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Interactive comment on "Water investment in Mexico City: contradictory elements preventing investment efficiency" *by* M. J. Marquez-Dorantes

Anonymous Referee #1

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The manuscript deals with the efficiency of investment in water supply projects with the Santa Catarina Water Supply Project in Mexico City as a case study. The author touches upon many interesting topics why efficiency in this particular case is problematic. At the same time, a clear problem definition as well as an elaborated conceptual framework and theory is lacking. This makes the manuscript a difficult read.

As regards the problem definition it is difficult to the specific aim of the manuscript: exploring "how far the multiple objectives of different actors involved in water projects are balanced to attain integrated water management" (210: lines 11-12); presenting a "series of contradictory elements in water supply projects investment" (211: lines 4-5); showing " how actors' objectives can constrain the achievement of project's efficiency" (211: lines 9-10); explaining "the interacting formal and informal institutional

arrangements that prevent efficiency of water supply projects investments" (214: lines 2-3)? The author has opted for an institutional perspective for studying investment efficiency. It would be very interesting and relevant to learn what such a perspective is necessary and meaningful. This would also be an opportunity to clarify the author's assumptions on the central issues in the manuscript. Concerning the conceptual framework and theory it remains unclear how the author is approaching the analysis of investment efficiency. Many concepts and dimensions are mentioned: the Institutional Development Framework at a general level and related concepts and dimensions such as positions, outcomes, action-outcome linkages, control, information, costs and benefits, contextual factors; stakeholder analysis and analysis of objectives, constraints and interactions; formal and informal institutional arrangements and the interactions between these; "eight elements" (214: line 2). The relations between all these concepts, dimensions, theories, ... are hidden and this contributes to a non-transparent conceptual lens for the analysis. There is probably some hierarchy and some straightforward relations between all concepts, dimensions, theories, etc. However, in its absence, the results section is difficult to understand. Apart from this, questions arise such as: what does an institutional arrangement encompass? what are formal and informal arrangements?; where do the eight elements come from?; why focus on objectives of the stakeholders/actors/agents involved? Additionally, despite mentioning concepts and dimensions, there is hardly any reference to them in section 3. Nor is there consequent reference to evidence (e.g. interviews, focus group discussions, policy statements or reports).

Interactive comment on Drink. Water Eng. Sci. Discuss., 5, 209, 2012.