



ASSESSING THE OPENNESS OF ELECTION DATA IN THE PNG 2022 NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTIONS

PNG UPDATE 2022

OBJECTIVES

- Highlight the importance on the openness of election data in PNG
- Give a summary on the openness of election data in PNG as monitored during the 2022 National General Elections
- Present the main findings and challenges affecting the openness of election data in PNG
- Provide recommendations to improve the openness of election data

INTRODUCTION

- A free and fair election relies on several key processes that occur both before election day, on election day and after
- The amount of information available on elections is important as citizens that are eligible to vote need to have access to this information in order to make informed decisions during the elections.
- Papua New Guinea signed onto the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and adopted commitments to open government data
- Therefore, this project monitored 15 key electoral processes in the elections over a 9-month period to assess data openness

ELECTION DATA?

- Election data” refers to information relating to aspects of the process throughout the electoral cycle.
- The 15 electoral processes that were monitored include: electoral management body and administration, election management processes, electoral boundaries, electoral security, political party registration, ballot qualification, election campaigns, campaign finance, voter registration, voter list, voter education, polling stations, election results, electoral complaints, disputes and resolutions, and the electoral legal framework.

CONT.

- The monitoring of election information also took into account the following data principles; availability for free on the internet, granularity, completeness, analyzability, non-proprietary, non-discriminatory, license free, permanently available, and timeliness.
- The scoring algorithm allocates six points for availability for free on the Internet, three points each for granularity, completeness, and analyzability, and one point for each of the non-proprietary, license-free, permanency and timeliness principles. As a guide, a score equal to or less than 30% classifies data as not open; between 31% and 70% as partially open; and above 70% as mostly open.

SUMMARY OF OPEN ELECTION DATA

| Process | Assessment |
|--|----------------|
| Election Management Body and Administration | Partially open |
| Election Management Body Processes | Not open |
| Electoral boundaries | Partially open |
| Election security | Partially open |
| Political Party Registration | Partially open |
| Ballot Qualification | Not open |
| Election campaign | Not open |
| Campaign finance | Not open |
| Voter registration | Not open |
| Voter lists | Partially open |
| Voter education | Partially open |
| Polling Stations | Not open |
| Election results | Partially open |
| Electoral Complaints, Disputes and Resolutions | Partially open |
| Electoral Legal Framework | Mostly open |

OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

1. Low levels of education, access to information, and demand for election data puts little pressure on key bodies to make election data available to the public.
2. Slow move to utilizing online connectivity and the untimeliness of updating online information demonstrate the need to better utilize online systems.
3. While key legislation is available online, there is little public awareness.

CONT.

4. The Voter Look-Up system is a welcome innovation, but its implementation should be strengthened.
5. Official data on security incidents is key to assessing how ethnic fragmentation and other inter-related factors continue to drive high levels of election-related violence.
6. Challenges in gaining access to data from public institutions with key roles in the election indicate a prevalent culture of reluctance to release information of public interest.

CONT.

7. Budget and campaign finance data seemed to be the most difficult to obtain.
8. Lack of funding has affected the preparedness of the EMB to deliver the election and ensure that key data is made available to all stakeholders—including candidates, voters, and observers—in a timely manner.
9. Poor management and limited technical capacity led to ineffective and untimely implementation of electoral activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations for Government and lawmakers includes prioritizing election fundings for next elections, relevant public departments to strengthen OGP through working to ensure openness of election data, and conducting a nationwide census prior to the next elections to address inaccuracy issues with the electoral roll experienced in the 2022 elections.
- Recommendations for EMBs include timely communication for voter registration sites per LLGs, to increase voter education and awareness, and prioritize the timely and regular update of election information via the EMB official website

CONT.

- Recommendations for partners, NGOs, and other civil society organizations include support to government and citizen efforts to enhance actions for open election data through technical or financial assistance, provide support to efforts of EMBs in terms of education and awareness on voting and electoral processes, and maintain a continuous public forum through the media discussing election-related issues to maintain public awareness and maintain pressure on sitting government to address these issues through policy making or amending of laws.

CONT.

- Recommendations for voters highlights the need to increase demand for more data to be made public and take on personal obligations to spread awareness on the need for available, timely and updated election data. Recommendations also include that voters need to increase demand for political parties or independent candidates to make their campaign finances available and in detail to the public before contesting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Ancuta Hansen, NDI Senior Director for the Pacific Islands & the National Democratic Institute (NDI)
- We would like to further acknowledge Julia Brothers, NDI Senior Advisor, Johandra Delgado, NDI Advisor for Election & Political Processes, and Rakara Raula-Nelson, NDI Country Coordinator, for the training and support provided to the project team.