

CIPPEC: ARGENTINA

ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION AT THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BRANCH: PROMOTING AN INNOVATIVE MONITORING MECHANISM

Final Report, April 4 2006

Final report of activities

This report includes all the activities realized during the last phase of the project and also and overall presentation of the activities developed since July 2004 to January 2006.

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MONITORING MECHANISM

Introduction

This report includes the whole of the activities carried out by CIPPEC from November 2005 to January 2006. In the original proposal, the following activities were scheduled for the following months:

Application of the monitoring system	November	December
1. Collection of data		
2. Processing of the information collected		
3. Analysis of the information including the comparison among agencies		
4. Presentation of the results to the advisory council		
Presentation of the results to the agencies		
Public presentation of the results		
Evaluation		

Elaboration of the final report		
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Notwithstanding this was the original proposed timetable, we had to re-schedule several activities, basically because the recollection of the information needed to be adjusted according to the agenda of the public officials involved in this task. Therefore, we conducted interviews during January, which we are still processing during February. This is our internal schedule for February:

17/02: Delivery of the report to the public officers

24/02: Meeting with public officers to receive their opinions and perspectives

24/02-28/02: Inclusion of the commentaries of the organisms and elaboration of the final version

28/02: Presentation of the final report to public officers, advising council, press and donor.

A.1.Implementation of the monitoring mechanism: second phase

Presentation of the report to public officers and the advisory council

On November 3rd the team presented the results to the public officials of the monitored organisms. This meeting was carried out with the presence of Dan Ritchie of PTF who had the opportunity to get in contact with the discussions and different opinions of those officials regarding our work. As a result of that meeting, and of Dan Ritchie’s recommendations, we included a special section for each of the organisms to express their opinions and differences of what we described about the general situation within their agencies.

After the meeting with the public officers, we presented the study to Victoria Martínez Araoz from the Undersecretary of Institutional Reform and Democracy Strengthening and to Nestor Baragli of the Anticorruption Office who expressed their impressions not only over this report but also over the complete monitoring experience conducted by CIPPEC. Both public officials have been participating as members in the Advisory Council and play a leading role in the implementation of the Decree.

Workshop “Decree 1172 vis a vis other regulations related to access to information”

In order to discuss the limits, scope and future of Presidential Decree 1172/03, in particular the issue concerning its co-existence with other normative regulations, we organized a workshop with highly recognized jurists and scholars on the fields of administrative and public law. These prominent specialists participated and expressed their opinions over this and other issues.

They first agreed that the foremost topic to clarify is whether or not the enforcement of decree 1172 collides with the current legal regime of administrative procedures (which dates back greatly from 1972). After a debate, they reached the conclusion that, from a juridical point of view, there is no conflict between both regulations. They also emphasized that the Decree stipulates a special and autonomous procedure, that allows any given citizen to request the access to public information that is in hands of the government only, and that such singularity overturns, or displace, the application of the limits set forth in the administrative

procedures regime that regulates, in general, the access to governmental files among other things. In the same vein, they also conclude that the question regarding the hierarchy of the norm loses strength since both legal regimes regulate different institutes and protect different values that are not, in essence, incompatible. After discussing other issues, they finally stressed the need to make the enforcement of this right stronger since they recognized that it is fundamental in order to exercise a whole plethora of other human and civil rights. The delegates from the public agency in charge of implementing decree 1172/03 who were present in the meeting agreed with the conclusions given.

After the event, members of NGOs, other public officials and journalist who had also participated of this meeting agreed with the conclusions reached and stressed that it has been a very interesting and fruitful meeting. The outcome of this workshop helped us to compare the technical point of view with the one expressed by the public officers of the organisms who affirmed the prevalence of the administrative regulation instead of the Decree. Attached you will find the entire transcription of the meeting.

A.2. Implementation of the monitoring mechanism: third phase

As we did in the previous assessments we evaluated the government agencies in relation to four dimensions: 1) application conditions, 2) implementation activities, 3) pathways for receiving requests and providing information, and 4) impact.

Concerning the second dimension of analysis, in this third report we described the application conditions, only giving account of them when alterations between the application conditions described in the last report (T2) and the current ones (T3) have occurred (T3-T2).

Application conditions prior Presidential Decree 1172/03	Application conditions in the first assessment	Application conditions in the second assessment	Application conditions in the third assessment
T0	T1	T2	T3

Monitored Organisms	Decentralized agencies
Ministerio de Trabajo	SAFJP y SRT
Ministerio de Educación	CONEAU y CONICET
Ministerio de Planificación Federal	ORSNA y OCCOVI
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Comercio Internacional y Culto	Cascos Blancos y CONAE
Secretaría General de la Presidencia	ARN y COMFER

In this third report we decided to concentrate ourselves in the relation and interaction between the monitored organisms and the decentralized agencies under their scope. The objective of this exploration was to discover the reach of the Decree to other agencies of lesser institutional magnitude and the communication between central and peripheral agencies in the reception of requests and the provision of information to the citizenship. The selection of the decentralized agencies was decided in a collaborative way with the public officials of the five organisms. These are the agencies explored: We also included a set of interviews to the “private secretaries” of the Ministers in order to get in touch with the awareness of the Decree among them and their participation, if any, in the circuit of receiving information requests. It is very common that the requests are addressed to the main authority of the organisms, thus the “private secretaries” should be able to recognize those requests that were passed through the general desk of entries. We also interviewed the public officials that worked as the primary contact with the people that visit the agencies. This position, known in our country as “mostrador” (front desk) is the first and main filter of information and assistance.

In depth interviews

During the period of the third assessment, which took place between December 1st and February 1st, we have performed the following in-depth interviews:

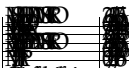
Organism	Public Officer	Date
Secretaría General de la Presidencia:	Julián Gadano y Marcelo Ventura, Enlace Alternativo y Responsable de Acceso a la Información	14/12/05
	Gonzalo Carabajal, COMFER	19/01/06
	Mostrador	27/12/05
	Oscar Klimt, ARN	1/02/06
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores	Gustavo Soliño, Responsable de Acceso a la Información	9/12/05
	Martín Torres, Cascos Blancos	1/02/06
	Mostrador	27/12/05
Ministerio de Educación	Ag. Cdora. María Inés Martínez, enlace titular, Ag. Ing. Cristina De	27/12/05

	Antoni, enlace alterno. Liliana Pérez Rizzo, Directora de Despacho, CONICET Secretaria Privada CONEAU Mostrador	11/01/06. 30/01/06 12/01/06 27/12/05
Ministerio de Planificación	Silvina Granero, enlace titular Adriana Trefler, Secretaria Privada de Ministro. Paulina Segovia, OCCOVI Ariel Maquez, ORSNA	13/12/05 17/01/06 1/02/06 19/01/06
Ministerio de Trabajo	Georgina Roman, Alicia Cunarro y Valeria Marinich, Enlace Titular y responsable de acceso a la información. Lic. Beatriz Castro, Administradora Gubernamental y Asesora de la Gerencia General, Superintendencia de Riesgos de Trabajo. E Ana Carina Rodríguez, Gerente de Relaciones Institucionales, Afiliados y Beneficiarios, Superintendencia de Administradoras de Fondos de Jubilaciones y Pensiones. Personal del mostrador Secretaria privada del Ministro	15/12/05 9/01/06 9/01/06 27/12/05 30/01/06

All the interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed by the project's team. We also systematized the information according to the variables that constitute the work of the follow up mechanism.

Mystery Citizens

In order to provide evidence of the circuit of reception of the information requests in the different agencies, we created and coordinated a group of volunteers who visited the monitored organisms, central offices of the ministries and decentralized agencies of their dependencies, to ask for information in their offices. This activity intended to compare the information provided by the public officials interviewed by CIPPEC with the experiences of the "mystery citizens". In this third phase, the volunteers conducted personal visits to the



monitored agencies and the decentralized organisms under their scope. Our volunteers performed the following visits to the government agencies:

Organism		Date of visit	
SGP. SEDE BLCARCE	26/12/05	SGP. JULIO A ROCA	26/12/05
SGP. ARN	9/01/06	SGP. COMFER	26/12/05
MRECIC. CASCOS BLANCOS	02/01/2006	MRECIC. CONEA	02/01/2006
MRECIC. SEDE DEL MINISTERIO	26/12/05	ME. CONEAU	02/01/2006
ME. PALACIO PIZZURNO	26/12/05	ME. CONICET	10/01/2006

Organism	Date of visit
SGP. SEDE BLCARCE	26/12/05
SGP. JULIO A ROCA	26/12/05
SGP. ARN	9/01/06
SGP. COMFER	26/12/05
MRECIC. CASCOS BLANCOS	02/01/2006
MRECIC. CONEA	02/01/2006
MRECIC. SEDE DEL MINISTERIO	26/12/05
ME. CONEAU	02/01/2006
ME. PALACIO PIZZURNO	26/12/05
ME. CONICET	10/01/2006

Elaboration of the third and last report

During February we will be analyzing all the information collected as well as the interviews performed. This last report will include a description of the methodology used and its adjustments.

As the previous reports, the document will have a special section for each agency under scrutiny. That section is going to contain a general description of the current conditions of application of the decree, the activities and implementation carried out, the internal pathways to process the information requested and its impact in terms of the amount of information requested, and responded. We will also be presenting a series of recommendations that could help the agencies to improve their performances in the implementation of the decree. The report will also include a section with conclusions regarding some issues or aspects to be addressed by each agency in order to overcome frequent obstacles and limitations posed by the regulation. Apart from that, as this is our last assessment, we will also include a general conclusion of the advances in the implementation of the Decree and a general evaluation of the system created in order to make this regulation effective.

We will present the final version of this report to the public officials who are responsible for the implementation of the decree in each agency on February 24th at CIPPEC.

Press impact

During the last three months we have been interviewed by several newspapers, radio and television journalists. In the attached document named "Press report" it will be found the main articles related to our work published in national newspapers, radio and TV. This press summary includes the coverage of activities related not only to the monitoring experience but also to the promotion of access to public information.

B. FINAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

B1. Summary of the activities developed

Design of the monitoring mechanism

Diagnosis

The Decree 1172/03 was passed on December 2003 and came into force on March 2004. The authority responsible for the decree enforcement, the Undersecretary of Institutional Reform and Democracy Strengthening, has been in charge of different actions to spread the knowledge of the Decree throughout the national public administration.

Even though a central enforcement authority has been assigned, the implementation of the Decree is decentralized and each public agency is responsible of its observance. In this sense, each agency has responsibility over the management of information requests (its reception and answers) as well as the systematization, availability and preservation of the information in their hands.

Meanwhile, and in order to generate positive incentives and to level the different offices, the Undersecretary was developing the following activities: strategies of cooperation with the civil society, trainings and elaboration and dissemination of guidelines, which would allow a more effective exercise of the access to information right, among others.

In order to turn these actions into practice in each agency, the Undersecretary promotes coordinated meetings among them. They also suggested the designation of one responsible per agency to follow their instructions for a more accurate implementation of the Decree.

These activities found several and different obstacles. The lack of an organizational culture that consider the information a public good is a negative incentive which influences the proper systematization, organization, preservation and availability of public documents. This situation is not exclusive of Argentina, but similar in other countries of the region. Apart from that, there isn't a national legislation that regulates access to public information; therefore, the decree -an administrative and internal regulation of the executive branch- should be insert in a very complex and profuse legal frame of national laws.

Design of methodology

Collaborative strategy

It should be emphasized that this project is carried out with the collaboration of the governmental agencies and for this reason a majority of the methodological decisions were made with the input of the authority of application and of the agency that receives denouncements. As it will be shown in the section about the selection of the agencies to be analyzed, the project team -based on the suggestions of the authorities mentioned earlier- decided to use a procedure of self-selection by which the agencies themselves would volunteer to be monitored. The activities of the first assessment demonstrated that the results of the project would be very different if we had not relied on the support of the agencies and on the collaboration of the liaisons and those officials responsible for access. Because of this

collaborative strategy, we were able to conduct multiple interviews with officials and develop critical information to evaluate the agencies.

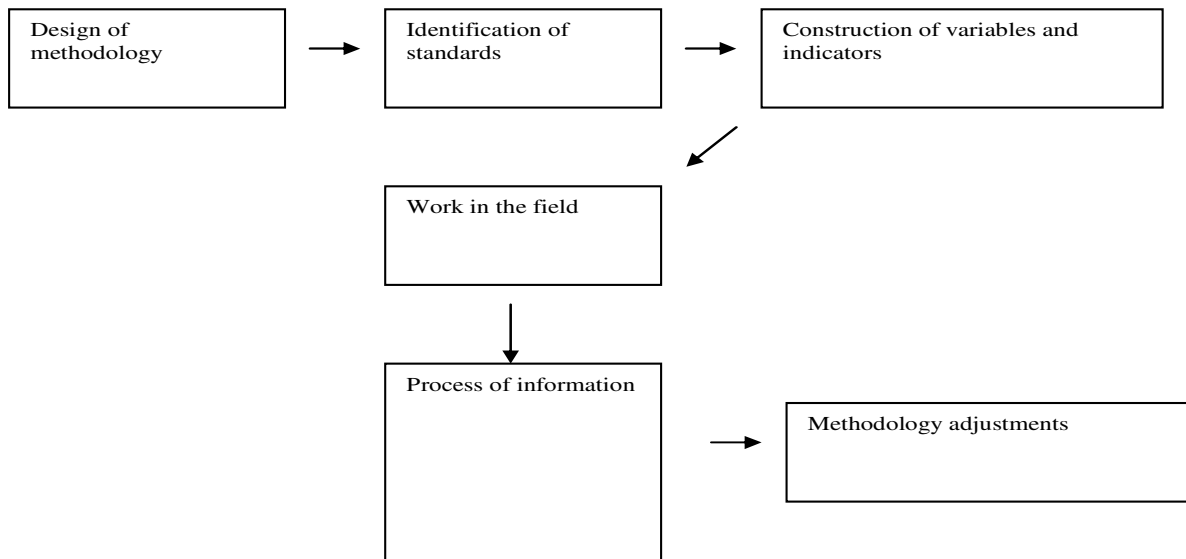
Methodological strategy

The methodology was defined during the first phase of the project and prior to the first assessment. In the original proposal presented to the donor, the project's main objective was indicated to be the construction of a monitoring system that could be translated into an index capable of holistically uniting all the considered variables and indicators, thereby converting the specific results into a general evaluation of the monitored agencies.

This original intention -attractive because of its ability to be replicated in other institutions and to be used to compare the different analyzed agencies- was adjusted with the advice of the advisory counsel. One of the main suggestions of the Under-Secretary for Institutional Reform and Democratic Strengthening was it would be better if we emulated previous experiences in the monitoring of public institutions which had opted for purely qualitative and mainly descriptive strategies of the aspects to be studied. In this regard, the authority for application expressed concern about the possibility that the numeric assignment of a "grade" on the performance of the monitored agencies could be counterproductive and act as a negative incentive, especially given that the regulation took effect only a year ago.

In this way, we started to become interested in richer and more meaningful qualitative descriptions that would allow us to understand how the organizational reality of each agency studied was impacted by the General Regulation on Access to Public Information of the National Executive Branch. This decision, whose pertinence was proved by the experience of the first assessment, allowed us to gain analytical richness because we could access the personal perspectives and points of view of actors involved in the regulation's implementation. Nevertheless, an additional challenge arose at the time of processing and systemizing the information and putting the collected data into the variables that had been chosen based on the identified standards. The fact that the decentralization of the regulation's implementation meant that each agency must create its own mechanisms to receive, process and respond to information requests based on its preexisting processes of documentation turned to be one more aspect to be studied. Given this organizational variable, the creation of homogenous indicators was a true challenge. However, because we chose a more qualitative strategy, we were able to understand these particularities and reconstruct the analytical matrix designed during the first phase.

Graphically, the process of designing and adjusting the methodology was the following:



Most probably, the construction of an index and the definition of indicators a priori, without having assessed the concrete experience of the agencies, would have been a “blind experience,” one that would have enormously complicated the collection of information. We would have constructed uniform but perhaps less important and/or pertinent indicators for what we were trying to measure. For this reason, the first measurement allowed us to arrive at more meaningful indicators that will certainly be transferable to other public institutions and agencies.

Identification of standards and construction of variables

The proposed monitoring system aims to evaluate fourth dimensions that were considered to be crucial for successful implementation. The variables considered are the following:

1. Application conditions

The monitoring aims to identify the conditions under which the Decree was applied. This point is fundamental because it is necessary to consider the preexisting situations in order to carry out a performance evaluation of the agencies and of the activities implemented by them. This aspect acquires particular importance if we want to carry out cross-evaluations among different agencies. If we want to evaluate the law’s impact on the organizational reality, we must first understand the starting point.

2. Implementation Activities

This dimension aims to understand the preparation activities developed by each of the agencies before the Regulation took effect. Through this dimension, we also studied the actions implemented once it was in effect, in order to guarantee an effective use of the right of access to information.

3. Pathways for receiving requests and providing information

The inclusion of this dimension was suggested at the first meeting of the Advisory Council. The field experience demonstrated that this aspect was critical in order to describe and evaluate the impact of the new law on the organizational realities. Using this dimension, we evaluated the performance of the correspondence reception desks of the various agencies and the degree of involvement and participation of the liaisons and officials responsible for the access to information in the processing of requests and providing information. In addition, we considered alternative pathways such as receiving requests via email and providing information using the agencies' institutional webpages.

4. Impact

In addition, the monitoring system aims to identify the main results of the regulation's implementation. Our intention when including this dimension was to observe the agencies' response to requests made between the time the law took effect and the first assessment.

The variables selected to classify the requests were:

- Number of agencies involved (ministries or equivalent agencies)
- Number of internal offices involved
- Delay in responding to requests
- Users of the law (who made the request)
- Receiver of the request (who received the information request)
- Way in which the request was presented (if it was made by letter, in person or by email)

These dimensions, which were defined when the investigation proposal was designed, needed to be put into operation with concrete indicators that would allow us to conduct field work. The development of indicators was based on standards that were identified in the text of Decree 1172/03 and from other international experiences and discussed at the Advisory Council meeting.

Finally, and after a dynamic process, the work matrix that directed our field work is the following:

Dimension	Variable	Indicator
Application conditions	Availability of resources	Availability of human resources Availability of financial resources Availability of informational resources
Application conditions	Evaluation of information	Preservation, systematization and storage of information
Application conditions	Management of information	Interactivity among various areas Systems of internal communication
Implementation activities	Allocation of human resources	Appointment of liaisons, deputy liaisons and officials responsible for the access to information
Implementation activities	Budgetary allocation	Creation of a budget for information system design, creation of archives, information production and/or others
Implementation activities	Dissemination of the law	Issuance of resolutions Circulation of memos
Implementation activities	Implementation activities	Training sessions Creation of an information system Design of matrices and/or flow diagrams Coordination with key players and areas Creation of content and/or special sections on websites
Pathways for receiving requests and providing information	Performance of correspondence reception desk	Processing of correspondence Help in making requests System of internal procedures (records/notes) Directing of requests to specific areas
Pathways for receiving requests and providing information	Performance of official responsible for access to information in development of responses	Notification Help for requester Follow-up Development of response
Pathways for receiving requests and providing information	Processing of requests received via electronic methods	Processing of electronically received requests (status) Existence of an electronic system of information management Place of reception Redirection Follow-up Response

Creation of an Advisory Council

During this first stage, we created the Advisory Council conformed by representatives of different sectors in order to ensure a multi-stakeholder approach to the development of the index. We also considered the skills needed to guarantee quality and viability in the application of these tools. We consider the opinion, suggestions and advice of these experts fundamentally in the translation of principles and standards into a descriptive and replicable methodology. The Council was integrated by: Marcelo Leiras (San Andrés University), Mercedes Di Virgilio (San Andrés University), Roberto Martínez Nogueira (Buenos Aires University), Pablo Batalla (former public official), Victor Abrahmovich (Center for Legal and Social Studies, Executive Director), Roberto Saba (Civil Rights Association, Executive Director), Norberto Borzese (Social Forum for Transparency, President), Mario Rejtman Farah (Transparency Internacional National Chapter, President), Marta Oyhanarte (Institutional Reform and Democracy Strengthening Subsecretary), Nicolás Raigorodsky (Anticorruption Office, Director), Fabián Repetto and Roberto De Michele (both from the International Development Bank).

Even when the members showed a great enthusiasm at the beginning of the project, different circumstances made their participation fade and some of the members left the Council. Mario Rejtman Farah left Poder Ciudadano in 2004 and therefore the Advisory Council; Victor Abrahmovich finished his duty as Executive Director in CELS in 2005; Marcelo Leiras -who was one of the main active members- left the country in November 2005 to finish his degree in the United States, Roberto de Michele was unable to continue because of his new role at the IDB and finally Fabián Repetto left the group after a change in his position in IDB also.

These changes, even when they were not motivated by our work, were very disappointing for us. The suggestions and opinions of the Advisory Council were very important in the design of the methodology and in the strategical decisions we made.

Selection of public agencies

In order to compare similar units, we decided to request every Ministry to give us their organizational chart and quantity of employees by agency.

In the selection of the public organisms, we considered the following criteria:

1. The relationship of the organism in the juridical definition of the scope of the Decree. (the relationship with who?)
2. Location in the administrative organization chart of the Executive Branch.
3. Type of information/service or public good provided or its relationship with the community.
4. Other preexistent norms related to access to information.

As we mentioned in the original proposal, our aim was to monitor five different types of organisms according to their definition in the scope of the Decree. The diagnosis showed that the public offices are working in the implementation of the Decree but it has not reached the

private institutions yet. So, we decided to monitor in this first phase only the five public institutions according to the other criteria mentioned above.

Following the advice of the authority in the implementation of the Decree, we finally decided to invite the agencies to collaborate in the project. At first, we received the self postulation of the Secretary General of the Presidency and the Ministry of Labor. In December, we confirmed the participation of the Ministries of Federal Planning and the Ministry of Education, and finally the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Our analyses will be based on the main results of these five organisms that offered themselves to be monitored.

Implementation of the monitoring tool

In depth interviews

During the monitoring experience we conducted several in-depth interviews. This was our primary resource of information: all the information described in the reports came from their own public officials.

Organism	Public Officer	Date
Ministry of Foreign Affaires	Gustavo Soliño, Access to Information Responsible.	21/02/05
	Marta Dutrey de Salas Oroño, Mesa de entradas.	3/03/05
Ministry of Education	Cristina de Antoni, Access to Information responsible.	20/01/05
	María Inés Martínez, Access to Information Responsible.	17/02/05
	Martín Funes. Repsonsable de Despacho.	17/02/05
	Emiliano Tagle, Mesa de Entradas.	27/01/05
General Secretary of Presidency	Julián Gadano and Christian Silveri, Access to Information Responsible.	10/01/05
	Jorge Puertas, Mesa de Entradas..	17/02/05
	Gustavo Quinteros, Chief of Informatic Division.	20/01/05
Ministry of Federal Planification	Silvina Granero, Access to Information Responsible.	11/01/05
	Lic. Floreal Suarez Alvarez, Lic. Elena Quintero y Lic. Daniel Santamaria, Informatic Division.	20/01/05
	Jorge Rolla, Mesa de Entradas.	2/03/05
Ministry of Labour	Horacio Fucksman, Chief of Mesa de Entradas..	22/02/05
	Graciela López de Montanari,	

	Director of Informatic Division. Alicia Cunarro y Georgina Roman, Enlaces. Alejandro Negro, Access to Information Responsible.	22/02/05 25/01/05 3/03/05
Second assessment		
Secretaría General de la Presidencia:	Julián Gadano y Christian Silveri, Enlace Alterno y Responsable de Acceso a la Información Jorgelina Bendini y Natalia Beatriz Barría, Secretaría Legal y Técnica	27/06/05 28/07/05
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores	Gustavo Soliño, Responsable de Acceso a la Información Juan Gasparini and María Chiodi, Dirección de Asuntos Legales	4/07/05 11/08/05
Ministerio de Educación	Ag. Cdora. María Inés Martínez, enlace titular, Ag. Ing. Cristina De Antoni, enlace alterno and Adriana Carrera, Responsable de Acceso a la Información Dr. Luis Quintero, Director General de Asuntos Jurídicos	29/06/05 29/06/05
Ministerio de Planificación	Silvina Granero, enlace titular Marcela Guelerman and Ignacio Azarosa Dirección de Asuntos Jurídicos Ministerio de Economía	30/06/05 5/08/05
Ministerio de Trabajo	Alicia Cuñarro, María Georgina Román, Alejandro Negro and Valeria Marinelich, Unidad de Acceso a la Información Graciela Vila and Javier Nagata, Dirección de Asuntos Jurídicos	30/06/05 19/07/05

Third assessment

Secretaría General de la Presidencia:	Julián Gadano y Marcelo Ventura, Enlace Alterno y Responsable de Acceso a la Información Gonzalo Carabajal, COMFER ARN 4/12/05
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	19/01/06 1/02/06	
Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores	Gustavo Soliño, Responsable de Acceso a la Información Martín Torres, Cascos Blancos Mostrador	9/12/05 1/02/06 27/12/05
Ministerio de Educación	Ag. Cdora. María Inés Martínez, enlace titular, Ag. Ing. Cristina De Antoni, enlace alterno. Liliana Pérez Rizzo, Directora de Despacho, CONICET Secretaria Privada CONEAU Mostrador	27/12/05 11/01/06.
Ministerio de Planificación	Silvina Granero, enlace titular Adriana Trefler, Secretaria Privada de Ministro. Paulina Segovia, OCCOVI Ariel Maquez, ORSNA	13/02/05 17/01/06 1/02/06 19/01/06
Ministerio de Trabajo	Georgina Roman, Alicia Cunarro y Valeria xxx, Enlace Titular y responsable de acceso a la información. Lic. Beatriz Castro, Administradora Gubernamental y Asesora de la Gerencia General, Superintendencia de Riesgos de Trabajo. E Ana Carina Rodríguez, Gerente de Relaciones Institucionales, Afiliados y Beneficiarios, Superintendencia de Administradoras de Fondos de Jubilaciones y Pensiones. Personal del mostrador Secretaria privada del Ministro	15/12/05 9/01/06 9/01/06

All the interviews were conducted, transcribed and analyzed by the project's team. We also

systematized the information according to the variables that constitute the work of the follow up mechanism.

Mystery citizen

In order to provide evidence of the circuit of reception of the information requests in the different agencies, we created and coordinated a group of volunteers who visited the monitored organisms, central offices of the ministries and decentralized agencies of their dependencies, to ask for information in their offices. This activity intended to compare the information provided by the public officers interviewed by CIPPEC with the experiences of the “mystery citizens”. In the second phase the volunteers conducted personal visits to the monitored agencies as well as telephonic surveys. In the third phase the volunteers conducted personal visits to the monitored agencies and the decentralized organisms under their scope. Our volunteers performed the following visits to the government agencies:

First assessment

Organism	Date of visit
ME. Sede del organismo	01/02/2005
ME. Sede del organismo	No date available
ME. CONEAU	28/01/2005
ME. CONEAU	01/02/2005
ME. CONICET	28/01/2005
ME. SECYT	28/01/2005
MT. Sede del organismo	02/05/2005
MT. Sede del organismo	No date available
MT. SAFJP	No date available
MT. SRT	No date available
SGP. Sede del organismo	27/01/2005
SGP. Sede del organismo	No date available
SGP. Sede del organismo	27/01/2005

SGP. COMFER	No date available
MP. Sede del organismo	27/01/2005
MP. Sede del organismo	No date available
MP. EBY	02/02/2005
MP. ENRE	02/02/2005
MP. ENOHS	01/02/2005
MRECIC	No date available

Second assessment

Organism	Date of visit	Date of call
SGP	Balcarce 50 and Julio A. Roca on July 20th 2005.	Subsecretaría General: performed on July 20th 2005 Subsecretaría de Coordinación: performed on July 20th 2005
MRECIC	The Ministry's Building was visited on July 21st.	Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores: performed on July 20th and 26th. Secretaría de Culto: performed on July 22nd. Secretaría de Comercio y Relaciones Económicas Internacionales: performed on julio 22nd 2005.
ME	Pizzurno Palace, visited on July 20th.	Secretaría de Políticas Universitarias: July 20th and 26th. Secretaría de Educación: July 20th and 26th.
MP	Visited on July 20th.	Secretaría de Obras Públicas: on July 20th and 26th. Secretaría de Comunicaciones del Ministerio de Planificación Federal, Inversión Pública y Servicios: on July 20th and 26th.
MT	Visited on July 20th.	No calls were conducted since the phone line of the Ministry was not working.

Third assessment

Organism	Date of visit
SGP. SEDE BALCARCE	26/12/05
SGP. JULIO A ROCA	26/12/05
SGP. ARN	9/01/06
SGP. COMFER	26/12/05
MRECIC. CASCOS BLANCOS	02/01/2006
MRECIC. CONEA	02/01/2006
MRECIC. SEDE DEL MINISTERIO	26/12/05
ME. CONEAU	02/01/2006
ME. PALACIO PIZZURNO	26/12/05
ME. CONICET	10/01/2006
MP. SEDE DEL MINISTERIO	26/12/05
MP. OCCOVI	02/01/2006
MP. ORSNA	26/12/2005
MT. SEDE DEL MINISTERIO	26/12/05
MT. SRT	02/01/2006
MT. AFJP	02/01/06

Heavy users

Fanny Pereiro, ACIJ, NGO. Interviewed by Natalia Torres. February 15 and December 2005.

Mariela Belski, ADC, NGO. Interviewed by Natalia Torres. February 22.

Laura Alonso, Poder Ciudadano, NGO. Interviewed by Fernanda Araujo. March 1.

Gabriel Sued, Journalist, La Nacion Newspaper. Interviewed by Natalia Torres and Fernanda Araujo. February 16 and December 2005.

Julieta Elfman, Journalism student. Interviewed by Fernanda Araujo. March 3.

Damián Loretti and Laura Zommer, University of Buenos Aires.

Laura Alonso, Fundación Poder Ciudadano.

Information request collection

Along the project we collected and analyzed the following information request:

medicion					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	primera medición	56	35.0	35.0	35.0
	segunda medición	40	25.0	25.0	60.0
	tercera medición	64	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	100.0	

All the information requests were analyzed by the team of the project and processed in SPSS data base.

Presentation of the reports to the Advisory Council and public officers. Communication strategy and dissemination of the results.

First report:

The meeting with the Advisory Council was held on March 28th with the presence of Marta Oyhanarte, Roberto Martínez Nogueira, Pablo Batalla, and Roberto De Michele. Other members of the Advisory Council sent their comments through electronic mail. Their valuable comments helped us to improve the quality of the report and the results achieved.

We had a second meeting with Marta Oyhanarte's team who provided us with some suggestions on the first section and introduction of the report in which we describe the functions and activities developed in this first year of the implementation of the Decree. The comments allowed us to count on hard numbers and more details of the activities carried out from the Undersecretary.

We presented the final version of the report to public officials who are responsible for the implementation of the decree in each agency on April 4th at CIPPEC.

A communication strategy was developed with the help of the Communication staff at CIPPEC in order to disseminate the results of this first phase of the assessment. We decided to present the results during the International Seminar of Access to Information. This seminar was organized by CIPPEC and ADC (Asociación por los Derechos Civiles -a non governmental organization focused on civil rights) which counted on the presence of international experts and public officials from different countries such as USA, México, Peru, Chile, Sweden, Australia, France, Bulgaria, and UK, among others. Almost 300 people attended the seminar including public officials, NGO members, journalists, etc. The main aspects of the presentation can be consulted in the Spanish document posted in our website <http://www.accesoalainformacion.org/archivos/Jueves%2028%20-%20Viernes%2029%20final%20.pdf>

The complete first report is available at <http://www.accesoalainformacion.org/archivos/primer%20informe%20final.pdf> first o second?

Second report

We presented the final version of this report to the public officials who are responsible for the implementation of the decree in each agency on November 3rd at CIPPEC. The report was also presented to the authorities of the Undersecretary of Institutional Reform and Democracy Strengthening on November 3rd at CIPPEC. This meeting was held with the presence of Dan Ritchie of PTF.

The complete second report is available at http://www.accesoalainformacion.org/archivos/segundo_informe_final.pdf

As we mentioned before, we are working now in the elaboration of the third report that will be presented on February 28th.

Press impact of the project

All the articles related to our work have been included in the attached documents (Summary Press impact. pdf and Summary radio and tv impact.xls)

Other activities

Follow up of the access to information bill of law

In the context in the initiative promoted by the Global Opportunities Fund we have been lobbying for the Access to information bill of law. Unfortunately and after five years of continuous and joint work with others NGOs on 2005 the project lost its parliamentary status. To know the work done since 2002 please visit: <http://www.accesoalainformacion.org/impulso.php>

Assistance in the elaboration and further implementation of access to information regulations

Also in the context of the initiative supported by Global Opportunities Fund we assisted and evaluated different local laws and regulations in the provinces and municipalities. On this behalf we worked in Morón (Province of Buenos Aires), Lanus (Province of Buenos Aires), Santa Fé, Mendoza, Tucumán, City of Mendoza and the provincial legislature of Chaco where an internal regulation established free access to all its documents was passed.

International Seminar on Access to Information

On April 27-29, we held the International Seminar on Access to Public Information in the City of Buenos Aires. Due to the quality of the national and international participants, the large number of attendees and the different focuses, approaches, experiences, and diverse opinions in the treatment of issues related to the right of access to public information, this event was unprecedented in our country. In addition, it is very important the collaboration between two local civil society organizations, CIPPEC and ADC.. To see the programs, rapporteurships and general information (in Spanish) over the International Seminar please visit <http://www.accesoalainformacion.org/estadoactual.php>.

The outstanding level of both the international guests and the Argentine speakers, together with the high attendance rate, made the Seminar a major event in relation to the issue of information access in Argentina. Additionally, the interest shown by the attendees throughout the Seminar is an indication of the potential for stronger and wider cooperation, incorporating other social sectors, aimed at the effective exercise of the right of access to public information.

The Seminar additionally enriched the debate on this public issue by providing - through the descriptions of best practice standards in developed countries - a basis for international comparisons, which should be a key factor in future discussions on the relative merits of the current bill and the original bill.

Additionally, the Seminar was an opportunity for a meeting between civil society and government officials, giving rise to an infrequent dialogue in which citizens were able to approach officials and discuss matters of mutual concern.

The wide-ranging nature of the attendees (numbering a total of 262) reflected the significance attached to public information access by social actors in various sectors. The attendance of a large group of librarians, for instance, suggests possible strategies aimed at involving other professionals in promotion, training and implementation activities relating to public information access, given the essential role played by the different sectors in each of these stages.

Workshop

As we mentioned in the first part of this report we conducted a workshop with prominent scholars and jurists in administrative and public law in order to discuss the relationship between the decree and other previous regulations, in particular those concerning the administrative procedure regime.

Elaboration of a national map on access to information regulations

In the context of the project supported by the Global Opportunities Fund we developed a comprehensive research of the regulations related to access to information in provinces and local governments. The results of this research are available in the map below:

<http://www.accesoalainformacion.org/mapa.php>

Participation in the elaboration of "Guía Ciudadana"

Jointly with the Foro Social por la Transparencia, the Undersecretary of Institutional Reform and Democratic Strengthening, the Anticorruption Office and Poder Ciudadano we elaborated a publication aimed to provide both citizens and public officers with guidelines to the interpretations, implementation and exercise of the Decree 1172/03. The publication is available online at www.guiaciudadana.gov.ar

Replication of the monitoring tool

Thanks to the support of the Global Opportunities Fund of the British Embassy we are working in the replication of the monitoring tool in the Province of Buenos Aires, the Province of Córdoba and the City of Buenos Aires. These districts have their own legislation regarding access to public information but they are not well known among citizens and, therefore, its use is very scarce. Those are the reasons why we are not only interested in the validation of the methodology at a local level but also in generating public awareness of the legislation.

Since October 2005 we are working with local NGOs (CEDHA in Córdoba and Democracia Representativa in the City of Buenos Aires) and universities (University of San Andrés, situated in the Province of Buenos Aires) in order to adapt the methodology to the local scenario. The collection of data, in-depth interviews and the processing of information will be carried out during January to March, and reports of each of the districts will be presented in March.

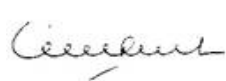
FINANCIAL REPORT

MONITORING MECHANISM OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL REGULATIONS OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION			
TOTAL COST	BUDGET (Nov-January)	REAL (Nov-January)	DIFFERENCE
Project Supervisor	\$ 466	\$ 412	\$ 54
Project Coordinator	\$ 793	\$ 1.242	\$ -449
Analyst 1	\$ 469	\$ 816	\$ -347
Intern	\$ 414	\$ 499	\$ -85
Advisory Board		\$ 203	\$ -203
Administrative		\$ 348	\$ -348
HUMAN RESOURCES	\$ 2.142	\$ 3.520	\$ -1.378
Travel expenses	\$ 103	\$ 129	\$ -26
Bank Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Reports	\$ 103	\$ 502	\$ -399
OTHER EXPENSES	\$ 206	\$ 631	\$ -425
Subtotal	\$ 2.348	\$ 4.151	\$ -1.803
Administrative Costs	\$ 689	\$ 749	\$ -60
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	\$ 689	\$ 749	\$ -60
TOTAL	\$ 3.037	\$ 4.900	\$ -1.863

TOTAL COST	TOTAL	Prior Expenditures	Total Expenditures	Amount Remaining
Project Supervisor	\$ 4.190	\$ 3.444	\$ 3.856	\$ 334
Project Coordinator	\$ 7.138	\$ 6.410	\$ 7.652	\$ -514
Analyst 1	\$ 4.221	\$ 3.996	\$ 4.812	\$ -591
Intern	\$ 3.724	\$ 2.563	\$ 3.062	\$ 662
Advisory Board	\$ 1.034	\$ 609	\$ 812	\$ 222
Administrative	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 348	\$ -348
HUMAN RESOURCES	\$ 20.307	\$ 17.022	\$ 20.542	\$ -236
Travel expenses	\$ 931	\$ 221	\$ 350	\$ 581
Bank Costs		\$ 119	\$ 119	\$ -119
Reports	\$ 310	\$ 122	\$ 624	\$ -313
OTHER EXPENSES	\$ 1.241	\$ 584	\$ 1.093	\$ 149
Subtotal	\$ 21.548	\$ 17.606	\$ 21.635	\$ -87
Administrative Costs	\$ 3.232	\$ 2.483	\$ 3.232	\$ 0
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	\$ 3.232	\$ 2.483	\$ 3.232	\$ 0
TOTAL	\$ 24.781	\$ 20.089	\$ 24.989	\$ -209

TOTAL COST	TOTAL	Total Expenditures	Total Expenditures	Amount Remaining
PTF	\$ 19.082	\$ 15.489	\$ 19.228	\$ -146
CIPPEC	\$ 5.698	\$ 4.599	\$ 5.760	\$ -62
Total	\$ 24.781	\$ 20.088	\$ 24.988	\$ -208

Prepared by



Cristina Senatore
Administrative Director

Date:

09/02/2006