

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Earth System Governance

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## ENVIRONMENTAL RECOURSE AT THE MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS

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## Environmental Recourse at the Multilateral Development Banks

Elements in Earth System Governance

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**Abstract:** Global governance now provides people with recourse for harm through international grievance mechanisms, such as the independent accountability mechanisms of the multilateral development banks. Yet little is known about how such mechanisms work. This Element examines how IGMs provide recourse for infringements of three procedural environmental rights: access to information, access to participation, and access to justice in environmental matters, as well as environmental protections drawn from the United Nations Guiding Principles and the World Bank's protection standards. A content analysis of 394 original IAM claims details how people invoke these rights. The Sections then unpack how the IAMs provide community engagement through 'problem-solving' and 'compliance investigations' that identify whether the harm resulted from the MDBs. Using a database of all known submissions to the IAMs (1,052 claims from 1994 to mid-2019), the Sections demonstrate how the IAMs enable people to air their grievances, without necessarily solving their problems.

**Keywords:** international organisations, accountability, environment, human rights, multilateral development banks

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