



SCOR Capacity Development Activities 2025

Prepared by Emily Twigg and Rebecca Zitoun

SCOR capacity development activities include a visiting scholar program, the POGO-SCOR fellowships, travel support to early-career scientists from developing countries to attend meetings and conferences, and the Regional Graduate Networks in Oceanography. Additional capacity development activities are carried out by the SCOR projects through Summer Schools.

SCOR has received support from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) since 1984 for capacity development activities. The largest portion of the funds are used for travel grants for scientific meetings, although a portion is used for SCOR's contribution to the POGO-SCOR Fellowships and partial support for the SCOR Visiting Scholars program.

SCOR also builds capacity through the encouragement of early-career and developing country scientists in SCOR working groups and projects.

SCOR Committee on Capacity Development (CD Committee)

The primary purpose of the SCOR Committee on Capacity Development (CD) is to oversee all SCOR's capacity development activities and to help the SCOR Secretariat manage these activities. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the CD committee are to:

1. Provide direction for all SCOR's existing capacity-development activities: participation of scientists from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in SCOR activities, POGO-SCOR Fellowship Program, travel grants, and provision of reports to libraries in developing countries.
2. Guide and assist SCOR Executive Director in development of new capacity-development activities, particularly the Regional Graduate Schools of Oceanography activity.
3. Assist SCOR-sponsored projects in developing their capacity-development activities.
4. Help SCOR arrange funding for existing and new capacity-development activities.

5. Assist SCOR in interacting with regional and international groups related to capacity development in ocean sciences, such as the ICSU regional centers, START, IOC regional programs, etc.
6. Members of the SCOR Committee on Capacity Development will be appointed for three years, with one additional renewal for a total period of service of 6 years.

In October 2025, the committee consists of eleven members, with one member completing their service this month. The SCOR Secretariat sought nominations from national committees for replacement members, focused on Oceania in anticipation of the future departure of the current chair.

Chair: Rebecca Zitoun (Australia)

Members:

- Sanae Chiba (Canada/PICES)
- Mauro Cirano (Brazil) - outgoing
- Ebenezer Nyadjro (USA)
- Nubi Olubunmi Ayoola (Nigeria)
- Viena Puigcorbé (Spain)
- Moagabo Ragoasha (South Africa)
- Sazlina Salleh (Malaysia)
- Paula Sierra (Colombia)
- Dale Webber (Jamaica)
- Sun Xiaoxia (China-Beijing)

The Capacity Development Committee met quarterly in 2025 (January, April, July, October). The committee reviewed Visiting Scholar applications (January) and travel grant applications (quarterly), and several members reviewed POGO-SCOR Fellowship applications along with other reviewers from POGO's network. The committee also used these quarterly meetings to advise SCOR on the capacity development plans for the new working groups, improvements to the capacity development programs, preparation for the One Ocean Science Congress and UN Ocean Conference, and funding scenarios.

SCOR Visiting Scholars

Since 2009, SCOR has enlisted the services of ocean scientists from both developed countries and developing countries, both recently retired and active, to teach short courses and to provide more extended on-site education and mentorship at developing country host institutions and aiming to establish future collaborations between the visiting scientist and the host institution.

The SCOR Visiting Scholars Program is a partnership between SCOR and local hosts. SCOR provides up to \$2,500 for airfare and local expenses for each fellow; local hosts often provide local accommodation and may support some other local expenses. Local support from host

institutions demonstrates institutional commitment to the visit. Information about the program is available at <https://scor-int.org/work/capacity/visiting-scholars/>.

In 2025, 17 applications were received, which is a small increase from the number of applications received in 2024 (15). Five new Visiting Scholars were selected to travel in 2025. However, one Scholar eventually canceled due to lack of response from their host institution. One of the selected Scholars postponed their trip to 2026 due to personal circumstances. The four Scholars are:

Babette Tchonang, Naval Research Laboratory, **USA**

Host Institute: University of Dschang, **Cameroon**

Topic: Oceanography challenges and opportunities in the Gulf of Guinea region

Visit Date: August 2025

Brit Finucci, NIWA(now Earth Sciences New Zealand), **New Zealand**

Host Institute: Miyaru – Shark Programme, **Maldives**

Topic: Deep-sea shark biology, fisheries collaboration, and conservation strategies

Visit Date: August-September 2025

Deepak Mishra, University of Georgia, **USA**

Host Institute: Berhampur University, **India**

Topic: Integrated Training in Remote Sensing of Coastal and Marine Environments

Visit Date: November 2025

Yohan Louis, New York University Abu Dhabi, **UAE**

Host Institute: **Papua New Guinea** University of Natural Resources and Environment

Topic: Coral molecular research

Visit Date: March 2026

SCOR Visiting Scholars are supported by a grant from the U.S. National Science Foundation (OCE-2346864) and dues payments by SCOR national committees.

POGO-SCOR Fellowship Programme

The POGO-SCOR Fellowship program is jointly funded by POGO (Partnership for Observations of the Global Ocean) and is designed to promote training and capacity building leading towards a global observation scheme for the oceans. The fellowship program is open to scientists, technicians, postgraduate students (preferably of PhD level) and post-doctoral fellows of developing countries and countries with economies in transition and involved in oceanographic work. The program has awarded 200 fellowships since 2001.

In 2025, five recipients were selected for the fellowship.

Kehinde Oluwasiji Olorunfemi, Federal University of Technology Akure, **Nigeria**
Host Institute: Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, **Bangladesh**
Topic: Unlocking ocean insights through modelling, data management and analysis

Marzieh Biglari, Ayatollah Boroujerdi University, **Iran**
Host Institute: University of East London, **UK**
Topic: Data-Driven Discovery and Forecasting of Ocean Surface Dynamics Using SINDy and PINNs Trained on Observation Data

Abhijith Raj, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, **India**
Host Institute: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, **USA**
Topic: Advanced training in Eddy Covariance data processing for wind-wave interaction studies and model roughness length improvements.

Mayukhmita Ghose, National Institute of Oceanography, **India**
Host Institute: Max-Planck-Institute for Marine Microbiology, **Germany**
Topic: Uncovering Microbial Carbon Processing Pathways in Mangrove Ecosystems Using Stable Isotope Probing and Omics Approaches

Matheus Batista, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande, **Brazil**
Host Institute: Universidade de Lisboa, **Portugal**
Topic: Phytoplankton Community Composition in Coastal Waters Using Satellite Remote Sensing

More information about the program can be found on the program website (<https://pogo-ocean.org/capacity-development/pogo-scor-fellowship-programme/>) and in the report from POGO to the SCOR annual meeting (https://scor-int.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/POGO-SCOR-Fellowships_2024_Report.pdf).

SCOR's contribution to the POGO-SCOR Fellowship program is supported by grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation (OCE-2346864).

NSF Travel Support for Developing Country Scientists

SCOR provides travel support for early-career scientists from low- to medium-income countries to attend ocean science meetings, conferences, workshops, and trainings. Requests for travel support are only accepted from meeting organizers, who select the recipients based on SCOR's eligibility requirements. Meeting organizers conduct their own selection process for grant recipients.

The following 2025 meetings were approved for support by the Capacity Development Committee:

Event	Date	Location	Award (USD)	Number of Recipients
Austral Summer Institute XXII	6-17 January 2025	Concepcion, Chile	5000	9
Fundamentals Of Ecology For Conservation And Restoration of Marine Systems – 9th edition of Ramon Margalef Colloquia	16-21 March 2025	Barcelona, Spain	3000	3
Integrated Indian Ocean Science Committee Meeting	5-9 May 2025	Port Louis, Mauritius	1000	1
IMBeR Future Ocean 3	13-16 May 2025	Shanghai, China	2025	1
One Ocean Science Congress	4-6 June 2025	Nice, France	8000	3
International Workshop on Mid-latitude Atmosphere-Ocean-Ecosystem Interactions: Processes, Predictability, and Habitability	16-18 July 2025	Fukuoka, Japan	4000	2
Gordon Research Seminar/Conference on Chemical Oceanography	19-25 July 2025	Manchester, USA	4000	2
World Congress of Malacology	4-7 August 2025	Sao Paulo, Brazil	4000	5
5th Annual International Workshop of the United States–West Africa Coastal Research and Resilience Consortium	18-21 August 2025	Accra, Ghana	6000	6
Gulf of Guinea Ocean Sciences Summer School (GGOSSS): Empowering Future Leaders in Marine and Coastal Research	25-29 August 2025	Dschang, Cameroon	3000	4
International Conference for YOUNG Marine Researchers - ICYMARE 2025	8-12 September 2025	Bremerhaven, Germany	2000	2
12th World Sponge Conference	9-13 September 2025	Vila do Conde, Portugal	2000	2

The 7th International Conference on Ocean Engineering	14-18 September 2025	Chennai, India	2000	2
SAME18: Symposium on Aquatic Microbial Ecology	28 Sep-3 Oct 2025	Barcelona, Spain	2000	1
Unraveling the Impact of Deoxygenation and Coastal Acidification in the Latin American Region: From Physical and Chemical Perspectives to Evolutionary Implications	20-24 October 2025	Puerto Ángel, Mexico	3500	3
21st International Conference on Harmful Algae	19-24 October 2025	Punta Arenas, Chile	4000	4
2025 GEOTRACES Summer School	17-21 November 2025	Cape Town, South Africa	7000	3
International Indian Ocean Science Conference	1-5 December 2025	Hyderabad, India	4000	3
Past Ocean Oxygen Workshop: Notable Hypoxic Events of the Geologic Past	10-12 December 2025	Raleigh, USA	2600	1
Total	19 meetings	15 host countries	\$69,125	59 recipients

Eight meetings in 2026 have been approved for funding so far.

SCOR travel grants are supported by grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation (OCE-2346864)

Regional Graduate Network in Oceanography (RGNO) - Research Discovery Camp at the University of Namibia

The concept of an RGNO originated in a meeting on the topic of “Graduate Education in Oceanography in Developing Countries as a Means to Understand Global Environmental Problems” in which attendees recommended the development of multinational graduate schools. The concept has evolved to encompass centers of networking and training within a region.

The African-RGNO began in 2014, building upon the foundation developed by Prof. Kurt Hanselmann (Switzerland) during two SCOR visiting scholar fellowships, and with financial support from the Agouron Institute and the Simons Foundation (since 2017). The A-RGNO offers annual Research Discovery Camps in Oceanography at the Sam Nujoma Campus (SANUMARC) of the University of Namibia (UNAM), in collaboration with the National Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform (MAFWLR; formerly the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources) of Namibia. The focus of these camps is to provide courses and hands-on training in the chemical, physical, and biological aspects of oceanography to students with a particular emphasis on the Benguela Current ecosystem.

The 2025 course was run from 29 September to 17 October 2025. This follows from two years of canceled courses in 2023 and 2024 due to technical problems with the R/V *Welwitschia Mirabilis*. In 2025, the schedule for the R/V *Mirabilis* changed and prevented the course from joining its cruise and instead a daily charter was used during the course for coastal data collection. This year's RGNO attracted 19 applications from various countries. African applications were from Tanzania, Mauritius, South Africa, Mozambique, and Namibia. International applications were from Argentina, Italy and India. Due to anticipated berth limitations on the RV *Mirabilis*, only 13 applications were accepted, although only eight participants made it to the program. Of the eight, six were Namibians. Some participants visas were declined and others dropped out due to various reasons.

The plan for a Master of Science in Marine Sciences to be initiated at UNAM in 2026 offers the opportunity for the RGNO to be tied to an academic program and for dedicated administrative capacity to support and sustain the program.

***Oceanography* Special Issue on A Vision for Capacity Sharing in the Ocean Sciences**

SCOR was a financial sponsor of the *Oceanography* special issue on A Vision for Capacity Sharing in the Ocean Sciences and two articles in the issue highlight SCOR capacity development programs:

Seeyave, S., L.A. Krug, E. Urban Jr., F.A. Beckman, S. Sathyendranath, and E. Twigg. 2025. Developing capacity for ocean science through visiting fellowships. *Oceanography* 38(1):14–19, <https://doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2025.134>.

Twigg, E., P. Miloslavich, E.R. Urban Jr., and R. Zitoun. 2025. Enhancing global ocean science networks: The impact of SCOR's Travel Grant Initiative. *Oceanography* 38(1):29–30, <https://doi.org/10.5670/oceanog.2025.106>.

Seeyave et al. (2025) summarizes the impact of the POGO-SCOR Fellowship Programme based on results from a survey distributed to fellows five years after completion of their fellowship. The survey results show that the programme has facilitated participation in new research

projects, implementation of new techniques, and long-term collaborations. The fellows in turn pass on their new knowledge to colleagues at their home institution. Hosts also identified benefits from new collaborations, including reciprocal exchange visits, joint publications, and joint projects. Several fellows have become involved in additional POGO and SCOR activities or otherwise become involved in international science projects.

Twigg et al. (2025) summarizes the data compiled between 1999 and 2023 on recipients of SCOR travel grants. In that time, over 1,300 recipients received more than \$1.26 million USD in total to participate in ~280 activities. The recipients originated from 83 countries, to attend meetings hosted in 45 countries. Only 23 recipients resided in countries with economies considered “low income” by the World Bank. The article reviews the exchange within and between continents, demonstrating that significant international exchange has occurred. Participants were most likely to either attend meetings on their own continent or in Europe, consistent with the general trend in international attendance at major ocean science meetings. This suggests that encouraging international meetings held in the Global South is a means of increasing participation in international activities by scientists in these regions. About 35% of the supported events were organized by SCOR projects and working groups and about 25% were organized by SCOR partners, allowing the program to serve as a means to increase participation specifically in international ocean science programs. Further understanding of the immediate and longer-term impact of the program can be better understood through the implementation of follow-up surveys for the recipients.

The content from Twigg et al. (2025), along with general information about the travel grant program, was summarized in a poster presented at the One Ocean Science Congress, included in an appendix to this report.

Enhancing Global Ocean Science Networks: The Impact of SCOR's Travel Grant Initiative



About SCOR's Travel Grant Program

SCOR provides travel support for early-career scientists from low- to middle-income countries to attend ocean science meetings, conferences, workshops, and trainings.



Program description and application

Who can apply?

Requests for travel support are only accepted from **meeting organizers**. Meeting organizers conduct the selection process for grant recipients. Applications to SCOR are reviewed quarterly.

Who is eligible to receive a travel grant?

Travel grants are intended for individuals meeting the following criteria:

- current student or within 10 years post-degree,
- involved in marine-related sciences,
- residing in a developing country,
- presenting at a meeting or participating in training, and
- have not received support from SCOR in the prior two years.

SCOR's program is guided by its priorities, but similar programs could be implemented by other organizations with eligibility requirements based on other regional or disciplinary priorities.



Austral Summer Institute XXII 2025



SOLAS Summer School 2018



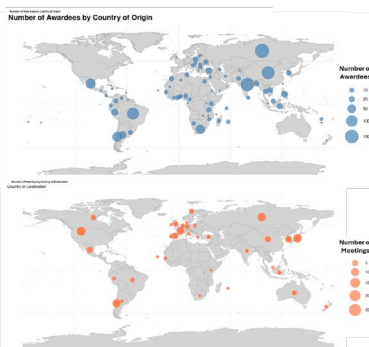
Trematodes 2024



GEOTRACES Summer School 2019

Program Impact and Lessons

Since 1999, SCOR has supported over 1,300 developing-country scientists from 83 countries to attend 280 ocean science meetings and trainings in 45 host countries.



Map of number of travel grant recipients by home country and number of meetings. Figure by Eduardo Klein (UTAS).

The countries with the most recipients also have relatively well-established oceanographic communities and have, or have had, membership in SCOR. Only 23 recipients resided in countries with economies considered "low income" by the World Bank.

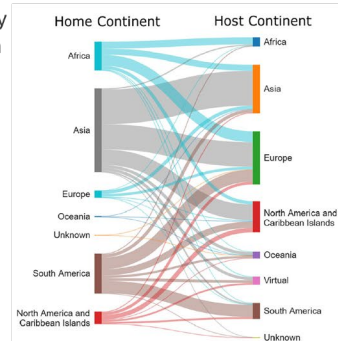
Participation from the lowest income countries is low.

The program has facilitated many opportunities for networking across continents.

Participants were most likely to either attend meetings on their own continent or in Europe (due to the large number of international events held there).

Travel within a continent could be favored due to the ability to obtain visas, lower flight costs, language, and interest in regional topics.

More international events need to be held in the Global South.



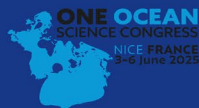
Relative number of recipients (indicated by line thickness) traveling from a given home continent (left) to event host continent (right). Produced using SankeyMATIC.

The program has returned benefits to SCOR by increasing participation in SCOR's activities, demonstrating value to member countries, providing complementary support to partners, and raising awareness of SCOR.

Read the article



Twigg, E., P. Miliutinich, E.R. Urban Jr., and R. Zitoun. 2025. Enhancing global ocean science networks: The impact of SCOR's Travel Grant Initiative. *Oceanography* 38(1) <https://doi.org/10.5670/oceanography.2025.108>.



SCOR's travel grant program is a sponsor of the One Ocean Science Conference

SCOR's capacity development programs are supported by grants from the National Science Foundation (currently OCE-2346864) and SCOR National Committee dues.