Civil Society Assistance Program
Quarterly Report

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<td>AP</td>
<td>Alianza PAIS – Political movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Convergence Board (<em>Mesa de la Convergencia</em> initiative)</td>
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<td>CC</td>
<td>Constitutional Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEOSC</td>
<td>Confederation of Ecuadorian CSOs (Spanish acronym <em>Confederación Ecuatoriana de Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil</em>)</td>
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<td>CNA</td>
<td>National Anti-Corruption Commission (Spanish acronym <em>Comision Nacional Anti-Corrupcion</em>)</td>
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<td>CNE</td>
<td>National Electoral Council (Spanish acronym <em>Consejo Nacional Electoral</em>)</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Popular Referendum (<em>Consulta Popular</em>)</td>
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<td>CPSCC</td>
<td>Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control. (Spanish acronym for <em>Consejo de Participacion Ciudadana y Control Social</em>)</td>
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<td>CPI</td>
<td>Counterpart International</td>
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<td>CSA</td>
<td>Civil Society Assistance Program</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>EPP</td>
<td>Electoral and Political Processes</td>
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<td>ESQUEL</td>
<td>Fundación Esquel</td>
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<td>ESQUEL – CLIC</td>
<td>Esquel – Latin American Center for Collective Intelligence</td>
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<td>FARO</td>
<td>Grupo FARO</td>
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<td>GADs</td>
<td>Decentralized and Autonomous Governments (Spanish acronym for <em>Gobiernos Autónomos y Descentralizados</em>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBTI</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>National Assembly</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>NWG</td>
<td>National Working Group</td>
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<td>OD</td>
<td>Organizational Development</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Participación Ciudadana</td>
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<td>PY</td>
<td>Program Year</td>
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<td>SENECYT</td>
<td>National Secretariat for Science and Technology (Spanish acronym for <em>Secretaria Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia</em>)</td>
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<td>SENPLADES</td>
<td>National Secretariat for Planning and Development (Spanish acronym for <em>Secretaría de Planificación y Desarrollo</em>)</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical Assistance</td>
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<td>VP</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
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I. Executive Summary

The Civil Society Assistance (CSA) is a program which seeks to support, strengthen and sustain the critical work of civil society organizations (CSOs) in their efforts to develop a wide base of participation and citizen linkage with national and local governments. This objective is supported by three integrated programmatic objectives: 1) Strengthen civil society’s commitment to promote transparency and accountability at the national and municipal level; 2) Expand citizen oversight of government activities at the central and municipal levels as allowed by Ecuadorian legislation, including the provision of objective and verifiable information regarding government performance, and; 3) Strengthen the technical and financial capacity of CSOs in their efforts to establish mutual support networks and examples of transparency and accountability under a restrictive environment. The program is jointly implemented by three Ecuadorian CSOs: GRUPO FARO (FARO), PARTICIPACION CIUDADANA (PC), and FUNDACION ESQUEL (Esquel). On June 27, the CSA program was extended for a period of 18 months (until January 2019) to further strengthen citizen participation in political and electoral processes in Ecuador (with funding from the USAID EPP Fund), within the framework of the three CSA program objectives.

This report covers the first quarter (October-December 2017) of PY4. During this period, the country experienced an intense political climate marked by expectations of an upcoming Popular Referendum, the judicial proceedings against the now former Vice President Glas, and the deepening of the crisis within the ruling political party. Given this context, the CSA partner organizations remained vigilant to these events, including the performance of judicial and control institutions, and continued to support President Moreno's decision to call a Popular Referendum. Specifically, they formulated and published opinions and recommendations on aspects of political and electoral reform necessary to carry out the Referendum, and began holding events and forums on some of the themes to be addressed in the Popular Referendum, as well as dialogues and debates on other topics of public interest.

Additionally, the political context was also marked by the issuance of Executive Decree 193 that replaces the current regulations on freedom of association (Decrees 739 and 16), and that regulates the establishment, control, and operation of civil society organizations. During this quarter, Counterpart’s partner organizations carried out a series of activities, both individually and in coordination with each other, which included analysis, interviews, public statements, and discussion forums on the new regulations. Their contributions were valuable for citizen reflection and for advocating to public sector stakeholders that in order to have an enabling environment for civil society, the country needs a different type of legislation that promotes incentives for greater citizen participation and alliances with the public sector, as well as clear norms that prevent discretionary interpretations of the law.

The organizations continued promoting their proposals for reforms to electoral legislation and providing contributions for the discussion of the Democracy Code in the National Assembly. Two of their proposed reforms were incorporated into the report that was discussed by the Assembly at the first debate of this legislation: (i) the requirement for the CNE to conduct debates among candidates, and (ii) requiring current officials running for the same office to request leave without pay during the campaign period. By the end of January, the National Assembly will hold the second debate to discuss additional reforms, and by mid-February the legislature will conclude the final approval.

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1 According to the Constitution (Art 114) and Democracy Code (Art. 93) officials running for a different office must resign.
Strengthening organizational capacities of the local CSOs and governments was another major focus of the project during the period. As part of the InnovAcción Training Program, a new training platform called "Participatory Mechanisms for the Cycle of Public and Electoral Policies" was designed, which will be delivered starting late January both through in-person workshops and online sessions. This program seeks to provide knowledge and practical tools for citizen participation in public management, including electoral processes and government transition at a local level. This quarter, the program was disseminated in five provinces of the country, registering 45 participants from local government, CSOs, and political parties and movements.

Furthermore, beneficiary organizations that work in the areas of youth, LGBTI and gender made improvements to their organizational structure, the administration of their human resources, and their internal policies to promote volunteer work within their issue areas. Additionally, the implementation of local advocacy initiatives was completed, and some organizations successfully established key contacts with private sector companies and other public-sector actors to explore their potential support for institutional activities.

Find below a brief summary of these and other accomplishments during this period:

FARO: Finalized its follow-up and analysis of the new administration’s campaign promises during the first 100 days of its administration in the areas of early education, technical education, fight against corruption, employment, entrepreneurship, and reconstruction of Manabí. The reports, which feature the analysis results and methodology were disseminated through the Ecuador Decide platform (https://www.ecuador-decide.org/deldichoalhecho/index.html). On the web version, the information is also shared through a user-friendly display containing themes and summarized contents, including indicators and methodology; this was developed to facilitate citizenship understanding. The findings and results were discussed with several cooperating public institutions. At the same time, FARO and its allied organizations made progress in following up on campaign promises during the six months of government administration and will disseminate results on its six-month evaluation in February.

Likewise, FARO concluded its systematization of the analysis regarding the executive transition process of 2017 and developed a guide with recommendations to facilitate similar administrative transitions in the future, both at the national and local levels. SENPLADES, the government entity with which FARO coordinated this activity, is reviewing these documents. Based on these products, FARO will develop a transition protocol for its use in the subnational elections of 2019.

In partnership with the Grupo El Comercio media outlet and the organization Líderes para Gobernar, FARO initiated the implementation of dialogues on television and debates on an online platform on topics of national and local interest. This quarter it conducted two dialogues: (i) Technical Education and (ii) the Fight against Corruption. Each program had 4 panelists from the academia, government, private sector and civil society. After the transmission of each dialogue, virtual debates were held between 2 people (1 representative of civil society and 1 government official) arguing in favor and/or against a platform for each topic. The debate platforms were disseminated on Ecuador Decide’s website for over a week, providing the possibility for citizens to participate by voting for or against. These dialogues were watched 54,228 times, and the debates had participation of 729 votes and 900 online visits. The implementation of virtual debates is an unprecedented activity in Ecuador.

FARO designed the Training Program "Participatory Mechanisms for the Cycle of Public and Electoral Policies" that will be addressed to local governments, civil society organizations and
political parties. This Program was made available on Grupo FARO’s website (http://ecuadordecide2017.org/fortalecimiento-de-capacidades) and promoted through events and meetings held in the provinces of Loja, Imbabura, Napo, Tungurahua, and Manabí, in which a total of 96 people participated. To date, 45 participants have registered for the online program, which will be carried out from the end of January to the beginning of July.

Due to the promulgation of the new Decree 193 that regulates CSOs and the change of political priorities within the National Assembly, FARO adjusted its advocacy strategy for the promotion of an Organic Law of Civil Society Organizations. This strategy also includes joint actions with SENPLADES to promote the introduction of Public-Social Partnerships as a mechanism for coordination between the State and civil society. Additionally, FARO issued a public statement on Executive Decree 193 and defined the actions that it will take forward with key executive and legislative stakeholders.

PC: Continued to monitor democratic institutions, as well as promoted the Popular Referendum. PC conducted several interviews in local media and universities to publicize the organization’s position regarding the Popular Referendum and political reforms, especially regarding the Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control. Additionally, PC issued a press bulletin questioning the delay of the CPCCS for the partial renewal of CNE members. Additionally, PC designed an online survey to ascertain citizens’ current level of knowledge in relation to the Popular Referendum and the priority topics of their interest. The information collected through the survey will inform the design of the discussion events that PC will carry out in January on questions about the Referendum.

To strengthen the leadership and advocacy capacities of young people in democratic processes, PC introduced the “Young Leadership” initiative, which will promote the creation of a National Network of Young Leaders. In this quarter, it conducted a mapping exercise of universities and youth leaders to identify young people and academic institutions that are interested in participating in this initiative. As a result of the mapping, PC selected 31 young people between 19 and 23 years of age from 13 universities in the cities with the highest university population in Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, and Loja.

PC maintained follow-up and contact with members of the Justice and State Reform Commission of the National Assembly to promote reforms to the Democracy Code. In the report on the first debate, three recommendations were accepted, including: (i) compulsory leave without pay for officials who will run for same office that they hold, (ii) mandatory debate for candidates (a topic also promoted by Grupo FARO within the proposal of the CNE), and (iii) greater control of official campaign finance. Subsequently, PC provided observations to be considered in the preparation of the report for the second debate to be held in January and the discussion in the Plenary of the Assembly scheduled for February 2018.

PC also conducted a detailed analysis and public statement on the promulgation of Decree 193 that regulates CSOs, highlighting the positive changes in the regulation and pointing out the aspects that should be revised. In addition, it maintained a close dialogue with the Citizen Participation Commission of the National Assembly to present and discuss the analysis and contributions to the legislation on Citizen Participation that this Commission is analyzing and/or promoting.

ESQUEL: Through events organized by members of the Convergence Board (Mesa de la Convergencia, CB), such as “popular trials” against former government officials including Vice
President Glas and former education minister Augusto Espinosa, Esquel continued to support the promotion of the fight against corruption. These events brought more than 550 people together. Likewise, with regard to the reappointment of 3 members of the CNE, Esquel and the CB provided support to the Electoral Observatory organization in the implementation of the initiative called "Liberation of the CNE" that included a public event with more than 100 people from different social and political sectors, marches, and an open letter to President Moreno promoting respect for the Constitution and the independence of State institutions.

Esquel and other members of the CB met with President Moreno and, in addition to reiterating their support for the Referendum, they presented their views on the current status of the CNE, including the need to recall the action of self-renewal, and incorporate as a core member of the CNE the alternate members selected with the highest rating in 2014.

Once the Referendum was scheduled, Esquel-CB held two online forums. The first forum dealt with the importance of the Referendum and the second addressed the referendum question on anti-corruption. These forums featured well-known panelists and had a web reach of more than 50,000 people. In January, Esquel will hold a total of 7 forums on the questions of the Referendum, in alliance with Diario LaHora.

In parallel, Esquel and the CB carried out activities such as forums, public events, and media appearances which contributed to the discussion and dialogue to create the conditions for the CB to promote National Agreements on education and social security issues. Likewise, activities to strengthen the organizational development and governance structure of the CB were carried out, including technical assistance to define an action plan for the current political context, as well as a communication strategy.

Esquel continued to be active in the discussion of the enabling environment for civil society. Following the promulgation of Decree 193 and repeal of Decrees 16 and 739, Esquel held the forum "Victory or more of the same?" to analyze the new regulations featuring several legal expert panelists, including the Technical Lead of Counterpart. The event was co-organized and broadcast by Diario La Hora, and reached more than 12,000 people through social networks.

Esquel also made progress in the final stage of capacity building assistance to the beneficiary CSOs, through delivery of the two last workshops and TA in social marketing, assistance in human resources management, and one workshop on conflict management. The CSOs have also completed their advocacy initiatives and applied CPI’s OD tool. In January, Esquel will hold a close-out workshop for their TA, during which they will discuss the achieved results and the challenges encountered, and analyze these in conjunction with strategies to overcome the difficulties. Likewise, participants will exchange their own experiences and perspectives. The achievements and impacts of OD, advocacy, and sustainability achieved under this component of the Program will be reported next quarter.

Next quarter will be marked by the Popular Referendum and the actions taken by the Government to address the results of the vote, which may include the restructuring of the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control. On the other hand, there is little optimism in the economic field due to the enforcement of recently approved regulations that did not meet private sector expectations. In addition, a growing demand by citizens for the dialogue promoted by the government to produce tangible results is expected in the social arena including delivery of

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2 CPI’s OD tool was adapted by Esquel in 2015 for local CSOs.
campaign promises. In this context, the actions of the CSA program will focus on the following: (i) educate citizens about issues addressed in the referendum and provide inputs for the implementation of institutional changes and political reform that the Referendum promotes, (ii) continue to strengthen the capacity of civil society to influence matters of public interest, (iii) link various stakeholders (civil society, public sector, academia, and political actors) in the discussion and definition of public policy proposals and/or reforms, (iv) monitor implementation of campaign promises of the current administration, and (v) continue promoting the rights of association and the enabling environment for civil society organizations; all of which constitute a significant contribution to efforts to strengthen democracy in the country.

II. Political Context

Three events significantly marked the country’s political pulse during the first quarter of fiscal year 2018: (i) the criminal trial against Vice-President Jorge Glas, (ii) deepening internal crisis in the ruling party Alianza PAIS, and (iii) the official call for a Popular Referendum by President Moreno. In addition, the promulgation of new regulations for civil society organizations and legislation in the economic field were also subjects that captured the public’s interest.

As of October 2, criminal proceedings began against Jorge Glas and 13 additional persons, including his uncle, for the alleged crime of conspiracy. On that same day, he was placed in custody and on November 24, the National Court of Justice formally initiated the trial against him. After 14 days of appearance of more than 70 witnesses and evidence presented by the Prosecutor’s Office and by the citizen and political science professor Cesar Montufar, acting as a private accuser, as well as Glas’ lawyer, on December 13, the now former Vice President Glas was sentenced to six years in prison after being linked and accused as the main perpetrator of an instance of illicit association. According to the Attorney General, "Vice President Jorge Glas integrated a criminal network created by Odebrecht."³ Additionally, he pointed out that this network "was capable of forging false investments, creating ghost companies, modifying bidding documents, altering contracts."⁴

On October 4, President Moreno appointed María Alejandra Vicuña, Minister of Urban Development and Housing, to serve as Vice President during the absence of Jorge Glas. According to the Constitution, the temporary absence of the president or vice president due to illness or force majeure may extend up to 3 months.⁵

On the other hand, the fragmentation of the government’s political movement deepened this quarter, especially with the visit of former President Rafael Correa who arrived in the country on November 25 to "recover the Alianza PAIS party."⁶ During his stay, he tried to relieve President Moreno of the presidency of the AP Movement through a decision announced by AP’s Executive Secretary and the Second Vice-President; however, the movement’s ethics committee separated Rafael Correa’s allies from the board and approved the selection of their replacements by President Moreno’s allies. This caused the "Morenistas" and "Correistas" to interpose several legal resources to obtain the representation within the movement. The Contentious Electoral

Court (TCE in Spanish) is analyzing the resources proposed. Meanwhile, the Morenista group maintains the leadership of the movement.

One of the most relevant events during this period was the definitive call for a Popular Referendum. On October 4, President Moreno sent the proposed 7 questions to the Constitutional Court for its analysis and pronouncement. After 58 days passed without the Constitutional Court issuing its endorsement or consent, on November 29, President Moreno opted to call for the Popular Consultation directly through Executive Decrees 229 and 230 and sent the questions to the National Electoral Council to start the call. On a legal level, its decision was based on the Law of Jurisdictional Guarantees and Constitutional Control that determines 20 days for the CC to resolve these types of issues, and that, if not pronounced in this period, it would be understood that the Court has exhaustively issued a favorable opinion.

On December 7, the CNE—which internally reelected its officers on November 30 under questionable circumstances due to the self-renewal of two of its members and the naming of one substitute member as principal office holder—announced plans for a Popular Referendum and selected February 4 as the date to carry out this electoral process. The Popular Referendum provides room for the legitimacy and mandate of the regime through an electoral process that has reshaped the political forces. Except for former President Correa's faction in AP, all political parties support the Yes vote on all seven questions. This trend also occurs with most social organizations. A total of 40 political and social organizations were accredited by the CNE to participate in the campaign, 36 of them favor voting "Yes" and only 4 voted "No". The campaign period will run from January 3 to February 2. Former President Correa, who returned to the country on January 4, leads the No-vote primarily for the questions related to repealing indefinite re-election, restructuring of the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control, and abolishing the Capital Gains Law.

The dialogue undertaken by the Government from the beginning of its administration has not yet produced any results, for the most part. Even doubts about this process have increased among the population due to statements by the former Secretary General of the Presidency, who commented in a conversation with Alianza PAIS militants that the dialogue is nothing more than delay tactics to appease conflicts with dissatisfied sectors. This officer (who is the Minister of Foreign Affairs' husband) had to leave office on December 13 after an audio recording of his remarks was leaked.

For civil society, the dialogue with the government has produced few results. On October 23, President Moreno repealed executive decrees 16 and 739, which had been in force from the previous administration, and issued decree 193, which contains some positive aspects, but...
maintains discretionary provisions for dissolving CSOs and certain restrictions for their operation.\textsuperscript{14} Decree 193 was initially viewed with enthusiasm and as a sign of change, however, for some analysts, the new regulation means a continuation of restrictive practices contrary to an enabling environment and where there would be the generation of a broader and consensual legislation between the State and Civil Society.

In the economic field, attention was focused on the "Organic Law to Promote the Economic Revitalization of Ecuador" bill sent by President Moreno to the National Assembly on November 2.\textsuperscript{15} According to the National Government, the bill was the result of talks held in the Economic and Tax Council where urgent issues for the revitalization of the country were discussed. However, the bill received significant criticisms from participants during the dialogues, including from trade associations or importers, as well as economic analysts and even politicians from the government and from the opposition. This project was modified in several parts during the revision by the Legislative, as well as through the partial veto of the Executive. On December 27, the National Assembly approved the final text after the partial veto of the Executive that insisted on keeping some of the measures proposed in the original bill. Although several adjustments were made to the original proposal, a large part of the business sector felt dissatisfied because they thought that the law did not include measures needed for a real revitalization of the productive apparatus of the country and for an effective recovery of the country’s economy.\textsuperscript{16}

The political environment around the Popular Referendum remains favorable for civil society’s active participation in the debate of the political, economic, and social issues that will be defined through this electoral mechanism. This electoral process allows the country to start a process of political, economic, and social reform that the Government —along with the various participants of society— will have to undertake to strengthen the democratic institutions and for the economic and social revitalization of the country in the medium and long term. It is to be expected that the favorable environment between the government and the population will decline after the referendum, considering the high expectations among the population regarding employment, reduction of the cost of living, and fighting corruption, among other priorities. Civil society, on the other hand, seeks a dialogue that would produce concrete results in terms of greater citizen participation in governance, by providing CSOs the opportunity to play again a key role in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies and reforms to advance development priorities and key issues of public interest.

In this context, the CSA program and its Electoral and Political Processes component continues to be relevant in promoting a constructive dialogue among different sectors of society, encouraging citizen participation in the discussion and construction of public policies, and monitoring public activities to promote transparency.

\textsuperscript{14} Watch Forum CLIC - Diario La Hora \url{https://lahora.com.ec/carchi/noticia/1102112674/la-hora-y-esquel-inician-ciclo-de-foros-para-fortalecer-la-democracia}

\textsuperscript{15} http://ecuadorinmediato.com/index.php?module=Noticias&func=news_user_view&id=2818828054&umt=presidente_moreno_envia_a_asamblea_nacional_ley_organica_para_impulsar_reactivacion_economica_documento

\textsuperscript{16} https://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2017/12/15/nota/6526837/veto-parcial-ley-urgente-deceptciona-empresarios
III. Summary of Activities

**Objective 1: Civil Society promotes transparency and accountability at national and municipal levels**

The Authorities’ Transition Process. FARO finalized a document for the organization of the authorities’ transition process, and, in addition, prepared a practical guide to facilitate this process for future transitions.

While preparing this document, FARO worked together with SENPLADES to map out its structure, identify the key participants to be interviewed and plot the relevant points of the transition process. All these elements were incorporated both in the organizational document and in the practical guide, to serve as a basis for future processes of this type.

In addition, the document includes lessons learned and best practices obtained from similar international experiences. **Annexes 1 and 2: Draft of the organizational document and Practical Guide**

The organizational document and the practical guide have been delivered to SENPLADES for review. In January 2018, FARO will hold a meeting with SENPLADES to collect their recommendations and prepare the final document.

Based on this arrangement, FARO will work on the development of transition protocols at the local level with the objective of influencing the local transition processes for the mayoral election that will be held in February 2019.

**Fulfillment of Presidential Campaign Promises:** In December, FARO and a consortium of academia, the CSOs and international cooperation organizations published six reports on the fulfillment of campaign promises addressing the following issues: the fight against corruption, employment, primary education, technical education, entrepreneurship, and the post-disaster reconstruction of Manabí.

These reports were issued following technical support provided by FARO to universities, CSOs and state institutions to create the methodology, indicators for each item and a process to delivery of information for calculating the indicators.

Each report includes a methodological manual and the corresponding technical sheets with information on the indicators used. **Annex 3: Reports on the first 100 days of government**

To facilitate the results’ dissemination, a tool was included on the Ecuador Decide website that allows the public to view the results clearly and dynamically, available at the following link: http://deldichoalhecho.ecuadordecide2017.org/informe.html

In addition, Counterpart has prepared a brief English summary of the six reports with the main recommendations. See **Annex 4.**

**Table 2: Consortium recommendations from the reports on the first 100 days of government**
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<th>REPORT TOPIC</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
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| **ANTICORRUPTION**| 1. Create a web-page for the Government Anticorruption Commission (Frente) including all the commission’s actions and information to increase transparency and access to information.  
2. Introduce more members in the Anticorruption Commission which are more representative of all sectors.  
3. Allocate budgetary resources for the Anticorruption Commission.  
4. Design mechanisms to allow all sectors to participate in the Commission’s activities. |
| **EMPLOYMENT**    | 1. Implement public/private alliances to generate jobs, investment and innovation.  
2. Improve government’s dialogue process results identifying concrete actions to improve productivity and competitiveness.  
3. Prioritize poor sectors (as identified by the National Survey Census) for the development of the Project Housing for All, and reduce the poverty rate. |
| **ENTREPRENEURSHIP**| 1. Since Ecuador has a budget allocation for entrepreneurship it is important to promote government entrepreneurship support opportunities throughout the country, and especially among the youth. The report results show there are several organized youth groups that can be supported by the government.  
2. Since there are few entrepreneurship programs, increase the promotion of entrepreneurship-related activities in commercial and social areas.  
3. Create alliances with the private sector to support entrepreneurship. The report notes that actors in general have not worked together in this area. |
| **PRIMARY EDUCATION**| 1. Specify all the projects that belong to the "Misión Ternura" program to establish terms and the corresponding budget.  
2. To increase the coverage and quality of initial education, the government must apply new mechanisms to fix current problems in this area (described in the report), and especially the ones that involve teachers’ professional development. |
| **TECHNICAL EDUCATION**| 1. Increase access to information regarding technical education in public education institutions.  
2. Educational institutions need greater bonding with the productive sector to promote and support technical education. |
| **RECONSTRUCTION OF MANABÍ**| 1. Create accessible information mechanism about projects in each city of Manabí.  
2. Foster cooperation with governmental organizations, citizens, CSOs, and especially with the private sector.  
3. Promote credit benefits with all the productive sectors.  
4. The Reconstruction Committee needs to organize all the actions and projects with a clear organizational structure defining objectives, the participants involved and their roles. |
The reports were published via social networks and were also used in the “Dialogues and Debates” programs hosted by FARO, for which additional information is provided below.

In addition, between October and December, 21 meetings were held with government authorities with two main objectives: (1) Provide feedback on the information obtained to the authorities in charge of the different areas and, (2) Analyze the points that have not been fulfilled so that the authorities may begin to take measures in this regard.

Among the public institutions that FARO visited included: SENECYT, SENPLADES, Ministries of Justice, Industries, Labor and Education, and the City Hall of Portoviejo. Annex 5: Summary of meetings and list of participants.

Given that the reports on the first 100 days of government took longer than planned, FARO has worked simultaneously on the 6-month government reports, which are ready and will be finalized in January 2018.

**Dialogue and Debate processes.** Within the political and social context of the country, the citizenry has begun to recognize the importance of dialogue and debate as public assets for the strengthening of democracy. During this period FARO, Grupo EL COMERCIO, Líderes para Gobernar carried out two new dialogue programs, completing 3 of the 5 of the planned project’s broadcasts to generate opinion streams on the analyzed and debated topics.

On October 26, the second debate on the topic of Technical Education was broadcast, with the following participants: Augusto Barrera, National Secretary of Education, Science and Technology; Pablo Zambrano, representative of the Chamber of Industries and Production; Wilson Araque, researcher at the Simon Bolivar Andean University, and Lisa Pesendorfer, member of the German Cooperation that advises on technical education projects. The program can be watched at: [https://www.facebook.com/elcomerciocom/videos/1813708455319575](https://www.facebook.com/elcomerciocom/videos/1813708455319575)

The program has been played a total of 26,781 times, has 179 online reactions (on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media outlets), 41 comments and, was shared 93 times.
After the program, an online debate was held on the web platform "Diálogos y Debates", hosted on the Ecuador Decide site. The debate question was: If technical education is taught in universities [in addition to trade schools], does the quality of the education suffer? Two experts on the topic participated: Rafael Donoso, who presented the thesis that the country's universities are not prepared to provide specialized technical education, and Adrián Bonilla, who proposed that the universities fulfill this task without any problems.

The results showed Rafael Donoso as the winner with 53.2%. There were 337 votes and 500 direct visits to the web page from Google. Social network posts associated with the first debate reached 21,638 people on Facebook and Twitter.

**Figure 1: Working model for online debates**

On November 29, the third dialogue on the topic of the fight against corruption was held, with the participation of: Rosana Alvarado, Minister of Justice; Jorge Rodríguez, Coordinator of the National Anticorruption Commission; Andrés Salazar, academic of the Ecuador Decide team; and Guillermo Pavón, businessman and part of the Citizen's Watch Against Anticorruption of the Ecuadorian Metal Industry.

In this program, guests discussed the Government’s efforts regarding the fight against corruption and presented the results of the follow-up report on the campaign promises after the first 100 days of government prepared by FARO. In addition, the importance of civil society’s and the private sector’s role in the prevention and fight against corruption was analyzed, through specific recommendations that could contribute to the government's efforts to combat corruption.

The program was viewed 27,447 times, generated 188 social media reactions and 115 comments, and was shared 44 times.

https://www.facebook.com/elcomerciocom/videos/1854152767941810/?id=10001653490703
After the program, an online debate was held on Ecuador Decide’s web page "Diálogos y Debates" (Dialogues and Debates), and the question for discussion was: Should the state or civil society lead anti-corruption efforts? Orazio Bellettini participated representing the civil society sector and Edwin Jarrín representing the government as a member of the CPCCS.

Results showed Orazio Bellettini as winner with 54.5% of the votes. There were 392 votes and 400 direct visits to the web page from Google. Social network posts related to the first debate reached 14,302 people on Facebook and Twitter. Mr. Bellettini noted during the dialogue: "Only by empowering citizens to demand that public resources be managed with transparency and austerity, is it possible to build a society where decency is honored and where, since not even a penny is lost, development for all is possible."

This debate allowed for an analysis of different strategies to face corruption and its social, economic and moral consequences. The main conclusion was that in order to combat corruption, the government needs a comprehensive strategy which should include: legal reforms supported by ethics, and culture government programs.

**Stand up for Changes in an Environment Enabled by Civil Society.** The enactment of Executive Decree 193, sending the President’s Emergency Economic Bill to the Assembly and the popular referendum, changed the priorities of the Assembly. Given this situation, Counterpart and FARO analyzed the mapping of key actors to consolidate their support for the draft of the CSO Law. The main actors identified were: CEOSC, the parliamentary group led by Assemblyman Pabel Muñoz, SENPLADES, the Policy Secretary and the Technical Secretary of the "Toda Una Vida" Plan.

Additionally, FARO drafted an analysis of Executive Decree 193 that was discussed by CSO members of CEOSC to finally make a public statement in October 2017. **Annex 6: Public Statement by CEOSC**

Executive Decree 193 does not represent a change in the situation faced by CSOs in Ecuador, so the need for regulation for their operation continues to be relevant. However, the enactment of this Decree demonstrates that the Executive is open to improving its relationship with civil society. FARO and CEOSC will take this opportunity to continue with the advocacy strategy develop in the CSA-EPP Project to discuss the CSOs Law Project with the government.
This strategy has three key objectives:

1) Obtaining support from members of CEOSC and other social organizations for the draft of the CSO Law
2) Form a parliamentary group that embraces the proposed Law
3) Promote the importance of a CSO Law to implement public/social partnerships.

To fulfill this last objective and demonstrate that these alliances are key to fulfill the implementation of the government’s flagship programs, FARO held a meeting with SENPLADES to present the model for management of public/social alliances. As a result of this meeting it was agreed to carry out a pilot project of joint work between FARO, the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES) and the Casa for All Plan (by the President of the Republic) to analyze how this alliance could work, as a pilot project.

Additionally, in January 2018, work will be done to generate strategic communication tools for direct contact with advisors of members of the assembly.

Training Program: Mechanisms for Citizen Participation in Public Policies. This program is part of the InnovAcción program that FARO has implemented in recent years. This time, FARO designed a specific program for representatives of decentralized autonomous governments, civil society organizations and political parties.

The objective of the program is to provide practical tools to promote the people’s participation in public management. The program’s content provides a complete analysis of the public policy cycle and strategies for citizen participation and innovation in public management, specifically in electoral and transition processes. FARO also expects that this program will increase the participation of these actors in Ecuador Decide’s future activities, especially in the transition process of authorities at local level.

The program design includes 4 modules described in the following table:

**Table 1: Program modules: Mechanisms for Citizen Participation in Public Policies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>START DATE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF HOURS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cycle of Public Policy I</td>
<td>February 8th</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Public Policy Cycle II</td>
<td>March 15th</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Electoral Platforms</td>
<td>April 19th</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Transition processes of authorities</td>
<td>June 24th</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL HOURS</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 7: Design of Program for Citizen Participation in Public Policies

The proposed methodology has a blended format, which includes online sessions and face-to-face workshops to strengthen the concepts and answer questions by the participants.

FARO will use the InnovAcción Program’s online platform to teach the four modules, and a link has been established between this program and the website of the Ecuador Decide project for this purpose. Those interested in the program can obtain information and access the online information at the following link: https://ecuador-decide.org/fortalecimiento-de-capacidades/

Between October and December, the training program was announced through online invitations sent to contacts in the FARO database and through visits to the provinces of Loja, Imbabura, Napo, Tungurahua and Manabí, chosen for the number of voters in each city. In each location, FARO’s team visited mayors and officials of the GADs, as well as representatives of CSOs and political parties.

Currently, 45 people have been registered: 19 GAD officials, 18 CSO representatives and 7 from political organizations. In January 2018, FARO will hold meetings with the members of the political parties in order to increase the number of registrants, since, due to the current political context, parties are working on activities related to the Popular Referendum.

Presentation of the program in different locations:

Objectives 2: Civil society fosters diverse participation and engagement
Reforms to the Democratic Code. In the previous quarter, PC expanded its original proposal for reforms to the Organic Electoral Law and Political Organizations - Democracy Code and presented it before the Justice and State Reform Commission in the National Assembly. Once these activities were implemented, PC carried out several actions in the current period to monitor and promote its reform proposal.

The first debate of the Amendments to the Democratic Code began on October 24 during the full session of the National Assembly. Marcela Aguiñaga, president of the Commission of Justice and State Reform, was the speaker for the project and stressed that the proposal included “initiatives proposed by the National Electoral Council and social organizations, Electoral Watch Group and the Corporación Participación Ciudadana”. During and after the first debate, PC maintained direct contact with the Commission’s secretary and with representatives of political movements and other members of the commission.

Specifically, of the six reforms proposed by PC, three were included in the report for the first debate: (i) mandatory leave without pay for officials who will run as candidates for the same office, (ii) mandatory debate for candidates (a topic also promoted by Grupo FARO within the proposal of the CNE), and (iii) greater control of campaign financing. Annex 8: Comparison of proposals by PC vs. Commission report.

Based on the discussion of the first debate and the contact with these stakeholders, PC prepared additional comments that incorporated feedback collected in the meetings held in the previous quarter with experts on electoral issues. On November 20, PC presented its comments (Annex 9) to the Commission as a contribution to the report for the second debate of the bill to reform this law. Starting on that date, the Commission analyzed the various proposals and comments of various organizations, including PC, and on December 20 finalized its analysis to prepare the report for the second debate, scheduled for discussion in full session of the National Assembly in January 2018.

Legislation on Citizen Participation and Right to Assemble. To continue promoting the theme of Political and Citizen Participation, which is one of the fundamental pillars of the Democratic Agenda, PC carried out additional efforts to analyze proposed legislation regarding the right to assemble.

On October 23, President Moreno issued Decree 193 with the “Regulation for Granting Legal Capacity to Social Organizations”. The following day, PC issued a Press Release (Annex 10) recognizing the advances of the new regulation and at the same time highlighting aspects that require improvement to promote a true enabling environment for CSOs. Overall, PC considers that the decision of the Executive to repeal decrees # 16 and # 739 is positive for the CSO enabling environment. PC also notes that this new decree includes several of the recommendations that PC and other civil society organizations have been proposing, such as the elimination of some causes for dissolution, bureaucratic burdens for organizations, forced inclusion of members, among other provisions. However, it maintains some problematic aspects that must be improved. These include, for example, ambiguities in causes of dissolution and lack of procedural guarantees for the dissolution of organizations. PC wrote a detailed analysis of the

17 http://www.asambleanacional.gob.ec/es/blogs/comision-de-justicia-y-estructura-del-estado/52155-pleno-de-la
18 http://www.asambleanacional.gob.ec/es/blogs/comision-de-justicia-y-estructura-del-estado/53276-informe
Decree and shared it with the various platforms of CSOs, implementing partners, as well as the media, and other organizations. (Annex 11)

On December 13, PC organized a working session with assembly members and legislative advisors of the Citizen Participation Commission of the National Assembly to present and discuss the analysis and contributions - from the vision of social organizations - to the legislation on Citizen Participation that this Commission is analyzing and/or promoting, including a Citizen Participation Law, as well as reforms to a bill for the operation of civil society organizations. This session was held in Quito with a total of 23 participants, who - in addition to the legislative officials - also included members of the National Working Group, and other organizations and social actors such as opinion leaders of the media, NGOs, representatives of international cooperation agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, among others.

In this session, the participants exchanged opinions on several bills that are being analyzed by the members of the Citizen Participation Commission and other political parties in the National Assembly. Additionally, participants from civil society provided specific inputs to the legislation on association rights, as well as the legislation that must be formulated and/or reformed for the functioning of the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control (CPCCS), once the Popular Referendum is done and the obtained results are taken into account in relation to this institution’s transformation.

The members of the Legislative Commission present at this meeting, including its president, confirmed their acceptance of the recommendations and commitment to continue the dialogue, as well as carry out additional work sessions with PC and its partner organizations and experts, to advance in the formulation and/or reformation of legislation in this field.

**White Paper.** PC’s White Paper on Economic Policy (Annex 12) was drafted by an economic specialist who is also member of the National Working Group, and included the contribution of the Director of the Foundation for Development Studies Corporation (CORDES); in November, PC printed 500 copies of this document and distributed it to several audiences including public sector officials in the Executive and Legislative branches, academia, civil society organizations, representatives of the private sector, and media executives, among others. In addition to the printed version of the document, PC also produced a fact sheet which contains a summary of the information provided in the White Paper. This document has been distributed online to various audiences and will be further disseminated under a transparency project supported by the USG through IRI. (https://www.facebook.com/ParticipacionPC/photos/a.113258758713456.7043.103043999734932/1574039615968689/?type=3&theater)
Follow up on the Democratic Agenda. Since the Assembly session began in May 2017, PC has been monitoring the compliance of the elected Assembly members with the topics that were included in the Citizen Agenda and that were presented and debated by the candidates in the second year of the CSA Project. In this quarter, PC continued to carry out this monitoring and analysis, for which it developed a matrix in which PC records the central themes of the Agenda, the specific requests of the citizens throughout the process of building the Agenda, the specific actions carried out by the Assembly related to the issues, the parties involved in said actions, and the links to the supporting documents of the National Assembly, including press releases and social networks.

To date, the elected assembly members have carried out a series of actions (meetings, requests, proposals) on both general and specific issues of the Citizen Agenda. According to PC’s monitoring, the most discussed topic in the Assembly linked to the Agenda is on Human Rights and Priority Attention Groups (Agenda Subject 4). Most of the Assembly members’ work has taken place in the participation of working groups and dialogues with social sectors such as: women’s groups on the issue of domestic violence; education issues; and environmental rights. Furthermore, the topics of transparency have been addressed (Agenda Subject 2), from the discussion on supervision of works and services to dialogues in which civil society has participated. Many of these have focused on political issues such as requests for impeachment to the president of the Judiciary, and to the then vice president, Jorge Glas.

Along with this monitoring, PC has also designed an institutional bulletin informing about the follow-up of the work of the Assembly members and put it into circulation. The follow-up information to the Agenda feeds this bulletin, and additionally includes other topics that are of interest to the Assembly members both in their participation in the Commissions, as in the Plenary Assembly and in other spaces both individually and in the parliamentary factions. To date, 10 editions of this bulletin have been distributed online (4 in the previous quarter and 6 in the current period).

Follow-up to Democratic Institutions and Political Reforms: PC continued to participate actively in the monitoring of democratic institutions and the promotion of the Popular Referendum.

Between October and December, PC issued two bulletins of their institutional initiative “Pilas con el Concurso”, through which PC monitors the selection of candidates for the partial renewal of the National Electoral Council, a process that is being conducted by the Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control. The PC bulletins collects the main facts of the selection process and additionally issues an analysis and/or op-ed on the events surrounding that process. Additionally, regarding the renewal and extension of the functions of members of the National Electoral Council, PC issued a press release on November 20, in which it argued that the process of partial renewal of its members has not been carried out in a timely manner, which has consequently generated citizen criticism and doubts about the legitimacy and legality of the continuity of the CNE members in extended functions. (Annex 13 - Press release).

In addition to the public statement through the press and social media bulletin, PC participated in several interviews promoted by local media and academia, to broaden its analysis and recommendations in relation to this topic.
Additionally, once President Moreno sent the referendum questions to the Constitutional Court for approval on October 4, PC continued to monitor the request made by the presidency and the subsequent actions taken by the Executive against the lack of statement of the Court, which caused political uncertainty on the future of the referendum. On November 29th, and based on dispositions of Constitutional guarantees legislation, President Moreno opted to call the Popular Referendum directly. Although in this quarter PC had scheduled public discussion forums on the questions of the Referendum, due to the political context and the delay of the Constitutional Court to issue its ruling, PC reprogrammed these activities for January 2018.

PC also designed an online survey to ascertain the knowledge that citizens have in relation to the Popular Referendum and the priority topics of interest. Through the responses, PC confirmed that there is a general lack of information on the themes to be consulted, especially regarding the questions on Anti-Corruption, unlimited re-election, and the reorganization of the CPSCC. In addition, there was a higher perception of lack of information by young respondents. Based on survey and discussions with members of PC’s Board of Directors, PC enriched the design and focus of the discussion events that will take place during the month of January.

**Initiative "Young Leadership".** One of the main activities that PC is planning during its last stages of participation in the CSA Program, is the strengthening of leadership capacities and the advocacy of young people in democratic processes. To do this, PC is promoting the creation of a National Network of Young Leaders who will be trained by PC to effectively participate in democracy strengthening initiatives, including the "Young Leadership" initiative that will begin in January 2018, which will promote networking among university students for the promotion of democratic values and oversight of key democratic institutions and practices.

During this quarter, and with the support of three interns from universities in Quito, PC carried out a mapping of universities and youth leaders to identify the young people who will participate in this initiative. To do this, the organization defined selection criteria and approached various universities in the country, student associations and youth groups, and collected the necessary information to select the participants. Out of a total of 50 young people initially identified, PC selected 31 young people (14 women and 17 men) between the ages of 19 and 23 attending 13 universities in the cities with the highest university populations: Quito, Guayaquil, Cuenca, and Loja.

The chosen universities include public and private education institutions with diverse careers and with adequate infrastructure and recognized experience that could contribute to the realization of activities and/or provide support for this type of initiatives in the future. The universities include in Quito: University of the Americas (UDLA), the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador (PUCE), University of the Armed Forces (ESPE), Central University of Ecuador (UCE), International University of Ecuador (UIDE), University of the Hemispheres (UDLH) and San Francisco de Quito University (USFQ). In Guayaquil: Catholic University of Santiago of Guayaquil (UCSG), the Casa Grande University (UCG) and the Polytechnic School of the Coast (ESPOL). In Cuenca, the

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20 History of leadership, positions of student representation, participation in youth groups and associations, awards and recognition received, communication skills and public speaking, level of commitment.
University of Azuay (UDA) and the University of Cuenca (UC); and in Loja the Private Technical University of Loja (UTPL).

Starting in January, PC will provide these young leaders with training on different topics, including leadership, conflict resolution, citizenship and knowledge of the constitution; in addition to political advocacy techniques. Likewise, PC will support the creation of a virtual platform so that young people can exchange ideas in their own space of to promote their own initiatives and projects.

**Campaign "With the Right Values in Mind"**. As in the previous quarters, PC produced a series of messages to disseminate the contents and proposals of the Citizen Agenda through social media networks Facebook and Twitter. In this quarter, messages related to the Popular Referendum were prioritized, as well as the Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control regarding its actions in the partial renewal contest to elect members of the National Electoral Council.

In this quarter, there was a slight increase in followers of PC on Twitter in terms of its presence on social networks (Ethical Pact and PC’s institutional account) that reached 9,268. The details of PC's presence on this and other social networks like Instagram can be seen in the [Annex 14](#).

Additionally, PC had 21 appearances, mentions, and/or interviews in radio, press, and TV. These appearances were mainly focused on PC’s position regarding the Popular Referendum proposed by the Executive, the promulgation of Decree 193 with the new regulations for the functioning of CSOs, and the performance of the Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control, as well as the selection contest for the partial renewal of the National Electoral Council. For a complete detail of the Media Coverage of from October-December 2017, please refer to [Annex 15](#).

**Objective 3: Increased ability of CSOs to operate cohesively and effectively**

**Organizational Development Technical Assistance (TA).** Esquel provided Technical Assistance to the 11 beneficiary CSOs in the following areas: managing organizational conflict and human resources management.

Counterpart, through its Technical Lead, held a second workshop to analyze the way CSOs confront organizational conflicts with other stakeholders and, based on this, to establish strategies for prevention and conflict management. The workshop was held on November 30 and was aimed at beneficiary CSOs in the city of Quito. The event was attended by 10 CSO representatives (4 men and 6 women).

The workshop included tools for resolving conflicts, and recommendations for improving advocacy capacity through developing good relationships with parties such as the government and the private sector.

As a result of the workshop, participants understood the importance of generating a conflict management protocol within their organizations to improve both the implementation of internal and external strategies and the relationships among their members.
Additionally, Technical Assistance was provided in the area of human resources administration and was aimed at strengthening the structure of the work team of each CSO by defining the roles of each of its members. Internal regulations for each organization were prepared in accordance with the Law.

A fundamental aspect was to organize the work of the volunteers in each organization, who fall under different administrative legislation than the rest of the staff. For this reason, Esquel carried out an analysis of the situation of volunteers in each CSO making recommendations so that the work of these people is carried out in accordance with administrative law procedures.

Finally, Esquel is designing a Manual with clear policies to work with volunteers that allows CSOs to benefit from this opportunity while respecting the volunteer's rights and the country regulations.

In the month of December, Esquel conducted the final evaluation of Organizational Development to each of the 11 beneficiary CSOs. The results obtained in each organization as well as the comprehensive analysis and specific recommendations will be presented in a final OD report in the next period.

**Technical Assistance for Advocacy Projects.** In this quarter the Technical Assistance in advocacy was completed for the 11 beneficiary CSOs. To complete this process of TA, Esquel will hold a workshop in January 2018 to share the lessons learned and best practices in the advocacy projects. Subsequently, Esquel will prepare a final Technical Assistance report reporting on the results of the advocacy projects, and highlighting the results of the workshop.

The last CSO to finalize its advocacy project was the Community for Human Development. The organization’s most important result was the design of a process to create *Tips for Active Non-Violence* in educational institutions. This model was presented to five educational units and authorities of the central government, among them the Vice Minister of Education Freddy Peñafiel who has been interested in the model and its possible introduction in public schools.

**Technical Assistance in Financial Sustainability:** In its completion of this TA, Esquel supported the beneficiary CSOs in the development of strategies for social marketing with the aim of developing social proposals that attract the attention of donors and companies that can support their work.

The TA was accompanied by a workshop for the beneficiary CSOs. The workshop in Quito was attended by 19 representatives of CSOs (8 men and 11 women) and, in Guayaquil, 18 CSO representatives attended (6 men and 12 women). **Annex 16:** List of participants and agenda of the workshop.

As a result of the workshop, the beneficiary CSOs have developed methods to strengthen the financial sustainability plan and establish strategic alliances with other sectors.

Additionally, Esquel is developing promo videos for each CSO to promote its work. In the next quarter, videos produced to support the work of beneficiary CSOs will be presented.

**Legal Technical Assistance:** On October 12, a meeting was held with lawyers who agreed to be part of the Network of Legal Experts and will provide pro bono legal assistance to CSOs through the online platform of EsquelCLIC. The Network has 11 experts (8 men and 3 women).
Among the topics of the meeting included the legal assistance model that has been developed and the guidance for legal consultations. The model is organized in different areas of law such as civil, constitutional, administrative, among others. The model also includes time alerts to respond to CSOs consultations in a timely manner.

Additionally, the lawyers of this network will work together in emblematic legal cases that could serve as an example for the application of the law for all CSOs.

Finally, a promotional video of the Expert Network was made as part of the communication strategy of this service. This video can be seen in the following link: https://www.facebook.com/fundacion.esquel/videos/1867495943561328/

Network of Legal Experts Presentation: October 12th, 2017

Virtual forums. Esquel, in partnership with the newspaper "La Hora", one of the most important media outlets in the country, organized a forum on the new regulations for CSOs (Executive Decree 193 and that was transmitted online by both organizations. The forum was attended by Boris Cornejo, President of Esquel, Alicia Arias, Counterpart International Technical Lead and Luis Fernando Almeida, legal advisor in civil and constitutional areas. Because of this alliance, more than 12,000 people were reached on social networks and 39 people participated personally (21 men and 18 women).

In addition, Esquel conducted a video conference about the relationship between CSOs and private sector dictated by the expert Barbara Palacios that reached 1,817 visualizations. Finally, six promotional videos were produced on topics in which Esquel and its beneficiary CSOs work. The list of all the developed products and the corresponding links are in the Annex 17.
Convergence Board (CB): On November 21st the Convergence Board received a recognition of good practices in the fulfillment of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace, Justice and Solid Institutions by the UN Global Compact. With more than 150 applications received from 114 participating organizations, the 61 best practices were awarded. The Convergence Board was recognized as a plural and independent initiative that has sought to highlight the voice of citizens, encouraging debate and agreement to create effective proposals that confront structural problems of Ecuadorian society.

The objectives set by the Convergence Board for this period were:

- Strengthen the support of the organizations that are part of the Convergence Board through the follow-up to the agreements, consensus on work priorities and the incorporation of three new members: Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador through its Indigenous Intercultural Chair, Citizen Electoral Observatory and the Citizens Movement for Democracy.
- Support the Popular Referendum as a political strategy to approach the government to subsequently work on the National Agreements on Education and Social Security.
- Work jointly with the Anticorruption Commission to generate a public agreement against corruption.

Under these objectives, the following activities were carried out:

a) Elaboration of a strategy to strengthen the Convergence Board in the current political context. This strategy has been presented to the members of the Convergence Board and will be defined in the month of January 2018.

b) Development of a communication and advocacy strategy: On December 4, an internal workshop was held with the Esquel team on this topic. Annexes 18 and 19 contain the summary of the Workshop and results obtained, which are summarized in Graph 2 below.

Graph 2: CB agreements for the communication and advocacy strategy

- The communication strategy aims to turn the Convergence Board into an icon of dialogue and citizen action at a national level.
- Support the referendum through the following actions:
  - Communication Campaign named “7 times YES to the Popular Referendum”
  - Elaboration of short, direct and clear messages about the importance of voting YES in each one of the questions.
  - Virtual forums for reflection on each of the 7 questions.
  - Conducting public events to support the referendum
- Promote national agreements on: Education and Social Security
- Start dialogues with Political Parties
- Search financing opportunities for Convergence Board activities
c) Investigation on the lack of Citizen Participation and Social Control Council’s independence. The CB is investigating the process of the commissions’ selection of authorities, which produced irregular designation of important authorities such as: The Comptroller General of the State, the National Electoral Council and the Attorney General of the State.

The research will include proposals for political reform that guarantee an ethical and independent process based on the merits of the candidates. This research will contribute to the process to be undertaken by the Transitional Commission of the Citizen Participation and Social Control Council once the Popular Referendum is over.

Support for the Popular Referendum. The Convergence Board worked together with the Anticorruption Commission in two specific activities: (1) in September, the CB submitted question proposals to be considered by President Moreno for the Popular Referendum and, (2) the application of collective advocacy strategies to support the Referendum.

The Referendum proposal questions were submitted to the Presidency in September, and it is important to note that three of the seven questions in the Referendum correspond to proposals raised by the CB.

Regarding the strategy to support the Popular Referendum, Esquel, the CB and the newspaper "La Hora” are organizing online forums on each of the seven questions addressed in the Referendum. The purpose of the forums is for citizens to inform themselves and reflect on each question and the consequences of its implementation. So far, two of the seven online forums have been created.

On December 18, the first forum on the importance of the Popular Referendum took place, the panelists were members of the CB: María Paula Romo, Juan Carlos Calderón, Milton Luna and Guadalupe Fierro (Moderator). The forum reached more than 18,000 people and can be seen at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/EcConvergencia/videos/191483824737143/

On December 21, the second forum was held, which addressed the first question of the Referendum, which addresses the “civil death” question. Specifically, the question asks whether persons convicted of acts of corruption should be prohibited from participating in politics and should be penalized by losing their property. The panelists were: Cesar Montufar, Jorge Rodríguez, Juan Sebastián Roldán and Jorge Madera (Moderator). The forum reached more than 41,000 people and can be seen at the following link: https://www.facebook.com/EcConvergencia/videos/1922775994657766/

CB National Agreements: CB has determined the two topics that it will work on in the development of two National Agreements: Education, with emphasis on Bilingual Intercultural Education, and Social Security.

In Education, on November 28 and 29, the Confederacion de Nacionalidades Indigenas del Ecuador (CONAIE) organized a forum called "Dialogue of Knowledge". This Forum constituted the first step in creating a road map towards the National Agreement for Education.

The objective of the Forum was to identify contributions from the indigenous representatives for the Bilingual Intercultural Education System (educational rights). As a result of this event, a
A document with 14 debate points was created for the dialogue process with the government. 69 people participated (48 men and 21 women). **Annex 20**: List of Participants.

In the area of Social Security, on October 25 at the Andina Simón Bolívar University, the Social Security Board launch party was held, which is part of the CB. The Social Security Board is composed of a group of experts who will write public policy proposals to influence the Social Security System’s function. In addition, its goal is to promote a dialogue between the labor unions, employers and government to help create a National Accord that improves Social Security.

At the event, a diagnosis of the social security system was presented, made by the CB, which was positively received by the participants. The diagnosis showed the key issues to be worked on by the CB; the need for the authorities to know about the serious social security system situation and to accept the recommendations of the board to improve it. 152 people participated in the event (85 men and 67 women). **Annex 21**: The Social Security System Diagnosis.

The event attracted the interest of the television channel “Telesucesos”, which together with the CB, in October and December aired four programs to discuss social security issues with help from members of the Social Security Board. The programs can be seen at the following link: [https://youtu.be/7FHnzX2WyQs](https://youtu.be/7FHnzX2WyQs)

**CB impact events.** The CB has organized a series of symbolic events in support of citizen organizations to stress specific issues related to the fight against corruption and support the active participation of citizens. These events have caught the attention of government authorities and even the President of the Republic who has received members of the CB and the National Anticorruption Commission in order to listen to their concerns and proposals.

Among the events held, the following stand out:

(a) **Supporting the Electoral Observatory to organize the "Liberation of the CNE" event.** In November 2017, three of the members of the National Electoral Council sought to extend their duties beyond November 29, 2017, the day on which their term legally ended. In light of this fact, on November 23, the Electoral Citizen Observatory, the CB, the Democracy and Human Rights Platform of Ecuador, the Federation of Guayas Civil Society Organizations, Fundamedios, the Citizen Observatory of Public Services and the collective "Nosotras por la Democracia", organized an event called: "Liberation of the CNE - Electoral Dignity and Transparency ".

The Social Security Study Board launch
Around 100 people attended the event, in which political and social leaders signed an Open Letter to the President of the Republic, requesting respect for the constitution and the independence for State affairs.

As a result of this event, on November 29, a meeting was held between the President of the Republic and representatives from various social movements of CB to discuss issues relating to the CNE situation and the Popular Referendum.

It was an open dialogue and the President was very interested in the CB’s proposals. The CB showed its support for the popular referendum, as a means of saving the institution of democracy, stressing the need to legally integrate the National Electoral Council, the entity in charge of carrying out this referendum.

(b) Participation at the Symbolic Political Trial of Vice President Jorge Glas. Given the refusal of the National Assembly to impeach the former Vice President for his participation in controversial corruption cases, in October, the Guayas National Anti-Corruption Commission, the CB and various citizen groups organized an event featuring a symbolic trial of Glas. The event aimed to bringing awareness to the population about the crimes committed and the implications for the country because of these acts of corruption.

Approximately 500 people attended, including social leaders, the media, teachers’ associations, the Federation of Guayas Civil Society Organizations, the Workers’ Front, the National Union of Educators and others. Some of the reports of this event can be found in the following links:


(c) Support for the Symbolic Popular Trial for the Former Minister of Education Augusto Espinoza. After the National Assembly refused to impeach the former Minister of Education for his responsibility in the multiple cases of school abuse that were discovered this year, the
CB, the National Anticorruption Commission and the National Union of Educators, decided to hold an event of symbolic judgment so that citizens could show their rejection for this type of action.

Approximately 60 people participated, and expressed their displeasure for the lack of actions of the former minister of education. Read the news in the following link: El Comercio. November 28, 2017. In popular trial Augusto Espinosa was ‘sentenced’ to three years in prison. Link:  http://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/juicio-popular-augustoespinosa-sentencia-une.html

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation

The attached Monitoring and Evaluation Plan table includes the indicators and results corresponding to the first quarter of the fourth year of the CSA Program’s (Annex 22) implementation. Some of the indicators reached during this quarter include:

- **CCI 2 - Number of Networks Strengthened.** Seven networks were strengthened this QT. (1) FARO’s Consortium Ecuador Decide (Del Dicho Al Hecho) through discussion and review sessions of Del Dicho Al Hecho oversight initiative, (2) the CEOSC network through regular assistance/coordination by FARO and discussion of the new Decree 193 and the CSO enabling environment. (3) the Guayas LGBTI network through Esquel’s regular TA and training activities to its members. (4) the Convergence Board coalition through advisory services on governance and political analysis, (5) the Convergence Board’s Social Security platform through discussion sessions and launching event to discuss assessment results, (6) The Anti-Corruption coalition and NAC through the support and assistance for the implementation of AC events including popular trials against VP and former Minister of Education, and (7) the Convergence Board’s Education coalition through discussion events of education on indigenous knowledge and overall discussion for planning future actions for a national Education agreement to be promoted starting in QT2.

- **CCI 3 - Number of CSOs, Social Organizations, and Government Agencies assisted.** A total of 56 organizations were assisted this period. This included: (1) FARO’s Training and hands-on assistance to 12 organizations (5 CSOs, 5 universities, and 2 private sector institutions) implementing Del Dicho Al Hecho initiative to follow-up to presidential campaign promises, (2) Assistance and discussion sessions on data and results with 13 public sector institutions providing the information for this initiative. (3) Esquel’s Regular TA and Training to 11 beneficiary CSOs. (4) Esquel’s TA and training to 2 additional organizations (Cronopios El Oro and Tu Mejor Version participating in Social Marketing and Conflict Resolution trainings), and (5) Esquel’s governance, OD, and political analysis assistance to the Mesa de la Convergencia formed by 18 core organizations.

- **DR.3.2.5 (EPP Indicator) - Number of individuals receiving civic education through USG-assisted programs (online, public forum participants, events).** A total of 280 individuals participated in CSA-EPP democracy related forums and events this period. This included participants at Esquel-MC events: (i) 69 participants at the Forum on Education - Indigenous Knowledge, (ii) 152 participants at the Forum on Social Security and launching of the Social Security platform, (iii) 39 participants at the live recording of Esquel’s on-line Forum on the new Decree 193 for CSOs, and (iv) 20 participants attending the recording of the first 2 on-line forums on the Popular Referendum (Importance of the Popular Referendum and Anti-Corruption). Moreover, the CSA-EPP Program outreach through the on-line forums organized by Esquel and FARO this period is over 126,000 measured by partners through numbers of
views, shares, reproductions, likes, comments, and/or other types of interactions or on-line and social media records and statistics.

V. Accomplishments

The main achievements of each social organization in relation to the objectives of the program include:

**Objective 1**

- Published reports after 100 days of government regarding the fulfillment of President Moreno's campaign promises in: the fight against corruption, employment, primary education, technical education, entrepreneurship, reconstruction of Manabí. The process to elaborate the report and get the information from different actors proved to be a challenge for the CSOs and universities involved, since this event is the first of its kind. The creation of objective indicators was a challenging task, partly due to society's inexperience for following up on public policies and, additionally, due to the lack of information on government programs in state institutions.

Despite these challenges, it has been possible to measure progress while maintaining the balance between accuracy, practicality and accessibility. Additionally, FARO has a digital tool that allows citizens to see the indicators' results in a simple and accessible way.

The recommendations made in the reports are based on clear evidence that they hope will be considered by government authorities. Such an effort is unprecedented in this country, furthermore, one of the crucial achievements for the project has been the consolidation of relations and the exchange of information with the distinct social and state counterparts.

- FARO’s dialogue and debate programs have demonstrated that it is possible to reach a large number of people to discuss ideas on issues that go beyond the currently context and create innovative solutions to each topic. In addition, new voices have been identified in different sectors and have raised issues of vital importance for the country.

The use of virtual debates is uncommon in Ecuador and other figures and CSOs are following the trend. Furthermore, press reports and interviews on this initiative have been published. Attachment 23: List of interviews and press releases.

The two dialogue programs spoke with authorities at the State Minister level and there were 54,228 views. There were 729 votes and 900 direct visits to the virtual web debate.

The debates' exercise takes back the capacity for public deliberation, after a period in which social figures and the media were conditioned by the government's agenda.

**Objective 2**

- The main result of PC during this period was the identification of 31 qualified university leaders to participate in the "Young Leaders Operation" initiative, by which PC will strengthen their capacity to monitor and influence democratic processes. The young people have confirmed their commitment and belong to 13 public and private universities in four of the cities where the university population of the country is concentrated. They will be grouped in a Young
Leaders Network to carry out this initiative and plan other events in the short and medium term.

- As in the previous quarter, PC also considers furthering the collaboration with Alianza País a major accomplishment. AP was receptive to PC’s comments and recommendations in the discussions on reforms to the Democratic Code and legislation on issues of citizen participation. PC has been able to exchange opinions with legislators and their advisors, and their observations and inputs have been mentioned in the internal meetings of the committees in charge of these bills.

**Objective 3.**

- The CB achieved the objective of actively support the President’s proposal to have a Popular Referendum through a process in which several actors participate to identify the relevant topics in which the citizens require urgent changes. These topics were included into concrete questions proposed to the President of the Republic. Additionally, as a collective advocacy strategy to support the Popular Referendum, virtual forums were organized on each of the questions, with the aim of making the public aware of the consequences and the requirements to implement each question if it was approved in the referendum.

- Another important result was the process of TA completion for the 11 CSO beneficiaries. The process included closing evaluations, meetings to discuss the results and the establishment of strategic alliances for the continuity of projects executed by CSO. In the next period, Esquel will establish comparison parameters and specific recommendations for OD in each CSO.

**VI. Best Practices and Challenges**

Particular best practices and challenges identified under the program components are as follows:

**Objective 1**

- The most important challenge in this period for FARO was the elaboration of follow-up reports on the first 100 days of government, which have indicators that respond to the problem areas identified by the members of the committee and include well-founded recommendations that contribute to the analysis of public policy and, to the provision of solutions.

  To achieve this result, the commitment from State institutions since the beginning of the process was fundamental. With each institution, people were defined who act as technical counterparts with whom FARO has direct access.

  The quality of information presented in the reports corresponds to FARO’s continued efforts to work with universities to rigorously analyze each topic, to insist on the required information from the government institutions and to include the CSO’s experience in the different topics.

  The presentation of the online information in an instructive, flexible and easy to understand way has encouraged the interest of citizens (media, schools, researchers, decision makers) in the results.
For the reports in the first year of government, FARO will work on obtaining information from direct sources that contribute to the report, as it is necessary to avoid the delay in the delivery of information by government institutions and this effort could help to strengthen the research capabilities of academia. In addition, these reports will include not only the information gathered but an analysis of the repercussions from the lack of information.

**Objective 2**

- The partnership with UDLA stands out as a best practice for expanding their outreach to youth groups in main cities of the country. This alliance helped PC enrich its approach in working with youth and access to several networks and discussion forums for young people, such as the inter-university network for the Model United Nations. The young leaders identified will be part of the “Young Leaders Operation” initiative that PC will carry out in the next quarter. This alliance involved the recruitment and active participation of interns who also participate in the oversight of the selection processes of authorities, such as the one currently being carried out by the CPCCS in relation to the partial selection of CNE members.

**Objective 3**

- The dialogue process within the CB is complicated because of its organizational diversity, which has meant a great effort on Esquel’s part to create communication processes that produce consensus in order to promote national agreements in the CB. One of the best practices implemented by Esquel is to focus the dialogue process on a political aspect that requires extensive context analysis to determine the best time to act based on the requirements of the situation, without affecting the objectives and actions scheduled in the project.

As a result of this process, two National Agreements were outlined, one in Education, with emphasis on Bilingual Intercultural Education, and another on Social Security. Each agreement will have a work plan and a strategy defined to promote advocacy actions in specific proposals which will be discussed with the government in dialogue processes.

In the next period, Esquel will work with the CB on the clear definition of the specific contents of the two National Agreements and will promote it at national level.

- Symbolic actions in support of the National Anticorruption Commission resulted in an effective methodology for citizens to better understand the repercussions of acts of corruption in the country, to report and participate actively. Citizens have begun to overcome fear and express not only their protest but also clear proposals to fight against corruption.

**VII. Expenses**

As of December 31, 2017, the total of incurred expenses was US $ 3,486,752.11

**VIII. Next Quarter Priorities**

**Objective 1**
• Implement the first module of the Public Policy cycle and start with the implementation of the second module for programs on questions of Popular Referendum.
• Implement two additional dialogue programs and two virtual debates on entrepreneurship and on the reconstruction of Manabí. Design the transition process protocol at the local level
• Issue follow-up reports at 6 months of government
• Gather information for the analysis of indicators for the first year of government
• Apply the advocacy strategy design to discuss for CSO Law project with government officials and members of the Assembly.

**Objective 2**
• Follow up on the PC reform proposals to the Democratic Code.
• Organize five discussion events with priority questions of the Referendum in Guayaquil, Quito, Machala, Cuenca and Ibarra.
• Hold training workshops for young university students to carry out the “Young Leaders Operation” initiative.
• Form a Young Leaders National Network.

**Objective 3**
• Hold the close-out event for the OD component with the 11 CSO beneficiaries.
• Write final report of TA on the event projects and obtained results
• Write final report of TA on OD, results obtained, lessons learned and best practices.
• Write final report of the TA in social marketing
• Create a roadmap for National Agreements
• Prepare the final version of the communication strategy for CB
• Use communication methods to support the Popular Referendum