



## **ZMT Alumna and Ambassador: Mehrnoush Tangestani, Iran (Alumni Ambassador for Iran, New Zealand, Australia and Fiji)**

### **What was your position at ZMT?**

I was a research fellow for three months under the Joint NAM S&T Centre – ZMT Bremen Fellowship in Tropical Coastal Marine Ecology and Biogeochemistry. I was originally going to study the effect of a combined nutritional diet based on probiotic bacteria and PUF-rich microalgae on the growth and survival rate of sea cucumbers, but the animals got sick and died as soon as I arrived at ZMT. I realised that disease was a serious problem in the aquaculture industry, but there were only very few studies on it. Therefore, I decided to shift my research to the cause of that lethal disease. Although it was very stressful to deal with an unforeseen proposal change in such a short period of time, the result was definitely worth it. I'll never forget the valuable help and support I received from the kind people at the ZMT BioLab and the MAREE.

One of my best memories was the perfect taste of the hot chocolate in the ZMT coffee room which I haven't been able to find a match for in New Zealand so far! Another great memory was my first real Christmas! In my home country, Iran, Christmas is not a public holiday, and my husband and I really enjoyed spending it in Bremen while I was working at ZMT. December is just a wonderful time in Germany with everyone preparing for Christmas and the New Year.

### **How did you benefit from your time at ZMT?**

I've always been interested in applied microbiology. ZMT offered me the opportunity to gain some knowledge in the fields of marine microbiology and aquaculture which I would really like to follow up on as part of my research in the future. My time at ZMT was my first experience working at an international research center abroad, and it definitely helped me to become more confident about my potential to cooperate effectively with international scientists in the future.

### **What happened since you left ZMT?**

Just a week after I left ZMT, I moved to New Zealand and started my PhD thesis at the University of Canterbury. I am currently involved in some research about bioactive molecules originated from marine resources (marine microbiology and microalgae studies), which is closely related to my previous activities at ZMT.