Much hope has been vested in pricing as a means of helping to regulate and rationalise water management, notably in the irrigation sector. The pricing of water has often been applied universally, using general and ideological policies, and not considering regional environmental and economic differences. Almost fifteen years after the emphasis laid at the Dublin and Rio conferences on treating water as an economic good, a comprehensive review of how such policies have helped manage water resources an irrigation use is necessary.

The case-studies presented here offer a re-assessment of current policies by evaluating their objectives and constraints and often demonstrating their failure by not considering the regional context. They will therefore contribute to avoiding costly and misplaced reforms and help design water policies that are based on a deeper understanding of the factors which eventually dictate their effectiveness.

Audience:
Practitioners, researchers and academics in natural resource management and economics; Policy-makers and water managers at national levels; Students of natural resource management.

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