



**Coping with marine litter,  
approaches of NGOs towards companies to change their course of  
action and the influence of legitimacy and CSR.**

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Wageningen, March 2014

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## Abstract

The marine litter problem is a global problem which has ecological, social and economic consequences. Currently an effective legal framework around marine litter is lacking. Due to globalisation and the rise of private governance the role of non-governmental actors has changed and gained more importance. Non-governmental actors play an important role in the problem of marine litter. NGOs are addressing the problem of marine litter and thereby try to influence companies to change their course of action.

In this study three NGOs are compared in their approaches towards companies. The Plastic Soup Foundation (PSF), the Plastic Oceans Foundation (POF) and Stichting de Noordzee (SDN) were interviewed. The concepts used in the study are approaches used by NGOs towards companies and towards society in order to influence companies. The other concept is legitimacy, as gaining legitimacy affects the effectiveness of the NGO. The last concept is corporate social responsibility (CSR), which originates from pressure of society on companies to act upon their social and environmental responsibilities. It is assumed that legitimacy and CSR affect the approaches used by NGOs and that CSR make companies more willing to cooperate.

The compared NGOs use multiple approaches towards companies and society. PSF and SDN are more confrontational in their approaches whereas POF is more cooperative. The NGOs indicated that effectiveness of the approaches is influenced by getting media attention and timing. Legitimacy is important for all three NGOs, however they seem to gain different types of legitimacy. It is interesting to note that they do not have an explicit strategy to gain legitimacy. CSR influences NGOs as they approach companies faster because companies which have implemented CSR can be more open and easier to approach. Though it is questionable how 'green' and willing to cooperate the company is when CSR is implemented.

## Acknowledgements

This thesis is a good completion of the knowledge I have gained during my master Aquaculture and Marine Resource Management in Wageningen. Working on this thesis is also a useful preparation for my internship which will also include a research part.

I would like to thank my supervisors Judith van Leeuwen and Kris van Koppen in guiding me through this thesis. You have been supporting me with good advice and guidance. It was a disappointment that there were no companies willing to be interviewed. But we quickly found a solution for this problem and work on the thesis could continue smoothly.

I would like to show my appreciation to David Jones of the Plastic Oceans Foundation, to Maartje Harding of the Plastic Soup Foundation and to Jeroen Dagevos of Stichting de Noordzee. Thank you all for participating in the interviews and providing me with sufficient information to write this thesis.

I would also like to thank Jos, Sjoerd and my parents for their interest and support during my thesis.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 introduction

Over the past 70 years there is a mass production of plastics. Plastic is a widely used product for a lot of different purposes, it is used as packaging material and in a wide range of other products, therefore the plastic industry is a large sector. A property of plastic is that it degrades slowly which leads to a large accumulation of plastic on the planet. Thompson (2006) estimates that about 10% of all the plastic produced end up in the oceans. This plastic accumulates on beaches and in the main currents of the oceans. The accumulation of plastic in those gyres is called “the plastic soup” or “garbage patch” (figure 1) (Cole et al., 2011). Plastic which enters the marine environment causes multiple problems.



Figure 1: Examples of the accumulation of litter in gyres Source: Wiki space plastic soup.

The problem of marine litter started as an aesthetic problem as marine litter is visible on beaches and in the marine environment (Cole et al., 2011, Galgani et al., 2013). Research showed that the nature of the problem is far bigger than was expected. Another problem is that the marine ecosystem goods and services are affected by marine litter, this degradation of goods and services leads to costs (Galgani, 2013). There are multiple sectors economically affected by marine litter: aquaculture, agriculture, fisheries, shipping power generation, tourism and local authorities (Cole et al., 2011, Galgani, 2013). For instance ships are damaged (figure 2) and navigation is disturbed by marine litter, also restricted catch was reported due to marine litter (Mouat et al., 2010). For coastal agriculture the damage consists of damaged equipment, harm to livestock and the extra costs to remove the litter (Cole et al., 2011, Mouat et al., 2010).



Figure 2: Damaged propeller of a boat by marine litter Source: KIMO.

On the social side, the problem affects humans and their quality of life (Mouat et al., 2010). The contaminated beaches and coastal waters can harm the recreational, educational, non-use and aesthetic values (figure 3)(Galgani et al., 2013, Mouat et al., 2010). Marine litter can reduce recreational opportunities and reduce the amount of people visiting the polluted area (Galgani et al., 2013, Mouat et al., 2010). The aesthetic value can be affected by marine litter as it reduces the enjoyment of the landscape (Mouat et al., 2010). In the Netherlands and Belgium the economical costs of removing the litter on the beaches rises up to approximately €10.4 million (Mouat et al., 2010). Besides these issues there is also the possibility of public health and safety problems, such as the possibility of plastics accumulating in consumption fish (Mouat et al., 2010). From the marine litter it is plastic which causes the most problems because of its slow degradation (Cole et al., 2011).



Figure 3: Beach covered with marine litter Source: Ocean Conservancy.

A distinction is made between macro plastics and micro plastics. Micro plastics have size ranges from <10mm to <1mm (Cole et al., 2011). The marine litter consists of 60 to 80 percent plastic (Vreede et al., 2010). It is unclear which types of plastic are present in exact numbers, however it has been shown which types causes litter related accidents. It was examined that in 2012, 6 percent of litter related accidents with marine animals were caused by micro plastics, ropes and nets accounted for 56 percent of the litter related accidents and 10 percent by packaging materials (Galgani et al., 2013). Also it was shown that since 1997 there is a 40 percent increase of litter related accidents with marine animals (Galgani et al., 2013).

The accumulation of plastic in the marine environment is a complicated global problem as there are many different and diffuse sources from which the plastics enter the marine environment. There are land-based sources resulting from bad waste management and sea-based sources, for example resulting from shipping (Galgani, 2013). The land-based litter flows from drainage and sewage systems, rivers, road run-offs and storm water outflows into the marine environment (Galgani, 2013). Because of current patterns, winds, tides the litter can travel long distances and identifying the source of the litter is a complex process (Galgani, 2013).

Besides the wide range of sources there are also a lot of different stakeholders involved in the problem of marine litter. From every category there are stakeholder ranging from global to local level. At the one hand there are the stakeholders who are involved in causing the problem: (plastic producing) industries, shipping and fisheries, consumers and government. And on the other hand there are stakeholders trying to solve the problem: Scientists, media, civil society, NGOs, government and educators (figure 4) (Weenen and Haffmans, 2011).



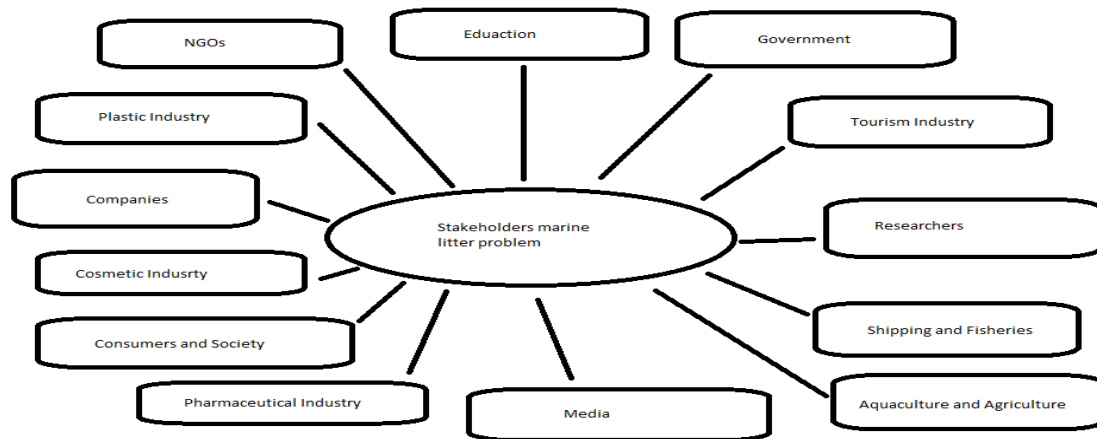


Figure 4: Schematic overview on the stakeholders related to the marine litter problem.

There are not much international agreements relating to the marine litter problem (Vreede et al., 2011). The existing legal framework on marine litter consists of global, regional, national and local regulations (Trouwborst, 2011). This division between different levels show that this framework is very fragmented and falls under a lot of different agreements. More information about this framework can be found in the background chapter on the legal framework.

Beyond jurisdictional borders the marine environment is a common good. Which results in a problem that is described in 1968 by Hardins in “The tragedy of the commons”. Because the marine environment belongs to everyone there is a need for global cooperation to solve the marine litter problem. Hardins suggests that only private property or centralized state governance can solve the tragedy of the commons (Hardins, 1968, Dietz and Ostrom, 2003). However, there is not a centralized state governing the marine litter problem and the marine environment cannot be assigned as private property. A state can apply its own legal framework on their territorial land and waters, but on the high seas policy must be regulated at international level, thus the power of states is limited to solve international environmental problems. Therefore global cooperation is needed to come to effective rules and regulations which can effectively be monitored and controlled.

The first complex task in global cooperation is the negotiation of international agreements, rules and regulations (Falkner, 2003). It can be very time consuming before consensus is reached among all states. The next step is to establish an effective monitoring and enforcement system. If these rules and regulations are easily undermined then pollution of the marine environment will still continue because the costs of not polluting will be higher than the costs of polluting. This can also be seen in the MARPOL convention. This shows that the enforcement and monitoring of ships is complicated especially at the high seas beyond the jurisdiction of states and thus pollutions still continues (Mattson, 2006). Also global regulations affect local regulations which can have a positive or negative effect on the local level (Dietz and Ostrom, 2003).

International state-led governance has to deal with quite some challenges and the establishment of an overarching legal framework on marine litter will be a long term process. It is possible to govern the marine litter problem with adaptive governance systems including non-state actors (Dietz and Ostrom, 2003). Therefore non-state actors also play an important role in the problem of marine litter.

The importance of non-state actors also increased because of globalization and the rise of private governance. A shift has taken place in the role of companies and NGOs. The role of companies and NGOs has become more important and they have gained more power. The influence of non-state actors differs from lobbying to exerting big influences in environmental governance (Falkner, 2003, Nelson, 2007).

There are several NGOs addressing the problem of Marine Litter. These NGOs work at global, regional and local level. They fulfil different activities like advocacy, awareness raising, analysis, capacity building, evaluation and monitoring (Nelson, 2007). In order to reach certain goals, the NGOs can use different approaches which can contain several of the above mentioned strategies. In order to be successful, NGOs need to gain legitimacy for their actions, which will also determine their choice of strategy.

An important stakeholder for the NGOs is the industry. NGOs have already targeted the cosmetic industry to stop using micro plastics in their products. This shows that besides at state level the changes can also be made at the company level. It will be determined by different factors such as their willingness to cooperate whether a company within the industry will change their course of action into the desired direction.

It is debated that responsibility of companies for social development has grown (Warhurst, 2005, Kong et al., 2002). Society is expecting that companies take into account their environmental impact, and try to minimize this impact instead of governments taking the lead, this is called corporate social responsibility (Warhurst, 2005). Due to the rise of corporate social responsibility, globalization and private governance the role of companies has changed and Warhurst(2005) suggests that these changes of responsibilities can be best addressed by strategic partnerships. This creates the opportunity for NGO's to cooperate with companies in order to change the industries in reducing the amount of marine litter. Legitimacy of NGOs and the level of corporate social responsibility incorporated by a company are factors that may influence the success of reaching agreements between NGOs and companies.

## 1.2 Research aim

The aim of this research is to find out what types of approaches from NGOs are successful in order to change the course of action of the industries that are connected with the marine litter problem and how this success is influenced by legitimacy and corporate social responsibility. To examine this, first only companies were incorporated in the research. However, due to a lack of response from companies, the approaches used towards society is also incorporated. These approaches indirectly influences companies. During the research it can be found that other factors are also important in influencing these approaches, such as new government regulations for example. This research will provide insight in which approaches chosen by NGOs have proven to be successful in the past regarding the marine litter problem. It will provide a better understanding of how legitimacy and corporate responsibility are influencing the relationship between companies and NGOs. The research will give insight in the important role of NGOs in international environmental governance ,how their influence on companies has changed due to corporate social responsibility and the importance of gaining legitimacy for their actions in order to reach success. Last, the findings might contribute to the

choices of action NGOs take in the future regarding this problem and change the way how companies and NGOs cooperate on the marine litter problem. The following questions are derived from this aim:

Which approaches have NGOs used towards companies regarding the marine litter problem and which approaches have been effective in changing the course of action of the industry?

Why were these approaches effective and what is the role of legitimacy and corporate responsibility in this?

What other factors are influencing the effectiveness of approaches?

### 1.3 Methods

This thesis is a comparative study between three NGOs: The Plastic Soup Foundation, The Plastic Oceans Foundation and Stichting de Noordzee. These NGOs will be compared in the approaches that they use towards companies and it will be examined which approaches were successful in changing the course of action of companies. The Plastic Soup Foundation from the Netherlands and the Plastic Oceans Foundation from the UK are quite similar, but differ in their approach towards companies. The first has a cooperative but also a confrontational approach whereas the latter has more a cooperative and communicative approach. Stichting de Noordzee from the Netherlands is used to compare two Dutch NGOs in their approach towards companies.

The data collection method used in this thesis are semi-structured interviews which will produce qualitative data. In this method the interviewer sets up a situation in which the respondent gets the time and scope to talk about their opinions on a particular subject. The focus is decided by the interviewer and the objective is to understand the view of the respondent. It will be examined which approaches the NGOs are using towards society to affect companies indirectly besides their approaches towards companies. The objective from interviews with NGOs is to clarify why they have chosen for certain approaches directed towards companies to change their course of action. And why they have chosen for certain approaches towards society and how this influences companies. The interviewees were the Plastic Oceans Foundation, Stichting de Noordzee and the Plastic Soup Foundation. The Plastic Soup Foundation and Stichting de Noordzee were questioned two times, first about their approaches towards companies and the second interview was focussed on their approaches towards society. The Plastic Oceans Foundation was interviewed once.

The interview questions are open ended and prepared in advance, but if there are more questions that appear interesting during the interview, then those questions can also be asked. The preparation of the questions will be done by first designing a topic list and then assigning questions to those topics. The list with questions can be found in the appendix. In the preparation phase contact is made with the desired respondents to try to make appointments to conduct the interview. When appointments are made and the questions are finished then the interviews can be conducted. After the conduction the interviews can be analysed and used for the analysis of the thesis. The first set of interviews was conducted in December 2013 and the second set in January and February of 2014. Besides data collection through semi-structured interviews, relevant documents are accessed such as policy documents, reports and website.

## 2 Conceptual framework

### 2.1 Introduction

In the following chapter the concepts used in this research will be discussed and it will be shown why legitimacy and corporate social responsibility are important. Also it will be discussed what the expectations are of the coherence of these concepts and their influence in the relationship between NGOs and companies.

Due to the rise of private governance the role of companies and NGOs has changed. Private actors started to provide in public goods that were provided by the government previously. This has led to a change in authority as those private actors gained more power (Palmujoki, 2006). Private actors such as companies also gained more power due to globalization and started lobbying, play important roles in implementation of international agreements and create non state-led institutional arrangements that include environmental governance functions or form hybrid private-public governance arrangements (Falkner, 2003). Also the importance of other non-state actors such as NGOs has grown due to the rise of private governance and they started to engage with companies (Falkner, 2003, Warhurst, 2005). Non-state actors can also play a role in promoting global standards and pressuring states to take action (Nelson, 2007, Kong et al, 2002). Private governance affects the opportunities for NGOs in influencing global governance as they empower them outside the state system (Falkner, 2003). Therefore it is assumed that NGOs can influence state and non-state actors which increases their scope.

It has been shown that in areas where governments fail to establish effective international rules, non-state actors are enlarging their role in the development of global standards (Biermann and Gupta, 2010, Schouten and Glasbergen, 2011). In the background chapter on the legal framework it will be explained that this framework on the marine litter problem is very fragmented and that effective international rules have not been established yet. Therefore it is expected that NGOs and companies play an important role in the problem of marine litter. NGOs are important in creating environmental awareness (Richards and Heard, 2005, Nelson, 2007) and trying to push the state and companies to make changes. Companies play an important role because they are part of the problem and have the power to make changes.

Private governance has led to a relationship between companies and NGOs as NGOs started to influence companies beside the state. NGOs started to cooperate more with companies and also got a more regulatory role during the rise of private governance, which led to certification systems for instance. This development led to an increased importance of gaining legitimacy for the NGOs as due to this new role trust is not straightforward anymore. In this research the relationship between NGOs and companies will be examined with a focus on how NGOs approach companies and society in order to influence companies. Also it is examined how legitimacy and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are influencing this relationship and choice of approaches.

NGOs can have different approaches towards companies. I have chosen to look at the influence of legitimacy and corporate social responsibility on these approaches. NGOs can also use approaches towards society to create awareness and indirectly influence companies via consumers for instance. The NGOs use approaches towards companies and society to try to change the course of action of the company. The willingness to cooperate or to change will influence the effectiveness of the approach. If the company has implemented CSR then it is expected that it will influence the willingness to cooperate with the NGO. There is a pressure from society on companies that act upon their responsibilities and it is assumed that when a company implements CSR society will perceive the company more positive, therefore the image of the company is increased. On the NGO side, NGOs need to gain legitimacy from society to be effective, thus influencing their choice of approaches towards companies. If the NGO does not gain legitimacy in their approach towards companies it will not be effective and the effort will be useless (Jepson, 2005). Legitimacy also needs to be gained from other stakeholders such as the government. This relationship is not elaborated in the research because the research focuses on the relationship between companies and NGOs. This relationship developed from the rise of private governance and the indirect relationship between NGOs and companies via society.

To get an idea of the approaches chosen by NGOs towards companies and how these approaches are influenced by legitimacy and corporate social responsibility, I have chosen these concepts to be examined. Because of the cohesion of these concepts, this approach will lead to the insight on how the relationship between NGOs and companies works directly and indirectly via society, and if CSR is a crucial factor in making this relationship more effective. In this chapter the concepts of NGO approaches, legitimacy and corporate social responsibility and the influence of society are explained and in the concluding section the coherence between these concepts will be made clear.

## 2.2 NGO approaches

NGOs often have limited resources and capacity which forces them to be selective in their focus and strategies they choose to reach their goal (Richards and Heard, 2005). Most of the NGOs relating to the marine litter problem do not focus on this single topic but have a wider field of environmental concern. The Plastic Soup Foundation is an example of a NGO which solely focuses on the marine litter problem but other NGOs such as the World Wide Fund focuses on a wide range of topics both terrestrial and marine. This means that the resources and capacity is being spread more at NGOs such as WWF.

There are different approaches which can be chosen by NGOs in relation to companies: confrontational, communicative, consultative and cooperative (Nelson, 2007). In this research an approach is defined as a certain behaviour towards companies used to achieve something, in this case to change the course of action of the company. The approach chosen will depend on the relationship between the company and the NGO. When the relationship is good the NGO will probably choose for a cooperative or consultative approach, whereas the confrontational approach will probably be chosen when the relationship is not good. The approach will be supported by different strategies that a NGO can use to achieve the desired outcome. It can be the case that a NGO will use different approaches

towards the same company and often several strategies will be used at the same time on the same topic, such as a combination of direct action and media attention (Nelson, 2007).

In a communicative approach there is a one-way dialog, which means that there is an information flow in one direction (Nelson, 2007). A communicative approach is often used to raise awareness, within this approach education and research strategies are often combined with strategies to get media attention (Storrier and McGlashan, 2006). This can result in different type of activities like developing an exhibition, producing posters and leaflets or depending on the budget launch a commercial, but also visits to schools and attending publicity events for instance (Storrier and McGlashan, 2006). Reporting and information sharing from the company on corporate social responsibility activities for instance is also included in the communicative approach (Nelson, 2007). An example of a communicative approach is the 'beat the micro bead' application for smart phones. This is a tool which informs consumers about micro plastics in products. It is a one way information flow which is used to inform and create awareness.

In a consultative approach there is a two-way dialog (Nelson, 2007). In a two-way dialog there is interaction between the NGO and the other actor but this does not have to lead to cooperation. Strategies used in this approach are scientific research, media attention, lobbying and consultation (Richards and Heards, 2005). The consultative approach can be restricted (Kong et al., 2002, Richards and Heards, 2005). This restriction is based on the fact that the company has the power to decide to be involved with the NGO in a consultative or cooperative way. Therefore the company also has the power to not engage with the NGO if this NGO does not behave in a desired way (Richards and Heards, 2005). Burchell and Cook (2011) found that there are limitations to setting up a dialog as businesses have used these dialogs in the past to develop tools to avoid critique instead of changing their course of action. This has led to negative experiences of NGOs with business dialogs and resulted in some NGOs not using this strategy anymore (Burchell and Cook, 2011). Examples of consultative approaches are most roundtable meetings where all kind of stakeholders meet and discuss, such as the roundtable on sustainable palm oil (Schouten and Glasbergen, 2011).

A step beyond consultation is cooperation. A cooperative approach goes a step beyond two-way dialog as it leads to agreements and cooperation between NGOs and companies (Nelson, 2007). An establishment of advisory and consultative joint project participation or project evaluation can be made for instance (Nelson, 2007). Strategies used in this approach are also scientific research, media attention, consultation, resource and capacity building (Richards and Heards, 2005). For some NGOs a cooperative approach with the corporate sector is necessary for resource and capacity building which determines the sustainability of a NGO (Roberts, et al., 2005). Therefore the cooperative approach is important for NGOs. The cooperative approach is also restricted in the same way as the consultative approach as again the NGO approaches the company and the company has the power to decide to engage or not.

An example of cooperative approaches is the WWF which cooperates with Walmart on supply chain issues to improve the sustainability of high demand products such as seafood (The guardian, 2012).

The confrontational approach makes use of direct action. These approach targets the moral liability and reputation of the companies (Nelson, 2007). Strategies that are used within the confrontational approach are getting media attention, scientific research, awareness raising, education and legal

challenges (Nelson, 2007, Richards and Heard, 2005). Within this approach the strategy of scientific research is very important because the NGO must underpin their confrontational behaviour in order to be legitimate (Nelson, 2007). The actions of Greenpeace at the Brent Spar is an example of a confrontational approach (Nelson, 2007, Richards and Heard, 2005). They occupied Brent Spar and called for a global boycott on Shell gas stations which was effective and led to reputation damage of Shell and in the end of not sinking the Brent Spar (Greenpeace, 2005). It is interesting to note that Greenpeace got a lot of media attention and they underpinned their claims with research, but it became clear that their numbers were exaggerated which also led to reputation damage of Greenpeace itself (Greenpeace, 2005, Richards and Heard, 2005).

Also new strategies have emerged (Kong et al., 2002) which can be placed in the communicative or consultative approach. NGOs are more often trying to influence the shareholders to exert their shareholder power and thereby influence the course of action of companies (Kong et al., 2002). This is a different strategy than consultation or cooperation with the company directly. NGOs can try to influence the course of action of companies by influencing the government in order to provide policies which push the companies to change. They can try to influence consumer by informing them which can have an effect on companies or the government. They can influence stakeholders such as shareholders. Or they can try to influence the companies directly.

There are different actors which can be influenced in order to change the course of action of companies and it differs per approach what the role of those actors is. Society plays a role in the communicative approach, where for instance negative information about companies is being spread in order to create awareness, but also to make companies aware that they do not follow the right course of action. In the confrontational approach society, or more specific consumers, can play a bigger role when participating in boycotts for instance. In addition, there are approaches directed towards society and consumers which will be discussed in the next section.

Research on marine environmental NGOs showed that lobbying, scientific research and media attention are the most effective strategies (Richards and Heard, 2005). It is shown that getting media attention is very important, as it strengthens the approach and the other strategies used when wide media attention is generated (Joutsenvirta, 2011). This was also shown in the example of Brent Spar, due to a lot of media attention, the reputation of Shell was damaged and people started boycotting Shell, which made the approach of Greenpeace effective. Legal challenges were considered as the least effective by the interviewed NGOs in the research of Richards and Heard (2005). The ineffectiveness of legal challenges has to do with the complicated, time consuming and expensive character of this strategy (Richards and Heard, 2005).

NGOs often find senior directors of companies easier to access and influence than the government, which especially holds for large publicly mentioned companies that need to protect their public reputation and keep their shareholders happy (Nelson, 2007). NGOs often use confrontational approaches towards companies but also often try to cooperate with companies (Nelson, 2007). NGOs do not always have enough resources and capacity to put into an approach, therefore resources must be spend effectively. An example of ineffective application of resources comes from a NGO who spend two years of dialog with a major retailer to use sustainable timber. 12 months after the end of



the dialog they found out that the retailer had turned back to using illegally harvested timber again, so all the resources and effort put in was for nothing (Burchell and Cook, 2011).

In this research the focus will lie on the different approaches a NGO can use towards companies. The chosen approaches by the NGOs reveal information about the relationship between the company and the NGO. Also it gives a more clear classification then comparing strategies because the same strategies can be used at different approaches. However, it has to be noted that a part of the chosen approach is also determined by the characteristics of the NGO. Greenpeace for instance is characterised to be more confrontational in their activities and approach then WWF for instance which is more consultative and cooperative in their activities and approach.

By examining the approaches used by NGOs towards companies it is expected that the strategies that have been used in those approaches will also be revealed. I will use the approaches classified by Nelson (2007) in this research: the communicative, consultative, cooperative and confrontational approach. The classification described above will help to reveal in the interviews which approaches the case study NGOs use towards companies. When the NGOs only have a two-way dialog with the companies then it will be classified as a consultative approach for instance. Also the approaches can be recognized by certain specific strategies, such as legal challenges that are specific for a confrontational approach and resource and capacity building for a cooperative approach. Not all strategies can be used in this way because a lot of strategies are used within different approaches such as getting media attention.

## 2.3 Society

In the marine litter problem society is an important stakeholder for NGOs. Society can be defined in many different ways. In this research I have chosen to define society as citizens and consumers.

The marine environment especially beyond the coastal zone has the characteristic to be unfamiliar and people tend to feel not engaged with the marine environment (Richards and Heard, 2005). It is important for NGOs to create awareness of the effects of marine litter. On the one hand because society is part of the problem as careless handling of litter on beaches for instance contributes to the marine litter problem. On the other hand the public opinion can be helpful in putting pressure on companies and the government to come up with policies or change course of action. Information about the specific role of society for NGOs that can be found in literature is limited, but it can be expected that NGOs make use of the power of society and sometimes more specific of consumers. Therefore in this research a distinction is made between society and consumers. Society is defined in this research as a large-scale structured community which consists of individuals which share a national identity (Dictionary, 2014). A consumer is defined in this research as a person who purchases goods and services for its own needs.

In the previous section it can be seen that NGOs can choose different approaches towards companies to try to change their course of action. NGOs can also use different approaches in order to influence the public opinion or engage the public in activities. Storrier and Glashan (2006) argue that it is important to involve communities in environmental or resource management projects in order to be successful. The Coastal Litter Campaign is an example of a successful campaign which was focussed



on society by getting people informed about marine litter and involved in activities to reduce marine litter (Storrier and Glashan, 2006).

Raising awareness is an important part of antipollution campaigns and can help to initiate a change in attitude (Storrier and Glashan, 2006). Therefore an important first step in approaches to society can be awareness raising but there might be more strategies necessary in order to change behaviour. Kong et al., 2002 states that people are willing to change their behaviour but they need to feel empowered to make a difference through their behaviour. The successful Coastal Litter Campaign created environmental responsibility amongst the communities and those communities felt empowered, achievement and ownership (Glashan and Storrier, 2006).

Those feelings were created because people could help in beach clean ups which helped to get people more involved (Glashan and Storrier, 2006). Awareness was created by informing people of the sources and impacts of marine litter via a travelling exhibition, leaflets and posters. Also schools were visited and children were taken on field visits. It can be seen that a lot of NGOs have special education programmes and activities for children. The importance of educating children is because young people can change their behaviour more easily and can help to create awareness amongst other people (Abu-Hilal and Al-Najjar, 2004). At WWF for instance, children can get their own special membership which makes them a WWF ranger. Once in a while those WWF rangers are asked to help to collect money in the neighbourhood for a certain goal such as saving the whales and in return they receive a stuffed animal (WNF Rangerclub, 2014). This strategy goes a step further, as through the children involved, awareness is created amongst other people.

In order to have a successful campaign, getting media attention is regarded as very important (Richards and Heard, 2005, Kong et al., 2002). Via media attention it is easy to reach a broad group of people which normally might be hard to reach. If the media addresses a topic to your campaign, then the environmental issues are seen by a wide public (Richards and Heard, 2005). By getting media attention, awareness is raised and also the fundraising abilities are strengthened (Richards and Heard, 2005). Also the emergence of new types of media have helped NGOs to reach people via new ways, first the emergence of the internet allowed NGOs to have their own website which can inform people. With the emergence of social media NGOs can now reach people via Facebook and Twitter for instance and also use those mediums in their campaigns. An example is the Plastic Soup Foundation which used a "Twitter bomb" against a multinational to force it to change the course of action (beat the micro bead industry, 2013). The emergence of new types of media have thus increased the amount of strategies NGOs can use and have made it easier to reach a broader public than can be reached with traditional media.

Instead of focussing on the society in general, NGOs can also use approaches towards consumers. NGOs can use multiple market-based tools in order to try to influence consumers, such tools are boycotts, awareness campaigns, information guides and certification schemes (Vos and Bush, 2011). Market-based tools are aiming specifically on the market and try to influence consumer behaviour (Horne, 2009). NGOs in America and Europe already used campaigns aimed at consumers as an environmental protection strategy for sustainable seafood (Vos and Bush, 2011). The use of market-based tools can be effective in trying to use the power of consumers to push companies to change their course of action.

There is also critique on the effectiveness of changing consumer behaviour via awareness raising. There are behavioural models developed such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour, that state that individuals behave in the way they intend to behave and via this model it can be predicted by attitudes how an individual will behave (Sheeran, 2002). According to those models awareness raising will lead to behavioural change, but research has shown that attitudes often do not lead to action which is called the attitude behaviour gap (Papaoikonomou et al, 2011). In the case of consumption this means that consumers claim to buy labelled products for instance but in reality they do not buy those products, even though they are aware of the benefits of the labelled products. Cowe and Williams (2000) call this the 30:3 syndrome where only 3percent actually buy ethical products whereas 30 percent claims to buy those products. This means that a certain attitude which might be shaped by creating awareness not always lead to the desired behavioural change. In order to achieve behavioural change NGOs must go a step beyond creating awareness which is also argued above by Kong et al. (2002).

When using a confrontational approach consumer boycotts can be very effective when succeeding in gathering enough people to participate in the boycott. This approach is directly aimed at companies via consumers. Consumer boycotts often focus on getting political, social or ethical control over the target that is boycotted and thereby try to force the target to change course of action (Braunsberger and Buckler, 2011). Greenpeace managed to mobilize consumers to boycott Shell in the Brent Spar campaign which led to quick changes (Richards and Heard, 2005). If a NGO manages mobilize consumers to boycott a target then this can be a powerful tool.

A less confrontational market-based tool that tries to influence consumer behaviour is the information guide. The information guide can be placed in a communicative approach. An example of this is “de Viswijzer” which is developed by Stichting de Noordzee to inform consumers about sustainable fish (Vos and Bush, 2011). This “Viswijzer” is a wallet card which consumers can use during their shopping to establish if the fish they want to buy is sustainable. If this is not the case then the intention of the card is to change consumer behaviour and make people choose for a more sustainable option instead of what they intended to buy. This might be seen as another less confrontational form of consumer boycott if it works effectively because it changes consumer behaviour to buy other more sustainable options. This might push companies to change their course of action in order to receive a good qualification. In the case of marine litter an information tool about the use of micro plastics in products is developed which pushes companies to stop using those plastics (beat the micro bead in het kort, 2013).

Another market-based tool that is used by NGOs towards consumers is labelling. This tool also provides information to consumers, but its advantage is that consumers do not have to carry a wallet card with them. Seeing that it also provides information in a one-way dialog, labelling can be placed in a communicative approach. Consumers can see on the products whether they are labelled. The downside is that the consumers in this tool do not get a lot of information at the time of purchase, so they need to know what the label means. As mentioned above, people need to feel empowered to make a difference in their behaviour (Kong et al., 2002). In the research of Kong et al., 2002 it came forward that credible labelling empowers consumers in their eyes. Labelling might be an effective tool to change consumer behaviour. Also it might help to put pressure on companies to change their course of action in the same way as the information guide does. The label might push companies to change in order to get the right qualifications to get a label.

In this research it will be examined which approaches the case study NGOs use towards society and more specific to consumers. The focus lies on how NGOs try to influence companies via society and consumers. The NGOs can use different approaches towards society and it is expected that they use some approaches towards society to influence companies. The approaches used in this research are derived from the approaches used in the previous section classified by Nelson (2007). I will use the communicative, cooperative and confrontational approach to classify approaches towards society and consumers. A communicative approach entails awareness raising, within this approach education and research strategies are often combined with strategies to get media attention (Storrier and McGlashan, 2006). The cooperative approach towards society will be used when there is cooperating between the NGO and society for instance in beach clean-up events or other cooperative activities. The confrontational approach is used when society or consumers are participating in boycotts set up by the NGOs which are directly focussed on companies.

## 2.4 Legitimacy

NGOs are traditionally seen as moral actors which develop missions that are guided by altruism and charity (Logister, 2007). Due to this view NGOs have managed to collect big amounts of money from both the private and public sector (Lister, 2003, Logister, 2007). A survey in 2007 showed that some well-known NGOs such as Greenpeace and Amnesty International are more trusted than governments or companies (Logister, 2007). As described in the introduction of this paper the role of NGOs changed over time and they started to influence companies directly. This has also led to an increase in cooperation between NGOs and companies, which has an effect on the legitimacy of the NGOs. The NGO must be accountable and show that the cooperation is based on the right intentions from both parties.

NGOs are criticized that they are not constraint by procedures in a way such as the governments are constraint, and some NGOs are criticized that they lack accountability and effectiveness. Also some are accused of having “hidden agendas” (Logister, 2007). Due to these critiques the public view of NGOs changed and confidence in NGOs is not straightforward anymore, this confidence is now related to interest in legitimacy of the NGOs and their activities (Logister, 2007). Therefore in order to reach success the NGOs must make sure that they gain legitimacy for their actions. This legitimacy needs to be gained from different stakeholders such as society and the government, but also from the companies. Because if the NGO does not gain legitimacy from the companies that it is approaching, it can be that their approaches will be restricted to merely communicative or confrontational. A company which perceive the NGO as illegitimate will not be open for a consultative or cooperative approach. And NGOs which are perceived illegitimate by the government or society will not receive resources or support from those stakeholders.

Legitimacy is a term which is often used but its meaning is quite vague (Lister, 2003, Logister, 2007, Jepson, 2005). In literature related to this subject authors seem to struggle with defining legitimacy in a proper way, although the definition formulated by Suchman in 1995 is often used. Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as follows: “Legitimacy is a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within the socially constructed system of norms, values and beliefs and definitions’ (p. 574)”. Legitimacy is thus associated with trust and is shaped by

the belief that NGOs act upon their qualities and characteristics of the organisation (Jepson, 2005). If the basis of trust in the NGO by the public is decreased, then the capacity to reach success is weakened or even absent (Jepson, 2005). Therefore it is important for a NGO to gain and maintain legitimacy.

In the literature on legitimacy related to NGOs different types of legitimacy are distinguished. There is not a standard categorization which leads to multiple types of legitimacy described by different researchers. Ossewaarde et al. (2008) and Jepson (2005) describe four different types of legitimacy: Ossewaarde et al. (2008) names them normative, regulatory, cognitive and output legitimacy, whereas Jepson (2005) does not mention output legitimacy but uses pragmatic legitimacy instead.

Normative legitimacy is dependent on how the public conforms to the normative claims of the NGOs. The NGOs take the public opinion into account but on the other hand they are shaping the public opinion by creating awareness. It works in two ways because people can only have an opinion on things they know, so first awareness about the problem needs to be spread. But the NGO must also take the public opinion into account in how they create this awareness. For instance WWF uses endangered species that appeal to people such as the whale to create awareness which is more effective focussing on saving the ocean in general. As Richards and Heards (2005) state, the marine environment has the characteristic to be unfamiliar and people do not feel engaged with it. When using subjects that relate to the marine environment and appeal to people, awareness is created more effectively.

Regulatory legitimacy depends on the view of the public on regulatory entities. When the public recognize the state as entitled to make rules, then the state is perceived as legitimate and is classified into regulatory legitimacy (Ossewaarde et al., 2008, Jepson, 2005, Lister, 2003). Regulatory legitimacy is gained by NGOs when rules correspond with the missions and norms of the NGOs, as NGOs are expected to comply with law. But they are also entitled to inform and influence legislators if the public gives NGOs this recognition (Ossewaarde et al., 2008, Jepson, 2005, Lister, 2003). Also NGOs became part of regulatory system or established regulatory systems such as certification schemes in which they also need to gain legitimacy in order to be a successful certifier for instance.

Cognitive legitimacy is gained when NGOs succeed in conforming technical expertise and intellectual knowledge into their missions and norms, so they are capable of acting upon their stated missions (Ossewaarde et al., 2008, Jepson, 2005, Lister, 2003). For instance Greenpeace uses technical expertise in addressing environmental issues and intellectual knowledge is used to keep debates about environmental issues ongoing (Ossewaarde et al., 2008).

The last type mentioned by Ossewaarde et al. (2008) is output legitimacy which relates to the need that NGOs show in how they materialize their objectives, which requires a professional organisation. This type of legitimacy is strengthened when NGOs are accountable to their stakeholders, this accountability can be realized by setting up transparent communication structures and perform transparent decision making (Ossewaarde et al., 2008).

Jepson (2005) mentions pragmatic legitimacy as the last type which relates to networking and the production of values. This type of legitimacy depends on the cooperation with other stakeholders, if they are valued as legitimate then the NGO cooperating with them is also valued as legitimate (Jepson,

2005). Ossewaarde et al., (2008) argues that NGOs need all the four types of legitimacy as they need to state their missions to sustain their normative legitimacy, they need to maintain regulatory legitimacy by law experts, they need intellectual participants in debates to sustain their cognitive legitimacy and for their output legitimacy they need managers to communicate their results.

Logister (2007) also categorizes legitimacy into different types, he distinguishes between seven types of legitimacy related to NGOs and derived those types from interviews with NGOs and stakeholders. The first type is procedural legitimacy which is legitimacy derived from transparency, accountability and independence of their actions. This is transparency and accountability of the NGO to their stakeholders, such as society for example.

The second type is popular legitimacy, which is legitimacy gained by public support and can differ from financial support and active participation in the organisation to taking part in e-mail campaigns.

The third type is effective legitimacy, which is derived from the effectiveness of the organisation. This depends on the quality of the work and the expertise of a NGO, a NGO creates authority and legitimacy by scientific expertise and information sharing.

The fourth type is normative legitimacy which is classified by Ossewaarde et al. (2008) and Jepson (2005) differently. Logister (2007) classifies this type as legitimacy gained by upholding or protecting legal norms which fits more in the regulatory type classified by Ossewaarde et al. (2008) and Jepson (2005).

The fifth type is moral legitimacy, which is derived when NGOs are addressing issues that are so important that those issues become a source of legitimacy by themselves and striving to change to issues include realisation of moral values which also gain legitimacy.

The sixth type is network legitimacy which is the same type as the pragmatic legitimacy classified by Jepson (2005). Also in this paper the importance of cooperation between NGOs and stakeholders is stressed, because NGOs are depended on their stakeholders in gaining legitimacy.

The last type is representative legitimacy, this is gained when NGOs have effective and representative structures, this type of legitimacy relates to the output and regulatory legitimacy of Ossewaarde et al. (2008). In the literature on legitimacy it can be seen that there is overlap in the classification of different types of legitimacy and Logister (2007) argues that the seven types he derived also overlap and can reinforce one and another. These different classifications of legitimacy show that it is a dynamic and complex concept with many different factors influencing the types of legitimacy (Lister, 2003).

In this research the four types of legitimacy classified by Ossewaarde et al (2008) and Jepson (2005) are used: normative, regulatory, cognitive and output legitimacy. Those classifications are the same between both authors, the only difference is the name of the last type of legitimacy. In this research output legitimacy will be used as the last type. The classification of Logister (2007) is not chosen because there is overlap between the different types of legitimacy. For this research it is more useful to have a clear distinction between the different types. With a clear distinction it might be easier to look

at how the different types influence this relationship. Therefore the classification of Ossewaarde et al. (2008) is probably more useful when distinguishing between the different types of legitimacy in the information derived from the interviews.

In order to gain and maintain legitimacy NGOs need to take into account internal threats which can affect the different types of legitimacy. Ossewaarde et al. (2008) looked at the internal threats that can evolve from the different types of legitimacy. Normative legitimacy can be threatened when NGOs state in their missions that particular norms should regulate organisational behaviour in all local settings. Norms have a wide range of viewpoints and can differ around the world, it would be contradicting to generalize this in all local settings. Therefore especially international NGOs are confronted with the complexity of local settings which might differ from their universal aims (Ossewaarde et al., 2008). Output legitimacy can be threatened if NGOs are not able to deliver data about their effectiveness. In maintaining this type of legitimacy it can threaten normative legitimacy, as it can lead to NGOs prioritizing the success of the organisation and thereby decreasing the priority of fulfilling their objectives (Ossewaarde et al., 2008). This shows that a contradiction between different types of legitimacy can lead to internal threats.

NGOs can also experience an external threat related to legitimacy. This external threat is the result of the interdependent relationship between NGOs and their stakeholders. Different stakeholders have different values relating to the legitimacy types which can lead to contradictory demands for those types (Ossewaarde et al., 2008). NGOs are often forced to conciliate different demands by arranging multiple activities and being creative in their packaging to hide the arrangements of contradictory activities. The perceptions of stakeholders are important to NGO legitimacy because (financial) resources depend on this (Burchell and Cook, 2011, Jepson, 2005, Ossewaarde et al., 2008). More stakeholders involved in a NGO leads to an increase in contradictory demands, which in turn will lead to more tension experienced by the NGO in order to gain the different types of legitimacy (Ossewaarde et al., 2008). These internal and external threats illustrate that it is not easy to gain and maintain legitimacy and that it is a struggle influenced by the interdependent relationship between NGOs and their stakeholders.

Besides the different types of legitimacy authors also emphasize the importance of accountability in providing legitimacy to NGOs (Lister, 2003). Besides concerns about legitimacy, also concerns about accountability have increased over the years. Accountability is defined as "the means by which individuals and organizations report to a recognized authority (or authorities) and are held responsible for their actions." (Edwards and Hulme, 1996 pp. 967). Accountability is thus related to output legitimacy classified by Ossewaarde et al. (2008).

According to Kilby (2006) most NGOs examined were accountable to three aspects: their work, their values and their constituencies. In addressing these aspects there are several accountability tools which can be used by NGOs: reports and disclosure statements can be published and participation, self-regulation, social audits, performance assessments and evaluations can be performed (Ebrahim, 2003). The accountability tools can range from informal to formal and from low to high accountability, this can differ per tool (Kilby, 2006) From these tools, NGOs use reports and disclosure statements most often as this is easy accessible due to the distinct nature of this tool (Ebrahim, 2003). In addition evaluations are often used which can be done internal or external, or by a combination of internal and

external evaluation (Ebrahim, 2003). Self-regulation in NGOs is based on setting up standards of behaviour and performance and set up in response to public scandals and to prevent restrictive government regulations (Ebrahim, 2003). Social auditing is a combination of different tools integrated in a complex process, which includes self-regulation, disclosure statements evaluation and participation (Ebrahim, 2003).

NGOs often combine different tools in order to be accountable and receive output legitimacy for being accountable. Jepson (2005) however argues that the key is not those accountability tools which should be addressed, but that engagement of public constituencies with informed discussions about the values and strategies of NGOs is necessary. In order to be accountable, NGOs should address both these discussions and other tools to reach the goal of gaining legitimacy.

Accountability is thus a mechanism to achieve output legitimacy, which is legitimacy gained from the whole range of stakeholders for instance companies and society.

By putting claims on their website and via other mediums such as social media NGOs can gain normative legitimacy from society when those claims conforms to what society perceives as being important.

By acting within the borders of the law, then a NGO gains regulatory legitimacy from the state and from society when society perceives the state as a legitimate entity such as in the Netherlands.

By working together with research institutes and showing technical expertise via their websites and during meetings, NGOs gain cognitive legitimacy from their stakeholders. Most types of legitimacy are thus gained from a wide range of stakeholders, but normative legitimacy is more specified on society. A NGO wants to gain as much legitimacy as possible from different stakeholders, which can lead to the internal and external threats described above.

Legitimacy affects the choice of strategies, for instance when a NGO decides to choose the strategy of direct action it is necessary to accompany this with sound rigorous science in order to legitimize their action (Nelson, 2007). This is also influenced by which actor they are influencing. If the NGO uses direct action, but the attacked actor publicly seeks to discuss joint solutions then the NGO is pushed to change its strategy in order to maintain its legitimacy (Burchell and Cook, 2011).

Richards and Heards (2005) have examined which strategies were important for marine environmental NGOs (MENGOs) to gain legitimacy. The provision of sound scientific research was very important for all types of MENGOs, as this gained legitimacy for campaigns but also for the organisation. Also media attention was perceived as being very important in gaining legitimacy (Richards and Heards, 2005). Due to media attention it becomes more public what activities the NGOs are working on. Due to this media attention the NGOs can gain legitimacy for those activities.

Legitimacy is thus classified into different types. A NGO can strive to gain legitimacy from those different types. When trying to achieve this, the NGO can experience tension between those different types which can lead to internal threats where one type contradicts another type. Besides internal threats NGOs also have to deal with external threats. The external threat is an increasing number of stakeholders which is necessary for resources and gaining legitimacy but makes the fulfilment of

different demands more difficult which also leads to more tension between the different types of legitimacy.

Not only NGOs need to gain legitimacy, also companies need to gain legitimacy. They can do so in the same way as NGOs try to gain legitimacy. Companies need to gain legitimacy because nowadays companies are not only supposed to make a profit, but they also have a lot of responsibilities about the way they operate. For instance, they need to take into account social, economic and environmental responsibilities. This will be more elaborated with the concept of corporate social responsibility in the next section.

There are many aspects which a NGO and a company must take into account when trying to gain legitimacy. The focus of this paper lies on NGOs gaining legitimacy, but the above mentioned classifications can also be applied to companies as gaining legitimacy is also important for them. A part of this research is the examination of the legitimacy of the Plastic Soup Foundation, Stichting de Noordzee and the Plastic Oceans Foundation. This is legitimacy gained from society, as it is expected that they need to gain legitimacy from society to be effective. However, gaining legitimacy from companies is also important as it is expected that this will easier lead to cooperation. I will use the classification of Ossewaarde et al. (2008) to determine which types of legitimacy are gained by these NGOs.

## 2.5 Corporate social responsibility

Since the rise of private governance and globalisation, companies are showing signs of being conscious of human rights, ethics and environmental problems, they recognize themselves as being economically, socially and environmentally responsible (Ganji and Chopra, 2010). Ford was one of the first companies in America which designed programmes to support recreational and health needs of its employees with the notion that companies had responsibilities towards society beyond profit making (Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010). The development of such programmes was the foundation of what is now known as Corporate social responsibility (CSR).

This consciousness was also due to the increased pressure of society and the government on companies, by means of laws and public initiatives, to change their course of action (Ganji and Chopra, 2010). Companies have an impact on employment, consumption, environmental quality and other issues therefore the influence of companies on society is high (Brammer et al., 2012). NGOs and trade unions have also contributed to this changed view of society, especially since their campaigns towards companies increased during the past decade (Nelson, 2007). From a business perspective the willingness to change their course of action will be influenced by corporate social responsibility.

Davis (1973) defined CSR as “the firm's consideration of, and response to, issues beyond the narrow economic, technical, and legal requirements of the firm to accomplish social benefits along with the traditional economic gains which the firm seeks (p. 312)”. It can be seen in the definition that business and society are connected and influence each other, which leads to expectations of society on behaviour and outcomes of businesses (Wood, 1991).



CSR is multidimensional and consist of three main pillars (figure 6) (Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010) and is about responses of the company beyond economic gains in order to accomplish social benefits (Warhurst, 2005). Social benefits can be ethical practices in employment, involvement in local communities and contribution to a cleaner more sustainable environment for example (Ganji and Chopra, 2010). The social benefits in the case of the marine litter problem will be contribution to a clean marine environment. CSR is not merely a management tool in order to enhance corporate performance, but the interest in CSR is broader, as disciplines such as politics, economics, law and sociology are all interested in CSR (Brammer et al., 2012). This is because CSR can be placed in a wider field of economic governance which includes the market and state regulation instead of only corporate governance (Brammer et al., 2012).



Figure 5 : Main pillars of CSR based on figure 1 pp. 4 of Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010.

The rise of globalisation and the increase of private governance have led to changes in the boundaries of responsibilities of companies (Warhurst, 2005). Globalisation resulted in challenges for companies as they had to deal with new government regulations such as varying standards, ethical issues and environmental restrictions (Ganji and Chopra, 2010). Besides those challenges, the view of society on companies changed. First society saw the government as the entity which is responsible for social development including environmental development. As companies grew and got more influence due to private governance and globalisation this view changed and society addressed more responsibility for social development towards companies (Warhurst, 2005).

Due to this increased pressure of society, a trend emerged of NGOs holding companies directly responsible for their course of action (Ganji and Chopra, 2010) which make NGOs important stakeholders for companies. Globalisation led to changes in responsibilities of businesses and corporate responsibilities merged with the responsibilities of governments leading to businesses addressing social development goals in partnerships with other actors (Warhurst, 2005).

Stakeholder engagement and dialogue have become important in CSR processes of companies (Burchell and Cook, 2011). Companies can then engage the critics of certain stakeholders such as NGOs in discussions and seek to cooperate by involving them in decision making processes (Burchell and Cook, 2011). This is also argued by Warhurst (2005), who states that social development goals can be developed in partnerships with NGOs.

CSR has advocates and opponents, thus in scientific literature both criticism and recommendation of CSR can be found. Some people thought that CSR was meant as a replacement for the government and that companies eventually would take over political and social spheres (Brammer et al., 2012, Gond et al., 2011). Also it is argued by companies that they do not have the resources or the power to

pursue social benefits (Ganji and Chopra, 2010). The other criticism is that companies which are implementing CSR are using it as corporate window dressing or to disguise irresponsible behaviour. They do this by distracting society with a view that they are doing so well which pulls attention away from ethical questions raised related to their core business activities (Brammer et al., 2012, Ganji and Chopra, 2010, Gond et al., 2011). The critique has led to the so called 'window dressing hypothesis' (Cai et al., 2012). On the other hand it is argued for instance by Metaxas and Tsavdaridou (2010) that CSR leads to: "social cohesion, economic growth and sustainable development in a voluntary way" (Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010 pp. 26).

CSR advertising and establishing a CSR identity are argued to be beneficial (Mc Williams and Siegel, 2001; Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010). While Pomeroy and Johnson (2009) argue that when companies are advertising with their CSR activities, those claims can lead to consumer scepticism. A reason for this can be that when companies only publishes positively about CSR, negative examples cannot be found in company publicity (Holme, 2010). Consumers therefore can get the idea that companies advertising CSR have something to hide (Pomeroy and Johnson, 2009). TDC a Danish telecommunication company has experienced this problem as it was accused of window dressing when it tried to reposition to a social responsible organization (Pomeroy and Johnson, 2009).

CSR is not a replacement for the role of the government, as the government is still expected to create regulatory frameworks for society (Warhurst, 2005, Gond et al., 2011, Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010). Also CSR can create opportunities for governments to regulate the behaviour of companies. Gond et al. (2011) argues that there is a misconception about CSR often made in literature relating to the CSR-government relationship. The misconception is that CSR is about everything that policies or regulations not require from companies, so beyond governmental regulations. This view about CSR is seen as a form of self-government whereas Gond et al. (2011) show that besides the form of self-government there are more forms of CSR relationships which show that CSR is not a replacement of the government. Those are not addressed in this research because the focus lies on CSR and NGOs but can be found in the paper of Gond et al (2011). The form of self government goes beyond law and the CSR initiatives that are developed by self government are without the interference of the state (Gond et al., 2011) The CSR initiatives that are developed by self regulation are certification schemes and disclosures for instance. Those schemes and disclosures are not obliged to be set up, but are developed on a voluntary basis to inform consumers.

CSR can vary in different activities (Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010). Those activities are for example: voluntary programs and partnerships to address environmental issues such as the impact of industrial plants and addressing social issues such as development of marketing initiatives to protect social welfare (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010).

There are many different activities from which a company can choose in order to incorporate CSR. Besides the societal pressure put on companies there are also other reasons why companies choose to incorporate CSR. There is a basic belief that CSR is good for business as it creates a competitive advantage by differentiating themselves, it creates a positive image and a better reputation, it creates goodwill from consumers and positive employee behaviour (Ganji and Chopra, 2010, Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010). CSR activities develop a win-win situation for the company and the society.

Effective CSR activities are activities that are directed at improving the relationships with their stakeholders and improving social benefits (Gond et al., 2011, Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010). A company is always seeking to maximize its profits, therefore effective CSR is accomplished when the company can maximize its impact on society and at the same time is able to maximize its profits (Ganji and Chopra, 2010). With the implementation of CSR it faces a same problem as NGOs face in gaining legitimacy. CSR needs stakeholder involvement, but when more stakeholders are involved than this will make CSR more mandatory which is the opposite of the voluntary principles on which CSR is based (Brammer et al., 2012).

During the last decade principles, standards and frameworks were emerging for best practices in CSR (Warhurst, 2005). From this standardized guides and schemes of standardized actions were developed and the implementation of CSR was often based on these guides and schemes (van der Heijden et al., 2010). The European Commission ISO has also developed the ISO 26000:2010 standard which provides CSR guidance to companies (ISO, 2013). Nowadays companies seek a more adaptive approach to implement CSR which incorporates company specific features (van der heijden et al., 2010). For effective CSR implementation it is difficult to design a structural approach as implementing CSR is a process of trial and error by each company (Crammer et al., 2004). Thus there is no single approach or strategy to effectively implement CSR which is applicable to all companies; it remains a search process in which the company must create a company-specific balance between social, economic and environmental gains (Crammer et al., 2004). Often companies display on their websites whether they have implemented CSR or CSR reports can be found via the internet which is accessible to everyone. This shows that disclosure of information on CSR activities is something that will be important for most companies which have implemented CSR. The importance of disclosure is also apparent when searching for information on CSR guidelines.

It makes sense that companies can develop their own strategies and activities relating to the environment because companies are often part of the problem and can therefore also be part of the solution of environmental problems (Warhurst, 2005). Development of such strategies can be especially important when environmental legislation is lacking or ineffective. It has been shown that lack of effective regulations has led to many negative environmental impacts (Warhurst, 2005), such as the marine litter problem where the amount of marine litter is still increasing and an effective regulatory framework is lacking.

The CSR dimension of environmental responsibility relates to companies trying to have economic growth while in at the same time safeguard natural resources (Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010). Companies can have a big impact on the environment, which is why this impact must be considered by the company leaders when implementing CSR. In order to minimize their impact, companies can implement CSR initiatives such as pollution prevention, product stewardship and clean technology (Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010). In the case of the marine litter problem one can think of companies which try to recycle as much plastics as possible. Related to clean technology, companies can minimize or even ban the use of plastics. In the cosmetic industry for instance, micro plastics are used in toothpaste and scrubbers, those plastics are gradually are being replaced for natural products which are easily degradable (beat the micro beat, 2013).

Due to globalisation and the rise of private governance the role of companies and NGOs has changed. The responsibilities of companies have shifted and from this CSR developed. Society puts pressure on companies to act upon their responsibilities which can lead to the implementation of CSR. There are now a lot of companies which have implemented CSR such as L’Oreal, Ahold and Lush for instance. NGOs started to directly influence companies during this change of responsibilities. Based on the literature, it is assumed that CSR has changed the way in which NGOs can approach companies. Companies which have implemented CSR are expected to be more willing to make changes related to environmental and social issues and are therefore assumed to be more open to cooperation with NGOs. It is reasoned that this indirectly influences the choice of approach of NGOs into a cooperative approach. Therefore it is expected that CSR has not only changed companies but also the relationship between companies and NGOs. And that is the reason why this concept is important for research in this field. Also it is expected that when a company has implemented CSR and cooperates with a NGO, this will increase the legitimacy of the NGO.

Because the focus of this research is about the approaches of NGOs towards companies and the relationship between them, CSR is chosen as a concept to examine whether it has an influence on this relationship. Approaches and legitimacy will be recognized by their classification. There are global standards and guidelines for CSR implementation but those are not easily accessible, such as the ISO 26000:2010 which needs to be bought. What came forward in the search for guidelines is that information disclosure is an important part of CSR implementation. Therefore it is expected that it can be found whether companies have implemented CSR. This can be via disclosure on their website or reports which can be found via the internet. NGOs can use this information and therefore know before approaching a company whether they have implemented CSR. In this research I will examine the perspective of the NGOs on the implementation of CSR.

## 2.6 Conclusion

In the previous sections the literature about the concepts used in this research is discussed. Also the relationship between the concepts is made clear. In this section a recap is given of the expectations on how legitimacy and corporate social responsibility influence the choice of approaches of NGOs and how this influences the relationship between NGOs and companies. The coherence of the concepts will be explained and displayed in figure 6.

In the three concepts discussed above (NGO approaches, legitimacy and corporate social responsibility) the pressure of society and other stakeholders is an important factor. Society can put pressure on NGOs, which must therefore make sure that their organisation and actions are perceived legitimate. But society can also put pressure on companies as they confer power to businesses and if the power is not used in a way which society regards responsible, that in the end this power will be lost (Wood, 1991). In gaining legitimacy, NGOs need to try to act upon the qualities and characteristics of the organisation. The implementation of corporate social responsibility makes it possible for companies to meet the obligations of their stakeholders which gives them a “licence to operate”.

It can be beneficial for companies and NGOs to cooperate because they can both gain legitimacy. NGOs gain this by fulfilling their missions. For the company it can be beneficial as the image of the

company improves by acting upon the responsibilities addressed by society. As Logister, 2007 writes in her paper, cooperation with NGOs can give companies a 'licence to operate'. The influence of the NGO in the company is bigger than vice versa. Also Nelson (2007) states that it is the media, public opinion and NGOs which have an influence on the 'licence to operate' of companies. There are examples of companies in the mining and oil sector which complied with state law but failed to continue to operate as they lacked a moral licence to operate for their business.

Regarding the marine litter problem it can therefore be useful for NGOs and companies to cooperate in trying to solve this problem, as it is likely that it will give them legitimacy and the company a better image. It is assumed that NGOs might experience that companies which have implemented CSR or are going to implement this are probably more willing to change their course of action in the desired direction. Such as using less plastic in their products and production process, more plastic recycling, better waste facilitation, etc.

Figure 6 gives a schematic overview of the coherence between the different concepts and the main stakeholders of this research (NGOs companies and society). Another important stakeholder related to the marine litter problem and to the main concepts used in the research is the government, but this stakeholder is out of the scope of this research. And despite the fact that the government is an important stakeholder, it can be seen in the introduction and the background chapter on the legal framework that effective rules and regulations are currently lacking related to the marine litter problem. In this research the relationship between NGOs and companies is examined in which the government is not expected to have a big influence. The government does have an influence on companies and on NGOs by developing regulations and giving subsidies for instance, but this is not expected to have a direct effect on the private relationship between NGOs and companies.

In this overview the relationship between NGOs and companies is displayed in which the NGO uses a certain approach when advancing the company (approaches arrow from NGOs to companies). The choice for the approach is expected to be partly determined by the type of company but also by legitimacy. As described in the section on legitimacy, an approach is only effective when the NGO gains legitimacy and therefore their choice of approach is assumed to be influenced by gaining legitimacy. This legitimacy needs to be gained from society and includes legitimacy for the NGO as an organisation as well as for the approach used (legitimacy arrow from society to NGOs).

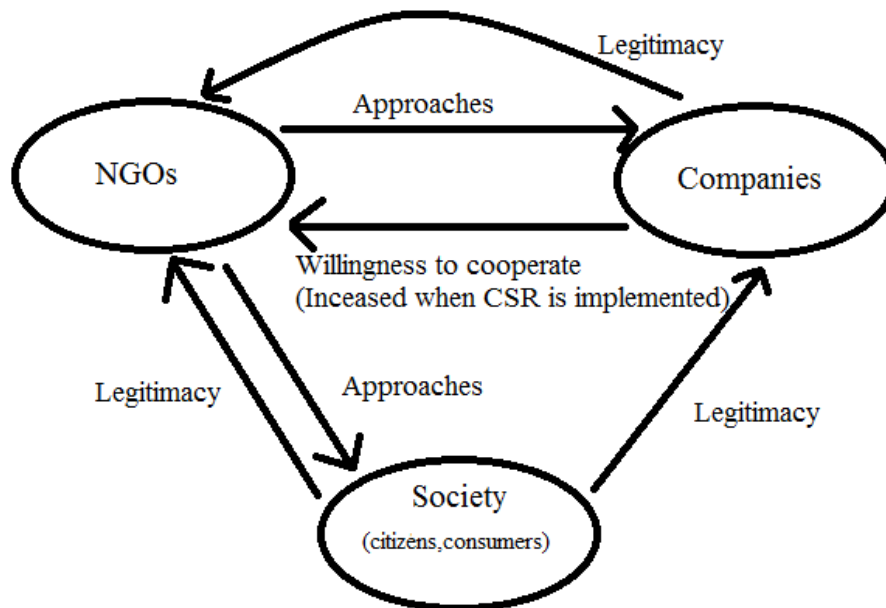


Figure 6: Schematic overview coherence of concepts.

Legitimacy can also be gained from the company. If the company regards the NGO as illegitimate then it is expected that it will not cooperate with that NGO and a consultative or cooperative approach will not be effective. It is also expected that when a company has implemented CSR and cooperates with a NGO, the legitimacy of the NGO is increased compared with a cooperation between a NGO and a company which did not implement CSR (legitimacy arrow from companies to NGOs). The company also needs to gain legitimacy from society, which works in the same way as how NGOs gain legitimacy.

Based on the literature it is assumed that the choice of approach will affect the willingness to cooperate of the company (willingness to cooperate arrow from companies to NGOs). When the NGO uses a confrontational approach the company will be pushed to change their course of action, but that change is not based on cooperation so their willingness to cooperate will be low. Gaining legitimacy from the company is not important when using this approach. When using a consultative approach for instance, which is not aggressive, the willingness to cooperate is expected to be bigger. This does not mean that it automatically leads to cooperation if the company is lacking resources for instance, but the willingness to do so can be increased.

On the company side in the schematic overview, a company can choose to implement CSR. Companies are pressured by society to act upon their responsibilities, if they do so they gain legitimacy from society. This is expected to push them to implement CSR if they have the ability to do so (legitimacy arrow from society to companies). When a company has implemented CSR it is assumed that this increases the image society has about the company and then the company can gain legitimacy from society. It is expected that a company which have implemented CSR will be more likely to cooperate with a NGO than a company which has not implemented CSR (willingness to cooperate arrow from companies to NGOs). The reason for this is because of the implementation of CSR the company is already dealing with social and environmental issues which is often in the same line as issues where NGOs are dealing with such as reducing the amount of waste. Companies are

thus expected to be more open to changing their course of action and cooperation with NGOs when they have implemented CSR.

Because it is expected that companies are more willing to cooperate and cooperation is more effective when they have implemented CSR, it is also expected that NGOs advance those companies in a different way. In advancing companies NGOs are then expected to use a consultative or cooperative approach. Based on the conceptual framework the above mentioned expectations can be formulated into the following hypotheses:

- NGOs try to influence companies via society.
- Other approaches are used towards society than towards companies
- The choice of approaches of NGOs towards companies is influenced by the type of company and whether CSR is implemented.
- The choice of approaches used by NGOs towards companies and society is affected by gaining legitimacy as this determines the effectiveness.
- The type of approach used towards companies will affect the willingness to cooperate.
- When a company has implemented CSR it will easier cooperate with a NGO than when CSR is not implemented.

The research will examine which approaches are used towards companies and society and whether these soft hypotheses are right.

### **3 The marine litter problem**

This chapter gives background information about the ecological effects of marine litter. In the introduction of the thesis some information is given about the ecological effects, but to get a clearer picture of the ecological side of the problem more elaborated information is given in this chapter. In the introduction of the thesis it is stressed that the existing legal framework is fragmented and making changes at policy level is time consuming, whereas the problem of marine litter needs to be addressed now. In the second section of this chapter more information is given on the existing legal framework at global, regional and national level.

#### **3.1 Background on the ecological effects of marine litter**

The accumulation of macro plastics affects the marine life as it causes entanglements and gets ingested by marine animals (Trouwborst, 2011, de Vreede et al., 2010). It is estimated that around 10 percent of the marine litter entering the marine environment annually consist of lost or discarded fishing gear which is amongst the most problematic items of marine litter (Galgani, 2013). Those gears can keep on “ghost” fishing for years which causes damage and mortality to a lot of species. Entanglement with marine litter has been seen in cetaceans, pinnipeds, marine turtles marine birds and coastal birds

(Galgani et al., 2013). Besides entanglement there is also a problem of marine animals ingesting the marine litter due to misidentification or accidentally during feeding and normal behaviour (Cole et al., 2011, Galgani et al., 2013, Vreede et al., 2010). The ingestion of macro plastics can lead to obstruction of the digestive tracks, injuries and death (Cole et al., 2011, Galgani et al., 2013, Vreede et al., 2010).

Over time macro plastics can degrade to micro plastics, which are called secondary micro plastics (Cole et al., 2011). The primary micro plastics present in the marine environment are manufactured micro plastics which are used in cosmetics, air blasting technologies and in medicines (Cole et al., 2011). Because of the small size of these micro plastics they are often mistaken for food and are available throughout the whole food web. At the lower trophic levels these plastics get ingested by deposit feeders and filter feeders for instance (Galgani, 2013). Those animals get eaten by animals from higher trophic levels. This process continues to the top of the food web. During this process the plastics eaten by lower trophic levels accumulate in animals at the higher trophic levels and can be found back in animals on the top of the food web (figure 5). The effects are magnified from the lower trophic levels up to the higher trophic levels because of the accumulation in fatty acids of the organisms (Trouwborst, 2011). Eriksson and Burton, 2003 have found micro plastics in southern fur seals who feed on Mycophids (lanternfish). It was shown that those Mycophids had ingested micro plastics. Therefore the plastics can have adverse effects throughout the whole food web.

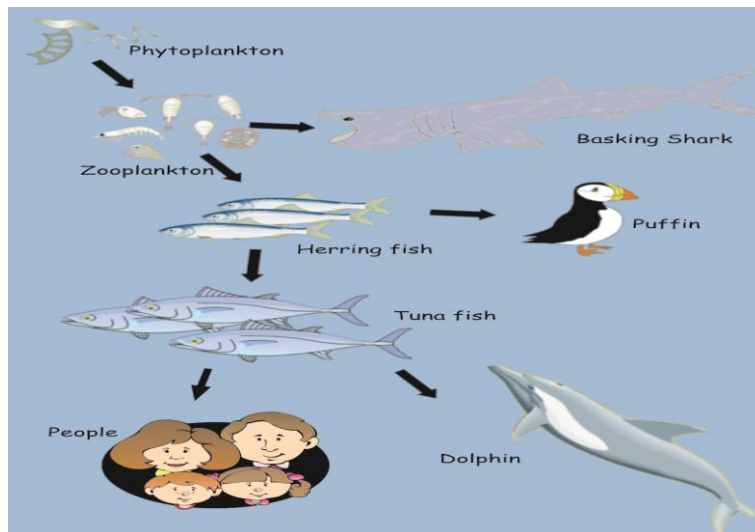


Figure 7: Example of marine food web Source: lifeadrift.info.

Plastics have the property to bind hydrophobic chemicals, most commonly bound are Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) (Galgani, 2013, Cole et al., 2011, Vreede et al., 2010). Due to the bounding of chemicals to plastics, the concentration of chemicals at the plastic surface can become much more concentrated than in the seawater (Trouwborst, 2011). Those chemicals can be released inside the organism and cause diseases, reduced reproduction and death (Cole et al., 2011, Vreede et al., 2011). Plastics also already contain chemicals like bromine, a flame retardant which can be released into the fatty tissue and have adverse effects on the animals (Cole et al., 2011). Not only marine organisms are harmed, plastics also harm the benthic habitats by smothering the seafloor and disrupting the gas exchange (Cole et al., 2011, Vreede et al., 2010). There is still a lot unknown about the effects of micro



plastics on the marine environment and the organisms that live in it, therefore more research is necessary to examine the long term effects.

### 3.2 Background on the existing legal framework

There are not much international agreements relating to the marine litter problem (Vreede et al., 2011). The existing legal framework on marine litter consists of global, regional, national and local regulations (Trouwborst, 2011). This division between different levels show that this framework is very fragmented and falls under a lot of different agreements. The existing regulations cover land-based and ocean-based sources, but as the problem still grows it shows that those regulations are not effective enough (Trouwborst, 2011).

At a global level the first convention which addressed marine litter was the Law of the Sea Convention in 1982. The regulations were part of the duty to protect and preserve the marine environment. This convention focused on pollution of any source (Trouwborst, 2011). Other global conventions which have subjects relating to marine litter are: the London Dumping and the MARPOL Convention for instance (Trouwborst, 2011). The London dumping convention was set up to prevent dumping of household waste into the marine environment.

The MARPOL convention was created a year later and focused on the prevention of pollution from ships. The annex V of the MARPOL aims to reduce and eventually eliminate litter that is dumped at sea from ships. Litter includes food, domestic and operational waste that is likely to be dumped from ships during their normal operations (Ukpandi, 2013). Amendments to annex V of MARPOL entered into force at the first of January 2013. This new version of annex V prohibits the dumping from ships at sea of all garbage including the dumping of plastics at sea (Ukpandi, 2013). There are some exceptions of things that can be dumped at sea, such as food waste outside special assigned areas and minimal 3 nautical miles from land (Ukpandi, 2013).

At Rio 20+ in 2012 it was globally decided that around 2025, regulations based on scientific research need to be taken to significantly reduce the amount of marine litter (European Commission groenboek, 2013). This is quite a vague decision with no precise date and no description of regulations or criteria.

Besides the global conventions there are also regional instruments relating to marine litter. An example is the UNEP Regional Seas Programme which consist of regional programmes spread globally as 143 countries participate in 13 programmes (UNEP, 2013). The programmes include several protocols relating land-based pollution (Trouwborst, 2011) but their focus lies on the overall degradation of the oceans and seas (UNEP, 2013).

On the EU level the Marine Strategy Framework Directive is being developed which applies on European seas. It is a directive which will achieve or maintain so called 'Good Environmental Status' (GES) (Galgani et al., 2013, Trouwborst, 2011). In 2010 criteria were developed by the European Commission from which member states can assess the status of the marine environment (European Commission groenboek, 2013). It applies to all the EU member states and the GES needs to be achieved in 2020 (Galgani et al., 2013). The directive is highlighting the management of human activities and its effects, which includes the problem of marine litter (Galgani et al., 2013).

Most attention at this moment seems to go to micro plastics, which is evident from the amount of media coverage this subject gets. When examining documents from the European Commission it shows that the focus lies on all plastics and not only on micro plastics. For instance, by 2015 all member states must set up separated collection systems for metal, plastics, glass and paper (European Commission working document, 2012). Also partnerships between the EU and industries are made and projects such as “fishing for litter” and coastal clean ups are set up to raise awareness and collect marine litter (European Commission working document, 2012). So there are several initiatives and regulations on EU level but also on this level regulations are still fragmented.

Also on national level the focus seems to lie most on micro plastics and on the Marine Strategy Framework directive. The government wants an EU ban on the use of micro plastics in cosmetic products and wants consumers to be better informed about micro plastics. The problem is thus recognized by the government and attention is being paid to it but it has not yet resulted in regulations. The Netherlands are mostly pointing to, and following EU regulations.

## 4 Results of the interviews and data analysis

In this chapter the chosen NGOs will be introduced first: The Plastic Oceans Foundation, Stichting de Noordzee and the Plastic Soup Foundation. After each description of the NGOs, the empirical findings from the interviews are presented in subsections of strategies, legitimacy and corporate social responsibility. This description is followed by an analysis of the interviews. In this analysis the chosen characteristics of approaches, legitimacy and CSR of the conceptual framework are used to determine which approaches are being used by the NGOs, which types of legitimacy are being gained and what role CSR plays in the approaches of NGOs towards companies. Finally, the analysis is being used to assess whether the soft hypothesis mentioned in the conceptual framework are correct.

### 4.1 Plastic Oceans Foundation

#### 4.1.1 Description of the Plastic Oceans Foundation

The Plastic Oceans Foundation (POF) is an UK NGO which was founded in 2010 by Howard Lack and Sonja Norman. Howard has a background in project and corporate finance in the energy and environmental sector, Sonja has a legal background. POF consists of a platform of different organisations. The organisations are: Dutch WWF, 5 Gyres, Global Ocean, Fauna & Flora International, British Plastics & Rubber, British Sub-Aqua Club, The Marine Conservation Society and NABU. The mission of the POF is “to significantly reduce plastic pollution in the environment by supporting and funding targeted solutions” (POF mission, 2013).

The POF wants to achieve this mission by:

1. Education
2. Providing a resource base for research
3. Raise funds for the development of solutions
4. Campaign for improvements in legislation and policy
5. Develop a worldwide social media network which supports the achievement of the mission

(POF the foundation, 2013)

The vision of the POF is that education is a key element in solving the problem, as through education the problems and possible solutions can be brought to life. Therefore POF is developing own education materials and wants to publicise other education materials used (POF education, 2013). Besides education the POF is also trying to spread awareness through art, as art engages societies and cultures worldwide. According to POF it is also a useful tool for learning. On the website, POF publishes and links to the work of artists to provide a platform where the work can be seen (POF art, 2013).

Besides education and art, the POF is supporting the development of solutions to the plastic problem. They do this by funding research but also by displaying best practices and solutions on their website. The thought behind the display on the website is that all solutions, inefficient or not, should be discussed analysed and assessed because they might all be potentially beneficial and help to solve the problem (POF solutions, 2013). Currently there are two examples on their website: Affresol, which are building units made of recycled plastic. And the newly developed diving material DUI, which is made for 75 percent of recycled materials.

Media such as social networks are used by POF to share views, photographs, environmental stories and updates of what the POF is doing (POF social-networking, 2013). These networks are also used to give updates about the documentary that POF is currently working on. This documentary is being made by top scientists and filmmakers. The documentary will be about environmental issues associated with plastic and its impact on mankind. This documentary will be used to raise global awareness of the plastic problem. There will be three versions, one of 50, 60 and 90 minutes. The documentary can also be used as an education tool. The 50 minutes version will be available via social network sites which makes it easily available to a broad range of people (POF movie, 2013).

The POF is mainly focusing on creating global awareness, funding other projects and involving a broad range of people through social media and their website. They want to make people aware and empower people to become part of the solution.

#### 4.1.2 Approaches of the Plastic Oceans Foundation

The POF is an NGO that focuses on creating awareness and approaching other actors in a positive way. Approaches are mainly being used towards society and the government. Although the focus of the POF is less on companies, they are also subjects of the POF's approaches. "We do not approach a lot of companies and we are too small to use multiple approaches towards the same company" (Jones POF, 2013). In the past the POF have approached Coca-Cola to create a dialogue about a take back scheme to recycle bottles but Coca-Cola was not interested because it is not profitable. "Companies are worried that when they make changes they are doing it wrong and will be attacked" (Jones POF, 2013). The POF is cooperating with companies that recycle plastics and displays best practices of companies on their website. The POF is rather trying to change policies on a governmental level and creating awareness than trying to change individual companies.

There is a difference in the approaches of the POF towards different actors. When approaching the government the POF is trying to align with NGOs that already have a good bond with the government whereas when approaching society this is not the case. The POF wants to inform others, create a dialogue with them and cooperate when possible. It is stated that confrontation is not effective in their opinion and therefore they do not use a confrontational approach towards other actors. "Confrontation is not the right way to approach others, you need to engage with them that is much more effective" (Jones POF, 2013). In the future when the POF gets bigger the same approaches will be used only more will be done.

The POF is approaching society through (social) media and education materials developed up by the organization. The education materials are part of national education programmes, which is achieved due to cooperation with the government. In order to create awareness the POF is currently busy with filming the documentary. This will be their main strategy to create awareness when it is finished. "When the film is ready it will be very effective as we can reach a broad audience through this movie" (Jones POF, 2013). The POF has 8000 people on their social media. Via social media POF is informing people, creating awareness and spreading best practices. In order to be effective in their approaches, the POF perceives networking as being important. Therefore the POF is trying to create a network with a lot of different actors. "The POF talks to the plastic industry as one of the few NGOs" (Jones POF, 2013).

#### 4.1.3 Legitimacy and the Plastic Oceans Foundation

Gaining the public's trust in the organization and their activities is important to the POF. It is important for them to be credible. The POF is trying to gain trust by using facts and not making things up. "The exacerbation of the plastic island that is twice the size of Texas is not the right way to inform, you must be honest and accountable" (Jones POF 2013). The POF team consists of well-educated people with different backgrounds and therefore is capable of using technical expertise and knowledge which helps to support their claims.

In order to be open and transparent, the POF gives a lot of presentations about their organization and what they are working on. In approaching other actors the POF takes legitimacy into account. "You have to take this into account. Sea Shepherd for example do not use the right tactics in our opinion, they have a lot of followers but also a lot of people against them. That is not the way POF wants to be" (Jones POF, 2013). The law does not hamper the activities of the POF as they are working within the restrictions of the law.

When the POF will develop campaigns they will take into account the gaining of trust but this is not the case yet. "We are just starting down that route of campaigns, but yes we will take gaining trust into account" (Jones POF, 2013). The POF is mainly focussing on the documentary and less on the campaigns at the time of writing. The POF believes that the mission of the NGO helps to gain trust in the organisation.

#### **4.1.4 Corporate social responsibility and the Plastic Oceans Foundation**

The POF will work with anybody and does not differentiate between companies that have or have not implemented CSR. But they do research before approaching a company. "You do your research but this can also reveal that they are not doing so well as they say" (Jones POF, 2013). Therefore CSR does not say everything in the opinion of POF. As the POF is mainly focussing on the development of their documentary they do not approach a lot of companies. They are intending to do so in the future and are currently in the first stages of a dialogue with the Young Presidents organisation. This is a global organization which consists of a network of business executives.

## **4.2 Stichting de Noordzee**

### **4.2.1 Description of Stichting de Noordzee**

Stichting de Noordzee (SDN) is a Dutch NGO. The topics that SDN addresses are broader than only the marine plastic pollution problem. Other topics that they address are clean shipping, nature conservation, sustainable fisheries, education of the north sea and sustainable fish on the menu of restaurants and consumers. SDN started 40 years ago as a group of volunteers and in 1980 it has become a foundation (SDN organisatie, 2013). The marine plastic pollution problem has found its way on the agenda of SDN due to scientific research. As scientists revealed that the amount of litter in the North Sea did not decline over the past 10 years. This was a sign for SDN to address this problem (SDN afval, 2013).

The mission of SDN is to have a clean and healthy sea which is resilient to outside forces. To achieve this the first important condition is a good functioning ecosystem. This system defines the borders for sustainable use of the sea by humans.

The vision of SDN is to provide the Dutch society with knowledge, appreciation and the drive to protect the sea. The core values of SDN are: advocate, knowledgeable, accessible, entering into dialogue, thinking in solutions and being critical. They are emphasizing on thinking in solutions

which are acceptable for multiple parties. To achieve their mission they are cooperating with multiple stakeholders which differ from the public in beach clean-up events to other NGOs such as the Plastic Soup Foundation, companies such as cargo companies and at governmental level in the International Correspondence Group Marine Litter of OSPAR (SDN missie en visie, 2013, SDN afval, 2013 ).

SDN has two themes which relate to the marine pollution problem: Clean shipping and a litter free North Sea and beach. The project which falls under the Clean shipping theme is the Clean Shipping Index which are criteria developed for cargo owners which helps them to choose for 'clean' shipping companies. A criteria is to bring all litter to port reception facilitations (SDN, Clean shipping index, 2013). Besides addressing the cargo companies and the shipping companies SDN is also addressing international governance and policies. An example is change of the MARPOL Annex VI which has become stricter. The allowable emission of sulphur will be reduced from 4,5% to 0,5% in 2020 and for the North Sea the allowable emission will be even lower from 1,5% now to 0.1% in 2020. SDN have worked several years to make this happen (SDN International Beleidsbeïnvloeding, 2013).

The other theme of a litter free North Sea and beach has three main goals:

1. Awareness and behavioural change of beach visitors.
2. No litter from sea ships in the sea which relates to the other theme of clean shipping.
3. Companies involved in the problem and cooperate for a litter free North Sea and beach.

(SDN afval, 2013)

The projects related to this theme are litter counting, awareness of litter and policy influences. SDN organizes beach clean-ups every year in which the collected litter is counted. These clean-ups also create awareness among the participants. Besides those clean-ups SDN also assigned some beaches as 'my beach zones' which are beach zones in which the municipality does not clean the beach. The responsibility for a clean beach lies in this case in the hands of the visitors themselves to make the scale of the problem more visible. To create awareness among children SDN has organised a classroom coast watch programme (SDN bewustwording, 2013).

On the level of policy influences is SDN working in the International Correspondence Group Marine Litter of OSPAR, and they are member of Seas At Risk (SDN beleid, 2013). They want to change the regulations under MARPOL which now allows ships to dump glass, metal and paper at sea as long as it is beyond the nautical mile zone of 12 miles. Besides regulatory changes SDN is striving for better port reception facilities to collect the waste of ships in order to reduce the amount of litter thrown overboard.

Besides those projects they are also cooperating with the Plastic Soup foundation on Beat the Micro Bead, which will be discussed more elaborated in the descriptive section of the Plastic Soup Foundation. SDN is thus a NGO which tries to influence companies, society and the government on national but also on regional and international level.

#### 4.2.2 Approaches of Stichting de Noordzee

SDN is addressing the marine litter problem via multiple projects. With Beat the Micro Bead the focus lies on micro plastics in personal care products. Other projects address marine litter in general such as the beach clean-up events and they are also addressing pollution from ships. SDN is using multiple approaches as they want to inform, create a dialogue, cooperate and if necessary use confrontation. There is a difference in how SDN approaches different stakeholders. When approaching the government a dialogue is created. "We have a lot dialogue with the government and the government involves companies in this dialogue, so indirectly there is also contact with companies via this route" (Dagevos SDN, 2013). When approaching companies SDN follow prescribed steps which starts with first writing a letter, than after a reaction a dialogue is created. "It is very important to make the outcome of the dialogue transparent by making it public, because then companies need to live up to what they have said" (Dagevos SDN, 2013). If there is no reaction than SDN will try to put pressure on the company via other ways. SDN is not using multiple approaches towards the same company at the same time but will switch approaches when the current one does not work.

In approaching society it is important to make the problem visible and transparent. SDN does this by checking products on micro plastics and communicate this to consumers and by organizing beach clean-up events for instance. The goal is to create awareness and try to influence society. Via the influence on society also companies are influenced. "You can see that companies are influenced by society, as there are already a lot of companies that stopped with the use of micro plastics" (Dagevos SDN, 2014). SDN stated that they are consciously trying to influence companies via society and often they focus specifically on consumers. "Via the consumer we address companies, there were a lot of consumers who indicated that they have send complaints to companies which is very effective. If a company receives enough complaints of customers they will change their course of action" (Dagevos, 2014).

SDN perceives a combination of approaches as being effective but it is important to first try to create a dialogue. "If you engage in a dialogue with a company you also learn what their difficulties are, some of the things you want to ask from a company are not realistic, like stopping with the use of plastic packaging around food products when this is mandated because of hygiene for instance"(Dagevos SDN, 2013).

SDN stated that to support their approaches scientific research is very important and getting public attention is regarded to be important for the effectiveness of the approach. "An example of the effectiveness of media attention is that we were already talking with sustainability managers for 1.5 years about micro plastics but the process went very slow, after the launch of Beat the Micro Bead which perceived a lot of media attention the process suddenly went fast" (Dagevos SDN, 2013). Besides getting media attention SDN perceives timing and alignment also as important factors influencing the effectiveness of an approach. "We were in a dialogue with a company and agreements



were almost finished, then another NGO started to campaigning against that company which resulted in the company stopping with the dialogue and agreements” (Dagevos SDN, 2013).

In the future SDN will still use a combination of different approaches and still try to cooperate with the sector. SDN is currently trying to cooperate with cargo companies in order to reduce the marine litter from ships. Cooperation will be necessary because without cooperation this marine litter problem cannot be solved according to SDN.

#### 4.2.3 Legitimacy and Stichting de Noordzee

SDN is not that dependent of donors as WWF is for instance, therefore they claim that legitimacy has not such a big role in their organization as it is for WWF. SDN acknowledges that it is important to keep a good relationship with the stakeholders that the organization is cooperating with, so legitimacy does play a role. In addition, it is also important to show the independence of SDN.

Transparency plays an important role in SDN as they try to be transparent as an organization but also in their activities. As an organization SDN is being transparent by publishing year reports and keeping an open dialogue. In their activities SDN is transparent in making their dialogues with other stakeholder public.

Besides being transparent, SDN is gaining legitimacy by having enough technical expertise and basing their claims on facts. “We have more people with a scientific background related to the topics we are addressing working in the organization than people working at the communicative department” (Dagevos SDN, 2013).

SDN is taking gaining legitimacy partly into account when developing campaigns. “If a campaign does not work, you are not doing it again and legitimacy also plays a role in this. But off course the effectiveness of a campaign depends on more than trust only” (Dagevos SDN, 2013). This also holds for approaches of SDN, if it does not work they will try something else and if an approach does not receive legitimacy than this will influence the effectiveness. “If you do not gain trust than the activities are ineffective and thus it influences the effectiveness” (Dagevos SDN, 2013).

#### 4.2.4 Corporate social responsibility and Stichting de Noordzee

SDN has approached a lot of companies with their Beat the Micro Bead campaign. First Unilever was approached. “We approached Unilever at first because sustainability is in their DNA, so it would be logical that they would be the first multinational to change” (Dagevos SDN, 2013). Other companies that were approached later were approached based on the fact that they were using micro plastics. A lot of local Dutch companies responded positively such as Ahold, HEMA and Kruidvat. Bigger companies did not always respond positively. “For bigger companies it is more difficult to change, this will only happen when it is in their interest to change, for example by pressure from society” (Dagevos SDN, 2013).

According to SDN corporate social responsibility can make companies more willing to change or to cooperate. It helps that companies that have implemented CSR often have a sustainability manager or team which makes it easier to reach them, but it depends on the company how much influence they



have. “Within a company there can be a struggle between departments and it depends on how topics are addressed on the agenda on how much such a sustainability manager/ team has to say. But it is still important to know those people” (Dagevos SDN, 2013).

SDN consciously looks at company goals and if CSR is implemented. If company goals match the desires of SDN then it is easier to address those companies for SDN. “If CSR is important for the company this will lead to the company being more open to a dialogue with people from outside the company” (Dagevos SDN, 2013).

SDN is approaching companies which have implemented CSR not differently but will approach them faster than companies which have not implemented CSR. “With companies which have not implemented CSR it is more difficult to get the letter on the right place because they often do not have a sustainability manger. If the letter reaches the communication department it will lead to other discussions than when it is received by a sustainability manager” (Dagevos SDN, 2013).

## 4.3 Plastic Soup Foundation

### 4.3.1 Description of the Plastic Soup Foundation

The Plastic Soup Foundation (PSF) is a Dutch NGO which is founded in 2011 by Maria Westerbos. She got inspired by Charles Moore, the discoverer of the ‘plastic soup’, when she met him. It was his mission to publicize this problem and Maria Westerbos was inspired to do the same. This resulted in the foundation of the PSF together with Jesse Goossens, the author of the book: Plastic Soep (PSF het bestuur, 2013).

PSF consist of an international platform of different organisations namely: 5 gyres, Algalita, KIMO, Duurzame Pabo, Fishing for litter, Plastic pollution coalition, partners of innovation, Plastic Oceans, Wetsus, Stichting de Noordzee and T-exchange. Together the mission of these organisations is to stop the plastic pollution in the oceans. To fulfil this mission, the PSF states that they do not want to spread feelings of impotence but encourage positive consciousness and action (PSF de organisatie, 2013).

The PSF want to stop the plastic pollution by:

1. Promoting and supporting measures that counter the reduction of plastics into micro plastics and the distribution of plastic litter in to oceans.
2. Supporting beach and ocean clean-up actions.
3. International cooperation with experts, organisations, universities and companies.
4. Reaching society via social media to help to think of and work on solutions and search for best practices.
5. Trying to convince the government to ban the use of micro plastics in products that are produced in large numbers.
6. Trying to make a case for supporting developing countries in reducing pollution problems in a way which fits the culture and context of the country. (PSF missie, 2013)

The vision of the PSF is already reflected in the way they want to fulfil their mission. On their website they state their vision as follows: "To counter the global problem of plastic pollution there is need for global change. The current production and consumption system of plastics is not sustainable. This must be changed into system which is based on alternative materials and innovative processes. The PSF want to contribute to this by promoting international cooperation, promoting projects of front running companies and by spreading good practices of sustainable solutions. Besides promoting the PSF also pressures the industry and the government to actually make changes by spreading independent information via social media" (PSF missie, 2013).

The PSF has different approaches towards companies. On the one hand they are spreading good practices and encountering companies in a positive way to try to make them change their course of action. On the other hand they are also pressuring companies via social media to make changes. This is reflected in their campaign Beat the Micro Bead.

When it became clear that there are a lot of personal care products which include micro plastics and those micro plastics end up in the rivers and oceans and have adverse effects, Stichting de Noordzee decides to approach companies about this problem. In 2011 Stichting de Noordzee is writing to companies to ask them to stop using micro plastics in their products. They mostly receive denying answers such as: "the products meet the safety standards, the products are safe for consumers, there are no legal restrictions, micro plastics are filtered out of the water and it cannot be proven that the micro plastics in the oceans come from their products" (Beat the micro bead history, 2013). So this approach was not efficient, therefore Stichting de Noordzee and PSF started a cooperation and launched the campaign Beat the Micro Bead in the summer of 2012 which is supported by 22 other NGO's (Beat the micro bead history, 2013). This campaign focuses on the personal care industry that uses micro plastics in their products. The mission is that all micro plastics in personal care products will be banned.

At the start of the campaign PSF and SDN organized an action directed to Unilever via twitter. Unilever stated that their products will be plastic free by 2015 (Beat the micro bead industry, 2013). This action made Unilever the first multinational which will change their course of action as a reaction on the campaign. After this other companies were called to also take responsibilities and follow Unilever's example. This led to a domino effect and other multinationals (Beiersdorf, Colgate, Palmolive and L'Oreal) also decided to stop using micro plastics (Beat the micro bead industry, 2013). At this point there are a lot of companies which are changing their course of action and will stop using micro plastics. The personal care industry is making big changes from 2012 until the upcoming years regarding the use of micro plastics which is a success for NGO's such as PSF and Stichting de Noordzee as they have put a lot of effort in the campaign.

Beat the micro bead is currently the biggest campaign of PSF. Together with SDN they have developed an app that allows consumers to scan personal care products and see which products are free of micro plastics, which products already indicated to be micro plastics free in the future and which products contain micro plastics. In 2012, the app was launched in the Netherlands and in the summer of 2013 it was launched worldwide (Beat the micro bead history, 2013). Besides the app there is also an online list of companies which have already stopped using micro plastics, companies which will stop and companies who do not stop using micro plastics. On the website of Beat the Micro Bead positive and negative statements of companies can be found regarding the use of micro plastics.

Besides Beat the micro bead, PSF has started a new campaign directed to Dutch stakeholders of the plastic problem named “De waarde van plastic soep”. This campaign aims to show the value of plastic litter, that it is a waste to not use it in another way then dispose it. It started in September 2013 with the river “de Maas” (PSF projecten, 2013). Another project is a TV series of 13 episodes which will be broadcasted in 2014. It is about the pressure on the oceans and shows how we can interact with the oceans in a sustainable way (PSF projecten, 2013). The ecological expedition goes from Volendam to the Sargasso Sea because there is no research done yet on the plastic in that area (PSF projecten, 2013).

#### 4.3.2 Approaches of Plastic Soup Foundation

Currently PSF is busy with their Beat the Micro Bead campaign, which is now an international campaign with a cooperation of 32 organizations. PSF is also setting up a new campaign which is called ‘collect your own fuel’ this is a project which focuses on the value of plastics. “Plastic litter is transformed into oil, our goal is to create awareness that plastic is not litter but a useful material” (Harding PSF, 2013).

PSF is an organization which is less about lobbying, but more about doing things and keeping an open dialogue. PSF makes a lot of use of (social) media in order to activate consumers. But when it is asked if they want to inform, create a dialogue, cooperate or confront, than it is stated that all these options are being used. PSF did not need to use multiple strategies at the same time towards the same company. “We did not need to use multiple strategies at the same time, in the beginning we are pushing a bit but not too much because we do not want to get opposite of each other” (Harding PSF, 2013). There is a difference in how PSF approaches different stakeholders. “Partly this happens automatically because the government for instance has other interests and another way of communicating than companies” (Harding PSF, 2013).

In approaching society there are two steps according to PSF. First awareness needs to be created among citizens and consumers and the next step is to create behavioural changes. PSF is currently busy with the first stage but this year they will organize a clean-up event in Amsterdam which is part of the second step. To create behavioural changes, PSF wants to offer solutions to society which make it easier to change. “We try to surf on the feelings of society and by doing so, we want to offer them solutions to make changes which will also affect companies” (Harding PSF, 2014).

With the Beat the Micro Bead campaign PSF is focussing on consumers in order to try to make changes at company level. “In the beginning we were especially focussing on mothers because they are easy to reach and do not want their children to brush their teeth with plastics for instance” (Harding PSF, 2014). PSF is focussing on consumers because this is effective as consumers have got more power than before the rise of social media. Consumers can therefore put more pressure on companies which is beneficial for PSF.

PSF does not want to cooperate a lot with companies because that will give them a more dependent position. PSF is more about dialogues and confrontational approaches. However, they do not want to use too much confrontation. “We do not want to create the image that we are a NGO with which you cannot talk with and only seeks confrontation” (Harding PSF, 2013). In the future the PSF is not intending to change their approaches as the current ones suit the organization.

PSF want to have a balance between dialogue and confrontation. What is important for the effectiveness of their approaches is getting media attention. "Maria Westerbos has a background in media and with her network and expertise we receive a lot of media attention which helps in our approaches" (Harding PSF, 2013). Besides media attention, PSF regards it as important to reflect the public opinion. "The public opinion is important because those are the costumers of the companies" (Harding PSF, 2013). Cooperation with other NGOs is also important for the PSF and in doing so there is need for clear communication between those NGOs. PSF cooperates with other NGOs, they share information and successes such as their Beat the Micro Bead application for the Smartphone. This is spread to other NGOs in order to spread the app globally.

#### 4.3.3 Legitimacy and Plastic Soup Foundation

It is important for PSF to show that as an organization you can make a difference. "The success of Beat the Micro Bead shows what we can do and this gives us more support" (Harding PSF, 2013). When developing campaigns they are taking legitimacy into account. To gain legitimacy PSF is basing their claims on scientific evidence. "We do not take fluid plastic into account in our campaign because there is no scientific knowledge of the consequences of fluid plastic in the marine environment"(Harding PSF 2013).

Gaining legitimacy has an influence on the PSF. They want to profile themselves in a certain way and the way of profiling has an effect on legitimacy. That is also a reason why they do not want to be too confrontational. Also the PSF tries to be open and transparent as an organization, but also in their campaigns to other stakeholders. This is done via year reports, reports about dialogues and financial reports. Transparency is important for PSF. "that is what the consumer wants" (Harding PSF, 2013). "In our missions we also try to be as open as possible and we think that this helps in gaining trust" (Harding PSF, 2013).

PSF regards taking legitimacy into account as important, because it influences the effectiveness of the organization. "on the long term legitimacy will help to keep you in contact and dialogue with other stakeholders because you want to keep receiving legitimacy" (Harding PSF, 2013).

#### 4.3.4 Corporate social responsibility and Plastic Soup Foundation

PSF decided to first tackle the personal care industry because this was the easiest. For the companies in this sector it is not difficult to replace micro plastics with alternatives. "Also personal care is something that speaks to the feelings of people because everyone uses it and therefore it is close to people" (Harding PSF, 2013). Unilever was the first to be confronted because they want to be sustainable and are a big player in the Netherlands. After Unilever the contact with other companies went smooth. "They were all willing to have a dialogue. We have had enough publicity which has helped in the contact with companies" (Harding PSF, 2013). "It is all a matter of publicity and cooperation" (Harding PSF, 2013).

According to PSF it is now 'hot' to be green and this is influencing the willingness of companies to cooperate. "Because it is now hot to be green as a NGO you need to make use of this" (Harding PSF, 2013). But PSF is not consciously looking for companies which have implemented CSR. The other side

is that because it is so 'hot' to be green almost every company has something about CSR on their website. "As a company you need to have some more than only 'we are good for the environment' so it is questionable when a company has implemented CSR what they are really doing about this" (Harding PSF, 2013). PSF believes that CSR can also work against companies as it creates certain expectations. "An example is that C&A is doing really well on environmental aspects but they do not want to express this because it can lead to higher expectations and criticism" (Harding PSF, 2013).

CSR is thus something to take into account when approaching companies but it does not say everything according to PSF. They approach those companies in a positive way but PSF believes that media attention and timing are much more important factors influencing the effectiveness than the implementation of CSR.

## 4.4 Analysis

### 4.4.1 Introduction

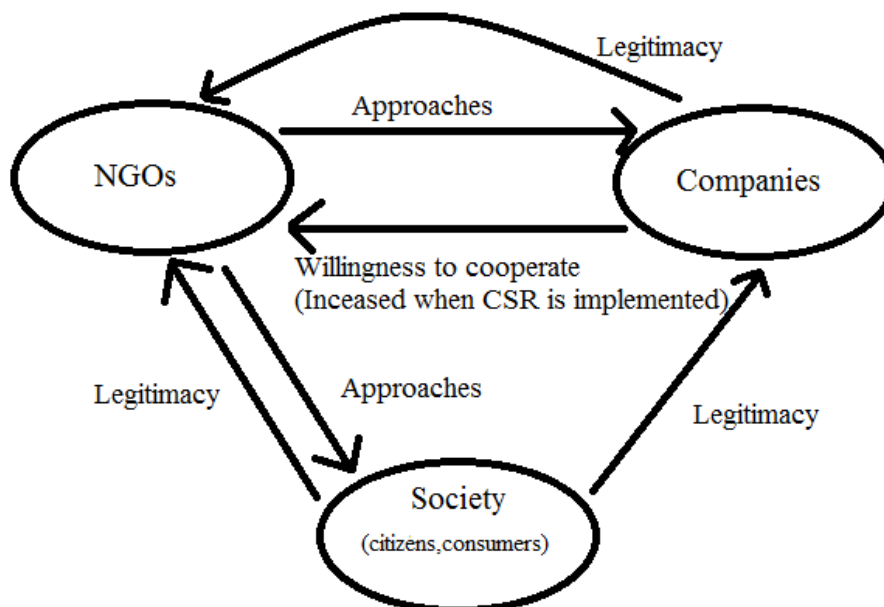


Figure 6: Coherence of concepts from conceptual framework

In this analysis every arrow of figure 6 displayed above and in the conclusion of the conceptual framework will be discussed. The figure will be used as guidance for the analysis, to compare the information found in scientific literature with the information gathered from the interviews. The following hypotheses were formed in the conceptual framework:

- NGOs try to influence companies via society.
- Other approaches are used towards society than towards companies
- The choice of approaches of NGOs towards companies is influenced by the type of company and whether CSR is implemented.

-The choice of approaches used by NGOs towards companies and society is affected by gaining legitimacy as this determines the effectiveness.

-When a company has implemented CSR it will easier cooperate with a NGO than when CSR is not implemented.

The research will examine which approaches are used towards companies and society and whether these soft hypotheses are right.

#### 4.4.2 Approaches of NGOs towards society and companies

First the approaches of NGOs towards companies is analysed then the approaches towards society is analyzed. This section is represented in figure 6 in the 'approaches' arrow of NGOs towards companies and the 'approaches' arrow of NGOs towards society. The four approaches (communicative, consultative, cooperative and confrontational) from the conceptual framework are used to identify which approaches the NGOs have used towards companies and society when working on the marine litter problem and which approaches were effective. All three NGOs choose not to use just one approach in general but use multiple approaches towards companies and society, if necessary they will also use multiple approaches towards the same company.

##### *Approaches from NGOs towards companies*

The use of multiple approaches towards the same company is not done at the same time, often the NGOs first try to start a two-way dialogue with the companies, which is a strategy that is classified in the consultative approach. "If you engage in a dialogue with a company you also learn what their difficulties are, some things you want to ask from a company are not realistic like stopping with the use of plastic packaging around food products when this is mandated because of hygiene for instance"(Dagevos SDN, 2013).

The three NGOs indicated that trying to create a dialogue is a strong strategy towards companies which is often perceived as being effective. This means that they often start to approach companies in a consultative way. SDN indicated that related to this approach it is very important to make agreements that result from the dialogue public via social media for instance. Making the outcome of the dialogue with a company public is classified in the communicative approach as this is a one-way dialogue towards the companies and society. The use of this approach gives more guarantee that the company will keep their promises.

If a consultative approach does not work then the NGO shifts to other approaches directed towards companies. There is a difference between POF and the other two NGOs. POF indicated that besides a consultative approach they are aiming for a cooperative approach with companies and they perceive confrontation as the least effective approach. "Confrontation does not help anybody. It is hard to say that a company is bad, it is better to try to engage and work with them. Therefore the POF talks to the plastic industry, and we are one of the few" (Jones POF, 2013). The POF will not choose for a confrontational approach whereas the PSF and SDN use besides the consultative also the

confrontational approach towards companies. PSF and SDN indicated that if the consultative approach does not lead to solutions then they will use a confrontational approach.

For the three NGOs the consultative approach towards companies has a preference and is experienced as being effective. The POF wants to use a cooperative approach towards companies if possible whereas PSF emphasised that they do not want to cooperate and thus not use a cooperative approach. “We do not want to cooperate with companies because we think that this gives us a more independent position then when we would cooperate” (Harding PSF, 2013). At the same time the PSF does not want to be too confrontational because they want to display themselves as a NGO which is open to dialogues and does not want to stand totally opposite of the companies. This shows that the choice of approach is not only influenced by the type of company that is approached but also by how the NGO wants to profile themselves.

### *Approaches from NGOs towards society*

In the approaches used towards society the POF, PSF and SDN indicated that it is important to first create awareness of the problem. Creating awareness is done via a communicative and cooperative approach towards society. POF is going to do this by their documentary when it is finished. The POF also focuses on education and has developed education materials for children to create awareness of the problem amongst young people. PSF and SDN are creating awareness via the Beat the Micro Bead campaign by spreading information which is a communicative approach. They also create awareness by organizing clean up actions which is a cooperative and communicative approach. The clean-up events attract media attention which help to create awareness which falls under the communicative approach but the people participating in the clean up event are approached by a cooperative approach. “We will organize another beach clean-up event in August which will reach much further then only the people attending this event because of the media attention that it generates” (Dagvos, 2014).

The NGOs indicated to be aware that in scientific literature it is written that creating awareness does not automatically lead to behaviour changes. Therefore PSF and SDN stated that creating awareness is an important first step which is quite effective at this stage. “There are already quite a lot of people that know about micro plastics” (Harding, 2014). “When you googled micro plastics a few years ago you only got a few hits and now there are a lot of hits. Somewhere this year we will measure how many people know about the problem” (Dagevos, 2014). The cooperative approach belongs to the second step beyond creating awareness which is meant to lead to behavioural changes.

Besides creating awareness SDN and PSF try to offer solutions which people can use in their daily life to reduce their own use of plastics. “We ask people on our websites to bring their own bags when going shopping which makes the use of plastic bags unnecessary for them” (Harding, 2014).

### *Approaches directed to companies and society*

The PSF and SDN try to push companies via media attention and social media. This can be seen in the start of the Beat the Micro Bead campaign where a “twitter bomb” was used to push Unilever to stop with the use of micro plastics in their personal care products. Prior to this Unilever was already approached several times in a dialogue by PSF and SDN to stop the use of micro plastics but this was not effective. After this “twitter bomb” Unilever stated that they will stop with the use of micro plastics in personal care products.



By the use of social media which is directed to society the PSF and SDN changed from a consultative approach directed to companies to a communicative/cooperative approach directed towards society combined with a confrontational approach towards Unilever. This confrontational and communicative/ cooperative approach was thus effective and led to other companies being more open to the consultative approach. PSF stated that the contact with almost all other companies during the campaign went smooth and were open to a dialogue. Besides this dialogue also the communicative approach is used, as SDN stated. In this case the outcome of the dialogue is made public on the website of Beat the Micro Bead.

SDN and PSF try to empower consumers and offer them better options to choose via their Beat the Micro Bead app. This market based tool directly affects companies via an indirect way by the approach of NGOs towards society. Besides empowering consumers they use the power of consumers to address to companies. "Via the consumer we address companies, there were a lot of consumers who indicated that they have send complaints to companies which is very effective. "If a company receives enough complaints of customers they will change their course of action" (Dagevos, 2014). Both PSF and SDN perceive this as an effective way to try to influence companies. These approaches from NGOs towards society work at two sides as it reduces the use of products that contain micro plastics and it influences companies to change their course of action and stop using micro plastics in their products.

The approaches used towards consumers are meant to both change consumer behaviour and influence companies. The approaches used can be confrontational for companies and cooperative for consumers. It is confrontational and cooperative when explicitly naming companies that use micro plastics and asking people to stop using those products for instance which is done in the Beat the Micro Bead campaign. The communicative approach can also be used which is more informative and for example explains the effects of micro plastics but does not explicitly ask people to stop using certain products. The confrontational/cooperative approach is used by PSF and SDN whereas the communicative approach is used by POF. POF is not trying to influence consumers directly as they do not tell consumers what to do or buy.

The POF displays good practices of companies on their website. People and the companies can read this which is good advertising for that company. This is very a different way of approaching then the cooperative/ confrontational approach. The company is positively displayed, but people are not explicitly asked to buy products from that company because it is doing well, they are only informed.

What also came forwards and coincides with scientific literature is the importance of getting media attention and supporting claims with scientific research. This is needed for the approaches directed to society and to companies. This was also showed in the conceptual framework that those strategies are perceived as the most effective. "An example of the effectiveness of media attention is that we were already talking with sustainability managers for 1.5 years about micro plastics but the process went very slow, after the launch of Beat the Micro Bead which perceived a lot of media attention the process suddenly went fast" (Dagevos SDN, 2013).



#### 4.4.3 Legitimacy gained by the NGOs

In this subsection it is analysed how legitimacy is gained and if legitimacy affects the choice of approaches. This is represented in the 'legitimacy' arrow from society to NGOs and the 'legitimacy' arrow from companies to NGOs. To identify which types of legitimacy the NGO tries to gain the four types (normative, regulatory, cognitive and output legitimacy) from the conceptual framework are used.

In the conceptual framework it is stated that if important stakeholders such as society have no trust in the organisation then this will affect the effectiveness of the NGO. The NGOs all agree that gaining legitimacy is important for the effectiveness of the organisation but they do not have an explicit strategy to gain legitimacy. They have indicated that they take legitimacy into account when developing campaigns and choosing approaches. SDN confirmed that if they do not gain legitimacy for their approach then it does not work and they try something else. It was already mentioned that the image of the NGO is very important. The choice of approaches partly determine the image of the NGO which affects the legitimacy. The POF gave the example of Sea shepherd which is very confrontational and therefore has a supporting group but also a group against them.

Legitimacy is not automatically being gained but the three NGOs stated that they are expecting to gain all types of legitimacy by the way they operate. They try this not always in the same way but they have indicated to perform characteristics of all the types of legitimacy. Therefore legitimacy is being gained due to specific characteristics which are often being implemented because they are necessary to be effective. Therefore the NGOs are aware of the importance and effectiveness of legitimacy.

##### *Types of legitimacy*

Normative legitimacy plays a role in campaigns and activities. This type of legitimacy expected to be gained by the NGOs as PSF confirms: "The public opinion is important and if the NGO expresses the public opinion then this is a strong factor" (Harding PSF, 2013). PSF is consciously taking into account the public opinion in their activities. If a NGO expresses the public opinion in their normative claims then they will receive normative legitimacy. The NGOs take the public opinion into account but on the other hand they are shaping the public opinion by creating awareness. "We are part of society and as Maria Westerbos says: We need to surf on the feelings of society" (Harding, 2014). So on the one hand they are creating awareness but also need to take the feelings of society into account. Therefore PSF is not telling people strictly what they need to do or change but gives them solutions which they can apply.

All three NGOs emphasized the importance of using scientific knowledge to support their claims. The POF and SDN both have people in their team with technical expertise and scientific backgrounds which helps them to translate scientific knowledge into missions and norms. PSF base their missions and norms on scientific knowledge. "We do not take fluid plastics into account in our missions because there is not enough scientific evidence yet for the consequences of this type of

plastic”(Harding PSF, 2013). All three NGOs are expected to gain cognitive legitimacy because they base their claims on scientific knowledge and perceive this as important for the effectiveness of the NGO. “It is important to base your claims on scientific knowledge and also not to exaggerate, because also exaggeration can affect your credibility” (Jones POF, 2013).

The third type of legitimacy is being gained when the rules and norms of the NGO comply with the law. What also falls under regulatory legitimacy is the establishment of regulatory systems. This type of legitimacy relates to accountability to stakeholders. All three the NGOs are expected to gain this type of legitimacy. PSF and SDN both publish year reports, financial reports and reports about the dialogs with other stakeholders which also relates to the communicative approach. The POF does not publish year reports but tries to be transparent and accountable by giving presentations about what they are doing. As PSF and SDN publish more reports and therefore being more transparent and accountable it might be possible that they will receive more output legitimacy than POF.

The last type of legitimacy is output legitimacy. The effectiveness of campaigns and activities relate to output legitimacy. The app of Beat the Micro Bead campaign developed by PSF and SDN can be seen as an output of the organization. It empowers and informs consumers to choose for products that are free of micro plastics. When people use that app it is expected that they perceive PSF and SDN legitimate enough to judge products on certain criteria of the use of micro plastics. It is expected that PSF and SDN gain output legitimacy by this app. The documentary of the POF is also an output of the organization and it is expected that the POF will receive output legitimacy for the documentary when it is finished.

It is difficult for the NGOs to determine whether their legitimacy is increased when they are cooperating with a company that has implemented CSR. Therefore the expectation is not confirmed from the perspective of the NGOs. From the company perspective it also cannot be confirmed as there were no companies interviewed.

#### 4.4.4 Corporate social responsibility

In this subsection the influence of CSR is analysed. This is represented in the arrow of 'willingness to cooperate' from companies to NGOs. All three NGOs indicated that they do their research before approaching a company and therefore know before contact whether a company has implemented CSR.

The NGOs think that it can be unbeneficial for the companies to implement CSR. "CSR can even work against the company as they create expectations as a company about the course of action and this can easily lead to critique" (Harding PSF, 2013). PSF perceives the implementation of CSR as unbeneficial because a lot of companies state that they have implemented CSR. "Being 'green' is a trend now but it does not have to mean anything if companies state on their website that they have implemented CSR" (Harding PSF, 2013). This statement relates to window dressing, where companies use CSR to display themselves better than they really are. If they only state to have implemented CSR but not doing a lot with it then this can also be seen as window dressing. This window dressing can give the NGO a reason to address the company and can facilitate a consultative approach. If the company is not willing to change it can provoke a confrontational approach which makes it easy to publicly shame the company.

On the other hand companies which have not implemented CSR can also be 'green' as PSF indicated. "We talked with C&A a clothing retailer which has a green course of action but does not want to emphasize on this as it creates expectations and can lead to critiques if they do not live up to this expectations" (Harding PSF, 2013). Therefore companies with and without CSR implementation are approached in the same way.

SDN stated that it can certainly be beneficial for NGOs in their approach towards companies if they have implemented CSR. "We approach companies that have implemented CSR faster because this means that they often have a sustainability team or manager which makes it easier to approach those companies, also those companies are often more open to dialogues" (Dagevos SDN, 2013). This shows that opinions about CSR differ which is also reflected in the conceptual framework where researchers are also pro and con CSR. The implementation of CSR therefore can be both beneficial and unbeneficial.

It seems that CSR is not automatically a confirmation that the company is more open to cooperation or changing their course of action. It will depend on the company if they are willing to cooperate or change their course of action. Therefore it cannot be stated that the implementation of CSR automatically increases the willingness to cooperate of companies.

PSF and SDN approach companies which have implemented CSR differently than companies which have not implemented CSR. As SDN indicated they approach those companies faster because it is easier to approach them, and PSF indicated that they approach those companies in a positive way. The NGOs think it is hard to tell whether CSR have influenced successes achieved in the past. PSF and SDN emphasized on the importance of media attention and pressure from consumers and think that this is a bigger influence than whether companies have implemented CSR.

#### 4.4.5 Analysis concluded

To conclude the analysis the hypothesis will be discussed in order to see whether they were correct. The hypothesis that NGOs try to influence companies via society is confirmed. The three NGOs make use of a communicative approach to make the outcome of the consultative approach public which is directed towards society. The PSF and SDN also make use of the power of consumers to indirectly influence companies via communicative and cooperative approaches towards society. They stated that these approaches are very effective in influencing companies.

The hypothesis that NGOs use other approaches towards society than companies is confirmed. The NGOs do not use a consultative or confrontational approach directed towards society whereas the consultative approach is preferred towards companies. Towards society the NGOs mostly use a communicative and cooperative approach. The approaches used towards society are meant to create awareness or behavioural changes. Those can be used to influence companies. The approaches used towards companies are meant to create awareness and to the change course of action.

The hypothesis that choice of approaches used by NGOs towards companies and society is affected by gaining legitimacy as this determines the effectiveness is confirmed. The NGOs are aware of the importance of legitimacy and take it into account in their organization and their approaches but do not have an explicit strategy to gain legitimacy. The choice of approaches used by the NGO affects the

image of the NGO which has an effect on the legitimacy gained. This is categorized under normative legitimacy, it is expected that the NGOs gain all the types of legitimacy.

The hypothesis that the choice of approaches of NGOs towards companies is influenced by the type of company and whether CSR is implemented is not confirmed. From the information gathered in the interviews with the NGOs it is shown that companies which have implemented CSR can be more open to dialogues and are easier to approach. Though this does not change the choice of approaches of the NGOs towards those companies. Companies which have implemented CSR are approached in the same way as companies which have not implemented CSR.

The hypothesis that when a company has implemented CSR it will easier cooperate with a NGO than when CSR is not implemented is not confirmed. It remains questionable how 'green' a company really is when they state to have implemented CSR. Other companies which have not implemented CSR can also be green. The implementation of CSR can influence the willingness to cooperate but the implementation is not automatically a confirmation that the willingness to cooperate is increased. It will depend on the company whether they are willing to cooperate. CSR is thus not always an indication that the company will easier cooperate.

## 5 Discussion

In the discussion I want to highlight some points of the research. The scope of the research, the conceptual framework, timing and media will be discussed in this chapter.

### 5.1 Scope

In this research I have examined three NGOs from which two were Dutch and one English. The examined Dutch NGOs were a good representation for the NGOs addressing the marine litter problem in the Netherlands. For the U.K. the representation could be better. There is also an active NGO called Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) which is also addressing the marine litter problem. This NGO could have been incorporated in the research to get a better representation of the U.K. NGOs addressing this problem. Besides the U.K. and the Netherlands there are also NGOs in the U.S. addressing the marine litter problem such as the Five Gyres Foundation and the Surfrider Foundation which are not represented in this research. To get a clearer representation of the NGOs actively addressing the marine litter problem those NGOs could also have been represented.

Besides the representation of the NGOs it has to be noted that I have left the role of the government out of the scope of this research. I decided to focus on the relationship between companies and NGOs and the indirect relationship via society. The government influences all the actors discussed in this research and I acknowledge that the government plays an important role in the marine litter problem.

## 5.2 conceptual framework

### *approaches*

The approaches of NGOs towards companies and society were essential in this research. Approaches play an important role in NGOs. The NGO wants to accomplish a certain goal and the approaches supported with strategies are the means to fulfil that goal. All NGOs use approaches and those approaches partly determine the effectiveness of the campaign. The choice of approaches towards other stakeholders influences the image of the NGO which is linked to legitimacy.

The classification of approaches that I have chosen to use in this research was primarily developed for approaches towards companies. The communicative and cooperative approaches however did also apply correctly to society. The NGOs use a one-way dialogue towards society to create awareness and inform them. Which is classified in the communicative approach. The NGOs also actively try to involve citizens and consumers in activities such as beach clean-up events or in not buying products with micro plastics. This is classified in the cooperative approach. Overall the characteristics of the approaches used could be found back in the data from the interviews therefore all the classifications of the approaches are applied.

### *Legitimacy*

The classification for the different types of legitimacy that I have chosen to use were all applicable to the NGOs. The NGOs indicated to apply characteristics from every type of legitimacy used in the research. The used types of legitimacy were: normative, regulatory, cognitive and output legitimacy classified by Ossewaarde et al (2008). The characteristics of the different types of legitimacy have clear and elaborated distinctions. The chosen classification helps to give a clear overview of the different types of legitimacy and whether the NGOs are trying to gain those types of legitimacy.

The types of legitimacy that Logister (2007) uses are: procedural, popular, effective, normative, moral, network and representative legitimacy. There is overlap between the two classifications and all the types mentioned by Logister can be grouped into the types of Ossewaarde et al. (2008). Effective legitimacy relates to cognitive legitimacy. Normative legitimacy classified by Logister (2007) relates to regulatory legitimacy. Moral legitimacy relates to normative legitimacy. Network, procedural, popular and representative legitimacy relates to output legitimacy. Because the classification of Logister (2007) can be grouped under the used classification they both could have been used. The data show the characteristics of this classification as well. The used classification has more elaborated distinctions between the different types and clear characteristics. Therefore I prefer the used classification for the analysis of the types of legitimacy.

### *Corporate social responsibility*

In this research the opinions differed about the influence of CSR. On the one hand CSR is seen as beneficial when implemented in companies as it can make it easier to approach the company. On the other hand CSR is seen not being useful as it can be used as 'green washing'. It can also have a reversed effect that companies who are green do not want to implement CSR because this can lead to expectations and criticism.

NGOs look at companies before approaching them and the implementation of CSR influences the way the companies are approached. The application of CSR in the research was therefore useful. If

companies were also interviewed it would have led to clearer results about how CSR affects the willingness to cooperate of companies.

It is interesting to see that the different opinions in scientific literature about CSR are also reflected in the empirical findings. The findings showed that the examined NGOs also differed in their opinion about CSR. In literature there are advocates and opponents of CSR. Brammer et al (2012), Gond et al. (2011) and Ganji and Chopra (2010) are examples of opponents of CSR. The critique in the beginning on CSR was that it was meant as a replacement for the government and that companies would gain too much power if this would happen. Other critique is that CSR can be used as window dressing which is also found back in the empirical data. Small companies argue that they do not have the resources to implement CSR which can be unbeneficial (Ganji and Chopra, 2010). Mc Williams and Siegel, 2001 and Metaxas and Tsavdaridou, 2010 are advocates and they argue that CSR leads to what it was originally developed for, social cohesion and sustainable development without hampering economic growth. Therefore it is beneficial for companies to implement CSR according to them. Also Calabrese et al. (2013) argue that when implemented in the right way CSR can be beneficial for companies as they can have a competitive advantage. Other authors stand in between the opponents and the advocates, according to them CSR has positive effects but they certainly could be more effective. For instance Utting (2007) argues that the contribution of CSR on social protection varies, therefore CSR is not ineffective but could be improved.

### *Timing*

Timing of approaches would have been a useful concept for the research. It is indicated that timing is an important factor influencing the effectiveness of approaches. Timing is not incorporated in the conceptual framework. The importance of timing is not found back in scientific literature. In future research it can be assessed what the influence of timing is on approaches and what optimal timing can be for instance.

An approach can be very effective but when the timing is wrong it can affect the effectiveness. SDN gave the example of them being in a dialogue with a company for a long time. They have invested a lot of work in that dialogue. When it was almost finished another NGO decided to use a confrontational approach towards that company. This led to the company stopping with the negotiations with SDN and all the time and effort spend resulted in nothing. It was thus the wrong timing of the other NGO which led to an ineffective result for both the NGOs as the company felt attacked, stopped the negotiations and refused to change.

With the right timing an approach can be effective as it can also make companies more willing to change. For instance when it is known that in the future the use of micro plastics will be illegal than it can be beneficial for companies to already shift to alternatives. NGOs can make use of this in their timing of their approach directed towards companies. If they approach the company before it is known that the use of micro plastics will be illegal, or when it is already illegal than that will probably be the wrong timing. That will result in another outcome of the approach than with the right timing. This example shows that the right timing can influence the effectiveness of an approach which has to be taken into account by the NGOs.



## Media

In literature it is mentioned by Joutsenvirta (2011) and Richards and Heard (2005) that getting media attention is an important strategy to support the approaches. During this research it also became clear that it is very important that the approaches used are supported by getting media attention. Therefore it would have been a useful concept for the research how this influences the approaches towards companies and society and how the NGOs are trying to get media attention.

Besides media attention also the type of media which can be used by NGOs have changed. This is due to the emergence of the internet and social media for instance. These new types of media make it easier for NGOs to reach a broader public. Also these types of media can help to increase consumer power which can influence companies. Therefore in future research the role of media attention and the use of (social) media by NGOs addressing the marine litter problem can be examined.

## 5.3 Role of companies

In this study interviews were conducted with NGOs, therefore the results of this study reflect the perspective of the NGOs on the concepts addressed. The conclusions made in this research are based on the NGO perspective as companies were not willing to be interviewed. This also indicates that companies are not so willing to be interviewed even if it is about a positive change such as the replacement of micro plastics by alternatives. If it is possible to find companies willing to be interviewed in the future, then further research can examine the perspective of the companies related to the marine litter problem. Also their view on the concepts used and how they perceive the approaches of the NGOs and the role that CSR plays in their perspective can be examined.

## 6 Conclusion

It is widely recognized that plastic pollution causes biological problems to the marine environment and social and economic problems to the users of the marine environment. In the literature it is suggested that it is possible to govern the marine litter problem with an adaptive governance system that includes non-state actors. Due to globalisation and the rise of private governance the role of companies and NGOs changed. Non-state actors are enlarging their role in the development of global standards in areas where the government fails to establish an effective legal framework. In the marine litter problem the existing legal framework is not effective at this moment. Non-state actors therefore have the opportunity to play a role in the promotion of global standards and the ability to pressure states.

There are NGOs that are actively involved in the marine litter problem. NGOs such as the Plastic Soup Foundation (PSF) and the Plastic Oceans Foundation (POF) are focussing only on the subject of marine litter. Other NGOs such as Stichting de Noordzee (SDN) are addressing the problem in their mission and through campaigns specified to the subject. It is imaginable that the NGOs feel more urgency to address this problem because of the lack of an effective legal framework and because of scientific evidence that shows that the problem still grows. In order to tackle the problem the NGOs have developed campaigns directed to society and towards companies.

The aim of this research is to find out what type of approaches the NGOs used in order to change the course of action companies that are connected with the marine litter problem and how the effectiveness is influenced by legitimacy and corporate social responsibility. The following research questions were derived from this aim:

Which approaches have NGOs used towards companies and society regarding the marine litter problem and which approaches have been effective in changing the course of action of the companies?

Why were these approaches effective and what is the role of legitimacy and corporate responsibility in this?

What other factors are influencing the effectiveness of approaches?

### *Approaches used by the NGOs*

The classification of approaches that is used in this research is based on the literature of Nelson (2007). The approaches were classified as approaches from NGOs towards companies but I have also used this classification to identify approaches from NGOs towards society. The approaches used are: communicative, consultative, cooperative and confrontational.

In a communicative approach there is a one-way dialogue from the NGO towards the other actor. This approach is often used when creating awareness and informing other actors. This approach can be used towards all actors. In a consultative approach there is a two-way dialogue between the NGO and the other actor. This approach is often used towards companies and the government. In a cooperative approach there is cooperation between the NGO and the other actor. This approach can be used towards all actors. The last approach is the confrontational approach, in this approach NGOs put pressure via different tools and activities mostly on companies. The confrontational approach towards companies can be at the same time a cooperative approach towards consumers. For instance, this is the case when consumers are actively asked to not buy certain products and the consumers cooperate by not buying that product.

In the marine litter problem all types of approaches are used by the NGOs and I want to emphasize that it is a combination of approaches which led to effective results. Therefore it can be concluded that all type of approaches are important for the NGOs and it is not a specific approach which is more effective than the other approaches. This combination of approaches is often directed towards companies and towards citizens and consumers. It has been shown that society plays an important role for NGOs in influencing companies. A part of the approaches directed towards society are meant to indirectly influence companies. This is thus done via society or sometimes more specific via consumers. When society was left out then an important part of the approaches influencing companies was missing.

The type of approaches used will determine the image of the NGO. The PSF indicated that they do not want to be too confrontational because then the image is created that working with them is difficult and that can affect the willingness to cooperate of other actors with the NGO. The PSF and SDN are quite similar in their approaches, they first try to be consultative and if that does not work they will put some pressure via a confrontational approach. The POF is quite different as they do not want to be confrontational, therefore the POF make use of consultative and cooperative approaches.



The type of actors which are influenced by NGOs differs among the NGOs. There is also a difference in the approach towards society and towards companies and between the approaches used by NGOs. In approaching society the NGOs focus in creating awareness and behavioural changes. The approaches towards society are mostly communicative and cooperative approaches. Besides creating awareness the PSF and SDN make use of consumer power to influence companies, the POF does not do this and focuses on creating awareness amongst society. There are also some meetings companies and with the government. Their main focus lies on influencing society.

In the case of micro plastics SDN and PSF use communicative and cooperative approaches towards consumers to influence them and to use the power of consumers to influence companies. Also direct consultative approaches towards companies are used which together have led to companies stopping with the use of micro plastics in their personal care products

### *The effectiveness of the NGOs*

It is clearly visible that NGOs nowadays try to influence a wide range of actors. This research shows that in the marine litter problem NGOs are effective and have accomplished to make a difference. In the marine litter problem NGOs are able to influence state and non-state actors. SDN has managed together with other actors to change the Annex V of the MARPOL convention which is an example of influence on governmental level. PSF and SDN focussed with their Beat the Micro Bead campaign on changing the course of action of companies to stop using micro plastics via consumers. The campaign influences both companies and consumers. This campaign is very effective as a lot of companies stopped the use of micro plastics in their personal care products.

During the research it became clear that getting media attention is very important as this influences the effectiveness of the NGO. It helps to gain publicity for the activities of the NGO. Also media attention influences the effectiveness of the approaches. When activities from the NGOs get media attention and gain publicity amongst society then it seems that companies are willing to cooperate. This shows the importance of the role of society. The image of a company is important, companies need to gain legitimacy just like NGOs. When companies are negatively displayed in the media and it is picked up by society this can affect the image and legitimacy of the company. Therefore companies do not want to get negative attention. NGOs can make use of that. Media attention is a useful tool which enhances the effectiveness of NGOs as it can push companies to change their course of action and helps to gain more publicity.

Another factor influencing the effectiveness of the approaches is the right timing of the approach. If the timing is wrong it can be that the company is not able or not willing to change. Therefore it is important to take this and the importance of media attention into account when trying to change the course of action of companies.

### *The influence of legitimacy*

In this research I have chosen to use the classification based on the literature of Ossewaarde et al. (2008). There are four different types of legitimacy in this classification: normative, regulatory, output and cognitive legitimacy. Normative legitimacy is dependent on how the public conforms the normative claims of the NGOs. To gain this type the feelings of the public need to be taken into account. Regulatory legitimacy applies when the rules and norms of the NGO comply with the law. This type of legitimacy also relates to output legitimacy as it can be seen through the output whether

the NGO complies to the law. Output legitimacy is characterized by what the NGO is doing which is reflected in reports, campaigns, activities etc if this is accountable then this strengthens their output legitimacy. The last type of legitimacy is cognitive legitimacy which is dependent on conforming technical expertise and intellectual knowledge. This is characterized by having people with a technical background and basing their claims on scientific literature.

It is confirmed by the NGOs that gaining legitimacy plays an important role in the organization as this influences the effectiveness. It can be concluded that although legitimacy plays an important role in the NGOs there is not an explicit strategy for gaining legitimacy. This does not mean that gaining legitimacy is not important, it is important but it has a different role than expected. It was expected that legitimacy would have a more prominent role in NGOs as an explicit strategy, as it influences the effectiveness.

The NGOs perform characteristics which make them gain legitimacy. They perceive those characteristics to be important for the organization or their mission. In their campaigns and organization gaining legitimacy is taken into account for instance by trying to incorporate the feelings and opinion of society. Being transparent is also an important factor which influences the legitimacy. The NGOs stressed on the importance of being transparent in their campaigns and transparent as an organization.

Legitimacy also influences the choice of approaches because the approach will not be effective when legitimacy is not gained but also in the choice of approaches there is no explicit strategy for legitimacy. This is more reflected in the fact that the choice of approaches affects the image of the NGO. The NGOs indicated the importance of this and carefully take this into account. This leads to the conclusion that legitimacy has a prominent role with no explicit strategy but NGOs do put a lot of effort in gaining legitimacy via different characteristics.

### *The influence of CSR*

The NGOs indicated that they examine what type of company they will be approaching and whether CSR is implemented. Although the companies with and without the implementation of CSR are approached in the same way, therefore the choice of approaches is not affected by the type of company. It differed among the opinions of the NGO whether CSR makes it easier to cooperate. SDN indicated that it is easier to reach companies that have implemented CSR and it can increase their willingness to cooperate. PSF indicated that the implementation of CSR does not have to be an advantage as it is questionable how green a company still is. Also companies which have not implemented CSR can be very green. Therefore it can be concluded that CSR can increase the willingness to cooperate, but it does not automatically mean that if a company has implemented CSR that this is the case.

## 7 Recommendations

From this research I have derived the following recommendations:

Further research can examine the role of timing on the effectiveness of approaches. What is the influence of timing on approaches and what can be optimal timing?

Further research can try to examine the perspective of companies in the marine litter problem and their perspective on CSR and their willingness to cooperate.

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## 9 Appendix

List of interviewees:

Plastic Oceans Foundation : David Jones

Plastic Soup Foundation: Maartje Harding

Stichting de Noordzee: Jeroen Dagevos

### Topic list interview NGOs

-General information

-Specific information for the PSF, POF and SDN



-Approaches

-Legitimacy

-CSR

### **Topic list interview companies**

-General information

-Specific information about the company

- Approaches

-CSR

### **Questions interview NGOs**

#### General information:

1. Can you tell me something about the vision of the organization relating to the marine litter problem?
2. What is the NGO currently working on related to the marine litter problem?
3. What are the strong characteristics of the NGO?
4. Can you tell me something about the partnerships with all the different organizations from which the NGO exists? How much collaboration? Why these partners?

#### PSF:

1. Why did you decided to first address the personal care industry with a big campaign?
2. Why was Unilever the first multinational which was confronted by the PSF?
3. What will be the next industry which will be addressed by the PSF and why?
4. What other activities is the PSF in involved at this moment?
5. How was the contact with companies during campaigns?
6. Are there companies with which the contact did not run smoothly? Why was this?
7. I have had email contact with Lush, can you tell me something about the contact with lush? How did it evolve?

#### POF:

1. How effective is the POF at this moment?
2. You are focusing on empowering people to make changes, do you already receive a lot of input from people? What kind of input?

3. What kind of activities is the POF in involved right now?
4. Which companies have the POF approached? How was this going?
5. Were there companies that did not want to be involved with the POF? If so why?

#### Stichting de Noordzee

1. You cooperate a lot with the PSF on the marine litter problem, how is this cooperation developed?
2. What are specific activities that you organize related to the marine litter problem?

#### Approaches:

1. What kind of strategies does the NGO use?
2. Is there difference in how the NGO approaches companies instead of other stakeholders such as the government for instance?
3. In my research I distinguish between four different approaches: Do you want to inform, create a dialogue, cooperate or push the company to make changes, which approaches does the NGO use towards companies?
4. Are multiple strategies being used at the same time towards the same company?
5. Which approaches are being perceived as strong approaches and why?
6. And which as less effective and why?
7. According to you, what other important factors are influencing whether an approach is effective?
8. Will the NGO use other approaches in the future? If yes which approaches and why?
9. Which activities are related to the used approaches? Such as lobbying or getting media attention for instance.

#### Legitimacy

1. Gaining trust in the organization and their activities from stakeholders such as society is important, which role does this play in the NGO?
2. How is the NGO gaining trust in the organization from society, the government and companies?
3. How is the NGO gaining trust in their activities from society the government and companies?
4. Does the NGO take gaining this trust into account when developing campaigns?
5. Does gaining trust affects the choice of approaches?
6. Does the law hamper the activities of the NGO? (regulatory legitimacy)
7. Do you think that the mission of the NGO helps to gain trust from society? (Normative legitimacy)

8. Is the NGO capable to put in technical expertise and knowledge (such as research) to support the claims? (cognitive legitimacy)
9. What does the NGO do to be open and transparent towards stakeholders? (Output legitimacy)
10. Can you tell me how trust by other stakeholders affects the effectiveness of the NGO according to you?

#### Corporate Social Responsibility

1. Which companies has the NGO advanced and why those companies?
2. Which companies responded positively?
3. Why do you think that those companies responded positively?
4. Do you think that the rise of corporate social responsibility affects the willingness to change of companies? If so how?
5. Is the NGO actively approaches companies which have implemented CSR?
6. Is the NGO considering to actively approach companies which have implemented CSR in the future?
7. Does the NGO advances companies which have implemented CSR differently?
8. Were those companies more open to cooperation?
9. Do you think that successes reached in the past by the NGO were influenced by CSR?
10. If you cooperate with a companies which has implemented CSR do you think this will increase trust from other stakeholder more then when cooperating with a company which has not implemented CSR?

#### **Questions of second interviews about society**

##### **Topic list interview NGOs**

-Society/ Consumers

##### **Questions interview NGOs**

1. What kind of strategies does the NGO use towards society ?
2. What is the purpose of those strategies towards society? (e.g. creating awareness or empowering society to influence other actors)
3. How effective are the strategies towards society and what determines this effectiveness?
4. Does the NGO use certain strategies specifically towards consumers?
5. If the NOG is influencing companies via society/ consumers in what way is this done?

6. In what way do you think that the empowerment of consumers affects companies?
7. The NGO also has specific programs for children, what is the reason for this?
8. In the previous interview it came forward that getting media attention is very important, how does the NGO try to receive media attention?