

# **Complaint as Positive Energy**

**The Experience  
of “The Worst  
Bureaucratic  
Procedure  
of My Life”  
Contest in Bolivia**

Hernán Charosky  
María Inés Vásquez  
Nicolás Dassen

**Institutions for  
Development Sector**

**Institutional Capacity of the  
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Contact: Nicolás Dassen, [nicolasd@iadb.org](mailto:nicolasd@iadb.org).



## ABSTRACT\*

A government agenda of openness and transparency is critical to improving the quality of services to users and streamlining bureaucratic procedures. Efficiency and transparency in administrative processes, access to information, user-friendliness of paperwork, and mechanisms for resolving paperwork issues must be ensured so that citizens can fully exercise their rights when requesting a decision from the government, applying for a license, or soliciting other information or documentation issued by the State. Bolivia's Ministry for Institutional Transparency and Fight against Corruption treated user experience as a fundamental aspect of the relationship between citizens and the public sector by launching a contest in 2011 called "The Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of My Life". The aim was to solicit examples from users of extremely bureaucratic procedures as well as proposals to improve them.

**JEL Codes:** H83

**Keywords:** public services, civil society participation, open government

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## ACRONYMS

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| IACAC   | Inter-American Convention against Corruption   |
| DDRR    | Property Rights Registry   |
| MTILCC  | Ministry for Institutional Transparency and Fight against Corruption                 |
| UNDP    | United Nations Development Program   |
| SAC     | Citizen Service Project  |
| SEGIP   | General Personal Identification Service  |
| SERECI  | National Civil Registry Service  |
| SEDUCA  | Education Department Service   |
| SENASIR | National Apportionment System  |
| TU      | Transparency Unit  |
| VPPET   | Vice Minister of Corruption Prevention and Promotion of Ethics and Transparency      |
| VPPET   | Viceministerio de Prevención de la Corrupción, Promoción de la Ética y Transparencia |





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The act of compiling citizens' comments and complaints about the quality of public services is not practiced widely enough in Latin American countries. Using such information to improve services is even less common. Bolivia's Ministry for Institutional Transparency and Fight against Corruption (Ministerio de Transparencia Institucional y Lucha contra la Corrupción, or MTILCC) decided to collect information on user experiences to identify opportunities to improve the management of administrative processes. It chose the mechanism of holding a contest, called "The Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of my Life," to solicit comments from the public about their experiences with bureaucracy.

Held in 2011, the contest gave users of the most frequently requested transactions a chance to comment on their negative experiences with various entities of the Bolivian public sector. Based on the contest, the MTILCC compiled detailed information on the quality of management of administrative processes, which revealed some of the biggest challenges faced by citizens in their interactions with the government.

The goal of this case study is to document the implementation of the contest and to analyze its impact on the application of measures to improve the management of administrative processes and public

services in various areas, from the perspective of MTILCC and of the entities mentioned in contestants' submissions.

By the end of the contest, 2,044 submissions had been received nationally. Of these, 256 met the requirements and were analyzed, and five were chosen as winning cases. The MTILCC expected a low number of submissions given the limited resources available for the contest's implementation and publicity campaign. However, participation in the Bolivian contest was higher than in other similar contests in Peru and Mexico. With slightly more than 2,000 participants out of a population of around 10 million, Bolivia had proportionally higher participation than Peru (roughly 4,000 out of a population of 30 million) and Mexico (21,000 out of 110 million).

Causality between the information provided by contestants and corrective measures taken by some of the entities against which complaints were lodged is not yet conclusive. Nevertheless, there is an obvious correlation between the information and its use in the context of ongoing reform and improvement processes, as such information provides the basis for initiatives such as launching user-oriented information campaigns, improving web pages, and publishing online manuals on administrative procedures.

Given existing issues in transparency and access to information, the experience of the contest revealed elements that were aligned with the principles of open government. A channel for citizen participation was established, and coordination and collaboration mechanisms between MTILCC and participating entities and among the latter were set up. The initiative received enthusiastic support from MTILCC and Transparency Unit (TU) officials, who carried out the initiative and achieved an outcome comparable to one with more support than the limited resources it had available.

For efforts such as this one to become catalysts of change, the contest needs to become a part of a systematic initiative and a regular channel for exchange of information, creating an incentive for public officials and users to change key aspects of the culture of citizenship while fostering trust in the capacity of institutions to handle complaints and reports. Only an ongoing commitment to support citizens to resolve their paperwork issues, reduce asymmetry, and produce knowledge on administrative roadblocks can pave the way for practicing open government principles in everyday experiences with the State and transform complaints into a true source of change.

# 1 INTRODUCTION: CITIZEN EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING

Who likes criticism? What is the point of telling people what they do poorly? Is it possible to learn from negative feedback? According to the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the public's negative experiences in its interactions with the bureaucracy can give rise to initiatives to improve public services and administrative management. A project conducted by the Ministry for Institutional Transparency and Fight against Corruption (MTILCC) compiled citizens' negative experiences and found opportunities for improvements. Between August 11 and October 14, 2011, a contest called "The Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of My Life" was held to give users a chance to share their worst experiences with administrative procedures, make suggestions, and receive prizes for doing so, as well as to find solutions to the administrative problems they faced.

The initiative created a space for dialogue and coordination in various areas. Aside from learning about the participants' individual experiences, the contest proved to be a channel for communication that enabled dialogue between different entities within the public sector aimed at identifying and overcoming obstacles in conducting administrative procedures, as well as responding to requests from the public. Having a jury panel consisting

of high ministerial-level members, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) staff, and civil society representatives enhanced the legitimacy and visibility of the contest.

The contest created opportunities for the MTILCC and the participating entities to coordinate the implementation of a number of measures related to the logistics of spreading the word about the contest and receiving complaints at 200 offices where such transactions are carried out. It also provided a platform for the MTILCC and the entities responsible for collecting complaints to communicate with each other in order to resolve specific cases and help simplify procedures. Additionally, it redefined the concept of transparency as a pillar of the MTILCC's mission by focusing on access to information about administrative procedures and reducing the asymmetry between users and public employees.

The contest encouraged the flow of information and provided prizes (desktop and laptop computers) to the winners. It also enabled the MTILCC to monitor and even resolve procedural impasses in a timely matter, which motivated citizens not only to put their trust in the proposed channel, but also to raise their expectations beyond merely voicing their complaints.

The goal of this paper is to analyze the effect and potential of “The Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of My Life” as a tool for handling citizens’ personal discontent with public administration in isolated cases and as a channel of information to detect obstacles and provide solutions for improving administrative processes by chronicling the contest process.

Section 2 focuses on several aspects of the contest, including its implementation, a description of the activities led by MTILCC, the mission implied, and the coordination and leadership needed to carry out the initiative together with the other government entities and with the public. It presents the information gathered on public entities and on the procedures highlighted, the participants’ experiences, and the dialogue established among MTILCC and other public sector actors.

Section 3 addresses the limitations and the potential of the experience. The lessons learned through the project have influenced a plethora of actors in public administration: MTILCC learned about key aspects in access to information and communication with the public, and other participating entities received valuable feedback on their work. Section 3 analyzes these inputs and extracts lessons learned. Considering that this was a one-time event with little time and resources for planning and implementation, the contest highlighted the MTILCC staff’s strong faith in their mission and their willingness to stretch their capacities even further,<sup>1</sup> as well as the challenges of translating this isolated experience into a tool for change. Specifically, the section highlights the innovative aspects of the experience in terms of defining the MTILCC’s mission, the types of connections between the Ministry and the citizens, and the inter-institutional dialogue created. Finally, Annex I presents information compiled on similar experiences in other countries.

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<sup>1</sup> This considers the relevance of the spirit of the mission and the public entities’ enthusiasm and ideas inspired by the objectives—particularly those that have an ongoing relationship with traditionally bureaucratic entities. See Drezner (2000).

# 2 “THE WORST BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURE OF MY LIFE” CONTEST

## 2.1 Background: Citizen Service Project

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is committed to promoting ethics and transparency in public sector management with a focus on the citizens, aiming to improve public services in different social areas and increase productivity and competitiveness through innovation.<sup>2</sup> This commitment is inspired by the concept of “living well,” a characteristic of original and indigenous cultures of Bolivia that is mentioned in the Preamble and in various articles of the Political Constitution. It also forms the basis of the National Development Plan enacted in 2007.

The Political Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia was enacted in 2008. It includes 38 articles aimed at strengthening transparency, combating corruption, improving access to information, incorporating social monitoring, establishing accountability mechanisms, promoting ethics among public employees, and restoring state properties.

Various entities were created to meet these objectives. In 2006, the Vice Ministry of Anticorruption was established.

In 2009, it became MTILCC. The MTILCC has powers commensurate with the Policy of Transparency and Anticorruption (Política de Transparencia y Lucha contra la Corrupción, or PTLCC), which focuses on four aspects: (i) encouraging citizen participation, (ii) promoting transparency in public management and the right to information access, (iii) undertaking measures to eradicate corruption, and (v) implementing institutional strengthening and coordination mechanisms.

In 2010, soon after its creation, the MTILCC began to incorporate citizen services as an area of focus in its scope of intervention in addition to promoting transparency and preventing corruption. The Vice Ministry of Corruption Prevention and Promotion of Ethics and Transparency (VPPET) carried out a citizen services project (Servicio de Atención al Ciudadano, or SAC) with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It proposed gathering information on the operation of customer service counters to identify the impact of inefficiencies on citizens’ experience with conducting

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<sup>2</sup> See National Development Plan (Supreme Decree 29.272/2007).

bureaucratic transactions or receiving services. In particular, the project sought to determine the margin of discretion of the public officials in charge of these procedures. Direct observation and forms filled out by users were the main tools used to gather information in national hospitals, municipal health centers, and property rights registries among other entities that make up the observed sample of entities in the project.

Information compiled by SAC made it possible to identify some of the red tape in the relationship between citizens and public administration that can create delays or denial of procedures or services. This red tape comes in many shapes and sizes: delays in budget transfers, which hinders service delivery; inertia in budget implementation, which hampers the expansion of access to services; lack of information (e.g., on requirements or deadlines), which prevents the public from being able to request decisions or certain goods or services provided by the government.

From this information, a problem-and-agent map was produced, which helped define measures to improve services in areas closely related to the objectives of the MTILCC. Based on that, the program sought to optimize the variables that affect the normal flow in the relationship between citizens and the government. The fundamental tasks of SAC also include following up on problems presented by users and dialogue with public entities responsible for the procedures where the obstacles occur. In exercising its capacity to register, observe, and intervene in cases of excessive requirements, discretion, or arbitrariness as well as cases of poor coordination between public entities, the MTILCC was often able to streamline procedures. Once formulated and settled by SAC, the circulation of information

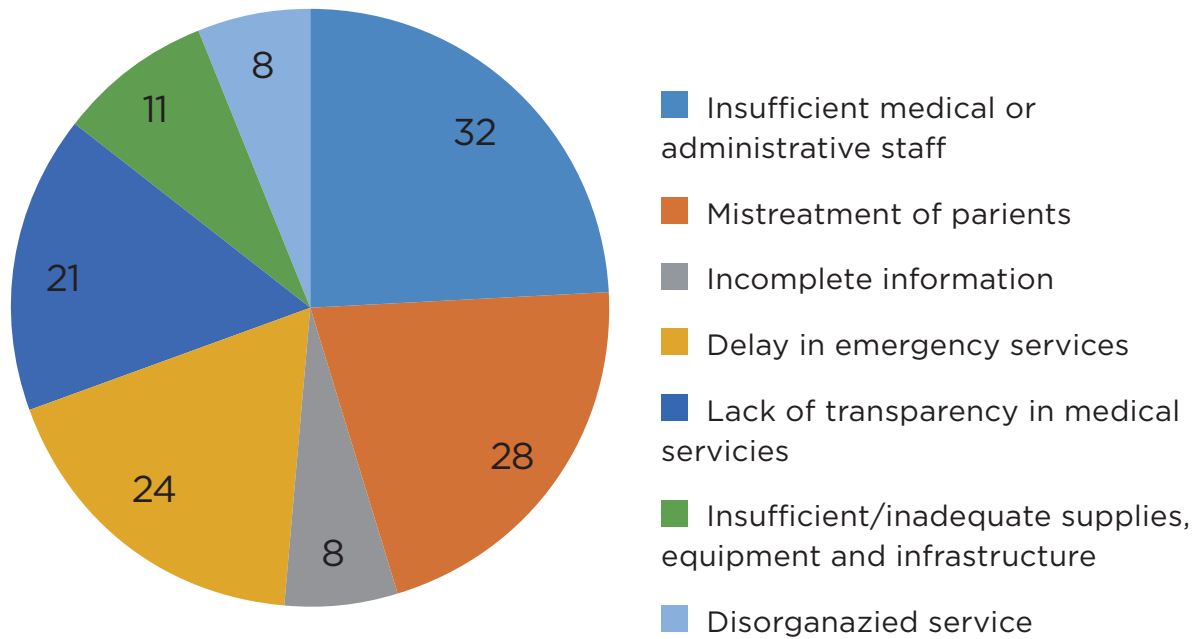
that had been blocked (on items such as underutilized donated medical equipment or unauthorized budget lines) made it possible to articulate the problems, identify the causes, and find solutions.

Some entities were especially receptive to observations and recommendations received through this project. The General Personal Identification Service (Servicio General de Información Personal, or SEGIP), which is responsible for issuing identification documents, used the information and recommendations made available through SAC to develop a process of change, which is under way, and to raise awareness among its staff. Examples of changes undertaken are improvements in waiting areas, simplification of procedures, and better signage, among others.

Despite the positive outcomes obtained by SAC, MTILCC found several limitations, such as the difficulty of incorporating more points of contact between citizens and the public sector and the inability to systematize this process, making it a regular mechanism through which to gather information, identify obstacles, and conduct process reviews. Additionally, since SAC focused primarily on the questions and concerns raised by the MTILCC rather than on user experience, there were conceptual limitations in the methodology of information collection and evaluation.

Nevertheless, despite limitations in the scope and duration of the project, MTILCC staff affirmed that SAC had allowed them to focus on the quality of services provided by the public sector as part of an effort in which transparency on many levels—in the proactive provision of information to citizens, in budget flows, and in administrative decisions that can potentially block access to services—plays a fundamental role. SAC made a conscious

**Figure 1. Example of Information Gathered by SAC:  
Complaints Recorded in Hospitals (number of complaints)**



Source: prepared in-house based on MTILCC data.

effort to incorporate this point into a corruption prevention policy, including it in the summary of existing policies to implement Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC) in the country report of 2010.

Finally, the project facilitated the establishment of a channel through which

information on administrative procedures and public services could flow outside of the usual asymmetric circuits, and made it possible for the public to receive more information and services. The implementation of SAC and the outcomes obtained created an opportunity to capture the impact of these obstacles on users' lives.

## 2.2 Basis and Goals of the Contest

The experience of SAC raised an important question: can user experience be used to reduce red tape? In 2011, inspired by a similar project in Mexico, VPPET proposed a contest that asked citizens to share their worst experiences with bureaucracy. In 2008, the Secretary of Public Service of Mexico had organized a contest called

“the Most Useless Paperwork” to gather user input on unnecessary requirements, long wait times, and abuse of discretion by public employees.<sup>3</sup>

The VPPET's challenge was to develop a similar initiative but without a budget. This restricted both the ability to publicize

<sup>3</sup> The Mexican initiative had a budget that allowed for handing out awards of between US\$26,000 and US\$28,000 and for carrying out an extensive publicity campaign (see Annex I).



the project and its geographic coverage. However, there was a lot of enthusiasm: if an initiative of this kind could be implemented, the information collected could be used to supplement and strengthen the knowledge gathered through SAC from the user's point of view. Additionally, by having a map that identified entities and problems, the contest campaign could target certain procedures and entities to maximize the impact of the limited resources available.

Furthermore, the MTILCC would be compelled to consider transparency from the standpoint of the end user. The contest could focus on information asymmetry and margin of discretion in terms of their impact on the State's decision making and citizens' ability to obtain certifications and receive other services. On the one hand, MTILCC staff understood that an activity of this kind was aimed at reducing opportunities for corruption, some of which had already been identified through SAC and even shared with the Vice Ministry of Anticorruption, which is in charge of investigating corruption. On the other hand, obstacles in accountability and access to information could be identified for

purposes beyond corruption prevention—that is, identifying obstacles considered unacceptable from the standpoint of the constitutional concept of “living well.”

As mentioned before, the Preamble and various articles of the Political Constitution of Bolivia allude to the indigenous concept of “living well,” which is embedded in the idea of full and harmonious development of personal and social life. As stated by VPPET staff in an interview, hurdles imposed by the public sector on individuals are completely at odds with this idea. Therefore, the mission of improving citizen experience is considered a constitutional obligation.<sup>4</sup>

In light of the above, the contest was designed and launched with the overall objective of learning about citizens' experiences with administrative processes on a national level vis-à-vis various entities of the Plurinational State, at the central, autonomous departmental, or municipal level, and identifying those processes that need to be optimized to improve public services and reduce transaction time and costs, as well as prevent corruption.

## 2.3 Organization of the Contest

### *a. Implementation and Communication Strategy*

SAC provided data on the types of procedures and the public entities in which users ran into hurdles that obstruct the

normal flow of their requests. For example, civil registry procedures, which are a prerequisite for many other services, such

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<sup>4</sup> Section 1 of Article 8 includes the principle of teko kavi (good life), while Section 2 refers to the values of equality, dignity, and transparency. Section 232 requires public administration to adhere to the principles of legality, impartiality, public spirit, social interest, ethics, transparency, equality, competency, efficiency, quality, empathy, honesty, responsibility, and results delivery. Likewise, these principles are formally recognized in the Anticorruption, Illicit Gain, and Wealth Investigation Law of Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz by the Supreme Decree 214/2009, which establishes the four aspects of National Policy on Transparency and Anticorruption as well as the Public Management Transparency Program: participation, transparency with access to information, corruption eradication measures, and inter-institutional coordination.



as obtaining a birth certificate, presented difficulties such as inadequate waiting rooms and service areas (physical) and a lack of clear, advance communication regarding requirements (access to information). Serious deficiencies were also identified in municipal procedures, applications for professional degrees or certificates of completion of studies, procedures related to real estate property rights and access to healthcare, and personal identification services. Based on this information, entities involving highly demanded procedures with dense and complex information for users were selected in order to create an opportunity for citizens to lodge their complaints and grievances through the contest. Entities on the receiving end of user complaints or corruption reports by TU were also included.

Various aspects were considered in designing the implementation strategy of the contest. Initially, given budget constraints and personnel capacity, the MTILCC considered limiting the initiative to the most populated departments—La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz—and to the major cities. Later on, a decision was made to “go big, try to reach as many places as possible, and gather new information,” as described by one of the public sector employees who participated in the contest. Consequently, the initiative was expanded to all of the departments in the country, including those without MTILCC or TU offices, such as Oruro and Pando. The contest’s executive team would reach out from La Paz, identify local contacts, carry out on-site publicity activities, and put up ballot boxes in strategic locations.

The VPPET team placed more than 200 ballot boxes at different points throughout

the country, in which users could deposit their forms and participate in the contest. In La Paz and in the departmental capitals, ballot boxes were installed in regional offices of those entities with the highest concentration of recorded procedures or problems: the Education Department Service (SEDUCA), the National Apportionment System (SENASIR), public universities, Property Rights Registries (in offices of the judiciary), the National Health Fund, the Civil Registry Service (SERECI), and the General Personal Identification Service (SEGIP), among others. These institutions placed ballot boxes at the customer service counters of their local offices and in their TUs. Additionally, ballot boxes were placed in over 40 municipal government offices, mainly in the most populated areas, and in areas with institutional relations with the MTILCC (to ensure their permanent availability and effective communication). Publicity posters and informational pamphlets were also distributed in places where ballot boxes were set up. Map 1 shows the geographic distribution of ballot boxes by department.

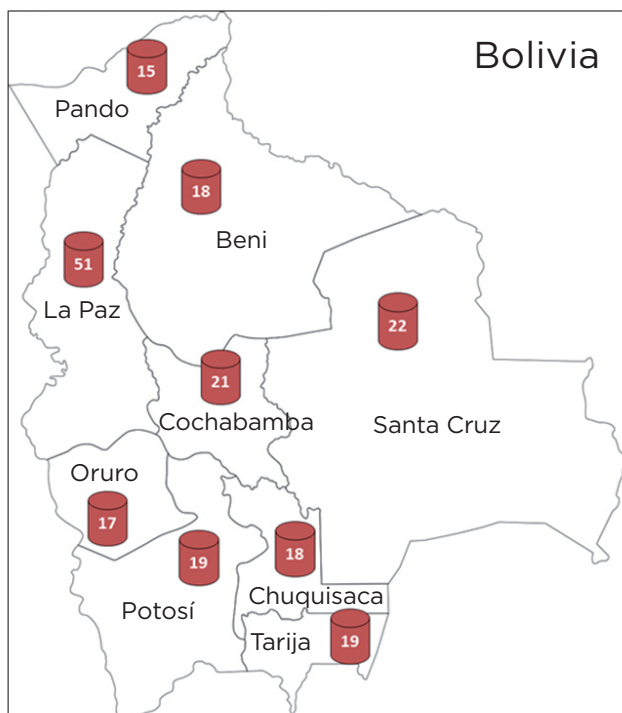
Table 1 presents information on the ballot boxes used in the contest at the departmental and municipal levels. La Paz department had the greatest number of boxes and included more municipalities than other departments. The decision was consistent with the size of the total population in the department and with the significance of the municipalities in each department in terms of population, especially El Alto.

In addition to the information provided through SAC, the TUs contributed valuable data.<sup>6</sup> As part of the contest preparation,

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<sup>5</sup> El equipo del VPPTE para el concurso estuvo formado por cinco personas y contó con un presupuesto de US\$12.800 aproximadamente.

**Map 1. Geographic Distribution of Ballot Boxes by Department**



the VPPET asked the TUs to come up with an inventory of procedures associated with each hosting institution. This process revealed some procedures and problems that had not come to the attention of the VPPETs. For example, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this process detected cumbersome procedures in consular sections that needed to improve their information and processing speed even if no complaints were received during contest. Later, during the implementation of the contest, the TUs were asked to support publicity efforts, collect forms, and process results.

MTILCC staff participated in these and other activities, such as the implementation of SAC, and helped improve the relationship between the MTILCC and the TUs. For TU staff, the contest was an opportunity to

**Table 1. Geographic Distribution of Ballot Boxes**

| Departament        | Number of ballot boxes in capital city | Number of ballot boxes in municipal government offices | Percentage (of total) | Population (percentage of national total) |
|--------------------|--|--|-----------------------|---|
| La Paz             | 33                                     | 9 (El Alto)<br>9 (otros)                               | 25.5%                 | 26.99% (2,7 M)                            |
| Cochabamba         | 16                                     | 5  | 10.5%                 | 17.53% (1,76 M)                           |
| Santa Cruz         | 19                                     | 3  | 11%                   | 26.48% (2,66 M)                           |
| Pando (Cobija)     | 15                                     | -  | 7.5%                  | 1.1% (0,11 M)                             |
| Beni (Trinidad)    | 15                                     | 3  | 9%                    | 4.2% (0,42 M)                             |
| Chuquisaca (Sucre) | 15                                     | 3  | 9%                    | 5.74% (0,58 M)                            |
| Potosí             | 16                                     | 3  | 9.5%                  | 8.2% (0,82 M)                             |
| Oruro              | 15                                     | 2  | 8.5%                  | 4.9% (0,49M)                              |
| Tarija             | 17                                     | 2  | 9.5%                  | 4.8% (0,48 M)                             |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>161</b>                             | <b>39</b>  | <b>100%</b>           | <b>10.02 M</b>                            |

Source: Prepared in-house based on data from VPPET and the National Statistics Institute of Bolivia.

<sup>6</sup> Conceived in the structure of ministries by the Supreme Decree 29894, TUs were established to promote access to information, advocate public ethics, prevent corruption, and receive user complaints or denouncements.

enhance communication with counterparts. As the director of one TU pointed out, the meetings held to process the information gathered through the contest helped identify patterns of difficulties within procedures and improved the input of TUs in their respective ministries. The contest also strengthened the role of customer service counters, which had been perceived primarily as a channel for denunciation, in clarifying procedures.

The MTILCC team developed the contest's communication strategy with limited resources. The core message was to foster and encourage participation without fear of retribution. The work with the press included a publicity guideline for broadcast media with partial coverage in the interior departments, interviews in various media outlets, as well as signs and posters in SOME institutions and offices where transactions occur. Additionally, the resources were leveraged with highly creative and humorous self-produced radio and television spots. For example, some TV commercials featured a locally renowned comedian who performed alongside MTILCC staff posing as actors to deliver a dramatic rendering of the administrative process..

To reinforce the publicity, MTILCC staff appeared in locations where ballot boxes were placed and directly informed users about the contest.<sup>7</sup> MTILCC staff also

### *b. Form Evaluation Process*

VPPET staff, the 52 TU heads, and an evaluation committee consisting of representatives of the jury panel members received and reviewed a total of 2,044 forms. Figure 2 shows the different stages of the

gave interviews in the media. The public employees involved acknowledged that an undertaking of this kind in the future would require not only more publicity but also a communication strategy tailored to the different communities and languages of the country.

**Image 1. Contest Poster in Public Offices where Transactions are Conducted**



evaluation process, starting with checking formal requirements and participant identity.

To carry out this process, the MTILCC established guidelines and focused on two

<sup>7</sup> MTILCC staff paid at least one visit to each public entity that had a ballot box installed for users to submit contest forms.

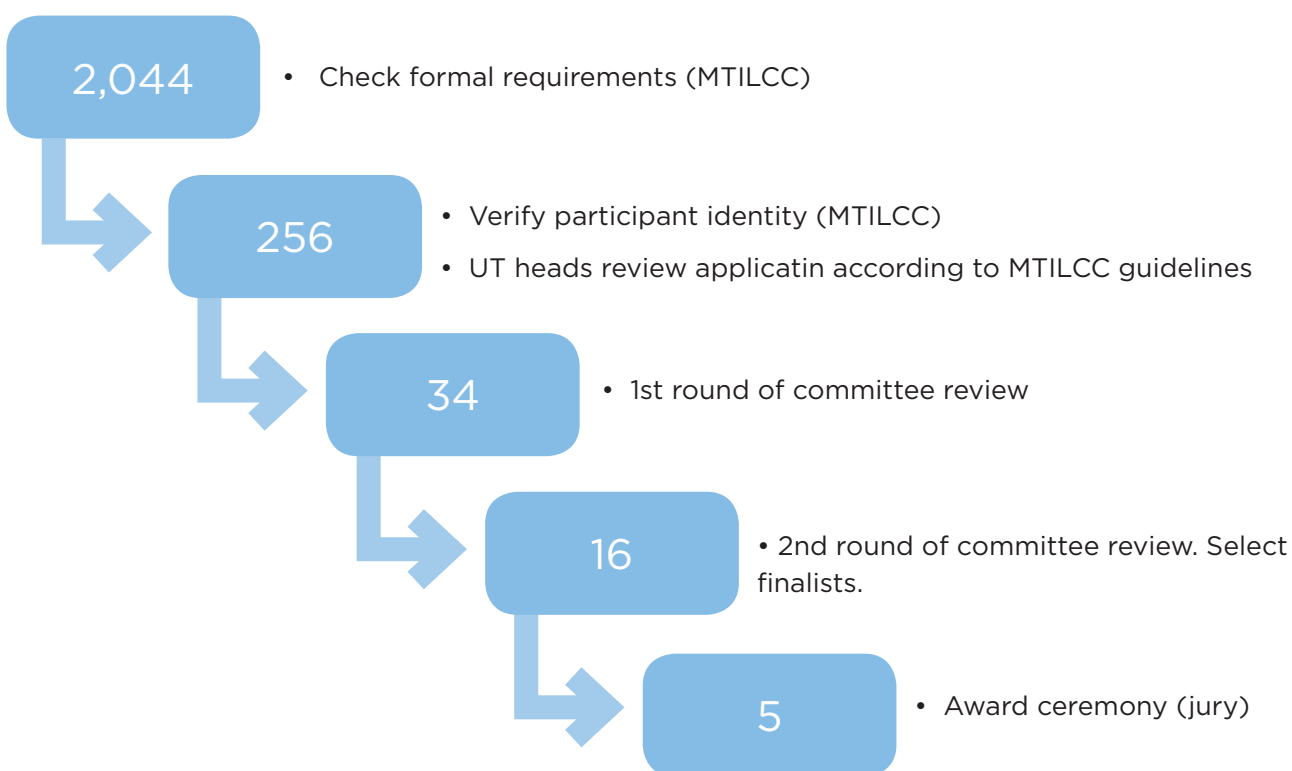
primary variables in the evaluation: impact on the contestant's life and time involved in completing the paperwork. The former aimed at determining the severity of the problem faced by the users and its impact on their lives, while the latter considered time delays in completing transactions as an important factor in increasing opportunities for corruption.

The evaluation committee consisted of representatives of jury panel members, including four ministers, and representatives from civil society and multilateral organizations.<sup>8</sup> The president's support for this initiative could be seen in the quality and the level of authority of the participating jury members. People with diverse perspectives from different sectors

and from senior political levels conducted the final review of the forms. The results enhanced the services received by the contestants and enriched their life stories.

The participation of representatives of social movements and human rights organizations on the jury panel was consistent with the spirit of transparency and anticorruption policies, which is collaboration between government and civil society. As part of the National Council against Corruption and Illicit Gain, the National Confederation of Neighborhood Councils reached a consensus with the former and sent a national leader to participate. The Permanent Assembly on Human Rights (Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos, or APDH), a human rights organization that normally does not

**Figure 2. Stages in the Evaluation of the Contest**



<sup>8</sup> Jury members included David Choquehuanca (Minister of Foreign Affairs), Elizabeth Salguero (Minister of Cultures), Claudia Peña Claros (Minister of Autonomy), Fernando Fuentes Daza (Vice Minister of Justice), Iván Iporre Salguero (Plurinational Public Management School), Teresa Subieta (Human Rights Assembly), Baudouin Duquesne (IDB representative), Eduardo Enrique Reina (OAS), and Efraín Chambi (National Confederation of Neighborhood Councils).

participate in such activities but remains in permanent communication with the MTILCC, especially through referrals of grievances, sent a member to serve on the jury panel and put up a ballot box in their headquarters.

According to the APDH representative interviewed for this paper, addressing

## 2.4 Results

Of the 2,044 forms received, only 256, or 12.4 percent, met the minimum requirements to be considered for the contest: that is, they contained information on the identity of the citizen, a clear narrative of the “worst bureaucratic procedures,” and suggestions to improve it. The total number of forms collected and the proportion containing adequate information were lower than hoped, although according to the Ministry team, they were not lower than expected. It was difficult for the team to determine in advance the number and adequacy of the responses. The considerable number of people conducting administrative transactions procedures every day and the number of problems known to exist were reasons to expect a substantial response. However, many factors played against the expectation, one of which was undoubtedly the lack of resources to carry out the initiative.

The MTILCC used the information contained in all of the forms, including those considered invalid for the contest. Nearly 900 forms contained suggestions encouraging dialogue between public entities, and 800 other forms provided information on statistics related to complaints and detection of problem-prone procedures. A total of 256 cases considered valid for the contest

the public’s plight vis-à-vis bureaucracy and defending human rights have the same goal. Again, just as the concept of transparency was redefined in the eyes of VPPET staff, the concept of human rights acquires an immediate and everyday dimension in the relationship between citizens and the State when administrative transactions are carried out.

documented citizen problems to which VPPET was committed to find solutions. For this purpose, VPPET put together a team that contacted the corresponding entities and conducted follow-up. In other words, an inherent reward of participating in the contest was the support of MTILCC. At the same time, the forms provided content for dialogue with public entities, notifying the latter of problem areas and fostering an exchange of ideas to find solutions. See Table 2 for a summary of the information gathered from the forms received.

Data on the forms that related to La Paz department were also of interest. The proportion of forms collected in La Paz department exceeded the percentage of the population it represents and the proportion of ballot boxes distributed by a wide margin. According to MTILCC staff, several hypotheses can help explain what happened. First, given the degree of centralization that still exists in the country, key procedures are concentrated in La Paz. As La Paz is the seat of the highest executive power and the administrative capital, and since the executive branch has the greatest number of entities, someone who runs into obstacles in the administrative procedures has a reason to go to the capital and seek assistance from a higher-level authority.



**Table 2. Number of Ballot Boxes, Forms Received, and Valid Forms by Department**

| Departament  | Total Number of ballot boxes | Percentage of forms received (out of national total) | Percentage of valid forms (out of departmental total) | Percentage of valid forms (out of total number of forms considered) |
|--------------|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| La Paz       | 51                           | 43.30%   | 16.70%  | 57.80%  |
| Cochabamba   | 21                           | 12.20%   | 15.90%  | 15.60%  |
| Santa Cruz   | 22                           | 11.80%   | 6.60%   | 6.30%   |
| Pando        | 15                           | 2.80%  | 5.90%   | 1.20%   |
| Beni         | 18                           | 2.80%  | 16.90%  | 3.90%   |
| Chuquisaca   | 18                           | 9.60%  | 6.60%   | 5.10%   |
| Potosí       | 19                           | 5.70%  | 8.50%   | 3.90%   |
| Oruro        | 17                           | 3.20%  | 17.90%  | 4.70%   |
| Tarija       | 19                           | 8.50%  | 2.30%   | 1.60%   |
| <b>Total</b> | 200                          | 100% (2,044)   | 12.4% (256)   | 100% (256)  |

Source: Prepared in-house based on VPPET data.

Second, follow-up to some procedures has traditionally resulted in final decisions being made in La Paz. Even though important steps have been taken to decentralize public administration, the culture of “going where the decisions are made” persists. There are still documents and information that are centralized and require several procedures to be carried out in La Paz, which means that even though important entities involved in paperwork procedures have offices in all departments of the country, applicants may still have a reason to travel to La Paz. Thus, the overrepresentation of La Paz in the total number of forms could be linked to the concentration of users in the capital.

Additionally, as mentioned by members of the contest executive team, there are practical reasons why the publicity campaign had the greatest impact in the capital. Physical proximity allowed for better coordination between the executive team and various offices involved in conducting procedures and the TUs. Monitoring the presence of posters, flyers,

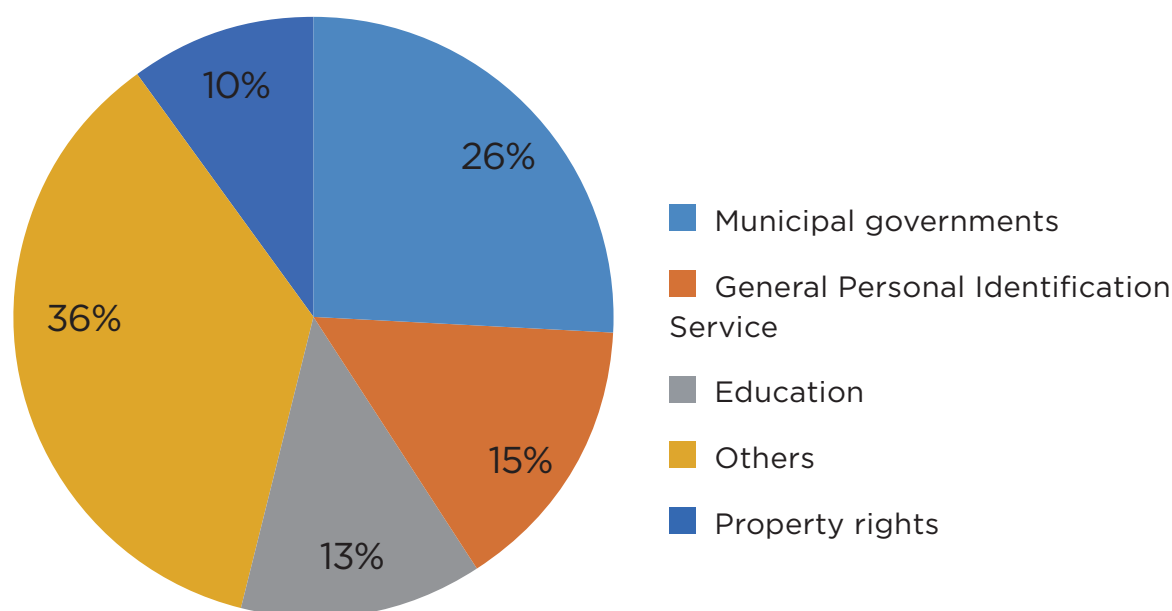
and ballot boxes was easier; hence, there was greater participant commitment. On the other hand, even though the guidelines intended publicity to be as far-reaching and diverse as possible, radio, television, and Internet have more coverage in La Paz than in many other—though not all—departments. A targeted publicity approach with greater overall coverage, more presence in communities, and particular languages would have required a bigger budget and more planning.

By contrast, a department with a population similar to that of Santa Cruz had much lower participation in terms of the proportion of the total number of forms collected (11 percent). Nevertheless, this percentage is the same as that of the ballot boxes distributed in the location. Therefore, even though it was underrepresented in relation to the local population, user reaction was consistent with the presence of ballot boxes and hence with the contest visibility in the local offices of national administrative entities.

According to some public employees on the contest’s executive team, one of the main obstacles they had to overcome was ensuring the visibility of the contest in those departments where the MTILCC has little or no presence, such as Beni, Oruro, and Pando. Within budgetary constraints, the MTILCC leveraged its resources by cooperating with the Vice Ministry of Anticorruption, which was carrying out activities in different parts of the country for its own research. It set up ballot boxes and helped

publicize the contest. This helped create awareness of the contest in such places and increased the possibility of linking the objectives of anticorruption and corruption prevention. Nevertheless, the proportion of responses from these departments was not remarkably low. Even though the number of participants was notably lower than the proportion of ballot boxes distributed, the proportion of responses was not lower than the percentage of its population over the national total.

**Figure 3. Total Number of Forms Received by Entity (percentage)**



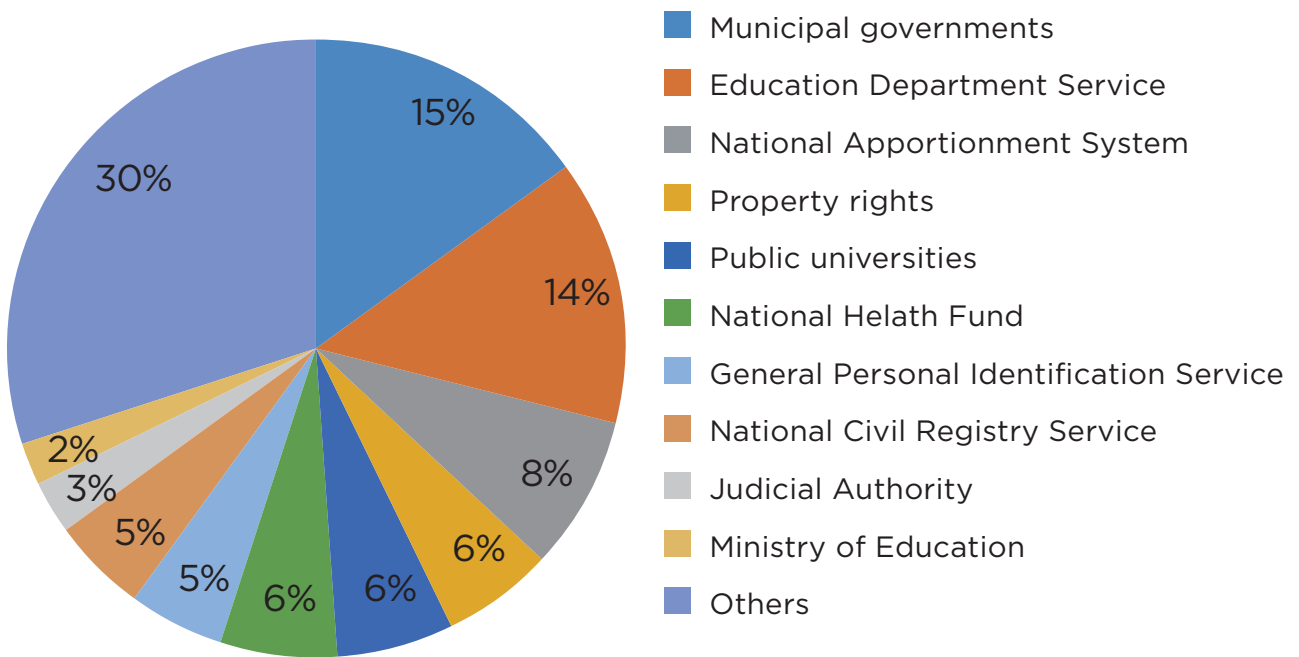
Source: Prepared in-house based on MTILCC data.  
Note: 2,044 forms were considered.

Figure 4 depicts the share of each entity as a percentage of the 256 forms correctly filled out and considered valid for the contest. In other words, 256 forms contained a complaint and as well as a suggestion. While in the first case we took into account all useful complaints, denunciations, and suggestions for statistical purposes to identify procedures causing discontent, in the second case we focused on a set of cases that complied with the contest’s objectives of detecting

specific problems that could lead to identifying institutional solutions.

The first thing that attracted our attention was the dispersion in both groups. Out of the total number of forms (2,044 forms), the category “Others,” which groups together all entities with individual percentages lower than 10 percent, took up more than a third of the total. Out of the total number of valid forms, “Other”, which groups together all entities with individual

**Figure 4. Valid Forms by Entity**



Source: Prepared in-house based on MTILCC data.

Note: The total number of valid forms was 256 (151 submitted by men, 105 by women).

percentages of lower than 2 percent, also took up the same proportion. If we were to use the same criteria on individual percentages as the first case, the category “Others” would have accounted for almost 70 percent in the second case. The reason may be that the contest did not use a clear enough definition of bureaucracy,

nor was the contest scope limited to any specific sector, which resulted in all kinds of bureaucratic procedures and entities coming up. In terms of gender, male participation was higher. Of the 256 people who submitted valid forms, two-thirds were men and one-third were women. Of the 34 finalists, 22 were men and 12 were women.



# 3 ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCE

## 3.1 Procedures, Asymmetries, and Citizen Options

The point of encounter between the public sector and end user is the bureaucratic transaction. Sometimes these transactions take the form of obtaining a good or service, such as a cash payment or healthcare benefit, while in other instances, they consist of administrative actions required by regulations as a prerequisite for conducting other activities (e.g., obtaining a business license, driver's license, debt-clearance certificate, or operating license). One common characteristic in all these transactions is the asymmetries between the two parties involved.

There are obvious information asymmetries between citizens and public entities (and their final decision makers—public sector employees responsible for one or more steps in the bureaucratic transactions, whether or not they directly interact with citizens). Nor are they on equal footing in terms of decisions and control over the transactions involved (which is different from contracts, in which transactions depend on the free will of both parties on equal footing).

In this sense and from a more instrumental perspective, red tape refers to the administrative procedures involved in obtaining goods, services, permits, or waivers, or compliance with legal obligations

(from paying taxes to registering newborns). The variety of reasons for and areas in which transactions are required make them a fundamental aspect of the relationship between the State and the citizens. Thus, there are a number of indicators used to measure the quality of governance that involve measuring red tape. For example, the *Doing Business* index developed by the World Bank (2014a, 2014b) attempts to quantify the relationship between good governance, regulations and their application, and businesses. The index takes into account indicators related to State decision making required in administrative procedures, such as “starting a business,” “obtaining a construction permit,” “getting electricity,” and “paying taxes.” In *World Governance Indicators* published by the same organization for the past two decades (World Bank, 2013), there are indicators that take into account aspects related to carrying out administrative procedures. Among the factors considered are “government effectiveness,” “rule of law,” and “control of corruption”. To measure government effectiveness, the quality of the bureaucracy and satisfaction with public services are considered, among other factors. To measure the rule of law, variables that reflect the speed of judicial proceedings are considered. To measure the control

of corruption, indicators of corruption in relation to different aspects of decision making and services provided by the public sector are considered.

Including corruption as an aspect in administrative decision making that affects citizens is due to asymmetries between State agents and end users. Asymmetries also exist between public employees interacting directly with users and their supervisors. Typical scenarios of asymmetry are considered in these principal-agent relations, in which possibilities exist for public employees to demand illegal payments in exchange for completing any type of procedure. Therefore, this is the level at which the famous Klitgaard Formula (Corruption = Monopoly + Discretion - Accountability) is most widely applied (Klitgaard, 1988). Information asymmetry is implicit in the formula. In fact, as Klitgaard explains, in a principal-agent-client model, monopoly over decisions, lack of regulatory or functional limits and absence of accountability give agents such power that they have an incentive to engage in corruption.

Administrative corruption (which is not necessarily “small” in economic terms if we think about the kinds of decisions, permits, or waivers that large private companies can require individually or collectively or if we consider their frequency) is one example that can be extensively explained by the variables of monopoly, discretion and accountability. Asymmetries in procedures required by the government reflect the full extent to which opportunities for corruption exist.<sup>9</sup> In other words, the possibility of corruption in various procedures reveals the

risk run by citizens, who are at the mercy of people with decision-making power and knowledge of regulations who can commit corruption, abuse their authority, or simply refuse to correct an error.

Both the specialized literature and real life experience have proposed solutions to reduce the asymmetries and risks involved in even the best scenarios of administration and public policy implementation. Proposals to solve these problems usually invoke concepts of citizen participation and accountability. The experience with the contest points to citizen feedback mechanisms, as well as redress and complaint mechanisms. According to Gauri (2011), it is necessary to highlight the particularity of redress and complaint mechanisms vis-à-vis others that have received more attention in previous literature and in public administration improvement programs, where citizen feedback mechanisms pose some constraints. Gauri focuses on distinguishing between mechanisms that focus on user experience in specific cases and those that call attention to other aspects of administrative processes.

Following the criteria set by Gauri and some of the distinctions he makes, we differentiate the diverse participatory mechanisms in terms of their relationship to user experience with specific interactions with public administration. Budget monitoring by citizens focuses on legislative proceedings and administrative implementation processes. Reporting channels for corruption focus more on law infringement than on the quality of the services provided. Citizen scorecards, or report cards,<sup>10</sup> can incorporate ex-post evaluations by users, but the focus

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<sup>9</sup> Other political and institutional variables are required to explain corruptions linked to public policy designs, major procurements, or adoption of regulations (Johnston, 2006; Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> India in particular uses this mechanism. See, for example, <http://www.capacity.org/capacity/opencms/en/topics/accountability/citizen-report-cards-score-in-india.html>.

is more on aggregate information than on the procedures themselves. Social auditing processes are also evaluated ex-post, but again, processes take precedence over the transactions themselves. By contrast, the right to access information can be used not only to obtain data on processes and aggregate information but also to learn about obstacles in specific transactions. However, it does not purposefully reveal, redress, or compensate for deviations in conducting procedures. Likewise, even though they take into account individual experiences with bureaucratic procedures, bureaucratic simplification assessment<sup>11</sup> processes tend to focus on organizational reforms rather than finding solutions for specific cases.

According to Gauri (2011), a particular feature of redress and complaint mechanisms is that they focus on defining appropriate treatment of specific individuals in specific transactions, allowing for the detection, documentation, and compensation of devious or unfair procedures beyond their impact on the accountability of the State before citizens or on the extent to which this information can affect the exercise of state power at issue in the procedure.

Concepts related to citizen feedback should also be taken into account. Although specific projects in this area have been under way during the past 15 years at least, evaluations of ways that citizen feedback can contribute to resolving, organizing, and gathering information by entities subject to complaints are still pending, and a more precise definition of terms and methodologies is still needed (Jump, 2013). Citizen feedback mechanisms seek to bridge various kinds of gaps between

public officials responsible for decision making and citizens who are affected. In these gaps lies the challenge of closing the broken feedback loop. Jacobs (2010) affirms that the citizen feedback concept implies systematic gathering of points of view of beneficiaries and other actors through four stages in the relationship between decision makers and affected parties—sharing information, giving feedback, taking actions based on information shared or feedback collected, and once again, communication (Custer and zum Felde, 2012). In the case of red tape, for example, this would refer to the relationship between people who need to conduct procedures (users of public services) and people who process them (public employees).

The “Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of my Life” contest consisted of the following steps: filling out and submitting forms containing complaints and suggestions regarding specific procedures; follow-up by MTILCC to help resolve cases; organizing and aggregating information by entities subject to complaints, with information on their geographic locations, and dialogues with entities identified as being particularly bureaucratic. Additionally, the contest provided a channel to call attention to issues in specific transactions as well as a tool for follow-up and finding solutions (under discussion with the entities that require the procedures). The contest also made it possible to aggregate data, publish information, identify trends in red tape, and take the appropriate measures.

The capacity to gather information on specific citizen experience with different

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<sup>11</sup> See IEG (2013) for a description and evaluation of a procedural simplification project in Peru and U4 (2012) on simplification and corruption reduction.

types of procedures has become especially important in the context of “targeted transparency policies” (Fung, Graham, and Weil, 2007). These policies aim at making information available to a specific group of users while taking into account their needs and objectives, as well as incentives for the information to exert influence on the user experience in question. The contest demonstrated that many of the obstacles had to do with the lack of information available to users on public service procedures. Obtaining such information tends to be costly for users in terms of time, distance, and money (potential bribes as well as costs in terms of time and travel),

and as Fung, Graham and Weil point out, transparency politics can generate an impact only when they allow users to make better decisions without imposing additional costs.

Furthermore, and in line with the participation of social organizations encouraged by the Plurinational State of Bolivia, there is consensus that the sustainability of transparency policies depends on the auditing roles played by citizens, specialists, and civil society organizations (CSO). Fung and Wright (2003) argue that the synergy between users and authority can mean solutions outside the scope of top-down policies.

### 3.2 User Complaints and Recurring Obstacles Identified

In light of the conceptual framework presented, this section describes and analyzes some of the most frequently reported obstacles and problems identified by contest participants. Specific user experiences illustrate the kind of red tape perceived by citizens to be typical, the types of procedures subject to complaint, and particularly, the types of obstacles that citizens confront.

Table 3 shows the entities with the procedures most frequently reported on the contest forms.

As shown in Table 3, those procedures subject to the greatest number of complaints are related to the use, enjoyment, transfer, and ownership of property. These include approval of

**Table 3. Forms and Procedures by Entity Subject to Complaint**

| Entity name                             | Number of forms received by entity | Procedure   |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Municipal Governments                   | 46                                 | ✓ Approve construction plan<br>✓ Land registry        |
| Education Department Service            | 43                                 | ✓ National degree<br>✓ Secondary education diploma    |
| National Apportionment System           | 24                                 | ✓ Certificate of allowance<br>✓ Retirement procedures |
| Property Rights Registry                | 19                                 | ✓ Registration of real estate properties              |
| National Health Fund                    | 17                                 | ✓ Membership procedures<br>✓ Emergency care           |
| Civil Registry Service                  | 14                                 | ✓ Obtaining birth certificates                        |
| General Personal Identification Service | 14                                 | ✓ Renewing ID cards                                   |

construction plans, land registries, and real estate property registration. One of the entities involved in the use and transaction of property—the Property Rights Registry—was also frequently mentioned on both the total number of forms submitted and the valid forms (see Figures 1 and 2). Land registry is the procedure most frequently mentioned, while education-related matters and access to healthcare came in second and third, respectively.

At least three types of obstacles can be identified from the cases reviewed. The first is barriers in accessing information on procedural requirements. The sudden appearance of unexpected requirements that affect contestants' lives was a common occurrence that resulted in discontent and delays. For unexpected requirements to appear, there has to be incomplete or poor quality information on procedural requirements. "The requirements could only

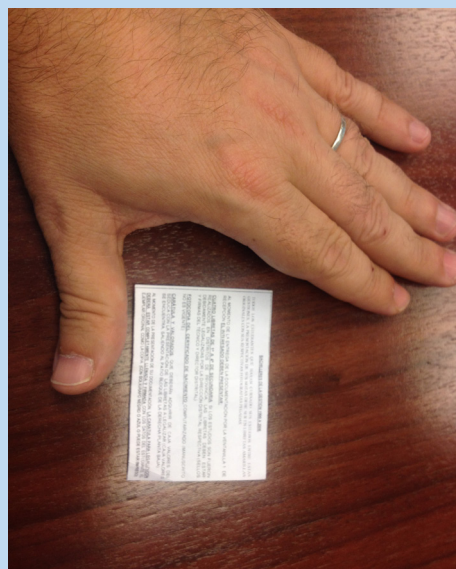
be found on a printed sheet. To get a copy, I had to stand in line, get the document and go out and make a photocopy. In any case, I have been asked to produce things that were not even [on the sheet]," said one person who needed to request a degree certificate in order to teach.<sup>12</sup>

Another applicant seeing a secondary education diploma who went to the Education Department Service offices several times spoke of his defeat:<sup>13</sup> "The line barely moved since the public employee was giving such poor service. She even left her office, leaving the entire line waiting, only to return after quite some time. The worst part was that when I was one person away from being helped, she closed the window rudely and without warning. The sign said that the office was open to the public until 11:30 AM, but the lady decided to call it a day at 11:20 AM. All the people who were left waiting were floored, since she didn't even show the

### Box 1. Microscopic Instructions

Obtaining certifications of completion of schooling cycles (high school proficiency examination, secondary education diploma, and professional degrees) is another problem that came up frequently in the contest (see Table 3). "Bolivia doesn't have more professionals," said Areli Muñoz, a contest finalist, "because people can't get their diplomas."

For Ms. Muñoz, receiving miniature instructions with information on requirements for procedures she would have to complete with Seduca Cochabamba (see image) was just one of the many challenges she had to overcome in getting her secondary education diploma that would allow her to process her undergraduate degree in public accounting, for which she had already passed all the exams. For more than 10 years, Ms. Muñoz had to put up with waiting in endless lines in vain, loss of documents submitted to public offices, mistreatment, misinformation, and arbitrary service hours. She saw her professional career stagnate and had to settle for jobs for which she was overqualified since she was unable to receive her diploma. "I felt like I was nobody, and that I didn't matter. It doesn't matter what I did, who I am, I just don't exist." Consequently, in addition to her loss of income, there is the psychological cost of not being able to assume her professional identity and the cost of having to deal with red tape on a daily basis.



<sup>12</sup> Based on interview with contest finalist Elena Natividad.

<sup>13</sup> Verbatim copy from the form submitted by Mr. Luis Paolo Bosco Grajeda.



slightest respect by telling us that she'd only see two more people or something along those lines so that people would not have waited in vain. Nor did she say politely that she was closing the window."

When the applicant was finally able to submit the documents, his request was denied, since his SEDUCA records had the wrong last name. In his own words: "I came back to stand in line in the afternoon and when it was finally my turn, they gave me the documents and said they couldn't give me the diploma because two of my files had my last name wrong. I checked and it was right, but they still told me that I was not in the system nor in the circulars (...) They told me that I had to come back to the cashier and pay for another voucher to have my last name fixed, submit an application letter, present my birth certificate, and pay 25 Bolivianos (...)"

In at least two cases, having the "wrong" shade of background color in the photos required for certain procedures caused delays or denial of service. To obtain

withheld welfare benefits or a national degree in order to teach, the requirement of an exact background color—without providing details in any specific regulation which shade to use but rather following conventions—meant that citizens had to "go back to square one" and start the procedural steps all over again. "It was practically impossible to get accurate information on all the requirements, and it wasn't clear in most cases where they came from," said a contestant who had to submit her ID photo four times before she came up with the right shade of background color.

Often, citizens take the legal route to obtain what they cannot (or believe they will not be able to) get through administrative means. Lack of information on requirements has frequently resulted in amparo proceedings to obtain results for which administrative channels exist.

Second, some procedures involve extreme hardship, such as having to commute between various cities all over the country to obtain results or to pick up documents

## Box 2. The Challenge of Getting Healthcare

The winning case of the contest was submitted by Ms. María Sueldo Baldivieso. On a windy, stormy day, an old tree on a public square came close to falling on top of her eleven-year-old son, who was running and was injured by a piece of sharp metal that punctured his stomach and caused a hemorrhage. The boy's mother took him to the emergency room in the Workers' Hospital of La Paz, and an ordeal that lasted more than 10 hours, during which the boy could not receive medical care due to administrative delays and the indifference of administrative staff and paramedics. The first few moments of the long wait spoke for themselves: "after making it through a long line, they asked us to present documents at the reception counter. We explained what happened and they sealed a slip of paper saying that the specialist—a surgeon—would take care of my son. We went back to the emergency counter with the sealed slip, and the lady there put it in a box and told us to wait, saying that we'd get called without looking at us and all the while chatting and laughing with her friend."

In another case, the mother of a newborn had to fight time and again in a hospital to receive services covered by her health insurance. The staff demanded that she demonstrate, confirm, and verify her coverage over and over again, delaying her turn to receive medical care for her baby by several hours. When she finally saw the doctor, the doctor reprimanded her for bringing in the baby so late: "I could not afford to cry because it would make my milk bitter." Once the baby was hospitalized, his mother had to confirm once again that she was insured so that her baby could receive milk in accordance with her healthcare plan.

Bureaucratic barriers in access to healthcare include obstacles ranging from difficulties in processing health insurance membership to delays or denials of service in emergency rooms.

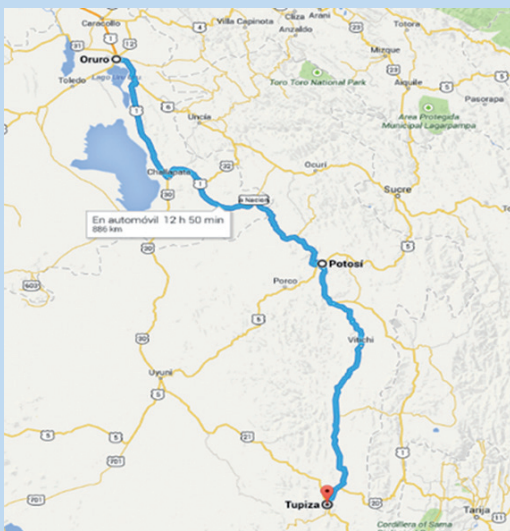
that are already in the hands of public administration in most cases. Likewise, hours of operation for conducting procedures usually overlap with the working hours of most people. Taking time to do paperwork often means having to ask for special permission or even missing a full day of work and pay.

These cases compel us to reflect on some of the costs of red tape. Difficulty in performing transactions has a negative impact on the exercise of individual rights that include better job opportunities, retirement pensions, and being able to

register a property or access healthcare services, among others. Red tape also affects communities at large: for example, it can reduce the pool of qualified professionals who can take high-demand jobs, limit the real estate market, or make it difficult to improve the housing situation for citizens.

Third, human resource-related dysfunctions in the bureaucracy became apparent. The hospital staff remained indifferent to the boy's suffering by not providing timely and adequate service and using noncompliance with requirements as an excuse. This also

### Box 3. 900 Kilometers for an ID Card



To renew her ID card, 70-year-old Domitila Murillo traveled at least 900 kilometers over a period of 11 months between Oruro, Tupiza, and Potosí. In each of her visits to Identification Services—the police entity in charge of the procedure—new and unexpected requirements were imposed on her in addition to endless lines and hours of waiting in order to be served. The procedures took her through courts, public registries, the Electoral Court, and the municipal governments of three Bolivian cities, entities to which she had to pay more than one visit due to administrative malfunctions that hindered the issuance of documents that the offices themselves required of her.

“Stamp missing,” “we don’t have your information on file,” or “come back tomorrow” have been some of the responses that Domitila received from public employees. Endless sessions of waiting in line became an everyday affair: “I am still at Identification Services. I came here early and it’s 12:00 now. They told me to wait, I paid the ID fee, and I gave 20 Bolivianos to the police officer who wanted to help me... everything is chaos here. It’s 4:00 and they are telling us that they can’t help us today. I’ll have to come back early tomorrow morning. The next day: “It’s 8:00 AM and I’m already in Identification Services. There’s a ton of people lined up in the streets, and someone told us that the police was turning over this office to another institution that’d take over identification services, so we would not be served until further notice. What am I going to do?” Even when she thought she had found a police officer willing to help her, it did not come free. After nearly a year in these “treks” without getting her ID, Domitila only wanted to get it even if it was just “for the little grandchildren to see,” said her daughter.

Encouraged by her family, Domitila submitted her case to the “Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of My Life” contest and was selected as a finalist. In her application, Domitila suggested that “institutions should work in coordination so that users would not be condemned to wander from place to place (...) and explain to each and every public employee what the problem was and have them respond according to their own criteria. All should know exactly what the requirements are and make good use of the computers everyone has at their fingertips.”

Note: Unfortunately, Domitila Murillo passed away two weeks after receiving her ID. Her daughter, María de los Ángeles Murillo was interviewed for this case study.

created opportunities for corruption by State agents, as seen in several cases. Not only did public employees who “pass the buck” or ask citizens to “come back tomorrow” inspire publicity skits, posters, flyers, and broadcast spots for the contest; frustration also inspired some contestants to include works of art and ad hoc compositions in their application forms.

The perception of corruption as a constant, latent threat in citizens’ interactions with the public sector is so pervasive that it has become part of the popular imagination. The Alasitas Festival of La Paz is an occasion in which the city’s residents attempt to ward off risks and threats they face on a daily basis using miniature replicas of everyday objects. Thus, the idea of delays and bribes as routine occurrences is reflected in the following parody of public offices (see Image 2).

The normalization of corruption as a part of bureaucratic procedures was expressed in one of the saddest submissions of the contest. One of the finalists had gone through every obstacle imaginable in order to make a payment related to an expropriation by a municipal government

### 3.3 Lessons from the Contest

MTILCC took all 256 forms seriously, recognizing each as a problem that deserved a solution. Although in some cases, contestants have taken legal measures or turned to the Ombudsperson to resolve their administrative plight, not all had happy endings. At the beginning of the contest, follow-ups were proposed only for semifinalist cases. Later on, it was decided that all of the contestants’ cases would receive follow-up, which meant contacting the public entities directly or through their TUs to streamline

**Image 2. Alasitas Miniature Festival, La Paz, Bolivia**



over 30 years ago. The paperwork was passed from one office to the next, got lost, and in each new leg of the odyssey a monetary “favor” was demanded in exchange for advancing the process or finding the “disappeared” document—an imposition that the citizen put up with since it resembled yet another requirement among the many she needed to meet. It seemed to have reached a point where all requirements—legal and illegal, formal and informal—became inherently arbitrary in the guise of normalcy.

procedures. In most cases, according to VPPET officials, this produced positive results: “If it were not for the Ministry taking charge, my paperwork would have remained stuck,” said one of the contestants who was able to receive her degree this way, which was a requirement for the teaching profession. The follow-ups allowed users to contact authorities or inform higher authorities where the bottlenecks are within their administrative structure, among other measures that moved the paperwork forward.



Similarly, discontent with municipal governments was expressed in the different groups of forms. This problem had already been detected in the assessment conducted by VPPET in the SAC project, through which obstacles had been identified in occasions where the mere presence of MTILCC officials translated into measures of improvement in the public entities involved. One of the contest's executive team members said that on his visit to a municipal government office, there was someone complaining how impossibly difficult it was to receive a diagnosis, which depended, unfortunately, on a non-functioning scanner at a local health center. The connection between the citizen's need and the local authorities allowed for the latter to take action and obtain technical and budgetary support to repair the equipment.

Nevertheless, the contest's executive team recognizes that a lack of familiarity with external monitoring has resulted in resistance and even retaliation by some entities. By making her plight public, the winner of the contest was pressured by her insurance company, who looked for excuses to put her in situations of non-compliance and demanded payment for services already provided to her free of charge. Another finalist whose procedure remains unresolved stated that by taking her case public through the contest, some of the public employees involved retaliated by toughening requirements and reproaching her for participating, which made it necessary for additional interventions by the VPPET team in charge of case follow-ups in order to avoid additional retribution. According to the contestant, the aggressive reaction against the publicity of her case has to do with the existence of corruption networks that benefit from the opportunities that arise from discretion and inadequate information. "My procedure got further

complicated because I refused to pay the public employees. If I hadn't, it would probably have been resolved."

One recurring recommendation stands out among the many submitted through the forms: a proactive policy to communicate procedural requirements. In the narratives compiled by the contest, no greater asymmetry exists than the one between users and public employees responsible for links in the chain of procedural steps. When the public employee suddenly demands a requirement unbeknownst to the user, citizens are put at the mercy of public employees. Whether it is to extract a bribe or merely to exercise power, this asymmetry is the cause of delays and wasted efforts by citizens and public administration alike. Knowing the timeline, process flow, and public employee responsibilities and defining wait times, informing citizens what to expect and where to lodge grievances are also part of the demands for information that can help users and public employees avoid having to repeat procedures or have confrontations.

Some contestants have seen their careers stagnate due to their inability to overcome inevitable bureaucratic hurdles and certify their high school studies, college diploma, or other types of professional degrees such as teaching certificates. Meanwhile, the job market is deprived of qualified professionals for positions with higher value added than the jobs they currently hold, and yet they cannot move up because their grades cannot be found, because they suddenly need to submit additional documents in order to obtain their certifications, or because their degree documents are lost. It is not possible to know how statistically representative these cases are, but what would happen if this contest were to be repeated on a regular basis, with a specific objective of obtaining representative

samples and documenting the damage inflicted by bureaucratic barriers? It could potentially generate information to reduce obstacles and inefficiencies in procedures and promote better services to avoid a poor ranking.

Another factor that frequently came up in the interviews is the lack of a culture of complaint and reporting. Employees of public entities, civil society representatives, and the citizens interviewed all spoke of the notion of a common behavior pattern of ordinary citizens who passively put up with abuses and fear retaliation from people with power over their paperwork. Aside from the cultural stereotype present here, perhaps this image adequately reflects average behavior. In light of this, accountability, citizen empowerment, and citizen participation were made key issues by an important coalition of social organizations at the beginning of President Evo Morales' administration.

The Constitution and the Transparency Law of Marcelo Quiroga Santa Cruz are

explicit on this matter. Additionally, since the creation of the MTILCC and especially in light of the functions of VPPET, these aspects have taken on new significance. As one of the jury members, a civil society representative stated, accountability is part of President Morales' "lead by obeying" mandate, which calls for the subjugation of the representatives to the citizens they represent.

Translating this vision into efforts to close the gaps in everyday life is part of the initiative to detect and reduce power asymmetries in bureaucratic transactions. The pro-participation and accountability focus formulated by the government and participating social organizations would gain momentum at the individual level from citizens who participate in this initiative. The one-time nature of the contest is a major constraint. The lack of practical experience and support and limited publicity are some of the barriers that must be overcome should another initiative be undertaken to gather individual information, solve citizens' problems, and detect bureaucratic obstacles.

### 3.4 Reactions and Ongoing Projects in the Entities Involved

From installing ballot boxes to publishing statistics, every step of the contest generated a variety of reactions from participating entities. The statistics, rankings (see data in Figures 3 and 4), and specific cases compiled by VPPET not only expanded channels of communication between the MTILCC and the public entities but also boosted internal communication flows among these entities. Additionally, in some cases, the evidence collected by the contest served to strengthen the rationale for processes of administrative and institutional change.

Various types of changes have been underway in the participating entities and are at

different stages. From incipient processes with great difficulties in coordination and development to radical changes in service delivery and in administrative and political responsibilities, the "Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of My Life" contest contributed to providing a basis for the need to change, highlighting the rationales and generating internal debate.

There was an important case involving the Property Rights Registry (Oficina de Derechos Reales, or DRRR). As part of the Judicial Authority, the La Paz office of DRRR, which receives the most paperwork requests and the most complaints,

requires permanent communication and coordination with authorities headquartered in Sucre, the country's judicial capital. Authorities in the La Paz office saw in the contest the opportunity to initiate a new dialogue on obstacles in the normal procedural processes and the need for modernization and reform. "We had conducted an in-depth analysis of the problem, but the contest gave us the chance to let the people put it in their own words," commented one office staff member. For example, the officials were aware that one of the reasons for work overload in DDRR offices was the need to correct data. A great number of documents contain errors, which must be corrected before property-related transactions can be completed. Corrections usually take weeks or months and frequently lead to legal actions, which sometimes occur almost immediately or before the administrative procedure even begins. La Paz officials were aware of this problem, and the contestants confirmed it. The contest strengthened the justification for enacting a Property Right Regularization Law (247/2012), which has a more far-reaching objective and incorporated articles that call for a reduction in processing time of key procedures, such as correcting data errors.

Additionally, the complaints and suggestions received also pointed to another piece of information known to the office but that could not be disclosed until now. Given the constant inflow of complaints about the authorities and the review process involved, La Paz Property Rights Registry was aware that a large part of user comments on paperwork arose out of mistakes that could be avoided if users had better knowledge of the requirements. The contest demonstrated, in the words of an important official of the office, that "we have no hotline, no webpage... if users had read the requirements in advance they would

manage on their own." The La Paz DDRR office made several attempts to coordinate with Sucre authorities to hire professionals to help them put up a webpage with information, but none of these efforts had good results. If one visits the webpage of the Registry (<http://ddrr.poderjudicial.gob.bo/>), one would realize how scarcely used and outdated it is as a means to give users advance notice of procedural requirements. Considering that an informative webpage requires only a moderate budget and no technological sophistication at all, the deficiency becomes even more glaring.

According to the officials, part of the problem is the incomplete transition of DDRR from Judicial to Executive Authority, which should have taken place under current regulations but was held up by various institutional roadblocks. The officials commented that the traditional view of the Judicial Authority was more reactive and typical of an institution that expects a "judge's decision" rather than a focus on administrative procedures and service delivery, which, if adopted, would benefit more than just the users. For an office that charges fees for its procedures, taking the second approach could encourage better services and increase fiscal income. Founded over a hundred years ago with only one office in the administrative capital and in the most populated district, it is difficult for La Paz office of DDRR to rise to the challenge without first changing its perspective.

Difficulties in registering and documenting identity—procedures involving the Civil Registry Service (SERECI) and the General Personal Identification Service (SEGIP)—have to do with a transition involving not only administrative changes but also access to financial resources within public administration. SEGIP is a case in point as to how the contest can provide feedback to an ongoing modernization process. In 2010,

SEGIP began to take over functions that were previously performed by Identification Services under the then National Police (now the Bolivian Police). Thus, the majority of complaints received had to do with the previous period and with the deficiencies identified after the function transfer took place. For example, a case of identity duplication and difficulty in rectification such as the one described by the finalist who traveled more than 900 kilometers would not have happened today. The transition showed that the contestant was not the only one experiencing the problem: there were at least 400,000 similar cases (*La Razón*, 2011) and it was not reasonable to demand that 4 percent of the population to undertake such an odyssey to fix the problem.

The decision to modernize the personal identification system by removing it from police control and creating a specialized institution was not free of cost. In 2011, in other words at the same time that the contest was occurring, riots broke out in which police staff demanded better salaries and working conditions, launching a corporate discourse in defense of continual provision of identification services. Ostensibly, the corporate defense focused on the importance of the income generated by these services in the overall police budget. Nevertheless, there was another hidden aspect that had to do with opportunities for corruption and kickbacks (*Opinión*, 2011). Authorities of SEGIP and General Driver's License Service—the latter also a previous function of the police—were able to identify corruption networks that provided illegal IDs and licenses. Bureaucratic simplification and greater transparency in procedures eradicated many of these opportunities for corruption. For authorities of entities that were just emerging back then, the information derived from the contest was useful in

demonstrating that the transition was the right decision from a user perspective.

The Civil Registry Service was a relevant case for dialogue with VPPET regarding the implementation and the conclusions of the contest. On the one hand, SERECI was also undergoing a process of change. Since 2009, technological updates and public service upgrades were carried out on its own initiative and as part of the Service Improvement regional project sponsored by the Organization of American States (OAS). Between 2009 and 2012, the use of digital birth certificates and marriage certificates was expanded, and in 2012, an information counter was set up for users to learn about procedural requirements, with printed materials and better waiting areas.

As in previous cases, the contest provided feedback for an ongoing process of change. Additionally, there was written communication between SERECI and the MTILCC, in which officials from SERECI recognized the suggestions it received and commented on the degree of their relevance or their connection with the ongoing reform process. A highlight of the communication was that the SERECI report states that some of the suggestions were related to processes formerly conducted through judicial channels that were recently modified in order to simplify procedures and allow citizens to conduct them through administrative channels, eliminating the need for legal representation. Just as in the case of the DDDR, the habit of going through the legal channel is still part of the red tape culture. Thus, communication on this type of simplification would be helpful to users, who would stop engaging in unnecessary and inappropriate transactions.

Contestants also identified bureaucratic barriers in access to various welfare

benefits, such as procedures that they had to repeat due to the lack of information on documents not initially required or erroneous information. Responsible for calculating and granting welfare benefits, the National Apportionment System carried out a process to simultaneously incorporate greater control capacity and develop information management capacity. Audit controls made it possible to detect illegal operations and corruption maneuvers related to public employees' discretion in stopping procedures and demanding bribes in exchange for resuming the proceedings. At the same time, carrying out information campaigns throughout the country strengthened the public's capacity to gather all requirements before initiating paperwork and to know the procedural timeline and methods to avoid being at the mercy of corrupt officials.

SEDUCA represents the educational portfolio of each department and is responsible for processing the certification of grades, secondary education diplomas, national degrees, and all types of paperwork having to do with the exercise, payment, and promotion of the teaching profession. Hence, SEDUCA is responsible for meeting the needs of students, alumni and teachers. SEDUCA presents a profile detailing the characteristics of the demands

and its capacity to respond. SEDUCA's office in La Paz is one of the most complex, given the magnitude of the demand and the available resources. Some 50,000 teachers and 700,000 students request various forms of certifications, degrees, and other documents.

Some of the main procedures mentioned in the contest, such as processing secondary education diplomas and national degrees, were under review during and after the contest. The contest cases clearly showed the need to simplify procedures and to improve coordination with other institutions involved in the process, such as the Ministry of Education, in order to reduce processing time and clearly inform users of the requirements, steps, and responsibilities involved in the procedures. Additionally, the contest also highlighted the pending task of establishing channels to register complaints, as they enable the detection of public employee inefficiencies, obstacles, and unnecessary steps in procedural design or implementation. Furthermore, progress has been made in terms of procedural guidelines, which are now available in print in the offices of district-level authorities as well as departmental-level educational establishments. However, this material is not yet available online—an obvious limitation that could be easily overcome.





# 4 CONCLUSIONS: CHANNELING COMPLAINTS INTO ENERGY

The experience with the contest brought about consensus on several points between MTILCC staff and the public entities interviewed. In the first place, there is a need for external channels to alert users on obstacles in administrative procedures. Having such channels can help detect redundant or arbitrary regulations or processes, limitations in human resources, and even niches for corruption.

At the same time, it became clear that inefficiency, arbitrariness, and corruption go hand in hand. Retaliation suffered by various contestants shows the need to protect public interest vis-à-vis vested interests of certain sectors in the bureaucracy. Strengthening the authority and capacity of public entities that channel citizen complaints and intercede to protect citizen's rights is part of a response to the situation.

Moreover, information collected through citizen complaints makes it possible to identify key points for reform and process improvement. Reducing the number of steps or facilitating access to information are some of the responses to the findings on delays caused by redundant steps or failure to comply with procedural requirements from the beginning. In many of the cases described, these

improvements are part of a more extensive process of modernization of public entities.

The publicity attracted by complaint ranking and contestants' life stories has reinforced the rationale for these reforms. For example, the SEGIP case showed how transition toward a new entity, which caused a conflict by taking away identity document procedures from the police, was able to benefit from the information obtained on bureaucratic excess and on previous corruption thanks to the contest. In the case of the DRRR, information regarding the La Paz office helped strengthen their arguments for the need for change vis-à-vis the administration of Sucre-based Judicial Authority on which it depends. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the launching of the contest promoted a review and completion of information on procedural requirements.

Although no apparent causality could be identified between citizen feedback and the change process, there was indeed a correlation between information provided through feedback and their use in the context of transitions, reforms, and improvement processes. We have seen in various cases obvious asymmetries, such as those leading to delays in procedures due to inadequate information while breeding inefficiencies and potential

corruption, which were addressed when the public entities involved decided to review and complete the information that they provide to the public. On a wider scale, information facilitated in this way plays an important role when it is organized in a complaint collection project like the one analyzed here. The contest facilitated or contributed to information campaigns carried out at procedure sites, webpage improvements, and making available procedure manuals on websites, among other processes.

Putting problem organizations “on the spot” and identifying needs for reform are common outcomes of these types of projects. However, no such similar initiative has been repeated on a regular basis to generate a permanent flow of information on procedural inefficiencies. Similar projects (see Annex I) in Mexico between 2008 and 2009 (which inspired the Bolivian contest) and in Peru in 2013 had similar objectives: use citizen complaints to facilitate change. The Mexican case focused more on corruption, while the Peruvian case emphasized identifying useless requirements or procedures.

Quantitatively speaking, participation in the three contests was comparable, and the Bolivian case had a proportional advantage, having generated more than 2,000 responses out of a population of around 10 million, while Peru had approximately 4,000 responses out of a population of 30 million and Mexico had 21,000 responses out of a population of 110 million. Each case focused on finding proposals for change as well as solutions for specific problems. In other words, all three contests aimed at obtaining feedback on individual cases and individual procedures of specific offices or groups of public entities.

One of the highlights of the Bolivian contest was that the initiative received the enthusiastic support of public employees who promoted the project and managed to achieve a level of response (although low at first glance as considered by VPPET staff) comparable to that of initiatives with greater visibility, despite limited resources for publicity.

The experience with the contest revealed aspects consistent with the principles of open government (Ramírez Alujas and Dassen, 2012). By applying these concepts, issues of transparency and access to information (need for signage, procedural manuals, and information on procedural requirements on public entities’ transparency portals) are clearly identified as the source of the problems. Citizen participation channels—a means to “actively listen” to citizens—were proposed, and collaboration mechanisms were put in place between MTILCC and participating entities, among the entities themselves and within the MTILCC.

Nevertheless, for these proposals to translate into catalysts of change, the contest needs to be institutionalized. If a permanent channel were established to receive information—or better yet, a channel with technological support—it would become a two-way street that promotes active participation by citizens. Valuable information could be gathered to improve services, and information disclosure would create incentives for public employees and users to change key aspects of the culture of citizenship, such as distrust in the capacity of institutions to handle complaints and reports. Compiling and disclosing information on a regular basis could also become a benchmark in the processes of decentralization and implementation of digital solutions aimed at improving public services.



Public services represent the largest portion of public spending in Bolivia but are usually subject to outdated organizational models and obsolete legal frameworks, and often lack the support of digital solutions to unleash their potential. As a result, costly operational and transactional processes persist to the detriment of citizens and businesses vis-à-vis governments, which impairs local competitiveness and negatively affects the quality of life of the population.

Besides providing tools for citizen participation and improving access to information, technological solutions can bring about additional benefits, such as process reengineering, citizen charters, installation of one-stop counters and customer service centers, and improved regulations that incorporate regular inspections and auditing. Implementing all these policies would call for coordination between different government entities (the MTILCC, the General Directorate of e-Government, and institutions responsible for providing relevant public services). Public service policy reforms also need to take into account cultural and generational aspects as well as deficiencies in access to technology. Any reform should anticipate and prepare for the transitional period

from one system to another, and at least maintain certain aspects of personalized service and paper forms in the interim.

Beyond pointing out the ample room for improvement in the current Bolivian public administration, we would like to highlight the value in the MTILCC's commitment to conducting improvements in public services with social participation. Although the sectoral focus on identifying lack of transparency and inefficiencies in healthcare, education, and registries is nothing new (albeit necessary), the opportunity for citizens to collaborate and contribute to the solution is nothing short of innovative in the Bolivian case. This is what open government policies are about: citizens going beyond the traditional role of social monitors and assuming an active role in jointly creating public value through collaboration with the government. We have heard touching testimonies in which people have regained their dignity and pride as citizens thanks to MTILCC's interventions to solve their specific problems. This is an intangible value that is morally superior to economic costs. The Plurinational State of Bolivia should act intelligently and promote it with long-term policies toward a modern, open, and efficient public administration.



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# ANNEX I

## EXPERIENCE FROM INTERNATIONAL CONTESTS AIMED AT IMPROVING BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES

|         |                                      |
|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Case    | “The Most Useless Paperwork” contest |
| Country | Mexico                               |
| Year    | 2008-2009                            |

### Initiators/Organizers

Government of Mexico, endorsed by Transparencia Mexicana, the Mexican chapter of Transparency International.

### Scope (national, federal, local, private, public)

National.

### Description

In September 2008, the Secretary of Public Affairs of the Federal Government of Mexico kicked off an initiative to award citizens who report the most absurd bureaucratic procedure they had had to go through and come up with the best proposal to do away with red tape and bribes. The jury panel consisted of prominent national figures such as Federico Reyes Heróles (President of Transparencia Mexicana), professors, journalists, consultants, and political scientists.

### Results, Impact and Limitations

21,000 proposals were received. The main points presented by citizens had to do with long lines to conduct procedures, poor services provided by bureaucrats (or public employees), bribes, and pointless requirements.

The winner was a 34-year-old woman who presented a problem she had while trying to obtain medicine from the Mexican Social Security Institute for her son who suffered from a genetic disease. The procedure required her to get signatures on the prescription slip by two different physicians, and four public employees were required to sign off on it, make a copy each and submit all four to the hospital dispensary—a procedure that could take anywhere between four and fifteen days. The award was handed to her personally by the then President of Mexico, Felipe Calderón.

Two other citizens were also presented with awards for presenting bureaucracy reform proposals. One was a local initiative aimed at simplifying procedures to correct errors in birth certificates in Mexico City. The other one focused on reducing the

number of requirements to obtain a certificate of residency in the municipality of Toluca of the State of Mexico. The second proposal was replicated in other states.

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|         |                               |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| Case    | “Pointless Paperwork” contest |
| Country | Peru                          |
| Year    | 2013                          |

### Initiators/Organizers

President of the Council of Ministers and the Government of Peru. The contest was sponsored by the National Confederation of Private Business Associations, the Lima Chamber of Commerce, and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and GIZ Peru, institutions, which also financed the awards.

### Description

The contest was held to identify bureaucratic procedures that needed to be improved or eliminated. Citizens were called upon to present their experiences and propose “innovative, simple, and viable solutions to improve difficult, tedious, and complex procedures” with the possibility of winning the “the best solution for the worst paperwork” award.

### Results, Impact, and Limitations

3,970 cases were presented, and three on healthcare service procedures were selected as winners. A commitment was made to reform the procedures in the 60 days following the award ceremony. The President of the Council of Ministers, Juan Jiménez Mayor, stated that the government would take into account the outcomes of the “Pointless Paperwork” contest to introduce necessary changes toward a more responsive, modern, and efficient State. The President of the Republic, Ollanta Humala, attended the award ceremony.

Reforms were undertaken based on the procedures selected. For example, procedures to schedule appointments for growth and development monitoring were redesigned.

### Sources

Description of winning cases can be found at: <http://sgp.pcm.gob.pe/noticias/entry/diario-oficial-el-peruano-comenta-los-resultados-del-concurso-el-tramite-de-mas>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z5JkBXUnFYA>



Note: As distinct from the contest in Mexico, the Peruvian contest did not focus explicitly on bribes or corruption.

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Case    | Reform of procedures addressed in “the Most Useless Paperwork” contest |
| Country | Mexico   |
| Year    | 2008-2011 (last report)  |

### Initiators/Organizers:

Federal Government of Mexico

### Scope

National and local public administration

### Description

The following objectives were established based on the 21,000 cases presented in the framework of “the Most Useless Paperwork” contest: eliminate unnecessary procedures, simplify procedures by changing rules and criteria, and introduce technologies to facilitate access to government services.

### Results, Impact and Limitations

As of June 2011, 29 percent of the 21,000 procedures reported had been eliminated. Three hundred procedures were evaluated each month to analyze customer service quality, information collected, corruption, access to facilities, degree of discrimination, and overall customer satisfaction. Policies such as one-stop counters to automate tedious processes have also been implemented.

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|         |                         |
|---------|-------------------------|
| Case    | Anti-paperwork Campaign |
| Country | Colombia                |
| Year    | 2011-present            |

### Initiators/Organizers

Administrative Department of the Government of Colombia.

### Scope

National, with a focus on specific procedures

### Description

Aspects of administrative procedures and processes are identified in order to evaluate their relevance, importance, and value added for users, which are then recorded in the Single System for Information and Procedures (Sistema Único de Información y Procedimientos, or SUIT), leading to the creation of a registry and a procedural inventory. Based on information collected through the latter, procedures in need of improvement to ensure institutional effectiveness and user satisfaction were identified. The objective of this stage was to prioritize procedures in need of intervention.

Procedures were analyzed and prioritized based on internal (complexity, cost, time) and external (demand for bribes, complaints, external audits, etc.) factors. A citizen consultation was carried out as a participatory mechanism through which users shared their perceptions or criteria regarding the design of the procedures subject to intervention in order to conduct an assessment of the services, look for

joint solutions, and encourage citizen participation in public activities.

### Results, Impact and Limitations

As of 2012, some of the procedures deemed the most unnecessary in a social media survey had been modified. For example, judicial certificates are no longer required, and users no longer need to present a document certifying their criminal background in order to conduct transactions with private or public institutions.

### Sources

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|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Case/Institution | Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievance |
| Country          | India   |
| Year             | 2010-present  |

### Initiators/Organizers

Union Government. The initiative was carried out by the Citizen Charter, which seeks to promote government reform with a focus on service delivery to citizens.

### Scope

National and each state division

### Description

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievance is considered a key area in India's public administration

due to its individual-centered vision. The Department seeks to compensate for citizen grievances by implementing institutionalized rectification or agreement systems. It also presents proposals to conduct relevant reforms and address causes of complaints and inconveniences citizens may experience. In addition, there is an online platform to handle complaints, which once received are forwarded to relevant sectors. Complaints that fail to generate responses or satisfactory answers are resubmitted to the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievance, which then strives to resolve the issues presented by working alongside the respective institutions.

### Results, Impact and Limitations

The scope of the system includes states as well as several ministries and centralized services such as railroad, postal services, urban planning, banks, and public enterprises, among others. Not included in the scope are complaints about problems that have already sought out court solutions as well as business contracts.

There are no conclusive results on the effectiveness of the initiative. According to an international consultancy, as of 2012, India's bureaucratic systems remains the worst of its kind in Asia.

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<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-16523672>

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Case/Institution | Grievance Redress Mechanism for UNREDD |
| Country          | Cambodia, Honduras, and Suriname       |
| Year             | 2013                                   |

### Initiators/Organizers

United Nations REDD+ Program.

### Scope

National/transnational.

### Description

The program assesses existing grievance redress systems and implements a series of recommendations to strengthen them and improve conflict management capacity for issues related to Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD). Additionally, the program aims at building conflict management capacity for all natural resource related issues through prioritizing existing mechanisms over creating new ones. The goal of the initiative is to clarify processes, roles, and responsibilities involving the personnel responsible for addressing complaints in the REDD Program; improve effectiveness and efficiency and reduce response and resolution time; maintain communication between external stakeholders and optimize internal communication; and improve the performance of REDD. Additionally, there is a guide on establishing and strengthening grievance redress mechanisms for participant countries of the REDD Program.

### Results, Impact and Limitations

An assessment has been conducted to

analyze the main sources of conflict that must be dealt with in grievance redress mechanisms and existing local systems. The initiative also included an analysis of the capacity of the abovementioned institutions to handle complaints, based on which a series of recommendations was made.

### Sources

<http://www.un-redd.org/AboutREDD/tabid/102614/Default.aspx>

[http://www.un-redd.org/AboutUNREDDProgram/FAQs\\_Sp/tabid/4827/language/en-US/Default.aspx](http://www.un-redd.org/AboutUNREDDProgram/FAQs_Sp/tabid/4827/language/en-US/Default.aspx)

<http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2008/september/la-onu-y-noruega-se-unen-para-luchar-contra-el-cambio-climtico-en>

[http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=catview&gid=3382&Itemid=53](http://www.unredd.net/index.php?option=com_docman&task=catview&gid=3382&Itemid=53)

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Case    | European Prize for Innovation in Public Administration |
| Country | European Union (EU)                                    |
| Year    | 2012-2013  |

### Initiators/Organizers

The EU launched the contest to celebrate excellence and innovation in public administration and reward initiatives with the potential to be replicated in other contexts. Based on EU values, public administration must be reconsidered in an “innovation ecosystem” and in the context of the relationship between citizens and the State (see YouTube videos listed in “sources”).

### Scope

Transnational.

## Description

A contest was held to celebrate the most innovative and forward-looking public initiatives, which benefit citizens, firms or the education and research sector. The contest aimed at public authorities established in any EU member state or in a participant country in the EU Framework Program for Research.

The initiatives presented had to be undertaken during a period of one to four years. Winners were selected based on four criteria: the economic impact of their initiative, its relevance to challenges facing society, how original and easy to replicate the idea is, and how they plan to use the prize money (€100,000) in the future.

## Results, Impact and Limitations

203 applications were received from all over the EU, out of which nine winning initiatives were selected in the categories of “citizens,” “firms,” and “education and research sector.”

### **Category «Citizens»**

Helsinki Metropolitan Area, Finland: disclosing of non-confidential data to involve citizens in decision making.

Online National Health Initiative, Sweden: enabling patients and caregivers to conduct online follow-ups to their hospital visits.

London Borough of Islington, United Kingdom: an integrated package of interventions to reduce fuel poverty as well as excess winter deaths and hospital admissions.

### **Category «Firms»**

Spanish Center for Open Data Management:

an ambitious national initiative to reuse public sector information to generate new economic opportunities.

Regional Administration of the Northern Provinces, the Netherlands: an online platform offering fast access to funding opportunities to companies.

Agency for Public Service Reform, Portugal: an initiative to simplify the process of setting up businesses with little or no wait time.

### **Category «Education and Research Sector»**

Autonomous Community of Murcia: an energy-efficient car race with participation from student-turned-entrepreneurs

Croatian Academic and Research Network: an initiative to promote equality in access to quality education through ICT equipment in primary schools of remote areas.

Slovak National Initiative: an initiative to build a detection system for plagiarism by aggregating theses and dissertations of all higher education institutions.

In the upcoming Innovation Prize to be held in 2014 in Brussels, the contest winners are to present on measures taken to implement the initiatives previously proposed.

## Sources

For a summary of the winning cases, see:

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-13-503\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-503_en.htm)

[http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-505\\_es.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-505_es.htm)

[www.ec.europa.eu/admin-innovators](http://www.ec.europa.eu/admin-innovators)

[http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index\\_en.cfm?section=admin-innovators](http://ec.europa.eu/research/innovation-union/index_en.cfm?section=admin-innovators)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cM7D1gBzDsc>

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Case    | Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration |
| Country | Australia   |
| Year    | <b>2010-present</b>   |

### Initiators/Organizers

Eleven years since the implementation of the first large-scale government reform through the enactment of Public Service Regulations of 1999, a series of modifications were introduced to upgrade the institutional, cultural, and behavioral structure of State bureaucracy. The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet advocated for the importance of the initiative in the following words: “within Australian Government administration, the Australian Public Service (APS) is a core institution. Its 160,000 employees play an essential role in assisting the government to carry out its responsibilities on behalf of the Australian people. The ability of the APS to help the government tackle domestic and global challenges through the 21st Century will significantly affect Australia’s strength and prosperity.” Additionally, it is understood that “the APS will only be strong if it addresses its own organizational challenges. They include raising citizen expectations of government, rapid technological change, tight fiscal pressures, increasing pressure to deliver in restricted timeframes and a tightening labor market that will place greater pressure on the APS to attract and retain the best employees.”

### Scope

National/public administration/160,000 public employees

### Description

In March 2010, the report *Ahead of the Game: Blueprint to the Reform of Australian Government Administration* was presented to establish the range of operational changes in the public administration in order to build on the previous government reform of 1999 and address issues that have come up in recent years. These changes have to do with the code of conduct, information management, recruitment, promotions, and diversity.

### Results, Impact and Limitations

As of June 1, 2013, all agencies had to be prepared to implement changes introduced by the new law resulting from discussions based on the abovementioned report. The law affects 160,000 employees of the Australian public administration.

### Sources

[http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/aga\\_reform/aga\\_reform\\_blueprint/exec\\_summary.cfm](http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/aga_reform/aga_reform_blueprint/exec_summary.cfm)

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/about-the-apsc/parliamentary/state-of-the-service/2011-12-sosr/01-commissioners-overview#service-delivery-and-innovation>

<http://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/49042370.pdf>

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/circulars-and-advice/2013-advice/apsc-advice-20131>

[www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00460](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00460)

<http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013L00448>

[http://www.aph.gov.au/About/Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1112/12rp01](http://www.aph.gov.au/About/Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1112/12rp01)

**Table A1.1 Summary of International Experience**

| Experience  | Country   | Year              | Type of action                        | Executive Agency  | Scope                      |
|---|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| “The Most Useless Paperwork” contest  | Mexico  | 2008-2009         | 1. Contest                            | Government of Mexico and Transparencia Mexicana                           | National                   |
| “Pointless Paperwork” contest   | Peru  | 2013              | 1. Contest                            | Government of Peru with sponsorship from public and private organizations | National                   |
| Reform based on “the Most Useless Paperwork” contest                                | Mexico  | 2009-2011         | 2. <i>Feedback-based reform</i>       | Federal Government of Mexico  | National and local         |
| Anti-paperwork campaign   | Colombia  | 2011-present      | 2. <i>Feedback-based reform</i>       | Administrative Department of the Government of Colombia                   | National                   |
| Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievance                           | India   | 2010-present      | 3. Grievance redress mechanisms       | Government of India through Citizen Charter                               | National and local         |
| Grievance Redress Mechanism for UN-REDD   | UN-REDD beneficiary countries (Cambodia, Honduras and Suriname) | 2013-present      | 3. Grievance redress mechanisms       | United Nations (UN-REDD+)   | National and transnational |
| European Prize for Innovation in Public Administration                              | European Union  | 2012-2013-present | 4. Reforms to improve user experience | European Union  | Transnational              |
| Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the reform of Australian Government Administration | Australia   | 2010- present     | 4. Reforms to improve user experience | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet                              | National                   |



# ANNEX II

## FOLLOW-UP TO CASES PRESENTED BY THE MTILCC

| No. | Entity   | Cases | Follow-ups | Closed |
|-----|--|-------|------------|--------|
| 1   | Municipal Governments  | 43    | 31         | 18     |
| 2   | Departmental Educational Services  | 38    | 30         | 22     |
| 3   | Ministry of Education  | 9     | 8          | 6      |
| 4   | Departmental Governments   | 2     | 2          | 2      |
| 5   | National Service for Agricultural Health and Food Safety                             | 3     | 3          | 1      |
| 6   | National Tax Service   | 2     | 2          | 2      |
| 7   | National Customs Service   | 1     | 0          | 0      |
| 8   | National Police  | 3     | 3          | 3      |
| 9   | Ministry of Labor  | 3     | 3          | 3      |
| 10  | Ministry of Public Works   | 1     | 0          | 0      |
| 11  | National Service for Protected Areas   | 1     | 1          | 0      |
| 12  | Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (Bolivian national oil and gas company) | 1     | 0          | 0      |
| 13  | National Directorate of Prevention and Investigation of Vehicle Theft                | 1     | 0          | 0      |
| 14  | General Driver's License Service   | 3     | 3          | 3      |
| 15  | General Personal Identification Service  | 20    | 20         | 20     |
| 16  | Civil Registry Service   | 12    | 9          | 9      |
| 17  | National Apportionment System  | 29    | 29         | 14     |
| 18  | Property Rights Registry   | 17    | 11         | 10     |
| 19  | Public Universities  | 17    | 15         | 11     |
| 20  | National Health Fund   | 17    | 15         | 11     |
| 21  | Directorate General of Immigration   | 7     | 7          | 5      |
| 22  | Ministry of National Defense   | 3     | 3          | 2      |
| 23  | National Agrarian Reform Institute   | 2     | 2          | 0      |
| 24  | Departmental Health Services   | 1     | 1          | 0      |
| 25  | National Social Housing Fund   | 2     | 1          | 1      |
| 26  | La Vitalicia Insurance   | 1     | 1          | 0      |
| 27  | National Hydrocarbons Agency   | 5     | 5          | 3      |
| 28  | Ministry of Health   | 3     | 3          | 3      |
| 29  | Attorney General's Office  | 4     | 4          | 4      |
| 30  | Judicial Authority   | 8     | 8          | 8      |
| 31  | Center for Tropical Disease, Santa Cruz  | 1     | 1          | 1      |
|     | Total  | 260   | 221        | 162    |



# ANNEX III

## LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

### ***Ministry of Institutional Transparency and Fight against Corruption***

Milenka Altamirano, Head of Unit of Institutional Prevention and Promotion of Ethics  
Franco Morales, public employee  
Viviana Quintanilla, public employee  
Miguel Ángel Barrios

### ***General Personal Identification Service***

Antonio Costas

### ***Evaluation committee of “The Worst Bureaucratic Procedure of My Life” contest***

Efraín Chambi, President of National Confederation of Neighborhood Councils of Bolivia  
Teresa Zubieta, President of Permanent Assembly on Human Rights, La Paz  
Susana Aramayo, Head of Transparency Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### ***National Apportionment System Service***

Juan Mercado Claros, Executive Director-General  
Edgar Arias, Secretary-General  
Freddy Pérez, Chief of Welfare and Social Security  
Víctor Choque, National Operations Unit

### ***Civil Registry Service, La Paz***

Milenka Paredes Lora, Civil Registry Section Chief  
Marco Antonio Flores, Administrative Assistant in Legal Supervision  
Gastón Márquez, Administrative Assistant

### ***Property Rights Registry***

María Isabel Galleguillos, Property Rights Registrar  
Aurelia Gómez Cahuaza, Property Rights Supervisor  
Marco Cauna Bautista, Property Rights Advisor  
Marco Ortuste Chávez, Express Counter Clerk  
Juan Carlos Torres Flores, TEMIS System Registrar  
Ever Gerson Quispe Franco, Sinaref System

### ***Bolivian News Agency (ABI)***

Daniel Espinoza

### ***Contest finalists***

Areli Muñoz  
María de los Ángeles Murillo  
Elena Natividad

