

APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris

Marine debris, including plastic litter in the marine environment, is an increasing global challenge in need of a cooperative response. The severity of the marine debris problem is particularly acute in the APEC region, underscoring APEC's importance as a regional forum in a strategic position to drive efforts on understanding the impacts and costs of marine debris, and developing the required management and prevention approaches, in order to mitigate its impediments to sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific.

I. Background

At the APEC Ocean-related Ministerial Meeting in 2014 in Xiamen, China, the Xiamen Declaration called for more integrated, sustainable, inclusive and mutually beneficial partnership and encouraged cooperation on the reduction and mitigation of marine pollution, including from land-based sources.

To implement the Xiamen Declaration, the Oceans and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) and the Virtual Working Group on Marine Debris have had strong work programs on marine debris with several important initiatives. In 2018, the OFWG endorsed the ROK sponsored 'Workshop's Recommendation for a Draft on APEC Marine Debris Management Guideline' which informed this Roadmap. Based on the numerous joint efforts of APEC economies under the APEC framework in recent years, the APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris is intended to help guide APEC's work.

II. Vision

Recognizing the pressing need for a collective and coordinated vision and long-term strategy with high-level endorsement, the present document aims to encourage member economies to take voluntary and concrete steps while taking into account their respective internal circumstances. Recognizing further that marine debris is a global and multidisciplinary challenge, APEC will take action, based on scientific evidence and lessons learned from regional efforts, to significantly contribute to addressing this urgent issue through the following areas:

- Encouraging an APEC consolidated approach by driving policy development and coordination at every level, from regional cooperation down to local governments, across all relevant fora and agencies;
- Fostering research and innovation for the development and refinement of new methodologies and solutions for monitoring, preventing, and reducing marine debris;
- Promoting sharing of best practices and lessons learned and enhancing cooperation; and
- Increasing access to financing and facilitating private sector engagement to promote investment, trade and market creation in industries and activities that enable marine debris management and prevention.

III. Guidelines

Taking into account that APEC economies have diverse policy objectives and priorities as well as domestic laws and regulations, the policy and programmatic development and coordination among APEC economies should be based on the APEC principles of consensus, non-binding, voluntary participation, cooperation, and flexibility.

1. *Policy Development and Coordination*

- Identify and share effective measures taking into account existing global, regional and domestic action plans and frameworks on marine debris; and promote mutually beneficial collaboration with other relevant international, regional and sub-regional fora or organizations.

- Establish mechanisms for cross-fora dialogue among relevant APEC Working Groups to encourage a coordinated and holistic approach to combating and managing marine debris.
- Strengthen coordination with relevant private sector, and civil society organizations.
- Encourage economies to build upon and apply the '*APEC Policy and Practice Recommendation for Overcoming Barriers to Financing Waste Management Systems and Reducing Marine Debris*' to address financing gaps for waste management infrastructure.
- Encourage APEC economies to promote domestic inter-agency policy coordination mechanisms on marine debris and waste management.
- Promote sustainable waste management, and reduction and prevention of leakage of waste from land- and sea-based sources, at all levels of government and expand on successful experiences and models.
- Encourage the use of available scientific information for the development of policies.

2. *Capacity Building*

- Consider cross-fora collaboration on harmonization of macro and micro plastics monitoring methodologies and the best available technologies (BAT) to reduce the release of plastic waste.
- Promote complementarity between member economies' initiatives within the APEC framework and other similar initiatives in the APEC region.
- Encourage consumer awareness activities and education.

3. *Research and Innovation*

- Promote research development and implementation of innovative solutions to marine debris such as environmentally sustainable alternative materials and start-up incubators.
- Promote research to identify policy drivers of marine debris and promote development and implementation of innovative solutions.
- Support research and promote knowledge sharing - to assess marine debris impacts on coastal ecosystems (e.g., mangroves, sea grass, coral) and the marine environment.
- Encourage research on environmentally sustainable waste disposal and management.
- Support research on land- and sea-based sources, pathways, life cycles and impacts of marine debris, including potential impacts on human health.

4. *Financing and Private Sector Engagement*

- Encourage and facilitate Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to increase investments, productive partnership arrangements and outputs.
- Consider the possibility of APEC sub funds to support sustainable management of the marine environment including marine debris.
- Consider applying circular economy or sustainable materials management approaches to strengthen end-markets for plastic wastes and drive sustainable waste management.
- Explore opportunities for de-risking innovations and technologies to enhance access to international financing.

IV. *Implementation*

This Roadmap should be seen as a living document. Additional APEC-wide actions could be considered for agreement by consensus to achieve the objectives of this Roadmap. As the relevant fora, the OFWG annual work plan should include activities to implement the Roadmap, and annual economy reports to the OFWG should include information on domestic or regional marine debris activities. The OFWG shall report on actions and progress under the Roadmap to the Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation. Senior Officials will share best practices and recommendations with APEC member economies broadly, as appropriate.