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Finding new points of influence: Building partnerships between research and policy “worlds” in Burkina Faso

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WORKING SESSION WITH THE VISIONNARY TEAM (KOMBISSIRI, SEPTEMBER 2011)

Key Message

The collaboration between the IWMI and the SP-PAGIRE as part of the V4 project of the CPWF programme lays the basis for innovative local water management practices that will be piloted by local communities to meet their multiple demands. The SP/PAGIRE would like to share its experience of such approaches with the scientific community and development practitioners.

Summary

The design and implementation of the CPWF V4 project provided an opportunity for developing collaborative linkages between the SP/PAGIRE and the IWMI through practical field activities that sparked the interest of local actors. The participatory approach that is adopted allows for the identification of improvements in the way that water resources are managed for multiple purposes by the communities themselves. It also allows for identifying the positive and negative impacts of a suite of interventions. To date, collaborative activities have included:

1. The collaborative design of the project (IWMI, SP/PAGIRE, DGRE and Agence de bassin).
2. Meetings with local actors (farmers, deconcentrated ministries, local government) but also with central ministries and development partners in order to conduct an initial diagnosis and select the study area.
3. Targeted meetings with key stakeholders (*éclairés*) who are widely recognized for their experience and expertise of the sector and can contribute to the design of the project activities and the validation of the tools and results that could be devised/produced.
4. A synthesis report on IWRM initiatives in Burkina Faso that will be useful so as to share experiences with other countries in West Africa.

The watershed-level dialogue instituted for collective decision making over water governance, the involvement of local, regional and national actors, the possibility given to IWRM practitioners (SP/PAGIRE) to interact with researchers to find innovative ways of implementing IWRM and the framework based on the companion modeling framework confer an innovative character to this project. This is of use for development practitioners and researchers alike so that they better understand each other and account for local communities' concerns.