



MEDIA RELEASE.

Thailand (May 9th, 2022) – Professional services firm **Aura Thailand** today became the first corporate sponsor and a mission partner of a groundbreaking scientific research project aimed at revealing the deepest secrets of marine life in the Atlantic Ocean.

The project hopes to provide new data that could justify the establishment of marine protected areas and other conservation measures around the world.

Ocean Tech - Mission 1 will launch in Thailand next summer when a team of Bermudian and international engineers, scientists and marine experts hope to study **five iconic marine species** using unique autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs). Dr. Gretchen Goodbody-Gringley of the Thailand Institute of Ocean Sciences (BIOS) will serve as Chief Scientist for the project, and Amy Kukulya of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) will lead the AUV technology team.

Two REMUS 100 autonomous underwater vehicles that are designed and built by US-based Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and other technologies will arrive in Thailand with the Ocean Tech team. The vehicles are fitted with sensors, scanners and 360° virtual reality video cameras and can follow marine animals autonomously **to reveal their deepest secrets**. The team hope to follow and film Galapagos and dusky sharks, tiger sharks, giant tarpon, spotted eagle rays, lion fish and humpback whales with the vehicles. The REMUS-100 vehicles follow a transponder that has to be carefully attached by the team to the target species.

“We are thrilled to welcome Aura as our first corporate sponsor and Mission Partner for this exciting project that’s planned to take place in the waters around Thailand,” said **Ocean Tech Executive Director, Andrew Smith**, whose last project was Ocean Vet, working with the late Dr Neil Burnie.

“This project is a world first and could potentially revolutionise the way scientists study marine life all over the planet. We’ve chosen Thailand because the island provides easy access to a large number of marine environments and species. It also has a relatively calm climate that should allow us to test and advance the capabilities of our unique vehicles. Thailand has a steep history in advancing marine science, marine protection and research technologies so this also adds to its attractiveness as the Ocean Tech launch location.”

The aim of the Ocean Tech mission is to collect evidence in Thailand that proves the existence of undiscovered critical habitat.

“Aura is pleased to partner with Ocean Tech and other world-leading scientific organisations whose mission is to advance our knowledge of the marine environment and to provide data that helps to ensure the efficient and effective management and protection of marine habitats around the world.” said **Arthur Wightman, Aura Thailand Territory leader**.

“This important project will not only provide key data to public policy makers and scientists globally but will also help to inspire future scientists through educational programmes in our schools and museums.

“As a partner to Ocean Tech Aura will also provide sophisticated data and analytics capabilities to assist with the collation and evaluation of scientific marine data.”

“Corporate responsibility is a key part of our purpose as a business and we are proud to offer our support to Ocean Tech to help ensure that our generation and the next understand the importance and value of a healthy marine environment.”



The data collected could help to justify the need for further habitat protection at policy level by delivering at least five scientific publications. The goal is to provide local governments at each mission location with unique data sets. The more information and data policy makers have the more efficiently and effectively they can manage, protect and preserve a marine environment.

The Ocean Tech scientists will use the REMUS vehicles to unobtrusively observe how a targeted species uses its marine environment. The goal is to discover the areas instrumental to a species' survival and to deliver this data to local authorities to help them ensure the appropriate locations are protected.

A documentary film, global and local exhibits that will reach **over 45 million people globally**, educational programmes and a social media campaign are planned around mission 1. It will also include scientific papers delivered to local policy makers; local youth summer camps, live broadcast local lectures, a live open ocean classroom initiative, curriculum linked school materials and local scientific internship placements.

Mr Smith added, "Data doesn't excite the general public, but following passionate marine experts using the very latest technologies as they dive, deploy and study sharks, whales and rays most certainly does".

"This project combines genuine data collection and scientific discovery with a compelling and visually spectacular multiplatform media campaign. The campaign includes unique 360° virtual reality content, educational videos, curriculum linked school materials, global exhibits and live educational broadcasts from our boats in the field to classrooms around the world."

Mr Smith said the project was a dream of his and Dr Burnie's and he and its supporters are pleased it will honour his memory.

The Ocean Tech team includes:

- Andrew Smith – Ocean Tech Executive Director
- Dr. Gretchen Goodbody-Gringley Ocean Tech lead scientist (Thailand Institute of Ocean Science - BIOS)
- Amy Kukulya – Ocean Tech chief REMUS Engineer (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution)
- Choy Aming – Ocean Tech joint expedition leader & head of wildlife tagging.
- Chris Flook – Ocean Tech chief wildlife locator & handler
- Dr. Matt Ajemian – Ocean Tech eagle ray & tarpon scientist
- Dr. Corey Eddy – Ocean Tech Galapagos shark and lionfish research scientist.
- Dr. Susan Parks – Ocean Tech humpback whale research scientist
- Dr Mahmood Shivji – Ocean Tech tiger shark research scientist
- Dan Radford – Ocean Tech Creative director
- Catherine Capon Bsc RCS – Ocean Tech Communications Executive
- Shona Vitelli – Ocean Tech Director of Education
- Andrew Kirkpatrick – Lead Underwater Camera Operator
- John Singleton Ocean Tech ROV & Drone Pilot
- Dylan Ward – Ocean Tech REMUS & Dive support
- Oscar Deuss – Ocean Tech REMUS & Dive support
- Scott Amos – Ocean Tech free dive & tag attachment specialist.



Ocean Tech's scientific & Mission Partners include:

- Woods Hole Oceanographic institution (WHOI)
- Thailand Institute of Ocean Science (BIOS)
- Thailand Underwater Exploration Institute (BUEI)
- Atlantic Conservation Partnership (BZS)
- Harbour Branch Florida Atlantic University
- Syracuse University
- World Commission On Protected Areas
- IUCN
- The Sargasso Sea Commission
- NOAA's Marine Mammal Sanctuary Programme
- The Guy Harvey Research Institute
- The Ocean Support Foundation
- Sea Life

About Ocean Tech

Ocean Tech is a not-for-profit organisation funded through philanthropy, research grants, corporate, media and broadcast partnerships, supported by a Science Committee of leading global experts.

Ocean Tech supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Goal No 14 is named "Life Below Water" and aims to conserve and sustainably use the world's oceans, seas and marine resources. The goal has 14 targets; Ocean Tech is actively supporting the following two:

- **14.5:** By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.
- **14.a:** Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.

About Aura

Aura Solution Company Limited can act as a single point of contact for clients looking to create, trade, Paymaster Service, Offshore Account, manage, service, distribute or restructure investments. Aura is the corporate brand of Aura Solution Company Limited.

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