

The Governance of International Spaces

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What are International Spaces?

International spaces include regions and resources beyond as well as across national boundaries, thus outside national laws and governance. Stretching from the poles to the equator and upwards from the sea bed to outer space, International Spaces encompass the High Seas, Antarctica, The Earth's climate system, and arguably even the Internet and the Electromagnetic Spectrum. Nearly 75% of the Earth's surface lies outside national boundaries and the sustainability of these spaces is crucial to all life on Earth.

What are the challenges and opportunities in Governing International Spaces?

A range of complex and interlinked International Agreements exist for the governance of these spaces, but each considers only its own objectives and there has been little attempt to recognize the need for a holistic approach to management of these international spaces and their resources. The opportunity is to use scientific understanding of these spaces and the interrelationships between them as a tool for linking policies. The challenge for governments and global civil society is to envision a science-policy process linked to governance that operates with continuity over decades and centuries.

Learning from Good Governance - Examples from Antarctica

The Antarctic Treaty model recognizes that solutions to transboundary or global issues must be processes involving cooperation, iteration and responsiveness to ever-changing circumstances. Science has become a tool of diplomacy, for example, policy on Environmental Management is underpinned by peer-reviewed substantive research. Agreement by consensus is slower than by majority but a powerful tool in making progress across different cultures, languages and legal systems. The need to share data and experiences for a common cause is a powerful motivator.

What is the Foundation for Good Governance of International Spaces?

"Our Spaces" is a new International organization for bringing together the fragmented parts of International Governance, for stimulating discussion between disciplines and nationalities, and for looking for new applications for those approaches that have been shown to work. Recent and current activities include support for - Arctic Environmental Governance Workshop, Geoengineering and the Governance of International Spaces, Antarctic Treaty Summit, - as well as on-going Website and Database development.



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www.ourspaces.org.uk

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