

IPNLF sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Maldives Ocean Plastic Alliance

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The marine ecosystems surrounding the Maldives that are threatened by ocean plastic pollution will inevitably benefit from the new Memorandum of Understanding signed by IPNLF and Maldives Ocean Plastic Alliance (MOPA).

This MOU will tackle the issues posed by ocean plastic pollution through the implementation of programs to reduce ocean plastic, and retrieve plastics associated with fishing practices, otherwise known as ghost gear.

The Maldives is an exclusive one-by-one fishing zone, however drifting FADs (dFADs) and ghost gear from other fishing sectors can drift into Maldivian fishing zones. This affects local marine life when non-target species become entangled in abandoned nets and dFADs, and the ghost gear also threatens local tuna populations.

Programs have already begun in the Maldives to encourage fishers to retrieve ghost gear that they encounter on fishing trips, such as the Joanna Toole Foundation Project run by IPNLF, and one of the main objectives of the new MOU is to increase this effort and aim for 'ALDFG positive' status for Maldivian one-by-one fisheries. Being 'ALDFG positive' will mean that Maldivian fisheries are cleaning up more plastic than they dispose of.

This agreement will hopefully inspire further collaborations to tackle ocean plastics in the Maldives.



**MALDIVES OCEAN
PLASTIC ALLIANCE**



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In signing the MOU, IPNLF and MOPA agree on the following actions:

- To co-develop and implement programs on wide ranging aspects of marine plastic pollution and ways and means of reducing them.
- To develop programs and campaigns to educate the fishing community on emerging harmful effects of marine plastic pollution.
- To focus on ghost gear retrieval encountered by fishers and work on ways to minimize marine litter from the fishing industry.
- To pursue “ALDFG positive ” status of one-by-one tuna fishing, to further promote these fisheries as environmentally sustainable and low-impact.
- To build alliances in the fishing industry in respect to mutual sustainable development goals to reduce ocean plastics.

An MoU with MOPA is an important step to expand and strengthen our work on marine plastics in the Maldives. We plan to embark on creating awareness on issues relating to plastics entering the marine environment and co-creating innovative intervention to minimize marine plastics. With plastics neutrality projects under our FIT we would focus on reusing and upcycling of the marine plastics we would collect by engaging fishers and with support from our members.

- Shiham Adam, Director for Science & Maldives, IPNLF

ABOUT - Maldives Ocean Plastic Alliance

Maldives Ocean Plastics Alliance (MOPA) is the only national NGO alliance committed to pooling resources, forging partnerships, engaging stakeholders and empowering communities to safely repurpose single use plastics in Maldives. They are committed to science, contribute to education and awareness and conform to policy initiatives, to formulate community-based programmes and ambitious projects aimed at ridding pollution from our oceans.