

Net-Works™

Empowering communities, replenishing the ocean.



About Net-Works

In 2012, Interface and ZSL embarked on a unique partnership. It began with the question: how could a carpet tile address inequality? Interface wanted to source material in a way that would benefit communities as well as the environment. ZSL wanted to develop a new model of community-led conservation, one that would bring immediate benefits to local people and break the traditional cycle of donor dependency.

The result is Net-Works - an innovative business that empowers communities in the developing world to turn waste fishing nets into opportunity, by selling them into a global supply chain. These nets were wreaking havoc with the marine ecosystem, causing pollution and threatening the livelihoods of fishing communities.

At the heart of Net-Works are the local community banks it sets up. Run by community members, these banks manage the local net supply chain, organize beach clean-ups and facilitate sales. They enable people to save money, including their earnings from net sales, and take out small loans to invest in education or in new enterprises. The banks also create "environment funds", where community members pool a portion of their savings to fund local conservation projects.

What impact has Net-Works had?

Since 2012, Net-Works has been established in 36 communities in the Philippines and Cameroon. 142 metric tons of waste nets have been collected for recycling - enough to go around the world twice! 1,500 families have been given access to finance through community banks and 62,000 people have benefitted from a healthier environment.

"Net-Works creates immediate benefits for communities and it's protecting the ocean in the long run."

Amado Blanco, Net-Works Philippines Project Manager, ZSL

What makes Net-Works unique?

The Net-Works model is a blueprint for a new generation of business and an innovative approach to marine conservation. It is:

environmentally restorative – turning waste into a valuable resource and replenishing marine environments;

socially inclusive – bringing marginalized communities into a fair global supply chain and providing access to finance;

commercially viable – supplying sustainable material for Interface and enabling community-led, financially sustainable conservation.

Net-Works' focus on community empowerment creates a truly sustainable solution, one that will help communities manage and protect their marine resources long into the future.

"I have seen first hand how the confidence of Net-Works community groups grows with every decision they take."

Dr Nick Hill of ZSL, Co-Founder of Net-Works

Scaling up

We've proven that Net-Works works, so now it's time to scale up. Interface and ZSL are seeking implementation and funding partners to help us expand Net-Works globally. By 2020 we aim to give **10,000 families** access to finance, create a healthier environment for **1 million people** and better protect **1 billion square meters** of the ocean.