

# Leveraging International Partnerships – China's FOCAC Model for Ghana's Green Growth

Africa-China Centre for Policy and Advisory

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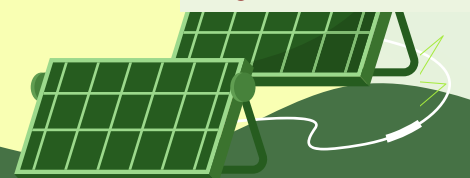
This policy brief has been prepared for ACCPA by Dr. Hagan Sibiri, a Senior Research Fellow at the Africa-China Centre for Policy and Advisory (ACCPA). The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are those of ACCPA and do not necessarily represent the views of its partners or supporting institutions.

The brief forms part of a thematic series developed under the Sino-African Green Finance Alliance (SAGFA), with support from the African Climate Foundation (ACF), to facilitate knowledge exchange, and promote informed policy dialogue on green finance for Africa's sustainable future.

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## Policy Points

China is Ghana's leading source of green-aligned finance, with over US\$620 million committed between 2007 and 2024, primarily for large-scale green infrastructure projects. FOCAC remains the main framework guiding China's green investment, with a focus on energy, industry, and technology transfer.

While Chinese financing has enhanced Ghana's renewable energy capacity, it remains concentrated in energy megaprojects. Monitoring is weak, with limited or unavailable data on project outcomes, financing terms, and sustainability impacts.

Stronger coordination between Chinese lenders and Ghanaian agencies is essential to align projects with national development goals.

<sup>1</sup> This policy brief summarizes Chapter 6 of the Sino-African Green Finance Alliance (SAGFA) research report titled "Green Finance and Sustainable Industrialization in Ghana: Mapping the Ecosystem and International Contributions," published by the Africa-China Centre for Policy and Advisory (ACCPA) with support from the African Climate Foundation.





China, through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), has emerged as one of Ghana's leading bilateral partners in advancing green finance and sustainable industrial development. Between 2007 and 2024, China disbursed over US\$623 million for green-aligned infrastructure projects in Ghana, surpassing traditional partners such as the EU and the US. Flagship initiatives like the Bui Hydroelectric Dam and the Ghana-China Renewable Energy Technology Transfer Project highlight China's role in expanding renewable energy and promoting sustainable industrialisation. However, gaps in transparency, limited local ownership, and inconsistent monitoring mechanisms continue to hinder the full realisation of these investments' potential. This policy brief distils lessons from the report "Green Finance and Sustainable Industrialisation in Ghana: Mapping the Ecosystem and International Contributions," identifies key opportunities and constraints, and offers actionable recommendations for aligning international partnerships with Ghana's national green growth priorities.

**\$623**  
million  
disbursed  
by China



# Ghana's Green Growth Goals and China's Role

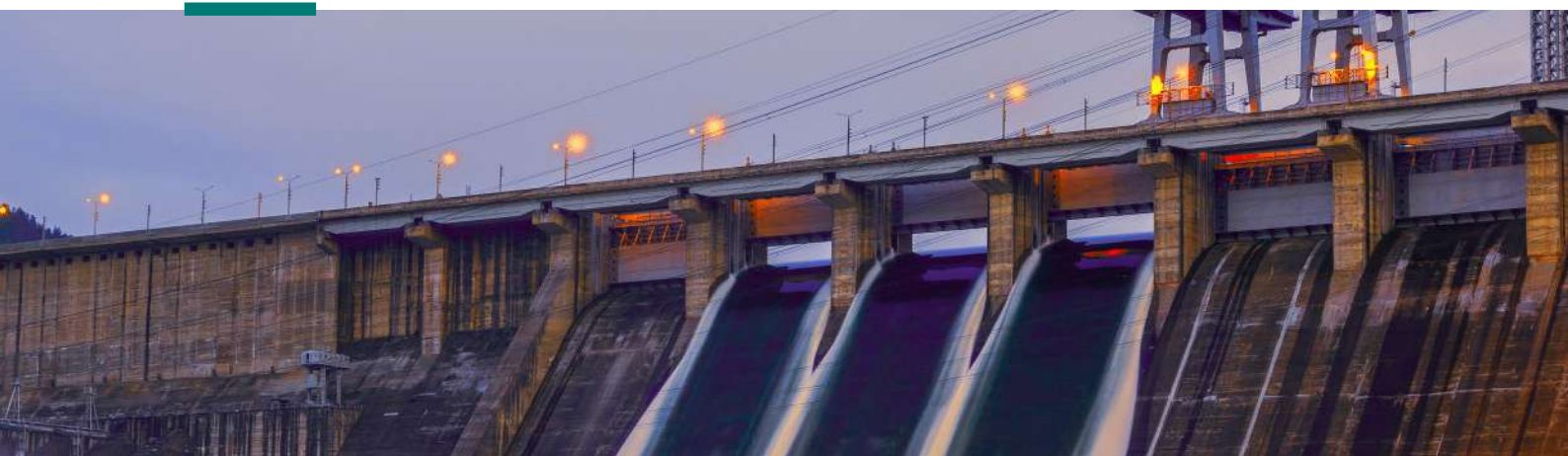
Ghana is actively seeking to transition toward sustainable industrial development, guided by frameworks like the Ghana Beyond Aid (GBA) Charter, the newly launched 24-Hour Economy Initiative, and its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Climate Agreement. These frameworks reflect a strategic intent to achieve economic growth that aligns with climate resilience, low-carbon energy systems, and environmentally responsible industrialisation. At the heart of this transformation lies a pressing need for substantial financial and technological resources, a need that has increasingly been met by international partnerships.

China, under the FOCAC framework, has played a decisive role in shaping Ghana's green development landscape. Through policy bank loans, concessional finance, and joint ventures, China has become the largest single source of green-aligned finance in Ghana, supporting flagship projects like the Bui Hydroelectric Dam and the Tema Industrial Park. Moreover, Ghana's endorsement of China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2018 further deepened this relationship, positioning the country as a strategic partner in China's green development strategy in Africa.

As the report underscores, Ghana's engagement within FOCAC reflects a maturing relationship moving beyond traditional aid to strategic cooperation in green finance, renewable energy, and clean industrialisation. Yet this partnership also exposes significant structural gaps (in governance, transparency, and long-term sustainability) that must be addressed to optimise outcomes.



# FOCAC's Impact on Ghana's Green Finance Space



**\$790 million**

Bui Power Plant

**\$580 million**

Asogli Power Plant

**\$320 million**

Tema Industrial Park

Ghana has emerged as a strategic player in FOCAC, using its participation to advance national goals in energy, infrastructure, and increasingly, green industrial development. Since establishing diplomatic ties with China in 1960, Ghana has transitioned from a traditional aid recipient to a key economic partner, securing substantial financing and technical support through FOCAC mechanisms. Flagship initiatives such as the Bui Hydroelectric Dam (US\$790 million), the Sunon Asogli Power Plant (US\$580 million), and the Ghana-China Industrial Park in Tema (US\$320 million) underscore the scale and depth of this cooperation. Ghana's endorsement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2018 and its active engagement in successive FOCAC summits, including the pivotal 2021 Dakar Summit, reflect a strategic shift toward integrating sustainability and green finance into its development agenda.

Recent FOCAC Action Plans have placed growing emphasis on green finance, sustainable industrialisation, and technology transfer, aligning closely with Ghana's aspirations for climate-resilient growth and energy transition. The 2021–2024 FOCAC Action Plan, for instance, prioritised clean energy, industrial park development, and green manufacturing, while bilateral agreements such as the Strategic Cooperation Agreement for Industrial and Technological Upgrades and the Green Development Framework Agreement further deepened commitments to environmental protection and sustainable economic growth. Ghana now stands at the forefront of China's green development agenda in Africa, positioned not only as a major beneficiary of green finance but also as a regional leader shaping the contours of Africa's low-carbon industrial transformation. The following sections highlight the financial, technological, institutional, and governance dimensions of FOCAC's green engagement in Ghana.

# Financial Contributions and Sectoral Prioritisation

Since its inception, FOCAC has significantly expanded its financial commitments to African nations, with Ghana emerging as a key recipient of Chinese development financing. From 2000 to 2024, China’s financial commitment to Africa through FOCAC totalled US\$248.2 billion (see Figure 1). Ghana received over US\$623.5 million in green-aligned financing from China between 2007 and 2024, surpassing contributions from traditional partners such as the European Union (US\$174.8 million) and the United States (US\$93.5 million) (see Table 1)

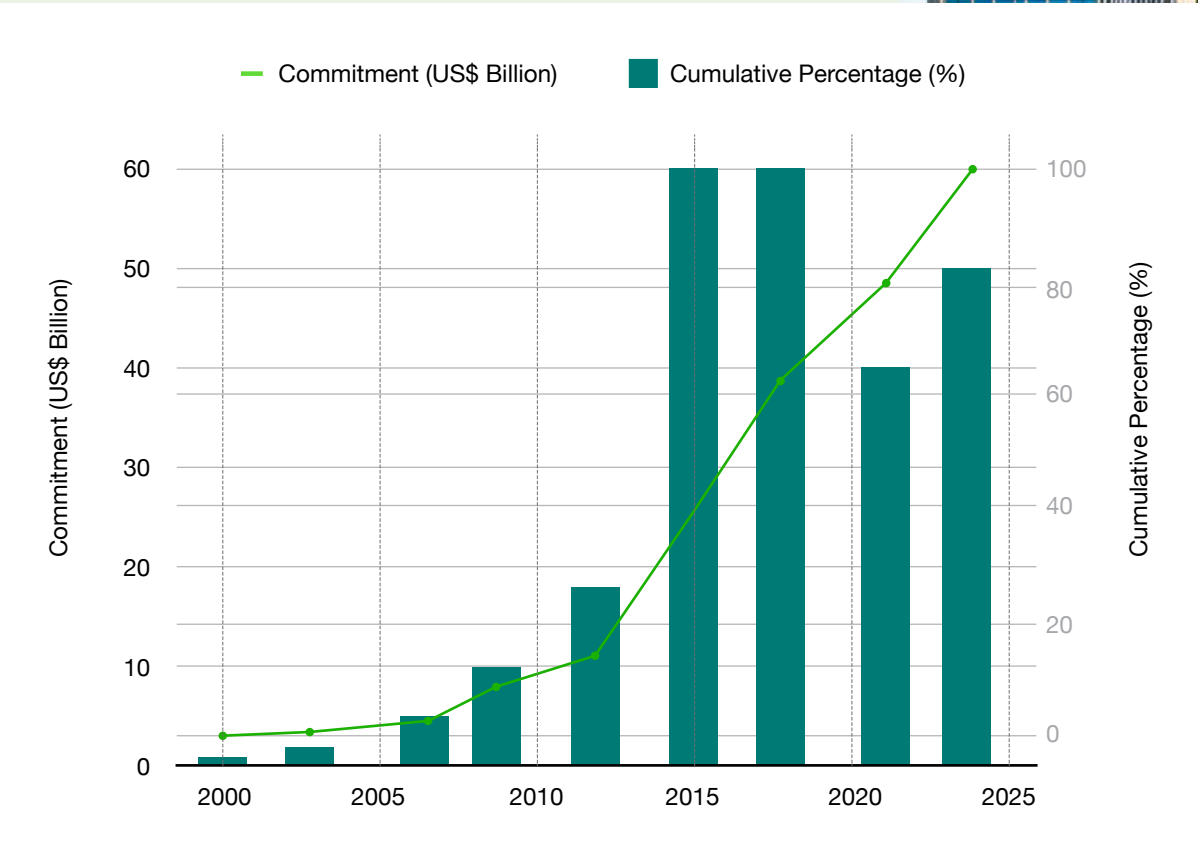


Figure 1: FOCAC’s Financial commitment to Africa from 2000-2024.





Chinese finance is primarily structured through concessional loans and policy bank instruments, including support from the China Exim Bank and China Development Bank. Key funded projects include:

**The Bui Hydroelectric Dam**

- (US\$790 million)

a major renewable energy infrastructure boosting national grid capacity.

**The Sunon Asogli Power Plant**

- (US\$580 million)

a joint venture enhancing Ghana's energy security.

The Ghana-China Renewable Energy Technology Transfer Project promotes solar and wind power capacity.

**The Ghana-China Industrial Park in Tema**

- (US\$320 million)

dedicated to sustainable manufacturing.

**The Green Industrial Complex in Kumasi**

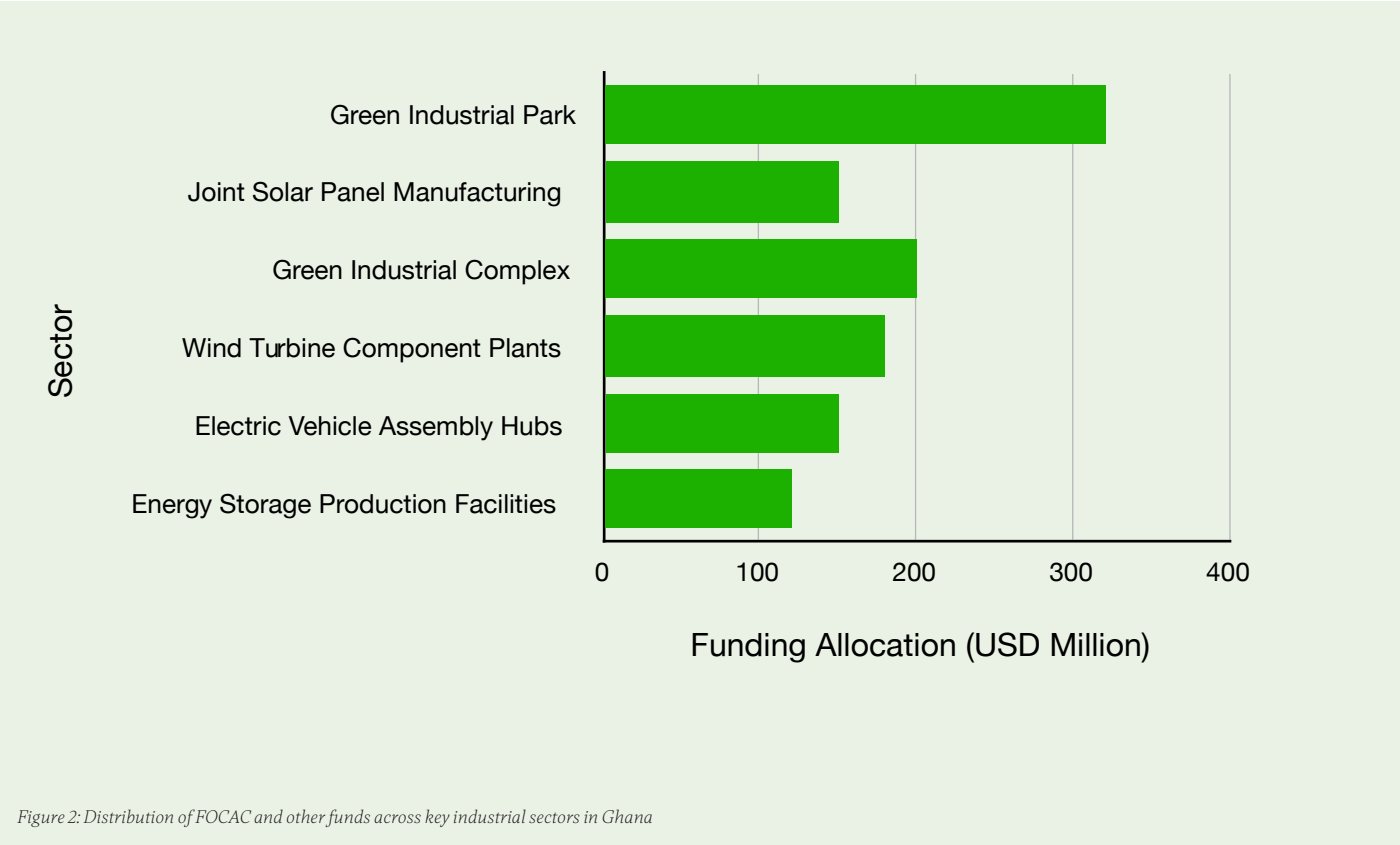
- (US\$200 million)

a circular economy initiative.

Rank	Country/Institution	Investment Amount (US\$)	Key Projects	Financing Mechanism
1	China	623.5 million	Bui Hydroelectric Dam	Policy bank loans
2	European Union	174.8 million	Northern Savannah Agriculture Project	Grant-concessional blend
3	United States	93.5 million	77 decentralised climate projects	USAID grants
4	African Development Bank	127.8 million	Multi-country renewable initiatives	Blended finance
5	Germany	64 million	Photovoltaic systems	Technical cooperation funds

Table 1: Top International Contributors to Green Finance in Ghana (2007–2024)

Between 2022 and 2024, a shift in focus is observed toward industrial capacity building, eco-industrial parks, and clean energy manufacturing. These include solar panel assembly plants (producing 400MW annually), electric vehicle assembly hubs (US\$150 million), and battery storage facilities (US\$120 million). Such investments signal a strategic move toward localised green manufacturing, reinforcing Ghana’s vision for energy independence, export diversification, and resilient industrial ecosystems. Notably, 35% of FOCAC-funded projects in Ghana are aligned with green finance objectives, compared to a West African regional average of 25%.



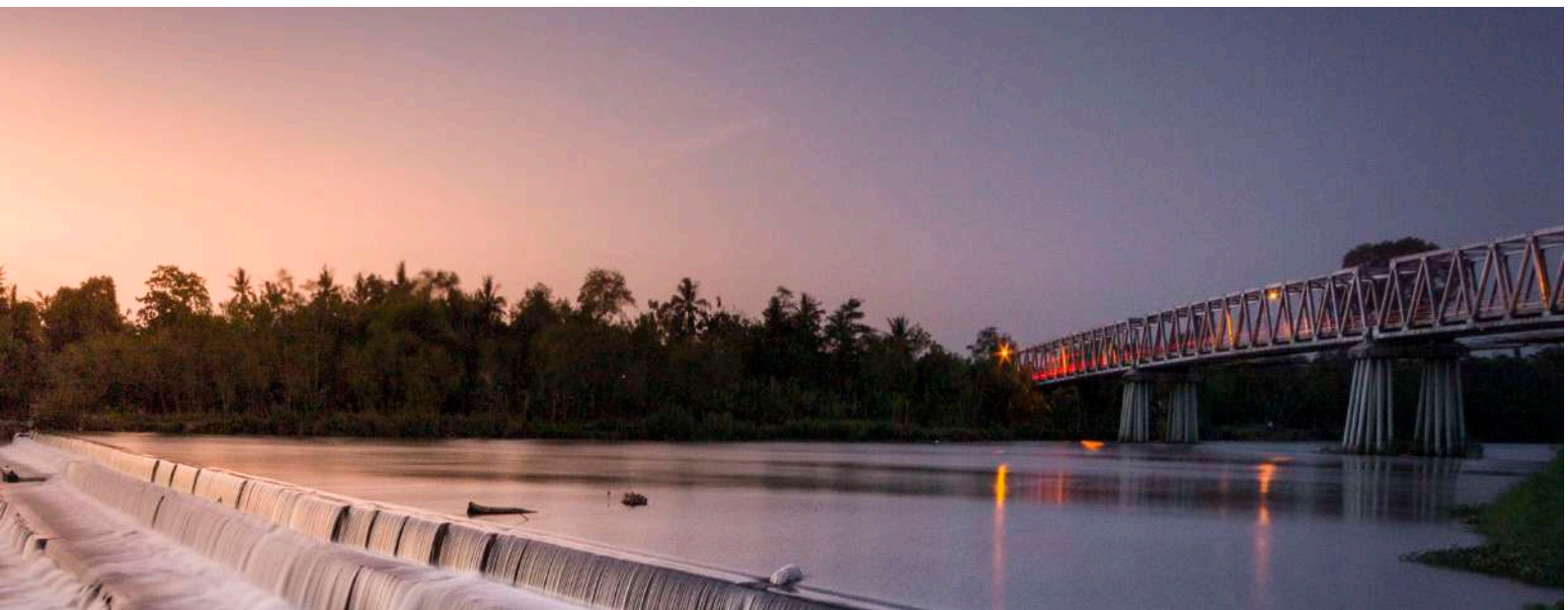


# Technology Transfer and Capacity Building

Technology transfer and workforce development are central to the Ghana-China partnership. The report highlights several collaborative platforms that strengthen Ghanaian expertise in renewable energy and industrial sustainability:

- > The China-Ghana Renewable Energy Technology Transfer Project Focuses on building technical capacity in the solar and wind energy sectors, including training for smart grids and low-carbon industrial systems.
- > The Ghana-China Technology Transfer Centre facilitates knowledge exchange in advanced manufacturing, green standards, and environmental management.
- > The Ghana-China Climate Technology Centre (US\$150 million): Supports compliance with Ghana's NDCs by providing training in emissions control, clean production, and sustainable energy use.
- > The Tema Green Industrial Park (established in 2019): Demonstrates application of energy-efficient systems, with 40% lower emissions than conventional industrial zones.
- > Vocational training and scholarship programs: Develop local human capital in climate-smart manufacturing, energy engineering, and sustainable resource management.

These initiatives contribute to the localisation of clean technologies and reduce dependency on foreign technical assistance. They also support employment generation, with projects like the Tema Park expected to create up to 300,000 jobs. Additionally, the EV component manufacturing initiative has positioned Ghana as a hub for lithium-ion battery production in West Africa.



# Policy Alignment and Institutional Coordination

FOCAC initiatives are closely aligned with Ghana's green industrial goals outlined in the GBA Charter, the Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP), and the NDCs. The China-Ghana partnership explicitly supports the shift to clean energy, reduction in emissions, and integration of green infrastructure in industrial development.

The report highlights coordinated implementation led by:

- The Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC): Overseeing project alignment with industrial policy.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI): Managing environmental compliance.
- The Joint Industrial Cooperation Working Group (est. 2021): Ensuring coherence between Ghana's agenda and FOCAC-funded project pipelines.
- The Joint Arbitration Committee: A conflict resolution body streamlining project implementation.

Despite these mechanisms, challenges remain in harmonising inter-ministerial oversight and ensuring the timely implementation of regulatory frameworks. The report emphasises the need for a centralised coordination unit to align and monitor FOCAC initiatives within Ghana's broader green growth strategy.



# Challenges and Policy Recommendations

Although China's contributions to Ghana's green development are substantial, the report identifies critical structural gaps that undermine their full potential. Transparency remains a major concern, as loan terms, project agreements, and performance benchmarks are rarely disclosed, and the absence of a public finance registry limits citizen oversight and policy alignment. Many projects are shaped by high-level negotiations with limited involvement from local agencies. The lack of centralised monitoring and evaluation systems hampers the ability to track progress on emissions reduction, technology transfer, and employment outcomes. Addressing these challenges requires deeper institutional reforms to ensure FOCAC investments deliver broad-based, inclusive, and sustainable development outcomes.

To strengthen FOCAC's contribution to Ghana's green industrialisation, the following recommendations are structured into two key areas: (1) Strategic Alignment and Policy Engagement, which focuses on institutional coherence and capacity development, and (2) Leveraging Synergies and Co-Financing, which aims to optimise financing mechanisms and deepen collaborative partnerships.





# Strategic Alignment and Policy Engagement

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**Establish a Green Industrial Development Unit:** Create a specialised unit within the Ministry of Trade and Industry to coordinate FOCAC-funded industrial projects, align them with Ghana's Industrial Transformation Agenda, and ensure adherence to environmental and green industry standards.

**Adopt a Green Technology Transfer Framework:** Develop a structured framework to guide the acquisition, localisation, and protection of green technologies, while mandating binding knowledge transfer provisions in all FOCAC-supported industrial initiatives.

**Launch the Ghana-China Green Industry Training Institute:** Set up a bilateral training institute focused on environmental technologies, clean manufacturing, and industrial policy, aimed at building Ghana's domestic expertise and advancing green skills development.

**Secure Targeted Funding for Green Industry Development:** Proactively engage within FOCAC negotiations to increase dedicated funding for renewable energy manufacturing, technology localisation, and clean production systems. Joint R&D between Ghanaian and Chinese firms should be prioritised to accelerate innovation and employment.

**Implement a Digital Project Monitoring System:** Deploy a centralised digital platform to track key performance indicators, including emissions reduction, technology absorption, job creation, and compliance with sustainability standards, enabling data-driven decision-making and public accountability.

**Establish a Green Industry Innovation Fund:** Create a fund to support SMEs in adopting clean technologies and obtaining environmental certifications, while fostering innovation through matching grants, green R&D, and stakeholder-driven project selection.





# Leveraging Synergies and Co-Financing

**Develop a Green Industrial Development Fund:** Establish a blended finance vehicle leveraging FOCAC, climate finance, and private capital to support large-scale green industrial projects. Priority should be given to initiatives with clear environmental benefits and strong technology transfer potential.

**Form a Ghana-China Green Industry Alliance:** Institutionalise a formal platform for joint ventures, technology-sharing, and research collaboration among industrial actors and financial institutions from both countries, ensuring mutual benefit and stronger regulatory alignment.

**Enhance Private Sector Participation:** Improve the business environment by streamlining regulatory processes, offering tax incentives, and increasing transparency in public-private partnerships to encourage local business involvement in green value chains.

**Create Sector-Specific Technology Transfer Centres:** Establish dedicated centres focused on renewable energy, waste-to-energy, and clean manufacturing to adapt Chinese technologies to local conditions, train Ghanaian technicians, and support indigenous innovation.

**Incentivise Green Production Facilities:** Encourage Chinese enterprises to establish green manufacturing plants in Ghana, supported by supplier development programs that help local firms meet environmental and quality standards.

**Integrate Environmental Criteria into Co-Financing Agreements:** All co-financed projects should include environmental performance metrics, robust monitoring systems, and mandates for local capacity-building. This will improve project execution, ensure accountability, and align investments with Ghana's green growth strategy.

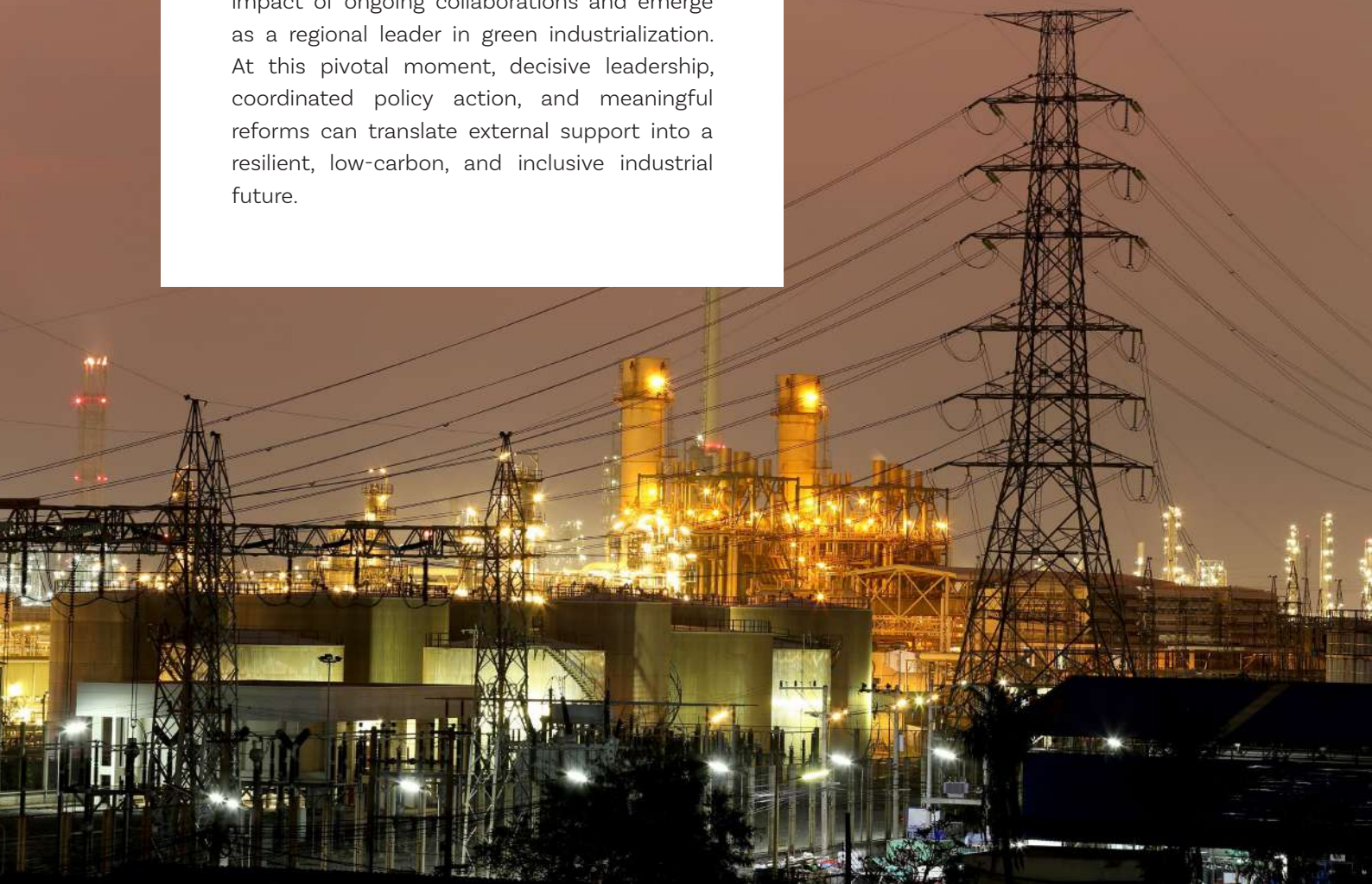


# Conclusion:

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## A Call to Action

China's FOCAC model has provided Ghana with encouraging access to green finance, technology, and industrial infrastructure over the past two decades. This relationship has shifted from traditional aid dependency toward a strategic partnership grounded in shared goals for sustainable development. To fully realise the benefits of this cooperation, Ghana must strengthen its institutional frameworks by enhancing transparency, promoting local ownership, and aligning investments with its national green growth agenda. The strategic recommendations outlined in the report offer a practical roadmap that prioritizes integrated planning, technology transfer, and inclusive industrial development. By reinforcing its domestic systems, Ghana can deepen the impact of ongoing collaborations and emerge as a regional leader in green industrialization. At this pivotal moment, decisive leadership, coordinated policy action, and meaningful reforms can translate external support into a resilient, low-carbon, and inclusive industrial future.





## About SAGFA

The Sino-Africa Green Finance Alliance (SAGFA) is a multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to advancing sustainable industrial development in Africa through innovative green finance solutions. By bringing together policymakers, researchers, financial institutions, and industry leaders from Africa, China, and beyond, SAGFA works to unlock investment opportunities, shape policy frameworks, and strengthen capacities for climate-resilient growth.

Through research, dialogue, and targeted initiatives, the Alliance positions Africa at the forefront of global green finance transformation while fostering stronger Africa-China cooperation for a just and sustainable future.

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## About ACCPA

The Africa-China Centre for Policy and Advisory (ACCPA) is a Sino-African research and policy think tank based in Accra, Ghana, with teams in Morocco, Tanzania, Tunisia, the DRC, China, the UK, Ethiopia, and Botswana.

Through evidence-based research, strategic advisory, and multi-stakeholder dialogue, the Centre offers policy briefs, expert analysis, capacity-building programs, and forums that advance informed decision-making and sustainable partnerships.

With a pan-African outlook, ACCPA is committed to ensuring that Africa's voice is at the forefront of international cooperation with China- championing shared development goals, policy coherence, and equitable cooperation.

[www.africachinacentre.org](http://www.africachinacentre.org)



## About ACF

The African Climate Foundation, established in 2020, is the first African-led strategic re-granter working at the nexus of climate change and development.

[www.africanclimatefoundation.org](http://www.africanclimatefoundation.org)

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## CONTACT

PLOT No 49, Haatso RD  
North Legon, Accra, Ghana

+233 303 965 259  
[www.africachinacentre.org](http://www.africachinacentre.org)  
[info@africachinacentre.org](mailto:info@africachinacentre.org)