Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Liberia Implementation Report 2017–2019

Diasmer Panna Bloe, Independent Researcher

Table of Contents

Open
Government
Partnership

Executive Summary: Liberia

Liberia's 2017–2019 action plan was implemented within a challenging context of political transition and economic turmoil. The majority of commitments did not result in open government reforms. However, Liberia made notable progress in citizens' access to information and dispute resolution regarding land rights. Moving forward, Liberia's multistakeholder forum should strategically focus where political, financial, and technical resources exist to advance Liberia's open government agenda.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a global partnership that brings together government reformers and civil society leaders to create action plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) monitors all action plans to ensure governments follow through on commitments. Liberia joined OGP in 2012. Since, Liberia has implemented three action plans. This report evaluates the implementation of Liberia's third action plan.

General overview of action plan

Liberia's 2017–2019 action plan was implemented within a challenging context of political transition and economic turmoil. Of the 10 commitments, six did not result in a change in government practices, three resulted in marginal changes, and one, Commitment 7, resulted in major open government reforms.

Modest open government reforms include the appointment of additional public information officers and magistrates. Such reforms slightly increased citizens' access to information and justice.

Liberia's land reforms constitute the country's greatest open government advances under this action plan. The Liberia Land Authority (LLA) increased citizens' online access to land policies and laws, and made headway creating a land deed registry and tribal land inventory. Most importantly, the LLA recognized the legitimacy of alternative land dispute resolution and established the Special Presidential Review Committee to resolve land conflicts at the highest political level.

A lack of political will among the legislature (Commitments 1 and 6), implementing agencies (Commitment 9), and wider government (Commitment 8) stood as major challenges to implementation. Activities were often dependent on donor funding (Commitments 3, 5, and 7). Specifically, many activities related to open data (in Commitments 5, 7, 8, and 10) saw limited implementation. The IRM researcher therefore recommends Liberia's next action plan strategically focus where political, financial, and technical resources are available to advance open government reforms.

Table 1. At a glance
Participating since: 2012
Action plan under review: Third
Report type: Implementation
Number of commitments: 10

Action plan development
Is there a Multistakeholder forum: Yes
Level of public influence: Consult
Acted contrary to OGP process: Yes

Action plan design
Commitments relevant to OGP values: 10 (100%)
Transformative commitments: 2 (20%)
Potentially starred: 2 (20%)

Action plan implementation
Starred commitments: 0 (0%)
Completed commitments: 0 (0%)
Commitments with Major DIOG*: 1 (10%)
Commitments with Outstanding DIOG*: 0 (0%)
Level of public influence: Consult
Acted contrary to OGP process: No

A starred commitment must meet several criteria:

- The commitment's design was **Verifiable**, **Relevant** to OGP values, and had a **Transformative** potential impact. As assessed in the Design Report.
- The commitment's implementation was assessed by IRM Implementation Report as **Substantial** or **Complete**.

Based on these criteria, Liberia's action plan has no starred commitments.

Table 2. Noteworthy commitments

Commitment description	Status at the end of the implementation cycle.
Commitment 6: Pass Legislation and Support Capacity Building for Integrity in Government The commitment aimed to support the passage of critical laws to help ensure the integrity and accountability of public servants, support the development of capacity within the civil service, and build a network of honest government officials.	This commitment saw limited completion. Implementation was restricted to the incorporation of modules on integrity and accountability in the President's Young Professionals Program training. Accountability Lab also held an annual Integrity Idol campaign, which had good participation and was well received by the public.
Commitment 7: Improve Transparency in the Land Authority The commitment, a continuation from the second national action plan, sought to increase the transparency of land ownership and use both on and off-line. It also aimed to provide a land dispute resolution mechanism through the Liberia Land Authority.	This commitment was substantially completed and resulted in major changes to government practices. The Liberia Land Authority (LLA) took over management of the deed registry. It posted policies, laws, and updates on government activities on its website. It also created and implemented alternative land dispute resolution services that are preferred and widely used by the public. In addition, LLA simplified the deed registration process, created land survey regulation and surveyor guidelines, and trained 16 new surveyors. It executed these activities within the context of the landmark passage of the Land Rights Act. That legislation protects community and tribal lands, expands land categories, and provides rights for communities and guidelines for adjudicating disputes. Additionally, the Land Administration Project will build a land administration system and support tribal land inventory.
Commitment 8: Improve Accountability and Value for Money through Open Contracting This commitment sought to improve accountability regarding and the value of money through open contracting. It intended to adopt international standards, provide access to information that can be used to judge the accountability of contracting processes, and create a forum to provide oversight of procurement processes.	This commitment was not started. The main constraints to implementation included changes in the presidential administration (and, therefore, policy direction), changes in the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission leadership, and leadership troubles at the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

Five Key IRM Recommendations

The IRM key recommendations are prepared in the IRM Design Report. They aim to inform the development of the next action plan and guide implementation of the current action plan. In Liberia's 2017–2019 Design Report, the IRM recommended the following:

Seek out and include citizens' perspectives—through commitments, milestones, and/or activities generated by the public and milestones and/or activities matching Liberians' circumstances, interests, and hopes.
Align the national action plan's development with the Government of Liberia's budget calendar to ensure time to request budget allocation and expenditure for OGP activities.
Get a summary of ministries' and agencies' current and planned programs, related roles, and results before the national action plan's development.
Map the steps and stakeholders required to implement commitments within current contexts, and as technology is integral to meeting milestones, include the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in planning and implementation.
Build coherence within the national action plan's monitoring and evaluation using a common framework for data creation and sharing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diasmer Panna Bloe is a policy and systems consultant working on issues of organizational design, governance, and civic participation in Liberia. She has expert knowledge of Liberian policy, historical and post-conflict contexts, and survey design and implementation.

Diasmer has an MS in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University and a BA in mathematics from Dartmouth College. She is completing her DPhil at Balliol College, University of Oxford, in population health, with a specialization in psychometrics.

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

I. Introduction

The Open Government Partnership is a global partnership that brings together government reformers and civil society leaders to create action plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive, and accountable. Action plan commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area. OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) monitors all action plans to ensure governments follow through on commitments. Civil society and government leaders use the evaluations to reflect on their own progress and determine if actions have made an impact on people's lives.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism of OGP has partnered with Diasmer Panna Bloe, an independent researcher, who carried out this evaluation. The IRM aims to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments. For a full description of the IRM's methodology please visit https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/independent-reporting-mechanism.

This report covers the implementation of Liberia's third action plan for 2017–2019.

Liberia drafted its 2017–2019 action plan before a general election and during a recession. The country's political transition and, to a lesser extent, its economic fragility affected implementation of the plan. In Liberia, the president has exercised the legal mandate to appoint personnel up to three levels deep in ministries, agencies, and commissions. Thus, implementation began with informing and persuading lead ministries to support and prioritize the national action plan. During the implementation period, Liberia was plagued with increased levels of perceived corruption,[1] and there was reporting of high-profile corruption cases.[2] Liberia also experienced mismanagement of public resources,[3] and the government made numerous partisan hires,[4] such as the appointment of the head of the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative Secretariat.[5]

Liberia's OGP action plan has 10 commitments focusing on transparency (Commitments 1–3, 5, and 7–10), accountability (Commitments 4 and 7), and improved citizen engagement with government and its services (Commitments 1 and 4–10). Several thematic areas were carried forward from previous action plans, including open policing and land rights. Other thematic areas include open parliament, budget, contracting, data, beneficial ownership transparency, right to information, and access to justice.

---

[1] "Our Work in: Liberia," Transparency International, 2020, https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/liberia; and "Almost Half of Liberians Perceive Increase in Corruption over the Past Year, New Afrobarometer Survey Shows," Afrobarometer, 21 November 2018, https://afrobarometer.org/press/almost-half-liberians-perceive-increase-corruption-over-past-year-new-afrobarometer-survey.

[2] S. D. Kollie, "Missing Billions, Losing Patience: Liberia Probe Targets Former Officials," African Arguments, 10 September 2019, https://africanarguments.org/2019/09/10/missing-billions-losing-patience-liberia-probe-targets-former-officials-weah/, accessed December 2019.

[3] International Monetary Fund, "IMF Staff Completes 2019 Article IV Mission to Liberia," press release no. 19/71, 8 March 2019, https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2019/03/08/pr1971-imf-staff-completes-2019-article-iv-mission-to-liberia, accessed December 2019.

[4] R. Sieh, "Liberia: Ruling Party Sends 25 Names for Employment at RIA as IMF Concerned over Slow Pace of Retrenchment Drive at Central Bank," Front Page Africa, 20 November 2019, https://frontpageafricaonline.com/business/economy/liberia-ruling-party-sends-25-names-for-employment-at-ria-as-imf-concerned-over-slow-pace-of-retrenchment-drive-at-central-bank/, accessed December 2019.

[5] G. Senah, "Controversial LEITI Head of Secretariat Finally Removed," The Bush Chicken, 16 September 2019, https://bushchicken.com/controversial-leiti-head-of-secretariat-finally-removed/, accessed December 2019.

II. Action Plan Implementation

The IRM Implementation Report assesses "Completion" and "Did it Open Government?" These two indicators are based on each commitment's implementation progress at the end of the action plan cycle. This report does not re-visit assessments for "Verifiability," "Relevance" or "Potential Impact." The former are indicators assessed in IRM Design Reports. For more details on each of the indicators please see Annex II in this report.

2.1 Overview of Action Plan

Of the 10 commitments in Liberia's 2017–2019 national action plan, no commitment was completely implemented. However, two commitments were substantially completed (3 and 7). Four commitments had limited completion (2, 4, 5, and 6). There were no starred commitments. Four commitments (1, 8, 9, and 10) were not started during the implementation period. As a result, Liberia's implementation of its third action plan lagged behind its second national action plan, which was implemented in 2015. The 2015–2017 action plan included 20 commitments. Of these, six were completed, three had substantial implementation, 10 had limited completion, and one had no implementation.[6]

The OGP Secretariat oversaw the implementation of the 2017–2019 national action plan commitments. The Secretariat is housed within the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism (MICAT). It worked closely with the OGP Liberia point of contact, the deputy minister of administration at MICAT, to manage the OGP process. The OGP Secretariat facilitated the multistakeholder forum, supported implementing agencies, and tracked progress on commitments. Despite such institutional support, political and economic constraints limited implementation progress. These constraints include a political transition following a general election in 2017, which, in turn, led to a loss of momentum and institutional memory. There were also documented instances of corruption,[7] and the government imposed restrictions on civic space in reaction to civil protests.[8]

Despite limited completion levels, implementation of the 2017–2019 action plan produced tangible changes in open government practices. Specifically, Commitment 7, which sought to improve transparency in the Liberia Land Authority, led to major changes. This commitment improved public accountability and access to information in the Land Authority. It was further supported by the passage of the Land Rights Act and the creation of an alternative land dispute resolution mechanism for land law cases. The mechanism is an opt-in system (via a signed memorandum of understanding) that has an opportunity for rapid, transparent adjudication based on publicly available data that was also made accessible, in line with the government's commitments. Cases were usually resolved within the mechanism. The Land Authority now seeks a legal mandate for binding judgments.[9]

Four commitments (2, 3, 4, and 7) resulted in marginal changes in government openness. In particular, Commitments 2 and 3 led to increased access to information on government services. That access includes timely publication of budget documents, and training and allocation of public information officers to all counties. Commitment 4 led to improved access to policing information and improved civic participation in safeguarding communities. The remaining commitments (1, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10) did not change government practices. All but one commitment that resulted in marginal or major changes in government practices were related to the OGP value of access to information

---

[6] International Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia 2015–2017 End of Term Report* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership, 2018).

[7] Clair MacDougall, "$100 Million in Cash Vanishes in Liberia, and Fingers Start Pointing," *The New York Times*, 20 September 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/20/world/africa/liberia-missing-currency.html.

[8] S. Burari, "Social Media Blocked as Liberians Protest 'Corruption and Creeping Dictatorship,'" Cable News Network, 7 June 2019, https://edition.cnn.com/2019/06/07/africa/liberia-protests-george-weah/index.html, accessed December 2019.

[9] Kulah Jackson (Liberia Land Authority), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

and were led by a ministry, agency, or commission with a legal mandate covering the activities and milestones.

2.2 Commitments

1. Develop a Legislative Monitoring Database

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

"This commitment will create a database to track laws and bills within the legislature; and provide regular reports on the status of these laws and bills matched with roundtables to allow for discussion."

Milestones:

1. Track status of bills in the House of Representatives and Senate through ongoing monitoring;
2. Provide analysis on the progress of bills, the sponsor of each bill and who has voted for each bill;
3. Publish ongoing results and analysis in quarterly reports and online through a searchable database;
4. Work with relevant groups inside and outside government through round-tables to push for the passage of critical bills when needed

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
Verifiable: Yes **Relevant**: Yes Access to Information Civic Participation **Potential impact**: Minor	**Completion:** Not Started **Did it Open Government?** Did Not Change

This commitment aimed to develop a database to track and monitor the progress of laws and bills in the legislature, provide quarterly reports on the status of these laws and bills, and conduct roundtables for civic discussion. It sought to address the opaque nature of the legislative process, and citizens' belief that legislators do not fulfill their mandate and that they do not work in Liberians' best interest.[10] At the time of this commitment's formulation, the Institute for Research and Democratic Development (IREDD), a civil society organization, independently compiled reports tracking the legislature's and individual legislators' activities.[11] The Liberia Legal Information Institute managed free online access to national legal information,[12] and Liberians usually voiced opinions on pending legislation through civic protest.[13]

This commitment was not started by the end of the action plan period. The primary factor that contributed to the lack of implementation was inadequate support and buy-in for implementation from the legislature.[14] The legislature was not involved in the formulation of this commitment, and engagement to gain its support began only during the implementation period. As the commitment was not started, there was no change in government practice at the end of the implementation period. A lack of action by the legislature inhibited several commitments in this action plan.

---

[10] Andrew Nimley (Ministry of Justice), interview by IRM researcher, 17 October 2018.

[11] Strengthening Legislative Accountability and Transparency in Liberia, *IREDD Final Legislative Report Card 2016* (Monrovia, Liberia: Institute for Research and Democratic Development, 2016).

[12] Liberia Legal Information Institute homepage, http://www.liberlii.org, accessed December 2019.

[13] International Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia 2017–2019 Design Report* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership, 2019), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-design-report-2017-2019-for-public-comment/.

[14] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

Therefore, the IRM recommends that the OGP Secretariat and partners conduct outreach to sensitize members of the legislature to OGP processes and the value of open government reforms. Partnering with reform-minded allies within the legislature will likely assist the implementation of future commitments.

Meanwhile, IREDD continued its independent work issuing reports and statements on legislative voting and conduct based on data compiled by monitors assigned at the House of Representatives and the Senate. IREDD also manages Liberian Lawmakers Watch,[15] a searchable, database-driven website that expanded access to reported information. In addition, the media brought attention to legislators' refusal to use electronic voting machines provided by the National Democratic Institute in 2010. These machines would have facilitated the recording and tracking of legislative activity. However, the media reported that not all legislators used the machines or used them consistently,[16] and reports noted that the machines no longer work.[17]

[15] Liberian Lawmakers Watch homepage, https://www.liberianlawmakerswatch.org, accessed December 2019.

[16] G. Senah, "No Voting Records Available at Legislature at Lawmakers Abandon Electronic Voting System," The Bush Chicken, 2 February 2017, https://bushchicken.com/no-voting-records-available-at-legislature-as-lawmakers-abandon-electronic-voting-system/, accessed December 2019.

[17] R. Sieh, "Liberia: Neglected World Bank Electronic Voting Machines Raise Credibility Issues in Justice Ja'neh's Impeachment," Front Page Africa, 2 April 2019, https://frontpageafricaonline.com/politics/liberia-neglected-usaid-electronic-voting-machines-raise-credibility-issues-in-justice-janehs-impeachment/, accessed December 2019.

2. Publication of Budget Documents

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

"The commitment seeks to open up the budget process for citizen participation. An open budget process is essential if citizens are to understand how public resources are being used and managed.

The commitment will make public budget information related to the executive budget, the budget speech, and audit reports. This will allow citizens to more fully participate in the budget process. Coupled with oversight by the legislature and audit institutions this will contribute to a more accountable use of public money."

Milestones:
1. Publication of annual audit reports;
2. Publication of the pre-budget statement and the year-end report on budget implementation;
3. Extend coverage of International Financial Management and Information System to an additional 8 ministries & agencies and provide functional/technical support to ensure use and effectiveness;
4. MOFEP will publish, within 3 months of the end of the quarter, data on quarterly central government expenditures, by Ministry, Department and Agency

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
● **Verifiable**: Yes ● **Relevant**: Yes Access to Information ● **Potential impact**: Minor	● **Completion:** Limited ● **Did it Open Government?** Marginal

This commitment aimed to open up the budget process through timely online publication of budget statements, audits, and reports. It also proposed to add eight ministries, agencies, and commissions to the International Financial Management and Information System (IFMIS). The IFMIS is a computerized system that aims to improve institutional accounting capabilities and efficiency through automated transactions and reporting.[18] As a result of such disclosure, the government anticipated an increase in community engagement and monitoring in the budget process, as well as in the allotment and expenditure of resources. The government also anticipated that this disclosure would also lead to greater transparency of those receiving funds and trigger audits where needed. Overall, this commitment aspired to leverage transparency to reduce allegations of corruption,[19] and systemic public underfunding of basic services.[20]

At the time of this commitment's formulation, the budget calendar, drafted and approved budgets, quarterly reports on budget execution and revenue collection, and the annual citizen's guide to the budget were available on the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning's (MoFDP) website. However, problems accessing the 2018 version of the MoFDP website inhibited public access to budget documents.[21]

---

[18] "LR-Public Financial Management—IFMIS," The World Bank, https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P109775?lang=en, accessed December 2019.

[19] J. Browne, "IFMIS, MTEF to Aid Corruption Fight," The New Dawn, 15 August 2018, https://thenewdawnliberia.com/ifmis-mtef-to-aid-corruption-fight/, accessed December 2019.

[20] Government of Liberia, *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene—Sector Performance Report*, May 2018.

[21] Website reviewed by IRM researcher, October 2018: https://mfdp.gov.lr.

This commitment had limited completion at the end of the implementation period. Annual audit reports are available on the General Auditing Commission's website (Milestone 1).[22] The IRM researcher confirmed that the prebudget statement was distributed and discussed in the legislature.[23] However, prebudget statements were not published online in either 2017 or 2019.[24] The end-of-fiscal-year report was not published online in 2017 but is available for 2019.[25] Therefore, Milestone 2 was partially completed. OGP Working Group minutes state that the ministry published quarterly financial statements for 2017/2018; however, they are not available online (Milestone 4).[26]

According to the MoFDP, the government completed Milestone 3, which aimed to extend the IFMIS to eight ministries and agencies. Now, the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Education, Health, Internal Affairs, Justice, Labor, Mines and Energy, Public Works, Youth and Sports and the Liberia Land Authority use IFMIS. IFMIS is also used within the judiciary and the National Security Agency. MoFDP provided technical support to ministries for effective use and management.[27]

This commitment led to marginal changes in government practice. The amount of budget documents publicly available online—and therefore citizens' access to budget information—only slightly improved. Between 2017 and 2019, Liberia's Open Budget Index score saw only a slight increase, from 36 to 38 points out of 100, for budget transparency.[28] The government publishes many budget documents for internal use or makes them available only in hard-copy format. While the national budget, citizen's guide, and budget call circular are available online,[29] budget documents specified in this commitment were not provided on the MoFDP website by the end of the implementation period. Online publication of more budget documents would have increased the commitment's level of completion.

[22] "GAC Annual Reports," General Auditing Commission, Republic of Liberia, https://gac.gov.lr/annual-report/.

[23] Hon. Tanneh G. Brunson (Ministry of Budget), email communication with IRM staff, 22 October 2020.

[24] International Budget Partnership, *Liberia, Open Budget Survey 2017*, https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2019/liberia

[25] Ibid.

[26] Document provided to IRM: "Minutes from OGP Working Group," 10 October 2018; and Ministry of Finance, *Consolidated Financial Statement*: https://mfdp.gov.lr/

[27] Hon. Tanneh G. Brunson (Ministry of Budget), email communication with IRM staff, 22 October 2020.

[28] International Budget Partnership, *Liberia, Open Budget Survey 2017*, https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2019/liberia; and "Open Budget Survey 2019: Liberia," Open Budget Survey, International Budget Partnership, https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2019/liberia.

[29] "Budget Call Circular," Ministry of Finance, https://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/main-menu-reports/mm-bdp/budget-call-circular.

3. Implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI)

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

"The commitment is for the appointment of additional Public Information Officers in all counties and to provide additional trainings to ensure they can fulfil their mandate and responsibilities as they relate to the FoI Act.

"The commitment will strengthen the supply side of FoI by ensuring that the government can provide information to citizens; and the demand side of information- by making the process of obtaining information easier for citizens, bolstering trust in the process and leading to more FoI requests."

Milestones:
1. Appointment of additional Public Information Officers in all counties and trainings.
2. Training of PIOs on the online Freedom of Information platform developed.
3. Training for PIOs on how to generate frequently requested documents;
4. Information Commission provides quarterly reports on progress and use of FoI law.

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
● **Verifiable**: Yes ● **Relevant**: Yes Access to Information ● **Potential impact**: Minor	● **Completion:** Substantial ● **Did it Open Government?** Marginal

This commitment aimed to appoint and train public information officers in all 15 counties and assemble and make accessible quarterly reports on progress and adherence to the Freedom of Information (FOI) law. The commitment sought to address low public awareness and usage of public information and weak government adherence to FOI mandates.[30] It builds on prior commitments in Liberia's 2013 and 2015 action plans to increase citizens' access to information.

In 2010, Liberia was the first West African nation to implement a FOI law. However, citizens and public officials exhibit limited understanding and use of the law.[31] At the time of this commitment's formulation, there were 57 designated public information officers in central ministries, agencies, and commissions. Most also served in other roles, such as public relations officers, with their public information officer role being an additional, and sometimes conflicting, responsibility.[32] Additionally, the Independent Information Commission's (IIC) budget constraints limited coordination with civil society. A civil society organization, iLab, created the infoLib website in 2016 to simplify, expedite, and track requests for government information.[33]

This commitment was substantially completed this commitment by the end of the implementation period. Due to the IIC's work with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 15 additional public information officers were appointed to counties (Milestone 1). The commission and civil society trained public

---

[30] An Act to Establish the Freedom of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Liberia (6 October 2010), http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/104012/126692/F1739999472/LBR104012.pdf.

[31] "Supporting Freedom of Information in Liberia," Making All Voices Count, https://www.makingallvoicescount.org/project/enhancing-the-implementation-of-liberias-freedom-of-information-act/.

[32] Independent Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia End-of-Term Report 2015–2017* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership, 2018), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-end-of-term-report-2015-2017-year-2/.

[33] InfoLib homepage, http://infolib.org.lr.

information officers on how to facilitate requests for information under the FOI law using infoLib and off-line sources (Milestones 2 and 3). The IIC held only two workshops in Monrovia, due to limited funds. However, civil society organizations such as the Carter Center Liberia, Open Society Initiative for West Africa, and the Center for Media Studies and Peace Building provided further public information officer training.[34]

The United States Agency for International Development contracted the nongovernmental organization Internews to provide technical assistance to the IIC for its website, infoLib, and other activities. However, the IIC reports that this assistance did not materialize, and therefore, infoLib continues to be managed outside the government by iLab. Moreover, the IIC did not publish quarterly reports (Milestone 4), as "nothing had been happening during [the implementation period]."[35] Therefore, this commitment was substantially rather than fully completed.

This commitment's activities had a marginal effect on opening government. The IIC and the Carter Center noted that the appointment of additional public information officers increased the government's capacity to respond to requests for information.[36] However, the IRM researcher was unable to confirm whether information requests or government responses increased as a result of implementation. Additionally, this commitment's activities are identical to activities carried out in Liberia's second national action plan and therefore do not represent a significant change in government practices.[37]

---

[34] Saah N'Tow (The Carter Center), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] "Appoint Public Information Officers (PIOs) (LR0007)," Liberia, Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/liberia/commitments/LR0007/.

4. Citizen Monitoring and Support for the Justice System

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

"The commitment seeks to ensure access to justice for citizens by further bolstering jury offices, training magistrates, monitoring the performance of local courts and ensuring citizens are aware of their rights and access to justice.

"The commitment will build capacity within the justice system and engage citizens around rule of law issues at the local level to ensure accountability within the system."

Milestones:
1. Jury offices established in all 15 counties;
2. Training of 300 magistrates across all 15 counties;
3. Awareness raising around the roles of juries
4. Track cases in courts to prevent delays in judication
5. Open Justice initiative through which citizens monitor local courts, track cases and follow-up on the return of bond fees

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
● **Verifiable**: Yes ● **Relevant**: Yes Civic Participation Public Accountability ● **Potential impact**: Minor	● **Completion:** Limited ● **Did it Open Government?** Marginal

This commitment aimed to improve access to justice through juror education, judicial consistency, and decreased wait time for trials. It sought to do so through the bolstering jury offices, training and appointing additional magistrates, and increasing public awareness and monitoring of local courts' performance.[38]

At the time this commitment was designed, Liberians significantly mistrusted the justice system. Many Liberians perceived that the justice system did not fairly serve the poor and marginalized citizens.[39] Additionally, national concepts of justice were not aligned with a rights-based system, which affected jury deliberations.[40] Access to formal justice was limited by scarce legal aid and unlawful magistrate fees.[41] The commitment built on Liberia's 2015 national action plan, during which the government established a central Jury Management Office and eight regional jury offices.

---

[38] Independent Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia Design Report 2017–2019* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Liberia_Design_Report_2017-2019_for-public-comment.pdf.

[39] Patrick Vinck, Phuong Pham, and Tino Kreutzer, "Talking Peace: A Population-Based Survey on Attitudes about Security, Dispute Resolution, and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Liberia" (SSRN, 2011).

[40] Gavin Raymond, "Decentralizing Justice and Security in Liberia," Centre for Security Governance, 26 February 2014, http://secgovcentre.org/2014/02/decentralizing-justice-and-security-in-liberia/, accessed 2018.

[41] "ILAC Revisits Liberia for a New Assessment with an Access to Justice Lens," International Legal Assistance Consortium, 22 May 2019, https://ilacnet.org/ilac-revisits-liberia-for-a-new-assessment-with-an-access-to-justice-lens/

However, the government did not implement the initial commitment's aim to publish court returns and records.[42]

Commitment implementation was limited at the end of the action plan period. The government did not establish additional jury offices (Milestone 1).[43] The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) trained 60 magistrates, which brought the total number to 240 magistrates. However, the ministry fell short of fulfilling Milestone 2, which involved training 300 magistrates in five years.[44] The IRM researcher did not find evidence that the government conducted awareness-raising campaigns on the roles of juries (Milestone 3). However, the MOJ partnered with the International Development Law Organization to conduct four baseline surveys in Montserrado and Nimba counties to measure public knowledge of the jury system.[45] Additionally, the MOJ internally inspected courts and produced end-of-term reports.[46] The ministry did not complete Milestone 5, which involved carrying out an open justice initiative.

Despite challenges, the country experienced measured improvement in access to justice by the end of the implementation period. There were more trained magistrates and a decreased adjudication wait time (from three to four months to one month).[47] Moreover, an upsurge in the number of court cases suggests increased use of and trust in formal justice systems. Additionally, jurors were randomly selected and no longer called by name, thus reducing chances of tampering.[48]

As a result, this commitment's activities had a marginal effect on opening government. The MOJ gained greater knowledge of judicial management and citizens' perceptions through inspection reports and citizen surveys. However, these efforts did not translate to increased public information on the judicial system. Likewise, the number of trained magistrates increased but failed to meet the commitment's aim. Failure to implement the open justice initiative inhibited significant improvements in civic participation and public accountability in the justice system.

---

[42] "Citizen Monitoring of Justice System (LR0016)," Liberia, Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/liberia/commitments/LR0016/.

[43] Counselor Nimley and Counselor Katapah (Ministry of Justice), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

[44] This activity and milestone was written incorrectly in the national action plan, as 120 magistrates were to be trained within the implementation period, bringing the total to 300 magistrates trained within five years.

[45] International Development Law Organization homepage, https://www.idlo.int/, accessed December 2019.

[46] Counselor Nimley and Counselor Katapah (Ministry of Justice), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

[47] Andrew Nimley (Ministry of Justice), email communication with IRM staff, 12 October 2020.

[48] Ibid.

5. Implement a Feedback Mechanism to Build Accountability of the LNP

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

"The commitment will establish a variety of tools and information dissemination modalities to build trust in the police, report infractions and build evidence-based trust in the police force.

"These efforts will make data related to the Liberian police more transparent, accessible and useful for citizens. It will also allow them to report the police when they see the law being broken by the police force. These efforts will support greater trust in the system and, over time, the effectiveness of the LNP."

Milestones:
1. Establish free, public hotline for complaints and commendations for the LNP
2. Establish a task force of MOJ and CSO partners to understand police and public safety information currently being collected, to identify information gatekeepers and the current format(s) of data.
3. Design and develop a plan to collect and process high-priority public safety and police information and statistics for publication online on the LNP website
4. Provide data on crime, accidents and LNP activities through the existing open data portal
5. Create brochures for citizens with information about the role of the LNP, indicating their rights in relation to the LNP and the procedures for inquiries, complaints and commendations

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
● **Verifiable**: Yes ● **Relevant**: Yes Access to Information Civic Participation ● **Potential impact**: Minor	● **Completion:** Limited ● **Did it Open Government?** Did Not Change

This commitment aimed to employ the Liberia National Police's (LNP) off- and online resources to improve access to policing information and facilitate civic participation in safeguarding communities. It also aimed to coordinate with auxiliary ministries and agencies (for example, the Ministry of Justice) to document and quantify policing data. The commitment's overall goal was to address a lack of credibility and public mistrust of the LNP, which were partly due to everyday personal experiences of bribery and excessive use of force.[49]

At the time this commitment was designed, the LNP had already launched its website and introduced an emergency hotline.[50] This commitment is a continuation of two commitments from Liberia's 2015 action plan. The first commitment sought to publish police data online and was not implemented.[51] The second commitment led to the creation of a webpage on the LNP website for citizens to file complaints or praise for a particular police officer.[52]

---

[49] John H. T. Stewart, "Is the Liberia National Police Truly a Force for Good?" Daily Observer. 29 June 2018, https://www.liberianobserver.com/opinion/editorials/is-the-liberia-national-police-truly-a-force-for-good/.

[50] Liberia National Police homepage, http://www.lnp.gov.lr.

[51] "Public Safety/Law Enforcement Reform," Liberia, Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/liberia/commitments/LR0025/.

[52] "Know Your Rights' Initiative," Liberia, Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/liberia/commitments/LR0018/.

This commitment had limited completion by the end of the action plan period.[53] Meeting minutes from Liberia's OGP Working Group stated that the LNP created a complaints hotline (Milestone 1).[54] This note may refer to the previously established webpage for citizens to submit complaints or praise for police officers. The IRM researcher did not find a telephone hotline number other than the police emergency number on the LNP website.[55]

Milestone 2 involved establishing a task force of MOJ and civil society organization (CSO) partners to understand police and public safety information. The government did not start this during the implementation period. The LNP did collect quarterly statistics and data on crimes and accidents from police stations (Milestone 3). However, this information is available only on request and is not published online (Milestone 4). Finally, the government did produce a citizen brochure on policing policies, procedures, and citizens' rights (Milestone 5), but it is also not available online.[56] LNP reported that it did start a weekly radio program to share policing information with the public.[57] Overall, activities were insufficiently implemented to increase citizens' access to police information or civic participation.

By September 2019, a time beyond the scope of this commitment, the LNP and partners formed the Joint Security Public Relations Network to consolidate all security institutions' public relations and communications. The Strategic Capacity Group on the Strategic Communications Capacity Building Project provided strategic planning, skills building, and improved policies, practices, and platforms to institutionalize community policing best practices.[58] Additionally, the LNP worked closely with the Carter Center to uphold its freedom of information responsibilities and relied on its Facebook page,[59] press releases, and conferences to inform the public.

The government carried out these activities under the goal of proactive disclosure, solving issues before they escalate and ensuring that the LNP discloses information in a timely manner to combat disinformation. The LNP's community services section also worked with the Community Watch Forum to coordinate volunteer community watch teams.[60] This partnership included weekly meetings with reports on happenings, and police actions and responses from counties. However, these activities were not related to commitment milestones.

This commitment did not result in a change in government practices. The LNP's high-quality website, officer comment portal, and quarterly data collection constitute important open government tools. However, the government implemented these activities in the previous action plan. The IRM researcher did not find evidence that the continuation of this commitment resulted in new open government gains. The establishment of a nonemergency telephone hotline, MOJ and CSO task force, and open police data would have resulted in important changes to government practice.

Civic unrest on this issue, from Nigeria to the United States, indicates the vital importance of police accountability and transparency in gaining citizens' trust in government. The IRM researcher recommends that this commitment is continued, provided that the political will and financial resources exist for implementation. Effective implementation will require the buy-in from reform-minded staff within the Liberia National Police, high-level political support, and collaboration with

[53] Moses Carter (Liberia National Police), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

[54] Document provided to IRM: OGP Working Group meeting minutes, 10 October 2019.

[55] Liberia National Police homepage, https://lnp.gov.lr.

[56] Moses Carter (Liberia National Police), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

[57] Document provided to IRM: OGP Working Group meeting minutes, 10 October 2019.

[58] "Strategic Communications Capacity Building in Liberia," Strategic Capacity Group, https://www.strategiccapacity.org/projects/building-the-strategic-communications-capacity-of-the-liberian-national-police, accessed December 2019.

[59] Liberia National Police, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/theLNP/, accessed December 2019.

[60] David S. Menjor, "Police, Community Watch Forum Strengthen Partnership," Daily Observer, 4 April 2018, https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/police-community-watch-forum-strengthen-partnership/.

civil society. Implementers can refer to OGP resources on police transparency for best practices and international guidance.[61]

---

[61] See "Transparency and Accountability at the Frontlines of Justice: Police Data Transparency," Open Government Partnership, 8 July 2020, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/transparency-and-accountability-at-the-frontlines-of-justice-police-data-transparency/; and forthcoming guidance on open police data under the Justice Policy Series, Part II: Open Justice, which will be available at https://www.opengovpartnership.org/topic/justice-policy-series/.

6. Pass Legislation and Support Capacity Building for Integrity in Government

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:
"The commitment will support the passage of critical laws that will help to ensure the integrity and accountability of public servants; support the development of capacity within the civil service; and build a network of honest government officials.

The legal frameworks will put in place rule for the behaviors of public officials, while the training and network of honest government officials will build values of integrity throughout the civil service."

Milestones:
1. Ensure the passage of the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Acts
2. Strengthen implementation of Executive Order (19) (Code of Conduct for National Officials);
3. Revise curriculum and provide training to incoming government civil servants through LIPA and the PYPP on issues of accountability and integrity;
4. Build on the Integrity Idol campaign to create a national network of local government officials with integrity to share ideas, collaborate and push for integrity

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
Verifiable: Yes **Relevant**: Yes - Civic Participation **Potential impact**: Transformative	**Completion:** Limited **Did it Open Government?** Did Not Change

This commitment aimed to pass the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Act and strengthen implementation of the 2014 National Code of Conduct (COC). It intended to update civil service training to increase capacity for accountability. It also intended, through the Integrity Idol campaign,[62] to form a network of government officials with the integrity to push for good governance. Commitment activities aimed to strengthen integrity within the civil service to address government corruption and the mistreatment of whistleblowers.[63] Milestone 1 is a continuation of a commitment in Liberia's 2015 action plan to pass the Whistleblower Protection Act, which was not implemented.

At the time of this commitment's formulation, citizens perceived minimal accountability regarding government corruption in Liberia.[64] This perception came despite the existence of the Code of Conduct Act (2014), which outlines civil service disciplinary actions for infringement, and the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission's reporting and investigative procedures. In practice, discipline was discretionary and proven lawbreakers were either excused, given negligible penalties, or, if

---

[62] "Liberia: Accountability Lab Launches Integrity Idol 2019 Edition," Front Page Africa, 11 March 2019, https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-accountability-lab-launches-integrity-idol-2019-edition/.

[63] Open Government Partnership, *Liberia Design Report 2017–2019,* https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-design-report-2017-2019-for-public-comment/.

[64] "Almost Half of Liberians Perceive an Increase in Corruption over the Past Year, New Afrobarometer Survey Shows," Afrobarometer 21 November 2018, https://afrobarometer.org/press/almost-half-liberians-perceive-increase-corruption-over-past-year-new-afrobarometer-survey.

dismissed, rehired elsewhere.[65] This lax treatment resulted in people ignoring illegal activity and very few carrying out accountability measures.[66]

The completion of this commitment was limited at the end of the implementation period. Passage of the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Act stalled (Milestone 1). Furthermore, the IRM did not find evidence that the COC was printed into handbills, a requirement to become an actionable law (Milestone 2). The president's refusal to publicly disclose his assets, as required by Part X of the COC, further weakened its application.[67] The administration also appointed individuals with known corruption allegations,[68] underfunded the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission,[69] and made an active bid to remove tenure (and thus independence) of public oversight commissions.[70] There were no mechanisms to support the implementation of the COC. During this period, the civil service was distracted by a "wage harmonization" scheme,[71] which resulted in civil servants not receiving salaries for more than five months. This resulted in residual effects on government services and the general economy.[72]

The government partially completed Milestones 3 and 4. The President's Young Professionals Program continued to incorporate modules on integrity and accountability during training.

Accountability Lab's 2019 Integrity Idol campaign was successfully held, as it had been in previous years.[73] The annual event is popular, receiving around 5,000 applications a year and wide listenership on radio and viewership on television.[74] YouTube videos showcasing the 2019 recipients are available online.[75] The event continues to provide a positive incentive for public servants to conduct their duties with integrity. However, significant work remains to fully address government corruption, and the IRM researcher did not find evidence that the campaign led to creation of a national network of officials.[76]

This commitment did not result in a change in government practices during the implementation period. Milestones 3 and 4 represent activities that were ongoing prior to this commitment. The passage of the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Acts and fuller implementation of Executive

[65] "Liberia: FDA, Lands & Mines Connived," The New Dawn/All Africa, 7 April 2015, https://allafrica.com/stories/201504070881.html.

[66] Anderson Miamen (Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia), interview by IRM researcher, 30 October 2018.

[67] "Assets Declaration 'My Privacy,'" Daily Observer, 20 February 2019, https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/assets-declaration-my-privacy/.

[68] Lennart Dodoo, "Liberia: Alex Tyler, Despite Multiple Corruption Allegations, Resurfaces in Weah-led Government," Front Page Africa, 20 June 2019, https://frontpageafricaonline.com/front-slider/liberia-alex-tyler-despite-multiple-corruption-allegations-resurfaces-in-weah-led-government/.; Leroy M. Sonpon III, "Eyebrows Raised over Charles J. L. Gibson's Appointment to Head LACC," Daily Observer, 28 February 2019, https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/eyebrows-raised-over-charles-j-l-gibsons-appointment-to-head-lacc/#comments.

[69] Daniel Finnan,) "Liberia's Anti-corruption Agency Has 'Dented Credibility,' Says Information Minister," RFI, 12 November 2018, http://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20190219-liberias-anti-corruption-agency-has-dented-credibility-says-information-minister.

[70] Ida Reeves, "Senate Rejects Pres. Weah's Bill to Eliminate Tenured Positions," The Bush Chicken, 31 May 2019, https://bushchicken.com/senate-rejects-pres-weahs-bill-to-eliminate-tenured-positions/.

[71] Jefferson Krua, "Civil Servants to Suffer Yet Another Round of Salary Cuts," The Bush Chicken, 4 December 2019, https://bushchicken.com/civil-servants-to-suffer-yet-another-round-of-salary-cuts/.

[72] "Salary Harmonization Flawed, Provocative," Daily Observer, 7 October 2019, https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/salary-harmonization-flawed-provocative/.

[73] "Liberia: Accountability Lab Launches Integrity Idol 2019 Edition," Front Page Africa, 11 March 2019, https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-accountability-lab-launches-integrity-idol-2019-edition/; and photos of the event, available at the Integrity Icon Liberia website: https://integrityicon.org/Liberia/.

[74] James Kiawoin and Sakari Ishetiar, "Liberia's 'Integrity Idol': Pursuing Goal 16 through Public Awareness," Highwire Earth, 20 June 2019, https://highwire.princeton.edu/2019/06/20/liberias-integrity-idol-pursuing-goal-16-through-public-awareness/.

[75] Integrity Icon Liberia 2019, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLKITTNJArDzhZXyjY052MgHl-4O-yP1b4.

[76] James Kiawoin and Sakari Ishetiar, "Liberia's 'Integrity Idol': Pursuing Goal 16 through Public Awareness," 20 June 2019, https://highwire.princeton.edu/2019/06/20/liberias-integrity-idol-pursuing-goal-16-through-public-awareness/.

Order 19 would have represented a transformative change to government practices. This commitment was not sufficiently implemented to increase citizens' access to information on corruption in government.

Passage and implementation of the Whistleblower and Witness Protection Act would have a transformative impact on government practices. However, these reforms have been long delayed due to a lack of political will in the national legislature.[77] If this commitment is continued, efforts should focus on building high-level political support and public pressure for this legislation. Interim whistleblower mechanisms, such as a hotline, and regulations can be explored in the absence of a national legal framework. See the OGP's *Guide to Open Government and the Coronavirus: Whistleblower Protection and Scientific Integrity* for guidance and examples on implementing whistleblower protections in the context of COVID-19.[78]

---

[77] "Passage of Whistleblower Protection Act," Liberia, Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/liberia/commitments/LR0019/.

[78] "A Guide to Open Government and the Coronavirus: Whistleblower Protection & Scientific Integrity," Open Government Partnership, 6 May 2020, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/a-guide-to-open-government-and-the-coronavirus-whistleblower-protection-scientific-integrity/.

7. Improve Transparency in the Land Authority

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:
"The commitment, a continuation from the 2nd NAP, will make information around land ownership and use more open to the public both on and offline. It will also provide a mechanism for citizens to resolve land disputes through the Land Authority.

The commitment will radically improve transparency of land related documents and information, opening up a process of data-driven decision-making around land that will increase the fairness and accountability of projects in the land sector."

Milestones:
1. Make publicly available data on land rights (such as data/locations on land legally owned by private citizens or communities) produced by the government on the NBC platform;
2. Make land deeds and certificates available to the public through the Land Authority;
3. Produce hard copies of data collected and developed through the LEITI and SIMS and distribute these hard copies to relevant communities across Liberia as the basis for discussion;
4. Ensure the Land Authority makes information available related to land and resource governance (including policies, laws, guides for how to register property, updates on government activities and details including GPS coordinates of indigenous and community land ownership information) on its website and in hard copies;
5. Create a standing mechanism through which citizens can seek redress for land rights abuses within the Land Authority.

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
Verifiable: Yes **Relevant**: Yes Access to Information Public Accountability **Potential impact**: Moderate	**Completion:** Substantial **Did it Open Government?** Major

This commitment aimed to provide crucial and timely information on land distribution and related laws, and provide guidance on how the public can exercise their land rights. It also sought to create a mechanism to expedite citizens' access to justice on land disputes.[79] Its overall goal was to improve Liberia's land rights, use, management, and accountability.

At the time of this commitment's formulation, land disputes were increasingly violent, with legal cases burdening the courts.[80] In 2017, the Liberia Land Authority (LLA) began operations, and the Land Rights Act (LRA) was under legislative review.[81] The Liberian Parliament passed the LRA in September 2018, and it became law in October 2018.[82]

---

[79] Independent Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia Design Report 2017–2019* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Liberia_Design_Report_2017-2019_for-public-comment.pdf.

[80] Ibid.

[81] "About Us," Liberia Land Authority, http://lla.gov.lr/web/index.php/about-us.

[82] "Liberia's Legislature Finally Passes Land Rights Act," Front Page Africa, 6 September 2018, https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberias-legislature-finally-passes-land-rights-act/.

The LRA outlaws discrimination in land ownership and equally recognizes private and customary land ownership.[83] LLA's implementation was inclusive, as the government sent procedures and guidelines to civil society for critique and input. The act incorporated time-bound mandates, which were prioritized during this implementation period. This commitment is a continuation from commitments in Liberia's previous action plan. Previous Commitments 1.4 and 1.5 resulted in major changes, such as broad public consultations and the creation of an online map for commercial land use and extractive sector revenue.[84]

This commitment had substantial completion by the end of the implementation period.[85] During implementation, the LLA took over management of the deed registry and, with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, planned to scan and make deeds available online (Milestone 2). Physical copies of land deeds and certificates continued to be held at the Center for National Documents and Records Agency. With the technical and financial support of the World Bank, the LLA also posted online policies, laws, and updates on government activities (Milestone 4).[86] This work was done under the Liberia Land Administration Project.[87] The project sought to establish a land administration system and support tribal land inventory.[88] Beyond the commitment milestones, the LLA simplified deed registration processes, created land survey regulation and surveyor guidelines, and trained 16 new surveyors.

Significantly, the LLA created and implemented an alternative land dispute resolution mechanism (Milestone 5). In 2019, the LLA and Ministry of Justice created the Land Alternative Dispute Resolution Policy and the Legal Aid Policy. These policies equally recognize the legitimacy of formal adjudication and alternative land dispute resolution to resolve land conflicts. There are many forms of alternative land dispute resolution throughout Liberia. Land disputes are often resolved through local customary authorities.

In 2018, the government established the Special Presidential Review Committee to resolve land conflicts between communities and concessions at the highest political level. Dispute resolution was an opt-in system (via a signed memorandum of understanding) with an opportunity for rapid, transparent adjudication based on publicly available data that was also made accessible by the commitment. Cases were usually resolved within the mechanism. The Land Authority is now seeking a legal mandate for binding judgments.[89] In December 2019, the United Nations committed to strengthening local land dispute governance and resolution mechanisms, suggesting that Liberia's alternative land dispute resolution tools will continue to be strengthened after the implementation period.[90]

83 United Nations, *Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund Project Document*, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjMqr3q5ZXsAhUE UhUIHYseBl4QFjANegQIDBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Finfo.undp.org%2Fdocs%2Fpdc%2FDocuments%2FH71%2FLiberia_S trengthening%2520Land%2520Governance%2520and%2520Dispute%2520Resolution%2520Mechanisms_final_signed.pdf&us g=AOvVaw1dPfAPDN2CHQNYwSfYEDJ3.

84 "Public Information on Land and Natural Resource Reform (LR0010)," Liberia, Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/liberia/commitments/LR0010/; and "Commercial Land Use Rights Information (LR0011)," Liberia, Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/liberia/commitments/LR0011/.

85 Kulah Jackson (Liberia Land Authority), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

86 Liberia Land Authority homepage, www.lla.gov.lr.

87 The World Bank, *Implementation and Status Report: Liberia Land Administration Project (P162893)*, 2018, http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/803981543941178720/pdf/Disclosable-Version-of-the-ISR-Liberia-Land-Administration-Project-P162893-Sequence-No-03.pdf, accessed December 2019.

88 Ibid.

89 Kulah Jackson (Liberia Land Authority), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

90 United Nations, *Liberia Multi-Partner Trust Fund Project Document*, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjMqr3q5ZXsAhUE UhUIHYseBl4QFjANegQIDBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Finfo.undp.org%2Fdocs%2Fpdc%2FDocuments%2FH71%2FLiberia_S trengthening%2520Land%2520Governance%2520and%2520Dispute%2520Resolution%2520Mechanisms_final_signed.pdf&us g=AOvVaw1dPfAPDN2CHQNYwSfYEDJ3.

Despite progress, this commitment fell short in the implementation of Milestones 1 and 3. Land rights data is not yet publicly available online (Milestone 1). Specifically, guides and GPS coordinates of indigenous and community land ownership information are not available on the LLA website. Data on land rights was not made publicly available on the National Bureau of Concessions' (NBC) platform,[91] due to NBC's managerial difficulties.[92] Additionally, Liberia did not complete its land inventory. The Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) did not produce and distribute hard copies of data from LEITI and SIMS (Milestone 3). These activities were inhibited by the unlawful appointment of the head of the Secretariat at the LEITI and the anticipated consequence of LEITI losing its accreditation.[93]

The progress made under this commitment represents major changes to government practice. In particular, the LLA's formal recognition and strengthening of alternative land dispute mechanisms mark a major change regarding the OGP value of public accountability. However, with limited completion of Milestones 1 and 3, this commitment failed to meaningfully change Liberians' access to land information. Therefore, this milestone led to major changes under the OGP value of public accountability but fell short of its aim to improve citizens' access to information.

The IRM recommends that implementers continue to work with international partners to complete commitment activities. The completion of a land deed registry and tribal land inventory would significantly increase citizens' access to land information. Additionally, the LLA should continue to expand citizens' access to dispute resolution mechanisms for land conflict, particularly ensuring equal access among all segments of the population.

[91] "Liberia National Concession Portal," http://portals.flexicadastre.com/liberia/.

[92] Zeze Ballah, "Bureau of Concessions Boss, Coleman, Resigns Amid Challenges at the Agency," The Bush Chicken, 27 November 2019, https://bushchicken.com/bureau-of-concessions-boss-coleman-resigns-amid-challenges-at-the-agency/.

[93] "Nyenkan Re-shuffled from LEITI to President's Office," Daily Observer, 16 September 2019, https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/nyenkan-re-shuffled-from-leiti-to-presidents-office/.

8. Improve Accountability and Value for Money through Open Contracting

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

"The commitment seeks to improve accountability and value for money through open contracting by adopting international standards, opening up information that can be used to judge the accountability of contracting processes and creating a forum to provide oversight of procurement processes.

If Liberia can link data across budgets with contracting this will be a key step in increasing public accountability. Publishing contracts promotes fairer competition, encourages civic oversight and helps governments learn from previous successes and failures."

Milestones:
1. Adoption of the open contracting data standard, a global open-source tool to enable disclosure of data and documents along the entire contracting process (the planning, tenders, awards, contracts and implementation phases) and application of this standard to identified projects;
2. Establish administrative directive and guidelines and ethical codes mandating application of the open contracting system for public contracts;
3. Publish all contracting data on the open data portal by default, which will also be compliant with the open contracting data standard;
4. Civic education on procurement and contracting processes to support citizens in understanding how these processes happen and their duties to oversee them, through a specific, time-bound sensitization campaign;
5. Establish open contracting forum comprising of government, civil society and the private sector to ensure sustained engagement, oversight and improved procurement processes. The forum will follow the open government principles of equal participation and co-creation and will be tasked to select a number of projects to monitor using the open contracting data standard and web portal.

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
• **Verifiable**: Yes • **Relevant**: Yes 　Access to Information 　Civic Participation • **Potential impact**: Transformative	• **Completion:** Not Started • **Did it Open Government?** Did Not Change

This commitment aimed to increase transparency and accountability of government procurement processes through open contracting. The commitment also aimed to adopt the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) toward the same end. OCDS is a defined common data model that enables disclosure of data and documents at all stages of the contracting process.[94] This commitment sought to address issues of limited civic monitoring and accountability in procurement. Such issues are due to inconsistent access to information, limited whistleblower protections, low capacity for fraud

---

[94] Open Contracting Partnership homepage, https://www.open-contracting.org.

detection in public and private sectors, and the lack of applied conflict-of-interest mandates within the public sector.[95]

At the time of this commitment's formulation, the eProcurement Platform of the Public Procurement and Concessions Commission (PPCC) registered and listed businesses that could compete for public tenders.[96] It also provided information on calls for proposals and approved contracts. Additionally, the 2009 Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) Act mandated open contracting in the extractives sector.[97] However, Liberia lacked public oversight mechanisms to ensure accountability in government contracting.

This commitment was not started and thus was not completed at the end of the action plan period. Implementation was impacted by a change in administration, which led to a shift in policy direction and PPCC leadership.[98] LEITI also experienced leadership-related complications. However, PPCC continued to train government officials in procurement compliance,[99] and it enforced procurement guidelines.[100] As the commitment was not started, it did not change practices in relation to open government.

The PPCC's eProcurement Platform provides basic information, and LEITI, with its management difficulties,[101] struggles to maintain timely and open adherence from participating companies. Also, citizens—including the media and civil society organizations—do not perform proper or timely engagement on this issue.[102] Thus, OGP Liberia anticipates extending this commitment's contents to the next national action plan. The IRM recommends that during the next implementation period, the government drum up high-level political support by communicating the significant amount of government savings in countries with open contracting.[103]

[95] Roberto Martínez Barranco Kukutschka, *Liberia: Overview of Public Procurement,* number 388 (Bergen, Norway: U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre, August 2013), https://www.u4.no/publications/liberia-overview-of-public-procurement.pdf.

[96] PPCC eProcurement Platform homepage, http://vr3.ppcc.gov.lr.

[97] "Liberia EITI 2009 Act," Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, https://eiti.org/document/liberia-eiti-2009-act.

[98] "Liberia: Public Procurement Concession Commission Gets New Executive Director," Front Page Africa, 5 April 2019, https://frontpageafricaonline.com/news/liberia-public-procurement-concession-commission-gets-new-executive-director/; and Olando Zeongar, "Liberia: President Weah Gives Contradictory Accounts over PPCC Executive Director Dorbor Jallah's End of Tenure," Punch Liberia, 5 January 2019, https://www.punchliberia.com/featured-slider/liberia-president-weah-gives-contradictory-accounts-over-ppcc-executive-director-dorbor-jallahs-end-of-tenure-2/.

[99] "Liberia: PPCC Conducts Public Procurement Workshop for Public Officials," Procurement iNET, The World Bank, 27 May 2019, https://www.procurementinet.org/liberia-ppcc-conducts-public-procurement-workshop-for-public-officials/.

[100] Edwin Genoway, "Liberia: PPCC Boss Threatens to Prosecute Govt Officials Who Flout Procurement Law," Front Page Africa, 13 June 2018, https://allafrica.com/stories/201806130755.html.

[101] "Nyenkan Re-shuffled from LEITI to President's Office," Daily Observer, 16 September 2019, https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/nyenkan-re-shuffled-from-leiti-to-presidents-office/.

[102] Independent Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia Design Report 2017–2019* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-design-report-2017-2019-for-public-comment/.

[103] For more information, see "Breaking up Vested Interests: Three Steps to Turn Open Contracting Data into Political Change," Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/stories/breaking-up-vested-interests-three-steps-to-turn-open-contracting-data-into-political-change/; and "Nigeria Spearheads Open Government in Africa, Takes Steps to Stop US$15.7B of Illicit Flow through Financial Systems," Open Government Partnership, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/news/nigeria-spearheads-open-government-in-africa-takes-steps-to-stop-us15-7b-of-illicit-flow-through-financial-systems/.

9. Institute a Beneficial Ownership Registry

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:
"The commitment will develop a public register for beneficial ownership information. The development of the register will be instituted through implementing rules and procedures using open data standards.

A public register showing who owns and controls overseas companies will deter the corrupt from using these as safe havens to invest their criminal proceeds. In doing so, it will signal the beginning of the end for a system of secrecy that facilitates and entrenches the corruption in Liberia."

Milestones:
1. Commence consultations and workshops around the issue of beneficial ownership;
2. Sign Liberia up to the Open Ownership Global Register;
3. Constitute a coordinating committee to establish clear rules on beneficial ownership in Liberia;
4. Begin the process of establishing an open register of beneficial ownership for all companies operating in Liberia per international open data standards;
5. Awareness raising and capacity building on beneficial ownership for public officials, civil society and investigative journalists.

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
Verifiable: Yes **Relevant**: Yes - Access to Information - Civic Participation **Potential impact**: Minor	**Completion:** Not Started **Did it Open Government?** Did Not Change

This commitment aimed to develop a public register for beneficial ownership information using rules and procedures aligned with open data standards. This commitment addressed the need for better regulated and standardized reporting of beneficial ownership. Beneficial owners are natural persons who ultimately own or control a legal entity or arrangement.[104] Reporting of such ownership would increase transparency and reduce conflicts of interest within the government.[105]

At the time of this commitment's formulation, the Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (LEITI) had published its Beneficial Ownership Roadmap (2016).[106] It had also piloted a program on beneficial ownership disclosure in the natural resource sector. This pilot program had 55 percent compliance and revealed many issues. It highlighted the difficulty in obtaining accurate or sufficient public information on companies, poor cooperation from regulatory agencies, and poor government stewardship, and, therefore, minimal reporting from concessionaires. The passage of the New Petroleum Reform Law of Liberia (2014) required all bidding oil companies to declare their

---

[104] The Secretariat of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, and Inter-American Development Bank, *A Beneficial Ownership Implementation Toolkit* (Paris: OECD, 2019), https://www.oecd.org/tax/transparency/beneficial-ownership-toolkit.pdf.

[105] Independent Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia Design Report 2017–2019* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-design-report-2017-2019-for-public-comment/.

[106] "Liberia EITI Beneficial Ownership Roadmap," Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, December 2016, https://eiti.org/document/liberia-eiti-beneficial-ownership-roadmap.

owners,[107] and there was international scrutiny of the Liberian International Shipping and Corporate Registry.[108]

This commitment was not started by the end of the action plan implementation period. Contributing factors included governing problems within LEITI and the Liberian Business Registry (LBR).[109] The LBR is the government agency with LEITI-related functional and legal mandates. In addition, Liberia's OGP multistakeholder forum approved the commitment without participation from LBR, whose management team was not appointed until 2018.[110] Notwithstanding, at dates beyond the scope of this commitment, LBR updated its website with forms required to register a business and an online application system. These features increased access to information and resources, especially for those beyond the Monrovia metropolitan area.[111]

As the commitment was not started, it did not change practices in relation to open government. If this commitment is continued in future action plans, the Liberian Business Registry's buy-in for beneficial ownership reforms will be essential for successful implementation.

---

[107] Global Witness, "Liberia Passes Historic Oil Law Requiring Companies to Publish Names of Their Owners," press release, 28 November 2016, https://www.globalwitness.org/en/press-releases/liberia-passes-historic-oil-law-requiring-companies-publish-names-their-owners/.

[108] George Turner, "Liberia: America's Outpost of Financial Secrecy," Finance Uncovered, 26 May 2016, https://www.financeuncovered.org/investigations/liberia-americas-outpost-financial-secrecy/.

[109] "Nyenkan Re-shuffled from LEITI to President's Office," Daily Observer, 16 September 2019, https://www.liberianobserver.com/news/nyenkan-re-shuffled-from-leiti-to-presidents-office/.

[110] Liberian Business Registry, https://lbr.gov.lr/.

[111] Momo Kparteh, "LBR Launches Online Platform in Monrovia," Liberia Business Registry, 3 July 2019, http://lbr.gov.lr/2019/07/03/lbr-launces-online-platform-in-monrovia-july-3-2019/.

10. Implementation and Use of an Open Data/Citizen Navigation Portal

Language of the commitment as it appears in the action plan:

"The commitment will allow for a better understanding, collection and production of data related to policy-making in Liberia through a series of data-collection, cleaning and synthesis activities; and ongoing development of an online platform to disseminate this data.

These efforts will solve this problem through providing much more data to citizens in ways that are useful and usable. While internet access for Liberians can still be limited, having all of this data in one place, online, in a form that can be used, will allow for additional offline approaches to be developed."

Milestones:
1. Conduct a prioritized audit of IT capacity and gaps within government bodies relevant to the OGP process;
2. Conduct surveys of citizens to understand exactly what data they want from government;
3. Collection of datasets from relevant ministries and conversion to machine-readable formats to make the data easy to use and repurpose;
4. As part of the platform, create geospatial portal with all concessions agreements and related shapefiles, including agriculture, mining, and timber concessions, as well as Community Forest Management Agreements. Include maps of all community and customary lands that overlap with these concessions;
5. User design and feedback process to understand how best to integrate and display data;
6. Coordinate with the Aid Management Platform to ensure all aid data is available publicly on that platform, and it is linked to the open data platform;
7. Interactive, structured community building on open data issues between key civil society organizations in Liberia and those across the continent working on open data and transparency issues including a series of video-conferences, online discussions and virtual events to share thoughts, cross-pollinate ideas and build collaborations.

IRM Design Report Assessment	IRM Implementation Report Assessment
Verifiable: Yes **Relevant**: Yes Access to Information Civic Participation **Potential impact**: Moderate	**Completion:** Not Started **Did it Open Government?** Did Not Change

This commitment aimed to conduct a series of data collection, data cleaning, and data synthesis activities and support the development of the national data portal to disseminate government-held data.[112] It sought to address issues of disparate website appearance, quality, and storage. It also sought to streamline maintenance, optimization, and dissemination of Government of Liberia data, particularly in the context of the OGP process.[113]

---

[112] eLiberia homepage, http://eliberia.gov.lr.

[113] Independent Reporting Mechanism, *Liberia Design Report 2017–2019* (Washington, DC: Open Government Partnership), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/liberia-design-report-2017-2019-for-public-comment/.

At the time of this commitment's formulation, the national data portal was live but not formally launched. It provided links to websites of ministries and agencies and their online services and an unpopulated data repository page.[114] Site managers communicated with users through email. The site did not track data on general usage.[115]

This commitment was not started and thus not completed at the end of the action plan period. Contributing factors included the change in administration, resulting change in focus, and, later, changes in staffing within the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, the lead agency for this commitment.

However, during the implementation period, a redesigned eLiberia portal was officially launched. It made some government services available online. These included applications for passports, online payment of taxes, birth registration forms, and farmers e-registration.[116] As the commitment was not started, it did not change practices in relation to open government.

---

[114] Site was accessed October 2018.

[115] James K. Sulonteh (Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications), interview by IRM researcher, 12 October 2018.

[116] Ransford Mensah, "Liberia Launches Web Portal with Online Information on Government Services," IBI, 14 September 2018, https://www.ibi-usa.com/single-post/2018/09/14/eLiberia-launched.

III. Multistakeholder Process

Liberia's implementation process achieved a "consult" level of public participation. After a lag in operations until 2018, the OGP Liberia Secretariat increased collaboration with civil society and community outreach. However, the implementation process continued to face challenges, such as limited funding for activities and limited participation of some commitment leads.

3.1 Multistakeholder process throughout action plan implementation

In 2017, OGP adopted the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards intended to support participation and co-creation by civil society at all stages of the OGP cycle. All OGP-participating countries are expected to meet these standards. The standards aim to raise ambition and quality of participation during development, implementation, and review of OGP action plans.

OGP's Articles of Governance also establish participation and co-creation requirements a country or entity must meet in their action plan development and implementation to act according to OGP process. Liberia **did not act** contrary to OGP process.[117] Liberia did not create a national OGP website or webpage where information on processes are stored and did not have a repository of collected, published, and/or documented information online in accordance with IRM guidance. However, the Secretariat is taking steps to do so, and countries in the 2017–2019 action plan cohort have a grace period to create a repository.

Please see Annex I for an overview of Liberia's performance implementing the Co-Creation and Participation Standards throughout the action plan implementation.

Table 3. Level of Public Influence

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply to OGP.[118] 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 "collaborate."

Level of public influence		During development of action plan	During implementation of action plan
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		

---

117 Acting Contrary to Process - Country did not meet (1) "involve" during the development or "inform" during implementation of the national action plan (2) government fails to collect, publish and document a repository on the national OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance.
118 "IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum," IAP2, 2014,
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf

Liberia's implementation process for its third action plan achieved the level of "consult" for public influence. The OGP Liberia Secretariat was formed halfway through the implementation period in 2018. Once established, the Secretariat created a Steering Committee to oversee implementation of the action plan.[119] The Steering Committee met in person monthly and was composed of five government and five civil society representatives.[120] The government agencies included the Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs, and Tourism; the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning; the Anti-Corruption Commission; Independent Information Commission; and the judiciary branch. Civil society organizations included Accountability Lab, iLab Liberia, the Presidents' Young Professionals Program, Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia, and the Center for Democracy and Open Governance in Liberia.[121]

The OGP Secretariat faced resource constraints throughout the implementation period. As a result, consultations with the wider public were not held. The Secretariat did not receive any funding until 2019. However, the Secretariat did create an OGP website,[122] which is currently under construction.[123] The Secretariat also manages an active OGP Facebook and Twitter to keep the public informed.[124] The OGP Secretariat engaged the public with weekly radio and television programs.[125] Between March and April of 2018, the Secretariat held individual meetings with implementing agencies to gauge the status of implementation and feasibility of uncompleted milestones.[126] Throughout the process, lead agencies felt the OGP Secretariat took "ideas on governance and translated it into tangible, concrete work."[127]

The OGP Secretariat conducted an assessment of the action plan once it began operating in 2018. The Secretariat found a lack of ownership of commitments, as many were designed without the input of the principle actors. The Secretariat also found that resource constraints had not been sufficiently considered, and therefore several commitments were overambitious.[128] Therefore, the Working Group chose to focus implementation efforts on the commitments considered most achievable.[129] The Secretariat also attributes a low level of political will to the limited implementation of the action plan.[130] Some civil society representatives agree that implementation was inhibited by a lack of government commitment to OGP values.[131] Public integrity commissions, such as the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission and Independent Information Commission, faced decreased funding, staffing, and independence around this time.[132] These factors contributed to a difficult environment to enact open governance reforms.

Government agencies primarily led implementation efforts, while civil society provided support.[133] Government engaged civil society in the implementation of particular commitments. Beyond the multistakeholder forum, government leads for Commitments 2, 3, 5, and 7 made deliberate efforts to inform (via presentations and workshops) and engage (asking for and incorporating feedback and

[119] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM staff, 7 October 2020.

[120] OGP Liberia Working Group meeting minutes were provided to the IRM researcher by the OGP Secretariat.

[121] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM staff, 7 October 2020.

[122] OGP Liberia website, https://www.ogpliberia.org/.

[123] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM staff, 7 October 2020.

[124] OGP Liberia Twitter and Facebook: https://twitter.com/OGP_Liberia and https://www.facebook.com/Open-Government-Partnership-Secretariat-221424295551286.

[125] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM staff, September 2019.

[126] Meeting minutes were provided to the IRM by the OGP Liberia Secretariat.

[127] Moses Carter (Liberia National Police), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

[128] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM staff, 7 October 2020.

[129] OGP Liberia Working Group meeting minutes were provided to the IRM by the OGP Secretariat.

[130] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM staff, 7 October 2020.

[131] Andrew Miamen (Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia), interview by IRM researcher, September 2019.

[132] Ida Reeves, "Senate Rejects Pres. Weah's Bill to Eliminate Tenured Positions," The Bush Chicken, 31 May 2019, https://bushchicken.com/senate-rejects-pres-weahs-bill-to-eliminate-tenured-positions/.

[133] Ralph Jimmeh (OGP Liberia Secretariat), interview by IRM staff, 7 October 2020.

ideas) civil society during implementation. Additionally, civil society played leading roles in the implementation of Commitments 3 and 6.

VI. Methodology and Sources

The IRM reports are written by national researchers in each OGP-participating country. All IRM reports undergo a process of quality control to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual[134] and in Liberia's Design Report (2017–2019).

The following individuals were interviewed in the course of completing this report:

Andrew Miamen, Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia, September 2019
Anderson Miamen, Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia, 30 October 2018
Andrew Nimley, Ministry of Justice, 17 October 2018
Counselor Nimley and Counselor Katapah, Ministry of Justice, September 2019
James K. Sulonteh, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, 12 October 2018
Kulah Jackson, Liberia Land Authority, September 2019
Moses Carter, Liberia National Police, September 2019
Ralph Jimmeh, Open Government Partnership Liberia Secretariat, September 2019
Saah N'Tow, The Carter Center, September 2019

IRM staff also conducted research to gather additional information for the report. This further research included an interview with Ralph Jimmeh from the Open Government Partnership Liberia Secretariat on 7 October 2020.

The IRM also reached out, through email, to six government and civil society representatives involved in implementation of Liberia's 2017–2019 action plan in October 2020. Responses were received from the Deputy Minister for Budget and Development Planning Tanneh G. Brunson and Andrew Nimley, administrative assistant in the Office of the Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Liberia.

---

[134] IRM Procedures Manual, V.3: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual.

Annex I. Overview of Liberia's Performance throughout Action Plan Implementation

Key:
Green= Meets standard
Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)
Red= No evidence of action

Multistakeholder Forum	During Development	During Implementation
1a. Forum established: There is a forum to oversee the OGP process	Green	Green
1b. Regularity: The forum meets at least every quarter, in person or remotely	Green	Green
1c. Collaborative mandate development: Members of the forum jointly develop its remit, membership and governance structure.	Red	Yellow
1d. Mandate public: Information on the forum's remit, membership and governance structure is available on the OGP website/page.	Red	Yellow
2a. Multistakeholder: The forum includes both governmental and non-government representatives	Green	Green
2b. Parity: The forum includes an even balance of governmental and non-government representatives	Yellow	Green
2c. Transparent selection: Non-governmental members of the forum are selected through a fair and transparent process.	Green	Green
2d. High-level government representation: The forum includes high-level representatives with decision making authority from government	Green	Yellow
3d. Openness: The forum accepts inputs and representation on the action plan process from any civil society or other stakeholders outside the forum	Green	Yellow
3e. Remote participation: There are opportunities for remote participation in at least some meetings and events	Green	Red
3f. Minutes: The OGP forum proactively communicates and reports back on its decisions, activities and results to wider government and civil society stakeholders	Yellow	Yellow

Key:
Green= Meets standard
Yellow= In progress (steps have been taken to meet this standard, but standard is not met)
Red= No evidence of action

Action Plan Implementation	
4a. The government publishes via the national OGP website/webpage regular updates (i.e., at least every six months) on the progress of commitments, including progress against milestones, reasons for any delays, next steps. This is in addition to publishing self-assessment report	Yellow
4b. The website/webpage should have a feature to allow the public to comment on progress updates.	Red
4c. The government holds at least two open meetings with civil society (one per year) on the implementation of the NAP.	Red
4d. The government shares the link to the IRM report with other government institutions and stakeholders to encourage input during the public comment phase.	Red
4e. The multistakeholder forum monitors and deliberates on how to improve the implementation of the NAP.	Green
4f. The government submitted its self-assessment report to the national multistakeholder forum for comments and feedback on the content of the report.	Green
4g. Repository: Government collects and publishes a document repository on the national OGP website/webpage, which provides a historical record and access to all documents related to the national OGP process, including (but not limited to) consultation documents, National Action Plans, government self-assessments, IRM reports and supporting documentation of commitment implementation (e.g., links to databases, evidence of meetings, publications)	Red

Annex II. IRM Indicators

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.[135] A summary of key indicators the IRM assesses is below:

- **Verifiability:**
  - Not specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, do the objectives stated and actions proposed lack sufficient clarity and specificity for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
  - Specific enough to verify: As written in the commitment, are the objectives stated and actions proposed sufficiently clear and specific to allow for their completion to be objectively verified through a subsequent assessment process?
- **Relevance:** This variable evaluates the commitment's relevance to OGP values. Based on a close reading of the commitment text as stated in the action plan, the guiding questions to determine the relevance are:
  - Access to Information: Will the government disclose more information or improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public?
  - Civic Participation: Will the government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions or policies?
  - Public Accountability: Will the government create or improve public facing opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions?
  - Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability: Will technological innovation be used in conjunction with one of the other three OGP values to advance either transparency or accountability?
- **Potential impact:** This variable assesses the *potential impact* of the commitment, if completed as written. The IRM researcher uses the text from the action plan to:
  - Identify the social, economic, political, or environmental problem;
  - Establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan; and
  - Assess the degree to which the commitment, if implemented, would impact performance and tackle the problem.
- **Completion:** This variable assesses the commitment's implementation and progress. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the *IRM Implementation Report.*
- **Did It Open Government?:** This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how the government practice, in areas relevant to OGP values, has changed as a result of the commitment's implementation. This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the *IRM Implementation Report.*

Results oriented commitments?
A potentially starred commitment has more potential to be ambitious and to be implemented. A good commitment design is one that clearly describes the:
1. **Problem:** What is the economic, social, political, or environmental problem? Rather than describing an administrative issue or tool (e.g., 'Misallocation of welfare funds' is more helpful than 'lacking a website.').
2. **Status quo:** What is the status quo of the policy issue at the beginning of an action plan (e.g., "26 percent of judicial corruption complaints are not processed currently.")?

---

[135] "IRM Procedures Manual," OGP, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual.

3. **Change:** Rather than stating intermediary outputs, what does the targeted behavior change that is expected from the commitment's implementation (e.g., "Doubling response rates to information requests" is a stronger goal than "publishing a protocol for response.")?

Starred commitments

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/entities. To receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- The commitment's design should be **Verifiable**, **Relevant** to OGP values, and have **Transformative** potential impact. As assessed in the Design Report.
- The commitment's implementation must be assessed by IRM Implementation Report as **Substantial** or **Complete.**

This variable is assessed at the end of the action plan cycle, in the *Implementation IRM report*.