

GOOD GOVERNANCE AFRICA



MINI REPORT

MAKING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (LED) WORK IN GHANA

An extract from the GGA-WA Publication titled "Economic Development Pathways for Local Area Development



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FORWARD

The Good Governance Africa (GGA) is a not-for-profit research and advocacy based institution dedicated to using good governance principles to support the growth and effective governance of development initiatives on the African continent. The aim is to alleviate poverty and improve lives of the good people of Africa through advocacy and fact-based dialogues that could shape policy reforms. The West Africa Centre based in Accra – Ghana, is one of many Centres strategically opened to facilitate the coordination of timeous interventions to achieve growth and fair governance across Africa.

The GGA-West Africa Centre commits to enhancing good governance principles in critical areas such as education, land and property rights, local governance and decentralisation, transparent governance and anti-corruption fight amongst others. Since its establishment in 2015, the Centre has partnered relevant institutions in the public and private sectors to conduct research and debate critical issues as well as advocate for improvements in the lives of the marginalised and vulnerable in society particularly in Ghana with planned future interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

Under its work in the local governance and decentralisation sector, the GGA-WA Centre commits to assisting metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs) to find practical solutions to local problems. As the highest development authorities in our local areas under the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the MMDAs have been handed the responsibility to coordinate development initiatives at the district level and ensure growth and prosperity of their people. With the transfer of power and personnel from the central government institutions under the local government and decentralisation policy of the country, the MMDAs have received a boost in the performance of their mandate within the last three decades.

In spite of the gains made since the adoption of the decentralisation system of governance in Ghana about 3 decades ago, local level development still lags behind.

Local economic development (LED) initiatives promoted by successive governments since independents some 63 years ago continue to yield minimal results. Some have blamed this situation on the centrally designed nature of LED initiatives and others on the failure of MMDAs to create the enabling environment for local enterprises to grow and be sustained. The GGA-WA Centre strongly believes a good understanding of the concepts and principles on LED is needed by all stakeholders. There is the need to review what has been done so far by the country to enable MMDAs chart a new course of action for the districts in terms of expanding their economies.

This publication is a follow-up from pilot LED trainings for district level officials and other stakeholders in the Greater Accra and Western Regions of Ghana. This is a 'Mini Report' carved out of another GGA publication titled "Economic Development Pathways for Local Area Development". The Mini Report is targeted at LED stakeholders that require summarised information on the processes and alternative courses of policy actions.

Tina Serwaa Asante-Apeatu Executive Director, GGA-WA Centre

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GGA-WA is also particularly grateful to all selected district officials from the greater Accra Region of Ghana for availing themselves for the LED trainings and actively sharing the LED experiences from their districts. Your inputs contributed to the write up of this report and the report titled "Economic Development Pathways for Local Area Development". The districts being acknowledged are as follows; Ledzokuku Municipal Assembly (LEKMA) Adentan Municipal Assembly (AdMA) Tema Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) Ashaiman Municipal Assembly (ASHMA) Ningo-Prampram District Assembly (NiPDA) Ayawaso East Municipal Assembly (AEMA) Ablekuma Central Municipal Assembly (AEMA) Ga East Municipal Assembly (GEMA) Ga West Municipal Assembly (GWMA)

To the staff and representatives of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD and the Greater Accra Regional Coordinating Council (GARCC) who came to support the trainings, the GGA-WA Centre remains appreciative of your continuous support in our joint resolve to enhance capacities of our local authorities. It is the hope of the Centre that the sustained momentum in the development of the capacities of these actors will trickle down to ensure that the communities in the various districts are given the best services that they deserve.

1. Introduction

ocal Economic Development (LED) currently, has no unified definition and development practitioners, international institutions and researchers have • diverse perspectives on LED. The different operational definitions on LED are influenced by the entities unique approach to LED. Globally, some organisations such as the United Nations describe LED as a locally-owned, bottom up process by which local stakeholders from the public and private sector and civil society work together to support sustainable economic development (UN-Habitat, 2016). Whiles the International Labour Organisation (ILO) also views LED as a participatory development process that ultimately leads to decent work (ILO, 2006). Researcher and development practitioner, Bartik (2003), explained that LED is about local capacity building that strengthens small and medium-sized enterprises through skills building and networking for wealth creation. Similarly, according to Trah (2004), LED is a territorial concept and part of local development or regional management, specifically aiming to stimulate the local economy to grow, compete and create more jobs, by making better use of locally available resources. Among the research community, the different perspectives on LED emerge from their distinctive disciplines.

Despite the different views on LED, they all converge on some common characteristics. These common characteristics suggest that LED is a participatory and inclusive process drawing on multiplicity of actors and stakeholders within a territorially defined area and adopts a bottom-up approach to create room for local input into governance and decision-making, and whose purpose is to build entrepreneurial capacity, improve opportunities for economic growth and the quality of life of the local citizens. LED works towards achieving multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is particularly instrumental in advancing SDG goal 11 (on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and SDG goal 8 (which aims at inclusive growth and decent work for all) (UNDP, 2015). The objectives of the LED process can be economic growth, business creation, employment generation, engendering innovation, or combinations thereof. LED is important and key to sustainable growth, poverty reduction and the elevation of indices of the wellbeing of people and the society.



Ms. Edith Wheatland, Rockland Farms, Photo: by Rockland Farm

2. Contextual Issues: Local Economic Development (LED) Challenges in Ghana

n Ghana, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) focuses on implementing LED at the local level under the authority of local governments (Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies - MMDAs) because local economies are the only "true" economies. In contrast, the national economy is an aggregation, defined as the sum of the nation's production of goods and services, for which public policies and measurement tools are very broad and high-level. However, changes in the national economy can only happen as the economies of the smaller geographic units such as cities, rural areas, and regions, change. In making LED work in Ghana, the national LED policy and operational manual was developed in 2013 to guide MMDAs in implementing LED (MLGRD, 2013). Nonetheless LED implementation in Ghana is currently faced with numerous challenges summarised under eleven categories (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Local Economic Development (LED) Challenges in Ghana

Source: Consultant Construct, 2019

As depicted in figure 1, awareness of the national local economic development policy and operational manual by key MMDAs actors and the private sector is low. There is a misunderstanding regarding even what the concept of LED is among MMDAs and who owns it (Akudugu, 2018, MLGRD, 2019). However, under the

communication strategy of the LED policy, it was intended "to disseminate and create awareness of the policy among key stakeholders and generate feedback to promote ownership and attainment of the goals, objectives and targets of the policy" (MLGRD, 2013). Clearly, awareness creation and public engagement about LED needs a lot more work than has been achieved so far.

Secondly, inadequate technical guidance from relevant institutions (NDPC, MLGRD, RCC, NBSSI among others) prevents MMDAs from working according to the national LED operational manual as well as policy content. Although the national development planning framework exists, it has not made enough provision for the promotion of LED. The national development planning frameworks have not adequately articulated LED as a key thematic area for the purpose of planning (Akudugu, 2018). Again, LED interventions are poorly mainstreamed into the Medium-Term Development Plans (MTDP). According to Akudugu (2018), the classification of LED under the "enhanced competitiveness of Ghana's private sector" is misleading. This is attributed to the fact that LED as a development strategy entails more than private sector competitiveness. Again, there is a lack of a standard set of indicators at all levels for measuring LED performance and achievement (PLATFORMA and CLGF, 2015; Akudugu, 2018).

Poor capacities of MMDAs in LED limit them in facilitating the enabling environment for private sector to create local jobs (World Bank, 2004; Akudugu, 2013). According to MMDAs, finance is a major challenge to LED implementation (Akudugu, 2018, MLGRD 2019). This is because there is no dedicated fund for LED promotion in the districts. All the available revenues sources including; the District Assembly Common Fund (DACF), the District Development Facility (DDF), and donor funds remain earmarked for mostly social interventions, rather than LED promotion. Most MMDAs saw the introduction of LED pilot programmes as a donor project and expected external funding due to the involvement of the donors (UNDP, ILO among others). The involvement of donors in LED implementation in Ghana led to the creation of LED pilot projects and established LED platforms and LED action plans in some selected MMDAs. Akudugu (2018), indicates that the LED platforms and LED action plans in the piloted MMDAs was that their implementation would affect the district's performance in accessing the DDF (Akudugu, 2018).

It is acknowledged that capacity building rather than finance is a major challenge to LED (World Bank, 2004; PLATFORMA and CLGF, 2015; Mensah et al, 2013; Akudugu, 2013; UNDP, 2011). Enhanced capacities enable alternative solutions to be devised for challenges including financial challenges. Improved capacities allow creative thinking about difficulties from political, legal, administrative, institutional and socio-economic challenges and creating ways to foster the enabling environment. It is expected that through improved capacities, local governments can stimulate development towards poverty reduction and employment generation which combine to ultimately increase internal generated revenue (IGF) to fund LED and other service obligations.

MMDAs have untapped potentials to drive LED providing varied comparative (and competitive) advantages which can be enhanced if the necessary actions are taken to tackle the bottlenecks inhibiting their success (Mensah et al, 2013). Effective and efficient use of the potentials will lead to economic growth and poverty reduction.

The national LED policy framework in 2013 was expected to guide central government on how different economic sectors will be promoted (MLGRD, 2013). Conversely, LED implementation at the district level is still faced with the absence of specific sector guidance (Akudugu, 2018). According to some researchers (Akudugu, 2018; Mensah et al, 2013) support for identified lead sectors and strategically targeting area to address unique challenges will lead to poverty reduction, employment generation and an overall economic boost to advance local economic development.

Poor nature of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) is one of the key challenges of LED implementation in Ghana (ILO, 2007; Akudugu, 2018). LED when properly implemented should create opportunities for partnership between a wide range of actors including, local private and public sector actors, national governments, and international organisations. In this regard, well-designed LED initiatives can provide access to alternative sources of financing LED.

Finally, there is a lack of a long-term perspective on LED implementation (PLATFORMA and CLGF, 2015; MLGRD 2019). It was identified that there are no long-term structural questions which determine the future of the local economy to move from short term fixes to long term issues on LED.

Imagine having to walk 12 kilometers daily to a small plot of land, to produce enough food to feed your family...Iddrisu Aboubakar, a farmer in the northern region of Ghana, has been doing this for 13 years.

To farm all year yound, they had to rely on petrol-powered pumps which they said was expansive and made farming unprofitable.

Iddrisu Aboubakar has been farming for 13 years in the dryer region of Tamalgu, Northern Ghana. source: medium.com, UNDP Africa o ensure that Local Economic Development delivers effectively in Ghana, several approaches and tools are available that could be promoted by local governments.

Capacity and Skills Development:

Higher levels of human capital are essential to a territory's development. As research has shown, there is a positive correlation between human capital and a territory's GDP per capita. Therefore the higher the human capital stock, the higher the GDP per capita. The spectrum of human capital spans technical and vocational skills, managerial and administrative acumen, information and technology capacity, creative endowments and entrepreneurship.

At the front ends of the spectrum, vocational and technical skills have been identified as an important area, as the current focus of government initiatives shows in the technical and vocational education training (TVET) schemes. However, preparing labour adequately for jobs would entail orienting training delivery to meet specific needs of local business and industry.



Source: shutterstock.com

At the other side of the spectrum, a strong entrepreneurial spirit needs to be promoted especially among the youth and disadvantaged groups, which engenders job creation ventures by individuals and partnerships that are willing to take more risks in anticipation of higher returns.

Therefore, to ensure economic vitality and long run economic prosperity, MMDAs

must find means to effectively harness the human capital and make use of skills building organisations and higher learning institutions.

Increasing human capital

Given the importance of human capital to the performance of regional economies, what can regions do to increase their human capital? Recent research suggests that a region's colleges and universities can enhance local human capital levels in two important ways.

First, if newly minted graduates remain in the area, they directly raise a region's human capital stock. However, skilled people are highly mobile and may not remain where they earn their degrees.

Second, the knowledge created by colleges and universities through research can play a key role in raising the demand for human capital in a region by helping local businesses create jobs with high human capital needs. Because of the importance of physical proximity in the transmission of knowledge and sharing of ideas, academic research activities can provide a local benefit that is anchored to the region. In this case, the increase in human capital occurs regardless of whether businesses employ local graduates or import them from elsewhere

Source: Abel, Jaison R. "Human Capital, Local Economic Development, and the Importance of Colleges and Universities." (2017). Available at https://ecommons.cornell.edu/bitstream/handle/1813/55967/Rural-August-11-draft-03.pdf?sequence=1

Supporting access to finance:

Challenges in access to funds is deemed one of the biggest obstacles by the private sector (MSMEs) in Ghana (See Figure 2), despite the existence of funds and schemes such as YES, MASLOC, EDAIF, and Venture Capital Fund.

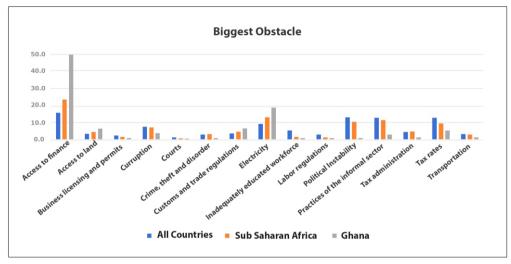


Figure 2: Obstacles faced by enterprises

Source: World Bank, Enterprise Surveys Ghana (2014)

Some of the underlying reasons include high interest rates, unattainable collateral requirements and low level of confidence in borrowers' ability to repay among others.

Firstly, supporting access to finance would require adequate training for MSMEs to better manage their finances and put in proper steps to improve their creditworthiness. Secondly, access to information on the financial systems and availability of credit could go a long way to enhance transparency and boost MSME confidence in the financial market. Furthermore, more education is needed on credit reporting to enable businesses take advantage of the credit market.

Especially for MSMEs in deprived areas, a guarantee fund could be made available when there are high-risk yet insufficient collateral. The guarantee funds could be designed as an incentive instrument. Lastly innovative financing for SMEs should be explored to enable innovative enterprises seek private funding to expand on their business operations such as captured in Fig 2.

Digital Currency	Social Impact Bonds	Development impact bonds
Mobile Money loans	Crowdfunding	Peer to peer lending
Grants	Guarantee Funds	Citizen funds
Bond issue	Angel Investing	

Table 1: Innovative Financing for MSMEs

Source: Consultant Construct (2019)

Non-financial business assistance:

Non-monetary components of business growth are equally essential to local economic development. It supports sustainability of LED interventions through value-addition services, engendering effective administrative methods and efficient use of resources. The non-financial business assistance comprises coaching and mentoring, market intelligence for inputs and outputs, and legal support, among many others. To this end, an important vehicle for non-financial business assistance is the empowerment of the Business Advisory Centres (BAC) based in the local governments. As public bodies, they are resourced enough not to burden new businesses with high charges for their services yet are able to render valuable services to them. However, it is recognised that they might not have the reach or the full range of advisory services. This creates the need to diversify the ecosystem of advisory services by enabling private actors to also participate, especially in areas where the BACs are not located.

Strong Partnership:

Both horizontal and vertical partnerships (Figure 2) are important tools for successful LED.

LED is based on a strong partnership between, government, private sector and the community. The full potentials of private public partnerships have not been fully captured in Ghana. The key constraints according to Osei-Kyei and Chan (2017) are the lack of experience and appropriate skills in PPP delivery, misallocation and incomplete transfer of risks, and high use of unsolicited proposals.

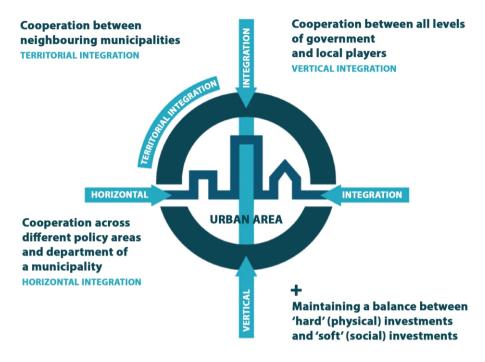
Tools to address LED Challenges



Source: eaie.org

In harnessing horizontal partnership as a tool at the grassroots level to promote LED, MMDAs need to explore cross-jurisdictional partnerships as well to harness economies of scale and benefits that otherwise would not have been available to one. Horizontal partnerships among enterprises should also ensure synergies and symbiotic relationships that contribute to environmentally sustainable principles and the economic growth of territories within which they operate. Horizontal partnership among MMDAs and the private sector should generate benefits and be able to overcome the challenges mentioned above. Vertical relationship should see greater collaboration among authorities and coordinating bodies such as the RCC. Vertical partnership should also allow MMDAs to think globally and act locally in addressing domestic issues. Moreover, this should allow MMDAs and the private sector to be able to access non-traditional sources of funds. Lastly, vertical partnership must also ensure policy coherence across national, sub-national and local governance scale.





Source: URBACT 2019

Information and communication technology: Embracing ICT as a tool for LED promotion enables innovation, particularly in contemporary times using social media technologies. Different dimensions in ICT usage can be seen when applied to actors in the LED ecosystem such as local government, private sector and enterprise operators (Refer to Table 1).

Presently ICT penetration (Figure 4a and 4b) is on the ascendency in Ghana and remains an important tool that could be harnessed to accelerate local development. As seen in Figure 4a, mobile data subscription in Ghana in 2017 increased by 89%, almost doubling from the 2013 subscription rate. Figure 4b points to a new trend where radios and cameras are losing out to mobile phones, as important tools for information dissemination.

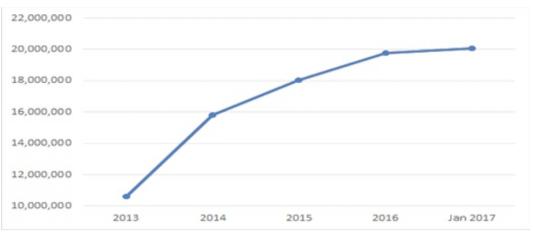


Figure 4a: Mobile Data Subscription in Ghana

Source: NCA (2017)

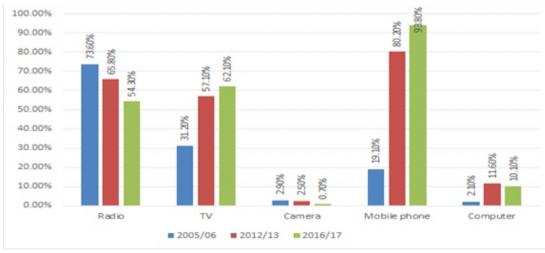


Figure 4b: ICT Tools in Households in Ghana

Source: GSS (2017)

The benefits of ICT can be fully harnessed through effective and careful planning and the realisation that ICT is now an integral part of the society with immense potential to catalyse change and accelerate the local growth.

Table 2: Potential of ICT in LED

Actor	ICT Benefits / Potential
Local Government	 E-governance and payment systems Popular consultation and participation Identification of locality challenges Database management Knowledge sharing Capacity building Revenue Enhancement Investment Promotion Skills development
Private Sector	 Knowledge sharing Promoting e-commerce and trade Information Dissemination Strengthening synergies and symbiotic relations Financial Management Digital marketing and advertising
Community	 Linkages with employment opportunities Information dissemination Networking and Social contact E-learning Recycling and reuse of resources Financial Inclusion Social accountability Real time market information Security Enhancement Resource mobilisation Community Engagement

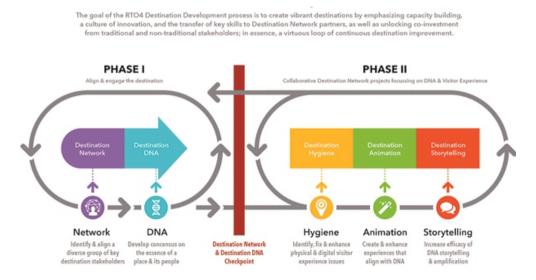
Source: Consultant Construct (2019)

Non-Financial Business Assistance:

Globalisation is a key driver of local economic development as it leads to increasing competition among local markets and places. As such, it will be important for localities with great potential to be able to broadcast their uniqueness and stand tall among the rest. Such differentiation will occur through a properly coordinated place or locality branding which capitalises on the unique attributes of the place. Global cities like London, Paris, Dubai to mention but a few have managed to carve a niche for themselves through successful place branding. Every territory in Ghana has a unique attribute that it could capitalise on to boost tourism and its associated industries.

Currently, simply touting the natural beauty of a location or highlighting the main attractions in a brochure or television commercial are not enough (Smajstrla, 2017). Globalisation has spurred the tourism sector as more countries compete promoting themselves. Increasingly, tourism is becoming integrated and intrinsically woven into the socio-economic fibre of the territory. Therefore, conscious development of the territory through direct investment would be needed to fully capture the emanating benefits exemplified by the phased framework below (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Destination Development Process



Source: RT04 (2017).

4. Policy Recommendations

To address the challenges on LED implementation in Ghana and advance local economic development, the following key interventions have been recommended for policy action. They include;

- An all-inclusive process, continuous sensitization, awareness creation on LED policy and operational guidelines, information-sharing and training of all stakeholder (MMDAs, RCC, MDA, private sector, communities among others) to facilitate effective participation in sustainable partnerships for LED implementation.
- Technical guidance on facilitating LED and creating enabling fiscal, regulatory and creative environments supportive of LED. The outcome of such guidance should lead to private sector institutions able to mobilise financial resource, technology, marketing and supply linkages to support LED initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation indicators should also be developed to measure LED programmes and projects.
- 3. Supporting training institutions focused on human capital development. There is the need to develop adequate capacity for specialized training of local government personnel in the area of LED. Capacity building on LED should be demand-driven and continuous to MSMEs and the locals. Furthermore, LED research should be linked to LED implementation to improve the sector.
- 4. Identifying champions at all levels to enhance LED. These individuals, institutions from both public and private should be knowledgeable on LED as well as have the capacity to drive LED. In addition, it is important for the local and regional government institutions to have focal points within the administration to ease LED implementation and facilitation.

- 5. Devising mechanisms that enable LED operatives to access finance and for the interlocutors to access the requisite resources to facilitate LED implementation.
- 6. Establishing knowledge-sharing platforms at all levels to enhance LED. All stakeholders should be able to access these knowledge sharing platforms to improve LED.
- 7. Identification as well as the effective and efficient use of MMDAs potential can be done through a partnership between the public, private and civil society sectors who will all contribute differently to the promotion of LED.
- 8. Facilitating guidelines for partnerships at the local level. Local governments should support the emergence of new partnership arrangements between local private sector actors, as well as local and foreign entities. In addition, local governments need help to also participate in direct partnerships with the private sector, where it is needed, to create new jobs and stimulate economic activity in their various jurisdictions.
- 9. Finally, LED must move beyond short term fixes to consider long term LED perspectives. This will prevent MMDAs from focusing only on immediate pressing and occasional issues which may not have long term impact on the local economy. Hence institutional development and capacities building should also address long-term effectiveness and the durability of LED.

5. Conclusion

Local Economic Development (LED) aims to boost local economies, promote job creation and income generation and improve governance and municipal performance. Making LED work in Ghana is based on a different approach (bottom up approach) to traditional development strategies. LED must focus on improving MMDAs territorial competitiveness and economic performance. Again, MMDA's must work to develop strategies and projects which will enable them to share the benefits of economic growth. Consequently, MMDAs should work to create the enabling environment for the private sector /MSME to operate, create job which will lead to poverty reduction through increase employment. As a result, MMDAs can increase IGF.

All stakeholders must work together to develop an understanding of their local economy and most importantly use available local resources to advance local economic development. These stakeholders at the local level including local governments, businesses, community organisations and/or NGOs need to work together to achieve sustainable outcomes in LED. Furthermore, all regionals and national level stakeholders must all play their respective roles (especially in facilitation among others) to make LED work in Ghana.

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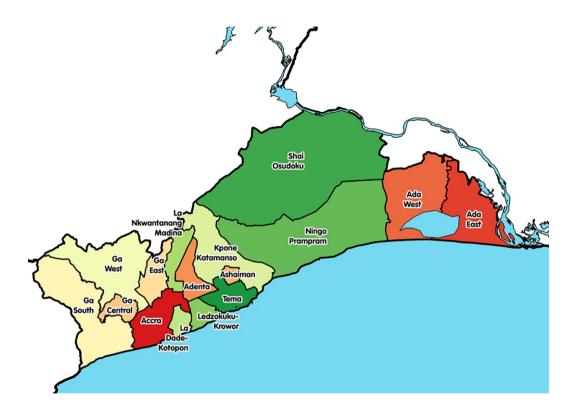
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