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RESOURCE

Water-use Efficiency and Productivity: Rethinking the Basin Approach

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Description / Abstract

This paper provides an analysis of three fundamental flaws in traditional water-efficiency discussions, as exemplified by a recent paper in Water International (Frederiksen and Allen 2011). In particular, we identify major components of inefficient water use typically ignored in theoretical discussions, address the concept of water productivity beyond simple efficiency, and identify important non-water “co-benefits” that are either ignored or discounted in most basin assessments, including improved water quality, increased production, greater reliability, decreased energy demands, and reduced or delayed infrastructure investments. While there are no silver bullets, water conservation and efficiency can play an important role in solving water management challenges.

Publication year
2011

Publisher
Water International

Keywords
Water-use Efficiency Water Productivity Basin Efficiency Water Conservation

Thematic Tagging
Water services
Language English
View resource

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Source URL: https://iwrmactionhub.org/resource/water-use-efficiency-and-productivity-rethinking-basin-approach