

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION -MOE- *Colombia*



Misión de Observación Electoral vigilará los comicios



THE ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSION - MOE

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1.

Who we are?

The Electoral Observation Mission (MOE) - Colombia is a platform composed of civil society organizations, independent of government, political parties, and private interests. It promotes the right of all individuals to participate in the establishment, exercise, and oversight of political power.

MOE recognizes human difference and diversity. Therefore, it has a deep commitment to promoting and guaranteeing the political rights of populations historically excluded from the political spaces, such as women, LGBTIQ+, persons with disabilities, people with ethnic and racial identities, youth, among others.

The mission of MOE is expressed through:

- » Encouraging civil society participation in democratic processes.
- » Conducting electoral monitoring and observation processes.
- » Researching and promoting legal initiatives related to the deepening of democracy.

MOE emerged in February 2006 as a citizen response to the capture of Colombian territories and democratic spaces by various illegal armed groups. At that time, 13 civil society organizations -including universities, social, religious and grassroots community organizations- conducted the first electoral observation in Colombia. This milestone marked the beginning of a committed effort to defend and promote democracy, which today is reflected in a platform comprising over 500 organizations nationwide.

Over nearly 20 years of operation, MOE has observed 141 electoral processes, including Presidential, Congressional, Local Authorities, Municipal Youth Councils, School Governments, among other mechanisms of citizen participation. This has been possible through a robust electoral observation network, with the involvement of more than 66.000 national observers and over 2.000 international observers.

MOE's presence across the country is realized through a national platform composed of 35 regional coordinations, which carry out their work through a network of over 500 non-governmental and social organizations, including groups representing women, youth, Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, trade unions, cultural and religious groups, universities, and other civic entities. As a result of this collaborative effort, MOE has successfully deployed electoral observation in all 32 subregions of the country, covering a total of 980 municipalities and establishing itself as a fundamental reference for defending democracy and promoting political and electoral participation in Colombia.

2.

We are an organization that builds and promotes democracy

At the beginning of 2024, MOE conducted an evaluation with the 35 regional coordinations that implement the electoral deployment and represent the organization in the 32 departments of the country. The goal of this evaluation was to identify challenges and strategies to continue strengthening actions that promote democracy in Colombia.

Additionally, in a participatory planning exercise, MOE updated its mission, vision, and institutional values.

Mission

The Electoral Observation Mission (MOE Colombia) is a platform of civil society organizations that promotes the exercise of civil and political rights, citizen participation, and the strengthening of state institutions' capacities, through electoral integrity observation, advocacy, training, research, and communication strategies.

Vision

By 2032, MOE is an international reference in matters related to democracy, recognized for its technical and methodological capacity in the comprehensive observation of electoral processes.

At the national level, it is a platform capable of communication, action, and impact in strengthening citizen participation and the institutions that have roles on the political-electoral sphere.

Values

MOE is characterized by its **impartiality** and **independence** from governments, political organizations and private interests. Our political option is democracy.

Transparency defines all our actions as an organization towards the country. MOE acts responsibly in its electoral observation, presenting **reliable** and **truthful** information with the highest quality standards.

At MOE, we foster a culture based on **teamwork** and **partnerships**, where every project reflects our **professionalism**, guided by ethics and continuous learning, driving us to excellence in every action we undertake.

MOE recognizes the value of **diversity** and **difference**, promoting the inclusion of all individuals in democratic processes without **any discrimination**.

3.

Organizational structure

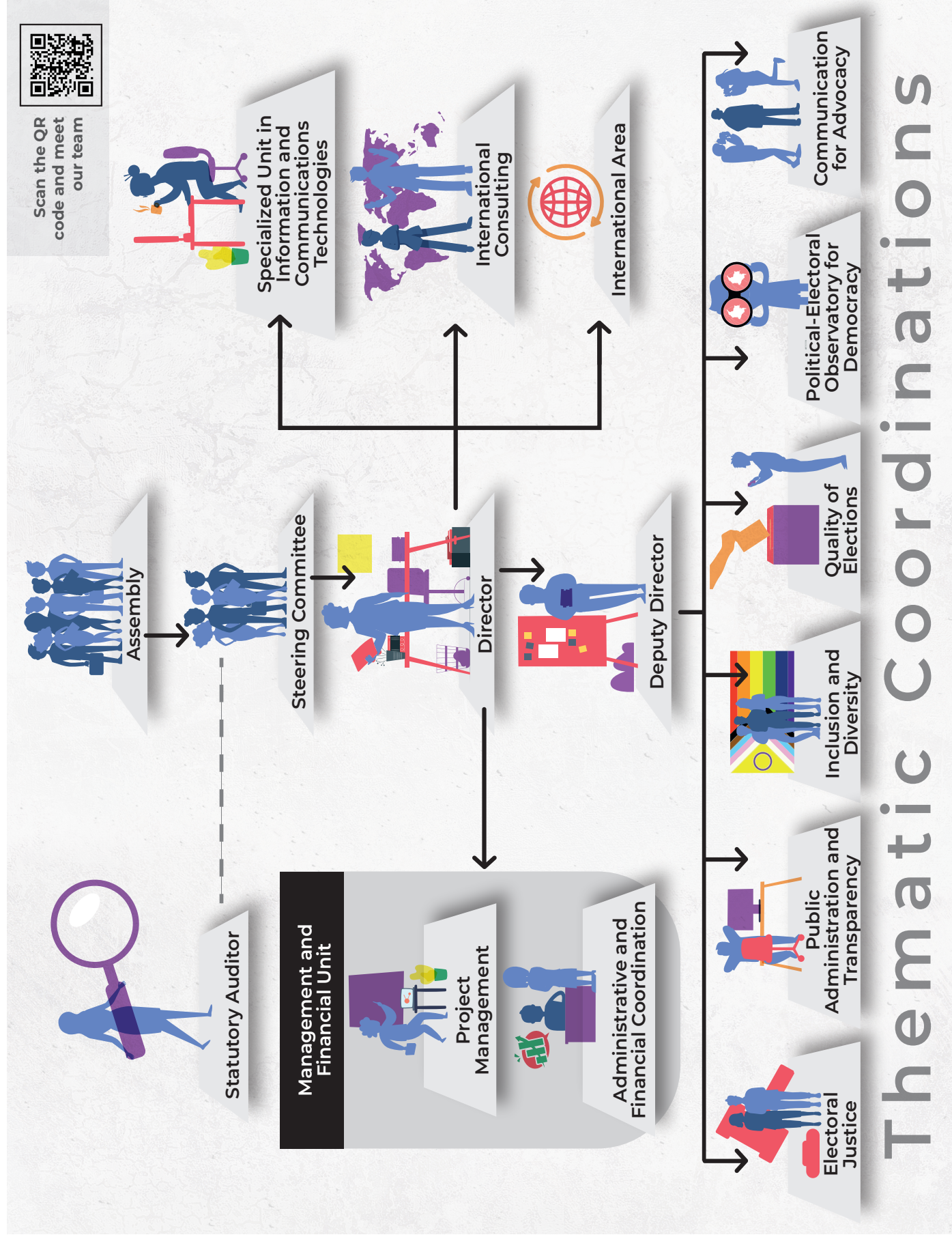
3.1 MOE's national office

In terms of governance, MOE has an Assembly composed of 12 recognized civil society organizations and a Steering Committee elected every three years. During 2024, the Steering Committee includes Colombian NGOs such as Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES), Corporación Viva la Ciudadanía, Fundación Nuevo Arco Iris, Comisión Colombiana de Juristas, Asociación Minga and Corporación Ciudad Abierta.

The national office is composed of a management team led by the Executive Director, the Deputy Director, the Project Management, the Administrative and Financial Coordination, and 6 programmatic coordinations.



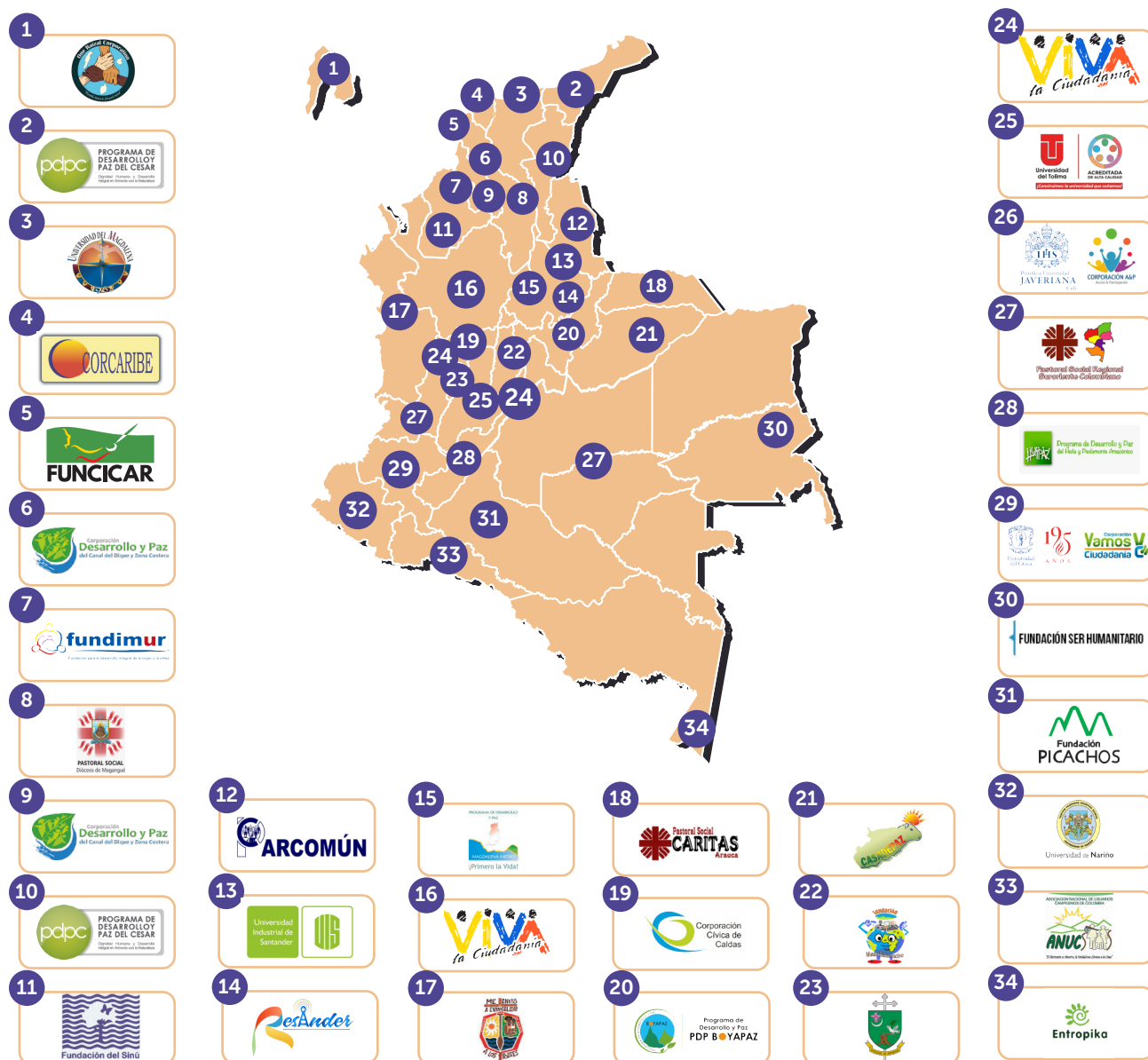
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE 2025 - 2028 ELECTORAL CYCLE



3.2 Platform of Electoral Observation Coordinations

The presence of MOE in the territories is possible through a platform of 35 regional organizations, which coordinate territorial work with more than 500 non-governmental and social organizations, including those representing women, youth, Indigenous people, Afro-descendants, labor unions, cultural groups, religious organizations, universities, and citizenship observation in all 32 departments of the country.

Regional Coordinations MOE 2024



In the recent local authorities elections of 2023, MOE deployed electoral observation in 531 of the 1,103 municipalities across the 32 departments of the country, representing an impact on 80% of Colombia's electoral roll. During the 2022-2023 electoral cycle, for both national and local elections, MOE prioritized observation in those municipalities where some level of risk was identified, either due to violence factors or indications of electoral fraud. Thus, in 2022, MOE deployed observers in 40% of the total municipalities at risk, and in 2023, MOE observed in 57% of the municipalities that met these same criteria.

4.

We are an organization with advocacy and impact capacity

Since its foundation in 2006, MOE has positioned itself as one of the civil society organizations with the greatest capacity for action at both the national and regional levels, thanks to its alliance with over 500 territorial organizations. **Currently, MOE is listed among the 15 most admired or prominent non-governmental organizations in the country**, according to the Opinion Panel of the polling firm Cifras y Conceptos¹.

The rigorous, objective, and impactful work of MOE has fostered trust among citizens regarding the information it provides about electoral processes and, more broadly, about the political and democratic agenda in Colombia. For this reason, MOE has become the primary source of consultation for civil society, the media, analysts, political actors, and national and international organizations at all stages of the electoral processes.

To this end, from the beginning of the electoral calendar, MOE presents monthly reports on violence against social, political, and community leaders, as well as on voter registration. It also activates the portal www.pilasconelvoto.com, where citizens can report information about alleged electoral anomalies and offenses. Additionally, it provides the "Electoral Route," a guide that allows various stakeholders in the electoral process to understand the step-by-step milestones of the electoral calendar, along with their respective legal references.

These actions are part of the strategies that reflect the organization's capacity for advocacy and impact:

- **Rigorous monitoring:** MOE has an interdisciplinary and specialized team that conducts research and monitoring exercises on issues such as violence against political, social, and community leaders, the presence of illegal armed groups in the country's territories, the financing of political campaigns, barriers to participation for diverse population

¹Cifras y Conceptos (2023) Opinion panel: Fifteenth version. P. 49. Retrieved from: <https://www.cifrasysconceptos.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Panel-2023-1.pdf>

groups, and the monitoring of the legislative agenda of Congress in political-electoral matters.

One of the most extensive monitoring efforts are the Electoral Risk Maps (MRE), a document produced by MOE's Political-Electoral Observatory of Democracy, which identifies municipalities at risk due to factors of violence and electoral fraud. These maps are used as information sources by entities such as the National Prosecutor's Office, the National Police, the Ombudsman's Office, the National Registry, the Ministry of the Interior, and other institutions to prioritize actions for preventing electoral crimes and violence during elections.

► **Dialogue with decision-makers:** MOE is the only civil society organization with a permanent seat on the National and Subnational Electoral Monitoring Commissions, as established by Decree 2821 of 2013. For instance, during the local elections of 2023, MOE participated in the 9 National Commissions convened and in more than 100 subnational commissions held throughout the electoral calendar. MOE is heard by government authorities, maintaining open channels of dialogue from a civic perspective.

► **Training in citizenship and democracy:** The organizations that are part of the MOE's platform promote the expansion and deepening of democracy in regional scenarios through actions aimed at strengthening citizens' capacities for active, informed, and impactful participation.

To achieve these objectives, MOE and regional allies conduct training and informational processes aimed at women's organizations, LGBTIQ+ individuals, youth groups, student organizations, oversight committees, and national and regional media, among others. During the 2022-2023 electoral cycle, over 7.800 people participated in these in-person training and informational sessions.

► **Networking and platform work:** Coordination and networking are essential for increasing the reach and impact of civil society actions. Therefore, in addition to operating as a platform, the MOE is also part of other networks, such as the Political Reform Interest Group (GIRE-PO), the Observatory of Violence against Women in Politics, the National Network of Anti-Corruption Observatories, and the Media and Democracy Observatory, which includes more than 15 faculties of social communication and journalism in the country.

At the international level, the MOE participates in networks such as the Latin American and Caribbean Observatory of the Political and Electoral Rights of Trans People, Global Network for Securing Electoral Integrity (GNSEI), the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM), and the Electoral Observation and Integrity Network (Red OIE).



- › **Strengthening government institutions:** In addition to its work with civil society organizations and citizens, MOE has focused its efforts on providing technical assistance and training to government institutions with electoral responsibilities, aiming to improve their capacity to respond to citizens' demands. An example of this is the training of over 230 prosecutors assigned to investigate electoral crimes, with representation in 70% of the total regional offices of the Prosecutor's Office across the country, in the context of the local elections of 2023.
- › **Technologies at the service of democracy:** As part of its monitoring, oversight, and advocacy actions on various political agenda issues, MOE has digital tools such as "Pilas con el Voto" platform, where citizens can report in real time electoral irregularities and crimes observed during electoral processes. During the 2022-2023 electoral cycle, MOE received over 7,000 reports via "Pilas con el Voto," which were analyzed and forwarded to entities such as the National Prosecutor's Office. It is important to highlight that, in 2023, 40% of the information about anomalies, irregularities, and electoral crimes provided to authorities originated from the "Pilas con el Voto" platform.

Additionally, MOE has "Lupa Legislativa", a website where different audiences, such as citizens, academics, political analysts, and the media, can access ongoing monitoring of the political-electoral agenda in the Colombian National Congress. The platform also provides profiles of congress members and their participation in legislative proposals.

Finally, the "Datos Electorales" website serves as the MOE's political-electoral information system, acting as a mechanism for capturing, systematizing, and publishing relevant information on historical electoral data, electoral risk, monitoring of violence against political, social, and community leaders, mapping illegal armed groups, among other topics.

- › **Communication for advocacy:** MOE is the most referenced civil society organization in national and regional media in the context of electoral processes and regarding the country's political agenda. During the 2022-2023 electoral cycle, MOE accumulated over 12,000 mentions in the media, stemming from the dissemination of press releases, specialized interviews, and publications on social networks. On these platforms, MOE has more than 80,000 followers across its X, Facebook, and Instagram profiles. In 2023, MOE had approximately 400,000 users on Facebook and generated over 1 million impressions on the social network X (formerly known as Twitter).

5.

We are an organization connected to the context

Before each electoral process, MOE develops a **risk matrix** that identifies the main risk factors and their respective variables, which could have a positive or negative impact on each electoral cycle in the country. In other words, it identifies potential problems that future electoral processes may face.

Based on this risk matrix, MOE begins its electoral observation process one year before election day, with the aim of having enough time and information to carry out:

- › The definition of **strategic plans** that will effectively guide the actions to be undertaken over the next four years.
- › The **methodological designs** that allow a better understanding of the electoral process.
- › The identification of **strategic alliances** and actors that should be engaged to address the various challenges that may arise throughout the electoral cycles.

Regarding the definition of strategic lines for the 2022-2023 electoral cycle, MOE focused, among other priorities, on working towards the effective inclusion of historically underrepresented groups such as women, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and ethnic groups. One of the key areas that saw significant development was the prevention and response to violence against women in politics (VAWP), for which MOE promoted advocacy spaces with political organizations, electoral authorities, and public institutions.

Regarding methodological innovations, during the recently concluded electoral cycle, MOE identified the effective inclusion of trans people and people with disabilities as one of the greatest challenges for the Colombian electoral system. Based on this, during the 2022 national elections, MOE implemented, for the first time, a new methodological approach that resulted in a monitoring tool and a strategy for training and advocacy, in partnership with organizations defending LGBTIQ+ and disability rights. In the 2022-2023 electoral cycle, 103 trans individuals and 110 people with disabilities were integrated as observers during the election days.

Finally, during the 2023 elections, MOE maintained close dialogue with business associations, given that one of the greatest risks identified was the illegal and illicit financing of political campaigns. This dialogue led to the creation of the document “10 steps for responsible campaign financing from the private sector in 2023”, which was shared with various business associations, encouraging them to familiarize themselves with electoral legislation on campaign financing.



6.

MOE on the international stage

In recent years, MOE has solidified its participation in various institutions, highlighting the inclusion of MOE's executive director in the General Assembly of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights (IIDH). Additionally, MOE has strengthened its influence in international electoral observation networks, establishing itself as a technical reference for organizations with similar missions across Latin America and globally.

In 2024, MOE led the development of two reports on the guarantees and challenges to the political rights of LGBTIQ+ individuals. These reports were submitted to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Independent Expert on the protection of the rights of people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression.

Currently, **MOE holds the General Secretariat of the Electoral Observation and Integrity Network (Red OIE) for Latin America and the Caribbean.** Red OIE brings together organizations from 17 countries in the region that conduct electoral observation from civil society, promoting fair, free, and transparent elections, as well as strengthening democracy and consolidating a politically informed and tolerant culture.

Throughout 2024, MOE led an international expert encounter on political and electoral issues through the “Electoral Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean Expert Seminar”. These spaces facilitated in-depth discussions on topics such as the analysis of elections in Mexico, Venezuela, and the United States, as well as factors affecting democracies in the region, including democratic erosion, the independence of electoral management bodies, the effective representation of women in politics and the growing challenges posed by technology, among others.

MOE, through Red OIE, is also part of the **Steering Committee of the Global Network for Securing Electoral Integrity (GNSEI)**, alongside the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems



(IFES), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This global network brings together both electoral observation organisations, international agencies and institutions, aiming to develop and promote adherence to standards and guiding principles that address emerging threats to electoral integrity.

To enrich the global discussion on the independence of electoral bodies, MOE -through Red OIE- led in 2023 the elaboration of a Regional Balance in Latin America and the Caribbean on the autonomy of these institutions. This document aims to provide inputs for internal discussions within the GNSEI, stemming from the work of its technical groups, where key topics such as the creation of guidelines to safeguard the independence of electoral management bodies and the consolidation of global principles for democratic electoral reform processes have been addressed.

Additionally, MOE—through Red OIE— is part of the **Coordinating Committee of the Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors (GNDEM)**, a platform aimed at promoting representative, transparent, and democratic governance. The network seeks to advance methodologies for systematic, evidence-based electoral monitoring while strengthening the capacities of regional networks and non-partisan electoral monitoring organizations, facilitating knowledge exchange and interactive communication among its members. GNDEM brings together over 250 civil society organizations that conduct electoral observation in regions such as Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Eurasia, Europe, and the Middle East/North Africa.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight the experience of the MOE´s technical team in international electoral observation, demonstrated by their participation as experts in various electoral processes across Latin America. For instance, notable electoral observations have been carried out during the presidential elections in Bolivia (2018), Ecuador (2021), Mexico (2018 and 2024), and the Dominican Republic (2024), as well as in the legislative electoral processes in Haiti (2019), Honduras (2019), Mexico (2018 and 2024), and the Dominican Republic (2024).





 Red OIE: f RedOIElectoral/ X red_oie 	 GNSEI: https://www.usaid.gov/democracy/global-network-securing-electoral-integrity 	 GNDEM: f GNDEM/ X gndemexchanges 
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Throughout 18 years, MOE has received support from the following partners:

- » British Embassy in Colombia
- » CORDAID
- » European Union
- » Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen – IFA
- » International Republican Institute – IRI
- » Konrad Adenauer Stiftung – KAS
- » National Democratic Institute -NDI
- » National Endowment for Democracy – NED
- » Open Society Foundations
- » OXFAM
- » Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation – AECID
- » Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - SIDA
- » The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia
- » United Nations Democracy Fund – UNDEF
- » United States Agency for International Development – USAID
- » Westminster Foundation for Democracy



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