

Change is on the horizon!

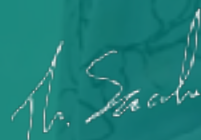
After a few cool El Niña years, in which the corals recovered very well, the forecasts pointed to renewed coral mortality in 2023/24. The thought that our hard work could be undone again after the disastrous 2016 kept us busy all year.

In February 2024, the sponge farmers of Jambiani celebrated their independence - one of the important goals of marinecultures.org has been achieved.

The announcement that our Managing Director Christian Vaterlaus will be retiring by the end of 2024 after 16 years of service to marinecultures.org, sparked the urgent question of "what next". Are we able to hire a new Managing Director? What will this person's job description look like? In consultation with the Executive Board and the team, we decided to advertise the position and were delighted to receive so many exciting applications.

marinecultures.org will continue! We are currently interviewing candidates and will soon be able to announce who will lead marinecultures.org into the next phase together with Ali and Connie.

Thomas Sacchi
President



Annual Report 2023/24



marinecultures.org

Aquaculture & Marine Conservation

Fourth global coral bleaching event – A disaster!

For coral reefs and for us, 2024 is a dark year. Rising seawater temperatures and El Niño caused devastating coral bleaching events not only in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Great Barrier Reef, but also in the Indian Ocean. From Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania down to Mozambique, the Seychelles, the Comoros, Zanzibar and the many small islands, it is an absolute disaster. A significant proportion of corals is affected, sometimes at depths up to 30 meters. This was the second coral bleaching event at a global scale since 1998.

A bitter setback. But we are not giving up! On the contrary, our coral reef reforestation projects are right on target and more important than ever. However, we need to adapt our areas of operation, methods and goals. We have just trained eight more coral reef reforesters and established two more coral nurseries in Kigombe, Tanzania and Msuka, Pemba with capacity for 20,000 coral babies.

Christian Vaterlaus
Managing Director





Sponge farming - The success story goes on.

The separation of the sponge farmers' cooperative from marinecultures.org was duly celebrated on February 24, 2024. Over 130 people attended the various speeches and the farmers made a great entrance. It has taken us around 10 years to develop this globally unique model. Today, the women farmers can manage and develop all areas of their business independently. They are proud. And so are we.

The SOMWAT research project has been extended until fall 24. The aim is to research the local seagrass meadows, as well coral and sponge reefs. Their ability of these habitats to act as a filter and improve the quality of coastal water is often underestimated, but represents an important ecosystem service that has an impact on local economic development. These habitats offer numerous benefits for the livelihoods of the local population.

We have started two new sponge farming projects on Pemba island and in Kigombe, Tanzania. In a first phase we are looking for commercially viable and cultivable sponge species with support from the local community. A potentially interesting sponge species was found on Pemba and we are currently testing if the successful Jambiani model can be adopted.

Unfortunately, we have no news from the Tunisian government.



Coral reef reforestation - quo vadis?

The coral reforestation approach needs a fundamental reorientation. Recurring coral bleaching events are likely to wipe-out all near-surface coral reefs in our region in the medium term. Coral reforestation needs to focus deeper waters or where cooler currents ascend from the depths. Only there will it be possible to restore the original diversity. Near the surface, only a few reefs will survive in the long term if temperatures stay at the current level. Experiencing the fascinating coral reefs by snorkeling will be a thing of the past.

This reorientation is currently taking place worldwide. Some have given up, but many coral rescuers are swallowing tears and picking themselves up again. Whenever possible, we will focus on 'Corals of Hope', which have survived high temperatures, while keeping the greatest possible diversity of species.

Thanks to an initiative by The Nature Conservancy a network for reforestation is being created for the West Indian Ocean region. The goal is to learn from each other and to share best practices. marinecultures.org will contribute its broad technical know-how and training experience.

Local fisheries management - Frustration and hope.

Our team's efforts to create healthier reefs are repeatedly undermined, by the continued use of destructive fishing methods. The protected area established by the Fisheries Committee and marked by us is not respected by many fishermen. Illegal fishing methods such as the use of ring nets in the intertidal zone are on the rise, especially among women. Unfortunately, the authorities are not able to stop these illegal activities.

Our team has started a new program to improve the situation and is focusing on regions where cooperative approaches and sustainable solutions are more likely to be successful. As part of the large-scale Blue Action Fund project, which focuses on the stabilization of the Pemba Channel, the expansion of the Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park (TACMP) and the creation of a new protected area on Pemba Island, all major NGOs in the region are for the first time working hand in hand. Participating NGOs cover the areas where they are most experienced, such as fisheries management, alternative livelihoods, microfinance, beekeeping, educational work, closed seasons, patrols in protected areas or the reforestation of mangrove forests. We make our contribution as a partner for sponge farming and the restoration of coral reefs.





Organization

marinecultures.org is a Swiss non-profit organization. Registered as an association in the trade register office of the Kanton Zurich (UID CHE-114.582.081). We are re-registered as an NGO with the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government in 2018 with the new No. Z0000008818. Our Tax Identification Nummer (TIN) is: 110-483-058.

We are financed by membership fees, donations and project support contributions. Donations are tax deductible in Switzerland.

Bank: Postfinance, Bern, Switzerland Account No: 85-51774-9, IBAN: CH77 0900 0000 8505 1774 9, BIC/SWIFT: POFICHBEXX

Statutory auditors: BDS Wirtschaftsprüfungs AG, Stammeraustasse 9, CH-8500 Frauenfeld, Tel.+41 (0)52 722 31 53, ralph.schaefli@bds-audit.ch, www.bds-audit.ch

Finance review (CHF)	2021	2022	2023
as per 31.12.2023			
Income			
Members	6'186	6'006	6'440
Donations	19'520	41'093	35'086
Grants	57'098	69'799	29'310
Others	16'029	5'881	0
Special Reserves			
In-house efforts	52'346	50'108	35'505
Total Income	151'179	172'887	106'341
Expenditure			
Projects *	122'667	137'443	73'203
Governance **	11'444	12'152	16'616
Total Expenditure	134'111	149'595	89'819
Increase/Decrease Income (Ref. previous year)	109.0%	111.5%	60.0%
Percentage of governance **	8.5%	8.1%	18.0%

* incl. 90% of the managing director's salary and social costs

** incl. 10% of the managing director salary and social costs

For detailed financial audit report 2023 see www.marinecultures.org

Who we are

marinecultures.org is a small non-profit organization on the island of Zanzibar; organized as an association and founded in Zurich, Switzerland in 2008. We are financed by membership fees, donations and project grants.

Why we are involved

Overexploitation of the seas destroys the ecological balance and coastal populations lose their livelihood. Our goal is to improve the quality of life of the population and protect natural resources.

What we are committed to

We want to preserve the diversity of marine fauna and create sustainable jobs through the development of aquacultures.

How we get involved

As an alternative to overfishing the oceans, marinecultures.org researches and develops ecologically compatible aquacultures in cooperation with the population.

Where we get involved

The focus of our activities is in Jambiani, a fishing village on the east coast of Zanzibar. We also operate individual projects on other coasts in Tanzania and East Africa.

Verein marinecultures.org

Kalkbreitestrasse 6, 8003 Zürich Switzerland, +41 79 479 48 01

Association marinecultures.org Zanzibar

House 65, 72108 Jambiani (Kibigija) Zanzibar, +255 783 357 357

info@marinecultures.org, www.marinecultures.org



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