

Guide to
AHEAD
Africa



AHEAD
Africa



Co-funded by
the European Union

The Glossary

ACDEG - African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

AfEONet - African Election Observers Network

Approach for Democracy

AHEAD - Action for a Holistic Electoral Approach for Democracy

AU - African Union

BDP - Botswana Democratic Party

CODEO - Coalition of Domestic Observers

COMESA - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

CFO - Country Forum

CDD-Ghana - Ghana Center for Democratic Development

CSO - Civil Society Organisation

DRI - Democracy Reporting International

EAC - East African Community

EACSO - East African Civil Society Organisation Forum

EALA - East African Legislative Assembly

E-HORN - East and Horn of Africa Election Observers Network

EISA - Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa

EMB - Election Management Body

EPD - European Partnership for Democracy

ESN-SA - Electoral Support Network of Southern Africa

EVM - Electronic Voting Machines

KZNCC - KwaZulu Natal Christian Council

NANGOF - Namibian NGO Forum Trust

ROEF - Réseau des Observateurs Électoraux Nationaux Francophones

SADC - Southern African Development Community

SsUNDE - South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections

SWAPO - South West Africa People's Organisation

WAEON - West Africa Election Observers Network

ZESN - Zimbabwe Election Support Network

Table of Contents



About

Why AHEAD Africa?
What is AHEAD Africa?
AHEAD approach
Our Partners

01

Governance

02

Learning

South Africa Election Academy
West Africa Election Academy

03

2024 elections

South Africa
Mozambique
Botswana
Namibia
Ghana

04

Advocacy

National
Regional
Continental

05

What's coming next?

06

1. About

Why AHEAD Africa?

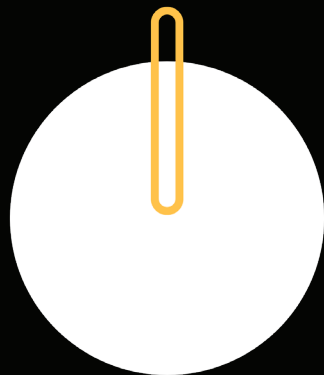
African civil society plays an important role in observing local elections and following up on electoral recommendations. However, their ability to do so has been hindered by numerous challenges, including the closure of civic space, restricted access to polling stations and data, and a lack of resources.



What is AHEAD Africa?

AHEAD Africa is an EU co-funded pan-African project focusing on multiple facets of the electoral cycle, aiming to:

Empower civil society across Africa, including **citizen observers**, in strengthening electoral systems & processes



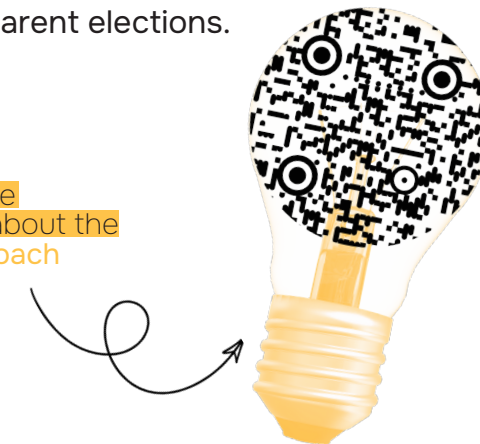
Contribute to higher levels of **electoral integrity** in African Union member states



AHEAD approach

The project follows the AHEAD approach – Action for a Holistic Electoral Approach for Democracy – highlighting election observation follow-up as a key driver for inclusive electoral systems, public trust, and conflict prevention. By prioritising ‘electoral follow-up,’ civil society can better advocate for democratic accountability and promote more transparent elections.

Scan for more information about the AHEAD approach



Our Partners

Activists' network



Democracy support networks

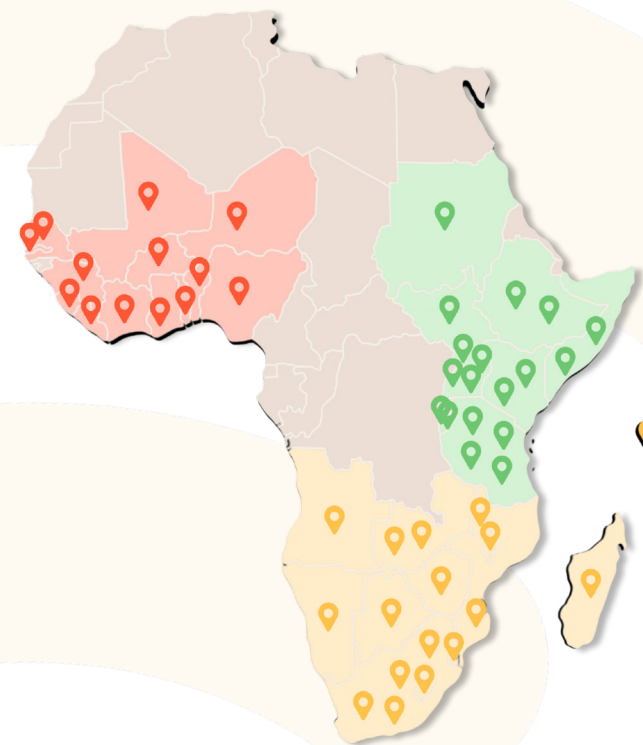


Citizen observer networks



3. Governance

African domestic election observers are united across Africa under AfEONet, a continental network which gathers 3 regional networks:



E-HORN with **18** national members across **East Africa**

ESN-SA with **17** national members across **Southern Africa**

WAEON with **13** national members across **West Africa**

In 2024, these networks strengthened their structures, operations, coordination, and member recruitment, expanding into not yet covered regions: **North and Central Africa.**

AHEAD Africa is led by the European Partnership for Democracy.

3. Learning

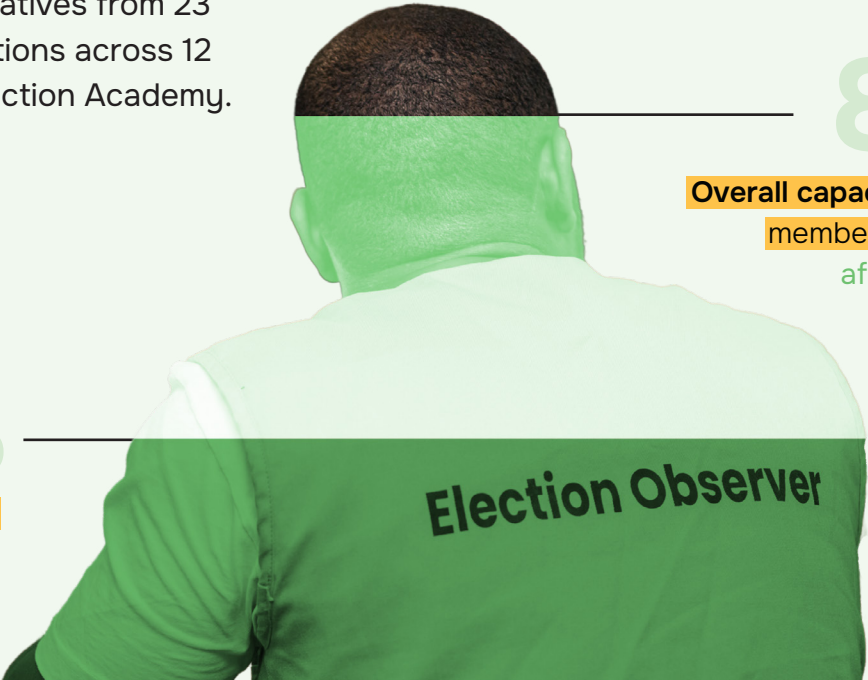
South Africa **Election Academy**

From April 10-12, 2024, in Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 representatives from 23 ESN-SA member organisations across 12 countries attended the Election Academy.

7 civil society organisations that participated in the Election Academy later joined ESN-SA learning and observation missions to **South Africa, Namibia**, and **Botswana** throughout 2024, where they also contributed to reports and recommendations.

48.5%

Overall capacity of ESN-SA member organisations ahead of the training



81%

Overall capacity of ESN-SA member organisations after the training

West Africa **Election Academy**

From 28 to 30 August, in Accra, Ghana, 10 representatives from 9 WAEON member organisations, equally split between men and women, attended the Election Academy.

73.7%

Overall capacity of WAEON observers ahead of the training



100%

Overall capacity of WAEON observers after the training

Young observers from WAEON member organisations who participated in the Election Academy were recruited for the first time ever to join an EOM for the Ghana 2024 elections.

4. 2024 elections

3
42

**Supported
organisations**
so far

Recommendations
shared

5

Election observation & learning missions

deployed in **2024**



South Africa



Mozambique



Botswana



Namibia



Ghana

South Africa

May 2024



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Why **South Africa?**

South Africa's 2024 elections tested political shift, the Electoral Commission's capacity amid rising tensions, the introduction of diaspora voting and CSO-led observation, providing key insights into democracy in the Southern African Development Community.

About the **mission**

ESN-SA deployed 10 observers from 26 to 31 May across Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, and Western Cape, applying lessons from the Election Observation Academy. The mission engaged international observers and former Kenyan and Nigerian presidents on electoral reforms. E-HORN joined at the University of Pretoria's invitation. KZNCC, an ESN-SA member, received a grant to monitor high-risk polling stations.



Scan for reports, findings,
recommendations & pictures
on **South Africa's** EOM

Mozambique

October 2024



Why **Mozambique?**

Mozambique's 2024 elections were crucial due to the deteriorating democratic environment, the history of electoral violence and the shrinking of civic space and press freedom. Supporting local CSOs was key for ensuring monitoring, preventing disputes, and assessing electoral integrity.

About the **mission**

AHEAD Africa supported an organisation that set up a Women's Situation Room (WSR) during the elections, deploying 150 women and youth as special observers in 4 provinces. They reported violations, irregularities, and gender-related issues to experts, who relayed findings to authorities and the public. After reports of police vehicles hitting young women protesters, the organisation led women's marches and will track protest-related hospitalisations.

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**Scan for reports, findings,
recommendations & pictures**
on **Mozambique's** EOM

Botswana

October 2024



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Why **Botswana?**

Botswana's 2024 elections tested democratic resilience as a stronger opposition challenged the ruling BDP, making the outcome less predictable. Key factors included voter registration, transparency, and media freedom, shaping public trust.

About the **mission**

In response to an invitation from the Government of the Republic of Botswana, ESN-SA deployed a five-member team to observe the 2024 elections on 30 October, covering urban, peri-urban, and rural areas around Gaborone. Prior to the Election Day observation, the team met with various electoral stakeholders.



**Scan for reports, findings,
recommendations & pictures**
on **Botswana's EOM**

Namibia

November 2024



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Why **Namibia?**

Namibia's 2024 elections tested SWAPO's declining dominance and the transparency of EVMs without a paper trail, offering key lessons for electoral integrity in the SADC region.

About the **mission**

ESN-SA deployed a small delegation to observe Namibia's 2024 elections, aiming to assess compliance with national laws and international standards. The mission also aimed to identify local CSOs, but few polling stations had domestic observers, as many faced funding challenges. The Mission met with various stakeholders, including international observers, legal experts, media, and CSOs like NANGOF, ACG, the AU, and SADC.



**Scan for reports, findings,
recommendations & pictures
on Namibia's EOM**

Ghana

December 2024



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Why Ghana?

Ghana's 2024 elections were a key test for democratic governance in West Africa, with potential transitions and policy shifts. The country's history of peaceful, rules-based transitions emphasised its commitment to electoral integrity, making the elections crucial for regional stability.

About the mission

CODEO recruited 4,000 observers from all 16 regions, with 70% aged 18-35, to observe 3,401 polling stations with the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT). Penplusbytes deployed a Disinformation Detection Platform (DDP), identifying over 10,400 issues, of which 1,875 were flagged for review—799 confirmed true, 38 as disinformation, and 110 escalated to CODEO. E-HORN deployed observers from 6 EAC countries to share knowledge and best practices on election observation.



Scan for reports, findings,
recommendations & pictures
on Ghana's EOM

5. Advocacy

In August 2024, E-HORN hosted a **webinar** on **South Sudan**'s electoral readiness ahead of the 2024 December elections, echoing AHEAD Africa's call for postponement due to gaps in the legal framework, bylaws, and civic education.

The South Sudan CFO, initiated by E-HORN in collaboration with the South Sudanese Network for Democracy and Elections (SSuNDE), is a platform fostering civil society collaboration in South Sudan's electoral governance. It aims to provide technical support in election administration, consolidate election monitoring findings, advocate for timely electoral reforms, harmonise institutional resources, and engage the public on key electoral issues.


E-HORN's press conference on electoral preparedness for 2024 helped push a reconsideration of the **election dates**, leading to the official postponement **from 2024 to 2026**.





Scan to watch the **webinar**


The **Kenya Uchaguzi Platform**, established in 2010, unites civil society organisations focused on governance, elections, transparency, and human rights, including Transparency International Kenya, Centre for Multiparty Democracy, ELOG, Federation of Women Lawyers, Mzalendo Trust, and the Electoral Law and Governance Institute for Africa. Led by ELOG, it now drives electoral reform within the AHEAD Africa project.

In 2024, the Kenyan CFO proposed amendments to several bills:

 **Election Offences Bill:** Strengthen electoral integrity with clear result timelines and accountability for delays.

 **Political Parties Bill:** Enhance clarity and independence of the Commission, and improve party record-keeping.

 **Elections Act Bill:** Ensure authorised polling stations, preserve democratic safeguards, and remove the cap on the High Court for electoral disputes.

 **Constitution Amendment Bill:** Oppose term extension and the Prime Minister's office, and call for judicial and parliamentary oversight on elections and security.

On 1 November 2024, the Kenyan Parliament withdrew the Constitution Amendment Bill No. 2 of 2024 extending term limits of elected officials from 5 to 7 years.

AfEONet and its regional networks (ESN-SA, E-HORN and WAEON) joined the **Southern Africa Zambia Elections Stakeholders Conference** from 27 to 19 November 2024, to discuss election observation and campaign finance. Hosted by the Electoral Commission of Zambia, the event convened 150+ stakeholders to tackle electoral integrity challenges for 2026.

AfEONet and ACFIM highlighted the role of domestic observers and campaign finance reforms, paving the way for future collaborations, around the upcoming second edition of the Electoral Integrity Summit (see section 5 and 6).



E-HORN and AfEONet participated in the **2024 East Africa Civil Society Summit (EACSO)**, which gathered 195 participants from six EAC member states to strengthen the social contract between Heads of State and citizens while showcasing regional achievements.

The AHEAD Africa project was introduced to the EAC Secretariat and the civil society movement in the EAC region. E-HORN and AfEONet hosted a panel discussion to deliberate on the journey made so far in the realisation of democracy in the EAC region and a break away session on the state of democracy in the region as of early 2024.



E-HORN and AfEONet made **9 recommendations** in the 2024 EACSO report, including a call to restore the Annual Secretary General’s Forum, leading to its revival.

E-HORN is strengthening its **engagement with the EAC and EALA**, considering future collaboration on electoral issues.



Scan to read the final report

On July 20, 2024, AHEAD Africa, WAEON, CDD-Ghana, and the European Partnership for Democracy co-hosted an event at the **AU-ECOSOCC 20th anniversary to launch the Continental AHEAD Africa project**, focused on advancing electoral integrity in Africa through citizen engagement. Amid the 19 elections scheduled for 2024, the event emphasised the role of civil society and citizen observers in strengthening electoral systems.

Key discussions included:

- **Ghana's 2024 elections, and the importance of resilient institutions.**
- **The EU's announcement of an Election Expert Mission in the country.**
- **Tech innovations and youth engagement for shaping more inclusive and transparent elections in Africa.**

The **first Continental Electoral Integrity Summit**, held in Kampala from 10-12 September 2024, brought together stakeholders from EMBs, civil society, political parties, media, and academia to address challenges undermining electoral integrity in Africa.

Co-hosted by AfEONet and ACFIM, the Summit, aligned with International Democracy Day week, focused on enhancing electoral transparency, public oversight, and collaborative reforms. Discussions covered political financing, state capture, and the role of technology and AI in election observation, with highlights such as the introduction of the 'Marble app' for real-time monitoring. The summit emphasised the importance of continuous efforts beyond election day to address integrity gaps.

A report with 21 recommendations on electoral integrity reforms.

A citizen observer network from North and West Francophone Africa applied to join AfEONET in October 2024 after participating in the Summit.

Scan to read the 21 recommendations on the Electoral Integrity Africa Summit I



6. What's coming next?



A glimpse of our **2025** activities. **Connect with us** via our website, social media, and newsletter for more details.

Learning

Experiential learning seminar

24-25 March 2025

Nairobi, Kenya

A continental community of electoral practitioners fostering peer learning, strategy development, and sustainable advocacy to strengthen African citizen election observation networks.

South Africa Election Academy

24-25 April 2025

Johannesburg, South Africa

The region's 2nd academy will review 2024 elections, tackle challenges, and solutions to electoral integrity preparing for 2025 polls in 12 African countries, including Malawi, Seychelles, and Tanzania.

Massive Online Open Course

2025

Online

Expand an existing online training platform on the ACDEG, AU, peace and security mechanisms, civic space, with new modules on elections and electoral cycles.

2025 elections

While 2024 saw many elections across Africa, activity in 2025 is not falling behind. AHEAD Africa, in collaboration with regional networks (ESN-SA, WAEON, and E-HORN), will support local actors in election observation and follow-up in: **Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi** and **Uganda**.

Focusing on pre- and post-electoral periods, the project will also support follow-up in countries that held elections in 2024, along with new support on voter education, civic engagement, and monitoring in **South Africa, Madagascar, Namibia**, and **South Sudan**.

Advocacy

Second Electoral Integrity Summit

September 2025

Zambia

Research

Recommendations Follow Up assessment study

Between 2012 and 2023, the African Union deployed 166 Election Observation Missions, yet electoral quality remains uneven. This study analyses AUEOM recommendation follow-up, highlighting key structural reforms to shape AHEAD's advocacy.

Country briefs on civic space for election observers

AfEONET analyses civic space for election observers in 18 countries, assessing regulations, constraints, safety, data access, funding, and perceptions. Annual findings will aid advocacy for their recognition and rights.

An online one-stop shop on elections

A platform with interactive information and data on elections across the continent: legal frameworks, key actors, upcoming elections, data on EOM recommendations, implementation rates and more.

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best electoral
practices from
2010 onwards

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