Cooley

John Brown

Consultant - Law of Sea



john.brown@cooley.com

+44 (0) 20 7556 4410

London

International Arbitration
Public International Law
Blue Economy

John joined Cooley in 2016 as a consultant in the law of the sea following early retirement from the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO), where he was head of the Law of the Sea section.

John began his sea-going career when he joined the Shell tanker HOROMYA in 1974 and trained as a deck officer. He was appointed to the UKHO in 1993 after working as assistant to the harbourmaster at Boston, Lincs, and as a hydrographic surveyor in the offshore industry for several years. At the UKHO, he joined the small team of internationally acknowledged practitioners in the Law of the Sea section at the end of 2002, where he advised UK government departments on law of the sea matters, provided technical input to UK maritime zone legislation and applied his extensive technical experience during several successful major illegal fishery prosecutions which culminated in record fines against the plaintiffs. He was regularly called upon to provide input on sensitive law of the sea issues for both the Royal Navy and coalition headquarters in the Middle East, and he also was widely consulted by UK-based military commands and authorities. He also has been a member of the UK delegation during boundary negotiations. John became head of the Law of the Sea section in 2015.

John continues to work with several foreign governments on maritime delimitation, baselines and zone issues. He has taken part in a number of boundary negotiations, both bilateral and third-party adjudication – including acting on behalf of Nicaragua as scientific and technical adviser at the International Court of Justice and as technical adviser for the Maldives at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).

John has attended and presented papers on technical aspects of maritime boundary delimitation at international conferences, training courses and workshops on international boundaries – including the London International Boundary Conference; the International Boundaries Research Unit at Durham University; the Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore; King’s College London (where he is a visiting research fellow); and Lund University in Sweden. He also has been a member of the faculty at the annual summer academy held by the International Foundation for Law of the Sea at the ITLOS in Hamburg since 2008. He has run detailed training courses in international maritime boundary delimitation for foreign governments, as well as a number of capacity-building training workshops in technical aspects of the law of the sea on behalf of the International Hydrographic Organization.

John is a freeman of the City of London and a liveryman of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners. He is recommended by The Legal 500 UK for public international law.

Within the directory, a source states, ‘John Brown stands out at the core of the public international law team. With his prior background working in the government and military, he brings very important understanding of the clients’. Another source says, ‘ … his expertise has shown through his constant engagement with our matters even after office hours and across time zones. More importantly, John’s continued offering of clearly structured advice has been essential to our work and tantamount to our successes’.

Ever the optimist, John follows the fortunes of the Scotland rugby team and enjoys travelling to watch them play. He is a member of the London Scottish Football Club and the Somerset County Cricket Club.

Education

King's College London MA, International Boundary Studies, with distinction

Rankings & Accolades

The Legal 500 UK- Public International Law (2022 – 2023)