

Side event proposal:

Addressing the ghosts in our oceans – Solutions to tackling lost and abandoned fishing gear at scale including circular economy business opportunities.

Prepared by the Global Ghost Gear Initiative and Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Introduction

Abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) or “ghost gear” is one of the major sources of litter causing significant ecological and socio-economic problems, including serious impacts on habitats, fish stocks and lethal entanglements of other marine species. Recent studies suggest that ghost gear could consist of as much as 46% - 70 % of all surface floating macro-plastics, when measured by weight, in our ocean.

Ghost gear results in reduced profits for the fishing industry due to the impacts of ‘ghost fishing’ - an estimated 5-30% of global harvestable fish stocks (depending on fishery/geography) are killed by ghost gear every year, making ghost gear a major threat to global food security and fisher livelihoods. Ghost gear also has a significant link to illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, as illegal fishers are more likely to abandon gear intentionally to escape enforcement authorities. Ghost gear also causes increased operational costs for vessel owners/operators and authorities through the replacement of lost gear and retrieval efforts, and also presents navigational hazards and safety at sea concerns. As ghost gear is an issue that cross-cuts several of the critical challenges currently facing our ocean, addressing it will help to build a blue economy, establish global food security, reduce marine pollution from sea-based sources and ensure a productive and healthy ocean for years to come.

Action on ghost gear is also closely linked with the delivery of the ambitions of the United Nations’ 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda and in particular SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 14 (life below the water), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the delivery of the goals).

As a long-standing participant in the Our Ocean conferences, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, together with its partners and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology would be honoured to host a side event during Our Ocean 2019 in one of Europe’s biggest and most important fishing and seafood export nations, Norway.

About the applicants

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI)

The GGGI is the premier, global, cross-sectoral alliance addressing ghost gear worldwide. Through the collective impact of its close to 100 members, the GGGI aims to mitigate the ecological and economic impacts of ghost gear. GGGI membership consists of 14 governments, some of the largest seafood companies in the world, global corporates and retailers, leading academic institutions, innovative technology organizations, private sector leaders, influential multilaterals, and expert NGOs. The GGGI serves as a global clearinghouse for information on ghost gear; informs specific plans, strategies and

policies to prevent and reduce ghost gear; and catalyzes practical and replicable solutions for end-of-life gear, in-the-water removal and, most importantly, the prevention of gear loss. The GGGI also works with governments and multilateral organizations around the world to elevate the issue of ghost gear on the global agenda and inspire international action. Most recently the Global Ghost Gear Initiative supported the development of the Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear (VGMFG) which were adopted in July 2018 by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Committee of Fisheries; and is UN FAO's sole civil society partner in rolling out four regional workshops to raise awareness and training on the VGMFG and best practises in gear management and support the development of a global strategy to tackle ghost gear.

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

The Blue Circular Economy (BCE) project aims to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) offering products and services within fishing gear recycling solutions in the Northern Periphery and Arctic region to attain a greater market reach. The goals of the project are to create environmentally and economically viable circular business models for SMEs in the fishing gear industry and to stimulate the demand for products made of recycled fishing gear. This involves the collaboration of academia, industry and government agencies following a triple helix approach. BCE therefore contributes to sustainable development in the NPA-region at the economic, environmental and social levels. This is an EU Interreg-project led by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and run in partnership with the North Highland College (NHC), Center for Arctic Technology (ARTEK), the Western Development Commission (WDC) and the University for the Creative Arts (UCA). In addition, the project collaborates tightly with many SMEs, rope manufacturing and recycling industries, and innovation networks involving entrepreneurs.

Side event at Our Ocean 2019 concept

In 2018, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative had the pleasure of sharing the main stage with various leaders in the marine pollution space during the Our Ocean Conference hosted in Bali where we were able to share a strong commitment to address ALDFG (see below – Annex 1). This year, we kindly request hosting a side event that would bring together critical actors of the GGGI and the Blue Circular Economy project that are helping realise this commitment to help achieve a net reduction of ghost gear in our oceans by 2030 and show the business opportunities around recycling fishing gear within the value chain. During the event we will highlight how a holistic and collaborative approach with the different stakeholders throughout the fishing gear 'life cycle'– from policy makers to seafood companies and fishers – is making progress towards our ambitious goals.

Proposed speakers and rationale

- **Ingrid Giskes, Director Global Ghost Gear Initiative** - Facilitator
- **Ola Elvestuen, Minister of Climate and Environment in Norway** to announce that Norway is joining the GGGI and to highlight the significant investments they are making and initiatives they are undertaking to help address ghost gear nationally and internationally.

- **Manuel Barrange, Director of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Resources Division United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation**, as lead UN agency, to address ghost gear on key preventative actions to avoid gear loss in multilateral policy initiatives.
- **Helen Agren, Swedish Ambassador for the Ocean**, highlight the ongoing support from Sweden for the GGGI as one of the first Governments to join the Initiative and the work they are doing internationally and in domestic waters to combat ALDFG.
- **Martin Exel, Managing Director SeaBOS** to reflect on the commitment of 10 of the largest seafood companies in the world to join the GGGI and tackle ALDFG in their businesses and help leverage other corporate actions on ghost gear and change including in aquaculture and wild catch fisheries, and through engagement with certification schemes.
- Vice-Rector and Professor in Sustainability, Annik Magerholm Fet, **Norwegian University of Science and Technology** - Blue Circular Economy Project and the fishing gear value chain.

Aims of the event

- Share tangible examples of actions, action plans and CSR policies that can be taken at all levels – corporate, government, civil society – to help address ghost gear and meet the objectives of the 2030 SDG agenda.
- Show how leadership from the seafood industry can help address ghost gear at scale at all levels of the value chain.
- Share case studies and lessons learned from example solution projects that can be scaled up and replicated around the world.
- Showcase how collaboration between different sectors and different UN agencies can work to address global ocean issues effectively.
- Continue growing awareness pertaining to ghost gear – its interlinkages with issues such as IUU, marine pollution, blue/circular economy, sustainable seafood production and food security, and inspire further action from the international and corporate community.
- Show the value of fishing gear, opportunities for circular economy and benefits that an EPR scheme for fishing gear can offer.

Target group and attendees

We are confident that we will be able to fill the room at maximum capacity (50 people). Given ghost gear is such a cross-cutting issue and given the cross-sectoral approach of the GGGI, we expect to interest a wide variety of stakeholders with our event.

ANNEX 1

Update on Our Ocean Commitment 2018 - GGGI

In 2018, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative had the pleasure of sharing the main stage with various leaders in the marine pollution space during the Our Ocean Conference hosted in Bali where we were able to share a strong commitment to address ALDFG:

- The Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) commits to operationalise 30 scaled solutions projects addressing ghost gear in 15 countries by 2025.
 - ✓ *We are now halfway through realising this commitment with 17 live or completed projects in 8 countries as of July 2019.*
- The GGGI also pledges to double the financial commitment from its members, supporting organisations & governments to \$2 million in 2019 to ensure the effective scaling of projects aimed at preventing and curing the problem of abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear, especially in developing countries. We specifically welcome the contributions from the UK and Dutch Governments (€ 100.000 each) towards this.
 - ✓ *We are confident that we will achieve this commitment in 2019 with our current actual income for 2019 being \$1.25 million as of July 2019.*
- The GGGI will work with 3 market leading certifications schemes, all 13 GGGI signatory countries and UN FAO to implement best practice management of fishing gear by 2021 including the uptake of the UN FAO Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear.
 - ✓ *We have achieved this objective in 2019 through our work with MSC, ASC and Friend of the Sea; through the delivery of four regional workshops (South Pacific-Oceania, South America-Caribbean, Asia, West Africa) on training on best practices management of fishing gear to avoid gear loss and how actions can be included in policy as well at the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.*
- The GGGI pledges to help establish baselines and contribute to achieve a net reduction of ghost gear in our oceans on an annual basis by 2030.
 - ✓ *We remain committed to this objective. We have launched the gear reporter app in two additional languages (Mandarin and Portuguese), remain committed to hosting the biggest repository of ghost gear data in the world through our data portal, contribute to studies on gear loss baselines, and support countries in setting up gear loss reporting systems. Once a new global baseline is established in the next 1-2 years, we will track impact and progress on this objective directly.*

New commitment for Our Ocean 2019 - GGGI

- The GGGI pledges to continue to steadily increase the financial commitment to ALDFG prevention, mitigation, and solutions the financial support of its members to its mission or host organisation to \$2.5 million in 2020 to ensure the effective scaling of projects aimed at preventing and curing the problem of abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear as well as

embedding gear loss prevention strategies and guidelines, especially in developing countries. We specifically welcome the contributions from our participating Governments in this regards.

- The GGGI pledges to continue to help establish baselines and contribute to achieve a net reduction of ghost gear in our ocean on an annual basis by 2030 – specifically by co-leading on studies on global gear loss estimates and building an evidence base on the connection between IUU and ALDFG.
- The GGGI commits to assist UN FAO in the development and implementation of a global strategy and umbrella programme to tackle ALDFG to continue to help contribute to achieve a net reduction of ghost gear in our oceans on an annual basis by 2030.
- The GGGI will increase Government participation in the GGGI to 20 Governments in 2021 and encourage collaboration on ALDFG action and implementation of gear management best practises.
- The GGGI welcomes the commitment from the Seafood Business for Ocean Stewardship initiative (SeaBOS) to join the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) as a full member (valued at \$100,000) to help remove, reduce, redesign fishing or aquaculture gear, and promote new practices to achieve positive and sustainable ocean health outcomes.