

Environmental pollution is a global issue. We support our clients to address legacy environmental pollution and clean-up responsibilities, and to manage current and future emissions and impacts on air, land and water.

The issue

Pollution is a global issue. Many developed countries have a legacy of contaminated land resulting from historical industrial activity, waste management and from previous development of land. Social and economic priorities meant that some developing countries were reluctant to prioritize pollution control but that has changed rapidly.

Awareness and understanding of the impact of pollution on human health, particularly in the air continues to develop and drive policy and regulation around the globe. According to the World Health Organization, air pollution is the single biggest environmental health threat, and causes more than seven million premature deaths a year.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals have a strong focus on reducing environmental pollution. UN SDG Target 3.9 aims to “substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination” by 2030. We support our clients as they work through these significant issues and their impact on their businesses.

What we do

The nature of pollution work is complex and cross-cutting. We assemble the right team from across our Environmental and Natural Resources practice to address the multifaceted issues. We help clients who face increasing governmental, regulatory and public pressure to reduce adverse impacts of their operations on the environment. Our work ranges from permitting advice, compliance counselling and litigation, to complex investigations and enforcement.

We regularly advise on legacy liabilities for contaminated land, particularly for clients in the industrial, chemicals, energy and mining sectors. This work includes addressing the allocation of liabilities under law and contract and environmental clean-up works.

We also advise on regulatory and civil litigation, including large class actions, relating to legacy liabilities and pollution incidents, spills and leaks as well as regulatory enforcement actions. We regularly negotiate and allocate pollution and clean-up responsibilities in the context of international corporate M&A, finance and property transactions, and help clients navigate the often complex statutory and regulatory regimes applicable to potentially polluting activities.

As pollutants move through the atmosphere and/or water sources, transcending national borders, we assist clients in addressing regulations and oversight across jurisdictional boundaries, including international cross-border matters.

We also work on some of the most substantive and far-reaching matters concerning air emissions from stationary and mobile sources, including vehicles. Our work includes advice on the permitting of new or modified air pollution sources and compliance with applicable emissions regulations and standards.

Our impact

Pollution can occur through different types of environmental media, and Hogan Lovells assists clients in addressing pollution across all these sources.

Water | Water pollution often comes from a discharge of water from a pipeline or other point source. Hogan Lovells understands not only the regulatory requirements for these discharges, and the technologies and design strategies that can reduce or eliminate pollutants in effluent. We also work with clients to address potential contamination from non-point sources like stormwater run-off or other uses of water as part of operations or development. Our lawyers also understand local, national and international standards applicable to water pollution, and we guide our clients through these levels of regulation.

Air | In addition to assisting clients in addressing carbon impacts and greenhouse gas emissions, we have advised sovereigns, private companies, and other stakeholders on the development of rules, regulations, and policies addressing air emissions. We have, for example, worked with the automotive industry to understand and implement standards for exhaust emissions. We also work with lenders and investors to incorporate air emission standards as part of financing arrangements. Air regulation is extraordinarily complex, and Hogan Lovells is comfortable with that complexity.

Waste | The disposal of water is highly regulated, with particular regulatory focus on hazardous wastes. We assist governments and private parties in the design of waste management facilities and the control of waste streams. We also help clients position their projects and operations to minimize waste and to do so in a manner consistent with legal requirements.

Useful links

- [Global Government Regulatory: Environment and Natural Resources](#)
- [Business Integrity and Sustainability](#)
- [Clean Air](#)
- [Site Remediation](#)
- [Environmental Litigation](#)
- [Chemical and Product Regulation](#)

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