

The Republic of Ghana

Geography

Ghana is a country located on the Gulf of Guinea, only a few degrees north of the Equator, therefore giving it a warm climate. The Greenwich Meridian also passes through the city of Tema Ghana, so it is said that Ghana is geographically closer to the "center" of the world than any other country. Côte d'Ivoire is located to the west of Ghana while Burkina Faso and Togo are located to its north and east respectively. The coastline is mostly a low, sandy shore backed by plains and scrub and intersected by several rivers and streams. A tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extends northward from the shore. North of this belt, the land is covered by low bush, park-like savannah, and grassy plains. The climate is tropical. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry (see Dahomey Gap); the southwest corner, hot and humid; and the north, hot and dry. Lake Volta, the world's largest artificial lake, extends through large portions of eastern Ghana.

Government: Ghana was created as a parliamentary democracy. The 1992 constitution divides powers among a president, parliament, cabinet, Council of State, and an independent judiciary. The Government is elected by universal suffrage.

For more information visit: www.ghanaweb.com

Administrative Divisions: There are ten administrative regions which are divided into 110 districts, each with its own District Assembly. Below districts are various types of councils, including 58 town or area councils, 108 zonal councils, and 626 area councils and 16,000 unit committees on the lowest level.

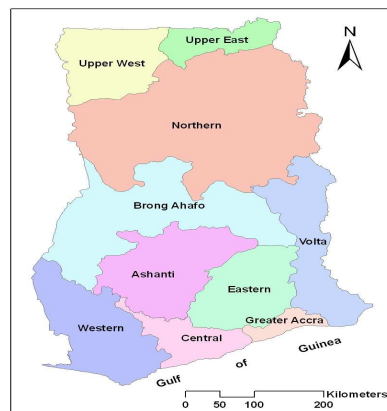


Figure 1: Map of Ghana: showing the administrative divisions

Accra City Profile



Independence arch in Accra

Population and expected growth (2015 horizon):

Accra is the capital city of Ghana and covers an area of about 170 km². It has an estimated population of about 1.66 million (Ghana Statistical Services, 2002). The population growth rate is estimated at 3.4 % per annum in the city itself but up to 10% in its peri-urban districts (Ghana Statistical Services, 2002; Drechsel et al., 2004). Accra has a very youthful population with 56% of the population being under the age of 24 years.

Ecosystem and climate:

Accra lies within the coastal-savanna zone with low annual rainfall averaging 810 mm distributed over less than 80 days. The rainfall pattern of the town is bimodal with the major season falling between the months of March and June, and a minor rainy season around October. The mean annual rainfall is about 730 mm. Mean temperatures vary from 24 °C in August to 27 °C in March.

Main characteristics of the city:

Accra is the most urbanized city in Ghana. The urbanization has been mainly due to development factors. Paramount to these factors has been the urban-biased development strategies adopted by policy makers since the colonial era. Thus, the concentration of industry, manufacturing, commerce, business, culture, education, political and administrative functions in the conurbation (Accra-Tema conurbation) since independence till date continue to attract migrants, not only from all over the country but also from neighboring countries. This has contributed a great deal to urbanization of Accra. As a metropolitan area and coastal city, the predominant primary economic activity is marine fishing and urban agriculture.

The Odaw River is the main river that flows through Accra. Accra's main water supply is from the Weiija Dam on Densu stream with some water being pumped from the Akosombo dam in the Volta River.

Most important types of Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture (UPA)

There are two major categories of UPA in Accra which takes place in and around homes (About 50-70ha distributed over 80,000 tiny backyards), and open-space farming. In Accra, about 680 ha are under maize, 47ha under vegetables (rain-fed) and 251 ha under mixed cereal- vegetable systems. Irrigated vegetable production takes place on a 100 ha land area in the dry season. Other components of UPA are livestock, poultry, floriculture and mushroom.

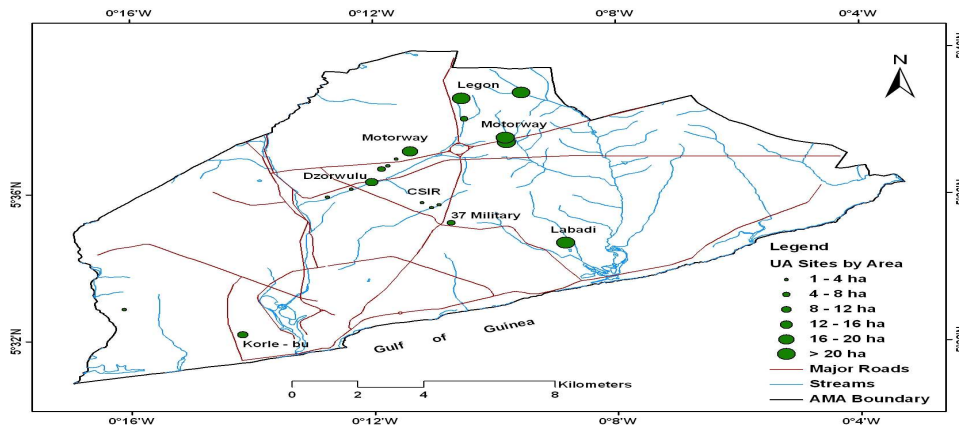


Figure 2 Urban Agriculture sites in Accra Metropolis (Source: Gerald, IWMI Ghana, 2008)

Tenure arrangements on urban open spaces vary. In general, no open space farmer owns the land cultivated and hardly do they pay any fee. Most of these lands are owned by the government, Municipal authorities or individuals. In urban Accra, there are about 1000 vegetable farmers of whom 60% produce exotic and 40% indigenous local or traditional vegetables. Some of the modern or exotic crops cultivated are lettuce, cabbage, spring onions, cucumber, green pepper and cauliflower, while the more traditional crops are tomatoes, okra, garden eggs (aubergine) and hot pepper. Plot sizes under UPA cultivation range between 0.01-0.02 ha per farmer, and reach 20 ha in peri-urban areas.



Households farmers use treated pipe-borne water and grey water (water from bathrooms and kitchens) for irrigation, and open-space farmers use drain water, streams/rivers, pipe borne water

and hand-dug wells, (in decreasing order of access); peri-urban farmers rely mainly on rainfall and streams/rivers.

Challenges faced by urban farming in the city

In spite of the benefits of UPA, such as employment and access to food in Accra, it is faced with challenges which tend to limit its acceptability and constrains its development. These are mainly: limited access to land and problem of insecurity even where there is access; limited access to water resources; contamination of crops from poor quality water and improper use of pesticides; lack of institutional framework for UPA; and the lack of organization among stakeholders to facilitate advocacy and lobbying for consideration of UPA by policy makers. The UPA related issues in Accra currently fall under the jurisdiction of different levels and types of authorities (e.g. Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), Town and Country Planning, Forestry, Parks and Gardens, Public health department, Urban planning, etc).



Although there is no specific policy on UPA, smallholder agriculture development is highlighted almost in all major policies, programs and projects such as Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy, Modernization of the Capital City and Decentralization Policy. This has not yet enhanced the development of UPA but there are opportunities for better integration of UPA in the overall city development policies and programs and this is being explored.

Development perspective

The team in Accra has developed a strategic action plan for UPA in Accra in which it has defined policy issues and strategies to consider specific UPA areas: policy and legislative support for UPA; education and public awareness on UPA, and urban food safety towards positive perception of UPA; capacity building for UPA Farmer Associations; land tenure and enterprise development and key stakeholders in UPA; quality assurance and safety; post harvest handling and marketing. The pilot project being implemented by the AWGUPA drew its policy issues from this strategic Accra city action plan. [Read more on the strategic action plan](#)