

Youth Policy Consultation on the Atlantic Lithium Project at Ewoyaa, Ghana.

At Green Innovation for People and Nature, we believe in responsible resource development that uplifts communities and protects the environment. That's why we were proud to partner with the inspiring Youth Climate Council (YCC) for a crucial policy consultation in November 2023. Our focus? Ghana's new Green Mineral Policy is a roadmap for managing the nation's rich lithium resources—an estimated 35.3 million metric tons! This critical metal is essential for electric car batteries and clean energy storage but mining it must be done right.

The consultation brought together 50 youths from 5 fringing communities, including Ewoyaa, Abonko, Kaampakrom, Anokyi, and Okwesi, 10 local leaders, representatives from the District Assembly, a representative from Atlantic Lithium Ltd., 12 health professionals from Winneba Community Nursing Training College, and YCC members through focus group discussions, panels, and roundtable discussions to solicit input on how to improve the Green Mineral Policy, assess the potential impacts of lithium mining on energy, water security, cultural heritage, and biodiversity in such resource-rich regions, and conduct a comprehensive analysis of the true costs associated with the project.

Background on Ghana's Lithium Mining.

Lithium is an emerging mineral in Ghana that is gaining significant attention due to the global transition towards electric vehicles and renewable energy. The Ewoyaa Lithium Project, being developed by Atlantic Lithium, is set to become Ghana's first lithium-producing mine. In October 2023, the Ghanaian government granted Atlantic Lithium's subsidiary, Barari DV Ghana Limited, a 15-year mining lease to commence the construction and mining of lithium at the Ewoyaa site in the Central Region of Ghana. This is a landmark event, as it represents Ghana's first-ever lithium mining project.

The Ewoyaa Lithium Project is located approximately 100 kilometers southwest of Ghana's capital, Accra. The project area covers two contiguous licenses, Mankessim and Mankessim South, and the lithium mineralization occurs in the form of spodumene-bearing pegmatite deposits. Geological investigations have shown that Ghana has significant lithium deposits in various parts of the country, from the south to the north, predominantly around Cape Coast, Kumasi, Sunyani, Bole, and Wa. However, the Ewoyaa project is the first to commence lithium mining in the country.

The Ghanaian government has recognized the importance of lithium and other "green minerals" in the global transition to clean energy. As such, they have developed a new Green Mineral Policy to guide the sustainable management, regulation, and

enforcement of policies aimed at promoting the responsible exploration of lithium and other critical minerals.

The mining lease granted to Atlantic Lithium incorporates new and enhanced terms to ensure that Ghana benefits optimally from the lithium project. These include an increase in the royalty rate, state and Ghanaian participation, and a requirement for value addition through the establishment of a chemical processing plant in the country. Overall, the development of the Ewoyaa Lithium Project represents a significant milestone for Ghana's mining industry and its efforts to position itself as a key player in the global supply chain for critical minerals needed for the green energy transition.

Highlights from Youth Consultation Meeting.

Protecting People and the Environment: A Collaborative Effort

One key recommendation centered on strengthening collaboration between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation, and the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources. This coordinated effort would ensure the project adheres to stringent sustainability standards, prioritizing the health and well-being of surrounding communities and the environment.

Safeguarding Health: Proactive Measures The consultation emphasized the importance of proactive health measures. Youths advocated for baseline and periodic health screenings to monitor potential health risks associated with mining operations. This foresight will help prevent future health problems in these communities.

Building a More Equitable Future

Community empowerment was a central theme. Youths called for a dedicated welfare scheme by Atlantic Lithium Ltd., the mining company, to address emergencies within these communities. Additionally, they stressed the importance of investing in skills development, particularly for young people. They proposed a 90% Ghanaian workforce, with a focus on recruiting from surrounding areas.

Transparency and Representation: A Seat at the Table

The consultation highlighted the need for increased transparency and community participation. Youths proposed raising the community's negotiation quota from 1% to 4%, ensuring their voices are heard clearly. Furthermore, they advocated for the inclusion of elected youth representatives in all project-related meetings.

Livelihoods in Transition: Preparing for Change

Recognizing the potential disruption to traditional livelihoods, the consultation called for the implementation of alternative livelihood training programs before mining commences. This proactive approach will equip community members with new skills and ensure a smooth transition.

The success of this consultation is a testament to the power of collaboration and youth leadership. By prioritizing the concerns of young people and fostering a spirit of partnership, we can pave the way for responsible resource extraction that benefits both people and the planet.

This is just the beginning. Green Innovation for People and Nature is committed to working alongside communities and stakeholders to ensure a sustainable future for Ghana, where economic prosperity and environmental responsibility go hand in hand.