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Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Actors, networks and platforms for the promotion of agro-ecological practices in Burkina Faso

YASMINA TEGA¹, HYCENTH TIM NDAH², JOHANNES SCHULER³, EVELINE COMPAORE-SAWADOGO⁴, JEAN-MARIE DIPAMA⁵

¹*Institute of Environment and Agricultural Research (INERA), Burkina Faso, Burkina Faso*

²*Leibniz Centre for Agric. Landscape Res. (ZALF), Farm Economics and Ecosystem Services,*

³*Leibniz Centre for Agric. Landscape Res. (ZALF), Farm Economics and Ecosystem Services, selected*

⁴*Institute of Environment and Agricultural Research (INERA), Burkina Faso, Burkina Faso*

⁵*Pr. Joseph Ki Zerbo University, Ouagadougou, Geography, Burkina Faso*

Abstract

In the last decades, agroecology (AE) has developed from a science on the pure ecological interactions in agricultural systems, to agronomic recommendations through specific practices that utilise these ecological interactions and finally into a social movements covering also issues such as food sovereignty and farmer autonomy. Each region has its different perceptions, experience, focus of agroecology and how it should be implemented. Besides, it is not clear, which actors, networks and platforms are involved and what services are mobilised including their quality.

Within the context of the project FAIR Sahel (Fostering an Agroecological Intensification to improve farmers’ Resilience in Sahel), we identified the relevant knowledge and service actors, organisations and stakeholders involved in the promotion and implementation of AE in Burkina Faso. We carried out a literature review and realised a stakeholder workshop focussing on AE knowledge and information systems within two contrasting regions in Burkina Faso (North and Southwest). In a stakeholder mapping exercise, we characterised the linkages (dynamics) between AE actors with focus on: 1) type of linkages (service or policy linkage), 2) quality of linkages (e.g., collaboration, competition), and 3) magnitude of linkages. Besides, we identified AE policies and programmes in Burkina Faso. The results showed spatially contrasting AE actors, networks and platforms across the two regions. Reasons for differences were partly caused by the climate, soils and the different crops grown in each region (cotton vs. cereals such maize and sorghum) creating different agronomic patterns as well as marketing and support structures. Overall, the local conditions lead to a higher appreciation of AE in the Northern region. These findings contribute to specific AE actor-network images for the regions and eventually for the entire country, allowing for a spatially targeted, case-specific promotion of agroecological practices.

Keywords: Agroecology, AKIS, Burkina Faso, innovations