

## Project factsheet information

<b>Project title</b>	Sinar Project
<b>Grant recipient</b>	The Malaysian Society for Transparency and Integrity 23, Jalan Pantai 9/7, Petaling Jaya. Selangor 46000. Malaysia Website <a href="http://www.sinarproject.org">http://www.sinarproject.org</a>
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<b>Partner organizations</b>	Transparency International
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<b>Project summary</b>	The Sinar Project is an initiative using open technology and applications to systematically make important information public and more accessible to the Malaysian people. The Project aims to improve governance and encourage greater citizen involvement in the public affairs of the nation by making the Malaysian Government more open, transparent and accountable.

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## Project Summary

The Sinar Project is an initiative using open technology and applications to systematically make important information public and more accessible to the Malaysian people. The Project main objective is to improve governance and encourage greater citizen involvement in the public affairs of the nation by making the Malaysian Government more open, transparent and accountable.

The project aims to achieve this through several web sites and services:

- Representatives, a site tracking and providing information on all government representatives  
<http://reps.sinarproject.org>
- Accountable, tracking corruption issues and connections between organizations and persons of interest  
<http://accountable.sinarproject.org>
- Open data example for better governance through the scraping and analysis of construction industry database  
<http://www.sinarproject.org/projects/construction-industry-development-board-cidb-database>
- BillWatcher, a parliamentary bill tracker for citizens  
<http://billwatcher.sinarproject.org>
- Aduanku/FixMyStreet localized version for reporting and resolution tracking of local council issues  
<http://aduanku.my>
- and an Open Data API linking all information from these projects for use by other developers to build additional governance services.

To date the project has held several public meet-ups on corruption and crowdsourcing information for representatives. As the only non-partisan civil society governance organisation it has been recognized and invited to present it's outputs in media traditional and online, as well as in public forums both locally and internationally.

## Background and Justification

Government in Malaysia lacks transparency and accountability, which curtails a proper working democracy for policy and citizen involvement, which requires open and free access to data and information. While Internet usage as percentage of population has rapidly increased<sup>1</sup> there are very few resources of on-line data and information related to governance such as budget expenditure, assets of those holding political office, crime, environment, local council issues, parliamentary bills, etc. available to the public<sup>2</sup>. The information that is available is not accessible in structured open standard formats usable by citizens and specialized users such as journalists and developers interested to build tools to facilitate interoperable access for the public and other developers.

## Project objectives

- Open Data API:** Providing stable consolidated search for information from project and external web data, with priority on project data services. The API will be able to provide results in a few open standard formats information on persons of interest and their relationships to other sources of information including issues, organizations and corruption issues.
- Elected Representatives Website and Service:** Crowdsourced and automated information of all elected representative and pledges on policy and issues of public interest.

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[http://www.google.com/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bnccppjof8f9\\_&met\\_y=it\\_net\\_user\\_p2&idim=country:MYS&dl=en&hl=en&q=malaysia+internet+usage](http://www.google.com/publicdata/explore?ds=d5bnccppjof8f9_&met_y=it_net_user_p2&idim=country:MYS&dl=en&hl=en&q=malaysia+internet+usage)

2 [http://www.malaysia-chronicle.com/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=37005:emulate-uk-cops-detailed-statistics-on-crimes&Itemid=2](http://www.malaysia-chronicle.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=37005:emulate-uk-cops-detailed-statistics-on-crimes&Itemid=2)

- c. **Accountable Website and Service:** Tracks corruption, abuse of power (including human rights violations) of persons of interest. Provides temporal structured data and improved relation tracking between issues, organizations, persons and sources. Better visualizations in the form of geo-location, statistic charts and network mapping charts.
- d. **Scraping and Crowdsourcing Platform for Construction Industry Project Data:** Scraped and crowdsourced improvement to construction industry board recorded projects. This initial data provides supporting data to other projects listed such as c) accountable (corruption tracking) and b) representatives. It requires a web application to crowd source while maintaining data integrity for improvements and cleanup of the data.
- e. **Billwatcher:** Allows users to view, discuss and track upcoming parliamentary bills. The project will improve the existing site to also include gazetted status.
- f. **FixMyStreet:** The project aims to empower citizens in general, and youths in particular, to monitor their local authority. They will report problems such as potholes, uncollected garbage and faulty streetlights and upload to a website. Citizens will then monitor their local council's response and comment if remedial action was satisfactorily taken. A localized version of Fixmystreet.com was in our list of planned projects, but not submitted as part of the original proposal to ISIF Asia as it did not fit in well with overall government monitoring at parliamentary and policy level. Transparency International Malaysia however secured an additional grant of USD4,000 for this project. Combined with original allocation in the ISIF Asia grant for OpenSpending (listed as an objective in the original proposal) along with administrative and political support from Transparency International Malaysia meant that this would result in a project with support of several government agencies. To date, we now have support of Kuala Lumpur City Council, Putrajaya Development and Subang Jaya Municipal Council as supporting partners for this pilot with the aim of it being adopted for all local councils in state of Selangor.

A new objective was added:

- g. **SinarNGOs:** To provide long term technical support for organizations working in areas of supporting partners of the declaration points for Parliamentary Openness which includes open source, accessibility, media freedom and civil rights. Sinar Project (as the only civil society organization in Malaysia with a highly technical team with resources) has been asked to provide specialized technical support for other civil society organizations (CSOs). This has included emergency support to assist in detecting and circumventing on-line government censorship<sup>3</sup> as well as keep them on-line when under attack. While this is not the main goal of the project, where possible, we share our technical expertise and resources to other CSOs in Malaysia.

## Users and uses

The projects undertaken are to make it easier for citizens of Malaysia to have better understanding of government and parliamentary processes and to be more involved.

Initially the project outputs serve as initial examples of what on-line parliamentary and government monitoring websites for Malaysia could be. It should show how far we can take it given existing restrictions and provide a glimpse to users of what the possibilities are. We are using the Open Government Partnership Eligibility<sup>4</sup> and Opening Parliament Declaration<sup>5</sup> as guidelines.

Questions that would be answered include;

- How much information is there on-line already for better governance?
- How much of it can be used and will there be repercussions of greater transparency?

<sup>3</sup> <http://sinarproject.org/blog/censorship-of-on-line-media-in-malaysia>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/eligibility>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.openingparliament.org>

- Will we be able to work together with government partners and representatives at some level?
- Would there be negative repercussions of providing easy tracking of corruption cases and making government more accountable?
- How much can be solved by technology?
- How much support from other CSOs, private sector and the government would be needed and in what forms?
- Has there been any meaningful impact from these projects. For example, has corruption been reduced with easier tracking of cases?

As the initial questions are answered, the projects should be able to both show the limits of how much can be done given existing restrictions, as well the way forward in solving the restrictions and gaps encountered.

## Indicators

Baseline	Indicators	Progress	Assessment	Course of action
No Open API for use by mobile applications.	Number of requests to service Number of applications using	Used by a simple Android mobile application to pull parliamentary representative information.	The OpenAPI is dependent on the other applications providing APIs as well as useful information. The OpenAPI collecting and providing simple mechanism to search all project information is contingent on others. Some other projects have already had to define their own APIs such as Mapit to check for geopolitical boundaries.	The API team can define specific requirements to be implemented by other projects first along with test cases. This would allow for testing of implementation while data and information are still being populated or crowdsourced by other projects by Sinar or third party.
No complete updated elected representative information.	Number of complete and up to date CVs of all State and Parliamentary representatives. Number of web requests for representatives. Number of times cited as source information.	Currently 199 MPs as of last general elections in May out of 222 have been added. Tracking of 555 state representatives has not started.	There is a need to update new MPs and complete the 222 parliamentary representatives. It is still very difficult and time consuming to chase representatives for information when they have not put it on-line. There has been a positive effect with candidates in last elections now uploading their CVs as part of campaign pages. Cited for Google Malaysia's page as election resource.	We need to restart the volunteer workshops for help in updating information, this is a heavy effort to get information of 555 state representatives. The site will need more attractive interface to make it used by the public, as well as to highlight representatives with missing profiles.

Baseline	Indicators	Progress	Assessment	Course of action
Corruption cases no tracked/followed, perception that nothing is being done about it. Representatives holding positions despite multiple open cases.	Number of cases tracked. Value of cases tracked. Resolution status of issues tracked.	The sites has steadily tracked number of cases and updated on information on existing cases. Value is now up to RM44 Billion in terms of financial cost. To date no cases have been resolved yet due to public pressure.	Despite being cited in anti-corruption forums by government agencies and CSOs and increasing number of cases implicating prominent persons, no convictions or resignations due to public pressure has happened. Instead during time of project, some persons of interest have been promoted. Interest in software platform for use by non-technical users in other countries (Philippines, Brazil)	Accountable was meant to be used as a crowdsourced source of persons of interests as well as linking persons and organizations to public corruption cases. Greater integration of showing linked information is needed going forward such as showing corruption issues on representatives site, and vice versa on corruption. The sites need to be more accessible and friendly for public, to highlight cases and persons to increase public pressure for corruption issues to be resolved.
No examples of open data usage for better governance. Most important statistics not available or under Official Secrets Act.	Citations of work based on this data and as examples on use of data for journalism and governance.	TEDxKLTalk, Data Journalism in Asia book and forum, Open Government Hangout, Interview with Sunlight foundation	This is the most popular output of Sinar Project for invitations to present. The data analysis for corruption and industry trends from scraped data. Public misconception that it is our role to write stories and provide narrative. Likely due to the publicity, current data for construction project are no longer open on the website. This is not of immediate concern as over a decade's worth of data has already downloaded.	Need to write more blogs and tutorials on using open data for journalists to encourage usage for stories and analysis.
People not aware of bills being passed, no mechanism to search and track all pending and gazetted bills.	Number of parliamentary bills being tracked by public. Number of searches.	Not tracking subscribers due to rewrite of backend.	Feature regression due to change in parliamentary website. New scraper had to be rewritten and stored in new more scalable format.	Need to re-implement user subscription for change notifications and track number. Need to re-implement full text search. Need to implement alerts on new bills subscriptions for users.
There are not publicly available reports of local council issues and complaints. Statistics provided by local council unrealistic. eg. 100% success rate within 3 days.	Number of reports. Number of reports resolved. Speed of reports.	At pilot stage with three government council partners and several community partners.	Being heavily pushed by government and Transparency International Malaysia partners.	More Malaysian political boundaries on local install of MapIT <sup>6</sup> to be ready to add more local councils quickly when pilot period ends.
A lot of major CSO websites running on unmaintained blogs that have limited features.	Number of CSOs that benefit from Sinar Project's open source platform and add-ons.	Currently 6 local CSOs, 1 regional project and 1 African project are using shared platform of Sinar.	The CSO features still need improvement such as Press Room and nicer themes.	Continue to improve Sinar Project's main website as a model CSO site and share code/features to other governance and rights CSOs.

<sup>6</sup> <http://mapit.sinarproject.org/>

## Project implementation: understanding the chain that leads to results

### *Narrative - project implementation*

Sinar Project is made up of several connected sub-projects with the aim of empowering citizens to monitor and participate in the process of government policies and implementation. At Sinar's core, the project was conformed by an initial group of 5 highly technical developers. There were no technical governance or parliamentary monitoring organizations at this time in Malaysia. The founders of the project looked towards best practices in the UK, US and Australia and seek to implement similar efforts in Malaysia. CSOs in Malaysia in general are limited in funds and capacity. As such Sinar team were volunteers and partnered with volunteers and interns from other CSOs involved in governance and civil rights.

Initially two of the original members of Sinar Project volunteers could not continue supporting the project, as it started to gain attention from others due to successful collaborative efforts with UndiMsia<sup>7</sup> (a popular and highly visible youth movement that builds Do-It-Yourself –DIY- action communities by activating the youth vote). When they left the core team, it was realized that funding would be needed to compensate key contributors who sacrificed public holidays, leave and weekends to work on Sinar Project outputs.

An effort was made to find partners willing to help host the project. Transparency International Malaysia had resources and interests aligned with our efforts to host the project if grant funding was successful. With grant funding secured from ISIF Asia, more features were planned as well as additional sub projects to cover additional information and web sites needed to effectively monitor government. The founding members rewrote the existing websites and services.

With pending elections for 2013, Sinar Project efforts were timely, with a new politically activated youth and middle class needing information. Priority was put on parliamentary representative website as well corruption and accountability website. These project outputs were highly publicized with invitations for interviews to be featured in online media, radio, printed press, as well as popular events like TEDxKL to feature our initial work.

Through UndiMsia collaboration -a project of the Malaysian Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (MCCHR)- we found a partner in which active youth could collaborate on overlapping issues, especially civil rights. This led us to work closely with other civil rights groups, which exposed Sinar members to the large gap in capacity of CSOs to be able to effectively monitor government policies and protect democratic rights. We also learned that there were no other technical CSOs working in other areas of governance. There were no other services for monitoring parliamentary organizations except from the ones under Sinar project, namely:

- 1) Billwatcher <http://billwatcher.sinarproject.org>
- 2) Accountable <http://accountable.sinarproject.org>
- 3) Representatives <http://reps.sinarproject.org>
- 4) Local urban planning and issues <http://aduanku.my>

Sinar Project was therefore providing services to fulfill demand that, just as an example, in the United States is covered by three separate organizations such as EFF, Sunlight Foundation and Open Plans, each with about 40 full time staff. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has 100 full time attorneys and 2000 volunteers. By comparison, in Malaysia, organizations like MCCHR and SUARAM, have 10 legal staff available part-time at the most.

We realized that to have a bigger impact than we have now, we will need to think beyond technical solutions, but to build capacity of CSOs including ourselves and take a long-term view of 5-10 years. Even if there were more funds available, we would not be able to hire any competent full time developers willing to work at a CSO that

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<sup>7</sup> [www.UndiMsia.com](http://www.UndiMsia.com)

may run afoul of a government that is not supportive of civil or democratic rights. Capacity will need to be built including having more interns and exposing more people to CSO civil rights work.

Despite the negative short-term outlook, the project has been provided with a lot of public support for what we have been able to achieve with limited resources. It will be a difficult, but important next step, that the project transitions from part-time project, to an independent CSO with full time staff, that is able to fulfill the demands of the public and make a more meaningful impact for better governance in Malaysia.



Input	Project activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Timeline	Status	Assessment
Consultant identified to work part-time for 9 months on Open API for governance projects	Initial open source version and second rewrite started.	Kratos was initial API with contact details MPs. Android application by third-party developed using data from the service. Second rewrite Zelus as pure pull/search API (not data storage) started.	Initial API to show possibility of use by third party sites done.	14/03/2013 - Kratos publicly available <sup>8</sup>	In-progress	Initial developer identified too busy to complete, but willing to recommend and mentor new consultant to complete the second version of the API. Need to issue contract as soon as possible to formalize deliverables.
Consultant identified to work part-time for 9 months to update and develop government representative web site	Initial version of websites tracking members of parliament started.	Website available to search and update wiki of elected representatives.	Was the most complete resource on-line for voters to find out about background of candidates for last general Elections.	14/03/2013 initial site ready. 26/05/2013 Workshop with UndiMsia to get volunteers	In-progress	Improvements needed to UI to be done by consultant. State representatives need to be added. Another workshop for volunteers needs to be organized to get new volunteers and restart updating process for recently elected representatives.
Consultant identified to work part-time for 9 months on Accountable corruption tracking website and service.	Website developed and content maintained and updated.	Website tracking issues running publicly.	Public can now track and search hundreds of public figures as well as open corruption issues reported publicly from 1980's and economic costs.	1/03/2013-present continuous development and content updates <sup>9</sup> .	Main site completed. Improvements and content updates on-going.	Improvements in temporal relationships are needed. Improvements to look and feel and usability of site needs to be improved such as color codes on status and whether somebody was against an issue or implicated. Contract needs to be issued. Consultant has been working voluntarily basis so far. Despite easier access and transparency, no corruption issues tracked so far has had any resolution. Additional innovative initiatives built on this experience, needs to be pursued to result in positive outcomes in terms of reduction in key cases of corruption.
Consultant not identified to work on crowd source data cleanup option for Construction Industry Database set for up to 9 months part-time.	Data made available in easy to use CSV formats.	Published data on website. Spreadsheet analysis of examples made available on Google Docs along with search query examples.	Source of inspiration for journalists and researchers on possibilities of mundane open data to expose hot issues such as corruption or economic worth of companies.	6/5//2013 Data made available.	Data published - completed Crowd sourced cleanup - not started	Consultant needs to be identified soon to research and recommend crowd sourcing solutions for cleanup of 300,000 record dataset.

<sup>8</sup> <http://people.sinarproject.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://github.com/Sinar/sinar.corruptiontracker>

Input	Project activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Timeline	Status	Assessment
Consultant identified to work part-time for up to 9 months part-time.	Scraper to make data from parliament website usable for applications. Website for users to subscribe to new bills, changes in status to existing ones and to search text of all bills.	Initial scraper done. Initial website made available. Second high performance scraper written. <sup>10</sup> Second website made available.	Initial website cited often for easy of use in searching and tracking new bills.	1/3/2013 Initial website made available. 19/08/2013 new version using faster webscraper and flexible framework available.	Complete - initial version. In-progress - rewrite.	Consultant identified and needs contract issued so that remaining two features of subscribing and searching be implemented in rewrite.
Consultant identified and working full time for a month (funded by Transparency International) Part-time funding needed to cover continue support for pilot until end of the year.	Localized version of fixmystreet using Google Maps.	Initial website for pilot for three councils set up with numerous bug fixes for use in Malaysia. Mapit geolocation / political boundary service set up.	System is providing main online reporting system for Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya city councils. For Subang Jaya city council (suburban town), system provides open and public system as check and balance to official reporting system.	1/9/2013 Initial pilot site ready for one council but limited Open Street Maps. 20/9/2013 Google Maps impementation with political boundaries for 3 councils.	Pilot version complete.	Consultant contract needs to be issued to support additional councils and bug fixes. To merge Sinar Project output with original FixMyStreet project.
Sinar consultants and community of developers	Developer shared open sourced platform for CSOs. Host shared platform for CSOs.	Automated buildout platform for CSOs for Plone with features needed by most CSOs. Resource, Press Room content type. Setup 6 local CSOs, 1 regional ICT4D project and 1 African Youth project site.	Improved CSO websites from simple blogs, sometimes unmaintained to take advantage of platforms use by larger well funded CSOs such as Oxfam and UN agencies.	1/3/2013- 31/7/2013 - 6 initial CSOs set up on the platform. 1/9/2013 - Sinar Project main website moved over to shared platform.	Production version complete. In-progress continuous improvements.	Continuous improvements to Sinar project site to be done by Sinar consultants and community of developers.

<sup>10</sup> <https://github.com/Sinar/sinar-beacon>

## Project outputs, communication and dissemination activities

Project outputs	Status	Assessment	Dissemination efforts
<p>Kratos was initial API with contact details MPs. Android application by third-party developed using data from the service.</p> <p>Second rewrite Zelus as pure pull/search API (not data storage) started.</p>	Work in progress	<p>Initial API service Kratos quickly taken up and used by developers.</p> <p>Zelus needs to be planned properly to source information from sub-projects. A criticism was that placeholder data on initial API had no way to update information which was not purpose of an API service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Featured at TEDxKL general audience <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3O7bkiVb0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3O7bkiVb0</a></li> <li>- Featured in pressThe Star newspaper for general audience <a href="http://techcentral.my/news/story.aspx?file=/2012/7/6/it_news/20120706172303&amp;sec=it_news">http://techcentral.my/news/story.aspx?file=/2012/7/6/it_news/20120706172303&amp;sec=it_news</a></li> <li>- Presented talks at monthly WebCampKL and advocacy to local developers <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qSkutyg80">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qSkutyg80</a></li> </ul>
<p>Website available to search and update wiki of elected representatives.</p>	Work in progress - Information needs to be updated constantly.	<p>Lesson learned that it was difficult to access representatives. Youth a good group of dedicated volunteers, but need to continuously hold workshops to get people activated to help update the site.</p> <p>Interns provided by UndiMsia partner did this most consistent work in updating as compared to volunteers.</p>	<p>In Media for youth: <a href="http://rage.com.my/content/stories/who-is-mymp/">http://rage.com.my/content/stories/who-is-mymp/</a></p> <p>Two youth community events/workshops for volunteers: May 2013 <a href="https://plus.google.com/101396658148522528050/posts/U1Fjfib6vAa">https://plus.google.com/101396658148522528050/posts/U1Fjfib6vAa</a> December 2013 <a href="https://plus.google.com/events/cm2kqngvulraea69e8ctp6j7j8c">https://plus.google.com/events/cm2kqngvulraea69e8ctp6j7j8c</a></p> <p>Various promotion to youth by partner UndiMsia on radio, youth events and more.</p> <p>Signed up as supporting partner for Malaysia for Opening Parliament Declaration <a href="http://www.openingparliament.org/organizations">http://www.openingparliament.org/organizations</a></p> <p>Hosted Google+ Hangout on Open Government and featured on Open Government Partnership blog <a href="http://blog.opengovpartnership.org/2013/07/e-dirap-open-government-google-hangout">http://blog.opengovpartnership.org/2013/07/e-dirap-open-government-google-hangout</a> for open government practitioners and community of practice.</p> <p>Announced ourselves and joined Open Knowledge Foundation and Sunlight Foundation's Parliamentary Organization Monitoring mailing lists.</p> <p>Outreach to community of practitioners and donors.</p> <p>Registered in Sunlight's Global PMO and civil rights organizations list.</p> <p>Outreach to community of practitioners and donors.</p>
<p>Accountable corruption website tracking issues running publicly.</p>	Work in progress	<p>Web site is online, updated and turns up highly on search engines for corruption searches in Malaysia.</p>	<p>Two radio interviews on BFM business radio station to audience of professionals and business executives <a href="http://www.bfm.my/current-affairs-150612-khairil-yusof-sinar-project-malaysia.htm">http://www.bfm.my/current-affairs-150612-khairil-yusof-sinar-project-malaysia.htm</a></p> <p>Various posts to G+ and Twitter when corruption issue arises and information is available on the site.</p>

Project outputs	Status	Assessment	Dissemination efforts
Published data on website. Spreadsheet analysis of examples made available on Google Docs along with search query examples.	Completed	Needs to have constant talks as well as tutorials on uses of open data and tools to be used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TEDxKL presentation to general audience.</li> <li>- Data Journalism: Storytelling in Malaysia with Big Data [Video] (Retrieved Sept 29, 2013) from <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHsGblvvdUa">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHsGblvvdUa</a></li> <li>- Data Journalism Forum <a href="http://www.kas.de/medien-asien/en/events/56412/">http://www.kas.de/medien-asien/en/events/56412/</a></li> <li>- Interview/Print Publication for Data Journalism in Asia - Setting Data Free by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung</li> </ul>
Initial scraper completed to download latest parliamentary bills. Initial website made available. Second high performance scraper written. <a href="https://github.com/Sinar/sinar-beacon">https://github.com/Sinar/sinar-beacon</a> Second website made available <a href="http://billwatcher.sinarproject.org">http://billwatcher.sinarproject.org</a>	Completed and in-progress for rewrite.	Parliamentary website changed format requiring a rewrite of the web scraper. Rewrite is on more flexible platform but missing key features.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TEDxKL presentation to general audience.</li> <li>- WebCampKL and Python.my meetups to audience.</li> <li>- Social media Twitter/G+ to general audience</li> </ul>
Initial website for pilot for three councils set up with numerous bug fixes for use in Malaysia.. Mapit geolocation / political boundary service set up.	In-progress.	Site up and about to run as pilot for October-November 2013 for three government agencies. Lots of bugs in upstream version of FixMyStreet that required fixing including support for Google Maps. Limited political boundaries available. Managed to get Kuala Lumpur zones. Hosting public service for GIS political boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with government agencies for partnerships and input. Kuala Lumpur City Council, Putrajaya Development and Subang Jaya City Council.</li> <li>Publicity in local community paper for Subang Jaya for community to be aware of upcoming pilot.</li> <li>Updates to G+/Twitter social media accounts for more help from developer community.</li> </ul>
Automated buildout platform for CSOs for Plone with features needed by most CSOs. Resource, Press Room content type. Setup 6 local CSOs, 1 regional ICT4D project and 1 African Youth project site.	In-progress.	Understanding requirements common to all CSOs which match Sinar Project's own website needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Media workshops with Lariche Community/InterNews to local CSOs to build on-line capacity of NGOs and to share our community support. 3 workshops Penang, Sarawak and Kuala Lumpur.</li> <li>Training Presentation shared to all CSOs.</li> <li><a href="https://docs.google.com/a/sinarproject.org/presentation/d/1Evfwuj8UzR3TGBW71OrPozTafZcRzEzO9K-kiwgpFG4/edit">https://docs.google.com/a/sinarproject.org/presentation/d/1Evfwuj8UzR3TGBW71OrPozTafZcRzEzO9K-kiwgpFG4/edit</a></li> <li>Mailing-list setup to support local CSOs.</li> </ul>

## Project management and sustainability

The greatest challenge this project faces is capacity in project leads that have CSO experience. When seeking hosting partners for the ISIF Asia grant most of the civil societies bluntly stated, that they do not have capacity to help us administratively. As a governance project, we have learned that there is limited information available and that a lot of information needed to better monitor government are restricted under Official Secrets Act or are simply not made available. This however is a challenge we can overcome through use of Internet crowdsourcing unlike the issue of human capacity.

Only the project coordinator has had any experience in working in a CSO environment. This limits the project greatly as we are unable to scale each of our sub-projects which would require at least a programme officer and a few technical consultant each to update reports, work on new initiatives, funding and partnerships. An example is the FixMyStreet or Aduanku.my local council issues reporting system. The federal government is planning to use it as a key example for use by all local councils nationally. Similarly there are calls to have it implemented for all councils in Selangor the richest and most populated urbanised state in Malaysia. We have one project manager for this project who also looks after all the other Sinar Projects and one part-time consultant. To compound this issue, the project staff at Transparency International Malaysia resigned leaving Sinar Project with no additional support.

The only way forward is to build capacity through training interns who will later be able to join as full-time staff to be assigned as programme officers for each of the projects. We started with one intern from a local law school who helped draft a Digital Defenders proposal. We should be able to easily raise additional funds from the public, and the project grant has budgeted an amount for Sinar Project to register as an organization. It is critical at this time, that the project host more interns to build capacity for future programme officers, especially interns who can join full time when the project is registered as an independent organization.

## Impact

The biggest impact the project has at this point is as an enabler of technical solutions such as bringing together strong technical community to support on-line tools in support of civil rights CSOs. We helped rally developers to help keep websites up during the elections <http://sinarproject.org/blog/censorship-of-on-line-media-in-malaysia> and we provided a platform for UndiMsia volunteers to track information on representatives. When it came to finding out information during the general elections, our project had the most coverage of parliamentary representatives and was featured on Google Malaysia (<http://www.google.com/elections/ed/my>) as a citizen's resource.

Another way this project has been able to achieve an impact is to show that there is a large demand for technical CSOs for Malaysia, and that a lot can still be achieved with just a few dedicated people. Sinar Project serves as an example of another type of startup model for the developer community that can have a large impact on the governance of the country despite democratic restrictions imposed by an authoritarian government. As a result we are now often being invited as speakers to talk about our outputs at emerging leader forums as an inspiration to others interested in doing similar work.

## Overall Assessment

The project should meet most of it's basic objectives in having a strong initial set of online better governance services for use by general public and developers.

Most of the outputs of the project are live systems that will be continuously improved and update with more features. Some of the projects outputs should be spun off into separate CSOs. An example is local council reporting should be spun off into a local organization similar to OpenPlans.org. Since all technical outputs are open sourced, this is easy to do and can be reused. A lot of the supporting code such as high performance web scraper can be reused independently by any other project that requires it.

Some of our services such as corruption tracking platforms have had interest shown by journalists in Philippines as well as developers in Brazil. As we improve them, other countries do not have to rewrite their own and simply either reuse or adapt what has been done and shared freely. Our support of open source has also improved some of the projects we have adopted, and systems such as FixMyStreet.com will have our fixes incorporated and in turn reused by others. Our shared NGO platform should help address the technical limitations of other CSOs in having a good online website with features that are often available only to more highly funded CSOs.

Our experience in using open source development methodology has allowed us to do achieve a lot of outputs by reusing and building upon existing technologies. The normal practice of working with global community has also allowed us to connect with and learn from international leaders in governance.

The team has already learned a lot in terms of governance. We have become more knowledgeable about the legal restrictions to CSOs and civil rights restrictions in Malaysia as well as the limited capacity both technical and human resource challenges they face. We have learned a lot about how larger US and UK organizations work and are funded. Technically we have also learned a lot about new technologies and have acquired new skills to work with such GIS, web scrapers and working with analysing large datasets.

## Recommendations

It's advisable that for future applicants at least the project manager/co-ordinator be work on the project full time especially if the project includes a lot of outputs that could be individual projects on their own. It is not possible to do proper dissemination, administration and timely reporting on a part-time basis while also doing technical work for outputs. The outputs will not have the polish or dissemination that they should be accorded. There will also not be enough time to work on initiative new grants and funding especially if some of the outputs have large demand and interest. As an example we have an extensive Digital Defenders Grant equal to this entire project in terms of planned outputs, but do not have capacity to take it up despite available funding.

For recipients for ISIF Grants for Rights, it is strongly recommended that they connect with other civil rights CSOs in their respective countries, especially if it has a democratically repressive regime. They will need their help and partnerships for advice, experience and support.

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