



Public opinion of institutional performance in Galapagos¹

Hugo Barber^a & Pablo Ospina Peralta^b

^aDATANALISIS Consultant, ^bUniversidad Andina Simón Bolívar

Throughout Ecuador, there is a lack of confidence in public and private organizations. The province of Galapagos is no exception. Perhaps that is why more than 25% of survey respondents during the study on *“Identities, social values, and nature conservation in Galapagos”* do not consider any of the institutions identified in the survey - the provincial government, the Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF), the National Institute of Galapagos (INGALA), the municipalities, the Galapagos National Park Service (SPNG), or the Ecuadorian Navy – to be trustworthy. About 20% of those polled indicated that none of these institutions uses its resources properly or has credibility.

Image of institutions

Among the organizations examined, the CDF has the best image, in terms of credibility, fulfillment of its functions, use of resources, and honesty. The CDF has the highest positive scores and lowest negative scores for all these attributes, except for “resource utilization,” where the negative score of CDF is similar to that of the Ecuadorian Navy (Table 1). However, even in categories in which the CDF has the best image among all the institutions, its score is still negative.

Municipal institutions received a significant positive score in “concern for the community.” Municipalities also stood out, though less strongly, in involving citizen participation in decision-making.

The GNPS is seen as having considerable economic resources, significantly more than the other institutions.

Among the institutions examined, INGALA and the Provincial Government have the poorest image.

In breaking down the institutional image by island, respondents scored institutions, especially municipalities, highest on Isabela (Table 2). By contrast, San Cristóbal residents gave the lowest scores overall, except for the Provincial Government, which scored even lower in Santa Cruz.

In general, institutions in Galapagos score low on trustworthiness. INGALA and the Provincial Government have the poorest images overall.

Table 1. Institutional Image (%*).

	Provincial Government	CDF	INGALA	Municipalities	GNPS	Ecuadorian Navy	None
Credible	19.1	39.2	15.8	29.6	25.0	29.2	18.1
Not credible	40.7	29.3	45.3	35.0	35.4	34.4	5.9
Does its work well	15.0	32.8	13.3	24.6	23.0	24.8	17.1
Does its work poorly	31.5	24.4	42.9	35.3	31.2	28.5	4.8
Honest	9.0	25.4	8.6	11.1	14.3	18.8	28.2
Dishonest	38.3	35.4	41.9	40.1	36.9	36.2	3.6
Concerned about the community	29.9	17.4	20.8	50.5	19.1	15.1	14.4
Not concerned about the community	24.9	31.4	31.3	21.7	34.6	32.1	5.2
Has significant economic capacity	18.2	37.1	22.4	24.4	55.0	16.4	1.8
Has limited economic capacity	15.8	12.2	23.6	26.9	8.9	20.0	3.7
Efficient uses of resources	14.7	28.0	10.1	19.6	21.4	16.2	20.4
Poor use of resources	28.7	24.8	33.2	33.5	29.3	24.3	3.8
Involves citizens in decision-making	22.1	15.1	15.7	37.8	18.8	11.8	16.1
Does not involve citizens in decision-making	23.0	29.0	32.1	22.5	31.5	35.3	4.4

Source: Opinion Poll, June 2006.

Notes

* Data weighted according to the population of each island.

Table 2. Institutional image index by island (%), 2006.

	Provincial Government	CDF	INGALA	Municipalities	GNPS
Total	18.3	26.3	14.1	28.9	20.3
Isabela	25.5	24.8	20.6	43.3	32.4
San Cristóbal	23.0	19.0	12.9	28.9	15.3
Santa Cruz	15.9	29.3	14.0	27.7	21.2

Source: Opinion Poll, June 2006.

Notes

- The index is constructed as a simple average of favorable opinions regarding credibility, proper use of resources, honesty, concern about the community, proper performance of functions, and acceptance of citizen involvement in decision-making.
- Data weighted according to the population of each island.
- The index does not include the variable on economic capacity because it is value-neutral.

Positioning

Positioning is understood as the array of attributes (positive or negative) characterizing each institution. Although the concept of “positioning” is related to the concept of “image,” a correlation between the two is not necessarily automatic. For example, an institution’s positioning can be very closely associated with a specific attribute, without having the best image with regards to that attribute.

The relationships among institutions and attributes are demonstrated in Figure 1. The distance between the position of an institution and a specific attribute indicates the strength of the relationship, with an institution having the strongest relationship to the closest attribute. However, the fact that an institution is closer to an attribute or characteristic does not necessarily mean that it has a better image regarding that attribute.

The CDF has a unique positioning in that it does not share its niche with any other institution. It is characterized as honest, credible, doing a satisfactory job, and as using its resources well.

The GNPS is characterized as an honest institution with significant economic capacity. It is the institution with the closest positioning to the CDF.

The municipalities are positioned in the lower right quadrant, associated with characteristics such as “accepting citizen participation” and “concern for the community.”

INGALA (located in the upper right quadrant) has a negative positioning, associated with a perception of “low credibility” and “doing a poor job.”

The Ecuadorian Navy is situated in the upper left quadrant, associated with “little concern for the community” and “no acceptance of citizen involvement in its decisions.”

On the other hand, the Provincial Government is mainly associated with misuse of resources.

Trends

To analyze trends in institutional image, an index was developed using a simple average of all positive scores of every institution for the different variables. This index was compared with similar indices in the “Galapagos Report” from previous years.

Overall, the image of institutions improved up to 1999, and then declined by 2001. In 2006, improved scores were registered for the CDF and the GNPS, whereas scores for the other institutions declined.

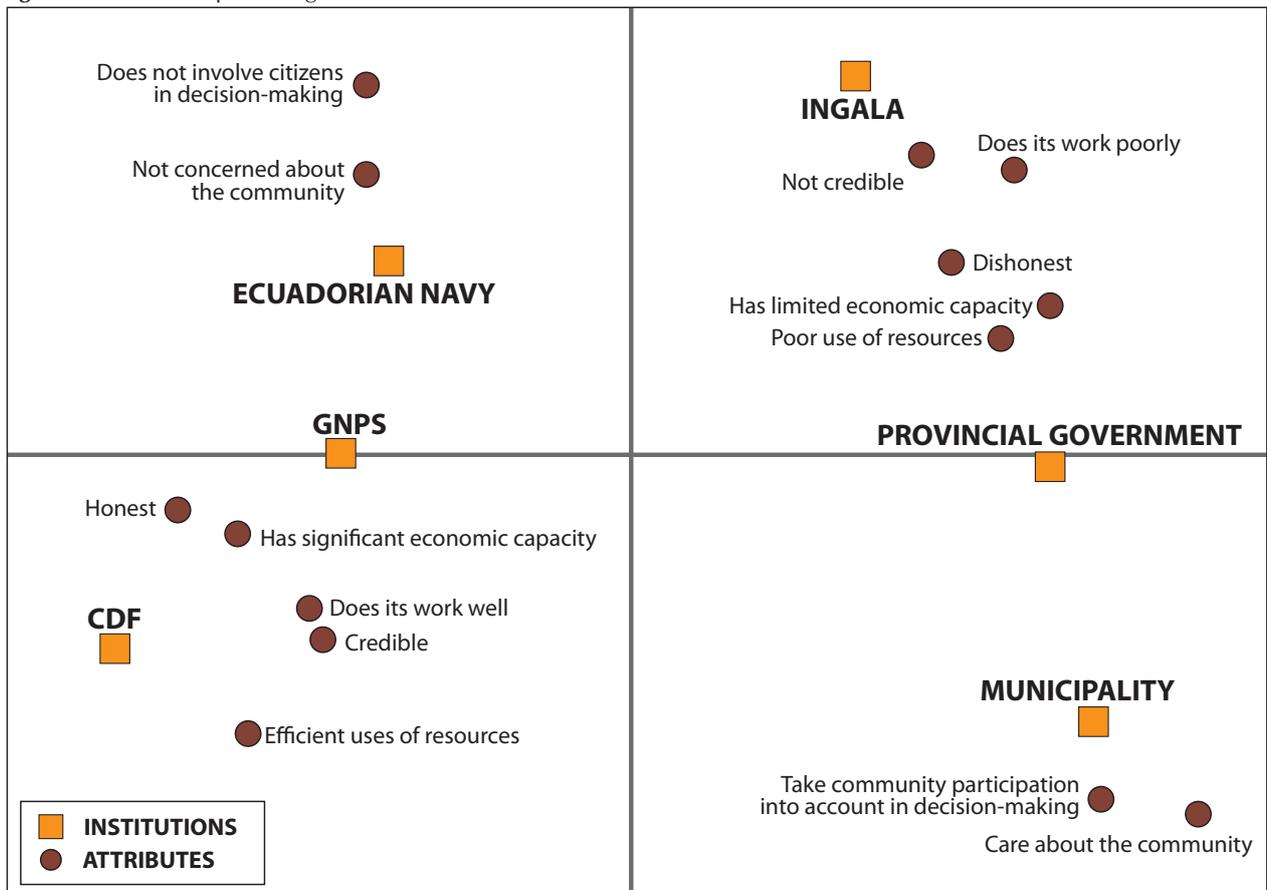
The image of the municipalities shows a different fluctuation. Their image remained stable from 1997 to 1999, showed an upward trend in 2000, and then a gradual decline in 2001 and 2006.

Until 1999, the GNPS had the highest indices of all institutions studied. In 2000 and 2001, municipalities scored the highest. In 2006, the CDF received the highest score (Fig. 2).

Significant changes in institutional image occurred during the study period, though the reasons for those changes are unclear. A comprehensive historical analysis could help reveal the causes underlying the changes in perception.

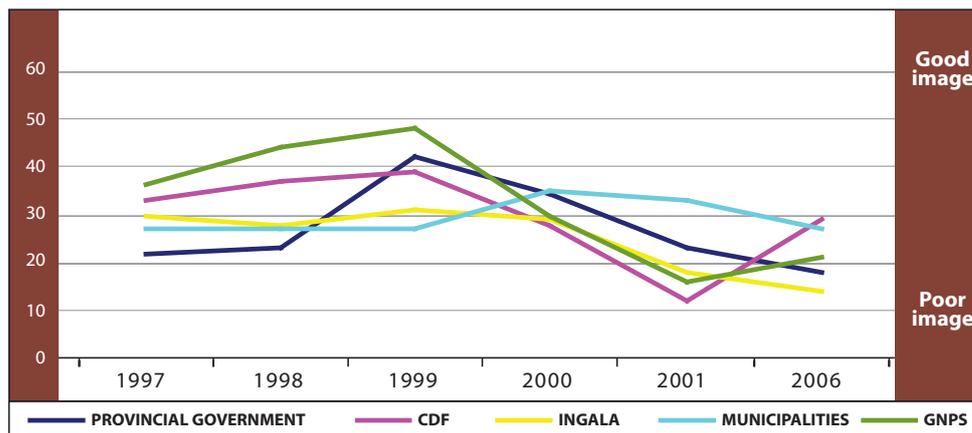
In 2006, positive appraisals of the Charles Darwin Foundation and Galapagos National Park increased, but the scores for other institutions declined.

Figure 1. Relationships among institutions and attributes



Source: Opinion Poll, June 2006.

Figure 2. Institutional image index, 1998 - 2006 (%)



Sources: For 1997–2001, Fundación Natura (2002)²; for 2006, Opinion Poll, June 2006.

Notes

- The index is constructed as a simple average of favorable opinions regarding credibility, proper use of resources, honesty, concern about the community, proper performance of duties, and acceptance of citizen involvement in decision-making.
- Data weighted according to the population size of each island.
- To make the indices comparable, the average for 2006 does not include the additional variable on acceptance of citizen participation in decisions.
- The index does not include the variable on economic capacity because it is value-neutral.