



Introductory Course on SDG 16 and the access rights, Aarhus Convention, and Escazú Agreement



Course Syllabus

Learning Objectives

Climate change, biodiversity loss, and air and water pollution are among the global environmental problems that affect everyone's health and wellbeing and threaten development. Good governance is essential to effectively respond to these challenges. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 promotes needful actions in this area and is instrumental for achieving all other SDGs.

This course explores the environmental dimension of SDG 16, honing in on the targets and indicators linked to access rights. These access rights – access to information, public participation, and access to justice, supported by safeguards for environmental defenders – are essential elements of environmental stewardship and decision-making, and provide invaluable tools to contribute to the achievement of SDG 16.

After introducing access rights, this course will look in greater depth at three Multilateral Environmental Agreements stemming from Rio Principle 10 – the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers, and the Escazú Agreement – that further develop these rights to empower societies to address existential challenges and protect our planet.

Finally, this course will survey a variety of other environment-related and human rights treaties and international instruments, exploring how they interconnect and contribute within their respective substantive focuses to the goal of good governance, leaving no one behind and, ultimately, sustainable development.

Content & Duration

This online course is comprised of 5 lessons, organized in interactive modules that combine the course theory with exercises and interactions that will facilitate the learning process. The core content of the lessons is complemented with additional material, such as videos, publications and external websites.

It will take you approximately 3 hours to complete the full course, excluding additional materials. This is a self-paced course that allows you to manage your time as you wish. You can navigate the lessons at your convenience and retake them whenever you wish.

Completion Certificate

Take the quiz at the end of the course to assess your learning progress.

You are required to answer at least 80% of the assessment questions correctly in order to obtain a course certificate.

Before obtaining the certificate you also need to submit the course survey (your feedback). This survey helps us to improve the course, develop new courses and assess if you are achieving your learning objectives.

Course Outline & Content

Lesson 1: SDG 16 and Access Rights

Overview of the environmental and human rights dimension of SDG 16, and introduction to Rio Principle 10 and access rights.

Lesson 2: Aarhus Convention

Introduction to the Convention, how access rights are incorporated and how its institutional frameworks operates.

Lesson 3: Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

Introduction to the Protocol, how access rights are incorporated and how its institutional frameworks operates.

Lesson 4: Escazú Agreement

The negotiation and adoption of the Agreement, how access rights are incorporated, and future directions.

Lesson 5: Application to other MEAs & International Processes

Overview of access rights in the Rio Conventions, other MEAs and international processes