



Burkina Faso

SECURING SOIL, WATER AND NATURE

When it comes to empowering local communities to enter into dialogue with public and private parties and a government that enforces regulations, local partners are crucial as facilitators and catalysts. In Burkina Faso, we support them in encouraging the sustainable management of agricultural land and conservation areas, to ensure that the water remains clean, and natural resources are better managed.

LANDSCAPE APPROACH

The five million inhabitants of the catchment area of the Nakanbé river are almost entirely dependent on the river for clean water and food production. IUCN NL works alongside local NGOs to prevent degradation of land and water resources, according to the landscape approach. In that approach, we often consider a water catchment area as a coherent unit that brings together various forms of land use. That is why we focus not only on nature but also on the social and economic aspects.

COMPULSORY TAXATION FOR THE MINING SECTOR

Large mining corporations often use huge amounts of water in their processes, and subsequently discharge contaminated water into the river. These mining corporations are required by law to pay water taxes to local development agencies, with the aim of supporting local water committees to manage the water resources in their municipality. However, the majority of these mining companies did not pay the tax, and the government failed to enforce the law.

Supported by IUCN NL, partner organisations AGEREF, AGED and Naturama entered into discussions with the mining companies and the government to settle conflicts relating to water and the necessity of sticking to the rules. By supporting them in the direct dialogue with the mining companies and by reinforcing the needs expressed by the local communities, we have reached a situation whereby all the companies now pay their tax. Thanks to the revenue thus generated, using our advice, the local water committees were at last able to start taking measures to prevent erosion and to preserve or restore local forests.

“For many years, consultation with businesses was simply not done in the nature conservation world. As more and more businesses become aware of their responsibility for the landscape and local communities, they are gradually becoming part of the solution and as such a vital dialogue partner.”

Jan Kamstra, expert Burkina Faso at IUCN NL

BROAD-BASED DIALOGUE

Our local partners also organised broad-based dialogue between businesses, government and local communities with the aim of considering not only water problems but other problems facing the environment, too. This resulted in a greater understanding of each other's interests, and the elaboration of solutions supported by all parties. It turned out that the mining companies were also open to addressing their impact on nature and water, and to take their relationship with the local communities more seriously.

Example of our work

Connecting protected areas

The Nakanbé catchment is a biodiversity rich area. The majority of large game is concentrated in a number of nature reserves, but these are becoming increasingly isolated. The areas between the reserves are used for agriculture and roaming cattle herds. The migration of elephants between reserves is leading to growing levels of conflict. With the creation of 'elephant corridors', we aim to maintain sufficient space for agriculture and livestock farming, as well as allowing the seasonal migration of the elephants.

Together with our partners, the local communities and the government, we have successfully elaborated a legal framework for corridors between the protected areas. This framework specifies which activities are and are not permitted in the corridor and gives government a clear enforcement mandate.

To ensure success, we are working alongside local residents to identify ways of reducing pressure on the corridors, for example by improving agricultural practice, organising livestock farmers and reinforcing land rights.

More examples of our work

More IUCN NL in Burkina Faso

- Artisanal and small scale gold mining is an important source of income for millions of people, but these miners often use the highly toxic substance mercury, much of which disappears into the soil and water. We are working to organise the small scale miners in cooperatives, allowing them to purchase technical equipment to minimise their social and environmental impact. We are also calling upon all levels of government to ban the trade in and use of mercury.
- In Burkina Faso, all naturally growing trees are government property. We are working on legislation that will transfer this ownership right to farmers, to encourage them to leave the trees standing, and better manage the tree stock. This development would benefit both water regulation and soil health. Particular attention is being paid to women because as yet they have few rights to the use of the land and natural resources, despite playing an important role in production and trade.

COLLABORATING WITH IUCN NL

Do you want to help IUCN NL to make nature conservation possible in Burkina Faso? Visit our [website](#) for more detailed information or contact our expert **[Jan Kamstra](#)**.