

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

ACEP RADAR

FEBRUARY 2025

In this edition, we revisit a 2021 report on the Tema Oil Refinery as discussions on its revamp resurface under Ghana's new government. We also share insights on the withdrawal of the ENI-Springfield unitization deal, highlights from the Investing in African Mining Indaba in Cape Town, and ACEP's recognition as a key partner in the Ford Foundation's justice-centered energy transition initiative in Africa, among other key updates.

Report Highlight

Plugging the Two-Decade Leak: Strategic Options for the Sustainability of Tema Oil Refinery

For decades, the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) has been at the centre of Ghana's petroleum industry, yet its financial and operational struggles have continuously raised concerns. With a refining capacity of 45,000 barrels per stream day, TOR was established in 1963 as a tolling facility, processing crude oil for multinational companies. However, its transition in 1996 to procuring its own crude and marketing refined products exposed it to greater market and political risks. As a result, TOR has accumulated massive debts, suffered from inefficiencies, and operated far below its potential.

In *Plugging the Two-Decade Leak: Strategic Options for the Sustainability of Tema Oil Refinery*, ACEP identified the root causes of TOR's persistent financial troubles. Chief

among them are excessive political interference, weak corporate governance, and operational inefficiencies. Despite multiple government interventions and financial support, TOR remains heavily indebted and struggles to meet its obligations. These persistent challenges have fueled concerns about its viability and whether continued public support is justified.

The Government of Ghana has renewed its commitment to reviving TOR, announcing plans to attract strategic investors to manage and finance its operations. This aligns with ACEP's recommendations that sustainable solutions must involve significant governance reforms and private-sector participation, given the uncertainties surrounding political behaviour. A phased

approach—beginning with partial privatization and progressing toward full state exit—would allow for a gradual transition while testing the effectiveness of private-sector involvement. Privatization also presents an opportunity to offset part of TOR's debt and halt further accumulation.

However, without tackling the core governance and accountability challenges that have long plagued TOR, such initiatives risk becoming yet another cycle of ineffective intervention. Sustainable reform requires more than financial investment; it demands a fundamental restructuring of TOR's management to ensure transparency, efficiency, and long-term viability.

Reviving TOR is not just about injecting funds; it requires a fundamental shift in how the refinery is managed. Ghanaians have already shouldered decades of financial burden through levies and bailouts. If the government's latest intervention is to succeed, it must prioritize transparency, efficiency, and accountability. The lessons from past failures must inform current decisions to ensure that TOR becomes a competitive and self-sustaining refinery rather than a perpetual liability.

As discussions on TOR's future continue, ACEP remains committed to advocating for policies that promote sustainable energy sector governance. The time for decisive action is now; Ghana cannot afford another decade of inefficiencies at its premier oil refinery.



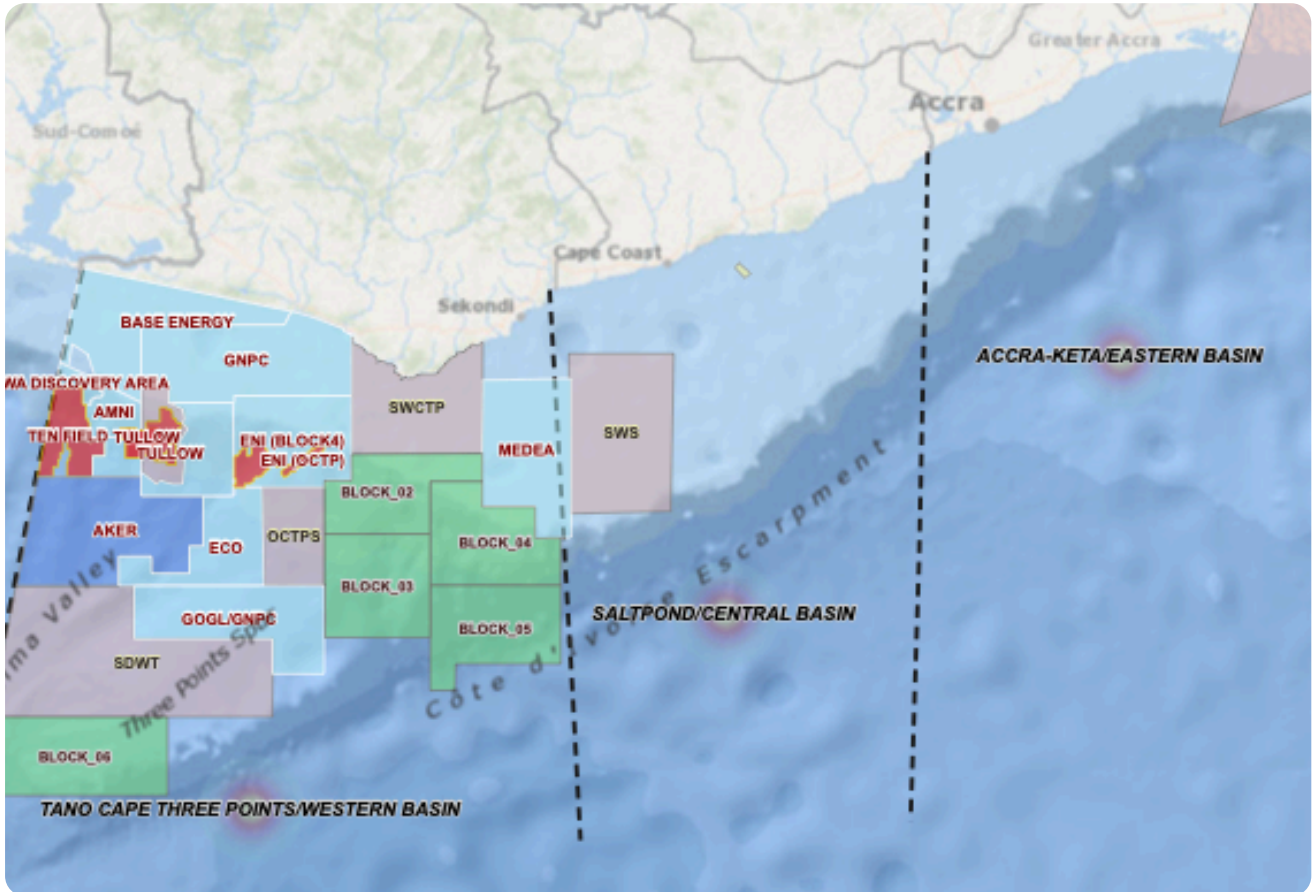
Plugging The Two-Decade Leak: Strategic Options for the Sustainability of Tema Oil Refinery

This report examines the operationalization of the TOR Debt Recovery Levy and the reasons accounting for the unsustainable growth of the TOR debt. Specifically, the authors assess the governance breaches of the Act, debt accumulation, and managerial and operational inefficiencies of TOR and provide recommendations on the strategic options for lifting the burden of TOR off the shoulders of the Ghanaian public.

Read report [here](#)

Insights & Perspectives

On Restoring Investor Confidence in Ghana's Oil and Gas Sector



Ghana's Offshore Activity Map

Source: Petroleum Commission of Ghana

In 2020, the government of Ghana directed ENI and Springfield to unitize their oil fields, Sankofa (operated by ENI) and Afina (discovered by Springfield), citing geological continuity. However, ENI contested the directive, arguing there was no clear technical basis for unitization. The matter was taken to international arbitration, where the tribunal ruled that the government had misinterpreted its laws in issuing the directive.

Although the tribunal ruled in ENI's favor, the previous administration upheld the directive, prolonging uncertainty in the oil sector. In a shift from this stance, the newly sworn-in government has now withdrawn the unitization directive, a move widely seen as an effort to restore investor confidence in Ghana's upstream petroleum sector.

With this policy reversal, ACEP's Executive Director, Benjamin Boakyee, reflects on the implications for Ghana's oil and gas industry. He writes:



Benjamin Boakye
Executive Director, ACEP

Following the arbitration ruling and the government's subsequent stance, it seemed that only a dramatic change of heart—akin to a Damascus moment—could alter the political leadership's position.

The same clear-cut ruling, which found that the government of Ghana had misinterpreted its own laws in issuing the directive, was paradoxically presented as a victory by the Attorney General at the time.

The then Attorney General argued that the OCTP partners had sought nearly \$1 billion in damages—a claim that was contingent on Ghana enforcing the directive—therefore, he won the case. Since the court ultimately blocked the directive, the claim never materialized.

The government's decision to keep the directive in place to allow further work on the Afina field was, in itself, an acknowledgment that the scientific basis for unitization remained inconclusive.

The oil industry operates on commercial principles; it is not like the government budget, where misappropriations and abuse can simply be absorbed by the public. Private sector players have the ability to resist any attempt to impose narrow interests through state power.

This should serve as a crucial lesson for local businesses looking to enter the upstream sector: risks are real, and political backing alone is not a sufficient safeguard.

The government must maintain its role as a fair regulator while remaining committed to developing capable local companies that can navigate the sector's inherent risks.

To compensate for the poor judgment that led to inflated expectations for Springfield, the government could consider suspending the relinquishment requirement on WCTP Block 2 for an additional three years. This would give Springfield time to engage industry players on purely commercial terms to optimize the block's potential.

Encouragingly, the industry is already responding, with companies reactivating sustenance capital and revising investment plans to unlock upstream potential.

Credit must go to the President of Ghana, H.E. John Dramani Mahama; Hon. John Jinapor, the Minister of Energy; Dr. Dominic Ayine, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice; and the Acting CEO of the Petroleum Commission, Ms. Emeafa Hardcastle, for prioritizing national interest at such a scale.

Program/Event Highlight

ACEP's Participation at the 2025 Mining Indaba



One of the sessions featuring ACEP's Policy Lead for Climate Change & Energy Transition, Dr. Charles Gyamfi Ofori

ACEP made its presence felt at the 2025 Mining Indaba, engaging in high-level discussions, policy dialogues, and strategic collaborations to advance Africa's energy transition and responsible mineral governance.

Dr. Charles Gyamfi Ofori, ACEP's Policy Lead for Climate Change and Energy Transition, joined a distinguished panel at the African Minerals Development Center (AMDC) Industry Intel Session on *Advancing Green Technologies, Energy, and Information in Africa* to explore Africa's role in global energy transition mineral supply chains. Discussions focused on regional collaboration, policy innovation, and strategies for positioning Africa as a leader in renewable energy manufacturing and infrastructure development.

During the Intergovernmental Summit Track 1 session on *Climate Imperative – Prioritising a Continental Just Energy Transition*, Benjamin Boakye engaged with industry leaders and policymakers on leveraging mining to advance Africa's energy ambitions. The conversation examined strategies for strengthening mineral value chains, driving green industrialization, and navigating the impact of foreign environmental policies on Africa's development priorities.

ACEP collaborated with the ECOWAS Federation of Chamber of Mines and the Ghana Chamber of Mines at a side event on *Expanding Africa's Mining Support Services through an Industrial Policy Mindset*, emphasizing the need for an industrial framework that fosters value addition, local participation, and sustainable economic development in Africa's mining sector. The discussion underscored the role of mining support services in building resilient local economies.

At a high-level dialogue on *Financing Africa's Transition Minerals: Unlocking Value Chains for Sustainable Growth*, hosted on the sidelines of the Indaba by the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), the Minerals Commission of Ghana, and ACEP, experts examined innovative financing mechanisms and policy reforms to unlock the full economic potential of Africa's transition minerals. The conversation highlighted strategies for strengthening value chains, promoting in-country value addition, and creating an enabling environment for responsible and sustainable investment.

Eliasu Ali represented ACEP at the Alternative Mining Indaba side session on *the Africa Mining Vision and Africa Minerals Governance Framework – Are Governments on the Right Track?* in a critical discussion on the challenges and opportunities in implementing the Africa Mining Vision (AMV). The session explored best practices, policy recommendations, and the urgent need for stronger national adoption and corporate accountability to ensure Africa's mineral wealth benefits its people.

Maybel Acquaye contributed to the *Whose Future Counts? Unpacking Livelihoods in the Energy Transition* idea generation session, where participants examined the social and economic implications of the energy transition on communities reliant on traditional energy sectors. The discussion emphasized the need for inclusive policies that safeguard livelihoods, promote equity, and support sustainable development.

Maybel Acquaye also participated in the *China-Africa Dialogue on Green Minerals: Giving a Voice to the Voiceless*. The session provided a platform to discuss the impact of Chinese investment in Africa's critical minerals sector and explore opportunities to strengthen Africa-China partnerships for sustainable resource governance.

ACEP's presence at the 2025 Mining Indaba reinforced our commitment to advancing transparent and equitable resource governance, promoting responsible mining practices, and ensuring that Africa maximizes the benefits of its mineral wealth. Through strategic engagements and policy dialogues, we continue to advocate for a just energy transition and sustainable economic development across the continent.



Program/Event Highlight

Strengthening Methane Management in Ghana's Oil and Gas Sector



Facilitators and Participants at the Training

Methane, a potent greenhouse gas with over 80 times the warming potential of carbon dioxide over a 20-year period, has seen an alarming rise in emissions globally. Despite its significant impact on climate change, methane management in Ghana's oil and gas sector has been hindered by weak monitoring systems, limited mitigation strategies, and inadequate regulatory enforcement. To bridge these gaps, ACEP convened a specialized capacity-building training to equip key stakeholders with the necessary knowledge and skills to drive effective methane management, advocacy, and policy influence.

The two-day training, held at ACEP's Conference Facility, brought together government agencies, industry professionals, civil society organizations, and researchers to engage in expert-led discussions on methane's role in climate change, best practices for detection and mitigation, and Ghana's Methane Roadmap Action Plan (MRAP). Participants explored financing mechanisms for methane abatement, investment risk assessments, and international climate finance opportunities. A dedicated practical session focused on stakeholder engagement strategies, advocacy campaign development, and policy implementation tools.

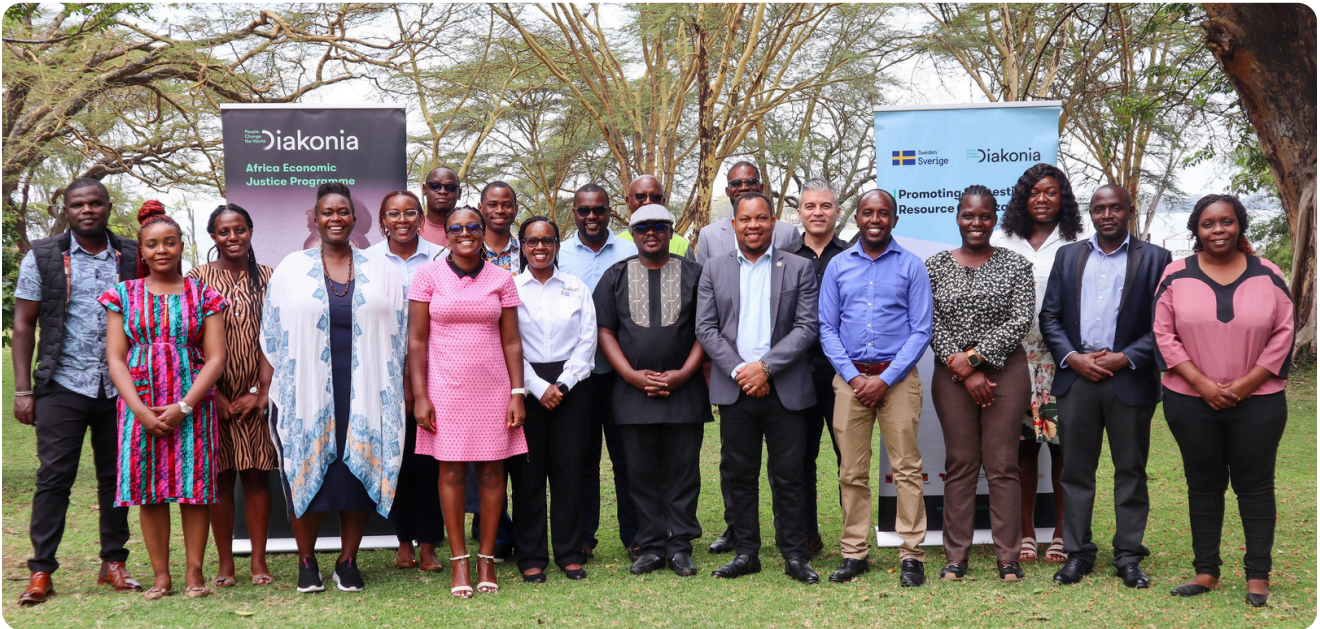
The training reinforced the need for stronger policies, enhanced monitoring, and investment in methane mitigation technologies to align Ghana's oil and gas sector with global climate targets. As Ghana refines its approach to methane governance, ACEP remains committed to advancing research, policy advocacy, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure effective methane reduction strategies that balance climate action with sustainable energy development.

Read more on methane management in Africa's oil-producing nations: [Report](#)



News

Strengthening Domestic Resource Mobilization: ACEP at the Diakonia Africa Review Meeting



Partners of the Domestic Resource Mobilization Programme

The constrained funding environment serves as a wake-up call for African nations to accelerate domestic resource mobilization (DRM) efforts. As part of the Domestic Resource Mobilization Programme under Diakonia Africa's Africa Economic Justice (AEJ) Programme, ACEP recently participated in a review meeting in Kenya. This meeting convened key partners working to enhance DRM implementation across the continent.

During the session, ACEP provided updates on its initiatives in Liberia, where it collaborates with both state and non-state actors to promote Beneficial Ownership (BO) Disclosures. A key highlight of the discussion was the commitment of the Liberian BO Administration Committee to facilitate the live publication of the country's BO register as soon as practicable. This step is crucial in enhancing corporate transparency and addressing financial leakages in the extractive sector.

ACEP remains dedicated to working alongside partners to seal revenue leakages and overcome structural barriers hindering effective DRM. Through engagement in initiatives like this, ACEP contributes to broader economic justice objectives, ensuring that African nations can mobilize and manage resources effectively to finance development priorities.

News

Ford Foundation Partners with ACEP to Advance Just Energy Transitions in Africa

The Ford Foundation has launched a \$5.7 million initiative to support Africa's just energy transition, bringing together key partners to ensure an inclusive and equitable transition process. This five-year initiative recognizes that Africa's energy transition must prioritize social, economic, and environmental justice, focusing on inclusion, transparency, and rights protection.

As part of this groundbreaking effort, the Africa Centre for Energy Policy (ACEP) has been selected as one of the five key partners working to address critical challenges in Africa's extractive governance space. Based in Ghana, ACEP will contribute its expertise in economic transformation and sustainable development to shape policy, advocacy, and stakeholder engagement in the energy transition discourse.

According to the Ford Foundation, successful just energy transitions must be “worker-centered and gender-transformative”, prioritizing historically excluded communities. This initiative will support broad-based coalitions that bring together civil society organizations, policymakers, labour unions, and the private sector to drive inclusive, low-carbon development in Africa.

Other partners in this initiative include the Coalition for Human Rights in Development (CHRD), the African Climate Foundation (ACF), the International Trade Union Confederation Just Transition Center (JTC), and ENDA Energie.

ACEP remains committed to championing energy policies that foster economic growth while ensuring justice and sustainability in Africa's energy landscape.

Call for Applications

Africa Climate Academy 2025



ACEP invites applications for the Africa Climate Academy, a unique and intensive training program designed for African policymakers, media professionals, civil society leaders, and academics who are committed to tackling climate change and advancing sustainable energy solutions.

The Africa Climate Academy aims to challenge prevailing narratives on energy transition, climate action, and resource governance in Africa. Through engaging discussions, expert-led training, and interactive workshops, participants will gain practical insights and strategies to drive climate-responsive policies and initiatives. The Academy seeks to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to promote transparency, accountability, and innovative solutions in climate governance.

The Academy is open to professionals from all African countries, including:

- Policymakers: Government officials involved in energy, environment, and economic planning.
- Media Professionals: Journalists and editors covering energy, environment, and climate issues.
- Civil Society Leaders: Advocates and activists driving climate action and sustainable development.
- Academics: Researchers and educators focusing on climate change, energy policy, and sustainability.

This is a fully funded program, with travel, accommodation, and meals covered. Interested persons should apply by 30th March, 2025.

Coming Up

What's Ahead at ACEP in March

March 11, 2025**BREAKFAST MEETING ON PUBLIC FINANCE MANAGEMENT AND ANTI-CORRUPTION ISSUES IN GHANA**

A stakeholder conversation on challenges in public finance management and how the new media space can drive accountability.

March 19–21, 2025**3RD AFRICAN FORUM ON MINING IN ADDIS ABABA**

ACEP will participate in the 3rd African Forum on Mining to discuss 16 years of the African Mining Vision; its achievements, challenges, and opportunities.

March 12, 2025**MEDIA TRAINING ON CHINESE LENDING STRATEGY AND GHANA'S DEBT SUSTAINABILITY**

A session designed to equip journalists with insights into China's lending strategy and its impact on Ghana's debt sustainability.

March 20–21, 2025**TRAINING ON EFFECTIVE METHANE MANAGEMENT IN ANGOLA'S OIL AND GAS SECTOR**

This training will equip key stakeholders in Angola's oil gas sector with insights into methane emissions, detection, mitigation, and policies.

March 13 – 14**TWO-DAY TRAINING: INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING ON ANTI-CORRUPTION IN GHANA**

A workshop to equip student journalists at UniMAC-IJ with essential investigative reporting skills to tackle corruption.

March 24, 2025**CAMPUS RALLY & LAUNCH OF RESOURCE GOVERNANCE CAMPUS HUB - UENR**

Empowering students with the knowledge, skills and aptitude to advocate for sustainable and inclusive utilization of Ghana's resources.



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ACEP is a thought leader in Africa's energy and extractives governance space, working towards improving economic transformation and inclusive sustainable development. We contribute to developing alternative and innovative policy interventions through high-quality research, analysis, and advocacy in Africa's energy and extractives sector.