



Proposal for a Master Thesis

Title: *The determinants of hybrid vs. hierarchical governance of urban water service provision in Germany and Spain.*

Background of the research

Urban water services such as sewage water treatment and drinking water supply are provided by a variety of governance mechanisms. While pure market provision is rare contract arrangements resemble often either a hybrid arrangement such as a long-term contract between the urban administrations and water providers or water providers are hierarchically governed, i.e. property of the local administration. Several pieces of research have already been undertaken concerning the determinants of these different arrangements. The research proposed aims to contribute to this work based on Transaction costs theorizing and empirical data gathered in Germany and/or Spain or other European countries. Furthermore, political considerations need to be considered in the context of the described decisions. Transaction costs economics proposes that the specific characteristics of the transaction determine the governance structure in which the transactions are undertaken. Specifically, it refers to characteristics of transactions such as frequency, asset specificity uncertainty and institutional environment. It is assumed that for the purpose of the work proposed here this set of characteristics has to be enlarged and redefined. Thus, in-depth literature work on the role of characteristics of transactions for governance of water services and their study is to be carried out.

Aims of the call for research:

The aim of the research is a) to build an analytical framework for understanding the decision on a specific governance structure concerning urban water service provision, and b) to understand the setting for transboundary river basin management on the Iberian Peninsula. For this purpose, first an extensive literature review is to be undertaken which will feed into the construction of an analytical framework for explaining the decision concerning the governance of water service provision. Second, for example, within the German Land of Schleswig Holstein and/or the Spanish Autonomous Community of Andalucía, cases are to be selected to which the framework is to be applied. For this purpose empirical data is to be collected

Methods

It is expected that a limited number of semi-structured expert interviews will have to be carried out in Spain and/ or Germany for analyzing cases in which recently the institutional arrangement for governance of urban water services have been changed.

Relationship to partners and support offered

The Division of Resource Economics has ample contacts in Spain and Northern Germany. These will be put at the disposal of Master students that want to undertake this research. Nevertheless, Master Students will themselves be in charge of all major decisions throughout their research. Close collaborative assistance on all stages of the research, incl. theory, framework, data gathering and analysis is offered. In addition, support in finding financial means, and for jointly publishing the results of the study, if they are of sufficient quality, will be provided.

Prerequisites: Sufficiently good command of Spanish and German in order to maintain conversation.

Starting date: According to needs of the study programme. Time to receive funding for travelling should be allowed before the study is undertaken.

If you are interested, please contact as "Advisor":

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