

IV. Build e-Transparency Online System

South Sudan should construct a centralized e-transparency system that distributes public economic and business data—free and in real time. Starting with the publication of transitional government officials’ asset declarations,⁷⁰ the online database should include public and government data—available on mobile devices—that includes the corporate business registry, national and local budgets, procurement deals, mining concession contracts, current oil production data, and more.⁷¹ The online platform should also be a place for companies to publish due diligence information in line with the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.⁷²

How would this action improve economic governance?

Most government data are unreported, opaque, or outdated. But transparency in the extractives sectors, for instance, is pivotal for rooting out corruption.⁷³ The e-system would be a public and central register that aggregates a wide array of economic data to promote full transparency of the country’s economy to ensure it works for more than a narrow set of political elite.

- With more open and accurate economic figures, South Sudan’s state and local governments would have better access to data on the public finances to ensure a fair budget, and one that significantly decreases the share for national security. The higher level of transparency would expose the inequity in government disbursement and expenditure.
- Legitimate investors would have more confidence in doing business in South Sudan with a transformation in public reporting on investments in the extractives industry, a more open public procurement process, and a system that rewards adherence to the country’s regulations.
- The e-system would be a resource for anti-corruption advocates, civil society, and political parties to hold leaders accountable and seek remediation for economic crimes and misconduct. By providing data for the public to dissect, the illicit economic activity in the country would be more transparent.

Has this policy worked?

South Sudan would set a new global standard for the availability and accessibility of public data. The country has taken initial steps to establish this system. In May 2015, South Sudan’s Anti-Corruption Commission (SSAC) installed data management software, the Asset Declaration Management System,⁷⁴ but the process failed to take hold during the conflict. In Rwanda, the e-procurement system publicizes government tenders and includes a blacklist of companies barred from doing business with the government.⁷⁵ Similarly, in Armenia, various e-governance tools include a system for the publication of asset declarations and the expansion of e-procurement tools.⁷⁶ Both efforts have improved transparency in public procurement.

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What are the steps to implementation?

The implementation of an e-transparency system would tie into the R-ARCSS, in line with Chapter 4 of the peace agreement and Public Procurement Bill passed in 2018.⁷⁷ Under the R-ARCSS, a new Economic and Financial Management Authority (EFMA)⁷⁸ should pursue an e-transparency system as the initial project. The R-ARCSS also calls for a registry of lands and issuance of title deeds, for example,⁷⁹ that the e-system should include.

- **South Sudan:** The R-TGoNU should endorse the e-system and show its support by issuing a directive for transitional government officials to fill out asset declarations and call for ministries to compile data. Government endorsement of an online system would demonstrate a decisive departure from past opaque practices in government operations.
- **IGAD, AU, United Nations:** The bodies overseeing the implementation of the peace agreement should enforce the use of the system. RJMEC and the AU Transparency Envoy should be empowered to report on which individuals, agencies, and ministries fail to provide data or expose those who look to manipulate the online system.
- **International Partners, Donors:** The United States and other donors should finance and help build the e-system, in consultation with the SSAC and investors. By contracting with an international due diligence firm, the e-system should be developed at the same time that South Sudan's disparate agencies compile data. Donors should structure financing to ensure the system is sustainable beyond the end of the transition period.