

## 1. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS OF THE COBSEA RAP MALI

The revised 2019 COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) seeks to guide consolidated and coordinated action in the region towards integrated management of marine litter, including preventing and reducing marine litter from land-based and sea-based sources, promoting regionally coherent monitoring and assessment approaches, and creating enabling conditions for marine litter action. It seeks to address marine litter as a transboundary issue and to support COBSEA countries in their delivery of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 14.1. This target aims to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution, as well as the relevant targets.

### 1.1 Objectives

Specific objectives of the COBSEA RAP MALI are to:

- (i) **Prevent and reduce to the minimum marine litter pollution** in the marine and coastal environment of the East Asian Seas Region;
- (ii) **Foster sustainable consumption and production** in a multi-stakeholder whole *lifecycle approach* to prevent and reduce leakage at source;
- (iii) **Remove** to the extent possible **already existent marine litter** by using environmentally acceptable methods;
- (iv) **Improve monitoring and assessment** of marine litter and its impacts for a science-based approach;
- (v) **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; and
- (vi) **Support national efforts** towards adequate institutional, policy and implementation frameworks, cross sector coordination and regional and international cooperation.

A clear characteristic of the RAP MALI is its holistic approach to combatting marine litter pollution from upstream measures in sustainable consumption and production, waste management, monitoring, removal and education.

### 1.2 Guiding modalities for implementation

Eight guiding principles have been agreed:

- (i) **The integration principle** by virtue of which marine litter management shall be addressed across relevant sectors and as an integral part;
- (ii) **The prevention principle** by virtue of which measures should prioritize addressing the prevention of marine litter generation at source;
- (iii) **The precautionary principle** by virtue of which where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- (iv) **The polluter-pays principle** by virtue of which the costs of pollution prevention, control and reduction measures are to be borne by the polluter, with due regard to the public interest;

- (v) ***The ecosystem-based approach*** by virtue of which the cumulative effect of marine litter on the marine and coastal ecosystem, habitats and species with other contaminants and substances that are present in the marine environment should be fully considered in management of marine litter;
- (vi) ***The principle of public participation and stakeholder involvement*** by virtue of which the general public including local communities, private sector, civil society organisations and local authorities will be involved in the development and implementation of efforts;
- (vii) ***The sustainable consumption and production principle*** by virtue of which current unsustainable patterns of consumption and production must be transformed to circular lifecycle models that decouple human development from environmental degradation; and
- (viii) ***The science-based approach*** by virtue of which marine litter management measures should be based on the best available scientific evidence.

### 1.3 Key actions

For achieving the specific objectives on regional marine litter management in the Seas of East Asia, the COBSEA RAP MALI provides for four key actions with guiding description (see Table 2.1.1.1). Table 2.1.1.2 below sets out examples of activities for each key action to guide the development of detailed biennial workplans for implementation of the RAP MALI, as developed by the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter (WGML).

Table 2.1.1.1. Key actions and guiding descriptions for marine litter management in COBSEA RAP MALI.

Key action	Guiding description
<b>Action 1: Preventing and reducing marine litter from land-based sources</b>	1.1) Legal and economic instruments
	1.2) Integrated waste management
	1.3) Removal of existing marine litter and its disposal
<b>Action 2: Preventing and reducing marine litter from sea-based sources</b>	2.1) Legal and economic instruments
	2.2) Removal of existing marine litter and its disposal
<b>Action 3: Monitoring and assessment of marine litter</b>	3.1) Expert Group
	3.2) Regional and national marine litter monitoring programmes
<b>Action 4: Activities supporting the implementation of COBSEA RAP MALI</b>	4.1) Regional and international cooperation and reporting
	4.2) National planning and policy frameworks
	4.3) Research activities
	4.4) Information, education, outreach and involvement of stakeholders
	4.5) Training and capacity building

## 1.4 Envisaged activities

Table 2.1.1.2. COBSEA RAP MALI – Overall table.

<b>Action 1</b> 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	
		1.2.3) Waste collection & separation systems	
		1.2.4) Take necessary measures to address illegal dumping	
		1.2.5) Cooperation with river authorities	
	1.3) Removal of existing litter and its disposal	1.3.1) Programmes & activities such as coastal clean-ups	
	<b>Action 2</b> 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			
2.1.3) Assistance on requirements of MARPOL Annex V on improving port reception facilities			
2.1.4) Sectoral prevention & reduction guidelines on fisheries & tourisms			
2.1.5) Legislation on identified fishing gears			
2.2) Removal of existing litter and its disposal		2.2.1) Programmes & activities	
<b>Action 3</b> MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF MARINE LITTER		3.1) Expert group	3.1.1) Setup of Marine Litter Monitoring Expert Group under COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter
	3.2) Regional & national marine litter monitoring programmes		
	3.2) Regional & national marine litter monitoring programmes	3.2.1) Regional guidance on harmonization 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) Report preparation for SDG target 14.1	
3.2.5) Database management			
<b>Action 4</b> 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	
		4.1.2) Institutional cooperation e.g. MARPOL, London Convention, Basel Convention, CBD, GPA & FAO	
		4.1.3) City partnership for knowledge transfer	
		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	
		4.2.3) Reporting format of national planning & policy frameworks	
		4.3) Research activities	4.3.1) Research & development on technology as well as social & behavioural sciences
		4.3.2) Research on marine litter impacts	
	4.3) Research activities	4.3.3) Effectiveness on market-based instruments	
		4.3.4) Trajectory modelling on marine litters	
		4.3.5) Plastic flows and relative contribution	
		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
			4.4.3) Awareness raising campaigns
			4.4.4) Information translated into national languages
	4.5) Training & capacity building	4.5.1) Regional education & training for targeted groups	
		4.5.2) Technical capacity buildings to relevant staffs	

Appendix 2 of the RAP MALI (see Table 2.1.1.2 above) encompasses further detailed description of key actions to serve as a guide for the development of biennial workplans for implementation of the RAP MALI to be discussed by the COBSEA WGML. This initial prioritization of actions identifies where countries agreed to collectively pursue more specific activities through COBSEA, within its mandate, in line with the East Asian Seas Action Plan and the COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018–2022.

Of note, the RAP MALI envisages the development of some specific regional outputs such as the following guidelines, guidance documents, expert groups, report and research areas:

- Sectoral guidelines on the prevention and reduction of marine litter, particularly for fisheries, marine/coastal tourism, waste management and plastic manufacturing;
- Regional guidance on the development of harmonized national marine litter and microplastic monitoring programmes;
- COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter (WGML) (with national focal points and experts);
- Marine Litter Monitoring Expert Group under the COBSEA WGML;
- Regional report for SDG 14.1;
- Regional marine litter and microplastic monitoring meta-database to support periodic regional reports;
- Regional sectoral guidelines on the prevention and reduction of marine litter from land-based pollution;
- Regional education and training;
- Regional format on national planning and policy frameworks; and
- Research focus on social and behavioural science, impact on the coastal and marine environment and economy.