



UNIVERSITY OF KERALA

Kerala – Norway collaboration: Workshop on Marine Debris and Microplastics Pollution at Kerala University

To strengthen Kerala's long collaboration with Norway, the honourable Chief Minister of Kerala visited Norway in 2022 and initiated an action plan for academic exchange and research collaboration. The Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries of the University of Kerala has been awarded the prestigious Erasmus+ Project (ECOMARINE), supported by the European Union, with a specific target to establish a marine monitoring lab to document marine life from the negative consequences of climate change and the disposal of plastic debris. With these two initiatives in the backdrop, an International Workshop titled “Marine Debris And Microplastics Pollution: Assessment And Characterisation” will be held during 29-31 May 2023, to kickstart this collaborative effort.

Dr. Andrew Booth, Chief Scientist and Research Manager, Observation and Ecosystem group at SINTEF Ocean, Norway, is the Workshop Director. A leading researcher in analytical chemistry and environmental toxicology, marine pollution, micro-plastic and nano plastic research, he has been associated with policy formulation of the European Union in marine debris management. On 30th May, Dr Booth will also meet the Minister for Higher Education Dr R Bindu, to discuss possible collaboration with Norwegian Researchers and the exchange of faculty/students. This strategic partnership with the Norwegian institute aims to combine the expertise and resources of both regions to develop innovative solutions and promote sustainable practices for a cleaner and healthier marine ecosystem.

The Marine Debris workshop, supported by Ecomarine Project and Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute, will be inaugurated on 29th May in the presence of Dr Adeela Abdulla, Director of Fisheries, and Dr Anil Kumar, Registrar, University of Kerala. The Minister for Higher Education will also release the coffee table book published by the University of Kerala under the Ecomarine project, titled "PLASTICS IN THE OCEAN- Source to Sea: Pollution to Solution", authored by Biju Kumar and Suvarna Devi.

“The workshop will be attended by selective fifty participants from all over India and will focus on the methods of marine plastics sampling and characterisation,

advanced research in micro/nano plastics pollution, and a special open forum on “Emerging Trends in Marine Debris and Microplastics Research, Identifying Knowledge Gaps Relevant to India and the Way Forward” informed Prof A Biju Kumar, coordinator of the workshop. Incidentally, the theme of World Environment Day, 5th June 2023, is “Beat Plastic Pollution”.

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