

# Law on the high seas

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Signatories Dr Wan (left) and Mr Heng firming up the agreement

Institutional expertise in ocean governance, and thought leadership in areas critical to strengthening Singapore's position as a global maritime knowledge hub, will be bolstered with the establishment of a research programme by the [Centre for International Law](#) (CIL) at NUS and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA).

CIL will be setting up the CIL-MPA Oceans Governance Research Programme with a three-year research grant of \$1.56 million from the Singapore Maritime Institute (SMI) supported by MPA. The programme will focus on three areas: Arctic shipping governance; transit passage regimes under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and marine environmental governance.

Dr Andre Wan, Director for Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships, NUS Research & Technology and Mr Heng Chiang Gnee, SMI Executive Director signed the grant agreement on 21 April at the sidelines of the annual Singapore Maritime Week.

Associate Professor Robert C Beckman, CIL Director and concurrent head of CIL's Ocean Law and Policy Programme, will helm the CIL-MPA Oceans Governance Research Programme. He will lead studies in fields such as opportunities and challenges in Arctic shipping, contemporary

developments in UNCLOS transit passage regimes and measures available for marine environmental protection. The research team will also analyse the feasibility of drawing up a new international agreement to govern the sustainable use and conservation of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

CIL will look at forming academic and research collaborations with leading legal academics and experts worldwide. Conferences and roundtable workshops will be organised for sharing and discussing findings with top international experts from governments, intergovernmental organisations, industry and academia.

Prof Beckman noted, “As a major flag State and port State and an active member of the International Maritime Organisation, Singapore has an interest in ensuring that the international legal regime governing international shipping ensures the safety of navigation, addresses threats to maritime security, and minimises the risk of ship-source pollution.”

MPA Chief Executive Mr Andrew Tan believes the programme will enable Singapore to “contribute to better understanding of maritime law, ocean governance and emerging issues such as Arctic shipping that impact on the international maritime community”.

NUS and MPA have worked together before to establish the [Centre for Maritime Law and MPA Professorship in Maritime Law](#).