



Fishing-for-Litter Guidelines¹

(OSPAR Agreement 2017-08)

Source: EIHA 17/9/1, Annex 13

Introduction

1. Recommendation 2016/01 on the reduction of marine litter through the implementation of Fishing-for-Litter initiatives was adopted at the OSPAR Commission meeting in Tenerife in 2016.
2. The purpose of the Recommendation is to promote the establishment of new or additional Fishing-for-Litter initiatives in fishing harbours of Contracting Parties and to facilitate:
 - the raising of awareness of the social, economic and ecological impacts of marine litter among fishermen and within the fishing industry;
 - a change in waste management practices within the fishing industry;
 - the direct removal of marine litter from the marine environment within fishing areas.
3. Contracting Parties should promote the establishment of Fishing-for-Litter initiatives in line with OSPAR Agreement 2007-10 whereby:
 - a. fishermen are provided, at no cost to them, with large hardwearing bags, or other suitable receptacles, in which they can collect marine litter that accumulates in their nets as part of their normal fishing activity. This does not include operational or galley waste from the vessel.
 - b. facilities are available for these bags to be deposited in any harbour participating in an OSPAR Fishing-for-Litter initiative at no cost to the fishermen and the waste processed in line with the waste hierarchy: reuse, recycle, recover and dispose.
 - c. the number of vessels and harbours taking part in Fishing-for-Litter initiatives and, wherever possible, the weight of the collected marine litter brought ashore is recorded and the data are collected by Contracting Parties for OSPAR reporting purposes.
 - d. a communication plan is developed and implemented to promote the initiatives and to raise awareness of fishermen and the fishing industry of the impacts of marine litter.
 - e. if the cost of disposal is likely to exceed the budget of a Fishing-for-Litter initiative, a participating harbour should advise the vessel to use the existing harbour waste reception facilities or, alternatively, provide information on disposal facilities of another harbour that can be used

¹ These Guidelines replace Agreement 2007-10

Background

1. Fishing-for-Litter initiatives operating in several OSPAR Contracting Parties over several years have demonstrated that the objectives and aims of the scheme can gain the support of the fishing industry, port authorities and local authorities. A report commissioned by the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in the south west of England (Report ME5418, 2015) to investigate potential associations between taking part in Fishing-for-Litter schemes and fishers' attitudes and behaviours regarding marine litter and its disposal provides evidence of positive behavioural changes. Fishing-for-Litter can contribute to changing practices and culture within the fishing sector, provide a mechanism to remove marine litter from the sea and seabed, and raise awareness among the fishing industry, other sectors and the public.
2. Fishing-for-Litter initiatives have been operating within the OSPAR Convention areas since 2002 when they were piloted as part of the Save the North Sea (SNS) Interreg IIIb project that operated between 2002 and 2004. The "Save the North Sea" Fishing-for-Litter initiative was implemented, co-ordinated and managed by KIMO International, one of the partners in the SNS project. The principle of the initiative was to mirror the operational methods of a pilot scheme in Den Helder, The Netherlands, and to expand the initiative to other harbours in The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom with a target of 60 vessels, five harbours and 1,000 tonnes over the period of three years (2002–2004). It is also based on experience from KIMO Networks which have been involved in these schemes and more recently on the Fishing-for-Litter projects currently running in Scotland, south west England and The Netherlands. The OSPAR Fishing-for-Litter Recommendation 2016/01 provides the initiative and opportunity for Contracting Parties to introduce Fishing-for-Litter schemes throughout the OSPAR region.

Implementation

3. At a national and local level the implementation of these initiatives requires considerable effort to firstly encourage the fishing industry to endorse the concept and to persuade individual fishing skippers and crews to actively participate on a day-to-day basis. There is also a requirement to develop support within individual ports and harbour authorities, as they are crucial as a collection point for the waste collected in the scheme. The appropriate waste-disposal authorities whether at local authority level or within the private sector must also be intrinsically involved. There is a need to keep participation simple as efforts to impose extra administrative burden on fishermen is likely to reduce participation.
4. Experience has shown that where it can be demonstrated that there is an economic cost to the industry from the effects of marine litter on their time and damage to equipment and to the image of a clean and sustainable food resource the industry will accept the concept and be willing to become partners. This is also true when the benefits which arise from the resulting good publicity associated with a scheme are evident.
5. However, the success of the scheme will depend on the day-to-day management of the project and with personal contact with the skipper and crews of individual vessels. To ensure that this is achieved it is important that a co-ordinator is employed to manage the project. This could be on a national basis or, depending on the size of the country, on a regional basis within a country.
6. The primary focus of the scheme should not necessarily be to collect other people's waste from the sea but to develop mechanisms to change the culture within the industry so that good waste management practices are adopted even for waste which is not their own. Although regulation has a role to play in

ensuring that good practice is implemented, experience has shown that this has not been as effective as had been expected. Market research about litter, whether land-based or at sea, has shown that regulation is not the prime driver for compliance but that it is the changing of societal acceptance of a practice; it is the changing of attitudes that will in the long term provide the solutions to this issue.

7. It should be noted that the concept of Fishing-for-Litter should be distinct and separate from the issue of requiring vessels to comply with regulations concerning their own operational waste. This is a significant distinction as, whilst many fishermen understand the reasons and legal requirements for good waste management practice for their own waste, they do not fully accept the concept that they should manage or deal with other people's waste. Whilst most fishermen who have been contacted to participate in the Fishing-for-Litter schemes are willing to do so on a voluntary basis and for no direct financial benefit, it is important that no regulatory or financial burdens are put in place to discourage this participation. To do so would have the same effect as asking the hundreds of thousands of volunteers who participate in beach cleaning initiatives to pay for the disposal costs of the waste they collect. Furthermore, the presence of well-equipped port reception facilities in all participating fisheries ports which are easily accessible for Fishing-for-Litter waste at no cost to the fishermen will help to prevent disposal of waste becoming a barrier to participation.

8. If funding is made available the following procedures should be followed:

- Appoint a national or regional coordinator
- Develop a management plan and work programme
- Develop a public relations strategy (**Appendix A**)
- Contact fishermen's associations (both national and local)
- Develop a database of fishing harbours and vessels
- Implement a management plan
- Develop guidelines for fishermen (**Appendix B**)
- Phased implementation as part of work programme.

Health and Safety Implications

9. It is worthwhile to consider the health and safety implications regarding hazardous and other substances that might be caught in trawls and collected on board vessels. Health and Safety issues for any project should be addressed to local standards. The experiences of the SNS project and the Fishing-for-Litter Scotland project indicate that there have been no instances of accidents or injuries directly related to the collection, storage or transfer to shore of marine debris collected as part of these projects.

Financial Implications

10. The cost of undertaking these initiatives will vary from country to country depending on staff, administration and other considerations such as waste disposal costs etc. It is therefore important that appropriate funding is made available to promote such voluntary schemes, ensure that they can be implemented and once a scheme is operational that funding is sustainable and secured over several years. This funding could be channelled through individual local authorities; however, experience has shown that schemes undertaken on a regional or national basis are more successful, have more effect and receive more publicity provided that the schemes are designed to ensure that local support is available and motivated.

Reporting and monitoring

11. The number of vessels and harbours taking part in Fishing-for-Litter initiatives and, wherever possible, the weight of the collected marine litter brought ashore each year should be recorded and the data forwarded to the appropriate Contracting Party contact who should submit the data for OSPAR reporting purposes under OSPAR Agreement 2007-10 . An important part of the Fishing-for-Litter initiative is that, wherever possible, monitoring of the collected marine litter be carried out to investigate the type of litter that is being caught in trawls.

Conclusions

12. Various Fishing-for-Litter schemes have shown the willingness of the fishing industry, individual vessels and crews, national and local authorities and harbour authorities to enter into partnership arrangements to implement schemes in a number of countries utilising different types of fishing vessels and fishing methods.

13. Fishermen, so far, have participated on a voluntary basis, provided that any additional costs for collection and disposal are not borne by the industry. All those involved have recognised the value of the goodwill and publicity these schemes generate especially within the public and consumers. As quality assurance schemes are introduced to promote the value and health of fish, schemes like these will be endorsed by all concerned. It can be beneficial for schemes to be operated at a country level but, as a minimum, at a level where economy of scale and ease of management is facilitated. The level of waste collected will vary significantly from country to country and according to what fishing methods are used. The financial cost of running schemes is not onerous in terms of benefit.



Fishing-for-Litter Public Relations Strategy (Model)

Fishing-for-Litter is a simple yet effective way to involve the fishing industry in the reduction of marine litter. Fishermen participating in the project will be asked to collect marine litter that accumulates in their nets as part of their normal fishing activity and on a voluntary basis. This is then stored onboard in the large hardwearing bags provided by the project so that it can be disposed of on shore in an environmentally friendly manner.

The main aims of the project are the physical removal of marine litter and the raising of awareness amongst the fishing industry that it is not acceptable to dump marine litter over the side.

To achieve both aims, the Public Relations campaign must make the fishermen aware of the project and encourage as many as possible to take part. Therefore, the fishermen will be targeted at the initial stages of the project before broadening the approach to include the public. The aims of the campaign are outlined below:

- Raise awareness of the project within the fishing industry;
- Identify key individuals within the industry to act as ambassadors;
- Highlight the role of the funding bodies;
- Demonstrate good practice within the fishing industry to the public;
- Change attitudes and behaviour within the fishing industry.

Influence policy makers

Fishing-for-Litter has already been established as a recognisable brand in Scotland, the south west of England, the Isle of Man, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Belgium and The Netherlands. A corporate identity and colour scheme are already established and easily recognisable and the logo is registered as an EU Trademark.

Key Messages

Two key messages for the Public Relations campaign are:

- Marine litter is a problem that can be solved if everyone takes responsibility for their actions;
- Marine litter damages fishermen's livelihoods as well as the environment and it is in everyone's interest to solve the problem.

Objectives

During a project there are several practical objectives. These have been outlined below:

- Develop an information leaflet on the project aimed at fishermen;
- Develop display material for exhibitions;
- Official launch of the project (using project ambassadors and other personalities such as Government Ministers, celebrities, high profile chefs and restaurateurs etc.);

- Develop Fishing-for-Litter content on a website;
- Press launch of first new harbour in the project;
- Coverage of the project on a rural affairs television programme;
- Press launch for final harbour in the project;
- Publication of the report on the analysis of the monitoring programme.

Media Contacts

Local agencies should have extensive contacts with the Trade Media and National Press. These should be utilised throughout the project to gain the maximum amount of coverage.

Crisis Management

1. The risk of bad publicity from a project is very low however there are some situations that could impact adversely on the press coverage, for example if a participating boat is caught disposing of marine litter at sea. In such a situation, the operator of the scheme should immediately release a press release condemning the action and reaffirming their commitment to eradication of such behaviour. It should also state their intention to enter into a dialogue with the boat and skipper to ensure there was not a repeat incident. As a last resort if there was no cooperation the boat in question should be removed from the scheme.
2. Another possible scenario is that one of the boats involved in the scheme is caught fishing illegally. In this situation, the operators would not comment unless directly approached by the press and then only to state that they are only involved in waste management issues and fisheries management is outside their remit.



Guidelines for Fishing-for-Litter

The following guidelines should be followed to ensure the smooth running of the project:

- Marine litter should only be collected in the bags/containers provided. If appropriate these should be branded with the Fishing-for-Litter logo.
- Only marine litter **caught in your nets** should be collected in the bags. Ordinary galley and operational waste should still be disposed of using the existing procedures.
- Drums of fluids, chemicals or oil and hazardous items such as batteries are considered special waste under waste regulations and should be dealt with through the harbours existing special waste procedures. Placing items such as these in the bags is a breach of the waste regulations.
- Full bags of marine litter should be deposited on the quayside and the Harbour Authority will remove them. However, if you accumulate a significant amount of litter in one trip resulting in space problems on board the bag can be landed any day as long as the harbour is informed.
- New bags can be collected from the pre-arranged location.
- Any queries or suggestions to improve the scheme should be directed to the project contact point.

Harbours

Although the procedures for the harbours are relatively similar there may be differences so if you are changing your landing port, please contact the harbour master for details of the harbour set-up as there will be a need to comply with local Health and Safety regulations and waste regulations.