



Virtual Working Group on Marine Debris

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Ryan MacFarlane

Coordinator

Virtual Working Group on
Marine Debris

rmacfarlane@crowell.com

Olivia Burzynska-Hernandez

Coordinator

Virtual Working Group on
Marine Debris

ohernandez@crowell.com

APEC Leaders Endorse Bangkok Goals on Bio-Circular-Green Economy

On 19 November, 2022 APEC Leaders released the **Bangkok Goals on Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy**, “where technology and innovation are used to create value, reduce waste, advance resource efficiency, and promote sustainable business models.” Thailand was successful in negotiating agreement by all 21 APEC member economies on the Bangkok Goals as a Leaders-level outcome for 2022. The goals will serve as a comprehensive framework to further APEC’s sustainability objectives and represent a key achievement for Thailand’s host year. Specifically, the goals commit APEC to continue work on implementing the [APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris](#); advance resource efficiency and sustainable waste management; and increase cooperation to advance circular economy approaches.

The [2022 APEC Leaders Statement](#) also affirmed the need for more intensive efforts to address environmental challenges including by facilitating investments in relevant activities.

U.S. Previews APEC Host Year Priorities

During the Informal Senior Officials meeting on 8 - 9 December 2022, the United States shared their APEC 2023 priorities, including:

- **Priority 1: Interconnected: Building a resilient and interconnected region that advances broad-based economic prosperity**
- **Priority 2: Innovative: Enabling an innovative environment for a sustainable future**
- **Priority 3: Inclusive: Affirming an equitable and inclusive future for all**

We anticipate a continued focus on implementation of the Bangkok Goals on Bio-Circular-Green Economy during the U.S. host year as well as a renewed focus on tackling environmental challenges including facilitating greater reuse, recycling, and recovery of materials, including plastic; capacity building to adopt technologies that reduce plastic waste, and harmonizing macro and micro plastics monitoring.

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[APEC Marine Debris Website](#)

The APEC Marine Debris website can be accessed [here](#). The website is a tool to promote information sharing among the various working groups engaging on marine debris and waste management issues in APEC as well as provide a centralized location for relevant reports and meeting outcome documents. **You can also find this newsletter on the website.**

Recap of Relevant Working Groups

A recap of the APEC marine debris relevant events and meetings during the 3rd Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) are listed below, including the APEC Oceans and Fisheries Working Group and the Chemical Dialogue.

Ocean and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) – 17-18 August, 2022

The United States submitted an update on the implementation of the [APEC Marine Debris Roadmap](#). You can view the implementation progress report [here](#).

OFWG Project Proposals/Updates

Viet Nam provided an update on the “[APEC Seminar on Promoting Circular Economy and Sustainable Materials Management to Effectively Address Marine Plastic Litter in the Asia-Pacific Region](#).” The objectives of this project were to:

- assess the capacity of economies in promoting a circular economy to address marine plastic effectively;
- share best practices and innovations of new sustainable materials;
- identify policy measures to incentivize circular economy practices in design and support innovations and start-ups, particularly those related to new, biodegradable and compostable plastics; and
- develop a Compendium of Recommendations encouraging cooperation in potential areas to tackle marine plastic litters, particularly in design phase.

Viet Nam organized a seminar virtually from 26 – 27 April 2022. There were 127 participants from 16 economies, representatives of related ministries, agencies, experts, scholars from APEC member economies, and representatives from international organizations such as UNIDO, IUCN, UNDP, Ocean Conservancy, World Bank, UNESCAP, and WWF.

Chinese Taipei provided an update on two projects, including “[Good Practices for Traceability Mechanism of Marine Debris Recycled Products in the APEC Region](#)” and “[Capacity Building on Marine Debris Monitoring by Using Innovative Technologies in APEC Region](#).”

- **Good Practices for a Traceability Mechanism** -The objectives for this project are to advance the circular supply chain and sustainable society; to enhance capacity

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building; and to build regional networking. A hybrid workshop and related discussion is planned for March 2023 in Taipei.

- **Capacity Building on Marine Debris** – Chinese Taipei organized a hybrid meeting on 24-25 March 2022 in Keelung related to capacity building for marine debris. There were roughly 156 participants and experts from over 13 APEC economies. Recommendations included: adapting to the local conditions; identifying marine debris through remote sensing technology as well as digital models; leveraging digital and de-centralized data platforms to provide real-time marine debris information; and implementing innovative technologies and open data sources for marine debris governance.

Indonesia provided an update on two projects, including “[Workshop on Promoting Bioplastic Materials to Reduce Marine Plastic Litter in the Asia Pacific Region](#)” and “[Capacity Building on Vessel Innovation to Combat Marine Debris](#).”

- **Bioplastic Materials** - The workshop aims to identify barriers and opportunities faced by APEC economies in promoting bioplastic materials to reduce marine plastic in the Asia-Pacific. A three-day workshop in Bali, Indonesia is planned for September 2023.
- **Vessel Innovation** - The objective of this project is to develop guidelines and recommendations for vessel innovation, fleet management, and collaboration in international waters to cope with marine debris.

Thailand provided an update on the APEC project “[Technical Workshop on Marine Debris Management in Marine Ecosystem](#).” The workshop aims to enhance participants’ capacity in marine debris management and to strengthen existing regional efforts, including sharing scientific knowledge and technologies needed to better understand marine debris management. The expected start date for this project is September 2022. The project outputs include: background information of marine debris management in the APEC region; a 2-day physical workshop, and best practices.

Chile presented its concept note “[Capacity Building on Marine Debris Impacts by Using Gaming Technology in APEC Region](#).” Gaming technology and Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR) have the potential to trigger huge directional shifts in thinking, entrepreneurship, research, and capacity building. This project aims to create and share information on the adoption of gaming technologies to improve raising awareness of the impacts of marine debris on the marine environment, fishing, and tourism.

Chemical Dialogue (CD) 23 August, 2022

Thai Industry shared a presentation on the “[Bio-Circular Green Economy: Plastics Waste Management by Public Private Partnership for Sustainable Plastic and Waste Management](#)” and the “[Bio-Circular Green Economy: Responsible Care Multi-Stakeholder Engagement in Thailand](#).”

- **Public-Private Partnerships** - The Plastics Institute of Thailand provided an update on public-private partnerships for Sustainable Plastic and Waste Management. Thai industry noted that this network aims to reduce plastic waste in the ocean by 50% by 2027.
- **Responsible Care** - Thai industry highlighted that nearly 70 economies implement responsible care at an economy level. Thailand industry also noted

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its flagship projects, including codes of management practices, local chemical regulatory engagement, and the ASEAN Regulatory Cooperation Project.

A representative from the **Council on Economic Policies** provided an update on Australia's APEC project "[Services that Support the Clean-up of Maritime Debris Project](#)" housed within the APEC Group on Services group. This study was commissioned to look at marine debris collection services and to better understand services and services trade policy that may help clean up marine debris. The representative shared the recommendations based on the study outcome, including: APEC members should ensure non-discrimination in access to and payment for port services for foreign vessels engaged in clean-up, monitoring and research; and APEC could consider further analyses of the feasibility of creating a market for marine debris clean-up services through coordinated regulation similar to remediation services, among others.

The United States provided an overview of a new APEC concept note on green chemistry. The objective of the project is to promote knowledge sharing and raise awareness within APEC member economies on innovations, practices, and policy among regulators, industry, and supply chain stakeholders to extend the application of sustainable chemistry principles and to advance the sound management of chemicals. The United States plans to hold events for both SOM1 and SOM3 in 2023. This project was endorsed by the CD and was approved for APEC funding.

The United States also provided an update on the [UNEA Global Agreement on Plastics Resolution](#). The presentation highlighted the international actions on plastic pollution outside of UNEA, including within the G7, the G20, APEC, ASEAN, and the Basel Convention. The UNEA 5.2 resolution on plastic pollution "End Plastic Pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument" agreed to launch an inter-governmental negotiating committee (INC) in March 2022. The INC is scheduled to hold their first session in November in Uruguay, and the multistakeholder forum is also planned. The INC aims to conclude negotiations by the end of 2024.

United States Industry provided an update on the APEC project on "[Leveraging Chemical Recycling in a Circular Economy](#)." The objective of this project is to explore the benefits of chemical recycling in a circular economy, and ways to improve its uptake and scalability. The first webinar took place in July 2022 and covered how advanced recycling contributes to a circular economy and covered the different types of technologies for advanced recycling. Some identified keys to success for a circular economy included plastic collection and preparation, investment in advanced recycling technology, and product specifications for drop-in usage. A second webinar is forthcoming.

The Virtual Working Group on Marine Debris (VWG) presented at both the Chemical Dialogue and the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group. The VWG shared previous accomplishments, including the creation of the Policy and Practice Recommendations and the APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris. It also provided an overview of the numerous marine debris projects that are taking place in the Chemical Dialogue, the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group, and the Energy Working Group, among others. The APEC marine debris website was presented as a good resource to find marine debris related activity in APEC. You can find the presentation at this [link](#).

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Rebound Exchange, a global quality-assured platform for the trade of plastic feedstock for recycling, presented how the organization provides new economic opportunities for economies through recycling, while reducing the impacts of plastic pollution. This includes creating a system that provides the supply of recycled plastic feedstock that can be used to create content. The process includes: collecting plastics, putting it into bales, transforming it into flakes, and finally, transforming it into pellets. You can learn more about Rebound Exchange and its platform [here](#).

[Marine Debris Sub-fund](#)

The APEC sub-fund for Marine Debris Management and Innovation (MDMI) is available for project submissions. The MDMI sub-fund will support capacity building activities to:

- promote the development of solid waste management infrastructure;
- inform the development of policies, regulations and practices to improve waste management and marine debris management;
- promote the development of technical innovations to create value from plastic waste;
- increase access to financing and promote the development of innovative financing mechanisms;
- promote new technologies for reducing the prevalence and environmental impact of marine debris.

Projects seeking funding through the new sub-fund will first be evaluated by the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group. More information regarding the sub-fund may be found: [here](#). The eligibility criteria and guidelines for accessing the MDMI sub-fund may be found: [here](#). More information regarding the APEC project proposal process may be found: [here](#).

Additional Information

If you are interested in additional information, have questions, or would like to be added or removed from the distribution please reach out to Olivia Burzynska-Hernandez at ohernandez@crowell.com.