

Ocean Action Panel 4:

Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities

*An extract of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation:
Inputs to Ocean Action Panels Concept Papers*

About this Paper

This paper is an extract from the report of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Inputs to Ocean Action Panels Concept Papers, which summarizes inputs received from stakeholders to a global online stakeholder consultation organized by UN DESA in connection with the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference which will be held from 9 June to 13 June in Nice, France.

The main Report can be found [here](#), including links to all responses and all inputs to the ten Ocean Action Panels, as well as detailed background information and a summary.

This paper presents summaries of key messages for Ocean Action Panel 2: Increasing ocean-related scientific cooperation, knowledge, capacity building, marine technology, and education to strengthen the science-policy interface for ocean health.



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Under this topic, 179 contributions were received, and more detailed inputs are available [here](#).

Main Challenges

A major challenge is the need for stronger environmental regulations related to reducing marine pollution. Numerous stakeholders highlighted the critical role of policy reforms in reducing ocean pollution, especially from plastic waste. However, the inadequate enforcement of current regulations remains a substantial obstacle.

A further challenge is **the global nature of marine pollution, which demands collaborative international efforts**. Many organizations highlighted the need for a global plastic pollution reduction pact and emphasized the importance of international cooperation to establish effective waste management systems and promote public awareness. However, achieving consensus among nations with differing priorities and capacities presents a significant challenge. Moreover, **the adoption of circular economy models**, while advocated by many stakeholders, faces obstacles in terms of policy integration and the development of sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics at both the local and global levels.

Transformative Actions

Multiple stakeholders emphasized the need to strengthen environmental regulations and policies related to plastic pollution.

They highlighted the importance of **reinforcing regulatory frameworks** to mitigate ocean pollution, with organizations focusing on advancing policy reforms for environmental protection.

"We should strengthen environmental regulation policies by implementing strict regulations to reduce the discharge of pollutants into rivers and oceans. This includes industrial waste, wastewater and agricultural chemicals." (Humanity for the World)

Several stakeholders stressed the potential of **community-driven projects**. These efforts encompass **clean-up activities, community education, and participation in international negotiations on plastic pollution**. Stakeholders emphasized that these initiatives would be particularly effective in **coastal cities and communities**.

"Implementing a "Zero-Waste Coastal Cities Initiative" can reduce land-based pollution by promoting waste management and recycling systems in coastal urban areas. Local governments can implement and enforce waste management policies. The private sector could develop and support innovative waste reduction technologies. NGOs can raise awareness and provide community support". (The Bharat Scouts Guides, WOSM World Organisation of Scout Movement, WWF Youngo and Indian youth for climate network UNICEF)

Many stakeholders called for the immediate enhancement of civil society organizations (CSO) focused on addressing marine pollution. Stakeholders advocated for increased CSO involvement in **raising awareness and implementing preventive measures** against pollution.

“The acceleration of CSO activities in prevention and the promotion of good practices around marine and coastal ecosystems must be revitalized.” (Afrique Esperance NGO)

Some organizations pushed for the **ban of harmful products** like cigarette filters and single-use vaping devices. They argued that removing these items from circulation would significantly reduce marine litter and pollution.

“By all accounts, pollution degrades and denatures ecosystems. The simplest way to eliminate this problem is to prevent plastics from entering the ocean, since single-use plastics such as cutlery, bottles, straws, cotton buds, and cigarette filters are responsible for 50% of marine pollution.” (Union des Amis Socio Culturels d’Action en Développement)

Stakeholders underscored the importance of **technology and conservation zones** in combating pollution. For example, participants advocated for innovative technological solutions to monitor ocean health and establish marine conservation zones aimed at protecting vulnerable ecosystems

and promoting sustainable marine resource management.

“By harnessing the power of continuous, data-driven, autonomous cleanup, we can significantly reduce the amount of plastic entering our oceans and restore the health of marine and coastal ecosystems.” (Clean Sea Solutions)

Several organizations promoted the idea of a **global plastic pollution reduction pact**. They emphasized the need for comprehensive national action plans and strengthened international cooperation, with a focus on **increased investment in sustainable waste management systems**, public awareness campaigns, and the promotion of eco-friendly practices to reduce environmental impact and encourage responsible waste disposal. In addition, stakeholders stressed the importance of **international collaboration and policy development for marine conservation**. They highlighted the role of **cross-border partnerships** in tackling cross-border pollution and safeguarding the sustainability of shared marine resources.

“Marine pollution, particularly from plastics, poses a significant threat to ocean health. A binding agreement can drive concerted action and accountability among nations to tackle this urgent issue. By uniting countries under a common goal, this initiative can lead to significant reductions in marine pollution, protecting ocean ecosystems and promoting sustainable practices.” (World Muslim Congress)



Partnership Spotlight

The [Ocean Cleanup](#) is a leading initiative that has demonstrated new ways of working to accelerate the implementation of SDG 14 by addressing marine pollution through innovative technology and partnerships. The project focuses on removing plastic from oceans and rivers using passive systems and river interceptors. Successful deployments, such as in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, have removed significant amounts of plastic waste, while river interceptors have shown promising reductions in plastic flow to the oceans. These results provide evidence of how advanced, data-driven solutions can combat marine pollution effectively. The initiative’s success is fueled by strong leadership and collaboration with governments, private sector companies, NGOs, and local communities, fostering sustainability and knowledge-sharing to tackle marine pollution on a global scale. *(Submitted by Alliance for Climate Innovation and Ecological Action)*

Some stakeholders advocated for nature-based solutions, such as replanting mangroves and community gardening, to reduce pollution. These approaches, promoted by various organizations, are seen as essential for restoring marine ecosystems and strengthening biodiversity.

"Pollution control and nature-based solutions, such as constructed wetlands, are effective measures, requiring stakeholder engagement and policy frameworks" (Marine Regions Forum, Research Institute for Sustainability - Helmholtz Centre Potsdam, RIFS).

Numerous organizations highlighted the importance of **empowering local communities** in sustainable waste management practices. By **raising awareness and involving communities in decision-making**, these efforts aim to reduce the harmful effects of pollution on local ecosystems.

"Community empowerment and education, paired with sustainable waste management initiatives, can reduce pollution and mitigate the negative impacts on local ecosystems" (Svyam Bane Gopal)

Several participants advocated for the adoption of **circular economy principles** as a solution to plastic pollution. They focused on recycling and innovative alternatives to single-use plastics, emphasizing the need to integrate these approaches into policy frameworks at the local and global levels. Stakeholders pointed out the potential of **extended producer responsibility** as a policy tool for implementing these principles.

"By establishing and promoting Extended Producer Responsibility programs globally, this action would significantly reduce marine pollution from land-based activities, particularly plastic waste, and create a more sustainable and circular economy." (IOI Ocean Academy Singapore)



Figure 10: Keywords associated with Ocean Action Panel 4: "Preventing and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities." according to stakeholders. Source: UN DESA

Partnership Spotlight

The Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) is a leading multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at reducing marine pollution, significantly advancing the implementation of SDG 14. Led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the GPML has facilitated key projects, such as the Clean Seas Campaign, which has gained commitments from over 60 countries to reduce plastic waste. This has led to notable achievements, including national bans on single-use plastics and measurable reductions in plastic waste. The GPML fosters collaboration across governments, the private sector, NGOs, and research institutions, demonstrating strong leadership and multi-sector engagement to combat marine litter. *(Submitted by Babatunde Development and Empowerment Initiative; Qaid a Azam University, Islamabad; Wright, Butler & Co; World Environment Council; Major Group of Children and Youth; University of Cape Coast; IOI Ocean Academy Singapore; GARP Hosting)*