

# IASS ACCOMPANYING RESEARCH: SOIL PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION FOR FOOD SECURITY IN BURKINA FASO

Under its special initiative “One World, No Hunger” (SEWOH), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is prioritizing efforts to deliver food security and enhance the management of natural resources. The protection and rehabilitation of agricultural land managed by smallholder farmers are central to this dual agenda and form the objectives of a GIZ programme implemented in five countries. Seeking to explore new forms of development cooperation, SEWOH mandated the Global Soil Forum (GSF)

to accompany the work of the GIZ through transdisciplinary research. The accompanying research project focuses on the socio-economic and cultural factors that constrain the uptake of sustainable land management (SLM) techniques by smallholder farmers. The GSF’s approach stresses co-development and the pursuit of research themes with local partners, including researchers, policymakers, actors of development cooperation, civil society organisations, and farmers.

## Our research partner GRAF

GRAF is a network of experts with different profiles working on issues related to land and soils. The organization was founded in 2001. It is a member of LandNet West Africa and International Land Coalition (ILC). GRAF links up experts in different fields, does research on its own account or in partnership, provides trainings, disseminates information, establishes a platform for exchange and lobbies for and influences political agendas on land tenure issues. The themes GRAF is dealing with are, amongst others, access to and management of natural resources, land conflicts and crises around soils, land acquisitions, decentralization of governance, and securing land rights for women and other disadvantaged groups.



### 2015

**April – October 2015:** Project inception: desk research on SLM-related issues in Burkina Faso and preparation of exploratory missions

### 2016

**November 2015 – April 2016:** Stock-taking phase: GRAF prepares an inventory of past SLM projects in the provinces of Tuy, Houet, and loba as well as a detailed analysis of 11 selected projects using interviews and focus group discussions with farmers and project implementers

**July 2016:** Exploratory mission to Burkina Faso; interviews with farmers, project implementers and policy makers; visit to GIZ intervention area

**October 2016:** Two Lessons Learnt workshops in Bobo-Dioulasso, one with farmers who benefited from and one with institutional stakeholders who implemented SLM projects

### 2017

**November 2016 – February 2017:** Gender Study on SLM technology adoption and land governance

**November 2016:** African Soil seminar in Nairobi; session on land governance co-hosted by GRAF, Synergie Paysanne (Benin partner) and IASS Potsdam

## Baseline Study

**Objective:** Learning from past experiences with SLM promotion in Burkina Faso

**Partner:** Groupe de Recherche et d'Action sur le Foncier (GRAF)

**Guiding Question:** What were successes and challenges in past SLM promotion projects in Burkina Faso? What lessons can be learned?

**Focus areas:** Selection of target groups; selection of SLM technologies; approaches to diffuse SLM technologies; enabling conditions for enhancing adoption; results, constraints and success of SLM technology diffusion

**Method:** Inventory of 17 projects with SLM components in total, in-depth analysis of 11 selected projects through interviews with project implementers and key informants and focus group discussions with farmers

### Findings:

#### Targeting project beneficiaries

- Generally, members of farmer producer groups were selected by village development councils based on criteria agreed upon with the project implementer
- Some interviewed farmers had the impression that the choice of beneficiaries is biased and benefits only farmers with good contacts to the project implementing organisation



## Lessons Learnt Workshops

**Objectives:** Jointly drawing lessons from past SLM projects with the stakeholders and farmers that were involved

**Setting:** Two Lessons Learnt workshops in Bobo-Dioulasso, one with farmers who benefited from and one with institutional stakeholders who implemented SLM projects

**Guiding question:** What works and what does not work in SLM promotion?

**Method:** Close analysis of eleven projects through participatory workshop methods (break-out groups, World Café, etc.)

### Adoption rates after project withdrawal

- Crop rotation, composting (pits), and stone bunds: 50 to 70 % (estimated)
- Agroforestry: 20% (estimated), especially difficult for migrants to adopt due to high tenure insecurity
- Earth bunds, tillage of dry soils, seeding under vegetative cover and mucuna: discontinuation in most cases

### Positive impacts on long-term SLM technology adoption

- Farmers’ awareness of severity of land degradation
- Delegate responsibilities to project beneficiaries through ‘cahier de charge’, contracts, and conventions
- Building local expertise through training of local technicians that can easily ensure follow-up of activities due to their proximity
- Institutional innovations and strengthening of institutional capacities of existing structures to facilitate dialogue between project implementer and beneficiaries and to enable rapid modification in response to difficulties

### Negative impact on long-term SLM technology adoption

- Lack of gender sensitivity: women’s participation is primarily quantitative (e.g. at construction of stone bunds) rather than qualitative (few women have truly benefited from SLM technologies)
- Neglect of land right issues: weak consideration of land tenure issues do not allow of appropriation/adoption of certain SLM technologies, such as agroforestry and some anti-erosive measures like stone bunds; migrants are especially affected
- Lack of facilitating access to credit: only 4 out of 11 projects have taken access to credit into account

