

# MARPLASTICCS

Marine Plastics and Coastal Communities Project



Thai school student removing plastic from the sea in Trat province. © IUCN Thailand

## The Plastic Pollution Crisis

Plastic is cheap, lightweight, strong and malleable which makes it a very useful material for a wide variety of applications.

Scientists estimate that since the 1950s, 8,300 million tons of plastic have been produced globally but only 9 percent has been recycled. The rest has been discarded in landfills or has accumulated in the environment.<sup>1</sup>

It is also estimated that at the current rate of production, a total of 34,000 million tons of plastic will be produced by 2050.<sup>2</sup>

Plastics are released into the environment at different stages of the plastic life cycle. In the case of oceans, studies indicate that rivers contribute around 10-20% of all ocean plastic waste every year.<sup>3</sup>

Plastic pollution is a production, consumption and waste management challenge that must be tackled upstream.

This means the way we design, produce, transform, use and dispose of plastic needs re-thinking and innovative circular economy approaches which can help close the plastic tap.

### Plastic Pollution: The Facts

- Up to 12 million tons of plastic flow into our ocean every year – that's the equivalent of one dump truck per minute.
- Plastic gets into our food and water, and is a serious health hazard.
- Plastic kills an estimated one million seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals each year.<sup>4</sup>
- Plastic pollution costs a minimum of \$13 billion annually in damage to marine ecosystems.<sup>5</sup>

In 2015, Thailand and Viet Nam were ranked among the top 6 contributors of marine plastic pollution.

<sup>1</sup> Jambeck J. R. et al., 2015. Plastic Waste inputs from Land into the Ocean. *Science*, vol 347, no 6223, 13 Feb 2015, pp. 768-771

<sup>2</sup> Geyer R., Jambeck J. R., Law L. K., 2017. Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. *Science Advances*, 19 Jul 2017: Vol. 3, no. 7, e1700782.

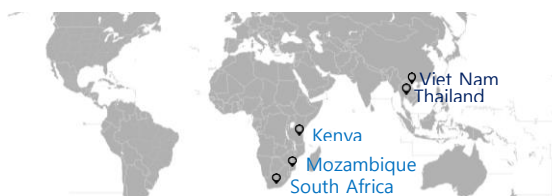
<sup>3</sup> Schmidt C., Krauth T., Wagner S. 2017. Export of Plastic debris by Rivers into the Sea. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 51: 1, pp 12246–12253.

<sup>4</sup> Gall S.C., Thompson R.C., 2015. The impact of debris on marine life. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 92:170–79.

<sup>5</sup> UNEP, 2014. *Valuing Plastics: The Business Case for Measuring, Managing and Disclosing Plastic Use in the Consumer Goods Industry*

## MARPLASTICCs

In 2017, with support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), IUCN launched the Marine Plastics and Coastal Communities initiative (MARPLASTICCs). This is a three-year initiative in Africa and Asia which works in five countries: South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Thailand and Viet Nam.



MARPLASTICCs uses an integrated life-cycle approach which supports a global transition from a linear take-make-dispose model to a circular plastics economy.

## MARPLASTICCs Objectives

MARPLASTICCs aims to:

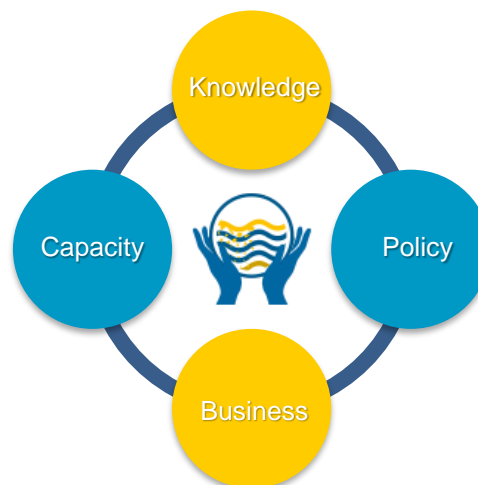
- **Assist** governments and regional bodies in Africa and Asia to **strengthen, develop and implement legislation** and other measures which reduce plastic pollution.
- **Equip** governments, industry and civil society with **tools, knowledge, capacity and policy options** to help close the plastic tap.
- **Ensure** that the **full life cycle of plastics is taken into consideration**, not just the impacts of downstream “marine litter”.



MARPLASTICCs partners in Mozambique picking up trash from a beach on World Oceans Day. © WWF

## MARPLASTICCs Pillars

To achieve its objectives, MARPLASTICCs works through four interconnected pillars:



**Knowledge:** IUCN is developing tools to assess the plastic leaking into the environment from source-to-sea. IUCN works with countries to co-generate credible, salient and legitimate data and analysis to understand their current plastic leakage status, set targets, agree and implement actions, and track progress towards targets over time.

**Capacity:** IUCN is bringing together key stakeholders to promote circular economy actions, share best practices, and stimulate and leverage national action to address plastic pollution.

**Policy:** IUCN is supporting policy and legislative analysis and reform, and facilitating the development of national programmes, including action plans and green economy roadmaps.

**Business:** IUCN is working with the private sector to develop a plastic footprint methodology measuring how much plastic is used, wasted and leaking into the environment along their value chain.

For more information, please visit, follow or contact us at:



<https://www.iucn.org/theme/marine-and-polar/our-work/close-plastic-tap-programme>



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