

Increasing Access to Information in Mexico

Background

Mexico has shown strong commitment to enhancing transparency and accountability. In June 2002, it became one of the first countries in Latin America to pass a Freedom of Information Act: the Federal Transparency and Access to Governmental Public Information Law.

The law guarantees the rights of Mexican citizens to access public information at the federal level, thus promoting higher levels of accountability throughout society. The law promotes public oversight of government budget allocation and expenditure, and enforces disclosure of information on financial management, public services, and public procurement processes. It also establishes what information should be public and regulates how it should be disclosed.

In order to guarantee the full implementation of the law and respond to the widespread demand for information, the Government created the Federal Institute for Access to Information (Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información – IFAI). IFAI is a decentralized agency with operational, budgetary and decision-making autonomy. Its main responsibilities include:

- Overseeing implementation of the law and promoting access to information policies;
- Issuing regulations on how to provide public information to citizens, and managing data and archives in federal agencies;
- Guaranteeing the right of access to governmental public information;
- Protecting personal data and information administrated by federal agencies;
- Resolving denials of information requests by federal agencies.

Since its creation, IFAI has focused on archives management for federal agencies and developing an effective system to track citizens' requests for information from federal agencies.

The World Bank is supporting the work of IFAI through a grant from the Institutional Development Fund.

Project objective:

To strengthen the institutional capacities of IFAI and extend the experience at the federal level to decentralized levels of Mexico's public sector.

Project activities:

- Designing a strategy to organize federal agencies' archives. This will make the Access to Information System (AIS)

Financing

Total cost: US\$477,000

IDF Grant: US\$477,000

Implementation period: October 2004 - March 2008

Geographical area: The whole country

Implementing agency: Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información (IFAI)

developed by IFAI and the Secretariat of Public Administration more accurate, effective, and operational.

- Enabling state and municipal governments in Mexico to adopt and adapt the AIS.