

New EU project secures funding to develop biodegradable fishing gear

The INdIGO (INnovative fishing Gear for Ocean) is a new EU Interreg co-funded project to develop prototype biodegradable fishing gear. The project which is cofunded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF will run until June 2023 with a total budget of Euro 4.2M.

Led by the University of South Brittany, the INdIGO project will reduce the total quantity of plastic present in the France/English Channel area by 3% through the development of biodegradable fishing gear, as well as improving habitat quality and maintaining biodiversity. Fishing gear is estimated to represent 27% of marine litter with more than 26 000 km of gear lost each year in the Channel area each year. With an estimated lifetime of several hundreds of years, the impact on marine wildlife can be devastating.

Lost and discarded fishing gear could be reduced by the use of biodegradable equipment with a controlled lifespan, however there is currently a lack of such products for use in the fishing and aquaculture sectors. The development biodegradable plastics is a realistic alternative for the European directive (2008/56/EC) in order to reduce ocean pollution in the long term.

Six research organisations (Universities of South Brittany, Plymouth and Portsmouth, IFREMER, CEFAS and SMEL) and four private partners (NaturePlast, Filt, IRMA and Marine South East) are collaborating in the development of prototype biodegradable fishing gear which will lead to the subsequent adoption by the commercial fishing industry. The main output of the project is to validate the proof of concept of a resistant fishing gear with a controlled lifetime. INdIGO will also work to improve the prevention and management of pollution generated during manufacture and develop an application to locate fishing gear already lost and identify recycling channels

The INdIGO project covers all aspects of net development including the supply chain, manufacturing, prototype development, testing and technical and economic analysis... A life cycle analysis will be completed to avoid pollution transfer. The involvement of SMEs will ensure the economic sustainability of the project by exploiting the results of the project. This expertise of the sector will enable INdIGO to develop products that are adapted to the needs of the market and competitive with current alternatives, while reducing their impact on the environment.

Progress and outcomes will be communicated to end-users, manufacturers, the scientific community, public authorities and the general public to raise awareness about the impacts of discarded fishing gear on our marine ecosystems and the solutions being developed by INdIGO.

SAVE THE DATE: Kick-off event on February, 12th 2020 in Lorient (Brittany, FR)



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