

POLICY BRIEF

FARMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF FARMER MANAGED NATURAL REGENERATION IN NORTHERN BURKINA FASO

Land degradation is a major challenge in the semi-arid areas of Burkina Faso. Exacerbated by climate change and anthropogenic pressures, it affects soil fertility, livelihoods, and food security in rural communities. In response to these realities, Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) involves the selection, protection, and management of the natural regrowth of trees and shrubs on farmland. FMNR is recognized by farmers as an accessible, low-cost Nature-based Solution.



Key informant interviews with environmental services

OVERVIEW

The study assessed mainly farmers' perceptions of the benefits of FMNR and examined the on-field reality through a floristic inventory of farmers' fields. The study was conducted in Gomponsom, located in the province of Passoré in northern Burkina Faso. This area is characterized by its Sudano-Sahelian climate and an annual rainfall of 600 to 1000 mm.



Field observation during the study

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Strengthen international collaboration :** International partners should strengthen technical, institutional, and community support mechanisms around FMNR to make it a sustainable solution to land degradation.
- 2. Integrate FMNR into policies:** National authorities and stakeholders should promote agroforestry practices adapted to local conditions and integrate FMNR into public policies for rural development. The role of local authorities should be reinforced through adequate budget allocation, logistical support, and clear responsibilities in land and environmental governance.
- 3. Provide farmers with training and financial support:** Local authorities should provide farmers with financial support and ongoing training on sustainable tree management techniques and land restoration techniques.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Land restoration techniques associated with FMNR:

Farmers practicing FMNR often combine it with other land restoration techniques. The most commonly used technique is the zaï pit, which was cited by 79.84% of farmers. Half-moon and stone bunds techniques are practiced by 54.03% and 41.94% of farmers, respectively. These practices are implemented alongside FMNR to improve soil fertility and water retention.

2. Current state and diversity of woody species: The floristic inventory of FMNR fields revealed a high diversity of woody species. This demonstrates that FMNR contributes to maintaining and restoring tree diversity in agricultural landscapes.

3. FMNR's benefits, as perceived by farmers: Farmers reported several benefits from the practice of FMNR. The diversity of trees preserved through FMNR provides products such as fruits, roots, leaves, and firewood used for food, medicine, domestic and commercial purposes, and fertilizer. Most farmers (81.45%) had not made any material or financial investments when adopting and practicing FMNR. Following the Community Regreening the Sahel (CRS) project, through which farmers were trained in FMNR practices, several (87.10%) observed an increase in yield from 2.58 to 3.8 carts. In addition, the adoption of FMNR allows the production of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), such as shea butter, which economically empowers the population.

RESEARCH APPROACH

The study used a mixed methods approach combining surveys, a floristic inventory, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. This triangulation helped capture both ecological data and farmers' perceptions.



Focus group discussion with farmers in Gomponsom

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the multiple environmental, social, and economic benefits of the adoption of FMNR. It also reveals that several land restoration techniques are essential for FMNR's effectiveness.

FMNR is perceived as an inexpensive, accessible solution that is well suited to local constraints. FMNR appears to have significant potential for the ecological and socio-economic resilience of rural communities in the Sahel, as long as it is better supported, promoted, and integrated into public policies for sustainable land management.

REFERENCES

Bonkounou, F. (2025). Farmers' perceptions of the benefits of agroforestry: The case of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration in northern Burkina Faso. [Master's thesis, Université Felix Houphouët Boigny]

