

2026

Industry Outlook

From Stabilisation
to Sustainability



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ABOUT GAB

The Ghana Association of Banks is the country's leading mouthpiece for the universal banking sector, currently representing the interests of 23 member banks and the Development Bank. The Association was established on 29th May 1980. GAB supports and promotes policies and initiatives that balance both the interest of banks, and the wider public. In consonance with similar global bodies, GAB's work is underpinned by three core priorities: Helping customers - both households and businesses; Promoting growth, including supporting Ghana as the financial gateway to West Africa; carrying out research, analysis and dissemination of information on issues affecting the banking industry's performance and growth.

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	ABSA BANK		ACCESS BANK
	AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BANK		BANK OF AFRICA
	CONSOLIDATED BANK GHANA		CALBANK PLC
	DEVELOPMENT BANK GHANA		ECOBANK
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	FIRST ATLANTIC BANK		FIRST NATIONAL BANK
	GCB BANK		GUARANTY TRUST BANK
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	UNIVERSAL MERCHANT BANK		ZENITH BANK

PROMOTING
INTEREST OF BANKS
AND CUSTOMERS

FOSTERING
PARTNERSHIP AND
SUSTAINABLE
BANKING

The GAB 2026 Industry Outlook

From Stabilisation to Sustainability

The GAB 2026 Banking Industry Outlook examines the banking sector's shift from macroeconomic stabilisation towards a phase defined by discipline, resilience, and strategic choice. It assesses how banks are repositioning balance sheets, managing risk, and allocating capital in an environment shaped by the final phase of the IMF-supported programme, the normalisation of prudential standards, and evolving global financial conditions.

The Outlook draws on a detailed assessment of macroeconomic trends, sector performance indicators, and policy settings to evaluate how external shocks, domestic fiscal discipline, and structural reforms are likely to shape banking outcomes. Rather than offering forecasts or prescriptions, it maps plausible operating conditions under varying assumptions about growth, inflation, capital flows, and policy credibility.

Given ongoing uncertainty in global markets and domestic adjustment dynamics, outcomes are unlikely to follow a single path. The scenarios and analyses presented are not exhaustive. They are intended to frame the range of conditions under which banks will operate, highlight key risk transmission channels, and inform strategic decision-making as the sector moves beyond stabilisation and seeks to entrench sustainable performance in 2026 and the years ahead.

The GAB 2026 Industry Outlook serves as a lens through which stakeholders can examine risks and opportunities in Ghana's banking sector. It is also a contribution to the broader discourse on the nation's financial future. While this Outlook offers valuable perspectives, it should be viewed alongside other strategic insights and data as stakeholders chart their paths in the evolving economic landscape.

January, 22nd 2026

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CEO'S FOREWORD



The year 2026 marks an important transition for Ghana's economy and its banking industry. After a prolonged period of macroeconomic stress, debt restructuring, and policy adjustment, the economy is about to enter a post-IMF phase defined less by emergency stabilisation and more by the challenge of sustaining credibility, discipline, and inclusive growth.

Over the past two years, decisive policy actions have restored a measure of macroeconomic stability. Inflation has declined sharply and the exchange rate has stabilised. Fiscal consolidation has strengthened, and confidence has begun to return. These gains are meaningful, but they are also fragile. Ghana's

economic history reminds us that stability achieved is not stability guaranteed.

For the banking sector, the adjustment period has been demanding. The Domestic Debt Exchange Programme tested balance sheets, capital buffers, and governance frameworks. Regulatory reliefs provided temporary breathing space, but their full withdrawal by the end of 2025 signals a return to normal prudential standards. Banks are now required to operate with stronger capital discipline, sharper risk pricing, and renewed focus on asset quality. Though 2025 may be regarded as a year of macroeconomic stabilisation, the abrupt and pronounced decline

in government securities yields, alongside the rapid appreciation of the cedi, initially posed material risks to banks' foreign exchange exposures and Net Open Position limits.

The 2026 GAB Banking Industry Outlook is published at a moment when the sector must move from defence to strategy. Opportunities are emerging in private sector credit, infrastructure financing, digital payments, trade finance, and ESG-aligned investments. At the same time, risks remain elevated. Sovereign exposure, non-performing loans, cyber threats, geopolitical fragmentation, and climate-related shocks continue to shape the operating environment.

Against this backdrop, the industry

must also confront the growing threat of fraud, particularly technology-enabled and insider-related incidents that erode trust and impose real financial costs. The Association has therefore purposed to intensify its fraud awareness and prevention campaign, working with regulators and member banks to strengthen internal controls, promote ethical conduct, and improve information sharing across the sector. Safeguarding trust is no longer a compliance exercise; it is central to financial stability.

Equally important is the need to deepen industry collaboration in digital payments. GhanaPay remains a strategic asset for the banking

sector, offering a trusted, bank-led platform that supports financial inclusion, payment sovereignty, and customer confidence. Wider adoption and consistent customer education will be critical to unlocking its full value. A strong, unified digital platform is essential if banks are to compete effectively, reduce fraud risk, and retain relevance in an increasingly platform-driven financial landscape.

The Ghana Association of Banks (GAB) remains committed to supporting a stable, resilient, and forward-looking banking system. Through sustained engagement with policymakers, regulators,

and development partners, the Association will continue to advocate for policies that strengthen financial stability while enabling banks to play a stronger role in financing growth and transformation.

This Outlook is intended to inform, challenge, and guide decision-makers. It reflects our collective responsibility to consolidate recent gains, manage emerging risks, and position the banking sector as a trusted pillar of Ghana's economic recovery and long-term development.

Mr. John Awuah
(CEO, *Ghana Association of Banks*)





Mr. Lawrence Sackey

Head of Research, Media, Business Intelligence and Market Conduct
Ghana Association of Banks



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ghana's banking industry enters 2026 at a defining stage for policy credibility and financial stability. The economy is emerging from a period of severe macroeconomic instability, marked by high inflation, exchange-rate volatility, and debt distress, into a phase of stabilisation supported by policy discipline and improving confidence. As the IMF-supported programme moves into its final phase, the responsibility for sustaining credibility increasingly rests on domestic policy discipline, institutional strength, and market confidence.

Globally, growth remains moderate and uneven. Disinflation is progressing, but geopolitical fragmentation, trade disruptions, and commodity price volatility continue to pose downside risks. For Ghana, easing global inflation and the prospect of lower international interest rates offer some relief. However, external shocks, shifting capital flows, and energy price uncertainty remain persistent sources of vulnerability.

Domestically, growth has recovered strongly, supported by fiscal consolidation, stabilising inflation, and improved external balances. Inflation fell sharply from its 2022 peak, reflecting tight monetary conditions and improved exchange rate management. The current account has moved into surplus, underpinned by strong gold receipts and resilient remittances. These developments have eased pressure on the cedi and improved liquidity conditions across the financial system.

Fiscal performance has strengthened materially. The deficit has narrowed, the primary balance has returned to surplus, and public debt ratios have declined sharply following restructuring. These improvements reduce near-term sovereign risk, but they do not eliminate it. Government securities remain a large component of bank assets, and fiscal slippages would quickly transmit into balance-sheet stress. Managing sovereign concentration and duration risk therefore remains central to bank strategy in 2026.

The banking sector itself is liquid, well capitalised, and profitable. Total assets and deposits have expanded rapidly, reflecting strong public confidence and deepening financial inclusion. Credit growth, however, has lagged deposit mobilisation, resulting in a low loan-to-deposit ratio and significant unutilised lending capacity. Elevated non-performing loans, particularly following the DDEP, continue to constrain risk appetite and reinforce conservative lending behaviour.

Monetary easing in 2025 has begun to support a gradual recovery in private sector credit, but transmission remains uneven. Lending rates adjust downward slowly, while deposit rates remain sticky. Margin management, repricing risk, and credit quality will therefore be key challenges as competition intensifies.

Beyond macro-financial factors, structural forces are reshaping the operating environment. Digitalisation, mobile money dominance, and the rise of platforms such as GhanaPay are redefining

banks' role in payments, liquidity, and data. Cybersecurity has become a core financial stability issue, amplified by artificial intelligence, cyber-enabled fraud, and the formal regulation of virtual assets. At the same time, ESG considerations are moving from reputational concerns to strategic and risk-management imperatives.

Looking ahead, the outlook for 2026 depends on sustained policy discipline and macroeconomic credibility. If fiscal discipline is sustained, inflation remains contained, and policy credibility is preserved, banks will be better positioned to expand high-quality private sector lending, support infrastructure and trade, and deepen financial intermediation. Failure to consolidate recent gains, however, would quickly re-expose vulnerabilities.

The central message of this Outlook is clear. Ghana's banking sector has regained stability, but resilience must now be actively built. The transition from stabilisation to sustainability will depend on disciplined risk management, strategic balance-sheet allocation, strong governance, and continued collaboration between banks, regulators, and policymakers.

Macroeconomic Insights

GLOBAL MACROECONOMIC INSIGHTS

Global Growth

Global growth prospects have moderated as the world economy transitions from post-pandemic adjustments to a more structurally uncertain global policy environment. As of the latest IMF World Economic Outlook in January 2026, global growth is estimated at 3.3 percent for 2025, and it's expected to remain unchanged in 2026, before a projected slight easing of 3.2 percent in 2027. This relatively stable near-term outlook reflects offsetting forces, including easing inflationary pressures, gradual financial condition normalization, and selective fiscal support, against persistent headwinds from geopolitical tensions, fragmented trade dynamics, and policy uncertainty. While global inflation continues to decline, disinflation remains uneven, with inflation in some advanced economies, reflecting divergent monetary policy paths across regions.

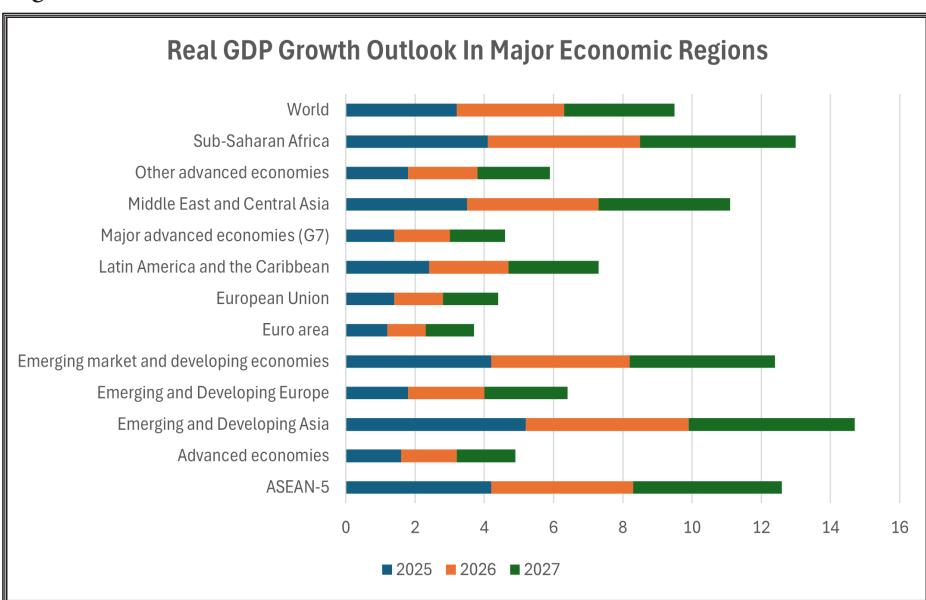
By late 2025, the IMF's assessment highlights a cautiously balanced but fragile global outlook. Risks remain tilted to the downside, driven largely by heightened trade policy uncertainty, geopolitical conflicts, and the recalibration of fiscal and monetary frameworks across major economies. Confidence effects remain weak; and while policy normalization is underway in several jurisdictions, the

effectiveness of these adjustments will hinge critically on credibility, predictability, and coordination, particularly in managing debt sustainability and financial stability risks.

Global GDP growth points to a broadly stable but moderating trajectory between 2025 and 2027, with clear regional divergence. Advanced economies continue to underperform, with growth estimated at 1.7 percent in 2025, with an anticipated marginal improvement of 1.8 percent in 2026, before easing back to 1.7 percent in 2027, reflecting structural constraints, aging demographics, and limited policy space which keep momentum subdued. Within this group, the euro area records weak but gradual stabilization, rising from

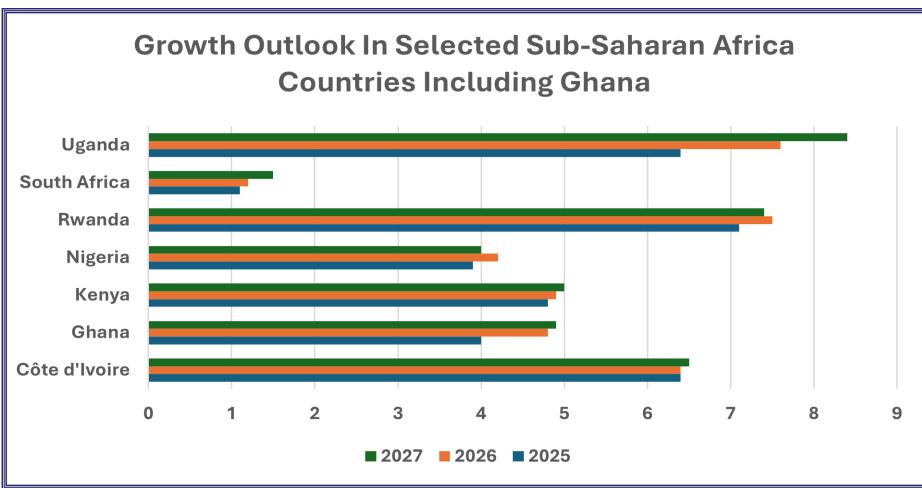
1.4 percent in 2025 to an estimated 1.3 percent in 2026 and 1.4 percent in 2027. The United States continues to outperform peers, but growth moderates over the projection horizon. In contrast, emerging market and developing economies still anchor global expansion, though at a slower pace. Growth is projected to ease from 4.4 percent in 2025 to 4.2 percent in 2026 and 4.1 percent in 2027, as external demand softens and financing conditions remain tight. Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to strengthen from 4.4 percent in 2025 to 4.6 percent in 2026 and 2027, supported by improving macro conditions, easing inflation, and firmer investment. Even so, growth remains below what is needed for short-term economic transformation, absorb demographic pressures, and reduce poverty at scale.

Figure 1: Real GDP Growth Outlook



Source: World Economic Outlook Data (2026)

Figure 2: Growth Outlook In Selected Countries



Source: World Economic Outlook Data (2026)

Global Inflation Outlook and Implications for Ghana

Global headline inflation is projected to ease from an estimated 4.1 percent in 2025 to 3.8 percent in 2026, before moderating further to 3.4 percent in 2027. These projections remain largely unchanged from the October 2025 outlook and suggest a more gradual return to target in the United States compared with other major economies.

Global inflation has largely remained steady, with annual headline and core rates showing stability with modest downside surprises in some economies. Sequential inflation has firmed slightly, reflecting ongoing pressures in some sectors, especially energy and food. In the United States, households continue to cite the high cost of living as a key concern, and short-term inflation expectations remain elevated. Similarly, input prices in manufacturing remain firm, signaling that cost pressures could persist despite headline stability.

Energy prices, particularly oil and natural gas, are expected to decline

further in 2026 supported by moderate global demand and ample supply. However, a soft floor is provided by higher-cost producers, Chinese strategic stockpiling, and OPEC+ measures to avoid a price collapse. This implies that while energy-related inflationary shocks may ease globally, volatility remains a possibility.

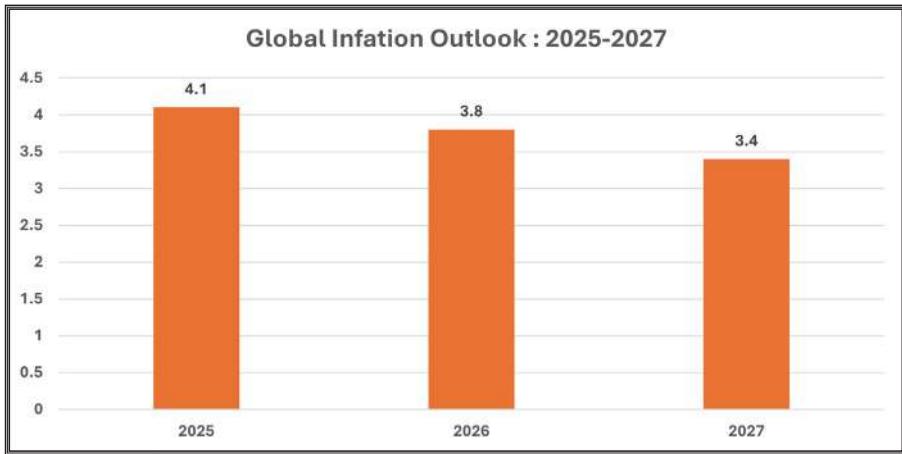
Monetary policy trajectories are also shaping inflation outcomes. In the US and the UK, policy rates are expected to gradually decline, while the euro area is likely to maintain rates and Japan may raise them slowly. Advanced economies such as Germany, Japan, and the US are expected to pursue stimulative fiscal policies in the near term, partly offsetting some disinflationary pressures.

Ghana should closely monitor global inflation developments, as falling energy prices provide some relief for domestic fuel costs but remain subject to volatility from

higher-cost producers, Chinese stockpiling, and OPEC+ decisions. Imported inflation, particularly from fuel and industrial inputs, could pressure local prices, while global food price movements may affect domestic food inflation. Changes in monetary policy in major economies, especially the US, could influence capital flows and exchange rates, with a stronger dollar potentially raising import costs and the country's foreign debt stock. To mitigate these risks, Ghanaian policymakers, banks, and corporates should consider targeted measures, including strategic hedging, to manage exposure to energy and foreign exchange shocks, ensuring that monetary and fiscal policies remain responsive to global dynamics.

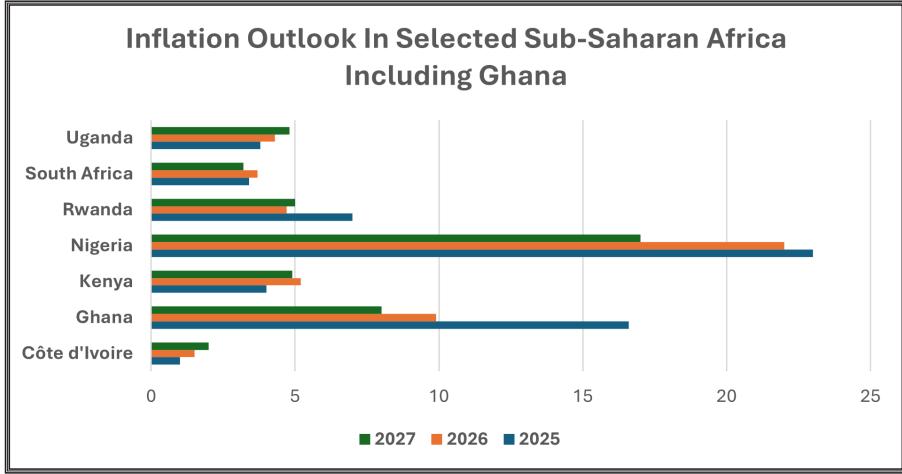
While global inflation is broadly stable, Ghana needs to maintain vigilance on imported cost pressures, energy prices, and exchange rate movements. Policymakers should consider targeted measures to cushion domestic households from external shocks and ensure monetary policy remains responsive to global dynamics.



Figure 3: Global Inflation Outlook

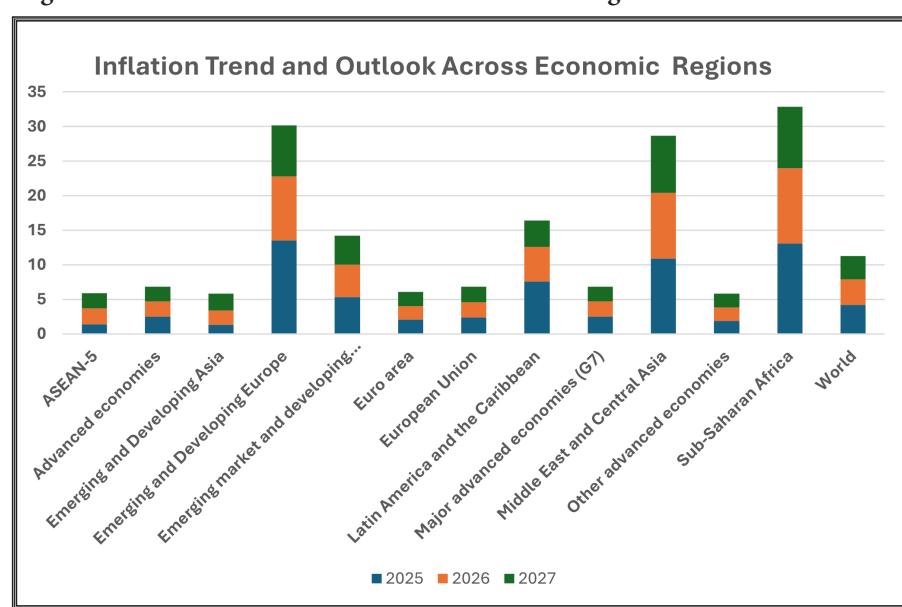
Source: World Economic Outlook Data (2026)

The global macroeconomic backdrop into 2026 combines resilience with meaningful uncertainty, shaping financial conditions across emerging and frontier markets, including Ghana. Growth is supported by technology-driven investment, including AI-related capex in North America and parts of Asia, alongside broadly supportive financial conditions and private-sector adaptability. At the same time, geopolitical risk, trade uncertainty, and commodity price volatility continue to generate downside pressure.

Figure 4: Inflation Outlook In Selected Countries

Source: World Economic Outlook Data (2026)

With global headline inflation expected to fall from 4.1 percent in 2025 to 3.8 percent in 2026 and 3.4 percent in 2027, major central banks have more room to begin easing. For Ghana, lower global inflation and softer international rates could reduce external financing costs, support portfolio flows, and ease pressure on the cedi. The risks are also clear. Trade disruption, geopolitical escalation, and commodity price swings could weaken export earnings, reduce fiscal revenues, and trigger renewed capital outflows.

Figure 5: Inflation Trend and Outlook in Selected Regions

Source: World Economic Outlook Data (2026)

Against this backdrop, Ghana's policy priorities should remain anchored in fiscal discipline, prudent debt management, and a monetary stance that protects disinflation gains. Any improvement in global liquidity should be used to rebuild buffers, attract durable private investment, and support real-economy recovery. Structural reforms that reduce policy uncertainty and strengthen productivity will determine how much of the global tailwind translates into sustained domestic growth.

Ghana Macroeconomic Outlook for 2025-2026

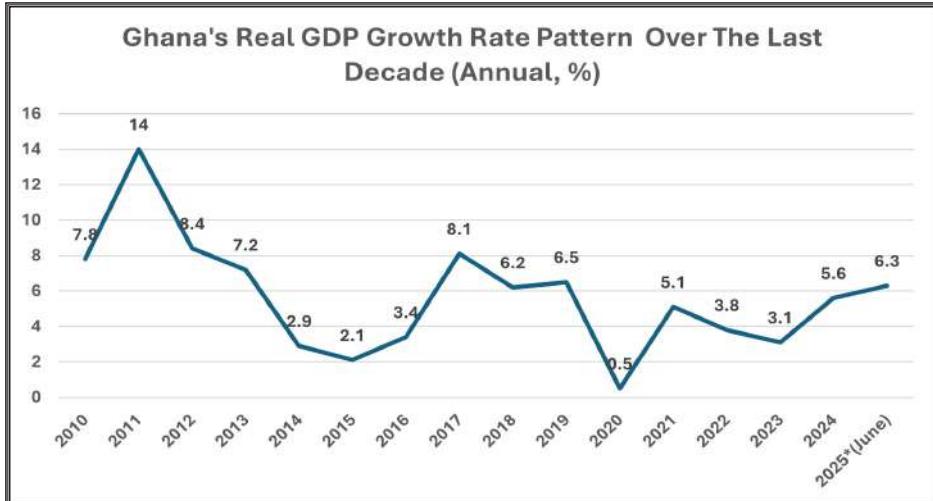
Growth

Ghana's real GDP growth trajectory from 2010 to 2025 highlights cycles of expansion, correction, and recovery, shaped by commodity dynamics and macroeconomic management. Growth surged to 14.0% in 2011 following the onset of oil production and remained strong above 7% between 2012 and 2013, before slowing sharply during 2014–2016, when growth dropped to 2.1% in 2015 amid fiscal slippages, energy constraints, and macroeconomic instability. A recovery phase emerged in 2017–2019, with growth consistently above 6%, supported by improved policy coordination and extractive-sector performance. The COVID-19 shock reduced growth to 0.5% in 2020, followed by a rebound to 5.1% in 2021, but this momentum weakened again as debt distress, high inflation, and tightening financial

conditions slowed growth to 3.8% in 2022 and 3.1% in 2023. Recent data point to a renewed recovery, with growth rising to 5.6% in 2024 and an estimated 6.3% by mid-2025, reflecting macroeconomic stabilization and improving confidence. Looking ahead to 2026, the outlook is cautiously positive: if fiscal consolidation is

sustained, inflation continues to ease, and investment in energy, agriculture, and infrastructure strengthens, growth could stabilize in the 6–6.5% range, though upside risks remain contingent on debt sustainability, external financing conditions, and productivity-enhancing structural reforms.

Figure 6: Ghana's Real GDP Growth Rate Pattern



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

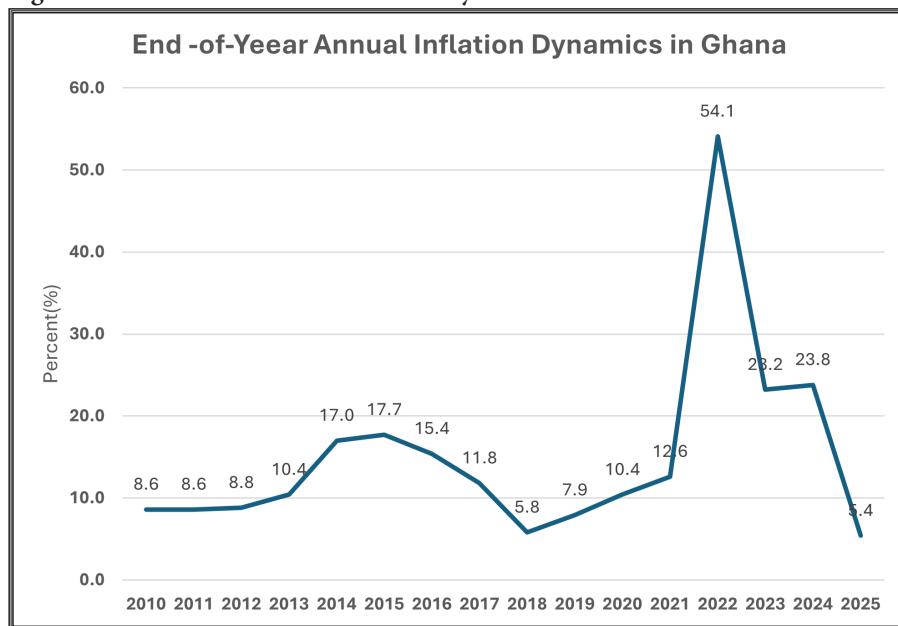
Inflation

Inflation remained largely single-digit to low double-digit between 2010 and 2013 (8.6–10.4%), before accelerating sharply during 2014–2016, peaking at 17.7% in 2015 amid fiscal slippages, currency depreciation, and energy supply constraints. A strong disinflation phase followed, with inflation falling to 11.8% in 2017 and reaching a low of 5.8% in 2018, reflecting tighter monetary policy and improved macroeconomic management, although pressures resurfaced in

2019–2021, pushing inflation back to 12.6% by end-2021. The period 2022 marked a structural break, with inflation surging to an unprecedented 54.1%, driven by severe exchange-rate depreciation, global commodity price shocks, supply-side constraints, and the domestic debt crisis. Although inflation eased significantly to 23.2% in 2023, it remained elevated at 23.8% in 2024, underscoring the persistence of second-round and cost-push pressures. The sharp decline to 5.4% in 2025 signals a strong disinflation phase,

reflecting tight monetary conditions, fiscal consolidation, and exchange-rate stabilization; looking ahead, sustaining low inflation beyond 2026 will depend on anchoring expectations, maintaining fiscal discipline, and addressing structural drivers of food and import-dependent inflation to avoid a renewed resurgence. Based on strong build-up of external reserves and fiscal consolidation, a stable inflation outlook (single digit inflation) is anticipated throughout 2026. Things will only get dicey after IMF programme support tapers off.

Figure 7: End of Year Annual Inflation Dynamics

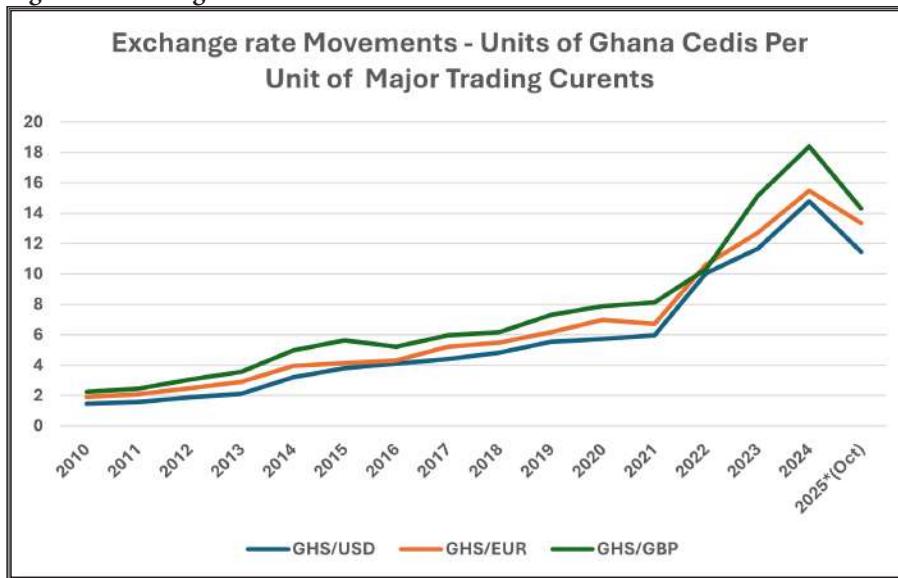


Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

External Sector Performance and Exchange Rate Movements

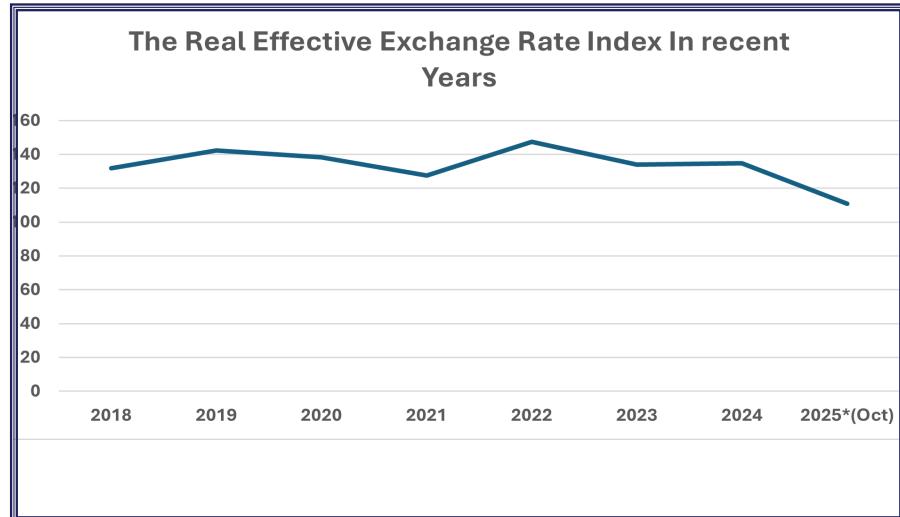
External sector indicators reinforced this stabilisation. The current account balance, which recorded deficits as large as negative 7.5 percent of GDP in 2015, shifted into surplus from 2023 onward and reached a peak of 4.4 percent of GDP in 2025. This turnaround was supported by strong gold export receipts, elevated gold prices that peaked at approximately 4,054 US dollars per ounce in 2025, and resilient remittance inflows. The improvement in the current account strengthened foreign exchange availability and reduced pressure on the domestic currency.

Figure 8: Exchange Rate Movements



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

Figure 9: The Real Effective Exchange Rate Index



Source: Bank of Ghana; Summary of Financial and Economic Data

Exchange rate developments reflect this external adjustment. In recent years, the Ghanaian Cedi has experienced significant volatility, with sharp depreciation up to 2024 reflecting inflationary pressures, fiscal deficits, and external

vulnerabilities. However, by October 2025, Cedi showed a notable recovery against major currencies, signaling the positive impact of policy interventions, improved foreign inflows, and growing reserves. While the

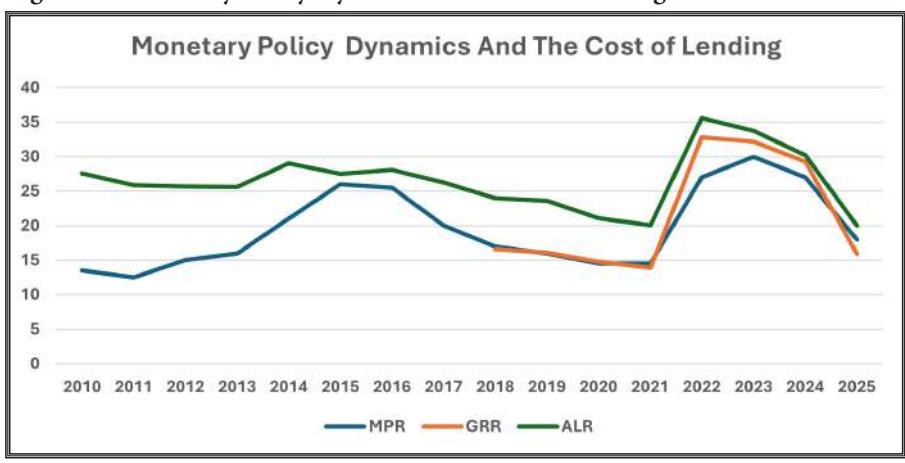
real value of the Cedi remains under pressure due to persistent domestic importation pressures, the accumulation of foreign exchange reserves, stabilization measures, and strengthening macroeconomic fundamentals provide a strong foundation for greater exchange rate stability and potential stability in the near future, offering hope for improved investor confidence and a more resilient currency outlook.

For banks, these macroeconomic developments improve the operating environment by reducing macro-induced credit risk. However, the data also show that macro stability has historically been volatile, and therefore banks should treat the current recovery as a phase to be consolidated rather than as a permanent structural shift.

Monetary Policy and Interest Rates

Monetary policy dynamics over the period illustrate the strength of the inflation interest rate nexus in Ghana. The Monetary Policy Rate averaged 19.6 percent from 2010 to 2025, but this average conceals extreme cyclical variation. The policy rate fell to a low of 12.5 percent in 2011, rose to 26.0 percent in 2015, declined again to 14.5 percent in 2020 and 2021, and then surged to a peak of 30.0 percent in 2023 before easing to 18.0 percent in 2025. This tightening and

Figure 10: Monetary Policy Dynamics And Cost of Lending

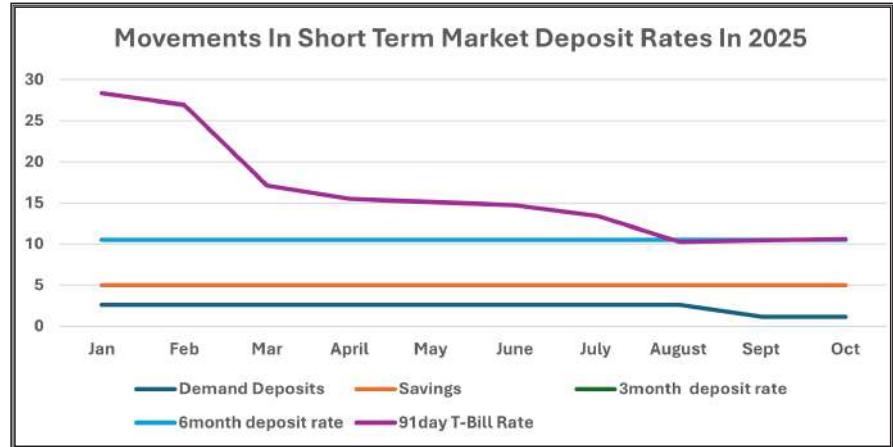


Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

Figure 11: Movements in Short Term Market Deposit Rates

easing cycle transmitted strongly into market and retail rates. The Ghana Reference Rate rose sharply to 32.83 percent in 2022 and remained above 32 percent in 2023 before declining to 15.9 percent in 2025. The average lending rate followed a similar pattern, peaking at 35.58 percent in 2022 and falling below 20 percent in 2025. These movements had a profound effect on borrower cash flows, loan performance, and credit demand.

The easing of monetary conditions in 2025 supports a gradual recovery in private sector credit in 2026, but the transmission mechanism is asymmetric. Lending rates rise quickly during tightening phases but adjust more slowly during easing phases, which implies that banks must actively manage repricing risk and margin compression. Deposit rates remain sticky, particularly for



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

term deposits, which could further compress net interest margins as competition intensifies.

Liquidity conditions improved significantly after the crisis years, with banks holding elevated levels of liquid assets in 2024 before partially redeploying liquidity in 2025. This liquidity normalisation is consistent with improving confidence, but it also implies

that banks must remain vigilant to sudden shifts in market conditions. The combination of easing rates, improved liquidity, and stabilising macro conditions creates space for renewed intermediation in 2026, but only within a disciplined risk management framework.

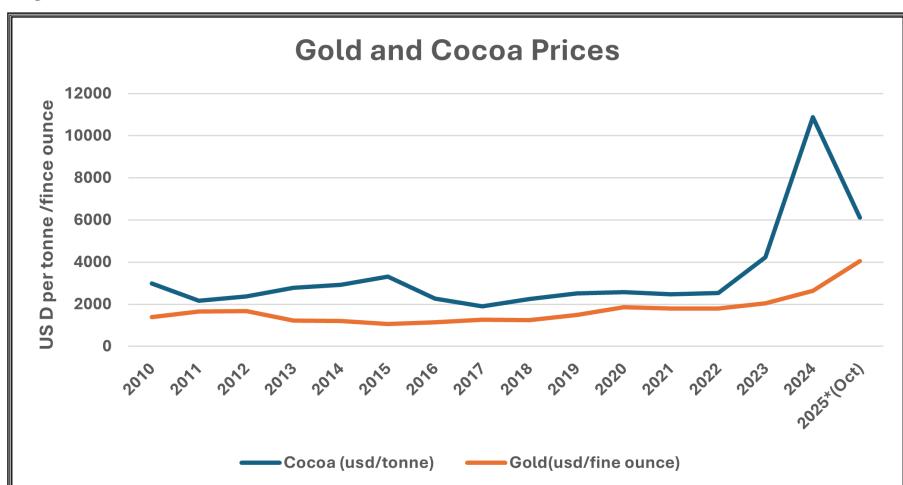


Commodity Market Outlook and Terms of Trade

Commodity prices play a central role in Ghana's macroeconomic and financial dynamics, and the dataset clearly illustrates their influence. Gold prices averaged approximately 1,722 dollars per ounce between 2010 and 2025, but this average masks a dramatic upswing in recent years. Gold prices reached a trough of about 1,069 dollars per ounce in 2015 and rose steadily thereafter, peaking at approximately 4,054 dollars per ounce in 2025. This peak coincided with the strongest current account surplus in the dataset and a significant accumulation of foreign exchange reserves.

Cocoa prices exhibit even greater volatility. Cocoa prices averaged about 3,393 dollars per tonne over the period but declined to a trough of approximately 1,905 dollars per tonne in 2017. Prices then surged sharply, reaching an unprecedented peak of about 10,869 dollars per tonne in 2024 before easing to around 6,111 dollars per tonne in 2025. This spike reflects supply constraints rather than volume expansion, which limits the pass through of high prices into broad based income growth. For banks, cocoa price volatility translates into uneven cash flows across the agricultural value chain and elevated credit risk for cocoa linked borrowers.

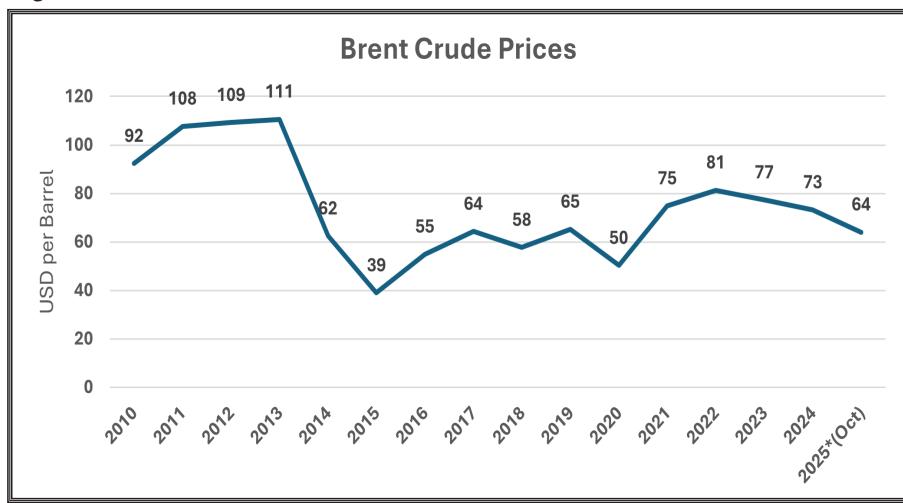
Figure 12: Gold and Cocoa Prices



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

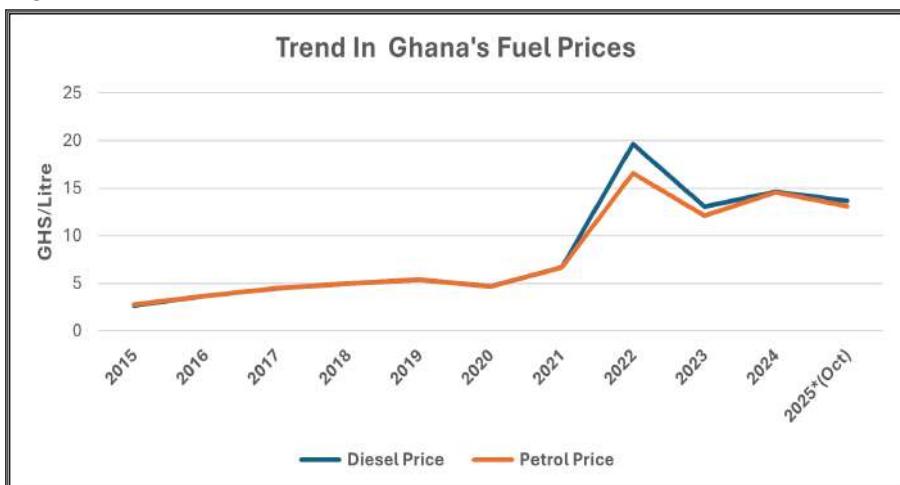
Oil prices provide a counterbalancing effect. Brent crude averaged approximately 74 dollars per barrel across the dataset, peaked at 110.6 dollars per barrel in 2013, and fell to a trough of 38.9 dollars per barrel in 2015. Prices remained in the 70 to 80 dollar range during most of the recent stabilisation period before declining to 64.0 dollars per barrel in 2025. Lower oil prices reduce Ghana's import bill and ease inflationary pressures, which indirectly support banking sector stability.

Figure 13: Brent Crude Prices



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

Figure 14: Trend In Ghana's Fuel Prices



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

From 2015 to 2021, Ghana's diesel and petrol prices gradually increased, reflecting rising global oil prices and exchange rate pressures. Prices spiked sharply in 2022, with diesel reaching GH¢19.61/litre and petrol GH¢16.58/litre, largely due to global supply disruptions and cedi depreciation. In 2023 and 2024, prices moderated

somewhat but remained high, with petrol at GH¢14.53/litre and diesel at GH¢14.60/litre in 2024. By October 2025, a slight downward adjustment was observed, with diesel at GH¢13.67/litre and petrol at GH¢13.11/litre.

A significant development

supporting potential future stabilization is the revamp and resumption of operations at the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR) in late 2025. By increasing local refining capacity, TOR is expected to reduce reliance on imported fuel and help moderate price volatility in 2026, all things being equal.

This indicates that while fuel prices have been volatile, the renewed TOR operations present a promising structural anchor for cooling fuel prices going forward

In 2026, the terms of trade outlook remains favourable but exposed to global volatility. Banks must therefore manage concentration risks in commodity linked lending while leveraging improved FX inflows to expand trade finance and transaction banking services.



Ghana's Fiscal Position and Debt Dynamics

Ghana's fiscal position over the period covered by the dataset reveals a long history of structural deficits punctuated by episodic consolidation. Between 2014 and 2025, the overall fiscal balance averaged a deficit of 6.56 percent of GDP, indicating that fiscal policy has generally been expansionary even during periods of economic stability. The deficit widened sharply during the pandemic period, reaching a trough of negative 11.7 percent of GDP in 2020, which represents the weakest fiscal outcome in the dataset. This deterioration reflected emergency spending pressures, revenue shortfalls, and elevated financing costs.

Fiscal consolidation began gradually after 2020 but gained momentum during the IMF-supported adjustment period. The deficit narrowed to negative 9.2 percent in 2021 and negative 8.3 percent in 2022, before improving significantly to negative 3.3 percent in 2023. Although the deficit widened again to negative 5.2 percent in 2024, it strengthened materially to negative 2.23 percent in 2025, which is the strongest fiscal outcome recorded in the series. This improvement reflects tighter expenditure control, enhanced revenue mobilisation, and reduced interest costs following debt restructuring.

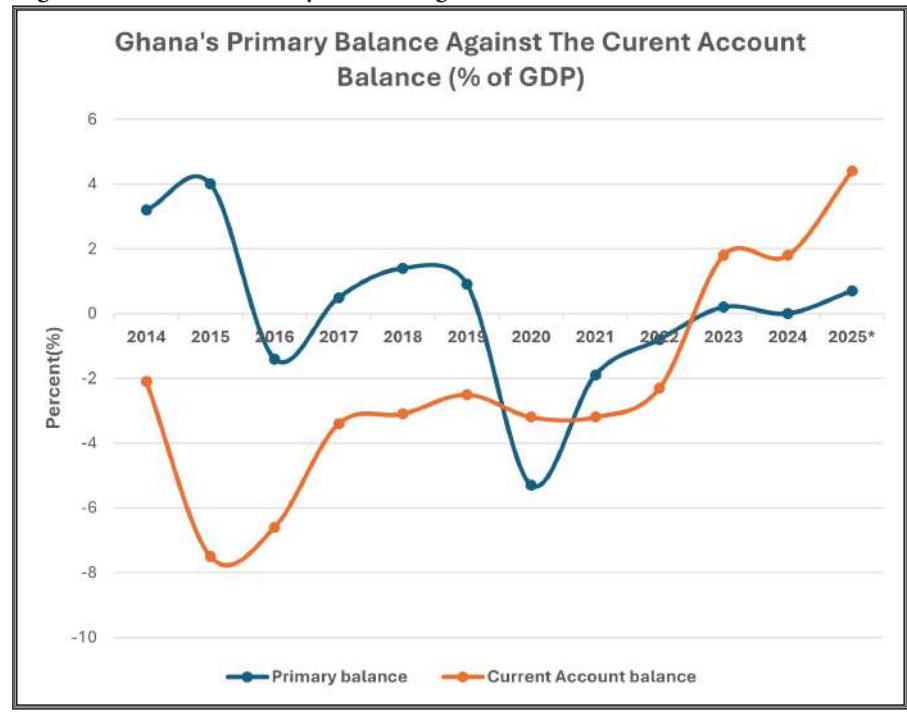
The primary balance improved steadily thereafter, returning to a

surplus of 0.2 percent in 2023, slipping back into a deficit of negative 1.2 percent in 2024, and strengthening again to a surplus of 0.7 percent in 2025.

In recent years, Ghana has grappled with the twin deficit problem, with persistent fiscal deficits and current account shortfalls driving volatility and depreciation of the Cedi up to 2024. The primary balance, which swung from surpluses in 2014–2019 to a sharp deficit of –5.3% of GDP in 2020, has gradually improved, with a projected surplus of 0.7% in 2025, reflecting stronger fiscal discipline.

Meanwhile, the current account, after years of deficits peaking at –7.5% in 2015, has turned into surpluses of 1.8% in 2023–2024 and an estimated 4.4% in 2025, signaling improving external resilience from rising exports, remittances, and foreign inflows. This combination of fiscal consolidation, better debt management, and growing foreign reserves has underpinned the Cedi's partial recovery in 2025 and, if sustained, positions Ghana for greater macroeconomic stability, stronger currency performance, and improved investor confidence in 2026 and beyond.

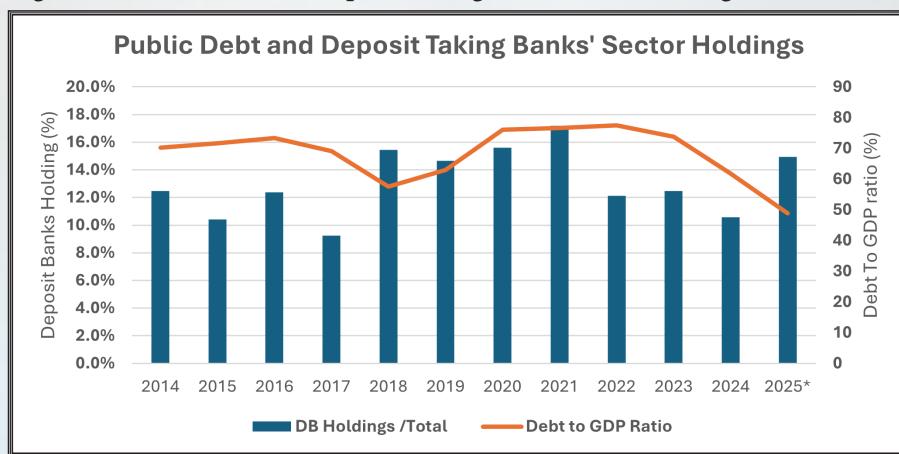
Figure 15: Ghana's Primary Balance Against The Current Account Balance



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

Public debt dynamics mirror the fiscal cycle and exchange rate movements. Public debt in nominal US dollar terms rose steadily from 24.8 billion dollars in 2014 to a peak of 60.4 billion dollars in 2021. Following restructuring and consolidation, the stock declined to 53.9 billion dollars in 2022 and 52.4 billion dollars in 2023, before easing further to 49.4 billion dollars in 2024. The increase to 59.9 billion dollars in 2025 reflects renewed financing flows and valuation effects rather than a return to unsustainable borrowing. More importantly, the public debt ratio declined sharply after peaking at 77.5 percent in 2022, falling to 73.7 percent in 2023, 61.8 percent in 2024, and 48.9 percent in 2025 with banks' holding of the public debt also moderating significantly. This trajectory significantly reduces sovereign risk pressures on the banking sector.

Figure 16: Public Debt and Deposit Taking Banks Sector Holdings



Source: Bank of Ghana Online Database Portal

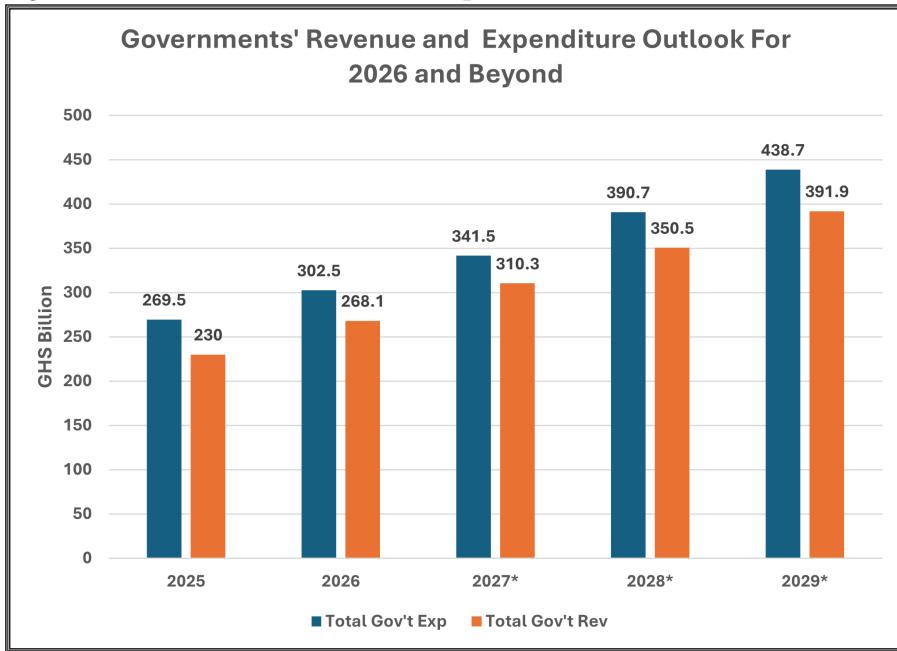
For banks, these fiscal and debt developments reduce rollover risk and valuation volatility on government securities, but they do not eliminate sovereign exposure risks. Government securities remain a large share of bank assets, and fiscal slippages would quickly transmit into balance sheet stress. In 2026, banks must therefore balance the improved sovereign outlook with prudent concentration management and duration risk control.



Ghana's Fiscal Outlook from 2026 and Beyond: Implications for Bank Financing, Sovereign Exposure, and Credit Risk Management

From 2026, government finances show a clear expansion in nominal terms, driven by both higher revenues and expenditures. Total government revenue is projected to rise from about GHS 230 billion in 2025 to GHS 268.1 billion in 2026, and further to over GHS 310 billion by 2027, reaching nearly GHS 392 billion by 2029. This steady improvement in revenue performance, underpinned largely by rising tax revenues: from a tax revenue projection of GHS 190 billion in 2025 to GHS 224 billion in 2026 and close to GHS 335 billion by 2029, signals stronger revenue mobilisation and improved tax administration agenda. For banks, this trajectory is important because stronger and more predictable government revenues reduce fiscal uncertainty and enhance the sovereign's capacity to meet its obligations, lowering systemic risk in the financial system.

Figure 17: Governments' Revenue and Expenditure Outlook for 2026



Source: Ghana's 2026 Budget Statement

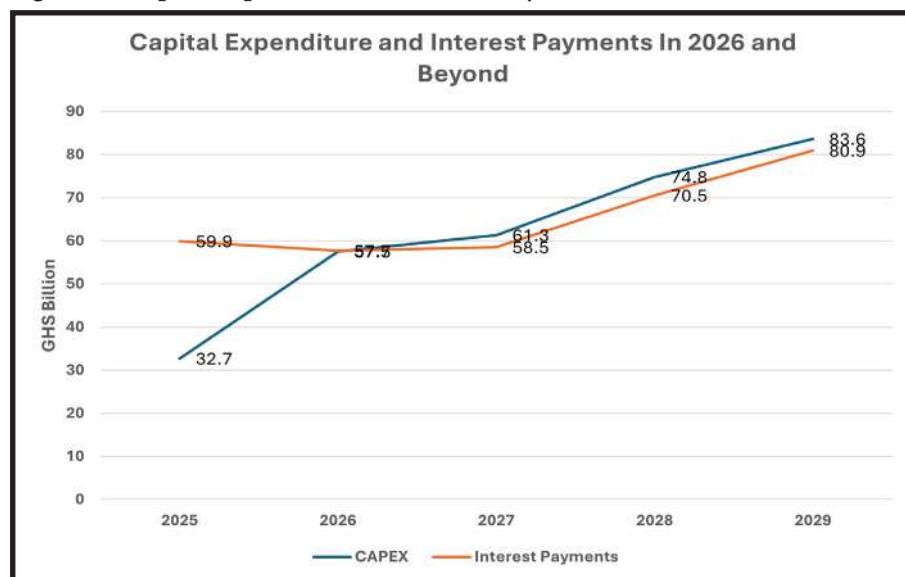
On the expenditure side, total government spending is projected to increase from about GHS 269.5 billion in 2025 to GHS 302.5 billion in 2026, rising further to nearly GHS 439 billion by 2029. A notable feature of the expenditure profile is the strong emphasis on capital expenditure (CAPEX). CAPEX is expected to rise sharply from about GHS 32.7 billion in 2025 to GHS 57.5 billion in 2026, and then continue increasing to over GHS 83 billion by 2029. This reflects a deliberate policy shift toward growth-enhancing spending, particularly in infrastructure and productive sectors. From a banking perspective, higher CAPEX is positive in the medium to long term, as it supports economic activity, improves firm-level cash flows, and strengthens borrowers' repayment capacity, thereby improving the quality of banks' loan books over time.

It is essential to provide clear budgetary allocations for these projected expenditures and to ensure policy continuity, so that future changes in government do not result in elevated non-performing loans on banks' balance sheets due to contract truncation or repudiation. This would help preserve banks' asset quality to build more base for further credit extension that would drive economic transformation and development for employment and growth.

Per the 2026 budget statement,



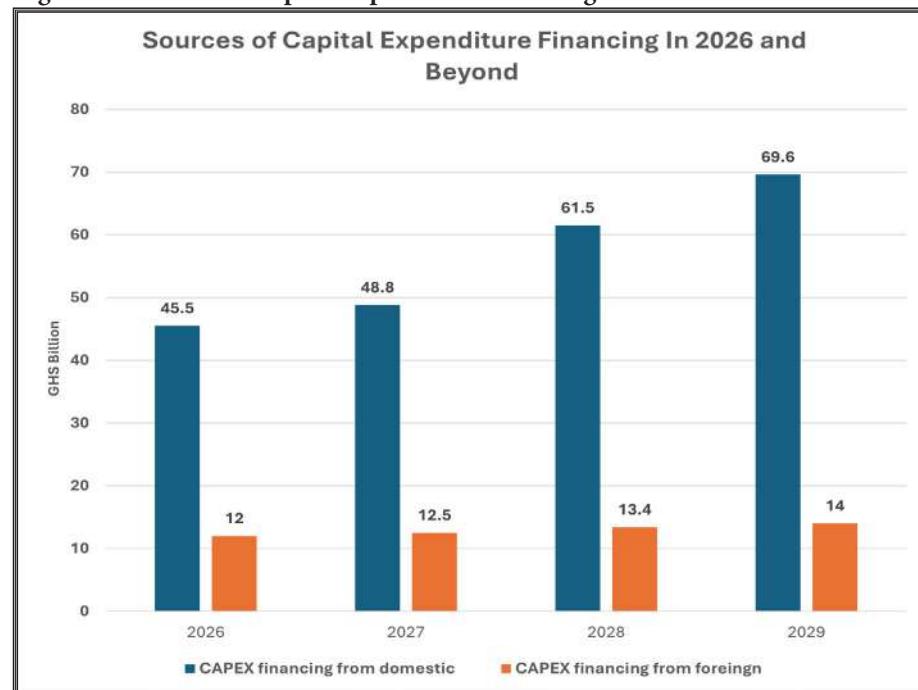
Figure 18: Capital Expenditure and Interest Payments in 2026



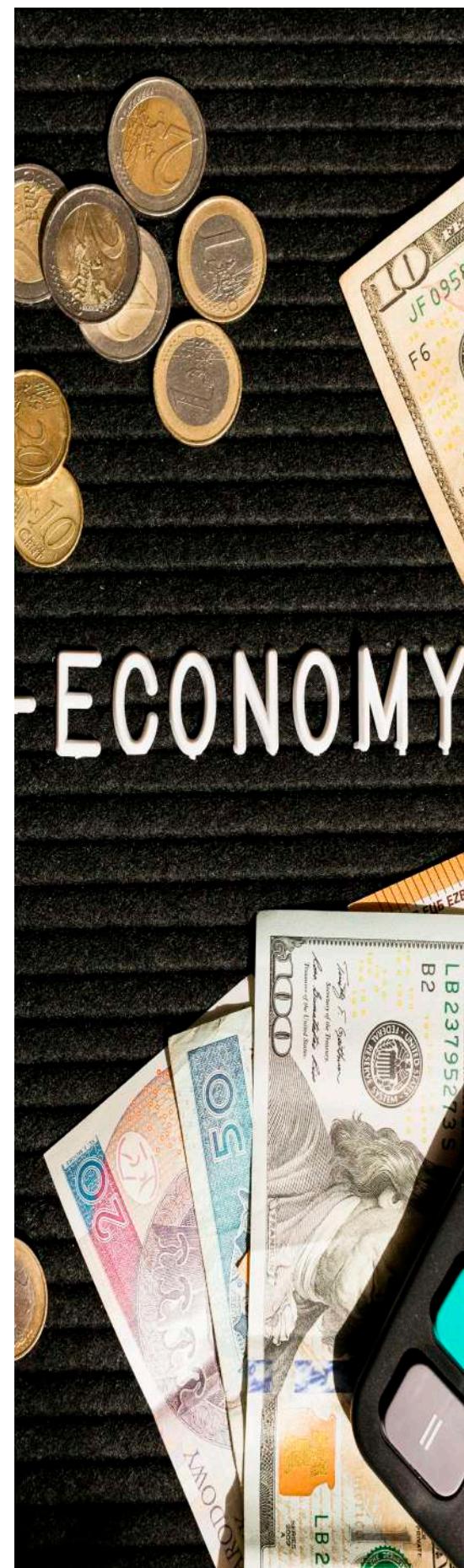
Source: Ghana's 2026 Budget Statement

about 60% of government financing would be supported by commercial banks, indicating that significant part of domestic financing of CAPEX is likely to create double-edged sword for the economy. On the one hand, when government borrows locally to fund capital expenditure, it boosts banks' expected interest income and with some risk posed to balance-sheet stability given the potential for significant NPLs exposure as from previous years. On the other hand, this same process crowds out private sector credit, as banks reallocate funds away from businesses toward sovereign paper, pushing up lending rates and weakening private investment. This cautions that, while CAPEX can be growth-enhancing, excessive reliance on domestic financing without careful structuring risks may deprive the private sector of adequate credit for growth and expansion. However, interest payments remain a critical pressure point in the fiscal

Figure 19: Sources of Capital Expenditure Financing

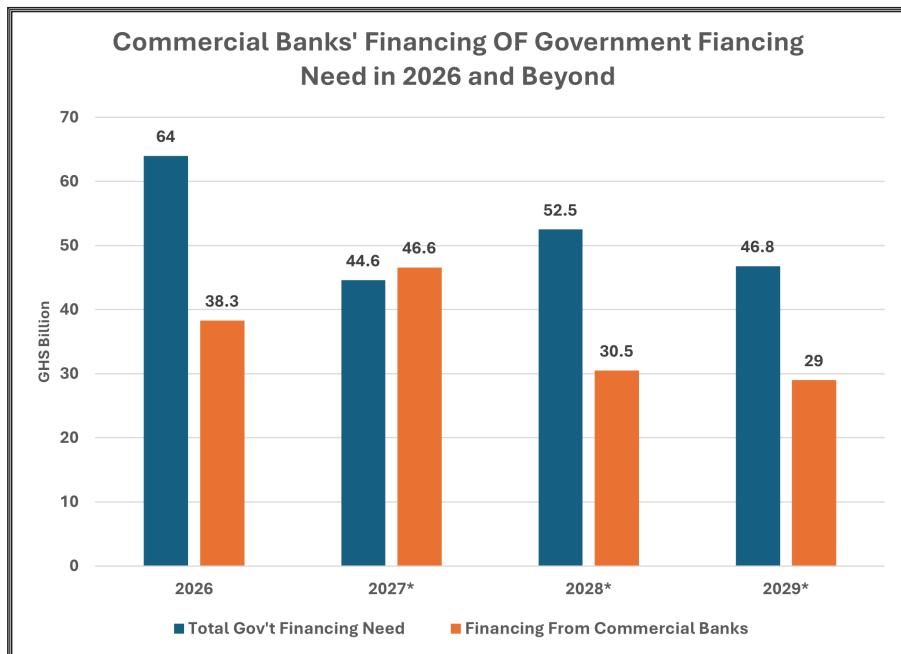


Source: Ghana's 2026 Budget Statement



accounts. Although interest costs are projected to stabilise somewhat around GHS 57–59 billion in 2026–2027, they are expected to rise again toward GHS 70 billion by 2028 and over GHS 80 billion by 2029. This underscores that debt servicing will continue to absorb a significant share of government resources. For banks, this has two implications. First, elevated interest payments constrain fiscal space, meaning that any slippage in revenue performance could quickly translate into higher financing needs. Second, the structure and sustainability of public debt remain central to sovereign risk assessments, which feed directly into banks' capital adequacy, risk-weighting of government exposures, and stress testing frameworks.

Figure 20: Commercial Banks' Financing of Government Financing need



Source: Ghana's 2026 Budget Statement

Encouragingly, the financing mix of the fiscal deficit suggests a gradual easing of pressure on domestic banks. Total government financing needs are projected to decline from about GHS 64 billion in 2026 to around GHS 44.6 billion in 2027, before fluctuating moderately through 2029. More importantly, financing from commercial banks does not rise in tandem with total financing needs. While banks are expected to provide about GHS 38.3 billion in 2026 and GHS 46.6 billion in 2027, their contribution declines thereafter, to about GHS 30.5 billion in 2028 and GHS 29 billion in 2029. At the same time, CAPEX financing increasingly draws on domestic non-bank and foreign sources, with foreign financing of CAPEX gradually increasing from about GHS 12 billion in 2026 to over GHS 14 billion by 2029.

For the banking sector, this evolving fiscal-financing pattern has important implications. Significant but moderate reliance on commercial banks for deficit financing helps to ease the crowding-out effect that has historically constrained private sector credit in Ghana. As government demand for bank financing moderates, banks are better positioned to reallocate balance sheet capacity toward private enterprises, particularly SMEs and productive sectors linked to infrastructure and supply chains. This supports credit growth

of better quality and improves income diversification away from excessive sovereign exposure.

From a credit risk management standpoint, the fiscal outlook implies a gradual shift in risk dynamics rather than an immediate elimination of risk. On the positive side, improving revenues, a declining primary deficit trajectory, and growth-oriented CAPEX enhance macroeconomic stability, which typically lowers default probabilities across sectors. Banks can therefore expect, over time, improved borrower fundamentals and a more supportive operating environment. Nevertheless, elevated interest payments and still-sizeable financing needs mean that sovereign risk remains a non-negligible factor. Banks will need to continue strengthening sovereign risk concentration limits, conducting rigorous stress tests under adverse fiscal and macroeconomic scenarios, and closely monitoring the interaction between fiscal shocks, interest rates, and asset quality.

In sum, Ghana's fiscal position in 2026 and beyond suggests cautious optimism. The trajectory points toward stronger revenues, increased development spending, and a gradual reduction in dependence on bank financing. For banks, this creates opportunities to expand private sector lending and improve asset quality, while also demanding disciplined credit risk management, prudent exposure to government securities, and continuous assessment of fiscal-macroeconomic linkages. If fiscal consolidation and debt management efforts are sustained, the medium-term outlook should be supportive of a healthier, more resilient banking system.

IMF Programme Outlook and Financial Sector Stability

The IMF-supported programme played a central role in stabilising Ghana's macrofinancial environment and restoring confidence. Programme implementation coincided with the sharp decline in inflation, the stabilisation of the exchange rate, and the rebuilding of foreign exchange reserves. Quantitative targets on fiscal balances and monetary aggregates were broadly met, reinforcing policy credibility and anchoring expectations.

Financial sector reforms under the programme focused on addressing legacy vulnerabilities exposed by the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme. Regulatory forbearance measures introduced to cushion banks against DDEP-related losses

were explicitly temporary, and the dataset shows that capital adequacy ratios weakened during the peak stress years, falling from 19.60 percent in 2021 to 15.44 percent in 2022 and to a trough of 13.87 percent in 2023. The subsequent recovery to 17.87 percent in 2025 reflects recapitalisation efforts, earnings recovery, and balance sheet adjustments ahead of the full withdrawal of forbearance.

The post IMF environment in 2026 presents a different risk profile. External anchoring will diminish, placing greater emphasis on domestic institutions and policy consistency. While macro indicators have improved, the dataset shows that Ghana has historically experienced reversals

after periods of consolidation. For banks, this means that capital planning, stress testing, and liquidity buffers must assume less external backstopping and greater exposure to domestic policy credibility.

At the same time, the post-programme phase creates opportunities. Lower sovereign risk, improved investor confidence, and stabilised inflation can support longer tenor funding and gradual re-entry into capital markets. Banks that maintain strong governance and transparency will be better positioned to benefit from this transition. For more insight on Ghana's historical IMF Programs and Assessment, watch out for GAB's comprehensive review in April, 2026.



Global Political Landscape: Geopolitical Fragmentation, Trade Disruptions and Financial Spillovers

The global political environment entering 2026 continues to be characterized by deepening geopolitical fragmentation, the militarisation of key trade routes, and protracted regional conflicts. These forces are fundamentally altering global flows of goods, capital, energy, and technology. For Ghana's banking industry, such developments are far from abstract; they exert direct and often immediate pressure on commodity prices, particularly gold, cocoa, and oil; foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, cedi exchange rate dynamics, inflation trajectories, and the cost and availability of credit. As global risk premia remain elevated, the transmission of geopolitical shocks to emerging and frontier markets like Ghana has accelerated, becoming more pronounced and persistent. This exposes the sector to heightened FX liquidity constraints, inflationary pass-through, and credit risks in vulnerable portfolios.

US-Venezuela Sanctions: Oil Market Volatility and Energy Price Risk

US sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector continue to inject instability and uncertainty into global energy markets. While the stated objective is to exert political pressure on the

Venezuelan government, the sanctions have also contributed to tighter oil supply and increased uncertainty around the pace and durability of any production recovery. Venezuela's oil output has fallen sharply, from about 2.5 million barrels per day in the late 1990s to below 500,000 barrels per day following the imposition of comprehensive sanctions.

Aside the sanctions, US abduction of president Maduro sparked series of condemnation and a shock wave into the oil market, but oil prices were not significantly affected because Venezuela is not a major producer oil from a global scheme of things despite having the largest proven reserve of oil. The fact is reserve does not automatically translate into production.

Even in the absence of immediate global supply disruptions, policy uncertainty itself embeds a risk premium into oil prices, and this could heighten volatility.

For Ghana, any sustained oil price volatility in 2026 due to geopolitics will raise the petroleum import bill, intensify inflationary pressures, and increase foreign exchange demand. For banks, these conditions will end up translating into tighter FX liquidity, higher working-capital requirements in energy-dependent sectors, and elevated credit risk among transport operators, manufacturers, and agribusinesses. Higher energy costs can also slow domestic disinflation, complicating monetary easing and keeping lending rates elevated for longer.



US-Iran Tensions: Middle East Risk Premium and Shipping Route Fragility

Ongoing US-Iran frictions, encompassing sanctions, proxy conflicts, and maritime incidents, continue to sustain a persistent Middle East risk premium in global oil pricing. Iran's strategic position astride the Strait of Hormuz ensures that even modest escalations can rapidly influence global energy sentiment through higher insurance premiums, transit delays, or perceived restrictions along key shipping routes.

The Red Sea and Houthi dimension, linked to Iran-backed groups, has seen a relative de-escalation, with attacks ceasing after September 29, 2025, following the Houthis' announced suspension. No major incidents have been recorded since. Nevertheless, Suez Canal traffic remains approximately 60 percent below pre-crisis 2023 levels in early 2026, according to BIMCO data, reflecting lingering risk aversion among global carriers. While some shipping lines, including CMA CGM through its MEDEX and INDAMEX services and selective Maersk transits, have begun cautiously resuming Suez routings, the recovery remains fragile.

Residual geopolitical risks imply that any renewed escalation or deterioration in regional security conditions could swiftly reverse recent gains, reintroducing logistics bottlenecks and amplifying volatility across energy and trade markets. Furthermore, any intensification of recent public protests or civil unrest in Iran or within the broader Middle East could disrupt global supply chains and exert renewed upward pressure on oil prices.

China-Taiwan Conflict: Supply Chains, Trade Routes and Systemic Risk

Escalating tensions between China and Taiwan have increasingly transformed strategic rivalry into tangible trade and supply-chain risks. The late-2025 Justice Mission 2025 military exercises, which simulated quarantine and blockade scenarios, have underscored the growing vulnerability of global commerce to non-kinetic disruptions, including commercial interdiction, intensified inspections, airspace restrictions, and naval checkpoints. The Taiwan Strait is a critical artery for global trade, facilitating an estimated 20–30 percent of global container traffic and approximately US\$5 trillion in annual trade flows, including energy shipments to North Asia and manufactured goods destined for global markets.

Even limited disruptions along this corridor force vessels to reroute through longer and more expensive passages, raising transit times, fuel costs, and operational risk. These developments have already triggered higher marine insurance war-risk premiums, the expansion of designated high-risk maritime zones, and the

imposition of geopolitical surcharges by shipping lines, costs that are rapidly passed on to traders and consumers. Beyond logistics, Taiwan's dominance in advanced semiconductor manufacturing, accounting for roughly 90 percent of global high-end chip production represents a systemic vulnerability. Prolonged disruption would reverberate across automotive, electronics, energy systems, and defence industries, amplifying inflationary pressures and undermining global investment confidence.

Heightened China-Taiwan tensions are likely to transmit into Ghana's economy through trade, inflation, and financial channels. Prolonged supply-chain disruptions could elevate import costs, lengthen settlement cycles, and increase working-capital pressures for firms dependent on Asian inputs, including those in manufacturing, construction, and digital services. Rising global inflation and risk aversion may also constrain external financing conditions, intensify exchange-rate pressures, and elevate credit risks. For banks, this highlights the importance of close monitoring of trade finance exposures, stress-testing liquidity against delayed receivables, and reassessing credit risk in sectors reliant on global supply chains and technology imports.



Trade Fragmentation, FDI and “Friend-Shoring”

Geopolitical fragmentation is accelerating the reorganisation of global trade and investment along political and strategic lines. The growing adoption of “friend-shoring” and de-risking strategies reflects a structural shift in which supply-chain resilience, political alignment, and security considerations increasingly outweigh pure cost efficiency. As firms reassess geopolitical exposure, investment decisions are becoming more selective, raising global hurdle rates and dampening overall risk appetite during periods of heightened uncertainty.

This evolving landscape is reshaping capital allocation patterns. Investment is increasingly directed toward jurisdictions perceived as politically stable, reform-oriented, and institutionally credible, while economies viewed as vulnerable to policy uncertainty or external shocks face more volatile inflows. While this trend may support longer-term supply-chain resilience, it also fragments global production networks, increases adjustment costs, and introduces greater volatility into cross-border trade and financial flows.

For Ghana, sustained macroeconomic stabilisation under the IMF-supported Extended Credit Facility and ongoing structural reforms could position the country to attract reallocated foreign direct investment in logistics, agro-processing, and light manufacturing. However, global risk-off episodes may still constrain inflows from traditional partners, heighten capital flow volatility,

and amplify foreign exchange sensitivity. In this context, banks will need to maintain robust liquidity buffers, strengthen stress-testing frameworks, and manage sectoral and counterparty concentration risks carefully. Institutions that proactively align credit strategies with emerging trade and investment patterns may better navigate volatility while supporting sustainable private-sector growth.

Energy Transition under Geopolitical Stress

Geopolitical fragmentation is increasingly complicating the global energy transition. Recurrent shocks linked to Venezuela, Iran, and broader Middle East tensions continue to reinforce the strategic imperative to diversify away from fossil fuels. However, the transition itself is facing growing headwinds. Disruptions to clean-technology supply chains, elevated financing and insurance costs, and increasing competition for public resources, particularly as major governments prioritise defence and security spending, are delaying renewable energy deployment and inflating project costs.

As a result, global capital allocation is gradually shifting toward resilience-oriented investments, including energy efficiency, storage solutions, grid stability, and diversification of energy sources, alongside traditional renewable generation. This recalibration reflects a more cautious approach in which energy security and system resilience increasingly

shape investment decisions, rather than speed of transition alone.

The Arctic as an Emerging Geopolitical Theatre

The Arctic is becoming a focal point of great-power competition as retreating sea ice opens new shipping routes and improves access to energy and mineral resources. The Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage are attracting increased strategic and commercial attention, with implications for global trade patterns, energy security, and military posture.

Russia continues to expand its Arctic footprint through infrastructure upgrades and military deployments, reflecting the region's importance to its energy exports and strategic deterrence. China, while not an Arctic state, is deepening its engagement through research, infrastructure partnerships, and investment in logistics and critical minerals. The United States and its NATO allies have responded by strengthening surveillance, defence cooperation, and icebreaking capacity, signalling a more contested security environment in the High North.

Greenland has moved further into the geopolitical spotlight following renewed statements by US President Donald Trump expressing interest in bringing Greenland under US control, citing its strategic location and resource potential. While Denmark and Greenland have reaffirmed sovereignty, the episode highlights the growing strategic value of the Arctic and the extent to which major powers are prepared to compete for influence over key territories and access points.

The Arctic contest has indirect but material implications on Ghana. Greater Arctic shipping capacity could gradually alter global trade routes, with potential effects on freight costs, shipping times, and the relative importance of traditional maritime corridors. Increased geopolitical tension among major powers also raises the risk of energy price volatility, which would affect Ghana through fuel import costs, inflation dynamics, and fiscal balances.

Additional Relevant Geopolitical Situations Impacting Ghana's Banking Sector

• Russia-Ukraine War:

Now in its fourth year with no clear resolution, the Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to sustain elevated global food and energy prices. Together, the two countries account for roughly 30 percent of global wheat supply, and ongoing disruptions have contributed to Ghana's persistent food inflation, estimated at about 9 to 10 percent in late 2025. Energy costs have also remained pressured by dislocations along key trade routes. For banks, these dynamics translate into sustained foreign exchange pressures, cedi volatility, and elevated non-performing loans, particularly in agriculture and agribusiness, with cocoa revenues highly sensitive to global price swings. Credit recovery remains subdued amid weak purchasing power and cautious investment sentiment.

• Sahel Jihadist Spillover:

Rising insecurity in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger continues to pose spillover risks for coastal West African states. While Ghana has not

experienced large-scale militant attacks, security assessments indicate heightened vulnerabilities along its northern borders, including increased cross-border movements, logistical pressures, and security-related strains associated with instability in the Sahel. Border-area incidents, persistent ethnic tensions such as those in Bawku, and refugee inflows estimated at over 110,000 across coastal states are dampening investor confidence. These pressures have the propensity to raise insurance and transport costs along trade corridors, weaken investment appetite in mining and logistics, and elevate credit risks in affected regions. Without effective containment, security spillovers could undermine Ghana's projected growth of over 4 percent in 2026 and exacerbate already elevated post-DDEP non-performing loans, placing renewed strain on bank liquidity.

• United States Policies under Trump 2.0: Tariffs and Trade Fragmentation

A renewed protectionist tilt in US trade policy, including reciprocal tariffs in the range of 10 to 15 percent on select partners and uncertainty surrounding the future of AGOA preferences, is intensifying global trade fragmentation. While energy exports are largely exempt, Ghana faces higher costs for non-energy exports such as cocoa derivatives and apparel, alongside indirect inflationary pressures from more expensive Chinese inputs. Although supply-chain diversification presents opportunities, banks will need to navigate volatile capital flows, foreign exchange pressures, and shifting trade finance patterns, while repositioning portfolios

toward resilience-focused and ESG-aligned financing as Ghana approaches a potential exit from the IMF programme.

Implications for Ghana's Banking Industry

Taken together, these geopolitical forces point to a more volatile and risk-sensitive global environment in 2026. Ghana's banking sector, while liquid and broadly solvent, remains constrained by elevated non-performing loans following the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme. Strengthening resilience will require proactive anticipation of commodity and foreign exchange shocks, robust liquidity management, and close monitoring of trade- and energy-exposed portfolios. Encouragingly, macroeconomic stabilisation, easing inflation, and ongoing fiscal consolidation are expected to support a gradual recovery, with GDP growth projected at about 4.8 percent in 2026 by IMF and Fitch estimates.

Banks that adapt swiftly can unlock opportunities in trade finance restructuring, supply-chain diversification funding, energy resilience investments, and ESG-oriented lending, provided risks are carefully priced and governed. In an increasingly uncertain global landscape, sustained vigilance, stronger risk management frameworks, deeper engagement with the Bank of Ghana and regional bodies, and balance-sheet strategies aligned with shifting geopolitical realities will be decisive for sector performance.



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Cybersecurity in 2026 is being reshaped by the convergence of artificial intelligence, escalating cyber-enabled financial crime, geopolitical fragmentation, deepening digital interdependence, and the formal integration of virtual assets into regulated financial systems. For Ghana's financial sector, this convergence represents a decisive inflection point. As the Bank of Ghana advances regulatory frameworks for virtual assets and related digital financial services, the country's digital finance ecosystem is transitioning from a largely informal and fragmented environment into a more structured, supervised, and systemically relevant domain.

Globally, cyber risk is no longer episodic or peripheral. It has become persistent, adaptive, and increasingly systemic. The World Economic Forum Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2026 reports that 54% of surveyed organisations now rank cybersecurity as their most significant business risk, exceeding concerns related to macroeconomic instability and supply-chain

Perspectives on The Digital Space, Emerging Technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity and Market Dynamics



disruption. Artificial intelligence is transforming both cyber defence and cyber offence, lowering barriers to entry for attackers while raising the sophistication and scale of attacks. At the same time, ransomware, cyber-enabled fraud, data breaches, and service disruptions continue to impose material financial, operational, and reputational costs on financial institutions.

In an environment where the banking system is deeply interconnected with mobile money platforms, instant payment systems, fintech partnerships,

cloud infrastructure, and emerging virtual asset ecosystems, cybersecurity has moved well beyond a technical or compliance function. In 2026, it stands as a core pillar of financial stability, consumer protection, and trust in the digital financial system.

Artificial Intelligence and the Acceleration of Cyber Risk

Artificial intelligence is redefining the cybersecurity landscape in 2026. Within Ghana's banking sector, AI is increasingly deployed to enhance fraud detection, transaction monitoring, customer authentication, anomaly detection, and cyber threat intelligence. These capabilities are improving speed, scale, and accuracy in identifying suspicious activity across increasingly complex digital ecosystems.

However, the same technologies are being weaponised by cybercriminals. The Global Cybersecurity Outlook confirms that 77% of organisations experienced an increase in cyber-enabled fraud and phishing attacks in 2025, while 73% of respondents reported personal exposure to cyber-enabled fraud or phishing incidents. AI-enabled phishing campaigns, deepfake voice and video impersonation, automated social engineering, and adaptive malware

are making cyber-enabled fraud more targeted, convincing, and scalable. These developments significantly reduce the cost of cybercrime while increasing its effectiveness.

The formalisation of virtual assets further amplifies these risks. Blockchain platforms, digital wallets, smart contracts, tokenised instruments, and crypto-to-fiat gateways expand the digital attack surface across banks, payment service providers, and third-party technology partners. Vulnerabilities may arise from compromised wallets and private keys, flawed smart contracts, weaknesses in custody arrangements, and data integrity risks embedded within AI-driven compliance and monitoring systems.

As banks adopt artificial intelligence and digital assets, strong governance, model risk management, explainability standards, and ongoing cyber risk assessment will be essential to prevent innovation from outpacing control.

Cyber-Enabled Financial Crime and Consumer Trust

Cyber-enabled fraud has emerged as the most pervasive and damaging cyber risk for financial institutions globally, and Ghana is no exception. The World Economic Forum Outlook identifies cyber-enabled fraud as the most prevalent cyber risk category, with 75% of surveyed organisations reporting an increase in cyber-enabled financial crime during 2025. In 2026, fraud increasingly exploits the intersection of digital onboarding, real-time payments, mobile platforms, and emerging virtual asset services. Identity theft, account takeover, payment manipulation, and investment



scams remain the most prominent typologies.

The regulated introduction of virtual assets heightens consumer protection challenges. As regulatory clarity improves, public perception may increasingly equate regulation with safety. The Outlook highlights that 59% of organisations believe digital adoption has significantly outpaced consumer understanding of cyber risk, creating conditions for misplaced trust that can be exploited by fraudsters. Without adequate safeguards, disclosures, and customer education, this perception risks creating misplaced confidence that can be exploited by fraudsters.

As digital finance expands,

cybersecurity must sit alongside consumer protection, clear risk disclosures, strong authentication standards, and coordinated financial literacy efforts. Trust will depend not only on technology, but on the sector's capacity to safeguard customers amid rising complexity.

Ransomware, Business Disruption, and Operational Resilience

Ransomware remains one of the most disruptive cyber threats facing financial institutions in 2026. Its capacity to halt operations, compromise sensitive data, and undermine confidence makes it a strategic risk rather than a purely technical incident. The Global Cybersecurity Outlook reports that 53% of organisations rank ransomware among their top three cyber risks, reflecting its systemic impact rather than its frequency alone. The growing use of crypto-assets for ransom payments further complicates detection, tracing, and recovery efforts.

As Ghana's banks integrate more digital infrastructure, including cloud services and potential digital asset platforms, operational resilience becomes paramount. The Outlook further notes that 70% of major ransomware incidents in 2025 resulted in operational disruption lasting longer than 24 hours, underscoring the scale of potential service interruption. Cyber incidents are increasingly characterised by cascading failures, where disruption in one system rapidly spreads across interconnected platforms and service providers.

Effective resilience strategies must therefore extend beyond perimeter security to include cyber-specific business continuity planning, secure

and segregated backups, robust key management, crisis simulation exercises, and coordinated incident response frameworks aligned with supervisory expectations.

Third-Party, Supply Chain, and Concentration Risks

One of the defining cybersecurity themes of 2026 is the growing concentration of digital infrastructure. Banks increasingly rely on shared cloud providers, payment processors, software vendors, and fintech partners. While this enhances efficiency and scalability, it also concentrates cyber risk. The Global Cybersecurity Outlook shows that 54% of organisations identify third-party and supply-chain dependencies as their single greatest cybersecurity challenge, while 41% experienced a material cyber incident originating from a third-party provider.

A cyber incident affecting a single critical service provider can simultaneously disrupt multiple institutions, amplifying systemic risk. This is particularly relevant for Ghana's financial sector, where shared infrastructure underpins payment systems, digital identity services, and emerging fintech ecosystems.

Cybersecurity strategies must therefore extend across the full value chain, incorporating rigorous third-party risk management, contractual cyber standards, continuous monitoring, and sector-wide contingency planning.

Geopolitics, Regulatory Fragmentation, and Cyber Sovereignty

Geopolitical fragmentation is increasingly shaping the cyber threat landscape. Cross-border tensions, divergent regulatory regimes, and competing digital standards are influencing data governance, cloud dependency, and the resilience of global financial infrastructure. The Global Cybersecurity Outlook confirms that 67% of organisations now consider geopolitically driven cyber threats a significant concern, reflecting rising exposure to state-linked cyber activity and regulatory divergence.

Virtual assets, by design, operate across borders and jurisdictions. This introduces challenges related to regulatory arbitrage, jurisdictional enforcement, data localisation, and exposure to geopolitically motivated cyber activity.

Aligning financial regulation, cybersecurity policy, and national digital resilience strategies is essential. Effective implementation of the virtual asset framework will require close coordination among regulators, law enforcement agencies, financial institutions, and international partners to address cross-border cyber risk and financial crime.

Skills, Governance, and Institutional Readiness

The Global Cybersecurity Outlook underscores a widening gap between the sophistication of cyber threats and the availability of skilled cybersecurity professionals. The survey reports that 72% of organisations face moderate to





critical shortages in cybersecurity skills, directly constraining their ability to manage advanced threats and emerging technologies.

Strengthening cybersecurity capacity will require sustained investment in talent development, board-level oversight, executive accountability, and clear delineation of roles across technology, risk, and business functions. Cybersecurity governance must be embedded within enterprise risk management frameworks, rather than treated as a standalone technical discipline.

the sector can strengthen threat intelligence sharing, harmonise standards, and build systemic resilience.

Conclusion

The cybersecurity landscape in 2026 reflects a world of accelerating digitalisation, persistent cybercrime, and rising systemic interdependence. Ghana's decision to formally regulate virtual assets signals confidence in innovation and digital finance, but it also raises expectations around cybersecurity maturity, governance, and accountability.

Strategic Outlook for Ghana's Banking Industry in 2026

As Ghana deepens digital financial inclusion and formally integrates virtual assets into the financial system, cybersecurity will increasingly determine the sector's resilience, competitiveness, and credibility. Strategic priorities for 2026 should include AI-governed cyber defence, protection against cyber-enabled fraud, ransomware readiness, third-party risk management, and strong consumer trust frameworks.

Collective action will be critical. Through coordinated industry initiatives led by the Ghana Association of Banks, in collaboration with the Bank of Ghana, the Cybersecurity Authority, and other stakeholders,

Innovation must be matched with resilience. By aligning cybersecurity strategy with regulatory reform, strengthening institutional and collective defences, and placing consumer trust at the centre of digital transformation, cybersecurity can serve as a strategic enabler of sustainable growth rather than a source of systemic vulnerability.

BANKING INDUSTRY OUTLOOK FOR 2026

Ghana's banking sector had transitioned from a prolonged phase of balance-sheet expansion and crisis management into a period of measured stabilisation shaped by tighter policy coordination and improving macro-financial conditions. Although total assets expanded markedly from GHS 63.4 billion in 2015 to about GHS 423.3 billion by October 2025, the defining feature of 2025 was not scale but adjustment: a sharp decline in Treasury bill rates following post-DDEP normalization, a revised Cash Reserve Ratio framework that eased liquidity constraints, and enhanced monetary operations including the introduction of a 273-day sterilisation instrument to strengthen policy transmission.

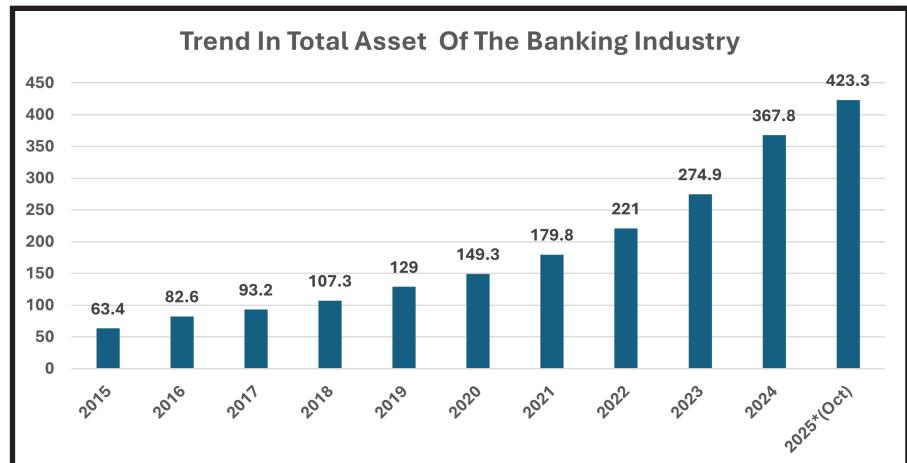
At the same time, intensified monitoring and tightening of Net Open Position limits—culminating in the shift to an asymmetrical 0% to -10% FX exposure band—curbed speculative activity, supported exchange rate stability and reinforced prudence in banks' foreign currency management amid a more orderly but still downward cedi trajectory.

The full phase-out of DDEP-related regulatory reliefs by December 2025, alongside the restoration of stricter capital, provisioning and IFRS 9 requirements, marked a decisive return to normal prudential standards, compelling banks to rebuild buffers, recalibrate risk appetite and strengthen balance-sheet quality. Looking ahead, these developments position the banking sector to move beyond defensive asset accumulation toward more sustainable intermediation, with improved resilience, better-aligned

incentives, and greater capacity to support private-sector-led growth as macroeconomic conditions continue to stabilise. Parallel to the expansion of assets, total deposits in the banking sector experienced an even more striking increase, rising from

GHS 41.3 billion in 2015 to GHS 302 billion by October 2025. This growth reflects a combination of strong public confidence, successful financial inclusion policies, and the widespread adoption of digital and mobile banking platforms, which have made banking services more

Figure 21: Trend in Total Asset of the Banking Industry

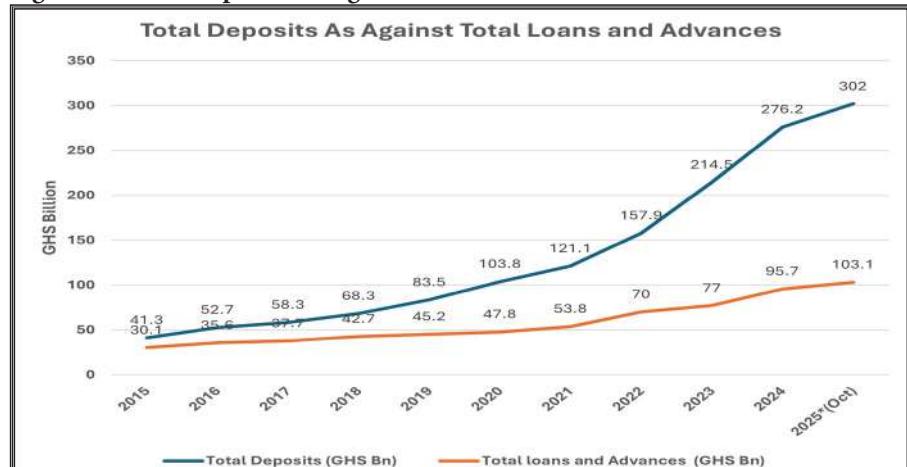


Source: Bank of Ghana; Summary of Financial and Economic Data

accessible and convenient for individuals and businesses alike. The consistent outpacing of deposits relative to asset growth highlights the sector's strong liquidity position, providing banks with ample capacity to meet operational obligations,

invest in government securities, and strategically manage risk. This robust deposit base also signals the growing trust of the public in formal financial institutions, positioning the banking system as a stable and reliable intermediary in the Ghanaian economy.

Figure 22: Total Deposits As Against Total Loans and Advances



Source: Bank of Ghana; Summary of Financial and Economic Data

Loans and advances have grown at a more measured pace, increasing from GHS 30.1 billion in 2015 to GHS 103.1 billion in 2025. While this represents a substantial increase in absolute terms, it has been outstripped by the growth in deposits, leading to a decline in the loan-to-deposit ratio from approximately 73 percent in 2015 to around 34 percent in 2025. This trend reflects cautious lending, driven by prudent risk management, regulatory reforms, and macroeconomic considerations such as inflationary pressures and currency volatility that deteriorated the credit quality. This points to untapped lending capacity that could support productive sectors such as SMEs, agriculture, and infrastructure if deployed strategically under stable economic conditions.

Taken together, the evolution of total assets, deposits, and loans over the past decade illustrates a banking industry that has grown significantly in size, strengthened its liquidity, and maintained a cautious approach to credit extension.

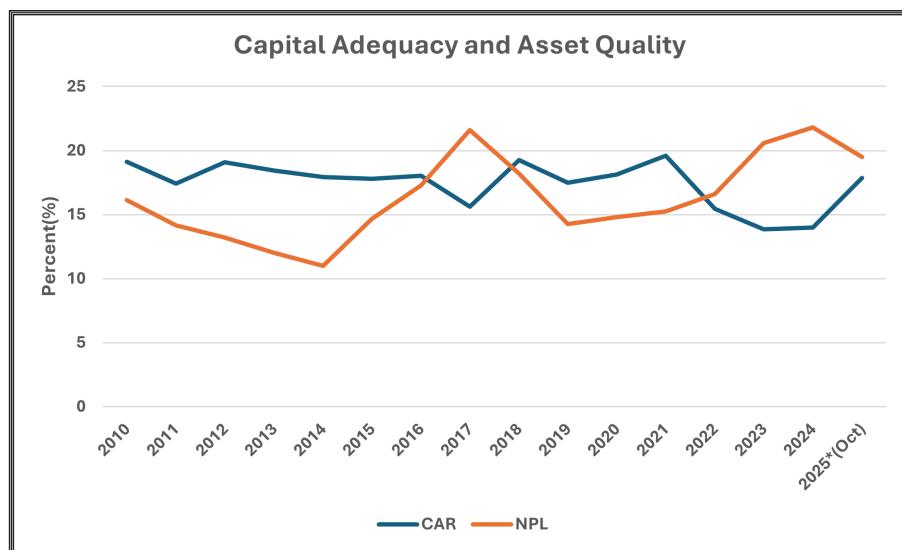


Performance of Ghana's Banking Sector (2010–2025)

Over the past fifteen years, Ghana's banking sector has experienced significant shifts in performance, risk, and operational efficiency, reflecting the interplay of regulatory reforms, macroeconomic pressures, and strategic adjustments by banks. Using indicators such as Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR), Non-Performing Loans (NPL), Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE), liquidity ratios, and cost-to-income metrics, the sector's evolution can be traced with clarity.

The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR), a measure of a bank's buffer against credit and operational risks, has generally remained robust, fluctuating between ~13.9% in 2023 and 19.6% in 2021, well above the Basel II minimum of 8%. CAR levels in the early 2010s were high, reflecting regulatory prudence and pre-clean-up capitalization, with the ratio peaking in 2022 at 19.6% before dipping slightly in subsequent years. This indicates that, despite economic pressures and banking sector challenges, Ghanaian banks have maintained adequate capital buffers to absorb shocks, especially during periods of currency volatility, inflationary pressures, and rising NPLs.

Figure 23: Total Deposits As Against Total Loans and Advances



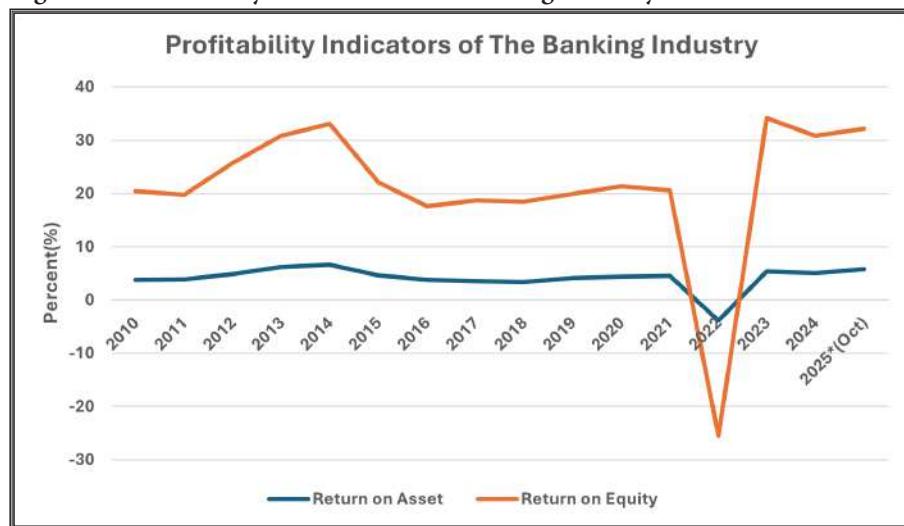
Source: Bank of Ghana Database Portal

Non-Performing Loans (NPLs), representing credit risk exposure, have exhibited more pronounced variation over the period. NPLs declined steadily from 16.1% in 2010 to 10.9% in 2014, reflecting sound lending practices prior to the banking sector cleanup. However, the 2015–2017 period saw a sharp increase in NPLs to over 21% in 2017, coinciding with macroeconomic strains, sectoral lending pressures, and the aftermath of the banking sector consolidation. In recent years, NPLs have remained elevated, peaking at 21.8% in 2024, highlighting ongoing challenges in credit quality, particularly in high-risk sectors, despite improvements in risk management and regulatory oversight in 2025 as the regulator has capped NPL ratio of banks at 10%.

Profitability indicators reflect a sector that has navigated volatile performance

cycles. Return on Assets (ROA) rose from 3.8% in 2010 to 6.6% in 2014, reflecting strong efficiency before the sector challenges of 2015–2017. A sharp contraction occurred in 2022, when ROA fell to -3.8%, indicating significant losses likely associated with macroeconomic instability, high NPLs, and restructuring costs. However, profitability rebounded strongly in subsequent years, reaching 5.8% in 2025 (Oct), demonstrating resilience and the ability of banks to recover through improved asset quality, prudent lending, and cost management. Similarly, Return on Equity (ROE) mirrored this trend, peaking at 33.1% in 2014, plunging to -25.5% in 2022, and recovering to 32.2% in 2025, signaling that while equity returns are volatile in response to macroeconomic and sector-specific shocks, the sector retains substantial capacity for profit generation.

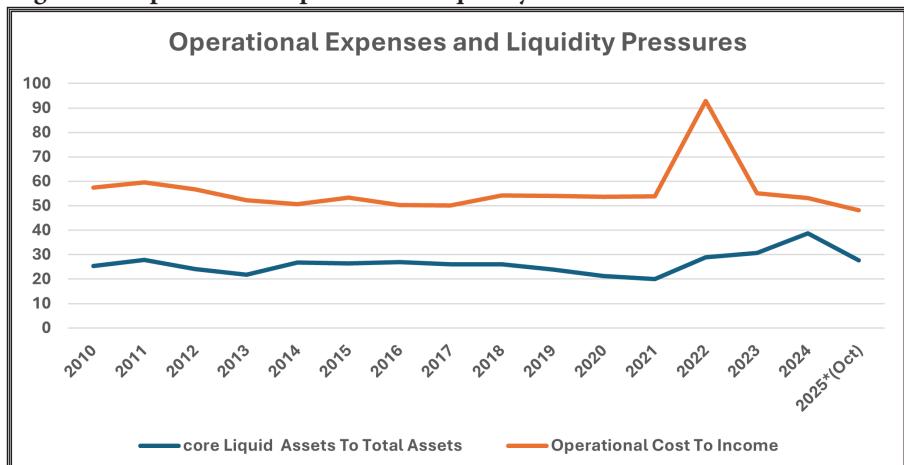
Figure 24: Profitability Indicators of the Banking Industry



Source: Bank of Ghana Database Portal

Liquidity, a critical dimension of banking stability, has remained robust. Measures such as core liquid assets to short-term liabilities and core liquid assets to total assets highlight strong preparedness to meet obligations. For instance, core liquid assets to short-term liabilities rose from 32.9% in 2010 to 46.3% in 2024, reflecting a growing emphasis on liquidity management, especially in the wake of currency and interest rate volatility. Similarly, the ratio of core liquid assets to total assets increased from 25.3% in 2010 to 38.7% in 2024, demonstrating that banks have been steadily improving their liquidity buffers to manage risk and enhance financial resilience.

Figure 25: Operational Expenses and Liquidity Pressures



Source: Bank of Ghana Database Portal

Operational efficiency, as measured by operational cost to income and total cost to gross income, shows a sector balancing profitability with cost discipline. Operational costs as a proportion of income fluctuated around 50–55%, while total costs to gross income gradually declined from 85.4% in 2010 to 74.1% in 2025, suggesting that banks have made strides in controlling expenses relative to income generation. This improvement in efficiency, alongside growing assets and deposits, has helped the sector maintain overall profitability even during periods of elevated NPLs and macroeconomic strain.

Ghana's banking sector has evolved into a resilient, highly liquid, and well-capitalized system, capable of supporting the country's economic ambitions. Its strong deposit base, improving operational efficiency, and cautious lending approach have maintained stability, while the government's infrastructure-driven expansion, particularly in roads and construction, provides substantial opportunities for credit growth, enhanced profitability, and meaningful contribution to national development. Looking ahead, the sector is entering a new phase as the Bank of Ghana begins the gradual withdrawal of regulatory reliefs introduced after the Domestic Debt Exchange Programme (DDEP). This signals a return to full prudential supervision, requiring banks to meet capital and risk requirements without regulatory forbearance and to restore Capital Adequacy Ratios on a fully-loaded basis. Institutions that remain undercapitalized must implement credible recapitalization plans within defined timelines, and non-compliance may attract heightened supervisory measures, including restrictions on dividends, bonuses, and balance-sheet

expansion. The withdrawal of reliefs also compels banks to fully recognize credit and valuation risks, prompting more conservative risk pricing and careful balance-sheet adjustments.

With prudent risk management, compliance with strengthened regulatory standards, continued macroeconomic stability, and strategic deployment of excess liquidity, Ghana's banking sector is well-positioned to achieve sustainable growth, improved performance, and a stronger role in financing the country's economic transformation in 2026 and beyond, particularly in support of critical infrastructure and development projects.

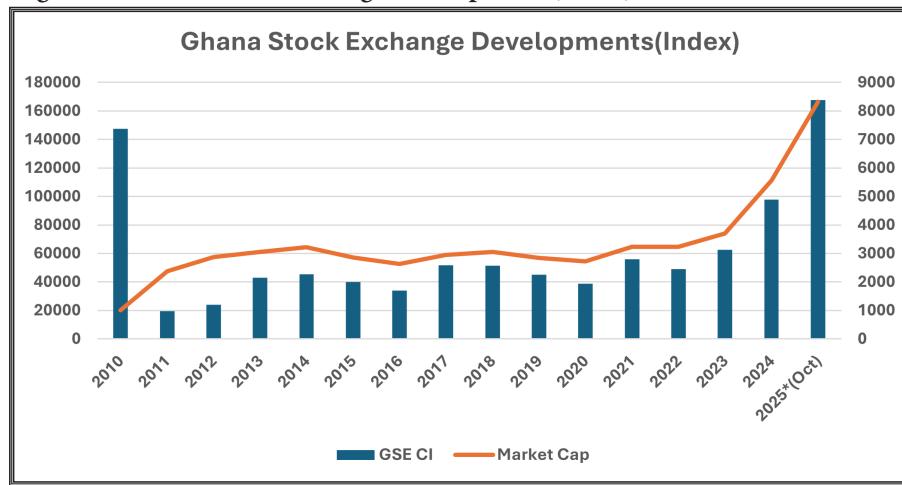


Development and Performance of the Ghana Stock Exchange with a Focus on the Financial Sector

The performance of the Ghana Stock Exchange (GSE) in recent years must be understood within the context of improving macroeconomic conditions and a gradual easing of financial constraints in the domestic economy. Following a prolonged period of macroeconomic instability marked by elevated inflation, tight monetary policy, and exchange rate volatility, recent developments point to a stabilisation of the macro-environment. Declining inflationary pressures and the consequent easing of interest rates have begun to reduce the cost of capital, improve business cash flows, and enhance profitability prospects for firms. This improving macroeconomic backdrop has been instrumental in supporting the recovery and valuation gains of companies listed on the exchange, particularly within the financial sector, where earnings are highly sensitive to interest rate dynamics and economic activity.

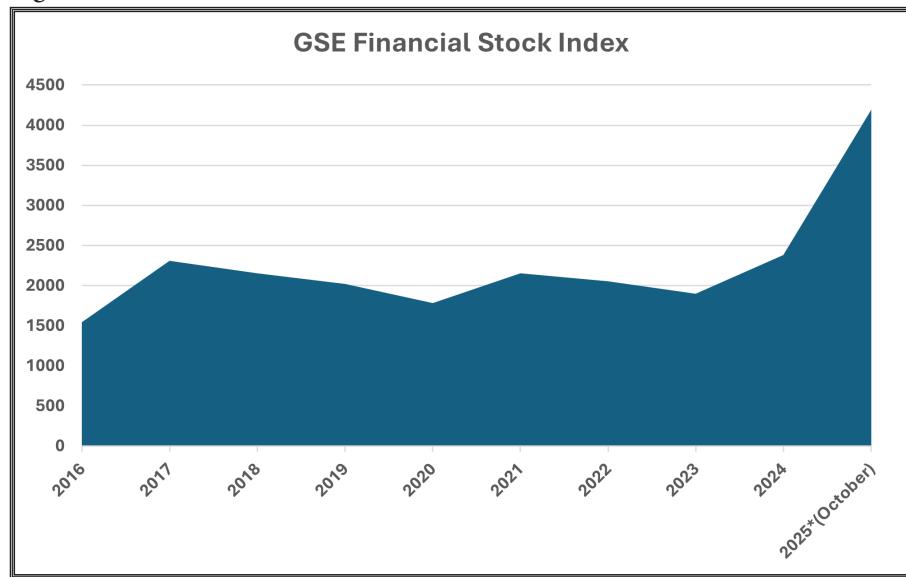
Against this background, the Ghana Stock Exchange has recorded a notable improvement in performance over the medium to long term. The GSE Composite Index (GSE CI), which stood at 7,369.2 points in 2010, experienced periods of volatility over the years, reflecting shifts in macroeconomic conditions, fiscal pressures, and investor sentiment. Nonetheless, the broader trend has been upward, with the index rising to 8,385.35 points by October 2025. More striking has been the expansion in market capitalization, which increased from GHS 20,116.7 million in 2010 to GHS 166,537.93 million by October 2025, underscoring the growing size, relevance, and valuation of the Ghanaian equity market. The sharp acceleration in market capitalization in recent years reflects renewed investor confidence, improved earnings outlook for listed firms, and a gradual reallocation of portfolios towards equities as moderate interest rates.

Figure 26: Ghana Stock Exchange Developments(Index)



Source: Bank of Ghana Database Portal

Figure 27: GSE Financial Stock Index



Source: Bank of Ghana Database Portal

The improving performance of financial stocks also highlights the broader role of the capital market in supporting economic growth. A strong and well-functioning equity market allows financial institutions to diversify their funding sources, strengthen capital buffers, and support increased lending to the private sector. In recognition of this, deliberate efforts are being made to deepen the Ghanaian capital market by expanding listings, particularly within the banking sector. There is a growing emphasis on ensuring that the equities of most universal banks operating in Ghana are listed on the GSE. Increasing bank listings is expected to enhance market depth, broaden the investor base, and improve liquidity, thereby reinforcing the exchange's capacity to mobilise long-term capital for development.

These efforts are being pursued through close collaboration among key stakeholders, notably the Ghana Association of Banks (GAB), the Bank of Ghana (BoG), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). This coordinated approach reflects a shared recognition that the development of the bourse is inseparable from broader financial sector stability and regulatory alignment. By harmonising prudential oversight with capital market development, these institutions are working to position the GSE as a credible and efficient platform for capital formation.

Looking ahead, the sustained expansion of the Ghana Stock Exchange will depend not only on favourable macroeconomic conditions but also on targeted measures to enhance listing and trading activity. Policies that reduce the cost and complexity of listing, improve market transparency, and strengthen investor protection will be critical in encouraging more firms to access the equity market. Equally important are measures aimed at addressing liquidity constraints, including broadening institutional participation, promoting market-making activities, and deepening secondary market trading. Together, these reforms will help transform the GSE into a more liquid, inclusive, and growth-supportive market, capable of playing a stronger role in financing Ghana's development agenda.



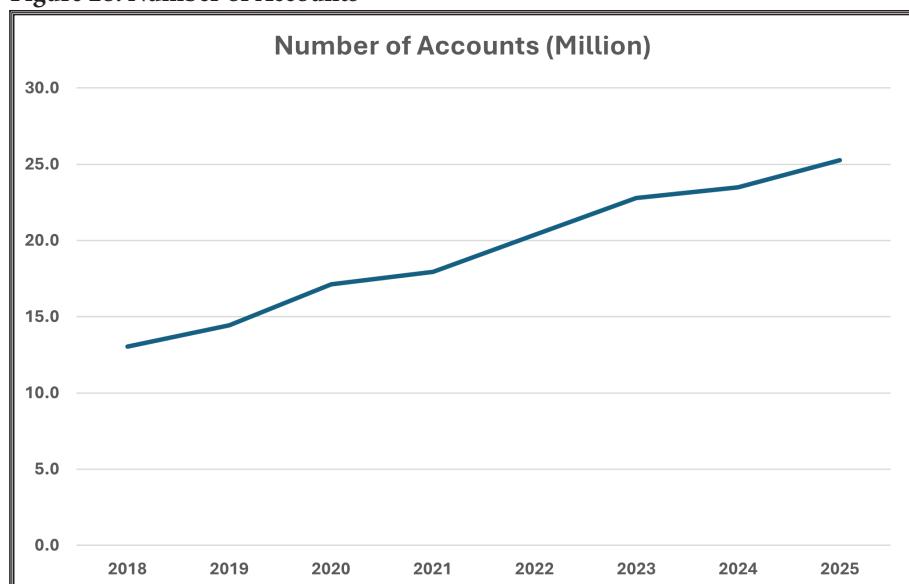
Evolution of Mobile Money in Ghana: Scale, Depth, and Systemic Importance

Over the past decade, mobile money has evolved from a basic payment convenience into one of the most systemically important components of Ghana's financial ecosystem. The data from 2018 to 2025 clearly illustrates not only rapid adoption but also a deepening of usage, value retention, and economic significance. What began primarily as a person-to-person transfer mechanism has matured into a platform underpinning retail payments, merchant commerce, government transactions, and informal economic activity.

Between 2018 and 2025, the number of mobile money accounts increased from 13.1 million to 25.3 million, representing almost a doubling within seven years. This growth trajectory reflects sustained financial inclusion efforts, rising mobile penetration, improved digital literacy, and the growing preference for cashless transactions. Importantly, the pace of account growth accelerated after 2020, coinciding with behavioral shifts induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which entrenched digital payments as an economic necessity rather than alternative.

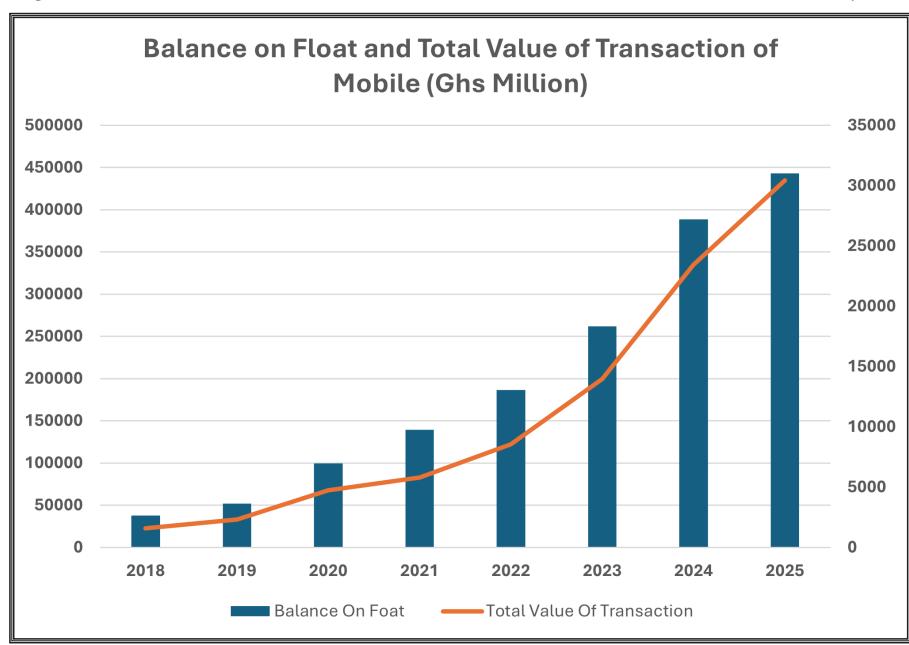
Beyond account ownership, the balance on float is as a critical indicator of trust and value retention, expanded markedly over the period. Float balances rose from approximately GHS 2.6 billion in 2018 to over GHS 31.0 billion by 2025, underscoring a structural change in consumer

Figure 28: Number of Accounts



Source: Bank of Ghana Database Portal

Figure 29: Balance on Float And Total Value of Transaction of Mobile Money



Source: Bank of Ghana Database Portal

behaviour. Users increasingly view mobile money wallets not merely as transactional pass-through channels, but as trusted stores of value. This transition has significant macro-financial implications, including effects on liquidity circulation, savings behaviour, and the velocity of money within the informal and semi-formal economy.

Transaction values mirror this deepening reliance. Total mobile money transaction values increased from GHS 22.6 billion in 2018 to over GHS 434.7 billion in 2025, reflecting exponential growth in both frequency and transaction size. Particularly notable is the sharp acceleration from 2021 onward, where annual transaction values expanded at increasingly higher absolute levels. This trend signals the normalization of mobile money for high-value transactions such as merchant payments, salary disbursements, bill payments, and increasingly, business-to-business transactions.

Collectively, these metrics confirm that mobile money in Ghana has transitioned into critical national financial infrastructure, influencing consumption patterns, revenue mobilization, financial intermediation, and monetary transmission. However, this rapid expansion has also brought into focus structural vulnerabilities within the ecosystem.

GhanaPay's Entry into a Mature Mobile Money Market

GhanaPay was introduced into an already mature and fast-growing mobile money environment, not to displace existing platforms, but to add value, rebalance the ecosystem and embed systemic safeguards.

Unlike earlier phases of mobile money growth driven primarily by telecom innovation, GhanaPay represents a bank-led, payment-infrastructure-anchored evolution of digital wallets.

As mobile money accounts expanded beyond 20 million and wallet floats crossed double-digit billions of cedis, the need for greater integration with the formal banking system became increasingly evident. GhanaPay addresses this gap by offering a mobile money platform that is directly connected to banks, settlement systems, and national payment rails, while remaining fully interoperable across mobile networks.

GhanaPay's Contribution to Market Metrics and Functional Depth

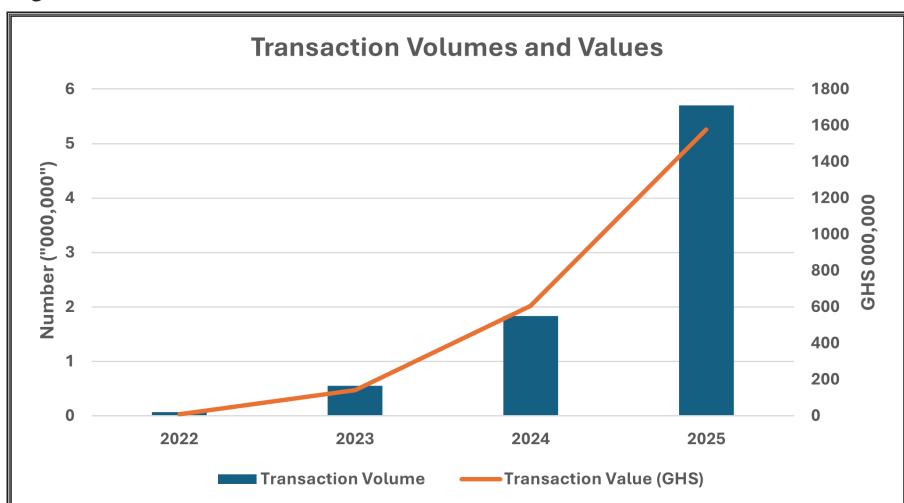
GhanaPay has demonstrated that bank-backed mobile wallets can achieve scale, with cumulative customer enrollment exceeding one million and transaction values surpassing GHS 2.3 billion within

a relatively short period. While modest relative to the overall market totals, this scale is significant given GhanaPay's role as an alternative rather than a dominant incumbent.

GhanaPay's wallet float growth, reaching approximately GHS 48 million by mid-2025, reinforces confidence in bank-anchored digital value storage. In a market where total mobile money float has exceeded GHS 31 billion, the importance of having a portion of this liquidity directly linked to the banking system cannot be overstated. It improves transparency, strengthens regulatory oversight, and supports broader financial stability objectives.

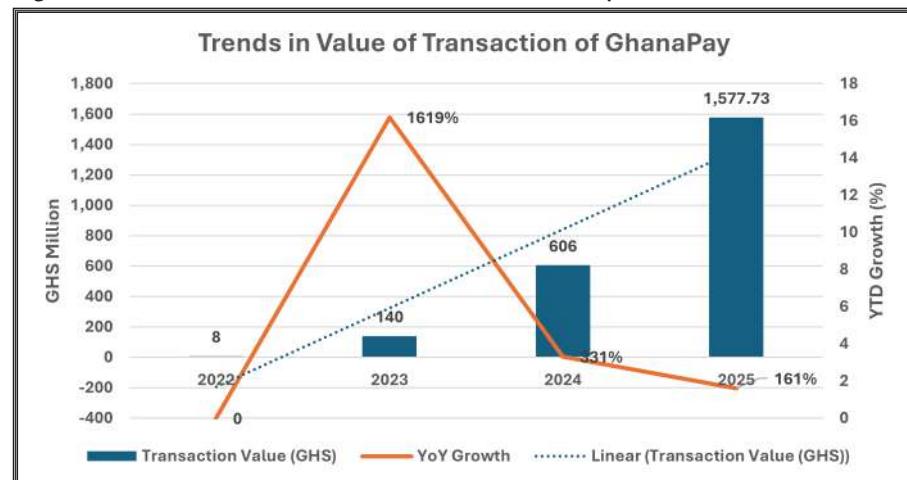
GhanaPay's expanding functionality ranging from Ghana Card-based onboarding, in-app notifications, crowdfunding public links, and deep interoperability which adds qualitative depth to the mobile money ecosystem. These features support use cases beyond basic transfers, including community finance, merchant aggregation, and future integration with savings, credit, and investment products.

Figure 30: Transaction Volumes and Values



Source: GhIPSS 2025

Figure 31: Trends in Value of Transaction of GhanaPay



Source: GhIPSS 2025

Repositioning Digitalisation in Banking and the Existential Relevance of GhanaPay

Digitalisation is no longer a transformation agenda for the banking industry; it is an existential one. In Ghana, the scale, speed, and systemic importance of mobile money have fundamentally altered how value is stored, transferred, and perceived by customers. With mobile money accounts now exceeding 25 million, wallet floats above GHS 30 billion, and annual transaction values surpassing GHS 430 billion, the centre of gravity in retail payments has shifted decisively away from traditional bank channels.

In this environment, the strategic question for banks is no longer whether digital finance will grow, but whether banks will remain structurally relevant as it does.

For much of the past decade, digitalisation in banking has been approached as a supporting function—focused on internal efficiency, channel automation, and incremental customer convenience. Meanwhile, mobile money evolved externally into a dominant financial interface, controlling customer relationships, transaction data, and liquidity flows at national scale. The result has been a gradual disintermediation of banks from everyday economic activity, even as banks continue to bear the balance sheet, regulatory, and systemic stability responsibilities of the financial system.

GhanaPay represents a strategic response to this imbalance. It is not simply another mobile wallet; it is a deliberate attempt to reposition digitalisation as a core banking survival strategy rather than a peripheral innovation initiative. By anchoring a nationally interoperable mobile wallet directly within the banking system, GhanaPay reasserts banks' presence at the point where value is created, circulated, and retained.

The existential relevance of GhanaPay lies in control of three critical dimensions of the digital economy: customer interface, liquidity, and data. First, GhanaPay restores direct customer engagement to banks in a payments ecosystem that has increasingly been mediated by non-bank platforms.

Second, it ensures that a portion of the rapidly growing mobile money float is structurally linked to the banking system, enhancing transparency, liquidity management, and monetary transmission. Third, it repositions banks as owners of transactional data that is essential for credit assessment, product innovation, and risk management in a digital economy.

Strategically, GhanaPay also introduces resilience into Ghana's financial architecture. As mobile money transaction values approach half a trillion cedis annually, systemic dependence on a narrow set of platforms becomes a national risk. GhanaPay provides diversification and competitive discipline.

For bank CEOs, the message is clear: digitalisation can no longer be treated as an efficiency play or a branding exercise. The future relevance of banks will depend on their ability to embed themselves within dominant transaction platforms, not merely connect to them from the periphery. GhanaPay offers a collective, industry-led mechanism allowing banks to compete, collaborate, and innovate within a shared digital infrastructure rather than fragmenting efforts across isolated proprietary solutions.

Ultimately, GhanaPay is about safeguarding the strategic relevance of banks in a rapidly digitising economy. It ensures that as Ghana's financial system becomes increasingly digital, banks remain central to value creation, liquidity intermediation, and economic governance. In this sense, GhanaPay is not optional infrastructure; it is a strategic imperative for the long-term viability of banking in Ghana.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN GHANA'S FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

Ghana's financial sector is undergoing a period of structural transformation, driven by regulatory reform, rapid technological change, and rising sustainability imperatives. Recent policy actions by the Bank of Ghana, supported by broader macroeconomic stabilisation under the IMF programme, reflect a deliberate effort to modernise the financial system, deepen inclusion, and manage emerging risks. Three interconnected developments stand out as defining forces shaping the sector's trajectory into 2026: the regulation of digital and virtual assets, the formalisation of Non-Interest Banking, and the growing integration of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations into financial intermediation.

1. Digital and Virtual Assets, Blockchain Technology, and Financial Digitalisation

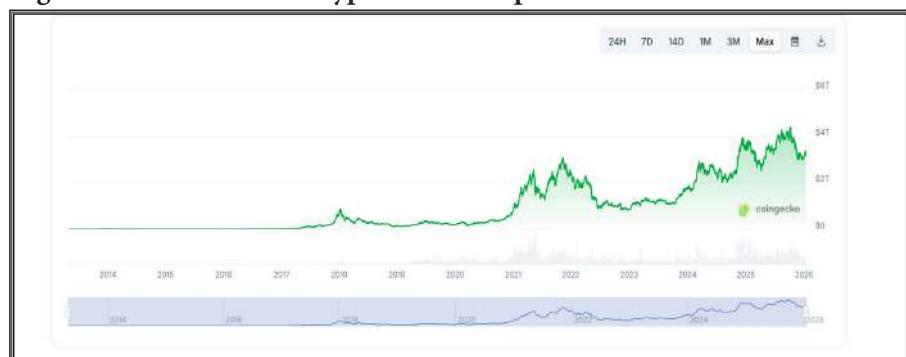
Virtual assets are digital representations of value that can be transferred, stored, or traded electronically, often using distributed ledger or blockchain technology. They include cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, stablecoins pegged to fiat currencies, and other digital tokens that can serve as mediums of exchange, stores of value, or instruments for decentralized finance (DeFi) applications. Unlike traditional money, virtual assets are typically decentralized, borderless,

and digitally native, enabling faster and more inclusive financial transactions but also requiring clear regulatory safeguards to manage risks related to fraud, volatility, and financial integrity.

The global cryptocurrency market continues to expand rapidly, reflecting both investor interest and technological innovation. As of January 2026, total crypto market capitalization exceeded \$3.17 trillion, with daily trading volumes over \$47 billion. Bitcoin (BTC) dominates with 56.7%

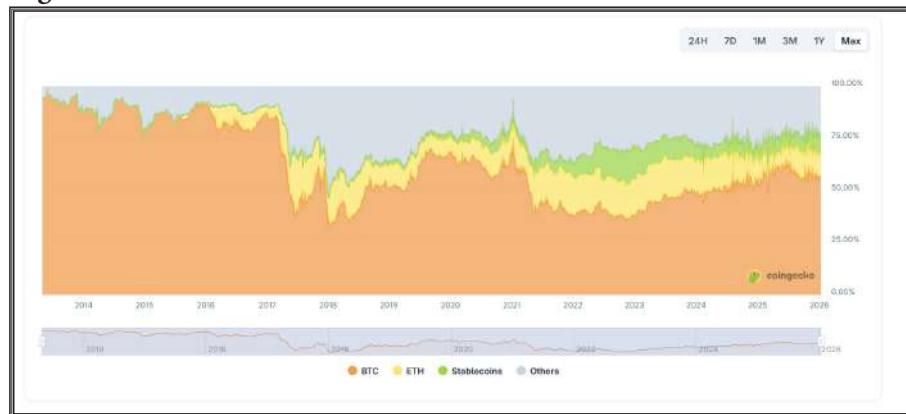
market share, followed by Ethereum (ETH) at 11.8%, stablecoins at 8.9%, and other digital assets comprising 22.3%. The decentralized finance (DeFi) sector alone is valued at \$111 billion, while stablecoins such as Tether (\$187 billion) and USDC (\$75 billion) play a critical role in reducing volatility and facilitating cross-border transactions. This global growth highlights the increasing utility of digital financial assets beyond speculation, extending to payments, trade, and liquidity management.

Figure 32: Total Global Crypto Market Capitalization



Source: CoinGecko January 2026

Figure 33: Bitcoin Dominance Chart



Source: CoinGecko January 2026

There's been rapid expansion of stablecoins, warning that rising currency substitution could weaken monetary policy transmission, particularly in emerging markets. As these dynamics reshape liquidity conditions and deepen interconnectedness between banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs), stress resilience in 2026 will increasingly hinge on robust liquidity management, prudent sovereign exposure limits, and enhanced counterparty risk oversight.

Figure 34: Stablecoin Market Cap

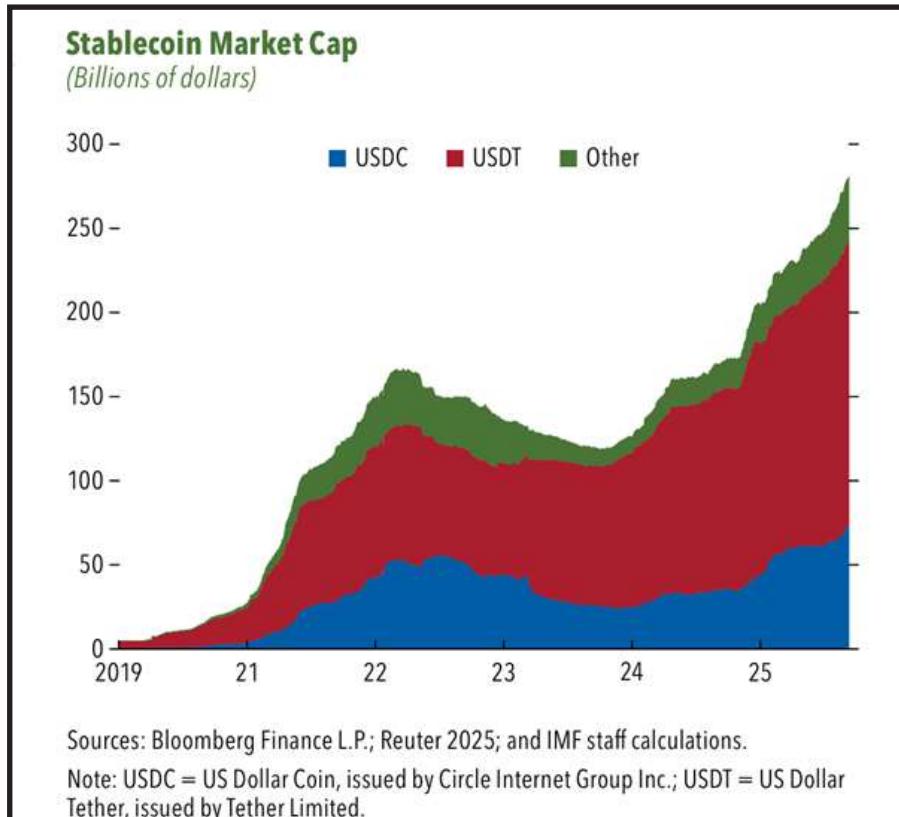


Figure 35: Stablecoin Market Cap

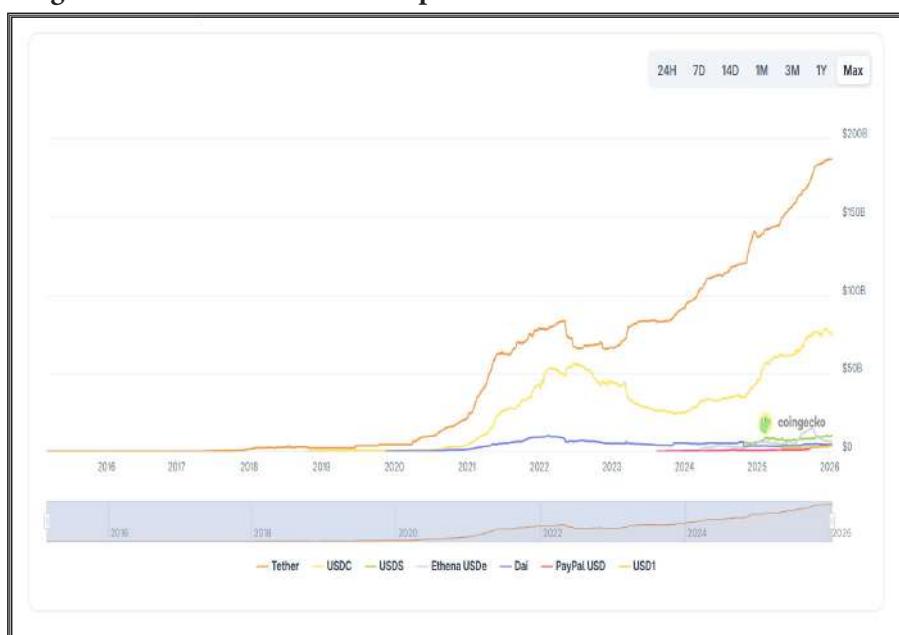
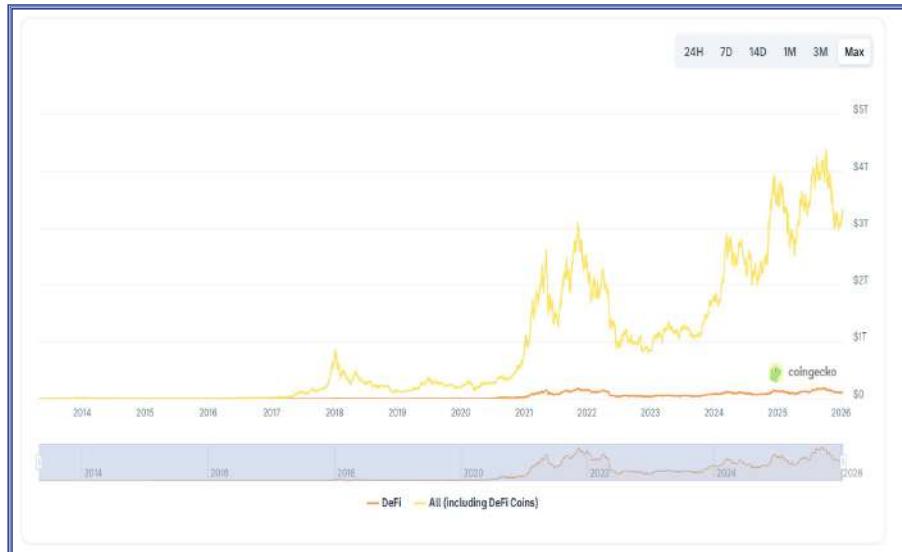
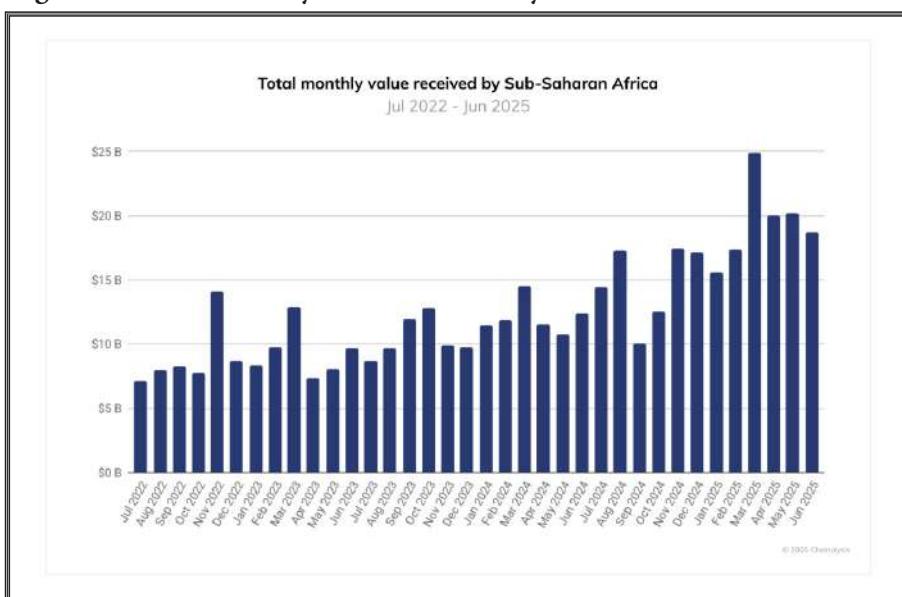


Figure 36: Decentralized Finance (DeFi) Market Cap

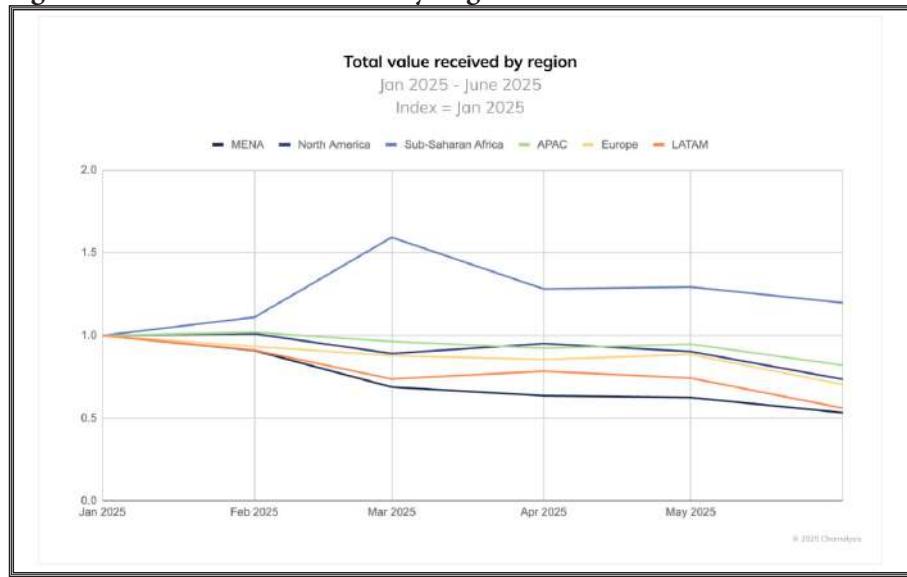
Source: CoinGecko January 2026

Sub-Saharan Africa has emerged as a major hub for crypto adoption, with on-chain activity rising 52% between July 2024 and June 2025. Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, and Ethiopia lead this trend, driven by retail adoption and growing institutional engagement. In economies where traditional banking remains limited, cryptocurrencies and stablecoins have become practical tools for hedging against inflation, facilitating cross-border trade, and enhancing financial inclusion.

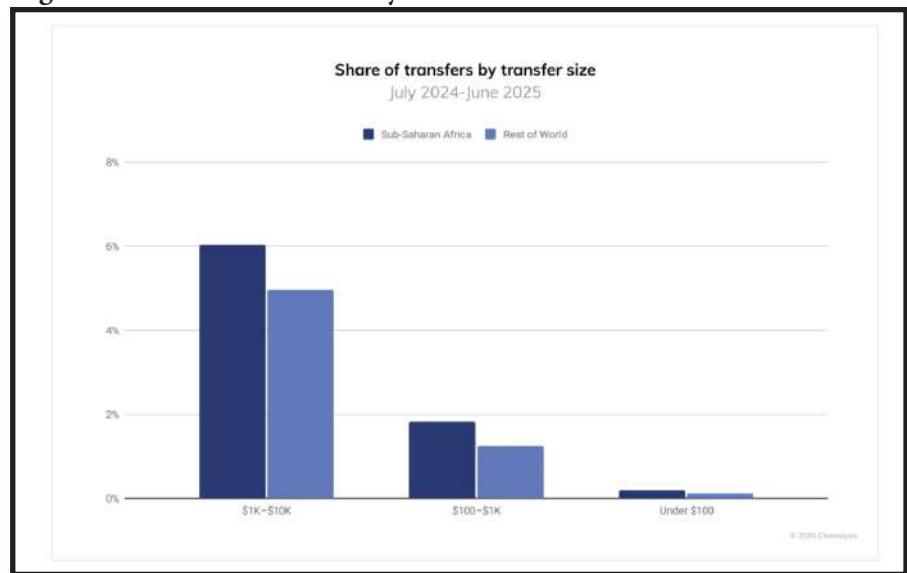
Figure 37: Total Monthly Value Received By Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: Chainanalysis 2025



Figure 38: Total Value Received By Region

Source: Chainanalysis 2025

Figure 39: Share of Transfers by Transfer Size

Source: Chainanalysis 2025

In Ghana, digital finance has grown rapidly due to high mobile money penetration, a tech-savvy youth population, and increasing cross-border digital transactions. Adoption has extended beyond traditional mobile payments to cryptocurrencies, stablecoins, and blockchain-enabled financial services, prompting the government to take decisive regulatory action. In 2025, Ghana enacted the Virtual Assets and Service Providers Act, formally establishing a regulatory framework for digital assets. This law prioritizes licensing and supervision of Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASPs), AML/CFT compliance, consumer protection, and cyber-risk mitigation.

Under this framework, banks are prohibited from holding or trading digital assets directly, preserving balance-sheet integrity and limiting speculative exposure. Instead, regulated banks can provide payment, settlement, and banking services to licensed VASPs, acting as gateways between the fiat and digital ecosystems under strict authorization, due diligence, and transaction monitoring. This approach balances innovation with prudence, recognizing

that stablecoins are widely used for payments and as value stores which could otherwise impact monetary policy transmission, capital flow management, and financial stability.

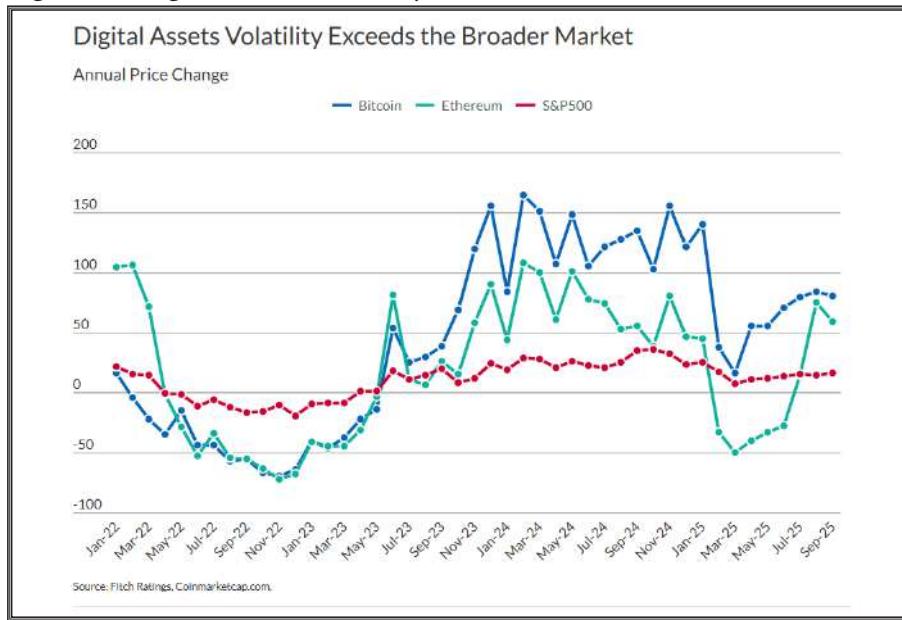
Fitch Ratings notes that when banks operate under a clear regulatory framework, new revenue streams emerge, operational efficiency improves, and customer services are enhanced while reputational and compliance risks are managed. By enacting this law, Ghana provides legal certainty, safeguards for consumers, and a platform for institutional adoption, setting the stage for financial innovation, deeper market participation, and regional leadership in digital finance.

Formalizing the crypto sector positions Ghana to harness the benefits of the digital asset economy while managing risks. Globally, structured regulation has demonstrated that digital assets can evolve from speculative instruments into strategic tools for economic development.

This will position banks as regulated gateways between the fiat and digital ecosystems, rather than direct participants in crypto markets. At the same time, it reflects concern over the growing use of stablecoins for payments and value storage, which could pose risks to monetary policy transmission, capital flow management, and financial integrity if left unregulated.

Strategic implication:

Digital assets and blockchain technologies present new fee-based income and payment-infrastructure opportunities for banks, but significantly elevate AML, cyber, operational, and reputational risks, requiring stronger controls and supervisory coordination.

Figure 40: Digital Assets Volatility

Source: Fitch Ratings 2026

2. Non-Interest Banking (NIB)

Non-Interest Banking (NIB), also known as Islamic or Shari'ah-compliant banking, is a form of banking that operates in line with established Non-Interest Banking and Finance (NIBF) principles. Unlike conventional banking, NIB strictly avoids interest (riba), excessive uncertainty or ambiguity (gharar), gambling or speculative transactions (maysir), and the financing of prohibited activities. All financial transactions under NIB must be backed by legitimate, real economic assets or activities, ensuring that funds are used in productive and ethical ways. This framework provides an alternative financial system that emphasizes risk-sharing, transparency, and ethical investment

A major structural shift in Ghana's financial landscape is the introduction of a comprehensive regulatory and supervisory framework for Non-Interest Banking (NIB). Through the Non-Interest Banking Regulatory Guideline (Exposure Draft) and accompanying FAQs, the Bank of Ghana has gained formally considered to embrace NIB into the mainstream financial system, moving it beyond a niche or informal offering.

The framework applies across banks, specialised deposit-taking institutions, development finance institutions, rural banks, and microfinance institutions, whether operating as full-fledged NIBIs or through dedicated windows. Central to the framework is a robust governance architecture, including mandatory Non-Interest Banking Advisory Committees (NIBACs) at the institutional level and oversight by the Non-Interest Financial Advisory Council (NIFAC) at the national level.

Prudential safeguards are equally stringent. Institutions are required to maintain strict segregation of NIB funds, avoid interest-bearing instruments, and establish Profit Equalisation Reserves (PER) and Investment Risk Reserves (IRR) to absorb losses and smooth returns. For banks operating NIB windows, the FAQs reinforce requirements for separate balance

sheets, dedicated IT systems, and clear disclosure of risk-sharing arrangements, particularly for Profit-Sharing Investment Accounts (PSIAs), where investors bear losses in the absence of misconduct.

Strategic implication:

While NIB increases operational and compliance complexity, it opens access to faith-sensitive and previously underserved market segments, supporting financial inclusion, real-sector financing, and product diversification.

3. ESG and Sustainability in Financial Intermediation

Sustainability considerations are increasingly shaping Ghana's financial sector, influenced by global ESG standards, domestic policy priorities and IMF programme conditionalities. The Bank of Ghana has consistently emphasised that financial stability, inclusion, and sustainable economic development are mutually reinforcing objectives.

Regulatory initiatives including NIB and digital asset oversight are explicitly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promoting ethical finance, transparency, and real-sector linkage. More broadly, banks are being encouraged to strengthen governance standards, risk disclosure, and environmental and social risk management, particularly as climate-related risks, energy-sector exposures, and infrastructure financing needs grow.

Under the IMF-supported reform programme, improved governance, transparency, and risk management

in banks and state-owned enterprises are recognised as essential to preserving financial stability. This places increasing responsibility on banks to integrate ESG considerations into credit allocation, portfolio management, and internal governance frameworks, even where explicit ESG regulations are still evolving.

Strategic implication:

ESG is transitioning from a reputational consideration to a core risk-management and strategic planning issue, influencing funding access, regulatory expectations, and long-term bank resilience.



Global Financial Stability and Banks 2026 Outlook Compendium

Since the release of the October 2025 Global Financial Stability Report (GFSR), global financial conditions have remained broadly supportive. Investor optimism continues to underpin high equity valuations and historically tight credit spreads, fueled by expectations of further monetary easing. Favorable financing conditions and low currency volatility have encouraged portfolio flows into emerging markets, with record international sovereign bond issuance and expanded access for lower-rated sovereigns, alongside consistent inflows into local currency debt markets.

According to the IMF, Equity market volatility spiked in November amid concerns about future returns in the artificial intelligence (AI) sector. AI companies now make up a significant portion of market capitalization and are major drivers of corporate capital expenditure growth. Market attention has increasingly focused on whether these firms can sustain AI-related revenue growth to justify high valuations. Rising leverage, reflected in high debt ratios and widening credit default spreads for some firms, adds to these risks. Moreover, complex circular investment and procurement arrangements among major AI firms—where companies invest in each other while securing future contracts—introduce opacity and concentration risks, making

ownership structures and valuations harder to assess.

Heavy issuance and shifting investor preferences are pushing sovereign debt toward shorter maturities, altering market dynamics in key economies. Global sovereign debt is projected to surpass 100 percent of GDP by the end of the decade. Lower policy rates have helped stabilize longer-term yields, even as term premiums rise due to heavy issuance and reduced demand for long-duration assets. Dutch pension funds are shortening portfolio durations, and traditional UK buyers, including pension funds, are giving way to hedge funds. In both the UK and the US, debt issuance increasingly favors shorter maturities. At the same time, short-term rates have risen with intermittent volatility, prompting periodic central bank liquidity interventions and raising concerns about market functioning.

Recent corporate defaults have highlighted weaknesses in credit underwriting and market transparency. While investors largely viewed the failures of Tricolor Holdings and First Brands as isolated, other distressed firms have avoided defaults through lender-led restructurings, often accompanied by rating downgrades. Nevertheless, these defaults exposed key vulnerabilities, including opaque financing structures, weak governance, and lenient underwriting standards—issues that have become more common with the rapid expansion of nonbank lenders,

particularly private credit. These vulnerabilities could intensify if market conditions tighten or investor risk appetite declines.

Fitch's 2026 global banking sector outlook is assessed as "Neutral," reflecting broad resilience in the system but with increasing divergence across regions. This assessment is anchored in the ongoing normalisation of global interest rate environments, which is expected to stabilise net interest margins (NIMs) following the post-pandemic period of heightened volatility. Banking systems transitioning from ultra-low-interest rate regimes-most notably Japan are projected to experience improving profitability dynamics. By contrast, banking sectors operating in jurisdictions facing elevated political uncertainty and weakened fiscal positions, including France, China, Hong Kong, and Canada, continue to face downside pressures.

Emerging market banking systems, including those in Africa, retain a neutral outlook, supported by strengthening macroeconomic fundamentals, easing inflationary pressures, and improving domestic demand conditions. However, a growing structural vulnerability stemming from banks' increasing exposure to private credit markets and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs). As banks deepen their linkages with these intermediaries, balance-sheet resilience could be tested during periods of market stress, particularly through liquidity transmission channels and correlated asset quality deterioration.

Capital adequacy across global banks remains above regulatory

minimum thresholds, providing an important buffer against near-term shocks. Nevertheless, Fitch cautions that emerging trends toward regulatory easing and lighter capital requirements in some jurisdictions could gradually erode these buffers, increasing susceptibility to systemic disruptions. At the same time, consolidation pressures are expected to intensify, with mergers and acquisitions rising in markets undergoing structural realignment, offering potential cost efficiencies but also introducing execution, integration, and governance risks.

Implications for the Ghanaian banking sector in 2026 and beyond:

As Ghana prepares to exit the IMF Extended Credit Facility (ECF) programme in August 2026, the banking sector is expected to face both opportunities and risks. On one hand, sustained macroeconomic stabilisation and reduced conditionality could support renewed credit growth, lower NPLs, and stronger investor confidence, particularly if global financing conditions remain supportive.

On the other hand, banks must remain vigilant against volatility in global interest rates, potential capital flow reversals, and currency pressures that could emerge as external support is withdrawn. Strategic focus on risk management, prudent lending, and diversification especially into infrastructure financing and high-growth sectors will be crucial to ensure that Ghana's banking sector benefits from its post-ECF trajectory while safeguarding financial stability.





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