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# **Sociedad Ambiente Marino Strengthens Its Board of Directors** <sup>[1]</sup>

Submitted on 20 December 2025 - 3:19pm

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## **Original Source:**



Fabiola Rivera Irizarry assumes the vice presidency of the marine organization

The president of the Society for the Marine Environment (SAM), Frances Candelas, officially announced the selection of doctoral candidate Fabiola Rivera Irizarry as the organization's new vice president during the General Assembly held with active members of Sociedad Ambiente Marino, Inc.

"Today I am pleased to announce that Fabiola Rivera Irizarry will assume the vice presidency of our organization. This appointment recognizes her trajectory, commitment, and leadership within SAM," Candelas stated.

Rivera Irizarry, a biology professor at Universidad Ana G. Méndez–Gurabo, is a Ph.D. candidate who began her involvement with SAM as a student and has since maintained active participation in marine research and conservation projects. She holds a bachelor's degree in Coastal Marine Biology from the University of Puerto Rico in Humacao and graduate studies in Biology with a specialization in Coral Reef Ecology from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. She has extensive experience in research on coral ecology, physiology, and immunology, as well as in the development of management, restoration, and rehabilitation strategies for reefs. Since 2014, Rivera Irizarry has worked on research projects, coral restoration, and environmental monitoring. She has been a key member of the SAM team in projects carried out across Puerto Rico, including Culebra, San Juan, Aguadilla, and Cabo Rojo, in collaboration with entities such as DRNA, NOAA, and Sea Grant.

"It is a privilege to be part of such a committed team. Taking on this role fills me with enthusiasm and responsibility. I hope to inspire more people to get involved in protecting our ocean and to promote research, restoration, and education projects that ensure a sustainable future for our coasts," said Professor Rivera Irizarry.

Frances Candelas also highlighted the strength of female leadership within the Board of Directors, where the president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary are women committed to the conservation and protection of the marine environment. In addition, the Board includes other members who bring diversity and experience to the team. "With this combination of talent and commitment, and with the support of all our members, we will take our efforts to a new level, especially as we prepare to celebrate our organization's 25th anniversary next year," she concluded.

### **About the Society for the Marine Environment (SAM)**

SAM is a nonprofit organization founded 24 years ago—professional, comprehensive, and forward-looking—committed to conservation, community education, rehabilitation, protection, and restoration of coral reefs, seagrasses, mangroves, and other vital coastal ecosystems. It also serves as a working laboratory that promotes educational, research, and professional development experiences for new generations through the generation of empirical evidence, the promotion of civic empowerment, and the fostering of transformative education to support sustainable development. Visit [www.sampr.org](http://www.sampr.org) <sup>[2]</sup> to learn more about projects focused on restoring and protecting our marine environment.

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