



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

USAID builds people’s confidence in democracy. When citizens participate, feel heard, and witness results, they understand how democratic systems benefit them, their families, and their communities.

## OUR WORK

USAID, working in partnership with the Government of Ecuador (GOE) and civil society organizations (CSOs), helps increase Ecuadorian’s trust in democracy. USAID’s assistance is particularly effective in ensuring citizens—especially those who have historically been marginalized— participate in democratic processes and spaces. USAID demonstrates how these democratic processes can help solve the most pressing issues faced by average families and how representation by public institutions that conduct free, transparent, and safe elections are essential for broad-based prosperity.

Photo: USAID Ecuador/Claudia Giron

## HOW DO WE CONTRIBUTE?

### ENSURING THAT ECUADOR CAN ADMINISTER SAFE AND TRANSPARENT ELECTIONS

USAID provides assistance to the National Electoral Council (CNE) to better protect data, improve cybersecurity measures, increase gender inclusion practices, and provide training to ensure the integrity of electoral processes. With USAID support, the CNE implements a train-the-trainer program to raise cybersecurity awareness and improve information technology coordination throughout the organization. Vulnerability testing exercises identify and overcome weaknesses in the CNE's systems and public website, which has been revamped to allow a better experience for users. USAID's implementing partners participate in the CNE's national election simulations and provide recommendations to improve its controls in public funding campaigns, further protect systems transmitting results, and help enhance training of workers in precincts and voting polls.

### PROMOTING CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

USAID supports local CSOs, including *Corporación Participación Ciudadana*, *Fundación Esquel*, *Fundación Ciudadanía y Desarrollo*, and *Grupo FARO*, to promote inclusion and transparency in political processes in the leads up to elections. These organizations bring citizens closer to candidates so they can present issues that affect them and identify solutions to solve them. USAID supports citizen-led forums, promotes online interactive platforms, and educates audiences on topics related to the referendum to take place in February 2023. Cooperation programs also empower local leaders, particularly women and youth, to increase their political participation. Engagement starts at the community level and continues all the way up to building the capacity of women who aspire to enter the political arena.

### MONITORING AND COMBATING MIS- AND DISINFORMATION

USAID's Ecuadorian partners, *Participación Ciudadana* and *Fundamedios*, conduct media monitoring during elections and when political conflict arises to help counter malign activity influencing public opinion and undermining democracy. During elections, *Participación Ciudadana* monitors violent activity targeting women. It also tracks, compares, and reports on political candidates proposals and monitors compliance with campaign finance legislation. *Fundamedios* leverages a coalition of media outlets and journalists to identify and counter mis- and disinformation related to political processes, movements, and protests. *Fundamedios* verifies information and disseminates it on social media to increase access to unbiased reporting data.

### IMPROVING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

USAID promotes the inclusion of women in the political arena. Four political parties (*Pachacutik*, *CREO*, *Izquierda Democrática*, and *Partido Social Cristiano*) voluntarily utilized a USAID-supported self-assessment tool to measure their compliance with national and international standards on gender participation. Moreover, USAID raises awareness within the CNE leadership on gender inclusion and the need for institutional equity policies. USAID also supports civil society-led public campaigns to raise awareness about political violence against women.

## OUR IMPACT

- Over **700,000 citizens** participated in interactive events and forums where they could raise social issues and learn about political candidates' platforms.
- Over **100 local leaders**, mainly women and youth, from across Ecuador are being trained on the importance of political participation and diversity.
- The CNE has better technology and its staff have improved skills to administer elections
- Over **350,000 election workers** have the skills and materials to improve polling station protocols and ensure proper vote processing. Nearly **16,000 voting poll and precinct coordinators** trained on the adoption of a step-by-step protocol of the electoral process.
- Approximately **3,800 individuals** are better prepared to work in the CNE's election results processing centers.
- Nearly **1,200 national and international elections observers**, including from the Organization of American States, the Latin American Council of Election Experts (CEELA), the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB), and Transparency International have access to a user-friendly observation guide from the CNE.
- **20 media outlets and 30 journalists** are fighting mis- and disinformation during elections, social conflict, and political protests.

## USAID-SUPPORTED INTERACTIVE ONLINE PLATFORMS

### ECUADOR DECIDE (<https://ecuador-decide.org/>)

- On this site, citizens can learn about electoral processes, entities' responsibilities, logistics and locations of voting polls. They can also compare political candidates' platforms, sorting by issues of importance, which include the environment, corruption, economic development, citizen security, and transportation.

### BRÚJULA ELECTORAL (<https://www.quito.brujulaelectoral.ec/index.php>)

- This site helps voters identify the candidate(s) that are the most promising, depending on their issues of interest. It focuses on candidates in Ecuador's largest cities - Quito, Guayaquil, and Cuenca.

### ECUADOR VERIFICA (<https://twitter.com/ecuadorverifica>)

- This site publishes verified news articles/sources related to the elections, covering several cities and provinces throughout the country.