

Thematic Evaluation
Electoral assistance provided within the Romanian ODA programme
Final Report

23 March 2015

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACEEEO	Association of European Election Officials
A-WEB	Association of World Election Bodies
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CEC	Central Elections Commission
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
EAD	Electoral Assistance Division, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EMB	Electoral Management Body
GEO	Global Electoral Organization
GPECS	Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support
GNI	Gross National Income
ICPS	International Centre for Parliamentary Studies
ICT	Information and communications technology
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INE	National Electoral Institute (Mexico)
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LTO	Long term observer
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCV	Out of country voting
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSCE/ODIHR	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
PEA	Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania
STO	Short term observer
TA	Technical Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Terminology note:

The report uses generic terms to characterize and group together similar activities with different names and titles. This allows for this thematic-level evaluation to assess a larger whole of the assistance, rather than focusing on individual activities. In particular, the report uses:

- *Integrity*- to capture elements of the assistance that contribute to electoral integrity beyond good EMB practices, such as the workshop on preventing electoral corruption or on campaign finance regulation and enforcement.
- *Study visits*- to include work visits, information sharing visits made to the PEA offices or to other electoral actors in Romania, and electoral observation visits to Romania that included these visits and presentations at the PEA and other Romanian institutions.
- *Technical assistance*- to capture visits to other EMBs with the purpose of sharing information and knowledge on the Romanian experience and system as well as to provide advice to the EMB or other institution on a particular issue. For the purposes of this report, the participation of PEA staff in other country ODA workshops as expert speaker is included in this category.
- *Workshops*- to cover all of the workshops, conferences, seminars and other structured group meetings held along those lines. Workshops can include the BRIDGE trainings that were conducted in the workshop format. However, in the report discussions, BRIDGE is often differentiated as it had a specific training function.

Executive Summary

Romania development assistance started in 2007 when it joined the European Union (EU). Since that time, it has provided more than USD 1,000,000 in assistance to strengthen electoral processes in Eastern and Central Europe as well as in North African and the broader Middle East. Roughly two-thirds of this has been provided multilaterally through grants to the United Nations (UN) and other international organizations, and the remainder provided bilaterally through Romanian institutions, most notably its Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA). Romania has also had several projects with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to strengthen its official development assistance (ODA) efforts, including facilitating some of the electoral assistance activities.

Bilateral electoral assistance has been provided as a series of activities, done as workshops and conferences held in Romania, through Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) workshops, technical expertise and the sharing of the Romanian experience, election observation, and attending professional conferences outside of Romania. Topic areas have included electoral management and communications, voter registration and election-day operations including out-of-country voting (OCV), women's participation, electoral integrity issues and democratic transitions.

The UNDP Regional Center for Europe and Central Asia commissioned this independent thematic evaluation of the Romanian ODA programme in collaboration with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Its purpose is to help develop a clearer understanding of Romania's engagement and strategic niche in electoral assistance. The evaluation report is expected to be used to inform Romania's future involvement in the sector.

FINDINGS

1. The PEA has a strategic vision for its international position but Romanian ODA still needs to develop a vision for its electoral assistance as a thematic area. Assistance is provided within the broader ODA framework and but there is no clearly articulated vision for the assistance other than a general intention to build partner capacity to organize independent, free and fair elections and to raise important issues such as women's participation.

2. Romania is perceived as impartial and geographically well suited to provide assistance but its visibility as a provider of electoral assistance is low. Participants saw most of the workshops and activities as professional interaction, rather than as capacity building assistance, with the exception of the BRIDGE workshops which have global recognition as electoral training and the two transitions-related workshops that targeted the North African and broader Middle Eastern states on democratic transitions and political parties.

3. Romanian interest in providing electoral assistance is high but capacity is limited. Funding is limited and allocated on an annual proposal basis. The PEA has a professional electoral management body (EMB) perspective and is willing to commit staff and resources to its assistance efforts, but the efforts also need to be provided with a development perspective to ensure aid effectiveness.

4. Bilateral assistance was most relevant for recipients as professional networking and information sharing opportunities. The activities provided peer-to-peer exchanges and information sharing on important electoral topics. Participants found these interesting and informative but not necessarily relevant to their needs. Other factors that affected relevance included the global proliferation of electoral events and assistance in the past several years, the supply-driven nature of

the assistance, and the grouping of participants with vastly different needs, levels of knowledge and assistance priorities.

5. The PEA was efficient at raising its international profile through its ODA and professional networking efforts. The PEA's active professional engagement on international workshops and events, such as the Global Elections Organization (GEO) conference, membership in the Association of the World Election Bodies (A-WEB) and the regional Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO), and its ODA activities significantly raised its international visibility.

6. Activities were generally effective at sharing information and knowledge, but results beyond this will require a more programmatic and development approach. The activities are mostly stand alone events and do not build on each other. The annual allocation of bilateral ODA on the basis of proposals is helping the PEA to identify and rationalize its planned ODA efforts over the year more systematically. However, this planning needs to be done within an overarching electoral assistance strategy that guides its design and ensures programmatic and development coherence.

7. Technical assistance is a promising area for assistance, not only by the PEA but by other relevant agencies, to issues of electoral integrity, security and reform. Only one technical assistance (TA) type of mission was done, facilitated by the Mobility Fund instrument, but this could be a cost-effective way to provide more targeted and effective assistance. The TA mission done to Moldova incorporated several best practices, including the substantive nature of the visit and timing it to the needs of the Moldovan electoral calendar.

8. Study visits to Romania represent another potential area for ODA expansion with effectiveness enhanced if capacity building elements are fostered. The ones undertaken were linked to workshops and observation efforts, and the PEA was able to increase their usefulness for the participants by adding on the visit and discussions at the PEA. However, strengthening the visits' capacity building elements, and providing TA follow-up or mentoring afterwards, would increase its impact.

9. Romanian workshops were successful at bringing together different groups on important electoral issues, but achieving development outcomes beyond this will require more tailored and targeted efforts. The workshops raised important issues but mostly at general levels. Once the principles and lessons are transmitted, the recipients then need much more specific assistance. These events though did provide a neutral venue for those from fragile and politicized contexts to meet and discuss technical but highly sensitive and potentially volatile issues if done at home.

10. BRIDGE events were largely successful activities, but BRIDGE does not provide Romania a comparative advantage over others that are already providing this regionally and internationally. Most of the visible results came from the BRIDGE workshops because of their capacity building nature. These demonstrated that if the right participant is targeted at the right time for the right course, s/he can receive tangible benefits and pass those on to her/his home institution. However, with more than 2,500 existing BRIDGE facilitators from 141 countries, and more than 20,000 BRIDGE workshops already held, BRIDGE is no longer a niche area.

11. Bilateral observation efforts helped build peer relations, but linking them to capacity building efforts would strengthen their effectiveness as a development tool. There was information provided to the evaluation on over 20 bilateral observation missions, mostly done by the PEA. These helped to increase Romania's visibility and the exposure of the Romanian participants to other EMBs and systems. But they were stand alone visits, without reporting back to the country holding the

election or linking them to later assistance efforts, which makes it unlikely that the observations resulted in any improvements of the processes observed.

12. Efficiencies could be increased with a dedicated person to direct, manage and coordinate the electoral assistance efforts within the PEA and the MFA. The PEA and the MFA have successfully organized large international events with a wide range of international participants. However, planning, management and other issues were raised in some interviews that had affected the participants and other electoral assistance providers' perceptions of the quality of the assistance. These included administrative issues such as visa problems, and programmatic ones, such as confusion over the purpose of workshops, questions related to the selection of participants and the lack of follow up to events. These affect costs as well as perceptions about how serious and capable a country is in providing assistance and whether partners want to continue their relationships.

13. Coordination of efforts with those of the broader international electoral assistance sector and with national partners needs strengthening, especially as the UNDP facilitation project ends. There is a general perception outside of Romania that some of the Romanian electoral assistance is designed and delivered without adequate consideration of national contexts and specific development needs or consultation with other assistance efforts, some of which are large and extremely complex. This leads to supply-driven assistance and reduced aid effectiveness.

14. The Mobility Fund is a useful tool for electoral assistance providing a flexible mechanism for a timely and targeted response. It was only used once by the PEA, but is ideally suited to respond to the unforeseen but immediate and often critical needs of an electoral process, especially in transitional circumstances. **Designing an Electoral Toolkit to document Romanian electoral reforms and best practices has significant potential for a cost-effective way to share the Romanian experience** and assist countries in similar circumstances.

15. UNDP provided value added for the Romanian ODA electoral assistance efforts through its programmatic perspective, global network and coordination mechanisms which Romania still needs to develop. This support helped to jump start the electoral assistance efforts and placed Romania in a much better position that it would have been otherwise. UNDP also supported the development of the Mobility Fund which was used successfully for electoral TA in the case of Moldova. A triangular relationship in the electoral field was anticipated with Mexico, but never fully developed.

16. The PEA has capacity building intentions for its ODA activities which could be built on to strengthen their sustainability aspects. This is important as sustainable change requires both the transfer of professional skills and operational knowledge that can build institutions and the cadre of personnel that work in them and that strengthen the electoral processes as a whole. Most of the Romanian bilateral activities so far have focused on the first step of this process, information sharing. However, in many cases, sustainability also requires electoral reform. In its internal work, the PEA has had some focus on the reforms needed to meet EU standards and improve legislation, but international assistance targeting electoral reform has yet to be developed substantively within the ODA-funded elements.

17. Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) are a good initiative to formalize bilateral assistance relationships and develop more systematic and institutional assistance. Assistance to date is largely based on invitational events and ad hoc efforts with different countries. The PEA has started to sign MOUs with a number of partners which provide the general context for their relationships. As assistance develops and is formalized through more specific MOUs and project agreements, it should become more targeted which will strengthen its ability to deliver sustainable outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. Romania is just starting to position itself to provide more substantial electoral assistance through the availability of the bilateral ODA funding and the activism of the PEA. The PEA has the interest, drive and technical competence to engage peer EMBs and share its experiences and is currently driving the bilateral assistance. But EMB-EMB assistance is only one part of an electoral assistance effort and is not an end to itself. A sector strategy still has yet to be developed that provides the vision for Romania's International electoral assistance and clearly articulates its ultimate purpose, ties the efforts programmatically into an integrated and coherent development effort, and ensures it is grounded in the best practices of international electoral assistance.

Conclusion 2. The results of the bilateral electoral assistance are at the activity level which is a reflection of its limited scale and output-based nature. For partner countries, most results are at the level of individual participants who attended an event and who likely gained an increased awareness or knowledge on the topics discussed. For the PEA, these efforts likely strengthened its own staff capacity, increased its exposure and understanding of other systems and gave it a seat at the international electoral table.

Conclusion 3. Other countries are interested in the Romanian experience and expertise but Romania needs to find its strategic niche and value added within the larger electoral assistance context. There is interest in Romania's experience and appreciation of its impartiality and expertise, but transitional experience alone is not enough to ensure relevance of assistance. There is a crowded assistance market and to provide value added in the midst of this, and with limited resources, Romania will need to move beyond the general and focus on a few niche areas. Evaluation findings suggest this lies in Romania's ability to provide a neutral venue and through the provision of targeted and demand-driven technical assistance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. Develop a strategic vision and mission for Romania's electoral assistance and ground this within the larger democratic strengthening thematic area. This should be consultative process and include other Romanian institutions and civil society, encompass a long term development perspective, and identify specific strategic objectives and focal areas for assistance. In the near to medium term, Romania could build on its transitional experience areas (autocracy to democracy, EU accession and temporary to permanent EMB) and PEA's ODA interest and drive to develop more focused and targeted assistance in areas with similar experience and aspirations, such as the Black Sea and Central Asia. This is where Romania appears to have its best comparative advantage. Areas further out and with different needs could be reached by targeted TA and well-designed workshops.

Recommendation 2. Develop programmatic links and synergies with other Romanian ODA areas pertinent to the electoral cycle which can become focal/niche areas for Romanian electoral assistance. Some of the other Romanian ODA efforts have direct links to electoral process issues, such as anticorruption, justice and education. Synergistic programming should be explored between these efforts to strengthen the electoral sector assistance. A roster of Romanian experts in electoral cycle areas could also be developed and used if the TA aspects of the assistance are strengthened.

Recommendation 3: Ensure electoral assistance is provided with a long term development and programmatic perspective that is guided by the strategic vision and framework developed for electoral and democratic sector assistance (Recommendation 1), grounded in the best practices for

development and electoral assistance, and that leads to sustainable outcome. This approach sees all activities as an integrated effort that contributes to a larger whole, includes beneficiaries in planning, and encompasses a capacity building perspective among others.

Recommendation 4. Assign dedicated officers to manage electoral support within the PEA and the MFA ODA Department once created and ensure their familiarization with the broader context of electoral assistance and lessons learnt. Electoral assistance needs a dedicated and reasonably senior person within these institutions to manage it, ensure programmatic coherence as well as a proper management of the possible political and cultural sensitivities in the recipient countries. As an emerging donor in the sector, PEA practitioners, and those designing and managing the assistance, could benefit from a targeted training on the developmental aspects of electoral assistance and the lessons learned internationally from the past twenty years of global electoral assistance. This officers should also ensure coordination of Romanian efforts with those of the other donors and international organisations on the ground and internationally.

Recommendation 5: Assure programming is based directly on the priority needs of the beneficiaries. Requests for assistance are often general and focused on the symptoms of a problem or on needs that are not priorities within the national context. It is important to correctly identify the exact nature of the needs, establish priorities, and design the assistance to directly target those priority needs in order to ensure aid effectiveness and achieve sustainable results.

Recommendation 6. Strengthen internal and external coordination mechanisms before the end of the UNDP project. Internally this needs to be done between the assistance implementer and the other Romanian agencies involved in similar efforts and with the Romanian representatives within the targeted countries. Those persons should attend donor meetings to ensure coordination at that level as well as to relay information back to the implementer. This coordination also needs to be strengthened externally with the broader international assistance efforts and with other multi- and bilateral assistance projects.

Recommendation 7. Foster strategic partnerships based on shared interests and that can increase the developmental efficacy of Romania's electoral assistance. Some of Romania's most visible results came from joint efforts with other partners and institutions. It should maintain the strategic partnerships that are already working well (UNDP, Council of Europe, ACEEEO, GEO/A-WEB, etc.) and look to expand this through other partnerships in its focal areas with EMBs, CSOs and other electoral assistance providers. Potential partnerships exist in areas such as electoral integrity, campaign financing, women in electoral processes, training and other areas.

1. Background

1.1. Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Centre for Europe and Central Asia commissioned this independent evaluation of the Romanian electoral assistance in collaboration with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). The purpose of the evaluation was to: (i) develop a better understanding of Romania's international engagement in the provision of electoral assistance; and (ii) examine its strategic niche and the role it could play in helping to strengthen the capacity of its partner countries to organize free and fair elections. It was also expected to identify best practices and provide a good foundation for future electoral assistance efforts. The evaluation was done in January 2015 as detailed more fully in Section 1.6. This report provides the findings of the evaluation, starting with an introduction on international electoral assistance, background to the Romanian Official Development Assistance (ODA) programme and the Romanian ODA electoral assistance (Section 1). It then provides the findings of the evaluation on the Romanian assistance (Section 2) and ends with the conclusions and recommendations for its electoral assistance for the future (Section 3).

1.2. International Electoral Assistance

The holding of regular, credible and inclusive elections is considered an integral part of a democratic transition and good governance. They confer the mandate for governments to govern and the political legitimacy needed for stable prosperous states. They are also among the most important ways that citizens can hold their representatives accountable and participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

The international community has been providing assistance to strengthen the electoral processes in transitional and developing nations for many years. Initially, international electoral assistance focused on the immediate needs of holding of the election event and addressed a knowledge gap, such as how to administer multi-party elections or observe polling. This helped ensure a better election event, but did not necessarily result in more inclusive and credible elections. Credible elections are those that meet widely recognized international standards, such as an open competitive process, equal access to media, the right for all citizens to participate as voters or as candidates, and a free, secret and universal vote. It became clear that achieving this required a longer term more development focused support for electoral reforms, building professional and institutional capacities and strengthening the broader electoral processes. This "electoral cycle" approach is now used by most development agencies including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Commission (EC).

The international electoral assistance sector is a large one, with billions of dollars worth of assistance provided by bilateral and multilateral institutions over the past two decades. Most of this assistance is financed with official development funds and follow the donor's development guidelines for aid efficiency. In addition, there are now well-known lessons on how to provide effective electoral assistance. These include: grounding the assistance in the local context; acting across the electoral cycle; integrating electoral assistance into the broader framework of democratic strengthening; emphasizing citizen understanding and engagement; ensuring national ownership; and, building on donor-coordination.¹ With the continuing challenges faced by some nations in their democratic

¹ OECD, "Principles for international electoral assistance" in *Accountability and Democratic Governance Orientation and Principles*. pp 81 -82

transitions, the next generation of electoral assistance is expected to include a greater focus on sustainability and maintaining the electoral and democratic gains made from one cycle to the next.

The European Union is a large provider of electoral assistance. It is guided by the EC Communication of April 2000 on Election Assistance and Observation. It joined with UNDP in 2006 to create an EC-UNDP Joint Task Force on Electoral Assistance and developed joint EC/UNDP Operational Guidelines for the implementation of Electoral Projects to ensure harmonized efforts. Among other things, the Joint Task Force has also developed e-learning courses, including one on effective electoral assistance.

1.3. Romanian official development assistance

Romanian official development assistance started in 2007 when Romania joined the European Union. Its main focus is to support people in developing countries to overcome poverty. Poverty is defined as not just a lack of financial resources, but also the lack of food, education, health services, jobs, political involvement and infrastructure.² Romania is an emerging donor which are countries with relatively new, or newly revived, assistance programmes. Most are new members of the EU, and many were donors during the Cold War but received assistance during their transition to democratic market economies.³ Romania has since been providing increasing amounts of development cooperation bringing its ODA in line with EU standards. The common principles within which the EU and its Member States implement their development policies are set out in the European Consensus on Development (2005). This also set the goal for each new EU member state's contribution at 0.17 percent of its Gross National Income (GNI) by 2010 and 0.33 percent of the GNI by 2015. In 2013, Romania allocated 0.075 percent of its total national budget to ODA or about Euro 100,870,000.⁴

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinates Romania's ODA. It started by channelling its assistance multilaterally through international organizations, but by 2014 about 25 percent of its assistance was being delivered bilaterally directly by Romanian agencies and organizations.⁵ Around 60 percent of these funds are allocated annually through a call for proposals addressed to Government agencies, international organisations and NGOs that want to implement bilateral assistance efforts. Romania also created a Mobility Fund for Government Experts to facilitate the timely transfer of Romanian experts and expertise to assist partner states to meet ad hoc needs in sectors where Romania could bring added value.

Romania is still developing its ODA systems and structures. Updated ODA legislation is currently drafted and awaiting enactment. This will create an ODA department within the MFA to manage all stages of the ODA programme and project cycle. Until then, ODA is handled by the MFA's Development Assistance Unit located in its General Directorate for Economic Diplomacy, and staffed by five persons. The MFA also needs to develop a database on its development programmes and projects which is prioritized for 2014-2015. This is part of an EC initiative to support member states to facilitate ODA reporting in order to strengthen aid transparency and facilitate cooperation through the timely release of aid information. Romania is already starting to formalize its development cooperation with partner nations, signing a general framework and conditions for

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *New donors can make a difference. Romanian Aid*, p 4

³ OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in *Beyond the DAC. The Welcome Role of Other Providers of Development Co-operation*.

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *National Report on the Official Development Assistance Provided by Romania in 2013*, p 2

⁵ MFA interview.

development cooperation in 2013 with the Republic of Moldova. The Republic of Moldova is Romania's most important partner as they share a common language, culture and border.

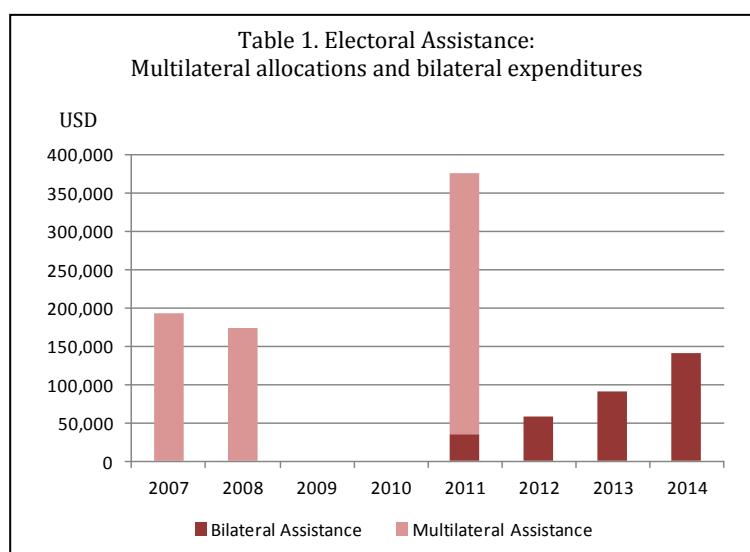
Romania has identified priority thematic areas for its ODA based on its democratic transition experience. These are areas where it feels it has lessons learned and experiences from the past 25 years of reform that it could share. Romania also has its more recent experience on European integration and bringing its national policies and systems in line with EU standards. These priority areas include consolidating public institutions, promoting peace and security, strengthening of civil society, child protection and sustainable economic development. Romanian ODA also focuses on building the capacity of state institutions on issues related to anti-corruption and anti-discrimination. In addition, it has a very large scholarship programme which it has offered for many years to students from other nations. Most of the bilateral ODA investments are made in the education sector which accounted for 86 percent of that assistance in 2013. The democracy, rule of law and migration sector, where electoral assistance is situated, is the next largest area of assistance, accounting for 11 percent, followed by humanitarian assistance (two percent) and development education (one percent).⁶

Geographically, Romania can provide assistance to any of the developing countries listed by the DAC as eligible. Within these it has identified priority countries, most of which are in its eastern and southern neighbourhoods. Originally this was Moldova, Georgia and Serbia but has expanded to include other Eastern European and Central Asian countries as well as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya following the Arab Spring, and more recently the broader Middle East.

1.4. Romanian ODA electoral assistance

Romania considers electoral assistance to be a thematic niche area of its ODA programme, given its experience and lessons learned from its transition to democracy and reform processes. It also realized from its recent experience in development cooperation that effective development within a partner state depends on its domestic security, stability and rule of law, and that systems based on democratic values and human rights and that guarantee free expression and promote entrepreneurship provide the necessary tools to overcome poverty, promote sustainable education and health systems, ensure equality before the law and contribute to domestic prosperity.⁷

Currently, the Permanent Electoral Authority (PEA) is the most active actor providing bilateral electoral assistance. Within Romania, the PEA is responsible for the "organization and conduct of the electoral processes, in order to offer appropriate conditions for exercising the voting rights, equal opportunities in political competition, transparency in financing the political parties' activity and electoral campaigns."⁸ The PEA was created in 2004 as a permanent institution and recently



⁶ MFA, *National Report on the Official Development Assistance Provided by Romania in 2013*.

⁷ MFA, *Op cit, Forward*.

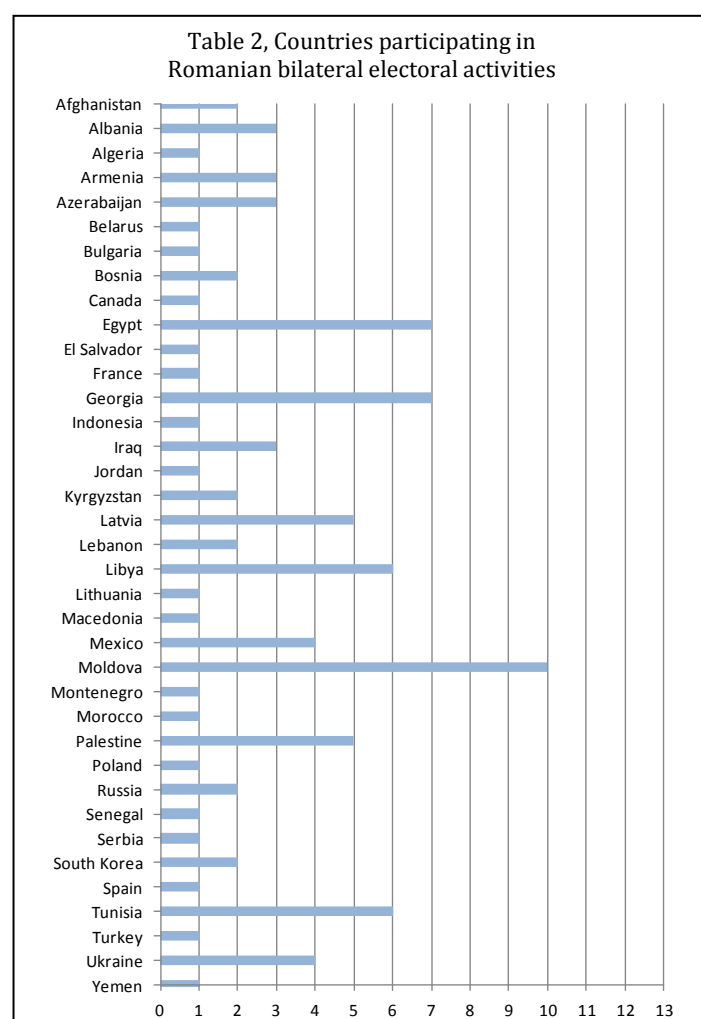
⁸ PEA, *Workshop on Women's Participation in Elections*, p 1

celebrated its tenth anniversary. During the past decade, it has “continuously expressed its commitment to support other countries’ efforts to hold free and fair elections by facilitating networking, building synergies and generating joint projects for the advancement of democracy and credible elections.”⁹

Romania has provided electoral assistance under its democracy, rule of law and migration ODA sector since 2007. This assistance has been provided both multilaterally and bilaterally. By the end of 2014, about 68 percent of the funding has been used multilaterally and 32 percent bilaterally (Table 1).

Electoral assistance started with a multilateral contribution of Euro 150,000 to the United Nations Electoral Assistance Department (EAD) for use in the Black Sea area. This was followed by other multilateral contributions to UNDP Moldova electoral support project helping Moldova prepare for its 2009 national elections (2008); the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for election observation (2008); the UNDP project supporting the electoral process in Egypt (2011); and, to International IDEA for a project supporting an internal assessment of the elections in Tunisia (2012) (Table 3).

Bilateral efforts for electoral assistance with ODA started around 2010 and by the end of 2014



almost 40 countries had participated in the 13 main activities provided by Romania (Table 2). Most participants have come from Moldova (82), followed by Egypt and Tunisia (60 each), Libya (23), Georgia and Ukraine (10 each).¹⁰

Initial bilateral efforts started as joint workshops organized with the UN or other international organization such as the 2010 workshop on out of country (OCV) voting organized by the MFA, PEA and EAD and the one on democratic transitions to share lessons learned with Egypt and Tunisia in 2011 following the Arab Spring. A sizable amount of the ODA bilateral electoral assistance has been channelled through an MFA- UNDP project designed to support and strengthen the Romanian ODA effort and where UNDP has acted as an implementing agency for some of the electoral activities organized by the PEA and MFA (Section 1.5.).

The PEA has started taking a more active and structured role in bilateral electoral assistance since 2012 when the MFA started the annual call for

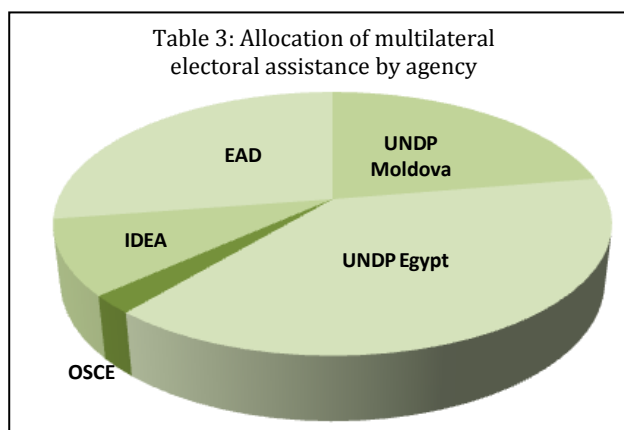
⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ These are total number of participants, and may include some persons who attended more than one activity.

project proposals addressed to public institutions, international organization and NGOs interested in development cooperation. The PEA used this funding to hold a number of workshops, BRIDGE trainings, study visits and observation efforts. The MFA also held a joint workshop with the Venice Commission on the role of political parties in 2013 for the Middle East and North Africa regions. Romanian parliamentarians also organized several small observation missions in Eastern Europe in 2013.

A sector strategy and results framework for electoral assistance has yet to be developed. The PEA stated some objectives in its 2014-2015 ODA funding proposal entitled *Support to Building Institutional Capacities of the Electoral Management Bodies and other concerned target group in the Romanian ODA priority countries*. This USD 154,000 effort was expected to be co-financed by a

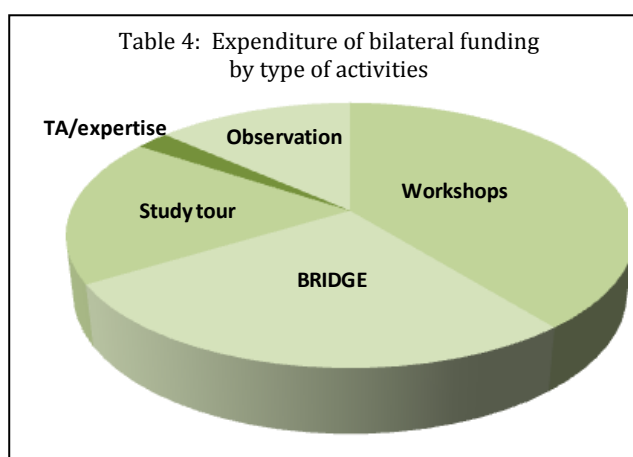
partnership with the National Electoral Institute (INE) in Mexico (Romania: USD 118,000, Mexico: USD 36,000) because of the joint activities. . Its objective is to support electoral management bodies (EMBs) and other key stakeholders (elected political representatives, civil society and media representatives) to build their institutional capacities to organize independent, free and fair elections. It intends to facilitate an exchange of experience in electoral assistance between Romania, and for some selected activities with Mexico, and the ODA partner countries. This was referred to by the PEA and UNDP as a triangular cooperation initiative.



This project gave special attention to North Africa, in particular Egypt, Tunisia and Libya which had become a focal area for Romanian electoral assistance. Other priority regions included Eastern Europe, and towards the end of 2013, the broader Middle East.

Romania's bilateral electoral assistance has been provided through a number of different formats (Table 4). For ease of reference for this report they have been grouped into the following categories:

1. Workshops and conferences held in Romania;
2. BRIDGE trainings provided in Romania;
3. Study visit activities held in Romania which could include observing the Romanian elections;
4. Technical assistance and sharing of expertise which includes presenting at development-focused workshops held outside of Romania and TA visits to other EMBs; and,
5. Election observation done by Romanians in other countries.

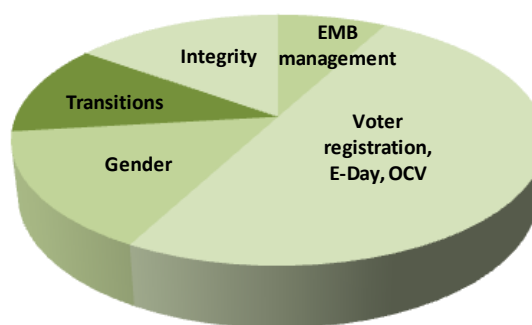


The first four activities form the main electoral assistance portion of Romania's programme, while the fifth is its electoral observation component. As assistance and observation are mutually supportive elements intended to lead to improved electoral processes for the recipients, both are

included in this report.¹¹ Romanian ODA or other funds were also used for other international efforts within the electoral sector, such as for the PEA to attend, and sometimes share its experiences, at professional conferences outside of Romania. Twenty-five out of the 35 international conferences or workshops organized by, or attended by the PEA since 2007 were more professional in nature than developmental.¹²

These are included in the table on international electoral activities provided in Annex 1, but are primarily discussed within this report in terms of PEA visibility and networking.

Table 5. Bilateral expenditures by topics of assistance



About 20 main activities were done within the four bilateral delivery formats on a range of electoral issues. Most of these fall into four general topic areas although some were a combination of several areas (Table 5). These areas are:

- EMB management, operations and communications;
- voter registration and e-day issues such as preparations, training, out of country voting;
- women in elections;
- democratic transitions; and
- integrity issues including combating fraud.

1.5. Role of UNDP in Romanian electoral assistance

UNDP has supported the development of the Romania's international development cooperation since 2008. It worked within the context of its country programme (throughout the period 2008-2013) and through an MFA – UNDP Regional Center partnership (2013-2015) (Annex 2). Its current project agreement will take UNDP assistance for ODA strengthening through to the end of 2015.

The main goals of this cooperation were to support Romanian efforts to become an effective, innovative and increasingly influential actor for development cooperation so its assistance could make a sustainable impact, and to strengthen the MFA's capacity to manage all aspects of its development cooperation by the end of 2015.¹³ UNDP helps to implement some of the ODA activities and provides advice and guidance on ODA trends, policies and practices. It also supports integration and synergies with South-South efforts, and connects ODA efforts with its global network of country offices and programmes. It also helped with the establishment and implementation of the Mobility Fund. UNDP has played similar facilitating roles with emerging donors for more than a decade, starting in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

¹¹ According to the EC, electoral assistance is the technical or material support given to the electoral process that focuses on improving those processes. Observation, while contributing potentially to better elections, involves the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of an electoral process and the presentation of recommendations for later improvements. *EC Methodological Guide on Electoral Assistance*, p 18

¹² "A professional conference is a meeting of professionals in a given subject or profession, dealing with organizational matters, matters concerning the status of the profession, and scientific or technical developments." Wikipedia definition.

¹³ UNDP Regional Project document, *The New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania (2013 -2015)*, p 5

Since 2013, the UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and the CIS, now located in Istanbul, has become the main partner for the ODA efforts, continuing the partnership established by the Romania Country Office in 2008. This project is expected to close in December 2015.

In the electoral assistance sector, UNDP provided links with its own democratic governance and electoral support efforts. Previously Romania had been a recipient of UNDP electoral assistance. Although this ended with Romania's accession to the EU, UNDP still provides electoral capacity building to the PEA and other electoral stakeholders. In 2011-2012 this included a project implemented with, and co-funded by the PEA, on *"Support to PEA and local administration in Romania to implement best practices in electoral process management."* This project was intended to improve PEA capacity in managing the electoral process cycle but also included a regional ODA element by including three countries from the region to participate in the workshop on preventing electoral fraud and corruption. UNDP also used its other regional and global mechanisms to support the PEA. This included participation in regional events and trainings organized by UNDP's Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) and by other UNDP programmes. UNDP will also support the PEA to organize a BRIDGE training for facilitators in May 2015.

1.6. Thematic Evaluation

The UNDP Regional Center for Europe and Central Asia commissioned this independent thematic evaluation of the Romanian ODA electoral assistance programme in collaboration with the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide the MFA and the Permanent Electoral Authority with an independent review of the Romanian electoral assistance which is expected to be used to develop a Romanian strategy for ODA electoral assistance and to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of future assistance in the sector.

The evaluation took place in January-February 2015, with the field work done in Romania from 19 - 23 January 2015. The evaluation was conducted by Sue Nelson, International Senior Consultant. It undertook a qualitative assessment of the relevance, appropriateness, scope of coverage, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the electoral assistance activities funded mainly within the ODA programme. It looked at how Romania has positioned itself as a provider of electoral assistance, the types and results of its various interventions; the Romanian capacities and comparative advantages to provide electoral assistance; and, the needs of Romania's partner countries.

The evaluation methodology included a desk review of available documentation (Annex 4); and interviews of relevant stakeholders, partners and third parties in Romania and abroad to collect information and perceptions on the Romanian electoral assistance (Annex 3). This included the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Electoral Authority of Romania, the UNDP New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania project staff, UNDP staff and experts in partner countries, EMB and other participants in the Romanian-sponsored programmes, and other national electoral bodies and organizations working on international electoral assistance. The evaluation methodology is provided in Annex 5.

The evaluation was constrained by the lack of performance data on the assistance and the scattered nature of the information available. There is no one data base that contains all of the information on the electoral assistance provided by Romania with ODA funding. The data is held by the different institutions that manage the multilateral, bilateral or institutional level activities and no aggregation of data and efforts appears to have been done. The PEA data also does not differentiate between professional interactions with other EMBs and development efforts. Data is also inconsistent among some documents on activities, dates and participants. As a result, the programmatic and financial information provided in this report should be considered as incomplete and for illustrative purposes

only. However, the perceptions and information provided in the different evaluation interviews were consistent which allowed for some general comments and analysis on the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the Romanian assistance.

2. Findings

2.1. Vision and position

2.1.1. The PEA has a strategic vision for its international position but Romanian ODA still needs to develop a vision for its electoral assistance as a thematic area.

Romanian electoral assistance is provided within the context of the broader ODA programme and its overarching vision and guidelines. But within the sector itself, there is no clearly articulated vision for the assistance other than a general intention to build partner capacity to organize independent, free and fair elections and to raise important sector issues such as women's participation. The evaluation at hand is conducted with a view to supporting the definition of the PEA's and Romania's vision on the electoral assistance provided to Romania's ODA priority countries.

The PEA is currently the most important provider of Romanian bilateral electoral assistance. It has a strategic vision for its international position, wanting to become a regional centre of electoral expertise, serve as an electoral knowledge hub and participate actively in international electoral networks and events. It aims to share Romania's transitional experience as well as its own experience as a permanent electoral management body. It sees electoral assistance as a way to help others but also as a way to improve its own electoral management and visibility. Its vision for its development cooperation however, is at the activity level and has yet to be developed into a programmatic strategy that identifies its long term objectives, targets, means of assistance delivery, and anticipated results and that would link it, and the other ODA bilateral and multilateral electoral assistance efforts, into the larger democratic strengthening strategic framework once that is developed.

At the activity level, the PEA aims to build EMB capacity, share its good practices and lessons learned as a permanent institution, and increase the participation of women in the electoral processes and administration. It also aims to share its experience with its electronic voter registry, on political financing and the training of local level polling officials, among other areas. It wants to create its own in-house electoral knowledge centre where people could come to confer with PEA experts, share experiences and take courses.

2.1.2. Romania is perceived as impartial and geographically well suited to provide assistance but its visibility as a provider of ODA electoral assistance is low.

In evaluation interviews, Romania is perceived as impartial and geographically well positioned to host workshops for those in Europe, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East. Participants thought that Romania had the infrastructure and facilities necessary to hold workshops and other types of events. Those in the Middle East thought it was much more convenient than going to training in a distant location such as Mexico. The Romanian PEA was also perceived as a professional organization with strong presentation and fund raising skills. However, the recognition of the workshops and other events held as Romanian development assistance was low, in particular for the workshops, most of which were perceived as professional EMB interactions rather than as development cooperation. BRIDGE courses were the exception as BRIDGE has global recognition as training as well as the workshops on democratic transitions and role of political parties.

2.13. Romanian interest in providing electoral assistance is high but capacity is limited.

Providing electoral assistance and sharing the Romanian experience with other EMBs is an area of high interest for the PEA, as well as for other Romanians working abroad who see the possibilities for Romanian assistance in the broader context. But Romania is a new donor and funding for ODA overall is limited and electoral assistance receives only a small portion of that (5 to 10 percent of the MFA ODA budget), with annual expenditures in the past few years of only about USD 100,000 - 150,000.¹⁴ The PEA has had to scale back its international plans in some cases, such as those planned for 2007, because of limited resources.¹⁵ Bilateral funding decisions are also made annually based on the annual proposals sent to the MFA. These decisions are only known at the start of each year, all of which makes it difficult to do multi-year planning or to ensure continuity of efforts which is an important factor for effective development assistance. However, with several years now of experience, the MFA and PEA are considering ways to more strategically invest their development assistance resources to maximize their use and impact, such as with transition experience sharing and well-targeted capacity building support through the Mobility Fund.

The PEA itself is a ten year old permanent EMB located in a stable and modern Eastern European country. Its staff is young and energetic with an institutional motto of “Our team, young, dynamic and eager for work.”¹⁶ It is the culmination of a long democratic transition process. Although it has direct experience with the reform processes linked to meeting EU standards, it does not have direct experience of working in a significantly resource-starved institution or in a fragile post-conflict environment where much of the electoral assistance is provided. It is also still developing its own systems and still has some outstanding recommendations from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) that remain to be met.¹⁷

The PEA has the perspective of a professional EMB in its approach to development cooperation and its activity in professional networks give it access to the other EMBs and electoral assistance providers, such as the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), world-wide. But a development perspective is also needed within the Romanian ODA electoral assistance programme as a whole to ensure its sector relevance and development effectiveness.

The PEA is very willing to put its staff and assets forward to do assistance but it is staffed for election administration, not for development cooperation. It currently uses an expert within its Communications and External Relations Department to handle the contacts and administrative processes of its use of ODA with other various PEA staff persons used as experts and resource persons as needed. Although it has created a Foreign Affairs Working Group to assess assistance requests and allocate tasks, this is mainly an ad hoc process that is used as needed. Both the PEA and MFA have benefited from the UNDP ODA project that has facilitated some of these efforts. The PEA looks forward to delivering all of its electoral assistance directly after 2015, saying it has the needed expertise and personnel in house. However, without someone at a senior enough level tasked full time to manage, monitor and coordinate the electoral assistance activities and thematic area, the ability of Romania to take this assistance to the next level is limited.

¹⁴ This figure may be low as the evaluation only had data for the costs for a portion of the assistance.

¹⁵ PEA, *Annual Activity Report, 2007*, p 66

¹⁶ PEA website, <http://www.roaep.ro/en/index.php>,

¹⁷ OSCE/ODIHR, *Parliamentary Elections 9 December 2012, OSCE/ODIHR Election Expert Team Final Report*, pps 22-25

2.2. Relevance

2.2.1. Bilateral assistance was most relevant for recipients as professional networking and information sharing opportunities.

Much of the bilateral assistance was provided in the form of opportunities for professional exchanges, whether as workshops, study visits or observation efforts. At these events, the participants had a chance to meet each other, observe a process or a system and share information. These networking opportunities are important for peer-to-peer exchanges and learning as they discuss an important issue or part of the electoral process. They also build relationships between institutions, especially in the informal side discussions. Participants found these events interesting and informative, however not necessarily relevant to their needs.

There are several factors that affected the relevance of the Romanian efforts. One is the global proliferation of these types of events over the past several years done by professional associations (which are also proliferating), electoral assistance providers and increasingly by EMBs. Many EMBs do not have the time or resources to attend all of the events and workshops that they are invited to, even if all logistical costs are covered by the donor. As an example, the Iraqi commission said it had had more than 500 workshops since 2004 and itself has 27 accredited BRIDGE facilitators. Another is the supply driven nature of the assistance where most of the activities were designed in Romania without needs assessments or adequate prior consultations/coordination with the larger assistance efforts being provided for its targeted countries. In some cases, such as Moldova, the PEA felt it already had a good understanding of the context and EMB needs as it had frequent interaction with that commission. But in other cases, activities were designed on the Romanian perception of needs and its own areas of interest which don't necessarily correspond with the priority needs on the ground.

The issue of relevance was less visible in some cases, especially where the workshops targeted regional groups, such as the Black Sea states invited to the workshop on electoral corruption, or the Out of Country Voting (OCV) workshop done specifically for Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. In these cases, the participants had largely similar needs at the time. However, in other cases, the activity grouped together participants from a multiplicity of countries, some with vastly different needs and assistance priorities. The relevance of participants selected to attend some of the activities was also raised in evaluation interviews. As noted by one of the partner Embassies, language, position, and permanence in the position are all important factors to take into account for the selection of participants, as "we would like the funding to be spent in wise ways for both our countries."

Relevance was less of an issue for the multilateral assistance. Most of this funding went into well designed multilateral projects implemented by the UN or OSCE/ODIHR that had well developed coordination and project management systems in place. However, the international IDEA project in Tunisia was also perceived in interviews as supply-driven and not integrated into the larger electoral assistance effort that was already providing the internal and assessments which this project intended to do.

2.3. Effectiveness

2.3.1 The PEA was effective at raising its international profile through its ODA and professional networking efforts.

The PEA has increasingly become more active in international electoral events and associations driven by the interest and energy of its leadership and staff, and facilitated to a large extent by the

ODA funding and the UNDP project management framework and its global network of country offices and thematic programmes. The PEA's participation at the sixth Global Elections Organization (GEO) conference held in Korea in October 2013 placed Romania among the forefront of the EMBs at the conference. The GEO is an international conference for networking and information sharing among election professionals and is held every three to five years. This provided a good opportunity for Romania to raise its international profile and showcase its electoral capacity as it is attended by all of the world's EMBs, electoral assistance donors and providers, and electoral service and commodity firms.

The PEA had a large presence of six at the GEO. It provided two of the conference presentations (on electoral fraud and the Romanian electronic registry) and had a booth at its Knowledge Fair to showcase its IT software to prevent double voting, legislation on political party and electoral campaign financing, handbook on preventing and combating electoral fraud, and materials to mobilize young voters. Several of the EMBs in other countries that subsequently participated in Romanian ODA-funded events said they had become interested in the Romanian experience because of its active and visible presence at the GEO.

The GEO was also the occasion for the inaugural assembly of the Association of the World Election Bodies (A-WEB) that created a global network of EMBs. Romania actively engaged in those discussions. The PEA President was elected to the A-WEB's Executive Board and the PEA will host the next A-WEB executive committee meeting in Romania in March 2015. Romania has also offered to host the next GEO conference although this is expected to rotate to the Arab region. The PEA has also been active in the Association of European Election Officials (ACEEEO) gaining its presidency in 2008 and again in 2014. As part of this, Romania hosted the ACEEEO's annual conference in Mamaia on the Black Sea (2008) and in Bucharest (2014). Each ACEEEO annual conference has a theme. In 2008 it was on elections security, and in 2014 it was on gender. The PEA has also won several International Electoral Awards from the international non-governmental organization (INGO), the International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS). These are: First Time Voter Award (2013); Award for Promoting International Cooperation on Electoral Affairs (to the PEA President- 2014); and, it was one of the EMBs recognized for Outstanding Achievements for Gender Equality (2014).¹⁸ The award for promoting international cooperation was a result of their achievements in reaching out to other EMBs according to ICPS.

This active professional engagement has given the PEA a seat at the international table for electoral related events and generated expressions of interest for collaboration from a broad range of EMBs. It has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with a number of countries, including bilateral agreements with Moldova, Ukraine, and Libya and multilateral agreements with the EMBs in Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Belarus and Slovenia. It also expects to sign MOUs with Egypt and Hungary. Most of these MOUs are on general collaboration issues.

2.3.2. Activities were generally effective at sharing information and knowledge with participants. Results beyond this require a more programmatic and development perspective.

The annual allocation of bilateral ODA on the basis of proposals is helping the PEA to identify and rationalize its planned ODA efforts over the year more systematically. However, this planning is done without an overarching electoral assistance strategy to guide its design and ensure that all of the elements are tied together programmatically and contribute to the same strategic objectives. There is also not a higher level democratic strengthening sector strategy that would link all of these

¹⁸ ICPS, *International Electoral Awards 2014*

efforts, and those in other electoral process related areas, such as anti-corruption and education, that could help to develop a more synergistic and effective effort for the recipients of this assistance.

As it is now, almost everything done in the electoral sector with, or in another country, is considered as electoral assistance, even if the main purpose was not to “promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective.”¹⁹ The lack of a development perspective also tends to result in the assistance being used for one-off events with a one-size-fits all approach for most events regardless of the level of institutional development and electoral maturity of the recipient and its specific needs.

At the same time, there were several relatively constant aspects to the PEA’s activities that could be built on for more development-effective assistance in the future. One was the more tailored approach towards Moldova which included one-on-one assistance from the PEA. Another is the PEA’s continuing desire to build EMB capacity and share information on the Romanian system.

2.3.3. Technical assistance is a promising area for assistance, not only by the PEA but by other relevant agencies, to issues of electoral integrity, security and reform.

There was only one technical assistance type mission done by the PEA according to the data provided for the evaluation, thorough the Mobility Fund. This was for a mission to Moldova. However, this is definitely an area that could provide value added to the Romanian ODA efforts as it allows for Romania to address the specific technical needs of an EMB in an area where Romania has the expertise and experience. If the TA is well designed, it is an area where an institution, such as the PEA, can make an impact with very little funding. In this case three PEA directors for management, logistics and information, communications technology (ICT) went to Moldova for four days of workshops on issues related to the voter registry, training of polling staff, selection of polling sites, and the financial implications of polling station logistical needs. These areas are interlinked in electoral management and addressing them together provided a cohesive programme of information that was likely to have increased its effectiveness for the Moldovans. It also included information on Romania’s efforts to meet the EU standards for internal control management systems, which would have been relevant for Moldova which wants to bring its processes in line with EU standards.

The PEA designed this effort without a specific needs assessment but it had been in close contact with the Moldovan Central Election Commission (CEC) over the years and believes it is familiar with their issues and concerns.²⁰ In fact, the OSCE/ODIRH 2011 election observation mission had identified voter registration and the need to improve campaign finance regulations and enforcement, as areas that Moldova needed among other legal, administrative and regulatory issues. In this case, the Moldovan CEC had subsequently developed its own electronic registration system, but it was untested and its civil society had concerns about its readiness for the 2014 elections.²¹

Although it was more targeted at information sharing than technical assistance, this experience holds potential for future TA as it can be refined and targeted over time to more specifically address the technical needs of the recipient. There were several good practices evident in this activity. The timing for instance was appropriate for Moldova which was expecting elections in November 2014. Doing it a year in advance gave the Moldovan partners the time to implement any ideas or

¹⁹ DAC, *Is it ODA, Factsheet- November 2008*, p 1

²⁰ According to the Mobility Fund methodology, missions are only deployed at the specific request of the beneficiary institution. Thus, it assumes need based on the request.

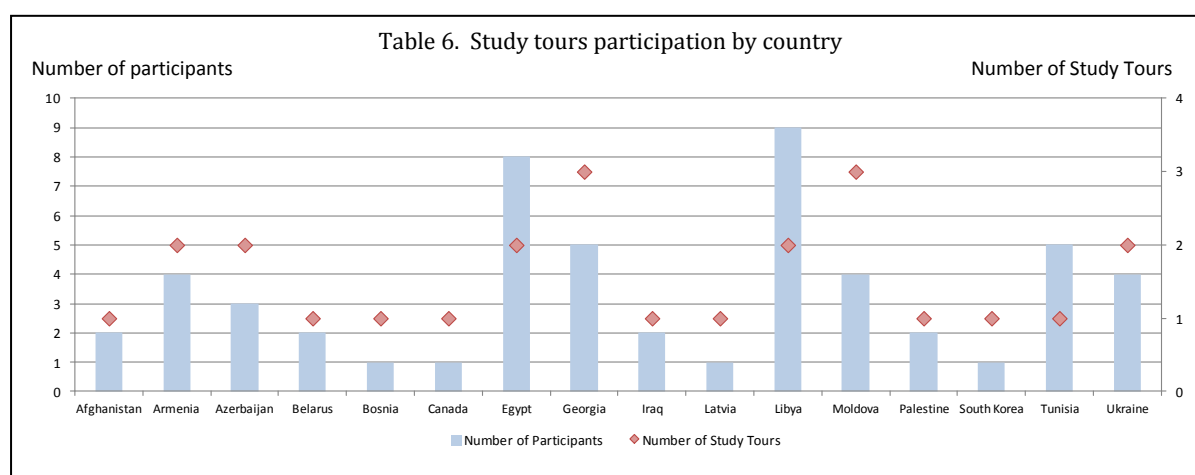
²¹ OSCE/ODIHR, *Republic of Moldova, Parliamentary Election, 30 November 2013, Needs Assessment Mission*

improvements learnt from the sessions before those elections. The workshops were also of substantive nature and included enough time after the presentations for the Moldovans to ask specific questions which would have increased its relevance for them. Turnout was good for the sessions ranging from 25 persons for the second day sessions on electoral management and training to five participants for the more specialized last-day session on electoral logistics.²² The PEA also followed up its visit with a set of technical recommendations sent afterwards to the CEC on the steps needed to develop a voter registry and secure the information.

2.3.4. Study visits to Romania is another potential area for ODA expansion with effectiveness enhanced if capacity building elements are fostered.

Study visits to Romania are another promising area for Romanian assistance. According to a PEA brochure these were organized in 2004, 2005, 2006, 2010 and 2011 for EMBs from countries such as Iraq, Moldova, Malaysia, Indonesia and Egypt. There was information available on four of these done from 2012 - 2014 (Table 6). In all, 16 countries attended those visits with a total of 54 participants. In these cases, the PEA was able to leverage a primary activity, such as a workshop or an observation visit, and increase its relevance for the participants and effectiveness by adding on a visit to the PEA operations. For instance, in May 2013, the Libyan, Tunisian and Egyptian participants saw the Romanian electronic registry after their workshop on out of country voting. This visit provided a direct link between the more theoretical discussions in the workshop and the practical application of technology for registration, making both more effective from a development perspective.

Study visits were also linked to three observation efforts, with the participants visiting the PEA the day before each election. The PEA provided presentations on issues such as voter registration,



Romania's electronic registration system, women's participation and the type of elections being observed. However, the nature of these visits was informational and there were no opportunities after observing the elections to return to the PEA and share observations or ask questions about what they had witnessed. According to some of the participants, this type of a visit was most useful for the newer participants who had limited exposure to other systems or EMB efforts to modernize. For example, some mentioned a city-level EMB professional from Latvia who accompanied the Chairman of the Latvian CEC. She was engaged, asked good questions and made thoughtful comments. Others participating were senior EMB officials who had already had this type of exposure. Targeting newer or more junior EMB staff is an area to explore for the future especially as this matches the PEA's intentions of providing opportunities for staff exchanges with those who do not normally have the opportunity to participate, such as provincial and more junior staff. These

²² PEA, *Mission Report*

visits could also be strengthened by developing their capacity building elements and providing TA follow-up after the visit.

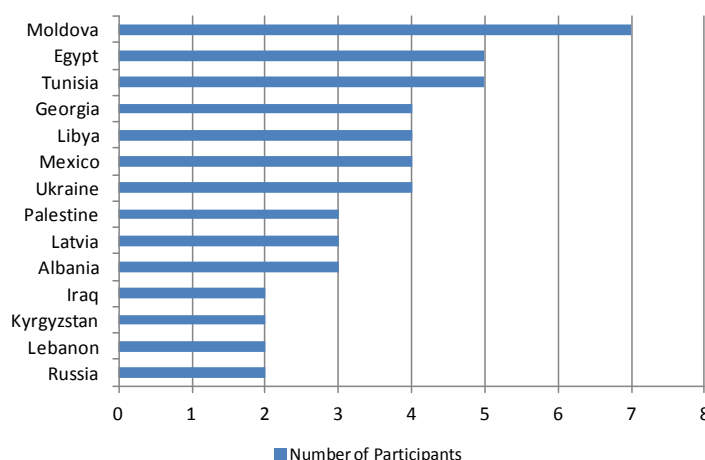
The PEA has not yet started professional exchanges or work placements where other EMB staff members intern or are seconded to their operations as a learning experience. This type of immersion is a good way to transfer skills and experience and is an area with significant potential for an EMB such as the PEA that has the interest in building in EMB capacities and sharing its experience, but limited funding. It also has the good English and French language skills that are needed to facilitate these types of exchanges. However these programmes also need to be well structured, well timed, with written policies and assigned mentors.²³

2.3.5. Romanian workshops were successful at bringing together different groups on important electoral issues, but achieving development outcomes beyond this will require more tailored and targeted efforts

Quite a few of the ODA-funded electoral activities were two to five day workshops. These ranged in nature from large international workshops on broad electoral themes to smaller BRIDGE trainings on specific components of the electoral cycle. These workshops appeared to have been generally successful events that were appreciated by participants. They were seen to have a good range of speakers and knowledgeable resource persons who added value to the events. The international visibility helped to strengthen the PEA's position within the regional and international EMB networks as an active and knowledgeable permanent electoral commission. It also helped foster relationships between participants, including relationships between participants from the same country. In the cases of fragile or post-conflict transitions, an international conference can provide a neutral venue for sensitive discussions that is beneficial to those national processes and relationships. This benefit was noted in several cases for the side discussions held among officials and civil society representatives from one of the Arab states and for the Afghanistan participants.

In the larger context, there has been a proliferation of international conferences and workshops on electoral issues in the past decade. Associations, electoral assistance implementers, donors, international organizations, projects and others, hold a multitude of events annually, many on the same issues and many with the same institutions. Developing a workshop that can add value to the existing discussions and add lessons learnt that are not already well known and documented, takes time, effort and knowledge of the other activities in the electoral assistance sector. As an emerging donor, Romania's partnership with UNDP was extremely useful in this regard. UNDP, in one form or another, is usually present at most of these events and has this broader experience and perspective. This partnership, as well as with others such as with the Council of Europe, helped Romania to develop several interesting and

Table 7, Countries participating in more than one Romanian workshop (includes BRIDGE)



²³ As a reference, the Australian Electoral Commission has a time tested work placement programme with policies, procedures and lessons learned.

useful conferences.

As an example, the democratic transition workshop, *North Africa and Eastern Europe: viewpoints and shared experiences of transition- a bridge over 20 years*, held in July 2011 targeted Egyptian and Tunisian senior government/EMB officials and civil society/media representatives who were planning to hold their first elections after the Arab Spring that fall. The intention was to share the Romanian transition experience and lessons learned. In the case of the Egyptian participants, this event followed an earlier UNDP/IDEA workshop held in Spain that had started a relationship building process among the Egyptian participants and with UNDP which was in the process of developing its electoral support project, the Strengthening Democratic Processes in Egypt project, with them. This conference also allowed the Egyptian and Tunisian participants to share their experiences with each other as they were relatively at the same place in time and faced some of the same transitional issues. The timing for the conference was also good for both countries as it was far enough out from their elections to be able to implement any new ideas learnt. According to UNDP Egypt reporting, the conference helped familiarize the participants with some of the challenges they would face in the organization of elections and on ways to maintain political neutrality and effectively manage electoral processes in a post-authoritarian environment among other lessons.²⁴

Romania then followed up on this effort through a multilateral contribution to the UNDP Strengthening Democratic Processes in Egypt project that was subsequently signed with Egypt which, among other things, supported the application of best practices and lessons learnt from other transitional countries. This provided synergistic programming efforts between a bilateral activity and the multilaterally funded project which is a best practice.

Another example is the October 2013 conference on *“Political parties- key factors in political development of societies”* organized by the MFA, Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, jointly with OSCE/ODIHR and Bucharest University Faculty of Law. This conference focused on political parties and their role within the electoral and democratic processes. Participants included academics, politicians and parliamentarians from Middle Eastern and North African states. This conference looked at the registration of political parties, financing and party participation in elections. This helped round out Romania’s electoral assistance beyond EMB-EMB support by bringing in other critical actors in the electoral processes, and the partnership with the Venice Commission helped raise Romania’s profile on this important topic and ensured a good attendance.

Other examples of useful practices include the developing of a handbook on *Preventing and combating electoral fraud* that was discussed at a regional conference on this topic with Moldova, Bulgaria and Turkey. This provided a practical tool that can be used by EMBs for reference as well as by the Romanians for subsequent trainings on the issue. Another was the first *“Out of Country Voting”* workshop done in June 2010, which included some of the key agencies involved in OCV, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and OSCE/ODHIR and which was intended to identify a set of good practices and lessons for the 15 countries attending. Romania followed up on this in May 2013, organizing an OCV BRIDGE training for participants from Tunisia, Libya and Egypt with technical information and capacity building.

At the same time, participants noted in the evaluation interviews that the larger workshops were on general principles and lessons, and that once these were transmitted, assistance on these topics needed to become much more technical and context specific to be useful for recipients.

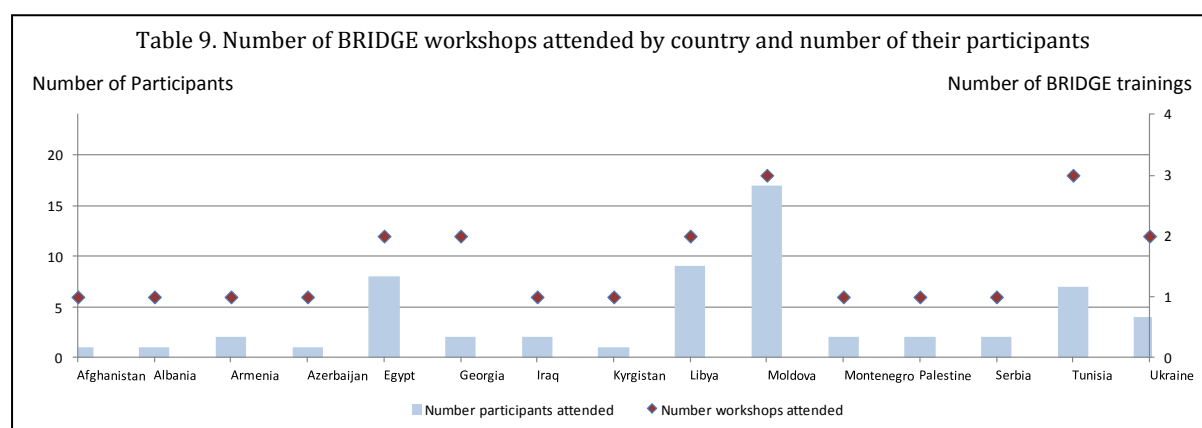
²⁴ UNDP, *Strengthening of the Democratic Processes in Egypt, Progress Report 2011- 2012*, p 24

2.3.6. BRIDGE events were largely successful activities, but BRIDGE does not provide Romania with a comparative advantage over others that are already providing this regionally and internationally.

The PEA, with the UNDP ODA project, started to provide BRIDGE trainings as part of its ODA efforts in 2012. BRIDGE is a modular course in electoral processes that is popular among EMBs, civil society organizations (CSOs) and donors as it has a comprehensive curriculum that cover all aspects of an electoral process and administration in a participatory manner. It is intended to be used within a broad development framework and is not a replacement for professional EMB training. It is an initiative of the Australian Electoral Commission (which serves as the secretariat), UNDP, EAD, IFES and International IDEA.

Topic	Date	Countries	Number participants
Electoral Management	03/12	8 countries from Eastern Europe	26
Out of Country Voting	05/13	Egypt, Tunisia, Libya	31
Election Communications	12/14	11 countries	31

Four BRIDGE trainings have been provided to about 115 persons from 17 countries (Tables 8 and 9). The first was a regional training done with eight Eastern European countries with the collaboration of the UNDP Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) programme. This focused on “*Electoral management, design and access to electoral processes*”. The second workshop also had GPECS support for a customized module of BRIDGE on *Gender and Elections* which was requested by Moldova but included both countries and was hosted by the PEA. These were followed by workshops on *Out of Country Voting* for the three North African countries and a module on *Communications in Elections* that combined the voter and civic education modules done by the PEA in Romania with UNDP facilitation.



BRIDGE courses are capacity building trainings. Each one lasts five days and includes theoretical discussions and practical working group exercises. The Romanian courses got good marks from the participants in the assessments done at the time. For instance, the training report for the course on electoral communications had approval ratings for every session of 78 percent to 94 percent, with most of them in the high 80s. The presentation aspects of the workshops consistently came in with higher scores than for content.²⁵ In particular, participants noted the value added by the guest speakers who were working journalists in the broadcast and social media sectors. The Romanian civil society participants thought the mixture of officials with civil society on the topic of civic education was useful for the officials as they believe civil society is closer to the people and understand what works in voter education campaigns.

²⁵ UNDP, *Nations United in Romanian Regional Training on Voter Education and Voter Information*, pp 3-6

The results of these trainings are only anecdotal as they were not tracked, either in terms of knowledge gained (measured through pre and post tests), or if the participants then used their new knowledge and skills once back at their job to effect change within their electoral operations or institution. There was also no follow up provided after the courses to see if the participants needed help to implement improvements in their operations or processes or to answer any application questions that they may have had. But the evaluation interviews demonstrate that if the right participant is targeted at the right time for the right course, they received tangible benefits from the course.

As an example, one of the Palestinian participants in the communications course was from the voter education section of the CEC, so the course was of direct relevance for him. He had come to the Palestinian EMB from the private sector and had never received training on voter education. He had many ideas on how to communicate and inform the Palestinian voters and stakeholders and had developed a communications plan for the commission. But without electoral experience or training, the plan did not fit the timeline or the needs of the electoral cycle and was shelved. The communications course directly addressed his area of interest and gave him the information he needed to revise his plan and make it relevant to the CEC needs. It is currently being adopted by the CEC and will create an institutional database of EMB communications that the entire organization will use to ensure consistency of message and to share information on the different activities done with the same stakeholders by the different EMB departments. This is expected to change the way the CEC interacts with its stakeholders and help to increase its credibility and trust. He felt it was a “gift from God that I attended this training course.”

The other example heard was from the Egyptian participants to the OCV BRIDGE course. One of their participants was from the ICT department in the High Elections Commission (HEC). The course information and material was relevant to his work as Egypt had implemented a hastily put together OCV programme in 2011. That system, that included internet voting, was heavily criticized because of perceptions that these votes could be bought or coerced. Thinking about OCV issues in general during the course sparked the idea of implementing a walk in system for voters abroad, where they could vote in any open location with their passport or national ID card. These had unique numbers which could be put into a central database in real time with a quick scan of their numbers revealing if these cards had already been used for voting. This system was used successfully in the May 2014 presidential elections. This participant then went on to informally help Yemen and Libya to develop their OCV data bases.

The PEA is extremely interested in continuing the BRIDGE courses and in becoming a BRIDGE hub. UNDP is expected to facilitate an English language BRIDGE Training the Facilitators (TTF) programme for PEA staff in June 2015. This could be a useful tool for the Romanian’s own training needs, strengthening the PEA training capacities so that it can better share its experience and expertise with its partner countries. However, in terms of comparative advantage, there is already a large pool of BRIDGE facilitators and providers, many of which are well situated linguistically and geographically to provide this assistance. As of the end of 2013, there were already more than 2,500 BRIDGE facilitators from 141 countries, and more than 93 countries had hosted almost 20,000 BRIDGE workshops.²⁶ There are also 16 accredited Romanian speaking facilitators, most of these with the CEC in Moldova, and only one Romanian.²⁷ The Romanian market is limited to Moldova and Romania and the courses would need to be provided in English or French for other participants. These are the two languages most in use by BRIDGE facilitators and courses. This is followed by Arabic speaking facilitators as BRIDGE already has a strong presence in the Arab-speaking regions.

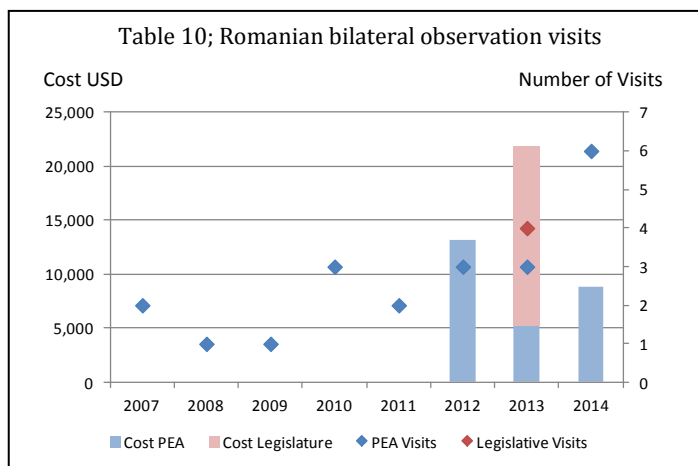
²⁶ BRIDGE, Statistics as of December 2013

²⁷ BRIDGE Secretariat

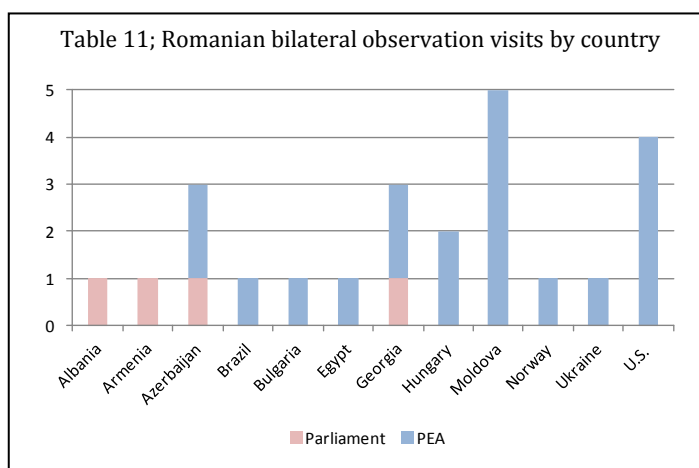
2.3.7. Bilateral observation efforts helped build peer relations, but linking them to capacity building efforts would strengthen their effectiveness as a development tool.

Romanian participation in election observation missions is considered as a part of its ODA electoral assistance efforts. There have been a number of these missions over the years and they seem to be increasing in frequency. More than 20 have been done bilaterally by PEA staff and some parliamentarians²⁸ (Table 10). Others have been done by Romanians participating in OCSE/ODIHR observation efforts. In addition, Romania provided 100,000 Euro multilaterally to the OSCE/ODIHR for observation efforts in 2008.

In the broader picture, the OSCE/ODIHR observation missions are done on the basis of a needs assessment to ensure there is a need for observers in that country for that election and to determine the number of short term (STO) and long term observers (LTOs) needed to cover that need. Their observers then assess the electoral process according to international standards and make recommendations for improvements in their observation reports. The EU considers observation as complementary to electoral assistance and is increasingly tying its electoral assistance efforts to the findings and recommendations of the EU election observation missions. As an EU member, Romania can second up to 15 percent of the requested number of LTOs and STOs for each OSCE/ODIHR observation effort and can channel the vacancy notices to Romanian experts for the core team positions which are directly recruited by the OSCE/ODIHR.



The countries selected for bilateral observation by the Romanians are done on the basis of an invitation and on the availability of funding (Table 11). These observation efforts do not appear to be linked with other assistance or development efforts and are stand alone visits. The PEA participants write up an internal mission report on their trip but there is no reporting back to the country on their assessment. As a result, there is likely more benefit from the visits for Romania, through its increased visibility and exposure to other systems, than there is to helping to improve the electoral processes within the country they are observing.



To make this use of ODA more effective for the partners, Romania could target observation efforts at its strategic partners and the countries involved in its electoral workshops, and provide reports on

²⁸ This number is likely much higher as only information on the PEA efforts and one parliamentary visit was available.

their observations with practical recommendations for improvements back to the EMB or legislative body depending on the source of the invitation. Follow up actions by technical assistance or through study visits for the needy departments to Romania could then strengthen these efforts.

2.4. Efficiency

2.4.1. Efficiencies could be increased with dedicated persons to direct, manage and coordinate the electoral assistance efforts within the PEA and MFA.

Most of the administrative work for the PEA bilateral efforts are done by an expert in its Communications and External Relations Department with the programmatic and implementation work divided among different PEA directors and staff depending on the topic and availability. There is no one person who takes responsibility for the ODA electoral assistance overall as a programmatic area and provides direction, planning, and project development or who ensures its timely implementation, performance monitoring and quality control. This would include its strategy development, project design, maintaining contact with programme beneficiaries as well as project management elements such as developing a project management and performance monitoring system, aggregating and analyzing data, tracking progress of the assistance towards achieving anticipated outcomes, reporting on results and ensuring the overall coordination of the programme internally, with external partners and with other assistance providers.

On an administrative level, the PEA has successfully organized large international events with a wide range of international participants. However, management issues and the need to address them were mentioned by several of the participants interviewed. Although some were felt to be minor by the Romanians, they did affect the perceptions of the participants on the value of participating and on the quality of efforts. For instance, issues related to procuring a visa for the Tunisian participants for a recent training resulted in his refusal to travel and participate in the forum. There was also a visa issue for one of the Palestinian participants that required several backs and forths with the PEA/UNDP and the Romanian embassy before a visa was issued. Several Arab participants mentioned the difficulties with food in Romania, where the participants' meals were linked to hotels that did not provide halal food. Others mentioned a lack of coordination between the Romanian police and the PEA for one of the observation efforts, where the PEA bus taking participants to polling sites was detained several times by police who were working to prevent bussing of voters to polls.

At a programmatic level, the participants thought the Romanian speakers were always prepared and had good visual aids such as power points and Prezi presentations. However, some mentioned practical issues such as the lack of an agenda on the opening days for the communications course and confusion among participants on the purpose of the course.²⁹ This extended to the course completion certificate which they thought had a different title than the material covered in the course. Others felt the participants in the presidential election study visit were mismatched, with some already familiar with electronic registration systems asking sophisticated IT questions, while others from developing contexts were at a much more rudimentary level and required a more basic presentation. They also noted a lack of a 'proper' observation effort, done more as electoral sightseeing than actual observation.

²⁹ According to the BRIDGE Secretariat, weekly agendas are used by facilitators to prepare for the workshop in advance and are sometimes given out at the start of a workshop, and always on request, so the participants know what areas will be covered. But they should also provide daily agendas which are updated at the end of each day of training to reflect the training needs of the participants.

Having a dedicated manager to oversee the programme cannot stop all of the glitches that occur in development assistance, but it can reduce their scale and mitigate the damage they can cause to the credibility of the efforts. Expanding the PEA human resources accordingly is also essential from a development perspective to bring more programmatic coherence and follow through to the efforts that is an integral part of effective and efficient assistance.

2.4.2. Coordination of efforts with those in the broader international electoral assistance sector, and with national partners needs strengthening, especially as the UNDP facilitation project ends.

Coordination issues affected all aspects of Romanian bilateral electoral assistance, even with UNDP facilitating and coordinating some of this assistance. Without attention, this issue will become even more problematic once the UNDP project, and its role in this, ends.

Most of the countries that participate in the Romanian ODA electoral activities are recipients of larger scale international electoral assistance provided by other donors and implementers. Moldova for instance has had long-standing UNDP support along with assistance from the Council of Europe on issues related to its electoral processes, voter registry, and BRIDGE training among other areas. Egypt, as another example, receives support from a USD 18,362,500 UNDP project, to which Romania is also a contributor, in addition to other large donor electoral assistance programmes. In the recipient countries, electoral assistance efforts are coordinated through frequent donor coordination meetings, many chaired, or co-chaired, by the EMB and UNDP or UN Representative. Assistance provided bilaterally from off-shore needs to factor into these in-country efforts to be effective, to avoid duplicating efforts, providing conflicting advice, or making those in-country efforts more difficult by not coordinating timing and content of activities. This is especially important in highly politicized and fragile transitions where it is hard to know from the outside if assistance will support divergent interests or if it will contribute to the larger international efforts to stabilize and strengthen the situation. National recipients also want to be consulted and have assistance efforts coordinated with their own work, needs and timelines.

Other electoral assistance actors interviewed have a perception that some of the Romanian-funded electoral assistance is designed and delivered without adequate consultations or consideration of other on-going assistance, the national context or other efforts internationally on particular topics, such as gender or integrity. This contributed to the supply driven-nature of the assistance and in some cases created scheduling conflicts, duplicated other work that was already being done or lacked appropriate targeting. Even in the case of Egypt, Tunisia and Libya which had direct and continuing contact with the UNDP Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) responsible for those countries, the CTA still felt the planning needed to be more cognizant of the situation on the ground and better coordinated with the larger international efforts. This perception also extended to the International other ODA-funded activities done in Romania and in other countries as well as with the IDEA effort in Tunisia that was funded through a multilateral Romanian grant.

Before the UNDP ODA project ends, the agencies implementing the Romanian bilateral assistance will need to develop their own relationships with the donor coordination efforts done in their target countries, either directly with them through the main implementer, such as a UNDP basket fund, or through the relevant office in the Romanian embassies located in those countries. According to interviews, the Romanian Embassy representative in Egypt did occasionally attend the donor coordination meetings of the UNDP project, where Romania was a donor, but not in Libya which was also a target country for Romanian bilateral electoral assistance but where Romania was not a contributor to the basket fund. In Moldova, the Romanian representative reportedly attended the larger ODA donor coordination meetings, but was not part of the policy-level EMB-donor coordination meetings created by the CEC in the lead up to Moldova's last elections.

The UNDP ODA project also attempted to promote a triangular partnership between Romania, Mexico and the Arab States (Libya, Egypt and Tunisia). The INE in Mexico has a large international electoral training facility and part of the concept was to do a joint training of the Arab EMB officials there and at a Cairo workshop organized by UNDP Egypt and IFES. Although the concept was included in the PEA proposal for ODA funding for 2014-2015 and UNDP developed a concept note for this relationship, the note was never signed. Two IFE staff and two PEA did participate in the regional electoral dispute resolution workshop held in Cairo in September 2014. However, this effort was perceived by the Mexicans as a continuation of a bilateral series of regional workshops that they had started in Mexico in February 2014. They also said they invited the PEA to join a programme related to their upcoming mid-term elections in June 2015, but saw this as an INE programme rather than a joint activity as it was something that they were offering to all of their international partners.

2.4.3. The Mobility Fund is a useful tool for electoral assistance providing a flexible mechanism for a timely and targeted response, while the Electoral Toolkit has significant potential for a cost-effective way to share the Romanian experience

The concept of the Mobility Fund is ideally suited for electoral assistance. Electoral assistance is provided within the tight confines of the electoral calendar, and often has unforeseen emergency needs that arise that are critical to the successful implementation of credible elections. Many donors have difficulty responding to these unexpected needs, and especially on an immediate basis. This tool was only used once for electoral assistance in the case of Moldova, but is something that should be factored in to its overall strategic planning as it gives Romania the flexibility to respond to urgent needs in areas where it could make a significant difference to the successful outcome of a partner's electoral event or transition.

Developing an Electoral Toolkit to document Romanian electoral reforms and best practices has significant potential for a cost-effective way to share the Romanian experience with developing countries going through similar transition processes. . Earlier Romania had intended to develop a Democratization Toolkit that was planned to address four main topics: elections, political pluralism, media and civil society, and gender equality. The Electoral Toolkit was expected initially to serve as a virtual library comprising videos and texts on the Romanian experience and include interviews with Tunisians and Egyptians on common aspects of their transitions. A conceptual framework and draft questions were developed but the efforts were suspended as the Arab participants thought the questions were too politically sensitive to answer in the middle of a delicate transition.

However, the idea of a multimedia knowledge product is a good one to illustrate the Romanian transition experience and best electoral practices. Refining and completing it could provide Romania with a cost-effective way to share its lessons and to assist countries in similar circumstances. For instance, focusing it on the key lessons learned from developing and consolidating the Romanian electoral system and permanent electoral commission, how it is meeting EU standards in areas such as campaign finance, taping short interviews with Romanian EMB staff, academics, civil society groups, media and others on these topics, and posting them on an internet portal could be the first step for this effort. Each would provide the perspective for their different areas. Later on, other topics and other country examples could be added as relevant. The AGORA Portal for Parliamentary Development provides a good example of what a few low-cost video interviews can provide to others who are interested in that sector's development.³⁰

³⁰ AGORA, Portal for Parliamentary Development, <http://www.agora-parl.org/>

2.4.4 UNDP provided value added for the Romanian ODA electoral assistance efforts through its programmatic perspective, global network and coordination mechanisms which Romania still needs to develop.

Starting a new development cooperation effort in the electoral sector with UN support appears to have been an efficient and effective way to enter the market. UNDP has the thematic, geographic and development networks and resources needed to develop and deliver an electoral assistance effort anywhere in the world. Taking advantage of this expertise and services by entering into a joint project with UNDP likely prevented many beginner mistakes and placed the Romanian assistance in a much better position than it would have been in otherwise. It was also able to easily gather together diverse groups for events such as the workshop on democratic transitions with the Arab states that showcased Romania's interest in the sector and increased its visibility within that region. UNDP also provided a development perspective to the electoral-related efforts it assisted-- in the design of the activities as well as in their packaging. This helped increase the Romanian awareness, especially for the PEA that is not a development agency, on some basic development concepts and programming practices for electoral assistance.

UNDP also supported the MFA in the set up of its Mobility Fund which is perfectly suited for electoral assistance. The triangular initiative was more problematic, with UNDP reporting that it was difficult to encourage this type of partnership as DAC donors work on a programmatic basis that requires multi-year programming and budgeting, programme-based interventions and demand-driven proposals which Romania has yet to develop.³¹ Although the triangular relationship did not materialize as expected, UNDP still feels that it was a successful effort as a means to increase coordination, aid effectiveness and partnerships for the Romanian institutions. In particular, by providing the opportunity to test what worked, identify its challenges, and with the lessons learned is developing a short practical guide for the MFA on triangular cooperation.

2.5. Sustainability

2.5.1. The PEA has capacity building intentions for its ODA activities which could be built on to strengthen their sustainability aspects.

The PEA sees its electoral assistance in the context of building the capacity of partner EMBs, as well as improving its own professional systems. This is important as sustainable change requires the transfer of professional skills and operational knowledge that can build institutions and the cadre of personnel that work in them and on the electoral processes as a whole. Most of the Romanian bilateral activities so far have focused on the first step of this process, information sharing. The BRIDGE courses took this to the next step as they are designed to increase the skills as well as knowledge of the participants. However, the impact and subsequent sustainability of their results are unlikely to go beyond individual participants unless the efforts directly target the needs of the participating EMBs and the participants chosen are the ones most directly involved in that area within those EMBs.

This was evident in the two examples of impact noted in the effectiveness section. In the case of Palestine, the original invitation was for someone other than the person who attended. It eventually ended up on the right person's desk, at the right time in the evolution of that EMB. He was able to directly apply the knowledge learnt to his job and the improvements were institutionalized through a change in EMB policy and the development of an institutional database. It was a similar case for the results in Egypt of the OCV course. In this case, the Egyptian participant will be leaving the EMB,

³¹ UNDP Regional Hub for Europe and CIS, *The New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania, Standard Progress Report*, 2014

but the impact from the course will remain as the changes have already been institutionalized. This application of knowledge and its institutionalization is important for the development of all EMBs, and particularly for EMBs working in transitional contexts where EMB commissioners and staff may only have temporary or one-election mandates. If not institutionalized, the knowledge leaves the institution with the individual.

In many cases sustainability of results also requires electoral reform. The PEA has some focus on the reforms it needed to make to meet EU standards and to improve legislation, but assistance targeting electoral reform has yet to be developed substantively within the ODA-funded elements. Some of the joint workshops held with the MFA have touched on these issues and larger electoral context ones. This is an area that could be developed in the future to enhance the sustainability of the efforts to strengthen the credibility and freeness and fairness of the processes assisted.

2.5.2. MOUs are a good initiative to formalize bilateral assistance relationships and develop more systematic and institutional assistance.

Romanian bilateral electoral assistance efforts are based largely on invitational events and ad hoc efforts with different partner countries. The only project agreement signed for electoral assistance delivery has been with UNDP. The PEA has started to develop MOUs with a number of partners which provide the general context for their relationships. As Romania continues to develop its assistance in the sector and efforts becomes more targeted, and more formalized through more specific MOUs and project agreements, this will strengthen its ability to deliver sustainable outcome.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1. Conclusions

3.1.1 Romania is just starting to position itself to provide more substantial electoral assistance through the availability of bilateral ODA funding and the activism of the PEA. But as part of this process, the developmental aspects of the assistance need attention.

Romania is an emerging donor and was an electoral assistance recipient as well as an electoral assistance provider until only recently. The PEA is also a relatively young institution but it has become increasingly active and more visible in regional and international professional organizations and in the international electoral sector, thanks in large part to the availability of the ODA funds, and the interest of its management. Consequently, the PEA has been enlarging its network of international contacts and has enhanced its experience in organizing international electoral conferences and trainings.

The PEA has the interest, drive and technical competence to engage with peer EMBs and share its experiences and is continuing to drive the bilateral electoral efforts into 2015. It is oriented towards professional exchanges with partner EMBs through a South-South type of assistance cooperation. It is interested in further developing its assistance and making it more effective for its partners. All of which provide a solid foundation on which to build its ODA's activities and profile in the near to medium term. The role of Romanian civil society organizations so far has been limited to participating in some of the seminars, but they also have the potential to help broaden the perspective of the electoral assistance, especially for assistance targeted within the region.

At the same time, the electoral assistance programme to date has been mostly one-off bilateral events and multilateral grants. A sector strategy still has yet to be developed that will provide the vision for this assistance, tie the efforts programmatically into an integrated and coherent

development effort, and ensure it is grounded in the best practices of international electoral assistance.

3.1.2 Bilateral electoral assistance results are at the activity level which reflects the limited scale and output-based focus of the assistance provided.

The results of the bilateral assistance are primarily found at the level of the individual activities where participants benefited from the information provided, topical discussions and networking opportunities. This likely helped to increase their awareness and knowledge on the issues discussed, some of which were on important elements of a free, fair and credible process, such as the participation of women and how to include overseas voters in national elections. The BRIDGE workshops had the most visible results. Not necessarily because they were BRIDGE, but because they were five day workshops focused on building participant capacity, knowledge and skills to deal with a particular area of electoral management or processes. However, the results beyond the completion of the activity are unknown as they were not tracked. They are likely limited because of the periodic and supply-based nature of the assistance.

The PEA also benefited institutionally from the ODA assistance activities. Many of the PEA staff attended the conferences, BRIDGE workshops and observation efforts. They also gained from the information shared and the exposure to other systems and procedures. This benefit would also extend to other officials and Romanian civil society members who attended the workshops. The PEA's international visibility as an electoral actor also increased significantly as a result of these efforts and its active participation in its professional networks. It now has a seat at the international electoral table that until recently only a handful of EMBS have had.

3.1.3. Other countries are interested in the Romanian experience and expertise but Romania needs to find its strategic niche and value added within the larger electoral assistance context.

EMBs and other actors in other countries are interested in Romania's experience and appreciate Romania's impartiality and expertise. Romania's transitional background did increase its relevance in general terms for some of the partners but transitional experience alone is not enough to ensure continuing relevance. These countries have vastly different needs for assistance depending on their level of development and political, cultural and security contexts. Once the general lessons are transmitted, they then need much more targeted and context specific assistance. The proliferation of electoral assistance, models, associations and curricula compounds this issue of relevance. To provide added value, especially with limited resources available for the effort, Romania will need to move beyond the general and focus on a few niche areas where it has an interest, believes it can make a difference and can complement, rather than duplicate, other efforts. Especially when the same, or similar, courses are already being provided within the partner countries by others, and usually in the language of that country.

From the findings of the evaluation, it appears that Romania's comparative advantage lies in its ability to provide a neutral venue for discussions and finding consensus in the sometimes highly politicized technical elements of an election. Its venues for the democratic transition, political party and EMB communications workshops provided participants from fragile and politically volatile national transitions with the opportunity to discuss these issues without a domestic spotlight or need for posturing, which allowed for constructive conversations and the building of personal relations that can then make communications easier once back home. The other area is in the provision of targeted technical assistance, based on specific requests and needs identified by partner EMBs and others, without focusing on sharing Romania's experience per se, but to help them to address a particular problem with the benefit of Romania's comparative experience.

3.2. Recommendations

3.2.1. Develop a strategic vision and mission for Romania's electoral assistance and ground this within the larger democratic strengthening thematic area.

Romania should undertake a strategic visioning process for its electoral assistance that takes a long term development perspective of the sector and identifies the strategic objectives that it wants to accomplish. This strategic plan should set targets and develop a results framework within which the implementers can plan activities and track their progress towards achieving these results. As electoral support should be conceived within an electoral cycle approach, this should be a consultative process with the broad range of concerned actors and institutions active in the sector in Romania, such as the PEA, parliamentarians, civil society, academics, media, Ministry of Justice, anti-corruption directorates and other institutions, to see what each has to offer and where they think Romania has a comparative advantage. This process should factor in the level of resources anticipated to be available for the sector, prioritize areas for its use and see how it could be allocated to maximize its effectiveness.

This strategic planning process should also identify Romania's comparative advantage and niche for electoral assistance. This niche needs to be developed internally, but from an outside perspective areas to build on:

- PEA's interest and drive in providing assistance. This will place a main focus on EMB-EMB assistance in the near to medium term;
- Romania's transitional experiences, from an autocracy to a democratic system, to an EU member, and from temporary electoral commissions to a permanent one. Romania has had a successful transition and successive peaceful elections and transfer of power. This can make it a role model and mentor for others struggling with these issues;
- MFA and PEA areas of interest, including issues of anticorruption, gender and capacity building, which could lead to strategic niches such as strengthening electoral integrity (that could include electoral finance, combating electoral corruption, legislative and electoral reform) strengthening electoral management capacity (that could include the capacity building and technical assistance elements) and increasing meaningful participation (that could include the issues of women's participation, motivating youth, and the voter education elements);
- The reform process and changes needed to meet EU standards and address OSCE/ODIHR recommendations which are of direct relevance to others in the region and which could form the basis for targeted technical assistance with individual countries or groups based on similar need;
- Targeting assistance at areas with similar experience to Romania, most notably the Black Sea region which still needs to strengthen its electoral processes and management. Here Romania could make a measurable difference with technical assistance and tailored training. The Central Asia area as well has similarities and needs where Romanian assistance is relevant and useful.
- Other areas are at very different points in development and are difficult to address from off-shore even regionally. For the near term, the most effective way to reach them is likely to promote Romanian participation in in-country electoral workshops organized by electoral basket-funded projects, and with targeted technical assistance missions to a specific EMB based on a specific request where Romania has expertise, in addition to continuing to invite them to periodic, but relevant (for them) events organized in Romania.

This strategic visioning process needs to be done within the strategic framework of the larger democracy strengthening thematic area so that results in the electoral sector contribute to those

higher level objectives. This should also support the building of mutually supportive programming between the different elements within the democratic governance area which can deliver more substantive and sustainable outcomes for partners. If the electoral assistance sector is ahead of the strategic planning process for the larger democratization sector, it should develop an interim strategy and revisit it once the higher level framework is completed.

3.2.2. Develop programmatic links and synergies with other areas of Romanian ODA pertinent to the electoral cycle which can become focal areas for Romanian electoral assistance.

Romania has strong national institutions and ODA activities in other areas related to the broader issues of strengthening free, fair and credible electoral processes. This includes the areas of justice, integrity and education. Synergistic programming should be explored between those efforts and electoral assistance, especially with institution such as the National Integrity Agency, National Department for Anticorruption and Ministry of Justice. There are also substantial links that could be developed through the educational opportunities that Romania offers including its annual training programme for junior diplomats. There is also an ODA programme in justice in Tunisia where possible links could be explored. Including this broader array of institutions in the visioning process for electoral assistance would help to flesh out the idea of synergistic programming and find specific areas and ways for collaboration. A roster of Romanian experts in areas related to the electoral cycle could also be developed who could serve as technical experts if that aspect of Romanian assistance was further developed, as well as for other organizations that might be looking for Romanian expertise. This effort should also take into consideration Romanian civil society efforts in these areas, both with official development funds and with other donor funding.

3.2.3. Ensure electoral assistance is provided with a long term development and programmatic perspective that is guided by the strategic vision and framework, grounded in the best practices for development and electoral assistance, and that seeks sustainable outcome.

This type of approach is based on clear development objectives and sees all of the activities as an integrated effort that contributes towards the achievement of those objectives. It designs activities to build on each other and takes national context and culture into consideration. It identifies the risks and constraints to electoral development, designs a programme to address those constraints and mitigate risks, and gives priority to development objectives over other interests. It also seeks to empower beneficiaries through the transfer of skills and knowledge, and includes them in the planning process to ensure national ownership of the assistance and sustainability of the results.

An important factor for a development perspective is also the ability to undertake multi-year planning on a programmatic basis. The current annual proposal system does not facilitate this. Consideration should be given to develop a larger umbrella programme for the sector which would provide the programmatic direction but which could still provide funds for its implementation on an annual basis. The PEA could also allocate a certain percentage of their international relations budget for electoral assistance to ensure follow-up and continuity.

3.2.4. Assign dedicated officers to manage electoral support within the PEA and the MFA ODA Department once created and ensure their familiarization with the broader context of electoral assistance and its lessons learnt.

Human resources are allocated within the PEA for electoral assistance on an ad-hoc basis, when it is time to do the ODA annual proposal, when an event is upcoming, or when an inquiry about assistance is received. But as a programmatic assistance area, electoral assistance needs an

exclusively dedicated senior person in both the MFA ODA office and the PEA to handle it, not only to ensure programmatic coherence and oversight, but to ensure it does not inadvertently create problems within the recipient country. Even if a donor is able to keep electoral assistance technical and provide it in an impartial manner, it is provided within politically sensitive and often volatile national contexts, and it is important for that larger picture to be factored into every element of electoral assistance.

As an emerging donor in the sector, these staff could also benefit directly from training in electoral assistance to avoid many of the mistakes made by this type of assistance in its early years, and to maximize the benefits of limited resources. As the PEA is leading the current bilateral effort and is not a development agency, a targeted training on the development aspects of electoral assistance would significantly help to strengthen its efforts from a development and programmatic perspective as well as to help them to develop the systems needed to monitor and track their outputs and results. These systems should include aggregating data from all of the assistance efforts, measuring performance against targets, and regular analysis of the progress made towards achieving the higher level objectives, addressing constraints and finding ways to enhance the efficacy of the assistance. Part of this is ensuring the data is also disaggregated by enough variables, such as by country, professional position, sex, etc, so that there is a better understanding of who is being reached by the assistance. Expenditures also need to be analyzed to be sure assistance is provided within a cost-effective manner.

3.4.5. Assure programming is based directly on the priority needs of the beneficiaries.

Requests for assistance are often general and focused on the symptoms of a problem or on needs that are not priorities within the national context. Different countries are also at different levels of development and their assistance needs will vary considerably depending on their context. To ensure aid effectiveness and maximize the impact of limited resources, it is important to identify, prioritize and directly target the most essential of beneficiary needs. For instance, a request for training should be followed up by a needs assessment of the staff before a training is designed or delivered. Among the questions that need to be asked are who needs this training (EMB management, administrative or operational units, permanent or temporary workers, or others such as law makers, CSOs or the media); what type of training would be best to address this need (mentoring, on-the-job, a specific workshop, cascade operational training, etc.); and when would be the best time to deliver this training. If resources are limited to do needs assessments, more information can be obtained through impartial observer reports, local domestic observers, and audit reports.

3.2.6. Strengthen internal and external coordination mechanisms.

More systematic coordination mechanisms should be developed for the electoral assistance sector and put into place before the UNDP ODA project ends. These systems need to be with external partners and other regional and international electoral assistance providers as well as with the internal governmental and nongovernmental actors involved in ODA. In particular, for efforts within a country, such as Egypt that received both bilateral and multilateral Romanian ODA electoral assistance, the Romanian representative in country should participate actively in those donor coordination meetings. This is essential for information and coordination purposes, but it also visibly demonstrates the role of Romania in ODA and its active interest in the supporting the country's efforts to achieve its electoral and democratization goals. It also serves to channel information back to the ODA office and the implementer, such as the PEA, on the status of the electoral processes and preparations in that country, on the broader assistance efforts going on, and on emerging issues and needs so that the MFA/implementer can make informed decisions about its assistance to that

country, help ensure it meet its specific needs and that its assistance fits within that broader context.

The MFA and PEA persons responsible for electoral assistance should also maintain regular communications with UNDP as one of its main roles in most countries is the coordination of donor assistance. They should also strengthen ties with the EU electoral assistance efforts and other potential assistance partners. The PEA should continue to formalize its relationships with other EMBs and organizations which and assign focal points within the PEA to fill that programmatic coordination function with the different agencies.

3.2.7. Foster strategic partnerships based on shared interests and that can increase the developmental efficacy of Romanian electoral assistance.

The Romanian electoral assistance efforts have benefited to a large degree from strategic partnerships and joint efforts, such as with UNDP that arranged space for Romanians as presenters in its workshops in other countries such as Egypt and Moldova, or the Council of Europe that brought its series of inter cultural events to Romania to host the one on political parties. These partnerships helped increase Romania's visibility, stretch the use of its resources and increased their efficacy by making them part of a larger effort. If Romania wants to expand its footprint and assistance, maintaining the strategic partnerships that are already working well, such as with UNDP, the Council of Europe, ACEEEO and GEO/A-WEB networks, and building new ones based on specific areas of shared interest, is important, especially in this field where many EMBs now want to enter.

There are several areas for new partnerships that Romania could explore for other aspects of its assistance. For instance, the PEA is interested in the issue of integrity, having hosted the conference on electoral fraud and organizing another on electoral integrity for March 2015. Among other organizations, IFES has developed an electoral integrity assessment methodology that it applies directly with EMBs to identify and address issues. It is being piloted with the CEC in Georgia which is interested in becoming a regional integrity hub. Romania might want to explore participating in this effort with IFES and Georgia. Each has advantages that could be leveraged in this area of shared interest: IFES has the methodology; Georgia has the Russian speaking capacity needed for some of the countries in the region, while Romania has the English-speaking capacity needed for others. The issue of integrity, and especially of building citizen trust in electoral processes and EMBs, was an important need mentioned by several EMBs, including those in Iraq, Afghanistan and Tunisia.

Another area of Romanian interest is the area of electoral campaign finance. This also fits into the broader vision of combating electoral corruption and promoting electoral integrity and it is still a developing area for electoral assistance. This is an EMB issue but is also a broader stakeholder issue and one where parliamentarians, political parties and civil society could also participate. In this area, IFES, as well as a few others, have developed considerable expertise and are implementing finance-specific projects. Partnerships on this issue would be useful. The PEA is also extremely interested in the issue of women's political participation. A partnership with UN Women and other EMBs focusing on this issue might also be useful to explore. IFES also recently issued a publication on *Political Finance and Gender Equality* that draws the connection between political finance and gender equality. This is an area not often discussed that is also an area that might be worth exploring. Another area mentioned as not covered in the region, but a need, is a focus on Roma voting rights and participation.

The PEA also has an interest in creating an electoral knowledge hub. This has yet to be fleshed out but some of ideas included creating an electoral training institute. This was partly the basis for the triangular relationship envisioned with Mexico. Mexico is ideally suited to provide advice on the setting up of an institute but for an initial effort, with limited funding, a market study should first be

carried out to inform the strategic planning and decision making process, to see what already exists, and the level of need and demand for one in Romania. In the near term, it could be useful to explore potential partnerships with training facilities already created in the region. For example, Georgia reportedly has a good training model that the CEC in Moldova wants to replicate. There are also training units in Ukraine and Azerbaijan. A bit further out Iraq is developing its own training and voter education institute for all of its actors in the electoral process and is extremely interested in collaboration with other similar institutes.

Annex 1: Romanian ODA electoral assistance activities

Purpose and Location	Participants	Dates	Topics	Approximate Funding ³²
Multilateral contribution EAD	Used partially for 2010 OCV Workshop Bucharest	2007	Black Sea Regional Trust Fund: € 100,000 Not earmarked: € 50,000	€ 150,000 (Aprx USD 194,085)
Conference Neum, Bosnia-Herzegovina	4 countries	18 - 20 April 2007	PEA participation in conference on electoral standards and elections in Bosnia Herzegovina	No data
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Bulgaria	20 - 21 May 2007	PEA observation of elections for European Parliament in Bulgaria organized by the CEC	No data
Election Observation	Moldova	3 June 2007	PEA observation of local elections in Moldova	No data
ACEEEO Annual Conference Strasbourg, France	ACEEEO members	18 - 19 September 2007	3 PEA presentations on Professional education of electoral actors	No data
Multilateral contribution EAD Channelled to UNDP/Moldova Electoral support project	Moldovan electoral authorities and other stakeholders	2008	Capacity building program for CEC Moldova in preparation for 2009 national elections	€ 100,000 (Aprx USD 158,240)
Multilateral contribution to OSCE/ODIHR	-	2008	International electoral observation	€ 10,000 EUR (Aprx USD 15,824)
ACEEEO Annual Conference Constanta, Romania	140 participants	11 - 13 September 2008	PEA hosted annual convention, provided 6 presentations on its theme of ensuring electoral security	No data
Election Observation North America	United States	4 November 2008	PEA attended U.S. presidential and legislative elections in the US	No data
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Moldova	5 April 2009 2009	PEA observation of parliamentary elections in Moldova	No data
ACEEEO Annual Conference Yerevan, Armenia	32 countries 150 participants	2 - 5 September 2009	2 PEA presentations: applying sociology in electoral processes; 2008 Romanian parliamentary elections	No data

³² Data in Table 1 is provided for illustrative purposes only and may contain gaps or errors due to the scattered and incomplete nature of the information available during the evaluation.

International Conference Chisinau, Moldova	No data	2 - 3 November 2009	PEA attended a conference on election management and perspectives in Moldova	No data
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Hungary	8 - 12 April 2010	PEA observation of parliamentary elections in Hungary	No data
International Conference Chisinau, Moldova	Moldova	21 April 2010	PEA participated in ICT in voter lists conference targeted primarily at Moldovan institutions sponsored by CEC/IFES/UNDP	No data
OVC Workshop Bucharest	15 countries 39 participants	7 - 8 June 2010	Out of Country Voting	Covered by Multilateral EAD contribution
Bi-Annual E-Vote Conference Bregenz, Austria	No data	21 - 25 June 2010	PEA attended E-Vote Conference sponsored by Competence Center for Voting and Participation	No data
International Conference Morelia, Mexico	International	26 - 29 August 2010	PEA attended sixth international congress on electoral law and democracy organized by UNDP, IDEA, INE, and others	No data
ACEEEO Annual Conference Tbilisi, Georgia	ACEEEO members	9 - 11 September 2010	2 PEA presentations on voter registration and 2009 presidential elections in Romania	No data
Election Observation North America	United States	2 November 2010	PEA observation of U.S. mid-term elections	No data
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Azerbaijan	5 - 8 November 2010	PEA observation of parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan	No data
Regional Meeting Tbilisi, Georgia	No data	8 - 12 February 2011	PEA attended EMB conference of Eastern Europe and Central Asia	No data
Regional Meeting Slovakia	Europe and CIS	25- 28 May 2011	PEA attended meeting on good electoral practices	No data
Democratic Transitions Workshop Bucharest, Romania	4 countries – MENA Region 81 participants	13 - 15 July 2011	North Africa and Eastern Europe: viewpoints and shared experiences of transition- a bridge over 20 years	USD 35,765 (+ UNDP: USD 48,000)
Multilateral contribution to UNDP/Egypt for electoral support project	Egyptian election officials, CSOs, other stakeholders	2011	Strengthening of the Democratic Processes in Egypt Project (2011-2015)	USD 275,000
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Moldova	3 - 6 June 2011	PEA observation of Moldovan local elections	No data
Multilateral contribution to International IDEA	Tunisian electoral process	2011	Internal and comprehensive assessment of the electoral processes (2011-2012)	€ 50,000 (Aprx USD 65,270)
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Moldova	June 3 - 6 2011	PEA observation of local elections in Moldova	No data

ACEEEO Annual Conference Budapest, Hungary	ACEEEO Members	16 - 18 June 2011	PEA participation in ACEEEO annual conference	No data
Regional Forum Istanbul, Turkey	Regional	14 - 17 November 2011	Equal participation in Decision Making Forum Presentation by PM Adviser (gender quotas), CSO (FILIA - on cooperation), + 1 PEA, 1 Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family attended	UNDP funded PEA participant Rest no data
International Workshop Mexico City, Mexico	No Data	5 - 9 March 2012	PEA attended international seminar on administration and justice sponsored by INE, UNDP, and others	No data
Regional BRIDGE Workshop Bucharest, Romania	9 countries 28 participants	26-30 March 2012	BRIDGE Electoral management, design and access to electoral processes	UNDP funded PEA co-hosted
ACEEEO Seminar Vienna, Austria	ACEEEO members	3 - 4 May 2012	PEA attended ACEEEO showcase seminar on external voting	No data
Regional Workshop Bucharest, Romania	4 countries 36 participants	7 - 9 May 2012	Preventing and combating electoral fraud	USD 46,107 (UNDP/PEA project)
Election Observation North Africa	Egypt	21 - 22 May 2012	2 PEA observed the presidential elections in Egypt	USD 1,700
Bi-Annual E-Vote Conference Bregenz, Austria	International	11 - 14 July 2012	PEA attended E-Vote Conference sponsored by Competence Center for Voting and Participation and Council of Europe	No data
Annual ACEEEO conference Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina	ACEEEO Members	15 - 17 September 2012	1 PEA presentation on access to electoral process: minorities of Romania	No data
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Georgia	30 September - 1 October 2012	2 PEA observed Georgian parliamentary elections at invitation CEC	USD 1,500
BRIDGE Workshop Bucharest, Romania	2 countries (Romania & Moldova) 25 participants	15-19 October 2012	BRIDGE Gender and Elections	PEA hosted funded through GPECS
Election Observation North America	United States	4 -6 November 2012	2 PEA observed U.S. elections organized by IFES	USD 10,000
Capacity Building Mexico City, Mexico	6 countries 7 participants	5 - 9 November 2012	PEA attended specialized course on political parties' regime by INE's International Center for Electoral Training and Research	No data
Workshop Chisinau, Moldova	6 countries	21 - 22 November 2012	PEA attended CEC's 15th anniversary and workshop on Training of electoral officials by ACEEEO	No data

New Donor Workshop Prague, Czech Republic	Capacity building	26 - 27 November 2012	MFA, PEA, CSO (TI) participated in: Sharing knowledge and transition experience for development, the view of new European donors organized by UNDP, EC and others	No data
Observation Study Tour Bucharest, Romania	6 countries 16 participants	8 - 10 December 2012	PEA organized electoral observation programme around its parliamentary elections	No data
Annual Regional EMB Meeting Georgia, Tbilisi	Eastern Europe Central Asia	20 - 23 February 2013	PEA attended third annual EMB Meeting. Theme: Conflict management in electoral processes	No data
Democracies Working Group Geneva, Switzerland	No Data	27 February 2013	MFA co-chaired annual meeting of Community of Democracies Working Group on Regional Cooperation. PEA presentations on electoral assistance and training experts	No data
Regional BRIDGE Workshop Bucharest, Romania	4 countries, 31 participants	13 - 16 May 2013	BRIDGE Out of Country Voting	€ 50,000 (Aprx USD 64,405)
Study Visit Bucharest, Romania	3 countries 18 participants	17 May 2013	Study tour of PEA for OCV BRIDGE participants on electronic electoral voter registry	(included in OCV cost)
International Conference Chisinau, Moldova	26 countries 107 participants	26 - 27 June 2013	PEA attended 10 th Annual conference of European electoral bodies organized by CEC and Venice Commission	No data
ACEEEO Annual Conference Warsaw, Poland	40 countries 155 participants	12-14 September 2013	Theme: ICT and social media in elections. PEA presentation on electoral registry	No data
Sub-regional Forum Tripoli, Libya	3 countries 65 participants	24 - 25 September 2013	PEA presented at sub-regional forum on OCV organized by UNDP and Libyan EMB	No data
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Azerbaijan	8 - 9 October 2013	2 PEA observed presidential elections in Azerbaijan	USD 1,600
AWEB Inauguration Inchon, South Korea	300 participants	14 October 2013	6 PEA, 1 MFA attended inauguration of the Association of World Electoral Bodies	No data
Global Electoral Conference Inchon, South Korea	300 participants	15 - 17 October 2013	6 PEA, 1 MFA attended 6 th Global Elections Organization conference. Two presentations (fraud and Romania's electoral register) and had a booth at its Knowledge Fair	No data (+ UNDP)
International Conference Bucharest, Romania	10 countries 30 participants	18-19 October 2013	Political parties- key factors in the political development of democratic societies	MFA with CoE, Venice Commission, OSCE/ODIHR, Norwegian MFA. Faculty of Law University of Bucharest
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Georgia	26 - 27 October 2013	2 PEA observed presidential elections in Georgia	USD 1,300

Election Observation Europe	Norway	8 - 9 September 2013	2 PEA observed parliamentary elections in Norway and pilot of internet voting	USD 2,320
Election observation Eastern Europe	Azerbaijan, Albania, Armenia, Georgia	2013	Senate and Chamber of Deputies Election Observation	€ 12,877 (Aprx USD 16,587)
ACEEEO Annual Conference Warsaw, Poland	ACEEEO Members 19 participants	12 - 13 September 2013	PEA attended annual ACEEEO conference. PEA presentation on its electoral registry	No data
PEA Technical Visit Chisinau, Moldova	CEC participants	18 - 23 November 2013	4 PEA through Mobility Fund for Government TA on: Electoral ICT, training polling officers, polling station mapping and assigning voters	USD 4,386
EMB Course Mexico City, Mexico	ACEEEO Members	2 - 6 December 2013	PEA attended the specialized course Electoral Systems and Results Transmission sponsored by ACEEEO and INE	No data
International Conference Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	International	3 - 4 December 2013	PEA attended ICPS's International Symposium on Electoral Affairs awards conference	No data
Exchange Visit Moldova	CEC	9 - 13 December 2013	Exchange experience on financing political parties,	No data
International Workshop Brasov, Romania	15 countries 56 participants	7-8 March 2014	Women's Participation in Elections Held after ACEEEO Executive Board Meeting	€ 36,136 (Aprx USD 46,017)
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Hungary	5 April 2014	1 PEA observed Hungarian parliamentary elections organized by ACEEEO	USD 1,200
Observation Study Tour Bucharest, Romania	5 countries 10 participants	24-25 May 2014	PEA organized: 1 day presentation on voter registration; 1 day observation Euro-Parliamentarian elections in Romania	USD 18,250
ACEEEO Annual Conference Bucharest, Romania	47 countries 160 participants	4-6 September 2014	PEA hosted conference. Theme: Participation of Women in Electoral Process and Political Life; Planning of a General Election	No data
Election Observation South America	Brazil	4 - 5 October 2014	1 PEA observed presidential and parliamentary elections in Brazil organized by Supreme Tribunal of Brazil	USD 2,750
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Hungary	10 - 12 October 2014	4 PEA observed Hungarian municipal and minority elections organized by the National Electoral Office	USD 443
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Ukraine	24 - 26 October 2014	2 PEA observed early parliamentary elections in Ukraine organized by the CEC	USD 800
Observation Study Tour Bucharest, Romania	11 countries 22 participants	1-2 November 2014	PEA organized observation linked to presidential elections, with presentation on electronic electoral register	USD 27,449

Election Observation North America	United States	2 - 5 November 2014	2 PEA observed U.S. elections organized by IFES	USD 3,000
Regional Forum Cairo, Egypt	Egypt and Libya	12 - 13 November 2014	1 PEA presentation at Regional Forum on Electoral Dispute Resolution: International Comparative Experiences organized by UNDP Egypt and IFES	USD 3,000
Election Observation Eastern Europe	Moldova	29 - 30 November 2014	2 PEA observed Moldovan parliamentary elections organized by the CEC	USD 250
Attendance at UNDP International Gender Conference Cairo, Egypt	International	9 -10 December 2014	PEA attended UNDP's International Conference on Mainstreaming Gender 10 Dec. 2014 Bilateral meetings with EMB 9 Dec. 2014	No data
BRIDGE Workshop Bucharest, Romania	11 countries 32 participants	12 December 2014	BRIDGE Combined module on voter education and civic education	USD 24,000

Annex 2: Recent UNDP projects related to Romanian ODA electoral assistance					
	Support to PEA and local Romanian administration to implement best practices in electoral processes management ³³	Support to MFA to develop its capacity in implementing ODA projects		The New ODA Cooperative Partnership with Romania	UNDP GPECS Project
		Phase 3	Phase 4		
DATES	01/07/11 - 30/06/12	15/6/11-31/12/11	1/6/12 - 31/12/12	1/1/13 - 31/12/15	2010-2013
TOTAL USD	USD 94,011	298,560 Euro ?	Same as Phase 3	Project total: USD 859,640 (Electoral: USD 118,000)	Global and regional components
Funders:	PEA USD 40,000	Romania: 281,000 Euro		Romania: USD 859,640	
	EAD Trust Fund on Black Sea Regional Programme USD 54,011	GPECS 17,560 Euro	EUR 341,121 (USD 423,753)		GPECS supported efforts done primarily under the PEA support project
PURPOSE	Improve capacity of PEA and local administration to implement best practices in electoral management for strengthened democracy in Romania	Enhance capacity of MFA to implement ODA projects/programmes by providing flexible administrative and implementation mechanisms for ODA delivery	Same as Phase 3	Strengthen long term vision for development of assistance, structures and systems, Support PEA's building of other EMB's institutional capacities	GPECS regional focus for Eastern Europe is the exchange of information and developing BRIDGE capacity for EMBs; global is women's participation among others
ACTIVITIES	3 day regional training workshop 7 - 9 May 2012 on Preventing & combating electoral fraud for PEA and 3 countries in region - Legal support for drafting legislation for political party financing, election management and dispute resolution - Handbook on Preventing and Combating Electoral Fraud - 2012 Gender and Elections BRIDGE workshop	Workshop on democratic transformation to develop capacity of PEAs, MFA and CSOs to provide development assistance to Tunisia, Egypt 42,500 Euro (USD 59,391)	Facilitate PEA's efforts to "strengthening institutional capacity of EMBs in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya." This covered the OCV BRIDGE training in May 2013 and accompanying visit to PEA. Democratization Toolkit (includes Electoral toolkit). Not completed and funds were reallocated for non-electoral purposes.	- Support exchange of experience in electoral assistance - Develop triangulation initiative: Romania, Mexico, Arab States; - Support ODA visibility events (Romania at GEO) - Develop Mobility Fund - BRIDGE training Communication in elections	Supported: - 2011 democratization workshop (listed in column 2) - 2012 Gender and Elections BRIDGE workshop (listed in column 1 not funded by ODA) - 2012 electoral management, design and access BRIDGE workshop (column 1- not funded by ODA)
Implementer	UNDP under DIM arrangements: UNDP provides implementation support services to PEA for ISS fee of 1 percent	MFA with UNDP implementation support for ISS fee of 2 percent	MFA with UNDP implementation support services ISS fee 2%	UNDP under DIM arrangements	UNDP BDP

³³ This project focused on PEA capacity building but included a strong regional component with other country participants.

Annex 3: Persons consulted

Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dinculescu, Ileana , Deputy Director, Middle East and Africa Department, Bucharest
Doroftei, Doina , Head of the ODA Unit, Bucharest
Iancu, Dan, Head, Moldova Division, Bucharest
Rogoveanu Oana, Head of Human Rights, Minorities and the Council of Europe Unit, Bucharest
Rebedea, Oana, Romanian Delegation to the United Nations, New York, by phone

Romania Permanent Electoral Authority

Patru, Ana Maria, President, Bucharest
Muhulet Marian, Vice President, Bucharest
Duta, Daniel, Director, Direction of Electoral Management, Monitoring and Logistics, Bucharest
Leahu, Cristian-Alexandru , Director, Legislation, Parliament Liaison and Election Dispute Resolution Department, Bucharest
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Petraru, Cristian, Director of the Electoral Processes Organization Unit, Bucharest

Expert Forum

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United Nations

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Morar, Filon, Head of External Relations, UN Electoral Support Team, United Nations Support Mission to Libya, by e-mail
Sadeghi, Mansour, Electoral Assistance Division, Department of Political Affairs, United Nations, New York, by Skype
Salamanca Kacic, Hugo, Legal Adviser, UNDP Afghanistan, Kabul, by Skype
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Australia

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Egypt

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Iraq

Swadi, Mazin, Head of Electoral Skills Section/Capacity Building, The Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq, Baghdad, by e-mail/Skype

Libya

Dr. Syahm, Imad, Chairman, High National Election Commission of Libya, by e-mail

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Mexico

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Moldova

Pasat, Corneliu, Deputy Chief of Communications, Public Relations and Media Department, Central Electoral Commission of Moldova, Chisinau, by Skype

Palestine

Kuhail, Hisham, Chairman, Central Elections Commission, Al-Bireh, by e-mail

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Tunisia

Labidi, Boutheina, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia, Bucharest

Tizaoui, Hasna, First Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia, Bucharest

Bouhouchi, Riadh, Member Board of Commissioners, Higher Independent Authority for Elections,
Tunis, by Skype

Ukraine

Kravchuk, Andrienko, International Department, Central Election Commission of Ukraine, Kiev, by e-mail

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Annex 5. Methodology

The purpose of this thematic evaluation was to provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Electoral Authorities with an independent review of the Romanian ODA electoral assistance which is expected to be used to develop a Romanian strategy for electoral assistance and to improve programming in the sector. The MFA, PEA and the UNDP New ODA Cooperative Partnership with Romania Project are expected to be the primary users of this evaluation.

The evaluation took place in January - February 2015, with the field work done in Romania from 19 - 23 January 2015. The evaluation was conducted by Sue Nelson, International Senior Consultant. It undertook a qualitative assessment of the relevance, appropriateness, scope of coverage, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of PEA projects and activities directed at supporting countries to strengthen their electoral systems and processes implemented mainly within the Romanian ODA programme.

The evaluation is a qualitative assessment of the ODA in relation to the main questions asked in the evaluation terms of reference. The key questions were:

- What are the results achieved so far? What type of interventions worked the best?
- What are Romanian capacities in the field of electoral assistance?
- What are the development needs of Romania's partner countries in the field of electoral processes? What is the involvement of other donors? Can Romanian assistance be strategically placed, needed and effective? What can be done to ensure complementarity with other ODA initiatives of partner countries?
- What are Romania's competitive advantages in electoral assistance? How should it position itself thematically and geographically in this field?
- What is Romania's position as a provider of electoral assistance in the international development arena? What is the level of visibility and awareness of Romania as an electoral assistance provider?

It is important to note that this is not an evaluation of national electoral processes or events.

The evaluation used mixed methods to collect, synthesize and analyze information and made professional judgments based on that information. Methods included:

- a desk review of available documentation. This included ODA documentation and reports, activity reports, agendas, PEA proposals, PEA reports, UNDP Romania project reporting, UNDP Egypt project reporting, OSCE/ODIHR election observation reports and others;
- interviews of relevant stakeholders, partners and third parties in Romania and abroad to collect information and perceptions on the Romanian electoral assistance; and,
- validation of the information through triangulation (discussions with others involved in electoral assistance in the areas targeted or through information provided in third party reports).

The evaluation benefited from the willingness of national and international partners to discuss the Romanian experience in particular and electoral assistance in general. It also benefited from the reports prepared by the PEA on its activities and by the UNDP ODA support project reporting on the activities it facilitated. At the same time, the depth of the assessment was affected by a number of factors. There is no strategic framework for the electoral assistance against which to measure results, especially at a thematic level. The only anticipated outcomes stated are in the PEA proposals which are for increased knowledge and capacity of EMBs and other relevant actors.

As a result, the evaluation looked broadly for changes within the individual participants of ODA events, as well as for improvements in the EMBs systems or operations, a strengthened electoral process, increased participation or any of the other standard expectations for ODA in the electoral sector that might have occurred as a result of the Romanian efforts. As there is also no performance monitoring plan, indicators or tracking of those indicators, the only data is found primarily in the different workshop reports or agendas that provide a list of topics discussed during the event. Without aggregated data, even at the output level, it was difficult to determine the scope of the activities and its overall composition. As a result, the evaluation relied on the interviews with participants, EMB heads, electoral experts who were present in events or working in the ODA target countries for their perceptions of impact, as well as those of the MFA, PEA and UNDP. Although the information collected on results was anecdotal, it was consistent among informants and matched the level of effort that was put into the different activities.

Another constraint was that the field work only took place in Romania. Participants and other actors outside of Romania were interviewed by phone, Skype or e-mail. Although there was a good response rate among the persons contacted by the evaluator, it still resulted in a limited sample of participants and partners interviewed. Nevertheless, the responses to the evaluation questions were also consistent across the different actors, locations and institutions.

The case study expected in the terms of reference was not feasible within the evaluation timeframe and available data. However, the evaluation report includes as much information as was able to be collected on Egypt which was requested to be the case study.