

NF-POGO-SeaNetwork-UCT Shipboard Training aboard the *RV Agulhas*- SEAmester cruise hosted by University of Cape Town (UCT)

Report

Name of Trainee: Pathiraja Mudiyanseelage Pamoda Sewwandi

Name of Supervisor (Parent Institution): Dr. Upul Premarathne

Supervisor (Host Institution): Prof. Isabelle Ansorge

Dates of Training: 18 06 2024 to 28 06 2024

Topic of Training: 2024 NF-POGO-SeaNetwork-UCT SEAmester South Africa's Class Afloat

Section A

(To be completed by the fellow)

It is the responsibility of the trainee to forward this form to the host and parent supervisor, and to submit a fully completed version to the POGO Secretariat. Please note that the complete report will be made public on the OTP website; Private comments should be included in a separate confidential form.

1) Please provide a brief description of activities during the training period:

There were daily classroom lectures and deck work that ran parallel to the ASCA research programme. I was provided with an opportunity of research support to specialist scientist and I could get daily hands-on experience on deck training, data collection, sampling and data analysis. It was magical working with the full suite of oceanographic, atmospheric and biological ship-based instrumentation such as CTD, XBT as well as gaining experience on all biological net tows. In addition, we were given a chance to work on a specific scientific mini project related to our area of interest and the scientific research underway. I who was with the keen interest on joining on-board activities joined two such projects where one was on calculating radii and areas of eddies broken from Agulhas current moving to Atlantic Ocean using GLORYS physical ocean model and Okubo-Weiss parameter while the other was on mapping submarine canyons for a coelacanth expedition using QGIS

2) What applications of the training received do you envision at your parent institution?

All the equipment handling and practical knowledge gathered through this cruise will clearly improve my ways of applying theoretical knowledge in my parent university for my upcoming research and also for further higher education purposes. The projects that are involved adds up to my

oceanographic knowledge, group work skills as well as my work Experiences. Also, the connections that I made throughout this cruise on board will be few of the greatest achievements that I have made to create a path where I could envision my future in oceanography.

3) Please provide your comments on the Fellowship Programme.

Conducting such a fellowship program benefits students like me in a developing country with low facilities to reach such valuable hands-on experience. Being able to be on a full-on equipped research vessel could have been a dream for me if I did not receive this opportunity to be on board S A Agulhas with such an experienced scientific crew for 10 days straight. I also hope in future many students in similar situations globally can receive this opportunity of a shipboard training that can massively help them in improving their academic career.

PRINT NAME

P. M. Pamoda Sewwandi

Date: 13 / 07 / 2024

Section B

(To be completed by the host supervisor and returned to the trainee)

Please note that the complete report will be made public on the OTP website; Private comments should be included in a separate confidential form.

1) Please provide your comments on the performance of the trainee.

Pamoda Sewwandi, from the University of Ruhuna in Sri Lanka, recently participated in the SEAmester VII Voyage onboard the SA Agulhas II between 18th – 28th June 2024. Pamoda was one of 49 students from over 23 tertiary institutes across South Africa and represented POGO's inclusion via the @seaNetwork into this programme. Pamoda proved to be a hard-working student and demonstrated both dedication and enthusiasm as a member of the Tools of the Trade stream. Pamoda's experience was marked by a hands-on approach to marine science, allowing her to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. During her time on the vessel, she engaged actively with lecturers and fellow students. Her interactions with experts in oceanography and marine research not only broadened her understanding of the field but also fostered valuable connections with fellow student participants that will benefit her future studies and career.

Overall, Pamoda's performance on the voyage highlights the spirit of curiosity and commitment that the SEAmester program sets out to achieve in postgraduate students and early career researchers. I truly believe that Pamoda emerged from this experience with a wealth of knowledge and inspiration, that will benefit her future studies and academic path within the field of marine sciences. It was a pleasure to interact with Pamoda during the 10 day voyage,

- 2) **Is this exchange likely to lead to future collaboration with the trainee's parent institution? If so please give example(s) of how this collaboration may be pursued.**

Pamoda is very keen to advertise the programme within her own institution and I hope that we will receive other applications. It is important to the programme that South African students are exposed to other countries offering marine science degrees at postgraduate level.

- 3) **Please provide your comments on the Fellowship Programme.**

The programme is in its 7th year and has proven to be extremely successful with over 260 students from 26 tertiary institutes trained onboard the SA Agulhas II. As with all student programmes it is important that students gain experience across all marine disciplines, learn the value of teamwork and build up a network of friendships across all universities. Having international students participate is important as it forms friendships outside of south Africa and builds on potential opportunities to study overseas. For this reason, the POGO/@seaNetwork is an excellent platform to advertise these programmes.

PRINT NAME - ISABELLE ANSORGE



Date: 22 / 7 / 24

SECTION C

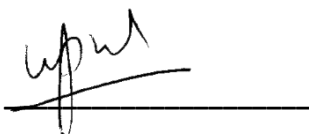
(To be completed by the parent supervisor and returned to the trainee)

Please note that the complete report will be made public on the OTPwebsite; Private comments should be included in a separate confidential form.

- 1) **Do you agree with the above comments, and do you have any additional feedback you wish to provide?**

Pamoda is the second trainee from the University of Ruhuna to be trained under the POGO initiative. I am very pleased with the hands-on experience and the onboard training she received. On behalf of the University of Ruhuna, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the POGO initiative, the Nippon Foundation, Prof. Isabelle Ansorge, and all other stakeholders of the program for providing this invaluable opportunity to one of our students. We look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

PRINT NAME: Upul Premarathne



Dr. Upul Premarathne
Head
Department of Oceanography and Marine Geology
Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology
University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka

Date: 25 / 07 / 2024