

INTEGRATED ELECTORAL SUPPORT GROUP ACTIVITIES



IESG and NIEBC discuss the timelines for VR and district elections and elections budget.

Since the inception of the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC) in December 2024, the Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) has offered

technical assistance regarding legal and operational matters. Initial discussions aimed to equip the new commissioners with an understanding of the electoral legal framework and highlight the need for strategic planning.

Building upon this groundwork, the IESG is now working in partnership with the NIEBC to draft key regulations concerning voter registration and the district elections scheduled. Additionally, IESG has been instrumental in outlining the timelines for the voter registration process and the district elections.

IESG and NIEBC have been reviewing the budget for voter registration and district elections to ensure that the financial allocations align with the Commission's strategic plan. The budget when finalized will also serve as a tool to mobilize resources.

HIGHLIGHTS

- National Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC) launches political association registration.
- IESG holds an induction training workshop for NIEBC commissioners.
- NIEBC prepares for voter registration.

ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS



IESG continues to engage with the newly formed National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC) in line with its mandate to support Somalia's electoral process. IESG provides ongoing technical and policy-level assistance to strengthen the Commission's capacity and advance credible, inclusive, and transparent elections. This support includes assistance with the ongoing voter registration exercise led by NIEBC, a key milestone in preparing for future electoral events.

Induction Training for NIEBC Commissioners



NIEBC Commissioners attended the Induction Workshop organized by IESG.

From 4 to 6 February 2025, IESG organized a three-day induction session for the newly appointed National Independent Electoral Body Commission (NIEBC) Commissioners. The workshop aimed to equip the Commissioners with foundational knowledge of electoral administration and prepare them to navigate the responsibilities, priorities,

and challenges of operationalizing a new Electoral Management Body (EMB).

The induction comprised fourteen interactive sessions covering a wide range of topics related to electoral administration. Key themes included the guiding principles of democratic elections, international instruments, sustainability of electoral processes, the electoral cycle and strategic and operational planning, and the roles of commissioners and secretariat staff. The sessions were led by national and international experts from the UN Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG), offering global perspectives with local relevance.

Dr. Abdi Guliye, a former Commissioner of Kenya's Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, participated virtually and shared insights on the structure and functions of Kenya's electoral body, sparking active engagement and questions from NIEBC commissioners.

The workshop successfully met its objectives and was well received by the Commis-

sioners. They recognized the importance of the NIEBC having institutional authority and maintaining independence, impartiality, professionalism, and transparency. The credibility of the upcoming elections will largely depend on establishing a professional, independent, impartial, and efficient electoral administration at all levels—central, regional, and district.

Launch of Political Association Registration

On 20 January 2025, the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC) officially opened the registration period for political associations interested in participating in the direct district elections. Initially set to end on 31 March, following requests from political associations for additional time, the NIEBC extended the registration period until 30 April 2025.

Since the start of the registration period, the Commission has held several meetings with prospective political associations and civil society organizations to discuss the regis-

tration process, challenges faced by aspiring political associations and mechanisms to address them.

The Somalia Union was the first political association to register. On 11 March, the NIEBC Chairperson confirmed that the Somalia Union met all the legal registration requirements outlined in the Political Associations and Parties Law and awarded a certificate recognizing SU as a political party. He also noted that several other associations were in various stages of registration.



NIEBC is awarding the registration certificate to the Somali Union political association.

Voter Registration Preparation



NIEBC Commissioners attended the Induction Workshop organized by IESG.



NIEBC commissioners received voter registration kits.

The NIEBC is preparing for voter registration that is set to start in April 2025 with the principal objective of registering approximately 3 million voters to create a national voter register. It will be conducted in four phases commencing in the Benaadir Regional Administration (BRA).

NIEBC has procured 2,000 biometric voter registration (BVR) kits with advanced fingerprint scanning technology in compliance with the electoral law. The kits arrived in Mogadishu and were assessed by NIEBC IT specialists to ensure they met their technical and security specifications. A data center in Mogadishu with on-premises servers and a cloud-based backup to support, manage, and secure voters' data is also being established.

NIEBC Commissioners conducted on-site visits to potential voter registration centers in the Benadir region and the Federal Member States Galmudug, Hirshabelle, and South-

west. During their visits, the teams engaged with local authorities, assessed the accessibility and suitability of the physical voter registration sites, and gathered feedback from citizens on their understanding of the voter registration process, their experiences and any challenges they faced.

On 20 March, the NIEBC conducted a two-day training session for 55 of its staff members who will be responsible for training the voter registration operators who will work in the 800 registration sites in 69 districts across Somalia. The training aimed to equip participants with the skills to use the BVR kits and the voter registration process.

The NIEBC will engage and coordinate with the Somali Police Force (SPF) and relevant ministries and institutions for security planning to ensure a safe environment for voter registration.

Commencement of the Nationwide Election Awareness Campaign

The National Independent Electoral Body Commission (NIEBC) launched its series of election awareness campaigns to increase public understanding of the upcoming voter registration exercise and elections. These efforts are part of the NIEBC's goal of fostering a well-informed electorate that actively shapes the country's democratic future.

Building on an earlier public awareness strategy developed with the support of the Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG), NIEBC's Public Outreach team is rolling out

targeted messages covering key electoral topics including citizens' rights, the importance of voter participation, and the steps involved in the electoral process.

To maximize reach and impact, NIEBC is using various communication channels, such as private television stations, its official social media platforms, and influential social media. Leveraging social media is essential for achieving broad outreach and effectively engaging Somali youth.



NIEBC social media poster highlighting the importance of the election.