

Global Partnership on Marine Litter

Purpose, function and organization

Creating an informed global community working together to achieve an ocean that is not harmed by marine litter – by eliminating discharges and carrying out targeted removal

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I. Background

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an overarching framework for pursuing a more sustainable society. Achieving the SDGs will require different sectors and actors to work together in an integrated manner by pooling financial resources, knowledge and expertise. SDG 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development) underlines that innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships will play a crucial role in supporting efforts to achieve the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – by the year 2030.

2. The Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) is a multi-stakeholder partnership which provides a unique mechanism to bring together all the actors working on marine litter to share knowledge and experience and to advance solutions to this pressing global issue. Its objective, as outlined in its mission statement, is to protect the global marine environment, human well-being and animal welfare by addressing the global problem of marine litter. The partnership was launched at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012 in response to a request set out in the Manila Declaration on Furthering the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, which was an outcome of the Third Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), held in January 2012. The partnership is led by a Steering Committee and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides secretariat services.

II. Mission and objectives

A. Mission statement

3. The Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) seeks to protect the global marine environment, human well-being and animal welfare by addressing the global problem of marine litter by:

- (a) Providing a mechanism for cooperation and coordination; sharing ideas, knowledge and experiences; identifying gaps and emerging issues;
- (b) Harnessing the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of all stakeholders;
- (c) Making a significant contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 14.1 (By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution).

B. Specific objectives

4. The specific objectives of GPML are:

- (a) To serve as the global platform or mechanism for all stakeholders on the issue of marine litter and to stimulate, and maintain the momentum of, action on that issue;
- (b) To facilitate cooperation between Governments, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies, the private sector, civil society and academia, inter alia, including on:
 - (i) Information-sharing and improved knowledge management;
 - (ii) Awareness-raising;
 - (iii) Development and/or dissemination of new environmentally sound technologies;
 - (iv) Capacity-building;
 - (v) Preventive action;
 - (vi) Risk-based recovery action;

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- (vii) Emerging issues;
 - (viii) Effective communication.
- (c) To share relevant information on projects and initiatives, including to identify and address gaps and avoid duplication of effort, as well as information on financing opportunities, and to facilitate matchmaking of projects and initiatives with funding;
 - (d) To raise awareness of GPML, identify actors and attract new members;
 - (e) To contribute to marine litter action plans at different levels as appropriate (all members);
 - (f) To communicate information and provide guidance based on the best available scientific knowledge and in accordance with the precautionary approach;
 - (g) To reduce the leakage of plastics into the ocean, through improved design; the application of the reduction, reuse and recycling (3Rs) principle; the promotion of closed-loop systems and more circular production cycles; the maximization of resource efficiency and minimization of waste generation;
 - (h) To support the implementation of relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 70/1, by which the Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, resolutions of the United Nation Environment Assembly on, or relevant to, marine litter and microplastics, and other relevant international resolutions and decisions;
 - (i) To support the implementation of legal, policy, institutional and other relevant frameworks that enforce international law relevant to marine litter and microplastics.

C. Members of the partnership

5. Any entity can become a member of GPML by applying via the membership form on the GPML online platform.¹ Once the form has been submitted, they will receive a document confirming their membership and will be added to the GPML member mailing list. They will also receive information on the partnership and be invited to participate in GPML webinars.

III. Steering Committee

A. Terms of reference

6. The Steering Committee sets priorities for the strategic direction of GPML, including its further development, its relationship with other initiatives, its priorities and structure; identifies activities for GPML through annual workplans and evaluates its progress in that regard; and promotes GPML action and initiatives and its benefits as a multi-stakeholder partnership.

B. Functions and responsibilities

7. The members of the Steering Committee have the following responsibilities:

- (a) To develop and, where relevant, implement the annual Steering Committee workplan by contributing to its activities;
- (b) To develop a long-term road map taking into account relevant processes and goals;
- (c) To attend the meetings of the Steering Committee and provide timely inputs;
- (d) To make recommendations to the secretariat on specific tasks and provide advice and input on key activities;

¹ <http://marinelitternetwork.com/join-us>.

(e) To share and provide information on new and ongoing initiatives and developments at the global and regional levels in the Steering Committee and communicate such information to the wider GPML partnership as appropriate, including via the GPML online platform;

(f) To promote and represent the GPML as appropriate.

C. Membership

8. To aid the selection of members to the Steering Committee and guide the Committee's programme of activities, a set of criteria has been established, as follows:

(a) Members should be drawn from among GPML partners;

(b) Members should participate in their institutional capacities with no more than one member per GPML partner;

(c) The membership of the Steering Committee should include representation of the expertise and regional diversity of GPML partners, which may comprise States, United Nations entities, regional bodies, the private sector, civil society and other relevant organizations;

(d) In selecting the membership of the Steering Committee, the secretariat and the Committee strive to ensure balanced gender representation;

(e) Any GPML member can propose a new Steering Committee member. The secretariat approves new members in consultation with the Steering Committee. Consideration is given to limiting the number of members in order to ensure adequate and effective communication;

(f) Steering Committee membership is subject to rotation while ensuring continuity of membership;

(g) Permanent seats in the Steering Committee are granted to UNEP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP);

(h) Two co-chairs will be selected by the Steering Committee members for a term of two years, renewable by agreement with the Steering Committee;

(i) The Steering Committee may decide to invite other GPML partners to attend its meetings as observers;

(j) The Steering Committee aims to meet face to face at least once a year, to take part in meetings by electronic means at least six times a year, and use the file-sharing application Basecamp for effective information-sharing.

IV. Involvement of regional bodies: regional nodes

9. The participation of regional bodies is considered essential to the successful implementation of the GPML workplan. Regional seas programmes and regional fisheries management organizations provide existing networks of relevant major stakeholders and can be recognized as GPML regional nodes, as appropriate, in accordance with the proposed objectives and draft terms of reference of the regional nodes. Other types of relevant institutions could also function as regional nodes.

10. GPML members can propose the establishment of a regional node to the Steering Committee if they are able to take responsibility for that node. Any such proposal must be approved by the Steering Committee. The regional nodes will be represented by one member in the Steering Committee.

V. Secretariat functions

11. UNEP provides secretariat services (the secretariat) for GPML and its Steering Committee. The secretariat is responsible for:

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- (a) Working alongside the Steering Committee to support its functions, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Working with the co-chairs to convene meetings, set agendas, distribute information, solicit inputs, draft meeting reports, as well as compile and document relevant information;
 - (ii) Preparing briefings to the Steering Committee on the programme of work and budget of GPML on an annual basis;
 - (iii) Updating the Steering Committee on any requests or proposals relating to Steering Committee membership.
 - (b) Initiating, based on Steering Committee input, activities which support the implementation of the GPML objectives, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Maintaining the functionality and accuracy of information on the GPML online platform;²
 - (ii) Conducting outreach activities to organizations and institutions that have been identified as being beneficial additions to the wider GPML partnership and/or the Steering Committee;
 - (iii) Maintaining communication with the regional nodes and other relevant networks and periodically collecting updates from them that can be distributed to the Steering Committee and the wider partnership;
 - (iv) Hosting webinars, meetings, conferences and other activities to which the wider partnership of GPML is invited;
 - (v) Creating and maintaining an inventory of GPML members and networks setting out information on the key activities, focal issues and geographical scope of GPML members and providing direct contact details for focal points;
 - (vi) Proposing GPML priorities for seeking partnerships with external donors and/or potential members and partners.

VI. Global Partnership on Marine Litter online platform

12. The GPML online platform is the platform for information exchange between partnership members, potential members and non-members. It is an open website that acts as an online information hub, hosting all relevant information on the partnership and offering an overview of projects (e.g., of the members).

13. The platform allows partners to share information on their own projects and initiatives as well as best available technologies and/or best environmental practices, case studies, action plans, major publications and events, among other things. The platform also provides access to massive open online courses (MOOC) and other services sponsored by partners, including UNEP. The platform has a sign-up section for the partnership, which is administered by the secretariat.

VII. Funding

14. The provision of secretariat services is currently undertaken by the GPA secretariat in UNEP.

15. Earmarked funding provided for GPML by donors may be used to fund priority activities in relation to Steering Committee meetings, GPML outreach (e.g., costs for the GPML online platform, meetings of members) and specific activities identified in the GPML workplan.

² <http://marinelitternetwork.com/>.

16. GPML does not have a budget. It is expected that GPML members will retain responsibility for funding and implementing their own activities in support of the GPML objectives.

17. GPML strives to provide a matchmaking platform whereby the partnership will endeavour to identify appropriate sources of funding or leverage other ongoing initiatives as appropriate and provide information on funding opportunities or grants to members.

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