

Burkina Faso

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Location and area

Burkina Faso is a landlocked republic in western Africa, bordered on the north and west by Mali, on the east by Niger, and on the south by Benin, Togo, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire. The area of Burkina Faso is 274,200 km². (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Topography

Burkina Faso is located on a plateau sloping generally to the south and situated from about 200 to 749 m in elevation.

The plateau is drained in the south by the upper courses of the River Volta: the Black Volta (Mouhoun), Red Volta (Nazinon), and White Volta (Nakanbe) rivers. To the east, small rivers connecting with the Niger drain the country. Much of the country is covered with grass and small trees but there are large infertile areas where the underlying rock is covered in loose sand or bare laterite. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Climate

Burkina Faso has a tropical climate with low rainfall. A dry, cool season in Burkina Faso extends from November to March; a hot, dry one from March to May; and a hot, wet one from May to November. Rainfall decreases from more than 1,020 mm in the south-west, the most productive part of the country, to less than 250 mm in the north. Average temperatures vary from 21° to 27° C. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Land use

Aridity, poor soils, and erosion seriously hamper agricultural development, and most arable farming is concentrated in southern and south-western Burkina Faso (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

Potential peatland areas in Burkina Faso include the Masilli River floodplain (15 km² in the wet season, 2 km² in the dry season), the Oti-Pendjari River floodplain on the border with Benin (4,810 km² in the wet season), and the Lake Bam shallow lake (cf. Howard-Williams & Thompson 1985).

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Burkina Faso and only 100 km² of gley soils.

Still to be checked:

Andres, W., Ballouche, A., Müller-Haude, P. 1996. Contribution des sédiments de la mare d'Oursi à Berichte SFB 268 7, 5-15 31 Mare d'Oursi (14o38'N, 0o25'E), 290 m, Burkina Faso.Pollen.

Ballouche, A. , Neumann, K. 1995. A new contribution to the Holocene vegetation history of the West African Sahel: pollen from Oursi, Burkina Faso and charcoal from three sites in Northeast Nigeria. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 4: 31-39 **31** Mare d'Oursi (14°38'N, 0°25'E), 290 m, Burkina Faso. Pollen.

Neumann, K. & Ballouche, A. (1992) Die Chaîne de Gobnangou in SE-Burkina Faso - Ein Beitrag zur Vegetationsgeschichte der Sudanzone W-Afrikas. *Geobot. Kolloquium*. 8: 53-68. **32** Chaîne de Gobnangou, (11°46'N, 1°48'E), ca. 400m , Burkina Faso. Pollen.