

June 2019

Traditional Areas in Ghana



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A Reference Source for Traditional Leaders, Government Officials, Land Practitioners, Investors, and the General Public.

By COLANDEF, June 2019

1. Background

Under the customary land system in Ghana, there are a number of land-owning groups who are indigenes and have collective ownership of a large area of land. The boundaries of the land that each land-owning group holds is called a traditional area^[1] and each land-owning group has leaders who are appointed according to the customs and traditions of the people.

There is usually one appointed Head who works with a number of other leaders under a well laid out hierarchy of authority. The appointed Head is usually referred to as a Traditional Leader (Usually, there is a female counterpart of all the leadership positions under the customary arrangements, but the females are not included in customary land administration). Traditional Areas in Ghana therefore represent the traditional administrative boundaries for Traditional Leaders and the land within the boundaries of the Traditional Area all fall under the jurisdiction of the Traditional Leaders. Even though all Traditional Leaders represent the authority for community leadership and oversight in matters relating to land and community governance, there are instances where the oversight for land and community is split between different leaders.

While some Traditional Leaders are identified as Paramount Chiefs, others are Overlords, Family Heads or Clan Heads. There are many Traditional Leaders superintending over many traditional areas in Ghana. Information on the number of traditional areas, the name of the leader of the traditional area and the type of land system they practice is not easily available in Ghana. Yet, such information is relevant for all prospective investors, local people and even government, for purposes of land acquisition and policy engagement. COLANDEF has started a process of compiling this information and publicizing it for the benefit of all who engage in the land sector in Ghana.

[1] The traditional area boundaries are not the same as the political administrative boundaries which are defined by the formal government. In a few cases, the political administrative boundaries are the same as the traditional area boundaries, but this is not always the case. Therefore, in discussions on customary land administration, it is always best to situate the discussions within the traditional area boundaries.

2. Regional Distribution of Traditional Areas

Prior to the creation of 6 new additional regions in February 2019, Ghana had 10 administrative regions of varying sizes. Each region has a number of Traditional Areas, although the size of a region does not necessarily determine the number of Traditional Areas that the region has. Thus, some regions have over 50 Traditional Areas while others have fewer Traditional Areas as seen in Figure 1 below.

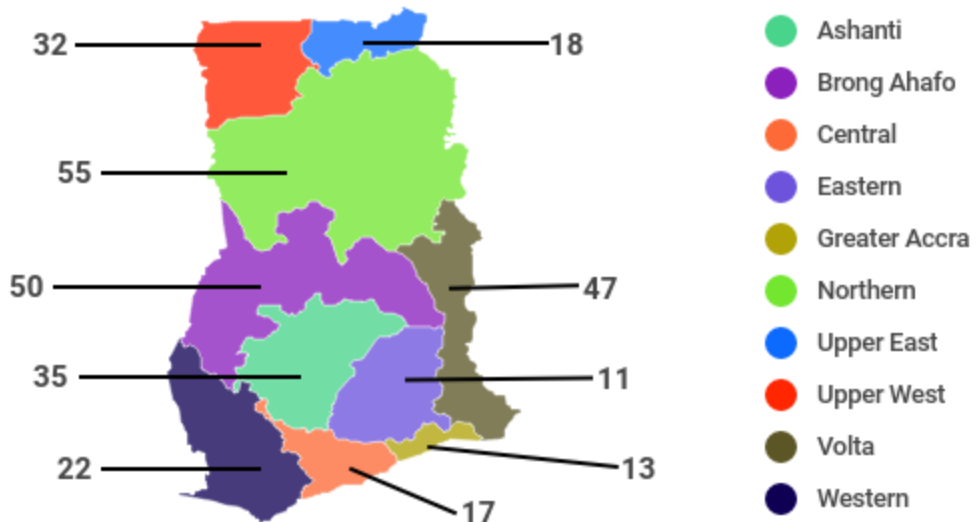


Figure 1: An info graph showing the number of traditional areas in the 10 regions of Ghana, as of June, 2019
 As of June 2019, the total Number of Traditional Areas in Ghana: 300. COLANDEF is building this data systematically and therefore will be updated regularly as information on other Traditional Areas not already captured, are identified.

The Traditional Leader of each Traditional Area does not work in isolation. There is a constitutionally recognized body called the Traditional Council with the Paramount Chief or Overlord as the President. Other members are the Divisional Chiefs and Sub-chiefs. The Traditional Council serves as the platform for traditional authority consultation and decision making on land and other community issues. In the Family Land areas, the Traditional Councils have jurisdiction in community governance and not land governance because the land is under the authority of Family Heads and Clan Heads, not under the authority of the Chiefs. However, in stool and skin land areas, the traditional councils have jurisdiction over both land and community governance.

3. Land Tenure Systems in Ghana

There are two main types of land tenure systems in Ghana, as briefly explained below:

1. Customary System- This system is operated by the traditional institutions mandated to set and apply rules derived from the customs and traditions applicable in the area. The rules under this system are unwritten unlike in the state system. About 78% of all lands in Ghana fall under this system and are held under the authority of Traditional leaders. Depending on the type of traditional authority that holds the overall decision-making power over the customary land in question, customary lands in Ghana are further grouped into three main types as follows:

a. Clan & family lands- Clan and Family Heads are the custodians of these lands and are responsible for the overall decision-making on the lands.

b. Stool lands- Paramount Chiefs are the custodians of stool lands and are responsible for the overall decision making on the land. Every Paramount Chief is supported by Divisional Chiefs and Local Chiefs in governing over the lands in their jurisdiction.

c. Skin lands- The Over Lord is the custodian of skin lands and is responsible for the overall decision-making on the land. He is supported by Paramount chiefs who have jurisdiction over designated portions of the skin land. In some skin land areas, there are 'Tindamba' who are recognized as spiritual heads over customary lands and are influential in decision making. Paramount Chiefs in skin land areas are supported by Divisional Chiefs and Local Chiefs in governing over the lands in their jurisdictions.

2.State system- It is operated by formal state institutions who provide land services guided by statutes and regulations. Lands under this system are referred to as state lands and account for about 20% of all lands in Ghana. These lands were also customary lands before but were acquired later on by the government using the power of eminent domain, for public interest purposes.

All state lands are held in trust by the President on behalf of the people of Ghana. In discussing the categories of lands under the two tenure systems, there is a third category known as the **vested lands**.

These lands are jointly held under an arrangement in which the beneficial ownership is held under the customary system, but the legal ownership is held by the state and therefore managed by the government through the Lands Commission on behalf of the land-owning communities. Vested lands represent approximately 2% of all lands.

4. The Different Types of Customary Land Systems in the Various Regions

- 1. Ashanti Region**– Lands in this region are all stool lands.
- 2. Brong Ahafo Region**– The dominant land system in this region is stool lands.
- 3. Central Region**– Lands in most parts of the region are stool lands, but in some parts also are clan and family lands.
- 4. Eastern Region**–The dominant land system is stool lands although there are few clan and family lands.
- 5. Greater Accra Region**– Lands in most parts of the region are family and clan lands, with a few being stool lands.
- 6. Northern Region**– Lands in this region are skin lands.
- 7. Upper East Region**– This region has a combination of Family and Clan lands.
- 8. Upper West Region**– This region has a combination of Family and Clan lands.
- 9. Volta Region**–The dominant land system are clan and family lands with a few stool lands as well.
- 10. Western Region**– Lands in this region are stool lands.

5. Traditional Areas in the Various Administrative Regions in Ghana

Ashanti Region

1. Kumasi Traditional Area
2. Mampong Traditional Area
3. Essumeja Traditional Area
4. Adansi Traditional Area
5. Nsuta Traditional Area
6. Kumawu Traditional Area
7. Juaben Traditional Area
8. Kokofu Traditional Area
9. Bekwai Traditional Area
10. Denyase Traditional Area
11. Offinso Traditional Area
12. Ejisu Traditional Area
13. Asokore Traditional Area
14. Tepa Traditional Area
15. Agogo Traditional Area
16. Manso Nkwanta Traditional Area
17. Bompata Traditional Area
18. Obogu Traditional Area
19. Asankare Traditional Area
20. Agona Traditional Area
21. Ofoase Traditional Area
22. Kwamang Traditional Area
23. Asuboa Traditional Area
24. Mpasaaso Traditional Area
25. Mabang Traditional Area
26. Amofo Traditional Area
27. Beposo Traditional Area
28. Domeabra Traditional Area
29. Gyadam Traditional Area
30. Mamfo Traditional Area
31. Juansa Traditional Area
32. Asamang Traditional Area
33. Adankragya Traditional Area
34. Kuntanase Traditional Area
35. Sabronum Traditional Area

Brong Ahafo Region

1. Abease Traditional Area
2. Acherensua Traditional Area
3. Adjaade Traditional Area
4. Akrodie Traditional Area
5. Amantin Traditional Area
6. Atebubu Traditional Area
7. Akroso Traditional Area
8. Ahafo South Traditional Area
9. Ahafo North Traditional Area
10. Awua-Domase Traditional Area
11. Badu Traditional Area
12. Banda Traditional Area
13. Bassa Traditional Area
14. Bechem Traditional Area
15. Berekum Traditional Area
16. Dormaa Traditional Area
17. Drobo Traditional Area
18. Duayaw Nkwanta Traditional Area
19. Dwan Traditional Area
20. Dwenem Traditional Area
21. Goaso Traditional Area
22. Hwidiem Traditional Area
23. Japekrom Traditional Area
24. Kenyasi No. 1 Traditional Area
25. Kenyasi No. 2 Traditional Area
26. Konkoma Traditional Area
27. Kukuom Traditional Area
28. Kwatwoma Traditional Area
29. Mim Traditional Area
30. Mo Traditional Area
31. Nkomi Traditional Area
32. Nkoranza Traditional Area
33. Nsawkaw Traditional Area
34. Nsooatre Traditional Area
35. Ntotroso Traditional Area
36. Odomase No. 1 Traditional Area
37. Offuman Traditional Area
38. Prang Traditional Area
39. Sampa Traditional Area
40. Sankore Traditional Area
41. Seikwa Traditional Area
42. Suma Traditional Area
43. Sunyani Traditional Area
44. Tano Traditional Area
45. Tain Traditional Area
46. Techiman Traditional Area
47. Wenchi Traditional Area
48. Wiase Traditional Area
49. Yamfo Traditional Area
50. Yeji Traditional Area

5. Traditional Areas in the Various Administrative Regions in Ghana (cont'd)

Central Region

1. Aboadze Traditional Area
2. Asebu Traditional Area
3. Eguafu Traditional Area
4. Kwamankese Traditional Area
5. Enyan Aboasa Traditional Area
6. Denkyira Traditional Area
7. Komenda Traditional Area
8. Bremen Essiam Traditional Area
9. Mankessim Traditional Area
10. Assin Atandanso Traditional Area

Upper East Region

1. Naaga Traditional Area
2. Sakoti Traditional Area
3. Bawku Traditional Area
4. Builsa Traditional Area
5. Nangodi Traditional Area
6. Bongo Traditional Area
7. Kayoro Traditional Area
8. Katiu Traditional Area
9. Nakong Traditional Area
10. Chiana Traditional Area
11. Bolga Traditional Area
12. Talensi Traditional Area
13. Navrongo Traditional Area
14. Neligu Traditional Area
15. Sirigu Traditional Area
16. Paga Traditional Area
17. Zoarungu Traditional Area
18. Koloko Traditional Area

11. Effutuakwa Traditional Area
12. Awutu Traditional Area
13. Abrem Traditional Area
14. Enyan Denkyira Traditional Area
15. Twifo Mampong Traditional Area
16. Gomoa Ajumako Traditional Area
17. Agona Nsaba Traditional Area

Upper West Region

1. Nandom Traditional Area
2. Tumu Traditional Area
3. Dorimon Traditional Area
4. Wechiau Traditional Area
5. Daffiama Traditional Area
6. Lawra Traditional Area
7. Gwollu Traditional Area
8. Jirapa Traditional Area
9. Issah Traditional Area
10. Wala Traditional Area
11. Wellebele Traditional Area
12. Kaleo Traditional Area
13. Lambussie Traditional Area
14. Bussie Traditional Area
15. Nadowli Traditional Area
16. Pulima Traditional Area
17. Zini Traditional Area
18. Ullo Traditional Area

Eastern Region

1. Akwamu Traditional Area
2. New Juaben Traditional Area
3. Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area
4. Bosso Traditional Area
5. Yilo Krobo Traditional Area
6. Many Krobo Traditional Area
7. Kwahu Traditional Area
8. Akim Bosome Traditional Area
9. Akim Kotoku Traditional Area
10. Akuapem Traditional Area
11. Anum Traditional Area

19. Bawiesibelle Traditional Area
20. Banu Traditional Area
21. Bulenga Traditional Area
22. Takpo Traditional Area
23. Guli Traditional Area
24. Sankana Traditional Area
25. Sing Traditional Area
26. Manwe Traditional Area
27. Charikpong Traditional Area
28. Kperisi Traditional Area
29. Busa Traditional Area
30. Funsu Traditional Area
31. Kojokperi Traditional Area
32. Kundugu Traditional Area

5. Traditional Areas in the Various Administrative Regions in Ghana (cont'd)

Northern Region

1. Kuga Traditional Area
2. Gushiegu Traditional Area
3. Kunbungu Traditional Area
4. Tolon Traditional Area
5. Yelzoli Traditional Area
6. Gulpegu Traditional Area
7. Nanton Traditional Area
8. Sunson Traditional Area
9. Gundogu Traditional Area
10. Karaga Traditional Area
11. Mion-Sambu Traditional Area
12. Tidjo Traditional Area
13. Yo-Savelgu Traditional Area
14. Sanarigu Traditional Area
15. Nakali (Tataali) Traditional Area
16. Sanguli Traditional Area
17. Chereponi Traditional Area
18. Namberi Traditional Area
19. Saboba Traditional Area
20. Yendi Traditional Area
21. Dindani Traditional Area
22. Kpansenkpe Traditional Area
23. Wungu Traditional Area
24. Yunyuo Traditional Area
25. Bunkrugu Traditional Area
26. Soo Traditional Area
27. Kurigu Traditional Area
28. Yagbon Traditional Area
29. Kpemi Traditional Area
30. Wasipe Traditional Area
31. Bole Traditional Area
32. Kusawgu Traditional Area
33. Kong Traditional Area
34. Sonyo Traditional Area
35. Damongo Traditional Area
36. Debri Traditional Area
37. Chori Traditional Area
38. Mankpan Traditional Area
39. Tuluwe Traditional Area
40. Kulaw Traditional Area
41. Kpashegu Traditional Area
42. Busunu Traditional Area
43. Buipe Traditional Area
44. Nakpah Traditional Area
45. Wulensi Traditional Area
46. Bakpaba Traditional Area
47. Dakpam Traditional Area
48. Chamba Traditional Area
49. Ivo Traditional Area
50. Kaliga Traditional Area
51. Yani Traditional Area
52. Bambo Traditional Area
53. Gondogu Traditional Area
54. Bimbila Traditional Area
55. Kuloh Traditional Area

Volta Region

1. Likpe Traditional Area
2. Anfoega Traditional Area
3. Asogli Traditional Area
4. Gbi Traditional Area
5. Nkonya Traditional Area
6. Ve Traditional Area
7. Krachie Traditional Area
8. Santrokofi Traditional Area
9. Tepa Traditional Area
10. Hokpe Traditional Area
11. Akpini Traditional Area
12. Peki Traditional Area
13. Amfoita Traditional Area
14. Bejamse – Nchumuru Traditional Area
15. Ziavi Traditional Area
16. Leklebi Traditional Area
17. Afloa Traditional Area
18. Agotime Traditional Area
19. Atwode Traditional Area
20. Kajebi Traditional Area
21. Logba Traditional Area
22. Fodome Traditional Area
23. Wusuta Traditional Area
24. Tafi Traditional Area
25. Vakpo Traditional Area
26. Aveme Traditional Area
27. Alavanyo Traditional Area
28. Nyagbo Traditional Area
29. Batto Traditional Area
30. Tefle Traditional Area
31. Holuta Traditional Area
32. Avenor Traditional Area
33. Kpedze Traditional Area
34. Matsi Traditional Area
35. Adaklu Traditional Area
36. Tinyigbe Traditional Area
37. Kpoeta Traditional Area
38. Bowiri Traditional Area
39. Agave Traditional Area
40. Dzolo Traditional Area
41. Mafi Traditional Area
42. Abutia Traditional Area
43. Have Traditional Area
44. Worawora Traditional Area
45. Some Traditional Area
46. Todome Traditional Area
47. Akome Traditional Area

5. Traditional Areas in the Various Administrative Regions in Ghana (cont'd)

Western Region

1. Sefwi Anhwiaso Traditional Area
2. Eastern Nzema Traditional Area
3. Nsein Traditional Area
4. Essikado Traditional Area
5. Wassa Amenfi Traditional Area
6. Lower Axim Traditional Area
7. Ajomoro Traditional Area
8. Ahanta Traditional Area
9. Lower Dixcove Traditional Area
10. Western Nzema Traditional Area
11. Mpohor Traditional Area
12. Gwira Traditional Area
13. Sefwi-Chrano Traditional Area
14. Suaman Dadieso Traditional Area
15. Upper Dixcove Traditional Area
16. Sekondi Traditional Area
17. Upper Axim Traditional Area
18. Shama Traditional Area
19. Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Area
20. Sefwi-Bekwai Traditional Area
21. Aowin Traditional Area
22. Wassa Fiase Traditional Area