



SINGAPORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURES INITIATIVE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Centre for
Commercial Law
in Asia



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Highlights of the research programme

The Singapore Sustainable Futures Initiative (SSFI) was established in November 2024 and entered full operation in 2025. SSFI is one of the core initiatives of the Centre for Commercial Law in Asia (CCLA) within the Yong Pung How School of Law (YPHSL) at Singapore Management University (SMU). This is the first annual report of the initiative in what was a highly successful inaugural year of research outputs and societal impact.

The SSFI aims to drive transformative change through futures-focused, interdisciplinary legal research that offers cutting-edge solutions to sustainability challenges. The Initiative is built upon key faculty expertise across international environmental law, biodiversity conservation law and the law of the sea. It also brings together other area of expertise from SMU Yong Pung How School of Law such as financial law, tort and contract law, and international economic and trade law. The SSFI aims to become a heartbeat for sustainability law research, with a global network from a wide range of disciplines and institutions.

The SSFI leads the Asia-Pacific Research Alliance on Law and Sustainability, a consortium that includes SMU, the University of Sydney, the University of Hong Kong and the University of Indonesia. Following successful ‘Law and Sustainability’ conferences at SMU (2023) and the University of Sydney (2024), the Research Alliance’s Flagship Conference was hosted in 2025 by the University of Hong Kong’s Faculty of Law. The next conference of the Alliance has been announced for July 2027 to be held at the Faculty of Law, University of Indonesia.

The research output of the SSFI in 2025 includes an edited book published by Routledge, *The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis* (lead edited by Associate Professor Nengye Liu), alongside peer-reviewed scholarship in top ranked international journals (see full list on page 5). 2025 also brought a number of research achievements for the SSFI, including:

- In December 2025, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) favourably evaluated SMU’s application to establish a **UNESCO Chair in Sustainability Law Futures**, with Associate Professor Michelle Lim, a core member of SSFI, as chairholder. The UNESCO Chair will advance futures-oriented approaches in sustainability law, develop and disseminate innovative pedagogies, and support law and policy makers in adopting futures approaches, with particular attention to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in Asia-Pacific island nations.
- SSFI’s work has earned strong policy recognition by national government and international organizations. Associate Professor Nengye Liu was nominated by **Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs** as Singapore’s expert speaker at the **13th Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum** (ASEAN 11 + Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States of America) and a member of Singapore Delegation at the 15th ASEAN Maritime Forum in Malaysia in September 2025. Prof Liu was also invited by the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime** to attend Maritime Expert Group Meeting on Effective Law Enforcement in the High Seas at the University of Vienna, Austria in June 2025.



- SSFI has strengthened its international profile in polar and maritime governance. Associate Professor Nengye Liu convened the **plenary panel “Asia and International Polar Law”** at the **18th Polar Law Symposium** in Nuuk, **Greenland** in October 2025, which attracted 150+ participants from across the globe. The SSFI has also been chosen to host the **20th Polar Law Symposium** at SMU Yong Pung How School of Law in **November 2027**. This will be the first time for the Polar Law Symposium to be held in a tropical country and Southeast Asia.



- SSFI has secured competitive external funding to convene global dialogue in Singapore. In November 2025, Associate Professor Nengye Liu was awarded a grant by **the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada** and will host the **1st Asia–Canada Arctic Dialogue** at SMU CCLA on 27-28 April 2026, together with Professor Suzanne Lalonde (University of Montreal).
- SSFI has received competitive funding from **the Korea Foundation** in a project led by Associate Professor Nengye Liu, entitled “Korea and the Antarctic Treaty System in a changing world order”. Associate Professor Liu will work with co-investigators Dr. Hyoung Chul Shin (President of Korea Polar Research Institute) and Associate Professor Cassandra Brooks (Department of Environmental Studies, University of Colorado Boulder) to deliver this project through 2026.
- SSFI is also driving applied, campus-linked sustainability initiatives. Associate Professor Michelle Lim, Dr Patrick Shi and Pam Wan were awarded \$170,000 from the **Singapore Ministry of Sustainability and Environment’s SG EcoFund** to establish a Nature–Food Futures Learning Precinct at SMU, as a hub for hands-on learning and research on native edible plants aligned with Singapore’s Green Plan Food and Nature goals.



SSFI Publications, Events & Global Impact

SSFI 2025 Key Publications and Presentations

Book

Nengye Liu and Shirley V. Scott (eds), *The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis* (2025, **Routledge**).

Book Chapters

- Nengye Liu, “Marine Living Resources” in D Rothwell et al., (eds.) *Elgar Concise Encyclopedia of Polar Law* (2025, Edward Elgar) 304-306.
- Ethan Beringen, “International fisheries as the “whale in the room” at the negotiations for a new instrument for Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction” in N Liu and S Scott (eds), *The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis* (2025, Routledge) 108-141.
- Ethan Beringen and Nengye Liu, “Is international law fit for purpose for the green shipping transition?” in N Liu and S Scott (eds), *The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis* (2025, Routledge) 171-196.

Journal Articles

- Nengye Liu and Shirley V. Scott, “China in the UNCLOS and BBNJ negotiations, yesterday once more?” (2025)38(2) ***Leiden Journal of International Law*** 168-187
- Ethan Beringen, “Exploring the potential for inter-regime learning between the BBNJ Agreement and the Global Plastics Treaty” (2025) 56(3) ***Ocean Development and International Law*** 255-289
- Madeline Taylor, Vladimir Strezov, Rohan Best, Jordie Pettit, Hannah Hyunah Cho, Mara Hammerle, and Ethan Beringen, “Offshore renewable hydrogen potential in Australia: A techno-economic and legal review” (2025) 152 ***International Journal of Hydrogen Energy*** 149923
- Adeline Chong and Stefanie Schacherer, “Extra-territorial liability and enforcement: Finding ways to tackle haze pollution in Southeast Asia” (2025) 2(2) ***Chinese Journal of Transnational Law***
- Shirley V. Scott and Nengye Liu, “The prospects of the High Seas Treaty decisively reducing the negative biodiversity impacts of distant-water fishing operations” (2025) 74(S1) ***International and Comparative Law Quarterly*** 255-266

Selected Presentations

- Nengye Liu, “Asia Countries and Futures of the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement”, Observer States Seminar, 10th Arctic Partnership Week, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea & Korea Maritime Institute, **Busan**, 10 December (invited speaker, funded by conference organizers)
- Nengye Liu, Roundtable on Implications of the BBNJ Agreement in the Arctic, CIL-NCLOS Workshop Arctic Governance: Contemporary Trends in Shipping, Environment and Security, NUS Centre for International Law, **Singapore**, 19 November (invited speaker)

- Nengye Liu, “International Law in the New Era: Bridging Practice and Research”, American Society of International Law Interest Group Engagement Session, Singapore Management University Yong Pung How School of Law, 2 September
- Nengye Liu & Ethan Beringen, “Plasti-City: Asian Ocean Cities and the International Law on Marine Plastic Pollution”, 3rd SMU-Sydney-HKU Law & Sustainability Conference, Legal Pathways to Sustainability Transition: Innovation and Resilience, Faculty of Law, The University of **Hong Kong**, China, 31 July – 1 August
- Nengye Liu, “Antarctic Governance upheld by the Treaty”, Kobe University Polar Cooperation Research Centre and Korea Polar Research Institute, **Milan**, Italy, 22 June
- Nengye Liu, “Small States, Polar Regions and International Law”, New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law, Auckland Law School, University of **Auckland**, New Zealand, 19 June
- Nengye Liu, “The Potential Role of BBNJ Agreement as a Cooperation and Coordination Framework with and among other IFBs”, BBNJ Symposium Satellite Workshop, Singapore, 20 February (invited speaker)
- Michelle Lim, ‘The Future is Futuring’ AgLaw Symposium 2025 - AgLaw at 20: Leadership, Legacy, and the Future of Agricultural Law, **Armidale**, Australia, 12 September 2025.
- Michelle Lim, Invited Distinguished Speaker, ‘The Role and Challenges of Environmental Law Pedagogy’ LAWASIA Environmental Law Committee’s fourth webinar on critical environmental legal issues, 13 June 2025 (virtual)
- Michelle Lim, Legal Prefiguration through Multispecies Stories – Playing in the Law Beyond the Anthropocene,’ 3rd SMU-Sydney-HKU Law & Sustainability Conference, Legal Pathways to Sustainability Transition: Innovation and Resilience, the Faculty of Law, University of Hong Kong, 31 July – 1 August 2025.



(Associate Professors Michelle Lim and Nengye Liu invited by Prof Caroline Forster, Director of New Zealand Centre for Environmental Law to teach and present their research at Auckland Law School, University of Auckland, June 2025)

SSFI 2025 Events & Global Impact

The Singapore Sustainable Futures Initiative has held a full program of events attracting international and local experts, industry leaders in sustainability law and governance to SMU. These events have helped to raise the profile of the SSFI and SMU Yong Pung How School of Law, fostered research collaboration, and led to high quality research outputs as well as societal impact.

SSFI's Core Member, **Associate Professor Michelle Lim** is **Co-Editor-in-Chief** of the **Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law (RECIEL)**, one of highest ranked journals in the field of environmental law (Impact Factor 2.3, Q1, A Journal on SMU YPHSL List). Prof Lim is also Faculty Advisor to SMU's **Environmental and Sustainability Law Students Club (ESLC)**. Meanwhile, SSFI Director, Associate Professor Liu Nengye is Co-Chair of the **American Society of International Law's Law of the Sea Interest Group** and a member of the **International Law Association Committee on Urbanisation and International Law**.

SPECIAL ISSUES



Law in a hyperconnected world: Joining the dots for sustainable futures

Issue edited by: Michelle Lim, Nengye Liu, Stefanie Schacherer

Pages: 153-341

First Published: July 2024

Journal: Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law: Volume 33, Issue 2

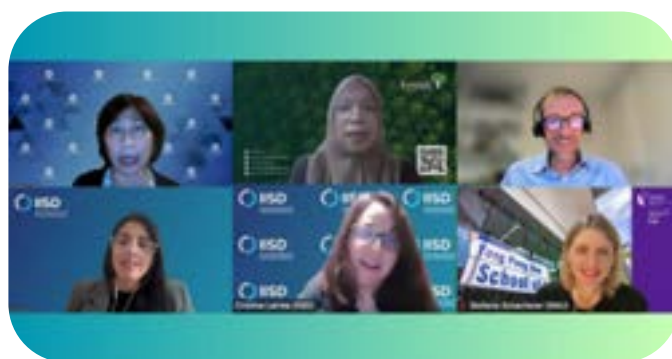
Seminar: The EU Deforestation Regulation and WTO Law

- Date: 13 February 2025
- Speakers: Ben Czapnik (Monash University), Henry Gao (SMU)
- Chaired by Assistant Professor Stefanie Schacherer (SMU)



Webinar - Implementing the European Union Deforestation Regulation: Perspectives from Southeast Asia

- Date: 25 February 2025
- Speakers: Surina Ismail (Chief Sustainability Officer, Group Sustainability, IOI Corporation), Berhad Nicolas Lockhart (Partner, Sidley Austin), Rukaiyah Rafik (Head of Secretariat, Yayasan FORTASBI Indonesia), Florencia Sarmiento (Policy Advisor, International Institute for Sustainable Development)
- Chaired by Cristina Larrea (Director, Agriculture, Food and Sustainability Initiatives, IISD), Assistant Professor Stefanie Schacherer (SMU)



The Role of Law in Advancing Climate Action and Biodiversity Protection — Perspectives from Academia, Policymaking, and Legal Practice

- Date: 21 March 2025
- Speakers: Professor Liz Fisher (Professor of Environmental Law, Faculty of Law, Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford), Dr Lena Chan (Biodiversity Conservationist), Dr Joseph Chun (Partner Shook Lin & Bok), Dan Perera (Partner HFW), Tiong Teck Wee (Partner, Wong Partnership)
- Chaired by Krystal Tan (President, SMU Environment and Sustainability Law Club) and Ng Xin Yu (Vice President, SMU Environment and Sustainability Law Student Club)



Workshops by Professor Liz Fisher: Crafting and Writing Legal Scholarship and Getting Published

- Date: 26 March and 4 April 2025
- Speaker: Professor Liz Fisher (Professor of Environmental Law, Faculty of Law, Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford)



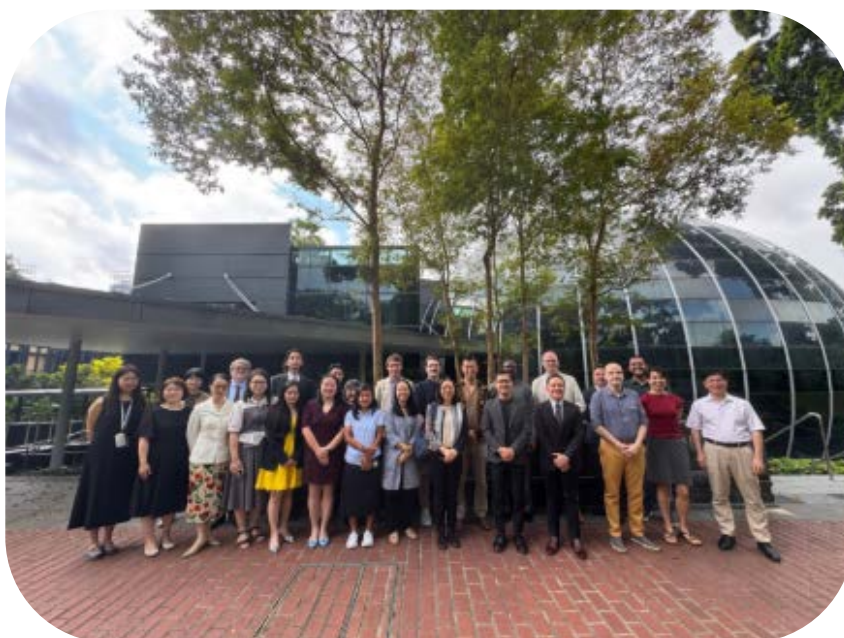
The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis: In Conversation with the Authors

- Date: 7 April 2025
- Speakers & Authors: Associate Professor Nengye Liu (SMU), Professor Shirley Scott (University of New South Wales Canberra), Dr Gabriela Argüello (Associate Senior Lecturer, University of Gothenburg), Professor David Leary (University of Technology Sydney), Dr Kristine Elfrida Dalaker (Lecturer, University of Wollongong), Professor Carina Costa de Oliveira (University of Brasilia), Associate Professor Ana Flávia Barros-Platiau (University of Brasilia), Rebecca Prentiss Pskowski (PhD Fellow, World Maritime University)
- Chaired by: Dr Ethan Beringen (Yong Pung How Research Fellow, SMU)



SMU-Fudan Workshop “Asian Cities and the International Legal Order”

- Date: 10-11th July 2025
- Hosted by: Associate Professor Nengye Liu (SMU), supported by Yong Pung How Fellowship, Fudan University School of Law, SMU Urban Institute and International Law Association (ILA)
- Organizing Committee: Professor Cai Congyan (Fudan University), Professor Helmut Aust (Free University Berlin, Co-Chair ILA Committee on Urbanisation and International Law), Professor Orlando Woods (Director, Singapore Management University Urban Institute) and Dr Ethan Beringen (Yong Pung How Fellow). Speakers were selected to represent Asia’s major cities, including, for example, Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Jakarta, Manila, Almaty, New Delhi, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok and Singapore



Asia-Pacific Research Alliance on Law and Sustainability (APRALS)- SMU-Sydney-HKU Law & Sustainability Conference Series: Legal Pathways to Sustainability Transition: Innovation and Resilience

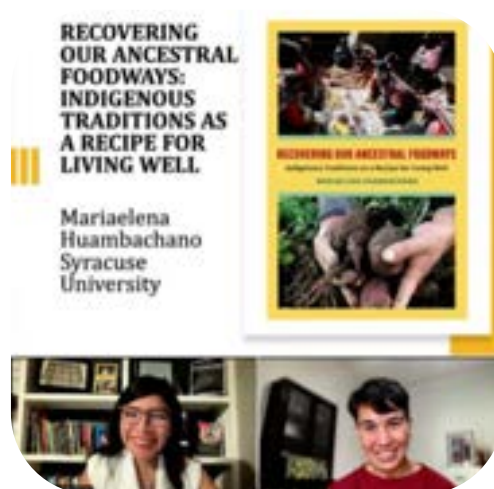
- Date: 31 July – 1 August 2025
- SMU Speakers: Dr Ethan Beringen, Associate Professors Nengye Liu and Michelle Lim (SMU), Assistant Professor Stefanie Schacherer
- Closing Address delivered by Associate Professor Nengye Liu, Founding Chair of the Steering Committee, Asia-Pacific Research Alliance on Law and Sustainability
- Hosted by: Philip K.H. Wong Centre for Chinese Law, The University of Hong Kong



(Steering Committee Members of Asia Pacific Research Alliance on Law & Sustainability: Profs Nengye Liu, Michelle Lim, Kate Owens (Sydney) and Xia Ying (HKU) at the 3rd Research Alliance Conference)

Recovering our Ancestral Foodways: Indigenous Traditions as a Recipe for Living Well: In Conversation with the Author

- Date: 28 August 2025
- Speaker: Associate Professor Mariaelena Huambachano (College of Arts and Sciences, University of Syracuse)
- Chaired by: Associate Professor Michelle Lim (SMU)



‘Reclaiming law at the Science-Law Interface’ Workshop

- Date: 8 September 2025
- Hosted by Australian Centre for Climate and Environmental Law, Sydney Law School, University of Sydney; co-hosted by SSFI.
- Co-organisers: ACCEL Director Kate Owens and Michelle Lim (SSFI)
- Participants included leading environmental law scholars (e.g. Professor Tim Stephens (USyd), Professor Nicole Graham (USyd), Dr Paul Govind (Macquarie), Associate Professor Julia Dehm (La Trobe) as well as authors and Chairs of IPBES and IPCC Assessments (e.g. Professor Winston Chow (SMU), Professor Lauren Rickards (La Trobe)).



SSFI Lunchtime Seminar - Arctic Governance is Dead. Long Live Arctic Governance!

- Date: 21 November 2025
- Speaker: Professor Vito De Lucia (The Arctic University of Norway)
- Chaired by: Associate Professor Nengye Liu (SMU)



The Law of the Sea Interest Group American Society of International Law Quarterly Webinar Series, co-sponsored by Rashtriya Raksha University and Singapore Management University

- Date: 6 November 2025 (Inaugural Webinar); Second Webinar 16 January 2026
- Invited Speakers include, for example, Ambassador Rena Lee (Singapore's Ambassador for International Law) and Prof Margaret Young (University of Melbourne)
- Co-organisers: Assoc. Prof Nengye Liu (SMU) and Prof Bimal Patel (Vice Chancellor of Rashtriya Raksha University, Indian Member of United Nations International Law Commission). The webinar has attracted global attention with 140+ registrations each and was livestreamed by American Society of International Law YouTube Channel

The Evolving Climate Jurisprudence under UNCLOS through International Institutions

Co-sponsored by the Law of the Sea Interest Group of the American Society of International Law, Rashtriya Raksha University and Singapore Management University

Thursday, November 6, 2025
9:00 AM - 10:30 AM EDT
Via Zoom

Climate change has caused substantial and increasingly irreversible damage to terrestrial, freshwater, cryospheric, and coastal ecosystems. Approximately 3.3 to 3.6 billion people live in highly vulnerable contexts, where human and ecosystem vulnerability are closely linked. Regions with significant development constraints face elevated exposure to climatic hazards. Increasing extreme weather events have afflicted millions, reducing food and water security, with the greatest impacts in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, LDCs, Small Islands, the Arctic, and globally for Indigenous Peoples, small-scale food producers, and low-income households. Between 2010 and 2020, human mortality from floods, droughts, and storms was 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions compared to areas with very low vulnerability. Human activities, primarily greenhouse gas emissions, have unequivocally caused global warming, with global surface temperatures reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1990 levels in 2013-2020.

The International Law Commission, in its 76th Session Report (June 2025), addressed 'Sea Level Rise in Relation to International Law,' clarifying the UNCLOS framework on baselines, preservation of statehood, human dignity, and solidarity in responding to sea level rise. In light of intensifying climate impacts, vulnerable communities have engaged global institutions, including the I.L.C., the International Court of Justice, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, to develop climate jurisprudence. This webinar will explore the evolving climate jurisprudence under UNCLOS, focusing on advisory opinions on climate change, I.L.C. insights on sea level rise, and the role of global institutions regarding anthropogenic emissions and transboundary harm.

Speakers:

- Ximena Blaricón Osorio, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
- Bimal N. Patel, International Law Commission
- Margaret A. Young, The University of Melbourne

Moderator: Liu Nengye, Singapore Management University

Registration for this online webinar is free and open to the public. Register at www.asil.org/events

The Implications of the Entry into Force of the BBNJ Agreement to the World's Oceans

Co-sponsored by the Law of the Sea Interest Group of the American Society of International Law, Rashtriya Raksha University, and Singapore Management University

Friday, January 16, 2026
9:00-10:00 a.m. EST
Via Zoom

The Agreement under UNCLOS on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Asian Regional National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) represents the most significant development in global ocean governance in decades. Adopted on 19 June 2023 after nearly two decades of negotiations, the Agreement crossed the 60-ratification threshold in September 2023, triggering a 120-day countdown for its entry into force. In accordance with the treaty's entry-into-force clause, the Agreement is scheduled to enter into force on 17 January 2026. The BBNJ Agreement establishes an integrated framework for the marine genetic resources (MGRs) and fair and equitable benefit-sharing, area – based management tools (ABMTs), including marine protected areas (MPAs), environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for activities in the area beyond national jurisdictions (ABNJ), and the capacity building and transfer of marine technology for developing states. As the international community and states move from negotiation to implementation, urgent questions emerge about institutional readiness, operationalization of the clearing-house mechanism (CHM), coordination with existing sectoral bodies (including RFMOs and the ISA), and the treaty's practical implications for polar and regional ocean governance. In this regard, the second webinar under the quarterly webinar series of ASIL – LOSIG – RRI – SME will explore the following aspects: The legal and institutional transition of BBNJ agreement from adoption to effective implementation; Interaction with the existing ocean governance regime and implications for future rule – making processes in the high seas. Most importantly, BBNJ agreement impact on the polar governance in the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Panelists:

- Amb. Rena Lee, Singapore's Ambassador for International Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Vito de Lucio, Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea (NCLOS), UVI-Arctic University of Norway
- Carolina Costa de Oliveira, Faculty of Law, University of Brasília
- Liu Nengye, Singapore Management University, Yung Pung How School of Law

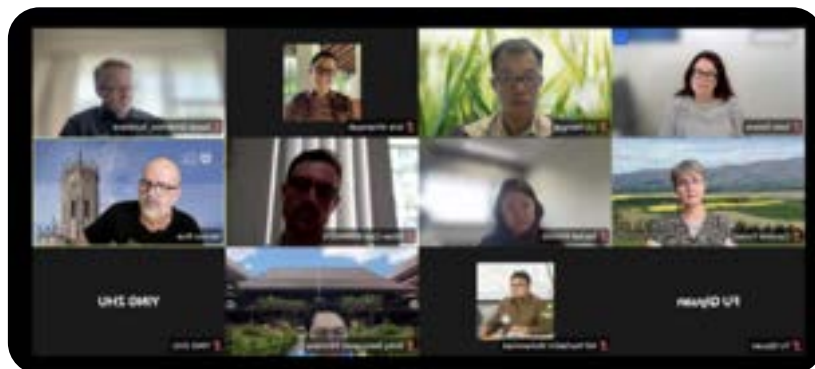
Moderator: Bimal N. Patel, International Law Commission (Moderator)

Registration for this online webinar is free and open to the public. Register at www.asil.org/events



1st Asia Pacific Research Alliance on Law and Sustainability Horizon Scanning

- Date: 8th December 2025
- Speakers from SMU, University of Sydney, University of Hong Kong and the University of Indonesia, and joined by colleagues from the University of Auckland
- Chaired by: Associate Professor Nengye Liu (SMU)



SMU CCLA- NUS CIL Distinguished Lecture by Judge Tomas Heidar: Complementarity between Hamburg and The Hague: The Two Advisory Opinions on Climate Change

- Date: 26th of January 2026
- Speaker: Judge Tomas Heidar (President, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea)
- Chaired by: Associate Professor Nengye Liu (SMU) and Assistant Professor Tara Davenport (Co-head of Oceans Law and Policy at NUS Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore)



Social Media and Outreach

The SSFI has built a public profile due, in part, to efforts in social media promotion and outreach. The activities of the centre have been promoted on LinkedIn and Bluesky. Recordings of online webinars have also been published to the SSFI YouTube page, ensuring access for those who may not be able to make it to the event.

Overall, the SSFI social media pages have been successful in building an engaged following, particularly on LinkedIn, though also represent an area of potential growth in 2026. Currently the SSFI LinkedIn page has 249 followers while the dedicated LinkedIn page for the Asia Pacific Research Alliance on Law and Sustainability has 151. On Bluesky, the SSFI page has 71 followers. This is strong progress in just one year and can be attributed to the efforts of SSFI Research Assistants **Qiyuan Fu** and **Renee Ong** who have run these pages in 2025.

SSFI members have also engaged with traditional media in 2025, with SSFI Director Associate Professor Nengye Liu being quoted in stories in Wall Street Journal, Channel News Asia, Lianhe Zaobao and the South China Morning Post. Associate Professor Michelle Lim and Associate Professor Liu have also been featured in the SMU Highlights blog on the SMU website (see [A hands-on Approach to Sustainability Law](#))

SSFI social media pages are available here:

[SSFI LinkedIn](#)

[APRALS LinkedIn](#)

[SSFI Bluesky](#)

[SSFI YouTube](#)



SSFI Membership

SSFI membership is open to SMU faculty with an interest in sustainability law broadly conceived. It also has an affiliated Yong Pung How Postdoctoral Fellow who joined the SSFI in 2025. It receives strong administrative support from SMU Centre for Commercial Law in Asia (CCLA)'s admin team.

Founding Director

Associate Professor Nengye Liu

A/Prof Liu Nengye teaches and conducts research on international law and sustainability at SMU. A/Prof Liu is lead editor of three books: *"The European Union and the Arctic"* (Brill, 2017), *"Governing Marine Living Resources in the Polar Regions"* (Edward Elgar, 2019); *"The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis"* (Routledge, 2025); published 50+ refereed journal articles and book chapters in the fields of the law of the sea and international environmental law; and delivered 100+ presentations about his research findings across five continents. He sits on the editorial board of *Marine Policy*, *Ocean Development and International Law* and *Polar Record*. Prof Liu also serves as Co-Chair of American Society of International Law's Law of the Sea Interest Group and a Member of International Law Association Committee on Urbanization and International Law.



Members

Associate Professor Michelle Lim



Dr Michelle Lim is an Associate Professor in Law at Singapore Management University. A/Prof Lim is Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law and incoming UNESCO Chair in Sustainability Law Futures. She was a fellow on the Global Assessment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and an author of the IPBES/IPCC joint workshop report. A/Prof Lim was awarded the 2016/2017 Law Council of Australia Mahla Pearlman Australian Young Environmental Lawyer of the Year Award and the 2021 Law and Society Association of Australia and New Zealand publication prize for a published scholarly article or book chapter for the paper: "Extinction: hidden in plain sight–Can stories of 'the last' unearth environmental law's unspeakable truth?." Griffith Law Review. 1-32.

Assistant Professor Rachel Phang



Rachel Phang is an Assistant Professor of Law at Singapore Management University (SMU). Her research interests are in the areas of financial law and regulation, contract law and tort law. Asst Prof Phang received an LLB from the National University of Singapore in 2016, and an LLM from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2021. She was admitted as an advocate and solicitor in Singapore in 2017. Prior to joining SMU, Asst Prof Phang was a researcher at the National University of Singapore's Centre for Banking & Finance Law. She also previously practised as a lawyer from 2017 to 2020. Her experience in legal practice focused on financial services regulation, and covered legal and regulatory issues relating to banking, capital markets, payment services, insurance and fintech.

Assistant Professor Nicholas Liu

Nicholas Liu is an Assistant Professor of Law at Singapore Management University. Asst Prof Liu writes and teaches in the area of private law doctrine and jurisprudence, with a focus on the law of torts. Before joining SMU in 2019, he served as a Deputy Public Prosecutor in the Attorney General's Chambers, a Justices' Law Clerk at the Supreme Court, and a commercial disputes resolution lawyer at a leading Singaporean law firm. Asst Prof Liu draws on his diverse experiences in his teaching, emphasising the commercial, social, and philosophical context of the law and its role as a practical and principled response to recurring human problems



Assistant Professor Stefanie Schacherer

Stefanie Schacherer is Assistant Professor of Law at the Singapore Management University. Prior to joining SMU, she held positions as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for International Law, National University of Singapore, and at the World Trade Institute, University of Bern, Switzerland. Asst Prof Schacherer provided technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries and worked for governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the UN Conference on Trade and Development, the European External Action Service, the African Union and the International Institute for Sustainable Development.



Research Fellow

Dr Ethan Beringen

Ethan Beringen is a Yong Pung How Research Fellow at the Centre for Commercial Law in Asia at Singapore Management University and completed his PhD within the Centre for Environmental Law at Macquarie University in Sydney. He has also been a guest PhD Researcher at the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea at UiT the Arctic University of Norway. Ethan's research is focused on international environmental law, the law of the sea and international relations. Specifically, he is interested in the protection of marine biodiversity and the prevention of marine plastic pollution. He has published research on topics such as the negotiations for new biodiversity conservation and pollution prevention treaties, international fisheries law, Australia's ocean governance, regime interaction and middle power theory. Dr Beringen will join the School of Law, University of Queensland as a Lecturer in March 2026.



Research Assistants

Qiyuan Fu



Qiyuan Fu was a research assistant at the SSFI and a Teaching Assistant in the Sustainable Ocean Law and Governance course in 2025. She completed a Juris Doctor Degree at Singapore Management University in the same year. Qiyuan was a member of the World Champion team from SMU in the Phillip C Jessup International Moot Court Competition.

Renee Ong

Renee Ong was a research assistant with the SSFI (Dec 2024- July 2025). In 2025 Renee completed a Bachelor of Laws at Singapore Management University. During her time as a student at SMU she was a member of the SMU Negotiation and Mediation Club (Finance Director AY22-23), an Editor and Marketing Associate at SMU Lexicon and the Finance Director at the Student Chapter of the International Law Association Singapore Branch. Renee also served as a Teaching Assistant for several courses at SMU.



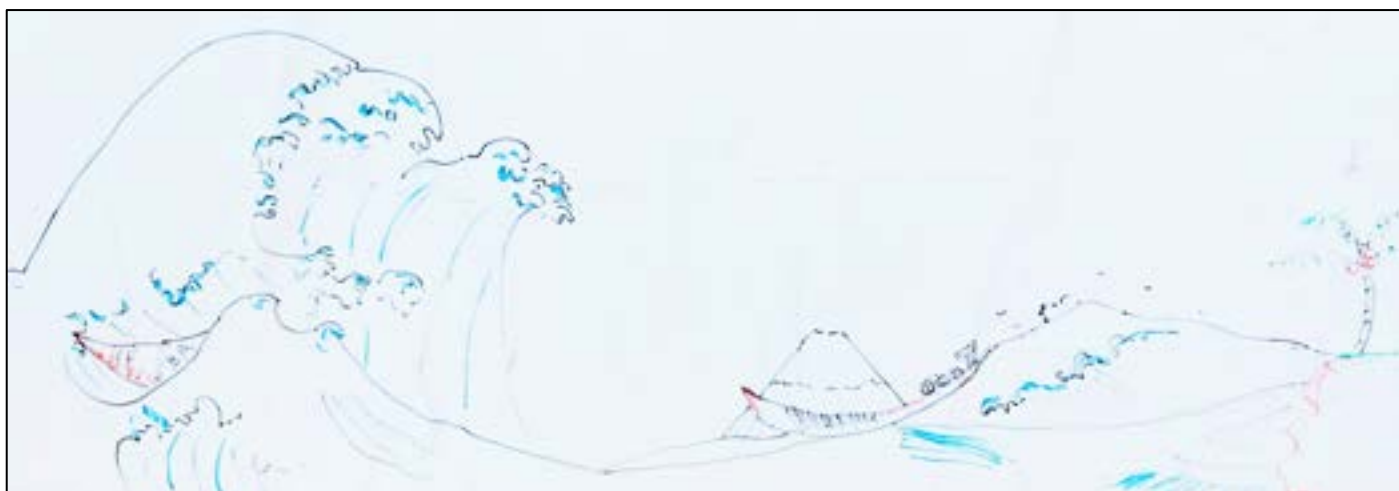
Looking Forward to 2026

In its first year of operations, the SSFI has established itself as a core sustainability law initiative in Singapore and a global heartbeat for law and sustainability research. 2026 is looking to be a year of accelerated growth for the Initiative. Embedded in a highly supportive academic ecosystem of SMU and the global urban hub of Singapore, the SSFI team plans to deliver a number of exciting projects and events in the coming year. SSFI is also fully aligning its strategy with SMU's Vision as a Global City University to drive innovations, transcend boundaries and transform lives.

SSFI will continue to nurture promising young scholars and change agents at home. We are also looking to recruit a second Yong Pung How Fellow, PhD candidates and Research Assistants. Meanwhile, SSFI continues to attract the best minds to Singapore to address sustainability challenges. For example, Associate Professor Nengye Liu will welcome Prof Helmut Aust (Free University of Berlin), Co-Chair of International Law Association Committee on Urbanisation and International Law to SMU as a Visiting Professor at SMU Urban Institute.

SSFI will consolidate and expand its partnerships with funders (e.g., Korea Foundation, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada), government bodies (e.g., Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Law), international organisations (e.g., ASEAN), academic associations (e.g., American Society of International Law) and civil society to act as a gateway for sustainability law and policy research between Asia and the world. For example, Prof Liu will serve as an Adviser of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) Delegation at the 48th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Hiroshima, Japan (11-21 May 2026). We very much look forward to the launch of Associate Professor Michelle Lim's UNESCO Chair in Sustainability Futures. Under Prof Lim's leadership the Sustainable Food Futures Project, funded by the Singapore Ministry of Sustainability and Environment's SG EcoFund will be in full swing. This project will establish a Nature-Food Futures Learning Precinct at SMU city campus, contributing to SMU's vision to transform lives and create sustainable futures.

These are just some of the many events and research projects beginning in 2026 for the SSFI. We aim to grow SSFI into a global leader in sustainability law research and teaching in the future.



(Picture credit, Michelle Lim, whiteboard markers on printer paper, After Hokusai, Based on 'The Great Wave Off Kanagawa')