



Organization of
American States

“More Elections Observed, Better Democracies”



2014

Year in Review
Department of Electoral Cooperation
and Observation (DECO) at the
Secretariat for Political Affairs (SAP)



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Canada



Organization of American States

**“More Elections Observed,
Better Democracies”**

Year in Review
**Department of Electoral Cooperation and
Observation (DECO) at the Secretariat for
Political Affairs (SAP)**

2014

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OAS Secretary General, José Miguel Insulza, with a group of students during an OAS/EOM.

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	Descriptive graphic		Electoral Observation/Oversight Mission
	Descriptive table		Professionalization of OAS/EOMs
	Data		Recommendations of OAS/EOMs
	Donors		Website
	Chapter summary		Calendar



Message from the Secretary General

Since the first Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) sent to Costa Rica in 1962, the Organization of American States has observed and accompanied more than 200 electoral processes in the hemisphere. These missions have evolved, in their content as well as their form, hand in hand with the political processes in the region. Those ad hoc and limited-scope missions that were deployed some 50 years ago have been transformed into standardized and institutionalized tools that have a further impact than just on the day of elections.

Since I assumed my post as the Secretary General in 2005, we have observed close to 100 elections in the region, deploying close to 6,000 international election observers. In 2006, the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) at the Secretariat for Political Affairs began a process to professionalize Electoral Observation Missions. The innovative methodologies implemented in these missions have become a model and guide for both national electoral observation groups and other international bodies.

The work carried out by OAS/DECO in our countries does not end when votes are counted. We understand that democracy is not purely elections, but it is first and foremost elections. Electoral processes are the genesis of democracy. By deploying Electoral Observation Missions, the OAS looks to provide a solid base and consolidate the democratic form of government. Each OAS/EOM presents a report with observations and recommendations directed at strengthening electoral processes. On many occasions, these recommendations translate themselves into technical cooperation projects.

Although the governments and people of the region have been able to strengthen their democracies over the last ten years, there is still work to be done to guarantee more equal conditions when it comes to every citizen's right to elect and be elected. These challenges related to universal political participation and the integrity of electoral processes, together with security issues faced by countries in our region, make it necessary for the Organization to continue its support for electoral authorities, employing its solid experience in the area of elections.

José Miguel Insulza
General Secretary

A photograph of two young women in a brightly lit indoor setting, possibly a school hallway. They are both smiling and looking at each other. They are holding up their identification cards, which are light blue with a photo and text. On the index finger of each woman, there is a purple ink smudge. The background is blurred, showing other people and architectural elements.

Prologue from the Secretary for Political Affairs

For over half a century, electoral observation has been one of the central activities carried out by the OAS. It is, without a doubt, one of the most visible contributions made by the Organization toward the consolidation of democracy in the Hemisphere.

Each new electoral cycle underscores the importance of this task. Nonetheless, there are challenges to maintaining the relevance of electoral observation in a constantly changing political context. If it is true that transparent electoral processes have become the only legitimate form of achieving political power in our Hemisphere, it is also true that the development of electoral institutions in the region has obscured the importance of observation modalities that were so crucial during democratic transitions and previous phases. Threats to the integrity of electoral processes in Latin America and the Caribbean have mutated, forcing us to re-evaluate the work that we carry out.

The year 2014, saturated with elections in the hemisphere, was not only an exceptionally intense period for the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation of the Secretariat for Political Affairs, but also an opportunity to introduce innovations to the electoral aspects of our work. As this document details, throughout 2014 we were able to systematically apply methodological instruments to monitor campaign financing and the access of women to political rights, and develop new tools on topics such as voting abroad, electoral justice and security, among others. In this way, we look to cover a larger spectrum of topics that encompass quality and equity in electoral competition, as opposed to focusing on the prevention of election day fraud.

A renewed electoral observation agenda has furthered our technical cooperation efforts with electoral authorities and strengthened the collaboration between the Department and other public and private actors that work within the electoral sector. Particular importance is given to the dissemination of the new electoral ISO norm – in the approval of which DECO played a decisive role– and to the institutionalization of the accreditation authority within the OAS, which will enable third parties to apply the norm. This will be an extraordinarily important instrument to promote modernization within electoral institutions in the hemisphere and elsewhere.

After 2014, the prospects of OAS electoral work look promising. The ability to tap into this potential will depend, as always, on the financial support from member states and permanent observers of the Organization. None of the achievements reached in 2014 would have been possible without their generosity, which we recognize today. In return for this support, we offer highly professional work, a motivated team and the conviction that our labor makes a contribution – both specific and visible – to the realization of the democratic promise to the peoples of the Americas.

Kevin Casas-Zamora
Secretary for Political Affairs



1 Introduction

This document summarizes the work that we have carried out as part of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) at the Secretariat for Political Affairs of the OAS General Secretariat throughout 2014. It details missions and activities that we have implemented, including a general financial report. It also presents guidelines and objectives for 2015.

In 2014, OAS/DECO deployed 15 Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) and accompanying delegations in 11 countries in the region. We sent 509 experts and international observers from 36 countries and obtained financial support from 18 donor countries. For the first time, these missions incorporated experts to observe subjects such as: participation of indigenous and afro-descendant groups, electoral security and crimes, dispute resolution mechanisms, and voting for citizens residing abroad. Today's OAS/EOMs generate technical recommendations on key aspects of electoral processes, which are in turn in line with the region's needs and trends, lending the work a comparative advantage.

Even though these are the most visible tools, Electoral Observation Missions represent only one component of the DECO work cycle. The first piece of this cycle is embodied by the activities that strengthen capacity for both the Department and the electoral bodies in the region; the second piece are electoral missions and accompaniment; and the third involves implementing these recommendations through technical cooperation. Our Department looks to the use of novel tools and techniques in order to confront the challenges of regional electoral authorities in an integral manner.

Among the innovations consolidated in 2014, one that stands out is the new ISO/TS 17582:2014 technical specification, better known as Electoral ISO, published in February 2014. In the same vein, the International Electoral Accreditation Body (IEAB) was created, which will operate within OAS/DECO to establish a fundamental control of the electoral ISO certification process.

In 2015, we will work on developing and publishing new tools that will allow us to standardize observations and recommendations on the subjects that we have incorporated within OAS/EOMs in 2014. At the same time, we will look to implement recurrent recommendations made by Electoral Observation Missions, focusing on those that are the most viable and have the highest potential regional impact. Lastly, we will focus our efforts on establishing the work of the electoral accreditation body.

Gerardo de Icaza
Director, DECO



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About DECO

Image: Caitlin Kelly



The Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) is part of the Secretariat for Political Affairs (SPA), which in turn makes part of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS).

DECO's Mission

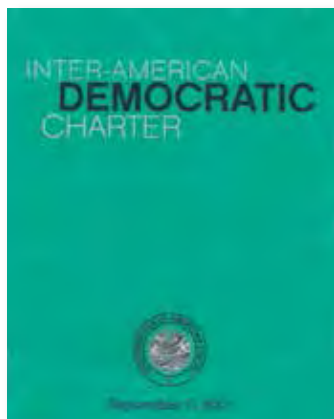
To strengthen democracy through professional electoral observation missions and by following up on the implementation of their recommendations, through technical cooperation with OAS Member States.

Strategic Objectives

DECO, together and in coordination with other OAS areas, contributes to strengthening democracy and consolidating the rule of law, ensuring principles ad-

opted in the OAS Charter and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, by working on:

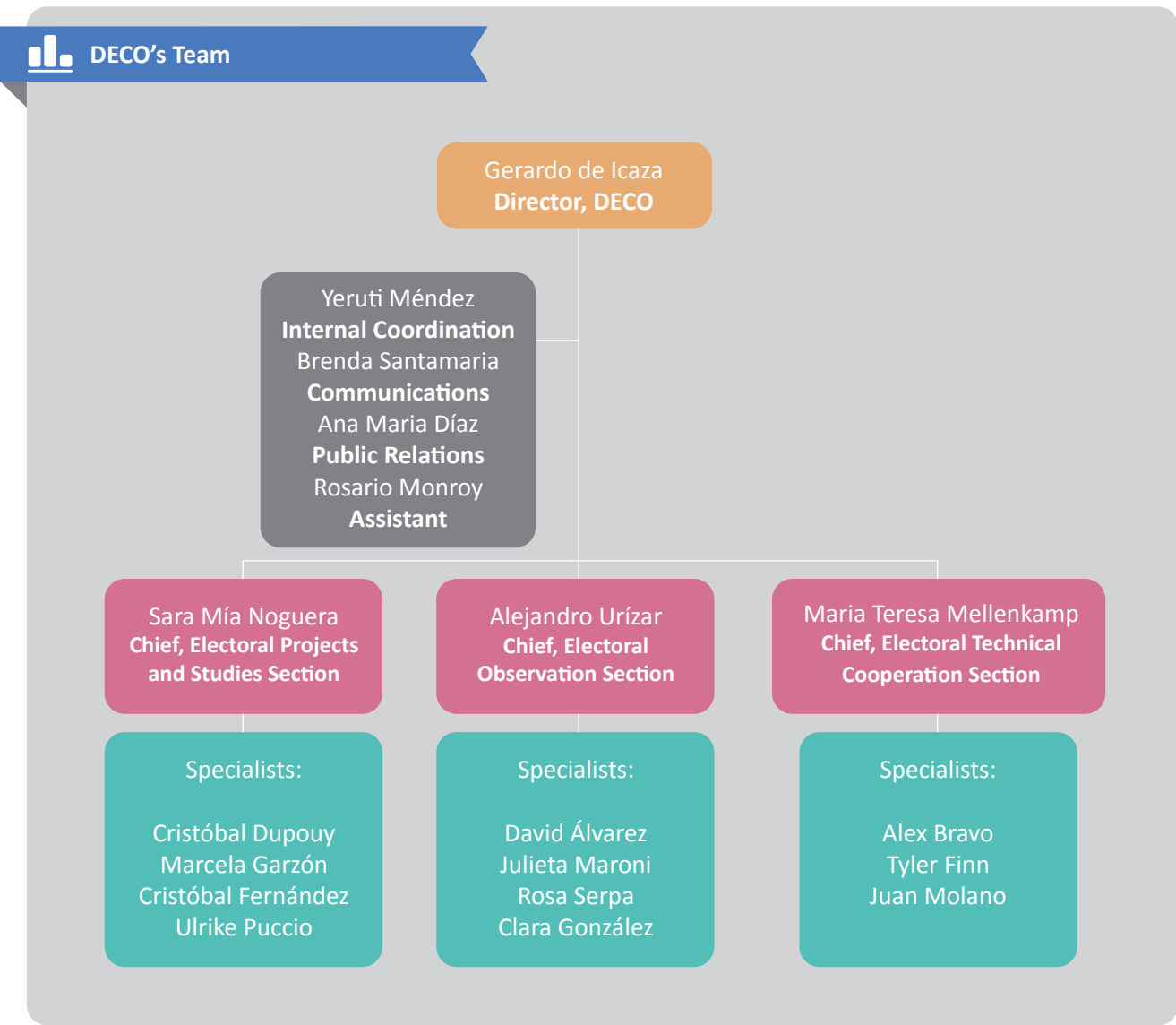
- a) Improving public management through promoting best practices, knowledge exchange and horizontal cooperation between Member States and by promoting equal citizen participation in democracy management.
- b) Consolidating electoral processes through the modernization and strengthening electoral of institutions in the Hemisphere, respecting the principles of non-intervention and sovereignty.
- c) Fostering a democratic culture and respect for the rule of law and principles of justice.



DECO's Principles

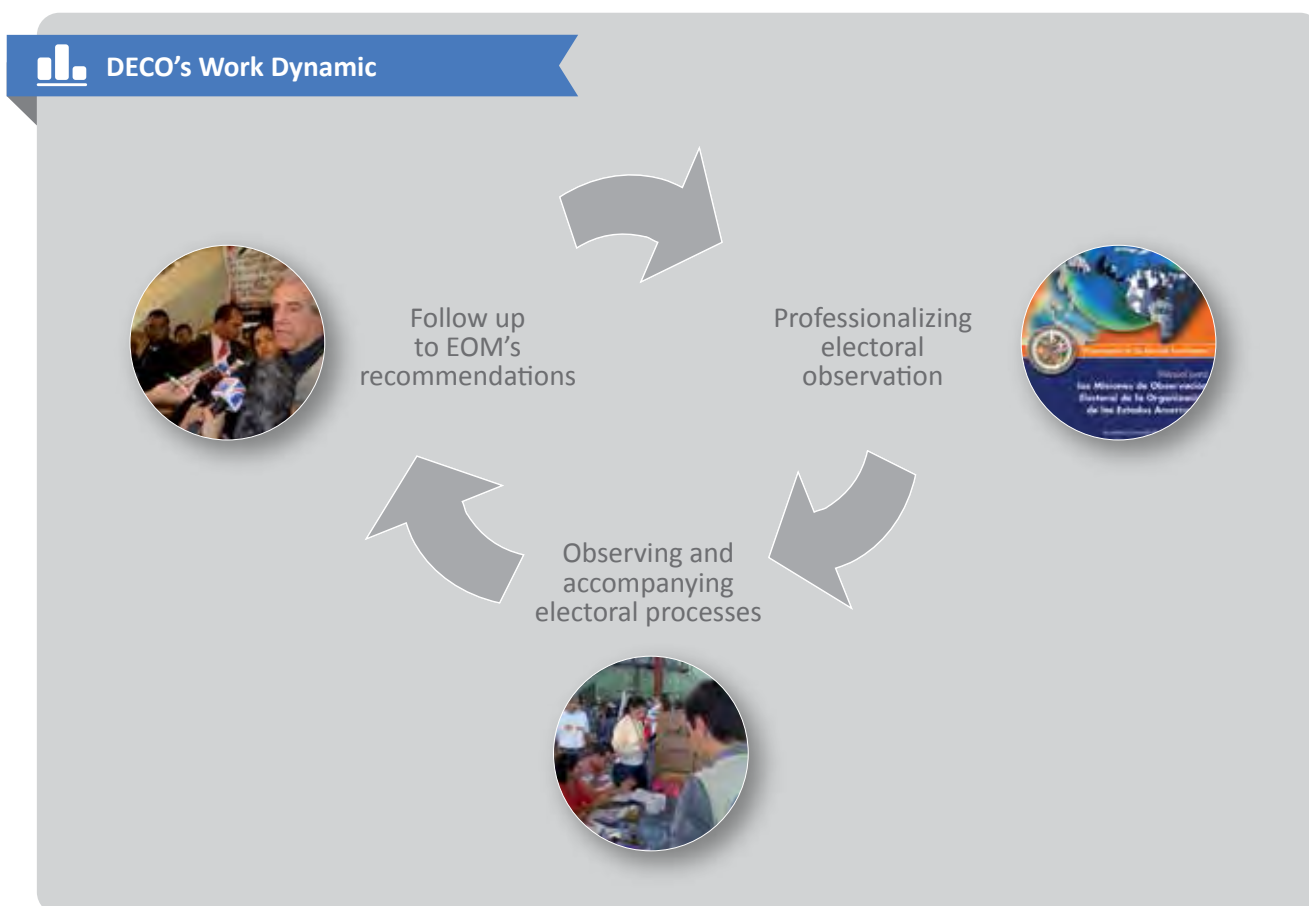
The guiding principles for DECO's work are established in the OAS Inter-American Democratic Charter (approved by the General Assembly in 2001):


- “Promote and consolidate representative democracy with respect for the principle of no intervention”.
- “The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it.” Art. 1.



DECO's Work Dynamic

DECO's work is organized as a cycle, which begins with professionalizing the capacity to observe elections, continues with electoral observation missions and accompaniment, and is finalized by implementing recommendations through technical cooperation. This review on DECO's work is organized based on this cycle.





3 Professionalizing Electoral Observation

“One of the most important contributions for Latin American democracy is what Electoral Observation, organized and conducted by the OAS, brings to the table. With a proven methodology and teams of competent professionals, DECO checks the pulse of every electoral process. Reports that are presented to local actors and the Permanent Council constitute an important account of findings, but more importantly, contain reflections and suggestions for new electoral processes. Today, we can say with conviction that the OAS contributes to the common goal of achieving quality democracies.”

Lourdes Flores Nano, Chief of Mission in Panama (2014) and El Salvador (2012)

The professionalization of electoral observation covers all of the activities and projects focused on strengthening the institutional capacity of the OAS on the subject, and also includes studies, tools and meetings that are aimed towards electoral bodies, thus supporting efforts to strengthen their capacity. The more we consolidate the capacity of OAS/DECO, as well as that of electoral bodies, the better are the conditions to implement professional observation exercises free, fair, equal and transparent electoral processes.



Chapter Summary in Numbers

▶ Observation methodologies and pilots	▶ One methodology developed ▶ Three new topics observed in the OAS/EOMs through 12 pilot exercises
▶ Online course for observers	▶ 800 candidates ▶ 100 students selected ▶ 73 persons certified in the OAS observation methodology
▶ Conferences and meetings with electoral bodies	▶ Electoral Conference with participation from 28 electoral officials ▶ Meeting with participation from 38 electoral officials ▶ Meeting of the working group on American Electoral Jurisprudence
▶ Studies and information tools	▶ Study on political participation ▶ Toolkit on political financing with a gender perspective ▶ OAS/EOM database ▶ Database on electoral jurisprudence
▶ Exchanges and agreements	▶ 13 exchanges with electoral organizations ▶ 2 agreements signed



Methodology to observe participation of indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants in electoral processes

As part of the process to professionalize OAS/EOMs, DECO has developed the following methodologies to observe aspects that affect the quality of an electoral process:

- ▶ Methodology to observe access to media in elections (2011)
- ▶ Observing political-electoral financing systems: a manual for the OAS/EOMs (2012)
- ▶ A manual to incorporate gender perspective within the OAS/EOMs (2013)

In 2014, a methodology on the participation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants was designed. The DECO will also be developing new methodologies in 2015.

This objective of the methodology was to create a tool to be used in OAS/EOMs to identify obstacles faced by indigenous and afro-descendant groups in the exercise their political rights, and to develop recommendations that promote the further inclusion and participation of these groups in electoral processes.



What was achieved?

- ▶ For the first time, participatory conditions in electoral processes for indigenous and afro-descendant groups were observed and visualized, through the public announcements of OAS/EOMs in Panama, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.
- ▶ OAS/EOMs reports included recommendations to promote the exercise of political rights by indigenous peoples and afro-descendants within electoral processes.
- ▶ OAS/DECO now has a rigorous and standardized methodology to observe the political participation of indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in future OAS/EOMs. This methodology will be published during the first trimester of 2015.



Pilots to observe new topics within the OAS/EOMs

- ▶ The goal of these pilots was to expand the field of observation covered by OAS/EOMs to include topics that affect the quality of an electoral process. The pilots are the first phase within a process that will result in the development of standardized methodologies. The topics observed were voting from abroad, electoral justice and the resolution of electoral disputes, and security in electoral processes



Pilots to observe new topics during OAS/EOMs 2014

Country	Election	Topics observed		
		Voting abroad	Electoral justice	Security
▶ Colombia	▶ Presidential elections	✓	✓	✓
▶ Panama	▶ Presidential and legislative elections	✓	✓	✓
▶ Antigua and Barbuda	▶ General elections		✓	
▶ Peru	▶ Regional and municipal elections		✓	✓
▶ Bolivia	▶ General elections	✓	✓	✓



What was achieved?

- ▶ Determination of topics and development of standardized guidelines for their observation.
- ▶ OAS/EOM reports included recommendations on improving norms and practices regarding voting from abroad, electoral justice and security in electoral processes.
- ▶ Project profiles were developed for the creation of observation methodologies specific to each subject-area. The development process for these methodologies will begin in 2015.



Online course for electoral observers

- ▶ The objective of the online course was to improve the conceptual, technical and logistical knowledge of potential international observers, in order to strengthen the OAS Electoral Observation Missions. The course was organized together with the Online Campus of the Department for Effective Public Management of the OAS and took place during September and October.



▲ A screenshot of the online course for electoral observers

What was achieved?

- ▶ DECO received almost 800 applications, of which 100 participants from OAS member and observer states were selected.
- ▶ After five weeks of online instruction, 73 participants passed the final evaluation and achieved certification in the OAS electoral observation methodology.
- ▶ DECO looks forward to including some of the participants from this first edition of the online course, namely those with the highest passing scores, in the Electoral Observation Missions of 2015.



Ninth Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Management Bodies (RAE)

- ▶ The objective of the *RAE* is to promote the effective exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices on electoral administration in the region. *RAEs* also facilitate horizontal cooperation aimed at improving the conduct of elections in the Americas. During this edition, an exhibit on electoral literature and technology was organized in order to promote innovation on the subject among participants.



About the IX RAE

▶ What is <i>RAE</i> ?	A regular meeting of high-level authorities of electoral bodies.
▶ Date	November 24-25
▶ Location	Lima, Peru
▶ Co-organized with	<i>National Board of Elections of Peru (JNE)</i> and the National Office of Electoral Process (<i>ONPE</i>) of Peru
▶ Central topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality management of electoral processes • Government intervention in elections • Challenges to electoral institutionalization.
▶ Participants	38 high level authorities from 22 countries, representatives of 26 electoral bodies.



◀ Development IX RAE

What was achieved?

- ▶ Challenges and best practices within the topics covered by the meeting were analyzed.
- ▶ Relationships between DECO and electoral authorities were strengthened.
- ▶ Technology tools and publications were disseminated among electoral authorities.
- ▶ The next meeting of electoral authorities was coordinated to take place in Brazil, with support from the Supreme Electoral Tribunal.



Seventh Inter-American Electoral Conference

- ▶ The goal of these conferences is to support the professionalization of electoral officials in Latin America and the Caribbean, through fostering knowledge and the exchange of experiences and best practices.



About the VII Conference

▶ What is the Electoral Conference?	A space for professionalization and exchange of experiences between electoral body officials.
▶ Date	September 22-26
▶ Location	Mexico, DF
▶ With collaboration from	National Electoral Institute of México (INE), International IDEA, Trust of the Americas (TRUST), and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)
▶ Central topic	Accessibility and electoral participation
▶ Participants	28 electoral body officials from the hemisphere



▲ VII Inter-American Conference Closing Ceremony

What was achieved?

- ▶ 28 officials were trained and informed about the tools and mechanisms currently implemented in other countries, in order to foster better accessibility and participation in electoral processes.
- ▶ Through the review of challenges and needs presented at the event, a methodology for observing participation of persons with different abilities within electoral processes was developed.



Fifth Meeting of the Working Group on American Electoral Jurisprudence

- ▶ The goal of the meeting is to continue the exchange of experiences between those bodies responsible for carrying out justice on electoral matters, present a new publication and update the database with relevant cases and decrees. Additionally, initiatives in future work were discussed.




Information about the Meeting

▶ What is the working group?	A group of ten electoral bodies that carry out initiatives to systematize and disseminate electoral jurisprudence and develop related activities with the application of electoral justice.
▶ Date	November 11
▶ Location	Panama City, Panama
▶ With collaboration from	Electoral Tribunal of Panama (TE)
▶ Central topic	American Electoral Jurisprudence Yearbook
▶ Participants	Representatives from ten electoral bodies in the hemisphere



◀ *Public presentation of the Latin American Yearbook*

What was achieved?

- ▶ The sixth publication, entitled “The Latin American Yearbook on Electoral Jurisprudence”, was disseminated, a collection of cases of electoral jurisdictional bodies on the internal democracy of political parties.
- ▶ The Electoral Jurisprudence Portal, a database of judicial sentences, was updated with 300 new entries.
See:  www.jurisprudenciaelectoral.org
- ▶ The Group agreed to support DECO in the development of a methodology to observe justice and electoral dispute resolution within OAS/EOMs.



Study on Electoral Participation in Central America

- ▶ The goal of this study was to analyze factors that influence electoral participation in Central America and contribute, through specific recommendations, to the promotion of higher participation. The study included site visits to obtain data on electoral rolls in five countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama.



Key Recommendations of the Study (Summary)

- ▶ Improve registration in civil registries to update voter censuses. Four paths forward are suggested: 1. Establish a uniform and standardized procedure of registering deceased persons, 2. Transfer civil registry from municipalities to the national level, 3. Apply registry amnesties that allow any civil act to be registered without a penalty.
- ▶ Expand the right to vote outside of national borders and improve opportunities for voting abroad: 1. Make pre-requisites for registration abroad more flexible, 2. Allow voting to take place throughout the weekend, 3. Establish voting centers in locations with a high concentration of immigrants, among others.

What was achieved?

- ▶ The first study on electoral participation in the region has been conducted, which uses data from electoral registries to analyze factors that influence electoral participation.
- ▶ The study includes unpublished data on each one of the researched countries, which aids the study and understanding of electoral participation in the region.
- ▶ The recommendations provided in the study are a starting point to promote and increase levels and quality of electoral participation in the countries in the region.



Toolkit to strengthen control on political financing with a gender perspective

- ▶ The goal is to provide electoral bodies in the region with a tool to strengthen technical capacity in the control of electoral financing with a gender perspective

What was achieved?

- ▶ A new text is available, which provides tips on how to use public financing as a mechanism to foster political participation of women at different stages of the electoral cycle.
- ▶ The toolkit presents a starting point for legal reforms and public policy that are aimed at strengthening equality and transparency in political financing. The document will be presented and published in the first trimester of 2015.



OAS/EOM Database

- ▶ The database is a tool that collects and systematizes information on each of the OAS/EOMs that has been deployed in the Hemisphere. Historic information on EOMs carried out by the OAS since 1962 will be available through a web page, and detailed information will be available on the results of missions deployed from 2010 onwards. It will also include EOM recommendations and information on follow-up of their implementation.
- ▶ The goal of the database is to systematize information produced by EOMs and make this information accessible to OAS officials, who will manage future missions, as well as to the general public.



▲ Database: by country, by EOM

What was achieved?

- ▶ Information produced by the OAS/EOMs, which represents a valuable collection of data on the development of democracy in the region, is now available and organized in one source.
- ▶ The information will be available to the public during the first trimester of 2015, in order to contribute to the debate, research, and strengthening of democracy in the region.



Exchanges and Agreements

DECO participated in the...

- 1 Symposium “Women, Politics and Democracy”, organized by the University of Salamanca and the OAS (Salamanca, Spain, March 2014). Participated: UNDP, UN Women, and IDEA International, among others.

- 2 Preparatory Meeting of the organizations signatories of the Declaration of Principles for International Observation, organized by the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) in Mexico City, Mexico, in June 2014. Participated: representatives of the organizations signatories of the Declaration of Principles.

- 3 Forum on Electoral Integrity, organized by the National Electoral Institute (INE) and the Global Network of Domestic Elections Monitors (GNDEM). Mexico City, Mexico, June 2014. Participated: representatives from 25 countries in Africa, America, Asia and Europe, electoral bodies and national and international electoral observation organizations.

- 4 Annual meeting of the Electoral Integrity Project organized by McGill University and the University of Sydney (Montreal, Canada, June 2014). Participated: universities from across the world, civil society organizations and research centers, all related to the study and promotion of electoral integrity.

- 5 11th European Conference of Electoral Management Bodies: “Combating the Misuse of Administrative Resources During Electoral Processes”, organized by the Venice Commission, the Parliament of Finland, the Ministry of Justice and the National Audit Office of Finland (Helsinki, Finland, June 2014). Participated: electoral body representatives from 25 countries, 3 international organizations and other institutions from Europe and elsewhere.

- 6 Workshop on National Electoral Observation organized by the Office of the Ombudsman of the City of Buenos Aires and the OAS (Buenos Aires, Argentina, August 2014). Participated: 66 observers linked with the observation that the Office of the Ombudsman conducts for local elections.

- 7 Seminar on Elections and Technology organized by the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic and IDEA International (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, August 2014). Participated: representatives of electoral bodies in the Americas and international organizations.

- 8 The VI Ibero-American Conference on Electoral Justice organized by IDEA International and the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judicial Branch of Mexico (Cancun, Mexico, August 2014). Participated: representatives of tribunals and electoral bodies of the Americas, international organizations and academic institutions.



Presentation of the book “International Standards on Electoral Justice” during the VI Ibero-American Conference on Electoral Justice (Cancun, Mexico)

- 9 Visitors Program for the Elections in the Russian Federation, organized by the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation (Moscow, Russia, September 2014). Participated: representatives of electoral bodies from around the world and international organizations.

- 10 The meeting of the American Bar Association, International Law Section, in the panel on “The Right to Vote of Indigenous People of the Americas”, organized by IFES (Buenos Aires, Argentina, October 2014).

- 11 The 9th Meeting of signing organizations of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, organized by the National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) and the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) in Manila, Philippines, November 2014. Participated: representatives of the signing organization of the Declaration of Principles and electoral bodies from across the world.

- 12 International seminar “Electoral Organization in Federal Countries and Protection of Political Rights”, organized by the National Electoral Chamber of Argentina (Buenos Aires, Argentina, December 2014). Participated: representatives of electoral bodies and tribunals from the region, international organizations and civil society organizations.

- 13 Forum on Financing Democracy and Averting Policy Capture, organized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, IDEA International and the OAS (Paris, France, December 2014). Participated: authorities from institutions responsible for regulation and implementation of political financing norms, representatives of political parties, civil society organizations and international organizations.

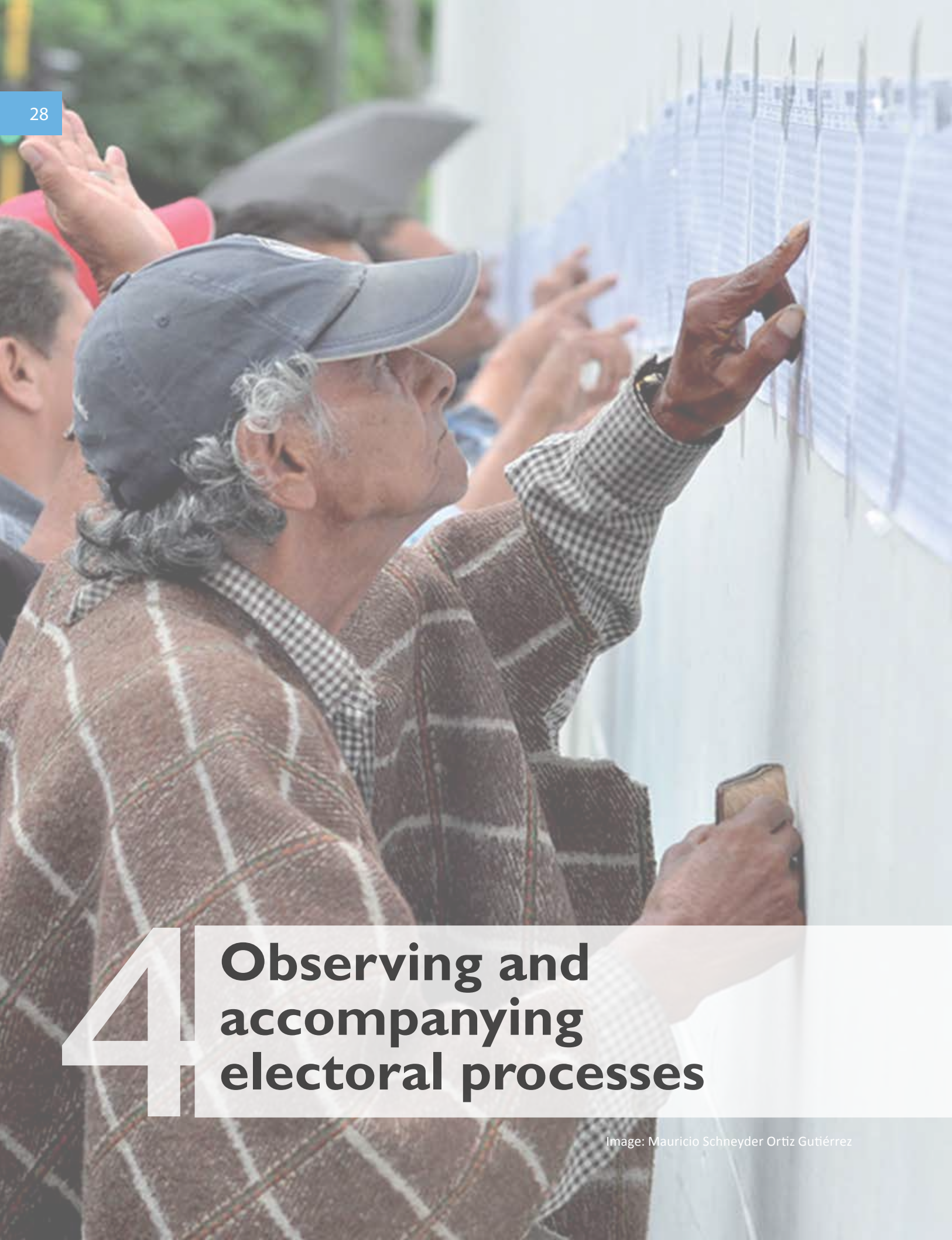
DECO signed agreements with...



The objective of the Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a relationship of mutual cooperation regarding electoral observation and assistance and to cooperate in strengthening democratic institutions. Potential joint activities include developing electoral observation methodologies and manuals; participation in electoral observation missions; organization of events and activities, among others.



The objective of the Supplementary Agreement is to establish mutual areas of interest, regarding which the CNE and the GS/OAS will cooperate on activities to strengthen the development of each institution’s functions. This cooperation will be framed under the areas of electoral justice; quality assurance and ISO certification; the analysis of political rights of citizens deprived of their freedom, and electoral federalism.



4 Observing and accompanying electoral processes

“This is a flagship program of the OAS, which plays an invaluable role in building capacity, supporting and enhancing democracy and human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. While the Caribbean has a strong tradition of democratic elections, this small region presents major challenges to democracy in an increasingly globalized world. This program provides critical capacity in supporting the democratic tradition of the region”

Rosina Wiltshire, Chief of Mission in Antigua and Barbuda (2014) and Saint Lucia (2011)

In 2014, DECO deployed electoral observation missions and accompanying delegations in every Member State in the region that extended an invitation to the Organization of American States. In total, DECO deployed missions to 11 countries in the hemisphere:



Chapter Summary in Numbers

▶ 8	▶ Countries where elections were observed
▶ 3	▶ Countries where elections were accompanied
▶ 12	▶ EOMs deployed ¹
▶ 3	▶ Accompaniment delegations ²
▶ 509	▶ Number of observers deployed
▶ 36	▶ Observer nationalities
▶ 18	▶ Donor countries

¹ More than one EOM was deployed in some countries, since two or three electoral processes took place in the same year.

² Unlike electoral observation, where a core group and international observers are deployed autonomously in-country, an accompaniment involves participation in programs organized by the electoral authority of the host country.

OAS/EOM Keywords and Icons

Type of elections



Presidential



Legislative



Municipal

OAS/EOM Members



= 4 observers



= 4 observers

Observation Methodologies Implemented



Political-Electoral Financing



Electoral Security



Electoral Justice



Media



Gender Equity



Indigenous Groups and Afro-descendants



Voting Abroad

Donor Countries



Argentina



Bolivia



Canada



Costa Rica



South Korea



Chile



Spain



United States of America



France



Italy



Israel



Luxembourg



Mexico



Norway



Peru



United Kingdom



Serbia



Switzerland



Turkey

 Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM)

Republic of El Salvador



Presidential Elections – first and second rounds
February 2 and March 9, 2014

Number of nationalities
among EOM members: **21**

EOM Members: **62 + 75**

Disaggregated
by gender:



The Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States (OAS/EOM) for the presidential elections in El Salvador was led by Former Foreign Minister of Bolivia, Dr. Gustavo Fernández.

During election day, the mission deployed 62 experts and international observers across the country's 14 departments. Since none of the candidates received more than 50% of the valid votes cast during election day on February 2nd, a second round was held between the two candidates that obtained the most votes. On the day of the election, the mission deployed 75 experts and international observers across the same departments.



Topics observed:



Donors:


Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

- Adopt measures to enable the cleansing of the electoral census to obtain an electoral registry that correctly represents all the citizens eligible to vote.
- Make the conditions for registering to vote abroad more flexible.
- That the TSE executes promptly and ex officio its control of the participation and intervention of public authorities in the electoral campaign.
- Reinforce measures for accountability in political party spending, regulate information on their sources of financing, and create the financial conditions for fair participation by new parties.



▲ EOM Chief, Dr. Gustavo Fernández, visits a polling station.

The Verbal Report was presented to the OAS Permanent Council on April 9, 2014 and can be found at
 http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/MOE_informe/InformeVerbal_El_Salvador.pdf

 Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM)

Republic of Costa Rica



Presidential and Legislative Elections – first and second rounds
February 2 and April 6, 2014




Number of nationalities among EOM members: **10**

EOM members: **29**

Topics observed:



Desagregados por sexo: 

Donors:



The Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States (OAS/EOM) in presidential and legislative elections in Costa Rica was led by Josefina Vázquez Mota, former presidential candidate and Minister of Social Development and Public Education in Mexico.

During election day on February 2, 29 international observers were deployed across the country's seven provinces. Additionally, OAS/EOM experts observed political financing, gender equity and media access during the first round. Since none of the 13 presidential candidates obtained 40% of valid votes during the first round, the two candidates receiving the most votes went to a second round of elections. The OAS/EOM was also present during the second round.

Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

-  Incorporate legislation on free media slots, to guarantee a minimum access level for candidates.
-  Explore the possibility of granting public financing to parties in advance, while also establishing mechanisms that do not require liquid collateral.
-  Consider integral strategies within political parties that contribute to developing and fostering female leadership within their ranks.
-  Increase electoral participation through civic education campaigns and by strengthening the work of political parties



Chief of Mission, Josefina Vázquez Mota, reads the press release.

The Verbal Report was presented to the OAS Permanent Council on July 9, 2014 and can be found at http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/moe_informe/InfoVerbalMOECostaRica2014.pdf

 Electoral Oversight Mission (OAS/EOM)³

Republic of Colombia



Legislative Elections
March 9, 2014

Number of nationalities
among EOM Members: **17**

EOM members: **27**

Disaggregated
by gender:



The Electoral Oversight Mission of the Organization of American States for the legislative elections in Colombia was led by José Antonio Viera-Gallo, former Senator and Minister of the Presidency of Chile.

During election day, the mission deployed 27 international observers, who visited 136 poll stations in five departments across the country. The EOM specifically observed the political financing system and gender equity in the electoral process.



Topics observed:



Donors:


Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

- Review possible reasons for a high number of spoiled ballots, such as the design of the ballot and the information and training provided to voters and polling station workers.
- Guarantee the necessary conditions so that all of the political parties and movements can open accounts within the banking system, as well as establish incentives or serious sanctions to support accountability and transparency.
- Promote legal reforms that promote parity and establish measures such as alternation and campaign financing targeted to women



▲ José Antonio Viera-Gallo, OAS/EOM Chief of Mission in Colombia, visits a voting center on the day of legislative elections

The Verbal Report was presented to the OAS Permanent Council on July 9, 2014 and can be found at http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/moe_informe/Informe_Verbal_Colombia2014.pdf

³ In Colombia, an organization called "Electoral Observation Mission (EOM)" already exists and, thus, the OAS adopted the name "Electoral Oversight Mission". The responsibilities and duties of Electoral Oversight Missions are identical to those of a regular OAS mission.

 Electoral Oversight Mission (OAS/EOM)

Republic of Colombia



Presidential Elections – first and second rounds
May 25 and June 14, 2014

Number of nationalities among EOM members: **24**

EOM members: **64 + 74**

Disaggregated by gender:



The Electoral Oversight Mission of the Organization of American States for the presidential elections in Colombia was led by the former President of Costa Rica, José María Figueres, and deployed 64 observers, who visited 398 polling centers in 24 departments as well as the Capital District.

The mission's team of experts focused their work on political-electoral financing, electoral security, electoral justice and voting abroad. Since none of the candidates obtained more than 50% of valid votes on elections held on May 25th, a second round was held between the two candidates who obtained the first and second majority of the votes. For this second round of elections, the mission had 74 international observers deployed across 27 departments and the Capital District, who visited 464 voting centers.







Topics observed:



Donors:



Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

-  Strengthen civil consciousness and promote suffrage, in order to increase voter turnout.
-  Strengthen the legal framework on voting abroad to prevent situations in which partial elections results are made available before the closing of the election.
-  Strengthen transparency mechanisms for campaign resources, establish clear sanctions to this regard and enforce their application.
-  Work towards full participation of citizens in the nomination process for polling station officials, through establishing impartial and inclusive databases managed by electoral authorities



EOM Chief, José María Figueres, talks to the press together with other members of the EOM.

The Verbal Report was presented to the OAS Permanent Council on August 6, 2014 and can be found at http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/moe_informe/Informe_Verbal_Colombia2014.pdf

 Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM)

Republic of Panama



Presidential and Legislative Elections
May 4, 2014

Number of nationalities
among EOM members: **19**

EOM members: **53**

Disaggregated
By gender:



The Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States (OAS/EOM) for the presidential and legislative elections in Panama was led by former presidential candidate and Peruvian legislator.

On election day, 53 experts and international observers were deployed by the OAS across the entire country, visited 290 polling centers. During this mission, experts observed the system of political financing, electoral security, electoral dispute resolution, the role of the media, gender equity, participation of indigenous and afro-descendant groups, and voting abroad.



Topics observed:



Donors:



Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

- Review regulation on political-electoral financing, in order to better control the use of public resources, private donations and electoral spending.
- Strengthen the Electoral Attorney's Office when it comes to its prerogatives, human resources and materials; to prevent complaints received regarding omissions in handling complaints and the lack of actions taken with regards to evident violations of electoral laws.
- Re-establish the National Commission on Electoral Reforms, to promote dialogue and possible improvements in the electoral process



▲ Lourdes Flores Nano, Chief of Mission, visits a polling station with other members of the EOM.

The Verbal Report was presented to the OAS Permanent Council on October 8, 2014 and can be found at:

 http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/MOE_informe/Informe_verbal_MOE_Panama.pdf

 Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM)


Antigua and Barbuda



General Elections
June 12, 2014

Number of nationalities among EOM members: **11**

EOM members: **16**

Disaggregated by gender: 

The OAS Electoral Observation Mission for the General Elections in Antigua and Barbuda was led by Dr. Rosina Wiltshire, from Barbados.

On election day, a gender-balanced team of 16 members visited 100% of the 164 polling stations distributed in 49 polling districts across the country's 17 Constituencies. The team of experts observed the political financing system, resolution of electoral disputes, and gender equity.








Topics observed:



Donors:



Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

-  To reconstitute the continuous registration process by the Electoral Commission, as per current legislation.
-  To complete the counting of ballots at polling stations.
-  To ensure that the Boundaries Commission carries out functions as established in the legislation.
-  To promote further gender equity in political participation.
-  To strengthen transparency in campaign financing.



Chief of Mission, Dr. Rosina Wiltshire, reads the press release.

The Verbal Report was presented to the OAS Permanent Council on July 9, 2014 and can be found at http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/moe_informe/InfoVerbalMOEAntiguaBarbuda2014.pdf

 Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM)

Republic of Peru



Regional and Municipal Elections
October 5, 2014

Number of nationalities
among EOM members: **16**

EOM members: **34**

Disaggregated
by gender:



The Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States for the regional and municipal elections in Peru was led by Uruguayan ex-Senator Sergio Abreu.

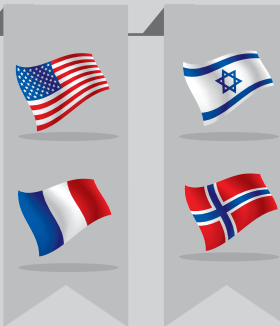
On the day of the elections, the mission deployed 34 experts and international observers, who visited 174 centers in 15 departments. The OAS/EOM specifically observed electoral organization and technology, political-electoral financing, gender equity, electoral security, justice and dispute resolution, and participation of indigenous and Afro-descendant groups.



Topics observed:



Donors:



Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

- Integally evaluate the disputes resolution mechanism.
- Ensure that political parties receive public financing and strengthen the capacity of authorities responsible for the control of campaign financing.
- Require gender alternation in the conformation of candidate lists.
- Review the transmission and publication system for electoral results, so that they can be consulted more quickly.
- Adjust security protocols, with a special focus on areas presenting risks during electoral processes.



Chief of EOM Peru, Sergio Abreu, at the press conference after elections

The Press Release , presented by the Chief of Mission the day after elections can be read at:

 http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/moe/Peru2014/docs/CP_Oct6.pdf

At the time this document was printed, the Verbal Report has not yet been presented to the Permanent Council.

Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM)

Plurinational State of Bolivia



General Elections
October 12, 2014

Number of nationalities
Among EOM members: **21**

EOM members: **62**

Disaggregated
by gender:



The Electoral Observation Mission of the Organization of American States (OAS/EOM) in the general elections in Bolivia was led by former Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom. During election day, the mission deployed 62 experts and international observers in nine departments across the country.

Polling stations opened on time and had all the necessary material for voting. The OAS/EOM observed the political financing system, electoral security, gender equity, media access, participation of indigenous peoples, voting abroad and electoral justice.



Topics observed:



Donors:



Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

- Discuss the possibility of splitting electoral organization functions and those of resolving conflicts and controversies, so that they are not the responsibility of the same body.
- Consider the possibility of passing a law for political organizations that deals with access to media, so that it can be inclusive and follow democratic principles.
- Promote a law for political organizations that will include equitable access to media and mixed financing



The President of Bolivia and presidential candidate, Evo Morales, receives Chief of Mission, Álvaro Colom.

The Verbal Report was presented to the OAS Permanent Council on February 11, 2015 and can be found at http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/MOE_informe/Informe_Verbal_Bolivia2014.pdf

 Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM)

Commonwealth of Dominica



General Elections
December 8, 2014

Number of nationalities
among EOM members: **6**

Miembros de la MOE: **6**

Disaggregated
By gender:



The OAS Electoral Observation Mission for the General Elections in Dominica was led by the OAS Secretary for Multidimensional Security, Adam Blackwell.

On Election Day, the members of the delegation visited the country's 21 constituencies, and observed the voting process from the opening of the polls to the transmission of the preliminary results. The Mission gathered information about the status of the recommendations made by the OAS/EOM in 2009, financing of political campaigns, and gender equity in the political process.



EOM members:



Donors:




Some of the OAS/EOM recommendations:

- Review and update the voter registry according to the provisions established by the electoral laws, ensuring that the electors on the list are only those eligible to vote.
- Issue identification cards before the next electoral process, in compliance with the legislation.
- Promote legislation on political campaign financing, to ensure equity and transparency in the electoral process.
- Put forth initiatives geared towards enhancing leadership roles of women in the political process



▲ Chief of EOM Dominica, Adam Blackwell, observes vote casting at a polling station.

The Press Release, presented by the Chief of Mission the day after elections can be read at:

 http://www.oas.org/en/media_center/press_release.asp?sCodigo=E-541/14

At the time this document was printed, the Verbal Report has not yet been presented to the Permanent Council



Electoral Accompaniment and Delegations



- Electoral Accompaniment
Eastern Republic of Uruguay
Presidential and Parliamentary Elections - first round
October 26, 2014
OAS Representatives: Lázaro Cárdenas, Kevin Casas-Zamora and Gerardo de Icaza**

The OAS, in response to an invitation from the Electoral Court, sent a high-level technical team that held meetings with presidential candidates and visited various polling centers on the day of elections. The delegation observed a high degree of organization, peaceful conduct of the elections and citizenry trust in the electoral system. The OAS would like to highlight the high level of political debate that was seen during this campaign, a symbol of respect towards the parties, candidates and democracy's institutions.



Electoral Accompaniment and Delegations



- Electoral Accompaniment
Federative Republic of Brazil
General Elections
OAS Representatives: Alfonso Quiñonez and Tyler Finn**

In response to an invitation from the Superior Electoral Tribunal, DECO sent a delegation to participate in the program for international visitors at the general elections held in Brazil. The delegation attended various presentations on the Brazilian electoral system, Brazil's political situation and the new electronic voting system. On election day, OAS representatives observed the voting process at various polling centers in Brasilia, accompanying audits of the electronic voting machines as well as the results transmission process. Thanks to the visit to Brazil and the established contacts, the Superior Electoral Tribunal has agreed to host the next Inter-American Meeting of Electoral Authorities.



Electoral Accompaniment and Delegations



● **OAS Delegation**
Republic of Ecuador
Local Elections
February 23, 2014
OAS Representatives: Lázaro Cárdenas and Rosa Serpa.

● The OAS delegation held meetings with electoral authorities, candidates, civil society representatives, media representatives and political leaders prior to elections day. The delegation directly observed voting in La Morita and in the city of Cuenca, Azuay. In La Morita the voting process was carried out normally, while there were long line-ups in Cuenca. The delegation was also at the CNE command center for the transmission of preliminary results. The first results to be transmitted were from those provinces where electronic voting was held. The OAS delegation supported the CNE authorities in evaluating and auditing the TREP computer system.



5

Follow-up to OAS/EOM recommendations

“We welcome the participation of the OAS/EOM as a fundamental pillar in electoral observations, as faithful impartial witnesses, and zealous guardians of the evolution and development of Panamanian democracy, from the first moment constitutional order was implemented in 1989. We congratulate the human and technical support that contributed to the success of the electoral process.”

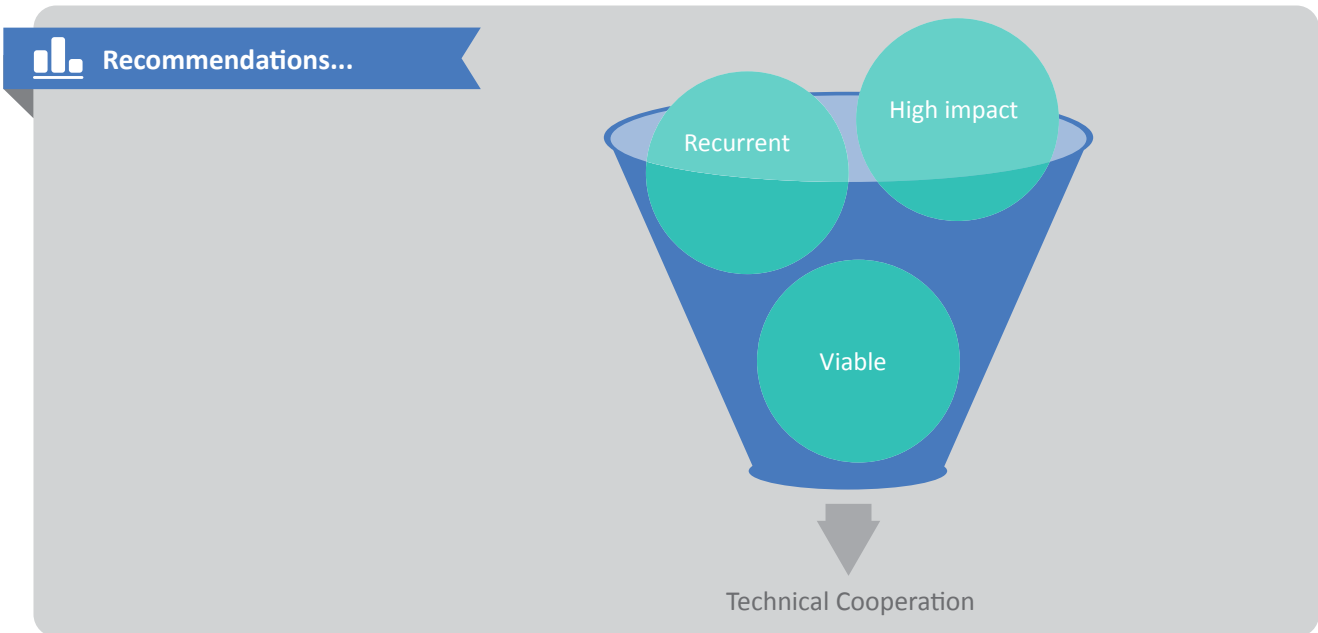
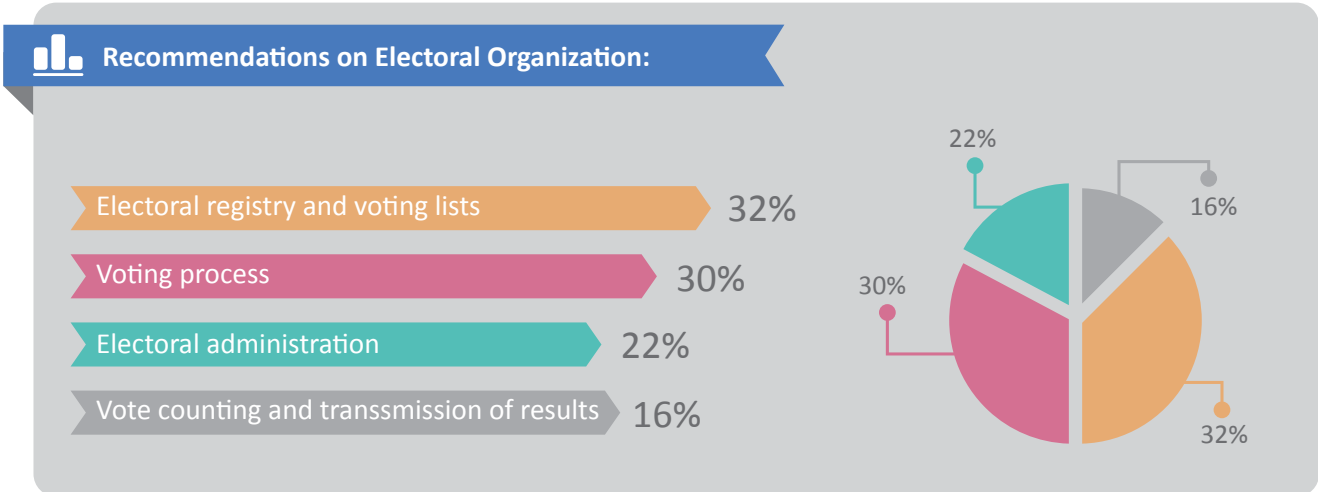
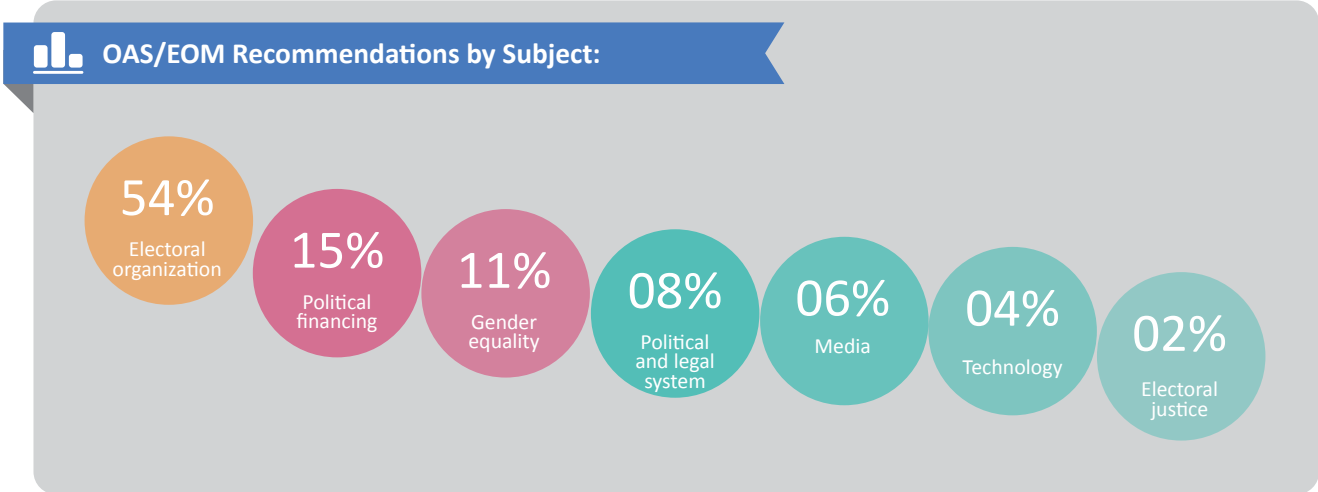
Erasmus Pinilla, President of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama

Follow-up to OAS/EOM recommendations is a final and fundamental step in the DECO work cycle, during which recommendations are classified by subject and their relevance is determined based on three criteria: recurrence, impact and viability. The goal is to implement initiatives and projects of national, subregional and hemispheric technical cooperation, based on OAS/EOM recommendations, which comply with the above-mentioned criteria.



Summary in Numbers

▶ Quality management system	▶ 10 training courses ▶ 1 document system on quality management ▶ 1 internal audit on key processes
▶ New electoral ISO technical specification published and an International Accreditation Body created	▶ 1 webpage interface for IEAB ▶ 59 participants in the workshop on the ISO norm ▶ 4 lead auditors authorized, 2 certifying bodies accredited
▶ Two electoral registries analyzed	▶ 2 reports with findings and recommendations ▶ 1 assessment ▶ 1 action plan
▶ Cooperation on electronic voting	▶ 2 reports with findings and recommendations
▶ Cooperation on the Preliminary Results Transmission System (TREP)	▶ 5 reports with findings and recommendations



✓ Implementation of a Quality Management System at the National Electoral Council (CNE) in Ecuador

In June of 2013, responding to a request made by the CNE, DECO carried out a diagnostic on the viability of certifying against ISO standards. In March of 2014, the OAS and the CNE signed a cooperation agreement to begin the implementation phase of the project. The GS/OAS role is limited to the provision of technical expertise and the monitoring of project progress.

The principal objective of the technical cooperation is the strengthening of the performance and transparency of the National Electoral Council, and the enhancement of public trust in the institution, through implementing a Quality Management System and certification under the ISO/TS 17582.



↑ Training at CNE Ecuador



What is a Quality Management System (QMS)?

A system aimed at strengthening institutionalism and promoting the professionalization, legitimacy and performance of electoral institutions, with a focus on continual improvement in the services provided to the citizenry.

About the Electoral Norm ISO/TS 17582:2014

The idea for an ISO electoral standard arose from the experience of implementing QMS in the electoral arena. Electoral bodies in the Americas and around the world can be certified against ISO/TS 17582. The electoral ISO technical specification defines specific requirements for eight electoral processes that are considered fundamental in any election: 1) voter registration, 2) registration of political organizations and candidates, 3) electoral logistics, 4) voting, 5) vote count and results publication, 6) electoral education, 7) campaign financing control, and 8) electoral dispute resolution.

What was achieved?

- ▶ The CNE is in a better position to successfully implement its quality management system, due to strengthened technical, personnel and institutional capacity.
- ▶ It is expected that the CNE will obtain its ISO/TS 17582:2014 certification during the first semester of 2015, becoming the first institution in the world to be compliant with the new electoral ISO technical specification.



The New Electoral ISO Norm and the Establishment of the International Electoral Accreditation Body (IEAB) at the OAS



Certification against the ISO norm is based on comprehensive audits that are carried out by third-party certification bodies. Based on the ISO model, each certification body must be previously accredited by an external organization, known as an accreditation body. When this project began, there were no accreditation bodies or certification bodies with experience in electoral matters. The goal set by DECO was to create an International Electoral Accreditation Body (IEAB) under the auspices of the OAS.



▲ *Workshop on the technical specification in Costa Rica*

To reach this goal, DECO...

- ▶ Designed a web page that will serve as the main interface between the IEAB and its clients.
- ▶ Developed internal management procedures, including operation and supervision manuals.
- ▶ Created standard evaluation materials that will be used by electoral authorities and certified auditors, to evaluate under the electoral ISO norm.
- ▶ Promoted the electoral ISO norm through a workshop presented in Costa Rica (59 participants, from 29 institutions from 18 countries, including members from 21 electoral bodies in Latin America)
- ▶ Accredited lead auditors and certifying bodies in Washington DC.

What was achieved?

- ▶ The new International Electoral ISO Technical Specification, ISO/TS 17582:2014, was published in February 2014.
- ▶ In May 2014, the OAS General Secretariat signed Executive Order 14-01, which officially establishes the International Electoral Accreditation Body (IEAB) within DECO.
- ▶ The OAS has received technical cooperation requests on electoral ISO from three countries: Bolivia, Colombia, and Paraguay.
- ▶ The IEAB accredited four lead auditors and two certifying bodies. The first certification processes are expected to begin in 2015. The IEAB is currently operating on provisional basis. The web page is currently under construction and will be available at:



www.oas-ieab.org



Cleansing and building of the Electoral Roll of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (*TSE*) and the National Registry of Persons (*RENAP*) of Guatemala

The goal of the technical cooperation was to propose actions to reduce information inconsistencies related to the 1.2 million people that are registered with a “Neighborhood ID” (*Cédula de Vecindad*, a document that is not valid for voting), before the 2015 elections. The technical assistance was carried in conjunction with the OAS Universal Civil Identity Project of the Americas (*PUICA*).



▲ Project presentation at the TSE



What was achieved?

- ▶ Of the 1.2 million inconsistencies detected, 39.2% (480 thousand) were resolved thanks to OAS intervention, and the beneficiaries will be able to vote in the 2015 elections.
- ▶ The electoral roll increased by 5.8% once updated with the *DPI*, going from 83.6% to 89.4%.
- ▶ The *TSE* will be able to carry out at least two more information cross-checks, which will allow it to strengthen its work by improving the quality of the electoral roll.



Cleansing and building of the biometric electoral roll of the Plurinational Electoral Body (*OEP*) of Bolivia

In October 2014, responding to a request from the Plurinational Electoral Body (*OEP*) of Bolivia, DECO put together a team of five international consultants, who began working in December 2014. The project is scheduled to carry on until March 2015.

The goal was to provide technical cooperation to the Plurinational Electoral Body (*OEP*) of Bolivia, to improve current processes and procedures related to the cleansing and building of the biometric electoral roll, in anticipation of the March 2015 elections



◀ OAS specialists and TSE judges in a meeting.



What was achieved?

- ▶ There is an assessment, recommendations and an action plan, which is expected to be implemented in the first few months of 2015.
- ▶ It is expected that by implementing the action plan, the *OEP* of Bolivia will receive technical cooperation that will strengthen its work in future electoral processes.

✓ First electronic voting abroad pilot in Costa Rica

The Supreme Elections Tribunal (*TSE*) of Costa Rica contacted DECO to commence a technical cooperation regarding electoral technology. As a result, DECO focused their accompaniment on electronic voting.

The goal of the pilot was to provide technical accompaniment and advise on all of the activities related to the implementation of the electronic pilot for voting abroad, for the presidential elections that took place in Costa Rica in 2014.



▲
TSE Technical Team



What was achieved?

- ▶ Based on the findings and recommendations presented by the DECO, the *TSE* of Costa Rica has decided to invest more resources and time to perfect the implementation of electronic voting abroad for future electoral processes.
- ▶ The *TSE* has the option of implementing a consolidated and effective electronic voting system in future elections.



Strengthening the process of Preliminary Electoral Results Transmission (*TREP*) of the Electoral Court (*CE*) of Uruguay



The goal of the technical cooperation in this case was to improve the development of activities related to the Preliminary Electoral Results Transmission (*TREP*) for the presidential elections held on October 26, 2014 in Uruguay.

What is *TREP*?

- ▶ It is the mechanism used by the *CE* to quickly transmit preliminary electoral results, by digitalizing, consolidating and publishing data from the 6,948 tallies received at the National and Departmental Computer Center. Though *TREP* has no legal validity, it has an important media and political impact, since published information is used by political actors to determine voting trends.

What was achieved?

- ▶ The Uruguay Electoral Court activated security measures in certain areas of information technology, thus reducing risks and strengthening information protection.
- ▶ Administrative measures were adopted, such as the creation of an electoral process plan and calendar, which establishes activities and those responsible for them. This document is a fundamental instrument to control and follow-up with each electoral process organized by the Electoral Court.
- ▶ For the 2014 electoral process, the Electoral Court adopted a computer cloud, thus decreasing response time for presentation of electoral results and reducing operational risks by eliminating costs related to a large-scale infrastructure.

6

DECO's Financial Situation

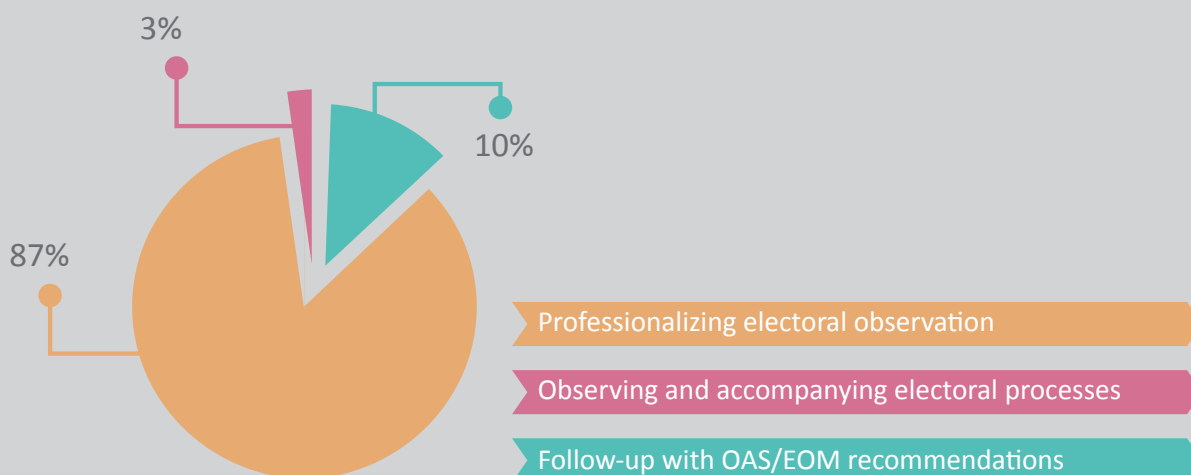
Image: Carolina Carrera

Allocation of Funds, DECO - 2014

Professionalizing electoral observation	\$ 342,728.70
Observing and accompanying electoral processes	\$ 2,957,082.31
Follow-up of OAS/EOM recommendations	\$ 90,216.14
TOTAL	\$ 3,390,027.15⁴



DECO Allocation of Funds 2014



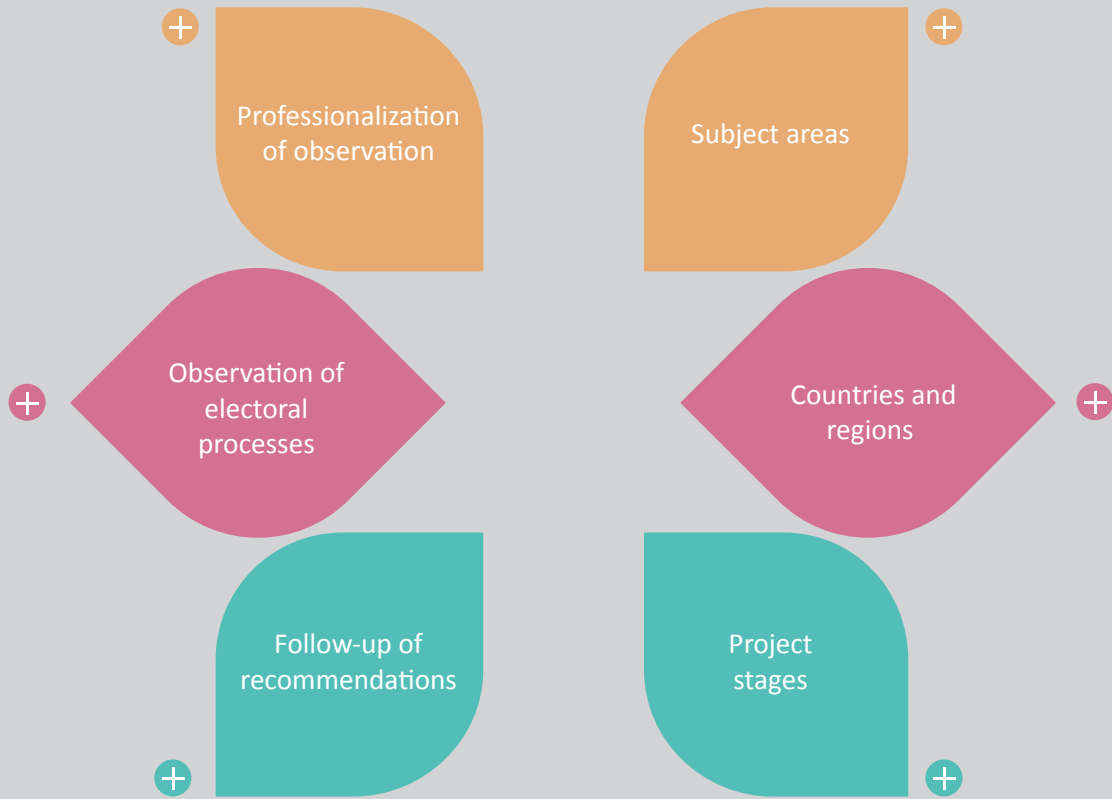
Financial needs, DECO – 2015

Our donors and other institutions interested in financially supporting DECO's programs and projects can channel their contributions by subject or area of work, by country or region, or by steps within the cycle of a project's implementation. At the same time, they are able to direct their contributions towards one of the three large areas of work within DECO: professionalization of electoral observation, observation and accompaniment of electoral processes, and follow-up of recommendations from EOM and technical cooperation assessments.

⁴ These are preliminary numbers and have not yet been audited.



Financial needs, DECO – 2015



A man in a dark suit and white shirt is leaning over a large, illuminated display or screen. He is looking intently at the content on the screen, which appears to be a collection of documents or data. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source coming from the display itself. The background is dark and out of focus.

T Priorities for **DECO in 2015**

Image: Hugo Passarelli

Development and implementation of new electoral observation methodologies

The development and implementation of these methodologies will mean an important advancement in the continued process of institutionalization and standardization of electoral observation practices at the OAS, and at the same time look to create new technical tools that will allow the OAS to expand its observation of electoral processes. With these tools, the OAS/DECO looks to improve in its three focus areas within electoral observation:

1. Political Integration:

- Political participation of indigenous communities and afro-descendants: looking to specifically identify the obstacles faced by indigenous and afro-descendant communities in the exercise of political rights as well as the limitations to effective participation in electoral processes. To effectively observe barriers in the exercise of the right to vote and to present a candidacy for elections, among other elements.
- Voting for citizens residing abroad: the goal is to examine the extension of political rights of citizens residing abroad, by creating indicators that permit the analysis of the legal framework; observe the organization and implementation processes for voting abroad and obstacles to effective implementation. The methodology will identify challenges, opportunities, trends and changes through systematically collecting data from different countries in the region.
- Program to promote electoral participation for people with different abilities: through this project proposal, DECO intends to develop an integral program that will incorporate the subject of the political participation of disabled persons, beginning with the collection and analysis of un-

published information through OAS/EOMs. To issue recommendations to electoral bodies in the region, aimed at improving the capacity, accessibility and participation of persons with different abilities in the electoral arena.

2. Electoral Process:

- Manual to Observe Electoral Dispute Resolution Processes and Mechanisms: establishes criteria to verify the level of adaptation to international standards of a jurisdictional system, legal system and effective practices that govern the process and resolution of conflicts related to suffrage and authenticity of electoral results. In its first draft, the manual analyzes such aspects as: a) independent and impartial tribunals; b) access to justice; and c) just and effective processes.

3. Electoral Integrity:

- Security and Electoral Crimes: to create a standardized instrument to observe issues related to security that affect election day, such as protection of electoral materials and voting locations,

security provision for citizens, observers, journalists and members of electoral authorities; as well as the existence of structures that monitor risk situations, with the objective of mitigating acts of violence or organized crime. The methodology will analyze the definition and types of electoral crimes; and the procedures and resources available to the authorities when dealing with electoral crime.

In order to contribute to the improvement in the quality of electoral processes, the EOMs that will be carried out in the different countries in the region will be able to apply these tools that will allow the formulation of specific recommendations on the above-mentioned topics.

Implementation of OAS/EOMs recommendations through technical cooperation

Systemizing and categorizing the recommendations from the last 25 Electoral Observation Missions shed light on the fact that out of 323 recommendations, 54% are related to weaknesses in electoral organization, 15% to shortcomings in the political electoral financing system, 11% were related to gender equity in electoral contest, 8% propose the review the political and legal systems, 6% to changes to electoral technology, 4% highlight deficits in media regulation, and finally, 2% are directed towards the creation of mechanisms to ensure compliance with the law when it comes to the vote count.

This analysis gives way to the project titled “Implementation of Recommendations from Electoral Observation Missions”. The project looks to strengthen the technical, human and institutional capacity of

electoral authorities in member states, so that they are able to implement the recommendations made by the OAS electoral observation missions regarding electoral organization, political electoral financing, gender, ISO and electoral security. In order to respond with specific tools and support the member states in implementing the most recurrent and impacting recommendations, the project proposes the following activities:

Electoral organization

- Implementation of a standardized methodology for audits of electoral registries.
- Evaluation of the electoral registry and implementation of findings.
- Implementation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) to define constituency boundaries in the Caribbean countries with parliamentary systems.

Political-electoral financing

- Development of an accountability software and promotion of transparency in electoral campaigning.
- Creation of a regional portal for access to information and transparency regarding political electoral financing.
- Development of a mobile application to promote transparency through visibility of costs in electoral propaganda in the Caribbean.

Gender

- Conduct regional meetings to promote female leadership and participation in the politics of the Americas, and monitoring of established agreements.

Quality Management and Electoral Security Systems

- Implementation of Quality Management Systems and Certification against ISO/TS 17582:2014.
- Creation of a program for sustainable security management for electoral information technology.

International Electoral Accreditation Body

As part of the efforts to promote tools to improve electoral processes to the Member States, the OAS/DECO will focus on implementing the International Electoral Accreditation Body (IEAB) in 2015. This body will have a global relevance, as the OAS will be able accrediting organizations to certify electoral authorities against ISO/TS 17582:2014, not only in the region but anywhere in the world. The IEAB, which will operate at the OAS, will be a fundamental control within the electoral ISO certification process. In 2015, the OAS is looking forward to the seeing the first coun-

tries in the region obtain certification against ISO/TS 17582:2014 certification, a process which will be governed by the methodology enforced by the IEAB.

First meeting of OAS Electoral Observation Mission Chiefs

The First Meeting of Chiefs of OAS Electoral Observation Missions (EOM) will be an important opportunity that will bring together the EOM Chiefs of Missions to promote open dialogue and reflect on the different experiences and perspectives of electoral observation. The forum will cover electoral observation in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, including both presidential and municipal elections. The meeting will be held in March 2015.

2015 Electoral Calendar and OAS Electoral Observation Missions (OAS/EOM)

According to the Inter-American Democratic Charter, for the OAS to deploy an Electoral Observation Mission (OAS/EOM) for any type of elections, it must first receive and official invitation from the Member States. A calendar of countries that will carry out elections in 2015 and could invite the OAS to deploy an EOM is presented below:


2015 Electoral Calendar and OAS Electoral Observation Missions (OAS/EOM)
MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Country	Type of elections	Date of elections
El Salvador	Parliamentary	March 1
Guatemala	General	September 13
Mexico	Parliamentary	June 7

AMERICA DEL SUR

Country	Type of elections	Date of elections
Argentina	Primary	August 9
Argentina	General	October 25
Bolivia	Municipal/Departmental	March 29
Colombia	Municipal	October 25
Paraguay	Municipal	To be confirmed
Uruguay	Municipal	May 10
Venezuela	Parliamentary	To be confirmed

CARIBE

Country	Type of elections	Date of elections
Guyana	General / local	May 11
Haiti	Presidential	To be confirmed
Jamaica	Local	To be confirmed
St. Kitts and Nevis	Parliamentary	February 16
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Parliamentary	To be confirmed
Suriname	Presidential/Parliamentary	May 25
Trinidad and Tobago	Parliamentary	To be confirmed



▲ *Members of the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in El Salvador (Presidential Elections 2014)*

“The OAS was the voice that made a difference and avoided bloodshed and violence in El Salvador”.

Ambassador Francisco Esteban Laínez,
Permanent Representative
of El Salvador to the OAS



8

Acknowledgments

Image: Jorge Christian Chávez Ramírez

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