

# #OurOcean

## Introduction

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 2017 Galway Atlantaquaria were welcomed onto the #OurOcean initiative;

### EU Maritime & Fish EU\_MARE

Honoured to welcome @GalwayAquarium, 1st to join #OurOcean action against #marinelitter, calling all in the world! #OceanSummit #CleanSeas



The #OurOcean initiative asks aquariums around the Globe to participate in creating an exhibition that would highlight a number of Marine litter issues. The context was to fill a tank with plastic and gauge the visitor's reaction to the exhibit.

We were placed onto this website <https://ourocean2017.org/campaigns>

<https://ourocean2017.org/campaigns/world-aquaria-against-marine-litter>

## **Our Ocean, an Ocean for life**

Over 3 billion people depend directly on our seas for their livelihoods. But in reality, all of us depend on the ocean: for our water, our food, our climate and our air.

Seas and oceans enrich our identity, ensure our wellbeing and sustain a large part of the economy.

Human action has left our ocean heavily affected by pollution, overexploitation, coastal degradation and global warming. This has severe consequences for all.

A new vision is needed, along with strong and action-oriented commitments.

Since 2014, Our Ocean conferences, have invited world leaders to look forward and respond, delivering high-level commitments and transforming the challenges ahead into an opportunity for cooperation, innovation and entrepreneurship. The 2017 edition, “An Ocean for Life”, will be hosted by the European Union in Malta, at the heart of the Mediterranean.

Here are the contact details of organiser: [mare-communication@ec.europa.eu](mailto:mare-communication@ec.europa.eu)

For social media: @EUMaritimefish

The action will be officially announced by EU Commissioner Karmenu Vella at Monaco aquarium, together with Prince Albert II, on Thursday 27th of July.

## **Clean Coasts group**

Galway Atlantaquaria joined in this initiative, as they are a Clean Coasts group and also a ‘Think before you flush’ business.

*We find that item 3 is really important in the proposed #OurOcean exhibit.*

## **Clean Coasts Groups**

The Clean Coasts programme through the Clean Coasts volunteering effort aims:

1. To facilitate community guardianship of adopted stretches of coastline.
2. To establish and support Clean Coasts groups who form a network engaged in coastal management, environmental actions, and education activities.
3. ***To enhance the value of the coastline by reducing the impact of litter and other environmental damage thus restoring the aesthetic appeal and increasing the amenity and economic value to local communities and tourists.***

## Down2earth Materials

### Why did we select Down2Earth Materials?

On April the 19<sup>th</sup> Dr Noirin Burke showed me the Compostable cup from Salthill Social, and I was amazed that this option was available! I contacted Down2Earth materials and posted this image. It was a very popular image/ idea and is still getting likes!



On reading the mission statement I saw a number of themes that are suited to the #OurOcean initiative, see underlined;

### *The Rule Rather than the Exception?*

Will sustainable packaging soon become the rule rather than the exception? We certainly think so, and it's the reason why we have been so passionately promoting these products since 2009. We fully realised upon initiation of Down2Earth Materials **that education and awareness** would be an essential part of making **sustainable packaging** 'the norm' in Ireland's foodservice industry, and we are just as committed to our education and awareness today, as we were when starting out.

Tony Lee, MD, Down2Earth Materials

We also loved their video; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMqpNXhb6PY>

### Why Compostable?

1. Handy, can be disposed of easily with food waste in the brown bin, no separating or rinsing.
2. Organic, because it's made from plants, not plastic, it breaks down into nutrient-rich soil in 180 days.
3. Sustainable resource, the soil grows the plants, which then makes up the new compostable product, thus creating a circular economy.
4. Cost effective, it's 35-45% cheaper to dispose of compostable materials at a composting facility, than bring unnecessary waste to a landfill.
5. Good for business, creates good PR and marketing opportunities for you and your food business.

## Concept development

### Summation;

Galway Atlantaquaria is designing an exhibit that focuses on a number of elements.

1. Any exhibit must include education, awareness and sustainable indicators that promote community action and awareness.

Plus

2. To enhance the value of the coastline by reducing the impact of litter and other environmental damage thus restoring the aesthetic appeal and increasing the amenity and economic value to local communities and tourists.

Plus

3. To educate visitors about “choice” including information about Compostable products (like with down2earth materials), and include elements of ‘Think before you flush’ and “encourage” behavioural change.

### Sourcing images and ideas for the project

As the aquarium runs off a closed circuit filtration system, we could not fill a tank with plastic bottles so we opted to use glass bottles with printed images inside the bottle to create the effect of what the litter looks like in the Ocean.

While we see the impacts of litter on the shore, we never see the full impact and the size of the problem in the Ocean, the goal of this project is to place at least 20 ‘dirty bottles’ into a tank with specific signage that shows what the public can do to ‘change’ this problem!

### The two messages we want to deliver is;

THINK before you flush (i.e. no litter)

USE sustainable materials (i.e. compostable)

### SOCIAL MEDIA TAGS

#OurOcean

#OceanSummit

#oceanhero

#CleanSeas

#2minutebeachclean

#GoGreenIn2017

#thinkb4flush

#ConvertToCompostables

#connectwiththesea

#BecomeACompostableConvert

#marinelitter

## Images

I used free stock images from Marine Photobank for inspiration; these are the ones that really matched our campaign and values.



While the images inspired the development of the project, we went another way with images the goal was to simplify the message.

## Community Involvement Partners/brainstorming

I would like to get the community involved, so have included this campaign idea;

I would love to adapt this to include Clean Coasts and Down2Earth materials as partners.

The text would read Can you help Galway Atlantaquaria, Clean Coasts and Down2Earth materials.....



Draft campaign



## CONCEPTS design- approaching Down2earth materials

Here is a rough initial design or vision for the display, with permission I would love to include your logo and two images for the boards.

I would also like a comment or written piece showing the rationale why you are supporting the #OurOcean project.



We hope to have a floating Toilet and Coffee cup that people can be photographed with.

The display will have the litter in the tank and facts on the signage.

### The design flow



The idea of filling glass bottles with rubbish was explored. The bottles would have a message on the outside.



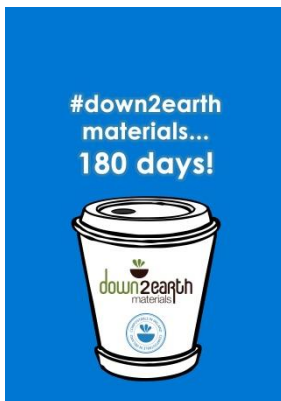
Glass bottle and sand failed.



We also tried a door option and this didn't work.



The acetates looked really good, but were very expensive.



The final design, blue clean background and Compostable cup (with facts).

It was much easier to 'draw' the rubbish and include a fact from down2earth materials. This would be safer for the animals in the tank. As you can see the Glass and filling with sand did not work.



After testing the bottles we decided that this was the best option. The pieces were laminated and placed inside the plastic bottles, which meant less chance of leakage.

## Signage



Signage goals, Keep it Simple;

1. Personalise the message YOU are....
2. Call to Action
3. Show why we need to change from plastic pollution
4. BIG call to action and steps you can take



## The #OurOcean exhibit

After deciding the message, and vehicle it was time to visualise how the exhibit would look.



The digital concept checking out how it looks before going to print.



**Final exhibit**, from left to right; Information about the exhibit, the signage (Call to action), TV monitor include three videos (all designed in-house) a video on Compostable packaging, a video on micro plastics and a video of plastic rubbish on the beach and of course the plastic bottles in the tank.



A simple and effective message about how long plastic takes to decompose versus down2earth materials packaging which composts after 180 days.

## PR and promotion of the message

The exhibit needs a global reach; here are some of the actions to promote the project.



#OurOcean PR, CleanCoast group



 An Taisce



#OurOcean public engagement

## Social Media Campaign

Before the exhibit is launched we started teasing, about the exhibit;



The social media campaign was run for a number of weeks before we launched the exhibit at World Oceans Day, 2017.



## **Youtube channel and Facebook**

Social media is a very powerful tool in promoting the message of this exhibit, we had to think about the description and here is that text;

###text###

## **#OurOcean**

### **Galway Atlantaquaria, the first aquarium to support the #OurOcean project**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, 2017 Galway Atlantaquaria were contacted by the #OurOcean initiative, which asks aquariums around the Globe to participate in creating an exhibition that would highlight a number of Marine litter issues. We were very happy to join in this Global action initiative and the #OurOcean will be officially launched by EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> of July.

The context was to fill a tank with plastic and gauge the visitor's reaction to the exhibit. As we were the first to join we felt we had to make a special effort and we hope visitors to the aquarium will enjoy our exhibit that features, signage, facts, videos and the physical #OurOcean exhibit. It is our hope that this collective world exhibit will start a conversation about Ocean pollution and more importantly encourage people to DEMAND compostable packaging and materials.

Duncan Stewart of Eco EYE, said "This exhibition is sending out a very important message. 'Eco eye' would like to bring your message out to a wide audience. Keep up the good work."

"I am thrilled and inspired be the exhibit #OurOcean at Galway Atlantaquaria!

It's clear that plastic is causing devastating damage to marine series and ecosystems.

We need to stop buying products wrapped in plastic or single-use disposable containers! Citizens need to come together collectively 'name and shame' the producers of products and drinks that continue to use plastic, when down2earth materials produce compostable options. We need to focus on protecting our children's future.

I was very impressed with 'down2earth' compostable containers that replace plastic – a truly great Irish innovation. This exhibition is sending out a very important message!"



## **Facts about Ocean litter**

Approximately 10 million tonnes of trash per year enters the ocean (400 kilos per second or one garbage truck per second)

By 2050 there could be more plastic than fish in the seas

By 2050 99% of seabirds could have ingested plastic

Millions of marine animals die every year because of litter

80% of marine litter comes from land sources

Plastic is the most common element that is found in the ocean. It is harmful for the environment as it does not get break down easily and is often considered as food by marine animals.

Plastic debris can absorb toxic chemicals from ocean pollution, therefore poisoning whatever eats it. In fact, plastic pollution is one of the most serious threats to the ocean. Plastic does not degrade; instead, it breaks down into progressively smaller pieces, but never disappears. They then attract more debris. It poses a significant health threat to the various sea creatures, and to the entire marine ecosystem. Overall, plastic is the number one source of pollution in the ocean.

We would like to thank Clean Coasts and down2earthmaterials for supporting this project.

For more information about this project, please see our website [www.nationalaquarium.ie](http://www.nationalaquarium.ie)

For more information about down2earth materials please see;  
<http://www.down2earthmaterials.ie/>

For more information about Clean Coasts please see; <http://cleancoasts.org/>

If you have any comments about the exhibit, please contact [garry@nationalaquarium.ie](mailto:garry@nationalaquarium.ie) directly.

**###ends###**

## Watch the Videos

We created a number of videos to promote the exhibit; you may find them on our YouTube channel Galway Atlantaquaria here;

1. To see the #OurOcean exhibit and take part in a Poll on Compostable use;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faxYHSKosAo&list=PLIRMzY6wMFB9kxaguxRp4jCxmB5w4\\_76&t=27s&index=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faxYHSKosAo&list=PLIRMzY6wMFB9kxaguxRp4jCxmB5w4_76&t=27s&index=1)

2. To see the information videos on down2earth materials, micro plastics and Plastic on the beach test use;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHSyu8ILED4&index=2&list=PLIRMzY6wMFB9kxaguxRp4jCxmB5w4\\_76](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHSyu8ILED4&index=2&list=PLIRMzY6wMFB9kxaguxRp4jCxmB5w4_76)

3. To see the launch and development of the #Our Ocean exhibit, please use;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfz\\_zWH4WkE&index=5&list=PLIRMzY6wMFB9kxaguxRp4jCxmB5w4\\_76](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nfz_zWH4WkE&index=5&list=PLIRMzY6wMFB9kxaguxRp4jCxmB5w4_76)

## Launch of the Exhibit

We are hoping to launch the exhibit on the Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> of June as part of our World Oceans Day celebrations.



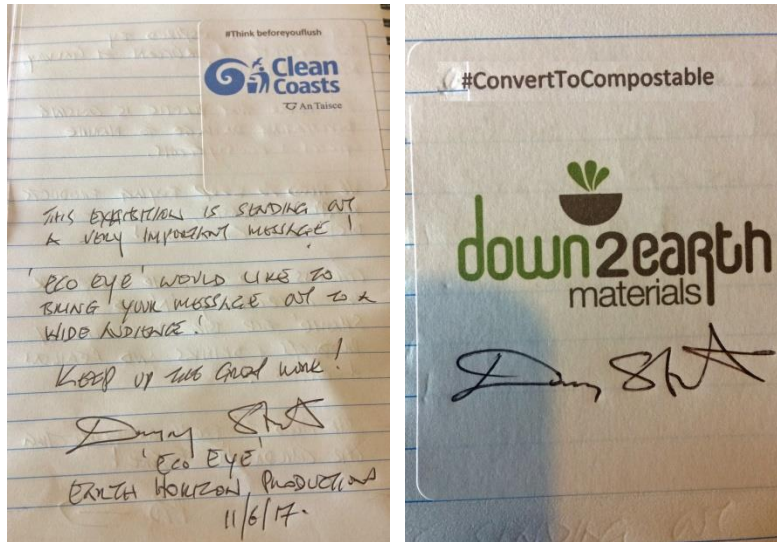
Duncan Stewart ECO EYE, loved the down2earth Materials product. He asked loads of questions and checked the product from start to finish.



Duncan Stewart gave a great opening speech; he loved the aquarium and the #OurOcean exhibit. He wants to support the project when we ‘officially’ launch with the rest of Europe.



Down2earth materials sent us samples of their cups. We ran an information table on the product, and offered young people an opportunity to plant ‘seeds’ in the cups, which they would bury in the garden.



Statement reads;

“This exhibition is sending out a very important message. ‘Eco eye’ would like to bring your message out to a wide audience. Keep up the good work.”

“I am thrilled and inspired be the exhibit #OurOcean at Galway Atlantaquaria!

It’s clear that plastic is causing devastating damage to marine series and ecosystems.

We need to stop buying products wrapped in plastic or single-use disposable containers!

Citizens need to come together collectively ‘name and shame’ the producers of products and drinks that continue to use plastic, when down2earth materials produce compostable options.

We need to focus on protecting our children’s future.

I was very impressed with ‘down2earth’ compostable containers that replace plastic – a truly great Irish innovation.

This exhibition is sending out a very important message!

‘ECO EYE’ would like to bring your message out to a wider audience!

Keep up the good work!

11/06/2017



## Gallery





See more images on our website [www.nationalaquarium.ie](http://www.nationalaquarium.ie) or Facebook GalwayAquarium

## Evaluation, PR and Impact assessment

The exhibit was launched on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2017 and we have been gathering data and visitor reviews since. The exhibit is proving to be very popular with visitors, and while it was only going to be a temporary exhibit for the #OurOcean initiative, Galway Atlantaquaria feel its message is so important we have decided to make the **exhibit permanent!** This project has a VERY important message and includes many educational opportunities, so it's a great project to support.



On the homepage



First logo of all the aquariums!!



## Potential Exhibit reach<sup>1</sup>;

Based on visitor Data we gather upwards of 80 thousand people per year.

## Social media reach<sup>2</sup>;

Facebook reach; 6 thousand

Instagram; 336 followers

Twitter; 2,599 followers

The **#OurOcean exhibit**, will be a permanent feature of the aquarium and be upgraded or reviewed to see how it is progressing with visitors. We are hoping that our partners and others will also share this message through their channels.

<sup>1</sup> expected

<sup>2</sup> Our social media reach is growing upwards





Andrea Alves Fernandes, Anka groll & Gilles Doignon (DG MARE - MARITIME AFFAIRS & FISHERIES)



CAPE Youth Group.



## WORLD AQUARIUMS against marine litter



10 million tonnes  
of litter are dumped  
in the seas **every year**



80% of marine litter  
comes from land sources



By 2050, there could be  
more plastic than  
fish in the seas



By 2050,  
**99%** of seabirds could  
have ingested plastic



Millions of marine  
animals die every  
year because of litter



That is  
one garbage truck **per minute**,  
400 kilos **per second**!



Each cigarette butt pollutes  
hundreds of litres of water and  
takes years to degrade

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Choose reusable  
products



Avoid packaging  
waste



Do not flush litter  
down the drain



Recycle



Change your habits



Pick up litter

FIGHT MARINE  
LITTER



Participate in beach  
clean-ups



The global community is ready to act for

## #OurOcean



Marine pollution is one of the main topics of the fourth edition of the "Our Ocean" conference, hosted for the first time by the European Union (Malta, 5-6 October 2017).

Learn more on [ourocean2017.org/](http://ourocean2017.org/)



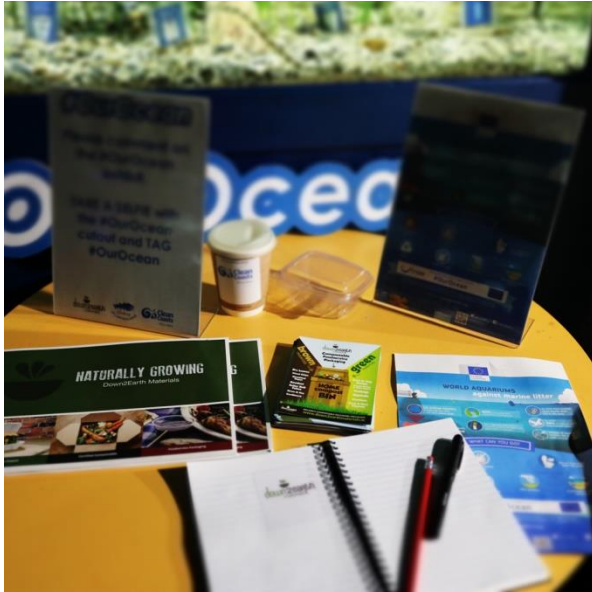
@EU\_MARE

f Eumaritimefish

This initiative, supported by dozens of aquariums worldwide, is an EU contribution to the #CleanSeas campaign launched by the United Nations.

Maritime Affairs  
& Fisheries

## Quotes and Comments, so far



Comments table includes the #OurOcean infographic, and instructions display cases, some of the compostable products and a comments book.

"I am very proud of you! We can do it!

Gilles (DG MARE)

"Similar effort going on in NC, USA. Together we can!! Keep up the fight our oceans are worth it!

Dr Susanna Lopez-Logetil UNCW

"Excellent set up keep up the good work"

"I hate people stop ocean pollution!!!"

Jack Vale

"I do like it"

Emma

"Amazing"

Casey Lonicon

"#OurOcean Love Océane"

“This was a great idea for all and all ages really recommend to everyone”

O Gallagher

“Compostable packaging made from plants can break down into nutrient rich soil within 12 weeks, when commercially composted, thus creating a sustainable, circular economy. Compostables can completely replace single-use plastic packaging in the food-service industry. It is quite simply the only viable solution.”

John Lynch, Organic Recycling Advisor, Down2Earth Materials.

“It makes me feel sad, why can’t we use compostable materials?”

Fiona Hussey, Finland.

“My favourite part is the plastic bottles”

Joe O Craé

“Your Ocean exhibit is amazing”

#OurOcean 2k17 (love) Eli

“I love the bottles with the notes in them”

Love Aoife Toomey

“Save the fish by not throwing rubbish into the water”

Aoife Toomey



## **SURVEY**

**By Andrea Alves Fernandes, Anka groll**

The interns completed a short survey of people engaging with the exhibit.

**Do you know why the aquarium has this type of tank?**

5 said yes

4 said no

**Do you think it is important to reduce plastic in the ocean?**

8 said yes

**This tank is temporary, should the aquarium keep it long term?**

8 said yes

2 said no

**Do you have any improvements for the tank to make it more interesting?**

Might you add something interesting like an LED to attract attention?

Bigger signs in the bottles

**-Other ideas**

Make it part of the tour

Move it to a place where people would notice it more

Interesting links;

[www.nationalaquarium.ie](http://www.nationalaquarium.ie)

<https://ourocean2017.org/campaigns/world-aquaria-against-marine-litter>

<http://www.down2earthmaterials.ie/about/>

### **Social Media tags**

@maltanationalaquarium

@fan.club.Seaquarium

@oceanomunaco

@tierparkhellabrunn

@AkwariumGdynskie

@AcquarioCalaGonone

@Akvariet

@sjofartsmuseetakvariet

@ZooMadrid

@NationalMarineAquarium

@aquariumbarcelona

@NausicaaCNM

@Aquarium.Donostia.SanSebastian

@skegnessaquarium

@TheDeepHull

@GeorgiaAquarium