



Policy plan 2023-2024

Healthy Seas Foundation

August 2024

1. Mission

In 2013 a non-profit organization and businesses joined forces to tackle the problem of marine litter and to boost regeneration of valuable resources. Under the mission statement 'Healthy Seas, a Journey from Waste to Wear' Healthy Seas since then aims to remove waste, in particular fishing nets, from the seas for the purpose of creating healthier seas. But it doesn't end there. To prevent the nets from ending up on a landfill, recovered fishing nets are transformed by a third party into regenerated nylon and are subsequently used to create new products, such as socks, swimwear, underwear and carpets. Healthy Seas provides a showcase at a European level for circular economy while highlighting that waste is too valuable to be wasted.

The strength of Healthy Seas lies in its simple, appealing and easy to understand storyline and a partnership from non-profit organizations and businesses that work towards the same aim: a better planet and healthier seas.

In order to be more professional, better organized, to keep up with this growth and capture the future possibilities with the ultimate goal of raising bigger awareness about the problem of marine litter and most specifically fishing nets, Stichting Healthy Seas (also referred to as 'the Foundation') has been established in August 2019. Stichting Healthy Seas will be responsible for the daily operations of Healthy Seas.

2. The Challenge & Strategy

Marine litter has become a pervasive pollution problem affecting all of the seas in the world. It is widely documented that marine litter, such as plastics and derelict fishing gear, has negative impacts on many aspects, including human health, marine wildlife, marine ecological systems, beach quality, navigational safety, economic well-being of states and fishing and maritime industries.

Why focus on ghost fishing nets?

Wrecks are biodiversity hot spots and often the last refuges for animals in marine areas with intensive human activities like fishing. Waste fishing nets threaten these hot spots, which is addressed by the Foundation.

The killing of marine animals by waste fishing nets illustrates very well the problem caused by dumping litter in the sea to the wider public. Next to this, waste nets in the seas can also continue problems for local communities and fishers.

Stichting Healthy Seas' response

Stichting Healthy Seas is setting the example for sustainable and coordinated activities and discouraging the abandonment of fishing nets at sea and make available, encourage, and facilitate responsible handling of fishing nets at the end of their life.

The actions Stichting Healthy Seas takes against waste fishing nets are:

- Recovering fishing nets. Ghost nets are often found on reefs and shipwrecks which are highly important places for marine biodiversity.
- Preventing marine litter entering the seas. Healthy Seas collaborate with fishermen, fish farms, local communities and other stakeholders to prevent waste nets from ending up in the sea and work on measures to dispose nets in responsible yet affordable ways.
- Raising awareness. The Foundation works on raising on public awareness of the environmental damage caused by ghost fishing gear and promote the ecological and economic importance of healthy seas.

3. Audience

Since we all profit from a better planet and healthier seas worldwide, the Foundation has no specific limitation on its target group.

To accomplish its mission, Healthy Seas works with divers, fishermen, fish farms, local communities and other stakeholders to recover waste nets from the seas and prevent them from becoming marine litter in the first place.

Our awareness raising work focuses on the general public, children and schools to promote the ecological and economic importance of healthy seas and the environmental damage caused by ghost fishing gear.

4. Activities

4.1. Regular activities

Fishing gear may be abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded in one part of the world and end up in another. Oceanic currents and winds can carry ghost fishing gear thousands of kilometers. Even remote Antarctic habitats are not free from pollution. That's why it is important to harmonize our actions between different countries and regions. Healthy Seas has the potential to expand its activities to other regions beyond the current scope.

Clean-up actions

We are continuously working with about 550 volunteer divers in 7 regions globally (North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea, Red Sea, Baltic Sea, Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean) to organize sea clean-ups, targeting shipwrecks or reefs, which are hotspots for biodiversity.

Prevention

Recognizing the increasing level of interest in tackling the issue of derelict fishing gear and also that the scope of existing solutions do not yet come close to tackling the scale of the problem, Stichting Healthy Seas believes that long term 'prevention' can make a difference. That's why it is crucial to engage the fishing industry, preventing that waste fishing nets will end up in marine ecosystems (with the help of fishermen communities and fish farms).

Healthy Seas established waste fishing net reception facilities in selected harbours in Europe and currently working with over 1250 fishermen and fish farmers.

Education and awareness raising

Education and awareness raising activities are key to spread the word about marine litter and the importance of clean and healthy seas. For example, Stichting Healthy Seas is having regular school programs in 11 countries: the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, France, the UK, Ireland, Greece, Poland, Slovenia and Croatia for the younger generation with interactive presentations, games, making artworks. Occasionally these educational events are combined with a beach clean-up as well. We also have school programs in cooperation with fishery schools.

It is intended that the existing programs will continue by Stichting Healthy Seas in the coming years.

4.2. Main events & Further activities from 2023 onwards

Besides the regular activities, main events are planned with tailor made communications which will capitalize on their uniqueness, the ecological significance of the location and leverage partnerships to achieve maximum reach.

During these events all three marine protection activities of Stichting Healthy Seas will be represented such as clean-up actions with divers, cooperation with fishermen, school programs and educational activities.

Stichting Healthy Seas is looking into possible new activities in three areas such as:

- Legislation impact making
- Technology, innovation, Virtual Reality
- Scientific project – environmental and material analysis of ghost nets retrieved from shipwrecks

Furthermore, Stichting Healthy Seas is planning to expand the current geographical scope of the existing activities to other regions and continents, focusing on three main activities:

- Clean-up actions with divers
- Prevention – cooperation with fishermen
- Education and awareness raising activities

5. Management and use of funds

The initial budget of Healthy Seas has been allocated as direct funding or in-kind contribution and the opportunity is offered to other business partners and stakeholders to join.

5.1 (Potential) funding sources

Potential funding sources of the foundation:

- Partnership fees / donations from partners;
- Public donations;
- 1-10% donation from every purchase based on partner product sales;
- Contributions from the public via crowdfunding.

Further external funding sources are needed to continue and expand the activities.

The budget is an ongoing process which will be adjusted throughout the years when additional funding sources will become available.

The progress of the project implementation, the financial implications and the level of sustainability of the various projects will be monitored and regularly evaluated. Based on this evaluation the planned projects and budget will be updated quarterly.

The Foundation and its annual action plan and related budget focusses exclusively on the non-profit activities such as sea clean-up actions, prevention and education. Possible designations of funds received include, but are not limited to:

- sponsoring of clean-up activities by participating organizations or supplying equipment or materials to facilitate clean-up activities;
- reimbursing expenses made to carry out clean-up, awareness raising or educational activities, and;
- preparing (multi)media materials in the form of photos (digital or print) or videos to raise awareness about plastic pollution.

In general, the funds received are used to realize the objectives of the Foundation.

Designation of funds received will always take place by majority of votes.

Furthermore, the Foundation wishes to emphasize that it does not have the objective of making profit.

At the end of the financial year (which runs from January 1 to December 31), the treasurer draws up the financial statements, accompanied by an accountants report.

The board members of the Foundation commit themselves voluntarily and receive no remuneration. Any expense allowance will at most concern travel costs, or administration costs incurred. No vacancy fees are paid.

The salaries are determined by the board of the foundation and related to the position, seniority and performance of the activities within the foundation. The salary policy is periodically checked against external data.

6. General information

Please find below general information of the Foundation, including an overview of the board members.

Statutory name	Stichting Healthy Seas
Incorporated	August 19, 2019
Chamber of Commerce registration number	75614421
Fiscal registration number	860340557
Mailing address	Healthy Seas Foundation P.O. Box 161 1390 AD Abcoude The Netherlands
Visiting Address	Healthy Seas Foundation Poelestein 7 1391 RG Abcoude The Netherlands
Phone Number	+31 6 30480795
Website	www.healthyseas.org
E-mail	info@healthyseas.org
Objectives & Activities	Creating healthier seas by supporting and promoting activities aimed at creating awareness of the presence, reusability and dangers of marine waste.
Profit motive absent	The foundation does not have the objective of making profit.
Target audience	General public worldwide, most specifically school children, divers, fishermen, fish farmers
Annual accounts	January 1 until December 31

Board members	
Chairman	Mr. M. Kersten
Treasurer	Mrs. M. Sandrini
