

Summative Program Evaluation Of

DFATD's Multilateral Elections Observation Program (MEOP)

2008-2013

Final Report

Submitted to:
PWCB/DFATD

Submitted by:
Plan:Net Limited

Thursday, March 20, 2014

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | I |
| Methodology | i |
| MEOP Overview and Strategic Partners | i |
| Main Program Findings | ii |
| Conclusions | vi |
| Lessons Learned | vi |
| Recommendations | vii |
| PART ONE - INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1 Rationale, Purpose, and Specific Objectives of the Evaluation | 1 |
| 1.2 Evaluation Approach and Methodology | 1 |
| 1.3 Evaluation Limitations/Risk Mitigation | 6 |
| 1.4 Organization of the Report | 6 |
| PART TWO – MULTILATERAL ELECTIONS OBSERVATION PROGRAM (MEOP) | 7 |
| 2.1 Historical Overview of Elections Observation Practice | 7 |
| 2.2 MEOP Program Design | 8 |
| 2.3 MEOP Objective and Design Components | 9 |
| 2.4 Partner Identification | 10 |
| 2.5 Activity and Expenditure Trends | 12 |
| PART THREE: MAIN FINDINGS ACCORDING TO DFATD'S PROGRAM-LEVEL EVALUATION INDICATORS | 14 |
| 3.1 Effectiveness | 14 |
| 3.2 Efficiency | 27 |
| 3.3 Relevance | 30 |
| 3.4 Sustainability | 31 |
| 3.5 Cross-Cutting Issues – Gender Equality, Environment, Governance | 33 |
| 3.6 Ownership | 38 |
| 3.7 Alignment | 39 |
| 3.8 Harmonization | 40 |
| 3.9 Results Based Management | 42 |
| 3.10 Mutual Accountability | 46 |
| 3.11 Design | 47 |
| 3.12 Risk Management | 51 |
| 3.13 Other Issues | 53 |
| PART FOUR: LESSONS LEARNED | 60 |
| 4.1 Lesson One | 61 |
| 4.2 Lesson Two | 63 |
| 4.3 Lesson Three | 63 |
| Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT | |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 4.4 Lesson Four | 63 |
| PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 64 |
| 5.1 Conclusions | 64 |
| 5.2 Recommendations | 65 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Figure 1-1: Objectives – 2013 Summative Evaluation Of Meop | 1 |
| Figure 1-2: Summary Of Evaluation Sources, Methods And Focus Of Inquiry | 3 |
| Figure 1-3: Number Of Key Informants, By Stakeholder | 4 |
| Figure 1-4: Data On Canadian Election Observer Interviews Conducted | 5 |
| Figure 2-1: Rules Of Conduct For International Observers | 7 |
| Figure 2-2: MEOP Programme Outputs And Outcomes | ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. |
| Figure 2-3: EOMs/Projects – Meop Deployment And Funding..... | ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. |
| Figure 3-1: MEOP Support For The Oas: Key Results | ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED. |
| Figure 3-2: The Electoral Cycle..... | 24 |
| Figure 3-3: Summary Of Key Discussion Topics At Implementation Meetings Of Declaration Of Principles And Code Of Conduct..... | 25 |
| Figure 3-4: Bilateral Vs. Multilateral Observation – Pros And Cons..... | 58 |

List of Annexes

| |
|------------------------------------|
| ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE |
| ANNEX B: EVALUATION WORK PLAN |
| ANNEX C: EVALUATION MATRIX |
| ANNEX D: REFERENCE DOCUMENTS |
| ANNEX E: KEY INFORMANTS |
| ANNEX F: DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS |

Acknowledgements

The PLAN:NET LIMITED evaluation team would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that contributed to this review of DFATD's Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP). Special thanks go to MEOP & DFATD staff for their considerable efforts in providing the evaluation team with documents and contact information. Special thanks also goes to CANADEM for providing us with contact lists for individual election observers and going the extra mile to answer our requests. The evaluators also wish to thank election observation managers at the Commonwealth Secretariat, OSCE-ODIHR, the EU, OAS, and Carter Center for their time in answering all of our questions and being excellent hosts. It is our hope that the findings and recommendations contained in this report will be of value to those who unselfishly provided their ideas, suggestions and comments during the study with a view to refining the important election observation and assistance work of MEOP and its multilateral partners.

Philip Cox
Corin Chater
Wayne Bobrosky

MEOP Evaluation Team

March 2014

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

List of Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| CAFP | Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians |
| CANADEM | Canadian NGO responsible for election observer contracting |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community and Common Market |
| CET | Commonwealth Expert Team |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| COMSEC | Commonwealth Secretariat |
| DECO | Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (OAS) |
| DFAIT | Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade |
| DFATD | Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| EMB | Electoral Management Body |
| EOM | Election Observation Mission |
| EU | European Union |
| GOC | Government of Canada |
| GOVNET | Government News Network |
| GPB | Geographic Program Branch |
| GPECS | Global Program for Electoral Cycle Support |
| IDEA | International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance |
| IEMI | International Elections Monitors Institute |
| IMRT | Investment Monitoring and Reporting Tool (CIDA) |
| IRR | Investment Performance Report (CIDA) |
| LFA | Logical Framework Analysis |
| LTO | Long-Term Observer |
| MEOP | Multilateral Elections Observation Program |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NGO | Non-governmental Organization |
| NORDEM | Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights |

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

| | |
|------------|--|
| OAS | Organization of American States |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD-DAC | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Cooperation Directorate |
| OSCE-ODIHR | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights |
| PMF | Performance Measurement Framework |
| PWCB | Partnership with Canadian Branch |
| RBM | Results-Based Management |
| SADC | South African Development Community |
| SPPB | Strategic Planning and Performance Branch |
| START | Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force |
| STO | Short-term Observer |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UFA | Utilization-Focused Approach |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

Executive Summary

This report provides the synthesis findings of the summative evaluation of DFATD's (formerly CIDA's) \$19.7 million Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP). The review period extends over five years, from 2008-2009 to 2012-2013. It is designed to satisfy a requirement under the Federal Accountability Act that all DFATD programs be evaluated within a five-year period and to address a series of program level issues that are specified in the Terms of Reference. The issues are organized under twelve standard evaluation criteria. Broadly speaking, the first four address achievement of development results –, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, and inclusion of cross-cutting themes. The second eight address management factors – efficiency, ownership, alignment, harmonization, mutual accountability, design, results-based management, and risk management. The review also comments on “other issues” raised in the TORs that do not conform specifically to the above-mentioned criteria.

The objectives of the evaluation are to identify MEOP's outcomes against actual results, determine the appropriateness of program design, identify lessons learned for the community of election observation practice and for DFATD and, finally, to provide recommendations for a potential future iteration of Canadian election support programming. Looking forward, DFATD's Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) is presently mandated to examine future options in elections observation programming. This evaluation is expected to inform their deliberations.

Methodology

Throughout the evaluation, the evaluation team maintained a three-level perspective: programmatic, institutional, and mission. We relied on program documentation including third-party reviews, to the extent that these were available. At the institutional level, the evaluators examined documents and held in person, key informant interviews with MEOP's multilateral partner organizations at their head offices. We also interviewed individual Canadian election observers who had participated in electoral observation missions. We met representatives of other donors and electoral observation service entities. Lastly we spoke with DFATD staff who were assigned MEOP roles during the five year cycle.

MEOP Overview and Strategic Partners

MEOP's main objective was “to increase access of eligible countries to credible, impartial and professional international election observers (including Canadians), through multilateral partners and in so doing, to help these countries adhere to international election standards”. In order to address this goal, MEOP utilized a two-tier strategy: direct funding for its international partner organizations to conduct election observation missions (with and/or without the participation of Canadian election observers) to recipient countries, which constituted the majority (>90%) of allocated program funding, and provision of resources for policy development and capacity building within both partner organizations as well as for the community of practice, which constituted just under 10% of MEOP's \$19.7 million budget.

In the program's third year, policy development projects and activities were dropped from MEOP's implementation strategy as a result of government decisions made outside of CIDA, leaving the program to focus exclusively on supporting the deployment of election observers in the field.

Toward the close of the five year cycle, the responsibility for the management of MEOP was transferred from Partnerships with Canadians Branch (formerly of CIDA), to the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (formerly of DFAIT). This change came on the heels of the amalgamation of CIDA with DFAIT.

There were seven strategic international and domestic partners. Four were funded exclusively to deploy observers for election missions: the Commonwealth Secretariat (COMSEC), European Union (EU), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights section of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE-ODIHR), and CANADEM. Two were funded for both deployments of missions as well as policy development/capacity building initiatives: the Organization of American States (OAS), and The Carter Center. One was funded to focus solely on policy development for the field of practice: the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

Particular attention in the evaluation is given to five organizations – COMSEC, EU, OSCE-ODIHR, OAS, and CANADEM, as they were the primary recipients of MEOP program funds and were responsible for the lion's share of program activities, in the form of arranging and implementing electoral observation missions (EOMs) to developing countries.

Main Program Findings

Since the commencement of the program, there was a discontinuity between MEOP's budget allocations and planned activities on the one hand, and its planned results on the other. From the start, the bulk of attention in the program was placed on the deployment of Canadians for participation in multilateral election observation missions (EOMs). Support geared to develop the international observation field of practice (policy development and capacity building mainly) was secondary. As such, only one of the three program outcomes – focused on the performance of the partner multilaterals – flowed from this activity in a plausible manner. The other two outcomes focused on downstream changes that could only come into the sphere of influence of a broader electoral support program.

Understanding this, the evaluation finds that MEOP succeeded in what it was originally intended to do, but was less successful in achieving the results outlined in its logic model.

From a multilateral partner perspective, MEOP was universally appreciated for the support received, though variously significant to the ability of partner organizations to plan for and field election observation missions to developing countries. And while its overall contribution in dollar terms was modest, MEOP also played an important role in the development of policy and capacities relating to election observation practice for partner organizations and for the international observation field of practice.

Key informants described a push within the field of practice for donors to take a more holistic approach to electoral observation and assistance in their program design. Specifically, mention was made of deepening consensus over the need to shift toward what is named as an "electoral cycle approach" and away from the event-driven programming that currently characterizes donor support to EOMs, including Canada's. This messaging is evident in OECD deliberations as well as in various documents recording annual discussions of organizations in their follow up meetings to the Declaration of International Observation Principles and Code of Conduct.

Internally within DFATD, and indeed in the case of many donor and multilateral organizations that support and implement EOMs, the evaluators learned that there is often a disconnect between divisions responsible for funding the implementation of missions, and those responsible for initiating projects that respond to mission report recommendations.

Judged against international best practices and standards in electoral observation, multilateral EOMs were viewed to be a more effective method of observing elections. Bilateral missions (which appear to be losing favour among donors) were characterized by stakeholders as possessing inherent flaws such as a greater potential for lack of neutrality and increased financial costs.

Canadian election observers were roundly perceived by partners to be a valuable asset in multilateral partner missions. Frequent mentions were made of their professional dispositions and their linguistic and cultural competencies, attributes that observers from other countries at times lacked.

The program did not directly contribute to any positive democratic development outcomes at the recipient country level, as no provision was made in the MEOP program design to either follow-up on EOM mission report recommendations, or to provide funding for capacity building projects at the country level to enhance democratic development, election transparency, or equal access within the political system.

More specifically, findings according to key evaluation criteria are as follows:

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of a program like MEOP would normally be judged against the results outlined in the initiative's logic model. In this instance, it was acknowledged by MEOP managers, and confirmed by the evaluators, that program expectations far exceeded what the program could reasonably be expected to achieve. If the actual intent of MEOP – as defined by the objectives, program components and budget allocations - as opposed to what was stated in its logic model, are assessed, then program results show as more positive: The following highlights the main findings under effectiveness.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

- MEOP made an important *contribution* to the election observation capacities of its main partners, though establishing the specific value-added of the Canadian contribution is difficult to do.
- The policy development component of MEOP, though cut short, tangibly assisted its partner organizations' abilities (among others) to field competent and effective EOMs.
- DFATD and MEOP's multilateral partners do not currently have mechanisms in place to follow-up on mission report recommendations, thus their ability to report on the progress of post-election policy or capacity development activities is not well developed.
- As a consequence of the above lack of follow-up, no direct evidence was found that MEOP contributed to equal gender participation in the electoral process.
- MEOP had little influence on the ability of its partner organizations to engage in electoral observation dialogue with recipient countries and other donors, outside of logistical and administrative elements.
- CANADEM, as Canada's EOM service provider has, by most accounts, performed competently sourcing, organizing, contracting, and providing training for Canadian participation in EOMs.
- Canadian participation in multilateral EOMs is generally viewed positively for reasons to do with their level of preparation and their linguistic and cultural competencies.

Efficiency

- It is difficult to assess how economically MEOP's multilateral partners converted inputs to outputs, due to many variables inherent in operationalizing EOMs.
- That said, all of MEOP partner organizations have developed standards of cost-effectiveness that they utilize when undertaking the logistics and administration of a mission.
- MEOP outputs were, to the best of the evaluator's knowledge, achieved on time and on budget.
- Contracting mechanisms with some of MEOP's partners (Commonwealth and OAS) enabled them to plan for and finance EOMs, however, a preference was stated for funding arrangements that would extend further than a year in duration. For other key MEOP partners (OSCE, EU, and CANADEM), the current contracting arrangements were found to work well.

Relevance

- MEOP dovetailed well with the priorities of its multilateral partners to conduct EOMs as a means of supporting democratic development at the country level. The program also aligned well with the international agreements that guide their EOM practices.

Sustainability

- There is no evidence, other than perhaps with the OAS, that Canada's financial support and contribution of observers has affected the internal management of partner EOMs. With or without Canadian assistance, partner organization EOMs would occur. However, for the Commonwealth and the OAS, funding challenges would be exacerbated.
- MEOP support has assisted one multilateral partner (the OAS) in leveraging funds (for both operationalizing EOMs as well as contributions for internal capacity development) from many other donors,
- And Canadian assistance channelled through three policy development/capacity building projects has contributed to the development of partner EOM standards and practices.

Cross-Cutting Issues

- Though the majority of MEOP's partner organizations already had gender protocols, manuals, and training regimes in place, the program did assist the OAS in creating a manual on gender integration in EOMs that has been recognized by the election observer field as a best practice document.
- Environment as a cross-cutting issue is not relevant to MEOP, a fact originally confirmed through CIDA's own internal assessment.
- From a governance perspective, there is no evidence that MEOP has had an effect on the ability of its partner organizations to be more strategic in terms of donor or other EOM organization coordination. The only real influence was on the ability of the partners using the grant arrangement – the OAS and the Commonwealth - to plan for EOMs.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

- MEOP support for policy development activities in the first two years of the program assisted with the development of professional observation best practices that are utilized by the entire field of practice.
- The evaluation was unable to determine any improvements in election governance in Ukraine, Honduras, and Nicaragua. What is important here is that partner organizations acknowledge that they have insufficient capacity, at this point, to track the follow through of EOM recommendations and trends in election management.

Ownership

- MEOP partners possessed a very high degree of ownership over the program. They had both the authority and ability to make decisions regarding the design and management of their EOMs, and were therefore able to deliver effective EOM programming, independent of donors, host country representatives, and others. MEOP's contribution was important, but was not a key determining factor in partner organizations' EOM design or execution.

Alignment

- MEOP's support for electoral observation, both from an operational and policy point of view, has mirrored current priorities within the general field of practice. Its partners have been key players in the development of international observation principles and in subsequent efforts to develop standards and professional practices.
- DFATD does not attempt to influence multilateral partner EOM priorities, but it does have a say in which specific countries it wishes to fund multilateral EOMs. This does not, however, violate the principle of alignment. It simply impacts the degree of flexibility the organization has to allocate resources to its EOM commitments.

Harmonization

- On a variety of levels (internally within DFATD, among donors, among multilateral partners, between DFATD and other Canadian organizations that are interested in EOM work, and at the country-level between Canadian observers and Canadian officials), the level of harmonization and communication is low, and there are few mechanisms by which discussion and knowledge sharing with respect to EOMs occurs.

Results-Based Management

- Some of the results claims in the MEOP logic model are implausible and out of sync with the program's purpose.
- The program risk management schema and performance measurement framework were never fully developed and the total RBM program level "package" was never updated to account for program learning or changing circumstances.
- It is not clear that there was sufficient dedicated program management and program level engagement among partner organizations.
- Despite these shortcomings, partners have produced project level reporting that has allowed the program to produce a program level narrative of achievement, at least at the output level.

Mutual Accountability

- MEOP program results were largely the responsibility of multilateral partners rather than DFATD. There is little evidence of contact between partner organization management and MEOP managers at headquarters. As a result, aside from supervising funding arrangements with partners, the role of DFATD personnel in the functioning of MEOP was minor.

Design

- MEOP, as well as its implanting partners, did not attempt to engage "end user" stakeholders - governments and citizens at the recipient country level - in the design of the program. This is understandable given the limited reach of the program (to the multilateral partners) and the emergent nature of election observer activities within the program life cycle.
- MEOP was hastily designed to address shortcomings in previous iterations of Canadian support for EOMs.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

- By most accounts it represents a considerable improvement, from an administrative point of view, over its predecessors.
- That said, the program, as a highly political file, has been subject to influences of senior government officials not directly connected with MEOP management.
- The Framework Agreement that has governed CIDA's relationship with CANADEM is seen as very effective from an administrative and operational perspective, in terms of putting Canadian election observer "individuals on the ground"
- With respect to a whole-of-government approach, MEOP has been effective in convening various Departments with an interest in the EOM file in a constructive manner.

Risk Management

- There was no evidence that any outcome or output-level risks identified in MEOP's logic model came to fruition during the program cycle. As a result, there was no need to implement the mitigation strategies that were anticipated.
- The evaluators were made aware of two additional risk areas of concern: security risks and political risks as part of EOMs. With respect to the former, adequate steps were taken by multilateral partners to mitigate any concerns, and regarding the latter, mitigation strategies would be to ensure that any country that receives an EOM is properly assessed against democratic indicators prior to deployment.

Other Issues

The evaluators were asked to address some "other issues" of interest to MEOP managers:

- The MEOP Program was found to be, for both the Canadian government as well as multilateral partner organizations, an improvement over previous iterations of Canadian support for EOMs in the following ways:
 - simplified and streamlined contracting of partners and of individual observers
 - unified management of election observer support activities
 - clearer road map for priority setting
 - inclusion of a policy development component, albeit modest in dollar terms
- Regarding the question of adding multilateral organizations as partners to implement EOMs, the evaluation - after a scan of potential candidates - finds that La Francophonie is the only candidate at present with sufficient capacity and experience to manage EOMs.
- In terms of an appropriate method to attribute Canadian participation in EOMs, any effort to do so in a multilateral mission would be inconsistent with the principle of anonymity. However, in a bilateral mission, it would be obvious. An effective, alternative method of promoting Canadian support for electoral observation would be to promote policy development and capacity building efforts for the field of practice.
- According to the majority of stakeholder groups interviewed, multilateral EOMs are eminently preferable to bilateral EOMs, as the latter, at least in the case of Canada's bilateral missions to Ukraine, have proven to be of greater expense as well as lacking in professionalism and neutrality. The only advantage to a bilateral mission is the visibility it gives the donor country, though as many sources have suggested, this visibility is not always positive.
- In terms of best practices in the field that were identified by stakeholders that donors could consider funding into the future, the following were most significant:
- Viewing of an election as an event in the electoral cycle rather than a single "one-off" activity, and thus adjusting programming accordingly.
- Ensuring all election observers receive appropriate professional training.
- Greater emphasis on addressing recommendations emanating out of EOM mission reports.
- Training of electoral officials at the country-level in EOM best practices, with the view that they will eventually be able to take over from external observers.

Conclusions

In the past five years, MEOP facilitated the deployment of about 650 Canadian election observers on two bilateral and more than 70 multilateral election observation missions in over 50 countries, including Haiti, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Mozambique, Sudan and South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Senegal. These Canadian observers took part in electoral observation missions implemented by the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States and The Carter Center. Canadian observers participated in election observation missions at the Presidential, Legislative, Parliamentary, and Provincial level. Canada's contribution as a percentage of the total number observers deployed by these organizations was about 6%¹. Deployment of Canadians into observer roles, more than anything, is what MEOP was designed to deliver; most of the budget was earmarked for this purpose. And, by all accounts, the program did it well.

Judged against its own program logic, MEOP came up short. Fault cannot be traced to poor performance, however. Rather it lies with the results expectations that were set. By design, MEOP overreached. With some of the outcomes focused on the performance of electoral management bodies and on male and female voter patterns, MEOP had the logic model of a wider spectrum, electoral assistance program where observation is part of a larger package of support that includes post observation follow-up and capacity building.

There is an important backdrop to MEOP, a coalescing of opinion on a global scale about what constitutes good practices in election observation. Among other things, this opinion leans toward: a prominent role for multi-lateral and/or regional organizations, greater continuity between observation and assistance related to recommendations, harmonization of international and domestic observation practices, context appropriate standards and measurement, and methodology adaptations to keep observation practices attuned to technological advances in electoral practices. Donors are being challenged in this discourse to coordinate with each other and to broaden support beyond that of deploying observers.

This leaves the evaluators to question whether there are alternative ways to support electoral observation - ways that retain focus on the democracy building goals of observation, while also yielding some foreign policy advantage to Canada. This is, perhaps, part of the inquiry that START is making as they consider a future iteration of election observer programming. Assuming it is, we urge that close consideration be given to scenarios that are attuned to the Declaration of International Observation Principles, the Code of Conduct and more recent agreements that have flowed from these landmark documents.

Lessons Learned

Following the holistic review of the MEOP program, the evaluators offer the following lessons learned which are meant to inform a potential future iteration of MEOP:

- If donors and their partners integrate electoral observation and electoral assistance initiatives programmatically and organizationally, then they will leverage, more fully, the contribution that each set of activities has to make to democratic development. This point addresses the shortcomings in support for electoral *assistance*, as opposed to *observation*, which is a common deficiency of donor support. Electoral observation is only one aspect of democratic development, and without any follow-up activities or projects that directly *assist* state governments in their democratic development efforts, little progress will likely be achieved.
- Investment by donors in systems that track the passage of recommendations, post EOM, will support: a) much needed evidence based decision-making in the design and delivery of observation and follow on assistance, and b) the ability of the international community to assess electoral management practices, country by country, against accepted standards.
- Multilateral election observation missions are more likely to contribute to and realize improvements in democratic development at a country level than are bilateral initiatives.
- When questions arise as to the optimal personnel configuration of an EOM, participation of professional election observers and the inclusion of "eminent" individuals in missions are not mutually exclusive. It is perfectly appropriate to include "eminent" individuals as part of EOMs, so long as they are just as professionally trained as any other observer.

¹ These numbers are taken from Figure 2-3 in Section 2 of the report. As noted in the table, deployment and expenditure figures are estimates only. The 6% participation rate is derived by extracting the bilateral from the total EOM count (i.e. 452/7418).

Recommendations

The evaluator's recommendations, outlined below, are based upon the above findings and lessons learned. They are intended to inform and provide a basis for discussion for DFATD as well as to outline some appropriate strategies if a future iteration of MEOP is proposed.

1. DFATD, in order to achieve a greater level of clarity in terms of programming responsibility, define and codify in a clear management structure how different parts of the Department relate to both multilateral partners and each other for both contracting aspects and project implementation following EOMs, as these will likely be the responsibility of different sections.
2. CANADEM continue to be utilized as the primary agency responsible for training, contracting, and fielding of individual Canadian election observers.
3. DFATD allocate resources in the next iteration of MEOP for projects and initiatives that better reflect the electoral cycle approach as opposed to MEOP's current emphasis on election-day only.
4. In any future iteration of program support for election observation, DFATD ensure a) the development and maintenance of a robust program management schema – a broadly owned, realistic logic model, and a risk management and performance measurement system, b) the requisite number of person-hours to manage for program results.
5. Funding is re-allocated for continued support of capacity building and policy development initiatives with multilateral partners.
6. DFATD consider adding La Francophonie to its stable of EOM implementing organizations.
7. If Canada chooses to operationalize a greater number of bilateral EOMs in the future, it is recommended that it take care to screen for bias in the selection process and ensure that all participating observers, including "eminent" observers, receive comprehensive professional training in electoral observation conduct and best practices.
8. In term of funding modalities, that DFATD institute longer-term grant arrangements with the OAS and COMSEC. For the program's other three main implementing partners (EU, OSCE, CANADEM), it is also recommended that the contribution agreement mechanism (and in the case of CANADEM, framework agreement) remain in place.

Part One - Introduction

Part One describes the basis for this evaluation of the Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP).

1.1 Rationale, Purpose, and Specific Objectives of the Evaluation

MEOP drew to a close on November 23rd 2013. This is a summative evaluation focused on two key uses. The first is to add key practice insights to the election observation body of knowledge – understanding that this is a dynamic time of innovation in the field. As such, the evaluation is expected to inform current and potential future cooperation partners. The second use is to inform decision-making about the design of a possible future election observer program. In February 2013, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade instructed CIDA to transfer responsibility for MEOP to DFAIT (now DFATD). The Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) within the amalgamated Department now carries responsibility for election observation programming and is presently mandated to examine future options in elections observation programming. This evaluation is expected to inform their deliberations.

The evaluation is to document achievements against anticipated results, in particular those that relate to the capacities and performance of partner multilateral organizations – i.e. their governance and management of EOMs, and their observation practices in the field. It is also intended to examine MEOP's design and program management.

The rationale and purpose of the evaluation is understood as stated in the TORs (Annex A); and the intent is to reflect that understanding in this summative report.

Figure 1-1: Objectives – 2013 Summative Evaluation of MEOP

- Identify MEOP 2008-13 actual outcomes against expected results
- Determine the appropriateness of program design
- Assess the cost-benefit of the investment: its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability
- Identify lessons learned and provide recommendations for the improvement of a possible future iteration of MEOP
- Provide feedback to MEOP's cooperation partners that can inform their organizational and programming improvement efforts.

Source: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Regarding the first item in Figure 1-1 related to the assessment of actual against expected results, the TOR's focus primary attention on just one of the three outcomes provided in the logic model, that is, "to provide effective, relevant, and timely assessments of and recommendations for [MEOP-supported] elections"². The TORs also state that primary attention is also to be given to the evolution of strategic and general governance within MEOP's cooperation partner organizations as it affects their management of EOMs. This caveat appears to point to an acknowledgement within DFATD that the other two outcome statements – one focused on the performance of election management bodies in the conduct of elections, and the other on men and women participation in the electoral process – exceed reasonable expectations for this program. This is discussed fully in Section 3.9.

1.2 Evaluation Approach and Methodology

This section describes the way the evaluation was designed and carried out.

Evaluation Approach

The TORs specified that in addition to servicing accountability relationships, this evaluation is to share lessons learned from election observation practice with cooperation partners and those mandated to design a possible future phase of MEOP. Accordingly, the team has adopted a Utilization Focused Approach (UFA) with its hallmark emphasis on stakeholder engagement in the design of the inquiry and in the analysis of its results (see

² Quoted from the 'OUTCOMES' section of the 2008-2013 MEOP LFA.

Evaluation Workplan, Annex B). It is a particularly relevant approach for a program that is supporting a very dynamic field of practice and that may well have another life cycle beyond the close of this one. The choice of UFA is underpinned by research that shows that intended users are more likely to use evaluations if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation process and findings.

Implicit in utilization focused approaches is the notion that evaluation is a process of discovery and mutual learning – wherein evaluators continually sharpen their inquiry and users increasingly see possible ways in which the evaluation can help their teams make wise program design and management decisions into the future.

Use of UFA in this assignment required a process of collecting data and making judgments of MEOP's merit - i.e. performance to expectations - and worth - i.e. value-added to development partners and, to the extent possible election bodies and processes within EOM host countries. The success of this process hinged on a trust relationship and on meaningful engagement with key stakeholder groups within DFATD and each partner organization.

In adopting a utilization-focused approach, the evaluators were cognizant that they had to retain evaluative independence from MEOP – that engagement notwithstanding - it was ultimately the team's role to make merit and worth judgments on the subject matter identified in the TORs.

There was no mid-program assessment of MEOP. This is the only evaluation exercise that has been undertaken at the program level.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation team formulated and implemented a non-experimental, mixed methods design with a commitment to collect: a) quantitative data – mostly referenced to pre-established MEOP program indicators and, b) qualitative data – mostly focused on stakeholder accounts of progress against program expectations and implementation aspects. Triangulation was sought by asking different stakeholder groups similar questions derived from the evaluation matrix and from checking accounts against reportage and evaluative material where it existed.

The Evaluation Matrix (Annex C) served as the guiding document for information collection. It outlined the various questions, indicators, and data sources (amongst other variables) that were present during the data collection process. The matrix was anchored by key questions. These were taken from the TORs. The evaluators drafted exploratory sub-questions to assist in addressing them. For the most part these provided the basis for writing our interview protocols.

Our methodology was formulated following a preliminary review of key documentation provided by DFATD and some key partner organizations, an internal review of electoral observation literature, and discussions with DFATD and partner organization managers.

The evaluation team maintained a three-tiered perspective in addressing the key evaluation questions set out in the TORs, employing a review of primary and secondary data:

- Programmatic – an examination of delivery mechanisms/strategies – specifically the advantages and disadvantages of the grants and contributions mechanisms, as well as MEOP results against expectations
- Institutional – an examination of the (continuing) relevance of partner (principally OAS, Commonwealth Secretariat, European Union, OSCE-ODIHR, CANADEM) mandates to the MEOP program, their performance in managing MEOP-funded activities (election observation missions, technical assistance initiatives, and best practice development), and the outcomes of the results flowing from these activities in terms of contributions to democratic development and governance in the host countries.
- Mission – design, delivery and results of MEOP-funded initiatives, generally individual EOMs though including an analysis of best practices in the EOM community of practice.

At all levels, the evaluators utilized two key methods of evaluation inquiry:

- Document review – including program/project strategy and approval documents (including logic models and performance measurement frameworks), work plans, annual reports, monitoring and/or evaluation reports, mission reports, and general EOM best practice documents. One key evaluation report at the program level was the 2006 assessment of CIDA's election observation programming. It, along with a detailed final report of MEOP's predecessor election observation program, captured well the state of

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

play in the field of election observation and the status of Canadian support in the lead up to MEOP. Evaluation and progress reports were sought for each MEOP partner organization, though it is understood that due to the funding mechanism for some partners, these were not available in all cases. The team gleaned evaluative data from these reports and also assessed the quality of the documents themselves. The evaluation team reviewed key strategy and reporting documents of the partner institutions as well as the wider field of evaluation literature for insights on the design and delivery of analogous election observation programs. A list of documents reviewed is set out in Annex D.

- Interviews – six key stakeholder groups offered insight about the implementation, operations, and results of Canadian support to EOMs. The chart below identifies these stakeholder groups, relevant contacts, data collection method(s), and the focus of the interview questions.

| Figure 1-2: Summary of Evaluation Sources, Methods and Focus of Inquiry | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| MEOP Evaluation Stakeholder Groups/Data Sources | Interviewees | Data Collection Method | Evaluation Focus |
| Primary Partner Organizations (CANADEM, OAS, Commonwealth Secretariat, EU, OSCE-ODIHR, Carter Centre, UNDP) | Directors, Program Managers, Operations/Logistics Coordinators | In-Person Individual and/or Group Interviews Telephone/Skype Interviews | MEOP Results Best Practices in EOMs Operations of EOMs Partner Performance |
| Canadian GoC Whole of Government EOM parties (DFATD {PWCB, Foreign Affairs}) | Current and Former Directors, Program Managers, Partner Organization GoC Liaisons | In-Person Individual and/or Group Interviews Telephone/Skype Interviews | MEOP Results Best Practices in EOMs Interactions amongst GoC Partner Performance |
| Individual Canadian Election Observers (LTOs and STOs) | Canadians who have participated in Primary Partner Organization EOMs | Telephone/Skype Interviews | Operations of EOMs Best Practices in EOMs Partner Performance |
| Other Donor Organizations (USAID, DFID) to EOMs | Directors, Program Managers | In-Person Individual and/or Group Interviews Telephone/Skype Interviews | Best Practices in EOMs Operations of EOMs |
| Other EOM Implementing Organizations (NORDEM, Swiss EOM body) | Directors, Program Managers | Telephone/Skype Interviews | Best Practices in EOMs Operations of EOMs |

Cooperation partners and key GOC agencies were the primary stakeholder groups in this evaluation. In both instances, the team attempted to interview key informants at the senior management and EOM program/project operations levels with implementing partners.

Our field mission lasted ten days during the last week of October/first week of November 2013. Figure 1-3 shows the number of key stakeholders interviewed during the mission (A full list of names is offered in Annex E).

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

| Figure 1-3: Number of Key Informants, by Stakeholder | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Key Stakeholder | Location | Number of Persons Interviewed |
| OAS State Department | Washington D.C. | 4 |
| Commonwealth Secretariat | London | 2 |
| European Union | Brussels | 1 |
| OSCE-ODIHR | Warsaw | 2 |
| DFATD CANADEM | Ottawa/Gatineau Washington, London, Brussels | 13 |

Interviews consisted of individual or group meetings with top EOM managers at partner organizations. In all instances the evaluators were able to find the individuals most closely involved in the management of the grant or contribution agreement with DFATD. The line of inquiry encompassed the search for normative and descriptive insight as well as evidence of causality (see, the Evaluation Matrix, Annex C). Often the evaluators would leave the interview with project documentation to supplement insights gained through the conversation.

In Washington and Brussels, we spoke with DFATD field staff to glean insight about MEOP delivery and partner working relationships from their perspectives. The majority of our meetings lasted about two hours. When identified individuals were not available in person, we held interviews by telephone or Skype.

In addition to face-to-face informant interviews, the evaluators conducted telephone/Skype interviews with other key stakeholders. These included the Atlanta based partner, The Carter Center, and another EOM implementing organization (NORDEM), that play a similar role to CANADEM in Norway. In the case of The Carter Center, our line of inquiry focused on best practices in election observation, new developments in EOMs, and on the partnering relationship with MEOP. Regarding NORDEM, discussions centred on best practices in EOM policy and programme development on a global scale.

During November, the evaluators conducted telephone/Skype interviews with a sample of the nearly 600 MEOP sponsored election observers deployed in the life of the program. Our interviews sought insight on the partner organizations' EOM operations, the efficacy of Canadian participation and on innovative trends and best practices observed. In our work plan, we proposed to interview 10 Canadian observers from each partner organization for a total of up to 50 individuals, with an intention to strive for an equal gender ratio amongst interviewees.

In addition, we intended that:

- 40% of those interviewed (or twenty individuals) would have participated in multiple EOMs in Ukraine, Nicaragua, and Honduras, providing insight into the evolution of elections capacity and democratization in these three countries
- 60% (or 30 individuals) would have participated in EOMs that represent the entire partner organization universe minus those three countries
- for each partner organization a minimum of two of the 10 observers would be LTOs

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

In the interests of balancing “randomness” with the value of capturing prize insight, the evaluators invited recommendations from partners regarding specific individual observers to interview. In these instances, individuals were those that had acted as EOM leaders.

The evaluators approached CANADEM for a list of Canadian election observers deployed for the five-year funded MEOP cycle. CANADEM responded with a list of 239 Canadian observers deployed from 2009-2012. In doing so, they noted a lack of representation of Canadian observers for COMSEC and OAS missions explaining that deployment of Canadian observers for these missions has usually occurred directly and therefore outside of the CANADEM agreement under MEOP (the organization does provide observer recommendations, on request).

With a list of 239 participants in hand, the evaluators randomly selected six participants (with a 50/50 gender split) in partner missions with CANADEM, OAS, EU, OSCE/ODIHR, and COMSEC. While the sample was large enough to select six each for CANADEM, OAS, EU, and OSCE/ODIHR, this was not the case for COMSEC. Canadian participation in COMSEC missions has been minimal (13 observers from 2008-2012). As it turned out, only one name was on the CANADEM list.

Adding to this list of 25 names, the evaluators randomly selected a further 18 election observers who had been involved with both of the bilateral missions to Ukraine in 2010 with OSCE. We also included one election observer who had participated in both missions to Nicaragua in 2011/2012. We capped the list of observers with a further four observers for a total of 48. CANADEM contacted these individuals to seek consent for the PlanNet team to contact them.

Of those 48 names submitted to CANADEM, 31 election observers gave their consent to be contacted; along with one local election observer who was known to the Evaluators and lived in Calgary. The Evaluators sent e-mails to the consented election observer list and coordinated telephone/Skype interviews that mostly occurred during the week of November 11-15, 2013. Of the 31 election observers that were contacted by the evaluators, 29 were interviewed (plus the local observer who was interviewed in person) for a total of 30 interviews.

It should be noted that the evaluators attempted to attain as representative a sample from the various partner organizations as possible, however the majority of Canadian election observer names provided by CANADEM were involved with missions sponsored by OSCE/ODIHR. In the end, we did not receive names of Canadian observers from the other partners. As a result, the sample numbers are somewhat skewed in favor OSCE/ODIHR participants. This could impact the validity of the sample. All Canadian election observers interviewed were presented with the same set of questions from the interview protocols. In many instances these observers had conducted missions with other partner organizations as well. Overall we noted a high degree of consistency in their sharing of EOM themes and findings.

In the end, the Evaluators were successful in getting equal gender representation; and attempted to get a significant number of interviewees who had participated as LTOs. Many of the election observers were very experienced and had been involved in EOMs with more than one partner organizations. The breakdown of election observer interview data is shown in Figure 1-4, below.

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Number of Observers Interviewed | 30 |
| Number of Males (Percentage of Sample) | 15 (50%) |
| Number of Females (Percentage of Sample) | 15 (50%) |
| Total Number of EOMs by Canadian observers interviewed by the evaluators | 101 |
| Total number of Short-term (STO) missions | 78 |
| Total number of Long-term (LTO) missions | 21 |
| Total number of Core Team Member or Middle Term Observer Missions | 2 |
| EOMs with European Union (percentage of total missions) | 27 (27%) |
| EOMs with OSCE/ODIHR (percentage of total missions) | 41 (41%) |
| EOMs with OAS (percentage of total missions) | 25 (25%) |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| EOMs with COMSEC (percentage of total missions) | 3 (3%) |
| EOMS with Carter Centre (percentage of total missions) | 5 (5%) |

Due to privacy concerns and at the request of partner organizations, names of the individual election observers are not provided.

In the process of developing our protocols, the evaluators allocated key questions to multiple informant groups to the extent that these groups would be able to provide insight. This is reflected in the data source column in the evaluation matrix. During analysis and writing, the evaluators looked for patterns of congruence/divergence in the responses of the different key informant groups (sub groups).

The evaluators approached the collection of gender disaggregated/sensitive data as follows:

- analysis of original gender analysis at the program and project levels and the formulation of gender expectations
- tracing of “follow through” on the above mentioned expectations in project/program document
- surveys
- reports
- specific questioning of partner key informants (including CANADEM) and of observers on the observed degree of integration of gender considerations in recruitment and deployment and in the observer process and reporting, and the level of attribution to MEOP.

Data collection protocols are included in Annex F.

1.3 Evaluation Limitations/Risk Mitigation

In the evaluability study, the consultants drew attention to the following:

- the limited availability of program reports
- financial and deployment data that combined estimates with final figures and did not encompass the entire program period
- the MEOP log frame design as a primary reference for assessing results achievement

These constraints continued to be a factor in the conduct of the evaluation and are duly noted in the appropriate sections. Regarding financial and deployment data, documentation provided by DFATD was often contradictory, as were the numbers provided by partner organizations to the evaluation team. The source of the confusion can, in part, be traced to a partner practice of accounting for Canadian contributions as part of a pool of donor resources. Additionally, the evaluators were only able to obtain total observer figures for the final year of the program from the OAS.

The evaluators encountered one further constraint in our attempt to capture comparative data from electoral processes in three identified countries – Ukraine, Nicaragua and Honduras - where MEOP supported EOMs had taken place within the evaluation period. We were unable to gather data on the uptake of observer report recommendations and instead learned that this aspect of the electoral cycle poses a significant challenge to observer organizations globally. Our attempt to secure from MEOPs multilateral partner the names of potential key informants within election management bodies also proved unsuccessful. As a result, the evaluation comes up short in being able to provide insight into MEOP’s progress vis-a-vis its first outcome related to the performance of election management bodies.

There were no significant areas of divergence among team members with regard to findings. Findings emerging from the observer interviews were consistent from those obtained through visits to partner organizations.

1.4 Organization of the Report

The report is organized into five parts. Part One describes the mandate and design of this evaluation. Part Two describes the rationale, goal and other defining features of MEOP itself. Part Three provides evaluation findings and commentary related to the evaluation issues and key questions outlined in the TORs. Part Four reflects on

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

lessons learned through the design and delivery of the program. Finally, Part 5 provides an overarching conclusion and recommendations for the future of Canadian support for electoral assistance programming.

Part Two – Multilateral Elections Observation Program (MEOP)

Part Two describes the origins and current features of MEOP and sets it within the context of an emerging global election observation practice.

2.1 Historical Overview of Elections Observation Practice

International organizations have monitored election activities since the first World War, but it is really only in the past two decades that the practice has become established in what has been described as a period of democratization in many parts of the world.

2005 marked the culmination of a global collaboration of international organizations to set in place a code of practice for election observation. In October of that year, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed a gathering at the United Nations to endorse a Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. He said,

“The presence of international election observers, fielded always at the invitation of sovereign states can make a big difference in ensuring that elections genuinely move the democratic process forward. Their mere presence can dissuade misconduct, ensure transparency, and inspire confidence in the process”. – Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan

The Principles describe the practice as the, “comprehensive and accurate gathering of information concerning the laws, processes and institutions related to the overall conduct of elections and other factors concerning the overall election environment (Article 4)...” It states that international election observation evaluates pre-election, election day and post election periods through comprehensive, long term observation, employing a variety of techniques (Article 5)...”

The main requirements for ethical and professional observation are set out in Figure 2-1. Since 2005, these have been adopted by growing list of international organizations that presently numbers 45. The list includes inter-governmental organizations regional parliaments, foundations, NGOs and civil society networks.

Figure 2-1: Rules of Conduct for International Observers

There is a growing international consensus on what constitutes good practice in election observation. In October 2005 the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers was formally endorsed at the UN by representatives of 22 organizations. By April 2013, the list had grown to 45 organizations and it remains open to future endorsement.

Several organizations that specialize in international observation – including ODHIR, the EU, the Commonwealth, OAS and The Carter Centre - have developed their own guidelines that are derived from the Declaration and Code. The main requirements for ethical and professional observation are as follows:

- **Respect the sovereignty of the host country.** To maintain the credibility and effectiveness of their election observation mission, international observers must respect the laws of the host country and the rules of its election management body. They must not attempt to give instructions to electoral administrators or interfere with governance of the country being observed. They must also respect accreditation rules during their mission.
- **Objectivity.** To be effective, international observation must be objective and non-partisan, and must provide balanced reports. Objectivity protects the credibility of the mission and helps maintain the integrity of the electoral process. When observers do their work, they must be very careful not to show a preference for any particular party or candidate lest they compromise the objectivity required for preparing impartial reports.
- **Non-interference in the election process.** International observers must not interfere with the work of electoral

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

administrators. Their mandate is not to supervise, correct mistakes or resolve local conflicts, but only to observe, report and assess.

- **Accuracy.** The reliability of the observation and assessment depends on the accuracy with which international observers report the facts. Many of the observers do not have an opportunity to observe the entire electoral process; accordingly, they must avoid generalizing on the basis of limited observations. Observation reports should clearly indicate the basis for the information presented, and not extrapolate beyond it.
- **Avoiding conflicts of interest.** Election observation should be kept strictly separate from technical assistance for elections. International observers should not be engaged in electoral assistance activities in the country where they are observing (for example, assisting electoral administrators, developing electoral legislation or training election staff). Professional and credible assessment of an electoral process requires reasonable separation from the administration being observed.

Taken from ACE Electoral Knowledge Network - <http://aceproject.org/> Originally sourced from: Bjornlund, Eric C., Beyond Free and Fair: Monitoring Elections and Building Democracy, Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2004 (go to: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org>)

The launch of the Declaration and accompanying Code of Conduct for International Election Observers has set in motion a proliferation of activities among signatories including those to:

- professionalize and standardize observation practices,
- support knowledge capture and communication,
- keep abreast of technological advances in registration and voting processes,
- establish working models of cooperation with domestic observer groups,
- improve post election follow up on observation recommendations, and
- foster donor coordination.

Annual follow-on meetings of signatories provide a forum for discussion and coordination. A summary of follow-on meeting agenda items can be found in Figure 3-1.

2.2 MEOP Program Design

MEOP Design and Set up

Canada (largely through Elections Canada) has supported democratic development processes internationally since the 1980s. In 1994, CIDA, DFAIT and Elections Canada jointly launched the Electoral Assistance Program and a year later CIDA assumed management of the program under a policy initiative for the Agency on Human Rights, Democratization and Good Governance. Throughout this early period, deployment of Canadian observers was managed directly by government. In a roughly ten-year period starting in 1995, CIDA organized 88 missions involving 400 election observers in developing countries; in most instances, missions were organized on a bilateral basis (by invitation of a host country).

The design of MEOP draws on the accumulation of practical insight from this foundational period of Canadian elections programming. Much of this insight was generated through the implementation of Canada Corps (created in 2004) and later the Office of Democratic Governance (ODG) at CIDA. Between 2004 and 2008, a further 19 election observation missions (bilateral and multilateral) were organized involving over 1,000 observers. They were fielded in cooperation with (then) Foreign Affairs Canada, Elections Canada and the Department of National Defence and with increasing reliance on a third party national recruitment system (CANADEM)³.

The set up of MEOP within CIDA took some turns following inception in 2008 largely as part of an agency wide re-structuring. Early on, ODG was moved within the Multilateral Branch of CIDA and later to the Partnership with Canadians Branch (PWCB). While there ODG was renamed the Governance Unit and in a subsequent move, Governance and Economic Growth programming areas were amalgamated within a single directorate. Most recently, with the amalgamation of CIDA and DFAIT, the governance portfolio has been given to the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START).

3 In September 2002, CANADEM was awarded the administration of the CIDA Election Assistance Program (EAP), previously managed directly by the CIDA Voluntary Sector Division. CANADEM's contract to administer this program was then competitively renewed in October 2004. The EAP contract was scheduled to run until July 31, 2007. However through a number of Amendments it was extended until December 31, 2008.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

Sources of Insight

MEOP’s design also draws from lessons learned outside of Canada. As noted above, the past fifteen years have been a formative time for the field of observation practice.

From initial conversations and a scan of the literature, there appear to be at least four major areas of insight guiding program design.

- **A shift from an election “event” to an election “cycle” focus** - a growing international consensus that the scope of election observation practice should encompass more than just the scrutiny of the election itself; that it should examine the election within the context of the country’s political development.
- **Movement from bilateral to multilateral election observer missions (EOMs)** – best practice research pointing toward support for multi-lateral election observation over bi-lateral; the claim being that they: minimize the burden on receiving countries, are perceived to be more impartial, and are less risky and more cost effective due to the expertise and specialized capacity acquired in these organizations.
- **From “ad hoc” to “strategic” deployment of observers** - a growing Canadian consensus that our support for election observation should be guided by a Canadian strategy and implementation framework that is shaped by our foreign policy or development objectives; that it should be less diffused in its organization across and within government agencies.
- **From direct to third party observer deployment** – starting in 2002 for cost effectiveness and liability reasons, mainly, CIDA outsourced the handling of EOMs (multi-lateral and bilateral) to the NGO, CANADEM. CANADEM took over the observer rosters previously held by Elections Canada and CIDA and assumed the role of screening and selecting candidates for identified EOMs. It took over responsibility for all mission related logistics from pre-departure arrangements and briefings to deployment to post-mission re-integration.

2.3 MEOP Objective and Design Components

MEOP’s main objective as described in the Program Approval Documents is, “to increase access of eligible countries to credible, impartial and professional international election observers (including Canadians), through multilateral partners and in so doing, to help these countries adhere to international election standards”. In order to address this goal, MEOP utilized a two-tier strategy: direct funding for its international partner organizations to conduct election observation missions (with and/or without the participation of Canadian election observers) to recipient countries, which constituted the majority (>90%) of allocated program funding, and provision of resources for policy development and capacity building within both partner organizations as well as for the community of practice, which constituted just under 10% of MEOP’s entire \$19.7 million budget. In the program’s third year, policy development projects and activities were dropped from MEOP’s implementation strategy as a result of government decisions made outside of CIDA, leaving the program to focus exclusively on supporting the deployment of election observers in the field.

Program outcomes and outputs are stated in a

| |
|---|
| <p>Figure 2-2: MEOP Program Outputs and Outcomes (as stated in the Log Frame, dated: May 8, 2008)</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased transparency of elections assessed against national and international commitments 2. Multilateral organizations are able to provide effective, relevant and timely recommendations for elections 3. Increased ability of men and women to participate equally in the electoral process, including voting, ability to run for office and election to office <p>Outputs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1 Increased geographic coverage of professional EOMs 1.1.2 Multilateral organizations are able to conduct professional & timely EOMs 2.1 Canadian organizations are able to support multilateral EOMs 3.1.1 Increased acknowledgement by the national and international community of the gender barriers in the electoral process (voting, election to office, etc.) 3.1.2 Gender specific barriers in the electoral process are clearly identified by observers and incorporated into mission reports (such as examining the effect of gender on barriers to exercising the right to vote and the right to run for office) |
|---|

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

log frame that was finalized in at the outset of MEOP and left unchanged throughout. These are presented in Figure 2.2. During the work planning phase of the evaluation, the evaluators observed that some of the results claims made by the programme appeared to exceed the programme's sphere of influence. We noted, for example, that at the outcome level only the one result dealing with *election observation practice* appears to be referring to a change that can reasonably be within MEOP's sphere of influence. This observation was consistent with an instruction within the TORs to concentrate on an assessment of results pertaining to this outcome. Our analysis of the results logic for MEOP is set out in Section 3.9.

Three components are set out in the original program description. These are summarized below:

- A framework arrangement with CANADEM for the deployment of Canadian observers on behalf of CIDA.
- Funding for (multilateral) partner organizations to send election observers to developing countries
- Support for complementary initiatives to further develop and refine international standards for democratic election processes and for increasing the professionalization of observer practices

While the program was originally designed to support *multilateral* election observer missions, mention was made of the possibility of the program accommodating *bilateral* missions on an exceptional basis. Following inception and by amendment MEOP was formally given the mandate to support bilateral missions under certain conditions. In the end, two bilateral missions were held to the Ukraine (requiring, in both instances, supplementary funding). CANADEM deployed an independent bilateral election observation mission of 200 Canadians called Mission Canada, to monitor and report on the second round of Presidential elections in Ukraine. Mission Canada collaborated in validating the election results, while providing advice to the Ukraine Electoral Commission on how to improve future elections.

MEOP has been managed by and paid for through the Partnership with Canadians Branch (PWCB) at CIDA. DFAIT has been CIDA's key counterpart in implementing the program's whole-of-government approach. CIDA and DFAIT convene bi-annually in an inter-departmental planning exercise to identify priority countries for Canadian support to multilateral election observation and to ensure that strategic priorities inform funding decisions. The exercise involves: CIDA field, geographic desk officers and governance specialists, CIDA Policy Branch governance specialists, and DFAIT policy, field, governance and geographic desk representatives.

2.4 Partner Identification

The program design documents name the Organization of American States (OAS), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the European Union (EU), and the International Organization for Migration as partners in MEOP noting that they are "recognized internationally for credible, impartial election observation." The documents envisaged the inclusion of other multilateral regional organizations as partners (including La Francophonie). The three organizations that were included as partners along with those mentioned above were the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), The Carter Center, and the UNDP. In the end, the IOM was not directly engaged as a partner in MEOP.

Partner Implementation Arrangements and Projects

- OAS – within the time frame of MEOP, CIDA entered into two grant agreements with OAS. In the Electoral Assistance Program (2009-11) the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) used CIDA funding to design, refine and implement election observation methodologies. In this period, DECO implemented 27 election observation missions and 12 technical cooperation projects, network meetings of electoral management bodies and electoral authorities, and initiatives in hemispheric capacity building related to the administration of electoral processes. DECO engaged with its counterpart organization in the African Union Commission to observe elections in Togo (2010) and used this opportunity exchange insights on observation methods and tools. It prepared two observation methodologies: a methodology to integrate a gender perspective in OAS observation missions, and a methodology for the observation of political and electoral financing models of electoral observation missions. During this period, DECO published, *The Manual for OAS Electoral Observation Missions* which defines an EOM in the hemispheric context and explains the process of deployment. A second phase of the Electoral Assistance Program (2011-13) was designed to consolidate previous efforts in professionalizing and refining procedures for EOMs – specifically those related to incorporation a gender perspective, observation of the role of media, design of electoral technologies for collecting information on election day, and observation of campaign financing. The design placed a focus on (gender

sensitive) professionalization of election observers on the OAS roster. In this second phase, DECO implemented a further 35 election observation missions in 18 member states.

- Commonwealth Secretariat – CIDA entered into two grant agreements with the Commonwealth Secretariat for the period, December 2008 to December 2009 and January 2010 and September 2012. Funds were used to support two modalities of elections support: Commonwealth Observer Groups (COGs) – these are intended to bring together diverse, gender balanced groups to observe electoral processes. These groups are typically comprised of politicians, leaders in civil society, judges, and members of the media, among others. Commonwealth Expert Teams (CETs) – are smaller in composition than COGs and are more technically focused on specific aspects of the electoral process. In the first grant agreement, funds were used to support COGs in six Commonwealth countries. In second grant agreement, CIDA funds were used to support nine COGs and three CETs. Under the second agreement, eight Canadians were fielded to EOMs (3 CETs, 5 COGs).
- European Union – Under an agreed cooperation scheme between the EU and the GOC, CANADEM entered into agreements with the EU on an “as needs” basis to supply Canadian observers. Up to the second quarter of 2012, CANADEM had collaborated with the EU on 12 EOMs in 11 countries, as well as participated in the 2010 EU Observer Forum in Brussels. Over the period, CANADEM reports that it executed the deployment of a total of 20 Short Term Observers (STOs) and 18 Long Term Observers (LTOs) for EU missions.
- OSCE – As above, CANADEM entered into agreements with OSCE on an as needs basis to supply Canadian observers. Up to the second quarter of 2012, CANADEM had collaborated with the OSCE-ODIHR on 10 EOMs in 6 countries; executing the deployment 8 LTOs and 140 STOs.
- The Carter Center – CIDA entered into a Contribution Agreement with the Carter Centre in February 2009 to support a research and development initiative aimed at building election observation practices. The Democratic Election Standards Project aimed to define and build consensus on democratic election standards run in both a traditional and electronic manner. The project was completed and evaluated. The contribution agreement expired at the end of May 2011 after a request was approved for a no-cost extension.
- UNDP – CIDA entered into a grant arrangement with UNDP for a project under the 3 year, \$50m Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS). The specific multi-donor funded initiative focuses on the Train4Dev Global Training Platform. This initiative aimed to build capacity of development partners (including CIDA) to design and manage assistance based on an election cycle approach. The CIDA grant was intended to support e-learning materials, the development of face-to-face seminars, and knowledge management initiatives aimed at spreading insights from the application of the training program.
- CANADEM – Strictly speaking, CANADEM was not a MEOP partner organization but rather the sole Executing Agency for the Program. However, for reasons of simplicity, CANADEM will be referred to as a partner organization of MEOP. MEOP documents specify that CANADEM is to operate under a Framework Arrangement with CIDA. The agreement is to set out the general terms concerning the administration, management and funding of election observation missions. There is no money attached to the Framework. Program documents originally provided for a \$5m allocation and set out an expectation that CANADEM would enter into contribution agreements with CANADEM for periods of approximately 12 months and for amounts up to \$2m, on the basis of a costed work plan. At the close of the first annual cycle and in the planning for the second cycle, a couple of important allowances were made. One was to remove the \$2m annual cap on annual allocations to CANADEM. The other was to amend the Framework Arrangement to accommodate the fielding of Canadians under bilateral missions. These changes were occasioned by: a) “the unpredictability of demand and timing of election observation missions and their attendant costs”, b) a desire to be able, on occasion, to supplement Canadian presence on multilateral EOMs by mobilizing separate bilateral missions. Such was the case for the Ukraine in 2010. This second adjustment brought the framework in line with a recent change in the scope of MEOP that now accommodated the possibility of CANADEM-led bilateral missions.

Through the above mentioned partnership arrangements, MEOP fielded about 650 Canadian observers on more than 70 missions. Approximately 80% were as short-term observers (STOs). MEOP resources were used to support EOMs in about 50 countries. Figure 2-3, below sets out the data available up to April 2012.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

2.5 Activity and Expenditure Trends

Figure 2-3, below, breaks down MEOP by its various projects/agreements. Expenditure figures are a mix of budget estimates and final expenditure. Observer deployment figures are also a mix estimated and final calculations up to April 2012, 19 months prior to the end of the program. The table is organized by partner organization. The first section documents EOMs that MEOP has supported. The second section documents three election observer capacity building projects that took place in the first half of the program.

| Figure 2-3: EOMs/Projects – MEOP Deployment and Funding | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Organization | EOMS/Projects (by year) | # of Observers (estimates only) Canadian/ Total in EOM | Total Funding (estimates only) |
| Commonwealth Secretariat - Grant recipient which fund Canadian and non-Canadian observers, along with portions of overall EOM implementation as specified in annual, costed work plans | 2008 – Bangladesh, Ghana | 2/17 | \$377,199 |
| | 2009 - Antigua and Barbuda, Maldives, Malawi, South Africa, | 3/20 | \$521,263 |
| | 2010 - Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania | 2/33 | \$605,900 |
| | 2011 - Cameroon, The Gambia, Guyana , Nigeria, Seychelles , Uganda, Zambia | 5/64 | \$1,281,090 |
| | 2012 – Lesotho, Papua New Guinea | 0/14 | \$370,000 |
| 2008-12 Total | | 12/148 (8.1%) | 3,275,274 |
| Organization of American States - Grant recipient which fund Canadian and non-Canadian observers, along with portions of overall EOM implementation as specified in annual, costed work plans | 2008 - | - | \$0 |
| | 2009 – Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominica, El Salvador (x2), Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, St Vincent and the Grenadines | 71/520 | \$1,002,140 |
| | 2010 – Bolivia, Colombia (x3), Costa Rica (x2), Dominican Republic, Haiti ² , Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname | 74/732 | \$1,314,649 |
| | 2011 – Guatemala (x2), Haiti ³ , Peru (x2) | 81/435 | \$481,954 |
| | 2012 – Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua | 12/250 | \$484,441 |
| 2008-12 Total | | 238/1937 (12.2%)⁴ | \$3,283,184 |
| European Union - Enters into an agreement on a case-by-case basis with CANADEM for deployment of Canadian Observers | 2008 - | - | \$0 |
| | 2009 – Afghanistan, Lebanon, Mozambique | 5/264 | \$90,313 |
| | 2010 – Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan (x2) | 20/438 | \$607,511 |
| | 2011 - , Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nicaragua, Niger, Sudan ¹ , Tunisia | 13/407 | \$967,093 |
| | 2012 – Senegal | 2/94 | \$59,173 |
| 2008-12 Total | | 40/1203 (3.3%) | \$1,724,190 |
| Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe - Enters into an agreement on a case-by-case basis with CANADEM for deployment of Canadian Observers | 2008 - | - | \$0 |
| | 2009 – Kyrgystan | 5/324 | \$39,411 |
| | 2010 – Belarus, Kyrgystan (x2), Tajikistan, Ukraine (x2) | 141/2564 | \$1,031,427 |
| | 2011 – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia (x2) | 11/1202 | \$142,901 |
| | 2012 – | - | - |
| 2008-12 Total | | 157/4090 (3.8%) | \$1,213,739 |

| Figure 2-3: EOMS/Projects – MEOP Deployment and Funding | | | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Organization | EOMS/Projects (by year) | # of Observers (estimates only) Canadian/ Total in EOM | Total Funding (estimates only) |
| The Carter Center - Enters into an agreement on a case-by-case basis with CANADEM for deployment of Canadian Observers | 2008 - | | |
| | 2009 - | | |
| | 2010 - | | |
| | 2011 - | | |
| | 2012 - Libya | 5/40 | 187,993 |
| 2008-12 Total | | 5/40 (12.5%) | \$187,993 |
| CANADEM | 2008 - | | |
| | 2009 - | | |
| | 2010 – Ukraine ⁵ | 200/200 | \$1,777,399 |
| | 2011 - | | |
| | 2012 – Ukraine ⁶ | n/a | n/a |
| 2008-12 Total | | 200/200 (100%) | \$1,777,399 |
| Grand Total for EOMS | | 652/7618 (8.6%) | \$11,463,779 |
| Capacity Building Projects | Democratic Elections Standards – The Carter Center (2008-2011) | - | \$1,163,248 |
| | Train4 Dev – UNDP (2008-2009) | - | \$300,000 |
| | Professionalization, Standardization – OAS (2008-2011) | - | \$313,345 |
| | Grand Total for Capacity Building Projects | - | \$1,776,593 |
| Grand Total Budget Estimate for EOMS and Capacity Building | | | \$13,240,372 |

Source: Abstracted from DFATD file - SGDE-EDRMS_4075364-v19-A034062_ROLL-UP_OF_ELECTION_OBERVATION_MISSIONS_-MULTILATERAL_ELECTION_OBSERVATION_PROGRAM.xls

Notes: ¹ – with the Carter Center; ^{2,3} – with the Caribbean Community; ⁴ – According to the OAS's 2012-13 Final Report to CIDA, Canada contributed \$975,000 between 2012 and 13 bringing the total contribution to the OAS closer to \$3.7 million. The updated figure for the number of Canadian observers is 259. ⁵ – An additional contract (valued at \$22,562+GST) was signed between CANADEM and the Ukraine Desk for this mission and only 68 out of the 200 were funded through MEOP; ⁶ – This bilateral EOM involving the deployment of 500 Canadian observers was funded from outside of MEOP (\$5.4m)

Part Three: Main Findings According To DFATD's Program-Level Evaluation Indicators

Part Three examines MEOP's performance. Evaluation findings are organized around twelve criteria as outlined in the TORs for this review. The criteria, broadly based on OECD-DAC guidelines for development and management results, are set out below:

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Relevance
- Results-Based Management
- Sustainability
- Cross-Cutting Issues (Gender, Environment, Governance)
- Ownership
- Alignment
- Harmonization
- Mutual Accountability
- Design
- Risk Management

Within these criteria, the evaluation is guided by a set of key evaluation questions, as presented in first column the Evaluation Matrix (Annex C). The relevant (paraphrased, where appropriate) questions are outlined at the beginning of each criterion.

This section also comments on "other issues" relating to election observation practices in general. These issues are specified in the evaluation matrix and are addressed on an individual basis.

3.1 Effectiveness

Key Evaluation Questions

1. Has MEOP contributed to its partner organizations being "better able to provide effective, relevant, and timely recommendations for elections", as anticipated in the Outcomes section of the program's LFA?
2. What were the enablers and obstacles to CANADEM's ability to support multilateral EOMs as anticipated in MEOP LFA Outputs?
3. Did DFATD's policy dialogue with its cooperation partners increase their ability to engage in diplomatic discussions with developing countries and donors?
4. Were there significant unintended results attributable to MEOP, whether positive or negative?

Background

OECD-DAC refers to "effectiveness" as a measure of the extent to which a program has achieved its objectives. In the case of MEOP, expected results are put forward in the program's logic model, outlined in Section 2.4, above.⁴

By design MEOP is to contribute to "greater democratic participation and representation through valid elections", and to show tangible evidence of change in three areas:

- *transparency of elections* – increased (Outcome 1),
- *performance of partner organizations* – improved (Outcome 2), and
- *participation of men and women in the elections process* - increased (Outcome 3).

⁴ As noted previously, MEOP's LFA employs results nomenclature that was in use prior to CIDA's implementation of the current logic model terminology in 2009.

The TORs for this evaluation make a comment about these outcomes. They acknowledge that involvement of any given EOM in a beneficiary country is very short-term, and that Canada is only one contributor (to the field of practice) both in money and in observers. Accordingly, the TORs train the evaluators' focus on the second outcome related to the performance of MEOP's cooperation partners, and specifically on the evolution of their strategic and general governance as it effects their management of EOMs.⁵

From our conversations with key informants associated with the program's development and implementation, there is acknowledgement within DFATD (development side) that the stated outcomes for MEOP were beyond the program's sphere of influence. As discussed in sections 3.9 and 3.11, the reasons for this have to do with a) the speed and depth of engagement in design discussions, and b) subsequent changes in program emphasis - lessening attention to developing the election observation field of practice and increasing attention to providing Canadian presence in EOMs – occasioned by higher level policy shifts.

In evaluating effectiveness, therefore, this evaluation is focused on what MEOP achieved under its partnership performance component (Outcome 2). To a lesser extent, we also comment on what we heard in relation to Outcomes 1 and 3 with the proviso that trends described cannot be traced solely to Canadian (MEOP) support.

Findings - General

Overall, the evaluation finds that in all cases, Canada's support to electoral observation through MEOP made a positive and important contribution to the ability of its multilateral partner organizations to organize, conduct, and provide recommendations following EOMs. This is particularly the case among two partners – the Commonwealth Secretariat and the OAS. Here, the Canadian contribution was significant from both an operational and a financial standpoint. Among the other partners, support provided by Canada was perceived as largely undifferentiated from the contributions to electoral observation provided by other donors.

Individual election observers that participated in multilateral EOMs were complementary of the ability of each of MEOP's current cooperation partners to plan and conduct EOMs. Most expressed the opinion that Canada would be well served by continuing to work through these partners.

Many of the observers with whom we spoke were critical of Canada's bilateral missions to Ukraine, noting their high costs relative to multilateral delegations and raising concerns over the quality of "Mission Canada" observers and their impartiality on the ground.

There is little evidence that the transparency of elections (reference to Outcome 1) has increased as a consequence of MEOP, save for the fact that when a state invites an EOM to occur, it is indeed by definition contributing to a level of transparency in its democratic governance by opening itself up to impartial observation and international criticism (in the case of multilateral missions). What is clear is that multilateral partners, themselves, are hard pressed to track these kinds of outcomes at the moment.

In terms of MEOP contributing to increased participation of men and women in the election process writ large (reference to Outcome 3), there is no evidence that Canada's support has had any influence, aside from tangentially, through best practice policy development initiatives supported by MEOP in the first two years of the Program.

Regarding CANADEM, all major stakeholders (partner organizations, individual observers, and DFATD (development) managers) who had worked with or through the organization spoke very highly of its ability to enable Canada's participation in electoral missions, noting that both CANADEM and its staff were professional, effective and efficient in their roles, and that they leveraged technology effectively (through the organization's database of Canadian election observers) to identify appropriate candidates for EOM participation. Furthermore, multilateral partners, individual observers, and DFATD personnel commented on level of professionalism displayed by CANADEM in providing appropriate training in EOM best practices, attributing this to what they perceived to be the participation of high quality of Canadian observers in multilateral partner missions.

MEOP's contribution to best practice policy development and dialogue has enabled partner organizations to develop and share information and best practices within the field of electoral observation, but there is little evidence to suggest the Program acted as a catalyst for its cooperation partners to increase their ability to engage with other donors or developing countries. Moreover, the policy support element of MEOP was shelved at the end of its second year to focus exclusively on the operational aspect of electoral observation (i.e. exclusively funding Canadian election observers to directly participate in multilateral and bilateral missions).

⁵ Quoted from the Terms of Reference for this evaluation mandate, section 2.2, page 6

This lessened its ability to support the development of election observation standards and practices on a global scale.

Finally, there is no evidence of any unintended results (positive or negative) that may be attributable to MEOP, for Canada, partner organizations, or individual observers. This is essentially a function of the nature of MEOP, where Program funds were primarily geared towards allocating resources for partner organizations to conduct EOMs, with Canada having no direct presence in the field (apart from the bilateral missions to Ukraine). This being said, individual Canadian election observers are generally well-regarded in the field of practice vis-à-vis other nationalities. During our field work we encountered several Canadians that were rising in the professional ranks of partner organizations.

Findings Specific to Outcome 2: Multilateral organizations are able to provide effective, relevant and timely recommendations for elections

This section addresses Key Evaluation Question #1 for Effectiveness.

For reasons stated above, most of our findings relate to Outcome 2. By the accounts of observers, Canadian officials and partner informants, MEOP made an important *contribution* to the election observation capacities of its main partners.

Consistently, we heard from partner organizations that Canadian support through MEOP to its main multilateral partners - those conducting multiple EOMs (Commonwealth, OAS, EU, and OSCE) - was significant. We also heard that the success or failure of any mission, or of the recommendations emanating from it, is not attributable to MEOP alone. In funding a multilateral mission, donor countries are voices in a chorus rather than soloists.

That noted, the evaluation does find that the level of influence that MEOP had on its four main partner organizations varied in magnitude.⁶ More than anything, this variance hinges on two factors: the mode of DFATD funding delivery (i.e. grant vs. contribution agreement), and on the inclusion of a policy development/ capacity building element in the funding arrangement. From a program-level perspective the following observations are offered, based upon interviews with MEOP's partners, individual election observers, and GoC representatives in the field:

- Canada's support to the Commonwealth and the OAS was identified as by these organizations as "very significant". While Canada is one among other member states that contribute to electoral observation programming (either indirectly through annual contributions to the organizations' general funding pool and/or directly for specifically targeted election observation activities, such as MEOP), its contribution to these two organizations in real dollar terms is one of the most significant. Both the Commonwealth and OAS reported that Canada's assistance afforded them considerably more flexibility in financing the planning and implementation of EOMs and undertaking other capacity development initiatives than they would otherwise have not been able to do without the support.
- For the Commonwealth, the evaluators were told that without MEOP's contribution, the organization would have only been able to undertake one-third of the EOMs it had completed over the duration of the Program.
- For the OAS, MEOP support is noted to have been crucial in developing their internal capacity, not just to undertake a greater number of EOMs, but also to develop best practices and other policy tools to assist both the OAS and country election management bodies (EMBs) to conduct more democratic and transparent elections. In the case of the OAS, MEOP has also contributed to a number of technical assistance projects that were a response to recommendations made in OAS mission reports. For example, biometric registration of voters in Bolivia, implementation of a quality management system for elections in Peru, and development of a work plan for a constitutional referendum in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. At the institutional level, MEOP was also crucial to (and directly contributed to) the development of the OAS' general manual on electoral observation as well as the development of a manual on the inclusion of gender considerations in EOMs, the latter of which has been recognized by MEOP's other multilateral cooperation partners as the standard in the entire field of practice.

⁶ Although MEOP, throughout its duration, maintained funding arrangements with seven partner organizations (Commonwealth, OAS, OSCE, EU, Carter Center, UNDP, and CANADEM), only the first four played a significant role in carrying out multiple EOMs. Support for the Carter Center and UNDP was primarily geared at EOM policy development (though MEOP did provide funds for one Carter Center mission to Libya), and CANADEM, despite the fact that it operationalized the bilateral mission to Ukraine in 2010, may not be considered as an organization that conducts observation missions, but rather covers the logistical elements of only Canadian election observers. For this reason, the evaluation considers the Commonwealth, OAS, OSCE, and EU as the Program's key multilateral partners.

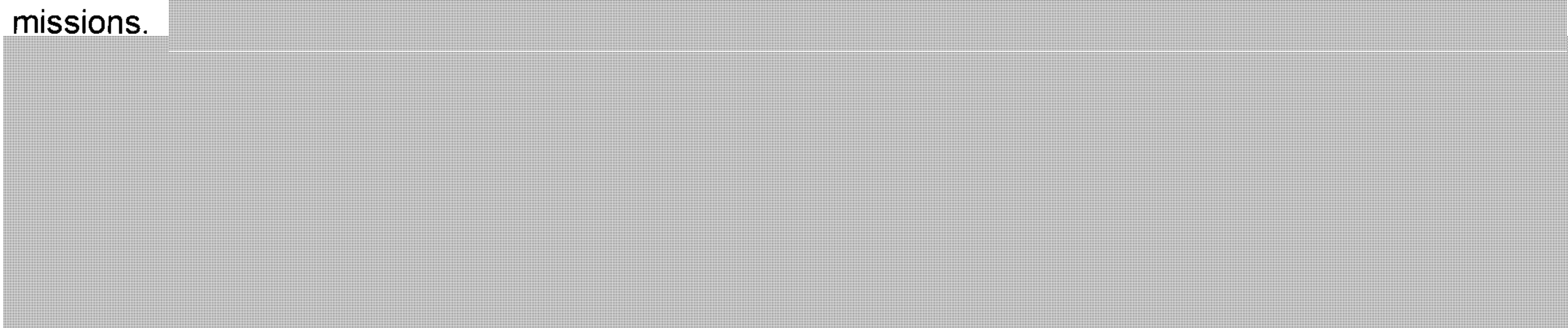
- By contrast, MEOP support for OSCE and EU observation missions, while important to these organizations, played a less significant role in their ability to field EOMs. Both organizations noted that while Canadian donor support is much appreciated, and that having Canadians as part of EOM teams adds tangible value (e.g. good observer competencies, useful language and cultural capabilities and often geographic knowledge), MEOP funding is relatively minor in dollar terms, and does not impact either upon their ability to conduct EOMs or on their overall quality. It is noteworthy that Canada's contribution to these two organizations is confined to the operational aspects of an EOM (i.e. travel costs, per diems, etc.) and not to any policy development or institutional capacity support.

The Commonwealth and OAS are funded through a grant arrangement with the Canadian government for electoral observation.⁷ Managers from these multilaterals noted that the grant mechanism has allowed them flexibility in the way they allocate resources for EOMs and the ability to plan more effectively for observing elections that were upcoming or unexpected. The OSCE and EU receive their MEOP funding through contribution agreements, which are generally more stringent in outlining where funds are to be allocated for partner programming.

The existence of two separate funding mechanisms for MEOP and their relative influence on the ability of the Program's multilateral partners to undertake election observation activities (either direct observation or policy development) is explored in greater detail in Section 3.2 – Efficiency.

In terms of the performance of individual MEOP partner organizations:

- OSCE and EU are characterized as being the most professional, capable, and experienced of all MEOP partners. They are generally held in high regard by Canadian observers as well as by GoC managers, who referred to their observation programs and practices as “well-oiled machines”. Interviewees noted that their EOM standards and methodologies are well articulated and briefing/debriefing sessions generally excellent. Some noted that in-country briefings were lacking in specific instances.
- Canadians who had taken part in OAS EOMs commented that the missions were carried out in a competent and professional manner, but that the organization lagged behind the OSCE and EU with regard to the efficacy of administrative systems and logistics. Those in a position to follow the OAS over time noted that, generally, the OAS is improving in its conduct of EOMs. This point is confirmed by the evaluators, who had the opportunity to speak with the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO), the arm of the OAS responsible for EOMs, as part of a 2011 review of Canadian support to the OAS in general.
- Regarding the Commonwealth Secretariat, interviewees noted a particularly strong relationship occurring between observers and EMBs and attributed this in large part to the differing nature of their missions. The organization exclusively utilizes high-level, “eminent” individuals such as ex-parliamentarians and other former senior government officials rather than “professional” observers. These individuals can usually leverage additional influence. And, with fewer numbers involved there are opportunities to build rapport with local election officials. The Secretariat conducts its own internal assessment mission prior to an election rather than relying on information from external LTOs. As a result, there is a higher level of synergy, familiarity, and trust displayed once the actual mission takes place.
- MEOP supported only one EOM by the Carter Center. Interviewees noted that their missions were generally of a much smaller scale and less formal than those of the other MEOP partners.
- Although primarily devoted to the administrative and logistical elements of sourcing Canadian observers to missions undertaken by OSCE, EU, and occasionally the OAS, CANADEM did organize two bilateral missions.



⁷ This is in addition to the general yearly contribution Canada makes to these bodies as part of assessed contributions that all member states make.

Among the four major EOM organizations partnered with MEOP, the OSCE was consistently described as possessing the most expertise in conducting EOMs, followed closely by the EU and the improving OAS. For its part, the Commonwealth Secretariat was also described as being competent and effective. However, as the structure and make-up of their electoral missions are fundamentally different to those of the other three organizations, it is difficult for the evaluators to draw comparisons.

MEOP's support for electoral observation policy and program development was conceived to be a benefit to the entire electoral observation community, not just its multilateral partners. This component represented a collective expenditure of approximately \$1.8 million or just below 10% of MEOP's total budget allocation. The funds supported three capacity building projects that were focused on standardizing and professionalizing the electoral observation field. In more detail, the three projects funded by the Program were:

- *Democratic Election Standards Project* delivered by **The Carter Center**. This initiative was meant to build upon UN's Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, which established general guidelines for election observation organizations and remains a pillar within the field of practice. However, this document, though the original benchmark in the field of election observation, did not specify the standards to be used by international observation missions to assess elections. The Democratic Election Standards Project, which ended in 2011, produced the following: a compendium and database of obligations for democratic elections; Carter Center election observation handbooks on electronic voting and mission operations; updated reporting templates and checklists for use by EOM participants and as open-source tools for others; and training modules for election observers (long-term and short-term) on how to use election standards during the course of a mission.⁸ With its contribution, CIDA was a significant donor providing about 50% of the total value of the project.
- The *Global Program for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS)* implemented by UNDP. The objective of this broad, \$5 million initiative was to enhance the credibility, effectiveness, transparency, efficiency and sustainability of electoral institutions and processes. Emphasis was given to capacity development, South-South exchanges, and inclusive participation. CIDA's \$300,000 disbursement was targeted on one part of GPECS, the Joint Donors' Competence Development Network, a sub-group focused on electoral assistance using the UNDP's Training 4 Development curriculum. The project had three components: Training – the production of e-learning courses on effective electoral assistance for both donors and recipient (partner) countries; Knowledge Sharing - organization of small, face-to-face seminars on relevant topics relating to electoral observation upon the request of project partners, other electoral assistance providers, and other national and international partners; and Knowledge Management – collection and codification of the training results, including production of a comprehensive study on the use of information and communications technology for civil and voter registration and the dissemination of election results. The project also supported the translation of key training content into French.
- *Professionalization and Standardization* of electoral observation and assistance initiatives implemented by the OAS. CIDA funding was not geared towards a particular initiative, but instead supported a range of OAS/DECO projects in the areas of capacity building for both OAS staff and election observers, as well as a series of sub-projects designed to strengthen electoral management bodies at the country level. More specifically, CIDA funds were significant in designing, refining, and implementing methodologies focused on aspects of OAS electoral observation practice, including a Manual for Electoral Observation Missions and a Manual for the integration of gender perspectives in OAS EOMs.⁹ MEOP also contributed to the development of a manual on campaign financing during EOMs. Additionally, at the country level, the OAS, through MEOP support, implemented a series of capacity building projects that were developed as a result of EOM mission report recommendations. Twelve electoral cooperation projects were implemented in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines which were geared to raising the capacity of the EMBs in these countries to better adhere to international election and democratic standards.

These projects, mostly focused on the formation of electoral observation practice writ large, were funded by MEOP during the first two years of the program. After this point, CIDA declined to support further initiatives of

⁸ The database, which in the opinion of the evaluators is an excellent tool for those in the electoral observation practice community, may be found here: <http://www.cartercenter.org/des-search/des/Introduction.aspx>

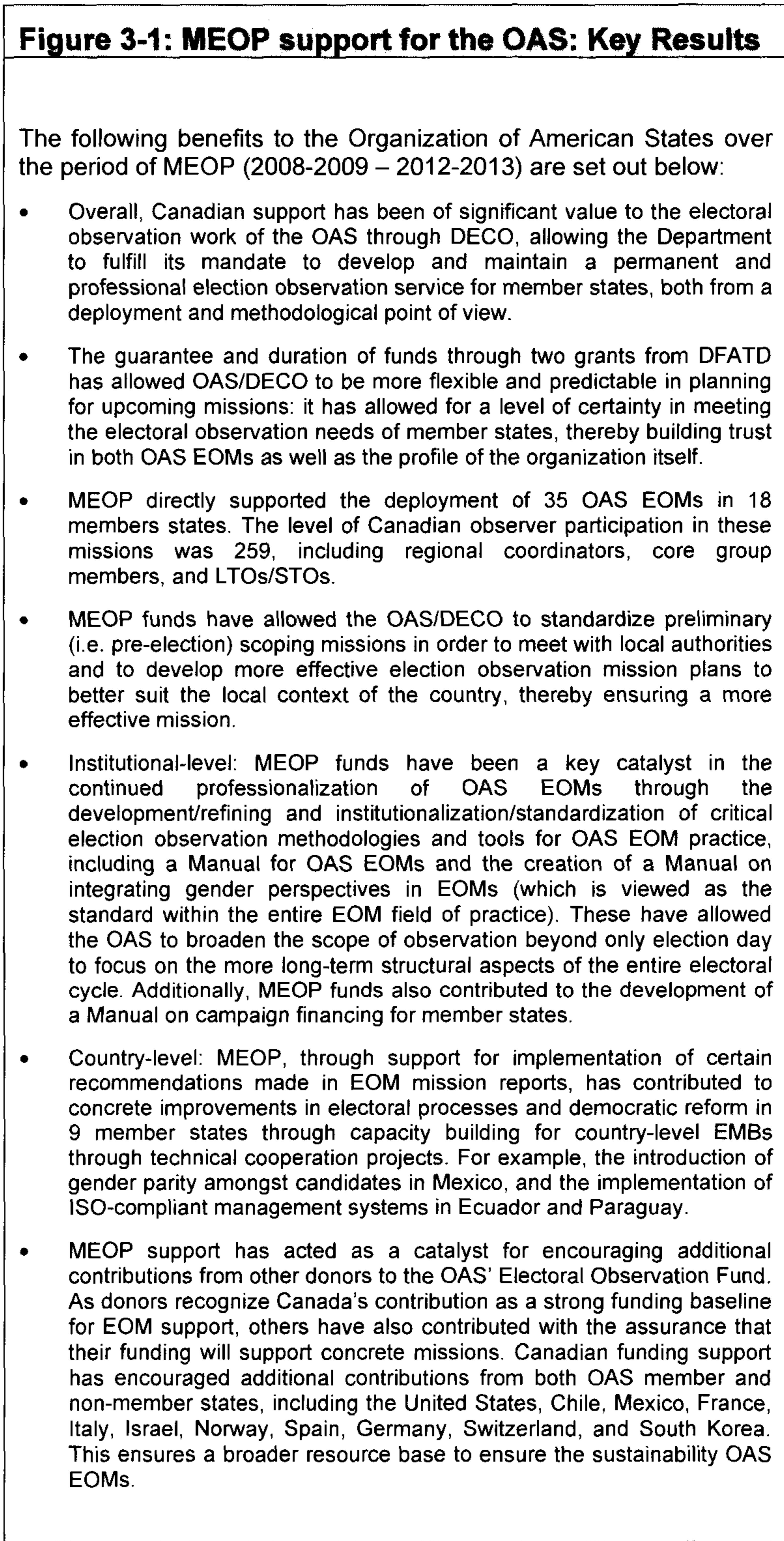
⁹ The Manuals for OAS EOM standards and integration of gender perspectives may be found here: http://www.oas.org/es/sap/docs/Manual_Misiones_publicado_en.pdf and here: http://www.oas.org/es/sap/deco/pubs/manuales/Manual_gender_e.pdf

this type despite: a) receiving requests from OAS and The Carter Center for follow on activities and b) the program documents specifying an allocation of up to \$3.7million (18%) of the total CIDA contribution¹⁰. The evaluation finds that this policy development element of MEOP, truncated as it was, tangibly assisted its partner organizations' abilities (among others) to field competent and effective EOMs.

In interviews, MEOP's implementing partners described these policy and capacity development projects as crucial to the process of professionalizing and standardizing the field of election observation practice. And the evaluators note the consistency of their content with the needs of this emerging field of practice as expressed in the annual implementation meetings related to the Declaration of Principles (please refer to Figure 3-3).

Other MEOP partners not involved in their development or implementation also remarked in positive ways about the systems and knowledge products generated by these projects. For example, the OSCE noted to the evaluators that the OAS Manual on integration of gender perspectives and the participation of women in elections and EOMs has been recognized by the electoral observation field as the most effective tool in planning how to integrate gender considerations into missions and the electoral process. Individual election observers participating in OAS EOMs following publication of both manuals commented on their clarity and high quality. With respect to The Carter Center's Democratic Election Standards project, the OAS, Commonwealth, and the OSCE all made mention of the importance of the database as a hub for information regarding electoral observation and assistance, both for the general community of practice and for local EMB's at the country level. An independent, summative evaluation of The Carter Center project concluded that, "the Center succeeded in making substantial progress towards building consensus on a single set of standards for democratic elections and contributing towards the defining of common approaches within the observation community on challenges facing election observation". Regarding the UNDP policy initiative, the evaluators were unable to discuss the project with the organization's representatives to determine its impact upon EOM stakeholders.

We summarize key results for MEOP's partnership with OAS in Figure 3-1, to the right.



10 The reasons behind this decision are explored in greater detail in Part 3.11 - Design

Findings Specific to Outcome 1: Increased transparency of elections assessed against national and international commitments

MEOP's multilateral partners, along with other practitioners in the electoral observation field, recognize the importance of addressing democratic challenges by focusing on the entire electoral cycle. The need for more effective post-election follow-up of election observer recommendations and provision of technical assistance was cited by a large majority of MEOP's multilateral partner representatives and by individual observers interviewed as the most pressing issue presently facing the election observation field of practice. We were told that while there exists suitable technical expertise to assist in this process (in the form of many individuals and organizations globally who possess the professional expertise and experience), actual translation into action has, to date, remained insufficient. As explained to the evaluators, there are two primary explanations:

- a dearth of funds and ability on behalf of election observer organizations (including MEOP partners) and donors to undertake follow-up activities based upon mission report recommendations, and
- unresolved questions over who would be responsible (i.e. Departments, Programs) within multilateral partners and donor organizations to operationalize these follow-up activities.

With respect to the first point, *a lack of funds for implementation of recommendations*, MEOP proves instructive. The Program did not allocate resources for election follow-up activities, either to assist multilateral partners in supporting post-election recommendations, or to support any mechanism to track implementation progress. **As a consequence, addressing Outcome 1 results – increased transparency of elections - in any meaningful sense is difficult. To properly determine if MEOP is effective in this regard, a suitable tracking mechanism must be in place. By their own account, MEOP's multilateral partners do not currently have such mechanisms in place (though the OAS is presently working on one), thus their ability to report on the progress of post-election recommendations is not well developed.**

Canada is not alone in not paying attention to follow-up activities with respect to EOMs as part of their election observation programming. Donor countries that contribute to electoral observation, according to MEOP's multilateral partners, prefer to fund actual missions rather than any other capacity building or policy development activities. Interviews were held with representatives responsible for electoral observation/assistance funding from Spain and the United States, and while Spain had a provision for policy development and capacity building support (for example, Spain also funded the UNDP's GPECS initiative), their core contribution, like Canada's, supported the fielding of observers only. For their part, the United States did not fund any policy development or capacity initiatives at all as part of their electoral assistance envelope.

A second reason why follow-up activities are not easily undertaken revolves around the *assignment of responsibility for tracking/supporting implementation of recommendations*. Within donors and indeed multilateral partners, there appears to be a discontinuity between EOM operational implementation and EOM recommendations implementation. It was found that, internally within both multilaterals and donors, departments or programs other than those directly concerned with EOMs usually bear responsibility for addressing recommendations, and there is often little communication or procedures by which one relates to the other. A hypothetical example follows:

- An EOM mission report recommendation suggests that greater transparency in subsequent elections in Senegal could be achieved if the EMB in the country were trained in media freedoms and campaign finance best practices. Budgetary funds within MEOP have not been allocated for such activities, so the responsibility for any follow up activity is downloaded to the Senegal Country Program of DFATD. As the Senegal program has not necessarily anticipated or planned for any projects based on EOM mission report recommendations (which of course are the responsibility of a different branch of DFATD/CIDA) it may not have the resources to follow through with the appropriate technical support response. In the event that it does possess funds, an entire project would have to be developed which could take a considerable amount of time to come to fruition - possibly more time than is available before the country's election machinery is called into action for another campaign.

As the evaluators understand it, the above scenario reflects the norm with respect to Canada and to other electoral observation donors. Spain has a similar set up, where monies are set aside for technical support projects, but responsibility for such lies outside of the EOM support mechanism.

Regarding division of responsibility among MEOP's multilateral partners:

- At OSCE-ODIHR, the responsibility for electoral observation is housed within the organization's Elections Division, while follow-up recommendations are the purview of the Democratization Division.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

ODIHR personnel noted that as the mandate of the Elections Division is not technical assistance, it bears no responsibility for follow-on initiatives. Indeed, they were not aware of what activities, if any were being undertaken.

- A similar scenario was evident within the EU and to a lesser extent the Commonwealth.
- Only the OAS has begun the process of integrating electoral assistance with technical and capacity building support for local authorities within the same department, in this case, DECO.

When commenting on the dearth of follow-up activities, one election observer put forward an apt analogy. He suggested it was akin to, “digging a well and stopping before reaching water.” He suggested that this is especially the case if the end goal of the initiative is democratization.

Findings Specific to Outcome 3: Increased ability of men and women to participate equally in the electoral process, including voting, ability to run for office and election to office

With respect to the third MEOP outcome, there is no direct evidence that the program contributed to an “increased ability of men and women to participate equally in the electoral process, including voting, ability to run for office, and election to office.” As is the case with Outcome 1, properly addressing this goal would involve follow-up capacity building and technical assistance/policy activities or projects. These might emanate from mission report recommendations. EOMs, in and of themselves, can do little if anything to contribute to better access and/or participation by stakeholder groups in an election.

As part of CIDA’s electoral assistance grant arrangement with the OAS, MEOP did assist country-level EMBs in ensuring a more inclusive environment for participation in elections, but the evaluators have not encountered any documentation showing that this intervention contributed to equal participation, as might be evidenced by updated laws or policies.

Findings Specific to Key Evaluation Questions Two to Four Under “Effectiveness”

(#2) Regarding the question about enablers and obstacles to CANADEM’s ability to support multilateral EOMs as anticipated in MEOP’s logic model outputs (only one of which is actually of relevance: 2.1 – “Canadian organizations are able to support multilateral EOMs”), there is a high level of agreement amongst MEOP stakeholders (partner organizations, individual election observers, and DFATD personnel) that CANADEM has done an excellent job in sourcing, organizing, contracting, and providing training for Canadian participation in EOMs.

In terms of enablers to support multilateral EOMs, the most obvious factor is CANADEM’s exclusive possession of the official roster of professional Canadian election observers. This list, currently holding 3,191 persons (1,123 women, 1,978 men), is the intellectual property of CANADEM. It serves as the only pool of Canadian observers when MEOP’s partners (OSCE-ODIHR, EU, and occasionally OAS) request the participation of Canadians in their EOMs.

- Potential candidates are screened to ensure a minimal level of competence and experience is in evidence. This ensures that those Canadians deployed as part of multilateral partner missions themselves display a high degree of knowledge, experience, and professionalism in terms of EOMs.

A second enabling factor is the high degree of professionalism and competence displayed by CANADEM and its staff. All stakeholder groups who have worked with or through the organization spoke very highly of its ability to mobilize Canada’s participation in electoral missions, noting that both CANADEM and its staff are very professional, effective, efficient, and are able to leverage technology effectively (through the organization’s database of Canadian election observers) to identify appropriate candidates for EOM participation. Furthermore, multilateral partners, and DFATD personnel commented on the level of professionalism displayed by CANADEM in providing appropriate training in EOM best practices. They attributed the perceived high quality and neutrality of Canadian observers participating in multilateral partner missions to this attention to best practice detail. Individual observers who had participated in EOM training sessions echoed this sentiment.

Beyond MEOP’s budgetary constraints, the evaluation finds no evidence of any obstacles to CANADEM’s ability to support multilateral EOMs.

The operations and role of CANADEM in Canadian support to electoral observation writ large is further explored in Part 3.11: Design.

(#3) Regarding the question of DFATD's policy dialogue with MEOP partner organizations, its impact upon the latter's ability to engage in diplomatic discussions with developing countries and donors, was found to be very small.

There is little evidence of any policy dialogue (specifically relating to the development of best practices and knowledge in the election observation field) occurring between DFATD/CIDA representatives and those of partner organizations outside of annual planning sessions that focused mainly on upcoming elections and whether Canada would chose to fund EOMs to specific countries. As the focus of MEOP shifted in the third year of the initiative to solely support the fielding of observers, questions of policy development and dialogue largely disappeared from the Program's activities.

The only instance where policy dialogue occurs amongst partner organizations is an annual conference which brings together all of the key practitioners of electoral observation policy and EOMs, as previously noted. This conference has been attended by all of MEOP's key partner organizations (OSCE, EU, OAS, and Commonwealth) and on occasion, by DFATD personnel. Partners interviewed commented that these events were useful and provided good opportunities to exchange ideas and best practices, but that there was little contact amongst them otherwise. As was noted, there is little geographic overlap amongst these EOM implementers. MEOP partners generally only conduct missions in states that are part of their membership, thus COMSEC missions only take place in Commonwealth countries, and ODIHR missions only occur in OSCE member states. In instances where there is an overlap (for example the EU and OSCE have many common members), there is an unwritten agreement that if one organization is conducting a mission, the other will not.

There was one instance of policy development and dialogue contributing to MEOP partners' ability to engage in discussions with developing countries and donors (outside of EOMs). As part of MEOP's support for policy development in the first two years of the program, the OAS developed a Manual on the integration of gender perspectives in EOMs, which has been described above. As a consequence of the positive reception of this document within the electoral assistance community, Germany and Spain subsequently contributed funds for additional OAS gender policy development and activities. In interviews with DECO personnel, it was stated that this support was directly attributable to Canadian assistance through MEOP. Other examples are included in Figure 3-1.

(#4) On the question about evidence of any unintended results, either positive or negative, that may be attributable to MEOP,

In the opinion of approximately half of those individual election observers interviewed,

[REDACTED]

When asked what a Canadian observer specifically brings to the table that is advantageous to the practice of electoral observation, we were told the following:

- Canadians, more than other nationalities, are considered to be more effective in their ability to be neutral and unbiased [REDACTED] and that having Canadians participate in multilateral EOMs added to their credibility as Canada is recognized as having strong democratic traditions and history.
- From a professional EOM standpoint, Canadians are considered to be more qualified than others.
- That Canada does not have any colonial or imperial "baggage", as opposed to many European countries and the United States. This affords Canadian observers a higher level of trust and legitimacy from country-level election authorities.
- The ability of Canadians to communicate in a variety of different languages (as a consequence of large diaspora communities in Canada) is considered an advantage in EOMs where there are often not many native speakers of less common languages. There exists a larger pool of specific language speakers to draw upon in Canada than elsewhere.

- As a result of large diaspora communities, Canadians generally have a higher level of familiarity with the contexts of a specific country than many other nationalities.
- Canadians practice both civil and common law traditions.
- Canadians, more than other nationalities, possess a higher level of skill in providing technical assistance in-country.

All of these elements contribute to the positive image of Canada and Canadians as fair and effective election observers. Perhaps the most significant point, however, is the second one. As the practice of election observation matures, there is, amongst multilateral partners an increased desire to carry out EOMs using professional observers – specifically, individuals that do not necessarily participate in EOMs as their lone vocation, but have received considerable training in the various technical areas relating to election observation and management. Canadians are seen as being further along the “professionalism” continuum than other nationalities.

Individual election observers are sourced from two main categories: retired professionals, and students. This is not surprising, as participating in an EOM requires, at the very least, a two-week time commitment, often on short notice. For a working professional, such a commitment is frequently difficult. EOM practitioners with whom we spoke are aware of this but remain intent on ensuring that any mission undertaken is comprised of the most competent observers possible. This increases the credibility of the mission, as well as ensures that any recommendations emanating from mission reports are based upon sound technical knowledge, which is also appreciated by the EMB at the country-level. From a reputational as well as a professional standpoint, and as a result of the training they have received through organizations such as CANADEM, Canada and Canadians appear to be ahead of the curve.

Analysis

It appears that gains *vis-à-vis* the MEOP outcome related to the performance of multilateral partner organizations (Outcome #2) can be traced to two types of activity: the larger scale provision of Canadian observers and the more modestly scaled (and ultimately discontinued) support provided to professionalize and standardize international election observation practices. Both are important to the integrity of the original program results logic. What is striking to the evaluators is that the content of the three capacity projects is so closely tied to needs expressed in the global election observation discourse, post-2005.

From an EOM practice perspective, the shift to purely observation activities in the third year of MEOP seems at odds with the direction that this global discourse is taking. As part of a move away from “event driven” assistance, policy and programme emphasis is favouring the longer-term involvement of election observers and deepening capacity support for domestic observer groups, electoral management bodies, political parties, media etc..

Arguably, an exclusive focus on the deployment of observers as the mode of program delivery is analogous to the “old” development assistance model featuring infrastructure and expert inputs.

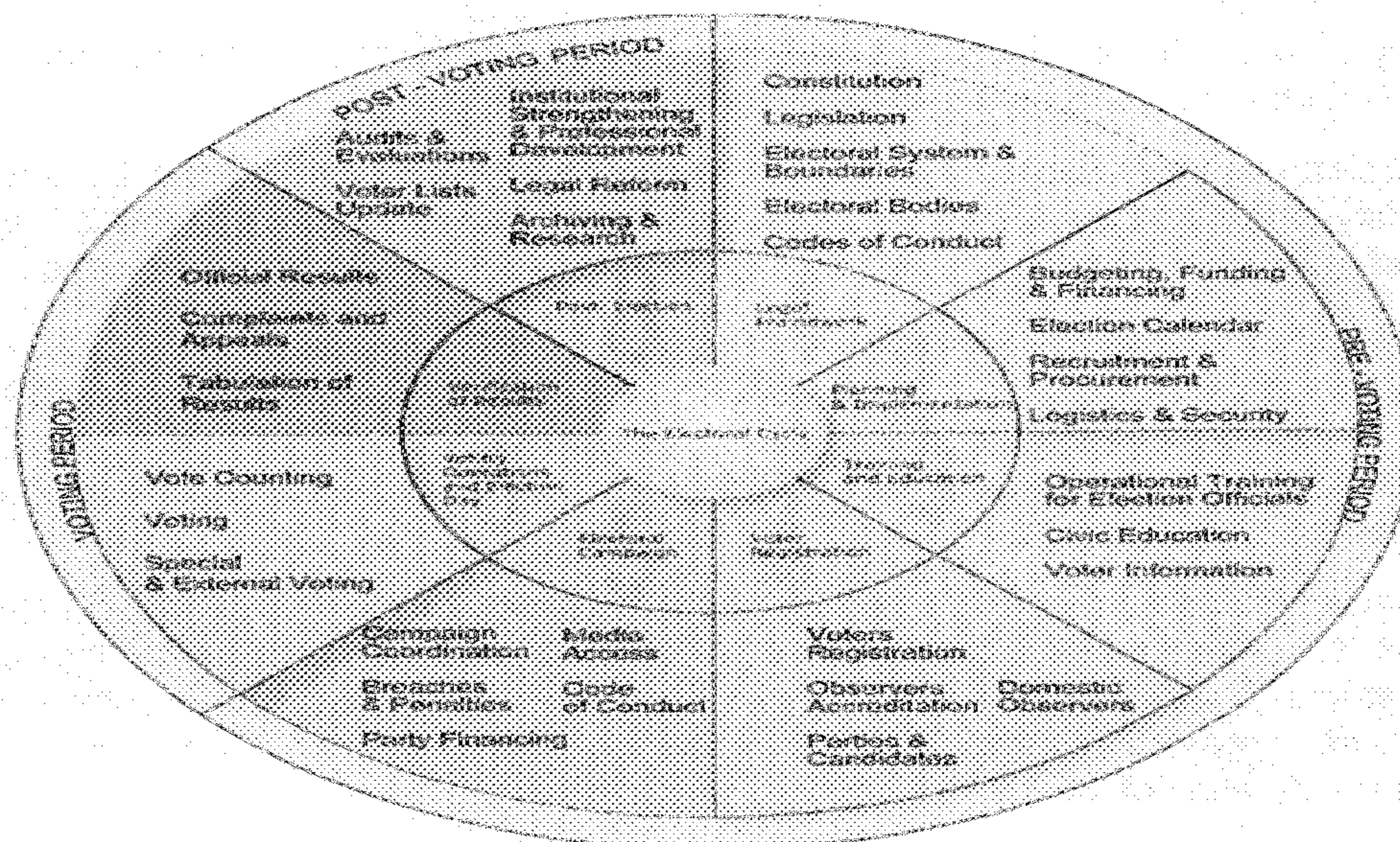
- In this model, the building of schools would be the sole goal of an intervention and an end in itself. Attention would be placed on factors such as number of schools built, and the number of students attending. This model has been described by most development experts as ineffective by virtue of the absence of attention paid to the sourcing and training of teachers, the availability of curriculum and textbooks, and the means by which children will get to school. In an EOM context, having observers on the ground is but one element of successful electoral observation, but from an aid effectiveness standpoint, it is a long way short of ensuring that the country’s citizens will be empowered to increase their participation in democratic processes (as is indeed the program goal of MEOP) at a future date. To ensure this occurs, many additional aspects need be considered, of which the most significant is likely support for sub-projects that lay the foundation for a better democratic process. Generally, such projects fall under the rubric of “governance”, but they are indeed part of the larger *electoral cycle* approach that posits that support for country-level stakeholders in the “period between elections” is, from a democratic development perspective, equally if not more important than election-day itself.

Figure 3-2 below, illustrates the various elements that, from a best practice perspective, should be taken into account during the various phases of the elections cycle (i.e. pre and post-voting periods, as well as election-day itself). The schema was developed by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), a Swedish based inter-governmental organization and major contributor to the field of electoral assistance. The illustration underlines, of course, that there is a lot more to the electoral process than

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

what goes on during campaigns and on voting day - that the process is composed of a number of integrated building blocks, with different stakeholders interacting and influencing each other.

Figure 3-2: The Electoral Cycle



As the programming focus of MEOP tilted toward support for the deployment of election observers, any activities that would have supported the more far reaching MEOP outcomes related to the transparency of elections and public participation (women and men) in them (#1 and #3) came to an end. And, even if the policy development component had continued, it is questionable as to how much MEOP could have extended its reach to make a tangible difference regarding gender participation. EOMs, in and of themselves, are not specifically designed to increase transparency and participation in elections. Rather it is the projects that follow, designed to address observation mission recommendations that would more appropriately address any shortcomings. It has been revealed that support for these projects was not within the scope of MEOP, either as it was originally configured, or following the shift in emphasis toward an exclusive focus on deployment.

For the majority of multilateral EOMs supported by MEOP, a similar scenario is followed for implementation:

- Appropriate observers (Canadian and non-Canadian) are sourced and contracted, through CANADEM or via the organization's internal observer lists based on their individual technical and professional expertise, previous experience in EOMs, and, where applicable, language capabilities that match the *lingua franca* of the country in question.
- Following briefing or training sessions held at CANADEM and/or in-country, observers are deployed to the EOM recipient country, either as LTOs (duration of over one month) to STOs (duration of under ten days).
- On election-day, observers carry out their role in various regions of the country, most often working in groups of two consisting of two nationalities. Assessment forms, developed by the partner organization, are provided to the observers to complete based on a variety of election indicators.
- Following the closing of the polls, EOM teams complete their reports and return them, either directly or electronically, to the implementing multinational partner.
- Based on the responses found in the reports, the partner issues a general mission report, which outlines key findings from the election period¹¹ in relevant areas (i.e. election administration by the local electoral management body (EMB), voter and candidate registration, the election campaign, role of media, participation of minority groups, process of voting, collection and tabulation of votes, etc.).

¹¹ Note that mission reports generally cover the entire election period (the time leading up to the day of the election) as well as election day itself.

- The report also provides recommendations for how subsequent elections could be improved based upon the election being observed. These recommendations usually suggest improvements that could be implemented by the EMB or various ministries or departments, etc., often in the areas of capacity building for EMB/ministry personnel, civil society, media, political parties, etc. to ensure that any subsequent election adheres more closely to the core principles and tenets of democratic and transparent elections.
- It is then up to the local country authorities to implement the recommendations, sometimes with assistance from the multilateral organization, sometimes not.

From an electoral observation practice point of view, it is activities relating to the final point where there appears to be discontinuity in the field at present. This gap was highlighted as the most significant challenge facing the field today. In addition, four other challenges were mentioned in conversations with stakeholders:

- Capacity building for country-level election management bodies
- Emanating out of the previous point, better coordination between international and domestic observers
- Training of domestic observers to undertake EOM activities
- Methodologies to keep abreast of technological advances in the electoral process (i.e. electronic voting, biometric voter registration).

All of the above are consistent with the topics on the agenda at field of practice conferences on electoral observation. On an annual basis practitioners of electoral assistance and EOMs (including MEOP partner organizations) gather to discuss developments and challenges in the field, and to share information on best practices and other areas of interest. Figure 3-3, below, summarizes what have been the main points of discussion over the duration of MEOP.

Figure 3-3: Summary of Key Discussion Topics at Implementation Meetings of Declaration of Principles and Code of Conduct

Much of the discussion to date has focused on the development of professional observation methods and standards with emphasis on:

- Delineating the limits of international observation
- An election cycle (rather than “event”) approach, in particular addressing pre- and post- election day issues:
 - constituency delimitation
 - voter registration
 - campaign finance and expenditure
 - role of the media
 - election complaints processes
 - handling of post-election human rights cases
- Promoting and establishing close working relationships with domestic observers
 - advent of the Global Principles for Non-Partisan Domestic Election Monitoring (DoGP)
- Ensuring financial and political independence of EOMs
- Benchmarks and indicators for assessing elections
- Integration of gender (and inclusion of excluded groups) as a cross cutting theme referenced to regional and international obligations
 - gender balanced delegations
 - inclusion of gender equality advocates in mission briefings
 - handbooks and training on women’s participation
- Capacity building of international and domestic observers
- Formulation of ‘user-friendly’ reports and targeted distribution
 - clear, actionable recommendations
- Inter-mission cooperation
- Post election follow up - getting beyond follow up discussions as simply “renegotiation of observer report recommendations”
 - establishing Guiding Principles on Follow-up (NDI)
 - engaging partner country governments and civil society on EOM findings
 - reviewing recommendations of past observer missions
 - conducting post mid-term assessments
 - using political tools to encourage compliance (e.g. special envoys)
 - consolidating a list of legal obligations for electoral processes (with particular suggestions to incorporate regional treaties and documents as a source of standards) and sharing of EOM “best practices” as a means of improving coherence, transparency and predictability

- developing a database of Obligations for Democratic Elections (The Carter Center)
- linking observation to technical assistance
- Involvement of parliamentary representatives (past and present) as observers - fine tuning
 - training
 - managing risk associated with media attention and identification with diaspora communities
- Addressing...
 - malpractice - defining and measuring politically motivated violence, intimidation and vote buying, and determining tolerance thresholds
 - use of State/Administration resources – defining and referencing to international standards
- Monitoring the integrity of electronic electoral technologies - “limiting the space for malpractice”
 - establishing the Guiding Principles for Observing Electronic Voting (The Carter Center)
- Mission models
 - pursuing “Gold Standard” (full), while allowing for (and properly explaining) “limited” approaches
- Communications...
 - popularizing the Declaration of Principles and the Code with specific target groups, for example: observers, EMBs, civil society, media, parliamentarians
 - between observer groups - developing cooperation communication mechanisms amongst bodies making up the “global community” of election observers - e.g. use of annual meetings and development of the ACE Project to maintain an online clearing house (Online Portal on the Declaration of Principles)
 - linkages between observer groups and other development actors (those engaged in other aspects of democratic development and broader socio-economic development)
- Coordination among donor organizations with emphasis on their influence/support role in post observation follow up

Source: *Proceedings of Implementation Meetings on Implementation of the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation:*

1st – London 31 May to 1 June 2006; 2nd – Washington 14-15 November 2007; 3rd – Maputo 23-24 October 2008; 4th – Warsaw 10-11 September 2009; 5th – Atlanta 13-14 October 2010; 6th – Brussels 4-6 October 2011; NDI website for summary of 7th meeting, 14-15 November 2012 (<http://www.ndi.org/dop-implementation-meeting>); OSCE website for notice of 8th meeting, 17-18 September, 2013 (<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/104323>)

In a slightly larger programming context, the evaluators are aware that donors and democracy supporting organizations have developed a set of principles to cover the realm of *electoral assistance*. Election observation is one facet of electoral assistance. The Principles for International Electoral Assistance emerged in 2010 from the first in a series of high-level roundtables and seminars to identify the trends in support to accountability actors and institutions. These were organized by the OECD (DAC and GOVNET)¹². There are 16 principles in all and they endorse the electoral cycle approach and signal the importance of: ownership/inclusivity, context sensitivity, domestic organizational capacity, working through regional organizations, donor coordination, and integration with broader forms of democracy support. With specific regard to election observation, Principle #8 sets out the following:

- Be as comprehensive as possible - Designing elections assistance to be comprehensive horizontally across the many domestic institutions and sectors involved in an electoral process will ensure better synergies and overall coherence. Elections assistance and observation should be well co-ordinated, as observation plays a key role in effective electoral support

Conclusions

The question of MEOP's effectiveness as a development intervention is at the same time straightforward and complex. If the results of MEOP are to be measured against the Program's stated outcomes as anticipated in its logic model, then the initiative may be characterized as not particularly successful. MEOP has really only made an impression on the second outcome focused on the performance of its multilateral partners in their conduct of EOMs. With that said, the Program's logic model was far too ambitious in terms of what MEOP could reasonably be expected to contribute to democratic development and governance in sovereign states. This is an assertion already acknowledged by DFATD personnel prior to the evaluation.

Regarding the second outcome, Canada's contribution to the performance of multilateral partners in conducting observation missions has been positive with each partner. For its part in enabling MEOP to provide Canadian presence in partner EOMs, CANADEM has lived up to its performance expectations, showing competent management of its roster, training activities, and most importantly its fielding of high quality Canadian election

¹² The first GOVNET roundtable – *International Support for Elections: Effective Strategies and Accountability Systems* – was held on 1 March 2010 with the support of DFID, the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Development Program, European Commission, European Commission-United Nations Development Program: Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

observers. The significance of MEOP's contribution has been variable from partner to partner. The mode of delivery - grant vs. contribution agreement - and the amount of the contribution relative to partner observation budgets – are important variables.

The first and third outcomes are much more closely related to policy development and to capacity building activities that would likely flow from the implementation of EOM recommendations. MEOP, in its first two years, took steps to address these expected results but the programming tilt exclusively toward the deployment of Canadian observers to multilateral and bilateral EOMs undermined the likely modest progress that could have been made toward these outcomes, given the scope of MEOP and the relatively modest level of funding to these programming components. The shift, two years into the program, further toward a more singular focus on the deployment of observers has occurred at the same time that the principle actors in the international election observation/assistance community are urging that more attention to integrated programming and capacity development in the field.

In the final analysis, although MEOP may not have achieved its expected results as set out in its logic model, it nonetheless was successful in enhancing the ability of its multilateral partners to conduct EOMs, which was, realistically, the main thrust of the intervention. Despite the fact that two out of the three outcomes were largely focused on policy development, upon review of the initiatives' budget and expenditures, only ten percent was ever allocated to these aspects, and more than 90% earmarked for the direct participation of Canadians in EOMs. Although a fundamental gap existed between MEOP's expected and actual results, the Program was largely effective in achieving its true purpose.

3.2 Efficiency

Key Evaluation Questions

1. How economically are MEOP resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) converted to outputs?
2. To what degree and how did design and procedural changes implemented at the outset of the 2008-2013 MEOP contribute to an increase or decrease in MEOP implementation efficiency compared to its predecessors?
3. Were outputs achieved on time and on budget?
4. Did DFATD's contracting approach with its implementation partners enable them to better plan, observe more elections, accomplish more, and improve internal efficiencies?

Background

Efficiency is concerned with a program's outputs in relation to its inputs and activities. Generally, it is an economic term signifying that the aid uses resources as sparingly as possible in order to achieve desired results. To get a measure of efficiency one looks to an initiative's cost-effectiveness, whether objectives were achieved on time and on budget, and the efficacy, if any, of alternate approaches that could yield similar results.

According to MEOP's logic model, the Program's outputs were as follows:

- Increased geographic coverage of professional EOMs
- Multilateral organizations are able to conduct professional and timely EOMs
- Canadian organizations are able to support multilateral EOMs
- Increased acknowledgement by the national and international community of the gender barriers in the electoral process (voting, election to office, etc.)
- Gender specific barriers in the electoral process are clearly identified by observers and incorporated into mission reports (such as examining the effect gender on barriers to exercising their right to vote and the right to run for office)

Inputs to achieve these outputs were financial resources, contracting mechanisms with partner organization, and Canadian election observers themselves.

Findings

The question of how economically MEOP inputs were converted to outputs (Evaluation Key Question #1 for Efficiency) needs to be framed somewhat differently than would be the case with many development

interventions. The program was considered by its partner organizations to be a funding mechanism to carry out EOMs rather than a development intervention with specific numeric or qualitative targets.

Overall, it was difficult to assess the cost effectiveness of partners fielding observers to conduct EOMs, due to the fact that every EOM possesses a number of different cost variables based on the differing contextual situations and geographical considerations of the host country. For example, an EOM to Moldova, where the infrastructure is sound and distances relatively small, would cost less than a mission to Sudan where a much larger geographical area and less developed infrastructure serve to increase mission costs. Moreover, the security situation in individual countries can also significantly influence costs as multilateral partners must make provisions for the security of their election observers. The upcoming EOM to Afghanistan in April 2014, for example, will be an extremely costly undertaking, as opposed to missions to Ukraine, a country very similar in size but without the security risks. Another variable is the form of EOMs themselves amongst multilateral partner organizations. While OSCE, EU, and OAS missions all utilize professional observers drawn from their own internal rosters or CANADEM's, the Commonwealth utilizes "eminent" individuals exclusively on their missions. This serves to increase costs as honoraria and travel costs are greater than those of individual observers conducting EOMs for other partners. Thus, determining how economically MEOP resources are converted to outputs from a partner perspective is very much akin to comparing apples to oranges: there are too many variables at work and one size does not fit all.

Another point to consider is the nature of MEOP's actual expectations of their key partner organizations. Again, it may be said that expectations were straightforward. Putting aside the policy development and capacity building initiatives for the moment, the bulk of MEOP resources were allocated for the program's multilateral partner to conduct EOMs, full stop. Aside from this expectation, and the assumption that completed EOMs would produce mission reports that provided information on, among other things, gender barriers and other impediments to the democratic process, little else was expected. In the case of CANADEM, expectations spelled out in the Framework Agreement revolves around the organization's ability to recruit and deploy, from their roster of election observers, individuals for multilateral and bilateral EOMs, as well as manage all mission-related logistics (pre-departure briefings, flights, contracting with individual observers, etc.).

Thus, all of MEOP's partners, to the best of their ability, met these expectations by conducting EOMs as economically and cost-effectively as possible to achieve program outputs. Each partner is sensitive to the fact that they are operating in a resource constrained environment, and thus each has in place a standard of cost-effectiveness that is either codified in documents or is inherent in their fielding of EOMs. These include efforts to lower mission costs by ensuring hotels and flights are booked, to the best of their ability, far in advance, as well as methods to ensure that any EOM-related expenses are kept as low as possible, with the exception of providing security for individual observers where appropriate. Interviews with individual observers confirmed that, from a security perspective, multilateral organizations do not cut corners. In terms of actually fielding individual (short-term) observers for a seven-day mission, and allowing for the many variables that may impact a specific mission outlined above, the following average costs by partner organization, converted to Canadian dollars are:

- Commonwealth: \$22,000 - \$27,000
- EU: no clear figure, as it is somewhat dependent upon the service provider implementing EU EOMs, but in the range of \$7,000 - \$9,000
- OAS: \$4,000 - \$6,000
- OSCE-ODIHR: \$3,500 plus travel costs

The above figures clearly indicate that of all MEOP's implementation partners, the Commonwealth Secretariat maintains the highest cost per observer, however, this is again due to the exclusive use of "eminent" individuals to fill their EOM teams, who travel and stay first-class while on mission. For their part, the OSCE was identified as being the most economical when deploying observers, with the OAS not far behind. However, despite these lower costs, it does not appear, according to individual interviewees that participated in these missions, that the integrity and reporting of the mission was compromised in any way. Nevertheless, some individual observers were of the opinion that more money should be allocated to their honorariums for EOM participation, and that this was potentially limiting the recruitment of qualified and professional election observers. A fair point, but in a resource-constrained environment, and as long as the veracity of the mission is not affected, this is not of particular concern: there are many individuals on CANADEM's roster (and others) who would gladly participate in an EOM. Moreover, the allocation of resources to the areas that really concern the safety and operations of EOMs are appropriately in place where they should belong (i.e. ensuring the security of observers). In conclusion, all partner organizations were, and are, working close to the line in terms of their ability to mount EOMs on time and on budget.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #2 – on the degree design and procedural changes implemented for MEOP contributed to an increase or decrease in implementation efficiency compared to its predecessor iterations - the evaluation addresses this topic in Section 3.13 – Other Issues.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #3 - whether outputs were achieved on time and on budget - the findings cannot point to an example where this was not the case. However, there is really no question of delay when it comes to operationalizing an EOM due to the nature of election observation. Simply put, if a state calls an election for a certain day, they are not going to postpone it due to the inability or lack of readiness of multilateral organizations to mount a mission. There are no floating deadlines when it comes to a scheduled election. Unless there are serious mitigating circumstances, an election will occur on the scheduled day whether a partner is ready to conduct an EOM or not.

Key Evaluation Questions #4 – regarding the influence of MEOP contracting approaches on partner performance - is largely irrelevant, due in large part to the already established administrative mechanisms through which they receive funds. Quite simply, there is no evidence that the actual contracting mechanism (grant arrangement vs. contribution agreement vs. framework agreement) had any influence on the partners' ability to address the issues above. The length of the contract itself had more of an impact in these areas. The following outlines a breakdown, based on interviews with EOM managers from MEOP's partner organizations, of their opinion of the contracting mechanism with DFATD and its ability to influence their programming:

- CANADEM: The Framework Agreement between the Canadian government and CANADEM sets out the administrative mechanism by which the organization manages and funds EOM for relevant MEOP partner organizations. It also outlines CANADEM's responsibility to recruit and deploy candidates for EOMs on behalf of the government of Canada. In the opinion of CANADEM, the Framework Agreement (which essentially mirrors the duration of MEOP) has been an adequate mechanism for the organization to undertake its responsibilities, with no particular complaint about its structure or its ability to influence planning or improving internal efficiencies. CANADEM had already, prior to the implementation of the Framework Agreement in 2008, plenty of experience in acting as a service organization to recruit and deploy EOM participants. If CANADEM was to undertake policy-related work in the electoral observation/assistance field, a broader programming approach facilitated by a grant arrangement would perhaps be more appropriate.
- OSCE and EU are contracted through contribution agreements with CANADEM/DFATD which flow through the appropriate Canadian representatives in the field (i.e. Canadian Missions to the EU and OSCE). Each of these multilateral partners, in discussions with the evaluators, was completely unaware of what program and indeed where the Canadian funds came from. Both of these partners noted that Canada's contribution, while appreciated, did not impact their ability to plan for or implement EOMs, nor did it impact upon their internal capacities. In response to the question as to whether they felt that the funding mechanism was appropriate, they noted that the status quo was fine. Moreover, in discussions with Canada's representative to the EU, it was stated that, from an internal perspective, the EU is set up only to receive funds through contribution agreements, thus making any thought of altering the mechanism to a grant arrangement out of the question.
- OAS and Commonwealth received funding from Canada directly through grant arrangements. In the case of the Commonwealth, this was based on biannual annual grants for EOM support, whereas with the OAS, the duration was three years. Both organizations, as outlined previously, were of the opinion that Canada's contribution had indeed enabled them to better plan for and better observe elections. Additionally, in the case of the OAS, it has allowed them to improve internal efficiencies through capacity building and policy development initiatives embedded within the grant arrangement. However, this is not attributable to the grant arrangement itself, and in any case, a granting mechanism is the only method of funding these organizations due to their internal policies and other funding relationships with the Canadian government. It was suggested, however, that although the funding mechanism was appropriate, a longer-term grant (i.e. for the entire duration of MEOP) would have allowed them to better plan for upcoming elections and to realize a level of cost-certainty in their planning, which is logical.

Conclusion

Overall, the Framework agreement with CANADEM has proved to be effective in getting quality observer talent on the ground for EOMs. Regarding the appropriateness of the granting mechanism for partners (only possible for Commonwealth and OSCE), it has provided them with additional leeway to not only plan for upcoming missions, but also to address policy development and capacity building activities. And the service contract

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

contribution agreement approach between CANADEM and the EU/OSCE likewise serves well the deployment of observers. As such, there is satisfaction that the most appropriate contracting mechanisms have been used for working with MEOP's multilateral partners and with CANADEM.

3.3 Relevance

Key Evaluation Questions

1. (Is program design) Are results relevant to MEOP's cooperation partners and needs?
2. Are the results achieved relevant to international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Union Democracy Charter, the OAS Democracy Charter, etc.?

Background

A program's relevance is a measure by which the intervention is suited to the priorities of the target beneficiary group or groups. In the case of MEOP, the key beneficiary group is MEOP's key multilateral partner organizations.

Findings

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #1 – on the relevance of MEOP to partner needs – the link is evident.

The purpose of MEOP, according to its logic model, was to "strengthen multilateral institutions to assess elections against national and international commitments and provide recommendations on how nations can conduct fair elections that promote democratization, protect human rights, and increase gender equality." When this statement is compared to the mission statements of the five partner organizations, it is immediately apparent that MEOP's activities and results were completely relevant to its partner's needs and goals. Below are the actual purpose statements from MEOP's multilateral partners that have conducted EOMs with DFATD assistance, with the number of missions supported by Canada in parenthesis.¹³

- **OAS (35):** The Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation (DECO) develops and maintains a permanent, professional service of electoral observation and technical assistance for the OAS member countries, based on its ongoing efforts to improve and strengthen procedures and practices in this field. The department conducts analysis and applied research activities and organizes discussion forums designed to help continuously improve the region's electoral institutions and processes, foster democratic elections, and strengthen citizen participation.
- **COMSEC (18):** The observation of elections is one way in which the Commonwealth Secretariat works to strengthen democracy. Observer groups are asked to report on the credibility of the electoral process, whether the conditions exist for a free expression of will by the electors, and if the election results reflect the wishes of the people.
- **OSCE-ODIHR (11):** Recognizing that democratic elections form the basis for legitimate government, the OSCE observes elections throughout its 57 participating states. It also provides technical assistance to improve the legislative and administrative framework for elections in specific countries
- **EU (13):** Genuine elections are an essential basis for sustainable development and a functioning democracy. The European Union believes that actions supporting the right to participate in genuine elections can make a major contribution to peace, security and conflict prevention. Support takes the form of electoral assistance projects and EU election observation missions.
- **The Carter Center (1):** Citizens around the world participate in elections to hold their governments accountable, and more governments than ever recognize democratic elections as essential to establishing their legitimate authority. The assessments of organizations that monitor elections in emerging democracies are central to determining whether an election is considered genuinely democratic.

The common denominator in all of these statements, in concert with MEOP's purpose, is the understanding that elections are a key and fundamental contributor to the democratic process, and further, that electoral

¹³ All of these statements were sourced from the websites of the electoral observation departments/sections of MEOP partners.

observation may act as a catalyst for democratization. As such, MEOP, as a program that ultimately supported democratic development through EOMs, was effectively mirroring the purpose of its partners.

Unanimously, Partner organizations expressed that Canada's contribution (some were not aware of MEOP itself, but the fact that Canada contributed to their EOMs) to EOMs suited their needs and was welcomed. This being said, there was a level of disappointment amongst the OAS and Carter Center that policy development activities that were funded under MEOP were discontinued, as these were (and remain) relevant to assisting countries in their democratic processes. However, overall, all partners assessed MEOP as a perfect mechanism to provide assistance for electoral observation activities.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #2 - program alignment with international human rights instruments - the evaluators also found a clear link. Multilateral partners are playing lead roles in the development of international election observation principles, standards and codes of conduct. All are early adopters of, or share original ownership in, consensus documents regarding the above. The first four articles of the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation links...

- election observation (Article 4)...
- to free and fair voting (Article 3)...
- to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights which assert that everyone has the right and must be provided with the opportunity to participate in government and the public affairs of his or her country" (Article 2), and ultimately...
- to genuine democratic elections as an expression of sovereignty and a basis for the authority and legitimacy of government (Article 1).

Conclusion

The Program dovetailed well with the priorities of its multilateral partner organizations and the international agreements that guide their EOM practices. MEOP was chiefly designed to provide funds to assist its partners to conduct EOMs (with a smaller initial capacity building/policy development component) in support of democratization at the country level, and this is exactly what was achieved over its duration, having provided assistance for a total of seventy-six EOMs up to April 2012.¹⁴

3.4 Sustainability

Key Evaluation Questions

1. Is there evidence that MEOP's financial support and contribution of observers to implement partner organization's EOMs has resulted in improvements in those organizations' management of EOMs that would be sustainable if Canadian observers were no longer available?
2. Has Canadian support helped its cooperation partners leverage funds from other donors?
3. Has Canadian support and policy dialogue resulted in improvements to the partner's operations that that will continue beyond the life of the current MEOP?

Background

According to the OECD-DAC criteria, sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. The question of sustainability *vis-à-vis* MEOP is straightforward. In this instance, the majority of Canadian funds were provided to multilateral partners to field election observation missions. This occurred without any specific goals at the country level other than to contribute to a democratization process. As such, sustainability has to be understood in terms of the ability of partners to continue to field EOMs after DFATD funds are discontinued.

Findings

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #1 – on the link between MEOP support and partner sustainability - the evaluation finds that multilateral partners would continue to operate EOMs with or without a Canadian contribution. However, for specific multilateral partners (i.e. the Commonwealth Secretariat and OAS), the scope of their involvement would be diminished. The main reason for this is that multilateral

¹⁴ According to the most up to date information provided to the Evaluators.

organizations (with the exception of the Carter Center and to a lesser extent, the Commonwealth and EU) are mandated to do so if requested by their member (or in some cases, non-member) states. Consequently, if any country contributing monies to EOMs withdrew their funding support, resources to carry out EOMs would have come from some other source, either internally or externally.

For example, if Bolivia requested an EOM to monitor an election in the country, the OAS would be mandated to do so. Funds would then have to be allocated for this mission, despite the reality of a chronic “cash crunch” within the organization. The OAS would then have to conduct a fundraising exercise to ensure monies are sourced for the mission to occur. Here, we draw attention to Figure 3-3 and a topic of discourse among observer organizations at their annual follow up meetings on implementation of the Declaration of Principles – the distinction of and need to rationalize mission models including “Gold Standard” and more modest, resource constrained variants.

With this context in mind, a brief review of the significance of MEOP funding for its key EOM implementing partner organizations is offered:

- OAS and Commonwealth: Canadian funds are very important to the ability of these organizations to conduct EOMs for their respective member states. The Canadian contribution, specifically earmarked for the fielding of EOMs irrespective of Canadian participation, allowed both partners to have additional flexibility in determining where to allocate resources for specific EOMs, giving them both a level of comfort in planning for future missions.
- OSCE and EU: Canada’s contribution represents a very small percentage of their respective budgets to implement EOMs, and specifically to support the deployment of Canadian observers. EOM managers from these bodies noted that although they appreciate Canadian funding support, it is not crucial to their ability to undertake observation missions.

These findings suggest that MEOP’s contribution to electoral observation activities on behalf of its multilateral partners is of more significance where direct Canadian involvement (in the form of individual Canadian election observers on the ground) is NOT exclusively mandated (Commonwealth and OAS), and is of less import to those organizations (OSCE and EU) where funds are directed to the deployment of Canadian observers.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #2 – on the link between Canadian support and partner access to donor funds – we encountered one instance where Canadian support assisted its partners to leverage additional donor support. It is described in Section 3.1. Here, MEOP policy assistance to the OAS to develop a manual on integration of gender perspectives in EOMs resulted in continued funding for the Organization’s gender and election activities by the Spanish and German governments. It was also noted that for the OAS, Canada’s contribution to the organization’s Election Observation Fund has acted as a catalyst for other countries to provide funds for EOMs. More specifically, both member and non-member states have provided additional financial resources for the Fund, which in turn contributes to the sustainability of OAS EOMs in both the short and longer-terms. Please see Figure 3-1 for a listing of contributing countries.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #3 – on the link between Canadian support and policy dialogue on the one hand and sustainable improvements in partner operations/practices on the other - MEOP has contributed to sustainability through three projects (UNDP – Global Program for Electoral Cycle Support, OAS (see above), and Carter Center - Democratic Election Standards Project) focused on developing the field of election observation practice, according to interviews with partner organizations and individual observers. Each project addresses needs articulated as part of the global effort to operationalize the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation with standards and professional practices, and as a result, fundamentally contributes to overall sustainability of policy within the general field of EOM practice.

The findings also revealed a dimension of sustainability at the scale of the individual observer. As concluded in Section 3.1, CANADEM has been effective in stewarding and deploying a diverse core of well prepared Canadians for EOMs. The majority of the individual observers interviewed had participated in EOMs for multiple MEOP partner organizations reflecting a depth of experience.

Conclusions

As election observation missions are “one-off” endeavours managed by the partner organization, there is little that can be sustained. Once the mission is complete, that is the end of that specific project. Accordingly, Canadian financial and human resource contributions have not added value to management and implementation beyond enabling those EOMs to take place. No MEOP funds were ever specifically allocated for mission management, though in the case of the Commonwealth and OAS, the granting relationship lent some flexibility

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

to management decision-making and offered limited scope for capacity development. Where there is more evidence of MEOP's contribution yielding sustainable improvements, is in the area of policy development & capacity building. MEOP's contributions can be linked to important developments in the international observation field of practice. As well, MEOP through CANADEM has been successful in ensuring a suitable and steady supply of home grown observer resources.

3.5 Cross-Cutting Issues – Gender Equality, Environment, Governance

Key Evaluation Questions

1. Has MEOP assisted partner organizations in developing and/or improving gender equality analysis? (Gender)
2. To what extent has DFATD's gender equality programming influenced the partner organization in achieving its gender equality goals or overcoming gender constraints? (Gender)
3. Has MEOP assisted partner organizations in developing and/or improving environmental stewardship in the implementation of EOMs? (Environment)
4. To what degree has MEOP contributed to improved governance of EOMs by its implementation partners? (Governance)
5. Has Canadian support and policy dialogue encouraged MEOP's cooperation partners to be more strategic in determining: a) where to conduct EOMs? b) how far in advance to plan EOMs? c) how to coordinate amongst donors? D) how to coordinate with other multilateral EOM implementing organizations? (Governance)
6. There are three countries in which two MEOP-supported EOMs have been undertaken over the span of the 2008-13 program: Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ukraine. Is there evidence in these cases that election governance in these countries has improved from one election to the next? (Governance)

Background

All development initiatives undertaken by DFATD are expected to integrate three cross-cutting themes into their program/project design. Accordingly, the evaluation considers the inclusion and incorporation of *advancing equality between men and women* (gender), *environmental sustainability* (environment), and *governance* both in MEOP's program design and in its activities with multilateral partners.

Under the rubric of governance, this section also comments on the status of election governance in three countries (Ukraine, Nicaragua, and Honduras) which experienced multiple EOMs over the duration of the MEOP Program.

Gender Related Expectations on MEOP

There are two aspects to gender equality considerations for MEOP: internally within the design of the program itself, and externally *vis-à-vis* partner organization adherence to program expectations and their adherence to gender imperatives when implementing EOMs.

Regarding Canada's role (through MEOP) in supporting its multilateral partner organizations, a Gender Equality Assessment was undertaken during MEOP's approvals process. The analysis pointed to the cooperation partners as the locus of attention for meaningful gender equality programming. In particular, the assessment indicated that MEOP had a role to play in encouraging organizations to recruit observers in a gender sensitive manner and to train them to make informed observations of men and women voter access, and of men and women's ability to secure elected positions. The assessment also concluded that MEOP could also encourage gender equality in the composition of electoral commission staff. Some of these goals were outlined in MEOP's logic model, which, at the outcome level, called for an "increased ability of women and men to participate equally in the electoral process, including voting, ability to run for office, and election to office."

Environment Related Expectations on MEOP

An internal CIDA environmental assessment of MEOP was conducted prior to the commencement of the initiative, which states the following, "Elections themselves may have significant environmental consequences. However, monitoring the environmental consequences of elections is beyond the scope of an electoral

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

observation mission at this time. Of the three main activities inherent in an EOM (needs assessment mission, selection and deployment of observers, and arrangement of in-country logistics), none have significant environmental components". The assessment concludes that, "there are no significant environmental issues associated with the deployment of election observers".

Governance Related Expectations on MEOP

Governance as a cross-cutting theme within MEOP is an interesting phenomena for, in a sense, the main purpose of the initiative revolves around the fact that electoral observation is the beginning of a process by which good governance and democratic development is achieved in countries which have hosted EOMs. That said, the focus of governance as a cross-cutting theme within the framework of MEOP is not focused on improvements in EOM governance at the country level, but among MEOP's multilateral partners. As such, we comment first on the extent to which MEOP has contributed to improved governance of EOMs and policy dialogue by its partners, then on the larger question as to how MEOP, and support for electoral observation in general, could potentially benefit governance structures and democratic development at a macro level.

Findings Specific to "Advancing Equality between Men and Women" (Key Evaluation Questions One and Two)

The feasibility of MEOP achieving the above mentioned outcome in Section 3.1 (Effectiveness) and Section 3.9 (Results-Based Management) follow. In short we find that addressing this outcome was beyond the overall scope of MEOP, as the Program, in of itself, was in no position to directly influence democratic participation in the electoral process at the country level. Two of MEOP's stated outputs reflect the role of partner organizations in outlining gender equality challenges. The outputs were:

- Increased acknowledgement by the national and international community of the gender barriers in the electoral process (voting, election to office, etc.);
- Gender specific barriers in the electoral process are clearly identified by observers and incorporated into mission reports (such as examining the effect of gender on barriers to exercising the right to vote and the right to run for office.

Each of these statements, especially the latter, reflect the role of EOM practitioners in ensuring that gender considerations are taken into account and reported on in any mission, both in the initial pre-deployment phase – i.e. training/ orientation for individual election observers on gender and equality imperatives - and in the post-election phase – i.e. identifying gender challenges in EOM mission reports. With respect to the former, the evaluation finds that specific gender equality expectations have been identified for CANADEM and each cooperation partner.

- In the case of the Commonwealth, emphasis is given to the training of staff and observers to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into EOMs.
- For the EU and the OSCE, DFATD acknowledges that both organizations have developed gender-related EOM competencies and resources in the form of manuals and training requirements. Expectations focus around the consistent application of the gender equality provisions that are already in place and mainstreamed within these organizations.
- Regarding the OAS, DFATD's assessment suggested that readiness to incorporate gender considerations into the recruitment and orientation of observers and in the EOM reporting was less well developed than in the EU and OSCE. As such, expectations on the OAS's DECO were to step up the inclusion of gender considerations in their management of EOMs.

On the basis of interviews with partner key informants and observers and of a review of documentation, the evaluation finds that MEOP's partners do incorporate gender considerations into EOM planning and in mission reports, as per expectations. Individual Canadian election observers who had participated in OSCE and EU missions commented on the strong inclusion of equality considerations for their pre-mission briefings, not only related to gender dynamics, but also the participation of minorities. **Over the life of MEOP, the OAS has made steady improvements in its focus on gender concerns in the EOM process, both at the observer training and country levels. Much of this improvement may be directly attributable to Canada's contribution through MEOP, which funded the development of a manual on the integration of gender perspectives in OAS EOMs, previously described in Part 3.1.**

- The EU, OSCE, and OAS have developed a gender checklist that individual observers must complete while on an EOM. This checklist outlines various indicators for gender equality, including access to

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

voting, recognition of the number of women (and minorities) in the electoral process, and gender considerations in campaign issues. In their mission reports, all three organizations devote stand-alone sections covering gender concerns and status, along with any relevant recommendations.

- The Commonwealth Secretariat has mainstreamed gender considerations (developed internally) throughout all of the Secretariat's projects, including EOMs. Gender elements are commented on in mission reports and recommendations where appropriate though there appears to be no codified checklist for gender indicators, as evidenced with MEOP's other multilateral partners.
- For its part, CANADEM also provides pre-deployment briefings on gender (as part of its gender policy) for all of its Canadian election observers, and in addition, provides observers it deploys with a gender checklist which must be completed and returned to the organization. CANADEM then compiles the responses for its mission and macro-level reporting.

A review of post-mission reports from all four of MEOP's partners shows that gender is given a stand-alone section for commentary. All partners provide gender disaggregated observer data with the exception of the Commonwealth Secretariat. As per the CANADEM Final Project Report, the gender breakdown for all project missions is as follows:

- Contacted: 2468 males/1555 females = 4023 (61%/39%)
- Interested: 677 males/487 females = 1164 (58%/42%)
- Shortlisted: 225 males/170 females = 395 (57%/43%)
- Deployed: 143 males/96 females = 239 (60%/40%)

MEOP's policy contribution to gender equality considerations and analysis was in evidence at both the partner and common field of practice levels.

- As outlined previously, MEOP funds supported the OAS to develop a gender manual. All other partner organizations had developed their own gender equity policies outside of MEOP.
- Through the GPECS (UNDP) and Democratic Election Standards (The Carter Center) Projects, MEOP has contributed to disseminating best practice information and general knowledge on gender considerations that could be reviewed and utilized by both practitioners of EOMs as well as EMBs at the country level.
- For example, the GPECS initiative, to which MEOP contributed a portion of donor funds, has implemented a variety of activities geared towards training EMBs at the country level in gender awareness.¹⁵
- Likewise, the Carter Center database provides links to partner and country statements and obligations on equal and universal suffrage that may be accessed by any interested party.

Findings Related to "Environmental Sustainability" (Key Evaluation Question Three)

No MEOP funds were allocated to assist its multilateral partners in developing or improving environmental stewardship in the implementation of EOMs. A review of EOM mission reports from all partner organizations likewise do not mention environmental considerations that could emanate out of an election. **Quite simply, due to the nature and focus of EOMs on issues of democratic governance, environmental factors are not relevant to the Program, a fact already confirmed by CIDA's own internal assessment itself.**

Findings and Analysis Related to "Governance" (Key Evaluation Question Four and Five)

Influence on Multilateral Partners

Regarding EOM practice improvements, there was no evidence that MEOP has had an impact on the governance of missions from an operational perspective. What may be said is that program funds contributed to the ability of partners (specifically the Commonwealth and OAS), to better plan for and finance their missions. The vast majority of MEOP funds were allocated to support personnel (Canadian and otherwise) in observer roles. No support was earmarked for improving how missions were conducted. Indeed, as interviews with

¹⁵ Please see:

<http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/GPECS%20Achievements%202009-2013.pdf>, specifically pages 13 and 14 for a summary of GPECS activities relating to gender. To be sure, MEOP cannot claim exclusive credit for this initiative, but a portion of it was funded under the policy component of MEOP.

individual observers have shown, all major MEOP partner organizations were already effective in the management and conduct of EOMs themselves leaving, from a governance perspective, little need for improvement.

Regarding MEOP's support for policy dialogue, there is no evidence that Canadian assistance has encouraged multilateral partner organizations to be more strategic in terms of how to coordinate amongst donors or with other EOM implementing organizations. While such coordination does take place on an occasional basis both within the EOM community and with donor countries, MEOP funds did not provide for assisting such interactions.

Regarding the extent to which Canadian support has encouraged MEOP's partners to be more strategic in determining where to conduct EOMs and how far in advance to plan for them, the program has had an influence but only in so far as it has provided funding certainty for those EOMs identified by Canada for support. The knock on effect of this certainty is a greater margin of flexibility in how other funds are allocated across non-Canadian supported EOMs.

In more general terms, however, MEOP, with the exceptions of the OAS and Commonwealth, has not had an effect on partner ability to plan ahead for mission scheduling. Such planning is confounded by the variability in the ways elections are called – some are planned, others emerge with very little notice.

Influence at the Country Level

It was previously noted that multilateral partners do not track implementation of mission report recommendations. Consequently, there is no methodology to ascertain concrete improvements (or indeed, regressions) and results to election governance at the country-level (i.e. EMBs). This point serves to additionally illustrate the importance of viewing elections as a cumulative and holistic process, rather than single events. By tracking the implementation of recommendations and addressing electoral assistance programming in the context of the electoral cycle, it is much more likely that challenges to electoral governance at the country-level will be both better ascertained and ultimately addressed, for a higher knowledge base from which to make management decisions would be realized.

A Macro Perspective on Governance as a Cross Cutting Theme

At a more general level, adherence to governance as a cross-cutting theme behoves electoral assistance initiatives like MEOP to manage with an understanding of their various democracy and democratization landscapes, mindful of the elements that encompass it – e.g. stable and effective institutions; transparent, and accountable public sector management; effective state institutions/systems (especially legal and judicial ministries/processes); due attention to human rights, rule of law and other measures to give civil society a robust role in decision making.

Well-defined by DFATD, Governance “encompasses the values, rules, institutions, and processes through which people and organizations attempt to work towards common objectives, make decisions, generate authority and legitimacy, and exercise power.”¹⁶ The OECD defines governance more generically: “Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority necessary to manage a nation’s affairs.”¹⁷ While both definitions are accurate, governance as defined by DFATD more wholly reflects the intuitive elements that must be influenced positively. Effective governance initiatives are not only about developing institutions through material support, they are also about changing the mindset (and values) of citizen stakeholders through these institutions and democracy in general.

When addressed as a cross-cutting issue, it is improvements at the organizational/operational level which take precedent. With that said, DFATD (formerly CIDA)-funded initiatives have historically included components that in one way or another improve the enabling environment. Here, MEOP is no different, though as it turns out this development/capacity building component in practice has been relatively minor.

In a development context, effective governance is indeed critical to poverty reduction and sustainable development; and a key element in any democratic governance programming must *always* be institutional reform and/or strengthening as a starting point. The presence of stable, efficient, accountable, transparent and non-corrupt organizations be they in the public sector or otherwise is instrumental to the achievement of higher-level goals and outcomes inherent in progress towards democratization (freedom and democracy, rule of law, human rights, and of course accountable public institutions).¹⁸ Further, developing the internal capacity of institutions

¹⁶ Please see: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/governance> (accessed December 21, 2013).

¹⁷ Please see: <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=7236> (accessed December 21, 2013)

¹⁸ These are the four elements of Democratic Governance for DAFAT.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

and organizations to promote better governance structures does not often occur rapidly or over the life of a single project. While more effective and transparent systems may be created, the greater challenge will always be in altering (and often countering) entrenched mindsets.

We contend that governance programs or projects require a dual focus – that is, on the operational/organizational aspects of project/program governance and on their enabling environments. In this vein, international election observation initiatives that support international election observation, like MEOP, should span a governance continuum that includes (from micro to macro):

- engagement with partners *vis-à-vis* project implementation – EOMs
- partner capacity building related to management of EOMs
- field of practice enhancements – professionalization and standardization
- linkages to other forms of electoral assistance – notably, technical support related to recommendations of observation reports, capacity building and coordination with domestic observer organizations

After a promising beginning of supporting partner capacities and initiatives that help to establish standards and professional observation practices, MEOP became more narrowly focused on one slice of this continuum.

Findings Regarding Democratic Progress in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ukraine (Key Evaluation Question Six)

In the TORs for this evaluation exercise, the evaluators were asked to review whether election governance had improved specifically in three DFATD countries of focus (Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ukraine) that had received multiple EOMs over the duration of MEOP. **Unfortunately, the evaluators were unable to uncover any significant information regarding this line of inquiry.**

We understand that it is important for DFTAD, and especially the various Country Programs within the Department, to obtain more knowledge about any changes in election governance in these three countries in order to tailor future programming and management decisions, however, as the evaluation has pointed out, MEOP partner organizations (in the case of EOM implementers for the above countries, the OAS, OSCE, and CANADEM) do not currently possess the internal management capacities or mechanisms to track or follow-up on implementation of recommendations emanating from EOM mission reports. Consequently, we were unable to review any material that spoke to this. We asked about contacting EMB representatives directly but learned from key informants of the poor likelihood of finding people or data that could reliably describe trends. Such a reality makes it very difficult, without actually visiting these countries, to determine if any positive progress has been made in terms of democratic governance electoral imperatives. It also underlines the importance of following up and tracking mission report recommendations if any real change is to be determined and reported on.

A key point must be made at this juncture. The deployment of EOMs by multilateral organizations, and efforts to address governance challenges at the country level to promote more effective and fair elections, are no guarantee that any progress will be achieved. Ultimately, decisions made by state governments are the key factor in assessing any progress, or lack thereof. Multilateral organizations must be invited by state governments to conduct EOMs, but their presence on the ground does not necessarily influence subsequent decisions a government may make. Additionally, governments change, and with them policies that may impact upon good governance and democratic principles and best practices. In both of these cases, partner organizations are entirely dependent upon the willingness of a country to implement any recommendations for progress, meaning that efforts to improve any systems at the country level are entirely out of their control. There is no requirement that a state *must* take steps to address recommendations or suggestions following an EOM, whether the government came to power by an open and democratic process, or not.

OSCE and OAS personnel similarly commented that in their assessment [REDACTED] They attributed this trend to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Once again, however, this turn of events was entirely beyond OSCE's and OAS's control, and thus, out of the control of donors as well, including Canada.

Conclusions

Regarding, gender, partner organizations have made headway in integrating gender considerations in the delivery of EOMs and MEOP has played a tangible role in this regard. This shows up in observer recruitment and orientation and in observer practices including the documentation of gender related aspects of the electoral process. In this regard, the Program has met design expectations, though it should be said that MEOP has not

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

been the only gender promoting influence. The program cannot describe the same level success promoting gender equality within the wider spheres of election management bodies. Here there are so many more variables in play that lie well outside of MEOP's ability to manage.

MEOP can only claim a minor contribution to governance as it relates to the design and delivery of EOMs by multilateral partners and to its ability to influence change within the elections programming context. From the beginning, MEOP sought partners that could provide assurances of being effective in the role. In this scenario, limited capacity building was identified and addressed with capacity support (for the most part related to gender). At the same time, the provision funds and people gave increased latitude to meet EOM mandates. In the larger sphere the program, by design, was not set up to extend its influence much before or after election event and beyond the observer organizations to in country election bodies. The most it could really do was to contribute to the development of international elections observation standards and practices, which it did in a modest yet effective way in early projects with The Carter Centre and the OAS.

3.6 Ownership

Key Evaluation Questions

1. Is there appropriate ownership at various stages of the MEOP lifecycle (design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation) by MEOP's cooperation partners, and do these partners have the appropriate authority and tools to make decisions and take action?

Background

The Paris Principles on Aid Effectiveness outline the importance of local ownership in any development initiative. The key aspect of ownership revolves around the fact that aid programs are something that must be done *by* developing countries and/or partner organizations, not *to* them. Policies and institutional reforms are more likely to be effective only so far as they emerge out of a genuinely collaborative process, where external assistance is tailored towards supporting beneficiaries to achieve their own development objectives, leaving donors in a largely secondary role. In the case of MEOP, the main referents of DFATD's support were its multilateral partner organizations responsible for actualizing election observation missions with Canadian monetary assistance.

A review of MEOP's program proposal and approval documents shows no general expectations around the principle of ownership. However, once again, MEOP may be considered an atypical initiative in a development sense. Generally, DFATD works closely with its partner organizations to ensure that the latter are responsible for results, providing, aside from direct monetary funding, and other expertise in the form of planning and technical assistance. MEOP, however, operated more as a simple donation mechanism from the partners' perspective, in much the same way that Canada makes general assessed contributions to multilateral organizations of which it is a member (OAS, Commonwealth, and the OSCE). The assumption was that as MEOP's multilateral partners were already the key players in the EOM field, they would already possess the appropriate and current expertise in electoral observation. In essence, MEOP's partners already *de facto* owned the program and its results, with DFATD's contribution essentially amounting to nothing much more beyond an additional avenue of funding and sourcing of Canadian observer support.

Findings

The level of partner organization ownership over MEOP results was, paradoxically, evident in the lack of recognition amongst the partners of MEOP itself, and the extent to which partners placed value on the Canadian contribution to electoral observation within their organizations. Partner organizations had negligible input into the Program's original design, logic, performance measurement, and delivery mechanisms. With regard to the latter element (delivery mechanisms), partner funding was mandated to conform to procedures already in place by which Canada supports its multilateral partners more generally, so there was little flexibility in MEOP's partners having a sense of control over this aspect. For example, the Canadian government provides annual contributions to the OAS and Commonwealth through a grant arrangement, while contribution agreements are the preferred mechanism for the OSCE and EU. Further, in discussions with partner organization representatives, it was clear that *none* of them had ever heard of MEOP as the specific mechanism by which Canadian support for EOMs was funnelled.

From the perspective of MEOP partners, Canada's contribution was valued both in monetary and personnel (Canadian observers) terms, but there is no concrete evidence of programmatic dialogue occurring between DFATD representatives and multilateral partners that related to the design of individual EOMs or policy projects. The only real communication between Canada and partner organizations revolved around the former notifying partners which specific EOMs MEOP funding preferred to support. Even in this case, however, the principle of partner ownership still applies, as funds contributed to a mission that would have occurred in any case, regardless of Canada's contribution.

Conclusions

While they might not have expressed it in this way, MEOP's partners have enjoyed a high (almost exclusive) degree of ownership over the program. As such, the initiative clearly adhered to best practice ownership principles as outlined in the Paris Declaration. Multilateral partners possessed both the authority and ability to make decisions regarding the design and management of their EOMs, and were thereby able to deliver EOM programming independent of donors, host country representatives, and other interested parties. The Canadian contribution through MEOP, in concert with contributions by other donor states, was a key input in operationalizing the missions, but was not, in any way, a determining factor in their design or execution.

3.7 Alignment

Key Evaluation Questions

1. MEOP's cooperation partners must be invited by the host country government to mount an EOM: Is this sufficient indication that the principle of alignment is being respected? What other indicators might apply?
2. Has DFATD's support influenced the election observation priorities of MEOP's cooperation partners?
3. Have changes in procedures for MEOP contracting with its cooperation partners led to these partner organizations being aware of Canadian priorities sooner and has this influenced planning and EOM selection?

Background

Under the Paris Declaration, the principle of alignment refers to two important aspects of aid practice. The first concerns donor obligations to base their support on the partner country or organization's development priorities, policies and strategies ('policy alignment'). The second concerns delivery using a partner country or organizations own systems, to the greatest possible extent, possible ('systems alignment').

Findings

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #1 – regarding adherence to the principal of “alignment” – the evaluators understand that any EOM undertaken by one of MEOP's multilateral partners is dependent upon an invitation from the host country government. Without such an invitation, no mission may be mounted. As such, while there may be both positive and negative justifications for a country to request that an EOM take place (for example, a genuine effort to ascertain and address gaps in the democratic process, or on the other hand, a means of gaining a form of legitimacy for a government that has not hitherto displayed a track record of adhering to democratic principles), this is nonetheless a sufficient indication that, at least theoretically, the principle of alignment between the partner EOM requirements and those of the country are being respected. The evaluators are unable to identify any other indicators that may apply, for without an invitation to observe an election, no intervention may take place.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #2 – on the extent to which MEOP has influenced the governance of partners - interviews with OSCE, Commonwealth, EU, and OAS EOM managers found that DFATD does not attempt to influence election observation priorities of its multilateral partners. As pointed out previously in this document, Canada does inform its partners of the elections that it wishes MEOP funds are allocated for on a yearly basis. However, this does not imply any form of influence over partner decisions to field EOMs to specific countries. As mentioned, most partners are obligated to undertake EOMs to their member states if requested, and as such, an EOM to any particular state would occur whether or not Canadian support was in evidence. There is a finite amount of resources that any donor contributes to EOMs, and the evaluators see no contradiction where a donor requests that its EOM program support funds are allocated for a mission to a specific country (based on a variety of factors such as foreign policy and trade imperatives, for example). Placing emphasis on specific countries does not imply influence where a mission would occur nonetheless: it simply aids

makes undertaking those missions easier from a financial and personnel perspective. Consequently, the principle of alignment between donor and multilateral priorities regarding support for specific EOMs is strong.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #3 – on the effect of changes in contracting procedure – there is no evidence that, as a result of alterations to its contracting procedures from the previous iteration of MEOP, multilateral partners are any more aware of Canadian priorities that may influence their planning and selection of which countries to conduct EOMs. As discussed previously, MEOP's partners, to varying degrees, regard Canada's contribution as an additional funding steam for their EOMs, albeit with the additional benefit of employing Canadian observers, regardless of the contracting arrangement. All multilateral organizations interviewed noted that they had obtained their knowledge of Canadian priorities through their infrequent interactions with DFATD personnel to discuss Canadian country EOM preferences. But, once again, financial mechanisms and delivery models had no impact upon this knowledge. It is generally assumed and accepted within the EOM implementing community that donors will have a predilection for specific countries as part of their support for election observation, and that these preferences will, in some way, be aligned with aspects of the donor's foreign policy imperatives.

From a macro-level perspective, however, it is clear that MEOP's support for electoral observation, both from an operational and a policy point of view, has mirrored the current priorities within the general field of observation practice. Concomitantly, Canada has developed a solid reputation for supplying appropriately prepared short and long term observers and that MEOP's choice of investments, early on, directly addressed priorities identified to operationalize the 2005 Declaration of Principles.

Conclusions

Regarding both policy and systems, MEOP was well aligned with the priorities of its multilateral partners as well as those of host countries where EOMs were being implemented.

3.8 Harmonization

Key Evaluation Question

1. Is MEOP programming appropriately harmonized within the development efforts of other DFATD programs and other donors and executing agencies in order to maximize impact, share best practices, and avoid duplication or competition?

Background

Harmonization in the context of a development initiative refers to the level and coordination within donors and stakeholder groups to ensure that adequate efforts are made to share information and avoid duplication. In the context of MEOP, the evaluators have identified five levels at which harmonization occurs:

- among various Divisions of DFATD
- among donors
- among Multilateral Partner organizations
- between DFATD and Canadian organizations that have an interest in electoral observation work.
- At the country-level between individual election observers and Canadian officials

Findings and Analysis

The evaluators are not privy to how the management of election support programming will be structured now that the file has been transferred to START, however, we can speak to the level of harmonization **internally within the former CIDA**. There are two aspects to this

- the existence of additional projects or programs that support initiatives either directly or tangentially related to electoral support and democratic development (for example, human rights, rule of law, good governance, etc.), and
- the actual internal mechanisms by which coordination occurs.

Regarding the first point, the evaluators were informed in interviews with MEOP management personnel (from the former CIDA) that over the life of the program, the Agency allocated over \$110 million for initiatives that could

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

be considered related to elections or democratic governance – that, in some way, support the impact to which MEOP contributes. This programming has occurred most often at the country-program or geographic division levels within CIDA, supporting capacity building activities to promote good governance, rule of law, and human rights.

We learned of one mechanism that brings together various DFATD stakeholders to discuss electoral support: an annual election observation planning exercise. Conducted in December of every calendar year, a meeting is held with various players within the Department to determine priority countries for MEOP-supported EOMs to take place. Prior to this meeting, questionnaires are distributed to the geographic programs. They are used to take stock of other forms of Canadian democratic development support, by country/region. With this information in hand, elections are prioritized for EOM participation through MEOP. A subsequent meeting is held in the summer to review any changes in the election timetable.

While the above mentioned annual planning process brings together various elements of democratic development program support within DFATD, it is not clear that programming is harmonized in any way with what MEOP is trying to achieve. We heard that country/regional democratic development programs/projects have been designed on the basis of assessments that leave out consideration of MEOPs albeit limited coverage of policy and capacity development activities and/or fail to use the insight generated through observation reportage. The evaluators mention one instance of duplication in the Americas during the evaluation period, without being able to determine the extent to which this is the norm. In this instance, a portion of CIDA's grant to OAS, administered under the Inter-American program, was allocated directly to DECO to assist in election observation and capacity-building projects both internally and within member states. As the evaluation has shown, MEOP also contributed funds to essentially the same type of activities.

MEOP's primary activity was funding the implementation of EOMs by its multilateral partners (more than 85% of its entire budget allocation), while a smaller portion was allocated for policy development and capacity building, generally at the level of the partner organization but also, in some cases, at the country level. Country-level programming within DFATD does not directly support EOMs, rather, their support focuses on what may be considered policy and capacity projects focused on local governments and civil society organizations, support that would ultimately benefit democratic processes within the country, including election management. It would not be a surprise if Canadian government programming in individual countries reflected what was contained in EOM mission report recommendations, but there appears to be, at least internally within DFATD, no mechanism to determine if this is the case.

Consequently, it would seem that greater efforts at harmonization among the various democratic development programming aspects of DFATD would be very beneficial in terms of assessing what priority initiatives need to be undertaken at the country level. The key aspect to remember here is that there are many avenues and mechanisms within donors that support democratization writ large. The challenge would be to ensure that this is holistically achieved in the most cost-effective manner. A future iteration of MEOP should thus define and codify internal responsibilities for operationalizing this support, and ensure that more effective mechanisms are created for interactions between various internal DFATD divisions to share knowledge and avoid duplication.

Regarding harmonization **among donors and also among multilateral organizations**, there is periodic communication and a global push, initiated with the 2005 Declaration on Principles, and the Code of Conduct, to build standards for international (and domestic) observation. There appears to be momentum to this push; an initial group of 24 signatories had grown to 45 by April 2013 (See Figure 2-1). On a global and regional scale, organizations and networks are developing observer practices that derive from these apex agreements. There is an annual conference on electoral observation that brings together EOM implementing organizations as well as donors, but this appears to be the only formal mechanism by which information, knowledge, and best practices are shared outside of less formal communication channels. MEOP partner organizations and donors interviewed for this evaluation commented on the fact that more contact among them would be beneficial, but due to busy schedules and the fact that EOM missions implemented by a multilateral partners do not overlap with others, additional communications are not a top priority.

With respect to relationships between **DFATD and other Canadian organizations** that are interested in getting involved in EOM work, there is no evidence that any communication has occurred. The larger issue here, however, is to determine if any other organizations are actually interested in working with the Canadian government to play a role in EOMs, either from a recruiting, training, or implementation perspective. At present, no organizations were identified to the evaluators as being in a position, based on previous experience in election observation that would merit inclusion in the discussion. As CANADEM has been, for many years, the "only game in town" in terms of recruiting and determining Canadian observers and logistical/contractual support

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

for EOMs, it would seem that any other organization interested in electoral missions would essentially have to begin from scratch in these areas if CANADEM was to cease its critical involvement on the EOM file. Quite simply, interviewees from all stakeholder groups, (within the Canadian government, multilateral partners who work with the CANADEM, and individual observers), questioned why the Canadian government would even consider an alternative to CANADEM given its positive reputation as a professional and competent election observer sending organization.

There is one final aspect of harmonization that the evaluators, based on their discussion with individual observers, would like to highlight: **the utility of contacts between individual Canadian election observers on the ground in-country while on mission and Canadian diplomatic staff, both in-country and also at DFATD.** The majority of observers commented that they were surprised Canadian embassy officials in EOM recipient countries as well as those at headquarters in Ottawa did not request a debriefing session with them to solicit feedback and recommendations following the completion of a mission, especially when many observers operated in remote parts of the country and had gathered potentially useful information and intelligence on the electoral process and broader democracy context. Generally, we were told, contact with Canadian representatives in the field consisted of informal receptions for Canadian observers at the Embassy, rather than any formal debriefing process. One observer who participated in the Canadian bilateral mission to Ukraine noted that a meeting with diplomatic staff would have provided a wonderful debriefing opportunity to gather and discuss democratic and economic issues facing the country: issues that would not otherwise have been reflected in the EOM mission report but would be nonetheless of interest to Canada. DFATD would do well to ensure a mechanism exists by which Canadian observers are better able to share their experiences and information from their EOMs with government representatives.

Conclusions

Overall, the evaluation concludes that the level of harmonization in terms of MEOP is not high, at any of the levels outlined in the Background section, above, and further that there are few mechanisms by which discussion and knowledge sharing occurs.

3.9 Results Based Management

Key Evaluation Questions

1. To what degree did the implementation of MEOP 2008-2013 reflect and adhere to the program's Logical Framework Analysis and Performance Measurement Framework?
2. With the advantage of hindsight, are there obvious suggestions for improving the MEOP LFA and PMF that would be useful in considering the design of a follow-up program?

Background

This section examines the strengths and weaknesses of MEOP's application of results-based management as per CIDA guidelines—to project design, rolling up and reporting on results, remedial action, and monitoring and evaluation.

Since its introduction within CIDA in 1996, RBM has been understood as a "life-cycle" approach to management that integrates strategy, people, resources, processes, and measurements to improve decision making, transparency and accountability.

Core expectations typically associated with the application of RBM include:

- engagement of key actors in a collaborative effort to achieve a common goal
- the formulation of a logic model or LFA that links resources to results
- an analysis of risk factors and means to monitor and mitigate, as needed
- a plan to track achievement through monitoring and evaluation
- a "nesting" of projects results within a larger program results frame
- reporting that focuses attention on results achievement, backs up claims with evidence and fuels decision-making

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

RBM practice has evolved over the past fifteen years. In 2008 CIDA revised its RBM policy to bring it into closer alignment with Canadian Treasury Board requirements and the practices of other aid organizations committed to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

MEOP was designed prior to a review and adjustment to the CIDA policy. As such, the program documents reference the original results logic nomenclature.

Findings

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #1 – on the relationship between MEOP design and implementation - the separate partner/project designs fit well within the program results schema and that, in design at least, attempts have been made in most projects to identify indicators that align with the program log frame. At the same time, the evaluators concur with many key informants within DFATD who describe a lack of realism in the program log frame, particularly at the outcome level. At the same time the system for gathering risk and performance data has not been finalized. Some performance indicators appear rudimentary when set against the results they are supposed to substantiate and the performance measurement framework, itself, has not been completed to an operational state. In addition, there does not appear to be any formalized program level reporting, beyond periodic attempts to aggregate project data for inputs to corporate level reports. The data provided at the project levels has been sufficient to allow CIDA to address many of the indicators in the LFA. As well, the results logic and accompanying indicators have not been reviewed and adjusted during program implementation even though the programming emphasis within MEOP has changed. More broadly, interviews with partners, observers and CIDA staff uniformly point to MEOP as having a low profile as a program. There is little or no recognition of MEOP, generally, and the program level results framework, specifically, outside of Partnership Branch. By and large, partners identify with their own project agreements and performance frameworks without an understanding that theirs is one project in a program portfolio.

With regard to the specific elements of MEOP's RBM system, program documentation contains an LFA, dated May 8th, 2008. The evaluators are not aware of any subsequent version of this document.

At the outcome level – understood in RBM parlance to be the level of result where the implementing party claims any direct influence - three arenas of change are anticipated from MEOP.

- election management – concentrating on the performance of election management bodies
- election observation practice – concentrating on the performance of multilateral organizations that are fielding observation missions
- voter access/participation (male and female) – concentrating on the practices of women and men voters

Five outputs are named in the LFA – these are understood to be areas of change over which the program has substantial control and that pave the way toward the achievement of outcomes. Results at this level are in the following areas:

- coverage of EOMs – i.e. extended
- EOM practice/capacity – i.e. improved
- Canadian election observer support to multi-laterals – i.e. improved
- recognition of gender equality principles within partner organizations – i.e. increased
- inclusion of gender equality aspects in observation practice and in report recommendations

Performance indicators are provided for output, outcome and impact level results. These are carried over from the LFA into a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF), working draft, dated April 28th, 2008. To the evaluators' knowledge the PMF was not advanced beyond this point. The draft shows an attempt to identify baseline data with references to: documentation related to previous CIDA supported election observation activities, international organizations that routinely monitor elections including MEOP partner organizations. The draft does not elaborate on data collection methods and frequencies.

Three risk areas each with associated mitigation strategies are provided in the LFA. To the evaluators' knowledge, these have not elaborated in a program risk management plan.

More specific results logic models – set up to be consistent with the 2008 RBM Policy - are included in CIDA's agreements with the three multilateral partners operating under grant agreements – the OAS, UNDP and the Commonwealth. CIDA's contribution agreement with The Carter Center is also fashioned around a tailored

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

results logic. An examination of these documents shows consistency in scope between the program and partner results logic. Partner level results schemas pay attention to gender, strengthening partner capacities to implement EOMs through provision of observers (OAS and Commonwealth, mainly) and training, and each aspire to an outcome related to uptake of observer recommendations and an associated improvement in the conduct of elections by institutions. In the case of the UNDP and The Carter Center, the focus is placed on strengthening the global field of election observation practice through methodology development, standardization, training and knowledge sharing.

CIDA's arrangement with CANADEM is also hinged around a results logic and performance measurement schema. The focus here is particular to the recruitment and deployment of Canadian election observers. Gender considerations are prominent in the logic of CANADEM's role in MEOP and extend from CANADEM's own recruitment practices to its influence in the field by virtue of attention brought to gender aspects in the observation process.

In all instances, results statements identified in partner level logic models are accompanied by indicators. In many instances these statements align with the indicators provided in the MEOP LFA, providing a basis for roll up.

All agreements between CIDA and partner organizations identify risk and risk mitigation strategies.

On reporting:

- To the evaluators' knowledge, MEOP has not routinely reported through a standalone program document; rather, managers have provided summary briefs to feed corporate reporting.
- CIDA's Investment Monitoring and Reporting Tool (IMRT) and its successor Investment Performance Report (IPR) templates have been set up for partner tracking, however the evaluators' have been unable to secure these reports beyond early reporting periods where there was little in the way of results to record.
- Partner reports have served as the primary basis for gathering program level insight.
- CANADEM reports (quarterly and final project report) are thorough, clear in presentation, and well referenced to planned results and indicators using a summary performance table. Substantial attention is paid to gender disaggregation. Quarterly reports discuss risk mitigation with regard to recruitment and deployment, converting what has been learned in the process into "best practices". The final project report for the period 2009-12, for example, provides a compendium of practices that have been adopted as "best practices". CANADEM reports abstract detail provided in EU and OSCE reports.
- Commonwealth reports (annual and final project report) provide narrative descriptions of each EOM completed with Canadian support. They provide deployment and expenditure data. Annual reports project election observation plans for the coming year. Planned outputs and outcomes and accompanying indicators are not addressed directly. Neither is risk. There is also no tracking of gender commitments.
- OAS reports (annual) provide details of EOMs supported under the grant agreement and of activities carried out under the category of capacity building. The scope of activities being reported appears consistent with the RBM frameworks, but the reports are not directly referenced to the results and indicators outlined in the project documents. There is no tracking of risk.
- The Carter Center (semi-annual and final project reports) describes achievement in relation to the two project objectives. Narratives are provided for each activity area set out in the logic model. Outputs are described in these sections – some are knowledge products that are subsequently appended. The report does not make direct reference to output and outcome statements nor to indicators, though some of insight can be abstracted from the text. Risk areas and their handling are identified as "difficulties encountered" – mitigation is discussed. Similarly, a separate project evaluation appears to hinge its analysis around three project objectives (including the two that are consistent with those pertaining to CIDA's contribution agreement) though without direct reference to the results framework of outputs, outcomes and accompanying indicators
- So far, the evaluators have been unable to secure project reporting on Canada's \$300,000 grant to support the Train4Dev Initiative (part of Component 1.5 in UNDP's Global Program for Electoral Cycle Support)

The following observations are made based on an analysis of RBM documentation and interviews:

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

- Some of the results claims in the log frame appear implausible and out of sync with the program purpose. MEOP's purpose statement places attention squarely on the capacity and performance of multilateral institutions; two of the three accompanying outcome statements exceed the purpose by focusing attention on the practices of election management bodies and voters (women and men). These two stakeholder groups are at least one and two steps further removed from the program on a results continuum. There is broad agreement among those interviewed that MEOP's sphere of influence cannot realistically extend beyond the performance of the organizations being supported to manage EOMs. Indeed, this is acknowledged in the TORs for this evaluation. A program of this scale and as broad as it is in its conception – incorporating, in addition to the provision of Canadian observers, support to the development of the global field of election observation through research and development, network building and knowledge sharing – could not reach into sovereign states and directly influence the behaviour of election management bodies and voters.
- It is understood that the task of developing the log frame and accompanying draft performance measurement framework was delegated to relatively junior level staff with time constraints that did not allow for a proper airing and testing at senior levels within CIDA or more importantly among program partners.
- During the life of the program, the results logic of the program was not adjusted to account for insights gained from implementation and, more importantly, for decisions taken about two years into the program cycle to concentrate MEOP's activities exclusively around the deployment of Canadian observers.
- As the program evolved, it is not clear that there was sufficient latitude within PWCB and dedicated staffing to manage MEOP as a programme – i.e. in a manner that allowed for boundary spanning between partners/projects with a unified focus on program level results
- And while there is consistency between program and project level intent, the program performance measurement system, itself, was never fully operationalized to provide a basis for program level reporting and management.
- Subsequently, partners have variously adopted program level indicators, along with their own, and have been able to provide basic performance data that has made it possible for CIDA to describe Canadian presence in election observation missions and show value added through implementation of projects in support of professionalization.

Conclusions and Insights for Future Practice

There are consistencies between intent as expressed in the MEOP log frame and the program that has been implemented. Assessed in relation to its core attributes outlined in the opening of this section, however, RBM has underserved the program.

With reference to Key Evaluation Question #2, the following ideas are offered for making RBM a more solid foundation for program management.

- Disciplined, iterative articulation of a results logic and performance measurement schema
 - calibration of reach, results and resources
 - engagement (and testing) with partners in program design and measurement
 - periodic review and adjustment where learning and changing policy and programming context require adaptation
- Dedicated resourcing of a program management role to...
 - focus attention on program level results and risk management,
 - facilitate interaction among project holders with program risks and results in view,
 - develop a program level results story and use this to inform decision-making elsewhere in the Agency, at the project level and among other donors support elections observation

As a starting point, it is suggested that considerable care be made in naming outcomes. The advent of the Declaration of Principles and the Code of Conduct has set in motion efforts in many directions to standardize and professionalize the field of practice (See Figure 3-3). Through a consultative process, it should be possible to identify two to four outcomes that, in addition to extending Canadian observer presence, pin point specific capabilities and performance standards for observer organizations. One could envisage, for example, a program logic that builds synergy between three results areas: specific global standards or practices that help to

operationalize some part of the Declaration of Principles, partner capacity/performance in implementing those standards, and the provision of Canadian observers to bulk up EOMs with skilled eyes and ears.

3.10 Mutual Accountability

Key Evaluation Questions

1. Are DFATD, other donor organizations, and cooperation partners mutually accountable for development results? If so, in what way were they mutually accountable during the design, implementation, risk management, monitoring, and evaluation of the development intervention? If not, describe the actual accountability matrix and its impact on program success?

Background

Mutual accountability suggests that, in a true development partnership, there are commitments on both sides of the relationship. In the context of MEOP, this would mean that DFATD and its partner organizations should be accountable to each other ('mutual' accountability) for the Program's results.

Findings

In implementation, program management has not featured prominently in MEOP. Aside from supervising the funding arrangements and disbursements of funds to the Program's multilateral partners, the role of GoC personnel in the functioning of MEOP was minor. Consequently, from a mutual accountability perspective, it appears that MEOP program results were largely the responsibility of multilateral partners to produce rather than that of DFATD, itself. This is apparent in the scant evidence of contact between partners and MEOP personnel at HQ, as well as the absence of a clear management structure for the program.

At the commencement of MEOP, there was a document outlining relationships between personnel within the Government of Canada. In interviews with MEOP personnel who were involved in its initial period, the comment was made that the organizational structure was overly complex and that it was not adhered to once the program commenced. This is consistent with our review of program documents and funding arrangements with CANADEM and MEOP's multilateral partner organizations. Here, we found no evidence of an explicit management structure or accountability matrix to oversee the program and its relationships with partner organizations.

With regard to our review of grant documents for the OAS and Commonwealth, as well as the Framework Agreement with CANADEM, we note that these do not codify any specific management arrangement by which MEOP's multilateral partner organizations may interact with MEOP management either in Gatineau or in the field. This was confirmed to the evaluators from interviews with electoral observation unit managers within partner organizations. Their contact with the MEOP representatives, if any occurred at all, was confined to occasional discussions with field level diplomatic personnel in Brussels (EU), Vienna (OSCE), London (Commonwealth), and Washington (OAS). Moreover, these contact individuals were Canadian government representatives managing relationships with multilateral organizations writ large, as opposed to specifically the election observation file. Consequently, MEOP management was but one very small aspect of their work.

Lastly, as mentioned earlier, multilateral partners did not convey an understanding of MEOP as an overarching program that provided them funds to carry out EOMs and policy development work. They were aware and appreciative that Canada provided funds for EOMs, but were unaware of what specific program mechanism those funds came through, and regarded Canada's contribution as one of many towards the pool of electoral observation donor funding.

Despite the lack of a clear management structure and accountability matrix for MEOP, the working relationships between MEOP's partners and GoC personnel (whether at CIDA or more commonly diplomatic staff in the field) were effective and positive. Interviews with multilateral managers and GoC representatives found that where there was contact (generally on a semi-annual basis or when an issue related to a specific EOM arose), it was characterized as mutually respectful, but was more focused on issues that arose either on a project by project basis or otherwise short-term issues (such as which elections Canada would support) rather than any joint strategic thinking with respect to electoral observation.

Conclusions

The program's multilateral partners were more responsible for achieving MEOP results than DFATD. Partners were directly responsible for the implementation and reporting on EOMs, Canadian program managers were only really responsible for enabling them, without any particular additional long-term strategic thinking or input on electoral observation strategy. Within the context of what MEOP was originally designed to achieve (as opposed to the overly ambitious expectations outlined in the program's logic model), this is a natural condition.

3.11 Design

Key Evaluation Questions

1. Did MEOP design expectations take into account the needs of cooperation partners, particularly in the area of funding predictability?
2. Did MEOP design reflect lessons learned from previous incarnations of the program, and was there appropriate balance between following proven approaches and applying innovative solutions to recognized challenges?
3. How did MEOP and its cooperation partners determine and address the needs of the ultimate beneficiaries: the governments and citizens of the EOM host countries, in the design phase and throughout implementation?
4. Considering the benefits and limitations of the short-term (1 yr.) nature of grant arrangements with OAS and COMSEC, would short term or longer-term (e.g. 5 yr) arrangements be more appropriate in a future iteration of MEOP?
5. Comparing MEOP's arrangement with CANADEM to similar British and Norwegian models, what were the main strengths and weaknesses of the CANADEM arrangement, considering among other factors the issues of transparency, accountability, efficiency, value for money, and issues related to the observer roster: professionalization of observers, political neutrality, and gender equality. Are there substantive barriers to entry for an alternative service provider? If so, how might DFATD reduce these barriers?
6. How well did MEOP apply a whole-of-government approach to address intersecting mandates and interests of other government departments and agencies?

Background

The question of whether MEOP design expectations took into account the needs of cooperation partners (especially in terms of funding predictability) is not a particularly complex one. In the context of electoral observation support, MEOP's multilateral partners essentially only had two needs. First, financial contributions to support implementation of their EOMs and second, assistance in developing best practice policies, both internally (OAS) and for the entire field of practice (Carter Center and UNDP) that would benefit the field as a whole.

As for what partner expectations were in terms of Canadian support, expectations again revolved around funding: that is to say, in the case of MEOP's key implementing partners, funds they could rely upon to support individual missions on a case by case (for partners funded through a contribution agreement mechanisms) or annual basis (for grant arrangements). With respect to those partners focused on policy development, the expectation was resources from MEOP to develop and share best practices in the field. Both expectations were met. The evaluation finds only one example where a MEOP partner had greater expectations of the program. In the case of the Carter Center, there was an expectation that an additional phase of support for the Democratic Standards project would be forthcoming, evidently based on discussions with CIDA personnel in the first two years of MEOP. However, as the program moved away from supporting policy initiatives following the second year, this expectation was not realized.

Findings

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #1 – on the extent to which MEOP consulted on needs - a review of the proposal and approval documents for MEOP, and interviews with the originators of the program within DFATD, do not point to a high level of involvement of MEOP's current multilateral partners in terms of consultations to design the program itself. This may be attributed to the fact that MEOP, in terms of

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

Canadian support for fielding EOMs on behalf of multilateral organizations, was a new iteration of previous EOM funding programming for its partners. Consequently, both CIDA and its partners were well aware of what the program entailed and what it was created to do.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #2 - on the influence of previous iterations of Canadian electoral support programming on MEOP - the evaluation finds that MEOP's design reflected a variety of lessons learned from previous incarnations of the program, especially in the area of funding and contracting mechanisms, as well as recommendations found in an evaluation by Joseph Sterns in 2008 on Canada's election observation support programming at the time.

However, to obtain a more holistic view of the evolution of MEOP from its previous incarnations to the program under review, it is important to consider the program's initial development and goals. What emerges is a program that was quickly conceived to address both administrative and democratic development challenges and imperatives relating to election observation within CIDA. MEOP underwent a fundamental transformation in terms of actual activities two years into its five-year duration without any accompanying changes to its logic model. As is understood, the Program has been subject to political influence from within the Canadian government. An elaboration follows:

- The evaluation finds that the genesis of MEOP was fuelled by two key factors:
- recognition that Canada's support for democratic development as it related to election observation (at the time) needed to be more professional, coherent and strategic, and
- that it needed to address the large administrative burden placed upon CIDA internally for fielding election observation missions.
- With regards to the former, Canada's support for EOMs prior to MEOP was, by the Agency's own admission, not particularly coherent. The file had been transferred from the now defunct Canada Corps to the (also defunct) Office for Democratic Governance and then to CIDA's multilateral branch before finally moving to PWCB. Prior to its shift to PWCB, Canadian support for electoral observation took place but was characterized as having no coherent strategy. Geographic divisions and country program managers, along with other elements of CIDA (ODG for example), would make their case for EOMs to take place in their respective spheres of influence in an ad hoc manner, without any overarching policy.
- The creation of MEOP changed this in a positive way, where PWCB, although perhaps not the most appropriate home within CIDA for the program (due in large part to its emphasis on working with local and country-level organizations as opposed to large multilateral bodies), was nonetheless successful in establishing a stable focal point around which the program could build.
- The second impetus for MEOP's creation stemmed from the large and complex administration of previous election support programming. It used to be that when a decision was made to fund an EOM, funds would not be drawn from a single source, but rather through the ODG as well as geographic programs and country desks. Moreover, prior to MEOP, election observers were all contracted by CIDA on an individual basis. This proved complex and time consuming for program officers who were tasked with working on the minutia of multiple contracts for Canadian observers to the detriment of their other responsibilities.

In essence, MEOP was created in order to attempt to bring separate elements of Canadian support for EOMs (contracting, policy development, geographic programming) under one umbrella. This was and remains a positive decision, but aside from these practical elements, it was also important that such a politically visible file be created.

It was impressed upon us that Election observation is a sensitive programming area. The reason for this lies in the fact that EOMs may, under certain circumstances, be utilized as part of a country's wider foreign policy agenda towards a state in addition to undertaking a mission for purely democratic development purposes. As such, a variety of motivations may influence the decision to participate in EOMs. Key informants mentioned for example:

-
-
-

As a result, Canadian (or any country's) support for election observation may be predicated on a number of potentially significant additional goals beyond that of simply assisting the state in organizing a free and fair election. As noted to the evaluators, the election observation file has been subject to a relatively large degree of political influence as compared to other development initiatives. As government agendas, foreign policy foci, and international economic objectives for Canada have evolved, so too has the focus of Canada's support to electoral observation. Regarding the direction that MEOP has taken within its life cycle we have understood that fundamental decisions regarding the direction have not been made by those directly involved in managing the program, they have been made at much more senior levels in government based on emerging Canadian foreign and economic policy agendas.

It is interesting, then, that despite acknowledging that Canada's electoral observation support is a politically sensitive file, the design of MEOP itself was mostly carried out at a relatively low level within CIDA, with little if any input from senior government officials. In discussions with the individuals at CIDA who developed and managed the program through its inception to 2010, the Evaluators were informed that the task of developing MEOP was given to a junior program officer. This individual, who possessed scant training in RBM, was charged with developing Canada's entire electoral observation support program to alleviate the contracting challenges the file had previously faced and to incorporate the political and administrative imperatives (both within and without CIDA) of the day.

At the point of inception, MEOP was *envisaged* as a program that would:

- Alleviate the previous concerns and challenges faced by contracting with individual observers and multilateral EOM partner organizations: thus giving CANADEM an enhanced role in the administration and management of EOMs.
- Focus on the professionalization and standardization of both individual election observers as well as the larger field of EOM practice. This was in response to a growing recognition within the election observation field that missions should be undertaken by fully-trained "professional" observers as opposed to individuals who might have been nominated without regard to any EOM experience or knowledge criteria. Accordingly the Program was to include the training of individual observers as well as support to international organizations in EOM delivery to undertake more substantive policy work that would benefit the entire field of practice: thus support for UNDP, The Carter Center, and the OAS to develop manuals and courses on EOM best practices that could cross-cut the entire field.
- Support, exclusively multilateral rather than bilateral election observation missions. With this Canada would be significantly promoting a multilateral approach to global challenges by funding international organizations to undertake EOMs rather than promoting a more statist bilateral approach, which was (and is) generally considered to be, from a practice perspective, a much less effective means of conducting EOMs.

For the initial two years of the program, MEOP operated along these principles. However, in 2010, the program was altered to:

- Focus exclusively on providing funds to field Canadian and international election observers both multilaterally and perhaps more significantly, bilaterally; and
- Abandon the policy development aspect relating to EOMs entirely.

From 2010 to its conclusion in 2013, MEOP activities were based solely on these imperatives. It is unclear who was responsible for making this decision. The Evaluators were unable to ascertain the reasoning behind this fundamental alteration to MEOP. Current and past program staff was not consulted before the change was made, nor were they a result of any analysis or internal (or external) evaluation based on progress reports or results. The Evaluators were informed that the decision had been taken at higher political levels than those responsible for MEOP implementation.

The implications of this change are discussed throughout this document, but it was made clear that, at least internally, CIDA staff of the day were critical of the modification. Part of the impetus for the change was likely an increased focus on bilateralism on behalf of the Canadian government. Within the sphere of EOMs, this was evidenced by the government's decision to undertake a bilateral EOM to Ukraine in 2010. Although the program was not originally intended to support such missions, an amendment was made to the MEOP approval document that allocated MEOP funds for this EOM. Following the change in MEOP's focus up until the conclusion of the program, emphasis on policy development and the professionalization of election observers was no longer supported. In interviews with partner organizations, it was made clear to the Evaluators that no reason was given by CIDA for the change, and while disappointed, MEOP partners were not particularly

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

surprised at this course correction, as they were aware of the highly political nature of EOM support (in Canada and elsewhere), and that programming changes often occur to reflect shifting political priorities.¹⁹

In the final analysis, MEOP did well, at least in its first two years, to find an appropriate balance between providing support for activities that would ultimately benefit both its multilateral partner organizations and individual recipient EOM countries (through its observer fielding component), as well as developing the entire field of practice (capacity building and policy development component) by supporting innovative practices. After two years, however, it lost its uniqueness as a multi-pronged intervention to promote democratic development.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #3 – on link between program design and the needs of “ultimate beneficiaries” - the evaluation finds that MEOP, and its multilateral partner organizations, had no particular initiatives in place to determine and address the needs of the governments and citizens of EOM host countries. This does not infer a lack of consideration, but simply that MEOP was not constructed to directly address the requirements of these stakeholder groups directly, despite what is stated for outcomes and impact in the logic model. In a very real way, the act of conducting an EOM in a country may be considered a step in determining the needs of/opportunities for country stakeholders (through observation mission reports and recommendations) and addressing them (through follow-up capacity building or technical assistance projects based on the mission report recommendations). As has been shown, the “addressing the needs” element of MEOP support has not been strong by virtue of it not being designed as a mechanism that would either fund or undertake follow-up activities in country to support democratic development once elections are concluded. Its primary focus was providing funds for multilateral partner to conduct EOMs, which may certainly be considered a method of establishing baseline needs for democratization activities.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #4 – on the benefits and limitations of short grant arrangements with the OAS and Commonwealth - the evaluation finds, following discussions with managers at each of these MEOP multilateral partner organizations, that each would have preferred a longer-term funding arrangement with the Canadian government. The reasons for this are straightforward. A longer-term grant (minimum 3 years) would allow the OAS and Commonwealth to better plan for EOM missions on a yearly basis, providing a level of cost certainty for fielding missions rather than having to be continually unsure what its operational capabilities will be. As each of these partner organizations often face chronic difficulties in raising funds for all their operations (EOMs included), it would make sense from both a financial and administrative standpoint for longer-term arrangements to be in place. From the Canadian government's perspective, longer-term arrangements would serve to ease the administrative burden on DFATD in terms of annually developing and producing a grant arrangement that would essentially be funding the exact same EOM activities year-over-year. Simply put, there is no good reason why grant arrangements with both of these multilateral partners cannot be extended to be longer in duration. Both have shown that they are capable and effective in conducting EOMs, and both have good relationships with the Canadian government. Longer-term arrangements to support their EOMs would thus be a positive outcome for both DFATD and these partner organizations.

Regarding the Key Evaluation Question #4 – on the comparison of MEOP's arrangement with CANADEM with that of analogous models in other countries - the evaluators were able to discuss with the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM) their relationship with Norway's government and with multilateral organizations involved in EOM deployment. We were also able to learn about NORDEM's own program of observer training and deployment.²⁰ As CANADEM's role and structure was originally based on the NORDEM model, there are many similarities between the two: their relationship to government is similar (though not identical, see below), they both maintain a resource list of election observers, and they both play training, contracting, and logistical support roles for Norwegian election observers. One key difference with NORDEM is that the organization is placed within the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights at the University of Oslo, as opposed to CANADEM, which operates as an autonomous body. Both bodies are focused on the professionalization of election observers (Norway's

¹⁹ It should be stated that previously committed MEOP funds for policy development were not cut off for those partner organizations who were involved in this element of the program (UNDP, Carter Center, and the OAS). Initiatives in progress were concluded according to previously agreed upon contracts and work plans. Following their completion, however, no new policy development activities were supported by Canada.

²⁰ The evaluators, despite several efforts, were unable to discuss EOM issues with the Election Reform International Service (ERIS), the United Kingdom's counterpart to CANADEM.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

government insists that any observers participating in EOMs must have received professional training in election observation practices) and both have firm commitments to the principle of neutrality and gender equality.

A second difference between the two organizations that was identified has to do with the contracting approach between the governments and CANADEM/NORDEM. While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides core funding for NORDEM, this funding is based on several different agreements with various elements of the Ministry, as opposed to CANADEM's framework agreement, which is an over-arching mechanism. In discussion with NORDEM managers, they were of the opinion that the Canadian relationship between DFATD and CANADEM is more effective from a contracting point of view, as having one funding arrangement (the Framework Agreement) is more efficient than the fragmented nature of NORDEM support.

Regarding the question of barriers to the potential entry of an additional service provider (part of Question #5), this is addressed in Section 3.13: Other Issues.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #6 – on MEOP's ability to apply a whole of government approach to address any intersecting mandates in democracy or electoral support programming on behalf of other Canadian government Departments - only two other government organizations possessed similar programming or common interests in electoral observation activities prior to and during the life of MEOP: DFAIT and Elections Canada. Regarding the former, there are obviously significant synergies in terms of common goals (forging relationships with foreign governments, promoting democracy, etc.). For Elections Canada, the organization was involved in Canadian support for electoral observation internationally in the early to mid 2000s, but changed its focus to concentrate on issues related to domestic elections in Canada. As a result, Elections Canada is no longer involved in EOMs or policy work relating to them, and is thus not a key player in any whole-of-government approach by MEOP.

That said, the relationship between DFAIT and CIDA prior to and during MEOP's operation has been mutually positive. Contacts were generally made (aside from the annual planning exercise: see Section 3.12 Risk Management) on an as-needed and ad hoc basis when election observation/country issues arose that merited DFAIT analysis or opinion. Those responsible for liaising in the field with MEOP's multilateral partner organizations are also from the diplomatic rather than the development side of the equation.

3.12 Risk Management

Key Evaluation Questions

1. How did the risks and mitigation plans identified in MEOP's LFA manifest in program implementation?
2. Were there any significant risks other than those identified in the LFA that arose during MEOP implementation? What might MEOP have done differently to anticipate these risks?

Background

MEOP's logic model outlines three risks associated with program implementation, along with mitigation strategies, two at the outcome level and one at the output level. At the outcome level, they are:

- Risk 1: that an EOM releases a report which differs from the Government of Canada standpoint, causing tensions in the relationship with the country, the multilateral (organization), or (which) leads to poor decision making.
 - Mitigation: Standardization of observation, increasing professionalism of observation.
- Risk 2: a mission unable to be conducted effectively because of lack of advanced notice.
 - Mitigation: Building coherence across the Government of Canada in supporting the stand of multilaterals which choose not to observe where to do so would threaten the credibility of the mission.

At the output level:

- Risk: Canada unable to support observation through multilateral channels as no multilateral organization is observing an election and/or is uninterested in accepting a Canadian contribution.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

- Mitigation 1: Increasing geographic coverage through engagement with multilaterals of which Canada is not a member, such as regional organizations. However, if no multilateral is observing, the likelihood of there being a strong rationale for Canadian participation is very low.
- Mitigation 2: A transfer payment for bilateral Canadian observation missions will be possible through the Framework Agreement being developed with CANADEM. The terms of the transfer payment would still need to be negotiated, but the Arrangement provides the basis for any contractual agreement required should there be rationale for Canadian participation despite the lack of a multilateral EOM. Beyond the mandate of this program, funding for such EOMs would fall under a separate project.

Findings

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #1 – on the actualization of risks identified and their handling – there are no instances of stated outcome-level risks coming to fruition throughout the duration of MEOP. That noted, these are curious risk statements to put in the logic model. MEOP was designed to support its multilateral partners in conducting quality EOMs. Multilateral EOMs are by definition neutral. Reporting is to reflect an unbiased professional assessment of the election process. Arguably, from a risk perspective, there should not be any relationship drawn between the content of these reports and what the Canadian government wishes that content to be. Regardless, such an eventuality did not manifest itself during the program.

When it comes to the risk of “lack of notice” impacting the ability of an EOM to be undertaken, there aren't any instances of this during MEOP. As understood the decision to hold an election at the country level is sometimes taken on short notice, but where this occurs efforts are made to ensure some EOM coverage, if that is so requested. In both cases we contend that the mitigation strategies proposed are not particularly relevant to the risks. The first one speaks to the global effort that is underway to make observation practice impartial to bias of any particular actors in the elections process (including donors). The second mitigation statement suffers from legibility issues.

Regarding the output level risk, again, there were no instances of an occasion where an election that was of interest to Canada was not being observed by one of MEOP's multilateral partners. Neither did we find any instances where a partner was uninterested in accepting a Canadian contribution to assist in funding an EOM.

Some further commentary on the subject:

- One mitigation statement speaks of increasing the geographic coverage of EOM engagement with multilateral organizations of which Canada is not a member. As it happens, increased geographic coverage has been achieved in this manner. Canada participates in EOMs through the EU. This allows Canada to field observers to countries receiving their electoral missions.
- The one part of the world that is notable for lacking Canadian EOM involvement is East and South-East Asia. In this instance, if Canada is not a member of the regional body that conducts electoral missions. That said, the organization ASEAN, is according to multiple MEOP partners interviewed for this evaluation, in its infancy regarding fielding of EOMs. The other logical regional multilateral organization of which Canada is a member, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), does not presently conduct EOMs in its member states.
- The potential for adding additional multilateral partners to MEOP's stable of implementing organizations is discussed in Part 3.13.

The second mitigation strategy, that of making a provision for a Canadian bilateral mission to take place if no multilateral organization chooses to conduct an EOM in a given country, has also been operationalized, at least in part. In 2010, a decision was made at higher political levels than MEOP management to draw on the initiative's resources for the Canadian bilateral mission to Ukraine later that year despite the fact that a multilateral organization (OSCE) was also monitoring the election. It was understood that a stipulation was made in MEOP's program design to allow for bilateral EOMs and that an amendment was made to this effect.

Regarding Key Evaluation Question #2 – on emergent risk areas - partner organizations alerted the evaluators to two additional risk areas of concern, one operational, and one political. They were:

- Security concerns during MEOP EOM implementation.
- The possibility that host-country governments could use EOMs as a cover and means to legitimize their undemocratic regimes.

These risk areas were identified more specifically in the individual project agreement documents.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

Regarding the first risk area, several informants outlined security as a risk during EOMs, however, the vast majority were of the opinion that MEOP's multilateral partners had done an excellent job in ensuring that any potential security issues were addressed. Amongst partner organizations, interviewees noted that the OSCE, EU, and Commonwealth were the best in providing appropriate security and logistics, having had plenty of experience working in this area with both local and multilateral organization security apparatus.²¹ The OAS was also perceived as managing any potential security concerns well, though a higher number of interviewees stated that more could be done to improve communications and protection, particularly in rural or isolated areas where voting takes place. In terms of mitigation, informants noted that there is little to be done from a Canadian perspective other than to liaise with the multilateral partner implementing the EOM to ensure that proper procedures are in place to protect observer safety. Additionally, DFATD could ensure that those geographical desks or units within the Department responsible for the country receiving the EOM communicate constantly with START to provide any intelligence or updates on the situation in the county.

In terms of the second risk, *EOMs could potentially be used by state governments to justify their regimes* - the point was raised by several interviewees that this is an especially prominent issue with African Union EOMs, as they are reluctant to criticize their member states, even where democratic abuses or irregularities are obvious. And they note that, in a bilateral mission, the risks to the implementing country are even greater, as the EOM is being carried out not by a collective of nationalities but rather by only one. In this scenario, were the country under review to revert to non-democratic practices following the mission, focus and criticism would squarely fall on the country responsible for the EOM for participating in a potentially flawed process. This could, in turn, effect the bilateral actor's reputation with other states as well as multilateral bodies. In terms of strategies to mitigate this danger, it would fall to the country (e.g. Canada) to ensure that any EOM the country participated in was a suitable candidate for the inclusion of Canadian observers, either in a multilateral or bilateral mission. As such, this would require a thorough assessment or scoping mission to determine the country's eligibility for Canadian participation.

3.13 Other Issues

Key Evaluation Questions

1. Is MEOP an improvement over its previous iteration(s)?
2. Are there additional organizations that conduct EOMs that could be potential implementation partners for MEOP?
3. Is there an appropriate method or means of attributing EOMs, conducted through MEOP, to Canada?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of multilateral vs. bilateral EOMs?
5. What are some best practices in EOM operations and policy moving forward?

Is MEOP an improvement over its previous iteration(s)?

In the evaluation we have described the following aspects of MEOP as problematic:

- Regarding design, it overreached with its results claims and came up short in developing a program level risk management, performance measurement and reporting. It ended up as being a loose association of projects each with their own accountability mechanisms.
- What was in place – a logframe, mainly – was not kept in sync with changes in program direction. And those changes in direction, narrowing toward a single focus on the deployment of Canadian observers, placed expected program level results even further out of reach.

The above mentioned concerns notwithstanding, we outline below various ways in which the evaluation found MEOP to be an improvement over its previous iterations. These are summarized from a Canadian government and partner organization perspective.

²¹ It should be noted that security for EOMs is generally the responsibility of the country government, or else, where the situation is perceived as being more volatile, it falls to organizations such as UNOPS or other external bodies to provide security assistance. MEOP multilateral partner organizations do not possess their own security forces.

Canadian Government:

- There was greater simplification and streamlining than before in contracting with partner organizations and with individual observers, thus increasing efficiency from a human resources and financial perspective.
- Having all of Canada's support for electoral assistance under a single umbrella eliminated the need for geographical and country programs to develop individual projects for EOMs on a case-by-case basis. MEOP's reality of providing a common pool of funds for Canada's contribution to electoral observation, once again, streamlines and simplifies the process.
- The program created an atmosphere for collaboration between, among and within various elements of DFAIT and CIDA.
- It set in place a firm structure on developing timelines and schedules for funding decisions (through the annual prioritization planning meeting) as opposed to previous ad hoc processes.
- Support for policy development projects in the first two years of the program highlighted Canada internationally as a positive contributor to electoral observation practices and democratic development.
- Incorporated the EU as a partner organization, thereby providing Canada a voice within the EU.

Partner Organizations:

- As above, simplification in contracting procedures for EOMs with CIDA and CANADEM.
- For OAS and Commonwealth, MEOP represented a means of ensuring a measure of cost certainty and the ability to better plan to undertake specific EOMs
- Greater ease in communications with the Canadian government (i.e. one central hub for EOM administration rather than several bodies scattered throughout the Agency).
- (Initial) Provision for policy development and capacity building projects recognized as an important aspect of enhancing the entire field of practice.
- The inclusion of Canadian election observers on multilateral partner organization missions adds to their credibility due to the positive and professional reputation of Canadian observers in EOMs.

Are there additional organizations that conduct EOMs that could be potential implementation partners for MEOP?

During the development phase of MEOP, a review of multilateral organizations was undertaken based on their previous expertise and involvement with Canada in implementing EOMs. Additionally, the Sterns evaluation in 2008 conducted an analysis of potential future partners for the program that would become MEOP. The selection of multilateral partner organizations was described to the evaluators as "judicious and fair" by DFATD staff who were involved in the file at the time, and was ultimately based on two factors: their expertise and reputation in carrying out an EOM, and Canada's direct relationship with the organization (i.e. was Canada a member state of the partner).

The choice of MEOP's initial key partner organizations (OAS, Commonwealth, EU, and OSCE-ODIHR) was based on both the assessed expertise of the organizations (at the time) in fielding EOMs, as well as on the geographic reach the candidate partner afforded Canada through deployment of its observers. In this vein, the OAS conducts EOM in the entire western hemisphere, the EU and OSCE-ODIHR in Europe and into central Asia, and the Commonwealth holds EOMs in member states in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. By partnering with these multilateral institutions, MEOP was able to ensure that Canadian participation in EOMs was almost global in reach.

Program documents made a provision for the inclusion of additional EOM implementing organizations to add to MEOP's stable of multilateral partners. Specific mention was made of emerging regional organizations in Africa and Asia, as well as La Francophonie. The Sterns evaluation also conducted a brief review of possible future partners for Canadian election observation support, specifically highlighting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), La Francophonie, and the South African Development Community (SADC).

Over the course of this review, multilateral partners, donors, NORDEM, and individual election observers were asked their opinion of other MEOP affiliated multilateral organizations conducting EOMs in terms of their capacity, readiness, and professionalism. Responses varied, but a common theme emerging was that many

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

other bodies, with one exception noted below, were just developing their EOM capacities and expertise, and were a few stages behind MEOP's current partners in terms of their ability to carry out an effective EOM. Opinions given on the following organizations were:

- ASEAN: It just undertook its first EOM in 2012 to Timor-Leste. As such, experience with EOMs in its infancy. In general, it is not (yet) professionally equipped to warrant support. As well, Canada is not a member state.
- La Francophonie: Has developed its EOM capacity considerably over the past few years, and is becoming more professional and competent in their delivery. Its focus is mainly on elections in Africa. Canada is a member state. It maintains its own roster of observers.
- SADC: Has conducted multiple EOMs in southern Africa. [REDACTED]
Canada is not a member state.
- African Union: Has conducted many EOMs in Africa, but in the same way as SADC, [REDACTED]
Canada is not a member state.
- CARICOM: Only conducts very small EOMs to member island nations. Has not (yet) professionalized its EOM implementation. Canada is not a member state.

Unless Canada's next phase of EOM support includes a component to assist on building the capacities of less-experienced multilateral partners in election observation, it would appear that only La Francophonie is presently a candidate for inclusion to MEOP's current partner organizations, based on its increasing positive track record and the growing professionalism of its missions. Other advantages of its inclusion for Canada are that:

- Canada is already a member state of La Francophonie and so contributes to the organization through an already established financial granting mechanism. As such, new and potentially complex administrative mechanisms would not necessarily have to be established for any flow of funds for EOMs. Further, relations are already well established between DFATD and the organization.
- The majority of La Francophonie members states are in Africa, a continent which at this point is only partially covered under the aegis of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the EU. As the continent is becoming increasingly important to Canada from an economic and trade perspective, the inclusion of Canadian observers in La Francophonie EOMs could afford Canada and DFATD additional contextual knowledge about the democracy landscape in member states.
- Canada has many observers who both are native French speakers as well as are familiar with civil law practices, which would be a dual advantage in the field.

Consequently it is suggested that if DFATD chooses to expand its cohort of EOM multilateral partners in a potential future iteration of MEOP, La Francophonie would be an appropriate candidate for consideration.

From a domestic perspective, it was noted in Section 3.1 (Effectiveness) that CANADEM's performance has been exemplary in acting as a service organization to operationalize Canadian election observers for both multilateral and bilateral missions. Aside from CANADEM, there is one other Canadian organization that has been, in the past, involved with election observation that could be a potential domestic partner for the next iteration of MEOP. This is the International Election Monitors Institute (IEMI), an organization comprised of former members of Canada's Parliament, the United States Congress, and the European Parliament.

A brief note about the IEMI is warranted. The Institute, established in 2006, was formed as a joint project of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP), the United States Association of Former Members of Congress, and the European Parliament Former Members Association. As outlined on the CAFP website, the purpose of the IEMI is to provide former legislators as election observers to operate worldwide in collaboration with other democracy-building organizations. To this end, the IEMI recruits and trains former legislators of the aforementioned groups with the goal of managing a dedicated and professional program to recruit, train, and arrange for the deployment of former parliamentarians for election observation missions. In addition to election monitoring, a goal of the Institute is to "work with governmental and non-governmental partners on post-election democracy-building endeavors, in countries where the Institute has observed elections". The Institute works with other monitoring organizations, including the OSCE and the Carter Center and, crucially, has endorsed the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation.

Presently, the IEMI does not receive funding from the Canadian government, but was previously supported by a CIDA contribution agreement over a five-year period concluding in late 2010/early 2011. The funds were used to

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

undertake EOMs by the IEMI as well as assist some administrative aspects of the organization. Curiously, the Evaluators for this review had no previous knowledge of this organization or the fact that it did indeed conduct EOMs as part of a multilateral team of international election observers. Nor was the IEMI mentioned in any discussions with GoC staff, despite the fact that mission reports were developed and presumably distributed to CIDA by the IEMI.²²

In the event that Canada aims to include a greater number of former parliamentarians or other “eminent” individuals on future EOMs, the IEMI would be a logical choice to provide their training. The Institute already has experience in recruiting and training former Canadian parliamentarians to undertake EOMs, thus they are familiar working with parliamentarians and would be acutely aware of the various issues of protocol involved. Moreover, as one of the priorities of the IEMI is also to support strengthening legislative institutions and political parties, the Institute also undertakes democratic development initiatives that, as have been shown, are an important part of the electoral cycle process. Finally, the IEMI has officially endorsed EOM best practices, which would serve to bring the Institute a high degree of credibility amongst the election monitoring community. In the end, the IEMI’s involvement in a future iteration of MEOP, potentially as part of a stable of EOM programming, could be very beneficial for Canada from a democratic development as well as diplomatic point of view.

Is there an appropriate method or means of attributing EOMs, conducted through MEOP, to Canada?

The issue of attribution for Canadians participating in *multilateral* EOMs, or for any other nationality, is a difficult one. Understandably, donor countries wish to promote the fact that they are involved in EOMs as part of their commitment to democratic development. However, promoting that involvement in the context of a mission is problematic. The primary reason for this is the nature of multilateral missions, where a fundamental principle lies in the anonymity and neutrality of observers. Quite simply, in any multilateral mission observers do not in any way advertise which particular country they are from. They act as representatives of the multilateral organization as opposed to representatives of any particular country and under the auspices of the former.

Likewise, EOM mission reports from partner organizations make no mention of the country make-up of participating election observers. From a practice point of view, advertising national identity, either directly on their clothing or in mission reports, is the opposite of best practices in electoral observation. Denoting nationality of observers potentially opens up the mission to criticism by the host country towards the inclusion of specific nationalities, or else accusations of bias on the part of specific country representatives that may ultimately reflect poorly on relations with the country itself. Additionally, the presence of national identity might imply that a donor country has a level of influence over the EOM, which may be negatively perceived.

One of a *bilateral* mission’s main purposes, on the other hand, is to promote the sending country entirely. In its two bilateral missions to Ukraine in 2010 and 2012, “Mission Canada” was prominently displayed on observer clothing, as were the activities of Canadian observers in both the Canadian and Ukrainian media. While this certainly is an effective method of promoting Canadian involvement, it is not consistent in any way with EOM best practices. This will be discussed in greater detail in the final section below.

Curiously, if Canada aims for more attribution regarding its role in EOMs, it is much more likely to gain that recognition from its support for policy and capacity building projects geared towards either its partner organizations or for country level EMB representatives. While the policy development component of MEOP was small, it did afford Canada, at least within the community of practice, a positive reputation as a country that supported democratic development principles. On the strength of our findings, Canada has the potential to gain greater positive recognition through its support for developing capacity building initiatives at the country-level, specifically providing resources for training of local government officials in EOM and democratic best practices, as well as targeted training in areas such as information technology, voting process, regional issues, etc. In discussions with Commonwealth EOM managers, the evaluators were informed that AusAid currently has a two-year, \$1 million project that does just that, and it has been very well received by both the field of practice as well as those countries that send EMB officials for training. Supporting an initiative such as this would be beneficial for Canada for two reasons. First, it would highlight the fact that any training initiative for country-level representatives was exclusively attributable to Canada, and second, it could result in other political or economic benefits from external country participation or through making key contacts with individuals who could potentially be the leaders of tomorrow.

²² The following is an example of an IEMI Mission report, in this case the Iraq elections in 2010:
http://www.ccd21.org/pdf/iraq_election_report.pdf

A mechanism for operationalizing such an initiative is beyond the scope of this evaluation, and indeed, such a possibility should be investigated more thoroughly. This being said, one possible suggestion could be the creation of a global Centre of Excellence in electoral assistance in Canada. Such a Centre could be a stand-alone entity or else housed within an already existing organization. Considering its experience in both EOM training and deployment, CANADEM could be a possible candidate to carry out this function, although other organizations may possess the ability to do so as well. The idea of creating a Centre of Excellence in electoral assistance will be elaborated on in Part 5, Recommendations.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of multilateral vs. bilateral EOMs?

In his 2008 Elections Reports for CIDA, Joseph Sterns recommended that CIDA's electoral observation support be to, "consolidate Canada's support to multilateral election observation into a coherent program of work. While Canada's support to other portions of the electoral cycle and the various types of election observation missions is important, the mandate for this program is specifically multilateral observation missions and those organizations supporting their activities." In his research and assessment of various Canadian led election observation missions, Sterns concluded that a bilateral observer mission that involves a Task Force of government officials and ministerial representative is, "by definition and perception, a Government of Canada initiative" and therefore cannot be deemed as independent of government. The report states that participation in multilateral missions is "preferable, where possible, to the use of independent bilateral missions, given the credibility, experience, established management and in-field infrastructures and media profile of the former. Bilateral missions have the perception of partisanship. Mission report does not carry the same weight. Multilateral missions have greater perceived neutrality, are more impartial, credible, professional, with experienced, well-trained observers and well-prepared and tested documentation and forms (From Section 6.1.4 Key findings).

Other key findings according to Sterns spoke to the level of risk in an independent bilateral missions rising exponentially with the size of the mission and the availability of time to prepare and deploy the participants. For example, risk potential was "very high" in the Ukraine Election Observer Mission in 2004, given extremely short time frame for planning and deployment. Other findings noted that in terms of cost effectiveness, the cost of STOs in Ukraine was nearly double the average cost for an 8 day bilateral missions versus a 10 day multilateral mission in the first two rounds of the election. Further findings in Haiti suggested similar: assessments conveyed that bilateral mission observers tend to have less international and electoral monitoring experience. The level of preparation and detail of in-field election training typically provided by professionalized multilateral missions is difficult to replicate in a bilateral mission. Multilateral missions are better organized and provide existing and effective logistics and operational structure for training, deployment, facilities, supporting and debriefing of observers. Multilateral missions normally provide both long term-observers and short-term observers. LTOs are utilized to prepare groundwork for STOs, briefing on overall electoral process, and assist with decisions on deployment of STOs.

Multilateral EOMs, not bilateral ones, were identified by all stakeholders as a better method of conducting election observation. Bilateral missions provide for donor visibility but are at odds with EOM best practices. Observer anonymity in terms of nationality is a core principle of neutrality. Multilateral missions, for their part, have much less visibility for donor countries but do closely adhere to EOM best practices.

In the various conversations with Canadian electoral mission observers, many of these views were reiterated with regard to EOM participation from 2008-2013, particularly in relation to the Mission Canada – Ukraine Election 2012. The evaluators heard the following:

- First, bilateral missions tend not to wholly include professionally trained observers. Instead, participants are often drawn from a pool of individuals who have a connection (historic and cultural, for example) with the targeted country.
- The case of Canada's bilateral mission to Ukraine in 2012 is instructive. It appears as if the selection of observers for the mission were based more on personal contacts and cultural/linguistic commonalities rather than previous experience in EOMs.
- Second, without properly trained observers, there is a greater likelihood of bias.
- Indeed, Canadian interviewees that had participated in both the bilateral and multilateral EOMs to Ukraine commented on the fact that they had witnessed many instances of partiality and in some cases open lobbying for one political party over the other.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

The most basic core principle of election observation is that individual observers, be they participating in a bilateral or multilateral exercise, must be completely neutral in their perceptions and assessments of the election itself. Indeed, all organizations involved in EOMs, including all MEOP partners, adhere to this principle. However, some interviewees commented upon the fact that

The majority of observers were also critical of the cost effectiveness of these types of bilateral missions. At the same time, some noted how these types of missions provided a higher profile to Canada on the international stage compared to being part of a multilateral mission with a partner organization such as the European Union or OSCE/ODIHR. However, there was a consensus that multilateral missions are extremely well organized and have an established operational structure. An overview of some of the advantages and disadvantages of the two bilateral & multilateral according to some Canadian election mission observers is set out in Figure 3-4, below:

| Figure 3-4: Bilateral vs. Multilateral Observation – Pros and Cons | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Bilateral Missions | Multilateral Missions |
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides more visibility to Canada and recognition of Canadian contribution as an active participant in democratic development More citizen involvement for Canadians and provides a training opportunity for less experienced observers Of direct interest to Canadian ethnic constituents; for example, Ukraine/Haiti; as well as to GoC for being seen by Diaspora as involved Opportunity for Canada to come to its own conclusions on the legitimacy of electoral results Beneficial in a country where Canada has a longstanding bilateral presence or relationship; or where Canada is pursuing and/or developing a political or trade objective As an instrument of foreign policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater perceived degree of impartiality and less distraction by EOM participants as to their country of origin and possible 'baggage' Able to cover a large election process properly; capacity to organize quickly and efficiently More cost effective on a per observer basis; more resources available – both human and \$\$\$ Highlights Canadian election observers' skills and expertise in supporting the democratic process Many have permanent dedicated bureaucracies: logistics, in-country teams, professional cadres, standard reporting methodology In-country teams are made up of different nationalities contributing to more objective reporting Canada can become involved without a major outlay The report of a multi generally carries more weight than that of a bilateral |
| Cons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs more in that the core team infrastructure must be recruited, trained and supported Backgrounds of some observers selected for past missions compromised some of the objectivity of the observers and made it more challenging to maintain strict impartiality Difficult to cover a large election process properly and manage the mission effectively; and have the same impact assessing/reporting legitimacy A tendency for a country to read situations through its own prism of experience and/or methodology which | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less opportunities for Canadian observers to get training as most is conducted in Europe (specifically in relation to EU & OSCE/ODIHR) Limits the opportunities for Canadian observers to promote and discuss findings of missions; constrained by partnering organizations' debriefing protocols Can be costly; bilateral pay their share of costs plus an overhead Can be relatively large scale operations which can result in a lack of national visibility and petty rivalries can intrude Results are only good as the sum of its parts (i.e., there can be some less than helpful/inexperienced members nominated at times) |

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>may not be appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If in a large country, the impact is questionable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bigger bureaucracies = less flexibility. One plays by its rules so a plan B in volatile situations can take time. |
|--|---|---|

What are some best practices in EOM operations and policy moving forward?

When asking this question to various stakeholders (multilateral organizations, individual election observers, and other donors), we assumed that there would be a variety of interesting responses. Curiously, however, there were none. The explanation for this was made clear. While the field of election observation has matured considerably over the years, the basic practice of observing an election remains essentially the same: external observers conduct on-site visits to various locations in a country, document and submit their findings to the EOM implementing organization, which are then rolled up into a macro mission report document. Other than perhaps leveraging technology to assist in this process, there are few ways this fundamental process may be altered in either a best practice or policy sense.

As noted in Section 3.1, there are several priority areas that concern the field of practice moving forward. All have been discussed throughout this document. The most significant are:

- The need to view election observation internally within a country as a process as opposed to a single day event as part of an electoral cycle.
- Ensuring individual election observers have received competent and professional training in EOM best practices to ensure their competence and neutrality while on mission.
- More emphasis on follow-up of EOM mission report recommendations (on behalf of multilateral partners and donors) to ensure progress in democratic development is actually being achieved.
- Training electoral officials at the recipient country level in election observation best practices, with the eventual goal of transferring EOM responsibilities and activities from international to domestic observers.
- A greater focus on the use of LTOs as part of the EOM process to better assess factors and realities in the host country that could help or hinder democratic processes.

In the interview stage of this review, DFATD personnel indicated that Canada was potentially interested in increasing the participation of current Member of Parliament (MP) in EOMs. Their inclusion in a mission certainly has advantages and disadvantages, and is not necessarily at odds with EOM best practices, provided that they receive professional training in EOM conduct. However, if they are to be included in future Canadian EOMs, two points are of note.

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

[Redacted]

²³ Please see: [Redacted] (accessed December 23, 2013)

PART FOUR: LESSONS LEARNED

The Future of Canadian election assistance programming in the context of the merger between DFAIT and CIDA.

Prior to outlining key lessons learned and recommendations for a potential future iteration of MEOP, we add some commentary on Canada's role in the future of electoral support programming. This section of the evaluation is meant to inspire debate about the future of electoral support programming within DFATD, and about the fundamental challenges faced by the newly created Department as a consequence of their amalgamation.

The official merger of CIDA and DFAIT in July 2013 has brought the differences in corporate culture and policy direction more clearly into view. Especially for programs such as MEOP and its predecessors, considered to be outliers within CIDA's general programming focus (as they are not indicative of traditional development interventions), the different mandates and approaches of the development and diplomatic/trade aspects of the new DFATD are important to consider when moving towards a future iteration of Canadian support for electoral observation.

As a development body, CIDA has honed a variety of development channels to support social and economic progress in the developing world. It has focused on the mechanics of identifying and managing delivery with resource constraints and development related risks in view, and always within the framework of Canadian policy.

MEOP's multilateral programming has conformed to these parameters. By contrast, MEOP's bilateral observer programming seems to support the policy parameters primarily driven by the diplomatic rather than the development cooperation side of Canadian foreign policy. DFAIT's culture and disposition has always been about the breadth and multi-dimensional development of Canadian policy and its delivery worldwide. It has never had to concentrate on managing the detail of small-scale institutional development featured so prominently in the program and project level delivery that has characterized CIDA's practices. Indeed, its macro trade and international alliance directions have from time to time conflicted with CIDA's commitments to support the social and economic progress of less-developed people wherever they are, sometimes in countries that have not found favour in DFAIT's policy perspectives.

As responsibility for MEOP and its successor will now be under the programming aegis of START, the suggestion has been made that the focus of Canadian assistance to election observation could be altered in the future to include a greater emphasis on generating tangential benefits to Canada from participation in EOMs rather than on the development of the practice itself. In this scenario, support for election observation would increasingly be conditioned by a drive to enhance the visibility of Canada on the international stage with a view to leveraging economics or trade related advantages, and/or diplomatic influence.

The presence of competing interests was noticeable in our deliberations at DFATD, though it must be said that these are early days in the new amalgamated Department and no definite programming direction was in evidence. Regarding those cross-currents of interests, we learned how the former CIDA had employed EOMs through MEOP as part of its democratic development and good governance toolkit, which also includes initiatives in other programming areas such as legal and justice reform, parliamentary support, court systems design and development, and civil society capacity building. On the other hand, we heard expressions of interest within the diplomatic/trade arm of DFATD (the former DFAIT) with regard to employing electoral assistance programming as a means of promoting Canadian political and economic values. We understand that START's is considering how programs such as MEOP may be able to increase the visibility of Canada on the global stage. In the realm of election observation this might occur through an increased emphasis on bilateral missions such as the ones conducted to Ukraine in 2010 and 2012, and the greater use of "eminent", as opposed to professional, election observers in future EOMs.

As has been noted, generating visibility through a bilateral presence in EOMs comes with its dangers. EOM best practices suggest that a decision to give greater emphasis to bilateral election observation could have implications for the reputation of Canada amongst other donors, recipient countries, and multilateral organizations.

Does Canada want to continue to be a credible and respected player in the field of EOM? Or do political imperatives trump development goals, at least in the short term? On the surface, the question would appear to be a choice between two firm options, but can a case be made for both within the rubric of future Canadian support to election observation issues and practices, where the duality of promoting Canada internationally and

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

providing professional and competent Canadian technical support to democratic governance and best practices are both addressed? The answer, we contend, is a qualified yes.

Simply put, a credible, well-organized, and delivered EOM is based not upon the nationality of election observers, but on their level of professionalism to carry out the task. Whether they are Canadian or Spanish or Norwegian, the goal should not be to “fly the flag”, per se, but to contribute to democratic development by impartially and professionally liaising, observing, and reporting on the election process itself. Indeed, there are other ways Canada could gain a positive reputation as a country in the electoral support field, one of which could be to develop a core Centre of Excellence in Election Assistance programming for the field, based in Canada. This option is elaborated in Part 5: Recommendations.

As has previously been noted, there appear to be two paths Canada could follow with regards to EOM support: bilateral and multilateral. It has already been established in this evaluation, as is the case in the general field of EOM practice, that bilateral missions are not as effective a tool for observing elections as are international institution-led multilateral missions. Aside from providing a high degree of visibility on the ground for Canada,

[REDACTED]

To move further in favouring a bilateral observer focus would make Canada an outlier in among other donors, as the evaluation understands it. Other donors are moving away from bilateral missions, recognizing their inherent flaws.

If DFATD does decide to focus to a greater extent on bilateral missions, it must ensure that deployed observers are fully competent and have received the appropriate professional training in EOM best practices. This would certainly provide bilateral missions with more credibility in the eyes of other donors, recipient countries, and multilateral organizations. This option is entirely doable: there are several accredited courses for individuals wishing to enter the election observation field delivered by CANADEM or other organizations. If Canada wishes to pursue bilateral missions in the future,

[REDACTED]

In the final analysis, Canadian assistance for election support programming, be it for policy development, direct fielding of observers, or both, has been and will always be a highly political endeavour, subject to influence in the form of political imperatives and the whims of individuals. The challenge, for DFATD as for other donors, will be to reconcile the benefits of both motivations in their subsequent electoral programming. It can be done, but it will require a concerted and joint effort.

The Evaluators offer the following insights from their review of DFATD's Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP):

4.1 Lesson One

If donors and their partners integrate electoral observation and electoral assistance initiatives programmatically and organizationally, then they will leverage, more fully, the contribution that each set of activities has to make to democratic development.

There is a clear nexus between electoral observation and electoral assistance. This has not been properly identified or addressed in program design by Canada and other donor countries.

The desired results for MEOP (at the outcome and impact level) according to its logic model, seek “greater democratic participation and representation through valid elections”. The evaluation has shown that election observation missions in and of themselves are limited in their reach without the implementation of follow-up activities (i.e. training and technical assistance for country level election bodies and other government institutions) which, in the end, were only supported by MEOP in a modest way.

Presently, donor support for election observation has largely been for just that: observation. However, the global donor community is coming to the realization that electoral support programming may achieve greater results from a democratic development point of view by employing a mix of electoral observation and subsequent electoral assistance practices. One is the natural consequence of the other. Simply put, electoral *observation* identifies the gaps and needs in the democratic process in a given country, while electoral *assistance* involves

programming that addresses those gaps. This is in line with the electoral cycle approach which is gaining recognition both amongst donors and multilateral election support practitioners as the way forward.

The following hypothetical example illustrates the point.

- In a calendar year, an election is scheduled in country x towards the end of May. The multilateral organization responsible for implementing the EOM is aware of this, and takes steps to ensure that it is properly placed to conduct a mission to observe the May election itself.
- First, it conducts an assessment mission to country x to ensure that, from a logistical and political perspective, proper contacts and arrangements are made with the national government and relevant EMB representatives to ensure a smooth EOM process on election day.
- Second, the organization deploys, in late March or the beginning of April, LTOs to monitor the state of democratic institutions in the country, as well as the role of media, actions of political parties (financing, views, etc.) and access to voting for various elements of the population.
- In the week prior to the election, an EOM is deployed by the multilateral organization which includes both core area specialists as well as a team of STOs.
- The election takes place as scheduled towards the end of June with a full observation contingent in place.
- In the days following the polls, both short-term and long-term observers depart the country, and then, within a few weeks, complete and submit their reports to the multilateral organization, which subsequently roll these report responses up into an overarching mission report, generally completed two to three months following the election date.
- The final macro mission report contains findings and observations from the period leading up to the election, as well as election day, itself, judged against a variety of indicators developed by the multilateral partner. It also contains recommendations for authorities at the country level, such as EMBs, political parties, judicial bodies, and civil society groups, on how the democratic and election process could be improved the next time, as well as suggestions on various aspects of the state's governance that impact upon democratic principles. Many of these recommendations revolve around altering laws or developing increased capacity within the country to support a more democratic and inclusive election process.
- By this point in the hypothetical calendar year, it is now the end of July. Training and other forms of capacity building projects emerge. Mission report recommendations are a source of insight for these activities, though the organizations providing the assistance along with the donors supporting them are not be connected enough within their respective organizations to make the best use of insights gained through the EOM.

The period from January to the end of July constitutes an election observation phase (pre-election, election day, and submission of mission report), while the period following the end of July constitutes the electoral assistance phase (development and implementation of programming based on mission report recommendations). Both are crucial to the democratic development process.

A clear separation of election support activities are evident in the scenario described above. This mirrors the experience described by key informants. Donors and their multilateral partner organizations experience a discontinuity in their internal governance when it comes to supporting EOMs. Often, one division or desk within a Department maintains responsibility for the conduct of EOMs, while others would be responsible for developing and implementing follow-up activities and projects (one again, the split between observation and assistance). This was in evidence internally within CIDA (DFATD), OSCE, EU, OAS, Commonwealth, and for Spanish electoral support programming. In all cases, to varying degrees, the levels of communication between the observation and assistance implementers was either not very strong, not formalized in any way, or both. As electoral support activity constitutes the inclusion of both aspects, it would be in the best interest of donors and multilateral partners to establish a clear and concise management structure by which both may be properly addressed. Logically, this would be within the same program structure, however, the evaluators are aware that such a reimagining would likely entail significant alterations internally within their departments, country programs, and/or divisions. If real progress in democratization is to be seen through to conclusion, having clear lines of responsibility for the differing aspects of electoral observation/assistance would be of great benefit.

In the final analysis, donors must ask themselves whether a program supporting EOMs exclusively in and of itself enough to achieve real progress and democratic change at the country level without provision to assist in

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

implementing for recommended follow up activities? The evaluators echo what appears to be emerging in the global discourse on observation (reference to Figure 3-3) that a more integrative approach is required.

4.2 Lesson Two

Investment by donors in systems that track the passage of recommendations, post EOM will support: a) much needed evidence based decision-making in the design and delivery of observation and follow on assistance, and b) the ability of the international community to assess electoral management practices, country by country, against accepted standards.

As electoral observation is the first step in what will ultimately lead to more robust democratic development, it would seem clear that there should be a mechanism in place to determine what actual influence the EOM has had on various aspects of election management within beneficiary countries. The evaluation has determined that within both donors and multilateral partners, such mechanisms as well as funding to support such mechanisms, is not in evidence. We note that the electoral observation field of practice has identified the tracking of mission report recommendations as a major need, and some parties have begun to take steps to address this gap (i.e. the proposed OAS policy project described in Section 3.5).

For their part, donors have been slow to adopt this approach in their programming, instead continuing to concentrate support on the deployment of observers. Even in the case where a donor does not provide resources for electoral assistance activities, allocating a small amount of monies for monitoring and tracking of multilateral mission report recommendations as part of observation support would be a positive development. By doing so, it would enable donors to better report to their constituencies both internally and externally as to what exactly has been achieved at the country level by electoral support activities, and additionally, would enable donors and partner organizations to better tailor any subsequent programming to better align with the needs of the beneficiary country.

4.3 Lesson Three

Multilateral election observation missions are more likely to contribute to and realize improvements in democratic development at a country level than are bilateral initiatives.

The evaluation has weighed the advantages and disadvantages of multilateral vs. bilateral observation missions. The advantages of bilateral missions - greater recognition for the donor country, greater ease of coordination, etc. - are trumped by the assessment of advantages of multilateral missions. These are that organizations like MEOP's multilateral partners specialize in the practice and have therefore honed a level of professionalism; that, by definition their presence dilutes the presence of any one sovereign state in the observation process; and that most significantly, perhaps, multilateral EOMs bring to the fore a wider array of funding potential and individual expertise that could assist the beneficiary country in its democratization efforts.

4.4 Lesson Four

When questions arise as to the optimal personnel configuration of an EOM, participation of professional election observers and the inclusion of "eminent" individuals in missions are not mutually exclusive.

In discussions with some DFATD personnel, there appears to be a view that election observers fall into two categories (other than LTOs and STOs). Either EOMs are comprised of "professional" observers (i.e. those that have received direct training and instruction in how to conduct and participate in an EOM, and who have done so on multiple occasions), or else are made up of "eminent" persons (i.e. former or current parliamentarians, high level government officials, or respected and well-known representatives from other sectors). While individuals from the former category are generally in evidence in MEOP multilateral partner EOMs (with the exception of the Commonwealth Secretariat), the latter are perceived as being more likely to take part in bilateral missions (Mission Canada to Ukraine, for example).

The assumption that election observers must be from one group or the other is counter to the reality of multilateral EOMs as they currently operate. Simply put, there is no contradiction in having "eminent" individuals

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

participate in “professional” EOMs, as long as these individuals are properly trained in EOM best practices and policies to the point where they are as competent from an EOM knowledge perspective as their “less- eminent” colleagues. Indeed, amongst MEOP’s key multilateral partners who insist on professional observers (OSCE, EU, and OAS), each delegation has traditionally placed an “eminent” and well-recognized individual in a lead role. However, these individuals are not figureheads, they are just as professionally trained and knowledgeable in EOM practices as any other participant on the mission. A rationale for their inclusion centres on their ability to liaise more directly and persuasively with higher level officials within the host country. Consequently, if Canada chooses to include additional “eminent” individuals in EOMs, either multilateral or bilateral, there is no reason why it could not do so, with the proviso that these individuals be as competently trained in election observation imperatives, procedures, and best practices as any other member of the mission.

PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To wrap up, we provide an overarching conclusion and a set of recommendations.

5.1 Conclusion

In the past five years, MEOP facilitated the deployment of about 650 Canadian election observers on two bilateral and more than 70 multilateral election observation missions in over 50 countries, including Haiti, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Mozambique, Sudan and South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Senegal. These Canadian observers took part in electoral observation missions implemented by the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States and The Carter Center. Canadians observers participated in election observation missions at the Presidential, Legislative, Parliamentary, and Provincial level. Canada’s contribution as a percentage of the total number observers deployed by these organizations was about 6%. Deployment of Canadians into observer roles, more than anything, is what MEOP was designed to deliver; most of the budget was earmarked for this purpose. And, by all accounts, the program did it well.

Judged against its own program logic, MEOP came up short. Fault cannot be traced to poor performance, however. Rather it lies with the results expectations that were set. By design, MEOP overreached. With some of the outcomes focused on the performance of electoral management bodies and on male and female voter patterns, MEOP had the logic model of a wider spectrum, electoral assistance program where observation is part of a larger package of support that includes post observation follow-up and capacity building.

There is an important backdrop to MEOP, a coalescing of opinion on a global scale about what constitutes good practices in election observation. Among other things, this opinion leans toward: a prominent role for multi-lateral and/or regional organizations, greater continuity between observation and assistance related to recommendations, harmonization of international and domestic observation practices, context appropriate standards and measurement, and methodology adaptations to keep observation practices attuned to technological advances in electoral practices. Donors are being challenged in this discourse to coordinate with each other and to broaden support beyond that of deploying observers.

Within the life of MEOP, program managers felt pressure to focus even more on election observer missions - both multilateral and bi-lateral - and less on developing the observer field of practice (standards and professionalism) and on capacity building. In short, MEOP moved further away from the kinds of support sought by the international community.

The evaluators understand that Canada, along with other donors, seeks visibility and recognition for the role they play in supporting and participating in EOMs. The suggestion that bilateral missions are a means of acquiring greater recognition is not wrong, but it rubs against what is widely considered good observation practice and it comes with risks to the sponsor.

This leaves the evaluators to question whether there are alternative ways to support electoral observation - ways that retain focus on the democracy building goals of observation, while also yielding some foreign policy advantage to Canada. This is, perhaps, part of the inquiry that START is making as they consider a future iteration of election observer programming. Assuming it is, we urge that close consideration be given to scenarios that are attuned to the Declaration of International Observation Principles, the Code of Conduct and more recent agreements that have flowed from these landmark documents.

5.2 Recommendations

The Recommendations outlined below are based upon findings, lessons learned, and commentary included in Parts Three and Four of this evaluation. All are based upon our analysis of the 2008-2013 MEOP Program, the evaluators' discussions with various stakeholder groups, and field visits to partner organizations.

These recommendations are intended to inform and provide a basis for discussion for DFATD as well as to outline some appropriate strategies in the event that a further iteration of MEOP is proposed by the Canadian government.

Recommendation 1: On the assignment of programming responsibility

Picking up the discussion in Section 3.8 on Harmonization and in the pre-amble to Part Four, the transfer of Canadian electoral assistance programming from PWCB to START will have implications for the strategic imperatives and operational conduct of electoral observation support. That said, it is likely that the creation of the DFATD will create questions of responsibility for various aspects of Canadian assistance to electoral support activities, as traditionally, the development arm (ex-CIDA) has been responsible for projects involving democratic development and capacity building for recipient countries, while the diplomatic arm's (ex-DFAIT) focus has been geared towards developing economic and political opportunities for Canada. Consequently, and to alleviate any overlaps or questions of responsibility, it would be of benefit to ensure that these complementary imperatives are integrated in a way that is beneficial to Canada while remaining consistent with international principles (See Section 3.1 and the final sub-section of 3.13 Other Issues for findings and discussion related to what constitutes effective international observation practice).

While START maintains management responsibility for the next iteration of MEOP, any initiative emanating out of mission report recommendations would more logically be placed within the purview of the development arm of DFATD, where there is much expertise in developing and implementing democratic development and good governance projects. **It is recommended that DFATD, prior to a potential next iteration, define and codify how different parts of the Department relate to multilateral partners and internally for both contracting aspects and project implementation following EOMs, as these will likely be the responsibility of different sections. A clear management and relationship structure within DFATD will be of great benefit in terms of alleviating both internal and partner confusion as to who bears responsibility for various aspects of Canada's support for electoral observation/assistance.**

Recommendation 2: On the utilization of CANADEM

It is recommended that DFATD continue to utilize CANADEM as the primary agency responsible for training, contracting, and fielding of individual election observers. As discussed in Section 3.1, Effectiveness and 3.2 Efficiency, CANADEM has gained an enormous amount of capability in the preparatory aspects of fielding Canadian election observers. In this evaluation, it has been spoken highly of for this capability by all MEOP stakeholders (DFATD, OSCE, EU, Carter Centre, and individual Canadian election observers).

We note that CANADEM maintains intellectual property over the roster of Canadian election observers, and that it is currently the only Canadian organization that recruits and trains them for EOM purposes. Without some form of technical or contractual arrangement with CANADEM, it would be very difficult for another organization to recruit and develop Canadian election observer expertise without essentially starting over. This, coupled with the lack of experience outside of CANADEM in EOM recruiting, training, and contracting, would almost certainly limit the effectiveness of Canadian EOM deployment from both a professional and administrative point of view. In the end, there is no practical need to reinvent the wheel: CANADEM has displayed a track record of professionalism, competence, and expertise in managing the day-to-day aspects of Canadian contribution to EOMs. The principle of "if it ain't broke don't fix it" applies. At the same time, this does not necessarily imply that other Canadian organizations are incapable of developing and delivering EOM expertise. We have suggested the possibility of the IEMI playing a complementary role in training for electoral observers, particularly if it is the intention of DFATD to enhance the participation in international election observation of parliamentarians or other "eminent" Canadians.

Recommendation 3: On adopting an electoral cycle approach to international observation

It is recommended that in a future iteration, DFATD allocate resources for activities that better reflect the electoral cycle approach as opposed to the "event-driven" emphasis which characterized MEOP.

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

Findings on the differential between “event driven” and the favoured electoral cycle approach to observation are discussed in Section 3.1, Effectiveness. In this recommended scenario, funding could be allocated to operationalize select projects emanating out of mission report recommendations. In terms of where this support could be placed, the evaluators offer two options: a) program funds flow directly through the partner organization to implement projects (with the proviso that Canadian funds be only used to support *specific* initiatives), b) program responsibility for follow up is distributed to relevant geographical desks within DFATD. There are many advantages to Canada in supporting subsequent projects at the country level.

- First, it would ensure that Canada is a visible player in global democratic development by being one of the first donors to recognize that electoral support programming entails not only observation but also subsequent assistance. This action would set an example and possibly precipitate similar actions by other donors.
- Second, Canada would have the latitude to target funding for follow-up recommendations at the country-level as it saw fit. In other words, funds could be steered towards projects in specific countries and in specific areas chosen by Canada (for example, for judicial reform in DFATD countries of concentration).
- Third, holistic electoral cycle funding would allow Canada to better report on actual results of electoral observation/assistance activities than previously. It would be in a better position than it is at present to determine the actual impact of EOMs on the democratic governance of host countries, along with their impact upon citizenry.
- Fourth, providing funding for programming the more tightly integrates with the electoral cycle would better dovetail with DFATD’s core priority of “promoting democracy and respect for human rights” more effectively than it has with MEOP.

Regarding nomenclature, a more holistic emphasis in the next phase could be conveyed with a program name such as CEAP (Canadian Electoral Assistance Program) or CESP (Canadian Electoral Support Program). Regardless, we argue with this recommendation that Canada’s strategy of “advancing democracy” in developing countries would be better served through a more holistic approach to electoral support.

Recommendation 4: On the implications of adopting an electoral cycle approach to international observation on DFATD electoral program management

It is recommended that in any future iteration of program support for election observation, DFATD ensure a) the development and maintenance of a robust program management schema – a broadly owned, realistic logic model, and a risk management and performance measurement system (see suggestions re: creating a robust RBM system in Section 3.9), b) the requisite number of person-hours to manage for program results.

If Canadian support for electoral observation programming were to adopt more of an “electoral cycle” approach, there would be implications on the staffing requirements at START. Program level management would be needed to monitor and follow up on EOM mission report recommendations, both internally within START and externally with partner organizations and other DFATD Departments.

Certainly, the call on resources for program management would be significantly greater than the allocation that was available to MEOP. In part, increased attention to program management in the future would be making up for a deficiency in this area in the past. In Sections 3.9 on RBM and 3.11 on Design, we describe a lack of attention to and resourcing for program management. As a sign of this, the current MEOP program was unable to determine final deployment figures over the five years. While this eventuality was in part due to shortcomings in partner organization reporting, interviews with DFATD personnel responsible for MEOP were of the opinion that internally, the program’s staffing allocation was not reflective of the actual amount of work required.

Recommendation 5: On support for high level development of the field of observation practice

MEOP’s time frame coincided with a defining moment in the history of election observation. On the strength of a shared understanding of what constitutes good practice on a global scale. In election observation there has been, since 2005, a global push to professionalize and standardize and this continues (See Section 3.1, Analysis).

MEOP’s support for policy development and capacity building initiatives, while only a small percentage of the total Program’s budget, was of considerable importance to the positive evolution of the field of practice. From a results planning perspective, a program focus on activities that create the enabling environment for effective

Summative Evaluation – The Multilateral Election Observation Program (MEOP) - FINAL REPORT

election observation extends influence beyond what can be achieved through the singular activity of fielding observers. **It is recommended that a future iteration of MEOP allocate a portion of its budget for continued support of capacity building and policy development initiatives.**

Recommendation 6: On the potential to build partnerships with additional organizations

In terms of other potential multilateral organizations for Canadian EOM implementation support, **it is recommended that DFATD consider La Francophonie as an additional EOM implementation partner.** As discussed in Section 3.13 under Other Issues, the organization has, in recent years, stepped up its professional competencies in operationalizing EOMs, according to MEOP partners. Moreover, from a Canadian perspective, the choice of La Francophonie as an additional recipient of electoral observation funds is a natural option. Canada is a member state, it possesses a large number of native French speakers, and it is familiar with civil law codes. The inclusion of La Francophonie would also afford Canada the opportunity to extend its ability to support observation missions on the African continent, where a majority of La Francophonie EOMs take place. Regarding other potential multilateral partners, none are presently experienced enough to warrant Canadian funding, unless a strategic goal is for Canada to gain entry into other geographical areas where Canada currently does not participate in many EOMs, namely Asia. In this case, ASEAN would warrant DFATD consideration for inclusion in electoral support programming.

Recommendation 7: On the use of bi-lateral election observer missions

Also as noted in Section 3.13 under Other Issues, Bilateral EOMs are recognized by the community of practice as being a less effective mechanism to assess the efficacy and transparency of elections at the country level. Their primary utility, it would seem, is to generate a greater measure of visibility for the implementing country. **If Canada chooses to operationalize a greater number of bilateral EOMs in the future, it is recommended that it take care to screen for bias in the selection process and ensure that all participating observers receive comprehensive professional training in electoral observation conduct and best practices.** This recommendation also applies if decision is made to incorporate increased numbers of “eminent” individuals as part of bilateral EOMs (or if trained, multilateral EOMs).

Recommendation 8: On the choice of funding modalities and time limited funding

Sections 3.2 on Efficiency and 3.11 on Design address the use of different funding modalities in MEOP. Both the OAS and Commonwealth Secretariat have proven themselves to be competent and professional implementers of EOMs throughout the duration of MEOP; however, they are constrained somewhat in their EOM planning activities by the terms of their agreements with DFATD. DFATD provides funding through an annual (COMSEC) or multi-year (OAS) grant arrangement with these partners. As both organizations have demonstrated their competence, and to ease the administrative burden on both DFATD and these bodies, **it is recommended that DFATD institute longer-term granting arrangements with the OAS and COMSEC.** This would allow them increased latitude to plan for upcoming elections on an annual basis without having to initiate the contracting process anew. It would also provide them with a level of cost-certainty to conduct specific EOMs, as these two multilateral organizations face the most challenges of any of MEOP’s partners in terms of generating funding for EOMs. The duration of a grant arrangement for these organizations could mirror the duration of the next iteration of MEOP. **For the program’s other three main implementing partners (EU, OSCE, CANADEM), it is also recommended that the contribution agreement mechanism (and in the case of CANADEM, framework agreement) remain in place.** Both EU and OSCE are content with the status quo, as is CANADEM.

Additional Consideration

It has become clear that Canada, and Canadians, are seen in a very positive light for their contribution to international election observation assistance. We are recognized for the competencies our Canadian election observers bring to the table. At the same time, the evaluators are aware of the desire on the part of DFATD to increase the exposure of Canada in the field of electoral support programming internationally. These two factors contribute to the following suggestion. This is not intended to be a recommendation, per se, but something that DFATD and the Canadian government could consider as a way of raising Canada’s profile while at the same time supporting democratic development and governance. The suggestion is the creation and hosting of a Centre of Excellence in Electoral Assistance, potentially housed within CANADEM, another organization, or as a newly-minted standalone entity.

The establishment of a Centre of Excellence could serve the purpose of promoting Canada on the international stage as a founder of an institution dedicated to researching and developing best practices in EOMs and follow-up activities as part of the electoral cycle. The evaluators see a Centre of Excellence serving both as a knowledge hub and a training institution for EMB and other country representatives to address recommendations emanating from EOM mission reports. The Centre could possibly deliver courses on a variety of issues relating to elections management, transparency, and democratic governance.

As a country, Canada is perfectly placed to establish such a Centre for a number of reasons:

- Canada and Canadians, unlike many other nationalities and countries that contribute to EOMs, are generally viewed as neutral and impartial from a global perspective, without any imperial or colonial “baggage” that often is inherent in other developed nations.
- Canada, unlike most donor organizations, supports a variety of multilateral partner organizations to implement EOMs, thus possesses a wider range of geographical coverage than do other donor states.
- Canadians have professional expertise in both common and civil law traditions, as well as in many other areas relating to aspects of elections management.
- Canada has a strong tradition, through DFATD, of supporting technical assistance and capacity development initiatives geared towards enhancing democratic practices in the public and civil society sectors of developing countries.
- Canada has already previously supported, through MEOP, policy development and, to a lesser extent, these capacity-developing initiatives at the country-level (OAS).

As noted in the evaluation, Australia supports similar capacity building activities, though not on-site in the country. If a Centre of Excellence is an option that DFATD may wish to investigate, it is suggested that contacts be established with the Australian government to obtain more information about their program.

In conclusion, the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Electoral Assistance could be mutually beneficial for Canada and for EOM recipient states. While promoting democratic development through provision of training for local government officials, the contacts made could ultimately result in enhanced political and/or economic relationships with state representatives that could benefit Canada as a whole. From their perspective, states would also see their prestige enhanced by participating in a global best practice program in democracy run by a credible and respected country. This could indeed be a win-win proposition for both sides.