

# WHAT GOVERNANCE FOR GROUNDWATER USE IN AGRICULTURE?

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This study aims at evaluating the economic instruments existing for groundwater management and conducting an empirical investigation on case studies of local groundwater management, focused on aquifer contract. Four cases studies present a high irrigation use: the Beauce Aquifer (Center of France), the Roussillon Aquifer (South of France), the Souss-Massa Basin (Morocco) and the Mancha Occidentale Aquifer (Spain).

The methodology approach lies on two analysis grids:

- A “classic one” that regroups a set of criterion, in order to identify homogeneously the main characteristics, the performance, the factors of success and pitfalls to avoid, of the aquifer contract. In the Beauce and Roussillon cases, local stakeholders have been interviewed in order to gather information on the encountered obstacles and the advices for the implementation of a similar initiative.
- A second analysis grid permits to confront each case to the design principles for common pool resources defined by Elinor Ostrom.

The conclusions of the study highlight that the implementation of a similar management instrument in different contexts leads to different results. Several prerequisites and conditions for success have been identified, notably (i) the importance of the flexibility and adaptation of the governance to the nature of the groundwater resource, the users and the culture of local stakeholders, (ii) a solid regulatory and legal basis, (iii) a trust between stakeholders, specifically, between users, between users and the management institution, between the State and the institutions, etc. and (iv) an accurate “dosage” of the supervision of the River Basin Authority during the elaboration of the aquifer contract.