MAP-X: The next transparency revolution in the extractive sector

Start Date: **May 2015**

End Date: **on-going**

Rationale:

Trust and authoritative information are two of the most scarce resources in countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV). This is especially the case in the extractives sector, which is often plagued by decades of opaque contracts, backroom deals and decisions taken by a narrow elite to the exclusion of communities and civil society. While extractive resources offers great hope for generating the revenues needed to kick-start post-conflict reconstruction, trust building among stakeholders in the sector and access to authoritative information are two essential prerequisites to sharing value and maximizing the potential peacebuilding and development impact. Particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, public access to such information coupled with meaningful stakeholder dialogue can be an impetus for rebuilding confidence in government, managing public expectations and also attracting quality foreign investment to the sector.

Significant progress is being made in bringing transparency and good governance to the extractive sector to maximize the development impact of the sector and minimize the downside risks. Hard fought battles have been won through initiatives such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) over contract disclosure, revenue payments, beneficial ownership, production information and benefits sharing. Important progress has also been achieved on the environmental front, in terms of laws, safeguards, monitoring and compliance.

However, these initiatives all face a shared challenge: the majority of the information generated by the extractives sector on performance and operational risks, is not yet accessible to the public in a format that can be used by stakeholders to inform public debate, build confidence, support new investments, and improve the development impact and environmental performance of the sector.

Much of the data remains locked down in static PDF files, closed databases and antiquated software that do not inform real-time decision-making and do not effectively reduce information asymmetries among different ministries and stakeholders. Local authorities and communities have few tools to understand the contractual obligations of different concession holders or monitor their financial, social and environmental compliance.

Description:

The MAP-X initiative is based on a request from the g7+ group of countries to "develop a partnership that supports stakeholders in the extractives sector to consolidate, analyze and visualize transparency data and other contextual information as a contribution to good governance and conflict prevention."

MAP-X has three basic components:

 - Open data platform: a national open data platform for the extractives sector that can be tailor made to local needs, owned by stakeholders and reinforce existing processes (see annex 1);

 - Normative data standard and workflow: an open data standard and workflow process for consolidating, validating, reconciling and licensing the data by key Ministries, companies and communities;

 - Stakeholder capacity building: a capacity building programme for stakeholders to comply with the standard, manage the workflow and use the open data platform to inform decision making.

By improving digital access to the vast array of information produced by transparency and good governance initiatives, MAP-X can be a transformative tool for strengthening informed participation, dialogue and decision making by all stakeholders in the extractives sector. MAP-X has the potential to improve the quality of stakeholder consultation and resource concession contracts, support reforms in natural resource governance, promote more equitable benefits sharing, and enhance the performance monitoring of the sector at the concession level. With improved transparency and stakeholder confidence in government, MAP-X could also help support due diligence and risk identification for extractive investments as well as promote a higher quality of international investment to the extractives sector.

GRID-Geneva is responsible for the development of the MAP-X platform, entirely based on open-source solution. GRID-Geneva is also deeply involved into the deployment of the platform in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with participation to stakeholder dialogues and capacity building activities.

Outputs/Results:

An open-source online geospatial platform with display, analysis, export/import functions for many different types of data (vector, raster, pdf, Excel) and information (indicators, summary, storymap).

Clients/End Users:

- Initially DRC, with various stakeholders in the extractive sector (Government bodies, civil societies, companies)
- Afghanistan, with various stakeholders in the extractive sector (Government bodies, civil societies, companies)
- EITI International Secretariat, and EITI national Secretariats

Partners agencies:

- EITI International
- UNEP Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch (PCDMB)
- World Bank

Link(s):

http://mapx.org

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