

Background and Rationale

Road accidents continue to be a national security issue in the country as more people continue to die from the canker than from terminal diseases. Between March 2020 when the first covid-19 case was reported in Ghana and March 2021, road accident deaths have overtaken total Covid-19 casualties¹.

This essentially means more people have died due to road carnage in the period than the number of lives cumulatively claimed by the novel coronavirus since the country recorded its first two cases back in March 2020. This chilling revelation forms part of data collated by the Motor Traffic & Transport Department (MTTD) of the Ghana Police Service. The economic impact of this trend has been massive as many families have lost breadwinners through road carnages.

Current statistics from the Motor Transport and Drivers Division (MTTD) of the Ghana Police Service paint a rather unfortunate picture with 2,560 road accidents cases reported between January and February of 2021. This involved 1,581 commercial vehicles, 974 motorcycles, and 2,766 pedestrians have been knocked down.

Ghana has codified its BAC as 0.080 mg/ml. Road accidents fatalities as a result of the 0.080 mg/ml have reduced significantly. A study by the BRRI indicates that most drivers involved in road accidents were still within the 0.080mg/ml limit. For some of the drivers, 0.060 mg/ml was still sufficient to result in an accident.

This finding has been validated by some countries whose BAC limit was 0.080mg/ml and had it trimmed down to 0.050 mg/ml. Ghana's 0.080 mg/ml at the time it was passed conformed with the World Health Organization (WHO) limit. Whilst most countries that have reduced road accidents occasioned by drunk driving in Europe and North America have reduced their BAC from 0.080 mg/ml to a level that is safer for all classes of drivers. Ghana's limit needs to be reviewed to align with international best practices as this will help reduce significantly road accidents occasioned by drunk driving.

¹ <https://www.myjoyonline.com/2021-road-accident-deaths-overtake-total-covid-19-casualties-since-march-2020-in-ghana/>

It is in this context, CUTS Accra with support from the Global Road Safety Partnership (GRPS) is implementing an 18-month project entitled “**Advocating for the Reduction in Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) in Ghana to save lives and Reduce Road Accident**”

Project Goal

The overall purpose is to bring policy changes and amendments in the national drink driving legislation (blood alcohol content) from 0.080 mg/ml to 0.050 mg/ml and ensure its effective implementation so that the lives of road safety victims of drink and drive cases and other vulnerable road users can be saved in the country.

Project Objectives

The Project seeks to:

Specific Objective

- To advocate for the amendment and effective enforcement of the current BAC level from 0.08 mg/ml to 0.05 mg/ml for all drivers & motorcyclists
- To improve collaboration and coordination of key actors involved in the safety frameworks in Ghana

Project Activities

The proposed activities can be split into four. Namely; Research, Capacity Building Workshop, Advocacy, and Media Outreach

Research

A review of articles, reports, and case studies of evidence from bodies like the WHO, World Bank, and John Hopkins Universities will be conducted to build support for the revision. Also, a review of global best practices & recent trends to enhance the evidence base for BAC revision will be conducted. This would be supplemented by key informant interviews from key parties & experts on road safety including academicians, trauma experts, legislators, road crash survivors and policymakers. The outcome would be a comprehensive report comparing Ghana’s BAC with international standards and demonstrating the positive effects of BAC reduction in many countries.

Capacity Building Workshops

A total of four capacity building workshops (two in year one and two in year two) bringing together a mix of various road safety stakeholders concerned, and in support of BAC change will be organized. The participants include; Journalists, CSOs and the Private Sector Coalition, the Accident Victims' association, Transport Unions, Truck and Bus Drivers' Representatives, Taxi & Okada Operator Associations, Ride-Sharing Companies (Uber, Bolt, Yango,) and Transport Owners. The workshops will result in signed memoranda from the different groups supporting BAC reduction and the Ministry of Transport's efforts on the same. A Memoranda will also be shared with key agencies involved in BAC reduction and the Parliamentary Committee on Roads and Transport for additional support/endorsement.

Advocacy

An intensive advocacy campaign is crucial to achieving the overall goal of the project. To this end, the following advocacy activities will be held:

- Hold a series of meetings with key government ministries and agencies concerned with BAC to obtain their support for BAC reduction.
- Engage and build support & partnerships with CSOs and other road safety stakeholders to support BAC reduction advocacy.
- Establish a road safety journalists' network for sharing road safety information for public dissemination, awareness creation and education

Media Outreach

The media shall be used as a tool to disseminate messages as well as inform and educate the public to support BAC reduction and compliance of same. Feature articles/Op-ed, press releases, and TV and radio appearances shall be employed to stimulate discussions and debates towards reforms that are aimed at informing, updating, and building support from the public on BAC reduction. A sustained social media campaign to promote BAC reduction, and encourage compliance and enforcement will also be launched. CUTS social media handles, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube shall be used rigorously to reach a wider audience to increase public awareness and

pressure on parliament to prioritize the BAC review.

Project Outputs

- Policy Briefs, press releases, Op-ed/Articles, Briefing Papers on best practices on the subject matter will be developed. In addition, a Meetings Report and a Comprehensive research report containing easy-to-digest evidence of discussions, suggestions and inputs from a wide range of stakeholders shall be developed.
- Form a road safety journalists' network for sharing road safety information for public dissemination
- Establish a CSOs & Private Sector Coalition on Road Safety

Project Outcomes

- The enabling environment is built for amendments and effective enforcement of the current BAC level from 0.08 mg/ml to 0.05 mg/ml for all drivers & motorcyclists in Ghana
- Improved collaboration and coordination among key actors involved in the safety frameworks in Ghana
- Improved understanding and knowledge of the trained road safety journalists' network for writing and reporting on road safety issues for public dissemination
- Enhanced public awareness and compliance with revised BAC limits
- Enhanced understanding and capacity of CSOs on Road Safety issues