



SUGANTHI DEVADASON MARINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli &
Recognised by University Grants Commission, New Delhi)

44 - Beach Road, Tuticorin - 628 001, Tamil Nadu, India

D.G. RAJAN
President and Secretary

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03.02.2023

To

ICRI Secretariat

Sub: Request to grant ICRI Membership - reg.

Dear Sir / Madam,

Greetings from SDMRI.

Established in April 1998, Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) is the first institution in the non-Governmental sector in India to offer Research and Higher Education in the discipline of Marine Science. By virtue of its unique and novel approach to strengthening marine research and capacity building to protect and manage the precious ocean wealth, SDMRI was recognized in 2000 by Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (MSU), Government of Tamil Nadu, as Research Centre for Marine Science, leading to Ph.D. program, which enabled SDMRI to add a new dimension to the field of marine research in India. Further, the University Grants Commission of Government of India recognized SDMRI in the year 2002 under Section 2(f) & 12(B) of the UGC Act, 1956 to teach up to Ph.D. degree and to receive central assistance. SDMRI has also been recognized since 2019 as a Scientific and Industrial Research Organization by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India.

SDMRI has the following key objectives: i) to identify and fulfill the research needs of marine and coastal ecosystems in India; ii) to promote higher education in marine science; iii) to encourage and enhance societal involvement in marine resource conservation; and iv) to assist the coastal communities in improving their social conditions and alleviating their economic hardships. In pursuit of the scientific aims and in its endeavour to transform the socio-economic status of the fishing populace, SDMRI is in the forefront of conservation and management of the coastal habitats such as coral reefs, seagrass beds and associated biodiversity through its research and monitoring programmes like survey and assessment for developing baseline data on corals and seagrasses. The baseline data have special emphasis on the status, distribution, and abundance of corals and seagrasses; on the threats and diseases that they encounter; on health monitoring; and on restoration and rehabilitation of corals and seagrasses.

SDMRI is the first institution in India to launch the programs of coral rehabilitation (2002) and seagrass rehabilitation (2008), and is working in close association with the Forest and the Environment Departments of Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN). So far, over 20 acres



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of degraded reef areas and 14 acres of degraded seagrass areas have been successfully rehabilitated with the support from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India (GOI), and the rehabilitated areas are monitored to record survival and growth and associated biodiversity. The ongoing task of coral monitoring, begun in 2005, has its main focus on coral health, reef resilience, coral diseases, spawning and recruitment, coral bleaching patterns and mortality, and coral recovery. Since 2000 SDMRI has been actively involved in awareness creation among coastal community and been instrumental in making the low-income fisher-folk aware about corals and their importance. The capacity building by SDMRI in terms of training / instructing the conservation staff in SCUBA diving and marine biodiversity identification is yet another milestone in further taking the conservation action to the next level in Marine National Park Management. From 2017 SDMRI's coastal ecosystem monitoring group has taken up the assessment of marine litter and microplastic in the marine environment (including coral reef ecosystem, estuaries and lakes) of Tamil Nadu, India to understand the status and abundance of plastic pollutants.

The implementation by SDMRI of the new Climate Change Adaptation Program called National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change of MoEF&CC, GOI, has yielded good results such as the restoration of a sinking island in Marine National Park in Tamil Nadu, rehabilitation of vast acreages of degraded corals and seagrasses and identification of new coral and seagrass patches in the offshore regions. SDMRI with support from MoEF&CC drafted the Rapid Response Plan for the mitigation of coral bleaching and disease outbreak in India in 2018.

SDMRI as part of its commitment to conserve and manage the coastal habitats, in particular the Coral Reefs, has made the following four Voluntary Commitments and successfully fulfilled them towards Communities of Ocean Action for Supporting Implementation of SDG 14.

1. Coastal Habitat Rehabilitation in Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu, India (Ref. # 27498)
2. Post-bleaching monitoring in Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu, India, in the wake of Climate change-caused bleaching and subsequent mortality in 2016, (Ref. # 27506)
3. Removal of marine debris from reef areas in Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu, India - to reduce the stress to the bleached corals and to support the recovery process (Ref. # 27510)
4. Assessment of microplastics in coral reef ecosystems of Gulf of Mannar, India (Ref. # 31814)

SDMRI recognizes and is fully committed to pursuing ICRI's objectives, particularly to supporting activities that contribute to the implementation of the ICRI Continuing Call to Action 2013 and Framework for Action 2013, for effective conservation and management of corals reefs worldwide.



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SDMRI is eligible and very much interested to become a member of International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), which would help SDMRI to get more recognition and exposure in this novel work to conserve and protect coral reefs. If given an opportunity to become a member, we will abide by the rules and regulations of ICRI.

I give below the Nodal Contact of SDMRI for further communications and follow-up activities:

Dr. J.K. Patterson Edward

Director

Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI)

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I therefore request that Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) may be granted Membership of ICRI.

Thank you and best regards,

Yours sincerely,

(D.G. Rajan)

President, SDMRI

D. G. Rajan
President

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