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Learning from the past: Rainwater management in the Volta Basin

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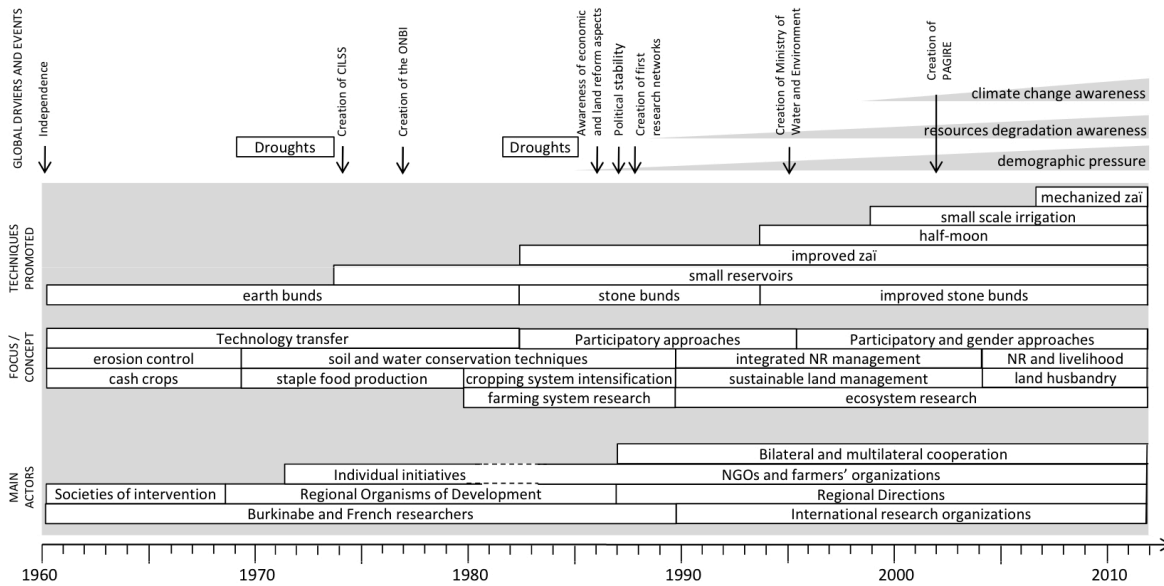
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Session: Volta Basin



Evolution of agricultural rainwater management strategies promoted in Burkina Faso's Volta Basin, and related actors, concepts and events.
CILSS: Permanent Inter-state Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel; NGO: non governmental organization; NR: natural resources; ONBI: Dams and Irrigation National Office; PAGIRE: Action plan for integrated water resources management.

Key Message

The “what, where and how” of rainwater management can be more efficiently addressed when taking into account the underlying causes for success and failure of research and development projects from the past. The paper will share key findings on the reasons behind the successes or failures of previous research and development projects on rainwater management, the knowledge gaps and pertinent lessons for the Volta BDC. This will not only guide researchers as well as decision-makers at sub-regional level through the choice and the support of best-fit RMS, but can also benefit other BDCs with similar baseline data.

Summary

Rainwater management strategies (RMS) have been extensively studied and promoted in the Volta basin during the last decades. However, water scarcity still limits agricultural production of most of the smallholder crop-livestock farms in the basin. In order to learn from the past about the underlying causes for success and failure in the application of RMS, a comprehensive and systematic review of past research and development projects on rainwater management in the Volta basin was undertaken. For this review, “rainwater management” was interpreted broadly and ranges from in-situ soil and water conservation technologies to small reservoirs for multiple uses. Besides identifying knowledge gaps, we synthesized existing knowledge and lessons learned to be taken into account by the Volta Basin Development Challenge (BDC) as well as future projects in order to ensure the choice of best-fit technologies for each type of environment, and enhance adoption of RMS by smallholder crop-livestock farmers.