



IICDEM, 2026 Session on

GLOBAL THEME 05 RISK MANAGEMENT AND ELECTORAL RESILIENCE



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Democracy and Election Management
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GT 05: Risk Management and Electoral Resilience

Date and Time	22/01/2026 at 2:15 PM – 3:45 PM
Venue	MR - 19
Moderator	Mr. Erik Asplund, Principal Advisor, International IDEA

Speakers and Participants

Mr. Erik Asplund, Senior Advisor, International IDEA

Mr. Sead Alihodzic, Principal Advisor, / International IDEA

Mr. Abdool Rahman, Electoral Commissioner, Office of the Electoral Commissioner, Mauritius

Rapporteur Name

Lochna Sharma



1. Introduction & Session Overview

The session on “Electoral Risk Management and Resilience-building” at the India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM) 2026, held January 21st to 23rd at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, addressed strategies for identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks to electoral integrity, with a focus on natural hazards amid climate change. Drawing from International IDEA’s frameworks, it emphasised proactive processes to enhance situational awareness and preventive actions. The session featured two distinct presentations: Sead Alihodzic, Principal Advisor, International IDEA, outlined key definitions of electoral risks, threats, crises, and management, and showcased Australia’s Electoral Commission’s risk assessment tools, including a detailed risk matrix. The second, by Erik Asplund, Senior Advisor at International IDEA, specifically examined natural hazards’ impacts on elections, highlighting 2024’s disruptions in 18 countries.

The initial segment defined electoral risk as potential negative occurrences from internal/ external factors, advocating systematic knowledge-building for mitigation. It detailed Australia’s matrix, rating risks by likelihood (rare to almost certain) and consequences (negligible to severe), emphasizing collaborative workshops. Asplund’s part focused on resilience against hazards, noting climate-exacerbated events like floods affecting voter access and infrastructure in countries including India and Indonesia. Discussions explored integrating these into EMB practices. A case study from Mauritius illustrated application: In 2024, the Office of the Electoral Commissioner (OEC) partnered with International IDEA’s Protecting Elections Project, using V-cycle workshops to map risks like cyclones, improving inter-agency coordination and response.

The session aligned with IICDEM’s themes of resilient democracies, promoting global knowledge-sharing on tools like matrices and early warnings. Q&A addressed adaptations for contexts like India’s vast elections, underscoring EMBs’ role in countering uncertainties.

2. Analytical Synthesis

The presentations collectively argued for proactive electoral risk management to safeguard integrity amid diverse threats. Mr. Alihodzic defined core concepts: electoral risk as potential negative events from internal/external factors, threats as exploitable situations/actors, crises as urgent integrity damages, and management as systematic processes for awareness and prevention (International IDEA 2016). He also emphasised Australia's risk assessment model, using a matrix to rate risks (low to extreme) based on likelihood and consequences, with tools like consequence criteria (e.g., severe: national impact, legal breaches) and tolerance tables guiding actions such as treatment or escalation. This promotes collaborative stakeholder workshops to mitigate biases, shifting EMBs from reactive to preventive postures.

Mr. Asplund's segment applied these to natural hazards, noting 2024's "super-cycle" where hazards disrupted 23 elections in 18 countries, exacerbated by climate change, affecting stages from registration to counting. He stressed resilience-building through integrated risk strategies, highlighting vulnerabilities in hazard-prone areas.

Mr. Rahman provided insights from the experiences of managing elections in cyclone-affected Mauritius. Mr. Sead and Mr. Rahman's approach to the theme was distinctly philosophical yet prudent.

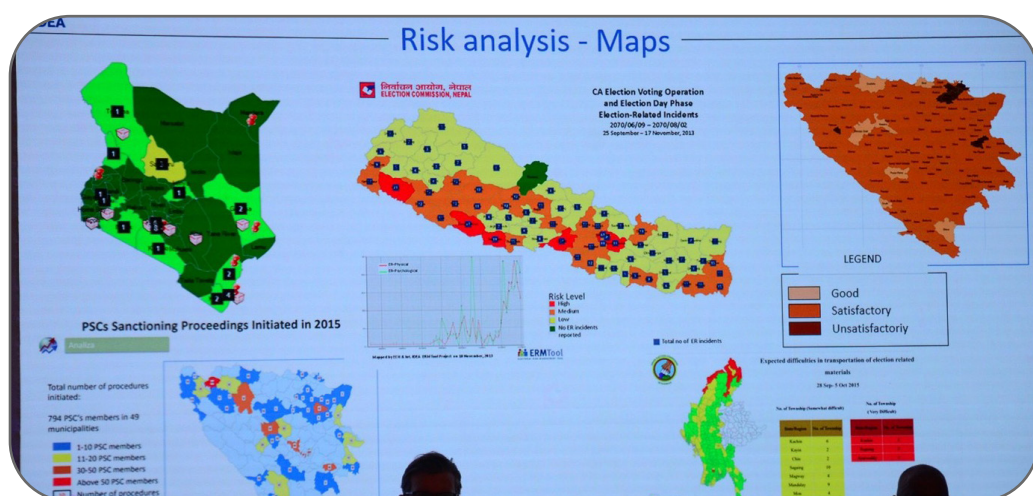
Situated in IICDEM's resilient democracy framework, the session advances discourse on adaptive election management, relevant for EMBs facing global uncertainties like climate disruptions, ensuring voter trust and participation. Comparatively, Australia's quantitative matrix contrasts Mauritius's holistic approach: Under IDEA's project, Mauritius's OEC conducted 2023-2024 workshops mapping risks via V-cycle, identifying cyclone threats to polling, leading to enhanced protocols and inter-agency plans for small-island contexts.

- **Mr. Sead.** : “Electoral risk is a possibility of negative electoral occurrence that may be caused by external or internal factors.”
- **On threats:** “An electoral threat is a situation or actor that can exploit electoral vulnerabilities.”
- **On management:** “Electoral risk management is a systematic effort (process) undertaken to improve knowledge about and situational awareness of both internal and external risks to electoral processes, in order to initiate timely preventive and mitigating action ”
- **Erik Asplund:** “During the 2024 super-cycle year of elections, at least 23 elections... were affected by natural hazards, impacting millions of voters around the world. Climate change exacerbated many of these weather events...”



3. Practitioner Takeaways

Linking to IICDEM's pillars of resilience and integrity, key takeaways include adopting risk matrices to evaluate threats systematically, fostering preventive cultures in EMBs. Australia's likelihood-consequence framework for workshops; V-cycle mapping from Mauritius for hazard-prone contexts are measures that could be adopted by other EMBs. Additionally, procedures involving early assessments, stakeholder consultations, and escalation tables to decide on acceptance, monitoring, or treatment can also be adopted as an effective risk-mitigation strategy. Innovations like integrating climate data for natural hazard forecasting enhance awareness. Institutional arrangements including Inter-agency collaborations, as in Mauritius's OEC-IDEA partnership, build shared resilience plans. Lastly, using quantitative matrices globally to standardise risk ratings, reducing bias through collaborative exercises, and prioritising external threats like climate events in planning are some of the strategies that can be implemented to address the evolving nature of threats and risks.



4. Way Forward

Inconsistent integration of climate risks into electoral planning, limited data on hazard impacts in vulnerable regions, and biases in subjective assessments without standardized tools are some of the gaps that were identified through the discussion. As mentioned, EMBs adopting hybrid frameworks combining matrices with V-cycle mapping, enhanced by AI for real-time hazard monitoring can be applied. Further, expanding projects like International IDEA's to more countries, mandating annual risk audits and cross-regional training under II-DEM can contribute to capacity building as well as risk management. Global collaborations could develop shared databases on election disruptions, ensuring adaptive strategies that prioritise inclusivity and mitigate uncertainties for resilient democracies.



5. Conclusion

This IICDEM session underscores electoral risk management's role in fortifying democracies against threats, exemplified by tools and cases like Mauritius, empowering EMBs to build proactive, hazard-resilient systems for enduring integrity.





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