

Annual Report 2025

**A Year of Strengthening
Citizens' Voice and Accountability**

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REPORT LAUNCH

Mapping of Illicit Financial Flows Along the Supply Chain of Gold Mining in Ghana

Date: 30th January, 2025
Venue: ISODEC Office
Time: 9am

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List of Acronyms

AARDO	-	African-Asian Rural Development Organization
AfCFTA	-	African Continental Free Trade Area
AVID 2	-	Action for Voice, Influence and Inclusive Development (Phase 2)
COCOBOD	-	Ghana Cocoa Board
CSSF	-	Civil Society Strengthening Fund
DCD	-	District Coordinating Director
DCE	-	District Chief Executive
GFI	-	Global Financial Integrity
GHS	-	Ghana Cedi
IDEAs	-	International Development Economics Associates
ISODEC	-	Integrated Social Development Centre
MEAL	-	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning
MTDP	-	Medium Term Development Plan
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Appraisal
STAR	-	Strengthening Transparency, Accountability and Responsiveness (STAR Ghana Foundation)
USD	-	United States Dollar
VSLA	-	Village Savings and Loan Association
WACSI	-	West Africa Civil Society Institute



Executive Summary

In 2025, the Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) continued to promote social justice, accountable governance, and equitable access to natural resources in Ghana. The year marked the beginning of the organisation's **2025–2028 Strategic Plan**, which focuses on four priority areas: natural resource governance, economic justice, civic participation, and organisational development.

During the year, ISODEC engaged communities, civil society organisations, policymakers, and development partners through research, policy dialogue, and community outreach programmes aimed at strengthening citizen participation and promoting inclusive development.

At the community level, ISODEC facilitated participatory consultations that enabled citizens to identify key development priorities such as access to potable water, employment opportunities, improved road networks, health services, and market infrastructure. The organisation also established **18 Community Accountability Labs** and trained nearly **300 community representatives** in

participatory planning and social accountability tools.

To strengthen local economic resilience, ISODEC supported the formation of **20 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)** benefiting over **650 members**, primarily women and small-scale entrepreneurs. These groups mobilised **GHS 411,225 in savings** and issued **GHS 360,627 in loans** to support small businesses and household needs.

At the national and regional levels, ISODEC contributed to policy dialogue on natural resource governance and fiscal transparency, including organising a regional conference on equity in natural resource extraction.

Looking ahead, ISODEC will continue to strengthen citizen engagement, advance policy advocacy, and expand community-based economic initiatives to ensure that Ghana's natural resources deliver equitable benefits for its citizens.





Message from the Executive Director

A Year of Strengthening Citizens' Voice and Accountability

The year 2025 was a period of renewed commitment to strengthening citizen participation, promoting accountability, and advancing inclusive development. Across our programme areas, ISODEC worked closely with communities, civil society partners, and public institutions to ensure that citizens' voices remain central to governance and development processes.

Through initiatives that promoted participatory local governance, research and policy dialogue on natural resource management, and economic empowerment for women and vulnerable groups, we contributed to strengthening community resilience and improving engagement between citizens and decision-makers.

While governance and development challenges remain, these experiences reaffirm the importance of empowering communities

to actively participate in shaping their own development priorities. Our work continues to demonstrate that informed and organised citizens are key to building accountable institutions and equitable societies.

As we look ahead, ISODEC will continue to deepen its advocacy, research, and community empowerment initiatives while strengthening partnerships that support transparency, social justice, and sustainable development.

We remain grateful to our partners, supporters, and the communities we serve for their continued collaboration and trust.

Executive Director

Integrated Social Development Centre
(ISODEC)



About ISODEC

The Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC) is an indigenous, rights-based, non-profit policy research and advocacy organisation dedicated to promoting social justice and equitable development in Ghana and across West Africa.

ISODEC works with communities, civil society organisations, policymakers, and international partners to promote accountable governance, protect natural resources, and advance policies that improve the wellbeing of marginalised populations.

Vision

A world in which every life matters.

Mission

To work in solidarity with citizens and institutions to promote social justice, rights, and accountability in governance and development.

Strategic Objectives (2025–2028)

1. Improve just natural resource governance and fiscal transparency in Ghana and West Africa.
2. Promote access of marginalised groups to productive resources and essential social services.
3. Advocate for progressive fiscal policies and debt restructuring solutions that improve economic and social outcomes.
4. Strengthen the institutional and financial sustainability of ISODEC.



ISODEC Strategic Focus Areas

ISODEC's work is guided by strategic focus areas that respond to pressing governance, economic, and environmental challenges facing communities in Ghana and the wider West African region. Through these thematic areas, the organisation promotes social justice, accountable governance, and inclusive development by strengthening citizen participation, advancing policy reforms, and supporting community empowerment.

1. Natural Resource Governance

ISODEC promotes transparency and accountability in the management of natural resources. Through research, policy advocacy, and stakeholder dialogue, the organisation works to ensure that Ghana's mineral and extractive resources contribute to sustainable development and improved livelihoods.



At the community level, ISODEC strengthens citizen awareness and participation in decisions affecting natural resource extraction, environmental protection, and revenue management.

2. Citizen Participation and Accountable Governance

ISODEC supports democratic participation by empowering citizens to engage in governance and development planning processes. Through participatory tools, community accountability platforms, and local governance engagement, the organisation helps communities identify development priorities and advocate for responsive public services.



These initiatives strengthen dialogue between citizens and public institutions while promoting transparency and accountability in governance systems

3. Economic Empowerment and Livelihood Support

ISODEC promotes economic inclusion and community resilience by supporting initiatives that expand financial access and livelihood opportunities.

Through programmes such as Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), the organisation enables community members, particularly women to mobilise savings, access credit, and invest in small businesses. These initiatives improve household income, support entrepreneurship, and strengthen economic stability in rural communities.



4. Institutional Strengthening and Knowledge Development

ISODEC contributes to policy development and governance reforms through research, evidence-based advocacy, and knowledge sharing. The organisation produces policy-relevant studies on governance, economic justice, and development issues while engaging policymakers, civil society organisations, and development partners in dialogue.



Internally, ISODEC continues to strengthen its systems for financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and programme delivery to ensure effective and accountable implementation of its work.

Administration and Organisational Infrastructure

Staffing

The staffing structure of ISODEC remained largely stable during the year under review. However, recognising the need to strengthen its monitoring and learning systems, the organisation initiated recruitment processes toward the end of 2025 to fill the position of Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Officer.

The recruitment process is expected to enhance programme monitoring, data management, and evidence-based reporting in the coming years.

Organisational Infrastructure

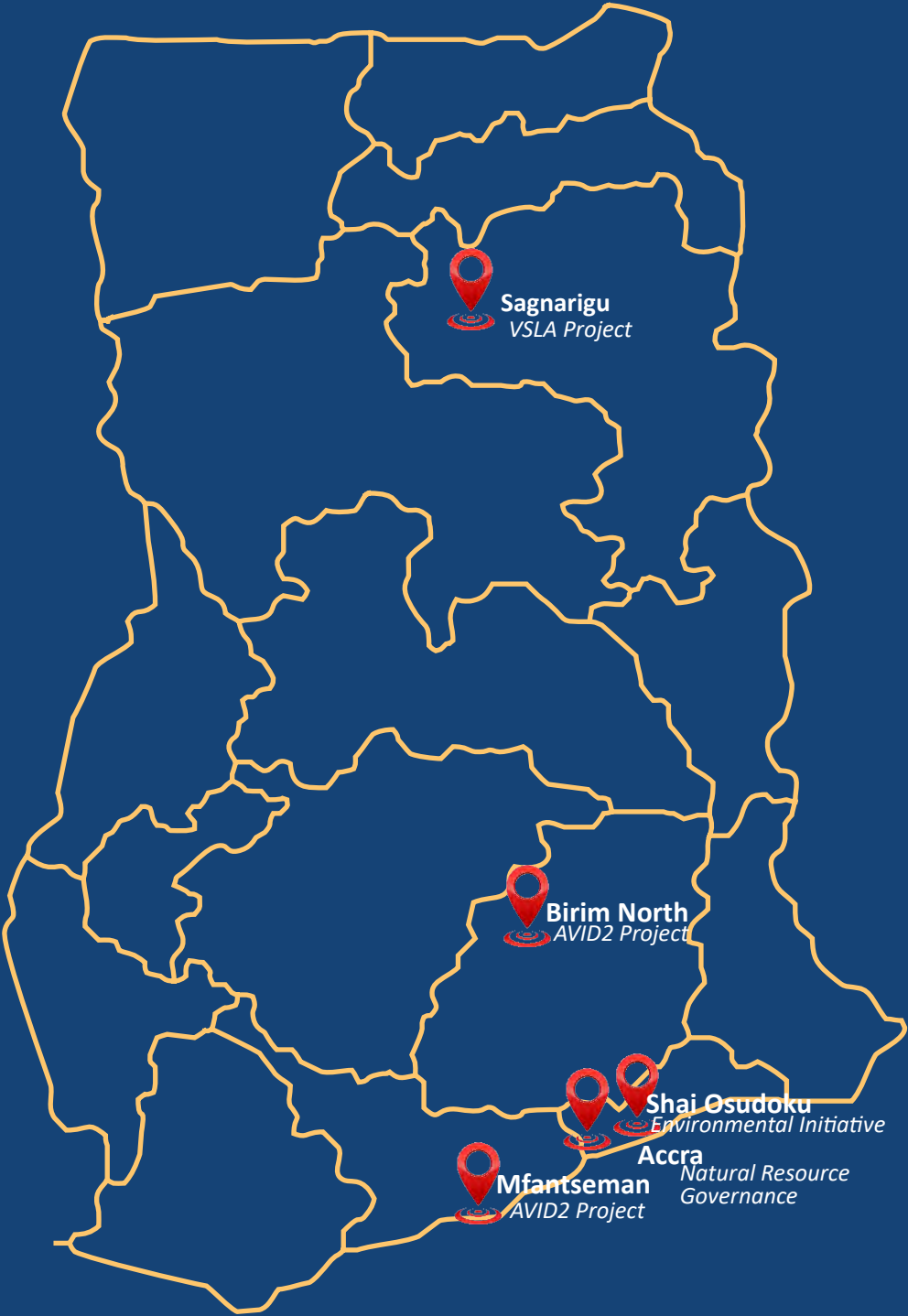
To support programme implementation and operational efficiency, ISODEC invested in key logistical resources during the year. These included laptop computers and the continued maintenance of the organisation's project vehicle.

While the vehicle continues to support field activities, it is ageing and will require replacement in the near future to ensure reliable programme delivery.

The laptop computers distributed among key programme and administrative staff remain functional and continue to support day-to-day operations, research, and stakeholder engagement.



Programme Coverage Map



Programme Activities

Objective 1

Improving Natural Resource Governance and Fiscal Transparency

ISODEC implemented several initiatives in 2025 aimed at strengthening transparency, accountability, and equity in the governance of natural resources in Ghana and the wider West African region.

These initiatives combined research, stakeholder engagement, policy advocacy, and community capacity building.

Ford Foundation West Africa Office @65 Anniversary Celebration

In 2025, the West Africa Office of the Ford Foundation celebrated its 65th anniversary. To commemorate this milestone and highlight the importance of environmental and social justice, ISODEC organised a community environmental initiative under the theme “From Nation Building to Social Justice.”

The event took place in the **Shai Osudoku District** and brought together approximately **250 participants** including school children, youth groups, traditional leaders, local government officials, and community members.

As part of the celebration, participants planted **65 economic trees**, including mango, coconut, and pear trees, within school compounds and the district assembly premises. The initiative aimed to promote environmental conservation while educating communities about climate change and sustainable environmental practices.



The event generated significant public interest and received coverage across mainstream and social media platforms, reaching an estimated audience of nearly **four million people**.

Key outcomes from the event include heightened public awareness of climate change, strengthened



collaboration between schools and local authorities, and a renewed community commitment to environmental conservation. Mango, coconut, and pear trees were selected for their dual benefit of providing shade and generating income for the communities

Community Participation in Natural Resource Governance

ISODEC collaborated with partners including Resource Justice Network and Friends of the Nation to facilitate community engagement processes in mining-affected communities within the Mfantseman Municipal Assembly.

These engagements aimed to support the Assembly in preparing its 2026–2029 Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) through an inclusive planning process that incorporated the perspectives of affected communities.

"This engagement session has helped us to understand that the Assembly does not operate in isolation. With the community's involvement in expressing our needs, the Assembly can better represent us and advocate on our behalf. We now understand how the lithium find will impact our communities. Our only appeal is that government should sign the contract so that those of us affected by the moratorium can know what to do next with our lives."
— James Kwadwo Yampah, Community Member, Krofu

Community stakeholders, including traditional leaders, women's groups, youth representatives, and ethnic minority groups participated in discussions that identified priority development needs within the communities.

Key issues raised included access to potable water, livelihood opportunities, and improved social infrastructure. These consultations strengthened citizen participation in local governance processes while enabling local authorities to better understand the concerns of communities affected by lithium mining activities.

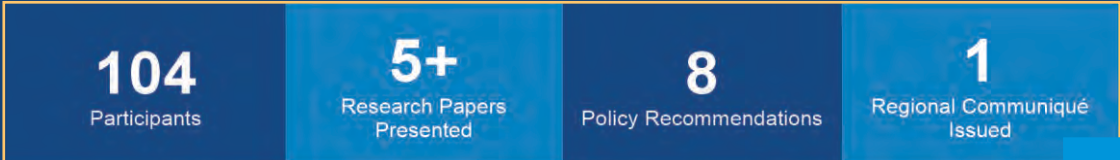
West Africa Conference on Equity in Natural Resource Extraction

With support from the Ford Foundation, ISODEC partnered with International Development Economics Associates (IDEAs) to organise a high-level regional conference on equity in extraction. The conference brought together more than 100 participants, including policymakers, academics, civil society organisations, community representatives, and private sector actors from across West Africa.

Discussions focused on addressing inequalities in natural resource governance, the implications of critical mineral extraction, and strategies for ensuring a just transition toward sustainable development.

Key findings highlighted persistent governance challenges including elite capture, environmental degradation, gender inequalities, and illicit financial flows within the extractive sector.

The conference concluded with a set of policy recommendations aimed at strengthening community participation, improving transparency in mining agreements, integrating gender considerations into extractive policies, and enhancing regional cooperation through frameworks such as the African Mining Vision and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).



Illicit Financial Flows Research Partnership

ISODEC continued its collaboration with Global Financial Integrity (GFI) to address illicit financial flows in Ghana's extractive and agricultural sectors.

A major milestone was the launch and dissemination of a research report examining illicit financial flow risks within Ghana's gold sector. The report was shared with key public institutions including the Ghana Revenue Authority, the Minerals Commission, the Ministry of Finance, and the National Development Planning Commission.

Engagement sessions with these institutions helped generate dialogue around policy reforms needed to strengthen oversight and reduce revenue leakages within the mining sector.



Cocoa Sector Research

Building on the gold sector research, ISODEC initiated a new study examining illicit financial flows within Ghana's cocoa sector.

The research was conducted in collaboration with the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), where a joint working committee was established to refine the research methodology and oversee data collection. Field data collection and analysis were completed in 2025, with the final research report scheduled for publication in 2026.

Blue Economy Documentary

ISODEC supported the production of a documentary highlighting the opportunities and challenges within Ghana's blue economy, particularly in the fisheries sector.



The documentary explores issues such as overfishing, illegal fishing practices, and the socioeconomic importance of fisheries to coastal communities. It also highlights the sector's contribution to employment and food security in Ghana.

The initiative will inform further research and advocacy activities planned for 2026 focusing on illicit financial flows within the fisheries sector.

Objective 2

Promoting Access to Productive Resources and Social Services

Action for Voice, Influence and Inclusive Development (AVID 2) Project

Through funding support from the STAR Ghana Foundation, ISODEC implemented the Action for Voice, Influence and Inclusive Development (AVID 2) project in the Birim North District and Mfantseman Municipal Assemblies.

The project aims to strengthen citizen participation in governance and improve accountability in the delivery of public services.

Formation of Accountability Labs

As part of the initiative, ISODEC facilitated the formation of community-based Accountability Labs composed of youth leaders, women representatives, and community activists. These groups were trained to monitor public service delivery, mobilise citizens, and engage local authorities on development priorities.

In total, Accountability Labs were established in 18 communities across the two districts.



Accountability Labs Discussions at New Abirem

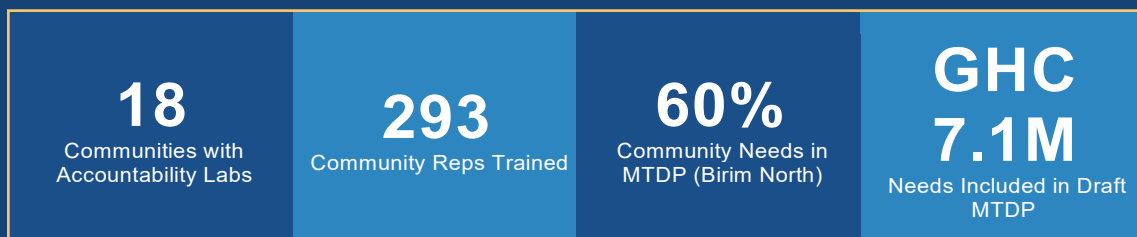
Participatory Rural Appraisal Activities

ISODEC trained community representatives in participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods to help communities identify and prioritise their development needs.

The participatory approach enabled communities to analyse local challenges, map community resources, and prioritise development needs through structured ranking exercises.

Priority issues identified included water supply, employment opportunities, healthcare access, education, and telecommunications infrastructure.

The results of these participatory exercises informed the development of the Assemblies' Medium-Term Development Plans and strengthened community engagement in local governance processes.



Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) Empowerment Project

With funding support from the African-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO), ISODEC implemented a Village Savings and Loans Association empowerment project in five communities within the Sagnarigu Municipal Assembly in Northern Ghana.

The initiative focused on strengthening the economic resilience of rural women through community savings groups.

Twenty VSLA groups were supported through training in financial literacy, savings mobilisation, loan management, and record keeping.

A total of 654 beneficiaries, primarily women participated in the programme. Through the initiative, group members collectively mobilised savings exceeding GHS 411,000 and accessed loans totalling more than GHS 360,000 to support small businesses, education, healthcare, and household needs. The project significantly strengthened women's economic participation and decision-making within their households and communities.



Institutional Strengthening

Through the Civil Society Strengthening Fund (CSSF) supported by the STAR Ghana Foundation and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), ISODEC undertook several institutional reforms aimed at strengthening organisational sustainability.

Key achievements included the development of a Financial Sustainability Plan, revision of key organisational policies, establishment of a procurement committee, implementation of improved financial management systems, and adoption of QuickBooks accounting software.

The organisation also strengthened staff capacity through training in monitoring and evaluation, risk management, proposal development, and programme management.

These efforts resulted in improved internal governance systems and contributed to the mobilisation of approximately USD 330,000 in new funding commitments for the organisation.

Success Story

In Afrangua community within the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District, youth leaders used the knowledge gained through the AVID 2 project to advocate for improved environmental safety measures related to quarry mining activities.

Community members had long been affected by blasting activities that caused noise pollution and damage to buildings. After engaging district authorities and raising concerns with the mining company, the community successfully advocated for improved regulation of blasting schedules. The company now publishes advance blasting timetables to allow residents to take precautionary measures, significantly reducing community risks and tensions.

"Since our confrontation with the elders over the misuse of the blasting compensation, we felt discouraged. But with what ISODEC taught us, and our love for our community we began to raise the issue again. We had the opportunity to complain directly to the DCE and the DCD, and I can testify that the blasting has now reduced. The Q3 company now publishes a timetable for their blasting, which allows us to prepare and take precautions. Now we feel empowered, and we are ready to confront other issues affecting our community."

— Isaac Arthur, Youth Leader and Accountability Lab Member, Afrangua

Programme Implementation Challenges

Despite the progress achieved during the year, ISODEC encountered several operational challenges including limited staffing capacity, delays in the release of project funds, logistical constraints, and limited collaboration from some public institutions.

Communication challenges within remote communities also affected programme mobilisation efforts.

The organisation continues to address these challenges through strategic partnerships, improved operational systems, and efforts to strengthen resource mobilisation.

Financial Overview

ISODEC remains committed to maintaining high standards of financial transparency and accountability.

During 2025, the organisation successfully managed multiple projects funded by development partners while strengthening its internal financial management systems.

Detailed financial statements outlining income, expenditures, and funding sources are available upon request.

Outlook for 2026

In 2026, ISODEC will build on the progress achieved in 2025 by expanding its research on illicit financial flows, strengthening community advocacy programmes, and deepening partnerships with civil society networks and policy institutions.

The organisation also plans to scale up its work on climate justice, natural resource governance, and economic empowerment for marginalised groups.

Through these efforts, ISODEC remains committed to advancing a more just, transparent, and inclusive society in Ghana and across West Africa.

Partners and Supporters

ISODEC expresses sincere appreciation to its development partners, collaborating institutions, and community stakeholders whose support made the 2025 programmes possible.

Key partners include the Ford Foundation, STAR Ghana Foundation, Global Financial Integrity, African-Asian Rural Development Organisation, International Development Economics Associates, and several national and community-based organisations.

Their continued partnership remains essential in advancing ISODEC's mission of promoting social justice and accountable governance.

References and Media Coverage

The organisation's work in 2025 received coverage from several national media outlets and development platforms highlighting ISODEC's contributions to community empowerment and governance reforms.

Selected media references are available through Ghana News Agency, GhanaWeb, 3News, Public Agenda, Ghanaian Times , TV3, GHOne TV, News Ghana, Business week among others.



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"Building Voices · Advancing Rights · Promoting Accountability"

