



**THE OPEN GOVERNMENT
PARTNERSHIP
INITIATIVE**

**DRAFT NATIONAL
ACTION PLAN FOR THE
REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

JANUARY 2013

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ACRONYMS

ARIC	Audit Report Implementation Committee
APRM	Africa Peer Review Mechanism
CEPA	Centre For Policy Analysis
CHRAJ	Commission For Human Rights And Administrative Justice
CHRI	Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Assembly
EOCO	Economic And Organized Crime Office
GACC	Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition
GIFMIS	Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System
GII	Ghana Integrity Initiative
GIS	Ghana Immigration Service
GODI	Ghana Open Data Initiative
ICT	Information And Communication Technology
IDEG	Institute For Democratic Governance
IEA	Institute Of Economic Affairs
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Coalition
M & E	Monitoring And Evaluation
MDA	Ministries, Departments And Agencies
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal And District Assemblies
MOFEP	Ministry Of Finance And Economic Planning
MOJAGD	Ministry Of Justice And Attorney General's Department
NALAG	National Association Of Local Authorities Of Ghana
NDPC	National Development And Planning Commission
NGP	National Governance Programme
NITA	National Information Technology Agency
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PEOU	Policy Evaluation And Oversight Unit
PIAC	Public Interest Accountability Committee
RTI	Right To Information

1.0 INTRODUCTION

After years of political authoritarianism and instability, Ghana, at the beginning of the 1990s, embarked on a path of sustained political liberalization and democratization. A liberal democratic constitution promulgated in 1992 paved the way for a multi-party democratic system which has been maintained for two decades. Popular commitment to multi-party democracy, combined with elite consensus, has guaranteed steady progress toward the attainment of open and democratic government.

The end has justified the political commitment invested by the people and the political class over the years. Today, Ghana enjoys the enviable reputation of being one of Africa's most democratic, stable, peaceful and best governed countries. Irrespective of the governance index applied, Ghana stands tall among African countries and in the international community.

It is against this backdrop that Ghana, in September 2011, signed onto the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The Open Government Partnership is an international initiative that seeks to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, enhance citizen's participation, promote accountability and adopt new technologies to enhance good governance.

Within the framework of promoting state-civil society collaboration, the OGP is governed by a Global Steering Committee comprising representatives of government and civil society organizations.

The formal launch of the OGP took place on September 20, 2011, when the eight founding governments: Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, United Kingdom and the United States endorsed an Open Government Declaration and announced their country action plans. Some 43 countries round the world, including Ghana, have, since then, joined the Partnership.

2.0 OPEN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO DATE

Ghana's return to constitutional rule since 1992 has witnessed a steady development of an overall framework to implement open government. Through the adoption of the 1992 Constitution, the people of Ghana irrevocably committed themselves to the pursuit of liberty, equality of opportunity and prosperity for all. Among other things, these noble national ideals are to be achieved through the following hallowed principles:

- Freedom, justice, probity and accountability;
- The rule of law; and
- The protection and preservation of fundamental human rights and freedom.

Five years onwards, in 1997, a National Governance Programme (NGP) was established. The underlying objective was to facilitate interfaces between actors and institutions within the state and non-state entities.

At the same time, the NGP was designed to empower civil society organizations, in Ghana, to claim their legitimate political space and assume their rightful role in the policy making process.

In 2005, Ghana opened another chapter in open, transparent and accountable government when the country became one of the very first to submit to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The country review report and programme of action (p33) acknowledged that Ghana had taken adequate legislative measures to ensure accountability and efficiency in government administration.

In 2012, a major constitutional review exercise came to its climax when the Government issued a White Paper on the report and recommendations of the Constitutional Review Commission. Government accepted the majority of the recommendations and assigned reasons for rejecting the rest. A 5-member Implementation Committee set up by the Government had until December 31, 2012, to bring its work to a conclusion.

2.1 Specific Initiatives

Within this overall framework, Ghana has adopted and implemented a wide variety of measures in every open government thematic area; transparency, citizens' participation, accountability, technology and innovation.

2.1.1 Transparency

The 1992 Constitution contains adequate provisions for ensuring financial discipline and effective management of resources and economic governance in general. There are provisions for raising taxes and authorizing expenditure through parliamentary approval. Institutions such as the Auditor-General's Department and the Public Accounts Committee exist to exercise stringent control on the use of public resources.

In addition, the budget is prepared through a process that is manifestly transparent. Civil society and private sector operators participate in pre-budget consultations while Ministries, Departments and Agencies have opportunity to make their input. The approved budget is published and made accessible to citizens through newspapers and Finance Ministry websites. The Ministry of Finance regularly publishes quarterly financial data.

2.1.2 Access to Information

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees to all the right to information, among many other rights. Since 2010, Cabinet has approved a Right to Information Bill which is still before the joint parliamentary committee on Communications and Legal, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs. The Bill, in principle, enjoys broad civil society support.

2.1.3 Tracking Government Investment, Reporting on Efficiency and Other Transparent Commitments

Currently, the office in charge of monitoring the performance and capacity needs of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) is the Policy Evaluation and Oversight Unit (PEOU) at the Office of the President. The PEOU performs four crucial functions in relation to the Presidency, namely:

- Creation and updating of national databank on resource capacity of MDAs and MMDAs relative to their functions;
- Monitoring and evaluation of Government policies, programs and projects;
- Providing the Presidency with advisory opinions on the performance of MDAs; and
- Creating, for the Presidency, MDAs performance databank on current state of development of the country.

The PEOU was not set up by legislation.

2.1.4 Citizens' participation

Under Ghana's 1992 Constitution, an elaborate system of local government and decentralized administration has been created. The primary focus of this decentralized governmental

administration is the transfer of functions, powers, responsibilities and resources from the central government to the decentralized units in a systematic way that promotes local development and democracy. Under existing arrangements, 276 Districts operate within 10 administrative Regions. Each of 10 Regional Co-ordinating Councils has responsibility for co-ordinating the activities of District Assemblies (Das) within its jurisdiction.

The District Assemblies have become one of the principal political mechanisms for ensuring popular participation in decision-making at the local level. Each Assembly has elected representatives who link their people to the Assemblies, backed by appropriate sub-district structures known as Unit Committees, Town and Area Councils that are even closer to the people.

Beyond the creation of the institutional framework for the popular participation, more direct interface programs between government and people have been created in the area of economic planning, development and democracy. Sector Working Groups exist in which government representatives, development partners and representatives of CSOs exchange or share ideas.

Regular meet-the-press sessions have been instituted to provide a platform for Ministers of State to brief the public on the activities of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies under their charge and receive feedback.

At the level of the Presidency, the President engages with the press, periodically, on various issues. Some Presidents have utilized a “People’s Assembly” system, a presidential forum with the people that enables the President to interact annually with the people in a different regional capital.

2.1.5 Accountability

Constitutionally and practically, the Government of Ghana remains committed to its obligation, that of accounting to the people for its stewardship. Freedom, justice and accountability and the rule of law constitute important constitutional requirements as the preamble to the Constitution clearly states.

2.1.5.1 The Constitution has created a Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) with an anti-corruption and administrative justice mandate that covers the investigation of private persons and public officials alleged to have been involved in all forms of corruption.

In addition, an Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO) has been established, since 2010, with the primary goal of investigation and detecting organized crime and facilitating the retrieval of proceeds of crime.

2.1.5.2 The Financial Intelligence Centre, created in 2010, has the mandate to receive reports on suspicious financial transactions and relay financial intelligence about money laundering and financing of terrorism to the appropriate institutions established to deal with these matters.

The spearhead of Ghana's anti-corruption efforts is the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) and the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII). These institutions provide an important forum where government, public and private sector institutions and CSOs effectively collaborate in the anti-corruption fight.

Ghana's anti-corruption endeavors have generated a wide array of specific legislation and national measures that constitute a robust anti-corruption framework. Key among these are:

- The Financial Administration Act, 2003 (Act 654) which regulates the financial management of the public sector, defines the responsibilities of officers in charge of financial management within the government administration and provides for effective and efficient management of public money;
- The Internal Audit Act, 2003 (Act 658), which creates an Internal Audit Agency as the central body that co-ordinates, facilitates, monitors and supervises internal audit activities within Ministries, Departments and Agencies;
- The Public Procurement Act (Act 663) which establishes the Public Procurement Authority as the body which makes administrative and institutional arrangements for procurement and sets tendering procedures and other matters;
- The Whistleblower Act, 2006, which specifies the procedures through which an individual may, in the public interest, disclose information concerning unlawful and other illegal or corrupt practices while protecting the persons who blow the whistle;
- The National Anti-Corruption Plan (2012 - 2021) is pending before Parliament.
- The Code of Conduct for Public Officers. This is a generic code based on Article 284 of the Constitution of Ghana. It deals with two main elements, conflict of interest and asset declaration by public officers. It complements the Guidelines in Conflict of Interest developed in 2006. On the basis of this, a draft Public Officers (Code of Conduct) Bill has been placed before Cabinet.

2.1.6 Transparency in the Extractive Industries

Endowed with substantial natural resources, Ghana has appropriately made provisions for the transparent management of its God-given wealth. To begin with, within the territorial boundaries of Ghana, all mineral deposits existing in their natural state in, under or upon any land, rivers and stream water courses and exclusive economic zone or continental shelf is vested by the Constitution in the President of the Republic. The Constitution further gives mandate to several commissions to co-ordinate policies for the management of natural wealth. The main public bodies co-ordinating policies on natural resources are the Forestry Commission, the Minerals Commission and the Petroleum Commission.

Ghana acceded to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2003 and became compliant in 2010. The implementation of the initiative in Ghana has led to the development of guidelines for the use of community's share of mineral royalties. This is to curb abuses identified by the Ghana EITI report. A draft bill intended to make revenue and contract disclosures in the extractive sector mandatory, is before cabinet.

Since the production of petroleum in commercial quantities commenced in Ghana, Parliament has enacted the Petroleum Revenue Management Act, 2011 (Act 815) to provide arrangements in accordance with clear, transparent and accountable procedures. The Act requires the establishment of a Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC) constituted largely by CSO representatives, to play the role of an independent oversight body on the collection, allocation and application of oil revenue. So far, the independence of PIAC and its integrity have not been assailed in anyway by Government.

2.1.7 Technology and innovation

At the beginning of the millennium, the Ghana Government adopted a policy of achieving accelerated socio-economic development through the development, deployment and exploitation of ICT within the economy, society and government administration.

The policy came to be known as the Ghana ICT for Accelerated Development or ICT4AD policy.

In addition to several socio-economic objectives underlying ICT4AD, the policy also aimed at attaining major governance objectives.

A principal governance objective was to support the modernization of the civil and public services through institutional reform, renewal and deployment and exploitation of ICT to facilitate improvements in operational effectiveness, efficiency and service delivery.

Another objective was to guide the development and implementation of electronic governance. As a concrete commitment to these NITA was set up to actualize the application of technology to governance.

Under ICT4AD, Ghana has made progress in the application and adoption of electronic services to governance. A large number of government Ministries have invested resources in the production of their own specific ICT policy. The policy articulates clearly how each Ministry proposes to deploy and use ICT to achieve its specific objectives.

Ghana has developed a robust legal regime to support ICT development and several important legislative acts have been enacted to support ICT policies.

Government has developed across the country an ICT support network which is policy driven to a certain level.

To collect and collate views from a broad spectrum of civil society organizations, local government institutions, traditional authorities and MDAs extensive open government consultations were conducted throughout Ghana between October and November 2012. To achieve a more focused consultation process the country was divided into three zones. The Northern zone consultations were held at Tamale in the Northern region, the Central zone consultations took place in Kumasi while the Southern zone consultations were conducted at Cape Coast. At the end of the zonal consultation process a National Consultative Forum was held in Accra and this drew a large number of other stakeholders including Development Partners and professional associations.

3.0 GHANA GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

Building on on-going open government initiatives and to further deepen Government's resolve to make government more open, accessible, transparent and accountable to the people through the application of modern ICT, the Government commits itself to further initiatives in the defined open government thematic areas. Partnerships between Government, on the one hand, and the private sector and CSOs, on the other hand, will serve as the cornerstone of Ghana's open government commitments. In the two-year period (2013 - 2014), Government will stretch a hand of co-operation to the private sector, civil society and all independent commissions of state and political parties to ensure that government remains open to all sectors of society in order to raise

the degree of openness to a level compatible with Ghana's governance status within the international community. Open government will also not be a nine-day wonder but will continue to be an open-ended, open-to-all, ever on-going political process with all-time commitment from various stakeholders.

3.1 Transparency

3.1.1 Fiscal Responsibility

The Government of Ghana will, within the two-year period (2013 - 2014) take concrete action to strengthen the management of public expenditure by working closely with relevant stakeholders to introduce the appropriate legislation in the Ghana Parliament.

Towards this end, the Government will consistently work towards the passage of the Fiscal Responsibility Act that strengthens mechanisms for fiscal discipline and provides the citizenry with clear indicators to determine when the Government is veering off approved expenditures in a way that threatens fiscal stability. Fiscal responsibility legislation is critically necessary to reverse, for example, the trend of overspending associated with Ghana's electoral cycle.

Actions

- Conduct a national consultation process with think-tanks, labour unions, private sector organizations on the necessity, content, limits, merits and demerits of a Fiscal Responsibility Act
- Finalize a report on the national consultation process
- Prepare and place a draft Fiscal Responsibility Bill for Cabinet approval
- Introduce Draft Bill in Parliament for debate and passage
- Educate the public on content and benefits of the Fiscal Responsibility Act

Responsible Agencies: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP), Centre for Economic Policy Analysis (CEPA), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)

3.1.2 Fiscal transparency

Fiscal transparency will be improved by making available to a wider section of the population additional budgetary information that facilitates the tracking of government expenditures especially on government projects. Towards this goal, budget figures will be rendered more user-friendly, simplified versions of the budget will be produced and widely disseminated, and reports on revenues and expenditures produced and distributed twice within the fiscal year.

Government further commits to collaborate with relevant civil society organizations and encourage the production and dissemination of a citizens' budget that reflects more broadly the direction of citizens' aspirations in relation to their national budget.

Actions

- Convene a consultative meeting with all relevant CSOs and private sector on budget presentation format that facilitates effective tracking of expenditures
- Convene forum of Government, private sector organization and CSOs to discuss the production of a simplified version of the budget for popular usage
- Support competent and relevant CSOs to co-ordinate the production of a citizens' budget on an annual basis

Responsible Agencies: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP).

Collaborators: Institute For Fiscal Policy (IFFP), Centre for Economic Policy Analysis (CEPA), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) and SEND Ghana.

3.1.3 Right to Information

The Government of Ghana has, since 2010, been working very hard on a major instrument of transparency in the shape of a Right to Information Bill which is currently pending before Parliament. To give transparency a badly needed shot in the arm, Government undertakes to work hand-in-hand with Parliament to ensure the early passage of the Bill. To achieve this undertaking, Government will support every effort to ensure an immediate resolution of all outstanding issues between Parliament and CSO supporters of the Bill.

Actions

- Convene a weekend retreat of the Coalition on Right to Information Bill and the Parliamentary Committee on Communications and the Parliamentary Committee on Legal, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs in order to thrash out the necessary compromises on the Bill
- Pass the Right to Information Bill by the end of 2013.
- Disseminate information and educate the public on the Law.

Responsible Agencies: Ministry of Information (MOI), National Media Commission (NMC).

Collaborators: Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Coalition on the Right to Information Bill (CRTI), Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)

3.1.4 Human Rights and Anti-Corruption

Government's commitment to human rights is already evident in the establishment of the human rights court. The Government of Ghana will substantially strengthen the human rights and anti-corruption regime already in existence by supporting the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) to more effectively pursue its human rights and anti-corruption mandates. One sure way of realizing this commitment will be to clarify the mandate of CHRAJ, in order to ensure that the Commission is not flooded with petitions outside its mandate, especially in Ghana's rural districts.

Government will also support CHRAJ to monitor Government's international human rights obligations.

Currently, decisions of CHRAJ do not carry the weight of a court of justice. Government commits to introduce the necessary legislative instrument that will allow successful petitioners at CHRAJ to register CHRAJ decisions in court to constitute a judgment of a competent court of law.

Additionally, Government will review the salaries and conditions of service of CHRAJ personnel with a view to effecting a significant upgrade, to stem the tide of outflow of legal professionals from the Commission.

Actions

- Conduct a joint Government and relevant anti-corruption and human rights CSOs review of principal impediments to CHRAJ effectiveness
- Present report to Cabinet, through the Attorney-General, for consideration and implementation of recommendations
- Monitor impact of implementation of recommendations by joint Government-CSO committee.
- Monitor implementation of Ghana's commitment to African Union and UN protocols and instruments against corruption.
- Conduct, by mid 2014, a joint M&E session of all responsible agencies to ensure that CHRAJ mandate has been clarified (CHRAJ monitors Government compliance with international human rights commitments; CHRAJ enjoys substantial upgrade in remuneration and conditions of service; and decisions of CHRAJ are registered to confer status of court judgment

Responsible Agencies: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP), Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General's Department (MOJAGD), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ).

Collaborators: Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII).

3.1.5 Oil Revenue Management

The Petroleum Revenues Management Law has provided for the establishment of Public Interest Accountability Committee (PIAC) with the primary responsibility of enforcing transparency in the management of oil revenues. PIAC is a predominantly civil society body that monitors the flow of oil revenues and expenditures. Established in 2011, PIAC, has already issued its first report for that year and enjoyed considerable independence and generous budgetary allocation.

Over the 2013 - 2014 period, the Ghana Government commits itself to maintain and strengthen the independence of PIAC by continuing the provision of adequate budgetary allocation and supporting relevant CSOs to conduct annual M&E exercises to assess the extent of PIAC independence. Government further commits to the full implementation of recommendations from annual M&E reports as it will maintain and strengthen PIAC's independent operations.

Government should further strengthen the legal framework on other minerals such as Gold.

Actions

- Publish regulations on the Petroleum Management Act (Act 815).

- Pass the Mineral Development Fund Bill.
- Call at least four meetings of relevant CSOs, Ministries and Departments to formulate a framework for monitoring and evaluation of PIAC independence
- Support publication and dissemination of M&E reports
- Support relevant agencies to formulate sustainability plans for annual M&E exercises and reports.

Responsible Agency: Ministries of Energy.

Collaborators: Oil and Gas Coalition, ISODEC, IEA, IDEG

3.1.6 Tracking Government Investment

Extensive economic reforms, in the past, included substantial offloading of Government interest in a large number of commercial activities. And, yet, Government still maintains significant investments in some sectors of the economy.

The perennial challenge facing Government is one of finding a mechanism for exercising close oversight and comprehensive tracking of its various investments. Under the OGen government Initiative, the Government commits to assign open and transparent tracking of its overall investment as an additional responsibility of the Policy Evaluation and Oversight Unit in the Office of the President (PEOU). The PEOU, currently, has oversight responsibility for the performance of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) but lacks legislative backing.

During the OGPI plan period, Government will take steps to initiate the process for the PEOU legislative backing that clearly specifies the additional function of tracking overall government

investment. Experience gained from years of monitoring MDAs will prove useful in tracking total government investments.

Actions

- Political leadership and administrative heads to provide the PEOU with accurate and timely information.
- Organize a forum or meeting of CSOs in governance and economic policy to discuss legislative backing and additional PEOU responsibility for oversight and tracking of government investment
- Hold meeting with Attorney-General's Department to prepare the draft legislation for the PEOU, including new function of exercising oversight and tracking of government investments.

Responsible Agencies: Office of the President, Ministry of Justice and Attorney-General's Department (MJAGD), Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MoFEP), PEOU.

Collaborators: IEA, CDD, IDEG

3.2 Citizen's Participation

3.2.1 Participating In Local Government

To bring government closer to the people and the people closer to their government, Ghana's 1992 Fourth Republic Constitution provides for an elaborate system of decentralized government

comprising three major structures, the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (MMDA). MMDAs advance the central government strategic goal of promoting local, economic and social development and democracy. Political parties are constitutionally barred from participation in elections to the decentralized local government bodies – MMDAs.

However, 70 percent of assembly members are elected and 30 percent appointed by the Central Government with advice from local stakeholders, especially Chiefs and other traditional rulers, with consideration for equitable gender representation. Each MMDA has another lower level elective structure, the Unit committee, area and town councils which are deeply embedded in local communities.

In addition to these representative structures, Government commits to deepening participatory democracy by encouraging MMDAs to promote extensive participation of local Civil Society Organizations in their budgetary processes and development planning. The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP) shall, accordingly, require of MMDAs evidence of popular participation in these processes before acceptance and approval.

Government further commits to support Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to organize annual meet-the-people fora to create opportunities for CSOs, other stakeholders and the public at large to participate in the evaluation of activities undertaken by the Assemblies in the preceding year.

Actions

- Organize two meetings between CSOs engaged in local government activities and Ministry of Local Government, MOFEP, NDPC, National Association of Local

Governments (NALAG) and District Assemblies Common Fund Administrator, to synthesize guidelines for deepening CSO participation in local government planning and budgetary processes

- Submit guidelines for wider discussion and adoption by representatives of MMDAs and CSOs.
- Set 2014 as starting point for implementation of guidelines

Responsible Agencies: Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, National Development Planning Commission, District Assemblies Common Fund Administrator.

Collaborators: National Association of Local Government, Institute of Local Government Studies, the SEND Foundation.

3.3 Accountability

In 2013 - 2014, Ghana Government commits to make public officers more accountable to the public by encouraging Parliament to effect the speedy passage of the Code of Conduct for Public Officers Bill and initiate action for immediate implementation. Government will introduce arrangements for the verification of assets declared by public officers through the appointment of a public officer of a rank not lower than an appeal court judge to verify assets and liabilities declared by public officers. This will minimize or bring to closure the persistent skepticism about the existing asset declaration regime and inject public confidence into the process. In its present form of assets declaration, without verification, public confidence is low or non-existent.

Actions

- Organize one consultative forum on the status of the Code of Conduct for Public Officers Bill and legal requirements for appointing an Assets Declaration Commissioner
- Passage of the Bill by parliament.
- Government to appoint Assets Verification Commissioner, by 2014.

Responsible Agencies: Minister in charge of Government Business, Parliamentary Committee on Legal, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs, Attorney-General's Department, CHRAJ.

Collaborators: Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC), Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII).

3.3.1 Implementation of Audit Recommendations

Government will further strengthen the accountability mechanisms of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) by reviewing the composition of the largely dysfunctional Audit Report Implementation Committees (ARICs) to include CSO representatives and independent professionals who will more effectively implement the recommendations of audit reports. A major impediment to effective implementation is that the Implementation Committee is predominantly composed of officers of the same Ministry or Department whose handling of public money has been queried by the Auditor-General.

Actions

- Convene a meeting of appropriate CSOs and government Agencies to review the Financial Administration Act, particularly the provision on Audit Report Implementation Committees (ARICs).
- Agree on amendment of composition of ARICs to include CSO representatives and independent professionals
- Amend Financial Administration Act.

Responsible Agency: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MOFEP).

Collaborators: Centre for Economic Policy Analysis (CEPA), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)

3.3.2 Accountability of Independent Broadcasting

Within the Action Plan period (2013 - 2014), Government will review and enact the national Broadcasting Bill to bring broadcasting, in Ghana, in line with nationally acceptable accountability standards and ensure that it is supportive of national unity and cohesion. Currently, a major national political concern is the threat posed by a vibrant but unregulated independent broadcasting. Some political broadcasting content is considered a threat to national unity, cohesion and even public morality.

Responsible Agencies: Ministry of Information (MOI), National Media Commission (NMC).

Collaborators: Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), Media Foundation of West Africa (MFWA), National Coalition on Broadcasting Bill (NCBB)

3.4 Technology and Innovation

During the 2013 - 2014 Action Plan period, the Ghana Government will continue, with increased vigour, the policy of achieving economic growth and development through the development and deployment and application of ICT. The modernization of the civil and public services through the application of ICT will be accelerated to enhance service delivery, efficiency and effectiveness. The goal is to complete, within the Action Plan period, the implementation of three major ICT-based projects: e-immigration, GIFMIS and Ghana Open Data Initiative (GODI).

The purpose of the introduction of the e-immigration system for visitors is to manage the growth of visitor members in a cost effective way through the use of cutting edge technology and to deliver service consistent with expectations of travelers. The introduction of an e-immigration system will help regulate entry into and exit of the country by foreigners and check fake identities. The automation will affect two seaports and four border entries, including Aflao and Elubo, and will contribute to promoting and improving intelligence sharing within the Ghana Immigration Service (GIS).

The Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) is a charter for public financial management that will help achieve the following key objectives:

- i. Capture all public finances currently scattered at different units, at the centre and across all local governments
- ii. Produce a single unified chart of accounts and budget classification (for budgeting, accounting and reporting) that is compliant with IMF standards

- iii. Develop and implement re-engineered business processes that are best practice
- iv. Consolidate the reporting of all government finances within the two years (2013 - 2014) that GIFMIS will be completed

Ghana further commits to the application of ICT for enhanced service delivery through the full implementation, by the end of 2014, of the Ghana Open Data Initiative (GODI) by the National Information and Technology Agency (NITA). In 2011, Ghana joined the global Open Data Initiative (ODA). The objective of the initiative includes promoting transparency in government transactions and creating business opportunity for re-use of open government data. The initiative involves a bold and innovative approach to governance and how public services should adapt their procedure to meet the demands and necessities of citizens.

GODI will facilitate data collection and dissemination by Ministries, Departments and Agencies and trigger innovation and development through the use of the data so disseminated. The Government, through the Ministry of Communications, will support NITA to open two portals, one immediately, by 2013, and the other, long- term, by 2014, to facilitate the collection and dissemination of data to serve citizens.

Actions

- Institute twice yearly support and solidarity meetings with Ghana Immigration Service and Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to track prospects, progress and problems faced in rolling out GIFMIS and E-immigration

- Call two meetings of Ministry of Communications, NITA and relevant CSOs to assess resource requirement of NITA in rolling out one portal, by end 2014
- Support NITA to roll out the portal to be used for policy making and community participation.
- Collaborate with Ministry of Communications, NITA and relevant CSOs to evaluate benefits to users of the portals established

Responsible Agencies: Ministry of Communications, NITA

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Public Sector Reform Secretariat (PSRS), as the Secretariat of the Ghana Open Government Partnership Initiative (OGPI), is the coordinating and facilitating agency for the purpose of implementing the Ghana National Action Plan of the OGPI. Effective mobilization of human, financial and technical resources for the PSRS will be key to the effective performance of its co-ordinating and facilitating role. The PSRS and the OGPI National Steering Committee shall mobilize, convene and co-ordinate all responsible agencies and collaborators for the purpose of successful translation of the Action Plan into concrete actions. Towards this end, no effort will be spared in mobilizing for the PSRS the requisite human and financial resources for the effective performance of its co-ordinating and facilitatory functions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

As a new middle income and oil exporting country, Ghana makes these commitments based on a number of assumptions, strategies and strong optimism. Open Government commitments require stakeholder commitments for effective implementation. Strong collaboration between government and civil society organizations will be the principal driving force of these commitments. The Open Government Initiative is nutrition for the sustenance of the political system not medication for one time treatment. Persistent and unrelenting efforts will be required to sustain the initiative. Present commitments shall build on on-going efforts. Success in selected commitments shall open the door to even more success in the future.

APPENDIX

OPEN GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (OGPI)

GHANA NATIONAL ACTION PLAN (2013 - 2014)

IMPLEMENTATION ROAD MAP

THEMATIC AREA 1: TRANSPARENCY

3.1	COMMITMENT	COMPLETION DATE
3.1.1	Pass Fiscal Responsibility Act	2013
3.1.2	Pass Right to Information Bill	2013
3.1.3	Policy Oversight and Evaluation Unit to track and oversee Government investment	2013
3.1.4	Clarify CHRAJ mandate, support CHRAJ to monitor Government's international human rights obligations, improve CHRAJ staff remuneration and conditions of service, register CHRAJ decisions to constitute court judgment	2014
3.1.5	Monitor maintenance and strengthening of independence of Public Interest and Accountability Committee	2013/2014

THEMATIC AREA 2: PARTICIPATION

3.2	COMMITMENT	COMPLETION DATE
3.2.1	Enforce full participation of CSOs and other stakeholders in district planning and budgetary processes	2013
3.2.2	Organize annual meet-the-people fora for CSOs and public to participate in end-of-year stock taking	2013/2014

THEMATIC AREA 3: ACCOUNTABILITY

3.3	COMMITMENT	COMPLETION DATE
3.3.1	Pass Code of Conduct for Public Officers Bill and monitor implementation	2013
3.3.2	Review implementation of Audit Report Implementation Committees to include CSO representatives and independent professionals	2014
3.3.3	Enact National Broadcasting Bill to protect national unity and cohesion, and protect public morality	2013

THEMATIC AREA 4: TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

3.4	COMMITMENT	COMPLETION DATE
3.4.1	Complete E-immigration project by automation of entry and exit of Ghana at 4 entry points and 2 seaports	2014
3.4.2	Complete Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information system GIFMIS by bringing all data on government to a central unit	2014
3.4.3	Support National Information Technology Agency (NITA) to create 2 portals for gathering and dissemination of information on government policies	2014