

Net-Works: The world's first inclusive business model to recycle discarded fishing nets Made in the Philippines and now primed to go global

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Net-Works™ tackles ocean pollution with a sustainable supply chain solution that provides a net positive social, environmental and business impact @Nets2Carpet

MANILA, Philippines, June 10, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Interface, the world's leading carpet tile manufacturer, along with conservation charity, the **Zoological Society of London** (ZSL), provided an update on the progress of **Net-Works** in the Philippines. Funded in part by United Kingdom government's Darwin Initiative, the Net-Works program is primed for global expansion. Net-Works is the first inclusive business model of its kind to combine the conservation and livelihood expertise of ZSL and the business know-how of Interface to integrate fishing communities in the Philippines into the global carpet company's supply chain as a source of recycled nylon.



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According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear -- including nets -- makes up about 10 percent of marine waste globally. Net-Works has shown that it is possible not only to effectively tackle this growing environmental problem, but to also empower some of the most disadvantaged communities in the Philippines to join a global supply chain by taking care of their local environment. Collected fishing nets are turned into carpet tiles, supporting Interface's Mission Zero goal to source 100% recycled material.

Since 2012, the Net-Works program's impact includes:

- 66,860 kilos of nets collected, by residents in 14 collection sites in Danajon Bank and the Bantayan Islands.
- 508 memberships in Community Banks, with the opportunity to earn supplemental income through the sale of nets, as well as access to financial infrastructure via locally-established CoMSCAs (Community Managed Credit and Savings Associations) or local microfinance initiatives.

Following the successful pilot of the net collection hubs established in Danajon Bank and the Bantayan Islands in the Philippines, Net-Works has announced both local and global expansion, with **a third collection hub activated in Northern Iloilo in the Philippines**, and **a hub currently being established in the Lake Ossa region of Cameroon**, where nets used for freshwater fishing create a similar environmental challenge.

"The Philippines has been the perfect place to trial Net-Works," said Dr. Nick Hill, Conservation for Communities Technical Specialist for ZSL. "The ZSL Philippines team, together with the local communities, who have been incredibly receptive and supportive of Net-Works, have been able to develop an effective model that not only removes this damaging waste from the marine environment but also brings socio-economic benefits. What we have achieved so far shows that Net-Works was "made in the Philippines" and is now ready for export."

ZSL and Interface are partnered with yarn supplier **Aquafil**, as well as with Philippine-based partners **Southern Partners and Fair Trade Corporation** and **Negros Women for Tomorrow Foundation** to build a model for inclusive business that is closing the loop on marine plastics, providing the opportunity to earn **supplemental income** for some of the world's most disadvantaged people, and creating an innovative pipeline to allow Interface to reach its goal of **sustainable manufacturing**.

"Within Interface, sustainability goes beyond reducing the environmental impact of our products," said Rob Coombs, president of Interface Asia-Pacific. "It is about creating a new way of doing business that is more sensitive, inclusive, and ultimately, more successful."

"Net-Works is a unique and commendable project supported by the Darwin Initiative which draws fully on British expertise in the field of biodiversity," said Trevor Lewis, Charge d'Affaires at the British Embassy in Manila. "It

delivers a highly collaborative initiative, fostering partnerships with local communities and organisations in the Philippines. We congratulate the Zoological Society of London, Interface and Philippine-based partners in the inspiring success of Net-Works, and we wish the best of luck in its global expansion."

About Interface, Inc.

Interface, Inc. is the world's largest manufacturer of commercial carpet tile. Its founder, Ray C. Anderson, served as co-chair of the President's Council on Sustainable Development during President Clinton's administration, from 1997-1999. For 41 years, the company has consistently led the industry through innovation, and now leads the industry in environmental sustainability.

It is setting the pace for development of modular carpet using materials and processes that take less from the environment, and is well along the path to "Mission Zero," a 20-year-old company-wide promise to eliminate any negative impact it has on the environment by the year 2020.

Interface's worldwide carpet manufacturing facilities maintain third party registration to the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System standard, and the company obtained the first-ever Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for the commercial floor covering industry in North America.

The company is recognized globally for its commitment to build environmental considerations into its business decisions. For additional information visit www.interface.com.

About ZSL

Founded in 1826, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity whose mission is to promote and achieve the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats.

Our mission is realized through our groundbreaking science, our active conservation projects in more than 50 countries and our two Zoos, ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo. For more information visit www.zsl.org.

About the Darwin Initiative

The Darwin Initiative is a UK government grants scheme that helps to protect biodiversity and the natural environment through locally based projects worldwide. The initiative funds projects that help countries rich in biodiversity but poor in financial resources to meet their objectives under one or more of the following biodiversity conventions:

- the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

- the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)**
- the **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing**
- the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture**

The Darwin Initiative is highly collaborative, fostering partnerships with local communities and organisations in the countries where it works, which draws fully on British expertise in the field of biodiversity. It has now awarded £113 million to 943 projects in 159 countries.

Video - <http://youtu.be/DX6Uidpg3VM>

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/net-works-the-worlds-first-inclusive-business-model-to-recycle-discarded-fishing-nets-made-in-the-philippines-and-now-primed-to-go-global-300096892.html>

SOURCE Interface, Inc.

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