



Local Government Elections Integrity Index

Index for Assessing the Integrity of Local Government Elections in Nigeria

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Introduction

Elections are essential to democracy, allowing citizens to choose political leaders and influence governance. An informed, politically active citizenry is crucial in preventing electoral malpractices, ensuring transparency, and holding politicians and electoral authorities accountable. The quality of elections directly impacts the legitimacy of democracy; flawed elections can erode public trust, diminish participation, and undermine confidence in governance institutions. To enhance local government elections and foster democratic practices in Nigeria, a comprehensive electoral support effort is required. The Local Government Elections Index has been developed as a tool to systematically assess key aspects of local government elections in Nigeria.

Importance of Local Government Elections in Nigeria

Local government elections play a pivotal role in promoting democratic governance at the local level by ensuring citizens exercise their constitutional right to choose their leaders. As a recognized level of government, these elections facilitate the decentralization of power, promote grassroots development, ensure effective representation, and foster inclusive and responsive local governance.

The Concept of Electoral Integrity

Electoral integrity ensures fairness throughout the electoral process, aiming to prevent manipulation and guarantee free, impartial elections. It provides a framework to evaluate fairness, transparency, and adherence to democratic principles. Key factors include public oversight, transparency, equal participation, privacy, voter support, impartiality, security, accuracy, and timeliness, all of which uphold the legitimacy of elections. The Electoral Integrity Project's framework, which measures election integrity through eleven criteria like laws, procedures, boundaries, registration, campaigning, finances, voting, counting, post-election matters, and management, can be adapted to the Nigerian context.

The Purpose of the Local Government Election Index Tool

The Local Government Election Index is a comprehensive tool designed to evaluate the quality of local government elections in Nigeria. It assesses key electoral aspects, provides insights into electoral challenges, and helps develop targeted measures to address these issues. The Index plays a critical role in preventing electoral misconduct, preserving credibility, and advocating for electoral reforms. It is instrumental in improving election administration, enhancing security, promoting civic education, and strengthening institutions to ensure free, fair, and transparent local government elections.

Development of the Electoral Integrity Assessment Index

This election integrity index is developed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative method relies on numerical data, statistical analysis, scoring systems, public opinion surveys, expert assessments, and analysis of election outcomes to provide insights into the quality and fairness of electoral processes. The qualitative method focuses on legal and procedural aspects, using normative and narrative approaches, such as comparative analyses, to evaluate and document electoral processes. This approach captures judgments and perceptions surrounding events, providing a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities electoral process.

The combination of these methods ensures the assessment tool is well-contextualized for local government elections. It helps determine key factors such as respondents' selection, target audience, frequency of the assessment frequency, and the overall purpose of the evaluation.

Local Government Election Assessment Index (LGEAI)

| Period | Sections | Questions |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Pre-election | A. Electoral Context | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The previous election that brought in the incumbent administration was credible and transparent 2. Incumbent administration performed well in governance 3. Citizens experienced freedom under the incumbent administration 4. The tenure of the incumbent was characterised by relative peace and security 5. The opposition party was not suppressed by the incumbent administration 6. The Opposition party did not boycotted the last LGA elections in the state 7. There were few litigations during the last LGA elections 8. There was a high voter turnout in the last election 9. Citizens expressed satisfaction with the last Election |
| | 1. Electoral Laws | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Election guidelines complied with the provisions of the Electoral Act 2. Electoral laws were fair to smaller parties and candidates 3. Electoral laws did not only favoured the governing party or parties 4. Election laws did not restrict the rights of (i.e., disenfranchised) citizens |
| | 2. Electoral Procedures | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Election procedures are consistent with the state electoral law 6. Electoral rules and procedures are clearly spelt out 7. Election regulations were accessible to all stakeholders 8. Election regulations and voting procedures were widely publicised |

| Period | Sections | Questions |
|--------|---|---|
| | 3. Candidate Nomination | <p>9. Women had equal opportunities to run for office</p> <p>10. The youth had equal opportunities to run for office</p> <p>11. Ethno-religious minorities had equal opportunities to run for office</p> <p>12. PLWDs had equal opportunities to run for office</p> <p>13. Not only top party leaders selected flag bearers/ candidates ran for offices</p> <p>14. Some parties/candidates were not restricted from running for offices</p> <p>15. Party nominations were not too expensive for some candidates</p> |
| | 5. Media Coverage of the Elections | <p>16. Newspapers, TV and radio services provided balanced election news</p> <p>17. All parties/candidates had fair access to political broadcasts and advertising</p> <p>18. Social media were used to expose electoral fraud</p> <p>19. Social media was not used to misinform voters</p> <p>20. There was a safeguard against hate speech and incitement to violence</p> <p>21. SIEC was able to respond to misinformation issues</p> |
| | 6. Campaign Finance | <p>22. Parties/candidates had equitable access to political donations</p> <p>23. Parties/candidates publish transparent financial accounts</p> <p>24. The state's resources were not used for campaigns</p> |
| | 7. Logistics and operation | <p>25. Non-sensitive materials were delivered on time for the election and in the required quantity</p> <p>26. Sensitive materials were delivered on time for the elections and in the required quantity</p> <p>27. Political parties were able to inspect sensitive materials</p> <p>28. Assessment and mapping of collation centres completed in time for elections</p> <p>29. SIEC LGA offices are fully operational for the election period</p> <p>30. Material distribution plan was completed ahead of election</p> |

| Period | Sections | Questions |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Election | 8. During Voting | 31. Personnel and materials arrived on time 32. There was easy access to polling units 33. Voters list was pasted in the polling units or used for the elections 34. Voting was done according to election procedure 35. The process of voting was easy 36. Electronic devices were used in the election 37. The electronic devices functioned well 38. There were safeguards against hacking or other forms of interference with the technological devices deployed 39. Special voting facilities and assistance were available for people with physical disabilities 40. Secrecy of the ballot was ensured in the arrangement for voting 41. Agents of parties and candidates were present and active during voting 42. Security agents were professional during voting 43. Voter turnout was high 44. Election observers were free to observe the elections 45. No voter was threatened with violence at the polls 46. No fraudulent vote was cast 47. No eligible voters were allowed to vote 48. There were election operations support centre 49. Voters were offered a genuine choice at the ballot box 50. Polling officials acted professionally 51. Security acted professionally 52. Vote buying was not prevalent in the election |
| Post-election | 9. At the close of Polls | 53. All voters in the queue voted 54. Votes were collated, counted and recorded fairly and transparently 55. There was consensus among party-agents of parties and candidates on the outcome of the election 56. Election results were properly transmitted according to the law 57. Polling officials transfer polling unit materials to the collation centre |

| Period | Sections | Questions |
|--------|--|---|
| | 10. Declaration of Results | 58. The election results were announced without undue delay 59. The result collation process was done transparently 60. Security agents were professional during collation and announcement 61. The announcement of the result was done in accordance with the law 62. The election results announced were widely accepted 63. The declared results tallied with the predictions of vote watchers 64. No Parties/candidates challenged the results 65. The declaration of election did not triggered protests 66. Electoral disputes were resolved through legal channels 67. Electoral disputes were resolved on time 68. SIEC set up a mechanism to listen to political party claims regarding the outcome of the election |
| | 11. Independence and Performance of SIECs | 69 The SIEC appointment, remuneration, tenure, and removal of staff safeguarded against undue political interference 70. The SIEC ad hoc election staff recruitment and training were done in a manner to guarantee their professionalism and neutrality 71. SIEC has a guideline for conducting elections 72. The SIEC conducted the election according to its guidelines, procedures and the state electoral law 73. The SIEC distributed election information to citizens 74. The SIEC allowed public scrutiny of their performance 75. The SIEC was proactive in adopting technologies that enhanced the credibility of voting and vote count 76. The SIEC was well-funded to conduct the elections 77. The SIEC published the report of the election on time |

Explanatory Notes

The contextual part of this instrument, which is optional, is to describe the general social and political environment of the elections and the prevailing culture of governance.

- **No. 1-7.** This is based on document analysis or buttressed by it. The documents are the electoral law and guidelines of the state. This means that these materials, including the electoral Act 2022 have to be procured for this purpose.
- **No. 8.** Electoral guidelines/regulations could be accessed online, on request from SIECs or displayed at the SIEC office.
- **No. 9.** This refers to the openness and inclusiveness of the primaries; whether by delegates, primaries elections or consensus. Also, notes should be made where affirmative action or quota for the minorities or disadvantaged groups are provided and observed.
- **No. 15.** This is focused on the cost of expression of interest and nomination forms. Compare with the ceilings provided by the Electoral Act 2022.
- **No. 63.** Some NGOs provide reports on the likely outcome of the elections based on their research before the election, e.g. Yiaga Africa's #WatchingTheVote reports
- **No. 69-77.** This should benefit from a review of the law guiding the appointment, tenure, role and funding of members of the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC).

Data Collection Methods

The assessment of the integrity of local government elections will employ three main approaches, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques:

- 1. In-Depth Interviews (IDIs):** Semi-structured or unstructured interviews with stakeholder groups, including academics, civil society representatives, political parties, Election Management Bodies, and election observer groups. These interviews will gather stakeholders' assessments of electoral procedures, processes, and the behavior of key actors, including State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs).
- 2. Surveys:** Structured surveys will be administered to voters to collect quantitative data on their perceptions of the electoral process.
- 3. Desk Review:** A systematic review of relevant documents, including observer reports, electoral laws and guidelines, and news reports, to evaluate the three phases of the electoral process based on the index's key indicators.



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