



Preventing marine litter: Global partnerships and activities

BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention

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On behalf of
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Introduction

The growing crisis of marine litter

Plastic pollution is the most visible of the many threats confronting the world's oceans. As dramatic images in the media attest, marine litter has reached an alarming level. It is estimated that 19 to 23 million metric tons of plastic enter aquatic ecosystems every year.¹ Much of this emanates from land-based sources, with rivers acting both as reservoirs for plastic pollution² and as conduits. A recent study found that more than 1,000 rivers worldwide account for 80 percent of the macroplastics transported from inland areas to the sea.³ Coastal areas also contribute to plastic waste leakage, discharging large amounts of litter into marine environments.⁴

Growing volumes of plastic pollution threaten aquatic life, critical ecosystems and human health – and stakeholders around the world recognise the need for a paradigm shift in the fight against it. In accordance with the principles of the 'waste hierarchy,' which emphasises the avoidance and reduction of waste in upstream value chains, strategies focus above all on limiting the further discharge of plastic. In addition to bans and voluntary approaches, such as reducing single-use plastics, discussions are also underway about how to hold producers, retailers and other stakeholders accountable for plastic waste leakage. Awareness-raising measures aimed at triggering changes in people's behaviours with respect to littering, waste separation and waste avoidance are another important approach.



International action on plastic pollution

Germany has been engaged in combatting marine litter for years. The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN) is at the forefront of these efforts.

In 2015 and 2017, Germany successfully placed the issue on the agendas of its G7 and G20 presidencies, respectively. In September 2021, Germany teamed up with Ecuador, Ghana and Viet Nam to convene the first Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution, in Geneva, Switzerland. The aim of this gathering was to build political momentum in the lead-up to the second part of the 5th UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2022. There, a historic resolution was adopted, mandating an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to draft, by the end of 2024, a legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution. In October 2024, Germany, together with Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic and Ghana, hosted a second Ministerial Conference in Cali, Colombia.

Today, the global community continues its pursuit of a legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee has convened multiple sessions to draft this critical agreement, which should address the entire life-cycle of plastics and safeguard environmental and human health. Over 100 countries now advocate for production caps to mitigate plastic pollution at its source. Germany has played a key role in pushing for ambitious reduction targets and advocating for stricter regulations on plastic production and waste management.

Despite dedicated efforts, the latest negotiations held in August 2025, in Geneva, Switzerland, concluded without a treaty, due to continued disagreement over key issues such as limiting plastic production and the establishment of a financing mechanism to support developing countries and emerging economies. It is unclear when, and in what form, negotiations on a legally binding plastics treaty will continue.



Supporting Germany's global engagement on marine litter

Since 2020, the [BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention](#)⁵, implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of BMUKN, has been contributing to the German government's efforts to tackle plastic pollution at its source. The project provides needs-based advisory services to the federal ministry in support of Germany's commitments. It makes use of international platforms and events to share knowledge and experiences, and distributes the project's products and findings. It also cooperates with regional, national and local actors to implement small-scale activities and pilots, developed in close coordination with the federal ministry.

In addition, the project supports the federal ministry in implementing the funding programme [Marine Debris Framework – Regional Hubs around the Globe](#) (Marine:DeFRAG), which was launched in 2019.

A gender-sensitive approach to tackling plastic pollution

The plastics value chain is not gender-neutral – the inequalities of our societies are reflected in it at each stage, from resource extraction through production, use, waste management and recycling. In 2023, the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention adopted a gender-sensitive approach to the design and implementation of the pilot projects it supports. This approach aims to ensure that solutions are both effective and inclusive by considering gender-specific needs and impacts.

More information about the relationship between gender and plastic pollution can be found in the project publication [Gender in Focus: Towards Inclusive Solutions Along the Plastics Value Chain](#). For an illustration of how gender is reflected in our activities, read about the [pilot project in Kenya](#) with women from the informal recycling sector.



Amiyna's story



Exploring inclusive solutions through visual storytelling

The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention collaborated with the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP), an initiative of the World Economic Forum, to explore the intersection of gender and the plastic economy using a visual, story-telling format.

Using GPAP's [guidance on gender-responsive action](#) as its starting point, the story-

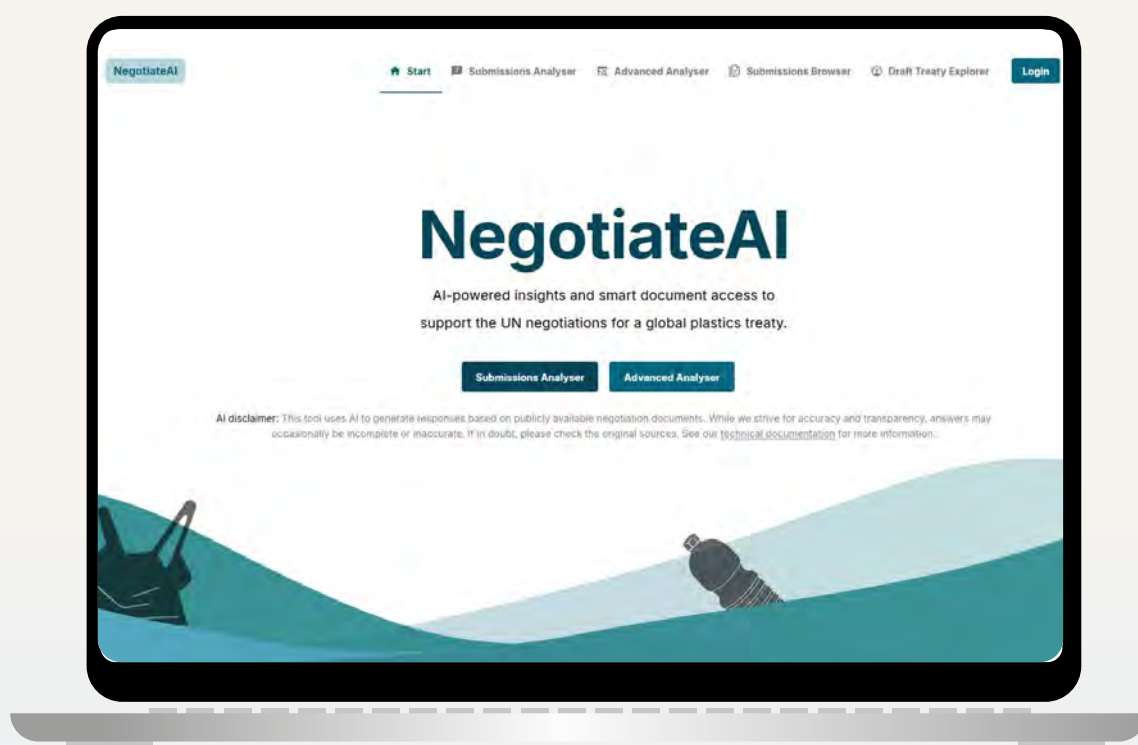
telling project follows the life of Amiyna, an informal waste picker, highlighting the distinct impacts and opportunities she faces compared to men or women from different backgrounds. For instance, it reveals how the lack of time and the multiple roles of women as workers, care-givers, and household managers affect women's participation in the plastics value chain.





NegotiateAI

A digital navigator for
global plastic treaty negotiations



Some of the countries most heavily affected by plastic pollution travel with very small delegations to the international negotiations on a legally binding global plastics treaty. This puts them at a disadvantage, as it is

nearly impossible for a few experts to manage the labour-intensive work of tracking and analysing all the documents, statements and position papers submitted by member states during the long and complex negotiations.



An app helps countries to position themselves effectively

The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention teamed up with the GIZ Data Lab to develop the NegotiateAI app to help countries navigate this complicated landscape. An open-source app which is available to use free of charge, NegotiateAI allows delegates, researchers and policymakers to search, review and analyse the content of official submissions. Users can quickly find content, compare the positions of different delegations and groups of states on specific issues, and identify themes across subsequent versions of the draft treaty. This helps them to stay oriented and to engage more effectively in the negotiations, including by identifying partners with similar positions.



A redesigned version of NegotiateAI was released in 2025, prior to the international negotiations in Geneva, Switzerland. The latest version – 3.0 – boasts an updated user interface and several new features. An Advanced Analyser allows users to compare submissions by narrow thematic areas, while the Draft Treaty Explorer makes it possible to track the evolution of specific articles over time, highlighting areas of consensus and disagreement.

A tool with broad applicability for advancing sustainable policies

NegotiateAI was developed with the needs of delegations at the global plastics treaty negotiations in mind. However, the app's functionalities are 'generic' and can be customised for use in other negotiation processes. For example, together with various partners, in 2025 the GIZ Data Lab launched the NegotiateCOP app to support international climate change negotiations.

Geographical overview of our activities

Scroll over circles to see countries.
Click on circles to go to project.



Brazil

Developing a national marine litter strategy



Brazil's 8,500-kilometre coastline is home to some of the world's richest marine ecosystems. Yet, plastic waste makes up over 80 per cent of debris found on its beaches,⁶ threatening biodiversity, fisheries, tourism and public health.

Recognising the urgency of this challenge, Brazil's government committed to developing a comprehensive National Marine Litter Strategy. The aim was to establish a structured, inclusive approach to tackling marine pollution, while strengthening Brazil's position in the negotiations for a global plastics treaty. The strategy was developed through input from multiple sectors – including waste management, fisheries, industry and local communities – combining scientific evidence with stakeholder dialogue to ensure it would be technically sound, widely supported, and feasible across Brazil.

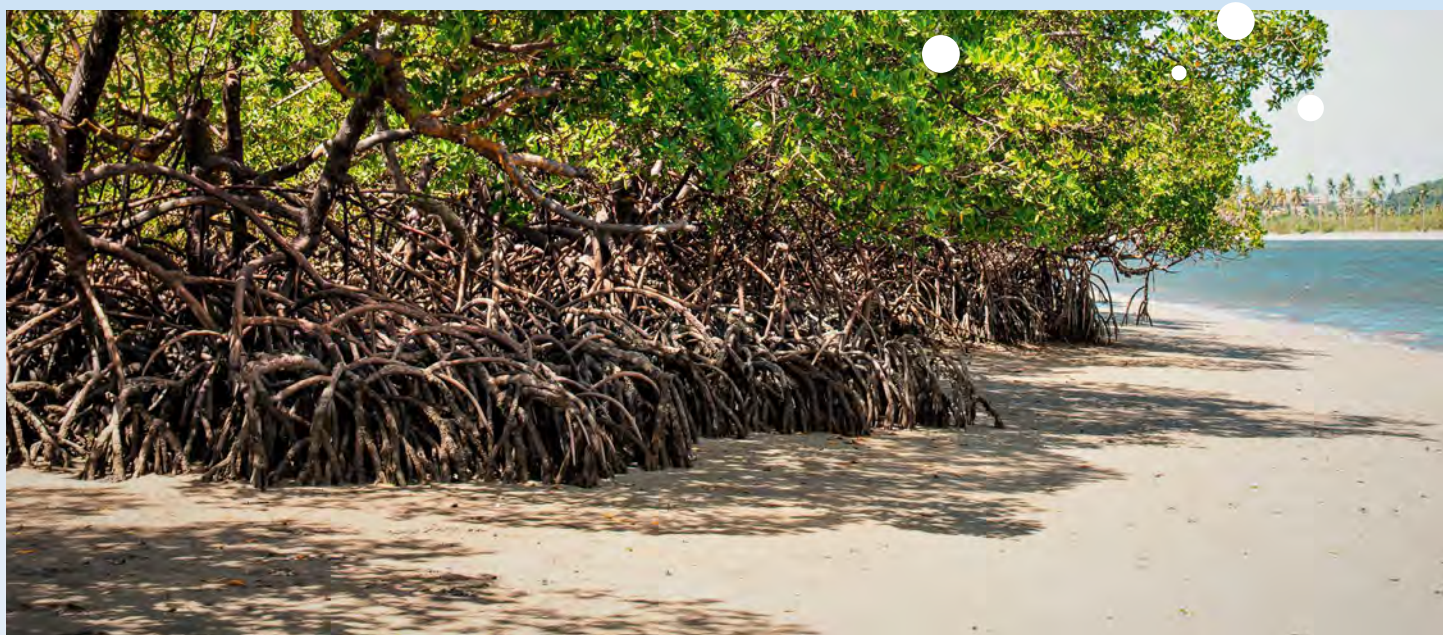
Public outreach and stakeholder engagement

To ensure broad participation, the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention supported the Brazilian Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and the University of São Paulo in a series of engagement activities. A public webinar series introduced experts, policymakers and citizens to the most pressing aspects of plastic pollution. The sessions covered topics such as the sources of marine litter, links to climate change, human health impacts, circular economy approaches, and [strategies to reduce plastics](#). Each session combined presentations with an interactive discussion, fostering exchange and raising awareness.

In parallel, specialised workshops were convened for key stakeholder groups, including local and state governments, civil society, academia and the private sector. These workshops focused on challenges specific to each group and helped identify practical actions to reduce marine litter.

 [The webinar recordings are available online](#)





Towards national impact with global relevance

More than 500 participants from almost 250 institutions took part in the workshops and webinars. By fostering knowledge exchange and inclusive dialogue, they created a strong foundation for a strategy that effectively addresses the complexity of marine pollution, while also reflecting Brazil's scientific, social, and economic realities. The strategy was published as an [official government decree](#) in October 2025, highlighting the priority being placed on tackling plastic pollution and increasing the likelihood that its provisions will be implemented.

Brazil's proactive approach also has international impact. As one of the world's largest economies with an extensive coastline, the country's actions strengthen its role in the global plastics treaty negotiations, setting an example for other coastal nations.



Time frame
2024



Partners
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MMA),
University of São Paulo



Colombia & Mexico

Tackling plastic pollution through sustainable public procurement

Public procurement holds significant potential to drive demand for more sustainable products, thereby reducing plastic use. Often referred to as the ‘sleeping giant’, this potential remains underutilised. The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention, in collaboration with the regional project EcoAdvance and local partners, supported the governments of Colombia and Mexico to make public procurement more sustainable and less plastic-intensive.

Colombia: Building on existing efforts

In Colombia, the initiative built on existing efforts, laws, and regulations such as Law 2232 of 2022, on the gradual reduction of production and consumption of single-use plastics, and the National Action Plan on Sustainable Public Procurement. The project activities, carried out in cooperation with Colombia’s National Procurement Agency (Colombia Compra Eficiente), included conducting an assessment of strategies for gradually reducing single-use plastic in public procurement, and identifying barriers, opportunities, and good practices. Additionally, a roadmap with proposals, guidelines, and strategic recommendations to promote and strengthen the gradual reduction of single-use plastic in public procurement was developed. Awareness-raising strategies within selected entities were also designed, promoting responsible plastic consumption and reuse as part of sustainable practices.



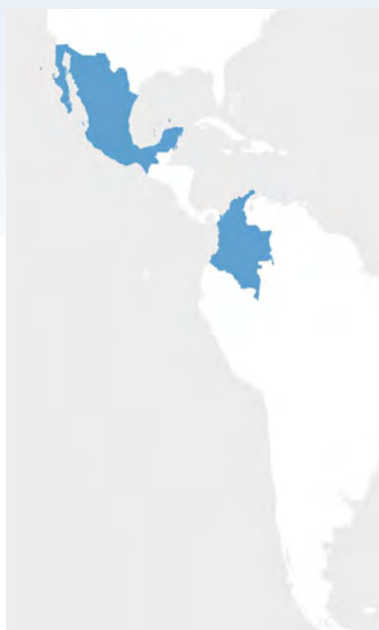


Mexico: Implementing a new federal law

In Mexico, a new federal law on public procurement integrating sustainability aspects has been in effect since April 2025. The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention collaborated with three states – Baja California, Nuevo León and Puebla – to support the implementation of the new law on state level by adapting procurement practices. First, the project analysed procured items to identify opportunities for reducing plastic consumption and waste generation. Based on these analyses, proposals and recommendations were developed to achieve plastic reduction goals at sub-national levels and, where possible, at the national level. Finally, the project created roadmaps for making public procurement more sustainable and less plastic-intensive in the three states.



[Visit
project
website](#)



Time frame
2025



Partners
EcoAdvance, National Procurement Agency (Colombia Compra Eficiente), State governments of Baja California, Nuevo León and Puebla (Mexico)

Costa Rica

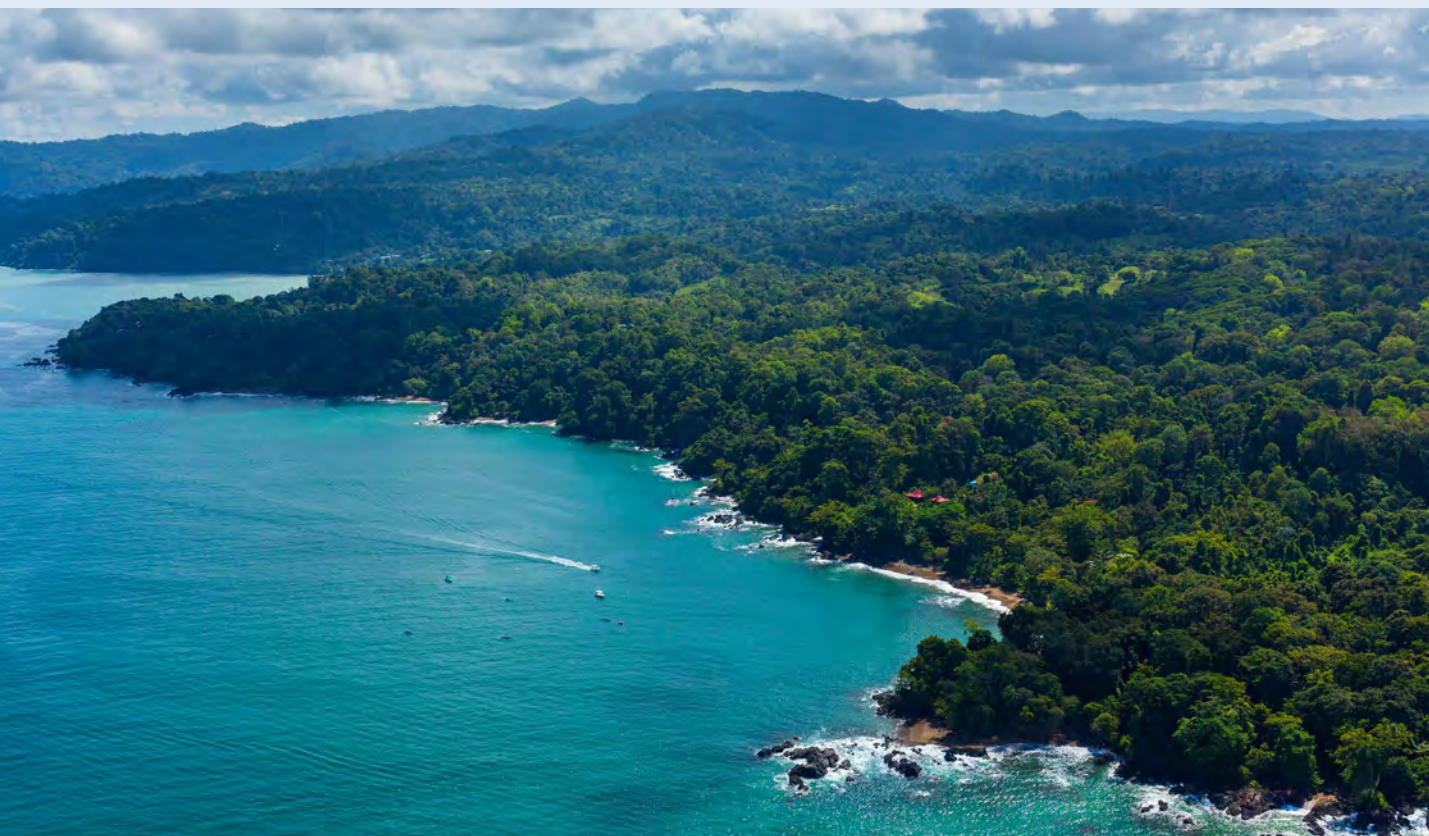
Generating evidence about marine debris

Plastic pollution threatens several key industries in Costa Rica, including tourism and fisheries, as well as the country's remarkable biodiversity. Fishing waste – such as nets, hooks, ropes, plastic containers and other materials – is part of the problem. The Ministry of Health estimates that it accounts for as much as 50 percent of the waste washed up on Costa Rica's shores. However, there are hardly any reliable data on the quantity, origin and type of this waste.

Formulating measures to prevent fishing waste

The government of Costa Rica is working to address plastic pollution through legislation and regulations. While Costa Rica does not have regulations which address marine debris, the National Marine Waste Plan seeks to be an instrument for planning and coordination with the actors and sectors involved, providing concrete actions on marine waste management issues.

More comprehensive information about the products used in fisheries and their possible entry into the marine environment was needed as a basis for the revision of this plan, as well as for the formulation of other measures aimed at avoiding the entry of plastic waste into the sea from the fishing sector.





A research study into plastic waste in the fisheries sector

In collaboration with Costa Rica's Ministries of Health and Environment and ACEPESA, the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention undertook a research study to determine the type, quantity, cost and final destination of plastics used by the fishing industry. The study also evaluated the contribution of fishing equipment to marine waste.

Researchers from ACEPESA focused on the area of Golfito, in Puntarenas province on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. They reviewed documents, conducted interviews and surveyed key stakeholders in the sector. Based on the information collected, the researchers concluded that fishing gear is often reused and recycled due to its high market value. At the same time, some gear is deliberately abandoned, probably to conceal illegal fishing activity. Waste audits and other systematic measurement methods are therefore needed to verify the scale of the issue. In this respect, the study underscored the urgency to address the lack of data on abandoned, lost and discarded fishing gear.

Recommendations inform future strategies and policies

Based on the findings and on consultations with relevant stakeholders, the study provided recommendations on technical, awareness-raising and educational measures, as well as monitoring, policy and regulatory proposals, to prevent marine litter from the fisheries sector around Golfito and at the national level. These results and recommendations were presented to the ministries in January 2022. They serve as a basis for discussions and priority-setting, including in relation to marine debris management, when updating national strategies and policies.

A follow-on project on 'ghost gear' is now underway in Costa Rica. For more details see [page 16](#).



Time frame
2021



Partners
Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and Energy,
ACEPESA

Costa Rica

Tackling ghost gear



The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention supports Ocean Conservancy's [Global Ghost Gear Initiative \(GGGI\)](#) to partner with experts in Costa Rica to tackle abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), commonly known as ghost gear. This effort aims to enhance local capacity and understanding of the factors contributing to ghost gear in Costa Rica's marine waters through the collection and use of data, and through stakeholder engagement.

Building evidence and capacity

GGGI will conduct fisher surveys using tools developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization to gather comprehensive data on gear loss in Costa Rica. These surveys will include questions exploring the role of women in fishing operations and gear management. The collected data will inform predictive models to identify ghost gear hotspots and guide removal and prevention efforts. GGGI will develop these models using spatial analysis and various datasets, including from the National Coast Guard.





Stakeholder engagement

To enhance Costa Rica's capacity to address ghost gear, GGGI will engage stakeholders through meetings and a virtual roundtable. This will involve government agencies, coastal municipalities, fishers, NGOs and regional champions. The roundtable will allow for the sharing of best practices and tools to support Costa Rica's efforts in managing ghost gear and achieving marine conservation goals. This will contribute to strengthening Costa Rica's voice in tackling abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear in regional and international processes and forums.



Time frame
2025–2026



Partners
Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), hosted by Ocean Conservancy

Nile Basin

Assessing and monitoring plastic pollution

Plastic pollution has increasingly affected the Nile Basin region, threatening the river's freshwater ecosystems as well as its vital environmental and economic resources. Given the Nile's extensive reach and its discharge into the Mediterranean Sea, it acts as a major transport pathway for mismanaged plastic waste, contributing substantially to transboundary marine litter and associated ecological risks.

A crucial platform for addressing shared water resources

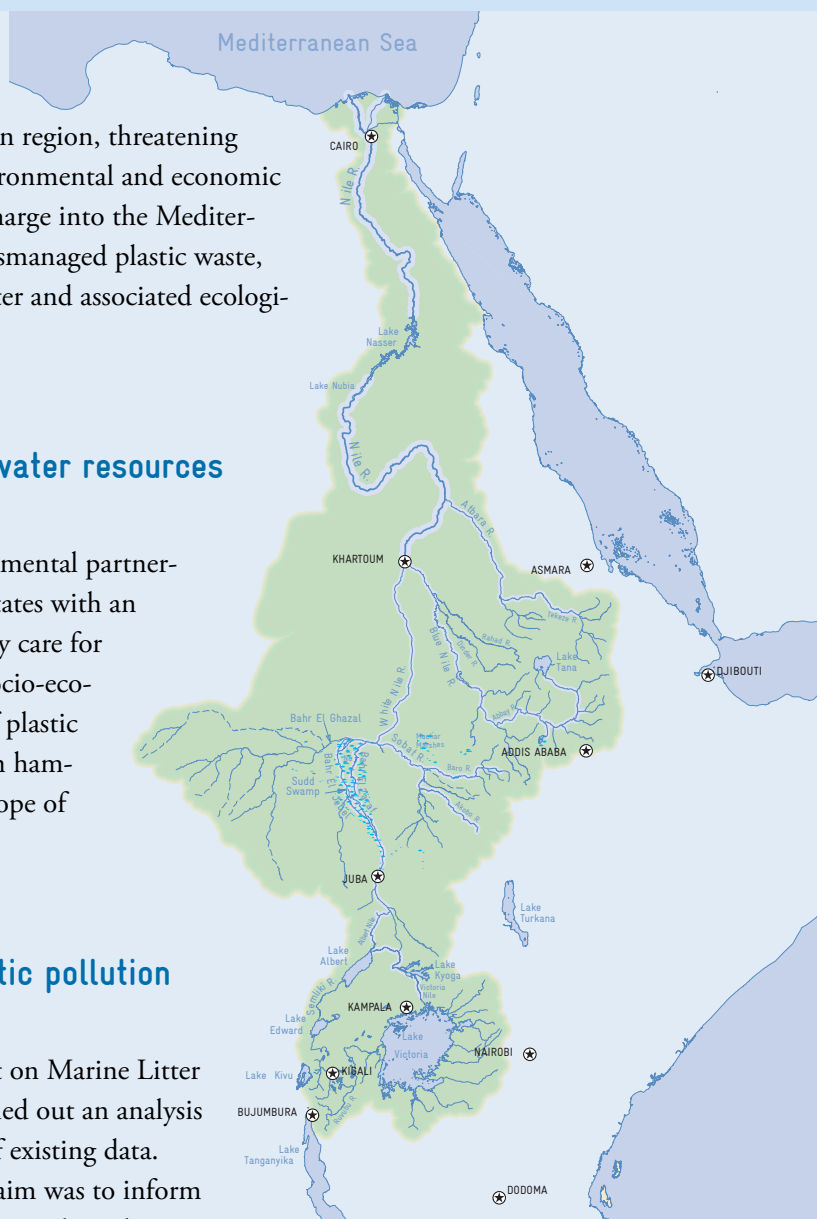
The [Nile Basin Initiative](#) (NBI), a regional intergovernmental partnership of 10 Nile Basin countries, provides its member states with an impartial, basin-wide platform to discuss how to jointly care for and utilise the shared water resources for sustainable socio-economic development. NBI wants to address the issue of plastic pollution together with its member states, but has been hampered by insufficient knowledge about the scale and scope of the problem.

Establishing a knowledge base about plastic pollution

In the first project phase the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention, together with NBI and local partners, carried out an analysis of plastic pollution along the Nile River on the basis of existing data.

The aim was to inform understanding about plastic pollution in the Basin and to support the development of countermeasures which could be incorporated into an NBI strategic framework for plastic waste prevention. Given the significant lack of data on waste management and river pollution in the Basin, this was an important first step in terms of assessing the level of knowledge and the extent of pollution.

The results of the study were presented to all member states at a workshop in Entebbe, Uganda, in 2022. During this workshop, participants were invited to share how their countries are affected by plastic pollution and to discuss the study outcomes.





Strengthening regional monitoring capacities

The second project phase aimed to support Nile Basin countries in enhancing their capacities for monitoring plastic pollution – a key need identified in the initial study. Effective monitoring of macroplastic pollution involves quantifying source inputs, identifying transport pathways, and informing targeted mitigation strategies in riverine areas.

In 2023 a baseline study was undertaken to assess existing approaches to macroplastic monitoring in the region, taking into account available resources and institutional capacities for data collection and management. With support from the [Nile Basin Discourse](#) (NBD), a network of civil society organisations, a comprehensive mapping of citizen science initiatives addressing plastic pollution was completed. In early 2025, in Kisumu, Kenya, the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention facilitated a training on macroplastic monitoring for representatives from all Nile Basin member states.

As a final step, an action plan on monitoring macroplastic pollution was developed and launched in mid-2025.

The plan sets out milestones on the journey to a comprehensive monitoring system in NBI member states. It also recognises the critical role of citizen scientists across the basin and encourages the continuation and expansion of their efforts to monitor and remove plastic debris from fresh-water ecosystems.



Time frame

2021–2022 (first project phase)

2023–2025 (second project phase)



Partners

Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), Nile Basin Discourse (NBD)

Kenya

Advancing a non-toxic, just and more sustainable circular economy

Kenya has taken major steps to reduce plastic litter in its waterways and marine areas. It has banned plastic bags, prohibited single-use plastics in protected areas, and adopted a law on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for a range of materials, including plastics. Despite these important actions, plastic pollution remains a challenge. Solid waste management systems are overwhelmed, recycling infrastructure is inadequate, and chemicals of concern in plastic products abound.

The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention supports the [Centre for Environment Justice and Development \(CEJAD\)](#) – and, indirectly, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) – in its efforts to bring about a non-toxic, just and sustainable circular economy in Kenya by enhancing the implementation of EPR systems and by regulating chemicals of concern in plastic products.

Enhancing EPR implementation for inclusive waste management

Kenya's EPR regulations mandate waste segregation by residents and institutions, the establishment of material recovery centres, and the implementation of material take-back schemes by producers through registered Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs). The first project component supports CEJAD's efforts to set up EPR schemes in Kisumu, Nairobi and Nakuru counties and to ensure that all actors in the value chain, including informal waste pickers, benefit from them. While waste pickers are formally recognised under the new EPR regulations, they often face challenges in understanding and complying with the legal and operational requirements and therefore are at risk of being marginalised.

The project will organise education and sensitisation sessions on EPR regulations and the new waste management law and also develop easy-to-read versions of the regulations and the law to increase public awareness and promote compliance. In addition, 100 waste pickers in each of the three counties will be trained on the management of material recovery centres. At least 30 female waste pickers per county will gain leadership skills and the chance to participate in decision-making processes, contributing to gender equality in the waste management sector.





Addressing chemicals of concern in plastics through science and policy advocacy

The second project component builds upon CEJAD's ongoing efforts with international partners to advance a non-toxic circular economy. These collaborations have exposed the pervasiveness of chemicals of concern in plastic products found in Kenya, sparking public debate and fuelling demands for stricter standards on plastic products.

With support from the project, additional laboratory analysis on chemicals such as bisphenols will be undertaken on selected plastic products in Kenya. In collaboration with its partners, CEJAD will present the findings in reports, policy briefs and informational materials targeting both the general public and the Kenya Bureau of Standards' (KEBS) relevant technical committees on plastics and safety of toys. Project support will also allow CEJAD to co-convene meetings of the technical committees, where findings will inform the review of national standards and regulations on chemicals of concern in plastic products.



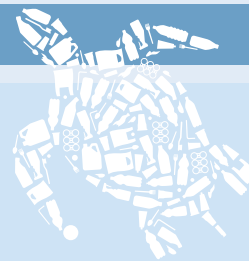
Time frame
2025–2026



Partners
Centre for Environment Justice
and Development (CEJAD)

Kenya

Empowering women in the informal recycling sector



Informal waste workers are essential in combating plastic pollution, particularly in places where waste management infrastructure is less developed. Women make up a significant share of informal waste workers in many countries, often undertaking time-intensive, dangerous work as sorters and waste pickers of lower-value recyclables. Gendered power relations within the informal recycling sector mean that women frequently have less access than men to more lucrative intermediary roles and earning opportunities.⁷ They also face a range of other challenges, from access to suitable protective gear to harassment, and even assault, at the places where they work.

A resource for raising awareness and developing capacity

[GRID-Arendal](#), a non-profit environmental organisation, has created a toolkit to support the empowerment of women in the informal waste sector. It aims to strengthen women's capacities in areas such as business and financial skills, workplace safety and physical health, leadership, rights and self-organisation.

The toolkit offers comprehensive guidance for organisations and initiatives that work with informal waste workers on preparing, implementing, and evaluating training sessions. GRID-Arendal has piloted the toolkit in different parts of the world to ensure its applicability across socio-economic and cultural contexts.



Inspiring women as change agents in Kisumu, Kenya

With backing from the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention, GRID-Arendal partnered with the Kisumu Waste Pickers' Welfare Association (Kiwapwa) to implement a training for women from the informal recycling sector using the toolkit. The initiative began by identifying the training needs of the target group. Experts from GRID-Arendal then facilitated an online train-the-trainer session to prepare local facilitators, who conducted a five-day workshop in June 2025.



The workshop was a notable success. Afterwards, participants offered testimonials highlighting how the sessions shaped their understanding of themselves as change agents in their communities:

'This training has not only built my capacity but has also given me purpose, courage, and a renewed sense of pride in my work.'

'Today, I see value and dignity in what I do. I'm not just collecting waste, I'm building a livelihood, protecting the environment, and proving that women like me can lead change in our communities.'



Next steps in Kisumu and toolkit update

Insights from the Kisumu training will inform updates to the toolkit, enhancing its effectiveness for future use around the world. GRID-Arendal plans to return to Kisumu in early 2026 to assess the impact of the training and to gather further insights.

This initiative empowers women in the informal waste sector and significantly contributes to the fight against plastic pollution, demonstrating the power of gender-sensitive approaches to respond to the specific needs of target groups and to create safe learning spaces which enhance the impact of trainings.



Time frame
2025–2026



Partners
GRID-Arendal

Abidjan Convention

Strengthening regional action with the Abidjan Convention

Africa's rapid modernisation has led to overexploitation of natural resources and extensive pollution. In the West, Central and Southern African region, growing volumes of plastic waste are harming the coastal ecosystems upon which many people's livelihoods depend. A regional approach is essential for addressing transboundary marine environmental challenges and governance issues.

A vital framework for regional cooperation

The Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region – commonly referred to as the [Abidjan Convention \(ABC\)](#) – provides an overarching legal framework for all marine-related programmes in West, Central and Southern Africa. Covering a marine area stretching from Mauritania to South Africa, with a coastline of just over 14,000 kilometres, the Convention arose from the need to adopt a regional approach for the prevention, reduction and control of pollution in the marine environment, coastal waters and related river waters. It is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme.

The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention provides the Abidjan Convention with targeted support to raise awareness in member states about negotiations on a global plastics treaty and to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders that will be key for the implementation of any future treaty.



Raising awareness and developing capacity to combat marine litter

In the first cooperation phase, the project provided the Abidjan Convention with financial support for a campaign to raise awareness about the need for a global plastics treaty. The campaign targeted political stakeholders involved in waste management, as well as the general public. Equipment for beach clean-ups was also provided.

In the current phase, the project supports the Convention in providing training to nominated representatives from national and local government authorities, as well as waste management companies. The goal of these trainings is to enable the implementation of sustainable waste management practices across the entire plastic packaging value chain.



The project has developed an online training programme on plastic waste management and carried out in-person training of trainers from ABC member states. So far, more than 300 people have been trained online and in person. These efforts aim to strengthen the knowledge and skills of government and private sector stakeholders across the region.



Time frame

2021-2022 (first project phase)
2023-2025 (second project phase)



Partners

Abidjan Convention (ABC)

Türkiye

Eco-friendly farming for plastic-free coastal areas



Pesticide-related plastic packaging poses a significant environmental threat in the greenhouse-dense agricultural areas of Antalya Province on Türkiye's Mediterranean coast. The BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention supports the efforts of the Antalya Metropolitan Municipality to reduce the volume of agricultural plastic being used, to recycle the hazardous plastic waste that is generated in accordance with national regulations and to prevent agricultural plastic waste from leaking into the environment, including marine ecosystems.

Building upon the Eco-Friendly Farmer Card project



The initiative builds upon the municipality's existing Eco-Friendly Farmer Card project which incentivises farmers, through a reward system, to safely dispose of pesticide-related plastic packaging in designated collection machines. In addition to extending the project to a new agricultural area – Gazipaşa District – the initiative will optimise the current approach, through adjustments to the monitoring and reward systems, and promote the use of low-plastic alternatives for pest control in order to focus more attention on prevention as the first step of the waste hierarchy.

Introducing a focus on gender

The mobile app for the Eco-Friendly Farmer Card project will be updated so that it not only monitors the volume and weight of the waste collected by farmers, but also disaggregates data by gender, measures plastic input and output per municipality, and tracks farmers' use of

low-plastic farming alternatives. The reward system will be adjusted so that farmers are not only incentivised to safely collect and dispose of plastic packaging, but also to reduce its use by switching to alternative pest control methods. The initiative will also introduce a focus on gender equality by prioritising women in the reward system, including gender-sensitive sessions into trainings, and ensuring that 20 per cent of the farmers trained in low-plastic farming alternatives are women.



Towards an EPR system for agricultural plastics

Finally, initial steps will be taken towards the development of an EPR for agricultural plastics – something which does not presently exist in Türkiye. The project will initiate first dialogues between different stakeholders to map interest, feasibility and shared responsibilities.



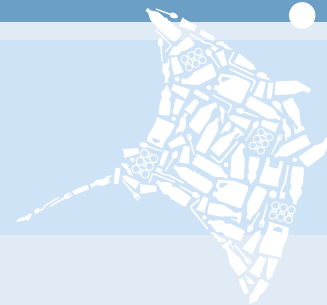
Time frame
2025–2026



Partners
Environmental Board of the
Antalya Metropolitan Municipality

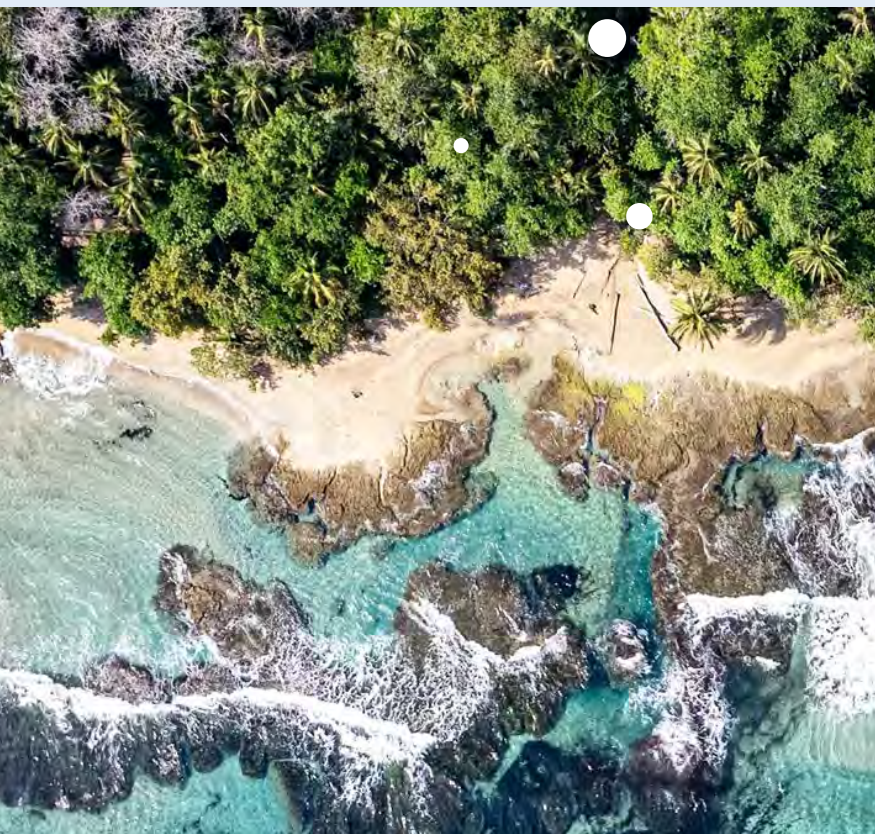
Indian Ocean

Regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean



The Indian Ocean, home to some of the world's richest marine ecosystems, is under growing threat from marine debris. The [Indian Ocean Rim Association](#) (IORA), which brings together 23 member states and 10 dialogue partners, has long acknowledged the dangers of marine pollution – not only to biodiversity and the environment, but also to human health, coastal livelihoods, and national economies. However, the absence of guidelines and strategies has hampered effective action on this common challenge.

Shared commitment to a cleaner Indian Ocean



In partnership with the government of Indonesia, GIZ and IORA cooperated in 2021–2022 on the development of a [Strategic Framework of Action on Marine Litter in the Indian Ocean](#). The aim was to promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices in waste management, circular economy and marine litter reduction among member states, to prioritise marine debris on the IORA agenda, and to promote regional cooperation. GIZ support was provided through the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention, as well as a second project, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, focused on strengthening IORA and its secretariat.

IORA's Working Group on the Blue Economy (WGBE) developed the framework through a series of collaborative activities involving experts and officials from selected IORA member states. The framework, which

was finalised at a workshop in Bali in 2022, outlines a list of concrete measures that member states can consider in developing national and regional solutions to reduce marine pollution. Participants at the Bali meeting also discussed steps for the implementation of the framework, paving the way for a future action plan.

Developing capacity to prevent plastic pollution at the source

In the second project phase, attention has shifted to the implementation of the strategic framework and the WGBE workplan. In collaboration with the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention, IORA organised a two-part webinar on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to introduce its member states to the



principles and practical approaches of EPR as a tool to reduce plastic pollution at the source. It brought together approximately 90 public and private sector representatives to explore existing EPR models, discuss implementation needs and share experiences from IORA member states. The sessions also served as a platform for interactive exchange, helping participants identify priority actions and capacity development needs to advance EPR efforts across the region in the future. Additional in-depth webinars for member states are planned.



Time frame

2021-2022 (first project phase)

2025-2026 (second project phase)



Partners

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia (first project phase)

Mekong Delta

New protocols for monitoring riverine pollution

The Mekong River, whose lower reaches are home to more than 70 million people, is a major contributor to marine plastic pollution. It is one of 10 rivers that together carry up to 95 percent of the plastic which reaches the world's oceans from inland areas.⁸ The [Mekong River Commission](#) (MRC), which brings together the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam, plays a vital role in protecting the Mekong River Basin's water and related resources. The Commission requires reliable data on riverine plastic pollution, including trends and fluctuations, to inform its efforts to protect aquatic environments and reduce marine litter.

A methodology for monitoring plastic waste



The Mekong River Commission has been working in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on water quality monitoring, including plastic waste leakage into the river system. The MRC Riverine Plastic Monitoring Programme, developed in 2020–2021, is a methodology for the long-term and cost-effective assessment and monitoring of plastic waste. It consists of three protocols for monitoring riverine macroplastic, riverine microplastic and microplastic in fish. The data collected through the programme provides critical evidence about transboundary plastic waste pollution status and trends, and can be used to inform policymaking.

Developing capacity to implement standard protocols

In the first phase of the project, the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention provided a grant to MRC to train representatives of national line agencies from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam on the implementation of the plastic monitoring methodology for riverine macroplastic and microplastic pollution. By ensuring that monitoring teams from the four countries apply the protocols in a uniform way, the trainings contributed to ensuring the compatibility of data collected across the Lower Mekong Basin.

MRC had previously piloted the protocols during the dry season with support from UNEP. GIZ then supported MRC in [piloting the methodology in the wet season](#), after conducting training workshops for national line agencies on how to implement the monitoring protocols. These pilots informed the finalisation of the protocols.



Expanding the reach of monitoring resources and strengthening analysis

In the second phase of the project, the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention made possible the translation of the MRC Riverine Plastic protocols into Khmer, Lao, Thai and Vietnamese. In addition, the project supported a training on microplastic analysis for representatives of member countries in Vientiane, Lao PDR, in 2024. Participants from national line agencies came away from the training with a common understanding of standard operating procedures for the analysis of microplastics, as well as the capacity to undertake the analysis and report results. A session on gender dimensions along the plastics value chain underscored the importance of integrating technical and gender-related considerations into plastic monitoring efforts.



Time frame

2022 (first project phase)
2024 (second project phase)



Partners

Mekong River Commission (MRC)

Cambodia

Empowering island communities for a plastic-free future

As Cambodia has experienced rapid economic and population growth in recent years, volumes of waste have risen as well. However, the development of waste management infrastructure has not kept pace. Only 65 percent of the municipal solid waste generated in Cambodia is collected⁹, with the remainder burned or disposed of in open spaces, streets or waterways. Some of this reaches rivers, including the Mekong, which carries plastic pollution out to the South China Sea. Along Cambodia's 440-kilometre coastline, improperly managed waste also harms vital marine ecosystems.

Plastic pollution in Cambodia's first marine protected area

The Koh Rong Archipelago, which comprises 10 islands in the Gulf of Thailand, was the first official Marine Protected Area in Cambodia. It is both an important tourist destination and an area of ecological significance. However, the archipelago's protected status does not mean it is shielded from plastic pollution. Assessments carried out by Flora and Fauna International have found that, in the absence of adequate solid waste management systems, communities in the archipelago have little option but to improperly dispose of household waste.¹⁰ Waste audits have revealed that plastic accounts for 30 percent of household waste and 23 percent of waste generated by businesses.¹¹

Encouraging the adoption of sustainable waste management practices

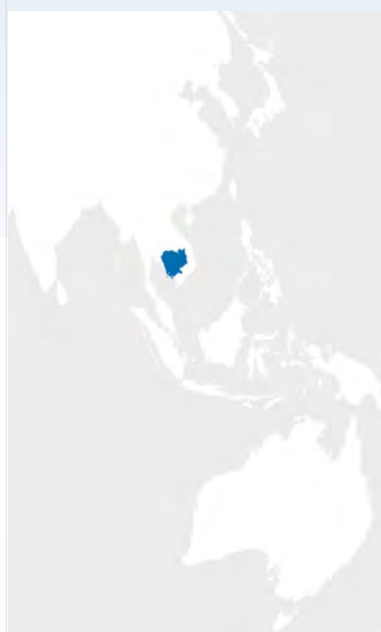
In cooperation with the Koh Rong Environmental Conservation Association and Flora and Fauna International, the BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention supported efforts to increase citizens' awareness of environmental pollution and of approaches for reducing plastic waste, in line with the 4Rs framework (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Training measures and targeted information campaigns sought to sensitise residents to





the importance of separating waste at source. Bins were provided to support waste separation and recycling according to circular economy principles. These measures empowered community members and local businesses to develop sustainable concepts for waste management and tourism which help to prevent marine pollution through recycling and the use of alternative, reusable items.

Lessons from Koh Rong are being used by the Ministry of Environment and other municipalities to guide the planning of similar measures in other parts of the country. The experience contributes to broader initiatives, helping to shape strategies based on real-world data and local practices.



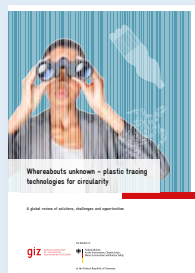
Time frame
2022



Partners
Ministry of Environment of Cambodia, Fauna and Flora International, Koh Rong Environmental Conservation Association (KRECA)

Publications

The publications can also be found on our [GIZ project page](#)



[Whereabouts unknown – plastic tracing technologies for circularity](#) (2026)

This publication provides a global review of the technologies, challenges and opportunities associated with plastic material tracing as a key enabler for a circular economy. It analyses solutions such as digital watermarks, physical tracers and digital product passports that aim to increase transparency in plastic value chains. A particular focus lies on the Global South perspective to ensure inclusive governance.



[Clean Water, Connected Efforts](#) (2025)

Developed as part of a cooperation with the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), this publication focuses on analysing and monitoring plastic pollution in the Nile Basin. It provides an overview of citizen science initiatives in NBI member states and their activities related to monitoring plastic pollution in the Nile Basin.



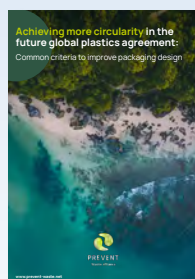
[Assessing the Role of Plastic Packaging in Food Waste Reduction in the Retail Sector](#) (2025)

Focusing on the retail sector in Latin America, this publication explores how packaging can be rethought to prevent food loss without new environmental burdens. It concludes that material innovation, system redesign, and policy must be pursued together to reduce food and packaging waste.



[Gender in Focus: Towards Inclusive Solutions Along the Plastics Value Chain](#) (2025)

This report provides an introduction for policymakers, businesses and civil society to gender and plastic pollution. It considers each stage of the plastic values chain through a gender lens, and shows how addressing plastic pollution with gender in mind makes measures more targeted and ultimately more effective.



[Achieving More Circularity in the Future Global Plastics Agreement: Common Criteria to Improve Packaging Design](#) (2023)

This report provides guidelines for improving the design of plastic packaging, drawing on both circular product design and eco-design principles. It informs stakeholders and decision-makers from the private sector, public institutions, and governments on the potential of improved product design to prevent plastic pollution and drive more circularity.



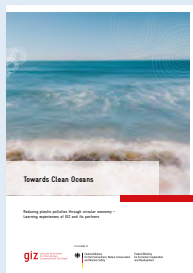
[Advances in Remote Sensing of Plastic Waste](#) (2023)

Imaging and remote sensing technologies can complement existing data collection systems for assessing and monitoring the leakage of (plastic) waste into the environment. This report provides an overview of remote sensing applications for plastic waste monitoring, as well as examples of current research projects.



[Extended Producer Responsibility Schemes in Small Island Developing States](#) (2023)

This study explores the potential of EPR schemes to reduce plastic pollution in Small Island Developing States (SIDS). It outlines core elements of EPR schemes, identifies key challenges for SIDS in developing and implementing such schemes, and introduces a roadmap for their preparation and development.



[Towards Clean Oceans. Reducing Plastic Pollution through Circular Economy – Learning Experiences of GIZ and its Partners](#) (2023)

Since 2015, Germany has expanded its international cooperation on marine litter prevention by supporting the transition to a circular economy. This publication takes stock of technical development cooperation efforts implemented by GIZ over this period, highlighting project examples and knowledge products that show what has and has not worked.



[Assessing the Role and Impact of EPR in the Prevention of Marine Plastic Packaging Litter](#) (2022)

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is recognised as a key instrument for mitigating marine litter. Against the backdrop of increasing volumes of marine plastic litter, this report critically assesses how EPR affects marine plastic (packaging) litter and how EPR schemes can be adapted for greater impact.



[Benchmark of Plastic Hotspotting Methodologies](#) (2022)

This report reviews methodologies for assessing plastic leakage into waterways and entering oceans and seas. By providing a comparative framework, it supports the identification of suitable methodologies for monitoring projects and national programmes aimed at preventing plastic pollution and marine litter.



[Small Island Developing States and Plastic Pollution – Challenges and Opportunities of a Global Agreement on Plastic Pollution for SIDS](#) (2022)

In the context of negotiations on a global agreement on plastics, this study analyses the specific challenges Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face in terms of combating plastic pollution, the needs which should ideally be addressed in a plastics treaty, and opportunities SIDS have to voice their interests during treaty negotiations.

Endnotes

- 1 United Nations Environment Programme (2021). [From Pollution to Solution: A global assessment of marine litter and plastic pollution](#). Nairobi.
- 2 Mennekes, D. et al. (2024). [Macroplastic Fate and Transport Modeling: Freshwaters Act as Main Reservoirs](#). ACS EST Water 2024, 4, 6, 2470–2481.
- 3 Lourens, J. J., Meijer, L. et al. (2021). [More than 1000 rivers account for 80% of global riverine plastic emissions into the ocean](#). Sci. Adv.7, eaaz5803.
- 4 Schmidt, C., Krauth, T., Wagner, S. (2017). [Export of Plastic Debris by Rivers into the Sea](#). Environ. Sci. Technol. 1(21), 12246–12253. DOI : 10.1021/acs.est.7b02368
- 5 The official name of the project is the 'Global sector project to support the BMUKN in implementing the Marine Debris Framework – Regional hubs around the globe.' For easier reading, we refer to the project by the shorter name 'BMUKN Support Project on Marine Litter Prevention'.
- 6 Cavalcante, R. et al. (2020). [Marine debris on a tropical coastline: Abundance, predominant sources and fate in a region with multiple activities \(Fortaleza, Ceará, northeastern Brazil\)](#). Waste Management 108 (2020) 13–20.
- 7 GRID-Arendal (2022). [A Seat at the Table: The Role of the Informal Recycling Sector in Plastic Pollution Reduction, and Recommended Policy Changes](#). GRID-Arendal.

[Export of Plastic Debris by Rivers into the Sea](#). Environ Sci Technol. 2017 Nov 7;51(21):12246–12253. doi: 10.1021/acs.est.7b02368. Epub 2017 Oct 11. PMID: 29019247.

[Sector Brief Cambodia: Waste Management](#). Eschborn: GIZ.

[Solid Waste Management and Marine Litter in the Koh Rong Archipelago: Findings & recommendations from an assessment of Solid Waste Management systems](#). Fauna & Flora International, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

- 11 Fauna & Flora International (2022). [Targeted Measures to Reduce Plastic Pollution in Marine-Protected Areas \(MPAs\), Cambodia](#). Phnom Penh, Cambodia: Fauna & Flora International.

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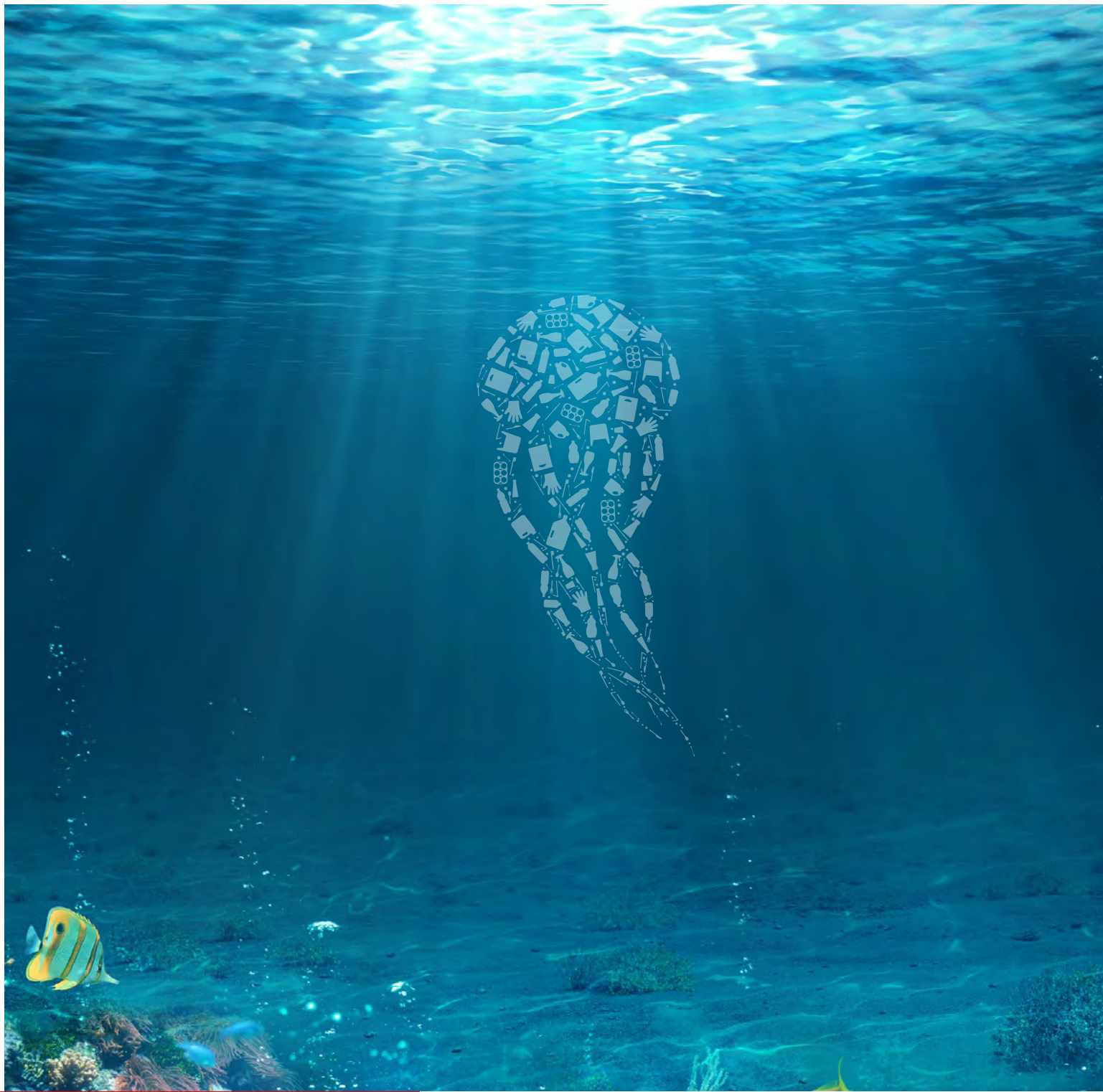
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