



CADEP

Opening borders with better data

The *Observatory of International Economics*, founded by *Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya* (CADEP,) is giving Paraguay the evidence it needs to embrace world trade.

SETTING THE SCENE —Paraguay has long been one of the poorest and most isolated countries in South America. A landlocked country, its ability to engage in the regional and international economy is constrained by high transport costs, administrative burdens, border delays and dependence on neighbouring countries for transit and access to the the sea. Increasing trade is crucial to the country's economic growth, particularly since it was suspended from the Mercosur free trade bloc in 2012. However, with a scarcity of data and rigorous evidence, and no real space for debate on the issues, Paraguay's policymakers, private sector and civil society lacked the evidence and analysis necessary to help the country address the challenges and opportunities of integrating into the world economy.

WHAT CADEP DID —In order to fill the gap in evidence and debate, and with the support of the Think Tank Initiative, in 2011 CADEP launched the *Observatory of International Economics* (OBEI). The Observatory engages in research, dissemination

and training on issues related to the international economy. Its mission is to support the public sector to develop enabling policies and the private sector to make sound business decisions. The Observatory also aims to enrich the debate among scholars, media reporters and members of civil society organizations.

The Observatory features databases, research publications, and videos that are all available in a dedicated space on CADEP's website. Through the Observatory, CADEP regularly organizes workshops, seminars, discussion groups, and capacity building activities for interested individuals such as journalists, academics, members of the business community, and political actors. CADEP also trains and educates civil society on topics of national importance.

By design, the Observatory is a vehicle for communications and policy influence, reaching and educating a wide range of stakeholders through its many activities. To further raise its profile,



CADEP engaged in a communications campaign that garnered coverage in national newspapers, on radio and on television, as well as in the international media, comprising over 150 mentions in the written press and more than 30 television and radio interviews.

THE OUTCOME —The Observatory is already contributing to a more accurate and evidence-

based debate on the future of trade in Paraguay. As a result of CADEP's research, the Paraguayan Central Bank has revisited its statistics on the country's trade account, and the think tank's figures are being used in trade negotiations. Overall it is clear that CADEP is changing the conditions and terms of the debate on Paraguay's regional and international trade strategy and policy.

To find out more about CADEP, visit <http://www.cadep.org.py>

You can also visit the Observatory of International Economics at <http://www.cadep.org.py/2011/12/observatorio-de-economia-internacional/>

TTI's Stories of Influence Series

This series, produced by TTI, shares stories about the impact Southern think tanks have on policy initiatives. All the think tanks featured in this series are supported by the [Think Tank Initiative](#), a multi-donor program dedicated to strengthening the capacity of independent policy research organizations in the developing world. At www.thinktankinitiative.org, you can find profiles on the organizations in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia supported by the program, as well as publications, working papers, and general information about TTI.