Review of international assistance to political party and party system development

Case study report: Nigeria

Pilar Domingo and Clement Nwankwo

December 2010

Acknowledgements

Contents

Tables, figures & boxes

Tables

Boxes

Executive summary

Political party and party system support in Nigeria is unfolding in a climate of political and institutional uncertainty. Nigeria has formally been a multiparty democracy since 1999. However, the electoral process for acceding public office remains problematic. The April 2007 election, which brought President Yar'Adua to power, was particularly lacking in credibility, with high levels of violence, manipulation and fraud. Political parties have a poor public image and are seen principally as vehicles of patronage and clientelism. There are over 50 parties formally registered, however, only four or five are considered to be viable. Since 1999, Nigeria has been governed by one party in what can be characterised as a dominant party system, with the ruling People's Democratic Party obtaining over 70% of the vote in 2007.

In this context, the donor community[1] has chosen to deepen its support for democratic processes, moving beyond the more short-term logic of electoral observation and electoral support to incorporating more long-term substantive support across a range of institutions and actors. This includes a new basket fund which integrates political party support as one of six pillars for deepening democracy. The new Joint Donor Basket Fund II (JDBF-II) includes the participation of DFID, CIDA, the EU and the UNDP. It is currently only at the start of its life and will run until 2015. In addition to the basket fund, USAID has a longer history of political party support through the IRI. And there is some marginal presence of the European party foundations.

There has been a change in donor thinking on the need to engage more fully with political actors. At the same time this presents challenges regarding how to support political processes and actors without been perceived as interfering with domestic politics. The Nigeria context is currently one of high volatility and the role of donors in the country is constrained by the fact of limited capacity to leverage positive change. It would seem that at most, donors can work with the fact of the strong public outcry and legitimacy crisis that was unleashed following the 2007 election, and Nigeria's interest in strengthening its international image.

Donors are confronted with the dilemma of how far they can support certain institutions and processes without seeming complicit with the inadequacies of political system. One concrete dilemma that has been an important matter of debate is how far the international community can work with Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). There is a case for saying that the realistic way forward is through piecemeal reform that can instrumentally shift the institutional incentive structures in the direction of improved accountability, probity and transparency in how political competition is organised, and political parties behave.

Political party support in Nigeria was, until recently, not an important area of donor intervention, to a large extent given the particular history of political and democratic development. To the extent that it has been present, it has generally taken the form of the 'standard method' of political party support, perhaps somewhat unimaginatively so, with a focus on top-down technical assistance, and some facilitation of inter-party dialogue. There is little sense of any meaningful impact on party development or conduct. The current basket fund signals some progress on this in terms of being context sensitive, and more politically attuned, but is at too early a stage to be assessed in terms of impact. The problem of buy-in by key stakeholders – namely political parties – was evident. Overall, there is the sense of limited consultation with political parties to ensure a more needs-based and demand driven approach to party support. A further recurrent feature was that a range of political party members themselves tended to have little knowledge or awareness of political party support.

---

[1] In the main, this report focuses on the support provided by donor agencies for party assistance, rather than examining other external actors, except where explicitly stated. This reflects the dominance of donors in assistance in this area in Nigeria.

Looking forward

- Understanding context and sophisticated political analysis is now part of how some donors are beginning to think about political party assistance, and this signifies an important step forward which should not be undervalued. But this knowledge needs to be translated into more effective action. A problem driven political economy approach is likely to be more effective in identifying opportunities for action.

- Long-term engagement also requires building in the possibility of re-adjustment and adaptation in light of unfolding political events on the ground. Some measure of dilemma analysis and scenario planning may be useful to guide a more flexible approach to programming and implementation.

- Related to this, donor thinking needs to integrate the acceptance that cause and effect measurements will not be easy to establish. In part this is about accepting that the nature of the transformation sought is deeply political and dependent on domestic processes, so attribution is unlikely to be clear or directly resulting from donor action. On the other hand, a political economy informed approach should allow for more realistic objectives to be set, which take better account of contextual realities.

- There is now a wider consensus within the donor community that for democracy support to be useful, donors need to engage with more long-term and structural support than the kind of assistance provided in the past, which has focused on short-term events and technical assistance around elections.

- In the end, the buy-in of key stakeholders is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of programming. This should be combined with more evident consultation processes which allow more room for demand-based thinking behind programme design and implementation. This is not without risks, but ownership over processes of change by political parties seems essential. It also seems evident that purely supply-driven forms of engagement are unlikely to be effective.

1   Introduction

Nigeria has formally been a multiparty democracy since 1999. However, the electoral process for acceding public office remains problematic. The election of April 2007 which brought President Yar'Adua to power was especially lacking in credibility, and resulted in a number of legal challenges. These were finally put to rest by the Supreme Court in December 2008. Political parties have a poor public image and are seen principally as vehicles of patronage and clientelism. There are over 50 parties which are formally registered, however, only four or five are considered to be viable. Since 1999 Nigeria has been governed by one party in what can be characterised as a dominant party system, with the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) obtaining over 70% of the vote in 2007 (bearing in mind the credibility issues concerning the electoral process and results).

In this context, political party assistance has been limited until recently. To the extent that it has taken place, the emphasis has been on traditional forms of technical assistance, (mostly channelled through the International Republican Institute, IRI), and through democracy support where the focus has been on improving the conditions for electoral competition, and improving the way in which political parties engage in electoral competition. The report focuses on political party and party system assistance in Nigeria, with an emphasis on the experience of the Joint Donor Basket Fund (JDBF) approach.

This case study is part of a research project funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). The overall objectives are to explore the experience of international support to, and engagement with, political parties in four countries and one regional context, to identify country-specific examples of good, bad or 'better' practice and draw out lessons going forward.

This case study is based on fieldwork conducted in Abuja in May 2010. It involved interviews with a range of relevant stakeholders including representatives from political parties, donor agencies, implementing organisations, and civil society organisations (CSOs). A full list of interviews is available in Annex 1.

2   The political context in Nigeria

Nigeria gained independence in the 1960s. Since then, electoral democracy has been the basis of legitimacy for the exercise of political power.[2] At the same time, political instability has been a feature of the Nigerian context, driven by regional and ethnic tensions which tested the integrity of the territory during the Biafra war, and by a troubled political settlement, and an increasingly centralised oil economy. This has contributed to frequent regime crises and military interventions. For 32 out of 49 years since independence, Nigeria has been under military rule. Nonetheless, the legitimacy discourse of democratic rule has not disappeared from the political horizon. Since 1999, Nigeria has returned to electoral politics, although democratic institutions remain underdeveloped and fragile – and to some extent, have even deteriorated, as exemplified by the high levels of fraud and violence that characterised the 2007 election. In this context, political parties in particular constitute an especially weak link between state and society.

The population of Nigeria is 140 million, governed through a federal system of 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory. There are over 375 ethnic groups, evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. The country is made up of six geo-political zones which have become the basis for a 'zoning' arrangement, an informal set of rules that acts as the basis for power-sharing at different levels of government, ensuring a rotation of power to account for the ethnic, religious

---

[2] There is extensive academic scholarship on the political development of Nigeria. See for instance Diamond (1991), Lewis (2003) on the electoral process, Sklar et al (2006) on the legacy of Obasanjo. Here we have drawn especially on recent political economy analyses within the donor literature and some of the project evaluations notably Egwu et al (2007); Afari-Gyan (2009); DGB 2010.

and regional make-up of the country. In recent decades there has been a resurgence of ethnic and cultural identity politics as the basis for political and electoral mobilisation, which has been one of the causes of dynamics of exclusion and political conflict.

Since independence, the state has remained a key actor in economic development. This has been reinforced by the emergence of the petroleum economy since the 1970s. By the 1980s, oil revenue had displaced agriculture and constituted 80% of external earnings and 70% of government revenue. It has since become the principle basis of the 'rentier' logic of state development. This has made the state and public office a 'prize' to be captured through elections, fuelling dynamics of state patronage, and contributing to a process of centralisation of power in the executive branch. This has contributed to a process of concentration of wealth and the 'privatisation' of public resources in the hands of a small elite - in 2008, Nigeria earned US$70 billion in oil revenue, but 92% of Nigerians are estimated to live on under US$2 per day.[3]

Oil resources are distributed through informal networks of patronage brokered at the centre through the executive. The evolution of the oil economy and related incentive structures have contributed to the development of an intricate web of neo-patrimonial relations between elites (on 'big men' politics, see Sklar et al 2006).This has combined with the legacy of military rule that has led to the erosion of the original constitutional federal arrangement, and to a concentration of political and economic power in the centre. The Presidency is effectively able to "dispense patronage across the country, hijack the ruling party, subordinate the legislature and stifle the judiciary" (Egwu et al 2008). Both horizontal and vertical forms of accountability are fundamentally weak, the prospects for rule of law are weak, and there is a culture of impunity in public office. In this context, political parties are no less susceptible to capture by the personal interests of powerful elites, and consequently fail to fulfil the role of representation, and mediation of state society relations.

At the same time, elections are central to maintaining a sense of political stability. They provide a source of legitimacy to the system of elite bargaining, and a means to broker the necessary alternation of power between elites on a regular basis. This contributes to sustaining a sense of stability between the three main regional bases – the north, south and east of the country (roughly coinciding with the Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo ethnic identities). The complex structure and logic of 'zoning' occurs at all levels of the political system, an unwritten power sharing agreement which ensures a system of rotation of power across regional and ethnic identities, and that has the objective of reducing the risk of renewed violence and conflict. It has become an almost permanent, if unwritten, feature of the political system. However, the sense of stability is nonetheless precarious, and elections are also moments which test the elite bargain, as evidenced by the high numbers of incidents of conflict and violence around polling time. Since the return to democracy in 1999, there is seeming consensus that the quality of electoral competition has deteriorated, and political parties have been complicit with this.

Overall, there is a sense that the quality of democratic governance has been deteriorating since the transition to multi-party democracy in 1999, and the irregularities of the 2007 election signal a growing lack of credibility and legitimacy of the institutions of representative government. The 2007 electoral process was rendered highly questionable by levels of pre-election and election-day violence, the problematic registration process, the theft of ballot boxes and ballot papers, and the manner in which results were announced. Most reports since then signal the poor performance of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which is seen to be lacking in independence and impartiality.

President Yar'Adua, in his inaugural address, undertook to ensure that electoral reforms would take place ahead of the 2011 elections. Following his death in May 2010, his successor (and vice-president) President Goodluck Jonathan is also committed to pass electoral reform, but time is running out ahead of the 2011 elections. A constitutional amendment was recently

---

[3] Cited in Afari-Gyan et al (2009).

concluded in the National Assembly aimed at improving the standing of the INEC, and its independence from the executive branch.

It remains unclear whether President Jonathan will stand in 2011, and there is a growing sense of uncertainty and discomfort within the ruling PDP party. The stability of the elite bargain appears to be at stake, as his decision to run would seemingly put in jeopardy the traditional zoning agreement, upsetting the unwritten rule of rotation of power between regional and ethnic groups.

Within this context, donors have begun to increase their programmes of support to party assistance. At the same time, donors are not key actors in Nigeria and have limited leverage given the level of economic independence. Aid to Nigeria constitutes approximately 1% of GDP. This means that the capacity for influence is limited. On governance issues, leverage is somewhat more evident with regard to Nigeria's concern for its international reputation – but even this is modest (Egwu et al 2008). Some members of opposition parties and CSOs interviewed voiced the concern that donors – precisely because of this weak leverage – were insufficiently vocal in signalling the irregularities of the electoral process of 2007, for fear of jeopardising relations with the government. The importance of the oil economy gives the sense that donor country governments give priority to diplomatic relations and issues of security. This was noted by some of the Nigerian party members and CSOs interviewed.

3 What problem does support to political parties address?

This section examines the factors that shape political parties and the problems that inhibit political party development, as identified by different stakeholders, notably the donor community.

3.1 Political party development

On the basis of the context analysis and the interviews, the section identifies the particular problems that afflict political party development in Nigeria. It also summarises what donors see as the problems that international assistance should contribute to resolving. It is worth noting that there is fairly broad consensus on what these problem areas are – among donors, CSOs and many of the party members that were interviewed. But the challenge lies in whether the assumptions about what needs to be done are the most effective routes to addressing these problems.

The development of political parties in Nigeria must be understood against the wider context of how the political system has developed since independence, as well as in relation to the sense of deterioration of the institutions of governance since the return to democracy in 1999, most dramatically highlighted in the 2007 electoral process, as discussed above.

Nigeria is governed by a presidential system. Over the decades, and following the experience of military rule, the country has seen a centralisation of power in the hands of the executive and a progressive weakening of the federal pact upon which Nigeria was founded. However, as political power has been concentrated in the centre and in hands of the executive branch, an intricate body of informal rules of political interaction has also evolved, including through the experience of civil war (the Biafra war) and military rule, by which power is brokered in a way that achieves a sense of stability – at least among elites. The zoning system mentioned above has been a key component of this.

The National Assembly, made up of two chambers, currently acts as a weak counterpart to the executive branch. The Nigerian constitution grants the legislature important formal powers as a legislative branch, but these are undermined by the informal rules of the political system, and by the reality of dominant party rule. There have been some important moments of

legislative assertiveness, such as the refusal to grant President Obasanjo (who oversaw the transition process and governed between 1999 and 2007) the necessary constitutional reform to remain in office for a third term. But overall, there is little sense that the legislative branch acts as an effective check on the executive.

It seems that civil society in Nigeria is vibrant, diverse, and politically active (albeit dependent on the donor community). It is among civil society organisations (CSOs) that that there is a strong commitment to democratic progress. Notwithstanding the diversity among this type of actor, CSOs play a role in facilitating and channelling electoral activities aimed at improving voter awareness and registration levels. CSOs are also the recipients of electoral support donor assistance through much of the last decade, and continue to feature strongly in donor democracy and governance support programs. Until the recent JDBF, donors seemed more focused on supporting CSOs than political parties, although the balance has been somewhat redressed in the current JDBF.

The electoral system is regulated by the 1999 constitution, and corresponding electoral legislation. Since 1999, the INEC has organised the elections of 1999, 2003 and 2007. Following assessments, which found the electoral processes to be wanting in terms of probity and fairness, and despite efforts to correct irregularities there appears to be broad consensus that electoral processes have deteriorated and become more susceptible to political manipulation and capture. Moreover, the incidents of intimidation and violence persevere to the point that the 2007 results were legally challenged – but eventually accepted, notably through Supreme Court rulings in 2008, and a commitment by President Yar'Adua to reform the electoral regulatory framework and process.

The regulatory framework has been modified since 1999 to take account of the deficiencies of the 2003 election, and lessons learnt regarding international assistance at the time (DGD 2009). The 2007 election was regulated by the Electoral Act of 2006 which was approved and implemented in an overly hasty manner. The inadequacies of the new electoral act and its implementation contribute to the problems of the electoral process – with an impact on party behaviour and development. Among others these include, first, that it was not passed with sufficient time for the regulatory framework to be in place in time for the 2007 poll. Second, there was dissatisfaction among key stakeholders regarding the failure of the law to ensure sufficient levels of impartiality and independence of the INEC from executive power. The problems of political hijacking of the process became evident during the course of events, immediately prior to the elections and afterwards.

A number of assessments have been published to review both the problems of the electoral process, and also what the donor community could have done better to support the 2007 election (DGB 2009; Egwu et al 2008; Afari-Gyan et al 2010) (we return to this latter issue below). The electoral system is currently under review following the findings of the Electoral Reform Commission (ERC) which was instituted by President Yar'Adua. President Goodluck.

Key features of the electoral system, some of which are especially problematic in terms of democratic governance, include:

- The INEC is the body in charge of managing the federal and state elections. It is the key mechanism involved in ensuring the probity of the electoral process, and overseeing the conduct of the political parties. The credibility with which it conducts its business is therefore central to political party development. The leadership of the INEC (Chairman and commissioners) are appointed by the President, and are seen as institutionally subordinated to the executive. The fact of dominant party rule means that it is perceived to be strongly biased in favour of the interests of the incumbent ruling party. INEC was unsurprisingly consistently characterised as lacking credibility and political impartiality throughout the 2007 elections in many of the later reports.[4] The credibility and capacity of INEC to regulate party conduct was seen by both donors and parties as a key factor in undermining political party

---

[4] See Egwu et al (2008); Afari-Gyan (2010); Barradas et al (2007)

development. All reports suggested the need to fundamentally restructure the INEC in particular with regard to ensuring its independence from the executive branch. This is central for political party development as well, given its potentially critical role in overseeing and regulating party conduct. It is unclear how deep a change is likely to happen before the 2011 election, but there seems to be sufficient political pressure bearing on the current presidency to ensure some change occurs.

- Nigeria's electoral system is organised around a first-past the post (FPTF) system which applies to legislative and local elections. One report attributes some of the political violence associated with electoral competition to the zero-sum nature of the FPTP system, as it generates a winner-takes all logic. The causes of political conflict cannot be derived solely from the FPTP system (Egwu et al 2008). However, it is likely that it has the effect of exacerbating dominant party rule. Paradoxically, the FPTP system has not limited the multiplication of the number of parties – which relates more to the absence of barriers to party registration. Currently, the issue of introducing a PR or mixed system of representation features to some extent in the political debate on electoral reform, as part of the recommendations of the ERC.

A number of reform efforts are currently underway. The National Assembly recently concluded amendments to the Constitution which will have a bearing on party development. They include: the appointment of members of political parties cannot be nominate for electoral officer position, but the Presidential retains power of appointment; to nominate electoral officials; allow the INEC greater financial autonomy from the Executive; and set a time limit to expedite election petitions (although not accepting that this be concluded before the declared winner is sworn in). A new Electoral Act reflecting some of these changes is also at the final stages of passage in the National Assembly. It is hoped that both will be in place in time for the 2011 elections, but there is a strong sense of time running out.

3.2   Parties in Nigeria today

Nigeria formally has 59 political parties – 57 were registered for the 2007 election. In 1998, as democratisation was being negotiated, only three political parties were relevant and competed in the general election. These were the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All People's Party (APP), later to become the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP); and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). Of the 59 parties, most are irrelevant political actors, at most one-person vehicles with no grassroots support. This is a direct consequence of the electoral system and the constitutional provisions for party formation and registration, discussed above.

A review of the 59 parties following from the 2007 elections shows that only six of the parties have representation in the National Assembly. These include: the ruling PDP, which won about 70 percent of the electoral seats; the ANPP which won about 17 percent of the electoral seats mostly in the North; the Action Congress (AC), trailing just behind the ANPP and winning the most seats in the West of the Country. The All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA), the Labour Party and Progressive People's Alliance (PPA), picked up the remainder of electoral seats in the Eastern region. The AD was divided by factionalism, with an important group leaving to become part of the AC in 2006.

The PDP is the ruling (dominant) party since 1999. It is a centrist and multi-ethnic party, but operates more as a catch all organization that houses a range of political positions. It has espoused economic liberalism in office, overseeing privatization process and deregulation of some key sectors (notably the telecommunications sector). It holds conservative views on social issues. At the same time, it is attached to a discourse of welfare protection. Its main strength, however, lies in the fact of being the incumbent in office, and the breadth of its patronage network and control of state resources.

The ANPP was created in 1999, (although there was an earlier political party of the same name, but which was outlawed following the 1984 military coup). It is a conservative party

with strong presence in the north and is the largest opposition party. In the elections of 2003 and 2007 it was lead by the ex military rule, Muhammadu Buhari.

Action Congress, was formed in 2006, and is the outcome of a merger of several other parties in 2006, including defectors from the PDP. To some extent, it profiles itself as a liberal party. It has a number of governorships, and its regional strengths lie in Lagos, the south west generally and in the north central regions.

The AGPA is an Igbo dominated party, with a strong regional base in the east. Finally, the Labour party is perhaps the most programmatically distinctive with a social democratic identity on paper at least.

The formal institutional framework was noted by both donor individuals and party members interviewed to be problematic for political party development. Firstly, all party candidates must compete through political parties (which eliminates the possibility of independent candidates). But at the same time the registration of political parties faces few real entry barriers. A party needs to register a copy of its constitution with INEC, and in principle have inclusive membership, a headquarters office in Abuja and its internal rules need to be democratic. However the enforcement of internal democracy is practically non-existent.

Secondly, all registered parties are entitled to state funding. This has led increasingly to the view that public funding of political parties should be eliminated in an effort to reduce the number of political parties. The view is that many of the irrelevant parties would cease to exist if they did not have access to state funding for elections. One interviewee noted that the problem is not that parties receive public funding for electoral purposes, but that there is currently no appropriate threshold. Moreover, INEC's poor public image suggests that it would currently be poorly placed to impose any threshold credibly.

Thirdly, despite the excessive fragmentation of registered parties, the FPTP system encourages the consolidation of dominant party rule. It is in fact the main formal mechanism that limits access to elective office for the smaller opposition parties.

The formal rules, then, establish some constraints and incentive structures that impact on political parties. But parties in Nigeria are perhaps more the product of informal institutions, guided by the phenomenon of 'godfatherism' and neo-patrimonialism, which operate within the power structures of a centralised oil economy in a regionally diverse society (Egwu et al 2008; Skar et al; Zasha et al 2007). Moreover, there is a broad agreement that overall, the INEC has not been seen to enforce or implement the Electoral Act effectively. So, for instance, while the legal framework explicitly prohibits parties from retaining political militias or thugs, the high number of incidents of violence at the polling station indicates a lack of capacity and/or will for the INEC and security authorities to police political party conduct and enforce this law.

Alongside these institutional features, there are a number of party-level weaknesses. These include firstly that political parties tend not to practice internal democracy, despite the fact that the party constitutions stipulate it. For instance, primary elections in many cases do take place but the final list of candidates is decided by the reigning 'godfather' or party leadership of the state or locality. This responds directly to the patrimonial system of rules that structures the logic of power and elite bargaining within parties and the broader political system.

Moreover, political parties are not programmatically coherent, and there is no clear ideological distinction between them. Several of the interviewees agreed that this is a historical trend that has deteriorated over the decades. Thus electoral choices are mostly made on the basis of personality, or ethnic or regional loyalties, or in the hope of acceding to the fruits of patronage. However, as one report notes, the logic of patronage and clientelism in Nigeria is not effectively redistributive; instead the spoils of office tend to be shared by elite groups (Egwu et al 2008). This has the effect of further aggravating the sense of legitimacy crisis that afflicts the party system. Overall political parties are seen as predominantly electoral vehicles which have the objective of mobilising voter support, to secure exclusionary elite bargains.

Moving between parties is not unusual, especially given the weak programmatic identity. Internal party loyalties are weak, and the main attraction for joining a party seems to lie with which party offers the better chance for access to state patronage. To a considerable extent this also accounts for the strength of the main party, the PDP. It has more access to public resources, and thus has a stronger pull factor in terms of commanding electoral and membership support.

Members from political parties interviewed also noted that politicians have limited political skills in terms of building effective campaign strategies, engaging in effective inter-party dialogue, or contributing to legislative processes. These were identified as areas where donors could contribute through capacity development. At the same time, most political parties that were interviewed had vague knowledge and limited information about external assistance in these areas. The IRI was mentioned in some cases as the relevant implementer for party support.

Additional problems include the high levels of violence that have characterised the elections of 2007, with the direct complicity and involvement of political parties. This is especially related to the perception – and indeed reality – of the winner takes all nature of political competition. A recurrent theme in the recommendations of the post-electoral assessment is the need for political party conduct during elections to be better policed, through improved law-enforcement capacity of the security force. The problem, however, lies in the weakness of the rule of law more generally, and in the complicity of the state authorities in many cases (and concretely the INEC) with subordinating the electoral process to the ruling political elite. In other cases, the security forces do not have the resources to confront the mobilisation of local thugs at the service of concrete political interests that act to intimidate voters, or interfere with the counting process at the polls.

An additional issue that has been identified is that of systemic gender inequality in political participation. Despite the gradual improvement as evidenced in Table 1, women still only hold 7.5% of seats in the National Assembly (compared to a regional average for Africa of 18.2%) (DGD 2010). Women continue to face formidable barriers to political participation rooted in cultural and religious factors, as well as the fact of economic disempowerment. The JDBF-II report indicates that women are repeatedly discriminated within the political parties, and experience harassment as well as frequent substitution of women candidates in the final lists. They tend also to be less likely to have the financial means or support of male-dominated patriarchal structures within the parties. In the interviews one informant pointed to the constant struggle for women against patriarchal structures within parties. In the PDP party women candidates register to compete on the basis of where their parental home is, or for the district that their husband belongs to. In either case, the decision is based on patriarchal structures.

The issue of enhancing women's participation in electoral process is emerging as one of the areas of support to political parties. Concretely the ERC report recommended a 30% quota in party lists.

Table 1: Comparison of Representation of Women in Elected Positions 1999 – 2007

Position	No. of Available Seats	No. of Women in 1999	No. of Women in 2003	No. of Women in 2007
Presidency	1	0	0	0
Senate	109	3	4	9
House of Reps	360	12	23	27
Governorship	36	0	0	0

Deputy Governorship	36	1	2	6
36 States Houses of Assembly	990	12	38	52
Total	1531	27	67	94

Source: JDBF-LELEX

Finally, as political party support begins to become a more prominent feature of democracy support, both donors and parties seem to agree that there is a need to (re) establish a forum that can channel party assistance aimed at both multi-party support, as well as inter-party dialogue. For now donor are working with the Inter-Party Advisory Council, (IPAC) which was established through INEC (this is discussed in more detail below).

3.3   Aims and objectives of international assistance

It is important to note the assistance to political parties until now has taken the form of technical assistance principally, and with very limited impact and presence. At the same times, there is a growing narrative among the development actors of the perceived need to support party development. Within this narrative, it is also the case that there is broad consensus among donors about the nature of the problems of political parties in Nigeria. Their assumptions about parties reflect many of the findings of reports and evaluations following the election of 2007, and coincide with much of what party members and CSO activists noted in many of the interviews. The identified problems are very much in line with those outlined above.

Concrete objectives in political party assistance in Nigeria within the JDBF-II include: improving the internal governing structures of political parties; supporting CSO oversight role regarding internal party reform; assistance to increased women's participation; strengthening the INEC's oversight role of political parties and party financing, , and as a consultative platform between parties, CSOs and the electoral authorities; providing technical facilitation of inter and intra party dialogue, including measures to prevent violent conflict. (DGD 2010) The general aim is to strengthen the "adoption and application of principles of inclusivity and democratic governance within and by political parties", (DGD 2010).

Within the basket fund there is an in-built concern with purposefully embedding lessons learned into the programme strategy based on understanding of context which is highly commendable. Moreover, the objectives of the fund are informed by the belief that donors can play a role in contributing to strengthening democratic values within political parties, including through the support of conflict-management and political dialogue facilitation. The objectives of the basket fund are thus very ambitious which raises the question of how realistic they are. In addition, the assumptions regarding the delivery of concrete outputs and the form of party assistance that is outlined in the log frame are not necessarily commensurably with the scale of ambition regarding the objectives.

The point to note here is that the assumptions and understanding about the nature of the 'problem' of political parties in Nigeria reflects a sophisticated understanding of knowledge. This is especially true of donor staff in the JDBF-II. Of course, the challenge lies in bridging the better understanding of context that now features in donor thinking with objectives that are realistic, and programming and ensuring that operational implementation can live up to the objectives – and this remains still to be seen.

On the technical assistance model, there is the sense that the objectives, while generally falling within the rubric of supporting the democratic role of political parties in Nigeria, are somewhat less politically ambitious. They are, however, premised on the belief that (top-down) technical assistance and an emphasis on capacity issues can contribute to political change. Raising skills through capacity development can, as one evaluation noted, contribute

to change, but the form of technical assistance and the degree to which it is tailored to context specific needs and demands is important, and needs to be informed by an understanding of the particular dynamics of party development and party competition (USAID 2003).

4 How have external actors supported political parties?

The presence of external actors in Nigeria has fluctuated as a consequence of the political volatility of the country. Since 1999, there has been a growing presence of donor agencies. Among these, DFID has remained a key player generally, and specifically in the area of democracy support. However, as noted above, donor presence overall has limited leverage in Nigeria.

4.1 Main models of party assistance

This section focuses on donor support to political parties. It is important to note that political party support until recently has not featured as an important component of democracy or governance support. Instead, donor resources tended to concentrate on electoral support and on CSOs. Donor interventions in party support over the last decade have been dominated by a concern with improving the electoral process and the possibility of fair and clean party competition at the polls, and generally under the rubric of democracy support. Donors stepped up support for the electoral process during the elections of 2003, mostly through capacity development of CSOs to promote voter education and to observe the electoral process.

Support to political parties has taken the form of:

- Multi-lateral and bi-lateral donor support through a donor basket fund (currently underway since 2010) under the JDBF-II. This is still unfolding, and is likely to develop both party and party system support.
- Bi-lateral donor support, mostly through assistance providers like the IRI, and with recourse to the 'standard methods' including technical assistance and inter-party dialogue (such as IRI with USAID funding).
- Some assistance provided through a small number of European foundations, (such as the Friedrich Ebert foundation).The presence of this type of assistance is very minor in comparison to the other sources, and was not seen as relevant by any of the party members that were interviewed – and most of the other donors.

Firstly, the basket fund approach grew from the 2003 elections, as a number of key donors developed a more co-ordinated strategy for the 2007 elections, through the establishment a Joint Donor Basket Fund (JDBF-1). It was managed by the UNDP and included funding from the EU, CIDA, DFID and the UNDP. It became the main platform for donor support for the 2007 election. Under JDBF-1, the emphasis was on supporting CSOs and providing technical assistance to the INEC. But the JDBF evaluation report noted that it was too narrow a process, notably as key actors of the elections were excluded. Notably political parties, the executive and the national assembly received no support under the JDBF-1. Specifically on the issue of political parties, the evaluation of the JDBF-I developed the following recommendations on areas of change for political party development (see Box 1).

Box 1: Recommendations from the JDBF Evaluation

1 Encourage the formation of political associations at the local level, and amend the legal framework to allow them to compete in elections up to and including National Assembly elections.

2 Establish electoral benchmarks for the recognition of national political parties, also continuing the prohibition of national parties built on sectarian principles

3 Reintroduce the possibility for independent candidates to contest elections

4 Establish electoral benchmarks to govern government funding of recognised national political parties; such funding should be in provision of facilities for contesting elections rather than in money

5 Enforce legal provisions to ensure that sources of political party funding above a given level are publicly declared and that specified limits on party and candidate campaign expenditures are adhered to

6 Prohibit replacement of eligible candidates who were selected or elected in accordance with party rules

7 Clearly define legal provisions for the responsibilities of INEC and of the judiciary in candidate certification and disqualification

8 Maintain a code of conduct with dissuasive sanctions for political parties, to include special emphasis on conduct during the electoral process, and in particular to include clauses prohibiting violence, bribery, and discrimination against women and the disabled. Enforce both this and existing legal requirements

9 Encourage parties to facilitate in all possible ways a shift in gender representation to include elective as well as appointive office

10 Oblige parties to provide training in electoral procedures for all party officials, candidates and party agents

Source: JDBF-LELEX (2008)

The evaluation report for JDBF-I also signalled that the strategy took too long to get off the ground, and the battle against time was lost at key stages of both the pre-election period and the post election process (JDBF-LELEX 2008). A key lesson, which donors are taking seriously for the 2011 election, is to have the procedures and support mechanisms more effectively in place. However, it seemed evident during the research for this report that donors have a limited say in setting the tempo for legislative and constitutional reform changes which are deeply political, and over which it is likely that there may be considerable resistance among the more affected stakeholders.

The JDBF-II emerged from the experiences of JDBF-I, and the emerging recommendations from the different reports following the drama of the 2007 elections. This involves a basket fund which will provide support to Democratic Governance for Development (DGD) (2010-2015). The JDBF-II has broadened the scope of interventions. It contains six related programming components: 1) strengthening the National Assembly; 2) strengthening political parties; 3) improving the electoral process; 4) increasing the capacity and performance of civil society; 5) reinforcing the role of the media; 6) empowering women. Thus, political parties have become an important pillar of the current deepening democracy project. In this sense, the JDBF-II has moved on to working with the assumption that political parties are an essential component of a working democracy.

It is intended that JDBF-II support to political parties will in the main take the form of technical assistance and support to facilitate dialogue. This programme is still in its set-up phase and likely areas for activities are outlined out in Box 2.

> ## Box 2: Areas for party assistance under the JDBF-II
>
> 11 Support to reforms in the internal governance structures of political parties to enhance internal party democracy; adherence with political finance laws; democratic practices, including adoption of affirmative action targets; and strengthened relationships with issue-based advocacy CSOs
> 12 Support to monitoring CSOs reporting on the institution of internal party reform
> 13 Assistance to a proposed support facility to increase women's representation, including identification and mentoring of potential candidates; peer support networks and linkages with women's groups
> 14 Technical Assistance to INEC to assist it to fulfil its role of oversight of political finance and as a consultative platform between INEC, political parties, CSOs and media. However, if the proposed Political Party Registration and Regulation Commission (PPRRC) emerges then the support would be directed towards this organisation to help it become established and fulfil its role of oversight of political finance and as a consultative platform between INEC, PPRRC, parties, CSOs and media
> 15 Technical facilitation of cross party and intra-party dialogue and measures to prevent violent conflict
> 16 Support to CSOs to monitor political party-related violent conflict during the campaigning, electioneering and post-election cycle
> 17 TA and equipment support to the Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), to enhance the capacity of members of IPAC to institute reforms throughout all their political party structures.
>
> Source: DGD 2009

In addition, the intention of the JDBF is that the six areas supported by the basket fund work in an integrated manner. Thus the JDBF-II focuses not only on the 'standard method' of party assistance, but this is also combined with broader political system support, including the legislative branch, the electoral process, civil society, the media and empowering women.

Funding will be disbursed within two parallel but distinctive time frames. The first, 2010-2011 focuses on support aimed at improving the credibility of the electoral process of 2011; the second, 2010-2015 aims to 'cultivate, nurture and advance processes that embed and deepen sustainable democratic values slowly, steadily and over the longer term'. From an expected budget of $80 million, support to political parties is set at a total of $6.4 million. Elections support is set at $22 million, and CSOs at $17 million. Empowerment of women will be at $6million. The JDBF-II is the largest basket fund in Nigeria. The approach of the JDBF-II seems to reflect lessons learned from the rigidities of the last JDBF, and the need to integrate rapid, timely, opportunistic and flexible channelling of technical assistance and disbursement of grants. Likely implementation arrangements are set out in Box 3.

Box 3: JDBF-II implementation arrangements

The basket fund implementation arrangements will include:

- Direct contracting of CSOs, CSO networks and State-partners (such as the National Assembly) working on the core themes of DGD. This arrangement would include funding support (and TA) to establish dedicated resource centres to undertake research, knowledge management and appropriate response in key areas of democratic governance such as conflict monitoring; documentation of violence and social exclusion; legal hotlines for media personnel.
- Prequalified contractors (CSOs and other partners, including State partners) whose activities could be funded on a rapid approval basis. Prequalification would be based on competitive tendering and evaluation consistent with UNDP rules.
- A grant facility for organisations addressing emergent issues of concern, with funding given on the basis of clear, competitive rules and discretionary awards permissible under agreed policies and UNDP project execution rules. A proportion of this fund (35%) would be ring-fenced for women's empowerment and gender equity issues. As with the DGD Grant Facility generally, this gender equality (GE) proportion of the overall grant facility would be disbursed through a mixture of open competition and discretionary grants.
- Technical Assistance: Provision of specialist TA alongside the establishment of an approved pool of call down consultants (both national and international). Such TA would be contracted quickly to advance and achieve project outcomes.

The above summarises the implementation arrangements of the programme generally, and for now it is foreseen that political party support will take the form of mostly of technical assistance and dialogue facilitation. It appears that for now engagement with party leaders through dialogue and training will be facilitated predominantly by an enhanced IPAC. Mention is made of engaging other interparty networks. A number of issues will be covered, including political party financing and conflict resolution through non-violent means, and recourse to CSOs to monitor party activity. The operational details, however, have yet to be developed. Thus, it is also unclear how different implementation modes might also shape political party assistance.

Interviews identified a number of strengths and challenges for this programme. There is no doubt that knowledge of context features strongly in the background work to the JDBF. In addition, the UNDP, EU and DFID staff involved in developing the programmatic and operational aspects of the programme have strong local expertise and knowledge, and in some cases have been involved in previous cycles of donor support to the electoral process. This ensures a degree of institutional memory which it is hoped will be translated into effective learning to inform the strategy and implementation of the programme. Thus there is no question as to the depth of understanding of the challenges related to making progress on the good governance front – including in relation to the challenges of and for political parties. There also seems to be a strong appreciation of the need to think politically for effective donor engagement in support political party development.

To some extent, the JDBF-II continues to follow somewhat standard toolkit methods for political party assistance, with perhaps an overemphasis on the technical dimensions of capacity development and institutional reform. There may be a mismatch between the well-intended ambitions of engaging with sharper political awareness, and what risks becoming recourse to top-down traditional technical assistance.

The JDBF-II support to political parties, as it is currently structured is premised on IPAC playing a key role in channelling party support. However, interviews with political party members almost unequivocally placed IPAC in an unfavourable light. IPAC was seen as a puppet institution of the INEC, but more importantly, the PDP. Notably, there is awareness among donor staff of the deficiencies of IPAC. But there seems to be a decision in place that despite these weaknesses, it is the only available institution through which most political party

support can be channelled, and interparty dialogue supported. The wager of the JDBF-II is that IPAC can be reformed and strengthened in time to win the confidence of all the relevant competing parties. Given the difficult relationship between IPAC and a number of the opposition parties, the mismatch between the perceptions of key stakeholders and the assumptions of the JDBF-II seems potentially problematic.

In connection with the points above, the JDBF-II document notes the importance of the need to involve consultation of political parties and other relevant national stakeholders, but it is not evident that the programme will in practice integrate the mechanisms for an effective demand-driven agenda for change. For now, success seems to be too reliant on IPAC becoming credible. This has potentially problematic consequences for the question of ownership among the relevant actors – in this case political parties. The communication gap between donors and parties is thus problematic.

Overall, then, there was the sense of limited consultation with political parties to ensure more needs-based and demand driven approaches to party support. Of course, there is the concern that political parties, in their current state of discredit, may not be seen to be the best judges of what party assistance should look like. However, unless their buy-in is secured political party assistance is unlikely to amount to much.

A second approach to party assistance has involved <u>technical assistance</u>, implemented by a number of party institutes. USAID and DFID are the main bilateral donors with significant presence in Nigeria. DFID has opted to support political parties mostly through the JDBF-II, but also provides some support to collaborative projects with USAID, through the IRI and NDI. In Nigeria, there is a division of labour in terms of IRI and NDI support to electoral development and political participation. NDI focuses on providing assistance to CSOs, to electoral reform and to legislative support.

Among the service providers, IRI is the organisation most associated with political party support. This was evident from the interviews with the political party members. IRI has been working in Nigeria since 1992 with a focus on four main areas: political party assistance, working with women in politics; working with people with disability; support for the development of the media.

It is likely that USAID will step up its work on support for the 2011 electoral process and that IRI will continue to work with political parties through a range of activities. These include: seminars and workshops to promote political parties' role in the electoral reform process; youth forums to bring together party leaders, and youth based civil society groups with the objective of educating the youth on electoral reform and youth participation in the 2011 election; facilitating workshops on reforming the legal framework to promote women's political participation and improving advocacy strategies; training and technical assistance to strengthen internal democracy and inter-party dialogue; facilitate inter party dialogue. IRI has also traditionally supported study tours to the US. It was unclear which parties are involved in IRI support. The challenge for donors, as mentioned in a number of interviews, is to be able to identify the relevant parties to support, given the very large number of registered parties, and which criteria to use.

It is worth noting that the PDP members had the most awareness of IRI activities. In the interviews they suggested a number of priority areas political party assistance. These included: Capacity development and technical assistance on party primaries and on internal party democracy at all levels of the party structure; Exchange programs with political parties from other countries (including through south-south exchange); Capacity development programs aimed at the youths, which was identified as a problematic area; Party assistance to work both on capacity development on leadership, as well as capacity development at the party base level. It seemed to be the case that PDP was keen to communicate its perceived needs for party support, but it was not clear that there were channels for this.

The traditional European political party foundations have comparatively limited presence in Nigeria, and were not mentioned as relevant actors in any of the interviews that were

conducted for the report. Indeed, some informants saw them as completely irrelevant. The FES seems to have a somewhat greater presence than any other, but it seems only marginally so (see Box 4).

Box 4: Friedrich Ebert Foundation priorities

FES Nigeria focuses on three priority areas:

- Good Governance and Democracy Promotion
  FES Nigeria cooperates with partners to improve the transparency of budgets and strengthen accountability in the budget process, particularly at state and local government levels. At the national level, FES Nigeria cooperates with selected National Assembly committees. Gender and politics as well as the role of youth in politics are also important parts of the project. FES commissions and coordinated studies and publications.
- Trade Union Cooperation
  FES Nigeria cooperates with and supports the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC). While labour rights issues are central to this project area the political role of trade unions and the labour movement in Nigeria are also addressed.
- Nigeria's Role in International Relations
  FES Nigeria increasingly works on Nigeria's role in international affairs at the West African, African and global level. The main partner in this project area is the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA).
- **Gender** and the role of **youth** are mainstreamed in all project areas

---

The work involves mostly in multi-party, civil society and trade union support through training and capacity development. FES is also involved in supporting publications on different aspects of democracy development. Notably, there was no evidence of the sister model of party assistance.

Table 2 sets out a summary typology of the objectives and expected results of the main models of support present in Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary typologies of models of support

Models of support	Objectives	Expected results	Main donors and implementers
Technical assistance model	To build technical skills and capacities of all political parties To facilitate dialogue To promote women's political participation	Strengthened multi-party system and democracy	IRI (USAID) Some European party foundations in the past
Basket fund model	To support the democratisation and institutionalisation of parties, including in relating to party financing To build interparty dialogue; To improve the electoral system and regulatory framework of party development To reduce political violence To improve women's	More institutionalised multi-party system and better quality competition among parties Reduction in levels of conflict Better gender balance Reduction in the levels of violence	JDBF-II (Political parties component supported by UK, UNDP, EU, CIDA)

	participation in political parties To improve CSO oversight capacity in relation to political party conduct		

4.2   The approach to results

We are not yet in a position to assess the impact of the JDBF-II. Nonetheless, it would seem that a measure of realism is called for in terms of what can reasonably be attributed to the basket fund specifically, and more general to political party support in place, including through IRI. Thus approaches to impact need to be adjusted to the particular challenges of the Nigerian political situation. In interviews with donors, awareness of this is evident. At the same time, the challenge (as in other governance dimensions), lies in matching the more politically aware assessment of the problems of party development with a policy strategy that is both realistic in terms of what is possible, and effective.

For instance, the logical framework of the basket fund sets indicators in relation to political party development which are not commensurable with the scale of the problems. This is inevitable to some extent, precisely because of the political and long-term nature of the problems. But in the endeavour to focus on results, effectiveness should not be boiled down to quantification measurements of activities which in themselves would tell us very little about any meaningful change. Two indicators that are currently cited include: first, that the number of political parties with approved manifestos, code of conduct rules and audited accounts amount to 10 by 2014; second, the number of IPAC/PPRRC session undertaken (with participation from at least 80% of the 5 major parties, where the target figure for 2014 is 15 annually. These numerical indicators in themselves will say very little about qualitative or meaningful shifts in the party system.

By contrast, the results and resource framework outlines output targets that are more in keeping with the assumptions of what is wrong with political parties in Nigeria, and with expectations about donor assistance that can contribute to progressive change. The change that is aspired to refers to deep, systemic and attitudinal transformation which can only be the outcome of long term processes of political development. There is a deliberate intention within the JDBF-II document to be politically attuned and sensitive to context. The challenge lies in achieving the right balance between what is realistic, but also meaningful. And here, it would seem that the long-view and long term engagement is desirable, as well as an impact assessment which is able to accommodate both the complexity of the objectives, and a realist perspective of what the role of donors might be.

In the end the objectives of the JDBF-II are to be achieved, it seems, mostly through capacity development and technical assistance, through dialogue facilitation (albeit mostly through the redoubtable IPAC), and with special attention to improving the presence of women in political parties. The JDBF-II programme also mentions the need to engage in consultation processes to facilitate demands-based programming. Details of programming and operations are not provided yet. But a potential strength lies in building in an evaluation or a 'lessons learned' exercise after the 2011 election to inform the second stage of the JDBF-II. Moreover, the programme incorporates the intention of adapting activities to a changing context. It is intended that the Programme Management Steering Committee will redefine and refocus the policy parameters and budget priorities as the project unfolds. It remains to be seen how this will develop.

It may be that this intended flexibility will be sufficient to address the kinds of risks that are associated with some of the proposed lines of activities. For instance, at the moment much of the party support as it is currently described assumes that the INEC will undergo the necessary transformation to becoming an autonomous organisation that can manage electoral process

and political party regulation in a credible manner – including in its coordination of IPAC. This is a deeply political process, and it is likely that it will be resisted by powerful elements of the governing elites. It remains to be seen whether the flexibility that is intended will be in place will deal effectively with the risk that INEC does not evolve in the desired direction.

The standard method of top down technical assistance that the IRI has practiced (and it seems, continues to), as one evaluation suggests, is unlikely to contribute to change in the attitudes or conduct within parties (USAID 2003). This is very much in keeping with the emerging consensus in the political party assistance literature (Carothers 2006). Training in the form of one day sessions, or fly-in visits by experts, or lecture-style approaches are unlikely to leave a lasting impact. Among women party members, there was a more positive response to the impact of capacity development in improving their ability to engage in party politics.

At the same time, IRI has a positive image according to the evaluation. One successful product, it seems, was the publication of the Poll Agent Handbook, which by some accounts according to the evaluation, contributed to channelling some of the incidents of conflict in the 2003 election (Ibid.). It should be noted that inter-party conflict and electoral violence was much worse in 2007.

5   What are the emerging lessons from Nigeria?

Since the 2007 elections, it is evident that political parties have been more explicitly identified by the development community as key actors in processes of democratisation, and as meriting further assistance. Thus, resources which in the past were directed mostly at electoral events and CSOs are now also targeted at political party support (notwithstanding the fact of traditional IRI support to political parties). There are a number of challenges specific to the Nigeria context that can be summarised as follows.

First, the Nigerian context is currently one of high volatility. There is considerable uncertainty regarding the political and institutional development in the lead up to the 2011 election. Donors have to work with what may be a fast changing situation. In this regard, DFID-Nigeria specifically aims to work with flexible programme structures, so that it can adjust to changing circumstances. Moreover, there is a commitment to ensuring minimum conditionality within the JDBF-II. However there are challenges regarding the degree of donor coordination in this regard, and how flexibility can be operationalised in the context of the basket fund and given the experience of JDBF-I.

Second, the role of donors in the country is constrained by the fact of limited capacity to leverage positive change. It would seem that at most, donors can work with the strong public outcry and legitimacy crisis unleashed following the 2007 election, and Nigeria's interest in improving its international image. At present, measurements of results and impact in place for the different programmes analysed here do not seem to fully address these risks and important contextual features (although risk levels are appropriately noted in the programme documents).

Looking forward

The case study points to a number of lessons, and possible new ways of engaging in political party assistance. There is now a wider consensus within the donor community that for democracy support to be useful, donors need to engage with more long-term and structural support than the kind of assistance provided in the past, which focused more on short-term events and technical assistance around elections. This signals a change in thinking on the need to engage more fully with political actors in order to gain traction in democracy support.

This general assumption is not unreasonable, but needs to be matched by a commensurable degree of realism regarding what donors can do to contribute to the objective of political party transformation. Donor thinking needs to integrate in its methods the acceptance that cause

and effect measurements will normally not be easy to establish as a result of party assistance. In part this is about accepting that the nature of transformation that is sought is deeply political and dependent on domestic processes, so that attribution is unlikely to be clear or a direct consequence of donor action. This does not make it irrelevant. Moreover, it should not deter donors from acting in this field. It is more a question of changing expectations and mindsets about what is possible, what is helpful, and what is attributable.

Long-term engagement requires building into the strategy the possibility of re-adjustment and adaptation of programming to be in keeping with political events on the ground as this unfolds. Introducing flexibility into programming is important to ensure, especially in volatile contexts, the capacity to adapt to events as they unfold.

Understanding context and sophisticated political analysis is now part of how some donors are beginning to think about political party assistance, and this signifies an important step forward which should not be undervalued. Analysis of context needs to inform programming more effectively. A problem driven political economy approach is likely to be more effective in identifying opportunities for action.

The uncertainty of the political situation of the country suggests that some measure of scenario planning is needed to guide a more flexible approach to programming and implementation, which might be informed by ongoing political economy analysis approaches to context. Evidence from the reports and interviews suggests that donors are confronted with the dilemma of how far they can support certain institutions and processes without seeming complicit with the inadequacies of the political system. One concrete dilemma that has been a matter of debate is how far the international community can work with INEC (and consequently with IPAC). There is a strong case for saying that the realistic way forward is through piecemeal reform that can instrumentally shift the institutional incentive structures in the direction of improved accountability, probity and transparency in how political competition is organised, and political parties behave. Supporting the needed changes in INEC may be an important part of how political party development can be supported by the international community. But some alternative contingency measures may need to be considered.

Finally, the buy-in of the key stakeholders is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of programming. This should be combined with more evident consultation processes which are sufficiently inclusive to allow more room for demand-driven strategic thinking behind programme design and implementation. This is not without risks, but ensuring greater buy-in over processes of change by political parties seems essential. It also seems evident that purely supply driven forms of engagement is not effective.

References

INEC Political Parties Code of Conduct

Electoral Act of 2006

Constitution of Nigeria 1999

Afari- Gyan, (2010), "Independent Electoral Assessment Team: Final Report", January 2010.

Barradas, Ana, Victor Adetula and Tim Bittiger, (2007), Mid Term Review For Support To Nigerian Electoral Cycle 2006-2011: Final Draft Of Evaluation Report", Abuja, Nigeria.

Carothers, T (2006) Confronting the Weakest Link: Aiding Political Parties in New Democracies, New York: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Democratic Governance for Development (DGD), 2009, Support to Democratic governance for Development CIDA-DFID-EU-UNDP partnership for support to the electoral Cycle and the Deepening of Democracy in Nigeria, 2010-2015, Project document for the JDBF-II

Diamond, Larry, (1991), "Nigeria's Search For A New Political Order" in the Journal of Democracy, Vol.2. No.2

Egwu, Sam, David Leonard, Khabele Matlosa and Mark Smith, (2008) "Nigerian Elections since 1999 and the Future of Donor Support", assessment of Nigerian elections.

Lewis, Peter, (2003), "Nigeria: Elections In A Fragile Regime" in Journal of Democracy Volume 14, Number 3 July

Shola Omotola, J, (2009) "Nigerian Parties and Political Ideology", in Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences, Vol 1, No 3, 612-634

Sklar, Richard L, Ebere Onwudiwe, and Darren Kew, (2006), "Nigeria: Completing Obasanjo's Legacy" Journal of Democracy Volume 17, Number 3 July 2006

Zasha, James, Abdul Raufu Mustapha and Ruth Meyer, (2008), "A Lessons Learning Exercise following the April 2007 elections in Nigeria", JDBF-I Final report

USAID, (2003) Evaluation of Support to electoral processes, political party development and legislative strengthening in Nigeria, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDABY503.pdf

Annex 1:List of interviews

- Dr. Dahiru Musa Abdullahi, Progressive People's Alliance (PPA)
- Priscilla Ankut, EU
- Dr. Usman Bugaje, Action Congress (AC)
- Dr. Mourtada Deme, IRI
- Mr. Jens-Peter Dyrbak, DFID
- Dr. Samuel Egwu UNDP
- Nnena Elendu-Ukeje, People's Democratic Party (PDP)
- Mr. Emma Ezeazu, Alliance for Credible Elections
- Chief Adewale Fatona, People's Democratic Party (PDP)
- Dr. Jibrin Ibrahim, Centre for Democracy and Development
- Chancellor Uche Igwe, People's Democratic Party (PDP)
- Mr. Salihu Lukman, Good Governance Group
- Prof Nnaji, IPAC
- Princess Chinwe Nnoram-Onwuha, People's Democratic Party (PDP)
- Chief Dan Nwanyanwu, Labour party
- Mr Adamu Ogoche, USAID,
- Mr. Osita Okechuwkwu, Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP)
- Sen. Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora, Action Congress (AC)