



A CITIZENS' GUIDE TO

UNDERSTANDING THE ELECTORAL CYCLE

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

- **CLRC** - Constitutional Law and Reform Commission
- **CSO** - Civil Society Organization
- **DJAG** - Department of Justice & Attorney General
- **DoF** - Department of Finance
- **DoT** - Department of Treasury
- **DPLGA** - Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs
- **EAC** - Election Advisory Committee
- **EBC** - Electoral Boundaries Commission
- **GoPNG** - Government of Papua New Guinea
- **ICAB** - Information and Community Awareness Branch
- **IDEC** - Inter-Departmental Election Committee
- **IFES** - International Foundation for Electoral Systems
- **IPPCC** - Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission
- **JSTF** - Joint Security Task Force
- **LPV** - Limited Preferential Voting
- **NGE** - National General Election
- **OLNLLGE** - Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections
- **PEM** - Provincial Election Manager
- **PESC** - Provincial Election Steering Committee
- **PM & NEC** - Department of Prime Minister & National Executive Council
- **PNGCS** - PNG Correctional Service
- **PNGDF** - PNG Defense Force
- **PNGEC** - PNG Electoral Commission
- **PSCEM** - Parliamentary Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
- **RPNGC** - Royal PNG Constabulary
- **SPCGE** - Special Parliamentary Committee on the 2022 General Elections
- **TIPNG** - Transparency International PNG Inc.

CONTENTS

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

4

PRE-ELECTION PERIOD

6

ELECTION PERIOD

8

POST-ELECTION PERIOD

10

SPCGE OVERVIEW

12

APPENDICES

14

This booklet was prepared by TIPNG (under our Voices Election Reforms Integrity Project) for the purpose of helping Papua New Guineans understand the PNG Electoral Cycle and the importance of reforms in improving the existing systems and processes.

All information and legal references presented in this booklet were extracted from the following texts:

- Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections (No.3 of 1977)
- Electoral Law (National Elections) Regulation 2007 (No.4 of 2007)

- The Constitution of the Independent State of PNG
- The Special Parliamentary Committee on the 2022 General Elections Final Report

This booklet is divided into five (5) main sections highlighting the phases of the PNG Electoral Cycle. And two appendices on pages 14 & 15 that give a general context on the 5-year Electoral Cycle and ongoing government efforts to improve PNGs Electoral systems.

While progress toward achieving the SPCGE reforms has been marginal, we hope this publication may be used to drive advocacy efforts for better PNG election outcomes.

KEY ELECTION STAKEHOLDERS

From planning to preparation and implementation, many stakeholders work together to make the National General Elections happen. The following section highlights some of the key stakeholders and their responsibilities:

The PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC)

- Plan, administer, conduct free, fair and safe elections;
- Establish election committees such as the Inter-Departmental Election Committee & Election Advisory Committee;
- Appoint Returning Officers & Assistant Returning Officers and revoke such appointments where necessary.
- Delegate powers to Returning Officers to establish Enrolment Agents and groups of committees to verify names and numbers on rolls;
- Educate & inform voters and stakeholders on elections;
- Prepare and maintain an accurate electoral roll and register all eligible voters;
- Advise Governor General on issuing writs for National General Elections and By-Election;
- Make sure people exercise their rights to vote and stand for public office;
- Conduct polling, count votes and declare results;
- Support the review of open electorates boundaries and submit recommendations to Parliament for approval.

Integrity of Political Parties & Candidates Commission (IPGCC)

- Consider applications for registration of political parties.
- Control and manage the Central Fund and policies concerning its administration.
- Administer terms & conditions – such as salaries and allowance, etc., for the executive members of registered political parties.

Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC)

- Review and set electoral boundaries to ensure the size of electorate are within calculated ranges and make recommendations to adjustment electoral boundaries when necessary.

Joint Security Task Force (JSTF)

- Made up of the Royal PNG Constabulary (Police) as the lead security agency, the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF), and the PNG Correctional Services (PNGCS).
- Provide a safe and secure environment for the National Elections to be conducted.

- Conduct risk and threat assessments and intelligence gathering to mitigate and manage threats throughout the pre-election to the post-election period. This intel informs resource deployment and operational activities.

Inter-Departmental Election Committee (IDEC)

- Provide a forum for planning and coordination of future National Elections.
- Ensure that the PNGEC receives adequate and timely funding for election development and improvement programs.
- Coordinate National Government agency response to the planning and delivery of resources for elections.
- Adopt policies to ensure that there is an integrated national approach to elections
- Provide support to PNGEC to build the capacity of Civil Society Organizations, media, and business to participate in the planning and delivery of free, fair and safe elections.
- Support NGE operations through National Government resource sharing and cooperation across provinces and regions to facilitate the more efficient and effective delivery of resources required for elections.

Provincial Election Steering Committees (PESC)

- Provide a critical link between IDEC and the provinces with respect to planning and conduct of National, Local-Level Government Elections, and by-elections as required.
- Ensure a consistent approach to elections management across the country through the implementation of national election policies and procedures.
- Develop policies and procedures as required to guide the effective planning and coordination of free, fair, and safe elections in the province.
- Provide a forum for integrated planning and coordination.
- Encourage resource sharing and cooperation across provinces.
- Participate in election budgeting and coordinating the resources required to deliver effective awareness, roll maintenance and other key election events.
- Explore and implement cost effective strategies to improve demographic data collection and management within the province.
- Promote and support CSO participation in the electoral process.

Election Advisory Committees (EAC)

- Provide recommendations and advice to the PNGEC on matters relating to the Organic Law or on election related matters referred to the EAC by the PNGEC.

- Make recommendations to the PNGEC.

The National & Supreme Courts

- **Contested Election Returns:** This involves hearing petitions challenging election results, also known as election petitions or disputed returns.
- **Injunctions:** The court may order injunctions prior to elections to restrain violations of campaign rules or to compel the PNGEC to enforce laws. However, this power is limited once the counting of votes has begun.
- **Judicial Review:** There are provisions for judicial review of election-related administrative actions, allowing parties to challenge decisions made by the PNGEC.

The Press / Media

- **Provide Information:** Educating voters about the electoral process. Including how, where, and when to vote and offering a detailed coverage of political parties, candidates, and their platforms, enabling voters to make informed choices.
- **Facilitate Debate & Public Discourse:** Encourage discussions about critical national issues to help shape public opinion.
- **Promote Transparency & Accountability:** Investigate and report on irregularities, malpractice, or corruption in the electoral process. Monitor the activities of political parties, candidates, and election management bodies to ensure fair play.
- **Encourage Voter Participation:** Raise awareness about the importance of voting and civic participation.
- **Combat Misinformation:** Debunk false claims, propaganda, and misinformation that could mislead voters or disrupt the electoral process. Help maintain the integrity of elections by ensuring that information disseminated is accurate and credible.
- **Act as a Watchdog:** Observe and report on election preparations, campaigns, and polling day activities.

Citizens / The Voting Public

- Ensure you are registered with the PNGEC before the election.
- Verify your details on the Electoral Roll.
- Learn about the candidates, their policies, and their track records.
- Understand the voting process, including polling dates, locations, and requirements.
- Cast your vote freely and fairly without intimidation or bribery.
- Report any suspicious activities such as vote-buying, fraud, or intimidation.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

From planning and preparation through to implementation, the National General Elections are the single most involved constitutional process in PNG. This section highlights some of the most important actors in the process and the roles they play in ensuring the success of the elections.

REVIEW OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- **Electoral Boundaries**

The redistributions by the PNGEC are to occur once every ten years. This process is implemented by the Electoral Boundaries Commission (EBC). The EBC is responsible for establishing, reviewing and redrawing PNG's electoral boundaries once every 10 years, as necessary. This ensures fair representation in Parliament as well as providing an accurate baseline for the equitable distribution of resources, government services, etc.

PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION

- **Issuance of the National Elections Calendar**

Under the Organic Law on the National and Local-Level Government Elections (OLNLLGE), the PNGEC is to advise the Head of State to issue the writs in accordance with the provisions of section 105 of the PNG Constitution which sets rules and guidelines on how all general elections should be held in PNG. The number of writs will be issued to the 22 provincial electorates, inclusive of National Capital District and The Autonomous Region of Bougainville. The number of open electorates is in line with Electoral Boundaries Commission recommendations upon approval from Parliament. The PNGEC also advises the public and stakeholders on the electoral calendar for the following election year.

- **Budget, Funding, & Financing**

Planning, budgeting, and procurement of election materials and services are pivotal to the success of elections. PNG has adopted a 5-year electoral cycle under the OLNLLGE to ensure responsible agencies have adequate time to implement these processes. However, this legal mandate must be supported by timely and adequate funding allocations across all three phases of the NGE.

- **Recruitment & Procurement**

The Elections Operation Branch is the main branch of the commission to which all other branches are aligned. Its main functions include planning, conducting the management and delivery of training for election officials, consistent maintenance of the accuracy and integrity of the electoral roll and the ongoing improvement capturing lessons learned from previous elections.

- **Appointment of the Electoral Commissioner**

The Electoral Commission Appointments Committee (ECAC) selects an individual suitable to serve as the Electoral Commissioner. The appointment is carried out by the Head of State by notice in the National Gazette. The Commissioner is appointed for a term of six (6) years and is eligible for reappointment.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

- **Operational Training for Election Officials**

The PNGEC is also responsible for developing and updating training manuals, handbooks and other election guideline materials in alignment with the changes in election processes and procedures. This essentially is to improve and strengthen preparation and delivery of electoral training. In the pre-election period, there may be a need to increase staff capacity in training for effective delivery of election, as the population is on the rise and new electorates may be established. In short, it is vital to monitor implementation of electoral trainings and upon its conclusion, there should be a production of training evaluation reports.

- **Civic Education & Electoral Awareness**

The Information and Community Awareness Branch (ICAB) is a branch under the PNGEC. The ICAB's main objective is to provide timely, relevant and quality information about the electoral process in partnership with government, business and CSOs. The ICAB empowers citizens to exercise their right to vote while keeping them informed on the processes involved, i.e., the Limited-Preferential Voting system, etc. This is done in an effort to increase in electoral knowledge, promoting informed participation, and improve public access to vital information.

VOTER REGISTRATION

- **Voter Registration**

The Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs (DPLGA) ensures electoral reforms happen with the aim to establish an accountable voting system via improving electoral rolls, reviewing polling periods, electoral boundary review and working closely with PNGEC to develop a feasible voting system in the long run. As part of the National Election Steering Committee, the DPLGA coordinates with other

key stakeholders to mobilize resources as the government approaches conducting important events like the census and elections. The DPLGA is committed to working closely with all provincial administrators, District Development Authorities (DDA) and city authorities to ensure elections are successful by updating the electoral roll, mobilize resources and allocating resources. Finally, the DPLGA ensures the ward record book system is established in all LLG wards before the 2027 National Elections.

• Observer Accreditation

The PNGEC may accredit some international and domestic stakeholders to oversee the election process. For instance, in 2022, Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) was accredited with the PNGEC as domestic election observer. Nonetheless, observers are present in the election process to ensure there is compliance by key actors to a specific set code of conduct and to collect election-related information throughout the country. The presence of observers during elections reinforces the expectations that election officials are to perform their roles in accordance to and as required by the law.

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

• Candidate Conduct during Campaign Period

The Registry of Political Parties, being aware of its responsibilities of providing direction and information, as required by political parties to conduct their responsibilities as political organizations in the country. In the pre-election period, the parties do play a part in promoting their parties themselves. The political party leaders and their team of executives are to take on the responsibility to educate the public about their party and what policies they stand for. The registry for a long time has taken up the role to enlist membership for the parties and promoting its policies, even though it is the responsibility of the parties themselves. A code of conduct is to be in place, which sets out the written guidelines to govern the conduct of political parties, candidates, party scrutineers and supporters during nomination, campaign, polling, and scrutiny and post elections.



This section covers some of the main activities carried out in the Pre-Election phase. From planning to preparations and financing the elections, this phase sets the tone for effective cooperation, and electoral success.

1

Governor General Issues Writs for Each Electorate (118 in total)

- Public servants intending to contest the elections must resign from public office at least six months prior to the issue of writs.
- Caretaker government takes over at issue of writs. All MP positions are effectively vacated.

2

Nomination Period Opens + Campaign Period Opens

- Nominations are not valid until the Nomination Fee of K1,000 is paid to the Returning Officer.
- The eligibility & qualification of nominees can be challenged. If sufficient evidence is provided, PNGEC can reject any nomination.

3

Nomination Period Closes

- At close of nominations PNGEC has a 7-10 week "Interval Period" to finalize preparations and deployments for polling & counting.
- Candidates may hold campaign rallies from issue of writs up until polling starts.

4

Polling Period Starts (on a Saturday) + Campaign Period Closes

- Only persons whose names are on the electoral roll are allowed to vote.
- Polling & counting must be completed within 21 days. The Electoral Commissioner may extend this period in special circumstances.

5

Counting + Tabulation Begins Immediately After Polling Ends

- ROs examine ballot boxes and admit or reject if there are concerns about their integrity.
- Scrutineers may object to ballot papers they believe should be deemed informal. The RO must make a determination on objections.

6

Counting Ends + The Winner is Declared + Writ is Returned

ELECTION SCHEDULE

- OLNLLGE s.76: A writ shall be deemed to have been issued at 4pm on the day the writ was issued.
- PNG Constitution s.105(2): The Head of State, acting with, and in accordance with, the advice of the Electoral Commission, shall fix the first and last days of the period during which polling shall take place and the date by which the writs for a general election shall be returned.
- OLNLLGE s.78: The nomination period shall commence on the date of the writ and shall not exceed a period of 7 days (including the date of the writ).
- The campaign period begins on the date of the writ and ends at the commencement of polling (approximately 8 - 11 weeks).
- OLNLLGE s.79(1): The date fixed for the commencement of the polling period shall be a Saturday and shall be not less than eight weeks not more than 11 weeks after the date of the writ.
- OLNLLGE s.79(2): Where special circumstances require, the Electoral Commission may, by notice in the National Gazette:
 - a. fix a date for commencement of polling on a day other than a Saturday; and
 - b. determine whether the period specified in Subsection (1) shall be increased or decreased.
- OLNLLGE s.80(1): The date fixed for the return of the writ shall not be more than 21 days after the end of the polling period.
- OLNLLGE s.80(2): Where special circumstances require, the Electoral Commission may, by notice in the National Gazette, extend the period specified in Subsection (1).

KEY OFFICIALS

Returning Officers (ROs)

ROs are officers seconded to the PNGEC by the Department of Personnel Management to carry out specific electoral functions. ROs are responsible for planning & implementing the electoral roll update, nomination process, and polling/counting for their designated electorate. ROs are also responsible for declaring the winning candidate once the final results have been verified.

Polling/Presiding Officers

Polling or presiding officers oversee the polling process at designated polling stations. Appointed by the RO, Polling

Officers are responsible for issuing ballot papers to eligible voters, ensuring voting is done in an orderly and peaceful manner, assisting voters at the polling booths, as well as counting and recording ballots after all eligible voters have cast a vote.

- **Scrutineers**

Each contesting candidate is allowed to appoint scrutineers to observe polling, but only one of these may be admitted to observe counting. Scrutineers must have written authority signed by the candidate or their agent. Scrutineers monitor the process from polling to declaration to ensure fairness and compliance with electoral laws. They are allowed raise objections with the RO if they suspect any discrepancies.

- **Provincial Election Managers (PEM)**

Provincial Election Managers are the administrative and management representative of the Electoral Commissioner in a province. The Electoral Commissioner may also appoint a PEM to be a Returning Officer for one or more electorates in a province. The PEM is a delegate of the PNGEC at the provincial level with the same status as other senior officers of the PNGEC such as the Deputy Electoral Commissioners and Branch Directors, whose main role is to assist the Electoral Commissioner.

- **Domestic & International Observers**

All election observers play a crucial role in providing independent oversight and ensuring proper processes are followed. Each observer group publishes a report with recommendations at the end of the election period. These reports inform election reforms by the PNG Government.

SECURITY OPERATIONS

Security and public safety operations are fundamental to the election process. The Police Commissioner acts as the chairman and overall Commander of JSTF operations. He is assisted by the PNGDF Commander and the PNGCS Commissioner. The PNGEC defines the following as security priorities:

- Polling Officials;
- Voters;
- Ballot Papers (used & unused); and
- Ballot Boxes

The primary role of the JSTF is to provide a safe & secure environment for the Elections to be conducted.



This section covers the Election Period. Where four (4) years of preparation and planning culminate in an intense 91-days of electoral implementation and coordination across 22 provinces, 89 districts, and hundreds of polling stations across the length and breadth of PNG.

AUDIT & EVALUATIONS

Following the conclusion of a National or Local-level Government Election, the PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) is expected to submit and publish a report to Parliament on the previous election. The purpose is to inform members of Parliament on how the National Election was conducted, the key challenges encountered, and what the PNGEC proposes for improving electoral processes during future elections.

The Electoral Commission reviews the overall electoral process, including voter turnout, citizen participation, the conduct of polling officials, and the adherence to electoral laws. They then gather feedback from both international and national stakeholders, including political parties, observers, and voters, to identify strengths and weaknesses and their recommendations for reform.

A summary of the financial statements highlighting the allocated budget and expenditure by the commission is also included in the PNGEC report. This demonstrates how funds were applied and whether they were applied in the intended manner and in compliance with regulations.

Furthermore, within three months after the date fixed for the return of writs following a General Election and every 12 months thereafter, the public officer of a Political Party is to submit financial returns to the Registrar of Political Parties, specifying details of all contributions received by the political party, details of all other receipts and income of that political party, and details of all expenditure that the party has incurred (especially during the election period).

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the year following the year of the elections the PNGEC is expected to launch a new Corporate Plan to guide their efforts in preparing for and implementing the next election. This corporate plan should entail how the PNGEC plans to tackle critical challenges identified in the previous election and strategies to improve the electoral processes moving forward. Furthermore, this corporate plan should also

include a capacity building and professional development plan for PNGEC staff across all divisions.

Post-election, domestic and international election observer groups also engage in institutional strengthening by compiling reports with recommendations for improving electoral processes. They also facilitate capacity-building workshops and training sessions for electoral officials, enhancing their skills and knowledge in election management.

For example, in 2018, The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted training with the PNGEC staff and organizations representing persons with disability (PWDs) on disability-inclusive elections. The training was aimed at empowering PNGEC and organizations representing PWDs to work together in identifying barriers to meaningful participation of PWDs in the electoral process.

VOTER LISTS UPDATE

To improve on Electoral Roll issues encountered in the 2022 National General Election, the PNGEC has developed a clan-based voter enrolment strategy. This approach is geared towards voter identification and enrolment, particularly at the clan level. PNGEC reports indicate that the strategy would be implemented to update the Electoral Rolls in 2024, in preparation for the Local-level Government Elections. This strategy will eventually form the basis for the 2027 National Elections.

While the responsibility of updating the Electoral Roll sits primarily with the Electoral Commission, other stakeholders such as the Department of Provincial and Local-level Governments (DPLLGA) also play a part in this process.

The DPLLGA is responsible for updating the Ward Record Book. The Ward Record Book captures all important socio-economic and demographic information within a Ward Boundary. In 2022, The Marape Government approved for Ward Record Books to be used in updating the PNG Electoral Roll. The DPLLGA is required to establish this system in all provinces, districts and LLGs before the 2027 National General Elections.

Furthermore, if there were any issues with the enrollment or changes in electorate boundaries during the election process, the Electoral Commission will also make the necessary adjustments, as stipulated in the law. This process may also include the transfer of voters' names between rolls if electoral boundaries were redrawn.

LEGAL REFORM

The Provincial Election Managers, through the PESC, are normally expected to submit reports or recommendations for reforms to the Electoral Commission. The Reports or recommendations for reforms should encompass : The Electoral Roll updates, Financing, Logistical Arrangements, Election Awareness, The Training Officials, Polling, Security During Elections, Counting/Declarations, and the overall observation of Impartiality/Integrity of the elections observed during the elections, Human Resource Capacity, and the change of election laws.

Observers such as Transparency International Papua New Guinea (TIPNG), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the Institute of National Affairs, and the National Research Institute contribute to legal reforms in PNG by compiling detailed post-election reports that highlight issues, challenges, and best practices, often including specific recommendations for legal changes. They engage with stakeholders, such as government officials and civil society organizations, to discuss their findings, creating momentum and lobbying for the implementation of necessary legislative reforms.

FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT

Once all writs have been returned, The Registry of Political Parties and Candidates Commission (IPGCC) advises the Electoral Commissioner on the political party or parties with the highest number of members elected to Parliament. The Electoral Commissioner then advises the Head of State (Governor General) to invite the Public Officer of that party or those parties to form Government.

ELECTION PETITIONS

Both the National and Supreme Courts are responsible for adjudicating election appeals that come after the announcement or official declaration of a successful candidate. Election petitions allow individuals to challenge the election of their parliamentary representatives if they have relevant evidence of breaches of electoral law sufficient to have affected the result. While technically part of the election period, election petitions can last years after elections end.



This section covers the main activities carried out at the end of the election cycle. From proper review, debriefs, audits, and evaluation these functions are imperative to identifying/indexing the challenges, and weaknesses in the electoral process. This phase is critical to ensuring the success of future elections.

SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON THE 2022 GENERAL ELECTION (SPCGE)

In the aftermath of possibly the most problematic national general election on record, Parliament established a special committee to investigate the issues surrounding the 2022 NGE and present recommendations on how to improve the elections. The SPCGE used five data collection methods, i.e., public hearings (5); regional consultations (4); written submissions (24); a desktop review; and a consultation visit to Australia.

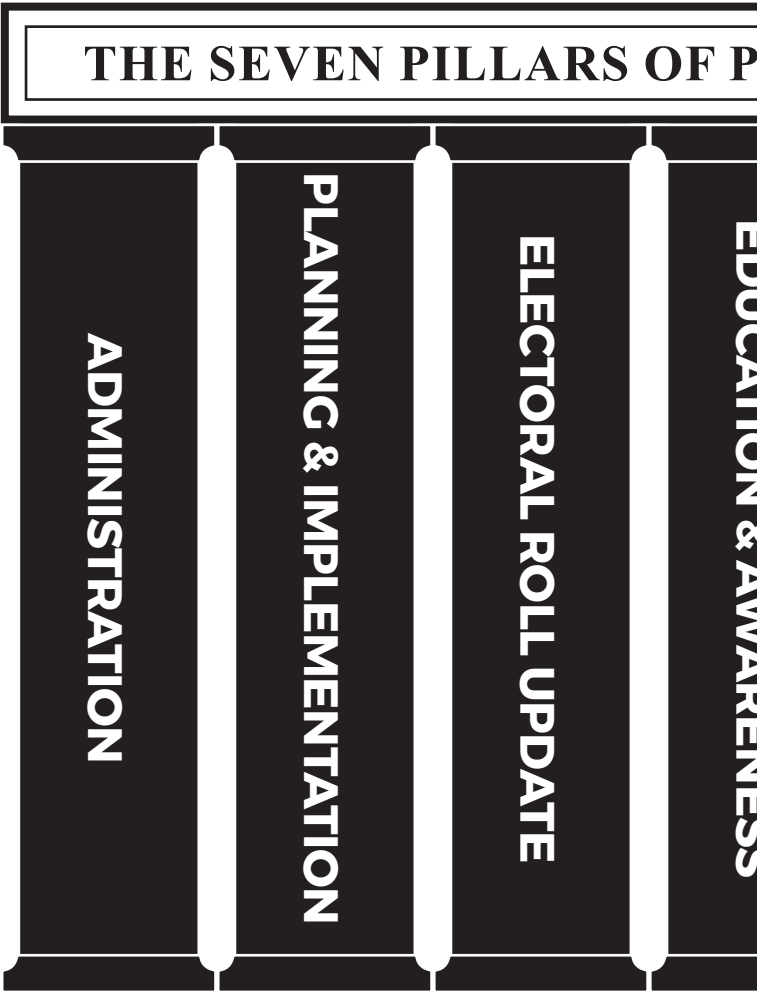
The final SPCGE report was presented to Parliament in November 2023 with the assistance of a Technical Working Group (i.e., TIPNG, the National Research Institute, the Institute of National Affairs, & the Parliamentary Committee Secretariat). Of the 70 recommendations put forward in the final SPCGE report, 28 of these were flagged for immediate action by the PNG government. These are presented in the following seven (7) thematic areas:

1. Scrutiny & Reform of Election Administration

In the area of election administration, there is a need to reform the PNGEC to establish consistent and effective scrutiny of their operations throughout the entirety of the five-year election cycle. The SPCGE recommended the establishment of a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (PSC EM) (Recommendation 1), a reform of the PNGEC internal accountability systems (Recommendation 2), and considerations to increase the number of Electoral Commissioners from 1 to 5 for more informed and better decision-making (Recommendation 3). The committee also recommended the establishment of an administrative coordination body such as the IDEC under law (Recommendation 5).

2. Effective Planning & Implementation

Proper planning, preparation, and execution are critical to ensuring meaningful outcomes for the general elections. To this end, the SPCGE recommended that planning by PNGEC must commence 4 years before the election year (Recommendation 9). This also includes the setting of polling dates, which must also be decided 4 years before the election year to establish hard deadlines for election planning and preparations (Recommendation 29). To provide



further public accountability on election preparations, the committee also recommended an amendment to the OLNLGE to require the PNGEC to produce a public election plan that must be implemented without unnecessary change (Recommendation 8).

3. Electoral Roll Update & Voter ID

Meaningful civic participation in the general elections is underpinned by an accurate Electoral Roll. To this end, the SPCGE recommended making the Electoral Roll update an annual exercise, supported by the necessary policy and regulatory changes to ensure its implementation is supported with the necessary resources and manpower (Recommendations 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, & 17).

4. Education & Awareness

There must be effective education and awareness on elections to help voters understand the importance of the election and how to conduct themselves ethically. To this end, the SPCGE recommended that the PNGEC roll out election awareness activities throughout the 5-year election cycle (Recommendations 32 & 51).

5. Timely and Adequate Funding & Procurement

Inadequate and late disbursement of funding was a major bottleneck to the 2022 NGE and previous elections.

NG ELECTORAL REFORM

EDUCATION & AWARENESS

FUNDING & PROCUREMENT

SECURITY & PUBLIC SAFETY

CROSS-CUTTING MATTERS

To remedy this the SPCGE recommended that budget appropriations must be done annually. Commencing 4 years before the election year (Recommendation 38). Furthermore, more autonomy must be granted to the provinces (along with a proportionate allocation of funding) to ensure that planning and procurement of goods and services for the elections can be done on time (Recommendation 42).

6. Strong Collaboration & Accountability Among Security Agencies

There is a need for security agencies to better coordinate in planning and implementing the security operations (Recommendation 46), and each officer assigned to elections security must sign a code of conduct, a failure to uphold which will be penalized appropriately (Recommendation 47). The committee also recommended amendments to the OLNLLGE to define parameters for cooperation among security agencies (Recommendation 50) and the sharing of operational intelligence (Recommendation 62).

7. Priority Cross-Cutting Matters

An effort must also be made to address cross-cutting issues such as electoral corruption (Recommendations 67 and 68); outdated election-related laws (Recommendation 69); and reserved seats for women (Recommendation 70).

SPCGE OVERVIEW



SPCGE OVERVIEW

SPCGE

SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON 2022 GENERAL ELECTIONS

COMMITTEE REPORT

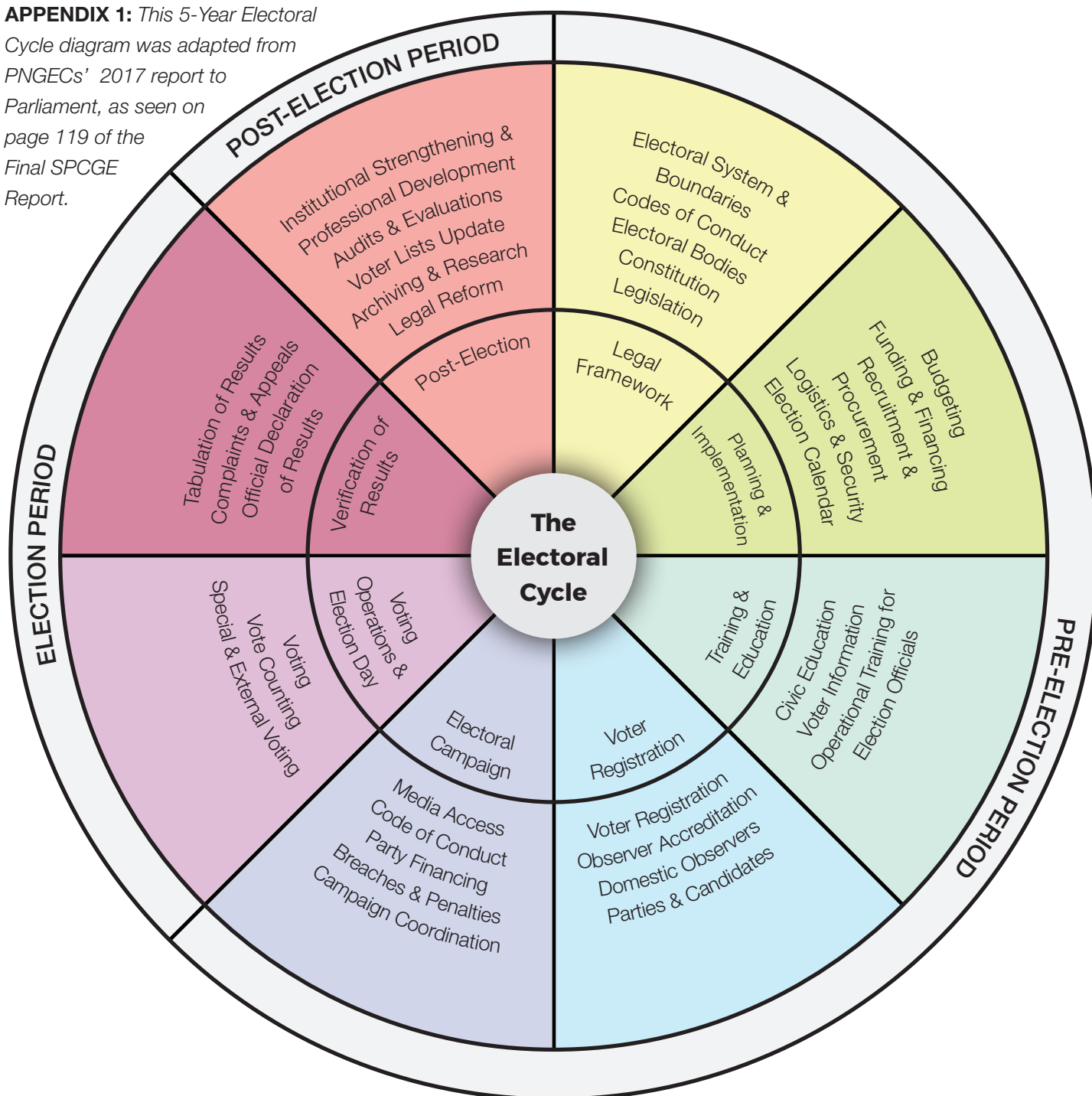
For free, safe and fair elections for the future

2023

SCAN TO DOWNLOAD

QR Code

APPENDIX 1: This 5-Year Electoral Cycle diagram was adapted from PNGECs' 2017 report to Parliament, as seen on page 119 of the Final SPCGE Report.



THE FIVE-YEAR ELECTORAL CYCLE

While the brunt of PNG NGE implementation is condensed into a period of ninety-one (91) days - from the issue of writs to the return of writs - the effective implementation of NGE operations requires a significant amount of planning, preparation, and coordination beforehand.

The sheer scale of this task means that the entire 5-year term of government must be effectively utilized to ensure that all necessary components are prepared before the next NGE. Key electoral activities must be resourced and implemented effectively throughout the 5-year electoral cycle to ensure that the election of Members of Parliament is done according to law, on time, and on budget.

Above is a diagram of an ideal electoral cycle which was extracted from the 2017 PNGEC Report to Parliament. This model includes the three (3) distinct phases of the electoral cycle (i.e., Pre-Election Period, Election Period, and Post-Election Period), as well as the eight (8) main activities and thirty-three (33) specific activities under each phase.

According to this cycle election planning by the PNGEC must start at least four years before the election year so that all the coordination issues, logistical issues, funding issues, and capital investment issues are addressed well before the election year. This effort must also be supported by the timely release of adequate funding on an annual basis.

ELECTION REFORM PRIORITIES

APPENDIX 2: SPCGE Prioritization of Election Reform Activities & Timeframes (extract from Pg.122 of the Final SPCGE Report)

No.	Reform Activity	Recommended Timeframe	Lead Agencies	Supporting Agencies	Remarks
1	Establish PSCEM (Rec.1)	Early 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliament 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJAG 	Subject to Parliament procedure.
2	Create 5 Electoral Commissioners (Rec.3)	Legal amendment to be done in 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJAG PM & NEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SPCGE PNGEC CLRC 	This will entail relevant legal amendments per Item 9.
3	Strengthen IDEC (Rec.5)	Legal amendment to be done in 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSCEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDEC PNGEC 	This would entail identifying, defining and demarcating IDEC's roles & functions vis-a-vis PNGEC's roles (and Electoral Commissioner's roles) within the overall electoral system of PNG.
4	Reform & improve PNGEC internal accountability systems (Rec.2)	Multi-agency group be set by first quarter of 2024 and capacity assessment be done by end of 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNGEC PSCEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDEC 	The multi-agency group to do the capacity and performance assessment can be established by the Parliamentary Committee after the presentation of the final report to Parliament and the assessment to be done by June 2024.
5	Security Forces Elections' Partnership MOA (Rec.68)	Sign MOA in 2024 and commence implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RPNGC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNGDF PNGCS IDEC PSCEM 	Police to take lead as it is the "mandated authority" for all policing matters in the country. Elections' security operations can be deemed as a "major policing operation".
6	Biometric or Photo-ID Pilot Study in 2024 (Rec.16 & 24)	To be done in 2024 during the Local-level Government elections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSCEM PNGEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDEC 	The study results should inform a decision on the option to use biometric or photo-roll in the 2027 NGE.
7	Update Ward Rolls (Rec.14 & 17)	Annually starting in 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNGEC DPLGA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSCEM IDEC 	Start in provinces with demonstrated capability.
8	Funding mechanisms to support the 5-year election cycle. Especially, the required "preparatory activities" (Rec.9, 38, 40, 41 & 42).	Address legal requirement or imperative in 2024 and apply annually thereafter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM & NEC PSCEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DoF DoT 	The aim is to provide a "legal imperative or mandate" for NEC and DoT and DoF to find required funds (in tranches) and disburse to PNGEC to continue its "preparatory activities" over the intervening years.
9	Legal Reform Program (Rec.69)	Work to commence once PSCEM is established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSCEM CLRC DJAG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PNGEC IDEC 	Work to be carried out by a Secretariat assisting the PSCEM in collaboration with DJAG and CLRC.

With two years left before the next Elections, time is quickly running out to implement the necessary legal and policy reforms to ensure that the 2027 elections can deliver credible and meaningful outcomes for PNG citizens. While GoPNG has little to show in terms of progress towards achieving the SPCGE recommendations, TIPNG has now recommended focusing the effort on delivering three (3) key reforms:

- » Increase No. of Electoral Commissioners from 1 to 3 or 5
- » Make Electoral Roll Accessible & Available to the Public
- » Ensure Timely Annual Funding for PNGEC Operations

Achieving these reforms is critical to establishing a minimum foundation of transparency, accountability, & the operational effectiveness of the PNGEC in the lead up to the 2027 NGE.

