



COBSEA

COORDINATING BODY ON THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA

Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter

2019

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I. Background & Rationale

1. Marine litter is a transboundary challenge that is rooted in unsustainable production and consumption patterns, poor solid waste management and lack of infrastructure, lack of adequate legal and policy frameworks and poor enforcement, including on interregional cross-border trade of plastic waste, and a lack of financial resources. Marine litter is any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded into the sea or rivers or on beaches; brought indirectly to the sea with rivers, sewage, storm water or winds; or discarded or lost at sea. Marine litter poses environmental, economic, health, aesthetic and cultural threats, including degradation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems that incur socioeconomic losses in marine-based sectors.
2. The majority of the population in the nine East Asian Seas countries lives in coastal areas, contributing to rapid urbanization and the world's highest concentrations of shipping and fishing vessel activity. Reducing and minimizing regional marine litter from both land-based and sea-based sources requires successfully addressing waste leakage and disposal into rivers, along coastlines, and into the ocean, in the East Asian Seas region. This requires multi-stakeholder engagement across all economic sectors and groups of society to overcome linear systems of production, consumption and disposal, and to tackle marine litter at source and at sea.
3. At the global level, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for action to 'Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources' (Goal 14) and 'By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution' (target 14.1). United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions on Marine Litter and Microplastics (such as UNEP/EA.4/6) recognize the importance of a regional approach to addressing marine litter as a transboundary problem, of multi-stakeholder engagement, coordination and cooperation, and stress the need to strengthen the science-policy interface, harmonize monitoring and methodologies, and prioritize a whole lifecycle approach. Regional Seas Conventions and programmes are prompted to increase their action and coordinate efforts.
4. There is a need for increasing coherence, coordination and synergies between existing mechanisms and to enhance cooperation and governance to better address marine litter and microplastic challenges at local, national, regional and global levels, including coordination across (sub)regional policy frameworks such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). A regional approach enables knowledge sharing, monitoring and assessing marine litter of land-based and sea-based sources, compiling scientific evidence and assessing policy pathways, to inform more coherent and synergistic, and hence more effective policy and management responses.
5. This revision to the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI), originally adopted at the 19th Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA in Cambodia in 2008, has been prepared pursuant to COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022 and based on extensive desk review; information provided by participating countries including through national consultations; recommendations arising from meetings of the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter; and existing regional action plans for marine litter¹ under implementation.
6. The revised COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter was adopted by the 24th Intergovernmental Meeting of COBSEA, in Bali, Indonesia, 19-20 June 2019.

1. Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean under the Barcelona Convention, Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), and Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter in the Baltic Sea.



Photo: Troy Mayne

II. Goals and Objectives

7. The overall goal of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter is to consolidate, coordinate, and facilitate cooperation, and implement the necessary environmental policies, strategies and measures for sustainable, integrated management of marine litter in the East Asian Seas region. The Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter will thereby directly support COBSEA participating countries to deliver target 14.1 of Sustainable Development Goal 14, to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution, and also contribute to the achievement of other Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets (identified in Appendix 1 of RAP MALI).
8. The specific objectives of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter are to:
 - i. Prevent and reduce to the minimum marine litter pollution in the marine and coastal environment of the East Asian Seas Region;
 - ii. Foster sustainable consumption and production in a multi-stakeholder whole lifecycle approach to prevent and reduce leakage at source;
 - iii. Remove to the extent possible already existent marine litter by using environmentally acceptable methods;
 - iv. Improve monitoring and assessment of marine litter and its impacts for a science-based approach;
 - v. Enhance knowledge sharing and awareness about marine litter and its impacts amongst all stakeholders and all groups of society in the East Asian Seas Region;
 - vi. Support national efforts towards adequate institutional, policy and implementation frameworks, cross sector coordination and regional and international cooperation.
9. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter ensures that the management of marine litter in the East Asian Seas Region is performed in accordance with accepted international standards and approaches and, as appropriate, in harmony with programmes and measures applied in other Regional Seas.
10. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter also recognizes the respective roles and contributions of participating countries and the COBSEA Secretariat in achieving these collective goals and objectives.

III. Actions

11. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter comprises the following main actions:

ACTION 1. PREVENTING AND REDUCING MARINE LITTER FROM LAND-BASED SOURCES.

Preventing and reducing marine litter from land-based sources. The bulk of marine litter originates on land, arising as a result of unsustainable production and consumption patterns and poor waste management. Land-based litter can enter the sea directly from loss or disposal on the shoreline, through leakage in the waste management chain and through wastewater and may be transported from inland areas via rivers and storms. COBSEA efforts to prevent and reduce marine litter from land-based sources can be developed and implemented working closely with the United Nations Environment Programme and Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) coordination office, including joint funding and/or implementation of projects where appropriate.

ACTION 2. PREVENTING AND REDUCING MARINE LITTER FROM SEA-BASED SOURCES.

Sea-based sources of marine litter include maritime activities such as shipping and fisheries, which contribute marine litter through accidental and deliberate discarding. With extensive fisheries and shipping operations as well as regulatory challenges and prevalence of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, sea-based sources of marine litter are of concern in the East Asian Seas region. However, the status, impact and associated costs and losses are not well quantified. In addressing sea-based sources of marine litter, COBSEA will work closely with relevant competent agencies in the UN system as well as with relevant regional organizations.

ACTION 3. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF MARINE LITTER.

One of the significant barriers to addressing marine litter is the absence of adequate science-based monitoring and assessment programmes. Monitoring and assessment are indispensable in identifying marine litter status and trends and its most critical impacts, and to support development, tracking and evaluation of policy and management interventions. There is a need to improve knowledge on the main types, sources and amounts of litter that enter the marine and coastal environment, to enable assessment of marine litter status and trends, the impact of marine litter on the marine and coastal environment and human health, as well as the socio-economic aspects of marine litter. Sound marine litter monitoring and reporting is also required to track progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, including target 14.1, and contribution to other relevant Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets.

ACTION 4. ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COBSEA RAP MALI.

Implementation of COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter requires enabling conditions for success, including adequate cross-sector and regional and international cooperation; filling knowledge gaps through targeted research; efficient and inclusive involvement of stakeholders; and adequate training, information sharing, outreach and public awareness. COBSEA will catalyse actions that support regional and national delivery of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter and provide the regional mechanism for supporting planning, tracking and reporting on the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter including its contribution to relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

12. The COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter will use Appendix 2 of RAP MALI as reference, as appropriate, to develop its biennial work plan as endorsed by the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting.



Photo: Zac Noyle

IV. Modalities for Implementation

13. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter applies to the countries participating in the East Asian Seas Action Plan: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the People's Republic of China, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.
14. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter aligns with the COBSEA Strategic Directions and may be revised or updated as appropriate on the adoption of new COBSEA Strategic Directions and by decision of the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting.
15. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter is complemented by more specific biennial rolling work plans as well as progress assessment reports developed through the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter and adopted by the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting. This enables an adaptive approach, strengthening progress in relation to priority issues, ensuring responsiveness to global level developments, e.g. in relation to UNEA resolutions, and reduces risk for duplication of effort. The Terms of Reference of the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter are provided in Appendix 3 of RAP MALI. Implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter may also be supported through development of the COBSEA institutional framework, including possible future Regional Activity Centres and knowledge management efforts.
16. COBSEA participating countries are encouraged to make their best effort to ensure that the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter is implemented, in a coherent manner.
17. In implementing the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, the participating countries shall be guided by:
 - i. The integration principle by virtue of which marine litter management shall be addressed across relevant sectors and as an integral part;
 - ii. The prevention principle by virtue of which measures should prioritize addressing the prevention of marine litter generation at source;
 - iii. The precautionary principle by virtue of which where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation;
 - iv. The polluter-pays principle by virtue of which the costs of pollution prevention, control and reduction measures are to be borne by the polluter, with due regard to the public interest;
 - v. The ecosystem-based approach by virtue of which the cumulative effects of marine litter on the marine and coastal ecosystem, habitats and species with other contaminants and substances that are present in the marine environment should be fully considered in management of marine litter;

- vi. The principle of public participation and stakeholder involvement by virtue of which the general public including local communities, private sector, civil society organizations, and local authorities will be involved in the development and implementation of efforts;
 - vii. The sustainable consumption and production principle by virtue of which current unsustainable patterns of consumption and production must be transformed to circular lifecycle models that decouple human development from environmental degradation; and
 - viii. The science-based approach by virtue of which marine litter management measures should be based on the best available scientific evidence.
18. The COBSEA Secretariat, in consultation with COBSEA National Focal Points and the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter, will where relevant assess national needs in relation to implementation of actions identified in the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, with a view to providing or identifying appropriate support to COBSEA participating countries.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: RELEVANT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ASSOCIATED TARGETS (SUPPORTING DOCUMENT)

1. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) directly supports participating countries in delivering Sustainable Development Goal 14: 'Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources' and associated target 14.1: 'By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, particularly from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.'
2. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter also contributes to national efforts towards the following Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets:
 - i. **Sustainable Development Goal 3:** 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'; target 3.9: 'By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.'
 - ii. **Sustainable Development Goal 9:** 'Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation'; target 9.4: 'By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities.'
 - iii. **Sustainable Development Goal 11:** 'Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'; target 11.6: 'By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality, municipal and other waste management.'
 - iv. **Sustainable Development Goal 12:** 'Responsible consumption and production'; target 12.4: 'By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment'; and target 12.5: 'By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse.'
 - v. **Sustainable Development Goal 17:** 'Partnerships for the goals'; target 17.6: 'Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism'; target 17.7: 'Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed'; and target 17.16: 'Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.'

APPENDIX 2: DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS (SUPPORTING DOCUMENT)

Appendix 2 encompasses further detailed description of key actions and serves as a guide for the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter's deliberations in developing specific activities that will be further elaborated in rolling work plans for implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. The rolling work plans will also form the basis for assessing progress on implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. It is considered that, at present, these actions will cover appropriately and feasibly the challenge of marine litter management in the region. Initial prioritization of actions identifies where countries will collectively pursue more specific activities through COBSEA, within its mandate, competence and comparative advantage, in line with the East Asian Seas Action Plan and the COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018 2022. Countries may, at the national level, further prioritize actions and develop activities, based on national priorities and need.

KEY ACTIONS	LEAD AUTHORITY
Action 1. Preventing and reducing marine litter from land-based sources	
1.1. Legal and economic instruments	
1.1.1. Encourage and assist countries to enhance leadership, implementation and quality of government efforts.	Secretariat
1.1.2. In countries where many government agencies and departments are involved in waste management efforts, COBSEA members may wish to consider, as necessary, establishing a policy making mechanism and supporting agency, or strengthening it if already existing, for the implementation of solid waste management policies.	Countries
<p>1.1.3. Encourage and assist countries to develop and adopt legal and economic instruments to assist the management and prevention of marine litter from land-based sources and moving towards circular economy models, including harmonization of standards and regulations in the region. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -addressing single-use product consumption (through, for example, fiscal and economic instruments such as a tax on plastic bags and packaging and phase out of single-use plastic items in stores); -establishment and/or further development of deposit refund systems for bottles, containers and cans (e.g. glass, plastics and aluminium). 	Secretariat/ Countries
1.2. Integrated waste management	
1.2.1. Enter into dialogue with the industry on waste management practices that impact on the marine environment and identify incentives/measures to promote sustainable practices.	Secretariat/ Countries
1.2.2. Implement adequate waste reduction, reuse and recycling measures, as well as other relevant approaches such as product replacement, in order to reduce the amount of litter, particularly the fraction of plastic waste that goes to landfill or incineration without energy recovery. Where incineration with energy recovery is used, this should use modern technology with controls on combustion condition capable of meeting stringent emission standards.	Countries
1.2.3. Organize the front and middle end of the waste system by building a modern waste collection and separation system, including recognizing and integrating waste pickers in formal systems of waste management and accelerating recycling, while ensuring non-processed waste is disposed of safely in sanitary landfills at the back of the chain.	Countries
1.2.4. Take the necessary measures to address illegal dumping, including closing existing illegal dump sites on land and strengthening enforcement measures to combat illegal dumping, such as littering on the beach and illegal solid waste or sewage disposal in the coastal zone and rivers, in accordance with national legislation.	Countries
1.2.5. Seek cooperation with River Authorities, if necessary, municipalities and other relevant authorities in order to address impacts of litter on the marine environment from riverine inputs, including through introduction and improvement of trash traps at river and drainage areas, floating booms and barriers.	Secretariat/ Countries

KEY ACTIONS	LEAD AUTHORITY
Action 1. Preventing and reducing marine litter from land-based sources	
1.3. Removal of existing litter and its disposal	
1.3.1. Develop and implement, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, programmes and initiatives for identification, removal and sound disposal of accumulations of land-based marine litter, e.g. in combination with existing efforts such as coastal clean-up activities, where economically feasible and ecologically advantageous.	Secretariat/ Countries
Action 2. Preventing and reducing marine litter from sea-based sources	
2.1. Legal and economic instruments	
2.1.1. Encourage and assist countries to develop and adopt legal and economic instruments, which are consistent with the relevant international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and its Annexes, to assist the management and prevention of marine litter from sea-based sources.	Secretariat/ Countries
2.1.2. Reinforce the implementation and enforcement of existing national legal instruments in compliance with marine litter related international conventions and agreements such as the MARPOL convention and its Annex V, the London convention and its Protocol, the Basel Convention, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.	Countries
2.1.3. Provide assistance in the implementation of the requirements of Annex V to the MARPOL Convention to provide and improve reception facilities for all types of ship-generated waste in ports, harbours, terminals and marinas.	Secretariat
2.1.4. Develop sectoral guidelines on the prevention and reduction of marine litter from sea-based sources, particularly for fisheries and marine/coastal tourism.	Secretariat
2.1.5. Develop and/or strengthen existing legislation requiring all fishing gear to be identified/marked in order to contribute to reducing fisheries-related marine litter.	Secretariat/ Countries
2.2. Removal of existing marine litter and its disposal	
2.2.1. Develop and implement, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, programmes and initiatives to locate, remove and dispose of accumulations of sea-based marine litter, where economically feasible and ecologically advantageous.	Secretariat/ Countries
Action 3. Monitoring and assessment of marine litter	
3.1. Expert Group	
3.1.1. Establish a Marine Litter Monitoring Expert Group under the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter.	Secretariat
3.2. Regional and National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes	
3.2.1. Prepare regional guidance on the development of harmonized National Marine Litter and Microplastic Monitoring Programmes, in line with globally established guidelines, e.g. Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection Working Group on plastics and microplastics in the ocean (GESAMP WG 40) Guidelines for the Monitoring and Assessment of Plastic Litter in the Ocean, and in consultation with relevant ongoing regional monitoring programmes.	Secretariat
3.2.2. Conduct regional training on the development and implementation of harmonized National Marine Litter and Microplastic Monitoring Programmes, also addressing associated data management needs and reporting.	Secretariat
3.2.3. Work towards developing and implementing National Marine Litter and Microplastic Monitoring Programmes, based on respective national policies, approaches and circumstances.	Countries
3.2.4. Prepare regional reports on marine litter and microplastic and delivery against Sustainable Development Goal target 14.1, and other relevant Goals and targets, based on National Marine Litter and Microplastic Monitoring Programmes.	Secretariat
3.2.5. Explore development of a regional marine litter and microplastic monitoring meta-database/portal, as appropriate building on available global infrastructure, to facilitate the preparation of periodic regional reports.	Secretariat

KEY ACTIONS	LEAD AUTHORITY
Action 4. Activities supporting the implementation of COBSEA RAP MALI	
4.1. Regional and international cooperation and reporting	
4.1.1. Establish a COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter, to include national focal points and experts. This group will promote implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, advising and assisting the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting and the COBSEA Secretariat. Terms of Reference for the group is provided in Appendix 3 of RAP MALI.	Secretariat
4.1.2. Establish institutional cooperation with relevant global and regional entities in relation to implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter and relevant global multilateral environmental agreements, e.g. the MARPOL Convention and its Annex V, the London Convention and its Protocol, the Basel Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) as well as the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Voluntary Guidelines on Gear Marking.	Secretariat
4.1.3. Establish partnerships with cities, to provide effective transfer of knowledge and innovation, and promote collaboration between cities/countries.	Secretariat/ Countries
4.1.4. Convene regional conferences for stakeholder engagement and partnerships and coordinate ongoing efforts with relevant regional and international partners and frameworks, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).	Secretariat
4.2. National planning and policy frameworks	
4.2.1. Develop and implement National Action Plans on Marine Litter or equivalent planning or policy documents (where relevant building on existing efforts such as development of or updating GPA national programmes of action to strengthen the management and mitigation of land-based pollution), or similar initiatives that contribute to addressing land-based and sea-based sources of pollution.	Countries
4.2.2. Develop regional sectoral guidelines on the prevention and reduction of marine litter from land-based sources, particularly for sectors of waste management, tourism and plastic manufacturing.	Secretariat
4.2.3. Develop, at the regional level, a reporting format on national planning and policy frameworks.	Secretariat
4.3. Research activities	
4.3.1. Support research and development including of technology and approaches, as well as the consideration of social and behavioural sciences, to prevent marine litter input from land-based sources and promote environmentally sound production and waste management technologies.	Secretariat/ Countries
4.3.2. Develop and carry out research on the impact of marine litter on the marine and coastal environment and economy (including economic costs and impacts on human health and safety).	Secretariat/ Countries
4.3.3. Develop and support research on the effectiveness of market-based instruments related to marine litter.	Secretariat/ Countries
4.3.4. Undertake marine litter trajectory modelling in the COBSEA region, to identify sources and accumulation zones for marine litter. Such models will assist participating countries in tracking progress towards Sustainable Development Goal target 14.1.	Secretariat/ Countries
4.3.5. COBSEA participating countries to consider undertaking analysis of plastic flows into the region and their relative contribution to marine litter generation.	Countries

KEY ACTIONS	LEAD AUTHORITY
Action 4. Activities supporting the implementation of COBSEA RAP MALI	
4.4. Information, education, outreach and involvement of stakeholders	
4.4.1. Encourage and assist the appropriate involvement of various stakeholders including local authorities, civil society and private sector in implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.	Secretariat/ Countries
4.4.2. Support the implementation of marine litter clean-up campaigns on a regular basis, including: -organization of clean-ups as a tool in educating and involving local stakeholders, communities and media, in combination with public awareness campaigns; -encouraging and assisting entities with a particular interest in or responsibility for certain coastal areas, such as tourist resorts and port authorities, to undertake regular clean-ups; -encouraging stakeholder engagement in relevant international initiatives, such as the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) campaigns, Clean Up the World (CUW) campaigns, Green Fins, Project Aware and similar campaigns or programmes.	Secretariat/ Countries
4.4.3. Formulate and implement awareness raising campaigns and activities, in line with the Clean Seas campaign and other relevant campaigns, for the general public, various sectors, municipal authorities, local communities and particularly vulnerable groups, school children and youth and other groups.	Secretariat/ Countries
4.4.4. Develop suitable information material on the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter and translate it into national languages.	Secretariat
4.5. Training and capacity building	
4.5.1. Develop and implement regional education and training for different target groups (across sectors and stakeholder groups) to enhance understanding of marine litter generation pathways, impacts, and preventive action, and to facilitate the application of technical sectoral guidelines.	Secretariat
4.5.2. Provide technical training and capacity building to staff from national and municipal governments, port authorities and the shipping industry on the prevention and reduction of marine litter from land-based and sea-based sources through regional workshops and training courses.	Secretariat

APPENDIX 3: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COORDINATING BODY OF THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA (COBSEA) WORKING GROUP ON MARINE LITTER (ENDORSED DOCUMENT)

I. Background

- 1.** The Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) identifies arrangements for its operationalization, including the establishment of a regional Working Group on Marine Litter consisting of national Working Group focal points and experts to assist and advise on implementation.
- 2.** These Terms of Reference describe the purpose, role, composition and working modalities of the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter.

II. Purpose

- 3.** The COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter is established to promote implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, providing strategic as well as technical support and advice to the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting and COBSEA Secretariat; exchanging information that supports implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter; and promoting regional cooperation in the context of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.
- 4.** The basis of the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter would be generally tied to the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. The Working Group may regularly review its relevance for approval at the Intergovernmental Meeting.

III. Functions

- 5.** The COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter will:
 - i.** Identify and share knowledge and scientific evidence where available, identify capacity and other gaps and needs, and provide guidance on information exchange, knowledge management, technical cooperation, education, training and technology transfer or other efforts to address such gaps and needs;
 - ii.** Provide support, including technical guidance and strategic advice, in relation to development of project proposals and implementation of projects or other activities in the context of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter;
 - iii.** Establish Expert Groups composed of experts nominated by COBSEA participating countries to undertake specific functions, e.g. related to assessment and monitoring or scientific and technical issues, and prepare Terms of Reference for and supervise the work of such Expert Groups;
 - iv.** Identify and facilitate strengthening of cooperative actions in the region towards implementation of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, including through exploring synergies with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Framework of Action on Marine Debris and relevant ASEAN Working Groups and mechanisms;
 - v.** Develop biennial COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter work plans and progress reports for approval by the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting;
 - vi.** Where relevant, provide recommendations on revision of the COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter to the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting;
 - vii.** Advise the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting on amendments to the present Terms of Reference;
 - viii.** Carry out other relevant tasks as decided by the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting.

IV. Participation

- 6.** COBSEA participating countries shall be invited to participate in the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter through nomination of a Working Group focal point. The Working Group focal point should represent the national agency with lead or coordinating responsibility at the national level regarding marine litter management and should have relevant experience and expertise. COBSEA participating countries may also nominate additional experts to attend Working Group meetings, to ensure that the full range of national expertise and interest is brought to the Working Group, and to enable the Working Group to take into consideration the multiple dimensions of marine litter management.
- 7.** Relevant United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations, as well as relevant regional bodies and organizations concerned with marine litter management, may be invited to participate in Working Group meetings as observers. Local authorities, private sector entities and non-governmental organizations may be invited to participate as observers on recommendation by Working Group focal points. Observers may, upon invitation of the Chairperson, make contributions on matters being discussed in the meeting and within the scope of their activities and expertise. Certain meeting discussions may be limited only to representatives of COBSEA participating countries.

V. Organization of work

- 8.** The COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter will function through meetings as well as intersessional work. Intersessional work will be carried out mainly by correspondence. Subject to availability of funds, the intersessional work may be carried out through meetings of Expert Groups and workshops. The working language is English.
- 9.** The COBSEA Secretariat will function as secretariat for the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter, including its Expert Groups.
- 10.** Meetings of the COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter are held at least once per year. Where practical, meetings may be held in association with other COBSEA meetings. The Secretariat, in consultation with Working Group focal points, prepares a provisional agenda and distributes relevant meeting documents one month prior to each meeting. Meeting officers consisting of a Chairperson and a Rapporteur are elected by consensus from among meeting attendees representing COBSEA participating countries. The Meeting Chairperson and Rapporteur prepare a draft Working Group meeting report, shared with Working Group focal points for comment within one month of the meeting. The final meeting report is submitted by the COBSEA Secretariat for consideration by the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting.
- 11.** Costs associated with COBSEA Working Group on Marine Litter meetings are covered through external funds including where possible contributions by participating countries, or from other appropriate sources, unless/ until provisions for this are made in the East Asian Seas Trust Fund.

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