

Fact Sheet

Data Entry Centre at the IHEC National Office in Baghdad

Following the elections for the Council of Representatives, the IHEC Data Entry Centre in Baghdad will process reconciliation and results forms from polling stations and count centres. Reconciliation and results data will be data entered, and results tabulated. Final results will be announced and handed over to the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court for certification.

Subsequent processes of the Data Entry Centre

The forms processed at the Data Entry Centre will represent reconciliation and results data pertaining to regular, absentee, special and out of country voting. Depending on the voting type and election date, the forms will be delivered at different dates. They will subsequently undergo 1) intake, where the forms are verified and accounted for, 2) data entry, and 3) scanning to create an electronic archive. Following their way through these processes, the forms will be archived.

The Data Entry Centre set up and organisation

Under the direct supervision by three Commissioners from the IHEC, the Manager of the IHEC is responsible for all aspects of the overall daily operation of the Data Entry Centre. All process area supervisors report directly to the Data Entry Centre Manager.

The Data Entry Centre is equipped with just under 500 computers distributed across the various process areas, and 15 scanners at the scanning area. Servers installed with an integrated software application specially designed for the entire results data entry operation will drive the computer network, and store and compile all entered data.

The Data Entry Centre will work with two shifts containing over 500 staff each: the first shift runs from 07.00 to 13.00 hrs, the second from 13.30 to 19.00 hrs. The intake, scanning and archive areas will in addition have a night shift. Clearance and audit sections will work in one continuous day shift. Several sections and departments of the IHEC National Office will detach staff to the clearance, audit and server administration sections respectively.

Data entry

The Data Entry Centre will process approximately 100,000 forms encompassing polling station forms from regular and out of country polling stations on one hand, and batch forms originating in the governorate count centres and representing the various categories of special voting on the other.

Under close supervision at every stage, the data entry operates through a blind double data entry: a data entry clerk enters the data recorded on the forms of a given polling station or batch. The forms are then physically moved to another section in the data entry area where another data entry clerk enters the data of the same forms. The data entry clerks of the second data entry do not see previously entered data. Possible mismatches between data entered in the two consecutive entries will be detected and flagged by the software application and corrected by a third dedicated data entry section.

Results data analysis and audit

The continuous data analysis uses various data reconciliation criteria approved by the IHEC Board of Commissioners. In case the relevant software module detects reconciliation inconsistencies, and if the applicable level of tolerance is in excess, an audit is triggered.

The audit section of the Data Entry Centre, in coordination with the governorate electoral office or count centre concerned, will analyse the data inconsistency and possibly request an audit of the sensitive material stored at the governorate warehouse or count centre. Results of the audit will either resolve the detected data inconsistency or compel the audit section to submit a recommendation to the IHEC Board of Commissioners for further remedial action or exclusion of the results of the polling station or batch from the overall tabulated results.

The impact of complaints on the results tabulation

The Data Entry Centre, and in particular its audit section, will coordinate closely with the IHEC Department of Electoral Advice & Complaints.

In case a certain polling station is subject of a complaint, and in case the Department of Electoral Advice & Complaints decides to launch an investigation, it informs the Data Entry Centre who will put the results data of the polling station concerned on hold or withdraw them from the results reports until further notice.

Following the complaints investigation, and based on the decision from the IHEC Board of Commissioners, the results data of the polling station concerned will either be released for inclusion in the provisional results, or excluded.

Provisional results – final results

As the blind double data entry progresses, the software tabulates results data. The status of results tabulated during the data entry operation is provisional in nature.

Provisional results do not include the results for those polling stations and batches that are subject of an audit triggered by the data entry software application or of a complaints investigation.

Provisional results reports will be available for perusal by all categories of observers present in the Data Entry Centre, and will be per governorate as soon as at least 30% of the polling station forms for the governorate are processed. At the same time, regularly updated provisional results will be displayed on screens in the observer area.

The nature of the results changes from provisional to final when the data on all polling station and batch forms have been entered and results data tabulated, and once all audit and complaints investigations have been executed and adjudicated.

The IHEC will submit the final results to the Iraq Federal Supreme Court for certification and publication.

Observation of the Data Entry Centre processes

The Data Entry Centre has an observer area where political entity agents, observers and media representatives may observe all processes and view displayed provisional results.

Dedicated staff will accommodate all observer categories in case they have questions or wish to submit a complaint pertaining to the observed processes or provisional results.

More information on the IHEC website www.ihec.iq