

Central Africa Fiscal Transparency 2023



The U.S. State Department annually publishes assessments of the quality of fiscal transparency in countries that are eligible to receive U.S. foreign assistance. We outline in this [video](#) the overall state of Central Africa fiscal transparency in the 2022 calendar year drawing on the results of the 2023 fiscal transparency assessments for nine Central African countries.

These assessments, published on 27 June 2023, found that while all nine countries did not meet the U.S. State Department's minimum fiscal transparency requirements, six countries demonstrated significant progress was evident in 2022.

The U.S. State Department's recommendations for improving

fiscal transparency in the nine countries not meeting minimum fiscal transparency requirements are presented in the video and cover government budget, audit, natural resource extraction and sovereign wealth fund activities.

The most numerous deficiencies identified in fiscal transparency in Central African countries in 2022 were in the following government budget processes:

- Publishing executive budget proposals within a reasonable period
- Producing end-of-year reports within a reasonable period
- Eliminating off-budget accounts or subjecting them to adequate oversight and audit

We also examine the relationship between identified fiscal transparency deficiencies and 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index scores. In addition, we suggest sources of technical assistance that governments might access to assist their efforts to improve fiscal transparency and indicate how fiscal transparency improvement activities could be monitored.

You can access the individual country reports here:

- [Burundi](#)
- [Cameroon](#)
- [Central African Republic](#)

- [Chad](#)
 - [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)
 - [Republic of the Congo](#)
 - [Equatorial Guinea](#)
 - [Gabon](#)
 - [Sao Tome and Principe](#)
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Corruption in Commonwealth Africa (a US perspective)



Introduction

The United States State Department's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* ("country reports") strive to provide a factual and objective record on the status of human rights worldwide. The 2021 country reports were published on 12 April 2022.

Section 4 of the country reports provides an assessment of Corruption and Lack of Transparency in Government which addresses the extent to which a country's law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials and the level of implementation of these laws.

Scores for Commonwealth Africa countries published by Transparency International in their 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) report demonstrate that the majority of the nineteen Commonwealth Africa countries failed to increase their 2012 CPI scores during 2012-2021. The

weaknesses in the implementation of criminal penalties for corruption by officials have no doubt contributed in some way to the lack of progress in addressing corruption in a number of Commonwealth Africa countries. Further discussion on corruption trends in Commonwealth Africa countries is provided [here](#).

Details of the overview comments for Commonwealth Africa countries in the 2021 country reports are provided below.

[Botswana](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally sought to implement these laws effectively. Officials tasked with enforcement lacked adequate training and resources, however. Media reports of government corruption continued. During the year there were numerous reports of government corruption, including allegations tied to tenders issued by local governments for COVID-19 projects, such as renovating public facilities so that they complied with virus prevention measures, as well as in the acquisition of personal protective equipment. A 2019 poll by Transparency International found that 7 percent of those polled had paid bribes to government officials, an increase from the 1 percent who reported paying bribes in a 2015 poll.”

[Cameroon](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government

corruption. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The law identifies different offenses as corruption, including influence peddling, involvement in a prohibited employment, and failure to declare a known conflict of interest. Reporting corruption was encouraged through exempting whistleblowers from criminal proceedings. In addition to the laws, the National Anticorruption Agency (CONAC), Special Criminal Court, National Financial Investigation Agency, Ministry in Charge of Supreme State Audit, and Audit Bench of the Supreme Court also contributed to fighting corruption in the country. CONAC, the most prominent of the anticorruption agencies, was constrained by the absence of any legislative or presidential mandate that could empower it to combat corruption. There were reports that senior officials sentenced to prison were not always required to forfeit their ill-gotten gains.”

Eswatini

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.”

Gambia

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not credibly investigate or prosecute any official accused of corruption. There were many allegations of government corruption.”

Ghana

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by government officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption. Corruption was present in all branches of government, according to media and NGOs, including recruitment into the security services. Since the first special prosecutor took office in 2018, no corruption case undertaken by that office resulted in a conviction. When the new special prosecutor took office in August, his staff included one investigator and one prosecutor, both seconded from other offices.

The government took steps to implement laws intended to foster more transparency and accountability in public affairs. In July 2020 authorities commissioned the Right to Information (RTI) secretariat to provide support to RTI personnel in the public sector; however, some civil society organizations stated the government had not made sufficient progress implementing the law.

The country continued use of the national anticorruption online reporting dashboard, for the coordination of all anticorruption efforts of various governmental bodies.”

Kenya

“The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year. Officials frequently engaged in allegedly corrupt

practices with impunity. Despite public progress in fighting corruption, the government continued to face hurdles in implementing relevant laws effectively. The slow processing of corruption cases was exacerbated by COVID-19 containment measures, with courts lacking sufficient technological capacity to hear cases remotely.”

Lesotho

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corruption by officials. The government did not implement the law effectively, and some officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.”

Malawi

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.

The government, in cooperation with donors, continued implementation of an action plan to pursue cases of corruption, reviewed how the “Cashgate” corruption scandal occurred, and introduced internal controls and improved systems to prevent further occurrences. Progress on investigations and promised reforms was slow.”

Mauritius

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year.”

Mozambique

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corrupt acts by officials; however, the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of corruption in all branches and at all levels of government during the year.”

Namibia

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of official corruption; however, the government did not implement the law effectively. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.”

Nigeria

“Although the law provides criminal penalties for conviction of official corruption, the government did not consistently implement the law, and government employees, including elected officials, frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. Massive, widespread, and pervasive corruption affected all levels of government, including the judiciary and security services. The constitution provides immunity from

civil and criminal prosecution for the president, vice president, governors, and deputy governors while in office. There were numerous allegations of government corruption during the year.”

Rwanda

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corruption by officials and private persons transacting business with the government that include imprisonment and fines, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year, particularly related to road construction projects. The law also provides for citizens who report requests for bribes by government officials to receive financial rewards when officials are prosecuted and convicted.”

Seychelles

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corruption by officials, and the government implemented the law effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year.”

Sierra Leone

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption.”

South Africa

“The law provides for criminal penalties for conviction of official corruption, and the government generally did not implement the law effectively, and officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.”

Tanzania

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. There were isolated reports of government corruption during the year. President Hassan took several steps to signal a commitment to fighting corruption. These included surprise inspections of ministries, hospitals, and the port of Dar es Salaam, often followed by the immediate dismissal or suspension of officials.”

Uganda

“The law provides criminal penalties of up to 12 years’ imprisonment and confiscation of the convicted persons’ property for official corruption.

Nevertheless, transparency civil society organizations stated the government did not implement the law effectively, and there were numerous reports of government corruption during the year. Officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity, and many corruption cases remained pending for years.”

Zambia

“The law provides criminal penalties for officials convicted of corruption, and the government attempted to enforce the law but did so inconsistently. Officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. Although the government collaborated with the international community and civil society organizations to improve capacity to investigate and prevent corruption, anticorruption NGOs observed that, the enforcement rate was low among senior government officials and in the civil service.

According to Transparency International Zambia, the conviction rate for those prosecuted for corruption was 10 to 20 percent. The Patriotic Front government did not effectively or consistently apply laws against corrupt officials; it selectively applied anticorruption law to target opposition leaders or officials who ran afoul of it. Transparency International Zambia further reported that, during the Patriotic Front administration, officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.”

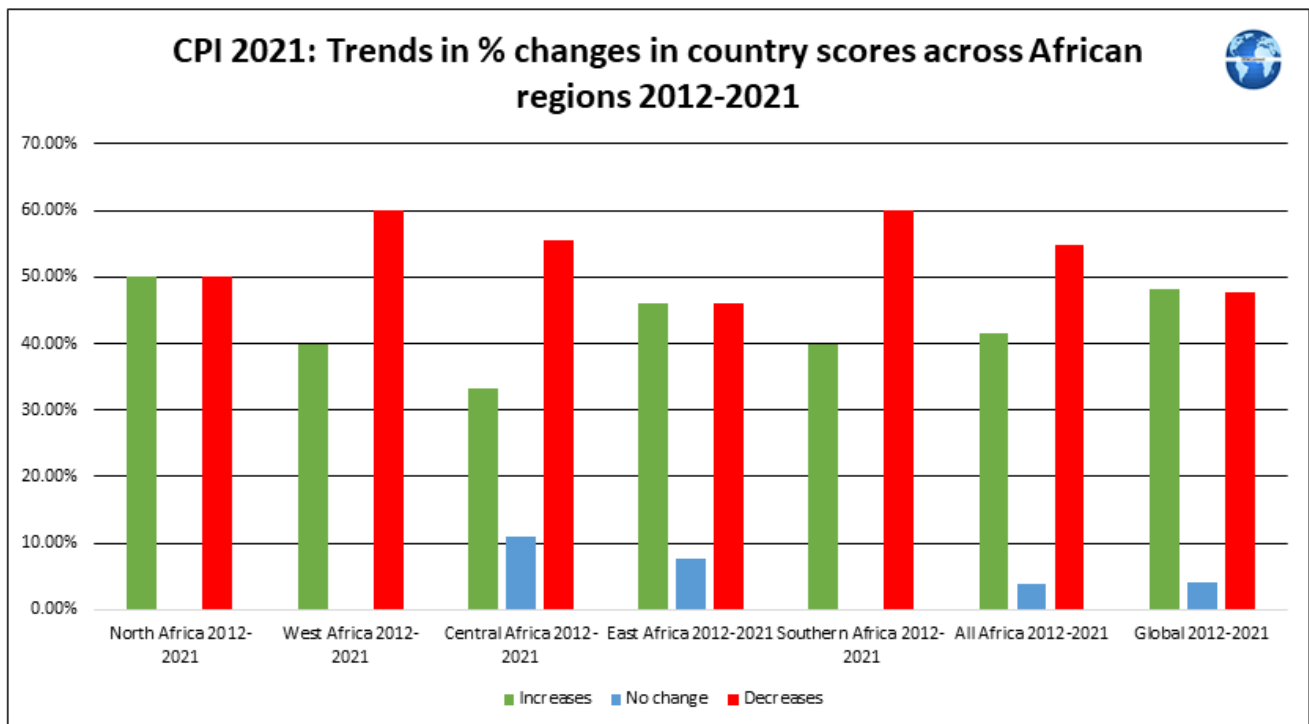
Conclusion

The United States State Department has assessed that more than half of Commonwealth Africa countries are not effectively implementing penalties for corrupt activities. This outcome is similar to the prevailing overall trend in CPI scores reported for 2012-2021.

Considerable effort is required by Commonwealth Africa countries and their development partners in the short to

medium term to reverse the current unsatisfactory trend in implementation of penalties for corrupt activities.

Corruption in Central Africa (a US perspective)



Introduction

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Scores for Central African countries published by Transparency International in their 2021 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) report demonstrate that Central Africa has been the worst performing African region in terms of improvements in CPI scores during 2012-2021. It is not therefore surprising that the country reports for Central African countries reveal shortcomings in all Central African countries in the implementation of current criminal penalties for corruption by officials. Further discussion on corruption trends in Central African countries is provided [here](#).

Details of the overview comments for Central African countries in the 2021 country reports are provided below.

[Burundi](#)

“The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption, but the government did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year. Some high-level government officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The constitution provides for the establishment of a High Court of Justice to review accusations of serious crimes against high-ranking government officials, but the court does not yet exist. The anticorruption law also applies to all other citizens, but no high-ranking official to date has stood trial for corruption.”

Cameroon

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The law identifies different offenses as corruption, including influence peddling, involvement in a prohibited employment, and failure to declare a known conflict of interest. Reporting corruption was encouraged through exempting whistleblowers from criminal proceedings. In addition to the laws, the National Anticorruption Agency (CONAC), Special Criminal Court, National Financial Investigation Agency, Ministry in Charge of Supreme State Audit, and Audit Bench of the Supreme Court also contributed to fighting corruption in the country. CONAC, the most prominent of the anticorruption agencies, was constrained by the absence of any legislative or presidential mandate that could empower it to combat corruption. There were reports that senior officials sentenced to prison were not always required to forfeit their ill-gotten gains.”

Central African Republic

“Although the law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, the government did not effectively implement the law, and officials often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. Corruption and nepotism have long been pervasive in all branches of government. Weak government capacity further limited attempts to address fully the problem of public-sector corruption. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.”

Chad

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but authorities did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.

According to Freedom House’s *Freedom in The World 2021* report, corruption, bribery, and nepotism were “endemic” in the country, and prominent journalists, labor leaders, and religious figures faced harsh reprisals for speaking out concerning corruption, including arrest, prosecution, and exile.”

Republic of Congo

“The law provides for criminal penalties for corruption by officials. The government did not apply the anticorruption law, however, and many officials engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were some reports of government corruption during the year.”

Democratic Republic of Congo

“The law provides criminal penalties for corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. Local NGOs blamed these levels of corruption, in part, to the lack of a law providing for access to public information.

In 2020 President Tshisekedi created the Agency for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption (APLC). A special service under the Office of the President, the APLC is responsible for coordinating all government entities charged with fighting corruption and money laundering, conducting investigations with the full authority of judicial police, and overseeing transfer of public corruption cases to appropriate judicial authorities. The Platform for the Protection for Whistleblowers in Africa asserted that APLC's record was mixed, without visible results."

Equatorial Guinea

"While the law provides severe criminal penalties for official corruption, the government did not effectively implement the law. There are no specific laws concerning conflict of interest or nepotism. On May 10, the government passed an anticorruption measure, Law No. 1/2021, imposing stricter standards of behavior on public officials regarding their interactions with the formal and informal private sector.

Officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. There were numerous reports of government corruption. The president and members of his inner circle continued to amass personal fortunes from the revenues associated with monopolies on all domestic commercial ventures, as well as timber and oil exports. Corruption at all levels of government was a severe problem.

According to Freedom House, the budget process was "opaque." The government continued to improve fiscal transparency, including auditing state-owned enterprises and public debt using international accounting firms and publishing data on

public-sector debt in the budget.”

Gabon

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of corruption by officials, but the government did not implement the law effectively. There were isolated new reports of government corruption during the year. According to media and NGOs, officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.”

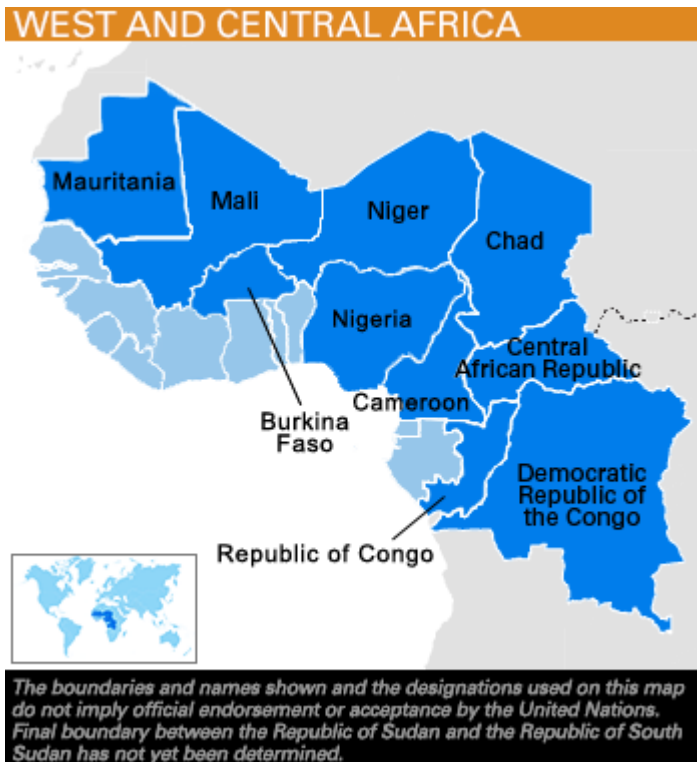
Sao Tome and Principe

“The law provides criminal penalties for conviction of official corruption, but the government generally did not implement the law effectively. There were numerous reports of government corruption during the year.”

Conclusion

The country reports for Central African countries demonstrate that the fight against corruption is far more than passing anti-corruption legislation. Criminal penalties for corruption by officials must be enforced if significant progress is to be made in addressing corruption.

Central Africa PFM digital transparency recent trends



Introduction

Transparency of public finances is a key element of a public financial management (PFM) system enabling public scrutiny of government actions and intentions. From our September 2020 “Improving PFM digital transparency in African finance ministries” [presentation](#) we now examine recent trends in Central Africa PFM from a digital transparency perspective by presenting data for seven Central African countries that was identified during our examination of 45 African ministries of finance (MoFs) current use of digital platforms to promote PFM transparency.

PFM transparency is important

Transparency of public finances is achieved by providing information on PFM which is comprehensive, consistent, and accessible to users. The World Bank's September 2020 report ["Enhancing Government Effectiveness and Transparency – The Fight Against Corruption"](#) (link to be provided) has highlighted the importance of ensuring greater transparency in government operations.

Identifying PFM digital transparency trends

The following statistics were prepared to help identify PFM digital transparency trends:

- Country internet usage

- MoF website visits during May/July 2020 and projected annualised visits for 2020

- Domestic and non-resident visits to MoF websites

- Country Facebook usage

- MoF Facebook page follower numbers

- Country Twitter usage

- MoF Twitter follower numbers

Penetration levels for MoF website users, Facebook and Twitter followers were subsequently identified to demonstrate the level of usage of these digital platforms and key recent PFM digital transparency trends.

Key trends

Trends in the key PFM digital transparency indicators for the seven Central African finance ministries with websites during the period May/July 2020 are available. These can be accessed by clicking on to the country links below:

- [Burundi](#)
- [Cameroon](#)
- [Central African Rep.](#)
- [Chad](#)
- [Congo](#)
- [Congo, Dem. Rep.](#)
- [Gabon](#)

A video showing Central African country PFM digital transparency trends for key PFM digital transparency indicators is available [here](#).

An additional video showing comparative results on a PFM digital transparency indicator basis across Central African countries is available [here](#).

Questions?

Please contact us at team@pfmconnect.com if you have any questions about this material.