

KIMO INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Municipalities for
Sustainable Seas



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INTRODUCTION

2025 was a year of transition, consolidation, and renewed ambition for KIMO International.

The most significant organisational change in recent years took effect on 1 January 2025, when the International Secretariat moved from Shetland Islands Council (UK) to Aalborg Municipality (Denmark). This transition marked the beginning of a new chapter for our network, bringing the Secretariat closer to the geographical heart of our membership while maintaining strong ties with our UK colleagues. The successful handover was completed in February 2025, and we are deeply grateful to the Shetland team for their unwavering support during the initial months.

Against this backdrop of organisational change, KIMO continued to deliver impactful advocacy, projects, and partnerships throughout the year. Our PFAS Working Group matured and developed a powerful joint statement with the North Sea Commission that outlined four urgent priorities for addressing "forever chemicals" in the marine environment. At the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in Vigo, our long-standing campaign against scrubber water discharges achieved a landmark victory, with contracting parties agreeing to the world's first regional ban on scrubber discharges. And in October, the Assembly of Delegates gathered in Inverness to adopt our new Strategy 2026-2030, built on four key pillars: Marine Litter, Chemical Pollution, Maritime Safety and Pollution, and Organisational Sustainability.

None of this work would have been possible without the dedication of our member municipalities, national networks, and the International Board. This Annual Report provides a comprehensive overview of our activities and achievements during 2025. It also includes detailed updates from each of our national networks – KIMO Netherlands & Belgium, KIMO Sweden, KIMO Denmark, KIMO UK, and our newest members in Ireland – reflecting our commitment to transparency and to showcasing the vital work happening at local level across our network.

As we look ahead to 2026 and the implementation of our new strategy, KIMO stands ready to continue its mission: to connect local action to international policy, and to secure clean, healthy, and productive seas for generations to come.



Preben Friis-Hauge
President
KIMO International



Lisa Bugge Nør Larsen
Executive Secretary
KIMO International



VISION AND MISSION

Preserving oceans and coastal waters for future generations



Vision

We envisage a world where healthy seas and clean beaches contribute to thriving coastal communities.



Mission

To unite and represent local governments in preventing pollution and protecting, preserving and enhancing the seas and coastal waters of the North-East Atlantic, North Sea, Irish Sea and Baltic Sea.



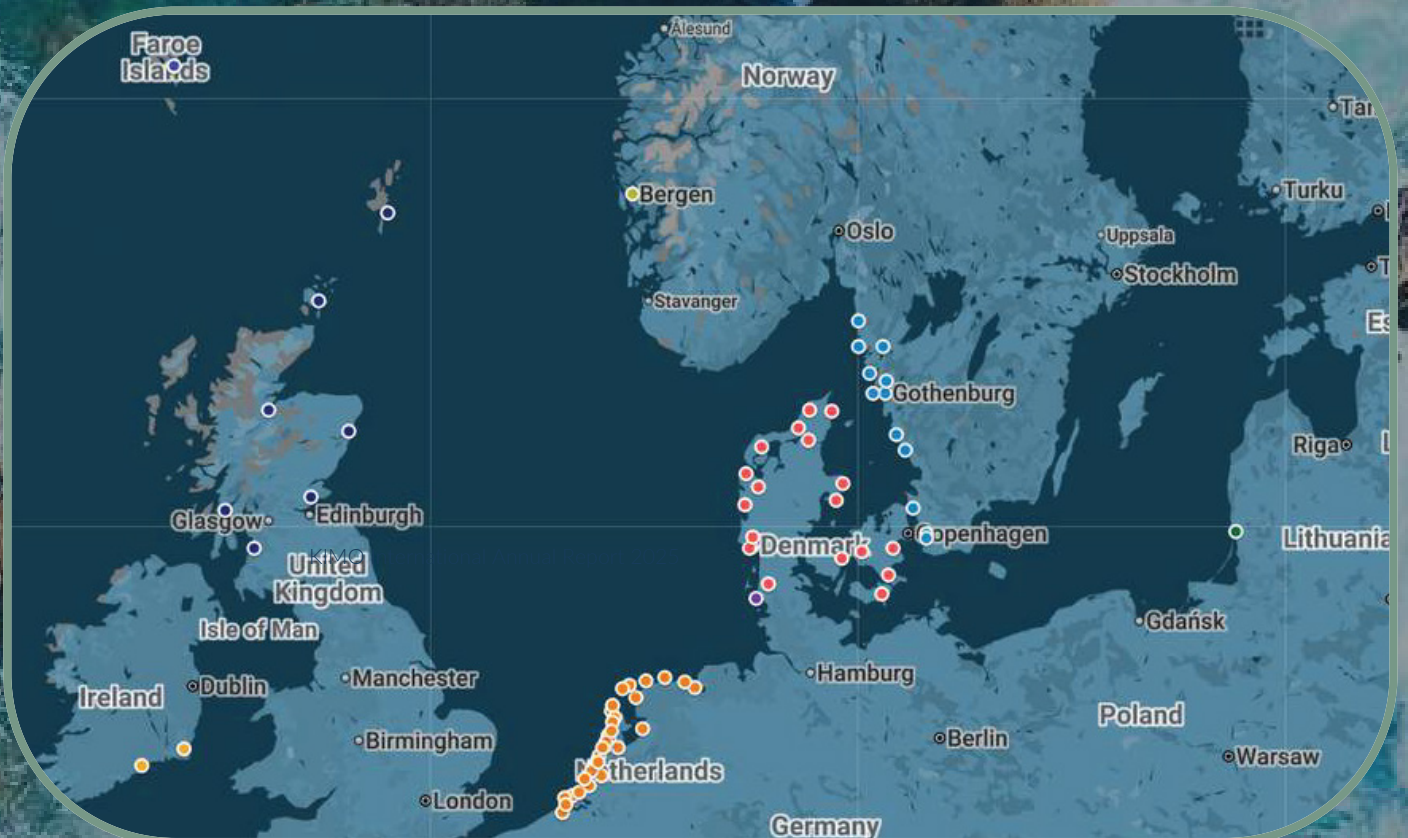
For the past 35 years KIMO has worked with municipalities across Europe to protect and enhance the marine environment. This wealth of experience gives KIMO a unique insight into the challenges faced by coastal communities and ensures that we work on issues that are important to our members.

Having a geographical focus on the North-East Atlantic, North Sea, Irish Sea and Baltic Sea KIMO welcomes all coastal municipalities facing these waters. Because of the interconnectedness of waterways, and hence the challenges faced, KIMO also welcomes riverine municipalities.



THE KIMO NETWORK

78 members in 9 countries



Our members work to find, implement and share positive solutions. We believe that through cooperation and collaboration, we can tackle the most pressing challenges facing the marine environment. Together, we are a powerful voice that influences decision makers at regional, national and international levels.

ORGANISATIONAL MILESTONES

Transition of the International Secretariat

The most significant organisational change in 2025 was the transition of the International Secretariat from Shetland Islands Council (UK) to Aalborg Municipality (Denmark), effective 1 January 2025. This decision, taken at the October 2024 Annual General Meeting, marked a new chapter for KIMO. The new Executive Secretary commenced on 9 January 2025, and the previous

Shetland-based team remained in post until the end of January to ensure a smooth handover. A dedicated visit to Shetland took place in mid-February to complete and formally mark the successful transition. The transition strengthened KIMO's operational base in mainland Europe while maintaining strong ties with the UK network.



The new Executive Secretary of KIMO's International Secretariat, Lisa Bugge Nør Larsen (second from the left), visiting the former secretariat staff at Shetland Islands Council to ensure a successful transition process.



Development of new strategy 2026-2030

At the 2024 Annual General Meeting, members established a Strategic Working Group to review strategic priorities and the international membership fee structure. Chaired by Jerry Ahlström (former KIMO President and member of the Swedish Board), the Group held five meetings between December 2024 and April 2025. The International Secretariat dedicated significant time to supporting the Group and preparing its final report. The outcomes included:

- A proposal for new strategic priorities and targets for KIMO as an organisation for the 2026-2030 period.
- A renewed membership fee structure designed to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

These proposals were presented for discussion at the 2025 Annual General Meeting in Inverness, Scotland and were formally adopted by the Assembly of Delegates.

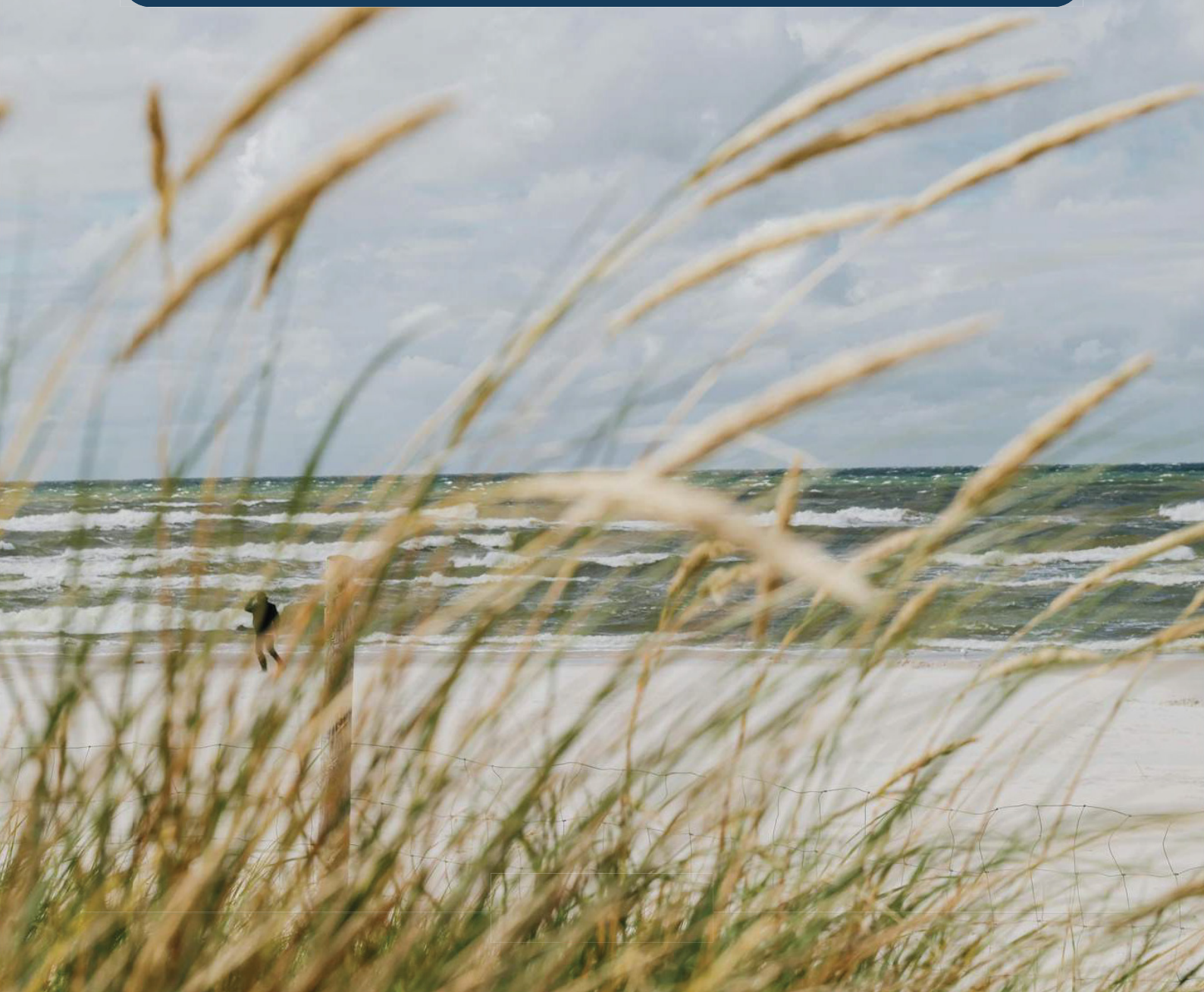


Reviewing governance (constitution)

A Special General Meeting of the Assembly of Delegates convened online on 21 March 2025. The purpose was twofold:

1. To approve an amendment to KIMO's financial year, changing it from the previous April–March cycle to a calendar year cycle (January–December);
2. To approve an amended nine-month budget for 2025 to bridge the transition period.

Both measures were adopted, bringing KIMO's financial reporting into alignment with standard practice in Europe and simplifying budget planning for the International Secretariat and member municipalities.



MEETINGS

Three International Board meetings

14-15 May 2025 – Aalborg, Denmark: The International Board met in person, hosted by Aalborg Municipality. This was a key opportunity to mark the transition of the International Secretariat and to showcase Aalborg Municipality's dedication to KIMO and marine environmental protection. Discussions focused on the new strategy, membership trends, and fundraising priorities.

8 September 2025 – Online: A virtual meeting followed up on discussions from the May meeting and finalised agenda items and documentation for the upcoming Annual General Meeting.

8 October 2025 – Inverness, UK: The third Board meeting of the year took place in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting. The International Board approved the Action Plan for 2026 which paved the way for the implementation of the new strategy which was subsequently adopted by the Assembly of Delegates.





Eight Network Coordinator Meetings

The International Secretariat organised eight Network Coordinator Meetings in 2025. These meetings brought together coordinators from KIMO UK, KIMO Denmark, KIMO Sweden, KIMO Netherlands & Belgium, as well as representatives from Germany and Ireland.

The meetings served as a vital forum for discussing specific activities, sharing updates on national and international initiatives, aligning priorities, and coordinating joint advocacy efforts. Participants highlighted the value of these meetings for maintaining momentum across the network.





KIMO International Annual General Meeting

Approval of KIMO Strategy 2026-2030

The Assembly of Delegates formally adopted the new KIMO Strategy 2026-2030 during the Annual General Meeting, which was held on 8 and 9 October 2025 in Inverness and hosted by Highland Council. The strategy provided a clear and focused path forward for the organisation, built on four key priorities:

Marine Litter

Continuing KIMO's long-standing mission to combat plastic and other waste in oceans, rivers and on beaches.



Maritime Safety & Pollution

Enhancing measures to prevent pollution from shipping and maritime activities.

Strategic Priorities 2026-2030

Chemical Pollution

Addressing the impact of hazardous substances such as PFAS on marine ecosystems and coastal communities.



Organisational Sustainability

Ensuring KIMO's own long-term effectiveness and resilience.

The adoption of the new strategy provides a powerful framework to keep KIMO at the forefront of the fight against marine pollution for the following five years.



Updated Resolution on Lost Shipping Containers

In a significant policy development, the Assembly of Delegates adopted an updated resolution on lost shipping containers. The issue had been brought to the fore at the 2024 Annual General Meeting by Honorary Member Albert de Hoop, who highlighted a critical legal gap: international regulations did not obligate national governments to clean up litter from containers lost overboard, nor did they require the shipping industry to cover the costs. The newly adopted resolution calls for stronger international measures to ensure accountability and proper clean-up. Newly elected KIMO President Preben Friis-Hauge stated that the resolution strengthens KIMO's mandate to lobby for change and protect coastal communities from this preventable form of pollution.

Honouring Dedicated Service

The Assembly conferred Honorary Membership upon three individuals in recognition of their exceptional contributions. The honour was awarded to former KIMO presidents Karsten Filsø and Robert te Beest for their long and dedicated service. The late Martin Hall was posthumously awarded Honorary Membership in recognition of his profound impact on the organisation.



Karsten Filsø



Martin Hall



Robert te Beest



SPOTLIGHT ON PFAS

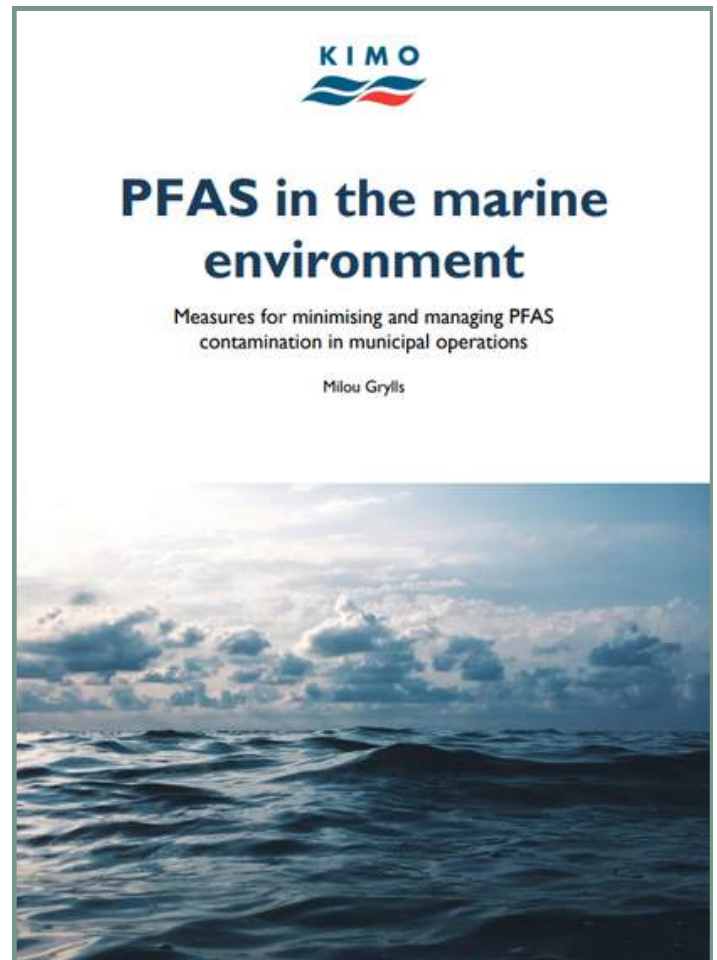
The PFAS Working Group was established in 2024 in response to growing concern among KIMO members about the impact of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances on marine and coastal environments. The group remained open to experts, officers, and policymakers within and beyond the KIMO network.

Meetings

The working group held four online meetings in 2025. These meetings focused on the ongoing revision of the European REACH regulation, information sharing on national PFAS developments, and joint advocacy planning.

Publication of report from KIMO Sweden

In April 2025, KIMO Sweden published a comprehensive report investigating the problem of PFAS and highlighting actionable measures available to municipalities. The International Secretariat translated the report from Swedish into English and made both language versions publicly available on the KIMO website. The report was subsequently used by several member municipalities as a practical reference for local policy development.



Participation in North Sea Commission webinar

On 4 June 2025, KIMO President Trish Robertson was an invited speaker at a PFAS webinar organised by the North Sea Commission. Her presentation focused on concrete actions that municipalities could take to address PFAS pollution, drawing directly on the findings of the KIMO Sweden report. The webinar was well attended by local and regional authorities from across the North Sea region.



Joint statement with the North Sea Commission

KIMO and the North Sea Commission developed a shared statement calling for ambitious action against PFAS pollution. The statement highlighted four priority areas: strengthening the REACH restriction proposal, addressing gaps in environmental monitoring, supporting municipal-level action, and promoting research into alternatives. The full statement and a condensed one-pager were made available for download on the KIMO website.

Municipal guidance

Building directly on the KIMO Sweden report and the June webinar presentation, the International Secretariat developed a targeted PFAS Guidance document specifically for municipalities. The guidance provided step-by-step recommendations for local authorities, including how to assess PFAS risks, engage with regional and national regulators, and communicate with citizens. The document was released in October 2025, with support from the PFAS Working Group.

What can your municipality do about PFAS?

- Identify and map sources and routes of spread of PFAS in the municipality
- Integrate PFAS contamination into municipal governing documents
- Update supervisory guidance
- Communicate to and collaborate with other local actors and operators
- Review material options and procurement options
- Inform the public and industry

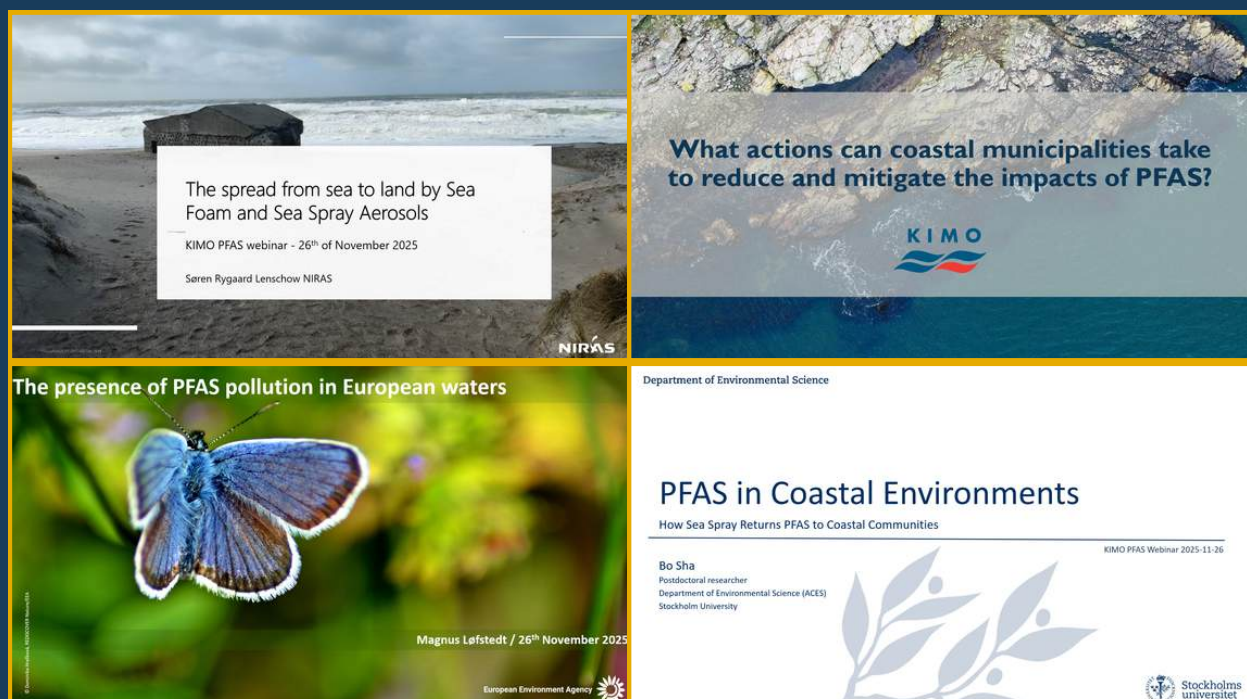
KIMO

Excerpt from KIMO's municipal policy guidance titled 'Combating PFAS Pollution'



KIMO PFAS Webinar

On 26 November 2025, KIMO hosted a dedicated PFAS webinar titled "The Presence and Impacts of PFAS on Coastal Communities: What do we know and how to move forward?" The event brought together scientific experts, municipal officers, and policy advisors to discuss current knowledge gaps, emerging research, and practical measures that local authorities could implement. A recording and summary of key takeaways were made available to participants and KIMO members.



POLICY

European Oceans Pact

The European Commission adopted the European Ocean Pact in June 2025, presenting a unified plan for ocean management built around six priorities, including support for coastal communities. Earlier in the year, the Commission launched a call for evidence to shape the Pact. KIMO submitted a formal response, advocating for stronger integration of local authority perspectives and highlighting the role of municipalities in marine protection. The International Secretariat also attended the European Maritime Days in Cork, Ireland, in May 2025, where anticipation for the Oceans Pact was a central theme of discussions.

Scrubber water (open letter and OSPAR win)

KIMO signed an open letter coordinated by Seas at Risk, alongside more than 20 other environmental organisations, calling for a ban on the discharge of scrubber water from ships. The campaign achieved a major breakthrough at the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in Vigo, where contracting parties adopted a political commitment to ban discharges from open-loop scrubbers by July 2027 and from closed-loop scrubbers by January 2029. This marked the first time a regional regulation on scrubber discharges had been agreed anywhere in the world. A KIMO news piece covering the victory was published on the website.



New resolution on lost containers

As part of the work in the Strategic Working Group, KIMO's existing 50+ resolutions have been reviewed and prioritized with the resolution on lost containers chosen as the first historic resolution to be updated.

The resolution stresses that too much litter is left behind on the coast and on the sea floor following lost container incidents and that clean-up efforts are too heavily dependent on public funds from national and/or local governments (see page 12 of the current report for more information).





Paraffin pollution in Denmark

In June 2025, three KIMO Denmark municipalities reported a new paraffin wax stranding incident, with clumps of paraffin washing up on beaches. This was particularly concerning because no such incidents had been reported in Denmark between 2021 and 2024, despite stronger regulations on tank washings coming into force in 2021. The incident raised serious questions about whether current regulations were being properly monitored and enforced. In response, KIMO's President transmitted a formal letter to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), encouraging the IMO to follow the situation closely, examine whether existing regulations were being properly enforced, and consider whether more systematic monitoring and action were needed. A press release to this effect was issued and published on the KIMO website.

PROJECTS

Net cuttings

The International Secretariat, together with KIMO Denmark, secured funding from the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) for two projects running from September 2025 to May 2026. The first project, led by KIMO Denmark, involved updating and adapting KIMO's 2020 Net-cutting Report for formal adoption as an OSPAR Environmental Best Practice. This adoption would give the recommendations formal recognition and encourage wider uptake across OSPAR contracting parties. The report originally provided practical guidance on reducing marine litter from net cuttings waste from commercial fishing harbours.

Together with KIMO Sweden and KIMO Denmark the International Secretariat put together an application to the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) Fund for a project to pilot the best practices recommendations on ways to reduce marine litter from net cuttings waste that KIMO conducted for the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM) in 2020. The application was successful but since the BSAP Fund only covers maximum 50 % of total project costs, the application is thus contingent on the International Secretariat's ability to raise the remaining funds elsewhere. The International Secretariat successfully applied for the maximum amount of funding and continues to explore if other funding sources are willing to allocate the remaining funds. If successful, the delivery of the project depends on the engagement of harbours in Denmark and Sweden.

ALDFG prevention for recreational fishers

The second SwAM-funded project focused on abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) from recreational fisheries. KIMO led two main activities:

- An awareness campaign targeting recreational fishers, focusing on gillnets, anglers, hooks, and lines. [Deliverables due by April 2026]
- A webinar on best practices for marking recreational fishing gear to reduce loss and enable recovery. [Scheduled for January 2026]

This work builds on three previous reports prepared for HELCOM by KIMO Denmark and aimed to close a significant gap in marine litter prevention efforts, which had historically focused on commercial fisheries.

Fishing for Litter

Update from UK and Netherlands



United Kingdom

The Fishing for Litter scheme celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2025 and continued to expand significantly. By the end of 2025, over 70 harbours were participating in the scheme, which had increased from 32 in around three years, and the network expects this number to rise as demand remains high and funding has been secured to target new coastlines. The total number of vessels recorded exceeded 600, and the total tonnage collected from the start of the project in 2005 exceeded 3,000 tonnes.

Netherlands

Between 2001 and 2024, Dutch and Belgian fishermen participating in Fishing for Litter removed 8,500 tonnes of waste from the North Sea. However, participation declined from a peak of 130 vessels in 2021 to approximately 80 vessels at the time of reporting. The next big milestone for the project is to reach a cumulative total of 10,000 tonnes of litter removed from the ocean. The Dutch network continues to explore ways to reverse the decline in participation





BlueCities campaign

In November 2025, KIMO became an official co-signatory of the #MakeEUBlue: Cities in Action campaign, developed under the EU4Ocean Coalition. This citizen-driven movement encouraged municipalities to take concrete, measurable steps toward healthy seas and oceans. KIMO President Preben Friis-Hauge commented that the campaign aligned perfectly with KIMO's core mission and offered a practical framework for member municipalities to showcase their commitments. The campaign provided toolkits, communication resources, and opportunities for peer exchange among participating cities.

How the #MakeEUBlue Campaign Works

- 50 Signatures: The campaign contacts local officials, providing them with the "Guide for Cities to Act."
- 100 Signatures: A follow-up email is sent as a reminder to act.
- 250 Signatures: Officials are notified of the growing citizen demand for a response.
- 500 Signatures: A fourth message is sent, featuring inspirational examples of ocean action from pioneering cities across Europe.
- 1,000 Signatures: The campaign works with local leaders to organise a community event, bringing citizens and officials together to plan next steps.



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

KIMO International holds official observer status at regional conventions such as OSPAR, HELCOM and the Bonn Agreement and works in close collaboration with various partner organisations to achieve its goal of healthier seas and more sustainable coastal communities. We include in this section some highlights from our most effective and influential collaborations in 2025.

OSPAR ICG-ML (Intersessional Correspondence Group for Marine Litter)

The International Secretariat attended the ICG-ML meeting in Antwerp in June 2025. This was an important opportunity to maintain KIMO's long-standing partnership with OSPAR, to share updates on KIMO's projects (particularly on net cuttings and fishing gear), and to coordinate with other Observers on marine litter priorities.

OSPAR Ministerial Meeting (Vigo, June 2025)

The International Secretariat attended the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in Vigo, Spain. This was a major platform for KIMO to attract visibility to its priorities. The Executive Secretary delivered a formal statement in KIMO's capacity as an official Observer, highlighting that the meeting's landmark outcome was the adoption of the Vigo Ministerial Declaration, which included the political commitment to ban scrubber discharges (detailed on page 17).



The North Sea Commission - Joint PFAS Statement

In September 2025 KIMO and the North Sea Commission (NSC) issued a powerful joint statement urging the European Union to adopt ambitious and comprehensive measures to combat PFAS pollution, a growing threat to marine ecosystems and coastal communities.

This call to action came during the critical ongoing revision of the EU's REACH regulation, a pivotal moment for chemical policy in Europe. The purpose of the statement was to ensure that the perspective of coastal communities, which experience the consequences of PFAS pollution most directly, is heard at the highest levels of decision-making.

Both organisations maintain that a full ban on all PFAS compounds, based on the precautionary principle, is the ultimate goal, but recognizing that there are diverging interests at play, the statement affirmed that “While we wait in anticipation, hopeful for a full ban of all PFAS compounds, we also recognize that transformation sometime takes time. If the upcoming revision of the REACH Regulation will only be a first step, we must recognize the urgency of action beyond regulating use”.

For this reason, the statement outlined four urgent priority areas for action developed by KIMO's international PFAS Working Group,

in collaboration with the North Sea Commission (which is a member of the group):

- 1. A Comprehensive Ban:** Urging the European Commission to be ambitious by banning the use of all PFAS compounds and establishing a clear, stepwise approach to achieve this.
- 2. Systemic Monitoring:** Establishing a common EU-wide monitoring approach to understand the presence and implications of PFAS in the marine environment, moving beyond a sole focus on drinking water
- 3. Closing Knowledge Gaps:** Allocating funding through EU research mechanisms to thoroughly examine the presence and impact of PFAS, both within and beyond EU borders.
- 4. Support for Coastal Communities:** Addressing the disproportionate burden on coastal municipalities by facilitating research and adopting a ‘polluter pays’ principle to provide financial support for remediation.

Together, KIMO and the North Sea Commission represent 27 regions and 80 coastal municipalities across eleven countries bordering the North-East Atlantic, North Sea, Irish Sea, and Baltic Sea, giving a powerful collective voice to communities on the front line of chemical pollution.





KIMO and the North Sea Commission call for ambitious action against PFAS pollution in the marine environment

Waiting in anticipation

We, KIMO (Local Authorities International Environmental Organisation) and the CPMR North Sea Commission, henceforth referred to as NSC, are united in our efforts to preserve and enhance the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic, North Sea, Irish Sea and Baltic Sea. Together we represent 27 regions and 80 coastal municipalities across eleven countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Faroe Islands, Germany, Belgium, France, and Lithuania).

We cannot risk the health of the marine environment, and the European Union has a responsibility to act. The revision of the REACH Regulation presents an important opportunity for the European Commission to pave the way for ambitious PFAS regulation within the European Economic Area and beyond.

1.



In order to enforce a comprehensive ban that demands action from industry, we urge the European Commission to be ambitious and ban the use of all PFAS Compounds and decide on a stepwise approach that sets a clear path moving forward.

2.



To address the limited and vastly different types of monitoring, we urge the European Commission to establish a common monitoring approach and facilitate systemic reporting. It is important that this systemic approach extend beyond a focus on drinking water and look at the presence and implications of PFAS in the marine environment while still allowing flexibility for local communities to monitor additional indicators of local relevance: KIMO and NSC urges the European Commission to establish a common monitoring approach and facilitate systematic reporting.

PFAS

are a group of thousands synthetic chemicals which persistence in the environment and potential health risks have earned them the nickname "forever chemicals." Although two of the most well-known PFAS have been largely phased out in many countries newer PFAS compounds remain in use. PFAS are found everywhere in the marine environment and the implications of their presence to the marine ecosystem

4.



We urge the European Commission to close the knowledge gaps by using its research call mechanisms to allocate funding to research that thoroughly examines the presence and implications of PFAS within and beyond the EU.

3.



We urge the European Commission to adequately address the burden on coastal communities by facilitating research that increases our understanding of the burden posed by PFAS to coastal communities and to take a 'polluter pays' approach, dedicating financial support to coastal communities struggling with this type of pollution.



Workshops (highlights)

OSPAR workshop – 18 February 2025: Workshop on gear marking (OSPAR action B.41). KIMO's participation reinforced its commitment to practical solutions for fishing gear identification and traceability.

OSPAR workshop – 11 November 2025: Workshop on Action B.4.2 (Design and Recycling of Fishing Gear). This was a follow-up to KIMO's ongoing work to share knowledge on circular economy approaches to fishing gear.

Free LitterAT webinar – 13 November 2025: Knowledge-sharing Webinar on the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for fishing gear containing plastic. KIMO is on the Advisory Board of this project which covers a rapidly evolving policy area.

COMMUNICATION

Newsletter

The International Secretariat successfully reinitiated the quarterly newsletter, which had been inactive for a period. The newsletter was distributed to all members, partners, and subscribers, providing updates

on policy wins, project progress, upcoming events, and opportunities for engagement. Website visitors and members are encouraged to subscribe to the newsletter via the sign-up form on the website.

Leaflet (value proposition flyer)

The International Secretariat developed a professional flyer outlining KIMO's value proposition for prospective member municipalities. The flyer was shared with national coordinators and received positive

positive feedback. It was translated into Dutch and Swedish, with other national networks planning to use it as an aid for membership recruitment.

LinkedIn and Facebook

The data indicated that LinkedIn was the more effective platform for KIMO's engagement during this period, generating

higher visibility and follower growth. Facebook remained a useful channel but showed stagnant interaction rates.

More original and in-depth content

The International Secretariat shifted toward a quality-over-quantity approach to communication, as formalised in the new Communication Strategy 2025-2030 (approved by the International Board in May). Key elements include:

- Reinitiating the news section on the KIMO website, with regular posts on policy developments, project updates, and member activities.
- Prioritising "original" KIMO content.
- A planned website update to improve visual appeal, navigation, and alignment with the new strategy.
- Establishing a "knowledge hub" on the website in 2026, where members could easily access resources related to KIMO's strategic priorities.

The KIMO International website recorded 325,344 unique visitors in 2025 - a 227% increase compared to the previous year.



UPDATES FROM KIMO NETWORKS

KIMO Denmark



Meetings

The National Board of KIMO Denmark held four meetings during the 2024-2025 period. Three of these meetings took place virtually in November 2024 and in February and September 2025, while one board meeting was held in person and included a study trip in Thisted Municipality. During that two-day meeting, hosted by Thisted Municipality, the delegates visited the harbour of Hanstholm, the National Park of Thy, and Strandet I/S, a local business that raises awareness of marine litter and plastic pollution.

Key Priorities

KIMO Denmark's focus during this period was on supporting members' concerns, particularly regarding container loss, paraffin pollution, and PFAS pollution.

The network also engaged in dialogue with the Ministry of the Environment about derelict ships stranded off municipal coasts, as municipalities were having to bear the costs of removing the wrecks. In 2024, KIMO Denmark created a policy information document that politicians could use in similar cases, and after writing to the Ministry, the issue was taken up at the national level, with KIMO Denmark following this work into 2026.

Regarding paraffin pollution, the network monitored whether a change in law that came into force in January 2021 reduced incidents; although no coastal municipalities had applied for

reimbursement for cleaning up paraffin in 2021, 2022, 2023 or 2024, there was an incident on the Danish west coast in the spring of 2025, prompting KIMO Denmark to write to the Minister of the Environment and collaborate with KIMO International on a Danish and international press release.



Following an accident in which 46 shipping containers were lost at sea causing pollution in the waters and coast of northern Denmark in 2023, KIMO Denmark awaited an official report and worked together with Keep Denmark Tidy on a guidance document for municipalities, while also participating in coordination meetings from the Danish Maritime Authority.

PFAS pollution continued to be an area of concern, with KIMO Denmark's members contributing background information to the international PFAS working group. The network also submitted a consultation response in connection with the Ministry of the Environment's action plan for Marine Strategy II and protected marine strategy areas, as well as a consultation response to Denmark's revised marine plan.

On communication and marketing, the secretariat continued to work with internal and external communication, maintaining regular activity on the LinkedIn platform. The secretariat also created a knowledge bank and the network produced a PR newspaper that was delivered to local politicians in a targeted campaign, as well as a short promotional video for use on social media.

Projects

KIMO Denmark and Aarhus University continued the national monitoring programme of marine waste on reference beaches in Denmark, with the contract with the Environment Agency running until the end of 2026. Under this programme, KIMO Denmark monitored three beaches in western Denmark four times during the course of the year, and all waste collected over a 100-metre stretch was sorted, categorised, and reported to OSPAR and the Danish Environmental Protection Agency.

The Interreg project “Power Bio,” which began in 2023, saw KIMO Denmark as a partner leading on several project tasks. The goal of Power Bio was to use residual biomass circularly, for example in energy production from biogas and pyrolysis or the production of various high-value products, while at the same time promoting biodiversity and citizens’ use of natural areas. KIMO Denmark coordinated the group working on methods for collecting and reusing washed-up biological material such as seaweed and eelgrass, and in June 2025 the network launched a coastal network to connect external partners to project partners. Three in person network meetings were held.

In the Interreg North Sea TREASURE project, which aimed to reduce pollution of the sea by preventing the outflow of plastic waste from streams and rivers to the North Sea, KIMO Denmark and Lemvig Water and Wastewater carried out demonstration projects in Varde Municipality and Lemvig Municipality respectively. KIMO Denmark set 2,000 wooden drifters in the Varde river in the autumn of 2024 and another 2,000 in the spring of 2025; using citizen science, these drifters helped map the pathways of plastic litter flowing from land to sea. The network collected data from litter found in the river and examined which prevention and awareness activities could be implemented, while also researching governance and policy regarding riverine litter in Denmark and holding a national meeting that brought together major actors working with plastic pollution.



Projects (continued)

NewSea, a three-year project financed by the Velux Foundation with Aarhus University and the Technology Council as partners, aimed to develop a new concept for integrated environmental assessment of pollution sources in the sea. KIMO Denmark participated in the project's advisory board.

In addition, KIMO Denmark delivered five reports to HELCOM in February 2025, summarising information on lost fishing gear in the Baltic Sea area and documenting best practice and technology that could prevent losses from end-of-life equipment and recreational fishing, as well as best practices for marking fishing gear and reducing the loss of fishing nets.

Five member municipalities took part in the Coastal Lottery: Frederikshavn, Hjørring, Jammerbugt, Thisted and Varde. Observing that beach cleaners in Denmark did not need to receive prizes as motivation, the network decided to discontinue the Coastal Lottery in 2025. Instead, KIMO Denmark launched a marine remediation fund, and organisations in member municipalities will be able to apply for project funding, with the Danish Board awarding support to a rehabilitation project for the bottom of the Limfjord by Aalborg in 2026. KIMO Denmark also worked with KIMO International to help produce material for both OSPAR and HELCOM, building on previous work on prevention of net cuttings and lost recreational fishing gear.

Looking to the Future

The Velux Foundation approved the network's application for the SUPRE project, which examines environmental factors that affect and reduce the number of seabirds. KIMO Denmark contributes to coordinating activities that connect and involve stakeholders in collaboration on solutions that could reduce plastic waste in the marine environment, especially the North Sea. The project started in 2025 and finishes in 2028.

Following municipal elections at the end of 2025, new board members will join KIMO Denmark in 2026. The network is working on a draft strategy and action plan for 2026-2029 that the board will consider and adopt in 2026.



KIMO Netherlands and Belgium



Meetings

In 2025, KIMO Netherlands and Belgium held five Executive Board meetings and two General Board meetings, the latter taking place at special venues: Circuit Zandvoort and Unmanned Valley in Katwijk. The network also participated in seven International Coordinators' Meetings, three International Board Meetings, two Steering Group meetings for the "Fishing for Litter" project, and monthly consultations with Rijkswaterstaat and the Ministry. In addition, the secretariat held weekly meetings with municipalities, port authorities, and provinces, ensuring that collaboration remained continuous and responsive to emerging issues.

Key Priorities

The network's members jointly formulated several priority themes, which were examined and discussed in dedicated working groups. These topics included contracts for beach pavilions and lifeguard stations, Blue Flags, sand erosion, and PFAS. A significant operational challenge arose when, after 25 years of using office space within the IJmond Environmental Service, KIMO Netherlands and Belgium was informed that these facilities could no longer be provided. After searching for a suitable alternative, the Executive Board decided to house the network in the Old Town Hall in Middelharris from 1 January 2026, a stately building located in one of its beautiful coastal municipalities that offered the opportunity for further growth.



Projects

KIMO Netherlands and Belgium was asked to organise the Dutch Coastal Days, a major event that required considerable time and energy but proved vital for knowledge sharing and strengthening the network. On 1 and 2 October 2025, Theater De Muze in Noordwijk hosted two days of meetings, content, and inspiration under the central theme “The future of our coast,” which explored how to keep the coastal area safe and liveable while balancing economy, nature, and recreation. The Minister attended on the first day, and the event concluded with an inspiring networking evening during a walking dinner. On the afternoon of 2 October, KIMO Netherlands and Belgium also organised the Cleanest Beach Award ceremony, announcing the beach named the cleanest in the Netherlands for 2025.

The network actively contributed to the Clean Beaches Programme, coordinated by Rijkswaterstaat, which aimed to achieve structurally cleaner beaches through awareness, behavioural change, and waste collection, with annual monitoring of beach litter ensuring continuous improvement. KIMO Netherlands and Belgium also played a close secretariat role in the Coastal Pact, where 59 coastal stakeholders expressed the wish to extend cooperation until at least 2030, leading to the new Coastal Pact 2026–2030 with its continued focus on balancing coastal development and protection. Furthermore, the network became a partner in the five-year OR ELSE project, an interdisciplinary team that gathered new knowledge about the ecological effects of sand extraction in the North Sea, recognising that while sand extraction remains necessary for safety and economic development, it must be done with respect for a healthy, resilient marine ecosystem.



Projects (continued)

Fishing for Litter remained a flagship activity: for more than 24 years, KIMO Netherlands and Belgium had been the driving force and organiser of the project, and in 2025, 75 large fishing vessels continued to bring ashore the litter they collected at sea in the well-known KIMO Big Bags, with all waste now being fully recycled. Thanks to close cooperation between Dutch ports, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, Rijkswaterstaat, and European subsidies, more than 8,500 tonnes of litter have been removed from the sea over the past 24 years, a result that underscored the success and impact of the project.



Looking to the Future

In 2026, KIMO Netherlands and Belgium plan to continue all collaborations and working groups, deepening ongoing dossiers with the goal of achieving concrete results and strengthening the position of coastal municipalities. Regarding PFAS, the network intends to explore whether, in addition to the International PFAS Working Group, there would be a need for a national PFAS Working Group. The network also plans to focus more strongly on external visibility, communicating more frequently and consistently through direct contacts, social media, and traditional media, while continuing its well-received newsletters and events such as the Dutch Coastal Days. To strengthen ties with members, a provincial-level meeting will be organised alongside regular members' meetings to update administrators and staff and exchange knowledge. KIMO Netherlands and Belgium will once again organise the Dutch Coastal Days in 2026 and will continue coordinating the entire Dutch Fishing for Litter programme, including recruiting new vessels and enhancing communication around the initiative. The network will remain a partner in the OR ELSE consortium and will continue to support and contribute to the work of KIMO International through active participation in international meetings and fora.



Meetings

KIMO Sweden held four network meetings in 2025: two were physical, one was digital, and one was a hybrid meeting, with all physical meetings also accessible digitally for those unable to travel. Members took turns hosting the physical meetings, and the network usually combined the formal agenda with a presentation by the host municipality about a current local or regional issue, while news from KIMO International remained a standing point on the agenda.

In March, Kungälv hosted the annual meeting, which confirmed the budget, action plan, and annual report, and also informed members about its work on PFAS issues while sharing positive examples from its marine work.

In June, a hybrid meeting invited the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, which held a presentation on chemical pollution, marine litter, and biodiversity, followed by discussions with member municipalities; during the formal part of the meeting, the network discussed KIMO International's strategic priorities and the consequences of decreased national grants for beach cleaning.

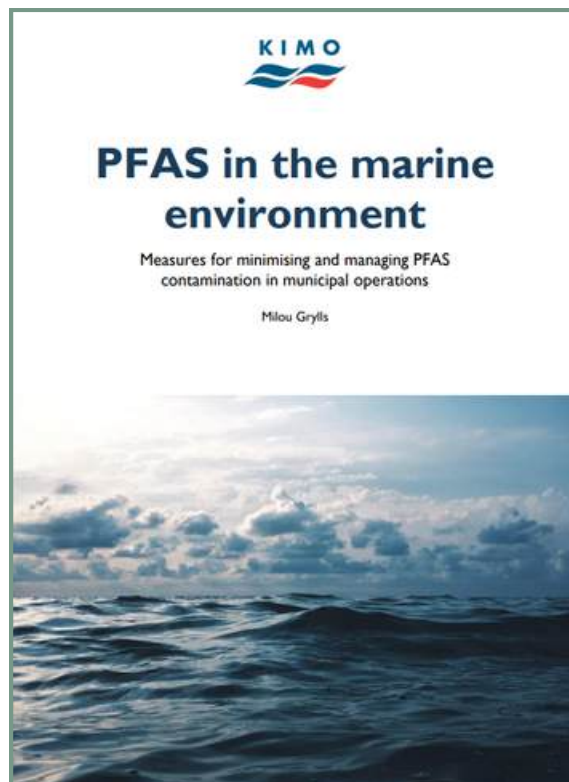
In September, Malmö and Lomma hosted a meeting that included discussions about how KIMO Sweden's working groups related to KIMO International's strategic priorities, as well as a visit to the location for a planned bubble barrier in Lomma and a tour of nature-based climate adaptation projects along the coast.

A digital meeting was held in November mainly focusing on following up on activities during the year and discussions on priorities for 2026.

Key Priorities

PFAS remained an important topic for KIMO Sweden throughout the year: the network published a report focusing on how municipalities could work to handle the issue, and this report was later translated into English and published on the KIMO International webpage.

Marine litter and beach cleaning were continuously important issues for the network and its member municipalities, discussed during meetings and recognised in external communications. Another key focus was organisational sustainability and communication.



KIMO Sweden updated the structure of its action plan and developed communication materials, recognising that this was important both to secure a sustainable organisation and to attract new member municipalities. The network also looked into ways to attract associate members as well as additional municipalities.

In addition, KIMO Sweden sent two letters to the Swedish Minister of Environment and Climate to highlight the negative consequences of decreased national grants for beach cleaning, as well as the issue of historical waste from lost fishing gear.

Looking to the Future

Looking ahead to 2026, KIMO Sweden plans to continue its network meetings and activities in line with its action plan. Organisational sustainability would remain a priority: the network intends to continue updating documents and communication materials, and is planning a revision of its constitution ahead of the next annual meeting. Attracting new members will also be a focus, and KIMO Sweden plans to start a LinkedIn page to strengthen its external presence and outreach.





Meetings

KIMO UK held three Board meetings online during the 2024-2025 period. On 6 December 2024, the Board made slight amendments to the UK Constitution, and discussions centred on the move of the international Secretariat and the Strategic Working Group. On 13 March 2025, the Executive Secretary provided a presentation on the new International Secretariat in Aalborg, and KIMO UK welcomed Robina Barton as the new UK Coordinator. On 13 June 2025, the Coordinator reported back on the PFAS Working Group, and there was a discussion around UK fee levels and plans for the UK AGM. The network had intended to hold its Annual General Meeting on 5 September 2025 in person in Fife, along with a strategic planning workshop, but this had to be postponed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Key Priorities

Since the appointment of the new Network Coordinator in April 2025, the focus had been on organisational and financial sustainability. The network has been working to identify organisational priorities and ways to generate income. The Coordinator explored potential areas for action by KIMO UK, for example research on PFAS levels around the Scottish coastlines and opportunities to support voluntary beach clean activities around Scotland in a strategic way. The network saw partnership working as key to success and took steps to develop relationships with like-minded organisations, including the Scottish Islands Federation, which had a Marine Litter Working Group, and the Local Government Association Coastal SIG, a cooperation of coastal local authorities in England working together on marine issues. Sadly, the Vice-Chair, Cllr Mark Dixon, passed away unexpectedly in late July. Mark had been a champion of marine conservation and remained very actively engaged in KIMO UK, and his passing was a huge loss to KIMO UK as well as to his local authority, South Ayrshire.

Projects

Fishing for Litter continued to expand significantly: by the end of 2025, over 70 harbours were participating in the scheme, which had increased from 32 in around three years, and the network expects this number to rise as demand remains high and funding has been secured to target new coastlines. The total number of vessels recorded exceeded 600, and the total tonnage collected from the start of the project in 2005 exceeded 3,000 tonnes. The year marked the 20th anniversary of Fishing for Litter, and the network planned to mark the occasion by interacting with the first three UK harbours to participate, highlighting their involvement since 2005. Due to the appointment of Liaison Officers, KIMO UK gained better insight into what was going into its skips, and the network recently established a pilot for recycling Fishing for Litter waste in one Scottish harbour, continuing to work with plastic recyclers and government to realise its ambition to expand this across the whole of the UK. Fishing for Litter education packs were made available online, with the kit supporting in-person presentations and practical experiments for primary school aged children.



Looking to the Future

Looking ahead, KIMO UK plans to develop a light-touch strategic plan, aligning with the KIMO International 2026-2030 Strategy, in order to focus its efforts over the next three to five years.



Tramore Beach, Waterford

Following Wexford County Council's seminal decision to become a member of KIMO in 2024, Waterford City & County Council has now taken a significant step in the fight against marine pollution by becoming the second Irish municipality in as many years to join our international network of coastal municipalities. Historically Irish municipalities have played an important role in KIMO and we are delighted to work together with our new Irish members to tackle pollution in the Irish Sea.

Located in Ireland's southeast, Waterford boasts a diverse landscape, from the Knockmealdown and Comeragh Mountains to its stunning coastline, which includes four Blue Flag beaches and seven Green Coast beaches.

A significant stretch of this coastline, the Copper Coast, is recognised as a UNESCO Global Geopark for its geological significance. The county is also home to major waterways, including the River Suir and the River Blackwater, which flow into the ecologically important Waterford Harbour estuary.

Waterford has long demonstrated environmental leadership through initiatives like Clean Coasts, Blue Flag and Green Coast designations, and community-led beach clean-ups. The council has actively tackled plastic pollution through campaigns such as “Take 3 for the Sea” and partnered with local organisations to remove debris from the Suir Estuary and other waterways.

An event to launch the accession of the municipality to KIMO was held locally in Villierstown in July 2025. Gabriel Hynes, Acting Director Of Services, Roads, Water & Environment of Waterford City & County Council said:

“We in Waterford share a vision with KIMO – clean beaches and rivers, healthy seas, and thriving coastal communities. Joining KIMO is a natural next step in strengthening our ability to protect these vital ecosystems.”

With its inclusion in KIMO, Waterford City & County Council looks forward to closer collaboration with European partners, sharing knowledge, and contributing to collective efforts to safeguard the Irish Sea and its rich marine biodiversity.



GET IN TOUCH

Interested in exploring more? Reach out to our
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