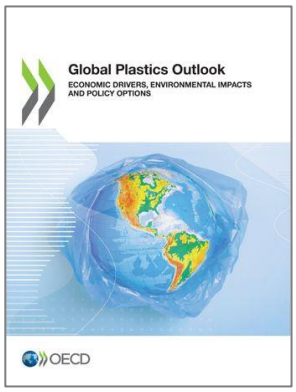
Ad-hoc OEWG preparing for the INC to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution
Request for input about efforts in the area of plastic pollution

Submission from the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD)

Following the request for input by the UNEP Secretariat dated 17 May 2022, please find below a summary of our organisation's main efforts in the area of plastic pollution.

Global Plastics Outlook



The publication *"Global Plastics Outlook: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options"* quantified current trends in plastics use, waste generation and environmental impacts and presented four essential levers to bend the plastic curve: markets for recycled plastics, technological innovation in plastics, domestic policy measures and international co-operation, including international financing. The findings point to the need for a whole of life-cycle approach requiring policy interventions both downstream of the value chain, such as end-of-life management, and upstream, like product design, for an effective policy mix.

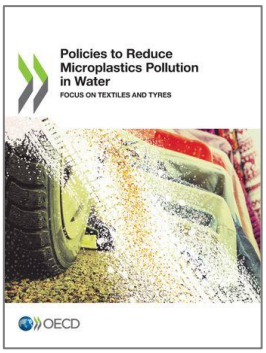
This **interactive data dashboard** provides a snapshot on the full lifecycle of plastics across the world: production, use, waste generation, waste management, waste generation and waste management, including waste that is mismanaged or leaked to the environment.

A second publication *"Global Plastics Outlook: Policy Scenarios to 2060"* will follow in June 2022. It will provide a forward-looking perspective, with scenarios for the evolution of plastics use, waste, and environmental impacts in the absence of additional measures, as well as with scaled-up policy action to address plastic pollution. Such an outlook on plastics can help policy makers understand the scale of the challenge to transition to a more sustainable and circular use of plastics, as well as to grasp the environmental benefits and economic consequences of adopting more stringent policies.

Further follow-up work might include similar exercises scaled down at the *regional level*, including with a focus on the most affected regions such as Southeast Asia.

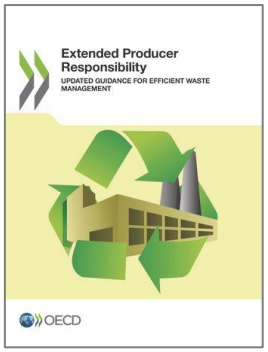
Plastics in the environment

The OECD has published a number of reports related to plastics and plastics in the environment, including on the following topics: improving plastics recycling, reducing microplastics pollution and single-use plastics waste, and costing ocean pollution prevention.



- The 2018 OECD report *Improving markets for Recycled Plastics* looks at why only a small share of plastic waste is currently recycled and what can be done to improve conditions for recycling. The report proposes a range of potential interventions to address the identified barriers and improve markets for secondary plastics.
- The 2021 report *Policies to Reduce Microplastics Pollution in Water: Focus on Textiles and Tyres* synthesises the state of knowledge on the sources, fate and risks of microplastics pollution. Focusing on two sources of microplastics pollution, textile products and vehicle tyres, it proposes policy insights on measures and strategies that could help minimise their leakage and impacts on human health and ecosystems.
- The OECD Environment Working Paper *Cornago, Börkey et Brown (2021), «Preventing single-use plastic waste: Implications of different policy approaches»*, examines the effectiveness of policies to address externalities that emerge across the life-cycle of single-use plastics.
- The OECD Environment Working Paper *Soós, Whiteman et Gavgas (2022), «The cost of preventing ocean plastic pollution»* provides estimates of the cost of preventing land-based plastic leakage into the ocean, covering 38 OECD member countries and 10 selected major plastic waste emitters in Asia and Africa.

Economic instruments



An important line of past and on ongoing work provides policy guidance on the use of selected economic instruments. Notably, OECD work on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), an important market-based policy tool, is a major reference point for our members' efforts to reduce externalities associated with the end-of-life stage of product and packaging. A reference point is the 2016 report Extended Producer Responsibility: Updated Guidance for Efficient Waste Management.

The OECD Environment Working Paper *Laubinger et al. (2021), «Modulated fees for Extended Producer Responsibility schemes (EPR)»,* defines a classification for EPR fee modulation (by criteria and methodology), discusses potential challenges and opportunities and presents key policy insights that can further stimulate this emerging policy approach.

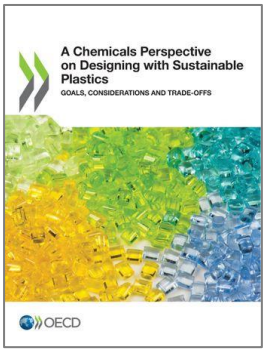
Ongoing work in this area focuses on multiple aspects in the design and implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility, including combination of EPR with Deposit-Refund Schemes (ENV/EPOC/WPRPW(2020)2/FINAL) and the extension of EPR to additional product groups.

A workshop on Extended Producer Responsibility is being planned for the first half of 2023. This will be organised jointly with the United States and will engage both OECD and non-OECD countries.

Sustainable Design of Plastics from a Chemicals Perspective

The OECD Global Forum on "*Plastics in a Circular Economy: Design of Sustainable Plastics from a Chemicals Perspective*" was held in May 2018 in Copenhagen. The Forum sought to incentivize a shift in sustainable chemistry thinking at the product design stage by identifying good practices, including tools and approaches, as well as a policy framework to reduce the environmental and health impacts of plastics.

The 2021 OECD publication *"A Chemicals Perspective on Designing with Sustainable Plastics: Goals, Considerations and Trade-offs"* seeks to enable the creation of inherently sustainable plastic products by integrating sustainable chemistry thinking in the design process. It provides an integrated approach to sustainable plastic selection from a chemicals perspective, and identifies a set of generalizable sustainable design goals, life cycle considerations and trade-offs. The report also considers trade-offs that will need to be carefully balanced in the design phase and reflection on implications of design choices.



Transboundary movements of plastic waste

As part of the line of work on the transboundary movement of plastics scrap and waste, the OECD developed the Environment Working Paper *Brown, Laubinger et Börkey (2022), «Monitoring trade in plastic waste and scrap»*. This paper aims to identify and assess trends in trade patterns of plastic waste and scrap in the context of recent policy developments, particularly the strengthening of controls applied in the context of the Basel Convention.

As part of the work on trade and environment more generally, the OECD has undertaken work on international trade and circular economy, with the Environment Working Papers Dellink (2020), *«The Consequences of a more resource efficient and circular economy for international trade patterns: A modelling assessment»*, and Yamaguchi (2021), *«International trade and circular Economy: Policy alignment»*. This line of work is continued in the forthcoming paper by Yamaguchi (2022, forthcoming), *"Securing reverse supply chains for a resource efficient and circular economy: What role for trade facilitation mechanism and standards?"*. Oher ongoing work focuses on the nexus of illegal trade and environmental crime, which also encompasses efforts to tackle illegal waste trade. The analysis focuses on multilateral and regional solutions to cross-border environmental crime.

Development cooperation to tackle plastic pollution

As part of OECD work on development cooperation to address plastic pollution, the OECD is developing a paper that examines: (i) trends in plastics use, waste generation and the related environmental impacts in developing countries, (ii) the scope and nature of *Official Development Assistance* (ODA) in support of reducing plastic pollution, and (iii) effective and innovative development cooperation approaches that could be scaled up and further developed. The report will make available and analyse dedicated a dataset on ODA in support of plastic pollution reduction.

This work will inform the development of Guidance on Effective Development Cooperation in support of Sustainable Ocean Economies, carried out as part of the OECD Sustainable Ocean for All Initiative. The Guidance work aims to create a space for sharing experiences and fostering good practices. This work will also inform discussions at the 2020 U.N. Ocean Conference, namely through two side events, one of which co-organised in partnership with UNEP.

OECD mandate on plastics

In February 2022, the United Nations Environmental Assembly adopted the landmark resolution to convene an intergovernmental negotiation committee to develop an internationally binding instrument on plastic pollution. Less than a month later, on 31 March 2022, the Declaration of the *OECD Environment Ministerial Meeting* "Declaration on a Resilient and Healthy Environment for All" committed to develop comprehensive and coherent life-cycle approaches to tackle plastic pollution and promote co-operation internationally.

Environment Ministers also invited the OECD, through its Environment Policy Committee (EPOC), to:

- consider the possible development of an *OECD Recommendation on plastics* addressing gaps in information and good practices, taking into account the findings of the Global Plastics Outlook, and avoiding duplication and overlap with discussions in other international fora.
- support the objectives of the upcoming intergovernmental negotiating committee mandated to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, with relevant analytical work building on the Global Plastics Outlook.