

Lecture #16 - Implementation

1. What are the obstacles to implementation?

No Court to enforce. We have a World Court, but it choose to stay uninvolved in global treaty enforcement.

Institutional tendency to maintain the status quo (constituencies pushing/pulling in that direction).

Difficulties of monitoring. If you can't monitor progress (or breaches), you can't implement the treaty. If you can't monitor the state of the problem, it is hard to know whether progress is being made. (Free rider problem.)

Costs of monitoring are high. Makes it hard to monitor in a careful, continuing and comprehensive way.

National priorities in countries are such that environmental issues are not a high priority. Domestic issues take precedence.

Political shifts (i.e. elections, instability, wars) make it hard to generate consistent commitments to implement.

Political pressure from (certain) domestic interest groups not to comply is strong

Disincentives to collaborate (i.e. don't share information) – competition, sovereignty concerns, etc.

Lack of resources to manage implementation (i.e. secretariat to do the necessary work)

Failure to adopt domestic laws to create necessary pressure and instrumentalities to implement

Scientific uncertainty (creates disincentive to do what is mandated)

Other costs of compliance (domestically) and no money to cover them

Lack of expertise/capacity in certain countries

Formation of blocking (political) coalitions on the part of countries that have various internal reasons not to comply. Linked to on-going political debates.

2. What causes these obstacles to appear and what is your theory of why and when they arise?

Ideological disagreements among and within countries

Resource constraints/lack of capacity

No tradition of long-term collaboration among countries on resource management issues

Lack of agreement on the scientific scope and causes of the problem (proof!)

LACK OF INCENTIVES (i.e. ASSURED BENEFITS AND/OR RELATIVELY CERTAIN PENALTIES) TO ACT COLLECTIVELY IN THE SHORT TERM

3. What might be done about them?

OFFER BENEFITS (SUBSIDIES) NOW! Money, for example. But, also possible to give other kinds of rewards, like good reputation.

OFFER A CHANCE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS AND BUILD TRUST.

STRESS LINKAGE TO OTHER THINGS THAT COUNTRIES NEED OR WANT.

SWAP ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY (BREAK OUT OF TECHNOLOGY LOCK IN)

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1. The forces of the status quo are very powerful.
 2. Long term sustainability requires changes in policy and practice (at the global, national, and sub-national levels)
 3. Without substantial incentives it will not be possible to alter the status quo (which creates environmental problems or lack of sustainability)
 4. Without the threat of penalties (i.e. serious enforcement) countries will continue to act as Free riders.
 5. In the absence of money, other kinds of incentives will be required (linkages, “gold stars for good behavior”)
 6. Information and capacity building are important, but not decisive considerations.
 7. Public pressure (awareness, education) are also helpful ingredients, but not decisive.
 8. Scientific uncertainty contributes to the difficulty of taking collective action, but greater certainty probably won’t defeat the forces of the status quo.
 9. A more effective global monitoring capability might be helpful (in building a more believable enforcement mechanism), but it would not be decisive.
 10. How can we assess progress toward implementation (criteria, method)?
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What to measure to track implementation of global environmental agreements?

Extent/scope of the problem is changed (reduce scientific uncertainty)

Extent to which domestic changes in policy and practice are being encouraged
(in different types of countries)