Natural Resource Governance Institute

2023 Year in Review



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Introduction

NRGI envisions a world where natural resources enable fair, prosperous and sustainable societies, instead of undermining them.

We exist because decisions about how natural resources are governed determine the wellbeing of people in resource-rich countries, and of the planet.



Women of the Wayuu people in the desert of La Guajira, Colombia, are directly impacted by mining and renewable energy projects • *EGT-1 via Shutterstock*

We accompany resource-rich developing countries to:

- Minimize harms and equitably benefit from the growing demand for transition minerals used in critical green technologies.
- Build inclusive economies that end dependence on fossil fuel extraction and advance a just energy transition.
- Manage revenues from natural resources accountably in accordance with citizen priorities.

NRGI is one of many actors working in concert to advance natural resource governance. We deliver applied research, data and analysis, policy advocacy, capacity development and technical assistance, and serve as a convener of actors working toward reform.

In 2023, we continued to evolve strategically in response to changes in the resource governance landscape and the global context. This annual review offers an overview of highlights across our work.

2023 Highlights

Transition mineral good governance



Chuquicamata in Chile, the world's largest open-pit copper mine, supplies copper used in renewable energy technologies and electric vehicles • *Felipe Fredes Fernandez / Shutterstock*

Transition minerals are crucial for climate action.

Minerals such as cobalt, copper, lithium and nickel are essential for technologies such as solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicles. The International Energy Agency (IEA) projects that meeting Paris Agreement climate goals will require a quadrupling by 2040 of demand for such so-called "transition minerals." For some minerals, demand could even reach 30 times current levels by 2040. Improved governance of the mining of these commodities is therefore crucial.

Better governance can help avoid delays and disruptions in the transition away from carbon-intensive technologies. It can also protect the well-being of producer countries from the negative social and environmental impacts of mining, and ensure that economic opportunities and benefits are shared fairly.

In focus countries including Chile, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mexico and Peru, NRGI analyzes opportunities and risks—including corruption risks—in the extraction of

transition minerals. We also influence global standards and key policies related to transition mineral governance.

In 2023 NRGI helped inform and shape national, regional and global dialogues; agendas; and standards on transition minerals. We became a go-to partner for governments interested in developing accountability in the transition mineral space, and a leader globally and regionally on anticorruption in transition minerals. Our work also informed consumer-country policies that affect resource-producing countries.

Strengthening anticorruption measures in the EU's Critical Raw Materials Act

The European Union (EU) is an important consumer market for our priority countries and an agenda-setting jurisdiction for global dialogue and policy trends. NRGI has therefore sought to engage in policymaking processes surrounding the bloc's Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA). We responded to the initial public consultation in November 2022 and met with European Commission decisionmakers in early 2023 to highlight the importance of addressing corruption issues in policies governing transition minerals.

Our advocacy ensured that drafters included references to corruption in the proposal for a regulation published in March 2023. In response to this proposal, in partnership with Publish What You Pay (PWYP), we outlined our reactions and recommendations. We also worked with partner civil society organizations (CSOs) to identify where policymakers could strengthen the proposal, shared these recommendations with decisionmakers in the European Parliament and European Council, and contributed to joint briefings and letters in support of this work as active members of the EU Raw Materials Coalition.

In November 2023, we co-organized and chaired an event in Brussels at EU Raw Materials Week on corruption and transition minerals, with speakers from the European Commission, OECD, Resource Matters, Global Witness and the Congo Is Not For Sale Coalition. Ahead of International Anticorruption Day on 9 December 2023, we called upon the European Commission to strengthen anticorruption provisions in key legislation; more than 50 organizations joined our advocacy campaign.

The European Council approved the agreement in March 2024, and the regulation was then signed in April, with the final text retaining or strengthening key

references to anticorruption and multi-stakeholder governance. Specifically, Article 6 and Annex III, which outline sustainability criteria for "strategic projects," mandate that operators implement transparent business practices and establish compliance policies to prevent corruption and bribery. (They make particular reference to the corruption elements of OECD guidance.) Annex IV, which sets out further criteria for certification schemes which will be used to assess the sustainability criteria of strategic projects in Article 6, requires that the certification schemes include both multi-stakeholder governance and measures to ensure business integrity and transparency, including anticorruption and anti-bribery policies.

Leading regional and global thinking on transition minerals governance

In 2023, NRGI contributed to stronger regional and global standards around anticorruption in the extractives industries.

Regionally, and building on our report *Triple Win: How Mining Can Benefit Africa's Citizens, Their Environment and the Energy Transition*, we engaged actively with policymakers and civil society actors across Africa on the steps needed to maximize benefits from transition minerals. At the African Mining Indaba and the Alternative Mining Indaba, where community voices are essential to ensure decisionmakers account for and minimize the social, economic and environmental impacts of mining, we organized sessions and participated in multiple panels. One was a launch event for the *Triple Win* report which we co-hosted with PWYP and which provided a platform for consensus-building among government, industry and civil society participants.

Following several engagements with regional bodies responsible for developing the African Green Minerals Strategy, many of the recommendations from the *Triple Win* report, including the importance of regional coordination, were reflected in the draft version of the African Green Minerals Strategy. The opportunities and challenges identified in this research also informed our engagement within key minerals-producing countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where we worked closely with civil society partners to advocate for an integrated national critical minerals strategy, and developed recommendations on how the country could advance its efforts to build a battery precursor plant in partnership with Zambia.

Also in DRC, and in collaboration with PWYP and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative DRC (EITI-DRC), we convened dialogues to help disseminate

the recommendations on the DRC government's contract for a mining project with the Chinese company Sicomines. Reports from EITI-DRC in 2021 and the Inspectorate General of Finance (IGF) in February 2023 had concluded that the contract was unbalanced and that its implementation did not fully benefit the citizens of DRC, and recommended that the DRC government renegotiate the Sicomines agreement with the Chinese business group. To support the dissemination of the reports' recommendations, and in collaboration with PWYP and EITI, we helped to organize multiple dissemination workshops in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Likasi and Kolwezi with members of parliament, students, civil society actors and decision makers.

We have continued to advance discussions about the importance of transition minerals governance in key multilateral fora and to strengthen our relationships with relevant actors. The OECD invited us to join the multi-stakeholder group driving implementation of its responsible minerals program, including at the influential annual OECD Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains. At the forum in 2023, we co-hosted two events on corruption risks in the licensing process and the intersection between corruption and human rights alongside key stakeholders in industry, multilateral organizations, and civil society.

In September, we were the only civil society organization included in the International Energy Agency's (IEA) first-ever Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Summit. Ahead of the summit, we coordinated with civil society partners, and NRGI president and CEO Suneeta Kaimal authored an op-ed outlining key recommendations to strengthen the voices and interests of lower-and-middle-income producer countries and communities in discussions. These exchanges and communications laid the groundwork for more significant interaction: NRGI signed a memorandum of understanding with the IEA in July 2024, foregrounding further collaboration on transition minerals governance, people-centred energy transition, and fossil fuel phaseout.

Informing national dialogues on lithium in Ghana and Chile

The urgency of the global transition to clean energy is generating both challenges and opportunities along the supply chains of critical transition minerals, including lithium. In 2023, NRGI informed national conversations promoting good governance of lithium, particularly in Ghana and Chile.



Experts gather to discuss the future of the lithium industry in Chile at a seminar organized by NRGI, Chile Transparente, GIZ GmbH, and Terram Chile, with government and civil society representatives

In Ghana, we created spaces for public dialogue around the discovery of lithium and in particular the terms of a lease between the government and Atlantic Lithium Limited for the mining of lithium in Eyowaa in the Central Region, which would be the first lithium-producing mine in West Africa. In July, we partnered with the Institute for Energy Security (IES) and the Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) to convene a national multi-stakeholder dialogue on the discovery of lithium and its potential impact on the country's economy, environment and communities. The discussion centered on concerns raised by IES and ACEP regarding the government's negotiations with a company over lithium extraction, which had been announced in February, and the need for transparency measures and local participation. Prior to the dialogue, NRGI articulated the issues at stake.

In October, Ghana signed a 15-year lease agreement with Barari BV Ghana Limited, a subsidiary of Atlantic Lithium Limited, for the mining of lithium in Eyowaa. In comparison to the mining standards for other minerals, the government hailed the lithium agreement (still to be finalized through parliamentary approval) as historic, as it included improved terms aimed at maximizing the country's benefits, encompassing higher royalty rates, increased participation by the state and Ghanaian citizens, and mineral value addition. However, some civil society actors and individuals raised concerns, including that: the terms of the lease were still insufficient to yield benefits for the country; the lease did not include enough protection for local communities; and there was inadequate public participation in the negotiation of the lease.

Amid these concerns, and recognizing the need for public dialogue and information exchange, we convened and hosted a dialogue on lithium in December 2023, with participation from government, civil society, academia, media, private sector and interested citizens. There, the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources committed to quarterly engagement with CSOs to increase transparency and accountability of government transition mineral plans.

At the time of writing, the final lithium agreement is yet to receive parliamentary approval, but in early 2024 we continued the dialogue by co-organizing a two-day dialogue with the Minerals Commission. There, CSOs made inputs into the draft revised mining policy to shape the policy for a transition minerals regime. A memorandum conveying the various inputs by the CSOs was then submitted to the commission. We then assessed Ghana's lithium fiscal framework and benchmarked it against those of other hard rock lithium producers, providing guidance for the parliament in its deliberations on the agreement.

Chile holds the world's largest lithium reserves, and in 2023 the government announced a new national lithium strategy and confirmed its intention to join the EITI. Within this context, we focused on challenges in industry, including issues such as contract negotiation, payment transparency and local impacts; identified risks of corruption in lithium exploitation; provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Mines to implement reforms; and highlighted for debate the urgency to increase transparency.

As Chile has begun the process of joining the EITI, we have been recognized by both the government and civil society organizations as an independent facilitator to drive adherence, and train and motivate actors from government and civil society organizations. We drew on findings from the OECD expert group on responsible minerals supply chains and the updated EITI standard, and also applied NRGI's corruption tool in collaboration with partners to identify and generate consensus around the risks specific to lithium extraction in Chile and how the government should address them.

In October, NRGI and partners convened international experts and representatives of public institutions and civil society to discuss lithium in Chile and the international perspectives on strategic minerals. We also provided training and technical assistance to the Ministry of Mining and Cochilco (the Chilean Copper Commission, and the technical secretary of EITI Chile) and a number of workshops for civil society organizations to engage and deliberate on their participation in EITI. Civil society actors have asked NRGI to observe their process and provide additional training.

Just transitions in fossil-fuel producing countries



Several countries view natural gas as a transition fuel, bridging the gap between fossil fuels and renewable energy • *Berkut_34 for Getty Images (via Canva)*

The extractive industries, particularly fossil fuels, are major sources of government revenue in producer countries, but they have generally failed to deliver sustainable development to citizens, and in many cases have exacerbated corruption and inequality. The global energy transition will dramatically reduce the value of these countries' exports and public revenues unless countries change course. For economies to prosper in a low-carbon future, governments and civil society actors will need to develop alternative energy and revenue sources, build new economic visions via broad-based consultation, and conduct sober assessments of the climate-related economic risks they face.

NRGI is leveraging its long-standing knowledge and expertise in resource governance to help citizens and governments build inclusive economies that end dependence on fossil fuel extraction and advance a just energy transition.

In 2023, NRGI continued support to just transitions in fossil-fuel producing countries and examined what the energy transition means in various contexts. We provided applied research, tools, and technical assistance to inform decision-making by governments and state-owned enterprises as they navigate the transition. We convened dialogues through which contributors came to understand and co-create narratives about what the energy transition means in their countries. Our research and experiences from these dialogues informed our engagement in global climate

conversations, particularly at COP28. We built upon existing partnerships and technical experience and expanded our work, including examining the role of resource governance in the Andean Amazon and methane emissions in Senegal and Nigeria. Our research on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions also contributed to discussions defining the new EITI Standard in 2023.

Training civil society, convening dialogues and constructing narratives on the energy transition

In 2023, across multiple countries, NRGI convened training events and multi-stakeholder dialogues in which participants discussed and defined the energy transition.

In Ghana, with a local CSO, Strategic Youth Network for Development (SYND), we supported a youth conference on energy transition aimed at closing the planning and consultation gap between government and youth in discussions regarding transition and climate change.

In Uganda, we collaborated with several local organizations and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to emphasize gender inclusivity in the country's energy transition planning.



Discussions at NRGI's just transition convening in Uganda focused on gender inclusivity in energy transition

In Mongolia, where we are helping civil society actors to engage in energy transition policy development, we organized a training for PWYP Mongolia and other civil society representatives on energy transition risks and the role of civil society in navigating these risks.

In Nigeria, NRGI partnered with BudgIT Foundation, Spaces for Change and Extractive 360 to train 23 participants from civil society, media, and communities—including women and youth—on the need for a just and inclusive transition, and to examine the social, environmental and economic impacts of the transition on their lives and livelihoods. Following the training, we provided further technical assistance to an oil-producing community, whose members then successfully engaged with subnational government actors including the Ministry of Environment, oil and gas regulators and companies operating within their community. The upstream regulator, environment ministry, women's ministry, and oil companies committed to take steps to accelerate environmental remediation and provide technical and financial support to reduce economic inequality. In addition, through this engagement, the community representatives successfully unlocked additional support from development partners to deepen their advocacy on environmental justice.

In Colombia, through cutting-edge narrative change work, we amplified the voices and ambitions of those most affected through our Energy Transition Narratives Initiative to co-create a " meta-narrative" with Colombian civil society, describing why a just energy transition in Colombia is necessary, urgent, desirable and possible.



Participation at the just transition workshop in Colombia

Changing the story in Colombia

As it came to power, the current Colombian government made an unprecedented proposal to move to an economy without oil and coal. However, authorities have yet to translate this ambition into concrete plans and are yet to address important questions about the fiscal and energy security implications of the energy transition. Even less has been done to secure citizens' support for the transition, including among communities in energy- and mineral-producing areas. The current public discourse about the energy transition in Colombia is led by powerful economic and political actors firmly against a fossil-fuel phaseout and often instills fear of the economic consequences of moving beyond oil. To date, there has not been an alternative narrative that truly reflects and brings together the diversity of values and worldviews that exist in Colombia's civil society space.

In 2023, NRGI convened an initiative to create this alternative narrative—one presenting a vision for a just energy transition in Colombia—that could enable civil society organizations to effectively and concertedly contribute to the public discourse. To achieve this, we designed and implemented a participatory process to develop a meta-narrative that, building on distinct energy transition narratives, could amplify and project the voices and ambitions of those most-affected to inform the development of a post-hydrocrabon society in Colombia. Our initiative in 2023 concluded with convened CSOs approving a meta-narrative, setting out a collective vision of a just transition in Colombia, as well as four alternative narratives tackling predominant narratives against a just energy transition.

This initiative was designed as a first step toward transforming the energy transition public discourse in Colombia. Before attempting to directly influence public discourse, it was essential to start by aligning points of view and by building a greater understanding of the different perspectives about the energy transition in Colombia, bridging diverse world views and priorities at the national and local community levels. This has set the ground for future interventions that can influence the predominant public discourse, built on the shared vision, greater trust and agreed common messages that resulted from the work in 2023.

Building upon these experiences and lessons, we are developing a framework on just transition in resource-rich countries, which compiles evidence on equity challenges during the energy transition, principles and policies and suggestions dimensions for NRGI and partners to consider in their work. In 2024, we will discuss and apply the framework through collaboration with partners in different countries, with the intention to both raise awareness of just transition issues and use it to frame our own work.

Pioneering research on national oil companies and the energy transition

NRGI's research on and engagement with national oil companies (NOCs) in the context of the energy transition has helped shape the field and bridge a gap between the climate and energy communities, both nationally and globally. National oil companies produce half of the world's oil and gas, and are planning $1.8 trillion in upstream developments and expansions over the next 10 years, but they have received comparatively little attention in discussions about the shape of the global energy transition. Their choices will have a major impact on their countries' resilience amid a changing energy market.

In November 2023, we released two major publications which analyze what NOCs are doing (or at least saying) about energy transition risk: Riskier Bets, Smaller Pockets: How National Oil Companies are Spending Public Money Amid the Energy Transition and Facing the Future: What National Oil Companies Say About the Energy Transition. This research built upon our 2021 Risky Bet research on NOC spending, which we undertook to fill a gap in understanding of the role of NOCs in climate action, the potential risk of a global energy transition for NOCs, and the subsequent effects on public revenue and governments' ability to fund public services. This earlier research was informed by our prior engagement with NOCs (nationally in Mexico, Colombia, and Ghana, and regionally in the Middle East and North Africa [MENA]), which suggested that a slow reaction to the energy transition would threaten economic welfare in the respective countries and regions, and highlighted a need for NOCs to plan more systematically for adaptations to their approaches.

Building from this, in Facing the Future we sought to understand the extent to which NOCs were acknowledging the risks brought by the global energy transition, assessing these risk, and making mitigation plans. We analyzed the public statements of 21 NOCs from across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and found that only 9 of the 21 had even acknowledged the risk that the global energy transition posed to their traditional ways of working. Even fewer (four) had

indicated that they were conducting transition risk assessments or explicitly described risk-mitigation strategies (five).

In Riskier Bets, which covered 58 NOCs, we examined past upstream oil and gas investment and expected pipelines of investments over the next ten years, and found that "As NOCs, along with the rest of the oil industry, expect oil demand to stay high, they will likely invest USD 1.8 trillion in new upstream developments and project expansions over the next 10 years. However, $425 billion of this investment is unlikely to be profitable if global oil demand falls from the current 100 million barrels a day to 55 million barrels a day by 2050, in line with the International Energy Agency's Announced Pledges Scenario." Given this risk, we recommended that NOCs and governments "must examine how they can generate sufficient revenue and energy for citizens without making even risker bets with public money." We identified those NOCs where upcoming investment portfolios pose particular risks for citizens and economies because they depend heavily on projects with high break-even prices that will not generate strong returns if the world transitions from oil and gas at a moderate or fast pace. We also made recommendations for how governments and NOCs can reduce their risks and build more resilient plans.

This research was heavily informed by demands and opportunities that arose out of NRGI's engagement on NOC reform in Ghana, Mexico, Colombia and other countries.

Saving billions in Ghana

In Ghana, in July 2021, Ghana National Petroleum Corporation had asked Parliament for $1.65 billion to purchase shares in Aker Energy's undeveloped offshore oil projects in Ghanaian waters. NRGI built on prior research, acting as a technical backstop to an alliance of Ghanaian CSOs which engaged with the government, parliament and through media advocacy. The government paused its plan for the acquisition. Then, in March 2023, Aker relinquished its interest, effectively returning the holding to Ghana for free. The Ghanaian government has since launched a National Energy Transition Committee. GNPC and the government have credited the work of NRGI and the alliance of CSOs as a significant influence on the evolution of the approach and NRGI is providing technical assistance in the development of the energy transition plan.

Also in 2023, and building upon previous engagement in Ghana, we analyzed how GNPC's transition planning compared to the plans of other NOCs assessed in the Facing the Future report, and we worked with GNPC, the Ghanaian government and civil society actors to drive national dialogue by hosting a multi-stakeholder event to explore topics including GNPC's governance, transition strategy, and planning options. Speaking at the launch of the two NOC reports described above, a senior GNPC official publicly appreciated NRGI's analysis and input as the company formulates an energy transition strategy.

In Mexico, we facilitated discussions around the future of national oil company Pemex and the risks associated with the global and domestic energy transition, bringing together stakeholders from the climate and energy sectors to strengthen a national agenda around Pemex reform.



Pemex, Mexico's national oil company and one of the largest in the world • *Armando Salgado for NRGI*

External reviewers of NRGI's work around NOCs in Ghana and Mexico in 2023 found that NRGI's most significant contribution—as repeatedly expressed by international experts, key partner organizations, and NRGI staff—was creating awareness while enabling and driving energy transition discussions among opposite visions on the topic. The coalition-building and analysis we undertook in 2023 set the stage for further engagement around Pemex reform in 2024, including recommendations for the incoming Mexican government after the June election.

Globally, NOCs have become a prominent topic in climate conversations, particularly in the lead-up to COP28, and our research is informing these conversations. The 2023 Production Gap Report, produced by UNEP and a group of climate-focused NGOs, cited NRGI's National Oil Company Database in making the case that NOC

investment is a major driver of public spending that risks widening the global gap between climate goals and countries' planned fossil fuel production.

Informing regional energy transition strategies and global climate conversations at COP28

NRGI's research on and engagement with NOCs, in addition to narrative-building energy transition work, informed our engagement in global climate conversations at the COP28 in December 2023. In the build-up to COP28, between May and October, we convened a six-part online, Arabic-language discussion series to discuss the energy transition with regional experts in MENA; these included youth and women experts, who are less represented in the debates in the region. The aim of these webcasts was to create a space for dialogue among experts, governments, and civil society actors in the native language of the region. This kind of dialogue and advocacy space— limited in MENA—is needed to shape the regional understanding and advocacy beyond official narratives.



NRGI attended COP28, taking part in press events and organizing a number of sessions

The series drew on the diverse knowledge and expertise of an array of MENA experts to produce actionable policy recommendations and priorities to advance a just energy transition in MENA, including specific recommendations for consideration within the COP28 context. For example, in one webcast, we discussed the importance of climate financing—a crucial topic in the region and at COP28—and published the key points from the discussion in a blog post, including recommendations for governments at COP28. These topics proved relevant and important for MENA audiences, as evidenced by high engagement, live attendance, and views of the webcast recordings. We shared the recommendations with

government officials across the MENA region and also to the public through engagements with several media outlets, including Daraj, Jaafar Talk, and SkyNews, and conference appearances. We also shared insights and key recommendations at COP28 in Dubai, where we hosted an in-person, Arabic-language panel including four female experts from the region.

Our research on NOC energy transitions also underpinned wider advocacy at COP28, delivered through a range of events and briefings, media engagement (with special emphasis on media from Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East & North Africa), NRGI commentary, and networking with partners and allies. Our analysis of the transition risks and challenges faced by NOCs in low- and middle-income countries helped elevate the needs and priorities of their host countries in Global Stocktake (GST) and new climate finance goal (NCQG) negotiations. It also contributed to greater and better-informed media coverage of the implications and significance of one of the headline outcomes of COP28: the call on parties to contribute to "transitioning away from fossil fuels…" This outcome underscores the importance of relevant analysis and open dialogue to chart the future for low- and middle-income producers of oil, gas and coal. NRGI will continue to focus on our fossil fuel transition work in 2024 through ongoing research and analysis, policy advocacy, and by creating spaces for discussion and knowledge sharing, including a continuation of the MENA webcast series.

Aligning extractive projects with conservation efforts in the Amazon

Building upon our expertise and networks in Peru and Colombia, in 2023 NRGI launched a new program on the extractive industries in the Andean Amazon. We are assessing the role of resource governance in deforestation and avoidance of the Amazon "tipping point" by supporting stronger, more inclusive decision-making around the future of the oil, gas, mining and renewable energy sectors. We conducted a study on the economic viability of continuing fossil fuel exploitation in the Peruvian Amazon, in which we found that there is a declining trend in oil exploitation in the region and that the global energy transition context will entail a significant reduction in oil demand. We recommended that subnational governments prepare for a gradual decrease in oil extraction in the coming decades and that national and regional governments devise strategies for productive diversification and fiscal reform to offset the lower fiscal revenues from oil and gas royalties. We also found that natural gas production could be a viable alternative in the short and medium terms, but that authorities should accompany it with an energy transition strategy prioritizing renewable energies.



"Loreto, Peru, is navigating the balance between energy development and conservation while protecting the Amazon and local communities from illegal mining • *Matyas Rehak / Shutterstock*

In Peru we are contributing to the Loreto region's energy policy and actions against illegal mining, and also aiming to strengthen the link between the energy transition and the protection of the Amazon. In preparation for the October 2024 UN biodiversity conference (COP16) in Colombia and the November 2025 UN climate change conference (COP30) in Brazil, we have joined inter-institutional spaces with the aim of articulating a common narrative for the Amazon region in these climate-related negotiations.

Researching and catalyzing action on methane emissions reduction in Senegal and Nigeria

It is increasingly important for fossil-fuel producing countries to reduce methane emissions associated with fossil fuel production, in order to limit their climate footprints and align their industries with a growing set of international rules and strategies, including the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the EU's plans to regulate methane emissions. Despite the importance of this objective, there is relatively little public dialogue on methane emissions abatement within many countries—particularly in Africa—and a need to increase the accountability of governments and companies around emissions.

In 2023, NRGI mapped methane reduction efforts to date in Nigeria and Senegal. Informed by this exercise, in Senegal, we published a briefing calling for action on minimizing emissions from Senegalese oil operations, and to strengthen the public

debate on this overlooked issue. We organized a multi-stakeholder dissemination panel which was covered in several media articles and broadcast on the most watched television station, on the evening news in both Wolof and French. The event sparked further media attention and subsequent TV programs around methane emissions in Senegal's oil and gas sector.

Contributing to the new, more robust EITI Standard

In May 2023 the EITI international board approved a full set of refinements to the EITI Standard; NRGI played a leading role in the process, through staff sitting on the EITI Board. This latest iteration represents a significant change in the standard, in line with the enormity of the challenges that citizens in resource-producing countries now face. Though the process lasted over a year, NRGI and civil society partners were active in negotiations until the very end, winning substantial victories on GHG emissions and reserve disclosures after refusing to agree to the text in a final extraordinary board meeting in May. On the issue of GHG emissions, our analysis brought a number of implementing countries and mining companies around on the issue, overcoming months of intransigence from oil and gas companies.



NRGI colleagues joined the EITI Global Conference 2023, where the updated EITI Standard was presented

Sustainable revenue management

Effective revenue management, strong tax frameworks, transparency and citizen participation are hallmarks of accountable extractive-sector governance.

NRGI's research and programming help officials to manage revenue volatility, spending priorities, savings and debt, and also to achieve equity and efficiency in subnational revenue sharing. The organization supports tax authorities and state-owned companies in its priority countries to adapt to the energy transition, helping national treasuries to realize benefits from the boom in transition minerals. NRGI also collaborates with civil society actors, journalists and other stakeholders at national and local levels to bolster their ability to monitor governments' management of revenues.

In 2023, NRGI provided research and analysis, convening support to governments and civil society partners, and technical assistance to support governments to secure good deals from mining contracts and to ensure that revenues flowed into communities. We also contributed to improved transparency through the publication of additional mining contracts on our ResourceContracts platform.

Shaping the future of resource taxation and revenue management

In June, the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development (IGF) and the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) convened the Global Conference on the Future of Resource Taxation in Zambia, bringing together government officials, industry executives, civil society actors and academics to deliberate changes needed in mining taxation amid the energy transition. NRGI sponsored the attendance of African civil society participants, providing pre-and post-conference workshops and advocacy support.

We also played a central role in IGF and ATAF's broader "future of resource taxation" project, contributing three chapters to a handbook on the future of resource taxation. The handbook is now being used to inform government decision-making and public debate. Our chapters covered variable rate royalties, minimum profit share mechanisms and the implications of carbon taxes and border carbon adjustments for resource-rich developing countries. We also integrated these efforts on mineral taxation into capacity development offerings, notably in our francophone Africa regional course in Cameroon. (See below.)

In 2023 we also drew on our earlier research to support an African Development Bank assessment of the risks and opportunities of resource-backed loans for African countries, informing the ADB's recent guidance to African governments.

Improving transparency in mining contracts

NRGI's work in 2023 helped to strengthen transparency and accountability in our focus countries through the publication of additional mining contracts. Over the course of the year 115 contracts were added to the ResourceContracts platform, the world's largest open repository of extractive industry contracts. Our affiliates and partners including ECHO (Kazakhstan contracts), Tax Justice Network (Malawi contracts), EITI Secretariat (Niger contracts) and the DRC Ministry of Mines (DRC contracts) aided in the identification of contracts published during the year.

Strengthening capacities of accountability actors and decision-makers on subnational revenue transfers in Senegal

Through a USAID-supported project in Senegal, NRGI, in collaboration with national CSOs Forum Civil and ONG 3D, strengthened transparency and accountability mechanisms in the mining, oil and gas sectors for better revenue management and distribution to benefit all Senegalese citizens. This program both enhances capacities of civil society organizations and the media to hold the government accountable for extractive industries policies, and also supports the government and national and local officials to manage extractive revenues transparently and effectively in the public interest.

In partnership with EITI Senegal, we led two workshops in October to enhance the capacities of journalists and government officials to communicate in alignment with the EITI vision and mission and the EITI Standards 2023. We also enhanced the capacities of journalists and government officials, parliamentarians, teachers, youth, women and students to take actions to strengthen transparency and accountability of subnational transfers from extractive sector revenues, including training on management of revenues and governance instruments related to extractive resources. Following an NRGI-facilitated training session, seven journalists, with further support from NRGI, published four investigations related to resource extraction, the coexistence of oil extraction and fishing, the hazards of gold mining in Kedougou, and Woodside Energy's exploitation of oil and gas in Djifere. We also helped to establish citizen participation coalitions (CPCs) in three regions. These coalitions, formed through extensive meetings with local communities, young

people, women, and authorities, are vital mechanisms for community engagement and conflict resolution; CPCs help communities to address specific challenges arising from extractive activities.

Providing analytical tools to diagnose corruption in the extractive sector

In December 2023, NRGI published the second edition of our extractives corruption diagnostic tool. This tool is a flexible and adaptable guide that helps users engage on sensitive topics; identify and understand major corruption issues; develop multi-stakeholder participation and support; and build and implement action plans to prevent corruption in the future. The latest edition brings in insights from users of the tool in Mongolia, Colombia, Guinea and the Philippines and features a digital microsite to help users quickly understand and navigate all relevant information. In addition to the five existing thematic modules covering guidance on key topics on licensing and contracting, operations, revenue collection, revenue management and state-owned enterprises, the new edition of the tool includes three new modules on artisanal and small-scale mining, socioenvironmental impacts in the mining sector, and fossil fuel phaseout.

The new version of the corruption diagnostic tool was accompanied by a briefing on anticorruption experiences. This brings together eight case studies from other sectors ranging from forestry in Uganda to shipping cargoes in Argentina which hold useful lessons for reformers in the extractives sector. The briefing concludes with five anticorruption reform lessons drawn from these cases. The aim is to show what can be achieved and support users of the diagnostic tool to learn from experiences outside the extractives sector.



Workshop convened by NRGI in Guinea on tackling corruption in the extractives sector

In Guinea, we supported civil society representatives of the EITI steering committee to employ our corruption diagnostic tool and to compile a diagnostic report highlighting the most concerning forms of corruption in the Guinean mining sector. We then developed an accompanying intervention plan which presents a practical approach to tackling corruption. This was elaborated with close involvement from PWYP Guinea, and with active involvement of government agencies engaging in the prevention and disruption of corrupt practices. We also outlined our own key recommendations.

Empowering civil society for sustainable resource management and conflict resolution in Tunisia's oil-producing regions

In Tunisia in 2023 NRGI focused on empowering CSOs to effectively represent the interests of marginalized communities in two key oil-producing regions: Tataouine and Kebili. These areas, pivotal in the country's energy landscape, are at the forefront of Tunisia’s transition toward sustainable energy practices. In 2022, we had established networks of CSOs in each region to spearhead mediation between the government and grassroots activists, enhancing dialogue and understanding. Throughout 2023, we facilitated numerous workshops aimed at bolstering the networks' capabilities in resource governance, conflict mediation, and project management. These workshops were crucial not only for enhancing specific skills

necessary for navigating the complexities of oil-rich regions but also for preparing these actors to address renewable energy project challenges. By fostering connections among CSOs, we strengthened their collective advocacy and operational effectiveness, ultimately supporting a people-centered energy transition.

In September, in partnership with the United Nations Democracy Fund, we hosted a training workshop in Tataouine—a region endowed with oil and gas reserves yet plagued by conflicts over resource revenue and local employment.



The workshop in Tataouine, Tunisia, focused on resolving natural resource conflicts through mediation and collaboration

This workshop provided a vital platform for civil society actors to exchange experiences and learn practical facilitation techniques and conflict mediation strategies. The skills they acquired are directly applicable to both current and future challenges in renewable energy projects, underscoring the transformative power of unity and shared purpose in driving sustainable development.

Cross-cutting

Enhancing knowledge and capacity on resource governance and the energy transition

In 2023 NRGI continued to foster capacity on extractive industries' governance through our executive and advanced courses and residential summer school, and we adapted and expanded these training events to address knowledge gaps on the energy transition.

From April to June, we held our advanced course "Natural Resource Governance and Energy Transition: Policies and Practice" in collaboration with the NADEL-Center for Development and Cooperation at ETH Zürich, with participation from 43 leaders from across government, civil society, parliaments, media, international development agencies, industry associations, research organizations and academia, from 23 countries. Following a gathering of course alumni in Zambia, in February 2024 two alumni advocated that resource-rich African countries to reform their tax systems to prepare for the energy transition, drawing from discussions that took place during the advanced course.

In September, we hosted the 11th edition of the executive course "Oil, Gas and Mining Governance in Emerging Markets" in partnership with the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government, which provides training for policy leaders on management and governance of mining, oil and gas, and facilitates dialogue amongst public and private stakeholders. The 2023 course brought together 48 participants from 17 countries.



Participants of the 2023 edition of the executive course “Oil, Gas and Mining Governance in Emerging Markets

During the 2023 training, we also had the opportunity to interact with specialists from Latin America and hear their perspectives on the impact of the energy transition in the region. Following the executive course, we hosted a gender event to create a platform for female participants to discuss gender equity in natural resource governance. Using the Feminist Natural Resource Governance for a Just Transition Agenda, participants discussed concrete policy recommendations to foster a just energy transition, through community consultations, protection and exercise of land rights, and use of gender-relevant and disaggregated data.

In July 2023, NRGI and the Catholic University of Central Africa in Cameroon co-hosted a two-week residential summer school which equipped various stakeholders —including civil society actors, journalists, and parliamentarians—with essential knowledge, tools and skills to enhance their capacity to promote transparent and responsible management of extractive resources. The summer school, in its 12th year, brought together over 20 participants from 9 African countries and culminated in an international conference titled "Energy Transition in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges for Domestic Resource Mobilization.” Participants at this conference—in line with the new EITI Standard—explored the connections between climate change, the energy transition and the extractive sector, with the objective of identifying policies and practices to enable the energy transition to contribute to domestic revenue.

Website and brand: New visual identity launch

In July, NRGI launched our new website along with a brand-new visual identity. The new site is highly visual, showcasing impactful photography and enabling us to deploy dynamic content more effectively, including web-based publications, video, and interactive data visualization. The refreshed branding underscores NRGI's role as a distinctive changemaking organization, committed to advancing resource governance for the energy transition era.

We also expanded our social media presence by significantly increasing our LinkedIn following and enhancing engagement across our Twitter accounts, including our Spanish-language Twitter page. We have also increased our video content production, contributing to steady growth in our YouTube channel.

Our media outreach efforts and our analytical and research outputs have attracted considerable media attention, including in prominent outlets such as The Economist and the Financial Times, as well as more extensive coverage from key national newspapers in our focus countries.

Looking ahead



The Espinar region of Cusco, Peru, with its copper mining activities affecting both the environment and local people • *Miguel Gutierrez Chero for NRGI*

NRGI launched its current strategy in January 2020. The global pandemic, announced in the months after the strategy launch, and subsequent events dramatically shifted global and national contexts, commodity markets, geopolitical dynamics and ways of working. Since then NRGI has continuously assessed the changing context and adapted accordingly. During 2023, we reflected on our strategic evolution, what we have learned and how we should adapt our approaches going forward.

We continued to hone our three “guiding lights” (transition mineral governance, fossil fuel transition, and sustainable revenue management), and began a deep dive into our transition minerals work to sharpen our theory of change and our priorities for future evolutions. Together with PWYP, we commissioned research on the new paradigms of natural resource governance, testing the assumptions on which our current and future work will be based.

In 2024, we are focused on building upon our past experiences and lessons to shape NRGI’s strategic direction through 2030. Our strategy development process is designed to sharpen and clarify our bold ambitions for impact, strengthen our capacity for continuous learning, real-time strategic planning, and adaptation, and ensure our approach is enriched by a diverse range of expertise both within and

outside NRGI. We will launch this new strategy in early 2025, setting the course for our work for the next five years.

Cover image

Neil Palmer / Climate Visuals

About NRGI

The Natural Resource Governance Institute is an independent, non-profit organization that supports informed, inclusive decision-making about natural resources and the energy transition. We partner with reformers in government and civil society to design and implement just policies based on evidence and the priorities of citizens in resource-rich developing countries. For more information visit www.resourcegovernance.org

Natural Resource Governance Institute