1. What is Metagora?  
2. How does Metagora operate?  
3. A common working framework  
4. Addressing basic questions  
5. Getting significant lessons from pilot experiences  
6. Feasibility and relevance  
7. Quantitative and qualitative data  
8. Involvement of Official Statistical Agencies  
9. Value added for Human Rights Institutions  
10. Empowerment of civil society  
11. Emerging initiatives worldwide  
12. Training materials  
13. Assessment of Metagora by an Independent Panel of Experts  
14. Metagora II: building further on the achievements of the pilot phase  
15. Need for increased financial support
The feasibility and relevance of “measuring” human rights and democratic governance have long been controversial in the human rights community, in the international statistical family and among social and political scientists as well. The potential of statistical analysis for enhancing rigor and reliability of reporting on human rights was first evidenced by work undertaken in the 80s, in particular by David Banks, Richard Claude, Thomas Jabine and Herbert Spirer. Their pioneer studies were followed in the 90s by successful measuring projects conducted in different countries by the Human Rights Data Analysis Group of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Also, experts of the French research centre DIAL and the National Statistical Institute of Madagascar started in 1995 to apply statistical methods to assess national key issues of democratic participation and governance.

Nevertheless, it was only in 2000 that these initiatives and issues were broadly debated on the occasion of the Montreux Conference on Statistics, Development and Human Rights, attended by more than 700 experts and officials from 123 countries and 35 international organizations. As a follow-up to the conclusions of that conference, policy analysts, human rights practitioners and professional statisticians started to work together in various regions of the world to develop evidence-based assessments of human rights and democratic governance. A North/South network emerging from this process formulated the orientations, goals and working plan of the Metagora project.

Metagora was launched in February 2004 under the auspices of the OECD / PARIS 21. On the basis of the achievements of its three-year pilot phase (2004-2006), donor institutions agreed to support a new phase of the project (*Metagora II*), to be implemented until December 2010.  

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1 The Montreux Conference, held on 4-8 September 2000, was organized under the aegis of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS), a specialised branch of the International Statistical Institute (ISI), the largest and most authoritative world-wide scientific organization in the field of statistics. The Conference was jointly convened and supported by two Swiss federal agencies: the Development and Co-operation Agency (SDC) and the Federal Statistical Office (SFSO).

2 The pilot phase of Metagora was successfully implemented thanks to generous voluntary contributions of Canada (CIDA), France (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Sweden (SIDA), Switzerland (SDC) and the European Union (under the budget of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights). Beyond this financial support, the project also benefited of 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.
1. What is Metagora?

Metagora focuses on methods, tools and frameworks for measuring human rights and democratic governance. Its strategic goal is to enhance proper assessment and a more systematic monitoring in these fields. Its main objective is to develop tools based on well-established statistical methods to obtain relevant data and create indicators upon which national policies can be designed, implemented and evaluated.

Metagora is policy-oriented in scope, multidisciplinary in approach, inclusive and participatory in method. Based on a North/South partnership, it gathers together the expertness of leading organizations and individuals from different continents, including human rights practitioners, political analysts, statisticians and academics. It is being implemented as a catalyst of expertise: it identifies and documents national and local initiatives aimed at enhancing quantitative assessment of human rights and democratic governance, and facilitates exchanges and networking among experts involved in these initiatives.

Metagora works as a decentralized laboratory: it is the first international project on measuring human rights and democratic governance to undertake several pilot experiences in different regions of the world in an interactive fashion. During the pilot phase, these included:

- three pilot surveys on human rights / governance issues carried out in Mexico City (on abuse and ill-treatment by police forces), in the Philippines (on indigenous people’s rights) and in South-Africa (on land reform);
- two regional multi-country surveys on democracy and governance issues progressively implemented by official statistical agencies in eight capital cities of francophone Africa (since 2001) and in three countries of the Andean Community (since 2002);
- the development of indicators and a data base on the right to education in Palestine;
- the establishment of a controlled vocabulary and harmonized procedures allowing NGOs to collect and analyze data on human rights violations in Sri Lanka (since 2001);
- a world-wide survey on projects measuring human rights and democratic governance;
- the identification and production of relevant training materials.

Figure 1. A decentralized laboratory for evidence-based assessment
Impact in the Field

Why is an Ombudsman like me involved in Metagora? My first and spontaneous answer is: because this project is enhancing my work as human rights defender, enlarging the scope of my mission and opening new perspectives to my action.

How is this happening? From the 40'000 cases of human rights violations reported every year to the Commission for Human Rights of Mexico City (Federal District), we have some 8'000 formal complaints – and, out of them, around 1'500 against police forces. I have therefore know for quite some time that, beyond the follow-up I can give to all these individual cases of human rights violations, I should find appropriate tools for fighting against these violations as a major structural problem.

The Metagora survey on abuses and ill treatment by police forces in the Federal District provided me – and the Mexican society at large – with an evidence-based picture of the magnitude and main characteristics of this phenomenon. For the first time I have in hand a tool for fighting against the widespread culture of impunity and non-respect for human dignity that prevails still today within the behaviour of police forces in my City.

After the release of the results of the Metagora survey implemented by Fundar in Mexico City I got in touch with the government of the Federal District and with the local legislative Congress to discuss how to address, in terms of policy and legislation, the structural problem of massive abuses by police forces. Discussing this issue on the basis of solid data marked a substantial difference in the kind of dialogue I used to have with public officials and political authorities. Normally officials and civil servants don’t like at all to discuss human rights issues related to individual cases of victims of police abuse. The situation is different when you can show with strong evidence the nature and magnitude of the structural problem you would like to address together with them. Confronted with facts and figures, they accept to enter into a more constructive and positive policy dialogue. At the present stage of this on-going dialogue, we are considering the possibility of drafting a law aimed at controlling abuses of police forces. Moreover, we are trying to set up a five-year human rights program for the Federal District. In this context, we are developing the kind of indicators promoted by Metagora and we are using the Metagora Training Materials as a guide and a common ground to develop solid monitoring tools.

This is what Metagora is really changing in Mexico and in other countries participating in the project: it is generating the methods and tools that make the difference in fighting against structural human rights violations, and it is providing common ground for policy dialogue on measures and norms that can improve the daily relations between people and public authorities. Thus it is not a matter of fortuity if, in the framework of Metagora, several Human Rights Institutions from Latin-America, Africa and Asia are now developing plans and a common agenda for enhancing measurement and evidence-based assessment of structural human rights issues.

Emilio Álvarez-Icaza
Chairman, Commission for Human Rights of the Federal District, Mexico
These pilot experiences constituted parts of a coherent whole; their outcomes converge into common achievements and significant lessons with regard to the global project’s objectives. Through these experiences Metagora was not only testing and refining quantitative assessment methods, but was – and still is – also working on crucial monitoring issues, such as proper matching of quantitative and qualitative information.

The originality of Metagora in comparison to other existing international initiatives and projects resides in its method of work, based on a bottom-up approach. In each pilot country, this consists of:

- the identification, by local stakeholders and experts, of key human rights and democratic governance issues for which evidence-based assessment would be highly relevant;
- the measurement and analysis of the selected issues with statistical methods that, combined with qualitative approaches, are adapted to the particular national context;
- the assessment of these methods for their capacity to provide reliable and policy-relevant information;
- the formulation of measurement’s results in terms of shared knowledge on the policy issues at stake;
- the broad dissemination and policy use of this new acquired knowledge;
- the decantation of global lessons from the pilot experiences and the formulation of recommendations for further application of the tested methods elsewhere.

Metagora therefore addresses national needs for reliable data and indicators on human rights and democratic governance. Its nationally-owned and nationally-based approach efficiently complements the top-down approach of international comparative indicators, which have limited application when it comes to effectively assessing key national issues – and in particular when the goal is to enhance evidence-based monitoring of national policies.

Metagora was designed and is being implemented with a strong product-oriented commitment. In this respect, its three-year pilot phase was a great success, as the project implemented all planned field operations and policy-oriented analysis, broadly disseminated their results, drew a set of guidelines for future action, and delivered all expected products. These include not only a series of technical and policy-oriented reports, but also two important on-line resources: a first substantive set of Training Materials and an Inventory of Initiatives Aimed at Enhancing Evidence-based Assessment of Human Rights and Democratic Governance (both are available in: www.metagora.org).

Through these tangible outcomes Metagora is addressing the needs of a large spectrum of beneficiaries, including decision makers, policy actors, analysts and civil society members who need to understand how statistics and indicators are created and how these can be properly used to assess the implementation of human rights and democratic governance.

Metagora works and grows through cross-fertilization. Project partners regularly share experiences, review work in progress together and provide each other with mutual support. Cross-fertilization materialises both at the level of each pilot experience – among the involved experts and practitioners from academic, governmental and non-governmental organizations – and at global level – among all partners and experts contributing to the implementation and assessment of the whole project. Metagora is therefore a process of mutual learning and common growth.
Interlinking and Empowering Actors of Change

In the Philippines, as in several other countries around the world, there is clearly a “before” and an “after” the arrival of Metagora.

Already by the end of 2000 the Philippine attendants to the international Conference on Statistics, Development and Human Rights established a “Montreux-Manila Group”, gathering together human rights defenders, activists of various civil society organizations, academic researchers and official statisticians. Their common objective was to implement in our country the operational conclusions of the Montreux Conference. At that time, my Institution was reluctant to play any kind of role in measuring human rights or democratic governance. Nevertheless this position started to evolve once the initiative of the Montreux-Manila Group matured in a more institutional form, under the leadership of our national Commission on Human Rights (CHR). In this context, we started to talk with institutions and persons we had never met until then: the CHR itself, the Commission of Indigenous Peoples and several senior scholars working in the fields of human rights, democracy and governance. Thus we discovered highly qualified potential partners and started to explore with them how to work together. While the discussions on the possibility of measuring human rights and democratic governance were not always easy – as each partner had his own specific conceptual background, method of work and particular agenda – we realized that our Institution had a lot to gain and a lot to provide in this process of dialogue and incipient collaboration. We finally decided to provide a strong technical support to the design and implementation of the first Metagora pilot experiment in our country, aimed at measuring indigenous peoples’ rights.

The Metagora pilot was a success not only in terms of production of relevant and valuable information, but also – and perhaps mainly – in terms of the impact it had in transforming and empowering the relations between the many “actors of change” committed in this process. As a direct consequence of our involvement in the Metagora pilot, we reviewed the design of our national population census in order to make once and for all truly visible the demographic and social profile of indigenous peoples, who constitute a significant part of the total population of our country. Finally, we far overcame our initial reluctance to measure human rights and democratic governance issues, as this kind of work is now part of our regular working program and we are producing, on a regular basis, indicators of local governance – an assessing tool that can be powerful in the hands of actors of change.

Dr. Romulo A. Virola
Secretary General, National Statistical Co-ordination Board of the Philippines
2. How does Metagora operate?

Metagora is managed by a central **Coordination Team** hosted by the OECD/PARIS21 Secretariat, based in Paris. Nevertheless its effective implementation relies on a multi-disciplinary and inclusive community of organizations and individuals. The core of this community is formed by representatives and experts of the seven **Partner Implementing Organizations (PIOs)** that signed Partnership Agreements with the OECD for the implementation of the Metagora pilot phase:

- **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);
- **National Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines**, CHR (Manila);
- **General Secretariat of the Andean Community**, GSAC (Lima).

The link of Metagora with the **Asia Foundation** project in Sri Lanka is not based on a formal partnership agreement with the OECD; however the Asia Foundation’s project team (Colombo) and the member organizations of the **Human Rights Accountability Coalition of Sri Lanka** are considered and treated **de facto** by the Metagora community as whole and key project partners.

All PIOs are internationally known as authoritative institutions in their fields of work. They have different skills, organizational profiles, specific missions and particular agendas. Such diversity constitutes by itself a major asset of the Metagora community. In the course of the pilot phase PIOs played different roles: four conducted pilot operations and policy-oriented studies in their countries (CHR, Fundar, HSRC and PCBS), two co-ordinated regional multi-country actions (DIAL and GSAC), and two provided technical assistance and intellectual services (AAAS and DIAL). All contributed to the project’s cross-cutting activities.

PIOs are responsible for the whole organization and management of their specific activities. On the basis of resources provided to them through the project’s budget, they recruit staff and local consultants. They also contract firms for provision of services – and namely for the implementation of operations of data collection and processing. In each PIO a “Metagora Coordinator” conducts the pilot experience and acts as antenna for the relations with the central co-ordination team and with the other PIOs.

PIOs not only ensure proper and timely implementation of field operations and analytical work, but also co-ordinate interventions of other national organizations and lead **local multidisciplinary teams** consisting of human rights practitioners, policy actors, statisticians and researchers from the academia. In addition, to ensure genuine materialization of the Metagora bottom-up approach, PIOs have been developing consultative mechanisms and participatory working methods aimed at allowing a large variety of stakeholders to express their views and expectations with regard to the content, scope, objectives and policy-orientation of the pilot experiences.

Such a **participatory process** is a key characteristic of Metagora, but its form varies from one pilot experience to another. It can be based on strong inter-institutional mechanisms (like in the Philippines), on project’s national steering committees involving the civil society and policy actors (such as in Palestine), or on ad hoc groups of experts and key stakeholders (such as in Mexico, Peru and South Africa). It can include large workshops, training sessions, “focal group discussions” with target groups, or narrative interviews of relevant actors concerned by specific issues at stake.
A light central co-ordination team is in charge of the overall management of the project.

Seven organizations based in different regions of the world conduct policy-oriented pilot experiences and co-ordinate the work of other national organizations involved in the project.

The Partners’ Group gathers together representatives of partner organizations, the co-ordination team, and all international experts involved in the implementation of the project. It fosters substantive cohesion of the whole project, common orientation of the various activities towards the Metagora goals as well as cross fertilization and interaction among the partners.

A Steering Committee gathering together donor institutions (i.e. representatives of EC and governmental agencies that are providing financial or in-kind support to the project), three elected PIO representatives, and representatives of key international stakeholders.

A Panel of Experts is in charge of assessing the implementation of Metagora on a strictly independent basis.
In the course of the Metagora pilot phase PIOs mobilized an impressive number of local qualified staff, consultants and stakeholders both in the implementation of planned activities and in the related participatory processes. In the whole, around seventy experts worked in the various national implementing teams (this figure doesn’t include staff involved in surveys’ field operations). More than three hundred stakeholders and experts were involved in local advisory bodies and mechanisms. Around one thousand stakeholders have been attending, at the national and international levels, consultative meetings and workshops.

Several international experts provide PIOs with scientific and technical assistance in fields like survey questionnaire design, sampling, statistical analysis, data encoding, or development of databases. Some experts implement or support project’s cross-cutting activities such as the production of training materials and the inventory of initiatives. Others conduct training courses for stakeholders and PIOs’ staff, namely on uses and misuses of statistics on human rights.

All PIOs, international experts and the Coordination Team gather together in the Partners’ Group, which constitutes the true engine of the project. This group ensures internal methodological consistency and substantive cohesion of the whole project. It fosters interaction mutual support between the various pilot experiences and checks the adequacy of each of them with overall project objectives. It draws global lessons from the various pilot experiences and it examines and endorses the materials, tools and products of the project. Frequent meetings of the Partners’ Group, in plenary or in ad hoc task teams, are devoted to review work in progress and to identify partner’s needs for scientific and technical support. In addition, members of the group have frequent working exchanges through electronic communication. In other words, the structure and dynamics of the group truly reflects a double strong commitment of each PIO and expert to the specific objectives of each pilot experience and to the global Metagora goals.

The two multi-country pilot experiences supported by DIAL in French speaking Africa and in the Andean region were based on existing institutional mechanisms for regional co-operation: Afristat, the Statistical Institute for French Speaking Africa, and the Andean Community. The Statistical Committees of these institutions, formed by Directors-General of National Statistical Agencies, set up specific working frameworks for developing exchanges and collaboration in the field of measuring democratic participation and governance issues.

A Steering Committee closely follows the advancement and results of the project and provides guidance and support to the Coordination Team. It examines progress reports, defines strategic guidelines and approves proposals for changes in the working program, as well as re-allocation of funds within the project budget. During the pilot phase of the project, this Committee consisted of representatives of all donor institutions, OECD, PARIS21, and the Chair of the Partners’ Group. At the request of the Partners’ Group, in 2006 the Committee decided to extend its membership to representatives of PIOs as well as to key international stakeholders.

Last but not least, an Independent Panel of Experts (IPE) assesses the implementation and outcomes of Metagora. It works with total independence with regard to both the project’s implementing structures and the Steering Committee. The IPE delivered in 2005 and 2006 two interim reports, largely based on an in-depth review of the implementation and outcomes of the survey-based pilots. The intermediate findings, conclusions and recommendations of the IPE were presented and discussed in a joint IPE/Partners’ Group Methodological Workshop held in Paris on 29-31 January 2007, that concluded the pilot phase of the project. In August 2007 the IPE adopted a general assessment report covering the period from February 2004 to July 2007, the main conclusions of which are summarized in section 13 of this paper.
3. A common working framework

While Metagora is operating with largely decentralized working structures, it is implemented within a common working framework. To ensure that all pilot experiences be brought together into a coherent whole and that results be shared and delivered within the planned deadlines, it was crucial that the Metagora community adopted and followed a common synchronized schedule. This was the major operational challenge of the whole project – and also the most constraining burden for the PIOs and experts involved in the pilot experiences.

Metagora inherited from substantive work carried out prior to the launching of the project, namely in French speaking Africa, Peru and Sri Lanka. In all other target countries, PIOs succeeded within fourteen months to design, organize and implement all planned field operations. They then produced, reviewed and released results and, finally, drafted and broadly disseminated policy-oriented reports based on these results. The various pilot experiences progressed through four main phases:

- **The preparatory work** in each pilot country and region included: (1) planning and budgeting the pilot experiences; (2) building local teams and organizing participatory consultations with relevant experts, stakeholders and institutions; (3) preparing and signing Partnership Agreements with the OECD; (4) recruiting PIOs’ project staff and local consultants; (5) refining the scope and specific objectives of each activity; and, most importantly, (6) designing surveys, questionnaires and databases.

- **The implementation of field operations** included: (1) in the case of sample surveys: data collection, processing and statistical analysis; (2) in the case of the dynamic database on the right to education: defining expected indicators, developing the tool and collecting both quantitative data and qualitative information; (3) in the case of work with narrative information of civil society organizations: collecting and encoding information following harmonized procedures and using harmonized forms.

- **The analysis of results and technical reporting** in each pilot country included: (1) documenting problems encountered and open technical issues; (2) descriptive analysis; (3) sharing and analysing preliminary results with stakeholders; (4) complementing quantitative data with qualitative information; (5) drawing pilot indicators; and (6) delivering preliminary results, technical reports and descriptive analysis for internal and external assessments by the Partners’ Group and the Independent Panel of Experts.

- **The production, evaluation and delivery of final outcomes of the pilot phase**, included: (1) presentation to stakeholders and the media of final results of pilot experiences by PIOs; (2) broad dissemination of national policy-oriented reports; (3) evaluation by the Partner’s Group and the Independent Panel of Experts of the tools and methods tested through the pilot experiences, and (4) drawing a global synthesis of results and lessons of the pilot phase.

During each of these phases PIOs and international experts embarked together in sound professional exchanges aimed at ensuring solidity and technical rigor in each step. They mutually reviewed the design of all survey questionnaires, the sampling plans, the problems encountered in field operations of data collection, the quality of the data gathered, the analytical frames, as well as the consistency and meaningfulness of the results.

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3 In February 2004 all field operations of the surveys on democratic governance issues in French speaking Africa were completed - and results of the first survey in Peru were available. The preparatory phase of the project on political and ethnical violence in Sri Lanka started in 2001 and field operations of collection and encoding of NGOs’ data are being implemented since 2002.
4. Addressing basic questions

It is worth noting that all Metagora activities were designed and implemented as pilot experiences, within a short time frame and with few resources. In none of these activities the aim was to provide an exhaustive and achieved evidence-based assessment of the human rights and democratic governance issues at stake. While all pilot experiences produced relevant information and had significant policy implications, their main interest is beyond their specific findings: it relies on the answers that were given to a series of basic questions on the feasibility, relevance and usefulness of measuring human rights and democratic governance with statistical methods and tools.

Indeed, each pilot experience was intended to respond to specific sets of questions. For instance, the three policy-oriented surveys on human rights and democracy issues implemented in Mexico, the Philippines and South Africa, specifically addressed the following questions:

- Can a survey questionnaire target and reflect the multi-dimensional complexity of phenomena like human rights violations, abuses by public authorities or failure of key redressing policies?
- Will sample randomly selected people (who are not necessarily motivated or committed to the issue at stake) accept being interviewed, and respond to sensitive questions?
- Can data collected through a survey questionnaire provide significant information allowing assessment of human rights and democratic governance issues in terms of accountability of public institutions and political authorities, policy weaknesses and policy needs?
- How can qualitative approaches inform and enrich survey plans and questionnaires design, and how can they inter-relate with quantitative approaches for empowering the analysis and interpretation of survey results?

A second interesting example of relevant questions emerges from the regional multi-country household surveys that were conducted by National Statistical Offices in eight countries of French Speaking Africa and in three countries of the Andean Community, as well as from the pilot experience conducted in Palestine. Indeed, these experiences allowed responding to crucial questions such as:

- Can official statistical agencies be involved in measuring democratic governance issues? What are the effective possibilities and the limits of an involvement of official statistics in measuring and monitoring human rights?
- Would people willingly respond to sensitive political questions in the framework of a survey carried out by a governmental body?
- Is it possible, in the contexts of fragile democracies or in non-democratic regimes, to measure with official statistical tools (such as household surveys) sensitive governance issues, expectations for democracy or gaps between political expectations and reality?
- What kind of specific indicators can be produced when reporting socio-economic variables to the assessment of democratic governance and public participation?
- Which kind of quantitative and qualitative information is required to develop rights-based indicators?
- How can official statistical agencies and policy actors (in particular civil society organizations) cooperate to define and design indicators on social and economic rights?
5. Getting significant lessons from pilot experiences

The responses given by each pilot experience to the series of questions exemplified above were discussed in-depth by the Metagora Partners’ Group so as to draw “global” methodological and policy-oriented lessons from the “local” processes, methodological approaches and measuring outcomes. This process has taken place since May 2005 and led the Partner’s Group to collectively formulate and progressively deepen a set of significant lessons, which can be summarized as follows:

- **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.

- **Quantitative and qualitative data** can and should interrelate to properly inform assessment of democracy, human rights and governance.

- **Official Statistical Agencies** can be efficiently involved in the measurement of human rights and democratic governance.

- Statistical analysis and quantitative indicators bring a significant value-added to the work of **national Human Rights Institutions**.

- Statistical methods can substantially enhance the research and advocacy of **Civil Society’s Organizations** in the fields of human rights and democracy.

- **Many initiatives in different regions of the world**, with approaches and objectives similar to those of Metagora, have been identified and documented in the form of an on-line database. These initiatives – that are often modest in scope and based on rudimentary methods – attest to a widespread need to enhance evidence-based assessment as well as to a dramatic need for technical and financial support.

- **The experiences, problems encountered and lessons learned in measuring human rights and democratic governance can and should be documented as training materials** aimed at helping national actors in replicating the experiences and properly applying the tested methods in other countries and other contexts.

- **And a North/South network of experts and institutions** concerned with the measurement of human rights and democratic governance has been consolidated around Metagora and is continuously growing.

The subsequent sections of this paper further elaborate on these significant lessons. In the course of the pilot phase, a number of critical issues were also identified and subject to in-depth examination. These are in particular: (1) the non-response issue in some pilot surveys, the quality control and the robustness/reliability of the information produced through these surveys; (2) data protection issues and the professional integrity of Metagora activities; and (3) issues related to linking quantitative and qualitative analysis, objective and subjective data, and building nationally-based indicators. The reflection and broad dialogue on these issues led the IPE and the Partners’ Group to jointly formulate guidelines for future work in the **Conclusions of the Joint IPE / Partners’ Group Methodological Workshop** that marked the end of the pilot phase. This document was unanimously endorsed by all members of the IPE and the Partners’ Group – and it therefore constitutes a key reference document both for those who will be involved in the implementation of Metagora II, as well as for the donor institutions and the Steering Committee of the project.
6. Feasibility and relevance

The surveys and studies conducted in French speaking Africa and in the Andean Community show that it is possible to collect relevant data and develop indicators for evaluating how well institutions and democracy are working, and for measuring the degree of support for policies among the general public. Measuring and building these indicators are generally less complex than measuring and building traditional socio-economic indicators, such as, for example, monetary poverty. The non-response rate with regard to the surveys’ questions on governance and democracy is generally lower than the non-response rate observed with regard to questions on revenues. A scientific comparison with other international initiatives (the Afrobarometer and Latinobarómetro projects) revealed both the strong convergence of the obtained results across the common fields – which confirms the robustness of the proposed indicators – and the areas in which the various instruments complement each other.

The three pilot experiences carried out in Mexico, the Philippines and South-Africa showed that well-established statistical survey methods of sampling and field operations can be applied to measure sensitive human rights and democratic governance issues. As is the case in all surveys that intend to capture sensitive or complex data, proper design and accurate tests of questionnaires are basic preconditions for obtaining reliable relevant data – and this is of particular relevance to ensure that a survey appropriately addresses the issues at stake within the specific national political, social and cultural environments. Although non-response is a serious problem, here further study and articulation of assumptions and models can improve statistical estimates. These surveys were designed and implemented as pilot experiences, within a short time frame and with few resources – and this had, as a consequence, a number of sampling and technical limitations. In spite of this, the collected data provided significant information on the nature, dimensions and magnitude of the issues at stake. The surveys’ findings - such as the high incidence of abuses by law-enforcement authorities in Mexico City, the centrality of protection of ancestral land for the effective implementation of indigenous people’s rights in the Philippines or the expectations expressed by the South-African black population with regard to land reform - are particularly relevant for addressing key governance issues, for confirming or correcting stakeholders’ perceptions and policy assumptions, and also for informing with evidence-based analysis appropriate design of policies and programs aimed at redressing rights and enhancing accountability.

The particular methodology applied in Sri-Lanka to document, encode and analyze sensitive information on massive human rights violations, is allowing to establish a scientifically rigorous record of reported and estimated total numbers of violations, patterns of abuse, and the nature and identity of perpetrators and victims. This helps to clarify the past, assign responsibility for past violations, and will put an end to perpetrators’ sense of impunity. Analysis of data sets is confirming correlation between patterns of various forms of massive human rights violations that is consistent with the hypothesis that these violations were the result of specific causes and perpetrators that can be identified over time. This kind of analysis will be precious for the work of future mechanisms for reconciliation and truth. Moreover, the development of records and survey-based estimates of current abuses assists in monitoring compliance with commitments made within the peace process, and also helps to shape policy in ways that promote greater human rights protections and accountability.

In other words: pilot experiences – which were intentionally conducted in different cultural, political and development contexts and applying different survey approaches and data collection methods – attest to the feasibility, relevance and fruitfulness of applying professional statistical tools and methods for enhancing assessment and monitoring of human rights and democratic governance.
Example 1: non-physical abuse in contacts with law enforcement authorities in Mexico City (Federal District)
(survey results correspond to 2.3 million contacts experienced by 1.5 million persons)

- Were you asked for money? 667,000
- Were you insulted or humiliated? 248,000
- Were you threatened with accusation on false grounds? 163,000
- Were you threatened in order to obtain a confession or some information? 120,000
- Were you threatened to be hurt? 114,000
- Were you compelled to confess? 72,000
- Were you threatened with hurt to your family? 34,000

(Number of contacts per type of non-physical abuse)

Source: Fundar – Metagora report

Example 2: levels of corruption and civil servants’ wages in Antananarivo, Madagascar, 1995-2004

Source: INS Madagascar and DIAL – Metagora report
Example 3: Incidence of corruption within public agencies in Peru

Source: INEC Peru and DIAL – Metagora report

7. Quantitative and qualitative data

Outcomes of the pilot phase show not only that assessment of democracy, human rights and governance can build on the solid rock of proper quantitative reporting, but also that design and use of measurement methods and tools in these areas must be informed by accurate qualitative research and documentation on the situation and perceptions of target populations as well as on the assumptions and expectations of all kinds of stakeholders. Qualitative information is essential not only to ensure proper design of survey questionnaires, but also to focus statistical analysis on relevant issues and to provide appropriate contextual frameworks for an effective policy-oriented interpretation of quantitative data.

In the pilot experience carried out in Mexico, the design of the survey questionnaire was based on extensive consultation of qualitative assumptions and assessments of experts, but also on a systematic records of qualitative information gathered through in-depth narrative interviews with victims of law-enforcement authorities’ abuses. In the Philippines, multiple qualitative methods were applied (including focus group discussions with target populations, substantive reports of local experts as well as large consultations and topical discussions with all relevant stakeholders). These were precious not only in conceiving and designing the questionnaire, but also in interpreting and validating the findings (i.e., clarifying noteworthy variations among the tribes of indigenous people on specific issues), therefore ensuring that the investigation was aligned and responsive to indigenous conceptualisations, and focused on salient and meaningful priorities. Moreover, the Sri Lankan experience of building statistically-friendly series of data encoded from records of narrative reports on human rights violations, as well as the Palestinian attempt to integrate in a single database quantitative data with relevant qualitative information on the right to education, are opening promising perspectives on possible ways and means for better matching quantitative and qualitative sources of information.

The outcomes of the pilot phase show that relating the surveys’ results with qualitative and contextual information provides a solid comprehensive basis for policy-oriented reporting on human rights and democratic governance issues.
Example 4: linking quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess indigenous peoples’ rights in the Philippines

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<tr>
<th>Quantitative approach</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SURVEY FINDINGS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High perception and awareness of rights to ancestral domain and land (Bago, 68%), Bugkalot (70.8%), Kankana-ey (60.8%).</td>
<td>• Tribal leaders and women have highest awareness and perception of rights to ancestral domain and land. Young people have the lowest awareness. Right of ownership, to develop lands and natural resources and to stay in territories well understood. Low or no awareness of other rights listed under IPRA. Apparent confusion of rights due to lack of knowledge about distinction or difference between rights to ancestral domain and land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Government is in second place as source of information of rights to ancestral domain and land: Bago 28.4%, Bugkalot 54.2%, Kankana-ey 22.4%.</td>
<td>• Positive effect of IPRA on their rights to ancestral domain and rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experienced violations of rights via encroachment (Bago-6%, Bugkalot 30.9% and Kankana-ey 13.2%); pollution (Bago, 4.7% Bugkalot, 17.7%, Kankana-ey, 8.8%); illegal entry (Bago, 5.3%, Bugkalot, 46.3% and Kankana-ey, 13.2%). Experience of land grabbing by private individuals (Bago 50%; Bugkalot, 56.5%, Kankana-ey, 55.6%), council of elders and others.</td>
<td>• Violations occurring by tribes mates, other tribes, private mining companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Substantial awareness and use of governmental programs and services.</td>
<td>• Recognition of government efforts in fulfilling rights to ancestral domain and land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exercise of land ownership and acquisition of right to ancestral domain.</td>
<td>• Customary law as primary source of dispute resolution affecting rights to ancestral domain and land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Average satisfaction (68-78%) about delivery of government programs and services.</td>
<td><strong>LOCAL CONSULTATIONS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 90% considered customary laws helpful in solving land issues; 52% of land issues are resolved by customary laws.</td>
<td>• Demand for relevant and deeper human rights and IPRA education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Top five primary needs: adequate food, housing, water system, livelihood and education.</td>
<td>• Need for livelihood and organizing especially among women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Development aggression of private sectors permitted/not controlled by government and co-opted by some tribal leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of delivery of vital services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discriminatory policies to access rights to education and other social services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pollution of and inadequate water resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peace and order to ensure personal security.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Commission on Human Rights and National Statistical Coordination Board of the Philippines – Metagora report

8. Involvement of Official Statistical Agencies

Contrary to an inextricable prejudice, still too broadly shared within the international official statistical community, Metagora’s pilot experiences show that official statistical agencies can: (1) conduct large sample surveys on governance and democracy issues, or (2) provide qualified technical assistance and field logistics to other governmental agencies or human rights institutions responsible for monitoring the implementation of human rights, or (3) develop, in collaboration and interaction with civil society organizations, proper tools for systematic evidence-based monitoring of social, economic and cultural rights.
As factual evidence of the feasibility of measuring democracy and governance issues with official statistical tools, to date survey questionnaires on these issues have been attached as a supplement to regular household surveys conducted by eleven official statistical agencies in French speaking Africa and the Andean region. This experience develops and promotes a very promising tool, as using well-established official surveys presents obvious advantages: the size, the quality of the sampling frames, the effectiveness of proper data collection, the analytical potential of the data collected, as well as the marginal additional costs incurred by adding a specific questionnaire to existing surveys. Analysis of the resulting data is enriched with information on respondents collected from both, the regular and supplement questionnaires, making it possible to focus on governance issues in relation to major social and development problems such as poverty and exclusion. In French speaking Africa as well as in the Andean countries, disaggregated data provide precious grounds for evidence-based assessment of local governance. In Madagascar and Peru the survey is becoming a routine measurement tool that allows undertaking of analysis over time. The institutionalisation of this tool within the national official statistical information systems must be further enhanced, deepened and included in the national strategies for the development of statistics promoted by PARIS21, and supported by the UN family.

In the Philippines, the National Statistical Co-ordination Board not only provided sound expertise to the design of the survey (and to the analysis of results) on the rights of indigenous peoples organized by the Commission for Human Rights, but also coordinated training actions, sampling work and field support provided by the National Statistical Office and by the Statistical Research and Training Center. Experts from these statistical agencies were involved throughout the whole process, from the participatory consultation of stakeholders and indigenous peoples’ communities to the statistical analysis and the presentation of findings to the stakeholders and to the media. This involvement was determinant not only for ensuring that the experience conforms to well-established professional standards, but also for enhancing the culture of evidence-based assessment of the other main institutional partners: the Commission for Human Rights and the Commission for Indigenous people.

In Palestine, the Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) embarked on intense co-operation with civil society organizations to develop indicators and a prototype database on the right to education. This cooperation was based on a clear and rigorous distinction of roles and tasks. PCBS is and will be responsible for the identification, collection and processing of relevant data, as well as for the design, development, update, maintenance and public access of the database. Nevertheless the analysis and interpretation of the information provided by the database will be of the sole responsibility of the users (civil society organizations, media and bodies of the Palestinian Authority) on a strict independent basis. In particular, PCBS will not be associated in any form to the production of the policy-oriented report foreseen in the framework of this activity, but this is being drafted by qualified experts from the civil society.

All these experiences therefore show that official statistical agencies can efficiently and successfully be involved in diverse forms in the measurement of human rights and democratic governance. Nevertheless, the decision for an official statistical agency to embark or not in such measurement exercises must be based on sound consideration of the feasibility, suitability and usefulness of the involvement in each specific national context. The Metagora community has been strongly committed in defining criteria and drawing clear guidelines for such a decision-making process. Moreover, it formulated a series of requirements to conduct official statistical surveys on human rights, democracy and governance issues. In this context, the Metagora community strongly recommends official statistical agencies that the decision to be (or not to be) involved in human rights and governance assessments be taken within the framework of their global strategies for reinforcing their own legitimacy and capacities.
Example 5: information from a household survey implemented by a national official statistical agency. How important is democracy for people in Ecuador?

Example 6: outcomes of a “Mirror Survey” aimed at comparing data from household surveys conducted by official statistical agencies with experts’ views on corruption

Source: INE Ecuador and DIAL – Metagora report

Source: DIAL – Metagora report
Example 7: building indicators and a database on the right to education in Palestine

9. Value added for Human Rights Institutions

Current human rights monitoring mechanisms are mainly based on reporting of individual cases (or series of cases) to Human Rights Institutions (HRIs), as well as on judicial decisions. This form of monitoring is certainly invaluable for purposes of advocacy on individual cases, but it does not provide relevant information on the real dimension and trends of major human rights issues considered as collective, social and political phenomena. As HRIs are primarily concerned with the promotion and protection of human rights on the basis of international norms and standards, they are more aware than any other institution of the lack of reliable information on human rights relevant large phenomena. However HRI agents are often unfamiliar with quantitative analysis and therefore tend to consider statistics as an overly reductive approach unable to capture the multiple complex dimensions inherent to their human rights work.

The Metagora experience in the Philippines, conducted by the Commission on Human Rights, has proven that working mechanisms involving different institutions with the appropriate substantive and technical skills can successfully implement measurement of complex problems such as the implementation of indigenous people’s rights. This experience shows that a strong leadership of HRIs, political commitment of relevant institutions in charge of protection of target populations, proper technical assistance and field support from official statistical agencies, and large consultations of all concerned stakeholders constitute essential assets for the success of this kind of initiative. This experience also showed that a long process of dialogue and mutual learning is required to overcome prejudices as well as unfamiliarity of the various actors with the approaches and skills of the others. The results of the pilot survey and complementary qualitative analysis prove that, on the basis of a shared analysis, statistical information can effectively complement regular reporting of HRIs and can powerfully inform relevant recommendations of HRIs to executive and legislative powers, in particular on the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights.
In a different context, the pilot survey on ill-treatment in Mexico City also provides evidence of the complementary role of statistical methods to the work of HRIs not only in identifying specific forms and mechanisms of massive abuses by law-enforcement authorities, but also in constructively promoting and supporting governmental policies and programs aimed at enhancing governance structures and measures to eliminate and prevent such abuses.

In the course of the implementation of the pilot phase, other initiatives and plans undertaken by HRIs were identified, namely in Kenya and South-Africa, that confirm the suitability of further developing, as part of the Metagora consolidation work, a network of HRIs that would allow more frequent and efficient exchanges between them, as well as further transmission of lessons to the international human rights community. The implementation of these plans will be closely articulated to current and future involvement of some Metagora partners within the high level expert group of the UN-HCHR on indicators of Economic, Social and Cultural rights. In this perspective, the AAAS Science and Human Rights Program has already drawn, in collaboration with some national HRIs, an outline of structured work that could be implemented to ensure a more shared, replicable and sustainable involvement of HRIs in evidence-based assessment of human rights issues.

10. **Empowerment of civil society**

In the framework of the innovative project supported by the Asia Foundation in Sri Lanka, technical expertise was provided by Metagora to the Human Rights Accountability Coalition (HRAC) that gathers together different Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). These CSOs join efforts to systematically collect, collate, analyze, and share data on human rights violations. The objective of HRAC is to develop a massive, objective and undeniable statistical record aimed at: (1) injecting scientifically rigorous evidence into the search for truth about the patterns, magnitude, and responsibility for past violations connected to Sri Lanka’s ethnic and political conflicts; and (2) systematically documenting current abuses to assist in monitoring compliance with commitments made in the peace process.
Technical foundations were established with the adoption of harmonized forms to register events as well as an agreed vocabulary on human rights violations. These tools allow ensuring standardized coding and processing of comprehensive physical records (archives of CSOs, each containing tens of thousands of individual cases of human rights violations). On this basis, and thanks to a generous contribution of the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA), this pilot activity developed and expanded further as to ensure rigorous data processing and quality control. Thus HRAC partner organizations succeeded to build an impressive electronic record of human rights violations that can now be properly used to carry out statistical analysis. This demonstrates that well established methods for ensuring harmonized data collection and coding contribute to reinforce capacity building of CSOs and open promising perspectives for proper evidence-based analysis of massive human rights violations.

The experience in Sri Lanka doesn’t aim at training CSOs activists to be statisticians. Rather the strategy of this experience has been and still is to build locally-based sustainable capacities through a three-fold line of action:

- Technical assistance, training, coaching and tools are provided to local CSOs (HRAC partners) in order that well trained staff and members become (1) highly skilled producers of solid and relevant data on human rights violations, and (2) highly skilled users of professional statistical analysis of large-scale human rights violations.

- A close partnership with relevant Sri Lankan academic scientist (within the Statistics Department of the University of Colombo) has been established to ensure a scientifically qualified and truly sustainable follow-up of projects’ achievements on the basis of nationally-based expertise – namely in terms of autonomous production of professional statistical analysis of large-scale human rights violations. Scientific workshops have been and will be organized to allow Sri Lankan researchers and professional statisticians to develop networking and exchanges with foreign statisticians who have outstanding experience and expertise in developing methods and tools for generating and analyzing data on human rights violations.

- Workshops and forums are held with social scientists and human rights experts from academic circles to attract their interest in human rights statistics and to develop a culture of evidence-based research and analysis in the field of human rights.

Example 9: training Palestinian civil society actors on uses and misuses of human rights data
The implementation of this strategy has been successful. It shows that for effectively enhancing capacities of the civil society to conduct evidence-based assessment, it is required that different skills be appropriately transmitted to different kinds of local actors involved in the collection, analysis and policy-oriented analysis of human rights data. This is an essential condition to ensure effective sustainability of the work in the country on an autonomous scientific and technical basis.

In a different context, the Metagora experience implemented in Palestine explores, through a large participatory process, possibilities for a particular involvement of CSOs, together with Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in measuring human rights and democratic governance issues. The experience focuses on the development of indicators on the right to education based on official statistical data as well as on information collected by CSOs. Quantitative and qualitative information is integrated into a dynamic database developed and managed by PCBS, and serves as a reference tool for independent policy-oriented analysis and reporting of research centres, human rights organizations and political actors. This prototype database is therefore providing a common basis for gathering, coding and analyzing sets of information of different sources that otherwise may remain fragmentary, anecdotal and irrelevant for comprehensive analysis.

As in the case of Sri Lanka, the pilot activity in Palestine confirms that appropriate training on data collection techniques and processing of data, as well as adequately calibrated transmission of know-how, substantially empowers the monitoring and advocacy capacities of CSOs. Thanks to this training CSOs can now play a double role as providers and users of relevant information. Moreover, the Metagora experience has provided a key policy focus to (and has given a strong impetus for) an effective cross-institutional partnership between the academia, independent research centres, civil society organizations, policy actors and the official statistical agency. The way in which the pilot experience was launched and implemented is characterized by a strong involvement of numerous stakeholders in consultations and decisions. Such a participatory process is considered today at the national level to be one of the main policy achievements of the activity – and it is often quoted by key actors and organisations as a valuable example to be followed by other major national initiatives and projects in Palestine. This clearly confirms the powerfulness of Metagora’s bottom-up approach – here jointly conducted by CSOs and a technically and professionally skilled institution. But the experience also shows that, to be effective, the implementation of this approach requires a clear distinction of roles and tasks between the CSOs and statistical and other governmental agencies.

11. Emerging initiatives worldwide

The conference of Montreux revealed for the first time that evidence-based assessment of human rights and democratic governance is a need emerging worldwide. Half of the 300 substantive contributions to that conference were coming from developing countries. It was therefore important that a specific activity of Metagora aimed at gaining better knowledge of on-going efforts in the field of data analysis and measurement tools on human rights and democratic governance, and to share information on available experiences and capacities around the globe. A world-wide survey was therefore carried out to identify current and recent measuring work in these areas, and to provide for the first time an overview of existing expertness around the world. The information gathered was – and will continuously be – recorded in an inventory that primarily serves as an information tool on emerging experiences and available expertise. This inventory – made public as an on-line repository (Internet search tool) in www.metagora.org – aims also at facilitating exchanges and networking among organizations and at enhancing the development of assessment and monitoring tools.

The survey revealed the existence of numerous on-going initiatives widespread around the world that were until now largely unknown by the human rights and statistical communities. The Inventory therefore not only provides a list of up-to-date attempts and efforts in measuring democratic governance and human rights, but also gives a highly interesting picture of local and national needs and priorities in these fields arising around the globe. It clearly attest to a widespread need to enhance evidence-based assessments.
The survey covered a broad range of institutions and initiatives that differ in their nature and objectives, themes addressed geographical scope, and methodological approaches, with the aim of identifying as many field-initiatives as possible. Well-known institutions working on a global level with high professional knowledge, as well as small civil society organisations interested in measuring one single aspect of democratic governance and/or human rights within their local community were reached and responded to the questionnaire. The Inventory, to a large extent, paves the way to exploration and original investigation of feasible ways to bring statistical analysis into the hearth of monitoring of human rights and democratic governance, and promote proper matching of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The results show that the need for measuring democratic governance and human rights and the related policies, and for a more rigorous use of quantitative methods in the collection, production, and analysis of data in these fields, is not only an academic exercise and an international concern, but also a strong demand coming directly from the global South. Nevertheless, the identified initiatives are often modest in scope, conducted with very few resources and based on rudimentary methods; this attest to a dramatic need for technical and financial support.

The initiatives collected show also a large variety of approaches to assessment: when grouped along the lines of quantitative vs. qualitative approaches, a large majority actually uses a combination of both – therefore impressively illustrating one of the main lessons of Metagora, namely the complementarity of quantitative and qualitative methods.

12. Training materials

Much progress has been made by Metagora in documenting human rights, democracy and governance measurement methods, so that others may reap the benefit of what has been learned. The production and further dissemination of training materials is therefore a clear mark of the project’s value added. The goal of these web-based materials (available in www.metagora.org) is to provide a large variety of stakeholders (policy makers, civil society actors, field workers and data analysts) with structured information on the approaches, conditions and methods for measuring democracy, human rights and governance.

The Training Materials aim to inform rather than instruct stakeholders, namely policy and decision makers and other users of data (i.e. non-governmental organisations, professionals working with data, journalists, donor institutions, etc.), and the technical vocabulary used has been adapted to fit the variety of users’ levels of knowledge and needs. The structure and contents of these Materials were subject to a broad international peer-review, involving not only Metagora partners and experts but also several external scholars, including statisticians, social and political scientists, as well as experts in human rights monitoring.

The specific aims and goals of the Training Materials are to allow:

- **Policy and decision makers** to understand how appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis can inform the formulation of policy related to democratic governance and human rights;

- **Civil Society Organisations, Human Rights Institutions** and other potential users of data to understand the complementary roles of quantitative and qualitative data in their work related to democratic governance and human rights, and how to create statistically rigorous projects for data collection and analysis; and

- **Professionals working with data** to understand policy processes related to democratic governance and human rights as well as the needs and activities of policy makers, and to grasp the specific challenges inherent in conducting projects like those of the Metagora pilot phase.
The Training Materials facilitate the creation of a common ground of understanding. The Training Materials include Guidelines for informing policy via data, definitions in the form of an Encyclopedia of Terms, a Case Study, and a collection of documents, tools and explanatory documents from the Metagora project that can be used as potential examples for future projects. These documents and tools include training manuals for interviewers, sample analyses and reports, etc.

13. Assessment of Metagora by an Independent Panel of Experts

As it has been said, 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. 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:

- “Metagora has made a major contribution in showing, through its various pilot experiences, that measuring human rights, democracy and governance is technically feasible and policy-oriented.”
- “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.”
- “The Metagora community has been increasingly extending and deepening its international network, integrating new partners and promoting, through many means, dialogue and exchanges among the various actors involved in measuring human rights and democratic governance over the world.”
- “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.”
- “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 addresses when planning, budgeting, designing and implementing activities.”
- “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.”
- “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.”

Looking at the implementation of future work, the IPE “encourages the Metagora Partners and the Coordination Team to continue their efforts to address the weaknesses, technical shortcomings and problems identified.” In this perspective, the IPE formulates a series of recommendations aimed at enhancing the scientific, technical and professional basis of the project.

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4 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); Mrs. Haishan Fu (China, Chief statistician of UN-ESCAP 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-chairman of PARIS21); Mr. Carlo Malaguerria (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).
In particular, the IPE recommends strengthening: (1) the core staff of the Coordination Team by adding high-level expertise in survey methods, including sampling and analytical methods; (2) training and training materials for partners in such key areas such as questionnaire construction, report preparation, and graphical presentation; (3) work on methodological reporting, including estimates of sampling variability for all major survey estimates and analytical conclusions, as well as information on data limitations to be provided in all of the project’s outputs; (4) quality control of field work, data processing, analysis and reporting; and (5) ethics review of work in progress and provision of guidelines to national and regional partners on protection of personal data and security of fieldworkers.

Moreover, the IPE recalls previous interim operational recommendations which, to date, have either not been implemented or have only partially been implemented, due to budget constraints. For instance, this concerns the expansion and timely updating of the project’s information tools (and in particular the web site), the need for translating key project outputs from English into at least French and Spanish, or the need for sharing more broadly the methodologies, results, findings and analytical work with countries that do not participate in Metagora.

The IPE stresses that its scientific, technical and operational recommendations “will cost money to be implemented properly. In these circumstances, donors will have to weigh expected costs against expected benefits. In thinking about the trade-offs involved and likely benefits to be achieved one may note that most of these recommendations involve the implementation of well-tested and widely-recognized principles, that most of them are interrelated in nature; (...) if implemented, they will together help make Metagora a more useful, cost-effective, and responsible endeavour.”

14. Metagora II: building further on the achievements of the pilot phase

The Metagora Partners’ Group drafted and adopted a Strategy and a Project Outline for Metagora II. The latter was submitted to the donor institutions in September 2006. It stresses that, while moving towards a new phase, the Metagora project must not change course. Future action will be a continuation and amplification of the impact of the pilot phase. Metagora II will build on the achievements, lessons, tools and network of Metagora I. It is only on this basis that the project can confirm and spread the approach, objectives and methods of the pilot phase – in particular by increasing the institutional impact and political effect of the data, the indicators and the tools for measuring democracy, human rights and governance.

The Strategy and the Project Outline therefore propose to deepen and extend the experiences implemented in the pilot phase. Future action will therefore consist in a wide-ranging study based on the application of the methods and tools tested during the pilot phase to new, large and diversified sets of coordinated experiences at national and regional (multi-country) levels. As was the case in the pilot phase, these experiences will consist of field surveys, statistical analysis and matching of quantitative and qualitative data. They will be designed, implemented and assessed to document an entire methodology.

Indeed, while the indicators generated within the pilot activities are of obvious policy relevance (such as the magnitude of ill-treatment in Mexico City or the incidence and costs of corruption for the Peruvian population), these indicators are still limited in terms of technical robustness and analytical potential. As pointed out in the IPE’s Assessment Report, such limitations result not only from survey samples’ sizes (which is a normal constraint in all pilot surveys that are conducted with light budgets) but also from a range of technical and conceptual problems that were identified and that should be duly addressed with appropriate means by Metagora II.
The Project Outline for Metagora II therefore proposes a working program and a tentative broad estimate of costs of € 11 million over a period of 4 years (2007-2010)⁵ resulting from a realistic consideration – based on strict professional standards – of the resources, the time and the expertise that are needed to:

- properly implement the scientific, technical and operational recommendations of the IPE;
- increase the number of national surveys and studies to cover new geographical areas and cultural contexts and to reach a critical mass of differentiated experiences;
- generate more robust policy-oriented data and build solid and relevant indicators of human rights and democratic governance;
- document methodologies for producing, disseminating and using those indicators;
- anchor evidence-based assessment and indicators in decision-making and monitoring mechanisms;
- ensure effective national appropriation of Metagora approaches, methods and tools, and therefore a sustainable capacity of national institutions to produce evidence-based indicators; and
- develop and enrich further the Training Materials and the Inventory of Initiatives, as well as to substantively upgrade and timely update the project’s website.

To reach these objectives, the Project Outline for Metagora II includes a core program of global activities – including conceptual, training, networking, dissemination and advocacy work – a program of joint activities with relevant international organizations such as the UNDP – Oslo Governance Centre, the UN-HCHR or the OECD Global Project on Indicators of Progress of Societies, and a modular program of multi-country and national activities aimed at replicating and extending, on a significant scale, the successful experience of the pilot phase.

The core program of global activities started being implemented in February 2007. The modular program of national and multi-country activities will start as soon as the required funds are made available by donor institutions. This program will be implemented by an enlarged Metagora Community. Indeed, the program of work of Metagora II was elaborated not only by the Metagora Partners who implemented the pilot phase, but also by new Partners who are committed to actively contribute to the implementation of the project in its second phase. These include the Higher School of Economics – State University (Russia), the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (Denmark), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mongolia). Also, since the formulation of Metagora II’s program of work, other institutions have expressed strong interest in joining the project – such as the National Commission on Human Rights of Kenya, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, the Malawi Human Rights Commission, the Commission of Human Rights of Sao Paulo, the Brazilian National School of Statistical Sciences (ENCE), as well as several National Statistical Agencies interested in testing in their countries the method of appended ad-hoc modules on democratic governance to their regular household surveys.

15. Need for increased financial support

Metagora is an inherent part of PARIS21, but is financed through a separate funding scheme and is operating with an independent budget. The Metagora Steering Committee includes representatives of donor institutions that have provided financial support to the implementation of the project. 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 IPE’s Assessment Report 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”.

⁵ For purposes of comparison, the total expenditure of the three-year pilot phase of Metagora (February 2004 – February 2007) was of € 2.9 million.
As this paper shows, the pilot phase of Metagora constituted a successful materialization of a North/South commitment to enhance evidence-based assessment of human rights and democratic governance. Much progress has been made thanks to the considerable work carried out by the many actors involved in the Metagora activities around the world. To be continued and to attain its final goal, this collective effort now needs a consistent financial support by those donor institutions which have put the promotion and monitoring of human rights and democratic governance at the forefront of their development and cooperation policies.