



Measuring Open Government in the Americas: The IOG Index

In response of growing citizenship demand for accountability regarding public affairs, public authorities from all levels of government across the Western Hemisphere have been implementing policy initiatives, joining international peer-learning networks and adopting Open Government (OG) best-practices to improve governance domestically in several policy and public management domains - such as education, health, public security, public finance and procurement.

Example are several. For instance, about 17 OAS member-States joined the Open Government Partnership initiative in the past five years. Some of them have received OAS technical support in drafting national action plans to improve OG practices by explicitly compromise with implementation of a wide range of public-led initiatives and goals to advance transparency, accountability, participation and technological innovation in collaboration with key national stakeholders – such as NGOs, business associations, labor unions and academia.

However, even after a decade of its emergence in public governance studies domain, the open government concept remains somehow fuzzy, vague and diffusive. As a result, there is no comprehensive cross-country metric available that takes into account the canonical three-dimensional definition of open government concept: transparency, participation and collaboration.

To fill this gap, the OAS School of Governance (OAS SoG) and Georgetown University's McCourt School for Public Policy (GU/MSPP) joined forces to develop analytical tool to measure government openness cross-nationally, to evaluate the OG reforms state-of-affairs in the Americas, and to generate specific recommendations for each OAS

member-State interested in pursuing these reforms: **the Interamerican Open Government Index (IOG Index)**.

Built upon previous similar efforts carried out by other multilateral organizations, the **IOG Index** aims to offer a “one-step-forward” contribution towards the introduction of a quantitative framework to measure, analyze and inform further advances on open governance policies and programs led by national governments in the Western Hemisphere.

First, the report adopts a comprehensive operational definition of open government in a way that is relevant to Latin-America’s public-sector idiosyncrasies. Secondly, it introduces the **IOG Index** as a three-dimensional quantitative synthetic index to measure national government performance in each of 3 OG dimensions. In order to identify potential areas of improvement and reform priorities for each OAS member-State, the report calculates the IOG Index score for OAS member-States. Based on the scoring, the report discusses 4 case-studies: Uruguay, Guatemala, Venezuela and Costa Rica. Cases were handpicked to illustrate challenges faced by countries in different stages of OG reforms implantation and performing at different levels (i.e. well-performed country, averagely performed country, poorly performed country and a “rising star”). Finally, the report tentatively tests whether government openness is positive and significantly correlated with the level of government effectiveness in each country. The report concludes discussing the **IOG Index** limitations and suggests further steps for the advancement of OG research agenda in the region.

Collective action-type coordination with civil society and business community is required to fulfil the open government promises. The **IOG Index** aims to assist OAS member-States in creating more detailed OG reform action plans, enlarging citizen participation and increasing public-private collaboration to to improve government effectiveness in the Americas.

Further information:

- *The MOGA Report can be downloaded here:*
<https://www.oas.org/es/sap/dgpe/escuelagob/docs/MEASURING%20OPEN%20GOVERNMENT.pdf>
- *Consultation, information and request regarding MOGA Report database may be sent to Silverio Zebal Filho (OAS SoG) at szebral@oas.org.*