

Ninth pre-congress Special Report provides case study of how to sustain and grow historic coral industry



MILAN, ITALY: AUGUST 20, 2026 – With little more than two weeks to go to the opening of the 2026 CIBJO Congress in Vicenza, Italy, on September 4, 2026, the ninth of the pre-congress Special Reports has been released. Prepared by the CIBJO Coral Commission, headed by Vincenzo Liverino, the report provides an extended case study of how the historic Italian precious coral centre of Torre del Greco has worked not only to protect its heritage, but to sustain and develop its industry for future generations.

“The town remains one of the foremost centres in the world for the working of coral, with numerous companies and workshops, and an economy oriented outward to international markets,” Mr. Liverino explains. “Many of its houses are also its workshops, with the leading businesses having passed through four, five and six generations of the same families, with children learning to understand the material at their parents’ and grandparents’ benches long before they make a living from it.”

“The value of precious coral, in other words, is not only in the rarity of the raw material. A great deal of it is added, here, by people,” he adds.

To protect its very distinctive brand, Torre de Greco has taken advantage of a decision by the European Council to extend its geographical indication protection, which is a legal framework long familiar to the food and wine industries, such as the insistence that “Champagne,” for example, can only be used to describe sparkling wine from that particular region of France. Since the end of 2025, the European Union Intellectual Property Office has extended such protection also to specific craft and industrial products, enabling the Italian town to secure specifications for its coral and the cameos it produces.

Other measures have been taken as well, Mr. Liverino writes. Torre del Greco’s Francesco Degni State Art School trains young engravers and coral workers, bringing new hands to the bench. “Crucially, renewal does not mean discarding the hand-skill that defines the craft— it means giving it new reasons to attract talent,” he notes.

Also, in May 2026, Torre del Greco hosted the first edition of the Precious Sea Summit, the first edition of a conference devoted specifically to the precious organic materials of the sea.

Among the speakers at the event was CIBJO President Gaetano Cavalieri, who pointed out that the value of coral goes well beyond price. The worth of the material, he argued, is measured in the quality of the businesses that handle it, in the tradition carried by artisan families, and in the sector’s ability to hold beauty, ethics and responsibility toward the sea together. It is an emblem, in his words, of how a strong local identity and global competitiveness can reinforce one another.

“As the only jewellery-sector organisation holding special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and a member of the UN Global Compact, CIBJO is formally engaged with the Sustainable Development Goals — including those on decent work and economic growth, sustainable communities, and responsible production,” writes Mr. Liverino at the conclusion of the Special Report. “That mandate is precisely why CIBJO is well placed to champion the livelihoods of people involved in this ancient craft. In doing so we are defending skilled jobs, intergenerational know-how and a responsibly managed marine resource.”

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The World Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO) is the international jewellery confederation of national trade organisations. CIBJO's purpose is to encourage harmonisation, promote international cooperation in the jewellery industry and to consider issues which concern the trade worldwide. CIBJO's chief mission is to protect consumer confidence in the industry. The World Jewellery Confederation is the sole jewellery industry organisation to have Special Consultative Status with the United Nation's Economic & Social Council (ECOSOC) and is a member of the UN Global Compact.

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