



# Harnessing Open Data to Achieve Development Results in Latin America and the Caribbean

## First Technical Report

*Project 107574*

Santiago de Chile, January 2015

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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# Harnessing Open Data to Achieve Development Results in Latin America and the Caribbean

*Project (107574)*

## *First Technical Report*

**The project for Harnessing Open Data to Achieve Development Results in Latin America and the Caribbean ("Project")**, supports the Latin American Open Data Initiative (Iniciativa Latinoamericana de Datos Abiertos - ILDA). This initiative acts as research hub on open data usage to achieve development goals across Latin America and the Caribbean, and therefore to foster the accountability and legitimacy of public institutions, improving public services, and to boost economic growth of the region. ILDA is hosted by Avina Foundation, in coordination with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

### **I. Synthesis**

As today, several governments in Latin America and the Caribbean (e.g., Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay, among others) as well as local authorities (e.g., Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo and Lima, among others) have launched open data initiatives. This increasing interest in opening public information has feed the need to better understand how this process improves governance while fosters transparency, innovation and citizen empowerment.

There is an implied consensus that making data available through the web it is not enough. Thus, challenges for open data policies are considerable; highly costs for data-collection, technical standards, privacy regulations, political will and citizen engagement are among them. In order to support this process is required to build significant evidence on critical issues associated with the implementation of open data programs and how to achieve their full potential.

The **Project**, aims to promote the exchange of best practices to help understand how governments and civil society can relate together to improve public services through open data and to add value from data. The project also supports the development of technical standards and capacity building in public and private sectors.

The overarching objective of the project is to strengthen the accountability and legitimacy of public institutions, improve public services, and fuel economic growth in Latin America and the Caribbean through research and innovation on open data initiatives. This objective will be achieved through 6 research objectives:

- 1) Improve understanding of the demand and use of open data for development in Latin America.

- 2) Support the collaborative development of products and services between government, civil society and entrepreneurs in these selected areas.
- 3) Promote the development and adoption of emerging open data standards that enable open data initiatives to scale up.
- 4) Explore mechanisms for open data to address the needs of marginalized groups, focusing particularly on youth, women and urban poor.
- 5) Build the capacity of the Latin American Open Data Initiative (ILDA) to act as knowledge sharing platform fostering dialogue with governments that feeds to this initiative.
- 6) Share knowledge and research on the demand and use of open data for development with governments in Latin America and the Caribbean, improving policy dialogue and consultation practices.

## **II. Research problem**

Data openness holds the promise of providing answers to important challenges for development and governance. However data release for itself is not useful unless communities and citizen engage in their usage. Thus, is essential to understand how public and private innovation works and in which methods can be conducted to boost this process. Some of the research questions of the project include:

- How do governments address the information divide in relation to data and spread the benefits of open government to marginalized communities?
- How can governments define priorities in their open data efforts and reach greater impact?

## **III. Research findings**

Research objectives: *1) Improve understanding of the demand and use of open data for development in Latin America; (5) Build the capacity of the Latin American Open Data Initiative to act as knowledge sharing platform fostering dialogue with governments that feeds to the initiative.*

The discussions held during the activities undertaken on the project to date, especially those taken place at the workshop “Open data for open government” (October 3th, 2014), helped identify and validate some challenges that national open data programs face:

- Political support: In many cases open data programs need high level political support to achieve institutional reforms and allocate the necessary resources for an effective implementation of policies.
- Data availability: Current regional initiatives are challenged by the granularity of data, refresh rates, ease of reuse and data disparity.
- Strategic vision: Often, open data programs don’t have strong links with major development plans or political priorities (despite that some progresses have been made through Open Government Plans).

- **Licensing:** One of the main difficulties for the use of public information is related to regulations on terms and conditions to access public data, and related aspects on privacy, data protection and intellectual property rights, among others.
- **Technical standards:** The standard in which a data set is released can be a barrier or a drive for its use, and it will mean a lower or higher cost for business purposes. As it is widely known, there are private and open standards, respectively. While the use of open data released on proprietary standards represents a higher cost for users, there are also open standards not suitable for reusing of data.
- **Citizen engagement:** One of the key elements for assuring the significant impact of open data initiatives is the need to develop digital services based on social needs. Consequently, it is necessary to promote co-creation of services in open innovating environments, connecting citizen's with entrepreneurs and governments. At a regional level, there are some initiatives aimed at this purpose (hackathons, gobcamps, and un-conferences).

#### **IV. Project implementation and management**

Usually open government data programs in Latin America and the Caribbean (e.g. México, Chile and Uruguay) had been implemented through e-government agencies and public institutions responsible for the coordination of digital agendas. Thus, a consistent policy setting for peer review<sup>1</sup> on open data should consider this institutional framework. The former, could help improve its policy making, adopt best practices and comply with established standards and principles.

ECLAC acts as technical secretariat of the Action plan for the information society in Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2015). According to the Millennium Development Goals and the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), eLAC has a long-term vision towards 2015, stating that information and communication technologies (ICTs) are tools for economic development and social inclusion. eLAC was agreed by the Ministerial Conference on Information Society, a forum that brings together institutions responsible for ICT policymaking.

Through the Open Data for Development platform (OD4D), project #106286, ECLAC has led a wide range of studies on open government data in several areas such as tourism, mining and urban governance (*smart cities*). As a result ECLAC is uniquely placed to take advantage of the previous accumulation process, to produce significant research analysis on open data and digital policies.

During the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Montevideo from 3 to 5 April 2013, delegations from participating countries decided to set up a total of 13 working groups for the period 2013-2015, among

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<sup>1</sup> A systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a state by other states.

which did not include the subject of open data. The working groups at eLAC2015 have the objective to:

- Encourage networking and collaboration mechanisms.
- Support the exchange of experiences and best practices.
- Encourage capacity building.
- Promote dialogue for technical and scientific exchange.
- Contribute to institutional links with other forums and organizations.

At the second edition of regional GobCamp workshop, that took place in June 2013 in Montevideo, Uruguay, within the framework of the First Regional Conference on Open Data for Latin America and the Caribbean, senior e-government managers from Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), agree on foster the creation of a working group for open data at eLAC2015. Finally, after a consultation process, the working group was established in August, 2013.

Since its creation the open data working group of eLAC had two face to face meetings. The first was held in Bogotá, Colombia, in November 27th, 2013, at e-Experience, with the participation of representatives from Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay. The second meeting was held in México D.F., in October 3th, 2014 at the Second Regional Conference on Open Data.

For project purposes (*outputs 1-1a*), activities implemented in the period involving this report were focused on supporting the working group on open data in the framework of the eLAC process as a political platform. Some of these activities involve the organization of a second face meeting of the working group, where government representatives had the chance to conduct a reciprocal evaluation process of their open data policies and discuss the work plan for the working group. The outcomes of this meeting, where also presented at the preparatory meeting for the V Ministerial Conference on Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in November 2014 in San José, Costa Rica.

## **V. Project outputs and dissemination**

*Research objective:* 1) Improve understanding of the demand and use of open data for development in Latin America; (5) Build the capacity of the Latin American Open Data Initiative to act as knowledge sharing platform fostering dialogue with governments that feeds to the initiative.

*Expected Output 1:* A work plan agreed among governments in the region inside the regional open data working group (coordinated by UN-ECLAC) and in alignment with the work plan of the Open Government Partnership Working Group (responsible ECLAC).

## Obtained output:

**Workshop “Open data for open government”:** The workshop was organized by ECLAC in coordination with the Organization of American States (OAS), through the e-Government Network in Latin America and the Caribbean (Red Gealc). The meeting took place in Mexico D.F., on October 3th, of 2014. The workshop had three objectives: i) provide inputs for research on open data strategies in the region with the support of working group at eLAC2015; ii) review open data initiatives and its incorporation in open government policies; iii) discuss the work plan for the working group on open data at eLAC2015.

The workshop was held within the framework of the Second Regional Conference on Open Data and the third GobCamp meeting. It had the participation of government representatives from 8 countries of the region (Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay) and staff from RedGealc, OAS, W3C and ECLAC (See attachment 1).

The workshop had an open participation format, and reviewed progresses and obstacles of open data policies in the region. In this context, some characteristics emerged on possible topics for research. Participants acknowledge the different maturity levels of open data programs and agree on the importance to evaluate more advance experiences to set policy recommendations. It was also noted the relevance to identify criteria for publishing data, set technical standards and promote capacity building in public institutions.

**Work plan for the open data working group at eLAC2015:** One of the objectives of the workshop “Open data for open government” was to discuss a work plan for the working group of eLAC2015. At the meeting the chair of the working group (Uruguay) presented a work plan draft around four topics: strengthen the working group consolidation, updated the status of regional initiatives, promote coordination with other initiatives and establish research requirements (See attachment 3). The work plan highlight six common axes integrated in national strategies: i) technological infrastructure, ii) access to data, iii) institutions, iv) regulation, v) engagement and vi) metrics. These six common dimensions can be used as basis for conducting a regional debate on open data strategies and foster multilateral cooperation. These items also can become the basis for defining specific actions to achieve a regional strategy.

Also, meeting participants discussed the working group involvement in the process of the preparatory meeting for V Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the main concern on how better incorporate open data as part of the policy priorities of the new digital agenda for the region.

## *Dissemination activities*

- Spread of basic information about open data.
- Promotion of the exchange of experiences and best practices on open data.
- Raising awareness of the importance of open data policies.



- Engage policy makers, government officials and researchers in discuss open data.
- Promote synergies and political dialogue between other regional forums.
- Share information trough the project website<sup>2</sup>.
- Press and communication activities<sup>3</sup>.

## VI. Capacity building

At the workshop “Open data for open government”, meeting participants had the opportunity to carry out a policy debate on open data initiatives. These favour the exchange of best practices around national programs and help consolidate a network of policy experts interested in open data. This meeting also promoted a conceptual and methodological debate on potentials for open data research in Latin America and the Caribbean. Since the workshop was organized in the framework of the Second Regional Conference on Open Data help strength the relations between policy makers, experts, academics and researchers.

The incorporation of open data as part of the discussion of the preparatory meeting for the V Conference of Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean promoted a high-level debate on open data potentials for digital policies. This contributed to a better understanding on how to better conduct ICT policies and open data strategies in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting key priorities, challenges and barriers for the region.

## VII. Impact

**Raise awareness and political support on the importance of open data:** It is important to note that the Second Regional Conference on Open Data was attended by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Ms. Alicia Bárcena, as a key speaker, where she noted that "Latin America is a region that requires a technological jump with a future view, a change in their ways of production and consumption and redefine the equation State, Market and Society". In this regard she referred to the need to empower citizens through technology, emphasizing that we are facing a new public management model that needs to improve innovation, transparency and accountability as means to fight corruption and open the door for citizen engagement<sup>4</sup>.

The Second Regional Conference on Open Data was held in Mexico D.F., in October, 2014. The conference had the participation of a large audience with multiple actors between policy makers, civil society activists, private and corporate representatives, journalists, academic specialists and international organizations. The conference was organized in two days with 4 plenary sessions and 40 parallel working meetings, along with side events and workshops, including the workshop “Open data for open government”. Some of the topics address at the event were productivity, privacy, challenges for the Open Government Partnership, Open Platforms, Open Mapping, Evaluation of Data policies, Open Contracting, Data science, Open data for local governments, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://idatosabiertos.org/que-es-ilda/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://condatos.org/indexen.html>.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.rpp.com.pe/2014-10-03-cepal-latinoamerica-requiere-un-salto-tecnologico-con-vision-de-futuro-noticia\\_730749.html](http://www.rpp.com.pe/2014-10-03-cepal-latinoamerica-requiere-un-salto-tecnologico-con-vision-de-futuro-noticia_730749.html)

This event favored the exchange of best practices and help building capacity among multiple stakeholders (governmental agencies, civil society representatives, web developers, journalists, academic researchers and private sector representatives, among others). The conference also promoted Open data as an important topic for the development agenda of the region. ECLAC supported the participation of several government officials in the event and the consolidation of working group on open data under the mandate eLAC2015. This strengthen and expand ongoing Open data strategies in the region, as well as setting the basis for further collaborations and cooperation in specific activities of the project.

**Set open data as a digital policy priority for the region:** The preparatory meeting for the V Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean took place in San José, Costa Rica, from 5 to 7 November, 2014, convened by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications of Costa Rica and ECLAC, as the technical secretariat. The main objective of the meeting was to review a draft document for a regional Digital agenda "eLAC2018". Representatives from 14 countries of the region attended the meeting (Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay), along with 12 working groups coordinators and observers from civil society, the private sector and the technical community.

At the meeting working groups had the chance to present their work (in view of their work plan) and proposals for new objectives for the regional digital agenda (eLAC2018). Therefore, the open data working group, chair by the Agency for the Development of the Information and Knowledge Society of Uruguay (AGESIC), highlighted the importance of open data for digital policies, especially those set in the area of e-government.

Based on the discussions held at the preparatory meeting, the new digital agenda "eLAC2018" sets out 24 interdependent and complementary objectives mapped into five areas of action: (i) access and infrastructure; (ii) digital economy; (iii) e-government; (iv) social inclusion and sustainable development; and (v) governance aiming to boost innovation, economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

Under the action line for "e-Government", eLAC2018 states that the current citizen's requests related to resource management, trust, security, conflict resolution and political representation exceeds traditional institutions. In this context, ICT have become a fundamental tool for improving participation, increasing transparency and enhancing cooperation between different levels of government.

Thus, it is specifically stated in paragraph 24 of the "Digital agenda eLAC2018" that: *"While e-government has been understood as a platform for the relationship between government and citizens, recently given a greater emphasis on co-creation of public value and innovation. Open government has encouraged this trend under the principles of collaboration, participation and transparency and through two key areas: opening up public data and the use of platforms for citizen participation. The challenges in designing such policies are associated with cultural barriers, access to information, the costs for data processing, protection of personal data, technical capabilities and promoting the use of data by citizens and businesses "*.

In particular, target 14 states to *“Promote open government data initiatives and the use of digital platforms to facilitate collaboration, citizen participation and public transparency”*. Additionally, the consensus led also to incorporate other targets related to open government and open data which recognize the importance of public innovation (targets 11 and 12).

The inclusion of open data as part eLAC2018’s priorities, will promote a high level debate on open data between regional authorities within the framework the V Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean. In consequence this will boost political support to open policies.

## **VIII. Recommendations**

At this stage the project outputs showed a strong link between open data and digital policies in the region, specifically in the implementation of open data portals. Therefore, a major challenge is to continue the promotion of this topic within this context of the regional digital agenda (eLAC2018) and encourage the consolidation of open data initiatives.

Thus, the process of data opening is boosting in the region a broad range of policy challenges are still manifesting in terms of costs, technical standards, political will, public innovation, citizen participation and businesses creation. National open data programs (open data portals) are relatively new in the region and research on their management, coordination, implementation and evaluation is still limited. Considering the latter, efforts should be made to assist governments to reach better results on their open data programs and support a better understanding of its implications. This will require to:

- Map, key governance issues on ongoing national open government data programs.
- Strengthen the relations between open government data programs, in order to favor cooperation, exchange of best practices, capacity building and networking.
- Support governments in compiling and analyzing open data policy impacts, by providing technical tools for monitoring and evaluating policies.
- Compile and discuss specific actions for the promotion of open government data.

Therefore, it is clear that research and cooperation can help policy makers to set better institutional arrangement to support more adequately open data initiatives. The definition of a common agenda and the creation of regional mechanism for cooperation can be an opportunity for a joint workspace that will improve open data policies.

## Attachment 1

### GobCamp III: open data open government

Castillo de Chapultepec, Mexico City, October 3, 2014

#### Program

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>8.30 to 9:00</b>   | Openning<br>Steve Grinner, Program Coordinator e-government, OAS.<br>Mario Castillo, Division of Production, Productivity and Management, ECLAC |
| <b>9:00 to 9:30</b>   | GobCamp dynamics and presentation of participants<br>Roberto Lopez, Manager of RedGealc   |
| <b>9:30 to 9:45</b>   | Open data research activities<br>Catalina Achermann and Jorge Patino (ECLAC)  |
| <b>9:45 to 11:00</b>  | Work group activities   |
| <b>11:00 to 11:15</b> | Projecting the results of working groups.   |
| <b>11:15 to 11:30</b> | Coffe break   |
| <b>11:30 to 11:45</b> | Open Data and open government dialogues<br>Introducing work activities, Roberto López (Red Gealc)   |
| <b>11:45 to 13:00</b> | Work group activities   |
| <b>13:00 to 15:00</b> | Lunch break   |
| <b>15:00 a 15:30</b>  | Developing conceptual artifacts for groups  |
| <b>15:30 a 16:00</b>  | Interpreting conceptual artifacts   |
| <b>16:00 a 16:15</b>  | Coffe break   |
| <b>16:15 a 17:45</b>  | First impressions of the Second Regional Conference on Open Data (Condatos)   |
| <b>17:45 a 18:00</b>  | Closing<br>Fernando Perini, IDRC.<br>Mike Mora, OAS.  |

## Attachment 2

### List of participants GobCamp III: open data open government

|         |                            |   |   |
|---------|----------------------------|---|---|
| Bolivia | Arsenio Castellón Quisbert | Coordinador de Interoperabilidad, Dirección General de Gobierno Electrónico | Ministerio de Planificación del Desarrollo  |
| Brasil  | Andrea Thalhofer Ricciardi | Directora de Gobierno electrónico   | Secretaria de Logística y Tecnología de la Información                              |
| Chile   | Juan José Soto             | Director  | Unidad de Modernización del Estado, Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia |
| Chile   | Natalia Carfi              | Coordinadora  | Programa de Gobierno Abierto, Unidad de Modernización del                           |

|            |                        |   |   |
|------------|------------------------|---|---|
|            |                        |   | Estado, Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia       |
| Costa Rica | Juan Ignacio Barrios   | Gerente de Gobierno Electrónico             | Ministerio de Ciencia y tecnología                            |
| Guatemala  | Jorge Pineda           | Asesor                                      | Comisión Presidencial de Transparencia y Gobierno Electrónico |
| Mexico     | Enrique Zapata         | Director de Innovación Pública              | Presidencia   |
| Perú       | Victor Guerra Villegas | Director de Gobierno Abierto                | Secretaría de Gestión Pública                                 |
| Uruguay    | José Clastornik        | Director Ejecutivo                          | AGESIC  |
| Uruguay    | Virginia Pardo         | Directora Ciudadanía Digital                | AGESIC  |
| OAS        | Steve Grinner          | Coordinador Programa eGob                   | OAS   |
| OAS        | Mike Mora              | Especialista Secretaria de Asuntos Publicos | OAS   |
| Red Gealc  | Roberto López          | Gerente Red Gealc                           | Red Gealc   |
| CEPAL      | Jorge Patiño           | CEPAL                                       | CEPAL   |
| CEPAL      | Catalina Achermann     | CEPAL                                       | CEPAL   |
| CEPAL      | Mario Castillo         | CEPAL                                       | CEPAL   |
| ILDA       | Frabrizio Scrollini    | ILDA  | ILDA  |
| W3C-Brasil | Vagner Diniz           | W3C-Brasil                                  | W3C-Brasil  |

### Attachment 3.

#### Proposed work plan for the open data working group of eLAC2015

| Work areas                    | Possible actions   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Consolidate the working group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope: It is recommended that work on open data in the region is articulated with Red GEALC</li> <li>• Participants: The group should be integrated by different profiles, data users, governments and academia, among others.</li> <li>• Work methodology: Make available an online calendar.</li> <li>• Meetings: Coordinate annual meetings at GobCamps and the</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p>Regional open data conference.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Virtual meetings: Coordinate monthly virtual meetings.</li> </ul>  |
| Updated the status of regional initiatives  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline: Conduct a study to identify regional progress.</li> <li>• Exchange platform: Use an existing platform for exchange of best practices and information.</li> <li>• Shared agenda: Implement regional agenda of activities.</li> <li>• Promote an Open data observatory.</li> </ul> |
| Promote coordination with other initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with other initiatives such as OGP, W3C, OECD, etc.</li> <li>• Search synergies with existing projects and research.</li> </ul>   |
| Research                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the requirements for research (study will be led by ECLAC, under the ILDA)</li> <li>• Validate study outcomes.</li> </ul>  |