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Challenges and strategies for post-mine land restoration efforts in Ghana

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Abstract

Gold mining in Ghana poses serious environmental and socio-economic challenges creating a soulless habitat for human and animal species, despite the existence of legal and regulatory frameworks, to address environmental-related hazards due to mining.

Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of information regarding the practical implementation of this and adherence to regulatory instruments. This study utilised policy analysis, participatory net mapping, expert interviews, and focus group discussions to delve into the experiences of after-mining land reclamation strategies from four communities in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Complementarily, a survey of 100 households was also conducted. The study identified revegetation, soil management, landfilling, community participation, and integrated water management as the primary methods of reclamation. Even though these practices constitute fundamental agricultural activities within the selected communities, the findings reveal that there are instances of failed or unsuccessful reclamation. The lower rate of reclamation efforts in the studied communities was attributed to weak policies and regulations, insufficient enforcement due to limited human resources capability, logistical and budgetary restrictions, lack of education and training, and key stakeholders that have been neglected in the mining and reclamation value chain.

We recommend that authorities augment their efforts in capacity-building programmes for both miners and the residents. Moreover, there must be effective coordination among all stakeholders, particularly regulators, traditional authorities, mining firms, and NGOs involved in the mining value chain. This could be achieved by enhancing the quality of communication, promoting transparency, and embracing divergent viewpoints from all stakeholders who matter in achieving a successful mine-land reclamation.

Keywords: Environmental challenges, land reclamation, mining policies, participatory net-maps, post-mine land use