Towards a political ecology of irrigation and water use efficiency and productivity

ICID.UK & UEA Seminar

Thursday 6 November 2008
At the Institution of Civil Engineering, Central London

The School of Development Studies
ICID/UEA International Seminar – *Towards a political ecology of irrigation & water use efficiency and productivity*
Organised by Bruce Lankford, University of East Anglia

**Date:** Thursday 6th November 2008.  9 am to 6 pm, plus optional evening buffet
**Location:** Central London: ICE, One Gt George Street.  SW1P 3AA

**Introduction**
This international seminar will unpack irrigation/water use efficiency and productivity as a contested subject. The topic of irrigation efficiency and productivity is of critical significance if developing countries (commonly where irrigation depletes 70-90% of freshwater) are to better manage water and provide opportunities for the re-allocation of water from irrigation to other pressing needs. Irrigation sits at the heart of this reallocation imperative because of the widespread belief that surface irrigation is largely inefficient, and that spare water can be freed up – or a ‘water footprint’ reduced – by making savings. However, these beliefs are predicated upon how scientists and society account for water use, withdrawals, productivity and efficiencies at the field, system and basin level – ideas that are being reconsidered by researchers at universities, IWMI, ICID, FAO and other international organisations.

The topic is especially significant when seeking to formulate appropriate policies to improve irrigation productivity and efficiency, and in particular to maintain irrigated food production in the face of ecological protection, climate change and conflict over water.

**Towards a political ecology**
Through a series of presentations, participants will explore dimensions of the political ecology of irrigation efficiency and productivity – how competing ideas of water resource management and performance analysis, sometimes without recognition of or recourse to theory, boundaries and context, are reproduced and contested, potentially dominating policy. With this interrogation, we can question for example technocentric and possibly scalar-illiterate narratives such as ‘irrigation efficiency is addressed by lining canals’. The meeting will show that a variety of ideas and theories have relevance, yet at the same time incoherent thinking around water efficiency and productivity holds risks for all those interested in improved water management. Therefore, an objective of the meeting is to outline this debate to package irrigation efficiency and productivity as an urgent yet problematic topic for the attention of donors and decision-makers.

**Who should attend?**
The workshop will be of interest to a wide range of people including those working on virtual water, water neutrality, water foot-printing, scarcity, wetlands and rivers management and restoration, agricultural water, food security and integrated water resources management. It will be relevant for students working on water issues, plus academics, scientists and policy-makers from Universities, international and donor agencies and NGOs. The meeting will be of interest to political ecologists wishing to extend their knowledge to irrigation and water.

**Who is presenting?**
We are very pleased to host presenters from IWMI and eight different USA & European universities & institutes. We particularly welcome David Molden, editor of ‘Water for Food, Water for Life,’ A Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture.

*See overleaf for proposed programme*
ICID/UEA international seminar – *Towards a political ecology of irrigation & water use efficiency and productivity*

Thursday 6th November 2008. Registration at 9.00 am. Finish 6 pm

Evening: Optional buffet meal for seminar presenters and participants

**Programme**

9:00 am Arrivals, coffees/teas and register (Please arrive for a prompt 9:30 am start)

**Session 1. Paradigms and political ecology**

9.30 Welcomes & Introduction: Ragab Ragab and/or Peter Lee (ICID), Bruce Lankford (UEA) ‘Towards a political ecology of irrigation efficiency and productivity’

9.45 Keynote: David Molden (IWMI): ‘Water productivity - is it a watertight concept?’

10.15 Chris Perry: ‘Efficient irrigation; inefficient communications; flawed recommendations?’

10.45 Peter Mollinga (University of Bonn): ‘From 'clear definitions' to paradigm change. Efficiency and productivity as boundary concepts in irrigation’

11:15 am Coffee, tea, biscuits

**Session 2. Scales, contexts and trade-offs**

11.45 Jerry Knox (Cranfield University), (with M.G. Kay and E.K. Weatherhead): ‘Recognising reality - what efficiency means to a farmer’

12.15 John Gowing (University of Newcastle upon Tyne): ‘The Emperor’s Clothes? Inflated claims for deficit irrigation ignore the efficiency-equity trade-off’

12.45 Bruce Lankford (UEA) ‘Localising irrigation efficiency’

1.15 pm Approximately for 45 minutes for lunch and coffee

2.00 Linden Vincent, Gerardo van Halsema (Wageningen University): ‘Managing water for productivity: A matter of contextual relativism as opposed to general absolutism’

2.30 François Molle (IRD, Montpellier): ‘Irrigation efficiency and water productivity in closing basins: tricks and traps’

**Session 3. Performance and measurement**

3.00 Luis Pereira (University of Lisbon): ‘Looking for performance indicators to support a new paradigm in irrigation and water productivity’

3:30 pm Coffee, tea, biscuits

4.00 Bert Clemmens (ARS, US Dept of Agriculture): ‘Impact of Agricultural Water Conservation on Water Availability’

4.30 Julien Harou (University College London): ‘Potential economic gains of irrigation inefficiency: Conjunctive use and groundwater banking in California’

5.00 Group discussion: ‘Towards a political ecology of irrigation efficiency and productivity’

Finish at 6.00 pm

6.30 pm Buffet meal for seminar participants** (Optional, requires separate notification)

SEE OVERLEAF FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ICID/UEA international seminar – **Towards a political ecology of irrigation & water use efficiency and productivity**

**Evening: Optional buffet meal for seminar presenters and participants**

**FURTHER INFORMATION**

**Poster presentations**
Although the programme of presentations is now fully organised, individuals may wish to contribute to the debate via a scientific poster. Please submit your application for a poster to Bruce Lankford (b.lankford@uea.ac.uk) and inform Tim Fuller (Tim.Fuller@ice.org.uk). Authors of accepted posters will be eligible for a 20% discount on the fees.

**Registration**
Places will be limited, and we ask that you register and pay your fees as soon as you can.

To register your interest in attending, fill in the form on the following page and fax, post or email it to Tim Fuller (Tim.Fuller@ice.org.uk). Word versions of the form are available from Tim or from the websites below. Please also indicate whether you will be staying for the evening buffet. Bring no more than your enthusiasm and perspectives on this issue (e.g. stakeholder perceptions, policy, science and hydrology of productivity/efficiency).

**Location**
The meeting will be held at ICE, 1 Gt George Street. London, SW1P 3AA.
http://www.onegreatgeorgestreet.com/

**Fees**
For ICID members the charge to attend is £45.
For non-members the charge to attend is £90.
For ICID student members, the charge to attend is £25.
For student non-members and retired individuals, the charge is £40.

**Notes:** Individuals, whose scientific posters are accepted and presented, are eligible for a 20% discount on these fees. In addition, we are encouraging more non-members to join – the non member fees include free ICID.UK membership for 2008/2009.

The fees for the day include teas, coffees, lunch and handouts. **The evening buffet meal** is also included in the fee provided you give early notice of your intention to join the evening buffet to Tim Fuller.

ICE asks that fees are paid beforehand via Tim Fuller. See form overleaf.

**For further information see also these websites**
http://www.icid.org.uk/
www.uea.ac.uk/dev/lankford
ICID.UK & UEA Seminar
Towards a political ecology of irrigation and water use efficiency and productivity
Thursday 6 November 2008  9.00 am – 6.00pm.
Details and Word.doc versions of this form also available on: www.icid.org.uk and www.uea.ac.uk/dev/lankford

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Registration rates: (including handouts, lunch and all refreshments – see below for evening buffet registration)

ICID Members  £45
ICID student members  £25
Non members Student /Retired  £40*
Non Members  £90*

If your poster is presented an additional 20% deduction will be applied on these fees.
* Includes free membership for 2008/2009 for ICID.UK.

Method of payment:

☐ I/We enclose a cheque for £__________________ (made payable to The Institution of Civil Engineers)

☐ Please debit my MasterCard/Visa/** card by £__________________

(**Delete as applicable. Note: your account will be debited in favour of ICE [AMEX is NOT accepted]).

Card No: ___________________________  ____________  ____________  ____________  ____________
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Cardholder Name....................................... Cardholder Signature................................

Please return to Mr Tim Fuller, ICID, c/o ICE, 1 Great George Street, London SW1P 3AA.
Fax: 020 799 1325  e-mail: icid@ice.org.uk

The ICID.UK is a not for profit organisation and the fees charged are for costs recovery only. In order to minimise administration costs, we would be obliged to receive payment in advance. Your remittance will be acknowledged by way of a confirmation letter, with details of registration and the location. We regret that no refunds will be available for cancellations after 24 October 2008 but substitute delegates will be welcome.

Please indicate if you will be staying for the evening buffet
Please tick if you would like to join the society & a membership form will be sent