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Small reservoirs: Hot spots of scattered resources in the Volta Basin

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Key Message

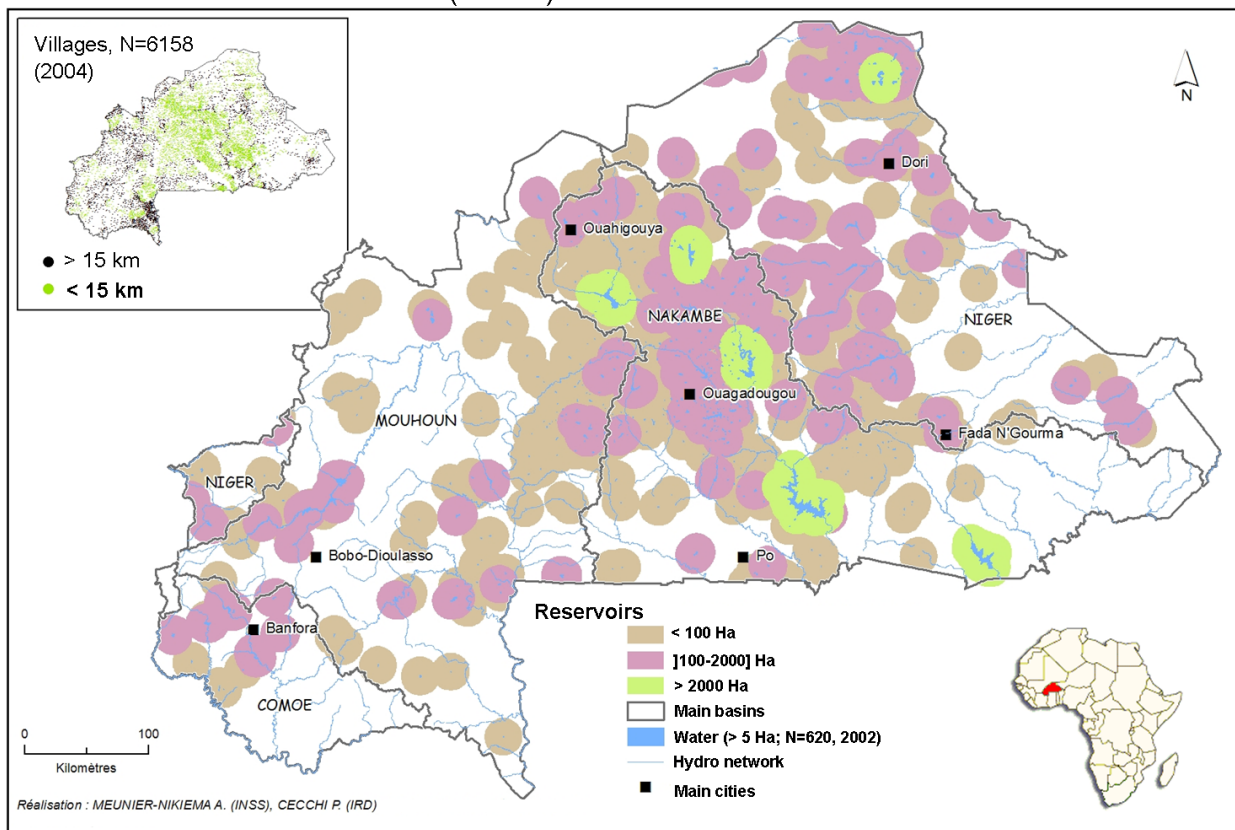
Small reservoirs in the Volta Basin constitute a patrimonial resource widely recognized and appreciated by their users and neighbors. In Burkina Faso more than 71% of the rural populations are living at less than 15km (at least) from a reservoir. This emphasizes the agro-economical importance of these infrastructures.

Summary

We used secondary databases from Burkina Faso to document the distributions of reservoirs and villages at the national scale. A 15km radius buffer zone around reservoirs was used to identify their immediate attraction area, revealing that 71.5% of the population (≈ 7 million inhabitants) are living at less than 15km of one perennial reservoir (at least). There exist important heterogeneities, but the Volta Basin (63.1% of the national territory) is particularly involved. Perennial reservoirs correspond during the dry season to ≈ 1000 km² of water and to a total shoreline of ≈ 4000 km, which support significant hot spots of productivity. The associated fishery potential is significant (≈ 5500 tons/year), as well as is the agricultural value of surrounding areas. This observation is meaningful for such a Sahelian country where the hydrographical network is mainly constituted by temporary rivers. Such vicinity constitutes a real and important potential in terms of valorisation, as resources and consumers are very close to each

other, being simultaneously largely scattered in rural areas. All arid areas of (West) Africa constitute valuable territories where such infrastructure may contribute efficiently to the enhancement of rural livelihood. The increase of their productivity is a priority that should come however after the maintenance of the current infrastructure and the preservation of their current value. For this to be achieved, both political and institutional inputs are required at different decision levels. In particular, clarification regarding their ownership status is clearly a major challenge for the sustainable exploitation of such hot spots.

Attraction area (15 km) around reservoirs in Burkina Faso



LOCATION OF THE 620 PERENNIAL RESERVOIRS (2002) AND OF THEIR RIVERINE POPULATION (<15 KM; 2004) IN BURKINA FASO (WEST AFRICA)