

Leveraging the Past for Better Futures

Eddy Moors

IHE Delft Institute for Water Education

Water managers face many urgent challenges. Sea levels are rising, floods and droughts are increasing in frequency and intensity, while population growth and socio-economic transitions increase water demand.

These challenges cannot be resolved by technological innovation alone. To adapt to the changing requirements of water systems, we need to not only rethink institutions, laws and policies, but also to reflect on past cultures and the often-overlooked relationship between humans, water and ecosystems. We need to include the larger public and elevate their awareness of the value of water, spark more interest and foster engagement. Water challenges are also socio-cultural challenges: they are anchored in local practices, cultures and traditions.

To tackle these complex challenges, we need a better understanding of the interconnections between water, cultures and societies, over time and through space. Researchers and practitioners from multiple disciplines and approaches need to forge a shared approach that connects technological innovation with historical, anthropological, political and economic aspects.

This new journal, *Blue Papers*, aims to contribute by bringing together different disciplinary approaches and stakeholders around the theme of water, culture and heritage. It will shine light on local adaptations and global visions. It will demonstrate the value of traditional knowledge and of the involvement of marginalized groups to develop sustainable management of water.

In this way, *Blue Papers* aspires to foster cross-disciplinary connections that will help the world tackle the urgent water challenges we as humanity face today.

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Preface