

# THE IMPACT OF CHINESE INVOLVEMENT IN SMALL-SCALE GOLD MINING IN GHANA



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## IN BRIEF

- » Small-scale mining contributes about 30% of Ghana's total gold output and provides livelihoods to large numbers of people
- » One aspect of the controversial issue of illegal mining in Ghana is the involvement of foreigners, especially Chinese companies and miners
- » Findings suggest that the involvement of Chinese miners intensified the negative impacts of small-scale mining in Ghana
- » The findings have been discussed with the Deputy Minister of Lands and Natural Resources

Small-scale mining is a significant economic activity that contributes about 30% of Ghana's total gold output and provides livelihoods to a large number of people. In Ghana, the small-scale gold mining industry has been 'reserved for Ghanaians' by law, often using rudimentary means of extraction. The last decade has seen a large increase in foreign involvement, especially from Chinese miners. This introduced a higher level of mechanisation and increased the scale of mining with consequent degradation of land and water bodies. By 2013, the participation of Chinese citizens in informal mining in Ghana had grown to such proportions, and received such adverse media coverage, that the Government of Ghana was forced to act.

This research examines the impact of Chinese involvement on small-scale gold mining in Ghana. The project explores this question by looking at Chinese involvement in two different ways and in two different geographical locations in Ghana. In assessing the impact of Chinese involvement, the study examines the effects at economic, social and political levels, both directly and indirectly.

The preliminary findings show that one consequence of mechanisation and the intensification of production has been much larger-scale environmental degradation in areas of alluvial mining. Many abandoned pits are left uncovered and become flooded, posing a danger to local residents, especially children, and to livestock. The findings show that there are serious negative environmental, economic, social, and security impacts intensified by the involvement of Chinese miners. The findings have been discussed with the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the recommendations will inform the mining policy in Ghana.