



SUPPORTING THE WORK OF UNIDROIT

Annual Report 2023

Introduction

This document summarises the activities of the UNIDROIT Foundation in the year 2023, divided into the two thematic categories represented in the graph below.



A. Economic Development

The UNIDROIT Foundation supports three substantive projects, which are conducted under the auspices of the [Cape Town Convention Academic Project](#) (CTCAP), a joint partnership between UNIDROIT and the University of Cambridge, with the Aviation Working Group (AWG) as the Founding Sponsor.

1. [Best Practices in Electronic Registry Design and Operations](#)

The Best Practices in Electronic Registry Design and Operations (BPER) Project, sponsored by **Aviareto**, identifies policy and technical best practices in the design and implementation of electronic registries. In 2021, the first guide developed through the BPER Project was launched: the [Guide on Best Practices for Electronic Collateral Registries](#).¹ The Project's focus then switched to developing best practices for electronic business registries.

To this end, in September 2022, a sixth Workshop for the BPER Project was hosted by the University of Cambridge and featured a review of a preliminary structure for the future Guide on Electronic Business Registries, as well as discussions on questions of scope and differences between business registries and collateral registries. Furthermore, the Workshop examined Critical Performance Factors for business registries, benefited from input from international organisations and practitioners, and drew comparisons with other international instruments in this area.

No project workshop was held in 2023.²

2. [Economic Assessment of International Commercial Law Reform](#)

The Economic Assessment of International Commercial Law Reform (EA) Project started in 2015 and aims at producing guidance on how to evaluate the economic impact of international commercial law reforms. To this end, the project group developed five variables, covering (i) the direct impact of the new rules, (ii) the

¹ The Guide can be accessed free of charge electronically and purchased in hard copy here: <https://ctcap.org/best-practices-in-the-field-of-electronic-registry-design-and-operation/>.

² The seventh Workshop for the BPER Project took place between 13-14 February 2024 at the premises of UNIDROIT in Rome.

impact of the new rules as a network, (iii) the systemic (indirect) impact of the law reform, (iv) the effective application of the new rules, and (v) the cost of creating and transitioning to the new rules.

In 2022, two Workshops were held for the EA project. On 10 March 2022, a small group of experts discussed a preliminary draft Guide to the Framework on the Economic Assessment of International Commercial Law Reform prepared by the Secretariat based on the information and experiences gathered during the previous sessions and additional research. On 15 September 2022, the eighth Workshop for the EA Project took place in Cambridge and online. The Workshop was attended by 20 experts with diverse backgrounds and benefited from presentations on ex-ante regulatory assessments given by representatives of the OECD and the European Commission. After these presentations, the discussion moved to specific aspects of the Framework, with introductory remarks by Professor Oren Sussman (University of Oxford). Aspects considered by the project group included the scoring system for the variables, distributional effects, social and environmental impact, and the confidence level of economic impact assessments. In addition, the group discussed a case study on a hypothetical ex-ante economic assessment concerning a possible Maritime Protocol to the Cape Town Convention.

No project workshop was held in 2023.³

3. Implementation of and Compliance with International Commercial Law Treaties

Following the approval by the Board of Governors at its 28th session in May 2023, a new project commenced on the Implementation of and Compliance with International Commercial Law Treaties (Treaty Project). In 2023, the Project received a first donation of \$ 15,000 from the **Aviation Working Group**.

The purpose of the Treaty Project is to offer guidance on best practices to facilitate implementation and compliance in relation to international commercial law treaties. The Project aims at identifying and helping to address the complexities and challenges associated with implementation and compliance. Drawing on the experience gained through the Cape Town Convention and other international treaties, the Project seeks to enable UNIDROIT and other organisations facilitate the implementation of and compliance with their international commercial law treaties. No project workshop was held in 2023.⁴

B. Education and Research

The Foundation's work on Education and Research includes efforts towards supporting the UNIDROIT Library, the UNIDROIT Internship and Research Scholarship Programme, and promoting UNIDROIT instruments.

1. Library Project

In August 2022, the Foundation concluded an agreement with the Dutch "Stichting Largesse" concerning a substantial donation (€200,000) of the latter to the UNIDROIT Foundation for the Library Project. The Library Project consists of: (i) expanding the UNIDROIT Library by renovating and transforming storage spaces into a Library Annexe, (ii) purchasing up-to-date legal literature, and (iii) digitising priority sections of the Library's collection.

In 2023, a contractor was selected to carry out the renovation works for the expansion of the Library. The renovation works started in January 2023 and the new Library spaces were ready in the summer of 2023. In line with the Project Plan, the donation of foundation Largesse is also used to purchase new books and e-books, and to digitise parts of the Library collection.

³ The ninth Workshop for the EA Project took place between 14-15 February 2024 at the seat of UNIDROIT in Rome.

⁴ A Planning Session for the Treaty Project took place on 15 February 2024 at the seat of UNIDROIT in Rome.

2. UNIDROIT Alumni Association

The [UNIDROIT Alumni Association](#) was founded in 2020 as a platform for the distinguished guests who have been welcomed to UNIDROIT as part of its research scholarship, internship, and independent research programmes since 1993. The Association provides alumni an opportunity to network on a global scale and keep up to date with UNIDROIT news and events from across the world.

Members of the Association receive a range of benefits, including newsletters with updates on the activities of UNIDROIT, notifications about upcoming events and conferences organised by UNIDROIT and its partners in different parts of the world, and access to closed groups on Facebook and LinkedIn where they can communicate with other members of the Association, as well as with members of the UNIDROIT Secretariat.

The annual membership fee for the Association is 50 Euros for lawyers, jurists, academics, and others, and 25 Euros for young professionals and students (under the age of 35). Proceeds from the Association go towards supporting the UNIDROIT Internship and Research Scholarship Programme.

As of December 2023, the UNIDROIT Alumni Association had 80 active members, which is a decrease compared to December 2022 (140 members). Such decrease was the result of stricter controls on payment of the annual membership fee.

3. UNIDROIT Scholarship and Internship Programme

Since its establishment, the Foundation has donated over €280,000 to UNIDROIT in support of its Research Scholarship and Internship Programme. This has largely been raised through the royalties received from the Official Commentaries to the Cape Town Convention and its Protocols by Sir Roy Goode, which he graciously donated to the Foundation.

In February 2023, the UNIDROIT Foundation received a sum of €7,620 from **Aston University** (United Kingdom) to fund a Research Assistant (Ms Ricci Appling) to conduct research on the implementation of the Cape Town Convention and its Protocols in Africa, for a period of six months. This sum was donated to UNIDROIT in March 2023.

In March 2023, the Foundation donated €8,000 from its General funds to support UNIDROIT's Scholarship and Internship Programme in 2023.

End-2023, the Foundation concluded a new agreement with law firm **MadrugaBTW** (Brazil) to facilitate a Scholarship for a researcher in 2024. The agreement with MadrugaBTW (which includes a donation of €5,000) will provide an opportunity to a Brazilian individual to conduct research for two months at UNIDROIT's premises in Rome. To this end, a [Call for Applications](#) was published in December 2023.

4. Promotion of UNIDROIT instruments

With support from the [International Law Institute](#), the Foundation facilitated an [Essay Competition](#) in 2022 on UNIDROIT and Sustainable Development. Interested individuals were invited to submit an essay in English between 2000 and 3000 words, examining how UNIDROIT instruments can contribute towards sustainable development and help countries achieve their targets for the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

The competition received over 50 contributions. The top five essays were presented by the authors at [a webinar on 28 August 2023](#), and the top-three winners received prize money.

C. Other matters

In 2023, the Board of Governors of the UNIDROIT Foundation met for its 28th session on 9 May 2023. During that meeting, the Board approved the Foundation's (i) Annual Report for 2022, (ii) Annual Accounts for 2022, (iii) Policy Plan for 2024, and (iv) Budget for 2023. The Board also discussed the Foundation's activities since the 27th session in June 2022 and took note of an update on UNIDROIT's activities.

No changes took place in the composition of the Board of Governors in 2023. Mr Marco Nicoli stepped down from his role as advisor to the UNIDROIT Foundation. For information on the current members of the Board, please see the [UNIDROIT Foundation webpage](#).

The poster is titled "LIVE WEBINAR" and "UNIDROIT Instruments and Sustainable Development" for "28 August 2023". It lists the following agenda items:

- 13.00 – 13.05 | Opening remarks by Prof. Maria Chiara Malaguti, President of UNIDROIT
- 13.05 – 13.10 | Opening remarks by Prof. Don Wallace, Chairman of the International Law Institute
- 13.10 – 14.15 | Panel Discussion and Q&A Session moderated by Prof. Anna Veneziano, Deputy Secretary-General of UNIDROIT
- 14.15 – 14.30 | Closing remarks by Prof. Ignacio Tirado, Secretary-General of UNIDROIT

Below the agenda, it states: "Panel Discussion with the participation of the 5 winners of the UNIDROIT Essay Competition supported by the International Law Institute (ILI) and facilitated by the UNIDROIT Foundation".

The winners are listed with their photos and names:

- Ekaterina Pimobakker, Assistant Professor, Eindhoven University of Technology (Netherlands)
- Joel Lee, Government Counsel, Department of Justice, HKSAR Government
- Nicholas Houtelot, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Bremen (Germany)
- James Patrick Chang, Juris Doctor, (California, U.S.A)
- Claudia Nyon Syn Yee, Advocate & Solicitor, Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)

A QR code is provided for registration.

**The UNIDROIT Foundation would like to thank its 2023 donors
for their support:**

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