

CSEAS Colloquium

GREENING ISAAN

Elusive dream or looming nightmare?

No
Reservation
required

Thursday 26 March 2020
13:30-14:30

Middle-sized Meeting Room, 3F, Inamori Foundation Building, Kyoto University



The northeast of Thailand (Isaan) is known as the driest and poorest part of the country. Poor soils and limited water resources have seemingly hindered the expansion of irrigation and the realization of the 'hydraulic mission' that the Royal Irrigation Department (RID) has so steadfastly pursued in the country. But the region is bordered by the Mekong River and this has nurtured the recurring dream of a megaproject that would divert the waters of the mighty river to 'green Isaan' and transform it into a prosperous region. I first illustrate, more generally, the process of securitization by which states frequently try to remove their megaprojects from public debate and the discursive devices they use. I then move to recalling 60 years of successive projects to green Isaan (including the latest reincarnation now under consideration), describe the political and financial interests at stake, provide four reasons for dismissing this bad 'good idea', and reflect on why it has not happened yet.

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Senior researcher at the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD), France. He has 33 years of experience working on issues of water management, water governance and water policies, especially in Brazil, the Middle-East/Northern Africa and Thailand/Vietnam. He has authored 250 publications, including 120 journal articles, book chapters, and edited volumes. François Molle graduated from Ecole Polytechnique, France, holds a Ph.D from the University of Montpellier, serves as an editorial board member for several journals, and is co-editor of Water Alternatives (www.water-alternatives.org).