

PANAMA
SWOT Analysis

<p>STRENGTHS</p>	<p>The Government has a Public Radio and Television System whose board of directors, chaired by the Minister of Education, comprises members of the Executive, the Legislative, civil society and the Comptroller General of the Republic. The system consists of a digital broadcast TV station and three radio stations, one of them AM. The National Assembly and the Panama Canal also have digital broadcast TV channels. All these TV channels also have Internet streaming. Their programs are essentially educational, IT-related, cultural, and scientific. It also has a national program for digital literacy, <i>Infoplazas</i>, with 320 service centers throughout the nation that has been running uninterruptedly for 21 years.</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES</p>	<p>Article 185 of the Criminal Code defines defamation and slander as crimes, and these are considered serious offenses when committed by means of the media. Although there is waiver of punishment in cases involving public servants, civil liability is not excluded. The punishments provided for these offenses include pecuniary penalties and there is no limit to the amount of the lawsuits. In addition to the likely encouragement of self-censorship, lawsuits of this kind put financial stability of the media at stake.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>Since 2017, there has been a public policy on Government Open Data. The National Transparency and Access to Information Authority (Autoridad Nacional de Transparencia y Acceso), along with the National Authority for Government Innovation (Autoridad Nacional para la Innovación Gubernamental), is developing the government open data website. In 2019, Open Government National Commission of Panama (Comisión Nacional de Gobierno Abierto Panamá) and the Open Data Working Group (Grupo de Trabajo de Datos Abiertos) were set. These multi-area entities are responsible for articulating and promoting action plans to encourage greater transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in public matters. Up to date, four national open government plans have been presented.</p>
<p>THREATS</p>	<p>According to official figures, Internet penetration is close to 70%, but with a vast use of prepaid mobile networks. Although freedom of expression and the press in the digital environment is full, there is concern over the increasingly frequent campaigns on social media intended to disrupt or manipulate public opinion. Individuals responsible for such actions have not been identified yet. Similarly, very few digital local media have financial power, wide coverage, and significant readership.</p>

