In Ghana oil palm production is primarily carried out by smallholders (80% +). It contributes to insignificant forest loss and plays an important role in local economies. As a multifunctional crop, oil palm is embedded in the everyday life of both rural and urban Ghanaians both under household consumption and on an industrial level. The sector- currently experiencing a resurgence under Ghana’s New Patriotic Party (NPP) rule - could also contribute towards poverty alleviation, development efforts and agricultural diversification in rural areas. We apply Ribot and Peluso’s (2003) ‘Theory of access’ as our analytical framework to assess the ability of oil palm production in Ghana to improve rural livelihoods, against the cross-scale dynamics and objectives of several components and actors in the land use sector. Trends in policy are also analysed to determine how sustainable land use practices can be created and strengthened over time, whilst supporting Ghanaian farmers. Preliminary findings show that whilst some benefits exist for smallholders in growing oil palm (e.g. regular income, is a drought- resilient crop, and provides cooking oil for household use), there are also challenges, including inadequate technical and financial support, and a complicated tenure system which is seen as both negative and/or positive by stakeholders depending on their respective positions. Opportunities lie in the government’s emerging initiatives alongside efforts by NGOs promoting ‘best management practices’ to help smallholders increase crop yield. However, there are concerns regarding the equity and justice elements for farmers who have very little agency in the decisions and policies around land use that affect them directly, with little – if any – inclusion in new initiatives proposed. Oil palm farmers are viewed as recipients much in the same way as international aid was delivered, with ‘positive outcomes’ defined/ decided by actors involved in policy formation/process (e.g. plantations, NGOs and certification groups), who in Ghana have an overall aim of facilitating the private sector towards national economic growth. The results are expected to be complementary to broader debates on - and feed into policy (and other) processes - on poverty alleviation, development, and sustainable land use practices for Ghana and beyond.