election results that will facilitate a quicker and more transparent election adjudication process; and e) cost effective, value for money and improved efficiency by reducing the number of persons required for result collation, and the paperwork involved in the management of election results.

Following the publication of **Position Paper No1/2021**, there was a consensus among stakeholders that INEC requires an electoral legal framework that enables the Commission to deploy appropriate, targeted, tested and safe technology to enhance the transparency, credibility and integrity of the election result management system. In the end, Section 60(5) of the Electoral Act 2022 specifically stated that; 'The presiding officer shall transfer the result including total number of accredited voters and the results of the ballot in a manner prescribed by the Commission.' This effectively gave the Commission the leeway to determine and deploy tested and trusted innovations for the election result management system.

4.5.4 Policy on Post-Election Audit and Review (PEAR)

The Policy on Post-Election Audit and Review (PEAR) was approved by the Commission in July 2017 as a framework for reporting, reviewing and auditing elections conducted by the Commission within a period of 60 days after the election. It is a systematization of a position the Commission had taken since 2011 of conducting periodic reviews of the conduct of major electoral activities and general elections that culminated into the publication of the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC)² Report. With PEAR, such reviews have become part of the Commission's standard operating procedures, the objective of which is to audit and review the conduct of such elections through both internal and external processes. The internal process involves internal debriefs of officials and staff of the Commission, who played key roles in

the election, while the external process involves engagements with external stakeholders, who constituted core participants in a particular election. These engagements were designed to provide the Commission with the opportunity to receive feedback on the conduct and management of an election to have a deeper understanding of the success and challenges associated with its conduct. To be sure, the policy serves as an important accountability tool to enable the Commission to review its conduct and management of elections by tracking and reviewing the roles and actions of its personnel during elections, assessing their strengths and weaknesses and learning lessons for future exercises. It also provides the Commission with an important opportunity for lesson-learning, production of new knowledge, innovating and the deepening of institutional memory.

Box 7: The Transmission of Election Results

The Independent National Electoral Commission published **Position Paper No.1/2021 on Electronic Transmission of Election Results** in September 2021 as part of the Commission's effort to articulate and disseminate its position on the issue of electronic transmission of election results. This was necessitated by the controversy that arose during the National Assembly's effort to repeal and re-enact Electoral Act 2010. The thrust of the controversy, which was characterised by entrenched partisan positions, incomplete information, unsubstantiated fears, groundless conspiracy theories and profound misconceptions centred on the proposed Section 60 (5) in the new Electoral Act on how election results shall be transmitted for the purpose of collation. The position paper, based on the outcome of the deployment of the electronic results management system in pilot tests during two off-cycle governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States, six senatorial, three Federal Constituency and 15 State constituency bye-elections was therefore designed to a) explain the desirability of electronic transmission of results as an electoral reform issue in Nigeria; b) clarify the position of the Commission on some of the central issues around electronic transmission of results; c) build a consensus on electronic transmission of results as an electoral reform issue based on a shared understanding of its desirability towards the 2023 General Election; d) address some prevalent misconceptions and concerns about the application of technology to the electoral process and to result transmission in particular; and e) articulate the essential legal framework to support an effective and secure implementation of electronic transmission of results.

²<https://wp1.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/RERC-REPORT.pdf>

4.5.5 Guidelines for Expanding Voter Access to Polling Units

To provide clarity on how to convert the existing voting points and voting point settlements into full-fledged polling units, the Commission in March 2021 released the guidelines for doing so. The guidelines were designed to aid in the conversion of the VPs and VPs into polling units and the relocation of the new and already existing PUs to places where they better guarantee voter access and support compliance with the extant framework for the conduct of elections. This was with the objective of decongesting existing PUs by reducing the number of registered voters, improving the quality of access to electoral services to votes, including persons with disability and addressing the declining voter turnout due to congestion or lack of access to PUs. The guidelines stipulated the approved processes and procedures for converting VPs and VPS into polling units, the appropriate location of polling units, the methodology for required fieldwork by INEC State and FCT offices in undertaking the task and the procedure for engaging with stakeholders in conducting the necessary verification for the location of the proposed polling units.

The cumulative outcome of the publication of the discussion paper on the state of voter access to polling units in Nigeria coupled with the release of the guidelines for expanding voter access to polling units in Nigeria and the follow-up advocacy through engagements and consultations by the Commission was the creation of 56,872 new polling units in Nigeria in June 2021. In addition to this, the Commission also relocated 749 PUs from inappropriate locations to appropriate public facilities or open spaces to guarantee unencumbered access for all voters. In so doing, the Commission removed 232 polling units from private properties, 145 from royal palaces, 21 from Churches, nine from Shrines and six from Mosques. The other 336 Polling Units were relocated from their original location to another location for sundry reasons including distance, difficult terrain, congestion, communal conflict, new settlements, and general insecurity. By this action, the Yakubu Commission broke a 25-year jinx that has bedevilled every Commission since 1998. This was achieved with the ability of the Commission to articulate the necessity for expanding voter access and to engage with all relevant stakeholders to understand this necessity and support the process.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Registered Voters by State, LGA, RA and PUs Before and After the Conversion of VPS/VPS to PUs

SN	State	Reg Voters (2019 GE)	Land Area Km2	No of LGAs	No of RAs	No of PUs Before Conversion	No of VPs Converted to PUs	No of VPS Converted to PUs	Total No of PUs After Conversion	Total No of Voters Per PU Before Conversion	Total No of Voters Per PU After Conversion
1	Abia	1,932,892	6,320	17	184	2,675	1,387	0	4,062	723	476
2	Adamawa	1,973,083	36,917	21	226	2,609	1,495	0	4,104	756	481
3	Akwa-Ibom	2,119,727	7,081	31	329	2,980	1,374	0	4,353	711	487
4	Anambra	2,447,996	4,844	21	326	4,608	1,112	0	5,720	531	428
5	Bauchi	2,462,843	49,119	20	212	4,074	1,349	0	5,423	605	454
6	Bayelsa	923,182	10,773	8	105	1,804	440	0	2,244	512	411
7	Benue	2,480,131	34,059	23	276	3,688	1,414	0	5,102	672	486
8	Borno	2,315,956	70,898	27	312	3,932	1,138	0	5,071	589	457
9	Cross river	1,527,289	20,156	18	193	2,283	998	0	3,281	669	465
10	Delta	2,845,274	17,698	25	270	3,624	2,239	0	5,863	785	485
11	Ebonyi	1,459,933	5,670	13	171	1,785	1,161	0	2,946	818	496
12	Edo	2,210,534	17,802	18	192	2,627	1,892	0	4,519	841	489
13	Ekiti	909,967	6,353	16	177	2,195	250	0	2,445	415	372
14	Enugu	1,944,016	7,161	17	260	2,958	1,187	0	4,145	657	469
15	FCT	1,344,856	18,768	6	62	562	1,951	309	2,822	2393	477
16	Gombe	1,394,393	5,530	11	114	2,218	770	0	2,988	629	467
17	Imo	2,272,293	23,154	27	305	3,523	1,235	0	4,758	645	478
18	Jigawa	2,111,106	46,053	27	287	3,527	995	0	4,522	599	467
19	Kaduna	3,932,492	20,131	23	255	5,101	2,910	0	8,012	771	491

20	Kano	5,457,747	24,192	44	484	8,074	3,148	0	11,222	676	486
21	Katsina	3,230,230	36,800	34	361	4,901	1,750	0	6,652	659	486
22	Kebbi	1,806,231	29,833	21	225	2,398	1,345	0	3,743	753	483
23	Kogi	1,646,350	36,825	21	239	2,548	960	0	3,508	646	469
24	Kwara	1,406,457	3,345	16	193	1,872	1,015	0	2,887	751	487
25	Lagos	6,570,291	27,117	20	245	8,462	4,861	0	13,325	776	493
26	Nasarawa	1,617,786	76,363	13	147	1,495	1,761	0	3,256	1082	497
27	Niger	2,390,035	16,762	25	274	3,185	1,765	0	4,950	750	483
28	Ogun	2,375,003	15,500	20	236	3,213	1,832	0	5,042	739	471
29	Ondo	1,822,346	9,251	18	203	3,009	924	0	3,933	606	463
30	Osun	1,680,498	28,454	30	332	3,010	753	0	3,763	558	447
31	Oyo	2,934,107	30,913	33	351	4,783	1,607	0	6,390	613	459
32	Plateau	2,480,455	11,077	17	207	2,631	2,358	0	4,989	943	497
33	Rivers	3,215,273	25,973	23	319	4,442	2,424	0	6,866	724	468
34	Sokoto	1,903,166	54,473	23	244	3,035	956	0	3,991	627	477
35	Taraba	1,777,105	45,502	16	168	1,912	1,685	0	3,597	929	494
36	Yobe	1,365,913	39,762	17	178	1,714	1,109	0	2,823	797	484
37	Zamfara	1,717,128	7,315	14	147	2,516	1,013	0	3,529	682	487
	Total	84,004,084	927,944	774	8809	119,973	56,563	309	176,846	700	475

4.5.6 Policy on Conducting Elections in the Context of Covid-19

The outbreak of the COVID-19 and its designation as a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation in December 2019 was particularly challenging for the Yakubu Commission. As the situation worsened with increasing death tolls worldwide, including in Nigeria, various measures were adopted including near total lockdown to mitigate the spread of the pandemic. INEC was compelled to suspend all regular and non-essential activities from March to August 2020. This resulted in the disruption and postponement of already scheduled elections and created uncertainties about the off-cycle governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States. Given the Constitutional requirements for the conduct of both elections, the Commission in May 2020 developed and disseminated a policy on conducting elections within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and deployed certain innovations to meet the public safety exigencies of conducting election during the global health emergency. The policy was designed to guide the Commission and other electoral stakeholders to understand the health, financial, legal and security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on the electoral process and to prepare them in responding to the challenges of conducting elections in the context of the pandemic. The policy articulated the appropriate measures and strategies to be adopted to protect the health and well-being of voters, candidates, officials, and other stakeholders involved in the electoral process, especially in the areas of voter registration, training, voter education and stakeholder engagements, Election Day operations, political party activities including primaries, nomination, and submission of the

list of candidates and polling agents, rallies, and campaigns as well as election observation and security.

Some of the measures and strategies outlined in the policy included:

- a) The mandatory use of face masks/face covering for everyone involved in the electoral process.
- b) The provision of infra-red thermometers at the registration area, LGA/Area Council and State collation centres to measure the temperature of all electoral personnel.
- c) Provision of personal protective equipment for polling officials and hand sanitisers, methylated spirit, and ancillary items at the polling units
- d) Enforcement of the rules of physical distancing at the venue of all electoral activities through the creation of a two-tier queuing system and other crowd control measures
- e) Review of the transportation matrix for the deployment of electoral personnel in conformity with COVID-19 requirements.
- f) Reducing contact points in the handling and delivery of sensitive and non-sensitive election materials
- g) Adjustment of the commencement and closing of the voting period from 8:00am - 2:00pm to 8:30am and 2:30pm to accommodate the necessary activities in setting up polling units.

- h) Deployment of appropriate electoral technology in all areas of the electoral process and election management, with reference to voter registration, voter accreditation, uploading of polling unit results to the IReV, training of election officials and security personnel, as well as candidate management, election observation, media, and polling agent accreditation processes to mitigate the health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- i) Mandatory publication of election results in every polling unit on Form EC 60 and uploading of the image of the Form EC8A to the IReV Portal to enhance transparency.
- j) Recruitment of persons with disability as election officials and provision of assistive voting devices such as tactile voting guide, magnifying glasses, and voter education materials in Braille to promote inclusivity.
- k) Addressing the issue of continued overcrowding in certain polling units despite expansion of voting access through the migration of registered voters from overcrowded to sparsely populated polling units; and
- l) Reviewing and strengthening the MOU with transport unions to include the Marine Transport Workers Union of Nigeria to facilitate timely and efficient forward and backward logistics for the deployment of election personnel and materials.

4.5.7 Voting in Safety: Voters Code of Conduct for Elections During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Immediately after the release and dissemination of the INEC policy on conducting elections in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in May 2020, the Commission commenced preparations for the conduct of postponed by-elections, court ordered elections and on-coming off-cycle governorship elections in Edo and Ondo State. As part of the preparations for these elections, the Commission designed Form EC30F on voter's code of conduct for elections during COVID-19 pandemic as an advisory information on how voters could vote in safety in the period of the pandemic.

The advisory consists of ten mandatory codes of conduct to be observed by all electoral stakeholders in the process of voting. They are as follows:

- a) Wearing of face mask at Polling Units and all election locations is mandatory. Voters are advised to come to the PU with their own face mask, using a handkerchief, scarf or such materials and should lower such mask for identification when necessary.
- b) The period of voting was adjusted to start by 8.30am and stops at 2.30pm with voters on two queues, outside and inside the polling area keeping 2 meters (6 feet) apart from each other. Admittance from the outer to the inner queue voting area shall be in batches and everyone on the outer queue by 2.30pm will be allowed to vote.
- c) Any voter showing symptoms

of COVID-19 such as high temperature, coughing, sneezing, etc. Is to leave the queue or voting area to be attended to by designated officials and everyone are advised to obey all directives by the polling officials, by keeping themselves and others safe and reporting any health emergencies urgently to an official at the Polling Unit.

- d) Everyone is expected to avoid touching of surfaces or leaning on walls and other surfaces at the Polling Unit and to use provided hand sanitizer where available.
- e) An election official may ask voters to clean their fingers with an antiseptic before their fingerprint is read with the Smart Card Reader.
- f) Voters are required to show their voters' card to election officials whenever requested; and
- g) After a voter casts his/her vote, he/she is required to move away from the voting area and may be required to obey all directives issued by election officials, including security officials, and always be orderly as INEC shall not tolerate assault of any election official and may prosecute anyone for doing so.

The combination of the INEC policy of conducting election in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the code of conduct for voters to enable them vote in safety during the COVID-19 pandemic was quite effective in that they enabled the Commission to conduct two time-bound off-cycle governorship elections in Edo and

Ondo State as well as several Federal and State Constituency elections in the later part of 2020 and early 2021. These elections were successfully conducted without any major incidence or uptick in the spread or infection rate of the COVID virus.

4.5.8 Policy on Election Technology Acquisition and Deployment (PETAD)

The Commission's continuous efforts at the development and deployment of technology for the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process introduced important innovations that have enhanced security, accountability and transparency. In May 2025, the Commission issued Policy No. xxx/2025 on Election Technology Acquisition and Deployment (PETAD) to guide and streamline the development, acquisition and deployment of fit-for-purpose election technologies. This was to institutionalize a governance framework for the development, security and deployment of election technology and to ensure the maximum benefits, cost-effectiveness and standardization of digital applications for election administration. The 10 key principles guiding the Commission in the adoption and utilisation of election technology are as follows:

- a) **Customisation** – Election technologies deployed by the Commission shall be customised to suit the needs and circumstances of the Commission and Nigeria with secure and exclusive intellectual and property rights owned by the Commission.
- b) **Cost-efficiency** – election technologies used by the Commission must give the maximum value for money

- without compromising on quality and functionality.
- c) **Security** – The security of all systems and users shall conform to the highest global standards of digital security.
 - d) **Homegrown** – The design, development and testing of election the Commission's technologies shall be done by the Commission and its employees and were developed by external persons, agencies, or vendors, such technology must be domesticated before deployment. Sustainability – Election technologies deployed by the Commission must be sustainable, in terms of cost, personnel and equipment.
 - e) **Transparency** – The Commission shall uphold the principle of transparency, publishing clear Regulations, Guidelines, and Manuals for public information in the deployment and utilization of election technologies,
 - f) **Accountability** – All operators of the Commission's election technologies shall be held accountable for their actions
 - g) **Accessibility** – The Commission shall ensure that any technology deployed that requires the involvement of citizens shall be simple, non-discriminatory and widely accessible applying the principle of equality and equity of access, making provisions for all citizens including PwDs; and
 - h) **Confidentiality and Privacy** – The Commission's election technologies shall be electronically safeguarded

and maintained in accordance with current best practice, but with no absolute guarantee regarding the protection, confidentiality or privacy of any information.

In addition to these guiding principles, the policy specified fourteen (14) requirements and conditions to be met by all election technologies developed, acquired and deployed by the Commission. Such technologies in terms of software, hardware and artificial intelligence must undergo a needs assessment and there must be clear justification for their utilisation. Furthermore, they must be customized, owned and homegrown; meet legal and regulatory compliance; have clear technical specifications, be interoperable and have open architectures; be guided by security, adaptability and data protection; and be tested, piloted and stabilized with the key features of clear documentation, knowledge transfer and training.

4.5.9 Policy on Receiving Support from Development Partners

The INEC Policy number 001/2021 on receiving support from development partners was approved by the Commission in February 2021. By this policy, the Commission established the normative framework for receiving support from development partners within the context of mutual respect and co-responsibility to promote institution building, the strengthening of electoral integrity and diffusion of democratic principles. The policy spelled out five governing principles in the relationship between the Commission and its development partners. These are:

a) Independence: the Commission will determine and retain control over the overall purpose of support based on its strategic interests and as required or requested by the Office of the Honourable Chairman.

a) No Direct Cash Transfers: development partners shall not make direct transfer of funds to the Commission. Technical assistance through expert support and skills transfer, as well as direct implementation by development partners of agreed activities, are preferred over cash transfers.

b) Flexibility: support from development partners should be such that they could be directed at meeting urgent and sometimes unanticipated needs to augment the work of the Commission in enhancing electoral integrity.

c) Accountability: the Commission will maintain a high level of transparency and accountability in requesting and receiving support from its Development Partners, especially through impeccable recordkeeping and timely reporting.

d) Coordination: request and receipt of support from development partners will be well harmonized and coordinated in line with this policy.

The main areas for which the Commission may seek support from development partners include:

a) Provision of technical assistance

as may be requested by the Commission.

b) Consultants: provision of consultants to advise the Commission on major electoral activities, including voter registration, civic and voter education, deployment of technology, logistics, procurement etc.

c) Equipments: provision of technical equipment in critical areas of the work of the Commission.

d) Training: training and capacity building, including organisation of workshops, seminars, conferences.

e) IEC Materials: production and dissemination of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials including policy papers, reports, sensitisation booklets etc; and

f) Peer Learning: promotion of peer learning and experience sharing between Election Management Bodies.

4.6 Electoral Museum

INEC Policy Number INEC/DE/ No. 6:60/2021 on Archiving and Documentation was approved by the Commission on Thursday 29th August 2021. The policy provides a comprehensive, robust, and coordinated approach to the collection, organisation, storage, and preservation of the Commission's activities, processes, procedures, records, and documents. The purpose is to preserve the bulk of materials of enduring historical value to the Commission and ensure ease of access

to staff and other interested members of the public.

To carry out the directives of the Commission and ensure a robust implementation of the Policy, the TEI proposed the creation of an Electoral Museum and Digital Archival System to serve as the institutional memory of the Commission's policies, processes, procedures, and actions at the TEI. The Electoral Museum and Digital Archive will serve as a means for preserving and disseminating electoral knowledge and showcasing the Commission and the evolution of the electoral process and electoral systems in Nigeria.

This project is to be implemented in two broad phases – Phase I consists of the creation and setting up of an Electoral Museum, while Phase II consists of the establishment of a Digital Archival System.

4.6.1 Phase I - The Electoral Museum

This phase deals with the collection, documentation, conservation, display, curation, storage of the exhibits, storage, and display consisting of the following seven (7) sections: -

- a. The historical development and evolution of elections in Nigeria - This is to cover the beginning of the election process in Nigeria before independence in 1960 to date.
- b. Presidents, governors, federal and state legislators.
- c. The evolution of the electoral legal framework: Electoral Acts, Regulations and Guidelines, Manuals, Handbooks and dated documents.

- d. Party formations, registration, activities, and constitution - The formation of parties, their registration based on the conditions stipulated, party logos, and campaign materials, including designated ballot boxes, ballot papers, and constitutions.
- e. Other things to be housed in the museum include a list of candidates that have participated in elections, election materials such as ballot boxes, ballot papers, election result sheets, annulled election sheets, etc.
- f. Voter education publications, jingles, narrations, and newspaper reviews; and
- g. Hall of Fame - the immortalization of who is who in the history of the electoral process in Nigeria.

4.6.2 Phases II- Establishment of Digital Archiving System

This deals with the collection and digitization of electoral documents, and the creation of a digital archive, also consisting of seven (7) areas namely:

- a. Provision and setting up of a digitization workstation with an archival repository server and adequate backups.
- b. Provision and setting up of scanners to scan various sizes of documents at great speed.
- c. Scanning and digitization of all existing electoral materials and documents.

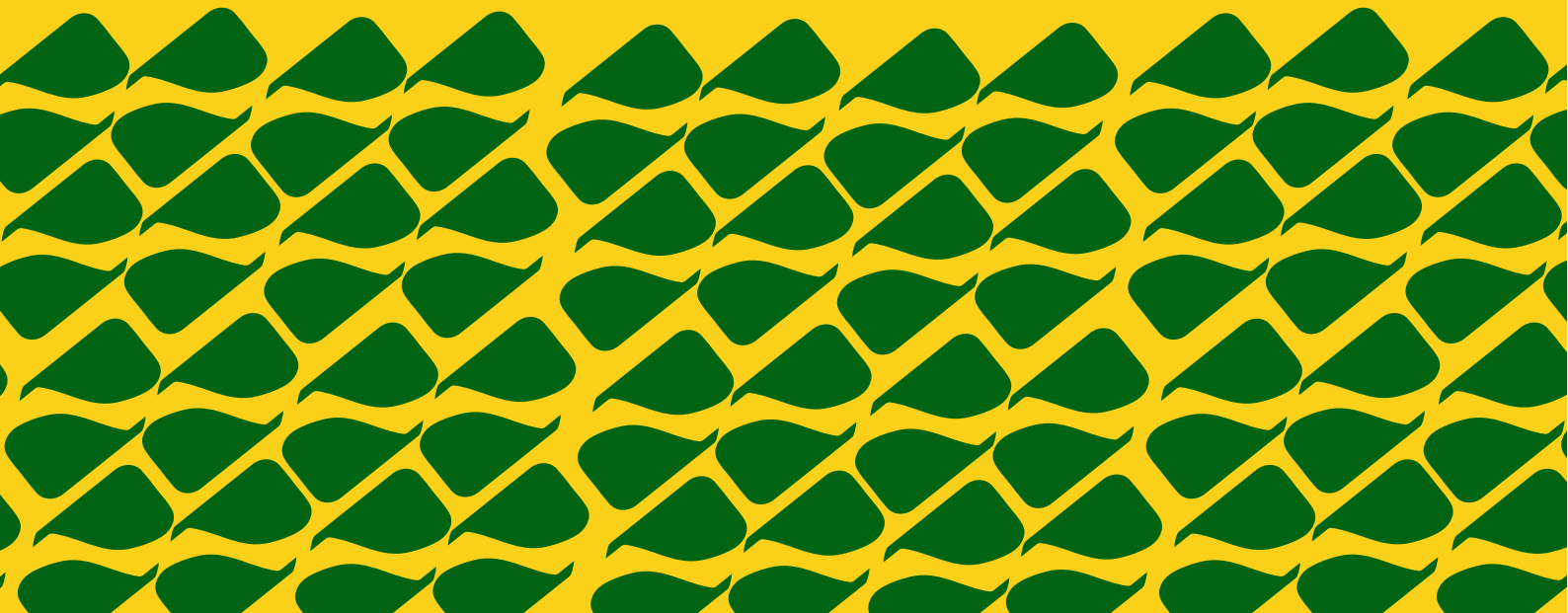
- d. Provision of a Digital Archival Database for storing digitized materials and documents.
- e. Implementation of appropriate security measures to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the digitized materials and documents; and
- f. Creation of a user-friendly interface for accessing and searching digitized materials and documents; and
- g. Capacity building for staff.



Figure 4.4: Institutional memory for the establishment of INEC's Electoral Museum

05

Expansion and Deployment of Electoral Technologies



Expansion and Deployment of Electoral Technologies

The use of digital technologies in elections has now been widely accepted in Nigeria as essential to efficiency and the reduction of negative human intervention in elections. Although technology was used in compiling the register of voters ahead of the 2007 General Election, it was not until 2010 – 2015 that election technologies were deployed in a structured, controlled and purposeful manner. That tradition continued in the Commission from 2015 to 2025. In this period, the Commission has become very intentional in applying technology based on clearly defined principles, some of them formalized and others conventional, for developing, choosing and deploying election technology as discussed in the Policy on Election Technology Acquisition and Deployment (PETAD) above. Ten such principles are discernible:

- a) Election technology requires a robust administrative and oversight system to function effectively.
- b) Technology supports elections, it should not drive it. In other words, elections should be technology-supported and not technology-driven, as many commentators erroneously often advocate.
- c) The latest and often the most expensive election technology is not necessarily the best. The environment in which it is to be deployed, and its adaptability are critical considerations.
- d) Where the Commission cannot fully understand the technical

workings of the technology and therefore cannot control it, then it probably does not need it.

- e) INEC processes determine the technology that it deploys; the technology does not / should not determine the Commission's processes.
- f) Technology mostly buys time by increasing efficiency, but it may not buy trust. As such, beyond technology, the Commission will continue to conduct itself in a manner that earns public trust and confidence.
- g) The Commission is always weary of off-the-shelf election technologies. Its preference is always to design its internally and then engage reputable Tech companies to custom-build it.
- h) Failure of election technology, ironically, is essential to its success. Always know how the system might fail and what the remedies are. Plan for failures and establish a robust system of failovers.
- i) Election technology is as good as it is secure. Licensed software may not always be the most secure. A sensible mixture of licensed and open-source software is required; and
- j) Phased, properly piloted deployment is key to success.

These principles enshrined in PETAD have been the guiding principles in the development, acquisition and deployment of digital election technologies in the Commission. Thus, the Commission had in the past one decade tried to ensure that all the systems, applications and portals developed and deployed for the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process adhered to these principles as detailed in the subsections below.

The Yakubu Commission developed and deployed several online portals to automate aspects of electoral processes and procedures

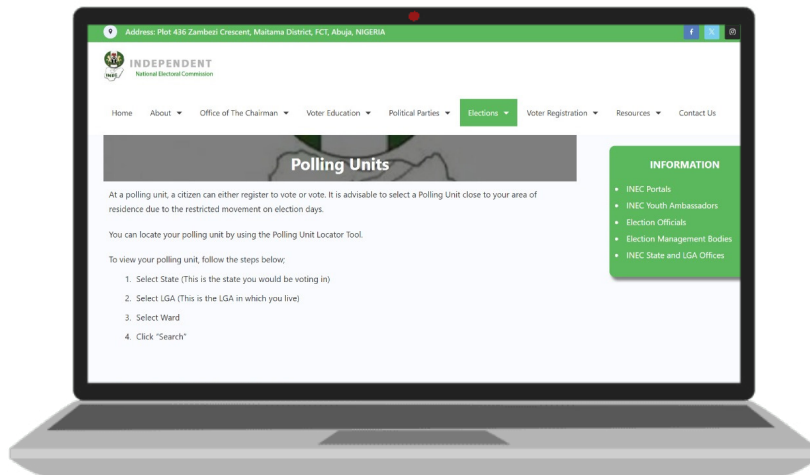


Figure 5.1: Screenshot of Polling Unit live locator

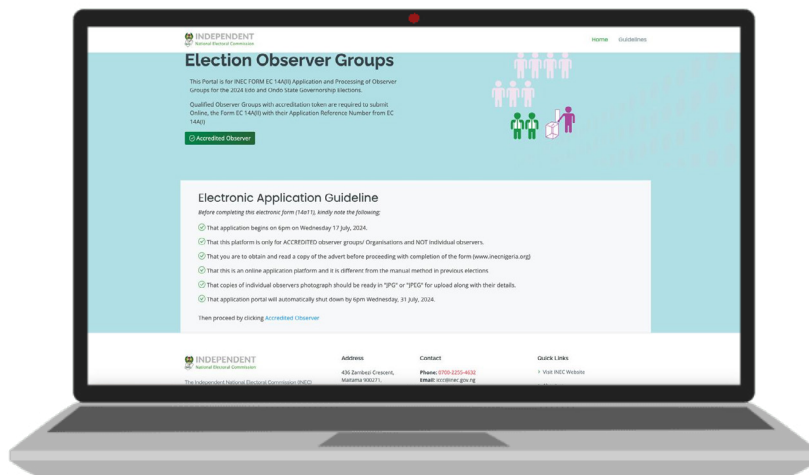


Figure 5.2: Screenshot of Observer Management System

The Yakubu Commission developed and deployed several online portals to automate aspects of electoral processes and procedures

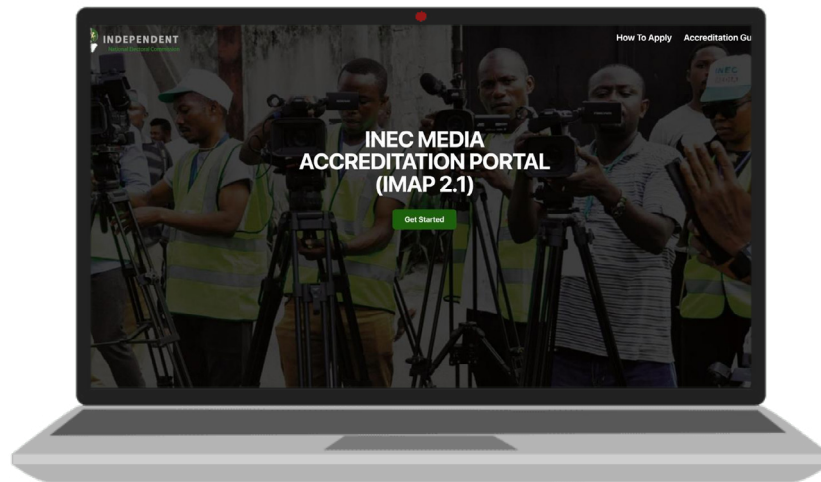


Figure 5.3: Screenshot of media accreditation portal

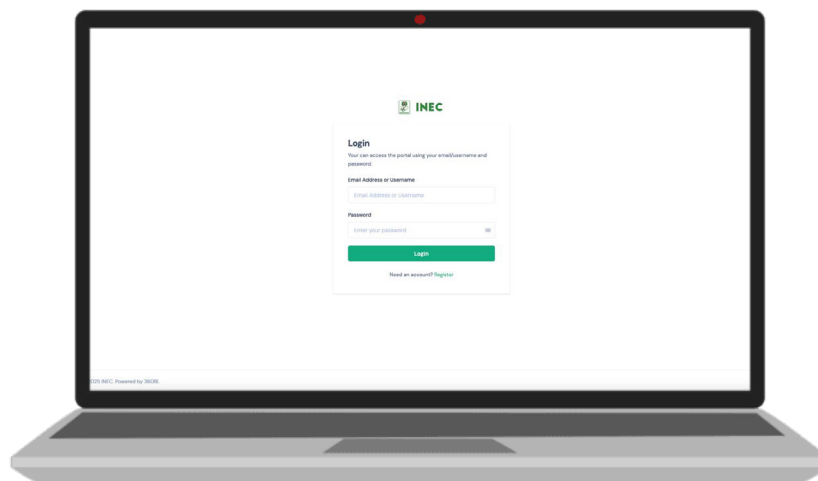


Figure 5.4: Screenshot of the INEC Candidate Nomination Portal

5.1 Pre-Covid Election Technology

The history of the adoption of election technology in Nigeria may be traced principally to INEC's compilation of a biometric register of voters. Different attempts were made by INEC, including the use of OMR technology, but the Commission finally settled for the direct collection of fingerprints using fingerprint scanners. The Direct Data Capture Machines (DDCM), as they became known, were used for the first major attempt to compile a biometric register by the Commission in the buildup to the 2007 General Election. The DDCM was a laptop computer to which was connected a fingerprint scanner and a webcam to collect fingerprints and photographs to create a voter's record on the register. Each record was later used to print a Permanent Voters Card (PVC), which the voter presents for accreditation on election day.

The next major deployment in Nigeria's election technology leveraged on the biometric register. It involved the use of machine-readable PVCs and the deployment of Card Readers for the accreditation of voters. For the 2015 General Election, INEC issued a new generation of the PVC, which had a chip and an antenna that enabled it to connect to the Smart Card Reader (SCR). The SCR read the chip of intending voters' PVCs and extracted the metadata of the voters as well as their fingerprints. The voter is then requested to place a selected fingerprint on the fingerprint reader of the SCR for matching. This was a major development in ensuring the integrity of elections in Nigeria. The PVC and SCR were used for the 2015 and 2019 General Elections. However, as early as the 2015 General Election, several challenges became apparent with the

use of the SCR for accreditation. First, its legality was challenged in one of the election petitions and the courts raised issues about the relationship between the use of the SCR and the provisions of the Electoral Act 2010, which did not specifically mention the use of the SCR. Second, the SCR was not able to read the fingerprints of some voters, either because their fingerprints were unreadable, for instance with older voters and those in some manual professions, or because the fingerprints were not properly captured when they registered to vote. Third, in some cases, the SCR was unable to read the PVCs. This was either because the PVCs were printed for the wrong Polling Unit, or because the antenna or chip in the PVC became faulty. The inability of the SCR to read the fingerprints and PVCs led the Commission to introduce Incident Forms. The form enabled affected voters to vote, once they fill the Incident Forms. Nonetheless, it soon became clear that the Incident Forms were being abused by politicians and voters, sometimes with the collusion of Polling Unit officials. There were credible reports that some voters who came to the Polling Units with other people's PVCs were allowed to vote after they filled the Incident Forms. As we shall see, these problems with the SCR informed the major changes introduced in the technology of voter accreditation after the 2019 General Election.

Other major election technologies deployed by the Commission up to 2015 are summarized in Table 5.1. They include the Automatic Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), which is a software used for finding multiple registrants and removing them from the Register of Voters, PVCs, Smart Card Readers, CSRVS, EOSC, EMSC, BaSED, ERM, EVMAT, Virtual Library, Graphic Design Centre, INEC PRES.

Table 5.1: Application of Technology by INEC up till 2015

Area of Application	Technology	Explanation	Election/ Date Introduced
Registration and Identification of Voters	Biometric registration	Use of biometrics (fingerprint technology in identifying voters).	2007
	Computer-based registration of voters	Direct Data Capture Machines (DDCM) is a laptop computer-based registration equipment introduced in 2007 but fully deployed in 2011.	2007/2011
	Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)	AFIS was introduced as part of the compilation of the biometric register. It is a software which was used to check multiple registration by removing duplicates. Deduplication is central to the integrity of the Voters Register.	2011
	Permanent Voters' Card (PVC) with chip	A chip-based voters card introduced in 2015 which made it possible to use an electronic device to positively identify a voter using fingerprints.	2015
Accreditation for Voting	Smart Card Reader (SCR)	An electronic device that reads the PVC and the fingerprint of voters to authenticate them before voting	2015
Results Management	Presidential Election Collation System	Electronic transfer of Presidential election results from States to the Presidential Collation Centre in Abuja. It involved emailing an Excel and scanned pdf versions of each State result directly to the Chairman of the Commission (Chief Electoral Officer) via a dedicated email address. The emailed results are then cross-checked against the physical result (EC8D) brought in by State Collation Officers for the Presidential Election (SCOPE) before being publicly displayed and collated.	2011
	Collation Support and Results Verification System (CSRVS)	CSRVS provides support to Collation and Returning Officers during the compilation and announcement of results. Using carefully prepared Excel sheets and files, CSRVS helps to confirm figures from manual collation and speed up the process of results management.	2015

Election-Day Supervision and Monitoring	Election Situation Room	Real-time monitoring and resolution of issues on election day, using various electronic channels such as emails, phone calls, electronic media reports, etc. It was initially established at the INEC headquarters but later extended to each State office.	2011
	Election Management System (EMS)	Election Management System (EMS) uses computer applications and dashboards to monitor and support Election Day activities.	2014
Security and Safety	Basic Security in Election Duty (BaSED)	Basic Security in Election Duty (BaSED) is an electronic security training and certification module for election duty staff.	2015
	Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERM)	Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERM) is a specialized tool for tracking election risks and managing them.	2015
Public Information and Voter Education	INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC)	ICCC uses technology to receive and respond to public requests for information and to escalate issues.	2014
Knowledge Production	Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT)	Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT) is an electronic data gathering tool used by the Electoral Institute (TEI) for research on election violence.	2015
	TEI Virtual Library	Fully equipped digital library at the Electoral Institute to support research and institutional memory building	2012
Election Staff Recruitment	INEC Portal for Recruitment of Election Staff (INEC PRES)	INEC Portal for Recruitment of Election Staff (INEC PRES) is an online election staff recruitment and deployment system. It also has an Android application to provide multiple access to potential election staff.	2019

5.2 Impact of Covid-19 on Election Technology

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a major threshold in the deployment of election technologies in Nigeria. In the face of the unique health challenges posed to citizens by the pandemic, which particularly affected mass events like elections, the Commission had to use technology to increase the efficiency of conducting elections and simultaneously reduce direct human contacts. At the height of the pandemic, the Commission issued a series of regulations, guidelines and policies on diverse aspects of its work, which inevitably increased the deployment of technologies in election administration. This spread across practically all aspects of the electoral process, particularly voter registration, accreditation during elections, results management, political party management and management of election observers. Five of these technologies stood out.

5.2.1 INEC Voter Enrolment Device (IVED)

Perhaps the most common area where new technologies have been deployed by INEC is in the registration of voters. The Direct Data Capture Machines (DDCMs) were the first set of enrolment devices introduced by INEC. A DDCM was a laptop computer to which was connected a fingerprint scanner, a webcam and a printer. It was first introduced in 2006 for voter enrolment, but that first deployment was bogged by several problems, including the absence of common hardware specifications, use of different data capture software and systems that lacked mutual intelligibility and interoperability, poor database management that led to mix-ups in the data of registrants, and challenges

in backend database management built on expensive licensed software and dated servers. These problems led to enormous difficulties with the register of voters in the 2007 General Election, with missing names, voters appearing in Polling Units where they did not choose, sometimes outside their States, fictitious names, and so on.

In the 2011 voter registration exercise, the Commission tried to rectify these challenges by introducing the second generation of DDCMs. It ensured that there were common hardware specifications for all suppliers, a single open-source Operating System, customized enrolment software built by the Commission itself, auxiliary power source for the equipment and on-the-spot printing of a Temporary Voters Card. At the backend, an open-source data management software was deployed and there was a transition from the big single servers to several smaller and more nimble servers, which gave far better flexibility and more computing power. These improvements made it possible for the Commission to enrol over 73 million registrants in about three weeks. Still, the second generation of DDCMs had their challenges, which included the use of small, single fingerprint scanners that took time to scan ten fingerprints, inadequate auxiliary power for equipment and so on.

After 2015, the new Commission introduced the third generation of DDCMs, which now had the 4-4-2 fingerprint scanners to speed up the process and larger auxiliary power. While these changes increased the efficiency in enrolling voters, the entire DDCM concept had fallen behind contemporary technology. They were bulky and cumbersome to move around, which created challenges for both outbound and reverse logistics.

It became inevitable that the next generation of enrolment devices should be nimbler and more mobile and should be more cost efficient. This led to the introduction of IVED by the Commission in 2021.

IVED was a customized mobile device (tablet with in-built high-resolution camera, to which was attached the 4-4-2 fingerprint scanner and printer). Its specification addressed the bulky challenge of the DDCM. It was also more power efficient and matched the DDCM in processing power. In addition, the IVED captured not only fingerprints and photographs, but the enrolment software was modified to capture facial features to support facial recognition during elections. In other words, the IVED added facial recognition as a second biometric feature, in addition to fingerprints. This made voter identification during elections (accreditation bimodal, that is using either the fingerprint or facial recognition). But most importantly for the Commission, the same tablets that were used as IVED were also converted to the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) used for voter identification on Election Day. This saved the Commission tremendous cost and improvements in assess management and logistics.

5.2.2 Online CVR and ABIS

Another important technology introduced into voter registration by the Commission in the 2015 – 2025 period was the online pre-registration. To facilitate registration, the Commission in 2021 introduced, for the first time, the online pre-registration of voters. Through a portal, intending voters could commence registration online, secure an appointment and complete the process of biometric capturing in person at an INEC Office. This has had several advantages. For one, it has made registration easier

for intending voters who have access to the Internet. For another, it has to some extent decongested registration locations, which was one of the common factors that dissuaded would be voters from registering. In addition, it has encouraged many younger voters to get registered. Above all, it has made it easier for the Commission to manage registration by pulling the data of registrants easily from the database linked to the portal. This has revolutionized voter registration in Nigeria, such that as of May 2022, over 2 million voters had registered.

A related innovation was the transition from Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) to the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) for removing multiple registrants and ensuring the integrity of the Voters' Register. ABIS is more versatile and comprehensive than AFIS and uses both the fingerprint and face recognition in conducting matches, which means that more cases of multiple registration are caught.

5.2.3 Election Portals

The pre-registration portal was not the only one established by the Commission during the period under review (2015 – 2025). In the context of the COVID-19 health crisis, several portals were established to not only reduce physical contacts, but also to enhance the efficiency of the Commission in several areas of election administration. These portals include the candidates' clearance portal, a portal for voters to check their registration status, portal for receiving observer applications, portal for accrediting polling agents, and a portal for managing media bodies that wish to cover elections. These portals, particularly the candidate submission portal has increased the speed of candidate management, as well as cut down on bottlenecks, congestion and reduced electoral fraud.

5.2.4 Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)

Perhaps the most important introduction of technology into Nigeria's election between 2015 and 2025 is the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). The device represents a major improvement over the Smart Card Reader (SCR) that was in use for voter accreditation prior to the 2023 General Election. Unlike the SCR, which did not have the details of voters resident in its memory, the BVAS contained the soft copy of the register of the Polling Unit to which it is configured for an election. This means that verification is easier as the BVAS can quickly confirm the records of the intending voter. Even more important is its use of two biometrics for the authentication of the voter namely, fingerprint and face recognition. This second layer of biometrics ensures that unlike the SCR, where the fingerprint of the voter is not successfully read, the BVAS can immediately use the face recognition. This provides more assurance that a genuine voter will not be disenfranchised. In addition, the BVAS means that in future it is possible not to require the specific use of the PVC for accreditation and voting. Any identity card could be used. In fact, it is even possible not to use any identity card at all, since the BVAS contains the name, photograph, fingerprints and the facial identity of the voter. Also, the BVAS retains an electronic record of all those who were accredited for an election, which provides a useful audit trail and backup for the physical register. Finally, the BVAS performs the additional function of transmitting the image of the result from a Polling Unit to the INEC Result Viewing portal (IReV)

5.2.5 INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV)

Publishing Polling Unit results after elections posed a strong challenge to the Commission for several electoral cycles. Many observers noted this problem and flagged it as a major weak link in the chain of integrity of elections in Nigeria. There was a widespread feeling that Polling Unit results were at variance with the results that are collated. Sometimes, the Polling Unit results were destroyed during violence and still results were returned for them. To allay these public concerns, the Commission was challenged to publish Polling Unit results.

From the 2011 General Election, the Commission began to conduct pilots for publishing Polling Unit results. One of such pilots was to send the results as text messages to a database, using cell phones. This became improbable with the large number of political parties and the risk of human error in entering the results. Another pilot involved the use of hand-held scanners purchased by the Commission to scan the results by swiping them with the scanner. The scanners were then to be returned after the elections for the results to be downloaded and saved in a database for publishing. Unfortunately, at the end of the election it was discovered that most Polling Unit scanners contained no images, while many images were blurred. More seriously, a good number of the hand-held scanners were pilfered and not returned. The Commission also in 2014 developed the e-TRACK, a system that allowed the upload upload of EC 8As onto a server from State Offices after an election.

However, it was only in 2020 that the Commission decided to leverage available technology to revisit this problem. The decision was to have the

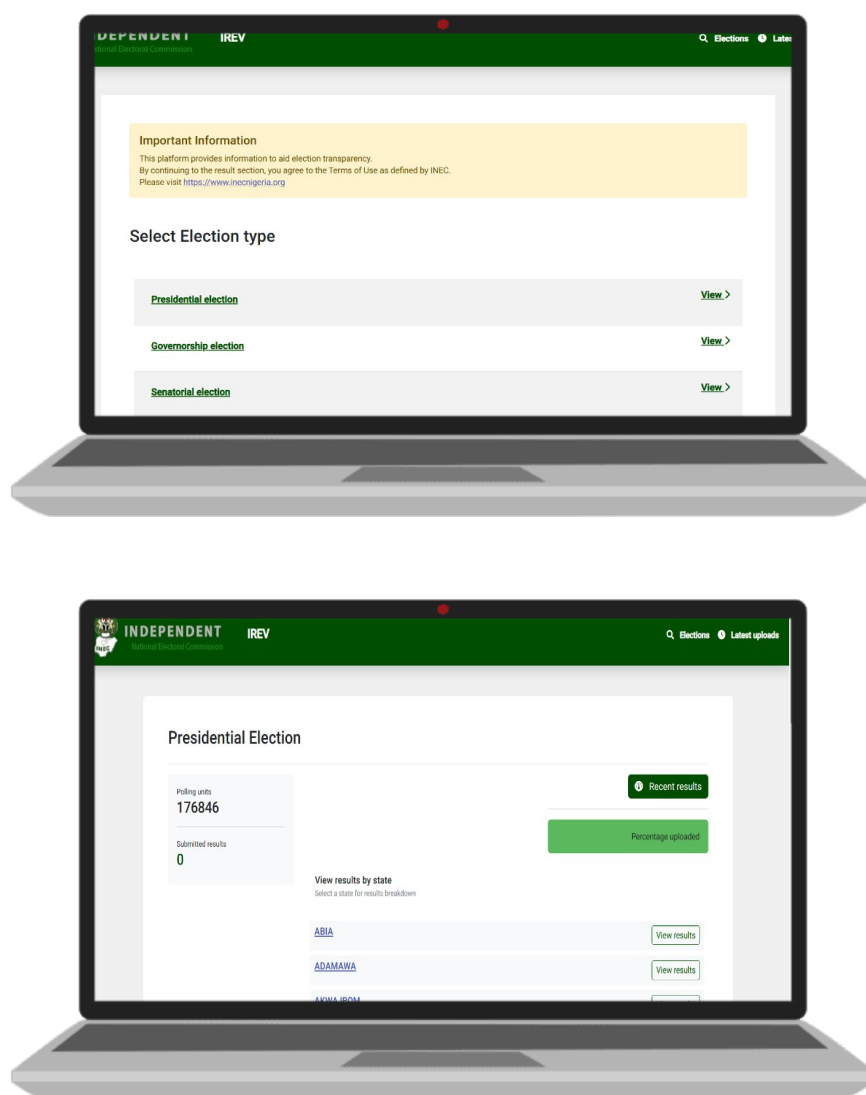


Figure 5.5: Screenshot of the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) for the 2023 Presidential Election

Polling Unit result sheets (Form EC8A) scanned and sent directly to a secure cloud server from where they will be published for public viewing. This was the birth of the IReV. To achieve this design, it was necessary to have a device at the Polling Unit that can scan the results, which also has access to the Internet to transmit it to IReV. Enter the BVAS. With the BVAS already available for accreditation of voters, it then had the additional function of transmitting Polling Unit results to the IReV.

IReV was first introduced in the Nasarawa Central State Constituency bye-election in Nasarawa State, held on 8th August 2020. Since then, a total of 1647 (see Table 5.4) election results have been uploaded to date as indicated in table 5.2 below. The thinking behind the introduction of the portal was twofold. First, it was designed to address the aforementioned issue that observers and Nigerians have raised regarding the publication of Polling Unit results. It was indeed an irony that even though elections take place at Polling Units, the Commission could

not publish results disaggregated by Polling Units. The problem was not necessarily that those results either did not exist or were doctored, as many critics think. Rather, it was more of the format for publishing the results, considering the number of Polling Units involved. Beyond that, Nigerians wanted the data to be in an editable format to enable them conduct their own audit of the results. The challenge with this was the cost of entering the

data in real time at all the Polling Units, some of them located in extremely remote areas, and under the tense conditions of counting and recording results at Polling Units. The fear of the Commission was that wrong entries could become rampant under those conditions, leading to increased tension and heated contestation over electoral outcomes.

Table 5.2: Number of Elections, No. of PUs, and Percentage of Results Uploaded onto IReV from August 2020

S/No.	Election	No. of Polling Units	No. of PUs Uploaded	% Uploaded
Governorship				
1	Osun State	3763	3763	100
2	Ekiti State	2445	2445	100
3	Anambra	5720	5719	99.98
4	Ondo State	3009	3009	100
5	Edo State	2627	2618	99.66
Senatorial District				
6	Lagos East	2002	1971	98.45
7	Plateau South	712	712	100
8	Imo North	692	692	100
9	Cross River North	535	535	100
10	Bayelsa West	396	396	100
11	Bayelsa Central	788	788	100
Federal Constituency				
12	Akure North/ Akure South	408	408	100
13	Ogoja Yala	297	297	100
14	Jos North/Bassa	619	619	100
15	Lere	249	249	100
16	Gwaram	248	248	100
17	Aba North/Aba South	609	609	100
18	Magama/Rijau	307	307	100
State Constituency				
19	Ekiti East I	47	47	100

20	Ngor Okpala	148	148	100
21	Pankshin South	62	62	100
22	Akpabuyo	129	129	100
23	Isoko South I	84	84	100
24	Sabon Gari	173	173	100
25	Isoko North	145	144	99.31
26	Kafin Hausa	118	118	100
27	Dass	79	79	100
28	Bakura	114	75	65.79
29	Kosofe II	350	346	98.86
30	Obudu	107	78	72.9
31	Bayo	59	59	100
32	Nganzai	85	85	100
33	Ibaji	148	145	97.97
34	Bakori	344	186	54.07
35	Isi-Uzo	118	118	100
36	Nasarawa Central	44	44	100
FCT Area Council				
37	Rimba/Ebagi Ward Bye-Election 2021	6	6	100
38	Six Area Council Chairmen 2022	2,822	2,822	100
39	62 Councillorship Seats 2022	2,822	2,798	99.14

The second reasoning behind the IReV was to make results from the Polling Units readily available to the public as a means of increasing transparency and trust in the process. In 2015, the Commission introduced the display of results on cardboard and plain sheets of paper for each Polling Unit. Sometime in 2018, the process was systematized with the introduction of Form EC60E, which is a poster containing a summary of the results for each Polling Unit. It was displayed at Polling Units for the public to see and take pictures if they so wished. IReV took the concept behind the Form

EC60E to a higher level by making the results available to more members of the public, who can access them from anywhere, even from outside the country. Users only need to register for access, supply a valid email address, which is validated, create their login details and, thereafter, have free access to the results on the IReV portal. At the moment, several accounts have been opened by members of the public to view results on the IReV and there have been over three billion hits on the IReV portal as shown in table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Number of Logins 'Hits' on the IReV During Elections

S/N	Type of Election	Login/Views
1	Presidential	1.9 billion
2	Governorship	1.1 billion
3	Senatorial	238 million
4	Federal Constituency	280 million
5	State Constituency	207 million
6	Local Council Chairmanship	100 thousand
7	Wards	40 thousand

Starting with the Nasarawa Central State Constituency bye-election, the IReV has been deployed in all elections, including the 2023 General Election. This means that the IReV has been deployed in 1 Presidential Election, 38 Governorship, 119 Senatorial District, 385 Federal Constituency, 1,036 State Constituency, six FCT Chairmanship and 62 FCT Councillorship elections as indicated in table 5.4 below. In these elections, 33,275 Forms EC8As were expected to be uploaded to the IReV for viewing. A total of 32,985 results

were successfully uploaded, giving an upload success rate of 99.13%. This is a remarkable achievement considering that the constituencies are spread across the country covering different types of elections in different terrains, some of them quite remote. These constituencies were both urban and rural in location; some were in creeks and mountains; and yet others even in areas affected by insecurity and insurgency.

Table 5.4: Number of Elections Uploaded to the IReV

S/N	Type of Election	Login/Views
1	Presidential	1
2	Governorship	38
3	Senatorial	119
4	Federal Constituency	385
5	State Constituency	1,036
6	Local Council Chairmanship	6
7	Wards	62

5.3 Suite of Election Management Apps

The visible improvements in the electoral process occasioned by the introduction of new technology were bound to lead to further infusion of technology in the Commission's work. In 2022, the European Union launched the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EUSDGN II) Project. One component of the project was support to INEC implemented by the Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI). In conjunction with the Technical Team of the INEC Chairman, that component of the

project designed and rolled out a suite of tools and applications for INEC. These applications are not only tailor-made for INEC, but the Commission received all their source codes and technical details. This is necessary so that whenever the Commission needed to make any changes to them, it can do so internally. It also means that the Commission will not have to pay licensing fees on any of the applications. This is entirely novel in the history of the acquisition of election technology by INEC. All the applications have been tested and phased deployment has been ongoing. Table 5.5 presents a summary of the applications and what they are meant for.

Table 5.5: Bespoke INEC-DAI Election Management Tools

	Tool	Acronym	Summary Description
1.	Collation and Returning Officers Management System	CROMS	A mobile and web-based system for recruiting, posting and evaluating Returning and Collation Officers
2.	Parties Financial Reporting and Auditing System	PFRAS	A tool for the automation of the reporting and auditing of the finances of political parties. It enables political parties to track, compile and report their finances to INEC virtually using this software and web-dashboard.
3.	Election Results Management System	ERMS	Provides a framework for creating the National Electronic Register of Election Results (NERER, as provided in Section 62 (2) of the Electoral Act 2022. ERMS draws results directly from IReV to create a composite, easily accessible database of current and past election results.
4.	Media Monitoring System	MMS	Provides an automated media monitoring system. Using keywords, the system can pull up all records of media reports related to INEC. It also tracks the history of such records for easy back record searches.

5.	Virtual Election Training System	VETS	VETS is an e-learning platform tailored to diverse INEC training needs. It provides both online real-time training facility and video training capabilities. In addition, it makes it possible for extended offline interactions between students and instructors, as well as among students.
6.	New EMSC Dashboard		This is a new, comprehensive and interactive EMSC dashboard. It replaces the old dashboard and incorporates an extended EMSC checklist. It makes it possible to plugin all the components of EMSC via APIs.
7.	INECPRES and OMIS Linkage Tool	IOMIS	IOMIS links the INEC ad-hoc staff recruitment system (INECPRES) and the Electoral Operation's Management Information System (OMIS). This linkage enables improved recordkeeping for staff recruitment and management and makes it possible for the automation of recruitment, posting and evaluation of the performance of ad-hoc staff.
8.	Election Facility Locator	EFLoc	A follow-up to the capturing of GPS locations of Polling Units. DAI supported the capturing of the locations of the new Polling Units established in 2021 and the correction of some earlier captured ones. The EFLoc is an interactive application designed for locating all INEC's georeferenced facilities on a map. The tool is also able to measure distances between locations and displays key metadata for each facility.

5.4 Impact of Technology on Elections

There is a broad consensus that the technologies and innovations introduced by the Commission between 2015 and 2025 helped to improve the quality of elections, both in terms of efficiency and credibility. The improvements can be seen in diverse areas of the Commission's work as an Election Management Body. These span voter registration, voter accreditation, political party and candidate management, election monitoring and support, as well as result management.

However, election technologies do not constitute a magic wand for solving all electoral problems.

While election technologies improve election efficiency and integrity, they can also constitute a source of vulnerability. Thus, notwithstanding that technology provides solutions to electoral management problems, it is also prone to failure. In Nigeria, elections are always seen as high-stake events and expect election technology to be perfect. When it encounters challenges, as was partly the case with IReV in the 2023 General Election, there is a deep feeling of disappointment, which is understandable. Nevertheless, such malfunctions are not unexpected and should be explained to the public, as the Commission has already done regarding the problem with the IReV in the 2023 General Election³.

³<https://www.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2023-GENERAL-ELECTION-REPORT-1.pdf>

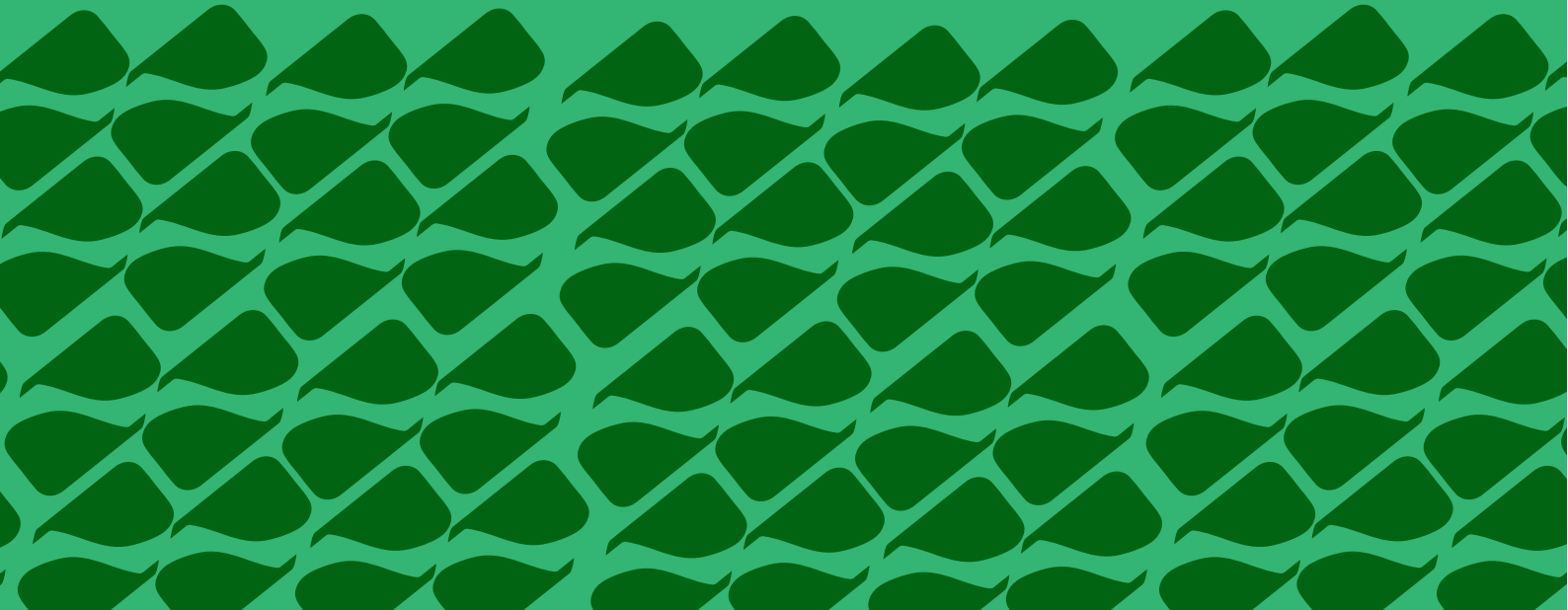
Box 8: Principles of the Acquisition and Deployment of Election Technologies in INEC

The use of digital technologies in elections has now been widely accepted in Nigeria as essential to efficiency and the reduction of negative human intervention in elections. Although technology was used in compiling the register of voters ahead of the 2007 General Election, it was not until 2010 – 2015 that election technologies were deployed in a structured, controlled and purposeful manner. That tradition continued in the Commission from 2015 to 2025. In this period, the Commission has become very intentional in applying technology based on clearly defined principles, some of them formalized and others conventional, for developing, choosing and deploying election technology as discussed in the Policy on Election Technology Acquisition and Deployment (PETAD) above. Ten such principles are discernible:

- a. Election technology requires a robust administrative and oversight system to function effectively.
- b. Technology supports elections, it should not drive it. In other words, elections should be technology-supported and not technology-driven, as many commentators erroneously often advocate.
- c. The latest and often the most expensive election technology is not necessarily the best. The environment in which it is to be deployed, and its adaptability are critical considerations.
- d. Where the Commission cannot fully understand the technical workings of the technology and therefore cannot control it, then it probably does not need it.
- e. INEC processes determine the technology that it deploys; the technology does not / should not determine its processes.
- f. Technology mostly buys time by increasing efficiency, but it may not buy trust. As such, beyond technology, the Commission will continue to conduct itself in a manner that earns public trust and confidence.
- g. The Commission is always weary of off the shelf election technologies. Its preference is always to design it internally and then engage reputable Tech companies to custom-build it.
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06

Voter and Stakeholder Engagements



Voter and Stakeholder Engagements

One distinguishing feature of the period 2015 to 2025 in the work of INEC was the regularity of engagements with voters and stakeholders. This is part of the commitment of the Commission to be proactive in providing information, prioritizing transparency in its work and building trust with electoral stakeholders. The cardinal purpose of all engagements with voters and stakeholders by the Commission is the conduct of elections. In the period since November 2015, the Commission conducted elections into over 4,500 Federal, State and Local Council constituencies in two general elections and several off-cycle, bye and re-run elections. The general elections were conducted in 2019 and 2023 and the comprehensive report on these elections are available on the Commission's website⁴

6.1 Continuous Voter Registration (CVR)

Without a doubt, the Register of Voters for any Election Management Body is the first most important element in the conduct of free, fair and credible elections. Without a credible voters' register, the credibility of elections is put into question. The registration of voters for the compilation of a Register of Voters is therefore a major area in the work of the Commission and perhaps the most critical activity that precedes any election, especially a general or off-cycle Governorship election. Sections 15F(e) in Part I of the Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution (as

amended) and Section 12 of the 2022 Electoral Act respectively empower INEC to register voters for all elections conducted in Nigeria. The Electoral Act provides that registration of voters shall be on a continuous basis. However, the Commission struggled to define the meaning of registering voters on a continuous basis as envisaged by law under the provisions of the Sections 9(1) and 10(1) of the old Electoral Act 2010 due to a number of issues. First was the issue of defining whether registration should be open permanently throughout the electoral cycle on a continuous or a temporal basis, considering that Section 9(5) of the Electoral Act 2010 provides that no registration shall occur 60 days to a General Election.

To address the issue, the Commission in 2010, took the decision to develop a new biometric register of voters for the country that will be continuously updated through the enrolment of new registrants that have either not registered before, or those that attained the age of 18 years as required by the Electoral Act. Thereafter, instead of the usual practise of undertaking a new registration of voters before a general election, the Commission in the run-up to the 2015 General Election only updated the already existing register by undertaking the registration of voters at the RA level over a specified period of 14 days in 2014. Expectedly, many members of the public criticised this on the ground that it did not meet the legal requirement of being continuous.

To explore the possibility of a nationwide CVR as stipulated under Section 10(1) of the 2010 Electoral Act (as amended), the Commission undertook a comprehensive review of the voter registration process in 2017.

⁴<https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/REPORT-OF-THE-2019-GENERAL-ELECTION.pdf> and <https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2023-GENERAL-ELECTION-REPORT-1.pdf>

During that review, the Commission considered the option of undertaking the voter registration exercise on a continuous basis at the PU, RA or LGA level. The review revealed that the indicative cost of rolling out a nationwide CVR exercise for one (1) day at the PU, RA or LGA level was N137.47 billion, N21 billion and N463.2 million respectively as shown in Table 6.1 below. Consequently, the Commission decided to undertake the CVR exercise at the LGA and other designated centres only as it did not have the required financial resources, personnel and equipment to deploy to the PU and/or RA level. The new CVR exercise which made it possible

for citizens who have attained the voting age of 18 years and those who, for sundry reasons, could not register during the previous exercises, can now do so, was conducted over a period of 17 months from 27th April 2017 to 6th September 2018. This marked the first time in the history of the Commission that registration of voters would be available on a continuous basis as envisaged by the Electoral Act. At the end of the exercise, a total of 14,283,734 new voters were added to the Register of Voters which brought the total number of registered voters for the 2019 General Election to 84,004,084.

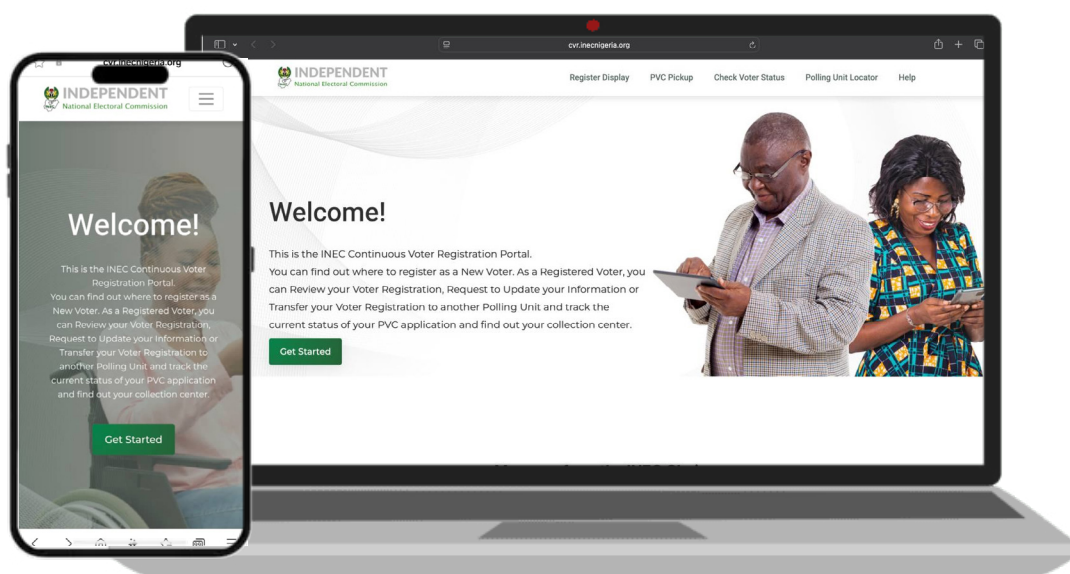


Figure 6.1: Image of the front page of the INEC Online Voter Registration Portal

Figure 6.2: Screenshot of the INEC Online Registration Portal

Table 6.1: Comparative Analysis of the Cost of Nationwide CVR Roll Out, for the 2019 General Election

		Indicative Cost - PU			Indicative Cost - RA			Actual Cost - LGA		
		119,973			8,809			774		
S/N	Activities	Nos Required	Indicative Cost Unit Cost (N)	Total Cost (N)	Nos Required	Indicative Cost Unit Cost (N)	Total Cost (N)	Nos Required	Indicative Cost Unit Cost (N)	Total Cost (N)
1	Honoraria (Registration Officials) @ 5 per Registration Centre + 5% redundancy (INEC + ad-hoc Staff)	629,858	2,000	1,259,716,000	46,247	2,000	92,494,000	4,064	0	0
2	Personnel (Security) @ 2 per Registration Centre	239,946	500	119,973,000	17,618	500	8,809,000	1,548	0	0
3	Consumables (Ink, Papers, Prescribed Forms)	119,973	34,960	4,194,256,080	8,809	34,960	307,962,640	774	1,932	89,748,966
4	Data Processing (Consolidation and de-duplication)			44,035,000			44,035,000			69,802,000
5	Publicity			85,118,000			85,118,000	774	126,747.80	98,102,800
6	Training for four (4) days	629,858	5,000	3,149,290,000	46,247	5,000	231,235,000	3870	9,292.38	35,961,500

7	DDCM/ DDCM Accessories	125,972	1,000,000	125,972,000,000	17,618	1,000,000	17,618,000,000	1,548	47,854.01	74,078,000
8	Power Generators - 5KVA	8,809	300,000	2,642,700,000	8,809	300,000	2,642,700,000			
9	Logistics, Readiness Assurance & Monitoring by HQTRs							25,156,000		
10	Logistics support to States (Servicing and fuelling of Power Generators							774	62,428.94	48,320,000
11	5% Contingency on Project							22,058,463		
	Total			137,467,088,080			21,030,353,640			463,227,729

The CVR exercise was suspended in September 2018 in preparation for the 2019 General Election expected to recommence again shortly after the election. However, the resumption was delayed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic with its associated health and security challenges so much so that it did not resume until 28th June 2021. In the intervening period, the Commission was determined to improve the registration process and ensure that all eligible citizens are registered to vote. Consequently, the Commission leveraged on the use of electoral technology by introducing the online pre-registration platform which made it possible for intending registrants to commence the process online and subsequently complete it in person at a Registration Centre. It also enabled already registered voters to transfer their registration from one location to another, and those with incorrect details on their PVC or with damaged, defaced or faded PVCs or whose names are on the register but were yet to collect their PVCs, to seek remedial action.

At the time the CVR exercise was suspended on 31st July 2022 in preparation for the 2023 General Election, 1,014,382 Nigerians have availed themselves of the use of online pre-registration facility and 12,298,944 new voters were registered. To validate the registered voters, the Commission undertook a thorough clean-up of the data and for the first time since 1998, displayed the entire register on the Commission's website for the purposes of claims and objections. At the end of the clean-up exercise, 9,518,188 registered voters were validated and added to the National Register of Voters. While the number of new registrants was impressive and demonstrated the eagerness of Nigerians, especially young people to participate in elections, the number

of invalid registrations resulting from double, multiple or underage registration is troubling. This is in addition to the question of registrants whose data were incomplete and did not meet the business rules for inclusion in the register. That the Commission was able to detect these ineligible registrants was due to the upgrade of the deduplication process from the previous Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) to the new Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) which is more a more comprehensive and robust system, involving both fingerprint recognition and facial recognition.

6.2 Printing and Collection of Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs)

The issuance of the PVCs to registered voters for the purpose of voting in elections is of the uttermost importance to the Commission. This is so given the fact that the Electoral Act requires that for any intending person to vote, he/she must present himself/herself with his/her voters' card to a Presiding Officer for the purpose of accreditation at the polling unit where his/her name is registered. In essence, the PVC is a prerequisite for voting and only the Commission has the power to design, print and control the issuance of Permanent Voters' Card (PVC) to eligible voters whose names appear in the register. To issue the PVC, the validity of the registrant must have been established after a de-duplication process through the Automated Fingerprints Identification System (ABIS).

In the period from 2015 to 2025, the Commission adopted significant and far-reaching innovations to enhance accurate record keeping and integrity

of the PVC collection process. First, the Commission reinforced the use of the PVC as a fundamental requirement for voting, maintaining the position that no voter will be allowed to vote without the presentation of his/her PVC on Election Day. Thereafter, the Commission undertook a comprehensive audit to ascertain the actual number of produced and collected PVCs for each state and the FCT. Furthermore, the Commission designed a harmonized procedure for the production, delivery, and collection of PVCs to ensure efficiency, transparency and good record keeping, developing a PVC collection register to track the actual number of collected, uncollected, unprinted and duplicated PVCs. This is in addition to the practice of entrusting the custody of uncollected PVCs with the Central Bank of Nigeria to ensure their safekeeping. Lastly, in the run-up to the 2019 and 2023 General Elections and every off-cycle governorship election, the Commission provided the enabling environment for registrants to pick up their PVCs by devolving collection to the RA level and by publishing the number of PVCs collected on the eve of such elections. The impact of these efforts is demonstrated by the fact that the PVC collection rate increased from 86.6% in the 2019 General Election to 93.0% in the 2023 General Election.

6.3 Providing Voters and Stakeholders with Information

Apart from upgrading its website and ensuring that critical information is readily available to the public, the Commission also established and/or improved on its various social media handles. The Social media has become a very powerful tool for voter education and information dissemination,

especially for a growing population of young voters. As a result, the Commission has become more active in that information ecosystem than at any time in the past. Beyond its social media handles, the Commission had in the period under review, enhanced the INEC Citizen's Contact Centre. (ICCC), which was established in 2012 to serve as a one stop shop for voters and the public to get all electoral information and address any concern that they may have. The ICCC increased its response rate to public inquiries and became more proactive in providing the public with information. Increased coordination between the ICCC and the Commission's social media handles led to vast improvements in public communication.

Between 2015 and 2025, the Commission vastly improved direct engagements between the public and the leadership of the Commission. Prior to the 2019 General Election, the Commission, in conjunction with civil society organisations, embarked on university outreaches for voter education, involving some well-known artistes who served as INEC ambassadors. These events brought the leadership of the Commission in direct contact with young university students and led to a rising interest of young Nigerians to register to vote. In 2022, ahead of the 2023 General Election, the university events morphed into two huge concerts in Lagos and Abuja in which millions of young Nigerians participated, and which accounted for the millions of new voters mainly young people.

However, the most important aspect of the Commission's engagement with voters during the period covered by this report is the establishment of new Polling Units. In 2021, the Commission established 56,872 additional Polling Units across the country, an increase

of over 47%. The existing Polling Units at the time were created in 1996, a twenty-five-year period during which it was widely agreed that the Polling Units had become inadequate, both in terms of numbers and in terms of locations, to provide adequate access to voting service to Nigerian voters. Prior to this period, the Commission had made several attempts to establish new Polling Units without success. Consequently, this was a major milestone for the Commission. Even more important is that the background document that the Commission developed on which it reached a national agreement to establish the new Polling Units, contains a model that will enable the Commission to establish new Polling Units whenever it becomes necessary.

Despite this major achievement, the reallocation of voters to new Polling Units to decongest the crowded ones has not been fully implemented. As a result, several new Polling Units have zero voters and yet others are very sparsely populated. For the 2023 General Election, a total of 240 Polling Units without registered voters, or 0.14% of the total, were delisted for the election by the Commission. An important future task for the Commission is the proper reallocation of voters to existing Polling Units as provided by the Electoral Act. This is necessary to achieve the overarching

purpose of the exercise which is to expand voter access to electoral services.

In the period under review, the Commission streamlined stakeholder engagements and made them more regular. There were quarterly meetings with civil society organisations, the media, political parties, security agencies through the Interagency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), and occasionally development partners. In addition, in the week preceding off-cycle Governorship elections, the Commission organized specific engagements with the stakeholders in the States. The Stakeholder meetings provided an opportunity for the Commission to hear directly from political parties, candidates, traditional rulers, voters and the public concerning its preparations, communicate important information to them and reach agreements on having credible and hitch free elections. In a bid to streamline these stakeholder events and make them more productive and peaceful, the Commission in 2018 issued guidelines for stakeholder engagements (Box 9). The guidelines, for the first time, established the basis for invitations, the ground rules for the meetings, procedures for interactive sessions, as well as rules for the recognition of attendants



Professor Mahmood Yakubu during a daily media briefing in the run-up to the 2019 General Election at the International Conference Centre on 18th February 2019



Professor Mahmood Yakubu, National Commissioners with former Chief Justice of the Federation, Mr Kayode Ariwoola and other Justices, the President of the Court of Appeal and the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court in Abuja on 1st February 2023



Professor Mahmood Yakubu during an engagement with the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria in Abuja in the run up to the 2019 General Election



Professor Mahmood Yakubu in a group photograph after briefing the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Nigeria on preparations for the 2019 General Election in Abuja in November 2018

Box 9: Guidelines for Conducting and Managing Stakeholder Meetings/Engagements

These Guidelines are designed to harmonize the conduct of stakeholder meetings/engagements convened by the Commission to ensure that they are peaceful, productive and meet the core values of the Commission, thereby maximizing their usefulness.

1. Invitees and Attendees:

- a) These shall be selected in a manner that ensures that they can contribute to the central objectives of the meeting/engagement.
- b) As much as practicable, all stakeholders and partners of the Commission on the core issues to be discussed at the meeting/engagement should be invited.
- c) Where there are "traditional" partners of the Commission on the core purpose of the meeting/engagement, efforts must be made to include them. Where all such partners cannot be invited, clear criteria of representativeness – political, regional, religious, gender, disability youth – must be defined and used.
- d) As much as possible, organisations, rather than individuals, should be invited to INEC-convened stakeholder meetings/engagements.
- e) Organisations should be represented by their Heads or persons duly mandated by them.
- f) Whenever there are known competing interests on the issues to be discussed, particularly political issues, all sides must be represented in the invitations.
- g) For pre-election stakeholder meetings, incumbents who are not candidates shall not be invited and should not attend.
- h) Records of invitation and acknowledgment by invitees should be kept by the Commission as much as possible.
- i) Attendance at all stakeholder meetings shall be taken by the Commission.

2. Ground Rules:

Ground rules for the meeting/engagement must be established beforehand or at the meeting before commencement, and where possible communicated to participants by the person chairing the meeting or by the Master of Ceremonies. Ground rules should cover, but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- a) Decorum and civility in words and conduct towards one another by all attendees.
Offensive language and disruptive behaviour shall be avoided at all times. Participants or the presiding official may request the withdrawal of specific offending language.
- b) As much as possible, interventions should avoid mentioning individuals and organisations by name, especially where such mentions are likely to be deemed offensive.
- c) All phones should be switched off or put on silent mode.

3. Interactive Sessions:

- a) As much as practicable, substantial time shall be allocated for interactive sessions at all INEC convened stakeholder meetings/engagements.
- b) For meetings involving organisations, including political parties, recognitions for intervention shall be in alphabetical order; in ascending order for the first round of interventions and descending order for the next round, and so on.
- c) Where an organisation in the alphabetical order is either not present or not ready to intervene, the next organisation shall be recognized.
- d) For meetings involving individual participants, the Presiding Officer shall make a list of individuals who want to intervene and recognize them in the order of the list. As much as possible, individuals who have already spoken should yield to those who have not.
- e) For meetings involving multiple stakeholders, such as stakeholder meetings preceding elections, the sequence of contributions during interactive sessions shall be political parties/candidates first, followed by CSOs/Observers, media, traditional rulers, etc.
- f) The Presiding Officer shall establish the maximum time for individual or organisational interventions before they commence. The objective should be to give as many participants as possible the opportunity to contribute to discussions.

4. Recognitions:

The presence of dignitaries attending INEC convened stakeholder meetings/engagements shall be recognized as directed by the Presiding Officer. Care should be taken to recognize all "interested parties" and to do so in a manner that does not disrupt the meeting.

6.3.1 Political Parties

Political parties and candidates constitute a principal group in the work of the Commission. Consequently, engagement with them was a priority. Several improvements were made in this regard. First, as a fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission created two separate portals for virtual interaction with political parties. The first was the portal for the submission of the list of candidates to the Commission, and the second was for the submission of the list of polling agents. These two portals have made engagements with political parties more efficient, less time-consuming, thereby reducing the manhours required by the Commission to deal with them.

Second, the Commission completely revised and updated several regulations and guidelines related to political parties. Among them were Regulations and Guidelines on the registration of political parties, campaigning, especially during health pandemics, as well as finance. These revisions made these regulations and guidelines compliant with existing laws and responded to contemporary realities. Apart from the regulations, the Commission created a new database of logos of existing and

moribund political parties. This became necessary as a means of checking the suitability of logos, especially while registering new parties. This has made party registration quicker and less cumbersome. Most importantly, during the period, at the behest of the Commission, the Electoral Act 2022 clearly outlined the conditions for deregistering political parties and the powers of the Commission in that regard. Consequently, in 2020 the Commission for the first time reduced the number of political parties from 93 to 18, which had a very positive effect on the organisation of the 2023 General Election. Cumulatively, all these have improved the Commission's role as the regulator of political parties in Nigeria.

Third, the quarterly meetings between the political parties and the Commission became more regularized. In the period under review, about 25 such meetings were held between the parties and INEC. Under the auspices of the Interparty Advisory Council (IPAC), the relationship between INEC and the political parties and among the parties themselves became more genial. Regular elections were conducted by IPAC and there was improved participation by the so-called big parties in IPAC activities and in the meetings between political parties and the Commission.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu, alongside Commission members and political party leaders after a consultative meeting in Abuja on 16th November 2024 ahead of the Ondo Governorship Election

6.3.2 Civil Society Organisations

The Commission continued to enjoy very good relations with civil society organisations between 2015 and 2022. The importance of civil society organisations as an important cohort of election stakeholders has long been recognized by the Commission. This role has been particularly pronounced in the areas of election observation and electoral inclusivity. In recognition of the importance of CSOs in the electoral process, both as partners and as election observers, the Commission has categorized them as one group of key electoral stakeholders. As such, the Commission holds quarterly meetings with CSOs, as it does with Resident Electoral Commissioners, political parties, the ICCES and the media.

Within this period, the Commission further expanded the participation of qualified civil society organisations in election observation. The reports submitted by these organisations have been very beneficial to the Commission in post-election reviews. As part of its post-election review activities, the

Commission also made it a duty to meet with civil society organisations to review their findings and draw lessons for future elections from them. These review meetings are in addition to regular quarterly meetings which the Commission holds with CSOs.

The Commission met with CSOs at critical moments of its planning for electoral activities in the period from 2015 through 2015. These engagements included:

- a) The quarterly meeting of 17th March 2017 on the introduction of regular dates for elections. At the meeting, CSOs supported the Commission's decision to henceforth make certain the dates of general and other elections.
- b) Meeting with local observers and CSOs of 3rd July 2019 to review the conduct of the 2019 General Election. The recommendations arising from this review resulted in important legislative and administrative reforms, the passage of the Electoral Act, 2022, and the Commission's Bimodal



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with the Executive Director, Peering Advocacy and Advancement Centre in Africa (PAACA), Mr Ezenwa Nwagwu at the Commission's quarterly meeting with Civil Society Organisations, on 4th February 2025 in Abuja

Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and INEC Results Viewing (IREV) Portal.

- c) First virtual consultative meeting with CSOs of 2nd June 2020 to solicit contributions on the Commission's policy for conducting elections during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the lockdown and unprecedented effects of the pandemic in limiting social gatherings, the policy enabled the Commission to conduct the 2020 Edo State governorship and other subsequent elections during the pandemic.
- d) Meeting with CSOs on 9th February 2021 on the need to expand voter access to PUs in Nigeria. With the support of CSOs arising from the meeting, the Commission established an additional fifty-six thousand, eight hundred and seventy-two (56,872) PUs on 16th June 2021, a key process that contributes to the inclusiveness and integrity of elections.
- e) Meeting with local observers and CSOs of 24th July 2023 to review the conduct of the 2023 General Election. The report made recommendations that would further help strengthen the Commission's commitment to continuously improve the electoral process.

The Commission shares a primary interest with many CSOs on electoral inclusivity, especially on the inclusion of women, the youth and persons with disability (PwDs). Thus, between 2015 and 2025, the Commission worked with them to pursue electoral inclusivity in different ways. In the first place, the Commission's gender policy was revised and focused more on achieving its targets, both within the Commission

and in the wider electoral process. Within the Commission presently, nearly half of the Directors are women. Similarly, the Commission worked with key CSOs and other stakeholders on improving the participation of women, youth, persons with disability and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the political and electoral processes. The provision of magnifying glasses has been added to ballot braille guides as critical electoral materials during elections, just as guidelines on attending to PwDs, as well as the collection of data on disabilities during voter registration and voting was issued, adopted and intensified by the Commission. With these, the Commission was able to better serve marginalized groups in the electoral process, though much more remains to be done on this score.

On IDP voting, the Commission continued to expand access to voting facilities for this group of voters. In 2014, the Commission created special measures to cater for the voting rights of Nigerians displaced by conflicts and other emergencies, in line with the Electoral Act. The framework was revised for the 2019 General Election to reflect extant realities of population displacements in the country, lessons from the 2015 General Election, as well as global best practices. The framework was further revised and launched for the 2023 General Election in August 2022. This brought together key stakeholders such as political parties, IDP communities, security agencies, emergency agencies, development partners and the media to discuss and validate the framework.

Above all, as part of its commitment to inclusivity, the Commission in 2021 created a full and separate Department of Gender and Inclusivity to drive the electoral inclusivity work of the Commission. Before then, inclusivity

issues were handled under different units of the Commission. By creating a full Department, the Commission has not only considered the participation of women within the Commission and in the broader electoral process critical; but by so doing, it also is better able to dedicate human and material resources to ensuring that every qualified Nigerian has access to electoral services.

6.3.3 The Media

The Commission has continued its traditional partnership with the media, which it considers to be a critical stakeholder in the electoral process, particularly in the role of educating the public and providing balanced reportage and access to different political viewpoints. Consequently, the Commission vastly increased its engagements with the media by making them more regular. These engagements spanned the entire electoral cycle and were not limited to periods of elections. The following is a list of some of the major engagements with the Media and their outcome:

a) Regular Quarterly Consultative Meetings

The regular meetings have boosted the existing working relationship with the Media, improved confidence in the Commission, and created an avenue for information dissemination and feedback.

b) TV and Radio Appearances at National and State Levels

Regular appearances on TV and Radio political programmes either for voter education and enlightenment or to address emergent issues in the

electoral process. These have also been helpful channels for providing information and enlightenment to the public. INEC has in no small way improved the public perception and understanding of its policies, actions and the electoral process through such media appearances.

c) Regular Press Releases

The regular release of press statements by INEC to a platform created to manage the activities of the INEC Press Corps ensures timely and regular information dissemination.

d) Forums for Media Executives at National and State Levels

The forum provides an avenue to update media executives in states where elections are scheduled to be held on developments and Commission's policies. Such engagements provide a deeper understanding of the Commission's processes, creating an opportunity to answer questions/clarify issues that might interest the public.

e) Forums for Journalists and on-Air Personalities at National and State Levels

The forum provides an avenue to also update journalists and on-air personalities in states where elections are scheduled to be held on developments and INEC Policies. It gives them a deeper understanding of the Commission's processes and creates an opportunity

to answer questions that might interest the public.

f) Capacity Building for Members of the INEC Press Corps

As a body of persons who have first contact with the Commission in terms of information dissemination, regular capacity building for members of the INEC Press Corps to deepen their understanding of the electoral process, the Legal Framework for the conduct of elections, and INEC's regulations and policies were organised. This has greatly improved the quality of their coverage and reportage of the Commission's activities and the electoral process.

In addition to the traditional media, the Commission between 2015 and 2025 also increased its engagement with the social media. It not only increased its social media presence, but also intensified engagements with influencers.

6.3.4 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)

The Commission has vigorously pursued a programme of building good working relations with ministries, departments, and agencies of government whose work directly relate to the conduct of elections and the electoral process. Thus, the Commission visited as well as received the leadership of the National Population Commission, National Boundaries Commission, National Orientation Agency, National Youth Service Corps, and the National Human Rights Commission. In addition to these, there were also visits by the Commission to the Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), the Office of the Postmaster General of the Federation, as well as that of the National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA). It is in furtherance of the Commission's commitment to public service that it mobilised 100 vehicles to support the Federal Government's Covid 19 Effort during the period of the health emergency.



Cross-section of the 100 vehicles deployed by the Commission towards the Covid-19 Effort for Contact Tracing

6.3.5 SIECs and FOSIECON

During the period under review, the Commission continued its enduring partnerships with the State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs), both individually and

collectively through the Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions of Nigeria (FOSIECON). INEC continued to provide key electoral materials to SIECs for the conduct of Local Government Council elections across the country. These include the register

of voters, list of political parties, voting cubicles, as well as other support on request. Additionally, the PVCs issued by INEC are also used in SIECs' conducted elections. Some SIECs have also requested and received technical support from INEC, based on specific Memoranda of Understanding signed by the two bodies.

The Commission has also continued collaborating with FOSIECON. Occasional high-level meetings were held between the two bodies to discuss critical issues about election management in Nigeria. Among the main joint initiatives embarked on by FOSIECON and INEC is the development of a model SIECs Law.

Since 2011, FOSIECON and INEC have worked together to develop and promote this model law with support from development partners. The model law has now been completed, validated and awaiting final adoption by individual SIECs. The model law, if widely adopted and implemented will not only strengthen the independence of SIECs, but will also improve their capacity to conduct free, fair and credible Local Government Council elections. Going forward, the Commission will continue to explore new areas of collaboration between SIECs/FOSIECON and INEC towards improving the electoral process in Nigeria.

Box 10: Engaging with the Forum of State Independent Electoral Commissions (FOSIECON)

The Commission has also continued collaborating with FOSIECON. Occasional high-level meetings were held between the two bodies to discuss critical issues about election management in Nigeria. Among the main joint initiatives embarked on by FOSIECON and INEC is the development of a model SIEC Law. Since 2011, FOSIECON and INEC have worked together to develop and promote this model law with support from development partners. The model law has now been completed, validated and awaiting final adoption by individual SIECs. The model law, if widely adopted and implemented will not only strengthen the independence of SIECs, but will also improve their capacity to conduct free, fair and credible Local Government Council elections. Going forward, the Commission will continue to explore new areas of collaboration between SIECs/FOSIECON and INEC towards improving the electoral process in Nigeria.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu (4th left) presents the Chairman of FOSIECON, Barrister Jossy Chibundu Eze (3rd left), with a plaque during a courtesy visit to INEC Headquarters Abuja by Executive members of the Forum of State Independent Electoral Commission ON 22nd May 2024

6.3.6 Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES)

The Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) was established in 2010 as an advisory body for promoting synergy, coordination, and cooperation in election security. Chaired and Co-Chaired by the INEC Chairman and the National Security Adviser, (NSA) to the President, it brings together in conjunction with INEC security and other State agencies and institutions responsible for securing elections. At inception, the Committee consists of 17 members with a mandate to coordinate the design of a comprehensive election security management system for INEC; develop locally focused plans for providing security before, during and after elections; harmonize the training, deployment and actions of security personnel on election duties; assess existing security threats across the country that have implications for elections and produce a red, amber and green electoral security map for the country, which will be regularly updated; advise INEC on rapid response to security threats around elections, including voter registration; ensure a reduction in transaction costs to INEC of dealing with individual security agencies on issues of elections; evaluate the performance of security agencies on election duties and recommend improvements and sanctions, where necessary; and harmonize the election budgets of security agencies and source funding commonly, if possible.

Since its establishment, ICCES has evolved to become an effective and widely accepted body by all stakeholders to promote cooperation, coordination, and synergy among its members to address the challenge

for election security in Nigeria. The Committee does this through the efficient management of resources and effective deployment of security personnel to ensure safe, peaceful, and violent-free elections. In 2020, the Committee worked in close collaboration with the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 Pandemic for the conduct of time bound off-cycle governorship elections to ensure the safety of all electoral stakeholders and preclude any default in the constitutional term limit of political office holders during the global health emergency. The membership of the Committee was later expanded from 17 to 24 to include the anti-corruption and public enlightenment and safety agencies. The is with the specific objective of evolving an integrated security strategy to meet the challenges of protecting the credibility of the electoral process and ensuring the sanctity of the vote by mitigating the emergent scourge of vote buying and securing the Commission's personnel and facilities.

6.3.7 Membership of ICCES

INEC Chairman (Chair)

Office of the National Security Adviser (Co-Chair)

1. The Nigeria Police Force
2. Police Service Commission
3. Ministry of Police Affairs
4. Ministry of Interior
5. Nigerian Air Force
6. Nigerian Navy
7. Nigerian Army
8. Department of State Security
9. National Intelligence Agency
10. Defence Intelligence Agency
11. Nigeria Customs Service
12. Nigeria Immigration Service
13. National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
14. Federal Road Safety Corps

15. Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
16. Nigerian Correctional Service
17. National Youth Service Corps
18. National Orientation Agency
19. National Identity Management Commission
20. Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
21. Economic and Financial Commission
22. Federal Fire Service

In the period between 2015 and 2025, ICCES held quarterly and special meetings to discuss and review security preparations as well as logistics and operational plans for election security and the modalities for the implementation of the joint security strategy for securing voters, election personnel and materials for the conduct of the 2019 and 2023 General Elections as well as for the conduct of the off-cycle governorship elections in Kogi, Bayelsa, Edo, Ondo, Anambra, Ekiti, Osun and Imo states. In December 2022, the Committee published a revised single, harmonised code of conduct and rules

of engagement for member agencies which provided common standards of behaviour during electoral duty, bringing significant improvement in the cooperation and synergy between the Police as the lead agency in election security and other agencies in training and for electoral duties.

ICCES also operates at the level of the 36 states and FCT, and in the 774 Local Government Areas, co-chaired by the Resident Electoral Commissioner and Commissioner of Police and the Electoral Officer and the Area Commander at the State and LGA levels respectively. Starting with the Edo State Off-Cycle Governorship election in September 2016, the INEC Chairman holds a consultative meeting with ICCES in every State conducting Off-Cycle governorship election to review, assess, and address emergent security issues including the identification of personnel needs to secure the election as well as the development of effective collaboration and coordination among the various Agencies involved in the conduct of the election.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu exchanges pleasantries with members of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) at a meeting held at the Commission's Headquarters on 11th February 2025



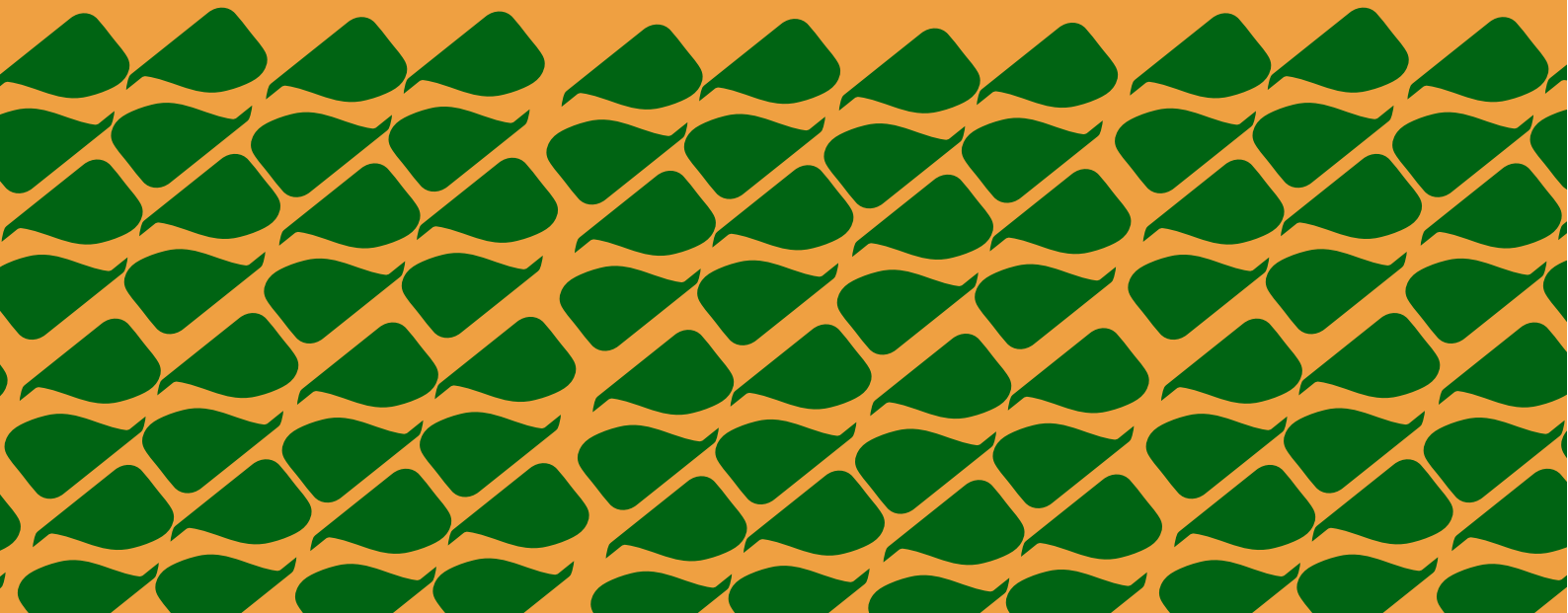
Professor Mahmood Yakubu, National Commissioners with members of the 2023 Election Review Committee after inauguration on 17th May 2023



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with members of the Commission during the Review of the 2019 General Election Meeting in Lagos on 9th July 2019

07

Electoral Governance, Coordination, Planning and Monitoring



Electoral Governance, Coordination, Planning and Monitoring

The conduct of elections and the management of electoral process are the key concerns of the electoral management bodies worldwide. With offices spread across the thirty-six (36) States and the FCT, 774 LGAs, together with 9 HQ and Zonal Stores across the country, and given the mass and spread of electoral operations with 176, 486 polling units, 8809 wards and 1459 electoral constituencies, developing robust systems for the coordination, planning and monitoring of credible electoral activities is a precondition for the conduct of free, fair, and inclusive elections. In the period under review, the Commission took many decisions and implemented many programmes to ensure that these objectives were achieved. Thus, the decision to ensure that the conduct of general and Off-Cycle governorship elections were regular, the periodic review of the Commission's regulations, guidelines and manuals arising from reforms of the electoral legal framework (ELF), the development and formulation of various planning documents, chief among which were the Strategic Plan (SP)/the Strategic Plan Implementation Programme (SPIP) and Election Project Plan (EPP) consequent upon various process and audit reviews undertaken after general elections, the establishment of the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) and its continuous refinement in response to lessons learnt from the field, the reorganisation of the Commission's Election Situation Room, the issuance

of letters of appointment with a dedicated complaints WhatsApp number to all ad-hoc staff as well as the prosecution of electoral offenders (both staff and non-staff) were key elements in the sustenance of a good governance culture in the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process. Some these issues have been elaborated below.

7.1 Regularization of Election Dates

In March 2017, the Commission took two decisions which have had far-reaching impact on election management in Nigeria. The first was the decision to have fixed dates for general elections, while the second was to institutionalize the SP/SPIP and the Election Project Plan (EPP). Following best practice across the world, the Commission decided that establishing the dates for elections in advance, such as obtains in countries like Ghana, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, would have a beneficial effect on the electoral process in Nigeria. It would bring stability in the election planning process, both for the Commission and all election stakeholders, improve election administration, and allow the government to plan and more effectively implement budgets for elections. It would enable all election stakeholders to plan their activities well ahead of time. Also, knowing the dates of general elections in advance would bring stability to the electoral process. Above all, having fixed dates for elections enables the Commission to set timelines for various pre-election activities, some of which are statutorily required. The Commission reasoned that about 100 days to the end of tenure of incumbents was a good benchmark from which to fix election dates.

Consequently, it decided that the first set of elections in a general election, that is Presidential and National Assembly elections, will hold on the third Saturday in February of each election year. The Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections will then hold two weeks thereafter.

In the same vein, the Commission also decided that Off-season Governorship elections shall take place on the

Saturday closest to 100 days to the end of the tenure of the incumbent, while the FCT Area Council Elections shall be held on the Saturday closest to 100 days to the end of the tenure of the incumbents. However, whenever the end of the tenure of the Area Councils coincides with a General Election year, the elections shall be held on the same date as the Governorship and State Assembly elections.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu, National Commissioners, Mrs. May Agbamuche-Mbu and Professor Antonia Simbine at the Commission's press briefing to release the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the 2019 General Election at the Commission's headquarters on 9th January 2018

Box 11: The Regularization of Election Dates and the of Planning and Implementation of Elections

In March 2017, the Commission took two decisions which have had far-reaching impact on election management in Nigeria. The first was the decision to have fixed dates for general elections, while the second was to institutionalize the Election Project Plan (EPP). Following best practice across the world, the Commission decided that establishing the dates for elections in advance, such as obtains in countries like Ghana, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States, would have a beneficial effect on the electoral process in Nigeria. It would bring stability in the election planning process, both for the Commission and all election stakeholders, improve election administration, and allow the government to plan and more effectively implement budgets for elections. It would enable all election stakeholders to plan their activities well ahead of time. Also, knowing the dates of general elections in advance would bring stability to the electoral process. Above all, having fixed dates for elections enables the Commission to set timelines for various pre-election activities, some of which are statutorily required. The Commission reasoned that about 100 days to the end of tenure of incumbents was a good benchmark from which to fix election dates. Consequently, it decided that the first set of elections in a general election, that is Presidential and National Assembly elections, will hold on the third Saturday in February of each election year. The Governorship and State Houses of Assembly elections will then hold two weeks thereafter.

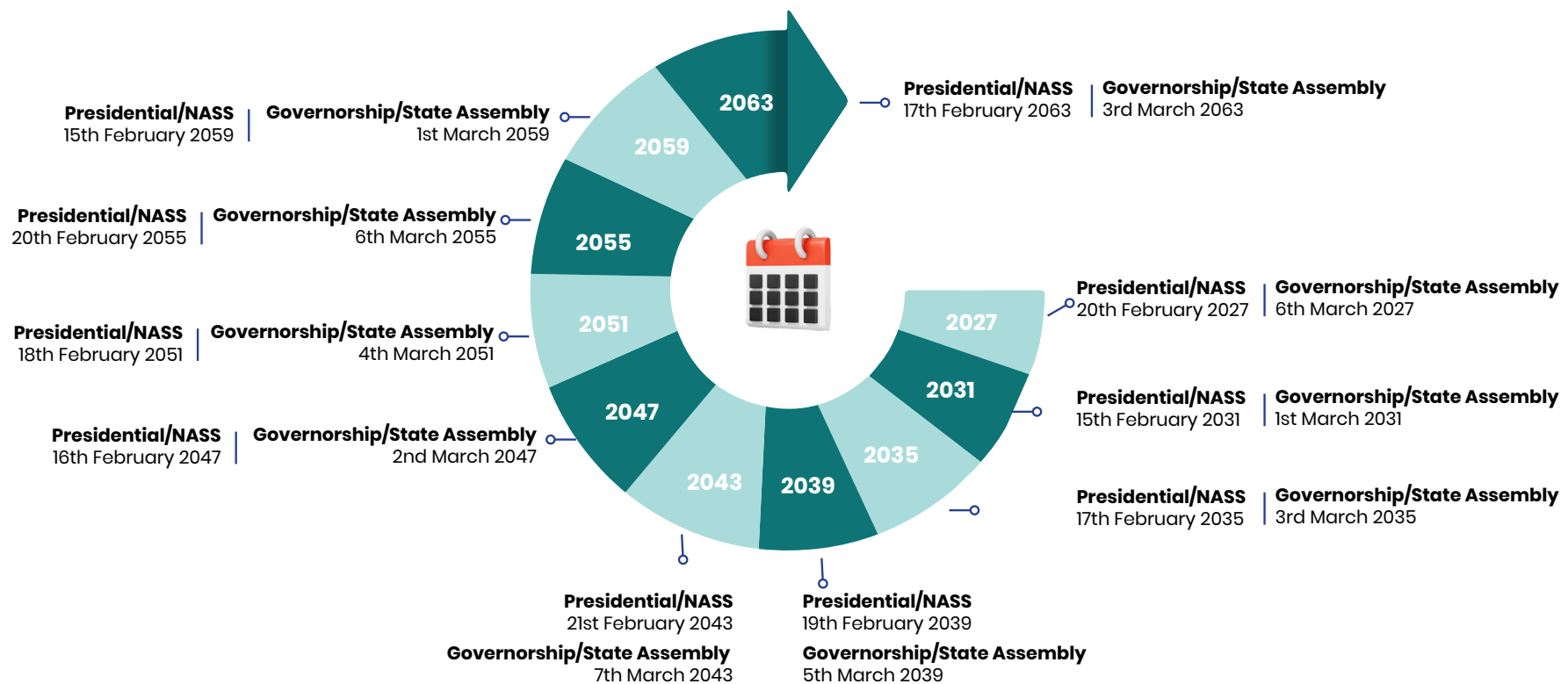


Figure 7.1: Dates for the Next 10 General Elections in Nigeria (2027 - 2063)

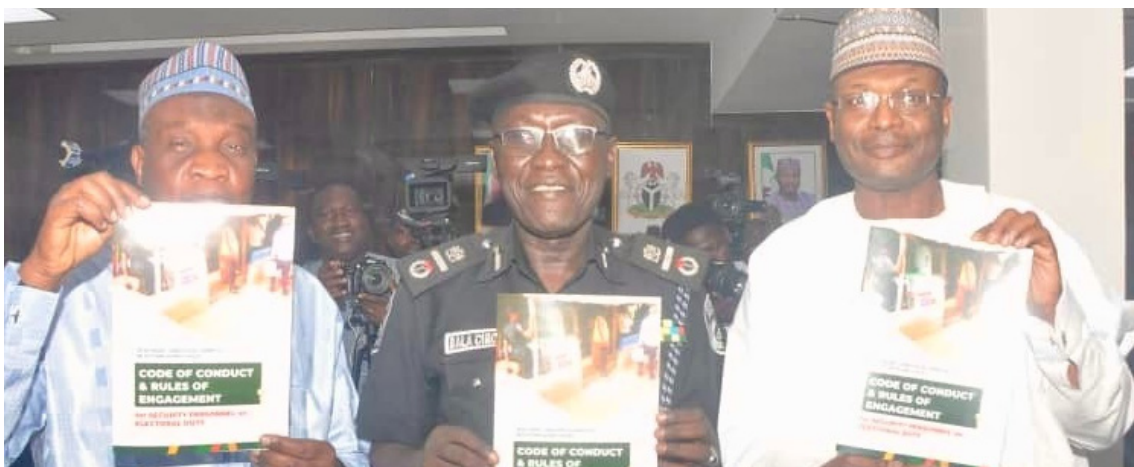
7.2 Issuance and Review of Regulations, Guidelines, Manuals and Codes of Conduct

Several regulations, guidelines and manuals, which the Commission is empowered to issue, were produced or updated during the period. These documents are constitutive parts of the framework for the conduct of elections. Some of them are part of the legal framework. The issuance and update of regulations, guidelines and manuals occur for several reasons including, the introduction of new procedures in the conduct of elections, amendment of existing laws or the need to clarify aspects of the law or procedures. Some of the many regulations, guidelines and manuals that were introduced and/or reviewed include the following:

- a) *Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections, 2022*
- b) *Manual for Election Officials, 2022*
- c) *Manual for Collation and Returning Officers, 2022*

- d) *Regulation & Guidelines for Political Parties, 2022*
- e) *Regulations and Guidelines for the Review of Declaration and Return of Elections, 2021*
- f) *Regulations and Guidelines for the Recall of a Member of the National Assembly, House of Assembly of a State or Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory, 2022*

Apart from regulations, guidelines and manuals, the Commission also issued codes of conduct, particularly the Code of Conduct for Staff and Personnel of INEC, Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for Security Personnel on Electoral Duty, and Voters Code of Conduct (VCC) for Elections During the COVID-19 Pandemic. The codes of conduct were designed to create a normative framework for INEC personnel and specific stakeholders to act in the electoral process. In particular, the code of conduct for staff and personnel of the Commission has the purpose of ensuring that staff and officials of the Commission are non-partisan, fair and dedicated to their responsibilities, as well as reducing conflicts of interest.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with representatives of the National Security Adviser and the Inspector General of Police unveiling the Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement for Security Personnel on Election Duty at the INEC Headquarters on 23rd February 2023

7.3 INEC Strategic Plans (SP) and Election Project Plans (EPP) 2015- 2023

Since 2012, the Commission has used Strategic Plans (SP) and Election Project Plans (EPP) to articulate strategic objectives, key actions, activities and implementation timelines to ensure planning, implementation and tracking of electoral activities in the discharge of its constitutional and statutory responsibilities. While the SP is a 5-year broad plan that addresses all activities and events across the Electoral Cycle, the EPP is narrower, focusing only on specific general or off-cycle elections. Thus, since 2012, the Commission has produced three SPs covering the periods 2012 - 2016, 2017 - 2021, and 2022 - 2026 and three EPPs 2015, 2019 and 2023. In the period under review, 2015-2025, three SPs (2017-2021, 2022-2026 and 2027-2031) and EPPs (2019, 2023 and 2027) have been produced by the Commission.

These planning documents have become the backbone of the Commission's activities. The SP is a practical, action-oriented guide developed based on a thorough review of previous electoral activities and an analysis of internal and external factors that direct goal setting and resource allocation to achieve the most impactful results within planning periods. They are blueprints that help the Commission develop a pragmatic roadmap for its work over five yearly periods. Similarly, the EPP derives from and is embedded in the SP, abstracting entire activities and events that must be implemented by the Commission for a general election to happen. The EPP is specific to each general election, and itemizes all the activities, including the procurement of goods and services necessary to conduct an election and for which timelines are allocated, and responsibilities assigned.

The strategic plans since 2012 share a common goal, which is to provide the Commission with practical, action-oriented blueprints for its activities during the plan periods. Generally, the plans are meant to: -

- a) Provide strategic direction for INEC and the actions to achieve its mandate within the national and international contexts.
- b) Propose the activities and processes to be implemented by the Commission to achieve its mandate.
- c) Provide a framework and focus for improvement within the Commission as a whole.
- d) Optimize the Commission's organisational systems and structures.
- e) Guide the management and officials of the Commission on day-to-day activities and decisions.
- f) Provide monitoring and evaluation framework for measuring performance; and
- g) Create a sense of common ownership of the plan among staff and the Commission.

Based on the above 7 core elements, the Commission's strategic plans broadly focus on five main strategic objectives, several key actions and hundreds of activities to be implemented by departments. Looking at the Commission's last three plans, five strategic objectives, with a few variations from plan to plan, seem to be dominant. These include: a) providing electoral operations, systems, and infrastructure to support the delivery of free, fair, and credible elections; b) improving voter education, training, and research; c) registering

political parties and monitoring their operations; d) interacting nationally and internationally with relevant stakeholders; and e) reorganising and repositioning the Commission for sustained improvements in the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections. These strategic objectives specify the activities required to achieve the Commission's priorities, the departments responsible for each activity, the collaborating units or departments, and the timelines within which these priorities are to be implemented. In addition, the strategic plans mapped out indicators to measure implementation and performance.

Within these broad objectives, are also specified certain key actions per each objective. For the 2017-2021 and 2022-2026 Plans, several key actions spread across the strategic objectives were prominent as follows: -

- a) Enhancement of the electoral legal framework for the conduct of free, fair, credible and inclusive elections;
- b) Formulation and implementation of an Election Project Plan (EPP);
- c) Ensuring that the voter register is accurate and regularly updated, including addressing the issue of the transfer of voters;
- d) Improving the development and deployment of ICT in the Commission's electoral operations;
- e) Activation and deployment of GIS to electoral activities;
- f) Establishing an effective and transparent election complaint and dispute resolution mechanism;
- g) Improving electoral processes, procedures, and systems;

- h) Providing infrastructure to support the delivery of free, fair, and credible elections;
- i) Planning new activities for the 2019 General Election;
- j) Develop database, analyse and process information on election results and electoral activities to aid decision-making;
- k) Plan for election logistics, transportation, and implement reverse logistics;
- l) Prepare for retrieval & storage of election materials;
- m) Review of electoral forms and materials;
- n) Review and enhance Election Day staff management system;
- o) Establish and maintain an archival system for electoral information and result management;
- p) Strengthen electoral logistics and storage systems;
- q) Review EMSC operational framework and scope; and
- r) Establish and maintain an archival system for electoral information and result management

Similarly, five issues have featured consistently in the three strategic plans as key actions required to achieve free, fair, and credible elections. These issues include revision of the election legal framework, update and maintenance of the voters register, strengthening of the electoral dispute resolution mechanisms, and improvement of election operations, processes, and procedures. In the 2017-2021 SP, three major issues were introduced, namely

election planning, early, special, and Out-of-Country Voting (OCV); and election logistics. The 2022-2026 SP further introduced additional key issues, namely budget and financial management, access to electoral services, electoral infrastructure, election-day staff management, and election result management.

Before the adoption of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan, the Commission

conducted a thorough review of the 2012-2016 plan. The outcome of the review showed that the 2012-2016 Strategic Plan recorded a relatively high level of implementation. The review indicates that over 4,000 activities were implemented to achieve the strategic objectives outlined in the 2012-2016 plan. An analysis of the performance of the Strategic Plan in the five core priority areas is presented in table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Performance of the Commissions Strategic Plans (2012-2016, 2017-2021 & 2022-2026) in Five Priority Areas

Description	2012-2016		2017-2021		2022-2026 ⁵	
	Activities	Implementation Rate	Activities	Implementation Rate	Activities	Implementation Rate
Full Completion	185	54.0	246	37.9	399	40.1
Partially Completed	75	21.9	168	25.8	197	19.8
Ongoing	82	23.9	236	36.3	399	40.1
Total	343	99.8%	650	100%	995	100%

Box 12: The Role of Planning Tools in Election Administration and Management

These planning documents have become the backbone of the Commission's activities. The SP is a practical, action-oriented guide developed based on a thorough review of previous electoral activities and an analysis of internal and external factors that direct goal setting and resource allocation to achieve the most impactful results within planning periods. They are blueprints that help the Commission develop a pragmatic roadmap for its work over five yearly periods. Similarly, the EPP derives from and is embedded in the SP, abstracting entire activities and events that must be implemented by the Commission for a general election to happen. The EPP is specific to each general election, and itemizes all the activities, including the procurement of goods and services necessary to conduct and election and for which timelines are allocated and responsibilities assigned.

The strategic plans since 2012 share a common goal, which is to provide the Commission with practical, action-oriented blueprints for its activities during the plan periods. Generally, the plans are meant to: -

- Provide strategic direction for INEC and the actions to achieve its mandate within the national and international contexts.
- Propose the activities and processes to be implemented by the Commission to achieve its mandate.
- Provide a framework and focus for improvement within the Commission as a whole.
- Optimize the Commission's organisational systems and structures.
- Guide the management and officials of the Commission on day-to-day decisions.
- Provide monitoring and evaluation framework for measuring the performance; and
- Create a sense of common ownership of the plan among staff and Commissioners.

⁵Note that this review was conducted in early 2025, more than a year to the end of the Plan Period

As with the SP, so too was the EPP a veritable planning tool. The Commission in March 2017 decided to further institutionalize the EPP by isolating election related activities within a 2-year period and assigning clear activity-related responsibilities, creating more focused implementation timelines and tracking/reporting mechanisms for the implementation of all activities related to the conduct of a general election. The EPP's objectives are twofold: on the one hand, it seeks to enhance operational, administrative and resource management and on the other, providing stakeholders in the electoral process the opportunity to assess the Commission's progress in the implementation of the identified activities and tasks towards major elections. This goes a long way in demonstrating the Commission's continuous efforts at enhancing transparency and integrity in the electoral process. In enhancing operations and administrative management of the electoral process, the Commission's EPPs since 2015 have striven to: -

- a) Provide much-needed direction, focus, and critical implementation paths for the successful conduct of general elections.
- b) Define the operational ambit of departments and directorates' activities for each general election.
- c) Create timelines for each activity and an overall Gantt Chart clearly showing implementation statuses.
- d) Establish clear lines of activity/task implementation between task owners and collaborating departments).

- e) Clear identification and justification of financial resources required for activities and their implementation.
- f) Keep expenditures within stipulated budgets.
- g) Provide clarity of purpose and indicates the Commission's ownership of its operations and processes.
- h) Clear articulation of the monitoring, evaluation, and support mechanisms necessary for the successful conduct of general election and other elections; and to
- i) Create flexibility in responding to emergent, unforeseen circumstances in the implementation of an election.

On balance, both the SP and the EPP have become key planning and implementation documents for the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process. Notwithstanding the challenges recorded in the implementation of these planning documents, useful lessons have been learnt that have been critical in the progressive improvements recorded in the conduct of elections and the management of the electoral process. These included: -

- a) Early planning is key to the attainment of INEC's strategic objectives, beginning with timely amendment to the electoral legal framework, which will enable preparation and development of regulations, guidelines and manuals for electoral activities.
- b) Electoral technology and associated systems that

enhance the integrity of the electoral process and limit human errors and interference such as the candidate nomination process, electoral staff management, voting process as well as election results management systems have had significant impact on the conduct of elections.

- c) Election security, especially in the past few years, has become a central issue of concern to the planning, management and conduct of elections. The Commission's measures and tools for the mitigation of election security threats such as Election Risk Management Tool (ERM), Basic Security for Election Duty (BaSED), the Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT) and the INEC-SANs have helped address many security challenges as discussed in subsection 7.5 below. However, given the dynamism of security challenges, nationwide security threat analyses and a database of incidents need to be regularised and established.
- d) The MoUs signed with critical stakeholders in logistics and operational areas have been useful in managing both outbound and reverse logistics. These MoUs need to be periodically reviewed to enhance efficiency and to meet emergent challenges.
- e) Regular interactive consultations with the leadership of political parties, civil society organisations, security agencies as well as other relevant bodies such

as the judiciary have been of immense benefit in managing elections and other electoral activities and should be strengthened.

- f) The continuous monitoring and tracking of implementation statuses of all activities in real time is a critical success factor, and must be closely watched by the Commission through the EMSC; and
- g) The strategic plan implementation clearly brought out the need for collaboration, cooperation and coordination among the Commission's departments and offices. The synergy for this should be built around completing the reorganisation effort.

These planning documents are complemented by a broader planning, monitoring, implementation, early warning and field support system in the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) discussed in the following subsection.

7.4 From the EMS to the EMSC: The Planning, Monitoring and Implementation of Elections

The Election Management System (EMS) was formalized and established by the Commission as a planning, monitoring, and implementation framework in 2014 based on recommendations from the review of the 2011 General Election as well as recommendations from the various process review reports, including those

of the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC).⁶ The development of the EMS itself began way back in 2013 being part of the Commission's response to the implementation of the recommendations of the RERC. The RERC Report drew the Commission's attention to the challenges it encountered in the prosecution of the two major electoral activities in 2011: the voter registration (15th January – 7th February) and the General Election (9th – 26th April). These challenges related to the management of logistics personnel, political parties/candidate management: as well as the registration of voters and training. Consequently, a committee was set up to consider the recommendations of the 2011 review processes as well as that of the RERC. The development and establishment of an EMS was a notable recommendation by the Committee on how to address the identified challenges and to systematize the electoral process by enhancing the Commission's capacity to conduct elections and manage the electoral process through improved coordination, efficiency and effectiveness.⁷ This led to the development of a cluster of clearly identified activities critical to an election and whose implementation required timelines, collaboration and the assignment of specific tasks and responsibilities to departments, and in certain instances to specific persons within those departments. It was this effort that led to the establishment of the 7 Principal Business Areas (PBAs) and the development of workflows for each of the PBAs through process analysis, key performance indicators (KPIs), and analytical tools for data collection and reporting. In addition, these had implementation timelines and schedules, and the plan was to automate these processes so that implementation progress can be monitored on a dashboard. The

PBAs were: Election Day Logistics (EDL); Election Staff Management (ESM); Political Party and Candidate Management (PPM); Election Day Training (EDT); Election Day Procurement (EDP); Continuous Voter Registration (CVR); and Election Day Support (EDS). Two sets of PBAs were added between 2017-2022. These are Voter Education and Publicity (VEP) and Complaints and Dispute Management (CDM) (2017-2019) and Election Day Security (EDSM) and Gender and Inclusivity (G&I) (2019-2022). Presently therefore, there are 11 PBAs, and the idea is that after every general election, process reviews would indicate the necessity or otherwise of additional PBAs.

The Commission approved the implementation of the EMS in its January 2014 Retreat in Kaduna, with the proviso that the automation of the EMS should begin with only four (4) PBAs thus: EDL, ESM, PPM and EDS. The automation of these assisted in tracking, monitoring, and reporting progress on the implementation of electoral activities under the PBAs, helped in the early identification of risks and threats, enhanced visibility of electoral activities and processes in the field, and served as an early warning system. The function of the analytical tools greatly enhanced the capability of the EMS to assist the Commission in decision-making and process audits for electoral planning, and performance and implementation analysis. The EMS was deployed for the 2015 General Election as indicated in its Report.⁸

The process reviews for the 2015 General Election and recommendations arising therefrom necessitated the decision of the Commission to bring two other monitoring tools viz the Electoral Operations Support Centre (EOSC) and the Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERM) into a unified planning,

⁶<https://wpl.inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/RERC-REPORT.pdf>

⁷<https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EMS-Project-Report-Final-Version.pdf>

⁸Ibid

monitoring, implementation, early warning and field support structure called the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC). The functions of the EMSC include the conduct of: - a) election readiness assessment/analysis across three monitoring zones: Green, Amber and Red); b) early identification of threats, and internal and external risk; c) performance management, d) monitoring of all Election Day activities (from the activation of RACs to the announcement of results); and e) tracking the implementation of the EPP calendar of activities. Building on the combined benefits of the integrated structure of the EMSC, which comprises the EMS, ERM, EOSC, and later the INEC Security Alert Notification System (INEC SANS), the EMSC became a strategic tool that enhances planning, monitoring, implementation, early warning and field support, providing data to the Commission and to task supervisors,

task managers, and task owners in the coordination, collaboration, communication, reporting, recording, and management of the entire election process, from the onset of planning the conduct of elections as well as to post-election analyses.

The design and structure of the EMSC were developed to enhance electoral planning, implementation, and monitoring of processes through the identification and sequencing of activities and tasks in a coordinated, effective, and efficient manner. This was done by identifying, selecting, and focusing on critical electoral processes that are closely associated with the challenges of logistics, staff management, training, procurement, voter registration, political parties, and candidate management, and later voter education and publicity, security as well as coordinating and managing Election Day processes.

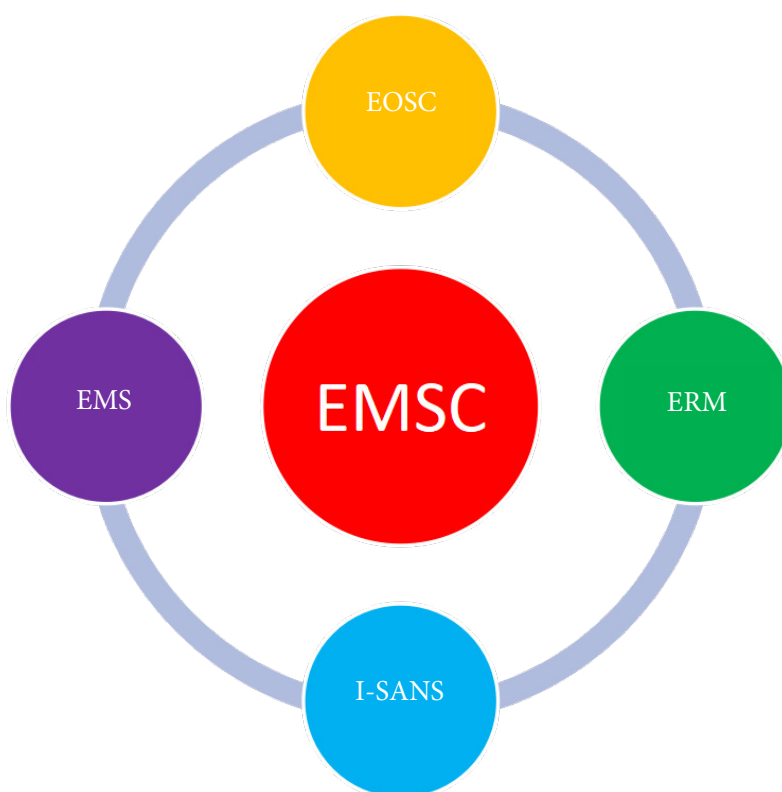


Figure 7.2: Integrated Planning Tools of the Commission

The activities of the EMSC are implemented across three operational timelines: Green, Amber, and Red Zones. The Green Zone is the critical bridge between the end of one Electoral Cycle and the beginning of another, lasting between 48 – 60 months before a general election in a new Electoral Cycle. It is designed to monitor the implementation of specified post-election activities and programmes, including for example, the various process reviews and post-election audit meetings, the publication of review, election and related report (such as the report of the EMSC), re-commencement of voter registration, reverse logistics, assessment and clearance of storage spaces, the disposal of election petition cases, the review of the electoral legal framework, the development of new planning documents, the review of the EMSC's PBAs and the review of new key performance indicators (KPIs) as well as the review of election regulations, guidelines and manuals.

Typically, 12 weeks before an election or as the Commission may determine, the Amber Zone specifies a set of 14 core activities, events, and processes that need to be strictly monitored and reported to the Commission at set intervals leading up to the eve of the election. These activities include the recruitment and training of ad-hoc staff; the preparation and deployment of election technologies for an election; including BVAS, IReV, Portals and related systems; compliance with legal

requirements; the receipt and batching of non-sensitive election materials by State and FCT Offices; voter education and publicity; continuous voter registration; the collection of PVCs; security arrangements; the training of election officials; the preparation of RACs; and the management of storage facilities.

The Red Zone has eight activities spanning 12 days: 9 days before the election, Election Day and 2 days after the election. These include the monitoring of transport arrangements, the commencement of accreditation and voting, the provision of election security, the receipt of election funds by State and FCT Offices as well as EOs, the receipt and batching of sensitive materials, the activation of RACs, reverse logistics within a span of twelve days - nine days to the election, Election Day and two days after the election.

The performances of electoral activities under these timelines are monitored through the Performance Dashboard. HQ and State EMSC Secretariats are actively involved in the monitoring and transmission of reports on the implementation while the EMSC Dashboard platform resources facilitate data collection on the implementation status of activities. Under platform management, collected data are analysed by activities on a state basis to produce periodic status reports for the Commission on the level of implementation.

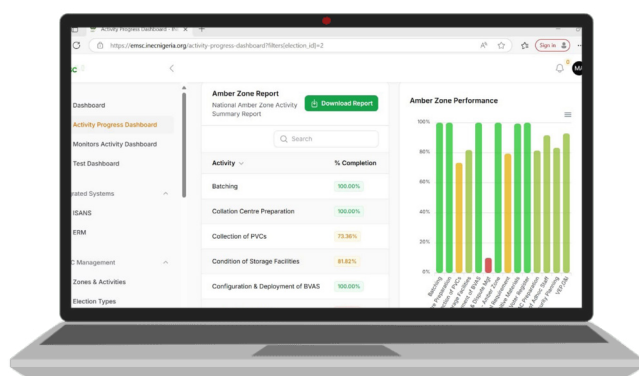


Figure 7.3: Screenshot of the EMSC Dashboard

The EMSC management structure is aligned with the administrative structure of the Commission. The EMSC functions as a sub-committee under the Planning, Monitoring and Strategy Committee (PMSC), driven by the Special Adviser to the INEC Chairman under the Office of the INEC Chairman. It is domiciled in the Planning and Monitoring Directorate for effective administration of the operational units of the EMSC, comprising the HQ EMSC and State Secretariats in the 36 states and the FCT. In line with the hierarchy in the Commission, the EMSC has identified task supervisors, task managers, and task owners from the Headquarters to State and LGA Offices. These are officers who play critical roles in the entire EMSC chain of operations and management. For the successful management of the EMSC, an integration process is in progress in the operational structure of all composite units of the EMSC.

Despite the benefits and opportunities that the EMSC provides, several challenges limit the utility of the tool. These challenges include:

- a. The usefulness of the EMSC is tied to prompt and quality reporting. As a data-driven system, it has been observed that personnel at the LGAs (the task owners) are not able to promptly provide quality reporting. Furthermore, the personnel at the state headquarters (the task

managers) who are expected to validate periodic consolidated reports sometimes fail to deliver their responsibility. It is very important to consider and implement measures that would increase compliance with reporting requirements at the LGAs and States;

- b. There is insufficient awareness of the EMSC reporting requirements by the HQ personnel who are supposed to flag non-compliance by EMSC officers at LGAs and states; and
- c. The efforts to institutionalize the EMSC, which involves developing and implementing capacity-building programmes, and the transfer of knowledge and skills are threatened by lack of funds.

Even with these challenges, the EMSC has over the years enabled the Commission to streamline its activities across the three operational timelines, ensuring timely planning, coordination, effectiveness, and implementation of the Commission's electoral activities thereby reducing or eliminating overlaps encountered over the years in the implementation of electoral plans, as well as effectively tracking challenges and taking timely, necessary remedial actions in the course of plan's implementation life-cycle.

Box 13: The Idea of the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC)

The process reviews of the 2015 General Election and recommendations arising therefrom necessitated the decision of the Commission to bring two other monitoring tools viz the Electoral Operations Support Centre (EOSC) and the Election Risk Management Tool (ERM) into a unified planning, monitoring, implementation, early warning and field support structure called the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC). The functions of the EMSC include the conduct of: - a) election readiness assessment/analysis across three monitoring zones: Green, Amber and Red); b) early identification of threats, and internal and external risks; c) performance management; d) monitoring all Election Day activities (from the activation of RACs to the announcement of results), and e) tracking the implementation of EPP calendar of activities. Building on the combined benefits of the integrated structure of the EMSC, which comprises the EMS, ERM, EOSC, and later the INEC Security Alert Notification System (INEC SANS), the EMSC became a strategic tool that enhances planning, monitoring, implementation, early warning and field support, providing data to the Commission and to task supervisors, task managers, and task owners in the coordination, collaboration, communication, reporting, recording, and the management of the entire election process, from the onset of planning the conduct of elections as well as to post-election analyses.

The design and structure of the EMSC were developed to enhance electoral planning, implementation, and monitoring of processes through the identification and sequencing of activities and tasks in a coordinated, effective, and efficient manner. This was done by identifying, selecting, and focusing on critical electoral processes that are closely associated with the challenges of logistics, staff management, training, procurement, voter registration, political parties and candidate management, and later, voter education and publicity, security, as well as the coordination and management of Election Day processes.

7.5 Electoral Risk Management (ERM)

The Electoral Risk Management (ERM) tool is one of the Commission's monitoring tools, designed to identify, analyse, and mitigate risks associated with election-related violence. It is an early warning tool used to evaluate numerous risk variables throughout the election preparation and management process embedded in the EMSC. Developed in collaboration

with International IDEA and the African Union (AU), the tool was adopted in 2014 and deployed in the 2015, 2019 and 2023 General Elections. It assists the Commission to track security challenges, to providing early warning on potential security threats, using key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor both internal and external risks that could affect an election or the electoral process. Through its structured approach, the ERM tool helps track and address threats at every stage of the Electoral

Cycle. The ERM tool is domiciled in the Planning and Monitoring Directorate and is supervised by the Director who serves as the Supervising National Coordinator. There are also Desk Officers in the 36 States and FCT Offices responsible for systematically collecting and reporting electoral risk data for their respective states.

In 2018, the ERM broadened its scope to encompass environmental hazards. For example, it mapped locations hit by the Lassa fever outbreak. This was done in collaboration with the Health Services Directorate to develop health and safety precautions. This included fumigating Registration Area Camps (RACs) prior to staff deployment and distributing First Aid Kits, which was the first time INEC integrated health regulations into election administration.

Given the growing political, social, economic, and safety concerns in the election environment, the ERM tool was improved to enhance data-gathering, analysis, and presentation for the 2023 General Election. Geo-referencing and geo-tagging were incorporated in the upgraded ERM tool to precisely identify risk locations, leveraging on the UTM GEO app to map election risks more precisely. Other improvements included tweaking the electoral risk factor register to better represent Nigeria's specific environment, revising the Assessment Checklist for electronic database compatibility, and conducting empirical risk factor classification and ranking. In addition, Geographic Information System (GIS) technology and ground truthing were utilized to ensure precise information gathering. Stakeholders were expanded to include the Nigeria Police and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) at the local government level. A novel meta-data function enhanced risk mapping accuracy.

These improvements resulted in more accurate Electoral Risk Maps, that provide location-specific data for the 2023 General Election.

The enhanced ERM tool was also employed for the Bayelsa, Imo, and Kogi Governorship elections on November 11, 2023, generating election risk maps that identified key threats such as security risks, vote buying, environmental hazards, and difficult terrains. Detailed reports, including risk maps, data analysis, and recommendations, were provided to the Commission at both national and state levels and shared with security agencies during ICCES meetings. The insights from the ERM tool were instrumental in mitigating security and environmental challenges before and during the elections.

Similarly, the ERM tool was deployed for the Edo and Ondo State Governorship elections. Sensitization programs were conducted in both states, bringing together representatives from the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the media, and Commission officials.

7.6 Electoral Operations Support Centre (EOSC)

The Electoral Operations Support Centre (EOSC) was inspired by the challenges of the November 16, 2013, Governorship elections in Anambra State. It was designed with the support of IFES to address the need for a system that will provide a bird's eye view of key activity areas in an election identify potential sources of threats, track trends and mobilize redundant resources to areas and issues in need. At inception, EOSC was based on the use of excel matrixes to document

incidents and generate periodic field reports which were sent via e-mail to the EMSC Desk Officers for upload to the EMSC Dashboard. This method of reporting was called the Excel Based System (EBS) which was the primary tool used during the 2015 and 2019 General Elections as well as all the off-season elections before the 2023 General Election.

However, in line with the Commission's commitment to innovation and the use of technology to improve the conduct of elections, a process commenced in 2018 to automate data gathering onto a mobile and web based application called the CT-DASS, which helped to facilitate the data sharing capability of the EOSC, thus quickening the intervention process. It was piloted in recent elections including the off-cycle governorship elections in 2021 and 2022 and was fully deployed in the 2023 General Election.

The EOSC was designed to provide real time reports on activities and deployments on Election Day that support the conduct of activities broken down into 3 key areas viz: a) registration area camp (RAC) activities, b) accreditation, voting and counting (AV&C) and c) collation. These activity areas help maintain surveillance, monitor compliance, identify threats, devise adequate responses, and coordinate the active interaction of field assets for the efficient conduct of elections.

7.7 INEC-Security Alert and Notification System (INEC-SANS)

With the rise of violent attacks against election personnel, materials and facilities as well as kidnapping, the Commission developed a solution that

could enable prompt interventions through a mobile application that tracks staff and election materials deployed to the field. Known as the INEC Security Alert and Notification System (INEC-SANS), the mobile application was first deployed in 2021 with the following objectives: -

- a) To provide timely security threat notifications and alerts to appropriate and designated persons called Responders.
- b) To provide real-time information needed by the Responders to mitigate or counter adverse incidents.
- c) To provide detailed incident reports and analyses.
- d) To mobilize coordinated responses to security threats (between Field Assets and the Response Team) to both INEC and ICCES; and
- e) To generate incident reports for the Commission on the security threats measures an election.

INEC-SANS is a web-based mobile application that helps ensure the formulation and deployment of timely solutions to real-time security threats. The system provides all the features needed to communicate effectively and quickly during an emergency from the user's mobile phone. This application allows the Commission to securely send alerts from anywhere via push notifications, text messages, emails, or voice calls to communicate in real time. The critical event management features help to escalate the crisis response and recovery process to protect people and processes. The system is an integral part of the EMSC and has helped rescue election staff in several elections, beginning with the 2021 Anambra and Ekiti and

Osun States Governorship as well as the FCT Area Councils elections. An upgraded version of the mobile app was deployed in the Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi state Governorship elections in November 2023.

7.8 Reorganisation and Improvements in the INEC Election Day Situation Room

The Situation Room is a platform for a real-time monitoring of elections. Established to receive reports from the field and to coordinate Election Day activities in locations where elections are taking place, the Situation Room is open to participants within and outside the Commission. The Commission's Departments and Directorates with responsibilities in the areas of protocol, installation and maintenance of the equipment and facilities, publicity, logistics, health services, security, and general

administration participate in the Situation Room. Stakeholders such as election observers, political parties, the media, and security agencies are also invited to the Situation Room.

For off-season elections, the Commission has since August 2020, maintained the tradition of granting Election Observers virtual access to the Situation Room to seek clarification and report challenges and potential threats on Election Day. This practice commenced with the 2020 Nasarawa Central State Constituency bye-election. The Situation Room was subsequently expanded to include virtual participation where stakeholders, especially civil society observer groups join via zoom, to report observations and incidents that may require the Commission's support and intervention.

During the 2019 and 2023 General Elections, several stakeholders were granted access to the Commission's National Situation Room as shown in Table 7.2 below.

Table 7.2: Access to the INEC Situation Room Granted to Various Stakeholders

S/N	Name of Organisation/Stakeholder	2019	2023
1.	Police	118	100
2.	Fire Service	5	16
3.	DSS	129	165
4.	Civil Defence	15	31
5.	ICCES Members	15	15
6	Media	63	141
7	Domestic Observers	136	193
8	Foreign Observers	51	38
9	Political Parties	47	30
10	FOSIECON	1	-
	Total	580	729

Besides receiving reports from election observers, the Situation Room also receives direct real-time reports from the Election Monitoring and Support Centre (EMSC) and connects with Situation Rooms in the 36 State and FCT Offices to monitor and attend to issues as they arose. Furthermore, with the support of the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES), the Situation Room interacts with the Operational Centres of the security agencies on Election Day to closely monitor election security.

7.9 Promoting Electoral Accountability and Integrity

The Code of Conduct and Principles of Ethical Behaviour for Members, Officials and Staff of INEC was adopted by the Commission in June 2022. It requires all officials and staff to comply with all applicable laws, regulations and guidelines governing the conduct and behaviour of public officials as enshrined in the Fifth Schedule, Part I of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), including the *Code of Conduct for Public Officials*, the *Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act*, the specific provisions on the standards of conduct and behaviour for Election Officials enshrined in the Electoral Act 2022 and the *INEC Staff Conditions of Service*. The code made it clear that the Commission will not condone any activity that constitutes a violation of the law or unethical conduct, nor permit any action that fails to stand the closest possible public scrutiny. The Commission stipulates that all professional and electoral activities must be conducted according to the highest standards of propriety and be in consonance with extant laws, rules, regulations and guidelines. These require members, officials and staff of

the Commission to always be truthful and non-partisan in their conduct. The code comprises of principles of general conduct as well as conduct in election and non-election related matters.

Some of the provisions in the principles of general conduct include: -

- a) Strict adherence to all applicable laws, regulations, guidelines, as well as to the mission, vision and core values of the Commission in undertaking all actions and activities.
- b) Avoidance and/or disclosure of any actual or potential conflict of interest guided by professional integrity, neutrality and non-partisanship
- c) Prohibition from the acceptance of gifts, entertainment and favours beyond the threshold set by the Commission from any individual, organisation or association subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the Commission. Also prohibited is a personal, professional or business interest in the decisions of the Commission; or maintaining a business relationship with the Commission.
- d) Effective and resourceful management of Commission's properties, funds and assets,
- e) Keeping accurate and reliable records, complete, accurate and timely communication of Commission's policies and decisions; maintenance of confidentiality and equal treatment to everyone devoid of discrimination and harassment based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion or age

In pursuit of the conduct of free, fair, and credible elections and to develop systems, structures and processes that

will support the provision of quality electoral services in Nigeria, the code of conduct requires all members, and staff of the Commission, as well as all election duty personnel or ad-hoc and any other person delegated for election duty by the Commission to:

- a) Subscribe to the Code of Conduct and other regulations and guidelines issued by the Commission and adhere strictly to them.
- b) Strictly adhere to the Commission's rules and regulations as contained in the *Code of Conduct for Election Officials (2014)* or as may from time to time be revised.
- c) Subscribe to and strictly adhere to the Oath/affirmation of Neutrality.
- d) Offer a user-friendly environment for all persons utilising electoral services, especially in respect of registration of voters and polling services.
- e) Arrange suitable access to physical facilities at the Registration Centre and other Centres for electoral activities, with reference to persons with disability and the elderly.
- f) Develop adequate and suitable election awareness programmes with dissemination schemes to ensure full national coverage.
- g) Ensure that all qualified persons who wish to register as voters can do so, and all registered voters who wish to vote are able to do so.

- h) Ensure diligence in the discharge of election duty and election related tasks; and
- i) Assist all persons with special needs, such as persons with disability, the elderly as well as pregnant and nursing mothers to have priority and easy access to electoral services.

In terms of conduct in non-election related context, members, and staff of the Commission are required to:

- a) Avoid any meeting with politicians, political party officials, political parties and political authorities alone and to always take somebody along to such meetings, especially around the period of elections.
- b) Extend meeting invitations to all political parties and avoid meeting with one political party or a select group of political parties as few issues, if any would exclusively affect a single party or group of parties.
- c) Postpone any meeting and consult if in doubt about the purpose of an invitation to a meeting or a request to attend a meeting by a politician, political party officials, political parties and political authorities or any affiliate organisation.
- d) Firmly decline any offers or benefits whatsoever from politicians, political party officials, political parties and political authorities.
- e) Hold regular meetings with all electoral stakeholders and always insist on a mutually agreed public statement – press release, communiqué, etc. – to

be issued after every meeting with politicians, political party officials, political parties and political authorities; and

- f) Hold regular, scheduled meetings with politicians, political party officials, political parties and political authorities rather than ad-hoc summons and sudden, unplanned meetings.

Avoid secret meetings and secret deals, both bilateral and multilateral, completely as nothing about election management is secret except balloting. The Commission takes adherence to the Code of Conduct seriously and the violation of any of its provisions, when proven often attracts serious disciplinary action including withdrawal of designated authority to RECs, interdiction of the accused official and even criminal prosecution.

7.10 Issuance of Employment Letters to Ad-hoc Staff

To ensure certainty of the entitlements due to ad-hoc staff on election duty and to clearly specify the mode of paying the entitlements and the responsibilities of the staff, the Commission decided at its meeting on 21st October 2019 to institutionalize the issuance of letters of appointment to its ad-hoc staff commencing with the 2019 governorship elections in Bayelsa and Kogi States. Since then, the issuance of appointment letters to ad-hoc staff has been done in every election to enhance the integrity of Election-Day activities. Hitherto, the recruitment of ad-hoc staff and their entitlements were not properly documented. As a result, it was easy to substitute bogus individuals for

properly recruited and trained ad-hoc staff. It was also possible for ad-hoc staff to be shortchanged in the payment of their entitlements. Repeatedly, ad-hoc staff complained about not being paid, leading on occasions to demonstrations at INEC offices. These problems have drastically reduced as ad-hoc staff now have official letters of engagement clearly stating their entitlements.

7.11 Prosecution of Staff, Officials, and Other Electoral Offenders

Prosecution of election offenders has been one longstanding problem confronting the Commission, with the public repeatedly calling on the Commission to do more to apprehend and prosecute offenders. The Commission has been more successful with the prosecution of offenders. In the period between 2015 and 2025, several prosecutions and convictions were recorded. Still, the Commission continues to note that it lacks adequate capacity to deal with the problem. Consequently, the Commission has expressed support for the establishment of a separate agency to focus on the prosecution of electoral offenders.

Even more strident has been public calls for the Commission to prosecute its own staff and officials alledged to have engaged in electoral malpractices. In response, the Commission has paid greater attention to its own staff and officials. In the aftermath of the 2015 General Election hundreds of INEC staff were indicted for bribery by security agencies and the Commission promptly placed them on suspension. Many others were investigated administratively for alleged malpractice during the 2015 General Election. Following the 2019

General Election, the Commission prosecuted two university professors who served as collation officers in Akwa Ibom State. One of them was convicted and jailed. In the 2023 General Election, three Resident Electoral Commissioners were relieved of their positions for the roles they played in the election. One of them, who prematurely announced the

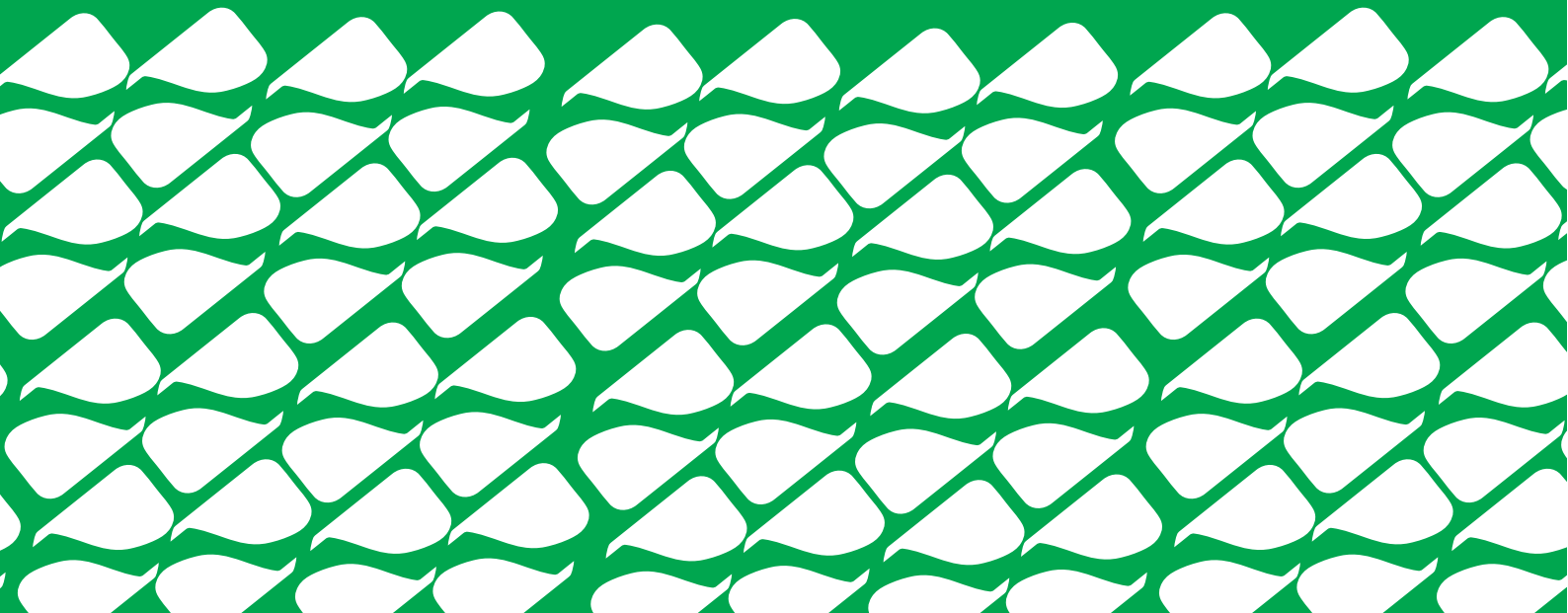
result of a Governorship election when collation had not been completed, is being prosecuted. The three RECs were subsequently dismissed by the appointing authority. All these point to the Commission's determination to also deal with its own officials and staff who undermine elections, even at the highest level.

Box 14: The Establishment of the Election Monitoring and Support Centre

The Election Management System (EMS) was formalized and established by the Commission as a planning, monitoring, and implementation framework in 2014 based on recommendations from the review of the 2011 General Election as well as recommendations from the various process review reports, including those of the Registration and Election Review Committee (RERC). The development of the EMS itself began way back in 2013 being part of the Commission's response to the implementation of the recommendations of the RERC. The RERC Report drew the Commission's attention to the challenges it encountered in the prosecution of the two major electoral activities in 2011: the voter registration (15th January – 7th February) and the General Election (9th – 26th April). These challenges related to the management of logistics, personnel, political parties/ candidate managements as well as the registration of voters and training. Consequently, a committee was set up to consider the recommendations of the 2011 review processes as well as those of the RERC. The development and establishment of an EMS was a notable recommendation to the Commission on how to address the identified challenges and to systematize the electoral process by enhancing the Commission's capacity to conduct elections and manage the electoral process through improved coordination, efficiency and effectiveness. This led to the development of a cluster of clearly identified activities critical to an election and whose implementation required timelines, collaboration and the assignment of specific tasks and responsibilities to departments, and in certain instances to specific persons within those departments. It was this effort that led to the establishment of the 7 Principal Business Areas (PBAs) and the development of workflows for each of the PBAs through process analysis, key performance indicators, and analytical tools for data collection and reporting. In addition, these had implementation timelines and schedules, and the plan was to automate these processes so that implementation progress can be monitored on a dashboard. The PBAs were: Election Day Logistics (EDL); Election Staff Management (ESM); Political Party and Candidate Management (PPM); Election Day Training (EDT); Election Day Procurement (EDP); Continuous Voter Registration (CVR); and Election Day Support (EDS). Two sets of PBAs were added between 2017-2022. These are Voter Education and Publicity (VEP) and Complaints and Dispute Management (CDM) (2017-2019) and Election Day Security (EDSM) and Gender and Inclusivity (G&I) (2019-2022). Presently therefore, there are 11 PBAs, and the idea is that after every general election, process reviews would indicate the necessity or otherwise of additional PBAs.

08

Voter Outreach Programmes: Civic and Voter Education



Voter Outreach Programmes: Civic and Voter Education

Voter and civic education is a key statutory function of the Independent National Electoral Commission. Section 2 of the Electoral Act (2022), states that “in addition to the functions conferred on it by the Constitution, the Commission shall have power to conduct voter and civic education”. Although the Commission commits a lot of time and resources to civic and voter education, repeated evaluations have rated its performance below par. This is given the vast expanse of the country, the large and diverse population of voters and the limited human and financial resources available to the Commission.

One important issue that is often overlooked in the discussions on the lack of adequate voter and civic education results by the Commission is that voter and civic education is a shared responsibility. There is no way INEC cannot singlehandedly undertake or achieve effective mobilization and voter education with desired reach. Therefore, voter education is also the duty and responsibility of other electoral stakeholders including political parties, civil society organisations, the media and relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies.

The Commission has in place a framework for the development, design and implementation of various voter outreach programmes and for the dissemination of various information, communication and education materials for the purpose of

voter mobilisation and sensitisation. It also provides overall leadership in the effort to mobilise and enlighten the citizenry to participate in the electoral processes.

8.1 The National Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Voter Education and Publicity

The idea of establishing the National Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP) comprising INEC and key ministries, departments and agencies dealing with voter and civic education as well as professional bodies and associations was contained in the Commission's 2012-2016 Strategic Plan. The motivating principle for the establishment of NICVEP was that each member will bring their considerable knowledge, expertise, resources and reach to bear on the development of a harmonised national template for voter and civic education to mitigate the low level of awareness on electoral matters by the citizenry. The objective was to discourage voter apathy, promote positive attitudes and responses among the citizenry, encourage compliance with regulations, discourage violence and all forms of malpractices and enhance active participation in the electoral process. The Committee made up of 15 members was inaugurated on 17th May 2014 and saddled with the responsibility of: i) Reviewing the existing frame-work for civic and voter education and advising the Commission on areas of improvement; ii) Proffering advice on effective strategies for public enlightenment and voter education; iii) Developing a medium to long-term framework for civic and voter education; iv) Identifying various organisations and

agencies capable of undertaking voter education activities and recommend appropriate support for them; v) Identifying those organisations and agencies that can contribute resources to voter education and develop strategies for engaging them; vi) Assisting in the design and provision of materials for voter education as well as their distribution and dissemination to target groups; vii) Monitoring the implementation of voter education strategies to ensure the realization of set goals; viii) Encouraging the pooling of resources and proper utilization of available channels and platforms for voter education; and ix) Undertaking periodic review of voter education activities in the country. The NICVEP members are as follows:

1. Independent National Electoral Commission
2. National Orientation Agency
3. Federal Ministry of Information
4. Federal Ministry of Communications
5. Federal Ministry of Education
6. Federal Ministry of Women Affair and Social Development
7. Federal Ministry of Youths Development
8. National Broadcasting Commission
9. Nigerian Communications Commission
10. Nigerian Television Authority
11. Federal Radio Corporation of

Nigeria

12. News Agency of Nigeria
13. Nigerian Guild of Editors
14. Nigerian Labour Congress
15. Nigerian Union of Journalists

Despite the best efforts of the Commission between 2015 and 2025, getting NICVEP to function as envisaged, its full operation has been very challenging indeed. Various attempts at developing cooperation, coordination and synergy among the members for the task of developing voter education mechanisms aimed at educating, enlightening and mainstreaming voters in Nigeria have yielded little or no result. Apart from inter-agency rivalries, pulling resources together to engage in civic and voter education in a formal and structured manner still remains difficult to achieve. This is based on the erroneous believe that the Commission has inexhaustible resources to fund the entire effort, including funds to the other member agencies to undertake civic and voter education. Nevertheless, the Commission continues to work with relevant stakeholders to formulate and implement strategies for the design and development of comprehensive civic and voter education materials and public outreach programmes and messages targeting the voter population as well as to promote the participation of marginalized groups in the electoral process.

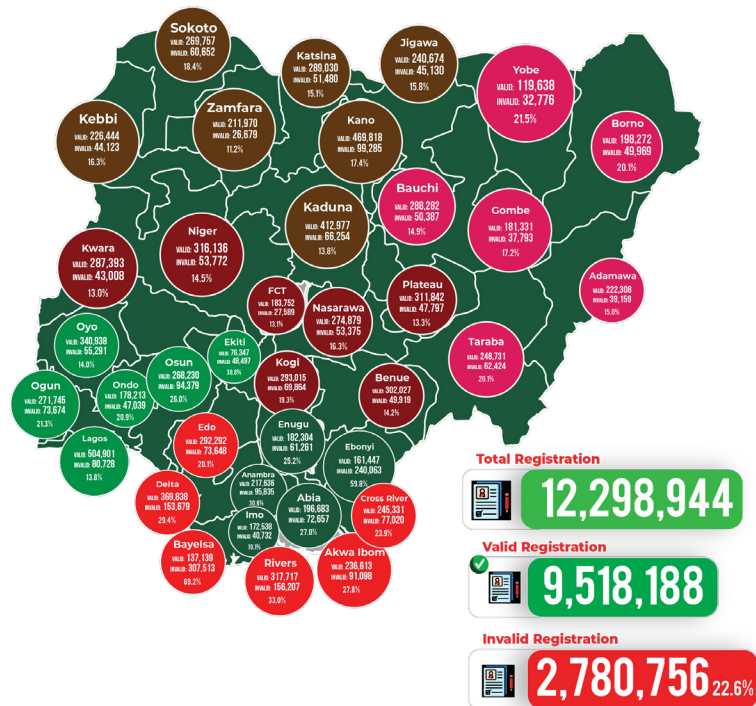


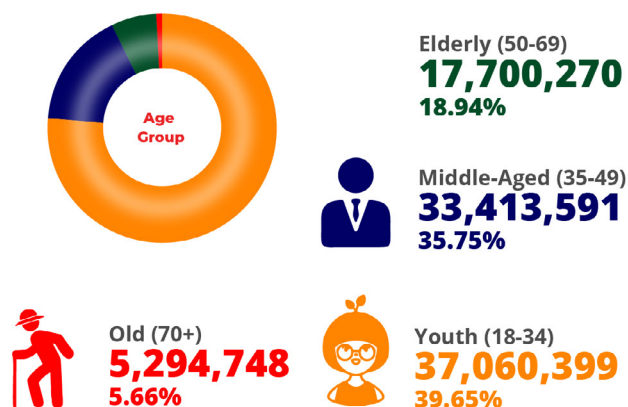
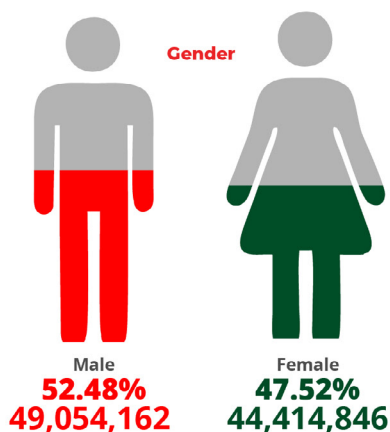
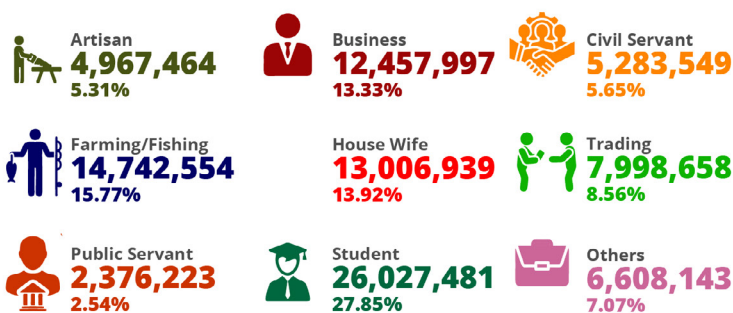
Figure 8.1: Completed Valid and Invalid Voter Registration figures after the application of the ABIS audit



Figure 8.2: Published Data for Registered Voters and Collected PVCs for the 2023 General Election



Analyses of Registered Voters for the 2023 General Election



Disability

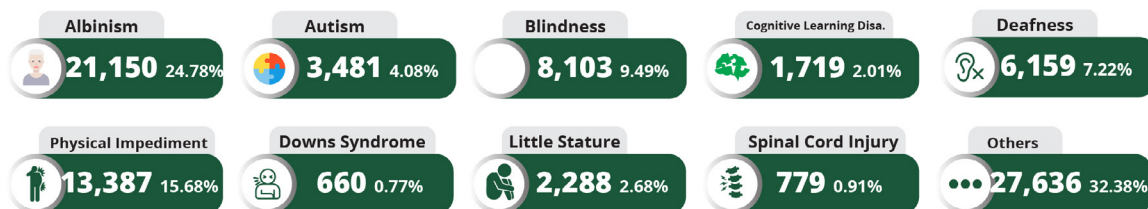


Figure 8.3: Breakdown of Registered Voters by occupation, gender, age and disability for the 2023 General Election

Box 15: Formation of the National Inter-Agency Committee on Voter Education and Publicity

The idea of establishing the National Inter-Agency Committee on Voter Education and Publicity (NICVEP) comprising INEC and key ministries, departments and agencies dealing with voter and civic education as well as professional bodies and associations was contained in INEC Strategic Plan 2012-2016. The motivating principle for the establishment of NICVEP is that each member will bring its considerable knowledge, expertise, resources and reach to bear on the development of a harmonised national template for voter and civic education to mitigate the low level of awareness on electoral matters by the citizenry. This is with the objective of discouraging voter apathy, promoting positive attitudes and responses among the citizenry, encouraging compliance with regulations, discouraging violence and all forms of malpractices and increasing more active participation in the electoral process. The Committee made up of 15 members was inaugurated on 17th May 2014 and saddled with the responsibility of: i) Reviewing the existing frame-work for civic and voter education and advice the Commission on areas of improvement; ii) Proffering advice on effective strategies for public enlightenment and voter education; iii) Developing a medium to long-term frame work for civic and voter education; iv) Identifying various organisations and agencies capable of undertaking voter education activities and recommend appropriate support for them; v) Identifying those organisations and agencies that can contribute resources to voter education and develop strategies for engaging them; vi) Assisting in the design and provision of materials for voter education as well as their distribution and dissemination to target groups; vii) Monitoring the implementation of voter education strategies to ensure the realization of set goals; viii) Encouraging the pulling of resources and proper utilization of available channels and platforms for voter education; and ix) Undertaking periodic review of voter education activities in the country.

8.2 Voter Outreach Efforts

The Yakubu Commission from the outset emphasized on the need for a good communication strategy and implementation plan for the conduct of free, fair, credible and inclusive elections and to earn public trust. These strategies and plans were articulated in the five main objectives of the 2022-2026 SP and the INEC Communication Policy, and various activities were undertaken in the period under review to achieve identified strategic communication goals. These include: -

8.2.1 Review and Implementation of the INEC Communication Policy

The maiden INEC Communication Policy approved in May 2013 by the Commission was comprehensively reviewed in 2018. The review culminated in the 2019 Communication Policy, which retained relevant communication concepts from the previous policy while incorporating new ideas and strategies, especially on the new social media that addressed the

evolving phenomenon of fake news, disinformation and misinformation. The Voter Education and Publicity (VEP) Department at headquarters followed the guidelines and standards outlined in the Policy Information flow from top to bottom and this was replicated in the various state and FCT offices throughout the two electoral cycles. Information about the conduct of electoral activities and other logistics were properly communicated to both internal and external publics. Public enlightenment and voter sensitization programmes were carried out optimally to the grassroots, using various communication channels and platforms.

8.2.2 Capacity Building Workshop for Voter Education Providers, Heads of VEP and Public Affairs Officers

The Commission in partnership with development partners organised various capacity development workshops for Voter Education Providers. Of particular note is the collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to organise capacity building sessions for 222 selected voter education providers. The training took place in the six geo-political zones of the federation as presented below:

Table 8.1: Schedules of Voter Education Workshops Supported by the UNDP

S/N	Zone	Venue	Date
1	North-West	Sokoto	17th October 2022
2	North-East	Adamawa	17th October 2022
3	North-Central	Lokoja	24th October 2022
4	South-West	Ibadan	24th October 2022
5	South-South	Calabar	31st October 2022
6	South-East	Enugu	31st October 2022

The Commission also collaborated with the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) to organise a training for the Heads of VEP in the State and FCT Offices between 6th and 7th February 2023. The trainings, which were held in Kano and Lagos, focused on the management of information during elections, procedures and processes for nationwide online media accreditation, technologies for 2023 General Election, issues of fake News, misinformation and disinformation as well as experience sharing on media interviews.

The Commission organized a capacity building training for Heads of Voter Education and Public Affairs Units on the 8th of September 2022 at Golden Dabis Hotel, Keffi, Nasarawa State, to intimate them on the approved activities and implementation strategies towards the 2023 General Election. Participants, comprising headquarters staff, Electoral Officers, (EOs) Assistant Electoral Officers, (AEOs) and representatives of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) were briefed about the Commission's activities towards the 2023 General Election, and the specific changes

in the processes. The meeting also served as a platform to sensitize participants on the procedures for safe participation in the electoral process and their responsibilities in getting the messages across to the electorate.

8.2.3 Production / Airing of Voter Education and Enlightenment Jingles

The Commission produced several jingles in English and local languages to enlighten and sensitise voters on various aspects of the electoral process towards the 2019 and 2023 General Elections. Some Nollywood celebrities were engaged to produce jingles in Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, English, and Pidgin languages, some of which were translated into various indigenous languages and aired locally. The audio and video jingles were produced for the purpose of continuous voter registration and election highlighting basic facts, requirements, and procedure for participation in the CVR and PVC Collection, voting procedure, basic facts on the BVAS and IReV Technology, campaign against violence, vote buying and selling and safety of election officials. The Jingles were aired across the country on public and privately owned radio and television stations and networks to enhance citizens' awareness of the processes and procedures for voter registration and for voting as one of the jingles demonstrates below

Nigerians, the time has come again for us to elect our leaders. The Presidential, National Assembly Governorship elections will be conducted on Saturday, 26th February 2023 while the Governorship and State Houses of Assembly election will hold on Saturday, 11th March, 2023. It is your duty to play your part to ensure that the elections are peaceful and successful in your communities and all parts of our country. INEC assures you that the elections will be credible. INEC will be fair to all political parties and candidates. To

prevent any cheating during voting at the polling units, INEC will use the new Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) to verify and accredit all voters. The BVAS equipment will also be used to upload election results from the polling Units to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV).

8.2.4 Outdoor Enlightenment Activities, Stakeholder Forums and LGA and Grassroots Community Mobilization

The VEP Department in collaboration with the Procurement Department engaged advertising agents to display voter enlightenment messages on billboards at strategic locations nationwide. Banners containing logos of political parties and correct thumb printing methods were also produced and mounted at the 774 INEC LGA Offices nationwide.

Similarly, State and FCT Offices engaged with stakeholders including political parties, civil society organisations, traditional and religious leaders as well as security agencies to disseminate information and address inter-communal tensions and conflicts that could impact on the electoral process. The use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms enabled the Commission to mitigate crisis by adopting confidence building measures in resolving potential crisis. Furthermore, road shows were held across the geo-political zones to sensitise and mobilise citizens on their electoral rights and the need for them to exercise their franchise. Similarly, the Commission participated in the yearly Calabar Carnival in Cross River State to create awareness and mobilise citizens to participate in the electoral process. In many of these engagements, the Commission collaborated with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to expand the reach of voter

enlightenment campaigns at the grassroots.

The Commission recognises the importance of religious leaders and the influence they wield over their adherents. For that reason, the Commission engaged with religious leaders at various levels for the purpose of voter education. This is with the belief that they will complement the Commission's efforts to get citizens to participate in the electoral process by registering and voting. For instance, the Commission convened a meeting with the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria and the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria just before the 2019 General Election where the Commission's innovations, activities and preparations for the General Election were laid bare. It provided an excellent opportunity for both bodies to interrogate the Commission's level of preparedness and clarify several issues. The meeting ended on a happy note with a pledge by the hosts to encourage their members to vote during the election.

8.2.5 INEC Ambassadors

The Commission enlisted local celebrities and influencers as INEC Ambassadors to amplify voter education and awareness messages, encouraging citizens, especially the youth who make up the majority of their audience, to register, vote, and contest for elective offices. It was also designed to discourage young voters from engaging in electoral malpractices like thuggery, vote buying, and electoral violence. Furthermore, the Commission partnered with the European Union and YIAGA Africa to organise the *Youth Votes Count/ INEC Campus Outreach* programme which held in the University of Abuja, University of Lagos, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Bayero University Kano, Modibbo Adama University, Yola, and the University of Port Harcourt in the run up to the 2019 General Election. This was replicated shortly before the 2023 General Election with the *Youth Votes Count 2.0* with two mega concerts in Lagos and Abuja, featuring various popular Nigerian music and movie stars. Both initiatives witnessed a large turnout of youths who registered and collected their Permanent Voters Cards (PVCs).



Professor Mahmood Yakubu during the Campus Outreach Programme on voter sensitisation in the run-up to the 2023 General Election

8.2.6 Engagements with Professional Bodies

In the period under review, the Commission interfaced with several professional bodies in the effort to strengthen the electoral process, enhance service delivery and promote cooperation and coordination in the implementation of some of its activities. These included the Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA), the Advertisers Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), the Chartered Institute of Professional Printers of Nigeria (CIPPON) and the Computer Professionals of Nigeria (CPN). As a result of these engagements, the NIPR and NBA are partnering with the Commission on reputation management, the prosecution of electoral offenders and the production of election materials. One particular outcome of the engagement with CIPPON was that for the first time since 1999, all the sensitive materials used for the 2023 General Election were printed in Nigeria.

Some other voter outreach activities conducted by the Commission in the period under review included: outdoor enlightenment activities with the use of sine-rover vehicles, publication and distribution of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the electoral process; electoral offences and penalties; election results management; rights and responsibilities of voters; election procedure; production and dissemination of voter education messages through animations and drama sketches; *vox-populi* to sample the readiness and awareness level of voters for elections; production and dissemination of documentaries on electoral activities; distribution

of fliers, leaflets and customized/branded exercise books, biros, T-shirts, badges, and face caps with voter enlightenment messages as well as voter sensitisation programmes on the INEC TV online and myINEC App.

These outreach activities have led to increased voter participation and awareness, enabling citizens to make informed choices about electoral services and activities of the Commission. To support and reinforce these efforts, IEC materials were produced to address different thematic areas such as CVR, voting procedures, use of assistive devices, the use of IVED/BVAS, offences and penalties in the electoral process, the campaign against vote trading, security of election personnel, correct thumb printing, the campaign against violence and the use of the IREV.

8.3 Social Media Outreach

With 2.8 million followers on X, 933,000 on Facebook, and 452,000 on Instagram, the Commission maintains a strong presence on the social media landscape in the period under review by taking full advantage of its channels and platforms to disseminate information, debunk fake news, interact with its various publics, and gather feedback from citizens. In line with the objectives articulated in the Communication Policy, all the Commission's press statements, announcements, policies, publications and electoral information were uploaded to its website and shared on its social media platforms. This provided Nigerians with unrestricted access to unfiltered information about its actions and activities and to equally express their views and report incidents, especially on election day.

In the buildup to the 2019 and 2023 General Elections, the Commission used its social media platforms to shared many voter education fliers, infographics and information on short videos that addressed various themes, including voting procedures, the Smart Card Reader (SCR), Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), the accreditation and authentication process, location of polling units, electoral offences and their penalties, and the INEC Result Viewing (IReV) portal.

In the run up to the 2023 General Election, the Commission organised two Twitter Spaces. The first with the theme: *Importance of Youth Participation in the Electoral Process* was held on 2nd June 2022, while the second – *Why BVAS and IReV are critical to the 2023 General Election* – took place on 4th November 2022. Both attracted large participation from all over the country and overseas, generating positive feedback.

8.4 Strategic Communication

In the period under review, the Commission embarked on actions and activities to strengthen its operational capacity for strategic and crisis communication to enhance the ability to engage credibly with citizens, pre-empt and mitigate reputational risks because of fake news, manage misinformation and disinformation and reinforce public trust in the electoral process. Pursuant to this objective, the Commission in 2017, established the INEC Online Newspaper which reports exclusively on its activities by publishing in-depth reports about the Commission's policies, events, activities and information on preparations for all electoral activities. The newspaper has

become a reference point for traditional media and blogs, which lift stories from the platform regularly to enrich their reports and features. In addition, the Commission also established the Digital Social Media and Strategic Crisis Communication Advisory Teams. The major task of the Teams is to review and address trending issues in traditional and social media regarding policy decisions and the actions and activities relating to the electoral process. Furthermore, the Commission hosts the INEC Press Corps comprising of over 100 duly accredited members from print, broadcast, and online media organisations to cover and report on the Commission's activities. The Corps members are periodically trained to deepen their knowledge and sharpen their reportorial skills on the Commission's processes and procedures. In recognition of the critical role the Media plays in covering electoral activities, the Commission engaged with Media Executives, Online Publishers, and Line Editors in Lagos in November 2021 where Directors of key Departments from INEC Headquarters made presentations and clarified several issues on the Commission's processes, innovations, and preparations for the 2023 General Election. Arising from this engagement, the Commission, in collaboration with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), held training workshops across the six geopolitical zones in the country to equip media practitioners with a basic understanding of electoral activities and all relevant legal and regulatory instruments guiding the Commission's electoral activities.

In furtherance of its efforts to enhance its capability for strategic and crisis communication, the Commission supported by IFES, strengthened the operations of the INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC) established

in 2012. Assisted by the European Union Support for Democracy and Governance in Nigeria (EUSDGN), the Commission also established the INEC Media Monitoring Centre in 2017. The ICCC was designed as a rapid response platform to enquiries by citizens on any aspect of the electoral process. The operation of the Centre is expanded in the run up to any major election running from 7am to 8.00pm daily prior to an election and up-scaled to 24 hours on the eve of election and on Election Day with dedicated call agents to respond to inquiries and receive reports from the public regarding election-related issues. The Media Monitoring Centre on the other hand was devoted to tracking trending news and opinions published by the print media and aired by broadcast stations and monitors public perception of the Commission's activities and the electoral process. This is with the primary objective of

identifying reports requiring urgent attention or responses, either through press releases, rejoinders, or other strategic media engagements.

By and large, the social and conventional media platforms were awash with fake news, misinformation, and disinformation on several issues during the period under review. These ranged from news about the registration of underaged voters in some States, electronic transmission of results, discovery of PVCs in forests and shrines, vote trading, and ballot box stuffing during the elections among others. However, the Commission's proactive and regular dissemination of information about its policies and activities through the mainstream media, social media platforms and online newspaper (inecnews.com) countered these fake narratives as much as possible.

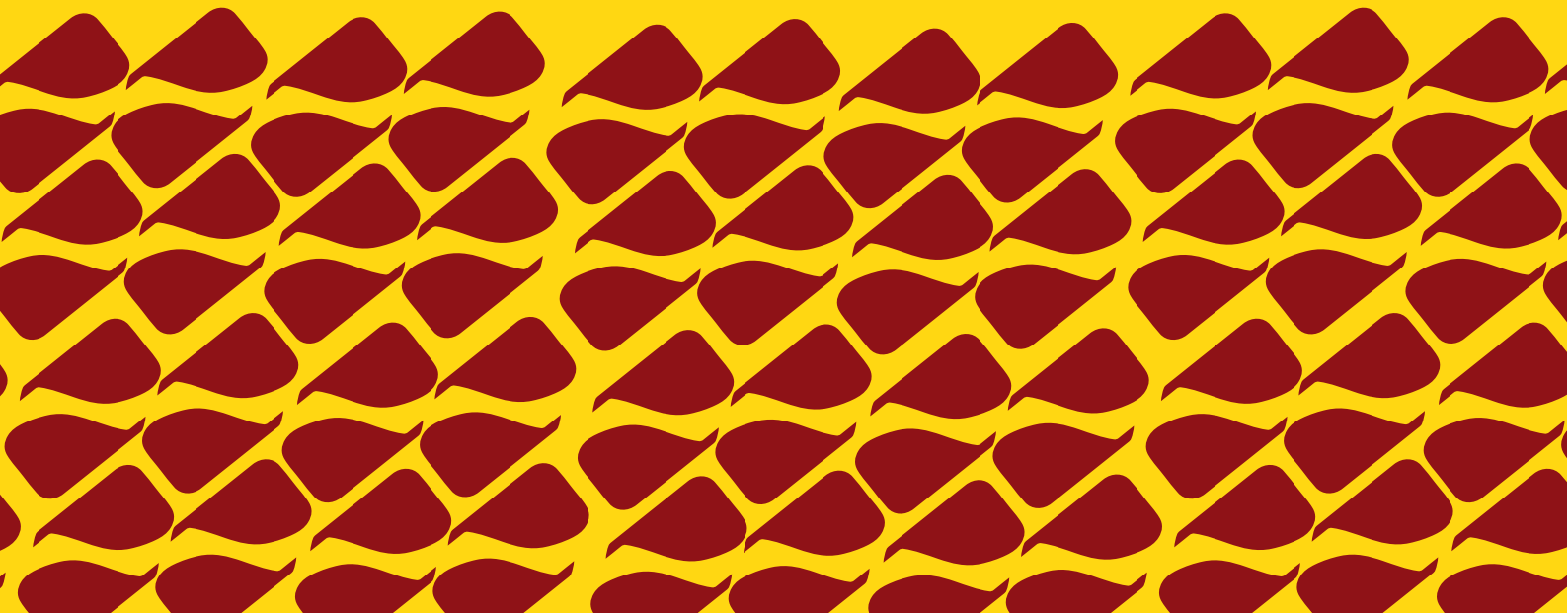


Figure 8.4: INEC Online Newspaper

Under the leadership of Professor Mahmood Yakubu, INEC launched the publication of an Online Newspaper (inecnews.com) to disseminate information on the activities of the Commission

09

Promoting Inclusivity in the Electoral Process



Promoting Inclusivity in the Electoral Process

The primary responsibility of the Independent National Electoral Commission is to conduct free, fair credible and inclusive elections. The Commission therefore takes the promotion of full and equal participation of all eligible citizens in the electoral process very seriously. Specifically, Section 54 of the Electoral Act 2022 charged the Commission to take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with disabilities, special needs and vulnerable persons are assisted to register and to vote. The Commission does not only place emphases on the provision of equal opportunity for all its members, officials and staff, it requires such officials to avoid any form of discrimination based on age, gender, and disability. Indeed, the Commission's code of conduct demands that its officials should ensure that all qualified persons who wish to register as voters can do so and all registered voters who wish to vote are able to do so. In doing so, our staff are directed to support eligible voters with special needs with the required assistance by providing them with priority and easy access to electoral services.

In the period under review, the Commission incorporated wide ranging inclusivity measures through the adoption of various policies and strategies to ensure the participation of all eligible citizens in the electoral process. These measures included the revision of the INEC Gender Policy to promote gender equity in the work of the Commission, the expansion

of voting access to persons with disability, addressing the voting rights of internally displaced persons and ongoing initiatives to facilitate special voting, out of country/diaspora voting and voting by the inmates of custodial centres to exercise their franchise.

9.1 Engendering the Electoral Process

The INEC Gender Policy was inaugurated in 2014 to create awareness and promote visibility on the key issue of gender in the electoral process. The Commission's commitment to gender equality was demonstrated in its endorsement of the Framework for Implementation of at least 35 percent affirmative Action on Women's Political Advancement and Representation in Democratic Governance in Nigeria. This was with the objective of creating a conducive internal environment for gender sensitivity and closing the gender gap within the Commission and a roadmap for systematic and sustained engagements with stakeholders in taking necessary action to address the inadequate representation of women in executive and legislative positions in Nigeria. The Gender Policy was therefore an innovative approach to broadening the participation of nearly half the population of registered voters in the electoral process and addressing the factors in the leadership recruitment process that are limiting the meaningful participation of women in the political process. Since the adoption of the Gender Policy, the Commission has provided required leadership, operational impetus and budgetary allocation for the institutionalization of the policy in its organisational structure and governance machinery, ensuring that its policies, plans, structure, practices and activities are undertaken based on their gendered implications.

9.2 Expansion of Access to Persons with Disability

The INEC Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with Disability in the Electoral Process was launched in September 2018 to demonstrate the Commission's commitment to the right of every citizen to exercise his/her franchise by facilitating their ability to cast an equal and universal vote and by protecting the sanctity of such vote. The Commission's commitment was anchored on Articles 21(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that all human beings are born free and equal and guaranteed their right to take part in the government of their country. These provisions were domesticated in Section 42 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which conferred on every citizen the right to freedom from discrimination and Sections 12 and 54 of the Electoral Act 2022 that stipulated the qualifications to register and vote in an election and which required the Commission to take reasonable steps in assisting persons with disability and

other vulnerable persons to vote with ease on Election Day. In line with its commitment, the Commission sets out the following five objectives to promote an inclusive electoral process and to guide its work in mainstreaming disability issues into its processes and procedures.

- i. To strengthen the Commission as an institution that is inclusive in its human and financial resources as well as in its practices and processes;
- ii. To work with relevant stakeholders to facilitate the development of accessible electoral facilities and infrastructure;
- iii. To encourage the participation of PWDs in all aspects of the electoral process;
- iv. To establish strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders to promote access and participation of PWDs in the electoral process; and
- v. To encourage Political Parties on access and participation of Persons with Disabilities in the electoral process.



A person living with Albinism uses a magnifying glass to check the Register of Voters for his name at a polling unit during the Osun State Governorship election held on 16th July 2022



A 93 year old woman casting her vote during the Presidential and National Assembly Election on 25th February 2023

Since 2018, the Commission had pursued the implementation of the Framework on Access and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in the Electoral Process through an operational plan, comprised of measurable actions that assigned roles to the various stakeholders and by allocation of resources for the delivery of these objectives. However, the enforcement of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition Act (2019) will go a long way in supporting the Commission's efforts towards the provision of inclusive electoral services.

9.3 Internally Displaced Persons

In the run-up to the 2015 General Election, the Commission was confronted with the issue of what to do with the growing number of internally displaced persons due to the insurgency and the associated insecurity in the North-Eastern part of the country, and specifically, in

the three states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe that were under a state of emergency. Conscious of its obligations to promote inclusivity and the prevention of discrimination in the electoral process, the Commission adopted a policy that enabled these displaced persons to exercise their franchise during the election. In the aftermath of the election and based on lessons learnt and some of the recommendations from the review of the election, the Commission adopted the INEC Framework for Voting by Internally Displaced Persons in December 2018 and a revised version in December 2022 to strengthen the legal provisions enabling internally displaced persons to register and vote in the 2019 and 2023 General Elections as well as in off-cycle governorship elections. The framework was necessitated by the determination of the Commission to expand the ability of all qualified citizens who have relocated temporarily or permanently from their places of habitual residence because of conflict, insecurity or other natural or man-made emergencies to register and vote.

The framework consists of three elements: i) Pre-operational planning for IDP voting, ii) Voting by IDP and iii) Engagement with Stakeholders. In the pre-operational planning phase, the framework requires the Commission to take 12 actions ranging from identification and classification of IDPs by location that is, whether intrastate referring to displaced persons within a state or interstate referring to displaced persons in one state that are hosted in another state to the conduct of a readiness assurance test to ascertain the level of preparedness for voting. In between these activities are some critical actions such as the determination of the categories of election in which IDPs can participate based on their location, organisation and the alignment of IDP voting with their delimitation details especially to their RAs and PUs. Other actions include the conduct of continuous voter registration and distribution of permanent voter cards in the IDP camps. In the voting period, the Commission is required to create polling centres in suitably determined locations in collaboration with security agencies, and relevant stakeholders, deployment of adequate number of BVAS configured to the PU level, put in place necessary modalities for a secure collation and result management system and the deployment of adequate number of election officials and security personnel for the election. Last are the actions the Commission is required to take is the extensive and wide-ranging engagement and consultation with stakeholders and extensive public enlightenment, voter education and publicity campaign.

9.4 Expansion of Voting Rights to Some Category of Persons

Article 25 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966), states that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions (and) unreasonable restrictions: (a) to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; and (b) to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors. Furthermore, Section 25 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) of Nigeria deals with citizenship, while Section 12(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 states that: (1) A person shall be qualified to be registered as a voter if such a person: (a) is a citizen of Nigeria; (b) has attained the age of 18 years; (c) is ordinarily resident, works in, originates from the Local Government/Area Council or Ward covered by the registration centre; (d) presents himself to the registration officers of the Commission for registration as a voter; and (e) is not subject to any legal incapacity to vote under any law, rule or regulation in force in Nigeria.

However, despite the provisions of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12(1c) of the Electoral Act 2022 makes it difficult if not impossible for certain categories of persons to vote on Election Day. This is because they are mostly engaged in electoral duties outside of the area where they are registered to vote as electoral officials, security personnel, election observers or journalist. Other persons in this category are inmates under the custody of the Nigerian Correctional Centre and Nigerians

in the Diaspora. The Commission addressed the issue of enabling these categories of registered voters to exercise their voting rights by exploring the pros and cons of doing so pending desired amendments to the existing electoral legal framework.

9.4.1 Early/Special Voting

Early or special voting refers to the ability of election officials, security personnel, election observers, journalists, essential workers that are otherwise officially engaged throughout the designated period of voting on Election Day. The desirability of facilitating the ability of these group of persons to vote is the fact of their disenfranchisement due to the nature of their work and religious belief. Moreover, it will result in increased voter turnout and their votes can determine the outcome as election becomes more competitive. However, for this to happen, there is need to amend Articles 44 and 45 of the Electoral Act 2022 to enable INEC to publish the notice for such election, specifying the day and hour for the election, the persons entitled to vote and the location of the polling units where voting will take place. Once this is done, the Commission will develop the regulations and guidelines to govern the conduct of the election with details on the persons qualified to vote, as well as the location, date, time, processes and procedures for voting.

9.4.2 Voting Rights for Inmates in Correctional Centres

The rights of inmates in the custody of the Nigerian Correctional Service to vote has been a subject of continuous debate. The right was based on the judgment of Justice M.T. Liman of the Federal High Court, Benin on the 16th December 2014, who averred that

prison inmates have the legal right to vote in Nigeria. However, he granted the reliefs sought specifically to the plaintiffs that instituted the action (Victor Emenuwe and four other awaiting trial persons) This judgement was affirmed by Justice Ogunwumiju of the Court of Appeal, Benin Division which confirmed that “all the inmates in Nigeria prisons possess a common Constitutional right to vote at an election”.

The legal framework used to confer voting rights on prison inmates are Article 25 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966); Section 25 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) defining a Nigerian citizen; and Section 12(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 defining the qualification required for registration as a voter. It is however important to clarify the meaning of Section 12(1E) which required that any prospective registrant “is not subject to any legal incapacity to vote under any law, rule or regulation in force in Nigeria”. This is particularly in reference to inmates that are on the death row or in prison for life.

Following these judgments, the Commission has engaged with the authorities of the Nigerian Correctional Service as well as with an NGO, Carmelite Prisoners’ Organisation (CAPID) to understand and/or work out the modalities to enable inmates that signify their intention to register or to vote to do so. Some of the suggestions includes: taking them out to register and/or to vote at proximate registration centres and polling units already designated for such purpose; ii) enabling them to register and vote in registration centres and polling units that are specially created for such purpose within the confines of the federal prisons nationwide; and iii)

enabling them to register and vote in registration centres and polling units specially created within the confines of selected federal prisons based on certain determinable criteria and through a pilot exercise.

In these engagements, it was observed that each of the proposed options has security risks for the Nigerian Correctional Service and personnel and monetary implications for the Commission. For example, the Nigerian Correctional Service will need to provide the required security and secure environment for the inmates to exercise their rights to register and vote and for electoral stakeholders to carry out their functions. The Commission on its own part will need to undertake the registration of inmates at designated registration centres, notify the public about such centres establish enough polling units in each registration area and to allocate inmates to such units.

By and large, the Commission and the Nigerian Correctional Service need to work together in developing the modalities and details of how electoral activities would be carried out in the Correctional Centres to guarantee the transparency, credibility and integrity of the electoral process. These include granting access to electoral officials, officials of political parties including their candidates and agents, election observers, the media and other relevant stakeholders to undertake their statutory functions in election administration, campaign and canvass for votes, monitor, observe and report on the electoral process and to provide civic and voter education to inmates. Finally, there is also the need to examine the ELF, particularly the EA 2022, to ensure that the measures to be taken on inmate voting are not inconsistent with the law.

9.4.3 Out-of-Country / Diaspora Voting

Nigeria has a significant population in the diaspora, with hundreds of its citizens living abroad on one kind of national assignment or the other as diplomats, Foreign Service Officers and Diplomatic Attaches and their dependants in the various Nigerian Diplomatic and Consular Missions abroad, personnel of the Nigerian Armed Forces participating in UN, AU or ECOWAS Peacekeeping Missions abroad, members of the Nigeria Technical Aid Corps (TAC) serving in Africa, the Pacific and Caribbean countries, as well as professionals and students engaged in training programmes or studying abroad. Given the importance accorded to the Nigerian Diaspora and Nigerian citizens on national assignment abroad, the Senate Committee on Diaspora and NGOs during their visit to INEC on 1st November 2016 urged the Commission to explore the possibilities of Out-of-Country Voting and pledged commitment to provide necessary legislative support in enacting an enabling law.

Consequently, the Commission on the 28th January 2017 inaugurated a Committee to determine the legal, political and electoral frameworks for out-of-country voting, estimate the population, spread and location of Nigerians in the Diaspora and Nigerians in missions abroad and requirements for registration; examine the methodologies of, and the global best practices for it; suggest an appropriate voting methodology; determine the logistic requirements assess the cost implications of the recommended methodology; and suggest timelines and/or a project plan for its implementation by the Commission.

The Committee however cautioned that to make Diaspora/Out of Country Voting happen, certain sections of the electoral legal framework as contained in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) and the Electoral Act 2022 must be amended. Moreover, the Committee provided the Commission with actionable recommendations criteria for eligibility, category of election and

an implementation methodology.

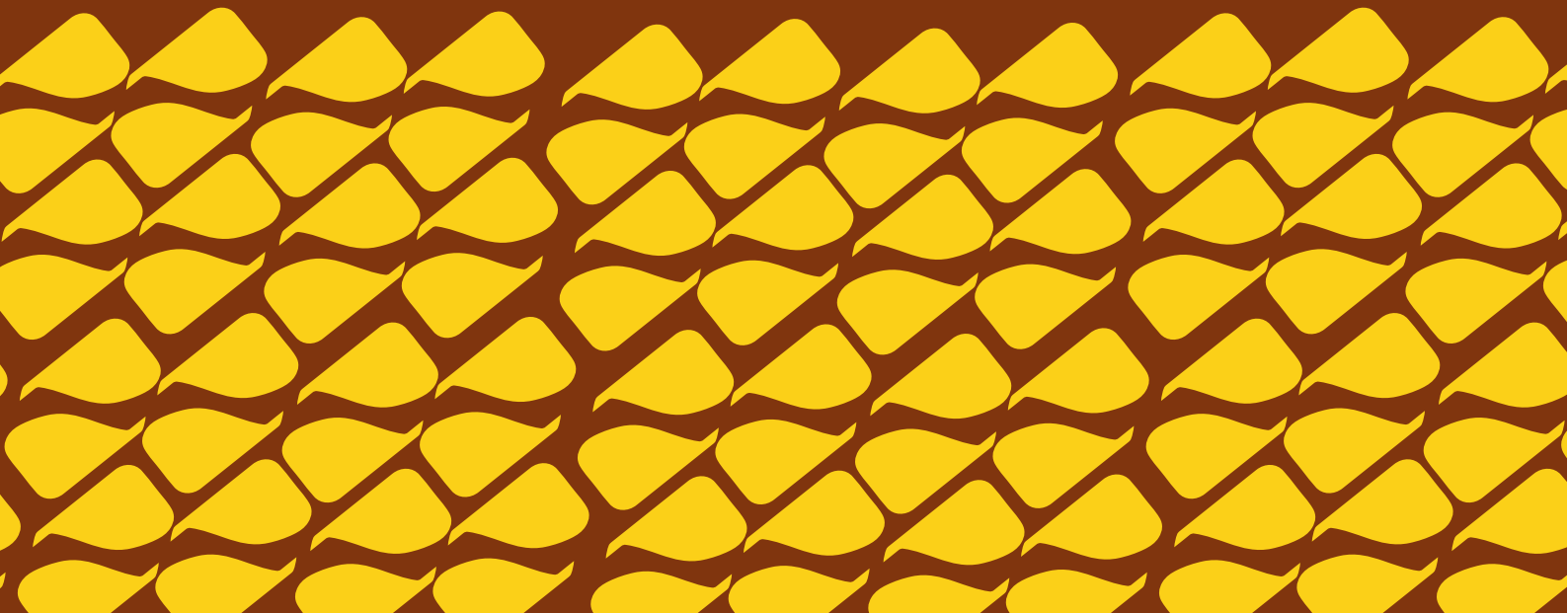
By and large, the Commission has undertaken extensive work on implementing Diaspora/Out of Country Voting and is in a good position to do so once the encumbrances in the electoral legal framework are addressed and resolved through legislation by the National Assembly.

Box 16: Promoting Inclusivity in the Electoral Process

In the period under review, the Commission incorporated wide ranging inclusivity measures through the adoption of various policies and strategies to ensure the participation of all eligible citizens in the electoral process. These measures included the revision of the INEC Gender Policy to promote gender equity in the work of the Commission, the expansion of voting access to persons with disability, addressing the voting rights of internally displaced persons and the ongoing initiatives to facilitate special voting, out of country/ diaspora voting and ability of the inmates of custodial centres to exercise their franchise.

10

Election Security



Election Security

In conducting elections, INEC has presence in the form of offices and facilities throughout the length and breadth of the country, many of them in remote locations. INEC has 774 Local Government offices, 37 State Offices, located in the State thirty-six capitals and the Federal Capital Territory, as well a national headquarters in Abuja. In addition, it has several locations to support the delivery of its mandate such as the Electoral Institute, two central stores in Abuja, as well as six zonal stores located in each of the six geopolitical zones. Each of the offices in the Local Governments and States also has a store for the safekeeping of electoral materials. Also, during elections and other electoral activities, INEC temporarily establishes Registration Area Camps, which are staging posts to specific locations for electoral activities.

Since the 2019 General Election, INEC facilities, materials and staff have come under orchestrated attacks by unknown persons (see Figs. 10 – 10.4). During preparations for the 2019 General Election, a storage container in the Anambra State office of the Commission at Awka, which housed the entire Smart Card Readers prepared for the election in the State, was razed by fire under suspicious circumstances. On the average, between 2019 and 2021 the Commission experienced 14 attacks on its facilities every year, mostly in the form of arson. In these attacks, buildings, election materials and vehicles were destroyed. Sometimes, these attacks even targeted staff, leading to loss of lives. For instance, during the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR in April 2022), some staff of the Commission in Ihitte

Uboma, Imo State were attacked, resulting in injuries and a death.

Incidentally, some of the attacks had nothing to do with elections or the activities of the Commission, such as the INEC offices that were destroyed by the #EndSARS protesters in 2020, by “unknown gunmen” and by Boko Haram insurgents. Therefore, while it is true that electoral violence is responsible for many of these attacks, it does not fully explain them. It seems that some assailants see INEC facilities as legitimate targets of anger towards government. This misrepresentation disregards the fact that the Commission is an independent constitutional body and not an extension of government. The legal role of the Commission is limited to conducting certain elections and referenda, civic education and the promotion of democracy. A further explanation of the susceptibility of the Commission’s facilities lies in the level of security and protection available for these facilities. Considering the number of these facilities and in many cases their remote locations, already stretched security agencies have been unable to provide adequate, armed protection. INEC has had to depend on unarmed guards to secure its remote facilities, which makes them soft targets for assailants.

In response to the attacks and their likely impact on elections, the Commission made a representation to President Muhammadu Buhari on 1st June 2021, requesting government intervention to curb the situation. Although the attacks appeared to subside thereafter, as a result of government intervention, in the run up to the 2023 General Election the attacks resumed with even more devastating consequences. As Fig. 10.1 shows that in 2019 there were nine incidents in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa,

Imo and Osun States, resulting to thuggery, and arson in some cases. Some offices were vandalized, others were burnt, election materials were destroyed and in Obot-Akara Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, twelve election vehicles were burnt, which affected election deployment. In 2020, the attacks more than doubled over the 2019 cases to twenty-one in nine States. However, unlike the 2019 cases that were mainly connected to the General Election, many of the cases recorded in 2020 were due to the #EndSARS protests across the country. But apart from #EndSARS, there were also attacks by Boko Haram on the Hawul Local Government Area Office of Borno State, protesters against the Supreme Court decision on the Imo Governorship election on the Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area office of Imo State, and attacks by unknown gunmen on the Aba South Local Government office in Abia State. In 2021, there were twelve incidents recorded in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Enugu, Imo and Kaduna States mostly

by hoodlums and unknown gunmen. However, the 2022 attacks created serious concerns for the Commission, not only because they were occurring too close to the General Election, but also because some of them appeared to be well-coordinated. There were seven attacks in 2022 in Enugu, Ogun, Osun, Ebonyi and Imo States (Table 10.1). Two of the attacks happened in Abeokuta South in Ogun State and Ede South in Osun State on the same day. Even more troubling were the two incidents in Imo State. First, on 2nd December, the Orlu Local Government Area office of the Commission, which was being repaired in preparation for the General Election following its destruction in 2021, was attacked by unknown persons and destroyed. Two days later in nearby Oru West Local Government Area, another attack was staged on the INEC office. It seemed plausible that those attacks were coordinated and targeted at disrupting the General Election in the State because they happened just 83 days to the General Election.

Table 10.1: Attacks on INEC Facilities in 2022

S/N	Local Government Area	State	Date of attack
1	Igboeze North	Enugu State	3rd July 2022
2	Udenu	Enugu State	1st August 2022
3	Abeokuta South	Ogun State	10th November 2022
4	Ede South	Osun State	10th November 2022
5	Izzi	Ebonyi State	27th November 2022
6	Orlu	Imo State	2nd December 2022
7	Oru West	Imo State	4th December 2022

Box 17: Attacks on INEC Facilities Nationwide

Since the 2019 General Election, INEC facilities, materials and staff have come under orchestrated attacks by unknown persons (see Figs. 10 – 10.4). During preparations for the 2019 General Election, a storage container in the Anambra State office of the Commission at Awka, which housed the entire Smart Card Readers prepared for the election in the State, was razed by fire under suspicious circumstances. On the average, between 2019 and 2021 the Commission experienced 14 attacks on its facilities every year, mostly in the form of arson. In these attacks, buildings, election materials and vehicles were destroyed. Sometimes, these attacks even targeted staff, leading to loss of lives. For instance, during the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) in April 2022), some staff of the Commission in Ihitte Uboma, Imo State were attacked, resulting in injuries and a death.

Incidentally, some of the attacks have had nothing to do with elections or the activities of the Commission, such as the INEC offices that were destroyed by #EndSARS protesters in 2020, by “unknown gunmen” and by Boko Haram insurgents. Therefore, while it is true that electoral violence is responsible for many of these attacks, it does not fully explain them. It seems that some assailants see INEC facilities as legitimate targets of anger towards government. This misrepresentation disregards the fact that the Commission is an independent constitutional body and not an extension of government. The legal role of the Commission is limited to conducting certain elections and referenda, civic education and the promotion of democracy. A further explanation of the susceptibility of the Commission’s facilities lies in the level of security and protection available for these facilities. Considering the number of these facilities and in many cases their remote locations, already stretched security agencies have been unable to provide adequate, armed protection. INEC has had to depend on unarmed guards to secure its remote facilities, which makes them soft targets for assailants.



ATTACKS ON INEC OFFICES

SINCE THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTION

As at Sunday 30th May 2021



These are attacks as a result of election-related violence, protests unrelated to elections and activities of thugs and unknown gunmen/hoodlums. The list does not include damages to facilities as a result of fire accidents, natural disasters such as flooding or rain/wind storms, the snatching/destruction of electoral materials during elections, burglary and attack on election duty officials.

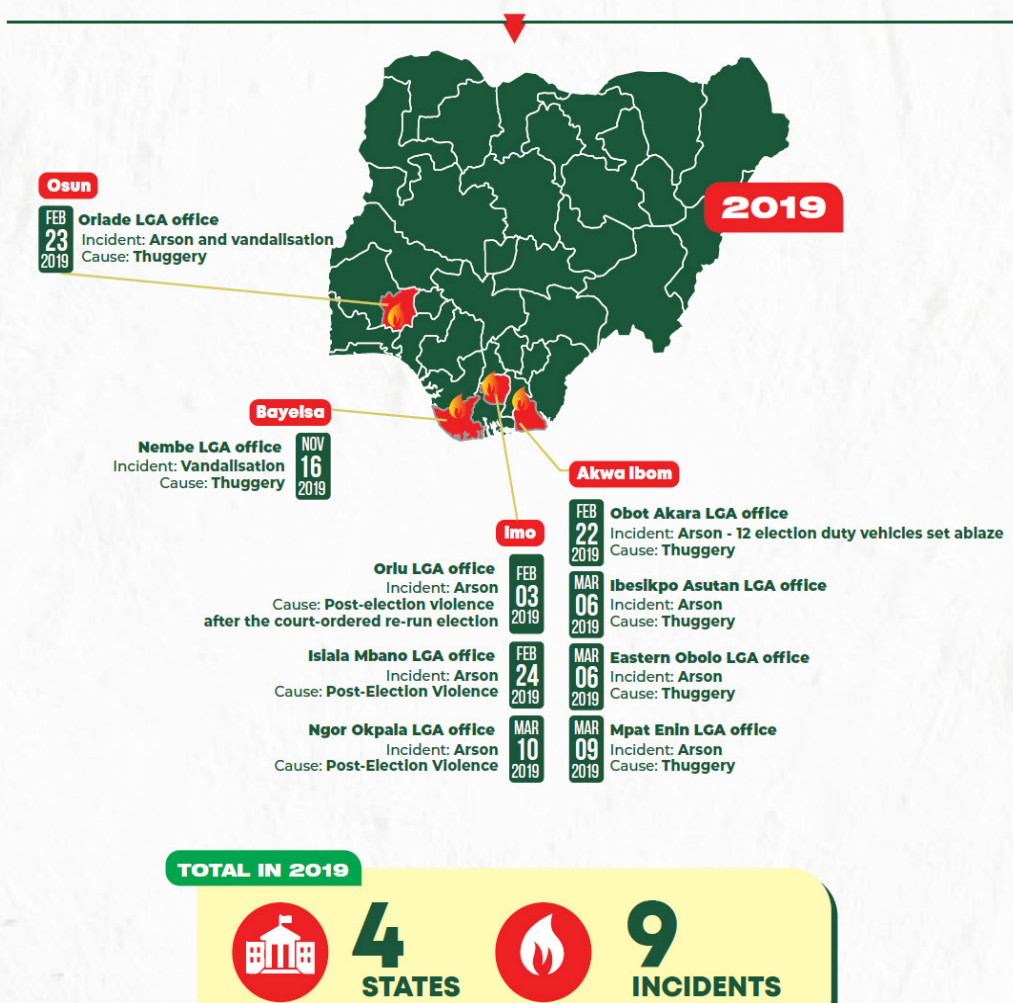


Fig. 10.1: Attacks on INEC Facilities in 2019

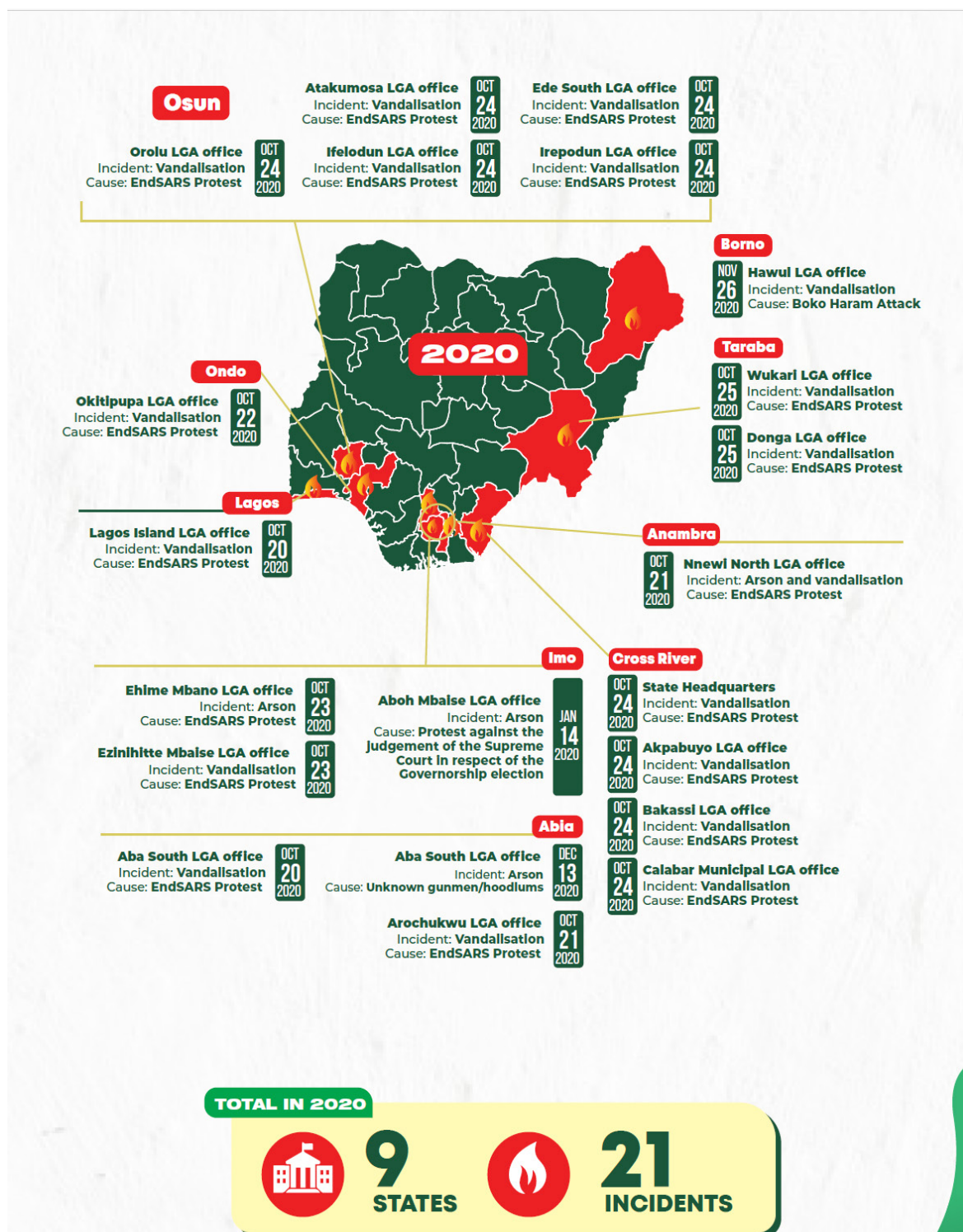


Fig. 10.2: Attacks on INEC Facilities in 2020

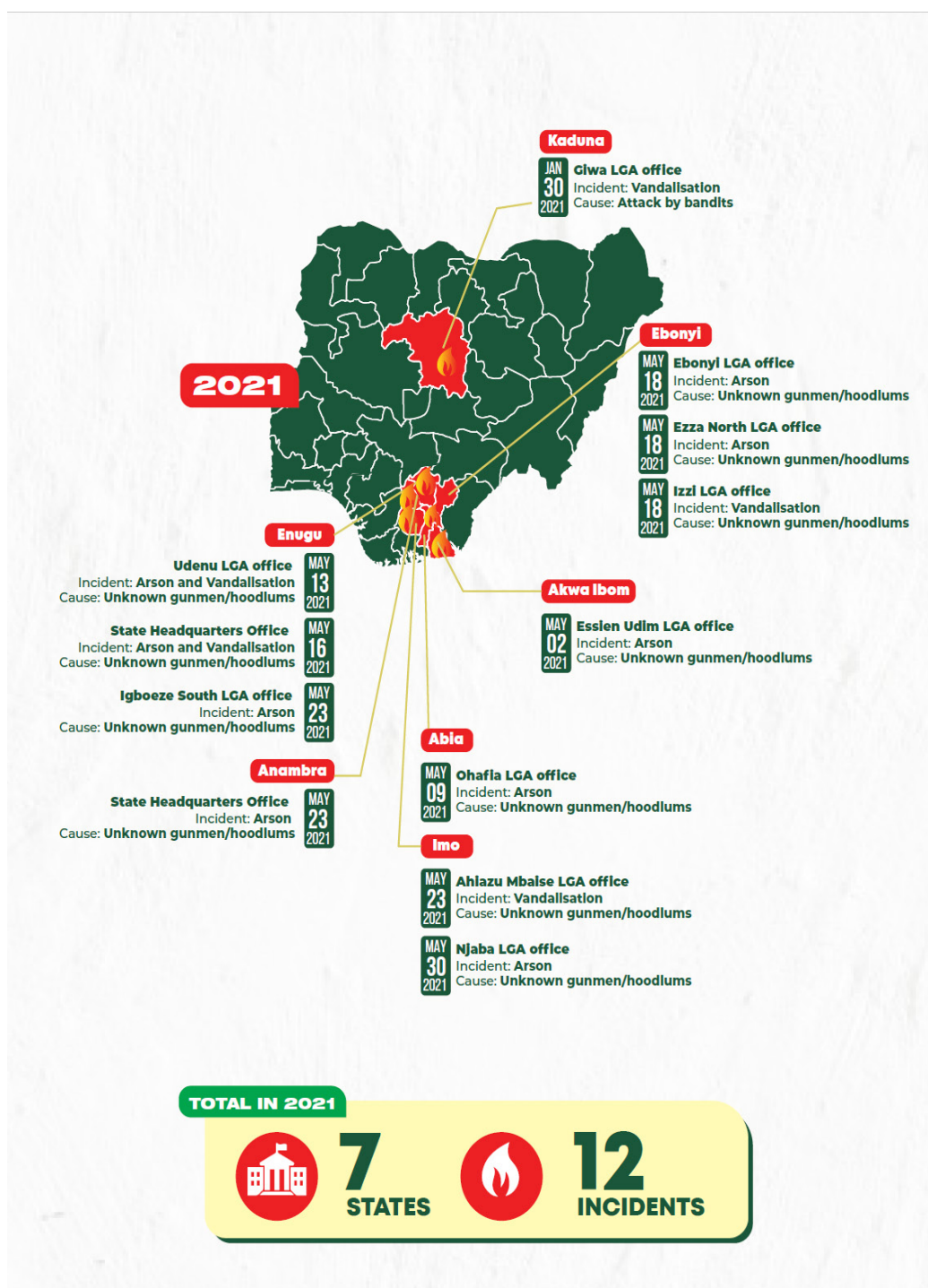


Fig. 10.3: Attacks on INEC Facilities in 2021

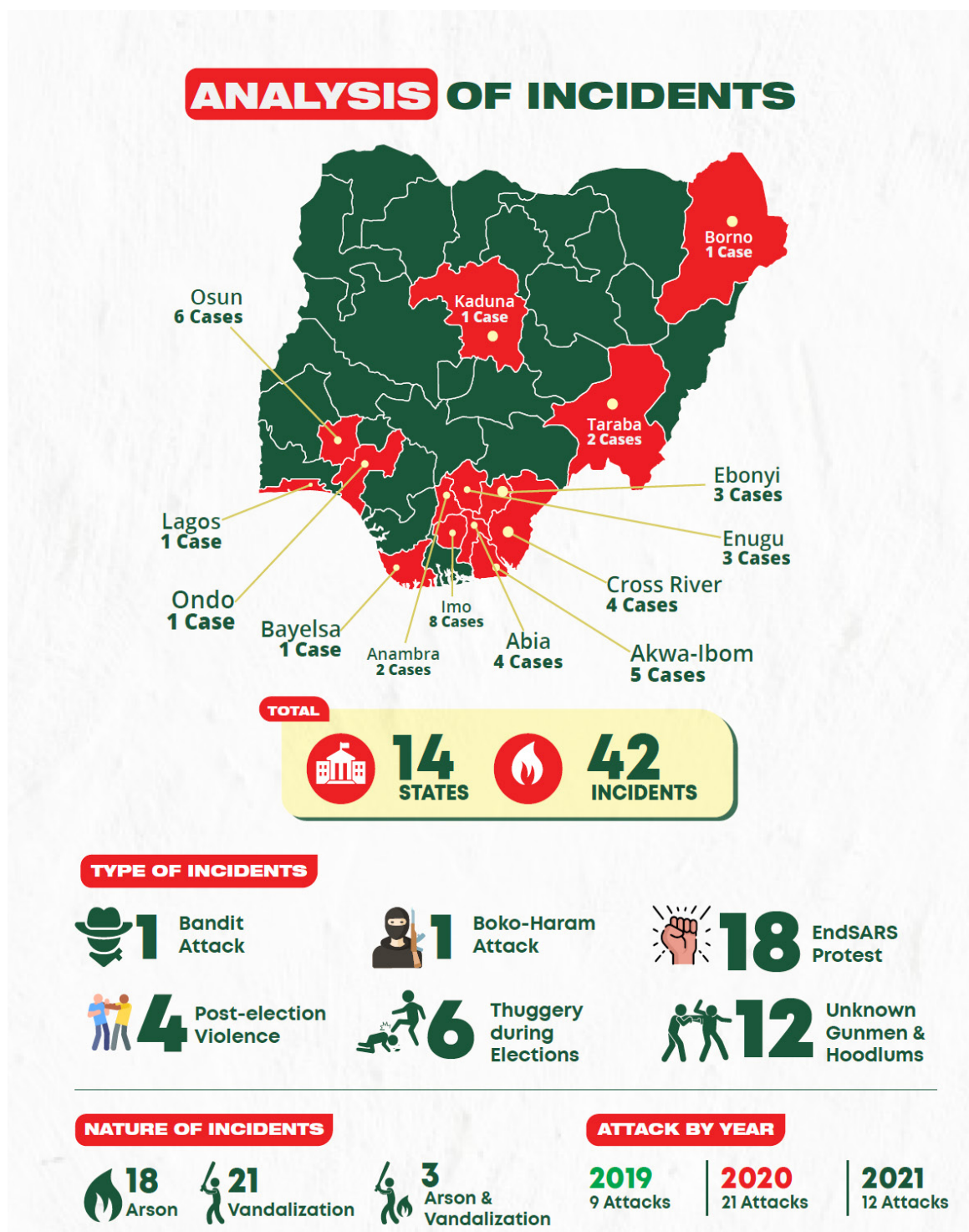


Fig. 10.4: Attacks on INEC Facilities 2019 – May 2021

10.1 The Role of ICCES in Securing Electoral Activities

The Commission depends extensively on the security agencies, especially the Interagency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) in responding to those attacks and for election security generally. The role of the security agencies in the provision of electoral security cannot be overemphasized. Since the establishment of ICCES in December 2010, the Commission has worked closely with security agencies to pull resources together to address challenges to the security of elections across the country. ICCES has been established not only at the national level but also at the level of states with efforts to make it functional at the LGA levels. This has enabled both the Commission and security agencies to, jointly, promptly address emerging threats to the conduct of elections. The role of ICCES includes:

- 1) Coordinating the design of a comprehensive election security management system for INEC.
- 2) Developing locally focused plans for providing security before, during, and after elections.
- 3) Harmonizing the training, deployment, and actions of security personnel on election duties.
- 4) Assessing existing security threats across the country that have implications for elections and producing red, amber, and green electoral security maps that are regularly updated.
- 5) Advising INEC on rapid response to security threats around elections,

including voter registration.

- 6) Ensuring a reduction in transaction costs (to INEC of dealing with individual security agencies on issues of elections.
- 7) Evaluating the performance of security agencies on election duties and recommend improvements and sanctions, where necessary.
- 8) Harmonizing the election budgets of security agencies and sourcing funding commonly, if possible. ICCES has tremendously helped in monitoring, coordinating, and tracking election-related risks to ensure free, fair, and credible elections.

In the past one decade between (2015 and 2025), several achievements were recorded in improving the work of ICCES. First, ICCES was expanded to include other relevant agencies, specifically the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). This expansion resulted from growing public concerns about the corrupt use of money in elections, particular for vote buying. The inclusion of these two agencies has further enhanced the security of elections within the framework of the ICCES. Second, ICCES developed a comprehensive rules of engagement for security personnel on election duties. Hitherto, each agency used its own general rules of engagement, some of which were inappropriate or inadequate for the purposes of securing the electoral process. The development and approval of a common set of rules has improved coordination and made all the agencies relevant to the needs of electoral security in a country like Nigeria. Third, there is now better coordination

between INEC's situation rules at the headquarters and the States with various situation rooms established by the security agencies. This has made responding to security issues more efficient and timelier. Finally, ICCES has now evolved a stable system of securing off-cycle governorship elections, which has now grown to nine States namely, Imo, Kogi, Bayelsa, Ondo, Edo, Ekiti, Anambra, and Osun. The importance of these elections has necessitated the strengthening of the work of ICCES both in the States and Local Government Areas. One major development is the joint briefing of National ICCES by the Resident Electoral Commissioners and Commissioners of Police of States conducting off-cycle governorship elections. These first-hand briefings have improved planning and coordination of security for these elections.

10.2 Tracking Insecurity During Elections

Prior to 2015, the Commission had two main tools for tracking insecurity during elections namely, the Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT) and the Electoral Risk Management Tool (ERM). The EVMAT used surveys to track the likelihood of violence during elections. On its part, the ERM is a tool deployed for the purpose of tracking overall risk to elections. Both tools embody mitigation mechanisms when risks are identified. These tools were linked to the Commission's EMSC and the Election Situation Room, this enables coordinates with security agencies to manage insecurity during elections.

However, in 2021, following a spate of attacks on its facilities across the country, the Commission developed a technology tool to provide early warning

of direct threats to INEC personnel and facilities. The INEC Security Alert and Notification System (INEC SANS). The tool was first deployed for the Anambra State off-cycle governorship election in November 2021. Some of the achievements of this system in combatting election security threats to personnel and facilities include the following:

- a) On 4 November 2021, two Registration Area Technical Staff (RATEchs) in Anambra state were attacked at Ufor (Nkpor) junction by unknown men. The RATEchs used the SOS alert facility on SANS to notify the Commission. Upon receipt of the SOS alert, the RATEchs were immediately located and rescued.
- b) On 9 November 2021, SANS was used to locate and rescue four ICT technical staff who were waylaid and kidnapped on their way to Ihiala LGA in Anambra State.
- c) An SOS alert was received from a Presiding Officer who reported the case of a Corps member who fainted in Dunukofia LGA, Anambra state. This report was given a rapid response, and the Corps member got the needed help.
- d) Through an SOS alert received on the INEC-SANS platform, the REC Yobe State and other staff of the Commission deployed to supervise the Jos North Federal Constituency bye-election on 26 February 2022 related to the Joint Task Force (JTF) operation that rescued them during an uproar at a collation centre that almost led to physical harm to them.

- e) In the 2022 Osun State off-cycle governorship election, political thugs that attempted to snatch the Ballot Box at PU 005, RA 11, Ifelodun LGA, were apprehended by the security agencies in response to a report received on the INEC-SANS platform.

INEC-SANS is now fully integrated into the EMSC Dashboard, which means

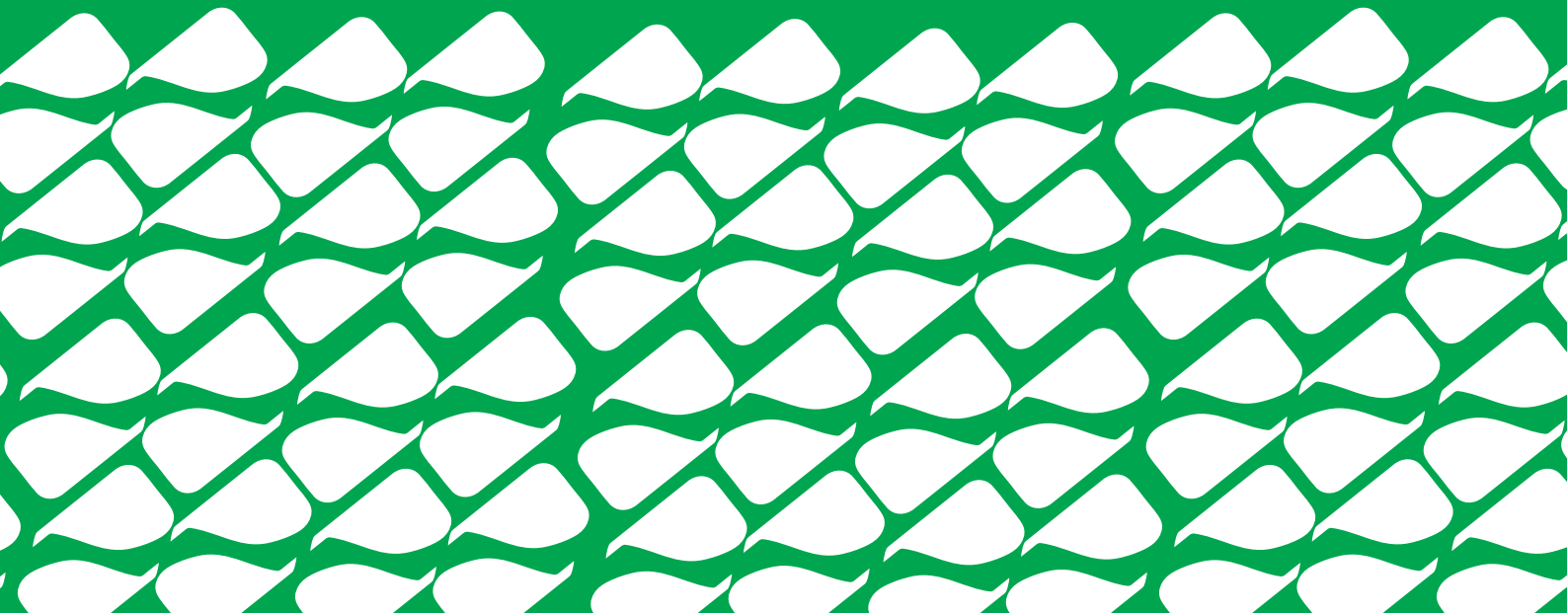
that it can presently be in the frontline of election monitoring activities of the Commission. However, the application still needs to be fully integrated into the Commission's election security framework by making the First-Line Responders of SANS part of ICCES. That way, ICCES and the various election situation rooms of security agencies can receive reports directly from INEC SANS.

Box 18: Securing the Electoral Process: The Role of ICCES

In the past one decade (2015 and 2025), several achievements were recorded in improving the work of ICCES. First, ICCES was expanded to include other relevant agencies, specifically the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). This expansion resulted from growing public concerns about the corrupt use of money in elections, particular for vote buying. The inclusion of these two agencies has further enhanced the security of elections within the framework of ICCES. Second, ICCES developed a comprehensive rule of engagement for security personnel on election duties. Hitherto, each agency used its own general rules of engagement, some of which were inappropriate or inadequate for the purposes of securing the electoral process. The development and approval of a common set of rules has improved coordination and made all the agencies relevant to the needs of electoral security in a country like Nigeria. Third, there is now better coordination between INEC's situation rules at the headquarters and the States with various situation rooms established by the security agencies. This has made responding to security issues more efficient and timelier. Finally, the ICCES has now evolved a stable system of securing off-cycle governorship elections, which has now grown to nine States namely, Imo, Kogi, Bayelsa, Ondo, Edo, Ekiti, Anambra, and Osun. The importance of these elections has necessitated the strengthening of the work of ICCES both in the States and Local Government Areas. One major development is the joint briefing of National ICCES by the Resident Electoral Commissioners and Commissioners of Police of States conducting off-cycle governorship elections. These first-hand briefings have improved planning and coordination of security for these elections.

11

Electoral Diplomacy: Relations with other Election Management Bodies and Development Partners



Electoral Diplomacy: Relations with other Election Management Bodies and Development Partners

11.1 ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC)

The ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC) was established in February 2008 following a meeting between the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) of ECOWAS member States and the ECOWAS Commission in Conakry, Guinea. The Network was conceived as a collective body of the 15 EMBs of the ECOWAS member States with the following objectives:

- a) To promote free and credible elections;
- b) To promote independent and impartial election organisations and administrators;
- c) To strengthen public confidence in the electoral process through free and credible electoral procedures;
- d) To develop professional election officials with integrity, a strong sense of public service and a commitment to democracy;

- e) To ensure predictability of the framework for elections;
- f) To promote the consolidation of democratic culture to create a conducive environment for the peaceful organisation of elections;
- g) To encourage sharing of experiences, information, technology and election documents;
- h) To promote cooperation for the improvement of electoral laws and practices;
- i) To work towards gradual harmonisation of electoral laws and practices, as appropriate, capitalising on good practice in electoral matters;
- j) To promote rationalisation and pooling of resources to reduce the cost of conducting elections; and
- k) To improve the working conditions of EMBs in the fulfilment of their mandate.

The Network's normative framework was derived from the provisions of the ECOWAS Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security of 1999; the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of 2001 and the Decision of Head of States and Government of Dakar 2003. Its governance structure consists of the General Assembly, which is the highest decision-making body, the Steering Committee of five (5) members and the Permanent Secretariat. The first elected President of the Network was Mr. Michel Tapsoba of Burkina Faso who served from 2008 to 2012. He was

succeeded by Dr. Christiana Thorpe of Sierra Leone from 2012 to 2015. However, the election to elect a successor to Dr. Thorpe had to be postponed due to lack of quorum during the Fourth Biennial General Assembly in Praia, Cape Verde in July 2015 as only seven members were present. Consequently, Gen. Siaka Sangare of Mali was nominated to oversee the affairs of the Network until the Fifth General Assembly scheduled for Cotonou, Benin Republic in March 2017. It was at this meeting that Professor Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was elected President after a keenly contested election. Other elected members of the Network's Steering Committee are Professor Emmanuel Tiando, President CENA Republic of Benin as 1st Vice President; Dr. Jose Pedro Sambu, President CNE Guinea-Bissau as 2nd Vice President; Mr. Newton Ahmed Barry, President, BENI Burkina Faso as Treasurer and Dr. Maria do Rosario Goncalves, President CNE Cabo Verde as Deputy Treasurer.

Following his election, Professor Yakubu set out his agenda for the Network in the Action Plan 2017-2019 with emphases on the following activities:

- a) Capacity strengthening of members;
- b) Needs Assessment Missions to member EMBs preparing to conduct elections;
- c) Election follow-up/Mid-Term missions on the implementation of recommendations of ECOWAS Election Observation Missions;
- d) Study on the Cost of Elections in West Africa;

- e) Regional Media Workshop on professional reporting of elections in West Africa;
- f) Experience and knowledge sharing initiatives; and
- g) Solidarity and advocacy missions for the provision of technical, logistic and financial support to member EMBs from their government and development partners

Based on this agenda, Professor Mahmood Yakubu as President of ECONEC undertook the following activities from March 2017 to July 2019

1. Needs Assessment Mission to Sierra Leone (10-15 July 2017)

The Mission undertook an assessment of the level of preparations for the on-coming March 2018 General Election in the country. During the visit, the Mission engaged with the EMB and consulted with national stakeholders, including the executive, legislative and judicial branches, as well as with the security agencies, CSOs and the media on the logistics, operational and legal aspects of the electoral process. This is with the objective of identifying capacity needs and to determine the role that ECONEC, ECOWAS and international partners could play in contributing to the successful conduct of the elections. The Mission prevailed on the Government of Sierra Leone to suspend the contentious constitutional referendum and delimitation of boundaries of constituencies which some stakeholders believed was proposed as a ploy to postpone elections. It also facilitated the donation of

two boats, two trucks, five pick up vehicles and 5 motor bikes by the Federal Government Nigeria to the Electoral Commission and deployed a technical support team to assist the Electoral Commission in the collation of election results

2. Solidarity Visit to Liberia (16 -19 July 2017)

The Mission was embarked upon to assess the state of preparedness for the October 2017 legislative and presidential elections, share valuable experience with the National Election Commission (NEC) and to solicit support from state and non-state actors for the conduct of peaceful and credible elections. The Mission met with leadership of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the ECOWAS Special Representative in Liberia, the political parties, leaders of civil society organisations and the media. Apart from the effort by the Mission at helping in resolving the conflict related to the new provisions on citizenship in the Code of Electoral Conduct, it facilitated the conduct of the presidential run-off election by facilitating the dispatch of a Technical Team comprising of ICT experts from INEC Nigeria to assist NEC in cleaning up the Voter Register as directed by the Supreme Court of Liberia, as well as in the audit of voter registration and biometrics and for election result transmission and management.

3. Needs Assessment Mission to Cote D'Ivoire (13-16 October 2017)

The Mission was embarked upon to provide peer support to CEI in addressing the challenges associated with election administration and enhancing the capacity of political actors in the conduct of a credible and peaceful electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire. The Mission engaged with local and international stakeholders, including the UNDP and received promises of support to CEI.

4. Needs Assessment Mission to Guinea (Conakry, 8 – 13 June 2018)

The Mission evaluated the measures taken by the relevant actors in Guinea on the implementation of the recommendations of the ECOWAS Election Observation Mission to the 2015 presidential election with the objective of identifying the areas of support to the country's electoral process. The mission noted the implementation of the recommendation on improving the electoral register by arranging it in alphabetical order and adjusting the number of voting centres setting the maximum number of voters per polling station at 600 instead of 1,000, as well as the creation of the consultation platform for Inter-party consultation and the Technical Committee comprising of political parties and civil society organisations for monitoring of the electoral process. While identifying the possible areas of democracy support to CENI, the Mission strongly advocated for the

restoration of the eliminated 30% quota for women in the electoral process leading to the adoption of the gender parity law (50/50) in May 2019.

5. Needs Assessment Mission to Guinea Bissau (1- 4 August 2018)

The Mission was undertaken to assess the preparedness of the CNE to conduct the November 2018 legislative elections and presidential elections, especially the process of biometric voter registration. It engaged in wide-ranging consultations with various stakeholders, including state and non-state actors and officials, political parties and the media. The Mission also met with the leadership of the ECOWAS Peace keeping Mission to Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) to solicit support for the provision of adequate security to guarantee peaceful elections. The strong advocacy by the Mission on behalf of CNE led to Nigeria's donation of vehicles, motor bikes and 300 biometric registration machines for the elections and INEC's deployment of two technical experts to assist in the voter registration process.

6. Solidarity Visit to Mali (27 - 30 July 2018)

The Mission met with the leadership of CENI Mali and pledged peer support to the Commission for the conduct of the July 2018 general election in July 2018.

7. Solidarity Visit to Senegal (30 - 31 July 2018)

The Mission met with CENA Senegal and pledged to advocate for support to the Commission with both parties agreeing to strengthen collaboration and experience sharing.

8. Solidarity Visit to Togo (5 - 6 August 2018)

The Mission assessed the preparations for the 2019 legislative elections and shared experiences with CENI in addressing the challenges in the electoral process. It promised to solicit support for CENI for the conduct of credible and peaceful elections.

Professor Yakubu's tenure as President of ECONEC from 2017 to 2019 was remarkable in many ways. Apart from undertaking the listed needs assessment and solidarity visits to eight member states, he provided the Network with a functional permanent secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, advanced the mission and vision of the Network and improved its visibility, financial standing and technical capacity by his advocacy with ECOWAS and collaboration with development partners such as The Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), GIZ and International IDEA. It is a tribute to him that in this period, all the EMB members of the Network were supported to conduct credible and peaceful elections, and all the 15 member states of ECOWAS were governed by democratically election government.

Countries Visited by Professor Mahmood Yakubu for Needs Assessments, Follow-Up Missions, Solidarity and Study Visits and Election Observation

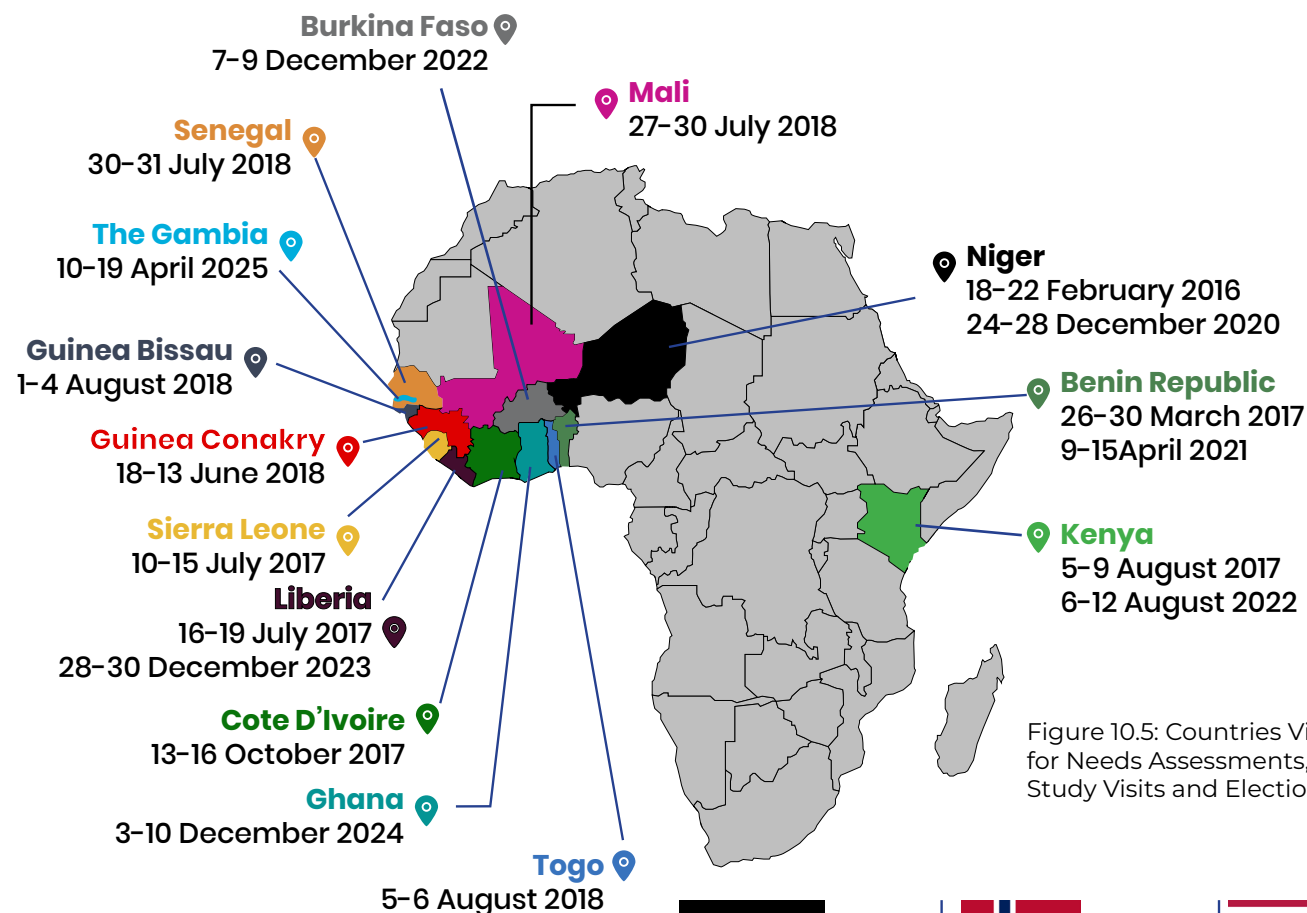


Figure 10.5: Countries Visited by Professor Mahmood Yakubu for Needs Assessments, Follow-Up Missions, Solidarity and Study Visits and Election Observation



Germany
16-23 September 2016



Norway
11-17 September 2017



USA
4-10 November 2016
10-14 October 2022



Switzerland
16-18 November 2022

11.2 Study Tours by Other EMBs to INEC

Within the past one decade, INEC hosted delegations from four sister Election Management Bodies for the purpose of peer learning and experience sharing. The study visits were as follows:

a) 23 – 28th April 2018

Study visit from a 4-person delegation from the Independent Electoral Commission of the Kingdom of Lesotho to understudy the process for the design, formulation, implementation and tracking of the Strategic plan and the Strategic Plan of Action.

b) 8th - 9th July 2021

Study visit by the Malawi Electoral Commission to understudy the

processes and procedures for the demarcation of electoral constituencies in Nigeria

c) 28th - 31 July 2021

Study visit by National Election Commission of Liberia to understudy the processes and procedures for the biometric registration of voters.

d) 16th - 19th December 2024

Study visit by the Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA) of the Republic of Benin for the purpose of peer learning and experience sharing especially in the areas of electoral legal framework, sourcing and procurement of electoral materials, recruitment and training of election duty workers, funding, election security and use of electoral technology.



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with the former President of Kenya and Head of the African Union Election Observation Mission to the 2023 General Election, H.E. Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta during the of the African Union Election Observers Mission to the Commission on 22nd February 2023



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with the former President of South Africa and Head of the Commonwealth Election Observation Mission to the 2023 General Election, H.E. Thabo Mbeki during the visit of the Observer Mission to the Commission on 20th February 2023



Professor Mahmood Yakubu briefing the Nigerian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom H.E. Sarafa Tunji Ishola and Officials of the High Commission on the preparation for the 2023 General Election in London on 16th January 2023



Mr. Paul Omokore, former Director ICT, INEC demonstrating the use of the Direct Data Capture Machine (DDCM) in voter registration to CSOs in Guinea Bissau



Box 19: The Formation and Objectives of the ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC)

The ECOWAS Network of Electoral Commissions (ECONEC) was established in February 2008 following a meeting between the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) of ECOWAS member States and the ECOWAS Commission in Conakry, Guinea. The Network was conceived as a collective body of the 15 EMBs of the ECOWAS member States with the following objectives:

To promote free and credible elections

To promote independent and impartial election organisations and administrators

To strengthen public confidence in the electoral process through free and credible electoral procedures

To develop professional election officials with integrity, a strong sense of public service and a commitment to democracy

To ensure predictability of the framework for elections

To promote the consolidation of democratic culture to create a conducive environment for the peaceful organisation of elections

To encourage sharing of experiences, information, technology and election documents

To promote cooperation for the improvement of electoral laws and practices

To work towards gradual harmonisation of electoral laws and practices, as appropriate, capitalising on good practice in electoral matters

To promote rationalisation and pooling of resources to reduce the cost of conducting elections; and

To improve the working conditions of EMBs in the fulfilment of their mandate.

11.3 List of Election Observation Missions and Study Tours by the Commission

Commission members, officials and staff went to observe elections and undertook study tours to other Election Management Bodies across the world in the period under review. Typically, such election observation missions, and study tours were led either by

Chairman, or a National Commissioner and it often consisted of other National Commissioners, Resident Electoral Commissioners, Members of the Technical Team, Directors at Headquarters, Administrative Secretaries, HOD/HOU in State and FCT offices and Electoral Officers as shown in Table 11.1. Most of the Staff nominated for such observation missions and study tours are mostly outstanding and must have distinguished themselves while performing their assignments and discharging their responsibilities.

Table 11.1: Details of Study Tours/Missions by the Commission, 2015-2025

S/N	Date	Country	Purpose	Composition	Designation
1	22 Nov 2015	Egypt	Election Observation	1. Samuel Madaki Usman 2. Ahmed Zogrima 3. Nathan Owbor 4. Mrs. Oyelola O. Abiola 5. Musa Husunu	1. REC (Borno State) 2. Admin. Sec (Zamfara State) 3. Admin. Sec (Delta State) 4. Director (IC&P) 5. Deputy Director (EPM)
2	21 Feb 2016	Niger Republic	Election Observation	1.Arfo Baba Shettima 2. Mr. Umar Farouq Usman 3. Mr. Owbor Nathan Ovi 4. Alh. Ahmed H. Zogirma 5. Mr. Gabriel Akanbi Abidakun	1. National Commissioner 2. Director (Logistics) 3. Admin. Sec (Delta State) 4. Admin. Sec (Zamfara State) 5. EO (Ogun State)
3	6 Mar 2016	Republic of Benin	Election Observation	1. Sylvester Okey Ezeani 2. Mr. Abubakar Sadiq Mohhamed 3. Mrs. Oyelola O. Abiola 4. Dr. Mustapha Adeniyi Mudashiru 5. Aliyu Hassan Shaaba	1. REC (Abia State) 2. REC (Sokoto State) 3. Director (IC&P) 4. Admin. Sec (Nasarawa State) 5. EO (Bauchi State)

4	6 - 10 Nov 2016	United States of America	U. S Election Program	1. Dr. Mohammed Mustapha Lecky 2. Mr. Habu H. Zama 3. Prof. Mohammad J. Kuna 4. Mr. Rotimi Oyekanmi 5. Mr. Adamu Malam Garba	1. National Commissioner 2. REC (Yobe State) 3. SA to Hon. Chairman 4. CPS to Hon. Chairman 5. EO (Jigawa State)
5	7 Dec 2016	Ghana	Election Observation	1. Alh. Arfo Baba Shettima 2. Mrs. Augusta C. Ogakwu 3. Barr. Barrito Kpagih 4. Mr. Saidu Dogonyaro 5. Mr. Okezie Nwankwo 6. Mr. Emmanuel I. Umenger 7. Ms Nikky Cleopas Emotim	1. National Commissioner 2. Secretary to the Commission 3. REC (Bayelsa State) 4. Director (Stores) 5. Assistant Director (EPM) 6. Admin. SEC (Bauchi State) 7. EO (Bayelsa State)
6	1st Dec 2016	Gambia	Election Observation	1. Prof. Antonio Taiye Simbine 2. Prof. Jacob Jatau 3. Alh. Musa Adamu 4. Alh. Musa Husunu 5. Dr. Omoleke Muslim 6. Mr. Ejikeme Ejimofor	1. National Commissioner 2. REC (FCT) 3. Director, HRM 4. Deputy Director 5. Admin. Sec (Ekiti State) 6. EO (Ebonyi State)
7	8th Aug 2017	Kenya	Election Observation	1. Prof. Mahmood Yakubu 2. Prof. Okechukwu Ibeanu 3. Mal. Mohammed Haruna 4. Dr. Omoleke Muslim 5. Fadimatu Aliyu Bakari 6. Prof. Mohammad J. Kuna 7. Rotimi Lawrence Oyekanmi	1. Hon. Chairman 2. National Commissioner 3. National Commissioner 4. Admin. Sec (Ekiti State) 5. Admin. Sec (FCT) 6. SA to Hon. Chairman 7. CPS to Hon. Chairman

8	11th Sep 2017	Norway	Election Observation	1. Prof Mahmood Yakubu 2. Baba Shettima Arfo 3. Dr. Mohammad Mustafa Lecky 4. Abdulrazaq Tukur Yusuf 5. Efeturi Mary Emavwoyan 6. Prof. Bolade Eyinla (CTA) 7. Rotimi Oyekanmi (CPS)	1. Hon. Chairman 2. National Commissioner 3. National Commissioner 4. Director EOPs 5. EO (Rivers State) 6. CTA to Hon. Chairman 7. CPS to Hon. Chairman
9	23 Aug 2017	Angola	Election Observation	1. Abubakar Nahuche 2. Mutiu O. Agboke 3. Abdulrahman A. Adamu 4. Oluwatoyin O. Babalola 5. Uchechukwu Asagwara 6. Damien A. Akhamhe	1. National Commissioner 2. REC (Ondo State) 3. Admin. Sec FCT 4. Director Legal 5. EO (Abia State) 6. Assistant Director (HQ)
10	24 Sept 2017	Germany	Election Observation	1. Soyebi Adedeji Solomon 2. Ogunmola Adekunle Ladipo 3. Ononamadu Emeka Joseph 4. Ezeigwe Pricilia Nwadi 5. Bako Inusa Alhaji	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. REC (Enugu State) 4. Deputy Director (EPM) 5. EO (Adamawa State)
11	10 Oct 2017	Liberia	Election Observation	1. Prof. Mahmood Yakubu 2. Antonia Taiye Simbine 3. Adekunle Ladipo Ogunmola 4. Umar Malle Ibrahim 5. Jude Chikezie Okwuonu 6. Maimuna Bawa	1. Hon. Chairman 2. National Commissioner 3. National Commissioner 4. REC (Yobe State) 5. Deputy Director (P&M) 6. EO (Sokoto State)

12	28 Jan - 4 Feb 2018	South Africa	Study Tour	1. Prof. A. T. Okosi-Simbine 2. Muhammed K. Haruna 3. Baba Shettima Arf 4. AVM. Ahmed Tijani Mu'azu, Rtd 5. Dr. Adekunle Ogunmola 6. Mr. Sam Olumekun 7. Dr. Nentawe G. Yilwatda	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. National Commissioner 4. National Commissioner 5. National Commissioner 6. REC (Lagos State) 7. REC (Benue State)
13	5 - 8 Feb 2018	India	Study Tour	1. Hajiya Amina Zakari, 2. Mrs. May Agbamuche-Mbu 3. Prof. Godswill Obioma 4. Mr. John Irem	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. REC (Ebonyi State) 4. Director (Training)
14	3 - 10 March 2018	Sierra Leone	Election Observation	1. Prof. A.T. Simbine 2. AVM. Ahmed Tijani Mu'azu 3. Dr. Mrs. Asmau Maikudi 4. Mrs. Ngozi Ogburna 5. Mr. Charles Ibeapuye	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. REC (Zamfara State) 4. Director (ADR) 5. EO (Akwa Ibom State)
15	20 May 2018	Venezuela	Election Observation	1. Mr. Arfo Baba Shettima 2. Mr. Effanga Obo 3. Mrs. Nyeh Comfort Omori	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. EO (Anambra State)
16	25 July – 1 Aug 2018	Mali	ECOWAS Election Observation	1. Samuel Udeze 2. Mrs. Maryam M Habib	1. Deputy Director (Rivers State) 2. ACAO (HQ)

17	27 July – 5 Aug 2018	Mali	Election Observation	1. Prof. Mahmood Yakubu 2. Prof. A.T. Simbine 3. Riskuwa A Shehu 4. Omokore Paul 5. Prof. Mohammed J. Kuna	1. Hon. Chairman 2. National Commissioner 3. REC (Kano State) 4. Deputy Director (ICT) 5. SA to Hon. Chairman
18	2 - 4 Sept 2018	Rwanda	Election Observation	1. Mrs. Sa'adatu Muazu Magaji	1. CAO (EOPs) HQ
19	24 - 26 Oct 2018	Ireland	Election Observation	1. Prof. Okechukwu Ibeanu 2. Barr. May Agbamuche Mbu 3. Segun Agbaje 4. Zakari B. Musa 5. Mrs. Saseyi Feyijimi	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. REC (Osun State) 4. Admin Sec (Adamawa State) 5. Deputy Director (Legal)
20	10 - 31 Jan 2019	Netherland	Election Observation	1. AVM. A. T. Mu'azu Rtd. 2. Salisu Garba, 3. Adigun O. Hakeem 4. Edwins S. Ochife 5. Abubakar W. Mohammed 6. Ubah L. Azubike 7. Oli O. Felix 8. Tukur M. Ajiya	1. National Commissioner 2. Deputy Director (Logistics) 3. Deputy Director (EOPs) 4. CSP (EOPs) 5. ACEO (EOPs) 6. ACAO (Procurement) 7. PAO (EOPs) 8. PEO (Audit)
21	3 - 9 Nov 2020	Ghana	Election Observation	1. Prof. Abduganiy Raji 2. Dr. S.U Idris 3. Engr. Okop Umobong 4. Muhammad Aminu Sani	1. REC, Ogun State 2. DG (TEI) 3. Director (IC&P) 4. (ACS ICT)

22	29 Nov - 6 Dec 2021	Gambia	Election Observation	1. Barr. Festus Okoye 2. Prof. Emeka Ezeonu 3. Mrs. Rose Oriaran-Anthony 4. Hajiya Maryam Musa 5. Awuhe Terngwa 6. Mr.Ojewande Stephen Akinropo 7. Abdullahi Kuji	1. National Commissioner 2. REC (Imo State) 3. Secretary to the Commission 4. Director (Commission Secretariat) 5. Assistant Director (CS) 6. Admin. Secretary, Ogun State 7. Electoral Officer (Nasarawa State)
23	6 - 12 Aug 2022	Kenya	Election Observation	1. Prof. Mahmood Yakubu 2. Mr. Kenneth Ukeagu 3. Dr. Uthman Ajidaga 4. Eng. Nwafor Chidi Patrick 5. Mr. Rotimi Oyekanmi 6. Barr. Hadiza Abubakar	1. Hon. Chairman 2. National Commissioner 3. National Commissioner 4. REC (Osun State) 5. CPS to Hon. Chairman 6. Legal Officer (EPM)
24	22 - 26 Jun 2023	Sierra Leone	Election Observation	1. Prof. Kunle Ajayi 2. Dr. Baba Billa 3. Olaniyi Olaleye Ijalaye 4., Samson Lebari 5. Mr. Uye Asuquo 6. Sadiq Abubakar Garba	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. REC, Ogun State 4. Director (Security) 5. CAO (EPM) 6. EO (Bauchi State)

25	8 - 11 Oct 2023	Liberia	Election Observation	1. Gen. Modibbo A. Alkali 2. Prof. Rhoda Gumus 3. Dr. Agundu Oliver Tersoo 4. Zainab Adamu Musa 5. Shuaibu Kamaludeen 6. Mrs. Otti Ebere Gladys	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. REC (Plateau State) 4. CAO (EPM) 5. PAO (CS) 6. EO (Anambra State)
26	26 -30 May 2024	South Africa	Election Observation	1. Haruna Mohammed Kudu 2. Prof. Sylvia Uchenna Agu 3. Mrs. Olayide Okuonghae 4. Mr. Uhunmwagho Omoregie 5. Rukayya Bala Sani	1. National Commissioner 2. REC (Imo State) 3. Director (Admin) 4. Assistant Director (EPM) 5. EO (Gombe State)
27	24 -30 Jul 2024	Venezuela	Election Observation	1. Prof. Kunle C. Ajayi 2. Hauwa G. Habib	1. National Commissioner 2. Ag. Director (EPM)
28	2 - 7 Nov 2024	United States of America.	Election Observation	1. Mr. Sam O. Olumekun 2. Mrs. Rose Oriaran Anthony 3. Okeze Nwankwo	1. National Commissioner 2. Secretary to the Commission 3. Deputy Director (EPM)
29	25 - 29 Nov 2024	Namibia	Election Observation	1. Prof. Sani M. Adam 2. Dr. Mutui Olaleke Agboke 3. Mrs. Charity Obidah 4. Auwal Saleh	1. National Commissioner 2. REC (Osun State) 3. Director (Stores) 4. Deputy Director (EPM)
30	5th – 9th Dec 2024.	Ghana	Election Observation	1. Mr. Sam Olumekun 2. Dr. Baba Bila 3. Mr. Umar Ibrahim 4. Mrs. Joan Arabs	1. National Commissioner 2. National Commissioner 3. REC (Gombe State) 4. Director (EPM)



Professor Mahmood Yakubu with National Commissioner Lawrence Nwuruku and Professor Bolade Eyinla, Chief Technical Adviser to INEC Chairman after a visit to the German Parliament in Berlin on 29th July 2016



Professor Mahmood Yakubu in a group photograph at the Elections to Peace (E2P) Senior Level Retreat in Montreux, Switzerland, on 16th November 2022

11.4 Engagement with Development Partners

Since 2010, INEC has had a good working relation with key development partners. In the period 2015 to 2025, this relation was retained and generally strengthened. The Commission's collaboration with development partners during this period was built on partnerships informed by INEC's needs and mutual respect. According to the Commission's Policy on Receiving Support from Development partners:

“The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) works with Development Partners to promote institution building, strengthening of electoral integrity and diffusion of democratic principles. The Commission does this within a framework of mutual respect and co-responsibility. Although the Commission is totally independent from external resources to cover its core electoral operations, it works with various Development Partners in pursuit of free, fair and credible elections as a global best practice. These Development Partners include the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, Embassies and Diplomatic Missions, Multilateral Development Agencies, International Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies and Foundations.”

While support from development partners constitute a small proportion of the requirements of INEC in conducting elections, the Commission continues to consider collaboration with them very useful, especially in the area of technical support. It remains the policy of the Commission not to receive direct funding from development partners. Instead, development partners were encouraged to spend their funds themselves, using their own procurement procedures, but with INEC identifying its needs for support. This policy is designed to ensure that development partners are

responsible for accounting for their own funds, while INEC is spared the additional burden of having to account for funds, as well as misrepresentations in the mind of the public regarding its partnership with development partners.

The key areas in which INEC engaged development partners are twofold. First, INEC engaged with them through occasional meetings, high-level briefings and exchanges. This was often with major diplomatic missions. These engagements afforded INEC the opportunity to provide clarifications on its work, while exploring areas of support and collaboration with the missions. Secondly, INEC worked with diverse development partners that work on elections, such as the European Union, IFES, International Republican Institute (IRI), the MacArthur Foundation and the Ford Foundation, among others, to tailor their programmes to where they are most beneficial to the electoral process. In that way, their grant making became more relevant to the work of INEC. For instance, the European Union Support for Democratic Governance in Nigeria (SDGN II) supports several organisations that work on elections, and through them, has made substantial contributions to INEC's work. As already mentioned, one of such contributions is the suite of election management applications developed by Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) in collaboration with INEC.

INEC has also had a longstanding partnership with the International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES) Some areas of this partnership are:

- a) Development of a Learning Management System (INEC E-School for the 2023 General Election.

- b) Review workshop of Election Security Personnel (ESP Training Resources for the 2023 General Election (August 2022.
 - c) Validation Workshop of Election Security Personnel (ESP Training Resources for the 2023 General Election (January 2022.
 - d) Printing of 60 copies of the ESP Handbook and 60 copies of the Facilitator Guide for the Election Security Personnel (ESP Training of Trainers
- towards the 2023 General Election.
- e) Facilitation of the printing of 350,000 of the ESP Handbook for deployed Security officials during the 2023 General Elections.
- Partial sponsorship of the ToT and Capacity Training of 922 Commission Trainers at the Headquarters, States, and LGAs ahead of the 2023 General Election Electoral Training.

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