

implementing the Zero Tolerance to Corruption Policy; the Anti-Corruption Act 2009; the Anti-money Laundering Act 2013; and the Whistleblowers Protection Act 2010. A strategy for social accountability has been developed under the Zero Tolerance to Corruption Policy with support from GIZ. Improvements in the quality of Public Financial Management (PFM) Systems including setting up a Treasury Single Account (TSA); upgrading the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) and the Integrated Personnel and Payroll System (IPPS) have led to better wage and payroll management, improved budget formulation, implementation, monitoring and reporting. The Government has also pursued automation through the Electronic Government Procurement (eGP) system.

The above notwithstanding, Uganda's score on the Corruption Perception Index has stagnated over the past decade, while corruption levels – on bribery in particular – have increased in all districts according to the latest National Integrity Survey (Inspectorate of Government, 2020). The cost of corruption in Uganda is estimated at UGX 9 trillion/year (over EUR 2 billion), or 23% of the annual government budget (Inspectorate of Government, 2021). Key gaps in the existing framework relate to asset recovery, anti-money laundering and whistleblower protection. Limited social accountability is also a challenge and there is low citizen's engagement in the demand for accountability of public resources.

The institutional landscape of the core state agencies is characterised by multiple institutions, mandate overlaps, competition for resources, and inadequate coordination. Numerous state institutions are charged with promoting accountability and human rights. A number of institutions derive their mandate from the Constitution (UHRC, IG, Parliament, OAG, Service Commissions, and Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) among others), while some mandates arise out of a Presidential decision (State House Anti-Corruption Unit (SHACU), DEI among others). Government is carrying out a rationalising exercise that is likely to result in the consolidation of state agencies, although the outcome of this effort is still unclear. It will also complement a three-year, EU-funded project to support implementation of the government's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

In response, institutions are shifting towards greater recognition of the importance of citizen engagement in accountability processes. A key component of this effort is to leverage digital technology through online platforms and partnerships with civil society. This work has yet to achieve scale and coherence across accountability and service delivery institutions although digitalization in Uganda has created opportunities for citizen-government interaction and for improved public service delivery. The National Data Transmission Backbone Infrastructure and e-Government Infrastructure Project (NBI/EGI) has resulted in connecting the 22 major towns within the country and in connecting Ministries and Government Departments onto the e-Government network. Digitalization of institutional processes, government-citizen interactions as well as de-concentration of services to regional levels are increasingly gaining significance across institutions. Gaps remain however. An incomplete regulatory framework and the multiplication of channels of public engagement<sup>3</sup>, makes it difficult for citizens to meaningfully interact with state authorities. Core accountability agencies, such as OAG, IG, PPDA, SHACU or the UHRC, are yet to streamline cooperation on digital processes and platforms could address interdependencies in citizen engagement.

The media in Uganda also has a key role to play in facilitating citizen engagement and access to quality information. A wide range of mostly privately owned media houses operate the country but the sector is beset with challenges including low revenues and political interference. Media sector training programmes supported by development partners over many years have resulted in a cohort of journalists committed to reporting stories in the public interest and ensuring citizens have access to the information needed to hold leaders accountable. This capacity mainly exists at the national level and further work is needed to embed it in sub-national media houses.

The key policy framework for good governance, anti-corruption and human rights in Uganda is the NDP III, in particular in Objectives 5 'Strengthening transparency, accountability and anti-corruption systems', 6 'Strengthening citizen participation' and 7 'Strengthening implementation of human rights' of the GSP. NDP III aligns with Uganda's Vision 2040 focusing on effective public service delivery as an enabling factor for good

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<sup>3</sup> For example by Government Citizens Interaction Centre (GCIC), the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), the State House Anti-Corruption Unit (SHACU), the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), the Inspectorate of Government (IG), the Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC).