**WE NEED RECORDS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS TO EVALUATE TRANSPARENCY**

On 29 December, Transparency International Spain (TI-Spain) published the Transparency Index of Spanish Provincial Councils (INDIP2015). For the first time, we find two indicators specifically designed to monitor whether the Councils link their records management systems to transparency policies. The inclusion of these indicators is the result of efforts made by the Coordinator of Archivists Associations (CAA) to promote their inclusion in TI-Spain audits. In the extraordinary session held last April, the CAA considered a proposal with four possible indicators submitted by ACAL (Archive Association of Castile-León) and a fifth submitted by AAC (Association of Catalan Archivists). All five indicators were approved. However, TI-Spain has only taken two into consideration: a) political publishing or the way in which records are managed and b) the publication of existing rules and procedures concerning the disposal of records. The three proposals that are not included at the present time are: i) the existence of units and managers responsible for managing, preserving and consulting records, ii) the publication of information in a clear and structured manner according to records series or other possible groupings, iii) the reliable demonstration of the traceability of published information showing how and where it is produced. We understand that TI-Spain has opted for the proposals which are more clear-cut and which can be easily verified since they can be identified in specific documents (records management manual, records disposal register, classification chart, description instrument, etc.), and has left proposals that entail demonstrating more structured management of active publicity and that affect the system used to post information on the Transparency Portal for a later date. In any case, this is an important move and we value it positively. But we want more.

Unfortunately, the INDIP2015 report does not tell us which councils have complied or not with these two indicators. The information is not segmented and we can only know for sure that Councils that have obtained a score of 100 in section A of the assessment, ‘Information on the Provincial Council’, where the two indicators can be found, have complied in full. In this sense, only eight Spanish councils fully comply with these indicators: eight out of forty-five. As we have already said, there is no way of knowing in detail which provincial councils comply and which ones do not. We will have to ask TI-Spain to publish the complete results of each survey, which it has not done up to now. In relation to Catalonia, Tarragona Provincial Council is one of the eight councils with the maximum score in section A. We are also aware, however, that Girona Provincial Council approved its own records management policy on 24 November. We assume that the results of the INDIP2015 must precede this fact. All the evidence suggests that the Catalan councils are doing their homework and incorporating the information contained within their records and archive management systems into their Transparency portals. This not only helps them to comply with the indicators, but also with the requirements concerning active publicity of Law 20/2015 amending Law 10/2001 on archives and records. In this way, records management is gradually becoming more visible within this arena. We encourage all organisations that have still not done this, including provincial councils, town councils, and the Government of Catalonia itself, to do so. We also encourage all archivists to promote this.

In any case, we remain critical of the fact that the TI-Spain reports and many other current indicator systems still do not provide enough clear information on records management. In this sense, only 2 out of the 80 indicators ensure that the INDIP2015 assessment continues to interpret information related to records management as sector-based information when it should be treated as structural, including the way it is presented on portals. This is what we demanded of the Catalan Transparency Act and what we continue to demand of all those who ask for our guidance or our opinion.

In order to improve this situation, the Association has undertaken to take part in the assessment of organisations’ transparency and it is for this reason that it has created a working group that is currently drawing up a Maturity Model in Records Management and Transparency. The aim of this model is to create an indicator assessment system that will enable us to find out more about the two indicators included in the TI-Spain reports. Our aim is to create a system that will enable us all to determine how robust our records management system is in terms of providing Transparency Portals with authentic, quality information and which demonstrates the existence of a rigorous methodology to ensure the traceability of information. In other words, a model that will enable us to monitor the degree to which our records management system and the transparency systems being created in each organisation are linked together.

This Maturity Model will be presented in its initial phase at the Symposium of Study and Debate to be held on 25 May this year. At this gathering, which we hold during the years when there is no Congress, we will discuss issues related to transparency as is only fitting at a time when we need to put up a strong and fearless fight to assert our rightful place. If we do not do the work, then others will do it for us. We should make absolutely explicit our specific abilities in this field. We say that we will present this in its initial phase because from that point onwards we will open it up for a specific period of time so that you may all give your opinions and suggest improvements. We think that this model will offer added value to organisations, but also to records management professionals who are in need of a system of indicators to help them assess the quality of their own records management system. Our aim is to create an assessment area located between the strict legal boundaries established by law and the standardised regulations which underpin systems at an international level which, although extremely thorough, are sometimes overly dense. We hope we can achieve this and we hope you share our interest in it.

We would like to wish you all a great 2016 and we would like to remind you that the AAC is and always will be by your side.