

Africa Integrity Indicators – Project Summary & Methodology

Global Integrity

Global Integrity supports progress toward open and accountable governance in countries and communities around the world. We believe that citizens have the right to shape the rules that govern their lives. Moreover, when governance is open and citizens are part of the process, societies are better able to address challenges such as corruption, poor service delivery, environmental degradation, and persistent poverty. Open and accountable governance is fundamental to inclusive and sustainable development.

Our approach is informed by three key insights: First, progress toward more open governance is inherently political; second, actors within a given governance context play the primary role in driving governance reform; and third, there is no universal blueprint for governance reform. We put these insights into practice by conducting research and generating data, by supporting the work of country-level reformers, and by influencing global conversations on open governance.

Utilizing its award-winning original methodology and a global network of on-the-ground journalists, and experts, Global Integrity generates actionable and action-worthy data and qualitative research. Typical Global Integrity assessments provide detailed data and reporting on the mechanisms in place to prevent abuses of power and promote public integrity at the national, local, and sector levels. Using a blend of social science and journalism, in-country teams of independent researchers, academics and journalists report on the *de jure* as well as *de facto* reality of corruption and governance. Since July 2018, the methodology was changed to focus on the practical implementation and enforcement of legal and policy frameworks across various categories, including safety and the rule of law, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development.

Measuring the “in practice” implementation is key in our effort to produce actionable governance data that help governments, citizens and civil society understand and evaluate the *status quo* and identify intervention points for subsequent reform efforts.

Scope of Africa Integrity Indicators

In 2012, Global Integrity embarked on a multi-year collaboration with the Mo Ibrahim foundation to generate the Africa Integrity Indicators (AII), which assesses key social, economic, political and anti-corruption mechanisms at the national level in all 54 African countries. Global Integrity staff recruit and manage teams of in-country contributors across the continent to generate original governance data on an annual basis. 2021-2022 will be the 10th round of AII research.

The questionnaire has 54 indicators and is divided into two main sections: Transparency and Accountability, and Social Development.

The Transparency and Accountability section consists of 30 indicators examining issues divided in the thematic areas of rule of law, accountability, elections, public management integrity, civil service integrity, and access to information. The indicators look into transparency of the public procurement process, media freedom, asset disclosure requirements, independence of the judiciary, and conflict of interest laws, among others. The Social Development section consists of 24 indicators about gender, rights, welfare, rural sector, business environment, health, education and civil registration.

Indicators in both sections take into account *de facto* realities of implementation of legal and policy measures in each country. They are scored by in-country researchers following an evidence-based investigation methodology. The resultant data points are then reviewed blindly by a panel of peer reviewers, drawing on the expertise of a mix of in-country experts as well as outside experts.

Periods of Study

The period of study for each research cycle is 12 months, and will span from September 2020 to September 2021 for Round 10 of the Africa Integrity Indicators. The research is completed approximately 4-6 months after the close of the period of study.

Evidence-based Expert Assessment Methodology

Global Integrity's evidence-based expert assessments require researchers (typically journalists, academics or civil society experts) to compile and document evidence to inform and support their score choices for each of the indicators. Rather than relying on experiences or pre-existing perceptions by experts, the strength of Global Integrity's methodology is that it requires a variety of sources of information to be reviewed and documented (including legal and scholarly reviews, interviews with experts, and reviews of media stories) to substantiate the score choice.

Personality, language, and culture can all affect the interpretation of a particular indicator and the score assigned to it. To minimize this effect and to maximize inter-coder reliability, Global Integrity provides researchers and peer reviewers with scoring criteria for every single indicator. The scoring criteria anchor each indicator to a predefined set of criteria. In essence, the scoring criteria guide the researcher and the peer reviewer by suggesting, "If you see X on the ground, score this indicator in the following way."

For "in practice" indicators, scoring criteria are provided for 100, 50 and 0 – the researchers also have the option to score 75 or 25, whenever the higher or lower defined criteria don't accurately represent the research's findings.

Researchers must provide a fact-based rationale to substantiate the score chosen for each indicator. They must also provide at least three references to substantiate their rationale. Evidence can take on the form of interviews conducted with knowledgeable domain experts, a website link to information provided by government or civil society, a relevant report produced within the period of study, published news articles, or a widely acknowledged and regularly-read blog produced by a subject matter expert.

A lead in-country researcher conducts the initial field research (including documentary review and interviews) and scores the indicators. Global Integrity staff rigorously verify sources and perform fact checking and quality control together with the researcher prior to declaring the research as final. After completion of the draft research, the indicators follow a double-blind peer-review process, in which a peer reviewer (a similarly qualified in-country domain expert) carefully scrutinizes and amends, supplements and enhances the research. The scorecard is also reviewed by functional reviewers, who are to focus on development-related indicators (welfare, gender, labor, education, infrastructure, human rights and others).

The double-blind nature of the peer review process guarantees feedback free of considerations associated with who collected the data and scored the indicators, and to avoid a peer-influenced consensus. Until the public release of the indicators, the researchers and peer reviewers are unaware of the identities of other members of the country team. Peer review comments are published transparently alongside the original data, offering reads an alternative perspective on the indicators.

Along with the scoring criteria, researchers and peer reviewers are also provided with a series of guidelines and definitions they should adhere to when performing their research and coding or reviewing the data (in essence, a codebook). These guidelines also provide guidance about appropriate sources and about how to score complex indicators in certain scenarios.

Data Aggregation

For the purpose of producing a country's aggregate scorecard, a simple aggregation method is used. After the researcher scores each indicator and Global Integrity, with the help of peer reviewers, conducts its rigorous quality control, each indicator score is then averaged within its parent category. The category score is in turn averaged with the other category scores to average and produce an overall country score.

For the Africa Integrity Indicators, the aggregation method will only be applied to the Transparency & Accountability section. The Social Development portion of the questionnaire was designed to feed the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) in areas not covered by the secondary data sources it utilizes therefore, does not attempt to be a comprehensive assessment by itself. Because this portion only includes a small number of questions per each topic area, we will not provide category or sub-category scores for this part.

Feedback period

Beginning 2016, Global Integrity put in place a new policy ([here](#)) that offers potential data users and interested parties a two-month window to review freshly completed research and to provide corrective information. The resultant data points have been rigorously reviewed by the Global Integrity team and a panel of peer reviewers and we are confident of its high quality. At the same time, the two-month window offers the opportunity to identify any substantive, remaining inaccuracies. During this time, the completed research is made available to the public on the Africa Integrity Indicators website and is considered provisional.

Country Teams

As with all its projects, Global Integrity has hired independent country experts with a significant track record in civil society, journalism or academia. Following Global Integrity's traditional policy, none of the researchers has worked directly for the country's government during the past three years. Researchers undergo a recruitment process that may include an interview and completion of an exercise (consisting on answering a sample question) to gauge their interest and capacity to adhere to the research method, including the need to employ journalistic skills to conduct interviews, obtain updated information, and produce a comprehensive quality assessment within the project's timeline. In each country, Global Integrity also contracts peer reviewers with a similar background who will review and enhance the initial research where needed (as described above).

The teams are coordinated from Washington DC via the Internet and phone.

Global Integrity is dedicated not only to producing high-quality data, but ensuring that it is as useful as possible for reformers (both inside and outside of government) around the world. If you're interested in working with this data to identify opportunities to support open governance efforts in your country, or would like to join the team as a researcher or reviewer, please contact us at aII@globalintegrity.org. To access our data, visit our project website at <http://africaintegrityindicators.org/>.