

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON PHILIPPINES



200

tonnes of discarded fishing nets have been collected to date - enough to go around the world 4.5 times.

64,000

people benefit directly from a healthier environment.

Preserving marine life while lifting coastal communities out of poverty

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL), an international scientific, conservation and educational charity which was founded in 1826, and the global carpet tile manufacturer Interface Inc. have co-founded the project Net-Works™, which is led by the experts in marine conservation and development of the ZSL. Net-Works™ mission is to secure an ocean with less plastic and more fish while lifting coastal communities of Southeast Asia out of poverty. Net-Works™ has operations in 36 communities in the Philippines and Cameroon, where the model was initially piloted on discarded fishing nets.

Southeast Asia is the centre of marine biodiversity. However, it also contains four of the top five countries that contribute a massive 60% of the world's marine debris and 3.35 million artisanal reef fishermen dependent on dwindling fish resources. These fishermen live in remote and

marginalised coastal communities where traditional solid waste management mechanisms do not exist because they are not economically viable. Driven by poverty, these communities use large quantities of cheap plastics that are disposed of straight into the ocean. Research has shown that community-based marine protected areas (MPAs) can be a key tool for replenishing fish stocks. However, they are too small to be effective as poverty means fishermen can only afford to set aside small areas, and they are undermined by plastics. By developing an inclusive business model including various components Net-Works™ aims to reduce plastic and preserve marine life in a more sustainable way. This includes collecting and buying end of life plastics – particularly the nylon fishing nets – for regeneration into Econyl® yarn, increasing the size and the protection of the MPAs, introducing local financial services to help people manage increased incomes, driving behaviour change away from using single



Julius Baer Foundation

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How you can contribute

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use plastics, and leveraging seaweed farming. Seaweed farming is key as it is the economic engine to Net-Works™, offering an alternative source of income to the local fishermen and their families and a business model to sustain all the activities by granting access to the growing market for bio-based plastics.

The support of the Julius Baer Foundation allows Net-Works™ to fully test a replicable business model for seaweed at commercial scale in one community on the ecologically significant Danajon Bank double barrier reef in the Philippines. By demonstrating the viability of the business model Net-Works™ strives to unlock further investment opportunities to help expand across the growing network in Southeast Asia. Ultimately, the organisation aims to extend the model to the 3.35million people dependent on fishing in Southeast Asia to reduce plastics and increase the fish population in the centre of marine biodiversity.

Creating ways to restore marine ecosystems

Through Net-Works™ and the support of the Julius Baer Foundation 200 ha of ocean will be protected and the use of single-use plastics halved, allowing over 3,000 people to benefit from these efforts. By testing its business model thoroughly the organisation will furthermore gain valuable experience and insights in order to expand successfully across Southeast Asia and to achieve a much greater impact in the future. In sum, seaweed provides the economic engine for community-based measures to restore marine ecosystems and tackle plastic use and recycling. By addressing inefficiencies and inequalities within the seaweed supply chain, Net-Works™ is able to offer participating members higher prices and important support services that can double local incomes. These incentives are offered to participants in return for supporting larger MPAs and signing up to environmental and social standards that reduce plastic pollution. As a result, Net-

Works™ increases MPA size to more than 16 times the national average. Additionally, the organisation drives a behaviour change programme to reduce the use of single-use plastic sachets and to switch to purchasing products in bulk and in more sustainable packaging, which are collected for recycling. Further, Net-Works™ works with experts at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to explore the potential for using seaweeds grown by the participants to create bio-based and biodegradable alternatives to petro-plastics.

Facts & figures

- Southeast Asia hosts the Coral Triangle – the centre of marine biodiversity.
- Asia accounts for 88% of the estimated 260 million people involved in fisheries globally (including capture, post-harvest processing, trading, transport and support services).
- Small-scale fishing provides a critical source of nutrition and income for some of the most marginalised segments in Southeast Asia, playing an essential welfare role in the mitigation of negative poverty impacts.
- The Philippines is the third worst plastic polluter in the world, with 1.88 million metric tonnes of plastic waste produced each year.
- 75% of fishing grounds in the Philippines are depleted.
- 1 million coastal people in the Philippines depend on carrageenan-bearing seaweed to provide part of their income.
- The carrageenan industry is forecast to be worth US\$1billion by 2020.
- Bio-based plastics can substitute 66% of conventional petro-plastics and can save 241 to 316 Mio. t. CO₂-eq. per year. This is equal to the CO₂-emission by over 50 million flights around the world per year.

For more information about Zoological Society of London and Net-Works™, please visit: www.zsl.org | www.net-works.com

“Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans.”

Jacques-Yves Cousteau, French marine explorer, conservationist and scientist