

Mexico

By Carlos Navarro

I. Introduction

In Mexico, enormous efforts have been undertaken so that the electoral norms, institutions and procedures reflect certainty, reliability, impartiality and transparency. These efforts have been supported by substantial financial investment in the EMB and the strengthening of a competitive political party regime.

Mexico is a federation formed by 31 states and a federal district (Mexico City). The distribution of responsibilities regarding electoral processes has two main components. First, although there is a single set of constitutional provisions that apply to all elections, both the federation itself and the 32 separate entities that comprise it have their own electoral regulations, institutions and procedures. Second, from a normative and organizational perspective, electoral powers and responsibilities are clearly divided into those of strictly administrative nature (preparation, organization and conduction of elections) and jurisdictional ones (dispute resolution and enforcement of electoral justice). These two powers and responsibilities are conferred to specialized agencies.

At the federal level, i.e. for national elections (those related to the election of the president and of the members of both chambers of Congress), administrative powers are vested in the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE is the Spanish acronym), which is a public autonomous and independent body, while the Electoral Tribunal, a specialized body of the Federal Judicial Branch, holds jurisdictional powers. Each of the 32 separate entities has its own administrative and jurisdictional bodies.

The data and figures included in this paper are strictly related to electoral management at federal level—and more precisely, to the administrative functions and the funding of national political parties, which are a direct responsibility of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), Mexico's EMB.

The IFE was created in 1990 as a public autonomous organization, independent in its decisions and administration. Among its main objectives are helping establish the conditions for the ongoing development of a more open democracy, strengthening the political party structure, ensuring equal suffrage for those legally entitled, and promoting the vote and democratic culture in general. The IFE is entrusted in a comprehensive and direct way with every activity related to the preparation, organization and conduct of federal elections in Mexico—including boundary delimitation; the design and implementation of civic education programs, including voter registration; training of polling officials, and ensuring accuracy and the speedy release of preliminary results.

II. Structure of the EMB

The main features that characterize the current electoral system in Mexico at the federal level are the result of a series of constitutional and legislative amendments passed between 1989 and 1996. These amendments addressed major issues, namely those related to the adoption of formulas for allocating seats in both chambers of Congress in a more proportional ratio; the strengthening of a system allowing for more competition between political parties; the transparency of electoral procedures; and the impartiality of electoral authorities.

As part of its efforts to effectively organize federal elections, the IFE has 332 offices throughout the country: one local office in the federal district and in the capitals of each of the 31 states and one district office in each of the electoral districts in which the country is divided for electoral purposes. The IFE is composed of three different types of bodies, all of which are represented at the central, local and district levels. The three are directive bodies (collegiate assemblies named councils), executive bodies (named boards) and surveillance bodies(named commissions), which are responsible for voter registration and boundary delimitation activities All these bodies are represented at central, local and district levels. The IFE's permanent staff totals 13,600 people across the country. In addition, a special civil career service for the IFE, known as the profession electoral service, has been created to assist it in ensuring professional performance.

The IFE's main executive body is the General Council, which includes nine members (the president councilor and eight electoral councilors) with the right to speak and vote; they are chosen to serve seven-year terms if approved by two thirds of those voting in the Chamber of Deputies. Other members of the General Council have a voice but no vote, including the IFE executive secretary and one representative from each national political party and one from each parliamentary group. The nine members with and the right to vote must not have any party links.

The IFE's operational activities are divided among six specialized units (called executive directorships), including the Federal Registry of Voters, Electoral Organization, Prerogatives and Political Parties, Electoral Training and Civic Education, Professional Electoral Service and Administration.

III. Legal framework

The Constitution sets forth the fundamental provisions that determine the election of national authorities, the organization of federal elections and the juridical restrictions and requirements for political parties. These provisions are detailed in one single piece of electoral legislation, the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures.

Mexico has a presidential system and a bicameral legislature comprising a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate. The president is elected to serve a six-year term and cannot run for a second term. The Senate is made up of 128 members, who are also each elected to serve a six-year term, and the Chamber of Deputies is made up of 500 members who are elected every three years. Neither the senators nor the deputies can be reelected for a second consecutive term. All federal elections are held on the same day, the first Sunday of July in election years.

The Mexican Constitution establishes the existence of political parties as entities of public interest. This means they are subject to public law, and that the State has the obligation to grant them the necessary conditions for their development. Accordingly, the electoral law provides eligible political parties with four basic rights: permanent and free access to radio and television; a special tax regime; postal and telegraph payment exemptions; and public funding. Parties must be legally registered and must obtain at least 2 percent of votes cast in a federal election in order to keep their legal status.

The electoral law regulates public and private funding of political parties and electoral campaigns and establishes three different types of public funding—for permanent ordinary activities, for campaign spending and for specific activities as entities of public interest. According to a constitutional provision, public funding must take precedence over private funding of parties and campaigns. Therefore, under no circumstance can private funding exceed the amount of public funding in terms of money raised and spent by political parties.

IV. Electoral costs

As a public autonomous institution, the IFE has the legal ability and requirement to prepare and present its own annual budget proposal. This proposal not only includes all programs and activities related to the planning, preparation, organization and conduction of elections (operational expenses), but also the public funding of political parties. The amounts of such funding and the criteria for distribution among political parties are clearly established by law.

The IFE is also responsible for calculating public funding for political parties. The calculated amounts are incorporated into its institutional annual budget and distributed by the IFE among the parties. Thus, the yearly budget proposal of the IFE includes both its operational expenses and public funding amounts approved for political parties. During electoral years there are significant increases both in the operational expenses (each unit within the IFE includes its ordinary expenses and those specifically related to the electoral process), and in the amount of public funding provided to political parties, since they also receive a special share to finance their campaign activities. More specifically, the spike in public funding for political parties only occurs every three years, which is the time elapsed between elections, whereas operational expenses increase only in two of those three years because the electoral year and the calendar year do not match.

The facts and figures provided in this paper are based on the IFE budgets of 2003 and 2004. The most recent federal elections were held in 2003—midterm elections for all 500 seats of the Chamber of Deputies—and 2004 was a typical non-election year from the administrative and budgetary points of view.

In 2003, the IFE's approved budget was 11.09 billion pesos (\$1.02 billion), of which almost 5.79 billion pesos were allocated for operating expenses and the remaining 5.3 billion pesos for public funding for political parties. When considering the operational costs of the different areas and programs of the IFE, it is not always easy to clearly distinguish ordinary expenses from those specifically related to the electoral process. Nevertheless, in general terms it can be estimated that about one third of the total (around 1.89 billion pesos) of operational expenses in 2003 was allocated solely for electoral expenses.

For the year 2004—a non-election year—the budget for the IFE was 5.47 billion pesos. Of that, 1.92 million pesos (about 35 percent of the total) were spent on public funding of parties and national political groups, and almost 3.55 billion pesos (65 percent of the total) were allocated for operational activities, including the

expenses of all IFE programs and offices at the national level.

The IFE has an Executive Administration Unit that is responsible for drafting the annual budget of the institution. This entity takes into account the proposals made by the different areas and offices of the IFE, both at central and decentralized levels, following the previously authorized programs. The budget draft has to be completed by August of each year; it is then reviewed and approved by the IFE's General Council before being submitted to the federal executive branch for inclusion in the federal expenditures budget. In September of each year, the executive branch must present the federal expenditures budget to the Chamber of Deputies, where it is examined, discussed and eventually approved. Therefore, the IFE's annual budget is subject to the approval of Congress as well as the executive branch; furthermore, it can only be modified by Congress.

Given that the IFE is directly in charge of all activities relative to the organization of federal elections—and that all of these activities correspond to the different units in the IFE's organizational structure—the institute's budget request must include all possible allocations for its units and programs.

Furthermore, the IFE's yearly budget request incorporates not only its operational expenses, but also the expenses related to the public funding of political parties. In electoral years, both the operational expenses (each area plans separately the expenses relative to the electoral process) and the total amount of public funding for the political parties are significantly higher than in non-election years.

The additional allocations for electoral expenses take place every three years, to correspond with general elections (president and congress) once every six years, and for intermediate elections (only deputies) once every three years. In 2003, the most recent electoral year (for intermediate elections), the IFE's approved budget was 11.1 billion pesos (about \$1 billion), of which 5.8 billion pesos were spent on the IFE's operating expenses, and the remaining 5.3 billion pesos went to funding for political parties. About one third of the operating expenses in 2003 were allocated to activities directly linked with the organization of the federal electoral process.

For the year 2004—a non-electoral year—the budget for the IFE was increased to 5.47 billion pesos, of which about 3.55 billion pesos went to overhead and 1.92 billion pesos were allocated to the financing of parties and national political groups

a) Voter registration

Improvements in the registry of voters most clearly reflects the efforts made in Mexico to solve the severe and longstanding problems of credibility that plagued the Mexican electoral system through the presidential elections of 1988. The electoral roll now comprises more than 70 million voters and is estimated to include up to 95 percent of the voting age population. The development and implementation of an accurate database for the current registry was one of the major challenges addressed by the IFE soon after it was created. Shortly before then, the political parties and the government had agreed to build a completely new registry in order to overcome all doubts and sus-

picions regarding the existing electoral roll and to guarantee the highest accuracy possible in the new registry. By means of a door-to-door national census, the IFE created one of the world's largest databases in just eight months, between November 1990 and July 1991.

Voter Enrollment in Mexico is permanent and is established at the federal level. The IFE is responsible for the integration, revision and updating of the different instruments forming the registry of voters. The IFE performs all these activities through a specialized unit, the Executive Directorship of the Federal Registry of Voters, which has a wide network of permanent offices and mobile units all over the country. Citizens need to formally request to be enrolled in the voter registry and they must obtain a voting card in order to cast a ballot. This card is issued by the IFE at no cost. The voting card and the electoral rolls that the IFE compiles and updates are also used for state and local elections, not just for federal ones.

In order to enhance the credibility of the electoral process, since 1992 voting cards have included a photo of the voter as well as different security devices that are upgraded regularly so as to make it difficult to falsify or tamper with. Not surprisingly, the photo-ID voting card is now the most widely used document in Mexico for purposes of legal identification. Furthermore, since 1997 the voter lists that are used for elections also include the photo of electors. The IFE undertakes regular efforts to revise and update these lists to ensure accuracy and certitude.

The complicated and massive task of integrating and updating the voter registry means, unsurprisingly, that it requires the largest percentage of resources from the electoral budget. The amount allocated for these efforts in the most recent electoral year, 2003, was 2.01 billion pesos (\$186 million), equivalent to a little less than 35 percent of total operational spending). In 2004, a non-election year, a total of 1.49 billion pesos (equivalent to almost 40 percent of total operational spending) was allocated to the voter registry.

Among the IFE's main legal responsibilities is the maintenance of the Federal Electoral Registry (DERFE is the Spanish acronym) as well as the definition and regular assessment of the electoral districts. DERFE's total budget in 2004 was \$1.49 million pesos. In 1990, when IFE was established and DERFE became an executive office, the first voting card was issued and a continuous voting roll process was initiated. The new electoral roll was created by using door-to-door canvassing throughout Mexico, creating a historical database of 39.5 million citizens in the electoral roll and a voters' list of 36.5 million.

All Mexican nationals by birth or naturalization who are at least 18 years old have the right to vote. In order to exercise this right it is necessary for all citizens:

- to be listed in the electoral roll;
- to have a photo-ID voting card (first used in the 1994 federal election); and
- to be included in the photographic voting list (first used in the 1997 federal election).

The photo-ID voting card is free to all citizens. Over the past decade it has become accepted as a general proof of identify, at least in part because the IFE signed more than 80 cooperation agreements with various public and private institutions who agreed to accept it. The photo-ID voting card is now the most used document for purposes of legal identification in public and private institutions. Its popularity and wide range of uses are key reasons that coverage of the electoral roll reached 94.2 percent of the population over 18 years of age, according to data from 2003 (National Sample Check).

In order to maintain a comprehensive registration system the Federal Registry of Electors must:

- be efficient so as to include in the electoral roll all new Mexican citizens who complete the application process;
- guarantee individual citizen registration only once in the voter list;
- avoid any duplication by comparing electoral codes, faces or finger prints (\$31.3 million budgeted for 2005);
- exclude deceased citizens, those who have lost Mexican nationality or those
 whose citizen's rights have been suspended by judicial decision, on the basis of
 official documents issued by the authorities (\$3.8 million budgeted for 2004);
- record changes of address reported by citizens to the Federal Registry of Electors on the voter list;
- issue voter credentials promptly (free of charge) to listed citizens;
- display voter list for citizens' check (required by law) and delivery to the
 appropriate government agencies (\$250,000 budgeted for 2004). Any citizen
 who is improperly included in or excluded from the voter list can lodge a legal
 complaint;
- print a final photographic voter list to be use on Election Day (which cost \$11 million for the 2003 federal election);
- update electoral boundary limits in terms of setting the first stage or measure of
 polling areas (electoral sections) as well as to define the federal electoral districts
 according to the population demographics (\$33 million budgeted for 2004, not
 including changes in district offices);
- plan and carry out a comprehensive strategy for an intensive publicity campaign
 urging citizens to obtain their new photo-ID voting card or to update their new
 address (\$3.5 million budgeted in 2004; includes all but TV advertising);
- undertake regular technical audits and checks to the electoral roll and voter list (\$10 million budgeted for 2005);
- store and maintain physical and digital enrollee records (investment cost for electronic equipment totaled \$9.7 million in 2003); and
- print and distribute the photographic voting list to be used on Election Day (distribution costs totaled \$3 million in 2004).

All of these activities Federal Registry of Electors' activities are financed inside the normal electoral budget authorized by the Congress every year. Needless to say, voter registration, issuing photo-ID voting cards and production of the voter list are among the most costly expenditures made by the IFE as a whole in every federal election cycle (every three years).

The Federal Registry of Electors permanently keeps the electoral roll updated by mounting an intensive campaign (known by the Spanish acronym CAI) every year to encourage citizens to visit the Citizen Registration Offices to be included in the Registry and obtain their electoral identity card. (According to CAI 2004 Report, there were 733 offices as a whole: 402 regular or permanent offices; 98 semi-mobile units; and 233 mobile units with an operating cost of 61 million pesos from October to December.) During the every electoral campaign, citizens can also provide their new address, correct their data or request a replacement. Apart of this, DERFE runs a permanent updating campaign that continues year-round in the 332 local and district offices.

It is important to note that during the 2001 CAI, the Federal Registry of Electors started implementing its Technological Modernization Program to equip the Citizen Registration Offices with sophisticated infrastructure requiring investments in hardware, software, skilled support staff and additional expenses for the ongoing operation and maintenance of the system. The Citizen Registration Offices can have different configurations ranging from one to six workstations each, but they all have as minimum equipment a desktop computer, laser printer, signature pad, finger print pad, digital camera, and card scanner all connected in a LAN (local area network: minimum investment cost for such a module is \$177,000); for the regular offices, the server in each one has an online connection to the DERFE WAN (wide area network). The mobile units have a laptop computer instead of a desktop computer, and in most cases also have their own electrical generator.

Most of the costs associated with the registration are items used at the registration modules, which include office rental in the case of regular offices or trailer amortization in the case of semi-mobile units; pickups or vans for the mobile units; wages and expenses (allowance and traveling) for staff; stationary; other materials used in registration; office equipment; training for all staff; communications, etc. In 2004 the total operating budget of the Citizen Registration Offices was \$131 million.

One of the most significant costs in the electoral process is the cost of producing the photo-ID voting card (\$6.13 each). In order to generate the greatest possible confidence in this process, the card was designed to be impossible to falsify and unusable if tampered with, in accordance with proposals from the political parties. Therefore, the card has several control and security features. On the front it includes the citizen's data (full name, age, gender and address); a digital photograph surrounded with a micro-text (0.5mm) containing the citizen's name and application date; an IFE hologram; and the word 'IFE' and the citizen's name printed with UV ink over the photograph. On the back, the card has a bar code with the citizen's biometric information covered with an infrared-sensitive black strip, OCR code and micro-text line surrounding the signature space. Molecular heat fusing during lamination ensures that

tampering renders the credential unusable.

The second phase of the modernization program was centered on centralizing the 'back office,' reducing the 17 regional computer and document storage centers (or registry databases) to a single computer center and document storage facility. This phase required an initial investment cost of \$47.6 million between 2003 and 2004 for the central computers and storage. This also meant designing and constructing a new facility as well as designing, developing and implementing a new computer system. Due to the importance of the computer system, effective contingency plans were built in case of system failure, including a mirror computer center, generators, alternative networks and other back-up systems and round-the-clock support services (the computer center's operating cost in 2004 was \$31 million, plus maintenance and support services totaling \$8.8 million).

Finally, it is important to mention that a key reason for the high costs associated with the registry is the wide range of responsibilities included in the process. The sheer magnitude of the task of gathering current information of every single eligible voter in a country such as Mexico is daunting. The importance of developing comprehensive procedures and their impact on effective voter registration is critical to the legitimacy of the democratic electoral process. This goal highlights the importance of the voter registration task even more.

b) Boundary delimitation

The electoral system used in Mexico to renew the Chamber of Deputies makes it necessary, as established by law, to review and periodically adjust electoral districts. Of the Chamber's 500 members, 200 are elected by proportional representation in five multi-member districts, and 300 by majority in single-member districts. As a general rule, these 300 single-member districts are distributed among the 31 states and the federal district based on population. The law states that the redistribution of such districts is to be made according to the data of the last population census. The IFE is also responsible for making this revision and periodically adjusting it to guarantee that each deputy from single-member districts represents approximately the same number of citizens, which helps ensure the principle of equality of all votes.

The most recent process of revision and adjustment of the 300 districts was made between April 2004 and February 2005. The resources used for this task were included in the budget allocated to voter-registration issues because the specialized unit of the IFE responsible for the voter registry is also responsible for coordinating the work of redrawing electoral boundaries. Representatives of national political parties also play important roles in the subsequent decision-making process.

c) Logistics

The IFE has a specialized and permanent unit, the Executive Directorship of Electoral Organization, that is responsible for operational activities related to planning, organization and logistics of elections. This unit is also represented in the 332 decentralized IFE offices throughout the country, where it oversees the integration and functioning

of decentralized bodies and deals with all aspects related to documents, materials and electoral statistics.

Such logistical activities are quite extensive and complex. For the midterm elections of 2003, for example, more than 121,000 polling sites were installed throughout the country, 125,000 ballot boxes were distributed and some 68 million ballots were printed, transported and distributed.

The budgeted amount for such programs and activities for the 2003 electoral year was 1.1 billion pesos (\$102 million), which was equivalent to about 19 percent of the IFE's total operational spending. The amount budgeted in 2004, a non-election year, was about 235 million pesos, equivalent to approximately 6.7 percent of total operational spending.

d. Party and campaign funding

In 1986 the Constitution incorporated the right of national political parties to receive public funding. Since then, the electoral law has created and implemented a series of provisions designed to regulate public funding of political parties with clarity, precision and integrity.

Public funding for political parties is allocated according to three different provisions and criteria. First, for ordinary and permanent activities—the total amount of which is determined annually according to a formula established by law—30 percent of the total is allocated to all parties on equal terms and the other 70 percent is allocated according to the percentage of votes obtained in the previous election. Secondly, public funds reimburse up to 75 percent of the proven annual spending on activities including education and political training, social and economic research and printing. These two lines of funding are permanent.

The third line concerns funding for election campaigns and is only applicable during election years. The amount allocated for this endeavor is equal to that allocated for ordinary activities during an election year and is distributed according to the same formula. Each party therefore receives the same amount for election campaigns and for ordinary activities. It is important to reiterate that according to the constitutional mandate, public funding should take precedence over private funding. Since 1993 the law also regulates sources of private funding and imposes certain restrictions or prohibitions regarding its origin and amount.

As was previously indicated, the amount of public funding distributed to parties and national political groups in the 2003 election year was 5.3 billion pesos (\$490 million), while the corresponding amount in the non-election year of 2004 was nearly 1.92 billion pesos. Parties are supposed to have an internal body responsible for obtaining and managing their general resources as well as campaign funds; this body is also responsible for presenting annual and campaign reports on the origin, amount, use and application of income coming from all funding sources.

e) Civic education

The IFE has a specialized unit, the Executive Directorship of Electoral Training and Civic Education, which is responsible for the training of citizens who serve as poll workers on election day. This unit exists at both the central level and in all decentralized offices. It is also responsible for drafting and implementing permanent programs of civic education, with special emphasis on young adults and children.

In the election year of 2003 this unit received 860 million pesos (\$80 million), equivalent to a little less than 15 percent of the IFE's total operational spending. It was allocated 267 million pesos, equivalent to about 7.5 percent of total operational spending, in the 2004 non-election year.

f) Out of country voting

Proposals to allow out of country voting for Mexicans began gathering steam in 1996, but it was only in July of 2005 that Congress finally approved a law recognizing and regulating this right, starting with the 2006 presidential elections. The method established is postal voting; Mexicans living abroad can only vote this way if they have their photo-ID card, which can only be issued by the IFE within Mexico itself. It is estimated that some 4.2 million Mexicans living abroad have photo-ID cards and are therefore already eligible to vote in 2006. The budget estimated and requested by the IFE for out of country voting in the 2006 elections amounts to 1.25 billion pesos (\$116 million).

g) New technologies

Efficiently managing an EMB like the IFE in a country the size of Mexico—with 70 million voters spread over 2 million kilometers (1.24 million miles)—has required the development and implementation of new technologies in practically all substantive areas and programs of the institution.

The IFE has introduced several technological innovations both for internal administrative purposes and for the planning, preparation, organization and surveillance of federal electoral processes. Undoubtedly the most striking outcome to date centers on the Federal Registry of Voters' efforts in areas such as programs for integrating and updating the electoral registry and the issuing of photo-ID voting cards. Investments allocated to such efforts are included in the budget of the specialized unit of the electoral registry.

The casting and counting of votes in federal elections is done manually. A legal reform would be required to introduce automated systems for voting and the counting of ballots; such reform has not been proposed to date. However, in 1994 the IFE developed a highly sophisticated and efficient computerized system that tabulates ballots cast and then issues preliminary results soon after polling sites are closed. The integration and operation of this program is overseen by a specialized unit for services of computers and communications, which is also responsible for technical support and the development of new computer services for the IFE. The budget funds received by this unit in the 2003 election year totaled 165 million pesos (\$15 million), equivalent to less

than 3 percent of total operational spending. The corresponding amount in the nonelection year of 2004 was 77 million pesos, about 2 percent of operational spending.

It is true that in many cases technological innovations have meant important reductions in both direct and indirect costs. As such, the main reason for adopting such changes generally has been the search for the highest possible efficiency, trust, certainty and security in the organization of elections and the delivery of electoral services.

In the case of Mexico, however, it is important to remember that the IFE does not receive any international financial assistance; instead, it is entirely financed by federal public funds. This limitation has not stopped the IFE from developing, since 1993, a systematic strategy of international linkages and cooperation that has allowed it to collaborate on diverse projects and initiatives of technical assistance and democratic strengthening in different regions of the world.

V. Final considerations

When figures more or less accurate and trustworthy are at hand regarding consolidated electoral spending, there is always the temptation of calculating the cost per voter or per vote, or even of making comparisons between countries. In reality, however, the lack of common parameters or points of reference at the international level makes such analysis risky and unadvisable since such calculations and comparisons can lead to biased or inappropriate comparisons or judgments.

In the Mexican case it is possible to obtain accurate figures on electoral spending, and this case study has provided specific, recent figures regarding the funding of political parties and the financing of the management body responsible for organizing federal elections in the country. However, this information and data are not directly comparable to situations and figures in other countries. In Mexico, for example, the following questions would undoubtedly arise during any analysis: On what basis should the cost per elector or per vote be calculated, by adding up the operational spending of the IFE during a complete electoral cycle or only the cycle geared explicitly to programs or activities related to the organization of a federal election? Furthermore, should calculations be included regarding the spending of the body responsible for solving electoral challenges and the amounts allocated for public funding of political parties and/or campaigns?

These simple examples offer clear proof that attempts to establish international comparisons pose serious additional complications having to do with the political organization of individual countries as well as the how electoral responsibilities are distributed among various levels of government. The different existing options for the integration of the voter registry, and the difficulties to define and add up the funding for this activity, should also be taken into account. A myriad other activities could be included under the category of electoral spending.

In conclusion, there have been substantial efforts to reform and modernize the Mexican electoral system in order to counteract and address the serious problems of trust and credibility that existed in the recent past. These efforts have also been direct-

ed to addressing the expectations of democratic change, impartiality and professionalism in the organization of the elections, with the goal of ensuring the cleanliness of electoral procedures and the equity of elections themselves. Among many other things, the steps taken so far have required substantial financial support that has been reflected in the total amount spent on election-related areas. To date, it seems, such outlays have proved to be a fruitful investment toward the development of an increasingly robust democracy.

About the author

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Mr. Navarro Fierro has been the IFE's representative in international electoral observation missions to a number of countries. He has also been speaker at diverse regional, continental and international forums organized by international associations of electoral authorities. He has authored the publications prepared by the IFE for the international community, as well as diverse international comparative studies on political and electoral issues, such as external voting; financing systems; oversight and equity conditions in the political-electoral contests; electoral systems for presidential and legislative elections; and the juridical regime of political parties, among others.