



SUMMARY REPORT

Annual evaluation: 2023
Totalizator: 2020 - 2023

Implementation of the Central Electoral Commission and Center for Continuous Electoral Training Strategic Plans

Promo-LEX
Advancing democracy and human rights



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MONITORING METHODOLOGY

The alternative monitoring report on the implementation of the Strategic Plans of the CEC and the CICDE is elaborated as a result of an independent monitoring exercise of the strategic tasks due in 2023 and the ongoing (half-yearly/annual/ permanent) ones.

The study involved a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, which included: document analysis, monitoring of CEC meetings, requesting access to information, analysis of official websites and social networks of the monitored institutions and partners, participatory observations¹ and interviews with representatives of the CEC and CICDE.

Document analysis was used to collect and systematize information in order to establish the consistency between the planned strategic actions/tasks and their actual implementation, including their compliance with the set indicators. The evaluator used the following documents/information sources:

- CEC Strategic Plan 2020-2023;
- CICDE strategic plan for 2020-2023;
- CEC Strategic Plan for 2024-2026;
- CICDE strategic plan for 2024-2027;
- CEC Action Plans for 2020-2023, in accordance with the activities set out in the CEC Strategic Plan for 2020-2023;
- CICDE activity plans besides CEC for 2020-2023;
- Action plan for the development and piloting of the internet voting information system;
- Procurement plans for CEC's core activity, for the year 2023, 2024, version II;
- NIJ's modular calendar plan for continuous training;
- CICDE training plans for the November 2023 general local elections;
- CICDE Civic and Electoral Education Plan for 2023;
- Annual plan on the realization of research activities within CICDE for 2023;
- CICDE initial and continuous training plan for 2023;
- Communication Concept of the Central Electoral Commission for 2020-2023;
- CEC Report on the implementation of the activities foreseen in the Strategic Plan of the institution for 2020-2023;
- CICDE report on activities carried out during 2023;
- CICDE thematic reports for the year 2023 (activities carried out for the preparation of the general local elections of November 2023; implementation of research activities; implementation of civic education activities; implementation of initial and continuous training activities for beneficiaries);
- CICDE educational offer and program menu;
- online information sources (www.cec.md, www.cicde.md, social networks, media etc.).

The monitoring of CEC meetings was carried out through following the meetings online and by consulting the decisions which included actions related to strategic activities.

Requests for access to information were sent to the monitored institutions in order to obtain details of specific activities. Contrary to the provisions of the Law No. 148/2024 on access to information of public interest, in both cases, the institutions' response was received after the 10-day deadline, being also incomplete².

¹ Live observation of public events, documenting participants' reactions, assessments, impressions and interactions.

² Promo-LEX requests were addressed to CICDE (May 7, 2024) and CEC (May 9, 2024). CICDE's reply is dated May 30, 2024 and CEC's reply is dated May 31, 2024.

The interviews were carried out with representatives of the monitored institutions in order to ensure an objective and fair assessment of the activities carried out during 2023, as well as a qualitative assessment of the degree of implementation of the strategic plans. Also, the discussions aimed at identifying the progress and challenges faced by the institutions in the process of implementing development strategies.

The report provides an analysis of the effort and results/backlog of the target institutions in implementing the strategic plans in 2023 and at the end of the implementation period (2020-2023).

The document is developed on the basis of a methodology focusing on both quantitative and qualitative indicators. In quantitative terms, a statistical assessment of the degree of execution of tasks and achievement of the performance indicators set in the strategic plan, and in their absence - of the performance indicators set in the action/activity plan - was carried out. In qualitative terms, the impact of the fully implemented activities on the achievement of the objective, the procedures for organizing and conducting elections, the training of electoral actors and the promotion of the values of participatory democracy was assessed.

To assess the degree of accomplishment of the tasks carried out, the evaluator has applied the following qualifications:

- **achieved:** attributed to the tasks for which the measures implemented by the institutions have made it possible to achieve the set performance indicators;
- **not achieved:** attributed to tasks not achieved and/or tasks for which achievement could not be proved;
- **partially achieved:** attributed to tasks for which performance indicators have not been fully achieved; as well as tasks for which actions/activities have been carried out but no concrete performance indicators have been set in either the strategic plan or the action/activity plan.

In assigning the final grade, the grades given annually in previous Promo-LEX reports were taken into account. The final assessment was based on the task formulated in the SP and the assigned indicator.

The qualitative assessment was carried out only for those activities that were fully completed and subject to impact assessment. We note that the activity is considered to be fully completed only if all tasks related to the activity have been carried out.

In this context, Promo-LEX observes that some indicators in the strategic and action/activity plans of the monitored institutions are formulated in general terms. The performance indicators set also capture quantitative changes (numbers) rather than expected qualitative impacts and results. Impact assessment is a very sensitive aspect, requiring measurable qualitative indicators that would allow such an evaluation.

For the impact assessment, a grid with five ratings was used as follows:

Rating	Meaning
0 - no impact	There is a lack of impact on achieving the objective, improving the quality of the electoral process and procedures, electoral performance and institutional framework of activity.
1 - low impact	There is a low impact and insignificant changes on the achievement of the objective, improvement of the quality of the electoral process and procedures, electoral performance and institutional framework of activity.

- 2 - medium impact** There are some changes that have had an impact, but have not produced significant changes on the achievement of the objective, improvement of the quality of the electoral process and procedures, the electoral performance and institutional framework of activity.
- 3 - major impact** There have been significant positive changes, which have contributed to the achievement of the objective and have produced important changes in the achievement of the objective, improvement of the quality of the electoral process and procedures, the electoral performance and institutional framework of activity.
- assessment was not possible** Lack of fully implemented activities; fully implemented activity, but its impact can only be assessed over time; performance indicators assigned are not measurable to track qualitative changes.

SUMMARY

The report presents the results of the analysis of 44 tasks from the CEC Strategic Plan and 40 tasks from the CICDE Strategic Plan - planned for 2023. It also summarizes the results and backlogs registered by the institutions in the implementation of the strategic plans for the period 2020-2023.

Regarding the tasks planned by the CEC for 2023. The Electoral Authority has undertaken 44 tasks related to 20 strategic activities. In Promo-LEX's opinion, the CEC managed to accomplish only 36% (16 out of 44) of the total planned tasks, 34% (15 out of 44) of the tasks were partially accomplished and 30% (13 out of 44) of the tasks remained not accomplished. A qualitative assessment was only possible for two fully implemented strategic activities. In the Association's opinion, one activity produced a major impact and the other - a medium impact.

Degree of achievement of goals set (see Annex No. 1)

Goal No. 1 aims to provide impeccable electoral services in line with the core values of the Central Electoral Commission. It is the goal with the most tasks planned and yet not accomplished at the end of 2023. Thus, according to the Promo-LEX Association, out of 21 tasks, six tasks (28.5%) have been accomplished, another six (28.5%) - partially accomplished, and nine (43%) tasks remained not accomplished. We emphasize that only in seven cases (33%) the tasks have been fully (exactly) taken up in the 2023 Action Plan.

According to Promo-LEX assessments, the highest degree of achievement under Goal No. 1 could be attributed to the strategic activities that focused on automating polling stations and deterring potentially fraudulent behavior (75% each), as well as strengthening CEC capacities to monitor and control political financing (50%).

Among ***the achievements*** in the process of achieving the goal, we mention the amendment of the relevant and related regulatory framework; the exercise of the supervision and control of the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns; renewal of 50% of the technical equipment for lower electoral bodies; the four-fold increase in the number of pre-registrations compared to 2019.

The backlogs that, in the Association's opinion, have affected the achievement of the set goal are (non)publication in open format of data related to the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns; poor functionality of the "Financial Control" Special Information System; lack of the voter's electoral profile software, of the application dedicated to the statistical data warehouse and of the electoral complaints management module; the limited media coverage of the digitalization component (only e-voting); the (non-)piloting of systems and technologies that would increase access to the electoral process; the sporadic nature of communication and cooperation between the CEC and the diaspora and voters from the left bank of the Nistru River.

Qualitative assessment was not possible, as by the end of 2023 the CEC had not fully completed any of the seven activities.

Goal No. 2 aims to develop bridges of communication and cooperation with key actors in order to strengthen democracy, improve electoral practice and legislation, and strengthen the CEC as a credible national and international beneficiary-oriented authority. It is the goal with the most tasks accomplished. According to the Promo-LEX Association, eight (50%) tasks have been accomplished, six (38%) tasks - partially accomplished, and two (12%) tasks remained unaccomplished. We emphasize that only in five cases (31%) the tasks have been fully (exactly) taken up in the 2023 Action Plan. In other six cases (38%) the tasks are not included in the action plan.

The highest degree of achievement under Goal No. 2 could be attributed to the strategic activities aimed at promoting electoral journalism, promotion of the WEM International Association, constant cooperation with other state institutions.

Achievements in the process of achieving the goal include specialization of judges, prosecutors, criminal prosecution officers and journalists in the electoral field; creation of partnership with the Audiovisual Council with the aim of promoting political pluralism in the media; voter education through information campaigns; joining efforts with civil society organizations to fulfill the agenda; participation in regional and international events.

The backlogs that, in the Association's opinion, have affected the achievement of the set goal are the lack of joint activities with the Equality Council in the context of a national election; for media service providers to promote political pluralism in the media; the failure to increase the proportion of accessible polling stations and to increase the financial sources attracted from outside.

A qualitative assessment was possible for two fully completed activities. According to Promo-LEX, the expansion of partnerships with civil society has had a major impact, and active participation in regional and international electoral associations - a medium impact.

Goal No. 3 aims to develop an efficient organization with a positive and clear culture. According to Promo-LEX, two (28%) tasks have been accomplished, three (44%) tasks - partially accomplished, and two (28%) tasks were not accomplished. For this goal, we also emphasize the incomplete transposition of the tasks from the strategic plan into the action plan: only two tasks have been fully taken up in the annual action plan, while two others are not included in the AP.

According to Promo-LEX assessments, the highest degree of achievement under Goal No. 3 can be attributed to the strategic activities that focused on making electoral bodies permanent and the recruitment of CECE II chairpersons.

Achievements in the process of achieving the goal include continuous training of CEC officials; elaboration and approval of the career path of the electoral official; making the CECE II permanent and appointing, on a competitive basis, the chairpersons; ensuring employee satisfaction with working conditions (82%).

The backlogs which, in the Association's opinion, have affected the achievement of the set goal are the lack of tangible results in terms of increasing team cohesion; and the lack of an internal communication strategy.

Qualitative assessment was not possible, as by the end of 2023 the CEC had not fully completed any of the five activities.

Regarding the level of implementation of the whole CEC strategic plan.

According to the Promo-LEX Association, at the end of the implementation period of the SP, the Central Electoral Commission achieved the following results: 39 (42%) out of 94 planned tasks - were accomplished; 34 (36%) - partially accomplished, and 21 (22%) - not accomplished. Out of the 27 planned strategic activities, 6 (22%) were achieved, 19 (70%) - partially achieved and 2 (8%) - not achieved.

The best results (54% achieved) were recorded for Goal No. 2, which entailed developing bridges of communication and cooperation with key actors in order to strengthen democracy, improve electoral practice and legislation and strengthen the CEC as a credible national and international beneficiary-oriented authority. On the other hand, the worst results (40% not achieved) were recorded for Goal No. 1, which entailed the impeccable delivery of electoral services in line with the core values of the Central Electoral Commission.

Goal No. 1. The highest degree of achievement within the goal could be attributed to the strategic activities that focused on automating polling stations and strengthening the CEC's capacity to monitor and control political financing (75% each), followed by deterring potentially fraudulent behavior (70%). On the other hand, the lowest degree of achievement within the goal could be

attributed to the activity that involved the development of the "Voter's electoral profile" module (0%).

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: optimization of processes and reduction of workloads of both CEC and lower electoral bodies; creation and ensuring the functionality of the Financial Monitoring and Control Division; establishing proportional and fair liability for violations of the rules of financing political parties and electoral campaigns.

The backlogs were observed in the exploitation of equipment aimed to increase access to the electoral process; open publishing of data related to the financing of political parties and electoral campaigns; development of modules: electoral complaints and voter's electoral profile.

Goal No. 2. The highest degree of achievement under the goal could be attributed to the strategic activities that focused on pro-active collaboration with the legislature; expanding partnerships with civil society; active participation in regional and international electoral associations (100% each), followed by the promotion of electoral journalism (87%). On the other hand, the lowest degree of achievement under the goal could be attributed to activities that involved strengthening the dialogue with political parties; working with development partners on specific areas; developing the WEM International Association (50%).

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: amending the electoral legislation and related framework; certification of electoral officials and making the territorial ones permanent; specialization of magistrates, prosecutors, criminal prosecution officers and journalists in the electoral field.

Backlogs were observed in increasing the proportion of accessible polling stations by 5%; diversifying partnerships and attracting funds for different strategic areas; cooperation with the Equality Council on electoral inclusion.

Goal No. 3. The highest degree of achievement under the goal could be attributed to the strategic activities which focused on conducting the staff audit; screening the existing partnership between the CEC and CICDE; recruiting the members of the CECE from politicians to professionals (100% each), followed by creating a culture of continuous training throughout the whole activity, encouraging the adoption of good practices and informal experience exchange among CEC members and staff (87%). On the other hand, the lowest degree of achievement within the target could be attributed to the activity which involved strengthening the internal audit service (0%).

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal, we highlight: making level II electoral bodies permanent; providing training and professional development opportunities for CEC officials; auditing staff and ensuring working conditions appropriate to their needs.

Backlogs were observed in eliminating overlaps in the work of the CEC and CICDE, developing the internal communication strategy; implementing measures that would increase employee cohesion and develop internal synergy.

Regarding the tasks planned by CICDE for 2023. The institution has committed itself to carrying out 40 tasks related to 16 strategic activities. In Promo-LEX's opinion, CICDE managed to accomplish 88% (35 out of 40) of the total planned tasks, 7% (3 out of 40) of the tasks were partially completed and 5% (2 out of 40) of the tasks remained not completed. A qualitative assessment was possible for 13 fully implemented strategic activities. In the Association's opinion, six activities have had a major impact and seven - a medium impact.

Degree of achievement of goals set (see Annex No. 2)

Goal No. 1 aims at providing training, civic education and research services that are modernized, continuous and tailored to the needs of the beneficiaries. It's the goal with the most tasks planned

yet, lagging behind in terms of fulfillment. Thus, according to the Promo-LEX Association, out of 24 tasks, 19 (79%) tasks have been accomplished, three (13%) - partially accomplished, and two (8%) tasks remained not accomplished.

According to Promo-LEX evaluations, eight out of ten strategic activities have been fully implemented. For two other activities the achievement rate was 83% and 75% correspondingly.

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: the organization and implementation of 432 training activities and civic and electoral education; the three-fold increase in the number of visitors to the website; ensuring a high degree of satisfaction of the beneficiaries with the quality of the activities (90%). **Backlogs** were observed in the accreditation of training courses.

A qualitative evaluation was possible for seven fully completed activities. According to Promo-LEX, three activities have had a major impact and four - a medium impact.

Goal No. 2 aims at carrying out all necessary internal measures in order to ensure CICDE's capacity to carry out the proposed training, civic education and research activities. It is the goal with the fewest planned tasks, yet 100% completed.

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: providing fee-based services; diversifying partnerships and attracting external financial sources. **Backlogs** were observed in the ability to retain experienced trainers. **Qualitatively**, one activity produced a major impact and one - a medium impact.

Goal No. 3 aims to increase the visibility of the institution and establish strategic partnerships. The nine planned tasks were 100% completed.

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: promoting the integration of electoral education into formal education; strengthening partnerships and carrying out activities in collaboration with development partners; actively promoting the work and image of the institution.

A qualitative assessment was possible for four fully completed activities. According to Promo-LEX, three activities have had a major impact and one - a medium impact.

Regarding the level of implementation of the whole CICDE strategic plan.

According to the Promo-LEX Association, at the end of the SP implementation period, the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training achieved the following results: 62 (91%) out of the total of 68 planned tasks - were accomplished; 5 (8%) - partially accomplished, and one (1%) - not accomplished. Out of the 21 planned strategic activities, 17 (81%) have been completed and 4 (19%) - partially completed.

The best results (100% achieved) were recorded for goal no. 2, which entailed the realization of all necessary internal measures to ensure CICDE's capacity to carry out the proposed training, civic education and research activities. On the other hand, worse results (86% not achieved) were recorded for Goal No. 1, which involved the provision of modernized, continuous and tailor-made training, civic education and research services.

Goal No. 1. Seven out of ten strategic activities were 100% completed. The achievement degrees for the other three were 88%, 83% and 75%. The lowest degree of achievement within the goal could be attributed to the activity that entailed continuous training of potential election officials as well as those appointed to the electoral bodies.

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: the diversification of the range of activities and of the pool of beneficiaries; the integration of electoral education into formal education (piloting courses in pre-university and university institutions); the modernization of the distance learning platform and the CICDE website; the almost 4-fold increase in the number of visitors to the website.

Backlogs were observed in the accreditation of training courses; inclusion of CICDE courses in the training program for civil officials; training of electoral officials and other interested subjects, mainly via distance learning platform; tangible outcomes as a result of the effort in promoting training and civic education activities.

Goal No. 2. The four strategic activities were 100% completed. Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: increasing the number of staff of the institution and increasing the level of financial satisfaction of employees; developing the institutional normative framework; certification of electoral officials; attracting external funds.

Goal No. 3. Five out of six strategic activities have been fully completed. The lowest degree of achievement under the goal could be attributed to the activity which involved enhancing the efficiency of inter-institutional collaboration (CEC and CICDE) in the implementation of strategic tasks.

Among the main **achievements** related to the goal we highlight: modernization and development of the services offered; promotion of the institution, its activity and products through participation in TV/radio broadcasts and events organized by national and international institutions; establishing CICDE as a reference center in the region and a valuable resource for other similar institutions.

Backlogs have been observed in eliminating overlaps in the work of the CEC and CICDE and enhancing the efficiency of inter-institutional collaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Central Electoral Commission and the Centre for Continuous Electoral Training:

1. Include in the Strategic Plan in the form of strategic activities of the broad directions of intervention, the major activities that represent strategic value in terms of the development of the institution, and thus, omit the inclusion in the SP of activities from the operational plan or activity plan.
2. Adjust/modify the Strategic Plan as necessary, but not more frequently than annually.
3. Define and clarify tasks in concrete terms, where appropriate, reformulate them so that all actors know exactly the scope of the work and the indicators to be achieved.
4. Avoid fragmentation and duplication of tasks.
5. Set a concrete and measurable quantitative and qualitative performance indicator for each task.
6. Ensure traceability between the Strategic Plan, the Institution's Activity Plan and the Divisions' Activity Plans so that the documents reflect the same activities, tasks, performance indicators, responsible persons, and terms of achievement.
7. Formulate and establish activities and tasks, the realization of which depends directly on the institution and less on other public authorities or actors in the process.
8. Monitor on a regular (semester) basis the implementation of activities and evaluate the results achieved.
9. Analyze risks, challenges and difficulties that may influence the smooth implementation of the plan and identify solutions and opportunities for remediation.
10. Identify and implement tools for permanent and efficient collaboration with central and local public authorities in order to accomplish activities or tasks.
11. Ensure a permanent and open collaboration with civil society organizations and development partners.
12. Plenary reporting to the society on the degree of achievement of the Strategic Plan and the results achieved in relation to the established performance indicators.
13. Keep the same reporting format throughout the strategic plans implementation period.
14. Strengthen and continue efforts to achieve partially completed and uncompleted tasks.
15. Wider media coverage of CEC activity and pro-active communication with voters in order to avoid situations that could diminish voters' trust in the institution and/or the electoral process.

ABBREVIATIONS

APA – Academy of Public Administration

AGE Estonia – e-Governance Academy from Estonia

LGE – Local General Elections

APC – Central government authorities

APL – Public administration authorities

ASP – Public Services Agency

BESV – Polling station electoral office

CA – Audiovisual Council

CEC – Central Electoral Commission

CECE – Constituency Electoral Council

CICDE – Centre for Continuous Electoral Training

CoE – Council of Europe

NAC – National Anticorruption Center

SCM – Superior Council of Magistracy

SCJ – Supreme Court of Justice

ECHR – European Court of Human Rights

CPRMD - Communication's, Public Relations and Media Division

LD - Legal Division

DSCPPECF - Division of Supervision and Control of Political Parties and Election Campaign Financing

ITMVLD – Information Technology and Management of Voters Lists Division

IFES - International Foundation for Electoral Systems

NIJ – National Institute of Justice

EPRI – European Policy and Reform Institute

IRI – International Republican Institute

International IDEA - International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

MAI – Ministry of Internal Affairs

NDI – National Democratic Institute

ODIHR - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

NGO - Non-governmental organization

AP – Action plan

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

GPO – General Prosecutor's Office

SP – Strategic plan

SIASA – Automated State Information System "Elections"
SIMCSI – Quality and Information Security Management System
STISC – Information Technology and Cyber Security Service
PS – Polling station
RSA – State Register of Electors
REM - Consortium Electronic Resources for Moldova
REO – Register of electoral officials
MSU – Moldova State University
ATU – Autonomous Territorial Unit
USAID – U.S. Agency for International Development
ToT – Training of Trainers
MDL – Moldovan Leu
OM – Observation mission
ART – Article
PAR – Paragraph
LET – Letter
No. – number
TV - Television