

The Petroleum Commission has been advised to urgently set up an online repository where information on upstream petroleum blocks could be accessed. The Petroleum Commission is the upstream regulator of Ghana's petroleum sector. It is mandated to regulate, manage and co-ordinate all activities in the upstream petroleum industry for the overall benefit and welfare of Ghanaians.

But the Commission does not have an online repository, where information on the petroleum sector issues such as ownership of blocks, co-ordinates of oil blocks, allocation of blocks as well as annual payments made by upstream petroleum companies could be found, according to the Ghana Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (GHEITI) 2012/2013 Report on the Oil and Gas sector.

The Report, prepared by Messrs Boas and Associates and launched in Accra last week, emphasised the need for the setting up of the repository in order to enhance transparency and to further improve the efficiency of the operations Commission. "The Petroleum Commission is advised to establish as quickly as possible an online repository where information on upstream petroleum blocks are found.

Such information will enhance transparency and improve the efficiency of the Operations of the commission, " the Report recommended. It further called on the Ministry of Petroleum to abandon the use of the open door negotiation process in the award of oil blocks. That, the Report, observed was not an open process and might lead to awarding oil blocks to inefficient operators.

"To ensure transparency and efficient management of the petroleum resources, the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum should introduce licensing rounds, including bidding, and also make available on its website details with operators," the Report proposed. In 2014, the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy was split into Ministry of Petroleum and Ministry of Power. In 2003, Ghana, as a country, associated itself with the EITI.

The Initiative seeks to improve development outcomes and reduce the potential for corruption and large scale embezzlement of benefits received by governments from extractive industries. Regular publication of extractive industry payments and government receipt is a requirement.

*Source: Public Agenda*