# MarineGEO Research Agreement:

# [Site name]

(Date 2023)

# Background

The Marine Global Earth Observatory (MarineGEO) is a collaborative research program designed to track and diagnose change in coastal marine environments, biodiversity, and ecosystems via coordinated observations and experiments across a global network of research sites. The Smithsonian coordinates biological surveys and experiments among partners worldwide, using shared, standardized protocols to ensure comparability across the network, and a central data management system for data submission, management, and sharing.

This agreement summarizes the core MarineGEO research to be conducted at the [Site] node, along with the responsibilities of the partner organization and the Smithsonian, during the current agreement. This is a good faith agreement (i.e., not legally binding) between Smithsonian MarineGEO and the partner institution for a period of five years, renewable by agreement of both parties, and complements the Memorandum of Understanding (if any) between our institutions.

# The MarineGEO partner: Responsibilities

All partners in the MarineGEO network agree to three basic ground rules. Each partner must: (1) conduct a set of research activities using standard MarineGEO protocols; (2) openly share the data in a common repository; and (3) accept responsibility for providing staff, infrastructure, and supplies to complete this work locally at the site(s). Required core research activities include:

1. Conduct surveys (annually unless otherwise agreed) of biological communities, ecosystem processes, and key environmental parameters in the agreed habitats (see Table 1) exactly following MarineGEO’s standardized protocols;
2. Participate in MarineGEO’s network-wide research project each year as appropriate depending on project focus;
3. Submit data resulting from the specified research in agreed format promptly (within 6 months of collection) to MarineGEO Central for long-term archiving and sharing;
4. Respond in a timely way to inquiries and assist the MarineGEO Central team in QAQC of the partner’s submitted data and metadata;
5. Abide by agreements regarding network priorities for publication of the data.

# Smithsonian MarineGEO Central: Responsibilities

MarineGEO’s lead team at the Smithsonian (i.e., MarineGEO Central) is responsible to:

1. Develop and maintain a “toolkit” of standardized protocols and data templates to advance research that can be rigorously compared across the network;
2. Provide training for partners in effective use of network science protocols and templates;
3. Assist partners in QAQC and formatting of submitted data for deposition in the MarineGEO Central data system, and ultimately for public release, within two years of collection unless otherwise agreed;
4. Issue citable digital object identifiers (DOI) that clearly attribute the original data to the primary contributor(s);
5. Manage network data securely and effectively in a central data system accessible to partners for data submission, QAQC, storage, retrieval, and basic visualization;
6. Lead coordination of the network’s ongoing research and projects, from planning and implementation to analysis and publication;
7. Communicate regularly with partners and convene the network community periodically, in person and/or virtually, for science, feedback, and networking.

# Core values and code of conduct

MarineGEO is a global network and community. The success of our shared mission depends on sustaining a welcoming, collaborative, environment for everyone involved. Every MarineGEO partner is responsible for abiding by *MarineGEO’s Values Statement* and Code of Conduct, both of which are found on the [*Guiding Documents*](https://marinegeo.si.edu/about-us/guiding-documents) section of the website. These agreements commit each of us to fostering a community of practice that strengthens and enriches our individual members and our collective science.

# Authorship

By contributing data to MarineGEO according to the approved protocols, you are automatically included as a co-author on core papers that include that data, provided that you remain actively engaged, follow deadlines, respond to queries, and contribute substantively to the MS throughout the process. We encourage papers based on subsets of MarineGEO data, but these should be conceptually distinct from planned network papers, taking care not to compromise the power of the full network, and should be discussed with MarineGEO Central in early stages of development.

# Agreement

We agree that the **MarineGEO [Site]** partner site will conduct the required research (Table 1) annually during the term of this agreement in the following habitats: [examples: seagrass, artificial habitat (dock panels).

Agreed on [date]:

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J. Emmett Duffy, Director [Name, title]

Tennenbaum Marine Observatories Network [Institution line 1]

and MarineGEO Program [Institution line 2]

Smithsonian Institution

**Attachment: Table 1**. Core research requirements of the **MarineGEO [Site]** partner site, by mutual agreement of [Institution] and Smithsonian MarineGEO Central. Cells marked with X are required core research activities, and cells marked with O are optional.