



INDONESIA

TIME FOR MORE PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT AND BETTER ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Open government is one of the key strategic initiatives of the government of Indonesia. As an incubator for new and innovative ideas, the UKP4, also known as the President's Delivery Unit (PDU), is responsible for ensuring that all key promises and strategic programmes declared by the President and Vice President are delivered by government departments and felt by the public. In late 2010, discussions about the Open Government Partnership were already getting underway in Indonesia between U.S. White House officials and Minister Kuntoro Mangkusubroto. Like other OGP founding members, Indonesia has been instrumental in laying the foundations of the OGP, both domestically and internationally.

Among CSOs in Indonesia, the initiative was seen as accelerating the national agenda in three key areas: implementing the Freedom Of Information Act (FOI),

improving public services, and increasing public participation. 'As an organisation working on human rights, democracy and access to information, we heard about the OGP through the freedom of information network. In the beginning we were really excited about it,' says Tanti Budhi Suryani of the Tifa Foundation.

ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY

In July 2011, with stringent timelines for developing the first OGP National Action Plan, the PDU made the decision to select a handful of civil society organisations to join the Core Team.

'There are hundreds of CSOs in Indonesia. We wanted organisations with a proven track record, experience and relevance in the field but no affiliation to any political party.'

explains Tara Hidayat of the PDU. Four CSOs (Indonesian Center for Environmental Law, Transparency International Indonesia, Indonesia Forum for Budget Transparency (FITRA), and the Center for Regional Information & Studies (PATTIRO)) and five government departments were invited to form the Core Team, which is responsible for the planning, programme management, monitoring and evaluation of the open government initiative. Membership was restricted deliberately – and affiliates were required to act as both information hubs and role models for other CSOs and government departments.

Some civil society organisations felt the selection process of the Core Team's CSO members was less than perfect. 'The process wasn't participative. Government just appointed them. Our greater concern, however, is their role in relation to the Action Plan and how the three main agenda points are

'The process wasn't participative. Government just appointed them. Our greater concern, however, is their role in relation to the Action Plan and how the three main agenda points are fulfilled,' - Tanti Budhi Suryani, the Tifa Foundation

fulfilled,' says Tanti. For government, it was more a case of 'let's make a start and see how it goes. We now know it should be done differently,' Tara reflects. One of the first responsibilities of the Core Team was to draft the Action Plan, which was done in conjunction with members of the National Planning Commission (Bappenas). The first draft listed 12 key actions.

The consultation process that followed included over 30 focus group discussions in nine provinces and eleven cities. These were conducted by the University of Indonesia for the purpose of raising awareness and helping citizens to understand open government. Parallel processes took place within government agencies and civil society. During July and August, a series of workshops was held with various stakeholders (government, media, private sector, NGOs) and inputs were solicited via the Indonesia open government

initiative website (www.opengovindonesia.org) and through Facebook and Twitter. Government and civil society concur on the need to continuously raise awareness of open government principles, especially in the provinces. The strategies used have included quarterly knowledge forums, roadshows, national competitions and 'Right to Know' days.

The first Action Plan outlined a Triple Track Strategy: Track 1 - to accelerate the implementation of the Law on Public Information; Track 2 - portal development (One Service, One Government, One Map) to aid information disclosure and promote public participation; Track 3 - pilot projects and new initiatives. Responsibility for implementing all the commitments outlined in the first Action Plan, with the exception of the Pilot Project, has been assigned to government. The Pilot Project seeks to establish best practice models for openness

in the provision of services to citizens. It will draw on initiatives designed to put open government into practice at the local and regional level. Responsibility for implementing these initiatives lies with the CSO Core Team, which will be acting in partnership with regional and local government agencies.

CRITIQUING THE FIRST ACTION PLAN

By September 2011, the final Action Plan of 38 commitments had developed organically from the 12 original commitments. According to Maryati Abdullah, a Core Team member at the time, the Action Plan was very broad, too ambitious and contained far too many actions. The majority of the actions can be classified as ongoing programmes, meaning the Action Plan did not contain enough new efforts to promote transparency. 'New transparency projects need

'It's a challenge for government officials to move beyond their comfort zone and accept that information is a human right and should be owned by the public.'

- Tara Hidayat, President's Delivery Unit

new budgetary allocations from the respective ministries. These were not included either because they missed the boat in the budget cycle or because they were not seen as a priority. The government must overcome this obstacle in time for the next Action Plan,' says Mary.

The Independent Monitoring Group, a consortium of CSOs working on transparency and human rights, closely monitored the implementation of the Action Plan. It published its findings in The Independent Report on Open Government Partnership in Indonesia, 2011. For Track 1, their evaluation of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics indicates that only 40% of state institutions at city and districts level have conformed to the FOI Act. They regard the model developed by the PDU for Track 2 as being too simplistic. Their recommendation is that an internet-based programme called PLIK be used. Developed

by the Ministry of Informatics, this software has been tried and tested in 5,900 districts. They believe that with some additional modifications, this software could become a model for genuine public participation, as opposed to the 'click activism' promoted by the PDU's portal.

For a country with a multi-ethnic population of 240 million spread over 13,000 islands, the challenges are many: how can general awareness of open government and its importance be raised; how can its ownership be fostered; how can the message be spread to both the various state institutions and the public; how can public participation be fostered; and how can constructive government engagement with citizens be brought about. Changing the mindset of government officials is no easy task. Getting them to share information is an ongoing struggle and one that will take time. 'It's a challenge for government officials

to move beyond their comfort zone and accept that information is a human right and should be owned by the public,' says Tara.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead to the next phase of the OGP process in Indonesia, a number of changes is being proposed. Membership of the Core Team will soon be extended to two vital ministries: the Departments of Home Affairs and Bureaucracy Reform. In addition, a further three CSOs will join the team. 'We are currently drafting the selection criteria and the application process and considering the timelines,' explains Tara. In an attempt to improve levels of participation and coordination and to increase the accountability of all Core Team members, the modus operandus of the meetings, held every two months, is being reviewed. It is proposed that the Chair and venue of the meetings be rotated. This

'the voice of civil society, within both Indonesia and ASEAN is critical and we shouldn't be sidelined if participation is to have real meaning.' - Maryati Abdullah, Core Team member

should instil a greater sense of responsibility and ownership among team members.

With preparations for the second Action Plan in full swing, the role Indonesian CSOs should ideally fulfil remains a topic of discussion. OGP is a multi-stakeholder initiative. Accordingly, some believe that CSOs should become more proactive and should assume their role as equal partners – setting the OGP agenda, and building alliances within government – alongside civil servants in departments keen to embrace and promote the ethos of open government. However, others want CSOs to become more critical. They would be happy to see those outside the Core Team taking on a monitoring role and making policy recommendations, while core team members would have a consultative function. Either way, 'the voice of civil society, within both Indonesia and ASEAN is critical and we shouldn't be sidelined

if participation is to have real meaning,' advocates Mary.

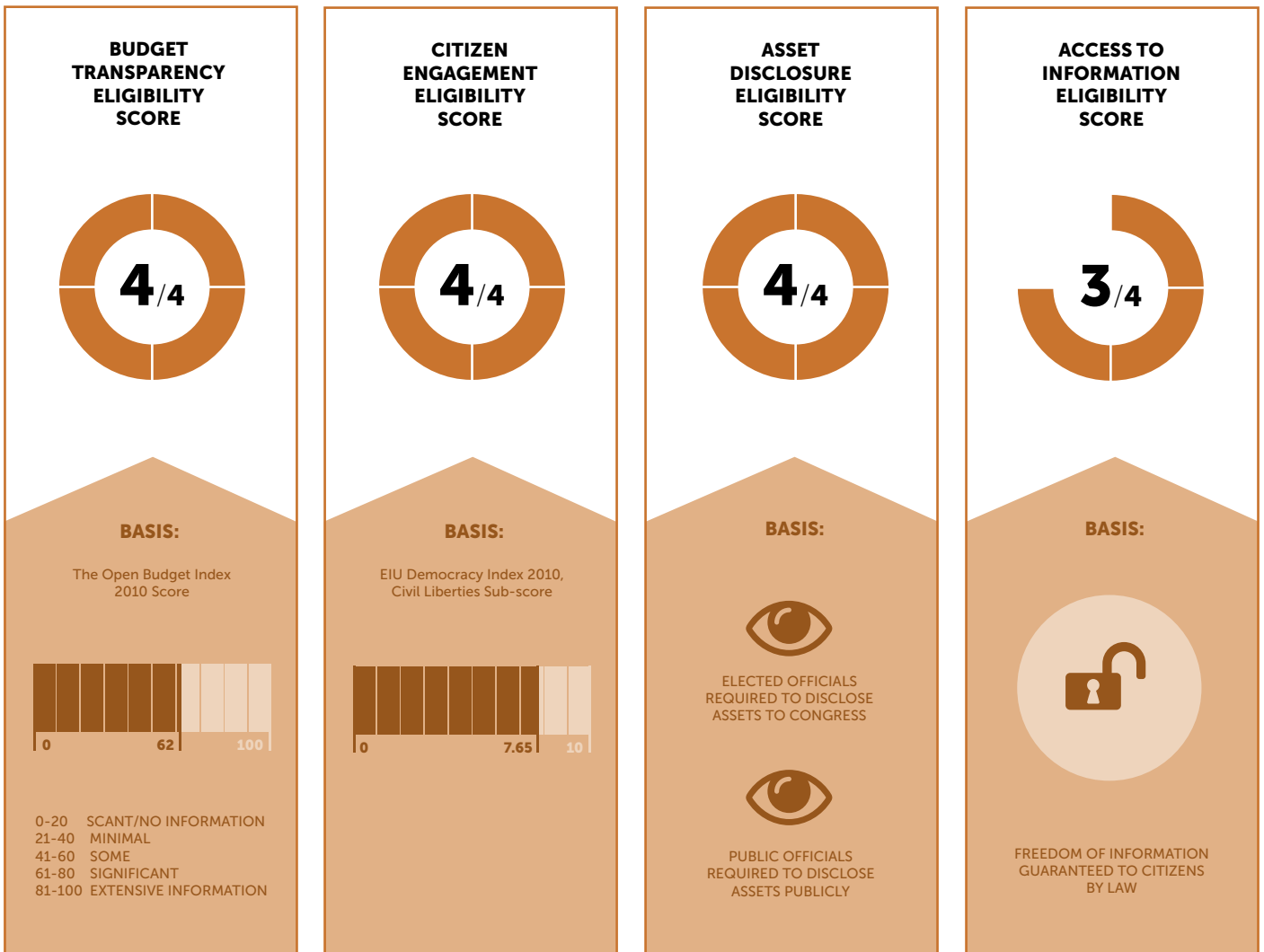
🔗 For more information or to get in touch with one of the people interviewed, please e-mail nvaart@hivos.nl.

🕒 OGP MEMBER SINCE:
September 2011

🏠 CURRENT STAGE:
2nd Action Plan

🌐 OGP SITE:
<http://opengovindonesia.org/tentang-kami/open-government-partnership/>

INDONESIA OGP ELIGIBILITY DATASHEET



TOTAL OGP ELIGIBILITY SCORE: **15/16**

