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## Earthwatch 25 Years On: Between Science and International Environmental Governance

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### Abstract

The UN system is complex and its workings often seem muddled to the outside observer. This is a problem the UN has struggled with from its inception, sometimes successfully but often not. Part of the difficulty lies in the increasing complexity of issues being addressed internationally, including not least 'sustainable development'. The expectations raised by such an all-encompassing term are hardly achievable in immediate terms. This lack of clarity in the issues addressed through the UN is also reflected in its institutional structures. The story of Earthwatch is just one example of how the UN has attempted to bring clarity into its system. In this case the aim was to bring together the most up to date scientific knowledge and make it policy relevant on an ongoing basis. What seemed a relatively straightforward goal instead has been fraught with difficulties. This analysis looks at these difficulties in terms of the relations between science and policymaking. The paper observes that there have existed three distinct conceptual approaches to this relationship: the functional approach; the feeder of information approach; and the assessments for policy approach. Each has had a decisive influence on the practice of Earthwatch. The paper concludes that the most recent approach offers the best alternative to realizing Earthwatch's goal. However, especially now much work remains to be done. To this end, a suggestion for further research is offered.

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Last year, over 3,500 volunteers have worked on Earthwatch projects, which have grown to 140 projects in over 50 countries around the world. [1]. Our History Edit. Earthwatch Australia has committed and dedicated staff. Our volunteer Board of Directors are responsible for the governance of Earthwatch Australia. What we do Edit. Every day Earthwatch is Edit. International Network on Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, 18 the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law, and the World Resources Institute's Access Initiative. Without more progress on developing effective governance systems, however, this issue will likely be a limiting factor in making significant further progress on international environmental initiatives. More importantly, to the extent that efforts to strengthen environmental governance systems are successful, they also help to make the rule of law in such systems more robust. In fact, as recognized in the work of organizations like International imbalance between environmental governance and trade and finance programs, e.g., World Trade Organization (WTO). Limited credit for organizations running projects within the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Linking UNEP, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank with MEAs. The legitimacy of decisions depends on the local population's participation rate and on how well participants represent that population.[25] With regard to public authorities, questions linked to biodiversity can be faced by adopting appropriate policies and strategies, through exchange of knowledge and experience, the forming of partnerships, correct management of land use, monitoring of biodiversity and optimal use of resources, or.