

IMPROVING COMMUNITY SPATE IRRIGATION

Spate irrigation is a type of river management that is unique to semi-arid environments. It is found in the Middle East, North Africa, West Asia, East Africa and parts of Latin America. Globally it is believed that the area under spate irrigation may add up to 6 Million hectares.

Repairing diversion spur Eritrea



Flood water entering banded field, Sindh, Pakistan



Conjunctive use in Yemen:
sorghum and horticulture



Administering spate water rights, DG Khan Pakistan

Spate irrigation is best described as in between water harvesting and perennial irrigation, yet its management, agronomy, organization and ecology is unique. Flood water from mountain catchments is diverted from river beds and spread over large areas. Spate systems are risk-prone due to the nature of the floods and the frequent changes to the river beds and channels from which the water is diverted. It is often the poorest rural areas, where people depend on spate systems for their livelihood, water supply and food security.

The Community Spate Irrigation Project-funded under DFID K&R program - aims to bring together knowledge on community spate irrigation. It develops guidelines and provides capacity building and practical support to organizations that develop spate systems. The project operates in Yemen, Pakistan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. It is led by HR Wallingford and Meta Meta.

For more information and suggestions, visit www.spate-irrigation.org or contact Philip Lawrence (philip@hrwallingford.co.uk) or Frank van Steenbergen (info@metameta.nl).