

A review of marine plastic litter in the WIO region: Effectiveness of measures undertaken, and opportunities

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Abstract

WIOMSA commissioned three interrelated studies to further understand marine litter in the WIO region. This study's objective (iii) sought to review policy and institutional frameworks on marine litter in the WIO region, including government and non-government (private sector, NGO, and community) actions and to analyze opportunities and needs. Specifically, this study analyzed how effective existing policy and institutional frameworks, and the actions conducted by all types of stakeholders were. Literature review in English and Portuguese to understand and identify existing regulatory frameworks and current initiatives to address marine litter were conducted. Information collected was put together in a database showing records on the type of waste targeted, the scope, the country/countries involved, the date and details of implementation. Participation by WIO countries in international agreements is generally widespread, with countries such as Reunion Island and South Africa involved in all relevant governmental and industry agreements. Some gaps exist, as some countries are not signatories to the London agreements or the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), however these countries are still involved at an international level through their membership of the UN and the International Maritime Organization. Nationally, some countries already adopted regulations on PET bottles indicating the recognition of their role in single use plastic reduction and creating opportunities in recycling. This reflects the engagement of governments, citizens, non-state actors against plastic marine pollution. Most of these initiatives were by the private sector. General awareness about plastics is still low and the initiatives are on a small scale, especially in countries with inadequate infrastructure. Various existing international programmes can help on these aspects in the WIO region by providing technical and financial support. After conducting a SWOT analysis, this paper gives these recommendations:

- a) Regulatory framework and waste management – using a top-down approach.
 - Collaborating with industry on EPR development
 - Incorporating microplastics in national-level regulatory frameworks
 - Ensuring regulatory measures via education and enforcement
 - Including informal sector in collection and recycling of litter
 - Promoting upstream measures like avoidance and eco-design
- b) Building initiatives – via a bottom-up approach
 - Developing awareness continuously
 - Supporting win-win partnerships with governments intervention where there exists no private initiatives.
 - Facilitating access into international programmes and funding

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