

# **NATIONAL SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (NSDF) FOR GHANA**

By Mohammed Alhassan

The Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD) has completed the preparation of a National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) for Ghana under the Second Ghana Land Administration Project (LAP-2) of the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources.

The NSDF provides a strategic national vision (desired future) for spatial development in Ghana over a twenty (20) year period. It provides a spatial expression of Ghana's development aspirations in terms of economic, social, environmental and other aspects.

In the absence of a mechanism for guiding the spatial distribution of facilities, location of facilities have been done in a laissez faire manner and thus caused great distortions in the hierarchy of settlements. The absence of joint development planning at the district level coupled with the absence of a clear mandate for plan preparation at the regional level has further heightened coordination challenges. This has caused a disconnect among otherwise complementary development interventions in the country. Currently, some District Assemblies are engaged in sourcing funds individually to provide facilities that have a national sphere of influence and therefore should be facilitated by the central government directly.

The Land Use Planning and Management Project which is a sub-component of the Ghana Land Administration Project, facilitated the preparation of a National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) spanning 20 years for the entire territory of Ghana.

The NSDF is expected to provide:

- perspectives and proposals for what kind of developments should take place, how much of it should occur, where this should happen, and how this should happen in order to take advantage of presented opportunities.
- a spatial strategy for achieving defined social, economic and environmental interventions related to employment, housing, infrastructure services (waste, water, energy, etc.), education, health care, tourism and leisure, transportation, communications, culture and nature and the environment.

## **THE NSDF PROJECT**

The Project started in April 2013 and was due to be completed in October 2014 but challenges with data access delayed the completion until March 2015. The NSDF focuses on key themes such as population, human settlements and urbanization, economic development, social development, infrastructure development, environmental management and climate change.

According to Mr. Kofi Dankwa Osei, the former Ag. Director of the TCPD, the National Spatial Development Framework for Ghana has been completed and the final hard copy is due to be presented to the National Development Planning Commission for onward transmission to Cabinet, Parliament and the Presidency.

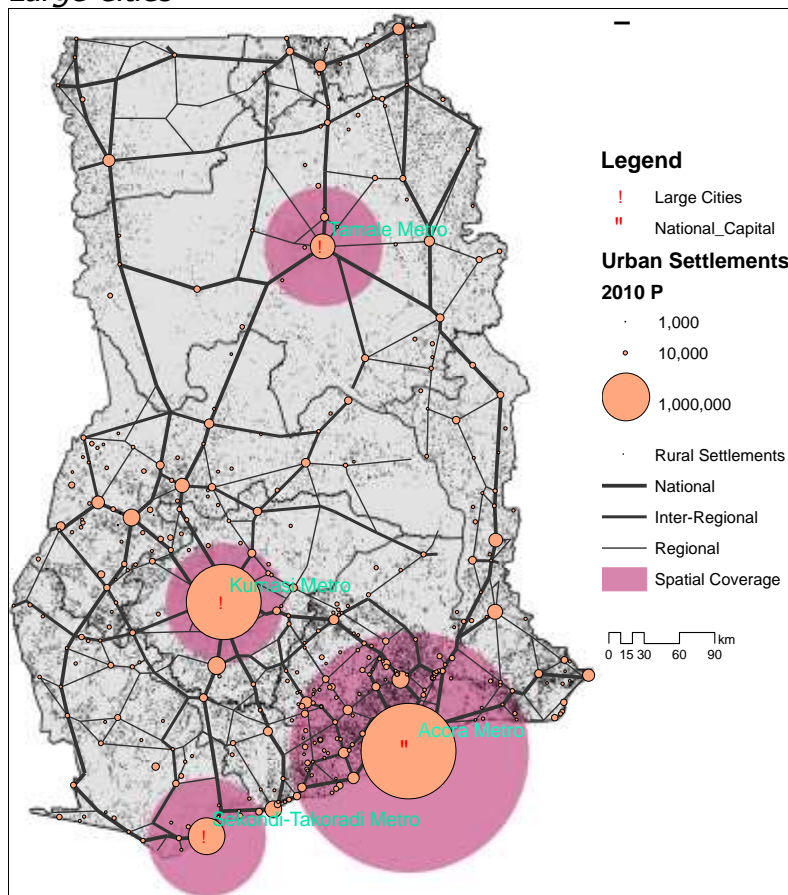
## **Key NSDF Themes**

### **Human Settlement Distribution**

A spatially integrated hierarchy of urban settlements has been proposed in the NSDF. They comprise grade 1, 2, 3 and 4 settlements.

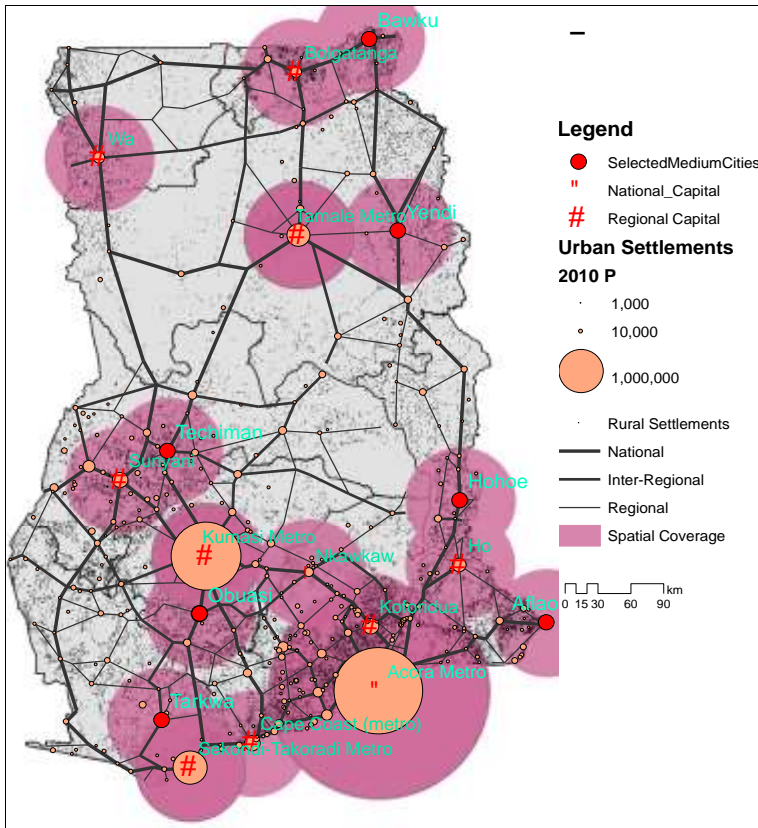
**Grade 1 - Large Cities:** The NSDF designates the four big metropolitan centres—Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale as grade 1 cities and have population sizes in excess of 50,000. The catchment areas of these cities contain about half of the national population. They also contain 70 and 30 percent of the urban and rural populations, respectively.

### *Large Cities*



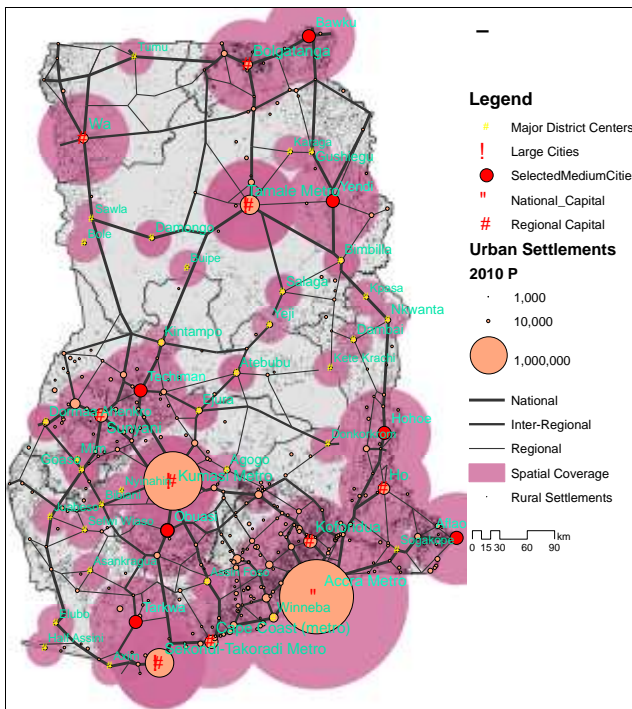
**Grades 2 - Medium cities:** The Plan identifies 16 Medium Sized Cities for special intervention. These are the six regional capitals that are not considered as large cities in addition to Yendi, Bawku, Techiman, Obuasi, Tarkwa, Nkawkaw, among others. These Medium-sized cities have populations above 50,000 but less than 250,000.

### *Large & Medium Sized Settlements*



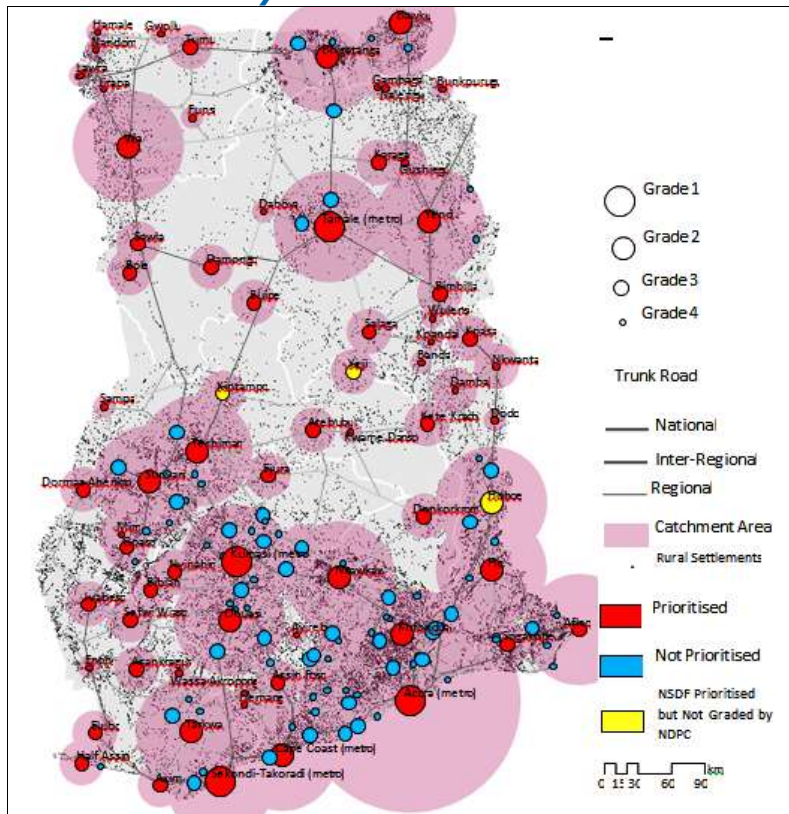
**Grades 3 - Major towns:** the Major settlements are those with populations between 20,000 and 50,000 inhabitants. Based on this criterion, 42 settlements are identified for targeted investments. Twenty-Eight (28) of these settlements are contained within the spatial catchment areas of large and medium-sized cities and include Assin Fosu, Atebubu, Dormaa Ahenkro, Ejura, Goaso, Bimbilla, Salaga, Damango, Kintampo, Nkwanta, Dambai, Yeji, Gushiegu, Mim among others.

*Large cities, Medium cities and Major towns*



**Grades 4 - Rural Service Centres:** About 94 settlements have been designated as Rural Service Centres in the Plan. These centres are expected to provide special rural services through facilities such as **Community Health Improvement Services (CHIPS) Compounds**, Agriculture Input Supply Centres, Markets, Chemical Shops, Basic Education Facilities etc.

### **Hierarchy of Urban Centres in Ghana**



**Strengthening the role of Accra as a gateway to Ghana:** The Plan proposes development of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area into regional business, trade and investment hub that is capable of competing healthily with other regional centres, such as Lagos and Abidjan. The Greater Accra region currently contributes 22 percent of total GDP—approximately the same share as Greater London contributes to the economy of the UK.

**Reinforce the role of Kumasi as a national driver of economic growth:** The focus of this strategy is to leverage the influence of Kumasi and link the coastal industrial corridor with the rest of the country, as well as the cocoa producing regions with the ports of Tema and Takoradi. This role can be supported through infrastructure improvements such as the Boankra Inland Port. Although Kumasi is Ghana's second largest city it is currently underperforming in its role as a key driver of economic growth.

**Dispersal of manufacturing activities to Satellite towns and cities:** The thrust of this strategy is to disperse manufacturing activities away from the metropolitan core of the major cities by improving infrastructure links between these satellite settlements and the metropolitan centres where economic inputs, infrastructure (e.g. ports) and business services are located.

**The role of secondary cities and regional capitals:** It is proposed in the NSDF to strategically strengthen the role of district capitals and regional capitals as centres of employment. This will prevent the inordinate migration of rural citizens into settlements within the “golden triangle”

**Development of a new town in the golden triangle:** The Plan identifies a potential site south west of Achiasi for the development of a new town to connect the major cities of Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi. The new town is expected to be a model that incorporates features that other cities could emulate, including smart-growth, transit-oriented development, ecological green design, well-planned industrial areas, affordable housing, and sufficient public and private services. The establishment of a new international airport accessible within 40 minutes from all triangle cities would render the area even more attractive.

### **Long Term Planning in Ghana**

Ghana has relative experience in Comprehensive National Development Planning which dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; beginning with the 10 Year Guggisberg Plan (1920-1930). As at 2014, Ghana had prepared about a dozen National Development Plans with the latest one being the ‘Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA): 2014-2017’. Almost all of these plans have focused on issues such as infrastructure development, promotion of agriculture and industry, human resource development, and poverty reduction through balanced creation of opportunities and employment, with varying degrees of emphasis.

Of all these plans, only three have had a long term horizon. They are the Guggisberg’s 10 Year Plan (1920-1930) which was fully implemented, followed by the 7 year National Plan for Reconstruction and Development (NPRD- 1963-1970) which was implemented for just three years and was truncated by a military coup of 1966 and the Vision 2020 (1995-2020) which was implemented for 5.

Vision 2020 (1996- 2000) and was discontinued in 2000 due to the immediate need to address macroeconomic imbalances at the time. Consequently, it was substituted by the World Bank/ IMF sponsored Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, namely the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I (GPRS I: 2003-2005) and Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRS II: 2006-2009).

Almost all the National Development Plans in the last decade spanned not more than 4 years, indicating a short sighted perspective to development interventions that require long term view. The short term perspective to national development planning has since remained in vogue with the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda: 2010-2013 and currently the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda: 2014-2017. It is important to mention that Ghana also embarked on stabilization programmes which began in 1983, with the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (1983-1999).

A key feature of the National Development Planning exercises is that of a total neglect of the spatial aspect of planning. With the exception of the 7 year National Plan for Reconstruction and Development (1963-1970) none of the plans have had a spatial component. Although the National Development Planning (System) Act, 1994, Act 480

advocates integrated planning at all levels of national administration, the spatial component of development plans in Ghana continue to be absent and therefore the achievement of sustainable development objectives have remained a mirage.

In 2006 an attempt was made to prepare a 10 year Human Settlements Development Strategy but this did not materialise. As a result, not much has been achieved from the massive investments that have followed these plans, largely because of the lack of a spatial framework to relate and coordinate these development interventions. The apparent absence of spatial connection to national social and economic policy has led to massive duplications, conflicts, overlaps and waste, which have further widened the imbalances within and between all the regional and district administrative enclaves in the country.

## **Infrastructure**

**Trans-Africa road transportation:** To be able to adequately cater for projected future population in Ghana as well as improve economic competitiveness and increase cross border cooperation and trade, the NSDF proposes a number of highway corridors, including Trans-Africa Highways (TAH). Some specific corridors proposed for consideration are:

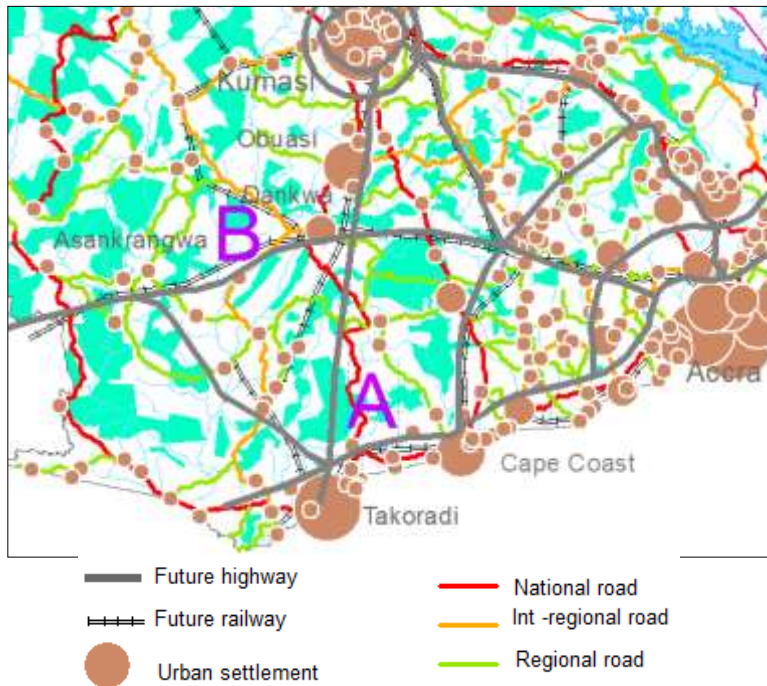
- (i) the Accra–Kumasi city-region highway as Phase 1 of the Ghana African highway link Accra–Ouagadougou;
- (ii) the Kumasi–Paga highway as the Phase 2 of the Ghana African highway link Accra–Ouagadougou;
- (iii) the Techiman–Sunyani–Kumasi highway; and
- (iv) Trans–West African Coastal Road.

These highways are expected to be well-connected to the national transport centres and future intermodal transport system that will include transport by railway, flights and vessels on the lake.

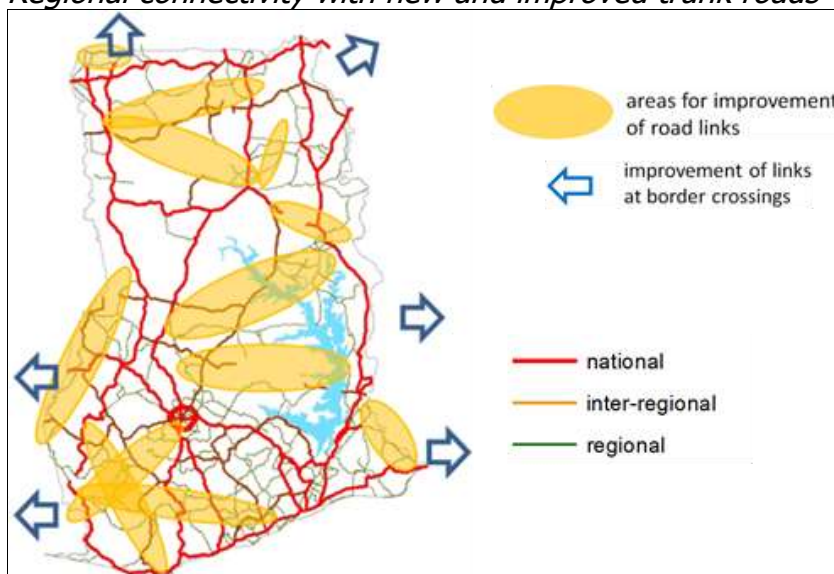
### *ECOWAS North-South Accra–Ouagadougou highway corridor*



### *Options for alignment of the Trans West African Coastal highway*



*Regional connectivity with new and improved trunk roads*

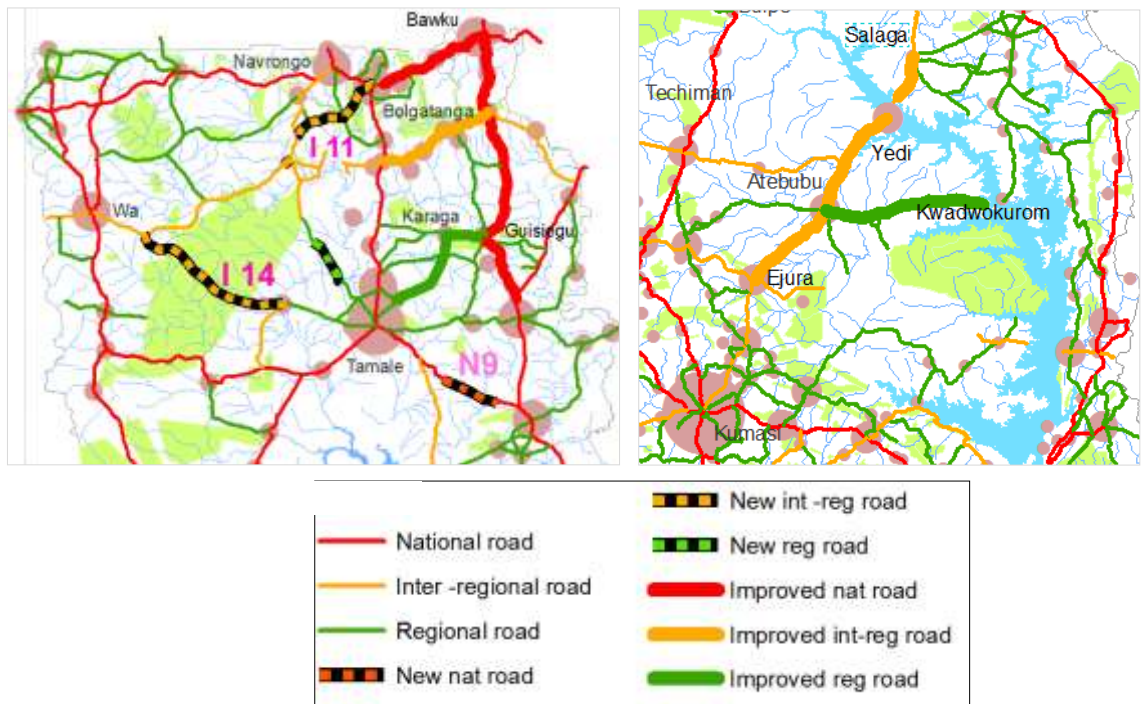


**Trunk road system in the SADA zone:** The NSDF proposes the development and improvement of a number of trunk roads in the SADA Zone as follows:

- new trunk road between Wa and Tamale (I-14)
- new and upgraded trunk roads between Wa and Bolgatanga (I-11)
- new trunk road between Bimbila and Tamale (N-9)
- corridor to Paga as an alternative to the central corridor route.
- upgrade trunk road on the N-11 between Bolgatanga and Bawku
- upgrade trunk road on the I-11 between Nakpanduri and Walewale
- improve connection between Gushiegu, Karaga and Tamale
- new trunk road from northern part of Volta Region linking the Eastern trunk road.

**Map 1 - SADA zone**

**Map 2 - Lake Volta**

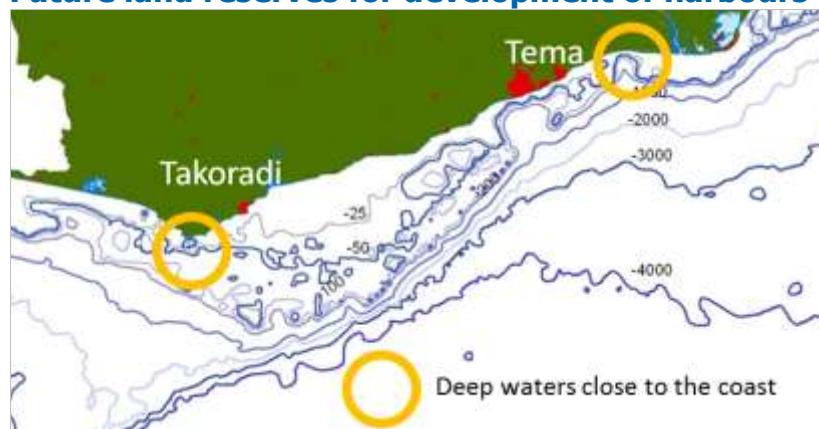


**Upgrading of Airports:** In line with objectives of the National Airport Systems Plan, the NSDF proposes upgrading of the Kotoka International Airport into a hub airport and the Kumasi and Tamale airports into international airports. The Tamale Airport is already being expanded to serve as complementary international airport to KIA with cargo capacity including cold storage and a maintenance centre for regional aircrafts.

A new international airport is proposed at Prampram in the Dangme West District of Greater Accra on a 65 km<sup>2</sup> site. The airport will handle a maximum of 12 flights per hour and, annually, 4.5 million passengers, 33,000 passenger aircraft movements and 30,000 tons of freight. It will provide jobs for thousands and generate a demand for ancillary products and services.

**Expansion of Sea Ports:** To avoid challenges associated with the current physical constraints in the sea ports, the NSDF proposes two areas to be reserved for future expansion of the sea port activities. These areas have a number of advantages. They are close to the existing ports, near to deep water and relatively free of existing urban development; they also have sufficient land for the development of inland facilities including access for rails and roads.

**Future land reserves for development of harbours**





*Source: TCPD, 2014*

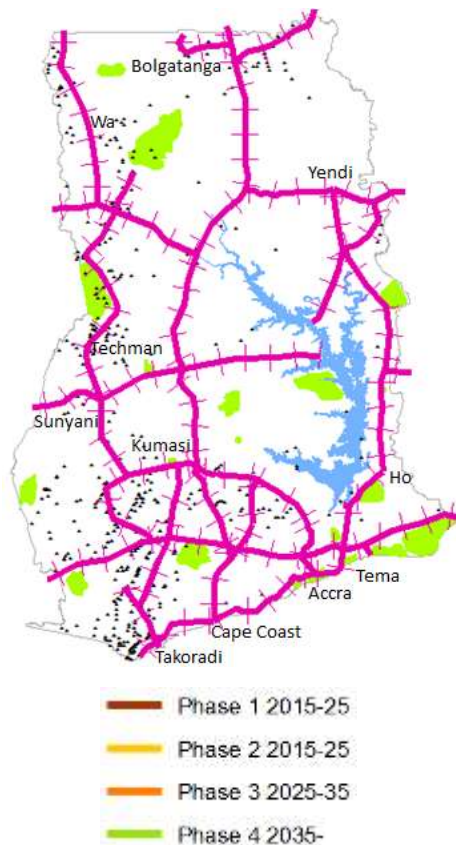
**Development of Railway Infrastructure:** The NSDF proposes new alignments to enhance development in the northern part of the country and make rational the development in the south. The major urban centres in the north will be connected, including new lines from Bolgatanga to Bawku and beyond to the Togo/Burkina Faso borders.

Additional links are made to the neighbouring countries from Sawla to the Comoe National park and Korhogo in Ivory Coast as well as from Yendi via Zabzugu to Kara and Sokode in Togo.

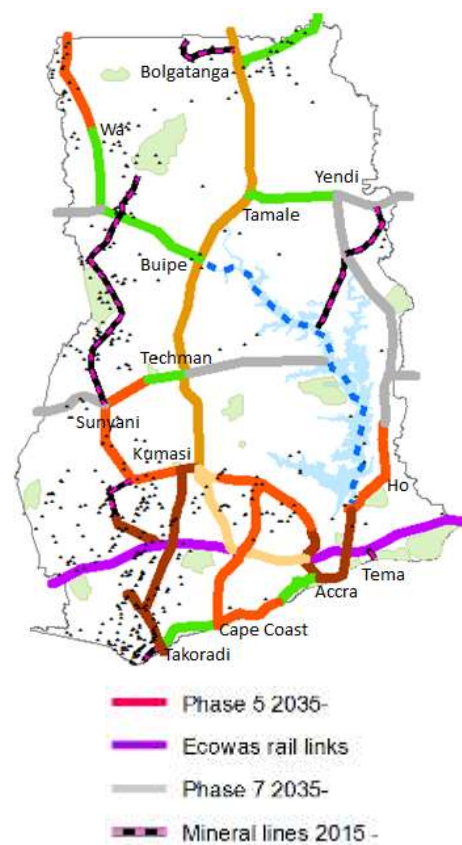
Agricultural areas in Upper Western and Eastern regions will benefit from the rail link to Tamale and to the large urban markets in the southern cities, with a maximum eleven-hour travel time.

## Proposed Railway Network

### Map 1 - Alignment



### Map 2 - Phasing options



**High-speed link between Kumasi and Accra:** The NSDF also proposes a new railway line between Accra-Tema and Kumasi to carry cargo between Tema port and the Boankra Inland port and passengers at high speed, 80–240 km per hour. The line will be about 10-15 km shorter than old Eastern Line—it will run through the country side from the Kotoku Junction in Accra via Achiasi to Boankra Inland port. The line will run parallel to the proposed Accra–Kumasi highway, simplifying land acquisition for both.

### Next Steps

Once the National Spatial Development Framework (NSDF) is now completed, it will have to be approved by the President before implementation starts. This will be facilitated by the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) and the Town and Country Planning Department (TCPD). Once the Plan is adopted, Ministries, Departments and Agencies as well as local government entities in charge of various aspects of the Plan will be requested to incorporate priority projects and programmes in their annual action plans and budget for them appropriately. It is expected that this Plan will serve as a guide for a coordinated delivery of development infrastructure and services based on a hierarchy of human settlements to propel the Nation into a higher middle income status.