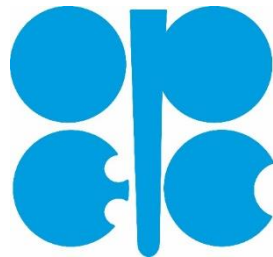


# **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**



**Call for written submissions  
on “the potential options for elements towards  
an international legally binding instrument to end  
plastic pollution”**

**OPEC Secretariat  
Research Division  
January 2023**



Name of country (for Members of the committee)	
Name of organization (for stakeholders to the committee)	OPEC – Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
Contact person and contact information for the submission	Dr. Christian Matthias Diendorfer, Senior Research Analyst, Environmental Matters Department
Date	3 January 2023

## I. Substantive elements

### 1. Objective(s)

#### a) What objective(s) could be set out in the instrument?

**Proposed Objective:**

*To end uncontrolled plastic pollution by relying on effective plastic waste management and circular economy approaches, as well as promoting innovation and technological solutions, while ensuring that plastic can play its important role in enhancing sustainable development.*

**Explanatory Text:**

*While uncontrolled plastic pollution is a major threat to the environment, plastic has enormous potential to support implementation of other multilateral environmental agreements and promotion of sustainable development, including sustainable consumption and production of plastic, due to its highly beneficial features in substituting other materials and functionalities, for example by substituting more emission-intensive materials and products.*

*It is important to guarantee environmentally sound management of end-of-life plastic waste, including by education, improving consumer behavior, and working with relevant businesses, while ensuring that plastic, as one of the major materials in various sectors, can play its important role in supporting sustainable development. This can be achieved by circular approaches to manage emissions and waste over the entire life cycle, especially its use in end-products, to address the root cause of plastic pollution in a fair and balanced manner.*

*The instrument should address pollution from the use of plastics in end-products and should include objectives to end pollution by providing support and technological means for recycling and waste management. Restricting the use of plastics or their production, risks putting plastics at a disadvantage compared to more emissions-intensive materials, for which such instruments do not exist.*

## 2. Core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches

- a) What core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches would provide a comprehensive approach to addressing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, throughout the full life cycle in line with the future objective(s) of the instrument?***

*A comprehensive LCA comparison of plastics (incl. single-use) to non-plastic alternatives is crucial to determine the environmental and socio-economic impacts, in a fair, equitable and balanced manner. This includes for example the impact on food-security for biodegradable plastics. There is a need to recognize the environmental impacts related to the use of bio-based plastics, their durability, affordability, and ESM of bio-plastic when it turned to waste, especially since there is a need to have proper environmental conditions and capacity.*

In most cases, the production of biomass requires the use of natural resources such as land and water and the use of chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides. Therefore, producing plastics from primary biomass can lead to direct or indirect land-use change, resulting in biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, deforestation, water scarcity, and competition with crops intended for human consumption.

Implementation of control measures to increase transparency for recycling and waste management, including through providing means of implementation to developing countries, as well as considering the common but differentiated responsibilities and national circumstances of countries.

In general, the obligations and measures should focus on the root cause of plastic pollution: the open-end of the currently linear plastics value chain, as well as development of relevant technological solutions focuses on the plastics design for recycling and degradation.

to reduce plastic pollution, while providing flexibility and support to developing countries, in the light of their national circumstances.

## II. Implementation elements

### 1. Implementation measures

- a) How to ensure implementation of the instrument at the national level (eg. role national action plans contribute to meeting the objectives and obligations of the instrument?)***
- b) How to ensure effectiveness of the instrument and have efficient national reporting?***

**c) Please provide any other relevant proposals or priorities here on implementation measures (for example for scientific and technical cooperation and coordination as well as compliance).**

*Inclusion of circular approaches and waste management measures in national programs at various levels for addressing plastic pollution, including through education and changing consumer behavior.*

*Countries may develop information on addressing plastic pollution, take into account the national circumstances and capabilities of developing countries. It is necessary to ensure flexibility for developing countries in planning their relevant activities for production and use of plastic, as well as recycling and waste management. All measures at various level should be cost-effective, especially for developing countries, and refrain from imposing any restriction on production and use of plastic that may create inefficient and costly approaches for addressing plastic pollution at various levels.*

*Inclusion of circular approaches and waste management measures in national programs with provision of means of implementation should be promoted, while considering their socio-economic impacts, including in developing countries.*

*Clear provisions on issues related to transparency and accountability would be essential for controlling any transfer of plastic and hazardous waste from developed countries to developing countries – which may relate to trade issues as well.*

## **2. Means of Implementation**

**d) What measures will be required to support the implementation of the instrument?**

*Implementation measures of any agreement should include provision of financial support, technology transfer and capacity building, especially in developing countries, to assist them to address plastic pollution in a cost-effective manner in light of their national circumstances and capacity building.*

*Promoting partnership among countries and relevant stakeholders at various levels for technical cooperation, and development and deployment of technologies to reduce plastic pollutions is critical, while financial support should be provided to enhance innovation and technological development.*

*Developed countries should provide means of implementation, including finance, technology and capacity building to support relevant activities to address plastic pollution. Therefore, implementation of actions in developing countries should be commensurate with support provided to developing countries.*

*International financial institutions and Multilateral Development Banks should also support and provide financial resources to developing countries to address cost-effective programmes to address plastic pollution and the socioeconomic impacts of response measures and such actions on developing countries.*

*Capacity building to understand, assess, and address the socio-economic impacts of the implementation of response measures to address plastic pollution, while considering national circumstances and the respective capabilities of each country.*

*Capacity building to enable the transformation to a circular economy. This includes in addition to technical solutions planning and investing.*

*Normalization and vulgarization of circular approaches and waste management measures at national levels.*

*Research and development measures to develop and implement the technical solutions required for circular approaches to reduce plastic pollutions. This also includes technology and best practice sharing between developed and developing countries.*

*Measures to increase investments (public and private) in the whole value chain of waste collection, sorting, and conversion.*

*Standardization and labeling of material feedstock grades to simplify the recycling processes.*

*Consumer-centric measures to ensure the actual use of modern recycling solutions and methods of environmentally safe plastic disposal.*

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