

## ESS Seminar Invitation

# How wicked are wicked problems and how do we model them

Speaker	<b>Alexey Voinov, Prof. Dr.</b> Professor at the University of Technology Sydney, and director of the Research Centre on <a href="#">Persuasive Systems for Wise Adaptive Living (PERSWADE)</a>
When	<b>September, 17<sup>th</sup>, <del>11:00 to 12:00</del> 10:00 to 11:00</b>
Where	<b>Forum Chriesbach D24, Eawag Dübendorf</b>
Abstract	<p>The concept of 'wicked problems' has emerged more than 50 years ago, and has been later on explored in numerous publications and applications, and produced further theories such as the post-normal science. All the policy and planning problems in pluralistic societies have been identified as wicked, which means that they cannot be properly defined, cannot have any single solution, moreover, they cannot have any correct or false solutions at all. Systems modeling, especially participatory modeling have been proposed as useful tools to use when dealing with wicked problems. Attempts to address the 'wickedness' also gave rise to justifying further increases in complexity of models to be built. While being a stimulating philosophical concept, the idea that certain problems simply cannot have solutions creates some forms of escapism that may justify inaction. In reality most of wickedness is a product of wrongly identified system boundaries and lack of understanding of hierarchies involved. We find that in much too many cases we tend to ignore the elephant in the room, trying not to look at the system at other scales, where the solution is quite obvious, but is contrary to the preferences and values of some stakeholders. We make problems wicked when we assume that only win-win solutions are acceptable, or when we try to make only popular decisions.</p>