

A person is seen from behind, walking away from the camera on a sandy beach. They are carrying a massive, tangled net made of blue and yellow plastic mesh, which is draped over their head and shoulders, obscuring their upper body. The net is dripping with seawater and appears to be full of debris. The person is wearing red shorts and is wading through shallow, rippling water. The background shows the beach and the ocean under bright sunlight.

# **GLOBAL GHOST GEAR INITIATIVE ANNUAL REPORT 2017**





IN JUST ONE DEEP WATER FISHERY  
IN THE NORTH-EAST ATLANTIC,  
SOME **25,000** NETS

TOTALLING AROUND

**1,250,000** KM

IN LENGTH – HAVE BEEN RECORDED  
LOST OR DISCARDED ANNUALLY.<sup>1</sup>

# INTRODUCTION

Since being founded by World Animal Protection in 2015, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) has progressed from an ambitious concept to the world's premier organisation working to solve the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear worldwide. Now, with 66 unique participant organisations from five continents and the official support of 12 governments, the GGGI has become a truly global movement.

This report summarises the key achievements of the GGGI in 2017 and demonstrates how the GGGI collective has come together to create a truly unique organisation focused on finding practical and scalable solutions to the most harmful form of marine debris – lost and abandoned fishing gear.

Mr Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Belgium: “We must strive to make the private sector, fishing industry, academia and governments work together to reduce the impact lost gear has on the economic sector, food security and, most importantly, on marine ecosystems. Certification and marking of gear to make it traceable and recycling of retrieved materials are some of the most promising solutions. My country supports the gear recovery initiative and recycling as a principle.”

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# GHOST GEAR – A GLOBAL PROBLEM

As a global community, we all depend on our oceans and the health of the marine life within them. Oceans drive our climate, supply us with food, provide livelihoods, and play a critical social, environmental and economic role. But they are increasingly inundated with marine debris, restricting their ability to perform these crucial functions.

Lost or abandoned fishing gear, known as “ghost gear”, is at least four times more likely to impact marine life, through entanglement, than all other forms of marine debris combined<sup>1</sup>. It is estimated that at least 640,000 tonnes<sup>2</sup> of fishing gear are lost or abandoned in our oceans each year. Ghost gear costs governments and marine industries hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in clean-up expenses and lost fishing time<sup>3</sup>.

Ghost gear also compromises yields and income from our fisheries – an estimated 5-30 percent decline in some fish stocks and damage to important marine habitats can be attributed to ghost gear<sup>4</sup> – creating higher costs for companies sourcing fish and contributing to global food losses. Of all known marine mammal species, over 40 percent have been affected by ghost gear, with many of these species being included on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of threatened species<sup>5</sup>.

The adverse impacts of ghost gear have been made even worse by the introduction of non-biodegradable or plastic fishing gear, predicted to persist in the marine environment for up to 600 years<sup>6</sup>. Ghost fishing gear (if measured by weight) accounts for over half of all macro plastics in our oceans today<sup>7</sup> and

will eventually break down into micro plastics, be consumed by marine animals and, ultimately, enter the human food chain.

Recognising the immediate need to address the myriad of problems facing our oceans, the United Nations formulated a dedicated goal (Goal 14) to “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, amongst the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs will drive the global sustainable development agenda until 2030 and beyond – giving countries, institutions, companies and civil society a mandate and a responsibility to deliver on these 17 commitments.



Photograph: Joel Bazuk



SDG target 14.1 commits the global community to “by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution”. As ghost gear is a significant form of marine debris, both in terms of quantity and certainly in terms of its impact on marine eco-systems and marine life, target 14.1 represents a clear and urgent call for action to prevent and significantly reduce ghost gear from our oceans.

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) is a cross-sectoral alliance committed to driving solutions to the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear worldwide. It is an established platform under which the global community can unite to improve

the health and productivity of marine ecosystems, protect marine animals from harm, and safeguard human health and livelihoods. The work of the GGGI is focused on ghost gear, but also directly impacts on the issue of marine plastics and micro plastics, and provides tools for effective action against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The GGGI is now in its third operational year and has successfully grown into a global clearing house for information on ghost gear, informing relevant policy processes in both the public and private sector, and catalysing practical and replicable solutions for on-the-ground and in-the-water removal and prevention of ghost gear. This annual report showcases some of the highlights of our work over the last year.

1 This statement is based on analysis by World Animal Protection based on figures and evidence found in the following papers: (1) Wilcox, C., Mallos, N.J., Leonard, G.H., Rodriguez, A., and Hardesty, B.D. Using expert elicitation to estimate the impacts of plastic pollution on marine wildlife. *Marine Policy*, No. 65; 107-114; Elsevier Ltd. 2015. Figure 2-110p.; (2) United Nations Environment Programme. *Marine Plastic Debris and Microplastics - Global lessons and research to inspire action and guide policy change*. UNEP. 2016. Nairobi. Table 7.1. and table 7.2. 82-83p. (3) Werner, S., Budziak, A., van Franeker, J., Galgani, F., Hanke, G., Maes, T., Matiddi, M., Nilsson, P., Oosterbaan, L., Priestland, E., Thompson, R., Veiga, J. and Vlachogianni, T. Harm caused by Marine Litter. MSFD GES TG Marine Litter - Thematic Report; JRC Technical report; EUR 28317 EN; doi: 10.2788/690366, 2016, 10 – 11p. (4) Moss, E., Eidson, A., and Jambeck, J. Sea of Opportunity - Supply Chain Investment Opportunities to Address Marine Plastic Pollution. Encourage Capital on behalf of Vulcan, Inc., New York. February 2017. 22p.

2 Macfadyen, G., Huntington, T., Cappell, R. Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies, No. 185; FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper, No. 523. Rome, UNEP/FAO. 2009. 115p.

3 Mouat, J., Lozano, R. L., and Bateson, H. Economic Impacts of Marine Litter. KIMO. September 2010.

4 While the effects on different types of fish species may differ dependent on the types of ghost gear most prevalent in certain areas, it is estimated that, on a global level, ghost gear has led to an estimated 5-30 percent decline in some fish stocks and damage to important marine habitats can be attributed to ghost gear. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have found that ghost gear is directly responsible for a 5 percent reduction in total cod catch in the Baltic Sea and a 30 percent reduction of Greenland halibut off the coast of Norway: NOAA Marine Debris Program. 2015 Report on the impacts of “ghost fishing” via derelict fishing gear. Silver Spring, MD. 25pp. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science recently published the findings of a 6-year study on the economic value of removing ghost gear which showed that removing some of the derelict crab pots in the Chesapeake Bay yielded an additional US\$20 million in harvest for local fishermen. If extended to a global level, the study showed that removing just 10 percent of ghost gear could increase landings by close to 300,000 metric tons: Scheld, A.M., Bilkovic, D.M., and Havens, K.J. (2016) The Dilemma of Derelict Gear. *Scientific Reports* 6, Article Number 19671. <http://www.nature.com/articles/srep19671>

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6 Reference to this can be found in: Approximate Time it Takes for Garbage to Decompose in the Environment: [https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/coastal/trash/documents/marine\\_debris.pdf](https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/coastal/trash/documents/marine_debris.pdf); and Macfadyen, G., Huntington, T., and Cappell, R. Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear. UNEP Regional Seas Reports and Studies, No. 185; FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper, No. 523. Rome, UNEP/FAO. 2009. 115p. 7 Moss, E., Eidson, A., and Jambeck, J. Sea of Opportunity - Supply Chain Investment Opportunities to Address Marine Plastic Pollution. Encourage Capital on behalf of Vulcan, Inc., New York, New York. February 2017. 22p.



# GGGI PARTICIPANTS, SUPPORTERS AND AFFILIATES

2017 has seen a substantial increase in GGGI participants and supporters across a wide range of categories including the addition of 12 governments, several NGOs and private sector organisations.

As of January, 2018 we have 66 GGGI Participants (2017 additions in bold):

Albion Farms and Fisheries	Friend of the Sea	Northern Prawn Fishery	SeaDoc Society
Archipelago Marine Research	Fundy North Fishermen's Association	Northwest Straits Foundation	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
Austral Fisheries	Ghost Fishing Foundation	Ocean Conservancy	Steveston Harbour Authority
<b>Axiom Cycling Gear</b>	GhostNets Australia	<b>Ocean Outcomes (O2)</b>	Surfers Against Sewage
BioPesca	Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation	Ocean Recovery Alliance	<b>T Buck Suzuki Environmental Foundation</b>
<b>Blue Ocean Gear</b>	Healthy Seas Initiative	Olive Ridley Project	<b>TierraMar</b>
Bureo	Humane Society International UK	ORCA	TriMarine
Calao Africa	International Pole & Line Foundation	<b>Pacific Islands Development Forum</b>	Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre
CetaceanLaw	Italian National Institute for Environmental Protection and Research – ISPRA	<b>PADI</b>	World Animal Protection
Circular Ocean	KIMO International	Parley for the Oceans	World Cetacean Alliance
Clean Nova Scotia Foundation	<b>Local Independent Sea Anglers - LISA</b>	<b>Pelagic Data Systems</b>	<b>World Wildlife Fund</b>
Cornwall Seal Group	Marine Conservation Society	Pew	Young's Seafood
<b>EcoTrust Canada</b>	MCB Seafoods	<b>Planet Love Life</b>	
Emerald Sea Protection Society	Natural Resources Consultants, Inc.	Plastic Disclosure Project	
<b>Fatface</b>	Neptune's Army of Rubbish Cleaners	<b>Plastix Global</b>	
Fathoms Free		Project Aware	
Fisheries Institute of São Paulo State		Project GHOST	
Fiskevegen AS		Raptis and Sons	
Fourth Element		Sainsbury's	
		Salacia Marine	



## We are now supported by 12 governments and several other key affiliates:

### GOVERNMENTS

Dominican Republic  
Independent State of Samoa  
Kingdom of Belgium  
Kingdom of the Netherlands  
Kingdom of Sweden  
Kingdom of Tonga  
New Zealand  
Republic of Palau  
Republic of Panama  
Republic of Vanuatu  
Tuvalu  
United Kingdom including Wales,  
Scotland, Northern Ireland and England

### KEY AFFILIATES

Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial  
Research Organisation (CSIRO)  
International Whaling Commission (IWC)  
NOAA Marine Debris Program  
United Nations Environment  
Programme (UNEP)  
United Nations Food and Agriculture  
Organisation (FAO)





# WORKING GROUP OUTPUTS

## Building Evidence

From the inception of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative it was clear: to promote engagement and plan effective solutions in hot spot areas, we needed to fully understand the problem. Sharing data, intelligence and resources to better understand global abundance, causes, impacts and trends of abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG or “ghost gear”), is critical to:

- developing a pathway to change
- supporting monitoring and benchmarking (including in the context of the UN Sustainability Development Goal targets)
- galvanising action and support from the international community.

However, information relating to ghost gear is challenging to work with. Data can be difficult to acquire, inconsistent in structure and type, and its quality often unknown. Data is sourced from a wide range of locations and organisations globally – so far, we are working with about 300,000 data records shared by over 30 groups.

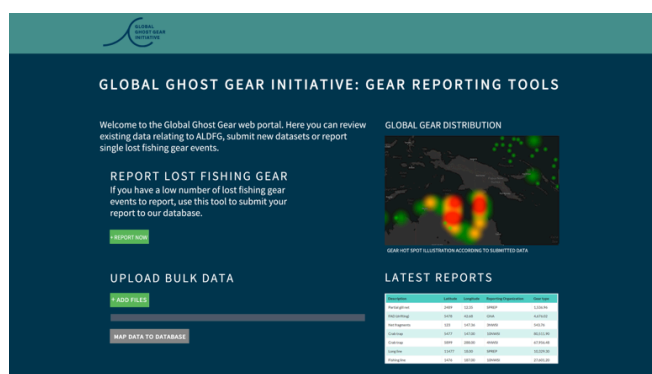


Illustration of proposed design coordinating reporting and submission tools.

To overcome these challenges, the GGGI is creating a range of tools and methods to both work with existing data and improve the way that we collect it. This data will then be used to inform solutions projects to address the ghost gear issue.

**The solution to this problem will be twofold:**

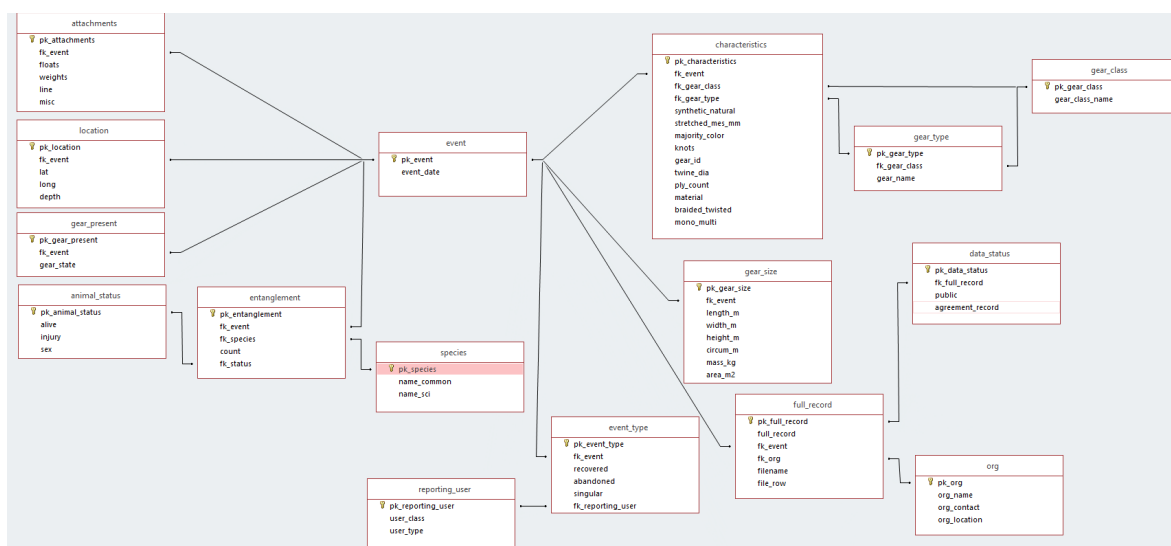
1. Create a centralised data portal to house a comprehensive global data set on ghost gear.
2. Create a mobile reporting app companion to the data portal.

### A Centralised Data Portal

In September 2017, the GGGI designed and implemented a database to act as a repository for existing and new ghost gear data. This followed a year of discussion and analysis with experts from the GGGI Build Evidence working group as well as the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)<sup>8</sup>, relating to the structure of existing data as well as what an ideal data set would look like.

The design focuses on flexibility with respect to potential data submissions, allowing for partial records to be created that may nevertheless be useful (e.g. a report of unidentified gear, at a known place and time) while at the same time supporting complete and detailed reports of gear characteristics. Additionally, the design aims to support submission of data not specifically relating to fishing gear, but commonly reported alongside or even in preference to gear-related events – such as entanglement or ingestion data. By supporting the capture of this data, we can capture a wider range of tangential, yet valuable, information relating to lost fishing gear.





By allowing submission from multiple sources (i.e. beach survey teams as well as commercial fishers and more), we will increase the rate and range of data capture. Each “front end” submission tool will feed into this same database, with a variety of tools supporting different types of submission:

- **Single reporting events:** a mobile app, called the GGGI Gear Reporter, will capture locations and other details about ghost gear
- **Bulk uploads:** a web portal supporting the uploading of existing ghost gear data sets from which the portal can read spreadsheets and extract pertinent data.
- **Collaboration and automatic submission:** partner organisations with their own existing web reporting tools can collect partial or full records and submit these to our database as they are collected.

### GGGI Gear Reporter

Designed by the GGGI Build Evidence working group, in conjunction with the data portal, this innovative tool provides complete records relating to gear while still being user-friendly. The app is designed to allow various users (commercial, recreational etc.) on-the-go access to a range of information including: gear location, type of activity, type of gear, and identification of affected wildlife.

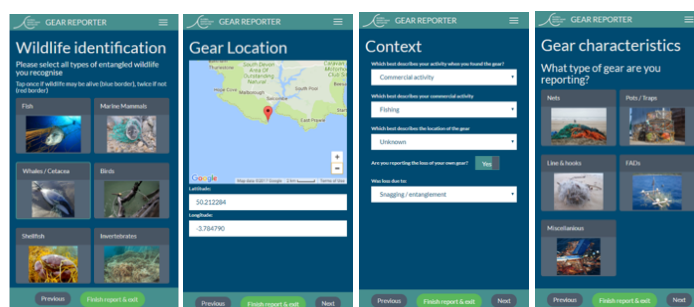
#### What can we do with the data?

To overcome the problem of ghost gear in the most effective way and in the most critical areas, we need solid, uniform, up-to-date data on a global scale.

Solutions, whether prevention, mitigation or cure-based, are built on data. Structured and accurate evidence gathering and synthesising:

- plays a key role in planning a global strategy
- supports advocacy efforts at the international level
- helps direct solution delivery in ghost gear hotspots, and
- creates opportunities for solutions projects using best practice models.

It also enables global monitoring and accountability to catalyse further change as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal ambitions. Gaps in our data show us where we need to survey more thoroughly, and collaboration with oceanographic modelling can tell us where the gear originated.



(App is in final development, above images are of late stage draft)

## Define Best Practice and Inform Policies

### Best Practice Framework summary for GGGI 2017 report

One of the greatest strengths of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative is the diversity of its participant base. Each organisation representing a variety of sectors has something unique to contribute to help solve the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear worldwide.

The Best Practice Framework for the Management of Fishing Gear (BPF) is a guidance document outlining approaches for minimising lost and abandoned fishing gear to various stakeholders across the seafood supply chain, including:

- Gear designers, manufacturers and retailers
- Fishers
- Fisheries organisations
- Port operators
- Fisheries managers and regulators
- Fisheries control agencies
- Fisheries and marine environmental research organisations
- Seafood ecolabel standard and certificate holders
- Seafood businesses
- Non-governmental organisations.

At its heart, the GGGI is a 'collective impact initiative', meaning that our strength lies in bringing together people and organisations to tackle the problem of ghost gear. Fishing industry involvement, in particular, is critical to our success. To this end, the GGGI hired Ocean Outcomes (O2) to consult with the industry on the BPF. Feedback was from over 50 fishing industry stakeholders via survey and/or webinar participation,

Photograph: Joel Baziuk



**ONE OF THE GREATEST STRENGTHS OF THE GLOBAL GHOST GEAR INITIATIVE IS THE DIVERSITY OF ITS PARTICIPANT BASE - FOSTERING UNIQUE PARTNERSHIPS AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS.**

Joel Baziuk, GGGI Secretariat





which has helped inform the rollout of the BPF and the GGGI's plan for its eventual industry-wide adoption.

#### Industry feedback was collected via:

1. A series of 13 informative and interactive webinars.
2. An anonymous online survey requesting feedback.

#### Some highlights include:

- Global response, with all continents (save Antarctica) represented
- All seafood supply chain sectors represented (save for port operators)

- 72% of respondents had moderate or high knowledge of impacts of ghost gear
- 67% saw ghost gear as a significant issue for their specific operation
- 83% said the BPF would be likely to influence their business practices
- Respondents indicated that “regulatory approaches” (80% in favour) would be best suited to mitigating the effects of ghost gear, with “certification and supply chain approaches” (50% in favour) being next best.

Using the data collected from the webinars and the online survey, O2 refined the BPF to ensure its recommendations would be feasible prior to finalising the document.

The BPF released in October, 2017.

The next steps are for the GGGI to undertake projects to encourage the fishing industry's adoption and endorsement of the BPF. These include:

- Integrate BPF metrics into solution project assessment criteria
- Encourage seafood companies to adopt the BPF into their sustainable seafood policies
- Pilot the BPF into one or two Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs)
- Make recommendations to MSC, Fair Trade US (and other relevant standards bodies) on gear management and ghost gear mitigation measures to be included into their standards
- Develop BPF metrics that align with MSC standards and audits to increase the likelihood MSC will include ghost gear measures
- Develop user-friendly summaries of the BPF.

## Catalyse and Replicate Solutions

The Solutions Working Group implemented a new GGGI Project Application process in 2017 as well as the Project Review Board (PRB), whose purpose is to review project submissions and ensure they follow a specific set of guidelines and deliverables to be endorsed by the GGGI. Members of the PRB are drawn from the GGGI participant base and are committed to reviewing all project proposals.

All projects submitted through the PRB must:

- Prevent negative impacts from ghost gear to species and habitats in the project area
- Develop systematic approaches to prevent negative impacts from ghost gear
- Provide exceptional value to GGGI in its efforts to support successful solutions to ghost gear.

7 Solutions Projects went through the Project Review Board process this year:

### **End of Life Net Recycling Project (Alaska)**

The immediate purpose of this project was to collect and transport end-of-life fishing nets from Dutch Harbor, Alaska, to Denmark where they will be recycled by GGGI member Plastix Global and entered back into the economy as a basic plastic commodity.

The resulting logistical system is now being promoted by the GGGI and the project partners as an example of best practice and a second phase of the project will start in 2018.

### **Vaquita Project (Mexico)**

The vaquita is the most endangered marine mammal on the planet, with fewer than 30 of them remaining.

The vaquita's proximity to extinction is due to illegal fishing activity for the also critically endangered totoaba fish and the resulting accumulation of abandoned gillnets.

To help save these critically endangered porpoises, World Animal Protection joined forces with the International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita (CIRVA), Monterey Bay Diving and local fishers in May 2017 and again in October 2017 (this time including GGGI participant WWF Mexico) to locate and remove illegal and discarded gillnets from the critical vaquita porpoise habitat in the Gulf of California. This project used the innovative side scan sonar technology to locate the gillnets. Using GPS coordinates, local vessels dragged grappling hooks behind them to snag the nets and mark them for recovery and recycling.

### **FAD Tracking Project (South Pacific)**

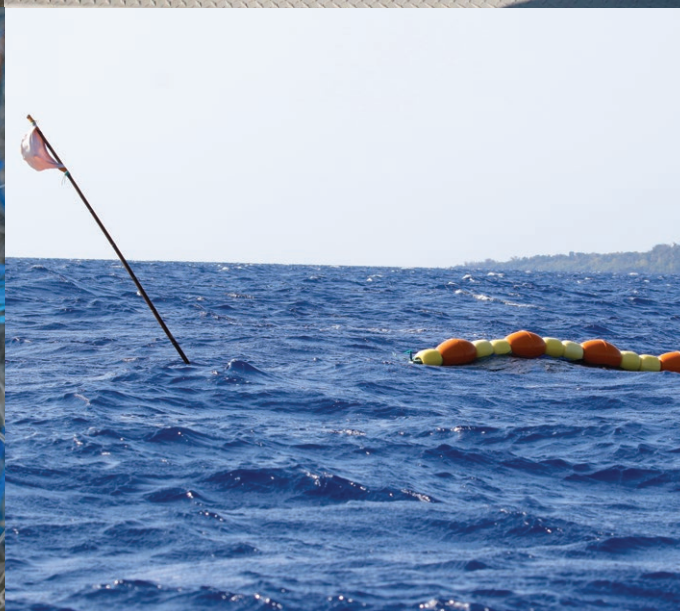
The GGGI is currently in the first phase of a solution project focused on the management of fish aggregating devices (FADs) in the South Pacific. We are looking at marking and tracking, along with other management measures, to prevent the creation of ghost gear and its related impacts. The project is in two strands.

The first strand of the project is to review GGGI participant Tri Marine's FAD policies and operations in the South Pacific to make recommendations for increased integration with the GGGI's Best Practice Framework for the Management of Fishing Gear (BPF).

The second strand of the project is to trial artisanal fish aggregating device (AFAD) position tracking technology in Vanuatu. We will evaluate their effectiveness, recommend protocols for monitoring the positions of the AFADs to aid in their retrieval, and recommend responsible disposal, retrieval and



Clockwise from top left: End of Life Net Recycling Project in Alaska; Vaquita Project in Mexico; FAD Tracking Project in the South Pacific; and Gear Marking in Indonesia



Photographs: Nicole Baker, Joel Baziuk, Christina Dixon

recycling/re-use opportunities for end-of-life AFADs. We will also trial methods for marking AFADs to increase visibility and identification, with an aim to reduce risk of damage, loss and interference.

In February 2018, the interim findings from this work will be compiled into a report for the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) Technical Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

### **Gear Marking Project (Indonesia)**

This pilot – the first of its kind in a developing world fishery – is testing approaches to marking and tracking fishing gear in a gillnet fishery ahead of the FAO Technical Consultation and the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) meeting in July 2018. It will provide valuable feedback from the field on the efficacy, methodology and barriers to gear marking as a tool for addressing ALDFG and potentially illegal,



Clockwise from top left: The Olive Ridley Project; Douglas Indian Association Pot Removal Project in Alaska; Fathoms Free Gear Removal Project in the UK; and Douglas Indian Association Pot Removal Project in Alaska



Photographs: Olive Ridley Project, Kyle Antonellis, Courtesy of Fathoms Free, Kyle Antonellis

THE WORK OF THE GGGI IS FOCUSED ON GHOST GEAR, BUT ALSO DIRECTLY IMPACTS ON THE ISSUE OF MARINE PLASTICS AND MICRO PLASTICS, AND PROVIDES TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED FISHING.



unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. Following the learnings from the project's first phase, currently underway, GGGI is further developing the scope of ghost gear mitigation in the region through the expansion of successful components from Phase 1 of the pilot project. Phase 2 will have a specific focus on embedding and improving current management practices for gillnets, including gear marking, end-of-life net management, lost gear reporting and other best practices.

#### **Olive Ridley Project (Pakistan)**

In Rehman Goth, Pakistan, The Olive Ridley Project has been working to facilitate a reduction of negative impacts from ghost gear by providing education to the local community, a storage/disposal site for fishers to responsibly leave end-of-life gear, and an alternative local artisanal use for ghost gear, aiming to end the ghost gear cycle whilst improving the quality of life amongst the fishing community of Rehman Goth.

1.2 tonnes of ghost gear were recovered by the end of 2017, 400 kg of which was successfully recycled. The remaining gear will be used by local artisans to create jewellery and add an additional source of income to the local community.

#### **Douglas Indian Association Pot Removal Project (Alaska)**

The Douglas Indian Association, with assistance from GGGI participant Natural Resource Consultants, began a lost crab pot removal project in Gastineau Channel, Alaska. This area is home to a large contingent of fishers fishing mostly Dungeness crab. The high degree of fishing activity sees many lost crab pots every year. The goals of the project were to:

- Prevent negative impacts from lost crab pots and other ALDFG in the project area
- Develop systematic approaches to

preventing ALDFG from entering the marine environment.

The project was based on extensive lost fishing gear recovery and prevention work done by Northwest Straits Foundation and Natural Resource Consultants in Puget Sound, Washington. Side scan sonar surveys were used to locate lost pots and they were removed using grapples and pot pullers.

The lessons learned will be used to implement or expand this project in similar areas along the coast of Alaska and British Columbia.

#### **Fathoms Free Gear Removal Project (UK)**

Fathoms Free, a group of volunteer marine community leaders in the South West of England, together with the GGGI, delivered a project that will protect the coastal communities and the marine environment from ghost gear. It will also help communities with the burden of disposing of end-of-life fishing gear – creating new opportunities for local business in the process. Fathoms Free aims for it to become a self-sustaining project on the Cornish coast; and eventually be scaled up to a nationwide initiative.

The project involves the following key aspects:

- Gathering and analysis of marine litter in the South West of England.
- Removal and analysis of ghost gear from the marine environment, involving 12 retrieval dives and 12 beach clean-ups.
- Creation of new economic opportunities by promoting innovative and sustainable solutions to recycle fishing gear.
- Raising awareness on the topic of ghost gear through UK national TV.
- Positive engagement and progress with UK regulators on licencing requirements of ghost gear

# CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

## UN Ocean Conference, New York

**June 5 – 9, 2017**

The UN Ocean Conference was the first of its kind, hosting stakeholders interested in ocean conservation from all over the world. The goals of the conference were to follow up on the implementation of the voluntary commitments registered and announced at The Ocean Conference for implementation of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14); to catalyse and generate new voluntary commitments; and to facilitate collaboration and networking amongst different actors in support of SDG 14. More than 1,400 voluntary commitments to ocean sustainability were made by organisations in the lead up to the conference and at the event itself.

During the conference, Ingrid Giskes, Head of World Animal Protection's Sea Change Campaign and Chair of the GGGI, gave a presentation which was very well received. Because of this, and extremely successful stakeholder engagement, 12 governments committed to signing the GGGI Statement of Support, helping pave the way for the GGGI to be recognised as the global leader on finding solutions to ghost gear. In addition, ghost gear was recognised as the only marine-based source of marine litter in the outcome document of the Conference Call for Action: Our Oceans, Our Future<sup>9</sup>.

## SeaWeb Summit, Seattle

**June 5 – 7, 2017**

The SeaWeb Summit is the world's premier conference on seafood sustainability, hosting a variety of industry stakeholders every year. Several GGGI members attended the Summit in Seattle this year, where we held a side event on ghost gear and officially launched the Best Practice Framework for the Management of Fishing Gear

The successful GGGI side event on ghost gear helped lead to the first ever acceptance of a GGGI-led panel session into the 2018 SeaWeb Summit program. This upcoming panel for the 2018 SeaWeb Summit in Barcelona in June will consist of several representatives from the seafood industry alongside several GGGI participants, further raising the profile of ghost gear within the global seafood sector and tying in to the greater discussion about ocean plastics and the degradation of macro into micro plastics.

## Circular Ocean's Net Hack Challenge, Reykjavik

**July 17 – 18, 2017**

World Animal Protection's Christina Dixon was invited to Iceland for an event hosted by Circular Ocean to talk about the GGGI's work on ghost gear. Ms. Dixon proposed a set of challenges for: artists, makers, chemists, technologists and civil engineers to common problems affecting marine animals such as whales, dolphins, turtles and seabirds. This event, 'Net Hack Challenge', encouraged teams to 'hack' or develop solutions using piles of nets collected from the beaches in the local area and develop a business model from the use of these materials.



The final concepts from the Net Hack Challenge will be shared online in the hope of stimulating further innovation around reuse of fishing nets and ropes, particularly in the remote fishing communities of the Northern Arctic Periphery Region where recycling may not be possible.

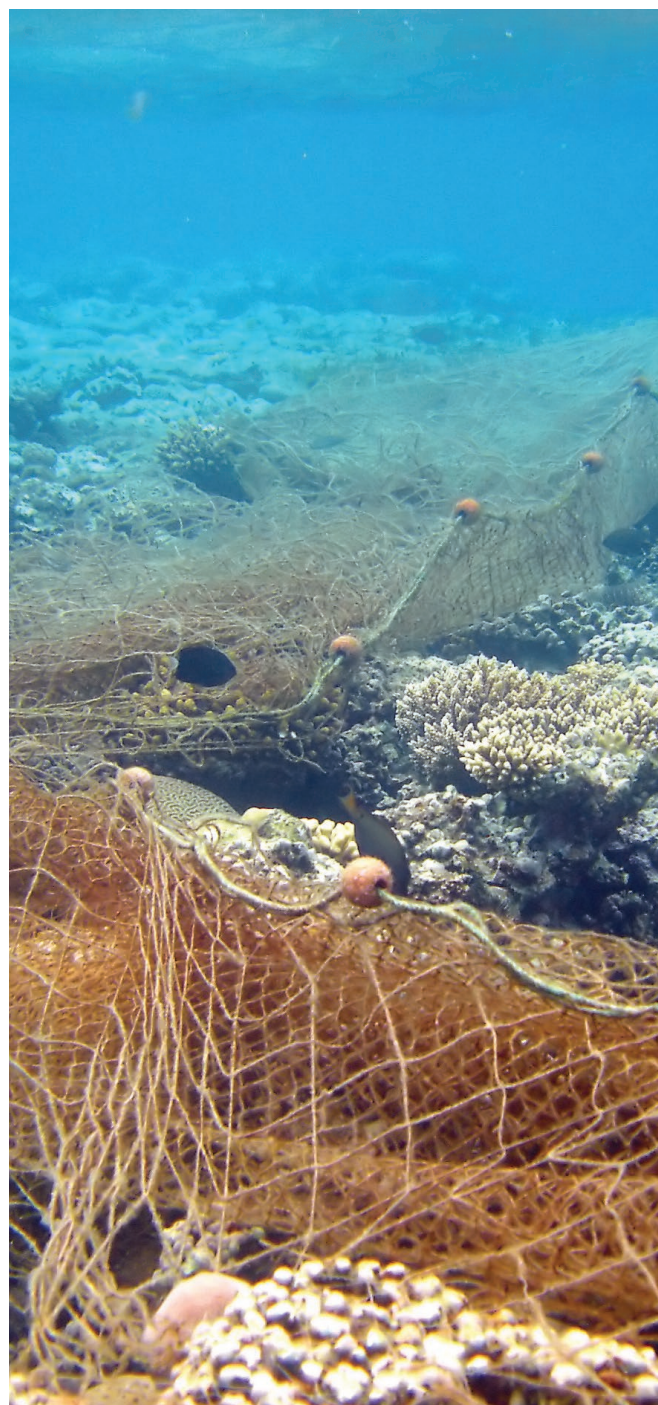
## World Ocean Council Summit, Halifax

**November 29 – December 1, 2017**

Each year, the World Ocean Council hosts a conference to convene stakeholders in ocean-related industries to promote sustainable ocean use and showcase sustainability initiatives, technological advances and research. This year's conference – Sustainable Ocean Summit – was held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada with the theme focused on the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water).

World Animal Protection attended the conference and gave a presentation entitled, "Showcasing Best Practice Guidelines and Solutions to the Problem of Abandoned, Lost and Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear" at a session titled, "Food Security, Sustainable Fishing and Aquaculture". Other panelists included two representatives from MSC and two seafood company speakers.

The conference provided an opportunity to speak with key players working on sustainable seafood issues and to discuss their involvement in the GGGI going forward.



Photograph: Malik Naumann / Marine Photobank

<sup>9</sup> <https://oceanconference.un.org/callforaction>





Photographs: Joel Baziuk



## 4TH ANNUAL GGGI MEETING – BANGKOK, THAILAND

The fourth Annual Meeting of the GGGI took place on 13th and 14th September in Bangkok, Thailand. The primary objectives of this two-day meeting were to:

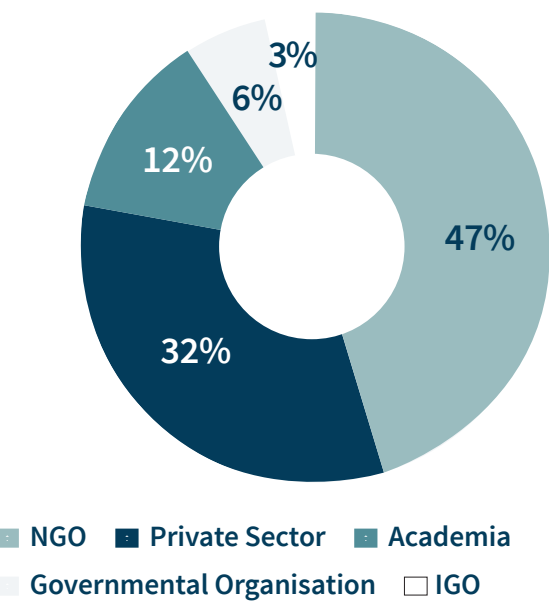
- Showcase and celebrate achievements within the GGGI and its participants and identify learnings which can be replicated and initiated in 2018
- Establish work priorities for 2018 and maintain the momentum achieved to date for the next year
- Enhance working partnerships and leverage the collective to multiply the impact of the GGGI's work
- Elect the Steering Group members, appoint Working Group Coordinators and Chairs, and expand the Project Review Board
- Develop the 2018 work plans for the three GGGI Working Groups
- Chart the course for the GGGI into 2018 and beyond.

Throughout the two-day meeting, the attendees all contributed to the development of the 2018 GGGI work plans, which built on the many successes from 2017, including the development of the Data Portal and Ghost Gear Reporter App, the completion of the Best Practice Framework, and the implementation of seven solutions projects around the globe, several of which will have second phases in 2018. The 2018 Steering Group was also elected and presented, consisting of a full seven members for the first time. A detailed summary of the annual meeting can be found [here](#). The next Annual Meeting will be hosted in Bali, Indonesia in October 2018.

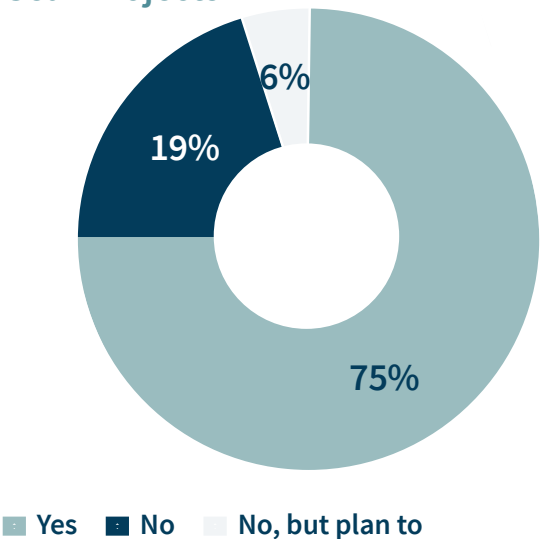
# YEAR-END SURVEY SUMMARY

For the first time, the GGGI held a year-end participant survey to better understand the contributions of the members as well as to gauge the effectiveness of the overall running of the collective.

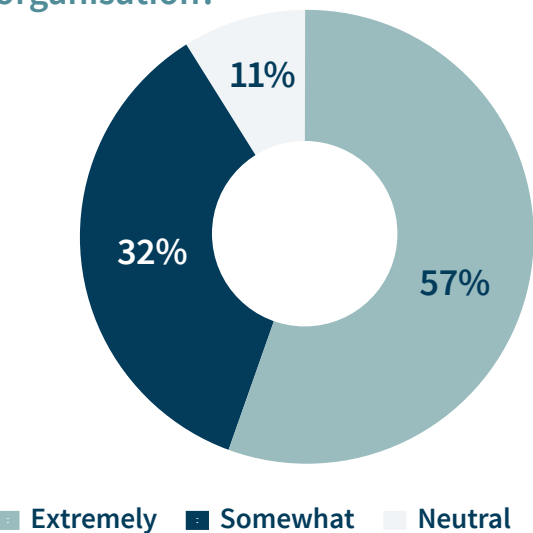
Respondents by Category



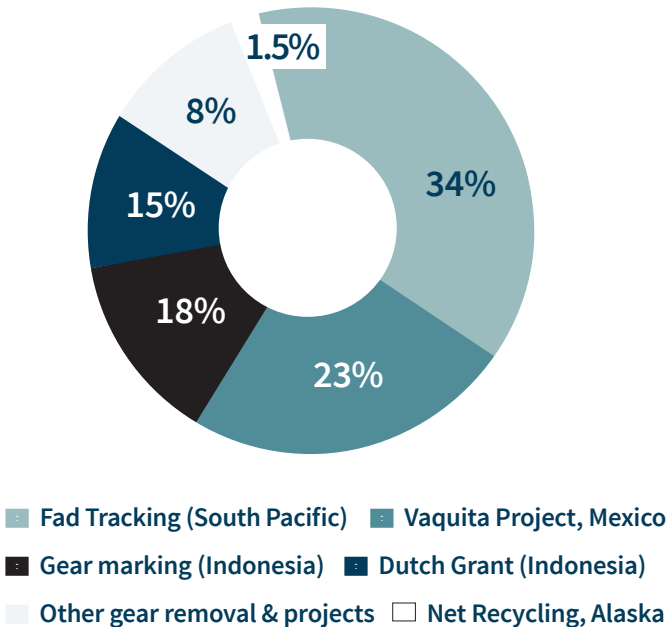
Organisations Participating in Ghost Gear Projects



How valuable is GGGI to your organisation?

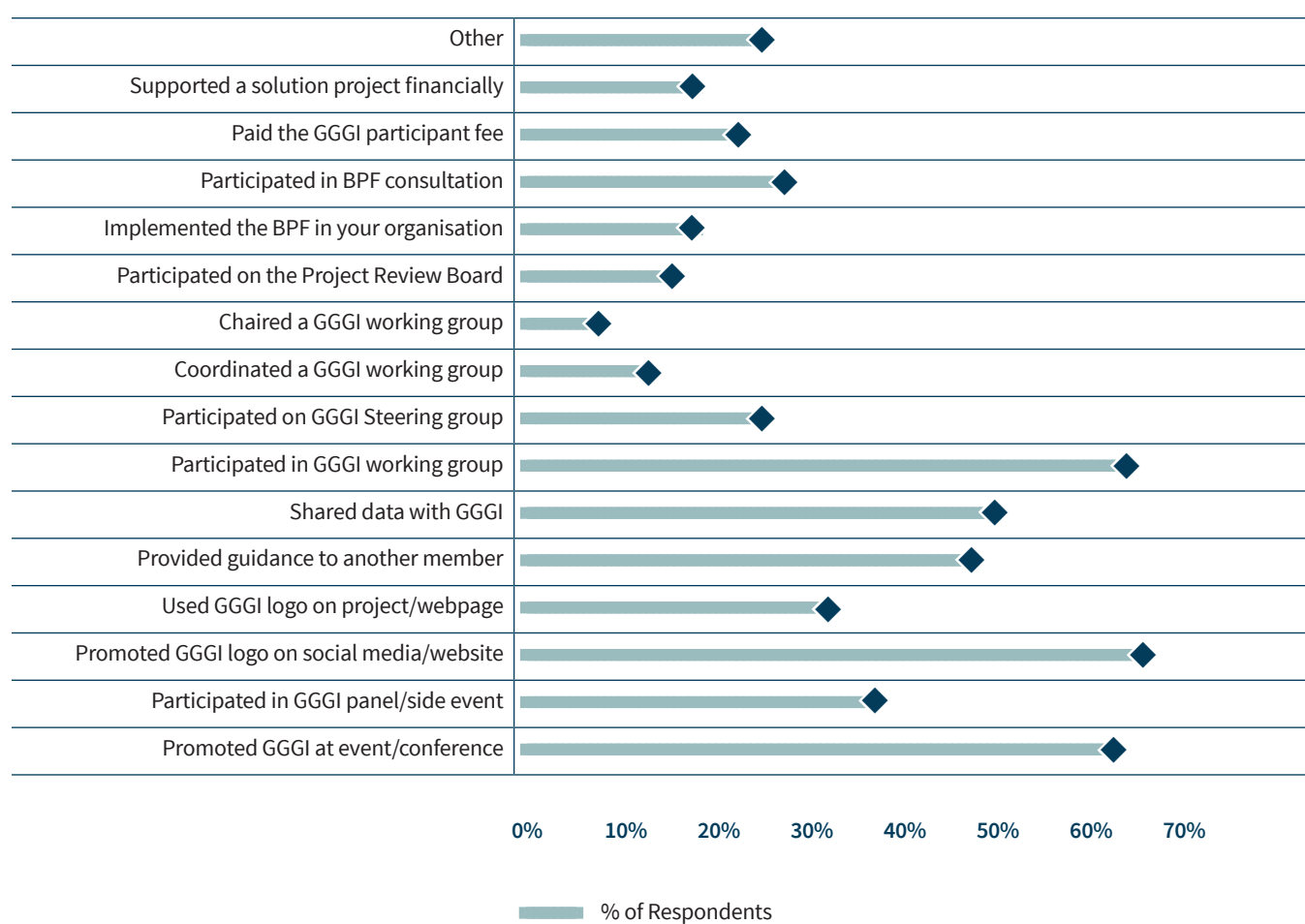


Project Funding beyond lead partner support





## How has your organisation contributed to GGGI in 2017?



## How do you feel your organisation has benefitted from GGGI membership?

“GGGI membership has provided us with a window to the global efforts to solve problems around lost fishing gear. This has been invaluable. We are able to connect with experts all over the world, learn about innovative approaches, and build our own expertise.”

“Important networking; increased knowledge and insight on the subject; and an important opportunity to help solve a growing problem in our industry.”

“The opportunity to collaborate and coordinate with international colleagues is of great benefit; as well, GGGI membership establishes/ legitimises the credentials of our program on the international stage.”

“The GGGI is able to move more quickly than an IGO so its work is seen as something to guide the path that we need to follow to address ghost gear at an intergovernmental level. Our work with the GGGI has enabled us to do pilot projects in developing countries that are more holistic in their scope than we would have done otherwise.”

“GGGI provides us with a global network of organisations that are collectively working towards the same cause. This has enabled us to make connections that we might not have had access to. GGGI also gives us the opportunity to organise around the greater issues that need to be addressed in order to ultimately put an end to discarded fishing gear.”

“Greater network of organisations all working towards the same goals which helps in achieving one’s own; increased exposure; also helps drive morale by seeing the achievements of other members.”







# LOOKING AHEAD

The GGGI continues to build momentum moving into 2018, and the next year promises to be our biggest yet. With a strong, motivated Steering Group, tangible and significant outputs from each of the working groups and the support of more organisations and governments than ever before, the GGGI is poised to have an even greater impact worldwide. We have several high profile conference appearances slated, including numerous panelists at the 6th International Marine Debris Conference in San Diego in March, and our first ever panel appearance at the SeaWeb Seafood Sustainability Summit in Barcelona in June.

We will launch our Ghost Gear Reporter App in early 2018, continue to pursue uptake of the Best Practice Framework, and develop even more solutions projects around the world. We will expand our participant base, continue to increase the profile of ghost gear as a global issue, and source more funding opportunities to build on what we accomplished in 2017.

## Some key objectives from the 2018 GGGI Work Plans include:

### Steering Group

- Ensure GGGI is well governed and working toward clearly defined goals
- Ensure GGGI continues to grow into an effective collective impact alliance
- Ensure GGGI participation grows and profile increases
- Ensure GGGI's collective impact is measured and clearly represented

### Secretariat

- Expand GGGI communications and increase brand recognition
- Ensure GGGI Steering Group and Working Groups operate at maximum efficiency
- Increase GGGI revenue and identify/secure additional funding opportunities
- Increase GGGI participation

### Build Evidence Working Group

- Diversify evidence base
- Deliver tech tools
- Refine working group operations
- Identify and secure additional evidence sources
- Influence external stakeholders

### Define Best Practice and Inform Policies

- Develop and undertake BPF-related pilot projects
- Develop measurable criteria for BPF to be incorporated into certification schemes
- Increase global uptake of BPF
- Develop further materials to support BPF

### Catalyse and Replicate Solutions

- Develop and support 12 diverse projects around the world with at least five in developing countries
- Collaborate closely with other working groups to increase potential project funding/support
- Increase awareness and support for GGGI participants wanting to be involved in GGGI solutions projects
- Implement effective evaluation of all GGGI projects to aid in scaling/replicating future projects



The Global Ghost Gear Initiative has grown into a robust and well-established multi-stakeholder partnership. It is the only alliance of its kind working across the three R's – Reduce, Remove, Recycle – to tackle the problem of lost and abandoned fishing gear. We welcome the involvement of like-minded organisations to ensure the GGGI's critical work continues to protect the world's oceans, ocean economies, food security, and our marine animals and wildlife.

Ingrid Giskes, Chair of the GGGI Steering Group and Head of World Animal Protection's Sea Change Campaign:

"In the last three years, we have seen the GGGI grow from a young, conceptual organisation to a truly global, mature initiative that is relevant, respected and providing critical marine sustainability improvements. I am very proud of the real results the GGGI is delivering both on a policy level as well as on the ground through solutions projects. I look forward to building, replicating, and scaling up our efforts worldwide in the year to come."



Photograph: Kyle Antonelis









The GGGI is an exciting and pioneering initiative that is increasingly being joined by numerous important stakeholders in this critical marine sector.

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