

Climate Change, Water Resources, and WASH Systems

COUNTRY CASE:

BURKINA FASO



	Risk	Programming	Policy & Planning	
Polluted water	Medium	Focused	NAP	Yes
Too little water	High	Focused	National climate policies & plans	Limited
Too much water	Low	Limited	Extent WASH is included	Small

Climate trends and impacts on water resources

In Burkina Faso,¹ the key trends include:^{2,3}

- An increase in average temperatures of 1.7°C by 2050.
- A decrease in rainfall of -7.3% by 2050.
- By 2050, expected decrease in annual volume of water in main rivers.



Impacts on WASH infrastructure and services

All water supply systems (both rural and urban) depend on surface water, groundwater, or a combination of both. The groundwater sources are relatively well-buffered from climate fluctuations except in the regions of Sahel and Nord where the water table has decreased during dry seasons over the past two decades. The government has shifted investments in surface water (small and medium dams) to much more focus on large dams and large agriculture – limiting options for small scale agriculture and community WASH.

Surface and groundwater are increasingly at risk of pollution linked to agricultural and mining activities. There is an increasing concern about chemical pollution of both surface water and groundwater that could be amplified by rainfalls, particularly intense rains that lead to damage and flooding of (illegal) mining sites. Most household sanitation facilities are on-site and unimproved. Emptying of latrines is limited, and the treatment facilities that exist only partially cover the needs in a couple of main towns.

Climate and WASH policy and initiatives

Alongside the main focus on water for agriculture and livestock, water supply and sanitation were introduced in the [National Adaptation Programme of Action](#) in 2015 with adaptation options focused on monitoring groundwater and surface water, reducing the unnecessary use of domestic water, and improving sanitation. These options broadly guided the design of national programs for Sustainable Development Goal 6.

There is still an important knowledge gap for defining specific expected changes instead of business-as-usual. Since May 2020, the national water utility, the National Office of Water and Sanitation (ONEA, for the French acronym), has been developing a reference framework for

¹ IRC works in Banfora District.

² National Adaptation Programme of Action, 2015.

³ Climate related risks assessment in Burkina, 2012

https://flurygiuliani.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/k3_millenniuminstitute_2012.pdf

resilience to climate change. This framework is expected to cover various aspects of resilience including economic, social, environmental, scientific, technological, institutional, and political considerations.

Country program activities: mitigation and adaptation

IRC Burkina has not historically worked on climate change. Starting in 2020, we began collaborating with UNICEF on a study to assess the specific risks linked to climate change in the provision of WASH services.

Key challenges

The primary challenge is defining very concrete climate adaptation measures (beyond principles) in existing service delivery models and enforcing them in the sector. Measures should be geographically specific depending on documented risks.

The local IRC team needs to acquire the knowledge to support the sector in this area both with technical assistance (guidance and practical solutions) and advocacy content (strategic changes expected from high level decision makers including political and financial commitments).