

Corporate Watershed Sustainability in Brazil

by

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Abstract:

Various abusive practices and consequent droughts and pollution have led to major compromises in water quality and availability. An examination of watershed use in Brazil reveals that large private users, especially corporations, seldom value sustainability. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of recent policy reform and its implementation on corporate water use. What factors, particularly governmental regulation, constrain or improve the ability of corporations to implement sustainable practices in their use of the watersheds? We will focus on the watershed area of Rio Paraiba Do Sul (in Rio, Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais) in order to distinguish detrimental corporate practices and determine how these new institutional arrangements have impacted their water use strategies.

To achieve this we will 1) design surveys to interview corporate liaisons, community members, and government officials; 2) use content analysis of archived information with respect to corporate operations, watershed commissions, meetings and technical groups, and environmental data concerning the watersheds, in order to compare case studies of corporate sustainability in watershed management; 3) and we will compile our findings into one comprehensive document accompanied by a presentation. In the interests of setting project goals that do not overtax time, financial and human resource constraints, we anticipate formulating two to three corporate sustainability recommendations for review.

Introduction:

Purpose of Research: The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of recent policy reform and its implementation on corporate water use. We will focus on the watershed area of Rio Paraiba Do Sul (including the states of Rio, Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais) in order to distinguish detrimental corporate practices and determine how these new institutional arrangements have impacted their water use strategies. From this analysis, we will examine the feasibility of sustainable water strategies to improve the long-term viability of sustainable corporate operations. We will also examine relevant governmental regulations and how the use of scientific information is integrated into corporate decision-making. From these findings we will make sustainability recommendations to all parties. Possible modifications in water use strategy for one or two of these industries could drastically improve future and current interaction between the private and public sectors with regards to watershed management.

Significance of Research: The Brazilian scholar Guimaraes describes the multi-disciplinary approach required to effectively address environmental issues in Brazil. "The environment cuts across all other sectors of public activities. To treat it separately,