Call for Proposals (CFP)

North South CURRENTS Program

(Coordinating Unified and Responsible Research to Enable Transfer of Skills)

Sponsor: Ocean Conservancy, in partnership with mentor institutions

Cohort size: Up to 6 researchers

Award period: One month per awardee

About This Program

Marine carbon dioxide removal (mCDR)* is a set of approaches being examined to help remove carbon from the atmosphere utilizing the ocean. It remains an early-stage and unproven technology, and researchers around the world are working to establish whether it is safe and effective before it can be used at scale.

North South CURRENTS is the first program of its kind: a coordinated effort to extend equitable access to mCDR research capacity to investigators in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Researchers at well-funded institutions have significant advantages in advancing this work. Researchers in LMICs often face barriers that are far more difficult to overcome, including limited funding, restricted equipment access, travel constraints, and limited connections to mentors who have already addressed similar challenges.

This pilot program will pair a small group of LMIC-based researchers with mentor research institutions for one month of funded training, mentorship, and hands-on research support. Ocean Conservancy is working directly with institutions that hold funding dedicated to mCDR research and will seek to match each selected researcher with a mentor best suited to their goals, subject to availability of appropriate expertise, facilities and institutional capacity. The aim is for the CURRENTS Fellow to return to their country of residence and continue to exercise their newly gained skills, including applying training to advancing existing or new research.

*mCDR for the purpose of this fellowship is:

- Nutrient fertilization
- Macroalgal / biomass cultivation and sinking
- Ocean Alkalinity Enhancement (including production from blue carbon ecosystems)
- Direct Ocean Capture and Storage

Previous grant-writing experience is not required to apply. This CFP is written to walk applicants through each requirement step by step. Questions are welcome and encouraged. For questions about this CFP, please contact currents@oceanconservancy.org.

Who May Apply

- Researchers based in low- or middle- income countries working on, or interested in, mCDR-related science or field research.
- Individuals or small teams. Prior affiliation with a partner institution is not required.
- First-time applicants are welcome and encouraged.

Geographic Eligibility and Compliance

Participation is limited to researchers based in the approved countries listed in this RFA.

All applicants and relevant participating institutions are subject to applicable U.S. sanctions, export control, and other legal requirements. Ocean Conservancy will conduct appropriate compliance screening before confirming participation.

Ocean Conservancy will not provide funding or other program support where doing so would violate applicable U.S. laws or regulations. Final participation is conditional upon successful completion of these reviews.

Two Ways to Apply

Applicants may apply under either track below, whichever best fits their situation. Only one track should be submitted.

Track A: Training and Mentorship

This track is for researchers who wish to build new skills by training alongside an experienced mentor institution, rather than proposing an independent project.

The proposal should address:

- The area of mCDR research the applicant wishes to learn more about, and why.
- The obstacles that have made it difficult to build this skill or access this training in the applicant's current setting.
- How this training is expected to benefit the applicant's future research, institution, or local research community.
- Any mentor institution or program the applicant would like to work with, if one is already identified (not required).

Track B: Independent Research Project

This track is for researchers who already have a specific mCDR research question and are seeking funding and mentor support to carry it out.

The proposal should address:

- The specific research project to be conducted, and the existing mCDR goal and/or gap it advances, including a specific fundamental research gap as well as larger mCDR knowledge gaps.
- The research question and proposed methodology (methods, data, site or lab access).
- The outcome or data expected by the end of the one-month award period.
- The mentor expertise or equipment access that would make the project possible.

Application Requirements

Every application, regardless of track, must include five parts:

1. **Proposal narrative:** (3 pages maximum, single-spaced, not including references) Address the questions listed under the selected track above. Clear, direct language is preferred over formal academic style.
2. **Budget:** Using the budget guidance below, list the amount requested for each category applicable to the project.
3. **Budget justification:** (half a page) A brief explanation of why the requested amount is needed in each category. For example, if requesting the full research budget line, note how the funds will be used (reagents, sample analysis, local transport, and similar costs).
4. **CV:** (2 pages maximum) A current CV or resume covering education, research experience, and relevant publications or projects.
5. **Letter of support:** (1 letter) A letter from a local institution or organization with which the applicant has a strong working relationship, confirming support for the applicant's participation in this program. A university or government body is not required. Research centers, NGOs, community organizations, and informal research collectives are all acceptable, provided the relationship is genuine and the letter speaks to it directly.
6. **Applicant Eligibility Information:** Applicants must provide their country of residence, current institutional or organizational affiliation (if any), and identify any proposed participating institutions or collaborators. This information will be used to verify program eligibility and facilitate applicable compliance and travel reviews. Additional information, including citizenship, may be requested before participation is confirmed.

Budget Guidance

These figures are in US dollars and reflect the maximum per-researcher funding available under this pilot. Applicants are not required to request the maximum in every category, only the amount the project requires.

Line item	Maximum amount

Researcher stipend	$2,500 (one month)
Researcher accommodation	$2,500 (one month)
Researcher visa*	$10,000
Researcher flight	$2,500
Research budget (equipment, materials, analysis, local costs)**	$7,500
Maximum total per researcher	**$25,000**

*A substantial portion of this line item may cover refundable travel bonds. The treatment of refundable amounts and any subsequent reallocation of funds will be determined in accordance with the program's financial arrangements and will require prior approval.

**If visa expenses are significantly lower than the maximum allocation, applicants may propose using the difference to expand the research budget, subject to prior approval by Ocean Conservancy and the overall $25,000 USD ceiling.

Final approved budgets and arrangements for providing financial support, including direct payments, reimbursements, or administration through a partner institution, will be confirmed before participation begins.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be reviewed on the following criteria:

- Clarity of the training goal or research question.
- Feasibility within a one-month award period.
- Potential to advance safe, effective, and equitable mCDR research.
- Ability of the training or research to advance the applicant's career goals.
- Priority will be given to applicants with a demonstrated capacity to transfer and further develop skills within their country of residence following the fellowship.
- Reasonableness of the proposed budget in relation to the allowable planned activities.
- Applications will be evaluated in the context of their selected track. Final selections will also consider the availability of appropriate mentorship expertise and facilities.

Program Administration and Award Conditions

Ocean Conservancy is coordinating this program in partnership with participating institutions and may engage a third-party organization to support program administration. The specific

arrangements for providing financial and logistical support will be communicated to selected applicants before participation begins.

Selection is conditional upon confirmation of an appropriate mentor placement, completion of applicable eligibility and compliance reviews, approval of the final budget and execution of any required agreements.

Ocean Conservancy reserves the right to adjust program arrangements, the number of participants, or the program schedule if necessary. Submission of an application or notification of conditional selection does not create a financial commitment.

Timeline

Milestone	**Date**
Applications open	October 28, 2026
Applications close	November 27, 2026 at 11:59 pm Pacific Time
Cohort selected & notified (conditional selection)	First half of December 2026
Date one-month long mentorship must conclude	August 2027

Questions and Application Support

Applicants who are uncertain whether their project fits or who would like feedback before submitting may contact Amanda Carter at [acarter@oceanconservancy.org] by November 13, 11:59 pm Pacific Time.

How to Apply: Email applications to currents@oceanconservancy.org by November 27, 11:59 pm Pacific Time.