Environmental Law, Policy and Governance: Principles, Permitting, Enforcement and Liability

1 – 5 February 2027
Barcelona - Eixample district four-star



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Introduction:

Organisations face permit breaches, remediation orders, penalties and community challenge when environmental law is read as a checklist rather than a system of principles, licences and enforceable duties. Environmental law and policy now shape site approvals, emission limits, waste handling and board-level liability. This Core Concept course equips environmental managers, in-house counsel, inspectors and policy officers to interpret environmental law principles, work with permitting and enforcement tools, assess corporate liability and design policy instruments. Participants produce an Environmental Legal Risk Register and Policy Brief for a case company.

Course Objectives:

- Interpret the prevention, precautionary, polluter pays and sustainable development principles and apply them to operational and permitting decisions
- Map the obligations that multilateral environmental agreements on climate, biodiversity, hazardous waste and ozone create for national rules and corporate operations
- Analyse permit and licence conditions, emission limit values and best available techniques requirements for an industrial or infrastructure site
- Evaluate inspection, sanction and enforcement options, and the corporate liability and remediation exposure that follows a pollution incident
- Design environmental policy options that combine command-and-control rules, economic instruments and public participation mechanisms
- Produce an Environmental Legal Risk Register and Policy Brief that ranks legal exposure and recommends controls for a case company

Target Audience:

- Environmental managers responsible for permits, licence conditions and regulatory reporting at operating sites
- In-house counsel handling environmental claims, contract clauses, incident response and liability exposure
- Regulatory inspectors and permitting officers who draft licence conditions and take enforcement decisions
- Environmental policy officers who draft strategies, standards and policy instruments
- Sustainability and risk managers who report environmental legal exposure to senior management and boards

Course Outline:

Day 1: Environmental Law Foundations and Core Principles

- Sources of Environmental Law: Treaties, Statutes, Implementing Regulations and Case Law
- Prevention Principle and Prior Authorisation of Polluting Activities
- Precautionary Principle: Scientific Uncertainty and Burden of Proof
- Polluter Pays Principle and Extended Producer Responsibility
- Sustainable Development, Intergenerational Equity and Transboundary Harm Duties

Day 2: Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Governance Architecture

- Framework Conventions and Protocols: Treaty Structure, Ratification and Reservations
- Climate Change Agreements: Nationally Determined Contributions and Transparency Reporting
- Biodiversity Conventions: Protected Species Trade and Habitat Obligations
- Hazardous Waste and Ozone Treaties: Prior Informed Consent and Substance Phase-Out Schedules
- Transposing Treaty Obligations into Domestic Rules: Gap Analysis Matrix

Day 3: Environmental Permitting, Licensing and Impact Assessment in Law

- Permitting Models: Integrated Pollution Permits, Sectoral Licences and General Binding Rules
- Emission Limit Values, Best Available Techniques and Permit Condition Drafting
- Environmental Impact Assessment as a Legal Gateway: Screening Triggers and Decision Records
- Permit Variation, Transfer, Renewal and Surrender Procedures
- Legal Register Construction: Obligation Mapping for an Operating Facility

Day 4: Enforcement, Corporate Liability and Remediation

- Compliance Monitoring Tools: Inspections, Self-Monitoring Returns and Audit Rights
- Enforcement Pyramid: Warning Notices, Administrative Penalties, Suspension and Prosecution
- Corporate and Director Liability: Strict Liability, Fault and Due Diligence Defences
- Contaminated Land Remediation: Liability Allocation, Clean-Up Standards and Financial Assurance
- Environmental Clauses in Acquisitions, Leases and Supply Contracts: Warranties and Indemnities

Day 5: Case Study: Legal Risk Register and Environmental Policy Brief

- Policy Instrument Selection: Standards, Environmental Taxes, Tradable Permits and Deposit-Refund Schemes
- Access to Environmental Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice Mechanisms
- Case Company Review: Chemicals Plant Permit Breach and Groundwater Contamination File
- Environmental Legal Risk Register: Likelihood, Consequence and Control Owner Scoring
- Environmental Policy Brief Drafting and Peer Challenge Panel

Skills You Will Gain:

- Environmental Principle Interpretation
- Treaty Obligation Mapping
- Permit Condition Analysis
- Environmental Legal Register Maintenance
- Enforcement Response Planning
- Environmental Liability Assessment
- Policy Instrument Design
- Environmental Policy Brief Writing

Why Attend This Course:

- Return with an Environmental Legal Risk Register and Policy Brief built on a realistic case company file
- Read permit conditions and enforcement notices with the reasoning an inspector or court applies to them
- Quantify how a pollution incident can turn into remediation costs, director exposure and contract claims before it happens
- Compare regulatory and corporate practice with peers from manufacturing, energy, utilities and public authorities

Conclusion:

Environmental law protects an organisation only when its principles are translated into permit conditions, monitoring routines, contract terms and board-level decisions. The week moves from the prevention, precautionary and polluter pays principles, through multilateral environmental agreements and permitting models, to enforcement tools, corporate liability and remediation, then policy instruments and public participation. The final day applies each element to a case company file, and each participant completes an Environmental Legal Risk Register and Policy Brief ready to present to management or a policy committee.