



Food and Agriculture
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NEWS RELEASE

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Global initiative tackles marine litter to clean up the world's oceans

April 12, 2021, Rome, Italy - The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has partnered with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and 30 countries in a major initiative to tackle marine litter and clean up the world's oceans.

The GloLitter Partnerships Project is being implemented by FAO in partnership with the IMO, with initial funding from the Government of Norway through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

GloLitter will assist developing countries in identifying opportunities to prevent and reduce marine litter, including plastic litter, from the maritime transport and fisheries sectors. The project aims to decrease the use of plastics in these industries and identify opportunities to recycle plastics, to better protect our fragile marine environment, as well as lives and livelihoods in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 that is committed to prevent and reduce marine pollution and conserve and use the oceans sustainably.

"Plastic litter has a devastating impact on marine life and human health," said Manuel Barange, FAO's Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture. "This initiative is an important step in tackling the issue and will help protect the ocean ecosystem as well as the livelihoods of those who depend on it."

The GloLitter project will help the sector to apply best practices for the prevention and reduction of marine plastic litter, including lost or discarded fishing gear, in a bid to safeguard coastal and global marine resources.

It will look at the availability and adequacy of port reception facilities; as well as enhancing awareness within the shipping and fisheries sectors, including seafarers and fishers and encouraging fishing gear to be marked so it can be traced back to its owner if discarded or lost at sea.

Jose Matheickal, Head of the IMO's Department for Partnerships and Projects, welcomed the initiative. "Marine litter is a scourge on the oceans and on the planet. I am delighted that we have more than 30 countries committed to this initiative and working with IMO and FAO to address this issue."

Tangible global action

The GloLitter Project will equip partner countries with tools such as guidance documents, training materials and strategies to help enforce existing regulations.

In the coming months, experts at FAO and the IMO will work with partners to provide technical assistance and training while facilitating communication between the partners.

The project will promote compliance with relevant FAO instruments, including the [Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear](#), as well as the [Global Ghost Gear Initiative \(GGGI\)](#).

The IMO will also encourage partners to consider the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) [Annex V](#) regulations on the prevention of pollution, which prohibits the discharge of plastics (including fishing gear) from ships into the sea. Another treaty, the [IMO London Convention/London Protocol](#), regulates the dumping of wastes from ships, permitting only certain types of non-harmful waste to be dumped.

The availability and adequacy of port reception facilities and their connectivity to national waste management systems will also be a focus of the project and participating countries will be assisted in the development of port waste management plans. GloLitter also includes pilot initiatives with women-led organizations active in fisheries to reduce the use of plastic in fisheries, fish processing and marketing, and to collect plastic for recycling

Another key aspect of GloLitter will be the establishment of public-private partnerships to spur the development of cost-effective management solutions for tackling marine plastic litter, including ways to decrease the use of plastics in these industries as well as opportunities for recycling plastic products or waste.

Lead and Partnering Countries

Five regions will be represented in this global effort: Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.

Ten countries have been confirmed as Lead Partnering Countries (LPCs) and another 20 countries have been selected as Partnering Countries (PCs) of the GloLitter Project.

LPCs will take lead roles in their respective regions to champion national actions which support the IMO [Action Plan to address marine plastic litter from ships](#) and the FAO [Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear](#). The LPCs and PCs will work together, via a twinning working arrangement, to build regional support for the project.

The 10 Lead Partnering Countries are: Brazil, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria and Vanuatu.

The 20 Partnering Countries are: Argentina, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Ecuador, the Gambia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga and Viet Nam.

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