# N-POC fact sheet

Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC)

Official hashtag: **#N_POC**

Photo: Solomon Islands (Edvard Hviding)

## About the N-POC programme:

The Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC) is an ambitious partnership in research and PhD training between two geographically remote, structurally different, but thematically convergent institutions of research and higher education: the University of Bergen (UiB) in Norway, and the regional University of the South Pacific (USP).

## The main objectives of N-POC:

1. To build a strong interdisciplinary Pacific cohort of PhD researchers to address urgent challenges for ocean and climate;

2. To build new multidisciplinary Pacific research on the ocean-climate nexus for regional and global policy impact;

3. To build enduring partnerships between researchers and universities in Norway and the Pacific Islands.

## N-POC FACTS:

- N-POC is funded for 2021–2025 by Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

- The programme comprises 24 fully funded PhD scholarships at the USP within ocean and climate research, ranging from the natural sciences, to law, to the social sciences and humanities.

- PhD candidates will be recruited from the 12 member countries of the USP, and from the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) of Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.

- N-POC collaborates with the intergovernmental organisations of the Pacific region.

- N-POC will build on complementarity between the two universities. UiB is one of Norway's largest universities and has a strategic research focus on ocean, climate and global challenges. USP is the Pacific Islands region's own multi-country university with 12 member states, and has a focus on ocean and climate from its regional position at the frontline of climate change.

- The two universities have a long record of collaboration on research projects, performing arts, student exchange and shared initiatives of science-driven ocean and climate diplomacy.

- The collaboration between the two universities is managed through a broad Memorandum of Understanding.

- The N-POC programme is campus-wide, involving all schools and centres, and is managed by the Research Office at USP.

- All 24 PhD candidates are to be based at the USP, but will be supervised jointly by researchers from both universities, and will receive a joint degree.

- All candidates will be invited to a dedicated summer school programme at the University of Bergen.

**For further information and contact details, visit**: www.uib.no/n-poc

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Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

ALTHOUGH Covid-19 has unfortunately caused some delays, the N-POC Scholarship Programme is nearing its first stage of implementation in the second half of 2021, with the appointment of a full-time N-POC management team at the USP. In the recruitment process, N-POC scholarship applicants will be invited to consider a broad range of interrelated themes and topics. The following multidisciplinary research clusters for the PhD programme provide the initial foundation for N-POC's scope of inquiry. Although the six clusters represent but a fraction of possible research topics readily at hand for the ocean-climate nexus in the Pacific, they build on strong research records at both the USP and the UiB, and represent significant, urgent knowledge gaps.

### N-POC CLUSTER 1: Stewardship and Governance of the Ocean-Climate Nexus

What research can best support integrated ecosystem management considering the commitments by Pacific states to protect their Exclusive Economic Zones and manage and conserve the resources therein? Given the complexity of ocean and climate governance, how will levels of governance from community to national to regional to global, and corresponding legal arrangements, be optimized to meet the evolving needs of the region? How can stewardship and governance protect, support, and empower Pacific values, cultures, and futures while also addressing global fields of interest?

### N-POC CLUSTER 2: Securing Healthy Ocean, Islands and Coasts

How can ocean and climate science (including Pacific knowledge) be used to support integrated ecosystem management of islands and ocean for improved urban and land use planning for healthy ecosystems and people? What are the opportunities for nature-based solutions to help protect coasts and urban areas? How can ecosystem valuation provide economic benefits that can be reinvested in protecting the environment and supporting healthy communities and a healthy Pacific?

### N-POC CLUSTER 3: Water and Food Security for Islands and Ocean

How do we balance the need for fisheries revenue to support island economies with protecting Pacific food security? What innovations, such as emerging aquaculture technologies, are possible to provide greater food security for the region? How can water and sanitation systems be improved to address the projected increase in droughts, flood, and salt contamination while protecting coastal ecosystems and human health?

### N-POC CLUSTER 4: Envisioning a Sustainable Blue Pacific 2050 and Beyond

The intergovernmental Pacific Islands Forum is developing an ambitious vision process of envisioning a sustainable Blue Pacific continent that needs to be supported with ground-breaking academic research and innovation. How do we develop and utilize sustainable sea transport vessels and systems to better connect the islands and Pacific countries? What innovative approaches and technologies are needed to achieve a sustainable Blue Pacific? What governance arrangements make sense to achieve a sustainable Blue Pacific?

### N-POC CLUSTER 5: Addressing the Challenges of Global Warming and Sea Level Rise

According to the IPCC *Special Report on The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* released in 2019, the ongoing acceleration of ice melt projects sea level rise scenarios with 10% chance of increase rom the current global mean sea level rise of 3.4 mm per year to more than 5 cm per year. How can the Pacific rise to meet the challenges of rising ocean temperatures and sea level rise with improved forecasting, heightened resilience and regionally and globally strengthened governance?

### N-POC CLUSTER 6: Pacific Cultural Heritage and the Ocean-Climate Nexus

Cultural heritage in the Pacific – everyday life on sea and land, traditional knowledge, languages, poetry, storytelling, performing art, material culture and visual expressions on national and regional levels – draws on relationships between human lives and the ocean. How are forms of Pacific cultural heritage and traditional knowledge brought to bear on ocean and climate activism, and how are such practices converted across fields of political communication and diplomacy?

The **University of the South Pacific (USP)**, founded in 1968, with its headquarters in Laucala Bay, Suva, Fiji, is a key contributor to the development of Pacific Island countries and the region's premier University providing a primary source of high-quality graduates in the region. USP strives towards excellence in the provision of tertiary education and aims to build on and preserve the Pacific heritage. It proactively engages with the region and its island communities, and with international partners, on major development issues relevant to the region. The University has positioned itself as a leader in research and education that is original, modern, and readily applicable in addressing the problems and challenges faced by its member countries. Jointly owned by 12 Pacific countries, the USP is one of only two truly regional universities in the world, and is not only a higher education institute, but also an active agent of regional integration, with campuses in all 12 countries. The steady supply of graduates has contributed to meeting the growing development needs of the region for over 50 years. The USP is dedicated to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and has a particular strategic focus on SDG 13 and SDG 14, increasingly setting its targets for programme development with direct reference to a range of SDGs and specific targets of special relevance to the region. Number of students: 31.310 (2019). Number of employees: 1498 (2019). Website: www.usp.ac.fj

The **University of Bergen (UiB)** is an international research university dedicated to advancing research, science, and higher education. Founded in 1948, the university is young, but grew out of a much longer academic and scientific tradition which had evolved at the Bergen Museum since its foundation in 1825. The UiB focuses on basic research, PhD training, research-based teaching, and the development of academic disciplines in all fields across seven faculties. The University of Bergen has an EU office in Brussels and is involved in extensive international collaboration with universities on all continents. It is a member of several international university networks and organizations: the Coimbra Group, The European University Association (EUA), the International Association of Universities (IAU), the Utrecht Network, and Worldwide Universities network (WUN) are just some. UiB has a particularly strong set of experiences, expertise, and overall qualifications for this project's thematic focus on research and PhD training at the ocean-climate nexus. UiB's strategy sets out three main fields of multidisciplinary strategy for research and higher education: marine science, climate change research, and research on global societal challenges. The University has taken a lead in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals within Norway's university sector by hosting an annual national SDG Conference, and by developing strategic cross-campus efforts through the strategic initiative SDG Bergen. UiB has global leadership in UN agencies for SDG14. Number of students: 17 468 (2019). Number of employees: 3944 (2019). Website: www.uib.no.

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Cook Islands    Federated States    Fiji    Kiribati    Marshall    Nauru    Niue    Norway
                of Micronesia                            Islands

Palau    Papua New    Samoa    Solomon    Tokelau    Tonga    Tuvalu    Vanuatu
         Guinea                Islands

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