



Gulf of Guinea Northern Regions Social Cohesion (SOCO) Project

DELIVERING LOCALLY-LED CLIMATE ACTION IN NORTHERN GHANA

Climate Change Policy and Priorities in Ghana

Ghana, as a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has demonstrated a commitment to addressing climate change risks in the context of national development. To fulfil its international obligations and recognize the critical importance of climate change, the country has taken various actions to integrate Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation into its developmental strategies. Several key initiatives have been undertaken, including the preparation of the National Climate Change Policy, National Climate Change Master Plan, National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Adaptation Communications to the UNFCCC, and an Updated Nationally Determined Contribution (2020-2030).

Recognizing that effective adaptation strategies must consider local conditions and sensitivities; Ghana's National Climate Change Master Plan emphasizes

the importance of context-specific approaches. The plan proposes various measures to enhance climate resilience, including increasing the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate-related risks, raising public awareness on climate change adaptation, and providing skills training to ensure preparedness in the face of climate change impacts. Moreover, the plan emphasizes the importance of climate-proofing infrastructure to withstand extreme climatic conditions.

By developing and implementing these comprehensive strategies, Ghana aims to better manage the impacts of climate change on its people, ecosystems, and economy. Integrating climate change considerations into national policies and development plans is crucial for building a sustainable and resilient future for the country. Through its proactive approach and commitment to local context, Ghana is positioning itself to tackle climate change effectively and contribute to global efforts in addressing this urgent and complex challenge.



GHANA SOCO PROJECT— DELIVERING LOCALLY LED CLIMATE ACTION IN NORTHERN GHANA

About the Ghana SOCO Project

The Ghana SOCO project is a World Bank supported initiative that was approved on March 31, 2022.

The implementation of the project is spearheaded by the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization, and Rural Development (MLGDRD).

The project covers 48 districts, encompassing five regions in the north (Northern, Savannah, Upper East, Upper West, Northeast), as well as Oti region.

These beneficiary Regions, Districts and Cluster of communities were carefully selected based on a vulnerability index, critical of which is exposure to climate risk, poverty and deprivation, proximity to border and security risk. The SOCO Project is expected to reduce the vulnerability posed especially by the climate-security nexus.

The primary objective of this Project is to enhance regional collaboration and bolster the socioeconomic and climate resilience of communities in the beneficiary districts.

The SOCO Project aims to foster sustainable development and empower local communities to effectively identify and address the challenges posed by climate change and promote inclusive growth. The project's underlying concept revolves around addressing fragility, conflict, and violence intensified by climate change. As such, climate change considerations have been integrated into every aspect of the project.

SOCO Project's Approach for Delivering Locally Led Climate Action (LLCA)

The Ghana SOCO project's locally led climate action approach builds on lessons and the recommendations of the World Bank's Ghana Country Climate and Development Report, issued in October 2022. This approach recognizes that communities possess valuable knowledge about their ecosystems and are directly exposed to climate change impacts, making them essential actors in crafting effective and sustainable solutions. The project's approach to locally led climate action in Northern Ghana is focused on the following four areas:

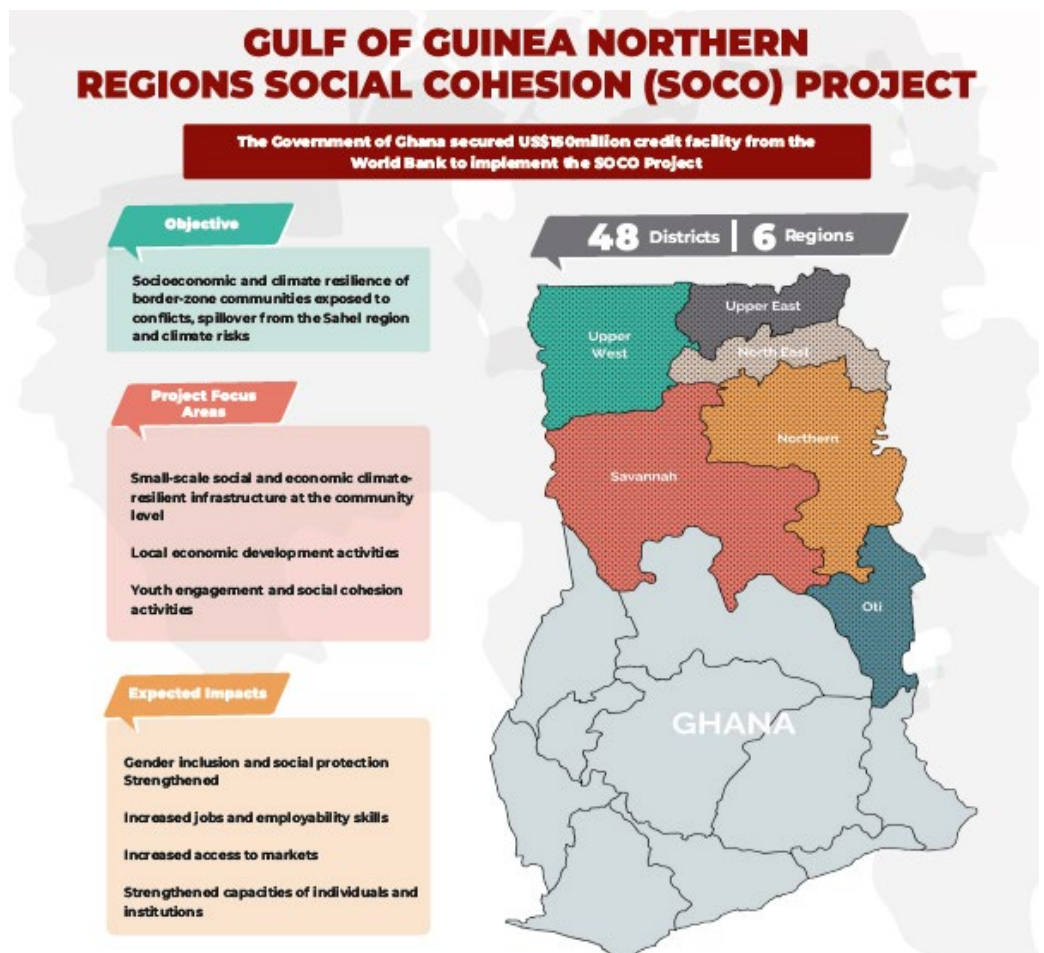


Figure 1: Overview of the Ghana SOCO Project



Figure 2: SOCO Project's Approach to Locally Led Climate Action

1. Community and local government led approach to climate action:

The SOCO project follows a community and local development approach, which leverages the existing local governance structure for its implementation. The project represents a comprehensive and community-centered approach to tackling the multifaceted developmental challenges which are exacerbated by climate change in the beneficiary regions. Through the integration of climate change considerations and emphasis on local governance, the project strives to build resilience, promote sustainable development, and foster peace and stability in vulnerable communities.

The project is designed and implemented based on the needs and priorities of the local communities. Promoting locally led climate action is about empowering communities to take charge of their own sustainable development and resilience-building efforts. It's crucial to listen to, and give voice to the communities, consider local knowledge, and work together in a collaborative and culturally sensitive manner. The SOCO Project also seeks to promote the use of nature-based approaches to building resilience of these vulnerable communities.

Here's step-by-step strategy that the project is expected to follow:

Step 1: Community Engagement and Needs Assessment:

- ✓ Engage with local communities, traditional leaders, and stakeholders to understand their perspectives, needs, and priorities related to climate change impacts.
- ✓ Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the most pressing developmental needs and opportunities for climate action in each cluster¹ of communities.

Locally led climate action refers to the efforts and initiatives undertaken by communities and local stakeholders to address climate change and its impacts on their environment and livelihoods.

¹ The SOCO Project covers 217 clusters in 2023 with more than 1,500 communities across 48 districts in Northern Ghana.

Step 2: Capacity Building: Climate Education and Awareness:

- ✓ Develop education and communication materials and establish community platforms to raise awareness about climate change, its impacts on local livelihoods, and simple adaptation and mitigation measures (climate smart practices)
- ✓ Educate community members on early warning systems and disaster preparedness and management.
- ✓ Utilize local languages, traditional communication channels, and community gatherings to effectively communicate climate information in all educational/capacity building/awareness programs organized at the community level.
- ✓ Use digital tools to share climate information to foster preparedness especially against climate induced disaster.

Step 3: Empowering Local Champions:

- ✓ Identify and support local climate champions who can serve as advocates and leaders in promoting climate action within the SOCO clusters/communities.

Step 4: Clusters/community led Climate Action Plans:

- ✓ Facilitate participatory climate action planning at the cluster/community level. Involve cluster/community level committees in decision-making processes to design and prioritize climate smart sub-projects that align with their needs.
- ✓ Integrate the cluster/community level climate action plans with the local government plans.

Step 5: Access to Climate Finance and Resources to local governments:

- ✓ Facilitate access to climate finance, grants, and resources to the local governments (MMDAs) to support the implementation of community-led climate actions including infrastructure subproject and local economic development activities.

Step 6: Collaboration and Partnerships:

- ✓ Foster partnerships with development partners, local NGOs, government agencies, academic institutions, and private sector organizations to leverage expertise, resources, and networks.
- ✓ Promote multi-stakeholder collaborations to enhance the impact of climate actions/ initiatives.

Step 7: Monitoring and Evaluation:

- ✓ Establish a digital app and digital data fellows' program to provide a robust monitoring and evaluation support to assess the progress and effectiveness of climate resilient sub-projects.
- ✓ Involve community members and local CSOs in the monitoring process to ensure transparency and accountability.

Step 8: Knowledge Sharing and Replication:

- ✓ Facilitate knowledge sharing among different SOCO clusters/communities in Northern Ghana to promote replication of successful climate initiatives.
- ✓ Encourage peer-to-peer learning and exchange visits between clusters/communities.

Step 9: Recognition and Incentives:

- ✓ Recognize and celebrate the efforts of local governments, communities and individuals who demonstrate outstanding commitment to climate-smart practices and actions.

Step 10: Policy Advocacy:

- ✓ Advocate for policies and regulations that support and incentivize locally led climate action.
- ✓ Engage with policymakers to ensure community perspectives including the most vulnerable are integrated into climate policies.

2. Promoting climate resilient public infrastructure in target clusters/communities

The Project has a large sub-component (US\$ 84 million) that focuses on supporting climate-resilient public infrastructure sub-projects in beneficiary clusters/communities.

The Project aims to ensure that the infrastructure sub-projects selected by the communities are climate-resilient, capable of withstanding current and future climate shocks, and avoid maladaptation.

Climate change considerations serve as a key criterion for sub-project selection, prioritizing initiatives that reduce vulnerability to climate-related shocks.

The Project has prepared and shared "Guidelines for Integrating Climate Change into the Design of Sub-Projects" with all participating Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs).



Figure 3: SOCO Project's Process for the Planning and Implementation of Climate Resilient Infrastructure Sub-projects

The participatory and climate-conscious approach, involving multiple stakeholders, prioritizes resilient sub-projects to benefit the participating communities.

By involving Community Project Implementation Committees (CPICs), Community Facilitators (CFs), District Assembly (DA) representatives, and community members in climate risk assessments, the project raises awareness about the need to consider climatic factors during sub-project planning and implementation.

District-level implementation agencies, including District Assemblies, Urban, Zonal, Town, and Area Councils (UZTACs), and Unit Committees, take responsibility for delivering climate-resilient assets, such as water reservoirs, which seek to enhance community resilience and foster sustainable solutions.

The Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) ensure that proposed sub-projects would not exacerbate climate-induced vulnerabilities, reinforcing the project's commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience.

3. Fostering climate-smart local economic development in target clusters/communities

Climate smart local economic development is an integrated approach that intertwines economic growth and development strategies with climate change mitigation and adaptation measures at the local level.

The SOCO Project demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting jobs and local economic development (LED) within beneficiary districts.

By supporting the operationalization of the National Local Economic Development Policy and piloting a transformational LED approach in selected districts, the project aims to unlock the potential for sustainable growth in Northern Ghana.

Recognizing the pressing challenges posed by climate change on local economies in Northern Ghana, especially on agriculture, the SOCO Project acknowledges the profound impacts of climate change and endeavors to find practical solutions. It emphasizes the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the enhancement of climate resilience, promoting climate-smart agricultural practices, the creation of green jobs, investment in green infrastructure, the promotion of environmentally friendly practices as vital components of economic development, and fostering public-private partnerships to harness resources and expertise in advancing climate smart economic initiatives.

Through such comprehensive efforts, the Project seeks to foster a more sustainable and resilient local economy in Northern Ghana.

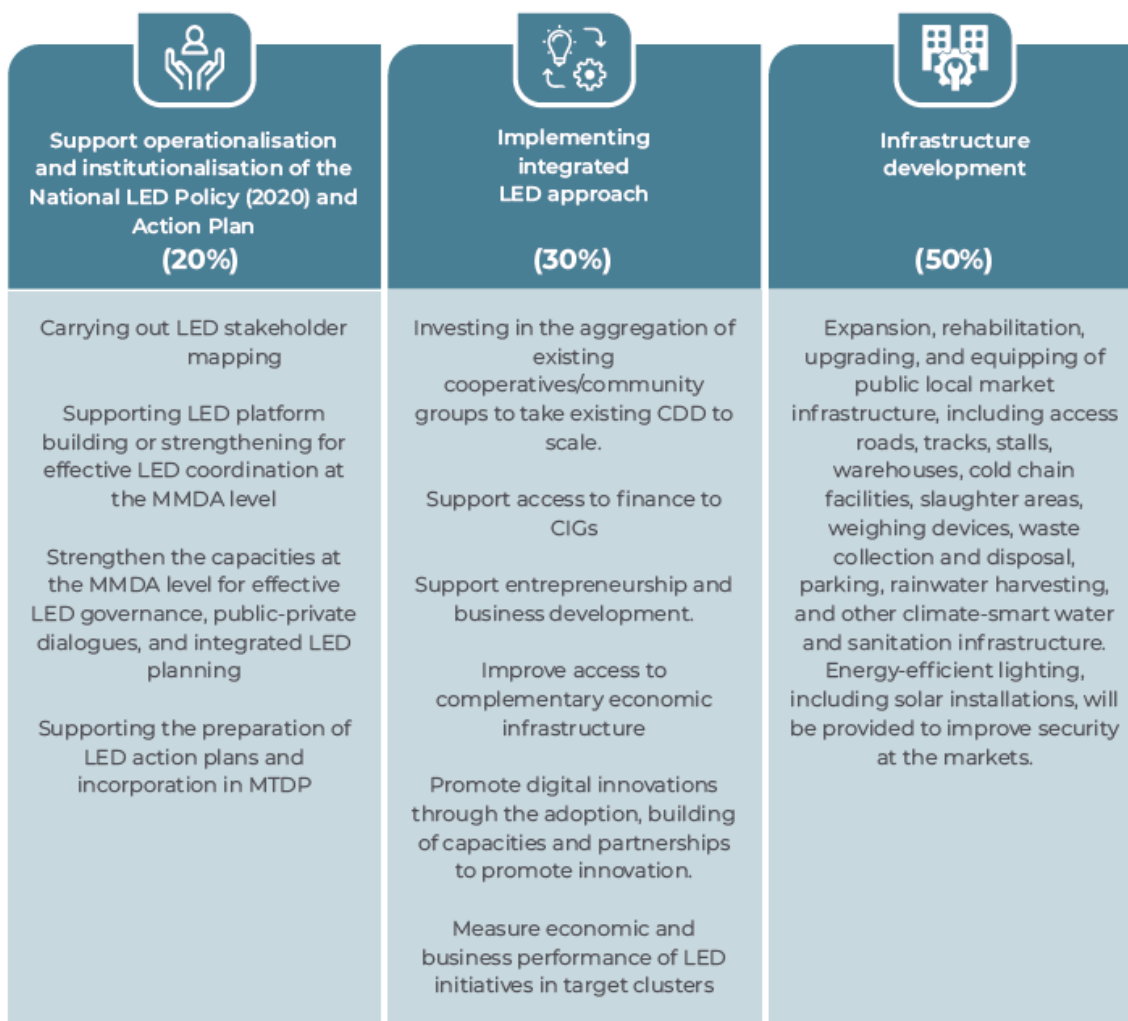


Figure 4: SOCO Project's Climate Smart Local Economic Development Sub-Component

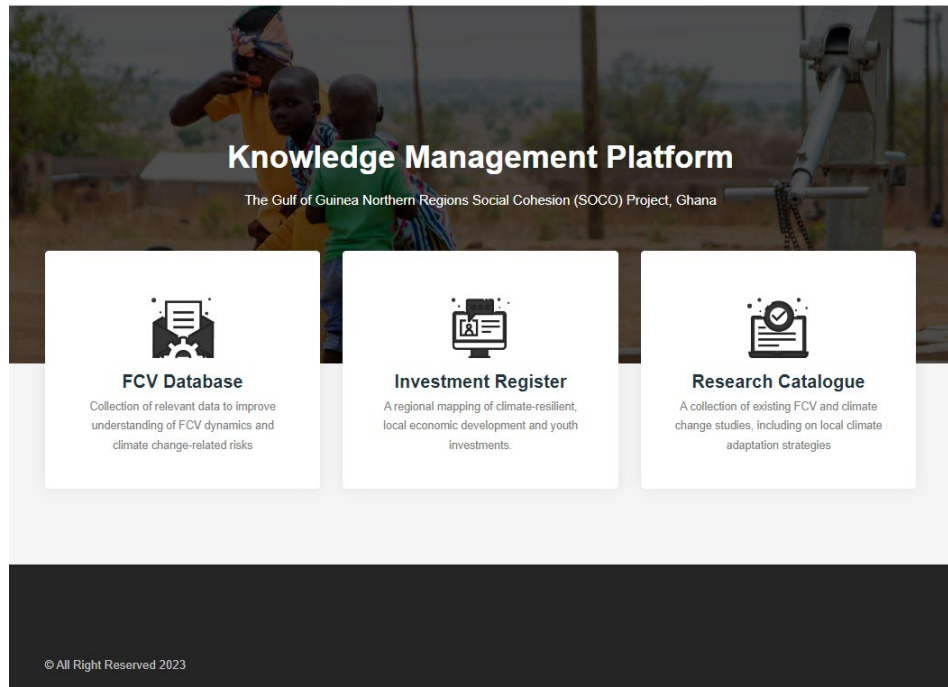


Figure 5: SOCO Project's Digital Knowledge Management Platform

4. Using data and digital innovations to accelerate the locally led climate action:

The SOCO Project is partnering with the local universities to engage university students as digital data fellows to collect climate data from target communities using a LLCA App.

This application is being developed to collect and analyse data and feedback specific to climate change from the SOCO communities on an annual basis to inform locally led climate action.

The data collected through the LLCA app will be made available on SOCO Project's digital Knowledge Management Platform (KMP) and will be accessible to various stakeholders working on climate change in Northern Ghana. This data will be analysed to understand local climate trends and identify patterns of climate change impacts in the local communities.

In addition, the SOCO Project's CDD app will be used to provide a robust monitoring and evaluation support to assess the progress and effectiveness of climate resilient activities supported by the Project.

Conclusion

Locally led climate action in Northern Ghana exemplifies the importance of adopting bottom-up approaches in addressing climate change, by tapping into local knowledge, nature-based approaches, and empowering communities. It is expected that the SOCO Project will foster sustainable and all-encompassing solutions to the region's climate-related challenges and serve as a blueprint for delivering climate-resilient development and communities in the face of global climate challenges.

To learn more, please visit the Ghana SOCO Website:

<https://soco.gov.gh/>