



Rodrigue Aho



PRESIDENCY  
OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF BENIN

GOVERNMENT  
ACTION PROGRAMME  
**2016-2021** SUMMARY



Message from the  
President of the Republic

My government's Action Programme for 2016-2021 delivers a strong message of hope for the future.

Benin is a model of democracy and stability, with all the necessary assets to become a centre of inclusive and sustainable development, economic dynamism and social progress. This potential, left for too long untapped, is ready to be revealed.

Benin's strategic location in West Africa, and its human capital, political stability, potential and heritage, are all indisputable advantages. It is time to promote these advantages and exploit them to their fullest.

That is what the 'Revealing Benin' programme is all about. It aims to create an environment that embraces the talent and dynamism of the Beninese people in order to revive our country's development on a long-term basis.

The 'Revealing Benin' programme acts simultaneously in institutional, economic and social areas. Among other things, it comprises 45 flagship projects in the economy's key sectors. It will be implemented with the support of various private-sector partners. The programme involves a scale of investment never before seen in the country, and is designed to boost employment, improve public well-being, create wealth and raise Benin's international profile.

It will mark a 'New Momentum' for all Beninese citizens, for all sectors of the economy, and for relations between our country and its partners.

## **Patrice Talon**

President of the Republic of Benin



“As individuals, each and every citizen of Benin  
is filled with talent and dynamism”

Patrice Talon  
President of the Republic of Benin

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A global programme  
for the development  
of Benin



The President of Benin aims to revive the country's development during his single, five-year term in office. This document summarises the 'Revealing Benin' programme, a roadmap for government action from 2016 to 2021. The programme is based on 45 flagship projects, along with 95 sector-specific projects. Launched swiftly and in close succession, these projects aim to transform the social and economic conditions in Benin.

## What is the current situation in Benin?

Despite the country's potential, Benin is making only gradual progress towards sustainable development after almost 26 years of democracy and economic liberalism. Poverty levels are still alarmingly high, with 40.1% of the population living below the monetary poverty line. The Human Development Index (HDI) was calculated at 0.48 in 2015, ranking Benin 166th out of 188. Various aspects of governance exhibit clear weaknesses in terms of efficiency, transparency and accountability. Despite exemplary political stability, serious failings and inefficiencies have been identified in public policy elaboration and implementation.

## A programme based on a comprehensive audit

The election of President Patrice Talon in April 2016 marked a new era in the way state action is governed, based on his 'New Momentum' programme. In his inaugural address on 6 April 2016, the President clearly stated his goal of undertaking fundamental reform to instil the country with fresh dynamism:

*"We urgently need to undertake political reform, restructure the national economy, repair our social fabric by instilling our citizens with fresh confidence, and restore our country's credibility".*

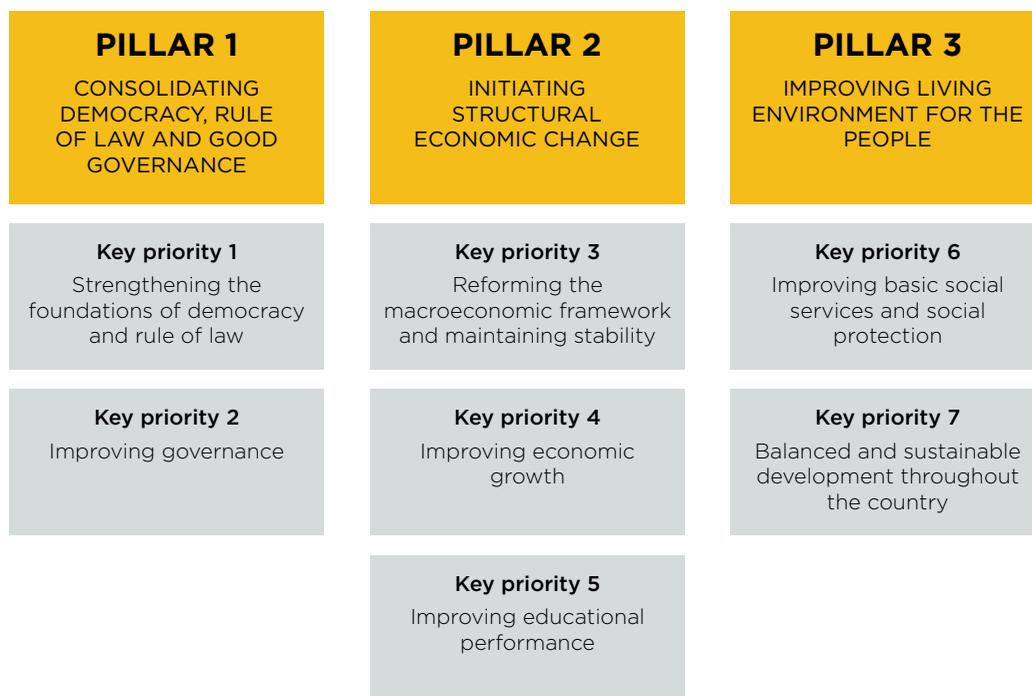
Therefore, as soon as the new government was in place, an assessment was conducted to confirm the priority development projects and how they would be funded. The 'Revealing Benin' programme was devised on the basis of this assessment, discussions regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs), and the conclusions of the Paris agreement on climate change (COP21).

The government will act simultaneously in political, administrative, economic and social drivers to mobilise the country by stimulating rapid, extensive and lasting economic recovery. In practical terms, this entails creating a framework that is more conducive to investment, and improving the everyday lives of Beninese citizens. Bold reforms will be undertaken to ensure greater economic efficiency, fairer access to public services, resources and opportunities, greater trust between local authorities, companies and individuals, and greater public participation in an open and transparent democratic system.

The 'Revealing Benin' programme is the sole instrument guiding government action and is used to define ministries' activities and allocate the national budget.

## The structure of the programme

The 'Revealing Benin' programme is divided into three pillars, which are themselves split into seven key priorities, namely:



### 45 FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

Anchor projects, many of which will be funded by public-private partnerships. They are led by agencies overseen directly by the President's office.

### 95 SECTOR-SPECIFIC PROJECTS

These sector-specific projects will support the key priorities of the public-private programme in the various target sectors.

### 19 INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

The purpose of these reforms is to establish a more balanced democratic framework and stronger governance.



# 2 /

## Strategic Priorities



Rodrigue Aiko

## Pillar 1

# Consolidating democracy, rule of law and good governance

Benin is recognised worldwide for its democratic and institutional stability. This is a strong pre-existing asset for the country and a real guarantee of trust that should be harnessed for its development.

However, it is apparent from the way that executive power has been exercised in the past 26 years that the constitution of 11 December 1990 does not ensure an optimal system of checks and balances. Indeed, the President's excessive power vis-à-vis other public bodies constitutes a weakness.

In this context, the government aims to sustain the country's democratic stability, optimise the power balance between institutions, and make Benin a model of good governance in Africa, while ensuring that public policies are implemented more effectively.

Therefore, a comprehensive package of institutional and political reforms is planned. The aim is to revise the Constitution and introduce legal instruments that are conducive to human, social and economic development. The improvement of administrative governance is a priority in this area.

## Key priority 1

### Strengthening the foundations of democracy and rule of law

This will notably involve constitutional reform, strengthening checks and balances institutions and improving access to legal system.

#### Focus: a more evenly balanced institutional and democratic framework

This key priority will focus on developing legal instruments to address issues within the rule of law, such as the constitutional reform of 11 December 1990, the adoption of the organic law on public administration, the revitalisation of the party system, and the modernisation of the electoral system.

Other legal instruments will also be put into place with the aim of strengthening checks and balances institutions, **including the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Justice, and the independent judiciary.** The audit office will be established as a constitutional institution.

## Key priority 2

### Improving governance

Among other reforms, this will entail the creation of a computerised and paperless administration (smart government), and the merger of the gendarmerie and national police force. In addition, the diplomatic network will become part of the development effort by raising international awareness of Benin's economic potential. Lastly, the partnership agreement between the government and the diaspora will be put into effect: measures will be taken to facilitate direct investment in Benin, and to promote the skills and talents of Beninese citizens living abroad.

#### Focus: economic diplomacy

Benin's diplomatic network will be modernised and mobilised to support the 'Revealing Benin' programme. Embassies will play a crucial role in concluding new contracts, showcasing Beninese culture, and promoting the tourism potential of our country to investors. A more effective diplomatic policy will also be adopted towards Nigeria in order to facilitate free trade in accordance with community and bilateral agreements.

The goal is to turn Benin's diplomatic network into **an effective tool for raising the country's international profile and mobilising resources for development.**



## Pillar 2

# Initiating structural economic change

This pillar is central to the 'Revealing Benin' programme. By fundamentally reforming our economy, we can create the necessary conditions for improving the everyday lives of Beninese citizens. The programme will therefore introduce necessary structural reforms to strengthen the public finance management system and revitalise the business environment.

A sound and stable macroeconomic framework is not only essential for growth and improving medium-term social well-being, but will also support the programme of major investments over the President's five-year term. It is an essential factor in mobilising the financial resources needed.

Strict controls on public spending, reform of the revenue-collection department, and a new environment conducive to economic dynamism will all help increase domestic resources. This will also restore the economic credibility of Benin.

The actions taken in this area will revolve around three key priorities.

### Key priority 3

Reforming the macroeconomic framework and maintaining stability

This will notably result in the adoption of a unified regulatory framework for public-private partnership operations, the modernisation and professionalisation of the public procurement system, greater budget transparency, tax arrangements favouring private investment, the acceleration of sub-regional integration and the promotion of the processing industry (notably to supply the sub-regional market).

#### Focus: complementary measures to improve the business environment

The government will implement a series of measures to improve Benin's ranking in the Doing Business Index. Among other things these measures will include **improving the regulations governing the establishment, operation and closure of businesses, boosting the competitiveness of the logistics platform in Cotonou, and widening access to industrial and agricultural land.** Benin's Investment Code will also be reformed, and mechanisms to promote competition in key sectors of the economy will be put into place.

## Key priority 4

### Improving economic growth

Economic recovery will depend on strategic sectors that are currently undervalued, despite their strong potential.

#### Focus: the strategic sectors of the economic recovery

##### Digital economy

The Benin government plans to use ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) as a catalyst for economic dynamism and national modernisation in order to quicken the pace of economic growth and social inclusion by 2021. The goal is to **establish Benin in the medium term as a digital services hub for the whole of West Africa.**

This new strategy will be based notably on **large-scale infrastructure development, the roll-out of high-speed Internet to 80% of the population,** and efficiency improvements across the sector. As a result, the market will double in size and up to 90,000 direct jobs will be created in the ICT sector.

##### Agriculture

To make agriculture the main driver of economic growth, wealth and job creation, the government will establish **seven regional hubs of agricultural development,** and promote the development of high added-value sectors: **pineapples, cashew nuts, cotton, maize, tapioca and rice.**

In support of large-scale agricultural investment, the government plans to set up research facilities specific to each sector, and vocational agricultural schools for each hub of agricultural development. Special emphasis will also be placed on instruments and measures which promote private investment in the agricultural and rural sector. Among other things, **6,000 ha of arable land will be created in the Ouémé Valley to encourage 2,500 young people to go into the farming business.**

##### Tourism and Culture

In Benin, tourism accounts for a modest 0.7% of GDP. However, Benin is one of the countries with the most outstanding tourism potential in Africa. The new government aims to transform the tourist industry into a growth sector that creates wealth and jobs, and puts Benin firmly on the international map.

To achieve this, Benin has numerous assets at its disposal, including **the best wildlife and nature reserves in West Africa:** the Pendjari and W parks. Vestiges and relics of the slave trade that will be used to reconstruct **the historic city of Ouidah, and the largest lake village in Africa (Ganvié) will also be redeveloped.**

##### Transport

Thanks to its geographical position, Benin forms a natural corridor linking several countries in West Africa. To make the most of this strategic asset, the government will strengthen transport infrastructure to support economic growth and facilitate the development of exports.

Special emphasis will be placed on improving transport, logistics and trade infrastructure, notably by:

- Modernising and extending the Port of Cotonou
- Upgrading the road network around the Port of Cotonou
- Building a new international airport in Glo-Djigbé
- Maintaining, modernising and extending the national road network over a planned 1,362 km

### Energy and Mines

To establish a largely independent and competitive energy system, and provide a reliable and high-quality electricity supply to factories and homes across Benin, the government is planning to modernise and expand the thermal sector. **The development of renewable energy and the installation of solar farms with a total capacity of 95 MW** are also among the measures planned to **boost energy capacity** in Benin. Lastly, the government believes that Benin must **develop its mining capacities** in order to fully exploit its subsoil potential.

### Craft industries

The government action programme will boost the output from craft industries. It aims not only to build and expand the support infrastructure needed to develop the craft industry sector, but also to enhance the technical capabilities of craftspeople themselves.

## Key priority 5

### Improving educational performance

The education system will be reformed and modernised by devising a new form of governance, improving the quality of teaching, adapting education to the needs of the country and businesses, and boosting scientific research.

### Focus: International Knowledge and Innovation City (IKIC)

#### Aim

The IKIC aims to provide a stimulating environment to meet the skills requirements of African markets through education, training and entrepreneurship. The long-term objective is for at least one third of IKIC graduates and participants to create their own jobs.

#### Description

The IKIC is an innovation and knowledge city based in Benin, which aims to promote the development of centres of excellence in higher education and scientific research, and to facilitate the emergence of national and regional champions in innovative areas.

Activity in this sector will be organised into three key priorities – higher education, research and business incubation.

The primary target market of the IKIC is made up of 15 African countries, which in 2015 represented 3.8 million potential students.

### **Educational programme**

The IKIC will offer multidisciplinary, multilingual training with strong links to the business and research communities. Its educational offering will include courses leading to diplomas ranging from undergraduate to PhD levels as well as vocational and technical training courses and continuing education courses.

Selected international world-class and competitive programmes from prestigious schools and universities will be part of the IKIC offering to train future leaders. The emphasis will also be put on highly practical curricula that are well aligned with the needs of the labour market.

Furthermore, research initiatives will predominantly focus on delivering tangible solutions that benefit communities and advance sustainable development goals. There will be unique opportunities for students, researchers and entrepreneurs to collaborate with private companies and global partners to prototype and commercialise their innovations.

### **Infrastructure**

The IKIC will be designed and developed based on 'smart city' principles, adapted for the local context. It will feature state-of-the-art learning, residential, commercial

and recreational facilities. The aim is to create a pleasant environment to live, learn, work and play built to international standards over an area of more than 100 ha with proximity to major infrastructure (main roads, new housing developments...).

The IKIC will be a pioneer of sustainable development, thanks to the adoption of innovative urban practices (such as recycling, modularity, compactness, and density) resulting in zero waste policy, a large proportion of green spaces, smart transport services, and renewable energy use.

### **Impact**

The IKIC will have a significant socio-economic impact. By 2030, some 130,000 students will have graduated from its schools and universities, and over 190,000 direct and indirect jobs will have been created (around one third of which will be self-employed).



## Pillar 3

# Improving living environment for the people

A lack of social protection diminishes the financial resources of Benin's citizens, especially the poorest. In terms of healthcare, people are left to their own devices with an ineffective emergency policy. People are living in precarious conditions due to delays in the provision of drinking water and energy, land planning and safe sanitation facilities. Finally, the sport and leisure sector remains poorly structured, when it could and should be a tool for human, social and economic development.

The government has identified the improvement of living environment as a priority for the 'Revealing Benin' programme. This will notably entail introducing a new policy on social protection and access to basic social services for all citizens. In particular, the state will provide social protection for the most deprived. It will introduce a policy to support the creation of income-generating activities through lifelong education, support for entrepreneurs and micro-loans for specific projects.

This pillar, which focuses on improving living environment, is split into two key priorities.

### Key priority 6

#### Improving basic social services and social protection

This will involve providing every community with healthcare equipment and facilities, access to drinking water and electricity, as well as recruiting doctors to widen access to medical care. In addition, the adoption of a new legislative and regulatory framework will enable the introduction of a social protection policy with individual beneficiary contributions supplemented by a government subsidy. A further goal will be to establish an insurance fund (ARCH) to reinforce Benin's human capital, providing four different types of social benefit for farmers, traders, hauliers, artists and craftspeople. A one-stop-shop will also be established for promoting employment and improving employment support services.

With regards to sports, university, military and municipal organisations will be set up, and 12 sports academies will be put in place to nurture talent at regional level.

## Focus: social protection

### Aim

The government will provide social protection for the poorest and most vulnerable, ultimately aiming to **support four million Beninese** citizens through a universal health coverage system.

These social protection measures will particularly target traders, farmers, craftspeople, artists and hauliers in the informal sector.

### Description

This major project will comprise four packages of social services: **health insurance, education, pensions and micro-loans**. Social protection agencies will be set up at both national and regional levels.

### Direct jobs

It is estimated that 2,000 new jobs will be created as a result of this major project.

## Focus: improving the living environment and the well-being of all Beninese citizens

The creation of a Ministry of Living Environment and Sustainable Development clearly illustrates the government's focus on promoting inclusive and sustainable development built on safe and resilient cities. Major urban projects, with an estimated cost of approximately **1,600 billion FCFA**, are key components in improving people's living environments and driving Benin's economic take-off.

**A scheme to build 20,000 homes** in the regional capitals will be launched, and the waste collection and management system will be modernised; Dantokpa market – the biggest market in West Africa – and Cotonou city centre will also be redeveloped.

The Parakou international market will be modernised, enabling it to play a key role in the development of the surrounding region. The primary, secondary and tertiary road networks in Cotonou, Porto-Novo, Parakou, Bohicon, Abomey, Sèmè, Abomey-Calavi and Natitingou will be renovated and redeveloped.

## Key priority 7

### Balanced and sustainable development throughout the country

This will entail considerable work in terms of the balanced and sustainable development of national territory, in line with the SDGs. The main lines of action will be to: implement large-scale urban projects to improve people's living environment, promote economic development, strengthen local democracy, rectify spatial disparities, and reduce inequality of access to public services.



## Focus: the central market in Parakou

### Aim

The government aims to improve the way the market operates, enabling it to play a key role in the region's economic development. Furthermore, the market will have to be more accessible and develop stronger links with the metropolitan area of Parakou.

### Description

The trading facilities will be updated, the movement of traffic around the market facilitated, and roads and car parks upgraded. Lastly, sanitation and sustainable waste management issues will be addressed.

### Ten-year social and economic impacts

Stimulate commercial activity and improve the hygiene and working conditions of traders.

### Direct jobs

**1,200 jobs** will be created as a direct result of this major project.

## Focus: access to drinking water for the entire population by 2021

At present, almost half of the total population of Benin does not have access to drinking water. Under these circumstances, and given that all citizens have a right to drinking water wherever they live, the government aims to ensure access to drinking water for the entire population by 2021. The fulfilment of this goal will confirm our efforts to meet SDG 6, which is to **ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**.

These efforts will include the introduction of reforms and projects to develop water production and distribution systems in urban, suburban and rural areas, **meeting the needs of 5.8 million people**. Governance of the sector will be improved to encourage more public-private partnerships involving local authorities, partners, and civil society.



# 3 /

## Implementation



“A team of inspired and competent leaders would be able to rapidly achieve a transformational development programme within an environment of strengthened democracy and freedom”

Patrice Talon  
President of the Republic of Benin

## Governance and monitoring of implementation

The government intends to take all necessary steps to ensure effective implementation of international standards relating to development results. To that end, a monitoring and coordination system has been set up for the programme, structured around the following bodies:

- The Council of Ministers (CM) which gives general guidelines and examines and approves implementation reports
- The Flagship Project Monitoring Committee (CSPP) supervised by the President of the Republic
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (CSE) supervised by the Minister of State for the Plan and Development
- Sector-Specific Monitoring Committees (CSS) chaired by ministers

### Focus: Implementing agencies

Independent agencies, responsible for implementing actions and reforms set out by sector-specific ministries, will be set up to run projects relating to key priorities of the 'Revealing Benin' programme. This option will boost capacity for implementing investment and therefore facilitate and accelerate the implementation of projects benefiting the public. The agencies will be coordinated by the Bureau of Analysis and Investigation (BAI), part of the President's office.

# Summary of the results of the macroeconomic framework

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
GDP in billions of FCFA	5 002,2	5 274,3	5 663,3	6 190,4	6 769,9	7 379,4	7 990,2
Variations (%)							
GDP at 2007 prices	5,0	5,0	6,0	7,1	7,0	6,6	6,0
RATIO AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP							
Investment rate	22,4	18,8	32,7	34,6	44,9	41,3	16,4
Public	7,5	6,3	15,2	12,5	10,6	9,5	7,2
Private	14,9	12,5	17,5	22,1	34,3	31,8	9,2
Savings - Investment Balance	-6,8	-6,3	-15,1	-18,8	-19,1	-17,6	-11,1
Total revenue	16,4	16,1	15,6	16,1	16,2	16,2	16,1
Tax revenue	14,3	14,1	13,8	14,3	14,4	14,5	14,4
Non-tax revenue	2,1	2,0	1,8	1,8	1,8	1,7	1,7
Total expenditure	24,8	21,0	29,5	26,0	23,5	21,8	19,0
Wage Bill	6,9	6,5	6,2	5,9	5,5	5,1	4,8
Public Investment	7,5	6,3	15,2	12,5	10,6	9,5	7,2
Debt Interest	0,7	1,6	1,8	1,7	2,0	2,1	2,3
Overall deficit (payment order basis including donations)	-7,9	-3,9	-12,5	-7,7	-6,0	-4,3	-2,1
Outstanding internal and external debt/ GDP	41,6	50,0	58,2	62,9	63,1	62,0	61,3

Source : DGAE, October 2016

## Focus: Impact of the programme

In macroeconomic terms, the investment plan of the 'Revealing Benin' programme aims to increase the investment rate from 18.8% of GDP in 2016 to an average of 34% over five years, with a peak of 45% in 2019.

These investment levels will enable a minimum average growth rate of 6.5% over the President's five-year term in office. All these measures will enable the creation of at least 500,000 direct and indirect jobs over the period.

## Cost of the programme

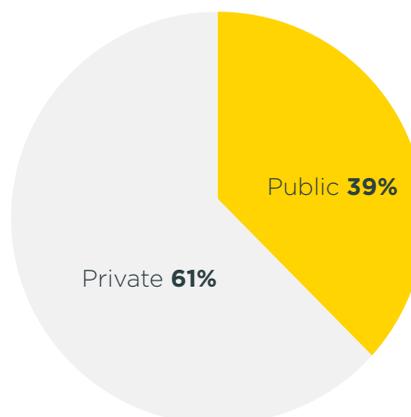
The total cost of the 'Revealing Benin' programme is estimated at 9,039 billion FCFA, of which 889 billion FCFA has already been secured, meaning that 8,150 billion FCFA still needs to be financed. The portfolio of projects included in the 'Revealing Benin' programme comprises 45 flagship projects costing an estimated 7,086 billion FCFA, which the government aims to launch in close succession.

	FCFA	EUR
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	9 039 billion	13,78 billion
<b>BUDGET FOR FLAGSHIP PROJECTS</b>	7 086 billion	10,80 billion
<b>BUDGET ALREADY SECURED</b>	889 billion	1,36 billion

## Funding

In order to fund the 'Revealing Benin' programme, the government has decided to focus on harnessing private sector funds through public-private partnerships (PPPs). It is anticipated that private sector partners will fund 71% of the flagship projects. The government will contribute to investments boosting domestic revenue in order to stimulate genuine economic recovery. Concessional or semi-concessional loans will be sought from technical and financial partners. Other key elements of the funding strategy include optimal use of available funds in the regional market in connection with effective public debt management. The chosen economic development model is therefore based on rigorous governance and PPPs.

### Funding structure of the government action programme



# Summary table of flagship projects

## SECTOR

## PROJECTS

### TOURISM



1. Pendjari Wildlife Park
2. Ganvié lacustrian town
3. Voodoo tourism in Abomey and Porto-Novo
4. Premium tourism - Tata Somba
5. Historic city of Ouidah
6. Coastal resorts

### AGRICULTURE



7. High added-value sectors (pineapples, cashew nuts, market garden produce)
8. Conventional sectors (rice, maize, tapioca)
9. Freshwater aquaculture
10. Development of lower and middle Ouémé Valley
11. Meat, milk and eggs

### INFRASTRUCTURE



12. New Glo-Djigbé airport
13. Modernisation and extension of the Port of Cotonou
14. Upgrading Port of Cotonou road network
15. North Cotonou bypass
16. Route des Pêches (Phase 2)
17. Sèmè-Kpodji - Porto-Novo motorway
18. Djougou - Pehunco - Kérou road
19. Extension of the road network over 1,362 km

### DIGITAL ECONOMY



20. High/ultra-high speed Internet
21. Shift from analog broadcasting to DTTV
22. Smart governance
23. Roll-out of e-Commerce
24. Roll-out of digital technology through education and training
25. Promotion and development of digital content

## SECTOR

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## PROJECTS

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### ELECTRICITY



- 26. Modernise and extend thermal sector
- 27. Developing renewable energy
- 28. Restructuring the national operator and its network
- 29. Better manage energy use

### LIVING ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



- 30. Development of Cotonou lagoon
- 31. Development of Porto-Novo lagoon
- 32. Waste management in Cotonou metropolitan area
- 33. Redevelopment of the old city centre of Cotonou
- 34. Modernisation of Dantokpa market
- 35. Modernisation of Parakou market
- 36. Cotonou international entertainment complex
- 37. Transformation of Camp Ghézo into a business centre
- 38. Highway maintenance
- 39. Rainwater sanitation and drainage in Cotonou
- 40. Building social and affordable housing

### IKIC



- 41. Establishment of an International Knowledge and Innovation City (IKIC)

### DRINKING WATER



- 42. Responsible management of water resources
- 43. Improvement of access to drinking water for rural and semi-urban populations
- 44. Develop drinking water production and distribution capacities in urban and suburban areas

### SOCIAL PROTECTION



- 45. Implement social protection for the most deprived and reduce poverty



Download the summary  
of the Government Action Programme (2016-2021)  
from the website of the President's Office:

[www.presidente.bj/benin-revele/](http://www.presidente.bj/benin-revele/)



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