NRGI 2020-2025 Evaluation: Management Response

July 2026

In September 2025, NRGI commissioned an independent evaluation to assess our impact, including: what changes NRGI has contributed to between 2020 and 2025; whether the assumptions underpinning our theory of change hold in practice; and to what extent NRGI has integrated systems-thinking into its ways of working (learning, political economy analysis, and working in alliances). Our ambition was to generate actionable learning to inform and strengthen NRGI's strategy moving forward, and the resource governance movement more broadly. The robustness of the evaluation findings – including 46 harvested and validated outcomes across six countries, 26 interviews with 42 stakeholders including partners and staff, two in-depth case studies, and a systematic document review – provides an important validation of the organization's impact and our approach to pursuing change.

This management response provides an overview of the key findings, and how we are integrating this learning into our work going forward, strengthening our impact.

The evaluation report's executive summary is available here.

NRGI's contributions to building more inclusive, resilient, and prosperous societies

The evaluation found that NRGI contributed to meaningful changes to build more accountable and inclusive natural resource governance, with particular influence in four main areas across multiple countries:

- **Strengthening policies and regulatory reforms**: NRGI's work has contributed to strengthening policy and reform processes related to transparency, revenue management and oversight across multiple countries and globally. NRGI's analysis and technical assistance have been widely used by policymakers, civil society organizations (CSOs), and journalists, including to inform concrete policy processes, institutional reforms and public disclosure mechanisms. The evaluation cites this impact across a range of geographies, and specifically highlights cases from Ghana, Mongolia and Nigeria as illustrations. In particular, the evaluation points to NRGI's ability to translate complex data into evidence for decision-making. For example, in Nigeria, NRGI-supported initiatives contributed to the public disclosure of methane emissions data by 15 oil and gas companies in 2024 as part of Nigeria EITI's 2022 and 2023 oil and gas audits. NRGI has also shaped international governance standards, including playing an active role in shaping the 2023 EITI Standard's requirements on emissions disclosure.
- **Building diverse coalitions and trust among stakeholders**: NRGI's ability to bring together actors who previously had limited trust or direct engagement is a key strength recognized by the evaluation that spans NRGI's influence at the international level, including illustrative examples cited by the evaluators from Ghana, Guinea, Senegal and Uganda. In Senegal for instance, NRGI supported the establishment of PACTEJ – a civil society platform of more than 40 organizations which gained recognition from the government, with its leaders integrated into the government's Just Energy Transition Partnership steering committee. In Ghana, a civil society monitoring committee evolved

into an extractives governance network which mobilized to scrutinize and block the Agyapa agreements.

- **Supporting narrative and discourse change:** The evaluation found that in several countries, NRGI helped introduce new concepts into public debate, particularly around justice dimensions of the energy transition. In Colombia, this included broadening climate discussions to encompass oil and gas governance issues and establishing justice as a foundational framing of the energy transition rather than a negotiating point. In Senegal, the evaluation points to a broader shift in public discourse toward equity, justice, transparency, and accountability, linked to NRGI evidence and engagement.
- **Strengthening knowledge and capabilities:** The evaluation found that NRGI's work has strengthened capabilities and engagement of a range of actors involved in resource governance – most visibly civil society organizations, but also government officials, academic institutions, and community representatives. NRGI trained over a thousand people across its countries and regions of engagement during the evaluation period, and also provided practical hands-on mentorship and accompaniment that has helped these stakeholders more effectively pursue reform. For example, capacity development initiatives have equipped civil society to interpret technical information and engage more effectively in policy debates. In Guinea, for example, five trained organizations began monitoring mining revenues and engaging local authorities on development funds. In addition, NRGI's training programs have supported the development of practitioner and expert networks, with alumni applying their knowledge in professional roles. These changes represent meaningful contributions toward more informed governance processes across multiple contexts.

The strengths in how we work

We were keen to understand how our ways of working support impact. Several findings resonated with us:

- **Integrating multiple approaches leads to deeper impact.** The evaluation illustrates that when we combine rigorous evidence, trusted relationships, convening power, and sustained accompaniment, we achieve actionable reforms and stronger accountability systems in ways that no single approach can achieve in isolation. This was a valuable finding that resonates with our organizational experience and responds to queries as to the benefit of our use of diverse, integrated approaches.
- **Impact requires long term partnerships and building from foundational outcomes.** The in-depth case studies conducted by the evaluators showed how NRGI's long-term investment, in partnership with other actors, helps produce enabling conditions for change. In Nigeria, for example, NRGI support helped build new transparency infrastructure on methane emissions, establishing an accountability foundation for future regulation. In Colombia, the strengthened civil society coordination through the development of a just energy transition meta-narrative provides stronger foundations for future governance reform. Across NRGI's work, the evaluation finds that building a strong coalition of actors invested in long-term change is a key foundation that leads to concrete and sustainable impact. Recognizing and communicating foundational steps as significant contributions is important both to our understanding of how change happens and to how we measure and articulate our impact.

- **Convening actors across geographies (global, regional, national, community), stakeholders (civil society, decision makers, private sector, multilaterals, communities), and sectors (climate, development, democracy, human rights) is among NRGI's strongest comparative advantages.** Our technical credibility and ability to build and bridge relationships are important drivers of impact and recognized by partners.
- **Trust and relationships are important complements to evidence quality.** Credible analysis and sustained presence build relationships, understanding of the political context, and trust with and across actors. Such engagement was noted as a consistent differentiator between cases in which we have built deep influence and others where our impact has been more limited.

We are committed to building on these strengths.

- Over the past year, we have invested in sharpening our approaches – advocacy, capacity development, research and analysis, strategic communications – with a focus on how they are mutually reinforcing. Looking ahead, we will continue to concertedly invest in the integration of our approaches around specific outcomes.
- In our program design, we are building on NRGI's convening power as a distinctive comparative advantage, with deliberate investment in the relationships and trust that make them possible. This includes our South-South Learning Platform on Critical Minerals, our capacity development courses, and our regional and national dialogues on issues ranging from the future of the energy transition in MENA to critical minerals work in Zambia. As part of these efforts, we will sharpen expectations, roles and responsibilities when NRGI is working in partnership, which will strengthen our collaboration.
- We will sharpen how we capture and communicate our impact, and as part of marking our 20th anniversary we are concertedly developing impact stories that will trace foundational and incremental outcomes over the past two decades. Those efforts will inform our theory of change and refinement of our results framework.

As the evaluation recognized, these are not small achievements in a field characterized by entrenched interests, shrinking civic space, and structural power imbalances. The evaluation strengthens our confidence in our strategic direction, and we are committed to further leveraging and building from the strengths identified, while also addressing areas to improve.

Where we seek to improve

The evaluation highlights several issues that NRGI can address to strengthen our approach and deepen the impact of our work. We will draw on these findings and make concerted efforts to continue to improve, with a particular focus on four areas identified by the evaluation:

- **Sustaining and implementing policy gains:** NRGI has devoted significant effort over more than a decade to understanding and addressing what scholars refer to as "the implementation gap" – that weak political will or a lack of resources among oversight actors mean that policy wins do not translate into sustained practice or enforcement. NRGI has systematically tracked this phenomenon, including via our Resource Governance Index and Resource Governance Assessment methodology (with country assessments launching later in 2026) – which measures both governance provisions embedded in policy and the consistency of their implementation – and in in-depth analysis within key countries and across key issue areas.

The evaluation notes that implementation challenges persist, requiring redoubled efforts to ensure that our work maximizes sustained impact. In particular, it highlights the need to build strategies for long-term monitoring into project design from the outset, identify who will sustain monitoring and advocacy after initial reform milestones, and secure sufficient resources to invest in follow up.

The evaluation notes that one of our strongest responses to implementation challenges is building monitoring coalitions. For example, in Ghana, where a civil society monitoring committee formed around a single petroleum bid round, evolved into a lasting extractives governance network that later mobilized to scrutinize and block the Agyapa agreement – a proposed deal to monetize Ghana's gold mining royalties. In 2020, the Ghanaian government proposed the creation of Agyapa Royalties Ltd., to leverage the country's gold reserves, but the deal was subsequently suspended after NRGI and partners raised concerns about potential risks and lack of transparency. That kind of sustained coalition building is a model we want to learn from and replicate more consistently, so that impact can continue even after specific projects end.

- **Strengthening the translation of evidence into influence:** The evaluation confirms NRGI's strength in generating high-quality research that is widely used by policymakers, civil society organizations and journalists, and our ability to translate complex data into evidence for decision-making. It also reinforces a key element of our theory of change – that high-quality analysis can spur change only accompanied by strong advocacy and a nuanced influencing strategy. Despite this awareness, the evaluation flags a need for more consistency in integrating research planning and dissemination into a broader influencing strategy. This includes identifying precise audiences and key moments for political influence and crafting targeted messages in line with a compelling overarching narrative.

  An internal communications review we recently conducted shows that where we have employed such approaches deeply – such as our work in Mexico developing recommendations for the incoming government on reform of their National Oil Company – we have effectively reached key audiences. Benefitting from the evaluation findings, we are strengthening our evidence-influence cycle, including via more consistent identification of precise audiences and dissemination channels at the outset of a research process, organization of pre-publication consultation with key stakeholders to hone findings and generate buy-in, and more systematic efforts to connect research and learning across countries. These changes are a part of a broader investment in strategic communications and NRGI's influencing strategy, which includes attention to advancing the key political narratives and meta-narratives that shape reform prospects, defining targeted cross-cutting advocacy priorities and aligning resources to build a critical mass to pursue them, more diverse forms of storytelling, and connecting our insights to live moments and agendas. The evaluation affirms the direction of these efforts while signaling there is more to do.

- **Power and political economy analysis:** NRGI's approach and theory of change emphasize that in order to spark lasting change, we need to shift power dynamics that limit opportunities and impede good governance. As the evaluation notes, we have succeeded in shifting these dynamics in key instances, such as in Tunisia, where NRGI's convening role

has helped bridge relationships between civil society and government, enabling civil society organizations to engage more effectively in policy discussions, leading to increased accountability and setting the stage for more inclusive development planning in resource-rich regions. These impacts have derived heavily from the savvy of our staff and close collaboration with partners when it comes to the political realities of the settings in which we are working. We have also made deliberate efforts to ensure that our work is responding to prevailing incentives, including by building political economy analysis into our monitoring tools and country strategy and project design processes.

The evaluation noted the need to build on these efforts and deepen our integration of political economy analysis into our work, mindful of the fast-paced, complex and dynamic policy environment, where well-resourced and entrenched interests play an outsized role. Following the evaluation, NRGI's Leadership Council met to trace a pathway for deeper and more consistent integration of political economy analysis into our work via three mechanisms. First, we will systematize a learning-to-action approach that further develops staff skills – including on how to translate political expertise into concrete action planning – and provides regular opportunities for sharing of success stories and reflection on challenges. Second, we will deepen the integration of practical and consistent political economy questions into our annual and mid-year planning processes, project kick-offs and proposal development phases, as well as encouraging organizational leaders to respond to "trigger moments" on an as-needed basis when a change in context necessitates reflection on our approach, and working with our funders to build a shared understanding on the need for flexibility in project plans as political contexts shift. Third, we will sharpen our approach to defining audiences and incentives in the evolution of our organizational "ways of working" approaches on advocacy, capacity development, research and strategic communications.

- **Clarifying expectations and roles in our partnerships and alliances:** As noted above, the power of partnership is at the core of NRGI's comparative advantage, but comes with its own challenges. As our work evolves (particularly around the just energy transition), we are engaging with a broader set of actors, whose primary missions and drivers may be different from ours. Working across this expanded ecosystem is important and consistent with our theory of change, but it requires intentionality – being clear about our role in each partnership, being transparent with partners about where our positions or approaches may diverge, being mindful of entrenched interests within each context, and ensuring that we are building collaborative capacity. We are committed to being more explicit in how we define, build, and manage partnerships, clarifying our role from the outset – defining priorities vis-à-vis the organization's strategic objectives over the long-term, ensuring country priorities include a deliberate review of partnership dynamics and NRGI's positioning within the ecosystem, and developing a more explicit approach to subnational engagement by learning from where NRGI has done this well.

We are grateful to the evaluation team from Impact Journey Collective for their expertise and partnership throughout this process, and to colleagues across the organization and partners for engagement in interviews and reflections.