ZIMBABWE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS 2022 - 2024 ELECTION STRATEGY

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Contents

Acknowledgments

The Civil Society Elections Clusters would like to acknowledge the role played by the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and the Election Resource Centre (ERC) in facilitating the development of this strategy. The cluster would also like to acknowledge the work that went into the development of the strategy by individual clusters.

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Acronyms and definition of keys terms

ACPDT	Africa Community Publishing and Development Trust
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
CCC	Citizens Coalition for Change
CCDZ	Centre for Community Development Zimbabwe
CHITREST	Chitungwiza Residents Trust
CHRA	Combined Harare Residents Association
CSEC	Civil Society Elections Cluster
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CODE	Coalition for Democrats
CVE	Civic and Voter Education
ERC	Election Resources Centre
GOTV	Get Out To Vote
GPA	Global Political Agreement
IBCVE	Issue Based Civic and Voter Education
LRF	Legal Resources Foundation
MDC T	Movement for Democratic Change Tsvangirai
NAYO	National Association for Youth Organisation
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NERA	National Election Reform Agenda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OB	Observation
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PVT	Parallel Voter Tabulation
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RDZ	Renewal Democrats of Zimbabwe
TZ	Transform Zimbabwe
WAG	Women's Action Group
WIPSU	Women in Politics Support Unit
YETT	Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust
ZACRO	Zimbabwe Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Election Support Network
ZMC	Zimbabwe Media Commission
ZIMCET	Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust
ZIMRIGHTS	Zimbabwe Human Rights Association
ZOCC	Zimbabwe Online Content Creators
ZPPDF	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Political Parties Dialogue Forum
ZWLA	Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.Introduction.

The Civil Society Elections Cluster (CSEC) strategy, 2017 to 2019, emerged from a broad consultative process that brought together Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Zimbabwe working in the arena of democracy and governance. It is premised on the realisation that while efforts at ensuring an effective oversight of the electoral process by individual organisations has traction, there is, regrettably, a dearth in deliberate coordination of various Civil Society Actors to coalesce around a unified electoral oversight strategy. Key to the absence of a robust coordination mechanism was a lack of common strategic direction among the different organisations culminating in an implementation thrust that is haphazard and devoid of a common vision. Further to the absence of a synchronised implementation thrust, unhealthy competition over scarce financial resources, and duplication greatly affected the effective coordination of CSOs in providing strategic oversight of the electoral process.

Considering the foregoing, this 2022 to 2024 Civil Society Elections Cluster Strategy aims to build on the lessons learned from the 2017-2019 strategy. It amplifies key successes from its predecessor and proposes new and innovative pathways to cement the growing opportunities for strategic partnerships. It builds on the promising practices of the work of the Civil Society Elections Cluster emerging from the 2018 harmonised elections and the recently held March 26, 2022, by-elections. At the core of the effective collaboration was the prime need to deliver world class and competitive oversight mechanisms critical for the consolidation of democracy in Zimbabwe. While the advent of Covid-19 presented novel coordination challenges, the Civil Society Cluster has, with reasonable success, continued to bring a multiplicity of actors to coalesce around coordinated electoral reform and observation strategy.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) is currently championing the coordination of five distinct CSO clusters working on the development of electoral democracy in Zimbabwe. These include; Elections Monitoring and Observation Cluster, Media, Oversight and Advocacy, Legal and Medical Services and Civic and Voter Education, constituted by ZESN network members and non-members alike. Through this strategy, these ZESN coordinated clusters hope to enhance transparency and accountability in the electoral process. With better and clearer coordination these clusters seek to improve CSOs' oversight of key electoral processes during the pre-election, election, and post-election period. Importantly, the cluster members are seeking to coordinate long-term election oversight and advocacy initiatives for the period before, during and after the harmonised elections.

Chapter 2
Strategy Development Methodological Approach

2.1 The strategy development process:
Review, Reflect and Re-imagine

Step 1
Strategy development, team set up, desk top review, strategy development framework.

Step 2
Stakeholder consultations, Strategy development, planning workshop

Step 3
Drafting of strategy and validation

2.1. The strategy development process

The development of the 2022-2024 strategy was designed through a triad approach premised on reviewing the 2017-2019 strategy in line with the context within which the 2018 harmonised elections were undertaken, reflect on the changes that have emerged since then and re-imagine innovative ideas for effective oversight.

Step One: Desktop Review

As an entry point, an extensive desk review was undertaken prioritising existing information on the democratic landscape post the 2018 harmonised elections. It also reviewed the work conducted by civil society actors in achieving the 2017-2019 strategy. A framework was subsequently developed using scoping discussions, and interviews to test assumptions while developing the approaches to the strategic planning process. Key questions were also formulated to understand the current operating environment of CSOs in Zimbabwe and to take stock of its efforts pertaining to the role of CSOs in election.

Step Two: Strategic planning working session

The strategy development further incorporated the concept of co-creation which placed emphasis on the role of key stakeholders participating and owning the outcome. To that end, four online working sessions were convened on the 30th and 31st of May 2022 targeting key clusters among them Civic and Voter Education, Election Monitoring and Observation, Media, and Elections as well as Oversight and Advocacy. The sessions reviewed the 2017-2019 strategy, the current operating environment and re-imagining civil society's role in the upcoming 2023 harmonised elections. The working sessions brought together participants drawn from CSOs who form the CSEC. The working sessions reviewed the implementation of the past strategy (what worked and what did not work), strategic objectives underpinning each theme and the attendant activities as well as the potential risks and how those could, potentially, be managed and whether they are still fit-for-purpose, past performance priorities and intended actions, and emerging trends that will define the 2022-2024 strategy.

2.1 The strategy development process:Review, Reflect and Re-imagine

Step Three: Validation workshop

A validation workshop for purposes of presenting the draft strategic plan to key stakeholders and share knowledge on implementation of the strategy was held on 5 July 2022. This process also provided for the identification and proposal of focused, strategic, and feasible interventions to support and strengthen implementation, as well as coordination of activities.

2.2. The Structure of the Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is structured according to the following sections:
- The first section is the introduction to the strategy and institutional framework
- The second section highlights the methodological approach towards the development of the strategic plan
- The third section reflects on key issues affecting elections in Zimbabwe as the country builds up to the 2023 harmonized elections. It identifies key social, political, economic, and legal issues in Zimbabwe that might inform the strategy
- The fourth section reflects on the implementation of the past strategy, what worked and what did not work
- The fifth section discusses the goal and the strategic objectives of the strategy. It also highlights the strategy principles and the key themes to inform the content of the strategy as well as the risks and assumptions and the work plan.
- The last section is the annexures in support of the strategy

Chapter 3
Situational Analysis

3.1. The political, socio-economic, and legal environment

Zimbabwe's socio-economic and political climate has remained heavily contested and acutely polarised almost four decades since the country attained political independence from her former colonisers. Elections and electoral democracy have developed in lips and bounds characterised by growth and democratic regression in equal measure. While there have been improvements in the electoral architecture including the attendant legal framework, these have been obliterated by regressive practices manifesting in shrinking democratic space, violence, intimidation, residual fear, and potential increased disillusionment in the democratic project.   The citizens are getting tired and losing patience with the way elections are run and administered in Zimbabwe. Resultantly, there is increased voter apathy as citizens are getting despondent with processes that seemingly have a predetermined outcome.

3.2. Political Environment

Zimbabwe's political landscape remains heavily polarised post the 2018 harmonised elections which has impacted on genuine multiparty democratic contestation. Following the military- assisted transition which led to the demise of former and long-term President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, hopes for radical change for more inclusive and democratic outcomes have been dashed by the heightened polarity among the major political players in the country's *realpolitik*. The political impasse between the leading political parties ZANU-PF and the MDC-Alliance and its latest offspring CCC continues to widen, quashing hopes of any fruitful dialogue process to confront the deteriorating socio-economic situation.

The government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa is accused of increased repression against human rights defenders and civil society organisations, severe corruption, and a general disregard of the dire economic situation of most of its citizens. One key area of concern is the ever-shrinking democratic space and the failure by the government to uphold the principles of constitutionalism post the 2018 harmonised elections. The disproportionate response by the state security apparatus after the January 2019 riots was followed by two years of increased repression against opposition members, activists, journalists, and other human rights defenders. In November 2020, the government gazetted the Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Bill whose net effect is to stifle the work of non-governmental organisations in Zimbabwe and "negatively affects active citizenship."

The International and domestic observer groups made a host of recommendations following their participation in the 2018 harmonised elections triggering the electoral reform debate. While some of the obnoxious pieces of legislation that impacted on democratic participation like the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) were repealed, they were replaced by equally retrogressive laws.

In February 2022, a 'new' political party, the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) was formed by Mr Nelson Chamisa. The 'new' party was formed from the remnants of a bitter and fractious intra-party feud with the parent Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – Alliance under the stewardship of Mr Douglas Mwonzora. The CCC won 19 out of the 28 contested National Assembly constituencies in the delayed March 26, 2022 by-elections with the remainder going to the ruling party ZANU-PF. As has become accustomed to political contestation in Zimbabwe, the by-elections were characterised by alleged intimidation and vote-buying. These assertions were corroborated by domestic observer groups among them ZESN and the Election Resource Centre (ERC). The parliamentary and local government by-elections were viewed as a precursor to the 2023 harmonised elections punctuated by hope for a new dawn in the Zimbabweans democratic landscape.

Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (2022) The Great Gift of Active Citizens: How the PVO Threatens Active Citizenship in Zimbabwe.
https://kubatana.net/2022/02/04/the-great-gift-of-active-citizens-how-the-pvo-bill-threatens-active-citizenship-in-zimbabwe/

3.3. Economic Environment

Zimbabwe's fragile economy continues to plummet following the 2018 harmonised elections characterised by the impact of recurring droughts, a lack of effective fiscal and monetary management, severe austerity measures, volatile exchange rate, rampant corruption and shrinking incomes within the public sector. This economic malaise was further exacerbated by the twin evils of Cyclone *Idai* and the global pandemic occasioned by Covid-19. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Zimbabwean economy contracted by 12.8% in 2019 and a further 10.2% in 2020. Key sectors of the economy – agriculture and mining continue to face challenges although a bumper harvest in the 2020-2021 season saw agriculture on the rebound. Within the mining sector, so-called mega deals and a new phenomena of cartels have hit the sector immensely with no significant growth pattern to write home about.

Zimbabwe recorded a record inflation rate of 837.5% in July 2020. A set of government measures resulted in increased fiscal stability and a gradual decrease in inflation figures, which was 348% in December 2020 and further decreased to 135% in 2021. During that time, Zimbabwe recorded an improved account balance, according to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ), as the account deficit of $1.4 billion in 2018 was followed by a surplus of $311.2 million in 2019. While headline growth has rebounded in 2021, rising unemployment and high poverty levels persist. The rise in commodity prices due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict has exacerbated Zimbabwe's long-standing structural issues, which are characterised by rising inflation and continuous depreciation of the Zimbabwean dollar that continue to undermine economic recovery.

Policy inconsistencies remain the Achilles heel of President Mnangagwa's administration. On the 7th of May 2022, President Mnangagwa announced a temporary freeze on lending by banks to individuals and corporations. The ban was championed by the Reserve Bank allegedly aimed at containing the runaway inflation and stabilising the economy. The move was to stop speculation against the Zimbabwean dollar which has rapidly devalued against the thriving black market. Zimbabwe's inflation had started to rise again, with year-on-year inflation at 96% in April 2022, up from 61% at the beginning of the year, mainly due to a rapidly weakening local currency. The policy has been roundly criticised by the economic analysts for its blunt approach in trying to address a long-standing currency conundrum.

Overall, the rallying point in Zimbabwean politics remains ordinary people's economic fortunes, whether it is about indigenous resource ownership or formal economic revival and the creation of jobs. The economic fortunes of the country have progressively nose-dived immensely since the 2018 elections and is characterized by instability and volatility, both of which are hallmarks of excessive government interference and poor planning.

Zimbabwe's newest opposition party wins majority of seats in by-elections.
https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20220328-zimbabwe-s-newest-opposition-party-wins-majority-of-seats-in-by-elections

3.4. The Legal framework

Chapter 7 of the 2013 Constitution provides the overall framework within which the conduct of elections is undertaken. It annotates the key processes including the electoral system, the electoral law, timing, and the delimitation of boundaries elections. Further, Section 239 (a) -(e) places the mandate to administer the elections on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) including supervising elections, registration of voters, compilation of the voters roll, accreditation of observers and the delimitation of constituencies.

The Electoral Act was amended on 28th May 2018 barely two months before the elections. It brought with it some progressive provisions among them polling station-based voting, the establishment of an Electoral Court as a specialized division of the High Court, the revised electoral code of conduct for political parties and the opportunity for visually impaired and illiterate voters to bring a confidante of choice to help them cast their vote as a measure of secrecy of the ballot. It also outlaws the use of voting slips that caused so much furore in the 2013 harmonised elections as they were allegedly used for double and/or multiple voting. Despite these progressive provisions, the Electoral Act still has grey areas that impact on the independence of the ZEC, the role of key stakeholders in the design and printing of ballot papers (one of the most contentious issues in the 2018 harmonised elections). The act does not provide due regard for the operations and accreditation of long-term observers.

Following the 2018 harmonised polls, the international and domestic observer groups made several recommendations aimed at improving the legislative framework for the conduct of elections. Key to these recommendations was the need for the government to consider expediting the alignment of the outstanding parts of the electoral law to the Constitution. They also implored the government to ratify and domesticate key international, and regional protocols such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. One of the important aspects recommended was the provision of mechanisms that ensure the right to vote is fully realised including extending such rights to citizens in the diaspora.

In an attempt to abide by the recommendations, several obnoxious laws among them the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) were repealed. These two laws were replaced by the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (MOPA), Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act, and the Cyber Security Act. However, the new pieces of legislation have not further entrenched the democratic development in this country.

Chapter 4
Lessons Learnt:
Key Achievements and Challenges, A Review of the 2017-2019 CSOs Election Strategy

4. Lessons Learnt:Key Achievements and Challenges, a review of the 2017-2019 CSOs Election Strategy.

A review of past performance is an important first step in the broader analysis of the trends and developments emerging in the field as an important component for a new strategic foundation. It is clear from the review of the 2017-2019 Strategy that, largely the proposed interventions were achieved, while others were not due to several factors. The review of the Civil Society Election Strategy 2017-2019 period was focused on the following Thematic areas/ Strategic Pillars:

4.1. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 1: Civic and Voter Education

Strategic Goal: Access to voter information resulting in an informed, organized, active and peaceful citizen participation in the electoral process Increase turnout at registration (baseline 88%, target 90%)

Statistics show that 78% of the eligible voters managed to register for elections prior to the 2018 harmonised elections. The 2018 elections were the first polls where ZEC assumed full responsibility of managing the voter registration process detached from the Registrar General's office. Based on the biometric voter registration data, ZEC managed to "capture 78.6% of the eligible population" for the 2018 elections. However, low voter registration numbers were reported in the rural areas. There were also allegations of under registration in strongholds of the opposition party through the deployment of few voter registration kits.

The use of new media to target young people contributed to a marked increase in registration figures, especially among those below the age of 40 years. More so, the general improvement in the political arena, not experienced in previous electoral contests coupled with the perception of new beginnings contributed towards an increased excitement among the public in participating in the elections. This new impetus witnessed a surge in the registration figures. The enhanced curriculum with improved content for CVE was also attributed to be a large contributor to the higher registration rates. The high voter turnout of 84% of the registered voters that participated in the election can also be attributed to the efforts and campaigns such as Get Out to Vote initiated by the CSOs and with the blessing of the ZEC. While the target for the reduction of the spoilt/rejected votes was 1.49% against the baseline of 0.5% the figure was still within an acceptable range and can be attributed to increased voter awareness.

ZESN partnered with 21 organisations to lead the mobilisation of citizens to participate in the voter registration process, the inspection of voters' rolls and turnout on Election Day. With more women and youth organisations accredited to conduct civic and voter education as part of the strategy, increased participation by the voters coming from these two sectors was realised. The CSOs ensured that their recruitment policies for CVE educators and observers were inclusive to allow for greater women and youth participation. The voter registration drive saw an increase in the number of women and youth who turned up to register to vote with women constituting 54% of the registered voters.

In comparison with the previous elections, the build-up to the polls witnessed a significant reduction in politically motivated violence. This can partly be attributed to the approach taken by the ruling party allegedly premised on breaking from the past and projecting itself as a new dispensation. However, the post-election period was marred by violence where clashes erupted between citizens and the police over the "delayed" announcement of the presidential election results. Between 1st and 7th August, it was reported that there were over 150 cases of violent clashes which were rooted in resistance against the electoral outcome. A key observation was that there should have been greater thought into anticipating post-election clashes given the novelty of the environment.

CSOs must be complimented for greater coordination in the previous electoral cycle. ZESN implemented the voter education component of the strategy with a network of CSOs through sub-granting to ensure an efficient and effective roll-out of a comprehensive civic and voter education programme at all levels. The Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign was part of the coordination efforts to increase voter reach. Through this coordinated approach the CSOs managed to increase access to civic and voter education by citizens and especially by youth and women for enhanced participation in the 2017 voter registration exercise and 2018 election. Additionally, they managed to improve CSOs election messaging and activity synergies through coordination, networking, and capacity building among CSOs to deliver enhanced civic and voter education by 2018.

However, the cluster should have done more in building interventions that reduce the high number of assisted voters. From the literature available on the 2018 polls, there is little data that gives exact figures but rather a sustained sentiment that there were still many assisted voters at the polling stations especially in rural areas where voters are alleged to be frog marched to polling stations to be assisted to vote.

4.2. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 2:
Election Monitoring and Observation

Strategic goal: Build the capacity of credible, non-partisan domestic observers to effectively monitor the entire electoral process

The cluster informed by the 2017 - 2019 strategy planned to observe the entire electoral cycle. To this end the Election Monitoring and Observation cluster deployed Long Term Observers (LTOs) who observed the pre-election period from 18 May to 30 August 2018. The LTOs were mandated to observe and report on key electoral processes in the period leading to the harmonised elections, including overall preparations by the ZEC, voter education campaigns, Nomination Court proceedings, inspection of the voters' roll, political parties campaign rallies and the training of the polling officials. The LTOs also met with key stakeholders including organisations and institutions working in electoral democracy. Key to the implementation of the past strategy was the successful observation of the BVR including the comprehensive audit of the voters roll through computer audits and list to people exercise.

As part of the implementation of the strategy, the cluster coordinated the development of a standardized election observation checklist and training materials. On Election Day, several cluster members deployed observers throughout the country. ZESN deployed 7 240 observers, the CCJP and the Inter-regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) deployed 700 observers, the ZCC deployed 300 observers who observed in Harare and surrounding areas, and the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO) deployed 364 local observers to cover the various sampled polling stations and others.

ZESN further trained and deployed 750 Sample-Based Observation (SBO) observers. The SBO is an advanced Election Day observation methodology which allowed ZESN to confidently comment on the voting and results tabulation processes, including an independent verification of the Presidential results as announced by the ZEC SBO observers were deployed to a nationally representative sample of polling stations throughout the country. This random sample was representative in terms of the geography of the country, the distribution of polling stations and the distribution of registered voters across Zimbabwe. SBO observers witnessed the entire voting and counting process at sampled polling stations and recorded the official result as announced by the polling officials.

African Union Election Observation Mission to the 30 July and 8 September harmonized elections in Zimbabwe.
IRI/NDI Zimbabwe International Election Observation Mission Final Report.
https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/iri.org/2018-10-29_final_zieom_report.pdf

In addition, as part of the cluster's efforts to observe the election dispute mechanisms ZESN observed the EDR process, in particular the Presidential election petition and the proceedings of the Commission of Inquiry into the August 1, 2018, shootings. Furthermore, as part of the learning process that will inform the cluster's interventions for the 2023 harmonised elections ZESN on behalf of the cluster convened the post-election conference to review the 2018 elections and provided several recommendations.

Gender mainstreaming was a key objective of the 2018 election activities. However, the cluster noted that despite the high encouragement to participate, the messaging on gender mainstreaming lacked the aspect of preparing women to run for office/elective positions. The cluster recommended that future gender mainstreaming programming should focus more on promoting the inclusion of women in elective positions.

It is encouraging to note that there was greater coordination among the CSOs, and this was enhanced through the setting up of the CSOs Election Situation Room two months before the harmonised elections. The main objective of the ESR was to improve coordinated and effective information sharing of electoral processes to promote free, fair, and credible elections.

4.3. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 3: Oversight and Advocacy

Strategic goal: To contribute towards credible elections in line with the constitution, regional and international standards governing the holding of democratic elections (oversight and advocacy)

This component sought to assess litigation, petitions to parliament and monitoring compliance. Support provided for this activity was driven by the ZHRC's civil and political rights cluster. The support was focused on public awareness, monitoring of violations, handling of complaints and investigative reports. The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) grant supporting the ZHRC enabled the running of an electoral litigation programme. The cluster also worked on strengthening the rule of law and enhancing access to justice focusing on training magistrates and lawyers on electoral offences, sentencing and electoral dispute resolution. In the 2018 polls, the ZEC noted that there were a total of 80 (eighty) election-focused cases where the commission was cited as a respondent. The cluster recommended that there should be an intra-party referral system which would enable women and other victims to report cases of violence without fear.

The foregoing efforts were supported by a concerted effort by the cluster towards a greater focus on the electoral reforms agenda. ZESN together with its partners were able to advocate for eleven election-related administrative and legislative reforms during the intervening period. ZESN and other CSOs petitioned parliament on electoral reforms. To ensure consistent work on reforms, regular cluster meetings were conducted taking stock of progress made towards the implementation of observer recommendations. This ongoing work under the guidance of ZESN continues to track the implementation of observer's recommendations from the 2018 harmonised election. Furthermore, under the banner of the cluster, ZESN managed to produce occasional key advocacy documents, namely the '10 Point Plan' and the '5 Key Asks'.

Strengthening the Rule of Law in Zimbabwe and Protection of Human Rights for all', implemented by ICJ, 2017-2020.
Zimbabwe Electoral Commission 2018 harmonized election report
Zimbabwe Harmonised Election 30 July 2018 compendium of election observer recommendations
https://www.zesn.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Electoral-Petition-to-the-Parliament-of-Zimbabwe.pdf
Mid-term evaluation of Support to the Consolidation of the Democratic Process in Zimbabwe

4.4. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 4: Media and Elections

Strategic Goal: Enhancing the role of the media in elections

Through some of its members, Gender and Media Connect (GMC), Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), Media Monitors (MM), Radio Dialogue, and Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), the cluster managed to contribute to a more extensive and accurate reporting on electoral processes. They also enhanced voters' access to more pluralistic information through alternative content development and dissemination initiatives but fell short of addressing entrenched bias in the mainstream media. ations.

The EU Elections Support program supported several members of the CSOs cluster. Under the program, a media engagement strategy was developed and aided in implementing specific activities. Regrettably, the different media organizations working on media and elections faced challenges in developing a consolidated media engagement plan which would have provided guidance in the implementation of the strategy.

A review of this component of activities showed that there was greater training and coaching of a sizable number of journalists and editors from among the state-owned and private newsrooms. The training focussed on essential knowledge of elections, associated reporting skills, and required standards. Resultantly, there was an increased number of media engaged in more extensive coverage of the election process than in 2013 and a general improvement in the quality of coverage, as discussed below.

Proposed under the strategy was the development of a media and elections code of conduct despite a preponderance of these codes existing within media organisations. However, there is no indication and/or evidence to show that the strategy and its members contributed to these codes. Ironically, the ZEC has a Code of Conduct for the Media, which they hardly enforce. That said, the restrictive media environment epitomises MISA Zimbabwe's push for self-regulation as well as the establishment of an independent complaint mechanism for public broadcasters.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa and Media Monitoring, together with national and international observers, assessed the media coverage during the campaign period, for and on behalf of the cluster. They concluded that the environment remained largely biased, unbalanced and partisan. Specifically, the media monitoring reports produced by the cluster member MMPZ, and the EU EOM found state-owned broadcast and print media blatantly violating their public service mandate in contravention of the provisions of the constitution norms set out of the revised SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections.

A review of the implementation of the past strategy shows that while it had a component of research on the use of social media, unfortunately no activity was undertaken by cluster members to implement this component of the plan. However, social media monitoring was incorporated into the main framework of media monitoring and complemented by the work of the Fact-Checkers. The fact-checking initiatives co-funded by the EU and Sweden contributed for the first time to mitigating misinformation and disinformation in the media. Fact-check tools were widely disseminated through various platforms, and they were reproduced by local and international media.

Another initiative included in the previous strategy was the mapping and sharing of information on Citizen Journalism. The International Media Support (IMS), with its local partners under the EU, supported the "Support to the Consolidation of the Democratic Process in Zimbabwe project". It also commissioned the development of the Citizen Journalism Guidelines on Electoral Reporting in Zimbabwe that support the training of citizen journalists on covering electoral matters in Zimbabwe. This manual also familiarized citizen journalists with the core issues of election reporting, including ethics, safety and security, fake news, hate speech, and the broader issues around the electoral system in Zimbabwe.

Mid-term Evaluation of "Support to the Consolidation of the Democratic Process in Zimbabwe Report"

4.4. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 4: Media and Elections

Through the successful lobbying of the government and parliament, cluster members, in conjunction with other partners, managed to have AIPPA unbundled, repealed, and replaced through the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act, and the Zimbabwe Media Commission Act. However, there remains an opportunity for the stakeholders and the Ministry of Information to ensure the harmonization of media laws in Zimbabwe.

To address security of media, through its Media Support and Media Defence Fund, MISA-Zimbabwe conducted election reporting and journalism safety and security workshops as part of efforts to capacitate the media to fulfil its role of reporting accurately, truthfully, and fairly in the pre-election and post-election periods. This also involved producing and updating its election reporting and journalism safety and security handbooks. Another major primary concern during elections is that journalists covering elections must be able to work as safely as possible if they are to get their stories out. This is done by issuing alerts on cases involving media freedom violations.

Overall, the implementation of the strategy through the CSOs cluster members assisted in strengthening and creating community media platforms and content generation capacity, helping amplify voter education information and messaging.

4.5. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 5: Cross-Cutting Issues (Gender, Youths, and PWDs)

Strategic goal: Increased participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in the electoral process

A review of member organisations materials and training demonstrates a concerted effort to ensure that those living with disabilities are included in all activities. However, information was not readily available to show whether there was an increase in voter turnout for PWDs from 10% to 60%. There remains a need for information collection to inform this intervention in future elections.

In addition, while CSOs cluster groups have been and continue to advocate for the easy access of polling stations, however, data is not available to show the percentage of polling stations that ensure such accessibility. Coupled with this, the cluster members are lobbying, given the large numbers of assisted voters in previous elections, for the right of PWDs to choose who can assist them to vote. Section 59 of the Electoral Act provides for illiterate or physically handicapped persons to bring a confidante to help them vote. Although the law makes such a provision, it does not conform to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which endeavours to provide independence to PWDs. The Disabled Persons Act of 1992, which is the prevailing legislation, is silent on the issue of the voting rights of PWDs.

The past strategy had proposed the setting up of a committee on gender diversity and youth. However, this aspect of the strategy was not implemented. This is despite member organizations of the CSOs cluster having ingrained gender diversity and youth strategies. ZESN's gender policy, for instance, promotes mainstreaming of measures to promote women's participation in all its programs. The STOs recruitment guidelines encouraged the recruitment of women to be prioritised. This has been greatly enhanced by participation in the network of women organizations such as the Women Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ), Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), Gender and Media Connect (GMC), The Association of Women's Clubs (AWC), Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD). This enabled greater participation of women's organizations in electoral oversight championing gender in the elections.

In addition, the strategy sought to increase the participation of youths in elections, and this was partly achieved given the increased numbers of youths that turned out to register to vote. Youth Election Day voter turnout figures are not available but it's assumed, given the high turnout during registration, the turnout must have been high.

4.6. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 6: Implementation Mechanisms, Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Though data is not available, indications are that the cluster members met regularly to share information.

Election observation training materials developed were used across the cluster members. A coordinated approach to monitoring was put in place to ensure uniformity in monitoring, spearheaded by ZESN. This included the production of the standardized checklist, training manuals, and public statements and reports. The cluster developed recruitment, training, and deployment plans for use by its members. The cluster developed comprehensive deployment mapping plans to avoid double deployments by the members. A CVE guide was developed and was used by members of the cluster to deliver CVE by members of the CSOs cluster.

A coordination canter funded by the TRACE program was turned into a Situation Room before the election to coordinate the production of materials, recruitment, training, and deployment of observers. It became a hub for receiving, verifying, analysing, and disseminating real-time information to enable a timely reaction to situations evolving during the election period.

The M&E unit within the cluster was not set up. Each member of the cluster was responsible for its M&E framework and each cluster member was responsible for developing its monitoring and evaluation plan. However, there is no data available to show joint tracking of implementation of activities.

4.7. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 7: Implementation mechanisms, Research, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Strategic goal: Resource mobilisation

Each cluster member was responsible for resource mobilization of the activities they were implementing. It is however encouraging to note that the sub-granting model used to support work in civic and voter education and election observation proved appropriate and effective in delivering on project objectives. The choice of ZESN as the grant management institution was appropriate given the years of capacity-building invested into the organization, which shows the institutional capacity to manage these types of grants. ZESN sub-granting coupled with coaching mainly provided for longer-term capacitation of sub-grantees consistent with its broader civil society clustering strategy.

Even as there was no strategic plan implementation team set up, the ZESN sub-granting involved providing technical backstopping and longer-term capacitation to recipient organizations, particularly in financial management, monitoring, and reporting.

In publicising the strategy, ZESN convened the donor's round table discussions. However, no publicity activities were undertaken during the life of the strategy, although coordinating meetings were mainly conducted under the auspices of ZESN. Overall, no specific follow-up meetings were undertaken explicitly to review the strategic plan.

The ZESN model that encourages domestic observation to come under a joint platform has greatly assisted in mobilising resources and at the same time speak with one voice. Consequently, this has amplified their findings to a wide audience thus attracting the attention of policy makers.

Chapter 5
Strategic Direction

5. Strategic Direction 2022 to 2023: Overall Strategy Goal

The overall strategic goal of the CSOs Election Strategy for 2022 – 2023 is to contribute to the successful delivery of credible elections which are an important factor in the consolidation of participatory democracy in Zimbabwe. Most importantly, this strategy will ensure that there is a clear understanding and unique outline of responsibilities among all stakeholders within the cluster to ensure that there is no duplication of activities which will limit the effectiveness of the strategy.

5.1. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 1: Civic and Voter Education

Strategic Goal: Access to voter information resulting in an informed, organized, active and peaceful citizen participation in the electoral process.

Context

A significant number of factors have changed the electoral and political arena in Zimbabwe since the 2018 polls. It should be noted that the 2018 polls themselves were a watershed election in Zimbabwe given the absence of both long-time leaders of the ruling ZANU-PF and opposition MDC. This factor alone heightened the interest in the electoral process. Despite this, critical access to accurate voter information has remained a wanting factor.

In building a credible voter register, the ZEC piloted the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) system in 2018, capturing 78.6% of eligible persons onto the voters roll. However, the anticipated target of registering 90% of eligible voters for the 2018 polls was not achieved. In the run-up to the 2018 polls the ZEC commissioned 37 civil society organizations to conduct voter education programmes. In comparison to the previous civic education efforts which relied heavily on the disbursement of funding, which was channelled through ZEC, the 2022-2023 period benefits from amendments to the legislation   that allows funding to be received directly by the organisation that will conduct the civic and voter education. The significance of this is that the elections cluster will be able to develop synchronised messaging on the significance of participating in electoral processes. It will also allow for the conduct of nationwide civic and voter education campaigns that are not inhibited by financial resources.

The cluster's strategic approach is to ensure that voter education becomes continuous, with a prime focus on voter education and information prior to the elections and civic engagement in the post-election phase. Other activities under this strategy will focus on reduction in assisted voters, reducing cases of spoiled ballots, and increasing the participation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

Specific Objective 1: Increase turnout at registration to 90%

The voter registration turnout in the 2013 harmonized election was measured at 88.36%. For the 2018 polls voter registration was measured at 78% made up of 5 695 706 voters, out of an eligible population of 7 224 128. The CVE strategy aims to increase the turnout for voter registration to 90% targeting mostly the first-time voters and the youths. To capture first-time voters, the cluster members working on increasing voter registration and particularly capturing first time voters who just achieved the age of voting, is proposing to engage ZEC to set up a sedentary desk within the Registrar General's office that will utilise 1 or 2 of the available 3000 BVR kits for the purpose of immediately registering first time voters thereby making strides towards achieving the target 90% registration.

1 An audit of 2013 Voters' Roll Research and Advocacy Unit July 2013
 Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) Final Report of the 2018 Voter's roll audit.
 https://www.zesn.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Final-Voters-Roll-Audit-2018.pdf

Looking at the 2018 voter registration data, there was a higher registration uptake by women, (3 073 190) compared to men (2 622 516). Further, the registration in rural areas was higher than in urban areas. Based on this, the voter education cluster will create targeted voter registration material that speaks to the male population in both rural and urban areas with the additional focus on Bulawayo Metropolitan, Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North and Mashonaland Central. Part of the targeted activities include taking voter registration to the places where men traditionally converge, the beer halls and the football stadiums and using national or community personalities that appeal to the male population. These personalities can be taken from the sporting, religious or musical (the arts) fraternities. In line with this, "blitz parties" will be conducted in the areas where registration will be taking place to increase attention to the process and attract people who are not registered to register.

Strategic Objective 2: Increased voter turnout on Election Day to 85%

Voter turnout in Zimbabwe fluctuates between extreme highs and lows based on the prevailing socio-political climate. In 2018, voter turnout was recorded at 84% owing to increased voter education efforts and the prevailing climate that allowed for political contestation. It should be noted that the 2018 voter turnout surpassed the Southern Africa regional average of 80%.

Prior to the polls, the cluster will print out weekly or fortnightly pamphlets and incorporate them into the largest circulating newspaper within the different provinces in different languages to keep the election momentum. The pamphlets should carry neutral electoral messaging including times for opening and close of polls, list of electoral offenses and the electoral hotline for reporting offences. As an addition to neutrality, the cluster will endeavour to tailor the messaging in a style that is in an active tone that will encourage the apathetic voter to turnout on election day. To fully achieve this, technical experts in communication and elections will be recruited to conduct this exercise.

Immediately before the "cut-off" period of election activities, the cluster will have roving vehicles with messaging that encourages showing up to vote as the last voter turnout activity, #ShowUp. It should be noted that social media will play a significant part of the election day turnout campaign based on the non-physical nature of the platform.

Strategic Objective 3: Reduce cases of spoilt/rejected votes to 0,5 and reduce cases of assisted voting

In the 2018 harmonised elections, the Presidential poll recorded about 1,49% of rejected/spoiled ballots. Despite this number falling below the "acceptable benchmark" of 3-4%. The cluster will implement voter information programmes that are aimed at reducing this number. The cluster will enhance voter education efforts through print and digital communication that will show how a ballot paper is marked and the acceptable marking that renders a ballot valid. Voting simulations/mock elections will be conducted in conjunction with the electoral commission to maximise the learning impact though visual learning. This exercise will particularly assist first time voters to know the voting process comprehensively before polling thereby reducing the likelihood of rejected ballots.

To further complement the efforts of reducing spoilt ballots, the cluster will produce short video clips and Graphic Interchange Format (Gifs) that show the correct ballot paper marking to deem a ballot valid. These will be shared on social media and through text and WhatsApp broadcast to widen their reach.

Survey on Voter Registration and related election issues in Zimbabwe: Summary of Results:
Prepared by E V Masunungure, Stephen Ndoma, Heather Koga, and Richman Kokera (April 2015) Data used was from a nationally representative survey (sample size = 1200) drawn using 2012 population census figure
Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, 2018 Harmonised Elections Report
ACE project Vote counting https://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/864793780

To reduce assisted voters, particularly those with visual impairment, the cluster will ensure that the ZEC will advocate for the incorporation of a tactile ballot paper given that BVR data is able to identify the different needs among the electorate. Other measures that will be put in place include having ballot booths sized appropriately and laid out in a manner that enables easy flow of persons with different needs and that the entrance into the polling stations allows access for all having ramps and guide rails. The cluster will also sensitise the electorate on the options available to them if they need assistance within the legal provisions of the electoral law. In addition, the cluster will develop messages that speak to the secrecy of the ballot.

Strategic Objective 4: Reduced cases of electoral violence and fraud

Cases of electoral violence and fraud are often difficult to track and report on. Figures on these are usually pulled from police reports and the ZEC reports, especially from the conflict mitigation committee. Cases of electoral violence and fraud were reported in some parts of the country but there are however no baseline figures for such cases. The CVE strategy aims to promote a zero-tolerance for electoral violence and fraud during the build-up, during and after the 2023 harmonised election particularly based on the prescriptions under "Duty to cooperate" outlined in the Fourth Schedule 160A.14 of the Electoral Act.

The cluster will ensure that there is a comprehensive awareness of what constitutes electoral offences and where to report the offense. Neighbourhood watch and community policing forums will also be used as part of the violence prevention mechanisms and tasked with providing activity reports on a fortnightly / monthly basis and a special report after an electoral activity. These reports will cover the level of social cohesion within the community and recommendations, or interventions required to maintain peace.

Important to note from the 2018 polls is that the cluster responsible for monitoring the reduction in violence and fraud will ensure that there is a post-election conflict strategy in place that includes sustaining the MPLC in place to monitor the socio-political environment. The CVE strategy aims to have zero-tolerance for electoral violence and fraud during the build-up, during and after the 2018 harmonised election. In addition, the strategy seeks to address the fear factor and intimidation used sometimes through traditional and community leaders. Once the aforementioned issues are addressed, assisted voters are also likely to decrease.

Strategic Objective 5: Coordination for voter education for increased voter outreach

The coordination of voter education programmes for the 2023 polls will be conducted through the network of CSOs to ensure an efficient and effective roll-out of a comprehensive civic and voter education programme at all levels. Part of these coordination efforts will entail having trainers' apparel which will be politically neutral and identifiable by the public. This "uniform" is necessitated by the observation that there is a degree of hesitancy by the public to receive CSO groups whose apparel bears coincidental similarity in colour code to some political parties. Monthly coordination meetings will be held in addition to standardisation of CVE materials.

Civic and Voter Education principles

Non-partisanship:
The voter education campaign should be non-partisan and should not be seen to be supporting a particular party. Voter educators should be seen to be neutral and should not be seen to be endorsing certain candidates and parties.

Accuracy

The information provided by the voter educators must be accurate. In most cases, it must be cross checked with the ZEC to ensure that it is accurate and that wrong and misleading information is not disseminated.

Inclusiveness

The voter education should be inclusive and should not leave out certain groups based on their race, gender or sexual orientation, disability, political party affiliation and religious affiliation.

Secrecy of the vote

Voter secrecy, also known as secrecy of the ballot or secret ballot, is a fundamental democratic principle whereby voters are free to anonymously cast their vote in an election or referendum. The concept of voter secrecy was implemented to stop the practice of powerful persons or groups coercing voters into choosing a particular candidate. Voter education messaging must put emphasis on these given past experiences of voters being coerced to vote for certain candidates.

5.1.2.8. Voter Education Key Themes to inform content

The content of any campaign is informed by issues the campaign seeks to address. Content for this strategy will be informed by the following:

Get Out To Register (GOTR) and Get Out To Vote (GOTV):

This is aimed at mobilizing eligible citizens to register and turn out to vote on Election Day.

#CountMeIn

Aimed at mobilising voters to register and vote targeting social media channels

Voter Information (VI)

Refers to the provision of the basic procedural information voters require, including the date, time, and place of voting; the type of electoral system; registration requirements; and the mechanics of voting.

Issue based civic and voter education (IBCVE)

This typically addresses voter motivations and ability to make informed choices. This includes relatively more complex types of information about voting and the electoral process and is concerned with concepts such as the link between basic human rights and voting rights; the role, responsibilities, and rights of voters; the relationship between elections and representative government; secrecy of the ballot; why each vote is important and its impact on public accountability; and how votes translate into parliamentary seats.

5.2. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 2: Election Monitoring and Observation

Strategic Goal: Build the capacity of credible, non-partisan domestic observers to effectively monitor the entire electoral process to deter fraud, increase confidence in electoral processes.

Context

Although Section 235 (1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for the independence of ZEC, public confidence in the Commission has been at an all-time low following its perceived mismanagement of the 2018 election results. Following the military-assisted transition that led to the removal of the then President Robert Mugabe and the opening of the electoral environment, there was increased interest in the 2018 polls. According to ZESN and international observer missions, the pre-election environment was "relatively peaceful" and enabled the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms of association, assembly, speech, and media. The campaign period was conducted with "an unprecedented level of freedom compared to the previous elections, with voters actively participating in campaign events and civil society free to engage without hindrance. Despite the low level of confidence in the ZEC, the voter turnout in the 2018 harmonized elections according to the Commission was 82.5%, the highest ever in an election post-independence. While some significant incremental improvements were demonstrated in the 2018 elections, the NDI/IRI mission concluded that the poll did not meet the acceptable international standards.

In March 2022, the ZEC conducted by-elections that had been suspended allegedly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pre-election period was characterised by electoral malpractices that include violence during campaigns; restriction of some opposition campaign activities; vote buying; unequal access to the public media among others. These ever-present challenges in the electoral contestation continue to chip away public confidence in the electoral processes and the ZEC. Thus, building confidence ahead of the 2023 harmonised elections becomes peremptory. A clear and deliberate process of establishing visible and credible oversight mechanisms of the electoral process will go a long way in building the electorate's confidence in the election hence the need for a well-coordinated and visible election monitoring and observation process.

Section 40G of the Electoral Act provides that observers can be accredited to monitor all aspects of the poll, particularly the process on Election Day. Observers are required to bring any irregularities to the attention of ZEC and share with it their thoughts and recommendations as expressed in their final election reports. Statutory Instrument 85 has broadened the aspect of elections that accredited observers can observe. This includes equal access by the contesting political parties to the state media and other national resources. In a positive move, the Act also now provides that observers should also measure the degree of impartiality shown by ZEC as it discharges its duties. The Act as amended further provides for the Observer Accreditation Committee to consider applications to observe from local and international individuals and organizations.

On Election Day, ZESN deployed 7240 Short Term Observers (STOs) covering each of the 1958 wards across the country. These were augmented by 420 mobile observers tasked with monitoring the environment around the polling stations. The Network further deployed 750 observers to randomly sampled polling stations using a Sample based Methodology (SBO). Other civil society and faith-based organisations including Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). While most organisations observe the polling day, institutions like ZESN have been carrying out electoral observation at every stage of the electoral cycle, including long term observation of the pre-election and the post-election periods.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN). Report on the July 2018 Harmonised Elections. Harare: ZESN. 2018, p41
European Union Election Observer Mission. Final Report Republic of Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections 2018. Harare: July 2018, p19
International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute. IRI/NDI Zimbabwe International Election Observation Mission Final Report. Harare: October 2018
Zimbabwe Election Support Network (n 26)

Faced with the foregoing key issues, CSOs intending to observe the election in the run up to the 2023 har-monised elections will come together under the election monitoring cluster and coordinate their monitoring efforts. This is driven by the desire to carry out electoral observation at every stage of the electoral cycle. The overall objective of the cluster is to enhance transparency in the electoral process.

Specifically, the cluster seeks to ensure effective coordination of CSOs' election observation efforts throughout the election cycle. CSOs oversight will be on key election activities/processes to include the pre-election environment, covering the legal framework for elections, Voter registration, candidate nominations, media access, civic and voter education activities, party behaviour, role of CSOs, role of traditional leaders, hate speech, campaign restrictions, and participation of marginalised groups such as women, youth and PWD. The coordination will include the sharing of roles, the development and compliance with a common code of conduct, common reporting forms and operating procedures for making decisions, integration of training and deployment plans, sharing of debriefing information and jointly issuance of statements and reports.

This strategic plan will inform the activities each cluster member will undertake and implement. It is important to note that the strategic plan is not in any way prescriptive of what each member of the cluster can or cannot do.

Strategic Objective 1: to provide independent scrutiny of the electoral process

Under this strategic objective, a critical starting point is the development of a clear understanding of the different functions and areas of responsibility between observers and monitors. In developing this under-standing, the roles of political parties, civic groups, ZEC, and individuals (the general citizenry) will be fully outlined thereby providing a sequenced appreciation of the independent scrutiny process.

The cluster will deploy non-partisan observers to gather information about all elements of the electoral cycle and provide an impartial and objective assessment. This will include the production of evidence-based assessments and public reports that are distributed amongst key stakeholders such as ZEC, political parties, the media, the international community, and the electorate. The cluster will deploy observers to monitor the following phases of the election, the pre-election, polling, and post-election environments. This includes, but not limited to the following, the legal framework, the biometric registration of voters, the nomination of candidates, campaign period, audit of the voters roll, mapping and setting up of polling stations, ballot design and printing e-day activities, results management, and transmission as well as dispute resolution.

A coordinated approach to monitoring will be put in place and this will include production of standardized checklists, training manuals and public statements and reports. Recruitment, training, and deployment plans will be developed by the cluster for use by its respective members. The cluster will also develop comprehensive mapping plans to avoid double deployments by cluster members. A Communications Center, to be turned into a situation room a few days before the election, will be set up to coordinate the production of materials, recruitment, training, and deployment of observers. The cluster will deploy long term observers in all wards and short-term observers at polling stations on Election Day.

Strategic Objective 2: to deter electoral fraud and malpractices and advocacy for an improved electoral framework

The presence of the cluster election observers will provide additional safeguards in the electoral process, complementing the control mechanisms that are put in place by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). Their presence can deter attempts of fraud and defuse potential areas of conflict. As a starting point in building confidence in the electoral process, the cluster will observe the delimitation of electoral boundaries to ensure the electorate's voice in the process is heard. To aid this process the cluster will employ scientific methods of observing the process including spatial analysis tools to align population, and registration figures in line with the newly drawn boundaries.

In addition, the cluster will develop specialized monitoring approaches that are designed to detect and deter fraud and malpractices. The starting point will be a comprehensive assessment of the voter register. A voters' roll audit expert will be contracted on behalf of the cluster to assist the cluster set up a framework for the audit of the voter's roll. Statistical testing to assess the quality of the voters roll through the "list to voters" and/or the "people to list" methods will be employed. The audit of the roll will be at three levels, at the end of the first cycle of registration, after voters roll verification and after the certification of the voters' roll. The information obtained from this exercise will help detect deliberate attempts to skew the registration for political purposes. Findings of the audit will be used by the cluster to engage with key stakeholders and ZEC to address any shortcomings identified in the exercise. Work with international organisations for technical support and expertise to develop risk assessments and electoral integrity or open data tools relevant to Zimbabwe.

To complement general observation, the cluster, through one of its member organizations ZESN, will conduct a Sample Based Methodology of the election results. The SBO is an advanced Election Day observation methodology that allows ZESN to confidently comment on the voting and results tabulation processes, including an independent verification of the Presidential results as they will be announced by the ZEC. The methodology provides the most accurate and timely information on the conduct of voting counting and is the only observation methodology that can verify the accuracy of the official results announced by ZEC.

Though observers are not allowed by law to interfere in the polling process, they play a critical role in observing the process and thereafter advocate for improvements in the electoral framework based on their findings. By formulating concrete recommendations and highlighting key areas for reform, the cluster will fulfil an important policy role, conducting advocacy with ZEC, the parliament, and political parties.

The oversight of the electoral process will go beyond the election day and will encompass activities such as the post-election environment, acceptance of results and adjudication of electoral disputes post the election. In addition, the cluster will conduct post-election monitoring or observation and evaluation with the aim of taking stock of what worked and what did not work. The findings will be used to influence the post-election discourse on electoral reforms.

Strategic Objective 3: to promote trust & participation in the electoral process

Through its non-intrusive presence in polling stations and its objective reporting, the cluster's non-partisan observers can help to increase the overall confidence in the electoral process. Public trust in the neutrality of ZEC and the overall integrity of the process can lead to higher levels of voter turnout and candidates' acceptance of the election results. Publicity around the formation of the cluster's monitoring effort, coupled with the pre-election activities of observers and their presence at polling stations on election day will inevitably enhance public confidence in the electoral process and will encourage citizen participation. The strategic objective aims at increasing public confidence in the electoral processes through interventions such as;

- Observation of voter registration
- Long-term observation
- Short-term observation of the 2023 harmonised elections
- Sample-based Observation
- Political environment monitoring
- Crowdsourcing and citizen reporting

To increase trust and confidence in ZEC and the electoral process the cluster will set up a special unit to monitor the transparency of ZEC and its ability to engage and provide timely data to electoral stakeholders. ERC/ZESN will work with the cluster to build its capacity to effectively provide oversight on ZEC's responsibility to apply open data principles in the electoral process. In previous elections, ZEC has been accused of not providing information, in real-time, about the electoral process. Regrettably, this has greatly undermined citizen confidence in the ZEC's ability to deliver a credible election. For example, in 2018, ZESN accessed the voters roll and conducted field tests. However, in their conclusion noted that the "voters roll that was availed by the ZEC after nomination was not the roll used in the elections." Applying open-data principles provides an opportunity to demonstrate ZEC's commitment to transparency and accountability. Public confidence in each step of an election process is critical to the integrity of the election. Citizens not only have a right to participate in elections, but they also have a right to know for themselves whether the electoral process is valid. Access to information about each phase of the election process is fundamental to creating and reinforcing public confidence in elections. That knowledge is the basis for public confidence in elections and their resulting governments. Specifically, the committee will monitor and advocate for open data in the following electoral phases,

- Legal Framework
- Election Management Body and Administration
- Election Management Body Processes
- Election Security
- Political Party Registration
- Ballot Qualification and printing
- Election Campaigns
- Campaign Finance
- Voter Registration
- Voters Roll
- Voter Education
- Polling Stations
- Election Results Management
- Electoral Complaints, Disputes, and Resolution

Strategy principles

- Non-partisan and independent observation of the whole electoral process
- Understanding and respecting the legal framework
- Not interfering unlawfully in the electoral process
- Reporting impartially, accurately, and timely
- Providing constructive recommendations
- Cooperate with other observers
- Providing high quality training to everybody involved
- Promote transparency

Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN). Report on the 30 July 2018 Harmonised Elections. Harare: 2018, p34

5.3. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 3: Oversight and Advocacy

Strategic Goal: To contribute towards credible elections in line with the constitution, regional and international standards governing the holding of democratic elections (advocacy and lobbying)

Context

Some of the existing gaps in the electoral framework include; the right to vote not guaranteed in the constitution and not provided for in enabling laws, restrictions on the conduct of voter education by civil society in the absence of prior approval by ZEC, absence of a voter registration model which addresses issues that have been previously identified by various local, regional and international observers to Zimbabwe's past general elections, delimitation exercise which is not in sync with national census exercise, executive interference in the work of ZEC which affects their independence, absence of key definitions in the Electoral Act such as vote buying amongst others. The ZEC has also been facing challenges which continuously hampered its responsiveness of electoral processes to acceptable standards and expectations.

Historically, past elections were dogged by systematic intimidation, residual fear, and violence. Vote buying and parcelling out of agricultural inputs has also been a major feature of the elections. A system of patronage, in which willingness to cooperate is incentivised and distributed through the hierarchies of the political class.

There is a high degree of fragility among institutions based on resource challenges which n compromises their independence. Whilst there is general agreement on the need for reform several efforts towards this goal have been ad hoc and not well coordinated. The cluster will ensure that there is a coordinated approach to the push for the alignment of the laws with the constitution.

Strategic Objective 1: To influence improvements in the legal framework for free, fair, and credible elections in Zimbabwe.

Post the 2018 harmonised elections, ZESN and other CSOs embarked on an advocacy strategy that included the submission of a petition to Parliament in December 2018, followed by sustained interface with the Speaker of Parliament and the Portfolio Committee on Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. In that endeavour, ZESN also submitted three draft pieces of legislation to the Portfolio Committee for consideration by Parliament. These included the draft Electoral Amendment Bill, incorporating the SADC Model Law on Elections and the draft Political Parties Registration, Regulation and Funding Bill. While Section 40 G(1)(a) provides for the accreditation of observers on Election Day, it does not extend such accreditation to long term observation. Invariably, this anomaly presents an opportunity for CSOs to lobby for an amendment to the Act to allow for the deployment of long-term observers to observe the entire electoral process to enhance the credibility of the poll.

The alignment of the electoral laws with the Constitution remains a contentious issue within the Zimbabwean electoral landscape. Aligning the electoral laws with the provisions of the constitution enhances the credibility of the election. The cluster will engage several strategies to ensure the alignment of the electoral laws to the Constitution and these will include engagement with policy makers and other electoral stakeholders, strategic litigation, petitions to parliament, monitoring of compliance and regional and international advocacy, e.g., to SADC, AU, and UN. The Cluster will focus on the following key areas:

- **Impartiality**: Ensure ZEC Independence. The independence of ZEC is compromised as it reports to the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs in the government. ZEC is established under Chapter 12 as an independent commission supporting democracy however this function is curtailed through directly reporting to the Minister and not Parliament. ZEC needs adequate funding and administrative independence provided in sufficient time to be able to perform its functions.

- **Freedom**: Comprehensively guarantee political freedoms. Repeal or amend legislation that obstructs the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution, including freedom of peaceful assembly and protest, free speech, and the right to privacy. The Bill of Rights, African Union, SADC, and international obligations promote the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms with a view to enhancing democratic consolidation. In addition, vices such as the selective application of the law and impunity must be addressed.

- **Transparency**: Provide access to election materials and information. ZEC must ensure that critical electoral information such as ballot papers, results at all levels and the voters' roll is available in both electronic and hard copy format and election residue must be easily accessible to key stakeholders, especially to aid accountability.

- **Inclusion and Awareness:** The Right to Vote should be enjoyed by all eligible citizens. ZEC should initiate comprehensive and continuous voter registration. ZEC must ensure that there is greater involvement of civic society organizations in the development and conduct of civic and voter education.

- **Access: Reinstate Special Voting**. The Special Vote which was abolished by the Electoral Amendment Act (2014) and reintroduced postal voting for persons who are: on duty members of a disciplined force or as an electoral officer, on duty in the service of the Government outside Zimbabwe, or as a spouse of an on duty in service member outside Zimbabwe (Section 72 Electoral Act). Special voting was set up to facilitate early voting by uniformed forces and electoral officers assigned to duty on Election Day. The Special Vote has been characterized by logistical and management challenges; however, it is a positive development in ensuring the right to vote. In addition, postal voting is opaque as compared to special voting which can be observed and guarantees secrecy.

- **Openness:** Provide equitable media access. ZEC and the Zimbabwe Media Commission must rigorously enforce the relevant regulations of the Electoral Act to ensure the compliance of the State media during elections as well as to afford contesting political parties' equitable and balanced access. The bias and limited access to the State media has been the most persistent complaints in the pre-election and election phases. Furthermore, wider reform to ensure media pluralism, diversity and independence will address this issue at source.

> **Strategic Objective 2: To ensure sustained engagement of key stakeholders on electoral reform dialogue ahead of the 2023 elections at local and regional level.**

The engagement of key stakeholders in the implementation of electoral reforms that align the electoral laws to the constitution is critical in ensuring that the country has electoral laws that speak to the constitution. As a continuous activity towards the polls, the monitoring and observation cluster will convene working sessions that are aimed at continuously monitoring the electoral playing field measuring it against the clusters recommendations from the 2018 polls (observer recommendations compendium) thus maintaining an adequate oversight function.

In addition, the Cluster will hold regular meetings with key stakeholders such as political parties, (including those that may not have representation in parliament) the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Government, Researchers, and international institutions such as SADC, AU, and the UN.

5.4. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 4: Media and Elections

Strategic Goal: Enhancing the role of the media in elections

Context

The role of the media in enhancing citizen participation in governance and democratic processes cannot be overemphasized. The entire electoral cycle, outside the physical process of voting, is premised on democratic information exchange from various actors among them political parties, Electoral Management Bodies, and related government agencies, civil society, mainstream, and alternative media among others. Positive and negative usage of information can make or break an election diminishing validity of results and triggering social unrest and in some instances, destructive violence. Citizen participation and levels of engagement on elections is built on the quality or lack thereof of information hence access to quality, credible information helps citizens participate freely in elections.

For elections to be deemed free, fair, and credible, citizens must access and receive information that enables them to exercise their rights. And for such rights to be respected and enjoyed the media and freedom of expression environment must be conducive and mainstream media must play a positive role of promoting the public good. Zimbabwe's elections since 2000 have however been characterized by hate messaging and misinformation bordering on partisan political propaganda. Mainstream political parties especially the ruling party ZANU PF have abused the state-controlled media not only to propagate their political views and beliefs but also to denigrate political rivals and civil society. The mainstream media has partly contributed to electoral violence. The small but equally vocal privately owned media is largely seen as part of the opposition voices hence restricted in its operations through legal and extra-legal means. The costs of media products such as newspapers also limited access with newspapers reputedly accessed by slightly above 20% of the population.

The CSOs cluster under the media component made significant progress towards ensuring that a level playing field in the electoral process was possible. An analysis of the news agenda by the Media Monitors (MMPZ) showed a notable attempt by both mainstream media to cover and disseminate information about the various aspects of the electoral process. The substantial contribution by the media to voter education was acknowledged by ZEC and various observer missions. However, there is still room to improve, and the following activities are proposed for the strategy plan:

Specific goal Number 1: to build the capacity of the media to effectively cover elections
Engagement editors of mainstream media houses

The cluster will engage editors of mainstream media houses though influential cluster members inclusive of the Zimbabwe National Editors Forum, ZUJ, VMCZ, Media Monitors, MISA etc. to request space for CSOs to make editorial contributions analysing various issues on the elections. This space includes widening the parameters of what is generally considered "newsworthy" thus accommodating issues that are important to elections which are ordinarily eclipsed by greater political news. Cluster members working with the Research and advocacy cluster will coordinate publicity and analysis pieces in mainstream newspapers that address several issues on the election.

Capacity building programme for the mainstream media on elections

Whilst there were efforts in the past strategy on capacity building of the media there is still more that should be done to increase the capacity of the media to effectively cover elections. The MMPZ media monitoring found that independent media made substantial efforts to interpret electoral issues for the public by enlisting commentary from relevant stakeholders, civil society groups and analysts, as facilitated by the program. Despite notable progress in the depth and accuracy of factual reporting dedicated to electoral processes, MMPZ also noted persistent weaknesses, citing instance when the media still struggled to more clearly articulate and follow-up on the actual implications of irregularities and malpractices they reported

In this respect, the Media and Elections Cluster will continue to coordinate with the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe and other media groups on a capacity building programme for the mainstream media on elections. This will include a focus on covering elections, analysing the electoral legal and policy environment, and ethics among others. The CSOs cluster will coordinate the media and elections capacity building to avoid duplication of efforts. Part of the consultations on this will lead to a Media and election capacity building calendar. .

Coordinated development of an enforceable media and elections code of conduct

Under this strategy the cluster will continue the work on the enforcement of the media code of conduct in covering elections. This will include the monitoring of the media and its adherence to the code of conduct through the media monitoring activities of its members. Advocacy for the establishment of an independent complaint mechanism for public broadcasters will be key and central in ensuring the media space is opened up to all. The CSOs cluster will continue advocating for the establishment of an independent media complaint mechanism.

Development of media engagement strategy

The CSOs cluster on media will work towards the consolidation of a media engagement plan which has been lacking among the different media organizations working on media and elections.

Media Monitoring
The cluster members, Media Institute of Southern Africa, and Media Monitoring, together with national and international observers, assessed that the media coverage of the electoral campaign in the build-up to the 2018 Harmonised Elections remained largely biased and unbalanced. To this end, the cluster through its members will intensify media monitoring of the electoral process before, during and after the election.

Research on the use of social media in elections
The advent of the internet and, in particular, the rise of social media has changed the way people spread and consume political information, especially during elections. The issue of misinformation/disinformation has become one major challenge confronting the world today especially. The impact of disinformation/ misinformation on elections cannot be underestimated. Consequently, the CSOs cluster will work, through its partners, on research on the use of social media in elections and at the same time monitor the use of social media in elections with a view of identifying and flagging misinformation and disinformation. Through its partners the CSOs cluster will also work on fact checking to ensure that its work does not only focus on monitoring without taking remedial action.

Map and share information on Citizen Journalism
The International Media Support (IMS), with its local partners under the EU, supported the "Support to the Consolidation of the Democratic Process in Zimbabwe project" commissioned the development of the Citizen Journalism Guidelines on Electoral Reporting in Zimbabwe to support the training of citizen journalists on covering electoral matters in Zimbabwe. This manual aimed to familiarize citizen journalists with the core issues of election reporting, including ethics, safety and security, fake news, hate speech, and the broader issues around the electoral system in Zimbabwe. The CSOs cluster will continue to support the capacity building around citizen journalism. Training activities will be conducted throughout the country to equip citizen journalists with the requisite skills required to cover elections.

Specific objective number 2: to advocate for enabling media environment, laws, and policies

In the previous strategy the cluster identified dual accreditation of journalists as a challenge to the effective work of journalists in covering elections. Related to this the security and safety of media workers is not guaranteed during elections. The cluster will continue to collaborate with members whose mandate includes media safety and security to address this matter. Engagement with ZEC and the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) will be done to address dual accreditation. Attitudes and growing practices of barring journalists from private media from accessing ZEC press conferences must be addressed.

The Cluster also noted the threat of Cyber laws and likelihood of the internet being interfered with following the enactment of the Data Protection Act [Chapter 11:22]. As such there is need for cluster members to engage in advocacy as well as skills capacity on circumventing such a threat. Related to this is the need to protect both citizen and journalists' rights on the criminalisation of information sharing. This will be done through advocacy and working with HRDs to offer legal support where needed.

The Cluster will continue to work to influence the ZEC election Media regulations so that media workers are granted access to election information as well as spaces.

Litigation on dual accreditation
Through the successful lobbying of the government and parliament, cluster members, in conjunction with other partners, managed to have AIPPA unbundled, repealed, and replaced through the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act, and the Zimbabwe Media Commission Act. However, there is still an opportunity for the stakeholders and the Ministry of Information to ensure the harmonization of media laws in Zimbabwe especially those laws that provide for dual accreditation.

Address security of media and data security training
Through its Media Support and Media Defence Fund, MISA-Zimbabwe conducts election reporting and journalism safety and security workshops as part of efforts to capacitate the media to fulfil its role of reporting accurately, truthfully, and fairly in the pre-election and post-election periods. This also involves producing and updating its election reporting and journalism safety and security handbooks. Another major primary concern during elections is that journalists covering elections must be able to work as safely as possible if they are to get their stories out. This is done by issuing alerts on cases involving media freedom violations. With the coming into law of the Data Protection Act [Chapter 11:22] the need to train journalists on understanding it and its implications upon their work is critical. Not only that but the need to train journalists on safety and security is important as indications are clear that the journalist will be targeted going into the 2023 election.

ZEC engagement in information sharing
Members of the cluster through the EU "Support to the Consolidation of the Democratic Process in Zimbabwe Program" aided in increased ZEC interaction with the media despite limitations, including ZEC's reluctance to share information on some contentious processes; these efforts also contributed to better-informed media on the various aspects of the electoral cycle. There seems to be a general appetite by the ZEC to engage the media and the cluster on the media should take advantage of this to engage and get information from ZESN. The cluster will facilitate dialogue with the ZEC around open data sharing to enhance the credibility of the electoral processes.

Specific goal number 3. Voter Access to credible electoral Information

Strengthening and creation of community media platforms and content generation capacity.
The cluster will continue to facilitate the strengthening and creation of community media platforms and content generation capacity. Assessments will be done of existing platforms and ideas and plans shared on relating new platforms that are both offline and online. Focus will be on CSOs with a grassroots footprint and able to mobilize communities to participate in information platforms.

Amplification of voter education information and messages
The Media and Elections Cluster will continue to work closely with the Civic and Voter education cluster for the amplification of voter education information and messages. This will be done by digitalising platforms and ensuring that offline messages are relevant and reaching intended targets especially considering costs, literacy, and security among others.

Media, elections, and good governance https://zimbabwe.misa.org/issues-we-address/media-and-elections/
Mid-term Evaluation of "Support to the Consolidation of the Democratic Process in Zimbabwe Report"

Assessment of the use of existing media platforms in VE

An assessment of the use of existing media platforms in VE was meant to be undertaken under the previous strategy but was not done. The cluster, under this strategy, will undertake an assessment on the use of existing media platforms with a view of enhancing linkages with radio stations and newspapers. The cluster will mobilise for opinion pieces, analysis of information to be shared through the mainstream media. Focus will also be on exposing malpractices in the election processes.

5.5. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 5: Cross Cutting Issues (Gender, Youths and PWDs)

Strategic goal: Increased participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in the electoral process

Context

The 2018 harmonized elections witnessed an improved participation of the young people both as voters as well as candidates. Despite this positive statistic, the number of eligible first-time voters who registered in the last voter registration exercise was low indicating that more should be done for this bracket of voters to get out to register and vote.

The number of women that participated in the 2018 election as candidates was significantly low. Statistics show that only 4 out of the 23 Presidential candidates were women. Of the 1648 candidates who contested in the National Assembly seats, only 237 were women which translates to 14.38%. More remarkably, of those who contested, only 26 were elected. These grave statistics points to a political environment that may be unconducive for the effective participation of women.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe, in Sections 17 and 18, provide that the state has a duty to ensure full gender balance in Zimbabwean society, the full participation of women in all spheres of society and all institutions and agencies of government including Commissions and other elective and appointed governmental bodies established by or under the constitution or any Act of Parliament. Furthermore, Section 120 enunciates the 50/50 system for gender representation in the Senate with an emphasis on having the lists headed by a female. Section 124 allows proportional representation of six women in each of the ten provinces based on votes garnered by each party. The other 210 seats are by secret ballot and are not guided by any rules relating to gender.

The electoral field in Zimbabwe should be equally responsive to PWD. There are an estimated 2.3 million people with disabilities in Zimbabwe and out of these over 1 million are eligible voters. Reasons for refraining from voting include:

- Inaccessible polling stations
- Inaccessible pathways to the polling station
- Inaccessible/unsuitable voting infrastructure
- Lack of voter education
- Fear of violence
- Negative attitudes of polling officials toward people leaving with disabilities

**Specific objective number 1: Activities that encourage the inclusion of people with disabilities
in all activities of the electoral calendar**

Advocacy and lobbying for the inclusion of people with disabilities in activities of the election
Cluster members such as NASCOH (an umbrella body of over 70 organisations of and for PWD in Zimbabwe) will play a critical role in ensuring that PWD are meaningfully included in the pre-election, election, and post-election phases. In the build-up to the March 2022 By-Elections, it was rehashed that there is poor preparation to adequately include PWD in the voting process with dignity "Most polling officers are not equipped to assist us because they do not know our needs. Persons with disabilities must be employed at these polling stations because they understand us better. Sometimes the able-bodied think they are helping when they are actually insulting us because disability is not inability,"

The cluster will support activities that will allow for the inclusion of people with disabilities to participate in preparation for election through activities such as: data capturing, data processing, and transmission, research on best practices, pilot testing , training of VR operators, Voters Roll inspection, selection of VR method, draft procedures, Information campaigns, purchasing of equipment, closing roll and printing, adjudication of complaints, continuous stakeholder consultation, logistical planning inclusion in Coordination Committee monitoring of process.

Advocate for easy access to polling stations for people with disabilities
International and regional standards governing the conduct of elections provide that all efforts must be made to ensure that voting procedures, facilities, and materials are appropriate, accessible, and easy to understand and use. While the ZEC has made some progress towards the realization of this more will need to be done to ensure accessibility of polling stations. The cluster will advocate for accessibility of polling stations, the proximity of polling stations to people with disabilities, accessibility of pathways to the polling stations as well as ensuring that the visually impaired are assisted to vote by their assistants and the training of elections officers to be disability sensitive.

In the immediate pre-election period, once polling stations have been established, the cluster will carry out an audit of polling stations to take stock of how many polling stations have met these standards and how many have not. The information will be used to support the advocacy work by making sure that on election day, the requisite changes have been made.

Lobby for the right to choose who can assist to vote
The cluster members are lobbying, given the large numbers of assisted voters in previous elections, for the right of PWDs to choose who can assist them to vote. Section 59 of the Electoral Act provides for illiterate or physically handicapped persons to bring a confidante to help them vote. Although the law makes such a provision, it does not conform to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which endeavours to provide independence to PWDs. The Disabled Persons Act of 1992, which is the prevailing legislation, is silent on the issue of the voting rights of PWDs.

**Specific objective number 2:
mainstreaming gender and youth participation in all activities and processes of the cluster**

**Increase participation of the youth and women in the electoral process,
youth to increase to 80% and women 70%**

Youth Participation

In the 2018 polls, youth voter registration was measured at 44% of total registered voters. These registration figures in a country where the youth population is estimated to be 67% of the total population are low and to increase youth participation the cluster will target physical participation through increasing youth involvement in electoral activities and using modern communication channels where the youth frequent.

Disability - inclusive electoral process still a pipe dream
https://kubatana.net/2022/03/11/disability-inclusive-electoral-processes-still-a-pipe-dream/

Women Participation

To increase women's participation, the cluster will tailor electoral participation messaging along an empowerment lense that dispels gender performativity which marginalises the participation of women. To support the empowerment narrative, the cluster members will ensure that women are given influential responsibilities within the electoral cycle where they can inspire other women. Within political parties, a deliberate #NameAndShame strategy will be employed against political parties that fail to abide by the 50/50 representation aspiration, to have women involved and incorporated to positions of power within party structures.

Owing to the high number of incidences of political harassment of women, the cluster will establish a dedicated desk within the police (ZRP) that deals with the harassment of women in the form of threats of violence or actual physical harm. A working framework will be established by CSO's that champion gender equality which will highlight the steps to be taken when such a crime is committed and more so, it is important that the desk within the police is manned by women who have the requisite training to timeously handle such cases as they arise.

Set up a committee on gender diversity and youth

Women organisations will lead in the administration and oversight of activities that bring attention to gender in the elections. Whilst the cluster will ensure integrating gender and other cross-cutting issues into its activities and processes, a specific committee on gender diversity and youth will be set up. This committee will track issues on women and youth participation in the electoral process as well as key structures which feed into policy and legislative processes and suggest concrete ways for improvement. The committee will be used as a tool to fast-track the implementation of specific thematic decisions made by the cluster.

To ensure an informed discussion during the committee sessions, special attention will be paid to the thematic expertise and experience of the membership to the committee. To better understand the current gender issues, players and possible appropriate entry points for the cluster, strategic consultations will be held with selected women and youth organizations as well as the political party women and youth leagues. Recruitment, training, and deployment should be gender and youth sensitive. An expert will be hired to ensure that training materials and the training are gender sensitive.

Strategic Consultations, review of training and materials to ensure they are gender complaint

There will be a review of materials used in training for observers and other related materials to demonstrate that members of the CSOs cluster ensured that they are gender compliant. This includes gender-sensitive recruitment policies.

Strategic objective number 4: inclusion of strategic community organisations (Residents Associations, Community-Based Organisations and Emerging Social Groups)

The Faith Based Organisations (FBO), Community Based Organisations (CBO), residents groups and other community centred organisations are strategic in reaching communities that participate in electoral processes. This strategy will strengthen the capacity of these key groups in ensuring that participation is enhanced at the community level throughout the electoral cycle. These will be included in the current clusters to ensure their effective role in community mobilisation, monitoring of service delivery and dissemination of information as well as election observation.

5.6. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 6:
Rapid Response:Legal and Medical Services

5.8.1 Strategic Goal: World-class legal and medical services provided to cluster members as well as victims of human rights abuses

Context

A climate of fear and uncertainty which often curtails national civic space and hinders the work of human rights defenders during crucial moments in the democratic life of the country, is a constant feature of elections in Zimbabwe. For the past two decades, electoral contestation in Zimbabwe has been largely characterized by intimidation, violence and arbitrary arrest and detention of human right defenders and members of civic society. Even though political space seems to have opened up since Robert Mugabe left power, civic space and the exercise of fundamental freedoms have remained restricted by the regime. Violently repressed under Robert Mugabe, human rights defenders and civil society actors continue operating in a hostile environment under the current government.

The crackdown of civil society members has continued post the 2018 harmonised election. In March 2019, five civil society leaders were arrested at the Robert Mugabe International Airport and charged with subverting a constitutionally elected government. Since then threats to clamp down operations of CSOs by the President of Zimbabwe and his government have increased. In his State of the Nation address in 2020, the President threatened that "...all NGOs who do not stick to their mandates shall risk being de-registered or facing the wrath of the law". This was followed by directives by Provincial Development Coordinators requiring civil society organisations to either register with them and enter into memoranda of understanding or cease operations. The gazetting of the Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Bill further confirms that indeed the civic space for NGOs in Zimbabwe has evidently been shrinking. With these overtures, there is a greater likelihood that members of civil society will be targeted.

Organized Violence and Torture (OVT) has also remained a major challenge in Zimbabwe. According to the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), "[...] one of the deeply troubling aspects of OVT is the apparent lack of awareness of the serious consequences for victims' health, and especially their mental health." The cluster will therefore offer medical services coupled with psychosocial support to address the potential challenges to long-term problems of trauma and mental health. While the country has not witnessed the levels of violence that took place prior to the June 2008 Presidential election run-off, pockets of violence post the 2018 elections continue to be a cause for concern. The unfortunate events of the 1st of August shootings, the reprisals that followed the January 16-19 protests, and the violence that occurred in the run-up to the 26 March 2022 by-elections are a stuck reminder of the potentiality of a vicious 2023 elections.

Strategic objective 1: To dispense legal services to the cluster and members of civil society

Past elections have been characterized by violence, state sponsored torture and illegal detentions targeted at the individual cluster members. The violence and detentions are not only limited to cluster members but also extended to civil society, opposition political party supporters as well as members of the public. The Cluster will draw upon the services provided by its members under the stewardship of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) and the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA) to set up a rapid response mechanism to address matters of unlawful arrests and detentions by state authorities. Through public interest litigation, the cluster will ensure the observance of the rule of law, protection of and respect for human rights through providing litigation services to victims of human rights violations both within the cluster and to members of civil society in general.

Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU). Helping the victims and survivors of Organised Violence and Torture in Zimbabwe. Harare, February 2022

Strategic Objective 2: **To provide medical and psychological care for victims of violence and torture**

Since the crackdown on civil society continues unabated, manifested in the persecution of human rights defenders by an increasingly partisan government, the plight of survivors of gross and systematic human rights violations including those at the receiving end of violence and torture remains dire. Many victims normally require medical assistance through hospitalization or general treatment. Through organisations such as Counselling Services Unit (CSU) and Tree of Life, the cluster will ensure that victims of systematic human rights abuse (including torture) are provided with medical services. These services will include psychosocial care to address the long-term effect of trauma occasioned by violence. The cluster will systematically document the cases so that the survivors can pursue their rights to justice and other forms of reparations. Additionally, the Cluster will coordinate the building of capacity of medical personnel to enable them to assist as witnesses in the litigation of cases of victims of torture. Capacity building will also be extended to support staff on how to cope with cases of politically motivated violence and the assistance rendered to the victims. Further, the cluster will mobilise additional resources to cover victims of political violence and their rehabilitation beyond the life of this strategy.

Strategic Objective 3: To create linkages across all the other clusters to respond rapidly to any incidents that may arise before, during, and after elections.

The Cluster will create linkages across all the other clusters to respond rapidly to any incidents that may arise before, during, and after the election period. In view of the current operating and political environment, the cluster will not only offer medical and legal services but support the work of other clusters in so far as any legal or medical issues are concerned. Besides legal support to victims of human rights violations before, during and after the election period the cluster will also draw on the litigation expertise within the legal cluster to push for reforms and alignment of the electoral laws to the constitution in conjunction with the Oversight and Advocacy, Civic and Voter Education and Election Monitoring and Observation clusters. The Cluster will support ongoing efforts at litigation currently underway by members of the Cluster and will request the Legal Cluster to review provisions relating to the accreditation of observers as well as provision of voter education by the Cluster.

5.7. Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 7: Implementation Mechanisms, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation and Resource Mobilisation

Strategic Goal: Research, monitoring, and Evaluation

Context

The strategic pillar aims to ensure a coordinated approach to the implementation of the strategy as well as ensuring that targets are met through a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Whilst CSOs did well in monitoring the implantation of the past strategy there is room for improved coordination and monitoring implementation of activities.

Regular consultative meetings will be held between and among the members of the CSOs election cluster. The cluster will meet once a month and the meetings will become regular as the country builds towards the 2023 harmonised elections.

Specific objective number 1: knowledge and expertise of the cluster remain updated

Sharing of information amongst the cluster members on a continuous basis through an established framework of information sharing is pertinent in electoral processes. The cluster will review standardised training materials, checklists, and training to ensure uniformity of activities. A Communication Centre which will be transformed into a Situation Room a month before the election is crucial in information sharing and strengthening coordination of election-related activities. The Communication Centre will become a hub for receiving, verifying, and disseminating real-time information to enable immediate and timely reaction to situations evolving during the election period.

Setting up the information sharing platform, the situation room.

A communication center funded by the TRACE program was turned into a Situation Room before the election to coordinate the production of materials, recruitment, training, and deployment of observers. In view of the success of this mechanism in the past cycle the CSOs will set up the situation room a month before the election to assist with coordination of activities among the members as well as to ensure rapid and coordinated responses to election challenges as they occur.

Specific objective number 2: Continuous learning and tracking of progress against targets undertaken

The cluster will coordinate the standardisation of training programmes for the cluster members. Information from M&E reports will be shared among the cluster members and a documentation framework will be set up to inform future election activities. The coordination will include the sharing of duties, the development and compliance with a common code of conduct, common reporting forms and operating procedures for making decisions, integration of training and deployment plans, sharing of debriefing information and jointly issuance of statements and reports.

Setting up of the M&E unit within the cluster.

The M&E cluster member was not set up in the implementation period of the last strategy. Each member of the cluster was responsible for its M&E framework. It is however important that a depository of all M&E data be set up through members will populate with information from the different thematic areas they are implementing. This will allow for easy tracking of the implementation of the plan as well as to provide information on the successes and challenges the implementation of the strategy may be facing.

Ongoing M&E of the implementation of the strategy

During the implementation period of the previous strategy this was built into each member organization's implementation mechanisms. However, there was no data available to show joint tracking of implementation of activities. The cluster members will collaborate on tracking implementation of the strategy as well as tracking meeting of set goals and indicators. A centralised platform will be set out for data depository and tracking of the implementation of the strategy.

Specific objective 1: To Mobilize Resources for the Implementation of the Plan

For the strategy plan to be successfully implemented resources must be mobilised to ensure effective implementation of planned activities. While the strategy is designed to ensure close collaboration among the CSOs members, resource mobilisation for specific implementation of individual activities is left to each member organisation. However, resources must be mobilised for coordination of some of the activities including those that will require centralised activity implementation such as coordination meetings, message development and testing, materials development and distribution and M&E activities, training of trainers, where possible, sub-granting to members, CBOs, FBOs and Residents Associations.

The different elements of the strategy tend to be interlinked and hence a centralised framework for its implementation should be in place to ensure timely implementation of activities and also the monitoring and evaluation of the activities. The strategy must be internalized within the member organization for it to be successfully implemented. ZESN in partnership with ERC will coordinate the activities of the cluster thus ensuring that implementation plans are developed and progress towards the implementation of the strategy is tracked. Members of the cluster will draw their individual plans from this strategy and its members should identify themselves with this plan. The cluster will publicly launch this strategic plan to inform stakeholders of its existence and demonstrate cluster members' commitment to its implementation.

The Cluster through its coordination mechanism will mobilise resources and put in place mechanisms for grant management, accountability, and sustainability. Each cluster member will be responsible for resource mobilization for the activities they are implementing. In the early phases of the strategy the cluster will convene a donor round table meeting to present the strategy and identify partners that will support the implementation of some of the planned activities. The management of resources is critical in the implementation of the strategic plan and the sub-granting model used during the implementation of the past strategy will be utilised in the implementation phase of this strategy.

Specific objective number 2: to ensure full implementation, follow up and public awareness of this strategic plan

Zimbabwe CSOs 2022 to 2024 Election StrategyThe Cluster will create a strategic plan implementation team made of the leading representatives and rotating chairing of the clusters and coordinated by the teams from ZESN and ERC. The team will be responsible for activity coordination and convening coordination meetings between and among the cluster members. The team will also establish an information sharing platform to ensure effective activity coordination among the cluster members.

Chapter 6
Logical Framework and Work plan

6. Logical Framework and Work plan

Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 1: Civic and Voter Education **Strategic Goal: Access to voter information resulting in an informed, organized, active and peaceful citizen participation in the electoral process.**										
Increase turnout at registration	78% of the eligible voters (2018)	90% of eligible voters	Sedentary BVR desk at registrar general office. VR flash mobs at football pitches in both rural and urban areas. Onboard national and community personalities (media personalities, spiritual leaders, sporting personalities, [influencers]) to the voter registration process. Digital Broadcasting: National and community radio (target community radios), Television b. Social media (Facebook, twitter, TikTok, WhatsApp broadcasts) traditional Broadcasting: a. National and community Newspapers (adverts and factsheet excerpts). Door to door campaigns by voter educators. **CSOs** commissioned Billboards. "Blitz parties" alongside BVR registration to draw more attention to the process and encourage registration.	CVE messaging and materials developed. Trained voter educators CVE activities undertaken. Informed electorate.	Number of registered voters. Number of materials developed. Number of activities undertaken. Number of educators trained.	The voter registers Training sign-in sheets BVR Activity reports M&E reports	**Risks** CSOs not allowed to conduct CVE Resources to conduct a nationwide CVE not availed Activities will be politicized thereby causing limited and apprehensive uptake by the targeted population. **Assumptions** CSOs will be accredited on time Guidelines on how to conduct CVE will be released on time by ZEC The donor cluster on elections starts releasing resources for civic and voter education before the commencement of the voter registration exercise. Guidelines on how registration will be rolled out, timetable , and location of registration centers will be released early for planning purposes	X	X	?
Increased voter turnout at election day	85% (2018)	90%	Factsheets: Highlight where Zimbabwe ranks within SADC as a means of motivation towards E-Day. Vehicles with loudhailers alongside the distribution of pamphlets and brochures to encourage E-Day turnout. #ShowUp (Last activity before the "cooling off" period). Non-physical channels of communication (Social media, Tv, local and internet radio, podcasts).	CVE messaging and materials developed Trained polling staff CVE activities undertaken Informed electorate	Number of CVE materials developed Number of CVE educators trained Number of activities undertaken Number of voters on election day	Material development report Electoral commission activity reports Election day voter turnout figures	**Risks** CSOs not allowed to conduct CVE Resources to conduct a nationwide CVE not availed on time **Assumptions** CSO will be accredited on time to conduct voter education Guidelines on how to conduct CVE will be released on time by ZEC Guidelines on how voting will be rolled out, and the location of polling stations and conducted will be released early for planning purposes	X	X	
Reduce cases of spoilt/rejected votes	1.49% (2018)	0.5%	Election simulations/ mock-elections to learn by doing. a. Dramas/ plays where the primary scene is voting. Video clips / Gifs that show how to correctly mark the ballot paper. Process infographics. Storyboards - in newspapers or as standalone series.	CVE messaging and materials developed Trained polling staff ready to assist on E-day Informed electorate	Reduced number of spoilt ballots at close of polls.	Material development report Training report Activity reports ZEC election report	**Risks** CSOs not allowed to conduct CVE Resources to conduct a nationwide CVE not availed on time **Assumptions** CSO will be accredited on time to conduct voter education Guidelines on how to conduct CVE will be released on time by ZEC Guidelines on how voting will be rolled out, timetable , and location of polling stations will be released early for planning purposes Sample of the ballot paper released on time	X	X	

Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y1	Y2	Y3
Reduced cases of electoral violence and fraud	TBA	TBA	National, regional, and local dispute resolution and mediation Dare/Indabas. **2**Training of law enforcement agencies on policing elections. Onboarding neighbourhood watch and community policing forums as a conflict prevention mechanism. Campaign against electoral violence and fraud though: **a.** developing jingles to be used on digital media platforms and radio (target community radios and radio stations that relates to youth and women who normally face the brunt of election conflict) Television (skits and drama series)	Peaceful and credible conduct of elections Eradication of no-go zones for political parties and candidates Speedy resolution of conflicts	Zero cases of politically motivated violence and fraud	Newspaper reports Reports from the police ZEC Report CSOs election reports International observers report Newspaper reports Reports from the police ZEC Report CSOs election reports International observers report	**Risks** Resources to conduct a nationwide anti-violence campaign not availed on time No trust in CSO by the electorate to conduct anti-violence programmes Lack of Political will to condone political violence **Assumptions** Political parties will adhere to the code of conduct governing the conduct of political parties in elections	X	X	X
Coordination for voter education for increased voter outreach			Monthly Coordination meetings M&E Visits Development of standardized CVE materials and Training on Voter Information and Issue-based Civic and Voter Education Methods and Delivery Mechanisms. Post-election Review of Civic and Voter Education Activities	A coordinated and uniform CVE	A Coordinated CSOs supporting the implementation of this strategic plan and the reporting requirements set therein	Monthly Coordination meetings minutes M&E Reports	**Risks** Lack of coordination among the CSOs CVE Materials that are not standardized **Assumptions** The CSOs strategy will provide a guiding framework for CVE That resources to CSOs will be channelled to CSO s based on the strategy. CSOs see the need to coordinate activities	X	X	X

Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y1	Y2	Y3
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 2: Election Monitoring and Observation **Strategic Goal: Build the capacity of credible, non-partisan domestic observers to effectively monitor the entire electoral process**										
Strategic Objective 1,2 &3		TBA	**Assessing the legal framework** Desktop review of the legal framework governing elections. Report production Stakeholder engagement meetings on the findings of the legal framework assessment (government, parliament, ZEC, and political parties) petitions, litigations Public mobilisation on the findings	Electoral law aligned to the constitution. Stakeholders and the public sensitised on the need for reform	Number of laws assessed Number of electoral laws aligned to the constitution Number of stakeholder engagement meetings	Assessment report M&E reports	**Risks** Resources to conduct a nationwide the assessment not availed Unwillingness on the part of the GVT to reform the electoral laws **Assumptions** The donors of elections start releasing resources for civic and voter education before the commencement of the voter registration exercise. Political parties wiling to reform the electoral laws	X	X	
Strategic Objective 1,2 &3	No baseline Data	TBA	**Observing polling station mapping and setup** Development of training manual checklist, reporting protocols, and drawing of the sample Recruitment, training, and deployment of observers Engagement of stakeholders	Polling station mapping that responds to acceptable international standards	Number of observers deployed to observe the polling station mapping Number of engagement of stakeholders	Training reports Observation reports	**Risk** Observers not accredited and/or not accredited on time to observe the process. ZEC not releasing polling station mapping guidelines **Assumptions** ZEC will accredit OBs on time and the polling station guidelines released on time	X	X	
Strategic Objective 2&3			**Observing Biometric Voter Registration and Audit of the Voters Roll** Preparations on training content and design Materials development and testing Training of trainers of obs Deployment and reporting on the BVR Stakeholder engagement Monitoring and Evaluation Audit of the register	An inclusive and credible Voter register	Number of observers deployed to observe the BVR Number of reports produced Stakeholder engagement meetings	Training reports Observation reports Meetings reports Audit report	**Risks** Observers not accredited on time The copy of the register not released in a format that allows for auditing **Assumptions** Observers accredited on time The roll will be released on time and in an auditable format	X	X	
Strategic Objective 1,2 &3			**Observing Elections Campaign** Preparations on training content and design. Materials development and testing. Training of trainers of observers. Deployment and reporting on the campaign. Monitoring and Evaluation Stakeholder engagement.	Credible campaign period	Number of observers deployed. Number of reports received Number of stakeholder engagements. Number of issues attended to and resolved.	Training reports. Monitoring reports. M&E reports	**Risks** Observers not accredited on time. The political environment may not be conducive for the monitoring effort. **Assumptions** Observers accredited on time Political environment on election day is conducive to observation.			X

Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y1	Y2	Y3
Strategic Objective 2 &3			**Media Monitoring** Preparations on training content and design. Materials development and testing (training manual, checklist, reporting protocols and database development Training of trainers of monitors. Monitoring and Evaluation and Stakeholder engagement.	Balanced media coverage of the election	Number of observers deployed Number of reports received Number of issues attended to and addressed	Training reports Monitoring reports Media reports	**Risks** The political environment may not be conducive for the monitoring effort Media houses not receptive of the findings **Assumptions** Resources will be released early for the monitoring effort	X	X	X
Strategic Objective 2 &3			**Polling, Counting, tabulation and publication of results** Preparations on training content and design. Materials development and testing. Training of trainers of observers and cascade training. Deployment and reporting on the campaign. Monitoring and Evaluation.	Credible election process and acceptance of results	Number of observers deployed Number of reports received	Training reports Observation reports	**Risks** Guidelines on voting released late Observers not accredited on time The political environment may not be conducive for the monitoring effort **Assumptions** Guidelines on the voting released on time Observers accredited on time Political environment conducive for the observation effort		X	
Strategic Objective 1,2 & 3			**Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT)** Preparations on training content and design. Materials development and testing (training manual, checklist, reporting protocols and database development). Training of trainers of observers Deployment and reporting on the election. Stakeholder engagement.	Verifiable election results Credible election results	Number of observers deployed Number of reports produced.	Training Reports PVT OB report	**Risks** Guidelines on voting released late Voters roll not released on time Observers not accredited on time The political environment may not be conducive for the conduct of the PVT **Assumptions** Voters roll released on time Observers accredited on time		X	
Strategic Objective 2 & 3			**Observing Electoral Dispute Resolution** Preparations on training content and design. Materials development and testing Training of trainers of observers. Deployment and reporting on the campaign. Setting up of the EDR tracker. Stakeholder engagement Monitoring and evaluation.	Acceptance of results Follow up on elections disputes	Number of Observers deployed Number of reports received on the observation process	Training Reports Observation Reports	**Risks** Guidelines on dispute resolution released late and not clear. The political environment may not be conducive for the monitoring effort **Assumptions** ZEC will release clear guidelines on electoral dispute resolutions. The electoral laws provide for clear dispute mechanisms. Observers accredited on time.		X	X
Strategic Objective 1,2 & 3			**Post-election period and cross-cutting issues** Post-election conference	A review of the election process and recommendation for reform	Number of people who will attend the conference	Post-election conference report	**Risk** The political environment not conducive for the post-election conference **Assumptions** Political parties accept the outcome of the election			X

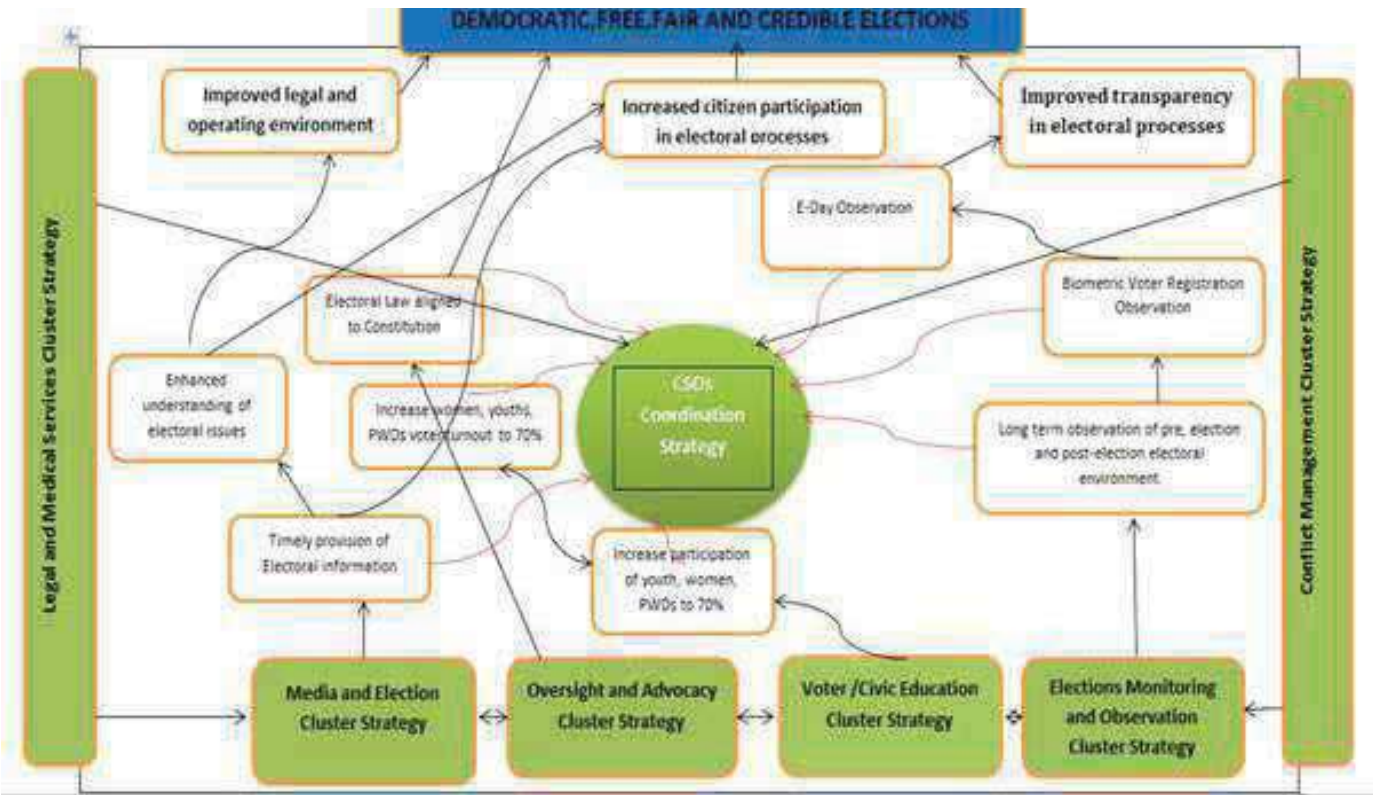| Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 3: Oversight and Advocacy **Strategic Goal: To contribute towards credible elections in line with the constitution, regional and international standards governing the holding of democratic elections (oversight and advocacy)**										
To influence improvements in the legal framework for free, fair, and credible elections in Zimbabwe.			**Assessment of the electoral laws** Targeted litigation Petition to parliament and to regional organizations. Monitoring of compliance Network-building strategy. **Electoral Reform Campaign** Communications strategy for Critical messaging. Fact sheets on electoral principles. Countdown or timeline of events surrounding selected legal issues (tracker). Social media strategy for Web presence	Electoral Laws aligned to the constitution One Million Citizens aware of the reform issues CSOs continued commitment to Implementing the reform agenda	Number of electoral laws aligned to the constitution Number of citizens aware of the reform issues. Number of radio programmes and advertisements on the reform agenda. Number of newspaper advertisements on the reform agenda. Number of CSOs implementing the reform agenda.	The Hansard Court Records Monitoring reports Activity Reports and Feedback	**Risks** Judicial capture The government refusing to abide by the court orders **Risks** Political parties refusing to pass parliamentary bills of electoral reforms. Stability of CSOs operating environment CSOs willingness to work on electoral Issues. **Assumptions** Political will to align the electoral laws to the constitution is there. Parliament willing to discuss electoral reforms bills. Stability of CSOs operating environment.	X	X	
To ensure sustained engagement of key stakeholders on electoral reform dialogue ahead of the 2023 elections at local and regional level.			Stakeholder analysis and mapping. conduct advocacy meetings, providing research papers and policy briefs with key stakeholders, (political parties, International governments, ZEC, Government, and state institutions, CSOs – domestic, international). Communications strategy	Consensus Building on Electoral Reform between CSOs, Commissions ZEC technical partners and the Region (SADC and AU)	Number of meetings held with SADC and AU, Parliament, ZEC, and other Institutions supporting Democracy	Meeting Reviews and Reports	**Risks** SADC, ZEC, and other institutions refuse to engage the cluster on electoral reforms **Assumptions** ZEC/CSO established Forums	X	X	

Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y 1	Y 2	Y 3
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 4: Media and Elections **Strategic Goal: Enhancing the role of the media in elections**										
Media structures (mainstream and alternative), capacity and elections			Development of media engagement strategy. Capacity Building of media on electoral coverage. Development of a media and elections code of conduct. Media Monitoring. Research on the use of social media. Map and share information on Citizen Journalism.	Media strategy Code of conduct Balanced news items	Media monitoring Code of conduct	Media monitoring reports Training reports	**Risks** Not all media participating in the capacity-building effort. Laws used to stop the implementation of the capacity building **Assumptions** All media houses will participate in the capacity-building efforts	X	X	X
To advocate for enabling media environment, laws, and policies			Litigation on dual accreditation. Address security of media. Data security training. ZEC engagement on information sharing.	Single accreditation of journalists to cover the elections. Security of journalists covering elections	Number of journalists trained. Number of engagement meetings.	Training reports Minutes of meetings Court records	**Risk** ZEC not willing to engage with the media Some media houses refuse to be bound by the provisions of the code of conduct **Assumptions** ZEC willing to engage the media The environment conducive to carrying out activities	X	X	
Voter Access to credible electoral Information			Strengthening and creation of community media platforms and content generation capacity. Amplification of voter education information and messages. Assessment of existing media platforms.	Stronger media platforms. one million voters reached through media voter education.	Number of eligible voters reached by the CVE carried out by the media.	Election reports Voter turnout figures.	**Risks** The laws being used to stop the media from carrying out CVE **Assumptions** Media will be allowed to carry out CVE. Media will be accredited to carry out CVE	X	X	

Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y1	Y2	Y3
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 5: Cross Cutting Issues (Gender, Youths and PWD) **Strategic goal: increased participation of women, youth, people with disabilities in the electoral process**										
Activities that encourage the inclusion of people with disabilities in all activities of the electoral calendar	Turnout 10%	Turnout 60%	Advocacy and lobbying for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all election activities within the election cycle. Advocate for easy access to polling stations for people with disabilities Lobby for the right to choose who can assist to vote	Access to the electoral process by PWDs. Increase in voter turnout for PWDs from 10% to 60%	Number of PWDs with access to the electoral process	CSO Election Reports ZEC reports M&E reports	**Risk** Lack of resources to ensure access of PWDs to the electoral process **Assumptions** Political will available to support access to the electoral process for PWD		X	X
Mainstreaming gender and youth participation in all activities and process of the cluster			Set up a committee on gender diversity and youth Strategic Consultations Review of training materials to ensure they are gender complaint #NameAndShame, deliberate strategy against political parties that continue to have a token participation of women that doesn't advance the 50/50 representation.	Impartial participation of women and youths in the electoral process	Number of youths and women participating in the electoral process. Number mainstreamed materials for gender and youth.	Election reports Monitoring reports	**Risks** The political environment does not allow for full participation of women and youth - their participation leads to targeted physical harassment or intimidation. **Assumptions** The legal framework allows for equal participation in the electoral process for women and youths	X	X	X
Increase participation of the Youth women in the electoral process	TBA	Youth to 80% and women 70%	**Meet them where there are** : Digital platforms -Facebook, WhatsApp, Snap Chat TikTok Physical platforms - "street corners" "pama bridge". Have days dedicated to having "fireside chats" at the areas where there are regular large congregations (nhimbe, sports gala's, churches) . Tailored mapping for rural and urban areas, "market days, cattle dipping days, public outdoor party venues" "cool" branding of electoral non-partisan material to have "walking billboards"	Increased visibility in positions of responsibility within the electoral cycle e.g., trainers	Increased excitement and contributions to governance discourse. (This indicator is based on the observation of vibrant football discourse)	Election Reports	**Risks** Violent reception to public gatherings reduces uptake of electoral activities and the electoral process in general. **Assumptions** strong public ownership of the activities leading to increased participation.		X	X
Inclusion of strategic community organisations			Community mobilisation . Monitoring of service delivery. Dissemination of information as well as Election observation.	Community participation in electoral processes	Number of Community Mobilisation activities Number of community observers deployed	Election observation reports M7& Reports	**Risks** Violent reception to public gatherings reduces uptake of electoral activities and the electoral process in general. **Assumptions** strong public ownership of the activities leading to increased participation.		X	X

| Logical Framework | | | | | | | | Work Plan | | |
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y1	Y2	Y3
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 6: Rapid Response: Legal and Medical Services **Strategic Goal: World-class legal and medical services provided to cluster members as well as victims of human rights abuses**										
To dispense legal services to the cluster and members of civil society			Public interest litigation that includes strategic impact litigation, and anti-impunity litigation among other specific forms of litigation.	Numbers of cases litigated. Judgments of the cases lodged with the courts	Outcome of litigated cases.	Cases recorded Periodic reports Judgments	**Risks** Political environment not willing to allow lawyers to prosecute the cases. Political environment inhibitive for victims to report and access medical and psychological support. **Assumptions** Lawyers are allowed to access victims and litigate.			
To provide medical and psychological care for victims of violence and torture	TBA	TBA	Medical and psychosocial care. Documentation of medical and forensic injuries Counselling and rehabilitation of victims of violence and torture. Psychoeducation and Coping Skills (PACS) intervention,	Number of victims provided with medical and psychological care. Number of victims undergoing counselling and rehabilitation.	Quality of medical and psychological assistance provided. Frequent Individual and group counselling sessions. Evidence-based therapies	Periodic Reports Hospital records	**Risks** Victims inability to access public health facilities. Health workers fearful to treat "political cases" or are even intimidated themselves for doing so. Victims denied treatment because of the perceived nature of their cases. **Assumptions** Victims of violence and torture can access medical centres	X	X	X
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 7: Implementation mechanisms, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation **Strategic Goal: Research, monitoring, and Evaluation**										

Logical Framework								Work Plan		
Strategic objectives	Baseline value	Target value	Proposed Activities	Outputs	Performance Indicators	Means of Verification	Risks and Assumptions	Y1	Y2	Y3
Thematic area/ Strategic Pillar Number 7: Implementation mechanisms, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation **Strategic Goal: Research, monitoring, and Evaluation**										
Knowledge and expertise of the cluster remain updated			Strategic sharing meetings Standardisation of training materials. Setting up of the information sharing platform, the situation room.	Sharing of information Stronger coordination	Number of meetings. Number of materials standardized and shared.	Meeting reports Reports from the situation room	**Risks** Political environment not conducive for the setting up of the information-sharing platform Cluster members not willing to work together **Assumption** The political environment will be stable to allow for the implementation of activities	X	X	X
Continuous learning and tracking of progress against targets undertaken			Setting up of the M&E unit within the cluster. Development of a monitoring and evaluation plan. Ongoing M&E of the implementation of the strategy.	Continuous learning	M&E Unit Monitoring plan	M&E Reports	**Risks** Political environment not conducive for the setting up of the information-sharing platform. Cluster members not willing to work together **Assumptions** Political environment will be stable to allow for the implementation of activities. CSOs willing to work together	X	X	X
To mobilize resources for the implementation of the strategy	TBA	TBA	Mobilisation of resources to fund the strategy. Donor roundtable to sale the strategy Training on grant management, accountability, and sustainability.	Resources mobilised for the implementation of the strategy. Cluster members trained on grant management, accountability and sustainability Resources mobilised for the implementation of the strategy Cluster members trained on grant management, accountability, and sustainability	Strategy funded. Number of cluster members trained on grant management, accountability, and sustainability	Training reports	**Risks** Donor partners not funding the strategy **Assumptions** Political environment will be stable to allow for the implementation of activities Donor partners willing to fund the strategy	X		
To ensure full implementation, follow up, and public			The setting up of a strategic plan implementation team. Publicity of this strategy. Coordinate meetings with key	Implementation of the plan Visibility of the publicity	Number of coordination meetings	Media reports Meeting minutes		X	X	

Annexure 1 Cluster Theory of change

Annexure 2: CSOs Involved in Elections in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Election
Support Network
Promoting Democratic
Elections In Zimbabwe

Funded by
the European Union

Sida
SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY