



Funding Report Form

Global Standard for CSO Accountability – Extension Phase 2019/20

SECTION 1: General Information

Name of organisation that received funds:

*Rendir Cuentas
Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo (ICD), on behalf of Rendir Cuentas*

Project title:

National, regional and global collaborations to strengthen CSO dynamic accountability

Grant period: 1 October 2019 – 30 October 2020

Project period: Initially 12 months implementation (1 October 2019 – 30 September 2020) and 1 month (October 2020) for preparing reports and performing financial auditing. A no-cost extension was approved until 30 October 2020, with final reporting deadline 04 December 2020.

Grant Amount: €44,941.12

Main contact persons: Anabel Cruz & Rosa Ines Ospina

Position titles:

- Anabel Cruz / President, Instituto de Comunicación y Desarrollo / Rendir Cuentas Coordinator
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SECTION 2: Achievements and Impact

1. Summary of project accomplishments during grant period

Since March 2020, the world is going through the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had dire consequences on health, economics and on societies in general. Half of the grant period of the Global Standard for CSO Accountability second extension phase had passed when the pandemic was declared. As such, and as it was predicted in our mid-term narrative report in March 2020, activities needed to be reformulated and reprogrammed, with a no-cost extension of the Global Standard Project up to November 30.

Rendir Cuentas is proud to report here by that despite those challenges, an important set of outcomes were achieved in Latin America and the Caribbean, going even beyond the initial goals and expectations and the original group of countries originally involved. A wide range of activities related to the Global Standard were carried out, both globally, regionally and nationally, led by *Rendir Cuentas* in different countries, as well as at regional level, impacting in one way or another most countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Just to mention some few examples: Hundreds of organizations are using the different *Rendir Cuentas* self-assessment tools against the Global Standard, and many of them identified improvement plans to strengthen their accountability practices, followed by dozens of organizations that have received technical assistance and different forms of support to implement their improvement plans. More than 300 organizations and networks from 22 countries enrolled in *Rendir Cuentas* virtual regional course and engaged in seven weeks of participatory sessions. The online web-based app *RendirApp* (app.rendircuentas.org), created by *Rendir Cuentas*, has become a global domain public goods, and is now available in four languages and versions for different type of organisations.

As claimed in our funding proposal, our work in this extension phase has tried to contribute to 3 core objectives, namely:

- i. Promote the use and engagement with the Global Standard at the national, regional and global levels through the partnership
- ii. Strengthen CSO capacity at the national, regional, and international levels to adapt the Global Standard to their needs and contexts
- iii. Inspire and nurture a global community of practice on Dynamic Accountability

In this frame, the **main strategic accomplishments** of Rendir Cuentas for the reported period can be clustered in following 5 main areas:

1. ***Growing recognition and institutionalisation.*** The Global Standard for CSO Accountability has captured wider attention as a tool for CSO capacity building in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is being possible by the intertwined several training, research, advocacy and support actions developed by Rendir Cuentas, aimed to civil society institutional strengthening, emphasising feedback mechanisms and power shifting.

Multiple CSOs, numerous civil society networks and their diverse stakeholders have now a greater acknowledgement of the Global Standard as a reference and aspirational standard to improve CSO dynamic accountability practices.

2. **Enhancement, adaptation, and expansion of the Global Standard tools.** New various audiences around the world have been reached out with the improved versions of the *RendirApp* web-based application. The regional self-evaluation has been adapted in specific countries in the region and instruments to advance the Global Standard specific commitments have been designed and made available, most notably for Commitments #2 (women's rights and gender equality), #4 (healthy planet) and #8 (open organisations).
3. **Stronger and more diverse relationships.** Rendir Cuentas has strengthened its links with the Global Standard Project Partners, but has also collaborated with new allies and friends outside the Partnership, both in the Latin American and Caribbean and beyond. Multiple collaborations at country, regional and global level show the enhanced trust and reputation gained by Rendir Cuentas as a leading force in the promotion of improved CSO dynamic accountability practices. In fact, we have indeed accomplished CSO accountability to be included in the public agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, with different new actors actively involved.
4. **Proven innovation and ability to adapt.** Even if the work conditions during the pandemic of the COVID-19 were extremely demanding and challenging, Rendir Cuentas and its members have been able to develop and implement resourceful and sustainable alternatives for CSOs in our region. Under these difficult circumstances, it was however possible to transform challenges into opportunities, allowing deep conversations, good results and further outreach. Reprogramming actions into virtual and hybrid work formats, Rendir Cuentas constituencies are striving to emerge stronger and more resilient from the global emergency, to confront the post pandemic responsibilities and to face the challenges of a *new normal*.
5. **Opening new dialogue opportunities.** New spaces for dialogue and interaction with donors and decision makers have been launched in different countries in this extension phase. These actions bring not only improved trust gained but also important lessons learned and inputs that can be replicated in other countries and regions, and approaches to be followed up in the next phase.

2. List of activities during the grant period

As said above, our work in this extension phase has tried to contribute to 3 core objectives. We have developed a set of activities at global, regional and national levels in order to fulfil those objectives. Most remarkable activities:

1. **To promote the use and engagement** with the Global Standard at the national, regional and global levels through the partnership, Rendir Cuentas has:
 - a. **Provided technical support** and follow up to a subset of organizations in 3 countries in Latin America (Colombia, Peru, and Uruguay) that had conducted their self-evaluations in the first extension phase. Ecuador joined this second extension phase with specific activities. Various methodologies have been used, from regional coordinators site visits and follow up calls, to virtual or f2f workshops, advice on

working plans, periodical meetings among Rendir Cuentas partners to share the experiences and lessons learned, among other work methods. The online web base application RendirApp has also been instrumental for Rendir Cuentas members in identifying weaknesses and strengths. Collective completions pilots (management, board, volunteers) enabled internal dialogues and unveiled different visions.

- b. **Presented the Global Standard** at national, regional, and global forums, conferences, seminars, and roundtables, disseminating its tools, benefits, and potentials. Either coordinators or Rendir Cuentas members have responded to multiple demands from civil society organizations, international CSO networks, academic institutions, and professional organisations (see list below).

**Rendir Cuentas presentations on the Global Standard:
A non-exhaustive list**

- University of San Andres, Argentina
- Red Regional *América Solidaria*
- Global Learning Exchange, CIVICUS
- AGNA CIVICUS LTA
- PR Professional Association Argentina
- Comunidad de Organizaciones Solidarias, Chile
- Catholic University of Portugal
- FORUS Annual Meeting
- National Association of NGOs, Uruguay
- Small Grants Program, Uruguay, UNDP
- National Civil Society Annual Meeting, Ecuador
- ISTR Web seminars on Civil Society and COVID-19
- Global Accountability Week 2020
- Mesa de Voluntariado y Compromiso Social, Uruguay
- National CSOs workshops in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay

- c. **Amplified outreach to other actors.** In this grant period, advances can be reported with international cooperation agencies that showed interest in promoting the application of the self-assessment tool with their counterparts. In Peru, Bread for the World and WeltHungerHilfe; in Colombia Open Society Foundation, Ford Foundation and USAID, SF and Ford Foundation, show new opportunities for recognition and institutionalisation of the Global Standard. For several donors, the pandemic has demonstrated the value of the Global Standard as a tool for CSO capacity building and strengthening democracy.

2. **To strengthen CSO capacity** at the national, regional, and international levels to adapt the Global Standard to their needs and contexts, Rendir Cuentas has:

- a. **Improved and expanded** features of the online web-based app *RendirApp* (app.rendircuentas.org). Created by Rendir Cuentas, the tool has become a global

domain public goods. Collaborations with other networks have made RendirApp available in Spanish, English, French and Macedonian, in versions for CSOs and for platforms or networks. More than 350 new organizations have tested the app during the reported period (initial target was exceeded 7 times).

- b. **Joined efforts to cooperate with the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN)**, a Global Standard Partnership member, for implementing the Global Standard tools in the Balkan region. Rendir Cuentas travelled to North Macedonia to conduct a training workshop for Balkan CSOs and the online web based RendirApp is now available in Macedonian, and has been tested by dozens of organizations and networks from the Balkan region.
 - c. **Collaborated with AGNA CIVICUS** to adapt RendirApp for networks, a version launched with a webinar that attracted more than 200 participants from 20 countries from the Americas and Europe and whose Facebook live transmission has generated more than 1000 views to this day. This collaboration also resulted in the AGNA initiative on the [90 Days Challenge](#) promoting the self-evaluation with RendirApp for 90 national networks in 82 countries and offering support to implement improvement plans according to the diagnosis obtained.
 - d. **Conducted a seven-week virtual training course** on "[Shifting power: CSO Dynamic Accountability](#)". The course convened 300 participants from 22 countries (including Spain, Portugal, and USA, besides all Latin American and Caribbean countries), representing civil society, local and national governments, international organizations, and academia.
 - e. **Developed and designed** work methodologies to support the implementation of improvement plans or to focus on specific commitments (such as workshops on Commitments 2 and 4 in Uruguay, Peru and Colombia or to measure the baseline in regard to Commitment 8). Resources were also identified for inclusion in the recommendations provided by the online tool RendirApp to organizations undergoing their self-assessment exercises.
3. **To inspire and nurture a global community of practice** on Dynamic Accountability, Rendir Cuentas has:
- a. **Contributed regularly** to the dissemination of information produced by the Dynamic Accountability Community of Practice as well as providing information and materials to the DACoP.
 - b. **Articulated the work done** in each country in the context of Rendir Cuentas with the Global Standard Communications strategy. This has resulted in several pieces from Rendir Cuentas members and their networks and stakeholders that were featured in the Global Standard channels (interviews, content created or testimonies). Furthermore, Rendir Cuentas had an active presence at the entirely virtual 2020 Global Accountability Week, leading and organizing global sessions on different topics or participating as panelists, preparing audio-visual and written materials, and creating content that was broadly disseminated via social media.

3. Progress of outcomes

Table below summarizes the original outcomes, as registered on the approved Rendir Cuentas proposal vis-à-vis the measurement of success as of November 30, 2020. The scope of outcomes predict several approaches and entry points to be followed up in coming phases of the Global Standard.

Original expected outcomes	Progress of outcomes - measurements
a. Technical assistance and capacity building provided to Rendir Cuentas members b. At least 15 organizations in 4 countries will have advanced in implementing their improvement plans	✓ Rendir Cuentas members and their stakeholders received different forms of support and capacity building ✓ 16 organizations in 4 countries have advanced in implementing improvement plans
c. 50 new CSOs have used the Global Standard self-assessment tool.	✓ At least 350 CSOs and networks around the world and at least 30 networks in 20 countries in Latin America applied in some way Rendir Cuentas self-evaluation tools
d. Documents about key Global Standard commitments are prepared and shared e. Sets of materials are identified to be used in training courses, technical assistance, and other recommendations to CSO to advance in implementing the Global Standard	✓ Methodologies to implement improvement plans and to measure baselines on GS commitments prepared and distributed. ✓ 54 sets of materials organized by GS commitments are available and have been used in different interventions.
f. New feedback and dynamic accountability mechanisms have been explored (with evidence)	✓ Initial conversations with organizations in Peru to explore such mechanisms. ✓ Training course explored new feedback mechanisms
g. At least 3 articles / op eds or policy documents are published in different media	✓ Contributed with 10 pieces to the GS external Newsletter. Multiple pieces for the GAW 2020 and for dissemination through own channels.
h. Decision makers adopt, adapt or incorporate the Global Standard in different ways and formats i. The Global Standard is presented to academia, governments, other actors.	✓ Donors in Peru and Colombia willing to incorporate the GS with grantees ✓ Audio-visual featured donors from Peru on their opinions about the GS potentials ✓ At least 15 presentations made to different actors
j. 30 CSOs participate in regional virtual training course	✓ 300 organizations enrolled in Rendir Cuentas virtual training course
k. At least 50 new organizations test RendirApp, receive and reflect on feedback provided.	✓ At least 350 organizations have tested RendirApp
l. Other achievements not initially planned	✓ RendirApp recommendations section ✓ RendirApp for Networks in 3 languages ✓ AGNA 90 Days Challenge implemented

4. Who has benefited from this project? Direct and indirect?

In the frame of the above-mentioned achievements and challenges, and as described in our original funding proposal, Rendir Cuentas has been able to bring benefits to civil society and other actors in Latin America and the Caribbean in different levels, namely:

- a. Rendir Cuentas members in four countries (ONGxT, Colombia, Grupo Faro, Ecuador, Propuesta Ciudadana and desco, Peru and ICD, Uruguay) **were the primary direct beneficiaries of this project.** These CSO have strong recognition and legitimacy in their respective countries and have been involved in different moments and diverse ways with the Global Standard construction process.
- b. These five organizations have worked closely with their own constituencies (as some are membership-based organizations) and they have provided technical assistance for self-evaluations and implementation of working plans to groups and institutions. These organizations represent a **second tier of some 50 direct beneficiaries.**
- c. Furthermore, we estimate that Rendir Cuentas regional and national actions have also reached out to **at least 500 CSOs and civil society networks and also academic institutions,** that have also benefited from this project. This is the case of 300 CSOs and networks attending Rendir Cuentas virtual training course, adding the many organizations attending RendirApp presentations, or the several conferences where the Global Standard was featured, to mention a few events.
- d. Lastly, a group of **donors and key decision makers** in some countries were also targeted with Rendir Cuentas actions and information and have indirectly benefited from this project. Progress has been made for further dialogues on how donors can use the Global Standard in their cooperation work with partners and grantees.

5. How did you engage different stakeholders and who were they?

As known, Rendir Cuentas is a regional platform and its work is developed in several countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In this second extension phase, we have directly worked with Rendir Cuentas partners in 4 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and we have also reached out audiences in more than 25 countries, in our region and beyond. The work in 2020 was marked by especial circumstances.

During 2020, the COVID-19 pandemia posed unprecedented challenges, at different levels, both at the organizational level, community level and personal levels, for people around the world. As we wrap up a very difficult year, many lessons learned emerge in regard to the specific question of how to engage stakeholders. We have kept the spirit expressed in the proposal, and worked with our stakeholders with solidarity, creativity and flexibility, according to different consecutive steps:

- a. Rendir Cuentas activities in the countries are based upon the needs and interests of the countries stakeholders, which were collected and identified in virtual regional meetings, in one-to-one calls and through site-visits (up to February-March 2020). Based upon this information Rendir Cuentas selected the activities to be carried out at country level and agreements were duly signed with four organizations in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay.

- b. As a result of the pandemic, from March 2020 onwards many activities had to be rescheduled and mainly reformulated. Most countries in Latin America are among those hardest hit by the pandemic and the measures to control its consequences. So for Rendir Cuentas it was compulsory to go from planned f2f local, national or regional meetings and gatherings to working entirely based on virtual tools. This implied many learnings, provision of technological support, and an amplified listening capacity to care for each other was also needed. For instance, some of the organizations working in the field with Rendir Cuentas objectives and in the promotion of the Global Standard and its self-assessment tools suffered important losses among their staff and direct collaborators.
- c. Some of the steps taken to engage with direct stakeholders have included to develop and strengthen a real peer network, to conduct focused webinars, virtual workshops and briefings, to organize conference calls and online consultations and to provide tailored mentoring, among many other actions. In turn, country organizations replicated this kind of support with their own constituencies and networks.
- d. An increased capacity in terms of online tools and virtual learning spaces have brought the possibility of active engagement and outreach to levels we might have never accomplished just with on-site or face to face activities. Virtual conferencing tools and virtual training sessions based different tools and methodologies allowed for instance to engage 300 organizations that attended weekly meetings during 7 weeks and interacted in a virtual classroom

6. Which steps have been taken to ensure the sustainability of the project? Do you believe these are sufficient?

Sustainability is traditionally defined as “the ability to exist constantly“ and is broadly used to indicate actions aimed at the preservation of a specific resource. However, we would like to refer to four areas, known as the four pillars of sustainability, namely human, social, economic and environmental. Rendir Cuentas has taken steps in all these four areas.

Human sustainability. We focus on the importance of anyone directly or indirectly involved in the work and mission of Rendir Cuentas. Human sustainability has to encompass the development of skills and human capacity to support the functions and sustainability of the organisations that promote the Global Standard and the improvement of accountability practices. Training, support, listening, support both formally as well as informally, informal reflection sessions, safe discussion spaces, respect for diversity, capacity building, and the development of skills for the post pandemic new normal are part of those steps taken by Rendir Cuentas.

Social sustainability. Social sustainability has to do with Rendir Cuentas long term mission to promote civil society accountability practices in Latin America and the Caribbean as a means to strengthen CSOs and civil society sector legitimacy. Rendir Cuentas has learnt through its 12 years of experience that, in order to achieve lasting results, all activities and actions should continue being relevant to the long term perspective and its core mission.

Environmental sustainability. Rendir Cuentas has focussed on producing public goods that benefit all members of civil society, that are provided for free and are easily accessible. Rendir

Cuentas tools have been acknowledged by communities and organizations around the world, not only in Latin America, and they try to ensure that the needs of the different stakeholders are met without the risk of incorporating costly instruments or that can do some sort of harm, in the short- or long-term, to the environment. Rendir Cuentas tools are co-created by its own members in the Global South, aimed to the use of global civil society, based on clean and autochthonous technologies.

Economic sustainability. Fresh and new technical and economic resources to promote the Global Standard principles and tools are being sought at different levels. On the one hand, Rendir Cuentas has submitted a proposal to the European Union, in collaboration with two other regional networks (RedLad and Alianza Regional) and supported by CIVICUS and Accountable Now as the Global Standard Secretariat

Finally, since it is such a complex system, sustainability is not just referred to this single project, but that a holistic sustainability approach can be maintained. Thus, efforts to ensure sustainability can never be considered sufficient and should never stop or be discontinued.

- 7. How were gender-specific objectives achieved in the implementation? What worked well, what did not?**
- 8. How did you manage environmental implications of the project? What worked well, what did not?**

These two questions make sense in the frame of two commitments of the Global Standard: commitment No. 2 Women's rights and gender equality (We will promote women's and girls' rights and enhance gender equality) and commitment No. 3 Healthy Planet (We will protect the natural environment and enhance its ability to support life for future generations). After a round of self-evaluations in several countries, these two commitments have been identified as the ones that need more attention in the organizations' improvement working plans. It might be easier with women's organizations or environmental organizations, but Rendir Cuentas members have challenged themselves and their constituencies when these aspects are not part of the core mission of the organization, but the Global Standard has made clear that attention needs to be paid to these aspects.

In this sense, several Rendir Cuentas activities have included elements inherent to these two commitments. For example, virtual training and exchange workshops were held in Uruguay Peru and Colombia, there CSOs and expert partners introduced examples and approaches on how organizations can advance in the inclusion of gender mainstreaming: how to design gender policies, how to get leadership, management, and staff to buy-in new gender policies, and similar tasks. CEDEP, a Peruvian member CSO of a Rendir Cuentas partner shared their efforts to promote gender equity both internally and in its relationships with its external stakeholders or main constituencies.

Furthermore, in Uruguay and Peru, Rendir Cuentas members explored how organizations can advance with commitment No. 3, starting from initial steps and a clear baseline into the design of more multifaceted actions.

9. Which challenges or risks occurred during the implementation? How did you deal with them and what impact did they have on the organisation or on the outcomes of the project? (risks identified in the project proposal as well as risks that came up during the implementation of the project)

Table below refers to risks identified in Rendir Cuentas proposal and its status at the end of the grant period.

Risk identified in project proposal	If occurred, taken mitigation measures
Not receiving funds on time	Did not occur
Not enough CSOs interested in using the self-assessment tool due to lack of time, resources or not wanting to compete with their national accountability tool	New CSOs participated in this phase. Challenges remain regarding the use of new tools, lack of resources and time.
Initiation of the project, envisage for October 2019, is a date too close to the fiscal year end. This may imply problems with the planning process for CSO, especially for the execution of their improvement plans	Project started in October and funds were received early November. Thoughtful preparations helped a smooth transition from the first into the second extension phase.
Not to have easy access to best practices information to share	Did not occur. Regional and national work enabled access to quality information
Fewer than expected organizations produce improvement plans, based upon the results of the self-evaluation exercises	More organizations than expected had their improvement plans ready, but this goal implied considerable efforts and time. The demand for continuous improvement of the GS tools needs to be explored in coming phases.

Risks not foreseen in project proposal:

1. As already elaborated throughout this report, one major unforeseen risk has undoubtedly been the COVID 19 pandemic, that posed unprecedented and unexpected challenges at all levels. Rendir Cuentas and all partners worked cooperatively and creatively to overcome important difficulties, which allowed to achieve targets and goals and even exceed them in some cases.
2. The last 12 months, several countries in our region have lived extremely difficult political situations and civil society has been tested more fiercely than any in recent times. At the end of 2019, the region shook with the echoes of protesters flooding the streets in several countries. In some cases, as in Ecuador and Chile the authorities failed to reckon with widespread violations committed by law enforcement officers during protests, with violations also to freedom of expression. Furthermore, by March 2020, movement restrictions and bans on public gatherings started to be implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As governments declared a sanitary emergency and established quarantines, human rights defenders found themselves at increased risk: several cases

of human rights violations were recorded with the excuse of the compulsory confinement. In this period, the CIVICUS Monitor has documented cases of the killing of human rights defenders in 11 Latin American countries, while Peru suffered a dramatic political turmoil that forced CSO to reconsider priorities and to respond to new demands.

10. Are you satisfied with the results? What would you do differently in the future? What would you need from the Centre and/or other Project Partners for this?

As is apparent from the preceding paragraphs, Rendir Cuentas coordinators and its members and partners are extremely satisfied with the achieved results in this second extension phase. This is particularly important given the adverse circumstances that this period represented.

Most important are the lessons learned and mainly **the lessons being learned**, that will nurture the future short-term and long-term work of Rendir Cuentas in the region and beyond.

Rendir Cuentas looks forward to sharing tools and experiences with the Global Standard Project Partners and contributing to advance towards a stronger common global voice. To Rendir Cuentas aims to produce new public and collective reports on CSO accountability practices, disaggregating data by networks, themes, countries or regions, following the experience gained with past Rendir Cuentas national and regional public and collective reports. New reports will benefit from information provided by different sources, including self-assessment exercises and action-oriented research. Focusing on the Global Standard will allow to deliver reports that are really relevant to new and challenging situations and will help to reveal information on the advances of dynamic accountability practices.