

SECTION 2 – COMPARISON OF REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

In this section, the five regional frameworks are compared, with a particular focus on COBSEA RAP MALI and the ASEAN FAMAD that are more detailed and include suggested activities. The comparison is undertaken with three approaches: first, the goals and objectives; second, the activities envisaged; and third, the cooperation processes.

It is important to note at the outset the significant overlap of all these frameworks and the cross-references they contain to each other. There appears to be continued efforts from COBSEA, ASEAN, ASEAN+, and their members countries to align actions and coordinate initiatives in different fora. In the context of the ASEAN processes that refer to other regional processes, this includes UN-led mechanisms in the spirit of the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action. See ASEAN Secretariat note on this and the 2016-2020 ASEAN-UN Action Plan at: https://www.unaprcm.org/sites/default/files/ASEAN-UN_Plan_2016-2020.pdf. See also [Part 1, Section 4.2.1](#) above.

1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To compare the goals and objectives of each regional instrument on marine litter, Parts 1 and 2 of the COBSEA RAP MALI on the background, rationale, goals and objectives are compared first with those of the ASEAN FAMAD as set out in the 2019 Bangkok Declaration on Combating Marine Debris in ASEAN Region and the four framing components of the ASEAN FAMAD. Elements of the shorter instruments from the other three intergovernmental processes (i.e. ASEAN+3, EAS and APEC) have also been compared. Table 2.2.1.1 below provides the findings of this comparison.

In a nutshell, the ASEAN FAMAD and the other regional processes are consistent with the two goals and six objectives of the COBSEA RAP MALI, except for the objective of removal of already existing marine litter by using environmentally sustainable methods mentioned in the latter. Removal of litter is not envisaged in the current version of the ASEAN Bangkok Declaration or the FAMAD.

Of note is the reference made in COBSEA RAP MALI, ASEAN FAMAD and EAS Leaders' Statement in Combatting Marine Plastic Debris to sustainable integrated management of marine litter and to the SDGs, in particular SDG 14.1 (on marine pollution prevention and reduction) and its associated targets. However, omission of this in the other two instruments is not seen as necessarily substantive as there are specific documents with very short or no preambles that are focused on the development of processes to combat pollution from marine litter.

Table 2.2.1.1. Comparison of goals and objectives of COBSEA RAP MALI and ASEAN FAMAD.

Legend: Goals and objectives that are met are in green; goals and objectives that are not met are in red; goals that are not specifically mentioned but can be implied are in light green.

COBSEA RAP MALI 2019	ASEAN Bangkok Declaration and FAMAD	ASEAN+3 / MPDCAI	EAS / SCMPD	APEC / RMD
GOALS				
1- Sustainable and integrated marine litter management in the East Asian Seas region				
2- Delivery of SDG 14.1 on marine pollution prevention and reduction and associated targets				
OBJECTIVES				
1- Prevent and reduce to the minimum marine litter pollution in the marine and coastal environment of the East Asian Seas Region				
2- Foster sustainable consumption and production in a multi-stakeholder whole lifecycle approach to prevent and reduce leakage at source				
3- Remove to the extent possible already existent marine litter by using environmentally acceptable methods				
4- Improve monitoring and assessment of marine litter and its impacts for a science-based approach				
5- Enhance knowledge sharing and awareness about marine litter and its impacts amongst all stakeholders and all groups of society in the East Asian Seas Region				
6- Support national efforts towards adequate institutional, policy and implementation frameworks, cross sector coordination and regional and international cooperation				

2. ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

This section seeks to identify the extent to which each action in the COBSEA RAP MALI has comparable actions or activities envisaged so far under the ASEAN FAMAD and the other shorter regional instruments, as applicable. The results of this analysis are summarised in Table 2.2.2.1 below. It is important to note at this point that none of the lists of priority actions or priorities are exhaustive; they are indicative of priority actions identified. Others are to be added later on. Three situations have been distinguished:

- (i) Actions or activities that are identical or comparable between both action plans (in green in Table 2.2.2.1 below);

- (ii) Actions or activities in COBSEA RAP MALI that are not specifically mentioned in the ASEAN FAMAD but could be included in actions that are described in more general terms in ASEAN FAMAD (in orange in Table 2.2.2.1 below); and
- (iii) Actions or activities in COBSEA RAP MALI that are not included in the ASEAN FAMAD (in red in Table 2.2.2.1 below).

A fourth category of actions are those that focus on specific outputs.

2.1 Comparable actions

This comparison shows that actions envisaged in the COBSEA RAP MALI and in the ASEAN FAMAD are generally aligned, which is expected. However, as priority actions of COBSEA RAP MALI are often more specific than those of the ASEAN FAMAD, a number of more general actions of the ASEAN FAMAD may later develop into similar specific actions; this may be clarified when an action plan is adopted by the ASEAN (ASEAN FAMAD D.1.3). Of note also is that whereas COBSEA refers specifically to partnership and coordination with the ASEAN, the ASEAN FAMAD does not specifically mention COBSEA or its RAP MALI, although it refers to regional platforms and best practices from Regional Seas programmes.

Some specific activities or outputs that are focused on by both COBSEA and the ASEAN are as follows:

- Moving towards the circular economy with a similar approach focused on inter-sectoral initiatives, engagement of the private sector, market-based initiatives, deposit refund and take-back for reusing and recycling (however, whereas extended producer responsibility (EPR) policies seem central to the ASEAN FAMAD, they are not mentioned specifically in COBSEA RAP MALI);
- Possible establishment/feasibility of the establishment of a centre on combatting marine debris;
- Standardisation of methods for the measurement and monitoring of marine debris: baseline and monitoring programme; and
- Knowledge management and sharing of information.

Table 2.2.2.1. Comparison of actions and activities in COBSEA RAP MALI and ASEAN FAMAD.

Legend: Actions and activities in green are included in both COBSEA RAP MALI AND ASEAN FAMAD; in red, not included in ASEAN FAMAD; in orange possibly included in ASEAN FAMAD.

COBSEA RAP MALI 2019		ASEAN FAMAD	
Action 1 PREVENTING AND REDUCING MARINE LITTER FROM LAND- BASED SOURCES	1.1) Legal & economic instruments	1.1.1) Enhance leadership, implementation and quality of government efforts	
		1.1.2) Solid waste management policies and agency coordination through policy-making mechanism	
		1.1.3) Develop and adopt instruments prevent/manage waste and towards circular economies including single-use plastics and deposit refund systems	
	1.2) Integrated waste management	1.2.1) Develop Industry dialogues for measures	
		1.2.2) Reduction, reuse & recycle as well as replacement to reduce amounts to landfill or incineration without energy recovery	<i>Without mention of incineration</i>
		1.2.3) Waste collection & separation systems	
		1.2.4) Take necessary measures to address illegal dumping	<i>No specific mention</i>
	1.3) Removal of existing litter and its disposal	1.2.5) Cooperation with river authorities	<i>No specific mention</i>
1.3.1) Programmes & activities such as coastal clean-ups			
Action 2 PREVENTING AND REDUCING MARINE LITTER FROM SEA- BASED SOURCES	2.1) Legal & economic instruments	2.1.1) Encouragement to develop & adopt instruments consistent with UNCLOS & MARPOL	
		2.1.2) Reinforcement of national legal instruments on MARPOL Annex V, London and Basel Conventions & FAO Code of Conducts of Responsible Fisheries	<i>No mention of FAO but mention of waste from fishing vessels No mention of London Convention</i>
		2.1.3) Assistance on requirements of MARPOL Annex V on improving port reception facilities	<i>No specific mention of port reception facilities</i>
		2.1.4) Sectoral prevention & reduction guidelines on fisheries & tourisms	
		2.1.5) Legislation on identified fishing gears	<i>Action on fishing gear may not involve legislation</i>
	2.2) Removal of existing litter and its disposal	2.2.1) Programmes & activities	
	Action 3 MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF MARINE LITTER	3.1) Expert group	3.1.1) Setup of Marine Litter Monitoring Expert Group under COBSEA WG on Marine Litter
3.2) Regional & national marine litter monitoring programmes		3.2.1) Regional guidance on harmonisation in line with international standards e.g. GESAMP	
		3.2.2) Regional training & data management	
		3.2.3) National monitoring & assessment on marine plastic & microplastic	
		3.2.4) Preparation of regional report for SDG target 14.1	<i>Not envisaged at regional level</i>
		3.2.5) Database management	<i>Unclear scope of regional database, sharing platform, or ASEAN information platform</i>
Action 4 ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COBSEA RAP MALI	4.1) Regional & international cooperation and reporting	4.1.1) Setup of COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter	<i>Expert exchange platform and regional action plan task force</i>
		4.1.2) Institutional cooperation e.g. MARPOL, London Convention, Basel Convention, CBD, GPA & FAO	<i>Only dialogue with Basel Regional Centre</i>
		4.1.3) City partnership for knowledge transfer	<i>No mention of direct city partnerships</i>
		4.1.4) Regional conferences e.g. ASEAN	

	4.2) National planning & policy frameworks	4.2.1) National action plan development & implementation or on equivalent GPA land-based	
		4.2.2) Regional sectoral guidelines on waste management, tourism and plastic manufacturing	<i>No guidelines mentioned although standardised approach is emphasised</i>
		4.2.3) Reporting format of national planning & policy frameworks	<i>No format mentioned</i>
	4.3) Research activities	4.3.1) R&D on technology as well as social & behavioural sciences	
		4.3.2) Research on marine litter impacts	
		4.3.3) Effectiveness on market-based instruments	<i>Different language but engagement of private sector emphasised</i>
		4.3.4) Trajectory modelling on marine litters	
		4.3.5) Plastic flows and relative contribution	<i>Regional baseline report</i>
	4.4) Information, education, outreach & involvement of stakeholders	4.4.1) Stakeholder involvement	
		4.4.2) Regular clean-ups for education, awareness, certain responsibility areas & international initiatives	<i>Education and outreach emphasised but not regular clean-ups</i>
		4.4.3) Awareness raising campaigns	
		4.4.4) Information translated into national languages	<i>No mention of translation but implied</i>
	4.5) Training & capacity building	4.5.1) Regional education & training for targeted groups	
		4.5.2) Technical capacity buildings to relevant staffs	

2.2 Actions or activities that are not included in ASEAN FAMAD

Four actions or suggested activities of the COBSEA RAP MALI are not included in the current version of the ASEAN FAMAD. Most notably, the priority action of marine debris removal on land and at sea is not envisaged in the ASEAN FAMAD. The other two priority actions that are not mentioned are (i) the preparation of reports for SDG target 14.1 at the regional level, and (ii) the establishment of institutional cooperation mechanisms with relevant treaty bodies. The ASEAN FAMAD only mentions dialogue with the Basel Regional Centre.

Other actions or suggested activities that are not specifically included could fit within some general actions, such as measures to address illegal dumping of waste on land and at sea (which would contribute to marine litter), extent and nature of communication with river authorities in the measures for integrated waste management, and city partnerships for knowledge transfer as a means of regional cooperation.

With respect to comparable priority actions, different language is used to describe potential cooperation mechanisms at the regional level. Streamlining between COBSEA and the ASEAN is expected to optimise resources, time and effectiveness. This is particularly true of knowledge sharing platforms, reporting mechanisms and regional experts' participation through working groups or regional task forces. In this context, the work of the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics may provide a building block for the ASEAN. Institutionally, this may be particularly feasible as seven of the nine participating countries of COBSEA are ASEAN member states, and the other two states are members of ASEAN+3 (see Diagram 1 in [Part 1, Section 1](#) on Methodology). Furthermore, the same government departments/officials appear to be generally involved in COBSEA meetings on marine

plastics and ASEAN meetings on the same topic. The ASEAN FAMAD also specifically refers to the best practices of Regional Seas programmes to combat marine debris.

Whilst COBSEA RAP MALI is generally more specific than the ASEAN FAMAD, some actions from the latter may also be relevant to COBSEA's work, such as a regular dialogue with the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South-East Asia (BCRC-SEA); a consultative meeting or a feasibility study on the development of an ASEAN agreement on management of marine debris pollution; the compilation of a regional baseline; and the development of communication material. COBSEA's cooperation with the Basel Convention occurs at the global level, with the COBSEA Secretariat being a member of the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership.

Also relevant to COBSEA's work is ASEAN's Culture of Prevention Initiative as an innovative approach to sustainable social and human development. See: <https://www.sdg16hub.org/system/files/2019-07/The%20Culture%20of%20Prevention%20represents%20a%20crucial%20crossroads%20for%20ASEAN.pdf>.

2.3 Specific outputs in ASEAN FAMAD

Finally, COBSEA may seek to collaborate and/or communicate in the context of the development of the following outputs by the ASEAN:

- Develop EPR policies;
- Conduct regular dialogue through webinar and/or BCRC-SEA;
- Review and analyse best practices of Regional Seas programmes to combat marine debris;
- Study of the feasibility of the development of an ASEAN agreement on management of marine debris pollution;
- Study of the feasibility of the establishment of a centre on combatting marine debris;
- Development of communication material on pollution from marine plastic; and
- Establishment of an ASEAN information platform including marine debris data.

The ASEAN+3 Marine Plastics Debris Cooperative Action Initiative focuses on marine litter management from land-based sources and in this context, emphasises, like COBSEA RAP MALI, knowledge sharing of sound waste management and 3R principles. The COBSEA RAP MALI is more comprehensive as it identifies more actions and seeks to also include marine litter management from sea-based sources. However, the mention of waste-to-energy infrastructure by ASEAN+ 3 must be noted as it is not in COBSEA RAP MALI or in the ASEAN FAMAD.

Whilst there appears to be no gap as such between the ASEAN+3 Initiative and the other regional instruments, a common specific feature is worth mentioning, namely the development of monitoring as well as harmonization of microplastics monitoring and standards in ASEAN countries. This a recurring priority in all regional plans considered. Additionally, of note are the two shared concerns of engagement with the private sector and the use of existing fora and institutions. The two institutions mentioned in this context are two Japanese research institutions: (i) the Regional 3R Forum in Asia and

the Pacific based in Tokyo, and (ii) the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) based in Jakarta.

3. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS, COOPERATION PROCESSES AT GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL LEVELS

Establishment of a number of cooperation mechanisms is specifically considered in relation to the implementation of COBSEA RAP MALI and ASEAN FAMAD.

COBSEA RAP MALI includes:

- Institutional cooperation with global relevant multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. MARPOL, the London Convention and its Protocol, the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, etc.);
- Effort coordination with relevant partners and frameworks (COBSEA RAP MALI specifically mentions ASEAN);
- Cooperation with river authorities;
- Groups of experts such as GESAMP; and
- Engagement with relevant stakeholders.

Whilst the ASEAN FAMAD highlights cooperation through ASEAN-led mechanisms, it also includes:

- Incorporation of international law in regional platforms;
- Best practices from the Regional Seas programmes on combatting marine debris;
- Support of research and sharing of scientific knowledge, including through engaging research institutions, public and private sectors, international partners and other relevant stakeholders;
- Compilation of regional baseline on status and impacts of marine debris in ASEAN;
- Cooperation and partnership across research institutions;
- Network for the sharing marine data and information; and
- Expert-exchange platforms.