

Blue Circular Nets (CIRCNETS)

Promoting collection and recycling of end-of-life (EOL) fishing gear in the European North

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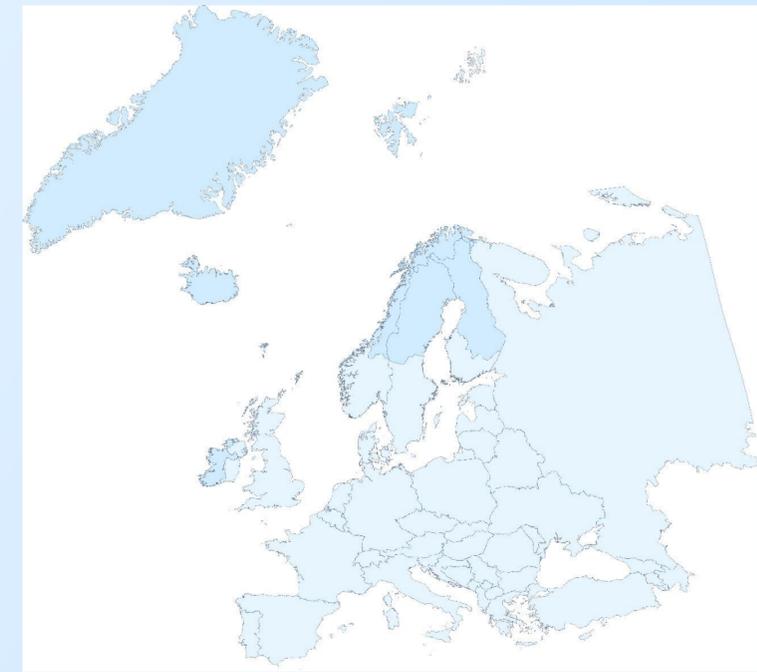
CIRCNETS

Northern Periphery and Arctic



CIRCNETS

- Funded by Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) Programme 2021–2027
- Implementation period: 1/2023–12/2025
- Partners from FIN, SWE, NOR, IE and ICE



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Why do we need CIRCNETS?

Background of the project

- European waste framework directive - Preventing waste is the top priority, but how this can be applied to fishing gear?
- SUP directive – aim is to decrease marine litter in Europe
- Not just “Single Use Plastics”, also fishing gear is targeted => the most significant sources of marine litter
- Extended producer responsibility (EPR) to be applied to plastics containing fishing gear => Producers and importers have to organise separate collection of EOL fishing gear
- The situation varies from country to country, national legislation takes these into account and defines how the system should be set up in each country, etc.
- How this can be done in northern, sparsely populated regions with long distances?

What happens to EOL fishing gear?

Iceland – the fishing nation

- In 2005 Icelandic Recycling Fund and the Association of Fisheries Companies reached a deal about domestic EOL fishing gear collection
- EOL fishing gear is collected at 14 major fishing ports, also foreign fishers can return their gear to the system (for a fee), 90% of collected fishing gear waste is domestic
- Annual collection volume c. 1100 tons, which is transported to Europe to be recycled
- As non-EU members, the SUP directive does not directly apply to ICE, but it does through the European Economic Area (EAA)
- ICE has informed EFTA Surveillance Agency (ESA), that they have partially implemented the SUP directive, but not the part that refers to fishing gear

What happens to EOL fishing gear?

Sweden – a front runner in collection of EOL fishing gear

- Since 2019 there has been a national collection scheme for EOL fishing gear, “Fiskereturen”, with financial support from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
- The operational area has covered west coast and Southern Sweden, will expand to Northern Sweden in 2024
- Collected EOL fishing gear is taken to Sotenäs Marine recycling center, which is the only dedicated marine recycling center in the Nordic countries
- Materials are separated from the nets at Sotenäs and recyclable plastics are transported to Denmark for further processing
- Transition period for the implementation of EPR for EOL fishing gear ends by the end 2024, separate collection system should be operational from 1.1.2025

What happens to EOL fishing gear?

Finland – a “late bloomer” in collection of EOL fishing gear

- Volume and value of commercial fishing smallest among the Nordic countries, but on the other hand a lot of spare time fishers
- No separate collection of EOL fishing gear, small scale coastal and freshwater fishing in the northern part of the country
- Significant amounts of historical waste in fishing ports, for instance drift nets, which were banned in the Baltic Sea in 2007
- Transition period for implementation of EPR ends by the of 2024, there should be a national collection system in place for EOL fishing gear by 1.1.2025
- In Finland, as in Sweden, this applies also to freshwater fishing, unlike the original SUP directive

EPR and fishing gear

- Producers and importers form an extended producer responsibility organisation, which will fund and implement separate collection of EOL fishing gear
- Users can return EOL fishing gear for free, the collection points are widely available
- The national legislation has set annual collection targets
- Recycling is not required yet at this point
- Handling the collected fishing gear into recyclable material segments is time consuming and expensive, therefore the producers should design gear that are easier to recycle

What next in CIRCNETS?

- The aim is to disseminate the good collection practices that are already found in the NPA area and beyond to new regions
- Workshops, webinars, etc.
- Another aspect that will be addressed later on in the project is the recycling of collected fishing gear
- What kind of technologies, best practices and methods that are in use on this field?
- Can the materials be processed and used in the regions, where the nets are collected?

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www

<https://www oulu.fi/en/projects/blue-circular-nets>

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