



MEXICO

PRIORITY IS TO STRENGTHEN AND DEEPEN THE RELATIONSHIP

The Federal Access to Information and Data Protection Institute (IFAI) is one of the world's formative and most respected Right to Information (RTI) establishments and it was instrumental in developing and shaping the OGP. 'Back in 2010, one of our Commissioners was invited by the White House to share her expertise,' says Gabriela Segovia of IFAI. As an independent unit charged with monitoring the application of the Federal Access to Information Law (FOIA) and appeals lodged in respect of it, IFAI has been well placed to take forward the OGP, both within Mexico and internationally. Following consultative talks with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other units of federal government and with CSOs in August 2011, a draft Action Plan was discussed and proposed. 'IFAI invited a number of CSOs to provide inputs and possible commitments that were relevant and feasible for government to execute within a one-year time frame,' explains

Alejandro Gonzalez of GESOC. The 'coalition' of the remaining eight specialist organisations compiled over 100 commitments taken from agendas they were already working on – in the areas of transparency, accountability and RTI – and suggested these to the federal government. Mexico's National Action Plan was presented together with the Action Plans of the other seven founding member countries in September 2011.

'After the launch in New York, we discovered that most of our inputs had not been incorporated in the Action Plan, and we didn't consider the document to be authentic,'

says Alejandro. The CSOs were critical and considered the Action Plan to be too general, too broad and not very strategic. Furthermore, the document hardly reflected any CS proposals or perspectives.

'We were constrained by time and also lacked the experience and methodology needed to develop the Plan,' Gabriela recalls. Thereafter a process of intense discussion started between the Coalition, IFAI and the Ministry of Public Administration – in the shape of the OGP Tripartite Technical Secretariat (TTS) - to develop the 'Reinforced or Extended Action Plan'. The TTS was set up to act as a permanent and institutionalised decision-making, monitoring and compliance body for the OGP.

CONSULTATIONS

Since its inception, IFAI has acted as an intermediary and facilitator between government and civil society. The consultation process for the Extended Plan commenced in December 2011 and was limited to the eight CSOs; all are based in Mexico City but work extensively in different states of the country. These organisations are recognised,

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- Alejandro Gonzalez, GESOC

experienced and independent. They bring analytical and critical skills to the table. 'We represent ourselves but we have been working as a consolidated community of practice for the past eight to ten years,' explains Alejandro. From the start, the TTS has had ongoing discussions about broadening the representation to other levels of government and to include other CSOs.

The decision not to go 'fully public' with the consultations was motivated by two important constraints: the timing and the time frame. With little time to prepare the document and with the Action Plan spanning only 12 months, the TTS focused on ensuring that the commitments and actions were realistic, measureable and achievable.

'To ensure our efforts are well coordinated, we have appointed someone from the FUNDAR

organisation to be the formal civil society representative on the TTS,' explains Alejandro. This position is for a fixed term and will work on a rotational basis. A part-time assistant is also being appointed to support the coordinator, a post that will be financed in equal parts by the eight CSOs. In addition, each CSO has appointed a staff member in order to define and lead the consultation process for the new Action Plan, which is likely to have eight thematic areas or clusters.

In late 2012, Mexico held national elections and the country now has a new government. Says Gabriela,

'With a new federal administration in place, we are focusing our time and energy on developing a relationship with them in order to continue our work on the OGP and to integrate the new Action Plan.'

The TTS also recognises the importance of preserving what has been developed: strengthening and deepening the relationship and improving the quality of the commitments. The contact with President Enrique Pena Nieto's team to date has been positive and the TTS has shared the results and lessons learned from implementing the first Action Plan. The results of the joint government/civil society evaluation revealed that only two commitments had not been fulfilled (21 were completely fulfilled and 15 were partially fulfilled). 'The overall quality was below par. For the second Action Plan, we want to have fewer commitments but those that are more strategic and have strong capacity to transform public management,' says Alejandro.

A stakeholder analysis is currently being undertaken, identifying key players in each cluster. In June/July 2013, discussions will commence with NGOs, academia, the media,

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the private sector and government agencies to develop specific result-oriented commitments that have the capacity to transform peoples' lives. 'The round table discussions will be highly participatory, involving public officials and the results will be published online,' says Alejandro. A website (www.aga.org.mx) was created at the outset and it has been actively utilised for hosting and sharing information. To date, the media has not been fully aware of the OGP and it has not been possible to generate media excitement about the initiative. OGP is often misunderstood; it is seen as a new thing that is complex and primarily about information technology. Plans are underway to engage the media in a more formal and structured dialogue in order to address these misconceptions and to bring about more substantive involvement.

Private sector engagement has also been minimal but is important

for the future. Increasing the transparency of procurement procedures is vital to addressing corruptive practices. According to Gabriela 'there are a number of CSOs that work with the private sector on enhancing transparency, and it is important that we create space for them on the OGP platform.'

KEY LESSONS

The Mexican experience has been enriching and many important lessons have emerged. Firstly, in order to have significant involvement in the OGP action-planning process, CSOs that are willing to engage must have enough resources (time, financial, personnel and knowledge) to sustain their participation. Secondly, it has been useful for CSOs to be part of various networks (national and international) in order to boost the whole process and to bring pressure to bear where necessary.

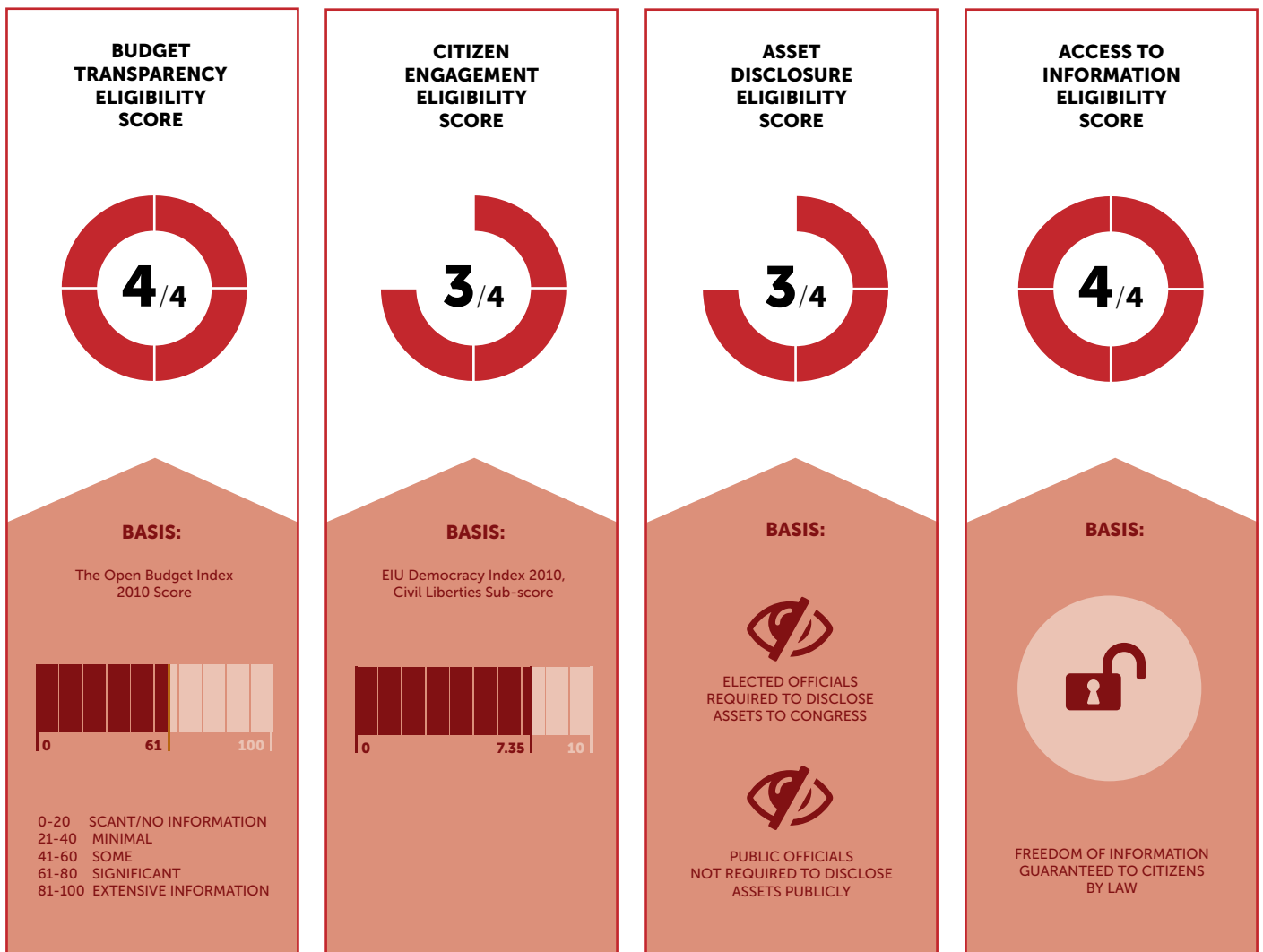
Thirdly, the TTS has proved to be an effective mechanism for steering and monitoring the OGP process in Mexico. Fourthly, raising the awareness of the OGP within government agencies and within civil society must be an ongoing process. Lastly, the TTS has provided a valuable space in which the relationship between all three actors has been equal and horizontal, and managed according to a consensus model. 'OGP has been about participation. Although it was difficult to define a methodology, we have learned a lot from trying things out and making the necessary mistakes. In fact we have learned more from these than from our successes,' concludes Gabriela.

OGP MEMBER SINCE:
September 2011

CURRENT STAGE:
2nd Action Plan

OGP SITE:
<http://aga.org.mx/SitePages/Principal.aspx>

MEXICO OGP ELIGIBILITY DATASHEET



TOTAL OGP ELIGIBILITY SCORE: **14/16**