

INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM (IRM):

# LIBERIA PROGRESS REPORT 2015–2016

IRM Staff  
Second Progress Report





# INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM (IRM): LIBERIA

## PROGRESS REPORT 2015-2016



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM (IRM): LIBERIA PROGRESS REPORT 2015-2016

**Liberia's second action plan addressed a wide range of issues such as justice reform, Freedom of Information laws, land governance, community engagement, and financial transparency. The government took major steps toward opening land ownership data and improving aid transparency. Many commitments saw limited completion, however. To improve implementation, the government could coordinate with international partners and assign responsible officials across ministries and agencies.**

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry, to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. Liberia began participating in OGP in 2011. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a biannual review of the activities of each country that participates in OGP.

The Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT) is the lead agency coordinating OGP in Liberia. It is responsible for developing and implementing the action plan, although many of the commitments were developed in conjunction with international partners and include activities that are part of ongoing foreign aid projects in Liberia. As such, development partners have played a significant role in implementing many of the commitments.

To oversee implementation of the action plan, MICAT has formed a national Steering Committee consisting of 30 institutions that represent the executive and legislative branches of government and civil society.

### OGP PROCESS

Countries participating in the OGP follow a process for consultation during development of their OGP action plan and during implementation.

Formulation of the action plan was a consultative process involving government ministries, local authorities, and civil society organisations. Regional workshops were held in all fifteen counties and gathered a wide

### AT A GLANCE

PARTICIPATING SINCE: 2011  
NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS: 20

#### LEVEL OF COMPLETION

COMPLETED:	2 (10%)
SUBSTANTIAL:	7 (35%)
LIMITED:	8 (40%)
NOT STARTED:	3 (15%)

#### COMMITMENT EMPHASIS

ACCESS TO INFORMATION:	15 (75%)
CIVIC PARTICIPATION:	4 (20%)
PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY:	1 (5%)
TECH & INNOVATION FOR TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY:	5 (25%)

#### COMMITMENTS THAT ARE:

CLEARLY RELEVANT TO AN OGP VALUE:	17 (85%)
OF TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL IMPACT:	7 (35%)
SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED:	9 (45%)

**ALL THREE (🔄): 3**

*This report was prepared by the IRM staff under the supervision of the IEP.*

range of voices. The consultations were conducted through town hall meetings, semi-structured interviews, and a final validation forum. The Steering Committee meets monthly in private and the minutes are not available online. The government conducted the self-assessment of the action plan and published the report in October 2016 without a public comment period.

## COMMITMENT IMPLEMENTATION

As part of OGP participation, countries make commitments in a two-year action plan. The Liberia action plan contains twenty commitments. The following tables summarize for each commitment the level of completion, potential impact, whether it falls within Liberia's planned schedule and the key next steps for the commitment in future OGP action plans. Similar commitments have been grouped and re-ordered in order to make reading easier.

Note that the IRM updated the star criteria in early 2015 in order to raise the standard for model OGP commitments. Under these criteria, commitments must be highly specific, relevant to OGP values, of transformative potential impact, and substantially completed or complete. Liberia received three starred commitments (Commitments 1.5, 1.6, and 2.1).

**Table 1 | Assessment of Progress by Commitment**

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION			
	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE
★ COMMITMENT IS SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE, CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.								
<b>Theme I: Transparency</b>								
1.1 Appoint and train PIOs								
1.2 Popularize FOI Law								
1.3 Expand Open Budget Initiative								
1.4 Information on Land Reforms and Natural Resources								
★1.5 Information on Commercial Land Use Rights								
★1.6 Development Assistance Transparency								
1.7 Link Financial Management System with the Aid Management Platform								
1.8 Track EVD Funds								

COMMITMENT SHORT NAME	POTENTIAL IMPACT				LEVEL OF COMPLETION			
	NONE	MINOR	MODERATE	TRANSFORMATIVE	NOT STARTED	LIMITED	SUBSTANTIAL	COMPLETE
<p>★ COMMITMENT IS SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE, CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED.</p>								
<b>Theme II: Citizen Participation</b>								
★2.1 Implementation of the New Jury Law								
2.2 Enhance Citizen Monitoring of the Justice System								
2.3 Civic Education and citizen engagement using offline tools								
2.4 Liberia National Police (LNP) 'Know Your Rights' Policing Campaign								
<b>Theme III: Accountability and Integrity</b>								
3.1 Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act								
3.2 Community Building for Accountability Organizations								
3.3 Improve Integrity Within Government Systems								
<b>Theme IV: Technology and Innovation</b>								
4.1 Collect Citizen's Feedback Via SMS								
4.2 Improve Online Government Information								
4.3 Expand Integration of Financial Management System (IFMIS)								
4.4 Digitize Community Policing								
4.5 Launch an Open Data Portal								

**Table 2 | Summary of Progress by Commitment**

NAME OF COMMITMENT	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
<b>Theme 1: Transparency</b>	
<p><b>1.1 Appoint and train PIOs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Moderate</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment seeks to further implement the 2010 FOI law by appointing and training 50 Public Information Officers (PIOs) to work in government ministries. By June 2016, 41 PIOs had been appointed and civil society partners carried out the capacity building trainings. The Independent Information Commission (IIC) has not published any quarterly reports on recruitment and training practices or government agencies' compliance with the Freedom of Information (FOI) law. Moving forward, IRM recommends concluding the recruitment of all PIOs and institutionalizing their roles in public administration.</p>
<p><b>1.2 Popularize FOI Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Moderate</li> <li>• Completion: Complete</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment aims to create the online platform for submission of information requests and to popularize the FOI Law through radio talk shows and town hall meetings. The government carried out awareness raising activities via billboards in 6 of the 15 counties and conducted town hall meetings. The IIC established an online platform to allow citizens to submit information requests online. CSOs ran a tracking system to collect information on requests, revealing that government lacks the capacity to respond to requests in a timely manner. To ensure effective implementation of the FOI law, each government agency will need to create a request tracking system and publish annual reports on the types of requests received, the time dedicated to processing them, and the outcomes.</p>
<p><b>1.3 Expand open budget initiative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Transformative</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment plans to publish key budget documents and solicit feedback from citizens on the budgeting process. Sixty-five hundred copies of the booklet, A Citizen's Guide to the National Budget, were produced and distributed to libraries and academic institutions in all 15 counties. TV and radio talk shows and town halls held discussions about budgetary practices. The SMS system for citizens to provide feedback on budgetary issues has not started, and no audit reports have been released. Moving forward, IRM recommends that a single government agency be given the leadership role to complete this commitment. The next step would be to improve citizens' feedback mechanisms.</p>
<p><b>1.4 Information on land reforms and national resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Moderate</li> <li>• Completion: Substantial</li> </ul>	<p>To improve transparency of land governance, the Liberian Land Commission committed to providing information about land and natural resource use, and how communities may be affected. Previously, there was little to no information available on land use, such as natural resource rights, concessions, protected areas, and community lands. In February 2016, the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) launched a platform publishing concessions and land use contracts from all relevant commercial sectors (forestry, agriculture, mining, oil and gas, and public-private partnerships). However, there are still no data available on the locations of private/community land rights. Further steps include collecting and publishing survey data, identifying all community and privately owned land, and digitizing deed records.</p>
<p><b>★1.5 Information on commercial land use rights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Transformative</li> <li>• Completion: Substantial</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment aimed to increase citizens' knowledge of commercial land rights by publishing information and interactive maps showing community land boundaries, protected forest areas, and where commercial contracts have been granted. Publishing information on land use can help mediate conflicts where citizens and companies have competing claims to land ownership. A Concession Information Management System (CIMS) has been developed and launched, allowing users to view commercial land use rights via a map-based web platform. While Liberia is EITI compliant and has made most contracts in the agriculture, mining, and forest sectors available online, not all have GPS coordinates showing where projects are carried out. Going forward, the Land Authority could provide citizens with hard copy information on policies, laws, how to register property, and commercial land purchases.</p>

NAME OF COMMITMENT	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
<p><b>1.6 Transparency of development assistance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Transformative</li> <li>• Completion: Substantial</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment sought to create an aid management platform to capture international donations and how they are being spent. Since tracking of foreign aid has been historically challenging in Liberia, disclosing details on donations could significantly improve transparency of development assistance. The Ministry of Finance (MOF) and international partners built the aid management platform, which displays information on project locations, disbursed amounts, donor agencies, and sectors where aid is being provided. In June 2016, Development Gateway helped the Government Aid Management and Coordination Unit train staff on how to populate the platform. Although data is steadily being added, the platform has not been publicized and is still under construction. To increase the usability of the platform, a permanent URL needs to be assigned and the website promoted to ensure wider uptake.</p>
<p><b>1.7 Link IFMIS with aid management platform</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Unclear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Moderate</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>The commitment plans to consolidate financial spending information in one platform to better account for how monetary resources are being used. The Aid Management Coordination Unit and international partners conducted a technical assessment to determine how data modelling in the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) could be transferred to the Aid Management Platform. This was a preparatory step, conducted internally without any public facing activity. The process has since stalled due to technical and financial challenges. Once the platform is fully integrated, the Ministry of Finance could distribute key findings on development spending, so that civil society can compare government statistics with international donor organizations' reports.</p>
<p><b>1.8 Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Tracking</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Moderate</li> <li>• Completion: Substantial</li> </ul>	<p>To make Ebola eradication spending transparent, the Ministry of Health (MOH) committed to publishing disaggregated information on the affected areas and the amount of funds disbursed for fighting the disease. The Ebola crisis in 2013 revealed a minimal capacity for detailed reporting on how foreign health aid is distributed. Beginning in 2015, the ministry began providing more detailed information, in addition to aggregate reports on health donations. The report published on the MOH website includes donation amounts and how funds were spent, for example, on hospital construction and medication procurement. The Liberian Open Data Portal, where interactive health data visualisations are to be featured, remains under construction. Moving forward, the Ministry of Health could better inform citizens on health spending through an information campaign targeting rural health clinics.</p>
<p><b>Theme II: Citizen Participation</b></p>	
<p><b>2.1 Implementation of the New Jury Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Transformative</li> <li>• Completion: Complete</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment aims to increase citizens' participation in the justice system by establishing a system for selecting and educating citizen juries. The Central Jury Management Office was established in Monrovia with approved budget and staffing and regional offices in eight counties. With the assistance of United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the Ministry of Justice created a database of citizens eligible for jury duty. Citizens selected to serve on juries are given training. Awareness raising activities around the role of juries were carried out in eight counties. Moving forward, IRM recommends continued training and public awareness raising about the jury system and adequate funding from the national budget.</p>
<p><b>2.2 Citizen monitoring of the justice system</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Minor</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment seeks to publish quarterly analyses of court returns. Publication of regular reports could be a positive step toward increased transparency of court decisions. The Ministry of Justice has collected some data on court returns, such as trial dates and case types, but has not published quarterly reports. Moving forward, IRM recommends the next action plan include a commitment to provide more information to citizens about court proceedings and trial outcomes.</p>

NAME OF COMMITMENT	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
<p><b>2.3 Civic Education and engagement using offline tools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Unclear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Minor</li> <li>• Completion: Substantial</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment is designed to raise citizens' awareness of corruption issues and to gauge their perceptions of public sector corruption. Accountability Lab, an international NGO working in Liberia, helped to create a music video, murals, and comic books focused on educating youth about the negative effects of corruption. The annual perceptions survey, conducted through mobile software, had not been completed by July 2016. The data analysis and publication is planned for 2017. To make this commitment directly relevant to the OGP values of transparency and civic participation, the survey results could be used to develop a mechanism for citizens to report their experiences of corruption. The next action plan could include a commitment to establish a corruption reporting hotline with a clear follow-up procedure.</p>
<p><b>2.4 LNP Know Your Rights policing campaign</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Moderate</li> <li>• Completion: Not started</li> </ul>	<p>The "Know Your Rights" campaign entails publishing laws and regulations on the enforcement powers of police as well as the rights of citizens in filing complaints. Implementation of the commitment has not started. IRM recommends the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) publish on its website procedures for submitting citizens' complaints. In addition, a more targeted public outreach campaign could help guide the public on how to report police misconduct.</p>
<p><b>Theme III: Accountability and Integrity</b></p>	
<p><b>3.1 Passage of Whistleblower protection act</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Transformative</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment entails passage of the Whistleblower Protection Act, which had been drafted in Parliament prior to adoption of the OGP action plan. Parliament has not made the draft publicly available. While CSOs have been in favor of publishing the draft law, they have not conducted a comprehensive advocacy campaign. IRM recommends the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) work with CSOs to engage with the Legislature to pass the bill. LACC could also conduct public outreach on the importance of whistleblower protection.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Community building for accountability organizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Minor</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>The creation of an OpenGov Hub in Monrovia, along with the establishment of "accountability incubators" in the 15 counties is designed to set up workspace and resource sharing for accountability initiatives. The site for the OpenGov Hub was identified and renovation work was ongoing in June 2016. Groups working on transparency can reserve the space for meetings and workshops. Accountability incubator programs to provide seed funding, training, and mentorship have been instituted by Accountability Lab. Nine young civil society leaders and entrepreneurs have been selected for training. Budget constraints have prevented the Incubator project from funding participants in all 15 counties.</p>
<p><b>3.3 Improve integrity within government systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Unclear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Minor</li> <li>• Completion: Substantial</li> </ul>	<p>Training of recent graduates entering the civil service aims to foster a culture of integrity within government systems. The goal is to train at least 20 government officials and start an innovation fund to support projects proposed by civil servants to strengthen ethical administrative practices. By June 2016, the Liberian Institute for Public Administration (LIPA) had trained 20 senior and junior officers on integrity issues. Over 40 new and senior civil servants had participated in ethics training on topics of accountability and transparency, ethical leadership, hiring, and reporting on tax forms and deductions. The innovation funds have not been disbursed. Going forward, IRM recommends creating strong whistleblower protections so civil servants can report instances of ethical violations.</p>

NAME OF COMMITMENT	SUMMARY OF RESULTS
<b>Theme IV: Technology and Innovation</b>	
<b>4.1 Citizens feedback via SMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Minor</li> <li>• Completion: Not started</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment seeks to collect citizens' feedback on development project outcomes, spending, and use of public services through SMS. The commitment did not specify how feedback may be used. Implementation of this commitment has not started. The Ministry of Finance could engage with development partners and mobile telecom companies in Liberia (GSMs) to initiate rollout of an SMS platform for educating and surveying citizens.</p>
<b>4.2 Improve online Government information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Moderate</li> <li>• Completion: Substantial</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment is designed to standardize government websites and train staff on how to maintain those websites. With the support of iLab Liberia, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications created government website standards which were implemented by 70% of all government agencies (45 in total). Government ministries were provided with new ICT policy guidelines, which were used to train staff. To complete this commitment, the remaining agencies need to comply with the new web standards.</p>
<b>4.5 Launch an Open Data portal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Transformative</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>Creating an open data portal on which the government regularly publishes data, statistics, and information in the public interest could transform access to information in Liberia. As of July 2016, the portal was still under construction, but the Ministry of Finance, with the support of international project partners, began developing a prototype for the portal. The launch of the portal is planned for Spring 2017.</p>
<b>4.3 Expand Integration of Financial Management Systems (IFMIS)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Minor</li> <li>• Completion: Limited</li> </ul>	<p>The Integration of Financial Management Systems (IFMIS) across 17 additional government ministries and agencies aims to facilitate provision of public financial management information. Additionally, hardware and software technical support has been extended to 19 ministries, agencies, and commissions. However, financial data has not been published in a public user interface, and most progress, thus far, has involved completing technical updates to the IFMIS system. The IRM recommends that the government and project partners publicize the IFMIS system and share financial data with the public in the second half of the implementation period. Educating citizens and civil society groups on how to use the IFMIS system to and and track financial information will be a key step in opening access to government information.</p>
<b>4.4 Establish LNP Office Informatics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear</li> <li>• Potential Impact: Transformative</li> <li>• Completion: Not started</li> </ul>	<p>This commitment plans to establish a national online platform to track police data in real time. Such data includes crime maps, traffic violations, and actions taken against police officers who display unprofessional conduct. A well-functioning platform could transform citizens' access to public safety and policing information. The Liberia National Police (LNP) has not developed a website to house an eventual tracking platform. Major roadblocks identified by CSOs include limited willingness to release data, technical issues related to standardization, and the lack of resources needed to develop an interactive platform. CSOs have recommended a set of policing data to be published on the Open Data Portal until a police-tracking platform is developed. For the next action plan, IRM recommends breaking the commitment into two separate activities — data collection and web-platform development. A task force made up of MOJ and CSO partners could be created to scope the landscape for public safety data to identify information gatekeepers and currently-used formats for data collection.</p>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

While there has been positive progress in implementing the commitments, some areas need strengthening and reinforcing. Implementation has not been even across commitments. Eleven out of the 20 commitments have been limited in their completion or have not begun. IRM recommends assigning a point of contact for each commitment to coordinate resources and communicate with international development partners supporting implementation. The government could also increase citizens' uptake by publicizing new data and monitoring tools developed in the action plan. Going forward, the next action plan could focus on creating more opportunities for citizens to provide feedback or seek recourse in issue areas addressed by the commitments.

Beginning in 2014, all OGP IRM reports include five key recommendations about the next OGP action planning cycle. Governments participating in OGP will be required to respond to these key recommendations in their annual self-assessments. These recommendations follow the SMART logic in that they are Specific, Measurable, Answerable, Relevant, and Time-bound. Given these findings, the IRM researcher presents the following key recommendations:

### Top Five "SMART" Recommendations

- 1 **Clarify commitment ownership and responsibility.** To strengthen public accountability and project execution, the next plan should establish which government agencies are responsible for completing commitments.
- 2 **Disclose operational budgets, work plans, and aid** to better enable CSOs to track government and international donors' spending.
- 3 **Expand land commitments** to provide citizens with information on how to register land, and develop a system of recourse for citizens to report and resolve land ownership disputes.
- 4 **Publicize transparency platforms** — such as the Aid Management Platform —and work with intermediary organizations to educate and engage the public in tracking and acting on findings.
- 5 **Anti-corruption enforcement.** To engage more citizens in the fight against corruption, the next action plan could develop grievance mechanisms that allow citizens to report, track, and appeal cases of corruption, especially in the judiciary or national police.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: 2015

To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate commitment to open government by meeting minimum criteria on key dimensions of open government. Third-party indicators are used to determine country progress on each of the dimensions. For more information, see Section IX on eligibility requirements at the end of this report or visit [bit.ly/1929F1l](http://bit.ly/1929F1l).



IRM Staff prepared this report with oversight from the IEP.

 The Open Government Partnership (OGP) aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) assesses development and implementation of national action plans to foster dialogue among stakeholders and improve accountability.

# I | NATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN OGP

## 1.1 HISTORY OF PARTICIPATION IN OGP

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder international initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP provides an international forum for dialogue and sharing among governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector, all of which contribute to a common pursuit of open government.

Liberia began its formal participation in September 2011, when President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf declared her country's intention to participate in the initiative.

In order to participate in OGP, governments must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government by meeting a set of (minimum) performance criteria on key dimensions of open government that are particularly consequential for increasing government responsiveness, for strengthening citizen engagement, and for fighting corruption. Objective, third-party indicators are used to determine the extent of country progress on each of the dimensions.

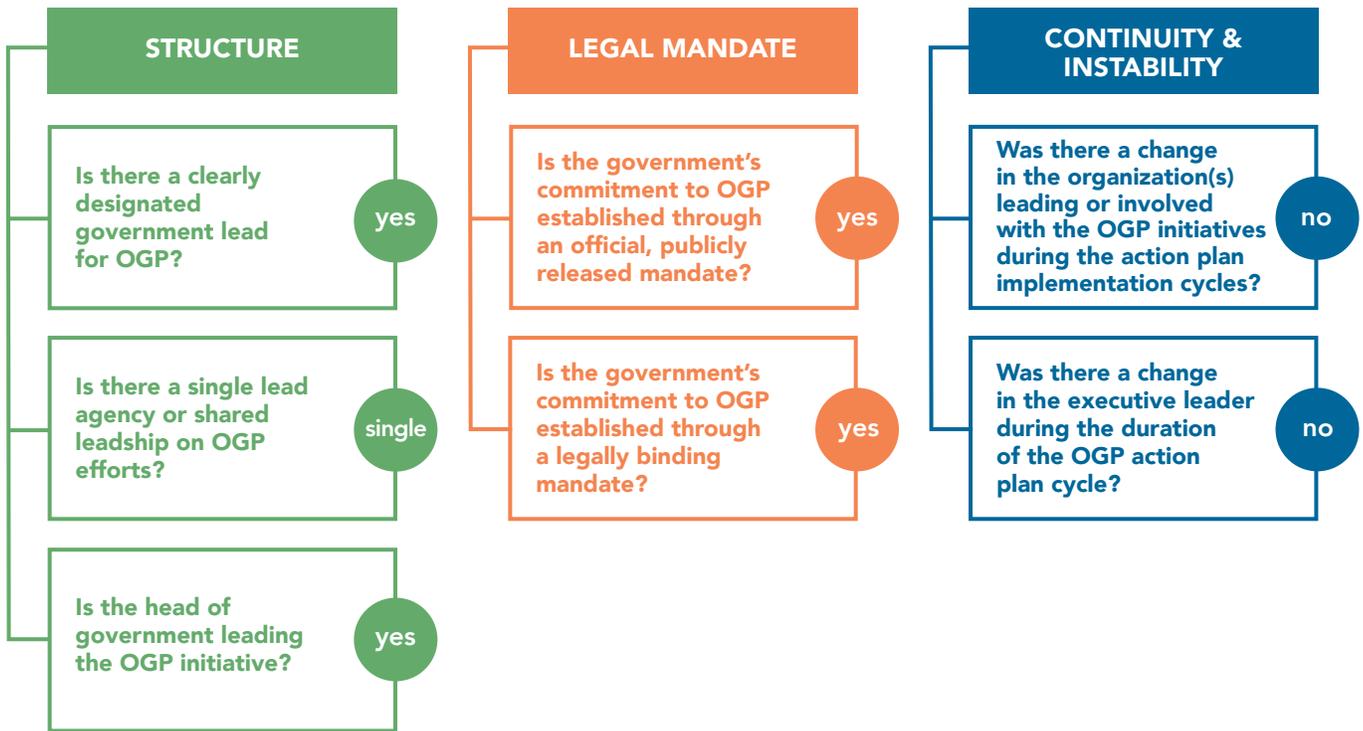
All OGP-participating governments develop OGP action plans that elaborate concrete commitments over an initial two-year period. Action plans should set out governments' OGP commitments, which move government practice beyond the status quo. These commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete on-going reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

Liberia developed its first national action plan from February to April 2013. The effective period of implementation was 1 July 2013 to 31 July 2014. Its second action plan was developed from January to June

2015 and endorsed by the Cabinet on 24 June 2015. This report follows on an earlier review of Liberia's OGP performance, "Liberia's Progress Report, 2013–2014," which dealt with the development and implementation of the first action plan from 1 July 2013 to 31 July 2014. Implementation of the second action plan started on 1 July 2015 and runs until 31 July 2017.

In order to meet OGP requirements, the Independent Reporting Mechanism conducted interviews with civil society organizations working closely on issues related to the action plan commitments. In addition, desk research and input from the Liberian government's point of contact, Andrew Tehmeh, were used to complete this report. Oscar Bloh of the Center of Democratic Governance provided information regarding the action plan's development process. It is the aim of the IRM to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments in each OGP-participating country. Methods and sources are dealt with in a Methodology and sources (Section VI) in this report.

**Table 1.1 | OGP Leadership in Liberia**



## 1.2 OGP LEADERSHIP IN LIBERIA

This sub-section describes the OGP leadership and institutional context for OGP in Liberia. Table 1.1 summarizes this structure while the narrative section provides additional detail.

Liberia is a unitary state with a multiparty democracy, led by a President who is head of both state and government. The republic is composed of three branches: the Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary. The first national action plan received its mandate after the President of Liberia sought membership in OGP and was endorsed by the Cabinet. The mandate of the second action plan was also endorsed by the Cabinet on 24 June 2015. The action plan is a form of policy, so a Cabinet endorsement makes it mandatory and legally binding.

The Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT) is the lead agency responsible for implementing the national action plan in Liberia. However, MICAT has little legal power to enforce policy changes, particularly in other branches of government (see Table 1.1 on the leadership and mandate of OGP in

Liberia). Its current mandate is to manage government communications with citizens on governance and development issues, lead the process of developing the action plan, and ensure coordination in its implementation. The ministry does not have the ability to compel other agencies to enter into commitments.

MICAT has worked to ensure that accountability and transparency commitments from diverse government agencies and institutions are reflected in the action plan. Its Deputy Minister plays a leadership and coordinating role, and the ministry has designated two additional staff to work solely on the implementation of the action plan. Yet, there is no dedicated budget line for OGP-related activities. The two dedicated staff members are paid from the ministry's budget. MICAT received funding from the World Bank to organize regular and national consultations.<sup>1</sup>

MICAT formed a National Steering Committee (NSC) to oversee implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP). The committee is composed of thirty institutions representing government agencies and institutions from the executive and legislative branches, as well as representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs).

The NSC is not subsumed under MICAT but ensures that the action plan is fully implemented. It is chaired by MICAT's Deputy Information Minister (Andrew Tehmeh) and co-chaired by a CSO representative selected by various CSO members. The NSC meets monthly and the venue changes for each meeting.<sup>2</sup> The regular NSC meetings are an attempt to institutionalize coordination of the action plan's implementation.

One year into the action plan, the country is now preparing for presidential and legislative elections on 10 October 2017. These elections will likely shift resources, energy, and effort from regular governance and development work to political rallies, campaigns, and other electoral engagements. All commitments and milestones could be greatly undermined since the implementation period is scheduled to end at the peak of the electoral process, on 31 July 2017.

In both the first and second action plans, Liberia's leadership relied heavily on international organizations as strategic and operational partners in the plan's implementation. The country has a highly centralized governance system divided into counties for administrative purposes. The central government, therefore, has a lot of control over political and economic activities in the counties, and can greatly influence decision-making processes at the county level.

However, consultations in the development of the action plan also included voices at the county level. In contrast to the previous action plan, the leadership broadened the consultation process to include citizens from across the country and is now working on Terms of Reference (ToR) to establish a bureau within MICAT to focus on developing and managing the implementation of the next action plan.

## 1.3 INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION IN OGP

This sub-section describes which government (state) institutions were involved at various stages in OGP. The next section will describe which non-governmental organizations were involved in OGP.

In Liberia, participation in OGP involves two branches of government: the Executive and Judiciary. However, most of the commitments fall under the executive and independent commissions. MICAT, the lead ministry that developed the action plan, made efforts to include the legislature, through written communications to the leadership and follow-up visits, but this branch did not demonstrate interest. Other independent commissions were consulted in the formulation of the plan. Table 1.2 details which institutions were involved in the formulation of the OGP plan.

**Table 1.2 | Participation in OGP by government institutions**

HOW DID INSTITUTIONS PARTICIPATE?		MINISTRIES, DEPARTMENTS, AND AGENCIES	LEGISLATIVE	JUDICIARY (INCLUDING QUASI JUDICIAL AGENCIES)	OTHER, INCLUDING CONSTITUTIONAL INDEPENDENT OR AUTONOMOUS BODIES	SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS
Consult	Number	4	0	2	4	0
	Which ones?	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning Ministry of Post and Telecommunications Ministry of Justice Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo Information Services			Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Freedom of Information Commission	
Propose	Number	0	0	0	0	5
	Which ones?					
Implement	Number	14	0	2	4	0
	Which ones?	See endnote <sup>3</sup>	Parliament	Independent Information Commission Administrative Department of the Supreme Court	Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission Law Reform Commission Governance Commission Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative	

<sup>1</sup>This was revealed during the 29 July 2016 interview in Monrovia with the Deputy Minister of MICAT, who is responsible for OGP implementation.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the minutes from NSC meetings were reviewed by the researcher. The minutes are not accessible online; they are hard copies on file.

<sup>3</sup>MICAT, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Land, Mines, and Energy, National Bureau of Concessions, Forestry Development Authority, Liberia Institute for Public Administration, Civil Service Agency, Liberia Institute for Statistics and Geo-Information Services, Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, and Liberia Telecommunications Authority.

# II | NATIONAL OGP PROCESS

Development of Liberia’s action plan involved consultation meetings between a variety of stakeholders, including government ministries and institutions, civil society organizations, and international partners. Moving forward, the government could give greater advance notice of consultation events, and could better publicize the notes and outcomes from meetings. Providing a sufficient period for public comment on the draft action plan could also allow for the collection of more diverse views.

Countries participating in OGP follow a set of requirements for consultation during the development, implementation and review of their OGP action plan.

Table 2.1 summarises Liberia’s performance during the 2015-2017 action plan.

**Table 2.1 | National OGP Process**

KEY STEPS FOLLOWED <span>5 of 7</span>			
BEFORE	<b>1</b> TIMELINE PROCESS & AVAILABILITY	<b>2</b> ADVANCE NOTICE	<b>3</b> AWARENESS RAISING
	Timeline and process available online prior to consultation	Advance notice of consultation	Government carried out awareness-raising activities
	<b>4</b> MULTIPLE CHANNELS	<b>5</b> DOCUMENTATION & FEEDBACK	
	Consultations held online	Summary of comments provided	
	Consultations held in-person		
DURING	<b>6</b> REGULAR MULTISTAKEHOLDER FORUM		
	Did a forum exist?	Did it meet regularly?	
AFTER	<b>7</b> GOVERNMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT		
	Annual progress report published	Two-week public comment period on report	
	Report available in English and administrative language	Report responds to key IRM recommendations	

The IRM has adopted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Scale of participation in OGP. The table below shows the level of public influence on the action plan. From left to right, features of participation are cumulative. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for “collaborative.” (OGP countries are generally not expected to reach “empower.”)

**Table 2.2 | Level of public input**



## 2.1 ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The action plan evolved from a consultative process with government ministries, the Administrative Division of the Supreme Court, autonomous agencies, and national and international civil society organizations. Following a two-week notice to participants, the consultations were held, first through town hall meetings, then semi-structured interviews and, finally, a validation forum.<sup>1</sup> Unlike that of the first action plan, this consultation process was extensive and targeted the 15 political subdivisions of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Three regional workshops were also held under the supervision of MICAT. The Region 1 workshop was held in Monrovia and included the counties of Montserrado, Gbarpolu, Bomi, Capemount, Bassa, and Rivercess. The workshop in Region 2 was held in Gbarnga and included Bong, Nimba, Margibi, and Lofa Counties. Region 3’s workshop took place in Zwedru and included Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, RiverGee, and Maryland Counties. Five persons represented each county at each of these regional meetings. They were selected by MICAT and included a local authority; the person who focuses on gender at the Ministry of Gender, Children, and

Social Protection; a disability representative; a CSO leader on women's issues, and a youth leader from a youth group. Other Monrovia-based CSOs working on transparency and accountability issues participated in the Montserrado and Gbarnga consultative workshops.

The consultations brought forth diverse views, given the representative group of participants.<sup>3</sup> One outcome was a proposal from the Zwedru forum for the establishment of an accountability hub in each country. This proposal became one of the milestones in the action plan. Unlike the first action plan, this consultative process did not include private sector participation. To ensure that stakeholder views were captured in the final plan, a one-day validation forum was held with CSOs and government institutions in Monrovia. Two persons from each of the 15 counties who participated in the regional workshops were invited to the validation. A total of 47 persons participated. The validation report showed that attendees had no issues with the final commitments that were shared during the forum.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 ONGOING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM

As part of their participation in OGP, governments commit to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation—this can be an existing entity or a new one. This section summarizes that information.

The multi-stakeholder forum was the platform used to inform the development of the action plan, but it did not meet regularly during the implementation period. However, an OGP Steering Committee (SC) met regularly, and included 15 members from government institutions and national and international CSOs working on issues related to the values of OGP. This was a forum established during the implementation of the first action plan with a mandate restricted and dedicated to OGP.

Institutions were invited to participate in the Steering Committee by written communication from MICAT. An international organization representative serves as co-chair of the SC and international project partners and CSOs can influence the implementation process by virtue of their expertise in accountability and technology. International organizations and CSOs represented on the SC are from Monrovia and work on

specialized policy issues, such as access to information, accountability, open data, and budget and technology. All the SC meetings are held in Monrovia.

Notes and minutes of the meetings are neither posted nor publicized, though they and participant lists for each meeting are documented and accessible upon request. Some of the SC meetings have focused on obtaining progress reports from partners responsible for particular commitments. Like the minutes, these reports are not publicized, though stakeholders are allowed to ask questions about the progress of the commitments. The IRM researcher was invited to attend the validation workshop for the action plan, and also attended one of the SC meetings upon request.

## 2.3 SELF-ASSESSMENT

The OGP Articles of Governance require that participating countries publish a self-assessment report three months after the end of the first year of implementation. The self-assessment report must be made available for public comments for a two-week period. This section assesses compliance with these requirements and the quality of the report.

MICAT, the government agency responsible for completing the self-assessment report, was still in the process of collecting progress reports from project partners at the end of the implementation period. The process had been slow and submitting progress reports with empirical evidence to demonstrate completion presented a challenge for partners, which contributed to the delay. The Steering Committee released the self-assessment report in October 2016, and there was no public comment period.

## 2.4 FOLLOW-UP ON PREVIOUS IRM RECOMMENDATIONS

Of the five recommendations contained in the previous IRM report (see Table 2.3), four were addressed and three were integrated into the second action plan. The IRM researcher was informed that budgetary constraints prevented full operational capacity, as intended in Recommendation 2. However, MICAT intends to organize a high level inter-ministerial conference in 2017 to mobilize the support of other government institutions to implement the action plan. The proposal to establish a Secretariat or OGP Implementation

**Table 2.3 | Previous IRM report key recommendations**

RECOMMENDATION 1	RECOMMENDATION 2	RECOMMENDATION 3	RECOMMENDATION 4	RECOMMENDATION 5
Increase citizens' participation of CSOs outside of Monrovia and include commitments from the other two branches of government	Demonstrate top level political commitment in the design, launch, and implementation of NAP	Include commitments from the other two branches of government that reflect OGP commitments	Establish an OGP Secretariat	Develop a coordination strategy to enhance the work of the Secretariat
Addressed? 	Addressed? 	Addressed? 	Addressed? 	Addressed? 
Integrated into next action plan? 	Integrated into next action plan? 	Integrated into next action plan? 	Integrated into next action plan? 	Integrated into next action plan? 

Support Unit within MICAT will be presented at the conference. This unit would be responsible for coordinating the action plan's implementation and transferring responsibility from the current OGP coordinator (Deputy Minister of the MICAT). However, this proposal has not been included in the next action plan, as envisioned by Recommendation 4, though the suggestion has been addressed and the Support Unit will begin institutionalizing OGP work within the government. Finally, the fifth recommendation, to develop a coordinated strategy to guide the work of the Secretariat, was neither addressed nor implemented.

<sup>1</sup>The country was divided into five regions. Town hall meetings took place in each region and brought together participants from the different counties. The validation took place in Monrovia.

<sup>2</sup>Interview conducted with the Deputy Minister of MICAT on 29 July 2016.

<sup>3</sup>Interview held with the Program Manager of Accountability Lab on 3 August 2016. He also co-chairs the Steering Committee.

<sup>4</sup>This report is not accessible by link but available in hard copy.

<sup>5</sup>Interview conducted with a member of CSO who is also part of the SC.

# III | COMMITMENTS

All OGP-participating governments develop OGP action plans that include concrete commitments over a two-year period. Governments begin their OGP action plans by sharing existing efforts related to open government, including specific strategies and ongoing programs.

Commitments should be appropriate to each country's unique circumstances and challenges. OGP commitments should also be relevant to OGP values laid out in the OGP Articles of Governance and Open Government Declaration signed by all OGP-participating countries.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD COMMITMENT?

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multiyear process, governments should attach time frames and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year, whenever possible. This report details each of the commitments the country included in its action plan, and analyzes them for their first year of implementation.

While most indicators used to assess each commitment are self-explanatory, a number deserve further explanation.

- **Specificity:** The IRM researcher first assesses the level of specificity and measurability with which each commitment or action was framed. The options are:
  - High (Commitment language provides clear, verifiable activities and measurable deliverables for achievement of the commitment's objective)
  - Medium (Commitment language describes activity that is objectively verifiable and includes deliverables, but these deliverables are not clearly measurable or relevant to the achievement of the commitment's objective)
  - Low (Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as verifiable but requires some interpretation on the part of the reader to identify what the activity sets out to do and determine what the deliverables would be)
- None (Commitment language contains no measurable activity, deliverables or milestones)
- **Relevance:** The IRM researcher evaluated each commitment for its relevance to OGP values. Based on a close reading of the commitment text as stated in the action plan, the guiding questions to determine the relevance of the commitment to OGP values are:
  - Access to Information: Will government disclose more information or improve quality of the information disclosed to the public?
  - Civic Participation: Will government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions?
  - Public Accountability: Will government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable to their actions?
  - Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability: Will technological innovation be used in conjunction with one of the other three OGP values to advance either transparency or accountability?<sup>1</sup>
- **Potential impact:** The IRM is tasked with assessing the potential impact of the commitment, if completed. The IRM researcher uses the text from the action plan to:
  - Identify the social, economic, political, or environmental problem;
  - Establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan and;
  - Assesses the degree to which the commitment, if implemented, would impact performance and tackle the problem.
- **Starred commitments** are considered exemplary OGP commitments. In order to receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:
  - It must be specific enough that a judgment can be made about its potential impact. Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity.

- o The commitment’s language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
- o The commitment would have a “transformative” potential impact if completely implemented.<sup>2</sup>
- o Finally, the commitment must see significant progress during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of “substantial” or “complete” implementation.

Based on these criteria, Liberia’s action plan contained three starred commitments, namely:

- 1.5 Information on Commercial Land Use Rights
- 1.6 Development Assistance Transparency
- 2.1 Implementation of the New Jury Law

Finally, the graphs in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its progress reporting process. For the full dataset for Liberia and all OGP-participating countries, see the OGP Explorer.<sup>3</sup>

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITMENTS

The Liberian action plan went through a rigorous consultative process that included many stakeholders. These were leaders of women’s and youth groups, government institutions and agencies, and civil society organisations working on access to information, transparency and accountability, and technology. The action plan was finalized after a validation workshop and focused on four themes: Transparency, Civic Participation, Accountability and Integrity, and Technology and Innovation. Under each, commitments are arranged in clusters. The greatest number of commitments were in the area of Transparency (eight), followed by Technology and Innovation (five), Civic Participation (four), and Accountability and Integrity (three).

## THEMES

There are 20 commitments and 46 milestones grouped under the four thematic areas. Within each theme, similar commitments are arranged and assessed in clusters to help the reader. This is due to the high number of commitments included in the action plan.

<sup>1</sup>Link to Procedures Manual and Articles of Governance explaining the relevance of OGP values.

<sup>2</sup>The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information visit: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919>.

<sup>3</sup><http://www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer/all-data.html>.

# THEME I: TRANSPARENCY

## CLUSTER: IMPLEMENTATION OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW

### **1.1 Appointment of Public Information Officers (PIOs) in government agencies and provision of training to fulfill their Terms of Reference**

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Independent Information Commission (IIC), Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), Carter Center, Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL)

**Start Date:** 1 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 May 2016

*Milestones:*

- 1.1.1 Appoint an additional 50 PIOs.
- 1.1.2 IIC prepares and shares quarterly reports (Hard or email copies are available but not by link because the website of the IIC is not active even though efforts are being made to reactive it.)
- 1.1.3 Conduct Capacity building training for staff of IIC

### **1.2 Popularize the Freedom of Information Law (FOI) and ensure access for more Liberians to the law**

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Independent Information Commission (IIC), Carter Center, iLab Liberia, Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL)

**Start Date:** 1 July 2015

**End Date:** Ongoing

*Milestones:*

- 1.2.1 Design and build an online FOI requests platform
- 1.2.2 Outreach and awareness for citizens across the country through town hall meetings and radio talk shows.

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Yes	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
1.1 Appoint and train PIOs				X	X						X		Yes		X		
1.2 Popularize FOI Law			X		X						X		Yes				X

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

In 2010, Liberia passed the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law, which was to be implemented by the Independent Information Commission (IIC). The law establishes that each public agency and government ministry must have a Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle access to information requests.<sup>1</sup> In addition, persons denied information or dissatisfied with a response can seek an appeal from the Information Commissioner, or request an internal or judicial review. This commitment has the potential to fully implement the FOI Law by refocusing resources on access to information issues in Liberia.

Prior to the commitment period, it was difficult to assess government compliance with FOI laws, as there was no system in place to track requests and responses. This remains a significant challenge to assessing FOI implementation. It is also compounded by the fact that the Liberian government does not yet have a strong records management system in place, and does not track or report on numbers of requests, responses, and timeframes.

**Commitment 1.1** includes steps to appoint and train 50 PIOs. In addition, the IIC is required to share quarterly reports on recruitment and training practices, as well as government agencies' compliance with the FOI mandate.

**Commitment 1.2** focuses on publicising the FOI law so that citizens are aware of its purpose and are able to benefit from the changes. Activities include building the

online FOI platform for submitting information requests, and conducting outreach to citizens through town hall meetings and radio talk shows in the counties.

## COMPLETION

**Commitment 1.1** has seen limited completion. During Liberia's first action plan, 22 PIOs were appointed. An additional 19 have been appointed under the current plan, thereby bringing the total to 41 information officers. The government's self-assessment report states that these 41 officers underwent Records Management Training<sup>2</sup> (1.1.3), though the details and content of the training cannot be independently verified by CSOs or the IRM. A representative from the Carter Center maintains that, although 41 PIOs falls short of the goal of 50, the government has made progress toward fully implementing the FOI law (2010) as a result of this commitment. The self-assessment report states that capacity-building activities have been carried out.<sup>3</sup> CSOs confirm that proactive steps have been taken by the government to bring multiple civil society groups together to work on access to information issues. They also agree that the government has focused on outreach at the county level<sup>4</sup> as a result of this commitment.<sup>5</sup> Most PIO trainings are carried out by international organizations working on access to information issues in Liberia.<sup>6</sup> The IRM could not confirm whether or the extent to which quarterly reports on FOI implementation have been distributed (1.1.2).

While the law envisages having PIOs in all public agencies, the government has not yet filled all

positions. Thus far, the information officers have been limited in their ability to fulfil information requests as a result of uneven institutional capacity and support.<sup>7</sup> A Carter Center representative considers capacity and outreach to be stronger at higher levels of the Liberian government, but several difficulties in records management and organizational capacity across multiple levels have limited the government's ability to complete this commitment.

The Carter Center and the CSOs that comprise the Liberia Freedom of Information Coalition (LFIC) created a "System for Tracking and Monitoring Freedom of Information" (STAM-FOI). To collect and track FOI request data, the STAM-FOI system encouraged citizens to self-report information on requests they have submitted to government agencies. STAM-FOI helpline operators were responsible for collecting voluntarily reported data from key regions within Liberia.<sup>8</sup> LFIC and the Carter Center published a report that provides a snapshot of Liberia's FOI process. It also identifies some of its challenges, such as the low government response to information requests, unused or under-utilized complaint and appeals mechanisms, requests involving sensitive topics that were ignored, and the lack of an internal government tracking system for monitoring requests and responding in a timely manner.<sup>9</sup>

**Commitment 1.2** is substantially completed. The IIC has established an online platform (1.2.1) to enable citizens to request information.<sup>10</sup> As of January 2017, 95 requests have been made,<sup>11</sup> though only four have received government responses; 89 remain unresolved. According to the government's self-assessment report, outreach and awareness activities were carried out in six of the 15 counties (1.2.2).<sup>12</sup> Freedom of Information billboard messages have been placed at key locations such as KLAY checkpoints, Bomi County, SKD-RIA Highway, Paynesville, and Freeport-Gardnersville Road.

From 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016, most awareness-raising activities were carried out by civil society to inform citizens about the FOI law. The LFIC and local freedom of information networks helped their constituencies make FOI requests.<sup>13</sup> As a result, 328 requests were voluntarily reported and entered into the STAM-FOI tracking system within this time period.<sup>14</sup> The agencies that received the most requests were the National Legislature (23%) and Ministry of Internal

Affairs (17%). However, responses to requests have been limited, and many PIOs still lack sufficient resources and training to provide timely, complete responses.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

Some results are emerging from the implementation of these commitments. For instance, the IIC, in partnership with iLAB, has established an online platform<sup>15</sup> that allows Liberians to request information from 45 government agencies and institutions. Citizens have begun using the link to make FOI requests, although responses from government institutions have been very limited. In an interview with the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), the Liberian chapter of Transparency International, it was pointed out that the attainment of results is still slow, despite the establishment of the online platform and more than six years of implementing the FOI law.<sup>16</sup>

A representative from the Carter Center considered a renewed government focus on FOI to be a positive change in opening access to information. The increased number of PIOs appointed as a result of this commitment is also a tangible sign of progress toward improving the capacity of public agencies to meet information requests.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the government has begun to organize county-level workshops to bring local civil society together to popularize FOI laws. These changes are incremental, but significant in relation to the many challenges present in the information environment in Liberia.<sup>18</sup>

## NEXT STEPS

Among the key stumbling blocks to fully implementing a well-functioning FOI system in Liberia are insufficient government resources, lack of a necessary budget, and uneven implementation capacity across various levels of government. These challenges continue to hinder the government's ability to respond to FOI requests, and have led to heavy reliance on partnerships with international organizations to carry out the commitment. Records management is the primary challenge to overcome in carrying out FOI implementation, and the IRM recommends the following key steps going forward:

1. Determine how to define and "count" FOI requests. Clear definitions of what constitutes an official FOI request are needed and must be established

unambiguously across all government agencies.

2. Create an internal government system to log and track FOI requests and publish annual reports. Data collected should track how many requests have been submitted to government ministries, agencies, and commissions; the type of information requests (if provided); and how long it took to fulfil the request.
3. Increase the amount of information proactively disclosed. A snapshot of requests collected by the STAM-FOI tracking system shows that the majority of requests are for information that should have been publicly disclosed already.<sup>19</sup>

According to a FOI expert from the Carter Center, to achieve these next steps it would be beneficial for the next action plan to focus on records management. Responding efficiently to FOI requests in a timely manner will require the government to index all the records held by each agency. This necessary cataloguing would include information on where records are located in agencies, whether they are digital, and whether they are held in a specific point of contact's office. The index would need a system for classifying documents, and identify which records to make available automatically, and which to disclose upon request.

To create a working index system, each agency could focus on training information officers on how to create and retain records. Steps for improving records management include:

1. Establishing records management positions in each government agency. More information officers are required to meet the FOI demand, and these positions should be institutionalized in the civil service to professionalize the role and retain trained officers.
2. Adding PIO positions to the organogram, creating an official job title, and applying civil service regulations to the position.
3. Continuing to partner with CSOs to professionalize the PIO role and provide training.
4. Creating a professional association for PIOs and records managers to build a network of FOI professionals.

These proactive steps could strengthen the government's capacity to fully implement the FOI law and develop a records management infrastructure.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://infolib.org.lr/assets/foiact.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.liberianewsagency.org/pagesnews.php?nid=864>.

<sup>3</sup> Government Self-Assessment Report 2015-2016, Commitment 1.1: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/liberia/assessment>.

<sup>4</sup> IIC capacity building carried out in March 2016, Bong County report: <http://www.liberianewsagency.org/pagesnews.php?nid=864>.

<sup>5</sup> IRM interview with Laura Neuman, Director, Global Access to Information Program, Carter Center, 13 February 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.liberianewsagency.org/pagesnews.php?nid=864>.

<sup>8</sup> The Carter Center, Report: The System for Tracking and Monitoring Freedom of Information Requests in Liberia, 2015-2016. <https://www.cartercenter.org/peace/ati/ati-in-liberia.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> [www.infolib.org.lr](http://www.infolib.org.lr).

<sup>11</sup> <http://infolib.org.lr/list/all?#results>.

<sup>12</sup> Counties include Bomi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Grand Gedeh and Maryland County.

<sup>13</sup> The Carter Center, Report: The System for Tracking and Monitoring Freedom of Information Requests in Liberia, 2015-2016, <https://www.cartercenter.org/peace/ati/ati-in-liberia.html>.

<sup>14</sup> The Carter Center, Report: The System for Tracking and Monitoring Freedom of Information Requests in Liberia, 2015-2016 (Summary), <https://www.cartercenter.org/peace/ati/ati-in-liberia.html>.

<sup>15</sup> The link to the online platform is [www.infolib.org.lr](http://www.infolib.org.lr).

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the representative from CENTAL, October 2016.

<sup>17</sup> IRM interview with Laura Neuman, Director, Global Access to Information Program, Carter Center, 13 February 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> The Carter Center, Report: The System for Tracking and Monitoring Freedom of Information Requests in Liberia, 2015-2016 (Summary), <https://www.cartercenter.org/peace/ati/ati-in-liberia.html>.

<sup>20</sup> IRM interview with Laura Neuman, Director, Global Access to Information Program, Carter Center, 13 February 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

# 1.3 EXPAND OPEN BUDGET INITIATIVE

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)

**Supporting Institutions:** Liberia Freedom of Information Coalition (LFIC), Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Citizens United to Promote Peace & Democracy (CUPPADL), Liberia Media Center (LMC), all mobile telecom companies (GSM) companies

**Start Date:** 1 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 June 2016

Milestones:

- 1.3.1 Develop SMS platform to disseminate budget information through bulk SMS with instant SMS response
- 1.3.2 Decentralize the Open Budget Initiative (OBI) to 15 counties.
- 1.3.3 Create awareness through town criers and local radio stations and other media outlets to explain the open budget initiative
- 1.3.4 Print and distribute 10,000 copies of the citizen’s guide to the budget in the 15 counties.
- 1.3.5 Conduct 15 town hall meetings and hold 20 talk shows to discuss the budget soliciting citizens’ feedback on the budget in the 15 counties
- 1.3.6 Publish in open data portal quarterly budget and all audit reports released by the General Auditing Commission.

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
			X		X	X		X				X	Yes		X		

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This commitment includes specific goals and activities to publicize the open budget initiative in Liberia. It has the potential to transform the process and system of distributing and sharing budget information with the public, and soliciting feedback on the management of public resources. Prior to the commitment period, the 2015 Open Budget Survey found that Liberia performed poorly (scoring 38 out of a possible 100 points) in budget transparency, legislative oversight,

public participation, and auditing.<sup>1</sup> Only four out of eight key budget documents are publicly disclosed, and important checks and balances on spending are missing from the institutional budget-approval framework. For example, the Executive’s Budget Proposal does not require approval from legislators, and legislative or judicial approval is not required to remove the head of the supreme audit institution.<sup>2</sup>

The objective of the Open Budget Initiative (OBI) is to create a platform for citizens to access the national

budget so they can participate in discussions about public spending. This could provide citizens with more tools to hold the government accountable in the allocation of resources. The activities planned under this commitment were to set up an SMS platform to disseminate budget information, and decentralize OBI activities to the fifteen counties in Liberia.

## COMPLETION

### **1.3.1 Develop SMS platform to disseminate budget information, with SMS response.**

The SMS platform to disseminate budget information (1.3.2) has not yet been instituted. The delay is due to budgetary constraints and insufficient capacity and funding to create the system.<sup>3</sup>

### **1.3.2 Decentralize the Open Budget Initiative to 15 counties.**

According to Deputy Information Minister Andrew Tehmeh, the budget has been decentralized to some of the counties. Counties such as Bong, Grand Bassa, and Margibi have appointed finance and budget officials as part of this commitment.<sup>4</sup> However, budgetary administration has not been decentralized to all areas of Liberia, and administrative change has been limited.

### **1.3.3 Create awareness through town criers and local radio stations and other media outlets to explain the Open Budget Initiative.**

According to the self-assessment, awareness-raising activities were carried out in 11 counties during 2015-16 under the “National Open Budget” theme. Andrew Tehmeh confirmed TV and radio talk shows, town halls, and booklets were used to inform the public about open budget issues.

### **1.3.4 Print and distribute 10,000 copies of the Citizen’s Guide to the Budget in the 15 counties.**

According to Andrew Tehmeh, 6,500 copies of the Citizen’s Guide booklets were produced<sup>5</sup> and distributed to libraries in high schools, universities, and community colleges in all 15 counties.<sup>6</sup> The guidebooks used simple, straightforward language and graphics so that citizens could better understand budget policy, spending, and goals for improvement in Liberia. The booklets are also available online, on the Ministry of Finance website.<sup>7</sup>

### **1.3.5 Conduct 15 town hall meetings and hold 20 talk shows in the 15 counties.**

The government’s self-assessment reports that more than 3,000 citizens participated directly in a public forum and 11 focus group discussions about open budget issues. Mr. Tehmeh confirmed that town hall meetings were held in all 15 counties, and citizens were able to provide feedback on budgetary practices. In addition, talk shows disseminated information about budget initiatives, and citizens were able to call in and comment or ask questions. It is unclear, however, if these citizens’ views were recorded or used to inform implementation of this commitment.

### **1.3.6 Publish in open data portal quarterly budget and all audit reports.**

This milestone is delayed because the Open Data Portal has not yet come online. The portal has been developed but is still undergoing demos and testing before being made public. Both CSOs and government contacts agree that the portal will likely be completely online and functioning by mid-2017.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

The open budget guidebook represents a novel improvement in publicizing and increasing citizens’ access to budget information in Liberia. Notably, the guide includes the amount of foreign aid Liberia receives — funds included in the national budget, as well as the (much greater) amount of aid received “off budget.” Mr. Tehmeh contends that this commitment has changed practices by bringing budgetary discussions into civic life, and allowing citizens to discuss and comment on government spending in public dialogues.<sup>8</sup> Increased outreach has been the main success of this commitment as implemented so far. Radio talk shows and town halls have engaged citizens, and the guidebooks have provided access to understandable budget information. Prior to the commitment period, it was rare for citizens to discuss budget transparency using channels such as radio and town meetings. While the number of citizens reached through the citizens’ guide booklet is relatively small, there have been positive steps in access to information and civic participation.

## NEXT STEPS

Many of the activities envisioned by this commitment have been constrained by funding and capacity challenges. For example, the SMS system for collecting citizen feedback could merit being a standalone commitment and, according to the Deputy Information Minister, was overly ambitious within the context of the other milestones in this commitment. Moving forward, the next action plan could benefit from conducting a feasibility assessment of milestone activities with the relevant ministries, agencies, and commissions to ensure that commitment goals are achievable.

While the SMS system for surveying citizens on budgetary issues may be an important next step, the future action plan should first determine the preliminary steps needed for implementation and work with civil society and international donor partners to identify funding sources. In addition, assigning a point of contact responsible for organizing communication and overseeing the commitment through completion could better ensure follow through and ownership of commitments by the relevant agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> Open Budget Survey 2015: <http://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/OBS2015-CS-Liberia-English.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/OBS2015-CS-Liberia-English.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> IRM interview with Andrew Tehmeh, OGP government point of contact, 15 February 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Government Self-Assessment Report 2015-2016, Commitment 1.3: <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/liberia/assessment>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/the-budget?download=59:fy2015-16-draft-citizen-s-guide-nov-2-edited-del-11182015>.

<sup>8</sup> IRM interview with Andrew Tehmeh, OGP government point of contact, 15 February 2017.

# CLUSTER: ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION ON LAND REFORM/COMMERCIAL LAND USE

## **1.4 Make accessible to the public information on proposed reforms in the Land and Natural Resources sectors**

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Land Commission (or future Land Authority) Sustainable Development Institute, Governance Commission, Law Reform Commission

**Supporting Institutions:** Liberia Media Center (LMC), Global Citizen's Initiative (GCI), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), concerned concession companies

**Start Date:** 20 August 2015

**End Date:** 20 March 2016

*Milestones:*

- 1.4.1 Carry out a broad stakeholders consultations in the county(ies) concerned to increase citizens' understanding about issues of land and natural resources

## **1.5 Ensure that material information on commercial land use rights is made publicly available**

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), Land Commission (or future Land Authority), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Forestry Development Authority (FDA), Ministry of Lands, Mines & Energy (MLME), National Investment Commission of Liberia (NIC), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), National Bureau of Concessions (NBC), National Traditional Council of Liberia (NTCL)

**Supporting Institutions:** Liberia Media Center (LMC), the Global Citizen's Initiative (GCI), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), concerned concession companies

**Start Date:** 20 August 2015

**End Date:** 20 May 2016

*Milestones:*

- 1.5.1 Publish information on acres (hectares) for each commercial land use right
- 1.5.2 Publish accurate map of location of each commercial land use right via a map-based web platform, in addition to providing hard copies of proposed land-use allocations to affected populations who don't have access to the internet.

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Yes	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
1.4 Information on Land Reforms and Natural Resources			X		X						X		Yes			X	
★1.5 Information on commercial land use rights			X		X						X		Yes			X	

Editorial note: Commitment 1.5 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

In Liberia, land reform is a pressing issue in two key areas. The first is the legal status of customary land rights; the second is the ownership of trees and other forest resources on community forest lands.<sup>1</sup> Key reforms already undertaken by the government put Liberia on the right track to resolving these issues. Reforms included the establishment of a Land Commission in 2009 to settle the question of customary land rights; and the enactment of a Community Rights Law in 2009, which returns ownership of forest resources to communities.<sup>2</sup> The Liberian Land Commission<sup>3</sup> was created through an Act of Legislature to propose, advocate, and coordinate reforms of land policy, laws, and programs. However, the Commission, now defunct due to the expiration of its statutory mandate, did not play a role in implementation and, instead, partnered with donor organizations (USAID, the World Bank, and Millennium Challenge Corporation) to carry out land management projects.<sup>4</sup> More recently, in 2016, the government created a new Land Authority to bring together under a single agency various land administration and land management functions. The Land Authority will be expressly authorized to implement policies and laws regarding land and land-based resources in close coordination with other relevant ministries and agencies.

Forest resources generated from the extraction of timber and the illegal mining of gold fuelled the Liberian civil war.<sup>5</sup> Incompatible combinations of land use and property rights continue to drive conflict among citizens, the Liberian government, and concessionaires. Concessions were granted in areas assumed to be uninhabited public land but, in reality, they extend over vast areas that encompass various forms of tenure (customary land, deeded land, land under tribal certificates) and, in some cases, overlap with protected areas.<sup>6</sup>

**Commitment 1.4:** Although the Land Commission was to implement this commitment through passage of the Land Authority Act (September 2016), it will now be implemented by the Liberia Land Authority and international donor partners. The commitment outlines activities for providing information to the public about land and natural resource use and how communities may be affected. Prior to implementation of the action plan, there was little to no publicly available information on land use. Stakeholders report that some data on forest cover were available from Global Forest Watch,<sup>7</sup> but specific information on natural resource rights, concessions, and community lands was non-existent.<sup>8</sup> Implementation of this commitment could stretch government practice by empowering the Land Authority to use public data, collected and published by international project partners, to support transparency in land use planning.

It is commendable that the government is making efforts to address land issues in the action plan. However, as written, the commitment language is not specific in terms of the goal or change the government intends to adopt under the open government framework.

**Commitment 1.5 (★)** aims to increase citizens' knowledge of revenue generated from the extractive sector. Implementation will address the lack of information as to whether concessionaires in the extractive sector are paying their fair share of taxes, and only using demarcated land not subject to competing tenure types, as recognized in the Land Rights Policy. Making information on commercial land use publically available can transform citizens' access to information on land ownership and mediate conflicts over specific areas in which citizens and companies have competing land ownership claims.

## COMPLETION

**Commitment 1.4:** The government's self-assessment reports that implementation of this commitment has been substantial. At the midterm, a report on revenue receipts and payments, Beneficial Ownership Disclosure (BOD), a scoping study in the mining sector, and a Simplified Contract Matrix in the extractive sectors have been made publicly available.<sup>9</sup>

In February 2016, the National Bureau of Concessions (NBC) launched a public platform with data from all relevant concessions sectors (forestry, agriculture, mining, oil and gas, and public-private partnerships).<sup>10</sup> Location data on concessions have been collected and published in maps on the platform.<sup>11</sup> Stakeholders have confirmed substantial progress in providing new access to information beyond what was available prior to implementation of this commitment.<sup>12</sup> Despite these positive steps, international partners assisting in implementation maintain there is still no publicly available data on land rights (such as data/locations on land legally owned by private citizens or communities) produced by the government.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, the deeds registry (Center for National Documents and Records/Archives or CNDRA) has made substantial progress in digitizing thousands of hard copy private deeds. As CNDRA is not under the auspices of the Land Authority, this information is not

generally available to the public and the quality of the deeds themselves is poor (e.g., no accurate GPS measurements). The Land Commission and Interim Land Task Force (the institutional bridge between the Land Commission and Land Authority) completed several inventories of tribal certificates. They are also not available to the public, but should be used as part of a wider systematic adjudication exercise to clarify land and resource rights.

Consultations with stakeholders in regional counties took place as part of the Land Rights Policy discussions beginning in 2013, prior to the commitment period. Multiple consultations were held with various interest groups on the content of the Land Rights Policy.<sup>14</sup> Stakeholders in all counties were consulted and included and, since 2013, consultations have continued in Monrovia with interest groups on the pending but stalled (as of September 2016) Land Rights bill.<sup>15</sup>

**Commitment 1.5 (★)** has been substantially completed. Information on acres (hectares) of land for commercial use and the affiliated contracts and agreements have all been uploaded on LEITI's website.<sup>16</sup> A Concession Information Management System (CIMS) has been developed and launched as well.<sup>17</sup> This tool allows users to view each commercial land use right via a map-based web platform. However, IRM notes that locations mapped for commercial mining rights overlap with protected areas on the map, and there is limited information available on private deeds, community ownership, or how conflicts are to be mediated. A local land tenure expert confirmed that EITI in Liberia has made most contracts in the agriculture, mining, and forest sectors available online, though he was uncertain if maps and GPS coordinates were available for all projects and operations.<sup>18</sup>

To complete this commitment, hard copies of the information contained in land use maps and concessions contracts should be provided to citizens, particularly in areas of disputed land use, and to populations that do not have Internet access. Information could also be displayed using visuals and other tools to make it more accessible to audiences that are not literate.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

The government is releasing concessions data and land use information and uploading it to the National Bureau of Concessions Platform. Civil society organizations working in the natural resource sector have accessed this data to support their work in resource governance and land rights.<sup>19</sup> At the midterm, data on community forests is available from “LandMark” (an indigenous and community lands’ platform operated by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and several other NGOs<sup>20</sup>) and Global Forest Watch. International CSO partners have also collected and published land use data. For example, AidData<sup>21</sup> has created shape files based on GPS coordinates in concessions contracts and data from the NBC.<sup>22</sup>

## NEXT STEPS

Two main factors contribute to the lack of information on land and resource tenure in Liberia — documentation and government capacity for records management.<sup>23</sup> Land and resource documentation is often based on poor surveys, sometimes with no GPS coordinates. At the administrative level, there is limited government capacity to manage deeds and data on land and resource tenure in a way that permits sharing across agencies, let alone with the public.

To address these issues, international partners recommend that all contracts on Liberia’s EITI website include up-to-date maps or GPS coordinates of project locations. Further efforts to map and create digital records of private deeds and community land

ownership should be initiated and published — perhaps using WRI’s existing LandMark platform to publicize indigenous and community land ownership information.

Another priority should be making sure the new Land Authority (set to be operational in 2017) makes information on land and resource governance (including policies, laws, guides for how to register property, and updates on government activities) available on its website and in hard copy.

Finally, CNDRA and the Land Authority should consider making public the thousands of digitized deeds as well as the results of the tribal certificate inventory. Taking this a step further, creating an accountability mechanism so citizens could seek redress for unlawful violations of land rights would be useful.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.land-links.org/country-profile/liberia/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> [http://lipa.gov.lr/pg\\_img/Liberia%20Land%20Commission%20Act.pdf](http://lipa.gov.lr/pg_img/Liberia%20Land%20Commission%20Act.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> UNSC Resolution 1521, December 2003. Accessible at: <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/1521.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Paul De Wit, Land Inventory and Land Management Planning in Sinoe County, Land Commission of Liberia Report, prepared with the support of EU Project FED/2011/270957, September 2012, [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/liberia/documents/press\\_corner/20130916\\_02.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/liberia/documents/press_corner/20130916_02.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.globalforestwatch.org/country/LBR>.

<sup>8</sup> IRM questionnaire completed by land tenure expert who preferred to remain anonymous, 19 January 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Reports can be accessed at [www.leiti.org.lr](http://www.leiti.org.lr).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.spatialdimension.com/News/News/ArticleID/285/Liberia-launches-online-National-Concessions-Portal>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nbcliberia.org/about-cadastre.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> IRM questionnaire completed by land tenure expert who preferred to remain anonymous, 19 January 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> <https://landportal.info/news/2016/09/liberia-land-policy-%E2%80%98challenge-national-development%E2%80%99>.

<sup>16</sup> [www.leiti.org.lr](http://www.leiti.org.lr).

<sup>17</sup> Resource map and concessions with GPS locations: <http://portals.flexicadastre.com/liberia/>.

<sup>18</sup> IRM questionnaire completed by land tenure expert who preferred to remain anonymous, 19 January 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.landmarkmap.org/map/#x=-9.3&y=-3.9&l=4>.

<sup>21</sup> <http://aiddata.org/liberian-concessions>.

<sup>22</sup> IRM questionnaire completed by land tenure expert who preferred to remain anonymous, 19 January 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

# CLUSTER: IMPROVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY

## 1.6 Development Assistance Transparency

Expand Transparency of development assistance in Liberia through open data portal of aid activities including access to raw data in machine readable formats. Encourage development partners to expand their own transparency by publishing timely, comprehensive, and disaggregated data on a quarterly basis in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Standard.

**Lead Institution:** Ministry of Finance (MOF)

**Supporting Institutions:** Development Gateway, Publish What You Fund, Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP)

**Start Date:** 1 July 2015

**End Date:** 28 February 2016

Milestones:

- 1.6.1 Ensure public online access to Liberia's Aid Management Platform and identify ways to improve accessibility, functionality and awareness of the platform.
- 1.6.2 Hold [annual/biannual] development cooperation meetings with donors to assess donor commitments to providing timely and comprehensive data on development assistance to the Government on a [quarterly basis].
- 1.6.3 Work with development partners to improve the availability of data by identifying the gaps of the information available.
- 1.6.4 Work with development partners to make the information accessible to users and develop programs for capacity building

## 1.7 Link Financial Management System with the Aid Management Platform

Strengthen development planning by identifying ways to link Liberia's Financial Management System with the Aid Management Platform (AMP) to monitor expenditures and plan more predictably over the medium to long term.

**Lead Institution:** Ministry of Finance (MOF)

**Supporting Institutions:** Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL)

**Start Date:** 15 July 2015

**End Date:** 15 February 2016

Milestones:

- 1.7.1 Assessment of how AMP and financial and expenditure management systems could be linked.

## 1.8 Facilitate tracking of EVD funds

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Health (MOH), Liberia Ebola Financial Tracking Group, Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC)

**Supporting Institutions:** iLab, Accountability Lab

**Start Date:** 15 August 2015

**End Date:** 30 June 2016

Milestones:

- 1.8.1 Track financial resources spent and map financial resources committed or allocated from government and partners, including the private sector
- 1.8.2 Disseminate data and reports on Government websites, including the yet to be established Open Data Portal.

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
★ 1.6 Development assistance transparency				X	X			X				X	Yes			X	
1.7 Link Financial Management System with the Aid Management Platform			X		Unclear						X		Yes		X		
1.8 Track EVD Funds			X		X						X		Yes			X	

Editorial note: Commitment 1.6 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The transparent and open management of aid flows into Liberia presents a major challenge to governance. Liberia remains highly dependent on aid for delivering public services, with total financial inflows exceeding the nation's GDP.<sup>1</sup> Data from a 2016 Ministry of Finance report on external resources and debt management indicate that international aid inflows in 2015-2016 were 13% higher than the country's national budget.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the majority of foreign aid flowing into Liberia is "off-budget,"<sup>3</sup> which means that donated funds go directly to NGOs and foreign contractors to implement development projects.<sup>4</sup> Only 23% of foreign aid goes through the Liberian government, while the remaining 77% arrives in the form of grants transferred directly from international donors to international CSOs and contractors in Liberia. Even these estimated figures are incomplete, as they exclude unknown amounts of funding from UNMIL, China,<sup>5</sup> private foundations,<sup>6</sup> and several bilateral and UN agencies.

These commitments seek to improve aid transparency so the Liberian government can strengthen its financial system, better assess how to allocate domestic revenue (which makes up approximately 47% of total annual

spending), and determine whether aid donations are being used effectively. The top five bilateral donors in 2015/16 were USAID, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the governments of Norway, Germany, and Sweden;<sup>7</sup> the United States is the largest contributor. Moreover, the recent Ebola crisis has drawn a considerable amount of additional international humanitarian aid, adding increased pressure to develop transparent management practices for these funds.

The goal of these commitments is to empower the Liberian government to play an active role in working with donors to allocate and assess spending on public goods and services. The commitments are important because they would help improve accountability in the development sector.

**Commitment 1.6** (★) outlines specific, measurable actions to increase transparency in the management of development aid. This is to be achieved primarily through creating the Aid Management Platform (AMP), a web-based tool for tracking, reporting, monitoring, and planning development activities. Information included in the platform will include geocoding and maps to show aid project locations, the amount of funds dispersed, development partners, and project information. Prior to the commitment period, such

information was only available to international development partners, and sometimes to the Liberian government.<sup>8</sup> The platform is designed to achieve the objectives of the Rome and Paris Declarations on Aid Effectiveness and Harmonization,<sup>9</sup> and ensure a public platform for citizens to access aid data. In addition, this commitment includes activities to bring government and international donors together to improve the availability of open data on development spending, identify gaps in transparency, and assess progress toward meeting International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Standards.

**Commitment 1.7** gauges how the financial management system (IFMIS) could be linked to the Aid Management Platform. Completion could lead to better coordination and accountability in how monetary resources are spent on development projects. This is considered a preparatory step, however, and does not have a public facing element or direct relevance to open government values as coded by OGP criteria.

**Commitment 1.8:** When the Ebola crisis began in 2014, tracking financial resources allocated and spent by government institutions and partners was a challenge. Accountability and transparency in the management of health aid during public health emergencies and the delivery of health care services is a new development in Liberia. The commitment is transformative in so far as it urges donors to report data on funding by sector to the Ministry of Health (MOH), and discloses the locations where aid has been dispersed. The MOH would then publish aid information on its website.<sup>10</sup> Implementing a strong system of financial mapping could greatly improve spending efficiency and accountability in managing public resources during a disaster or emergency.

## COMPLETION

**Commitment 1.6 (★)** is underway. A public aid portal has been designed, configured, and installed, and, although it does not have a permanent domain name as yet, it can be accessed at (<http://41.86.8.147/portal>). From 13-17 June 2016, staff from the government's Aid Management and Coordination Unit were trained by Development Gateway. The training focused on teaching AMP administrators how to enter data via the project form, how to generate reports, and how to use

dashboards.<sup>11</sup> While data are steadily being added to the platform, they have not been widely publicized, nor is most of the public aware of the AMP's existence.<sup>12</sup> Progress has continued and, as of 19 January 2017 (although outside the assessment period), 507 aid projects have been uploaded.<sup>13</sup> Many of these are still in draft form and only visible to credentialed platform administrators from the Aid Management Unit and development organizations. The website is also difficult to find since it does not yet have a descriptive URL, and technical progress, bug fixes, and data integration are still ongoing.

**Commitment 1.7** has begun. Technical assessments, such as data modelling and systems interface analysis, have been conducted to design a plan for integrating the IFMIS and AMP in one user portal. In a June 2016 progress report, AMP project partners<sup>14</sup> stated that linking the two systems would not be possible for another six to nine months, because the Budget Planning Module of the IFMIS was still being created. Once IFMIS completes the module, it will be linked to the Aid Management Platform.

**Commitment 1.8** aimed to make Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) spending and grant information publicly available on the Liberia Open Data Portal and MoH website.<sup>15</sup> The Open Data Portal is behind schedule and was not fully online as of the midterm, hence, EVD tracking information was not added. Ebola and emergency health funds are primarily applied through the Health Pool Fund (managed by a steering committee and chaired by the MoH) and projects/programs run by INGOs. The Ministry of Health has published annual reports on its website, including information on donation amounts, Health Sector Pool Fund spending, EVD management, and international partnerships.<sup>16</sup> This report includes data visualization, disease tracking and spending from UN agencies, international donors, and NGOs in different health areas. In addition, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has published detailed information in the Annual Development Assistance Report<sup>17</sup> on donor contributions, disbursement of funds, and spending in various sectors, including health. This September 2016 report falls outside the assessment period, but includes relevant information on the amount of health sector donations

Liberia received from international partners.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

**Commitments 1.6 (★) and 1.7:** Development Gateway and the Aid Management and Coordination Unit, a subgroup within the Ministry of Finance, held a training event for 40 civil servants from a variety of ministries to inform them about the AMP and how the information can be relevant for the different agencies.<sup>18</sup> A noticeable early result is Liberian ownership of the project as the Aid Management Unit is responsible for the platform's administration. AMP data have already been used to inform the Annual Development Assistance Report released by the Aid Management Unit.<sup>19</sup> The Ministry of Finance has published these reports online<sup>20</sup> and circulated them among donors.<sup>21</sup>

The training represents a first step in making data from Liberia's government ministries (such as health, agriculture, and finance) available on the online platform. While the primary goal is to map development aid projects and make foreign funding more transparent, a secondary aim under discussion is to add data collected by government agencies to compare statistics and find discrepancies in official and donor reported information.

**Commitment 1.8:** Although EVD tracking information has been published online in annual government reports, it is neither easily accessible nor understandable to the majority of citizens. It will not be widely accessible until data points, visualizations, and key findings are added to the Open Data Portal when it is completed. According to Accountability Lab, donor aid was generally provided in bulk before the commitment period but, now, more detailed reporting on specific uses (such as "for hospital construction, for procurement of drugs, for development of health policy") is now encouraged or required. This has improved accountability and the government's ability to track spending by type and region.<sup>22</sup>

## NEXT STEPS

Several main steps are required to complete these commitments and improve aid transparency.

### 1. *Publicize the platform.*

The first priority is to make the platform easy to find and well known. A public launch and publicity campaign is the most important next step, so that development partners, Liberian CSOs, government institutions, and citizens can easily find and use the information on the platform. While a launch has been discussed, funding has been insufficient. To remedy the issue, the next action plan should prioritize organizing a launch for the platform with relevant project partners.

### 2. *Make aid information available offline.*

To publicize the platform in rural areas with low Internet connectivity, hard copies of key data sets should be made available in town administrative centers and at workshops in local counties. Part of the outreach and launch could include partnering with Liberian CSOs to ensure the data can be shared through intermediary organizations. In addition, the Aid Management Platform can be configured to be available offline, a tool currently under development by Development Gateway. Possibilities to introduce an offline version in Liberia should be explored, given Liberia's low rates of Internet penetration.

### 3. *Link the IFMIS system to the Aid Management Portal.*

The plan to link the Financial Management System and Aid Management Platform to create a one-stop-shop for citizens to access financial information has stalled due to budgetary issues and disagreements over pay and costs. Reaching an agreement on how to resolve pay issues should be made a priority in the second half of the implementation period to ensure commitment 1.7 is completed.

4. *Increase the diversity of data on the platform.*

While most data added to the platform are produced and uploaded by development aid organizations, such as the World Bank, the next action plan should focus on expanding use of the platform by Liberian ministries, agencies, and institutions at the national and local level. This would have a major impact on transparency and access to information, if government officials, citizens, and Liberian CSOs could access and compare statistics from international aid groups and government reporting. National organizations, such as the Liberia Institute for Global Statistics, should be encouraged to upload their data on the platform as well. In addition, more international donor partners should be encouraged or required to disclose aid uses and amounts and share information with Liberian government agencies and CSOs.

5. *Improve records management.*

Records management in Liberia has improved with the increased demand for open data projects and cooperation between government agencies to create a standardized open data portal. The portal is due for completion in the first half of 2017, and the focus should be on collecting and publishing data in standard formats online. Due to low rates of Internet use, concurrent plans to publicize key data findings online through the portal and offline through CSOs, music, and radio programs should be organized with local chiefs, Liberian CSOs, and rural women's, youth, and health organizations.

<sup>1</sup> OECD (2013) Tax and Development Aid Modalities for Strengthening Tax Systems, OECD Publishing. Pg. 94. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1/87/9789264177581-en>

<sup>2</sup> Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, "Division of External Resources and Debt Management." FY 2015/2016, Annual Development Assistance Report, September 2016, <https://www.Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.gov.lr/index.php/documents/reports/annual-reports>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008020676.html>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://aiddata.org/blog/the-elusive-quest-for-effective-aid-management-in-liberia>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6319457.stm>.

<sup>6</sup> Relief Web, "Gates Foundation, Partners pledge \$90 million to boost incomes of small farmers in Africa", 19 February 2009. <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SNAA-7PJ7AQ?OpenDocument>.

<sup>7</sup> USAID (US\$161,314,802), (Millennium Challenge Corporation US\$35,315,511), Government of Norway (US\$31,542,859), Germany (US\$22,483,200) and Sweden (US\$21,624,755). From Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, "Division of External Resources and Debt Management." FY 2015/2016, Annual Development Assistance Report, September 2016. <https://www.Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.gov.lr/index.php/documents/reports/annual-reports>.

<sup>8</sup> Interview conducted by IRM with Fabrice Musoni, Project Manager for the Aid Management Platform, 20 January, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Development Gateway, Implementation of the Aid Management Platform for the Government of Liberia—Project Progress Report, prepared by Fabrice Musoni, 20 July 2016.

<sup>10</sup> <http://moh.gov.lr/health-sector-pool-fund/>.

<sup>11</sup> Development Gateway, Implementation of the Aid Management Platform for the Government of Liberia—Project Progress Report, prepared by Fabrice Musoni, 20 July 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Interview conducted by IRM with Fabrice Musoni, Project Manager for the Aid Management Platform, 20 January, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Aid Management Portal Link: <http://41.86.8.147/portal>.

<sup>14</sup> Development Gateway, Implementation of the Aid Management Platform for the Government of Liberia—Project Progress Report, prepared by Fabrice Musoni, 20 July 2016.

<sup>15</sup> <http://moh.gov.lr/health-sector-pool-fund/>.

<sup>16</sup> For the 2014 report see: [http://moh.gov.lr/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MOH\\_Annual\\_Report-2014\\_.pdf](http://moh.gov.lr/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MOH_Annual_Report-2014_.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, "Division of External Resources and Debt Management." FY 2015/2016, Annual Development Assistance Report, September 2016, <https://www.Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.gov.lr/index.php/documents/reports/annual-reports>.

<sup>18</sup> Interview conducted by IRM with Fabrice Musoni, Project Manager for the Aid Management Platform, 20 January, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, "Division of External Resources and Debt Management." FY 2014/2015, Midyear Development Assistance Report, February 2014. <https://www.Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.gov.lr/index.php/economic-outlook?download=48:nal-fy14-15-mid-year-development-assistance-report>.

<sup>21</sup> IRM questionnaire completed by World Bank representative on 31 January 2017.

<sup>22</sup> IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Interview conducted by IRM with Fabrice Musoni, Project Manager for the Aid Management Platform, 20 January, 2017.

<sup>24</sup> IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

# THEME II: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

## CLUSTER: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW JURY LAW

### **2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law**

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), Governance Commission (GC), Judiciary, Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP)

**Supporting Institutions:** United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Peacebuilding Fund (PBF)

**Start Date:** 15 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 June 2016

*Milestones:*

- 2.1.1 Approve budget for the jury management office
- 2.1.2 Set up, recruit and train staff of the jury management central office
- 2.1.3 Awareness raising around the role of juries

### **2.2 Enhance Citizen monitoring of the justice system**

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Judiciary, Justice and Peace Commission (JPC)

**Supporting Institutions:** Press Union of Liberia (PUL), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Liberia Media Center (LMC), United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

**Start Date:** 10 October 2015

**End Date:** 30 June 2017

*Milestones:*

- 2.2.1 Publish quarterly analysis of court returns

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
★2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law				X	X	X						X	Yes				X
2.2 Enhance Citizen monitoring of the justice system		X			X					X			No		X		

Editorial note: Commitment 2.1 is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The Jury Laws were amended in 2013 to modify the process of jury selection. Under these commitments, a newly established Jury Management Office will oversee implementation of the updated law.<sup>1</sup> Access to justice and adherence to the rule of law remain major challenges in the country's governance process. Prior to the commitment period, implementation of the amended jury laws had stalled. Juries were often randomly selected and comprised of citizens with no knowledge of the case being tried. For example, a rural farmer with scant knowledge of the finance industry could be selected to serve on a jury for a complex and technical case involving white-collar crime.<sup>2</sup> In such situations, juries composed of laymen lacked the technical knowledge needed to make informed decisions about the case. Moreover, the necessary administrative infrastructure required to select and impartially oversee juries did not exist prior to the commitment period. These commitments primarily aim to implement and enforce the amended laws, and ensure citizens selected to serve on juries are well informed about the case so that trials are conducted fairly.<sup>3</sup>

**Commitment 2.1** (★) focuses on the administrative steps needed to implement the amended law. Activities include approving the budget to establish a central

Jury Management Office, setting up the central office in Monrovia and regional offices in the counties, and recruiting and training administrative staff. The Jury Management Office will be responsible for jury selection, organizing the central jury pool, and ordering the number of jurors necessary for the functioning of Circuit Courts. It will also educate prospective/selected jurors about the law and legal processes, and help them understand their civic duties in the administration of justice as citizens of the Republic of Liberia.

**Commitment 2.2** seeks to increase the role of citizens in monitoring the justice system by publishing court returns each quarter. Citizen monitoring could make court officials more accountable to the public. As written, though, the commitment lacks specific, measurable plans to improve citizens' involvement and oversight of the justice system; therefore, the expected impact is minor.

These commitments are instrumental to advance the values of open government in two respects. First, by empanelling members of the public to juries and clarifying how that occurs, they could significantly improve fairness in selecting who participates in the administration of justice. The process of sortition is a form of public participation. Second, by improving the process of empanelling jurists, there could be potential improvements in the administrative review of

agency actions. Because the jury system only applies to criminal cases, the ultimate impact is contingent upon cases of waste, fraud, and abuse falling under the criminal code, and the ability of jury trials to prosecute such cases. Finally, by making the sortition process clearer, the commitments could make the jury selection process less arbitrary and subject to undue influence. Consequently, these juries could be more independent and accountable when acting on behalf of the state in criminal trials.

## COMPLETION

**Commitment 2.1** (★) is complete. The budget for creating and staffing the Central Jury Management Office has been approved and the office established in Monrovia (9.1) at the Temple of Justice<sup>4</sup> In addition, beyond the scope of the commitment, regional jury management offices have been established in eight counties.

Jury Management Office staff members have been recruited and trained by the James A.A. Judiciary Training Institute and UNMIL (9.2). A Liberian research consultant visited the office and reviewed the training manual. The manual is not accessible online because the office's website was not set up as of the midterm. UNMIL also assisted the Ministry of Justice in creating a database of Liberian citizens eligible for jury duty, catalogued by their skillset or area of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> The Jury Management Office uses this database to select appropriate jury members for citizens on trial.

Awareness raising activities surrounding the role of juries are also underway and have been carried out in eight of the 15 counties in Liberia.

**Commitment 2.2** had limited progress in the first year of implementation. Data and information on court returns have been collected, but judiciary quarterly reports have not been forthcoming. The government's OGP point of contact states that reports are to be published on the Liberia Open Data Portal, but as the portal is not yet online, the commitment is delayed.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

According to the government's OGP contact, jury selection practices have changed for the better as a result of this commitment. Prior to budgetary approval and establishment of the Jury Management Office, it was very uncommon for citizens or technical experts to be summoned to participate in juries. In Monrovia, where the central office has been established and staffed with trained administrators, citizens have begun serving on jury panels. The jury duty database established in partnership with the UN has improved the selection process and people with relevant skills and sector knowledge have been pulled from the system to serve on juries.

## NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, the implementation of jury and judicial system commitments could be improved by including strict performance indicators to measure progress. IRM recommends the next action plan include a commitment to provide more information to citizens about court proceedings and trial outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> "The New Jury Law: Revisions to Jurisdiction, Criminal Offense Categories, and Jury Selection", <https://corpusjurisliberia.wordpress.com/2015/10/02/the-new-jury-law-revisions-to-jurisdiction-criminal-offense-categories-and-jury-selection/>.

<sup>2</sup> IRM interview with Andrew Tehmeh, OGP government point of contact, 15 February 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## 2.3 CIVIC EDUCATION AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AROUND OFFLINE TOOLS

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of State (MOS), President’s Office

**Supporting Institutions:** Accountability Lab and iLab

**Start Date:** 15 September 2015

**End Date:** 15 September 2016

Milestones:

- 2.3.1 Creative tools for citizen outreach (interactive murals, citizen journalism, accountability film school, “conversation kekes”, “Kick Out Corruption” program, radio shows, etc.
- 2.3.2 Annual perception survey of citizens on government accountability

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Yes	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete	
			X		Unclear					X			Yes				X	

### CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The commitment seeks to raise awareness of corruption and educate citizens about social issues of relevance to Liberia. An international consultant was commissioned to assess citizens’ perceptions of corruption and issues of governance in Liberia. Educating citizens using offline tools is important to reaching sectors of society that are not connected to the Internet and where civic participation is generally low. However, as written, this commitment does not create new mechanisms for citizens to engage in government decision-making, does not create access to new information, and does not hold officials accountable. Therefore, it is not clearly relevant to OGP values.

### COMPLETION

According to the government’s self-assessment report and civil society project partners at Accountability Lab, the commitment is substantially complete. At the midterm, 800 comic books had been distributed, 5 murals painted in Monrovia, and a “Corruption, Corruption” music video produced.<sup>1</sup> The comic books can be downloaded and have been distributed in schools.<sup>2</sup> The annual perception survey was underway as of July 2016. Accountability Lab is conducting the survey in partnership with an independent Canadian research and survey-design consultant.<sup>3</sup> Views are collected through kobo toolbox (survey software for mobile phones) and, by late 2016, all surveys will have been completed. Data analysis will begin in early 2017.<sup>4</sup> This commitment is on track for completion by the end of the action plan period.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

There are no observable early results.

## NEXT STEPS

According to Accountability Lab, the concept of community outreach and education on government activities and identifying corruption should be extended to more local contexts and involve more local people.<sup>5</sup>

There are 15 counties, each with different regional linguistic groups in Liberia, and communication tools should be calibrated to these local contexts and languages to better engage different cultural groups.

To make this commitment more relevant to OGP values, citizen surveys should create a mechanism for citizens to provide direct feedback to the government or to report corruption. The next action plan could include a commitment to establish a corruption reporting hotline with clear follow-up procedures.

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<sup>1</sup>Comic book can be accessed at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/e0h4e466hu95cdv/Integrity%20Idol%20Comic%20Book%20-%20Aug%202016.pdf?dl=0>.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

## 2.4 LIBERIA NATIONAL POLICE (LNP) 'KNOW YOUR RIGHTS' POLICING CAMPAIGN/INITIATIVE

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of State (MOS), President's Office

**Supporting Institutions:** Accountability Lab and iLab

**Start Date:** 15 September 2015

**End Date:** 15 September 2016

*Milestones:*

- 2.4.1 Publish Laws and protocols on enforcement powers, filing of complaints and whistle blowing procedures
- 2.4.2 Promote citizens' awareness of the existence, roles, and actions of LNP Professional Standards Division

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
			X		X						X		No	X			

### CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

The police and criminal justice systems do not enjoy high levels of public trust in Liberia. In a 2013 Afrobarometer survey, 88% of Liberians perceived "some," "most," or "all" police to be corrupt.<sup>1</sup> Citizens often accuse the police of extortion and bribery.<sup>2</sup> Most do not know their rights in the justice system or the responsibilities of the police. The lack of an oversight body to address issues of police misconduct reinforces citizens' mistrust. This commitment could significantly improve citizens' awareness of their rights and knowledge of how to file complaints and apply whistleblower protections.

### COMPLETION

This commitment has not begun. The government's self-assessment report states that some information about policing is available in hardcopy at the National Police Headquarters.

### EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

This commitment has not begun.

### NEXT STEPS

To complete this commitment, the government could start publishing information about citizens' rights on government websites, such as that of the Ministry of Justice. IRM also recommends creating brochures written in straightforward language explaining citizens' rights in the justice system and how to report policing issues and cases of corruption. Additionally, informing citizens about police corruption and whistleblower rights could be done through radio and TV talk show discussions.

<sup>1</sup> Afrobarometer Report: Popular Assessment of Corruption in Liberia, 21 August 2013, [http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/media-briefing/liberia/lib\\_r5\\_presentation2.pdf](http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/media-briefing/liberia/lib_r5_presentation2.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> See Human Rights Watch 2013 Report on the LNP: "No Money, No Justice" Police Corruption and Abuse in Liberia," 23 April 2013, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/08/22/no-money-no-justice/police-corruption-and-abuse-liberia>

# THEME III: ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY

## 3.1 Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act

**Lead Institutions:** National Legislature, Law Reform Commission (LRC), Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Governance Commission (GC), Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), National Integrity Forum (NIF)

**Supporting Institutions:** Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Citizens United to Promote Peace & Democracy (CUPPADL), Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP)

**Start Date:** 15 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 May 2016

Milestones:

- 3.1.1 Lobby and engaged policy makers for the passage of the Whistleblower Protection act and undertake awareness raising on citizens' understanding of the act.

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
			X				X					X	No		X		

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Passage of a Whistleblower Protection Act could positively alter government practice by reducing corruption and allowing citizens the opportunity to hold public officials accountable without fear of retaliation. This commitment seeks to foment the political will necessary to pass and enact a Whistleblower Act, currently drafted but stalled in the legislature.

## COMPLETION

The bill has been submitted to the National Legislature but has yet to be acted upon. The draft is not publicly available and the contents are unknown. According to Andrew Tehmeh, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), there is no political will in the legislature to move forward on the Act.<sup>1</sup> This commitment relies on the legislative

branch, rather than the executive, and so there is limited ability for those implementing OGP commitments to lobby for progress. Although Mr. Tehmeh believes civil society groups favor the law, the groups themselves have not made strong or sustained efforts to lobby legislators for its passage. Therefore, this commitment remains stalled and incomplete.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

There are no results as yet since implementation has not begun.

## NEXT STEPS

IRM recommends that the LACC work with CSOs to engage the legislature to pass the bill and conduct public outreach on its relevance in the fight against corruption.

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<sup>1</sup>IRM interview with Andrew Tehmeh, OGP government point of contact, 15 February 2017.

# CLUSTER: BUILDING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN COMMUNITIES AND GOVERNMENT

## 3.2 Community building for accountability organizations

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), Governance Commission (GC)

**Supporting Institutions:** Accountability Lab, Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), Medica Mondiale, German Agro Action (GAA)

**Start Date:** 10 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 December 2015

Milestones:

- 3.2.1 Creation of an OpenGov Hub in Monrovia- a coworking and community space for accountability
- 3.3.2 Setting up and staffing of “accountability incubators” within the 15 counties

## 3.3 Improve Integrity within government systems

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Governance Commission (GC), Liberia Institute of Public Administration (LIPA), Civil Service Agency (CSA), National Integrity Forum (NIF)

**Supporting Institution:** Accountability Lab

**Start Date:** 20 September 2015

**End Date:** 20 September 2016

Milestones:

- 3.3.1 Train at least 20 middle, junior, and senior levels GoL officials on building a culture of integrity and promote network building of reformers within the government sector.
- 3.3.2 Creation of an innovation fund (\$2-5,000) for small, creative ideas for integrity within government.

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Yes	Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
3.2 Community building for accountability organizations			X			X				X			Yes		X		
3.3 Improve integrity within government systems				X	Unclear					X			Yes			X	

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

These commitments are designed to facilitate coordination among different groups working for accountability in Liberia, and to establish workspace, resource sharing, and support for accountability initiatives. Planned activities include constructing an OpenGov Hub community space, providing grants to local start-up leaders to improve governance, and training recent university graduates entering the Liberian Civil Service on ethics and accountability issues. Training topics involve building a sustainable organization, fair hiring practices, and transparent reporting on tax forms and deductions.

**Commitment 3.2** seeks to build a community of accountability organizations via an OpenGov Hub in Monrovia. The Hub would be a work and community space for all such organizations in Liberia.

**Commitment 3.3** aims to encourage a culture of integrity within government systems by training recent civil service graduates in government ethics (e.g., human resources, finance, and peer leadership). The goal is to train at least 20 civil servants and start an innovation fund to support projects proposed by civil servants to increase transparency and strengthen ethical administrative practices. As written, this commitment does not provide specific goals or clear plans on how improved transparency and ethical conduct will be measured and, therefore, is assessed as having only a minor potential impact.

## COMPLETION

**Commitment 3.2:** The government's self-assessment report identifies the site for the OpenGov Hub as Carey Street in Monrovia. Renovation work was underway and ongoing as of June 2016. A representative from Accountability Lab confirmed that the space is 80-90% completed and was being used in February 2017. Accountability Lab and iLab have permanent offices in the Hub, and open government organizations and data/transparency/technology groups can reserve the space for meetings and workshops. The website is online (iCampus.io) and fully operational, allowing community groups to book space, find events, and collaborate through discussion boards.<sup>1</sup>

Accountability incubator programs, which provide seed funding, training, and mentorship, have been established through Accountability Lab. Nine young civil society leaders and entrepreneurs have been selected and are currently being trained.<sup>2</sup> Participants' profiles and projects are published on Accountability Lab's website.<sup>3</sup> The program provides Liberian start-up founders and civil society organizers with 120 hours of training in skills such as financial management, team building, and digital communications. Seed funding of up to US\$10,000, mentoring, and media outreach are also provided to program selectees. Budget constraints have prevented the Incubator project from funding participants in all 15 counties.

**Commitment 3.3** is substantially complete. As of June 2016, twenty senior and junior officers of government institutions were trained by the Liberian Institute for Public Administration (LIPA) on integrity issues. The self-assessment report does not specify which particular topics were part of the training curriculum, or how improvements in government integrity would be measured. A representative from Accountability Lab reported in February 2017 that over 40 new and senior civil servants had been brought together as part of this commitment to participate in ethics training.<sup>4</sup> The organization also stated in 2016 that a project consultant attended the trainings with civil service agencies, local government officials, and public administration institutes to assess tools and materials used for training. Topics included accountability and transparency, ethical leadership, building a sustainable organization, hiring, and reporting on tax forms and deductions.<sup>5</sup> It is not clear if the 'network of reformers,' which consists of training alumni, will have any impact on improving accountability in practice, and the innovation funds have not been disbursed.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

No early results are found, but representatives from Accountability Lab view the participation of new and senior civil service officials in integrity workshops as a positive improvement in discussing ethical issues within the public administration.

## NEXT STEPS

Creating well-defined goals and measurable benchmarks to assess improved opportunities for civic participation could increase the potential impact of future commitments. In addition, creating strong whistleblower protections for civil servants who report instances of ethical violations could have a major effect on addressing integrity in public administration.

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<sup>1</sup><http://icampus.io/community/discussion-board-2/how-to-use-this-discussion-board-2/#post-2>.

<sup>2</sup>IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

<sup>3</sup><http://www.accountabilitylab.org/accountpreneurs/>.

<sup>4</sup>IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

# THEME IV: TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

## 4.1 Encourage Citizens' feedback on national development outcomes

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MOPT), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)

**Supporting Institutions:** Mobile telecom companies (GSM) companies, iLab, Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), all local radio stations

**Start Date:** 10 August 2015

**End Date:** 15 February 2016

Milestones:

- 4.1.1 Build out online/SMS platform for receiving and gathering feedback

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
		X			X	X		X		X			No	X			

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This commitment aims to collect citizens' feedback on project outcomes, spending, and use of public services. Their input is to be solicited using SMS messaging from mobile phones and sent to government ministries, where public relations officers will collect the data and respond to user feedback. While citizens' views on multiple sectors, such as health and education, are the desired outcome, the early focus will be collecting views on the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning.<sup>1</sup>

This will better inform citizens about how money in the national and county development budgets is

being spent by government ministries, agencies, and commissions. The system will then allow civil society organizations, development partners, and monitoring and evaluation arms of the government to measure project impacts against spending.<sup>2</sup>

However, as written, this commitment does not specify how feedback will be used, or how citizens can actually influence decision-making. Consequently, the potential impact will be minor.

## COMPLETION

Implementation of this commitment has not started.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

Implementation of this commitment has not started.

## NEXT STEPS

The Ministry of Finance could engage with development partners and mobile telecom companies (GSMs) in Liberia to initiate rollout of an SMS platform for educating and surveying citizens. Technical aspects, such as designing short codes with reverse services through an API to collect user feedback, should be completed to build an SMS platform compatible with mobile carriers in Liberia. This commitment could also benefit from a campaign to publicize the system once it is developed, so that citizens are aware they can text their views via SMS. Additional information could be shared about how citizens' feedback will be used.

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<sup>1</sup>IRM Questionnaire completed by Carter Draper (iLab Liberia), 23 January 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

# CLUSTER: PUBLISH GOVERNMENT HELD DATA ONLINE IN STANDARDIZED, EASILY ACCESSIBLE FORMAT

## 4.2 Improve GoL online provision of information

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MOPT), Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA)

**Supporting Institutions:** Accountability Lab, iLab, Liberia Media Center (LMC), IBM

**Start Date:** 1 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 June 2016

Milestones:

- 4.2.1 Standardize government websites with gov.lr standards and policies and train requisite staff for updates and maintenance
- 4.2.2 Develop "Knowmore LIB" open data and citizen navigation system

## 4.5 Establish and launch an Open Data portal to provide the public access to all relevant information on Liberia

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of State (MOS), Pentecostal Mission Unlimited (PMU)/Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MOPT)

**Supporting Institutions:** Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), iLab, Accountability Lab, IBM

**Start Date:** 20 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 February 2016

Milestones:

- 4.5.1 Determine portal specifications and ensure the setting up and launch of the Open Data Portal

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
4.2 Improve online government information			X		X						X		Yes			X	
4.5 Launch an Open Data portal			X		X		X				X		Yes		X		

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

Creating an open data portal on which the government regularly publishes data, statistics, and information of public interest could transform access to information in Liberia. Before the commitment period, non-standardized government websites, difficult to search domains, and poor quality or outdated webpages inhibited access to information. Applying a set of standards to government websites can improve citizens' and CSOs' ability to find information, and the portal could dramatically simplify access to such data as land use, crime maps, health and disease reports, government budgets and spending, and foreign aid projects and donations. At the same time, Internet access and connectivity in most parts of the country is low, not available, or expensive. Therefore, these commitments may have the greatest impact by making previously inaccessible information available to intermediary groups and CSOs that can connect citizens to the information.

**Commitment 4.2** seeks to standardize and train staff on how to maintain government websites. The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications is the lead arm of the government responsible for administering the gov.lr domain and crafting policies related to ICT platform standards. The Knowmore LIB citizen navigation system will focus on publishing open data and reports in machine-readable formats that are easy for citizens to research.<sup>1</sup>

**Commitment 4.5** aims to establish and launch an open data portal to centralize and publish information from all government agencies. This commitment could have a transformative impact on citizens' and CSOs' access to current, relevant, and useful government information and data.

## COMPLETION

**Commitment 4.2:** According to the government's self-assessment report, 45 ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs) have implemented the gov.lr standards.<sup>2</sup> Representatives from iLab, a CSO partnering with the government to implement this commitment, confirm that new ICT policies and standards were endorsed by Cabinet members and distributed to all line MACs.<sup>3</sup> iLab concurred with the government's

assessment that 45 MACs (approximately 70%) had updated their websites as of June 2016. Staff training has taken place, but is completed by each MAC independently using the ICT policy standards as a guide.<sup>4</sup>

The Knowmore LIB open data and citizen navigation system is currently under development by CSO commitment partners. At the midterm, demo sessions had taken place to test the system, and sample data had been uploaded and tested. A public version is expected to launch in 2017.<sup>5</sup> The platform will allow citizens to access and request information, especially until the open data portal is complete.<sup>6</sup> As of February 2017 (outside the reporting period), online users can view 101 information requests submitted to 45 different government authorities and available responses.<sup>7</sup>

**Commitment 4.5:** The open data portal was still under construction at the midterm. Progress has been limited, according to the government's self-assessment report. A representative from Accountability Lab concurred that the portal was not yet public as of February 2017. It could be online and ready for data upload by Spring 2017 since the prototype has already been developed.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

**Commitment 4.2:** The OGP Steering Committee conducted awareness activities to publicize the improved access to information on government websites. They used music and murals to inform citizens that MACs' websites are providing up to date information in an accessible format.<sup>8</sup> As a result of the action plan, some MACs that did not have websites are now working with the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication to create and tailor their sites to the standard operating procedures.<sup>9</sup>

Accountability Lab contends that the Knowmore LIB system has strengthened information access. Allowing platform users to view all submitted information requests and government responses means that Liberians have access to more information. CSOs believe the request platform has reduced the amount of time and inconvenience involved in obtaining information (for example, it removes the need to visit a specific agency in-person to submit a hard-copy request).<sup>10</sup> Public Information Officers (PIOs) have

been selected and trained, and are responding to all information requests. Early results show, however, a need to recruit more staff and PIOs to meet the public's demand.<sup>11</sup>

**Commitment 4.5:** There are no early results as the portal is not yet available.

## NEXT STEPS

CSOs recommend expanding the Knowmore LIB platform before the upcoming elections in 2017, as key project partners will be less available to coordinate technical steps for completing this commitment.<sup>12</sup>

Hiring and training additional information officers and administrative staff to locate information and provide timely responses to requests will be needed to meet the growing demand for disclosures.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Liberia Midterm Self-Assessment Report for 2015-2017, <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/liberia/assessment>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> IRM Questionnaire completed by Carter Draper (iLab Liberia), 23 January 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

<sup>7</sup> <http://info.lib.org.lr/>.

<sup>8</sup> IRM Correspondence with Carter Draper (iLab Liberia) 25 January 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> IRM Questionnaire completed by Carter Draper (iLab Liberia), 23 January 2017.

<sup>13</sup> IRM interview and survey questionnaire completed with Francis Lansana, Accountability Lab, 8 February 2017.

# 4.3 EXPAND INTEGRATION OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (IFMIS) TO MAKE THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC FINANCIAL INFORMATION EASIER

**Lead Institution:** Ministry of Finance (MOF)

**Supporting Institutions:** Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), Citizens United to Promote Peace & Democracy (CUPPADL), Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), Liberia Media Center (LMC)

**Start Date:** 15 July 2015

**End Date:** 30 June 2016

Milestones:

- 4.3.1 Extend coverage of IFMIS to an additional 17 ministries & agencies and provide functional/technical support (Hardware & software)
- 4.3.2 Efforts to ensure that this financial data is shared publicly
- 4.3.3 Create public awareness on the IFMIS program

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
			X		X					X			No		X		

## CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This commitment is designed to facilitate the provision of public financial management information. This is to be accomplished through the Integration of Financial Management Systems (IFMIS) across 17 additional government ministries and agencies.

## COMPLETION

According to the government self-assessment report, the IFMIS coverage had been extended to an additional 17 ministries and agencies. Additionally, hardware and software technical support was given to 19 ministries, agencies, and commissions. However, partner CSOs

have identified problems in linking financial data to the IFMIS system, due to stalled discussions within the public administration bureaucracy over contracting and paying technical engineers. For this reason, financial data have not been published in a public user-interface, and most progress has involved completing technical updates to the IFMIS system, with no public facing element.

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

There are no early results yet. Only internal technical improvements to the IFMIS system were made by June 2016. Once issues concerning completion of upgrades and integration are resolved, the public facing component (providing easier access to financial data) will be available online.

## NEXT STEPS

IRM recommends that, in the second half of the implementation period, the government and project partners publicize the IFMIS system and ensure that financial data is shared publicly. Educating citizens and civil society groups on how to use the IFMIS system to find and track financial information will be a key step in opening access to government information.

## 4.4 ESTABLISH LNP ONLINE INFORMATICS (DIGITIZE COMMUNITY POLICING)

**Lead Institutions:** Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MOPT), Liberia National Police (LNP), Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)

**Supporting Institutions:** Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), iLab, United Nations Police (UNPOL)

**Start Date:** 15 July 2015

**End Date:** 20 February 2016

Milestones:

- 4.4.1 Create online crime/policing maps with visualization options and interactivity and link it up with police official website
- 4.4.2 Push current police nationwide data to this platform in real time
- 4.4.3 Make this platform available via LNP official website

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW	SPECIFICITY				OGP VALUE RELEVANCE				POTENTIAL IMPACT				ON TIME?	COMPLETION			
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative		Not started	Limited	Substantial	Complete
			X		X			X				X	No	X			

### CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

This commitment plans to establish an online platform to track police data in real time. The platform will include crime maps, motor vehicle accident data, traffic violations data, information on locations of police depots, feedback on actions taken against the unprofessional conduct of police officers, regular updates on road conditions, police recruitment processes and policies, and community engagement activities.<sup>1</sup> If implemented, this commitment could have a transformative impact on citizen’s access to public safety and policing information.

### COMPLETION

This commitment has functionally not started. The CSOs involved in implementing it have drafted communication to the Liberian National Police (LNP) and relevant ministries, agencies, and commissions on the types of data to collect and publish online.<sup>2</sup> They recommend that data sets on policing be published on the Liberian Open Data Portal until a national police-tracking platform is developed.

The government’s self-assessment reports that progress has been limited, but that hard copies of crime/policing maps and information about community policing are

available at the Liberia National Police Headquarters.<sup>3</sup> The LNP has not developed a website to house an eventual tracking platform. Public information about the police is published on the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) website.<sup>4</sup>

## EARLY RESULTS (IF ANY)

There have been no public facing elements completed as part of this commitment, and there is insufficient progress to observe any early results.

## NEXT STEPS

CSOs from iLab recommend improving coordination between the Liberian National Police and implementation partners by holding regular Steering Committee meetings to debate and organize activities for developing the police-tracking platform. CSOs identified major roadblocks as officials' limited willingness to release data, the challenge of creating a standardized system to format data from many sources, and the significant technical and material resources needed to develop an interactive platform.<sup>5</sup> Additional staff will be needed to manage the platform and update information in real time.

IRM recommends breaking this commitment into two separate activities in the next action plan —data and information collection and web-platform development. Regular meetings with the Steering Committee may help bring issues and next steps into focus. In the next action plan cycle, directly involving the Ministry of Justice in this commitment may help ensure that the proper authorities and resources are allocated to its implementation.

A task force made up of MOJ and CSO partners should be created to scope the data landscape for police and public safety information currently being collected, to identify information gatekeepers, and to gauge the current format(s) in which data is collected (for example, digital records or hard-copies). The task force should then design a plan to collect and process high-priority public safety and police information and statistics for publication online.

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<sup>1</sup>IRM Questionnaire completed by Carter Draper (iLab Liberia), 23 January 2017.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Liberia Midterm Self-Assessment Report for 2015-2017 <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/country/liberia/assessment>.

<sup>4</sup><http://moj.gov.lr/agencies/lnp>.

<sup>5</sup>IRM Questionnaire completed by Carter Draper (iLab Liberia), 23 January 2017.

# IV | COUNTRY CONTEXT

Liberia's second action plan addressed many pressing governance issues, including land ownership information, aid transparency, and corruption. However, government capacity to carry out commitments remains low, and many international partners support implementation efforts. Going forward, institutionalizing the OGP process within ministries and agencies could improve enforcement and completion of commitment initiatives.

Following a brutal civil war in 2003, Liberia has seen fragile peace since 2006. Two successive elections took place in 2005 and 2011.<sup>1</sup>

Liberia has a relatively strong legislative framework that allows for citizen participation in government. The Constitution guarantees rights to association and organization, and civil society is largely free to operate. Liberia also ranks in the top tercile globally for civic participation, according to the World Justice Project.<sup>2</sup> Ethnic and religious minority groups generally enjoy full political rights and electoral opportunities. Significantly, opposition political parties have widespread support, which they have been able to translate into political power.<sup>3</sup>

However, Liberia still faces challenges regarding the exercise of freedoms (the Freedom House index ranks Liberia as only "partially free"). While there are a variety of newspapers and radio stations, access to the Internet remains limited and cost-prohibitive to the majority of Liberians. Information access is further hampered by Liberia's criminal and civil libel laws that are used to harass and intimidate journalists.<sup>4</sup>

Liberia was one of the first countries in West Africa to pass the Freedom of Information Act in 2010. The Act provides a legal framework for transforming the state of transparency in the country. According to the Right to Information (RTI) index, Liberia's Act ranks highly at 124 out of a possible 130 points for protecting and promoting transparency and right to information access. However, in practice, there have been multiple issues with implementing the Act, largely predicated on weak institutional capacity and limited resources.<sup>5</sup> According to an independent Carter Center assessment of six ministries and agencies, many Public Information

Officers (PIOs) installed by the Act lack training and budgetary resources to effectively perform their duties. Public agencies have shown little progress in proactive information disclosure and records management.<sup>6</sup> Other challenges for the implementation of the FOI Act include the lack of knowledge on how to use the Act to make information requests and limited institutional capacity for the PIOs to function effectively.

Liberia ranks seventh out of eighteen countries in the Sub-Saharan region for open government, according to the World Justice Project's open government report. However, it continues to rank in the bottom tercile globally for publicized laws and government data access, right to information, and complaint mechanisms.<sup>7</sup>

In the last decade, Liberia made progress in developing the institutional framework to enable good governance and fight corruption. It signed the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2005 and joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2009. The country has also published annual reports on revenues received from the extractive sectors, such as mining, timber, oil and gas.

The country has several institutions focused on fighting corruption, including the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), the General Auditing Commission, and the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission. However, the government has made little progress in implementing anti-corruption recommendations, particularly those made by the General Auditing Commission. Limited progress has undermined the institution's relevance and effectiveness, thereby making it harder to fight corruption.<sup>8</sup>

The Liberian Constitution and legal framework ensure independence of the judiciary, and there have been recent indications that the Supreme Court has increased its judicial independence.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, there are several challenges such as prolonged detention, backlog of cases, and the inability of ordinary Liberians to hire competent lawyers to seek their legal interest.

Foreign aid plays a major role in Liberia's governance. The majority of foreign aid flowing into Liberia is "off-budget,"<sup>10</sup> which means that donated funds go directly to NGOs and foreign contractors to implement development projects.<sup>11</sup> For example, aid data from a 2016 Ministry of Finance report on external resources and debt management indicates that international aid inflows in 2015-2016 were 13% higher than Liberia's national budget.<sup>12</sup> Only 23% of foreign aid goes through the Liberian government. The remaining 77% comes in the form of grants transferred directly from international donors to international CSOs and contractors in Liberia. Even these estimated figures are incomplete, as they exclude unknown amounts of funding from UNMIL, China,<sup>13</sup> private foundations,<sup>14</sup> and several bilateral and UN agencies.

The 2014 Ebola crisis presented major challenges to governance, as the government curtailed many civic freedoms and individual rights, imposed curfews, and restricted group organizing. Despite these Ebola-related difficulties, international observers assessed the most recent Special Senatorial Elections (in 2014) as relatively free, fair, and transparent.<sup>15</sup> In May 2015, Liberia was declared Ebola-free after a successful government-led strategy of community engagement to combat the outbreak. Since then, judicial independence and protection of individual rights and freedoms have increased, although corruption and lack of capacity to enforce security and justice pose major challenges to the rule of law.<sup>16</sup>

Liberia's current political and security environment is stable, although the peace is fragile. Structural conditions, such as exclusion, lack of citizens' participation in decision-making processes, corruption, limited access to public information, land ownership, and the inequitable distribution of resources that contributed to the conflict, are yet to be addressed. As summarized by Freedom House, "Conflicts over land

access and ownership remain pervasive. Many of these conflicts originated in the civil wars and subsequent internal migration, displacement, and resettlement. Others are the result of opaque concession agreements granting foreign corporations access to lands for production of tropical timber, palm oil, and other products."<sup>17</sup>

Within this context of fragility, the country will hold its third post-conflict legislative and presidential elections in October 2017. The elections present an opportunity for Liberians to consolidate their multi-party democratic system and processes and improve political participation. The elections will take place at a time when the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) ends its progressive transition, which began in June 2016. This means that the Liberian Government, particularly the Liberian National Police (LNP), will be fully charged with maintaining internal peace and security. The UNMIL drawdown will reduce the presence of international actors, and the LNP's credibility will be determined largely by the extent to which it is transparent and accountable to the Liberian public in performing its functions. The elections will be an added responsibility in terms of managing electoral related violence,<sup>18</sup> in addition to other security issues.

## STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES

Implementation of the Freedom of Information Law, budget transparency, and land and natural resource management are priorities for Liberia's civil society. Institutional and human resource capacity strengthening are directly linked to overcoming implementation problems. CSOs expressed the view that the mere appointment of PIOs will not guarantee access to information. It is an important first step in obtaining access to information, but the latter will be realized only with the strengthening of institutional capabilities and human resources.

## SCOPE OF ACTION PLAN IN RELATION TO NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Liberian action plan aims to address some of the major open government challenges in Liberia. There are plans to improve access to information by implementing the FOI law and establishing an open data portal; to increase accountability through judicial reform; and

to improve civic participation through technology and town hall forums. Progress has been uneven in achieving the aims of the commitments, but many positive steps have resulted from implementation so far. In the remaining period, stronger efforts could be made to enhance accountability in the area of policing (commitments 4.1 and 4.4). Moving forward, the next action plan could benefit from additional commitments that involve citizens in the strengthening and monitoring of the justice and police systems, since corruption remains prevalent in those areas.

**Fiscal transparency:** Over the past three years, the government has made headway on budget transparency by making national budget information accessible online. However, a vast majority of citizens do not have access to the Internet and cannot understand the technical language of the budget. To address this gap, the government developed a simplified version of the 2015-2016 national budget and widely publicized hard copies in several counties. Similarly, the Liberia Extractive Initiative and Transparency International (LEITI) created simplified versions of complex concession agreements and posted them on its website.<sup>19</sup> Ordinary citizens, however, do not have access to this information for the reasons cited above. The next National Action Plan could address this issue by committing more resources to publicizing simplified budget and extractive information through CSO intermediaries and wide-reaching channels such as radio talk shows and town hall meetings.

**Access to information:** Some government agencies have begun institutionalizing the ability to respond

to requests for information. One action taken is the appointment of 43 PIOs, spread out across different government institutions and agencies.<sup>20</sup> This is an important first step in implementing the FOI law. Partner CSOs, such as the Carter Center, have stressed that PIOs must have the necessary institutional support and human resource development to carry out their duties. CSOs view this as a priority going forward.

**Civic space and engagement:** Over the past ten years, the civic space for citizens to engage the government has been widening. For example, media diversification has created the opportunity for citizens to engage on critical national issues via radio. The government credits itself for this broad achievement and CSOs acknowledge they do have the space to engage and recognize the role the government has played in ensuring openness. Continued efforts to involve citizens and counties in governance should be continued.

**Public accountability:** In a society where there are many barriers to accessing public information, the reliance on whistleblowers to provide information on allegations of abuse of public trust are essential to prosecuting corruption cases. The commitment to pass a Whistleblower Bill is relevant and important. However, this commitment saw little progress during the first two action plans. Passage of the bill may not be a high priority for lawmakers, and responsibility for its enactment lies with a legislature that may not have the political will to move it forward. While CSOs acknowledge the Whistleblower Bill as a valuable tool for improving government accountability, they have not carried out strong advocacy efforts for the bill.

<sup>1</sup> Freedom House: Freedom in the World Report 2016 <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/liberia>.

<sup>2</sup> World Justice Project Open Government Index 2015 <http://data.worldjusticeproject.org/opengov/#/groups/LBR>.

<sup>3</sup> Freedom House, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Penal Law-Title 26, Liberia Code of Laws Revised, Sections 11.11 and 11.14.

<sup>5</sup> Interview conducted with an official of the IIC.

<sup>6</sup> Interview conducted with a member of CSO working on the FOI.

<sup>7</sup> (World Justice Project n.d.)

<sup>8</sup> The country is ranked 83/168 on the Corruption Perception Index 2016, <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015#results-table>.

<sup>9</sup> Over the past year, there have been no records of the Executive Branch of Government interfering or influencing judicial processes.

<sup>10</sup> "Liberia: 'All in Place to Ensure Transparency' - Minister Ngafuan," AllAfrica, 2 August 2010. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201008020676.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Brad Parks, Nakul Kadaba. "The Elusive Quest for Effective Aid Management in Liberia." AidData, 20 October 2010. <http://aiddata.org/blog/the-elusive-quest-for-effective-aid-management-in-liberia>

<sup>12</sup> Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, "Division of External Resources and Debt Management." FY 2015/2016, Annual Development Assistance Report, September 2016 <https://www.MinistryofFinanceandDevelopmentPlanning.gov.lr/index.php/documents/reports/annual-reports>.

<sup>13</sup> "China's leader boosts Liberia aid." BBC News, 1 February 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6319457.stm>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SNAA-7PJ7AQ?OpenDocument>.

<sup>15</sup> The Carter Center Country Overview: Monitoring Elections, <https://www.cartercenter.org/countries/liberia.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Freedom House, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> A conflict vulnerability assessment study commissioned by USAID in 2016 showed that the country faces a medium risk of conflict. The report can be accessed at <http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdfdocs/PA00M8M1.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> The report can be accessed at [www.leiti.org.lr/uploads/2/1/5/6/21569928/contract\\_matrix\\_final\\_version.pdf](http://www.leiti.org.lr/uploads/2/1/5/6/21569928/contract_matrix_final_version.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Information was provided by an international NGO working on supporting the government's capacity to implement the FOI law.

# V | GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Many commitments in the second action plan are either incomplete or have not yet started. This is due to financial and capacity constraints. Moving forward, the next action plan could benefit from a feasibility assessment involving the relevant ministries, agencies, and CSO partners to ensure that commitments have ambitious, yet achievable goals. An inventory of available resources should be identified and committed at the development stage, and a lead point person assigned to each commitment to ensure coordination and follow through for the duration of the implementation period.

In interviews, stakeholders highlighted several important areas that should be considered when developing the next action plan. These are:

1. To continue institutionalizing the FOI law by training public information officers in records management, creating a system to log and track FOI requests, and publishing annual progress reports. To improve the ability of government ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs) to respond to requests, the next action plan could focus on establishing an internal tracking system to record information requests and monitor responses. Information on how many requests each MAC received, and how many responses were provided could be published in annual reports.
2. Open budget initiatives could be enhanced by requiring publication of expenditure reports so that citizens can match planned activities with actual implementation. This could improve transparency by allowing citizens to compare spending with the quality of services provided. To address the issue of low rates of literacy and limited internet access in Liberia, the next action plan could commit to providing more resources for publicizing simplified budget information through CSO intermediaries and wide-reaching channels, such as radio talk shows and town hall meetings.
3. To improve land and resource management and to mediate conflicts, increased efforts to inform citizens of land policies, laws, concessions, and guides on how to register property should be publicized. Further efforts to map and create digital records of private deeds and community land ownership should be initiated and published — perhaps using WRI's existing LandMark platform to publish indigenous and community land ownership information. Taking this a step further, it would be useful to create an accountability mechanism in which citizens could seek redress for unlawful violations of land rights.
4. Progress has been made in creating online tools to improve health and aid transparency in Liberia. These could be carried forward by publicly launching and sensitizing citizens to such tools as the aid management platform. In addition, dispersing important datasets, reports, and findings offline to citizens via CSO intermediaries could further improve the impact of new transparency measures, and help citizens make more informed choices about health, education, and political engagement. Points of contact within the government could be assigned to monitor, continue, and promote successful initiatives and tools developed in partnership with international donors under the current action plan to ensure continued progress.
5. The lack of proper stewardship in the use of public resources remains a major challenge facing open government. The next action plan should consider creating an accountability mechanism to hold individuals responsible for breaching the public trust. While it is true that the government has established anti-graft institutions and made strong public statements on fighting corruption, the latter have not been equally matched by stern actions, including the prosecution of individuals accused of abusing the public trust. To empower individual citizens to address corruption, the next action plan could create a mechanism for citizens to report instances of corruption, bribery, and injustice in the judiciary or national police, and a system of official redress.

**Table 5.1 | Top Five “SMART” Recommendations**

<p><b>1</b> <b>CLARIFY COMMITMENT OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <hr/> <p>To strengthen public accountability and project execution, the next plan should establish which government agencies are responsible for completing commitments.</p>	<p><b>2</b> <b>OPERATIONAL BUDGET DISCLOSURE</b></p> <hr/> <p>Disclose operational budgets, work plans, and aid. To better enable CSOs to track government and international donors’ spending, increase operational budget disclosures.</p>	<p><b>3</b> <b>LAND COMMITMENT EXPANSION</b></p> <hr/> <p>To provide citizens with information on how to register land, and develop a system of recourse for citizens to report and resolve land ownership disputes.</p>	<p><b>4</b> <b>PUBLICIZE TRANSPARENCY PLATFORMS</b></p> <hr/> <p>Publicize tools such as the Aid Management Platform and work with intermediary organizations to educate and engage the public in tracking and acting on findings.</p>	<p><b>5</b> <b>ANTI-CORRUPTION ENFORCEMENT</b></p> <hr/> <p>To engage more citizens in the fight against corruption, the next action plan could develop grievance mechanisms that allow citizens to report, track, and appeal cases of corruption, especially in the judiciary or national police.</p>
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# VI | METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

The IRM midterm report is written by well-respected governance researchers based in each OGP-participating country. All IRM reports undergo a process of quality control to ensure the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

Analysis of progress on OGP action plans is a combination of interviews, desk research, and feedback from nongovernmental stakeholder meetings. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's own self-assessment report and any other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organizations.

Each IRM researcher carries out stakeholder meetings to ensure an accurate portrayal of events. Given budgetary and calendar constraints, the IRM cannot consult all interested or affected parties. Consequently, the IRM strives for methodological transparency, and therefore where possible, makes public the process of stakeholder engagement in research (detailed later in this section.) In those national contexts where anonymity of informants—governmental or nongovernmental—is required, the IRM reserves the ability to protect the anonymity of informants. Additionally, because of the necessary limitations of the method, the IRM strongly encourages commentary on public drafts of each national document.

Each report undergoes a 4-step review and quality control process:

1. Staff review: IRM staff reviews the report for grammar, readability, content, and adherence to IRM methodology.
2. International Experts Panel (IEP) review: IEP reviews the content of the report for rigorous evidence to support findings, evaluates the extent to which the action plan applies OGP values, and provides technical recommendations for improving the imple-

mentation of commitments and realization of OGP values through the action plan as a whole.

3. Pre-publication review: Government and select civil society organizations are invited to provide comments on content of the draft IRM report.
4. Public comment period: The public is invited to provide comments on the content of the draft IRM report.

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in section III of the Procedures Manual.<sup>1</sup>

## INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Each IRM researcher is required to hold at least one public information-gathering event. Care should be taken in inviting stakeholders outside of the “usual suspects” list of invitees already participating in existing processes. Supplementary means may be needed to gather the inputs of stakeholders in a more meaningful way (e.g. online surveys, written responses, follow-up interviews). Additionally, researchers perform specific interviews with responsible agencies when the commitments require more information than provided in the self-assessment or accessible online.

This report was written by IRM staff, under the guidance of the IEP. Key stakeholders in the sectors addressed by the action plan — land governance, freedom of information, open data, and justice — were consulted for the assessment. Representatives from the Carter Center, USAID, Development Gateway, iLab, Accountability Lab, and the World Bank were also interviewed for this report. Many of Liberia's commitments relied heavily on partnerships with international organizations to carry out the activities, and the IRM interviewed and provided a questionnaire to project partners to assess commitments' completion and early results. All interviews were

conducted in Washington D.C. between December and March 2017, and some CSO representatives chose to remain anonymous, due to their work on sensitive issues such as land rights. Oscar Bloh of the Center of Democratic Governance, provided information about the action plan development process, and Deputy Information Minister Andrew Tehmeh, the Liberian government contact, gave input on the action plan implementation and development process. IRM staff also relied on the government self-assessment report, as well as desk research to complete this report.

## ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT REPORTING MECHANISM

The IRM is a key means by which government, civil society, and the private sector can track government development and implementation of OGP action plans on a bi-annual basis. The design of research and quality control of such reports is carried out by the International Experts' Panel, comprised of experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

The current membership of the International Experts' Panel is

- Hazel Feigenblatt
- Hille Hinsberg
- Anuradha Joshi
- Mary Francoli
- Ernesto Velasco-Sánchez
- César Nicandro Cruz-Rubio
- Brendan Halloran
- Jeff Lovitt
- Showers Mawowa
- Fredline M'Cormack-Hale

A small staff based in Washington, DC, shepherds reports through the IRM process in close coordination with the researcher. Questions and comments about this report can be directed to the staff at [irm@opengovpartnership.org](mailto:irm@opengovpartnership.org).

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<sup>1</sup>IRM Procedures Manual available here: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>

# VII | ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ANNEX

In September 2012, OGP decided to begin strongly encouraging participating governments to adopt ambitious commitments in relation to their performance in the OGP eligibility criteria.

The OGP Support Unit collates eligibility criteria on an annual basis. These scores are presented below.<sup>1</sup> When appropriate, the IRM reports will discuss the context surrounding progress or regress on specific criteria in the Country Context section.

**Table 7.1 | Eligibility Annex for Liberia**

CRITERIA	2011	CURRENT	CHANGE	EXPLANATION
Budget transparency <sup>2</sup>	4	2	Decreased	4 = Executive's Budget Proposal and Audit Report published 2 = One of two published 0 = Neither published
Access to information <sup>3</sup>	4	4	No change	4 = Access to information (ATI) law in force 3 = Constitutional ATI provision 1 = Draft ATI law 0 = No ATI law
Asset Declaration <sup>4</sup>	4	4	No change	4 = Asset disclosure law, data public 2 = Asset disclosure law, no public data 0 = No law
Citizen Engagement (Raw score)	3 (6.18) <sup>5</sup>	3 (5.59) <sup>6</sup>	No change	EIU Citizen Engagement Index raw score 1 > 0 2 > 2.5 3 > 5 4 > 7.5
<b>Total/Possible (Percent)</b>	15/16 (93.75%)	13/16 (81.25%)	Decreased	75% of possible points to be eligible

<sup>1</sup>For more information, see <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/eligibility-criteria>.

<sup>2</sup>For more information, see Table 1 in <http://internationalbudget.org/what-we-do/open-budget-survey/>. For up-to-date assessments, see <http://www.obstracker.org/>.

<sup>3</sup>The two databases used are Constitutional Provisions at <http://www.right2info.org/constitutional-protections> and Laws and draft laws at <http://www.right2info.org/access-to-information-laws>.

<sup>4</sup>Simeon Djankov, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, "Disclosure by Politicians," (Tuck School of Business Working Paper 2009-60, 2009), <http://bit.ly/19nDEfK>; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Types of Information Decision Makers Are Required to Formally Disclose, and Level Of Transparency," in Government at a Glance 2009, (OECD, 2009), <http://bit.ly/13vGtqS>; Ricard Messick, "Income and Asset Disclosure by World Bank Client Countries" (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009), <http://bit.ly/1clokyf>. For more recent information, see <http://publicofficialsfinancialdisclosure.worldbank.org>. In 2014, the OGP Steering Committee approved a change in the asset disclosure measurement. The existence of a law and de facto public access to the disclosed information replaced the old measures of disclosure by politicians and disclosure of high-level officials. For additional information, see the guidance note on 2014 OGP Eligibility Requirements at <http://bit.ly/1EjLJ4Y>.

<sup>5</sup>"Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat," The Economist Intelligence Unit (London: Economist, 2010), <http://bit.ly/eLC1rE>.

<sup>6</sup>"Democracy Index 2014: Democracy and its Discontents," The Economist Intelligence Unit (London: Economist, 2014), <http://bit.ly/18kEzCt>.



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