

IM4DC

Action Research Report

SUMMARY

Researchers:

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School/Centre:

Centre for Exploration Targeting
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University/Institutions:

The University of Western Australia

Key themes:

Governance and Regulation
Operational Effectiveness

Key countries:

Africa and General Application

Completion:

April 2015

Research aims:

This project sought to investigate barriers to corporate data delivery to African national archives from the regulation, technical implementation and compliance perspectives, through:

- face to face interviews and questionnaires
- a review of existing publications
- a country-level case study

For further information on this action research:

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Company Geodata: Growing African National Archives via Transfer of Corporate Geoscience Data

The African Mining Vision identifies knowledge infrastructure, and resources data in particular, as an imperative for countries to improve their negotiating positions when establishing extractive agreements and also for deals on agricultural terrains, forestry, fisheries and tourism. Precompetitive geoscientific data when made available to mineral exploration companies has been shown to generate inward investment ranging from ratios of 3:1 to 20:1 for a number of international jurisdictions. However, for many African countries, the extent of geodata transferral from industry to government is variable and company geodata is largely missing from the geological infrastructure. When a company ceases activity on a permit, if the datasets they have acquired during exploration are not transferred to the government custodians of geoscientific data, this represents a missed opportunity for growing the national archive.

This report is based on an investigation involving face to face interviews with company, geological survey and university personnel supported by a questionnaire completed by 35 respondents from these three groups, existing publications and a combined total of 15 years' experience working in Africa in the minerals sector.

A cumulative approach is proposed to improve the transfer of company geodata to relevant government agencies and to achieve the following objectives:

- Raise the level of trust between companies and government departments
- Demonstrate that these two stakeholders have a shared interest in building national geoscience archives
- Provide a pathway towards a fast-tracked implementation allowing company data to begin to flow to government archives
- Outline a data management and delivery system at a scale that is sustainable for government departments in the initial stages of work-flow establishment and that would receive the maximum level of support from exploration companies, as it addresses their principal needs.

The approach would allow early implementation via transfer of company data from relinquished permits as a first stage towards an extended company geoscientific data management initiative. It would allow transfer, archiving and maintenance systems to be established and proven first, before addressing the need to ensure data confidentiality over active permits, which the survey showed was of real concern to companies in jurisdictions where data management systems are poorly monitored or non-existent.