

# Eco-social Synergies: Legal Challenges at the Intersection of the Environmental and Employment Realms

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## PANEL 2. The Key stakeholders in Environmental Protection in the Labour Market and Best Practices

### ABSTRACT

#### **The growing role of labour actors as environmental regulators – the case of Global Framework Agreements addressing environmental issues.**

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The urgency of the climate crisis and the increasing prevalence of environmental issues in policy and law-making is associated with the growing role of labour actors in processes of environmental regulation at various scales. Such a shift is influenced and reflected in many practical changes relevant for labour law, including the introduction of environmental provisions in Global Framework Agreements (GFAs) negotiated between multinational companies and transnational union coalitions.

Combining legal and sociological perspectives, the study is grounded on the creation and analysis of a database of GFAs containing environmental provisions (EGFAs), as well as three case studies chosen from the database and informed by semi-structured interviews and focus groups carried out with union and management representatives at various scales. It is argued that EGFAs can be understood as regulatory processes at transnational scale, implying that analysis should go beyond content and consider the agreements' context, in particular environmental regulation processes happening through a complex web of interactions at various scales, and involving labour actors among other agents.

To identify, empirically map, and theoretically characterise the interactions involved in the negotiation and implementation of EGFAs, and explain how these are connected to other regulatory processes at international, national and organisational scales, the study uses a bourdieusian analytical framework articulated around the 'thinking tools' of field, habitus and capital. It concludes that these interactions run through multi-scalar and multi-directional networks, which require labour actors to articulate abstract rules, standards, notions, etc. with concrete situations, including for the purpose of negotiating and implementing EGFAs. Tensions inform this process of articulation, as the logics of international and national environmental policy and law-making, labour's own environmental strategies, as well as corporate social responsibility, all play a part.