



GLASGOW CENTRE
FOR INTERNATIONAL
LAW & SECURITY



Transnational Accountability Project

Call for Applications

Deadline for submissions: 20 November 2019, 4pm.

Introduction

Transnational Accountability Project (TAP) is an off-curriculum project run for and by the students of law at the University of Glasgow, with the help and guidance of various faculty members.

The aim of this project is to provide legal research support to civil society campaigns that strive to hold international actors to account for the social and environmental impacts of their activities. It is therefore a hybrid between a research project (in that it will consist in providing research support) and a clinic (in that the research will be provided in relation to current real life scenarios). The particular focus of this project is on foreign investors and international financial institutions, but also on the governments that enter into legal relationships with these actors to acquire financial resources without sufficient guarantees of ensuring sustainability of subsequent operations.

This is a Glasgow Open Justice (Go Justice) initiative that is curated by Antonio Marzal, Akbar Rasulov and Giedre Jokubauskaite from the Glasgow Centre of International Law and Security.

Above all, this project is a space for the students to develop and create legal knowledge in the areas of human rights, environmental protection, corporate accountability, and social justice at the transnational level.

Case study: hydropower production in Georgia

In the academic year 2019/20, TAP will focus on the transnational legal issues surrounding expansion of hydropower production in Georgia.

In Georgia, the government has a priority to move away from energy production based on fossil fuels that is largely dependent on imports from Russia, to cleaner energy sources created through hydropower. As a mountainous country in the middle of the Caucasus region, Georgia

has many powerful rivers, which potentially could be transformed into sources of (national) energy production, and which would also enable Georgia to become an exporter of energy to other surrounding countries in the region. In the coming decade, Georgia plans to build 117 dams under this policy agenda.

However, there is serious evidence that show that this strategy can cause detrimental effects to the ecosystems surrounding river basins as well as local communities that live and depend on these rivers and their resources.

The TAP team of students and staff will scrutinise the accountability of international financial institutions and investors in implementing this policy agenda. The focus will be on the four controversial dams, some of which had already been built and partially collapsed, and some of which are still in the initial stages of planning and/or construction.

The aim is to explore the existing avenues of legal redress and accountability of financial institutions and investors that agreed to fund these dams, including the issues of contractual propriety, transparency, access to justice and information.

The civil society campaign against these dams is currently run by two organisations based in Georgia: Human Rights Education and Monitoring Centre (ECM, <https://emc.org.ge/en>) and Green Alternative (<http://greenalt.org>). These organisations are our key partners and for the moment, the main beneficiaries of the research support that will be generated by TAP.

For more information on the changes caused by some of these dams and the work done by the civil society campaign thus far, see: <https://bankwatch.org/svaneti>; https://bankwatch.org/bw_in_media/georgia-further-develops-hydro-power-despite-risks<http://greenalt.org/en/publications/>; <http://greenalt.org/category/complaints/>.

What to expect: role of the students

While predominantly aiming to support civil society campaigns for social justice and environmental protection, TAP is a student-focused project that relies on the research skills, analytical rigour and insight of the student community. All the reports and briefings created through TAP will be produced by students, in collaboration and under the guidance of the curating team of staff members.

The rationale is for the students to provide legal research support to the partner organisations, in order to enable them to understand their legal options for holding international financial institutions and foreign investors to account. While partner institutions will provide us with the facts, will share their on-going strategies and will outline their concerns, it will be up to the TAP team to identify the exact legal questions that need to be researched and examined, in order to support the on-going civil society campaign.

Together with our partner organisations in Georgia, we have currently identified three main areas of legal research support that will be examined by a dedicated team of students:

- a) Contractual framework of transnational public-private partnerships (PPPs);
- b) Transparency and public access to information in relation to state-investor and state-international financial institutions contractual arrangements;
- c) Accountability of international financial institutions through transnational grievance and complaint mechanisms and in front of the national courts.

Generally, each team will work with one member of a curating team, but there will also be on-going exchange of information between teams and, based on the needs, advice might be provided by other members of the Glasgow Centre for International Law and Security, and the School of Law more generally.

In order to facilitate the research and analysis in the early stages of the project, we will begin with several introductory readings and discussions, prepared and facilitated by the TAP curating team.

It is estimated that the individual student involvement will amount to approximately 3 hours per week.

Advantages

This clinical project engages with a complex area of legal issues that no single course or subject taught at the School of Law can cover in full. It will touch on the legal issues created by transnational movement of capital, and related gaps or accountability and oversight. The key advantage of this project is that it combines the analysis of both public and private law frameworks, and it also examines how the two interact at the international level.

This provides an invaluable opportunity for the students to engage with pressing legal issues faced by civil society organisations, operating at the local level but under the challenges caused by economic globalisation.

This project also provides an opportunity to experience first-hand how different areas of law, such as human rights, environmental law, corporate governance, financial due diligence, access to information and justice works in practice.

As well as developing the legal knowledge outlined above, students will acquire skills of providing legal research support, doing academic research on real-life complex legal issues, and working in a team with their peers, under the guidance of a curating team. These skills and experience will prepare you for a successful transition to legal practice in the future.

Finally, this is an opportunity to engage in the work of civil society, addressing issues of social and environmental justice from a legal perspective.

Application and selection process

If you are interested being a part of the TAP, apply by sending us your CV and a few paragraphs about why you want to be a part of this project, and why you think you would bring a valuable contribution to the team.

This project is open to all law students at the School of Law starting the second year of the LLB degree (Graduate LLB students can apply in the first year of their LLB). However, if you are in the final year of your degree (LLB, or a one-year LLM), please note that the project will run until July 2020. If you are currently not in the final year of your degree, there might be an opportunity for you to continue working on this project in the following academic year.

Send your applications to Giedre.jokubauskaite@glasgow.ac.uk and Antonio.marzal@glasgow.ac.uk by 20th November 2019, 4pm.

Successful applicants will be notified by early December 2019.