

# International Regimes and Private Interests in Environmental Issue Areas

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Environmental management involves an increasingly large role of the private sector in implementing public policies. While the influence of private interests in the domestic context has been analyzed in depth, we are still only just beginning to understand how non-governmental activities influence politics at the international level. Many people have noted the unusually prominent role of non-governmental organizations in environmental issue areas and the transnational coalitions they form. However, there still exist few analyses of the role of multinational corporations in obstructing or facilitating inter-state cooperation in the environmental management of resources.

This paper explores the links between environmental management, business interests, and inter-state cooperation in constructing an international environmental regime. There are a number of ways we can conceive of the relationship between states and non-state actors in environmental regime creation and maintenance. First, states can build upon the foundation of practices and norms previously laid down by non-state actors, which may facilitate cooperation among sovereign states. Second, individual governments can use private sector actors as an instrument to implement regulatory and management functions. Third, corporate interests may pursue their own goals with respect to environmental problems and seek to establish a management regime independent of states.

In a world of increasing capital mobility, corporations may pursue regulatory arbitrage in search of the most favorable environmental management regime. On the other hand, some corporations may seek profitable opportunities in environmental markets. I explore the nature and extent of corporate “greening” activities, regulatory arbitrage, and their implications for inter-state cooperation in the management of environmental resources, such as enclosed coastal seas.