

Grassroots international collaboration for exploring the ocean: what oral histories reveal

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How do scientists from more than 20 countries collaborate effectively for decades on complex global projects? This talk uses the case of scientific ocean drilling – the world’s longest-running Earth science program, studying the sub-seafloor since 1968 – to explore how international cooperation is built from the ground up. Based on over 100 oral history interviews, archival research, and fieldwork aboard research vessels and scientific forums, the presentation shows how scientific drillships are more than research platforms: they become hubs for long-term collaborations, attracting international scientists, generating trust, and building long-lasting professional networks that not only advance science but also result in the successful management of international programs. In particular, I examine Japan’s role in shaping these grassroots networks and contributing to program governance. The study shows that enduring international relations through science depends as much on human relationships as on technological capacity or science funding, which are traditionally emphasized in national science policy.

This event was organized by Takehiro (Tak) Watanabe (Associate Professor, FLA, Sophia University)

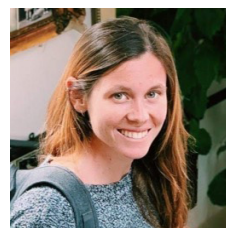
November 25 2025

18:00-19:30

**Room 301, 3F, Building 10,
Sophia University**

In person only

No registration required



Beatriz Martinez-Rius is a postdoctoral researcher at the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC, Japan). Before taking that position

in 2023, she obtained a PhD in History of Science at Sorbonne University (Paris) focusing on academic, industrial, and diplomatic interplays for seafloor exploration in 1970s France. She is the author of *New Deep Territories: A History of France’s Exploration of the Seafloor* (Chicago University Press, February 2026) and has led the project Oral Histories of Scientific Ocean Drilling (www.talesofoceanscience.com).

