



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection



Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

## BMUV Support Project Marine Litter

to support the funding program “Marine Debris Framework – Regional Hubs Around the Globe”

### Background

Nowadays, barely any other global threat to the oceans is as visible as the pollution from plastic waste. As often portrayed in visually charged media reports, the increasing littering of the oceans has reached an alarming level. A recent report indicates an estimated amount of eleven million metric tons of plastic waste being released into the oceans in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Large rivers play an important role in transporting macro- and microplastics from inland to the sea, especially in Asia and Africa. In addition, coastal areas contribute to plastic waste leakage, releasing the largest discharges into the sea.<sup>2</sup>

Various stakeholders recognize the need for a paradigm shift to combat marine litter. Strategies focus above all on limiting its further discharge as effectively as possible, including the avoidance and reduction options in the upstream value chains in accordance with the waste hierarchy. In addition to bans and voluntary approaches, e.g. to reduce single-use plastics, discussions are also taking place on how producers, retailers and other stakeholders can be held accountable. Awareness-raising measures to trigger changes in societal behaviour regarding littering, waste separation and waste avoidance represent another important approach.



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**Budget:** 2.5 million EUR

**Commissioned by:** German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV)

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### International approaches for action

For several years, international regulations for combating marine litter have been discussed and thus some implementations already approach the challenges:

Under the auspices of the BMUV, Germany has been engaged in combating marine litter for years. In 2015 and 2017, it successfully placed the issue on the agenda of the German [G7](#) and [G20](#) presidencies respectively. In September 2021 Germany teamed up with Ecuador, Ghana and Vietnam and convened the first ever [Ministerial Conference on Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution](#) with the aim to build political momentum in the lead up to the second part of the 5<sup>th</sup> UN Environment Assembly in 2022 where a mandate for a new global instrument to end plastic pollution is to be expected.

Furthermore, in November 2018, the BMUV launched an action plan "for less plastic and more recycling" under the programmatic title "[No to the throw-away society](#)" which comprises 5 points. While the first four points relate primarily to guiding principles for action within Germany, the fifth point concerns "international commitment against marine litter and for a sustainable use of plastics". This addresses in particular support for selected developing and emerging countries in their efforts to avoid marine litter and to establish appropriate waste collection and recycling systems. For this purpose the funding program "[Marine Debris Framework – Regional Hubs around the Globe](#)" (Marine:DeFRAG) was launched in 2019. The program supports [projects](#) which primarily aim at the avoidance of waste directly at the source, to furthermore limit plastic waste entry into the oceans. This includes measures such as reducing plastic waste in the medium term, as well as establishing functioning waste and recycling management systems in the longer term.

## Project goal and activities

Considering marine littering a global problem, the BMUV Support Project Marine Litter is supporting the engagement of the German Government to tackle plastic waste leakage at its source. For this, the project provides the BMUV with needs-based advisory services, considering relevant national and international initiatives and corresponding synergy potentials. International platforms and events are used to share knowledge and experiences and distribute the projects products and findings. Furthermore, the project cooperates with regional, national, and local actors to implement small-scale activities and pilots, developed in close coordination with BMUV. These activities are described in the following, and their geographical distribution is visualized in the map below.

On behalf of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and cooperation with local experts, we are carrying out a desktop study on plastic pollution along the Nile river. Our aim is to enhance the current knowledge on plastic pollution in the Nile Basin to support the development of counter measures and a NBI strategic framework for plastic waste prevention. Similarly, a study on plastic waste from the fishery sector in Costa Rica will be concluded in early 2022.

In cooperation with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), we conduct a series of online workshops within the IORA Blue Economy Working Group to exchange on current national marine litter strategies in IORA member states and to discuss opportunities for cooperation.

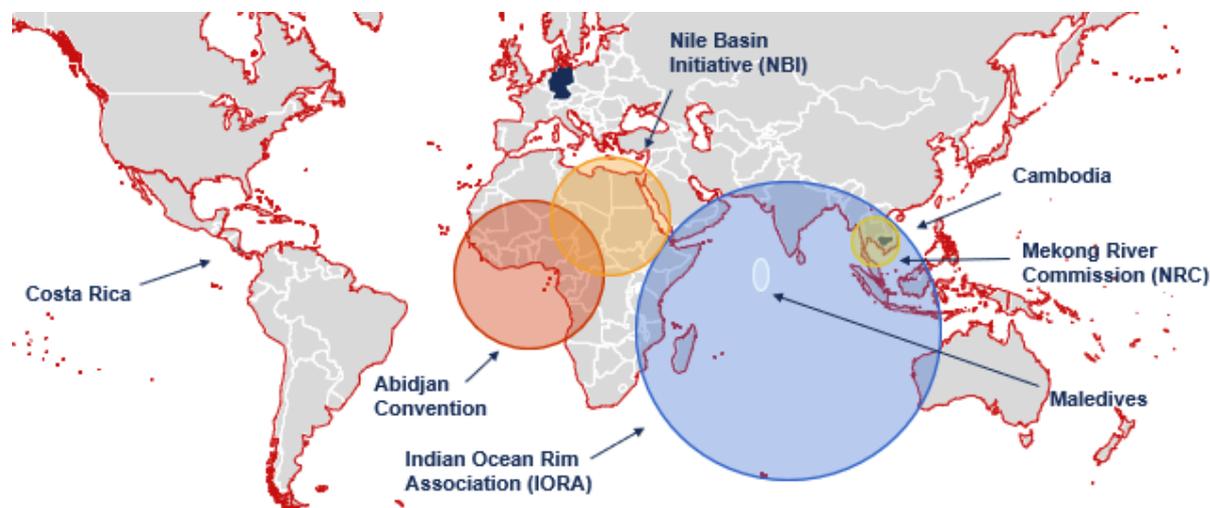
The aim is to develop a common strategic framework as a basis for national and regional action plans.

The project supports the Abidjan Convention's efforts to communicate and mainstream the problem of marine litter and to promote a possible global plastic treaty within its member states. On Koh Rong, a touristic archipelago in Cambodia, communities will be supported in the development and implementation of a circular economy-oriented waste management concept which aims at plastic prevention and supports recycling.

## Outlook

The Marine Litter Project will expand its activities and, for example, support the Mekong River Commission in conducting trainings on the application of its plastic monitoring methodology and accompany the government of the Maldives in implementing its communication strategy to phase out single-use plastic.

To support the BMUV in its knowledge management and processing, the project is currently developing a comprehensive information management tool presenting global data on actors and activities in the domain of marine litter and plastic pollution. Other activities in knowledge management include the planned publication of studies on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Eco-Design in spring 2022.



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### Further information:

GLZ project website: [The fight against marine litter](https://www.giz.de/en/the-fight-against-marine-litter)

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Project map (p. 2): Legal disclaimer:

This geographical map is for informational purposes only and does not constitute recognition of international boundaries or regions; GIZ makes no claims concerning the validity, accuracy or completeness of the maps nor assumes any liability resulting from the use of the information therein.

### Literature sources:

<sup>1</sup> PEW and SYSTEMIQ (2020). Breaking the Plastic Wave.

[https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/07/breakingtheplasticwave\\_report.pdf](https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/07/breakingtheplasticwave_report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Schmidt, C., Krauth, T., Wagner, S. (2017). Export of Plastic Debris by Rivers into the Sea. *Environ. Sci. Technol.*

<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acs.est.7b02368>

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