



IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency

Atoms for Peace and Development

Input of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC)

First Meeting of the INC to develop an International Legally Binding Instrument
on Plastic Pollution, including in the Marine Environment
Uruguay, 28 November-2 December 2022

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has decades of experience supporting Member States through the use of nuclear science and technology in their efforts towards the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to life on land and life below water for which plastic pollution is a big threat.

Under its initiative “Nuclear Technologies as a solution for Plastics Pollution” (NUTEC Plastics), which builds on the IAEA’s efforts to assist Member States in dealing with plastic pollution through recycling using radiation technology and marine monitoring using isotopic tracing techniques, the IAEA is considering (1) an upstream approach addressing the reduction of volume wastes together with innovating recycling and increasing reuse capacity, and (2) a downstream approach addressing the scientific understanding and the monitoring of the microplastics pollution impacts on the marine environment and its resources.

A note prepared by the Secretariat (UNEP/PP/INC.1/11), highlights in its Annex the priorities, needs, barriers and challenges, elaborated in particular from submissions by Member States with a focus on activities along the plastic life cycle where elements can be identified for consideration under this legally binding instrument. However, beyond the life cycle of plastics, the IAEA sees the need that this legally binding instrument also addresses another important element, i.e., the development of a monitoring mechanism of the impacts of measures taken under this instrument to reduce plastic pollution in the marine environment.

To this end, harmonized sampling protocols and analytical techniques are required to generate irrefutable data by a network of laboratories worldwide developed through capacity building.

Under its NUTEC Plastics initiative, and with the support of its Member States, the IAEA is developing such a network and facilitating the harmonization of protocols for marine microplastics monitoring.

Synergies with the IAEA work to reduce plastic pollution and assess its impacts on the marine environment should be considered. The IAEA can make a significant contribution through NUTEC Plastics and the work of its laboratories in Monaco and Vienna, and stands ready to continue providing support to its Member States to achieve national, regional and global goals.

<https://www.iaea.org/services/key-programmes/nutec-plastics>