Internet for Accountability (Internet para la Rendición de Cuentas) is an experience that shows how a proposal initiated by grassroots organizations municipalities and civil organizations and accepted and promoted by the government, is more likely to be accepted and implemented at a national level, since it integrates the contributions of multiple stakeholders committed to its development. Likewise, the way information is compiled, processed and presented is simple and easily accessed by communities. This initiative shows that participatory processes involving all stakeholders in an inclusive and transparent process are more likely to be accepted. Likewise, they facilitate the inclusion of new stakeholders willing to join efforts which provide the community with tools that facilitate access to information. In Internet for Accountability, it is important to highlight the interest shown by multiple stakeholders in developing the ICT tools for reaching the communities with a single technological product to enhance the dissemination of information. Open source is the heart of the Internet for Accountability initiative, without it would have been impossible to replicate the experience at national level.
### Description of the case

**Domain** | eGovernment
---|---
**Topic** | eParticipation, eDemocracy and eVoting | Services for Citizens | Open Source | Regional and Local
**Sector** | Culture and Media | Education, Science and Research | Local/Regional
**Community Development** | Social Services
**Start date - End date** | January 2002 (Ongoing)
**Date operational** | December 2002
**Target Users** | Civil society
**Target Users Description** | Municipalities and civil organizations.
**Scope** | National
**Status** | Operation
**Language(s)** | Spanish

### Policy Context and Legal Framework

The initiatives that have been developed show that the use of ICT is of great interest for the communities that do not have an easy access to them. Therefore, it is necessary to work together with the community identifying their needs and setting up services that allow access by using these new technologies. In this way the citizens will be well informed to take action, and hold their governments accountable. It is through information that citizens can question, demand and provide feedback to their government. Information is also an input for citizens' participation.

### Project Size and Implementation

**Type of initiative** | Participation
---|---
**Overall Implementation approach** | Partnerships between administration and/or private sector and/or non-profit sector
**Technology choice** | Open source software
**Funding source contributions** | Public funding national | Private sector | Charity, voluntary
**Project size** | Implementation: €5,000,000-10,000,000

### Implementation and Management Approach

Transparency Colombia (www.transparenciacolombia.org.co) invited a group of majors to see if they were willing to be involved in this initiative. The municipality of Paipa (26,000 citizens) was selected because at the time was working on the project led by Transparency Colombia, 'Municipalities Accountable for their Public Funds'. A web page design was developed with the participation of local civil servants and grassroots and social organisations of the municipality interested in being watchers of the local management administration. The tool developed in this phase of the project was donated to the national government through the Vice-presidency of the Presidential Office. The tool was evaluated and improved by the Connectivity Agenda (www.agenda.gov.co). The Connectivity Agenda decided to implement it through the Program &“Territorial e-Government”&™ in the Colombian municipalities receiving internet connectivity from the governmental program Compartel (www.compartel.gov.co). The implementation started in December 2005. From this experience, two initiatives have been integrated to the project facilitating important features for the improvement of the system: Met@logo (www.metalogo.org) and Follow up of the Millennium Development Goals.

### Technology solution

The tool is based on open source software (Apc Action Applications, php, MySQL, Apache) that is usually distributed under Public License GNU (www.gnu.org) freeing municipalities from the payment of licenses and promoting technological development.
Impact

- Today 1048 Municipalities have the systems installed representing 94% of municipalities in Colombia. - The sites received in 2007 8.3 million unique visits. Since 2005 the government has invested twelve million dollars to provide internet access, training and the platform through the program Territorial e-Government. - A national award was launched (ongoing - February 2008) to invite young designers to present proposals for new graphic designs of the sites. This initiative includes a training course in Cascade Style Sheets and accessibility. - This initiative shows that participatory processes involving all stakeholders (public and private) in an inclusive and transparent process are more likely to be accepted. Likewise, they facilitate the inclusion of new stakeholders willing to join efforts which provide the community with tools that facilitate access to information. - In Internet for Accountability, it is important to highlight the interest shown by multiple stakeholders in developing the ICT tools for reaching the communities with a single technological product to enhance the dissemination of information.

Track record of sharing

Internet for Accountability has been presented in multiple spaces such as International Anti-Corruption Conference hosted by Transparency International and in multiple spaces in Colombia. The National Chamber of Informatic and Telecommunications offered a special award to municipalities that use the tool and that provides up to date information in their sites every year. The web site of the project provides access to all the information, software, manuals, multimedia resources, online training courses among other useful information for those that are interested in the use of the tools produced.

Lessons learnt

Lesson 1 - A participatory processes involving all stakeholders in an inclusive and transparent process are more likely to be accepted. Likewise, they facilitate the inclusion of new stakeholders willing to join efforts which provide the community with tools that facilitate access to information. Lesson 2 - Open source is the heart of the Internet for Accountability initiative, without it would have been impossible to replicate the experience at national level. Lesson 3 - Internet for Accountability is an experience that shows how a proposal initiated by grassroots organizations municipalities and civil organizations and accepted and promoted by the government, is more likely to be accepted and implemented at a national level, since it integrates the contributions of multiple stakeholders committed to its development. Likewise, the way information is compiled, processed and presented is simple and easily accessed by communities.

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