



Thematic Fact Sheet

RESOURCE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

PROJECT FACT SHEET

Support to Promote Community Resilience and Rights in Competing Land Use for Mining, Agriculture and Forest Utilization in Ghana

A study across two districts, twenty communities and 528 households —what it set out to do, how it was done, and what it found

ABOUT THIS FACT SHEET

This fact sheet summarises the project and the study behind RESCONI's Final Study Report, *Support to Promote Community Resilience and Rights in Competing Land Use for Mining, Agriculture and Forest Utilization in Ghana* (November 2023). Every figure is referenced to the section, table or figure it came from. Unlike RESCONI's thematic fact sheets — which each take a single subject such as water quality, health, national security or livelihoods — this sheet covers the project as a whole: its purpose, scope, districts, methodology, stakeholders, headline findings and recommendations. It is intended as a standing reference for partners, funders, district assemblies and audiences meeting the work for the first time.

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1. The project at a glance

Ghana's land supports its economy and its people at the same time. This project asked what happens where mining, farming and forestry compete for the same ground.

PROJECT SUMMARY

- **Implementer:** Resource Conservation Initiative (RESCONI), Kumasi.
- **Duration:** September 2022 to November 2023.
- **Districts:** Atwima Mponua (Ashanti Region) and Asutifi North (Ahafo Region).
- **Coverage:** 20 communities — 11 in Asutifi North, 9 in Atwima Mponua.
- **Respondents:** 528 farmers and miners, against a target of 600.
- **Objectives:** knowledge generation and community capacity building; convenings; and publications, advocacy, networking and institutional strengthening.
- **Why it matters:** agriculture, forestry and minerals together account for more than **20% of Ghana's GDP**; cocoa alone contributes **7% of GDP** and 20–25% of export earnings.

The problem the project addressed

Despite the contribution of mining, forestry and agriculture to Ghana's economy, the report opens on a warning: the country faces a serious risk of environmental catastrophe from illegal mining, illegal logging and illegal farming inside forest reserves and beyond.

Government programmes already exist — the Ghana Forest Investment Programme and the Ghana Landscape Restoration and Small-Scale Mining Project among them. RESCONI's premise was that these need concerted effort from non-state actors alongside them.

Purpose

The project set out to identify gaps in applicable policies, including the Minerals and Mining Policy (2014) and the Forest and Wildlife Policy (2012), through consultation with stakeholders and regulatory agencies — and to generate knowledge on inconsistencies and regulatory contradictions between the mining and forestry sectors.

Expected outcomes

Improved environmental governance

Resilient livelihoods

Greater awareness of community land rights

Sustainable land use

Reduced degradation

Where the study took place

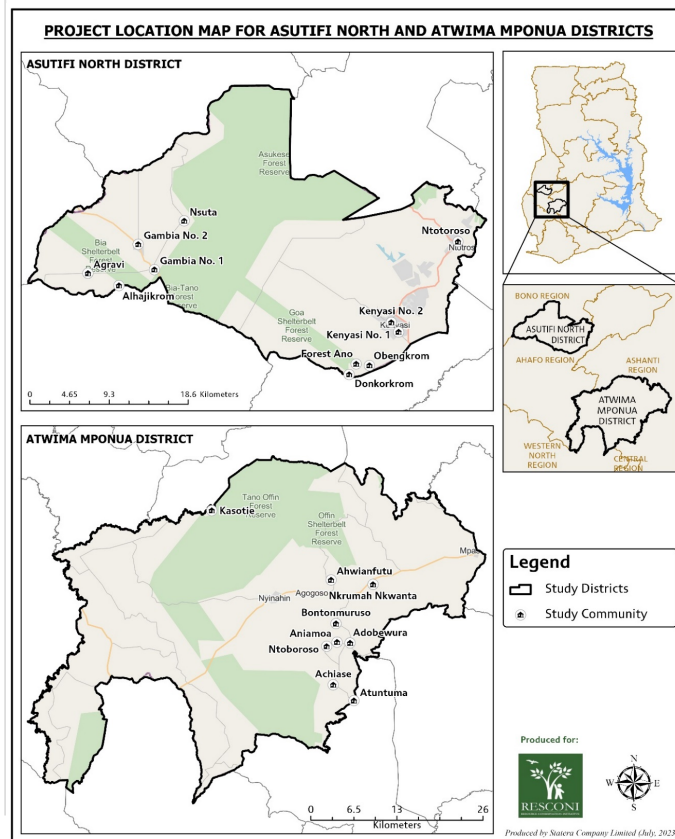


Figure 1. Project location map showing the twenty study communities in Asutifi North and Atwima Mponua Districts. **Source:** RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Figure 1.1, p. 3 (produced by Statera Company Limited, July 2023).

Who benefits

Cocoa farmers and forest-fringe communities; **women and youth**; traditional authorities; local government institutions; relevant state institutes and civil society organisations across the two project districts.

What the project does

- 1 **Community environmental education** — building understanding of the pressures on land, forest and water.
- 2 **Awareness on land and environmental rights** — so communities know what they are entitled to and can act on it.
- 3 **Multi-stakeholder dialogues and participatory land-use governance** — bringing assemblies, regulators, chiefs and residents to the same table.
- 4 **Ecosystem restoration and green alternative livelihoods** — recovering degraded land while creating income that does not depend on clearing it.
- 5 **Responsible mining advocacy** — pressing for mining that operates within the law and with community consent.
- 6 **Research and policy advocacy** — generating the evidence base and carrying it to decision-makers.

2. How the study was done

A concurrent mixed-methods case study, built on a Theory of Change, combining household survey, institutional interviews, laboratory analysis and drone observation.

The two districts compared

	Asutifi North District (AND)	Atwima Mponua District (AMD)
Region	Ahafo — one of 6 districts	Ashanti — one of 43 districts, westernmost
District capital	Kenyasi	Nyinahin
Land area	936 km ² (about 2% of Ahafo Region)	1,883.2 km ²
Settlements	5 major towns, 117 communities	4 major towns, 310 communities
Mean annual rainfall	1,250–2,000 mm	1,700–1,850 mm
Minerals	Gold — Newmont Ghana Gold Limited concession at Kenyasi Nos. 1 & 2 and Ntotroso	Gold at Ntoboroso, Bontomuruso and Anwiafutu; bauxite at Nyinahin (Block B Bauxite Project)
Forest note	Bia Tano and Bia Shelterbelt Forest Reserves; extensive cocoa farmland	Tano Offin Forest Reserve — Ghana's 4th largest Globally Significant Biodiversity Area (41,392 ha)

Table 1. District profiles. **Source:** RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Sections 1.5, 1.6 and 3.1; Table 1.1, p. 4; GSS (2020); AMDA (2017) and ANDA (2017) as cited in the report.

From desk study to national validation

DESK STUDY	RECONNAISSANCE	PRE-TEST	FIELD DATA	VALIDATION
Review of technical reports and content analysis of policy, informing the questionnaires and interview guides and the profile of each district.	Visits to both district assemblies, traditional councils, the DCE and the Nkawie and Goaso Forest Districts to select study communities.	Instruments pre-tested at Kenyase No. 1 on 14 March 2023 and revised on the feedback received.	A research lead and five officers surveyed 528 respondents on Android tablets using KoboCollect, with focus groups, durbars and site visits.	Two district workshops in October 2023 and a national workshop in November 2023 put the findings back to stakeholders.

Source: RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Sections 1.7, 1.8, 1.10 and 2.8.2.

The sample

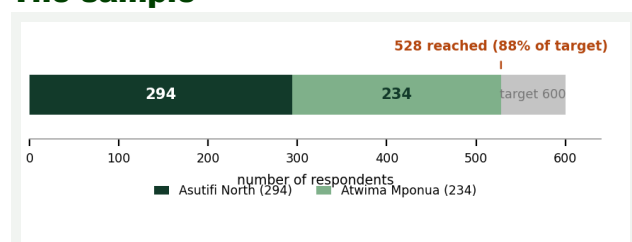


Figure 2. Respondents reached against the target of 600. **Source:** RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Section 1.9, p. 17.

Twenty communities were selected by purposive sampling, determined by the district assemblies on the basis of high prevalence of illegal mining, illegal logging and high cocoa production. Respondents were then selected by simple random sampling, at 95% confidence and 5% margin of error.

Who was surveyed

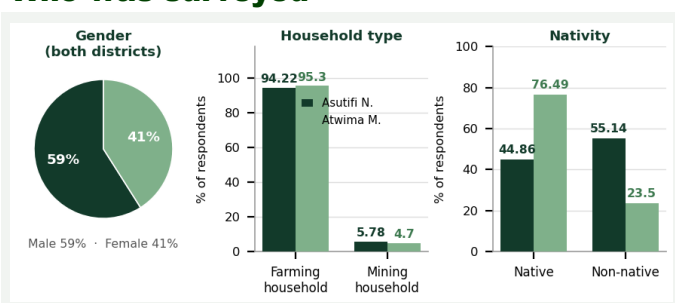


Figure 3. Respondent profile by gender, household type and nativity. **Source:** RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Figures 2.1–2.3, pp. 20–21.

Women were 41% of respondents — a deliberate design choice to strengthen women's participation in decisions on natural resource management.

Methods used

Method	Applied to
Semi-structured questionnaires	528 farmers and miners, administered on KoboCollect, capturing geo-data and photographs
Focus group discussions	Traditional councils, facilitated by District Planning Coordinating Units
Community durbars	Each of the 20 communities, to sensitise and create awareness
Key informant interviews	CHED-COCOBOD at Goaso and Nyinahin; MoFA Directorate; forest districts
Site visits and drone coverage	Illegally mined-out areas, to assess damage to forest and water
Laboratory analysis	Four water samples from Tano Offin, analysed at the KNUST Central Laboratory
Climatic data analysis	Goaso weather station data from GMet — rainfall, temperature, humidity
Land cover change analysis	Thirty-year comparison, 1990–2021

Table 2. Data collection methods. **Source:** RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Sections 1.7, 1.8, 1.10 and 3.1.

Ethics and data quality

Participation was voluntary and by expressed consent, with participants free to withdraw at any point. Names were not captured — each respondent was assigned a unique code within KoboCollect. Research officers were trained before deployment, each tablet carrying a unique identifier, and leading questions were deliberately avoided.

Limitations the study states

The study covered two districts in two regions and **must not be generalised** nationally. Access to mining respondents was difficult because mining here is predominantly illegal, and the farmer-to-miner ratio is not the actual livelihood mix.

3. What it found, and what it recommends

Headline findings

>90%	100%	6,000%	59.36%	95–99%
of respondents farm; 7% and 5% mine	of mining respondents in Atwima Mponua were illegal	above the WHO turbidity threshold in River Desiri	decline in open forest in Asutifi North, 1990–2021	say forest cover has dwindled over 30 years

Source: RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Executive Summary, p. x; Figures 2.4, 2.13 and 2.15; Section 4.1; Table 3.2, p. 59.

What the study concluded

On livelihoods. Three activities dominate — farming, illegal mining and logging. More than 90% of respondents farm, mostly smallholders producing for subsistence with some commercial cocoa. Agriculture employs not less than 60% of the district workforce.

On water. Samples from River Desiri in the Tano Offin Forest Reserve confirmed the damage illegal mining does to river systems and the health risk to downstream users — turbidity 6,000% above the WHO threshold, chromium 240% above and lead 280% above, against an undisturbed control stream in the same reserve.

On forest cover. A thirty-year land cover analysis confirmed decline across both districts, which the report reads as possibly indicating a failure of management and of the programmes intended to arrest deforestation.

On land. Interest in land given to third parties was being used for illegal small-scale mining, reducing arable land for cocoa and threatening productivity.

On climate. Increased temperature, erratic rainfall and drought negatively affected agricultural production, pointing to a need for climate-smart practices.

On what communities want. Residents called for **balanced, participatory land-use planning** — not a halt to one sector in favour of another, but a say in how the three are reconciled.

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528

communities and respondents behind every figure RESCONI publishes — with validation workshops putting the findings back to the people who gave them.

Stakeholders engaged

Category	Engaged
Public sector agencies	Forestry Commission (FSD); CHED-COCOBOD; MoFA; Minerals Commission; EPA; Ghana Police Service; Ghana Education Service; NCCE; National Investigation Bureau
District Assemblies	Asutifi North and Atwima Mponua
Traditional Authorities	Kenyase Nos. 1 & 2, Ntotroso and Gambia No. 2; Nyinahin, Nkawie, Toase and Kasotie
NGOs	A Rocha Ghana; Care International; Rights and Advocacy Network
Academia	Chemistry Department, KNUST
Communities	All 20 study communities

Table 3. Six stakeholder categories engaged during field data collection and validation. Source: RESCONI Final Study Report (2023), Table 2.3, p. 51.

What RESCONI recommends (Sections 5.1 & 5.2)

- Address competing land use within a **national land use plan** binding District Assemblies, regulators, traditional authorities and the private sector.
- Adopt the **Integrated Forestry and Mining & Management Approach (IFAMMA)** to restore degraded forestland and mined-out areas.
- Redefine **artisanal mining permits** to require the consent of Traditional Authorities before any grant.
- Invest in **leadership, capacity building and training for Traditional Authorities** with the National House of Chiefs.
- Build a **web-based reporting solution** with CSOs to identify illegal felling and mining and report it to law enforcement.
- Strengthen **inter-agency coordination** with clearly defined roles.
- Promote **sustainable farming practices** — good agricultural practices, agroecology, soil conservation, integrated pest management and organic fertilizers.

SOURCES

1. Resource Conservation Initiative (RESCONI). *Support to Promote Community Resilience and Rights in Competing Land Use for Mining, Agriculture and Forest Utilization in Ghana*— Final Study Report. Kumasi: RESCONI, November 2023. Executive Summary, pp. x–xi; Sections 1.1–1.13, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.8, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1 and 5.2; Figures 1.1 (p. 3), 1.11 (p. 14), 2.1–2.4 (pp. 20–22), 2.13 (p. 31), 2.15 (p. 34); Tables 1.1 (p. 4), 2.3 (p. 51), 3.1 and 3.2 (pp. 57, 59).
2. Project funded by the Ford Foundation. Laboratory analysis by the KNUST Central Laboratory. Mapping and land cover change analysis produced by Statera Company Limited (July 2023) with data from RMSC, KNUST and Ecometrica (Forest 2020 Project), 2022. Climatic data from the Ghana Meteorological Agency (GMet, 2023). Cocoa production data from the Ghana Cocoa Board.
3. Secondary sources cited in the source report include Creswell (2003) on mixed methods; GSS (2020, 2021, 2023); AMDA (2017) and ANDA (2017); World Bank and OECD national accounts (2022); Emmanuel et al. (2018) and Owusu et al. (2016) on mining and water quality.
4. RESCONI (2023). *Priority Actions Briefing Notes for Addressing Community Resilience and Rights in Competing Land Use*. Available at resconi.org/publication.php.