

## **Interface: Pioneering an Inclusive Business Partnership**

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As the world's largest manufacturer of modular flooring, Interface has consistently led sustainable innovation in the manufacturing industry for 20 years.

In 1996, Interface signed the 'Mission Zero' pledge; an open commitment to eliminate any negative impact it has on the environment by the year 2020. Since then, Interface has gone beyond the realms of what was thought possible, making significant progress towards its desire of operating with 100% renewable energy, using virtually zero water and attaining zero waste to landfill status.

Part of the pledge is to inspire all areas of the organisation, and other organisations, to consider people, processes, products, places and profits against the environment and wider circular economy. This incorporates every aspect of activity – from sourcing raw materials, product design, manufacturing processes and logistics, through to marketing, management and corporate social responsibility.

Using its pioneering Net-Works model as a real-life case study the paper will discuss how inclusive business partnerships can help bring transparency to the supply chain, closing the manufacturing loop and ultimately providing a template for the future of sustainable manufacturing in the carpet tile industry and beyond.

### **The Net-Works model**

The Net-Works model was created in 2012 by Interface and conservation charity, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), as an inclusive business partnership designed to tackle the growing environmental problem of discarded fishing nets.

Net-Works was launched in the Danajon Bank in the Philippines, as the island residents are highly dependent upon marine resources for sustenance and livelihoods, yet this area is also faces severe environmental threats.

The paper explores how Net-Works has developed into a replicable innovative, cross-sector business model and has introduced local communities to a more sustainable way of life, and introduced the wider industry to the future of collaborative, sustainable manufacturing.

### **Net-Works success**

Since Net-Works' launch, Interface has demonstrated a sense of responsibility towards social and environmental issues beyond the product it sells by successfully turning 'waste' into a future raw material for businesses around the world and, in turn, established a community-based supply chain.

To date, the Net-Works project has achieved a number of significant results.

- Collected 61,845 kg (136,345 lbs) of discarded fishing nets
- Collecting nets in 14 different collection hubs in Danajon Bank and Bantayan
- Villagers have earned supplemental income equal to 190,000 additional meals

### **Future plans**

Interface and ZSL recently announced their commitment to expand the Net-Works project. In early 2015 Net-Works will be adding another collection hub in Iloilo, Philippines, and by the end of the year the programme will be expanding internationally to Cameroon, Africa, continuing to build an inclusive business model in some of the world's poorest communities.

Based on initial results, it is anticipated that Net-Works will continue to support and strengthen over 500 hectares of community-based Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) over the next three years, thereby helping to restore the biodiversity of the aquatic ecosystem.