

Scientific Ocean Drilling Coordination Office

Recommendations on drilling proposals from the March 2026 SODCO Advisory Board Meeting

At the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) Scientific Ocean Drilling Coordination Office (SODCO) Advisory Board (SAB) inaugural meeting, the SAB developed several consensus items that should be of interest for Principal Investigators (PIs) writing drilling proposals to be submitted to NSF's Sub-Seafloor Sampling Program. This subset of recommendations is provided here for PI convenience. The compilation of all consensus statements and action items from the SAB meeting can be found on the [SAB web page](#) (see *Advisory Board Meetings*).

Consensus Statement 2026.03-1: The SODCO Advisory Board (SAB) supports the goals, objectives, and priorities of U.S. Scientific Ocean Drilling as outlined in a variety of recent planning documents and reports (e.g., [2050 Science Framework](#), [FOCUS report](#), [2025 FUTURE report](#), [2024 National Academies Consensus Study Report on Progress and Priorities in Ocean Drilling](#), and other recent ocean-focused NASEM reports). The SAB will assist NSF SODCO in remaining attuned to input from the U.S. science community while addressing these goals and objectives.

Consensus Statement 2026.03-11: The SAB emphasizes the importance of a Community Staffing Model for broadening participation in scientific ocean drilling expeditions and ocean drilling legacy asset projects and for assembling robust science teams.

Definition 2: The Community Staffing Model includes the following components: 1) a SODCO generated open call for participation to the U.S. community, 2) SODCO Advisory Board evaluation of the submitted applications and recommendations for staffing that consider career level, expertise, quality of the application, and need to broaden the community, 3) SODCO and expedition chief scientists' selection of offshore, onshore, and supporting scientists based on the recommendations from the SODCO Advisory Board.

Broader impacts of a Community Staffing Model are increased and wider representation of the U.S. scientific community in scientific ocean drilling, ensuring a pipeline of scientists at all career levels with inherent mentorship and hands-on training across the disciplines.

Consensus Statement 2026.03-12: The SAB recommends that 50% or more of a U.S. Scientific Ocean Drilling expedition or ocean drilling legacy asset project be staffed following the Community Staffing Model.

Consensus Statement 2026.03-13: The SAB recommends that NSF U.S. Sub-Seafloor Sampling Program proposals identify both the scientific expertise of the PIs and the additional science staffing expertise required to accomplish their proposed expedition objectives.

Consensus Statement 2026.03-14: The SAB recommends that PIs on NSF U.S. Sub-Seafloor Sampling Program proposals be part of the Expedition Science Team.

Consensus Statement 2026.03-15: The SAB recommends that NSF U.S. Sub-Seafloor Sampling Program PIs that propose drilling in international exclusive economic zone(s) and extended continental shelves consider establishing collaborations with appropriate scientists from the country/countries involved while developing their proposals.