



The effect of transparency and accountability interventions in the extractive sector: an evidence gap map

About 3.5 billion people live in countries rich in oil, gas or minerals (World Bank 2018).¹ The extractive sectors in a number of these low- and middle-income countries account for as much as 90 per cent of total exports and budget outlays (IMF 2012).² Researchers, activists and policymakers have been promoting transparency as a solution to the corruption associated with natural resource abundance (Rathinam et al. 2019).³ However, despite considerable efforts to support improved governance of natural resources in the extractive sector, the overall evidence on the impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives (TAIs) is sparse.

To identify critical knowledge gaps in this sector, 3ie's evidence programme on transparency and accountability in natural resources produced this evidence gap map (EGM) with the following objectives:

- To identify, appraise and summarise existing evidence from impact evaluations and systematic reviews of the effect of TAIs in the extractive sector on development and environmental outcomes.
- To identify existing evidence gaps where new primary studies and systematic reviews are needed to better inform transparency and accountability interventions directed at the governance of the extractive sectors.

Highlights

- We found very limited evidence in this sector, with only 20 studies meeting our inclusion criteria. All studies were published recently, between 2013 and 2019.
- Half of the impact evaluations and two systematic reviews look at the impact of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), a global standard that countries can opt in to for accountable resource management.
- Seven studies evaluate an information-provision intervention or include an information-provision component.
- Citizen monitoring and feedback mechanisms are evaluated in six studies, some of which also had information-provision components.

Main findings

Gaps in the interventions studied

- There are two absolute evidence gaps: (1) studies on interventions that introduce third-party audits, either financial or environmental; and (2) studies evaluating international initiatives focused on promoting transparency other than EITI, such as the Kimberley Process and the Publish What You Pay campaign. We did not find any studies on these interventions.
- Citizen participation in decision-making is another neglected type of intervention. Only one study assesses the impact of such a programme.

Gaps in outcomes studied

- Reported outcomes focus on citizen engagement, community engagement, and responses to TAIs by public and private actors.
- Long-term outcomes measuring actual change in individual or household well-being remain very much neglected.
- Only two studies look at the environmental outcomes, two measure impact on economic outcomes and one looks at psychosocial outcomes.

- Only two EITI studies report revenue allocation, which does not reflect the fact that many studies have focused on information provision about government spending of rent from natural resources.
- In the categories with larger evidence bases, studies report very few outcomes related to collective bargaining power.

Major gaps in evidence synthesis

- The map highlights a cluster of evidence on how two types of interventions – information-provision programmes and citizen-monitoring programmes – affect citizen and community engagement. Evidence synthesis could be beneficial in these areas.

Methodological gaps

- There were gaps in research methods, especially in the consideration of gender and equity dimensions.
- Four studies conduct subgroup analysis by gender or other factors of inequality, and another three studies look at vulnerable populations.

- Mixed-method experiments with a combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence are the most informative. However, only 4 of the 18 impact evaluations have a qualitative component.
- The EGM also found huge gaps in cost evidence. Only one study reports cost information, and none of the included studies incorporate any form of cost-effectiveness analysis.

Geographical coverage

- The countries studied in this EGM are not necessarily the most resource-rich countries, but they do have relatively large extractive industries. The top 22 countries on the World Bank list of natural resources-dependent countries – such as Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia – do not have even one rigorous evaluation (World Bank, 2018).⁴
- Given that only seven studies focus on individual countries (or two countries), any additional study – even in countries where research has already been conducted – would be valuable.





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Lessons and implications

The EGM highlights an urgent need to invest in rigorous impact evaluations to learn about the effects of these interventions. Certain methodological and political challenges have contributed to this evidence gap, and potential solutions are discussed below.

Methodological challenges and the need for innovative approaches

- Much of the existing research is of insufficient quality or rigour, representing lost opportunities to learn in an under-researched field.
- Using systematic reviews of evidence on transparency and accountability mechanisms implemented in other sectors could be useful to identify promising interventions.

- Studies using mixed methods and considering the implementation process can help to inform future programme design.
- Measurement of a broader range of outcomes, including environmental and well-being outcomes, in addition to cost-effectiveness data, would ensure future research findings are as useful as possible for improving people's lives.

Scope for more evaluations on global multi-stakeholder initiatives

- Nine of the 18 included impact evaluations underscore the potential to expand the evidence base at a low cost, by conducting more quasi-experimental studies on international initiatives, such as the Kimberley Process and the

Publish What You Pay campaign, for more transparency.

- EITI, as a frequently studied intervention, can still be valuable as a topic of research in the future, if the studies focus on specific countries.

Political economy of rigorously evaluating TAIs

- The lack of rigorous evaluations of TAIs in the extractive sector could be due, in part, to methodological challenges such as difficulties in finding rigorous counterfactuals.
- Future studies should systematically map the international and national efforts to promote governance, including TAIs, as well as explore the political economy of large donor-funded, multi-stakeholder initiatives that have not been evaluated.

How to read an evidence gap map

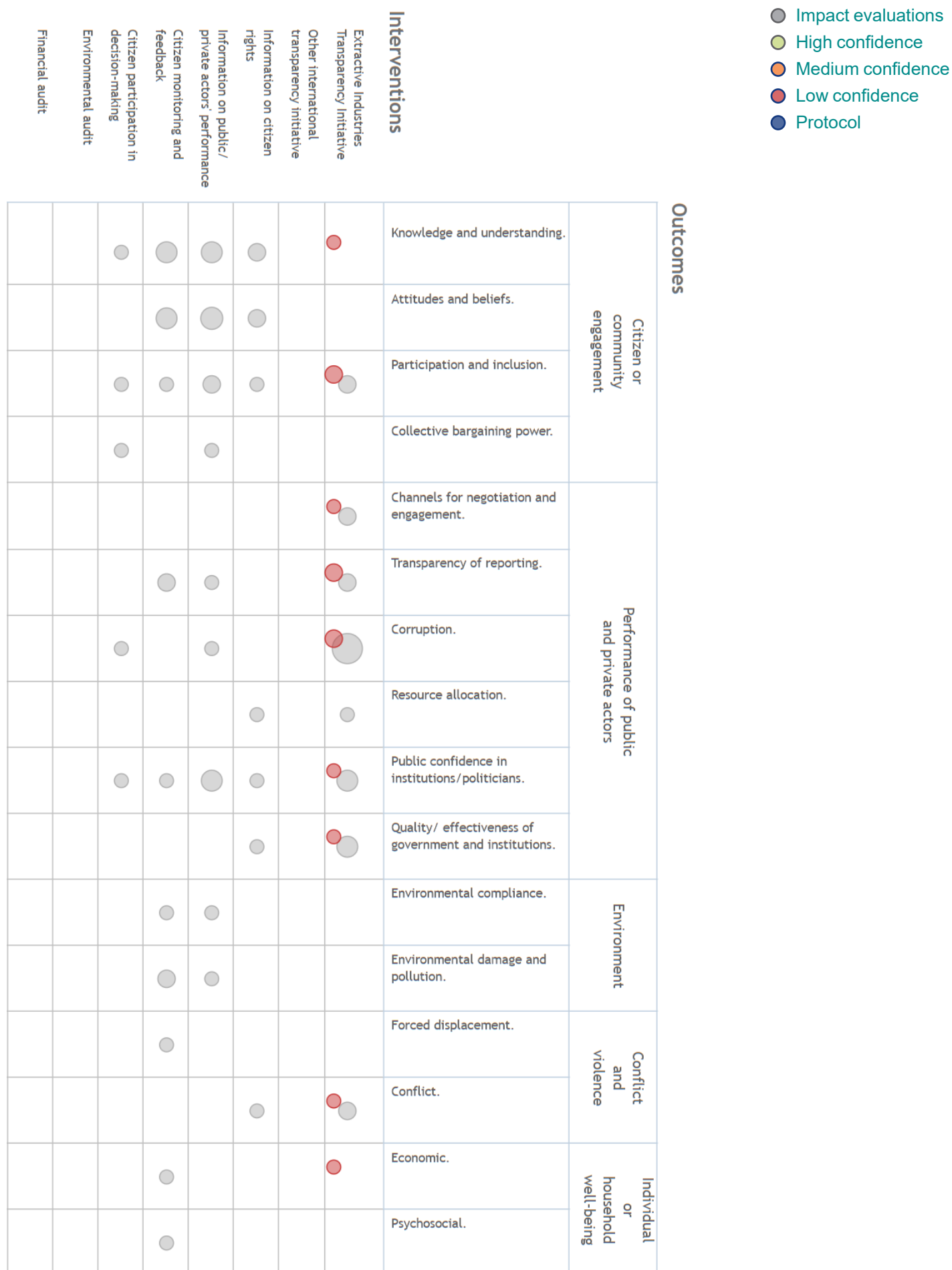
The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) presents evidence gap maps using an interactive online platform that allows users to explore the evidence base. Bubbles appearing at intersections between interventions and outcomes denote the existence of at least one study or review. The larger the bubble, the greater the volume of evidence in that cell. The colour of each bubble represents the type of evidence and, for a systematic review, a confidence rating (as indicated in the legend). In the online version, hovering over a bubble displays a list of the evidence for that cell. The links for these studies lead to user-friendly summaries in the 3ie evidence database. Users can filter the evidence by type, confidence rating (for systematic reviews), region, country, study design and population.

What is a 3ie evidence gap map?

3ie evidence gap maps are collections of evidence from impact evaluations and systematic reviews for a given sector or policy issue, organised according to the types of programmes evaluated and the outcomes measured. They include an interactive online visualisation of the evidence base, displayed in a framework of relevant interventions and outcomes. They highlight where there are sufficient impact evaluations to support systematic reviews and where more studies are needed. These maps help decision makers target their resources to fill these important evidence gaps and avoid duplication. They also facilitate evidence-informed decision-making by making existing research more accessible.



The Effect of Transparency and Accountability Interventions in the Extractive Sectors: An Evidence Gap Map





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About this map

The brief is drafted by Francis Rathinam and Zeba Siddiqui, and is based on *The effect of transparency and accountability interventions in the extractive sector: an evidence gap map*, 3ie Evidence Gap Map Report by Francis Rathinam, Juliette Finetti, Zeba Siddiqui, Birte Snilstveit,

Hannah Chrigwin, Richard Appell, Eleanor Dickens and Marie Gaarder. This map displays interventions that seek to improve transparency and accountability in the extractive sector through compliance with global transparency initiatives, provision of information to citizens, citizen

monitoring and participation, and environmental and financial audits. It includes 18 impact evaluations and 2 systematic reviews. The map critically appraised the two systematic reviews. All studies in the map were published after 2013.

Endnotes

¹The World Bank, 2018. Available at: <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/extractiveindustries>> [Accessed 23 May 2020].

²International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2012. Working together to support global recovery. Washington, DC: IMF. Available at: <<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/AREB/Issues/2016/12/31/Working-Together-to-Support-Global-Recovery>> [Accessed 25 June 2020].

³Rathinam, F, Cardoz, P, Siddiqui, Z and Gaarder, M, 2019. Transparency and accountability in the extractives sector: a synthesis of what works and what does not, 3ie Working Paper 33. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie). Available at: doi: <https://doi.org/10.23846/WP0033S>.


⁴World Bank, World Bank Country and Lending Groups, 2018. Available at: <https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups> [Accessed 23 May 2020].



The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) promotes evidence-informed, equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. We support the generation and effective use of high-quality evidence to inform decision-making and improve the lives of people living in poverty in low- and middle-income countries. We provide guidance and support to produce, synthesise and quality-assure evidence of what works, for whom, how, why and at what cost.

For more information on 3ie's evidence gap maps, contact info@3ieimpact.org or visit our website.

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