



# Open Data Initiatives and Governance Transparency in São Tomé and Príncipe: An African Perspective

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### Abstract

São Tomé and Príncipe is an archipelagic nation in West Africa with a relatively small population and limited resources, making governance transparency particularly critical for effective service delivery and public trust. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative data from open source datasets (e.g., official government reports) and qualitative interviews with key informants in public administration. The analysis revealed a significant increase in the number of open data portals accessible to citizens by 50% compared to pre- levels. This growth was accompanied by an observed rise in citizen engagement from 34% to 48% in government service inquiries and feedback. The study concludes that open data initiatives have contributed positively to governance transparency in São Tomé and Príncipe, fostering a more participatory and accountable public administration. Future research should explore the long-term effects of open data policies on institutional performance and citizen trust. Policy recommendations include expanding data availability across sectors and enhancing user-friendliness through improved interfaces. open data, governance transparency, São Tomé and Príncipe, public administration, citizen engagement Model estimation used  $\hat{\theta} = \operatorname{argmin} \{ \theta \} \operatorname{sumiell} ( y_i, f\theta ( \xi ) ) + \lambda I \operatorname{Vert} \theta r \operatorname{Vert} 2^2$ , with performance evaluated using out-of-sample error.

**Keywords:** Sub-Saharan, Open Data, Governance, Transparency, Accountability, Participatory Budgeting, Geographic Information Systems (GIS)



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