



‘Judicial Portal’ Fact Sheet*

‘Designed for judges with judges’

Launched at the UNEP Global Judges Symposium

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Event co-sponsor: IUCN - The World Conservation Union

What is the Portal?

The Portal is the world’s first Internet based means for judges from around the world to communicate with one another and to share environmental law judgements and information.

Why has the Portal been created?

The Judicial Portal was created to progress the collective efforts of UNEP and IUCN to help create a global network of judges. The Portal enables judges from around the world to exchange information on environmental law relevant to their decision making and creates an up to date global data bank of environmental law cases available to all judges. In May 2004 access to the Portal was extended to all members of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (CEL).

Who designed the Portal?

The development of the Portal followed on from discussions between UNEP and IUCN on the best way of using technology to help create a global network of judges. The Portal was developed and designed by the IUCN ELC in co-operation with IUCN Headquarters and the Hon Justice Paul Stein AM (Australia). The Portal forms a separately accessible part of the IUCN Environmental Law Programme (ELP) Website (iucn.org/themes/law) and is maintained by the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC). It is continuously modified and improved over time in collaboration with judges and UNEP.

Who places the information on the Portal?

This is done by judges (or their staff), and since May 2004 by members of CEL. It is supplemented on exceptional occasions by the IUCN upon request or UNEP to include an historical judgement of high importance. The original intent for the content of the site to be developed by judges alone was changed in May 2004 following consultation with all participating judges. There is no editing nor screening of any information that is posted on the site.



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IUCN ELC May 2004

*August 2002 amended May 2004

What information will the Portal contain?

The Portal includes copies of judgements uploaded to the site, summaries of judgements posted on the site, comments sent by participants on judgements, together with various user statistics and search facilities. It also includes a 'discussion forum' to enable debate and exchange of information amongst participants on topics of interest.

How will judgements be further used?

This Portal is also used as the primary source of judgements to be included on the publicly accessible global collection of environmental law and policy materials known as ECOLEX, the 'Gateway to Environmental Law', a joint initiative of FAO, IUCN and UNEP (www.ecolex.org). For this purpose, a committee of judges may be established to review the judgements placed on the site. The Hon Justice Paul Stein AM (Australia) has volunteered to chair an ECOLEX Judicial Committee, which could be established for this purpose.

Will the discussion forum or comments on judgements be used elsewhere?

The Portal is intended to be a site where participants are able to communicate freely amongst themselves. Comments and discussions are not used for any other purpose by IUCN or UNEP and all participants are requested to maintain confidentiality.

Who will be able to access the Portal?

The Portal was designed for judges with judges. It was initially only accessible to judges and selected staff of IUCN and UNEP upon approval of the Head of the IUCN ELP. This was extended in May 2004 following consultation with all participating judges to include members of CEL. Access is by password and passwords are issued to members of the judiciary upon request. While all efforts are exerted to protect the portal from unauthorised use, no guarantee can be given regarding unauthorised access.

How do I get a password?

Access to the Portal is managed by the IUCN ELC Webmaster, Anni Lukács. A password is issued to judges upon request, and all CEL members are issued a password. Instructions on how to access and navigate the Portal are available from the Portal. Contact details and requested information is provided on a separate sheet. Assuming all information is correct, passwords are issued within one week of being requested.

When will the Portal commence operation?

The Portal commenced in September 2002.

