MARINE LITTER ACTION PLATFORM

BACKGROUND

Marine litter has become one of the major global environmental challenges of recent years, originating from both terrestrial and marine sources. Millions of tonnes of waste enter the world's seas and oceans each year, harming marine biodiversity, posing risks to human health through the food chain, and causing substantial economic losses.

Marine litter and climate change are interconnected pressures. Marine litter contributes to greenhouse gas emissions across its lifecycle, from production to disposal, while climate-driven extreme weather, flooding and sea-level rise increase the leakage of waste into marine environments. This two-way interaction places additional stress on vulnerable ecosystems such as coral reefs, seagrass meadows and coastal wetlands, degrading carbon sink ecosystems, weakening the natural coastal protection they provide, and affecting the productivity of phytoplankton and other organisms central to global oxygen production.

Marine litter intersects with both mitigation and adaptation objectives under the Paris Agreement. Across its lifecycle, from production to disposal, it generates greenhouse gas emissions and is therefore relevant to Parties' mitigation ambitions under their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Marine litter also affects coastal and marine ecosystems, including seagrass meadows, wetlands and other blue-carbon ecosystems, which contribute to carbon sequestration and storage when effectively conserved and managed. From the adaptation perspective, marine litter undermines ecosystem resilience and coastal protection functions. In this context, addressing marine litter can contribute to the achievement of the Global Goal on Adaptation by supporting the resilience of ecosystems and infrastructure and reducing climate-related vulnerability, in line with the targets of the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience. Despite this relevance, marine litter remains insufficiently reflected in climate action efforts, including those undertaken in the context of NDCs, National Adaptation Plans and climate finance frameworks. Strengthening synergies between marine litter reduction efforts and the implementation of existing commitments under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement would improve coherence between plastic pollution policies and climate goals

A number ofinternational and regional initiatives are already contributing to efforts to address marine litter, including the G20 Marine Litter Action Plan, UNEP Clean Seas Campaign and FAO/IMO GloLitter Partnerships. The UNEP Clean Seas Campaign relies on voluntary pledges without standardised tracking. The FAO and IMO GloLitter Partnerships provide valuable technical assistance and are sector-specific and project-based. Building on these existing efforts, further opportunities exist to strengthen cooperation, knowledge sharing and access to financing.

Governance is correspondingly fragmented, cutting across environmental protection, waste management, maritime activities and climate policy without a unified institutional framework. Regional disparities persist, with developing countries and Small Island Developing States facing infrastructure, financing and capacity constraints, while sectoral engagement varies widely across fisheries, shipping, tourism and consumer goods. The result is that pilot initiatives rarely evolve into systemic change, and there is no integrated platform enabling systematic sharing of best practice, visibility for successful initiatives, and connection between project developers and financial resources.

Türkiye brings direct implementation experience through its national Zero Waste initiative, building on the momentum generated by United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/161 on promoting zero-waste initiatives and its extension to marine environments through the Zero Waste Blue approach. With extensive coastlines across the Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea, Türkiye holds both an ecological stake and practical experience in addressing marine litter at scale, positioning it as a credible bridge between regional cooperation frameworks and global climate governance.

OBJECTIVE

The Marine Litter Action Platform is a proposed initiative to establish an integrated global platform connecting marine litter reduction commitments, knowledge sharing and financing mechanisms, in order to accelerate scalable and measurable action to protect marine and coastal ecosystems while contributing to keeping the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C temperature goal within reach.

The Platform is designed to build upon existing initiatives, including UNEP-led partnerships and voluntary commitment platforms, by strengthening coordination, integrating financing and enhancing effectiveness, rather than creating a parallel structure. Its purpose is to transform fragmented efforts into a coherent, accessible and action-oriented mechanism that raises the visibility of existing initiatives, promotes the dissemination of best practice, and connects solutions to finance.

INITIATIVE OUTLINE

1. Implementation pillars

The Platform would combine five components, delivered as a single integrated system.

Pillar 1	**Knowledge hub** A hub for sharing best practices, technical knowledge and policy innovations on marine litter and climate change, with a focus on climate-responsive approaches and the link between marine litter and greenhouse gas emissions, ecosystem degradation and climate resilience.
Pillar 2	**Registry** A registry where stakeholders can voluntarily submit, update and track measurable marine litter reduction targets and actions, including their climate co-benefits.
Pillar 3	**Financing interface** An interface connecting project developers with relevant public, private and climate finance sources to support the scaling of solutions that contribute to both marine ecosystem protection and climate action.
Pillar 4	**Monitoring Dashboard** A dashboard enabling transparent tracking of submissions, including the number of initiatives, thematic focus areas, and geographic distribution across countries and stakeholder groups.
Pillar 5	**Capacity-building and awareness module** Guidance materials, training content and communication resources tailored to different stakeholders, strengthening understanding of the interlinkages between marine litter and climate change.

2. Delivery

Phased development to COP31

The Platform will be developed in four phases.

In the first phase, government-led stakeholder consultations will be conducted and existing initiatives will be mapped to define the Platform's structure, governance and functional requirements. The Platform was launched at the high-level event held in Trabzon on 10–11 September 2026, marking the start of this development process.

In the second phase, the Platform's core components, including the knowledge hub, commitment registry and financing interface, will be further developed. Preparations for the Platform's website are currently underway, and technical development will continue under the coordination of the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change.

In the third phase, pilot testing will be carried out with selected users to refine functionality, followed by the development of awareness-raising and capacity-building content.

In the final phase, the Platform will be presented to a broader international audience at COP31, showcasing its key features, early results and initial commitments, with the aim of expanding stakeholder participation, international cooperation and global visibility.

Monitoring and indicators

Progress would be tracked across participation, implementation, finance, knowledge sharing and environmental impact. Indicative measures include: the number of countries, cities and private sector actors registered; commitments submitted and updated annually; good practices uploaded and accessed; projects supported and financing mobilised; the share of initiatives moving from pilot to scale-up; sectoral and regional distribution of users; and estimated reductions in plastic leakage, improvements in coastal waste collection and recycling rates, and the area of ecosystems protected or restored.

Monitoring refers to tracking the activities registered on the Platform, not to monitoring marine pollution. Therefore, environmental baselines, quantified targets and specific timeframes for such indicators are not applicable.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND PARTNERS

The Platform will be established under the leadership of the COP31 Presidency. Governance arrangements, including the structure of the Platform and its hosting, will be defined in the first phase of delivery through stakeholder consultation and the mapping of existing initiatives. Alignment with UNEP and existing global marine litter frameworks will be maintained throughout to ensure coherence rather than duplication.

The design and implementation of the Platform will initially be guided by a Steering Committee composed of relevant national stakeholders. As international participation expands, the governance structure will be further developed in consultation with interested countries and relevant international partners, with a view to ensuring broad geographical representation, including developing countries, and promoting shared ownership. Future COP Presidencies will also be encouraged to engage with and support the Platform, with a view to strengthening international ownership and ensuring continuity of the Platform after COP31.

Developed through ongoing consultation and exchange with stakeholders engaged in *Axis 2: Stewarding Forests, Oceans, and Biodiversity* of the Global Climate Action Agenda, the Marine Litter Action Platform will support efforts to advance the Agenda's objectives.

PARTICIPATION

The Marine Litter Action Platform will bring together governments, local and coastal authorities, international organisations, the private sector, financial institutions, research institutions and civil society around a common agenda for marine litter reduction and coastal climate resilience. Stakeholder groups identified for engagement include:

- National governments, including environment, climate and waste management authorities;
- Local and coastal governments and municipalities;
- International organisations, including UNEP, FAO, IMO and UNDP;
- Private sector actors across the plastics value chain, fisheries, shipping, tourism, retail and recycling industries;
- Financial institutions, including development banks, climate funds and public and private investors;
- Research and academic institutions and scientific networks;
- Civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, community groups and international networks.

Participation is open to actors engaging according to their areas of interest and capacity, whether through policy alignment and implementation, contribution of good practice and data, technical and scientific support, financing, or advocacy and capacity building at community level.

Parties wishing to participate in the initiative are kindly requested to submit their request through their respective UNFCCC national focal point, by e-mail to the address indicated below. The same address may also be used by other interested stakeholders to express their support of the initiative.

CONTACT

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