

Position Paper

1. Name of organization

Environmental Management Bureau
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

2. Your view on major barriers to combatting marine litter and microplastics

The Philippines declares as the policy of the State to adopt a systematic, comprehensive and ecological solid waste management program in the country. Land-based pollution that inadvertently end up in the oceans as marine litter including microplastics, is a priority area that should be addressed with concerted efforts nationally and regionally.

The lack of infrastructure to either process or dispose solid wastes particularly marine litter and microplastics is a challenge that should be focused on and addressed as a shared responsibility between local government units and the private sector. The private and public sectors willingness and capacity to invest on waste treatment technologies and pay for solid waste management services, respectively is also a challenge that requires policy interventions and financial investments.

Likewise, the natural geography of the country, i.e. surrounded by bodies of water, mountains, plains and busy cities results to high inter-island solid waste management transport costs. Hence, the solution that has to be in place should be comprehensive to cater to the requirements of the situation.

Moreover, reliable scientific information is necessary in understanding the distribution, sources, transport and impacts of marine litter and microplastics. However, there is lack or rarity of available scientific information on microplastic pollution level and source identification in the country.

Organization of available research data and information and support to proposed researches to address gaps in information on marine litter and microplastics should be a priority. Also, the need for a harmonized protocol for monitoring and data collection is indispensable for data reliability and systematic management. Overall, an action plan with measurable targets and timelines to address these barriers should be a step forward in combatting marine litter and microplastics.

3. Your view on potential national, regional and international response options and associated environmental, social and economic costs

Based on recent findings on its effects on the environment and human health, the associated environmental cost outweighs economic costs in addressing marine litter and microplastics. However, response options through policy implementations should be based on systematic scientific measurements, public consultations and the financial considerations associated with these actions. Response options may vary locally per country but a regional and international plan of action with measurable targets and timelines is a necessity and should be a priority.

4. Your view on the feasibility and effectiveness of different response options

The environmental challenges posed by marine litter and microplastics are a national, regional and international issue. Hence, the response actions should be addressed as such, nationally, regionally and

internationally. Considering the urgency of the call for action to address marine litter and microplastics, strengthening and/or revisiting established international binding agreements to include measurable targets and timelines for marine litter and microplastics is feasible and possibly more effective.

5. Other inputs

Our support in the implementation of a regional action plan for marine litter and microplastics is a priority. Furthermore, a national action plan for marine litter and microplastics, to include monitoring and research to establish baseline information will be an integral agenda in our country focus.