



Panel T16P14 Session 1 *Citizens and businesses:
approaches to engagement in sustainability governance and outcomes*

**Institutionalizing Corporate Environmental Responsibility for
Protected Area businesses: behavioural perspectives on policy
settings and implementation**

Dr Valentina Dinica

Victoria University of Wellington, Victoria Business School, New Zealand.

Email: Valentina.Dinica@vuw.ac.nz

The empirical context for the research objectives

- 2010 Business Growth Agenda, requiring the Department of Conservation to: :
 - support the objective of **enhancing business access to Protected Areas**
 - become a more **active supplier of tourism infrastructure**, especially for international visitors (no PA access fees are charged in NZ)
 - become a '**facilitator**' **rather than leader of conservation work** in PA, and encourage others to do more
- Legally, DOC only has to “allow for tourism” if nature protection permits (obj. no.4).
- Three approaches for Corporate Environmental Responsibility are encouraged:
 - volunteering through labour, equipment and other resources for work on PA;
 - donations
 - commercial sponsorships

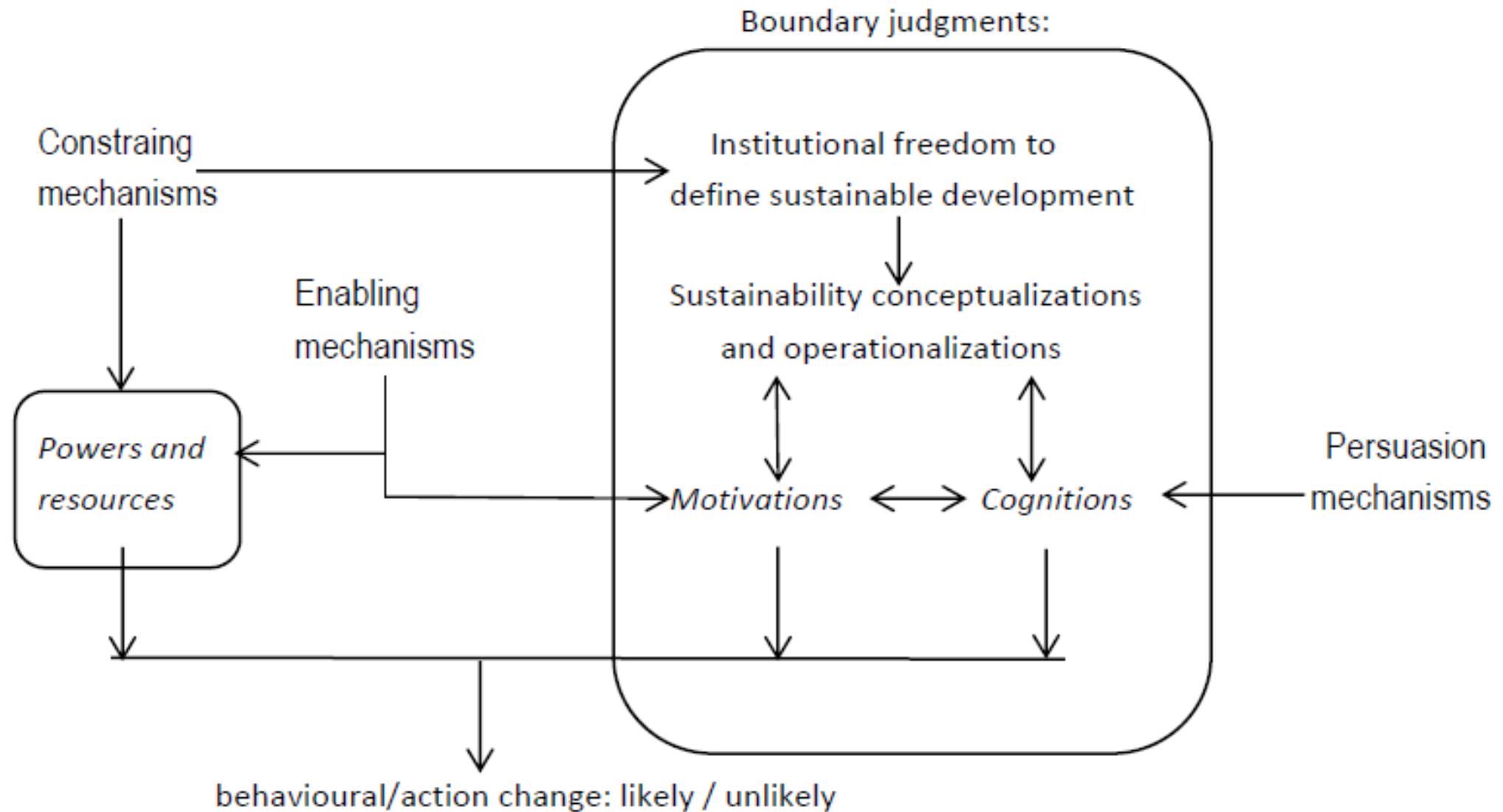
Objectives and long-term goals for 'conservation gains' based on the exercise by businesses of Corporate Environmental Responsibility

- by 2065 “More conservation activity is achieved by others” (DOC, 2015).
- all tourism businesses are expected to be able to carry-out voluntary conservation work independently by 2040.
- For concessionaires, DOC’s intermediate target is that new “partnership arrangements” will be concluded by 2019, which should “Lift the contribution to conservation outcomes from concessionaires by at least 10%.” (DOC, 2015).
- Only ‘persuasion’ and a few weak and short-term ‘enabling’ policy mechanisms used

Two research objectives guide this paper

- to understand the prospects for the recently introduced CER strategy in New Zealand to be implemented by tourism concessionaires in ways that are consistent with governmental expectations; and
- to gain insight into the potential pitfalls associated with the institutionalization of the CER strategy, from the standpoint of overall environmental performance at Protected Area level, taking into account that concessionaires are also targeted by regulatory instruments.

Key actor characteristics and mechanisms for behavioural change



CER initiative types/Env. Performance objectives	(P1) Prevention	(P2) Recovery	(P3) Management	(P4) Enhancement (CER strategy)
(E1) internally focused (concessions)	weak/modest, some impacts not covered	good	good	
(E2) supply-chain and product/service oriented initiatives				
(E3) other commercially- relevant environmental improvements				
(E4) exogenous environmental improvements				significant expectations

Relationships between CER initiative types, concession requirements and environmental performance objectives in New Zealand's Protected Areas.

Most respondents feel **demotivated** by several persistent DOC behaviours

- the Department's leadership is "fascinated by rich people" (R6) and only profiles corporate sponsorships as business partnerships through media and website messages; the rest are thrown into "the community efforts basket" (R2,4,7,16);
- DOC does not understand that making a profit in Protected Areas is tough for smaller companies (R1,2,4,7,10,12,14,15,16): *"they are talking about getting the big boys on board with lots of money, while undermining the small businesses with the exorbitant fees they expect and voluntary labour"* (R2);
- DOC does not formally acknowledge historical volunteering efforts (R1,2,5,7,11,16); particularly, DOC ignores smaller companies and does not actively seek positive relationships with them (R1,2,4,9,11,12,13,15,16);
- DOC is too slow in issuing permits for conservation work; some had to proceed without permits, but acquiring permits would have made them proud in the community and in relations with clients (R7,11,16);
- DOC is untrustworthy, has a track record of treating all concessionaires as undesirables (R2,4,7).
- DOC will tap into the same limited pool of individuals and corporations willing to offer donations/sponsorships to independent community volunteers, within and outside Protected Areas (R5,6,7).
- A strong demotivating factor is the plan to set accountabilities, performance measurement, and reporting systems around volunteering

Cognitive aspects

Most respondents are unwilling to learn skills that are irrelevant for their business, and argue that training will be a burden on DOC and own staff.

“people do not volunteer because DOC needs them to do things they have no money for” (R1); they want to give back to the community through things they enjoy doing and feel good about (R1,3,6,9,12,14); institutionalizing volunteering “takes the feel good out of the experience, and makes it feel like an in-kind charge” (R9).

Boundary judgements on sustainability and state responsibility

- *“Conservation is a governmental responsibility. DOC’s role is to look after National Parks. The role of concessionaires is to provide the public with nature experiences without damaging Parks. The idea that more businesses will do voluntary work is totally misguided” (R4);*
- *“The policies we see today are very radical compared to what DOC was set up to do. I see the Department preserving its current core functions and programmes and I see businesses and communities as a bonus, help grow conservation a little bit, but not under the model where the big growth is going to occur under the private sector leadership” (R6);*
- *“The fundamentals of why DOC actually exists are actually eroded. DOC still needs to be a leader” (R10);*
- *“Service delivery cannot be delegated away and businesses like mine cannot contribute financially voluntarily” (R11);*
- *“In many ways DoC has lost its way from being a nature focused department to some kind of corporation making money out of Parks rather than maintaining them” (R16);*
- *“DOC staff do not see themselves anymore as working for the general management of the Conservation Estate and (...) this is going towards a huge division between the Department and concessionaires” (R2).*

Five potential pitfalls:

1. CER in exchange for private benefits / loosening up Protected Areas zoning and access
- *“If we can get a closer and easier relationship with DOC, from a business perspective, yes, it would be easier to donate or volunteer. At this stage I have the feeling this is not a win-win relationship. (...) That’s why we are not doing anything with DOC, but we are doing things with business partners” (R8).*
 - *“Volunteering could eventually work all right as long as they would be willing to open up the Parks a bit and take care around the issue of foreign ownership. (...) If DOC gets stuck in the mud and does not want to open up the NP further, then my volunteering enthusiasm would wane”. (R13)*

2. CER as tokenism and environmentally ineffective (mismatch between business actions/projects and conservation needs)

- Volunteering *“is tokenism, fiddling around the edges; it is not really making a difference. A lot of required work is pretty highly skilled. Volunteers can only do a limited set of activities requiring only low skills. Not much thinking was put into what kinds of projects people can do”* (R6).

3. Concession fees as demotivating constraining mechanisms

All respondents stated they will be seriously demotivated to engage in CER if concession fees increase:

- *“if they carry on with this concession fee increase they will have a war, because they will also have no responsibilities if all the work will be done by volunteers” (R13).*

4. A regulatory framework that creates an uneven playing field between concessionaires and independent recreationists – demotivating factor

5. DOC centralization leading to vaguer Strategies and Plans and larger discretion for DOC staff with less public scrutiny

Policy interplays suggest that tourism intensification may 'cancel out' environmental improvements through CER

Other slides / question time

Firm	Size, concession type, activities/facilities
R1	<5 staff; permit; mountaineering/climbing
R2	30-40 staff; lease, licenses; guided walks, motorized boat tours, catering, shops
R3	20-35 staff; two licenses; guided kayaking
R4	15-20 staff; lease; accommodation
R5	50-750 staff; lease, licenses; ski infrastructure, accommodation, carparks, catering, shops
R6	15-20 staff; licenses; guided walks and kayak tours
R7	<5 staff; two licenses; guided walks, motorized boat transport/tours
R8	5-10 staff; about 50 permits/licenses; guided walks, vehicle-based tours
R9	<5 staff; permits; guided walks, vehicle-based tours
R10	120 staff; lease, licenses; accommodation, catering
R11	<5 staff; two permits; guided walks and vehicle-based tours
R12	25-30 staff; many permits/licenses across New Zealand; cycling, hiking, 'multi-activity' tours
R13	<5 staff; lease, licenses; accommodation, catering, guided walks, vehicle-based tours
R14	5 staff; lease, license; accommodation, shop, vehicle transport
R15	5-10 staff; many licenses; guided walks, vehicle-based tours
R16	<5 staff, two licenses; motorized water transport, fishing charting

Table 2. Main characteristics of research participants.

- (E1): internal actions, like paper recycling and energy efficiency in office buildings;
- (E2): supply-chain and product/service oriented initiatives (see Carlsen et al, 2001:291; Graci and Dodds, 2009; Milder et al, 2016; Sigala, 2008); examples include contracting with environmentally-friendly businesses; designing ‘green products’, or voluntary tourism products for pollution reduction or biodiversity conservation;
- (E3): ‘win-win’ environmental improvements executed with stakeholder, offering commercial benefits, directly or indirectly (Laing et al, 2009; Pitas et al, 2015); for example cruise-liners may offer subsidies to communities in developing countries where they anchor, to invest in solar panels and reduce biomass burning for energy – next to environmental gains this may also preserve forests for visitors to enjoy;
- (E4): exogenous environmental improvements, aiming at environmental benefits that are unrelated to the business; this may include equipment or employee volunteering to “undertake revegetation projects” (Carlsen et al, 2001:292), or altruistic donations towards projects like sponsoring “avoidance of deforestation”, “oil spill relief activities” and “returning urban land/landfills to parkland” (Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois,

- (P1): prevention; businesses can volunteer or be asked to try first to ‘avoid’ damage, e.g. by relocating a proposed development in a nature area of lower ecological vulnerability, or by avoiding the use of some National Park areas in peak season;
- (P2): recovery; damage may occur during construction or operation activities, and businesses can volunteer or be asked to ‘remedy’ that before starting operations, or after a pollution incident; some instruments may only require companies to ‘offset/compensate’ environmental damages, for example through nature/biodiversity enhancement elsewhere; remedy on site is considered by environmental stakeholders to be more desirable than offsetting elsewhere, especially when this affects ecosystem integrity; some regulations may even accept compensation for environmental damage to be offered to local communities, when this affects their livelihoods.
- (P3): management; some policy interventions only aim to induce businesses to ‘mitigate’ damages they contribute to; this requires an effort to keep particular negative impacts below certain levels that are considered undesirable (example: to engage in ‘site flora restoration’, following track erosion by tourists);
- (P4): environmental enhancement; this category refers to initiatives with benefits that are not directly related to the negative impacts of the respective business; examples here are coastal clean-up campaigns in areas outside the territory where the business normally operates; biodiversity conservation through pest control or breeding species