

2.6 Comparison of research focus by different ASEAN fora

Table 1.4.2.1 below summarises the extent to which the ASEAN and ASEAN-Plus bodies are involved (on the basis of publicly available documents) in the 16 research topics which have been reviewed for this report.

Whilst it shows that ASEAN governments are concerned with pollution by marine plastics and are pushing for a better understanding of the issues, activity is recent and still at an early stage. Most of the research topics are mentioned as an area of interest but little as yet been implemented through active research efforts that has become public. The details of specific ongoing programmes of work being conducted under the technical bodies (AWGCME, AWGCW and ACB) are not publicly available. The general lack of visibility of work done by ASEAN specialised bodies makes their work difficult to assess by the public.

However, as shown in [Part 1, Section 2](#) of this report on the status of scientific knowledge on pollution from marine plastics in Southeast and East Asia, states have recently adopted a series of strong waste management measures and research on the understanding of sources, leakages and impacts. These measures and research are expanding fast. In particular, media coverage shows a very large number of initiatives being launched by governments, public interest groups, industries and partnerships between them all in the ASEAN. One of the early actions taken by many Southeast and East Asian governments has been focused on limiting the use of plastic bags in supermarkets.

Table 1.4.2.1. Research focus of different ASEAN fora with respect to marine plastics.

Legend: Red = no research or interest expressed; Light-green = expressed or inferred interest; Dark-green = active or proposed research.

Research Focus	ASEAN FAMAD	AWGCME	ACB	AWGCW	ASEAN+3 (APT)	EAS
Policy, laws, administrative measures, action plans, guidelines	Dark-green	Red	Red	Light-green	Dark-green	Dark-green
Upstream research/circular economy/waste management	Dark-green	Light-green	Red	Light-green	Dark-green	Dark-green
Methodology for monitoring of marine plastic litter, survey and monitoring, pollution status	Dark-green	Red	Red	Red	Dark-green	Red
Accumulation zones & hotspots	Light-green	Red	Light-green	Light-green	Light-green	Light-green
Contribution from rivers	Light-green	Red	UNDP-PEMSEA-ADB-ASEAN Project (IRBMI)	Red	Light-green	Light-green
Source differentiation	Dark-green	Red	Red	Red	Dark-green	Light-green
Discharge from offshore infrastructures (incl. aquaculture)	Light-green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Dark-green
Contribution of fisheries/lost and abandoned fishing gear	Dark-green	Red	Red	Red	Light-green	Dark-green
Fragmentation and degradation	Light-green	Red	Red	Red	Light-green	Red
Ecological and environmental impact	Dark-green	Light-green	Light-green	Red	Dark-green	Dark-green
Socio-economic impact	Dark-green	Red	Red	Red	Dark-green	Red
Public outreach/beach clean-up	Dark-green	Red	Red	Red	Dark-green	Red
Organic/inorganic contaminants associated with marine plastics	Light-green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Port reception facilities	Light-green	Red	Red	Red	Light-green	Red
Fibre-reinforced plastic vessels	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red
Hull scraping and marine coating	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red