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Main message
Change is not the outcome of a simple “from”(research) “to” (policy) model. It is most likely to take place in the form of incremental adjustments, grounded in daily interactions between stakeholders.

Everybody Knows...

- Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is at the core of the water policy framework of Burkina Faso.
- Water agencies and local water committees (CLE) have been set up to manage water resources.
- They face implementation challenges.

How did IWRM come into being?
IWRM was promoted in West Africa by an advocacy coalition of Danish water professionals flanked by Burkinabe policy makers.

A few high-ranking Burkinabe civil servants orchestrated a policy network, through which they acquired influence at national and regional level.

This was facilitated by regional and international venues provided by DANIDA and GWP.

A large pool of Burkinabe consultants, many of who are former civil servants, play a pivotal role in the design and implementation of water policies and programs in francophone West Africa.

Approaches to IWRM and participation in particular are grounded in an “upward accountability” ethos.

Why does it matter?
Framing policy as a practice, that is something people do and undo rather than as a normative reference point, allows for understanding how and why people take decisions and in which arenas.

Such an approach allows for identifying multiple policy engagement channels and strategies.

Findings

- Fruitful engagement rests on a fine balance between long-term institutional partnerships and one-off pragmatic interventions. This is possible to achieve only after building trust and legitimacy.
- Early collaborative project development proved to be a very valuable phase to understand policy processes, identify engagement opportunities, and work towards mutual understanding and legitimacy.
- Stakeholders beyond the administration still need to acquire a legitimacy to meaningfully contribute to making decision over water management.