

African anti-corruption agencies' digital platform usage



Kenya's Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission

Posted by David Fellows and John Leonardo [\[1\]](#)

The release of [TI's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\)](#) on 28 January 2021 has focused attention in many countries on current corruption levels. In a recent [blog](#) we outlined the possible role social media platforms offer for promoting online public engagement in the war against corruption. We also noted that in Africa there are strong positive correlations between social media user numbers and perceived

corruption levels. In this blog we review African anti-corruption agencies (ACAs) digital platform, including social networking sites, usage. Additional regional analyses will be prepared over the next six months.

The 2020 CPI outcomes from an African perspective are disappointing as demonstrated by the trends revealed in Figures 1 and 2.

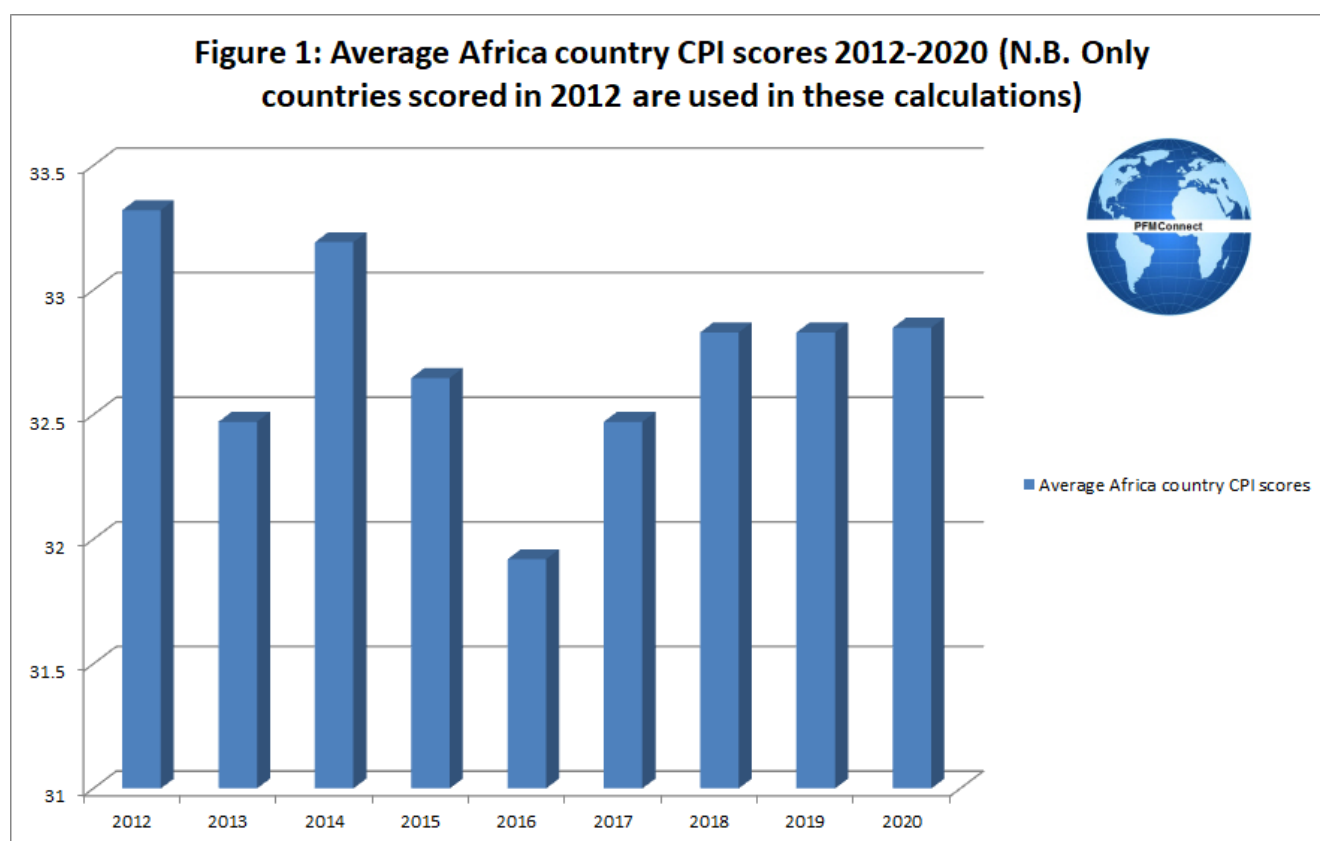
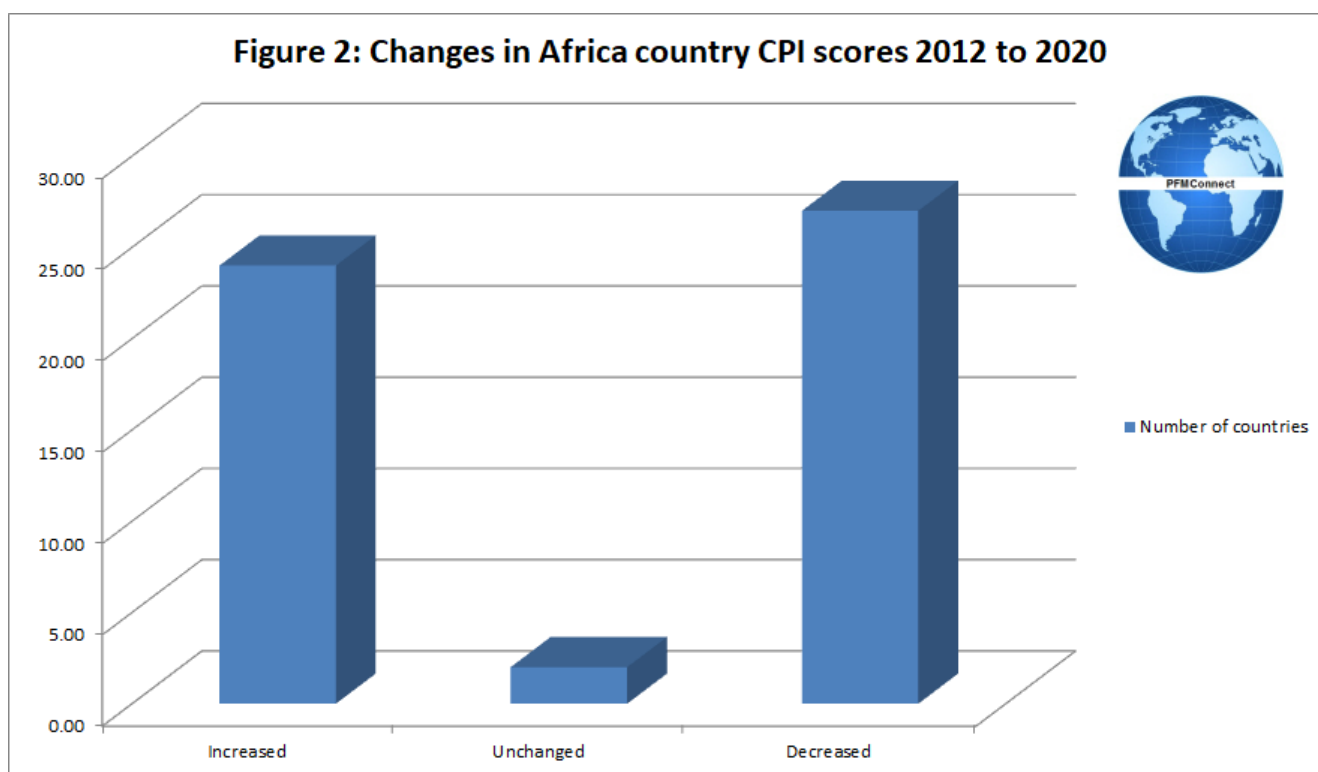


Figure 2: Changes in Africa country CPI scores 2012 to 2020



Websites and the social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter, are the digital platforms most frequently employed by African ACAs. Updates on ACA activities, developments affecting ACA operations and formal reports are featured on ACA digital platforms.

The [United Nations Convention Against Corruption](#) includes provisions relating to financial management and public reporting (Articles 9 and 10 – see Appendix). The extent of ACA compliance with these provisions has also been examined in this blog.

1. African ACAs digital platform usage

1.1 Website usage

Details of the use of websites by African ACAs as at mid-January 2021 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: African ACAs use of websites

ACAs	Number
ACAs with stand-alone websites	27
ACAs with webpages included in government websites	3
ACAs without any web presence The Uganda case	24
Total	54

NB. Nigeria has two recognised ACAs with websites; Uganda has two recognised ACAs but only one has a website with the other using only social media sites. One Nigerian ACA with a website and the Ugandan ACA which only has social media sites are not included in Table 1 or Table 2 below.

Details of the use of websites by African ACAs in countries with relatively higher and lower 2020 CPI scores are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: African ACAs use of websites by 2020 CPI scores

ACAs	Number	Stand-alone websites	Web page on government site	No website
ACAs with higher 2020 CPI scores	27	19	2	6
ACAs with lower 2020 CPI scores	27	9	-	18
Total	54	28	2	24

Data was available for both 2020 CPI scores and 2020 UN E-government scores in 42 countries. There is a strong positive correlation between country 2020 CPI scores and 2020 UN E-government scores for the 23 countries where ACAs have websites (for which data is available); a strong negative correlation was found for the 19 countries without ACA websites.

1.2 Website visit activity

Actual visit numbers to ACA websites in the 2020 December quarter were annualised to provide annual visit estimates which were in turn divided by country internet user numbers to provide an indication of ACA website penetration levels.

The average derived ACA website penetration level for all ACAs was very low at 0.37%. The only favourable scores were recorded by Mauritius (5.9%) and Madagascar (1.9%).

1.3 Social media activity

Social media follower information was analysed for ACAs with Facebook and Twitter pages using data available in mid-January 2021. Details of current Africa ACA social media pages are presented in Table 3. NB The Facebook and Twitter pages of the two Nigerian and Ugandan ACAs are included in the data presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3: African ACA social media pages

ACAs	Facebook pages	Twitter pages
ACAs with stand-alone websites	20	15
ACAs with webpages included in government websites	1	0
ACAs without any website	1	1
Total	22	16

1.3.1 Facebook activity

Less than one half of the ACAs have Facebook pages.

While the average Facebook penetration level for ACAs on a country basis (country ACA Facebook followers divided by total country Facebook subscribers) for the 20 countries was relatively modest at 1.06%, there were some notable exceptions.

Four of the six countries showing penetration levels in excess of the Facebook country ACA average of 1.06% also had follower numbers greater than estimated annual visits to their websites; details are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: African ACAs with significant Facebook penetration levels

ACAs	Estimated annual website visits	Website penetration %	Facebook followers	Facebook follower penetration %
Egypt	404,384	0.82%	630,827	1.49%
Nigeria (2 ACAs)	351,944	0.28%	576,137	2.12%
Seychelles	300	0.42%	850	1.20%
Tunisia	28,920	0.37%	106,104	1.43%

1.3.2 Twitter activity

The number of ACAs with Twitter pages is modest.

The average Twitter penetration level for ACAs on a country basis (country ACA Twitter followers divided by total country Twitter subscribers) for the 14 countries was, however, very high at 23.73%. Twitter country ACA penetration levels exceeded Twitter internet user penetration levels in six countries (Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe).

Two of the countries recording above average country ACA Twitter penetration levels also had Twitter follower numbers that exceeded estimated annual visits to their websites; details are provided in Table 5.

While the majority of visits to the Nigeria and Zimbabwe ACA websites were made by local residents, the local resident proportion of Twitter followers for these ACAs is not known but it is assumed to be significant.

Table 5: ACAs with significant follower numbers

ACAs	Estimated annual website visits	Facebook followers	Twitter followers	Twitter follower penetration %	Twitter internet user penetration %
Nigeria (2 ACAs)	351,944	576,137	1,172,400	59.82%	1.55%
Zimbabwe	260	0.42%	48,500	28.78%	2.01%

2. Reporting activity

The availability of the following categories of key reports on ACA websites or on web pages of national government websites was examined:

- National Anti-Corruption Strategies
- ACA strategic plans
- ACA annual reports

Details of the availability of the above reports on ACA websites are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Availability of reports on ACA websites

	National anti-corruption strategy	ACA annual report	ACA strategic plan
Available on ACA website	8	14	8
Available on another national non-ACA website	3	0	0
Exists but not available on any website	6	0	0
Being prepared	6	0	0
Not prepared	7	16	22
Total	30	30	30

N.B. One Nigerian ACA with a website and the Ugandan ACA which only has social media sites are not included in Table 6.

Coverage of ACA digital platform activity in the above-mentioned reports, particularly those relating to social media, was also examined.

2.1 Publication of national anti-corruption strategies

Less than one-third of African ACAs with websites have published their respective national anti-corruption strategy on their website.

While the role of the media in national anti-corruption strategies is addressed in the eleven national anti-corruption strategies reviewed when preparing this blog, references to the role of social media are limited. Egypt's National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019-2024), Namibia's National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2019) and Sierra Leone's National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019-2023) make mention of social media activity,

The Namibia and Sierra Leone strategies outlined particular roles for social media activities.

Morocco's ACA published a study in 2019 that assisted its preparation of a supporting communication strategy for its National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2015-2025). This study listed social media as one of the key success factors; viz. "The body must open up on social media and have "an online platform or space", which it must maintain and control in order to get closer to its target segments and to be responsive".

2.2 Publication of ACA annual reports

Only 14 of the 30 African ACAs identified in Table 6 have

recently published their annual reports (or de facto annual reports) on their websites. Specific reference to the use of social media was made in 8 ACA annual reports.

The Ghana ACA noted in its 2018 annual report the use of social media by the Ghana chapter of Transparency International. The Kenya ACA provided statistics about website hits and social media followers in its 2018 annual report. In its 2017 annual report the Mauritius ACA gave a detailed discussion about its social media activity including its approach for using Facebook.

The executive summary for the Morocco ACA's 2019 annual report noted that the ACA had to address its social media strategy in the course of developing its overall communication strategy.

Brief references to the use of social media were made in the Namibia (2019), Rwanda (2019), Sierra Leone (2019) and South Africa (2020) ACA annual reports.

2.3 Publication of ACA strategic plans

The modest number of ACA strategic plans that have been prepared recently is very surprising.

Five of the ACA strategic plans include specific references to the use of social media (Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Togo).

Kenya, Malawi and Rwanda ACAs set out specific strategies and

performance indicators for social media in their strategic plans. The Sierra Leone ACA set out specific strategies and progress markers while the Togo ACA set out details of the proposed launch of its website.

2.4 Overview of ACA online reporting activity

Assuming it is appropriate for all ACAs (including both Nigerian and Ugandan ACAs) to publish country anti-corruption strategies and their annual reports and strategic plans on their websites, the number of these documents that may be potentially published stands at 96 documents. Only 30 documents were published on ACA websites. This outcome falls short of the standards envisaged in the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

3. Social media performance and document publication correlations

ACA Facebook and Twitter subscriber penetration levels are weakly related to the number of ACA National Anti-Corruption Strategy, strategic plan and annual report publications placed on ACA websites.

While ACAs with relatively high Facebook and Twitter subscriber penetration levels have not generally been relatively energetic publishers of the above-mentioned reports, their social media posting activity has been sufficiently active to attract significant numbers of followers; this is most evident in the case of Kenya, Nigeria,

Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

ACA Facebook and Twitter subscriber penetration levels have, with a few exceptions, often substantially exceeded ACA website penetration levels.

4. Conclusion

The survey demonstrates a very limited level of publication on ACA websites of ACA reports in the three key categories identified in section 2.

It could add credibility to ACA professionalism and integrity to publish these reports even if some of the more sensitive detail concerning methodology and programming was omitted.

While ACA websites offer potential public engagement opportunities, social media activity has the potential for even higher engagement levels. It should be borne in mind that social media use in Africa, while a relatively recent phenomenon, is rapidly becoming extremely popular. The analysis demonstrates that while overall ACA use of social media is relatively limited, some ACAs have made considerable progress, particularly with the use of Twitter.

Those ACAs with websites but who currently do not have Facebook or Twitter pages should certainly consider these social networking sites as a means to gaining public confidence in anti-corruption activities and their cooperation in combatting anti-corruption investigations.

Appendix: United Nations Convention Against Corruption

Financial management and public reporting provisions

Article 9

Public procurement and management of public finances

2. Each State Party shall, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, take appropriate measures to promote transparency and accountability in the management of public finances. Such measures shall encompass, inter alia:

- (a) Procedures for the adoption of the national budget;
- (b) Timely reporting on revenue and expenditure;
- (c) A system of accounting and auditing standards and related oversight;
- (d) Effective and efficient systems of risk management and internal control; and
- (e) Where appropriate, corrective action in the case of

failure to comply with the requirements established in this paragraph.

Article 10

Public reporting

Taking into account the need to combat corruption, each State Party shall, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its domestic law, take such measures as may be necessary to enhance transparency in its public administration, including with regard to its organization, functioning and decision-making processes, where appropriate. Such measures may include, inter alia:

(a) Adopting procedures or regulations allowing members of the general public to obtain, where appropriate, information on the organization, functioning and decision-making processes of its public administration and, with due regard for the protection of privacy and personal data, on decisions and legal acts that concern members of the public;

(b) Simplifying administrative procedures, where appropriate, in order to facilitate public access to the competent decision-making authorities; and

(c) Publishing information, which may include periodic reports on the risks of corruption in its public administration.

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who previously worked extensively in UK local government finance and in the Cabinet Office. He was a leader for the introduction of digital communication in UK public service delivery. John Leonardo is a PFM expert with extensive worldwide experience. They are both directors of PFMConnect, a consultancy providing online support in the fields of public finance and digital communication.

Regional Africa/Asia SIDS PFM digital transparency update



**Regional Africa/Asia SIDS PFM
digital transparency update
December 2020**

By John Leonardo, PFMConnect

Our June 2020 video “[Improving PFM digital transparency in SIDS finance ministries](#)” examined finance ministries (MoFs) use of digital platforms such as websites and social media to provide public financial management (PFM) related information in [small island developing states \(SIDS\)](#). Recent PFM digital transparency regional trends in Africa and Asia (including the Middle East) SIDS are examined in our “Regional Africa/Asia SIDS PFM digital transparency update” [video](#).

Africa/Asia SIDS PFM digital transparency regional trends

PFM digital transparency trends were analysed for 7 Africa/Asia SIDS where MoF websites were active in the 2020 September quarter to provide the basis for this regional trends analysis:

- Bahrain
- Cabo Verde
- Maldives
- Mauritius
- Seychelles
- Singapore
- Timor-Leste

Three Africa/Asia SIDS did not have active MoF websites in the 2020 September quarter.

Charts for the following regional indicators are presented:

- ***MoF website penetration levels for the 2020 March and September quarters.*** The figures used in these charts were obtained using a two-step process. Actual visit data for the March and September 2020 quarters was annualised to provide projections of estimated 2020 visits. The resulting 2020 annual MoF website visit projections were divided by the number of country internet users to obtain MoF website penetration levels.
- ***Domestic and non-resident visits to MoF websites for the 2020 March and September quarters;*** these charts reflect the percentage of visits to MoF websites attributable to local residents and non-residents in the 2020 March and September quarters based on actual visit data.
- ***Rates of change in MoF website visits;*** this data is based on changes to MoF visit levels between the 2020 March and September quarters.
- ***MoF Facebook penetration levels as at June 2020 and October 2020;*** these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Facebook follower numbers by the number of country Facebook subscribers.
- ***Changes in Facebook follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020;*** these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Facebook follower numbers.
- ***MoF Twitter penetration levels as at October 2020;*** these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Twitter follower numbers by the number of country Twitter subscribers.
- ***Changes in Twitter follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020;*** these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Twitter follower numbers.

Key regional analysis findings

Some of the key findings from our analysis are as follows:

- Estimated total Africa/Asia SIDS MoF 2020 visits in the 2020 September quarter were 11.53% higher than in the 2020 March quarter for the 6 MoFs where data was available for both quarters
- Total Africa/Asia SIDS local resident MoF visits to the above-mentioned 6 MoF websites increased by 26.89% in the 2020 September quarter over the 2020 March quarter whilst total non-resident MoF visits fell by 29.17%
- Africa/Asia SIDS MoF Facebook follower numbers (and overall Africa SIDS average MoF Facebook penetration levels) increased by 7.16% between June 2020 and October 2020 where comparative data was available
- Africa/Asia SIDS MoF Twitter follower numbers (and overall Africa SIDS average MoF Twitter penetration levels) increased by 41.03% between June 2020 and October 2020 where comparative data was available

Global SIDS PFM digital transparency update



Global SIDS PFM digital transparency update December 2020

By John Leonardo, PFMConnect

Our June 2020 video “[Improving PFM digital transparency in SIDS finance ministries](#)” examined finance ministries (MoFs) use of digital platforms such as websites and social media to provide public financial management (PFM) related information in small island developing states (SIDS). In this “Global SIDS PFM digital transparency update December 2020” [video](#) recent SIDS PFM digital transparency trends are examined on a regional and country basis.

Regional PFM digital transparency analysis

Global SIDS PFM digital transparency trends have been analysed

using the following regional classifications for countries where MoF websites were active:

- Africa/Asia/Middle East (7 countries)
- Caribbean (18 countries)
- Pacific (11 countries)

Non-active SIDS MoF websites in the 2020 September quarter in the above-mentioned regions were as follows:

- Africa/Asia/MiddleEast (3 countries)
- Caribbean (11 countries)
- Pacific (8 countries)

Charts for the following indicators are presented:

- ***MoF website penetration levels for the 2020 March and September quarters.*** The figures used in these charts were obtained using a two-step process. Actual visit data for the March and September 2020 quarters was annualised to provide projections of estimated 2020 visits. The resulting 2020 annual MoF website visit projections were divided by the number of country internet users to obtain MoF website penetration levels.

- ***Domestic and non-resident visits to MoF websites for the 2020 March and September quarters***; these charts reflect the percentage of visits to MoF websites attributable to local residents and non-residents in the 2020 March and September quarters based on actual visit data.
- ***Rates of change in MoF website visits***; this data is based on changes to MoF visit levels between the 2020 March and September quarters.
- ***MoF Facebook penetration levels as at June 2020 and October 2020***; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Facebook follower numbers by the number of country Facebook subscribers.
- ***Changes in Facebook follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020***; these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Facebook follower numbers.
- ***MoF Twitter penetration levels as at October 2020***; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Twitter follower numbers by the number of country Twitter subscribers.
- ***Changes in Twitter follower numbers between June 2020 and October 2020***; these charts reflect changes in the respective MoF Twitter follower numbers.

The above-mentioned regional analyses are also available here:

- Africa/Asia/Middle East
- Caribbean
- Pacific

Key regional analysis findings

Some of our key findings from the regional analysis are as follows:

- Increases were recorded in SIDS overall regional MoF penetration scores for SIDS MoF websites, SIDS Facebook followers and SIDS Twitter followers. This growth is partially attributable to MoF posts relating to COVID-19 topics.
- A material increase in the SIDS Caribbean MoF Twitter follower penetration score contributed to strong growth in the SIDS overall regional Twitter follower penetration score.
- The increased interest in MoF digital platforms also resulted in material increases in the proportion of MoF website visits attributable to local residents and a consequent reduction in the proportion of MoF website visits attributable to non-residents. This trend was particularly evident in the Pacific where there was strong growth in Papua New Guinea MoF local resident visits.

- In four of the SIDS countries with MoF Facebook pages, the number of Facebook followers exceeded estimated 2020 MoF website visits demonstrating the role social media can play in boosting transparency about SIDS MoF activities.

SIDS country PFM digital transparency analysis

SIDS PFM digital transparency trends have also been analysed for the 36 countries examined in the above-mentioned regional analysis.

Country charts presenting the following PFM digital transparency indicators are available:

- ***MoF website penetration levels for the 2020 September quarter.*** The figures used in these charts were obtained using a two-step process. Actual visit data for the September 2020 quarter was annualised to provide projections of estimated 2020 visits. The resulting 2020 annual MoF website visit projections were divided by the number of country internet users to obtain MoF website penetration levels.
- ***Domestic and non-resident visits to MoF websites for the 2020 September quarter;*** these charts reflect the percentage of visits to MoF websites attributable to local residents and non-residents in the 2020 September quarter based on actual visit data.

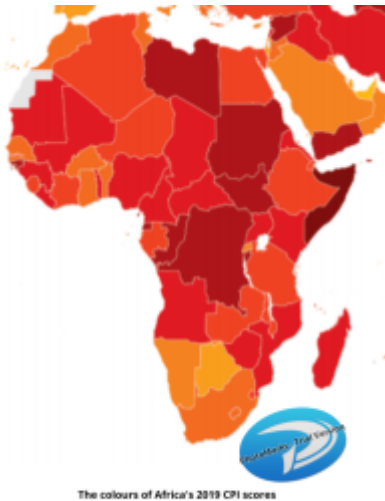
- ***MoF Facebook penetration levels as at October 2020***; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Facebook follower numbers by the number of country Facebook subscribers.
- ***MoF Twitter penetration levels as at October 2020***; these figures were obtained by dividing actual MoF Twitter follower numbers by the number of country Twitter subscribers.

Each country chart presents the following results for each indicator: the available country results, the average regional score and the average score for all SIDS countries where a MoF website was available.

Analyses of trends in key country PFM digital transparency indicators are also available here:

- Africa/Asia/Middle East
 - Caribbean
 - Pacific
-

Corruption and social media correlation outcomes in Africa



Does social media usage have any impact on country corruption levels? We have investigated the relationship between corruption and social media usage in Africa at a country level and present our findings below.

Methodology

Transparency International's [2019 CPI scores](#) published in January 2020 are taken to represent the measure of corruption in Africa.

The social media activity at a country level is taken as the subscriber numbers provided for Facebook by Internet World

Stats at www.internetworldstats.com as at 31stDecember 2019 and for Twitter by We Are Social as quoted in their 'Digital 2020' publication.

The Africa Population numbers are mid-year 2020 estimates taken from the United Nations Population Division published by Internet World Stats at www.internetworldstats.com.

Facebook data was available for 54 African countries in the CPI index but Twitter data was only available for 52 of those countries. These 52 countries were taken as our starting point.

We then removed from the list of 52 countries the 4 countries with distinctly higher corruption levels than the remainder as they did not offer results consistent with the remaining states which we consider to reflect the disruptive effect of very high corruption levels on social and economic behaviour. This leaves a sample of 48 countries.

Statistical robustness

The sample of 48 countries provides a confidence level of 95%. The margin of error is 5%.

Statistical Method	Facebook Results	Twitter Results
Pearson	0.657	0.699
Spearman	0.672	0.625

Conclusion

The above results are relatively robust from a statistical perspective. These demonstrate that, for the data used in our two samples, a strong relationship exists between 2019 CPI scores and per capita penetration levels of country Facebook and Twitter subscribers. This implies that the greater the level of public intercourse via social media the lower the level of corruption in the country concerned.