

Foreword

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Environmental protection is very often a public good, that is the benefits from a better environment can be captured by all the members of a given community (global, regional or local), and not only by those who contribute to protect nature or improve environmental quality. This makes it difficult to design effective environmental policies. Free-riding incentives and very asymmetric preferences for environmental protection dominate the decision process and weaken policy decisions.

Governing the global environment is a notoriously complex diplomatic task, and the lack of appropriate supra-national institutions contributes to this complexity. But governing national or local environments is not any simpler, even in the presence of well-designed and effective governing institutions.

The solution to the governance problem can be found in the integration of environmental policies with other global, regional or local policies. Environmental problems are likely to affect many dimensions of economic and social life, and can therefore be addressed by a number of integrated economic and social policies, rather than by specific environmental measures.

This volume addresses the above policy issues in a very detailed and effective manner. It is part of the output of the EPIGOV project that brought together scholars from eighteen universities and research institutes across Europe in an effort to synthesise and examine research and policy analyses on environmental policy integration. The project convened researchers belonging to a broad range of disciplines, including political sciences, economics, law and land use planning, and working with various methodological approaches. Three conferences were held under the auspices of the project and were used to compare and summarise the main findings of the research work.

This book focuses on the modes of governance associated with relevant measures to protect the environment at the national, regional and local levels. Its chapters provide a comprehensive assessment of the progress achieved in integrating the environmental dimension into national, regional and local policies. The book also compares different experiences with a view to

identifying modes of governance which tend to be more or less conducive to environmental policy integration.

This book is the product of the outstanding work of the three editors in cooperation with all the partners of the EPIGOV network. FEEM (Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei) provided secretarial and administrative support and organized the whole process leading to the publication. The analyses, results and experiences presented in this book can be very valuable to scholars and policymakers in the attempt to identify institutions and measures to protect the environment.

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