

Panama

Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, treats

<p>STRENGTHS</p>	<p>The State has a Public Radio and Television System with a board of directors, chaired by the Minister of Education, made up of members from the Executive and the Legislative, the civil society and the Comptroller General's Office. The system consists of one digital broadcast TV channel and three radio stations, one of them AM. The National Assembly [Legislative] and the Panama Canal also have digital broadcast TV channels. All the above-mentioned TV outlets also offer streaming feeds. Their programming features educational, cultural and IT content.</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES</p>	<p>The Panamanian Criminal Code sets forth slander and libel as crimes against honor, considered serious offenses when committed through a media outlet. Although government officials are exempted from penalties in this regard, civil liability is not excluded. The fines provided for these crimes are of a pecuniary nature and there are no amount caps for these lawsuits. In addition to possibly causing self-censorship, lawsuits of this nature jeopardize the financial stability of media outlets.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>Since 2017, there is a public policy of Open Government Data. The National Authority for Transparency and Access to Information, along with the National Authority for Government Innovation, is developing the government's open data portal. In 2019, the Open Data Working Group was established, a multi-sector body responsible for formulating and promoting action plans to promote greater transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in public affairs.</p>
<p>THREATS</p>	<p>According to official data, Internet penetration is close to 70%, albeit concentrated in the capital region and mostly available on mobile networks as a prepaid service. Although freedom of expression and the press in the digital domain is full, there is concern about increasingly frequent campaigns on social media seeking to rarify or manipulate the climate of opinion, without having identified those responsible for them to date.</p>

