



**British Institute of  
International and  
Comparative Law**

# BIICL Strategic Plan 2019-2023

## Our vision

**The British Institute of International and Comparative Law (BIICL) exists to develop and advance the understanding of international and comparative law in the UK and around the world, and to promote the rule of law in national and international affairs. Through our work, we seek to improve decision-making which will help to make the world a better place and have a positive impact on people's daily lives.**

**Our organisational vision is for BIICL to be an independent leader in applied legal research and ideas: informing debate, policy and practice; upholding and maintaining humane and democratic values; promoting evidence-based decision-making; and contributing to the upholding of the international legal order and the rule of law in the UK and worldwide.**



## Strategic Theme 1: Continued excellence and independence.

**Context:** BIICL is an independent research organisation and registered charity with an established reputation for excellent research, events, training and publications. Through our membership and wider public engagement, we serve as a hub for discussion, bringing people together to foster debate and to develop creative legal ideas. Much of our work has an applied focus, but we are also respected for our scholarship and academic rigour. Our journal, the *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, is one of the most highly-cited publications in its field.

**Risks and challenges:** BIICL has no recurrent core funding and the environment in which we operate is becoming increasingly competitive. Future access to EU funds is also uncertain. As a minimum, we need to ensure that our core areas and activities are maintained at current levels of excellence. While we have secured ongoing funding for some existing staff, we are still heavily reliant on project funding and donations to support other roles. We are often competing with universities who are able to offer free events and to underwrite research costs from other sources of funding. Our journal provides a welcome source of additional unrestricted income but we cannot assume that current levels will be maintained in the open access era.

### Our objectives for 2019-2023 are:

- To continue to produce excellent, independent and accessible research, providing practical and creative solutions and recommendations.
- To maintain and grow our role as a hub for generating and exchanging ideas through collaborative projects and shared posts with universities and other partners.
- To maintain and grow our community of scholars and practitioners, enabling better engagement between practice and academia.
- To maintain the excellence of our journal, the ICLQ, while linking it more closely to our own research areas, where possible.
- To maintain and extend our wider public engagement role through focused events, training, podcasts/video casts and user-friendly reports and briefing materials.

### Key targets:

- To secure longer-term, ongoing funding (both from existing donors and new funders) for our core research programmes and staff posts.
- To improve our membership offer, including exploring the development of a members' app and other new services.
- To grow our current membership by 20% in the next 3 years and by a further 20% over 5 years.
- To enable greater provision of free or reduced price events by securing alternative funding/sponsorship or cross-subsidy from other activities, where possible.
- To maintain and refresh our existing programme of short courses, including the development of an online version of Public International Law in Practice.



## Strategic Theme 2: Developing and growing

**Context:** International law is becoming increasingly central to public life. For BIICL to remain at the forefront of developments, we must expand and develop themes and areas of focus that cut across and broaden our current areas of expertise. These will include: trade; technology; the impact of Brexit and other societal challenges; and changes in the legal landscape. Our comparative perspective will become increasingly significant as part of our distinctive offer. Many of our current projects are relatively small and we have to be more ambitious about scaling up some of our activities. Our current short course programme is successful but needs to be expanded to cover new areas of focus.

**Risks and challenges:** The eventual impact of Brexit remains uncertain. Whatever the outcome, it will present major challenges for society and the legal profession. Our expertise will be in demand and we will continue to advocate independent, constructive and solutions-based approaches to what needs to be achieved at a detailed, legal level. As a small organisation, we are used to incremental growth and it will be challenging to upscale our areas of activity without a major injection of new funding. We need to be ambitious, but also realistic about how many new areas we can grow within a relatively short period of time. Developing effective partnerships with other organisations will become increasingly significant.

### Our objectives for 2019-2023 are:

- To achieve a strategic expansion of our work in these areas of focus, including new funded appointments, where appropriate.
- To develop at least 4 large-scale, cross-BIICL research proposals.
- To forge new strategic alliances with universities, cognate organisations and other partners in the UK, Europe and around the world.
- To grow our training/capacity building and educational activities so that we are recognized as a key training centre on international and comparative law issues.

### Key targets:

- To secure funding for at least 5 new researchers in key areas of focus, including those covered in the Bingham Centre strategy, as well as new professional staff appointments to enhance our capacity.
- To develop at least 4 new shared posts with universities or other strategic partners.
- To secure funding for at least 2 large-scale research projects and a major research centre.
- To develop at least 3 new short courses and a catalogue of bespoke courses available on request.
- To establish a new BIICL summer school in partnership with universities and other entities from 2020 onwards.



## Strategic Theme 3: Open BIICL

**Context:** By the nature of its work, BIICL operates in an international environment and already has some established partnerships and relationships with individuals and organisations around the world. These remain relatively limited, however, and we need to upscale and internationalise our activities if we are to grow our influence and reputation around the world. We have begun to establish a presence in other countries, most notably in the US and Belgium, and are actively discussing future opportunities. Alongside this, another key priority will be to develop a digital strategy to enhance our impact and outreach. We currently engage primarily with legal academics, practitioners and policymakers and want to improve our ability to engage with others, including non-traditional audiences such as disadvantaged groups and young people.

**Risks and challenges:** Choosing the right collaborative partners will be key to the successful expansion of our international presence, at least in the first instance. It will be essential to maintain our reputation for independent and high quality work. Improving our digital presence and output will require an investment in resources and the development of additional technical expertise.

### Our objectives for 2019-2023 are:

- To establish a BIICL presence in several other key countries around the world.
- To develop and roll out a digital strategy to enhance our impact and public engagement activities.
- To develop strategic partnerships with organisations working with diverse sections of society.
- To introduce live-streaming of some key events, with podcasts and/or video casts of most other events, as standard.
- To develop a series of online MOOCs in partnership with universities and/or other bodies.
- To review our approach to priced book publications including a move towards digital publishing of books and other research publications.

### Key targets:

- To have an established international presence in at least 4 other countries by the end of the period.
- To implement a new US fundraising strategy in early 2019 and review in mid-2020.
- To have developed at least 5 MOOCs by the end of 2021.
- To develop a more systematic and integrated approach to capturing and disseminating the impact of our work to funders, the mainstream media and the general public.
- To move to e-books for all new priced publications and to digitise key titles in our back catalogue by 2021.



## Strategic Theme 4: Improving our organization

**Context:** BIICL benefits from a committed team of staff and encourages a collegial and collaborative working environment. Over the last three years, we have increased our research capacity by establishing our Research Assistants programme which provides fixed-term paid opportunities for early-career researchers. We have also improved our pension offer to staff and provided confidential access to a service to support staff health and wellbeing. There are some opportunities for internal promotion for our researchers but progression is more limited for our professional services team. Our Board of Trustees is now more diverse and continues to operate effectively. Our financial systems are sound but we have not yet fully capitalized on our new finance system to improve our forecasting and longer-term planning. At times there are tensions between different parts of BIICL and a tendency for people to work in silos.

**Risks and challenges:** As a small organisation, we have to balance our desire to enhance staff benefits with ensuring equity and overall affordability. We will need to be more entrepreneurial, without compromising our charitable objects. The refurbishment of our first floor offices will be a major financial commitment which will restrict our ability to invest in other initiatives, at least in the short- to medium-term. It will, however, deliver a step-change in our working environment and events space.

### Our objectives for 2019-2023 are:

- To enable greater horizontal working and integration across the whole of BIICL.
- To continue to improve our strategic and financial planning and forecasting, with the proactive involvement of a broader range of senior staff across the organization.
- To secure further improvement to benefits for all staff, including enhanced pension arrangements and career progression opportunities.
- To improve our internal and external communications, technical expertise and knowledge management.

### Overarching targets:

- To secure funding to meet our refurbishment and broader Anniversary Appeal objectives as well as our other development targets over this period.
- To complete the refurbishment of the first floor office and conference space by early 2020.
- To invest in and successfully roll-out a new CRM system and communications software.
- To review our staffing structure to optimise collaborative and team-based working.
- To review career progression opportunities for all staff, including the provision of training and development for new roles.
- To improve our defined contribution pension scheme so that it is in line with the Pension Quality Mark Plus contribution level (overall contribution rate of 15%, with at least 10% from the employer).

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