

# ReconstrucciónMX

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**Organisation:** Mexican Federal Government, Office of the President

**Country:**

**Level of government:** Central government

**Sector:** Public order and safety

**Type:** Communication, Data, Digital, Public Service

**Launched in:** 2013

**Link to the innovation's website**

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# Description

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"ReconstrucciónMX" is a new service and communication tool aimed at linking data from various sources and levels of government involved in the response and recovery process of communities affected by natural disasters. It gives easy access to information about the needs and reactive measures being implemented in the affected areas, both to the general public and to the decision making and operating agencies.

This project is meant to increase transparency in the use and destination of resources from the Natural Disaster Fund (Fonden). Prior to "ReconstrucciónMX", the allocation of the Fund's resources was opaque: It was a complicated procedure with little clarity for the general public. This project provides transparency that aims to contribute to efficient public spending and improvement of accountability. ReconstrucciónMX has also integrated a system for citizen reports of misuse of resources.

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## Why the innovation was developed

ReconstrucciónMX was developed in response to a crisis. Mexico is hit by natural disasters on a yearly basis, namely hurricanes and tropical storms in some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the country. Investment in repairing damaged infrastructure and the rescue of the affected population falls under the Natural Disaster Fund. The project stems from the need for more clarity on how the resources from this rescue fund are allocated, identifying who the main responsible agencies are for every stage of the process and the size of the impact and damage of each crisis case. ReconstrucciónMX is the initial prototype of a cross-sector participative project that will result in clarity of processes, aggregation of reliable up-to-date information, transparency and accountability. It is designed to be a powerful decision-making tool for the agencies that must respond to emergencies on a yearly basis and as a vehicle of transparency for the general public.

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## Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Enhance public trust, Enhance transparency, Improve access, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve social equity

- Consolidate a data management system of dissimilar information stemming from various authorities and levels of government involved in the natural disaster response to communities and areas impacted into a single channel.
  - Facilitate access to information about the needs and reactive measures being implemented in the affected areas.
  - Increase transparency in the allocation and use of resources from the Natural Disaster Fund.
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## Main beneficiaries

Businesses, Civil Society, General population, Government bodies, Government staff, High-risk populations

- The general public and taxpayers benefit from information in a single, visual, and accessible source. It provides them with geo-referenced information about municipalities declared in state of emergency, updated in real time, as well as an explanation of beneficiaries and resource allocation in affected areas.
  - The Secretary of Finance benefits, as they were seeking to make the Natural Disaster Fund transparent.
  - Populations affected by the natural disasters benefit, because this tool provides clarity on the resources allocated to their municipalities and provides an outlet to make complaints about misuse of resources.
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## Existing similar practices

### Recovery.Gov

In other countries' public administrations

U.S. Government

Recovery.gov is the U.S. government's website that shows how U.S. recovery spending is made. It provides access to data related to the Recovery Act spending and allows for the reporting of fraud or bad spending.

<http://www.recovery.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

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# Results

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**Results not available yet**

# Development

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## Design

The idea stemmed from the damage created by hurricanes Irene and Manuel in September 2013. Various states were hit, including some of the poorest municipalities in the country. In the interest of providing transparency and reliable information about damage and recovery funding allocation, the President requested the design and implementation of a project. Those who developed, designed and delivered the ReconstruccionMX concept include the Coordination for the National Digital Strategy in the Office of the President in collaboration with the Secretary of Finance, the Secretary of State and transparency-focused NGOs. This involved both frontline staff and policy planning staff, as well as constant communication with the actors involved.

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## Testing

- ReconstrucciónMX was developed with data from different agencies who attend natural disasters in different stages.
  - The design for the infographic explaining these different stages - as well as the visualization of resource allocation, damaged areas and percentage of spending - was piloted internally and tested with the different agencies before its official release.
  - Two weeks after the prototype was tested internally, ReconstrucciónMX was released.
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## Implementation

### Tools used:

- This project was released under the platform of the Office of the President in Mexico.
- Programming was an intensive part of the design of the platform.
- Data sets and constant communication with the participating entities was a key component in the development of the project.
- CartoDB was used to generate the mapping information displayed on the site.
- Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop were also used for the visual aid found in the site.

### Resources used:

- Design staff.
  - Software architecture and design staff.
  - Policy planning staff.
  - Programming and coding staff.
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## Challenges and solutions

The fact that the fund is inter-agency resourced and operated was a challenge. There is no reference of this data having been released before, so coming to an agreement on the display, sources and included information was a challenge. The support of the upper tiers of the administrative staff in the Secretary of Finance was key to move forward with the project and overcome communication challenges.

# Lessons Learned

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## Lessons Learned

Having references of successful projects and initiatives in other countries allowed for a quick brainstorm for the design of this project, which required speedy delivery. OpenSpending, for instance, is a great repository of ideas and open-sourced tools for developing transparency and fund-tracking projects.

Another important lesson was to involve different stakeholders to generate long-term projects. ReconstrucciónMX is the initial stage of a project that is aimed at being participatory, involving the general public, academia, NGO's and different government agencies.

In order for this initial stage to work, it was necessary for the funding agency to be the most interested stakeholder. Opening data in this way may seem threatening to agencies that are not used to this, so having proofs of concept, references and allies in favour of the project is important. It is also necessary to have access to data, programming and designing staff that know how to design the basic programming architecture of a project like this.

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## Conditions for success

For the innovation to be successful, it will be necessary to have the active involvement of the different stakeholders both within the public administration and in civil society. In the public administration, rescue agencies must take ownership of this tool as something that enables them to make strategic choices, provide reliable information for prevention and rescue and be accountable to citizens. This will require infrastructure as well as human and financial resources. A diffusion strategy will also be necessary as the success of the innovation relies heavily on users and feedback. If it is not reaching the target audience, then the same information gaps will persist.

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## Other information

In the near future, the project will seek to create an information system based on open data standards, so as to spread the actions and use of resources in the prevention, early warning, mitigation, attention during emergencies and reconstruction stages. This effort will contribute to the coordination between stakeholders, to increase transparency and promote accountability in the exercise of the invested resources. Because of the latter, this initiative will be closely aligned to the Open Data Policy in Mexico.

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