



Ensuring rights and justice can strengthen environmental outcomes

Analyses for this report²² explored the relationship between environmental performance and environmental rights. Environmental rights include rights to an environment of a certain quality (clean, healthy, etc.), rights to information, participation and to access to justice in environmental matters, and fundamental rights relating to dignity, health and life that include implicit protection of derivative environmental rights. Several countries in the region recognize various forms of environmental rights.²³

On average, environmental rights provisions in constitutions and/or legislation are linked to better environmental outcomes²⁴

Recognition and protection of environmental rights is also linked to faster improvements in environmental quality

Figure 1.2a Environmental rights and average environmental performance index (EPI) scores, 2018

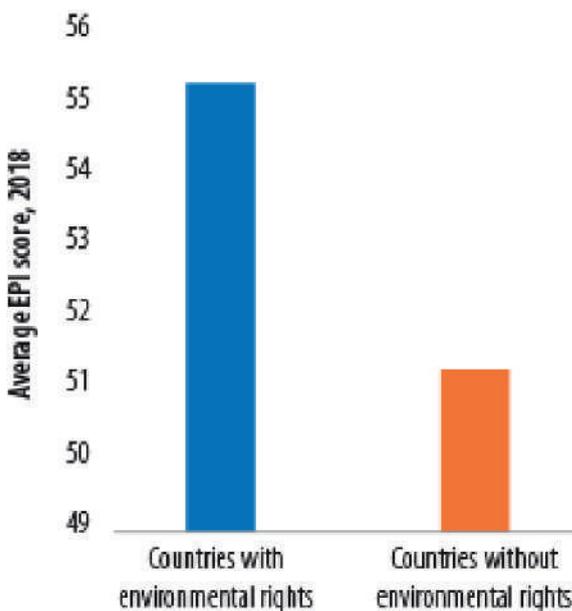
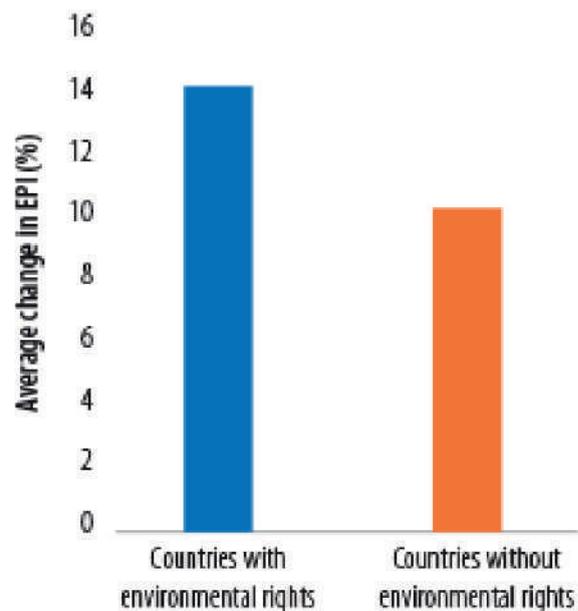


Figure 1.2b Environmental rights and improvements in EPI scores from 2014 to 2018



Source: Analysis by Jeffords and Gellers (2019)²⁵

Fulfilment of environmental rights helps to strengthen domestic legal frameworks and provides citizens with a mechanism for achieving environmental justice, supporting the achievement of several environment-related SDGs. Online platforms that catalogue best practices in environmental rights (e.g. the Environmental Rights Database²⁶) can help in the sharing of information on environmental rights. Technical training for judges, lawyers and advocates; raising public awareness about environmental rights and how to access legal services; and funding public-interest environmental law firms are all critical for the translation of rights into enhanced environmental performance in reality.