

# Climpact Inaugural Conference

Deadline: 15 July 2026 · 21:59

CLIMPACT — Charting the Landscape of Climate Litigation Impacts: An Interdisciplinary Framework and Open Access Database — invites submissions for its **inaugural international conference**, to be held at the University of Bari Aldo Moro on **12–13 October 2026**.

Climate litigation has become one of the most consequential instruments of contemporary climate governance. With cases now numbering in the thousands across every continent, litigation is reshaping regulatory frameworks, public discourse, and the boundaries of legal accountability for climate harm. Yet scholarship has not kept pace with this development in one critical respect: we still know remarkably little about whether, how, and under what conditions litigation actually produces measurable change beyond the courtroom.

This conference seeks to advance that inquiry. It brings together scholars to examine the real-world impacts of climate litigation against governments — the pathways through which judicial decisions, legal arguments, and litigation processes translate into shifts in law, policy, public perception, and governance — and to develop the methodological tools necessary for a rigorous, empirically grounded field of climate litigation impact research.

The conference is organised around keynote dialogues and parallel paper sessions. Twenty papers will be selected through this open call and allocated across four parallel sessions, grouped thematically in light of the conference programme. The detailed programme will be published separately.

## Confirmed Speakers

Joana Setzer (London School of Economics), Benoit Mayer (University of Reading), Francesco Sindico (University of Strathclyde), Ivano Alogna (BIICL), Annalisa Savaresi (University of Eastern Finland), Harro van Asselt (University of Cambridge), Anna Berti Suman (University of Padova).

## Themes

The conference welcomes submissions addressing the impacts of climate litigation from legal, socio-legal, sociological, political science, and interdisciplinary perspectives. We encourage both conceptual and empirical contributions, including case studies and original research examining the impacts of specific cases or sets of cases. Papers may engage with one or more of the following themes, which are indicative rather than exhaustive.

## **1. Defining and conceptualising impact**

What does it mean for climate litigation to "work"? How should we define, identify, and delimit the impacts of climate litigation against governments? How do we distinguish genuine causal relationships from mere correlation or temporal coincidence? What are the analytical boundaries between direct and indirect, intended and unintended, material and discursive impacts — and how useful are these distinctions in practice? How should we account for the possibility that litigation produces negative or countervailing effects, including political, social, or legal backlash? Submissions that test or refine these conceptual categories through the empirical analysis of specific cases or sets of cases are particularly welcome

## **2. Measuring impact: methodological frontiers**

What methods and research designs are best suited to capturing the multidimensional impacts of climate litigation? How can process tracing, counterfactual analysis, event studies, qualitative comparative analysis, content and discourse analysis, survey methods, and computational approaches contribute to a more rigorous evidence base? What are the respective strengths and limitations of legal, quantitative, and qualitative methods, and how can mixed-method designs overcome the shortcomings of any single approach? What data is available, what data needs to be generated, and what constraints does data availability impose on research design?.

## **3. Impact across governance levels and legal orders**

How do the effects of climate litigation manifest at the international, national, and subnational levels — and in the interactions between them? How do advisory opinions, landmark domestic rulings, and transnational litigation strategies produce cascading or cumulative effects across legal orders? What role do legal transplants, judicial dialogue, and citation practices play in diffusing litigation's influence? How does the distinction between monist and dualist systems shape the domestic uptake of international legal developments? Papers may include case studies tracing how specific rulings have generated effects across multiple legal orders or governance levels.

## **4. Impact on law, policy, and regulatory frameworks**

How does climate litigation transform legislative and regulatory landscapes? In what ways do judicial decisions drive the creation or revision of climate-related legislation, reshape administrative practices, or alter the implementation of existing policies? How do courts interact with legislatures and executive bodies in the aftermath of climate rulings, and what institutional dynamics facilitate or obstruct the translation of judicial pronouncements into policy change? How should we assess the legal effects of non-binding pronouncements, including advisory opinions? Contributions examining the legislative, regulatory, or policy impacts of specific cases through original empirical research are encouraged

## **5. Impact on public discourse, social mobilisation, and civic engagement**

How does climate litigation shape media narratives, public perceptions of climate responsibility, and patterns of civic mobilisation? What are the discursive and framing effects of landmark rulings, and how do these effects interact with broader social and political dynamics? How does litigation empower or marginalise different communities and actors, particularly in the Global South? Papers may include empirical studies analysing the discursive, mobilisation, or perception effects of specific cases.

## 6. Positionality, research ethics, and the politics of impact assessment

Who assesses, and does it matter? How should the positionality of researchers — including institutional affiliations, funding sources, and normative commitments — be accounted for in impact research? How should scholars navigate the tension between producing rigorous findings on backlash or negative effects and the risk that such findings may be instrumentalised by actors opposed to climate action? What principles of research integrity should govern this emerging field?

### Submission Guidelines

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Submissions should include an abstract of max 600 words, accompanied by a short biographical note (150 words maximum), via Climpact Application Hub by July 15, 2026.

Please indicate which of the themes your paper primarily addresses, though papers that cut across multiple themes are welcome. Abstracts should clearly identify the research question, the methodology or analytical approach, and the expected contribution. Both established scholars and early-career researchers are strongly encouraged to apply.

Authors of selected papers will be notified by August 10, 2026. There is no registration fee. CLIMPACT will provide travel support to a number of early-career researchers (doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and untenured faculty) whose paper is selected for the conference. Support includes accommodation for the duration of the conference, arranged directly by the project, and a contribution towards travel expenses.

### About CLIMPACT

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CLIMPACT is a four-year Starting Grant funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research (MUR) through the Fondo Italiano per la Scienza (FIS 3). The project provides the first large-scale, global, empirical research effort to systematically measure and evaluate the impacts of climate litigation, analysing a representative dataset of 500 cases through an interdisciplinary framework that integrates legal, sociological, and economic perspectives. For more information, contact [climpact.stg@uniba.it](mailto:climpact.stg@uniba.it).