



Gull Bulletin 1/2025

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Introduction

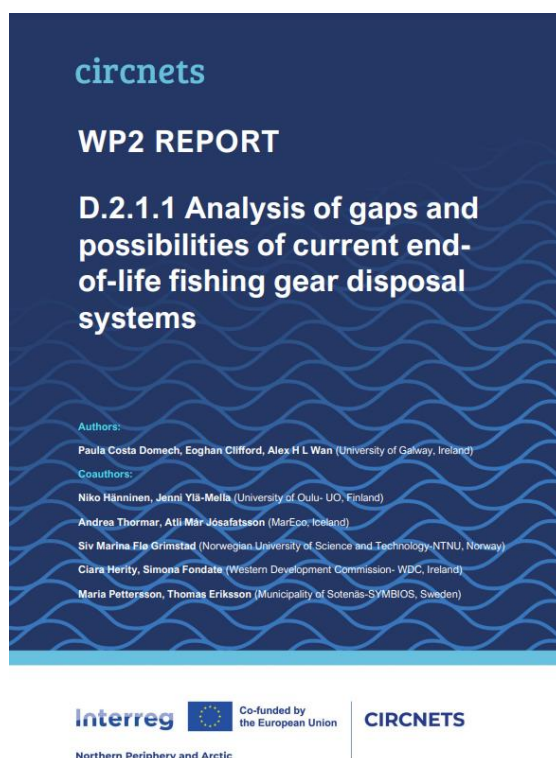
Welcome to the third newsletter of the Blue Circular Nets (CIRCNETS) project! After wintering elsewhere and enjoying a little getaway, I, Gus the Gull, eagerly wait for the spring to start with a busy fishing year lying ahead. Like me, our project will also have a busy (and final!) year which you can read more about at the end of this newsletter. Before that, this newsletter introduces you to what we have been up to, including our newest report, past events, and also some developments happening in the fishing gear world.



Sotenäs, Sweden

WP2 report

The first report of Work Package 2 has been published. WP2 focuses on the circular economy aspect of fishing gear waste, and the title of the report is “Analysis of gaps and possibilities of current end-of-life fishing gear disposal systems”. The report is divided into six chapters. After the introduction and description of the materials and methods used, the third chapter compares the current collection and disposal practices for EOL fishing gear in the partner countries. The fourth chapter introduces 11 practical examples of the best practices and best available technologies for the collection and recycling of fishing and aquaculture gear. The fifth chapter critically assesses the gaps and possibilities of the current disposal systems of the partner countries. The report ends with conclusions and references.



Cover of the first WP2 report

The report shows how different the collection and recycling systems are between the countries, mostly due to the volumes of waste material collected, size and structure of the fishing industry, and the presence of sorting and recycling infrastructure. Iceland, with a long-standing collection and recycling scheme and high fishing activity, can serve as a reference for the implementation for collection and recycling schemes in the other partner countries.

Possibilities to develop recycling systems in each of the countries were identified. Especially important would be to focus on investing in and designing pre-sorting techniques and support further research into recycling methods, so that recycling materials would be more efficient, cost-effective and sustainable.

Read the full report from our website: [Project reports](#).

Past events

Western Development Commission hosted the first webinar of the CIRCNETS project on 12th of September 2024, which was also a European Maritime Day In My Country event. The webinar focused on the collection, treatment and recycling of used fishing gear, with three case studies presented. Stina Gottlieb presented how the Fiskerituren project for collecting EOL fishing gear and the Sotenäs Marine Recycling Center in Sweden operate; Maliheh Salimi presented how Oceanize Ltd in Norway is recycling aquaculture gear; and Sharon Barrington introduced how NovelPlast in Ireland has experimented with introducing EOL fishing gear into their operations.

Our Icelandic partner MarEco hosted a Partner Meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland on the 5th and 6th of November 2024. Besides updating the progress of the work packages, our PM included two site visits. In Hveragerði, at Pure North Recycling, we learned more about plastics recycling in Iceland. Our second visit took us to the center of fishing gear business as we visited the netting factory of Hampidjan in Reykjavik. It was good to hear how sustainability issues have been addressed by a major fishing gear producer. Another viewpoint to the issue was provided by Sveinn Margeirsson, who visited us on the second day. Representing Brim, an important Icelandic fishing company, brought the fishing industry's aspect related to collection of EOL fishing gear into the discussion.



The mandatory group shot during our visit to the recycling facilities of Pure North Recycling in Hveragerði, Iceland.

November is not the prime season to visit Iceland, but the rain and the heavy winds did not manage to dampen the spirits of the partners. The next steps of the project were agreed on and the discussions with the locals provided a lot of new information. Thank you once more Andrea and Atli for hosting us!

EPR transition period and the Finnish pilot collection for EOL fishing gear

The transition period for the implementation of EPR for fishing gear has ended at the end of 2024. In the EU countries of the CIRCNETS project, Finland, Ireland and Sweden, producers of fishing gear must join a producer responsibility organization (PRO), which will meet the legal obligations on behalf of their members, including establishing a collection system for used fishing gear. In Sweden, Fiskekretsen AB has been accepted as a PRO for fishing gear on 30th of October 2024 and it aims to establish a nationwide collection system for fishing gear at recycling centers. In Ireland, the process of establishing PRO is still ongoing, with Foster Environmental Limited working as the interim registration body. The aim is to have a fully functioning PRO for fishing gear by February of 2026 at the latest.

In Finland, the Finnish SUP Producer Group Ltd was accepted as PRO for fishing gear on 18th of September 2024. A pilot collection for recreational EOL fishing gear was started in November 2024, with 13 collection points around the southwestern shore. The number of collection points will expand during the spring and by 1st of May 2025, there will be 75 permanent and 75 mobile collection points, as well as 10 terminal collection points for commercial fishing and aquaculture gear. There will also be seasonal collections in stores selling fishing gear during spring and autumn. The collection is organized by Finnish Packaging Recycling Rinki Ltd, commissioned by the Finnish SUP Producer Group Ltd.

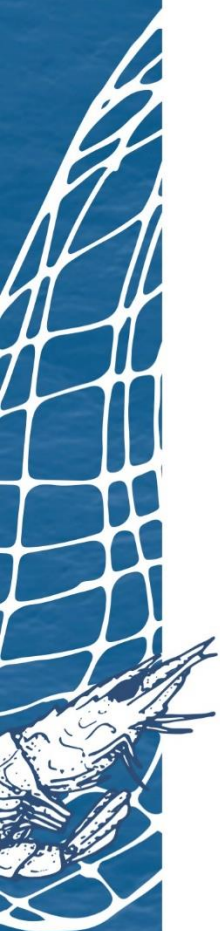
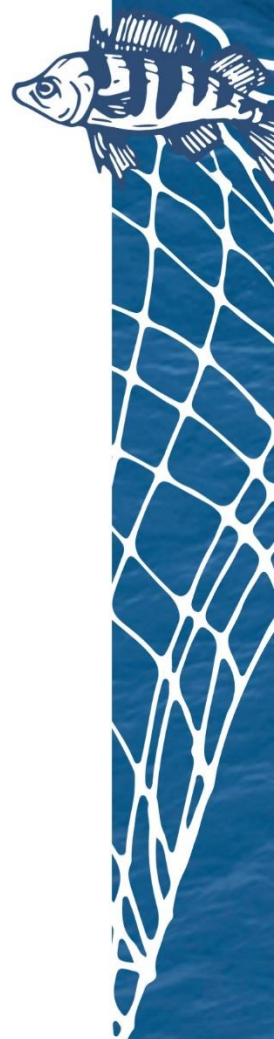
The two non-EU countries of the project, Iceland and Norway, are both part of the European Economic Area and therefore collaborate closely with the EU on environmental policies. Iceland has already had a collection of EOL fishing gear for almost 20 years. In Norway, the regulatory process to introduce EPR schemes for fishing gear has been progressing in the fall of 2024 and is still ongoing.

The EN 17988 series of standards

Recycling of fishing gear is challenging, as they usually contain different kind of materials. Metals, rubber and various plastics have to be separated from each other, before each material segment can be sent to a recycling facility. One aspect of the EPR is to increase the circularity and recyclability of the gear. Standardisation, which addresses these needs, can contribute to gear design.

The European technical committee CEN/TC 466 has developed the [EN 17988 “Circular design of fishing gear and aquaculture equipment” series of standards](#), which were published in Brussels on 28th of November. A stakeholder meeting was organised in connection with the publication of the standards and their implementation, which was followed by presentations and workshops about the topic.

EN 17988 provides requirements, recommendations and guidelines to address six aspects of circular design of fishing gear and aquaculture equipment containing plastics, starting from the design phase and going all the way through the entire life cycle of the products. The series is aimed at stakeholders in the fishing gear and aquaculture equipment sector as well as



stakeholders in the collection and re-processing of fishing gear and aquaculture equipment.

What are we up to next?

CIRCNETS project will be running until the end of 2025, and our final year is packed with exciting things. Our upcoming reports will address the quantities and qualities of fishing gear in the NPA area, emerging technologies and best practices about the reuse of recycled fishing gear, and the EPR and its implementation. There are also events planned for this year, for example in Finland a workshop bringing together fishing gear producers and plastic recyclers is being planned for spring. Dissemination campaigns for commercial and recreational fishers are also being organized.

May the slowly lengthening days bring new adventures your way!

Gus, on behalf of the whole CIRCNETS team

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