

# Final report

External final evaluation of the project  
titled "Increasing the effectiveness of the  
Inter-American Commission on Human  
Rights during 2018-2023"

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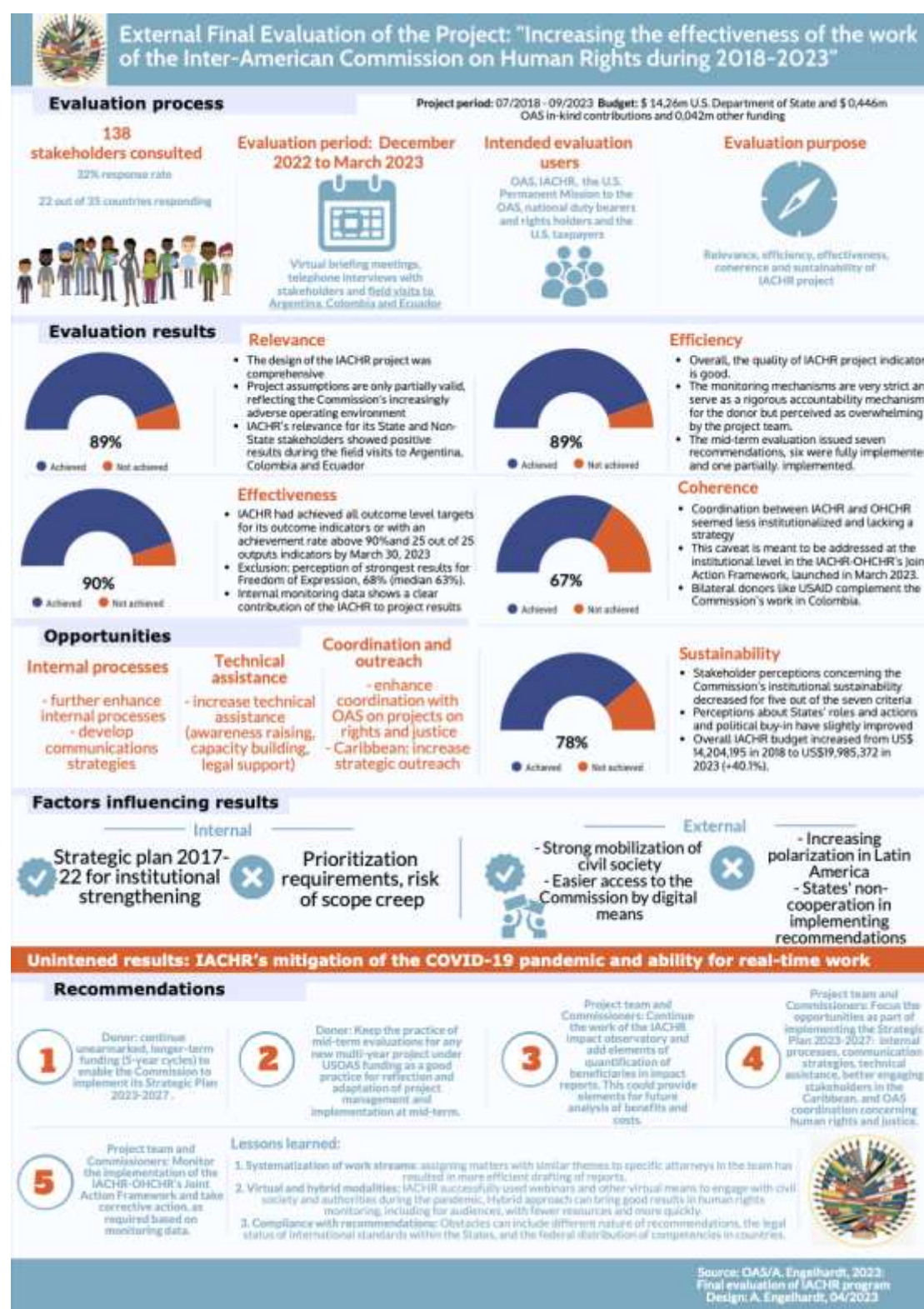
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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

CBA	Cost-benefit analysis
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease
C-SERMS	Caribbean Sustainable Energy Roadmap and Strategy
D.C.	District of Colombia
DPMO	Department of Procurement Services and Management Oversight (OAS)
GS	General Secretariat
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IAHRS	Inter-American system for the protection of human rights
ibid.	“Ibidem” (Latin for: “the same”)
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact (of the United Kingdom)
IFI	International Finance Institutions
IOM	International Organization for Migration
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OAS	Organization of American States
OHCHR	United Nations’ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PREA	US Prison Rape Elimination Act
RPPI	Report on Progress of Project Implementation (OAS)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIMORE	
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
SUM	Sum
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
U.S.	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	United States Dollar
%	Percentage



Figure 1: Infographic: evaluation process and main results



## Executive summary

The present document outlines the report of the **external final evaluation of the project titled "Increasing the effectiveness of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2023"**.

The Organization of American States (OAS)/ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) implements the project funded by the United States Department of State. The project' implementation period started on 07/01/2018 and is scheduled to end on September 30, 2023, after three amendments, including two cost extensions with a budget of US\$ 14,263,888.00.

### Project background

In a complex operating environment, the IACHR considers that there are essentially four major factors that affect the effectiveness of its work: 1) the delay in processing petitions and cases; 2) fragmentation and a lack of integration of the thematic and geographic monitoring of the situation of human rights in the hemisphere; 3) the difficulties in monitoring of the compliance of the recommendations issued by the IACHR and 4) the deterioration of the protection and guarantee of the right to freedom of expression throughout the hemisphere.

In this context, the project "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter- American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2023" CDH-1802 supported the effectiveness of the work of the IACHR in promoting, defending, and protecting Human Rights in the Americas. In 2021, the project benefitted from a mid-term evaluation.

### Evaluation background

According to the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), "the objective of the Consultancy was to evaluate the performance of the CDH-1802 project regarding efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation will explicitly focus on the delivery of the Immediate and Intermediate Outcomes for the project".

The evaluation questions are based on international criteria, comprising relevance, efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability.

### Evaluation methodology and approach

For this evaluation, the evaluator used a **theory-based evaluation methodology** to address the time lag between the program activities and outputs, on the one hand, and any changes in human rights practices. Logically the Theory of Change is linked to the logframe of the IACHR project (2018 -2023).

The evaluation followed the following steps for data collection, analysis, and reporting:

1. Document review, including the literature of models and approaches to determine the **cost-benefit of human rights programs** and related data requirements;
2. **Scoping calls** with key stakeholders
3. **Theory of Change validation** based on document review and interviews;
4. **Cost-benefit analysis** using Resolution 1/2020 to calculate the reach of those benefitting the broader population or sub-populations;

5. **Telephone interviews** with Member States' representatives (duty bearers) most benefitting from the OAS project and representatives of rights holders or their associations in sampled countries.
6. **Field visits to Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador**
7. **Online evaluation surveys: to Member States** not covered by the case studies/field visits to assess user satisfaction of IACHR services across all OAS Member States and Cuba;
8. Presentation of the midterm report to OAS via Skype conference call, following data analysis;
9. Finalization of the evaluation report and presentation to DPMO, the project team in the IACHR - OAS, and the U.S. Department of State.

The evaluation took place between December 2022 and March 2023, with the delivery of the final report scheduled for April 2023. The evaluator invited IACHR stakeholders in all OAS Member States and Cuba to participate in the evaluation, with 138 stakeholders out of 435 (31,7% response rate) of 22 out of 35 countries responding. This number compares to the 125 stakeholders reached in 27 Member States in the mid-term evaluation.

Sixty-four stakeholders participated in telephone interviews or interviews during the field visits<sup>1</sup>, and 74 out of 331 stakeholders completed an online survey, with a satisfactory 22,4% response rate<sup>2</sup>.

### **Sampling**

The evaluation used a sampling of IACHR activities based on the "most significant" change approach, i.e., where the IACHR left the most profound footprint. Following consultations with the IACHR Executive Secretariat and the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression the following countries were identified as examples of most significant change: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, and Mexico. In addition, the donor mentioned an interest in the Caribbean. The evaluator identified Dominica as the only country in the sub-region where the IACHR undertook a visit during the past three years.

Following the consultations, the evaluator confirmed the following countries for sampling for the two field visits, with a preference for countries not covered through case studies in the mid-term evaluation: Argentina and Ecuador. Given the IACHR's strong suggestion to visit Colombia due to multiple project components covered in the country, this country is also included in the sample for field visits, despite being covered during the mid-term evaluation.

### **Limitations**

One limitation to be mentioned in the executive summary included the inability to undertake virtual case studies for Costa Rica, Dominica, Honduras, and Mexico. Stakeholder participation in virtual case studies through zoom or telephone interviews was unsatisfactory despite support from the OAS in informing stakeholders about the evaluation and several reminders sent during the evaluation process. Given the good response to the online survey and the

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<sup>1</sup> including the IACHR management team. The quantitative ratings provided by the management team were not included in the data analysis to avoid any bias.




<sup>2</sup> An average response rate is between 10% and 15%. However, the IACHR commented that it considers necessary to include a context in which this evaluation was done that explain this rate of response. Between 2021- 2022 three processes of consultation with stakeholders: i) Evaluation of the Medium Term of this same project; ii) External Evaluation of the Strategic Plan; iii) Consultations for the new Strategic Plan.


insights captured, the evaluator is confident that those limitations have been mitigated satisfactorily by undertaking the field visits to three countries.


Also, the cost-benefit analysis did not go beyond assessing access to justice, as experienced during the mid-term evaluation, due to the challenges in undertaking cost-benefit analysis in human rights.



**Figure 2: Dashboard of key findings by evaluation criteria and main evaluation questions**





Criteria	Assessment	Rationale
Relevance		<p><b>Key findings: the IACHR project was doing the right thing, based on a valid theory of change and high relevance for its State and Non-State stakeholders.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design of the IACHR project was comprehensive. The main problems and barriers, the interventions results chain, and external drivers of change were correctly identified.</li> <li>However, the project assumptions were only partially valid, reflecting the Commission's increasingly adverse operating environment due to a deterioration of the human rights situation across many countries between 2018 and 2023, i.e. the Commission required more efforts than initially envisaged to achieve project results.</li> <li>The IACHR's relevance for its State and Non-State stakeholders showed positive results during field visits to Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador.</li> </ul>
Efficiency		<p><b>Key findings: The project applied results-based management principles, while the required resource-intensive monitoring mechanisms seem strongly accountability driven.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, the quality of IACHR project indicators is good.</li> <li>The IACHR continued using the results-based management principles that were in place at the time of the mid-term evaluation, for example, the quarterly RPPI.</li> <li>The monitoring mechanisms are very strict and serve as a rigorous accountability mechanism for the donor. However, this comprehensive monitoring on a quarterly basis was unevenly used for project management, as it was perceived as overwhelming.</li> <li>The mid-term evaluation issued seven recommendations. The USOAS followed all three recommendations addressed to the donor. Concerning the project team, three recommendations were fully implemented to the extent that they were within the project team's scope, and one recommendation was partly executed (about making some output indicators more results-focused).</li> <li>Cost-benefit: at least 101,175,701 persons from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru were reached by legislative and juridical measures with reference to Resolution 1/2020 and its recommendations. This could be compared to the US investment of US\$ 14,263,887.8, at a theoretical cost of US\$ 0,14 per person reached.</li> </ul>
Effectiveness		<p><b>Key findings: The IACHR project achieved all outcome/purpose targets and showed good effectiveness.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The IACHR had achieved all outcome level targets for its outcome indicators or with an achievement rate above 90% by March 30, 2023;</li> <li>IACHR project entirely or largely meets 21 out of 25 final targets for output level indicators by March 30, 2023;</li> <li>Exclusion: the perception of results achievement varies between 51,7% for older persons and 68% for freedom of expression. The median of results reaches 56,3%, with results for women being above the median at 62,9%.</li> <li>Internal monitoring data shows a clear contribution of the IACHR to project results. This is less reflected in stakeholders' critical perceptions, which have declined from a median of 66,4% to 54,5% between 2021 and 2023.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal key factors facilitating the project implementation were the IACHR's strategic plan 2017-2022 serving as a beacon and successful organizational restructuring. On the negative side, increasing budgets do not match the even more increasing workload, and Commissioners lose credibility due to the public discussion about divergent views on human rights.</li> <li>• External key factors affecting the Commission's work are the continued strong civil society mobilization and the momentum for monitoring recommendations using round tables. Negative factors are the increased political polarization in Latin America but also the weakness of legal systems and the lack of norms of willing States to implement IACHR recommendations.</li> <li>• Opportunities for the IACHR emerge to enhance internal processes further, develop communications strategies for different purposes, increase technical assistance (awareness raising, capacity building, legal support) for a broader range of State actors, enhance coordination with the OAS on project on rights and justice, and further increase its strategic outreach to the Caribbean.</li> <li>• Risks relate to internal processes facing an increasing workload and the available IACHR finances (despite significant increases in the past while this was not the case for the rest of the OAS), and the operating environment.</li> <li>• Unplanned project results include the IACHR's highly successful mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic, its increasing ability to focus on real-time human rights challenges in the Americas, and internal challenges threatening credibility and trust.</li> </ul>
Coherence		<p><b>Key findings: IACHR complemented national and other multilateral human rights initiatives to varying degrees, which depended on partners' receptiveness, showing most recently strengthened institutionalization efforts with OHCHR across the hemisphere.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IACHR is in a leadership role in many countries due to its geographical vicinity, accessibility (no language barriers), and development of human rights standards and mechanisms compared to the Geneva-based OHCHR.</li> <li>• The Coordination between IACHR and OHCHR seemed less institutionalized and lacked a strategy, such as Freedom of Expression in Argentina and Colombia or the National Committee on the Prevention of Torture in Argentina. However, this caveat is meant to be addressed at the institutional level in the IACHR-OHCHR's Joint Action Framework, launched in March 2023.</li> <li>• IACHR and the United Nations system (OHCHR, UNESCO) have different functions and are perceived as complementary in their work in Ecuador.</li> <li>• Bilateral donors like USAID and AECID complement the Commission's work in Colombia, for example, by funding CSOs in Colombia to analyze public policies and to present reports to the IACHR.</li> </ul>

Sustainability		<p><b>Key findings: The evaluation finds that the IACHR as a “crown jewel” of the Western Hemisphere shows an varying political and institutional sustainability but financial sustainability seems promising.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder perceptions of the Commission’s institutional sustainability decreased for five of the seven criteria, while the document review showed more positive results.</li> <li>• States’ roles and actions have slightly improved, starting from a low level, while the high reputation of the Commission suffered due to a lack of unity among the Commissioners and diverging views being publicly discussed.</li> <li>• The IACHR was still recovering from a situation of severe attack when five Member States tried in a coordinated effort to limit the Commission's scope in 2012 and 2019. The perceptions of political buy-in are increasing.</li> <li>• Budget: The mid-term evaluation found that the funding situation of the Commission was on an increasing trajectory until 2020. This situation continued till 2023. Overall budget increased from US\$ 14,204,195 in 2018 to US\$19,985,372 in 2023* (+40.1%)</li> </ul>
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\*Estimate

**Figure 3: Legend for color-coding used for results assessment**

	Green: Strong achievement across the board. Stands out as an area of good practice where OAS is making a significant positive contribution. Score 76 to 100 out of 100
	Green/amber: Satisfactory achievement in most areas but partial achievement in others. An area where OAS is making a positive contribution but could do more. Score 51 to 75 out of 100
	Amber/red: Unsatisfactory achievement in most areas, with some positive elements. An area where improvements are required for OAS to make a positive contribution. Score 26-50 out of 100
	Red: Poor achievement across most areas, with urgent remedial action required in some. An area where OAS is failing to make a positive contribution. Score: 0-25 out of 100

## Conclusions

### Relevance

The IACHR remains relevant and fulfils its mission in an operating environment which deteriorated further since the mid-term evaluation in 2021.

The US funding also actively defends democracy, the project empowering the IACHR as a soft power and rights being a vital part of democracy. The latter seems particularly relevant to uphold democracy, as powers with conflicting values are using the region as a battleground to actively undermining democracies across the hemisphere.

#### *Efficiency*

IACHR's and DPMO's rigorous project monitoring ensures robust accountability. At the same time, the RPPIs have to be produced in very short cycles, demanding significant efforts from the project management for reporting.

The mid-term evaluation served as a reflection point for the IACHR projects and the donor and project team took the recommendations seriously.

#### *Effectiveness*

The IACHR performed very well according to its logframe indicators and results are backed up by data. However, those undisputable improvements are less reflected in stakeholder perceptions.

#### *Coherence*

IACHR is well-positioned in the human rights arena in the Western hemisphere. The institutionalization of cooperation with OHCHR and a more strategic engagement seem to be put in place with the IACHR-OHCHR's Joint Action Framework.

#### *Sustainability*

While the political and institutional sustainability of the Commission is varying, its financial sustainability seems promising.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the key findings and conclusions drawn and listed above, the evaluation makes the following targeted and prioritized recommendations.

#### ***Relevance***

**R1: Donor:** The continuation of unearmarked, longer-term funding (5-year cycles) is recommended to enable the Commission to implement its Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and to defend democracy in the Western Hemisphere, complementing the US diplomatic and military efforts.

**Prioritization: very high. Next 3 months**

#### ***Efficiency***

**R2: Donor:** Keep the practice of mid-term evaluations for any new multi-year project under USOAS funding as a good practice for reflection and adaptation of project management and implementation at mid-term.

**Prioritization: medium. Next 12-18 months**

**R3: Project team and Commissioners:** Continue the work of the IACHR impact observatory and add elements of quantification of beneficiaries in impact reports. This could provide elements for future analysis of benefits and costs, including for evaluation purposes and to communicate results to Member States and donors.

**Prioritization: high. Next 3-6 months**

## **Effectiveness**

**R4: Project team and Commissioners.** Take the following opportunities as part of implementing the Strategic Plan 2023-2027:

### **Internal processes**

- Transparent prioritization process for topics and cases
- Better systematization, optimization of internal processes and coordination between teams
- SOPs for work protocols
- Unlock better IT potential:
  - Amplify the use of IT systems: e.g., more paid licenses for Airtable
  - Enhance process methodologies: definitions and automated processes
- Commissioners are invited to discuss any disagreements outside the public space to re-establish their unity and the Commission’s credibility.

### **Communication strategies**

- Strengthened dialogue with State actors even in challenging contexts
- Learning from COVID-19: Hybrid model for audiences and working meetings to broaden access to justice and save costs
- Communication of the Commission's work and mechanisms (e.g., SIMORE), particularly on its impact
- Prioritize the promotion of friendly settlement mechanisms in Member States and as an opportunity of attracting additional donor funding.

### **Technical assistance**

- More support to a broader range of State actors, including Human Rights Commissions, Human Rights Ombudsmen, and Anti-torture organs, to overcome structural barriers to implementing recommendations
- Include issues of the digital economy and misinformation under Freedom of Expression
- IACHR to provide technical assistance (legal analysis and advise) and monitor countries’ policy development and implementation concerning questions of memory, truth, and justice. Monitoring the political environment’s attitude towards the topics of memory, truth, and justice can serve as an early warning mechanism for potential emerging hotspots for undermined democracies and human rights. At the same time, this early warning mechanism could allow the Commission to proactively deepen the dialogue with States “in peril” of cherishing their human rights obligations.

### **Caribbean**

- Keep increasing staff from the Caribbean to get better access to the region
- Confidence building with Caribbean States, promotional visits around specific topics as an entry point for work visits which require official State invitation
- Capacity building and remote engagement to get on IACHR on the State’s agenda

### **OAS coordination**

- Dialogue, stock taking, and assessment of coordination opportunities between IACHR, Panamerican Development Foundations’ portfolio on rights and justice (OAS), and Media Integrity Centre in OAS

**Prioritization: medium. Next 24-48 months**

## **Coherence**

**R5: Project team and Commissioners:** Monitor the implementation of the IACHR-OHCHR’s Joint Action Framework jointly with OHCHR and take corrective action, as required based on monitoring data.

**Prioritization: medium. Next 12-18 months**





## Section I: Introduction

The present document outlines the report of the **external final evaluation of the project titled "Increasing the effectiveness of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2023"**.

The Organization of American States (OAS)/ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) implements the project funded by the United States Department of State. The project' implementation period started on 07/01/2018 and is scheduled to end on September 30, 2023, after three amendments, including two cost extensions.

The United States Department of State funds the project with US\$ 14,263,887.8 (96.6% of total funding), complemented with US\$ 446,476.00 OAS in-kind funding and US\$ 42,160.92 other funding. The initial donor funding amounted to US\$ 4,388,888.95 in 2018, which increased to US\$ 9,326,388.89 after the first program amendment before reaching the final amount in the third amendment.

### 1.1 Project background

The Terms of Reference (ToR) outline the program background as follows<sup>3</sup>:

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) is a principal organ of the Organization of American States (OAS). Its main function is to promote the observance and defense of human rights in the Americas and serve as a consultative organ of the Organization in this area. It is composed of seven members, who must be individuals of high moral authority and recognized experts in human rights, who are elected in their personal capacity by the OAS General. The Commission is headquartered in Washington, D.C. It was created by the OAS in 1959. Together with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the Commission is one of the institutions within the inter-American system for the protection of human rights ("IAHRS").

The mandate of the IACHR was established in the American Convention on Human Rights (the Pact of San José), later adopted on November 22, 1969, and entered into force on July 18, 1978.

Among the main functions and mandates of the IACHR are to: Promote the observance and defense of human rights in the Americas; formulate recommendations to States and promote due respect for rights; prepare studies and reports; request information from States; provide advice and technical assistance to States; conduct visits and observations in loco to observe the situation of human rights; act on individual cases and petitions, friendly settlements, and precautionary measures; appear before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in cases and other matters; submit proposals to the OAS for additional protocols or amendments to the American Convention on Human Rights; hold ordinary and extraordinary Periods of Sessions and; convoke public hearings on the situation of human rights in the region.

The Inter-American Commission has advocated for justice and defended freedom throughout the region for over five decades. Presently, the predominance of freely elected governments establishes the bases for the effective exercise of human rights, with respect for those rights being a vital element of democracy. However, the region continues to face profound challenges. Impunity, violations of due process, limits on judicial independence, police abuse,

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<sup>3</sup> Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, 2021: Terms of Reference. External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021". Pages 2 - 4.

discrimination, criminalization of the right to freedom of expression on matters of public interest are just some of the problems that threaten the effectiveness of human rights and weaken the rule of law.

Despite progress on various fronts, situations persist that present challenges for human rights at the global level and in the Americas. The OAS Member States continue to be affected by human rights violations. Some of the major problems include, among others: difficulties in access to justice, the fragility of institutions, impunity, corruption, structural discrimination and violence against individuals, groups, and communities at risk in the Americas, and the situation of insecurity that affects indigenous peoples, women, children, human rights defenders, persons living with disabilities, persons deprived of liberty, migrants, refugees and the displaced, among others. National protection mechanisms for human rights defenders in the Americas are weak. There are problems related to the situation of persons deprived of liberty, including the excessive use of pretrial detention in the majority of states in the region, situations of overcrowding, overpopulation, and conditions of incarceration that fail to guarantee the lives and personal integrity of the inmates. Furthermore, there are still challenges in implementing the obligation to consult with indigenous and tribal peoples in a prior, free, and informed manner and to guarantee their participation in all decisions related to any intervention that would have repercussions on their territories and the natural resources therein, including the execution of development and extractive project. Finally, undue restrictions on the right to freedom of expression persist in some countries, exacerbated by expressions of violence against journalists and authoritarian practices from some governments.

The IACHR has issued numerous recommendations aimed at overcoming these challenges. However, one stands above the rest as the IACHR seeks to improve its effectiveness in promoting, defending, and protecting victims of human rights violations. The IACHR considers that there are essentially four major factors that affect the effectiveness of its work: 1) the delay in processing petitions and cases; 2) fragmentation and a lack of integration of the thematic and geographic monitoring of the situation of human rights in the hemisphere; 3) the difficulties in monitoring of the compliance of the recommendations issued by the IACHR and 4) the deterioration of the protection and guarantee of the right to freedom of expression throughout the hemisphere.

In this context, the program "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter- American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2023" CDH-1802 will support the effectiveness of the work of the IACHR in promoting, defending, and protecting Human Rights in the Americas.

These are its components/ outputs:

- i) An increase in the number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage;
- ii) Improvement of the monitoring of the situation of human rights in the region;
- iii) Improvement of the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR;
- iv) Implementation of the Action Plan of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression; and
- v) Management, following up, and monitoring of the project<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, 2021: Terms of Reference. External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021". Pages 2 - 4.

In 2021, the DPMO coordinated an external formative evaluation of the project with the objective of evaluating the relevance, efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability of the CDH-1802 project. The evaluation explicitly focused on delivering the main Outputs and the Immediate and Intermediate Outcomes. At the time, the evaluation identified four (4) recommendations to the project team in the IACHR.

## 1.2 Evaluation background and objective

The evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR)<sup>5</sup> outline the objective of this external evaluation as follows: "The objective of the Consultancy is to evaluate the performance of the CDH-1802 project regarding efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation will explicitly focus on the delivery of the Immediate and Intermediate Outcomes for the project".

The evaluation contains the following scope<sup>6</sup>:

- Conduct a summative evaluation to identify the main achievements and results of the project, using the midterm evaluation conducted a year before as a reference.
- Determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the project as best reflected in the available results to date.
- Critically analyze the formulation, design, implementation, and management of the project and make recommendations as needed.
- Assess the institutional and financial sustainability of the interventions financed by the project.
- Document lessons learned related to the formulation, design, implementation, management, and sustainability.
- Make recommendations, as appropriate, to improve the formulation, design, and implementation of future similar interventions.
- Assess if and how the project addressed the crosscutting issue of a gender perspective and to what results.
- Considering the results of the mid-term evaluation, conduct a cost-benefit analysis.
- Assess the training results supported by the project using the Kirkpatrick training evaluation model.
- Determine if and how the recommendations issued on the mid-term evaluation were implemented.

The evaluation questions are based on international criteria, comprising relevance, efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation questions are as follows:

1. Was the program's implicit Theory of Change effective?
2. Were the programs objectives achieved (include a matrix to establish achievement and justification)?

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<sup>5</sup> Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, 202e: Terms of Reference. External Final Evaluation of the Projects: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021", pages 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pages 4-5

3. Are the programs' indicators S.M.A.R.T.?
4. Are the programs' achievements sustainable institutionally and financially?
5. Did the program team apply results-based management principles from inception to conclusion? Please describe which ones and how.
6. Was the monitoring mechanism used as an efficient and effective tool to follow up on the progress of the program's actions and compliance with the agreement?
7. Were there any unforeseeable/not planned results or outcomes? Please document.
8. Were the recommendations issued on the formative external evaluation/ midterm evaluation report implemented? If not, why not?

The evaluator added "why" questions for the main questions listed above to document the rationale for results achievement, including behavior change.

Expected users of this evaluation are the OAS, including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the United States Mission to the OAS, Member States, local and national counterparts, and program beneficiaries.

The evaluation took place between December 2022 and March 2023, with the delivery of the final report scheduled for April 2023. The evaluator invited IACHR stakeholders in all OAS Member States and Cuba to participate in the evaluation, with 138 stakeholders out of 435 (31,7% response rate) of 22 out of 35 countries responding. This number compares to the 125 stakeholders reached in 27 Member States in the mid-term evaluation.

Sixty-four stakeholders participated in telephone interviews or interviews during the field visits<sup>7</sup>, and 74 out of 331 stakeholders completed an online survey, with a satisfactory 22,4% response rate<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 4 shows those participating Member States in dark blue<sup>9</sup>.

The OAS contracted an external evaluation specialist to undertake this evaluation and selected Dr. Achim Engelhardt in a competitive tendering process. The

consultant was neither involved in the design nor implementation of the IACHR and has supported the OAS in the evaluations of U.S. Permanent Mission-funded project on several occasions since 2015.

**Figure 4: Map of the Americas with stakeholders participating in the IACHR evaluation**



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<sup>7</sup>, including the IACHR management team. The quantitative ratings provided by the management team were not included in the data analysis to avoid any bias.

<sup>8</sup> See IACHR comments on their response rate in footnote 2.

<sup>9</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, United States of America, and Venezuela.

Design: A. Engelhardt, 07/2021

### 1.3 Evaluation methodology and approach

For this evaluation, the evaluator used a **theory-based evaluation methodology** to address the time lag between the program activities and outputs, on the one hand, and any changes in human rights practices. The approach was successfully used in recent evaluations for international organizations, including OAS. A theory-based evaluation specifies the intervention logic, also called the "theory of change," tested in the evaluation process, as shown in the figure below, based on a concept developed by the University of Wisconsin.

The theory of change is built on a set of assumptions around how the project designers think a change will happen. Logically it is linked to the project logframe.

The added value of theory-based evaluation is that it further elaborates on the project's assumptions and linkages between outputs, outcomes, and impact. Besides, the approach highlights stakeholder needs as part of a situation analysis. The situation analysis also identifies barriers to reducing abusive practices and violations of human rights. The approach includes analyzing the projects' response (activities and outputs) to the problem followed by a results analysis.



Logically the Theory of Change is linked to the logframe of the IACHR project (2018 -2023).

The document review shows that the IACHR program benefits from a logframe with five iterations. While the assumptions section at the outcome level is rather generic, the IACHR logframe contains specific, measurable, and time-bound indicators. Baselines, targets, and results are available for the output indicators, as contained in 18 Reports on Progress of Project Implementation (RPPI). Assessing progress against those log frame indicators was the basis for evaluating the IACHR program's effectiveness.

### 1.4 Rights-based and consultative evaluation approach

The evaluation was guided by a rights-based approach, addressing both duty bearers like government officials and, to the extent possible, rights holders and their representatives during the evaluation.

The evaluator undertook the evaluation in a consultative manner. Following the document review, the team leader undertook a briefing meeting with the OAS, including the IACHR management.

This consultative approach is due to be further followed during the presentation of the mid-term report to the project team before delivering the final evaluation report. The team leader will also present the final report to the OAS, including the IACHR management, Commissioners, relevant staff in IACHR, and the donor, as required.

## 1.5 Cost-benefit analysis

The OAS is at the forefront of using cost-benefit analysis among international organizations, following good practices in International Finance Institutions (IFIs).

The evaluator successfully applied cost-benefit analysis for OAS evaluations in 2017, 2018, and 2019 on behalf of the OAS in sectors such as energy, business development, and climate change.

The mid-term evaluation of the project "Increasing the effectiveness of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021" showed challenges in assessing the cost-benefit. The mid-term evaluation found that "Cost-benefit analysis of programs working mainly on civil and political rights is scarce due to ethical considerations. Monetizing the loss, or avoided loss, of physical or mental health, for example, is at the borderlines of evaluation practice"<sup>10</sup>. The box below showcases the tensions when applying cost-benefit analysis for human rights.

"Philosophically, can rights be monetized without devaluing life and debasing human dignity? Practically, are monetization efforts feasible or valid? Legally, do these efforts themselves violate human rights norms such as the principle of equality and the right to life?"

Source: Aceves, W.J./California Western School of Law (2018): Cost-Benefit Analysis and Human Rights. In: 95 St. John's Law Review 431 (2018), page 451.

The mid-term evaluation's literature review showed that examples of cost-benefit analysis of social and economic rights are given, as in the cases of large-scale infrastructure project (OHCHR, 2018<sup>11</sup>, OHCHR, 2017<sup>12</sup>, Vickerman, 2007)<sup>13</sup>. However, the literature review also revealed that information on cost-benefit in civil and political rights interventions is exceptionally scarce. Aceves/California Western School of Law (2018) is one of the very few exceptions. In St. John's Law Review, Aceves/California Western School of Law call cost-benefit analysis of human rights an "intriguing and provocative opportunity."<sup>14</sup>

The Aceves/California Western School of Law paper provides insights into evaluation questions to identify cost-benefit, for example, calculating the costs and benefits of the US Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which seems at the very borderlines of ethical considerations, if not crossing ethical red lines. The mid-term evaluation used the following

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<sup>10</sup> Engelhardt, A., 2021: External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021.", page 26-27.

<sup>11</sup> OHCHR and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (2018): The Other Infrastructure Gap: Sustainability. Human Rights and Environmental Perspectives.

<sup>12</sup> OHCHR, 2017: Baseline Study on the Human Rights Impacts and Implications of Mega-Infrastructure Investment.

<sup>13</sup> Cost-benefit analysis and large-scale infrastructure projects: state of the art and challenges. In: Environment and Planning B Planning and Design 34(4):598-610

<sup>14</sup> Aceves, W.J./California Western School of Law (2018): Cost-Benefit Analysis and Human Rights. In: 95 St. John's Law Review 431 (2018), page 436.



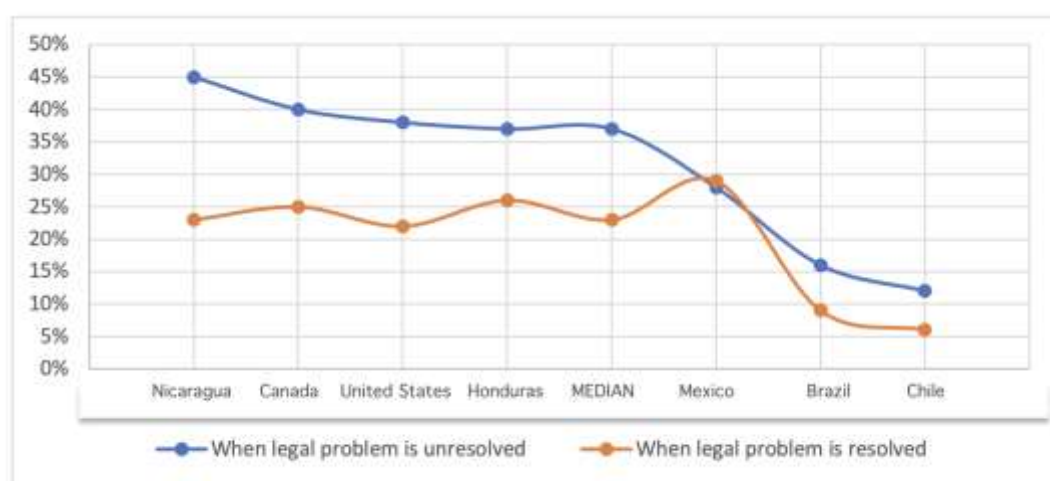
mitigation measure: "Hence, the evaluation estimates the cost efficiency of the IACHR's work through the **access to justice**<sup>15</sup> provided to the population of countries where otherwise human rights are not defensible through the national justice system. While this does not constitute a fully-fledged cost-benefit analysis, it provides a valuable alternative measure"<sup>16</sup>.

For the final evaluation, a complementary approach was proposed. During the evaluation process, the results of IACHR resolution 1/2020 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic on the OAS Member States emerged as an exciting entry point for analysing benefits and costs, with the effects of the resolutions on populations and *sub-populations* such as persons deprived of liberty or children. Hence, the access to justice was applied to population and sub-population, as applicable.

In 2020 the IACHR adopted a resolution, standards, and recommendations, with the support of its Special Rapporteurs on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights and Freedom of Expression, to ensure that the measures adopted by the countries to deal with and contain the pandemic should center on full respect for human rights.

Figure 5 outlines the interesting use of access to justice and the consequences on loss to income or employment in seven countries in the Americas (OECD, 2019). The *Median* shows that 37% of respondents stated a loss of income or employment due to an unsolved legal problem, compared to 23% when the legal problem was solved. Hence, access to justice has a positive economic effect based on reach evidence and shows its value for assessing cost-benefit.

**Figure 5: Share of urban respondents reporting the loss of income or employment as a consequence of a justiciable problem, sample of OAS Member States**



Source, OECD, 2019, based on World Justice Project's General Population Poll using a randomised sample of about 1,000 inhabitants of the three largest cities<sup>17</sup>. Adapted graphic, A. Engelhardt, 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Definition of access to justice: "ability of people to uphold their rights and seek redress for their grievances". OECD, 2019: Building a business case for Access to Justice. An OECD White Paper in collaboration with the World Justice Project, page 5.

<sup>16</sup> Engelhardt, A., 2021: External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021.", , page 27.

<sup>17</sup> OECD, 2019: Building a business case for Access to Justice. An OECD White Paper in collaboration with the World Justice Project

The figure above refers to violation of human rights at national level but serves as proof that access to justice can positive economic effects for citizens. This logic is applied in the relevant section of costs and benefits of this report concerning the IACHR's theoretical contribution on citizens by offering access to justice.

## 1.6 Sampling

The evaluation used a sampling of IACHR activities based on the "most significant" change approach, i.e., where the IACHR left the most profound footprint. This seems particularly relevant, as some activities ended several years ago, for example, in 2018. Memory recall was most substantial, where the activity results were most significant. To the extent possible under the memory recall approach, the evaluation also captured less successful project components ("least significant change"). This also allowed learning from challenges and how to do things differently in the future.

Figure 6 summarizes the sampling approach for selecting countries for field visits and case studies.

**Figure 6: Sampling of countries for field visits and case studies**

Country	IACHR recommendation for a field visit	IACHR visit 2020-2022	Country covered in the mid-term evaluation	Sampling
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friendly settlements</li> </ul>	05/2022	No	Country visit
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Friendly settlements</li> <li>Precautionary measures</li> <li>Monitoring recommendations</li> <li>Monitoring</li> </ul>	11/2022 07/2021 06/2021	Yes	Country visit
Costa Rica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Precautionary measures</li> </ul>	08/2022	No	In-depth telephone interviews
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberty of Expression (RELE)</li> </ul>	09/2022 01/2020	No	Country visit
Honduras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Precautionary measures</li> <li>SIMORE</li> <li>Monitoring</li> </ul>	09/2022 05/2021	Yes	In-depth telephone interviews
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring recommendations</li> <li>Liberty of Expression (RELE)</li> </ul>	07/2022 11/2022 09/2021 12/2020	Yes	In-depth telephone interviews
Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None (but donor interest in the Caribbean)</li> </ul>	07/2022	No	In-depth telephone interviews

The evaluator consulted with the IACHR Executive Secretariat and the Special Rapporteurship for Freedom of Expression to prepare for the sampling. The following countries were listed as cases of most significant change: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, and Mexico. In addition, the donor mentioned an interest in the Caribbean. The evaluator identified Dominica as the only country in the sub-region where the IACHR undertook a visit during the past three years. The criteria used for the country selection were as follows:

- IACHR recommendations of most significant change by project component;
- Recent IACHR visits which would still allow for memory recall by stakeholders consulted (2020-2022)
- Coverage in the 2021 mid-term evaluation through a case study (as an exclusion criterion)

- Donor interest

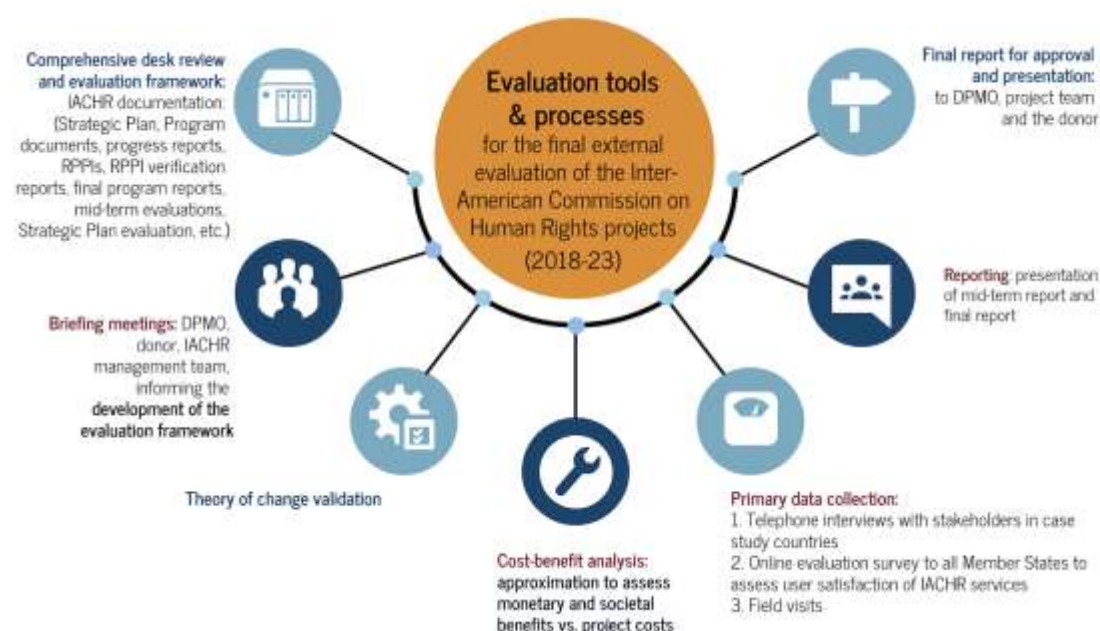
Following the consultations, the evaluator confirmed the following countries for sampling for the two field visits, with a preference for countries not covered through case studies in the mid-term evaluation: Argentina and Ecuador. Given the IACHR's strong suggestion to visit Colombia due to multiple project components covered in the country, this country is also included in the sample for field visits, despite being covered during the mid-term evaluation.

In-depth telephone interviews were foreseen to develop case studies as part of the evaluation for Costa Rica, Dominica, Honduras, and Mexico. However, the response to the invitation to telephone interviews in those countries was too weak to develop the envisaged case studies.

## 1.7 Evaluation tools and processes

The following evaluation tools and processes summarized in Figure 7 were used for this evaluation:

Figure 7: IACHR evaluation – evaluation tools and processes



Source: Engelhardt, A. 12/2022

In detail, the evaluation tools and processes comprise:

1. Document review, including the literature of models and approaches to determine the **cost-benefit of human rights programs** and related data requirements;
2. **Scoping calls** with the Department of Planning and Evaluation, the project team implementing the program in the OAS, and the representative of the U.S. Permanent Mission to the OAS;
3. **Theory of Change validation** based on document review and interviews;

4. **Cost-benefit analysis** using specific precautionary measures, merit reports, or friendly settlement reports as case studies to calculate the reach of those benefitting the broader population or sub-populations;
5. **Telephone interviews** with Member States' representatives (duty bearers) most benefitting from the OAS project and representatives of rights holders or their associations in sampled countries.
6. **Field visits**
7. **Online evaluation surveys: to Member States** not covered by the case studies/field visits to assess user satisfaction of IACHR services across all OAS Member States and Cuba;
8. Presentation of the midterm report to OAS via Skype conference call, following data analysis;
9. Finalization of the evaluation report and presentation to DPMO, the project team in the IACHR - OAS, and the U.S. Department of State.

## 1.8 Limitations and mitigation measures

The evaluation did encounter some limitations, despite the good availability of documentation and seamless cooperation with the IACHR Executive Secretariat, which had to deal with competing priorities on its time for Annual Reporting and the final project report.

One limitation included the inability to undertake virtual case studies for Costa Rica, Dominica, Honduras, and Mexico. While the response to the field visits was very positive (response rates reached, for example, 57% in Ecuador and 56% in Argentina), stakeholder participation in virtual case studies through zoom or telephone interviews was unsatisfactory despite support from the OAS in informing stakeholders about the evaluation and several reminders sent during the evaluation process. Given the good response to the online survey and the insights captured, the evaluator is confident that those limitations have been mitigated satisfactorily by undertaking the field visits to three countries.

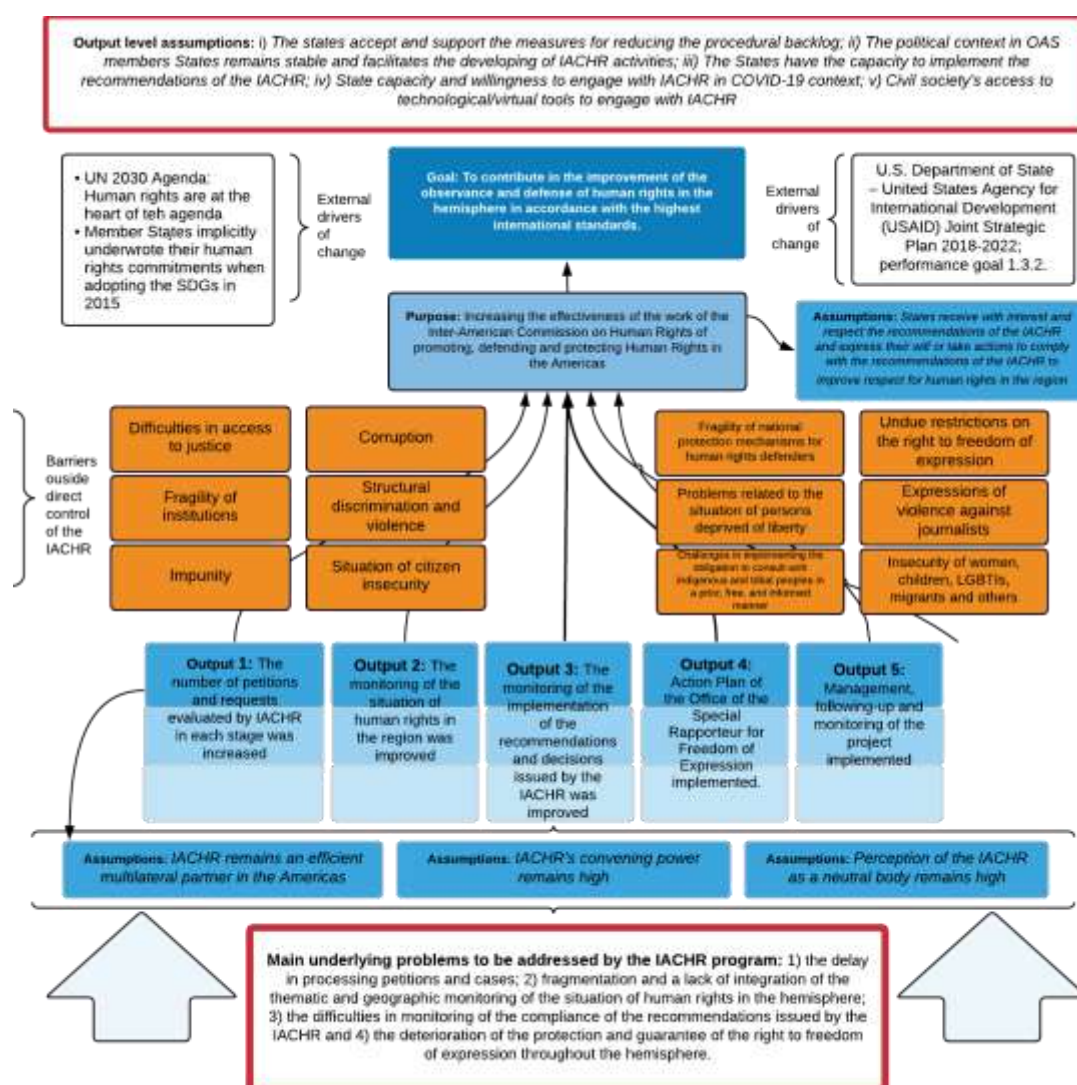
Besides, the planned Kirkpatrick-based online survey did not materialize, despite several attempts. The number of beneficiaries from recent capacity-building activities was insufficient to ensure a significant response for such a survey. Hence, IACHR's capacity building under the USOAS grant was not separately assessed as part of this final evaluation. However, the mid-term evaluation provided evidence of capacity-building results between 2018 and 2021.

Finally, the cost-benefit analysis did not go beyond assessing access to justice, as experienced during the mid-term evaluation, due to the challenges in undertaking cost-benefit analysis in human rights (see section 1.5 above). However, the evaluation managed to assess the reach of Resolution 1/2020 (*Pandemic and Human Rights*) on populations and sub-populations, such as the workforce or health workers in selected Member States. A full-fledged assessment, for example, of disability-adjusted life year (DALY) measures by preventing early death through granting precautionary measures for indigenous populations or human rights defenders or systemic changes in country's legal systems and their effects for sub-populations would go beyond the scope of an evaluation and would require significant time and budget for research teams.

## 1.9 Reconstructed Theory of Change of the IACHR project

Figure 8 presents the theory of change of the IACHR project based on the project documents and its logframe as the primary data sources, reconstructed during the mid-term evaluation.

Figure 8: Reconstruction of the Theory of Change for IACHR project 2018-2023



Source: A. Engelhardt 07/2021

The reconstructed Theory of Change of the project contains the following elements:

- Formulation of the main problems
- Outputs (short-term results) and related assumptions
- Barriers to moving from outputs to outcomes (medium-term results), the barriers are outside the direct control of the project but require observation
- Outcomes (purpose)
- Impact statement (long-term results/goal)
- Linkages to external drivers of change catalyzing the achievement of the impact
- Main assumptions

Section 2.1 provides an assessment of the validity of the Theory of Change.



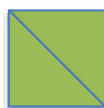
## Section II: Findings

### 2. Relevance: was the IACHR doing the right thing in the Western Hemisphere?

This section addresses the evaluation criterion of relevance. The sub-criteria used include the following: i) validity of the reconstructed theory of change, ii) main assumptions, iii) Intervention logic; iv) external drivers of change; v) IACHR reflecting stakeholder needs. This section's principal sources of evidence were the document review, interviews, observations during the field visits, and the online survey.

**Key findings: the IACHR projects was doing the right thing, based on a valid theory of change and high relevance for its State and Non-State stakeholders.**

- The design of the IACHR projects was comprehensive. Main problems and barriers, the interventions results chain and external drivers of change were correctly identified.
- However, the projects' assumptions were only partially valid, reflecting the Commission's increasingly adverse operating environment due to a deterioration of the human rights situation across many countries between 2018 and 2023, i.e. the Commission required more efforts than initially envisaged to achieve project results.
- The IACHR's relevance for its State and Non-State stakeholders showed positive results during the field visits to Argentina, Colombia and Ecuador.



This final evaluation finds that the relevance of the IACHR program is very high. Based on the evaluations' scoring methodology<sup>18</sup>, the relevance score is "green" (89 out of 100<sup>19</sup>).

#### 2.1 Validity of the Theory of Change

The final evaluation coincides with the mid-term evaluation results concerning the overall validity of the IACHR project' theory of change. Based on the theory of change reconstructed during the mid-term evaluation<sup>20</sup>, the mid-term evaluation findings remain valid.



#### Main barriers

The project document correctly identified the main barriers that the IACHR faced in order to be effective that justified the IACHR project from 2018 to 2023. Human rights violations continue to affect OAS Member States and have increased based on stakeholder perceptions since the mid-term evaluation. Those violations include, among others: i) difficulties in access to justice, ii) fragility of institutions, iii) Impunity, iv) corruption, v) structural discrimination and violence against individuals, groups, and communities at risk in the Americas, vi) fragility

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<sup>18</sup> applied by the UK's Independent Commission for Aid Impact, see for example <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/ICAI-Review-UK-aids-contribution-to-tackling-tax-avoidance-and-evasion.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Scores by sub-criteria: green: 3, green/amber: 2, amber/red: 1; red: 0 ; 2.1 = 3 (main barriers), 3 (main problems), 1 (main assumptions), 3 (intervention results chain), 3 (external drivers of change); 2.2 stakeholder needs = 3. Total = 17 out of a maximum of 21. Overall performance = SUM (16/18\*100) (88,88%).

<sup>20</sup> A theory of change as part of the project document was not mandatory in the OAS at the time of the program's design.



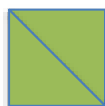
of national protection mechanisms for human rights defenders or vii) undue restrictions on the right to freedom of expression by expressions of violence against journalists and authoritarian practices from some governments.



### Main problems

The main problems facing the IACHR’s effectiveness remain unchanged since the mid-term evaluation. The main factors affecting the effectiveness in promoting, defending, and protecting victims of human rights violations: i) the delay in processing petitions and cases; ii) fragmentation and a lack of integration of the thematic and geographic monitoring of the situation of human rights in the hemisphere; iii) the difficulties in monitoring of the compliance of the recommendations issued by the IACHR and vi) the deterioration of the protection and guarantee of the right to freedom of expression throughout the hemisphere<sup>21</sup>.

The situation to upholding human rights in the Americas has further deteriorated since the development of the IACHR project document in 2018 and the mid-term evaluation in 2021.



### Intervention results chain

The evaluation finds that the intervention logic for the IACHR project is valid. The project’ purpose contributes to their goal. Enhancing the IACHR’s effectiveness contributes to improving the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere. Besides, the four thematic outputs contribute to the project’ purpose. The increase in petitions and requests evaluated reduces the IACHR case backlog and contributed to the Commission’s effectiveness. The same applies for enhancing monitoring, both of the implementation of IACHR recommendations and decisions and the monitoring of the human rights situation more generally. The Action Plan of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression also contributes to the effectiveness of the IACHR, for example, when defining standards for human rights in protests, such as the violent encounters in Colombia in 2021 and Ecuador in 2022 or more recently in Peru in 2022 and 2023.

The IACHR is **the** OAS’ principal organ to promote the observance and defense of human rights in the Americas. Hence its effectiveness influences the observance and defense of human rights in the Americas. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated in 2020: “The Inter-American Commission is a most effective and widely trusted impartial body, whose work is held in the highest regard. It has provided vital recourse for victims of human rights violations in the Americas, and has played an important role in advocating the rights of vulnerable groups.”<sup>22</sup>. The final evaluation confirms the findings of the mid-term evaluation that the five project outputs contribute to the IACHR’s purpose.



### Main assumptions

As stated in the mid-term evaluation, the project document lists four main explicit assumptions of the IACHR. In RPPIs, two additional assumptions appear in the COVID-19 context during the program’s implementation. Besides, the mid-term evaluation in 2021 identified three implicit assumptions. The evaluator tested all assumptions in telephone interviews and the online survey in 2021, reaching 26 countries, and updated results during the final evaluation in 2023, as presented in Figure 9.

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<sup>21</sup> The only problem cluster excluded in the project document comprises the reproductive rights of women. The latter was excluded from the program due to other donor priorities.

<sup>22</sup><https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26188&LangID=E>

**Figure 9: Validity of IACHR assumptions**

<b>IACHR assumptions</b>	<b>Score in 2021</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<i>1. The States receive with interest and respect the recommendations of the IACHR and express their will or take actions to comply with the recommendations of the IACHR to improve respect for human rights in the region</i>	33,1%	The 2021 score reflects the reality of its increasingly adverse operating environment due to a deterioration of the human rights situation across many countries in the Americas. Stakeholders interviewed during the final evaluation noted a further deterioration of the human rights situation in the Western Hemisphere.
<i>2. The states accept and support the measures for reducing the procedural backlog</i>	39.9%.	The score reflects a perceived lack of States' political buy-in to the work of the Commission across many countries.
<i>3. The political context in OAS members States remains stable and facilitates the developing of IACHR activities</i>	27.1%.	The score reflects instability across most countries in Latin America, which further deteriorated since the mid-term evaluation in 2021, for example, in Peru.
<i>4. The States have the capacity to implement the recommendations of the IACHR</i>	42,3%	The score reflects the existence of structures and mechanisms for some States to implement recommendations. The final evaluation showed that IACHR technical assistance would be required for legal reform to enable the implementation of recommendations in some cases.
<i>5. State capacity and willingness to engage with IACHR in COVID-19 context</i>	44%	The score reflects political hesitance in many countries, which COVID-19 did not change. COVID-19 did not significantly affect the political will to engage with the Commission.
<i>6. Civil society's access to technological/ virtual tools to engage with IACHR</i>	66,3%	Stakeholders experienced a larger and more frequent engagement of civil society members with the IACHR. Stakeholders appreciated virtual or hybrid audiences as a means to improve stakeholders' access to the Commission.
<i>7. IACHR remains an efficient multilateral partner in the</i>	68%	Stakeholders underscored the Commission's swift reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic. Critique reflected perceptions of lengthy and bureaucratic procedures in the Commission.
<i>8. IACHR convening power remains high</i>	69,7%	Despite the general deterioration of the human rights situation, particularly in Latin America, governments of most countries still cooperate with the IACHR to varying degrees, while civil societies' engagement is strong. This observation was validated during the field visits to Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador in 2023.
<i>9. Perception of the IACHR as a neutral body remains high</i>	59,1%	Certain disconnect shows in the political discourse of the OAS, being a political organization, with the rights-based statements of the IACHR, which affected the neutrality of the Commission. In 2023, the OAS's interference in the renewal of a former IACHR Executive Secretary is still vivid in the memory of external stakeholders close to the Commission.

Source: own data analysis, 2021 and 2023

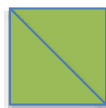
Figure 9 summarizes the validity of IACHR program assumptions, listing stakeholder scores from 2021 and providing comments based on the final evaluation’s data collection in 2023. The final evaluation finds that most assumptions do not hold and that the human rights situation identified in 2021 further deteriorated. Hence, the Commission’s operating environment was even more difficult than envisaged in 2018<sup>1</sup>.

The Brookings Institute and Chatham House found in 2023 that “global threats to the international rights regime today are multiple and complex. The bare power calculations of states’ national security, economic and diplomatic interests still present the primary challenge to compliance with human rights norms. But *threats to the international rights framework are emerging from three new directions*: increased geopolitical competition with new powers whose views of state sovereignty are at odds with human rights obligations; the rise of xenophobic and populist domestic movements; and the spread of surveillance technologies. In addition, for billions of citizens living in poverty or conflict zones, the notion of an international legal regime to which they can appeal for the protection of their rights remains a distant fiction. (...) In addition to the “traditional” challenges that have affected the Interamerican System for Human Rights for decades, there are new or emerging human rights concerns to which it is not well-equipped to respond, including corruption, the climate crisis, and the impact of businesses on human rights.”<sup>23</sup>

In the case of the Western Hemisphere, the geopolitical competition relates to the heavy engagement of non-democratic regimes in the energy sector of countries like Ecuador<sup>24</sup> or Venezuela. The rise of populist movements is currently taking place across countries in Central America<sup>25</sup> while the use of surveillance technologies across Latin America raises international concern.<sup>26</sup>

Also, in OHCHR’s latest publicly available Annual Report, the UN detects a worsening human rights situation specifically in the Americas, with the region with the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in the world. “The socio-economic effects of the pandemic affecting specific groups, compounded with heavy-handed responses from governments, exposed persistent structural inequalities and fragile democratic systems. Rates of poverty (33.7 per cent) and extreme poverty (12.5 per cent) across the region reached levels that have not been seen for 12 and 20 years, respectively” (...) <sup>27</sup>.

OHCHR noted the eruption of unprecedented social protest in the region in 2021, a deteriorating situation for human rights defenders and journalists and an increase in regulations in the rights to freedom of expression, participation, peaceful assembly, and association.



### External drivers of change

The evaluation finds that external drivers of change are valid in 2023. Human rights are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations. While the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) do not specifically address human rights, OHCHR undertook a detailed analysis to show

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<sup>23</sup> Sabatini, C (Ed.), 2023: Reclaiming Human Rights in a Changing World Order. Brookings Institute Press, Washington DC and Chatham House, London.

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ\\_Spanish/Journals/Volume-30\\_Issue-4/2018\\_4\\_05\\_ellis\\_s\\_eng.pdf](https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/ASPJ_Spanish/Journals/Volume-30_Issue-4/2018_4_05_ellis_s_eng.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Siles, I., Guevara, E., Tristán-Jiménez, L., & Carazo, C. (2023). Populism, Religion, and Social Media in Central America. The International Journal of Press/Politics, 28(1), 138–159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19401612211032884>

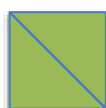
<sup>26</sup> <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/access-now-raises-concern-about-the-sale-of-surveillance-technologies-in-latam-calls-more-than-20-companies-to-respond-on-human-rights-inc-co-responses>

<sup>27</sup> OHCHR, 2022: UN Human Rights Report, page 264

the linkages of all SDGs with economic, social, and cultural rights<sup>28</sup>. As such, all United Nations Member States implicitly underwrote their human rights commitments when adopting the SDGs in 2015.

As stated during the mid-term evaluation, the U.S. Department of State – United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Joint Strategic Plan 2018-2022 refers to human rights and the rule of law under Goal 1: Protect America's security at home and abroad, performance goal 1.3.2. "By 2022, contribute to strengthened democratic governance through targeted assistance to improve citizen engagement, strengthen civil society, increase transparency, and protect human rights."<sup>29</sup>

The joint commitment of the U.S. State Department and USAID, particularly engaging civil society, and NGOs,<sup>30</sup> shows the commitment of the U.S. administration beyond the U.S. Mission to the OAS and functions as another external drive of change.



## 2.2 IACHR reflecting stakeholder needs

Beyond the formal assessment of the IACHR's theory of change for the USOAS-funded project, the final evaluation enquired about the IACHR's relevance for its State and Non-State stakeholders. The field visits to Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador showed overwhelmingly positive results in this respect. The evaluations' country cases studies found the following results:

**Argentina:** Since the visit of the IACHR in 1979, in the middle of the military dictatorship, the Commission has been highly appreciated by all stakeholders in Argentina. Governments, independently of their political orientation, appreciate the Commission due to its role in holding the dictatorship accountable in Argentina. The latter is perceived as an important step in Argentina's transition towards democracy.

**Colombia:** The IACHR is highly relevant for victims of human rights abuses and human rights defenders in Colombia. With social unrest mounting in 2021 and extending to 2022 and 2023, the human rights situation calls for the IACHR's attention.

*"The IACHR keeps opening doors which are closed in our home countries".*

**Stakeholder in Argentina**

*"The IACHR is the lifeline for so many people in the Americas, including our country. Hence, the exit of countries from the Inter-American human rights system is a real threat".*

*"The IACHR is like a lifejacket for civil society organizations. It is the ultimate resource, it propels cases to another level and defends citizens against their governments".*

**Stakeholders in Colombia**

*"The Commission is vital for defending human rights in Ecuador. But it should not function as a firefighting service only but proactively support the state of the media in my country through capacity building".*

*"Human rights were under constant attack in Ecuador. The president mocked the Commission in his weekly media talks. The IACHR was steadfast, and our country just managed to get the curve."*

**Stakeholder in Ecuador**

<sup>28</sup> OHCHR, undated. Sustainable Development Goals related rights.

[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/SDG\\_HR\\_Table.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/MDGs/Post2015/SDG_HR_Table.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of State, USAID, 2018: U.S. Department of State – USAID Joint Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022,

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of State – USAID Joint Strategic Plan FY 2018-2022, page 48.

**Ecuador:** The Commission is very relevant to Ecuador. Upholding the Interamerican system for human rights is a significant achievement and essential for CSO and citizens, especially when governments are critical towards attaining human rights. The IACHR protected journalists in Ecuador, which were under constant attack during a previous government (in power till 2017). The Commission protected Freedom of Expression and attacks of institutionalism of the press and kept doing so. This signals any current and future government that the Interamerican system protects Freedom of Expression. This signal seems much needed in the context of ambiguous government statements concerning Freedom of Expression<sup>31</sup> and the threats to the lives of journalists by unidentified actors in Ecuador, as witnessed in late March 2023<sup>32</sup>.

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31 In a televised address on 14 February, the current president referred to *La Posta*'s investigative reporters as "*media terrorists*"

32 France24.com: Five Ecuador TV stations receive letter bombs, one explodes (March 21, 2023).

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230320-letter-bomb-explodes-at-ecuador-tv-station-other-media-get-envelopes>

### 3. Efficiency: were resources used well to achieve IACHR results?

This section analyses the efficiency of the IACHR program based on the following set of sub-criteria suggested in the ToR: i) the quality of program indicators; ii) use of results-based principles; iii) utility of monitoring mechanisms, iv) implementation of mid-term recommendations; and; v) cost-benefit of the IACHR project.

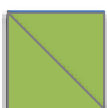
The evaluation used the document review as this section's primary source of evidence.

**Key findings: The project applied results-based management principles while the required resource-intensive monitoring mechanisms seems strongly accountability driven.**

- Overall, the quality of IACHR project indicators is good.
- The IACHR continued using the results-based management principles that were in place at the time of the mid-term evaluation, for example the quarterly RPPI.
- The monitoring mechanisms are very strict and serve as a rigorous accountability mechanism for the donor. However, this comprehensive monitoring on a quarterly basis was unevenly used for project management, as it was perceived as overwhelming.
- The mid-term evaluation issued seven recommendations. The USOAS followed all three recommendations addressed to the donor. Concerning the project team, three recommendations were fully implemented, to the extent that they were within the scope of the project team, and one recommendation was partly executed (about making some output indicators more results-focused).
- Cost-benefit: at least 101,175,701 persons from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru were reached by legislative and juridical measures with reference to Resolution 1/2020 and its recommendations. This could be compared to the US project investment of US\$ 14,263,887.8, at a theoretical cost of US\$ 0,14 per person reached.



The evaluation finds that the efficiency of the IACHR project was very high, with a "green" score (89 out of 100)<sup>33</sup> based on the four evaluation criteria listed above.



#### 3.1 Quality of program indicators

Overall, the quality of IACHR project indicators is good. Significant time and effort were invested in establishing those indicators, and they serve as a good practice example for the OAS. At the same time, RPPI verification reports repeatedly suggested a more ambitious target setting.

Figure 10 summarizes the current project indicators and suggestions for strengthening those indicators' results-focus.

<sup>33</sup> Ratings by sub/criteria are as follows on the 0 to 3 scale: 3.1 quality of program indicators = 3, 3.2 use of results-based principles = 3; 3.3 utility of monitoring mechanisms: no rating, 3.4 implementation of mid-term evaluation recommendations = 2, 3.5 cost-benefit: no rating. Total: 8 out of 9 (88,9%).



Figure 10: Suggestions on how to strengthen the results focus of IACHR program indicators

Narrative Summary of Objectives and Activities	Indicators IACHR	Suggestion of enhancing the results-based focus of indicators (in bold italics)
<p>GOAL</p> <p>To contribute to improving the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere in accordance with the highest international standards.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By 2025, at least ten OAS Member States have adopted legislation, public policies and practices harmonized with inter-American human rights standards which are aimed at providing protection of human rights of their population</li> <li>2. By 2025, at least ten OAS Member States have adopted recommendations issued by the IACHR in its country reports, thematic or reports of cases for the protection, defense and guarantee of the human rights of the population to eradicate the structural causes of human rights violations and failures of domestic judicial systems which lead to the presentation of petitions and to remove the obstacles faced by persons and groups in situations of vulnerability in the enjoyment of their rights.</li> <li>3. By 2025, at least 15 OAS Member States have adopted legislation, public policies and practices harmonized with inter-American human rights standards which are aimed to increase freedom of expression and access to information.</li> </ol>	<p><b><i>At least five cases documented where merit reports or reports on friendly settlements resulted in systemic change in States' legal systems or procedures</i></b></p>
<p>PURPOSE</p> <p>Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of promoting, defending and protecting Human Rights in the Americas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least 57% annual increase compared to 2017 in the number of requests (Initial review, Admissibility, Merit and Precautionary Measure decisions) responded by the IACHR regarding alleged violations to human rights in the region at the end of the project</li> <li>2. At the end of the project at least 19 OAS Member States which have participated in the activities of the IACHR have responded positively accepting commitments to comply with the IACHR recommendations and decisions issued in its reports</li> <li>3. The states informed actions taken to comply with recommendations to protect the rights to life and integrity in at least 70% of the total number of Precautionary Measures followed up during each year</li> <li>4. At the end of the project, at least 60 inter-American standards were developed to approach each of the following issues related to the right to Freedom of Expression and Access to Public Information to incorporate them in the national OAS Member state practices towards the guarantee and protection of these rights: 1) access to information and national security; 2) violence against women journalists; 3) national framework for freedom of expression in Cuba; 4) human rights in the context of protest, or disinformation and; 5) Freedom of Expression in electoral contexts. 6) Access to Environmental Information, 7) Access to Information and National Security, 8) Freedom of Expression and Children's Rights 9) Digital Rights. e) Online Disinformation and the Pandemic. (35 standards have been developed in the four thematic report)</li> <li>5. At the end of the project 47 new Friendly Settlements were signed between the parties</li> </ol>	<p>No recommendation, good results focus.</p> <p>To shorten indicator 4, the specific rights could be listed in the comments column of the framework or in a footnote.</p>

	<p>6. At least 11 States take positive measures (a public policy, a legal decision, regulation, bill) towards protecting freedom of expression and access to information, citing inter-American standards by the end of the project</p> <p>7. By the end of the Project, at least 10 new standards are created in the petition and cases system.</p> <p>8. By the end of the project, at least 131 measures (structural and/or, individual) have been, taken by the States in compliance with signed friendly settlement agreements.</p>	
<p>OUTPUTS</p> <p>1. The number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage was increased</p>	<p>1.1 At least 694 draft admissibility reports prepared for the IACHR approval at the end of the project,</p> <p>1.2 At least 170 draft Merit reports prepared for the IACHR approval at the end of the project.</p> <p>1.3 At least 300 Memos on cases in transition stage granting extension for compliance with recommendations by the end of the project</p> <p>1.4 By the end of the project, at least 40 working meetings facilitated at the transition stage of merit reports by the IACHR to monitor compliance of IACHR recommendations and decisions issued</p> <p>1.5 At least 104 cases submitted to the Inter American Court on Human Rights at the end of the project. (20 the first year)</p> <p>1.6 At least 85 new friendly settlements processes are initiated at the end of the project.</p> <p>1.7 At least 205 working meetings facilitated by the IACHR to promote friendly settlements at the end of the project</p> <p>1.8 At least 4250 requests for precautionary measures evaluated at the end of the project (1000 each year)</p>	No recommendation, good results focus.
<p>2. The monitoring of the situation of human rights in the region was improved</p>	<p>2.1 At least 22 countries by 2018; 24 by 2019; 26 by 2020 , 28 by 2021 and 35 by 2022 covered by monitoring actions of the IACHR</p> <p>2.2 Civil Society organizations and government officials from at least 15 countries from the Caribbean participating in dialogues and meetings conducted by the IACHR at the end of the project</p> <p>2.3 At least 30 recommendations issued in each country by the IACHR as a result of in loco Visits by the end of the project. (99 recommendations issued from the first two visits (Honduras and Brazil)).</p> <p>2.4 By the end of the project, at least 5 out of seven country reports published regarding the on-site visits to Venezuela, Nicaragua, Cuba, Brazil and Honduras with specific recommendations to overcome the situation observed.</p> <p>2.5 At least 1 thematic report with recommendations drafted by the end of 2021 and published by the end of the project</p>	<p>2.2 Civil Society organizations and government officials from at least 14 countries from the Caribbean participating in dialogues and meetings conducted by the IACHR at the end of the project <b>with a satisfaction rate about the training of at least 70 % (based on new end-of meeting evaluation survey)</b></p>

	<p>regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and Human rights and in the region, specifically about the limitations to civil and political rights in pandemics and the protection of the most vulnerable subjects</p> <p>2.6 At least 1 Report produced by the Inter-American System on the right of religious freedom in the hemisphere by the end of the project</p>	
3. The monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR was improved	<p>3.1 New methodology for the follow up on the compliance of recommendations issued by the IACHR in Merit Reports, designed by the end of the first year and implemented by the end of the project</p> <p>3.2 Four reports presented to the IACHR on the status of States' compliance of the recommendations issued by the IACHR through merit reports based on the new methodology by the end of project execution.</p> <p>3.3 At least 52 working meetings with the parties to follow up on the compliance of recommendations issued in merit reports at the end of the project.</p> <p>3.4 An online database as a tool to monitor the recommendations of the IACHR (Inter-American SIMORE) installed, working and updated by the end of the project</p> <p>3.5 At least 366 of State officers and CSO representatives participate in the five trainings on the use of SIMORE by the end of the project</p> <p>3.6 At least one report on national mechanisms in the Americas for the implementation of recommendations issued by the IACHR prepared at the end of the project</p>	<p>3.4 An online database as a tool to monitor the recommendations of the IACHR (Inter-American SIMORE) installed and working <b>by (add date) with a satisfaction rate about its utility of at least 70 % (based on new annual user survey)</b></p> <p>3.5 At least 175 of State officers and CSO representatives participate in the five training events on the use of SIMORE during the execution of the project <b>with a satisfaction rate about the training of at least 70 % (based on new end-of meeting evaluation survey)</b></p> <p><b>3.6: add time component (date)</b></p>
4. Action Plan of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression implemented	<p>4.1 By the end of the project, at least 9 thematic, country reports or Guides, containing recommendations related to Freedom of Expression issues in the region submitted for IACHR approval at the end of the project. Topics: a) Access to Environmental Information, b) Access to Information and National Security, c) Freedom of Expression and Children's Rights d) Digital Rights. e) Online Disinformation and the Pandemic.</p> <p>4.2 At least 26 petitions or cases related to Freedom of Expression processed within the Inter American System of Human Rights at the end of the project. (5 at the end of the first year)</p> <p>4.3 At least 15 statements with another international organization on freedom of expression issued by the end of project.</p>	<p>New 4.1.1 <b>User satisfaction about the utility and timeliness of the reports or guides reaching at least 70% based on new human rights practitioners' survey<sup>ii</sup></b></p>
5. Management, following-up, and monitoring of the project implemented	<p>5.1 One Progress Report every 3 months, one Final Report at the end of Project execution submitted to the DPE (now DPMO) for donor approval</p> <p>5.2 At least 38 recommendations from the external evaluation or verification reports incorporated by the end of the project</p>	<p>5.2 At least <b>75% of recommendations</b> from the external evaluation or verification reports incorporated by the end of the project</p>



### 3.2 Use of results-based principles

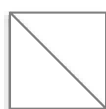
The final evaluation finds that the IACHR continued using the results-based management principles that were in place at the time of the mid-term evaluation. Findings from 2021 are confirmed:

"Overall, the use of results-based management principles in the IACHR program is satisfactory with appropriate indicators. The program uses a logframe included in the project document, which was regularly updated to reflect changes to the external environment and DPE (now DPMO) comments.

The project team used the OAS reporting templates, such as the RPPI containing for each indicator baselines, targets, and a column on the status of actual achievements, and followed the processes duly. (...) Issues flagged in Verification Reports on indicators and targets were followed-up, for example, comments on the targets, which were subsequently increased in new versions of the logframe"<sup>34</sup>.

DPMO consistently suggested more ambitious target setting for project indicators and the evaluation finds that the Commission might have been rather cautious in this respect.

Between 2018 and December 2022, the project team prepared eighteen RPPIs, one per quarter, followed by detailed DPMO Verification Reports for each RPPI.



### 3.3 Utility of monitoring mechanisms

The monitoring mechanisms outlined in the section above are very strict and serve as a water-tight accountability mechanism to the donor. In international development cooperation, quarterly progress reports to a donor for a five-year project seem rather the exception than the rule, for example, in the United Nations system.

However, the agreement signed between the OAS and USOAS requires quarterly reports, those requirements are applicable to all U.S. grants and cooperative agreements to fund project, programs or actions. This practice is based on U.S. Code of Federal Regulations - 2CFR200<sup>35</sup>.

As the monitoring mechanisms are beyond the project's control, no rating is provided.



### 3.4 Implementation of mid-term evaluation recommendations








The mid-term evaluation issued seven recommendations, three to the donor and four to the project team. The donor followed all three recommendations. Concerning the project team, three recommendations were fully implemented to the extent that they were within the project team's scope, and one recommendation was partly executed, as presented in Figure 11.

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<sup>34</sup> Engelhardt, A./OAS, 2021: External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021.", page 26.

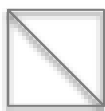
<sup>35</sup> IACHR comment: Even though it is true that reporting on quarterly basis is overwhelming, the IACHR wants to clarify that during the monitoring work, carried out by the Project and Planning Section, on the project implementation, information and alerts are issued to the IACHR implementation teams that are used to take actions and define priorities.

**Figure 11: Implementation of mid-term evaluation recommendations**

Recommendation	Comment	Rating
<b>R1: Donor:</b> Continue funding the IACHR program to defend human rights across the Americas despite a deterioration of the operating environment.	Funding was continued.	
<b>R2: Project team:</b> Consider the suggestions made in the evaluation report to further enhance the quality of the program indicators. For future donor multi-year programs, start using mid-term or annual milestones for all indicators.	The mid-term evaluation suggested adding satisfaction rates for indicators related to dialogues, meetings (indicator 2.2), databases (indicator 3.4), training (indicator 3.5), and reports (indicator 4.1) to make also some output indicators more results-focused. Also, the use of annual milestones was suggested. This recommendation was partly implemented.	
<b>R3: Donor:</b> Consider a final evaluation of the IACHR program to validate the level of final program results achievements, if possible, in selected beneficiary countries (which was not possible during the mid-term evaluation due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions).	The donor commissioned a final evaluation, as proven by this report	
<b>R 4: Project team:</b> Prioritize the protection of national human rights mechanisms in countries where the political commitment to upholding human rights appears volatile.	The field visits showed the positive attitude of national human rights mechanisms towards the IACHR and the Commission's active engagement, for example through briefings, despite challenging political contexts between 2018 and 2023. However, the demand for support is higher than IACHR's supply, given its funding limitations.	
<b>R5: Project team:</b> Make use of opportunities for the coordination with multilateral human rights initiatives in the Americas as and where possible.	The evaluation showed that coordination is a mutual effort. As the coordination, for example, for joint statements, is not institutionalized by the IACHR and its UN counterparts, such as the OHCHR, changes in counterparts in Geneva can have adverse effects on the joint efforts, as witnessed in the case of Freedom of Expression in Colombia or the National Committee on the prevention of Torture in Argentina.	
<b>R6: Project team:</b> Continue strategic planning cycles to outline the Commission's objectives and to continue operationalizing its results focus.	The IACHR externally evaluated its Strategic Plan 2017-2022 in 2021/2022 and established a consultative process for its new Strategic Plan 2023-2027.	
<b>R7: Donor:</b> Funding of core functions and staff is strongly encouraged to ensure that the increased accessibility of the IACHR lasts.	The Commission was free to use USOAS funding for core functions and staff and did so.	

Recommendation 2 was partly implemented. RELE created a new indicator in the new US funded project pertaining the endorsement by CSO, academia and media of the documents published by RELE. The indicator is: *The Number of organizations, academia, and media outlet who cite or refer to communication FoE campaigns at the end of the project*<sup>36iii</sup>. Additionally, annual milestones were included in the indicators of the new USOAS project.

<sup>36</sup> IACHR commented that satisfaction surveys are not useful to the type of work the IACHR and RELE does related to the advancement of standards and draft of reports. However, in line with the recommendation of making output



### 3.5 Costs and benefits of the IACHR project

The final evaluation provides a snapshot of the cost and benefit of the IACHR project funded under the USOAS grant between 2018 and 2023. For a fully-fledged cost-benefit analysis of any human rights program of the size of the USOAS grant, in-depth research would be required over an extended period, for example, longitudinal studies. The latter would exceed the budget and timeframe for this evaluation.

Given the challenges in assessing the cost-benefit of human rights interventions, the mid-term evaluation estimated the cost-benefit of the IACHR’s work through the **access to justice** provided to the population of countries where otherwise, human rights are not defensible through the national justice system.

In the absence of available benchmarks of the cost-benefit of comparable human rights interventions, this sub-criterion is not rated.

**Pandemic and human rights:** Resolution 1/2020, “Pandemic and human rights in the Americas,” adopted by the IACHR on April 10, 2020, offers an entry point to assess the costs and benefits for the IACHR’s project under USOAS funding.

In 2020, the IACHR, with the support of its Special Rapporteurs on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights and on Freedom of Expression, adopted a resolution, standards, and recommendations, to ensure that the measures adopted by the countries to deal with and contain the pandemic should center on full respect for human rights.

Resolution 1/2020 was necessary based on the following background<sup>37</sup>:

“As to containment measures to address and prevent the effects of the pandemic, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has noted that some rights have been suspended or restricted, and in other cases, a “state of emergency” or a “health emergency” has been declared by means of presidential decrees or different legal regulations in order to protect public health and prevent an increase in contagion. Different types of measures have been taken to restrict the rights of freedom of expression, access to public information, individual freedom, the inviolability of the home, and the right to private property; surveillance technology has been used to track the propagation of the coronavirus, and to store data on a massive scale”.

Under the IACHR’s impact observatory, the Commission published an insightful report titled “*Implementación e impactos de la Resolución No, 1/2020*”<sup>38</sup> in 2023 to show the effects of Resolution 1/2020 on States. This final evaluation took the analysis one step further and calculated the potential persons reached by the State’s measures, which specifically reference

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indicators more result-focused, IACHR did add the aforementioned indicator, and monitored it for the Report on Women Journalists and Newsrooms. The Commission is open to continuing to work in a better indicator but believe that we can test the usability of reports and standards through the monitoring of how it is cited and referenced.

<sup>37</sup> OAS/IACHR, 2020 : Resolution 1/2020, “Pandemic and human rights in the Americas”

<sup>38</sup> OEA /CIDH, 2023 : “Implementación e impactos de la Resolución No, 1/2020”



recommendations under Resolution 1/2020. The sample included legislative and juridical measures from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru.

Figure 12 highlights the national measures and judgments with reference to Resolution 1/2020, where an estimate of persons reached, i.e., persons that can make use of those measures and judgements was possible.

**Figure 12: Number of people reached by national measures and judgments with reference to IACHR resolution 1/2020**

Country	Reference to resolution No. 1/2020 recommendation	Topic	Beneficiary type	# of persons reached in country
Argentina	# 32	State of emergency, restrictions on fundamental freedoms and the rule of law: access to information	Potentially the entire population	45,808,747 <sup>39</sup>
Honduras	# 24	State of emergency, restrictions on fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law	Potentially the entire population	10,278,345 <sup>40</sup>
Colombia	# 5	State of emergency, restrictions on fundamental freedoms and the rule of law: protection of workers	Potentially the entire workforce	25,983,569 <sup>41</sup>
Mexico	# 5	State of emergency, restrictions on fundamental freedoms and the rule of law: protection of health workers	Potentially the entire workforce in the health sector	835,000 <sup>42</sup>
El Salvador	# 3(b)	General recommendations: access to justice	Potentially the entire population	6,314,167 <sup>43</sup>
Peru	# 51	Violence against women	Potentially entire female population	11,120,230 <sup>44</sup>
Argentina	# 4,5 and 67	Children and adolescents	Potentially all children (aged 0 to 14 years) and adolescents (aged 15 to 19)	11,118,087 <sup>45</sup> 3,454,109 <sup>46</sup>
Brazil	# 45, 46 and 47	Persons deprived of Liberty	Potentially all Persons deprived of Liberty	835,643 <sup>47</sup>
Argentina	# 45, 46, 47, and 48	Persons deprived of Liberty	Potentially all Persons deprived of Liberty	114,074 <sup>48</sup>
Argentina	# 11, 40 and 41	Older persons	Potentially all older persons	5,415,468 <sup>49</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Date : 2021. Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=AR>

<sup>40</sup> Date: 2021. Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=HN>

<sup>41</sup> Date: 2021. Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=CO>

<sup>42</sup> Date: 2020. Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1330713/number-health-care-professionals-mexico/>

<sup>43</sup> Date: 2021. Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=SV>

<sup>44</sup> 2021, 15 to 64 years of age, source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/789716/population-total-age-gender-peru/>

<sup>45</sup> Date: 2021. Sources: [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Argentina/Population\\_size/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Argentina/Population_size/) and United Nations Population Division

<sup>46</sup> Date: 2017. Source: <https://www.paho.org/adolescent-health-report-2018/images/profiles/Argentina-PAHO%20Adolescents%20and%20Youth%20Health%20Country%20Profile%20V5.0.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Date: December 2021. Source: <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/brazil>

<sup>48</sup> Date: December 2021. Source: <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/argentina>

<sup>49</sup> Date: 2021. Source: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.65UP.TO?locations=AR>

Figure 13 lists the estimated populations reached by State's measures and judgments with reference to Resolution 1/2020. This includes entire populations, as in the case of Argentina, concerning the right of access to information or sub-populations such as women in Peru, the workforce in Colombia, or health workers in Mexico. Where the entire population of a country benefits, sub-groups are not added to the calculation, as in the case of children and adolescents or persons deprived of liberty in Argentina.

The final evaluation finds that at least 101,175,701 persons from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru were reached by legislative and juridical measures with reference to Resolution 1/2020 and its recommendations. Based on the U.S. investment of US\$ 14,263,887.80 in the IACHR project 2018-2023, this benefit comes at the cost of US\$ 0,14 per beneficiary.

**Figure 13: Costs and benefits - Number of persons reached by national judgments with reference to IACHR resolution 1/2020 in relation to USOAS funding for the entire project' funding 2018-2023**

Country	Benefitting population	Cost of the U.S. program funding 2018 -23 (US\$)	Cost-benefit (US\$ per person reached by IACHR resolution 1/2020)
Argentina	45,808,747		
Brazil	835,643		
Colombia	25,983,569		
El Salvador	6,314,167		
Honduras	10,278,345		
Mexico	835,000		
Peru	11,120,230		
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,175,701</b>	14,263,887.80	0,14 <sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> US\$ 14,263,887.8 : 101,175,701 beneficiaries

## 4. Effectiveness: were project results achieved, and how?

The following section analyses the achievement of the IACHR project results. The sub-criteria follow the evaluation TOR based on the agreed evaluation matrix and work plan and comprise: i) the achievement of program objectives using the logframe indicators at the purpose level (eight outcome indicators) and five output level indicators; ii) results of addressing exclusion iii) contribution of program results; and iv) unplanned program results. In total, the evaluation rated 16 sub-criteria.

The data sources used as the evidence base for the effectiveness section are the document review, interviews, field visit observations, and the online survey.

### **Key findings: The IACHR project achieved all outcome/purpose targets and showed good effectiveness.**

- The IACHR had achieved all outcome level targets for its outcome indicators or with an achievement rate above 90% by March 30, 2023;
- IACHR project fully or largely meets 25 out of 25 final targets for output level indicators already by March 30, 2023;
- Exclusion: the perception of results achievement varies between 51,7% for older persons and 68% for freedom of expression. The median of results reaches 56,3%, with results for women being above the median with 62,9%;
- Internal monitoring data shows a clear contribution of the IACHR to project results. This is less reflected in stakeholders' critical perceptions, which have declined from a median of 66,4% to 54,5% between 2021 and 2023;
- Internal key factors facilitating the project implementation were the IACHR's strategic plan 2017-2022 serving as a beacon and successful organizational restructuring. On the negative side, increasing results lead to increasing workload on an already overstretched team and Commissioners lose credibility due to the public discussion about divergent views on human rights.
- External key factors affecting the Commission's work are the continued strong civil society mobilization and the momentum for monitoring recommendations using round tables. Negative factors are the increased political polarization in Latin America but also the weakness of legal systems and lack of norms of willing States to implement IACHR recommendations;
- Opportunities for the IACHR emerge to further enhance internal processes, develop communications strategies for different purposes, increase technical assistance (awareness raising, capacity building, legal support) for a broader range of State actors, enhance coordination with the OAS on projects on rights and justice and further increase its strategic outreach to the Caribbean;
- Risks relate to internal processes facing an increasing workload and the available IACHR finances (despite significant increases in the past while this was not the case for the rest of the OAS) and the operating environment.
- Unplanned project results include the IACHR's highly successful mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic, its increasing ability to focus on real-time human rights challenges in the Americas and internal challenges threatening credibility and trust.



The evaluation finds very high effectiveness of the IACHR project, with a score of 90 out of 100 ("green")<sup>51</sup>.

## 4.1 Achievement of program objectives

### 4.1.1 Project goal

Goal "To contribute to the improvement of the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere in accordance with the highest international standards."

The project logframe submitted to the evaluator did not contain goal level indicators. While it was clarified at the end of the evaluation process that the project logframe does contain goal level indicators but that they were automatically deleted in the OAS, this information came too late to make an in-depth assessment. Also, the RPPIs don't contain monitoring data on the goal level indicators.

Hence the evaluation is unable to rate this criterion.

### 4.1.2 Project purpose (outcome)

Purpose: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of promoting, defending and protecting Human Rights in the Americas."

The project's RPPI reporting shows that by December 2022, three months before the official end of the funding, the IACHR had achieved all outcome level targets for its outcome indicators or with an achievement rate above 90%.

In detail, three targets were exceeded, three targets were met (100%), and two targets showed a results achievement above 90%, according to the 18<sup>th</sup> RPPI. Figure 14 below provides a summary of the assessment.

#### **Key results for the project's purpose include the following:**

**Indicator 1.1:** *At least 57% annual increase compared to 2017 in the number of requests (Initial review, Admissibility, Merit and Precautionary Measure decisions) responded by the IACHR regarding alleged violations to human rights in the region at the end of the project.*

From inception to December 31, 2022, the Commission elaborated 18,237 responses regarding alleged human rights violations in the region by evaluating petitions, cases, and precautionary measures. The IACHR of 16810 responses has been exceeded.

**Indicator 1.2:** *At the end of the project at least 19 OAS Member States which have participated in the activities of the IACHR have responded positively accepting commitments to comply with the IACHR recommendations and decisions issued in its reports.*










Since the beginning of the project, a total of **19** states have committed to progress in implementing recommendations. Since the mid-term evaluation, three Caribbean countries, Bahamas, Grenada, and Jamaica, committed progress in implementing recommendations, joining the following 16 countries: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador,

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<sup>51</sup> The ratings are as follows : 4.1 = 3, 3,3,3,3,3,3, and 3 at the purpose level and 3, 2, 2, 3, and 3 at the output level; 4.1.4 = 2, 4.2 = 2; 4.3 = no rating; 4.4 = 2. Total score of 34 out of a maximum score of 42 (14\*3). Overall performance =SUM(43/48)\*100 (89,58%)

El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, United States, and Uruguay.

**Figure 14: Achievement of IACHR outcome level indicator targets at mid-term**

Program outcome (purpose)	Target	Achievement at mid-term
 <b>Outcome 1.</b> Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of promoting, defending and protecting Human Rights in the Americas	7 out of 7 targets fully achieved or >90% achievement	
 <b>Indicator 1.1</b> At least 57% annual increase compared to 2017 in the number of requests (Initial review, Admissibility, Merit and Precautionary Measure decisions) responded by the IACHR regarding alleged violations to human rights in the region at the end of the project	16810	18237 (108%)
 <b>Indicator 1.2</b> At the end of the project, at least 16 OAS Member States which have participated in the activities of the IACHR have responded positively accepting commitments to comply with the IACHR recommendations and decisions issued in its reports	19	19 (100%)
 <b>Indicator 1.3</b> The states informed actions taken to comply with recommendations to protect the rights to life and integrity in at least 70% of the total number of Precautionary Measures followed up during each year	70	81 (116%)
 <b>Indicator 1.4</b> At the end of the project, at least 60 inter-American standards were developed to approach each of the following issues related to the right to Freedom of Expression and Access to Public Information to incorporate them in the national OAS Member state practices towards the guarantee and protection of ten rights	60	58 (97%)
 <b>Indicator 1.5</b> At the end of the project 47 new Friendly Settlements were signed between the parties	47	48 (102%)
 <b>Indicator 1.6</b> At least 5 States take positive measures (a public policy, a legal decision, regulation, bill) towards protecting freedom of expression and access to information, citing inter-American standards by the end of the project	11	10 (91%)
 <b>Indicator 1.7</b> By the end of the Project, at least 10 new standards are created in the petition and cases system.	10	10 (100%)
 <b>Indicator 1.8</b> By the end of the project, at least 131 measures (structural and/or, individual) have been, taken by the States in compliance with signed friendly settlement agreements.	279	279 (100%)

**Indicator 1.3:** The states informed actions taken to comply with recommendations to protect the rights to life and integrity in at least 70% of the total number of Precautionary Measures followed up during each year.

Through the implementation of Resolution 2/2020, the Commission has followed up with States on 108 precautionary measures (PM) regarding Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, the United States, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, and Paraguay by receiving information requested or through virtual working meetings.

Out of the 108 PM granted that have been followed up, States informed actions taken on at least 86.11% (88 PM) to comply with recommendations to protect the rights to life and integrity<sup>52</sup>.

**Indicator 1.4:** *At the end of the project, at least 60 inter-American standards were developed to approach each of the following issues related to the right to Freedom of Expression and Access to Public Information to incorporate them in the national OAS Member state practices towards the guarantee and protection of ten rights.*

From the project's inception to December 31, 2022, 58 standards have been developed. In 2022, the IACHR developed the following standards:

- Standards Advanced in the report Women Journalists and Newsrooms (addressing, for example, salary gaps, job insecurity, discrimination against women who perform caregiving roles)
- Disinformation and Pandemic (addressing, for example, measures restricting the movement of people and those that particularly limit the right to assemble for the purpose of political expression or rejecting direct restrictions on freedom of expression)

**Indicator 1.5:** *At the end of the project 47 new Friendly Settlements were signed between the parties.*

From the inception of the project to December 31, 2022, the number of agreements signed is 48. Target has been exceeded.

**Indicator 1.6:** *At least 11 States take positive measures (a public policy, a legal decision, regulation, bill) towards protecting freedom of expression and access to information, citing inter-American standards by the end of the project.*

At the mid-term evaluation, five countries had taken *positive measures toward protecting freedom of expression* (Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Colombia, and Peru). Since then, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Venezuela have taken similar measures.

Other measures in 2022 included the President of Chile signing the Chilean accession to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean ("Escazú Agreement"), sending the treaty to be analyzed and eventually ratified by the legislative branch. The IACHR and its SRFOE have repeatedly encouraged the ratification of this agreement through various appeals.

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<sup>52</sup> IACHR comment: The information provided is based on the 18<sup>th</sup> RPPI and not accumulative for the project.

In the case of Costa Rica, on October 21, 2022, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice of Costa Rica accepted a writ (*amparo*) alleging an attack on press freedom, filed by journalists from the newspaper La Nación.



The *amparo* considered that the order of the Ministry of Health of July 8, 2022 to suspend the sanitary premise of the Parque Viva event complex, which is part of La Nación's businesses, was adopted as a way to affect the newspaper after publications critical of the president of Costa Rica and his government. The closure of Parque Viva was monitored with concern by RELE, which on July 26, 2022, **sent an official letter to the State**, based on the powers of Article 41 of the ACHR, requesting information about the action and its basis.

The Supreme Court annulled the suspension and determined that the State would pay costs, damages and prejudices caused by the order of the Ministry of Health, since it considered that "the closure of Parque Viva was carried out with abuse of power, through an indirect mechanism, disguised as a legitimate action", which, in addition to violating constitutional provisions, violated Article 13 of the ACHR.

**Indicator 1.7:** *By the end of the Project, at least 10 new standards are created in the petition and cases system.*

In 2022, the one standards were created:

- Case 12.815 Identity rights in the context of paternity proceedings

In a case related to a proceeding to determine the paternity of a child, the Commission considered that, given the direct relationship that such proceedings may have with the rights of children, including the right to identity, States have an obligation to adopt measures in response to their situation of vulnerability that protect their rights and serve their best interests.






**Indicator 1.8:** *By the end of the project, at least 131 measures (structural and/or, individual) have been, taken by the States in compliance with signed friendly settlement agreements.* From the project's inception to December 31, 2022, 131 measures have been taken. Considering the baseline of 148 measures, a total of 279 were taken by 31 December 2022.

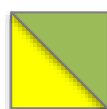


### 4.1.3 Project outputs

The IACHR project fully or largely meet 21 out of 25 final targets for output level indicators. Figure 15 summarizes the output level results.

**Figure 15: Achievement of IACHR output level indicator targets at mid-term**

Program outputs	Logframe indicator target achievement	Comments at mid-term
 <b>Output 1.</b> "The number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage was increased."	8 out of 8 targets fully achieved or >75% achievement	Overall very high results achievement of 100% or more for seven indicators. The accomplishment of indicator 1.4 reached 93% by December 2022 (working meetings facilitated at the transition stage of merit reports by the IACHR to monitor compliance with IACHR recommendations and decisions issued).
 <b>Output 2.</b> "The monitoring of the situation of human rights in the region was improved."	6 out of 6 targets fully achieved or >75% achievement	Overall very high results achievement. The thematic report on religious freedom rights (indicators 2.6) was finalized but is yet to be published.
 <b>Output 3.</b> "The monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR was improved."	6 out of 6 targets fully achieved or >75% achievement	Overall very high results achievement. The report on national mechanisms in the Americas for implementing recommendations (indicator 3.6) was approved in February 2023 and published.
 <b>Output 4.</b> "Action Plan of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression implemented."	3 out of 3 targets fully achieved or >75% achievement	Overall very high results achievement. Results for all three indicators were achieved or exceeded.
 <b>Output 5</b> "Management, following-up and monitoring of the project implemented."	2 out of 2 targets fully achieved or >75% achievement	The quality of the eighteen RPPIs is very high, which is not captured in the indicator.



### 4.1.4 Results on addressing exclusion, including women

Figure 16 shows stakeholder perceptions about the IACHR project' results to address exclusion between 2018 and 2023. The perception of results achievement varies between 51,7% for older persons and 68% for freedom of expression. The median of results reaches 56,3%.

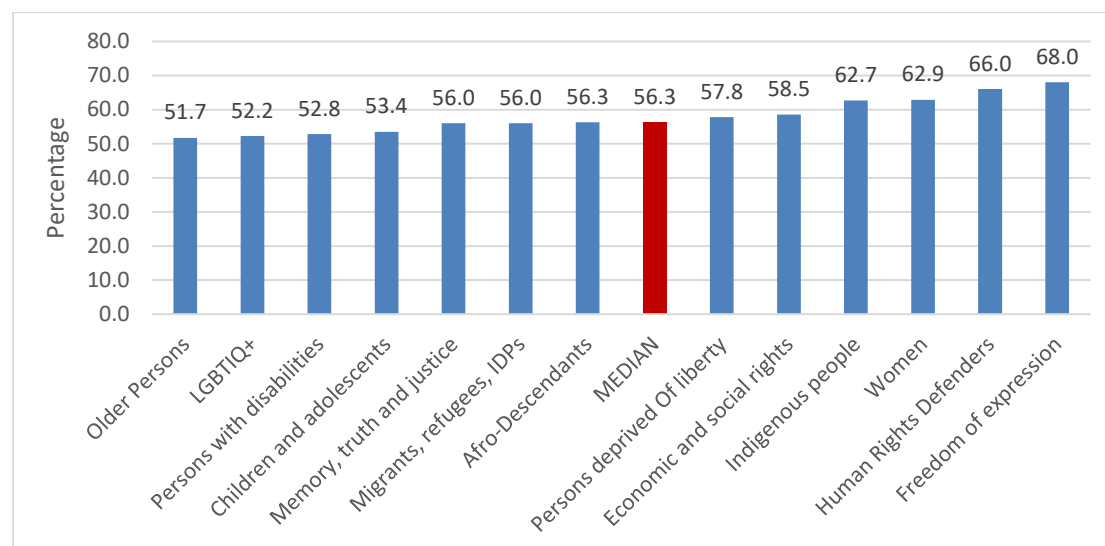
Above the median are also results concerning the IACHR for persons deprived of liberty, indigenous people, women<sup>53</sup>, and human rights defenders<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> IACHR comment: under the framework of the project agreement, the IACHR did not cover LGBTI, ESCR and reproductive women rights.

<sup>54</sup> IACHR comment: As a clarification, IACHR's work on economic and social rights was not under the USOAS project.

Below the median are, apart from older persons, LGBTIQ+, persons with disabilities, children and adolescents, memory, truth and justice, migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons, while results on afro-descendants coincide with the results median.

**Figure 16: Stakeholder perceptions about the IACHR project results on addressing exclusion**



Sources: evaluation interviews and survey, n=67

The field visits showed that States are progressing with addressing exclusion in their legal frameworks, for example, for LGBTIQ+, indigenous populations, or migrants in Argentina, but that the complete consolidation of their rights is missing, and implementation of laws is slow. In Ecuador, the State pays much more attention to disability issues. While women’s rights or the rights of LGBTIQ+ benefit from normative recognition, the State faces serious problems when trying to apply them. The strength of institutions often seems too uneven to translate public policies into changes for people in the country.

In the case of Colombia, a vast divide shows between laws applied in the country’s urban centers and the rural periphery of Colombia, where the State is often struggling to establish the rule of law.



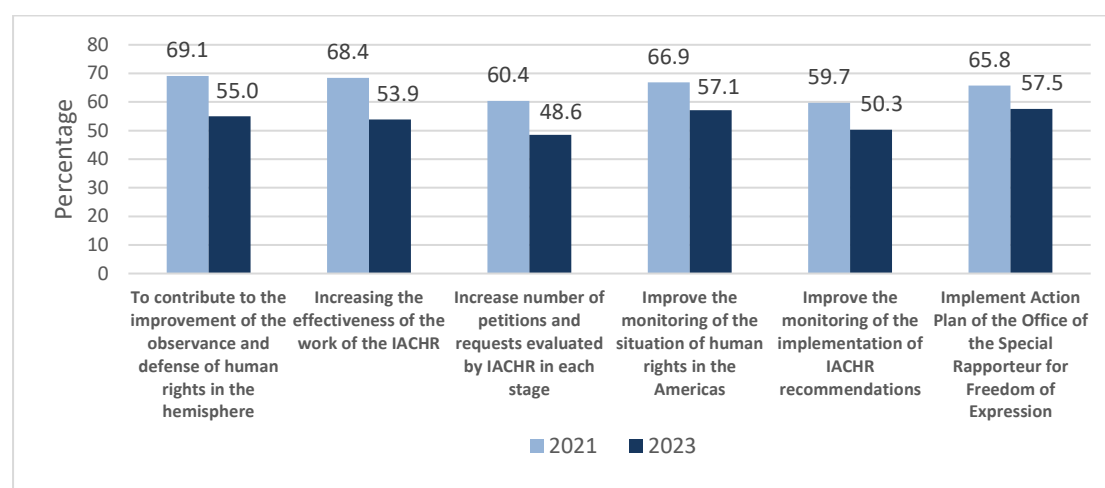
## 4.2 Contribution of project to results

Figure 17 summarizes stakeholder perceptions concerning the IACHR’s results achievement based on objectives at the goal, purpose, and output level of the USOAS-funded project. This includes the IACHR’s contribution to the improvement of the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere. At the same time, the figure allows for a comparison between stakeholder perceptions captured during the mid-term evaluation in 2021 and the ones expressed in 2023.

The final evaluation finds that stakeholder perceptions (n=95) about IACHR’s results achievements have declined in 2023 compared to 2021 from a median of 66,4% to 54,5%. **This decline does not correspond to improvements reflected by results based on the project’s appropriate performance indicators.**

For example, the IACHR’s contribution to improving the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere showed a drop in perception ratings from 69,1% to 55%. This perception appears in a context where the ambitious targets for all eight outcome-level indicators have been achieved or exceeded.

**Figure 17: IACHR program results achievement at purpose and output level based on stakeholder feedback – comparison 2021 and 2023**



Sources: Mid-term evaluation 2021 and final evaluation (survey and interviews) 2023. 2021: n=38, 2023: n=95

The rigorous IACHR monitoring also provides clear evidence of the improvements in the IACHR's performance and the IACHR's contribution to an increased observance and defense of human rights.

**Initial study and review:** In 2022, the Commission received a total of 2,440 petitions; by the end of 2022, it had evaluated 2,344 petitions out of those 2,440 petitions, in total (96%). The number of petitions received in 2022 and pending evaluation, 96, compares to 8,295 petitions pending initial evaluation in September 2018. Hence, the backlog has been reduced to a very high extent. Moreover, Out of the 2,344 petitions evaluated, only 14% of the total petitions received were found to have met the procedural requirements to open a case to the admissibility stage.<sup>55</sup>

**Admissibility and merits:** Inadmissibility increased from close to zero in 2016 (2 inadmissibilities out of 45 decisions: 4.4%) to 5% in 2017, to 11.3% in 2018, to 16% in 2019, to 15% in the 2020, to 29% in 2021, when the Commission adopted 88 inadmissibility reports out of 303 decisions.<sup>56 57</sup>

This steady increase in the ratio of inadmissibility reports is the result of a rigorous approach to the admissibility requirements rendered by the IACHR. This approach is also consistent with the express terms of the Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

The assessments were based on Commission's assessment criteria digest (2020)<sup>58</sup>, which is publicly available.

However, stakeholders increasingly fail to see those improvements, as shown in Figure 17.

<sup>55</sup> Source: personal communication, IACHR 2023 based on unpublished draft Annual Report 2022

<sup>56</sup> OAS/IACHR, 2021: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Annual Report 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Source: personal communication, IACHR 2023

<sup>58</sup> OAS/IACHR, 2020: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Digest of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on its admissibility and competence criteria  
<https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/DigestoADM-en.pdf>

Interviews with stakeholders revealed that IACHR statistics are only partly known to stakeholders. Also, the length of cases going through national justice systems before even reaching the IACHR is exhausting petitioners. Once the Inter-American system is reached, petitioners are mainly unaware of the digest of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on its admissibility and competence criteria and struggle to get cases beyond the initial review and eventually admitted.

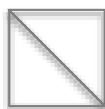
The combination of frustration along the process, the long time involved, and a deep sense of injustice caused stakeholders to feel that the case backlog might even be increasing, though this is certainly not true.

As for the mid-term evaluation, the final evaluation finds a substantial contribution of the IACHR to results in the human rights sphere in the Americas. Undoubtedly, admissibility reports, merit reports, precautionary measures, and friendly settlements directly relate to the Commission's work, even beyond 2018 – 2023.

Besides, the work of special rapporteurs on freedom of expression with thematic and country reports, such as Freedom of Expression, has high visibility and is used by human rights defenders and academics. The Special Rapporteur's “Protests and rights” report was quoted in practically all interviews with stakeholders related to freedom of expression. Thematic and country reports are additional to the Commission's work on petitions and cases.

The evaluator provides an “amber-green” rating, reflecting the stakeholders' critical perceptions, which, as stated above, clearly contradict monitoring data.

### 4.3 Internal and external factors influencing project results



The final evaluation captured internal and external factors influencing the delivery of project results through telephone interviews and during in-person interviews during the field visits. Some changes occurred compared to the situation in 2021 when the mid-term evaluation took place.

Figure 18 presents the internal and external factors affecting project performance, both positively and negatively. Factors that emerged since the mid-term evaluation are highlighted in *italics*.

As many of those negative factors are beyond the direct control of the Commission, the evaluation does not rate this sub-criterion.

**Positive internal factors:** The IACHR's strategic plan 2017-2022 served as the cornerstone for the Commission and was its beacon, as found in the mid-term evaluation. Other positive internal factors emerging between 2021 and 2023 include the positive effects of IACHR's organizational restructuring, the related continuation of reducing the case backlog, and the successful implementation of friendly settlements, which caused significant interest among Member States and donors.

**Negative internal factors** keep referring to the limitations in financial and human resources, as funding stagnates or decreases due to inflation and a unfavourable general funding context in the OAS and the increasing workload of the Commission. New negative factors transpiring since the mid-term evaluation in 2021 comprise the loss of credibility of the Commissioners due to divergent views on human rights and the scope creep which confronts the Commission with new topics and challenges for priority setting.

**Positive external factors** are the continued strong civil society mobilization and demand for the Commission. Over the 2018-2023 period, doubling the IACHR budget was also a positive external factor facilitating the Commission's work. Also, the Commission benefitted from the biggest USOAS-funded grant in the OAS, the subject of this evaluation, with close to US\$15m due to a strong project accountability framework,

However, as work increases significantly, the Commission now faces budget limitations for its ongoing efforts.

Despite the challenging operating environment, stakeholders stressed the momentum for monitoring recommendations using round tables, for example, in Bolivia, Guatemala, and Colombia. The access to the Commission also changed, mainly positively, through the digitalization of work processes.

**Negative external factors** comprise the lack of cooperation of some States in an environment of increased political polarization in Latin America but also the weakness of legal systems and the lack of norms, processes, and procedures of willing States to implement IACHR recommendations. The latter even includes large economies such as Argentina. Finally, despite the IACHR's increased efforts to reach out to the Caribbean, access is still a challenge.

**Figure 18: List of internal and external factors affecting the results of IACHR**

Internal factors	External factors
<b>Positive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IACHR's strategic plan as the cornerstone for institutional strengthening, increased performance, and guiding Commissioners</li> <li>• <i>Restructuring of IACHR and its approach to monitoring: better monitoring cross-cutting thematic and country issues. Now more holistic monitoring of HR situation, breaking silos</i></li> <li>• <i>Reduction of the cases backlog (+159% admissibility reports 2018-2021) and increased quality of the admissibility analysis</i></li> <li>• <i>Successful showcasing of friendly settlement mechanisms as an opportunity of attracting additional donor funding</i></li> </ul>	<b>Positive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong mobilization of civil society, which has been increasingly acquainted with using the Interamerican system</li> <li>• <i>Easier and broader access to the Commission through digital means (the latter are, however, a barrier for some elderly users)</i></li> <li>• <i>Momentum for monitoring recommendations using round tables (Bolivia, Guatemala, Colombia)</i></li> <li>• Increasing Regular Fund budget (which now reached a peak and is affected by inflation)</li> </ul>
<b>Negative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As demand increases, human and financial resource limitations affect the Commission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lower proactiveness in changing situations, limitations in travel, and emergency travel</li> <li>○ Work discontinuity due to funding gaps</li> <li>○ Use of temporary consultants and staff retention challenges</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Undermined credibility of the IACHR by Commissioners' diverging public statements</i></li> <li>• <i>Scope creep (with emerging topics like energy or climate change) and issues of priority setting</i></li> </ul>	<b>Negative</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>States' non-cooperation in implementing recommendations</i></li> <li>• <i>Structural challenges: weakness of legal systems in some Member States</i></li> <li>• <i>Increasing polarization in Latin America, which even reached the Commission, affecting the independent Commissioners</i></li> <li>• <i>Caribbean:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Limited access to reliable monitoring data that can be used, for example, in reports or precautionary measures</i></li> <li>○ <i>Insufficient access to States, CSOs, development partners, and regional organizations</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Source: Evaluation interviews and survey, 2023

The evaluation's SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) of the IACHR also identified the following opportunities and risks for the IACHR, as presented in Figure 19.

Opportunities relate to internal processes, communication strategies, technical assistance, better engaging stakeholders in the Caribbean, and OAS coordination concerning human rights and justice. Risks also comprise internal processes as the Commission's workload keeps increasing, the Commission's financial situation, and its operating environment.

**Figure 19: Looking ahead: opportunities and threats for the IACHR**

Opportunities	Risks
<p><b>Internal processes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top priority: Transparent prioritization process for topics and cases</li> <li>• Better systematization and optimization of internal processes and coordination between teams as workload keeps increasing</li> <li>• SOPs for work protocols</li> <li>• Unlock better IT potential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Amplify the use of IT systems: e.g., more paid licenses for Airtable</li> <li>◦ Enhance process methodologies: definitions and automated processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Timeliness vs. comprehensiveness: timeliness is key for IACHR’s relevance</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened dialogue with State actors even in challenging contexts</li> <li>• Learning from COVID-19: Hybrid model for audiences and working meetings to broaden access to justice and save costs</li> <li>• Showcasing friendly settlement mechanisms to find solutions to cases in Member States and as an opportunity for attracting additional donor funding</li> <li>• Communication of the Commission's work and mechanisms (e.g., SIMORE), particularly on its impact</li> </ul> <p><b>Technical assistance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support to a broader range of State actors, including Human Rights Commissions, Human Rights Ombudsmen, and Anti-torture organs, to overcome structural barriers to implementing recommendations</li> <li>• Include issues of the digital economy and misinformation under Freedom of Expression</li> </ul> <p><b>Caribbean:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep increasing staff from the Caribbean to get better access to the region</li> <li>• Confidence building with Caribbean States, promotional visits around specific topics as an entry point for work visits which require official State invitation</li> <li>• Capacity building and remote engagement to get on IACHR on the State’s agenda</li> </ul> <p><b>OAS coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue, stock taking, and assessment of coordination opportunities between IACHR, Panamerican Development Foundations’ portfolio on rights and justice (OAS), and Media Integrity Centre in OAS</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b>Internal processes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient capacity to step back and timely reporting following field visits</li> <li>• Deficit of attorney understanding Member States’ legal systems to assess which cases are admissible</li> <li>• Prioritization of admissible cases is required, risk of proliferation of precautionary measures</li> <li>• Mission creep: Articulation of new norms and standards for the region: better focus on implementing existing treaties, more careful thought process required before setting new standards. Need to find a balance between human rights promotion vs. protection</li> <li>• As the number of admissibility and merit reports increases, quality assurance becomes vital</li> </ul> <p><b>Finances:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success in creating internal processes and IT use brings its own risks: IACHR is becoming a victim of its own success. Quicker turnaround encourages more demand and more cases in the context of a static or slightly decreasing budget</li> </ul> <p><b>Operating environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member States are trying to undermine the Commission by nominating candidates with ambiguous views on human rights.</li> <li>• Decision-makers openly questioning transitional justice, truth commissions or reparation policies in Latin America: early warning for democracies in peril</li> </ul>

The quotes below reflect the additional risks and opportunities captured in stakeholder interviews and the survey.



## Opportunities

*“Country listings in Chapter 4B [of the IACHR’s Annual Report], can cause furious initial State reactions but serve as an opportunity of dialogue.”*

*“We would need better access to North American agendas to engage on topic such as the death sentence”.*

*“The IACHR should clarify its expectations from the OAS General Assembly to ensure States’ compliance with IACHR recommendations. Let the Commission urge the General Assembly more, propose resolutions to demand compliance, listing what has not been complied with. For our government it is important to put on record that the IACHR asked the General Assembly for action. Also, Chapter 4B recommendations could be put in detail to the General Assembly, demanding for a General Assembly resolution”.*

## Risks

*“The better the IACHR gets, the more critics they receive.”*

*“I feel we live in a moment of fear, disagreement, and polarized societies.”*

*“Incentives are missing in the Commission. Their work requires more resources. Staff works very hard, and they are online all the time doing highly intellectual work. The quality of work is at risk if Commission remains in its current resource frame. And I see a risk of staff demoralization and burn out”.*

**Sources: IACHR stakeholders**



## 4.4 Unplanned project results

While stakeholders identified various surprises or unplanned project results, several common clusters emerged during the Commission's work between 2018 and 2023.

1. The IACHR’s mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. Commission’s increasing ability to focus on real-time human rights challenges in the Americas
3. The non-renewal of the previous Executive Secretary and the OAS’ interference in that process, and
4. Recent frictions among the Commissioners and their interpretation of human rights.

1. In times when other public services came to a standstill during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission even increased its accessibility, for example, through virtual audiences. Positive expressions of surprise came from countries like Honduras and marginalized stakeholders in Colombia.

*“COVID-19 allowed the IACHR to reinvent itself. Changes were so drastic. IACHR is now reaching people it never reached before. We have more equal access. Travel is not required any more. It is pretty unique. (...) Online working meetings strengthened IACHR’s presence, its visibility in the Hemisphere”.*

**Source: IACHR stakeholder**

2. The final evaluation confirms a finding from the mid-term evaluation that one of the unplanned program results is the Commission's increasing ability to focus on real-time human rights challenges in the Americas.

The doubling of IACHR funding, growing human resources, optimization of systems, and a reduction of backlog in cases made the Commission more agile. "Rather than being bogged down on human rights cases that often concerned previous administrations, the Commission increasingly addresses cases of current administrations. The latter change causes discomfort among many administrations (...). As such, the evaluation finds that the IACHR is increasingly a victim of its own success"<sup>59</sup>.

3. While the OAS General Secretariat is by regulation the instance who can approve and renew a contract in the IACHR, in consultation with the Commission<sup>60</sup>, as the personnel of the Commission are part of the OAS/GS and their contracts depend on the Secretary General, the OAS' controversial role in the non-renewal of the previous IACHR Executive Secretary continued to be discussed.

The political damage persists. Many stakeholders still feel that the OAS interfered in the governance of the IACHR, threatening its integrity and credibility.

4. At the same time, stakeholders are surprised by the lack of unanimity among Commissioners and their inconsistent interpretation of human rights. The level of surprise, or shock, perceived was exceptionally high in Argentina and Colombia.

The evaluation finds that while at the stage of the mid-term evaluation, five Member States openly tried to weaken the Commission, those destabilizing attempts are now continued by, at times, different actors through more subtle means. The latter refers to the nomination of Commissioners, as observed during one field visit. However, ultimately it is within the responsibility of the Member States to elect Commissioners and to thoroughly assess their capabilities and determination to defend human rights in the Hemisphere.

5. Other surprises include the significantly enhanced visibility in the media and social networks, as observed by stakeholders in Mexico, and the approach to addressing and monitoring the *Ayotzinapa case*.

*"The precautionary measures in the Ayotzinapa case in which the IACHR deployed an interdisciplinary group of experts as part of the follow-up to the measure was an unprecedented involvement that went beyond all IACHR approached in any Member State.*

*In other cases, the IACHR has not had any involvement even if it was a very sensitive issue".*

**Source: IACHR stakeholder, Mexico**

The quote below reflects an unexpected result for a beneficiary of precautionary measures from Central America.

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<sup>59</sup> Engelhardt, A./OAS, 2021: External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021.", page 42

<sup>60</sup> Art 21 of the Statutes of the IACHR approved by the OAS General Assembly establishes: "The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the Secretary General of the Organization, **in consultation** with the Commission. Furthermore, for the Secretary General to be able to remove the Executive Secretary, **he shall consult** with the Commission and inform its members of the reasons for his decision."

*“What I can contribute as a beneficiary of the precautionary measure is that you [IACHR] have saved my life and today, thanks to you and the human rights defenders, activists, I can be alive and healthy”.*

**Source:** IACHR stakeholder, Central America

The following paragraphs summarize the unplanned positive and negative results beyond the patterns listed above, based on perceptions by stakeholders in the countries visited during this final evaluation: Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador.

### **Argentina**

The evaluation identified positive and negative results related to the work of the IACHR over the past five years.

On the positive side, stakeholders referred to the high degree of streamlining of the case system. The latter includes the promotion of friendly settlements, including capacity building, where the Commission plays a more active role than stakeholders expected resulting in a better quality of negotiations.

*“Friendly settlements are like three persons dancing tango. The IACHR facilitates, as required”.*

*“The role of States in the Interamerican system is crucial. As authoritarianism increases, not abiding to human rights, the Commission must battle for dialogue to use all its human rights instruments. Once dialogue breaks down, it seriously limits the Commission”.*

**Sources:** IACHR stakeholder, Argentina

On the negative side, the advancements in public policies on memory, truth, and justice based on IACHR standards seem in peril in the Southern Cone due to unexpected political opposition in many parliaments of the sub-region and the perception of insufficient mitigation measures from the Commission.

### **Colombia**

Stakeholders perceived changes among the Commissioners that affected their determination to hold the government accountable for its human rights obligations. A change of engaging the government using an *“appeasement approach”* and *“undue reluctance”* was observed in 2022 and taken advantage of by the government.

Hence, the monitoring of implementing recommendations and precautionary measures was weaker than expected. Also, human rights defenders still experience a significant backlog in responses to demands for admissibility.

### **Ecuador**

After ten years of negating precautionary measures, the new government was surprised that IACHR issued so many precautionary measures for a specific group of petitioners, which gave an impression of following political objectives beyond protection issues. Political parties certainly politicized the precautionary measures, the latter being beyond the control of the Commission.

The pandemic disabled IACHR's in situ presence, which affected its reach of State actors, where there is still a need for strengthening, for example, the capacities of judges on the protection of journalists. The cooperation between the Inter-American human rights system and the universal one suffered downturns. The cooperation lacks institutionalization on both sides, with the current Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of OHCHR being very removed from the region. The previously strong effects following joint declarations now diminished.

## 5. Coherence: were the IACHR project complementing other human rights initiatives?

This section analyses the coherence of the IACHR project between 2018 and 2023. The sub-criterion used is i) complementarity with other human rights mechanisms.

The evaluator used the interviews, the online survey, observations during the field visits, and the document review as primary data sources.

**Key findings: IACHR complements national and other multilateral human rights initiatives to varying degrees, which depends on partners receptiveness, showing most recently strengthened institutionalization efforts with OHCHR across the hemisphere.**

- IACHR is in a leadership role in many countries due to its geographical vicinity, accessibility (no language barriers) and developing of human rights standards and mechanisms compared to the Geneva-based OHCHR.
- The Coordination between IACHR and OHCHR seemed less institutionalized and lacking a strategy, for example of Freedom of Expression in Argentina and Colombia or the National Committee on the Prevention of Torture in Argentina. However, this caveat is meant to be addressed at the institutional level in the IACHR-OHCHR's Joint Action Framework, launched in March 2023.
- IACHR and the United Nations system (OHCHR, UNESCO) have different functions and are perceived as complementary in their work in Ecuador.
- Bilateral donors like USAID and AECID complement the Commission's work in Colombia, for example, by funding CSOs in Colombia to analyze public policies and to present reports to the IACHR.



The evaluation finds that the complementarity of the IACHR with other human rights mechanisms is high, with a score of 67 out of 100 ("amber/green")<sup>61</sup>.

The field visits provided exciting insights into the complementarity of the IACHR with other human rights mechanisms in Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador. The document review complemented those observations.

### Regional insights

Overall, the joint work with UN, including permanent exchange of information, joint statements, events, and letter to States seeks to maximize the impact of the work of both organizations, particularly in countries with poor human rights compliance and poor levels of engagement with the Regional System. During 2021 and 2022, RELE participated in more than 10 joint statements with its UN counterparts pertaining the situation of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly regionally, and specifically in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela, Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, and Cuba.

In this context, the Office met with OHCHR representatives in Central America in 2021 to elaborate a strategy for this region, as deemed high priority for both institutions.

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<sup>61</sup> The ratings for the evaluation sub-criteria by sub-sections: criterion i) = 2. Total score 2 out of a maximum score of 3. Overall performance =  $\text{SUM}(2/3) \times 100$  (66,6%)

Having identified the need to institutionalize the joint work with the OHCHR, on March 2023, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association presented the Joint Action Framework<sup>62</sup>, an initiative that seeks to shape cooperation between international and regional human rights mechanisms, including the IACHR. The relevant Commissioner and the Special Rapporteur for RELE participated in its draft, launch, and are now engaged in its implementation. It is too early to assess the results of this initiative.

The evaluation survey and interviews, undertaken before the launch of the IACHR-OHCHR Joint Action Framework, found that the Commission's complementarity with multilateral human rights initiatives remained largely unchanged between 2021 and 2023. Stakeholder perceptions about the IACHR's complementarity reached 62,5% (n=89) in 2023, a change from 64% (n=38) based on the mid-term evaluation results in 2021.

**Argentina:** State actors in human rights were keen to participate in the evaluation and to show their close interaction with the IACHR. Coordination with the universal human rights system shows satisfactory coherence based on stakeholder feedback.

The IACHR is in a leadership role in Argentina due to its geographical vicinity, accessibility, and development of human rights standards and mechanisms compared to the Geneva-based OHCHR. Accessibility refers to IACHR's efforts to reach, for example, human rights defenders in Argentina and using Spanish to avoid language barriers.

Stakeholders observed cooperation between the IACHR and OHCHR on standards or joint statements, for example, when launching the thematic report on Freedom of Expression in 2019. In other areas, the intents of coordination seem to be less clear. In the case of the National Committee on the prevention of Torture, stakeholders missed a coordination strategy.

**Colombia:** Civil Society Organizations have a closer link to the IACHR than to the universal human rights system due to the use of the Spanish language. Besides, cases can lead up to the level of judgments from the Interamerican Court, which is not the case in the universal system. While OHCHR is present in the city and territory, IACHR is less strongly and more sporadically presented.

The agreement between the IACHR and OHCHR seems to have functioned sub-optimally in Colombia over the past five years, as timely joint statements are at times rather difficult to achieve, based on stakeholder perceptions. However, the document review found that in 2021 a joint press release<sup>63</sup> with different Special Rapporteurs was published in the midst of the social protests. Likewise, the OHCHR office was essential and instrumental for the IACHR's visit to Colombia in 2021 in the same context.

For freedom of expression, the OHCHR's special rapporteur seems to recently lack synchronization with the IACHR's rapporteur due to a perceived lack of prioritization of the Latin America and Caribbean region in OHCHR.

Bilateral donors seem more coherent in their work with the IACHR than OHCHR. USAID and AECID, for example, support CSOs in Colombia to fund activities to analyze public policies and to present reports to the IACHR. Also, both bilateral donors enable CSOs to accompany victims of human rights abuses and access the Inter-American human rights system.

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<sup>62</sup> <https://freeassemblyandassociation.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Joint-Action-for-FoAA-Framework.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.oas.org/es/cidh/expresion/showarticle.asp?artID=1198&IID=2>

**Ecuador:** IACHR and the United Nations system (OHCHR, UNESCO) have different functions and are complementary in their work in Ecuador. OHCHR is perceived as having a stronger emphasis on cooperation with the states, while the Commission is perceived as more accessible to civil society. However, the evaluation visit showed that the IACHR supported both State and non-State actors between 2018 and 2023 under USOAS-funded activities.

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## 6. Sustainability: are results lasting?

This section assesses the extent to which IACHR results are lasting. Sub-criteria used are i) institutional sustainability, ii) political buy-in, and iii) future funding.

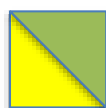
The evaluation used interviews, observations during the field visits, and the online survey as principal data sources for this section.

**Key findings: The evaluation finds that the IACHR as a "crown jewel" of the Western Hemisphere shows a varying political and institutional sustainability but financial sustainability seems promising.**

- Stakeholder perceptions concerning the Commission's institutional sustainability decreased for five out of the seven criteria while the document review showed more positive results.
- Perceptions about States' roles and actions have slightly improved, starting from a low level while the high reputation of the Commission suffered due to a lack of unity of the Commissioners and diverging views being publicly discussed.
- The IACHR is still recovering from a situation of severe attack when five Member States tried in a coordinated effort to limit the Commission's scope in 2012. At the same time, the perception of political buy in is increasing.
- Budget: The mid-term evaluation found that the funding situation of the Commission was on an increasing trajectory until 2020. This situation continued till 2023. Overall budget increased from US\$ 14,204,195 in 2018 to US\$19,985,372 in 2023 (+40.1%).



The score for sustainability is "green" (78% out of 100%)<sup>64</sup>. Figure 20 summarizes the sustainability ratings of different dimensions of the IACHR and its work based on the online survey.



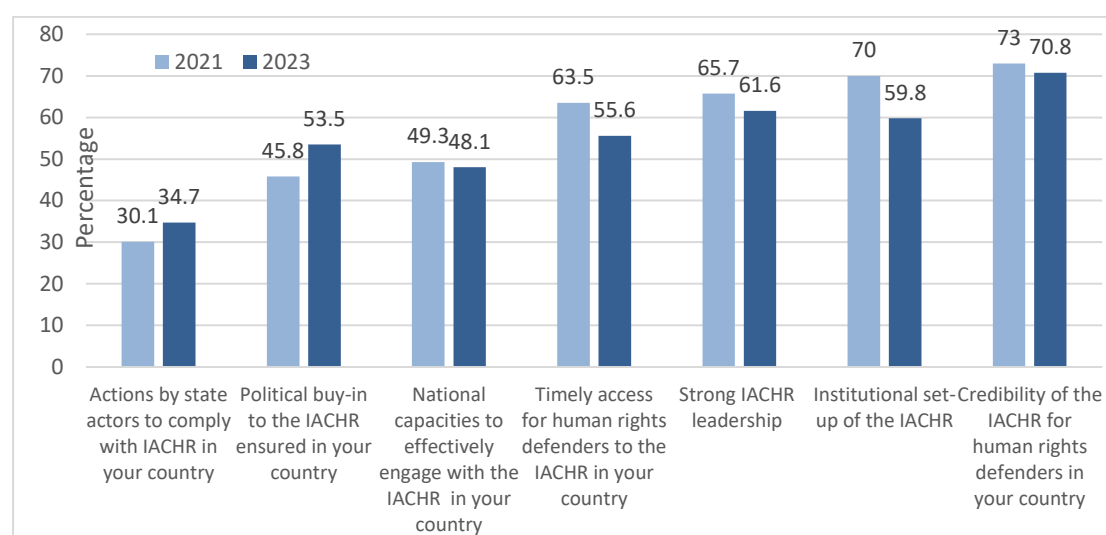
### 6.1 Institutional sustainability

The mid-term evaluation used seven criteria to assess the institutional sustainability of the IACHR, applying an online survey for IACHR stakeholders (n=37, 23 countries reached). In the first quarter of 2023, the final evaluation of the USOAS fund project applied the same criteria and reached 55 stakeholders in 21 countries. This coherent evaluation approach allows for a fascinating comparison of stakeholders' perceptions.

Figure 20 shows that stakeholder perceptions of the Commission's institutional sustainability decreased for five of the seven criteria. The stakeholder perceptions for the Commission's institutional sustainability, which relates to institutional strengthening through the USOAS grant, for example, through the systematization of work processes, should be interpreted as a wake-up call. While the perceptions about the State's roles and actions have slightly improved, starting from a low level, at the same time, the high reputation of the Commission suffered due to a lack of unity among the Commissioners and diverging views on human rights being publicly discussed.

<sup>64</sup> Ratings by sub/criteria are as follows on the 0 to 3 scale: 6.1 institutional sustainability = 2; 6.2 political buy in = 2; 6.3 future funding = 3; Total: 7 out of 9 (77,7%).

**Figure 20: Stakeholder perception on the institutional sustainability of the IACHR**



2021: n=37, 2023: n=55

Stakeholders perceived that actions of State actors to comply with IACHR in the Member States increased from 30,1% to 34,7%. At the same time, perceptions about the political buy-in increased significantly from 45,8% to 53,5%, which is encouraging. National capacities to effectively engage with the Commission in Member States remained nearly unchanged, decreasing from 49,3% to 48,1%. Interviews confirmed the challenge of many State actors to find ways to work with the Commission and strengthen their capacities.

The box below provides insights into the stakeholder experiences with the lasting results of IACHR’s work due to its institutional sustainability.

“There is high credibility of the Commission in the country, especially because it has maintained its commitment despite state omission. The recent crisis [in the non-renewal of the Executive Secretary] may continue to affect the perception of strong leadership, but the restructuring is appreciated and supported because there was much dissatisfaction with it”.

**Source: IACHR stakeholder Venezuela**

“The IACHR is not very autonomous, independent, and politically unbalanced and generates distrust in the countries (see the episode of the recent political intervention of the SG in the autonomy and independence of the IACHR and the serious consequences for the public credibility of the institution). The IACHR should adopt a strong public transparency program to overcome this institutional distrust. (...) Work should be done to autonomize the ES of the IACHR from the GS of the OAS and place it in the same legal status of the Inter-American Court, administrative and legal management outside the GS/OAS”.

**Source: IACHR stakeholder Brazil**

Human rights defenders seem to have less timely access to the IACHR, with ratings decreasing from 63,5% to 55,6%. This frustration was mirrored during the field visits, and the digitalization of the IACHR’s case system, including SIMORE, caused more efficient work for the IACHR but at the expense of being more remote to its users.

Finally, perceptions about the institutional set-up of the IACHR suffered the most substantial decrease, from 70% to 59,8%. In interviews, stakeholder reactions concerning the lack of union between Commissioners ranged from bewilderment to shock, particularly among

human rights defenders. The ethos of Commissioners is openly questioned. IACHR leadership suffers under those circumstances, with ratings decreasing from 65,7% to 61,6%, as well as the high ratings concerning the credibility of the IACHR, which decreased from 73% to 70,8%. Yet, the final evaluation acknowledges that the reputation of the IACHR is high and is described as a “crown jewel” of the Western Hemispheres by the Brookings Institute and Chatham House (2023). Also, the document reviewed found that investments in work processes, the systematization work flows, and the restructuring of the team structure enhanced the efficiency and institutional sustainability of the Commission.



## 6.2 Political buy-in

The evaluation finds overall a positive trend concerning the political buy in of Member States to the work of the IACHR under the USOAS project.

The IACHR was still recovering from a situation of severe attack when five Member States tried in a coordinated effort to limit the Commission's scope or to even dispose of it. Proposals to “strengthen” the Interamerican system in 2012 went from altogether abolishing the Commission to establishing a new human rights body controlled by the governments, to relocating the Commission’s headquarters away from Washington in order to remove it from U.S. influence, as researched by the Brookings Institute and Chatham House in 2023<sup>65</sup>.

While several countries overcame governments with authoritarian tendencies, new governments reacted to the critique of the Commission at times with disbelief and stopped cooperation on specific cases, as observed during the evaluator’s field visit.

At the same time, the political commitment in Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela remains unchanged while it is in peril across several countries in Central America. Also, inflation is diminishing social and economic rights across the Hemisphere, which affects the sustainability of IACHR’s results and political buy-in.

Figure 20 shows that overall, the trend about the political buy-in is increasing based on stakeholder perceptions (from 45,8% to 53,5%). The paragraphs below provide insights from the field visits.

**Argentina:** The human rights topic seems anchored in the Argentinian democracy. The State seems highly motivated and dedicated to cooperating with the IACHR, as recently observed in the highly participatory process of identifying a candidate for an IACHR Commissioner from Argentina.

However, the topic is heavily politicized. Interviews revealed that though human rights are universal, the prosecution of members of the Argentinian junta or State representatives of elected governments can cause severe reactions with claims of politicizing cases, depending on the stakeholders’ political orientation.

At the same time, stakeholders observe a backlash, for example, against LGBTI+ and migrants. Also, State representatives noted challenges to implementing IACHR recommendations, despite political buy-in, due to a lack of existing legal frameworks and instruments to comply with. This finding coincides with the 2023 Brookings Institute/Chatham House report.

Finally, the sustainability of IACHR’s work in Argentina is affected by its federal legislation, which allows provinces not to implement the federal government’s decisions. This affects compliance with Inter-American standards, such as indigenous populations’ rights.

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/10/reclaiming-human-rights-changing-world-order/11-polishing-crown-jewel-western-hemisphere>

**Colombia:** The discourse concerning human rights gained momentum during the 2022 election campaign.

Less than six months after the change of government, the discourse still seems promising. For example, the demand for canceling all precautionary measures, a position maintained by the previous government, was dropped. However, actual results concerning structural and systemic changes required time. While the Directorates for Human Rights in the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense are now led by a human rights defender and the Minister of Defense is also a human rights defender, key results are still outstanding, and the sustainability of those measures is uncertain. Those results include the reform of the national police corps or the observance of human rights outside the urban centers of Colombia.

**Ecuador:** In 2017, Ecuador emerged from ten years of opposing the work of the IACHR to varying degrees, up to the point of openly attacking the Commission and trying to reduce its scope and mandate in coordination with like-minded governments across the hemisphere. It is the deep belief of stakeholders interviewed that those dark days are in the past.

The Commission left strengthened that process of bitter confrontation, which marked stakeholders in Ecuador and created a sense of community among the human rights community in the country. New governments even provided financial resources for the Commission's work in Ecuador, for example, for the commission investigating the death of three Ecuadorian journalists at the northern border in Colombia. State representatives underscored the goodwill of the new government to cooperate with the IACHR and their commitment to cherish the human rights agreements signed by the State. At the same time, demand emerges for a more robust engagement of the Commission with State actors, for example, for capacity building or awareness raising on topics such as the IACHR's friendly settlements mechanisms. State actors desired to be empowered to play a more preventive role in cooperation with Non-State actors rather than only dealing with human rights violations.

The quotes below reflect some of the stakeholders' rich views on the sustainability of the IACHR's work in Ecuador between 2017 and 2023.

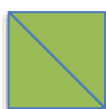
"We have come out of 10 years of darkness. Now we see light again and the Commission did not let us down in our unequal struggle for human rights in our beloved country. We are profoundly grateful to the Commission and its sustained support in upholding human rights".

"The OAS and IACHR were our saviors. Their long-term support to democracy and rights saved our country."

"Yes, the new governments changed direction and now publicly support the IACHR. But what has changed in practice? Human rights don't help to gain votes in elections. In fact, they only create problems for a government. Human rights issues affect the image of States and often the State has to admit that it had failed. Which government would be mature enough to recognize systemic failures? Take the violations of female staff in the national Police Corps. Those cases remain untouched due to the fear that the police would turn against the government. The same is true in the case of human rights violations in the armed forces."

"The Commission must work with the State. The State violates human rights but it is the only one to guarantee those rights. We [State actors] long for cooperation, not confrontation."

**Sources: IACHR stakeholders, Ecuador**



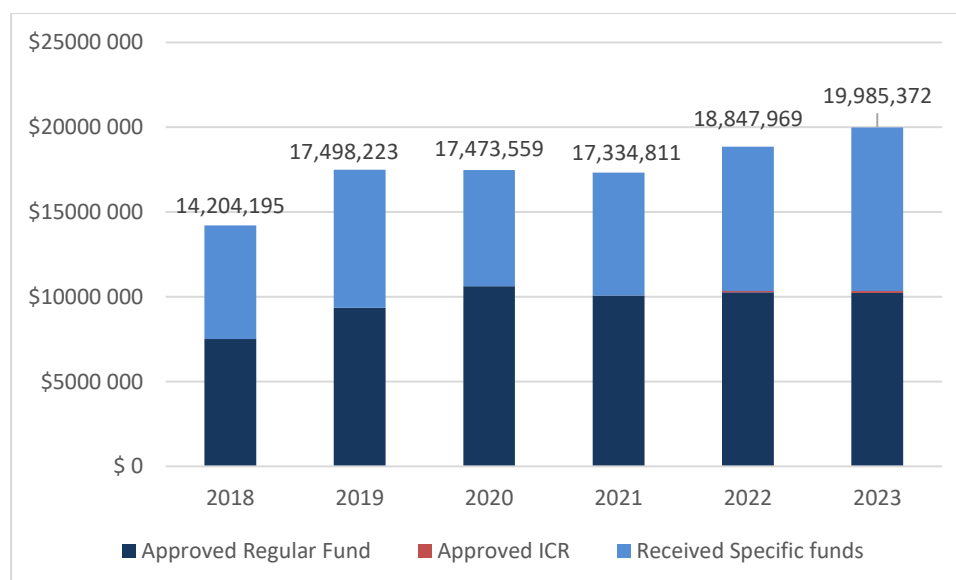
### 6.3 Future funding

The mid-term evaluation found that the funding situation of the Commission was on an increasing trajectory when the OAS passed through prolonged periods of declining funding. This situation continued till 2023.

The IACHR budget grew from US\$ 7,505,200 in 2018 to US\$ 9,367,400 in 2019 and US\$ 10,627,900 in 2020. This represents a budget increase of 41,6% between 2018 and 2020. The IACHR's annual report 2020 states that "the increase in the budget for 2020 marks the culmination of the final phase of doubling the regular budget allocated following the Cancún Agreement of 2017 <sup>66</sup>. In the midst of the discussions surrounding the OAS regular fund budget and the variation of budget ceilings, the IACHR, even after the finalization of the Cancun agreement, has managed to maintain budget allocations in the order of 12%. The approved regular fund reached US\$ 10,230,700 in 2023.

Also, the Commission managed to increase its donor base, with several multi-year projects from Canada, The European Union, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, complementing the U.S. project. Specific funds received increased from US\$ 6,698,995 in 2018 to US\$ 9,637,673 in 2023. The overall budget of the Commission showed an increase from US\$ 14,204,195 in 2018 to US\$19,985,372 in 2023. Figure 21 provides an overview of the IACHR budget between 2018 and 2023<sup>67</sup>.

**Figure 21: IACHR budget 2018 to 2023**



\*2023: Projected information for Specific Funds as of March, 2023, ICR: indirect cost recovery, US\$ 90,900 in 2022 and US\$ 117,000 in 2023.

The field visit found that Argentina set up and funds the Human Rights Institute of Mercosur, which is a significant financial commitment. However, the State's commitment to human rights is not reflected in increasing the quota to the OAS due to the country's critical debt situation.

<sup>66</sup>IACHR, 2021: IACHR's annual report 2020

<sup>67</sup> 2023 data based on estimates

## Section III: Conclusions, recommendations, and lessons learned

Figure 22 provides a detailed summary of the evaluation's key findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The matrix format ensures the logical flow of evidence grouped by evaluation criteria. The following conclusions emerge from the key findings.

### . Conclusions

#### **Relevance**

The IACHR remains relevant and fulfills its mission in an operating environment that deteriorated further since the mid-term evaluation in 2021.

The US funding also actively defends democracy, the project empowering the IACHR as a soft power and rights being a vital part of democracy. The latter seems particularly relevant to uphold democracy, as powers with conflicting values are using the region as a battleground to undermine democracies across the hemisphere actively.

#### **Efficiency**

IACHR's and DPMO's rigorous project monitoring ensures robust accountability. At the same time, the RPPIs have to be produced in very short cycles, demanding significant efforts from the project management for reporting.

The mid-term evaluation served as a reflection point for the IACHR projects, and the donor and project team took the recommendations seriously.

The U.S. funding to the IACHR between 2018 and 2023 constitutes value for money to the U.S. taxpayers, based on the project's reach, for example, through Resolution 1/2020 on the pandemic and human rights.

#### **Effectiveness**

The IACHR performed very well according to its logframe indicators and data backed up results. However, those undisputable improvements are less reflected in stakeholder perceptions.

IACHR Commissioners and the project management are aware of the factors affecting the IACHR's performance, the risks, and opportunities for the IACHR. They could act accordingly, provided the availability of future funding.

#### **Coherence**

IACHR is well-positioned in the human rights arena in the Western hemisphere. The institutionalization of cooperation with OHCHR and a more strategic engagement seem to be put in place with the IACHR-OHCHR's Joint Action Framework.

#### **Sustainability**

While the political and institutional sustainability of the Commission varies, its financial sustainability seems promising.

Figure 22: Summary of key findings, conclusions, and recommendations

	Key evaluation findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
Relevance	The design of the IACHR project was comprehensive. The main problems and barriers, the interventions results chain, and external drivers of change were correctly identified.	The IACHR remains relevant and fulfills its mission in an operating environment that deteriorated further since the mid-term evaluation in 2021. The US funding also actively defends democracy, the project empowering the IACHR as a soft power and rights being a vital part of democracy. The latter seems particularly relevant to uphold democracy, as powers with conflicting values use the region as a battleground to undermine democracies across the hemisphere actively.	<b>R1: Donor:</b> The continuation of unearmarked, longer-term funding (5-year cycles) is recommended to enable the Commission to implement its Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and to defend democracy in the Western Hemisphere, complementing the US diplomatic and military efforts. <b>Prioritization: very high. Next 3 months</b>
	However, the project assumptions were only partially valid, reflecting the Commission's increasingly adverse operating environment due to a deterioration of the human rights situation across many countries between 2018 and 2023, i.e., the Commission required more efforts than initially envisaged to achieve project results.		
	The IACHR's relevance for its State and Non-State stakeholders showed positive results during the field visits to Argentina, Colombia, and Ecuador.		
Efficiency	The quality of IACHR project indicators is good. The IACHR continued using the results-based management principles that were in place during the mid-term evaluation, for example, the quarterly RPPI.	IACHR's and DPMO's rigorous project monitoring ensures robust accountability. At the same time, the RPPIs have to be produced in very short cycles, demanding significant efforts from the project management for reporting.	<b>No recommendation.</b> <b>As US law demands quarterly monitoring, no changes to the frequency of reporting cycles can be recommended.</b>
	The monitoring mechanisms are very strict and serve as a rigorous accountability mechanism for the donor. However, this comprehensive monitoring on a quarterly basis was unevenly used for project management, as it was perceived as overwhelming.		
	The mid-term evaluation issued seven recommendations. The USOAS followed all three recommendations addressed to the donor. Concerning the project team, three recommendations were fully implemented to the extent that they were within the project team's scope, and one recommendation was partly executed (about making some output indicators more results-focused).	The mid-term evaluation served as a reflection point for the IACHR projects, and the donor and project team took the recommendations seriously.	<b>R2: Donor:</b> Keep the practice of mid-term evaluations for any new multi-year project under USOAS funding as a good practice for reflection and adaptation of project management and implementation at mid-term. <b>Prioritization: medium. Next 12-18 months</b>
	Cost-benefit pandemic and human rights: at least 101,175,701 persons from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru were reached by legislative and juridical measures with reference to Resolution 1/2020 and its recommendation. This could be compared to the US investment of US\$ 14,263,887.8, at a theoretical cost of US\$ 0,14 per person reached.	The U.S. funding to the IACHR between 2018 and 2023 constitutes value for money to the U.S. taxpayers.	<b>R3: Project team and Commissioners:</b> Continue the work of the IACHR impact observatory and add elements of quantification of beneficiaries in impact reports. This approach could provide elements for future analysis of benefits and costs, including for evaluation purposes and to communicate results to Member States and donors. <b>Prioritization: high. Next 3-6 months</b>
Effectiveness	The IACHR had achieved all outcome level targets for its outcome indicators or with an achievement rate above 90% already by March 30, 2023. IACHR projects fully or largely meet 25 out of 25 final targets for output level indicators already by March 30, 2023.	The IACHR performed very well according to its logframe indicators, and results are backed up by data. However, those undisputable improvements are less reflected in stakeholder perceptions.	See R4 on communication strategies
	Exclusion: the perception of results achievement varies between 51,7% for older persons and 68% for freedom of expression. The median of results reaches 56,3%, with results for women		



<p>above the median of 62,9%. Internal monitoring data shows a clear contribution of the IACHR to project results. This is less reflected in stakeholders' critical perceptions, which have declined from a median of 66,4% to 54,5% between 2021 and 2023.</p> <p>Internal key factors facilitating the Commission's work were the IACHR's strategic plan 2017-2022 serving as a beacon and successful organizational restructuring. On the negative side, increasing results lead to an increasing workload on an already overstretched team. Besides, Commissioners lose credibility due to the public discussion about divergent views on human rights.</p> <p>External key factors affecting the Commission's work are the continued strong civil society mobilization and the momentum for monitoring recommendations using a round table. Negative factors are the increased political polarization in Latin America but also the weakness of legal systems and the lack of norms of willing States to implement IACHR recommendations.</p> <p>Opportunities for the IACHR emerge to enhance internal processes further, develop communications strategies for different purposes, increase technical assistance (awareness raising, capacity building, legal support) for a broader range of State actors, enhance coordination with the OAS on projects on rights and justice and further increase its strategic outreach to the Caribbean.</p> <p>Risks relate to internal processes facing an increasing workload and the available IACHR finances (despite significant increases in the past while this was not the case for the rest of the OAS) and the operating environment.</p> <p>Unplanned project results include the IACHR's highly successful mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic, its increasing ability to focus on real-time human rights challenges in the Americas, and internal challenges threatening credibility and trust.</p>	<p>IACHR Commissioners and the project management are aware of the factors affecting the IACHR performance, the risks, and opportunities for the IACHR and could act accordingly, provided the availability of future funding.</p>	<p><b>R4: Project team and Commissioners:</b> Take the following opportunities as part of implementing the Strategic Plan 2023-2027:</p> <p><b>Internal processes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparent prioritization process for topics and cases</li> <li>• Better systematization and optimization of internal processes and coordination between teams</li> <li>• SOPs for work protocols</li> <li>• Unlock better IT potential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Amplify the use of IT systems: e.g., more paid licenses for Airtable</li> <li>○ Enhance process methodologies: definitions and automated processes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Commissioners are invited to discuss any disagreements outside the public space to re-establish their unity and the Commission's credibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>Communication strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened dialogue with State actors even in challenging contexts</li> <li>• Learning from COVID-19: Hybrid model for audiences and working meetings to broaden access to justice and save costs</li> <li>• Communication of the Commission's work and mechanisms (e.g., SIMORE), particularly on its impact</li> <li>• Prioritize the promotion of friendly settlement mechanisms in Member States and as an opportunity of attracting additional donor funding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Technical assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More support to a broader range of State actors, including Human Rights Commissions, Human Rights Ombudsmen, and Anti-torture organs, to overcome structural barriers to implementing recommendations</li> <li>• Include issues of the digital economy and misinformation under Freedom of Expression</li> <li>• IACHR to provide technical assistance (legal analysis and advice) and monitor countries' policy development and implementation concerning questions of memory, truth, and justice. Monitoring the political environment's attitude towards the topics of memory, truth, and justice can serve as an early warning mechanism for potential emerging hotspots for undermined democracies and</li> </ul>
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			<p>human rights. At the same time, this early warning mechanism could allow the Commission to proactively deepen the dialogue with States "in peril" of cherishing their human rights obligations.</p> <p><b>Caribbean</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep increasing staff from the Caribbean to get better access to the region</li> <li>• Confidence building with Caribbean States, promotional visits around specific topics as an entry point for work visits which require official State invitation</li> <li>• Capacity building and remote engagement to get on IACHR on the State's agenda</li> </ul> <p><b>OAS coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue, stock taking, and assessment of coordination opportunities between IACHR, Panamerican Development Foundations' portfolio on rights and justice (OAS), and Media Integrity Centre in OAS</li> </ul> <p><b>Prioritization: medium. Next 24-48 months</b></p>
Coherence	IACHR is in a leadership role in many countries due to its geographical vicinity, accessibility (no language barriers), and developing of human rights standards and mechanisms compared to the Geneva-based OHCHR.	IACHR is well-positioned in the human rights arena in the Western hemisphere. The institutionalization of cooperation with OHCHR and a more strategic engagement seem to be put in place with the IACHR-OHCHR's Joint Action Framework.	<p><b>R5: Project team and Commissioners:</b> Monitor the implementation of the IACHR-OHCHR's Joint Action Framework jointly with OHCHR and take corrective action, as required, based on monitoring data.</p> <p><b>Prioritization: medium. Next 12-18 months</b></p>
	The Coordination between IACHR and OHCHR seemed less institutionalized and lacked a strategy, for example, of Freedom of Expression in Argentina and Colombia or the National Committee on the Prevention of Torture in Argentina. However, this caveat is meant to be addressed at the institutional level in the IACHR-OHCHR's Joint Action Framework, launched in March 2023.		
	IACHR and the United Nations system (OHCHR, UNESCO) have different functions and are perceived as complementary in their work in Ecuador. Bilateral donors like USAID and AECID complement the Commission's work in Colombia, for example, by funding CSOs in Colombia to analyze public policies and to present reports to the IACHR.		
Sustainability	Stakeholder perceptions concerning the Commission's institutional sustainability decreased for five out of the seven criteria, while the document review showed more positive results.	While the political and institutional sustainability of the Commission varies, its financial sustainability seems promising.	<p><b>See R1 on continued donor funding</b></p> <p><b>See R4 on internal IACHR processes</b></p>
	States' roles and actions have slightly improved, starting from a low level. At the same time, the high reputation of the Commission suffered due to a lack of unity among the Commissioners and diverging views being publicly discussed.		
	The IACHR is still recovering from a situation of severe attack when five Member States tried in a coordinated effort to limit the Commission's scope in 2012 and 2019. Still, the perception of political buy-in is increasing.		
	Budget: The mid-term evaluation found that the funding situation of the Commission was on an increasing trajectory until 2021. This situation continued till 2023. Overall budget increased from US\$ 14,204,195 in 2018 to US\$19,985,372 in 2023 (+40.1%)		

## **. Recommendations**

Based on the key findings and conclusions drawn and listed above, the evaluation makes the following targeted and prioritized recommendations.

### **Relevance**

**R1: Donor:** The continuation of unearmarked, longer-term funding (5-year cycles) is recommended to enable the Commission to implement its Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and to defend democracy in the Western Hemisphere, complementing the US diplomatic and military efforts.

**Prioritization: very high. Next 3 months**

### **Efficiency**

**R2: Donor:** Keep the practice of mid-term evaluations for any new multi-year project under USOAS funding as a good practice for reflection and adaptation of project management and implementation at mid-term.

**Prioritization: medium. Next 12-18 months**

**R3: Project team and Commissioners:** Continue the work of the IACHR impact observatory and add elements of quantification of beneficiaries in impact reports. This could provide elements for future analysis of benefits and costs, including for evaluation purposes and to communicate results to Member States and donors.

**Prioritization: high. Next 3-6 months**

### **Effectiveness**

**R4: Project team and Commissioners:** Take the following opportunities as part of implementing the Strategic Plan 2023-2027:

#### **Internal processes**

- Transparent prioritization process for topics and cases
- Better systematization and optimization of internal processes and coordination between teams
- Standard Operating Procedures for work protocols
- Unlock better IT potential:
  - Amplify the use of IT systems: e.g., more paid licenses for Airtable
  - Enhance process methodologies: definitions and automated processes
- Commissioners are invited to discuss any disagreements outside the public space to re-establish their unity and the Commission's credibility.

#### **Communication strategies**

- Strengthened dialogue with State actors even in challenging contexts
- Learning from COVID-19: Hybrid model for audiences and working meetings to broaden access to justice and save costs
- Communication of the Commission's work and mechanisms (e.g., SIMORE), particularly on its impact
- Prioritize the promotion of friendly settlement mechanisms in Member States and as an opportunity of attracting additional donor funding.

### **Technical assistance**

- More support to a broader range of State actors, including Human Rights Commissions, Human Rights Ombudsmen, and Anti-torture organs, to overcome structural barriers to implementing recommendations
- Include issues of the digital economy and misinformation under Freedom of Expression
- IACHR to provide technical assistance (legal analysis and advice) and monitor countries’ policy development and implementation concerning questions of memory, truth, and justice. Monitoring the political environment’s attitude towards the topics of memory, truth, and justice can serve as an early warning mechanism for potential emerging hotspots for undermined democracies and human rights. At the same time, this early warning mechanism could allow the Commission to proactively deepen the dialogue with States “in peril” of cherishing their human rights obligations.

### **Caribbean**

- Keep increasing staff from the Caribbean to get better access to the region
- Confidence building with Caribbean States, promotional visits around specific topics as an entry point for work visits which require official State invitation
- Capacity building and remote engagement to get on IACHR on the State’s agenda

### **OAS coordination**

- Dialogue, stock taking, and assessment of coordination opportunities between IACHR, Panamerican Development Foundations’ portfolio on rights and justice (OAS), and Media Integrity Centre in OAS

**Prioritization: medium. Next 24-48 months**

### **Coherence**

**R5: Project team and Commissioners:** Monitor the implementation of the IACHR-OHCHR’s Joint Action Framework jointly with the OHCHR and take corrective action, as required, based on monitoring data.

**Prioritization: medium. Next 12-18 months**

## **. Lessons learned**

The evaluation identified the following lessons learned based on the synthesis of the project’s monitoring and reporting (RPPIs):

### **Systematization of workstreams**

The Commission reported that assigning matters with similar themes to specific attorneys in the team has resulted in more efficient drafting of reports. Some themes identified for assignment include due process in dismissing justice operators; human rights violations committed during military dictatorships; violence against women and girls; and massacres.

### **Country-level engagement**

The IACHR successfully used webinars to engage with civil society and authorities during the pandemic and used virtual means, including for working visits. Now that travel restrictions have been lifted, a hybrid approach can bring good results in human rights monitoring, including for audiences, with fewer resources and more quickly.

If the IACHR does not have consent for a working visit, the IACHR should implement promotional visits and/or work closely with civil society organizations<sup>68</sup>.

### **Compliance with recommendations**

Obstacles that affect compliance with recommendations include the different nature of recommendations, the legal status of international standards within the States, and the federal distribution of competencies in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, or Mexico.

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<sup>68</sup> IACHR comment: The IACHR will continue to implement promotional visits to work closely with the State and civil society.

## Annex 1: Field visit summary - Argentina

### (A) Relevance

Since the visit of the IACHR in 1979, the Commission has been highly appreciated by all stakeholders in Argentina. Governments, independently of their political orientation, are, in principle, appreciative of the Commission due to its role in holding the dictatorship accountable in Argentina. The latter is perceived as an essential step in Argentina’s transition towards democracy.

“The IACHR open doors which are closed in our home countries”.

Source: IACHR stakeholder, Argentina



Source: <http://www.theworldmap.net/country/argentina/>

### (B) Coherence

Overall, stakeholders in Argentina experienced satisfactory coherence between the IACHR and the universal human rights system.

The IACHR is in a leadership role in Argentina due to its geographical vicinity, accessibility, and development of human rights standards and mechanisms. Accessibility refers to IACHR’s efforts to reach, for example, human rights defenders in Argentina and the use of Spanish to avoid language barriers.

Stakeholders observed cooperation between the IACHR and the Geneva-based OHCHR on standards or joint statements, for example, when launching the thematic report on Liberty of Expression in 2019. In other areas, the intents of coordination seem to be less clear. In the case of the National Committee on the Prevention of Torture, stakeholders missed a coordination strategy.

### (C) Effectiveness: the achievement of project results

#### Achievement of project objectives

***To contribute to the improvement of the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere in accordance with the highest international standards.***

The situation has improved in Argentina for some vulnerable populations such as persons deprived of liberty, LGBTIQ+, migrants, and indigenous peoples.

The UN Report claiming memory as the fifth pillar of transitional justice (2020), based on IACHR principles, elevated the status of those principles and their application. It constituted a milestone in observing human rights in Argentina, the Southern Cone, and beyond.

Argentina made Less progress on economic, cultural, and social rights. Cases of police violence under the previous government have also advanced unsatisfactorily.

***Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of promoting, defending, and protecting Human Rights in the Americas***

Change for the better has been noted. The initial review seems much more agile now, and the backlog in cases decreased. Friendly settlements are increasingly being used in Argentina, which helps to cut the time in dealing with cases. The attractiveness for agreeing on friendly settlements is due to the fear of the parties involved to face a trial in the Interamerican Court. The backlog was very convenient for States, as governments could deal with cases from previous administrations and had not to face responsibility for their own actions. At the same time, the victims of human rights abuses suffered while waiting for justice. This situation is increasingly changing now, and governments in the Western Hemisphere increasingly need to face their own human rights issues.

Stakeholders underscored the Commission's crucial role in capturing testimonials during public unrest, for example, in Chile, Colombia, Bolivia, or Peru, and its follow-up by granting precautionary measures for human rights defenders.

***Increase the number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage***

Stakeholders had mixed observations concerning the management of petitions and cases in the IACHR's system.

On the positive side, State representatives noted increased attention of the Commission on State responses to cases since 2020. Friendly settlements strongly contributed to addressing the caseload and back log for Argentina. However, an overall perception persists that the case system is still relatively slow.

A need emerges to transparently share the criteria for admitting or rejecting cases, which are largely unknown to most stakeholders interviewed.

While the digitalization of processes is welcomed, the digital case system creates a barrier between the petitioners and the Commission, as no personal interaction is experienced anymore. The latter increases the need for audiences.

Stakeholders were aware of the enormous demand for the cases and petition system, its staff, and its limited human resource base.

***Improve the monitoring of the situation of human rights in the country***

The IACHR's thematic reports on monitoring human rights are appreciated. Examples include the right to protest under the Liberty of Expression Rapporteurship, migration, and transitional justice.

Potential shows for the annual report and the mentioning of specific countries in section 4B. However, this seems political and beyond the decision of the IACHR, but instead in the OAS' influence.

Concerning monitoring friendly settlements, stakeholders experienced that action is often victim-driven rather than the IACHR. The latter reflects the staff limitations in the relevant IACHR section.

***Improve the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR***

IACHR efficiently monitors the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR in Argentina. The missing part is the deficiencies in the State's implementation of recommendations. In Argentina, a deficient State administration often impedes the implementation of IACHR recommendations where laws and procedures are missing. Essentially, State employees don't know how to comply with IACHR recommendations, for example, how to calculate the proposed amount for reparations of victims of human rights abuses.

### ***Freedom of Expression***

Though there are no systematic attracts to the freedom of expression in Argentina, cases emerge where the State tries to silence journalists' critique of State representatives. Increasingly journalists are threatened in the Rosario area by drug traffickers.

### **Major internal and external factors influencing project implementation**

The major internal factors influencing the IACHR's work over the past five years were the reduction of the cases backlog and the increased quality of the admissibility analysis. Besides, the case system seemed to have improved.

Internal factors influencing the efficiency of the Commission's work negatively are the delays caused by the fact that all Commissioners need to sign an admissibility report or background report rather than a single one. Also, stakeholders identified a lack of prioritization in the Commission's work and a lack of transparency when priorities are set. Stakeholders observed less emphasis in the Commission on topics such as memory, truth, and justice. While a better representation of women among the commissioners is observed and appreciated, questions about the suitability of Commissioner profiles were raised.

The scope of the IACHR's work has increased over the past five years, including now, for example, also the right to health. Subsequently, the workload simultaneously increases.

External factors comprise the polarization of the human rights agenda, including political movements questioning transitional justice and truth commissions in the Southern cone. The federal and provincial systems in Argentina can complicate the IACHR's work and State's compliance with recommendations.

### **Unforeseeable/not planned results or outcomes**

The evaluation identified positive and negative surprises related to the work of the IACHR over the past five years.

On the positive side, stakeholders referred to the high degree of making the case system more agile. The latter includes the promotion of friendly settlements, including capacity building, where the Commission plays a more active role resulting in a better quality of negotiations.



“Friendly settlements are like three persons dancing tango. The IACHR provides leadership and facilitates, as required.”

Source: IACHR stakeholder, Argentina

On the negative side, internal developments in the Commission cause worries. Nearly all interviewees referred to a lack of unity among the Commissioners, where the public disclosure of single dissenting opinions heavily affected the Commission’s credibility.

Also, the OAS’s involvement in the exit of the previous IACHR Executive Secretary caused concern, affecting the IACHR’s autonomy and public image. The OAE seems to face a crisis of representation in the Western Hemisphere, which limits its legitimation and indirectly affects the work of the IACHR.

“The role of States in the Interamerican system is crucial. As authoritarianism increases, not abiding to human rights, the Commission must battle for dialogue to use all its human rights instruments. Once dialogue breaks down, it seriously limits the Commission.”

Source: IACHR stakeholder, Argentina

Finally, the advancements in public policies on memory, truth, and justice based on IACHR standards seem in peril in the Southern Cone due to unexpected political opposition in many parliaments of the sub-region.

## Results in addressing exclusion

The IACHR positively affected excluded groups in Argentina by expanding rights to groups such as LGBTQ+, migrants, and indigenous populations. A collective interaction of the countries such as Argentina with the IACHR created this effect. Human rights activists, community and indigenous populations groups claiming their rights found a sounding board in the Commission. Creating standards to protect LGBTQ+, migrants, and indigenous populations is a step toward addressing their exclusion.

While the rights of populations such as LGBTQ+, migrants, and indigenous people have enhanced over the past five years in Argentina, their application is still lacking, for example, for indigenous communities in the Province of Formosa.

### (D) Sustainability: are results lasting?

#### Political buy-in

The human rights topic seems anchored in Argentinian democracy. The State seems highly motivated and dedicated to cooperating with the IACHR, as recently observed in the highly participatory process of identifying a candidate for an IACHR Commissioner.

However, the human rights topic is heavily politicized. Interviews revealed that through human rights are universal, the prosecution of members of the Argentinian junta or State representatives of elected governments can cause severe reactions with claims of politicizing cases, depending on the stakeholders’ political orientation.

At the same time, stakeholders observe a backlash, for example, against LGBTI+ and migrants. Also, State representatives noted challenges to implementing IACHR recommendations, despite political buy-in, due to a lack of existing legal frameworks and instruments to comply with.

Finally, the sustainability of IACHR's work in Argentina is affected by its federal legislation, which allows provinces not to implement the federal government's decisions. This affects compliance with Inter-American standards, such as indigenous populations' rights.

### **Future funding of the IACHR**

Argentina set up and funds the Human Rights Institute of Mercosur. This State commitment concerning human rights is not reflected in increasing the quota to the IACHR due to the country's critical debt situation.

## Annex 2: Field visit summary - Colombia

### (A) Relevance

The IACHR is highly relevant for victims of human rights abuses and human rights defenders in Colombia.

“The IACHR is the lifeline for so many people in the Americas, including our country. Hence, the exit of countries from the Inter-American human rights system is a real threat”.

“The IACHR is like a lifejacket for civil society organizations. It is the ultimate resource, it propels cases to another level and defends citizens against their governments”.

**Sources: IACHR stakeholders, Colombia.**



Source: <http://www.theworldmap.net/country/colombia/>

### (B) Coherence

Civil Society Organizations have a closer link to the IACHR than to the universal human rights system due to the use of the Spanish language. Besides, cases can lead up to the level of judgments from the IA Court, which is not the case in the universal system.

While OHCHR is present in the city and territory, IACHR is less strongly and more sporadically presented.

An agreement between the IACHR and OHCHR seems not to be functioning well, as timely joint statements are at times rather difficult to achieve, as in the case of the social unrest in 2021 concerning the right to protest.

For freedom of expression, the OHCHR’s special rapporteur seems to lack synchronization with the IACHR’s one due to a lack of prioritization of the Latin America and Caribbean region in OHCHR.

This is another example of insufficient institutionalization of agreements between IACHR and OHCHR.

Bilateral donors seem to be more coherent in their work with the IACHR. USAID and AECID, for example, support CSOs in Colombia to fund activities to analyze public policies and to present reports to the IACHR. Also, both bilateral donors enable CSOs to accompany victims of human rights abuses and access the Inter-American human rights system.

### (C) Effectiveness: the achievement of IACHR results

#### Achievement of project objectives

***To contribute to the improvement of the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere in accordance with the highest international standards.***

The overall human rights situation in Colombia is very complex and remains essentially unchanged for many parts of society if compared to five years ago. Some stakeholders described the situation as even worsening, with the number of killings of social leaders and human rights defenders initially decreasing from 185 in 2020 to 145 in 2021 but then reaching a record high of 199 killings in 2022<sup>69</sup>. At the same time, recorded violations of freedom of expression increased from 477 in 2018 to 595 in 2022.

The country still suffers killings of social leaders, indigenous leaders, and people signing the peace agreement. Over the past four years, human rights defenders suffered severe stigmatization from the government side. At the same time, the government put in doubt the renovation of the IACHR's and OHCHR's mandates in Colombia.

The lack of government engagement in the territories previously held by the FARC guerilla constitutes a blank sport for observing and defending human rights. At the same time, the social unrest in 2019 and 2020 led to the most severe human right violation by the national police and army.

The new government used human rights guarantees and report recommendations in their election discourse, e.g., the reform of the National Police Corps. While commitments were made to uphold the Inter-American Convention on human rights, including positioning human rights defenders in government posts, the action remains to be seen.

The implementation of measures of non-repetition leading to systemic change is still largely missing. Out of 29 judgments of the Inter-American Court for Human Rights, only one judgment is fully implemented due to the lack of cooperation of previous governments.

***Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of promoting, defending, and protecting Human Rights in the Americas***

The IACHR played a crucial role in the transitional justice as early as the dialogue with paramilitary groups started in 2005

With its work on the rights to reparation, memory, and protection of HR defenders, the IACHR set standards. Over the past five years, the Commission has been monitoring the social unrest in Colombia since 2018.

In 2018, several mass mobilizations and social unrest spread over Colombia, and CSOs demanded a visit of the IACHR to Colombia. The government did not want such a visit until the IACHR asked to be invited in a context of high media coverage.

The government ceded and wanted exclusive meetings with the IACHR. But the demand of many CSOs and citizens to meet the IACHR was so high that the government had to allow meetings once the IACHR was in the country. The Commission even had to use virtual channels to meet the demand. However, in several locations, the visit created wrong expectations, and victims lacked clarity on how their testimonials were used.

While the implementation of recommendations of the 2022 IACHR report on social unrest is still outstanding, the effects of the report on the 2018 demonstrations have started to show.

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<sup>69</sup> <https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/colombia-reporta-2022-cifra-record-asesinatos-lideres-sociales-y-defensores-ddhh/6866815.html>

During recent social mobilizations in the Costa Norte, highways were cut but opened for ambulances and other urgent transport to pass. According to the stakeholders interviewed, this would not have happened without the influence of the IACHR.

Stakeholders observed that the IACHR engaged with civil society organizations and helped to raise the visibility of human rights abuses, for example, through social media use. As a result, there was a perception that the government had to be attentive when the IACHR claimed rights from the States that have signed Inter-American Conventions of Human Rights.

However, civil society organizations also noted a shift in the Commission's proactiveness and style to hold the government accountable since 2021 with the departure of a highly engaged Commissioner. The latter affects the perception of the IACHR's trust and weight in the country among civil society organizations in the country.

The 2022 IACHR report on social unrest, described as “historical,” is laudable, stating that social protests are a fundamental right.

Monitoring of the implementation of recommendations has been virtual so far, and on 27 January 2023, a first in-person meeting took place. The previous government rejected the report, which included recommendations about the reform of the National police force.

Advancements in the IACHR's systems and processes have a downside, as a perceived increase in the effectiveness of the Commission's work results in more demand. As such, the IACHR is becoming a victim of its own success if its resources are not increased.

At the same time, interviews indicated a significant divide between the awareness about the IACHR between urban and peripheral areas in Colombia. Due to the precarious security situation in many peripheral parts of the country, CSOs struggle to inform the population about the Inter-American system, and an organ from the outside is required for those tasks. External organizations such as the Peace Corps fulfill that role.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to IACHR audiences through virtual means allowed marginal communities to participate for the first time to participate. This increased reach of the IACHR is, to some extent, a democratization and addresses inequalities in its access. It is expected that a hybrid format would allow for maintaining the reach of audiences while allowing human rights defenders to benefit in person from informal meetings around the audiences.

At the same time, some victims of human rights abuses and human rights defenders interviewed still suffer from the backlog of their cases. SIMORE is viewed critically by some human rights defenders, as data is not sufficiently up to date. For elderly human rights defenders, the technological barrier to using SIMORE seems substantial.

Concerning Freedom of Expression, the human resource limitations in the Commission are felt. As demand in other countries increases, the depth of the Rapporteurship's work in Colombia decreases. In cases where the Commission reaches a deadlock with governments, as in the case of the three Ecuadorian journalists killed in Colombia in 2018, ambassadors of democratic countries could play a vocal role. In Ecuador, for example, the U.S. ambassador publicly denounced in December 2021 the involvement of 19 high-ranking police officers with the drug traffickers, describing them as “narcogenerales” and revoking their visas to the U.S.<sup>70</sup>. In January 2022, the U.S. ambassador continued playing a vital role in defending human rights by publicly revoking visas to Ecuadorian judges and other personnel in the legal and justice

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<sup>70</sup> <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2021/12/16/ecuador-narcogenerales-cupula-policial-orix/>

sector due to alleged corruption<sup>71</sup>. Those public acts of defending democracy and human rights significantly complement and support the work of the IACHR at the political and administrative level, according to human rights defenders in both CSOs and on the State side.

While the IACHR does not guarantee liberties, it is the last resource for countless people. CSOs encourage the IACHR to keep making recommendations in its reports, even if they repeat themselves to assure that States and their employees listen.

### ***Increase the number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage***

**Cases and petitions:** concerning the caseload, the evaluation found a perception among stakeholders that the Commission is still overwhelmed, with cases having long delays. The evaluator learned that even the registration of cases can take up to four years.

In case 11-888, *Red de la Armada*, the victims' parents are elderly now and long to see a solution to the case. In one of the interviews, the children of their abducted and murdered mother shared their fears with the evaluator that they might die without having found a conclusion of their case, which torments them, causing additional suffering.

**Precautionary measures:** Human rights defenders noted a structural problem of delays in the Commission's time to respond to the demand for precautionary measures and to granting their extension. At times even months passed without a response despite the urgency of cases.

In the case of political rights, delays in granting precautionary measures can mean that elected persons can be out of office for a prolonged time. This shortcoming would need to be better prioritized and addressed by the Commission.

Stakeholders lauded the visit of the IACHR Commissioner for the monitoring of precautionary measures, as this helped him and his team to familiarize themselves with the situation on the ground.

Colombia noted an increase in **friendly settlements**. The purpose is to try that those cases get solved by the national justice systems, liberating the Inter-American system and workload for the IACHR. However, guarantees of non-repetition need to go beyond one victim. For their systematization, policy or strategy development would be required. From a practical perspective, victims of human rights violations interviewed stated the need for a mediator during the friendly settlement process, as victims feel alone in negotiations of the State with all its organs involved. The expectations towards friendly settlements are very high as a means to speed up cases.

In the case of "*Comuna 13*", the IACHR provided very precise guidance, and after a highly efficient process, the State recognized its responsibilities.

### ***Improve the monitoring of the situation of human rights in the country***

Most stakeholders interviewed perceived the IACHR's human rights monitoring in Colombia positively. Stakeholders made linkages to the Commission's Strategic Plan, and a virtual presentation of the IACHR and its rapporteurs to CSOs was well received, as it enhanced their understanding of the IACHR's priorities and processes.

Monitoring the human rights situation seems to depend on the working style of the respective

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<sup>71</sup> <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2022/01/10/estados-unidos-revoca-visas-ecuador-orix/>

commissioners, and stakeholders missed a more standardized approach, some sort of Standard Operation Procedures. Monitoring can sometimes appear rather unilateral, as meetings are called at short notice, and CSOs have challenges attending those meetings.

For monitoring precautionary measures, the evaluation detected a gap in the protection, for example, of new leaders of labor unions or community representatives, which are not covered through existing precautionary measures of previous or retired leaders.

Concerning Freedom of Expression, stakeholders noted that cases of a collective dimension could be prioritized before personal ones.

***Improve the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR***

Stakeholders were critical concerning the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations.

In general, the ongoing dialogue of the IACHR rapporteurs with the State organs, as part of the Commission’s monitoring function, keeps human rights issues on the agenda. The State is forced to remain vigilant and to provide responses to the IACHR. Also, the national courts recognize the Commission’s recommendations. Stakeholders identified that Colombia presents a good political moment for systemic changes based on the IACHR’s recommendations. Given the political will to observe human rights in the country, the Commission should prioritize and accelerate the search for political spaces for dialogue, awareness raising, and capacity building for State organs and human rights defenders.

However, critical views prevailed. There is a perception among human rights defenders that since Colombia is no longer treated under Chapter 4A of the IACHR’s Annual Report, its monitoring of human rights and the monitoring of recommendations have weakened. Also, the timely official visit of the Commission during the 2021 social unrest, despite resistance from the State, raised very high expectations, which were subsequently unmet. The Commission’s report on the social unrest in 2021 contained a recommendation for a monitoring mechanism. CSOs proposed a tripartite mechanism involving the Commission, the State, and civil society. After ten meetings concerning the specifications of the monitoring mechanisms, the change of IACHR rapporteur slowed down this process. Generally, this change in the Commission also resulted in a different attitude of the Commission towards the State, which was described as failed “appeasement.”

A lesson to be learned for the Commission is that dialogue with all States is a top priority regardless of the governments’ views on human rights. However, when States show a lack of action beyond formal commitments, the Commission should use the appropriate language and mechanisms to defend human rights.

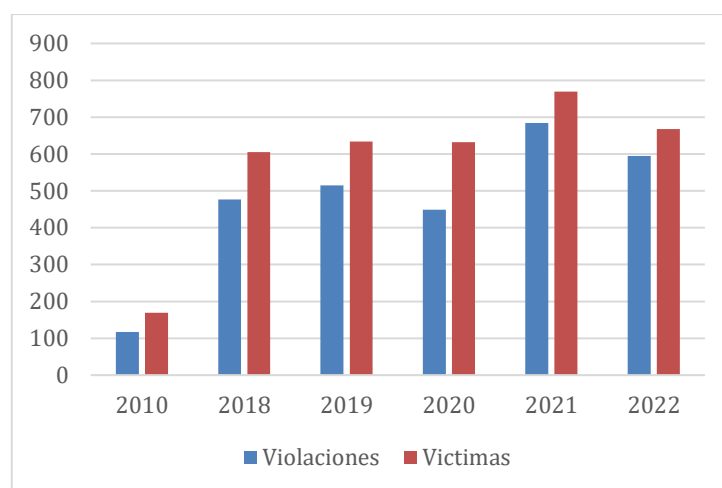
***Freedom of Expression***

The situation for journalists has worsened over the past five years with increasing threats and killings, despite the IACHR’s significant efforts to address Freedom of Expression in Colombia. Journalists operate in an environment of fear and feel threatened by State and non-State actors.

Figure 23 below presents data on the violations of Freedom of Expression in Colombia, showing an increase between 2018 and 2022 in the number of infringements (+ 19,8%) and

the number of victims (+9,4%). If 2010 is used as a baseline, the increase of violations and victims skyrocketed in the country over the past 12 years.

**Figure 23: Violations of Freedom of Expression in Colombia 2010-2022 and victims of aggression**

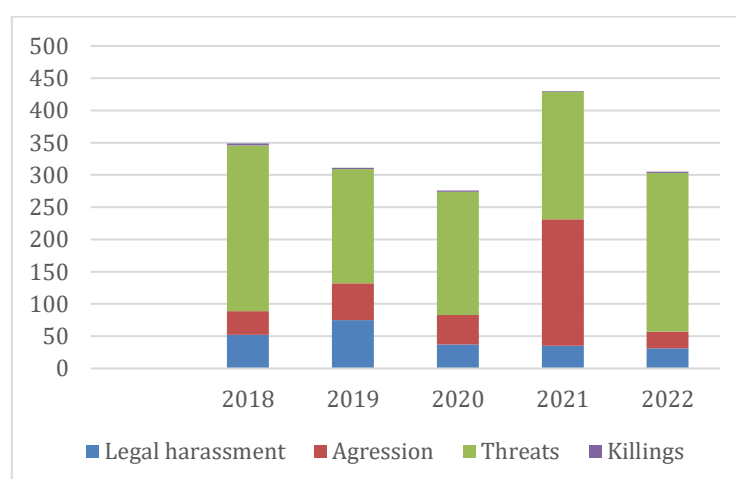


Source: FLIP, 2023

<https://www.flip.org.co/index.php/es/atencion-a-periodistas/mapa-de-agresiones>

Figure 24 shows that between one and three journalists were killed in Colombia between 2018 and 2022. Aggressions were particularly high in 2021 in a period of social protests.

**Figure 24: Violations of freedom of expression in Colombia: legal harassment, aggression, threats, and killings 2018-2022**



Source: FLIP, 2023

<https://www.flip.org.co/index.php/es/atencion-a-periodistas/mapa-de-agresiones>

## Major internal and external factors influencing project implementation

Two governments characterized politics in Colombia during the past five years. In that period, for four and a half years, a government was in power with a critical attitude towards the IACHR concerning its observance of the human rights situation in Colombia. Moreover, the government tried to limit the scope of the IACHR's work with other like-minded governments.



Its attitude towards the IACHR was bureaucratic, and responses were slow. Human rights defenders criticized its lack of urgency of precautionary measures.

While the IACHR was very strong in engaging that government and highlighting the problematic human rights situation in Colombia, for example, in Chapter 4A of its annual reports and its insistence to visit Colombia during the social unrest in 2021, an impression emerges that the government's persistent lack of trust in the IACHR eventually led the Commission to change its approach to appease the government. The categoric refusal of the recommendations from the 2021 IACHR report about the social unrest in Colombia and the failure to set up a functioning monitoring mechanism are examples of failed appeasement.

Since November 2022, a new government has been in charge. The discourse during the election process and at the beginning of the new government's term defended human rights. An improvement in the observance and defense of human rights remains to be seen.

CSOs critically accompany the IACHR's work in Colombia, and many stressed good communication with the Commission.

COVID-19 initially affected Colombia's accessibility to the IACHR. However, the Commission was lauded for its adaptive management approach. The creation of virtual spaces accelerated the democratization of the Commission, as virtual meetings and later hybrid ones significantly widened the reach of the Commission. Human rights defenders and CSOs never reached before managed to access the IACHR through virtual audiences. This change in reach is highly relevant, as most people suffering human rights abuses in Colombia live outside the urban centers and lack the means to travel to the Commission in the U.S. for audiences.

### **Unforeseeable/not planned results or outcomes**

Stakeholders repeated the changes in the Commission, which affected its determination to hold the government accountable for its human rights obligations. Hence, the monitoring of implementing recommendations and precautionary measures was weaker than expected. Also, human rights defenders still experience a significant backlog in responses to demands for admissibility.

### **Results in addressing exclusion**

In general, the lack of progress in implementing the 2016 Peace Treaty with the FARC left many people in rural areas unprotected, as structural and systemic changes are still outstanding in Colombia.

Concerning indigenous populations, Colombia's institutional court is well positioned about their rights, e.g., issues such as previous consent and rights to their territory. But the providing guarantees of those rights by the State is challenging. Also, a lack of clarity emerges for which territories previous consent is required.

### **(D) Sustainability: are results lasting?**

#### **Political buy-in**

The discourse concerning human rights gained momentum during the 2022 election campaign.

Less than six months after the change of government, the discourse still seems promising. For example, the demand for canceling all precautionary measures was dropped, a position maintained by the previous government. However, actual results concerning structural and systemic changes require time. While the Directorates for Human Rights in the Ministry of Interior and in the Ministry of Defense are now led by human rights defenders, key results are still outstanding. Those results include the reform of the national police corps or the observance of human rights outside the urban centers of Colombia.

### **Future funding of the IACHR**

Colombia does not provide project funding to the IACHR.

### **Main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the IACHR's work in Colombia**

#### **Strengths**

The IACHR offers important entry points to strengthen human rights in the country. Precautionary measures are highly important in Colombia due to the high need for protection for human rights defenders or indigenous populations, though there is no guarantee of protection. The rapporteurship for memory is vital for Colombia for transitional justice and reaffirming victim standards.

Without the IACHR and the IA system, the current president would have been unable to stand for the presidency, as the State procurator had unlawfully revoked the right to stand as president.

The IACHR report about the social unrest in 2021 had a strong echo in the country, for example, on the right to peaceful protest or the topic of police reform which could give signals to the entire region.

#### **Weaknesses**

Due to Colombia's critical human rights situation, the IACHR faces increasing cases and petitions. Stakeholders perceive that the IACHR struggles to respond to this increase due to its limited human resource and financial capacities. This affects the response time, form, and quality of responses, for example, concerning background reports.

While SIMORE facilitates channeling many petitions and cases, users experience impersonalized access to the IACHR without knowing who deals with petitions.

Stakeholders noted the need for more visits to Colombia to understand the context of human rights violations better.

#### **Opportunities**

The political momentum for observing and defending human rights in Colombia seems given. The Inter-American system is recognized as a human rights mechanism, and its substitution is no longer pushed.

In the current government, human rights defenders are placed in several important positions, such as the human rights focal point in the Ministry of Defense or ambassadors. This context

would allow the IACHR to establish privileged communication channels with the government and draw media attention to human rights issues during official visits, such as to the President and the Congress when presenting reports or recommendations.

Besides, the attitudinal change of the new government towards the IACHR should allow for smoother cooperation on cases, petitions, and measures and the end of systematically delaying the IACHR’s work.

At the same time, in a context of increasing violence, for example, against journalists, the need emerges to strengthen the capacities of Civil Society Organizations and facilitate their access to the IACHR.

One opportunity for Civil Society Organizations’ engagement is the annual fora of the Inter-American system on human rights.

#### Risks

The exit of countries from the Inter-American system is a real threat, as the IACHR is the lifeline for so many people, including countries like Nicaragua and Venezuela. Any interruption of dialogue affects human rights in the Americas, and some stakeholders saw the human rights work of the IACHR affected by the OAS’s political organs.

To mitigate the risk of being perceived as being “too detached” from civil society, the IACHR could offer more audiences and facilitate the presence of victims of human rights violations, for example, through hybrid audiences where in-person participation is possible combined with remote involvement for persons or organizations without the means to travel.

Finally, the IACHR needs to manage expectations carefully. IACHR’s monitoring did not match the hopes raised in the process of the visit during the 2021 social unrest and the subsequent report with appreciated recommendations. Many Civil Society Organizations perceived the latter as reluctant and half-heartedly.

## Annex 3: Field visit summary - Ecuador

“The Commission must work with the State. The State violates human rights, but it is the only one to guarantee those rights. We [State actors] long for cooperation, not confrontation.”

Source: IACHR State stakeholder, Ecuador

The IACHR is very important for Ecuador. The Inter-American System is crucial for defending human rights with significant results for CSO and citizens over the past years, especially when governments are critical towards attaining human rights.



Source: <http://www.theworldmap.net/country/ecuador/>

The Commission protected journalists during the time of a previous president (in power till 2017), defended Liberty of Expression, and denounced attacks on the press. This approach served as a signal for any government in the future that the Inter-American System protects Freedom of Expression in the country.

When the national legal system does not provide access to defend human rights, access to international bodies such as the IACHR is crucial.

### (B) Coherence:

IACHR and the United Nations system (OHCHR, UNESCO) have different functions and are complementary. For CSOs, IACHR is closer to the country than OHCHR.

The box below showcases the seamless coherent approach of the US Diplomatic Representations and the USOAS in the case of Ecuador, an example of perusing the common goal of the US Department of State to safeguard human rights in the Americas<sup>72,73</sup>.

#### **US action to defend human rights – USOAS-funded efforts hand-in-hand with the US Diplomatic Representation in Ecuador**

The U.S. ambassador in Ecuador publicly denounced in December 2021 the involvement of nineteen high-ranking police officers with the drug traffickers, describing them as “narcogenerales” and revoking their visas to the U.S.<sup>1</sup>. In January 2022, the U.S. ambassador continued playing a vital role in defending human rights by publicly revoking visas to Ecuadorian judges and other personnel in the legal and justice sector due to alleged corruption.

Those public acts of defending democracy and human rights significantly complement and support the work of the IACHR at the political and administrative level, according to human rights defenders in both CSOs and on the State side.

<sup>72</sup> <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2021/12/16/ecuador-narcogenerales-cupula-policial-orix/>

<sup>73</sup> <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2022/01/10/estados-unidos-revoca-visas-ecuador-orix/>

## **(C) Effectiveness**

### **Achievement of project objectives**

***To contribute to the improvement of the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere in accordance with the highest international standards.***

Over the past five years, stakeholders noted a vicinity to the OAS and continued observance of human rights through the Commission. While actions and mechanisms are increasingly in place to observe and defend human rights in Ecuador, this seems less evident. Over the past five years, government commitment to human rights has significantly increased, a change from a situation where the government systematically challenged human rights for ten years (till 2017). Today, the country faces a situation where organized crime and individual State representatives abuse human rights.

"Today, we see a severe deterioration of human rights in Ecuador despite so many efforts. But what would have happened without the Commission? That would have been catastrophic. The prize for human rights offenses is high thanks to the IACHR. This is so important, through intangible".

"State organs and individual State representatives need to rethink when violating human rights. Though, this does not affect the significantly increasing actions of organized crime in the country."

Sources: IACHR stakeholder, Ecuador

***Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the IACHR of promoting, defending, and protecting Human Rights in your country***

Stakeholders witnessed high visibility of the IACHR in Ecuador, where it is well positioned. Opportunities seem to emerge for the Commission to go beyond individual petitions and promotion the States' role as a human rights stakeholder, a duty bearer, and what this role means, as well as engaging with CSOs and giving them the required tools to select and present well-founded cases.

Some stakeholders noted that the calendar for audiences is reduced now, which limits CSOs' access to the IACHR. The hybrid modality for audiences increases access, reducing costs for CSOs and allowing poorer and geographically peripheral CSOs to participate.

***Increase number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage***

Practically all interviewees referred to the case of three hijacked journalists from *El Comercio* newspaper in March/April 2018 at the Ecuadorian/Colombian border. It took the IACHR only three weeks to issue precautionary measures, which was considered a very swift action. However, the governments of Ecuador and Colombia closed the measures in late 2019 after the murder of the journalist, even though the issue of transparency of documentation was not fulfilled and, to date, remains unfulfilled.

The Commission's real-time work in Ecuador following the high jacking and killing of the three journalists led to a very timely report by an independent special monitoring committee, paid for by the State. However, stakeholders close to the case revealed that the report's conclusions and recommendations appeared too categoric and affirmative, which caused unease among civil servants fearful of media attention and legal consequences and closed the doors for a dialogue with the State. The suspicions of civil society members close to the case concerning the reasons for not declassifying documentation related to the killings were confirmed during the field visit.

The government did not accept any precautionary measures between 2007 and 2017. The new government was taken back by the large number of measures issued by the IACHR ever since.

***Improve the monitoring of the situation of human rights***

Stakeholders perceive that the Commission is overwhelmed due to the deteriorating human rights situation in the region, searching for more efficient internal mechanisms for monitoring, protecting, and promoting human rights.

***Improve the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR***

Stakeholders observed more systematic monitoring of IACHR recommendations, bearing in mind that those recommendations are not legally binding and depend on the State's commitment to its human rights obligations.

The case of the three hijacked journalists from *El Comercio* newspaper in March/April 2018 shows the limitations of IACHR monitoring.

***Freedom of Expression***

The IACHR undertook a joint mission with the United Nations to Ecuador in 2018 concerning Freedom of Expression with recommendations for the Communication Law, among other issues. Follow-up action remained unclear.

In 2019, the Commission visited the country amidst social protests and addressed Freedom of Expression, as over 150 journalists attached in 12 days during the protests. After the report was emitted, recommendations remained unimplemented. In June 2022, this situation repeated itself.

During the field visit, the evaluator witnessed subtle threats against journalists to limit Freedom of Expression, for example, in a recent court case against an investigative journalist following corruption allegations against a member of the political class.

"Compared to the time before 2017 we journalists don't suffer from that abysmal fear anymore."

Source: Ecuadorian journalist, January 2023

However, after the field visit, in February and March 2023, journalists were attacked more openly in the context of ambiguous government statements concerning Freedom of

Expression<sup>74</sup> and the threats to the lives of journalists by unidentified actors in Ecuador, as witnessed in late March 2023 when letter bombs were set to media outlets<sup>75</sup>.

The figure below shows the latest threats against journalists and Freedom of Expression in April 2023 when writing this report.

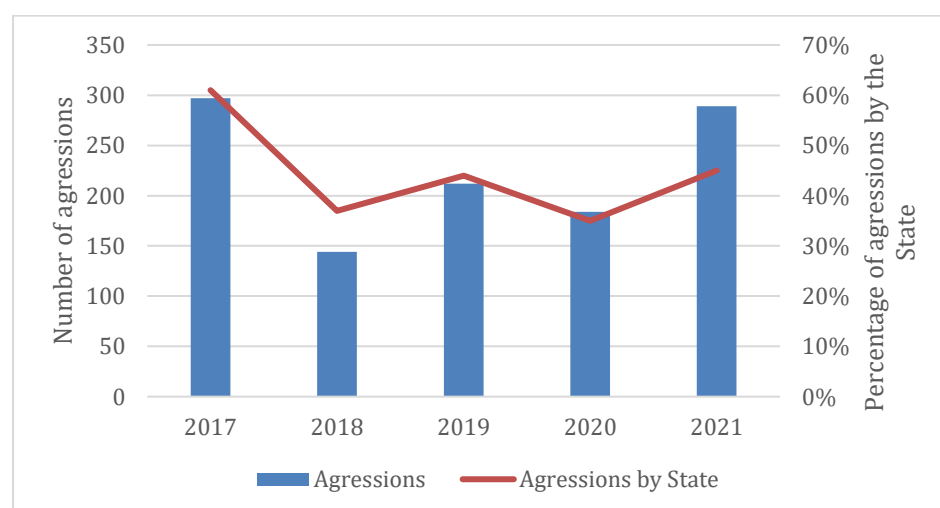
**Figure 25: Recent threats against Freedom of Expression in Ecuador – April 2023**



Source: <https://www.fundamedios.org.ec>

Figure 26 provides data on the number of aggression against journalists and the percentage of aggression by the State between 2017 and 2021. A sharp decline showed after the change of government in 2017. However, aggressions nearly reached 2017 levels in 2021.

**Figure 26: Data on aggression against journalists in Ecuador 2017-2021**



<sup>74</sup> In a televised address on 14 February, the current president referred to *La Posta*'s investigative reporters as "media terrorists"

<sup>75</sup> France24.com: Five Ecuador TV stations receive letter bombs, one explodes (March 21, 2023).

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230320-letter-bomb-explodes-at-ecuador-tv-station-other-media-get-envelopes>

**Source :**

**<https://www.planv.com.ec/historias/derechos-humanos/libertad-expresion-impunidad-agresiones-y-limitaciones-continuan-ecuador>**

**Major internal and external factors influencing project implementation**

**Internal**

- IACHR Strategic Plan 2017-2022: initially, some stakeholders did not see its advantages, but it resulted in better analysis, a better quality of individual cases, less cases backlog, quicker response, and more staff and financial resources in the Commission.

**External**

- Political cooperation, distancing itself from previous politics
- State hunt of journalists has ceased, but LoE is still under threat
- Helps State Prosecutor to work constructively with CIDH
- But the new government is closely related to the previous one with the same ideology, and people often still in positions that might have been involved in the implementation of previous, less human rights conform policies and actions

**Unforeseeable/not planned results**

- After ten years of negation of precautionary measures, the new government was surprised that IACHR issued so many precautionary measures for a specific group of petitioners, which gave an impression of following political objectives and beyond protection issues
- Political parties certainly politicized the precautionary measures
- The pandemic disabled IACHR's in situ presence, which affected its reach in the country, where there is still a need for capacity building, e.g. of judges on the protection of journalists
- Cooperation between the Inter-American human rights system and the universal one suffered downturns. The collaboration lacks institutionalization, with the current Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of OHCHR being very removed from the region. When joint declarations got lost, stakeholders noted less leverage of the international human rights bodies in Ecuador.

**(D) Sustainability**

In 2017, Ecuador emerged from ten years of opposing the work of the IACHR to varying degrees, up to the point of openly attacking the Commission and trying to reduce its scope and mandate in coordination with like-minded governments across the hemisphere. It is the deep belief of stakeholders interviewed that those dark days are in the past.

The Commission left strengthened that process of bitter confrontation, which marked stakeholders in Ecuador and created a sense of community among the human rights defenders in the country. The following governments even provided financial resources for the Commission's work in Ecuador, for example, for the Commission investigating the death of three Ecuadorian journalists at the northern border in Colombia.



State representatives underscored the goodwill of the new government to cooperate with the IACHR and their commitment to cherish the human rights agreements signed by the State. At the same time, demand emerges for a more robust engagement of the Commission with State actors, for example, for capacity building or awareness raising on topics such as the IACHR’s friendly settlements mechanisms. State actors desired to be empowered to play a more preventive role in cooperation with Non-State actors rather than having to deal with human rights violations only.

The quotes below reflect some of the stakeholders’ views on the sustainability of the IACHR’s work in Ecuador between 2017 and 2023.

“We have come out of 10 years of darkness. Now we see light again and the Commission did not let us down in our unequal struggle for human rights in our beloved country. We are profoundly grateful to the Commission and its sustained support in upholding human rights”.

“The OAS and IACHR were our saviours. Their long-term support to democracy and rights saved our country.”

“Yes, the new governments changed direction and now publicly support the IACHR. But what has changed in practice? Human rights don’t help to gain votes in elections. In fact, they only create problems for a government. Human rights issues affect the image of States and often the State has to admit that it had failed. Which government would be mature enough to recognize systemic failures? Take the violations of female staff in the national Police Corps. Those cases remain untouched due to the fear that the police would turn against the government. The same is true in the case of human rights violations in the armed forces.”

**Sources: IACHR stakeholders, Ecuador**

## Annex 4: Terms of reference

**To be inserted**

## Annex 5: Documents reviewed

The evaluator reviewed eighteen RPPIs and the corresponding RPPI verification reports. Besides, the evaluator assessed project deliverables such as thematic reports and cases related to Precautionary Measures, friendly settlements, and merit reports. Other documentation used for this final evaluation comprise the following:

Aceves, W.J./California Western School of Law (2018): Cost-Benefit Analysis and Human Rights. In: 95 St. John's Law Review 431 (2018)

Cost-benefit analysis and large-scale infrastructure projects: state of the art and challenges. In: Environment and Planning B Planning and Design 34(4):598-610

Engelhardt, A., 2021: External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021.",

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OAS/IACHR, 2020 : Resolution 1/2020, "Pandemic and human rights in the Americas"

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OHCHR, 2022: UN Human Rights Report,

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OHCHR and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (2018): The Other Infrastructure Gap: Sustainability. Human Rights and Environmental Perspectives.

Sabatini, C (Ed.), 2023: Reclaiming Human Rights in a Changing World Order. Brookings Institute Press, Washington DC and Chatham House, London.

Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, 2021: Terms of Reference. External Formative Evaluation of the Program: "Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights during 2018-2021".

Siles, I., Guevara, E., Tristán-Jiménez, L., & Carazo, C. (2023). Populism, Religion, and Social Media in Central America. The

International Journal of Press/Politics, 28(1), 138–159.  
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### ***Business and Human rights***

<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/access-now-raises-concern-about-the-sale-of-surveillance-technologies-in-latam-calls-more-than-20-companies-to-respond-on-human-rights-inc-co-responses>

### ***Chatham House***

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/10/reclaiming-human-rights-changing-world-order/11-polishing-crown-jewel-western-hemisphere>

### ***CNN en español***

<https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2021/12/16/ecuador-narcogenerales-cupula-policia-orix/>  
<https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2022/01/10/estados-unidos-revoca-visas-ecuador-orix/>

### ***Fundación para la libertad de la prensa - FLIP***

<https://www.flip.org.co/index.php/es/atencion-a-periodistas/mapa-de-agresiones>

### ***France 24.com***

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20230320-letter-bomb-explodes-at-ecuador-tv-station-other-media-get-envelopes>

### ***Free assembly and association. net***

<https://freeassemblyandassociation.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Joint-Action-for-FoAA-Framework.pdf>

### ***Fundamedios***

<https://www.fundamedios.org.ec>

### ***OAS/IACHR***

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### ***OHCHR***

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26188&LangID=E>

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**United Kingdom Independent Commission for Aid Impact**

<http://ica.i.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/ICAI-Review-UK-aids-contribution-to-tackling-tax-avoidance-and-evasion.pdf>

**Voice of America**

<https://www.vozdeamerica.com/a/colombia-reporta-2022-cifra-record-asesinatos-lideres-sociales-y-defensores-ddhh/6866815.html>

**World Bank**

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=AR>

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=HN>

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.TOTL.IN?locations=CO>

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=SV>

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.65UP.TO?locations=AR>

**World Health Organization**

<https://www.paho.org/adolescent-health-report-2018/images/profiles/Argentina-PAHO%20Adolescents%20and%20Youth%20Health%20Country%20Profile%20V5.0.pdf>

**Prison studies.com**

<https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/brazil>

<https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/argentina>

**The global economy.com**

[https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Argentina/Population\\_size/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Argentina/Population_size/)

## Annex 6: Stakeholders interviewed

This evaluation report does not contain a list of stakeholders interviewed, as agreed with DPMO.

A total of 138 stakeholders participated in the evaluation, including 64 stakeholders who did so anonymously in the on-line surveys. Due to the small number of stakeholders in some countries, sharing the names of interviewees would allow to trace back respondents by country. Hence the decision was taken not to publish the list of stakeholders interviewed. This approach is in line with United Nation Evaluation Group’s evaluation ethics concerning the anonymity of evaluation stakeholders.

## Annex 7: Evaluation matrix

	Evaluation questions	Proposed evaluation tools	Data source
Relevance			
	<p>Is the projects' implicit Theory of Change valid?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are the cause-effect relationships valid</li> <li>○ Did the main assumptions hold?</li> </ul>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interview with project team</p>	<p>Project profile, mid-term evaluation, and other documents; commented by expert opinion</p>
Efficiency			
	Were the program indicators S.M.A.R.T.?	Document review	<p>Project profile, mid-term evaluation, monitoring reports, and other documents; project team, project stakeholders, commented by expert opinion</p>
	Did the program team apply results-based management principles from inception to conclusion? Which ones and how?	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with project team</p>	
	Was the monitoring mechanism used as an efficient and effective tool to follow up on the progress of the projects' actions and compliance with the agreement?	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with project team</p>	
	Were the recommendations issued on the formative external evaluation/ midterm evaluation report implemented? If not, why not?	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews with project team</p>	
	What was the cost-benefit of the IACHR projects since their inception?	<p>Review of available data</p> <p>Follow-up telephone interviews with IACHR clients, field visits</p>	

	Evaluation questions	Proposed evaluation tools	Data source
Effectiveness			
	To what extent were projects' outputs and outcomes achieved? What were the specific results for women and other marginalized groups?	Document review, Online survey, telephone interviews, field visit	Monitoring reports; project team: clients; logframe, RPPI, commented by expert opinion
	What major internal and external factors influenced the projects' implementation?		
	Were there any unforeseeable/not planned results? If affirmative, why?		
Coherence			
	To what extent were the IACHR projects complementing other human rights initiatives?	Document review, Online survey, telephone interviews, field visit	Project team, project clients, commented by expert opinion
Sustainability			
	The extent to which projects' achievements are sustainable institutionally and financially: is the political buy-in and future funding of the IACHR program ensured?	Telephone interviews, field visit	Project team and project stakeholders commented with expert opinion



## Annex 8: Evaluation questionnaire

Name	Sex	Position	Organization	Country	Date

### (A) Relevance

1. To what extent are the OAS' assumptions valid for an effective IACHR? *(Project team only, as the mid-term evaluation covered stakeholder views)*

	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	No answer
The States receive with interest and respect the recommendations of the IACHR and express their will or take actions to comply with the recommendations of the IACHR to improve respect for human rights in the region.						
Comments:						
The states accept and support the measures for reducing the procedural backlog						
Comments:						
The political context in OAS members States remains stable and facilitates the development of IACHR activities						
Comments:						
The States have the capacity to implement the recommendations of the IACHR.						
Comments:						
The States - due to the emergence of COVID-19 - have the capacity and willingness to respond to requests for information, assist virtual meetings, and provide necessary information to follow up on IACHR recommendations.						
Comments:						
The States and Members of civil society have access to technological/virtual tools to attend virtual meetings during the COVID-19 emergency.						
Comments:						
OAS/IACHR remains an efficient multilateral partner in the Americas						
OAS/IACHR convening power remains high						
Comments:						
Perception of the OAS/IACHR as a neutral body remains high						
Comments:						

### (B) Coherence

2. To what extent are the IACHR projects complementing other human rights initiatives from the OAS and other organizations?

Summary: complementarity with other human rights initiatives of the OAS or other organizations (the national, and the multilateral system)	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	No answer

*Please explain your rating:*

### (C) Effectiveness: the achievement of project results

3. To what extent has the IACHR achieved its objectives?

Achievement of planned objectives	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	No answer
To contribute to the improvement of the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere in accordance with the highest international standards.						
Comments. <i>How have results been achieved?</i>						
Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of promoting, defending, and protecting Human Rights in the Americas						
Comments. <i>How have results been achieved?</i>						
Increase the number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage						
Comments. <i>How have results been achieved?</i>						
Improve the monitoring of the situation of human rights in the region						
Comments. <i>How have results been achieved?</i>						
Improve the monitoring of the implementation of the						

recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR						
Comments. <i>How have results been achieved?</i>						
Implement Action Plan of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression						
Comments. <i>How have results been achieved?</i>						
Overall, how satisfied are you with the results achieved to date?						
Comments:						

5. What major internal and external factors have influenced the project's implementation to date? How and why?

6. Were there any unforeseeable/not planned results or outcomes? Explain? How and why?

7. To what extent has the IACHR (2018 to 2023) achieved results in addressing exclusion?

Summary: exclusion reduction	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	No answer
Women						
Comments:						
Youth						
Comments:						
Indigenous populations						
Comments:						
Other ethnic minorities						
Comments:						
LGBTIQ+						
Comments:						
Others						

**(D) Sustainability: are results lasting?**

8. To what extent is the political buy-in of the IACHR ensured in beneficiary countries?

9. To what extent is the future funding of the IACHR ensured in beneficiary countries?

Summary: sustainability	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	No answer
Political buy-in to the IACHR ensured						
Future funding of the IACHR ensured						

10. To summarize: what are the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the IACHR?

## Annex 9: Evaluation survey

Name	Gender	Position	Organization	Country	Date

### (A) Relevance and coherence

1. To what extent are the IACHR activities implemented during 2018-2023 complementing other human rights initiatives in your country?

	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	No answer
Complementarity with other human rights initiatives of the OAS, the national, and the multilateral system						
Importance of having the IACHR for the observance and defense of human rights in your country						

Please explain:

### (B) Effectiveness: the achievement of project results

2. To what extent has the IACHR achieved its objectives?

Achievement of planned objectives in your country	Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low	No answer
To contribute to the improvement of the observance and defense of human rights in the hemisphere in accordance with the highest international standards.						
Increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of promoting, defending, and protecting Human Rights in the Americas						
Increase the number of petitions and requests evaluated by IACHR in each stage						
Improve the monitoring of the situation of human rights in the						
Improve the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and decisions issued by the IACHR						
Implement Action Plan of the Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression						
Overall, how satisfied are you with the results achieved to date?						

Please explain:

3. What major internal and external factors influenced the projects' implementation?

4. Were there any unforeseeable/not planned results or outcomes?

5. To what extent has the IACHR (2018 to 2023) achieved results in addressing exclusion?

<b>Summary: exclusion reduction</b>	<b>Very high</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Very low</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Women						
Youth						
Indigenous populations						
Other ethnic minorities						
LGBTIQ+						
Others						

Please explain how those results were achieved:

**(C) Sustainability: are results lasting?**

6. To what extent is the following ensured in your country?

<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Very high</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Very low</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Political buy-in to the IACHR ensured						
Future funding of the IACHR ensured						

7. To summarize: what are the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the IACHR?

<sup>i</sup> IACHR comment: The IACHR cannot include assumption in monitoring progress report. To do so, the IACHR requires for the DPMO to return the project document through the DPMO-PMS. This occurs when there are project modification and/or addition of funds, which it did not occur after the mid-term evaluation. Nonetheless, to counteract this, and based on the mid-term evaluation, the IACHR incorporated three new assumptions in CDH2101:

- The IACHR convening power remains high
- The IACHR remains an efficient multilateral partner in the Americas
- Perception of the IACHR as a neutral body remains high
- Member States welcome the project goals and express interest in promoting human rights and express willingness to comply with the standards and the recommendations
- The States receive with interest and respect the recommendations of the IACHR and express their will or take actions to comply with the recommendations of the IACHR to improve respect for human rights in the region.

<sup>ii</sup> IACHR/RELE comment: RELE created a new indicator in the new US funded project pertaining the endorsement by CSO, academia and media of the documents published by RELE. The indicator is: The Number of organizations, academia, and media outlet who cite or refer to communication FoE campaigns at the end of the project.

Satisfaction surveys are not useful to the type of work the IACHR and RELE does related to the advancement of standards and draft of reports. However, in line with the recommendation of making output indicators more result-focused, IACHR did add the aforementioned indicator, and monitored it for the Report on Women Journalists and

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Newsrooms. The Commission is open to continuing to work in a better indicator but believe that we can test the usability of reports and standards through the monitoring of how it is cited and referenced.

iii IACHR and RELE comment: the IACHR implemented some of the suggestions, where/when possible, in CDH2101 and in the indicators of its Strategic Plan. Also, it is important to account for the existent limitation of the PMS-DPMO system is not possible to establish annual milestones perse. Also, indicator 2.2 pertains to involving the Caribbean in IACHR activities, which includes technical cooperation, high-level meetings, meetings in the framework of the Period of Session and/or meetings the permanent missions. As such, it is not possible to implement satisfaction surveys at that level. Pertaining to 3.4, by the time of the mid-term evaluation, the IACHR has already fulfilled that indicator as stipulated in the SOW.

Overall, IACHR reiterates that satisfaction surveys are not useful to the type of work the IACHR and RELE does related to the advancement of standards and draft of reports. Nonetheless, the Commission is open to continuing to work in a better indicator but believe that we can test the usability of reports and standards through the monitoring of how it is cited and referenced.