

Reef Renewal Bonaire Appoints Francesca Virdis as Executive Director

Summary

- Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire has appointed Francesca Virdis, one of the organization's founders and former Managing Director, as Executive Director.
- Virdis returns after serving as Restoration Strategy & Planning Lead at KAUST's Coral Restoration Initiative in Saudi Arabia, one of the world's largest coral restoration operations.
- This marks a new phase of strategic development for RRFB as the organization scales restoration efforts and strengthens international collaborations.

(Bonaire, Dutch Caribbean) The Board of Directors of Reef Renewal Foundation Bonaire (RRFB) is pleased to announce the appointment of Francesca Virdis as Executive Director. A co-founder of the organization and former Managing Director, Virdis returns to guide the foundation's strategic direction as coral reefs face escalating threats worldwide.

As coral reefs in the Caribbean confront intensifying pressures from climate change, disease, coastal development, and water quality impacts, the need for action has never been greater. Over the past decade, RRFB has grown from a small initiative into one of the region's leading coral restoration programs, demonstrating that active restoration can accelerate recovery and strengthen reef resilience.

Virdis played a central role in the creation and development of RRFB. As Managing Director from the organization's start in 2012, she established its network of coral nurseries and outplanting sites, tested and implemented innovative restoration techniques, and built lasting partnerships with local dive shops, volunteers, and collaborators around the Caribbean.

Most recently, Virdis served as Restoration Strategy & Planning Lead at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in Saudi Arabia, contributing to the development of one of the world's largest coral restoration programs.

"I'm excited to return to Bonaire and build on the strong foundation we've created over the years. The next phase for RRFB is about strengthening global partnerships and collaborations that allow us to scale our impact and continue restoring reefs in a meaningful and lasting way," said Virdis.

In this leadership structure, Ernst Noyons expands his role as Director of Operations, ensuring strong execution across the organization's growing footprint, and in overseeing the implementation of RRFB's restoration programs both in the water and on land via RRFB's Coral Laboratory, currently under construction.

“We are incredibly proud of the meaningful work done to date by RRFB. We also know that we have a tremendous amount more to do - both in the water and on land - to protect and restore the biodiversity of the reefs on Bonaire,” said David J. Fishman, President of the Board of Directors of RRFB. **“We are very excited to engage Francesca in this new role as she brings her unmatched coral restoration experience and her expert global network back for the benefit of Bonaire. As she will be working closely with Ernst and our senior management team, the Board feels RRFB is now very well positioned to meet the challenges the reefs of Bonaire face now and into the future.”**

As coral reefs in Bonaire and around the world face unprecedented pressure, RRFB is committed to advancing coral restoration in the Caribbean and strengthening partnerships locally and internationally.

Photos

Please credit **Max Rouwenhorst - Evoke Visuals**. Download the high-resolution photos [here](#).

