

ECOALF FOUNDATION IMPLEMENTING THE UPCYCLING THE OCEANS PROJECT

The [Ecoalf foundation](#) was born in Spain in 2015 to support the revolutionary project [Upcycling the Oceans](#). The project is a worldwide adventure created with the support of the fishing industry to help remove and recover marine waste that is destroying the oceans and close the loop by transforming it into top quality yarn and fabrics to produce high-quality products.



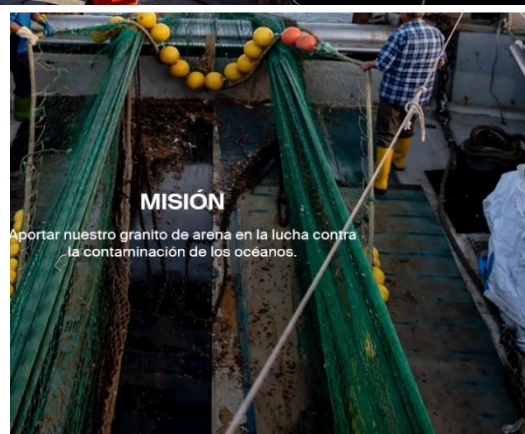
More than 4000 fishermen collaborate daily with the project on a voluntary basis to recover the trash caught in their nets. The initiative today involves 1000 boats located in 72 ports.

The waste is deposited in specific containers at the port and periodically transported to treatment plants for sorting. *Upcycling the Oceans* has recovered more than 1700 tonnes of trash from the bottom of the ocean since its origins in 2015, with a record of 290 tonnes of trash every year.

The various selected materials are then converted back into raw material. In particular, the plastic waste is transformed into flakes and pellets, ready for a new life. Recycled marine debris has different applications. One example is the conversion of PET plastic into polyester yarn for use in the textile industry.

[Upcycling the Oceans is the main and most ambitious project of the Ecoalf Foundation](#); a worldwide adventure that fights against marine waste with the help of the fishing industry. This initiative with an international scope was born in Spain in 2015 and since then has also been implemented in Thailand, Greece, Italy, France and Egypt. Ecoalf Foundation is currently working on its expansion to other countries in the Mediterranean basin.

The Ecoalf Foundation is a Spanish non-profit entity registered in the Registry of Foundations of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment. The Foundation is a space for innovation in the circular economy, with a clear vocation for ocean defense and a methodology based on alliances. In its day-to-day work, it has a technical team supported by a highly experienced and motivated group led by the founder, Javier Goyeneche. In addition, there are contributions from the different partners to make the projects a reality together.



The marine litter is one of the main threats to the health of the seas and oceans. The Ecoalf website mentions the main data: 8 million tons of litter reach the seas and 70% of the litter remains on the seabed. In 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in the sea and 80% of litter comes from land. This is a global problem that, like climate change, does not understand geographical or political borders and has major ecological and socioeconomic impacts. Taking into account the origin, quantity and type of waste dumped into the sea, the main cause lies in the current linear economic model, which generates a continuous accumulation of waste.

The Ecoalf Foundation was born from the idea that the implementation of circular economic models is the best preventive action to combat marine litter. The goals of the Project *Upcycling the Oceans* are: to collaborate in cleaning the oceans, to give a second life to recovered waste, and to raise awareness of the problem to prevent it. The objective was to manufacture a generation of fashion products made from recycled materials of the same quality, design and technical properties as the best non-recycled products, showing that it is not necessary to continue abusing the planet's natural resources in an indiscriminate way.

The fishermen are the real heroes of this project. Every day they collect the waste that accidentally gets caught in their nets, take it to port and deposit it in specific bins to prevent it from mixing with other waste streams. Periodically, this waste is transported to treatment plants where it is sorted to facilitate its subsequent recycling and conversion into new products.

During the first year, in 2016, Ecoalf developed the *Upcycling the Oceans* project in Spain [in collaboration with the company Ecoembes](#), recovering more than 180 tons of waste with the contribution of more than 450 trawling boats in 32 Mediterranean ports. After collecting the marine litter, it is deposited in recycling plants, where, taking advantage of an innovative and sophisticated process, known as polymerization, a continuous filament is created, respecting the purity conditions required by Ecoalf. The thread obtained is used to produce fabrics with properties and design of the same quality as non-recycled top-of-the-line materials and, with them, the company manufactures different types of textile and footwear products: coats, t-shirts, bags, sneakers... this being the main activity of the company. Ecoembes, for its part, participates in this initiative to promote the recovery of materials such as film, steel or aluminum and transform them into all kinds of raw materials.

In 2017 *Upcycling Oceans* was replicated in Thailand with the support of the Ministry of Tourism of Thailand and PTT Global Chemical to replicate the activities in Southeast Thailand. A three-year commitment was established to clean 5 islands: Bangkok, Phuket, Rayong, Koh Tao, Koh Samui.

The profits from the *Upcycling the Oceans* project have allowed the company to open an online store and also to open a shop in Madrid and another one in Berlin, generating more consensus and employment. In addition, it has earned numerous awards, such as the European Environment Award, the National Fashion Award, or the BID14_4th Ibero-American Design Biennial Award. Using plastic bottles, recycled cotton, tyres, fishing nets and coffee grounds collected from the sea, the company manages to create sustainable fabrics that it transforms into a wide variety of products. In addition to generating business profits and employment for the company, Ecoalf's *Upcycling the Oceans*



project contributes to the sustainable development of the planet and to solving one of the major problems that currently threaten the environment.

Ecoalf's vision for the future is to involve more than 10,000 fishermen by 2025 and to recover 1,000 tons of waste each year from the Mediterranean Sea.

To know more

[Fundacion ECOALF sitio web](#)

[Upcycling the Oceans website](#)

[ECOALF Products](#)

[ECOALF Winter collection](#)

[Upcycling the Oceans in Ecoembes website](#)

[Ecoembes.com.es](#)

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[Upcycling the Oceans in Facebook](#)

[Article in Fashiontechnews](#)

[Article in knowledge-hub.circle-economy.com](#)

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