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ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE AND REFORMS PROJECT

Dates of project: June 12, 2017 – September 30, 2024

Budget: \$16,777,181

The Electoral Governance and Reforms Project seeks to strengthen key institutions and increase citizen voice and accountability in the political and electoral processes. To achieve this objective, the Program supports i) the effective implementation and enforcement of existing laws, including - particularly - the reforms of the Electoral and Political Parties Law (LEPP); ii) the technical capacity building of the (*Tribunal Supremo Electoral*, TSE) to ensure the integrity of the electoral system and the establishment and facilitation of effective communication channels between the TSE and civil society; iii) capacity building of civil society actors and media to carry out a systematic and effective observation of the 2023 electoral process; and, v) improvement of the conditions for dialogue and technical support, between civil society, the legislative branch and other institutional actors, regarding legal and institutional reforms necessary for a better functioning of the political-electoral system.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC APPROACH

The Program is designed to contribute to the entire territory of Guatemala; however, it has more focused areas of action in the Northeast (Alta Verapaz and Baja Verapaz), the North and Southwest (Totonicapán, Huehuetenango, San Marco, Quiché and Quetzaltenango) and the East (Chiquimula, Jutiapa, Jalapa and Zacapa).

The focus of the program is to work to overcome barriers and ensure greater access and inclusion of historically marginalized groups for the effective exercise of their political rights. As such, it prioritizes the effective political participation of youth, indigenous peoples, LGBTQI+ communities and persons with disabilities (PwDs).

CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The 2023 elections present a series of challenges that need to be effectively addressed to generate basic conditions of integrity. Endogenous factors of the electoral political system include the diffuse nature of certain electoral rules in force, low citizen confidence in institutions, and the fragmentation of the party system. Exogenous or contextual factors include accumulated territorial social conflict, increase in criminal violence and territorial control of organized crime, political polarization, use of disinformation strategies, and vulnerability of the financing system. These factors generate conditions that may affect the certainty, security, inclusion, and transparency of the electoral process.

Likewise, these challenges open a space to strengthen fundamental values of the Guatemalan political electoral system: the citizen-driven characteristics of its electoral bodies, the plurality of the political organization system and its long tradition of respect for electoral results and the effective alternation of power. CEPPS works with key institutions, civil organizations and social movements, the media, and other interested actors, to help ensure that the elections take place in the best organizational and competitive context.

APPROACH AND RESULTS

To address these challenges, the program is implemented to strengthen key institutions and increase citizen voices and accountability mechanisms in the political and electoral processes. To achieve this objective, the project implement the following activities: assistance to implementation and enforcement of existing laws, including past reforms of the Electoral and Political Parties Law (*Ley Electoral y de Partidos Políticos*, LEPP); the technical strengthening of the TSE; effective communication channels between the TSE and civil society; capacity of civil society actors and the media to carry out effective oversight of the upcoming electoral process; and, to a lesser extent this year, work to improve understanding between civil society, the legislature and other institutional actors on legal and institutional reforms necessary for the better functioning of the political-electoral system.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Implementing Partner: Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) conformed by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and International Republican Institute (IRI).

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