

BURKINA FASO

Early Warning Early Action

CASE STUDY



Context/Status of EWS¹

Burkina Faso is a Sahelian country with limited natural resources. Its economy is largely based on agriculture although gold exports are on the rise. A large share of its population, more than 40%, lives below the poverty line.² The country's agriculture is rainfed and faces severe climatic deterioration with decreasing agricultural yields that lead to an increase in food insecurity and the deterioration of living conditions, especially those in rural areas. In addition, since 2015 the country has been facing an upsurge in terrorist attacks with its share of dead and internally displaced persons, thus further deteriorating the living conditions of the populations. According to UNHCR, in addition to the 1.4 million internally displaced people, the country hosts more than 23,000 refugees, mainly from Mali.

The country is increasingly facing various climatic shocks such as heavy rains that lead to flooding, droughts and dry spells, heat waves, strong winds and locust attacks.

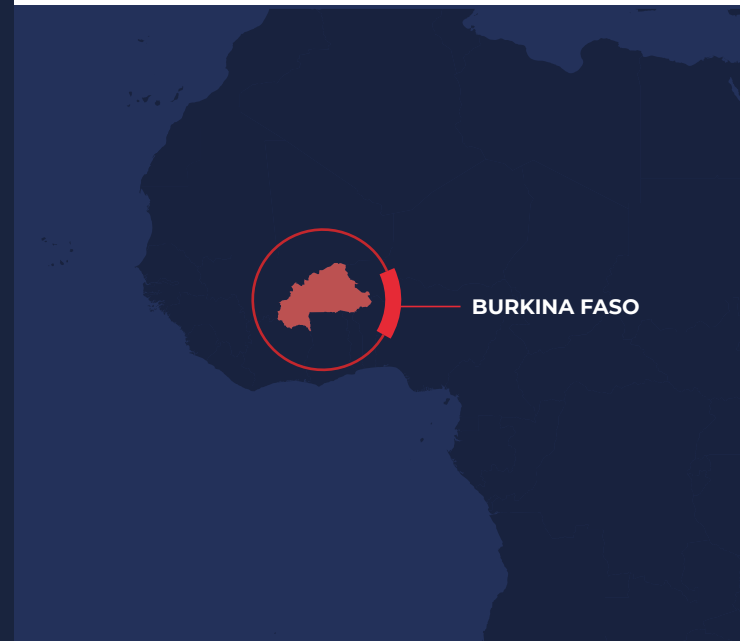
According to the Burkina Faso Forecast-Based Financing (FbF) feasibility study report, taking into account the quality of the forecasts, the impact and the possibility of acting in advance, droughts are considered the priority hazard for Anticipatory Action, followed by phytosanitary hazards, heat waves, floods and dust storms.

Droughts as well as phytosanitary hazards lead to crop and pasture loss putting people at risk of starvation or forcing them to migrate. Migration can be a source of community level conflict between people on the move and the indigenous host populations. As for floods, they are associated with severe damages to infrastructure and agricultural sites. Appropriate responses, including robust and reliable early warning systems, must be provided for the management of these hazards, in order to protect lives and livelihoods and strengthen resilience in the face of climate change.

1 Section is based on Ouedraogo, Guigma (2022): *Projet de Rapport sur l'État de Lieux de L'Alerte Précoce et des Opportunités d'Introduction du Protocole d'Alerte Commun au Burkina Faso*.

2 Source: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/burkinafaso/overview> (accessed 7.6.2022)

Risk Communication for Early Warning Early Action using the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)



To combat growing threats of the global climate crisis, the UN Early Warning for All Initiative (EW4All) aims to ensure that everyone on Earth is protected by early warnings by 2027. People centered early warning systems are critical preparedness and adaptation approaches to save lives and empower communities to navigate intensifying weather challenges globally.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International Telecommunications Union and the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent (IFRC) societies are working to strengthen the use of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) for reliable, fast and actionable early warnings at national level. These efforts are designed to significantly expand the reach and impact of early warnings for at-risk populations and are a direct contribution to Pillar 3 'Dissemination and Communication' of the EW4All initiative.

Status of Early Warning Systems in Burkina Faso

Early warnings are an important link in the management of crises and disasters that can help protect people and their environment. Burkina Faso has a comprehensive policy framework for disaster management including various national policies and strategic plans that govern early warnings in different sectors. The main legal foundation for early warnings in the country is the Law 012-2014³ on the prevention and management of risks, humanitarian crises and disasters which addresses risk management issues and takes into account early warning as an essential element. In addition, various sector specific laws address information sharing with the public to address risks and disasters. While there is a relatively good legal foundation to organize and manage early warning systems, challenges remain regarding the implementation of the legal texts. There is a lack of sufficient means and financial support to the technical structures to properly fulfill their missions enacted by the texts. Generally, these structures are supported by development projects or similar initiatives. The proper functioning of the various systems or mechanisms therefore lasts as long as the support projects are being implemented. The institutional structures find themselves in a perpetual restart without being able to make significant progress.

Currently Burkina Faso does not count with a single national multi-hazard alert mechanism through which alerts are produced and disseminated. Various government entities have their individual information systems, with some

structures being responsible for the production and dissemination of hydrometeorological, climatic, agricultural, agro-sylvo-pastoral, phytosanitary, etc. information, while others are using the information for risk prevention and disaster management. Key institutions for the production of forecast information include the National Meteorological Agency (Agence Nationale de la Meteorologie, ANAM) for meteorological and climate information, the General Directorate of Water Resources (*Direction Generale de Ressources en Eau*, DGRE) for hydrological information and the General Directorate of Vegetal Productions (*Direction Generale des Productions Vegetales*, DGPV) for phytosanitary information. Key institutions as users of the provided information include the General Directorate for Civil Protection (*Direction Generale de la Protection Civile*, DGPC) and the Permanent Secretariat of the National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (*Secrétariat Permanent du Conseil National de Secours d'Urgence et de Réhabilitation* (SP/ CONASUR)). A key initiative for early warning in Burkina Faso is the HYDROMET project⁴ to strengthen climate resilience. Supported by the Government of Burkina Faso, the International Development Association (IDA) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), it aims to build the institutional capacities for the prevention and management of crises related to climate change. While various sectoral information and early warning systems exist, they are unable to disseminate alerts efficiently in a timely manner. This is due to the technical difficulties that the structures in charge of early warning in the country have in collecting, processing and disseminating emergency alerts, and due to the absence of an adequate common mechanism for disseminating multi-risk alerts.

3 Loi No 012-2014/AN: Portant Loi D'Orientation Relative a La Prevention et a la Gestion des Risque, des Crises Humanitaires et des Catastrophes
<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5b2bc10d4.pdf>

4 <https://hydromet.bf/en/>

Motivation of Burkinabe Red Cross to engage on the Common Alerting Protocol

The Burkinabe Red Cross (*Croix Rouge Burkinabè*, CRBF) got involved in the IFRC Alert Hub Initiative⁵ which aims to increase adoption of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) together with actionable messages to strengthen end-to-end Early Warning Systems and enable Early Action in the face of disasters because it sees the need to advocate for a common approach to using and disseminating early warning alerts. In a changing climate, with increased risks of extreme weather and disasters, the public needs to be even more aware of the risks they face. With Disaster Management being one of CRBF's core programmatic areas, the National Society sees great value in approaches that enable the sending of fast, reliable, consistent and actionable early warnings and emergency alerts to people at risk.

When the opportunity of the IFRC Alert Hub Initiative was introduced to CRBF, the National Society had just begun with the first stages of a forecast-based financing (FbF) project, conducting a multi-hazard feasibility study and the development of an Early Action Protocol (EAP). There was general interest from the National Society in finding operational support for a greater engagement with early warning and opportunities to increase the linkages with different government institutions with roles in early warning.

CRBF initially reached out to ANAM since the meteorological services are often the primary institution for producing and issuing CAP based alerts and meteorological hazards have severe impacts in Burkina Faso. Through ongoing

discussions at the National Society level, there was the acknowledgement that other hazards that have regular and grave impacts especially on poor, vulnerable farmers in rural areas need to be taken into consideration yet the information coming from the meteorological services do not fully reflect the spectrum of hazards. Another issue that requires the involvement of different technical agencies are the interdependencies between different hazards, i.e. when certain meteorological conditions trigger a locus invasion or the spread of a disease as a cascading hazard from floods. While the more narrow focus of the FbF engagement didn't allow for a more comprehensive multi-hazard approach, the interest and engagement on CAP in Burkina Faso brought different technical agencies into the discussion.

Stakeholder Engagement to Strengthen Early Warning Early Action

CRBF had already established some contacts and linkages to government partners through the FbF efforts and the development of a feasibility study. The interest in engaging with government partners in support of CAP for early warning in Burkina Faso was reinforced when the team from the Disaster Management Coordination from CRBF attended an FbF post-activation assessment activity in Mali. During this event the IFRC country cluster team in Niamey used this opportunity to make again the case for strengthening efforts on Early Warnings Systems. Upon their return, the CRBF realized that with the CAP engagement the National Society would have an opportunity to reinforce or newly establish links with government partners around early warning. This experience and the interest to work towards a more comprehensive multi-hazard approach to early

5 <https://preparecenter.org/site/ifrcalerthubinitiative/>

warning motivated the National Society to invite a number of key technical agencies to a workshop to discuss the options for implementing the Common Alerting Protocol and strengthening a multi-hazard Early Warning System in Burkina Faso. The National Society also carried out a consultation process on local early warning actors, including the documentation, research, and mobilization of key actors, which made it possible to map the early warning structures and identification of key actors to include in the workshop. The workshop took place on 22–23 of February 2023 with an extra day added to enable press briefings and establish the connection to media outlets.⁶ The main two workshop days were attended by a number of state actors working in the context of humanitarian protection, protection of water resources and the environment, food security, etc. The two workshop days provided an opportunity for presentations and discussions among the participants on the current ways that different technical agencies engage in the productions, dissemination and use of information relevant for early warnings. While the agencies that were participating discussed the need for a multi-hazard approach and worked on some initial implementation plans, nothing has been formalized yet due to the lack of funding options to implement the suggestions. The workshop also provided an opportunity to work on the contextualization of IFRC's Public Awareness Public Education (PAPE) messages that can be included as actionable guidance in early warnings and alerts. A set of messages on dust storms has been developed.

The ongoing engagement of the CRBF on CAP has enabled a broader dialogue among key technical agencies, challenging the current status quo of working in silos. While plans are not yet concrete, there are discussions of the government intending to create a unified agency that will bring together everyone working on early warnings. This will enable the relevant partners to work under the same administrative protocols and be managed by the same director. To date, CAP is not fully operational in Burkina Faso. The meteorological services had previously benefitted from a CAP focused training lead by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) but the implementation of CAP was never realized to its full effect. ANAM now is looking to organize a refresher training so that it can expedite the process of making the CAP more operational.

Additionally, CRBF is planning to start a communication campaign across all provinces using broadcast on radio and TV in four different languages to raise awareness on actions that people can take at individual and household levels to safeguard themselves and their livelihoods with longer lead time, i.e. ahead of different seasons. The broadcasting will be on two national TV and 20 local radio stations. The meteorological service currently only issues messages for imminent events not exceeding a 5-day lead-time. CRBF is looking forward to engaging the meteorological services in the communication and awareness raising campaign.

6 Examples of media coverage: <https://www.minute.bf/prevention-des-catastrophes-naturelles-la-croix-rouge-burkinabe-presente-son-protocole-dalerte-commun/>
<https://faso7.com/2023/02/24/vulgarisation-du-protocole-dalerte-commun-la-croix-rouge-burkinabe-ouille-des-journalistes/>
<https://lefaso.net/spip.php?article119767>
<https://www.sidwaya.info/blog/burkina-la-croix-rouge-ouillent-les-journalistes-sur-le-protocole-dalerte-commun/>

Lessons learned from Anticipatory Action and CAP engagement

Aligned with a greater interest of the National Society to advance early warning in the country, CRBF was able to build on previous engagement with government partners, mainly ANAM, to develop an EAP for anticipatory action. The National Society sees the early engagement with government partners in this context as an essential factor to success. This is especially true for working in some areas in Burkina Faso that are considered to be fragile, conflict or volatile (FCV) contexts. CRBF sees good communication with government entities and clearly establishing that the Red Cross works only in support of reaching the most vulnerable communities as essential factors for working in FCV contexts. The position of the CRBF in this context of growing insecurity, can facilitate the collection of data in areas with security challenges through its wide network of volunteers.

Through the engagement of CRBF in the Alert Hub Initiative to promote the use of CAP for early warning, the National Society was able to expand the dialogue on strengthening early warning in Burkina Faso to a greater number of technical agencies with roles on the provision and dissemination of forecasting information. CRBF has reinforced their position as a key actor for Early Warning Early Action and for working with various stakeholders in the co-production of early warnings. The CAP workshop proved to be a valuable platform for the various technical agencies to come up with recommendations and the suggestions for a common framework.

Going forward, CRBF does see challenges in identifying their role beyond brokering the dialogue and functioning as a convener for multi-stakeholder engagement in Early Warning Early Action. The mandate to issue early warnings and public alerts rests in government agencies. However, CRBF, through its status as an auxiliary to the public authorities, and its strong community roots, can continue to lobby for coordination of early warnings in order to have a single dissemination agency. Another key point for continued advocacy is the need for the integration of multiple hazards not yet considered in the HYDROMET project (2018 -2024) which is one of the key activities aiming to reinforce capacities of the state actors and establish a single platform for early warning and the implementation of the CAP (e.g.: phytosanitary hazards and those affecting livestock farming). CRBF can also facilitate the building of capacities, technical understanding of forecasts and the involvement of decentralized disaster risk management focal points to support the dissemination of CAP based alerts and key messages within the local communities.

Both the engagement of CRBF on Anticipatory Action and CAP have built structures that bolstered the engagement of a greater number of stakeholders in the dialogue on how to advance Early Warning Early Action in Burkina Faso and enabled the different partners to agree on the need for more dialogue and for working across silos between the different technical agencies and implementing agencies on the ground.

© International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2023

Any part of this publication may be cited, copied, translated into other languages or adapted to meet local needs without prior permission from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, provided that the source is clearly stated.

Contact us:

Requests for commercial reproduction should be directed to the IFRC Secretariat:

Address: Chemin des Crêts 17, Petit-Saconnex, 1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Postal address: P.O. Box 303, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland

T +41 (0)22 730 42 22 | **F** +41 (0)22 730 42 00 | **E** secretariat@ifrc.org | **W** ifrc.org

Follow us:

www.ifrc.org | twitter.com/ifrc | facebook.com/ifrc | instagram.com/ifrc | youtube.com/user/ifrc | tiktok.com/@ifrc

With support from

