

Borderlines

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NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mapping Boundaries



The 2025 IBRU
Training
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Programme

New IBRU
Online
courses



O U N T

EDITORIAL

Visualising and mapping boundaries in the GIS era

IBRU's former Director of Research Martin Pratt reflects on the impact of technological changes on international boundary mapping and analysis over the course of his career.

Early encounters

Like many geographers, I was first drawn to the discipline through a love of maps. As a teenage hiker I marvelled at how topographic maps could bring a landscape to life. And my parents' atlas was my window to the wider world and my first guide to international boundaries.

So when I started my undergraduate geography course at Durham in the late 1980s, I was excited to learn that we were required to take a cartography class. I'm not sure what I was expecting, but I was certainly surprised to discover that our tools were technical pens, tracing paper and a scalpel for erasing errors! I had never been much good at art, and it is fair to say that I was truly terrible at pen and ink cartography. I began to wonder whether geography was really for me.

The following year I picked a dissertation topic which required me to produce multiple maps of electoral districts in the city in which I lived. My supervisor suggested I should talk to a colleague who had just developed a Geographical Information System mapping tool which might save me a lot of work. I had no idea what GIS was, but I was willing to try anything that spared me the torture of trying to draw the maps by hand. I wouldn't say it was fun entering all the statistical data without a graphical interface to help me visualise what I was doing, but when I eventually pressed 'plot' and a perfect map gradually appeared, it was a genuine epiphany. I was hooked.

Boundary applications

Like all computer-based fields, GIS has evolved at an astonishing pace, and the resources and tools available to people interested in international boundaries today would have made my jaw drop when I started out at IBRU in 1994. For example, tools such as CARIS LOTS and GEOCAP's Maritime Limits and Boundaries for ArcGIS have transformed the way technical experts work on maritime boundary delimitation, making it possible not only to plot the limits and boundaries of coastal states with geodetic precision, but also to visualise potential delimitation scenarios in a fraction of the time it took when working with paper charts and compasses. The rapidly evolving field of 3D terrain modelling using LiDAR technology is also exciting for boundary specialists, providing efficient ways of identifying watersheds in heavily forested areas and (at least in clear water) modelling bathymetry in river channels and intertidal zones.

Such specialist tools often come with a hefty price tag, but many powerful GIS applications are open-source and free to use, at least for non-commercial purposes. QGIS offers a wide range of GIS tools that are often comparable in sophistication and ease-of-use to GIS environments which cost hundreds or even thousands of dollars per year to access. And Google Earth and ESRI's ArcGIS Earth both provide free and user-friendly access to rich libraries of satellite imagery and aerial photography covering the entire planet, often at very high resolution – with decent terrain models built in to allow for three dimensional perspectives. These tools have technical limitations which generally make them unsuitable for work which requires a high degree of spatial precision, but for general boundary landscape visualisation and analysis they are simply fantastic resources. Even though Google Earth has now been available for almost 24 years, I still get a frisson of excitement and wonder every time I open it and 'fly' to a boundary area that I want to explore.

IBRU workshops

There are many other GIS tools and resources which can enrich boundary analysis and cartography – far more than can be mentioned here. That is one reason why IBRU is excited to be including *Geographic Information in Boundary-Making and Dispute Resolution* among its professional training workshops in 2025. Most IBRU workshops include sessions highlighting useful technical resources related to the theme of the workshop, but the 'geographic information' workshop will allow for a deeper exploration of how geospatial tools and resources are being used by governments and practitioners in different boundary-making and dispute resolution settings.

Cover image: Extract from sheet 42 of the Canada-USA International Boundary Commission's boundary map (1922) showing the boundary in the St Francis River, International Boundary Commission / Commission de la frontière internationale.

Boundary maps and the future

The workshop will also provide a space to reflect on the relevance and value of more traditional geographical aspects of boundary-making in a GIS-dominated era, including the production of dedicated maps following boundary settlement or reaffirmation. While there has never been an international legal requirement to publish detailed boundary maps, many pairs of neighbouring states have chosen to do so. The primary purpose of such maps has been to clarify the location of the boundary in relation to the surrounding landscape, something which is rarely obvious from lists of geographical coordinates or verbal descriptions of boundary alignment in treaty texts. The fact that boundary maps are usually prepared by a joint boundary commission also gives them symbolic value, emphasising the fact that the boundary was fixed through a cooperative legal and technical process. Anyone who has ever had an opportunity to view some of the beautiful boundary maps and atlases that have been produced over the years will likely agree that there is something powerful about them beyond the fact that they offer a detailed depiction of the course of an international boundary. They show that governments involved really care about the boundary-making process.



Martin working on the GIS data that underlies IBRU's Arctic maritime jurisdiction maps.

With many governments now maintaining online geoportals in which a wide range of national geospatial data is made available to the public in digital formats, it seems likely that traditional boundary-focused maps will become increasingly rare. A shapefile containing a digital definition of the boundary is vastly cheaper to create than a paper map series. A digital line is arguably also much more versatile: it can easily be overlaid on imagery or a variety of base maps according to what kind of geographical context is needed; and it can easily be modified if there are changes in boundary alignment. There are plenty of good reasons for switching away from traditional boundary maps. But much as I love GIS, I will still miss them!

New IBRU Steering Committee Member

We are delighted to welcome **Dr Léonie Newhouse**, Assistant Professor in Geography at Durham University, as the newest member of the IBRU Steering Committee.



Léonie is an economic and political geographer interested in questions around conflict, displacement and other forms of mobility and urbanization.

Recently Léonie has been working across borders and disciplinary boundaries to build equitable research partnerships with researchers in South Sudan in support of projects exploring work and livelihoods, care and obligation, crisis response, generational change, displacement and climate impacts through arts-based participatory methods.

Léonie replaces longstanding committee member Professor Louise Amoore.

An interview with 2024 Raymond Milefsky Award winner Buddhi Narayan Shrestha

In 2024, IBRU awarded the seventh annual Raymond Milefsky Award to Buddhi Narayan Shrestha, to honour his career surveying, mapping, interpreting, and communicating borders between Nepal and its neighbours. IBRU's Philip Steinberg interviewed Mr Shrestha.



In your book *About Myself*, you state that you are “not a diplomat, nor a University teacher, nor a politician,” but a surveyor who worked his way up through the ranks in Nepal’s Survey Department. How do you feel that your technical background has helped you, or held you back, when working with government officials?

Surveying is at the heart of my approach to borders. I worked for the government Survey Department of Nepal for twenty-seven years and retired as Director General. During my tenure, I spent five years as leader of the eleven-member Nepal-India Joint Technical Level Boundary Committee. I also spent one year as deputy leader of the nine-member Nepal-China Joint Boundary Committee.

Overseeing the renewal of the Nepal-China boundary protocol was a fairly straightforward task of surveying. We followed watershed and median-line river fixed boundary principles in a more-or-less congenial exercise.

Delimiting Nepal's boundary with India has been more complicated, as, for the most part, there are no natural features. So it has taken more time to demarcate the boundary line, matching historical working maps to the ground and vice-versa. In this process too, I have used the technical knowledge earned during my professional workmanship with the Survey Department.

Nepal shares borders with two much larger states: India and China. How has this impacted your work in delimiting and maintaining borders, and how have you overcome any power imbalances?

Although Nepal shares its boundaries with two giant emerging Asian nations, the two borders are very different. The Nepal-China boundary line is mostly mountainous, whereas the boundary with India is on the flat Indo-Gangetic plain.

The Nepal-China boundary was primarily demarcated during 1961-62 and the boundary protocol was signed in 1963. It was renewed in 1979 and 1988, and I had a leading role in the 1988 renewal. For the most part, this was a simple task, as the mountainous border had already been demarcated. Working with my Chinese counterparts, damaged border pillars were repaired and maintained and missing pillars were erected. Changes to the river course were resolved by referencing strip-maps and co-ordinates.

The Nepal-India demarcation has been more complicated. Although 97 percent of that border has now been demarcated, the remaining 3 percent includes the 372 sq km Lipulek-Kalapani-Limpiyadhura area, which Nepal maintains is its territory, by right of the 1816 Sugauli Treaty with British India, but which India has occupied since the 1962 India-China border war.

I remain hopeful that this dispute can be settled through dialogue. In recent years, I have been suggesting a land swap, where Nepal recognizes India's control of the Limpiyadhura area in return for Nepal gaining the 'Chicken Neck' that separates Nepal from Bangladesh. A land swap like this, for which there is regional precedent in the 2015 India-Bangladesh land swap, would grant Nepal access to a seaport via Bangladesh as well as fostering stability in the region. I suggested this land swap to Nepal's prime minister prior to his 2023 visit to India, and I was pleased to learn that he raised the prospect of this solution during the visit.

Although mountain regions are ‘natural’ borders, they pose some very specific challenges for bordering. What have been your experiences working on borders in a mountain region?

Although mountain ridges and watershed boundaries are ‘natural’ borders, they are not necessarily self-evident. In 2020, local people in the Limi-Namkha segment of Nepal's Humla district (on the border

with China) asserted that China had encroached on Nepali territory in the area. On investigation, I found that in fact the local frontier inhabitants were confused about the location of the watershed boundary line.

Since then, I have advocated to government authorities that surveyors must visit the sites they are working with maps and co-ordinates. They must work with frontier inhabitants, local government authorities, and district political leaders to verify maps to the ground when delineating borders.

You've had a long and exceptional career. What has been your greatest accomplishment?

After consulting historical maps produced by British India and China, I have comprehensively mapped the areas that Nepal disputes with India and China, calculating the lengths of rivers, border segments, and other features. Government organizations and researchers, at home and abroad, have used these statistics. This brings me satisfaction because if we are to peacefully settle border disputes we first need to map them.

In 2020, the Nepali government used my data to produce what has become known as the 'Beaked Map', the first official map to depict territory claimed by Nepal but administered by India. Because mapping is crucial for dispute resolution, I hope that by making this map possible I have contributed to the territorial integrity of the nation.

What is the future for borders in the Himalayan region?

I am optimistic about a future without boundary disputes. The border between Nepal and China has been fully demarcated and there will be no issues in the future, provided that the border is jointly monitored regularly. If a difference of interpretation emerges, the two sides should be able to resolve it through dialogue and appeals to documentary evidence.

As I have mentioned, three percent of the border between Nepal and India remains to be demarcated. In 2014 Nepal and India formed a Border Working Group (BWG) to sort out the minor issues amicably. I am hopeful that the larger issue of Lipulek-Kalapani-Limpiyadhura can be resolved through effective, Track-II diplomacy.

Heads of government of both countries must initiate and negotiate the border business. This requires governments to plan ahead with: 1) facts and figures about the disputed border(s), 2) accompanying maps and documents, 3) a historical understanding of past incidents at the border, 4) a model plan for negotiation, and 5) a series of steps to be taken in case negotiations fail (e.g. appeals to third-party mediators or the ICJ). With appropriate levels of political will, technical expertise, and a commitment to dialogue, border issues can be resolved.

Nominations for the 2025 Raymond Milefsky Award

The Raymond Milefsky Award is now in its eighth year and has highlighted the excellent work being conducted all over the world by boundary scholars and practitioners.

The award is for an individual or organisation who:

- Has advanced knowledge of boundary-making or cross-border cooperation, OR
- Has implemented a programme over that past year that has contributed substantively to boundary-making or cross-border cooperation.

The awardee will receive an award of £745, as well as a profile in the next edition of *Borderlines*.

Letters of nomination should be sent to ibru@durham.ac.uk and must be received by **31 August 2025**.

Selection of the awardee will be made by a committee consisting of the members of the IBRU Steering Community, plus one external representative.

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/ibru-borders-research/news-and-events/milefsky-award/>

Borders in the news 2024

January

In January **Guyana** said it was seeking help from the U.S. to improve its defense capabilities amid fears that **Venezuela** might one day seize a disputed region in western Guyana that is rich in minerals and oil. The announcement came just weeks after the century-old dispute over the Essequibo region deepened, with Venezuela holding a referendum in December 2023 to claim sovereignty over an area that represents two-thirds of Guyana.

February

In February a warning was issued that the **Falkland Islands/ Islas Malvinas** dispute between the **United Kingdom** and **Argentina** was causing a fishing 'free-for-all' in the nearby Blue Hole, a stretch of the south Atlantic Ocean lying approximately 200 miles off the coast of Argentina and north of the Falklands/Malvinas. The warning was issued after a soaring number of vessels were threatening fish stocks and the environment as the dispute was preventing an agreement to regulate the area.



Nigeria's National Boundary Commission (NBC) announced plans to expedite action in the definition and demarcation of internal boundaries of the region of Delta and its neighbouring states in order to avert clashes.

Bangladesh announced plans to address border issues with **Myanmar** through diplomatic channels and bring the matter to the attention of the United Nations.

March

In March **India** announced plans to spend nearly \$3.7 billion to fence its 1,610-km (1,000-mile) border with **Myanmar** within about a decade to prevent smuggling and other illegal activities. India said it would fence the border and end a decades-old visa-free movement policy for reasons of national security and to maintain the demographic structure of its northeastern region.

Somalia and **Turkey** forged a new defence and economic partnership. The agreement expands Turkey's existing support to Somalia for humanitarian aid, famine relief and infrastructure development. It splits the revenue from activities in Somalia's exclusive economic zone – giving Turkey a 30% share of marine revenue in return for bolstering Somalia's maritime security capabilities through training, joint operations, information sharing and naval acquisitions.

Cambodia and **Thailand** agreed to establish a temporary checkpoint for entry into the temple of Preah Vihear. The move was welcomed by locals, who view it as a significant step towards boosting tourism and trade between Thailand and Cambodia. The agreement comes after a 16-year closure due to a territorial dispute between the two countries in 2008, which revolved around the area surrounding the ancient temple site.

April

In April, **Kenya** proposed a regional maritime treaty to defuse tensions between **Ethiopia** and **Somalia** over a deal allowing Ethiopia to set up a naval base and give it port access in Somalia's breakaway region of Somaliland. Landlocked Ethiopia had agreed on January 1, 2024 to lease 20 kilometres of coastline in Somaliland, a part of Somalia which claims independence and has had effective

autonomy since 1991, offering possible recognition of Somaliland in exchange.

Israel agreed to granting a year's extension to its water agreement with **Jordan**.

Malawi started a project to upgrade and expand Mbamba Bay Port on Lake Malawi without seeking consent from **Tanzania** as the lake boundary dispute between the two countries currently remains unresolved.



May

In May, **Niger** accused **Benin** of violating trade agreements between the two countries by blocking Niger, a landlocked country, from using a Beninese port to export its first crude oil. Niger has a \$400m deal with Beijing's state-owned major oil company China National Petroleum Corp. Benin's blockade was in response to Niger's refusal to reopen its land border with its neighbour.

August

In August, the Russian military held drills on a disputed island which both **Japan** and **Russia** claim as their own. Russian troops took control of the four islands off Japan's Hokkaido - known in Russia as the Kurils and in Japan as the Northern Territories - at the end of World War Two and they have remained in Moscow's hands since. The dispute has prevented the two countries from signing a peace treaty.

September

In September, **Canada** and the **USA** announced that they had created a task force to negotiate a boundary dispute in the Arctic. The two countries have a long-standing dispute over a section of the Beaufort Sea, disagreeing over a treaty dating from 1825. The countries said in a statement the task force will work on resolving overlapping claims over the area, which is north of Alaska, Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

The melting of a glacier has led **Italy** and **Switzerland** to redraw their borders. Large sections of their shared border are marked by glacier peaks and snowfields that mark the ridgeline in the Alps. Recently, these countries have watched as the glaciers on Klein Matterhorn have melted, shifting this ridge slightly toward Italy and reviving concerns of how climate change might impact mountain communities around the world in the coming years.

October

Following on from Kenya's proposed maritime agreement in April, **Somalia** and **Ethiopia** completed a second round of maritime talks aimed at resolving a dispute that has strained their relations. The Somali delegation had refused to proceed until Ethiopia publicly renounced the naval base agreement with Somaliland, causing the negotiations to stall. The delegations from Somalia and Ethiopia have not met face-to-face. Instead, Turkey has acted as an intermediary.

Vietnam and **China** agreed to calm tensions in their South China Sea dispute, after Hanoi accused Beijing of a "brutal" attack on its fishermen. It was reported that the two countries "committed to adequately controlling differences... avoiding actions that complicate the situation, and jointly maintaining stability at sea".

Borders in the news 2024

China accused a Japanese vessel of 'illegally' entering disputed waters. The incident was the latest between **China** and **Japan** around the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

The **United Kingdom** announced it was giving up sovereignty of the **Chagos Islands** in the Indian Ocean. The deal – reached after years of negotiations - will see the UK hand over the Chagos Islands to **Mauritius** in a historic move. This will include the tropical atoll of Diego Garcia, used by the US government as a military base for its navy ships and long-range bomber aircraft. The announcement, made in a joint statement by the UK and Mauritian Prime Ministers, ends decades of often fractious negotiations between the two countries.



November

In November, after signing a maritime development deal with Beijing, **Indonesia** affirmed that it did not recognise **China's** claims over the South China Sea, following some analysts' warnings that the pact risked compromising Indonesia's sovereign rights. Joint agreements with China in the strategic waterway have been sensitive for years, with some nations wary of deals they fear could be interpreted as legitimising Beijing's claims. A joint statement mentioned the two countries had "reached important common understanding on joint development in areas of overlapping claims".

Maps drawn up more than 130 years ago by the British War Office have been cited by **Iran** in its dispute with the **UAE** over the ownership of three strategic islands at the entrance to the critical Strait of Hormuz waterway. The historic maps from 1888, which show the islands were perceived by Britain as part of Iran while what is now the UAE was simply termed the 'Pirate Coast', were highlighted by Iran after the EU issued a joint statement at the end of its first summit with the Gulf Cooperation Council that included a denunciation of the Iranian "occupation of the islands", which it said was in breach of the UN charter and a violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates.

Further talks took place in November between **Greece** and **Turkey**, who disagree on the delineation of the continental shelf and exclusive economic zone. Turkey has said that any move by Greece to extend its territorial waters around its islands in the Aegean Sea from six nautical miles to 12 nautical miles, which Greece insists it has the right to do at any time, would be a cause for war. The November talks sought ways to prevent spats from escalating dangerously. "We are working to understand each other better on critical issues. The region we are in has many problems," the Turkish Foreign Minister said. "Turkey and Greece need to be able to act with mutual trust in this difficult geography. Through a win-win approach, we can contribute to the prosperity and peace of our people."



In November, the **Philippines** enacted a maritime law Manila claimed could help settle long-standing

territorial disputes with **China** in the South China Sea. The Maritime Zones Act defines the Philippines' maritime boundaries under international law. It was signed alongside the Archipelagic Sea Lanes Act, which establishes routes for foreign vessels through Philippine waters. China swiftly condemned the new laws and summoned the Philippine ambassador to China "to make serious protests". China stated that the new law "gravely infringes upon China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea".

Ghana and **Côte d'Ivoire** reached an agreement in November to conduct regular joint inspections along the two countries' international maritime boundaries in compliance with the ruling of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). The agreement is aimed at ensuring that firms exploiting offshore oil in the region are kept at bay and to prevent future territorial disputes and safeguard their respective marine resources and economic interests.

Cambodia and **Thailand** are to restart negotiations on their disputed maritime areas under the 2001 memorandum of understanding. Negotiations will resume once a joint technical committee is formed. Thailand and Cambodia both claim sovereignty of the Overlapping Claims Area, which covers about 26,000 square kilometres in the Gulf of Thailand. The area is believed to be rich in fossil energy resources.

Mexico and the **USA** have reached an agreement that they hope will address Mexico's pattern of falling behind on water-sharing payments in the Rio Bravo watershed. The agreement provides Mexico with tools and flexibility to deliver water earlier in a five-year cycle under the 1944 U.S.-Mexico water treaty, according to the bilateral International Border and Water Commission.

December

After 33 Years, **Kyrgyzstan** and **Tajikistan** announced in December that they had come to an agreement on their shared border, the last frontier in Central Asia still in question. The border dispute had been a longstanding issue since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and efforts to resolve it had been ongoing since 2002.



The two countries share a 987-kilometer border, and unresolved territorial claims had contributed to many tensions over the past three decades, including over irrigation, smuggling, and illegal border crossings.

The Presidents of **China** and **Nepal** met in December to issue a 'Joint Statement' with President Xi of China highly appreciating Prime Minister Oli's long-standing commitment to China-Nepal friendship. The statement emphasized that China and Nepal are good neighbours, friends, and partners connected by mountains and rivers.

Canada unveiled a new Arctic strategy to counter what it described as threats from geopolitical rivals. Canada unveiled a 37-page security policy detailing plans to enhance its military and diplomatic presence in the Arctic, citing rising threats from Russian and Chinese activity.

Guyana submitted to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague its final written brief on the merits in its case against **Venezuela**. Venezuela will have the opportunity to respond to Guyana's Reply with its Rejoinder, due on 8 August 2025. The Court will in due course set a date for oral hearings.

JRV Prescott Scholarship Awardee Interview

IBRU welcomed Masoumeh Parsoon from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran to the workshop 'Defining and Managing River Boundaries and International Rivers' in Thailand in May 2024. Masoumeh was able to attend thanks to the JRV Prescott Scholarship which helps post graduate students attend training to further their careers in the boundary field.

Masoumeh spoke to Liz Buxton about how the Prescott Scholarship has helped her.

What do you currently do in your career and how does your work relate to international boundaries and border-related issues?

As a legal-technical expert, my role involves working on existing border agreements and treaties, where I provide negotiation teams with legal and technical advice. This includes interpreting border descriptions and ensuring compliance with the terms outlined in the treaties. For instance, I am responsible for verifying any construction projects near the border to ensure adherence to established boundaries. Additionally, I am involved in delimitating maritime boundaries that are yet to be defined. This entails creating sketches and providing the negotiating team with legal and technical insights for drawing boundary lines. Given that Iran shares land borders with 7 countries and maritime boundaries with 10, my work revolves around addressing land, river, and maritime boundary issues on a daily basis.



Which postgraduate course did you study and did this course help develop your career?

During my initial years at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was pursuing my master's degree in Surveying-Geodesy, focusing on enhancing my technical expertise in border-related matters. However, after gaining practical experience in the field for five years, I recognized the importance of integrating legal knowledge into my work. Subsequently, I pursued a postgraduate course in International Public Law, culminating in a thesis on "The Role of Islands in Maritime Delimitation in light of International Judicial and Arbitral Decisions." This academic endeavor significantly enriched my understanding of legal complexities related to border issues and provided valuable insights that I could apply in my daily responsibilities.

Recognizing the importance of continually expanding my expertise, I embarked on a Ph.D. program in International Law at the University of Tehran in 2021. This academic pursuit has allowed me to bridge the gap between legal principles and technical considerations, enabling me to approach international border matters from a comprehensive perspective. The combination of legal and technical knowledge has proven instrumental in navigating the intricate landscape of international border negotiations and agreements.

What made you apply for the Prescott Scholarship Award and how did you feel when you were awarded the Scholarship?

I applied for the Prescott Scholarship Award due to my deep admiration for J.R.V. Prescott's groundbreaking contributions in delimitating maritime boundaries and addressing geographical challenges related to borders. His work has been a source of inspiration for me, and I saw the scholarship as a unique opportunity to further my studies and research in this specialized field. Moreover, the support provided by the scholarship was crucial in enabling me to attend the workshop without constraints, allowing me to focus wholeheartedly on my learning experience.

When I received the email informing me that I had been awarded the Prescott Scholarship, I was overcome with a sense of joy and gratitude. The recognition of my dedication and potential by such a prestigious scholarship committee was truly humbling. It reaffirmed my commitment to advancing my knowledge and skills in geodesy and international law, fueling my motivation to excel in my academic pursuits. The scholarship not only validated my hard work but also provided me with the means to continue my academic journey with renewed enthusiasm and determination.

How do you think the IBRU workshop 'Defining and Managing River Boundaries and International Rivers', the course paid for by the Scholarship, has helped you in your career?

The workshop not only enhanced my understanding of the complexities involved in defining and managing river boundaries but also equipped me with practical skills that I could immediately apply in my professional role. The interaction with experienced tutors and engaging in challenging exercises during the course broadened my perspective and introduced me to innovative approaches in addressing issues related to international rivers.

The knowledge and insights gained from the IBRU workshop have been invaluable in shaping my career trajectory and have significantly contributed to my professional growth. The course has enabled me to approach my job with a more informed and strategic mindset, allowing me to tackle challenges more effectively and make well-informed decisions in the field of managing river boundaries. Moreover, the workshop reinforced my belief that border lines are not just separation lines but also a means of cooperation. I am grateful for the opportunity provided by the Prescott Scholarship to attend this workshop, as it has been instrumental in enhancing my skills, expanding my knowledge base, and furthering my career aspirations in this specialized area of study.

Would you have been able to attend the workshop if the funding from the Prescott Scholarship had not been available and how important was this Scholarship to you?

The Prescott Scholarship was instrumental in enabling me to attend the workshop on managing river boundaries and international rivers. The scholarship not only facilitated my participation in the workshop but also served as a recognition of my work and potential in this field.

The importance of the Prescott Scholarship to me cannot be overstated. It not only made it possible for me to access high-quality training and expertise but also validated my dedication and commitment to advancing my knowledge and skills in managing river boundaries. The scholarship has had a significant impact on my professional development and has opened up new opportunities for me in my career. I am truly grateful for the support and recognition provided by the Prescott Scholarship, as it has been instrumental in shaping my journey towards becoming an expert in this specialized area of study.

JRV Prescott Student Scholarship Programme

Thanks to a generous donation from the estate of international boundaries scholar JRV Prescott, IBRU is pleased to offer a scholarship programme to support postgraduate attendance at IBRU professional training workshops.

IBRU will award the annual Prescott Fellowship to one deserving individual who is studying or has completed a postgraduate qualification in the last 5 years, to attend an IBRU training workshop.

The annual Prescott Fellowship recipient will receive a full waiver of workshop registration fees (typically around £2,250) as well as access to up to £250 to offset costs associated with travel and subsistence.

For more information, including instructions on how to apply, see <https://www.durham.ac.uk/research/institutes-and-centres/ibru-borders-research/training-and-workshops/services/>

Applicants are encouraged to apply by **31 May 2025** for the Scholarship.

2025 TRAINING PROGRAMME

Professional Training Workshops

IBRU's unique boundary training programme has been running since 1996 attracting over 1,800 participants from over 125 countries around the world.

Our professional training workshops are led by teams of expert tutors and provide a relevant combination of background theory and practical application in an informal teaching environment. Numbers are limited to maximise interaction between tutors and participants, so we advise you book early to guarantee your place.

Professional Training Workshop

23-25 June 2025
Durham, UK

Price: £2,685 per person*
£1,685 for LDCs

* price includes 3 nights accommodation

Geographic Information in Boundary-Making & Dispute Resolution

Geographic information, particularly as presented on maps and charts, has always been central to the process of creating and managing international boundaries. Access to accurate geographical information does not guarantee that a boundary will be problem-free, but boundaries created on the basis of poor geographical information almost invariably become a source of friction and occasionally even armed conflict between states.

This workshop is designed to help boundary practitioners make the best use of geographical information in their work. The workshop will examine the use of maps, charts and other traditional sources of geographic information in boundary settings and explore how modern Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can contribute to effective boundary creation, management and dispute resolution. The workshop will include hands-on exercises designed to allow participants to evaluate key geographic technologies and resources in a range of boundary-related settings.



Professional Training Workshop

15-17 September 2025
Durham, UK

Price: £2,685 per person*
£1,685 for LDCs

* price includes 3 nights accommodation

Finding and Equitable Solution in Maritime Boundary Delimitation

Clearly-defined maritime boundaries are essential for good international relations and effective ocean management, yet few coastal states have agreed all their maritime boundaries with their neighbours. Part of the reason for this is that boundary delimitation requires a range of specialist legal and technical skills which are not always readily available to governments.

Combining lectures, discussion and practical exercises, IBRU's most popular workshop helps participants develop the skills needed to achieve an equitable division of maritime space and clearly defined maritime boundaries.



Professional Training Workshop

3-5 November 2025
Durham, UK

Price: £2,655 per person*
£1,655 for LDCs

* price includes 3 nights accommodation

Strategies and Tools for Effective Border Management

Managing borders in the twenty first century is a complex and challenging task. It is widely agreed that in a globalising world borders should be as open as possible; yet over the last decade governments have understandably been more anxious than ever to ensure that their frontiers are secured against threats. This innovative workshop is designed to help policymakers and practitioners develop border management strategies which strike the best possible balance between these apparently conflicting goals.

Led by expert tutors, the workshop will provide practical instruction on a range of topics which are often overlooked elsewhere, including: managing border crossings; monitoring and controlling borders between crossing points; facilitating inter-agency cooperation; managing maritime borders; and environmental and transboundary resource management. While the appropriate use of technological solutions will be explored, the workshop is not intended simply to showcase the latest technology. Rather, participants will be encouraged to adopt an integrated approach to border management which builds effective institutional mechanisms and maximises the effectiveness of available resources.



Image by Stadnik, Pixabay

To make an enquiry about our workshops, please contact the IBRU Team

Tel: +44 (0)191 334 1965 Email: ibru@durham.ac.uk Find out more and book online at: www.durham.ac.uk/ibru

Help for LDCs to attend IBRU professional training workshops

In 2025, IBRU will continue to offer 10 places per professional training workshop to delegates from the 45 countries that appear on the 'United Nations Least Developed Countries List', at a reduced cost.

The full list of eligible countries can be found on the United Nations website:

<https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>

Places will be restricted to only 2 places per LDC country per workshop at this reduced rate. Any additional places will be available at the full cost price. Places will be available on a first come first served basis.



ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

IBRU's online training courses complement our world-renowned professional training workshops.

They feature IBRU and Durham University academics, as well as invited expert guest practitioners, and provide broad introductions to core topics in international boundaries and border management. They are a great way to learn more about specific topics or simply refresh your knowledge in areas where you may already have some experience. They can be taken on their own or in preparation for attending one of our more focused, practitioner-led, face-to-face workshops. IBRU's online courses are designed to be completed at your own leisure, at a time and place convenient to you.

NEW ONLINE TRAINING COURSE

Asylum, Borders and Human Rights

Online training

Price: £100



Borders around the world are increasingly crossed by migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers.

According to the UN High Commission for Refugees, there are over 45 million refugees and asylum-seekers worldwide. Who are they? What rights do they have as border crossers? What are the obligations and powers of states that receive refugees, and how is this reflected in the way that borders are managed?

IBRU's online course on Asylum, Borders & Human Rights details the legal framework governing migrant mobilities.

In this online, one-hour mini-course, Durham University migration scholars Dr Lauren Martin and Dr Léonie Newhouse unpack key terms like 'refugee', 'asylum-seeker', and 'migrant', analyse the lasting impact of the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, as well as a range of other treaties and agreements that impact the status of refugees and the borders that they cross.

COMING SOON

Interstate Cooperation on Offshore Renewable Energy Exploitation: Transcending Borders and Law

Amidst a surging growth in exploitation of wind and other offshore renewable energy sources, there is a growing need for trans-border cooperation. In this online, one-hour mini-course, to be released later this Spring, Dr Olivia Woolley of Durham University's Law School explores the challenges in law and governance emerging from this increasingly important sector of the world economy.

Introduction to International Boundaries: Definition, Delimitation and Dispute Resolution

Online training

Price: £250

International boundaries are a major source of friction between neighbouring states. Many land boundaries remain poorly defined and fewer than half of the world's potential maritime boundaries have been fully agreed. Governments recognise the value of clearly defined boundaries, yet the political, economic and social complexities of boundary regions, as well as the details of topography and history, often make resolving competing territorial and jurisdictional claims extraordinarily difficult.



This four-hour online training course provides a simple, contextual overview of international boundaries and the practical measures that can be taken to resolve international boundary disputes. Through a series of short online lectures and a final practical exercise, the course explores the relevance of borders and looks at land and maritime boundary disputes, before covering methods available for dispute resolution.

The videos can be watched in your own time and will be available for review as long as your licence is active. You will not need to complete the course in one go but can fit it around your schedule as required.

This course is available in both English and French.

To book your place on the online courses, please visit our website: www.durham.ac.uk/ibru

Images: Courtesy of Pixabay, Mexico Border Wall courtesy of Estela Parra, Refugees on a boat Pixabay, Shinkiyari Refugee camp Pixabay, Kalhh Pixabay, DVIDSHUB Flickr, Refugees behind fence Pixabay



Borderlines is the newsletter of IBRU, the Centre for Borders Research at Durham University. It has a readership of more than 3,500 boundary scholars, practitioners and enthusiasts around the world.

Since its founding as the International Boundaries Research Unit in 1989, IBRU has been the world's leading research centre on international boundary making and dispute resolution. Today, IBRU brings together work in international boundary law with the geographic study of borders and bordering in the 21st century.

For more information about IBRU visit our website at: www.durham.ac.uk/ibru

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