

11.2 G7 and G20 Action Plans to Combat Marine Litter

Summary of role: *Group of Seven (G7) is an intergovernmental economic organisation consisting of seven of the largest advanced economies of the world. The organisation regards itself as a “community of values”. An annual Summit is attended by its Members’ Leaders while its Members’ Ministers and civil servants meet throughout the year to discuss issues such as energy policy, climate change, HIV/Aids and global security. Group of Twenty (G20) was founded at the G7 Finance Ministers’ Meeting on 26 September 1999. Its Members are the G7 plus 12 major advanced and emerging economies and the EU. Issues discussed at the G20 focus on shared economic, political and health challenges.*

Summary of recommendations and work status: *In 2015, the G7 adopted an Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter. In 2017, the G20 also adopted an Action Plan on Marine Litter which is very aligned with the G7 Action Plan. However, the G20 is more active. In 2019, the G20 adopted the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter. It provides G20 Members’ commitments for facilitation and collaborative actions to implement the Action Plan whilst emphasising the importance of UN and other relevant intergovernmental bodies.*

Keywords/research fields: *Group of Seven; G7; Group of Twenty; G20; Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter; Action Plan on Marine Litter; G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter*

11.2.1 Background and aim

The Group of Seven (G7) consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States and has been meeting annually since 1975. In 2015, the G7 highlighted marine litter (in particular, plastic litter) as posing a global challenge, and adopted a G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter. Overarching principles of the plan include prevention and removal. See: https://www.env.go.jp/water/marine_litter/07_mat13_2_%EF%BC%93-2ALD.pdf.

11.2.2 Work and Action Plan

The G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter is structured around the following priority actions:

- Address land-based sources, including improvement of waste management;
- Removal, including the identification of accumulation areas of marine litter and to alleviate threats to sensitive marine ecosystems;

- Sea-based sources, including through port reception facilities and the identification of key waste items from the fishing industry; and
- Education, research and outreach.

The Action Plan also states that G7 countries support the development and implementation of regional action plans to reduce waste entering inland and coastal waters and ultimately becoming marine litter, as well as to remove existing waste. It also states that they recognise the value of existing platforms and tools for cooperation, such as Regional Seas conventions and action plans and therefore support their use. (G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter, page 8)

In 2017, the Group of 20 (G20) also adopted an Action Plan on Marine Litter (available: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000272290.pdf>). The G20 is composed of the G7 countries plus Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, European Union (EU), India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Republic of Korea and Turkey.

The G20's Action Plan mostly reiterates the priorities of the G7 Action Plan and adds financial, socio-economic and research considerations as well as a risk management approach. It also includes the launch of a Global Network of the Committed (GNC), a platform linked to UNEP GPML. In their Action Plan, the G20 affirmed that it will work to promote and initiate measures and actions at regional levels to prevent and reduce marine litter. Many concrete actions are also to be implemented at the regional level, such as communication and cooperation between different regions, as well as research and coordination to identify and remediate, through environmentally sound methods, sources of marine waste and concentrated areas of marine litter. The G20 also committed to contributing to the implementation of existing regional plans tackling marine litter and the development of new such plans.

In June 2019, the G20 adopted the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter (available: <https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/111826.pdf>). This Implementation Framework commits G20 members to the facilitation of and collaborative actions for the effective implementation of the Action Plan. Notably, collaborative actions include the establishment by G20 presidencies of a G20 Resource Efficiency Dialogue and a multi-stakeholder platform, as well as the development of a portal website by IGES with the support of the Japan government to share actions and progress on marine plastic litter by G20 members. The site was launched on 23 November 2019 and is available at <https://g20mpl.org/>. For each member, this site aims to provide a summary of the policy framework, measures, achievements and best practices with respect to marine plastic litter. The countries from Southeast and East Asia that are included on this site are China, Indonesia, Japan, RO KOREA and Singapore. The 'G20 Report on Actions Against Marine Plastic Litter - First information sharing based on the G20 Implementation Framework' is available at <https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/112576.pdf>.

The G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter also highlights regional cooperation. It states that the G20 will promote international and regional cooperation, with an emphasis on regional cooperation in collaboration with relevant Regional Seas programmes, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations and other regional initiatives. (G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, page 3)

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Of note is the proactive role played by Japan in these fora, as well as the ASEAN as a dialogue partner. The next G20 Summit is scheduled for November 2020.

Finally, both G7 and G20 Action Plans also highlight the central role played by UN bodies and initiatives, including UNEP and GESAMP and the need for tighter cooperation in all relevant fora.