



## FISCAL OPENNESS ACCELERATOR

Fiscal Transparency for Public Participation  
for Better Use of Public Resources



GIFT

## FOA Countries Meeting

22 July 2021 | 7:30 – 9:30 AM EDT

Zoom Meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88191825608>

### MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Topic	Inputs / Notes
Welcome Remarks	<p>The meeting was facilitated by Juan Pablo Guerrero of GIFT. He welcomed participants and shared that the main objective of the meeting was to provide updates on the progress from Liberia, Nigeria, and Senegal within the fiscal transparency and public participation workstreams of the FOA project. The discussion also aimed to know more about the challenges each country faced and explore how these can be addressed moving forward.</p> <p>The following representatives from invited countries joined the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Anne Nzegwu, Ministry of Budget and National Planning, Nigeria</li><li>• Mr. Johnson Williams, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Liberia</li><li>• Mr. Mor Diouf, Ministry of Finance and Budget, Senegal</li></ul> <p>Other participants who also joined the meeting were Suad Hasan of IBP and Marianne Fabian of GIFT. Aminata Fall from IBP Senegal also attended.</p>



## FISCAL OPENNESS ACCELERATOR

Fiscal Transparency for Public Participation  
for Better Use of Public Resources



GIFT

General FOA Project Updates by IBP/GIFT	<p>The GIFT/IBP team started the meeting by providing the following country-level updates for Benin and South Africa:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benin has updated their action plan and engaged in additional initiatives that put emphasis on the value of integrating public participation features in the current version of the BousProb mobile application. A series of meetings and peer-learning events were also organized with Benin from May to June 2021. From these meetings, the Benin FOA team provided requests for technical assistance for an in-field expert and onboarding of specific service providers on communications and logistics. Currently, GIFT/IBP also await their submission of progress assessments tables vis-a-vis GIFT/IBP recommendations on advancing selected fiscal transparency indicators at the country level. For next steps, GIFT/IBP looks forward to supporting the Benin FOA process by facilitating the recruitment of their requested expert and service providers. Additional meetings and workshops on fiscal transparency are also to be organized.</li><li>• The main update shared for South Africa was their key milestone on the selection of Pre-Budget Consultations as their pilot public participation mechanism, and the co-creation of their draft FOA Action Plan. To do this, from April to May 2021, internal consultations within the National Treasury were held. A learning activity in June and an Action Plan Workshop held in July also helped in defining the objectives, scope, target audience, format, intended impact, and initial milestones of Pre-Budget Consultations. Moving forward, the South Africa FOA Advisory Group shall seek endorsement of the draft Action Plan from National Treasury officials. GIFT/IBP shall also facilitate the recruitment of a public participation expert and local assistant to support the FOA process and help them implement activities identified under the draft Action Plan.</li></ul>
Country-specific Updates around the table on the FOA Public Participation and Fiscal Transparency Workstreams	<p><b>Nigeria</b></p> <p>Dr. Anne Nzegwu of the Ministry of Budget and National Planning shared that despite slow progress on their end in the past two months, the Nigeria FOA Advisory group has been meeting, and they are now ready to pick up on activities moving forward. The setback was due to budget approval delays in Nigeria. As such, she relayed that they will be needing more support from GIFT/IBP.</p> <p>Dr. Nzegwu said that they are looking forward to engaging the local technical experts and documentation assistant to work with the Nigeria FOA team. She noted that by the first week of August, they should have clear dates and activities under the FOA project. Their next steps would be to get endorsement from senior officials, narrow down the list of potential</p>



pilot public participation mechanism options within the Advisory Group, and organize a consultative forum with a broader set of stakeholders.

When requested to elaborate more on the scope and objectives of the consultative forum, Dr. Nzegwu relayed that it will be a venue to present and discuss potential FOA projects and get more inputs from CSOs and interested citizens outside the FOA Advisory Group. Prior to the conduct of the consultative forum, she also relayed that the Advisory Group is expected to meet twice to narrow down their options to two or three mechanisms to be presented for consultation. The Advisory Group shall look first into the pros and cons of each possible pilot project. She emphasized that it is important to do the consultation process in such a way that citizens will still be able to provide more ideas and recommendations on the design of such mechanisms.

To get more updates on the fiscal transparency workstream of the project, Dr. Anne advised the GIFT/IBP team to directly reach out to the focal person in the Budget Department of the Ministry, and loop her in conversations. She will be supporting follow up activities with senior officials, if needed.

### Senegal

Mr. Mor Diouf of the Ministry of Finance and Budget shared that they have been planning to organize a meeting with CSOs and other organizations to discuss potential FOA pilot mechanisms, but there are challenges. He acknowledged that they are late, but they remain committed to the FOA project and continue to work on institutionalizing the FOA Advisory Group in Senegal.

In terms of fiscal transparency, he informed the group that they have been publishing all key budget-related documents online from the Treasury and Budget Department, as this is part of their accountability process.

Mr. Diouf committed to share via email to the GIFT/IBP team the composition/membership of the Advisory Group. He shared that they had two initial meetings with selected civil society organizations, however, there is a need to launch and reorganize the group.

Juan Pablo Guerrero relayed that the IBP/GIFT is eager to share with Senegal via a meeting, two to three international experiences on forms of participation that are practical and efficient, and can be replicated/adapted to the Senegal context.

Mr. Diouf said it would be good to have discussions with members of CSOs and government representatives during budget preparation. He noted that there have been some budget reductions made, and this makes



the whole process more challenging. As soon as they can launch the FOA process, he mentioned that an exchange with CSOs would be a good idea. After the on-going budget debates, a debriefing meeting can be scheduled. He said that they already discussed some possible mechanisms, but these need to be realized and further discussed through the FOA process.

Aminata Fall of IBP Senegal supported the idea of organizing an activity to benchmark and learn from international examples of public participation. But given the fiscal calendar, actions should be taken as soon as possible.

### Liberia

Mr. Johnson Williams of Ministry of Finance and Development Planning relayed to the group that the past months has been a challenging time for Liberia due to the ongoing pandemic, midterm elections, and the new PFM law which requires a change in fiscal year and transition to an annual budget calendar. He relayed that this year, the MoF will have to prepare two budgets.

In terms of institutionalizing the FOA Advisory Group in Liberia, he informed that the new terms of reference (ToR) had been drafted and approved by the new head of the Budget department. But, it still needs to be approved by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Williams shared that they already met with NGOs regarding the FOA project. From their initial discussions, they agreed that before adopting the ToR, it is important to get the Minister of Finance's endorsement. However, this is a challenge given all of the other on-going issues in Liberia. He also relayed that they were forced to reduce staff and others are working from home, so it is particularly difficult to get some tasks done.

Because of such challenges, Mr. Williams apologized about not having made any progress from the last updates provided. However, he said that they will have a meeting the next day with the Minister of Finance and ensure that the FOA project will be discussed with him. He shared that the Minister is passionate about promoting fiscal transparency, and he is hopeful that they will get final approval on the ToR and endorsement of a FOA mechanism.

Juan Pablo Guerrero empathized with the challenges shared by Mr. Williams, and noted that the FOA project should not be a burden to the Ministry. He relayed understanding of the concerns shared. To help address the challenge of reduced staff, he also highlighted the opportunity for the FOA project to support in this aspect by facilitating the hiring of people to assist the FOA Liberia team.



## FISCAL OPENNESS ACCELERATOR

Fiscal Transparency for Public Participation  
for Better Use of Public Resources



GIFT

Next steps and Closing Remarks	<p>The following are the summary of next steps and action items from the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The draft highlights of the meeting shall be disseminated after the session.</li><li>• The upcoming Stewards General Meeting in August 2021 shall provide another opportunity for each country to provide updates on their FOA process to other members of the network.</li><li>• Mr. Mor Diouf shall share with the GIFT/IBP team via email the composition of the FOA Advisory Group in Senegal.</li><li>• The GIFT/IBP team proposed to facilitate the recruitment of in-field coordinators to support implementation of the FOA project in Liberia and Senegal.</li><li>• The GIFT/IBP team proposed to organize a learning event on international experiences on public participation in Senegal.</li><li>• The GIFT/IBP team shall proceed with the recruitment and on-boarding of endorsed infield experts and coordinators in Nigeria, Benin, and South Africa.</li><li>• The GIFT/IBP team shall wait for the submission of the accomplished tool with updates on advancing selected fiscal transparency indicators at the country level for Benin, Liberia, and Nigeria.</li><li>• IBP/GIFT is also open to provide other forms of additional technical assistance that may be proposed.</li></ul>
--------------------------------	--