

Learning Lab on Public Financial Management (PFM)

Strengthening Systems Change through Public Financial Management (PFM) Engagement

1. Purpose

Across Africa, systems change initiatives are deeply shaped by how governments mobilise, allocate, and manage public resources. Members of the Africa Community of Practice (CoP) have consistently expressed strong interest in influencing public financing decisions, engaging effectively with government actors, and securing sustainable funding through public budgets. This reflects a shared understanding that lasting systems change depends on government ownership, effective resource mobilisation, and accountability in public spending.

The purpose of this Learning Lab is to strengthen the capacity of civil society and systems change practitioners to engage strategically with Public Financial Management (PFM) systems. The programme supports participants to understand political economy dynamics, identify leverage points across the budget cycle, and align systems change initiatives with PFM processes. Emphasising both *why* and *how* PFM matters within complex systems, the Lab enables participants to move beyond isolated budget analysis toward coherent, sustainable, and institutionally embedded approaches to influence and accountability.

2. Objectives

The Learning Lab will provide a structured space where participants can:

1. Analyse political economy dynamics and power relations shaping PFM systems in their contexts.
2. Map national PFM ecosystems, including key actors, institutions, laws, and budget processes.
3. Identify and prioritise strategic entry points for influence and accountability across the budget cycle.
4. Align organisational systems change initiatives with specific PFM stages and decision-making processes.
5. Develop context-specific, actionable plans to institutionalise and sustain PFM engagement within their organisations.

3. Learning Approach

Learning Labs within the CoP are different from learning circles in that they move from one-off learning events to a structured and facilitated learning journey that combines systems thinking, practical reflection, and peer exchange. Sessions build progressively from shared framing and system mapping to strategy development and organisational integration. The approach prioritises real-world application, drawing on participants lived experience and contextual realities across different governance and fiscal environments.

4. Structure and Core Themes

The Learning Lab will be designed around 4 interconnected sessions:

Date	Sessions	Outcomes	Homework
12/02/2026	<p>Session One: Mapping the PFM System and Power Landscape</p> <p>Resource Facilitator: Bajeti Hub</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand political economy dynamics shaping Public Financial Management (PFM) systems• Map national PFM ecosystems, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Government structures and mandates- Key institutions, roles, and actors- Core PFM laws, policies, and documents- Budget cycles, timelines, and key decision points	Map the national PFM ecosystem, clearly identifying key actors, institutions, power dynamics, and influence pathways
12/03/2026	<p>Session Two: Strategic Entry Points for Influence and Accountability</p> <p>Resource Facilitator: IBP- Nigeria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present and reflect on mapped PFM ecosystems• Identify and prioritise strategic entry points across the budget cycle• Analyse leverage points for influence, accountability, and	Develop a contextual map of strategic entry points for influence and accountability, linked to priority actors and decision moments

		citizen participation within PFM processes	
09/04/2026	<p>Session Three: Mapping Systems Change Work Against the PFM Process</p> <p>Resource Facilitator: Bajeti Hub and IBP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess alignment between existing systems change strategies and PFM processes • Identify gaps, misalignments, and opportunities for strategic adjustment • Define concrete actions to engage the right actors at the right stages of the PFM cycle • Apply learning through case studies and case clinics in session 	Create a clear visual map linking systems change initiatives to specific PFM stages, decision points, and responsible actors
14/05/2026	<p>Session Four: From Strategy to Organisational Practice and Sustainability</p> <p>Resource Facilitator: Bajeti Hub and IBP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess organisational readiness for sustained PFM engagement • Reflect and learn through country-specific peer groups • Develop a high-level, context-specific action plan for sustained and institutionalised influence 	Leverage Africa CoP colleagues to strengthen systems change work, peer accountability, and ongoing learning beyond the programme

5. Session Format

Sessions will be monthly, directly supporting participants' ongoing systems change initiatives. Each session will be **90 minutes**, structured as follows:

Time (GMT)	Duration	Segment	Focus
09:00 – 09:05	5 min	Opening & Framing	Setting the context and session goals

09:05 – 09:35	30 min	Resource Presentation	Deep dive into tools and systems change frameworks.
09:35 – 10:00	25 min	Plenary & Q/A	Open discussion and collective troubleshooting.
10:00 – 10:20	20 min	Group Work	Small-group application to ongoing initiatives.
10:20 – 10:30	10 min	Reflections & Close	Synthesis of insights and defining next steps.

6. Intended Outcomes

By the end of the programme:

1. Participants have a clear, shared understanding of how PFM systems function within their political and institutional contexts.
2. Organisations can clearly articulate where and how they seek to influence PFM processes for accountability and impact.
3. Participants produce practical tools, including PFM ecosystem maps, strategic entry point analyses, and alignment frameworks.
4. Stronger peer networks are established through the Africa CoP, supporting ongoing learning and collaboration.

7. Target Participants

The Learning Lab is designed for Co-impact partner staff who are in the front lines of the systems change work. These are the people who are engaging with governance, accountability, or public finance issues as part of their systems change initiative and are seeking to deepen the strategic impact and sustainability of their PFM work.