

Metagora: Current Progress and the Way Forward

I. Aim and current outcomes of the Metagora project

1. Metagora focuses on methods, tools and frameworks for measuring human rights and democratic governance. Its strategic goal is to enhance evidence-based assessment and monitoring in these fields. Its main objective is to develop robust methods and tools to obtain data and create indicators upon which national policies can be formulated and evaluated.

2. The Metagora project emerged and is operating in the intersection of, on the one side, OECD – DAC policy guidelines (and in particular its priority action area of strengthening human rights and democratic governance assessments and indicators), and, on the other side, the commitment of PARIS21 in the development of national capacities to produce and use robust statistics and indicators for assessing key development issues, evaluating impact of policies and properly monitoring progress.

3. Metagora follows a bottom-up approach aimed at enhancing national capacities and leadership in assessing human rights and democratic governance. It is based on a North-South network of organisations and individual experts¹ and operates as a decentralised laboratory: it undertakes several pilot experiences in different regions of the world in an interactive fashion – and, on the basis of these experiences, it formulates recommendations for further application of the tested methods elsewhere.

4. The three-year pilot phase of Metagora was a great success. The project implemented all planned field operations and policy-oriented analysis, broadly disseminated their results, delivered all expected products and drew a set of significant lessons and guidelines for future action, which can be summarized as follows:

- a) Measuring human rights and democratic governance is technically feasible and politically relevant: data on human rights, democracy, and governance can be collected and indicators produced that are central for policy makers' decisions.
- b) Quantitative and qualitative data can and should interrelate to properly inform assessment of democracy, human rights and governance.
- c) Official statistical agencies can be efficiently involved in the measurement of human rights and democratic governance.
- d) Statistical analysis and quantitative indicators bring a significant value-added to the work of national Human Rights Institutions.
- e) Statistical methods can substantially enhance the research and advocacy of civil society's organizations in the fields of human rights and democracy.
- f) A North/South network of experts and institutions has been consolidated around Metagora and is continuously growing. This operational network, which is unique in the world, is able to provide the international community with skills and capacities for making a decisive jump towards the enhancement of measuring methods and indicators.

The products developed include in particular two important resources: a first substantive set of *Training Materials – Measuring Human Rights and Democratic Governance*, and an *Inventory of Initiatives Aimed at*

1 The Metagora community includes the organizations and institutions with which the OECD signed partnership agreements (the PIOs that lead and coordinate specific Metagora activities), and other organizations, institutions, individual experts and stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of the activities. The Metagora PIOs are: American Association for the Advancement of Science, AAAS (Washington), DIAL, Développement, Institutions et Analyses de Long terme (Paris), Fundar, Centro de Análisis e investigación (Mexico City), Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa, HSRC (Pretoria), Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, PCBS (Albireh/Ramallah), Philippines National Commission on Human Rights, CHR (Manila) and Secretaría General de la Comunidad Andina, SGCA (Lima).



Enhancing Evidence-based Assessment of Human Rights and Democratic Governance, (both available in: www.metagora.org).

II. Assessment by an Independent Panel of Experts of the implementation and outcomes of Metagora

5. Since 2005, the implementation and outcomes of Metagora are being assessed by an Independent Panel of Experts (IPE) that works with strict independence from both the steering and implementing bodies of the project.² On the 24th of August 2007, these senior experts adopted an Assessment Report covering the period from February 2004 to July 2007, in which they stress, *inter alia*, that:

- a) *“The IPE appreciated the remarkable progress accomplished by Metagora in a very short time, including the rich body of important and useful substantive results produced by several of the national pilot projects. (...) The original multidisciplinary approach and the synergies among official and academic statisticians, human rights practitioners, social and political scientists and other stakeholders constitute a considerable value-added of the project.”*
- b) *“The Training Materials and the Inventory of Initiatives attest to the impressive capacity gained by the project to generate tools that are informative, rigorous, innovative and useful.”*
- c) *“Any future plans for Metagora must take into account both the achievements and the identified weaknesses of the pilot phase. The technical shortcomings identified by the independent review have to be duly addressed when planning, budgeting, designing and implementing activities.”*
- d) *“The surveys implemented during the pilot phase are still too few for developing and duly documenting robust tools; (...) these can be further developed and validated only by means of replication and extension.”*
- e) *“The IPE strongly recommends to the community of donors to support the continuation and enhancement of the Metagora project in its second phase so that it can complete its work.”*

III. Funding issues

6. Metagora is an inherent part of PARIS21, but it is financed through a separate funding scheme and operates with an independent budget. The Metagora Steering Committee includes representatives of donor institutions that have provided financial support to the implementation of the project.³ While in 2006 these donors agreed to support a new phase of the project (Metagora II, to be implemented from February 2007 to December 2010), the total amount of committed funds is, to date, far less than that necessary to launch the field activities planned for Metagora II and to enhance the technical, organizational and operational basis of the project, as recommended by the IPE. The Assessment Report of the IPE therefore *“urges the community of donor institutions to consider the risk that, due to the absence of appropriate and timely funding, current achievements and the promising dynamics of the project might be jeopardised by lack of continuity”*.

² The members of the IPE are **Mr. Jean-Louis Bodin** (Chairman, France, former President of the International Statistical Institute), **Mrs. Milva Ekonomi** (Albania, EU and Statistics Sweden’s consultant in Kosovo, former General Director of the National Statistical Institute of Albania); **Ms. Haishan Fu** (China, Chief of the Statistics Development Section of UN-ESCAP Statistics Division and former Chief of statistics of the UNDP Office of the Human Development Report); **Mr. Kwaku A. Twum-Baah** (Ghana, former Government Chief Statistician of Ghana and former co-chair of PARIS21 Steering Committee); **Mr. Carlo Malaguerra** (Switzerland, former Director General of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office and former Chairman of the Conference of European Statisticians) and **Mr. William Seltzer** (USA, Senior Research Scholar at Fordham University and former Director of the UN Statistical Division).

³ To date the following donors have provided voluntary contributions to support the implementation of Metagora: **Canada** (CIDA), **France** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), **Sweden** (SIDA), **Switzerland** (SDC), the **European Union** (under the budget of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights) and the **European Free Trade Association** (EFTA). Beyond this financial support, the project also benefited from seconded experts and other in-kind substantial contributions from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, Statistics Sweden, the National Statistical Institute of Italy (ISTAT), the Cooperation Agency of the French Ministry of Finance (ADETEF) and the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

7. Building on the achievements and lessons of the pilot phase, the activities to be carried out during Metagora II target six objectives: (a) to anchor evidence-based assessment methods and indicators of human rights and democratic governance in decision-making and monitoring mechanisms, (b) to document methodologies for producing, disseminating and using indicators, (c) to ensure effective national appropriation of Metagora approaches, methods and tools promoted with the Metagora project, and therefore a sustainable capacity of national institutions to produce evidence-based indicators, (d) to develop tools which contribute to make available a shared/agreed information basis, (e) to make the convergence of the bottom-up and top-down approaches to governance indicators effectively happen and (f) to appropriately and timely hand over the results, lessons, methods and tools generated by the project.

The budget of Metagora II has been estimated at an annual average amount of €2.8 million, totalling a forecast four-year period cost of €11 Million. The following table shows the different contributions that have been allocated for Metagora II in 2007 as well as those announced for 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Donor institutions	2007 ⁴	2008 (Announced contributions)	2009 (Announced contributions)	2010 (Announced contributions)	TOTAL
CIDA Canada	643,016				643,016
SDC Switzerland	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
SIDA Sweden	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France		50,000			50,000
EFTA ⁵	59,000				59,000
TOTAL	1,102,016	450,000	400,000	400,000	2,352,016

8. In the light of these developments, the Co-ordination Team approached a number of potential donors and invited them to attend the meeting of the Metagora Steering Committee (MSC), that was held in Paris on the 8th of October 2007. This was an open-ended gathering aimed at allowing all interested institutions to: (1) be informed on current developments and plans within the project and (2) examine, together with current and potential donor institutions, the ways and means for ensuring prompt appropriate funding for Metagora II. The meeting concluded with the following three main decisions:

- (a) The Co-ordination team will review the work programme of Metagora II and present it in a more modular way, and will produce advocacy material taking into account suggestions by the MSC;
- (b) Fundraising must now have the highest priority. Seven or eight potential donors (including *inter alia* UK-DFID, Netherlands, Norway and Finland) will be visited by a small Metagora delegation formed

⁴ Contributions that have already been allocated or are in the process of being allocated

⁵ EFTA has allocated two grants for a total amount of 59,000 Euros aimed at covering the costs of a seminar on “democratic governance statistics” held in Amman on 22-23 October 2007 and attended by National Chief Statisticians of 17 Arab States as well as Metagora field work conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, PCBS (household survey on democratic governance issues). It is worth mentioning that these two grants have been directly allocated by EFTA to the two institutions organising the work (one based in Amman and the other in Ramallah).



by the Chairman of the Partners' Group, one or two selected strong advocates from Partner Organisations (to highlight the project's impact) and the Co-ordinator of the project;

- (c) The MSC will be convened again by mid December 2007 to assess the outcomes of the fundraising missions and to decide on next suitable steps.

9. The PARIS21 Steering Committee is invited to agree on the following points:

- That the Metagora project will continue to be implemented within the framework of PARIS21;
- That the Metagora Co-ordination team will intensify its fundraising efforts during the next couple of months; and
- That a Metagora project document will be presented to the UN Statistical Commission for discussion in 2009.