

Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Côte d'Ivoire Hybrid Report 2018–2020

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Executive Summary

Côte d'Ivoire's second action plan was designed through an improved, collaborative process with civil society. The commitments responded to citizens' demands and national development priorities. The Technical Committee and civil society platform's monitoring led to high levels of commitment completion. Notable early results were obtained in transparency and participation with public budgets. To raise the level of ambition in future commitments, the IRM recommends that commitment designers provide greater details on planned activities and evaluate draft commitments to ensure a clear, open government lens.

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. Côte d'Ivoire joined OGP in 2015, and has since implemented two action plans. This report evaluates the design and implementation of Côte d'Ivoire's second action plan.

General overview of action plan

Côte d'Ivoire's second action plan was developed with collaboration between the multi-stakeholder Technical Committee and Civil Society Platform. Together, representatives from the government, the private sector and the Civil Society Platform for the PGO (PSCI-PGO) held public consultations and drafted commitments based on diverse public input. Civil society tracked the implementation progress, in collaboration with relevant government institutions. Subsequently, 3 commitments were fully completed and 5 were almost completed by the end of implementation. However, most commitments were of moderate ambition.

This report focuses on three commitments that produced notable early results in open government. Commitment 1 spurred co-creation of a simplified Citizens' Budget from 2019 onwards. Commitment 2 led to the establishment of community committees to oversee the construction of schools and the quality of education at 110 rural preschools. Commitment 6 continued efforts to expand participatory budgeting practices to more communes through outreach and technical support. Commitments 1 and 6 fostered budget transparency and initiated civic participation in local budget processes. Commitment 2 demonstrates the power of community participation in upgrading public services.

Table 1. At a glance

Participating since: 2015
Action plan under review: Second
Report type: Hybrid (design and implementation)
Number of commitments: 10

Action plan development

Is there a Multi-stakeholder forum: Yes
Level of public influence: Collaborate
Acted according to OGP process: Yes

Action plan design

Commitments relevant to OGP values: 9 (90%)

Action plan implementation

Completed commitments: 3
Commitments with early results in DIOG*: 3
Commitments with major DIOG*: 2
Level of public influence: Collaborate
Acted according to OGP process: Yes

*DIOG: Did it Open Government



Section B of this report analyzes completion levels for the remaining action plan commitments. Commitments 3, 5, and 9 primarily involve awareness-raising activities, considered as important first steps towards open government reform. These commitments are judged moderately ambitious and were not analyzed for early results. Commitment 8 was not reviewed in-depth, as it did not contain a clear, open government lens. Commitment 4 was revised during implementation and encountered a number of obstacles; it was not initiated, but was pursued in Côte d'Ivoire's third action plan. Commitments 7 and 10 reformed vitally important national issues – anti-corruption and media freedom – but achieved limited open government results during implementation and were not evaluated in detail.

Nevertheless, the IRM recognizes that these commitments begin to address issues of national importance. Commitments such as 3, 4, and 5 were modest in ambition, but laid the foundation for more ambitious reforms in Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 action plan. Using a new reporting model, the IRM turned its focus on a limited number of commitments with evidence of early results for all member countries. Extra attention to specific commitments in this report should not be construed as a statement on the action plan's overall ambition and relevance.

Looking to future action plans, the IRM recommends that commitment drafters provide greater details on activities outlined under each commitment. More comprehensive specificity would help the IRM to better assess each commitment's potential for open government results. The IRM also recommends that drafters evaluate all commitments to ensure that they promote government transparency, civic participation in government processes, or public accountability of government officials or entities. For more details on key recommendations listed below, see Section V of this report and Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 Action Plan Review.¹

Key IRM Recommendations

| |
|---|
| Maintain an updated and comprehensive OGP repository to ensure procedural transparency and accountability |
| Design commitments with open government values of transparency, civic participation, and/or accountability as guiding principles for core commitment activities |
| Design commitments with more information on the full scope of intended activities to better enable citizens to measure impact |

¹ Independent Reporting Mechanism. Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 Action Plan Review. 2021.
<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-review-2020-2022-for-public-comment/>

I. Introduction

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. 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.

Côte d'Ivoire joined OGP in 2015. This consolidated report covers the design and implementation of Côte d'Ivoire's second action plan for 2018-2020. This report focuses on three commitments with strong evidence of early results. The remaining commitments are assessed only for their level of completion.

For the most recent IRM recommendations, please refer to Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 Action Plan Review: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-review-2020-2022-for-public-comment/>

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>.

II. Open Government Context in Côte d'Ivoire

Following a decade of social unrest and civil war, Côte d'Ivoire is rebuilding its political stability, strengthening the rule of law, and improving governance institutions. Since 2013, the country has displayed considerable progress in anti-corruption efforts through new legislation and institutions. However, their effectiveness has yet to be determined, with freedom of information and expression remaining fragile.

Background

After a decade of ethnic and political turmoil and post-2010 electoral violence, Côte d'Ivoire's security situation has stabilized and the country is taking various measures to reform broken governance institutions and establish the rule of law.¹ Before the Covid-19 pandemic that affected Ivorian households and businesses in 2020, the country persisted as one of Africa's most vibrant economies, with an anticipated growth rate of around 8%.² At the same time, the poverty rates decreased considerably, from 51% of the population in 2011 to 39.4% in 2020.³ Against this backdrop, corruption continued to be a major concern.⁴ In particular, corruption in the judiciary, police and security forces, which exacerbated a climate of impunity.⁵

In recent years, President Ouattara led an anti-corruption agenda and undertook various measures to address major governance challenges.⁶ In October 2020, he was re-elected for a third term in an election boycotted by major opposition parties.⁷ Among the main reforms: a presidential anti-corruption decree that passed in 2013, and establishment of new anti-corruption bodies –the Brigade for the Fight Against Corruption in 2012, the High Authority for Good Governance in 2014 and the Anti-Racketeering Unit. The effectiveness of these measures is still undetermined. Nevertheless, most indicators suggest some progress in corruption control in recent years.⁸ For example, the 2019 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance reported that, over a decade, Côte d'Ivoire had risen from 33rd to 18th place, a significant advance in governance through improved infrastructure and public administration.⁹

Transparency and Access to Information

Overall, Côte d'Ivoire has seen progress in access to public information, such as establishing a promising legal, institutional and political framework, as well as communication and distribution activities. Nevertheless, according to the Coalition for Access to Information, the politicization of public information creates a predicament. As described by a Coalition member, holders of public information communicate the information only to those who are on the same political board.¹⁰

Some initiatives are evident since the publication of the first OGP action plan. The Commission for Access to Information and Public Documents (CAIDP) is continuing its efforts to sensitize the community¹¹ and improve the capacities of its Information Officers.¹² When interviewed in 2019, Mrs. Chantal Angoua,¹³ Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and SME Promotion and Chair of the OGP Technical Committee, ¹⁴ said the CAIDP addresses various government agencies to support their response to information requests from the public. As an independent administrative body, CAIDP is responsible for ensuring that public agencies respect individual rights to access information and documents of public interest. CAIDP also receives and reviews appeals against public agency decisions regarding access to information of public interest and ensures security and control of public bodies' data. It has power of sanction. For example, the Commission may impose a fine or daily penalty, as set by decree, on public bodies that fail to comply with their obligations. Moreover, CAIDP offers guidance and recommendations about access to information, and may suggest legislative and regulatory measures.¹⁵ Following a December 2018 workshop organized by the German Foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Office of Namibia, to further the relationship between CAIDP and journalists, a group of journalists founded the Network of Journalists for Access to Information of Public Interest of Côte d'Ivoire (REJAIP-CI), with the goal of streamlining access to information laws.¹⁶

The Public Service Observatory (OSEP) was founded to promote continuous and permanent dialogue between government and public service users. OSEP is a listening process, a platform¹⁷ where users can express their concerns about the administration. When the platform launched in February 2019, Mrs. Angoua¹⁸ affirmed that users could remain anonymous and use the tool to follow up on their files. Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly¹⁹, Research Manager at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, specified that institutional capacity is a government priority. Civil society delegates, on the other hand, approved government efforts to promote the public's right to access information. However, they recognized that the government should broaden the geographical scope of its information access awareness-raising events to cities beyond Abidjan.²⁰

Finally, one of the government's strategies was to leverage digital administration for improved transparency and open data. In this regard, the "gouv.ci" strategy aims for accessible government websites via computer, tablet or mobile. The 150 existing government websites are regularly updated through the Government Centre of Information and Communication (CICG), such as the free "Allo 101" call centre or the www.bilan2011-2015.gouv.ci information portal. Furthermore, the government embarked on a program to provide data processed by public administration. With support from CAIDP and backed by law 2013-867 of December 23rd, 2013, the CICG conducted Open Data workshops to collect public data that would be made available on the portal www.data.gouv.ci.

Civic Liberties and Civic Space

While the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, association and freedom of the press, civic space remains obstructed, according to CIVICUS Monitor.²¹ Freedom of expression in Côte d'Ivoire was precarious at outset of the action plan, according to Amnesty International.²² The human rights organization reported arbitrary arrests and imprisonment for journalists and bloggers.²³ It also mentioned the pressure on civil society²⁴ and harassment of opposition groups by police and the gendarmerie, who regularly banned and dispersed their meetings using excessive force.²⁵ Amnesty International also reported the use of torture by police, the gendarmerie and the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance.²⁶

Accountability and Anticorruption

Several institutional reforms (legislation and policies) were launched, confirming the government's political will to fight corruption.²⁷ Côte d'Ivoire scored 36 points out of 100 on the Transparency International 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index, revealing significant improvements since 2013, when it scored 27 points.²⁸ Côte d'Ivoire is one of the first West African countries to ratify and draft good governance laws. The statutory anti-corruption framework was bolstered by the High Authority for Good Governance (HABG), an economically independent legal entity under authority of the President of the Republic, and investigations led by the State's General Inspectorate (SGI).²⁹ However, the struggle against corruption remains challenging, with real estate and agriculture being the most affected sectors.³⁰

In 2018, the country passed a whistleblower act that protects witnesses and victims of corruption. However, a lack of protection meant that whistleblowers were reluctant to participate in the fight against corruption, and the law has yet to prove effective.

¹ Transparency International, Knowledge Hub, "Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of Corruption and Anti-corruption" (18/04/2016): <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/cote-divoire-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>.

² "Côte d'Ivoire : cinq choses à savoir sur le dernier rapport de la Banque mondiale", André Silver Konan, February 27, 2018, Jeune Afrique website, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/536552/economie/cote-divoire-cinq-choses-a-savoir-sur-le-dernier-rapport-de-la-banque-mondiale/>. For an update, see: "Overview, The World Bank in Côte d'Ivoire", Last update on May 03, 2021, World Bank's website, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cotedivoire/overview>.

³ "Overview, The World Bank in Côte d'Ivoire", last updated May 03, 2021, World Bank's website, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cotedivoire/overview>.

⁴ Transparency International, Knowledge Hub, "Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of Corruption and Anti-corruption" (18/04/2016): <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/cote-divoire-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The Africa Report (November 3, 2020), "Côte d'Ivoire: Alassane Ouattara re-elected for a 3rd term with 94.27%", <https://www.theafricareport.com/48878/cote-divoire-ouattara-re-elected-for-a-3rd-term-with-94-27/>

⁸ Transparency International, Knowledge Hub, "Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of Corruption and Anti-corruption" (18/04/2016): <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/cote-divoire-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>.

⁹ See 2020 Ibrahim Index of African Governance – Index Report, p.25:

<https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2020-11/2020-index-report.pdf> and comparison data:

<https://iiag.online/data.html?meas=GOVERNANCE&loc=CI&view=table#>.

¹⁰ "Côte d'Ivoire : Le droit d'accès à l'information d'intérêt public au cœur des préoccupations", Maxime Kouadio, April 12, 2019, <http://www.linodrome.com/societe-culture/47502-cote-d-ivoire-le-droit-d-acces-a-l-information-d-interet-public-au-coeur-des-preoccupations>.

¹¹ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

¹² CAIDP website, <http://www.caidp.ci/>.

¹³ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, then- Chair of OGP Technical Committee, interviewed in person on February 11, 2019, followed by e-mail and phone exchanges.

¹⁴ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, interviewed in person on February 11, 2019, followed by e-mail and phone exchanges.

¹⁵ CAIDP website, <http://www.caidp.ci/>.

¹⁶ "Accès à l'information d'intérêt public: le Réseau des Journalistes pour l'Accès à l'Information d'Intérêt Public de Côte d'Ivoire (REJAIP-CI) voit le jour", December 10, 2018, CAIDP website, http://www.caidp.ci/accueil/photo_album/acces-l-information-dintrt-public-le-reseau-des-journalistes-pour-lacces-linformation-dintrt-public-de-cte-divoire-rejaip-ci-voit-le-jour.

¹⁷ Citizen Portal "Milié", website <http://www.milie.ci/index.php?page=reclamation.APropos>.

¹⁸ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, interviewed in person on February 11, 2019, followed by e-mail and phone exchanges.

¹⁹ Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, in charge of research, Ministry of Trade and Industry, interviewed in person on February 11, 2018, followed by e-mail exchanges.

²⁰ Civil society delegates, phone calls and e-mails from February 10, 2019 to March 30, 2019; The OGP Technical Committee commented (document with observations dated September 7, 2021 sent to the IRM) that the CAIDP organized campaigns to promote access to information in 2017, 2018 and 2019 at: West: Man, Duékoué, Daloa; East: Abengourou, Bondoukou; Center: Bouaké, Yamoussoukro; North: Korhogo. See CAIDP reports on "Access to Information Caravans": <http://www.caidp.ci/recherche/actualite?search=Caravan>. In 2020, there was no campaign due to COVID 19.

²¹ <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/cote-divoire/>, March 14, 2020.

²² "Côte d'Ivoire: a fragile Human Rights Situation", Full Report, October 2018, Amnesty International, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/AFR3197142018ENGLISH.pdf>.

²³ "Côte d'Ivoire: la liberté d'expression est malmenée (Amnesty international)", February 11, 2019, Africanews website, <https://fr.africanews.com/2019/02/11/cote-d-ivoire-la-liberte-d-expression-est-malmenee-amnesty-international/>.

²⁴ "Côte d'Ivoire. La répression des voix critiques met la liberté d'expression à rude épreuve", January 28, 2019, Afrikipresse website, <http://www.afrikipresse.fr/opinion/cote-d-ivoire-la-repression-des-voix-critiques-met-la-liberte-d-expression-a-rude-epreuve>.

²⁵ "La liberté d'expression malmenée en Côte d'Ivoire", February 9, 2019, La Libre Afrique, website, <https://afrique.lalibre.be/32152/la-liberte-dexpression-malmenee-en-cote-divoire/>.

²⁶ "Côte d'Ivoire: la liberté d'expression est malmenée (Amnesty international)", February 11, 2019, Africanews website, <https://fr.africanews.com/2019/02/11/cote-d-ivoire-la-liberte-d-expression-est-malmenee-amnesty-international/>.

²⁷ "L'Indice de perception de la corruption: La Côte d'Ivoire améliore sa position", <https://www.rti.ci/info/economie/24005/leindice-de-perception-de-la-corruption-la-cote-deivoire-ameliore-sa-position>.

²⁸ Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2020: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/civ>.

²⁹ As reported by the OGP Technical Committee, in the last reshuffle in April 2021 a Ministry responsible for the fight against corruption was created, in addition to previous actions taken by the government to combat corruption (document with observations, dated September 7, 2021 and addressed to the IRM).

³⁰ "Despite Legal Frameworks, Corruption Still Thrives in Côte d'Ivoire", by Aboubacar Ouakaltio Ouattara, IACC News, February 2, 2019, <https://iaccseries.org/blog/corruption-still-thrives-in-cote-divoire/>.

III. Leadership and Multi-Stakeholder Process

The government and civil society reformed national OGP structures for a more collaborative approach to the development and implementation of Côte d'Ivoire's second action plan. The multi-stakeholder Technical Committee and the Civil Society Platform held training sessions, regional consultations, and workshops that produced an action plan that strongly reflects input from civil society. Civil society took part in the implementation and monitoring of the action plan, despite challenges presented by COVID-19. Looking forward, the Technical Committee should ensure that Côte d'Ivoire's OGP website is up to date, to encourage transparency and awareness of national open governance initiatives.

A. Leadership

This subsection describes the OGP leadership and institutional context for OGP in Côte d'Ivoire.

With a July 2018 cabinet shuffle, the Ivorian government introduced a Technical Committee (CT-OGP), hosted by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and SME Promotion. While the Interministerial Committee (CI-OGP)¹ oversees the process, the Technical Committee is responsible for coordinating Côte d'Ivoire's OGP efforts. It was originally chaired by Mrs. Chantal Angoua and, since 2020, by Mrs. Mariama Koné, Technical Advisors to the Minister of Trade and Industry, and involves delegates from both government and civil society.² The Technical Committee is responsible for overseeing government commitments and is the main point of contact for implementation of the OGP in Côte d'Ivoire.

The initial CT-OGP was composed of sixteen members, including ten representatives of the state, three representatives of the private sector, and three representatives of civil society organizations, according to the government Order issued on December 16, 2016.³ The focal point ministry approached the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior and the Secretariat for Capacity Building (formerly Governance Secretariat)⁴ to identify a list of civil society organizations qualified to join the Technical Committee. With this list, the Ministry of Interior and the Secretariat for Capacity Building contacted three organizations matching specific criteria, such as credibility and work on human rights and gender issues, and requested that they elect a representative. These representatives were appointed to the CT-OGP. The government initially chose civil society organizations represented on the committee. Civil society would address the issues with the Ivorian Civil Society Platform for the OGP (PSCI-PGO), a platform for all organizations involved in the OGP process⁵: The platform created a selection process which would help civil society appoint members to the Technical Committee.⁶ In 2020, parity was achieved between government and civil society members of CT-OGP in response to a request from PSCI-PGO, along with information gleaned from meetings with other governments. The new Technical Committee was founded through Order 516/MCI of May 11, 2020 and has 22 members, including 11 from government, 8 from civil society and 3 from the private sector.⁷

Concerning economic resources, distribution to OGP-related activities is variable. In 2018 and 2019, the dedicated budget for the Ministry of Industry was 90 million CFA annually. Government representatives described the budget as insufficient, decreased from approximately 210 million CFA available for the first action plan⁸, although it provided for public consultations and missions throughout the plan's development.⁹ Since 2018, Open Government Support in Francophone Africa (PAGOF) has financially supported the governments of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia.¹⁰ PAGOF was founded by the French development agency and implemented, in the context of OGP, by Expertise France and CFI. Côte d'Ivoire's second action plan, it funded some aspects of the public consultations as well as training of civil society, as well as some specific commitments, such as those associated with open data, the fight against racketeering and participatory budgeting, by facilitating

meetings with local authorities.¹¹ Finally, it is important to note that there are no staff dedicated full time to OGP in Côte d'Ivoire.

B. Multi-stakeholder process in action plan development and 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. Côte d'Ivoire **did not act** contrary to OGP process as the country met "involve" during the development of the national action plan.¹²

Please see Annex I for an overview of Côte d'Ivoire performance implementing the Co-Creation and Participation Standards throughout the action plan development.

Table [3.2]: Level of Public Influence

The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply to OGP.¹³ 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 | | |

Multi-stakeholder forum

Collaboration between the Technical Committee (CT-OGP)¹⁴ and the OGP Civil Society Platform (PSCI-PGO) constitutes Côte d'Ivoire's multi-stakeholder forum. CT-OGP includes government, civil society, and private sector representatives. PSCI-PGO unites all organizations in open government issues.

The government's 2018-20 end-of-term self-assessment outlined how stakeholder exchanges took place during the development and implementation of the action plan through various frameworks:

- meetings of the OGP Interministerial Committee (CI-OGP);
- meetings of the OGP Technical Committee (CT-OGP);
- meetings and discussions between CT-OGP and institutions responsible for commitments;
- meetings between CT-OGP and the Ivorian Civil Society Platform (PSCI-PGO).

This framework was established following development of the first action plan, and did not exist prior to the OGP process.¹⁵ PSCI-PGO is currently the government's primary civil society speaker, also responsible for distributing information about the process to a broader spectrum of civil society organizations.¹⁶

Participation and engagement throughout action plan development

According to interviews with government and civil society representatives, the second action plan followed a more participatory approach than the first one.¹⁷ This time, the government provided the Civil Society Platform with precise timeline and deadlines with opportunities for participation, and outlined the decision-making process for commitments included in the plan.¹⁸

The elaboration of the action plan included training sessions for selected participants, followed by public consultations.^{19,20} Training sessions took place from April 11-13 and from April 24-25, 2018 in Abidjan.²¹ The first targeted 12-15 public administration and civil society representatives, specifically Technical Committee and the PSCI-PGO members selected to conduct the ensuing national public consultations in 2018. The second session, for the same participants, concentrated specifically on managing the digital platform for public consultations.²²

The Technical Committee and PSCI-PGO collectively determined the 2018 calendar of public consultations in several major cities and towns,²³ with consultations in Bongouanou, Odienné, Gagnoa and Abidjan. In Bongouanou, surrounding communes were invited (Andé, Arrah, Kotobi, Abongoua, M'Batto, Anoumaba, Tiémélékro). In Gagnoa, communes nearby also participated in discussions (Oumé, Ouragahio, Guibéroua and Diégonéfla).²⁴ Each consultation lasted two days and included some 50 participants. The purpose was to promote local awareness about the OGP to guarantee a maximum number of participants from rural, remote communities and various regions.²⁵ The discussions were open to all civil society organizations, along with official members of the PSCI-PGO. Other participating organizations were the Plateforme des organisations de la société civile pour l'observation des élections en Côte d'Ivoire (POECI) and Tournons la Page. Local and regional authorities, community and religious organizations were also involved.²⁶ As specified by the Chair of the Technical Committee²⁷, members of civil society were the reporters for all meetings.

Consultations identified problems and thematic areas for the action plan and determined which agencies could potentially oversee implementation.²⁸ According to a civil society representative²⁹, thanks to the involvement of civil society, various ministries and state entities adapted their internal processes to comply with OGP standards (publishing open data, for example). The discussions also reinforced connections between certain agencies and civil society organizations, resolving existing collaboration challenges and encouraging participation in public affairs. For instance, the organization Social Justice is currently involved in the state's budgetary process. However, IRM researchers saw no evidence that attendants communicated with the broader civil society and other government stakeholders.³⁰

Along with public consultations, the government collected citizen input through an online platform,³¹ set up by the Ministry of Industry and Mines.³² The platform was available for one month, from June 11 to July 11, 2018.³³ This allowed the public to vote, using surveys on access to information, corruption and budget, to comment on their own votes and collect opinions and suggestions from Ivorian communities to draft the second action plan. However, the digital platform itself was not as

effective as anticipated for the OGP process, as participation was very low and the government failed to provide specific feedback on the comments.

Following the regional tour, the CT-OGP organized a workshop in Abidjan, on August 6 and 10, 2018, with the purpose of translating their concerns into commitment proposals.³⁴ The workshop was attended by CT-PGO, PSCI-PGO and government institutions which were potentially responsible for commitments. The proposals were analyzed in the context of OGP principles and their alignment with Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan, which would guarantee technical and financial support for projects covering 2018-2020. Draft commitments also required a budget in related ministry's overall resources. Following the workshop, the CT-PGO initiated regular meetings with identified commitment carriers.

The action plan was subsequently elaborated in a workshop on September 27, 2018, mostly by the Technical Committee and representatives of the Civil Society Platform.³⁵ The participants discussed the commitments and their technical and financial feasibility. Mrs. Angoua said that other priorities, such as energy, sustainable development and environment, could have benefited from open government commitments. These were not included in the action plan, as most government equivalents failed to be accountable for implementation.³⁶ The initial draft of an action plan with 15 commitments was then shared with the Civil Society Platform with a two-week window for submitting comments.

The pre-validation workshop was organized on October 17, 2018, with the Technical Committee and the Civil Society Platforms.³⁷ The participants analyzed the 15 draft commitments; one-third were not retained as they were not relevant to open government values. Those deemed relevant were modified. The final draft action plan covered 10 commitments accepted by government and civil society representatives, with their respective institutions.³⁸ The 2018-2020 action plan was validated by the Interministerial Committee and adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2018.³⁹

Overall, the OGP process in Côte d'Ivoire saw vast improvements between the first and second action plans. Government, civil society and private sector representatives jointly discussed and designed policy priorities and commitments.⁴⁰ The government moved from information sharing⁴¹ to collaboration and interactive dialogue with civil society. Civil society representatives recognized that they were primarily responsible for proposing plan's content, as reflected in the workshop reports shared with IRM researchers.⁴²

Participation and engagement throughout action plan implementation

During the implementation process, the government produced its first mid-term self-assessment report in December 2019 and an end-of-term assessment in December 2020. Both are available on the OGP website.

According to the self-assessment and confirmed by different interviewees, the government provided opportunities for civil society to participate in and monitor implementation. At the outset, the PSCI-PGO consulted civil society organizations regarding methodology and the implementation timeline for the action plan. Several meetings took place between CT-OGP, responsible government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and the beneficiaries of certain commitments, as detailed in the self-assessment.⁴³ Therefore, civil society was more involved in monitoring the progress⁴⁴ than in the first action plan, as recommended by the IRM's 2016-2018 mid-term report, although the exact number of meetings was not disclosed to the IRM researcher. In May 2020 a ministerial order would restructure the Technical Committee to ensure parity, with 11 members from government, eight from civil society (instead of the initial three), three from the private sector, with civil society representatives selected by the PSCI-OGP. Balanced composition in the CT-PGO had been recommended since the IRM 2016-2018 progress report.⁴⁵

However, the unexpected outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Côte d'Ivoire disrupted the timetable for OGP activities as of March 2020. For the Technical Committee, restrictions rendered it impossible to continue the planned public consultations in Abidjan and other cities. As a result, the meetings were held online. Likewise, government entities offering commitments were forced to postpone various awareness-raising and group activities.

Transparency, co-creation and participation recommendations

To continue strengthening the co-creation process, Côte d'Ivoire should consider:

- **Update the national OGP website:** While the Technical Committee and Civil Society Platform both have OGP websites, neither provides current information.⁴⁶ The government should ensure that the repository is up-to-date to provide detailed records and access to all documents concerning the process, including consultation documents, national action plans, government self-assessments, IRM reports and documentation supporting commitment implementation (e.g. links to databases, evidence of meetings, publications), with publication date. Current information about Technical Committee composition and governance should also be featured on the OGP website/page. Côte d'Ivoire should also consider using free online platforms, such as Google Drive or Facebook to disseminate information about OGP activities. For an example of a comprehensive OGP repository, Côte d'Ivoire can refer to Morocco and Tunisia's OGP websites.⁴⁷
- **Improve transparency of multi-stakeholder forum:** The calendar for Technical Committee and the Civil Society Platform meetings should be announced publicly, in advance, when the dates are set after consultation with Committee and Platform members. Meeting reports should also be made public.
- **Ensure effective and regular communication channels:** During the action plan development, the government should facilitate direct communication with citizens to answer questions about the action plan process, particularly during intense OGP activity. For online interaction with citizens, promote the effective application of online platforms and boost public participation through popular social media platforms. Further, the multi-stakeholder forum should enhance the platform with offline activities to include citizens who do not have internet access.

For the most recent IRM recommendations to strengthen participation of civil society in the OGP process, see the Action Plan Review 2020-2022:

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-review-2020-2022-for-public-comment/>

¹ Order No. 158 /PM/CAB of March 13, 2019 establishing, attributing and functioning of the Interministerial Committee for the conduct of the process of the Open Government Partnership in Côte d'Ivoire.

² In May 2020, the committee was reorganized to reach parity between government and civil society and private sector representatives (11 from government, 8 from civil society and 3 from the private sector). See Order nominating members of the OGP Technical Committee, Annex I of the End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Cote-dIvoire_End-of-Term_Self-Assessment_2018-2020_FR_Annexes.pdf.

³ Order of December 16, 2016 appointing the members of the Technical Committee of the Interministerial Committee for the implementation of the PGO process in Côte d'Ivoire. The initial three members representing civil society were Mr. Manlan Ehounou Kan Laurent, magistrate and President of the NGO Transparency Justice, Mrs. Zebeyoux Aimée, General Counsel at the Supreme Court and President of the Association of Women Jurists of Côte d'Ivoire (AFJCI), and Mrs. Sylla Sidibé Assata, notary and member of the Coalition of Women Leaders of Côte d'Ivoire. For current members of the Interministerial Committee see Order No. 158 /PM/CAB of March 13, 2019 and members of the Technical Committee see Order No. 516 / MCI of May 11, 2020.

⁴ Formerly Secretariat for Governance and Capacity Building, see <http://snrc.gouv.ci/assets/fichier/doc/2014-483.pdf>

⁵ Civil Society representative, phone exchange on July 24, 2019.

⁶ IRM Côte d'Ivoire Mid-Term Report 2016-2018.

⁷ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, at the time Chair of the OGP Technical Committee (CT-PGO), met on 11 February 2019 followed by e-mails and phone exchanges. Mrs. Chantal Angoua remained involved with the CT-PGO as a resource person, as informed by the CT-PGO in June 2021.

- ⁸ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, met on November 4, 2019.
- ⁹ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, met on November 4, 2019.
- ¹⁰ Web programme #PAGOF : <https://www.pagof.fr/> and “#PAGOF : Le gouvernement ouvert porté par une communauté francophone active et engagée”, Le Blog d’Etalab, November 30, 2018 : <https://www.etalab.gouv.fr/le-gouvernement-ouvert-en-afrique-francophone-porte-par-une-communaute-active-et-engagee>.
- ¹¹ “#PAGOF – Open Government Support Program in Francophone Africa”, Expertise France website, <https://www.expertisefrance.fr/web/guest/fiche-projet?id=706416>. While it co-chaired the Open Government Partnership (from September 2016 to September 2017), France committed to support transparency of public action at the international level by showing its support for Francophone countries in implementing their action plans. With funding from AFD, the French development agency, Expertise France and CFI launched a 3-year technical assistance project with 3.5 million EUR in October 2017.
- ¹² Acting Contrary to Process - Country did not meet (1) “involve” during the development or “inform” during implementation of the NAP (2) government fails to collect, publish and document a repository on the national OGP website/webpage in line with IRM guidance.
- ¹³ “IAP2’s Public Participation Spectrum,” IAP2, 2014. http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf
- ¹⁴ Technical Committee (operational body) of the Intergovernmental Committee (political body).
- ¹⁵ IRM Côte d’Ivoire Mid-Term Report, 2016-2018.
- ¹⁶ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, met on February 11, 2019 followed by e-mails and phone exchanges.
- ¹⁷ Interviews with Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, met on November 4, 2019 and civil society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10 and March 30, 2019.
- ¹⁸ Civil Society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10 and March 30, 2019.
- ¹⁹ In an ongoing process since 2017, civil society actors debated the government over different themes of interest to include in the plan. Within the evaluation framework of the 1st action plan, consultations took place in 2017 in 5 localities: Agnibilékrou, Aboisso, Bondoukou, Daloa and Yamoussoukro. Besides evaluating implementation of the first action plan, the meetings identified thematic areas and priorities that would serve as a foundation for development of the second. Each consultation was attended by over 50 participants. The Technical Committee provided a report of the public consultations to the IRM researcher.
- ²⁰ Côte d’Ivoire Action plan 2018-2020, phone calls and e-mail exchanges with civil society representatives between February 10 and March 30, 2019.
- ²¹ Côte d’Ivoire Action plan 2018-2020. The IRM researcher was presented with the Terms of Reference from the one-day launch workshop in Abidjan June 7, 2018 to outline the 2018 action plan and timeline, the workshop report and list of participants.
- ²² Documents of Terms of Reference, Report and Lists of participants from the public consultations were submitted to the IRM researcher by the CT-OGP.
- ²³ The 2018 public consultation calendar was jointly decided with civil society representatives, with expert support, during a training session in April 2018. The facilitator submitted the training report to the IRM researcher.
- ²⁴ Côte d’Ivoire Action plan 2018-2020, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.
- ²⁵ Civil Society representative, member of the platform, phone exchange on July 24, 2019.
- ²⁶ Documents of Terms of Reference, Report and Lists of participants of public consultations were provided by the CT-OGP to the IRM researcher.
- ²⁷ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, met on February 11, 2019 followed by e-mails and phone exchanges.
- ²⁸ Côte d’Ivoire Action plan, 2018-2020.
- ²⁹ Civil Society representative, phone exchange on July 24, 2019.
- ³⁰ Although no evidence was provided about the report to the broader civil society, the CT-PGO shared the attendance lists of public consultations, which included government and civil society representatives, with the IRM researcher.
- ³¹ Public consultations digital platform, website: <https://cp.ogp.gouv.ci>
- ³² The OGP Point of Contact was initially the Ministry of Industry and Mines. Through government reshuffles, it became the Ministry of Trade, Industry and SME Promotion and eventually, the Ministry of Trade and Industry.
- ³³ Civil Society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10 and March 30, 2019.
- ³⁴ Document of responses to research questions shared by the CT-OGP with IRM researcher in 2019.
- ³⁵ Report from Workshop for discussing 2018-2020 national action plan, September 27, 2018. Document submitted by the CT-OGP (via email) to the IRM researcher.
- ³⁶ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, met in person on February 11, 2019 followed by e-mails and phone exchanges.
- ³⁷ Report from Pre-validation workshop of the 2018-2020 national action plan, October 17, 2018. Document developed by civil society representatives and submitted to the IRM researcher by the CT-OGP in June 2021.
- ³⁸ Report from Pre-validation workshop of the 2018-2020 national action plan, October 17, 2018. Document detailed by civil society representatives and submitted to the IRM researcher by the CT-OGP in June 2021.
- ³⁹ Côte d’Ivoire End-of-Term Self-Assessment Action Plan, 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-self-assessment-2018-2020/>. Minutes from validation session by the Interministerial Committee, December 12, 2018, submitted to the IRM researcher in June 2021. The Minister Council adopted the plan on December 23.
- ⁴⁰ As reported by civil society representatives, there were separate consultations with civil society. For example, Social Justice organized a consultation in Bouaflé and in Abidjan, in partnership with other international organizations, such as

Médecins du Monde, regarding transparency of the health budget, particularly the family planning budget. Social Justice also consulted with Transparency International on governance aspects and the fight against corruption, with the aim of proposing commitments in corruption and transparency.

⁴¹ IRM Côte d'Ivoire Mid-Term Report, 2016-2018.

⁴² Civil Society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10 and March 30, 2019. Workshop reports developed by civil society representatives and sent by the Technical Committee to the IRM researcher in June 2021.

⁴³ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-Term Self-Assessment of action plan, 2018-2020.

⁴⁴ Civil Society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10 and March 30, 2019.

⁴⁵ IRM Côte d'Ivoire Mid-Term Report, 2016-2018, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-mid-term-irm-report-2016-2018-year-1/>

⁴⁶ See Côte d'Ivoire OGP website: <http://ogp.gouv.ci/> and the Civil Society Platform's OGP website: <https://psci-pgo.org/>

⁴⁷ See Tunisia's OGP website: <http://www.ogptunisie.gov.tn/en/> and Morocco's OGP website: <https://gouvernement-ouvert.ma/index.php?lang=fr>.

IV. Commitments

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

Commitments should be appropriate to each country's/entity's unique circumstances and challenges. OGP commitments should also be relevant to OGP values laid out in the OGP Articles of Governance and Open Government Declaration signed by all OGP-participating countries.¹ The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.² A summary of key indicators the IRM assesses can be found in Annex II.

General Overview of the Commitments

Commitment design

Most of the commitments in Côte d'Ivoire's second action plan continue the reforms introduced under the first plan. These include commitments related to budget transparency, the plurality of expression and liberalization of the television industry, the fight against corruption and racketeering, public involvement in local governance, open data and education.³ The plan introduced new policy areas, including transparency of asset declarations, a national integrity policy and the promotion of contraceptives. Commitments covered in this action plan follow IRM's recommendations from the 2016-2018 mid-term report, to apply greater efforts toward fighting corruption, secure plurality of expression and liberalize the television industry.⁴

This action plan is more specific and relevant than the previous one, following a recommendation from the IRM's 2016-2018 mid-term report.⁵ There is an opportunity to streamline the commitment text to evaluate the potential for results and completion. Most commitments in this action plan were estimated to have minor potential impact, except for three modest commitments. If the full scope of commitments' recommended activities had been presented in the action plan, they may have been expected to have a greater potential impact. The description of most commitments could profit from more comprehensive detail about the entire scope of planned activities, the activities that are listed are clearly defined. Therefore, 9 of the 10 commitments are specific enough to be verifiable. Commitment 8 is not directly related to open government values, since it does not include a public facing element. The remaining 9 commitments aim to primarily address access to information and civic participation.

The themes in the second action plan address civil society concerns as noted in the various public consultations during 2017 and 2018. The plan addresses national challenges, such as combating corruption and promoting public integrity. In pursuing a "more open, participatory and inclusive governance"⁶, the second action plan follows the country's National Development Plan (PND 2016-2020)⁷, strategically focused on strengthening the quality of institutions and governance.⁸ Côte d'Ivoire is involved in other international initiatives aligned with the action plan, such as the World Bank's Doing Business program, the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the United States (MCC), the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), the African Peer Review Mechanism of the African Union (MAEP), the African Growth Opportunities Act (AGOA), and received support from the Open Government Support Program in Francophone Africa (#PAGOF).

Level of completion and early results

At the end of the implementation phase, eight out of ten commitments were fully or substantially completed, a stronger completion rate than in the first action plan. The Technical Committee and the Civil Society Platform were more vigilant in monitoring commitment progress in the second plan, and met with government commitment carriers in April 2019, August and September 2020, which helped co-implementers to recognize challenges and fuel progress.⁹

The health crisis caused by COVID-19 disrupted OGP activities from March 2020 and delayed several actions, specifically the regional awareness-raising campaigns and meetings. According to the government self-assessment, the OGP Technical Committee was forced to move face-to-face public consultations online and affected modifications to support teleworking and online meetings between stakeholders. As detailed in the self-assessment, the takeaway from these changes is the need to support new ways to cooperate with communications strategies.¹⁰

This action plan allowed the Ministry in charge of the State Budget to significantly improve transparency around public budgets and citizen involvement in defining expenses at the local level (commitments 1, 2, and 6).

The remaining commitments made important but incremental progress in their respective policy domains. For example, through commitments 3 and 5, steered by the High Authority for Good Governance, high-ranking public officials have a greater awareness of their obligations to disclose their assets and protections for whistleblowers who uncover assets that were illegally acquired. Awareness-raising is a promising first step towards building the legal, regulatory, and cultural framework to tackle public corruption. The Executive Management of Decentralization and Local Development modestly improved anti-corruption activities by developing anti-racketeering committees (commitment 7).

The Ministry of Communication improved the right to information and plurality of expression by liberalizing the audiovisual landscape, with new public and private channels broadcasting in the country (commitment 10). It marginally improved access to open data by improving, updating and boosting awareness about the government's website (commitment 9). This is essential but it does not guarantee more citizen involvement in public affairs or use of published information. Future commitments to information disclosure should study mechanisms that advance citizen uptake and use of information.

The next section (Section A) analyzes three commitments with notable early open government results (commitments 1, 2, 6). The following section (Section B) evaluates completion levels for the remaining commitments in the action plan.

¹ "Open Government Partnership: Articles of Governance," OGP, June 2012 (Updated March 2014 and April 2015), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGP_Articles-Gov_Apr-21-2015.pdf.

² "IRM Procedures Manual," OGP, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>

³ Côte d'Ivoire Action Plan 2018-2020, <https://bit.ly/2HmhXGG>, accessed 10 March 2020.

⁴ IRM Côte d'Ivoire Mid-Term Report 2016-2018, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-mid-term-irm-report-2016-2018-year-1/>

⁵ IRM Côte d'Ivoire Mid-Term Report, 2016-2018, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-mid-term-irm-report-2016-2018-year-1/>

⁶ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report of action plan, 2018-2020

⁷ Plan National de Développement (PND) 2016-2020, Ministère du Plan et du Développement, http://www.gcpnd.gouv.ci/fichier/doc/TOME2_compresse.pdf

⁸ Côte d'Ivoire Action Plan, 2018-2020

⁹ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report, Action Plan 2018-2020

¹⁰ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-Term Self-Assessment Report, Action Plan 2018-2020

A. Commitments with early results

1. Develop and publish a citizen's budget as of 2019

Commitment description as it appears in the action plan:

"The citizen's budget is a document which aims to briefly show and make easily accessible to the public, data and information in the state budget. This commitment ensures the production and publication of the simplified budget version, each year, with illustrations (pictures)."

Milestones:

1. Develop 2019 Citizen's Budget
2. Put on line 2019 Citizen's Budget
3. Develop 2020 Citizen's Budget
4. Put on line 2020 Citizen's Budget"

Lead implementing agency/actor: Ministry delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of Budget and State's Portfolio / Civil society organizations

Start Date: June 2019

End Date: June 2020

Editorial note: For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's 2018-2020 action plan: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |

Context and design

A significant number of documents relating to the state budget are already available to the public, especially on the Ministry of Budget website; however, they are difficult for most of the population to use and understand. Limited budget literacy and the ability to access budget documents inhibits active participation from citizens in the development and follow-up of public budgets.¹

Indeed, expert organizations consider budget transparency in Côte d'Ivoire remains low. In 2019, the country ranked 83rd out of 117 in the Open Budget Survey, conducted by the International Budget Partnership², with an overall score of 34 points out of 100. Experts interviewed by the IRM researcher stated that, before 2019, the government only shared budget information through press

conferences and complex technical documents: 5 out of 8 key budget documents were being published, according to the International Budget Partnership, with varying degrees of quality and accessibility (some, like pre-budget statements and mid-year reviews, were solely for internal use or published late).³ Civil society actors also noted the challenges of “budget illiteracy”, or the population’s limited capacity to understand budget documents. As a result, the population could not evaluate government priorities leading the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the budget, and participation in the budget cycle was very limited.⁴

This commitment aimed to properly inform the population about the state’s budget process through a Citizens’ Budget, a shorter version of the authorized budget, which is easy-to-understand and illustrated.⁵ The commitment sought to produce and release a Citizens’ Budget for 2019 and 2020.⁶ As recorded in the action plan, activities could be quickly confirmed by estimating whether the 2019 and 2020 citizens’ budgets were drafted and published on the General Directorate of Budget and Finance website. The commitment is relevant to the OGP value of access to information, facilitating access to budget information by making this data more accessible and comprehensible to the public.

This commitment is considered to have a modest potential impact on access to budget information, provided that publication becomes routine government practice past 2020. While not explicitly outlined in the commitment text, civil society will play a role in drafting the Citizens’ Budget; this is a notable entry point for civil society involvement in budget transparency and processes. One civil society representative, who was interviewed by the IRM researcher, concurred that the Citizens’ Budget could help the general public to understand how budgets are drafted and implemented.⁷

However, a civil society representative also noted that this commitment fails to provide citizens with the opportunity to participate in the budget process, only releasing information when the budget is finalized.⁸ There were no opportunities for offline publishing or dissemination the Citizens’ Budget in rural communities were absent; this reduces the commitment’s scope as internet access is under 50% nationwide.⁹

Early results

The commitment was fully implemented. The first Citizens’ Budget, a simplified version of the State Budget with accessible language and illustrations, was uploaded to the Ministry of the Budget’s website in May 2019, in PDF format.¹⁰ Similar documents for 2019, 2020 and 2021 were drafted and uploaded.¹¹

In terms of content, the document focuses on the budget approved by the Parliament, describes the budget cycle in detail and presents context (objectives, definitions and supporting legal texts, revenue collection and economic hypothesis, analysis of expenditures, principal investments anticipated by sectors and projects, etc.). The 2020 version of the Citizens’ Budget reveals that the government has transitioned from a “means budget” (which emphasizes expenses incurred) to a “programme budget” (objectives with well-defined results to be obtained).

Government representatives from the Technical Committee concluded that the Citizens’ Budget was collaborative, with frequent stakeholder meetings, including civil society representatives. Civil society input was considered and the International Budget Partnership methodological guide was used as reference.¹² In terms of adding to the overall purpose of securing citizen participation in public affairs, government officials reported that the Citizens’ Budget had facilitated understanding and ownership of the budget by diverse segments of the population.¹³

The government organized various distribution activities, beginning with publication of the 2019 Citizens’ Budget on April 30, 2019, in the presence of the Minister in charge of the Budget and State’s Portfolio. In July 2019, an information campaign was held in five regional cities and towns, as well as discussions with civil society and private sector actors. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, distribution activities were carried out through print, radio and television broadcast, and an animated film that explained the budget cycle and Citizens’ Budget.¹⁴

In summary, this commitment resulted in major change with budget transparency, through the yearly publication of a Citizens' Budget. The IRM considers the publication of Citizens' Budget a success, as previously no comprehensive budget was accessible to the wider population. Additionally, government consultation with civil society about the content of the documents signifies a new commitment between state actors entrusted with budget process and civil society. The value of television, radio and online outreach was also crucial to raise awareness and control of the document.

Nevertheless, civil society representatives observed that there could have been more comprehensive consultation earlier in the Citizens' Budget drafting process. Government representatives stated that the 2019 and 2020 Citizens' Budgets followed the International Budget Partnership's recommended methodology. They also communicated with PSCI-PGO members during several working sessions and regular meetings, to reach consensus on its content.¹⁵ Nevertheless, civil society representatives reported that they had only received the Citizens' Budget in a workshop after it had been refined by public administration.¹⁶

It is also important to note that the Citizens' Budget is issued following approval of the state budget.¹⁷ Therefore, while it affords transparency of the budget and process, the document fails to encourage public participation in the process. Civil society also saw that public use of the Citizens' Budget could be improved by more inclusive communication.¹⁸ According to this interviewee, along with distribution efforts, the decentralized administration should arrange more workshops or informative seminars and training sessions in the regions. Civic organizations should also be supported in public distribution of the Citizens' Budget.¹⁹

Next steps

The Citizens' Budget is a positive step toward budget transparency. To continue building on this success, the IRM offers the following recommendations:

- Regarding the process, the government should **involve civil society from the first stages of developing Citizens' Budgets** to determine which information is most useful and how it should be presented, as advised by the International Budget Partnership.²⁰
- To communicate effectively, the Citizens' Budget should be **presented in the official languages of the country, distributed with the authorized budget and distributed in a timely manner**.²¹ Distribution projects should involve citizens who lack internet access with budget newsletters on paper or with awareness activities, such as town hall meetings or media campaigns. One journalist who was interviewed by the IRM researcher suggested that the government should involve community opinion leaders.²²
- Beyond transparency, the government could **improve public accountability and participatory budgeting** throughout the budget cycle, offering tangible opportunities for citizens to study the budget or collaborate with policymakers on monitoring activities to hold them accountable. Côte d'Ivoire can study the Principles of Public Participation in Fiscal Policies, developed by the Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency²³ as well as international examples.²⁴ Good practices and innovative public involvement initiatives in budget creation include advisory committees and public consultations.

¹ Côte d'Ivoire Action Plan, 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-2018-2020/>.

² Open Budget Survey 2019: Côte d'Ivoire, International Budget Partnership website, <https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2019/cote-divoire>

³ Open Budget Survey 2019: Côte d'Ivoire, International Budget Partnership website, <https://www.internationalbudget.org/open-budget-survey/country-results/2019/cote-divoire> and interviews through phone calls and e-mail exchanges by the IRM researcher to representatives of a civil society organization involved in governance and transparency issues, and members of the civil society platform set up during the OGP process (PSCI-PGO), in February and March 2019.

⁴ IRM Action Plan Review: Côte d'Ivoire action plan 2020-22.

⁵ Côte d'Ivoire Action Plan, 2018-2020.

⁶ Côte d'Ivoire Action Plan 2018-2020.

⁷ Civil Society representative, phone exchange on July 24, 2019.

⁸ Interview with Civil society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10, 2019 and March 30, 2019.

⁹ “Number of internet users in selected countries in Africa as of March 2019, by country (in millions)”, Statista, website, June 6, 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/505883/number-of-internet-users-in-african-countries/> ; Côte d’Ivoire, Population Data, website, December 13, 2018, <https://www.populationdata.net/pays/cote-divoire/> ; “ICoast eyes better online access with satellite broadband”, Phys.org, website, September 24, 2018, <https://phys.org/news/2018-09-icoast-eyes-online-access-satellite.html>

¹⁰ “Presentation ceremony of the 2019 Citizen Budget”, General Directorate of Budget and Finance, website, April 30, 2019, <http://dgbf.gouv.ci/ceremonie-de-presentation-du-budget-citoyen-2019/>

¹¹ Citizen budgets available at the Ministry of the Budget and State’s Portfolio for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

2019: www.budget.gouv.ci/doc/BUDGET_CITOYEN_2019.pdf ;

2020: http://budget.gouv.ci/uploads/docs/Budget%20Citoyen_2020_30-04-20.pdf ;

2021: www.budget.gouv.ci/doc/Budget_Citoyen_2021_VERSIONF.pdf

¹² Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

¹³ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

¹⁴ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021. Regarding distribution, a general explanation of the Citizen Budget is available at: <http://budget.gouv.ci/echos-budget.html> and a video (uploaded on 3 May 2021): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUs3usgdN7g&t=7s>.

¹⁵ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

¹⁶ Civil society representatives, e-mail communication on May 11, 2021.

¹⁷ Civil society representatives, e-mail communication on May 11, 2021.

¹⁸ Civil society representatives, e-mail communication on May 11, 2021.

¹⁹ Civil society representatives, e-mail communication on May 11, 2021.

²⁰ <https://www.internationalbudget.org/publications/citizens-budgets/>

²¹ The Power Of Making It Simple: A Government Guide To Developing Citizens’ Budgets, International Budget Partnership, April 2012: <https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/Citizen-Budget-Guide.pdf>

²² Journalist and state official, governance and transparency expert, phone and e-mail exchanges in March 2019.

²³ https://www.fiscaltransparency.net/pp_principles/

²⁴ <http://guide.fiscaltransparency.net/international-examples-aligned-to-gifts-public-participation-principles/>

2. Build 80 community preschools through community or Participative Decentralized Development approach

Commitment description as it appears in the action plan:

"Building of 80 community preschools over 2018-2020 period through community or Participative Decentralized Development approach (DDP). This approach empowers the target community once financial resources are transferred to it for the achievement of building or classroom rehabilitation under a Training/Action process;"

Milestones:

1. Grass-root management training for communities (financial management, participative monitoring and assessment, service and maintenance of infrastructures and equipment, procurement).
2. Construction of 80 community kindergartens facilities in rural areas.
3. Establishing of management committees (COGES).
4. Basic and continued training of community preschool teachers.
5. Establishing of a monitoring system to help communities to ensure a quality preschool education by the Ministry."
6. Recruitment of community teachers supported by the community. For the full text of this commitment*

***Editorial Note:** the IRM researcher added milestone 6 to reflect the "additional information" of the commitment as indicated in the action plan. See Côte d'Ivoire's 2018-2020 action plan for the full commitment text: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: Project Management Unit for the Improvement of Educational Services (PAPSE) / Club of mothers of girl students (CMEF).

Start Date: July 2018

End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |

Context and design

Since 2011, Côte d'Ivoire's educational system has seen rapid expansion through increased access to schooling in underserved areas. However, preschool attendance is relatively low (8% in 2016) and is typically concentrated in urban areas, although preschool has had positive effects on children's development and their opportunities to later complete compulsory education.¹ The root causes of this issue involve both supply and demand. Civil society representatives interviewed by the IRM

researcher conceded that low preschool rates in rural areas is due to a shortage of centres and their distance from the families' homes. Overall, communities are disconnected from the educational sphere and school administration.²

In 2017, the government of Côte d'Ivoire approved a ten-year Education and Training Sector Plan endorsed by diverse development partners.³ Among other objectives, the plan would increase access to preschool by 25% by 2025 and upgrade centres to minimum standards, particularly in rural communities. The plan seeks to encourage and promote integrated child development from 0 to 6 years by training families and communities "to ensure the operation and management of the centre(s) through an agreement between the state, communities and structures."⁴ In July 2018, the Ministry of Education launched the Project Management Unit for the Improvement of Educational Services (PAPSE)⁵, supported by the World Bank through the Global Partnership for Education and UNICEF, to strengthen the role of rural communities in the formation and supervision of preschools and promote instructional environment in primary schools in regions with the lowest school attendance.⁶

Supported by these national priorities, the commitment intended to build 80 community preschools in rural areas over two years, following a Participative Decentralized Development approach.⁷ This approach implies the transfer of financial resources from the state, so each local community is responsible for building or renovating facilities and for recruiting teachers and personnel.

The commitment is specific enough to be verifiable, although certain elements were not entirely clear under the action plan. In particular, there was a lack of indicators concerning the role and composition of school management committees (COGES) and the grass-roots administrative training for communities.

With regard to open government values, the commitment is relevant to civic participation as it involves community members in decision-making and rollout of local initiatives in education. However, civil society representatives unanimously agreed that building a number of local pre-schools would only partially address the disparity between rural and urban rates of schooling. Further work is required to facilitate access and explain the benefits of taking children to preschool, especially since preschool (before the age of 6) is not mandatory in Côte d'Ivoire.⁸ Even so, civil society representatives expressed that the commitment, and the PAPSE project, could empower beneficiary communities and enhance participation in local school administration.⁹ This commitment is also relevant to public accountability, as citizens are involved in monitoring education delivery.

This commitment is expected to have a moderate potential impact on civic participation and accountability of education service delivery in rural areas. As requested by rural communities and funded by the World Bank, this commitment is backed by local ownership and financial support to guarantee success. Moreover, establishing local committees for each school would ensure direct channel for communities to oversee the quality of construction and education services. Engagement between teachers, parents, and others will be bolstered by continuous training. Therefore, this commitment offers a clear lens on open government, as parents will be able to monitor and influence education services. This commitment would be potentially transformative if it represented a nation-wide program to promote participatory monitoring and expand early education access.

Early results

Level of completion of activities

All activities are concluded and the commitment is fulfilled.¹⁰ With additional donations, the timeline was re-examined and 117 community preschools with two classes each were built, instead of the targeted 80 (milestone 2).¹¹ A School Management Committee (COGES) was established or revitalized (milestone 3) for each centre, as well as Club of mothers of girl students (CMEF).¹² During the 2019-2020 school year, 110 centres were up and running.¹³ According to a representative from the ministry for education, COGES received training in capacity-building before each phase of the project (milestone 1).¹⁴

In terms of recruitment, 420 non-civil servant preschool supervisors were selected and paid by the School Management Committees (COGES) and underwent initial training (milestones 4 and 6). COGES are responsible for disbursing monthly salaries for community teachers (milestone 6).¹⁵ In the absence of specific tools, government monitoring is handled with community control over payment to educators and assistants (milestone 5). The contracts for educators and preschool assistants are signed by COGES and educators. This means that educators are accountable to COGES, which oversees the quality of education services.¹⁶

According to a Ministry of Education representative, each project phase was documented (dossier of instruction phase, validation, grant approval to the COGES, financing and reception of the buildings, and training reports to said committees).¹⁷ However, the IRM researcher did not receive these primary documents for review. General documents on PAPSE on their website, but reports need to be uploaded.¹⁸ A civil society member of the OGP Technical Committee stated that they had not seen any documentation of this reform, but instead received assurances that implementation was underway. The IRM recommends that documented evidence for this commitment be more readily available to civil society and the public.

School management committees (COGES) and community involvement

According to government officials, the plan reached rural and remote communities and focused on populations as its center. At the outset, considering the predetermined regions,¹⁹ the communities expressed concerns to the Ministry of National Education about access to preschool education; the Ministry subsequently determined the locations for the new schools.²⁰

Management committees (COGES) were formed or revitalized for each school. COGES include parent and teacher representatives, with the President of the Regional Council or the Mayor as chair. They hold regular meetings at the school.²¹ In each COGES, the Bureau is responsible for setting up public bids to select construction companies. COGES Bureaus took responsibility signing contracts and payments to companies selected to build the new schools. Works were monitored by the Technical Implementation Committee, within the COGES Bureau, with the support of a civil engineering technician from PAPSE. Once finished, the building was received by COGES with the support of the civil engineering technician and local and educational authorities.

COGES are a strong entry point for public participation in the education sector, since parents and teachers are members. COGES exercise significant autonomy and play a role in contracting, construction, staffing, salaries, and monitoring quality. Similarly, COGES received training in financial management, participative monitoring and assessment, service and maintenance of infrastructures and equipment, and procurement. However, one civil society interviewee was not able to confirm the quality of public participation, owing to a lack of information.²² Based on government interviews and available technical documents, the IRM concluded that this commitment resulted in a major opening of government. Specifically, COGES made it possible for parents to be involved in monitoring school construction and quality of education. However, the IRM recommends that the Ministry of National Education inform and involve civil society, by issuing more technical and monitoring documents on the project.

Next steps

Implementation of this commitment has improved education service with greater community oversight and ownership of preschools. The government has confirmed that it would assume the project financially after 2023 (until World Bank funds are ensured), with various options under review.²³ To continue this successful reform, the IRM recommends

- **Increased project transparency by updating the PAPSE website** with regular reports and open up public information about educational statistics.

- When following a participatory decentralized development approach, **define a clear set of responsibilities for the COGES and opportunities for public involvement.**
- **Supplement new schools and COGES with public awareness campaigns** that will encourage parents and communities to register children in preschool.
- Use **OGP action plans as an opportunity to increase the ambition and broaden the scope of pre-existing reforms** and development strategies, such as the Education and Training Sector Plan. Indeed, the OGP process can be a knowledge-sharing platform to identify best implementation practices, connect with technical experts, and build political will where needed.

¹ Plan Sectoriel Education/Formation 2016-2025, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (avril 2017), p. 17: https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/plan_sectoriel_de_education_-_cote_divoire.pdf. The OGP 2018-20 action plan reports preschool rates of 5% in rural areas and 30% in urban areas.

² Civil Society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10 and March 30, 2019.

³ See Global Partnership for Education <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/cote-divoire>, viewed February 19, 2020.

⁴ Plan Sectoriel Education/Formation 2016-2025, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (avril 2017), p. 37-38.

⁵ PAPSE website: <https://papse.ci/>

⁶ Annex 4, Implementation report of the Preschool Component of PAPSE - UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire for the first half of 2020. See also PAPSE website: <https://papse.ci/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Newsletter-PAPSE-N%C2%B000.pdf>

⁷ <https://papse.ci/le-modele-ddp-developpement-decentralise-participatif/>

⁸ Statistical Analysis Report of the Ivorian Educational System, of National Education, Teaching Technical and Vocational Training, http://men-dpes.org/FILES/pdf/stats/rapports/rap_ana_20162017.pdf

⁹ Civil Society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10 and March 30, 2019.

¹⁰ Representative(s) of the Ministry in charge of Education, working on PAPSE (Projet d'Amélioration des Prestations des Services Educatifs), e-mail communication sent by the Technical Committee on April 27, 2021

¹¹ The following departments/regions are benefiting from PAPSE: Bouana, Boundiali, Ferkessedougou, Korhogo, Mankono, Odiénne. See <https://papse.ci/le-papse-en-chiffres/>. They are also mentioned in Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020 and Annex 4 Implementation report of the Preschool Component of PAPSE - UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire for the first half of 2020.

¹² Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan, 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-self-assessment-2018-2020/>.

¹³ During the 2019-2020 school year, 7,764 students (51% female) attended the new preschool centres. Additionally, children who attended these centres experienced improved health through administration of de-wormers and vitamin supplements and improved school hygiene. See Annex 4, Implementation report of the Preschool Component of PAPSE - UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire for the first half of 2020, and Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of the 2018-2020 action plan.

¹⁴ Representative(s) of the Ministry in charge of Education, working on PAPSE (Projet d'Amélioration des Prestations des Services Educatifs), e-mail communication sent by the Technical Committee on April 27, 2021

¹⁵ Annex 3, email specifying the modalities and guarantees of support for Teachers, Management Unit of the PAPSE, Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

¹⁶ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou rodol, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021. According to them, "It has happened that some communities discontinue their relation with a teacher or assistant because of dissatisfaction with the results."

¹⁷ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

¹⁸ A civil society representative reported to have received a report, but without the meeting minutes, documents or any information on training grass-roots management, training communities and how communities were involved in the decision-making process. Email communication from May 11, 2021.

¹⁹ According to the Implementation report of the Preschool Component of PAPSE - UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire for the first half of 2020 (Annex 4 of End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020), the regions had been established based on low levels of school attendance.

²⁰ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

²¹ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

²² Civil society representative, e-mail communication on May 11, 2021.

²³ Annex 3, Email specifying modalities and guarantees of support for Teachers, Management Unit of the PAPSE, Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of 2018-2020 action plan. In the PAPSE project, the next stages involve working on financial viability by including the Club of mothers of girl students (CMEF) in activities to generate revenues for

preschools, as well as enhancing community abilities to address the needs of children and improve monitoring with the expertise of UNICEF.

6. Promote participative democracy in the Ivorian collectivities

Commitment description as it appears in the action plan:

"The purpose of this commitment is to:

- Encourage local authorities to practice participatory budget
- Improve governance at local level
- Stimulate populations' participation in decision-making"

Milestones:

1. DGDDL will carry out awareness raising and capacity building actions with umbrella collectivities, local elected representatives and civil society.
2. Capitalization of pioneer collectivities acquired know-how through field survey
3. Accompanying collectivities that have adopted PB
4. Preparation of a PB guide for good practices
5. Rewarding best practices"

Editorial note: For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's 2018-2020 action plan: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: Executive Management of Decentralization and Local Development / National and local civil society organizations; Délégation Fondation Akwaba

Start Date: June 2018
End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | |

Context and design

Local budgets in Côte d'Ivoire are generally prepared by elected representatives and advisors without any public input. The criteria and limitations that influence political decisions are rarely disclosed to the public. The local populations as well as local authorities receive limited information about the budget cycle from preparation, to implementation, to monitoring and assessment. According to the 2017 Open Budget Survey, at the time this commitment was planned, Côte d'Ivoire

scored 0 out of 100 in providing its citizens with opportunities to engage in budget processes. There were few experiences in participatory budgeting, but communities in general were not included in local budget monitoring and evaluation. Along with a dearth of accessible government data, civil society experts¹ blamed the high rate of budget illiteracy for the low public participation in public affairs.²

One of the first experiences with participatory budgets in 2014 was the CITI program supported by USAID in the cities of Korhogo, Duekoue, Divo, Bouake, Abobo and Yopougon.³ There was also a commitment included in the first OGP action plan to direct participatory budgeting in five communes (commitment 14). Within this commitment, government offered capacity-building sessions to 300 opinion leaders and 50 facilitators on social accountability tools, facilitation techniques, and prioritization of community projects.⁴ Beyond the objective, citizens in ten municipalities began to debate and decide on public policy priorities and to manage part of their local authority budget.⁵ However, the absence of mandatory legal requirements created significant obstacles to the expansion of this pilot project.

The commitment in this action plan encourages local authorities to practice participatory budgeting, improving governance and citizen participation in public decision-making. This is combined with Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan 2016-2020. The principal activities cover awareness-raising and capacity building with local elected representatives, umbrella groups/communities and civil society, capitalizing on the experience of pioneer communities through field surveys, supporting participatory budgeting processes, preparing a guide on the topic and rewarding best practices. Overall, this commitment is verifiable, but it could benefit from more specific objectives and milestones. There are important elements that remain unclear: how many communities will introduce participatory budgeting and how will it be enforced, what type and how many awareness-raising and capacity-building actions will be carried out, who are the pioneer communities and how do we benefit from their experience, and how will best practices be rewarded?

Despite a lack of specificity, this commitment is relevant to the values of access to information and civic participation, as it would present updated budgetary information and opportunities for citizens to be involved in public policy and local decision-making. By encouraging local governments to practice participatory budgeting, the potential impact is considered as moderate. It cannot be qualified as transformative, since it requires more detailed milestones and, civil society representatives that were consulted by the IRM researcher conceded that participatory budget mechanisms at the local level would require a national law to support widespread implementation.⁶

Early results

All but two of the planned activities were completed by the end of implementation.⁷ For training sessions (milestone 1), two workshops were organized in 2019 and in 2020 (although the activity was supposed to finish in September 2019) about the theory and practical steps of participatory budgeting. The first session was held in Abidjan from April 1-9, 2019, with 15 participants including local representatives, umbrella territorial communities and civil society organizations, primarily from La Mé. There was another session in Jacqueville from May 9 to 17 2020, attended by 16 government employees and civil society representatives, mainly from the Grands-Ponts and Agnèby-Tiassa Regions.⁸ Following these sessions, up to seven communities expressed political will to introduce participatory budgeting and the respective municipal councils debated the issue.⁹

Additionally, several communes implementing participatory budgeting were supported by the General Directorate for Decentralization and Local Development (DGDDL) (milestone 3). The number of communities and style of support were not described in detail, but a DGDDL member explained that training was provided to local officials and civil society representatives. DGDDL has followed and evaluated NGO pilot programmes since 2017, respectively in 6 communes in Iffou and Moronou and in 10 regional capital cities.¹⁰ A field survey (milestone 2) organized between April and June 2020 to

evaluate and capitalize the experience of pioneer communes practicing participatory budgeting, although the details and results of this survey were not submitted to the IRM researcher.

There is no evidence of the participatory budgeting guide (milestone 4), although the government self-assessment stated that it was underway. The DGDDL representative acknowledged that it had been postponed no sufficient feedback had been collected.¹¹ For rewarding best practices in participatory budgeting (milestone 5), this activity was not initiated due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²

In conclusion, the commitment's early results can be qualified as marginal. A shortage of national legal requirements and regulatory framework inhibited participatory budgeting from evolving as common practice among local authorities. However, according to a civil society representative interviewed, communities in the pilot areas were able "to take part in the preparation, decision-making process, implementation and follow-up of their local budget" in several communes and cities.¹³

Participatory budgeting, which was introduced as the first action plan, is a promising area in Côte d'Ivoire's open government reforms. The IRM researcher supports its continuation in the 3rd action plan, with a more concrete commitment that is precise and measurable, with clear, verifiable objectives and milestones to secure implementation. Civil society representatives determined that a legal framework would be required for mandatory participatory budgeting concerning local governments as well as producing a practical guide to facilitate citizen participation around budget concerns. Both of these demands are in commitment 1 of the 2020-2022 action plan, which prioritizes adoption of legal texts and guides to standardize and develop participatory budgeting at the community level. For the most recent recommendations on how to advance open government through participatory budgeting, see Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 Action Plan Review.¹⁴

¹ Civil society representative, e-mail exchanges in March 2019.

² Civil society representative, e-mail exchanges in March 2019.

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fy6blqirR_s, accessed February 17, 2020.

⁴ IRM Côte d'Ivoire End-of-Term Report 2016–2018, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Cote-dIvoire_EOTR_2016-2018_EN.pdf

⁵ IRM Côte d'Ivoire End-of-Term Report 2016–2018, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Cote-dIvoire_EOTR_2016-2018_EN.pdf

⁶ Civil society representative, email communication on May 11, 2021.

⁷ Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

⁸ Reports from capacity-building sessions, April 1-9, 2019 and May 9-17, 2020, sent by the OGP focal point to IRM research. Each session had 15 participants, 9 from government and 6 from civil society organizations.

⁹ 7 communes followed participatory budgeting, according to the Representative(s) of Direction Générale de la Décentralisation et du Développement Local, ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité, e-mail communication sent by the Technical Committee on April 27, 2021. The IRM researcher was provided with 4 letters of adhesion and deliberation programmes from the Mayors of Oumé, Dabou, Tiassalé and Agou, dated April and June 2019.

¹⁰ Representative(s) of Direction Générale de la Décentralisation et du Développement Local, ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité, e-mail communication sent by the Technical Committee on April 27, 2021. The evidence provided to the IRM researcher included a field visit assignment in February 2020 to Davo and Gagnoa and the intermediary evaluation report of the project "promoting participatory budgeting" in Abengourou, Bondoukou, Daloa, Divo, Duekoué, Ferkessedougou, Gagnoa, Korhogo, Man, et Yamoussoukro. Another document provided was the front page of the evaluation of the participatory budgeting experience from 2017 to 2019, in 6 communes in the regions of Iffou and Moronou.

¹¹ The IRM concludes that there was no progress with regard to the participatory budgeting guide, especially since it was included in the next action plan.

¹² Côte d'Ivoire Self-assessment report of action plan 2018-20 and Mrs. Mariama Koné, Government representative and Chair of the Technical Committee, and Mrs. Chantal Angoua and Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, contacts at the CT-OGP, interviewed by the IRM researcher by phone, April 16, 2021.

¹³ Civil society representative, email communication on May 11, 2021.

¹⁴ Independent Reporting Mechanism. Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 Action Plan Review. June 2021.

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-review-2020-2022-for-public-comment/>

B. Commitment Completion

3. Adopt and popularize a law on the protection of those reporting acts of corruption and related offenses

Commitment description as it appears in the action plan:

"The High Authority for Good Governance undertakes to popularize the law related to the protection of whistleblowers after its adoption. The Commitment consists in: implementing the law, informing the population on guarantees given by the State and specific arrangements for protecting whistleblowers, and getting the population to report acts of corruption and related offenses."

Milestones:

- "1. Civil society organizations training on law relating to witnesses and whistleblowers' protection and on the commitment of the High Authority for Good Governance
2. Law outreach activities with the justice system stakeholders: Magistrates, police, gendarmerie
3. Law outreach activities with Kings and Traditional Chiefs
4. Law outreach activities with religious communities
5. Logistical and financial support from civil society organizations and deployment in the field
6. Commitment roll-out workshop"

Editorial note: For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: High Authority for Good Governance (HABG) / Civil society organizations

Start Date: January 2019

End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | not assessed | | | | |

Context and design

The Afrobarometer report from October 2017¹ revealed that 68% of Ivorians fear retaliation or negative consequences if they report any corrupt acts they may have witnessed. A perceived protection for whistleblowers in Côte d'Ivoire has discouraged citizens from aiding in the fight

against corruption. Whistleblowers need information about procedures for denouncing acts of corruption and are exposed to numerous dangers: arbitrary arrests or abuse by authorities were reported², as well as threats and reprisals from offenders.

In this setting, the purpose of this commitment was to build awareness of the Whistleblower Protection Act in Côte d'Ivoire and legal provisions that protect citizens from retaliations, threats and coercion from perpetrators. The commitment milestones incorporated training for civil society organizations in whistleblower protection and outreach with justice system stakeholders, Kings, traditional chiefs, and religious communities, support to organizations in the field and a closing workshop.

The milestones are verifiable, but need more information about the number of CSOs to be trained, the nature of outreach activities, and which and how many stakeholders are involved in the commitment roll-out. Moreover, it is unclear how logistical and financial support from civil society organizations is organized and the related responsibilities.

The commitment is relevant to access to information. Through awareness-raising and outreach activities, the government would further transparency around legal guarantees for protecting the anonymity and safety of whistleblowers. Training, along with logistical and financial support to CSO could benefit enforcement and implementation of the law. However, with limited details of the respective milestones, it is uncertain how the commitment could foster civic participation or public accountability.

Even if the commitment encourages more citizens to denounce corruption, its potential impact remains minor as it only concerns awareness-raising activities for a law that was adopted at the end of 2018.³ Moreover, according to the Civil Society Platform for OGP (PSCI-PGO), no clear strategy exists to protect whistleblowers, which limits commitment's potential impact.

Completion

This commitment is considered as substantially completed. According to the self-assessment report, most of the training took place during the implementation period; some began in mid-2018. In total, activities covered 23 out of 31 total regions. HABG supervised training for more than 500 civil society organizations and held education campaigns about the law for kings and traditional leaders. Only awareness-raising activities for legal system actors -magistrates, police, gendarmerie- were not achieved.⁴

HABG also partnered with the principal religious groups to set a framework for collaboration the HABG and religious denominations in the fight against corruption.⁵ The government self-assessment features a new milestone for establishment of a national whistleblower protection office, provided for by the whistleblower law (articles 5 and 6).⁶ The Council of Ministers adopted the relevant decree on December 8, 2020.⁷

Admirably, the government's self-assessment report details the results of dissemination activities beyond those envisioned in the commitment text. For example, awareness-raising campaigns and training resulted in 23 local integrity committees established by civil society organizations in each area. These committees include local civil society stakeholders (union of transporters, retailers, youth and women organizations, traditional and religious leaders, etc.) who are involved in awareness-raising, monitoring and/or education about acts of corruption. The members are volunteers but the HABG supports these committees with materials and equipment such as computers, internet kits, megaphones, t-shirts and campaign materials.⁸

Awareness-raising is essential to guarantee that potential whistleblowers are aware of their legal rights and protections from the start. However, fully implementing the law dictates forceful government regulations and institutions with a confirmed track record of protecting identities and investigating reports of corruption. To increase the ambition of this reform in future iterations, the

government should seek to include activities beyond awareness-raising activities to those that strengthen regulations and institutions.

¹ “Côte d’Ivoire Enquête] Corruption, un indomptable monstre”, December 18, 2018, Sériba Koné, Le Point Sur, website, <http://lepointsur.com/cote-divoire-enquete-corruption-un-indomptable-monstre/>

² Ibid

³ Journal Officiel, November 12, 2018, Abidjan.net website, <http://www.abidjan.net/JO/JO/41112018.asp> and <https://loidici.biz/2018/12/15/chapitre-2-organe-de-protection/lois-article-par-article/plus-de-textes-de-lois/protection-temoins/>

⁴ Côte d’Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-self-assessment-2018-2020/> .

⁵ Côte d’Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

⁶ <https://loidici.biz/2018/12/15/chapitre-2-organe-de-protection/lois-article-par-article/plus-de-textes-de-lois/protection-temoins/>

⁷ Côte d’Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

⁸ Côte d’Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

4. Develop a national integrity strategy with fight against corruption references of indicators

Commitment description

"The High Authority for Good Governance undertakes to prepare a national strategy paper which shall be used by public and private officials as reference in the area of public integrity."

Milestones:

- "1. Preparation and validation of the country integrity strategy paper
2. Implementation of the country integrity strategy"

Editorial note: For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: High Authority for Good Governance (HABG) / NGO Social Justice, NGO Movement for the Fight Against Injustice in Côte d'Ivoire

Start Date: June 2018

End Date: December 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | Not assessed | | | | |

Context and design

Transparency International's 2013-2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) reports that Côte d'Ivoire moved from 27 points to 35 points in 2018. This could be partly attributed to public integrity reforms undertaken since 2013, including adoption of an anti-corruption decree and new anti-corruption bodies –the Brigade for the Fight Against Corruption and the High Authority for Good Governance.¹ The High Authority for Good Governance (HABG) is leading the fight against corruption. One of its missions is to develop a strategic plan with indicators to assess the country's anti-corruption achievements.²

This commitment intends to provide a national strategy for use by public and private officials as reference in public integrity. According to the action plan, the strategy would cover corruption complaints, conflicts of interest, compliance by public sector officials to values, principles, and ethical standards that protect the public interest from private interests. One government representative explained to the IRM researcher that the strategy has a pedagogical purpose, empowering citizens to identify acts of corruption and define corruption in each administrative service.³

As written in the action plan, the milestones can be verified. However, more detail is required about the content of the draft strategy and how it would be developed and applied to combating corruption. This commitment is relevant to access to information, as the strategy will be shared with the public. If HABG involves civil society in developing strategies, this commitment might prove relevant to civic participation. The action plan indicates only that the strategy paper will be shared and validated during a single workshop with the private sector and civil society organizations.

Nevertheless, the commitment as written is evaluated as having minor potential impact. While a national anti-corruption strategy could be “an opportunity to better establish the principles and values of integrity in Côte d'Ivoire”⁴, the specificity of the commitment as drafted is low. One civil society expert in governance and transparency⁵ explained that the diagnostic study should highlight the current system's strengths and weaknesses should be and succeeded by time-bound proposals. Moreover, the resulting strategy should also highlight the roles and connections of existing national anti-corruption and good governance structures.⁶

Completion

This commitment was not implemented because of fundamental changes in the commitment, among other factors.⁷ In a letter from HABG to Cote d'Ivoire's OGP focal point, HABG explained that the original commitment aimed to build a national integrity system.⁸ This is a system of government institutions and non-government partners aligned to combat corruption. The process starts with a diagnostic national integrity system assessment, as proposed by Transparency International.⁹ However, HABG determined that evaluating and reinforcing the national integrity system would be a long-term goal that could not be achieved during implementation. Therefore, HABG requested that the commitment be updated to develop a national anti-corruption strategy. HABG emphasized that creation of a national anticorruption strategy is part of its core mandate and a crucial first step towards a national integrity system. However, the anticorruption strategy was not initiated during implementation due to COVID-19, presidential elections, and delays in recruiting a consultant.¹⁰ Eventually, this commitment was integrated into Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 action plan.

¹ Transparency International, Knowledge Hub, “Côte d'Ivoire: Overview of Corruption and Anti-corruption” (18/04/2016): <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/cote-divoire-overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption>.

² Civil society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges in February and March 2019.

³ Civil society representatives, e-mail exchanges between February 10, 2019 and March 30, 2019.

⁴ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, then- Chair of the OGP Technical Committee, met in person on February 11, 2019 followed by e-mails and phone exchanges.

⁵ Civil society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges in February and March 2019.

⁶ Mrs. Chantal Angoua, Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade and Industry, then- Chair of the OGP Technical Committee, met in person on February 11, 2019 followed by e-mails and phone exchanges.

⁷ Representative(s) of the HABG, e-mail communication sent by the Technical Committee on May 3, 2021.

⁸ See Annex II of Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan, 2018-2020.

⁹ Transparency International. "National Integrity System Assessments" <https://www.transparency.org/en/national-integrity-system-assessments>

¹⁰ See Annex II of Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan, 2018-2020.

5. Make effective assets declaration for public officials and civil servant in compliance with law

Commitment description as provided in the action plan:

"The High Authority for Good Governance commits itself to increase the rate of registrants from 76.6% in 2018 to 90% in June 2020."

Milestones:

- "1. The High Authority will ensure the registrants' awareness- raising as far as asset declaration is concerned.
2. Enforce repressive measures pursuant to law"

Editorial note: For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: High Authority for Good Governance (HABG) / Civil society organizations

Start Date: June 2018

End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | Not assessed | | | | |

Context and design

Since 2013, Côte d'Ivoire has expanded its asset declaration policy, as part of prominent anti-corruption reforms. The Ordinance 2013-660 of September 20, 2013 extended declaration of assets, which had affected only the President, to high-level public officials and political representatives, including members of government and parliament, district governors and mayors, senior managers of public companies and institutions, and senior officials from defense and security forces.¹ The Constitution of 2016 sealed the responsibility of asset declaration for public authorities and an ordinance passed in 2018 determined which court would process infractions.² However, the absence of control and enforcement mechanisms make it possible for many taxable subjects to avoid their obligations. In 2018, nearly 78% of the 6,882 taxable subjects had submitted asset declarations.³ A lack transparency about the assets of public servants is an impediment to corruption advocates and media in Côte d'Ivoire, as declarations are confidential by law.⁴

The High Authority for Good Governance (HABG) expects this commitment to improve the rate of registrants to 90% by June 2020, through awareness-raising activities and enforcement of sanctions. The commitment is sufficiently detailed, as its main objective sets a clear indicator: the percentage of taxable subjects who submit asset declarations. Two HABG departments are responsible for awareness-raising activities: the Department of Awareness and Education is accountable at the national level and the Department for Management of Assets Declarations targets institutions and ministries. Sanctions are provided for by Ordinance No. 2013-660 and Decree No. 2014-219.⁵

Regarding open government values, the commitment does not explicitly improve access to information, since declarations are not made public. The commitment could enhance the accountability of public officials if there are consequences for non-compliance with the law, but citizens should be aware the sanctions to be relevant to the OGP value of public accountability. Moreover, the HABG has no legal power of sanction and can only issue fines, according to civil society representatives,⁶ and the repressive measures are lacking specificity. Because most of the activities are non-specific and do not involve the public, this commitment is judged to have a minor potential impact on open government practices.

Completion

Despite delays, completion of the commitment can be considered substantial. The awareness-raising campaign for high-level officials, due by June 2019, began August 24, 2020, with a meeting between the Presidents of Institutions and the appropriate government ministers. The HABG also submitted informative letters to senior government officials concerning asset disclosure obligations.⁷

The sanctions in the law were not yet in force when this report was drafted. However, an important step was taken in January 2019 with an agreement between the HABG and the National Chamber of Judicial Officers of Côte d'Ivoire⁸, in view of sanctions for non-compliance with asset declaration regulations.⁹ According to the government self-assessment, sanctions will be enforced when the HABG's on-going awareness-raising campaign is completed.

So far, the commitment has potentially contributed to a slight increase in the number of asset declarations. According to the HABG, asset declaration rates reached 79.15% by June 2020 and 79.37% by February 2021.¹⁰ The objective of 90% has not been reached, except for members of the Constitutional Council and magistrates, and almost (over 86%) by members of government and senior officials from Public Administration.¹¹ Statistical data and recommended lists of persons who declared their assets annually since 2015 were uploaded to the HABG website,¹² which implies some improvement in access to information about asset declarations, compared to the previous situation.

Decrees 2018-99 and 2018-100 of January 24, 2018 would oblige more public officials in high office and those responsible for managing public funds to submit asset declarations when entering office, and to submit another asset declaration when leaving public office.¹³ The National Bureau of Technical Studies and Development (BNETD) found that the number of persons in public office who were subject to asset declaration in Côte d'Ivoire could be higher.¹⁴ The purpose of this study, commissioned by the HABG, was to use an automated system to update the lists of appropriate officials through a computerized mechanism. Supervisors and focal points of institutions and ministries were trained on this new system in August 2020.¹⁵

Given the importance of public officials' assets as an anti-corruption tool, the IRM welcomes that the commitment is followed up in the 2020-2022 action plan through two new commitments, albeit with a different focus. Commitments 4 and 5 of the third action plan seek to enhance asset declarations' transparency and strengthen the legal and technical framework.¹⁶ For more information on the design of the commitments, see the IRM Action Plan Review on the 2020-2022 action plan.¹⁷

Following international best practices, the IRM researcher recommends that the government consider the following while continuing asset transparency reforms:

- **Declaration transparency:** According to civil society organizations legislation should make some of the information contained in asset declarations available to the public, allowing citizens, journalists, and civil society to hold public officials accountable for illicitly gained wealth.¹⁸
- **Comprehensive disclosure:** Expand the scope of assets to be disclosed, from directly owned property and wealth to include assets of which the individual and family are ultimate beneficiaries, as well as other interests that might conflict with public office such as professional roles and memberships.

¹ Ordinance 2013-660 of 20 September 2013 on the fight against corruption and related offenses:

https://habg.ci/fichier/Ordonnance_2013-660.pdf and Decree 2014-219 of April 16, 2014: <https://www.habg.ci/fichier/2014-219-decret.pdf>. See as well Bertelsmann Transformation Index for Côte d'Ivoire 2018, Governance Performance / Resource Efficiently / Anti-corruption policy: https://atlas.bti-project.org/I*2020*CV:CTC:SELCIV*CAT*CIV*REG:TAB

² Côte d'Ivoire Constitution 2016 (Art. 41): <http://www.caidp.ci/uploads/52782e1004ad2bbfd4d17dbf1c33384f.pdf> ;

Ordinance 2018-25 from January 17, 2018: https://www.droitci.info/files/322.01.18-Ordonnance-du-17-janvier-2018_Lutte-contre-la-corruption_modifications.pdf

³ "Partenariat Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance et Chambre Nationale des Huissiers de Justice: Une Convention signée", January 22, 2019, Official Portal of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, website, http://www.gouv.ci/_actualite-article.php?recordID=9627&d=1.

⁴ Article 9, Ordinance 2013-660 of September 20, 2013, HABG website, https://habg.ci/fichier/Ordonnance_2013-660.pdf.

⁵ Document with observations from the OGP Technical Committee (dated September 7, 2021) addressed to the IRM.

⁶ Civil Society representatives interviewed by phone call and e-mail exchanges, between February 10, 2019 and March 30, 2019.

⁷ End-of-term self-assessment 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-self-assessment-2018-2020/>

⁸ "Partenariat Haute Autorité pour la Bonne Gouvernance et Chambre Nationale des Huissiers de Justice: Une Convention signée", 22 January 2019, Official Portal of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, website, http://www.gouv.ci/_actualite-article.php?recordID=9627&d=1.

⁹ Article 14 of Decree 2014-219 of April 16, 2014 provides that "Any person subject to the declaration of assets who, at the end of the prescribed deadlines and three months after an appeal by notified bailiff, to the diligence of the High Authority for Good Governance, to anyone, to their real domicile, to the public prosecutor's office or to the town hall, will not have fulfilled this formality, is punished in accordance with the provisions of article 54 of ordinance 2013-60 of September 20, 2013 referred to above".

¹⁰ Data of asset declarations submitted when taking office, from 2015 to February 28, 2021:

<https://www.habg.ci/fichier/TabPatrimoine28022021.pdf>. See as well End-of-term self-assessment 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-self-assessment-2018-2020/>

¹¹ By August 31, 2020, the HABG reported a rate of declarations by magistrates of 96.73%:

<https://www.habg.ci/fichier/DeclarationPatrimoine31082020.pdf>

¹² For instance, the latest lists of those who submitted asset declarations (in 2017 and 2018) were published on October 3, 2019: <https://habg.ci/fichier/LISTEDESDECLARANTS2017ET2018.pdf>

¹³ Press release on the publication of decrees 2018-99 and 2018-110 on asset declarations (May 30, 2018):

<https://www.habg.ci/actualite.php?ID=66>. The decrees can be accessed at <https://www.habg.ci/fichier/decret2018-janvier.pdf>

¹⁴ According to the BNETD, the number of taxable persons in 2020 was 7.884 instead of slightly over 7.013 as identified by the HABG in the first months of 2020. Côte d'Ivoire Annex II of Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-self-assessment-2018-2020/>.

¹⁵ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

¹⁶ Specifically, commitment 5 promises to review current legislation to ensure that asset declaration is mandatory for public officials and civil servants while in office. Commitment 4 aims to capture all declarations in an online platform and publish aggregated statistics. See IRM Action Plan Review: Côte d'Ivoire action plan 2020-2022.

¹⁷ Independent Reporting Mechanism. Côte d'Ivoire 2020-2022 Action Plan Review.

<https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-review-2020-2022-for-public-comment/>

¹⁸ Civil Society representatives interviewed by phone call and e-mails exchanges, from February 10, 2019 to March 30, 2019.

7. Fight against corruption and racketeering in Ivorian local communities

Commitment description as provided in the action plan:

"Continue the establishment of Communal Anti-racketeering and Anti-corruption Committees (CCLR)"

Milestones:

1. Establishment of the national coalition
2. Establishment of new CCLR
3. Assessment of existing CCLR"
4. Training committee members on whistleblowing*

***Editorial Note:** the IRM researcher added milestone 4 in order to reflect the "How will the commitment contribute to solve the public problem?" section of the commitment as indicated in the action plan. For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: Executive Management of Decentralization and Local Development / National and local civil society organizations and the local private sector.

Start Date: June 2018

End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | not assessed | | | | |

Context and design

In Côte d'Ivoire, petty bribery and racketeering remain deeply entrenched in bureaucratic practice, with low salaries creating fertile grounds for "facilitation payments."¹ According to Human Rights Watch, the two principal sectors affected by corruption are police and security forces, with security checkpoints being used by the police to extort bribes.² In 2011, the government set up the Anti-racket Unit to fight extortion by the police at checkpoints.³ Its work has been undermined by inconsistent financial support and the failure of security forces to prosecute corruption perpetrators.⁴ Therefore, despite efforts racketeering is still frequent in the country.⁵

This commitment builds on commitment 13 from the previous action plan, which established five Communal Anti-racketeering and Anti-corruption Committees (CCLRs). Racketeering Committees are composed of civil society representatives and local public administrations and are chaired by a local elected official or their representative. These committees are established by municipal decree with a mandate to evaluate the racketeering situation and specific complaints and make recommendations to local authorities. In this way, CCLRs aim to sensitize the public, denounce, and monitor.⁶

At the end of the previous implementation period, civil society reported that CCLRs were inactive in most municipalities⁷ and those that were created were often not fully operational.⁸ The present commitment aims to address lacking capacity by mobilizing local authorities, civil society, private sector and local services through continuing with the installation and training of CCLRs. The commitment proposes to establish new committees, assess and strengthen the capacities of existing ones and raise public awareness on racketeering practices. The action plan also mentions the creation of a national coalition against local corruption and racketeering.

As written, the commitment is verifiable. However, milestones are vague and fail to specify the number of CCLRs that will be established, the evaluation method for existing CCLRs and the measures undertaken by the government afterwards. Moreover, the role and composition of the national coalition against corruption is not specified. With regard to OGP values, the commitment is relevant to civic participation, as it incorporates organizations and citizens in the establishment of CCLRs. Specifically, the committees are chaired by city mayors and include around 30 members from decentralized state services, municipal staff, community leaders, civil society organizations' representatives. Anti-racketeering committees act as a liaison with the government at the local level, through the support of citizens who are the actors (volunteers) and beneficiaries. Taking into account the description in the previous action plan, this reform is also relevant to public accountability as citizens will contribute to monitoring, investigating, and denouncing public officials' acts of corruption.

As written, the limitations of this commitment concern the anti-racketeering national coalition. As long as there is no coherent and effective system of whistleblowing and whistleblower protection, anti-racketeering committees will not achieve effective results, according to civil society organizations.⁹ Therefore, and without any further specificity of the given milestones, the potential impact of this commitment remains minor.

Completion

This commitment has been substantially completed.¹⁰ The national coalition of anti-racketeering committees (milestone 1) consisted of setting up a social media platform (WhatsApp group) to facilitate communication between the committees. More notably, from mid-2018 to mid-2020, the following seven CCLRs were created (milestone 2), as reported by a representative of the DGDDL: Yopougon, Divo, Adiaké, Grand-Bassam, Oumé, Anyama, Bonoua. Others had been established previously since 2017 with support from the Millennium Challenge Corporation and five of them in the framework of the first OGP action plan.¹¹ At the time of writing this report there were 20 active CCLRs.¹² An evaluation of CCLRs took place before June 2020 (milestone 3), and 11 out of 20 communes with CCLRs were provided with capacity-building sessions (milestone 4).¹³ Additionally, given its contribution to the fight against corruption and racketeering, the Ministry of the Interior and Security expressed the will to continue supporting the installation of CCLRs in all municipalities for a better territorial network.¹⁴

According to a member of the DGDDL, introducing a commitment on the Communal Committees for the Fight against Racketeering (CCLRs) in the OGP action plan enabled the government to strengthen the committees and link them to the fight against corruption.¹⁵ DGDDL obtained more support from other government departments, civil society organizations, as well as the private

sector, facilitating the installation and capacity building of several committees. PAGOF produced a guide¹⁶ on what type of acts can be expected from municipal public services and procedures against racketeering. Based on this guide, workshops were held in eleven municipalities to raise awareness among local public officials, elected representatives and civil society on the types of service acts and procedures that can be carried out by municipal authorities.¹⁷ The objectives of the guide and subsequent workshops were to encourage harmonization of procedures and fight corrupt practices locally.

However, in terms of results, both government and civil society representatives acknowledged that the commitment's impact is still low in terms of fighting racketeering,¹⁸ and that whistleblowers do not yet feel safe.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the IRM welcomes the government's will to pursue the establishment of anti-racket committees in all regions and recommends the adoption of an integrated approach that takes into account whistleblower protection measures, anti-racketeering committees and a national anti-corruption strategy. The next action plan includes the drafting of an anti-corruption strategy and is an important step in this direction.

¹ https://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/Country_profile_Cote_divoire_2016.pdf.

² Human Rights Watch, "Côte d'Ivoire: Extortion by Security Forces", July 29, 2015,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/29/cote-divoire-extortion-security-forces>

³ https://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/Country_profile_Cote_divoire_2016.pdf.

⁴ Human Rights Watch, "Côte d'Ivoire: Extortion by Security Forces", July 29, 2015,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/29/cote-divoire-extortion-security-forces>

⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Côte d'Ivoire: Extortion by Security Forces", July 29, 2015,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/29/cote-divoire-extortion-security-forces>

⁶ Côte d'Ivoire 2016-2018 Action Plan. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-2016-2018/>

⁷ Civil Society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges between February 10, 2019 and March 30, 2019

⁸ IRM Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Report 2016-2018, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-report-2016-2018/>

⁹ Civil Society representative, email communication from May 2021.

¹⁰ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

¹¹ Report on workshops on the basis of the guide for restitution of the collection of types of acts of municipal public services and sensitization of local public officials, elected officials and civil society on the fight against racketeering, Expertise France, November 2020.

¹² Mr. Oumarou Coulibaly, government contact at the Technical Committee, e-mail communication sent June 18, 2021. At the time of writing this report, there were 20 CCLRs throughout Côte d'Ivoire. The following cities had CCLRs before the 2nd action plan: Dabou, Attécoubé, Cocody, Agou, Grand Lahou, Gagnoa, Yamoussoukro, Bouaké, Aboisso, Abengourou, Tiassalé, Daloa, Séguéla. See for instance DGDDL website : <http://www.dgddl.interieur.gouv.ci/index.php?page=suite&id=219>

¹³ Representative of Direction Générale de la Décentralisation et du Développement Local (DGDDL), Ministry of Interior and Security, e-mail communication sent by the Technical Committee on April 27, 2021. See also Report on the workshops on the basis of the guide for restitution of the collection of types of acts of municipal public services and sensitization of local public officials, elected officials and civil society on the fight against racketeering, Expertise France, November 2020.

¹⁴ Report on the workshops on the basis of the guide for restitution of the collection of types of acts of municipal public services and sensitization of local public officials, elected officials and civil society on the fight against racketeering, Expertise France, November 2020.

¹⁵ Government representative from the Ministry of Interior and Security, email response to IRM researcher, June 18, 2021.

¹⁶ Report on the workshops on the basis of the guide for restitution of the collection of types of acts of municipal public services and sensitization of local public officials, elected officials and civil society on the fight against racketeering, Expertise France, November 2020.

¹⁷ Government representative Ministry of Interior and Security, email response to IRM researcher, June 18, 2021. The report on the workshops by Expertise France was shared with the IRM researcher. It stated "The mission was held in the localities of Grand-Bassam, Yopougon, Bouaké, Yamoussoukro, Oumé, Gagnoa, Divo, Cocody, Aboisso, Abengourou and Tiassalé, between March and November 2020 and consisted of 26 days of activities.

¹⁸ Government representative Ministry of Interior and Security, email response to IRM researcher, June 18, 2021.

¹⁹ Civil Society representative, e-mail communication on May 11, 2021.

8. Integrate the distribution of contraceptive products into the minimum health care activity package of 4000 community health care workers by 2020

Commitment description as it appears in the action plan:

"Integrate the distribution of contraceptive products into the minimum health care activity package of 4000 community care health workers by 2020. These community health care workers are selected by the populations themselves."

Milestones:

1. 4000 community healthcare workers trained"
2. Building the capacity of all community health care workers (Training and equipment) for contraceptive products resupply.
3. The implementation of a pilot study to delegate tasks concerning prescription of short acting contraceptives by community health care workers in the three medical districts.
4. The assessment of the pilot phase to delegate tasks concerning prescription of short acting contraceptives by community health care workers in the three medical districts.*

***Editorial Note:** the IRM researcher added 3 milestones in order to reflect the "Additional information?" section of the commitment as indicated in the action plan. For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: National Mother and Child Health Program (PNSME) / National and international NGOs: AIMAS, AIBEF, Pathfinder, PSI, Engender Health.

Start Date: July 2018

End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | unclear | | | | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | not assessed | | | | |

Context and design

Currently, access to family planning services remains limited in healthcare facilities in Côte d'Ivoire and the modern contraceptive prevalence rate is very low in regions such as Indénie-Djuablin (3%),

Aries (4%), and Hambol (5%).¹ According to a civil society representative,² the distribution of contraceptive products through community health agents would contribute to family planning, make it possible to increase the contraceptive prevalence rate, and reduce maternal and infant mortality rates.

As part of the National Health Development Plan 2016-2020, which aims to strengthen governance and leadership in the health sector, increase the quality of service delivery and reinforce prevention and health promotion,³ the commitment addresses the issue of family planning and low contraceptive prevalence. In this area, Côte d'Ivoire takes part in international initiatives such as Family Planning 2020.⁴ According to the activities undertaken within this initiative in 2017, Côte d'Ivoire pledged to increase state financial resources and access to family planning services, involve community health workers and health facilities in family planning programs, and strengthen the supply chain for family planning products.⁵

Within these priorities, this commitment aims to integrate the distribution of contraceptive products into the activities of 4,000 community health workers by 2020. These individuals come from the community and continue and expand the work of health professionals within their communities. Acting as volunteers, they are considered an essential link in the health chain by raising awareness in the communities on health issues, providing information, support and training.⁶

While family planning is a policy area of national importance, this commitment is not directly related to open government values. To be relevant, a commitment must increase government transparency, civic participation, or public accountability in relation to government practices. For example, if this commitment had involved community monitoring of the contraceptive supply chain or community monitoring of family planning services at health centers then this reform would be relevant to the OGP values of public accountability and civic participation. However, as written, this commitment does not contain an open government lens.

This commitment is determined to have a minor potential impact on the provision of family planning services and products. While this commitment addresses an area of national importance, the activities are limited to a pilot in 3 medical districts and are therefore of modest ambition.

Completion

This commitment was fully implemented as over 5,000 community health workers received training to include family planning advice as part of their role across 58 health districts over 18 health regions. Other commitment activities involved training 1,500 community health workers for community-based distribution of contraceptives, drafting the protocol for a pilot phase of prescription of short-term contraceptives and choosing pilot districts.⁷ While this commitment was completed, its impact in terms of open government was not assessed, as it lacks direct relevance to open government values.

Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 action plan includes two commitments (8 and 9) related to family planning and contraceptive products. These aim to create a budget line for the purchase of contraceptive products and publish information on family planning and contraception, the second of which is relevant to open government values. As recommended in the 2020-2022 Action Plan Review, the Technical Committee and Civil Society Platform should work together to design commitments with a clear connection to creating more transparent, accountable, or participatory government practices to ensure that commitments contain an open government lens.⁸

¹ National Health Development Plan 2016-2020.

² Civil society representatives, phone calls and e-mail exchanges in February and March 2019.

³ National Health Development Plan 2016-2020, https://extranet.who.int/countryplanningcycles/sites/default/files/planning_cycle_repository/cote_divoire/pnds_2016-2020.pdf.

⁴ Family Planning 2020 website, Côte d'Ivoire: <https://www.familyplanning2020.org/cote-divoire> and <https://www.familyplanning2020.org/about-us>

⁵ <https://www.everywomaneverychild.org/commitment/cote-divoire/>

⁶ “In Cote d'Ivoire, Community Health Workers Key to Linking Families to HIV Care and Treatment”, Columbia University, January 30, 2015, <https://icap.columbia.edu/news-events/in-cote-divoire-community-health-workers-key-to-linking-families-to-hiv-care-and-treatment/>.

⁷ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

⁸ IRM Action Plan Review: Côte d'Ivoire action plan 2020-2022. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-review-2020-2022-for-public-comment/>

9. Increase Côte d'Ivoire government open data impact (open data)

Commitment description as it appears in the action plan:

"CICG will work together with government structures in order to expedite publication of open government data. Alternatively, it will continue populations awareness raising in order to spur them into consulting the platform more in order to increase the level of available data reutilization."

Milestones:

1. Improve existing open data platform
2. Raise awareness, train and mobilize public structures and Civil Society
3. Promote open data platform
4. Induce production of tools and services from open data (re-utilizations) to impact Côte d'Ivoire"

Editorial note: For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: Government Centre for Information and Communication (CICG)

Start Date: September 2018

End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | not assessed | | | | |

Context and design

In 2015, the Governmental Information and Communication Center (CICG) launched the "Open Data Côte d'Ivoire" project to encourage public bodies to disseminate public documents and data in a structured way. In the previous action plan (commitment 9), the government developed and launched the first open data portal in the country (<https://data.gouv.ci>).¹ However, available data in the portal remained limited. The government acknowledged that not all public institutions were publishing information.² From a civil society perspective, the previous commitment also did not live up to its promises. Civil society organizations were not involved in the process of implementing training activities. Moreover, the platform had reportedly inherent limitations, such as the requirement to create a user account and there was a lack of consistent regulation on open data to

enforce and enable the implementation of this commitment.³ Finally, data formats did not comply with open data standards, thus limiting the use of available data by civil society organizations and citizens.⁴

The overall objective of this commitment is to address the abovementioned shortcomings, by accelerating the publication of open government data in a more widely and systematic way, as well as increasing the level of reusable data. To achieve these objectives, commitment milestones include improvement of the platform, awareness-raising activities and training civil society.

The commitment is verifiable. However, some of the milestones lack specific details on implementation, such as more information on trainings and awareness-raising activities, the promotion of the platform, as well as the types of enforcement mechanisms that will be used to make government agencies comply with data provision. The commitment is relevant to OGP values of access to information, civic participation and technology and innovation for transparency and accountability. As written, new information would be collected and made available to the public on the existing online platform and civil society organizations would take part in awareness-raising activities on data use by the citizens.

Based on the information available at the time, the IRM considered this commitment to hold a minor potential impact in terms of open data. The activities have limited ambition as they seek to improve an existing website and raise awareness. This commitment does not address the scope or quality of the data provided on the website, nor does it aim to increase agencies' compliance, introduce legal requirements, or promote a uniform approach to publishing data. A more ambitious commitment could also involve civil society to assess and improve the platform and the data it contains.

Completion

The completion level of the commitment is limited. CICG addressed the website's technical problems, but awareness-raising and training activities were limited until June 2020. Nevertheless, CICG carried out several workshops for public officials and data technicians of several ministries and institutions (two with the support of PAGOF) and one workshop for civil society representatives. Training was also provided to the Ministry in charge of Petroleum and Renewable Energies, after which it published around 50 new data sets on the open data platform.⁵

Administrative barriers continue to hinder open data reforms in Côte d'Ivoire. Government ministries particularly highlighted the need for (i) data validation processes (ii) instructions from the Prime Minister to promote compliance (iii) identification of open data focal points within each ministry (iv) an official letter to technical teams on data publication and (v) the integration of the platform within ministry websites to better highlight the datasets published by each department.

Next Steps

The IRM recommends that future open data commitments seek to engage civil society throughout implementation, which includes the following:

- Partnering with civil society to develop an Open Data Act to unify and mandate open data compliance across government
- Involving civil society to establish priorities of data to be published.
- Working with civil society to develop accessibility features on the platform and mechanisms that update data regularly.⁶
- Clearly stating the specific role of civil society in the implementation and monitoring of open data and in training and awareness activities.

¹ Côte d'Ivoire action plan 2018-2020 <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-2018-2020/> and e-mail exchanges with civil society representatives in February 2019.

² Côte d'Ivoire action plan 2018-2020. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-2018-2020/>
³ Civil society representatives, e-mail exchanges in February 2019.

⁴ http://www.gouv.ci/_actualite-article.php?id=1&recordID=9488&p=280, accessed March 1, 2020.

⁵ Côte d'Ivoire Self-Assessment 2018-2020. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-end-of-term-self-assessment-2018-2020/>

⁶ Civil society representatives, e-mail exchanges in February 2019.

10. Liberalize television space

Commitment description as provided in the action plan:

"To ensure that liberalization is as meaningful as possible, the commitment will consist in:

- constructing a building to host the network head;
- making the signal available to enable all TNT channel editors to broadcast."

Milestones:

"1. TNT network construction

2. Making the signal available to enable all TNT channel editors to broadcast"

Editorial note: For the full text of this commitment, see Côte d'Ivoire's action plan 2018-2020: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf.

Lead implementing agency/actor: Government Centre for Information and Communication

Start Date: July 2018

End Date: June 2020

| Commitment Overview | Verifiability | | OGP Value Relevance (as written) | | | | Potential Impact | | | | Completion | | | | Did It Open Government? | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------|-------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------|----------|-------|-------------|
| | Not specific enough to be verifiable | Specific enough to be verifiable | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Technology & Innovation for Transparency & Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Completed | Worsened | Did Not Change | Marginal | Major | Outstanding |
| Overall | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | not assessed | | | | |

Context and design

This commitment aimed to ensure that Côte d'Ivoire's transition from an analogue to digital television network included the liberalization and explanation of the television channels available. Therefore, this commitment aimed to increase the plurality of voices contributing to public debate and sources of information and entertainment accessible to citizens. Since 2016, the monopoly of Côte d'Ivoire's media space by state-run outlets started to fade. A significant step to set the basis for a competitive television ecosystem was created by the High Authority for Audiovisual Communications (HACA), Côte d'Ivoire's broadcast regulator, which began to open spaces for private television stations.¹ In May 2016, the HACA issued a call for tenders and in December it announced the approval of four new private television channels and two companies to serve as multiplex operators. A decree on the liberalization of the audiovisual area was adopted in June 2017.

This reform builds on commitment 12 in Côte d'Ivoire's 2016-2018 action plan, which sought to liberalize the newspaper and television space. During the implementation period, legislative changes broadened freedom of speech by giving journalists more legal room to operate. However, civil society members noted that the fee to establish a television channel was a significant barrier.²

In this context, this commitment aimed to diversify audiovisual content and promote access to information by constructing a building to host the network head office and by making the signal available to enable all TNT (Digital Terrestrial Television) channel editors to broadcast.³

According to a governance and transparency expert who is also a journalist⁴, this commitment would allow greater expression of a plurality of opinions as well as fuel a creative and competitive ecosystem in the audiovisual sector. As written in the action plan, the proposed actions are sufficiently clear and specific to verify their completion in an objective manner. Indeed, it is possible to assess the TNT network has been set up and whether the signal to enable all TNT channel editors to broadcast is available. The commitment is relevant to the OGP values of access to information as well as technology and innovation, as the measures proposed would allow more channels to broadcast and, therefore, more information would circulate in the country. It is also relevant to civic participation by providing more channels to a plurality of perspectives and thus enhancing civic space.

This commitment is considered to an important but incremental step toward improving access to information and civic space in Côte d'Ivoire. As a result, the commitment was considered to have a minor potential impact. Digital Terrestrial Television could liberalize the audiovisual space through the launch of private and free television channels in Côte d'Ivoire, which would end the monopoly of public audiovisual media⁵. However, as specified by a civil society representative⁶, the construction of the TNT network and the availability of the broadcast signal is only the first step to liberalize the television space. To increase the potential impact of this commitment, it would also be important to implement other safeguards to guarantee that the stations can broadcast freely, for example, guarantees that journalists can express themselves freely, and measures to foster a creative and competitive ecosystem as the commitment proposes.⁷

Completion

The commitment was substantially completed during the implementation period. The TNT signal reportedly covers 60% of the population, infrastructures are available throughout the country and full deployment of TNT was planned for March 2021.⁸ This commitment was not evaluated for open government impact, as it has limited ambition in terms of open government aims. Increased technical infrastructure is an important first step toward a more liberal media landscape. However, technical advancements should be accompanied by enhanced legal safeguards to continue enabling freedom of speech in Côte d'Ivoire. Specifically, in considering future related commitments, the IRM recommends that:

1. The government engage journalists and civil society to consider possible open government reforms to address the mistreatment of journalists by security forces and police.⁹
2. The government engage journalists and civil society to consider reforms that reduce the legal sanctions on journalists and ensure independent and thorough investigations into crimes against journalists.¹⁰
3. Continue to strengthen implementation of Côte d'Ivoire's Public Information Act to ensure that media have comprehensive and timely access to government-held information.¹¹

¹ Freedom of the Press 2017 - Côte d'Ivoire, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a4cd502d.html>.

² Côte d'Ivoire 2016-2018 action plan: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/cote-divoire/commitments/CI0012/>

³ Côte d'Ivoire action plan 2018-2020.

⁴ Journalist and state official, governance and transparency expert, phone and e-mail exchanges in March 2019.

⁵ "Passage à la TNT : les travaux commencent en Côte d'Ivoire", 20 août 2018, Baudelaire Mieu, Jeune Afrique website, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/617071/economie/passage-a-la-tnt-les-travaux-commencent-en-cote-divoire/>

⁶ Journalist and state official, governance and transparency expert, phone and e-mail exchanges in March 2019.

⁷ <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a4cd502d.html>.

⁸ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2018-2020.

⁹ Reporters Without Borders. Côte d'Ivoire Country Page. 2021. <https://rsf.org/en/cote-divoire>

¹⁰ Reporters Without Borders. "RSF's recommendations for protecting press freedom during Côte d'Ivoire's elections" 2020. <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsfs-recommendations-protecting-press-freedom-during-cote-divoires-elections>

¹¹ See Côte d'Ivoire's 2016 commitment "Promote Access to Public Information Act": <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/members/cote-divoire/commitments/CI0011/>

V. General Recommendations

This section aims to inform development and guide implementation of future action plans. The three recommendations below reflect both Côte d'Ivoire's 2018-2020 and 2020-2022 action plans, as implementation of the 2020-2022 action plan had begun at the time of completing this report. This section is divided into two sections:

- 1) IRM key recommendations to improve OGP process and action plans in the country
- 2) an assessment of how the government responded to previous IRM key recommendations.

5.1 IRM recommendations

The IRM researcher suggests the following recommendations to improve the OGP process in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the national action plan's quality:

- **Maintain an updated and comprehensive OGP repository to ensure procedural transparency and accountability**

Côte d'Ivoire's Technical Committee and Civil Society Platform both have OGP websites. However, neither website provides comprehensive or up to date information on national OGP processes and structures. A public repository is vital to provide transparency on the progress of action plan design and implementation. It is also a useful tool that can allow the public, civil society, and government actors interested in OGP processes to familiarize themselves with Côte d'Ivoire's open government accomplishments thus far. Due to its essential function, OGP members must maintain a public repository to act in accordance with OGP process.

A repository should be an online space where information and evidence related to the action plan (including process and implementation) is publicly stored, organized, updated and disseminated. Governments should document, collect and publish information on the repository to provide clear evidence of what happened during the action plan development and implementation processes. To meet the IRM's minimum requirements, there should be at least one piece of evidence to account for the implementation of each commitment. For a full list of examples of evidence please see the IRM's Guidance for Repositories.¹ The repository should also be updated at least every six months during the action plan cycle.

For examples of repositories please see Morocco and Tunisia's OGP websites. Other member countries make use of Google Drive or free platforms such as Trello.²

- **Design commitments with open government values of transparency, civic participation, and/or accountability as guiding principles for core commitment activities**

Admirably, Côte d'Ivoire's collaborative co-creation process resulted in an action plan that reflects issues of national importance raised by civil society. The co-creation process included a moment in which stakeholders evaluated the commitments' relevance to OGP values and removed those deemed not relevant. Despite this process, a few commitments in the current action plan and the 2020-2022 action plan do not contain public facing elements and are therefore not relevant to OGP values.

Specifically, commitment 8 in this action plan and commitments 7, 8, and 10 in the 2020-2022 action plan are not relevant to OGP values. Other commitments, such as commitment 6 in the 2020-2022 action plan, contain only tangentially advance open government aims.

Therefore, a notable number of commitments across the two most recent action plans are not directly related to government transparency, accountability, or participation.

To determine whether a draft commitment contains an open government lens, drafters should consider whether it meets any of the following criteria:

- 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?

For example, Côte d'Ivoire's 2018 and 2020 action plans both contain commitments related to contraception and family planning. Commitment 8 in the current action plan aims to increase access to contraceptives, which is not relevant to OGP values, as per the criteria set above. This commitment involves further training for volunteer health workers in the community. However, it does not increase opportunities for the public to contribute to *government decision-making*. Therefore, it is not considered relevant to civic participation. However, activities that empower citizens to influence health policymaking or monitor health service provision would open government and, therefore, ensure that the commitment's design included an open government lens.

It should be noted that commitment 9 in Côte d'Ivoire's 2020-2022 action plan promises to publish the country's contraceptive resource allocation online. Therefore, this commitment is relevant to the value of access to information. However, the connection to open government values of commitment 8 in 2020-2022 action plan, which consists in creating a budget line for the purchase of contraceptive products, is less clear as it is a goal internal to the government.

- **Design commitments with more information on the full scope of intended activities to better enable citizens to measure impact**

Many commitments in this action plan begin to address issues of national importance. However, a lack of detail on the full scope of the planned activities makes many commitments' level of ambition unclear. This is one of the factors that lower the level of ambition across this action plan, with only three commitments considered to have moderate potential impact.

Additionally, limited details on milestones make assessment of completion and early results more difficult. The government's self-assessment report often describes completed activities that extend beyond the milestones listed in the commitment or that took place before the implementation period (for example commitment 5 or commitment 3). This discrepancy makes it difficult to determine whether these accomplishments are related to the implementation of the action plan. Listing all intended activities in the action plan in advance would allow for the public and civil society to assess the action plan's open government early results more accurately.

For example, the milestones for commitment 3 are solely related to training and outreach to spread information on the whistleblower protection law, which had already been adopted. The extent to which civil society would participate in designing and carrying out the outreach is not clearly specified in the commitment as written. Additionally, the lack of details on the number of training sessions to be held and the intended number of participants makes the ambition of the commitment unclear. The government's self-assessment report notes that local integrity committees were established and HABG established a framework for collaboration against corruption with religious institutions

under commitment 3. If these activities were anticipated and listed in the action plan text, the potential impact of this commitment would have been considered higher.

Commitment drafters should seek to design milestones that are "SMART": specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time bound. Such milestones for commitment 3 would look like the following: "HABG will establish a framework for collaboration against corruption with religious institutions and partner together to conduct X number of training sessions with religious leaders and X number of outreach activities in W, Y, Z provinces for religious communities."

Table 5.1: Key IRM Recommendations

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Maintain an updated and comprehensive OGP repository to ensure procedural transparency and accountability |
| 2 | Design commitments with open government values of transparency, civic participation, and/or accountability as guiding principles for core commitment activities |
| 3 | Design commitments with more information on the full scope of intended activities to better enable citizens to measure impact |

5.2 Response to previous IRM key recommendations

The government shared and addressed previous IRM recommendations with the various stakeholders involved in the OGP process in Côte d'Ivoire and in its self-assessment report.³ However, the recommendations could not be taken into account during the second year of implementation of the 2016-2018 action plan due to a delay in the publication of the final version of the progress report.⁴ The IRM recommendations were taken into account during the development process of the 2018-2020 Action Plan. Overall, the government followed four out of five previous IRM key recommendations.

According to the interviews carried out with civil society representatives, civil society actors discussed with the government to determine the themes of interest⁵ that should be addresses in the 2018-2020 action plan. These were collected during public consultations conducted in 2017 and 2018 in various towns of the country. Government representatives, as well as civil society members, stated that commitment proposals were jointly analyzed in the light of OGP principles, alignment with Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan for projects covering the 2018-2020 period, and technical and financial issues.

However, milestones continue to be difficult to quantify and specify, thus limiting the potential impact of commitments.

Table 5.2: Previous IRM Report Key Recommendations

| Recommendation | Responded to? | Integrated into Current Action Plan? |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Collaborate with civil society in decision making to ensure it can play a supporting role and partake in citizen action. To this end, increase the number of civil society representatives on the OGP Technical Committee, to achieve a balanced composition between government and civil society. Fully involve the civil society platform in choosing the committee's civil society representatives. | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2 The government could further dedicate itself to fighting corruption. For example, it could write, adopt, and implement an anti-corruption policy or national plan, addressing both racketeering and money laundering. | ✓ | ✓ |
| 3 The government could enhance its focus on freedom of the press and plurality of expression. For example, it could ease the conditions of liberalization in the televisual sector. It could also expand the areas in which private television channels can broadcast. | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4 The next action plan could be more detailed and more consistent, with specific, quantifiable, and verifiable goals. | ✓ | X |
| 5 Regular monitoring of the action plan during its implementation in collaboration with civil society: Together with civil society and all other stakeholders, the Technical Committee and the Civil Society Platform could meet every three months to monitor the progress of each commitment. Civil society could have more representatives present during on-the-ground progress evaluation. | ✓ | ✓ |

¹ IRM Guidance for Online Repositories. 2020. <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-guidance-for-online-repositories/>

² Tunisia's OGP website: <http://www.ogptunisie.gov.tn/en/>; Morocco's OGP website: <https://gouvernement-ouvert.ma/index.php?lang=fr>; Argentina's Trello OGP website: <https://trello.com/b/CgBE7B7a/seguimiento-de-compromisos-2do-plan-de-acci%C3%B3n-ogp-argentina>.

³ Côte d'Ivoire End-of-term Self-Assessment Report of action plan 2016-2018, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cote-Divoire_End-Term_Self-Assessment_2016-2018_EN.pdf.

⁴ IRM Côte d'Ivoire Mid-Term Report 2016-2018, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-mid-term-irm-report-2016-2018-year-1/>

⁵ Côte d'Ivoire Action Plan 2018-2020, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/cote-divoire-action-plan-2018-2020/>.

VI. Methodology and Sources

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

Analysis of progress on OGP action plans is a combination of interviews, desk research, observation, and feedback from nongovernmental stakeholders. The IRM report builds on the evidence available¹ in Côte d'Ivoire's OGP repository, website, findings in the government's own self-assessment reports, and any other assessments of process and progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organizations. At the beginning of each reporting cycle, IRM staff share a research plan with governments to open a seven-day period of comments or feedback regarding the proposed research approach.

Each IRM researcher carries out stakeholder interviews to ensure an accurate portrayal of events. Given budgetary and calendar constraints, the IRM cannot consult all interested parties or visit implementation sites. Some contexts require anonymity of interviewees and the IRM reviews the right to remove personal identifying information of these participants. Due to the necessary limitations of the method, the IRM strongly encourages commentary during the pre-publication review period of each report.

Each report undergoes a quality-control process that includes an internal review by IRM staff and the IRM's International Experts Panel (IEP). Each report also undergoes an external review where governments and civil society are invited to provide comments on the content of the draft IRM report.

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual.²

Interviews and stakeholder input

Research for the design section of this report was begun by the local IRM researcher in 2019. Due to unforeseen obstacles, the design section of the report was delayed. Upon IRM consultation with the point of contact for Côte d'Ivoire in 2021, it was agreed that the design and implementation sections would be combined in one hybrid report. Research for the implementation section of this report was conducted by the same local IRM researcher in 2021. The entire report was consolidated with assistance from IRM staff, an IRM consultant, and reviewed by the international expert panel.

Prior to conducting interviews, the IRM researcher consulted with the government point of contact, who provided a list of civil society and government stakeholders who took part in the co-creation process. In addition, the IRM researcher identified civil society representatives who had expertise in the specific areas included in the action plan, such as transparency, governance, integrity, human rights, among others. Some of the organizations consulted were not necessarily part of the OGP platform. However, they had a deep knowledge of the OGP process as well as the commitments made by the government. This was done to include the perspective of multiple stakeholders, diversifying and triangulating the sources, as well as potentiating the recommendations section.

The IRM researcher conducted one in-person meeting with government representatives and exchanges by phone and e-mails with all the civil society representatives identified and selected. The IRM researcher encountered time challenges and responses constraints, as many contacted civil society representatives expressed being very busy during the time of writing this report. As civil society representatives interviewed requested anonymity, their names are not cited in this report.

About the Independent Reporting Mechanism

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) is a key means by which all stakeholders can track OGP progress in participating countries and entities. The International Experts Panel (IEP) oversees the quality control of each report. The IEP is comprised of experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

The current membership of the International Experts Panel is

- César Cruz-Rubio
- Mary Francoli
- Brendan Halloran
- Jeff Lovitt
- Juanita Olaya

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

¹ Evidence available, <https://bit.ly/2HmhXGG>

² IRM Procedures Manual, V.3 : <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>

Annex I. Overview of Côte d'Ivoire performance

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

| Multi-stakeholder Forum | Design | 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. | Yellow | Green |
| 1d. Mandate public: Information on the forum's remit, membership and governance structure is available on the OGP website/page. | Red | Red |
| 2a. Multi-stakeholder: The forum includes both governmental and non-governmental representatives | Yellow | Green |
| 2b. Parity: The forum includes an even balance of governmental and non-governmental representatives | Yellow | Green |
| 2c. Transparent selection: Non-governmental members of the forum are selected through a fair and transparent process. | Yellow | Yellow |
| 2d. High-level government representation: The forum includes high-level representatives with decision making authority from government | Green | Green |
| 3d. Openness: The forum accepts inputs and representation on the action plan process from any civil society or other stakeholders outside the forum | Yellow | Green |
| 3e. Remote participation: There are opportunities for remote participation in at least some meetings and events | Green | Green |
| 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 | Design | Implementation |
|--|--------|----------------|
| 4a. Process transparency: There is a national OGP website (or OGP webpage on a government website) where information on all aspects of the national OGP process is proactively published. | Yellow | Yellow |
| 4b. Documentation in advance: The forum shares information about OGP to stakeholders in advance to guarantee they are informed and prepared to participate in all stages of the process. | Green | Green |
| 4c. Awareness-raising: The forum conducts outreach and awareness raising activities with relevant stakeholders to inform them of the OGP process. | Green | Green |
| 4d. Communication channels: The government facilitates direct communication with stakeholders to respond to action plan process questions, particularly during times of intense OGP activity. | Green | Green |
| 4e. Reasoned response: The multi-stakeholder forum publishes its reasoning behind decisions and responds to major categories of public comment. | Yellow | Green |
| 5a. 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) | Yellow | Yellow |

Annex II. IRM Indicators

The indicators and method used in the IRM research can be found in the IRM Procedures Manual.¹ 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.
- **Did It Open Government?:** This variable attempts to move beyond measuring outputs and deliverables to looking at how 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.

Results-oriented commitments

A promising commitment has more potential to be ambitious and to be implemented. A good commitment 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.”)?
3. **Change:** Rather than stating intermediary outputs, what is 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.”)?

¹ “IRM Procedures Manual,” OGP, <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual>