

Benchmarking Good Governance in Angola: An Analysis of Productive Practices in the Management of Natural Resources

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Abstract

The paper uses qualitative document analysis (2010-2023) to examine Angola's administrative reforms and adherence to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as benchmarks for good governance in natural-resource management. It outlines initiatives such as one-stop service centers, judicial audits and anti-corruption strategy, and argues that these reforms signal political will yet suffer from weak enforcement. That study concludes that benchmarking can accelerate sustainable transformation only if backed by robust implementation and monitoring.

Keywords

Good Governance, Natural Resources, Benchmarking, Angola, EITI, Judicial Audits

1. Introduction

“If sub-Saharan African countries could close the ‘implementation gaps’ and fully enforce their own regulations, they could generate significantly higher revenues from their natural resources. They could also better address the negative human and environmental impacts of extractive activities” (Natural Resource Governance Institute, 2019a). Africa is rich in natural resources and holds 30% of the world's reserves of oil, gas, and minerals. More than half of the exports of many sub-Saharan African countries come from natural resources—and up to 90% in the case of countries most dependent on oil (African Development Bank Group, 2021). It is important to note that good governance can indeed help improve the investment climate, reduce corruption risks, and strengthen supply chain security, bringing positive outcomes for producing and consuming countries alike, as well

as for financial markets, including in Angola. However, it is observed that despite the establishment of legal frameworks that introduce stricter rules on transparency and accountability within various public administration structures, their implementation remains inadequate.

All these observations lead us to reflect on the theme: “Benchmarking Good Governance: Productive Best Practices in the Management of Natural Resources—The Case of the Republic of Angola.”

Thus, the term benchmarking is defined as a technique that involves observing competitors on a given topic, analyzing the results, and comparing them with practices within one’s own organization. In the context of our study, the term benchmarking is not used in relation to competing commercial enterprises, but rather as a technique that can be applied to improve performance, efficiency, and management within public administration and other public sectors.

It is important, first of all, to define the term “governance” before addressing the concept of “good governance.” *The World Bank (1992)* defines governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s social and economic resources for development, and the capacity of governments to plan, formulate, and implement policies, as well as to discharge their legal functions.”

The concept of “good governance” will be understood, according to *Mancebo (2013)*, as “a set of regulatory mechanisms for interests that seek to reconcile principles of effective public management with ethical principles.” In the context of this reflection, it is also defined as “a set of government processes, institutions, and decision-making and regulatory practices concerning matters of common interest” (*Zuka Mon’do Ugonda Lemba, 2023*).

Lastly, the term “natural resources”: is any biological, mineral, or aesthetic asset afforded by nature without human intervention that can be used for some form of benefit, whether material (economic) or immaterial (*Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025*).

In our study, we focus primarily on non-renewable resources (such as coal, hydrocarbons, minerals, and forests), which pose challenges in terms of exploitation, management, and conservation.

Finally, Forensic auditing (judicial audits) involves the application of auditing and investigative skills to situations that may have legal consequences. It is conducted with the aim of producing evidence that can be presented in a court of law particularly in cases involving fraud, embezzlement, or disputes (*Bhasin, 2016: p. 481*).

Most African countries have limited knowledge of their natural resources (land, forests, and minerals) and give them little consideration in political planning, particularly when choosing between competing uses or demands (*United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2018a*).

Furthermore, most recent studies show that the exploitation of hydrocarbons tends to weaken the economic fabric, social cohesion, and political institutions of

producing countries.

According to [Natural Resource Governance Institute \(2019b\)](#), the most significant implementation challenges faced by resource-rich sub-Saharan African countries concern the enforcement of legal requirements related to the transfer of revenues from oil, gas, and mining operations to local communities, as well as the disclosure of information on social and environmental impacts. In short, the application of good governance principles.

Indeed, African countries, including the Republic of Angola, must establish processes within their public institutions that allow them to compare their own structures with those of other states (public administrations) or international organizations, in order to ensure good governance of their natural resources. To what extent have the benchmarking mechanisms adopted by Angola contributed to improving transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the management of its natural resources?

To undertake this reflection and address the questions raised, we adopt a qualitative document analysis approach based on documentary analysis of legal texts, along with a descriptive empirical study grounded in existing literature. This article offers an analysis of the benchmarking mechanisms for good governance implemented by the Angolan state in the management of natural resources, with a particular focus on administrative reforms and transparency in the extractive sector.

Thus, we will begin with a brief presentation of the Republic of Angola, followed by a description of the good governance processes in the country, and conclude with the discussion and final remarks of our study.

2. Methodology

This research is based on a qualitative document analysis covering the period from 2010 to 2023. The corpus was composed of both primary and secondary sources, including official documents from the Angolan government (laws, presidential decrees, ministerial reports), publications from international organizations (such as the EITI, World Bank, IMF, and African Union), as well as peer-reviewed academic articles and research studies. The databases consulted include Google Scholar, Web of Science, as well as the official portals of Transparency International and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Direct relevance to the theme of natural resource governance in Angola;
- Published between 2010 and 2023;
- Public accessibility or verifiable institutional availability;
- Analytical or comparative content with clear contribution to the study objectives.

The exclusion criteria were used to eliminate:

- Opinion pieces not based on empirical data (e.g., editorials or personal columns);

- Documents outside the geographic or thematic scope;
- Redundant publications or those lacking original analytical value.

A thematic analysis framework was applied to organize the results into four main dimensions:

1. Mechanisms of transparency and accountability;
2. Legal and institutional frameworks;
3. Performance indicators (e.g., CPI, EITI);
4. Comparison with selected African reference models (Botswana, Ghana, Nigeria).

This methodological approach was chosen to ensure analytical rigor, transparency in document selection, and the replicability of the findings

3. Results

3.1. Brief Presentation of the Republic of Angola

Geographical and Socio-Economic Characteristics.

Angola is a vast country with a long coastline and a central plateau. It stretches inland in Southern Africa, sharing borders with Namibia, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the latest estimates, the country has a population of approximately 37.3 million inhabitants, with a density of 29 people per square kilometer ([World Population Prospects: The 2024 Revision](#)), and the third-fastest population growth rate on the continent (3.3%). Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is estimated at USD 2,021, according to IMF data ([IMF, 2024](#)).

According to the [African Development Bank Group \(2021\)](#), “The country has experienced decades of economic hardship. Since the 1990s, Angola has embarked on a development process within the framework of a market economy. However, despite the strong economic growth recorded before 2015, Angola still faces many challenges in terms of economic development.”

At the regional and international levels, Angola plays an increasingly important role within regional and international bodies, particularly on the African continent. It is a member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), whose Commission has been chaired since July 2020 by an Angolan national, Gilberto Da Piedade Veríssimo. Angola is also a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), where it chaired the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation until August 2018.

Furthermore, Angola is actively involved in the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), which it has chaired since late November 2020—for the second time since the organization’s creation. An Angolan national, João Samuel Caholo, has served as Executive Secretary of the ICGLR since December 2020 ([United Nations, 2020](#)).

Natural Resources

It should be noted that the following description of Angola’s natural resources is not exhaustive. This is primarily due to the country’s long history of armed

conflict, which has significantly hampered scientific research in many sectors. Nevertheless, we offer this brief overview of the current situation of Angola's natural resources.

Flora

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2010), Angola possesses a diverse flora comprising approximately 38 plant species distributed as follows:

- Cabinda Province: 5 vegetation species;
- Zaire Province: 10 species;
- Uíge Province: 5 species;
- Bengo Province: 8 species;
- Luanda Province: 3 species;
- Cuanza Norte Province: 7 species;
- Malanje Province: 7 species;
- Lunda Norte Province: 19 species;
- Benguela and Huambo Provinces: 3 species;
- Bié Province: 2 species;
- Lunda Sul Province: 6 species;
- Moxico Province: 6 species;
- Namibe and Huíla Provinces: 11 species;
- Cunene Province: 8 species;
- Cuando-Cubango Province: 7 species;

Angola's flora includes at least 17 different types of trees.

Fauna

The country's fauna is subdivided into terrestrial and marine fauna

Terrestrial Wildlife

Various species of terrestrial wildlife in Angola are distributed according to ecological zones such as savannah and herbaceous steppe. The main groups include: ruminants, antelope families, carnivores, reptiles. Marine fauna is composed of cetaceans, turtles, crustaceans, and fish (Simões de Oliveira, 2017).

In addition to the above-mentioned terrestrial and marine species found in Angola, there is also a notable presence of certain insects (non-exhaustive list), including: tsetse flies (*Glossina*), grasshoppers, termites, butterflies, among others.

Mineral Resources

It is worth noting that Angola has significant deposits of minerals such as diamonds, granite, gypsum, marble, gold, copper, iron, manganese, lead, mica, nickel, phosphate, quartz, silver, uranium, vanadium, tungsten, titanium, chromium, beryl, kaolin, zinc, as well as oil and natural gas

Governance and Corruption Levels

Despite the efforts made by the Government of Angola, the country still shows weaknesses in certain key governance indicators. Perceived levels of corruption remain a major concern. For example, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks the country 142nd out of 180, which is worrying, although it represents a modest improvement compared to its 2019 rank-

ing (146th).

3.2. Good Governance in the Republic of Angola

According to Article 198, paragraph 1 of the Constitution of Angola, “Public administration shall pursue the public interest and, in carrying out its activities, must be guided by the principles of equality, justice, proportionality, impartiality, accountability, integrity, and respect for public property.”

a. Good Governance Practices within Public Administration

As part of the implementation of good governance principles, the Angolan government has introduced several administrative reforms aimed at bringing public services closer to citizens, simplifying bureaucratic procedures, and strengthening transparency in public affairs management. These initiatives reflect a commitment to improving service quality and combating corruption.

Some of the most notable mechanisms include:

1. One-Stop Shop for Businesses (Guichet Unique)

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Justice, this public service aims to facilitate and reduce bureaucracy in the process of creating, modifying, or closing a business. It consolidates all necessary services in a single location, thereby streamlining procedures and reducing processing time.

2. Entrepreneur’s One-Stop Window (Balcão Único do Empreendedor—BUE)

Also overseen by the Ministry of Justice, the BUE’s main goal is to simplify the process of business registration, licensing, and regularization of entrepreneurs already active in the market. This service promotes formal entrepreneurship and supports economic development.

3. Citizen Assistance Service (CIAC)

This public service, supervised by the Ministry of Public Administration, Labor, and Social Security, aims to centralize the delivery of public services in a single physical location. It provides assistance based on simplified procedures and offers high-quality, efficient services to citizens.

In addition to these mechanisms that ease public access to administrative services and reduce long-standing bureaucratic barriers, the government has instituted judicial audits in public enterprises. These audits aim to discourage and prevent practices such as:

- embezzlement of public funds,
- money laundering,
- corruption,
- and mismanagement.

This type of audit can examine a company’s financial and administrative management over a period of up to ten to fifteen years. If irregularities are found, legal proceedings may be initiated against those responsible. These audits serve as a deterrent and are intended to promote accountability, restore citizens’ trust in public institutions, and enhance transparency in the management of public resources.

It should be noted that recently, by Presidential Decree No. 169/24 of July 19, the Government of the Republic of Angola adopted the National Strategy for the Prevention and Repression of Corruption (ENAPREC 2022-2027). The main objective of this strategy is to reduce corruption levels in the country through the following actions:

- Promotion of integrity, transparency, and improvement of service delivery across all sectors;
- Active involvement of citizens in the prevention, detection, and repression of corruption;
- Guarantee of transparency in the management of public affairs;
- Promotion of responsibility and accountability of public officials.

(Agency Angola Press (ANGOP), 2024)

b. Mechanisms of Good Governance in Natural Resource Management

It should be noted, as [Batterbury and Fernando \(2006\)](#) affirm, that “Most African examples related to the decentralization of natural resource exploitation activities highlight the difficulty of implementing institutional reforms that could enhance the authority of local communities over resources and broaden their rights to exploit them.”

The Government of Angola, together with the African Development Bank (AfDB), has established the Economic Diversification Support Program (PADE). The subsequent operations under this program series are intended to better support governance in the management of natural resources and state-owned enterprises. In this framework, the program should be designed to incorporate principles of best practices in conditionality, notably through:

- a) aligning the program’s policy matrix with the government’s PRODESI indicator;
- b) selecting reform measures essential to the program’s success and the achievement of results, as a prerequisite for disbursement; and
- c) recognizing the importance of strong ownership of the reform program by public authorities to minimize the risks associated with shifting priorities and to ensure long-term sustainability.

In the specific context of natural resource management, the Angolan government has adhered to the standards of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). According to the [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa \(2018b\)](#), “The opacity of Angola’s oil sector led to the creation of the EITI in 2003, when calls from civil society advocates to address corruption issues drew significant attention.” On this matter, Diamantino Azevedo, Angola’s Minister of Mineral Resources, Petroleum and Gas, declared: “Angola made the decision to join the EITI after serious reflection by His Excellency President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, in line with the administration’s commitment to focus on the fight against corruption.” ([Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative \(EITI\), 2022](#)). He added that “The implementation of the EITI will support the government’s goals of strengthening transparency and will ensure that the government

demonstrates the political will to enhance national good governance mechanisms.” (African Development Bank Group, 2021).

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is a global standard launched in 2003 to promote transparent and responsible management of natural resources. Its aim is to strengthen government and corporate systems, contribute to public debate, and build trust. In the more than 50 countries committed to implementing the EITI, governments, companies, and civil society work together in a multi-stakeholder process to ensure that information about oil and mining operations is publicly accessible. This includes (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), 2021a) a description of the legal framework and fiscal regime;

- the sector’s contribution to the economy, including employment;
- license registers and allocations;
- beneficial ownership of companies;
- production data;
- information on state participation in extractive industries.

In Angola, in short, the publication of reports in accordance with the EITI.

Standard will help ensure that key information on the country’s extractive sector is made public—particularly regarding beneficial ownership, contracts related to extractive companies, the management of state-owned enterprises, and revenues from the sector. The disclosures required under EITI implementation may contribute to identifying corruption risks, administrative weaknesses, and areas of revenue leakage, concluded African Development Bank (2019).

Furthermore, in order to evaluate Angola’s reform efforts in the governance of natural resources, it is crucial to specify the external models used in the benchmarking process. Angola mainly draws on examples from African countries such as Botswana, Ghana, and Nigeria, along with international standards set by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). These countries were selected based on comparative criteria, including institutional stability, the effectiveness of transparency mechanisms in extractive industries, anti-corruption performance, and the capacity to transform extractive revenues into sustainable development. For instance, Botswana is known for its prudent management of diamond revenues through a transparent sovereign wealth fund; Ghana has implemented a robust legal framework for petroleum governance; and Nigeria has made significant progress in the disclosure of contracts and payments (Gillies, 2010; Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), 2021a). These models serve as benchmarks for assessing Angola’s reforms, especially in areas such as budget transparency, revenue traceability, and stakeholder engagement in decision-making processes.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a clear commitment by the Angolan government to promote more transparent and accountable management of its natural resources, notably by aligning itself with international standards such as those of

the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). However, this ambition faces several structural and institutional obstacles that undermine the implementation of reforms.

Firstly, although Angola has adopted legal instruments and policies aimed at establishing good governance, their application remains partial or even ineffective in several key sectors. This observation aligns with the findings of the [World Bank \(1992\)](#), which suggest that Sub-Saharan Africa suffers more from an implementation gap than from a lack of regulatory frameworks. In Angola's case, this results in persistent corruption, weak accountability among public managers, and limited transparency across the extractive value chain ([Transparency International, 2023](#); [IMF, 2024](#)).

Secondly, institutional mechanisms such as one-stop shops, judicial audits, and administrative simplification platforms (CIAC, BUE) deserve recognition for their modernizing potential. However, their effectiveness largely depends on the independence of oversight bodies, the competence of human resources, and, above all, sustained political will ([Batterbury & Fernando, 2006](#)). Documentary analysis reveals that although these mechanisms are structurally important, they are often implemented in a top-down manner, with little to no involvement of civil society or local communities, which are nonetheless crucial to the good governance of natural resources ([United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2018b](#)). Thirdly, Angola's adherence to the EITI is a significant step forward, but its success depends on the regularity, quality, and accessibility of published information—particularly concerning beneficial ownership, contracts, and financial flows. Yet, as the [African Development Bank \(2019\)](#) points out, the experience of EITI in other countries shows that such disclosures can sometimes be merely symbolic or incomplete. In Angola, there is a risk that EITI will be perceived as a cosmetic initiative if not accompanied by deep-rooted reforms in extractive governance.

Finally, this study confirms the existence of a well-known paradox: resource-rich countries often struggle to convert their wealth into sustainable development. Angola thus appears to be trapped in a form of “resource curse” or “Dutch disease,” despite the governance instruments it has adopted ([Lefevre, 2018](#)). Only through strong institutional anchoring, enhanced accountability, and multi-stakeholder engagement (State, private sector, civil society) can good governance benchmarking become an effective tool for transformation.

Despite the institutional reforms undertaken by the Angolan government, tangible results in the governance of natural resources remain mixed. For instance, under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Angola was admitted as a candidate country in 2009 but voluntarily withdrew in 2010, citing technical and institutional difficulties. This withdrawal sparked criticism over the country's genuine commitment to transparency in the extractive sector ([Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative \(EITI\), 2010](#)). Regarding the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published by Transparency International, Angola scored

33/100 in 2023, ranking 116th out of 180 countries, compared to 19/100 in 2012 (ranked 157th) (Transparency International, 2023). This progression suggests a relative improvement in anti-corruption efforts, but the score remains below the global average (43/100 in 2023), indicating that major challenges persist—particularly in the management of oil, diamond, and other natural resource revenues. These figures illustrate that despite some formal progress, governance mechanisms are often weakly implemented or fail to yield meaningful outcomes.

Furthermore, one of the persistent weaknesses in Angola's governance model is the limited involvement of local communities and civil society in key decision-making mechanisms. For instance, in the implementation of the national anti-corruption strategy (ENAPREC), civil society organizations have had a marginal role, mostly restricted to isolated monitoring activities by NGOs such as ADRA and Omunga. In Lunda Norte, communities living near diamond-rich zones often lack access to relevant information and are excluded from compensation negotiations and environmental consultations (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Similarly, in oil-producing Cabinda, tensions have arisen due to the absence of structured community engagement.

By contrast, countries like Ghana have institutionalized multi-stakeholder groups within their national EITI platforms, ensuring civil society participation in auditing extractive revenues. Nigeria has developed community dialogue forums in the Niger Delta to address environmental and social concerns (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), 2021b). These examples demonstrate that genuine stakeholder engagement can enhance transparency and prevent resource-related conflicts. Angola could benefit from formalizing participatory mechanisms at both local and national levels as part of its benchmarking strategy.

Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations. First, it relies exclusively on secondary data sources, which may reflect reporting biases or outdated information. Additionally, the selection of documents was limited to publicly available materials in selected databases, which may have excluded relevant but inaccessible or unpublished reports. These constraints could affect the comprehensiveness and balance of the findings. Future research would benefit from incorporating field interviews, community-based assessments, and first-hand data collection to validate and enrich the conclusions drawn here.

5. Conclusion

Our reflection on benchmarking good governance—productive best practices in the management of natural resources: The case of the Republic of Angola—had as its main objective to study how the Republic of Angola applies benchmarking of good governance and productive best practices in the management of its natural resources. This study led us to highlight the following points:

- The Republic of Angola, like other African countries endowed with natural resources, has not been spared from the phenomenon of the “resource curse”

and the Dutch Disease, which have affected the majority of countries rich in natural resource wealth.

- The main challenge these countries face no longer lies in establishing legal frameworks that provide for stricter rules on transparency and accountability within public administration structures, but rather in the lack of effective implementation. In short, the problem lies in the application of good governance principles.

As for the Republic of Angola, despite its commitment to the EITI process and other measures taken by the public administration to fight corruption and promote good governance, the government has found it necessary to accompany all its programs with judicial audits. Angola is thus at a decisive turning point: either to truly commit to reforms or to reproduce the cycle of the resource curse. Benchmarking, backed by effective good governance, can offer a favorable outcome—provided that the principles are respected and sustainably institutionalized.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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