

Institute for Social Sciences Research (ISSR)
INTERDISCIPLINARY INCUBATOR GRANT FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Project April 2021 – July 2021

Report completion by January 2022

NAME OF AWARDEE(S):	DR CLAIRE METHVEN O'BRIEN
LIST of collaborator(s):	N/A
SCHOOL/DISCIPLINE:	SCHOOL OF LAW

TITLE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY INCUBATOR GRANT PROJECT

Business and human rights: exploring the potential and challenges of a UN framework convention

END PROJECT SUMMARY: Please provide detailed summary of project outcomes. (max 2 pages)

This project succeeded in delivering its key objectives of further developing and disseminating internationally an existing body of work the awardee to develop draft legal text and underlying theoretical rationales favouring a framework-style UN convention on business and human rights, in contradistinction the approach currently pursued within the process to draft a UN business and human rights treaty.

The outcomes delivered, in relation to the project's promised outputs, are as follows:

I. **THREE (3) interdisciplinary online seminars to explore strengths and weaknesses of a framework convention, drawing on other regulatory policy fields**

The project delivered **FIVE (5)** interdisciplinary International online seminars under the grant:

1. **Framework instruments and human rights treaties: insights from experience**

Wednesday 15 September 2021 12:00-13:30 BST, [View on YouTube](#)

Prof Barbara Koremenos (University of Michigan, USA), Dr Claire Charters (University of Auckland, New Zealand), Prof Shin-Ichi Ago (Ritsumeikan University, Japan), Dr Annalisa Savaresi (University of Eastern Finland, University of Stirling), Dr Jacques Hartmann (University of Dundee).

2. **A business and human rights framework treaty: contours and challenges**

Thursday 23 September 2021, 12:00-13:30 BST, [View on YouTube](#)

Prof Peter Muchlinski (SOAS, University of London), Dr Eva Jueptner (University of Dundee), Dr Alex Ansong (Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration), Prof Dr Markus Krajewski (FAU, Germany), Dr Nicholas Bueno (UniDistance Suisse, Switzerland), Prof. Olga Martin-Ortega (University of Greenwich, UK) and Prof Humberto Cantú Rivera (University of Monterrey, Mexico).

3. **Supporting the operation of a framework treaty in practice**

Thursday 30 September 2021, 14:00-15:30 BST, [View on YouTube](#)

Professor Başak Çalı (Hertie School, Berlin), Professor Erika George (University of Utah), Dr Anja Mihr (Center on Governance through Human Rights, Berlin), Dr Tom Pegram (University College London) and Dr Michael Riegner (Humboldt University Berlin).

4. **Business and human rights: governance challenges in an era of transition**

Wednesday 6 October 2021, 12:00-13:30, [View on YouTube](#)

Professor Lorna McGregor (University of Essex), Professor Morris Altman (University of Dundee), Dr Axel Marx (University of Leuven), Professor Brigit Toebes (University of

Groningen) and Dr Gale Raj-Reichert (Bard College Berlin).

5. Links to the business and human rights governance constellation

Thursday 14 October 2021, 14:00–15:30, [View on YouTube](#)

Professor Larry Catá Backer (Pennsylvania State University), Professor Dorothee Baumann-Pauly (University of Geneva), Dr David Birchall (London South Bank University), Dr Jernej Letnar Černič (Nova Univerza, Slovenia), Dr Sorcha McLeod (University of Copenhagen) and Dr Miho Taka (Coventry University).

The online seminar series drew a total of 194 participants from academia, government, business, civil society organisations and international agencies, as well as students, representing all world regions (Europe, Africa, Americas, Asia-Pacific). Full gender balance was achieved across the speaker cohort.

II. Dissemination of outputs (blog, publicly available videos of the three seminars).

All seminars were recorded and posted on a newly established [YouTub channel](#) with 130 viewings to date. A [University of Dundee Business and Human Rights Network webpage](#) was established.

The seminar series prompted a new collaboration between Dr Methven O'Brien, Dr Michael Reigner and [Völkerrechtsblog](#) towards an online symposium around Dr Methven O'Brien's framework treaty model that is currently in production (26 abstracts received) to be published Q2 2022 which will lead in turn to a Special Issue of [World Comparative Law \(VRÜ/WCL\)](#) to be produced during 2022.

III. Interdisciplinary application for research grant on business and human rights regulation.

Under the grant Dr Methven O'Brien initiated collaboration with the University of St. Andrews and University of Luxembourg to develop an ESRC large grant application, with a view to submission in 2022.

IV. Interdisciplinary literature review on framework conventions.

A draft literature review was completed during the term of the grant which will inform the development of further scholarly publications by Dr Methven O'Brien on her framework treaty proposal in 2022.

FINAL REMARKS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE SUCCESSES OF THE PROJECT, AND AN HONEST REFLECTION ON ANY CHALLENGES FACED.

Successes: The seminar series significantly raised the profile, interdisciplinary scholarly and stakeholder engagement with the framework treaty texts and proposals and is leading to wider scholarly debate and inquiry regarding its relative strengths and challenges internationally. In October 2021, the US, Japan, EU and Canada voiced diplomatic support for a framework-style UN business and human rights treaty, in line with Dr. Methven O'Brien's advocated approach. In addition, funded activities highlighted the new LLM Business and Human Rights programme, law and human rights courses and research more widely.

Challenges: Issues with speaker availability entailed pushing the seminar schedule from summer to autumn 2021. Organising 5 seminars was demanding for the grant holder and research assistant.

ANY ADDITIONAL FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES PLANNED RELATING TO THE PROJECT.

Online symposium on [Völkerrechtsblog](#) in Q1 2022; Special Issue of [World Comparative Law \(VRÜ/WCL\)](#) In 2022/23; Verfassungsblog symposium (2022); One (1) online international seminar in 2022; Dr Methven O'Brien invited talks University of Kyoto, May 2022, Japanese BHR Law Network, March 2022.

