

## ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF PLASTICS AND MICROPLASTICS IN THE OCEAN: SUPPORTING A HARMONISED APPROACH

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Concern about the quantity of plastic debris in the ocean has grown rapidly in recent years. There is increasing interest from the private sector, environmental NGOs, special interest groups, the media and the scientific community. In response, GESAMP WG40 undertook an initial assessment of 'Sources, fate and effects of microplastics in the marine environment – a global assessment', (2015). A Phase II assessment was published in in 2016, contributing to a wider study of marine litter. Results were presented at the Second UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-2, April 2016).



During the 43rd Session of GESAMP (Nairobi, 2016) it was agreed that the working group would conduct a third phase, focusing on three revised Terms of Reference:

- Sampling methodologies;
- Impacts of nanoplastics; and
- Plastics as a vector for organisms.



**1st priority in 2018:** Developing guidelines to achieve a harmonized approach for the assessment and monitoring of plastics and microplastics in the oceans.



WG 40 is reviewing existing initiatives and actions plans. WG 40, provides advice and practical guidance on setting up a global monitoring and assessment programme for marine plastics and microplastics.

### CONTENT:

- Basic principles of monitoring and assessment;
- Monitoring methods, including recommended sampling protocols;
- Methodologies for physical and chemical identification of items and analysis of polymers;
- Requirements for monitoring and assessment, including strategies, harmonization, data quality and management;
- Propose future developments and recommendations.



### General objectives include:

- Supporting the development of initiatives, meeting goals and objectives related to marine litter in a global context;
- Linking pressures, impacts and quality of the environment to ecosystem management;
- Producing region-specific comparable assessments;

UNESCO/IOC; UN Environment; IMO; FAO, NOAA;



Ministry of Environment/Japan; SOA; NOWPAP; MOF/KOREA; RSCs; JPI oceans project