

## ***First Recycling Tests to Turn Disused Fishing Nets into Sportswear and Other Applications***

*The OCEANETS project has started testing a tool to prevent the loss and abandonment of fishing gear and to facilitate recovery. The project has also begun research on chemical and mechanical recycling processes that can be implemented to make use of these fishing nets to produce sportswear and other high added-value products.*

**Valencia (03 December 2019).** The European OCEANETS project has started initial research to achieve the twofold objective of preventing the loss and abandonment of fishing nets and facilitating their recovery for subsequent reuse in the form of high value-added textile products.

In particular, the first tests were carried out on the GPS tracking tool, which fishermen can use for preventive purposes to identify areas where they detect obstacles that trap their fishing gear, as well as areas where they have lost nets, so that they can be collected.

The project's work on land has also started with the first tests to develop innovative mechanical and chemical recycling methods to find new uses for recovered fishing nets at the end of their life cycle.

The OCEANETS project is funded by the European Union and led by AIMPLAS, the Plastics Technology Centre. In the ten months since the project started, the Port of Vigo Shipowners' Cooperative (ARVI) has contacted several agents in the fishing gear value chain (manufacturers, users, repair and waste management services) to gain firsthand information on the life cycle of fishing nets, as well as the challenges posed by their loss at sea and recycling at the end of their life cycle. ARVI member ships are chartered to bring disused nets to the port. The cooperative also works with waste managers and net makers that manufacture and repair fishing gear. One example is TecnoPesca, a fishing gear manufacturer whose professionals collaborate by determining the qualitative and quantitative composition of the typical trawling gear used in the Sole Bank and by sampling different fractions for analysis and recovery through recycling.

Initial chemical recycling tests are currently being performed on polyamide nets to obtain fibres that can be used to produce sportswear. For other kinds of fishing nets, AIMPLAS is doing research on mechanical recycling and compounding processes to improve the properties of the material so that it can be used in different value-added applications.

Other companies and associations participating in the OCEANETS project include ECOALF, the Universidad de Vigo, Sintex and the Asociación Vertidos Cero. The project is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals due to its commitment to the marine environment and to responsible production and consumption. The project is funded by the European Union European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EASME) under grant agreement EASME/EMFF/2017/1.2.1.12/52/03/552.789390 (OceaNets).

### About AIMPLAS

AIMPLAS is involved in this project and carries out research on this topic to fulfil its commitment to environmental sustainability. As a result, companies in the sector will be able to integrate circular economy criteria into their business models and turn the legislative changes affecting them into opportunities to improve efficiency and profitability and reduce their environmental impact. AIMPLAS also does research in areas such as recycling, biodegradable materials and products, and the use of biomass and CO<sub>2</sub>.



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