

Nigerian 2023 General Election: Introduction of BVAS technology

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***Editor's Note:** A democracy is the best way to govern human beings in a modern society, since it empowers every individual and gives her the opportunity to develop herself to her optimum level.*

But like all human enterprises, a democracy requires care and continuous modifications to serve the ever-changing needs of human societies.

In Nigeria, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is bringing in continuous improvements to the process of conducting the elections.

DiGiNews360.com hopes that INEC and the major political parties in Nigeria will jointly work to strengthen democracy and people's faith in it.

*Some examples of successful democracies (to which, DiGiNews360.com will like to add Nigeria within a few years): **1.** England **2.** India (for the last 75 years after 1947, when India became independent). **3.** France (since 1958, when the Fifth Republic was established). It is because both the people and the political parties, in these countries, have reposed faith in the democratic system.*

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The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), introduced by INEC, could be a game changer in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

The BVAs technology will, in no small way, remove the doubt on Nigeria election credibility and prevent fraud to the barest minimum.

The purpose of the BVAS is to ensure that the total number of accredited voters for every polling unit across the country are captured using the BVAS portal. The collated results are within the time frame, stipulated in the electoral Act, uploaded onto the INEC Result Viewing Portal IREV for members of the public to view instantly. The result on the INEC IREV Portal should match the total number of votes cast at the designated polling unit at the close of voting.

The ballots are manually counted. In case the total number of votes counted is more than the sum total of accreditation on the IREV, the votes counted at that polling unit is annulled.

The INEC 4th February, 2023 Mock test for the BVAS in selected Polling units across the country will provide a guide on how prepared INEC is for the new system.

Osun election result and BVAS;

Osun State, South West Nigeria: The election for the Governor was conducted on 16th of July, 2022. The PDP candidate was declared the winner, having scored 403,371 votes, while the main challenger, APC scored 375,027 votes.

APC rejected the results. APC alleged over voting and said that the result did not comply with the 2022 electoral act as amended.

APC took their case to the Election Petition Tribunal.

The electoral panel constituted to review the election process sat for several weeks. Several documents were examined and the results from the BVAS were considered. The final majority verdict indicated there was massive over voting as reflected on the IREV compared to the manually collated and declared results by INEC. The polling results from all polling units that recorded over voting were cancelled. The computed results by the electoral panel indicated that the APC candidate scored 314,921 votes, while the PDP, which had been earlier declared as the winner, scored 290,266. The APC candidate was declared winner by the majority verdict of the electoral panel.

The Judgement may be challenged at an appropriate higher court of jurisdiction until it gets to the Supreme Court.

By--Akinwole Falodun

Editor's Note: The result by the Panel shows two things:

- *BVAS worked.*
- *The system of Election Petition Tribunal worked well.*

DiGiNews360.com congratulates all the Nigerians on the success of their system.
