

FISCAL
OPENNESS
CHAMPIONS
NETWORK

STRATEGY 20/22.

ACCELERATING
ENGAGEMENT
for better Public Finances

GIFT
GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR
FISCAL TRANSPARENCY

20/22 ACCELERATING ENGAGEMENT

WHO WE ARE

Network of ministries of finance, civil society organizations, international financial institutions coming together to produce meaningful information on the sources and uses of public resources for inclusive and accountable public finance to promote more equitable and sustainable development.

WHY CHAMPIONS

GIFT members engage in the network as peers, establishing a close collaboration that supports their shared vision. The dynamics have created a stable, innovative and reliable race to the top that enhances fiscal openness -including transparency, public participation and accountability. The Stewards, from civil society, governments and international financial institutions, have established clear actions, reported periodically to the Network, to improve and support improvement in the short, medium and long term. The actions go from budget legal reforms and quality of transparency, to amending financial management and establishing channels for public participation.

19 Governments

Brazil (Budget Sec),
Philippines (DBM),
Mexico (SHCP),
+ 16 budget government agencies

10 International Organizations Networks

WBG, IMF, OECD, IFAC, MITRE, OCP, CABRI, IPF, Global Integrity, PEFA

GIFT Stewards
The 47 Champions

15 Civil Society Organizations

IBP, Fundar, ILDA, CBPP, INESC, Icfei, ACIJ, Obs-Fiscal, Seknas, Funde, PSAM, Emerging M., NCDHR, Social Watch.

4 Funders / Foundations

Hewlett F., Luminate, Ford F., DfID.

THE 2020/2022 STRATEGY

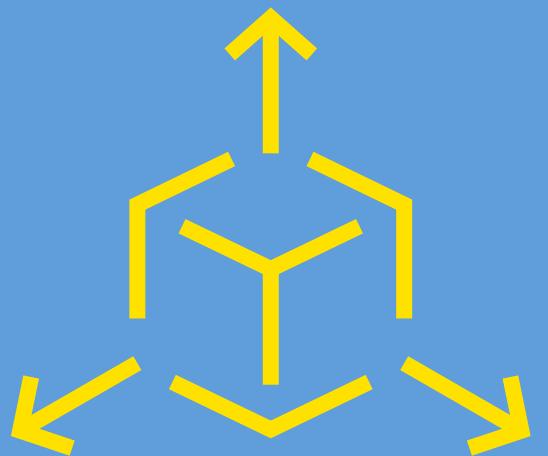
HOW WE WILL FOSTER IMPACT

GIFT Lead Stewards have taken stock of its founding period and now is moving to **consolidate a Network of champions on fiscal openness** that encourages trust and sustainable development. In the next phase, GIFT will **reinforce our focus on impact** and **support governments and civil society organizations Stewards** to reach more ambitious and lasting gains on fiscal openness.

GIFT coordination team has put together **four projects based on the most successful areas of impact of the GIFT network**, to help countries produce and publish meaningful information on the sources and uses of public resources for inclusive and accountable public finance, to promote its use for more equitable and sustainable development and for reaching fiscal accountability goals that would otherwise be out of reach for member countries.

THE FOUR PROJECTS ARE:

1. Scaling-up meaningful fiscal openness through peer-collaboration, training and technical assistance.
2. Fiscal Openness Accelerator Project- Promoting and incubating inclusive public participation along the budget cycle.
3. Digital tools for user-centered fiscal transparency.
4. Government/civil society coalitions- Using data for better budgets and investments management for sustainable development.



Scaling-up meaningful **FISCAL OPENNESS** through peer-collaboration, training and technical assistance

WHAT IT IS

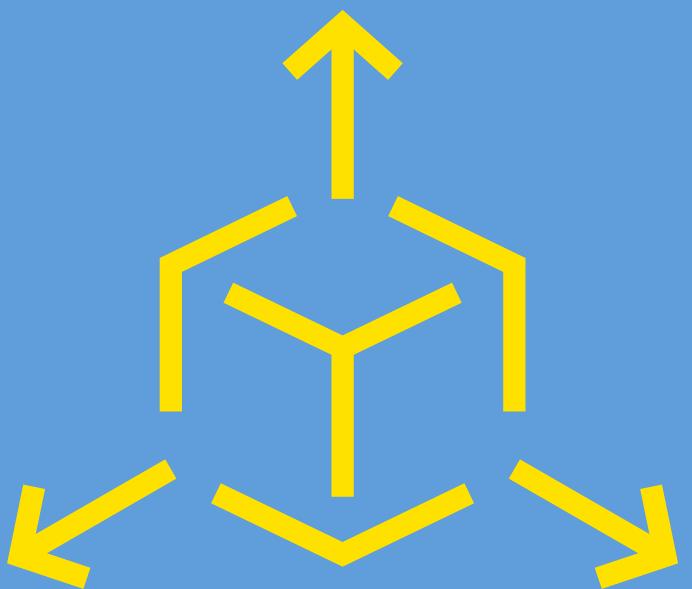
Based on its peer-learning and technical collaborative experience, the GIFT network seeks to develop a long-term training and peer-supported technical collaborative program in coordination with its Stewards. GIFT's intervention will help countries understand both the standards on fiscal transparency, as well as how they can improve their proactive publication practices by modeling the efforts of their peers in other countries that have achieved good levels of fiscal transparency, taking into consideration the users' needs.

The GIFT is uniquely positioned to generate the collective actions needed within its Stewards (19 Ministries of Finance, 15 Civil Society Organizations and expert and international institutions) to adopt meaningful fiscal openness. Throughout the past five years, the constant coordination of interaction and peer-support has created a community of practitioners with a shared mission and goals. Within its members, GIFT is perceived as a trusted partner to support their progress and innovate, as well as an open and neutral ground of discussion around the future and challenges related to the agenda. The GIFT network model of peer-collaboration has been the core to achieve high impact results that extend further than the specific actions of the coordination team, it:

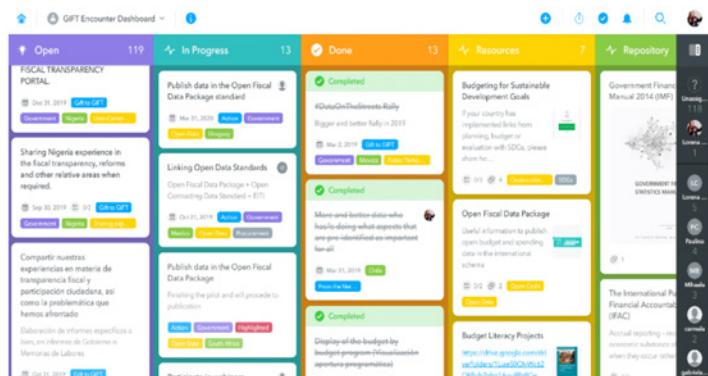
- **Promotes trust among peers to collaborate in sharing knowledge and tools.** We have organized countless in-person or online peer-learning activities by identifying shared objectives, good practices and challenges among Stewards, as well as yearly community events where representatives of all organizations share their progress and challenges, enabling honest and practical collaboration.
- **Enables economies of scale in advancing the agenda, whether it requires legal reforms, changes in processes or adoption of digital tools.** The identification of good practices, as well as challenges and failures, allow shortening the path of the members to achieve their goals. Additionally, members also share practical tools for publication or use of fiscal information, including opening their code for digital platforms as well as methodologies.
- **Facilitates the conversation between civil society and governments in a collaborative form.** The discourse and actions, in general, of the Stewards have shifted from improving in a normative sense against national and international standards, to adopting a user-centered approach for relevant fiscal transparency -where norms are and international standards are observed, but potential users are also considered in modeling progress.
- **Creates a race to the top of governments and civil society peers that lead to innovation and sustained gains.** Interaction with peers and exposure to international examples creates a sense of possibilities and aspirations for the members. This, in turn, creates a positive dynamic where members are more open to innovative approaches.

Raising the bar for the GIFT members, in 2018 the operating rules of the Network were changed as a relevant evolution towards becoming a group of fiscal transparency champions. As such, to foster closer collaboration, GIFT compiles in a dashboard the actions being implemented by its members. The compilation of actions from this broad range of members allows us to have a practical understanding of the present and future priorities in the subject to adapt our agenda and work. Some of the trends that we can already identify are: high interest in publication of open data, but also now on its use to achieve social and economic objectives; a bigger focus on increasing the number and types of users of fiscal information through budget and data literacy efforts initiated both from civil

WHY GIFT



WHAT WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE



Contribute to achieving concrete improvements in user-centered fiscal transparency and public participation practices in line with international standards.

We will accomplish so through the development of the following actions:

A) Peer-collaboration and technical assistance for Stewards

How it works

Over the past five years, the GIFT network has successfully used this model of technical collaboration and peer-exchanges, including dialogue with civil society users of information. We expect to host one annual training and peer-exchange event in which representatives of the 19+ governments and 15+ civil society organizations participate. The topic for each event will be defined collaboratively through the Network and taking into consideration the trends analysis of the action plans included in the dashboard.

We will also produce regular peer-exchange opportunities in person and online (through webinars



society or governments, and in some cases together; thematic focus of fiscal transparency, mainly for gender, performance and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and upcoming plans to integrate public participation along the budget cycle.

or similar tools), depending on the best areas of collaboration among Stewards. The first set of five webinars for 2020 will focus on the production, dissemination and use of non-financial performance information, including the focus on thematic areas of gender, environmental finances and the SDGs.

B) Fiscal Openness Massive Open Online Course

How it works

Online course on fiscal transparency that can enable governments and other stakeholders to better understand the standards assessed as well as the steps they can take to improve their practices in line with those of other governments that have achieved high levels of transparency, addressing users' needs.

The online course would be open for governments (including parliament technical staff and audit institutions representatives) who are assessed but also by other stakeholders (such as donor agencies and civil society groups) who are interested in advancing their knowledge on fiscal transparency and their potential contributions to the efforts needed in their countries.

C) Targeted technical assistance

How it works

Targeted technical assistance with peer-learning for improving fiscal openness happens upon partners request. Different from action 1.1, this technical assistance requires more in-depth and specific support to a government or civil society organization from inside or outside of the GIFT Network. This technical collaboration entails engaging fiscal openness experts and peer practitioners, including opportunities for discussions with international peers on how to improve fiscal openness and overcome barriers.

In this form, we are currently supporting Mongolia and from 2020 we will support Benin, Liberia and Nigeria.



Fiscal OPENNESS ACCELERATOR Project:

Promoting and Incubating Inclusive Public
Participation along the Budget Cycle

Together in a GIFT-IBP alliance, eight government stewards and two government partners will be supported to pilot specific mechanisms of public participation along the budget cycle.

For that, GIFT-IBP have developed alliances with Ministries of Finance in different countries who are willing to step up efforts to implement public participation. Each mechanism of participation will be country specific, although there will be three **peer-exchange workshops** for government and civil society to take stock of the lessons along the process. The participant countries will receive **technical assistance** in design, monitoring and documentation of cases (phase by phase) and **synthesis of knowledge** to facilitate progress. The technical assistance will provide insights and lessons-learned on best practices and experiences from other countries through peer exchange workshops in participating countries, will help participant governments to identify next steps. Technical assistance will come from consultants with extensive experience and knowledge in fiscal transparency and participation.

WHAT IT IS

To facilitate knowledge sharing representatives from the government will be selected as volunteers, representing the living face of the innovations. They will be recorded speaking about the experience of the projects from the start. We believe that the community will further benefit from getting to know the project through the individuals in charge as they design the projects, face challenges and overcome with solutions. The experience will be presented in an innovative form of video documentaries to better engage the audience. The recording will constitute the **FOA Project Reality TV** which will be presented after the end of the first year of the projects and will be part of the Guide of Public Participation.



The GIFT experience on public participation in fiscal policies, including the development of the Principles of Public Participation in Fiscal Policy and the Guide of Public Participation Mechanisms, has been used by several countries in their efforts to include citizen engagement in the budget process. GIFT members such as the Philippines, Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, Indonesia, South Africa, Uruguay and Argentina, and partner countries such as Slovenia, have used such work as a reference for their national actions on the matter. GIFT experience on the matter has been also presented and discussed before the Supreme Audit Institutions representatives from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Peru (Public Participation Technical Commission of the SAI Latin America & Caribbean Organization, OLACEFS), and the United Nations World Public Sector Report 2019, among others.

WHY GIFT

Further benefiting from the Network's principles and peer learning, members have started to plan specific public participation mechanisms and seek innovative practices, allowing peer-exchange and support, generating a comparative documentation of cases, and ultimately allowing the assessment of impact in order to move forward with more sustained implementation. The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs has awarded a grant to IBP and GIFT for piloting public participation mechanisms in fiscal policies at national level in selected African countries. The main objective of the project is to build the technical capacity of a number of governments to implement mechanisms for public participation in the fiscal policies cycle at the national level. Over a period of 36 months, the grant will allow IBP and GIFT to ensure technical collaboration and support



to Benin, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, to establish meaningful and practical public participation mechanisms and create opportunities for dialogue between civil society and public finance authorities on the use of public resource.

By the end of the project, all countries included in the pilot will implement their participation mechanisms and receive network technical support on participation. On an annual basis, the project will organize peer-learning workshops for representatives from the participating countries to share their experiences and reflect on key challenges and lessons-learned. As part of this effort, IBP and GIFT held a “Building Public Participation in Budgeting” workshop in Washington in July 2019, with the attendance of representatives from budget offices from Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Mexico, the Philippines and South Africa in attendance. The workshop confirmed that these GIFT member governments are part of a growing community that shares the commitment to promoting public participation with impact in public finances.

We believe that the fact that the governments of such relevance in the developing South (Nigeria, South Africa, Indonesia, Philippines, Colombia, Mexico) are embracing the GIFT network as a forum to advance unprecedented practices of public participation in the budget process at the national level, clearly reflect the contributions of the network in the search for practical solutions to sustainable development questions including engaging in a trustful dialogue with governments, international actors and civil society organizations to achieve impact at the national level.

SCOPE OF WORK

The US government is financing the pilots for five African countries (Benin, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa) and the GIFT network is seeking additional funds to include Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Mexico and the Philippines in a simultaneous effort.

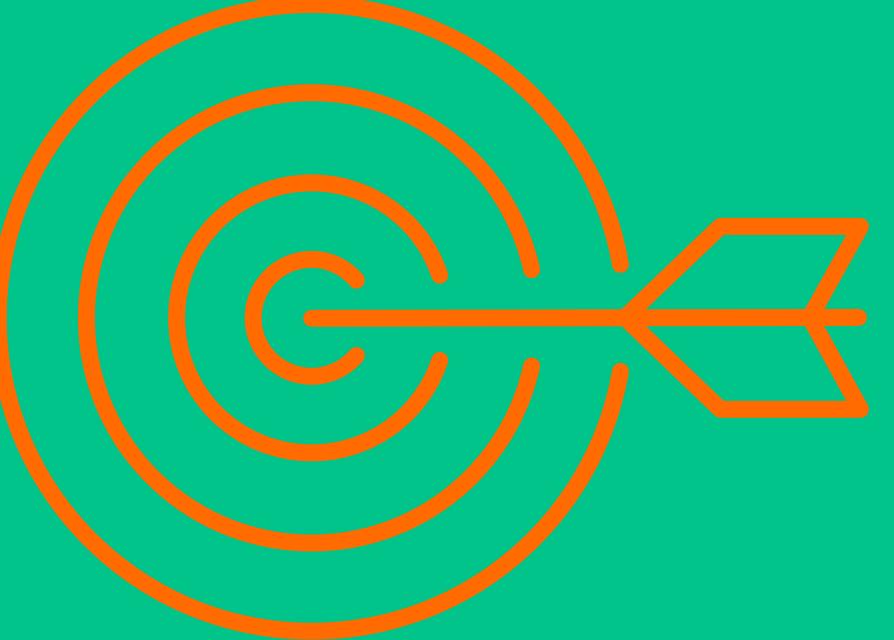
WHAT WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE

Support governments in the development of participation mechanisms that can help their governments engage in budget processes that better reflect the inputs and needs of citizens. During the development we will document the process to evaluate the impact and disseminate good practices and lessons learned.

Additionally, with the storytelling we seek to create better engagement and visibility of the pilots. The storytelling will encourage other government innovators to take the same path and will allow them to have a glimpse of the process the need to undergo.

PARTNERS





Digital tools for User Centered fiscal transparency

WHAT IT IS

Proactive transparency mechanisms, in most cases, lacks understanding of the users and the needed flexibility to technological changes considering the way society gets and consumes information. Therefore, they rarely enable systemic change and achieve limited results against their envisioned objectives. Renzio and Mastruzzi (2016) conducted a survey showing that CSOs are dissatisfied with the information that governments make available because it is not detailed or useful enough. Their study concludes that there is a significant demand for better organized budget data, including a greater level of detail. It also emphasizes the need to review disclosure practices in terms of reusable data formats, the quality of online portals/websites, and the ability to cross-reference different datasets.

The adoption targeted digital tools has been constantly in GIFT agenda. In this sense, in the coming years GIFT will seek to generate worldwide gains in user-centered fiscal transparency that uses digital tools in a strategic way, built from the experiences and lessons learned from around the world.

WHY GIFT

Achieving a user-centered publication does not mean to publish the usual information with visualizations and simpler language. It requires understanding the audience and adapting contents considering the format, granularity and structure that will enable use and decision-making. It also requires that an environment in which technological innovation is embraced and enabled.

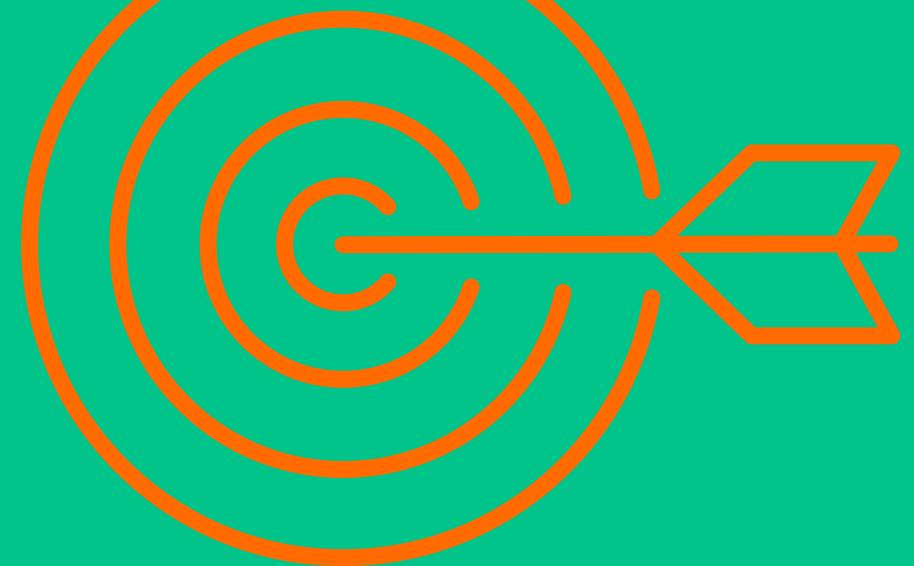
Through peer-exchange and technical collaboration, GIFT has been involved in the development, improvement and publication of 11 fiscal transparency portals and is collaborating in two additional ones.



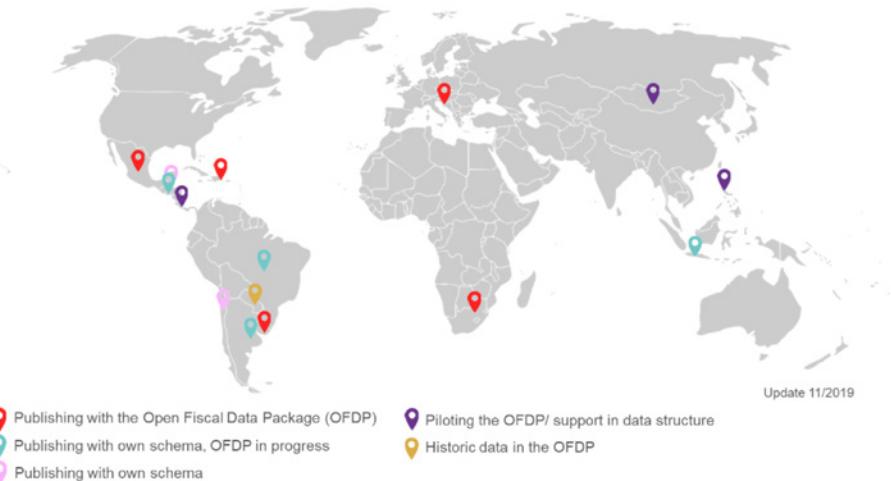
📍 Fiscal transparency portals in collaboration with GIFT
📍 Collaboration/support in progress

While the source publishers are governments, civil society organizations have also worked in developing platforms that reuse the information and have benefited from the sharing of experiences. This is the case of INESC in Brazil, Fundar in Mexico, Observatorio Fiscal del Gasto in Chile, ACIJ in Argentina, PSAM in South Africa, among others.

GIFT has supported the development of a specification to open data of budget and spending that helps publishers standardize the publication and facilitates reuse of the data. Up to 2019, we have worked in familiarizing governments and civil society with spending open data and have provided a digital tool to publish such data, the Open Fiscal Data Package. Indeed, in 2019 we have witnessed a strong uptake of MoF publishing budget and spending open data, as well as a more solid external use of the published data. Through the support and peer-exchange, 12 countries have now published



their budget and spending open data and three more are in process, as can be seen in the map below.



The technical assistance and tools to publish and use open fiscal data are well appreciated by governments and civil society. For this reason, we expect to step up GIFT support and broaden its scope. Finally, together with the Open Contracting Partnership, GIFT Network has developed an extension of the Open Contracting Data Standard, which requires the interoperability of treasury and e-procurement systems. With this in mind we are well positioned to continue the development of complementary data schemas and enabling linking data for richer analysis and insights to improve governance.

While seeking to improve transparency following global norms, GIFT Network members have undergone improvements of internal systems, such as the case of Mexico which has developed a new Public Investments Management System and a subnational governments' expenditures reporting system and has modified the accounting system to link it with the e-procurement system. South Africa is improving the collection of projects at the provincial level. Chile is improving the public works monitoring system, and ongoing effort in Mongolia to improve the Glass Account reporting and publication system, to name a few.



In the past, GIFT Network has supported the peer-exchange to facilitate progress in publication, including webinars in the matter, such as the webinar on Good Internal Systems for Good External Publications with the IMF, CABRI and the IT department of the Ministry of Finance of Argentina and the one on Building Fiscal Transparency Portals with INESC from Brazil, the IT department of the Ministry Planning Department of Brazil and the National Treasury of South Africa.

For the 2020-2022 Strategy we will scale-up and become more results-oriented, with the following activities:

A) Fiscal Open Data Services

How it works

The publication support from GIFT will rely on three pillars:

- **Data schemas.** So far, GIFT has focused on the development of the budget and spending data schema, however we are ready to broaden to a bigger spectrum of public financial management. We will develop schema for revenue and cross-cutting subjects, including environmental finances, non-financial performance, and gender-responsive budget.

To develop each of the new data schemas GIFT will require to fund research and specialists for the data structure. The data schemas for the cross-cutting subjects will be developed in collaboration with specialized organizations.

- **Guidance and technical support to structure and clean the data.** From experience in previous years, we are aware that publishers face the biggest challenges in correctly structuring the data before publication. Providing proper guidance and follow up will stimulate, not only more publication, but better data quality.

- **Tech to publish and use open data.** Tools for packaging different data schemas will be part of the Open Fiscal Data Package Structure to enable publication, while we will further include tools for developers and data scientists to promote reuse.

Through the Open Data Services, GIFT seeks to contribute in:

1. Facilitate governments transition to systematically publish public finances open data and enable its use and reuse by the public.
2. Provide guidance on how to structure open data for topics that have important international



relevance for sustainable development, including environmental finances, non-financial performance, and gender-responsive budget.

3. Enable interoperability of data schemas to enhance the possibilities of the use of data in analysis and decision making and the country and international level.

B) Good Internal Systems for Good External Publication

How it works

Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS) are set up to generate timely, relevant, and reliable financial data and reports that support financial decision making and improvements in fiscal discipline, expenditure control. In this sense, building strong and comprehensive fiscal transparency is highly intertwined with the development of FMIS. However, technology departments at ministries of finance have been often neglected on the subject, while they receive requests from other ministries' departments and civil society, to publish relevant information with high-quality open data. In many cases, these IT teams lack the needed tools, capacity or training for it.

In this context, we seek to enable peer-learning and collaboration for GIFT Stewards IT departments, reinforced with innovative approaches for Govtech and CivicTech, through three main actions:

- **Specialized collaborative group for IT departments. Peer-learning and collaboration on technological solutions for internal systems and publication.**
- Two international workshops for **peer-learning and training for IT departments** from governments and civil society on innovative approaches such as disruptive technologies, agile development and GovTech solutions.
- **Repository of open code for CivicTech** that will facilitate taking advantage of economies of scale in development.



C) Tutorial to develop user-centered fiscal transparency portals

How it works

After several years of working with government Stewards in building digital platforms to provide fiscal information that addresses the users' needs, the GIFT Coordination team has produced an online tutorial with a basic guide to concepts and actions to consider in the process of publishing budget information with a user-centered approach. The tutorial allows participants to understand the importance of publishing budget information, take into account the target audience, and recognize the different steps to develop a budget transparency portal or platform with a user-centered approach. The tutorial also helps governments identify potential users and segment the audience of a budget transparency portal, discover innovative tools to take full advantage of the possibilities that current technological progress offers, and acquire techniques to monitor the results of the publication. It will be available in English and Spanish.



PARTNERS

Luminate



GIFT
GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR
FISCAL TRANSPARENCY



Government civil society coalitions **COALITIONS**

Using data for better budgets and investments
management for sustainable development

WHAT THEY ARE

In achieving openness, transparency is only one side of the equation, and its impact will depend on the use given to relevant information and how to close the feedback loop to create better accountability. Government-civil society coalitions are light touch and scalable participation initiatives that enable collaboration in a semi-formal flexible setting for dialogue among different stakeholders, to achieve specific objectives of improving certain processes and policies that affect sustainable development.

WHY GIFT

Considering its comparative advantage of bringing together ministries of finance and civil society together, in an environment of trust and innovation, GIFT has modeled two types of coalitions that countries can adopt and adapt for their specific context, considering their position, opportunities and challenges. In the following description of the models we compile some of the results seen from these coalitions:

A) #DataOnTheStreets International Rally- coalitions towards better public investments management

How it works

Governments, through their Ministry of Finance, Public Works or similar, and one or more CSOs, launch an open invitation to participate in the Rally #DataOnTheStreets. People register to the event and go through the construction projects dataset or mapping platforms published and select the ones they want to visit. Knowing the location and coordinates they go out to check out the projects, comparing what they see on the dataset and what they see on the streets. Participants document their findings through social media (Facebook or Twitter), posting creatively and engaging their own network. At the end, judges, representatives from government and civil society (coordinated by GIFT), choose the winners based on number of projects visited, creativity, engagement and, of course, extra points for data analysis.

Previous results and testimonials

Since 2017, GIFT started to support the #DataOnTheStreets Rally (initiated in Mexico by the MoF), which enables civil society-government collaboration to close the feedback loop in public investments projects management. The Rally is now also held in Chile and Colombia. The Rally helps identify strengths and gaps in the implementation of investment projects, as well as in the related data flows inside of the government.

Experience shows that participants tend to be non-data specialists, expanding the audience using open data and engaging civil society in follow the money activities.



In Chile, the rally has engaged a growing community of stakeholder, including construction and private sector associations, the public works ministry and remarkably, the Supreme Audit Institution (SAI). Such new community gathered around the quest of better monitoring of public infrastructure have triggered specific actions in data gathering and monitoring from the Ministry of Public Works and the SAI, which has interested other external control agencies in the region, such as the SAI in Peru and Mexico.

In Colombia, the impact of the Rally (2018 and 2019) and the Dataquest (2019) has reached the National Development Plan, including a provision to incorporate cross-cutting budgets in the budget process that match the categories of projects included in the Rally and the Dataquest, these are: gender, process for peace and inclusion of indigenous groups. Currently, as follow-up, GIFT is providing technical assistance and enabling peer-exchange to develop the cross-cutting budgets.

In Mexico, the Rally has the longest history (since 2016). From the finding and lessons learned, the MoF has also renovated the systems for public investments management and the system for reporting subnational governments expenditures, which improves data quality for monitoring and decision-making. All the reports of inconsistencies and possible mismanagement are directed to the social auditing office and the comptroller. From the experience there is a long-standing coalition with the co-hosting CSO (SocialTic), working on improving transparency and co-developing the "How to Understand the Budget? Massive Open Online Course".

Expected countries for 2020

Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa.



B) Better Budget Dataquest for Sustainable Development-coalitions towards better public financial management

How it works

In 2019, the Better Budget Dataquest for Sustainable Development was introduced to encourage collaboration in evidence-based policy analysis. The Dataquest typically takes the form of a day event, where teams explore certain dataset(s) to provide context and better understanding of a particular subject. The outcomes of the participants can be, for example, a multimedia piece, the start of a research project or a human story among others that provide useful insights to improve a certain policy or process. Teams of up to five individuals explore the spending dataset and by contextualizing it with other data they should come up with findings for one of the following categories: gender, inequality or environment. A multimedia piece, the start of a research project, a story or other creative ideas must be presented by the end of the event. Considering the insights, judges from government and civil society will decide the winners.

As the Better Budget name suggests, the Dataquest is an opportunity to find new insights on certain topics and innovative ideas to improve budget allocations and execution. The process is also an opportunity for data publishers to expand budget and data literacy, to increase awareness and engagement.

Previous results and testimonials

This Dataquest was held in 2019 in seven countries, having 14 GIFT Stewards from civil society, government and international organizations coming together. Below we present some of the relevant results:

ACIJ, a civil society organization in **Argentina** implemented the Better Budget Dataquest in 2019. During the event the Ministry of Finance presented how to use the newly published open data to civil society organizations, journalists and additional participants. The teams' results were specially oriented in analyzing the performance information with budget allocations. The second-place team continued the investigation and recently published an article analyzing the delivery of fortified milk as part of a network of

0000

An investigation based on budgetary data evidences significant reductions in food policies for children in Argentina

by ACIJ

by ACIJ



investigative journalists of Latin America. Considering the findings, the government is taking actions to improve the gathering and publication of performance indicators, as well as programming targets.

In **Costa Rica**, Innovap, a leading research and academic organization, during the Open Data Day in March organized the first steps to have a Dataquest in the future, considering that the country does not have the necessary open data yet. From there a coalition with the Ministry of Finance (MoF), supported by GIFT, was formed. Through this coalition there is now a formal Memorandum of Understanding between civil Innovap and the MoF to work together in publishing budget and spending open data through the Open Fiscal Data Package and establishing a budget school in 2020. GIFT is supporting both activities through technical assistance and peer-exchange with other stewards who have established similar budget literacy efforts. Out of this collaboration, the Costa Rica MoF and Innovap applied to become GIFT stewards.

As for **South Africa**, the National Treasury and civil society coalition for the fiscal transparency portal (Imali Yethu) have identified gaps in the information need of users through the Dataquest. The changes that need to be implemented to achieve publication go further than including the data or visualizations, since they require establishing mechanisms to improve the checks, feedback and follow up with the line ministries and budget executing agencies to better implement the budget. Through this insights and posterior work, the fiscal transparency portal, in the coming weeks, will include data of allocations at the facility



level, which will at the same time allow better monitoring and analysis.

Expected countries for 2020

Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa and Uruguay.

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