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IDB Fund approves \$600,000 grant for program to support civil society organizations that promote transparency and accountability based on the PTF model

The Inter-American Development Bank's Multilateral Investment Fund announced today the approval of a **\$600,000 grant** for a program to support targeted **projects of civil society organizations** to increase transparency in public and private sector economic activities based on PTF's now well established model for assisting CSOs to fight corruption.

Resources will support projects and help disseminate knowledge on successful initiatives. A **Regional Fund for the Promotion of Transparency** (FONTRA) will be created to cover activities in **Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay** to be managed by **The Institute for Communication and Development** (ICD), PTF's partner in Uruguay. The program will be executed over a period of three years.

The Fund will finance around 30 grants of between \$10,000 and \$30,000, with a maximum of \$50,000. MIF resources will be used to cover approximately 40 per cent of the projects on average. Each institution will be required to match at least 20 percent of the total cost of each project. All grants will have a maximum duration of one year.

"This program represents a spin off of PTF's activities in the Mercosul countries" said PTF President Pierre Landell-Mills. "It should pilot an intensive program of coordinated CSO anti-corruption initiatives in that area, engaging the private sector as co-financing partners. If successful, it could be replicated in the Andean region and Central America.

The program will be presented at a series of promotional events and announced online through the Internet (Visit: <http://www.lasociedadcivil.org/>). Specific calls for proposals are expected to be issued later this year and in 2007, but meritorious proposals may be submitted at any time. Proposals will be assessed on their technical merit, innovativeness, replicability and adherence to the program's objectives. A final regional conference will assess and disseminate the results of the program, which will be executed over a period of three years.

The executing agency for this program, **ICD** is a non-profit civil society organization founded in Uruguay in 1986 to promote awareness for a democratic, inclusive and equitable development based on ethics and transparency. An important aspect of this program will be the participation of various private companies and other donors interested in providing financial support. One of the benefits for these companies is that by rooting out and reducing corruption, they can help to lower cost of doing business.

"By bringing in companies and private sector associations at the national level through a consultative council, the program will attract increased support and improve its sustainability," IDB's Dan Shepherd stated. "Increasing transparency in the participating countries will improve market functioning and the overall business climate."