



MALAWI ELECTORAL COMMISSION

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MEDIA, CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

July 2012

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR MEDIA, CIVIC AND VOTER EDUCATION
COMMITTEE**

1. Name of Committee

- a. The Committee shall be called the Media, Civic and Voter Education Committee

2. Composition of Committee

- a. The committee shall be appointed amongst the Commissioners and shall consist of not less than 3 members. A quorum shall be two members.
- b. The chairperson of the Committee shall be appointed among the Commissioners through a method chosen by the Commissioners forming the Committee
- c. Members shall hold their positions through the tenure of their position as Commissioners. With approval of the Commission a change may be proposed and accepted to the Composition of the Committee

3. Secretary

- a. The Head of Civic and Voter Education shall serve as the secretary of the Committee while the Head of Media and Public Relations shall be the alternate.

4. Attendance and frequency of meetings

- a. The Committee will meet face-to-face no less than four times annually and will meet and consult by telephone and/or electronically as often as is deemed necessary and appropriate. A meeting may also be called outside the quarter if there is need necessitating so.
- b. The Chief Elections Officer, Deputy Chief Elections Officer (Ops), Deputy Chief Elections Officer (F&A) or other heads of departments, if necessary, shall attend the meetings.
- c. Other Commissioners also have the right of attendance.

- d. Depending on the need, the Committee shall have powers to invite or summon the attendance of any person within MEC or outside the MEC if their presence and expertise are needed.
- e. Such members invited to attend the Committee meetings, but are not permanent members of the Committee, shall not have voting powers.

5. Notice of Meetings

- a. Meetings of the Committee shall be organised by the secretary of the Committee at the request of any of its members or at the request of the Commission if it considers it necessary.
- b. Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date together with an agenda of items to be discussed, shall be forwarded to each member of the Committee and any other person required to attend in a timely manner before the date of the meeting.
- c. Supporting papers shall also be sent to Committee members and to other attendees as appropriate at the same time.

6. Authority

- a. The committee is authorized by the Commission to investigate any activity within its terms of reference. It is authorized to seek any information it requires from any employee and all employees are directed to cooperate with any request made by the committee.
- b. The chairperson of the Committee shall be present at the Commission meeting to answer questions
- c. The committee is authorized by the Commission to obtain outside independent professional advice and secure the attendance of an outsider with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this is necessary.

7. Duties

The Committee will carry out the following duties for the Commission:

a. Civic and Voter Education TORs

- i. Advise, recommend and report to the Commission on civic and voter education matters.
- ii. Approve the development and distribution of C&VE materials.
- iii. Supervise and Monitor implementation of civic and voter education programmes.
- iv. Recommend to MEC for approval, direction and any support needed for success of C&VE programmes.
- v. Coordinate implementation of C&VE at all levels.
- vi. Supervise the Training/briefings of all C&VE stakeholders and partners.
- vii. Establish working arrangements and linkages with C&VE stakeholders for the successful delivery of C&VE including the private sector and media.
- viii. Supervise the development of work-plans and budgets in line with the electoral calendar for the development and delivery of C&VE.
- ix. Guide C&VE implementation in line with the set objectives and outputs.
- x. Guide C&VE providers that wish to develop their own materials/messages and facilitate vetting of such products by MEC.
- xi. Recommend for accreditation and supervise accredited stakeholders
- xii. Explore innovative ways of providing C&VE Programmes

- xiii. Conduct regular briefing sessions with political parties and other stakeholders on developments and progress on C&VE
- xiv. Implement C&VE where gaps exist.
- xv. Regulate the implementation of C&VE.

b. Media and Public Relations

- i. Review development and implementation of the Communications Strategy
- ii. Facilitate and supervise the development of Communication and Public Relations materials like press releases/statements, press conferences, radio and TV programmes
- iii. Devise innovative and cost effective means of improving the Commissions relations with all electoral stakeholders
- iv. Review the Commission's image among electoral stakeholders
- v. Ensure that the Media and Public Relations Department is adequately resourced and funded to carry out its functions.
- vi. To review Media and Public Relations Annual work plan before submission to the Commission
- vii. Coordinate monitoring of media coverage on electoral issues through the Media Monitoring Unit.
- viii. Coordinate capacity building activities for the media in reporting elections and all issues related to elections e.g the legal frame work
- ix. Coordinate activities that provide for balanced and non-partisan reporting and coverage of electoral issues like public debates, stakeholders meetings.
- x. Oversee recruitment and supervision of MEC stringers
- xi. Recommend to the Commission for engagement of external expertise/consultants in the event that a need arises to do so.
- xii. To consider other topics, as defined by the commissioners.

8. The role of MEC

- a. The Commission will retain the overall responsibility for C&VE
- b. Will accredit eligible partners
- c. Vet and approve C&VE materials developed by partners and giving a symbol of authority before use of such materials.
- d. Supervise the Media, Civic and Voter Education Committee to ensure that the strategy is followed.
- e. Enforce the Code of Conduct
- f. Provide the required support to ensure the success of the C&VE programme, including facilitation of funding for accredited CSOs with Cooperating partners.

9. Reporting Procedures

- a. The Committee will provide an annual written report on its activities for the information of the Commission, as well as such additional updates as the Committee may deem appropriate.
- b. The Committee shall, in its report to the Commission, identify any matters in respect of which it considers that action or improvements is needed, and making recommendations as to the steps to be taken.
- c. A separate section of the annual report shall describe the work of the Committee or departments under the Committee are discharging.

10. Guiding Principles in implementing the Communications, C&VE strategies

The Committee will be guided by the following principles when implementing the activities:

- Objectivity
- Transparency and Accountability
- Effectiveness

- Accessibility
- Appropriateness
- Participatory approaches
- Inclusiveness
- Timeliness
- Professionalism
- Non –Partisanship
- Independence
- Cost effectiveness