



MILLENNIUM
CHALLENGE CORPORATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Fact Sheet

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MCC's Commitment to Freedom of Information

The Millennium Challenge Corporation values the free flow of information. Access to information increases political transparency, educates citizens, provides information to consumers, and gives citizens an outlet through which they can voice opinions and ideas. A commitment to a free press, freedom of information laws and unfiltered internet access is an investment in the long-term progress of any society. The importance of citizen access to information in these diverse ways can be seen as the basis for the open data movement, the tools of organization in the Arab Spring and in studies showing that simply providing information to citizens can improve outcomes from health to lower electricity consumption.

Freedom of information can also play a critical role in poverty reduction. Higher transparency and access to information have been shown to increase investment because they enhance an investor's knowledge of the behaviors and operations of institutions in an economy, help reduce uncertainty about future changes in policies and administrative practices and contribute data and perspectives on how best an investment can be initiated and managed. Access to information also strengthens democratic accountability, promotes political participation, reduces governmental abuses, and leads to more effective allocation of national resources.

Measuring Freedom of Information

MCC introduced its freedom of information indicator in September 2011 as part of its annual country selection scorecards. The indicator is a composite index that includes a measure of press freedom, the status of national freedom of information laws and a measure of internet filtering. MCC relies on three independent measurements:

- ★ Freedom House's Freedom of the Press Index: This data, updated annually, measures "the degree to which each country permits the free flow of news and information" by examining the legal, political and economic environment. (Available at bit.ly/In8haS)
- ★ Fringe's Overview of all FOI laws: Fringe tracks whether a country has a freedom of information law, whether it is enforceable and whether citizens can appeal freedom of information decisions to the judiciary. (Available at bit.ly/qZNxL4)
- ★ Open Net Initiative's Global Internet Filtering Map: The score takes into account filtering of political content or Internet tools such as websites that provide e-mail, Internet hosting, search, translation, voice-over Internet protocol telephone service, and circumvention methods. (Available at bit.ly/mLj1mG)

Calculating the score

MCC calculates its freedom of information indicator index score using the following formula:

Press freedom score – freedom of information act score + Internet freedom score = index score

Freedom House measures countries on a 0-100 scale, where lower scores represent greater press freedom.

- ★ A country's score improves by two points if they have a freedom of information law in process and by four points if they have freedom of information laws or regulations already enacted.
- ★ A country's score is penalized two points for selective filtering of political content or Internet tools, three points for substantial filtering of either category or four points for pervasive filtering of either category.

On the 2011 scorecards, MCC's partner countries averaged a score of 43, while the remaining countries received an average score of 59.