

POTI

Protection of Ocean Trees & Inhabitants

An Initiative of Government, Non-Government and Community to Protect Environment.

2024-2025

Staff Reporter
The Protection of Ocean Trees & Inhabitants (POTI) project, a joint initiative by Goa Waste Management Corporation (GWMC), Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC), and the NGO Anyay Rahit Zindagi (ARZ), was inaugurated on Tuesday in Vasco. The project aims to protect the environment by reducing the use of plastic bags and promoting the recycling of old clothes into reusable cloth bags, said Julian Lohar, Deputy Director of ARZ. GWMC has provided a kiosk and deposit center, MMC has allocated space at the Vasco Fish Market, and ARZ is responsible for collecting old clothes and distributing stitched cloth bags. Lohar said the initiative would prevent the use of approximately 30,000 kg of single-use plastic annually and reduce the dumping of around 50,000 kg of old clothes. Vasco MLA Krishna Sakkar called on the community to support the project, urging society to be environmentally conscious.

Every old cloth donated does three things.

 Reduces textile waste.

 Replaces plastic bags.

 Creates dignified livelihoods for survivors of trafficking and sexual violence.

POTI proves that environmental protection and human dignity can go hand in hand.

Goa's Initiatives towards Resource Efficiency (RE) and Circular Economy (CE).



Foreword



**Dr. Levinson J. Martins, IAS,
Chairman, Goa Pollution Control
Board**

Government of Goa had prioritized Waste Management in the State and has taken several steps to manage various types of waste including Municipal Solid Waste. One of the components of Municipal Solid Waste is used and rejected clothes, which at times can even get to 3% to 5% of the total of such waste. The Goa Waste Management Corporation which is a knowledge partner of Government of India ministry of urban affairs has taken various initiatives to manage waste by setting up two plants one is at Saligao and other one at Cacora, besides common Biomedical facility and common hazardous waste facility. The waste is also collected from various local bodies and schools in the State of Goa.

As a innovative and pilot project to recycle used old cloth a project named “POTI” was initiated under the guidance of Hon’ble Chief Minister 2 years back at Mormugao Vasco city. This project of GWMC was supported by Mormugao Municipal Council and being implemented through a reputed NGO named ARZ (Anyay Rahit Zindagi). It has been 2 yrs since the project was initiated at Vasco city near fruit market. ARZ has given employment and has rehabilitated victims of human trafficking who are linked to this project similar to their other projects.

Under the project one can donate old used clothes and for 2 kg of clothes get a free cloth bag “POTI”. This has gone a long way in reducing cloth component in the Municipal Waste. I am sure other local bodies can replicate POTI project.

Congratulations to team ARZ for completing 2 yrs of “POTI” scheme.

POTI began with a simple question: can protecting the environment also protect lives? Two years on, supported by the Government of Goa and implemented with Goa Waste Management Corporation, Mormugao Municipal Council, and ARZ, POTI has evolved into a powerful model where environmental responsibility meets social justice. By reducing textile and plastic waste and promoting sustainable practices, the initiative has also created dignified livelihoods for women survivors of sexual violence and trafficking restoring income, confidence, and agency.

For ARZ, livelihood is important, as economic independence remains a key safeguard against re-trafficking. We express our sincere gratitude to Dr. Levinson J. Martins and to all partners, community members, students, and survivors who have made POTI a living example of meaningful change.

POTI reminds us that protecting the environment and preventing exploitation are deeply connected. When we choose reuse over waste, dignity over neglect, and partnership over isolation, we build systems that care for both people and the planet.

May this journey inspire many more.



**Ms. Juliana Lohar
Deputy Director
ARZ**

About POTI Project

Genesis:

POTI meaning "bag" in Konkani is an acronym for Protection of Oceans, Trees & Inhabitants. It is a joint initiative of the Goa Waste Management Corporation (GWMC), Mormugao Municipal Council (MMC), and the WISH Project of ARZ (Anyay Rahit Zindagi), aimed at addressing plastic pollution while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for women survivors of sexual violence and trafficking. POTI project was launched to combat the growing problem of plastic waste in Vasco and surrounding areas. The initiative involves collecting old and unused cloth materials from the community and recycling them into reusable cloth bags, which are then distributed free of cost in exchange for old clothes, thereby discouraging the use of plastic carry bags.

Objectives:

- Reduce the use of single-use plastic bags
- Promote recycling and up-cycling of old clothes
- Create sustainable livelihood opportunities for women survivors of sexual violence
- Engage communities in environmental protection

How POTI Works



Impact:

Metric Area	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	2-Year Cumulative Impact
 Environmental	Textile Waste Diverted from Landfills	9,836 Kgs of old clothes collected
 Plastic Reduction	Reusable Cloth Bags Distributed	13,462 bags put into active circulation
 Social Justice	Dignified Livelihoods Provided	75 women survivors employed
 Civic Engagement	Citizens Actively Sensitized	10,093 persons reached via outreach

Join Us In Making Goa Plastic Free

Journey of POTI



Inauguration of POTI Kiosk at Vasco Fish Market



Clothes donations received



Upcycling old clothes



Up-cycled products made by victims of sex trafficking

Support the Movement
Every donation of old clothes contributes to:

- Reducing textile waste
- Protecting our oceans and environment
- Replacing single-use plastics
- Empowering women with dignified livelihoods



Winners of State level Clothes Collection Drive



Newspaper articles



POTI awareness conducted by College students



POTI awareness in community



Drop in Centre for Old clothes

ARZ email: arzindiagmail.com

Vasco - ARZ office, Flat no. 04, Guia Building, 1st floor,
Mapusa - WISH Unit, D319, Karaswada, Mapusa, Acoi Village

arzindia.org

Contact: 9850962390