

Is Water the Hidden Agenda of Agricultural Land Acquisition in Sub-Saharan Africa?

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Water use may be implicit/obscured in land deals:

- 'blue' water use explicit: semi-arid areas, formal irrigation (e.g. Malibya, Office du Niger, Mali)
- 'Blue' water implicit: sub-humid savanna: 'adequate' total rainfall ('green water'), but unreliable:
 - High crop water requirements (sugarcane, rice)
 - Dry-season crops (wheat, vegetable, fruit)
 - Crops requiring supplementary irrigation (?)
- 'enhanced rainfed' farming: small-scale farmers (indigenous, improved?), large-scale commercial?

Estimating impacts 1 (after van der Zaag et al. 2010)

- Lower Limpopo (Mozambique)
- Existing use (Mm³/yr)
 - Registered (formal irrigation) 95
 - Unregistered (informal irrig) 88
 - Environment 240
 - Total 423
 - Projected (after comm invest) 1639
 - Available (Avg annual flow) 3670

Estimating Impacts

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- Lower Limpopo

- Existing irrigation (ha) 14,000
- Projected total irrig 73,000

Taking account of annual flow variation

- Water at 80% assurance 52,000

OR

- Water at 100% assurance 30,000
- Water at 60% assurance 22,000