

**East 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 East Africa PFM from a digital transparency perspective by presenting data for twelve East 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 twelve East 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:

- [Djibouti](#)
- [Ethiopia](#)

- [Kenya](#)
- [Madagascar](#)
- [Mauritius](#)
- [Rwanda](#)
- [Seychelles](#)
- [Somalia](#)
- [South Sudan](#)
- [Sudan](#)
- [Tanzania](#)
- [Uganda](#)

A video showing East 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 East African countries is available [here](#).

Questions?

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

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
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- 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.

Note: Improving PFM digital transparency in African finance ministries



by John Leonardo

Introduction

This note provides an introduction to our “Improving PFM digital transparency in African finance ministries” [presentation](#) which is also available as a [video](#). Transparency of public finances is a key element of a public financial management (PFM) system enabling public scrutiny of government actions and intentions. Transparency of public finances is achieved by providing information on PFM which is comprehensive, consistent, and accessible to users.

Ministries of Finance (MoFs) play a leading role in promoting transparency of public finances. The World Bank's September 2020 report "[Enhancing Government Effectiveness and Transparency – The Fight Against Corruption](#)" has highlighted the importance of ensuring greater transparency in government operations.

Transparency is an important factor in African public financial management (PFM) in view of historically relatively weak PFM in many African countries, including transparency activities, and relatively poor recent progress in curbing corruption.

PFM digital transparency

In a PFM context, digital transparency can be defined as the process of providing PFM related information using digital platforms such as websites and social media; for example, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. PFM digital transparency should be an important part of African MoFs' digital government strategies.

Currently African MoFs employ PFM digital transparency practices using a range of platforms such as websites and social media (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, LinkedIn). They publish a range of PFM and related material on the latter platforms.

Current PFM digital transparency trends analysis

We have examined MoF website, Facebook and Twitter use to obtain an understanding of Africa MoFs' current use of digital platforms.

The following statistics are presented and reviewed in the presentation:

- 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

We have also examined penetration levels for MoF website users, Facebook and Twitter followers to demonstrate the level of usage of these digital platforms. In addition, we have identified correlations that may exist between digital platform use and leading economic and governance indicators including those relating to e-government.

Some key findings

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

- Six of the twenty-five MoFs with Facebook pages had higher Facebook follower numbers than estimated 2020 MoF visits to the respective websites demonstrating the role that MoF Facebook pages can play in boosting PFM transparency
- MoF social media content approaches differ quite markedly with MoFs generally publishing a wider range of material on their Facebook pages compared with the material included in tweets on Twitter.
- African MoF social media activity is helping to raise awareness about African MoFs' PFM activities. Some African MoFs have generated considerable interest in their activities using social media.
- The proportion of non-domestic visitors to MoF websites varies considerably demonstrating how digital structures enable reach to the diaspora and other international stakeholders
- Use of digital communication mechanisms to strengthen African MoFs' operational capacity and support PFM reform plans have to date been limited prior to the onset of COVID-19

- African MOFs overall progress to date in the use of digital platforms to promote transparency has been relatively modest

Recommendations

We recommend African MoFs should take advantage of the opportunities provided by digital platforms to improve their PFM digital transparency by:

- Addressing identified PEFA transparency gaps which will result in more PFM material being published
- Establishing Facebook pages if these are not already in place
- Posting a variety of PFM related information on Facebook pages to increase community interaction and promote transparency
- Preparing PFM digital transparency action plans to improve PFM digital transparency performance and support PFM reform activities.

We have also outlined the nature of the tasks that should be included in PFM digital transparency action plans.

Regional analyses of trends in key PFM digital transparency indicators for all 45 African finance ministries are available

for:

[Central Africa](#)

[East Africa](#)

[North Africa](#)

[Southern Africa](#)

[West Africa](#)

**World e-government coverage
remains limited**

E-Government Survey 2020

Digital Government in
the Decade of Action for
Sustainable Development

With addendum on COVID-19 Response

World e-government coverage remains limited according to the 2020 edition of the [United Nations E-Government Survey](#) which was released on 10 July 2020 (1). This is in spite of most countries and municipalities currently pursuing digital government strategies, many with innovative initiatives.

The 2020 ranking of the 193 UN Member States in terms of digital government – capturing the scope and quality of online services, status of telecommunication infrastructure and existing human capacity – is led by Denmark, the Republic of Korea, and Estonia, followed by Finland, Australia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States of America, the Netherlands, Singapore, Iceland, Norway and Japan.

Among the least developed countries, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Cambodia have become leaders in digital government development, advancing from the middle to the high E-Government Development Index (EGDI) group in 2020. Mauritius, the Seychelles, and South Africa are leading the e-government ranking in Africa. Overall, 65 per cent of Member States are at the high or very high EGDI level.

In responding to the health emergency, governments have put in place new tools, such as dedicated COVID-19 information portals, hackathons, e-services for supply of medical goods, virtual medical appointments, self-diagnosis apps and e-permits for curfews. Many countries were quick to deploy tracking and tracing apps, and apps for working and learning from home.

Innovative digital government responses to COVID-19 include online dashboards in Canada and Australia to share information and track emergency responses. In China, chatbots are used to assess patients' risk of being infected. A community engagement app in Estonia allowed local governments to directly interact with their constituents, including through sharing COVID-19 information, posting photos and videos and even organizing virtual events. In Croatia, a "virtual doctor" is powered by artificial intelligence and developed by technology firms in cooperation with epidemiologists. In London, the use of cameras, sensors and AI algorithms, normally intended to control traffic, now measures distance between pedestrians to control social distance.

E-government progress still

hindered by digital divide

As a development tool, the E-Government Survey examines countries' strengths, challenges and opportunities, and informs policies and strategies. The 2020 edition found that progress has been made across all regions, even in the least developed countries. Over 22 per cent of countries were promoted to higher levels of e-government development.

Yet, despite the gains and major investments in e-government by many countries, the digital divide persists. Seven out of eight countries with low scores are in Africa and belong to the least developed countries group. The regional average index scores for countries in Africa are almost one third lower (at 0.3914) than the world average EGDI of 0.60.

Alongside these trends, the COVID-19 pandemic has now not only reinvigorated the role of digital government in its conventional delivery of public services and in ensuring business continuity, it has also brought about innovative ways in managing the crisis, such as in contact tracing, e-health, online learning, and remote working.

About the UN E-Government Survey

The UN E-Government Survey, published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), is prepared over a two-year period following an established methodology. It looks at how digital government can facilitate integrated policies and services across 193 UN Member States. The Survey supports

countries' efforts to provide effective, accountable and inclusive digital services to all and to bridge the digital divide and leave no one behind.

(1) This blog is an amended version of the accompanying [UN press release](#)