Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Liberia End-of-Term Report 2015–2017

IRM Staff, with contribution from Allan Quee

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Executive Summary:

Liberia
Year 2 Report

Liberia has made progress in improving citizens' consultations on land rights and providing increased access to information on budget and public spending. However, the commitments on the whistleblower act and on the new government's platforms remain unfulfilled.

HIGHLIGHTS

Commitment	Overview	Well-designed? *	Major or Outstanding Results? **
✪1.5 Information on commercial land use rights	Making information on commercial land use publicly 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.	Yes	No
✪2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law	Establishing the Jury Management Office would have a transformative potential impact to select and train jurors, increasing the transparency and fairness in selecting those who will participate in the judicial system.	Yes	No
3.1 Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act	Passage of a Whistleblower Protection Act could positively alter government practice by reducing corruption and setting the framework to allow citizens the opportunity to hold public officials accountable without fear of retaliation.	Yes	No

* Commitment is evaluated by the IRM as being specific, relevant, and potentially transformative
** Commitment is evaluated by the IRM as having major or outstanding results in terms of the 'Did it Open Government?' variable
✪ Commitment is evaluated by the IRM as being specific, relevant, potentially transformative, and substantially or fully implemented

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.

Who was involved during implementation?

		Government		
		Narrow/ little governmental consultations	Primarily agencies that serve other agencies	Significant involvement of line ministries and agencies
Civil society	Beyond "governance" civil society			
	Mostly "governance" civil society			✔
	No/little civil society involvement			

The Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT) is the lead agency responsible for implementing the action plan. MICAT formed a National Steering Committee (NSC) to oversee implementation, composed of thirty institutions representing government agencies and institutions from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, autonomous bodies, as well as representatives from civil society organizations working on issues related to the values of OGP.

Level of input by stakeholders during implementation

Level of Input	During implementation
Collaborate: There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda	✔
Involve: The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered	
Consult: The public could give input	
Inform: The government provided the public with information on the action plan.	
No Consultation	

Liberia did not act contrary to OGP process
A country is considered to have acted contrary to process if one or more of the following occurs:

- *The National Action Plan was developed with neither online or offline engagements with citizens and civil society*
- *The government fails to engage with the IRM researchers in charge of the country's Year 1 and Year 2 reports*
- *The IRM report establishes that there was no progress made on implementing any of the commitments in the country's action plan*

COMMITMENT PERFORMANCE

Liberia's second action plan contained 20 commitments, grouped into four thematic areas (transparency, citizen participation, accountability and integrity, and technology and innovation). Commitment completion increased from the first year of assessment but the number of starred commitments decreased by one due to changes in IRM evaluation criteria.

		Year 1	Year 2
COMPLETED COMMITMENTS	OGP Global Average *	18%	36%
	Action Plan 2015-2017	2 of 20 (10%)	6 of 20 (30%)
	Action Plan 2013-2015	0 of 6 (0%)	N/A
TRANSFORMATIVE COMMITMENTS	OGP Global Average *	16%	
	Action Plan 2015-2017	7 of 20 (35%)	
	Action Plan 2013-2015	1 of 6 (17%)	
STARRED COMMITMENTS**	Most in an OGP Action Plan	5	8
	Action Plan 2015-2017	3 of 20 (15%)	2 of 20 (10%)
	Action Plan 2013-2015	1 of 6 (17%)	N/A

* This indicator is calculated using data from the most recent round of published IRM reports.
** Prior to 2015, the starred formula included commitments with "Moderate" potential impact.

COMMITMENT OVERVIEW

Commitment Title	Well-designed? *	Complete	Major or Outstanding Results? **	Overview
1.1 Appoint and train PIOs	No	No	No	To further implement the 2010 FOI law, 50 Public Information Officers (PIOs) will be appointed and trained to work in government ministries. At the end of the assessment period, 48 PIOs had been appointed and trained but no quarterly reports were published.
1.2 Popularize FOI Law	No	Yes	No	The Independent Information Commission created and launched an online platform for information requests (www.infolib.org.lr). The government carried out awareness raising activities via billboards in 6 of the 15 counties and conducted town hall meetings.
1.3 Expand open budget	Yes	No	No	To publicize the open budget initiative in Liberia, 10,000 copies of the

initiative				Citizens' Guide booklets were produced (in addition to the 6,500 copies already distributed). The SMS platform to disseminate budget information and the Open Data Portal to publish quarterly budgets and all audit reports online were not implemented.
1.4 Information on land reforms and national resources	No	Yes	Yes	This commitment is complete with the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative having conducted broad-based stakeholder consultations in six counties and in concession areas to inform the public on land and natural resource use.
✪1.5 Information on commercial land use rights	Yes	No	No	To increase citizens' knowledge of revenue generated from the extractive sector, the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia and LEITI conducted community outreach activities and an internal web-based cadaster was developed to host land-related information.
1.6 Development assistance transparency	Yes	No	No	The Ministry of Finance (MOF) and international partners built the aid management platform, which displays information on project locations, disbursed amounts, donor agencies, and recipient sectors, but the link and open data portal are no longer accessible.
1.7 Link Financial Management System with the Aid Management Platform	No	No	No	A technical assessment to determine how data modelling in the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) could be transferred to the Aid Management Platform was conducted, but this commitment has unclear relevance to OGP values.
1.8 Track EVD Funds	No	No	No	Although Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) information on the affected areas and the amount of funds disbursed for fighting the disease was published online in annual government reports by the MOH and MFDP, it is not accessible in an open portal.
✪2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law	Yes	Yes	No	To increase public participation in the justice system, the budget for creating and staffing the central Jury Management Office has been approved and the office established in Monrovia at the Temple of Justice.
2.2 Citizen monitoring of the justice system	No	No	No	This commitment seeks to publish quarterly analyses of court returns. The Ministry of Justice has collected some data on court returns, such as trial dates and case types, but has not

				published quarterly reports.
2.3 Civic education and engagement using offline tools	No	Yes	No	The commitment seeks to raise awareness of corruption and educate citizens on relevant social issues, however, as written, does not create new mechanisms for citizens to engage in decision making, increase access to information, or hold officials accountable.
2.4 LNP "Know Your Rights" policing campaign	No	No	Yes	A website and Facebook page have been launched to publicize information on police activities and mode of operation with functionality for citizens to register comments or seek redress on police actions.
3.1 Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act	Yes	No	No	This commitment entails passage of the Whistleblower Protection Act, which had been drafted in Parliament prior to adoption of the action plan. Passage has stalled with a lack of political will by the legislature cited as the reason.
3.2 Community building for accountability organizations	No	Yes	No	The OpenGov Hub in Monrovia is completed and fully operational. The Liberia Accountability Incubator Program for young civil society leaders to build sustainable, effective tools for accountability, participation and social impact covering 15 counties, was also established.
3.3 Improve integrity within government systems	No	Yes	No	By June 2016, the Liberian Institute for Public Administration (LIPA) had trained 20 senior and junior officers on integrity issues but there is only minor potential impact because specific goals or how improved transparency and ethical conduct will be measured are not identified.
4.1 Citizens feedback vis SMS	No	No	No	This commitment seeks to collect citizens' feedback on development project outcomes, spending, and use of public services through SMS. Implementation of this commitment has not started due to lack of funding.
4.2 Improve online government information	No	No	No	This commitment is designed to standardize government websites and train staff on how to maintain those websites. Government website standards were created and implemented by 70% of all government agencies (45 in total).
4.5 Launch an Open Data portal	Yes	No	No	Creating an open data portal on which the government regularly publishes data, statistics, and information in the public interest. The portal prototype has been created but there is no

				permanent URL and data is not regularly updated.
4.3 Expand Integration of Financial Management Systems (IFMIS)	No	No	No	IFMIS was upgraded and scaled to support all county service centers in Liberia and more than 100 ministries, agencies, and commissions. Thirty-two additional MACs have been integrated on IFMIS and four counties have been integrated to use the system.
4.4 Establish LNP Office Informatics	Yes	No	No	The Liberia National Police officially launched its website to track police data outside the assessment period but it does not provide updates in real time, nor does it provide crime statistics or crime maps.

* Commitment is evaluated by the IRM as being specific, relevant, and potentially transformative
** Commitment is evaluated by the IRM as having major or outstanding results in terms of the 'Did it Open Government?' variable
✪   Commitment is evaluated by the IRM as being specific, relevant, potentially transformative, and substantially or fully implemented

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This report was written by IRM staff, with contribution from Allan Quee.

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.

Open Government Partnership

Overview: Liberia

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) End-of-Term Report (2015–2017)

Liberia has made progress in improving citizens' consultations on land rights and providing increased access to information on budget and public spending. However, the commitments on the whistleblower act and on the new government's platforms remain unfulfilled.

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. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out a review of the activities of each OGP-participating country. This end of term report summarizes the results of the period 24 June 2015 through 30 June 2016 and includes some relevant developments up to June 2017.

The Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT) coordinates the development of the OGP national action plan and implementation of the commitments. However, MICAT does not have the power to compel other agencies to change policies or act on commitments. The main role of MICAT is to organize and coordinate OGP meetings among stakeholders during the development and implementation of the action plan. A Steering Commitment (SC) composed of government institutions and CSOs serves as a working group and advisory board. However, in the case of both MICAT and the SC, their role is limited to monitoring and reporting. Liberia's national action plan was co-created and implemented by government agencies, international organizations and CSOs. Accountability Lab played a lead role in collaborating with other stakeholders to implement commitments under three of the four thematic areas. In September 2017, the government published an end of term self-assessment report, which indicated that 10 of the 20 commitments were complete. This report has been distributed among the OGP Liberia team and its partners, though there has been no confirmation of public feedback or comments.

The new national action plan 2017–2019[1] has been launched with commitment implementation activities starting in October 2017. This includes 10 commitments: four are new and the remaining six were carried forward from the second action plan.

Table 1: At a Glance		
	Mid-term	*End-of-Term*
Number of Commitments	20	
Level of Completion		
Completed	2	6
Substantial	7	3
Limited	8	10
Not Started	3	1
Number of Commitments with…		
Clear Relevance to OGP Values	17	17
Transformative Potential Impact	7	7
Substantial or Complete Implementation	9	9
All Three (◉)	3	2
Did It Open government?		
Major	2	
Outstanding	0	
Moving Forward		
Number of Commitments Carried Over to Next Action Plan	6	

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[1] https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-action-plan-2017-2019, accessed 29 April 2018.

This report was prepared by IRM Staff with contributions from Allan Quee

Consultation with Civil Society during Implementation

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

Liberia's national action plan was developed through an extensive consultative process involving both national and international civil society organizations (CSOs). This process targeted the 15 political subdivisions of the country by organizing regional workshops. About 21 CSOs were engaged in the implementation of the commitments, with Accountability Lab and iLab serving as lead implementing agencies in seven of the 20 commitments.

Accountability Lab and iLab Liberia supported these commitments through "Knowmore LIB"—a project to assess, find, collect and visualize information and datasets on key government services.[1] The team is working with the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT) to build a dual-purpose website to function as an open data hub and a government navigation portal to help citizens understand and use government services more effectively.

In other thematic commitments, The Carter Center and Internews (international non-profit organizations) have provided training support for the newly appointed Public Information Officers who are assigned to various government institutions to disseminate information requested by the public on the FOI law. The local CSO, the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) has also been engaged in the Open Budget Initiative which ensures citizens' access to budget information. They have organized interactive forums in some districts where representatives meet with their constituencies and provide information related to projects and funds. Furthermore, CENTAL through its "Resource and You" project has engaged citizens in Nimba, Bong and Grand Bassa to discuss aspects of concession agreements related to community.[2]

The National Steering Committee (NSC) oversees the implementation of the national action plan. The committee is composed of 30 institutions representing bodies from the executive and legislative branches, as well as representatives from CSOs. Chaired by the MICAT deputy Minister, and co-chaired by a CSO representative selected by CSO members, the NSC meets monthly to enhance effective coordination in implementing the action plan.

Table 2: Consultation during Implementation

Regular Multistakeholder Forum	Midterm	End-of-Term
1. Did a forum exist?	Yes	Yes
2. Did it meet regularly?	Yes	Yes

Table 3: Level of Public Influence during Implementation

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply to OGP.[3] This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for "collaborative."

Level of Public Influence during Implementation of Action Plan		Midterm	End-of-Term
Empower	The government handed decision-making power to members of the public.		

Collaborate	There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda.		✔
Involve	The government gave feedback on how public inputs were considered.		
Consult	The public could give inputs.	✔	
Inform	The government provided the public with information on the action plan.		
No Consultation	No consultation		

¹ Accountability Lab, https://bit.ly/2KcdqEv
² Cental, Open Government, http://www.tiliberia.org/?page_id=333
³ IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum,
http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf

About the Assessment

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.[1] One measure, the "starred commitment" (✪), deserves further explanation due to its particular interest to readers and usefulness for encouraging a race to the top among OGP-participating countries. Starred commitments are considered exemplary OGP commitments. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity. A commitment must lay out clearly defined activities and steps to make a judgment about its potential impact.
- 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.
- The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.[2]
- The government must make significant progress on this commitment during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.

Starred commitments can lose their starred status if their completion falls short of substantial or full completion at the end of the action plan implementation period.

In the midterm report, Liberia's action plan contained three starred commitments. At the end of term, based on the changes in the level of completion, Liberia's action plan contained two starred commitments.

Finally, the tables in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its reporting process. For the full dataset for Liberia, see the OGP Explorer at www.opengovpartnership.org/explorer.

About "Did It Open Government?"

To capture changes in government practice the IRM introduced a new variable "Did It Open Government?" in end-of-term reports. This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice has changed as a result of the commitment's implementation.

As written, some OGP commitments are vague and/or not clearly relevant to OGP values but achieve significant policy reforms. In other cases, commitments as written appear relevant and ambitious, but fail to open government as implemented. The "Did It Open Government" variable attempts to captures these subtleties.

The "Did It Open Government?" variable assesses changes in government practice using the following spectrum:

- Worsened: Government openness worsens as a result of the commitment.
- Did not change: No changes in government practice.
- Marginal: Some change, but minor in terms of its effect on level of openness.
- Major: A step forward for government openness in the relevant policy area, but remains limited in scope or scale.
- Outstanding: A reform that has transformed "business as usual" in the relevant policy area by opening government.

To assess this variable, researchers establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan. They then assess outcomes as implemented for changes in government openness.

Readers should keep in mind limitations. IRM end-of-term reports are prepared only a few months after the implementation cycle is completed. The variable focuses on outcomes that can be observed in government openness practices at the end of the two-year implementation period. The report and

the variable do not intend to assess impact because of the complex methodological implications and the timeframe of the report.

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[1] IRM Procedures Manual, http://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/about-irm
[2] The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information, visit http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919

Commitment Implementation

General Overview of Commitments

As part of OGP, countries are required to make commitments in a two-year action plan. The tables below summarize the completion level at the end of term and progress on the "Did It Open Government?" metric. For commitments that were complete at the midterm, the report will provide a summary of the progress report findings but focus on analysis of the 'Did It Open Government?' variable. For further details on these commitments, please see the Liberia IRM progress report 2015-2016.

After a rigorous consultative process, the second Liberia action plan focused on four themes: Transparency, Civic Participation, Accountability and Integrity, and Technology and Innovation. Under each theme, the commitments were 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).

In total, there are 20 commitments 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.

Table 4: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
Theme 1: Transparency																					
1.1 Appoint and train PIOs (Midterm)				✔	✔						✔			✔					✔		
1.1 Appoint and train PIOs (End-of-Term)														✔							
1.2 Popularize FOI Law (Midterm)			✔		✔						✔					✔			✔		
1.2 Popularize FOI Law (End-of-Term)																✔					
1.3 Expand open budget initiative (Midterm)				✔	✔	✔		✔				✔		✔					✔		
1.3 Expand open budget initiative (End-of-Term)														✔							
1.4 Information on land reforms and national resources (Midterm)			✔		✔						✔					✔				✔	
1.4 Information on land reforms and national resources (End-of-Term)															✔						
✪1.5 Information on commercial land use rights (Midterm)			✔		✔							✔				✔			✔		
✪1.5 Information on commercial land use rights (End-of-Term)															✔						
1.6 Development assistance (Midterm)				✔	✔			✔				✔			✔			✔			
1.6 Development assistance (End-of-Term)														✔							

Commitment																			
transparency																			
1.7 Link Financial Management System with the Aid Management Platform		✔			Unclear					✔				✔				✔	
1.8 Track EVD Funds		✔		✔						✔				✔	✔			✔	
Theme II: Citizen Participation																			
✪ 2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law			✔	✔	✔					✔					✔				✔
2.2 Citizen monitoring of the justice system	✔			✔					✔			✔	✔					✔	
2.3 Civic education and engagement using offline tools		✔			Unclear				✔					✔	✔			✔	
2.4 LNP "Know Your Rights" policing campaign		✔		✔					✔			✔		✔					✔
Theme III: Accountability and Integrity																			
3.1 Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act		✔				✔				✔		✔ ✔						✔	
3.2 Community building for accountability organizations		✔			✔				✔			✔			✔				✔
3.3 Improve integrity within government systems			✔		Unclear				✔					✔	✔			✔	
Theme IV: Technology and Innovation																			
4.1 Citizens feedback vis SMS	✔			✔	✔		✔		✔			✔ ✔						✔	
4.2 Improve online government information		✔		✔						✔			✔ ✔						✔
4.3 Expand Integration of Financial Management Systems (IFMIS)		✔		✔					✔			✔		✔				✔	
4.4 Establish		✔		✔			✔			✔	✔							✔	

LNP Office Informatics													✔								
4.5 Launch an Open Data portal			✔		✔			✔				✔		✔					✔		

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.

Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Independent Information Comission (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), 1 July 2015-30 May 2016)

Milestones:
- *1.1.1 Appoint an additional 50 PIOs.*
- *1.1.2 IIC prepares and shares quarterly reports*
- *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.

(MICAT, MOF, IIC, and Carter Center, iLab Liberia, CEMESP, CENTAL, 1 July 2015-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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.1 Appoint and train PIOs			✓		✓						✓			✓					✓		
														✓							
1.2 Popularize FOI Law			✓		✓						✓					✓			✓		
																✓					

Commitment Aim:

In 2010, Liberia passed the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law, establishing that each public agency and government ministry must have a Public Information Officer (PIO) to handle access to information requests from the public.[1] 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. 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 was compounded by the fact that the government did not have a strong records management system in place, and did 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 Independent Information Commission (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 publicizing 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.

Status
Midterm:
Commitment 1.1: Limited
This commitment had limited completion at the midterm. By June 2016, 41 of 50 PIOs had been appointed and civil society partners had carried out the capacity building trainings. However, by the end of the review cycle, the IIC had not published any quarterly reports on recruitment and training practices or government agencies' in compliance with the FOI law. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

Commitment 1.2: Completed
The IIC has established an online platform "InfoLib"[2] to enable citizens to request information. As of January 2017, 95 requests have been made, though only four have received government responses and 89 remain unresolved. The InfoLib tracking system reveals that the government lacks the capacity to respond to requests in a timely manner. The government has carried out awareness-raising activities through town hall meetings in six of the 15 counties. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term:
Commitment 1.1: Limited
An additional seven PIOs have been appointed and trained, bringing the total to 48 PIOs. These PIOs were serving as Public Relations Officers (PRO) in their respective ministries. Their appointment to serve as a PIO is an additional responsibility in their terms of reference as PRO.[3] Two more PIOs need to be appointed and trained to complete the commitment.

In fulfilling another milestone under this commitment, iLab have conducted five capacity building trainings for IIC staff. Also, in June 2016, iLab Liberia, in collaboration with IIC and the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism, conducted a week-long training for all PIOs. The training was an effort to provide the newly appointed PIOs hands-on training on the FOI request platform, as they serve as the primary contact of their authority or agency for the public.

However, a representative from the IIC informed the IRM researcher that the commission has not been able to publish any quarterly reports as they have not received any reports from the PIOs. He also expressed that the public is not fully aware of services on the online platform even though the commission has engaged in educating people about it on various radio shows.[4] For these reasons the commitment level of implementation is still limited. Although PIOs have been appointed, there is no evidence that they are preparing and sharing quarterly reports.

Commitment 1.2: Completed
The online platform has been designed and built (www.infolib.org.lr). Also, according to the self-assessment report, the government has carried out awareness activities in seven counties. Pursuant to the FOI Act, the government appointed Cllr. Mark B Freeman as Commissioner for the ICC. One of the commissioner's primary responsibilities and functions is to develop outreach and a public awareness strategy to provide useful tools and relevant information to the general public on how to access the FOI Act. In this regard the IIC, with support from Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), has conducted awareness outreach in 12 of the 15 counties. Billboards were also erected in strategic locations to increase public awareness.[5]

CSOs maintained that the establishment of the IIC is a step in the right direction to provide information to the public. However, they highlighted that the government needs to fully support the

IIC in order for it to be effective in fulfilling its mandate.[6] Furthermore, The Carter Center, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has developed "A Citizens' Guide to the 2010 Liberia Freedom of Information Act", which has been distributed widely and is accessible online.[7] The Carter Center is also implementing a two-year (2016–2018) access to information plan for women in Lofa, Bong and Nimba. This project mainly targets women's groups to educate them about the FOI Act and how they can request information from government institutions.

Did It Open Government?
Commitment 1.1
Access to Information: Marginal

According to the report from the Carter Foundation[8], although the implementation of the FOI Act in Liberia still faces serious challenges, one key positive aspect is the appointment of information officers in the different agencies. Prior to the implementation of this commitment no public information officers (PIOs) were in place. Currently, 48 PIOs are working on the implementation of the FOI Act in Liberia. The Carter Foundation stated that "the basics exist to begin and advance implementation". However, a representative from the IIC, responsible for supervising and providing technical support to the designated PIOs, indicated a lack of reporting from the newly designated PIOs.[9] While PIOs are in place and trained, the results of their work are not visible yet. In view of these considerations, the commitment resulted in a marginal level of opening up the government.

Commitment 1.2
Access to Information: Marginal

Although PIOs have been appointed, the use of the FOI Act to request information remains limited in Liberia. The IIC representative, Emmanuel Howe, stressed more outreach and sensitization about the FOI online request platform is needed. As of November 2017 there are a total of 27 online requests known by the IIC made by citizens to public institutions. From this, only 10 of the public bodies have complied with requests from the public.[10] The commission officer highlighted to the IRM researcher that more public awareness is needed in relation to online requests. Internet penetration and literacy rates could also be affecting the number of requests people make. The IIC also expressed that it is important to firstly strategize ways in which the already designated PIOs can be more effective before assigning and training additional PIOs. Finally, it is important that the government revise their record management and information storing system so that public institutions can have the information readily available for release.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 1.1 was carried forward into the third national action plan.[11] Commitment 3 of the third action plan aims to complete the appointment and training of additional PIOs in all counties and to provide additional trainings to ensure they can fulfill their mandate. The commitment also aims to increase the amount of FOI requests and to ensure the government's provision of information.

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[1] http://www.liberianembassyus.org/uploads/documents/Liberia%20Freedom%20of%20Information%20Act%202010x.pdf
[2] InfoLib, http://infolib.org.lr/list/all?#results
[3] Emmanuel Howe, Independent Information Commission (IIC), interview by IRM researcher.
[4] Emmanuel Howe, Independent Information Commission (IIC), interview by IRM researcher.
[5] Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) 2014-2017 Strategy, http://www.osiwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/osiwa_2014-2017_for_website_final.pdf
[6] Accountability Lab, Peacework Liberia, iLab, LOFANET and the Global Citizens Initiative were consulted on this topic.
[7] A Citizens' Guide to the 2010 Liberia Freedom of Information Act, https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/ati/liberia/citizens-guide-to-foi-final.pdf
[8] Findings from Select Agencies: Liberia, https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/ati/liberia-iat-country-report.pdf
[9] Emmanuel Howe, IIC, interview by IRM researcher, November 2017.
[10] One example includes the request for the annual financial statements from 2008 -2012/13 from Liberia Electricity Corporation and their contribution to the National Budget and Broad. Also the CSO Ebola Response Task Force requested the Ministry of Finance for expenditures made in seven counties from the County Development Fund in the fight against

Ebola. Both cases are still pending with the Ministry of Finance failing to appear for court proceedings. For more information, http://iicliberia.org/cases/

[11] Liberia's third national action plan, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-action-plan-2017-2019

Standalone Commitment: Open Budget Initiative

1.3. Expand Open Budget Initiative.

Ministry of Finance (MOF), Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism (MICAT), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) with support of 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), (1 July 2015 - 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.3 Expand Open Budget Initiative				✔	✔	✔		✔				✔		✔							
														✔					✔		

Commitment Aim:

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, Liberia performed poorly in the Open Budget Survey 2015 (scoring 38 out of a possible 100 points). Only four out of eight key budget documents were publicly disclosed and checks and balances on spending were missing from the institutional budget-approval framework. The activities planned under this commitment were to set up an SMS platform to disseminate budget information so that citizens can have access to the national budget and participate on the discussion about public spending. The commitment also aims to decentralize the Open Budget Initiative (OBI) activities to the 15 counties in Liberia.

Status

Midterm: Limited

Increased outreach has been carried out by engaging citizens through radio talk shows and town halls, and the guidebooks have provided access to understandable budget information.

Awareness-raising activities under the "National Open Budget" theme were carried out in 11 counties and 6,500 citizens' guide booklets were produced and distributed in libraries in high schools, universities and community colleges in all 15 counties. The booklets are also available online on the Ministry of Finance website. However, the SMS platform to disseminate budget information was not instituted and the Open Data Portal, which is to publish quarterly budget online, was not yet operational. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term: Limited
According to the government self-assessment report, at the end of the implementation period 10,000 copies of the Citizens' Guide booklets[1] were produced (in addition to the 6,500 copies already distributed). This distribution exercise covered 78 libraries of high schools, six universities and six community colleges across the 15 counties. However, there are no indicators of the number of citizens reached disaggregated by geographical locations.

More than 3,000 citizens have directly participated in a public forum and 11 focus group discussions nationwide. Outreach activities have been conducted in 11 counties under the theme "National Open Budget". According to a representative from the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), it has conducted different awareness-raising activities to decentralize the OBI. These included interactive forums related to projects and funds for elected representatives and their constituencies. With support from UNDP they produced "The Open Expenditure Initiative (OEI) Report" which details findings gathered from four districts through Focus Group Discussions and Open Expenditure Forums on the County Social Development Funds in Montserrado.[2] A representative of CENTAL also pointed out that the Open Expenditure idea was their way of pushing for more openness and a call for public officials to prioritize the dissemination of expenditure information when they give out budget information.

Nonetheless, two milestones under this commitment—the SMS platform to disseminate budget information and the Open Data Portal to publish quarterly budgets and all audit reports online—have not been implemented.

Did It Open Government?
Access to Information: Marginal
The distribution of citizens' guide booklets, outreach activities under the theme "National Open Budget" and the interactive forum where public officials disseminate expenditure information in the counties have been highlighted by LOFANET and CENTAL representatives. Some of them stated that this is the first-time initiatives like this have been conducted in their community.[3]

According to the Open Budget Initiative Survey results for 2017, citizens' key budget information documents published by the government are substantially comprehensive and useful in providing basic information to citizens. Since 2015, Liberia has increased the availability of budget information by publishing the Citizens' Budget online. However, budget information disclosure is still limited in Liberia, as no quarterly budgets, audit reports or pre-budget statements that allow proper monitoring or feedback have been disclosed. Therefore, the IRM researcher concludes that this commitment has increased citizens' access to budget information only in a marginal way.

Carried Forward?
This commitment was carried forward into the next action plan (Commitment 3). The commitment includes the publication of annual and quarterly audit reports; and extends the coverage of the International Financial Management and Information System to eight additional ministries and agencies.

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[1] Citizen's Guide to the Liberian Budget, http://www.fourthway.co.uk/citizens-guide/index.html
[2] Interview with CENTAL representatives, November 2017.
[3] Interview with LOFANET and CENTAL representatives, November 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

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Land Commission (or future Land Authority) Sustainable Development Institute, Governance Commission, Law Reform Commission. Additional support from Liberia Media Center, The Global Citizen's Initiative, CENTAL, concerned concession companies, 20 August 2015 – 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

Ministry of Internal Affairs, Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI), Land Commission (or future Land Authority), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry Development Authority, Ministry of Mines & Energy, National Investment Commission, Ministry of Justice, National Bureau of Concessions, National Traditional Council. Additional support from Liberia Media Center, The Global Citizen's Initiative, CENTAL, CEMESP, concerned concession companies, 20 August 2015 – 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion		Midterm		Did It Open Government?				
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	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.4 Information on land reforms and natural resources			✔		✔						✔				✔	✔				✔	
1.5 Information on commercial land use rights			✔		✔							✔			✔ ✔				✔		

Commitment Aim:

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. This commitment aims to provide information to the public on proposed reforms in the land

and natural resources sectors, and to ensure material on commercial land use rights is available to the public.

Commitment 1.4 This 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, but specific information on natural resource rights, concessions and community lands was non-existent. Implementation of this commitment could empower stakeholders by increasing their understanding of land and natural resources.

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 whether they are using only demarcated land not subject to competing claims of ownership or tenure, as recognized in the Land Rights Policy. Making information on commercial land use publicly available could transform citizens' access to information on land ownership and mediate conflicts over specific areas in which citizens and companies have competing land ownership claims.

Status
Midterm:
Commitment 1.4: Substantial
The government's self-assessment reports that the 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. 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). For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

Commitment 1.5: Substantial
This commitment has been substantially completed. Information on acres (hectares) of land for commercial use and the affiliated contracts and agreements have all been uploaded on Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency's (LEITI) website.[1] A Concession Information Management System (CIMS) has also been developed and launched. This tool allows users to view each commercial land use right via a map-based web platform. However, the IRM researcher 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. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term:
Commitment 1.4: Completed
The commitment seeks to ensure the public is informed on proposed reforms in the Land and Natural Resources sectors through broad based stakeholders' consultations in the counties to increase citizens' understanding of land and natural resources issues.

LEITI has conducted broad based stakeholders' consultations in the six counties and in concession areas to disseminate the abridged contract matrix in an initiative which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI).[2] According to meeting minutes and the Deputy Head of Secretariat, Myer W. Saye, LEITI conducted town hall meetings which informed community members and created an interactive forum about relevant concession agreements, economic features, social responsibilities and environmental controls, as well as disclosure of Social Development Funds payments received by the

government from relevant companies in the extractive sector.[3] This initiative is intended to promote natural resource transparency through information sharing.

The Land Authority has established sub offices in the counties to provide guidelines and procedures for the Sale of Public Land, the Land Rights Policy, the Act against Criminal Conveyance of Land, and the draft Land Rights Act. Also, as part of this commitment, the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL) has engaged citizens in Nimba, Bong and Grand Bassa counties as part of its "Resource and You" project.[4] In these locations CENTAL conducted dialogue forums where company authorities, public officials and community members discussed pertinent issues relating to land, social agreements, and management and use of natural resources.

Commitment 1.5: Substantial
CENTAL and LEITI have conducted various community outreach activities to target community members who do not have internet access and provide information to audiences that are literate.[5] This has been done through town hall meetings, and audio and print media using local groups and radio stations. The Ministry of Internal Affairs also partnered with CENTAL to organize public interactive forums in towns and villages where issues and concerns on private deeds and community ownership concession agreements were addressed.

Furthermore, the Sustainable Development Institute and Platypus Productions have developed a secure mobile reporting application to improve citizen reporting on what is happening to natural resources in rural Liberia. The simple and secure app – This Is My Backyard (TIMBY)[6] – feeds into a mapping platform and provides information that creates narrative around land-related conflicts and concession agreements. These short narratives, combined with creative animations, help engage policymakers and audiences across the country on land-related activities.

According to the information provided by the government to Accountability Lab,[7] an internal map-web-based cadastre[8] has been developed by the National Bureau of Concessions to host all land-related information. However, the information has not been uploaded to the website due to the delay in the passage of the Land Rights Act by the National Legislature. The government informed the representatives from Accountability Lab that with the passage of the Land Rights Act, the information on land map and other key issues, such as private deeds and community ownership, will be made public.

Did it Open Government?
Commitment 1.4
Access to Information: Major
The broad-based stakeholders' consultations have had a major impact on providing information, creating a space for interactive sessions with local authorities, companies and the general public. According to the information provided to the IRM researcher by CENTAL and LEITI, community leaders, youths, women, elderly and physically challenged citizens were represented in the fora. Initially, company authorities seldom held meetings with the local community. Such meetings were held in the capital city, Monrovia, with top government officials. According to CENTAL and LEITI, community members are better informed about their land rights and claims as a result of public information campaigns and dispute resolution meetings for overlapping claims.

Commitment 1.5
Access to Information: Marginal
Community outreach activities organized in towns and villages provided more information about land use and tenure to community members. Community members expressed that prior to the outreach activities organized by CENTAL and LEITI, they were misinformed and that now they have a much broader understanding that can help them to protect and claim their rights.[9] However, the map web-based platform has not been implemented yet, limiting access to information on commercial land use.

Carried Forward?

Commitment 1.4 was not carried forward.

Commitment 1.5 is carried forward into the next action plan (Commitment 7). This commitment aims to make more information on land ownership and rights available to the public. It also proposes the creation of a standing mechanism for citizens to resolve land disputes through the Land Authority.

A five-year (September 2017–2022) World Bank-funded project (US$7 million) will be providing support to the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) to strengthen its institution capacity through the implementation of four components. The project will, inter alia, address tribal land ownership and create an accountability mechanism for community members seeking redress on unlawful violations on their land.

[1] Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative(LEITI), http://www.leiti.org.lr
[2] Interview with LEITI representatives, IRM researcher, December 2017, https://www.dai.com/our-work/projects/liberia-accountability-and-voice-initiative-lavi
[3] LEITI meeting minutes, http://www.leiti.org.lr/uploads/2/1/5/6/21569928/draft_msg_regular_meeting__minutes__december_2017.pdf
[4] Resource and You, https://spark.adobe.com/page/xCYRC/
[5] Mr. Thomas Doe Nah, Executive Director CENTAL, interview by IRM researcher, December 2017.
[6] This is My Back Yard (TIMBY), http://www.makingallvoicescount.org/project/involving-citizens-in-decision-making-processes-in-liberia/
[7] Antony Selmah (Accountability Lab), contacted by IRM staff, 28 May 2018.
[8] Liberia National Concession Portal, http://portals.flexicadastre.com/liberia/
[9] Marvin Tokpah, Executive Director, MPARD Nimba County, interview by IRM researcher.

Cluster: Improve Financial Management and Transparency

1.6 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

Minitry of Finance (MOF), supported by Development Gateway, Publish What You Fund, Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP), 01 July 2015 – 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 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

(MOF, supported by CEMESP, CENTAL, 15 July 2015 – 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 [1] funds.

(MOH, Liberia Ebola Financial Tracking Group, LACC, with support from iLab, Accountability Lab, 15 August 2015- 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
1.6 Development assistance transparency				✔	✔			✔				✔		✔	✔			✔			
1.7 Link Financial Management System with the Aid Management Platform			✔		Unclear						✔			✔ / ✔				✔			
1.8 Track EVD Funds			✔		✔						✔			✔	✔			✔			

Commitment Aim:

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, but the majority of Liberia's foreign aid is "off budget", which means that donated funds go directly to NGOs and foreign contractors to implement development projects. Data from a 2015-2016 Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) report on external resources and debt management indicate that the government of Liberia's approved budget FY 2015/2016 accounted for US$622 million, when compared to aid projections of US$899 million (more than 30 percent greater than the national budget).[2] These commitments seek to improve aid transparency so that the Liberian government can strengthen its financial system, better assess how to allocate domestic revenue and determine whether aid donations are being used effectively.

Commitment 1.6 The commitment seeks to ensure public online access to Liberia's Aid Management Platform and identify ways to improve accessibility, functionality and awareness of the platform. Prior to the commitment period, such information was only available to international development partners, and sometimes to the Liberian government.

Commitment 1.7 gauges how the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) could be linked to the Aid Management Platform. This could lead to better coordination and accountability in how monetary resources are spent on development projects.

Commitment 1.8 The commitment seeks to track financial resources spent and map financial resources committed or allocated from government and partners, including the private sector. It also intends to disseminate data and reports on government websites, including the Open Data Portal Management System.

Status

Midterm:
Commitment 1.6: Substantial
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.[3] 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. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

Commitment 1.7: Limited
The Aid Management Coordination Unit and international partners conducted a technical assessment to determine how data modelling in 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.

Commitment 1.8: Substantial
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. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term:
Commitment 1.6: Limited
The self-assessment reports indicated this commitment as completed. However, the initial link (http://41.86.8.147/portal), which was accessible during the midterm report, cannot be accessed presently, and neither can the open data portal be accessed via the Development Gateway website (http://www.developmentgateway.org/programs/aid-management-program.html). According to Jonathan Williams, OGP Point of Contact Liberia, the government is seeking ways to improve the functionality and accessibility of the Aid Management Platform to ensure transparency of development assistance.[4]

Apart from the platform, Publish What You Fund has published Liberia's IATI registry dataset (https://iatiregistry.org/dataset/afdb-liberia).[5] National Open Budget Initiative has also published the Citizen's Guide, which allows the public free and easy access every year to government financial information.[6] The official development assistance section provides information on all the foreign money that will come to the country, whether on-budget (grant/ gift and loans) or off-budget (donors' money to be used by NGOs working in Liberia or through government agencies).

Pursuant to the principles of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), and Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the new framework -Aid Coordination and Management Unit of the MFDP- identifies best practices in Aid Management and Coordination, establishes effective policies and procedures for the management of donor funding, increases the coherence of aid negotiation, mobilization and coordination. The framework is necessary for an effective aid flow and maintains a full database of aid flows.

Commitment 1.7: Limited
The proposal to link IFMIS and the Aid Management Platform to create a one-stop shop for citizens to access financial information has not been completed. Liberia's self-assessment report indicates the IFMIS system was hacked.[7] This stalled the process of interfacing both systems. After this incident, upgrading and interfacing of the platform with IFMIS was delayed due to limited funding.

Commitment 1.8: Limited

The self-assessment report indicates this commitment as completed. Although Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) tracking information was published online in annual government reports by the MOH and MFDP, the information is still not accessible in an open portal. Therefore, the implementation of this commitment is limited.

Did It Open Government?
Commitment 1.6
Access to Information: Did Not Change
The commitment aim was to ensure public online access to Liberia's Aid Management Platform and identify ways to improve accessibility, functionality and awareness of the platform. However, to date, even though the website has been developed, it is difficult for citizens or CSOs to find it, since it does not yet have a permanent URL and has been inaccessible most of the time. With such technical progress and ongoing data integration, the IRM researcher considers that the government did not improve the quality of information disclosed to the public. Moreover, although there have been efforts from CSOs to improve capacity building regarding the public budget in Liberia, government practice regarding citizens' access to aid data remains limited.

Commitment 1.7
Did Not Change
Even though the Liberia Aid Management Platform has been developed, the platform has not been published online yet and has not been linked to the Financial and Expenditure Management System. The platform has not enhanced coordination and accountability on monetary resources spent on development projects. Therefore, the *status quo* of government practice has not changed.

Commitment 1.8
Access to Information: Did Not Change
Although more information on financial reports has been disclosed, there is no clear evidence that the new data has been disseminated on the Open Data Portal Management System and that it is easily accessible to the majority of citizens. Moreover, due to its limited level of implementation, the commitment has not helped to improve aid transparency and government tracking of aid flows.

Carried forward?
Commitment 1.6 and 1.7 are carried forward into the next action plan (Commitment 2) and will include the publishing of annual audit reports and pre-budget statements, and the year-end report on budget implementation. The commitment also aims to extend the coverage of the Integrated Financial Management Information System.

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[1] EVD is the acronym for Ebola Virus Disease.
[2] Liberia National Concession Portal, goo.gl/QsDpPS
[3] Development Gateway, https://www.developmentgateway.org/reach
[4] Jonathan Williams (OGP Point of Contact of Liberia), interview by IRM researcher, November 2017.
[5] "Publish What You Fund tracker", http://tracker.publishwhatyoufund.org/publish/packages/afdb-liberia/
[6] "Citizen's Guide to the National Budget: Republica of Liberia", https://bit.ly/2pZbF5b, 31 March 2018. The book, which is divided into five sections, defines what the budget is and how it is produced, explains where the money will come from, how government plans to spend the money it will collect, how citizens can find out more and get involved in the budget process and how much each county will get, who will provide how much, and what are the important things the money will be spent on in each county.
[7] Liberia Self-Assessment report 2015-2017.

Theme II: Citizen Participation

Cluster: Implementation of the new Jury Law

2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law
(MICAT, LACC, GC, Judiciary, MIA, MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, with support of UNMIL, PBF, 15 July 2015 – 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
(MOJ, Judiciary, JPC, with support of PUL, CENTAL, CEMESP, LMC, UNMIL, 10 October 2015 – 30 June 2017).

Milestones:
- *2.2.1 Publish quarterly analysis of court returns*

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law (Midterm)				✔	✔	✔						✔				✔					
2.1 Implementation of the new Jury Law (End-of-Term)																✔			✔		
2.2 Citizen monitoring of the justice system (Midterm)		✔			✔					✔				✔							
2.2 Citizen monitoring of the justice system (End-of-Term)														✔				✔			

Commitment Aim:
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. Prior to the commitment period, implementation of the amended jury laws had stalled. Juries were often randomly selected and comprised citizens with no knowledge of the case being tried. These commitments primarily aim to implement and enforce the amended laws, and to ensure citizens selected to serve on juries are well informed about the case so that trials are conducted fairly.

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 on 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 dates 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.

Status
Midterm:
Commitment 2.1: Completed
The budget for creating and staffing the central Jury Management Office has been approved and the office established in Monrovia at the Temple of Justice. In addition, beyond the scope of the commitment, regional jury management offices have been established in eight counties. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

Commitment 2.2: Limited
This commitment 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. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term:
Commitment 2.1: Completed
The Jury Management Office has been fully operational and engaged in a) jury selection; b) organizing the central jury pool and ordering the number of jurors necessary for the functioning of Circuit Courts and; c) providing education to prospective/selected jurors on the law and legal processes to help them understand their civic duties in the administration of justice.[1]

The Jury Management sub-offices have been established in eight of the 16 judicial circuits to date; namely: Montserrado County (first Judicial Circuit), Brand Bassa County (second Judicial Circuit), Grand Gedeh County (seventh Judicial Circuit), Nimba County (eighth Judicial Circuit), Bong County (ninth Judicial Circuit), Lofa County (tenth Judicial Circuit), Bomi county (eleventh Judicial Circuit), and Margibi County (thirteenth Judicial Circuit).

Commitment 2.2: Limited
The self-assessment report indicates this commitment has been completed, however, there is no sufficient evidence to confirm it. The judiciary website (http://judiciary.gov.lr) only provides basic information about judiciary processes and units in the judiciary branch. There is no feature or link that allows the public to access court records and analysis of court returns.

A UNDP/UNMIL joint program "Strengthening the Rule of Law in Liberia: Justice and Security for the Liberian People (2016–2019)"[2] has been developed in close consultation with the Judiciary, the Ministry of Justice and other principal institutional counterparts. The program aims, *inter alia,* to enhance the capacities of, and public confidence in, the different justice and security institutions, strengthening access to justice, security and protection services, especially for women and girls. Interventions are designed with a view to ensuring sustainability and linking activities to 'system-level' policy development. One of the outcomes of this project is building the capacity of key actors and stakeholders to monitor progress and results in the rule of law developments.

Did It Open Government?

Commitment 2.1
Access to Information: Marginal
Civic Participation: Marginal
The commitment has advanced on the administrative steps needed to implement the recently amended law. The establishment of the Jury Management Office, as well as regional offices, is a huge first step to train and select jurors. However, according to the existing evidence, this commitment had only a marginal effect on opening government practices, as these changes are only the first administrative steps in the implementation of the jury law.

Commitment 2.2
Access to Information: Did Not Change
The judiciary website offers little information about the workings of the justice system or any access to court records. Therefore, there is not sufficient evidence of any change in government practice.

Carried forward?
This commitment was carried forward into the next action plan with the following deliverables set as milestones:
- Jury offices established in all 15 counties;
- Training of 300 magistrates across all 15 counties;
- Awareness raising around the roles of juries;
- Track cases in courts to prevent delays in judication;
- Open Justice initiative through which citizens monitor local courts, track cases and follow-up on the return of bond fees

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[1] Office of the Jury Management, Profile, http://judiciary.gov.lr/jury-management/
[2] "Strengthening the Rule of Law in Liberia: Justice and Security for the Liberian People (2016-2019)", http://www.lr.undp.org/content/dam/liberia/docs/docs/Procurement%20Notices/Guidance%20Note%20-%20Civil%20Society%20Roster%20(June%202017).pdf

2.3 Civic Education and citizen engagement around offline tools

(MIA, MICAT, MOS, President's Office, with support from Accountability Lab and iLab, 15 September 2015 – 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.3 Civic education and engagement using offline tools			✔		Unclear					✔					✔ (Midterm)	✔ (End-of-Term)		✔			

Commitment Aim:

The commitment seeks to raise awareness of corruption and educate citizens on 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 for 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.

Status

Midterm: Substantial

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, five murals painted in Monrovia, and a "Corruption, Corruption" music video produced. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term: Completed

Accountability Lab has developed several offline tools to create civic education and citizen engagement about corruption and issues of social relevance to Liberia. These include film schools, interactive murals, rap competitions, podcasts, community outreach activities and citizen helpdesks.

With support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and Accountability Lab, Liberian musicians launched a collaborative initiative to combat corruption in Liberia through the power of Hip Hop music. At public performances in schools, the musicians spoke on the importance of eliminating corruption at all levels of society.[1] Topics of discussions have been around the use of local taxes. Citizens' helpdesks have also been organized in concessions areas where concessions agreements are explained to community members in very simplified language. These sessions also

create a platform for dialogue between community members, company executives and local authorities. The rap competitions, which mainly involved youths, were organized in 15 counties with contestants spreading messages on selected themes like peace, elections, taxes, corruption and natural resource management.

Did It Open Government?
Did Not Change
While the offline activities carried out through this commitment, such as film schools, podcasts and community outreach programs, have engaged youth voices on issues of social relevance, such as tax reforms and corruption, government practice has not changed in a way that is relevant to open government values.

Carried forward?
The commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Accountability Lab, 'Corruption, corruption', http://www.accountabilitylab.org/corruption-corruption-partnering-with-amaze-to-promote-social-change-via-music-video/

2.4 Liberia National Police (LNP) 'Know Your Rights' Policing Campaign/Initiative.

(MIA, MICAT, MOS, President's Office, with support from Accountability Lab and iLab. 15 September 2015 – 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
2.4 LNP "Know Your Rights" policing campaign (Midterm)													✔								
2.4 LNP "Know Your Rights" policing campaign (End-of-Term)			✔		✔						✔				✔					✔	

Commitment Aim:

The police and criminal justice systems do not enjoy high levels of public trust in Liberia. According to a 2011/2013 Afro-barometer survey, 88 percent of Liberians perceived "some," "most," or "all" police to be corrupt.[1] Citizens often accuse the police of extortion and bribery. 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.

Status

Midterm: Not Started

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. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term: Substantial

With assistance from the Carter Center a website (http://lnp.gov.lr/lnp/) and a Facebook page have been launched. The online platform provides basic information to the general public on police activities and mode of operation. The website has a comments and complaints tab which creates a link for citizens to register their comments or seek redress on police actions. It also has a "Find Officer" section which provides the identity and location of any police officer after the ID number has been submitted. Key laws and regulations are also available on the site. Furthermore, the FAQ section provides useful information about citizens' rights when arrested, the role of the police and civilian-police interaction. Nonetheless, this commitment is considered as substantially complete because the awareness-raising activities regarding the online platform and its use are still missing, particularly in the counties that are far from the capital city.

Did It Open Government?
Access to Information: Major
CSO representatives[2] believed this initiative has helped to flag police brutality cases as several complaints have been filed through the website, and the "Find Officer" link has helped to identify officers who were involved in violent acts.[3]

Citizens can now be aware of detention time limits (which prevents prolonged detention) and other police procedures. Before the implementation of this commitment, citizens could not report police officers who demonstrate brutality or behave outside their professional standards. CSO representatives acknowledge that, currently, complaints are being received even from counties far from the capital. For all these reasons, the IRM researcher considers this commitment as a major step forward in government openness in the security policy area.

Carried forward?
This commitment was carried forward in next action plan (Commitment 5). The commitment aims to establish a public hotline for complaints and recommendations, to increase available data on crime, accidents, and LNP activities on the website, and to create brochures with information about citizens' rights in relation to the LNP.

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[1] "Afro-barometer R5 2011/2013 (Liberia)", http://afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis/analyse-online
[2] Interviews with Peace Work Liberia and LOFANET representatives. December 2017.
[3] William Howard, Executive Director, Peace Work Liberia, December 2017.

Theme III: Accountability and Integrity

3.1 Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act
(National Legislature, LRC, MICAT, GC, LACC, NIF, with support from CENTAL, CUPPADL, CEMESP; 15 July 2015 - 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3.1 Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act			✔				✔					✔		✔ (Midterm) / ✔ (End-of-Term)				✔			

Commitment Aim:
The former President of the Republic of Liberia signed Executive Order No. 22[1] on 18 December 2009. This order aimed to protect anyone who discloses information about actions of impropriety against the public interest in any public or private institution. This commitment aims to move a step forward and foment the political will necessary to pass and enact a Whistleblower Act, currently drafted but stalled in the legislature. Passage of a Whistleblower Protection Act could positively alter government practice by reducing corruption and setting the framework to allow citizens the opportunity to hold public officials accountable without fear of retaliation.

Status
Midterm: Limited
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 with the Act. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term: Limited
On 21 June 2017, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission held a one-day colloquium on the passage of the draft Whistleblower and Witness Protection Bill into law.[2] The event was intended to solicit the support of the National Legislature for the passage of the draft Bill into Law and to raise awareness among CSOs and other state actors on the importance of the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Law in Liberia. However, the passage of the Whistleblower Protection Act has stalled and, according to the government's self-assessment report, the challenge in implementing the commitment was the lack of political will on the part of the legislature.

Did it Open Government?
Public Accountability: Did Not Change
The bill has not yet been passed by the National Legislature, therefore the status quo of government practice has not changed.

Carried forward?
This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Liberian Executive Orders, Protection of Whistleblowers (No. 22),
www.vertic.org/media/National%20Legislation/Liberia/LR_Protection%20of%20Whistleblower%20(No.22).pdf
[2] Interview with Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) focal person, December 2017.

Cluster: Building a Culture of Accountability in Communities and Government

3.2 Community building for accountability organizations.

(MICAT, MIA, LACC, GC, with support from Accountability Lab, CENTAL, OSIWA, Medica Mondiale, GAA; 10 July 2015 – 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.

(MICAT, GC, LIPA, CSA, NIF, with support from Accountability Lab; 20 September 2015 – 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
3.2 Community building for accountability organizations			✔			✔				✔				✔		✔			✔		
3.3 Improve integrity within government systems				✔	Unclear					✔					✔	✔		✔			

Commitment Aim:

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 This commitment 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 giving recent civil service graduates training in government ethics (e.g., human resources, finance, and peer leadership). The goal is to train at least 20 civil servants and to 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.

Status
Midterm:
Commitment 3.2: Limited
The government's self-assessment report identifies the site for the OpenGov Hub as Carey Street in Monrovia. Renovation works were ongoing as of June 2016. A representative from Accountability Lab confirmed that the space is 80–90 percent completed and was being used in February 2017. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

Commitment 3.3: Substantial
As of June 2016, 20 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. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term:
Commitment 3.2: Completed
The OpenGov Hub is completed and fully operational offering various services to open government organizations, such as high-speed internet connection and hot-desking in co-working spaces, office space for meetings and workshops, customs trainings and workshops.[1]

Furthermore, the iCampus shares innovation, co-working and community space for organizations focusing on the intersection of technology, accountability and social change in Liberia. It acts as a physical and virtual space for youth-focused ICT and governance training, a networking and innovation hub, and a focal point for elections and open governance work.

The iCampus, also hosts the USAID Liberia Accountability and Voice Initiative (LAVI) Learning Lab— a physical and online hub for Liberians and international organizations to collaborate, share lessons learned, and access useful resources to help improve programmatic learning, advocacy campaigns, and open and accountable governance in Liberia.[2] Also, the Liberia Accountability Incubator Program[3] from Accountability Lab, a flagship program for young civil society leaders to build sustainable, effective tools for accountability, participation and social impact covering 15 counties, is now established.[4]

Commitment 3.3: Substantial
Training for government officials, including senior civil servants, have been conducted by government institutions and NGOs working on accountability issues. According to the government's self-assessment report, 20 middle and junior level government officials (PYPPs) were trained on issues of integrity.

Accountability Lab, with the government innovation fund, launched "Integrity Idol," a campaign to "name and fame" honest government officials.[5] The Integrity Idol campaign has tapped into the frustration around corruption in Liberia and channeled it toward positive thought and action. The finalists themselves have already committed to building a network of hundreds of young people in their districts who can act as integrity champions in the future. This will help local reformers share ideas, build coalitions and actively collaborate to improve governance.

Did it Open Government?
Commitment 3.2
Civic Participation: Marginal
According to the Accountability Lab and iLab Liberia, the OpenGov Hub and iCampus have improved collaboration, networking and information sharing among line ministries and CSOs. This has created synergy in governance programs as stakeholders are now more aware of each other's project activities, improving the opportunities to create alliances and influence government decisions. However, there is no sufficient evidence to state that this commitment has influenced civic participation in government decisions.

Commitment 3.3
Did Not Change
Although this commitment is a major step forward in promoting a culture of integrity in Liberia, it is still to be seen how this commitment would improve the government's score on the OGP values of access to information, civic participation and public accountability.

Carried forward?
This commitment was carried forward with milestones including, *inter alia*, the passage of the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Acts and the strengthening of the implementation of Executive Order (19) (Code of Conduct for National Officials).

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[1] Luther D. Jeke, Ilab Liberia, interview by IRM researcher, November 2017.
[2] iCampus, LAVI Learning Lab, http://icampus.io/lavi-learning-lab/
[3] Accountability Lab, Accountability Incubator, http://www.accountabilitylab.org/accountapreneurs/
[4] Blair Glencorse, questionnaire interview by IRM researcher, 15 November 2017.
[5] Blair Glencorse, questionnaire interview by IRM researcher, 15 November 2017

Theme IV: Technology and Innovation

4.1 Encourage Citizens' feedback on national development outcomes

(MICAT, LISGIS, MOF, MOPT, MIA with support from GSM companies, iLab, CENTAL, All local radio stations; 10 August 2015- – 15 February 2016).

Milestones:

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

Commitment Overview	Specificity				OGP Value Relevance (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Midterm / End-of-Term	Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed		Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.1 Collect citizen feedback via SMS		✔			✔	✔		✔		✔			✔ (Midterm) / ✔ (End-of-Term)						✔			

Commitment Aim:

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.

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 (CSOs), development partners, and monitoring and evaluation arms of the government to measure project impacts against spending.

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.

Status

Midterm: Not Started

Implementation of this commitment has not started.

End-of-Term: Not Started

The government's self-assessment report indicates this commitment has not started because of a lack of funding. Nonetheless, it is important to state that Accountability Lab has begun implementation of "Offline Citizen Helpdesks"[1], a project that pioneers citizen feedback, dialogue and a community voice platform to ensure accountability in the development process. The project is working in two areas where large gold mining concessions have led to a variety of accountability challenges. Helpdesks are acting as a platform for shared understanding between communities, the local government and the concession companies, and as the basis for collective solutions to shared challenges in the natural resource management process. This process is used to ensure that everyone

understands how and when development will take place, to build accountability into local decision making in real-time, and to close the feedback loop between citizens, governments, the media and the private sector.[2]

Did it Open Government?
Access to Information: Did Not Change
Civic Participation: Did Not Change
There is no progress to show for this commitment and it has not had any impact on changing government practice.

Carried forward?
This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Citizen Helpdesks, http://citizenhelpdesk.org
[2] Anthony K Selmah, iLab, interview by IRM researcher, November 2017.

Cluster: Publish Government Held Data Online in Standardized, Easily Accessible Format

4.2 Improve GoL online provision of information
(MICAT, MOPT, LTA with support from Accountability Lab, iLab, LMC, IBM; 1 July 2015-30 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
(MICAT, MOF, MOS, PMU/MOPT with support from CENTAL, iLab, Accountability Lab, IBM; 20 July 2015-30 [sic] 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.2 Improve online government information			✔		✔										✔						
											✔				✔				✔		
4.5 Launch an Open Data portal			✔		✔			✔				✔		✔							
														✔					✔		

Commitment Aim:
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.

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.

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.

Status
Midterm:
Commitment 4.2: Substantial
According to the government's self-assessment report, 45 ministries, agencies, and commissions (MACs) have implemented the gov.lr standards. 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. iLab concurred with the government's assessment that 45 MACs (approximately 70 percent) had updated their websites as of June 2016.

Commitment 4.5: Limited
The open data portal was still under construction at the midterm. Progress has been limited, according to the government's self-assessment report. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term:
Commitment 4.2: Substantial
According to the end of term self-assessment from the government, due to a lack of funding there has been no increase in the number (45) of MACs that have updated their website using the ICT policy standards as a guide. Additional Public Information Officers (PIO) have been trained to update the website and provide feedback to users. However, the provision of timely responses to requests has not been encouraging.[1] The IIC believes PIOs should be specifically recruited to carry out this responsibility.

Commitment 4.5: Limited
According to the self-assessment report, Liberia Open Data portal prototype has been created.[2] The website provides basic Sustainable Development Goals about Liberia, disaggregating them into counties. It also provides basic information about Liberia GDP, population, healthcare, agriculture, etc. However, the portal has no permanent URL and the data is not updated on a regular basis.

Did it Open Government?
Commitment 4.2
Access to Information: Marginal
Before the implementation of this commitment, most of Liberia's ministries and government institutions did not comply with the website standards information disclosure. After the implementation of this commitment, 45 MACs have updated their website. However, the lack of timely feedback to public users still limits public members requesting information.[3] Moreover, on some of the websites, such as the Ministry of Finance, the data formats provided are not easy to understand or user-friendly to navigate for the general public.

Commitment 4.5
Access to Information: Marginal
In an interview with members of the civil society communities in Bong, Lofa and Montserrado, most users who have assessed the government website expressed appreciation for the data provided. This has been helpful in program design and baseline assessments. However, some users suggested conducting consultative sessions on which data would be useful to standardize, as the information is still limited and cannot be permanently accessed through the portal.

Carried forward?

This commitment was carried forward into the next action plan. Commitment 10 aims to implement an open data citizen navigation portal. Different activities are proposed, such as a survey to understand citizens' needs on government data and the creation of a geospatial portal that includes the concession agreements of the different ministries.

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[1] Interview with Emmanuel Howe, Independent Information Commission, November 2017.
[2] Liberia Data Portal, http://liberia.opendataforafrica.org/
[3] Interview with Federation of Liberia Youths, November 2017.

4.3 Expand Integration of financial management systems (IFMIS) to make the provision of public financial information easier

MoF with support from CEMESP, CUPPADL, CENTAL, LMC; 15 July 2015 – 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.3 Expand Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) Midterm			✔		✔					✔				✔							
4.3 Expand Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) End-of-Term														✔				✔			

Commitment Aim:

This commitment is designed to facilitate the provision of public financial management information through the expansion of the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) across 17 additional government ministries and agencies. The commitment does not specify how financial data will be publicly shared and which type of awareness-raising activities will be pursued. As written, the commitment has a minor potential impact as it is not clear how the expansion of IFMIS will facilitate the provision of financial information to the citizens.

Status

Midterm: Limited

According to the government self-assessment report, 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 with 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.

End-of-Term: Limited

In June 2017, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning hired the services of a consultant to upgrade and scale IFMIS to support all county service centers in the Republic of Liberia and more than 100 ministries, agencies and commissions. 32 additional MACs have been integrated on IFMIS and four counties have been integrated to use the system; namely Nimba, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Bomi.[1] Although technical internal procedures and updates have been completed, the public user-interface cannot be accessed.[2]

Did it Open Government?
Access to Information: Did Not Change
The implementation of IFMIS has only impacted on the government's internal technical procedures regarding the provision of financial information. Consulted CSOs expressed that they could not access financial data through the online platform. Although they explained that they could obtain this information in the county service centers upon request, this information was already available prior to the implementation of this commitment.[3]

Carried Forward?
This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Liberia annual assessment report: 2015-2017.
[2] Interview with LOFANET representatives, November 2017.
[3] Interview with LOFANET representatives, November 2017.

4.4 Establish LNP Online Informatics (Digitize Community Policing)

(MICAT, MOPT, LNP, LISGIS, with support from CENTAL, iLab, UNPOL; 15 July 2015 - 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 (as written)				Potential Impact				Completion				Did It Open Government?				
	None	Low	Medium	High	Access to Information	Civic Participation	Public Accountability	Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability	None	Minor	Moderate	Transformative	Not Started	Limited	Substantial	Completed	Worsened	Did Not Change	Marginal	Major	Outstanding
4.4 Digitize community policing			✔		✔			✔				✔	✔ (Midterm)	✔ (End-of-Term)				✔			

Commitment Aim
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. If implemented, this commitment could have a transformative impact on citizens' access to public safety and policing information.

Status
Midterm: Not Started
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. They recommended that datasets on policing be published and that a national police-tracking platform is developed. For more information, please see the 2015–2016 IRM midterm report.

End-of-Term: Limited
The LNP officially launched its website (http://lnp.gov.lr/lnp/) outside the action plan assessment period, on 29 November 2017. According to a representative from the Carter Center, the website aimed to enable both the public and police officers to access information about the institution via mobile phones. However, the website is not being updated on a regular basis.[1] Moreover, according to Peace Work Liberia, an NGO that mediates on community conflicts, the mobile website does not provide updates on police data in real time, nor does it provide crime statistics or crime maps. Therefore, the IRM researcher considers this commitment to have a limited level of completion.

The Executive Director of Peace Work Liberia, Mr. William Howard, commended the initiative but noted that the website is not updated on a regular basis.

Did it Open Government?

Access to Information: Did Not Change

The commitment saw limited implementation and the platform was developed after the implementation of the action plan period. According to CSO representatives, the information provided in the platform is limited and is not updated on a regular basis. There are no changes in government practice in disclosing information about police in a meaningful way.

Carried forward?

This commitment was not carried forward.

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[1] Interview with Mr. Nah from Carter Center, November 2017.

Methodological Note

The end-of-term report is based on desk research and interviews with governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's self-assessment report; other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organizations; and the previous IRM progress report.

The approach in writing the end-of-term report was based on desk reviews, including literature reviews and in-depth interviews with key informants, government officials and members of CSOs. Two field visits were conducted, to Nimba and Lofa counties, where consultations with community members and CSOs were also carried out.

The following CSO and government representatives were interviewed by the IRM researcher:

- Blair Glencorse, Accountability Lab

- Francis E. Lansana, iLab

- Luther D. Jeke, iLab

- Emmanuel Howe, Independent Information Commission

- William Howard, Peace Work Liberia

- Suzanna Baysah, LOFANET

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

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