



**IMPACT REPORT 2019-2024**

# **NO PLASTIC IN NATURE INITIATIVE**

**DRIVING SYSTEMS CHANGE IN  
THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST  
PLASTIC POLLUTION**

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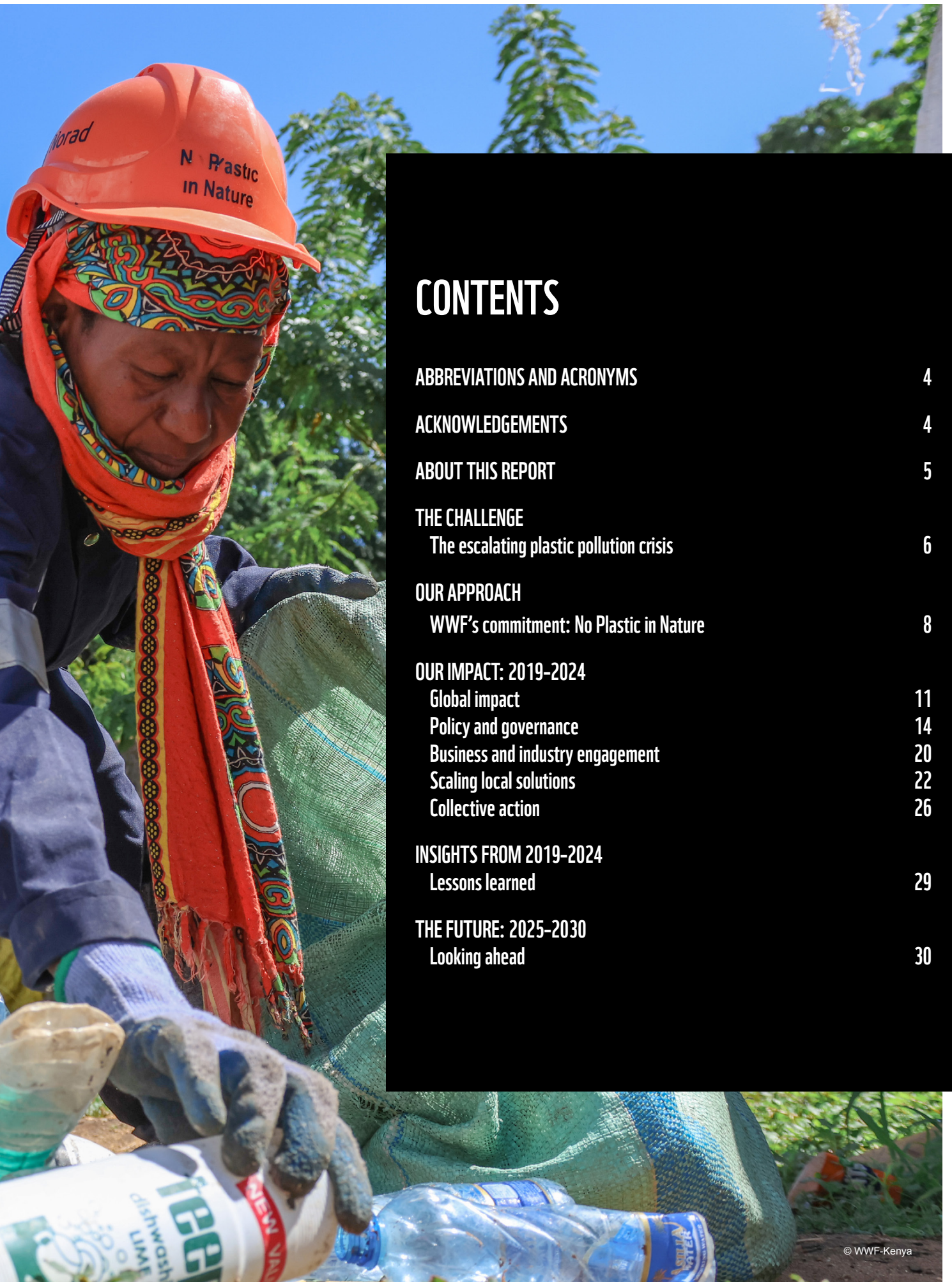
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WWF is an independent conservation organisation, with over 35 million followers and a global network active through local leadership in over 100 countries. Our mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Find out more at [panda.org](https://panda.org)





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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
GPAP	Global Plastic Action Partnership
PSC	Plastic Smart Cities
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This impact report is dedicated to all the WWF teams around the world who have contributed to the No Plastic in Nature (NPIN) initiative. It is a testament to your dedication, innovation and tireless efforts to tackle plastic pollution at every level – from local communities and national governments to regional platforms and global negotiations. Your work has helped to shape policies, drive systemic change, build powerful partnerships and inspire collective action. Thank you for your passion, your persistence, and your belief in the possibility of change. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our partners, funders and the communities involved. Your trust, collaboration and expertise have been fundamental to every success reflected in this report. Whether supporting on-the-ground solutions, influencing policy or amplifying our collective voice, you have been vital in transforming ambition into action.

Bosch Power Tools

DANIDA

Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF)

Epson Foundation

European Investment Bank (EIB)

The German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN)

Global Environment Facility

Grieg Foundation

Hilton Foundation

PreZero

The Coca-Cola Foundation

The Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines, Inc

The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)

TV-aksjonen/NRK

UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

The foundations of WWF's No Plastic in Nature initiative were laid in 2018 when leading offices from across the WWF network recognised the need to apply a systemic approach to our work on plastic pollution.

This required breaking down silos, challenging long-held beliefs and creating new ways of working across teams who had been tackling the problem from very different perspectives. We have come a long way since then and are proud to share this impact report. It captures the progress we made and the lessons we learned in our mission to stop plastic pollution.

This report brings together five years of work across countries, sectors and cultures, reflecting the collective efforts of WWF teams and partners who have been driving real-world change. From advancing negotiations for a Global Plastic Pollution Treaty to enabling communities and governments at the local level to shift away from single-use plastics, the No Plastic in Nature initiative has been at the forefront of pushing for systems change.

While we can take heart from the unprecedented global attention plastic pollution has received in recent years – from headlines and consumer campaigns to intergovernmental negotiations – the harsh reality is that the trend has not shifted. Plastic pollution continues to flow into the environment and our bodies at increasing rates. We are now facing a more complex and urgent challenge than ever before. The global plastics system remains locked into a high-production, high-waste model. Without rapid, coordinated action, plastic leakage into nature will worsen. This report is not only a record of what we have done – it is a call to do more, and faster.

Inside, you will find evidence of impact, stories from the field and a roadmap for how we move forward. We share case studies of how policy reform, financial innovation and grassroots mobilisation are already delivering results. But we are also honest about the gaps that remain and the scale of transformation required.

Our goal with this report is to inform, inspire and challenge those who care about nature and people to stay the course and deepen their commitment to the systemic solutions needed to turn the tide on plastic pollution – before it is too late.



**John Duncan**

Global Initiative Lead, No Plastic in Nature  
WWF International

# THE ESCALATING PLASTIC POLLUTION CRISIS

Despite growing global awareness, the plastic pollution crisis continues to escalate. More than 30 000 tonnes of plastic leak into our oceans every day,<sup>1</sup> posing increasing threats to ecosystems, economies and human health.



Between 1950 and 2000, annual global plastic production increased from nearly 2 million tonnes to more than 200 million tonnes.<sup>2</sup> In the last 20 years alone, both annual global plastic production and plastic waste have doubled. If current trends continue, by 2040, global plastic production will double again while plastic leakage into the ocean will triple.<sup>3</sup> Currently, over 460 million tonnes of virgin plastic are produced, a significant proportion of which is designated for single-use items every year. Alarming, only 9% of this plastic is recycled globally, leaving the majority to be incinerated or to persist in our environment.<sup>4</sup>

The environmental toll is profound. Over 2 140 species have so far been found to encounter plastic pollution in their natural environments. Of these, over 1 254 species have ingested plastics, and 276 species have been documented as harmed by entanglement.<sup>5</sup> This figure continues to rise as new studies are conducted and new methods of detection for microplastics are developed.

Economically, the burden of plastic pollution is disproportionately borne by low-income countries in the form of reduced ecosystem services, increased waste management costs and growing human health risks. Despite consuming nearly three times less plastic per capita than high-income nations, these countries incur a total lifetime plastic cost that is up to 10 times higher.<sup>6</sup> This disparity underscores the inequities embedded in the current plastics value chain.

- 1 The Pew Charitable Trusts. 2020. *Breaking the plastic wave: A comprehensive assessment of pathways towards stopping ocean plastic pollution*. The Pew Charitable Trusts and SYSTEMIQ. [https://www.pew.org/-/media/assets/2020/07/breakingtheplasticwave\\_report.pdf](https://www.pew.org/-/media/assets/2020/07/breakingtheplasticwave_report.pdf)
- 2 OECD. 2022. *Global Plastics Outlook: Economic drivers, environmental impacts and policy options*. OECD Publishing, Paris, France. <https://doi.org/10.1787/de747aef-en>
- 3 The Pew Charitable Trusts (see note 1).
- 4 OECD (see note 2).
- 5 Tekman MB, Walther BA, Peter C, Gutow L and M Bergmann. 2022. *Impacts of plastic pollution in the oceans on marine species, biodiversity and ecosystems*. WWF Germany, Berlin, Germany. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5898684>
- 6 WWF. 2023. *Who Pays for Plastic Pollution?* WWF International, Gland, Switzerland. <https://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/who-pays-for-plastic-pollution>



## WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Efforts to address plastic pollution have been under way for many years. But they have failed to shift the trajectory of the problem: plastic has become one of the most ubiquitous materials in use around the world today.

The systemic causes of this escalating crisis include:

- **Unsustainable production and consumption of plastic:** The take-make-waste model is exacerbated by a growing global population.
- **Product design optimised for convenience rather than circularity:** Additives, components and multiple polymers are used that make products unsuitable for reuse or recycling.
- **A lack of global coordination and alignment on how to regulate and manage plastic:** Multiple plastic products are traded globally across countries, each with their own regulations and waste management systems.
- **A lack of accountability across the system:** Externalities are not incorporated into the current cost of plastics, with virgin, fossil-based, single-use plastic often being the least expensive option.
- **Few incentives for using alternative materials, technologies and business models:** Alternatives have a high cost to entry, making them risky for businesses to scale and not competitive with products made from virgin plastics.

## GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

The COVID-19 pandemic complicated efforts to address plastic pollution. Lockdowns and health concerns led to a surge in single-use plastics such as personal protective equipment, exacerbating the waste crisis. The pandemic disrupted waste management systems worldwide, highlighting the need for resilient and sustainable infrastructure.

In March 2022, at the resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2), a historic resolution was adopted to develop an international, legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The resolution (5/14) requested the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to convene an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop the instrument, aiming to complete the negotiations by the end of 2024. The INC began its work during the second half of 2022, with sessions held in Uruguay, France, Kenya, Canada and South Korea.

Despite widespread support for ambitious measures, negotiations have faced delays because of differing national interests.

# WWF'S COMMITMENT: NO PLASTIC IN NATURE

In response to the escalating plastic pollution crisis, WWF launched the No Plastic in Nature initiative. The goal is to bring WWF's deep scientific expertise, extensive global network, mobilisation power and longstanding partnerships with communities, governments and businesses to bear on the challenge.

## OUR VISION

# A WORLD WITH NO PLASTIC IN NATURE

This vision is based on:



A just and inclusive transition



A safe circular plastics economy



A recognition that the impacts of plastic pollution extend beyond biodiversity and include impacts on climate and human health

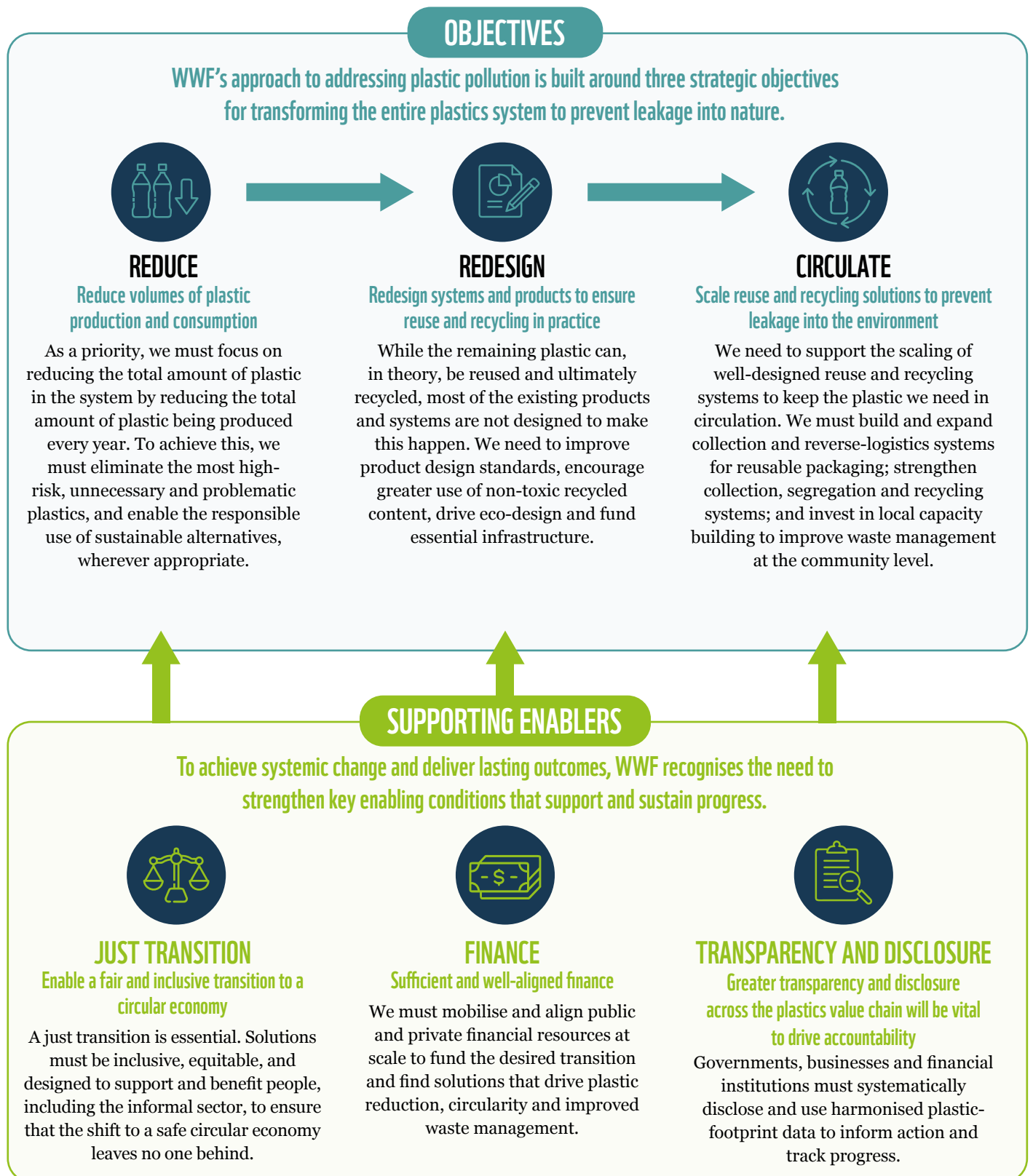
Through this comprehensive approach, WWF is helping to shift the plastics economy from linear to circular, ensuring that plastic no longer becomes pollution.



© Nick Garbutt / naturepl.com / WWF

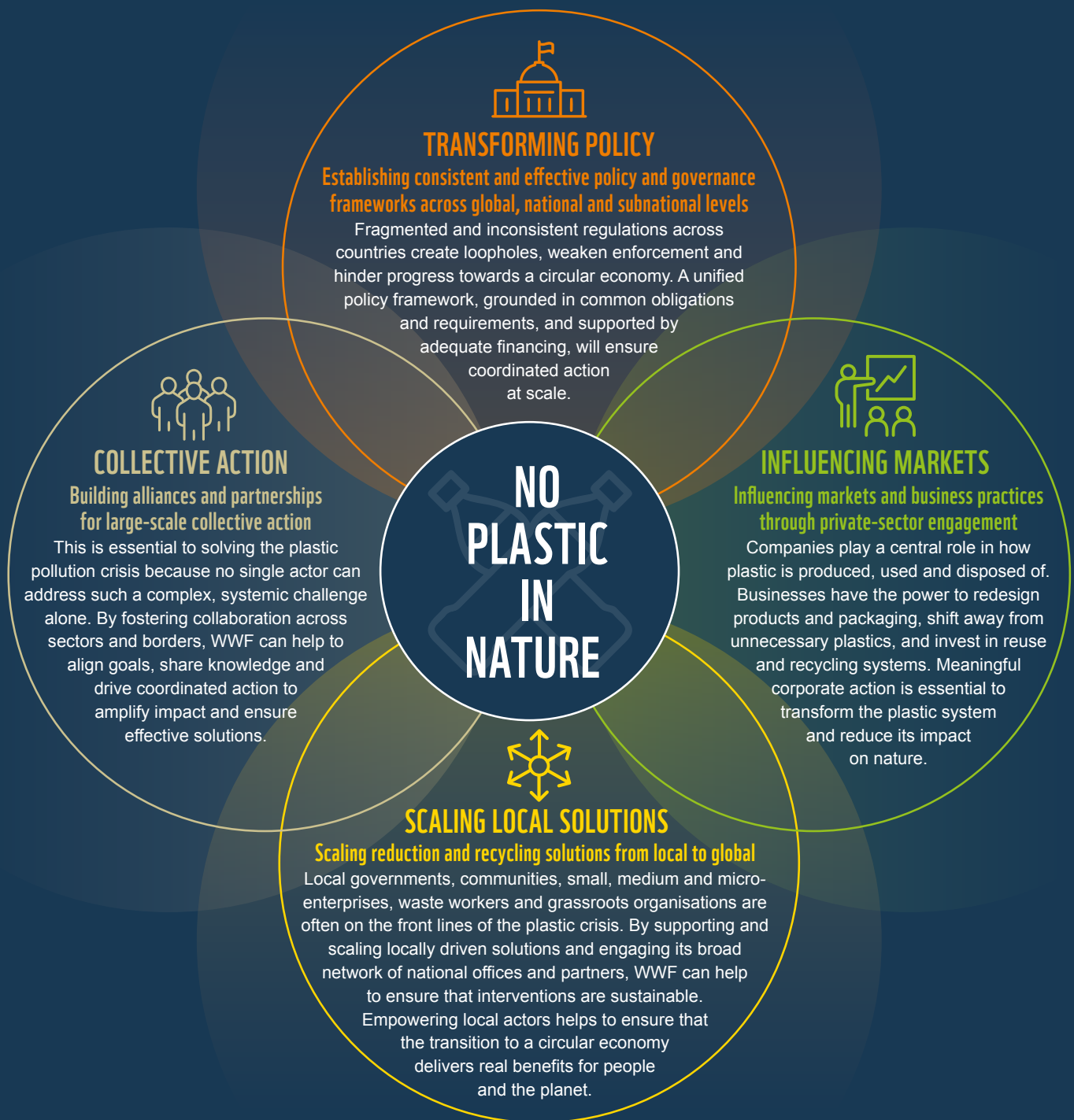
## A SYSTEMS-BASED APPROACH

There is no single, universally applicable model or solution to address plastic pollution. Waste leakage into the environment is a complex issue that differs from one country to the next. The complexity of the issue demands a holistic, multi-level, multi-actor approach across the full life cycle of the plastics value chain.



# PATHWAYS FOR CHANGE

Plastic pollution does not recognise borders. It is a global issue that requires a global response, and no single country can solve it on its own. To achieve our vision of No Plastic in Nature, we need a holistic approach that builds on WWF's strengths and works across the full life cycle of the plastics value chain. This involves a multitude of stakeholders, ranging from leaders of governments to informal waste pickers. With deep expertise, global reach and strong cross-sector partnerships, WWF is uniquely positioned to coordinate and implement this work, bridging science, policy and industry to drive systems-level change and scale impact across markets.



# GLOBAL IMPACT

Over the past five years, the No Plastic in Nature initiative has built a powerful coalition for change – influencing global policy, transforming industry practices, and empowering governments and communities to act.

Reflecting on the progress the No Plastic in Nature initiative made from 2019 to 2024, it is evident that significant strides have been taken. But there is still much to be done towards eliminating plastic pollution. This impact report delves into the achievements, challenges and lessons learned over the past five years of the initiative. It serves as both a testament to the collective efforts undertaken and a call to action for continued collaboration to ensure a future where nature is free from plastic pollution.

In the chapters that follow, the initiative's impact is discussed under the following headings:

**POLICY AND GOVERNANCE**

**BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT**

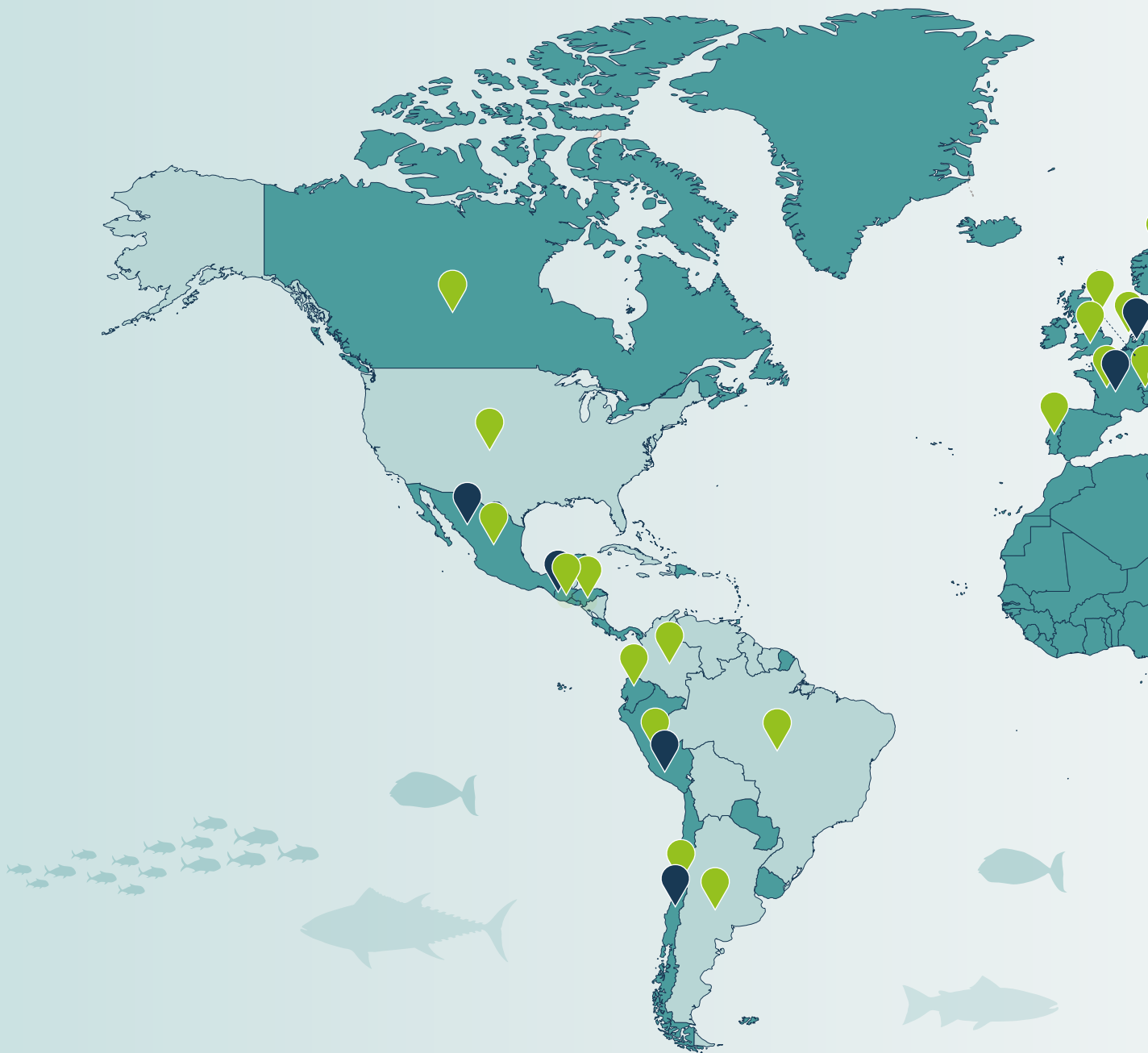
**SCALING LOCAL SOLUTIONS**

**COLLECTIVE ACTION**



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# THE NO PLASTIC IN NATURE INITIATIVE'S WORK AROUND THE WORLD (2025)



## SUPPORTING THE WWF MUST-HAVES IN THE GLOBAL PLASTIC POLLUTION TREATY

133

Countries supporting all of WWF's must-haves in the treaty

37

Countries supporting some of WWF's must-haves in the treaty

Positions as of July 2025. For more detail on countries' positions, visit [WWF's Plastic Navigator](#).

## PLASTIC SMART CITIES (PSC) SITES

### AFRICA

1. South Africa (1 site)
2. Kenya (1 site)

### EUROPE

3. Croatia (2 sites)
4. Italy (1 site)
5. France (2 sites)
6. Netherlands (2 sites)
7. Finland (1 site)
8. Norway (1 site)

### ASIA

9. China, including Hong Kong SAR (3 sites)
10. India (1 site)
11. Indonesia (7 sites)
12. Laos (3 sites)
13. Malaysia (1 site)
14. Philippines (12 sites)
15. Thailand (8 sites)
16. Turkiye (3 sites)
17. Viet Nam (14 sites)

### LATIN AMERICA

18. Chile (1 site)
19. Guatemala (1 site)
20. Mexico (2 sites)
21. Peru (1 site)

For more detail on individual PSC sites in each listed country, visit [plasticsmartcities.org](https://plasticsmartcities.org).



## WWF OFFICES WORKING ON NO PLASTIC IN NATURE

- |                   |                   |                 |               |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. South Africa   | 11. Hong Kong SAR | 21. South Korea | 31. Guatemala |
| 2. Kenya          | 12. India         | 22. Singapore   | 32. Honduras  |
| 3. United Kingdom | 13. Indonesia     | 23. Switzerland | 33. Colombia  |
| 4. Germany        | 14. Laos          | 24. Portugal    | 34. Ecuador   |
| 5. Italy          | 15. Malaysia      | 25. Greece      | 35. Peru      |
| 6. France         | 16. Philippines   | 26. Uganda      | 36. Chile     |
| 7. Netherlands    | 17. Thailand      | 27. Pakistan    | 37. Brazil    |
| 8. Finland        | 18. Turkiye       | 28. Canada      | 38. Argentina |
| 9. Norway         | 19. Viet Nam      | 29. USA         | 39. Australia |
| 10. China         | 20. Japan         | 30. Mexico      |               |



# POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

The historic and unanimous decision by countries at UNEA-5.2 to forge a global treaty to end plastic pollution was a turning point in addressing the worsening plastic pollution crisis. Through its global policy and campaign efforts, WWF has been at the forefront of efforts to unite states in this critical endeavour.

From the earliest discussions of a potential legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution at the third United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA-3) in 2017, WWF has been at the forefront of global advocacy efforts to highlight the urgent need for a coordinated global response to the plastic pollution crisis.

Our work has focused on the following aspects:

- Producing the research and data that negotiators need to inform policy decisions
- Mobilising global voices and support for an ambitious treaty

- Leading advocacy for strong, binding provisions
- Uniting business, civil society and governments around key treaty provisions
- Building national-level systems that underpin a meaningful treaty

WWF continues to serve as convenor, advocate, catalyst, watchdog and partner to both governments and industry, to ensure that the Global Plastic Pollution Treaty is scientifically sound, socially equitable, and ambitious enough to deliver meaningful and lasting environmental outcomes.



# INFORMING POLICYMAKERS

WWF has played a vital role in advancing the plastic pollution treaty negotiation process with robust research and data to help inform evidence-based policy decisions. Bridging science and policy, WWF's scientific analyses, public opinion surveys and policy briefs have equipped negotiators with the critical insights needed to design effective, ambitious and enforceable measures.



## UNITING CIVIL SOCIETY AND MOBILISING THE PUBLIC

Ensuring that the scale of the plastic crisis is accurately perceived by the public has been a key element of WWF's global campaign efforts. In a world with an ever shorter attention span and increasing competition for the public's attention, WWF's thought-provoking global public campaigns and partnerships with civil society organisations have shone a light on some of the emerging effects of plastic pollution, particularly on human health and the inequity of the crisis around the world. This work has captured the public's interest to channel their voice into the treaty decision-making process.

Building momentum and public interest outside the policy arena has been an essential building block to getting the treaty negotiations to where they are today. To secure a strong treaty that can address this global crisis, WWF will continue to collaborate with businesses, civil society organisations and other stakeholders to achieve the outcome people and nature need.

# 10x HIGHER COST

Despite a number of national and voluntary measures, the absence of common global rules to combat plastic pollution affects all countries. However, it is low- and middle-income countries and small island developing states that are bearing the brunt of the problem.<sup>7</sup>



## ALIGNING THE BUSINESS VOICE FOR AMBITION



Launched in September 2022, the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty, convened by WWF and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, brings together over 300 businesses and financial institutions from across the plastics value chain. With its clear vision for a treaty based on global rules as the most effective way to pursue a lasting impact on plastic pollution, the Business Coalition has become the leading voice of businesses calling for an ambitious and effective global treaty to end plastic pollution.<sup>8</sup>



Highlighting the unprecedented alignment between business and civil society, this new approach to corporate advocacy is grounded in a shared understanding that a harmonised global approach to plastic pollution can deliver economic, environmental and social value. It reflects a growing recognition that meaningful progress requires collective ambition and coordinated action across sectors.

<sup>7</sup> WWF (see note 6).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.businessforplasticstreaty.org/vision-statement#vision>



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## THE WWF MUST-HAVES: THE TREATY THAT PEOPLE AND NATURE NEED

The Global Plastic Pollution Treaty is a historic opportunity to show how all of us can solve global environmental problems together. It will determine what the future looks like for today's children and generations to come.

The treaty presents a unique opportunity for states to demonstrate how coordinated international action can effectively address complex global challenges, such as marine pollution, and give substance to the ambitions of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Solving the plastic pollution crisis requires a meaningful treaty that goes beyond goals and ambitions, and includes a set of binding global rules on which all parties can act together.

The treaty that people and nature need must include four essential elements to regulate the production and consumption of plastic across its entire life cycle:

1. Global bans on the most harmful and problematic plastic products and chemicals.
2. Global product-design requirements and systems for the transition towards a non-toxic circular economy.
3. Aligned financial flows and sufficient resources for systems change.
4. Decision-making mechanisms to ensure that the treaty can be strengthened and adapted.

# A GROWING WAVE OF SUPPORT

WWF works with some of the largest brands in the world, civil society movements, global leaders, parliamentarians, leading scientists and partner NGOs to amplify and diversify the voices calling for an ambitious and effective plastic pollution treaty.

2022

2021

2020

2019



## GOVERNMENTS

**32** UN Member States publicly call for the new agreement.

Solving Plastic Pollution Through Accountability report urges governments to start negotiating a binding international treaty on marine plastic pollution.



**78** UN Member States publicly call for the new agreement.



**113** UN Member States publicly call for the new agreement

**42** UN Member States co-sponsor a draft UNEA resolution to start the negotiation.



**175** UN Member States adopt the UNEA 5/14 Resolution to End Plastic Pollution.



## BUSINESS



The Business Case for a Global Plastic Pollution Treaty is published.



**70+** leading businesses and financial institutions call on governments to develop a robust, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution.



**85** The Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty is established with 85 member companies and organisations.



## CIVIL SOCIETY



Global Plastic Diet Campaign launches.

**50 000+** signatures in first few months of the WWF petition calling for a plastic pollution treaty.



Global #StopGhostGear Campaign launches.

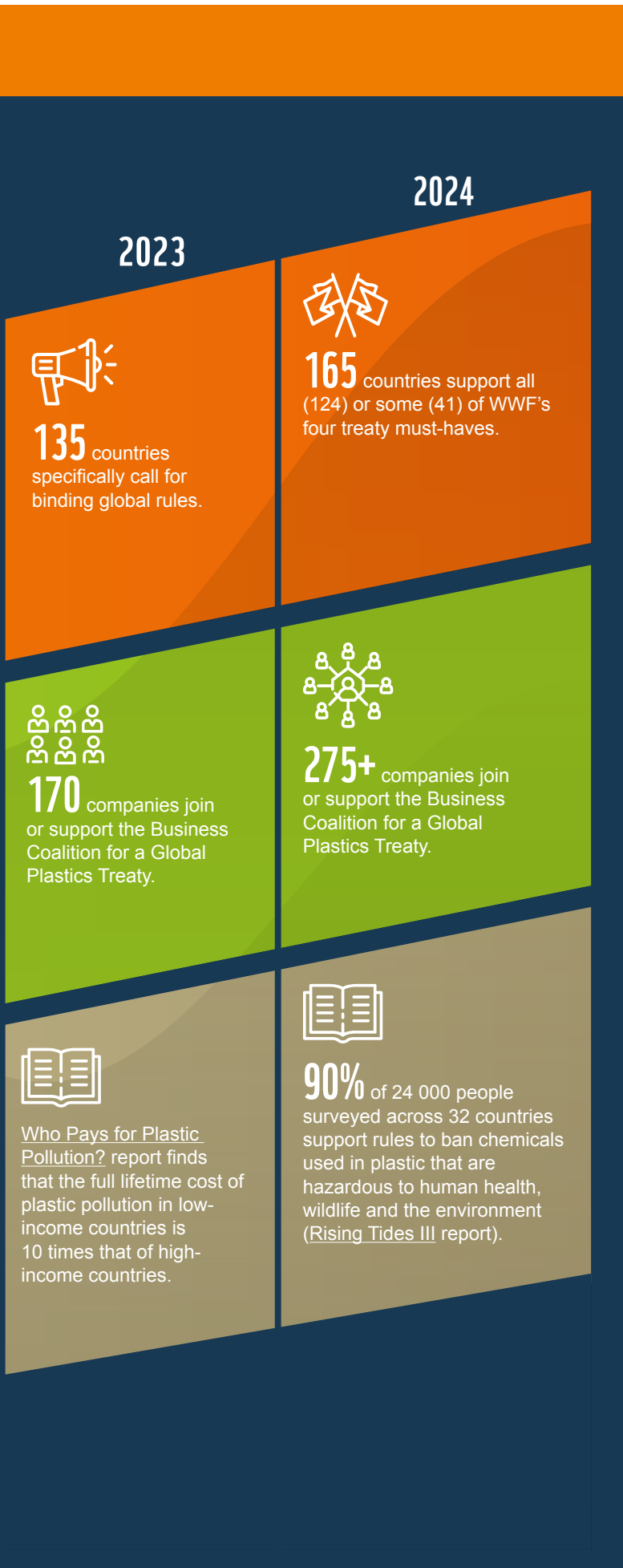
Publication of the Stop Ghost Gear report, which shows that 10% of ocean plastic is attributed to discarded fishing gear.



**88%** of 20 513 people surveyed across 28 countries think a global treaty to stop plastic pollution is important, as shown in the Rising Tides report.



**2,2 million+** people sign the WWF petition calling for a plastic pollution treaty.



## NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Governments will need to take the lead in institutionalising critical changes in their national policies and legislation to support a binding global framework. Over the past five years, WWF offices around the world have continued to work with governments to advance the establishment and implementation of new laws to drive a more circular economy.

### CASE STUDY

#### Redefining producer responsibility for a circular economy

##### Overview

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) is a cornerstone approach to reduce plastic pollution and promote a circular economy. Over the past five years, WWF has worked with governments and businesses to embed EPR into several national frameworks through technical guidance, policy development and multi-stakeholder engagement.

##### Kenya

WWF played a key role in shaping Kenya's EPR policy landscape by supporting the creation of a Model County Bill and catalysing national-level reform. The work led to the official gazetting of Kenya's EPR Regulations in November 2024. WWF also facilitated partnerships with waste workers and established community-led recycling hubs. Four companies have since committed to redesigning products for circularity in 2025.

##### Viet Nam

WWF contributed to the integration of mandatory EPR into national legislation. By co-leading platforms and generating 34 policy-informing studies, WWF helped to shape Viet Nam's National Action Plan for Circular Economy by 2035. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment recognised WWF's contributions.



# BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

Tackling plastic pollution is not just an ethical responsibility. It is also a strategic business decision, especially as stakeholders increasingly demand genuine environmental action.

## CASE STUDY

### ReSource: Plastic

#### Overview

Since 2019, ReSource: Plastic, a WWF-US corporate engagement platform, has enabled companies to measure, report and reduce their plastic usage. Using the Act-Advocate-Invest framework, the platform guides businesses towards circular solutions and systemic change. Businesses can improve their plastic footprint in three primary ways: getting rid of the plastic they do not need and minimising the negative impact of the product they use; ensuring that the plastic they put into the market can be recovered for recycling and reuse; and advocating for and investing in circular-focused solutions.



#### Contribution

- Over 200 organisations used the ReSource Footprint Tracker's methodology via ReSource, the US Plastics Pact and the Canada Plastics Pact.
- The Tracker was integrated into the CDP's plastic questionnaire and has helped over 5 600 companies to report progress against their plastic targets in 2024.

#### Impact

- 221 000 metric tonnes reduction in virgin fossil-based plastic use by ReSource members
- Recycled content increased by over 80% across aggregate member portfolios, from 7,9% in 2020 to 14,5% in 2023.

## THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN SOLVING THE PLASTIC POLLUTION CRISIS

Companies are pivotal in shaping how plastic is produced, used and managed. They have the unique ability to redesign products and packaging, phase out unnecessary plastics, and invest in reuse and recycling systems. Addressing plastic pollution is more than a moral obligation; it is a smart, forward-looking business strategy that builds long-term resilience, ensures compliance with evolving regulations, strengthens stakeholder trust and drives innovation.

As public pressure and policy momentum grow, businesses that take early, meaningful action are better positioned to lead in a competitive and rapidly changing market. WWF partners with companies to transform ambition into impact, helping to measure plastic footprints, increase transparency and implement scalable solutions that reduce waste, enhance brand reputation and build circular, future-ready supply chains. Through collaboration with leading businesses worldwide, WWF works to eliminate unnecessary packaging, expand reuse models, improve recycling infrastructure and accelerate the shift towards sustainable materials.

## INDUSTRY COALITIONS: HARNESSING COLLECTIVE ACTION

In many countries around the world, WWF has played a critical role in building and advancing national industry coalitions that accelerate the transition to a circular plastics economy. Through strategic engagement with programmes such as Plastics Pacts, National Plastic Action Partnerships and Plastic ACTION (PACT) initiatives, WWF is able to leverage its extensive global network of offices to help align businesses and governments on shared goals to reduce plastic waste and pollution.



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### Plastics Pacts

In partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) and other partners, WWF has supported the development and implementation of national Plastic Pacts in India, Kenya, Mexico and South Africa. The Pacts bring together national governments, businesses and NGOs that are working towards a set of measurable targets. These targets are tailored to each geographical area and based on a blueprint of:

- Elimination of unnecessary and problematic plastics
- Design for reuse and recyclability
- Effective recycling in practice and at scale
- Inclusion of recycled content

### National Plastic Action Partnerships

WWF has also played a critical role in the World Economic Forum’s multi-stakeholder Global Plastic Action Partnership. This platform enables collaboration between national governments and other vital partners to turn plastic waste

and pollution commitments into action. WWF has hosted and advised National Plastic Action Partnerships in countries such as Colombia, Pakistan, Ecuador, Peru, Viet Nam and Indonesia. In each of these countries, WWF’s local experience and partnerships have been instrumental in convening national stakeholders to develop baseline analyses and national roadmaps that use data analysis and expert-informed action to drive local change.

### PACT (Singapore)

WWF Singapore’s Plastic ACTION (PACT) programme has helped to eliminate the use of over 85 million plastic items annually. The programme supports companies in adopting science-based, resource-efficient practices to reduce environmental impact and meet rising sustainability demands.

Across each of these initiatives, WWF has mobilised hundreds of stakeholders, helped shape national plastic strategies and driven innovation in the business sector. WWF’s coalition work showcases the power of collective action, catalysing systemic change and accelerating progress towards a world free of plastic pollution.

“Partnering with WWF has been instrumental in catalysing cross-industry action. Their global footprint, combined with deep local engagement, has played a vital role in scaling initiatives like the Plastics Pacts and the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty, demonstrating how coordinated leadership can accelerate the shift to a circular economy and keep plastic in the economy and out of the environment.  
— ROB OPSOMER, EXECUTIVE LEAD: PLASTICS & FINANCE, ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION

# SCALING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Local authorities and communities are at the forefront of dealing with the plastic pollution crisis. Conquering this challenge requires an array of scalable on-the-ground solutions that are flexible enough to adapt to multiple contexts.

PLASTIC  
SMARTCITIES



Although many cities have basic waste management regulations and some foundational knowledge, they often lack the capacity, operational capabilities and infrastructure needed for the impactful roll-out and implementation of solutions.

To address these systemic challenges, the Plastic Smart Cities (PSC)<sup>9</sup> programme has been working at over 60 different sites. Since 2019, over 30 cities have signed a Declaration of Intent with WWF offices around the world. The PSC programme recognises that collaboration across sectors is essential to creating a unified and sustainable approach to tackling plastic pollution. It focuses on a wide range of local initiatives that contribute to plastic reduction, reuse, collection and recycling.

By leveraging the success of locally grounded pilots, PSC works to catalyse broader systemic change through the following:

- Using evidence from the ground to inform and influence policies, regulations and practices at national and regional levels
- Encouraging reduction efforts through behaviour-change, reuse, refill and alternative material models
- Improving waste segregation and collection systems
- Prioritising investment in projects that are deliberately designed with a strong potential for replication
- Building a portfolio of solutions that can scale beyond borders and organisations

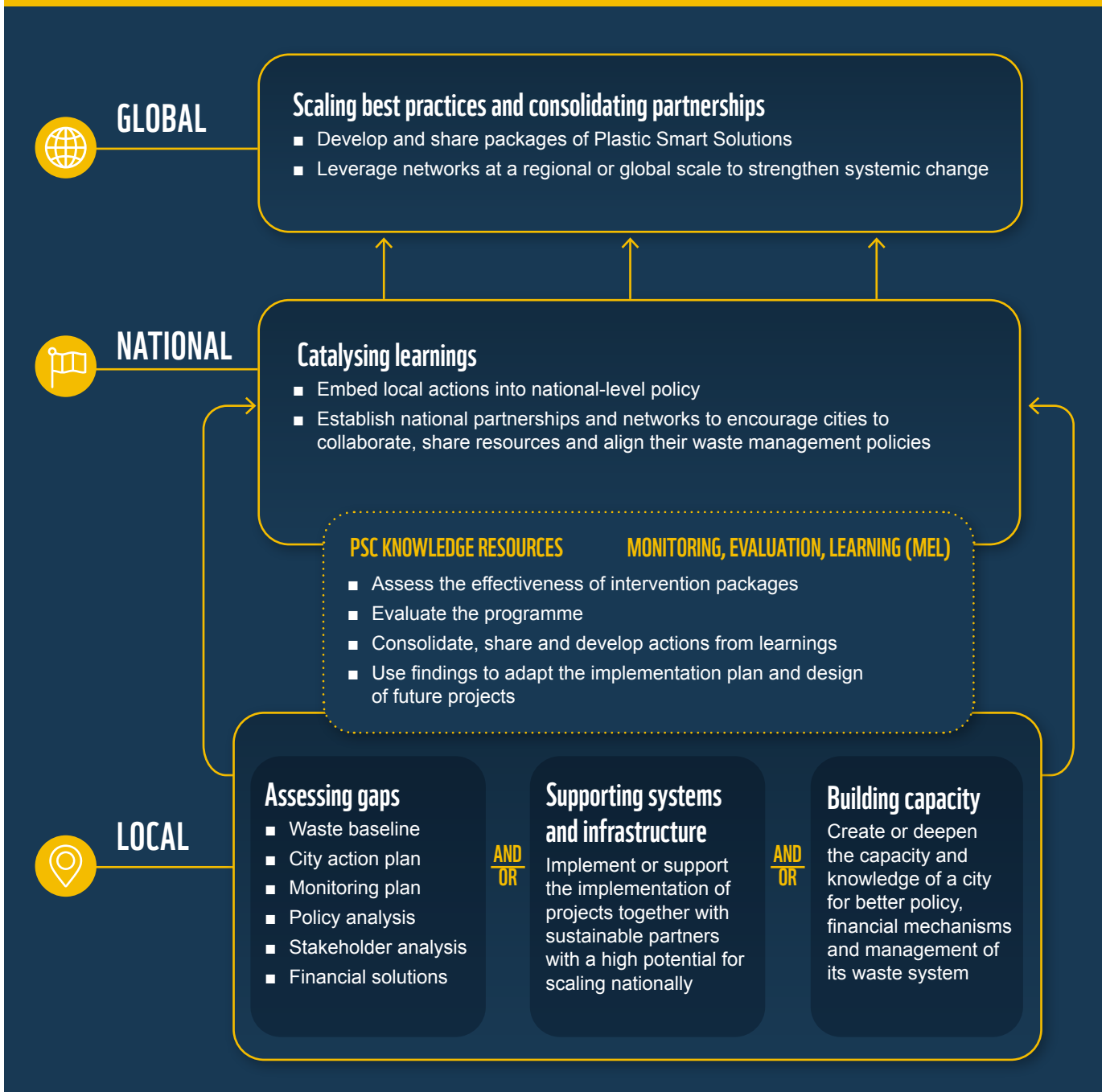
PSC operates across local, national and global levels, with distinct roles at each level that ensure effective implementation, replication and systemic transformation. In capturing the lessons learned, refining best practices and sharing knowledge globally, PSC is also inspiring and guiding like-minded partners.



© WWF-Indonesia

9 <https://plasticsmartcities.org>

# PLASTIC SMART CITIES STRATEGY



“ Among the most notable results has been a reduction of over 32 000 tonnes of plastic leakage across 38 pilot sites, demonstrating how local action can drive systemic impact. — PLASTICSMARTCITIES.ORG



## GLOBAL

### A platform for plastic-smart solutions

#### Overview

To promote global knowledge exchange, WWF developed the Plastic Smart Cities (PSC) website as a hub for solutions, reports and best practices. The platform has attracted over 54 000 users annually over the past five years. It has been used primarily by local governments, civil society organisations and local partners as a resource centre for best practice and guidance tools.

#### Contribution

- Plastic Smart Guide for Cities, which was developed as a step-by-step process for cities to achieve the Plastic Smart targets.
- City Action Template, which was co-developed with UN-Habitat's Waste Wise Cities as a practical tool to guide strategic plans to address plastic waste streams in cities.
- Collection of over 75 case studies from project sites across nine focused approaches:
  - Behavioural change
  - Collection
  - Community-based waste management
  - End-of-life
  - Local policy and regulation
  - Monitoring and assessment
  - Recycling
  - Reduction and reuse
  - Sustainable financing

#### Impact

PSC strengthened partnerships through global webinars, conferences and working groups with private-sector stakeholders.



## GLOBAL

### Giving cities a global voice

#### Overview

Plastic Smart Cities (PSC) is a founding member of the Local and Subnational Governments Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, alongside C40, UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) and Global Cities Hub led by ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability).

#### Contribution

- Co-developed a Coalition Statement advocating for local and subnational government voices in the Global Plastic Pollution Treaty.
- Published policy recommendations that integrate key insights from city-level interventions addressing plastic pollution, calling on INC negotiators to support global bans and requirements to provide local governments with authority and resources that can unlock replication and scaling of solutions.

#### Impact

The aim is to amplify local leadership in global plastic governance processes through coordinated advocacy and knowledge exchange.



## NATIONAL

### Local action to national policy in Viet Nam

#### Overview

WWF-Viet Nam implemented the Plastic Smart Cities (PSC) approach across 11 municipalities to improve plastic waste management and inform national-level dialogue to encourage the replication and scaling of efforts.

#### Contribution

- Hosted national consultations with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the National Assembly across 63 provinces and cities.
- Piloted scalable waste-sorting and recycling models through city-level engagement, starting in Phu Quoc, Thanh Khe and Tuy Hoa and later expanding to eight other municipalities.

#### Impact

- PSC interventions and models were replicated and scaled across 11 municipalities, including the Participatory Action-Oriented Training method (waste segregation at source), the Plastic Waste Free School Model, and programmes for fishers and the tourism industry.
- Replication of successful PSC models is now taking place without WWF support as two additional sites have adopted the PSC framework.

## LOCAL

### Building sustainable solid-waste management systems in Greater Jakarta, Indonesia

#### Overview

WWF supported the RECO Consortium, an end-to-end plastic-waste management company in Indonesia, to scale up plastic recycling infrastructure and operations.

#### Key successes

- Integrated the solid-waste management chain by connecting different waste aggregators and sourcing supplementary materials to diversify revenue and maintain consistent feedstock to sustain operations.
- Collected 4 000 tonnes of mixed waste and 1 800 tonnes of plastic.
- Generated revenue of \$388 000 within its first operational year.

#### Impact

WWF provided a grant to fund equipment and facility upgrades in Bekasi on the eastern border of Jakarta. This enabled daily processing of 10 tonnes of waste and a monthly throughput of 600 tonnes. The REKOSISTEM app is used to track waste flows, support traceability and monitor environmental impact.



## LOCAL

### Scaling municipal plastic solutions in Yangzhou, China

#### Overview

Yangzhou City joined WWF's Plastic Smart Cities (PSC) initiative in April 2020. In two years, Yangzhou achieved a 30% reduction in plastic waste in pilot areas.

#### Contribution

- Establishing waste management facilities that streamline sorting, collection, transportation and disposal.
- Leveraging community agricultural supply stations by facilitating the collection of used agricultural films, which is then transported to plastic recycling facilities.
- Implementing fishing-gear recovery and reuse initiatives aligned with the city's riverside economy.

#### Impact

- Achieved source reduction through targeted actions, including regulating packaging, promoting eco-friendly courier practices and banning non-degradable plastics in markets.
- Expanded recycling infrastructure with nine integrated sanitation facilities and over 1 457 recycling nodes, enhanced through digital platforms such as the e-recycling WeChat mini-program.
- Launched over 1 000 public awareness campaigns that reached more than 100 000 people, fostering community participation in initiatives such as "plogging" (picking up rubbish while jogging) and environmental education.
- Established pilot zones for medical and agricultural plastic-waste recovery; recycled 224 tonnes of pesticide packaging and 2 000 tonnes of fishing nets.

# COLLECTIVE ACTION

Collective action is essential to solving plastic pollution because no single actor can address the scale and complexity of the crisis alone. System-wide change requires coordinated efforts across governments, businesses and civil society.

## CASE STUDY

### Plastic Reboot: A model for scaling impact

#### Overview

Launched in 2024, Plastic Reboot is partnering with governments, businesses, civil society organisations and experts to build systems that keep plastic out of nature, by advancing upstream and midstream circular solutions in the food and beverage sector. Plastic Reboot is supported by the Global Environment Facility, co-led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WWF, and implemented in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Working globally and in 15 countries, Plastic Reboot will deliver \$108 million in catalytic funding, technical expertise and coordination to pilot and scale circular economy solutions.



#### Plastic Reboot

#### Contribution

- Eliminating single-use and problematic plastics
- Designing products and packaging for circularity
- Creating enabling conditions through policies, finance and multi-stakeholder networks

#### Impact

Plastic Reboot is active in Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, the Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, India, Jordan, Laos, Peru, Philippines, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa.

7



-YEAR TIMELINE

Spanning from 2024 to 2030

15



NATIONAL PROJECTS

Implementing on-the-ground action around the globe to address the plastic pollution crisis

108m



FUNDING IN US\$

Funding programmes supported by the Global Environment Facility

## CASE STUDY

### Partnering to close the loop on reuse in Germany

#### Overview

Large public events often generate significant waste because of the widespread use of single-use food and beverage containers. In response, WWF Germany, in collaboration with several partners, piloted a successful reuse system at a major concert series, demonstrating that circular solutions are both practical and popular at scale.

#### The Berlin concert pilot

In 2024, German band *Die Ärzte* performed three concerts in Berlin, drawing over 150 000 attendees. Partnering with stakeholders such as Loft Concerts GmbH, Cradle to Cradle NGO, Vytal and ProjectTogether, WWF Germany implemented a full-scale reusable food-ware system involving:

- 29 food stalls using only reusable plates, bowls and utensils
- Multiple return and collection stations set up throughout the venue



#### Contribution

- 57 393 single-use items were prevented from becoming waste
- Over 90% return rate for reusable items
- 98% of respondents rated the system as “good” or “very good”
- 88% of respondents returned items in under 30 seconds
- 80% found the system easy to use

#### Impact

- The pilot demonstrated the feasibility of reuse systems at high-volume events.
- Positive public reception shows potential for behaviour change.
- The model showcases how environmental protection and entertainment can coexist through innovative, scalable solutions.

“ Large-scale events offer enormous potential to make a positive impact – at the event itself, but also by changing the mindset of the visitors of what is possible and desirable – through reusable systems and innovative circular economy approaches. Concerts like this demonstrate how climate protection, a more responsible use of resources, entertainment, and collaboration can go hand in hand. — LAURA GRIESTOP, WWF GERMANY



**If we fail to act decisively now, we risk locking in a high-pollution future that will be far more difficult and costly to reverse.**

© Vincent Kneefel/ WWF

# LESSONS LEARNED

Over the course of the past five years, the WWF No Plastic in Nature team has seen what works and what does not. Here are some of the key learnings and course corrections that have shaped the initiative's approach and that will guide the path forward.

## THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE

Over the past five years, WWF teams working on plastic pollution have had to navigate a highly unpredictable global environment marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting political dynamics, economic uncertainty and geopolitical conflict. These challenges disrupted supply chains, delayed policy processes, and diverted public and political attention. Yet, through strategic adaptation, the No Plastic in Nature initiative continued to drive tangible progress.

WWF supported the passage of national plastic regulations in several countries, helped pilot EPR schemes under new timelines, and expanded multi-stakeholder platforms through virtual engagement. These adjustments enabled key outcomes, such as maintaining momentum on policy reform, scaling up waste management pilots, and strengthening partnerships across sectors. Flexibility, combined with WWF's deep local presence and global reach, has proven critical to sustaining impact in a time of uncertainty.

## IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER

From the outset, WWF recognised that solving the plastic pollution crisis requires broad-based collaboration across the entire plastics value chain. The WWF team has worked closely with governments to shape and implement ambitious policies. They have also partnered with industry to drive innovation and accountability, and joined forces with other civil society organisations to amplify advocacy and share knowledge. These partnerships have been essential in aligning efforts, breaking down silos and building a more coherent, system-wide response to plastic pollution.

By bringing diverse actors to the table, each with unique strengths and perspectives, the No Plastic in Nature initiative has gone further, faster and with greater impact than any organisation could achieve alone.

## START WITH THE END IN MIND

In the endeavour to end plastic pollution, successful pilot projects are an important first step. But real impact comes when solutions can be scaled and replicated beyond their original context. Too often, promising initiatives remain confined to individual sites, not only because they are tailored to local conditions but also because of a lack of funding, supportive management models and strategic planning to adapt and scale them effectively. That is why the No Plastic in Nature initiative emphasises the importance of embedding scalability into project design from the outset by designing solutions with flexibility, transferability and long-term sustainability in mind, and by engaging partners who can support scale. The No Plastic in Nature team can move beyond isolated successes to system-wide transformation. Starting with the end in mind means not just solving the problem locally, but building a foundation for change that can travel far beyond a specific site.

## MEASURE TWICE, CUT ONCE

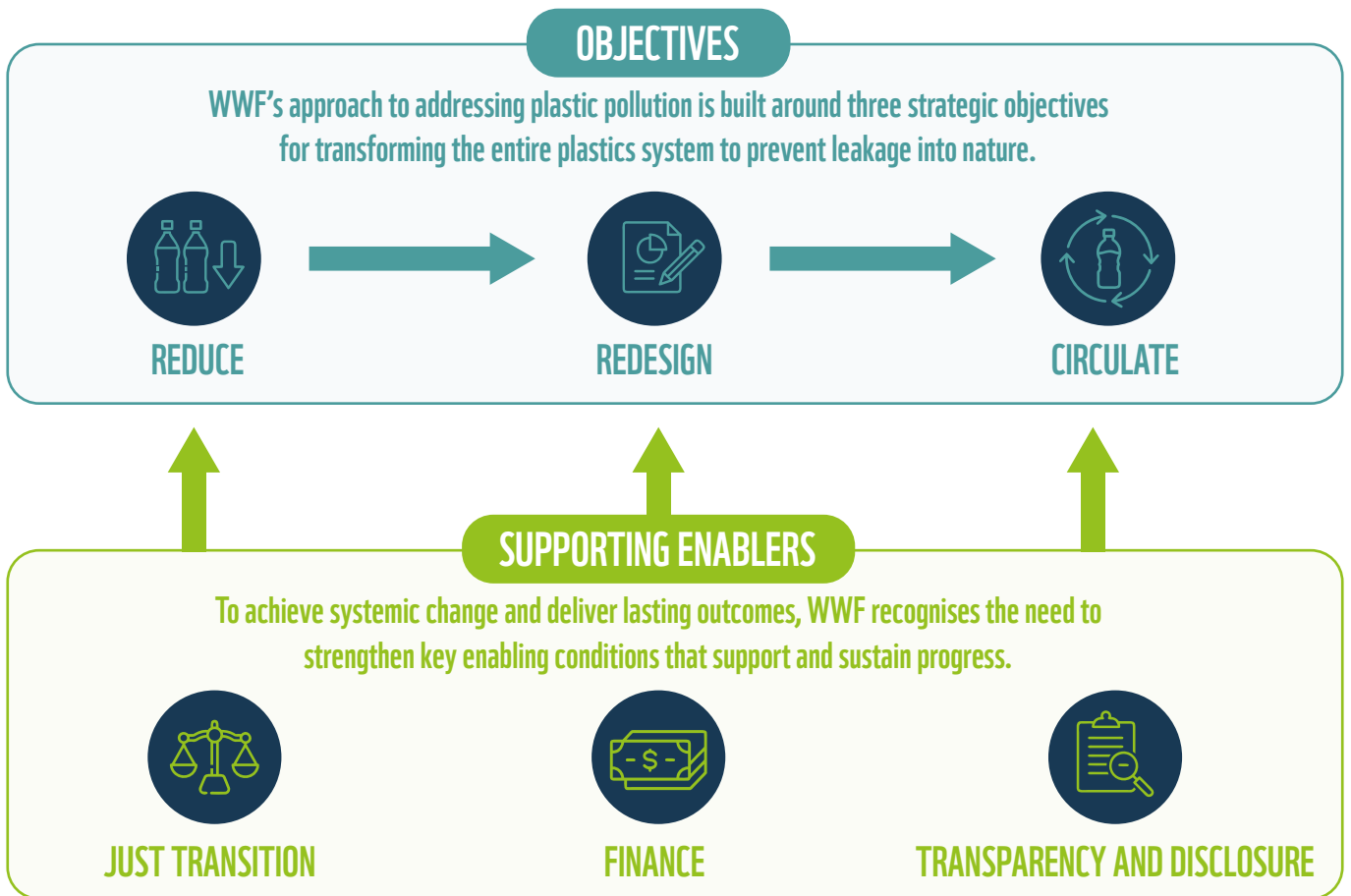
Reuse is one of the most effective solutions to solving plastic pollution. However, to date, many reuse projects in the packaging industry have failed to scale or sustain impact; they were simply not designed to function within the realities of existing systems, behaviours and market incentives. Many were small, fragmented pilots that lacked the infrastructure, policy support and financial models needed to operate at scale. Sometimes they focused narrowly on the technical aspects of reusable packaging without considering the logistical complexity of collection, cleaning, redistribution and consumer convenience. In addition, reuse systems often require a high level of collaboration across sectors, which is difficult to bring about without strong coordination and shared standards. Without enabling conditions such as supportive regulation, robust reverse logistics and aligned financial incentives for businesses and consumers, reuse solutions struggle to compete with the convenience and low cost of single-use plastics. To succeed, reuse must be embedded in a wider system designed to make it easy, affordable and accessible at scale.

# LOOKING AHEAD

The next five years are critical in the No Plastic in Nature initiative’s work to stem the tide of plastic pollution. Humanity is rapidly approaching a tipping point, not only in terms of environmental impact but also of political opportunity.

Plastic production is set to nearly double by 2040 if current trends continue. This will increase the threat to ecosystems, communities and climate resilience. Over the next five years, there is a unique window to shape global action, with the ongoing negotiations for a legally binding Global Plastic Pollution Treaty and a surge in public and corporate commitments to circularity. If we fail to act decisively now,

we risk locking in a high-pollution future that will be far more difficult and costly to reverse. But if we align ambition with investment and implementation, we can bend the curve of plastic pollution and secure a future where nature and people thrive, free from plastic waste. The key intervention areas for WWF’s No Plastic in Nature initiative from 2025 to 2030 are outlined below.



# OBJECTIVES FOR NO PLASTIC IN NATURE: 2025–2030



## REDUCE

### Reduce volumes of plastic production and consumption

#### Objectives

- Implement regulatory and market-based measures to reduce plastic production at the supply level
- Ban or phase out high-risk, unnecessary and problematic plastic products
- Enable the responsible use of sustainable alternatives



#### Strategic interventions

##### TRANSFORMING POLICY

- Advocate for legally binding global bans and phase-outs of the most harmful products and chemicals through the agreement and ratification of an ambitious and effective Global Plastic Pollution Treaty
- Strengthen the adoption of harmonised bans and phase-outs in existing global and regional policy frameworks such as the World Trade Organization, World Health Organization and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) conventions
- Support the development of national regulatory measures aligned with harmonised global bans and phase-outs



##### INFLUENCING MARKETS

- Engage industry in the development and implementation of harmonised voluntary commitments to reduce overall plastic production and eliminate high-risk, unnecessary and problematic plastic products



##### SCALING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

- Support the national and subnational implementation and enforcement of bans and phase-outs
- Scale national or subnational efforts to implement incentives for the sustainable use of materials



##### COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Facilitate a sustainable transition for companies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), policymakers and local communities by developing guidance tools on the use of sustainable alternatives
- Establish education, awareness and behaviour-change campaigns on reducing plastic consumption and using sustainable alternatives

# OBJECTIVES FOR NO PLASTIC IN NATURE: 2025–2030

## REDESIGN

### Redesign systems and products to ensure reuse and recycling in practice



#### Objectives

- Harmonise global product design rules and systems to enable reuse and increase the use of recycled materials
- Establish policy mechanisms to incentivise and enhance eco-design and fund infrastructure



#### Strategic interventions

##### TRANSFORMING POLICY

- Advocate for legally binding harmonised product-design requirements through the agreement and ratification of an ambitious and effective Global Plastic Pollution Treaty
- Support the establishment of national policies in priority countries to deliver:
  - Mandatory extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes
  - Large-scale reuse systems
  - Deposit return systems (DRSs)
  - Increased use of post-consumer recyclates (PCRs)



##### INFLUENCING MARKETS

- Engage industry in the development and adoption of harmonised voluntary product-design standards for key product categories



##### SCALING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

- Work with local actors to develop and test innovative eco-design products
- Support the design of large-scale reuse and deposit return systems



##### COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Foster the development, dissemination and adoption of best-practice EPR guidelines on key topics, including:
  - Product design
  - Eco-modulated fee systems
  - Incentives and mechanisms to support reuse or refill

## CIRCULATE

### Scale reuse and recycling solutions to prevent leakage into the environment

#### Objectives

- Scale reuse and recycling solutions to prevent leakage into the environment
- Enhance local waste management skills and capacity

#### Strategic interventions

##### TRANSFORMING POLICY

- Enable the integration of vulnerable and affected groups in policymaking processes at global, national and subnational levels (aligned with Enabler 1: Just transition)

##### INFLUENCING MARKETS

- Mobilise corporate engagement and participation in:
  - EPR schemes
  - Large-scale reuse programmes
- Establish effective voluntary industry initiatives<sup>10</sup>

##### SCALING LOCAL SOLUTIONS

- Pilot replicable solutions (including EPR schemes) to enable collection, segregation and recycling at scale in priority countries
- Collaborate with national and subnational governments on:
  - Developing national or subnational action plans or long-term strategy development
  - Doing capacity gap and effectiveness assessments (baseline or stakeholder analysis)
  - Supporting the integration of workers in informal and cooperative settings in reuse and recycling programmes

##### COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Support the development and implementation of large-scale reuse and reverse-logistics pilots
- Stimulate consumer behavioural change on reuse and recycling
- Strengthen global platforms and partnerships such as the Reuse Portal, Global Action Partnership (GAP) for EPR, Plastic Smart Cities, Plastic Reboot and Lift Collaborative to:
  - Coordinate action across the private and public sectors

<sup>10</sup> WWF defines effective voluntary initiatives as initiatives that align with the No Plastic in Nature strategy, take a systems-based approach addressing the full life cycle of plastics, are grounded in transparency and accountability (third-party verified), align with national roadmaps and the Global Plastic Pollution Treaty, prioritise upstream solutions and support a just and inclusive transition.

# SUPPORTING ENABLERS FOR NO PLASTIC IN NATURE: 2025-2030

## JUST TRANSITION



Enable a fair and inclusive transition to a circular economy

### Objectives

Ensure meaningful and effective engagement with vulnerable and affected groups in shaping policies and implementation

### Strategic interventions

- Enable the integration of vulnerable and affected groups in policymaking processes and implementation at the global, national and subnational levels
- Strengthen global platforms and partnerships working on the just transition

## FINANCE



Mobilise and align sufficient public and private finance at scale to fund solutions that drive plastic reduction, circularity and improved waste management

### Objectives

Establish innovative financing mechanisms (e.g. blended finance, green and blue bonds and EPR schemes)

### Strategic interventions

- Structure innovative public-private investment vehicles that combine concessional funds with commercial returns
- Map and align diverse financial flows with bankable projects (e.g. waste collection, recycling infrastructure, reuse systems) in high-leakage regions

Unlock private-sector investment

- Identify key barriers to private-sector investment and build consensus on bold, actionable solutions to mitigate risk and accelerate momentum
- Drive corporate leadership and public-private collaboration to enable delivery on voluntary commitments
- Provide technical assistance and impact metrics to improve investor confidence

Reduce harmful incentives

- Establish best practices, guidance and principles for investors to redirect investment towards circular systems that reduce plastic use at the source
- Develop recommendations to phase out subsidies and policies that promote the production and use of virgin plastic



## TRANSPARENCY AND DISCLOSURE

Ensure that governments, businesses and financial institutions systematically disclose and use reliable and harmonised plastic-footprint data

### Objectives

Companies publicly report harmonised data on plastic production, use and waste, enabling better decision-making and accountability

Governments implement harmonised mandatory plastic-footprint reporting, integrating it into national and international regulations

Financial institutions integrate harmonised plastic risk into Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) assessments, influencing corporate behaviour

### Strategic interventions

- Support the development of harmonised corporate reporting metrics on plastic production, use and waste through platforms such as CDP's Plastic Disclosure project
- Increase corporate accountability by mobilising companies to voluntarily disclose harmonised data on plastic production, use and waste by leveraging corporate partnerships and platforms
- Advocate for the inclusion of mandatory reporting and disclosure of harmonised data on plastic production, use and waste in the Global Plastic Pollution Treaty
- Advocate for the inclusion of mandatory corporate disclosure in national regulations
- Strengthen local and national data and monitoring efforts
- Support the development of guidance and standardised scoring methodologies to allow financial institutions to effectively integrate harmonised plastic risk into investment decisions



# CALL FOR COLLABORATION FROM GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESSES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The plastic pollution crisis is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time, but it is also one that we have the knowledge, tools and momentum to solve. A future with no plastic in nature is possible, but only if we act with urgency, unity and unwavering resolve. We call upon governments, businesses and civil society around the world to act boldly, urgently, and together!

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