

International Perspectives on Water Resilience: Mini-conference and workshop

Tuesday, 11 October 2016

[Future Economy Centre](#), 4th Floor, 1 Temple Way, Bristol, BS2 0BY (Sat Nav: BS2 0BU)

Learn, share and network with international researchers, practitioners and stakeholders in water systems and resilience.

Objectives:

- Learn how water can fit into existing resilience initiatives (e.g. 100 Resilient Cities, etc.)
- Share new perspectives with international speakers
- Define how to build water systems capable of resilient performance
- Identify gaps and share ideas to set an innovative research agenda
- Find partners for multi-disciplinary collaboration

Time	Programme
Conference Session	
9.30 – 10.00	<i>Chad Staddon</i> (UWE, Bristol) and <i>Douglas Owen</i> (The Schumacher Institute): Welcome, Objectives and Structure of the Day
10.00 – 10.30	<i>Ian Roderick</i> (The Schumacher Institute): From Global to Local
10.30 – 11.00	<i>Robert Varady</i> (University of Arizona): Resilience and Diversity: Managing the Water-Energy Nexus to Enhance Water Security
11.00 – 11.20	Coffee/Tea
11.20 – 11.40	<i>Richard Bonner</i> (Arcadis): Bristol Resilience Roundtable Findings
11.40 – 12.10	<i>Bimo Nkhata</i> (Monash South Africa): Resilience and polycentric governance: Linking the catchment and urban water system
12.10 – 12.40	<i>David Butler</i> (University of Exeter): Perspectives on Urban Resilience – The Safe and SuRe Project
12.40 – 13.00	<i>Sarah Toy</i> (Chief Resilience Officer, Bristol City Council): Provisional title – Bristol’s Resilience 50 Year Plan
13.00 – 13.45	Lunch
Workshop Session	
13.45 – 14.30	Introduction: Framing the resilience research challenge <i>Douglas Owen</i> (The Schumacher Institute): The past and future of resilience thinking <i>Chad Staddon</i> (UWE, Bristol): Resilience in water systems – 2 case studies
14.30 – 15.15	Break-out Groups: Stocktaking & Gap Identification <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Respond” – Do we know what to do to manage water systems? 2. “Monitor” – Do we know what information matters in water systems and their environment right now? 3. “Learn” – Do we learn the right lessons from the right experience? 4. “Anticipate” – How can we know what are important changes, disturbances and opportunities lay in the future?
15.15 – 15.30	Coffee/Tea
15.30 – 16.30	Plenary Discussion and Next Steps

Overview

Resilience Thinking in Systems – Douglas Owen

Resilience thinking looks for ways to enhance the ability of systems to succeed in a volatile, unpredictable, complex and ambiguous world. It is the potential to optimise performance under foreseen and unforeseen changes, disturbances and opportunities. It invites us to move beyond a ‘predict and withstand’ model, to one based on adaptation and reconfiguration, whilst retaining systems’ fundamental characteristics.

The ultimate aspiration is to safeguard what matters, minimise harm to individuals, organisations and wider society, and to enhance organisational and societal wellbeing.

This potential to do this is arguably developed by underlying capabilities delivered by the people, technology and processes within a system-of-systems. In doing so, we should enable ourselves to prepare, adapt and succeed within our complex and volatile environment and ecology.

This is an aspiration brings with it many questions and tensions. Which interests should be prioritised, and when? Over what timescale? Who will resolve these conflicts to minimise harm? For whose interests? What demands will these new approaches place on the people in the system?

And most pressing of all ... how?

Water-related Resilience in Bristol – Dr. Chad Staddon

Water (or lack of it) figures in many of the [UK Cabinet Office Risk Register](#) and yet it does not perhaps receive the attention it deserves as a critical vector of resilience. This may be changing, for some UK cities at least. Bristol has been recognised as a city at risk of both [flood](#) and [drought](#) impacts and the city’s recent designations as “European Green Capital” and as one of the “Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities” have focussed attention on water and urban resilience.

This may occasion some debate about the differences and similarities between a “resilient” city and a “sustainable” one. Be that as it may, we know that previous models of resilience predicated on expensive heavy engineering projects have often taken us in the wrong directions. New approaches are needed, approaches that might look quite different from the past (over)emphasis on heavy engineering (click [here](#) for some recent blogs discussing new approaches to resilience in water systems).

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