



Water pumping
in Barsalogho at
a rehabilitated borehole
by TerresEauVie (June 2020)
Photo: TerresEauVie

A PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN DRINKING WATER SUPPLY IN BARSALOGHO

TerresEauVie Burkina Faso

TerresEauVie supported the Barsalogho commune to execute and implement an “affermage” (service concession) contract with a private sector partner to improve management of their Simplified Drinking Water Supply (AEPS) systems, especially during emergency situations.

Since 2018, Barsalogho, a commune in the Center-North region of Burkina Faso, has received a large influx of refugees fleeing terrorists and inter-community violence. This sudden population increase in Barsalogho led to overuse and deterioration of the already limited infrastructure and

available water resources. As a result, population access to drinking water decreased by 40 percent, posing a huge challenge to local inhabitants who host more than 80 percent of the displaced persons.¹

The Barsalogho commune remains committed to reliable and efficient operation of water services despite insecurity and water shortages and is formally required to deliver such services by the Burkinabe state’s decentralization process. To strengthen and better maintain existing its water distribution networks, the commune embarked on a novel process of engaging Association Impulsion (AI), a private sector company, to sign an affermage contract² whereby AI is responsible for the renewal costs for a portion of the equipment (the equipment which are less than 15 years old). This kind of contract enables cost-recovery schemes by stressing on profitability and cost considerations, such as promoting the management of several systems by the same operator through inter- or

¹ According to the Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020 published in May 2020 by OCHA ([page 44-48](#))

² In Burkina Faso, the State has transferred competencies and infrastructure in the field of drinking water supply and sanitation to the communes. For SWPS (simplified water provision system / or AEPS in French) and PEA (autonomous water point), the commune delegates the

management to a professional private operator (operator or water manager) recruited by the commune on the basis of a service offer, through an affermage (lease) or an operating contract. However, often this process is incomplete or non-existent, which causes problems between the commune and the operator, and also disrupts the supply of drinking water to users.

multi-communal contracting, rationale water pricing schedules, etc.

A formal agreement to sustainably manage the availability and quality of drinking water in the commune

Since 2011, AI has managed several AEPS systems in the Barsalogho commune, but without a formal agreement. This has occasionally raised concerns among the population, particularly about water pricing. Commune leaders also felt sidelined because they were unable to legally exercise their right of control creating unnecessary tensions in a degraded security and humanitarian situation and made it difficult for AI and the municipal council to discuss pricing and the condition of the infrastructure and equipment. It also gave an impression of lack of transparency creating distrust among users (Where is going the money we give for water? Is this really used to maintain our drinking water supply? Aren't they just lining their own pockets?)

Despite these issues, the commune was hesitant to formalize the relationship. Since the beginning of its activities in Barsalogho, TerresEauVie has gained the confidence of the municipality, and has worked with AI since December 2019 to rehabilitate 20 boreholes and one AEPS. Based on this, the commune accepted TerresEauVie's recommendation to formalize an agreement and delegate service management to AI for 10 years, following national regulations.³ TerresEauVie facilitated the formalization process through numerous discussions and by involving the Regional Water and Sanitation Directorate (DREA).

After several meetings and infrastructure inventory missions in the field, the commune council and AI signed the (formal) delegation contract on April 21, 2020 in Kaya, the capital of the Centre-North region.

In this agreement, the commune council agreed to renew the contract with AI at least once to enable AI to make a return on investment at the end of 20 years of management. For its part, AI agreed to donate all hydraulic works it has carried out in the commune to the Barsalogho Commune Council which will then become their owner. This 10-year contract with AI will improve management of at least six Simplified Drinking Water Supply Systems in Barsalogho, able to supply water to nearly 6,500 people.



Signing of the affermage contract between the Barsalogho commune council and AI, with the Regional Director of Water and Sanitation. Photo: April 2020, TerresEauVie.

The Regional Director of Water and Sanitation, Mrs Clarisse Ouedraogo born Yameogo, appreciated this collaboration: *"We are all in this together, to satisfy the needs for drinking water of our people. The DREA was able to fully play its companion and advice role to clarify the essential points, ensure that the contract is exhaustive [and] respects the legislative framework, and above all, ensure it is easy to apply. The signatories have already a good command of the key elements of this agreement. Congratulations to all the actors who have collaborated to reach this signature."*

A solution to better manage infrastructure

³ Since 2018, the Framework Document on the Reform of the Management System for Drinking Water Supply Infrastructure in Rural and Semi-Urban Areas in Burkina Faso has been the governing document.

newly built or rehabilitated during crises

TerresEauVie also took the initiative to invite a representative of UNICEF's regional office to the contract review session in March 2020. UNICEF contributed to the reflection on the sustainable management of newly built and rehabilitated infrastructure in emergency contexts—which are characterized by a lack of time to worry about future management before having to deal with another emergency issue. This Barsalogho-AI contract then became a starting point with UNICEF for additional discussion and planning on needed construction and management activities within the development-humanitarian nexus. Afterwards, the Barsalogho-AI contract was extended to covers a new AEPS being rehabilitated by the Burkinabe Red Cross in the village of Foubé under UNICEF emergency funding. UNICEF valued the approach and asked TerresEauVie to share its experiences developing the affermage contract, with other stakeholders working in humanitarian and emergency contexts, to ensure the sustainability of investments made in emergency situations.

"It is the first time that such a formalization of our drinking water supply systems was carried out at the level of our commune. It gives the commune council a better understanding of its role in managing the public water service and enables the population to have greater access to drinking water because the facilities will be better managed and maintained. I am relieved for the commune that we can formalize this collaboration with Association Impulsion and we are convinced that TerresEauVie has a good strategy for supporting communes".

Excerpts from the speech of Mr. Abdoulaye Pafadnam, Mayor of Barsalogho, at the signing of the affermage (April 2020).

Whats's next?

As a result of this successful collaboration, the DREA has given approval to TerresEauVie to initiate a broad dialogue with communes in the region on the delegated management of AEPSs.

TerresEauVie is now encouraging the regularization of leasing contracts in 6 communes in Center-North, which face technical and management problems of their AEPS: Tougouri, Bouroum, Nagbingou, Yalgo, Pissila and Rollo. Following training on water public service management at communal level and exchanges, the 6 communes then drew up a road map for the renewal of their affermage contracts, which will enable them to better manage and maintain their communal drinking water supply systems.

USAID's Resilience in the Sahel Enhanced (RISE) project has been implemented in Niger and Burkina Faso since 2012. The second phase, RISE II, continues the same efforts with the overall goal that chronically vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso and Niger, supported by resilient systems, effectively manage shocks and stresses and pursue sustainable pathways out of poverty. Within RISE II and led by Winrock's Sustainable Water Partnership, the USAID "TerresEauVie" Activity enhances communes' self-reliance by making social and ecological systems resilient through three components: (1) Improved water security; (2) Enhanced sustainable productive land use; and (3) Improved management of shocks, risks and stresses.

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