

**TTI Phase 2 Institutional Support: ID
107866-001
Investigación para el Desarrollo
Asunción, Paraguay**

**Final Technical Report
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Executive summary

Objectives and Progress towards Milestones

The overall organizational objectives under TTI Phase 2 were related to the improvement of research quality, strengthening of organizational performance, and policy engagement.

The achievements and progress towards those objectives were relevant, permanent, transcendental for ID, and impossible to reach without the support of TTI, both phase 1 and 2.

All the progress obtained by our organization in relation to the three pillars would require a long description, but a brief account of the accomplishments and progress towards the established goal are presented as follows. All the information used to prepare this summary has been described in detail in all previous reports presented in the framework of the TTI implementation process.

1. ID's researchers gained great space as providers of valuable technical advice for the national government, as well as specialized knowledge and information demanded by multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies, international NGOs, subnational governments and other public and private organizations. That positioning is the result of several actions taken with the valuable support of TTI's, most importantly because of an improved administration of qualified human resources, a relevant research agenda and a set of actions to improve research quality.

- A regularly updated **research agenda** internally defined and covering key areas of study as well as a qualitative assurance process are currently part of the institutional resources for positioning ID as a reliable source of knowledge and evidence-based policy advisor.
- Coordinated collaboration among the 5 areas of ID create **synergies**, allowing the introduction of a broader base of research topics and types of studies.
- The establishment of an internal **editorial board** and the increased number of peer reviewed studies, as part of the quality assurance measures, strengthened the quality of the research produced.
- The number of **publications with peer review** in international and regional journals area still low, but there was a growing trend, registering 5 at the first year of TTI the Phase 2, and 24 in the fourth year.
- Currently six ID's researchers are registered, and others would follow, as beneficiaries of the PRONII (Programa Nacional de Incentivos a los Investigadores – National Incentive Program for Researchers), receiving a financial support for performing a research agenda.
- The consolidation of the **junior professional initiative** has been very useful for including new researchers and several professionals affiliated to ID, both male and female, are currently making an internal career and others are advancing their Master and PhD studies, and would be reinserted to strengthen and diversify our institutional capabilities.
- The improved public recognition of ID has been attracting requests for internships by students from Europe and the USA, in addition to local students.
- An interarea group of professionals, trained by TTI, has been created for offering impact evaluation studies, supported by a fund that offer resources to perform that type of services, when the opportunities arise.
- ID is member of several **research networks** (CLACSO, RedSur, Regatta, PREAL, among others) and is part of international alliances such as ILAIPP, Southern Voice and LATTs, and there is an increasing number of partnerships with local and international partners with which ID has been presenting projects in recent years.

- The support provided to researchers for performing local and international presentations, as well as the constant demand for interviews regarding IDs studies, has strengthened the experience for IDs personnel and promoted their professional recognition.
 - The results have been **higher rate of success with research and project proposals** and a widening the number of local and international partners for making proposals. ID has been awarded in 2018 with the biggest contract ever received (around USD 4.0 million budget) signed with the Ministry of Education.
2. **ID's organizational performance has been strengthened by the support provided by TTI, by means of the restructured by-laws, and the approval of a new business model. The organizational reforms were conducted since 2012 with the relevant support of TTI since phase 1, and the results were materialized in four consecutive changes (the last one approved in 2016, during Phase 2 of TTI) that produced the current by-laws, determining the current governance structure of the institution, establishing clear rules accepted and respected by all members and collaborators.**
- The core funding and the relevant technical support provided by TTI, since the Phase 1, produced the much-needed **institutional reforms**. The results have been specified with a **new governance structure**, establishing, among others, the rules for the periodic nomination of the President and Executive Director, as well as a steering committee, a Board of Director and an Advisory Board.
 - Based on a set of new clear rules, it was possible the consolidation of **5 the specialized areas**, as well as the strengthening of the positions for Administrative and Communication Directorates and the creation of the new Research Directorate, determined a more efficient structure. The communication and coordination among these areas improved significantly the efficiency of the organization.
 - The **new institutional model and the strategy adopted** determined a more efficient way for mapping for financial resources for research and projects. As a result, the **participation of TTI to ID's overall budget** decreased steadily from 26% in the first year of TTI Phase 2, to 4% in 2018.
 - A new **resources mobilization process** has been adopted, although they are regularly updated to improve the capabilities of the institutions as well as of each individual area to search for financial resources for researches and projects.
 - During the implementation of TTI, ID attempted several approaches, including hiring specialized personnel for mapping and for preparing proposals, diversification of areas (training, for example), and a rotary fund available for tendering projects. Training has not been a source of funding, despite several attempts. On the other hand, the fund created for preparation of projects has been a mechanism that facilitated a more effective participation in several calls for proposals and tenders.
 - Thanks to TTI support, ID is currently capable for conducting **impact evaluation** projects, but the numbers of studies and the relative weight on the budget are not as expected, due to the low level of demand. Currently, impact evaluations in Paraguay are conducted mainly by international consultants, and usually local organizations, as ID, are requested for conducting only minor parts of the evaluation processes, as for example, to implement baseline studies.
 - TTI supported relevant investments for improving **technological and managerial capabilities**, including the establishment of a laboratory in the education area, with updated hardware and software. Core funding resources allowed moving the offices to a new more ample facility.
 - ID initiated also the implementation of a **Business Process Model (BPM)** for the automatization of actions for several activities related to human resources, documents, procurement and project management.

3. **TTI helped ID to maintain policy engagement with relevant policy makers. As result, IDs professionals actively participate as advisory council members for several public organizations, including Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Planning Secretariat, Antidrug Secretariat, the Electoral Justice Court, as well as Departmental and Municipal governments, among others.**
- In the process of providing policy advise for the government, ID joined several international cooperation agencies to participate in the preparation of technical and policy advising documents. Among the most relevant **multilateral organizations** are the World Bank, InterAmerican Development Bank, UNICEF, FAO, UNDP and PNUMA, and among the **bilateral agencies**, ID worked with USAID, JICA, KOICA and AECID, among others. There was also cooperation with **International NGOs** working in Paraguay, as Plan International, Global Infancia, WWF and Habitat International, among others.
 - Despite the low level of interventions in public policies by the **private sector**, ID has established initial partnerships for providing technical support on public policies for organizations like the UGP (Productive Organizations Union), APROSEMP (Seeds Producers Association) and FECOPROD (Productive Cooperatives Federation). Despite proposals made for new projects with private sector, during the Phase 2 the number of initiatives performed with private sector has been limited.
 - ID actively participated, with other CSO, as part of initiatives promoting **public policy discussions**. Special mentions deserve the “Paraguay Debate” initiative, which received financial support from IDRC, that allowed the preparation of policy notes that facilitated a more ample and inclusive participation of the general public for a **better-informed vote** during general and municipal elections. In the same vein, ID is currently is coordinating a project financed by USAID that allowed the creation of the “Network for Transparency” that will contribute, with other CSO to improve a better administration of public funds.
 - As members of the Paraguayan Scientific Society (SCP), and in collaboration with other organizations, ID participated in regular events to promote the results of investigations.
 - ID has been awarded in 2015 by the National Council of Sciences and Technology (CONACYT) with financial support for several research projects. All the projects awarded to ID were timely and efficiently completed, receiving compliments from CONCAYT and establishing the standards for financial and technical processes for other organizations.
 - Some public organizations allowed to ID access to data that has been processed by ID’s researchers, producing some researches that were widely disseminated, as for example the Electoral Justice Court, the Antidrug Secretariat and Ministry of Education. In other cases, ID processed data publicly available to produce innovative studies, such as illiteracy and students excluded from the education system, using information produced by the Statistics, Surveys and Census Directorate (DGEEC), the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Bank.
 - All those activities, in addition to seminars and presentations organized by ID with policy makers and in alliances with civil society organizations influenced on the increased presence and public visibility of ID and its researchers in the mass media, including television, radio, newspapers and social media.
 - Dissemination products supported by TTI (catalogues, videos, printed materials) also contributed to widening the public that have access to IDs documents.

Synthesis of results

At the close of the TTI, ID is positioned as a research center that is much more consolidated institutionally, better governed and managed, with greater capacity to produce results, more recognized and visible

among policy makers, with constant presence in the media, participating in several networks, whose advice is sought by policy makers and with stronger perspectives of sustainability.

Even the fact that the changes began to be observed slowly at the beginning, the transformation of ID were accelerated thanks to the strategic planning exercises and the structural reforms technically and financially supported by TTI. The core funding available for ID to promote such changes were crucial for the institutional development.

The greater internal confidence gained by ID is reflected in the credibility gained among officials at different levels of government, international cooperation agencies, partner organizations and the press. One of the most important impacts on ID area reflected in the signature of the most important contract obtained by ID since its creation, and the growing demand for the services provided by ID.

ID has faced several times the constant invitation that partners and researchers receive to join government positions, affecting the institutional structure. Among the positions held by former members and researchers of ID can be mentioned: Presidency of the Central Bank of Paraguay, Ministry of Planning, Vice Ministry of Security, Executive Directorate of CONACYT, various advisory services for educational reform, Advisory to the Civil Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic, advisors positions for members of Parliament, Municipal Council members and several other management positions in public entities and the Academy.

While it is difficult to define the level of attribution that can be awarded to ID, the entity has contributed significantly for numerous legislative initiatives discussed in the legislative branch and for decisions made by policymakers in the entities previously mentioned.

- Important lessons have been learned during the process of implementing the TTI, from phase 1. The errors teach a lot, and among them are the difficulties and slowness with which the process of **internal structural reforms** was conducted, which would have been beneficial if they were completed in an initial stage of the TTI. However, in view of the positive results obtained in terms of governance and sustainability, it can be said that patience was worthwhile and that could never have been done without the TTI support.
- The TTI has forced the members of ID to debate in depth aspects of great relevance for the entity. Among these are the need to give **an identity to the institution**, to define if its role is to focus on research or to manage projects or if a combination of both should be adopted. Although today the debate is not exhausted, it is clearer to the members that both activities are complementary and that the projects can be the source of the funds that the entity needs to continue with its research agenda, after the end of TTI.
- Some initiatives did not have the expected result, but they are still part of the options that ID must promote in the future, such as the experiences with **training and the impact evaluation unit**.
- Other aspects that are essential for a research center is to **consolidate its relationship with other local and international research centers**. A globalized world and the integration processes, demand that a research center must collaborate with sister entities to be in line with the streamline topics for a research agenda and with the medium and long-term objectives agreed by the international community, such as the SDGs.
- Other initiatives supported by TTI had been extremely positive, require continuity and must be maintained with **institutional resources**, such as the junior researcher's program, the area of communication and the establishment of competitive funds to finance proposals for areas and researchers.

- **The availability of core funding resources was essential.** The internal reforms and initiatives were carried out with the speed, sequence and emphasis chosen by our organization. If the TTI support were not available, the pace of reform had to depend from other unreliable and untimely financial sources. As result of the internal reforms adopted with the technical and financial support of TTI, our institutional budget for projects and researches were financed out from a more diversified set of sources. It is remarkable that Funds from TTI represented only 4% of ID's total budget in 2018.
- Another relevant aspect has been the **quality of the technical assistance provided by TTI**, including the training programs sponsored.
- Finally, it should be noted that the openness, flexibility and, above all, the good intentions of the founding partners and the other members of ID have made it possible to make the changes required to consolidate the new institutional structure, strengthen its governance and ensure its sustainability.

Problems and Challenges

There are no major problems linked to the TTI that deserve mentioning. If there were problems in the implementation of TTI, those were mainly due to external aspects, such as the shortage of researchers with high academic level interested in promoting a career in a research center, since it is difficult to compete with the salary levels offered by the public sector and multilateral organizations. Another difficulty has been the low-level demand in Paraguay for impact evaluations and the difficulties to compete internationally.

One of the threats to which a research center is exposed is the potential loss of independence in case of over-reliance on sources foreseen by a single or limited number of entities.

ID has opted to diversify its funding sources as much as possible, which is why it has also resorted, in parallel, and received funds from multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies, international NGOs and private sector associations.

In several periods, the number of calls for tenders to finance projects or investigations has been reduced, for example during electoral periods or after the assumption of a new government. Having the TTI funds was essential to overcome these situations. ID has created, based on those experiences, a contingency fund to finance the operation of the entity in situations such as those described.

Administrative Reflections and Recommendations

Fundraising and sustainability are central aspects for an entity such as ID. In retrospect, any additional effort would have been important to be enforced at the beginning, because sooner or later, one of the great issues that would emerge is the requirement for additional resources and, from a longer-term perspective, the need to consider that TTI's financial support will finish.

For ID, it is crucial that the costs of internal services that do not depend from areas that generates income, such as communication, fundraising and general operation costs, must be financed with institutional resources generated in other dependencies. The new institutional strategic planning recently identified the need to adjust the percentage of overhead and to differentiate the percentage charged to the projects (adding a plus) from the initiatives related to researches.

Due to the design quality of the TTI initiative, in hindsight **it is difficult to find any recommendations regarding the scope, duration or budget.**

Perhaps it could be useful push harder on the institutional changes at an early stage. A suggestion would be to establish a mandatory face-to-face induction program for members and managers of all centers, so that everyone can start the process on the same page and from the same point of departure. This could also accelerate opportunities to generate synergies between centers from an early stage.

If there is something that could have been improved is to emphasize from the beginning the fact that ID should have taken into account that TTI was a temporary project, that at some point would come to an end, and that for that moment should be prepared to continue alone.

For ID the TTI experience has been momentous and marks a rebirth milestone. The impact of TTI will endure for a long time on our organization.