

Welcoming the wind, waiting for the sun...

Planning for Renewable Energy in Germany & the U.S.

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Background

Germany and the United States have been pivotal drivers when it comes to renewable energies, primarily through wind, solar, biomass and geothermal usage. Renewable energy provides the foundation for a sound energy transition, climate change policy and triggers innovations and the diffusion of relevant technologies. Both countries have established policies requiring a reduction of CO₂ emissions and the development of a certain renewable electricity generation capacity. Whereas the acceptance and support for the development of renewable energies is prevailing on the national level in both countries the actual realization of renewable power plants often faces considerable difficulties. Although they produce energy without emitting CO₂ renewable energy plants such as wind farms, solar plants or geothermal plants have certain negative effects on the environment, in particular habitats, scenic landscapes or water resources. The consideration of these effects is part of the permission process for renewable energy facilities and in general is done during an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Goal

We want to figure out whether there is need to streamline or change the existing processes of project permission and consideration of environmental concerns in order to be able to meet the renewable energy policy goals.

Content and Tasks

In a comparative way we want to pursue along the following questions:

- 1) Analyze planning and permission regimes for renewable energy projects in both countries. Which legal requirements apply?, Who are the responsible entities? etc.
- 2) Analyze case studies of wind, solar, biomass projects in both countries. Understand which steps and assessments are necessary for the approval of renewable power plants. Which conflicts and problems occur?
- 3) Find out where need for streamlining and strategic planning exists.
- 4) Come up with recommendations for strategic renewable energy planning under consideration of environmental concerns.

Organization

The project will be organized in smaller teams and the plenary meetings. The exact work packages and the timeline will be developed by the group. The language of the plenary and the written results will be English.

The result of the project will be a jointly written report and if possible a contribution to a conference e.g. IAIA 2011 in Puebla/Mexico (poster or presentation).

First meeting on Thursday, October 21, 2010, 15.00h in EB 414

Contact

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