

Institutional Change in Agriculture and Natural Resources
Institutioneller Wandel der Landwirtschaft und Ressourcennutzung

edited by/herausgegeben von
Volker Beckmann & Konrad Hagedorn

Volume/Band 30

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**Institutional Interplay in
International Environmental Governance**

Policy Interdependence and Strategic Interaction
in the Regime Complex on Plant Genetic Resources
for Food and Agriculture

Shaker Verlag
Aachen 2008

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Zugl.: Berlin, Humboldt-Univ., Diss., 2007

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Printed in Germany.

ISBN 978-3-8322-6974-6

ISSN 1617-4828

Shaker Verlag GmbH • P.O. BOX 101818 • D-52018 Aachen

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Institutional interplay – synergies and disruptions in the implementation of overlapping international agreements – is an important factor for the effectiveness of international environmental governance. This book analyzes the determinants of institutional interplay between institutions that regulate the conservation and use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the FAO International Treaty on PGRFA (ITPGR), the WTO Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). While interactions among agreements focusing on PGRFA conservation and supply (CBD and ITPGR) and those focusing on PGRFA use (TRIPS and UPOV) have led to synergies, interactions between these two groups have been marked by conflicts over property rights to PGRFA and the distribution of benefits arising out of PGRFA use.

Using a combination of institutional analysis and theories of international cooperation, this book systematically compares the relationships between these institutions and explores the conditions for successful interplay management. The analysis reveals factors beyond those commonly identified in interplay research such as overlapping issue areas, contradicting objectives or deliberate issue linkages. While initiatives to consolidate CBD and TRIPS have failed so far, disruptions between ITPGR and UPOV could be overcome through a new governance approach reflecting the physical and socioeconomic conditions of PGRFA conservation and use. This development was supported by the narrow scope and the longer institutional history of ITPGR and UPOV, and the emergence of a network of experts that actively promoted the development of shared approach to PGRFA governance.