

# The 2025 Targets for Solutions on Marine Plastics Litter

IUCN Marine and Polar Programme

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## Introduction

The Declaration of the Global Plastics Associations for Solutions on Marine Litter was launched in 2011.<sup>1</sup> Since its launch, it has been voluntarily signed by 60 plastics organizations in 34 countries. The Joint Declaration focuses on action:

Since 2011, more than 185 marine litter solutions projects have been planned, put into action, or completed. That's a 50% increase in marine litter projects since the declaration was created. And it's just the beginning.

In September 2015, the United Nations adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.<sup>2</sup> It includes a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on the oceans:

**SDG 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.**

And this goal includes a target to reduce marine pollution:

**SDG Target 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.**

In May 2016, at the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Science, Technology and Technological Advice (SBSSTA) for the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, the Parties formally addressed the issue of marine debris including plastics litter. They agreed on a set of the priority land-based actions for mitigating and preventing

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.marinelittersolutions.com/about-us/joint-declaration/>

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats.<sup>3</sup> Further, the background documentation for this issue recognised the Joint Declaration as “a public commitment to tackle the global issue of plastics in the marine environment.”<sup>4</sup>

IUCN and its members in collaboration with Global Plastics Associations and other stakeholders propose to ‘connect the dots’ through this integrated framework for action which links the 2011 Joint Declaration with SDG target 14.1 and the CBD’s set of priority land-based actions.

To accomplish this, *additional text in italics* adapted from SDG14, the draft CBD agreement,<sup>5</sup> and IUCN and its members is integrated into the Joint Declaration as follows:

### **Declaration of the Global Plastics Associations for Solutions on Marine Litter *with 2025 Targets***

Plastic materials deliver significant societal benefits, including energy and resource savings, consumer protection and innovations that improve health care, reduce food spoilage and improve quality of life. For society to receive the benefits that plastics can provide, it is essential to properly recover them so that litter does not threaten our natural environment, including marine ecosystems.

Investigations by marine scientists are highlighting the extent to which littered plastic and other materials are ending up as debris in our oceans and the consequences for the marine environment. The organisations below are firmly committed to the principle that plastics do not belong in the world’s oceans and should not be littered -- plastics should be responsibly used, reused, recycled and finally recovered for their energy value.

Plastic is present as debris in the marine environment as a result of poor or insufficient waste management, lack of sufficient recycling / recovery and bad practices such as land and marine litter. These are large and complex issues with societal and economic challenges, and are more than any single entity, industry, or government can solve. Building on work in individual regions, the undersigned

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<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2016/pr-2016-05-04-sbstta20-en.pdf> and <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-20/official/sbstta-20-05-en.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/sbstta/sbstta-20/information/sbstta-20-inf-09-en.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> The final CBD decision will be made by the Conference of the Parties in December 2016.

organisations are coming together to work with governments, NGOs, researchers and other stakeholders to prevent marine litter.

*By 2025, we aim to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.*

We will:

**1. Contribute to solutions by working in public-private partnerships aimed at preventing marine debris; including:**

*Promoting structural economic changes that would reduce the production and consumption of plastics, increase production of environmentally friendlier materials, and support the development of alternative materials;*

**2. Work with the scientific community and researchers to better understand and evaluate the scope, origins and impact of and solutions to marine litter; including:**

*Identifying baseline data on the main land-based sources, quantities and impacts of marine debris;*

*Supporting research aimed at developing technology to better understand the environmental impacts of plastics on the marine environment, to design new or improved green chemistry alternatives and to assess cost-effective production on a commercial scale;*

**3. Promote comprehensive science-based policies and enforcement of existing laws to prevent marine litter; including:**

*Assessing whether different sources of microplastics and different products and processes that include both primary and secondary micro plastics are covered by legislation, and strengthen, as necessary, the existing legal framework so that the necessary measures are applied;*

*Supporting an enabling environment for these changes through capacity-building, regulations and standards, and cooperation between industry, governments and consumers*

- 4. Help spread knowledge regarding eco-efficient waste management systems and practices, particularly in communities and countries that border our oceans and watersheds; including:**

*Improving the waste management systems of countries through the sharing of best practices as well as identifying and addressing loopholes that contribute to the generation of marine debris;*

- 5. Enhance opportunities to recover plastic products for recycling and energy recovery; including:**

*Promoting structural economic changes that would increase recycling and reuse;*

and

- 6. Steward the transport and distribution of plastic resin pellets and products (including powders and flakes) from supplier to customer to prevent product loss and encourage our customers to do the same; including:**

*Promoting best practices along the whole plastics manufacturing and value chain from production to transport, such as aiming for zero loss.*

*Conducting research into the effectiveness of product loss prevention and containment strategies*

Success in these efforts will require sustained, good faith cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders. We will do our part and invite other organisations to join us; including:

*Collaborating with IUCN, its members and other stakeholders to further develop an online and inclusive platform for information-sharing, communication and collaboration to support preventing and mitigating the impacts of marine debris on marine and coastal biodiversity and habitats.*