

FISHING FOR LITTER FROM NETHERLANDS INVOLVING FISHERMEN TO REDUCE MARINE LITTER

The [Fishing for Litter](#) initiative, started by the KIMO organization in three ports of Netherlands as a small local project to tackle the problem of marine litter involving fishermen, celebrates in 2021 its 20th anniversary and international impact.

KIMO (Local Authorities International Environment Organization) is a network of local governments, working together to prevent pollution and to protect, preserve and enhance the seas and coastal waters of the North-East Atlantic and Baltic regions. KIMO works to find, implement and share positive solutions for the coastal communities and in 2001 they invented the *Fishing for Litter* scheme and first launched it in three ports of Netherlands. Following the successful of the initiative, KIMO created the *Fishing for Litter* international project in 2004.

Fishing for Litter aims to reduce marine litter by involving one of the key stakeholders, the fishing industry. Fishing boats are given big bags to collect the plastics, ghost gear and other debris that gathers in their nets during normal fishing activities, instead of returning them to the sea. When the fishing boats come into port, they can unload the bags of litter. These bags are collected and the rubbish is select in view of its recycling or its correct disposal. All the fishers who participate in the project are volunteers committed to a healthy environment and the project covers the costs of collection and disposal. In addition of catching and removing thousands of tonnes of marine litter from the sea, these practices substantially contribute to raising awareness on the problem within the sector and the general public, generating environmental, social, economic and scientific benefits.

In 2021 *Fishing for Litter* works in Netherlands involving 140 vessels based in 13 ports. During 2020 this innovative partnership was able to remove 644 tonnes of rubbish from the ocean. *Fishing for Litter's* success is made possible because of the joint efforts of fishers, ports, waste collectors and local, regional and national authorities.

The operational scheme of *Fishing for Litter* adopted by KIMO in the Netherlands has progressively involved new actors from neighboring countries, generating new practices and expanding their impact. Since being endorsed in 2016 by the Regional Seas Convention for the North East Atlantic ([OSPAR](#)), which involves contracting partners from 15 countries, *Fishing for Litter* schemes have been launched by other organizations in different ports of the Region. KIMO members continue to coordinate the local projects in [Netherlands](#), [Scotland](#) and [south west England](#), and [the Faroe Islands](#).

[The website of Fishing for Litter](#) presents the practices which are currently underway in different countries, providing detailed information on the results achieved and on the local organizations involved in the initiatives.



Thanks to the important impact results achieved in the various countries, the *Fishing for Litter* scheme has been recognized by several international marine protection bodies. The OSPAR Regional Seas Convention for the North East Atlantic actively encourages Contracting Parties to adopt similar schemes in their countries. The European Commission highlights it as best practice and has financed programs based on the Fishing for Litter methodology. In 2019 the EU included the passively fished waste in the new European [Port Reception Facility Directive](#). As of 2022 this Directive will come into force nationally and will apply to all EU coastal Member States.

In 2011 the Honolulu Strategy, developed in the framework of the 5th International Marine Debris Conference, organized by UNEP and the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Debris Programme, stated the *Fishing for Litter* approach in carrying out the proposed actions.

Recognizing the great potential of practices that directly involve fishermen in waste reduction activities in the seas, in 2016 UNEP developed the [Guide on best practices of Fishing for Litter in the Mediterranean](#), as one of the tools for applying the [Marine Litter Regional Plan of the Barcelona Convention System](#). The Guide provides guidance on the process of involving the stakeholders responsible for the *Fishing for Litter* practices, that are expected to be implemented in local areas at small-medium scale due to the specific characteristics of the Mediterranean trawling fishing fleet.

The KIMO organization, in addition to taking part in projects with local impacts, supports the international promotion strategy of the *Fishing for Litter* scheme, to increase its impact in different contexts. With over 80 member municipalities in eight countries, KIMO encourages their citizens to tackle the most pressing challenges facing the marine environment through the exchange of experiences and innovative knowledge. KIMO frames its actions in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 14 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda: *Life below water*.

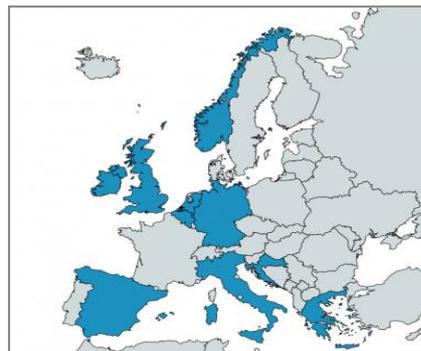
The reduction of the large amount of marine litter, which endangers marine life and entire ecosystems in the seas and coastal areas, is definitely a transboundary problem and a challenge that involves actions on an international scale between the countries that share the marine spaces and on a national scale, through specific laws and regulations concerning waste management issued by the respective governments. The experience of the Fishing for Litter practice, however, has shown that innovative solutions can be created and operationally successfully managed in local contexts, directly involving the main stakeholders and influencing decision makers at national, regional and international levels.

[The Fishing for Litter website also directly addresses fishermen](#) from European countries, encouraging them to participate in the movement, which is open to all ports and fishing vessels. If enough vessels from a particular harbour show an interest in joining *Fishing for Litter*, KIMO can approach the port authority to explore options for setting up this innovative and effective scheme of marine litter reduction.

To know more

[Fishing for Litter website](#)

[Fishing for Litter in KIMO website](#)



[Article in KIMO International website](#)

[KIMO International website](#)

[2007 Report Fishing for Litter in OSPAR Region](#)

[OSPAR Commission website](#)

[Fishing for Litters records in Netherlands](#)

[Celebrating 10 years of Fishing for Litter in Germany](#)

[Guide on best practices of Fishing for Litter in the Mediterranean-UNEP](#)

[Fishing for Litter in pame.is website](#)

[Fishing for Litter in Plastic Smart Cities website](#)

[Fishing for Litter Germany in European commission website](#)

[To join Fishing for Litter](#)

