

WESTERN
SAHARA



West Africa CivicTech Landscape Report

Empowering Change through Technology
for Good Governance



Table Of Contents

About Civic Hive
Executive Summary
Recommendations

06

Introduction

Defining CivicTech
CivicTech vs GovTech

08

The Rise of civictech in West Africa: A Country-by-Country Review

- Republic of Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cape Verde
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Liberia
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Togo

36

The Current Status of civictech in West Africa

Categories of civictech Tools in West Africa

1. Civic Engagement and Community Building
2. Transparency & Accountability
3. Elections
4. Public Service Delivery
5. Justice and Human Rights

Table Of Contents

- 40** **Civictech Ecosystem
in West Africa**
Categories of civictech
Stakeholders
- 43** **Civictech Funding
and Sustainability**
Challenges and Limitations
- 48** **The Impact of civictech
In West Africa**
The Future of Civictech in West Africa
Opportunities to Scale
Recommendations
- 61** **Annex 1: CivicTech
Typologies**
Explanation of Classification Typologies
- 64** **Annex 2: Methodology**
Data Collection Methodology:
Limitations of the Report:

About Civichive

Civic Hive was established in 2017 as the innovation hub of BudgIT with the goal of developing new civictech leaders and also creating an innovative virtual and physical space for partnerships and to support new civictech organisations and strengthen the capacity of already existing NGOs in Nigeria In order to meaningfully impact the Nigerian civictech space.

Our overarching goal is to stimulate citizens' interests around public data and trigger discussions towards better governance. We are committed to the principles of open data & governance, citizen participation, and data transparency.

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© 2025 Disclaimer: This document has been produced by Civic Hive to provide information on civictech in West Africa. The report accurately reflects our views that we believe are reliable and fact based. Whilst reasonable care has been taken in preparing this report, no responsibility or liability is accepted for errors or any views expressed as a result of the information provided in this report.

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Executive Summary

Democracy in Africa has sparked debate about the role of public participation, transparency, and accountability in governance. While citizen participation has helped resolve long-standing issues and end authoritarian rule, these successes have often been short-lived. The continued threat to democracy raises questions about the effectiveness of public participation in governance.

Over the past four decades, the West African region has experienced a continuous cycle of twist and fluctuation in politics, governance, and citizen participation across its constituent nations. This tumultuous period has been marked by various disruptive events, including military incursion in democratic processes, the suppression of civic spaces, public protests, internet shutdowns, military coups and takeovers, attempts to extend executive powers and presidency beyond constitutional limits, and mounting pressure to impose restrictions on social media and social movements.

In West Africa, civictech has strategically leveraged digital innovation to bridge the gap between citizens, government, and promoting civic actions. This has also helped citizen-led initiatives to mobilise communities, expand their reach, and use a wide variety of digital entry points to push for positive societal change through increased public participation, transparency, accountability, and efficient delivery of public services.

This report examines the rise and importance of CivicTech in governance across West Africa by examining the historical markers in each country which pinpoints how civictech has developed and shaped interactions between citizens and government. It also maps the fast-evolving dynamic landscape of initiatives and umbrella networks civil society uses to engage and interact in the region. Finally, this report explores the current active environment and investigates the roles of different stakeholders in meeting societal needs; technological progress, and how innovation drives civictech's continued development.



Recommendations

Beyond presenting a current overview of the civic landscape, the report explores opportunities and recommendations for adapting and advancing civictech work over the past four decades. Additionally, it is tailored for a diverse audience and stakeholders.

- National Governments: To actively collaborate, adopt and integrate these tools into their existing frameworks. This collaborative effort can increase citizens' uptake of these tools, streamline the implementation process, ensuring that the tools are effective to meet the specific needs of the community and social contract. Additionally, governments and civic organizations can create open data platforms and APIs that allow developers to access and use government data to create innovative civictech applications.

- Private Institutions: The role of the private sector in nurturing a thriving civictech ecosystem is a multifaceted exploration. Delineating the potential contributions of private enterprises can serve as a catalyst for increased civic engagement. This can be done through financial investments, technological resources hub, and mentorship programs, as well as collaborative endeavors with civictech initiatives.

- National Civil Society Organisations: While existing civictech tools have undoubtedly demonstrated great potential to drive significant change when implemented effectively, there is still need for improvement in publicising these tools to a wider audience, deepening their use among various stakeholders, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of these initiatives.

- Regional Organisations/Associations: ECOWAS stands as the apex regional organization in West Africa and arguably the most vibrant regional organization in all of Africa with an unmatched level of uptake and adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG).

Given the contestation around democracy and governance in the region, there is a need for increased partnership on digital approaches and new technologies between ECOWAS and civil societies on how member states can coordinate inappropriate use of technologies without extreme regulation and shrinking of civic spaces.

These carefully curated recommendations seek to drive civic participation, nurture developmental initiatives, and enhance the effectiveness of governance structures concerning establishing a strong civictech ecosystem.

In conclusion, the report profiles key stakeholders and players in the civictech space, shedding light on the latest trends and innovations shaping this rapidly evolving sector and highlighting stakeholders who continued to be successful and impact civictech, fostering a more inclusive, transparent, and responsive relationship between the government and its citizens.

Introduction



Our research aims to provide a detailed analysis of the factors that drive innovation in the rapidly changing civictech landscape of the region.

Geopolitically, the West African region consist 15 diverse countries¹; each with its own unique history and democratic challenges, yet bound together by strong cultural ties and shared economic interests. These nations, which include Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo, have a long history of interaction and cooperation, dating back to pre-colonial trade routes and empires.

Despite their diversity, West African countries share many cultural similarities, including common languages, traditions, and religious beliefs. This shared cultural heritage has fostered a sense of regional identity and solidarity, which has been crucial in promoting cooperation and integration. The region also has a young and growing population, which represents a significant demographic dividend. However, West Africa also faces significant challenges, including unconstitutional change of government, inequality, corruption, human rights abuses, and delayed justice.

Our research aims to provide a detailed analysis of the factors that drive innovation in the rapidly changing civictech landscape of the region. The main goal is to create a comprehensive repository that maps the region's diverse civic technologies, platforms, and initiatives, including their technological underpinnings, user demographics, impact metrics, and potential for scalability to other countries.

This report offers stakeholders a comprehensive overview of the West African civictech landscape, highlighting key innovations and the individuals driving them. By identifying, categorizing, and profiling key stakeholders—from innovators to end-users—we aim to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing within the civictech ecosystem in West Africa.

Ultimately, this research aims to serve as a tool for advocacy, fortifying the foundations of civictech systems, refining decision-making frameworks, and amplifying the transformative impact of technology on ECOWAS member states democratic processes and societal structures.

The objective of this report is to establish a comprehensive repository of existing knowledge focused on the civictech economy in West Africa. This repository will cover key aspects such as sector stakeholders, impact assessment, funding dynamics, trends,

and overall development. Rather than simply documenting information, the primary goals are to strengthen advocacy initiatives, support civictech systems, and offer well-informed insights to improve decision-making processes. Ultimately, the aim is to act as a catalyst for positive change within the West Africa civictech ecosystem.

¹ Mauritania formally withdrew from ECOWAS in December 2000 bringing membership down to 15 countries. However in August 2017, Mauritania signed a new associate-membership agreement with ECOWAS.

Defining CivicTech



Despite the differences, a common theme included keywords or phrases - technology, service delivery, inclusion, civic engagement, democracy, transparency and accountability.

Within the civic space in Nigeria, and globally, one of the buzzwords that have gained traction in the last decade is the term “civictech”. It is a relatively new phenomenon that many organisations working in the civic space like to associate themselves with. As we set out to define what this term is or at least what it meant to different people we found out that there are several definitions.

Despite the differences, a common theme included keywords or phrases - technology, service delivery, inclusion, civic engagement, democracy, transparency and accountability. But as Code for All Global Network simply put it, “technology that positively impacts society”².

The longer version according to CivicTech Fund is that it is “technology that reinforces citizen engagement and strengthens the accountability and transparency of governance processes and public services. Effective civic technology is often the result of collaboration between civil society, public authorities and the private sector. civictech can also include a strong digital engagement focus, in that it uses

technologies to support the functioning of public networks and platforms, citizen engagement or public interest advocacy campaigns.”³ It is also the utilisation of digital tools, technologies, and platforms to empower citizens, improve government services, and promote transparency and accountability within the public sector.

CivicTech vs GovTech

It was also observed that discussions about civictech often entail an assumption that it solely pertains to the demand side, involving individuals or organisations in the civic space. The provided definition, however, extends beyond civic technologies; it also encapsulates the features of Gov-Tech, highlighting their similarities and distinctions. In essence, the terms “GovTech” and “CivicTech” serve as descriptors for various aspects of technology applications in the public sector. While sharing similarities, they diverge in their focal areas within the respective domains they operate, providing a nuanced understanding of their distinctive roles.

Gov-Tech	Civictech
Definition: Gov-tech refers to the use of technology by government agencies to enhance and improve the delivery of public services, streamline operations and engage citizens more effectively. ⁴	Definition: Civictech refers to the use of technology to empower citizens , foster civic engagement, and promote transparency and collaboration between the government and the public.
Focus: The Primary focus of GovTech is on the internal operations of government entities, including the development and implementation of technology solutions to make government processes more efficient and responsive.	Focus: CivicTech focuses on the interaction between citizens and government. It aims to enhance democracy by using technology to connect people with government information, services, and decision-making processes.
Key Phrases: Streamline processes, improve service delivery, efficiency, and decision making.	Key Phrases: empower citizens, accessibility, transparency and accountability processes.

² Code for All. (n.d.). About Civic Tech. Code for All. <https://codeforall.org/about-civic-tech>

³ Charter Africa. (n.d.). What is CivicTech? The Civic Tech Innovation Network. Retrieved December 2, 2024, from <https://civictech.africa/>

⁴ GovPilot. (n.d.). What is GovTech? Everything to Know About Modern Government Technology 2023. GovPilot. <https://www.govpilot.com/blog/what-is-govtech-everything-to-know-about-modern-government-technology>

Democratic Experiences and CivicTech Trends: A Country-by-Country Review

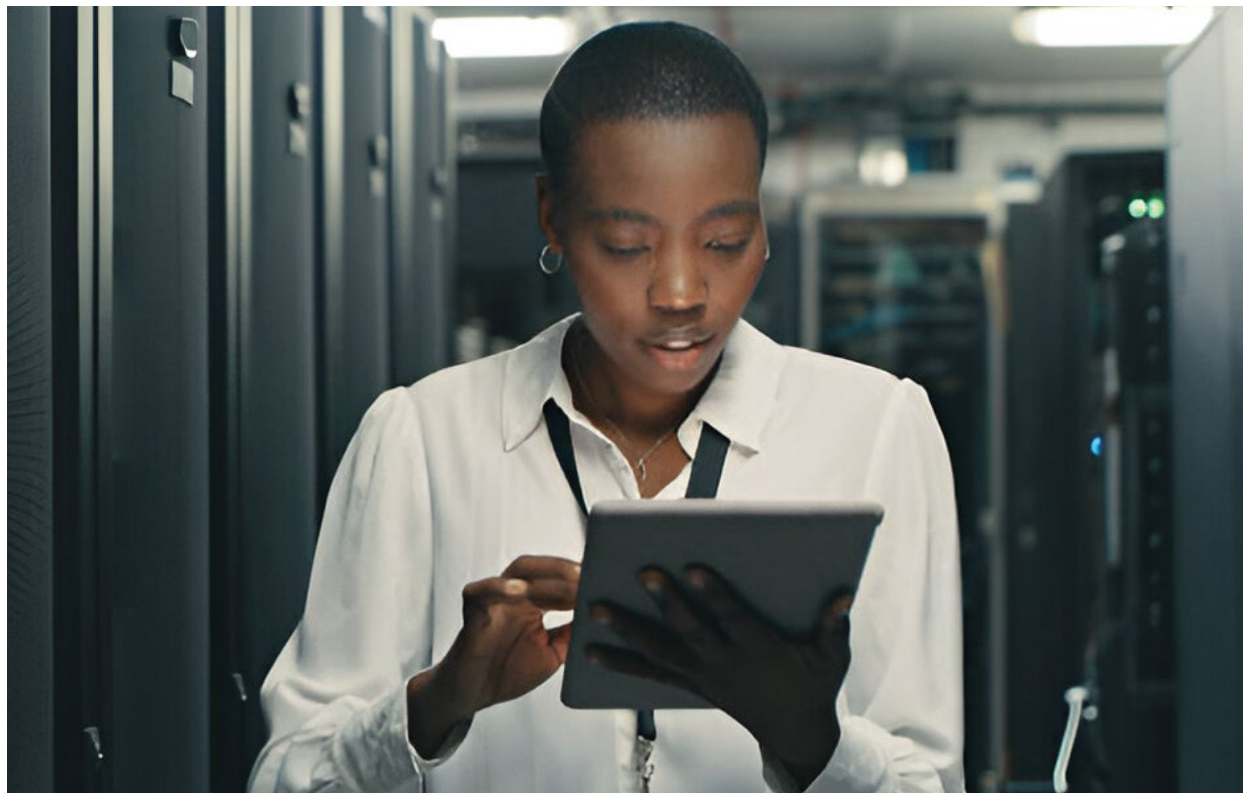


Across West Africa, democratic system has been strengthened significantly by the constellation of civil society organisations, non-profits, and activists who have been advocating for transparency, accountability, and citizen participation.

Against a backdrop of political discontent in Africa, Citizen-led initiatives focused on the common good and making governance work for the people are emerging. Across West Africa, democratic system has been strengthened significantly by the constellation of civil society organisations, non-profits, and activists who have been advocating for transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. These groups have been essential in demanding good governance practices from the government, which is vital in

building a robust and thriving democracy.

This section provides a detailed analysis on the specific events and actions that led to the growth of CivicTech in each West African country. It is an attempt to explore diverse factors; shifts in governmental policies, emergence of grassroots movements, and the involvement of both domestic and international organizations, all of which have played a pivotal role in shaping the CivicTech landscape across these countries.



Republic of Benin



Palais des congrès in Cotonou

Benin, a former French colony, gained independence on August 1, 1960. Following the collapse of the Marxist government in 1989, the country transitioned to a democratic system, adopting a new constitution and establishing the Republic of Benin.

Benin has emerged as a hub for innovation in new technologies in West Africa in recent years. Following the lead of its neighbors who launched projects to promote the digital sector as early as 2010, Benin joined the movement in 2015. The country established coworking spaces, launched hackathons and training programs, and supported organizations like The Bloggers' Association.

Benin's government planned to tax OTT services (Facebook, WhatsApp etc), making social media more expensive. This caused controversy and the government withdrew the plan.

In 2015, Benin introduced an information and communications code. Articles 6, 7, and 8 indicate a digital policy that is moving in the

direction of freedom of expression. This legal instrument was supplemented by the digital code adopted in November 2017.

The civictech space in Benin is still in its early years, driven by young people. A considerable number of civictech initiatives were established to observe the 2016 presidential elections and benefited from substantial funding by international donors. However, since the enthusiasm of the post-election period has receded, there is a need to consolidate and reinforce a thriving space that has not yet had the time to restructure itself.

“Talonmeter” was launched during the 2016 presidential elections to track the president's campaign promises.

The development of civictech initiatives in Benin has been gradual, with players forging relationships and partnerships with public authorities. The legislative framework is also quite favourable to the development of projects, and to their sponsorship by financial backers.



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Burkina Faso



Grand Mosque of Bobo-Dioulasso

The roots of modern civic engagement in Burkina Faso are deeply intertwined with its political history, notably the leadership of Thomas Sankara, a charismatic revolutionary who served as president from 1983 to 1987. Sankara's administration was marked by ambitious social and economic reforms aimed at reducing corruption, promoting gender equality, and fostering self-reliance.

On 4 August 1984, a presidential decree initiated by Sankara was confirmed by the National Assembly, renaming the country from Upper Volta to Burkina Faso (Land of Incorruptible People) to reflect a new national identity. However, Sankara's tenure was cut short by a coup d'état in October 1987, orchestrated by his former colleague, Blaise Compaoré. Following Sankara's assassination, Compaoré assumed the presidency and ruled for 27 years. While Sankara's ideals of transparency and citizen empowerment inspired many, the long period of Compaoré's rule was marred by allegations of corruption, repression, and governance challenges. This period set the stage for growing dissatisfaction among Burkinabè citizens.

During Blaise Compaoré's rule in Burkina Faso (1987–2014), efforts to improve civic tech and govtech were limited, primarily because these concepts were not widely embraced in the country during that period. However, there were some developments and events that indirectly influenced the growth of civic engagement and technology initiatives, this included The National Strategy for the Development of Information and Communication Technologies (Stratégie Nationale de Développement des TIC) which was adopted to modernize the public administration and improve access to technology.

In October 2014, a popular uprising against Compaoré's attempt to extend his presidency catalyzed a significant shift in Burkina Faso's political landscape. Mass protests, fueled by decades of governance grievances, culminated in Compaoré's resignation and exile. The uprising was a watershed moment for civic engagement in Burkina Faso, as citizens from diverse social and economic backgrounds united to demand accountability and transparency.⁵



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⁵ Chouli, L. (2015, April 01). The popular uprising in Burkina Faso and the Transition. *Review of African Political Economy*, 42(144). 10.1080/03056244.2015.1026196

In 2003, The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs developed the ADEN project as a support fund for internet usage and applications for development to enhance digital communication access in specific African countries, including Burkina Faso. The project focuses on establishing internet access centers and generating local content in areas with limited internet connectivity to improve ICT and public participation in governance.

This period also marked the emergence of digital tools as critical enablers of activism. Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter played a vital role in mobilizing protests and disseminating information. The events of 2014 highlighted the potential of technology to amplify citizen voices and foster collective action. Here are some notable civictech tools or solutions:

“Boala” is anti-terrorism alert button developed by Faso Civic to alert law enforcement in case of danger in Burkina Faso.

Le Balai Citoyen (Citizen's Broom), a grassroots movement, co-founded by two musicians in Burkina Faso⁶ with the vision of “making Burkina Faso a just and honest society, in a democratic

state of law”. They organized several protests in early 2014, for example hosting a joint rally with the newly formed Movement of People for Progress, filling a 35,000-capacity sports stadium to its rafters. Faso Civic also became an early hub for civictech innovation for the emergence of young people, who, thanks to digital technology, can provide concrete and innovative solutions to the problems of Burkina Faso.

OpenBurkina also supports development actors to better collect, structure, use and open data, while respecting people's privacy and preserving the interests of the nation through research, advocacy, training, tools and assistance. Access to data allowing winning decisions to be made promotes better citizen collaboration while protecting individual rights.

Burkina Faso's civic tech sector has made significant strides in promoting transparency and accountability. However, challenges remain, including limited digital access in rural areas, cybersecurity risks, and the need for sustained funding to scale civictech solutions. As the sector continues to evolve, it holds immense potential to drive meaningful change and strengthen democracy in the Land of Incorruptible People.



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⁶ Le Balai Citoyen. (n.d.). Who we are-The Citizen Broom. <https://lebalaitoyen.fr/qui-nous-sommes/>

⁷ Faso Civic. (n.d.). Our Projects. Faso Civic. <https://fasocivic.org/nos-projets/>

⁸ Open Burkina. (n.d.). Open Burkina - Knowledge to decide together. <https://www.openburkina.bf/>

Cape Verde



Palácio da Justiça – Palace of Justice, in Praia

Cape Verde, also known as Cabo Verde officially the Republic of Cabo Verde, was recognized as the African country with the most open civic spaces, earning an index score of 85 out of 100, in 2022.⁹

Since the early 1990s, Cabo Verde's civil society has witnessed substantial growth, with freedom to form associations guaranteed by Article 27 of the country's constitution. Civil society organizations (CSOs) in Cabo Verde focus on issues such as human rights, environmental protection, drug trafficking, and community development.

In 1996, Platform of NGOs of Cabo Verde (Plataforma das ONG de Cabo Verde) was created to support formal NGOs, while numerous informal organizations, including community associations and cooperatives, also exist. The mission of the platform is to strengthen, consolidate, and recognize the efforts of non-profit organizations, supporting

the work of its members and other non-profit civil society groups. It aims to promote a culture of collaboration, solidarity, partnership, and shared responsibility in contributing to Cape Verde's development process.¹⁰

A notable govtech initiative is NOSi. Established in 2003 under Decree No. 15/2003 by the Government of Cabo Verde (GoCV) NOSi aims to modernize society and accelerate economic growth while making public services more citizen-focused. It is responsible for developing a knowledge-based society through innovation and integrated electronic governance systems, enhancing the daily lives of Cabo Verdeans, and improving the economy's competitiveness.

Despite being Africa's leading country in terms of open civic spaces, Cabo Verde still holds significant potential for further development, as there is a lack of widely recognized civictech tools and organizations.



In 1996, Platform of NGOs of Cabo Verde (Plataforma das ONG de Cabo Verde) was created to support formal NGOs, while numerous informal organizations, including community associations and cooperatives, also exist.

⁹ Statista. (2022). Countries with the most open civic space in Africa in 2022. Retrieved November 28, 2024, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1373678/openness-index-of-civic-spaces-in-africa-by-country/>

¹⁰ SOBRE NÓS. (n.d.). SOBRE NÓS. [platongs.org.cv](http://www.platongs.org.cv). Retrieved December 31, 2025, from <http://www.platongs.org.cv/sobre-nos/>

Côte d'Ivoire



Basilica of Our Lady of Peace in the capital city Yamoussoukro, the largest church in Africa.

Côte d'Ivoire's 2011 political conflict, rooted in disputed election results and deep-seated ethnic and political divisions, left the country in a fragile state. The conflict was a combination of economic decline and political manipulation that contributed to the country's descent into instability for a decade. It also underscored the need for robust mechanisms to ensure electoral transparency, citizen participation, and governmental accountability.¹¹ Although the peace process initiated in 2002 played a crucial role as a move towards reviving democratic transformation, digital tools and civic technology also helped the transition from crisis to recovery by addressing these challenges:¹²

The civicttech movement in Côte d'Ivoire gained traction alongside the global rise of technology-driven solutions for social good. The growing accessibility of mobile phones and the internet enabled civil society organizations and tech enthusiasts to explore innovative ways to engage citizens and improve governance.

Wonzomai: Pioneering Civic Participation & Election Monitoring

One of the early civicttech initiatives in Côte d'Ivoire is Wonzomai,¹³ which translates to "witness" in the local Bété language, the major language in the western part of the country - was the first internet-enabled citizen engagement initiative dealing with election issues. The platform allowed individuals to report diverse incidents, from traffic conditions, fraud and security, to voting conditions, as well as to share official government information. Citizens could call, text, send email or use the Twitter hashtag to report incidents, which were then mapped. Wonzomai empowered citizens to report electoral irregularities via SMS and other digital channels. This approach leveraged Côte d'Ivoire's growing mobile penetration to gather real-time data from across the country.

The Ivorian NGO Akendewa and the French NGO Internet Without Borders collaborated on a Wonzomai, which utilized the Ushahidi platform. Wonzomai, meaning "Sentry" in the local Ivorian Bété language, was implemented to monitor the first round of the presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire on October 31, 2010.



The civicttech movement in Côte d'Ivoire gained traction alongside the global rise of technology-driven solutions for social good.

¹¹ Zounmenou, D. D., & Lamin, A. R. (n.d.). CÔTE D'IVOIRE'S POST-ELECTORAL CRISIS. *Journal of African Elections*, 10(2).

¹² <https://www.eisa.org/storage/2023/05/2011-journal-of-african-elections-v10n2-cote-divoire-post-electoral-crisis-ouattara-rules-but-can-he-govern-eisa.pdf?x340>

¹³ Wonzomai. (n.d.). X. <https://x.com/wonzomai>

Additionally, In the middle of October 2010, immediately after the launch of Wonzomai, the Twitter hashtag #CIV2010 was launched. Its aim was to engage citizens on Twitter on all election issues. #CIV2010 allowed voters to track candidates, post pictures, analyse TV debates, campaign for votes, report issues and much more. #CIV2010 users chose not to obey the government injunction to not publish the first round of election results, since the injunction specifically focused on national and foreign media in Côte d'Ivoire. As a result, many of the #CIV2010 users felt they were not obliged to respect this.

It is Important to note that aside support and donations from International organizations, NGOs like Akendewa were instrumental in laying the groundwork for the civictech ecosystem in Côte d'Ivoire. Founded in 2009, Akendewa focuses on leveraging digital tools to

support humanitarian efforts and provide access to information. Over time, the organization became a critical player in the civictech landscape. Through initiatives like CIVSocial, Akendewa created platforms for dialogue and collaboration, enabling citizens to engage with governance issues more actively.¹⁴

The post-2011 period in Côte d'Ivoire illustrates how civictech can emerge as a powerful tool for rebuilding trust and fostering citizen participation in governance. Early platforms like Wonzomai demonstrated the potential of technology to enhance electoral transparency, while organizations like Akendewa laid the foundation for a dynamic and innovative civictech ecosystem. Together, these efforts have contributed to strengthening democratic processes and empowering citizens in Côte d'Ivoire.



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¹⁴ Akendewa. (n.d.). <https://www.akendewa.org/>

Gambia



The Arch 22 monument

The Gambia's CivicTech space emerged following the 2016 democratic transition, ending 22 years of authoritarian rule. Largely as a result of this transfer of power, The Gambia secured a record-breaking 21-point score increase in the annual "Freedom in the World 2018 Report," moving from "Not Free" status to that of a "Partly Free" nation seemingly overnight.¹⁵ For over five decades, The Gambia utilized the unique marbles¹⁶ voting system, a tactile and innovative approach that ensured inclusivity in a country with varying literacy levels.

However, as global electoral processes evolved, the system's limitations, such as logistical inefficiencies and its susceptibility to human error became more apparent. In response, The Gambia began exploring technological upgrades to enhance transparency and efficiency in its elections. This shift demonstrates the country's commitment to leveraging technology to uphold democratic values while retaining elements of its unique electoral identity. The integration of digital tools and data management systems into voter registration and election monitoring is a testament to the adaptability of this traditional system in the face of modernization.¹⁷

Young people in Gambia, representing a significant portion of the population, have emerged as a driving force behind civic engagement, particularly through the use of civictech tools. Platforms like "Gambia Participates"¹⁸ that aids the learning process and enable the environment for a functional democracy through citizen education, citizen participation and innovative tools for government accountability and MALA FACT¹⁹ - A fact checking tool by *Malagen, Gambia's first investigative journalism media organization on Open government and anti-corruption*. Malagen has become central to this movement, empowering citizens to raise their voices, report societal issues, and demand accountability.

The adoption of civictech platforms reflects a broader trend of digital transformation in Gambia. The introduction of these Civictech tools have not only fostered greater citizen engagement but also bridged the gap between the government and the people. These tools have enabled inclusive participation, reduced barriers to information, and created avenues for constructive dialogue on governance and accountability.



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¹⁵ D'Aiello, L. (2018, August 24). The Case of The Gambia: A Template for Democratic Transition? Foreign Policy Research Institute. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2018/08/the-case-of-the-gambia-a-template-for-democratic-transition/>

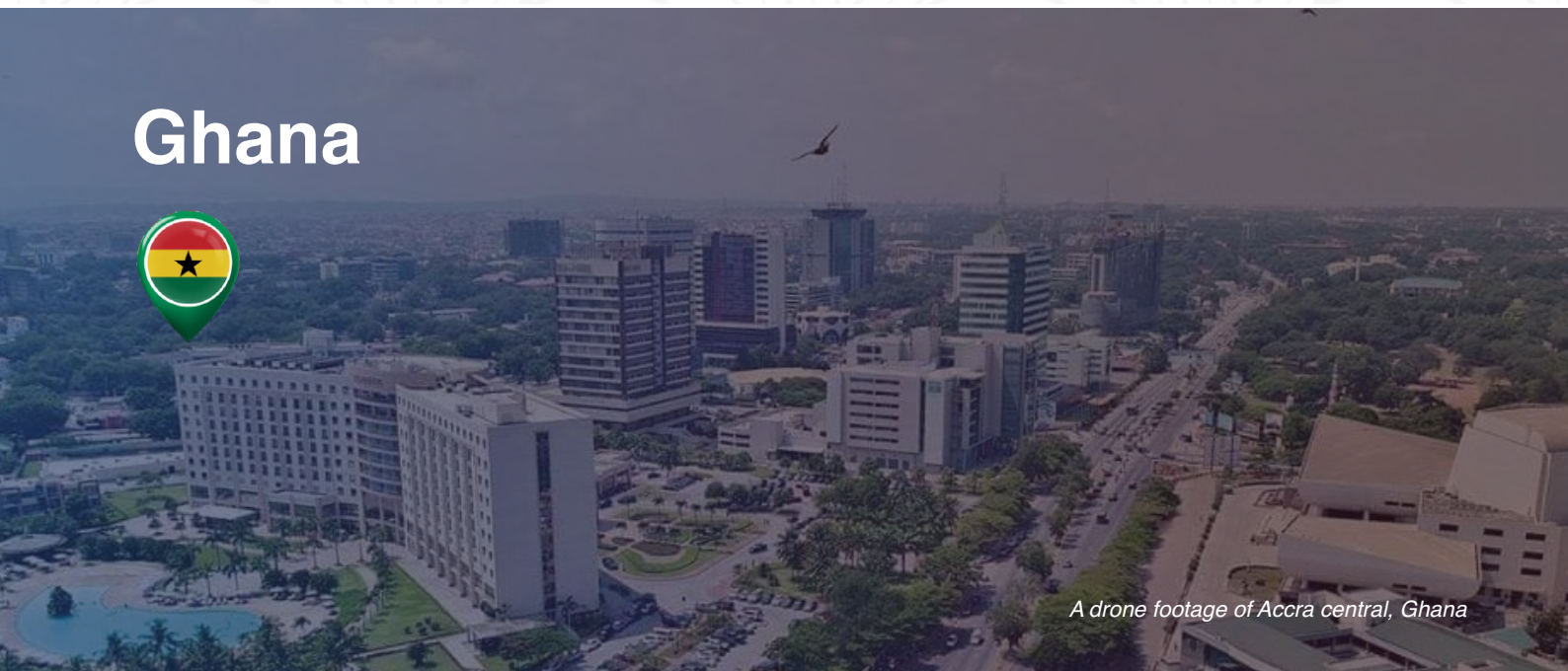
¹⁶ Sanneh, A. (2021, December 7). The Gambia's 55-year-old marbles voting system is simple but difficult to cheat. The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/the-gambias-55-year-old-marbles-voting-system-is-simple-but-difficult-to-cheat-173263>

¹⁷ CSM Tech. (2024, January 23). Technology's Transformative Potential for Gambia. <https://www.csm.tech/blog-details/technology-s-transformative-potential-for-gambia>

¹⁸ Gambia Participates. (n.d.). Gambia Participates. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.gambiaparticipates.org/>

¹⁹ Malagen. (n.d.). MalaFact. <https://malagen.org/malafact/>

Ghana



A drone footage of Accra central, Ghana

In 1957, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan African country to gain its independence under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. Since then, it has grown to become the second-most populous country in West Africa with its capital and largest city being Accra.

The origins of Ghana's civic space can be traced back to the pre-independence era, when people united to form movements advocating for various causes, ultimately leading to the country's independence. A key group in this movement was the United Gold Coast Convention, founded in 1947 by professionals such as lawyers, academics, and businessmen, who sought broader support by collaborating with other groups pushing for change.²⁰ This group later merged with Kwame Nkrumah's efforts to form the Convention People's Party (CPP), which took power following independence.²¹

Ghana is now in its Fourth Republic, governed by the 1992 constitution. The rise of civictech began shortly after the government transition, when the new administration opened up

communication channels and made telecommunications more accessible. Between 2007 and 2008, the country saw the integration of technology into the system, sparking an interest in tech and social media platforms by 2009. By early 2010, the emergence of tech apps sparked a surge of public interest.

Popular civictech tools in Ghana that address diverse issues, leveraging technology to empower citizens and foster accountability include TALKAM,²² Ripoti, U-Report and GotToVote. ***TALKAM, a human rights platform, tackles human rights abuses by enabling citizens to report violations, ensuring victims receive justice while perpetrators are held accountable.*** Operating globally, TALKAM facilitates responses to reported cases, engaging relevant organizations to take necessary action.²³ Ripoti focuses on digital rights, offering a collaborative platform for reporting violations and holding offenders accountable. It protects and defends digital rights across Africa, providing support and advocating for justice.²⁴



Between 2007 and 2008, the country saw the integration of technology into the system, sparking an interest in tech and social media platforms by 2009.

²⁰ African American Registry. (n.d.). The United Gold Coast Convention is Formed. African American Registry. <https://aaregistry.org/story/the-united-gold-coast-convention-is-formed/>

²¹ Convention Peoples Party. Biography. (n.d.). Ghana Web. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.ghanaweb.com/person/Convention-Peoples-Party-3715>

²² <https://civictech.africa/initiative/talkam-human-rights-app/>

²³ Devatop Center for Africa Development. (2018). Talkam. About Us | Talkam. <https://talkam.app/about>

²⁴ Ripoti. (n.d.). Ripoti Africa. <https://ripoti.africa/>

*U-Report, developed by UNICEF, is an SMS-based tool that promotes community participation.*²⁵ Through polls and real-time responses, it addresses issues such as youth unemployment, child marriage, cyberbullying, and public health concerns. Results are shared with communities and governments to inspire change, with Ghana becoming the 47th country to implement the platform.²⁶ *GotToVote simplifies voter registration by helping citizens locate their nearest registration centers, providing guidance on eligibility, documentation, and the process.* It was created by Odekro and Code for Africa, in partnership with Code for Ghana, it consolidates scattered voter information into an accessible mobile-friendly platform, empowering citizens to participate in elections more effectively.

Some of Ghana's civictech pioneers include Penplusbytes, a non-profit established on July 18, 2001, driving innovation in governance, digital technologies, climate, and resource management, with a focus on enhancing transparency and accountability in the use of mining, oil, and gas revenues.²⁸ Another notable organization is IMANI Center for Policy & Education, founded on March 9, 2004, is a renowned think tank producing objective, high-quality policy research. Known for its media impact, *IMANI leverages newspapers, the internet, and TV and radio platforms to engage citizens and shape public discourse, boasting one of the strongest media profiles among West African think tanks.*²⁹ Additionally, *Odekro promotes transparency and citizen engagement by providing free online access to parliamentary records, including Bills, Motions,*

and Hansards. It was founded in 2015 as a platform to assess parliamentary performance through a set of indicators, enabling stakeholders to evaluate legislative activities effectively.³⁰

Notable CSOs in Ghana include Visuals for Gender and Open Cities Accra. Visuals for Gender uses data visualizations to highlight critical gender-based issues like FGM, child marriages, defilement, and rape. This open data initiative engages citizens, policymakers, and journalists to promote awareness and action.³¹ Open Cities Accra was part of the Open Cities Africa initiative led by the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT) in partnership with Mobile Web Ghana and OSM Ghana. Focused on resilience against natural disasters, the project mapped flood-prone areas like Alogboshie, Akweteyman, and Alajo along the Odaw River, which are affected by severe flooding during the rainy season. The initiative supported the broader Greater Accra Resilience and Integrated Development (GARID) project to enhance disaster preparedness and mitigate the impact of floods on vulnerable communities.³²

Ghana's civic space has witnessed a significant evolution from its pre-independence roots, further transformed by the advent of technology in the mid 2000s. With the rise of civictech platforms, there has been a marked increase in citizen participation and transparency, enabling individuals and organizations to advocate for social change and hold public officials accountable. Ghana's civic space is likely to expand even further, creating new opportunities for active citizenship and governance.



Ghana's civic space has witnessed a significant evolution from its pre-independence roots, further transformed by the advent of technology in the mid 2000s.

²⁵ Thomas, E., Arblaster, K., Kangasniemi, A., & Maxwell, L. (2019, November). U-Report | UNICEF Evaluation Office. Unicef. Retrieved January 31, 2025, from <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1006/file/U-Report.pdf>

²⁶ U-Report Ghana. (n.d.). U-Report Ghana. Retrieved November 31, 2024, from <https://ghana.ureport.in/about/>

²⁷ GotToVote. (2016). About. GotToVote Ghana. Retrieved October 28, 2024, from <https://ghana.gottovote.cc/about.html>

²⁸ PenPlusBytes. (n.d.). Promoting good governance in Africa using new digital technologies. PenPlusBytes. <https://penplusbytes.org/>

²⁹ IMANI Africa. (2004). IMANI Africa: IMANI Centre for Policy and Education. <https://imaniafrica.org/>

³⁰ Odekro. (n.d.). Odekro. <https://www.odekro.org/>

³¹ Visuals for Gender. (n.d.). About Visuals for Gender Project. About Us--Visuals for Gender. <https://www.visualsforgender.org/about-us/>

³² Luswata, D., & Dills, B. (n.d.). Open Cities Africa - Accra City Project - Ghana. Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team. <https://www.hotosm.org/projects/open-cities-africa-accra-city-project-ghana/>

Guinea



Dame de Mali

At the start of 2023, Guinea had 4.87 million internet users, representing 34.7% of the population. ***The country also had 1.95 million social media users by January 2023, making up 13.9% of the total population.*** There were also 13.46 million active cellular mobile connections in Guinea in early 2023, which accounted for 96.0% of the population.³³

In Guinea, civictech tools such as Le Peuple ("The People") help enhance transparency by providing citizens with access to parliamentary information and reports on parliamentary activities.³⁴ Another significant platform, Magoé Education, addresses issues within the education sector by connecting students, teachers, parents, and administrators. It also offers personalized courses tailored to individual student data and is accessible both on the web and via mobile devices.³⁵

Additionally, ***Les Villageois is a youth-led organization that promotes digital literacy, educates citizens on the benefits and risks of Information and Communication***

Technologies (ICT), and advocates for good governance and accountability through CivicTech. One notable national platform is the Coalition Nationale Action et Plaidoyer pour l'Eau (CNAPE), established by WA partner Carbone Guinée with the aim of advancing and monitoring SDG 6 initiatives, as well as improving civil society accountability in Guinea's water and sanitation sector.

Despite a high percentage of active cellular mobile connections in Guinea, there is a lack of sufficient information on civictech advancements, available online. According to USAID, many Guineans still struggle to grasp the concepts of civic engagement, government structure, and their rights and responsibilities, which restricts their ability to actively participate in their communities during this pivotal period. A 2018 Global Review of National Accountability Mechanisms for SDG 6 noted that insufficient consultation with civil society organizations and a lack of coordination remain key obstacles to effective, multi-stakeholder involvement in Guinea.



In Guinea, civictech tools such as Le Peuple ("The People") help enhance transparency by providing citizens with access to parliamentary information and reports on parliamentary activities.

³³ Kemp, S. (n.d.). Digital 2023: Nigeria. DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-nigeria>

³⁴ Civic Tech Innovation Network. (2024, October 14). "Le Peuple", an open data platform of the Guinean parliament serving citizens and decision-makers. Medium. <https://medium.com/civictech/le-peuple-an-open-data-platform-of-the-guinean-parliament-serving-citizens-and-decision-makers-267ec56db49c>

³⁵ Googogui, M. (2023, September 20). Transforming education in Guinea using an e-learning application and management tool. Global Partnership for Education. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/transforming-education-guinea-using-e-learning-application-and-management-tool>

³⁶ Les Villageois. (n.d.). Les Villageois 2.0 – Association Villageois 2.0 est une organisation et une plateforme de jeunesse qui s'investit dans l'alphabétisation numérique et la sensibilisation des citoyens guinéens sur les avantages et les risques des Technologies de l'Informatio. <https://www.lesvillageois.org/>

Guinea-Bissau



The Presidential Palace of Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau's civictech landscape has emerged in the context of significant political and institutional challenges. Since gaining independence from Portugal in 1973, the country has experienced frequent political instability, including military coups, contested elections, and periods of authoritarian rule. These disruptions have created a fragmented political environment and severely weakened governance structures.

As one of the world's most fragile states, Guinea-Bissau faces persistent challenges such as widespread corruption, lack of public service delivery, and limited citizen trust in government institutions. This environment has hampered the development and implementation of much-needed policy reforms, leaving citizens disillusioned and disconnected from governance processes. Despite these challenges, recent years have seen the emergence of civic tech initiatives aimed at fostering citizen participation, enhancing transparency, and bridging the gap between government and the populace.

The civictech movement in Guinea-Bissau has been driven by local innovators, civil society organizations, and international partners seeking to leverage technology as a tool for social change. For Instance: *InnovaLab applies participatory analysis to identify local challenges, ensuring solutions are co-created with communities using Design Thinking principles. Its initiative, ACELERA, accelerates Guinea-Bissau's transition into a competitive, digital, and inclusive economy. By fostering digital skills, entrepreneurship, and innovation, ACELERA empowers youth, businesses, and institutions to drive sustainable development and economic transformation.*³⁷ The "Votu", is a civictech platform designed to engage the population in politics and democracy by encouraging campaigning and increasing the transparent publishing of results³⁸ While Votu primarily targets political engagement, its framework could potentially be adapted to crowdsource reports on issues like trafficking and corruption.



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³⁷ InnovaLab - Accelerate <https://innovalab-gw.org/initiatives/accelera/>

³⁸ One Young World. Votu <https://www.oneyoungworld.com/node/410057>

Additionally, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a pivotal role in advocating for transparency and accountability, often integrating technology into their initiatives to amplify their impact. Organizations such as Tostan with its Community Empowerment Program (CEP) in Guinea- Bissau and regional partners have introduced digital literacy programs to empower citizens, particularly in rural areas, to use technology for advocacy and community mobilization.³⁹

The frequent turnover of government officials

and unstable political coalitions make it difficult to implement sustained governance reforms in Guinea Bissau. However, civic tech initiatives have sought to bypass these challenges by empowering citizens directly, despite the low penetration of the internet, mobile phone usage is widespread, creating an opportunity to use SMS-based platforms for citizen engagement. To sustain this momentum, stakeholders must address the underlying structural barriers while leveraging technology's potential to build a more inclusive and participatory democracy in Guinea-Bissau.



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³⁹ Tostan. (n.d.). About Us - Tostan International. <https://tostan.org/programs/where-we-work/guinea-bissau/>

Liberia



A view of a lake in Bomi County

Liberia was relatively politically stable until 1980, when two decades of civil war and instability began, characterized by internal conflict and economic collapse. The war devastated public infrastructure and human resources. A peace agreement in 2003 led to the formation of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) to oversee peace and disarmament.

Following the end of the conflict, the NTGL prioritized reviving telecommunications infrastructure, which had been devastated by the war. The fixed-line copper network operated by the Liberian Telecommunications Corporation (LTC) was destroyed, and critical components were looted.⁴⁰ Mobile phone services were minimal, with only about 1,500 subscribers in 2000, and many operators lacked clear licenses or proper spectrum allocation.⁴¹ At the time, the sector was managed by the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications (MPT) without an independent regulatory body.

In 2007, Liberia introduced its first national policy

on telecommunications and ICT, which was in effect until 2010. The Liberian Telecommunications Act of 2007 provided comprehensive legislation outlining the roles and responsibilities of key entities in the country's ICT sector. The policy remained active until 2018, when it was amended to create a new five-year ICT plan aimed at improving infrastructure severely impacted by 14 years of civil war. This policy ran from 2019 to 2024. However, internet access remains limited in communities outside the capital city.

CivicTech in Liberia gained prominence with *the establishment of iCampus in 2011, the country's first innovation and community space for technology, accountability, and social change*. Founded by Accountability Lab Liberia and iLab Liberia under USAID's Accountability and Voice Initiative, iCampus aims to drive policy reform through advocacy. They collaborated with the University of Liberia to create the country's first electronic lab, with support from USAID.



The Liberian Telecommunications Act of 2007 provided comprehensive legislation outlining the roles and responsibilities of key entities in the country's ICT sector.

⁴⁰ Best, M. L., Jones, K., Kondo, I., Thakur, D., Wornyo, E., and Yu, C. (2007). Post-Conflict Communications: The Case of Liberia. *Communications of the ACM*, 50(10), 33-39.

⁴¹ ITU (2007). *World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Database*. Geneva: International Telecommunications Union.

⁴² iCampus Liberia. (n.d.). iCampus Liberia | A Liberian Innovation Space. <https://icampus.io/>

Another notable CivicTech organization is iLab Liberia, a non-profit tech hub founded in 2011. It offers access to information, open and geospatial data, research, web technologies, and expert ICT support. iLab leverages technology to benefit Liberia, developing local solutions aligned with global standards while collaborating with government, private sector, and development partners.⁴³

Starz University of Liberia, a leading tech institution in the country, is key player in the tech ecosystem. It is developing the next generation of tech professionals and partnered with BudgIT on the YouthClub project. This partnership significantly contributes to the tech sector, culminating in the official launch of the BudgIT Youth Club Initiative on November 14, 2024.⁴⁴

Furthermore, Liberia has made progress with the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), which introduced e-filing for generating revenue information. The most recent election in Liberia introduced biometric voting to promote fairness and transparency in the electoral process. The Liberian parliament serves as another avenue for citizen engagement in civic activities, many of which are driven by social media campaigns to mobilize initiatives. Organizations like BudgIT's Tracka focus on training Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), though implementation efforts still require improvement. Current discussions between Liberia's government and various stakeholders, including USAID, aim to develop a national budget dashboard to enhance financial transparency.

Major donors supporting these initiatives include the World Bank, USAID, recognized as the largest contributor to the CivicTech space through its diverse programs, UN Women; which focuses on actively involving Liberian women in ICT; and UNDP; which plays a significant role in

advancing the country's development efforts. In the private sector, Liberia's two main telecommunications operators, Orange and MTN, have funded several hackathons. The Ministry of Post and Telecommunications also plays a central role in the ICT ecosystem, alongside the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA).

Similar organizations to BudgIT Liberia includes Integrity Watch, a CSO founded in 2017 that focuses on promoting transparent, accountable, and inclusive governance, with various tools for monitoring and evaluation, community engagement (including social audits and community scorecards), and policy influencing.⁴⁵ Another notable organization is the Center for Transparency and Accountability (CENTAL), Liberia's national chapter of

Transparency International (TI), which has been at the forefront of anti-corruption and integrity building efforts since 2004.⁴⁶ Another key player is the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections (NAYMOTE), Partners for Democratic Development, founded in 2001 by student leaders and activists, which works to enhance citizens' understanding of democratic processes and participation, while promoting democracy, peacebuilding, human rights, and civic engagement.⁴⁷

A major challenge to the advancement of CivicTech in Liberia is the country's limited internet penetration, which stood at 30.1 percent of the total population at the start of 2024.⁴⁸ Contributing factors include poor regulation enforcement, inadequate logistics, and centralization. Also, the lack of expertise among professionals capable of driving innovation further impedes progress in advancing CivicTech and expanding internet access in the country.



The most recent election in Liberia introduced biometric voting to promote fairness and transparency in the electoral process.

⁴³ iLab Liberia. (n.d.). iLab Liberia | PreventionWeb. <https://www.preventionweb.net/organization/ilab-liberia>

⁴⁴ The Liberian Investigator. (2024, December 5). BudgIT Liberia, Starz University Launch Youth Club to Strengthen Fiscal Transparency. The Liberian Investigator. <https://liberianinvestigator.com/news/budgit-liberia-starz-university-launch-youth-club-to-strengthen-fiscal-transparency/>

⁴⁵ UNCAC Coalition. (n.d.). Integrity Watch Liberia (IW-Liberia). UNCAC Coalition. <https://uncaccoalition.org/anti-corruption-platforms/africa/liberia/integrity-watch-liberia-iw-liberia/>

⁴⁶ Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL). (n.d.). Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL). <https://cental.org.lr/>

⁴⁷ The Centre for Media and Democracy. (n.d.). National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections. The Centre for Media and Democracy. https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=National_Youth_Movement_for_Transparent_Elections

⁴⁸ Kemp, S. (n.d.). Digital 2023: Nigeria. DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-nigeria>

Mali



Bamako

Mali's civictech landscape has evolved against the backdrop of political instability, governance challenges, and efforts to rebuild trust between the government and its citizens. The decade leading up to the military coups in 2020 and 2021 was marked by systemic grievances, including inadequate public services, pervasive corruption, and the government's struggle to address the growing threat of violent extremist groups. The adoption of the 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, brokered between the government, armed groups, and civil society actors, was a turning point for civic engagement in Mali. The agreement emphasized citizen participation, transparency, and accountability as essential components of rebuilding trust and promoting sustainable peace.

The post-2015 period saw the emergence of innovative civictech solutions designed to address Mali's unique challenges. Among the pioneering initiatives was Malicheck;⁴⁹ one of the first projects to combat disinformation in Mali. The team processes and verifies videos, photos, texts, voice messages, speeches, faked or taken out of context to mislead public opinion.

The primary objective is to minimize the impact of false information. Another platform is SIRA,⁵⁰ a web and mobile platform for early warning and automatic analysis of cases of human rights violations. Initially developed by Tuwindi;⁵¹ for monitoring human rights violations in northern Mali, the core of SIRA was adapted and expanded to monitor the entire territory as part of the Citizen Observatory against Impunity and for accountability,

As Mali continues to navigate political transitions and security challenges, civictech remains a crucial instrument for fostering citizen-state relations. Hence, Mali's civictech landscape reflects the resilience and innovation of its citizens in addressing the country's profound governance and security challenges. By leveraging digital tools and platforms, Malian civil society has begun to bridge critical gaps in governance and security, fostering a culture of accountability and participation.⁵² As the country continues its journey toward stability and reform, civictech will undoubtedly play an integral role in shaping a more inclusive and transparent future.



As Mali continues to navigate political transitions and security challenges, civictech remains a crucial instrument for fostering citizen-state relations.

⁴⁹ ODIL. (n.d.). Malicheck. Malicheck - ODIL. <https://odil.org/initiative/malicheck/>

⁵⁰ SIRA Integrated Alert, Reporting and Analysis System. (n.d.). All about SIRA Integrated Alert, Reporting and Analysis System. <https://www.sirasahel.com/sira>

⁵¹ TUWINDI. (n.d.). TUWINDI | We build innovative projects that change the lives of communities. <https://tuwindi.io/home>

⁵² Thera, K. (2023, April 5). In Mali, Civil Society Takes on New Role in the Democratic Transition. United States Institute of Peace. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/04/mali-civil-society-takes-new-role-democratic-transition>

Mauritania



Nouakchott

The civictech landscape in Mauritania reflects the country's journey from political turbulence to its first peaceful democratic transition of power. The period between 2008 and 2018 was marked by a military coup and a protracted struggle for political stability. However, *the 2019 elections and the subsequent swearing-in of Mohamed Ould Ghazouani as president represented a watershed moment in Mauritania's history, signaling its first peaceful transfer of power since gaining independence in 1960.*

The integration of GovTech and civictech initiatives in Mauritania underscores the country's commitment to leveraging technology for governance and citizen engagement. The adoption of government technology (GovTech) initiatives has been pivotal in modernizing Mauritania's governance structures and addressing long-standing issues such as urban planning and citizen participation. The ASTON project, supported by the French Development Agency (AFD) to build more sustainable and inclusive communities. "This system must be widely adopted by the population to have a strong impact on the city's development,"

according to the Mauritanian team. Nouakchott's participation in the ASTON project is important as the city's decision-makers benefit from technical and methodological support to implement important initiatives for the citizens and for urban planning.⁵³

Another standout program in the civictech space is the AfricTivistes - CitizenLab in Mauritania. *The CitizenLab program is designed to accelerate participatory engagement among young people, focusing on consolidating democracy and fostering active citizenship.*⁵⁴

Mauritania's journey from political instability to democratic consolidation highlights the transformative potential of civictech and GovTech. Initiatives like the ASTON project and AfricTivistes CitizenLab demonstrate how technology can bridge the gap between citizens and the state, fostering transparency, accountability, and active participation. As the country continues to navigate its democratic transition, these tools will play a crucial role in shaping a more inclusive and participatory governance landscape.



The integration of GovTech and civictech initiatives in Mauritania underscores the country's commitment to leveraging technology for governance and citizen engagement.

⁵³ Thera, K. (2023, April 5). In Mali, Civil Society Takes on New Role in the Democratic Transition. United States Institute of Peace. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/04/mali-civil-society-takes-new-role-democratic-transition>

⁵⁴ AfricTivistes. (n.d.). The AfricTivistes CitizenLab program. Presentation of Citizen Lab. <https://africtivistes.net/en/citizenlab-en/>

Niger



Nouakchott

Niger, a vast landlocked nation, faces challenges of limited cellphone coverage, restricted internet access, and insufficient electricity supply. Adding to these challenges, the country has faced ongoing instability, including five military coups since gaining independence on August 3, 1960.

The country has a limited number of civictech tools due to challenges like internet access, political instability, and infrastructure. However, there are few notable civictech tools such as TALKAM Human Rights App and U-Report tools developed by Devatop Centre for Africa Development and UNICEF.

In the last twenty years, the role of civil society in Niger has become more complex and contentious. According to Gutheil and Tschörner (2024), the evolving role of civil society in Niger can be attributed to the expansion of groups identifying as part of it.⁵⁵ This includes organizations formed through international

cooperation, acting as intermediaries between donors and aid recipients, as well as local agents supporting multinational companies, such as mining corporations. There is an increasing interconnectedness between civil society and the political landscape. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have not only forged alliances with political parties, the government, and the military, but have also started to actively participate in political power.

One of the most notable Civil Societies is The M62 Movement, named in reference to Niger's 62 years of independence from the French colonial power.⁵⁶ Formerly known as "M62: Sacred Union for the Safeguard of the Sovereignty and Dignity of the People", it is a political organization founded in 2022, exactly 62 years after Niger's independence, by a coalition of 15 civil society organizations, in response to the French military presence during Operation Barkhane.⁵⁷



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⁵⁵ Gutheil, L., & Tschörner, L. (2024, October 28). Working with Civil Society in Authoritarian Contexts? The Case of Niger [https://www.megatrends-afrika.de/assets/afrika/publications/policybrief/MTA_PB28_Gutheil_Tsch%3B%20rner_Civil_Society_in_Niger_revised.pdf]. Megatrends Afrika. 10.18449/2024MTAPB28v02

⁵⁶ Tschörner, L. (2024, August 5). Came to Stay: Niger's Military Junta Consolidates its Power. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. Retrieved February 1, 2025, from https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/mta-spotlight-36-came-to-stay-nigers-military-junta-consolidates-its-power

⁵⁷ Tschörner, L., & Tchangari, M. (2022, September 21). Niger's civil society in protest: "Europe should take the opinions of the people seriously." Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/mta-spotlight-15-nigers-civil-society-in-protest

Another civil society organization, MediaLab for Women, offers training to journalists on managing gender-related open data and provides support for investigating gender inequality in French-speaking Africa. The project uses innovative content to raise awareness about gender and open data issues among journalists and local communities in four countries: Madagascar, Cameroon, Niger, and Ivory Coast.

The political instability caused by coups in African nations, including Niger, undermines both civil society organizations (CSOs) and civictech initiatives. In countries already struggling with poor human rights conditions, political instability worsen these challenges, making it more difficult for CSOs to function effectively. Political upheaval often leads to restrictions on freedom of expression, decreased space for civic engagement, and a lack of governmental support for initiatives aimed at addressing social issues.



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Nigeria



National Theatre Nigeria

Over the last decade, the usage of mobile phones and internet connectivity in Nigeria has witnessed an exponential increase. According to Statista⁵⁹ ***The mobile internet user penetration rate in Nigeria currently stands at about 39%, which is a considerable leap from 27.27% in 2019 and is estimated to reach 49.74% by 2028.***

This development has created opportunities for various civictech initiatives to emerge, enabling citizens to access government services and information easily via their mobile devices. Thanks to internet connectivity and the widespread use of smartphones, mobile applications, and web platforms, civictech platforms can now reach and engage a broader audience. This has not only improved the overall quality of governance in Nigeria but also empowered citizens to play a more active role in shaping their communities by providing access to information and providing mechanisms and platforms for citizens to share feedback on

governance in their communities⁶⁰

The rise of social media, particularly among the youth demographic has provided a platform for civictech to be harnessed within Nigeria; platforms such as Nairaland, Facebook(Meta), Twitter- now X, Instagram, WhatsApp and Blogs have significantly amplified the reach and impact of civic participation in keeping Neticizen abreast of information, fostering widespread engagement and virality in Nigeria.

Young people have leveraged social media to push for their own demands, lead conversations (e.g #Getinvolvedcampaign #Fixouroil #Nottoyoungtorun, #SoroSoke #EndSARS, #BringBackOurGirls #OccupyNigeria), and bring data close to citizens and the effective dissemination of civictech initiatives in Nigeria.

Most of these groups and initiatives emerged following specific policy shortcomings or critical incidents.



The mobile internet user penetration rate in Nigeria currently stands at about 39%, which is a considerable leap from 27.27% in 2019 and is estimated to reach 49.74% by 2028.

⁵⁹ Statista. (2024, December 12). Mobile internet user penetration in Nigeria from 2020 to 2029. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/972900/internet-user-reach-nigeria/>

⁶⁰ Eke, C. I. (2023, September). Digital technology and boosting Productivity in Nigeria's public sector. 10.13140/RG.2.2.15055.05285

In 2010, Enough Is Enough (EiE) originated from public dissatisfaction with the secrecy surrounding **President Umaru Yar'Adua's medical condition** leading up to his death. The protests were organised primarily through email, SMS, Blackberry Messenger and Facebook. This was the emergence of what would be the reliance on technology as a tool for advocacy, engagement and mobilisation.⁶¹

On May 28, 2011, a significant milestone was achieved when civil society organisations, pressure groups, and the Nigerian Union of Journalists collaborated to advocate for non-bureaucratic and free access to government data.⁶² This advocacy led to the implementation of the **"Right to Know Bill,"** which subsequently became the Freedom of Information Act, enhancing data accessibility. Civil society then used this data to demand government accountability, ushering in a new era of civic engagement and citizen-led governance oversight.

Since the enactment of the **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**, various civil society organisations, non-profits, citizens, and activists have monitored government compliance with the law, as well as evaluated the effectiveness of the data provided through civictech tools and platforms. These tools and platforms empower citizens with information on budgets, procurement, and public services, fostering transparency and accountability through civictech Information that was previously out of reach, allowing them to participate in public discourse and hold their governments accountable.

It's hard to overlook the role of innovation hubs like Co-Creation Hub (**CC-hub**), especially considering their impact on fostering **civictech hackathons in 2011**, through the Tech-In

Governance hackathon. Tech-driven solutions were birthed to empower citizens to actively engage in good governance. Organisations such as BudgIT,⁶³ which uses an exposé-style method to probe public sector data, particularly focusing on demystifying the government's finance to the populace, inaugurated its website in 2011, as a result of its participation in CCHub's inaugural tech governance competition.

Subsequently, *'Follow the Money' was launched by Connected Development (CODE) in 2012, following a lead poisoning outbreak in Zamfara state.* This outbreak, associated with gold ore processing, tragically resulted in the loss of over one hundred children's lives. Likewise The Social Economic Right and Accountability Project, (SERAP), the Say No Campaign emerged in 2013 in response to the government's pardon of the corrupt governor Diepreye Alamieyeseigha. Also in 2013, *Enough is Enough (EiE) launched the #OpenNASS Campaign to create a more open, transparent and accountable National Assembly.* This campaign which was born out of the frustrations of Nigerians has, since its inception, advocated for the use of technology to improve transparency in the National Assembly by demanding that details of the National Assembly budget be made publicly available, that voice voting be replaced by electronic voting and that the National Assembly maintain a functional website and make public the attendance records at plenary.

Another key moment which shaped the civictech in Nigeria is the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in 2020. Due to the nature of the pandemic, governments around the world had to turn to emergency procurement approaches which made room for corruption and a lack of transparency in how the government used public funds due to the nature of the transactions.



Another key moment which shaped the civictech in Nigeria is the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in 2020.

⁶¹ Enough is Enough (EiE) Nigeria. (n.d.). About | EiE Nigeria. EiE Nigeria. <https://eie.ng/about/>

⁶² Agba, J. U. U., Ogr, E. U., & Adomi, K. O. (2018). The Nigerian Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and the Right to Know: Bridging the Gap between Principle and Practice. New Media and Mass Communication, 73. 2224-3275

⁶³ The BudgIT Foundation. (n.d.). Our History - The BudgIT Foundation - Nigeria Budget Transparency. The BudgIT Foundation. <https://budgit.org/about-us/our-history/>

⁶⁴ EiE Nigeria. (n.d.). #OpenNASS - A Call for Transparency. Shine Your Eyes. <https://www.shineyoureyes.org/blog/-opennass-a-call-for-transparency>

⁶⁵ Open NASS. (n.d.). Our Demands. Open NASS. <https://opennass.ng/>

This again created an opportunity for CSOs to collaboratively develop innovative approaches using digital technology to track COVID-19 spending using data.⁶⁶ This involved the use of already existing civictech Tools such as NOCOPO, Budeshi to present and track COVID-19-related spending. This also involved using social media platforms to advocate to key government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA) on the need to be transparent and to galvanise citizens to take action. Ultimately, this moment grew the appreciation for what is possible with data using civictech solutions.

Civil society organisations and CivicTech organisations persist in employing diverse technologies to foster and influence discussions among Nigerians regarding transparency and accountability. Their aim is not only to impact policies but also to reshape the broader public perceptions of civic space. This created opportunities for civic innovators to come up with potential solutions to address the pitfalls of previous elections in Nigeria.

In parallel to these major events, the work of civic actors in the space began to gain global recognition which resulted in an inflow of funding for civictech developers to nurture ideas which then materialised to CivicTech innovations. For example, the MacArthur Foundation, which is one of the leading donor organisations funding innovative approaches to solving problems in Nigeria, has given out grants worth up to \$151.3 million to 130 organisations in Nigeria since 2015.⁶⁷

Civictech in Nigeria has witnessed remarkable growth within the community of practice. This growth is propelled by significant events in the nation's history, a robust policy framework, external influences including substantial funding from international donor organisations, and the advent of platforms fostering collaborations between state and non-state actors. Its growth can also be attributed to actions of individuals, often described as audacious, which have sparked movements leading to transformative impacts on governance in Nigeria.



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⁶⁶ Macbeth, A. (2021, March 2). How emergency COVID-19 spending rallied open data activists in Nigeria to push for reforms. Open Contracting Partnership. <https://www.open-contracting.org/2021/03/02/how-emergency-covid-19-spending-rallied-open-data-activists-in-nigeria-to-push-for-reforms/>

⁶⁷ MacArthur Foundation. (n.d.). Grant Search. MacArthur Foundation. <https://www.macfound.org/grants/?program=102202&yearFrom=2015&yearTo=2023>

Senegal



Dakar, Senegal's place de l'Indépendance: a center of government, banking and trade.

Senegal has a strong history of civic engagement rooted in its democratic tradition and active civil society. The country's transition to a multi-party system in the late 20th century laid the groundwork for increased citizen participation.

With the establishment of the 2001 constitution, which emphasized good governance and accountability, and the advent of mobile technology and the internet in the 2000s, new opportunities emerged for leveraging digital tools to enhance governance and citizen engagement. Hence, there has been a surge in online activism and digital platforms for political engagement.

Although, Senegal does not have a specific legislative framework for civictech. The regulatory framework for telecommunications has evolved in recent years with the aim of increasing the population's access to broadband services, and adapting to the regulatory provisions of the WAEMU and

ECOWAS. Regardless of these measures, corruption remains a serious problem in the country as anticorruption laws are unevenly enforced and enforcement actions are sometimes viewed as politically motivated.

The first feel on civictech tools in Senegal started with the Movement with "Y en a Marre" ("We've had enough") created January, 2011 aimed to raise awareness and mobilize citizens, especially young people, in order to maintain the citizen dynamic observed during the previous presidential election in 2012.

Senegal is the home of Jokkolabs, which is attributed to be the first coworking space in West Africa. It was launched in 2010.

Another of such tools that sprung up in the early period is the Sunu2012, an election monitoring platform launched by a group of bloggers led by Cheikh Fall during the 2012 presidential elections.



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This platform allowed people to monitor the electoral process in real time. During this period, the country was in a crisis situation (high cost of living, power cuts, financial scandals, etc.) against a backdrop of a political context where the system of governance installed and maintained at the head of the State, was based on nepotism, political patronage, corruption and impunity which undermines the values and social morality and dividing the Senegalese

nation.

The Senegalese government plays a dual role as both a regulator and an enabler of civicttech. Initiatives like the Digital Senegal Strategy 2025 aim to promote digital transformation, including the use of technology for governance and public service delivery.



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Sierra Leone



The Sierra Leone Supreme Court

Sierra Leone achieved independence from the United Kingdom on April 27, 1961, becoming a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and has grown to a population of approximately 8.6 million today, one of the smallest in West Africa. However, nearly half of its post-independence history has been characterized by periods of autocratic rule or civil conflict. It is one of the world's youngest democracies, having established its democratic governance in 2007, after enduring a civil war from 1990 to 2001. The war was fueled by various factors, including the notorious blood diamonds, which were mined and sold to finance the purchase of weapons.⁶⁸

Health sector challenges in Sierra Leone led to the emergence of civictech solutions in the country. The HealthOne platform was developed in response to the 2014 Ebola outbreak, which severely impacted Sierra Leone, affecting all 14 medical districts, with

14,122 reported cases and 3,955 deaths.⁶⁹ The country also faces ongoing issues with water and sanitation within its health system. In response, significant resources were invested in creating a platform to facilitate interactions and information gathering to inform stakeholders and support decision-making.

This effort led to the establishment of the Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)-One account, a platform designed to address water and sanitation challenges within the health sector, supported by the World Bank, WHO, and UNICEF. The WASH account serves as a civic tool for engaging with specific government agencies, health stakeholders, and development partners to track interventions and upgrades in Sierra Leone's health system. It consolidates information about water and sanitation challenges, government and donor interventions, and collaborative efforts to improve health outcomes.



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⁶⁸ Afrikanza. (2018, July 26). 12 Interesting Facts About Sierra Leone (The Land of Diamonds!). Afrikanza. <https://afrikanza.com/blogs/culture-history/facts-about-sierra-leone>

⁶⁹ Squire, S. J. (2017). The Ebola outbreak and staffing in public health facilities in rural Sierra Leone: who is left to do the job? National Library of Medicine. 10.5588/pha.16.0089

The WASH-One account proved instrumental during the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak, showcasing its role in addressing health emergencies. These initiatives have driven efforts to enhance the health system and promote stakeholder engagement to address Sierra Leone's health challenges effectively. WASH-One is being supervised by CSOs such as WASH-Net (Water and Sanitation Network) UNICEF and WHO.

A key contributor to civictech in Sierra Leone is the Sensi Tech Hub, supported by the World Bank, which remains the largest donor in the country's CivicTech sector. The hub is actively promoting the growth of a dynamic civic space in Sierra Leone. The popularity of CivicTech took off with Sierra Leone's first-ever d|Bootcamp, held in June 2016, where 28 finalists gathered at the Sensi Tech Hub in Freetown to officially kick off the Aftercare program. Organized by Code for Africa in partnership with the World Bank, and supported locally by Code4Salone and Sensi Tech Hub, the bootcamp highlighted innovative projects focused on civic engagement, open data, and technology as tools for addressing the country's most urgent needs.⁷⁰

Notable civictech tools that emerged from the boot camp include Hazard Map, Health Finder, Mbate Konli (Solve Cholera), a voice-response service that assists citizens during cholera outbreaks by helping them locate nearby health

centers, access home treatment options, or find ambulance services.⁷¹ Memba O! A platform which serves as a parliamentary monitoring tool, providing citizens with insights into their elected officials' attendance and voting records.⁷² mWash which focuses on water and sanitation, mapping public water points and sharing essential hygiene and sanitation information.⁷³ The Free Health Care App (FHCAApp) that aims to restore trust in the free healthcare system by exposing fraudulent medical practitioners, checking medicine availability, and offering hospital ratings.⁷⁴ These platforms are currently in development and have not yet been finalized or launched.

Other key players in Sierra Leone's civictech landscape, particularly within the governance and health sectors, include the Ministry of Health, which oversees health activities at the national level and is led by the Minister of Health. At the district level, the District Health Management Team, headed by a District Medical Officer, is responsible for implementing health policies and supervision. These district teams report to the Ministry of Health at the central level. Health-related data is collected by various stakeholders, including donors, civil society organizations (CSOs), and health organizations. CSOs, such as WASH-Net, use this information to engage with the government on pressing issues identified through platforms like WASH-One.⁷⁵ They advocate for actionable solutions to improve health services and infrastructure.



Other key players in Sierra Leone's civictech landscape, particularly within the governance and health sectors, include the Ministry of Health, which oversees health activities at the national level and is led by the Minister of Health.

⁷⁰ Khatib, U. (2016, September 2). And It Begins — Sierra Leone's Civic Tech Movement. Medium. <https://medium.com/code-for-africa/and-it-begins-sierra-leones-civic-tech-movement-62144377bfb>

⁷¹ Khatib, U., & IDT Labs. (2016, August 17). Harnessing ICT Skills in Fragile States: Tales from Freetown. The World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/08/17/harnessing-ict-skills-in-fragile-states- Tales-from-freetown>

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ WASH-Net Sierra Leone. (n.d.). WASH-Net Sierra Leone: Home. <https://www.wash-net.org/>

Another important player, similar to the BudgetIT foundation, is The Budget Advocacy Network (BAN). It is an umbrella organization that coordinates the activities of budget organizations in Sierra Leone. Established in 2006, it is a coalition of Civil Society Organisations in Sierra Leone focused on improving budget policies for sustainable and equitable development.⁷⁶ Its members include local and international groups like Transparency International, Campaign for Good Governance, and ActionAid Sierra Leone. BAN operates around three principles: participation, transparency, and accountability, aiming to promote inclusivity, improve access to information, and support gender-sensitive and pro-poor budgeting.

Major challenges in the advancement of CivicTech include limited internet penetration, a low tech literacy rate, and a lack of information. There is also minimal sensitization and awareness regarding existing platforms, with little interaction from civil society organizations (CSOs) with these platforms. Furthermore, there is a lack of investment in the CivicTech space, which hampers progress. There also remains a significant gap in platforms that focus on public finance management, accountability, or direct civic engagement with the government on financial matters. This highlights an area for potential growth within the civictech space in Sierra Leone.



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⁷⁶ The Budget Advocacy Network (BAN). (n.d.). About | The Budget Advocacy Network. <https://ban-sl.org/about/>

Togo



Fujiyama, a TOGO hypercoaster

Civic space in Togo has been shrinking since the 2017-2018 anti-government protests, marked by the killing of protesters, arrests of human rights defenders, journalists, and activists, and restrictions on protests and media outlets. The government has implemented laws and regulations that limit civic freedoms, further hindering the work of human rights defenders.⁷⁷ Despite the shrinking civic space in Togo, the country still has civictech tools like Neny City and Novissi.

Neny City is a free mobile app developed by Togolese scholars of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and funded by the U.S. Embassy in Togo. It is designed to enhance municipal management and promote decentralization. It encourages inclusive local development, citizen participation, and stronger connections between local administrations and residents.⁷⁸ Users can quickly report issues like power outages, water problems, or school malfunctions using photos, videos, text descriptions, and geolocation. Public services can track these alerts through an administrative interface, ensuring prompt action. The app has streamlined issue reporting and improved governance in Zio, a prefecture near Lomé with 300,000 residents.

FarmAI, launched by Alcoford Corporation, is a sustainable agriculture platform driven by AI, to support smallholder farmers, particularly women. The platform provides market access, tailored recommendations, and essential agricultural knowledge.⁷⁹ Alcoford Corporation's mission is to enhance farmers' livelihoods by utilizing locally sourced raw materials, producing ethanol locally, and promoting sustainable development within rural communities.

NOVISSI Togo is a social protection platform that utilizes machine learning, geospatial analytics, and mobile phone metadata to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸⁰ Supported by IDA financing under the West Africa Unique Identification for Regional Integration and Inclusion (WURI) Program, NOVISSI aims to deliver emergency cash transfers to the poorest populations in Togo. The platform uses satellite imagery and household consumption data to select underserved villages, then prioritizes individuals using machine learning algorithms based on mobile phone data and surveys. Between November 2020 and March 2021, 57,000 new beneficiaries were identified and supported through contactless cash transfers.⁸¹



The government has implemented laws and regulations that limit civic freedoms, further hindering the work of human rights defenders.

⁷⁷ Paccamiccio, N. (2022, June 30). Togo needs concrete actions to address the deterioration of civic space | Statement at the 50th Session of the UN Human Rights Council. CIVICUS. <https://www.civicus.org/index.php/media-resources/news/united-nations/geneva/5894-adoption-of-the-upr-report-of-togo>

⁷⁸ Civil Society Media. (2020, November 11). Togo: "Neny City" soon to be operational in 13 communes. <https://societecivilemedias.com/2020/11/11/togo-nenyo-city-bientot-operationnelle-dans-13-communes/>

⁷⁹ Civic Tech Innovation Network. (2024, August 30). Togo's FarmAI: Improving agricultural productivity and promoting sustainable development in underserved communities. Medium. <https://medium.com/civictch/togos-farmai-improving-agricultural-productivity-and-promoting-sustainable-development-in-a>

⁸⁰ World Bank Group. (n.d.). Prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable in West Africa: Togo's Novissi platform for social protection uses machine learning, geospatial analytics, and mobile phone metadata for the pandemic response. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2021/04/13/prioritizing-the-poorest-and-most-vulnerable-in-west-africa-togo-s-novissi-platform-for-social-protection-uses-machine-l>

⁸¹ Digital Economy for Africa. (2020). Togo Digital Economy Diagnostic Report. World Bank Document. Retrieved January 2, 2025, from <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/61714f214ed04bcd6e9823ad0e215897-0400012021/related/Togo-Digital-Economy-Diagnostic-Report.pdf?>

The Current Status of civictech in West Africa



The rapid adoption of civic technology is largely powered by improved internet connectivity, and hampered by uneven access to the internet by citizens which continues to create a digital divide.



The state and use of digital technology by civil society in West Africa is rapidly increasing, yet still evolving. Despite the brimming potential of CivicTech, its potential is yet to be fully harnessed across most countries in West Africa. The rapid adoption of civic technology is largely powered by improved internet connectivity, and hampered by uneven access to the internet by citizens which continues to create a digital divide.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, West African CSOs, like others globally, adopted technology to maintain activities, collaborate, raise awareness, advocate, survey, train, and host online events and platforms. These digital technologies enhanced CSO effectiveness by optimizing their advocacy, and boosting impact.

As digital divide continues to slow down the potential of civictech in West Africa, which is a result of infrastructural deficiencies and limited access to technology that excludes a large number of the population from

engaging with and benefiting from civictech initiatives. Bridging this gap to ensure inclusivity will require adoption of offline activities and community outreach. These activities include community workshops, town hall meetings, and other forms of in-person engagement that provide opportunities for citizens to learn about these civictech tools, voice their opinions on issues, and actively participate in shaping their communities. By extending civictech tools beyond the digital realm, organisations have created more inclusive and participatory democracy approaches that truly reflect the diverse voices and needs of all citizens.

While the early days of civictech in West Africa were highly focused on just developing new tools and platforms, there is a cohesive strategic shift where key actors and stakeholders in the field have evolved from the "tool-churning" phase; prioritising quantity (number of civictech solutions) over impact, to just building tools that meets particular needs and solves social issues.

Categories of CivicTech Tools in West Africa



Through our interviews and research, we identified that historical and extant realities of countries played a significant role in the type of issues they advocate and build civic technology for.

CivicTech tools in West Africa can be broadly categorized into five major categories based on their primary functions and the societal challenges they address. While all of these categories are fully existent in countries with high civic space actions, some smaller countries have not fully developed civic technologies in some categories.

Although the categories provided are not exhaustive, it represents a comprehensive compilation of tools we have identified, reviewed, and analysed for the specific purpose of this research. Through our interviews and research, we identified that historical and extant

realities of countries played a significant role in the type of issues they advocate and build civic technology for.

Our civictech typologies reveal that most initiatives align with five overarching categories: Civic Engagement and Community Building, Public Service Delivery, Elections, Justice and Human Rights, and Transparency and accountability. This classification framework not only encapsulates the varied landscape of civictech but also enhances our understanding of its diverse current applications within countries in West African context.

1. Civic Engagement and Community Building



These tools facilitate citizen engagement and participation in governance processes. They may include platforms for online consultations, public feedback mechanisms, civic studies, and participatory budgeting initiatives.

The gap between governments and their citizens has grown over time, leading to a significant disconnect. This is evident in the shrinking civic space in some West African countries, where citizens lack clear and

transparent avenues to communicate with elected officials, provide feedback, or access accurate information.

However, innovative technology and capacity-building initiatives are now empowering citizens to engage with their elected officials and make informed decisions. These platforms enable citizens to connect, build communities, and contribute to their nation's development, while promoting transparency and accountability.

2. Transparency & Accountability



Transparency and accountability are the building blocks of modern-day democracy. These principles ensure that public officials remain responsible to the public and that the public unequivocally has access to information about the workings of the government as it concerns the citizenry.

These tools aim to make government data and information accessible to the public. They include platforms for tracking government spending, monitoring public procurement processes, and reporting corruption. **By making data and information about public affairs readily available, the public can hold their officials accountable, reducing**

the likelihood of corruption within the public system.

However, Nigeria has faced challenges with government data being shrouded in secrecy, data not being up-to-date, or available information being too technical⁸² for non-technical audiences to comprehend.

In addition to civictech, other digital tools have been used to push Transparency and Accountability forward. Social media platforms like Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) have been utilised to disseminate simplified datasets to a broader audience. This has enabled the intended audiences to access the data easily and effectively.

3. Elections



Elections are the cornerstone of democracy and have become a commonly accepted means to legitimize governance institutions in West Africa. However, elections have also become a major source of violence and insecurity in the region.

Given the recent military uprising that has rocked the region, there is a significant increase in developing novel tools, and platforms to revolutionise a fairer election process while promoting democratic participation, as seen during the recent general elections in Ghana.

These civictech tools proffer a wide range of features, including election monitoring, violence tracking, polling locations, and advocacy tools, among others. These features significantly facilitate people's participation in the democratic process. It is impressive to note that the organisations and tools involved solely focus on promoting democratic participation and not serving any political campaign or partisan agenda.

4. Public Service Delivery



Digitising government services has revolutionised the public sector in West Africa, marking one of the most significant contributions of technology to this field.

This transformation has brought about a new era of transparency, accountability, and customer-centricity, which has been made possible by various measures taken by the government.

One of the most crucial steps taken in this direction has been the gradual adoption of e-government services in some countries, which has brought about a significant change in the way government services are delivered. The use of technology has helped to streamline processes, reduce waiting times, and minimise the need for physical interactions, promoting social distancing and making services more accessible to all.

⁸² Ezema, I. J. (2019, May). Status and Challenges of Open Government Data in Nigeria: An Informetric Analysis of Websites of Government Ministries and Organizations. Research Gate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372448915_Status_and_Challenges_of_Open_Government_Data_in_Nigeria_An_Informetric_Analysis_of_Websites_of_Government_Ministries_and_Organizations

5. Justice and Human Rights



The rise of civic technologies in the justice and human rights sector marks a significant leap in addressing persistent challenges and reshaping legal and judicial procedures. The role of technology in improving access to justice and promoting justice reforms is crucial and multifaceted.

The Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund, established in 2019 by the MacArthur Foundation and WellSpring Philanthropic Fund, supports African-led transitional justice efforts. Since 2019, \$3.1m has been disbursed to 46 West African institutions.

Historically, a major hurdle was the backlog of cases, causing prolonged wait times and frustration among those seeking justice. With the introduction of efficient case management systems, which reduced backlogs and ensured a quicker dispensation of justice, these

technologies have democratised access to justice by providing digital platforms for legal research, online dispute resolution, and streamlined court operations. This accessibility bridges the gap and fosters a more inclusive and fair legal system, aligning with fundamental principles of justice and human rights.

Nevertheless, the integration of technology in access to justice and justice reforms in West African countries has been a challenging endeavour. Digital divides have worsened existing inequalities, while concerns about data privacy and security need to be addressed.

In Mali, The USAID Mali Justice Program has been instrumental to the growth of the formal and informal justice sectors and civil society to advance institutional reforms, increase access to justice, and enhance delivery of justice services.



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Civictech Ecosystem in West Africa



Across the region, the civictech ecosystem encompasses a diverse range of influential stakeholders.



Civictech Ecosystem in West AfricaThe civictech Ecosystem, which is still developing, uses a wide range of technologies, platforms, applications, and communities to encourage transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in different public domains. It has shown great potential to address major social and political challenges in West Africa.

Across the region, the civictech ecosystem encompasses a diverse range of influential stakeholders. These key players play a pivotal role

in shaping the present dynamics of the ecosystem and possess the potential to influence and shape the future trajectory of civictech in the country. These players include developers, innovation hubs, media, and a limited number of funders etc.

The diverse and multidisciplinary nature of civictech tools attracts stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds and social needs. This diversity not only enriches the civictech landscape but also signifies that there is opportunity for other actors to join and contribute.

Categories of civictech Stakeholders



three major categories of civictech stakeholders emerged from our research.

Taking into consideration the different roles that civictech stakeholders play, the way they engage with civictech and the contributions they make to the growth of the overall civictech ecosystem, three major categories of civictech stakeholders emerged from our research. One key insight we observed is that some civictech actors fall into different categories. Below is a description of the different stakeholder categories:

1. Civictech Enablers: This group comprises stakeholders who are not directly involved in the day-to-day of civictech but are invested in the success of civictech across the region. They provide material and immaterial resources that serve as support for other stakeholders in the ecosystem. They include;

a. Civictech Funders: In West Africa, most organisations that provide financial support to civictech projects are typically international development organisations, embassies of global north countries in West Africa, philanthropic foundations and others. These organisations have made significant investments in the CivicTech space, with notable contributions from funders such as the USAID, World Bank, MacArthur Foundation, Ford Foundation, NED, Luminate, and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, amongst others.

b. Innovation Labs/Incubation Hubs: They create an enabling environment and guide CivicTech innovators and technology experts on how to take civictech solutions from ideas to solutions. West Africa's burgeoning tech

industry has witnessed a slow track record in the establishment of sustainable incubation and venture hubs that focus on supporting civictech solutions.

The main reason is that most innovation labs/incubation hubs are focused on profit-driven solutions rather than the type of impact derived from civictech which might not be easily measured in currency. Among the innovation labs/incubation hubs are CC-hub, Civic Hive (Nigeria), Seme City (Benin), Espresso Innovation Hub (Senegal), and iLab (Liberia).

2. Civic Tech Developers: Civictech Developers are individuals/organisations deeply vested in building technology that helps achieve improved governance and service delivery, and transparency and accountability in various aspects of society. They are committed to using their skills and expertise to drive positive change, and they believe that technology can play a vital role in achieving this goal. The group comprises:

a. Civil Society Organizations: The members of civil society organisations who belong to this group build CivicTech products to tackle societal issues. They are passionate about using technology to drive social change, and they have a broader understanding of the challenges that society faces.

Although they are not tech companies, they have access to tech resources that work closely with them to develop technologies that they use to achieve their core programmatic focus.

b. Social Innovators: These are the pioneers of tech driven ideas that have the potential to improve society. They constantly seek new and innovative ways to use technology to promote transparency and accountability. They are driven by a desire to make a positive impact on society and to create a better future for all.

c. Media & Journalism: It can also be argued that while journalism and the media have developed tools that can fall under civictech, they majorly serve as an outlet to empower citizens with the data to make informed choices. Nonetheless, there are investigative journalism organisations such as The Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) in Nigeria which have deployed civictech tools such as Udeme.

d. Governments: As established in the definition of CivicTech, it also includes technology solutions which have been created by the Government. In Nigeria, there are several civictech solutions which have been deployed by the government, that also aim to improve service delivery, transparency and accountability and establish communications channels between citizens and the government. Examples include the Nigeria Open Contracting Portal (NOCOPO), Open Treasury portal, Kaduna States Eyes and Ears and several open contracting portals which have been deployed by Nigerian State governments.

e. Individual contributors: These are practitioners of niche disciplines in the civictech space who bring in building blocks that shape civictech. These include researchers, academia and technology experts. Technology experts fall into this category because even though their skill sets and expertise contribute directly to the development of technology tools, they often do not own intellectual property to these solutions and in a lot of cases, they are contractors who are given specific tasks to deliver on.

3. CivicTech users: They are the primary audiences for civictech innovations that make up the demand side of civictech. It is also expected that their interaction with civictech solutions leads to an action that can directly translate to change or can start up or become part of a series of actions that translate to change. From organizations, journalists, policy makers and the general public, the use case of civictech by these users varies. Some civil society organizations have built their advocacy entirely on civictech products built by another organization, and access to justice and information have only been made possible to citizens through these tools.

Regardless, for most of the civictech solutions that exist, their success sometimes depends on citizens' uptake to utilise these tools to achieve the expected result.



Regardless, for most of the civictech solutions that exist, their success sometimes depends on citizens' uptake to utilise these tools to achieve the expected result.

Civictech Funding and Sustainability



Successful organisations within the CivicTech space have specialised in a particular service niche, catering to both government and non-profit sectors.



CivicTech's increasing popularity and potential for advancing democracy and good governance are fueled by support from donor organizations investing in innovative solutions. Organizations such as the World Bank, the Omidyar Network, Open Society Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation, along with innovation hubs have promoted new ideas and technology-driven solutions to address societal challenges.

This potential for growth and impact of many nonprofit civictech organizations is hindered by the lack of sustainable funding and investors specifically focused on civictech

initiatives.

Despite these challenges, the sector is resilient and continues to explore new funding avenues and business models to enhance its vital work. Successful organisations within the CivicTech space have specialised in a particular service niche, catering to both government and non-profit sectors. They actively explore diverse revenue-generating methods and adopt various business models to sustain their existence. A few of these organisations have successfully established dependable revenue streams that cover a portion of their expenses and keep lights on.

Challenges and Limitations

Across the West African region, CivicTech organizations have made impressive strides in civictech since their inception. They have actively addressed a myriad of socio-economic challenges, including but not limited to

education, health access and gender-based violence. However, there are challenges and limitations to harnessing the full potential of civictech identified by both its users and developers specifically to data security, digital literacy, and infrastructure gaps amongst others.

Civictech Users

Civictech tools suffer from a lack of awareness and slow adoption rates.

The adoption rate of CivicTech across West Africa, as the research conducted, indicates that the effectiveness of these tools hinges largely on the users capacity to leverage the information provided for meaningful action or engagement. Respondents underscored a prevailing low

awareness and adoption surrounding civictech products resulting in a suboptimal user engagement. Respondents indicated that the lack of funding for awareness campaigns, visibility, and campaign strategies aimed at specific user groups are potential reasons why there is low awareness. They also noted that fintech companies do not have these issues.



Now, see, the first challenge is when you even tell people it's a civictech organisation, they feel like, what are you saying? What is civictech? I still told someone yesterday and the person was like, what is civictech? So it's more or less like for Nigeria, let me say, even in Africa, it's more or less a new terrain. Trying to use technology to drive civic engagement, to drive civic conversation. It's more or less a new thing in Nigeria.

- Male, Nigeria

Distrust and low credibility of information and data:

The reliability of an information source hinges upon the authenticity of the organisation or individuals responsible for its creation and dissemination. When it comes to government-related data, users often

harbour scepticism due to perceived secrecy and ambiguity surrounding the information. Nonetheless, organisations command a higher level of trust due to their established track record and unwavering commitment to maintaining the authenticity of the information they provide.



People want to know what you can offer before they understand what you stand for. People want to know how credible you are with what you're doing before they even trust what you're putting out there.

-Civictech User, Nigeria

Limited Internet Infrastructure and Accessibility:

Across the region, internet penetration and users are unevenly distributed. With countries like Cape Verde (72.1%), Ghana (69.8%), and Senegal (60%) having the highest internet users in the region, while Niger (16.9%), Burkina Faso (19.9%), and Liberia (30.1%) having low internet penetration.⁸³ The guiding principle of CivicTech is to ensure equal access to all citizens regardless of geographical location. However, *the*

utilisation of civictech tools appears to be concentrated mainly in urban areas where the necessary internet infrastructure is readily available and accessible. In order for civictech to achieve genuine inclusivity, prioritising accessibility in design is paramount. Failing to address this concern may result in the exclusion of vast geographical areas with limited or no access, emphasising the crucial role that thoughtful and inclusive design plays in ensuring widespread participation.



Internet subscription might be a luxury for many here. Most citizens prefer information that is shared on social media rather than the one they can do research with using these tools.

-Civictech Developer, Ghana

Inadequate User-centric Design of CivicTech Tools:

The lack of user-centred design in many civictech solutions has resulted in poor user experience, as highlighted by some respondents. This includes difficulties in navigation and performing tasks, particularly for users with

disabilities. Many of the analyzed solutions failed to incorporate basic principles of user-friendly design, neglecting the crucial first step of conducting thorough user research as emphasized in the Principles of Digital Development.

Civictech Organisation and Developers

Talent and Skill gaps among Innovators:

Respondents highlight the challenges with identifying and retaining talents within the civictech space. Over the years, it has proven to become particularly

demanding for CivicTech organisations, primarily due to the attraction of competitive remuneration offered in remote job opportunities at the global level.

⁸³ Galal, S. (2024, March 14). Africa: internet penetration by country 2024. Statista. Retrieved February 2, 2025, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1124283/internet-penetration-in-africa-by-country/>

Government adoption of civictech tools and platforms: Within the current landscape, the government's stance on civictech is characterised by scepticism, predominantly viewing it as a potential threat rather than an enabler. This prevailing perception, as highlighted by respondents, creates a significant impediment to the adoption of civictech designed to streamline operations⁸⁴ and enhance efficiency, and transparency in different sectors. The apprehension toward civictech within the government framework introduces a barrier to the realisation of its full potential in facilitating smoother workflows and improving public services.

To buttress this point, respondents who were interviewed during the key informant interview had this to say about government buy-in and adoption:

Low data transparency: Datasets usually produced at the national and subnational level are often cumbersome, technical, and difficult for ordinary citizens to understand. It is not enough to have this information in its raw form; it must also be presented transparently and simplified for citizens to understand. Additionally, many civictech tools and organisations rely on data availability, mainly from the government, to power these civictech tools and that lies on the frequency and cleanliness of data sets.

Limitations to Civictech Innovations

Internet Restrictions and Social Media Crackdowns. Cyberattacks and the crackdown on social media platforms represent significant threats to the civic space. For instance, the imposed restriction on X in Nigeria (2022), Internet Shutdowns in Sierra Leone (2022), Benin (2022), Senegal (2023), and Guinea (2021)⁸⁴ posed a major challenge. Furthermore, over the years, certain civic-tool platforms have faced attacks, particularly due to the publication of Ministries, Department and Agencies' spending, further highlighting the vulnerabilities within the civictech landscape.

Continued Shrinking of Civic Space:

As evidenced by reports carried out by respective media houses, the shrinking of the civic space poses a challenge for civictech solutions.⁸⁵ This has hampered the ability of these technologies to engage effectively with citizens, impeding efforts to promote transparency and accountability.

Contributing factors to this contraction encompass restrictive legislation, limited funding avenues, and heightened governmental restrictive oversight of civil society organisations.

Financing: The inability to secure sustainable financial support has severely hindered the growth and impact of these organizations, limiting their ability to invest in core capacities and scale their operations.⁸⁶ This has made it incredibly challenging to develop and maintain the necessary infrastructure, technology, and human resources to expand their reach and create meaningful change. Ultimately, this lack of funding stifles innovation, progress, and the potential for positive social change.

As highlighted earlier, the egress of some civictech developers stems from financial constraints, inadequate compensation, or a perceived lack of value for the solutions they contribute.

⁸⁴ Access Now. (2024, August 20). Africa in 2023: internet shutdowns attack democracy. Africa in 2023: internet shutdowns attack democracy. <https://www.accessnow.org/press-release/africa-keepit-on-internet-shutdowns-2023-en/>

⁸⁵ Oshaba, E. (2022, November 11). WACSI raises alarm over Nigeria's shrinking civic space. Blueprint NG. <https://blueprint.ng/wacsi-raises-the-alarm-over-nigerias-shrinking-civic-space/>

⁸⁶ United Nations University Institute for Natural Resources in Africa. (2024, November 22). Financial constraints hinder green innovation in West Africa. United Nations University. <https://unu.edu/inra/news/financial-constraints-hinder-green-innovation-west-africa>

Little collaboration within the ecosystem: With the increased attention being given to CivicTech, stakeholders within civil society often operate in silos due to a lack of trust or a desire to hold onto their ideas. This has resulted in a fragmented and disjointed ecosystem, which has hindered progress and prevented the creation of a robust and reliable framework and foundation. The ecosystem works in silos and duplicate efforts,⁸³ instead of collaborating and bridging the gaps that exist in a platform or tool.

Strategic Goals and Funding From Donors: Given that civictech typically is not structured with a revenue generation framework akin to that of the private sector, there exists a dependence on donor funding.

As previously noted, for a comprehensive and sustainable civictech ecosystem, funding is imperative not only for online activities but also for offline initiatives. This encompasses the financing of offline events and engagements, alongside the essential maintenance of the platform and other operational facets.

Lack of Local Philanthropy: The absence of coordinated local philanthropy for civictech initiatives presents a challenge due to the limited local funding to address pressing concerns. Indigent In-country private foundations and businesses have not yet been fully leveraged for their potential to strategically support civictech innovation within their context.



The Impact of Civictech In West Africa



civictech has become a core pillar for the strengthening of democracy in Nigeria

Despite the prevailing challenges, the implementation of civic technology in West Africa has yielded notable accomplishments across diverse societal domains. While this research emphasises five specific thematic areas, the extended application of CivicTech in healthcare, education, governance, and public safety underscores its effectiveness in mitigating some of the most pressing challenges confronting the region.

With the growing momentum and adoption of civictech, civictech

organisations and solutions, civictech has become a core pillar for the strengthening of democracy in Nigeria by its evidential contributions to the promotion of transparency and accountability in budget and contracting processes, enhancement of civic participation, promotion of justice dispensation and strengthening of election processes and transparency.

Below are some of the impacts civictech solutions across the West Africa region

- Tracka (Nigeria & Ghana)

tracka

Tracka is a social platform that offers citizens the opportunity to collaborate, track and provide feedback on public projects in their communities. Its creation aimed to tackle the low levels of citizens participation in the budget implementation process and the absence of citizens' inclusion in developmental projects.

Tracka visited another community in Sokoto state where a pregnant woman had tragically lost her life due to the absence of primary

health. Prior to Tracka's intervention, the residents of Kaffe, a rural community situated in Gada Local Government, had previously been unaware that a total of N34 million had been allocated in the Federal Government budget to enhance and equip the health centre in Kaffe. Tracka brought this situation to light through the use of their social media platforms and effectively prompted a positive response from the government of Sokoto, who promised to address the situation with urgency.

- iFollowTheMoney (Nigeria, Cape Verde, Liberia, Ghana)



iFollowTheMoney is an online community of over 7000 thousand users that is involved in advocating, tracking, and visualising government spending and international aid and its impact in rural communities.

iFollowTheMoney began in 2012 following a lead poisoning incident in Bagega community in Anka LGA of Zamfara State.

Over 700 people, mostly children and pregnant women, were exposed to the poisoning and the incident claimed 163 lives. Through a series of investigations, online publicity, offline advocacy

and sensitization, iFollowTheMoney was able to work together with the citizens of the community to ensure the funds allotted to tackling the lead poisoning was utilised judiciously.

FTM has built local independent structures across the 36 states in Nigeria, including the FCT and has spread to 10 African Countries namely Kenya, Gambia, Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Liberia, Malawi, South Sudan, Cape Verde and Ethiopia.⁸⁷

- GovSpend (Nigeria)



GovSpend is a visual platform, launched by BudgIT in 2021, that provides access to simplified data sourced from the Federal Government's Open Treasury Portal (OTP). The platform was created to make the once inaccessible data in the OTP available to citizens, CSOs, the media, and stakeholders.

GovSpend provides tools for understanding FG's spending, insights into recipients of FG's payments and real time reports on FG's payments. It allows its users to search for payment using the project title, agency, or beneficiary and discover trends and connections.

Through GovSpend Media Fellowship, several groundbreaking discoveries were unearthed by journalists who investigated several payments made by the Federal Government to questionable contractors who either absconded with funds or delivered a substandard project. Some media fellowship publications include: ***Worries over "poor execution" of Kwara's Share-Patigi Road project, Dashed Hope: Three Years After Nigerian Government Paid N43 Million To Contractor, Anagu Road In Anambra Remains Abandoned and Contractor Paid Over 78m, Failed to Deliver Dawanau-Danguwa Road in Kano.***

⁸⁷ Connected Development. iFollowTheMoney Homepage. iFollowTheMoney. <https://followthemoney.org/>

⁸⁸ Salako – Adekunle, A. (2023, December 9). Worries over "poor execution" of Kwara's Share-Patigi Road project. Radio Nigeria. <https://radionigeria.gov.ng/2023/12/09/worries-over-poor-execution-of-kwaras-share-patigi-road-project/>

⁸⁹ Iom, S., & GovSpend Media Fellowship. (2023, December 19). Dashed Hope: Three Years After Nigerian Government Paid N43million To Contractor, Anagu Road In Anambra Remains Abandoned. Sahara Reporters. <https://saharareporters.com/2023/12/19/dashed-hope-three-years-after-nigerian-government-paid-n43million-contractor-anagu-road/>

⁹⁰ Adamu, A. (2023, November 23). INVESTIGATION: Contractor Paid over N78m for Project in Kano, Failed to Account for Its Location. Wikikitimes. Retrieved February 2, 2025, from <https://wikikitimes.com/investigation-contractor-paid-over-n78m-for-project-in-kano-failed-to-account-for-its-location/>

- Live Result by Civichive (Nigeria)



Prior to the 2023 General Elections, citizens had to wait at least four to five days to have a sense of how the election result was going. The manual journey of ballot boxes from the polling units to the INEC national collation centre gives room for manipulation of election and anomalies.

To promote election results transparency and real time visualisation, Civic Hive developed the Live Result election portal in 2022 to make election results accessible to citizens of the country, aid voters' education and enhance their involvement in the electoral process. The portal also features an interactive map, grants users access to previous election results, enables them to make their own projected

outcomes, create scenarios with the interactive map, and provide election updates. During the **2023 elections, Civichive, in collaboration with credible grassroots organisations, deployed officers to the 774 LGAs collation centres across Nigeria to have quick access to election results.**

In a landmark discovery during the 2023 gubernatorial election, the CivicHive team discovered that In Lafia LGA, INEC erroneously declared APC candidate winner of the election in the LGA while verified data from INEC evidently showed that the PDP candidate won. With this discovery the PDP candidate approached the tribunal to seek redress.

- OpenESR Conqueror (Mali)



Built by Tuwindi Foundation, a tech organization that was founded in 2015. They have built a number of civitech products, among these are MonElu and OpenESR Conqueror.

OpenESR (Elections Situation Room) Conqueror was the first tool developed by Tuwindi Foundation with the goal to enable citizens participation, election transparency, and monitoring using technology. The project was first implemented in Côte d'Ivoire then Benin, Mali, Senegal etc.

OpenESR is a tool to enable citizens to participate and monitor the electoral process through the use of technology to collate data from polling stations and upload in the database. This helps citizens have a real time view of the electoral process and right awareness, thereby forcing the system to be transparent.

The platform also served as an educational tool, providing voters with information about their rights, the importance of voting, and how to report issues. This led to a more informed electorate, capable of participating more effectively in the democratic process.

Open ESR Conqueror has significantly contributed to the electoral process in Mali by enhancing transparency, improving electoral security, and fostering citizen engagement. The inspiring stories of preventing electoral fraud, ensuring safe elections, and promoting civic education highlight the transformative potential of civitech initiatives like Open ESR Conqueror. Addressing challenges such as digital literacy and internet access will further enhance the platform's reach and effectiveness.

The platform also provides real-time data and reporting through sms, it has enhanced the electoral process by the ability to detect electoral fraud and manipulation. With this tool, it was possible to capture and report incidents around elections and also hold authorities accountable by ensuring that reported issues are addressed promptly, transparently, ensuring a smoother electoral process.

Open ESR Conqueror has contributed to empowering citizens in Mali to take an active role in monitoring elections, nurturing a sense of ownership and participation in the democratic process.

- The MOOC on Democracy, Elections and Governance (MOOC DEG) (Benin, Guinea, Cote D'ivoire, Burkina Faso)



AfricTivistes is a pan-African civil society organization established in 2015 and headquartered in Dakar, Senegal with representatives in 40 countries and over 200 members. It promotes and defends democratic values, human rights, and good governance across Africa using civictech.

AfricTivistes has created a network of change agents aiming to address major challenges to democracy and unity on the continent. The organization empowers African citizens to actively participate in building their societies and holding governments accountable through various strategies, including digital infrastructure development, research, innovative media design, social media campaigns, advocacy, capacity-building workshops, and community mobilization. AfricTivistes has citizens lab in Mauritania and Benin.

The MOOC on Democracy, Elections and Governance (MOOC DEG) launched in July 2022, aims promote public awareness of the African Charter for Democracy, Elections, and Good Governance, with a focus on the following specific audiences: media professionals, youth from grassroots community organizations (GCOs), bloggers, web activists, and citizen activists, CSOs.

The MOOC DEG free online learning platform offers five courses: Democracy Human Rights and Gender, Civic Spaces and Citizen Participation, Elections and Electoral Cycles, Peace and Security in Africa, African Union and its specialized organizations. It provides access to several online interactive and diverse educational content (videos, quizzes). The courses also exist in printed format and are available here - resource center.

Through their platform, MOOC DEG has promoted civic awareness and understanding of democratic principles and electoral processes among Senegalese citizens. It engages young people, equipping them with the knowledge to actively participate in democratic activities. Participants report feeling more empowered to engage in political discourse, vote, and hold leaders accountable.

Additionally, the course has inspired government officials to improve governance practices, recognizing the increased awareness among citizens. So far, over 1500 learners have enrolled on the MOOC DEG, and over 128 have finished at least one of the five (5) courses available on the dedicated platform.

- MonElu (Mali)



MonElu is a smartphone application that enables Malian citizens to communicate with their elected representatives directly, sharing their own concerns and offering fresh suggestions to enhance local governance or draw their attention to a specific issue

MonElu, which translates to "My Elect" in French, is a civic technology tool created in Mali by Tuwindi to improve citizen engagement, government accountability, and transparency by bridging the gap between citizens and their elected representatives.

MonElu facilitates continuous communication between electors and their representatives in government. It allows citizens to question, criticize, and even suggest new initiatives to government representatives. This app empowers citizens to actively engage with their representatives, participate in political discourse, and contribute to decision-making processes, allowing them to also track performance and promote transparency.

- Novissi (Togo)



The Novissi platform revolutionized social protection in Togo by delivering contactless, emergency cash transfers to those most in need. Amid the economic devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, poverty surged, affecting 46.2% of the population and disrupting livelihoods for over 60% of workers, particularly in the informal sector. Chronic malnutrition afflicted nearly a quarter of children under five, highlighting the urgent need for targeted assistance.

Leveraging machine learning and mobile money, Novissi identified and prioritized the poorest individuals with unprecedented precision. High-resolution satellite imagery and household consumption data pinpointed the 100 poorest cantons, while anonymized mobile phone metadata and surveys enabled algorithms to predict consumption patterns for 5.7 million people—70% of Togo's population. Between November 2020 and March 2021, 57,000 new

beneficiaries were selected for cash transfers, ensuring aid reached the most vulnerable.

This data-driven approach also minimized errors and fostered inclusion, particularly for women, illiterate individuals, and marginalized groups. Ground-truth surveys and in-person studies strengthened algorithm training, ensuring fairness and assessing impacts on food security and well-being. Novissi's success extended beyond cash transfers, driving a 7% increase in mobile money penetration by creating over 170,000 new accounts. By combining innovation with humanitarian need, the program provided a lifeline for informal workers, especially women, and demonstrated the potential of technology to transform social protection.

As Togo rebuilds from the pandemic, Novissi sets a powerful example of how advanced data-driven methods can create equitable and effective solutions for vulnerable populations.

- AfricTivistes CitizenLab (Mauritania)



AfricTivistes CitizenLab Mauritania has positioned itself as a pioneering civic tech initiative dedicated to strengthening citizen participation, equipping civil society actors, and fostering democratic consolidation. As a citizen innovation hub, the initiative leverages digital tools, training programs, and media solutions to bridge the gap between civil society, public administration, and everyday Mauritanian citizens.

In response to growing demands from Mauritanian youth and civil society, the CitizenLab program provides a structured space for co-creation, innovation, and participatory governance. With a focus on inclusion, accessibility, and good governance, the project promotes digital democracy through the development of tools that empower citizens to engage with their government and institutions effectively.⁹¹

Over the past year, the initiative has trained 17 young people in citizen participation, digital

activism, fact-checking, and content creation, and organized nationwide workshops on governance, civic rights, and digital literacy. These workshops equipped youths and civil society actors with the capacity to effectively engage in advocacy and accountability efforts. Another notable achievement is the establishment of a Think Tank within the CitizenLab to support research, policy analysis, and innovation in participatory democracy.

One of the primary challenges in Mauritania is the limited access to civic information, as most official materials are published in French or Arabic, excluding large segments of the population who speak Hassania, Wolof, Soninké, and Pulaar. To address this issue, AfricTivistes CitizenLab developed a Multilingual Audio-Voice Mobile Application, a 100% audio-based platform, which enables citizens to access important information on government and elections in their local languages.

⁹¹ <https://citizenlabmauritania.org/a-propos>

They also developed an Open and Participatory Citizen Web Platform which was created to enhance citizen engagement, provide fact-checked content, success stories, and participatory discussions on democracy and governance. Through these digital solutions, 1.73 million internet users in Mauritania now have increased access to transparent, multilingual, and inclusive civic information.⁹²

AfricTivistes CitizenLab recognizes that sustained civic engagement requires education. These efforts have contributed to the growing participation of young Mauritians in civic discussions and policy debates, fostering a new generation of digital democracy advocates. They have also implemented a diverse range of media initiatives as a means to popularize democratic values and amplify citizen voices. These initiatives include a Web TV platform featuring discussions, interviews, and success stories of citizen engagement and democratic transformation. Television and radio broadcasts in partnership with local media, ensuring widespread access to civic education and election awareness programs. A Monthly Digital Newsletter and a News Magazine to provide regular updates on governance, civic rights, and policy changes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, young Mauritians demonstrated a high level of civic engagement, launching initiatives to raise awareness, combat misinformation, and develop ICT-based solutions. The CitizenLab has documented and amplified these initiatives, further encouraging grassroots activism.

Additionally, ahead of Mauritania's elections, AfricTivistes CitizenLab produced a comprehensive Election Voter Guide, designed to educate citizens on their electoral rights and

voting procedures, counter disinformation and electoral malpractice and foster greater voter turnout and informed decision-making. The project has launched online advocacy campaigns promoting citizenship and democratic engagement, utilizing social media, digital forums, and interactive discussions to reach a broader audience.

AfricTivistes CitizenLab has built strong partnerships with civil society organizations, media professionals, and institutional stakeholders to enhance its impact.

- The official launch seminar in Nouakchott, themed "Digital Technology for Citizen Engagement and Participatory Democracy in Mauritania," served as a platform to engage government agencies, media partners, and advocacy groups.

- Media partnerships have enabled the distribution of CitizenLab-produced content on national and international platforms, ensuring wider accessibility.

AfricTivistes CitizenLab Mauritania has transformed the civic engagement landscape by integrating innovative digital tools, targeted training programs, and impactful media solutions. Through its inclusive mobile application, multilingual platforms, voter education efforts, and strategic partnerships, the initiative has successfully empowered Mauritanian citizens to actively participate in governance and democratic processes.

Moving forward, the initiative aims to expand its reach, strengthen institutional collaborations, and further refine its digital tools to ensure that every citizen, regardless of literacy level or linguistic background, can actively contribute to shaping Mauritania's democratic future.

- GambiaParticipates (Gambia)

Gambia Participates has emerged as a pivotal civic tech and advocacy organization in The Gambia, championing transparency, democracy, and civic engagement. Since its inception during the historic 2016 presidential election, the organization has spearheaded numerous projects focused on fiscal



transparency, anti-corruption, elections, strategic litigation, advocacy, and access to information. Through its innovative initiatives, Gambia Participates has significantly influenced governance processes, empowered citizens, and strengthened democratic institutions in The Gambia.⁹³

⁹² <https://citizenlabmauritania.org/initiatives>

⁹³ Gambia Participates. (n.d.). Fiscal Transparency, Anti-Corruption, and Elections. Gambia Participates. <https://www.gambiaparticipates.org/>

A cornerstone of Gambia Participates' work is promoting fiscal transparency and public participation in budget processes. By conducting budget research under the Open Budget Survey, the organization has provided valuable insights into government financial management. The Know Your Budget initiative, launched in 2017, has been instrumental in demystifying the national budget process, ensuring that citizens, regardless of education or economic status, can actively engage in financial governance. Through community visits, stakeholder engagements, billboards, and simplified budget documents, this initiative has enhanced public scrutiny of government spending. The support from the International Republican Institute and the U.S. Embassy in Banjul has strengthened the project's outreach and effectiveness⁹⁴.

Additionally, Gambia Participates, in collaboration with SANCUS partners, is developing the Parliamentary Oversight Assessment Tool to assess and improve parliamentary accountability. This tool is designed to help civil society organizations and stakeholders evaluate how effectively parliamentarians exercise oversight throughout their tenure.

Advancing Anti-Corruption Efforts Gambia Participants have played a crucial role in exposing and addressing corruption in The Gambia. The organization's investigative work and advocacy have highlighted cases of grand corruption and land-related abuses.

The 2019 documentary *Hyena*, produced in partnership with Transparency International, brought to light crimes committed during Yahya Jammeh's dictatorship, including unlawful confiscation of property, forced exile, and denial of social benefits. The documentary's impact was profound, leading to testimonies at the Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) and its admission as evidence.

In 2021, the organization produced two documentaries, *Kharafi in Kafuta* and *Maladies in Babylon*, to expose land-related corruption. These films gave voice to victims from Kafuta, whose farmlands were occupied by The Kharafi Group, and residents of Lameng, Makumbaya, and Mandinaring, whose lands were forcefully seized. By documenting these injustices, Gambia Participates has raised awareness and fostered

dialogue on land corruption in The Gambia.

Strengthening Electoral Processes and Voter Engagement Gambia Participates have made significant strides in enhancing electoral transparency and voter education. The Marble Project, developed in partnership with Assutech, introduced The Gambia's first election app, making real-time election results and key electoral information accessible to citizens, including those in the diaspora. The app, which was downloaded by approximately 30,000 people during the 2016 election, has transformed how Gambians engage with electoral processes, featuring tools such as polling station navigation, voter education content, and an interactive "I Voted" sticker.

Ahead of the 2021 presidential election, Gambia Participates, with support from, National Endowment for Democracy (NED) launched a voter education campaign targeting rural regions. Through community engagements, billboards, animation videos in local languages, and radio jingles, the campaign successfully educated citizens on voter registration, the voting process, and the importance of peaceful elections. The initiative played a critical role in preventing election-related violence and increasing voter turnout.

Empowering Citizens Through Information and Advocacy Recognizing the power of digital advocacy, Gambia Participates continues to innovate through online campaigns and multimedia content. Their newsletters, news magazines, and media partnerships ensure that vital civic information reaches a broad audience. By leveraging technology and civic engagement strategies, the organization is fostering a more informed and active citizenry in The Gambia⁹⁵.

Gambia Participates has established itself as a driving force for democratic consolidation, fiscal transparency, and anti-corruption efforts in The Gambia. Through its impactful projects, the organization has strengthened governance accountability, increased citizen participation in democratic processes, and empowered marginalized communities. Moving forward, Gambia Participates' commitment to leveraging technology, advocacy, and research will continue to shape a more transparent and participatory democratic landscape in The Gambia.

⁹⁴ Ibid⁹⁵ <https://www.gambiaparticipates.org/>

- GoToVote (Ghana | <https://ghana.gottovote.cc/>)



GotToVote! Ghana is a platform designed to help Ghanaian citizens register to vote. The website provides information on eligibility, the registration process, required documentation, and the location of the nearest voter registration center. This information is presented in an easily accessible format, unlike the difficult-to-access PDFs and MS Word or Excel documents on government websites.

GotToVote! Ghana was built by Odekro and

Code for Africa, in partnership with Code for Ghana hub in Accra. According to the team, The project took them two days and \$500 to execute, and all data and source materials are available for reuse. This is the first in a new partnership to create digital tools that empower Ghanaian citizens.

This project has also been deployed and scaled to countries like Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe.

- Penplusbytes (Ghana)



Penplusbytes, a leading not-for-profit organization in Ghana, has been at the forefront of initiatives aimed at combating disinformation, promoting media literacy, and fostering collaboration between the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These efforts are particularly significant as Ghana approaches its 2024 general elections and continues to address various developmental challenges.

Some of Penplusbytes' impactful work, as highlighted in their various articles, includes driving initiatives to combat misinformation, empowering youth with media literacy, fostering collaborations to counter election disinformation, and advocating for climate action.

In October 2024, Penplusbytes, in collaboration with Youth Kommunity, hosted the inaugural Youth Against Disinformation Conference in Accra and Tamale. This event, part of the UNESCO Global Media and Information Literacy (MIL) week in Ghana, aimed to educate young Ghanaians on identifying and combating election-related misinformation. Over 200 participants, including students, media representatives, and members of civil society organizations, engaged in workshops and discussions to enhance their media literacy skills. Jerry Sam, Executive Director of Penplusbytes, emphasized the importance of informed decision-making among young voters, stating,

"It is crucial for the youth to base their choices on policies rather than personalities."

Anticipating the challenges of the upcoming 2024 elections, Penplusbytes, in partnership with Research ICT Africa (RIA) and supported by International Media Support (IMS), convened key stakeholders in Accra on November 12, 2024. The meeting aimed to establish a coalition comprising civil society organizations, fact-checking entities, the Electoral Commission, political parties, media representatives, and the national elections security task force. The goal was to develop a collaborative framework to identify, report, and counteract disinformation, thereby safeguarding the integrity of Ghana's electoral process. Jerry Sam highlighted the initiative's objective: "Our objective is to build a collaborative framework that enables effective coordination in identifying, reporting, and countering disinformation to safeguard the integrity of Ghana's electoral process."

Through these multifaceted initiatives, Penplusbytes continues to play a pivotal role in promoting informed citizenry, enhancing democratic processes, and fostering sustainable development in Ghana.

Their projects span a diverse range of efforts, including launching the DisinformShield – Defending Democracy, an innovative initiative to counter disinformation and enhance democratic systems.

Co-funded by the European Union, the project aims to fight disinformation and strengthen democracy across the continent. Penplusbytes is also executing the "Optimising Audience Engagement for AU-ECOSOCC" project, co-funded by the European Union as part of its goal to encourage civic engagement and participation in democratic processes. This project aims to improve the AU-ECOSOCC's digital engagement strategy.

In collaboration with VoteSwiper e.V., a civic tech organization based in Germany, the organization is implementing the Voters' Compass project through its African Elections Project. Funded by the German Federal Foreign Office's ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) under the Zivik Funding Programme, the project is designed to help Ghanaians make informed voting decisions in the 2024 national elections by providing verified information about political parties, candidates,

and election procedures.

In partnership with Africa Confidential and funded by the European Journalism Fund, Penplusbytes will produce journalistic and research content to monitor African states' negotiating tactics at UN COP climate summits. This will cover technical issues, challenges faced by diplomats and parliamentarians, and the coordination among national governments, NGOs, businesses, financial institutions, and pan-African organizations.

The "Yen Somu Bi" project, designed by Penplusbytes with support from the STAR Ghana Foundation, is designed to showcase domestic philanthropic impact. The project focuses on creating an innovative research-based fundraising and advocacy platform to promote charitable giving.

- Tostan

(Guinea, Guinea - Bissau, Mali, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal)



Tostan is a leading community-driven organization dedicated to empowering communities through education and fostering sustainable development. Its mission is to support communities in achieving their vision for the future while inspiring large-scale movements that uphold dignity for all. Tostan's model emphasizes community-led development, focusing on education, governance, and well-being. Since launching its Community Empowerment Program (CEP) in Guinea-Bissau in 2008, the organization has made significant strides in fostering civic engagement, strengthening democratic participation, and improving social outcomes.⁹⁶

The CEP, first introduced in Guinea-Bissau in 2008, has reached 239 communities directly, with 119 communities implementing the program from 2008-2019 and an additional 120 communities engaged since 2020. The program has had a transformative impact, strengthening the capacity of communities to drive their own development through education and participatory governance.

Tostan uses mobile phones, solar power projects, digital tools, and community radio & digital communication to facilitate literacy, numeracy, civic engagement, and social change.

Currently, the CEP operates in 120 communities across all six sectors (districts) of the Bafatá region as part of the Scaling Wellbeing initiative. This program is a collaborative effort between Tostan, local communities, and the Regional Government of Bafatá. The initiative targets 72 Fula-speaking communities, 36 Mandinga-speaking villages, and 13 Creole-speaking communities, ensuring that development efforts are inclusive and linguistically accessible. The engagement strategy emphasizes grassroots participation, which is crucial for sustainable impact.⁹⁷

As of early 2022, there were 8,740 participants in Tostan centers, with women and girls making up 73% of the participants.

Tostan has played a crucial role in enhancing the democratic space in Guinea-Bissau by working closely with local government representatives. One of the key aspects of this initiative is ensuring that government officials understand their roles and responsibilities toward their communities.

In 2022, Tostan conducted training with 83 local officers in Guinea-Bissau, reinforcing their ability to respond effectively to community needs and foster participatory governance.

⁹⁶ Tostan International. (n.d.). About Us. Tostan International. <https://tostan.org/about-us/>
⁹⁷ Ibid

Additionally, Tostan collaborates with various governmental and non-governmental partners, including CODEDIC, Wellfound, the National Committee for the Abandonment of Harmful Traditional Practices, ECAS-D (Community Structure for Animation and Sensitization for

Development), the U.S. Embassy, and the Policy Experimentation & Evaluation Platform. These partnerships have strengthened the organization's ability to scale its programs and increase its impact across the region.

The Future of Civictech in West Africa

Regardless of the many challenges that CivicTech faces, there is a significant untapped potential that, if properly harnessed, could lead to unprecedented impact and further opportunities to scale the sector.

Opportunities to Scale

1. Internet Connectivity & Technological Advancement: West Africa's fixed broadband market is transforming, marked by significant growth and technological advancements, albeit in many countries with a very low base. This growth is driven by the widespread adoption of fiber and fixed wireless broadband technologies, enhancing connectivity and accessibility across urban and rural areas.

However, broadband penetration in Africa at large remains one of the lowest globally, highlighting both the challenges and opportunities on the continent. The potential for civic participation through improved digital access is immense.

It is evident that the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector in Nigeria is rapidly growing as it was reported to have contributed 17.47% to Nigeria's real Gross Domestic Product in Q1 of 2023 which is an increase in comparison to the 16.2% from last year in the same period.⁹⁸ Also, the emergence of a digital-savvy minister - in Bosun Tijani, as the Minister of the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy creates an opportunity for the expansion of civictech in Nigeria.

Several strategies are already in place to guide the development of ICT infrastructure across Africa. These strategies serve as a foundation for increased regional integration and contribute to national strategies for digital infrastructure. The following are the existing pan-African policies and strategies: Agenda 2063; a 50-year plan that

aims to transform Africa into a global powerhouse, African **Continental Free Trade Agreement** which promotes the development of cross-border networks to strengthen land-based infrastructure and diversify connectivity routes, the **Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)** strategy which aims to leverage digital technologies and innovation to transform African societies, and the **ATU White Paper on Connectivity in Africa and Regional Co-operation Framework for Submarine Cable Accessibility** which stresses the importance of affordable access to international bandwidth and promotes extending subsea cable capacity to landlocked countries.

These advancements and milestones create an enabling environment for Nigerian civictech developers to strengthen the strides made so far and forge new paths for the success of civictech. It also creates the infrastructure for more potential users of civictech to connect and engage with platforms that enable positive change in society.

2. There is a growing awareness and consciousness about civic education and civic duties in West Africa, especially among the youth: In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of young men's and women's civic & political participation in West Africa to achieve gender equality in youth political and civic participation. From an individual standpoint to the organizational level, West African citizens have become increasingly active, and NGOs are no longer the sole leaders in the demand for good governance and accountability in West Africa.

In Burkina Faso, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, and Guinea, social movements made up of citizens (including NGOs) protested against certain government actions and policies, and in some countries, removed authoritarian leaders from office.

⁹⁸ Akintaro, S. (2023, May 25). ICT contributed 17.47% to Nigeria's real GDP in Q1 2023. Nairametrics. <https://nairametrics.com/2023/05/25/ict-contributed-17-47-to-nigerias-real-gdp-in-q1-2023/>

The opportunity here is to ensure that democracy is sustained and the heightened awareness of social action can be further strengthened through the use of technology to re-engage citizens and broaden their understanding of Civic action and participatory governance.

3. Regional Incubation and Accelerator Fellowship: Only few fellowships exist to cater for mentorship of incubation of civictech innovators in West Africa, only few are continental in approach and they sometimes don't give opportunities for mentorship and scalability. Majority of incubation programs existed within specific countries with limited funds to pilot their ideas. There is a need for ECOWAS to create a special fund for investment in mentorship, incubator, and accelerator programs that not only focus on the tech part of their idea but also for the civic aspect.

4. A lot of already existing platforms to build upon: Also evident in this report is the fact that CivicTech in the West Africa region is way beyond its starting point and is well on its way to

establishing itself as a sector on its own. From this study, we identified solutions that can be easily scaled to other countries if there is an idea exchange fellowship that exists for social innovators.

5. Emerging Technologies: With the world rapidly advancing when it comes to technologies, many respondent organisations see a crucial need to explore new and advanced technologies to promote civic and community engagement, these include both organizationally and in their project work. Hence, civictech stakeholders should harness the potential of cutting-edge technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DL), blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT). This is essential to enhance data utilisation, improve user engagement, and equip civictech solutions with the necessary tools to support users to effectively take action. There are technologies that though they are not new, but have not been used effectively to reach marginalised communities e.g. Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD).



Recommendations

Civictech Organisation

Innovate around Civic education and participation: There is still a low level of civic education on citizens' rights, duties and participation in governance, leading to (among other factors) the inability for citizens to take action as necessary, even when the right information and other resources are made available. But *there is a burgeoning interest in civic education. It is therefore critical for civictech organisations to identify and execute more innovative approaches to civic education and encouraging civic participation, recognizing that it forms the core of engaging with civictech tools.* It's crucial to demystify civic participation, dispelling the misconception that it is solely centred around elections.

In-Depth User Research: To ensure seamless citizen engagement with civictech tools, civic actors need to develop tools that keep the intended users at the centre of their design and development. This involves creating user-friendly interfaces, incorporating features that actively encourage citizen participation, and ensuring accessibility for diverse users. By conducting thorough research on citizens' demographics and preferences, actively involving the community in the design process, and fostering a culture of continuous innovation, civic actors can develop tools that resonate with citizens and empower sustained and meaningful civic participation and community.

Collaboration amongst Civictech Developers: Considering finances are a major challenge within the ecosystem, civictech developers (Innovators, civic organisations and technology companies) need to collaborate and co-create together effectively. This can help reduce the burden and make the process smoother for everyone involved. This collaborative effort can effectively pool diverse expertise and resources, fostering innovation facilitating the exchange of best practices and creating a more effective and efficient ecosystem. This strategic collaboration will

prevent duplicative efforts within the ecosystem, ensuring that valuable lessons learned contribute to the enhancement of a broader community.

Build Digital Public Goods (DPG): According to the Digital Public Good Alliance (DPGA) digital public goods are defined as “open source software, open data, open AI models, open standards and open content that adhere to privacy and other applicable laws and best practices, do no harm, and help attain the SDGs.”⁹⁹ By developing these digital public goods, civictech organisations can build solutions that are not just open, and safe, but allow other people to build upon what already exists and share information. civictech solutions can also be recognized globally and pique the interests of the international community.

Explore other Funding Models: Platforms that are supported by grants may be open source or free, but their long-term viability cannot be assured. Therefore, the ecosystem needs to consider funding approaches that encourage community-owned local solutions that cater to local issues and promote ownership among community members. Such funding models can foster greater participation and engagement from local communities, resulting in more sustainable and efficient solutions that cater to their specific requirements.

Awareness of civictech-Tools: There's a need for civictech organisations to prioritise the task of raising awareness among their users about the various civic tools and platforms available to them. Organisations should educate their users on how these tools and platforms can contribute to their daily lives and make their communities better. This can tremendously enhance the users' experience and increase their engagement with the platforms and tools, leading to more participation in civic activities, and a more engaged and informed citizenry.

Enough is Enough Nigeria is an organisation committed to fostering a culture of good governance and public accountability in Nigeria through active citizenship. Its approach involves advocacy, activism, and mobilising youth adults to become responsible and active citizens of society.

Robust M&E and Impact Measurement:

Civic organisations should establish robust structures to measure the impact and evaluate the products, tools, and platforms they design.

Government

Adoption of civictech Tools: The Nigerian government should consider working hand in hand with civictech organisations to promote infrastructure development and digital transformation. This approach can improve the development of digital public goods, streamline processes, increase trust, and prevent duplication of efforts within the government system.

Lagos State Citizens Gate is a platform for citizens to connect with the government of Lagos state. On this platform, citizens can file feedback on government services in the form of commendation, complaint, suggestion, or inquiry. Citizens also have the option to reopen a closed ticket from a complaint. Additionally, citizens can access information about ministries, departments, and agencies of the Lagos State Government, as well as information about LCDAs in Lagos State.

Build Digital Public Infrastructure:

Although there have been significant efforts

It's essential to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative measurements to ensure continuous alignment with user needs. This will facilitate the identification of innovative solutions or features within the platform. For instance, implementing a quick satisfaction/evaluation survey after user engagement with a tool or platform can provide valuable feedback for ongoing improvement and measure user interactions and behavioural change.

from the government to provide certain infrastructure to support digital development, there's still a need for more strategic work to be done that can serve as the backbone for more old and new digital tools to build upon. For instance, the Nigerian National Identity Programme by the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) has created a database of personal information that digital solutions can call on for reliable personal identification information. With the help of robust DPGs, an unending synergy between ecosystems can be created and leveraged.

Sustainability and Local Innovation: To foster sustainability and innovation within the ecosystem, it's important to create a supportive environment that encourages local initiatives. A sandbox infrastructure can provide a controlled space for innovation, enabling the ecosystem to develop homegrown solutions that meet the needs of their communities. By building a sustainable ecosystem through collaboration and innovation, we can strengthen the civic space and promote democratic participation.

funding sources, creating a local dedicated pool could further drive innovation and a sustainable funding ecosystem that benefits each country.

Private Sector

Building Local Philanthropy: There is a need for a local funding pool within West Africa's CivicTech ecosystem. While there are existing

Categories of Civic Tech Tools in West Africa.

Citizen's Engagement and Community Building



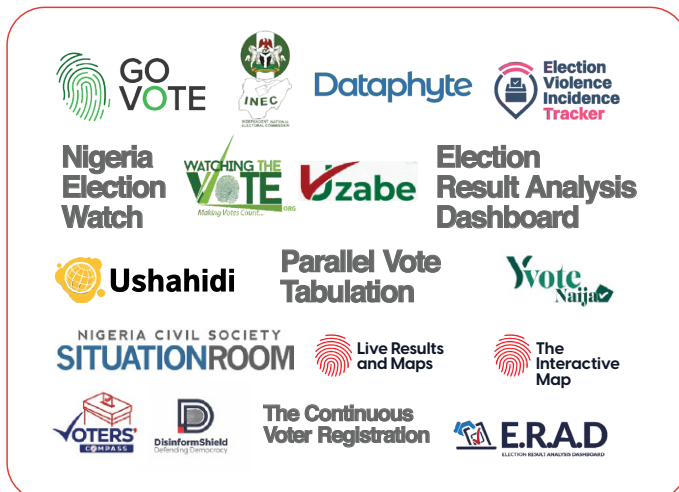
Transparency and Accountability



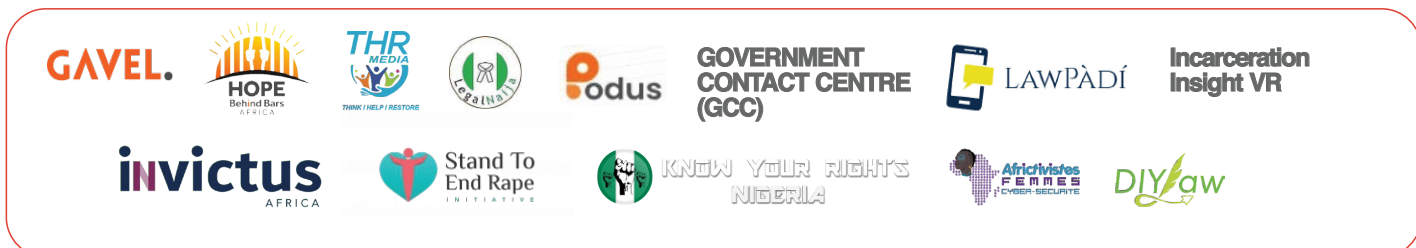
Public Service Delivery



Elections



Justice and Human Rights



Annex 1: CivicTech Typologies

Explanation of Classification

As proposed, the taxonomy for civictech was designed to encapsulate the multifaceted nature of the digital realm's intersection with civic engagement and governance. This categorization addresses the breadth and depth of digital innovations, bridging the divide between citizens and their governments.

At its core, civictech is about improving the dialogue between governments and their constituents. Hence, categories like **Government-Citizen Communication Platforms** and **Public Participation Tools** lie at the heart of the taxonomy. They emphasise the importance of two-way communication, allowing governments to convey messages and citizens to voice concerns or feedback.

A modern democracy thrives not just on effective communication but also on transparency, participation, and accountability. Thus, **Transparency and Accountability Platforms** and **Election and Voting Systems** were introduced. These categories acknowledge the public's right to transparent governance and ensure the sanctity and trustworthiness of electoral processes, respectively.

Recognizing that civictech isn't limited to the national stage, including **Civic Engagement and Community Building**, spotlights grassroots movements and localised initiatives, enabling community members to collaborate on shared concerns.

The taxonomy also acknowledges the evolution and diversification of civictech tools. **Emergency and Disaster Response** reflects the growing importance of tech in crisis management, while **Integrity and Anti-Corruption Tools** highlight the role of digital platforms in maintaining governance standards.

Lastly, the **Capacity Building and Digital Literacy** category was an essential inclusion, emphasising that the true potential of civictech is realised only when both the government and citizens are adept at harnessing these tools.

The chosen taxonomy reflects a comprehensive and holistic view of the civictech landscape, prioritising inclusivity, communication, transparency, and adaptability. Each category has the overarching aim of strengthening democratic processes, enhancing citizen engagement, and promoting effective governance through technology.



Typologies

1. Government-Citizen Communication Platforms:

- Description: Tools or platforms that enable direct communication between citizens and government officials or agencies.
- Examples: Feedback portals, complaint and redressal systems, and public forums.

2. Public Participation Tools:

- Description: Platforms that facilitate citizen involvement in decision-making processes and policy formulation.
- Examples: Online public consultation platforms, e-petitions, and participatory budgeting tools.

3. Transparency and Accountability Platforms:

- Description: Tools that give citizens access to governmental operations, decisions, and expenditures information.
- Examples: Open data portals, government spending trackers, and contract and procurement disclosure platforms.

4. Public Service Delivery:

- Description: Digital platforms that facilitate the delivery of public services to citizens are more efficient and user-friendly.
- Examples: E-governance portals, online tax payment systems, and digital public transportation information systems.

5. Election and Voting Systems:

- Description: Platforms that support electoral processes, from voter registration to election results dissemination.
- Examples: Online voter registration platforms, election result dashboards, and digital platforms for voter education.

6. Civic Engagement and Community Building:

- Description: Platforms that allow citizens to organise, discuss, and collaborate on local issues or initiatives.
- Examples: Neighbourhood forums, civic issue reporting apps (e.g., pothole reporting), and community project crowdfunding platforms.



7. Policy and Legislation Feedback Platforms:

- Description: Tools where citizens can provide feedback on proposed policies or legislation.
- Examples: Online platforms for commenting on draft legislation policy discussion forums.

8. Capacity Building and Digital Literacy:

- Description: Initiatives that aim to educate and train citizens and government officials about digital tools and platforms.
- Examples: Online courses on digital literacy workshops on using civictech platforms.

9. Emergency and Disaster Response:

- Description: Platforms that facilitate communication and coordination during emergencies or disasters.
- Examples: Early warning systems, emergency reporting, and response apps.

10. Integrity and Anti-Corruption Tools:

- Description: Platforms focused on monitoring, reporting, and mitigating corrupt practices.
- Examples: Whistleblower platforms, corruption reporting apps, and integrity monitoring dashboards.

While typologies can help organise and categorise civictech solutions, it is essential to remember that real-world applications may only sometimes fit neatly into a single type. It is critical to evaluate each solution individually and determine its potential benefits and limitations based on the specific needs and circumstances of the user.



Annex 2: Methodology

The methodology used for this research was a qualitative assessment, this is to help provide a nuanced analysis of the distinctions between various platforms and technologies and elucidate the features and, more importantly, how these distinct elements converge to reinforce the overarching concept of civictech.

Data Collection Methodology: To conduct the landscape analysis, qualitative research methodology; key informant interviews, desk research, and platform and tool analysis was utilised. These methods allowed an analysis of specific interconnections between these technologies.

Desk Research: Desk research was conducted, examining existing literature, reports, and relevant documentation. The objective was to gain a comprehensive overview of the landscape. This process facilitated the identification of key elements and established a foundational understanding essential for further analysis to ascertain what existed within the landscape and to better demystify the funding models, thematic areas, and adoption rate.

- The research also reviewed government-developed platforms designed to serve the public, subjecting them to a rigorous evaluation against pre-defined criteria for civictech. This analysis was aimed at showcasing the active involvement of the government and its significant contributions to the development and advancement of civic technology. Through this lens, we highlighted the commendable efforts made by governmental entities in leveraging technology to improve civic engagement and public services.

Key Informant Interview: The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) employed a qualitative approach, strategically selecting a sample size within the population. This methodology was aimed at extracting nuanced information that delves into the experiences and behaviours of participants in a manner not achievable through quantitative methods alone. The respondents chosen for the KIIs included civictech developers, users of civict technology, and expert consultation providing a comprehensive exploration of perspectives from both ends of the spectrum.

- **Expert Consultations:** In addition to engaging civictech developers and users, the research also conducted interviews with CivicTech champions from different countries in West Africa within the civictech space. This deliberate inclusion of experts added a valuable layer to the qualitative approach, bringing forth insights and perspectives shaped by their extensive experience and specialised knowledge. This multifaceted approach, combining insights from developers, users, and experts, contributes to a more comprehensive and constructive analysis that informs strategic recommendations and advancements in the civictech domain.



- **Civictech Users:** The research also engaged with users of civictech such as Civic Society Organisations (CSO), Media and independent tech enthusiasts through interviews, providing valuable insights and perspectives to contribute to a constructive and user-centric analysis.

- **Civictech Developers:** civictech developers were interviewed for this research, covering a dual spectrum that included technical developers and key personnel from the management or staff of civictech organisations who are instrumental in designing the products or platforms. This inclusive approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of technical expertise.

Limitations of the Report: The report on civictech in Nigeria provides a comprehensive overview of the tools operating in the country. However, like any research work, it has certain limitations that offer opportunities for further research within the ecosystem. The limitations of this report are:

- **The report's scope:** is determined by the tools explored during the research phase. Given the dynamic nature of the CivicTech landscape, the report did not explore **ALL** the tools in the West Africa ecosystem. Hence, it is essential to continue exploring and identifying new tools and platforms.

- **Government officials and entities:** The report did not interview government officials due to research timelines and the unavailability of those officials after scheduling an interview. We recommend that future research should be prioritised, especially in understanding Gov-Tech in West Africa. To foster more collaborative efforts between the Gov-Tech and CivicTech sectors, future studies should involve government officials.

Future studies should expand the scope and engage a broader range of stakeholders within Gov-tech and civictech.



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SIERRA
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CÔTE
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