



**Universiteit
Leiden**
Institute of Security
and Global Affairs



**University of
St Andrews**

Oceans Governance – Workshop series

Call for contributions and project concept note

Just over 70 percent of our planet is covered by water but excepting major security incidents such as piracy or war at sea, international relations has largely engaged with the remaining 29 percent of the planet. This ‘seablindness’ (Bueger and Edmunds, 2017) has occurred because the open ocean is easy to access but hard to control. This presents major obstacles for national governments to be able to pursue their global ambitions (both in terms of climate change, non-traditional security challenges and insecurity), but also tremendous opportunities in terms of freedom of navigation, trade and traditional security objectives.

This series of workshops will explore the proposition that, it is not a problem of having too little international law, but rather a challenge of too little governance. By its nature developing research in this area is inherently interdisciplinary and demands new path-breaking approaches to research.

With the support of a network grant from the Royal Society of Edinburgh, we will be holding a series of workshops on this topic at the University of Leiden and the University of St Andrews. These workshops will bring together academics, policy makers, and practitioners to address the following inter-related questions: **What type of political space are the oceans? How can we create an international framework to enable the oceans to be governed? To what extent should the freedom of the seas be maintained?**

Responding to this question is not simply an endeavour for international lawyers or international security scholars. Instead, it requires a deep understanding of the range of challenges that need to be considered alongside an understanding of the international politics and existing global governance architecture. Hence, there is a need to invest time in bringing a range of scholars from multiple disciplines to collaborate on this project. Consideration also needs to be given to the actors responsible for governance in the ocean which is often performed by non-state actors such as private security firms, insurance companies and large fishing corporations. This form of governance does not lend itself to oversight of multilateral conventions, the protection of the environment or human rights.

Empirical topics considered relevant include:

- climate change and climate science;
- environmental pollution (including data collection, management and sharing);
- food insecurity;
- corporatism;

- resource pillaging;
- human rights abuses and non-traditional security threats;
- crime and terrorist activity.

This project will produce three workshops: one in St Andrews (April 2022), one in Leiden (July 2022), and one in London (November 2022). These events will be in hybrid format to maximise the range of academic and practitioner inputs. The final project outcome will be an interdisciplinary edited collection on Ocean Governance (edited by Newby and Jones).

For the initial workshop in St Andrews on April 7th and 8th, you will be required to provide an outline of an argument or piece of research related to the topic of Ocean governance. Contributions at this stage should be a maximum of 5000 words and should be in the form of a working paper. Please submit an abstract (maximum of 200 words) to Cath Jones, on CMJ20@st-andrews.ac.uk, before 5pm (GMT) January 10th 2022. In your submission please indicate if you would like to contribute in person or online.

We actively encourage participation from a wide range of disciplines and backgrounds, as a result, please let us know if you have any access needs (in either format – in person or online). Similarly, if your research in this area has been affected due to COVID or other challenges and you would like to contribute but may find it hard to produce a working paper in this time frame, please let us know in your email of your interest, we will try and work to find solutions.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Cath Jones (cmj20@st-andrews.ac.uk) and / or Vanessa Newby (v.f.newby@fgga.leidenuniv.nl)

Bibliography:

Bueger, Christian, and Timothy Edmunds. 2017. "Beyond Seablindness: A New Agenda for Maritime Security Studies." *International Affairs* 93 (6): 1293–1311.