



**KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJON
LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
ORGANISATION**

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OSPAR Highlights KIMO Pioneering Work on Fishing for Litter

At its Commission meeting this week, in Ostende, Belgium, OSPAR¹ chose marine litter as one of the main themes at its press conference highlighting the pioneering Fishing for Litter initiative as a significant measure in addressing the problem. Guidelines on Developing Fishing for Litter projects developed by KIMO International were approved along with other measures on marine litter such as a Marine Beach Litter Monitoring Programme, led by the Netherlands and Belgium.

Fishing for Litter, which is co-ordinated by KIMO (Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation) is a unique marine litter project because it tackles litter at sea rather than on the shoreline and because it engages a sector, which is not usually involved in preventing marine litter, fishermen. The aim is not only to remove litter from the marine environment but also to change working practices within the fishing industry and improve waste management.



The basic idea is very simple the project provides the fishermen with large hardwearing 1m³ bags, which they take to sea with them during their normal fishing activity. Any marine litter that accumulates in the nets during fishing is then placed in the bags and taken ashore for disposal on land. The fishermen participate on a voluntary basis although the project does pay for the bags and waste costs.

The Marine Beach Litter Monitoring Programme is the result of a 6-year OSPAR pilot project, lead by Sweden, in which KIMO participated. The final results of the project showed that there had been no discernable improvement in the levels of marine litter and that they remained high within the project region.

¹ The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR) www.ospar.org

OSPAR recognised that despite these measures there is still a need to make more progress on the development of programmes and measures to reduce marine litter.

KIMO Project Officer John Mouat, who represented KIMO at the OSPAR Commission stated: *"I am delighted that, after many years of hard work by KIMO and others, marine litter is now high on OSPAR's agenda. Furthermore I hope that the agreement on a new OSPAR monitoring programme for marine beach litter will be the starting point for the development of more measures, such as Fishing for Litter, to tackle the ongoing problem marine litter."*

Notes to Editors

- More information on Fishing for Litter can be found at www.fishingforlitter.org
- The Pilot Project on Monitoring Marine Beach Litter report will be published in July 2007 and will be available from www.ospar.org
- OSPAR Press statement - New Initiatives on CO₂ Capture and Storage and Marine Litter - *"OSPAR takes action on climate change and cleans up our beaches"* www.ospar.org

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