

Global Initiative for Fiscal Transparency (GIFT)

2022 Workplan

(April 19th, 2022)

Based on the GIFT network's mission and strategic plan, its 2022 Workplan's priority activities are to:

- 1) Advance transparency and public participation in fiscal policies in international norms and at country level.
- 2) Increase and improve peer-learning, knowledge exchange, technical collaboration, and harnessing digitalization to increase access to meaningful information and engage the public.
- 3) Consolidate GIFT as a cohesive action network of champions, set to become a source of knowledge, experience, innovation, and practices that have impact.

The paragraphs below outline how GIFT will perform each of these activities.

1. Advancing transparency and public participation in fiscal policies

a) Global norms harmonization

- i. GIFT is working to convene its multi-stakeholder network for a dialogue on how International Financial Institutions (IFIs) can further promote fiscal openness during emergencies. This will primarily be done in partnership with the International Budget Partnership (IBP) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The objectives of this dialogue are to:
 - Agree on the importance of fiscal openness in promoting relief and recovery efforts, examining 2020-21 illustrative cases;
 - Take stock of steps already taken by IFIs to promote fiscal openness in aid-recipient countries during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; and
 - Identify practical actions that IFIs can take to promote fiscal openness through their lending operations and governance policies in times of emergencies.
- ii. The online public consultation process for the draft Transparency Principles for Tax Policy and Administration concluded in March 2022. GIFT received comments from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other organizations. A discussion at country level took place in Mexico. Further country level discussions are to take place in the Philippines and South Africa. With the assistance of Richard Murphy and Andrew Baker (University of Sheffield), the GIFT Coordination Team will then produce the final version of the principles to be presented at the 2022 Stewards General Meeting.
- iii. Emergency response analyses from a fiscal transparency perspective (based on the [Fiscal Data for Emergency Response: Guide for COVID-19](#)): In partnership with the World Bank Group (WBG), GIFT's analyses based on research and workshops conducted with Serbian, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the North Macedonian public financial management (PFM) communities, contributed to the preparation of a report coordinated by Verena Fritz from the World Bank. The draft report underwent a detailed review by in-country specialists and

public servants, with the final version to be presented to the relevant ministries of finance in the first semester of 2022.

b) Public participation mechanisms

- i) The GIFT/IBP Fiscal Openness Accelerator ([FOA](#)) public participation project progressed significantly with the workshop held in Dakar, in March 2022. Representatives from the participant countries (Benin, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa) as well as Cote d'Ivoire were in attendance. This, the first in-person gathering since March 2020, triggered significant advancements in country plans and actions to adopt public participation mechanisms. South Africa implemented its first round of pre-budget public consultations in 2021, while Benin launched their public participation mechanism, the BousProb mobile application, in March 2022. With GIFT's continued technical assistance, all of the FOA countries are expected to implement a form of public participation in their 2022-23 budget processes.
- ii) In collaboration with the WBG, GIFT will continue providing technical assistance and support to the Government of Cote d'Ivoire, for the implementation of a public participation mechanism in the budget process, as part of the country's Open Government Partnership (OGP) National Action Plan.
- iii) In collaboration with [DAI](#), GIFT will provide technical support for the public participation segment of the Guatemala National Institutional Strengthening (for Accountable Governance) project, funded by USAID.

c) Fiscal transparency innovative approaches for inclusive budgets and development

- i) GIFT participated in United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs-16) conference discussions, providing technical inputs related to its experience on the role of civil society in more inclusive budget processes, particularly in the context of COVID-19 fiscal package emergency responses. Within this framework, GIFT will continue to provide documented experience to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA).
- ii) GIFT will continue its partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to develop training materials based on international experience; provide in-field technical assistance to Egypt's Ministry of Finance and Planning; and coordinate a peer-learning visit to Mexico, in support of the implementation of program-based budgeting that includes SDG tagging, with emphasis in identifying SDG allocations directly related to the wellbeing of children and youth.
- iii) GIFT will begin to work with UNICEF in Lesotho to develop training materials on program-based budgeting and sectoral expenditure analyses to inform SDG focused budget planning, monitoring, and reporting.

d) Budget authority/CSO partnership events

- i) Partnership events, such as the Better Budget Dataquest for Sustainable Development, aim to use open data to improve the use of PFM systems' information, encouraging collaboration in evidence-based policy analyses. Chile, Mexico, Mongolia (in partnership

with the WBG), and the Philippines, are currently organizing events; while Colombia, Indonesia, Bogotá, Mexico City and Guanajuato have shown interest in hosting events, at their respective levels of government, in 2022.

- ii) Through GIFT's partnership with the WBG, in depth technical assistance was provided for the Mongolian Dataquest, in respect of its framing, design and development strategy in the first quarter of 2022. GIFT will continue supporting the implementation and documentation process, including by performing a mentor and judging role throughout 2022.

2. Increasing and improving knowledge exchange

a) Peer-collaboration and technical assistance for stewards

- i) Several technical meetings and workshops were held to support the Tunisian Ministry of Finance and a broad range of civil society organizations (CSOs) in improving budget transparency as part of Tunisia's National OGP Action Plan (commitments 4 and 12) with the objectives of showcasing international practices on fiscal transparency portals with open data features, as well as comprehensive, inclusive and interactive citizen budgets (with examples from Egypt, South Africa, Mexico and the Philippines). This collaboration will continue throughout 2022 and will include fiscal transparency mechanisms for improving intergovernmental transfers and public participation at the local level.

b) Fiscal transparency online course

- i) The Advancing Fiscal Transparency for Development course, produced in English and French, was launched in September 2021, firstly by invitation only to countries with low fiscal transparency performance. Participants from twelve countries (Angola; Azerbaijan; Cambodia; Egypt; Ethiopia; Liberia; Papua New Guinea; South Sudan; Sudan; The Gambia; Uzbekistan; and Zimbabwe) took the English version of the Course, presented twice from September to December 2021. Participants from a further six countries (Chad; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Haiti; Lebanon; Madagascar; and Niger) then took the French version of the course from January to March 2022. From these countries, approximately 120 participants registered for the course, of which 74 have, to date, successfully completed the course, receiving a certificate.

Over five weeks, participants were taken through a range of issues critical in establishing fiscal transparency as part of good governance, including how key actors engage and interact in a fiscal ecosystem using fiscal transparency to actively contribute to and participate in fiscal policy; different technical tools available to facilitate fiscal transparency; and the role of non-technical factors and the obstacles often faced in advancing fiscal transparency, together with the actions that can be taken to overcome these obstacles and take advantage of windows of opportunity for advancing fiscal transparency. To do this, the course consists of 90 content videos, 20 field stories, and five real time webinars, with a total of approximately 20 hours of videos spread over the five weeks of the course. The documentary and video materials of the course constitute a video and documentary collection of more than 150 files. The course will be opened up for free general registration from June 2022. Several dissemination activities are planned in 2022 to ensure strong

enrolment. A fiscal transparency comprehensive workbook, based on the course content, will be produced in 2022.

c) Digital tools for user-centered fiscal transparency

- i. GIFT will continue providing assistance to different countries on the [Open Fiscal Data Package](#) (OFDP) to publish government budgets and spending data. Fiscal Open Data Services will be provided to Costa Rica; Dominican Republic; Guanajuato (Mexico); Mexico City; Mexico; South Africa; and Uruguay.
- ii. GIFT has taken an active role in the design, research and preparation of the fiscal data module of the [Global Data Barometer](#) (GDB), housed at the Instituto Latinoamericano de Datos Abiertos ([ILDA](#)). The inputs of country researchers from over 100 countries have been thoroughly analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods; and compared, enriched and aligned with 2021 Open Budget Survey research. The GDB results will be released on May 11th, 2022, with GIFT participating in dissemination and advocacy efforts.
- iii. In collaboration with the World Bank, the GIFT Coordination Team provided an in-depth analysis to the Vietnamese Ministry of Finance on its new budget transparency portal. Collaboration on the development of a more user-centered, interactive portal is expected to continue throughout 2022.

3. Consolidating GIFT as a cohesive action network

Following the Stewards General Meeting's decision to include local governments as members of the network, the network director began searching for applicants matching the main characteristics sought: regional diversity, governments already working on fiscal transparency and public participation in fiscal policies, the endorsement of a network member as a candidate, or plans for collaboration with national levels of government on key issues relevant to the network. Under this framework, local government recommendations are expected from the Department of Budget and Management of the Philippines, the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, and the Europe Foundation. Additionally, the Municipality of Cascais, Portugal, and the State Government of Guanajuato, Mexico, expressed their interest in formalizing their application for membership. Formal applications are expected by May 2022.

Simultaneously, at the national level, the Governments of Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia and Cameroon have expressed interest in joining the GIFT network as members, with their applications expected to be received in the coming weeks.

Lastly, GIFT will organize the 2022 Stewards General Meeting in Bogota, Colombia, in partnership with the Ministry of Finance and the City of Bogota (GIFT members), in a hybrid format, providing for significant in-person attendance as well as remote participation and engagement. This meeting date is still to be finalized, possibly to take place in August.

The third term of appointment of the current network director will expire in April 2023. As has been communicated in the past, the current director will not seek reappointment for a fourth



term. In coordination with the IBP, the GIFT Director will formulate a proposal to the Lead Stewards for the selection of the new director before the end of 2022.

Timeline	2022 GIFT Coordination Team summary of activities
1st Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● West-Balkan countries technical collaboration research and workshops ● Tunisia MoF and CSOs workshops ● Online fiscal transparency course production and French version presentation ● Global data barometer public finance module research ● FOA countries and Cote d'Ivoire Workshop in Dakar ● Rallies and data quests in GIFT network community ● Egypt SDG budgeting project development ● Tax transparency principles online consultation and Mexican workshop ● Terms of collaboration with Cote d'Ivoire and UNICEF (Lesotho) ● Detailed analysis of new transparency portal to Vietnam
2nd Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead stewards meeting ● Tax transparency principles consultation in South Africa and the Philippines ● Transparency Principles on Tax Policy and Administration final version ● West-Balkan countries technical collaboration ● FOA tailored technical assistance ● Workshop on the role of IFI's in promoting fiscal openness in emergency responses ● Online fiscal transparency course presented in a free and open format ● Egypt SDG budgeting second in-person technical assistance visit ● Collaboration for the global presentation of OBS 2021 ● Rallies and data quests in GIFT network community ● Technical assistance in Cote d'Ivoire ● Technical assistance in Guatemala (collaboration with DAI) ● Presentation of the Global Data Barometer
3rd Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FOA tailored technical assistance and conclusion of the first phase of the project ● Stewards' General Meeting in Bogota, Colombia (hybrid format) ● Egypt SDG budgeting project technical visit to Mexico ● Technical assistance in Cote d'Ivoire ● Technical assistance in Guatemala (collaboration with DAI)
4th Quarter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead stewards meeting ● Technical assistance in Guatemala (collaboration with DAI) ● Technical assistance in Lesotho (collaboration with UNICEF)
Throughout the year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide tailored technical collaboration and practical assistance on IT and open data ● Participation in capacity building and dissemination events organized by lead stewards, stewards and partners ● Participation as mentors and judges for user-engagement initiatives ● Dissemination and communication activities