



**MEASURING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE :
CONCLUSION OF THE METAGORA WORK AND HANDING OVER OF ITS OUTCOMES**

This document established by the Metagora Coordination Team and agreed by the PARIS21 Secretariat:

- explains why and how the work implemented within the Metagora project can now be steered towards its conclusion;
- highlights in particular the ways and means for ensuring a proper and timely handing over of the Metagora successful outcomes to relevant organizations and emerging international initiatives aimed at enhancing evidence-based assessments of human rights and democratic governance;
- requests that the PARIS21 Steering Committee, the Metagora Steering Committee and the Metagora Partner Organizations endorse the steps, deadlines and final outcomes of this concluding work.

1. Background

Metagora was launched in February 2004, under the auspices of the OECD/PARIS21, as a concrete follow-up to the conclusions of the 2000 Montreux Conference on Statistics, Development and Human Rights. This pioneering project has been implemented thanks to generous voluntary contributions of the European Union, Canada, France, Sweden, Switzerland and the European Free Trade Association.

Metagora emerged from a **multi-disciplinary North/South network of institutions**. Seven organizations committed, under a Partnership Agreement with the OECD, to take the lead in implementing global, regional and national operations planned within the project: the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Washington), the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (Manila), the DIAL Centre of the Institute for Development Research (Paris), Fundar Centre for Analysis and Research (Mexico City), the General Secretariat of the Andean Community (Lima), the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa (Pretoria) and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (Ramallah).

Other organizations provided substantive contributions and in-kind support to the project, or conducted field operations – namely ADETEF the Cooperation Agency of the French Ministry of Finance, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, the Commissions for Human Rights of Kenya, Korea, Malawi, Mexico City, South Africa and Sri Lanka, as well as AITRS the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, AFRISTAT the Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa, the National Statistical Coordination Board of the Philippines, and the National Statistical Offices of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland.

2. Distinctive Metagora features

Metagora's original strategic goal was **to enhance evidence-based assessment and monitoring** of human rights and democratic governance. The main objective of the project has been to develop robust methods and tools to obtain data and create indicators upon which national policies can be formulated and evaluated. To reach this goal, Metagora was designed as a decentralised laboratory: through its Partners, it has been undertaking pilot experiences in different regions of the world in an interactive fashion. On the basis of this field work, all Partners involved in the project have been formulating together significant lessons and recommendations for further application of the tested methods elsewhere.

Since its inception Metagora has systematically been following an innovative bottom-up approach aimed at **strengthening national capacities and leadership** in assessing human rights and democratic governance. In line with the principles of ownership and participation formulated in the Paris Declaration, the specific objectives of each national Metagora activity have been defined by domestic stakeholders. The activities have been designed – with a sound technical basis and a strong policy orientation – to address sensitive issues, such as abuses and ill-treatment by police forces, corruption within public administration, obstacles to and weaknesses in democratic participation, political exclusion of the poor or infringement of indigenous peoples' rights. These activities have been conducted in complex environments, difficult circumstances and diverse political, social and cultural contexts. Through this purposefully selected variety of experiences the project has proved both the technical feasibility and the political relevance of measuring human rights and democratic governance.

The impact of Metagora in the field is tangible. In the various specific national contexts in which the project has been operating, it clearly depicted the nature, magnitude and characteristics of crucial human rights, democratic and governance issues. The assessing tools generated by Metagora are therefore shedding light on the kind of actions and measures that have to be taken to improve domestic policies and legislation on the issues at stake – and these have become influential in the hands of human rights champions, committed stakeholders and policy actors.

Metagora has also had an important impact in **interlinking and empowering domestic actors of change**. In a number of countries where activities were implemented, key institutions and leading people who had not interacted before are now working together to inform policy-making with evidence-based

assessments and putting the issues at stake on the national political agendas. The policy-oriented reports and the materials generated by the project are creating common ground among national stakeholders and policy makers on the conditions and opportunities for developing solid evidence-based monitoring tools. Moreover, in some countries, household surveys on democratic participation and governance issues – conducted by National Statistical Offices – are now becoming institutional routine tools and are therefore starting to generate time series that can serve as a sound basis for monitoring of progress.

3. Specific outcomes

Over the last four years, both the strong individual commitment of the numerous Metagora Partners and their efficient collective work within the Metagora Partners' Group – the true engine of the project – have been determinant for ensuring the quality and timeliness of planned outcomes. To guarantee the rigour and robustness of the tools that have been developed, all survey-based pilot studies conducted within the project have been scrutinized in-depth by an independent panel of senior experts, who delivered a positive general Assessment Report on the implementation and results of Metagora. On these foundations, the project delivered **five main types of outcomes**:

- **documented methodologies and selected examples of good practices** of evidence-based assessment of human rights and democratic governance;
- **measurement tools** based on well-established quantitative methods and qualitative approaches, including data collection techniques, survey-based assessments, and dynamic databases;
- **indicators on key national issues and policies** that empower the analysis and concrete action of policy makers, parliamentarians, civil society, human rights defenders and other actors of change;
- **national policy-oriented reports** that, based on the information collected and analysed, highlight the relevance of the findings for democratic dialogue and policy-making;
- **online resources**, including a substantive set of *Training Materials* and a worldwide *Inventory of Initiatives Aimed at Enhancing Evidence-based Assessment of Human Rights and Democratic Governance*, (both available in: www.metagora.org).

4. Recent developments

On the strength of these achievements, as well as the many perspectives opened by the project, the Metagora Partners were ready to deepen the project's lessons, and expand the methods and tools. Also, the Independent Panel of Experts strongly recommended that the community of donors back the continuation and enhancement of Metagora. Some donor institutions reacted positively to this recommendation and expressed their readiness to support a new phase of the project.

In this context, the possibility of further continuing the Metagora efforts with a Secretariat based at the OECD in Paris had to be assessed both in terms of the availability of the extensive funds that would be required to implement a significant number of field operations, and with regard to the **strategic orientation** defined since the inception of the project by the Metagora Partners' Group and the Steering Committee. As affirmed on various occasions in both arenas, Metagora has no vocation to become a new institution: it is a project that was intended to have a beginning and an end. The target goal has always been to allow institutional project Partners and relevant international organizations to inherit and further expand, by their own, the results, lessons, methods and tools generated by Metagora.

In this perspective, over the last four years Metagora has been strongly advocating in the international scene – and in particular within the OECD-DAC Network on Governance, GovNet – the enhancement of proper assessment methods. It has also facilitated exchanges among key international actors, and developed close ties of collaboration with institutions that play a leading role in monitoring human rights and assessing democratic governance. These include, for instance, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Oslo Governance Centre of the UN Development Program (UNDP-OGC). Through this action Metagora had **a significant impact on the evolving international approaches and plans** in these areas. At present, important international programs on

human rights and democratic governance assessment, with national, regional and global scopes, are being designed and shall soon be launched by well-established international organisations. Some of them are based on the bottom-up approach and on the principles of ownership, inclusivity, policy focus, professional rigour and enhancement of national capacities, promoted by Metagora.

Thus **the main achievements of Metagora are now being incorporated in the work and plans of international organisations** that have prominent voice, efficient funding mechanisms, and worldwide operational structures – such as representative offices in most developing countries. These organisations have the capacity to effectively continue the work initiated by Metagora and to closely link it with on-going major UN initiatives, policies and programs in the fields of development, human rights, democracy and governance. Some of these actors, such as the UNDP-OGC, have started to approach Metagora Partners to establish partnerships for the implementation of the above-mentioned emerging programs on democratic governance assessments and measurement.

At this stage, and in this evolving environment, the Metagora community at large – including not only the Partner organisations but also the donor institutions and the many individuals who have been providing advice and support to the implementation of this pioneering work – has therefore to consider, in line with the original aim and strategy of the project, how to best serve and facilitate the enhancement of methods, tools and national capacities for measuring human rights and democratic governance.

5. Recommended way forward

The Manager of the PARIS21 Secretariat, the General Coordinator of the project, and the Chair and co-Chair of the Metagora Partners' Group, consider that **the time has come for Metagora to steer its pioneering work to a conclusion, by intensifying and accelerating the handing over of its outcomes to relevant organizations and emerging programs**. They therefore recommend to the members of the Metagora Steering Committee, the Partner Organisations and the PARIS21 Steering Committee, to endorse the following orientations for the concluding work of the Coordination Team:

1. Existing key project documents and a current draft publication will be reviewed and merged within a concluding synthesis book to be published and broadly disseminated in printed and CD-Rom forms as an OECD official publication – in English, French and Spanish – by mid July 2008.
2. Contacts with relevant organisations and emerging programs will be taken, and arrangements will be made, to ensure the timely handing over of resources, documentation and networks references, as well as future access to information available in electronic support.
3. Organisations in charge of emerging programs will be approached to examine possible ways and means for integrating the Metagora Partners within those programs.
4. A concluding event, gathering together the whole Metagora community and all actors involved in on-going measurement projects and emerging programs, will be organised and held in Paris on 9-10 July 2008 to discuss the perspectives opened by the Metagora project and the articulation of its achievements with the work planned within emerging initiatives.
5. A concluding debriefing of the Metagora Steering Committee will take place in Paris on the 11th July 2008.
6. The Metagora Coordination Team will finalise all its project and administrative operations by the end of July 2008 and will be on leave until the end of August 2008 (which would mark the final date of their working contracts). After this date, any outstanding issues, in particular regarding terminating of contracts and financial reporting to donor institutions, will be managed by the PARIS21 Secretariat.
7. A videoconference with the project's current donors will be held on the 28th of April 2008 to confirm their support to cover the costs of the concluding operations.