



INEC Policy Number:
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POLICY ON CONDUCTING ELECTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable officials and staff of the Commission to understand and respond adequately to the challenges of conducting elections in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its health and financial implications, and to provide a guide for engagement with stakeholders during elections.

Authority

Section 160 (1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) empowers the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to 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. The Commission is also empowered by Section 153 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) to issue regulations, guidelines and manuals for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of the Act.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all elections and electoral activities of the Commission during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Responsible Party

All officials and staff of the Commission.



1. POLICY STATEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an extensive impact on the electoral process in Nigeria. Not only has it led to far-reaching disruptions in the electoral system, it has also specifically led to the postponement of elections and created uncertainties about scheduled ones. The Commission, cognizant of the profound impact of the pandemic on the electoral process, extensively deliberated on how best to respond to the impact of the pandemic on election administration. The situation is made worse by the global economic impact of the pandemic and its knock-on effect on the Nigerian economy, which has seen a decline in funding for government activities. Expectedly, this trend will also affect the work of the Commission. Conducting elections in a pandemic such as COVID-19 is yet uncharted waters. Only very few jurisdictions have any experience with this. That notwithstanding, the Commission is committed to conducting all elections that are due within the

extant legal framework. However, in so doing it will put a premium on public safety and mitigation of health risks from COVID-19. Citizens must be assured that they will be safe while participating as voters, candidates and officials. The Commission remains committed to raising public confidence in the electoral process in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic and to regularly communicate its actions and challenges to the public. This would from time to time occasion alterations in its procedures, rules and regulations, as is the case with the present policy. The broad objective of this policy framework is, therefore, to prepare the Commission to respond to the effects on the electoral process of the twin challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and looming cuts in government spending and to communicate these to its stakeholders.



2. HEALTH ISSUES

The most immediate challenge that COVID-19 poses to the electoral process is health related. In order to protect voters, election officials and other stakeholders in the electoral process, the Commission shall implement the following:

A. General Protective Measures

- i. Infrared thermometers will be supplied and used at the Registration Area Collation Centres, the Local Government Area Collation Centres and the State Collation Centres.
- ii. The use of face masks is mandatory for all involved in the election process and must be worn at all election locations.
- iii. The Commission shall provide face masks for all election officials.
- iv. Alcohol based hand sanitizers will be provided for election officials at the polling units.
- v. Methylated Spirit and cotton wool will be provided for the disinfection of the Smart Card Readers (SCRs) after the fingerprint of each voter is read.
- vi. The rules of physical distancing shall be enforced at all election activities including stakeholder

engagements, training, queuing at Polling Units, etc.

- vii. All protocols issued by the NCDC, Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, State Committees on COVID-19 and other relevant health authorities shall be observed by election officials and all stakeholders.

- viii. The Commission shall work with the PTF and health authorities to have in place a system of voluntary COVID-19 testing for INEC staff before and after deploying for elections.

B. Voters and Election Officials Showing Symptoms of COVID – 19

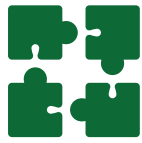
- i. The Commission shall work with the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 and health authorities in the States having elections to develop a protocol for dealing with persons who show symptoms of COVID-19 at election venues.
- ii. Where an election official, a voter or any other person present at an election venue shows symptoms of COVID-19:
 - the prevailing protocol shall be observed;
 - the person must be isolated

- from other persons at the venue;
- the attention of the security personnel should be drawn;
- the dedicated number for COVID – 19 emergencies shall be called; and
- if the affected person is an election official, the Commission must be notified through the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC)..



3. LEGAL ISSUES

- i. As already announced by the Commission, the dates for the Governorship elections in Edo and Ondo States remain 19th September 2020 and 10th October 2020 respectively. Dates for the four postponed bye-elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Plateau States, as well as other bye-elections that become due during the COVID-19 pandemic will be announced by the Commission following its established procedures.
- ii. The Commission will engage with the legislature and other stakeholders to explore ways of responding to the rising cost of conducting frequent bye-elections, especially in consideration of the Supreme Court position that votes belong primarily to political parties, as well as the Commission's records, which show that only in 10% of all bye-elections since 2015 did the party that won originally lose the election.
- iii. The Commission will engage relevant authorities, including the legislature, to designate election as an essential service to enable the Commission function effectively in times of national emergency.



4. PLANNING ELECTIONS

The Commission shall revamp its election planning and implementation monitoring processes in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Commission in planning elections shall:

- i. Reflect and take full cognizance of the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on election service delivery. All election activities shall be evaluated on the extent to which they recognize the likely effects of the pandemic on their timely and successful execution.
- ii. Update and strictly implement an Electoral checklist of indicators that mainstreams COVID-19 for use in monitoring and tracking performance over time and space.
- iii. Undertake strategic consultation and consensus building with stakeholders on key changes in its procedures due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- iv. Respond to the growing demand for deepening the use of technology in the electoral processes, including the introduction of electronic voting.
- v. Develop a new election budget template to reflect the likely impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the funding profile of electoral activities.
- vi. Constantly re-evaluate planned electoral activities in the light of COVID-19 and the health risks it poses for voters, stakeholders and staff during elections, and implement mitigating measures in consultation with health authorities.
- vii. Integrate its various planning and monitoring tools – Election Risk Management (ERM), Election Management System (EMS) and Electoral Operations Support Centre (EOSC) into a robust system for delivering electoral services during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- viii. Undertake risk mitigation strategies, including innovative ways of conducting election activities that will mitigate risk to health and safety of voters and election officials.
- ix. Continuously update election readiness assessments and regularly share information from them with stakeholders.



5. ELECTORAL OPERATIONS

A. Pre-election activities

- i. The Commission shall:
 - a. Immediately embark on a review of regulations, guidelines and manuals for elections in the light of changes to the electoral process that are imminent due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - b. Develop a Voter Code of Conduct (VCC) document detailing how voters are expected to act and conduct themselves at the polling units in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - c. Review all Election Information Kits to include COVID-19 information.
 - d. Expand the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) at all levels to include NCDC (or other requisite health bodies) and NOA on a temporary basis.
 - e. Mandate its State offices to work with local health authorities to do a health assessment of upcoming elections immediately.
 - f. Mainstream COVID-19 in its election risk mapping tools like the Election Risk Management (ERM) and Election Violence Mitigation and Advocacy Tool (EVMAT).
 - g. Conduct immediate discussion with state governments where elections are to hold concerning lockdowns, curfews, etc. and how they might affect elections.
 - h. Ensure that Pre-Election Preparation (PEP) activities shall be conducted online preferably. Where face-to-face activities become necessary, the protocols for COVID-19 prevention should be followed.
 - i. Pilot changes to the electoral process in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic in a bye-election prior to the Edo and Ondo Governorship elections in order to learn lessons where necessary.
- ii. The Commission shall conduct an immediate evaluation of its key election facilities to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose, including Polling Units (PUs), Registration Area Centres (RACs) and Collation Centres. These facilities will

be reorganized to make them more optimal to health and cost considerations.

- iii. In order to support improved planning and deployment during the COVID-19 pandemic, two key spatial and mapping activities shall be implemented namely, geo-referencing of RAC locations and mapping of COVID-19 prevalence.
- iv. In handling and delivery of election materials:
 - a. To reduce the number of contacts during distribution, when Non-sensitive Materials are procured, they will be delivered directly by vendors to States or purchased by States requiring the materials and packaged according to quantity required by Registration Area. This will reduce the level and number of contacts during distribution.
 - b. Ballot Papers and result sheets (Sensitive Materials) shall be packaged to Registration Areas (RAs). Production of Sensitive Materials shall commence early to give adequate time for proper packaging and delivery.
- v. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to adversely affect staffing for elections. Consequently:
 - a. The Commission will engage immediately with NYSC and INEC State Offices to evolve modalities for corps members to serve as ad hoc staff in elections during the pandemic. The Commission's State offices will commence identification of alternative sources of ad hoc staff in line with Commission policy, in case there are shortfalls.
 - b. The Commission will:
 - Ensure the use of electronic and non-contact means to recruit ad hoc staff by deploying its INECPres portal, as well as in notifying ad hoc staff of invitations and postings (for example, use of SMS) to prevent large gatherings at INEC offices during staff deployment.
 - The Electoral Operations and Logistics Department (EOPs) will harvest all past ad hoc staff from its databases and send to each State preparing for elections.
 - All ad hoc staff databases in the Commission will be harmonized for better management.
 - c. To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, the Commission shall reduce to a minimum interstate

movement of staff, including ad hoc staff, for off-season and bye elections. The rule shall be that only shortfalls requested by the States are filled from outside the state. As much as possible, all election staff will be sourced in-state.

- d. Transportation of election staff shall comply with COVID-19 containment protocols. Consequently, there shall be a reduction in the number of passengers per vehicle on election day from 14 to 7 for buses, and from 12 to 6 for boats. Motorcycles and tricycles must be used sparingly with one passenger per motorcycle and two per tricycle. All passengers and drivers must wear face masks and it shall be mandatory and the responsibility of vehicle owners to provide hand sanitizers for occupants of their vehicles.
- vi. For RAC activities:
 - a. State Offices of the Commission shall conduct a thorough assessment of RACs to determine their suitability for elections. The designation of RACs and Super RACs shall be on a case by case basis, having due regards for the expanse of territory that they serve, terrain and adequate space.
 - b. Where there is insufficient space in a RAC and no suitable alternative facility is available for a Super RAC option, canopies may be deployed outdoors to increase the available area for use.
 - c. COVID-19 awareness shall be included in RAC briefing. Handouts, flyers and information kit on the pandemic will be distributed to election staff at the RACs.
 - d. At the RACs, election staff may be checked by RAC Managers or Supervisory Presiding Officers (SPOs) for COVID-19 symptoms such as high temperature and coughing. Staff showing symptoms will receive medical attention and be replaced immediately from the reserve of staff, on the approval of the Electoral Officer and REC.
- vii. In the establishment of Voting Points, in order to reduce the number of points in a Polling Unit to be monitored and controlled for COVID-19 compliance, the threshold for Voting Points shall be increased from 500/750 to 1,000/1,250.

B. Election Day activities

- i. At the Polling Units during elections:
 - a. In the light of the COVID-19

pandemic, the Polling Unit layout shall be redesigned by the Commission to ensure substantial compliance with the protocols established by health authorities. Among other things, social distancing, general hygienic conduct and enforcement of COVID-19 prevention protocols shall be emphasized in the redesign.

- b. There shall be a two-tier queuing system at the Polling Unit – one outside and the other in the voting area. Voters will be brought into the voting area periodically to prevent overcrowding. Tags and twines may be used to ensure crowd control and maintenance of social distance.
 - c. In order to accommodate additional activities in setting up the PU due to COVID-19, polls shall now commence at 8.30 am and close at 2.30 pm. Anybody on the outer queue by 2.30 pm shall be allowed to vote, in line with the Commission's regulations.
 - d. Prior to the commencement of polls, the Presiding Officer or Assistant Presiding Officer (VP) shall ensure that the contents of the Voter Code of Conduct (VCC) are read out loudly to voters and that the VCC Poster is pasted at the Polling Unit.
 - e. Face masks shall be mandatory at Polling Units and all election locations. Any voter without a face mask shall be turned away from the Polling Unit. However, the Assistant Presiding Officer (APO) II in checking the Register of Voters may request removal of mask to prevent voter impersonation.
 - f. There shall be periodic disinfection of chairs, tables and work areas, as well as adequate ventilation at the Polling Units. The SCR shall be cleaned with the prescribed disinfectant after each voter's fingerprint is read.
 - g. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other safety materials shall be provided for polling staff.
 - h. At the close of polls, polling unit staff shall ensure that materials are properly disinfected, carefully packaged and that used PPE are hygienically packaged or disposed of.
- ii. For purposes of collation of results after election:
 - a. The Commission will cluster RA collation centres where feasible, in order to reduce exposure of people to the risk of COVID-19, speed up

collation and reduce costs.

- b. There shall be a designated area at each Collation Centre (outdoors) for the implementation of the safety and health measures such as compulsory wearing of face masks, hand sanitizing, body temperature check, etc.
 - c. There shall be 6ft queuing distancing for all seeking to enter the collation hall.
 - d. There shall also be 6 ft sitting spacing arrangement within the collation hall.
 - e. In order to prevent overcrowding during collation, only one polling agent of a party on the ballot (or the candidate in person) for the election(s) shall be allowed into the collation hall.
- b. Used PPE that are not reusable must be disposed in the prescribed manner.
 - ii. It is now mandatory for designated election staff to collect and deposit all Electoral Operations copies of results with their Supervisors within the prescribed time. Non-compliance shall be treated as dereliction of duty.
 - iii. All post-election debriefings shall preferably be done electronically. Where face-to-face debriefings take place, the protocols for COVID-19 prevention shall be followed.

C. Post-election Activities

- i. For Reverse logistics:
 - a. Election staff must ensure that used but reusable PPEs are carefully packaged and sent to designated collection points.



6. ICT AND VOTER REGISTRATION

The Commission recognizes the critical role that ICT will play in an electoral process that is being vastly reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the growing demands by Nigerians for the deepening of the use of technology in our elections. Consequently, the Commission shall:

- i. Continue to apply relevant, value-for-money technology in all aspects of the electoral process and election management.
- ii. Regularly validate and clean up the biometric Register of Voters by removing multiple registrants and deceased persons.
- iii. Suspend the Continuous Registration of Voters (CVR) for the time being to prevent the health risks associated with it in the context of COVID-19.
- iv. Continue to make available its electronic channels for voters to check their registration status.
- v. Pilot the use of Electronic Voting Machines at the earliest possible time (not Edo and Ondo), but work towards the full introduction of electronic voting in major elections starting from 2021.



7. TRAINING

- i. The methodology for election training will combine face-to-face and electronic approaches. Where the former is used, the requisite COVID-19 prevention protocols shall strictly apply. It shall be the responsibility of trainees to provide their own face masks during training.
- ii. All training resources such as the Manual for Election Officials, Synopsis and training DVD will be reviewed to include COVID-19 content and consequent changes to election procedures approved by the Commission. Soft copies of these materials will be shared with trainees prior to training to reduce face-to-face contacts and also enhance learning.
- iii. Trainers will receive refresher courses on COVID-19 to improve their ability to deliver new content and handle COVID-19

emergencies during training.

- iv. COVID-19 prevention protocols shall inform the choice of training venues. Considerations such as

sufficient size to comply with the physical distancing rule and adequate ventilation will be paramount.



8. VOTER EDUCATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The Commission shall:

- a. Engage with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and other health authorities to develop relevant messaging on COVID-19 and the electoral process.
- b. Combine face-to-face engagements with stakeholders with online meetings. Where the former is used, the necessary COVID-19 prevention protocols shall strictly apply.
- c. Design effective messaging with requisite COVID-19 content for its activities and changes to the electoral process.
- d. Make extensive use of radio and television broadcasts
- e. in several languages on COVID-19 and the electoral process in a manner that balances the health risks of the pandemic and the civic responsibilities of Nigerians.
- e. Expand the channels available to citizens to reach the Commission with their concerns and suggestions, such as the Citizens' Contact Centre, MyINEC App, etc.
- f. Conduct extensive grassroots enlightenment, using strategies that fully incorporate the COVID-19 prevention protocols.
- g. In its voter education and publicity activities, focus particular attention on new and young voters, women, and persons with disability

in order to ensure a more inclusive electoral process.

- h. Include accessibility features and closed captioning during its online engagements in order to carry along persons with disability.

- i. Create an online platform for accrediting media organizations and journalists who wish to take part in electoral activities.



9. POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTION OBSERVATION

A. E-Platforms for Election and Party Monitoring Activities

The Commission will create E-platforms for the following activities:

- a. Accreditation of Observer Groups and Deployment of their field Observers.
- b. Submission of nomination forms by Political Parties for Candidates.
- c. Tracking and reporting of campaigns and campaign finance by/for Candidates and Political Parties.
- d. Submission of Party Agents lists by Political Parties.
- e. Engagement with stakeholders

(consultative meeting with Political Party leaders and briefing of Observers).

B. Accreditation and Deployment of Observers

The Commission shall:

- i. Request and receive applications for election observation exclusively online.
- ii. Reduce the number of accredited Observer Groups based on past performance and compliance with Commission's guidelines for election observation. This is to reduce crowding and therefore health risks at election venues.
- iii. Reduce the number of Field Observers. Approved number of field observers may be

proportionally allotted to accredited Observer Groups.

C. Party Primaries and Campaigns

- i. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission shall encourage political parties to develop appropriate Guidelines and Regulations for conduct of Party Primaries that take into account the COVID-19 prevention protocols.
- ii. Where the Guidelines and Regulations are in conflict with the Constitutions of Political Parties and the Commissions' Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Political Party Primaries, 2018, the Commission shall draw the attention of the political party to the discrepancy.

D. Submission of Nomination Forms and List of Polling Agents

- i. The Commission shall provide Access Codes to be issued to National Chairmen and National Secretaries of political parties for the submission of names and particulars of their candidates for various elections.
- ii. The particulars of candidates will be pasted in hard copies at the Commission's State offices and also published online.

- iii. The Commission, through Electoral Officers, shall use appropriate technology to receive the particulars of Polling Agents from political parties.

E. Briefing and Debriefing of Election Observers

The Commission shall, as appropriate, combine physical and online briefings for observers. However, whenever the former is adopted, all the protocols for COVID-19 prevention shall be strictly followed.

F. Engagements with Political Parties

- i. The Commission shall, as appropriate, combine physical and online engagements with political parties and their officials. However, whenever the former is adopted all the protocols for COVID-19 prevention shall be strictly followed.
- ii. The Commission shall develop a framework for these engagements in the context of COVID-19. Engagement with political parties shall be regular and commence immediately.



10. SECURING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

- i. The Commission shall regularly communicate any policy changes and any modifications to its procedure and process (pre-election, election and post-election) resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic to all Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) members.
- ii. In line with its mandate, the Inter-Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) will mandate the State-level ICCES to:
 - a. Reassess existing security threats across the States and the implications of COVID-19 for such threats, training and deployment for election security.
 - b. Develop locally focused plans for election security deployments, taking cognizance of COVID-19 and covering the periods before, during and after elections, and forward same to the National-level ICCES for approval.
- iii. The Commission in collaboration with security agencies and health authorities, shall review the content of the modules for training security officials on election duty to include COVID-19 specific content.
- iv. ICCES shall review its draft common Code of Conduct for Security Officials on Election Duties in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- v. ICCES shall develop guidelines for identifying legitimate security officials on election duties to prevent impersonation by wearing masks.



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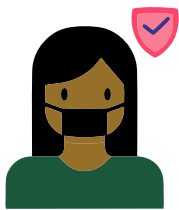
Introduction

This Supplementary to the Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections is issued pursuant to the powers conferred on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) and the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), as well as the provisions of the INEC Policy on Conducting Elections in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic of 21st May 2020 (No. 01/2020). It amends the Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections issued by the Commission on 12th January 2019 and all its clauses and schedule, as amended by this Supplementary, shall continue to apply in all elections conducted by the Commission. This Supplementary, which is an integral part of the 2019 Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections, shall remain in force until replaced by new regulations and guidelines or repealed in part or in its entirety by the Commission. Any such amendment or repeal shall be supported by a Decision Extract of the Commission or an official gazette





CONDUCTING ELECTIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND OTHER HEALTH EMERGENCIES



General Health & Safety Measures

- 1** Wearing of face mask is mandatory at all election locations. An improvised face mask using a handkerchief, scarf or other such materials is acceptable. Any person who does not wear a face mask at a Voting Point, Polling Unit, Collation Centre or other venues where electoral activities are conducted shall be politely turned away, provided that no person shall wear a face mask branded with the insignia or unique identification of a political party/candidate or indicating the person's voting preference. Face masks and alcohol-based hand sanitizers shall be provided for the use of election officials by the Commission. Infrared thermometers shall be supplied and used at the Registration Area Collation Centres, the Local Government Area Collation Centres and the State Collation Centres.
- 2** All protocols issued by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, State Committees on COVID-19 and other relevant health authorities shall be observed by election officials and all stakeholders. Where an election official, a voter or any other person present at an election venue shows symptoms of COVID-19:
 - a. the prevailing protocol shall be observed;
 - b. the person must be isolated from other persons at the venue;
 - c. the attention of security personnel should be drawn;
 - d. the dedicated number for COVID – 19 emergencies shall be called;



and

- e. if the affected person is an election official, the Commission must be notified through the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC).
- f. Any election official who believes that he/she has come into contact with an infected person should seek medical advice and make a report to the Commission.



RAC Activities

3 At the Registration Area Centres (RACs):

- a. COVID-19 awareness shall be included in RAC briefing. Handouts, flyers and information kit on the pandemic will be distributed to election staff at the RACs.
- b. At the RACs, election staff may be checked by RAC Managers or Supervisory Presiding Officers (SPOs) for COVID-19 symptoms such as high temperature and coughing. Staff showing serious symptoms will receive medical attention and be replaced immediately from the reserve of staff, on the approval of the Electoral Officer and Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC).
- c. Where there is insufficient space in an RA and no suitable alternative facility is available for a Super RAC option, canopies may be deployed outdoors to increase the available area for use.
- d. During the distribution of election materials, the SPOs shall ensure that there is no crowding and that the distribution is orderly.



Transportation of Staff

4 Transportation of election staff shall comply with COVID-19 containment protocols. Consequently, each vehicle deployed to convey



election staff shall carry only 50% of its normal passenger capacity. All passengers and drivers must wear face masks. It shall be mandatory and the responsibility of vehicle owners to provide hand sanitizers for occupants of their vehicles.

Amends Clause 3 (b) of Regulations & Guidelines 2019

- 5** In order to reduce the number of points in a Polling Unit to be monitored for COVID-19 prevention compliance, Voting Points shall be created out of Polling Units based on multiples of 1,000 voters and a maximum of 1,250 voters instead of 500/750 that was previously the case.

Amends Clause 10 (c) of the Regulations and Guidelines 2019

- 6** In order to accommodate additional activities in setting up the Polling Unit due to COVID19, accreditation and voting shall commence at 8:30am instead of 8:00am and end at 2:30pm instead of 2:00pm.



Queuing accreditation and Voting

- 7**
- There shall be a two-tier queuing system at the Polling Unit – an outer queue and an inner queue. The inner queue will be in the waiting or voting area. Persons wishing to vote shall join the outer queue from which the APO III shall bring voters to the inner queue in manageable batches.
 - Social distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) must be maintained on the queues and all around the Polling Unit. Queues may be demarcated for social distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) using twines and markings. Tags may be used for batching of voters and crowd control.



- c. The APO III and security officials shall ensure that every voter joining the outer queue is wearing a face mask. Any person without a face mask shall be politely turned away from the Voting Point or Polling Unit.
- d. Any person who wears a face mask branded with the insignia or unique identification of a political party/candidate or indicating the person's voting preference, shall also be turned away from the Polling Unit.
- e. Where hand washing facilities are available, voters should be encouraged to wash their hands thoroughly before joining the queue.

8 Prior to the commencement of accreditation and voting the Presiding Officer shall:

- a. Designate a safe area where voters who wish to observe the counting of votes and announcement of result shall wait after they cast their votes.
- b. Ensure that every person in the voting area is wearing a mask. Any person without a face mask shall be requested to leave the voting area. However, the Presiding Officer may request individuals to lower their face masks for proper identification.
- c. Ensure that all electoral officials (PO, APO I, II and III) properly sanitize their hands with the alcohol-based hand sanitizer provided.
- d. Have the APO III or any other official loudly read out the Voters Code of Conduct (VCC) and paste the VCC Poster conspicuously on a surface where everybody will see it.
- e. Invite the first batch of voters into the voting area.

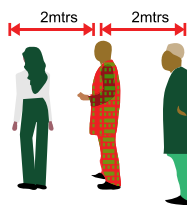
9 During accreditation and voting:

- a. Face masks must be worn and social distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) shall be maintained by all present.
- b. APO II in checking the Register of Voters may request that prospective voters remove their face masks for proper



identification.

- c. There shall be periodic disinfection of chairs, tables and work area, as well as adequate ventilation at the Polling Units.
- d. The Smart Card Reader (SCR) and other shared voting materials such as Braille Ballot Guides and magnifying glasses, shall be sterilized with the prescribed decontaminant after a voter has used any of them.
- e. A voter may request for hand sanitizer before having his/her fingerprint read by the SCR, which will be provided, if available.
- f. The APO I may request to clean the fingers of a voter with the prescribed disinfectant before his/her fingerprint is read by the SCR.



Voters wishing to observe counting and declaration

- 10** After a voter casts his/her vote, he or she shall leave the voting area taking every personal item, and if he/she intends to observe the counting of votes and announcement of result, move to the designated area for that purpose.



Closing of Polling Units

- 11** At the close of polls, the PO and APOs shall ensure that materials are properly disinfected, carefully packaged and that used personal protective materials are hygienically packaged for disposal. Reusable personal protective materials shall also be carefully packaged and sent to designated collection points.



Collation Centres

12

At all Collation Centres:

- a. There shall be a designated area outside the Collation Hall for the implementation of safety and health measures such as compulsory wearing of face mask, hand sanitizing and body temperature check.
- b. There shall be 2 metres (6 feet) queuing distancing for all seeking to enter the collation hall.
- c. There shall also be 2 metres (6 feet) sitting spacing arrangement within the collation hall.
- d. In order to prevent overcrowding during collation, only one polling agent of a party on the ballot (or the candidate in person) for the election(s) shall be allowed into the collation hall.
- e. Seats may be reserved for Election Observers based on available space in the Collation Hall and other COVID-19 considerations. Where there is not enough space to accommodate all Elections Observers in the Collation Hall, observer groups may be requested to elect those to represent all observes in the Collation Hall.



Mandatory Collection of Election Operations Copy of Results

13

It is mandatory for designated election staff to collect and deposit all Electoral Operations copies of results with their Supervisors within the prescribed time. Non-compliance shall be treated as dereliction of duty.



Suspension of Continuous Voter Registration

- 14** Continuous Registration of Voters (CVR) is for the time being suspended. This is to avert the health risks associated with it in the context of COVID-19. However, electronic channels for voters to check their registration status will continue to be available.



Procedure for Nomination of Candidates

- 15** Every Political Party intending to sponsor candidates for elections shall, through a written request signed by the National Chairman and National Secretary of the party and transmitted to the Commission in both electronic and hard copies, obtain an access code for Nomination Forms on the date stipulated in the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the election.

- 16** The Commission shall, on receipt of the written request and upon being satisfied that the political party conducted valid primaries, issue an Access Code for submission of Nomination Forms to the National Chairman of the Party.



Online Submission of Nomination forms

- 17**
- a. Nomination Forms shall be completed, uploaded and submitted to INEC on the Commission's Nomination Portal INEC Political Party Nomination Web Portal in the manner prescribed by the Commission. The uploaded documents shall include the following:
 - i. Covering Letter duly signed by the National Chairman and National Secretary of the Party.



- ii. Form EC9 (formerly Form CF001) with all necessary documents and affidavit sworn to by each candidate.
 - iii. The applicable Form EC9 (A) – (G) series (formerly Form CF002) duly signed by the National Chairman and National Secretary of the Party, accompanied with an affidavit of personal particulars of the candidates.
- b. The documents shall be upload to the Commission’s Nomination Portal not later than 6.00 pm on the last day for submission of the Forms, as stipulated in the timetable and Schedule of Activities for the Election. The portal shall no longer be available after the specified time.
- c. A slip indicating the successful submission of nominations will be automatically generated by the Nomination Portal, which the political party may save for its record.
- d. All submissions in respect of nominations shall be as prescribed in the preceding paragraphs. Personal, Courier or postal service deliveries are NOT acceptable and shall NOT be processed by the Commission.
- e. All Political Parties sponsoring candidates for an election shall ensure that all Forms EC9 of their Candidates are duly completed, signed by the candidate and sworn to before a Commissioner for Oath at the Federal High Court, High Court of the State or the Federal Capital Territory as provided by the enabling law before uploading same on Commission’s Nomination Portal. The applicable Forms EC9 (A) to (G), exactly as submitted online, shall be printed out by the parties and deposited with the Commission within 2 days of completing the online submission and an acknowledgement received. During the processing of the nominations, if there is any discrepancy between the printed (hard) copy of the Form EC9 (A) – (G) submitted by a political party to the Commission and the one downloaded by the Commission from its Nomination Portal, the version uploaded to the portal shall be used.



Processing of Nomination Forms

18

The following procedure shall be used in processing nomination forms of candidates submitted by political parties:

- a. The ICT Department of the Commission shall print a copy each of all the Forms received and a copy of the successful submission slip of each party, and forward same to the Legal Services Department on the same day it is received.
- b. The Legal Services Department shall upon receipt of the printed copies of Form EC9 and the relevant Form EC9 (A) – (G) series from the ICT Department, endorse every page with the date of receipt clearly indicated.
- c. The Legal Services Department shall return the endorsed copy of the printed Forms E9 and EC9 (A) – (G) series to the ICT Department for scanning and archiving.
- d. The submission slip generated from the Nomination Portal shall be presented by the political party to the Legal Services Department for issuance of acknowledgement of EC 9, EC9 (A-G) series and EC12 (A) – (G) series.
- e. The information on the candidates contained in Form EC 9 shall be entered into the format for list of candidates on the nomination portal by the ICT Department.
- f. The list of candidates for each election shall be generated by ICT Department for vetting by the Legal Services Department and approval by the Commission before the period for substitution.



Withdrawal/ Substitution of Candidates

19

Where a Political Party intends to change its candidate in accordance with the Provisions of the Electoral Act, the Political Party shall:

- a. Submit the appropriate Notice of Withdrawal of Candidates Form in the Form EC11 series duly signed by the candidate withdrawing and the substitute candidate with their passportsized photographs affixed and countersigned by the National Chairman and National Secretary of the Political Party.
- b. Form EC11 series shall be completed and uploaded on the Commission's Website in the manner prescribed by the Commission.
- c. The National Chairman and National Secretary of each Political Party shall jointly sign a covering letter forwarding the appropriate Form EC11 series for the elections to the Commission's Website not later than 6.00 pm on the last day for submission of the Forms as stipulated in the timetable and Schedule of Activities for the Election. The portal shall no longer be available after the specified time.
- d. A slip indicating the successful submission of the Form will be automatically generated by the Portal, which the political party may save for its record.
- e. The provision of Clause 15 above shall be applicable to substitution of candidates by political parties.
- f. The final list of candidates shall be generated after the period for substitution for vetting by the Legal Services Department.
- g. The Legal Services Department shall seek approval of the Commission for the publication of the Final List of candidates in compliance with the provisions of section 34 of the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) and the timeline in the Timetable and Schedule of Activities for the Elections.



Nomination Form EC13

- 20** Political Parties shall submit appropriate Nomination Forms in the Form EC13 series for all candidates sponsored for elections within the stipulated period in the Timetable and Schedule of Activities in the manner prescribed in Clause 17.
- 21** Political Parties are to note that where there is a Court Order in respect of the nomination of any of its candidates, the Commission shall comply with such Order.

RESUMPTION OF RESULT COLLATION FOLLOWING A DISRUPTION



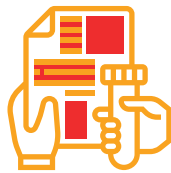
Principles for Resumption of Result Collation

- 22** The following Principles shall guide resumed collation of election results after a disruption:
- Voting takes place at Voting Points and Polling Units. Therefore, Forms EC8A (VP), EC8A and EC60E are the building blocks for any collation of result.
 - All INEC staff (permanent and ad hoc) involved in the resumed collation of results shall conduct the process with openness and transparency.
 - In the course of collation of results, there shall be opportunity for all interests to be heard insofar as they are not disruptive. However, the



Commission and its designated officials, including Collation Officers (COs) and Returning Officers (ROs) shall have the final say in the collation of results.

- d. The collation shall be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect among all participants. There shall be zero tolerance for disruptive behaviour and intemperate language, and all participants must act with decorum.



Handling of Copies of Results for Collation

23 At every level of collation, where INEC copy of collated results from the immediate lower level of collation exists, it shall be adopted for collation.

24 Where INEC copy of collated results from the immediate lower level of collation does not exist, the Collation Officer shall ask for duplicates from the following bodies in the order below:

- a) Police,
- b) State Security Service and
- c) Political Parties.

25 When a duplicate result sheet is tendered for collation from sources other than INEC, it shall be compared with other duplicate copies available. A duplicate copy shall only be accepted for collation if: (a) political parties accept it by consensus; or (b) a majority of political parties and the Collation Officer or Presiding Officer who first collated or recorded the result accept it as a true copy of the result in question.

26 Where no copy of collated results is available from any of the agencies, the results, where possible, shall be regenerated from the preceding level (collation or Polling Unit) in accordance with Clause 47 of the Regulations and Guidelines and Guidelines for Conduct of Elections issued by the Commission.



Request for Leave to Comment or Raise Objection by Polling Agents

27

A polling agent may request leave from the CO or RO, as applicable, to comment or raise objection on any issue during collation. The CO or RO shall rule on the merit of the comment or objection, provided that no comment or objection shall be allowed to disrupt the process of collation.



Cancellation of Results

28

Cancellation of any result shall be strictly in accordance with Clause 47 and Schedule 1 of the Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Elections. Every cancellation must be clearly recorded in the appropriate Form EC40G.

29

As much as practicable, Collation and Returning Officers who have commenced collation of the result of an election shall continue with the collation when it resumes. However, the Commission shall appoint new COs and ROs if the former ones are not available or if in the determination of the Commission it has become necessary to replace them.



Persons Allowed to be Present at Collation Centres

30

The following persons are allowed to be present at the Collation Centres, provided they are properly documented and issued the necessary identification badges:

- Collation and Returning Officers.
- INEC personnel.
- One Polling Agent per party or candidate. Candidates who choose to serve as their own agents should inform the Commission in good



time for proper documentation and identification.

- d. Approved and designated security officials.
- e. Properly accredited election observers.
- f. Properly accredited media persons/organizations.



Power of Returning or Collation Officer to Remove Persons from Collation Centre

31

The Returning Officer or Collation Officer shall have the power to request security officials to remove any person from the collation centre who, in his/her determination, is acting in a disruptive manner. Such a person may also be granted reprieve subsequently if the RO or CO so determines.

Dated at Abuja this **9th** day of **June** 2020.

Professor Mahmood Yakubu
Chairman, INEC



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SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

www.inecnigeria.org



Introduction

This Supplementary Regulations and Guidelines amends:

- a. Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Political Party Primaries;
- b. Regulations and Guidelines for Political Party Operations, 2018; and
- c. Regulations and Guidelines for Rallies and Campaigns by Political Parties, Aspirants, Candidates and their Supporters to bring them in line with the Commission's policy on Conducting Elections in the Context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Policy No. 01/2020) and for other allied matters.



Issuance of party guidelines for primaries. Amends Clause 2.1 of Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Political Party Primaries

1

- a. National Executive Committees and National Working Committees of political parties as empowered in respective party constitutions shall, in accordance with these Regulations and Guidelines, provide appropriate guidelines for the conduct of Party Primaries, wherein eligible members of the party must be given equal opportunity to participate.

Such Guidelines shall be in electronic format and as much as possible, reflect the prevailing requirements for public health including the provision and requirements for use of personal protection equipment (PPE) for/by participants in the party primary

- b. The Guidelines shall be transmitted to the Commission not later than 7 days to the date of the primaries.



Notification for primaries. Replaces Clause 4 of Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Political Party Primaries

2

- a. A Political Party shall submit an electronic and hard copy of notification addressed to the Hon. Chairman, INEC indicating the type, date, venue and time for party primaries not later than 21 days to the date of its primaries.
- b. Any Political Party intending to change the date, venue or time for its primaries shall electronically and in hard copy submit same to the Commission, not later than 7 days to the date of the conduct of such primaries stating clearly the reason(s) for rescheduling.
- c. All Notifications for Party Primaries (Electronic and hard copies) shall be signed jointly by the National Chairman and the National Secretary of the Party.



Submission of party membership register to the Commission Amends Clause 4.5 of Regulations and Guidelines for the Conduct of Political Party Primaries

- 3** A Political Party that intends to organize its primaries by direct method shall submit to the Commission a soft copy of its membership register pertaining to the constituency for which nomination is being organized, not later than 7 days before the day fixed for primaries. The register must also be available to aspirants and any member of the party on request.



Indirect Primaries

- 4** a. A Political Party that intends to organize its primaries by indirect method shall provide to the Commission in electronic format, not later than 7 days to the date of the primaries, the list of delegates expected to vote at the primary election(s), which shall be signed off by the Chairman or an official so delegated in writing.
- b. The list of Delegates shall indicate the names, addresses, contact phone numbers and party membership numbers of the said Delegates
- c. The political party shall also provide the membership register to be used in the election of Delegates for the indirect primaries



Issuance of Access Code for Commission's Nomination Portal to Political Parties

- 5** a. National Chairmen and National Secretaries of Political Parties as contained in the Commission's records shall be issued access codes for the electronic submission, withdrawal and substitution of names and particulars of their candidates as elected at Party Primaries monitored by the Commission.
- b. Where there are conflicting requests from the National Chairman and National Secretary of a political party, the Access Code shall be issued to the National Chairman of the party.



Submission of nominated candidates

- 6** Political parties shall use the access codes provided by the Commission to upload the names and particulars of their candidates based on the prescribed Forms EC9 (formerly EC CF 001) and the appropriate Form EC9 (A) – (G) series (formerly CF 002) as provided on the Commission's website.
- 7** The Completed forms EC9 and EC9 (A) – (G) series signed by the National Chairman and National Secretary of the Political Party shall be uploaded to the Commission's prescribed portal along with the relevant covering letter addressed to the Chairman of the Commission and other specified documents. Hardcopies of the appropriate Forms EC9 (A) – (G) shall be submitted at the Commission's headquarters and an acknowledgment obtained.



Withdrawal/Substitution of Candidates

- 8** A candidate may withdraw his candidature by notice in writing signed by him/her and delivered to the Political Party that nominated him/her for election. The political party shall convey such withdrawal to the Commission by uploading the prescribed Form EC 11 series not later than 45 days to the election at the Commission's Nomination Portal. A hard copy shall also be delivered to the headquarters of the Commission and an acknowledgment obtained.



Maintenance of membership register

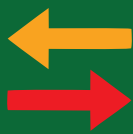
- 9** Every political party shall maintain in electronic format and hardcopies, an up-to-date register of its members according to Wards, indicating their names, addresses and party registration numbers, which shall be available to members on demand. The membership register shall be submitted to the Commission in electronic format on the last day of December of every calendar year.



Notice of Conventions, Congresses, etc. Amends Clause 1.1 of Regulations and Guidelines for Political Party Operations, 2018

10 A Political Party shall issue and transmit the Statutory 21-day notice in Electronic format and hard to the Commission for the conduct of its Conventions, Congresses or Meetings as provided in Electoral Act, 2010 (as amended).

11 A Political Party intending to change the date, venue and/or time for its meeting, congress or convention of which it had validly notified the Commission, shall transmit same to the Commission in Electronic or hard form not later than 7days to the new date.



Replaces Clauses 1.5, 1.6 & 1.7 of Regulations and Guidelines for Political Party Operations, 2018

12 All Political Parties shall transmit to the Headquarters of the Commission in Electronic Format the names, positions, addresses, LGA and State of origin of members of their respective National, State, LGA and Ward Executive Committees, indicating the date and venue of the congress or convention at which they were elected, not later than 7 days after they are elected.



Polling Agents

13 A political party shall within 14 days before an election, forward its list of Polling Agents in hard copy and/or electronic format to the Commission through the Electoral Officer (EO) in a Local Government Area or Resident Electoral Commissioner in a State along with the following:

- a. Passport photographs of the Polling Agents.
- b. Their means of identification (Photo copy of National Identity card/PVC/ International Passport/Drivers License.)



Submission of schedule of campaigns, rallies, etc. to the Commission

14 A political parties shall notify the Commission by written notice, transmitted electronically and in hardcopies, through the Electoral Officer at the LGA, the Resident Electoral Commissioner at the State or the INEC Headquarters Abuja, details of their public rallies, meetings, procession or public gathering not later than 7 days to the date of the event



Campaigns to comply with certain Regulations, Guidelines, Codes and Protocols

15 Campaigns by Candidates and Political Parties shall be based on their published Manifestos and shall comply with the provisions of:

- i. Regulations and Guidelines issued by the Commission;
- ii. Political Parties Code of Conduct;
- iii. Guidelines and regulations that may be issued by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC); and
- iv. Public Health Regulations and other protocols

Dated at Abuja this **9th** day of **June** 2020.

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SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDELINES FOR ELECTION OBSERVATION

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Introduction

This Supplementary Guidelines amends the Commission's Guidelines for Election Observation to bring it in line with the Commission's policy on Conducting Elections in the Context of the COVID-19 pandemic (Policy No. 01/2020).



Online Application. Amends Clause 2.1 of Guidelines for Election Observation

1

Requests for and receipts of all applications election observation shall be strictly online.

All interested observer groups shall complete the application Form EC 14A (1) online and upload it with all necessary documents, including evidence of past election observation, to assist in their assessment.

Observer groups that desire to observe more than one election shall indicate accordingly while completing the online application.

Submission of false documents may lead to disqualification and prosecution

2

All interested observe groups shall ensure that they submit with their online application all necessary information for their assessment by the Commission including:

Evidence of legal status.

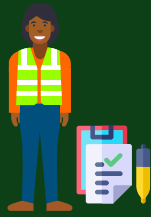
Federal Inland Revenue Service (Medium Tax Office) Registration Certificate.

Report of previous election observation.

Preference shall be given to observer groups that are based in the States where the election is taking place.

The Commission may limit the number of elections that an observer group may observe, as well as the number of field observers it can deploy. The is to limit overcrowding at election venues.

As a result of the pressure on space due to COVID-19, Commission may limit the number of observers admitted into a Collation Hall. Observer groups may have to elect those to represent them in the collation hal



Responsibilities of Observer Groups

3

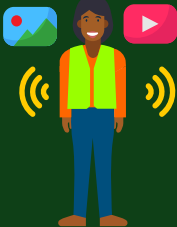
Observer organizations or groups shall be responsible for the training and deployment of observation teams and individuals, including the following:

All costs associated with the conduct of elections observation, excluding the observer kits, which the Commission shall provide.

Provision of personal protection equipment for all field observers deployed by the organization, including face masks or coverings, hand sanitizers etc.

Ensuring compliance with other COVID-19 prevention protocols, including safe social distancing by observer teams and individuals.

Singing the Commission's indemnity form.




Virtual briefings and Workshops for Observers

4

The Commission shall organize virtual pre- and post-election briefings and lessons learnt workshops for observers. Where physical briefings and workshops are organized, they shall be in line with the subsisting protocols for COVID-19 prevention.

Dated at Abuja this **9th** day of **June** 2020.


Professor Mahmood Yakubu
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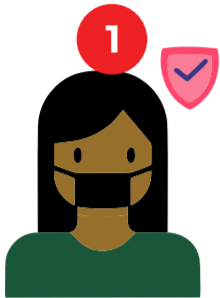
EC 30F

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

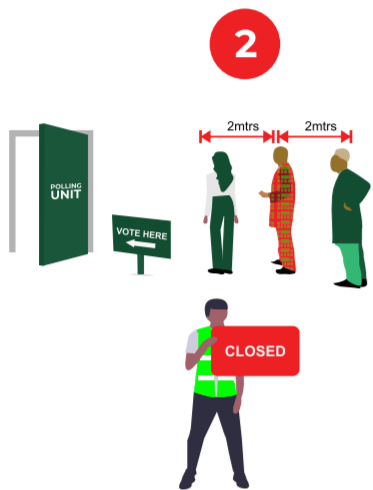
Plot 436 Zambezi Crescent, Maitama District, Abuja.

VOTING IN SAFETY

Voters Code of Conduct (VCC) for Elections During the COVID-19 Pandemic



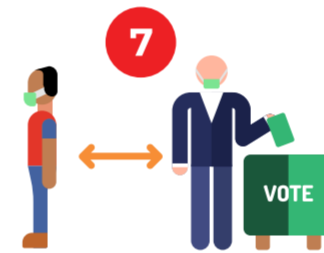
Wearing of face mask at Polling Units and all election locations is mandatory. Please come with your own face mask, which you can make yourself using a handkerchief, scarf or such materials. You may be asked to lower your mask for identification when necessary.



- a) Voting starts by 8.30 am and stops at 2.30 pm.
- b) There shall be two queues – one inside and one outside the polling area. You will be called from the outer queue into the voting area in batches.
- c) By 2.30 pm, the outer queue shall close, but you will vote if you are already on the queue.
- d) Maintain order while on the queue and keep a distance of 2 meters (6 feet) from other people.



Any voter showing symptoms of COVID-19 such as high temperature, coughing, sneezing, etc. will leave the queue or voting area to be attended to by designated officials. Obey all directives by the officials to keep yourself and others safe. Report any health emergencies urgently to an official at the Polling Unit.



After you cast your vote, move away from the voting area. You may observe the counting of votes and announcement of result from a designated area.



Avoid touching of surfaces or leaning on walls and other surfaces at the Polling Unit. Hand sanitizer will be provided on request, if available.



Please take away your used protective materials such as face masks and hand gloves when leaving the Polling Unit. Do not litter the Polling Unit!



An election official may ask to clean your fingers with an antiseptic before your fingerprint is read with the Smart Card Reader.



Remember that cell phones or any other device that can take pictures are still not allowed in the voting cubicles.



Please show your voters' card to election officials whenever requested.



Obey all directives issued by election officials, including security officials, and be orderly at all times. INEC shall not tolerate assault of any election official and you may be prosecuted for doing so.

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