



**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands

Call for abstracts

H2OLAW

Law-Science Interfaces within the Law of the Sea and Fresh Water Law

26-27 September 2024

We are pleased to invite abstracts for the conference 'H2OLAW – Law-Science Interfaces within the Law of the Sea and Fresh Water Law' hosted by the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, Leiden University. The conference will take place on 26-27 September 2024 at Leiden University in the Netherlands. This event will mark the start of a multi-year research project led by Dr. Hilde Woker and Dr. Jason Rudall, funded by a Dutch government starting grant.

Both the law of the sea and fresh water law are characterized by important law-science interfaces. For example, scientific information is critical to determining thresholds of environmental harm and managing the equitable division of resources. Legal frameworks must respond to new scientific and technological developments in order to remain just and relevant. In practice, however, the encounter between law and science presents many challenges given the apparently incommensurable characteristics of law and science. While law typically favours certainty, stability and predictability, science often catalyses innovation and change. Yet, as the realities of our world evolve and we are faced with new challenges, both law and science will likely play an increasingly significant role in how our natural and human environments are governed.

Although both the law of the sea and fresh water law regulate the use and protection of water bodies that are ecologically connected, and whose law-science interfaces have regularly faced analogous challenges, they are rarely analysed or researched together. They have traditionally developed as two distinct legal regimes: the law of the sea is predominantly codified in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), while the 1997 United Nations Watercourse Convention is central to fresh water law. However, many synergies exist. Salt water and fresh water both provide essential natural resources, each are used for navigational and commercial purposes, and both are threatened by climate change, pollution and declining biodiversity. Too often, efforts at regulating the environment have been through artificial disciplinary silos, ignoring the natural architecture of our environment and inhibiting transdisciplinary stakeholder engagement.

The purpose of this conference is to bring together researchers from both fresh water law and the law of the sea to examine cross-cutting issues concerning law-science interfaces in both disciplines. We also aim to create a platform for exchange, collaboration and integration with respect to common law-science interface challenges in salt and fresh water governance.

We are honoured that Judge Tomas Heidar, President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), will deliver the keynote address.

We welcome abstracts on any of the following issues, or other issues related to law-science interfaces within the law of the sea and/or fresh water law:

- Marine pollution
- Climate change
- The protection, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity
- Access to and exploitation of natural resources
- Delimitation and implementation of boundaries

- Fisheries management
- Ecosystem approach
- Precautionary principle
- Environmental impact assessments
- Procedural obligations (e.g. the duty to consult/notify)
- Dispute settlement

Selected speakers may be invited to contribute to an edited volume at a later stage in the project. Further information on this will be shared at and after the conference.

The conference will be free of charge, with catering and a conference dinner offered for all speakers. However, selected speakers and participants will need to cover their own expenses for travel and accommodation.

Submission guidelines:

- Abstracts should be max. 300 words. The title of the presentation, the name and affiliation of the speaker(s), and contact information should also be indicated on the abstract.
- For the purposes of allocating speakers to panels, please indicate in your submission the predominant perspective taken (e.g. law of the sea, fresh water law, both, etc.).
- Submissions should be sent to H2OLAW@law.leidenuniv.nl with the subject line: “H2OLAW Conference 2024 – Abstract Submission”.
- The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 31 March 2024.

For inquiries, please contact Dr. Hilde Woker and Dr. Jason Rudall at H2OLAW@law.leidenuniv.nl.