



ACCESS TO INFORMATION *in Africa*



SOUTH AFRICA



UGANDA



GHANA

World Resources Institute (WRI) is an environmental think tank that goes beyond research to find practical ways to protect the earth and improve people's lives. This two-page brief contains information related to WRI's work in Africa on access to information and transparency models within the context of natural resource management.

Contact

The *ATI in Africa* project is currently supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada, and also receives funding from Irish Aid, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and World Bank Development Grant Facility. The project will be expanded to include other countries as additional funding is secured.

For more information on WRI's *ATI in Africa* project, please contact Carole Excell cexcell@wri.org or Peter Veit peter@wri.org.

Transparency Models and Lessons Learned

The *Access to Information in Africa: Transparency Models and Lessons Learned (ATI in Africa)* project is an initiative of the World Resources Institute in partnership with the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) in Ghana, Greenwatch in Uganda, and the Open Democracy Advice Centre (ODAC) in South Africa. The overall goal of the ATI in Africa project is to better understand transparency models and environmental approaches to accountability in Africa, and to inform policymakers and citizen groups engaged in building the infrastructure for greater transparency.

The ATI in Africa project focuses on the environment because of the importance of natural capital in rural households and national economies, and the clear links between nature, wealth and power. A number of African governments pro-actively release to the public various types of environmental information, such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports. Environmental advocates have also been at the forefront promoting transparent and open government, and they have effectively used constitutional provisions, environmental and natural resource laws, regional declarations, international accords and other instruments to access information and participate more effectively in government matters.

Photos: Ghana (Deforestation - Addy Cemron-Huff), Uganda (Oil drilling - Robert Byaruhanga), South Africa (Potgietersrus Platinum Mine 2 - Liane Greeff).



Open Democracy Advice Centre



ATI in Africa Countries

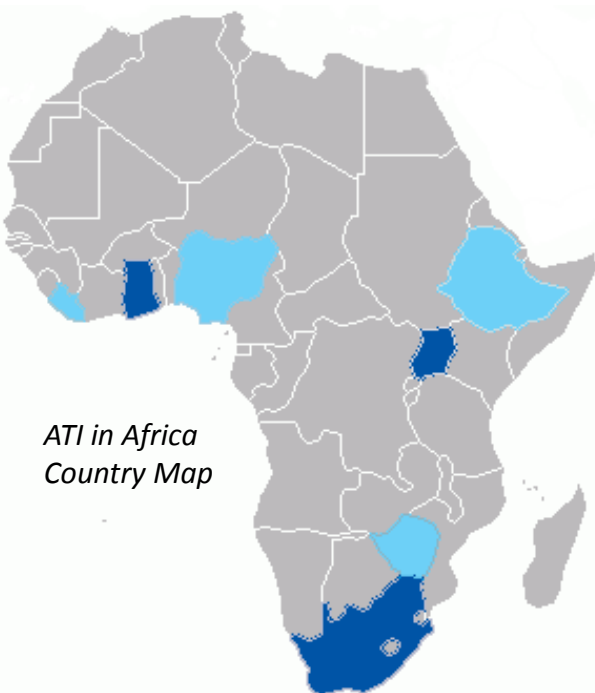
ATI in Africa is using a combination of field and desk research as part of the project methodology (see country map below).

FIELD RESEARCH

- Ghana
- Uganda
- South Africa

DESK RESEARCH

- Ethiopia
- Liberia
- Nigeria
- Zimbabwe



ATI in Africa
Country Map

Project Vision and Objectives

The broader vision of the *ATI in Africa* project is to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction by establishing greater transparency in Africa and providing measures for governments to be more accountable and responsive to their citizens. The project has three specific objectives:

- Develop a better understanding of legal and policy ATI frameworks, public and private institutional roles, and transparency and secrecy of information regarding natural resources use and management.
- Generate new knowledge to inform government, civil society organization and donor decision-making, and contribute to reform processes (e.g., new institutions, laws and strategies) designed to promote transparency and increase access to information.
- Strengthen independent policy-research and public-interest environmental law organizations in Africa, by developing local research skills and communications capacity.

Working with Partners

WRI's partners—CDD, Greenwatch and ODAC—are conducting original research and advocacy in Ghana, Uganda and South Africa. All three countries have large, poor rural populations that live off the land (principally farming and animal husbandry), and depend on a range of natural resources for their livelihood and basic subsistence. Natural resources also contribute significantly to national economies. Mining has long been important in South Africa (gold, diamonds and other minerals) and Ghana (gold). Economically-viable quantities of oil have also recently been discovered in Ghana and Uganda. WRI will complement this in-country work with desk research on Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and other countries.

To ensure that Africa's natural capital and wealth translate into economic growth, poverty reduction and development, there is a need for the establishment of new laws, institutions and practices that promote transparency and accountability. The ATI in Africa project addresses transparency of information on the broader environment and on five specific natural resources—land, mining, petroleum, forestry and water. Each partner organization is conducting research on the environment and three of these five natural resources.

The ATI in Africa project seeks to create an evidence-based approach and an understanding of ATI through the environmental lens in order to strengthen access rights. Data and information are being collected using a variety of methods, such as literature review and legal analysis, review of institutional structures and procedures, development of case studies as well as making actual information requests. Based on their findings, partners develop and implement specific influence strategies to advocate for strengthening ATI and governance of natural resources. Partners are using a variety of tools to ensure effective outreach. In Ghana, CDD is publicizing the research findings and recommendations to educate the public on the benefits and utility of a comprehensive ATI law, ensuring that the draft bill safeguards broad rights of ATI and is implementable. Greenwatch is convening public dialogues to popularize Uganda's ATI law as a potential tool for expanding the opportunities of poor resource-dependent communities to understand government procedures and programs. In South Africa, ODAC is working to ensure that civil society will have access to a web-based and searchable environmental database including information on water, mining, environmental management and law enforcement.