African Union

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International IDEA

EISA
Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa

SPEC
Strengthening Pan-African Capacities for Electoral Observation and Assistance

Strengthening Pan-African Capacities for Electoral Observation and Assistance (SPEC) Project: A Two-Year Impact Snapshot (2024-2025)





About the Project

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) are implementing a 36-month European Union-funded project, titled – **Strengthening Pan-African Capacities for Electoral Observation and Assistance (SPEC).**

The SPEC project was designed drawing on lessons learnt by International IDEA and EISA from over a decade of providing support to the AU and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in electoral assistance and election observation. International IDEA and EISA are working together and in a complementary manner in the delivery of the objectives of this project.

The overall objective of this project is to contribute to improved transparency and credibility of elections in Africa whilst contributing towards progress in the achievement of SDG 16.6 at the global level.

SPEC Project Outcomes/objective(s)

1. **Outcome 1:** Continental, regional and national authorities (AU and RECs) harmonise their approaches to and demonstrate strengthened institutional capacities in electoral observation.

2. **Outcome 2:** Continental, regional, and national authorities demonstrate strengthened institutional capacities in electoral assistance provision.

SPEC Project Implementation modalities:

- Advisory services
- Technical assistance
- Training
- Peer learning
- Mentoring
- Development of knowledge products
- Development of digital tools.

Demonstrating how the EU's €5,000,000 investment has transitioned African electoral governance from independent observation to sustainable institutional capacity and risk prevention.

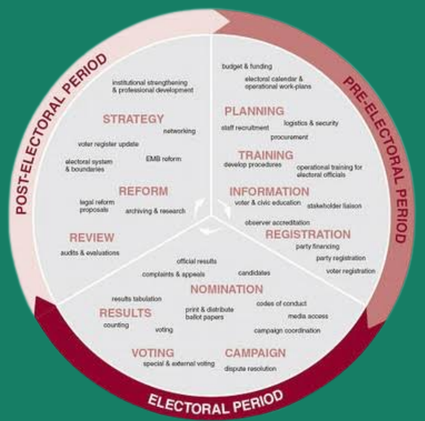
The Strategic Foundation



- AU
- RECs
- EMBs

translating 2024-2025 funding into measurable institutional change across the AU, RECs, and EMBs.

Strengthening the Full Electoral Cycle



From pre-election assessment and preparation, through election observation missions, to post-election follow-up and technical assistance.

2024: 1 AU PAM (South Africa).
2025: 5 integrated PAM/NAM missions (Malawi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, and Tanzania).

Total (2024–2025): 6 pre-election assessments in 6 countries

Pillar 1 — Harmonized Observation

Increased Coordination

Moving from ad-hoc coordination to structured, standardized compliant joint AU-REC observation missions.

Quantitative Growth

Fully harmonised missions: 5

- AU-COMESA PAM/NAM to Malawi
- AU-COMESA EOMs to Malawi, Egypt and Seyelles
- AU-ECOWAS EOM to Guinea Conakry

Partially harmonised missions: joint planning, coordination meetings, and methodological alignment without full joint deployment (e.g. South Africa, Rwanda, Senegal and other AU EOMs)

2024: 4 AU-EOMs (Comoros, Senegal, Rwanda, South Africa)

2025: 7 AU-EOMs (Malawi, Seyelles, Tanzania, Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Guinea Conakry)

Total (2024–2025): 11 EOMs in 11 electoral processes

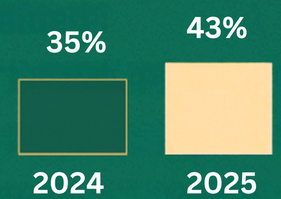
Increased Observation Capacity

282

EMB Staff Observers Trained

Quantitative Growth

355 EMB staff trained out of which 43% of the staff trained were women



- **2024: 127 Short-Term Observers and 28 Core Team Experts trained (155 total). Participants came from across Africa, representing more than 30 countries.**
- 2025: 127 observers and experts trained through two STO trainings and one Core Team training.

Total (2024–2025): 282 STO observers and experts trained

Pillar 2 — Targeted Technical Assistance

Capacity-Driven Institutional Growth

Risk Management

Establishing dedicated risk management directives and networks to fill structural gaps.

111 participants trained (ERM)

EMBs benefited directly from ERM support:

- National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE)
- Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC)
- Elections Cameroon (ELECAM)
- Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)
- AU Democracy and Elections Unit and Situation Room staff



Institutional Capacity for EMB Networks

Regional/thematic convenings supported for EMB networks, particularly ECONEC and ECF-SADC.

6 EMB network convenings supported

Key regional EMB Network support included:

- ECONEC General Assemblies and Symposia, Sierra Leone (2024),
- The Gambia / ECOWAS region (2025)
- ECF-SADC Annual General Conferences in Seychelles (2024) and Eswatini (2025)
- AU's 9th Annual EMB Forum in Ghana (continental level)

Demand-Driven EMB Capacity Building

14 successful capacity-building requests answered

332 EMB staff trained

45 participants trained — Regional BRIDGE Training

- 15 EMBs,
- 3 EMB Networks and
- AU staff

Trainings for Malawi Electoral Commission:

- ToT for constituency store clerks;
- internal auditors training

Training for ECONEC:

- Protecting Elections in the Information Environment

Regional New Commissioners Orientation (NCO) for Southern Africa

ERM workshops and self-assessments for NEBE, MEC, ECZ, ELECAM and AU staff

Strengthening Electoral Architecture in Africa: Tailored Institutional Assistance

Under the SPEC project, International IDEA delivers tailored electoral assistance to strengthen the institutional capacities of African authorities. This transition shifts the focus from one-off event support to building permanent, risk-informed, and expert-led electoral frameworks across the continent.

STRATEGIC CAPACITY & EXPERT DEPLOYMENT

Bridging the AU Human Resource Gap

Joint AU-IDEA expert secondment recruited to the DEU.

Transition Support in Guinea Conakry

- SPEC -deployed an expert to support an ECOWAS Electoral calendar dialogue.
- SPEC provided technical support to an ECOWAS assessment mission that engaged transition authorities and key stakeholders to assess electoral preparedness and develop a roadmap toward transition elections.
- An electoral expert was deployed and produced an advisory note for future electoral assistance.
- In 2025, SPEC supported the deployment of an AU Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) to Guinea-Conakry.

High-level hybrid PAM/NAM Guinea-Bissau,

- High-level hybrid PAM/NAM with a preventive diplomacy component was deployed to Guinea-Bissau,



INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT & FUTURE READINESS

Malawi: From Training to Governance

- SPEC supported a high-level hybrid Pre-Election Assessment Mission (PAM) and Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) led by the African Union and COMESA, incorporating preventive diplomacy and electoral preparedness assessments.
- SPEC provided targeted technical assistance, including Training of 66 constituency store clerks on electoral logistics and inventory management, training of 50 MEC internal auditors on quality control, compliance, and financial oversight.
- An Electoral Risk Management (ERM) Context Overview Workshop attended by 65 participants.
- A specialized workshop on preventing gender-based discrimination and violence in elections attended by 55 stakeholders.
- A major outcome was the development and institutionalization of a structured electoral risk management approach within MEC, culminating in the establishment of a dedicated risk management directorate.



Benin – SPEC support.

SPEC support to Benin focused on post-election follow-up and institutional strengthening.

- In 2024, the project supported an ECONEC post-election follow-up and needs assessment mission to review implementation of recommendations from the 2021 presidential election and identify capacity needs ahead of the 2026 elections. Two electoral experts were deployed through SPEC to support the mission and produce an advisory memo for future technical assistance.

- In 2025, following requests from ECONEC, SPEC supported the development of a stakeholder engagement framework for the Commission Électorale Nationale Autonome (CENA) to strengthen dialogue between the EMB and electoral stakeholders. Although validation was postponed until after elections, the initiative contributed toward institutionalizing stakeholder engagement and improving transparency



Senegal

Senegal – including the country-level exchange mission in which the Guinea delegation participated.

- In 2024, SPEC supported an ECONEC Peer Support and Learning Mission (PSLM) to the presidential election in Senegal. The mission brought together EMB leaders and commissioners from across West Africa to observe, learn, and exchange experiences with the Senegalese electoral authorities.
- The mission generated important lessons on electoral management, peer-learning methodologies, and institutional accountability. It also informed the development of the AU-led Peer-to-Peer Learning Methodology that was subsequently endorsed by EMB networks and RECs.
- Regarding participation by Guinea, the 2025 Regional BRIDGE Training in Dakar included a delegation of 13 participants from Guinea, led by the President of the Constitutional Court, as part of broader efforts to build electoral readiness ahead of future transition elections.

Strengthening Electoral Architecture in Africa Through Regional EMB Networks

Collaboration | Capacity | Credible Elections

EMB network peer-learning/ exchange convenings

Total peer-learning/ exchange convenings: **5**

- ECONEC Peer Support and Learning Mission (PSLM) to the Senegal Presidential Election (2024).
- ECONEC-ECF SADC exchange mission during the Nabibia elections (2024).
- ECONEC-ECF SADC exchange mission during the Ghana elections (2024).
- ECONEC peer-learning engagement during the Côte d'Voire Presidential Election (2025), which included participants from SADMC countries such as Seyellines and DTC and served as a pilot for the peer-learning methodology.
- International Workshop on Electoral Efficiency and Sustainability (Indonesia, 2023) involving African EMB leaders.

Number of regional peer-to-peer exchanges overall.

4 structured regional peer-learning exchanges:

- Senegal PSLM (ECONEC).
- Namibia ECONEC-ECF SADC Exchange.
- Ghana ECONEC-ECF SADC Exchange.
- Côte d'Voire Peer Learning Mission involving ECONEC and SADMC EMB representatives.
- In addition, the project facilitated broader continental and cross-regional learning through the AU-RECs Reflection Sessions and the Indonesia workshop.

Institutional Foundation

ECF-SADC STRATEGIC PLAN (2025-2030)

Regional Strategy & Resource Mobilization

ECONEC FIVE-YEAR PLAN (2026-2031)

Institutional Growth & Sustainability

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)

Development of an Institutional Policy Framework

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP NETWORK (ONGOING)

Continental network for women electoral leaders

Support to the EAC included:

- Participation in development and validation of the Methodological Framework on Peer-to-Peer Learning.
- Participation in the AU-RECs Reflection Meeting (Johansburg, 2025).
- Development of an Institutional Policy Framework for the East Africa EMB Network, which was ongoing and scheduled for finalization in 2026.
- Participation in validation meetings for peer-learning methodologies and AU community of practice processes.
- Countries represented through the East African EMB network included EMBs from the EAC region that participated in All-laid and regional activities.

> *"Stronger networks. More learning. Greater regional impact."*



Through regional collaboration, we build stronger EMBs, more resilient institutions and credible elections across Africa.

Strengthening African Electoral Excellence: Digital Tools, Knowledge Production and Peer Learning,

Under the SPEC project, the African Union and its regional partners have moved from ad-hoc exchanges toward a systematized, institutionalized architecture for electoral knowledge. This pathway highlights the journey from foundational reflections to global South-South exchanges, creating a sustainable ecosystem for African electoral integrity.

2025 AU-RECs Reflection Sesion

First of its kind platform Participating 46 representatives (5 RECs, 16 EMBs, EMB Networks) for upcoming continual elections.





African Union ⟺ Funded by the European Union

AU-EU Peer-to-Peer Mission to EUP elections 2024

AU experts gained direct exposure to European practices in technology and disinformation management.

Digital Evolution

Deployed an upgraded, web-based platform for real-time risk monitoring across the continent.

- International IDEA, ERM tool 2.0:
- EISA, Electoral Integrity Tool

ERMTool
ELECTORAL RISK MANAGEMENT TOOL

EITool
- A weighted scorecard designed to guide the drafting of statements and final reports issued by Election Observation Groups (EOG).
- Not a rating tool on an election

Knowledge Products Delivered

- 2024 African Elections Annual Report
- Policy Papers
- Reports
- Policy Briefs

South-South & Global Exchange

African EMB leaders expanded expertise at the International Workshop on Electoral Efficiency in Indonesia.

From Reactive to Systematic: Prevantive Diplomacy

Under the SPEC project, the African Union and Member States have transitioned from ad hoc, reactive responses to electoral crises toward a formalized, systematic architecture for risk management. This evolution prioritizes early engagement, institutionalized methodologies, and regional peer-to-peer learning.

2024
(Pilot)

Ghana



2025
(Scaling)



Malawi,



Cameron,



Côte d'Ivoire,



Guinea-Bissau,



Tanzania

6 countries benefiting from preventive diplomacy support:

- EMB Network Convenings Supported: 6
- Peer-Learning/Exchange Convenings: 5
- Regional Peer-to-Peer Exchanges: 4
- EAC Institutional Support Initiatives: 3+
- EMBs Benefiting from ERM Support: 4 EMBs + AU

Driving Electoral Excellence in Africa: The SPEC Project 2-Year Impact Comparison (2024–2025)

AU Observers & Experts Trained

2024

155 trained (127 STOs + 28 Core Team Experts)

2025

127 trained (STOs and Core Team Experts), completing a total pool of 254 qualified experts.

Hybrid Pre-Election/Needs Assessments

2024

Foundational ground work laid. (Ghana)

2025

5 countries reached (Malawi, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania) to identify institutional needs.

Inclusion & Gender Diversity in AU Observation

2024

35% female participation.

2025

41% female participation—a direct, measured improvement in gender representation.

Demand-Driven EMB Requests

2024

Initiated with 3 EMBs (Malawi, Cameroon, Ethiopia).

2025

14 demand-driven requests answered, signaling rising active trust and demand for SPEC expertise.

AUEOMs Supported

2024

4 countries (Comoros, Senegal, Rwanda, South Africa).

2025

7 countries (Malawi, Seychelles, Tanzania, Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Egypt, Guinea Conakry).

Institutionalisation & Networks

2024

ECONEC General Assemblies and Symposia in Sierra Leone and the ECF-SADC AGC in Seychelles

2025

Creation of ROGEAC, MEC Risk Directorate, Peer-to-Peer Learning Methodology, and the AU-led Community of Practice.

Total Number of EMB staff trained

2024

64

2025

236

Number Regional Peer to Peer Exchanges

2024

3 exchanges

2025

2 exchanges

Overall 2 - year SPEC Project Impact Across 2024 -2025

01

BUILT A MORE HARMONISED AND CREDIBLE CONTINENTAL ELECTION OBSERVATION SYSTEM

Strengthened standards, consistency and credibility across AU election observation missions.

02

STRENGTHENED TECHNICAL CAPACITY OF OBSERVERS AND EMBS AT SCALE

Enhanced knowledge, skills and tools for effective electoral observation and management.

03

ADVANCED GENDER INCLUSION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Promoted equal participation and representation of women in electoral processes and institutions.

04

INTRODUCED DATA-DRIVEN AND RISK-BASED ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

Improved decision-making through data analytics, risk assessment and evidence-based planning.

05

SHIFTED AU ENGAGEMENT TOWARD PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Earlier engagement helps mitigate risks and reduce electoral tensions before they escalate.

06

STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION (AU-RECS-EMBS)

Stronger coordination and partnership for coherent and effective electoral support.

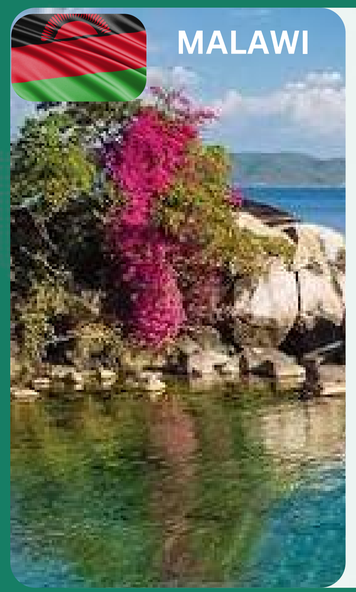
07

ESTABLISHED A FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM ELECTORAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN AFRICA

Built systems and capacities for lasting impact beyond the project lifecycle.

MAKE AN IMPACT

Sample Impact Stories



Building a More Resilient Electoral System

> “Support received through the SPEC project has significantly strengthened Malawi’s Electoral Commission, leading to more professional, coordinated, and transparent electoral processes. The establishment of a dedicated risk management directorate, improved stakeholder engagement on electoral violence and civic voter education, and strengthened logistical planning all contributed to a peaceful, well-run election with high turnout and no major irregularities reported.”
>
> Mr. Andrew Kamkwalala, Deputy Chief Elections Officer, Finance and Administration, Malawi Electoral Commission ”



Strengthening Electoral Resilience Through Regional Learning

Namibia benefited from SPEC-supported regional peer-learning and election observation initiatives, including technical support to the ECF-SADC observer mission, observer training, and cross-regional EMB exchanges.

The Namibian elections served as a learning platform on electoral risk management, electoral operations, youth engagement, and management of misinformation, while also showcasing improved gender inclusion in election observation missions.



From Reactive to Proactive Risk Management

SPEC SUPPORT
SPEC supported a regional Electoral Risk Management workshop.

THE CHANGE
The National Election Board initiated an internal risk-management framework and established a multi-departmental committee.

SPEC supported the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) through ERM-focused interventions, including a self-assessment workshop, participation in a regional ERM workshop, and advisory support that led to the establishment of an internal committee to develop a national electoral risk management framework. The project also facilitated NEBE's participation in the Regional BRIDGE Training.

ADDITIONAL SPEC IMPACTS:

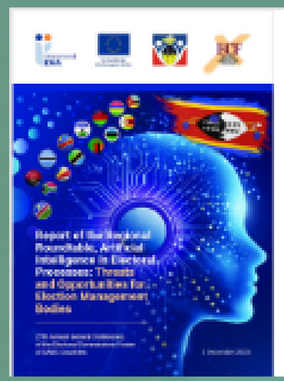
- Regional EMB networks strengthened their organizational capacity through the development of strategic plans, institutional policies, and resource mobilization frameworks.
- EMBs increasingly adopted data-driven and risk-based approaches to election management, particularly in Malawi and through regional EMB networks.
- An AU-led Community of Practice was developed and validated, providing a long-term mechanism for harmonized electoral support, peer learning, and knowledge exchange across the continent.
- The project contributed to strengthening the AU's capacity to provide tailored electoral assistance, preventive diplomacy, and technical support to member states through more structured and coordinated approaches.



Digitalization and Youth Engagement in Electoral Processes in the SADC Region:...

This policy paper stems from the 26th Annual General Conference of the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries (ECF-...

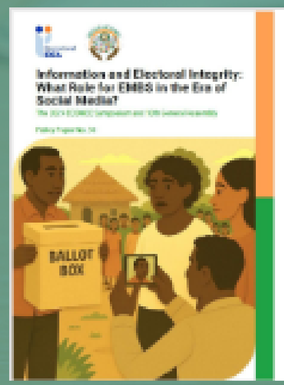
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Report of the Regional Roundtable, Artificial Intelligence in Electoral Processes: Threats...

The 27th Annual General Conference of the Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries, held in the Kingdom of Eswatini on ...

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Information Integrity and Electoral Integrity: What Role for EMBs in the Era of Social...

The electoral management bodies (EMBs) play a paramount role in ensuring the public has access to accurate and timely information, as a...

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This policy brief emphasizes the importance of strengthening democratic culture in Africa through media, education and institutional...

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Strengthening Electoral Risk Management in Malawi

13 NCOs. A Growing Community of Electoral Leaders





















Au -RECs Meeting











Peer Learning











Observation Mission









Partners

African Union

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International IDEA

EISA
Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa

ECF
ELECTORAL COMMISSIONS FORUM OF SADC COUNTRIES

CEEAC-ECCAS

EAC
JUMUIYA YA AFRIKA MASHARIKI

CEDEAO
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