

PANAMA
ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES,
OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

<p>STRENGTHS</p>	<p>Panama has a solid print and radio media network, both private and state-owned. There is no limitation for entrepreneurship or controls for the setting of digital media. This is why a more diverse information atmosphere is beginning to take shape. For more than twenty years, the National Secretariat of Science and Technology (Secretaría Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología) has been implementing a national digital literacy program in a little more than three hundred community care centers throughout the country.</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES</p>	<p>The designation of defamation and libel as crimes against honor in article 185 of the Penal Code opens the door to judicial harassment. There is a waiver from penalty in the case of civil servants, but civil liability remains and the money-related penalties do not consider limits on the amounts. Apart from the potential self-censorship, lawsuits of this nature jeopardize the financial stability of the media. In Panama, the digital gap persists. Although Internet penetration is close to 70%, it comes from prepaid mobile networks in urban areas.</p>
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>Panama has had a public policy of Open Government Data since 2017. To date, four national open government plans have been submitted. There are two multi-area bodies: The National Commission on Open Government Panama (Comisión Nacional de Gobierno Abierto Panamá), and the Open Data Working Group (Grupo de Trabajo de Datos Abiertos), responsible for designing and promoting action plans to encourage greater transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in public affairs.</p>
<p>THREATS</p>	<p>The National Authority for Transparency and Access to Public Information (Autoridad Nacional de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública) is an autonomous entity, but the appointment of its director depends directly on the Executive. There is full freedom of expression and the press in the digital realm, but disinformation campaigns orchestrated by undetermined agents who use socio-digital media to position their narratives are becoming more frequent.</p>

