

Zaï Pits — Farmer-Led Water-Harvesting Restoration of Degraded Cropland, Yatenga, Burkina Faso

PES & Nature-Based Solutions · Good practice · Burkina Faso

Quality score: 67/100

Evidence strength: Quasi-experimental

Summary

From 1980, farmer Yacouba Sawadogo revived zaï planting pits in Burkina Faso's Yatenga province, helping plots reach ~1,500 kg/ha of millet/sorghum vs under 500 kg/ha untreated, and turning 27 ha of barren land into a 60+ species forest, per CIRAD/INERA/ISRA.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Carbon — sequestration / storage, evidenced	2/3
Biodiversity — conservation / improvement, evidenced	2/3
Water & soil — retention, infiltration, erosion control	3/3
Fire resilience — risk reduction, evidenced	0/3
Governance, certification & transferability	3/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-03

[Association pour la Promotion des Zaï](#) — accessed 2026-09-03

[The zaï technique: how farmers in the Sahel grow crops with little to no water — The Conversation \(CIRAD/INERA/ISRA\)](#) — accessed 2026-09-03

[Yacouba Sawadogo — UNEP Champions of the Earth 2020](#) — accessed 2026-09-03

Cite this — Evidoria. *Zaï Pits — Farmer-Led Water-Harvesting Restoration of Degraded Cropland, Yatenga, Burkina Faso*. Persistent ID: 2a12a85e-a7bd-4a33-b546-9f5ddefe9e3a.