



CHISU Results in Action

Creating an online “Legisanté” library to increase accessibility of Burkina Faso’s strategic public health documents

January 2024

Background

Burkina Faso’s Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene (MHPH), like other ministerial departments, produces many regulatory documents such as decrees, orders, letters, conventions, study reports, statistical reports, standards, directives, manuals, and many other strategic documents that regulate, govern, or support decision making at different levels. In 2015, MHPH created the Department of Archives and Documentation (DAD) within the Ministry and in line with the standard organizational chart for ministerial departments. DAD is responsible, among other things, for collecting, compiling, safeguarding, and managing the Ministry’s archives; applying the Ministry’s archiving and documentation policy in line with national archive guidelines; and designing and implementing archive management tools in line with current regulations. All of these roles and responsibilities are defined in an administrative procedures manual, established with the technical and financial support of CHISU.

Challenge

Although DAD is fully set up and operational, it is experiencing difficulties implementing its mission. Specifically, archiving of various standard documents and regulatory texts is done manually by DAD staff, which fails to guarantee document security and does not facilitate access to these documents for MHPH staff and the public. Anyone needing a document has to travel to DAD in person, and the department’s agent has to physically search for their requested document for more than a quarter hour. Other MHPH platforms exist online to publish information (such as the Ministry’s website) but do not meet the need for digital management of regulatory texts and other strategic documents. This has resulted in essential documents disappearing, difficulty accessing existing documents by those in charge of health facilities and by the public, a lack of knowledge of the existence of texts by health staff, and poor performance by DAD.

Country Health Information Systems and Data Use (CHISU) is USAID’s flagship data and information system program to strengthen host country capacity and leadership to manage and use health information systems to improve evidence-based decision-making. www.chisuprogram.org

Zoenabo Ramde, a computer scientist working for the IT Department (DSI) who was responsible for the technical aspects of the project, said: “When a private individual needed a bylaw, management had to dig through the archives. Even when properly classified, searching through the archives was a thankless task.”

Steps Taken

To address these challenges, the MHPH authorities recommended that an online digital library be set up with regulated access to the various documents. This tool would improve document security in archiving, facilitate public access to documents, and control access to confidential documents to authorized parties. With financial support from USAID, CHISU provided technical support to DAD to set up an online application called “Legisanté” to manage the regulatory texts and other strategic documents of MHPH. The process was carried out under the leadership of key MHPH players, notably DAD, the Department of Information Systems, and the General Secretariat of MHPH, with the participation of the Department of National Archives attached to the Presidency of Burkina Faso.

The first step in the process was to bring these players together to select an application. To do so, three applications were presented by DSI. These included “Legisanté,” “MS-courriel” and “Catalogue santé.” An analysis of the comparative advantages led to the choice of Legisanté because it best met the needs of DAD, is easier to configure and use, and will be easier to learn for the DAD team (who are not information technology specialists). The Legisanté application is designed locally by the Department of Information Systems of the Burkina Faso MHPH. It is developed with the PHP programming language and uses a PostgreSQL database.

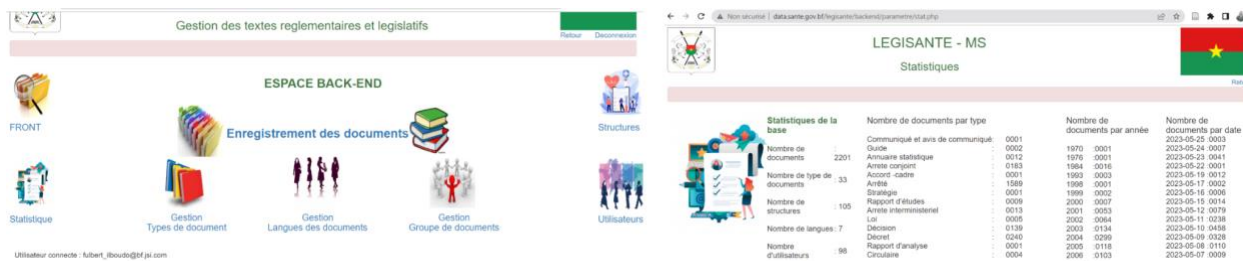


Zoenabo RAMDE
IT Specialist working at DSI

The rest of the process involved three stages:

- Collection of all regulatory and legislative texts and other strategic documents from the MHPH’s central departments
- Configuring the application, loading digital copies of historic documents, and [putting it online](#)
- Training all DAD members on application administration and maintenance

At the end of the process, a total of 2,201 documents were digitized and made available on the platform—making them accessible to the public or a more restricted audience depending on the nature of the document. Health facilities’ accounts were created to enable their access. In addition, continuous updates are planned as new documents become available.



Screenshots from Legisante

Results + Next Steps

The online library offers the opportunity to make optimal use of the archives and other MHPH strategic documents, because it saves users time and offers security coupled with remote access.

- With Legisante, the time a user needs to retrieve a document is usually less than five minutes — without having to make a physical journey.
- The archives are secured and backed up digitally and remain accessible to authorized persons at all times.
- Legisante gives the Burkina Faso public free access to the country's official decrees and documents.



Dramane SANOU
Director of Archives and Documentation

In addition, the online library, as initially conceived, can be continuously updated to include future document documents. When asked how the introduction of Legisante has changed day-to-day practice, Dramane Sanou, Director of DAD at MHPH, said, "The platform enabled archives and documentation managers, authorized stakeholders, and decision makers to gain fast, fluid access to online documentary information."



This publication was produced with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of #7200AA20CA00009. Views expressed are not necessarily those of USAID or the United States government.

