

Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA): improving governance on the water and sanitation agenda

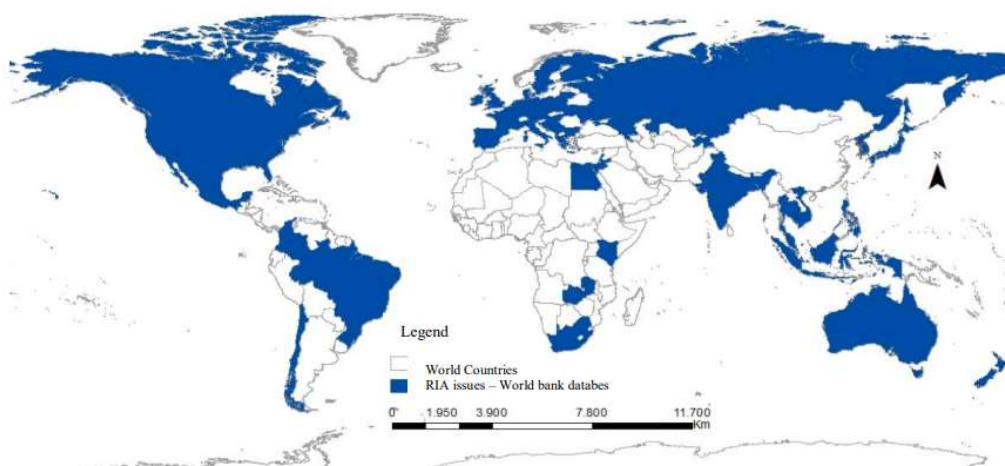
Summary

The way States interfere in the Water and Wastewater sectors has significantly changed, and so has their intervention agreements. In this respect, it is noteworthy to proceed with a change of pattern in the way those arrangements are conducted, which makes the regulatory intervention stand out as an essential public policy instrument. However, public agents fail to structure assertive decisions and this is reflected in inefficiency, dissatisfaction and lack of legitimacy of governmental interventions. Presenting decisions justifications – that are supported by solid theories – raise a discussion on this matter of regulations and their respective impacts, and lead to promoting a debate, at first academically, and later in different areas of society, that is, among decision-makers in the infrastructure sector, where failure directly and independently affects customers, providers, the regulator; and the State as owner. The better regulation agenda (BRA) emerges in this context, where the regulatory impact assessment (RIA) gains recognition as a fundamental instrument capable of supporting decisions that improve intervention quality, and governance.

Regarding the current economic scenario and relevance of the regulation agenda, this thesis intends to contribute to the literature by approaching (i) the RIA theory (using meta-analysis associated with the conceptual modeling theory), (ii) the RIA applicability in practical cases in the water and wastewater sector in Brazil and Portugal (using a developed framework, analytical and consultancy methods), (iii) the relation between RIA and governance and the operationalization of its concept in Brazil (using a combination of meta-analysis, analytical and consultancy methods), and (iv) the mandatory adoption of RIA in Brazil in view of current discussions (using descriptive approach). After analyzing the four dimensions mentioned above, it is possible to conclude that: (i) the theoretical model of RIA must be flexible and adapted to each application circumstance; (ii) the combination of methods that support its application and respective justifications tend to grant more robustness and legitimacy to the results; (iii) the relation between RIA and governance implies a broader understanding of the BRA and RIA implementation benefits, once they can drive regulatory principles forward; and finally, (iv) the discussion on the mandatory adoption of RIA in Brazil is relevant and should be aligned with good practices and conceptual models, even though it does not have a minimal level of established federal or subnational governance neither enough institutional maturity.

Keywords

Governance, multicriteria decision analysis, regulatory impact assessment, wastewater services, water services.



RIA issued by or for national governments. (Source: World Bank, 2017; author's elaboration).



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