



## THE ISSUE

Plastic pollution is a global crisis that is expected to worsen if there is not a drastic change. It is imperative that we work to address the problem now, as plastic waste is expected to quadruple from 2010 to 2050, and global recycling capacity will only cover a third of the waste produced.

Plastic pollution includes macro-plastics such as bags, cigarette filters, balloons, bottles, or straws, all of which cause serious harm to habitats and wildlife. There is growing research focused on the widespread presence and impacts of microplastics (particles of plastics <5mm), which have been found around the world in marine, freshwater and terrestrial environment.

Only 14% of plastic packaging is recycled. Currently, the recycling and waste management system is broken. Globally we still follow a make-use-dispose model and do not regard plastics and packaging as valuable resources. In order to address the plastic pollution crisis and stop leakage into the environment, it is necessary to redesign the plastic production waste cycle and “close the loop” through improved product design, recovery, recycling and reuse.

## WHAT WE ARE DOING

WWF advocated a transition to a global circular plastics economy, with a focus on material and product re-design, consumer behaviour and circular waste management. The strategy focuses on two-levels of plastic pollution in particular: reducing the use of plastics by redesign of materials and products on the one hand, and stopping the leakage by creating circular waste management systems for plastics on the other.

With our vision of No Plastic in Nature by 2030, we aim to stop the flow of plastic entering nature by 2030 through elimination of unnecessary plastic; doubling reuse, recycling and recovery; and ensuring the remaining plastic is sourced responsibly. Our focus is advocacy and outreach through a global campaign and the request of a new legally-binding instrument to combat marine plastic pollution.

In view of the need for global collaboration and movement, WWF has developed the Plastic SMART Cities program, a scalable initiative, to transform global hotspots for plastic pollution into circular economies. The action method consists of elements based on a circular economy that facilitate change on multiple levels to ensure long-lasting impacts.

In order to achieve this goal, it is critical to leverage circular economy models and system-wide approaches. WWF is specifically aiming for:

- 100% reduction of plastic leakage to ecosystems
- Double global recovery of plastic (collection and recycling)
- Shift to sustainable inputs for remaining plastic, including:
  - Recycled content

- Sustainably sourced bio-content
- Advanced products
- Reducing unnecessary plastic through:
  - Business model Innovation
  - Reduction
  - Substitution

WWF and its partners have started addressing five pilot cities, including Hong Kong, and will scale up to the cities that are the biggest leakage points for marine litter. A global platform of solutions for cities to address marine litter, along with a global communications campaign and WWF advocacy targeting other cities in the region, will enable the global scaling up of the city level commitments by 2021.

## **OUR ASK**

In order to eliminate our plastic footprint, we must advocate for new policy standards, new incentives for industry, and new models of innovation for plastic avoidance, use, reuse and waste management. Plastic Smart Cities is the knowledge sharing platform on plastics, where all stakeholders join together for a Plastic Free Ocean. Here we connect problem owners with vetted solutions and solution providers. WWF and its partners will work with cities and tourism centers that want to tackle the plastic pollution problem in an innovative way, learning from the best practices that are being implemented and tested in cities around the world. Innovative entrepreneurship around circular alternatives for unnecessary single-use plastics creates new jobs in the cities and citizens actively participate in the transition towards a plastic pollution free economy.

WWF is calling on Hong Kong to become a Plastic Smart City by being 100% plastic pollution free by 2030. We urge the government to produce a city plan for dealing with the problem of plastics, leveraging global smart cities best practices. WWF Hong Kong recommends the government to implement the below strategies:

- Ban all polystyrene tableware by 2022;
- Provide a clear timeline on phasing out all single-use plastic tableware upon completion of the government's consultancy in 2021;
- Establish an aid fund for the food and beverage industry to roll out incentive schemes for customers to bring their own cutlery and container;
- Implement the Pilot Scheme on Collection and Recycling Services of Plastic Recyclable Materials in Sai Kung and Central piers;
- Develop a regulated Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system for plastic packaging and tableware in supermarkets and the food and beverage industry.