



Virtual Working Group on Marine Debris

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While the COVID-19 pandemic prevented in-person meetings for most of the year, virtual events and meetings were held throughout the second half of 2020. A brief recap of the APEC marine debris relevant events and meetings are listed below, including the APEC Oceans and Fisheries Working Group, the Chemical Dialogue, the SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation, and the Subcommittee on Standards and Conformance.

[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 link.**

[APEC Leaders Week](#)

[APEC Ministerial Statement](#)

On November 16, 2020 APEC Ministers met virtually for the first time under the Chairmanship of The Honourable Dato' Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, Senior Minister and Minister of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia. They released a [Joint Ministerial Statement](#), including the following on addressing marine debris:

“Recognising the importance of sustainable management of natural resources and noting the region’s rapid population growth and urbanisation, we welcome APEC’s work to support resource efficiency by exploring ways to safely and innovatively manage waste and note the work on smart and sustainable cities. We are pleased that the Multi-Year Policy Dialogue on Innovative Waste Management has commenced and is expected to continue until 2022. The Dialogue serves as a platform to pursue policy recommendations that enable efficient and sustainable management of resources and waste along the supply chain.....”

We remain focused on the need to promote responsible resources management, including ocean conservation and the sustainable use of marine and forest resources. We note the work on combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, illegal logging and associated trade, as well as addressing marine debris.”

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APEC Leaders Statement

On November 20th, APEC Leaders met on November 20 and stressed the importance of new technology to allow economies to handle waste more sustainably in the [2020 Kuala Lumpur Declaration](#).

“We are hopeful that new technologies are available and accessible to allow us to handle resources and waste more sustainably, and in a holistic manner.”

Ocean and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) - October 20th

Indonesia presented on their workshop “The Capacity Building on Global Marine Debris Monitoring and Modeling: Supports Protection of the Marine Environment” which was held on 18-20 February 2020, at Kartika Discovery Hotel, Bali. The capacity building workshop aimed to advance discussions on marine debris and specifically to improve understanding of marine debris movement and distribution at sea. Areas of focus during the workshop included: 1. dissemination and utilization of monitoring data, 2. implementation of data and monitoring information in policy making, and 3. improving the quality of data and information from monitoring results. More information may be found at this [link](#).

Malaysia presented on its on-going project to [promote investment to combat marine litter and build a circular economy](#) in APEC through the APEC Webinar Series in collaboration with Ocean Conservancy. The APEC Host also presented on a potential project to build the capacity of APEC members to measure and characterize marine debris coming from rivers. This project plans to develop a status report of marine debris for APEC developing economies’ during the dry and wet seasons. Additionally, Malaysia aims to foster research and innovation for the development and refinement of new methodologies and solution for monitoring, preventing and reducing marine debris as addressed in the vision of APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris 2019. More information about the project proposal may be found at this [link](#).

Chinese Taipei presented on its project “Capacity Building on Marine Debris Monitoring by Using Innovative Technologies in APEC Region”, which plans to organize a 2-day training workshop and a 1-day site visit in Chinese Taipei in October 2021 with the objective to share information on effective marine debris monitoring approaches and best practices; establish a regional collaboration platform; and formulate recommendations on building a monitoring network. More information may be found at this [link](#).

Japan presented on plans to hold a physical workshop (if possible) for marine debris prevention and management in the APEC region in 2021, titled “Good Practice and Innovative Workshop for Marine Debris Prevention and Management in the APEC Region.” More information can be found at this [link](#).

United States presented on implementation of the [APEC Marine Debris Roadmap](#). The implementation plan is meant to help provide direction and prioritization to implement the roadmap, guide the work of OFWG and APEC more broadly on marine debris, and serve as a guidance document to help track actions related to marine debris within APEC. The implementation plan will be a living document that

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will be updated at first OFWG meeting each year. Next steps include prioritizing future work, ensuring coordination across APEC working groups, and posting the implementation plan to the APEC Marine Debris [website](#). More information may be found in the presentation at this [link](#) (requires an APEC Information Management Portal (AIMP) login).

Ocean Conservancy presented an update on the APEC Clean Cities and Ocean Initiative and the [Plastics Policy Playbook](#) developed with the Trash Free Seas Alliance. Ocean Conservancy also provided a summary of the 2020 marine debris webinar series it co-hosted with Malaysia on “Promoting Investment to Combat Marine Litter and Build a Circular Economy in APEC.” More information may be found at this [link](#).

Ocean and Fisheries Working Group (OFWG) – Project Proposals

Malaysia, Thailand, and the United States submitted a project proposal to identify key challenges and capacity development needs within the APEC region associated with addressing abandoned, lost, and derelict fishing gear (ALDFG) and build APEC capacity to implement instruments, measures and tools to prevent and reduce ALDFG and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing throughout the region. The project will be unique in that it will engage both APEC fishery management officials as well as key private industry stakeholders through two workshops in Thailand. As outputs, the project will develop a best practices framework to address ALDFG in the APEC region and a compendium on regional gear-marking schemes, both of which will lead to enhanced capacity to improve fishing gear management and prevent its loss. More information may be found at this [link](#).

Viet Nam submitted a project proposal to host a 2-day seminar in the second quarter of 2021 in Viet Nam, designed to gather all APEC economies, stakeholders and representatives from other related institutions and businesses to (i) assess the capacity of economies in promoting circular economy to address marine plastic effectively; (ii) share best practices and innovations including new renewable, biodegradable and compostable materials that are not toxic or less toxic than fossil-based plastics; packaging and products that use a single or small number of polymers; (iii) 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; (iv) develop a set of recommendations to encourage cooperation in potential areas to tackle marine plastic litter, particularly in the design phase. More information may be found at this [link](#).

The United States submitted a proposal project that will engage APEC participants and key global experts to develop a marine debris monitoring decision framework (or guideline document) to assist APEC economies to practically undertake marine debris monitoring, based on local conditions, capacity, needs and issues. The framework will be developed with input from APEC and additional global experts, then refined and tested at a workshop (potentially to be held in late 2021) with participation of APEC representatives. The project will be fundamental for implementing the APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris with significant cross-APEC benefit to working groups addressing this issue and will ultimately enable better comparison of marine debris data across APEC. Information may be found at this [link](#).

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Chemical Dialogue (CD) November 5-6

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 2020 webinar series developed in collaboration with the Ocean and Fisheries Working Group, which focused on innovative funding models and innovative technologies for land-based waste management in the APEC region. The APEC marine debris website was presented as a good resource to find marine debris related activity in APEC. More information may be found at this [link](#).

Japan presented on a training seminar on plastic waste management under the Japan Initiative for Marine Environment (“JaIME”). The training took place in February 2020. JCIA noted that participants of the week-long training seminar included policy makers, national and local governments, plastic manufactures, retailers, and waste treatment companies – with 29 individuals in total participating. The overall goal of the training seminar was to understand the concept of material flow analysis. More information may be found at this [link](#).

SOM Steering Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation

Japan submitted a project proposal with the objective to identify problems regarding resource circulation and waste management in cities and to recommend appropriate solutions for the problems. The project follows up on previous efforts by Japan to develop a [guidebook](#) on resource circulation and waste management [SOM 01 2016S]. More information may be found at this [link](#).

Malaysia submitted a proposal for a “Multi-year Policy Dialogue on Innovative Waste Management.” The Policy Dialogue is to be held for one day annually until 2022, with the topic and the goal to be determined at the beginning of the year depending on the host year’s priority. The outcome is the development of policy recommendations that can serve as guidance for all economies in moving towards more sustainable waste management, including through circular economy approach in the food system. More information may be found at this [link](#).

Subcommittee on Standards and Conformance

Malaysia submitted a proposal for the “13th SCSC Conference: Standardisation in Circular Economy for a More Sustainable Trade.” The objective of the conference is to: 1. promote circular economy initiatives in the APEC region through sharing of knowledge, best practices, expertise etc., and 2. to encourage utilization of standardisation in formulating policy recommendations for more sustainable trade practices in APEC. More information may be found at this [link](#).

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:

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- 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 Ryan MacFarlane at (macfarlane@crowell.com). As the distribution is quite large please consider carefully before “replying all” to any messages.