

**SERIES** ATAF POLICY BRIEF

# UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL TAXATION FOR AFRICA: LESSONS FROM THE ATAF DATABANK

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**AFRICAN TAX  
ADMINISTRATION FORUM**

**FORUM SUR  
L'ADMINISTRATION  
FISCALE AFRICAINE**

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### ABOUT ATAF

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The African Tax Administration Forum is an organization that was established by African revenue authorities in 2009 to improve the performance of tax administrations in Africa. Now in its 11th year of existence, ATAF has positioned itself as Africa's homegrown solution to improving revenue collection, advancing the role of taxation in governance and state-building and providing a voice for the continent on international tax issues. The tax administrations of 40 countries in Africa are members of ATAF, i.e. 74% of tax administrations on the continent, making it the premier body on tax matters on the continent. Two countries, Mali and Somalia, were the latest to join the organization, in 2020. ATAF believes that better tax administration will enhance economic growth, increase its citizens' accountability and more effectively mobilize domestic resources.



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# Introduction

The African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) launched its flagship annual publication, titled *African Tax Outlook (ATO)*, in 2016. Since then, it has served as a reference point on continental tax data that provides practical, comparative, descriptive and analytical work on tax matters (ATAF, 2020). The ATO assesses and compares data from an increasing number of African countries (currently 37 ATO countries, see list of countries in the appendix) against indicators in five broad categories: tax bases, tax structure,

revenue performance, tax administration and taxpayer service. The publication also analyses environmental data specifically disaggregated by environmental taxes, such as pollution tax, resource tax, energy tax and transportation tax across participating countries that provide this data. The purpose of this brief is to analyse the information on environmental tax data from the ATAF Databank<sup>1</sup> and provide recommendations. It also briefly touches upon the definition, importance and categories of environmental tax.



1. The ATAF Databank is a synopsis of the ATO cross-country dataset. It consists of a harmonized set of national-level information and revenue statistics for 37 African countries covering the period 2010-2020. It was launched on 24 February 2021 and can be accessed at <https://ato.ataf-tax.org/atafdatabank/>.