GHANA EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRY TRANSPARENCY INITIAVE (GHEITI) OPEN DATA POLICY

Background

Article 21(f) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana provides that “all persons shall have the right to information, subject to such qualifications and laws as are necessary in a democratic society”. In keeping with this provision the Government of Ghana signed onto the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in 2003 and Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2011.

Whereas the Ghana Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (GHEITI) is an initiative that seeks to promote transparency and accountability in the Extractive sector in Ghana, the OGP seeks to make the government more open, accountable and responsive to citizens.

In furtherance of these commitments, Reconciliation Reports (RRs) have been the core output of the GHEITI systems and processes. These reports have been produced annually for the mining sector since 2004 and from 2011 with respect to the oil and gas sector.

The data found in the RRs are comprehensive, covering all fiscal payments by extractive companies to the government, production and production related data as well as contextual information. This is verified through independent audits and approved by the Multi Stakeholder Group(MSG) of GHEITI.

In tandem with EITI requirement 7.1 which stipulates that implementing countries “agree upon a clear strategy with regard to the access, sharing and re-use of data. The implementing countries will be encouraged to publish their EITI data under open license and advise users that the information may be used without prior consent”, the MSG undertakes to implement an Open Data Policy as enshrined in this document.

The Principles of Open Data

The principles underlying GHEITI's Open Data policy are based on the International Open Data Charter (http://www.opendatacharter.net) and modified to reflect the domestic context of GHEITI. They are as follows:

- Primary Data
- Open by Default
- Easy Access
- Timely Data Availability
- Completeness
- Machine Readability
- Free Use
- Comparable and Interoperability
- Improved Governance and Citizens Engagement
- Inclusive Development and Innovation

Open Data Objectives

The overarching objectives of GHEITI's Open Data policy are to

- Provide unrestricted access and re-use of data on the extractive sector to the publics so as to stimulate debates on the prudential extraction and management of the country's natural resources
- Enhance the demand-side of social accountability by providing public information on management and expenditure of revenues derived from extractive sector resources in order to promote sustainable development
- Promote transparency and good governance in the use and management of finite natural resource revenue to eliminate the incidence of corruption and embezzlement

Sources of Data for the Open Data

- The primary source of data shall be the GHEITI reports on the extractive sector.
- This would be complemented by credible data from other sector agencies assured through the application of international standard, subject to the approval of the MSG

Guidelines for Open Data Policy Implementation by GHEITI

The MSG of GHEITI commits to the under-listed measures to ensure the successful implementation of the Open Data policy:

- Promote the timeous publication of credible data and updating same on a regular basis
- Data published in the Reconciliation Report shall also be uploaded into the GHEITI open data portal and published on the GHEITI website in open data format such as excel or csv and others, subject to the approval of the MSG
- Provide adequate information on source of data, data gathering process and limitations on published data
- In the long-term, encourage the integration of the open data principles into government systems to promote facile access to data at minimum cost to the user
- Sensitize and educate stakeholders and the public on how to use and re-use published data on the open data portal
- Ensure that data is interoperable with current and future national and international EITI standards
- Share and support the exchange of international best practices in the development and implementation of open data in GHEITI
- Liaise with the Registrar General's Department to progressively digitize the Beneficial Ownership register
- Incorporate open data requirements into the Terms of Reference for the Independent Administrator