THE ACCESS INITIATIVE (TAI)

Est. in 1999: WRI as Secretariat

NETWORK of 200+ civil society organizations in 50+ countries

MISSION: to strengthen public rights to participate in environmental decision-making through evidence-based advocacy

Photo: Flickr/CIFOR
WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY?

INFORMATION → publicly available, accessible, and relevant environmental information

PARTICIPATION → meaningful opportunities for the public to shape decisions that have environmental impacts

JUSTICE → accountability and grievance mechanisms to enforce laws and compensate for harms

Photo: Flickr/UN Photo/Tobin Jones
THE CHALLENGE

• In many countries laws are weak or absent.

• Practice lags behind the law

• Measuring progress is essential to creating change

Photo: Flickr/UN Photo/Tobin Jones
WHAT IS EDI?

75
Legal Indicators scored to create the index

24
Supplemental Practice Indicators provide key insights

NATIONAL RULES & LAWS
Relevant and legally-binding

AIR & WATER QUALITY
EXTRACTIVES
FORESTS
TERRESTRIAL BIODIVERSITY
WHY EDI?

• First of its kind
• Benchmarks to 2010 UNEP Bali Guidelines
• Limits subjectivity with clear scoring criteria
• Makes data easily accessible
• Engages governments and stakeholders
KEY FINDINGS

• Top ten countries: Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, United State (tied), South Africa (tied), United Kingdom, Hungary, Bulgaria, Panama and Colombia

• Better legal protection in Aarhus Convention countries

• Wealth is important, but it’s not the only factor
KEY FINDINGS

• Countries that have good laws tend to have more observable good practices

• Countries scored best on access to information laws, while public participation lagged behind

• 73% of EDI countries environmental cases are heard in court.
NOTES ON METHODS

• Scores provisional until August 31st

• Federal vs. Unitary

• Practice indicators not comprehensive
NEXT STEPS

• Expanding indicators on practice and implementation
• Add at least 30 more countries (100+); focus on LDCs
• Convene governments and civil society in select countries to prioritize improvements
• Build new partnerships to expand reach and impact