

RESOLUTION MEPC.417(84) (adopted on 1 May 2026)
2026 STRATEGY AND THE ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS MARINE PLASTIC
LITTER FROM SHIPS

ANNEX 21

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THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE

RECALLING Articles 38(a) and (e) of the Convention on the International Maritime Organization (the Organization) concerning the functions of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (the Committee) conferred upon it by international conventions for the prevention and control of marine pollution from ships,

ACKNOWLEDGING that work to prevent pollution by garbage from ships has been undertaken by the Organization since the adoption of MARPOL Annex V,

ACKNOWLEDGING ALSO the relevance of the work on marine plastic litter undertaken by the Parties to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 and its 1996 Protocol, including the adoption in 2016 of a "Recommendation to Encourage Action to Combat Marine Litter",

ACKNOWLEDGING FURTHER the relevant work of other international organizations in relation to marine plastic litter, in particular FAO, the UN Environment Programme and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC), and the importance of existing cooperation mechanisms, including GESAMP, the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters, the IMO OceanLitter Programme and the Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter,

RECALLING that the Assembly, at its thirtieth session, in December 2017, recognized the ongoing problem of marine plastic pollution, as addressed in MARPOL Annex V, which required further consideration as part of a global solution within the framework of ocean governance, in pursuance of the target of SDG 14 to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds by 2025,

RECALLING ALSO the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,

RECALLING FURTHER that, at its seventy-third session in October 2018, it adopted, by resolution MEPC.310(73), the *Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships*, which was superseded by the *2025 Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* adopted by the Committee at its eighty-third session (MEPC 83) in April 2025 by resolution MEPC.404(83),

RECALLING that it, at its seventy-seventh session in November 2021, adopted, by resolution MEPC.341(77), the *Strategy to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships*,

RECALLING ALSO the obligation of Member States to provide adequate facilities at ports and terminals for the reception of garbage, as required by regulation 8 of MARPOL Annex V, and ensure this obligation is implemented effectively,

- 1 ADOPTS the 2026 *Strategy and the Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* (the 2026 Strategy and the Action Plan) as set out in annexes 1 and 2 to the present resolution;
- 2 NOTES the application of the 2026 Strategy and the Action Plan to all ships, including fishing vessels;
- 3 INVITES Member States, international organizations and other relevant bodies to undertake further studies to better understand discharges of marine plastic litter, in particular microplastics, from ships;
- 4 INVITES the Secretary-General of the Organization to make adequate provisions in the Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme to support relevant follow-up actions of the Action Plan;
- 5 AGREES that the 2026 Strategy and the Action Plan will be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it continues to deliver against its objective and outcomes and actions reviewed and updated based on the information submitted by Member States and international organizations;
- 6 ALSO AGREES that the 2026 Strategy and the Action Plan supersedes the Strategy adopted by resolution MEPC.341(77) and the 2025 Action Plan adopted by resolution MEPC.404(83).

ANNEX 1

2026 STRATEGY AND THE ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS MARINE PLASTIC LITTER FROM SHIPS

1 Background

1.1 IMO has recognized the importance of preventing pollution by garbage, including plastics, from ships since the adoption of MARPOL Annex V. IMO has also recognized the importance of preventing the dumping of various types of waste, including plastics, into the sea through the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (London Convention or LC) and its 1996 Protocol (London Protocol or LP). IMO has also committed to working closely with a number of partners to address the issue of marine plastic litter. However, studies demonstrate that, despite the existing regulatory framework to prevent marine plastic litter from ships, discharges into the sea continue to occur.

1.2 IMO recognized the ongoing problem of marine plastic pollution required further consideration, in pursuance of the target of Sustainable Development Goal 14 to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds by 2025. In recognition of the urgency to address marine plastic litter from ships, IMO adopted the *Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* (resolution MEPC.310(73)), which was superseded by the *2025 Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* adopted by the Committee at its eighty-third session (MEPC 83) by resolution MEPC.404(83) as well as the *Strategy to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* (resolution MEPC.341(77)).

2 Vision

2.1 IMO remains committed to reducing marine plastic litter entering the marine environment from all ships, including fishing vessels. As a matter of urgency, IMO aims to strengthen the international framework and compliance with the relevant IMO instruments, endeavouring to achieve zero plastic waste discharges to sea from ships by 2030.

3 Objective and outcomes

3.1 The objective of this Strategy is to guide the implementation of the Action Plan to best achieve the outcomes of the Action Plan, by the establishment of a timeline and identification of appropriate modalities.

3.2 In considering the Action Plan, it is useful to consider the following outcomes as key goals:

- .1 reduction of marine plastic litter generated from, and retrieved by, fishing vessels;
- .2 reduction of shipping's contribution to marine plastic litter; and
- .3 improvement of the effectiveness of port reception and facilities and treatment in reducing marine plastic litter;

and the following further efforts which could aid in achieving the goals, inter alia:

- .4 enhanced public awareness, education and seafarer training;
- .5 improved understanding of the contribution of ships to marine plastic litter;
- .6 improved understanding of the regulatory framework associated with marine plastic litter from ships;

- .7 strengthened international cooperation; and
- .8 targeted technical cooperation and capacity-building.

4 Time frame

4.1 The following groups of actions under the Action Plan have been identified:

- .1 actions that can be progressed now by relevant sub-committees, which could be referred to as short-term actions;
- .2 actions that may be reliant on the outcomes of the IMO Study on marine plastic litter, or other relevant research, in order to progress, which could be referred to as mid-term actions;
- .3 actions which require concrete proposals to the Committee in order to progress, and could therefore be considered long-term actions; and
- .4 actions which would continuously be addressed over the life of the Action Plan.

4.2 The time frame and table grouping short-, mid-, long-term and continuous actions is set out in section 4 of the Action Plan.

5 Method of work

5.1 Improvement of the effectiveness of port reception and facilities and treatment in reducing marine plastic litter, especially for regions that have in place a Regional Reception Facility Plan (regulation 8.3 of MARPOL Annex V) should be considered when progressing each individual action related to addressing the discharge of plastic litter to reception facilities.

5.2 The actions in the Action Plan will be reviewed at MEPC based on follow-up proposals and commenting documents by interested Member States and international organizations. Following such a review, the Committee would instruct the PPR Sub-Committee or other sub-committees, as appropriate, to undertake work only on actions for which a well-defined scope of work had been developed.

5.3 During the ongoing development of the Action Plan, consideration should be given to how to assess compliance and effectiveness of actions.

5.4 For actions where the coordinating/associated organ is a sub-committee under MSC, the preferred way forward will be for proposals for a new output to be submitted to MSC in order for MSC to instruct the appropriate sub-committee accordingly.

5.5 For actions where the coordinating/associated organ is another committee, submission of documents to the relevant committee will be the preferred way forward.

6 Monitoring, evaluation and review

6.1 The 2026 Strategy and the Action Plan will be monitored and evaluated to ensure that it continues to deliver against its objective and outcomes.

6.2 IMO will carry out a comprehensive review of the 2026 Strategy and the Action Plan in 2030.

ANNEX 2

ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS MARINE PLASTIC LITTER FROM SHIPS

1 Background

1.1 Marine plastic litter enters the marine environment as a result of a wide range of land- and sea-based activities. Both macroplastics (e.g. large plastic items such as plastic bags, water bottles and fishing gear) and microplastics (small plastic particles generally five millimetres or less in size) persist in the marine environment and result in harmful effects on marine life and biodiversity, as well as negative impacts on human health. In addition, marine plastic litter negatively impacts activities such as tourism, fisheries and shipping. This plastic material has the potential to be brought back into the economy by means of reuse or recycling. Studies demonstrate that despite the existing regulatory framework to prevent marine plastic litter from ships, discharges into the sea continue to occur.

1.2 IMO has recognized the importance of preventing pollution by garbage, including plastics, from ships since the adoption of MARPOL Annex V, as well as the dumping of various types of waste, including plastics, into the sea through the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter 1972 (London Convention or LC) and its 1996 Protocol (London Protocol or LP). This commitment was reinforced by the IMO Assembly, at its thirtieth session, in December 2017, recognizing the ongoing problem of marine plastic pollution, as addressed in MARPOL Annex V, which required further consideration as part of a global solution within the framework of ocean governance, in pursuance of the target of Sustainable Development Goal 14 to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds by 2025.

1.3 IMO recognizes the importance of continued action to manage this global issue. In 2016, the thirty-eighth Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties to the London Convention and the eleventh Meeting of Contracting Parties to the London Protocol adopted a "Recommendation to Encourage Action to Combat Marine Litter". In 2018, MEPC 73 adopted the *Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships* by resolution MEPC.310(73) which was superseded by the 2025 Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships adopted by the Committee at its eighty-third session (MEPC 83) by resolution MEPC.404(83).

1.4 IMO has committed to working closely with a number of partners to address the issue of marine plastic litter including, but not limited to:

- .1 FAO through the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters (JWG) and the IMO OceanLitter Programme;
- .2 the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP);
- .3 the UN Environment-managed Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GP3ML);
- .4 the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea (ICP);
- .5 the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA); and

- .6 the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC).

2 Objective

The 2025 Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships has been developed to contribute to the global solution for preventing marine plastic litter from entering the oceans through ship-based activities. This Action Plan provides IMO with a mechanism to identify specific outcomes, and actions to achieve these outcomes, in a way that is meaningful and measurable. The 2025 Action Plan builds on existing policy and regulatory frameworks, and identifies opportunities to enhance these frameworks and introduce new supporting measures to address the issue of marine plastic litter from ships. The 2025 Action Plan also recognizes the actions that have been completed since the adoption of the initial Action Plan in 2018, demonstrating the considerable work undertaken by IMO to address this important issue.

3 Time frames, review and evaluation

3.1 The measures within the Action Plan should be completed by 2030.

3.2 Specific time frames for individual measures have been captured in the table of actions set out in section 4.

3.3 The Action Plan will be reviewed in 2030 with a view to updating the actions based on information submitted by Member States and international organizations on the implementation of the Action Plan.

4 Actions

	Outcome	Measures	Parent organ	Coordinating/ Associated organ	Time frame*	Associated partners
1	Reduction of marine plastic litter generated from, and retrieved by, fishing vessels	Consider making the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme mandatory for all fishing vessels over 24 metres in length through an amendment to the Cape Town Agreement once it enters into force	MSC MEPC	/	Mid-term	
2		Encourage the ratification of the Cape Town Agreement	MSC MEPC	/	Continuous	
3		Taking into account the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear and new and existing regional fisheries management organization requirements, develop mandatory goal-based measures under MARPOL Annex V for the marking of fishing gear that would avoid duplication with existing measures, instruments and frameworks	MEPC	PPR / III (JWG)	Mid-term	FAO
4		Consider the development of measures for a ship-specific management plan for the gear and equipment deployed in fishing activities, including the logging of fishing gear on board a fishing vessel	MEPC	PPR / III	Short-term	FAO
5		Develop a circular reminding IMO Member States to collect information from their registered fishing vessels regarding any discharge or accidental loss of fishing gear	MEPC	PPR	Short-term	

* The time frame is defined in section 4 of the Strategy.

	Outcome	Measures	Parent organ	Coordinating/ Associated organ	Time frame*	Associated partners
6		Consider the preparation of a circular reminding Member States to enforce MARPOL Annex V on fishing vessels through PSC measures, if appropriate Encourage port State control MoUs to develop PSC procedures that include fishing vessels, if appropriate	MEPC	PPR / III	Mid-term	
7	Reduction of shipping's contribution to marine plastic litter	Consider whether and how to address the responsibility, and if appropriate, liability for plastic consumer goods lost at sea from ships	LEG MEPC	/PPR	Long-term	
8		Consider enhancing the enforcement of MARPOL Annex V, including, where possible, through a risk-based approach	MEPC	PPR / III	Short-term	
9		Consider and develop mandatory measures to reduce the environmental risks of plastic pellets transported by sea in freight containers	MEPC MSC	/PPR / CCC	Short-term	
10	Improvement of the effectiveness of port reception and facilities and treatment in reducing marine plastic litter	Consider the requirement for port reception facilities to provide for separate garbage collection for plastic waste from ships, including fishing gear, if appropriate, to facilitate reuse or recycling	MEPC	PPR	Mid-term	
11		Consider mechanisms to enhance the enforcement of MARPOL Annex V requirements for the delivery of garbage to reception facilities	MEPC	PPR	Mid-term	

	Outcome	Measures	Parent organ	Coordinating/ Associated organ	Time frame*	Associated partners
12		Consider facilitating the mandatory use of port waste management plans to ensure the provision of adequate waste reception facilities Identify information from the port waste management plans that can be shared via the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) Encourage Member States to address the entire process of plastic garbage handling and ensure that landed garbage is managed in a sustainable manner ashore	MEPC	PPR / III	Mid-term	
13	Enhanced public awareness, education and seafarer training	Consider ways to publicly promote the work of IMO to address marine plastic litter generated from ships	MEPC	PPR	Continuous	
14		Consider how the model course "Marine Environmental Awareness 1.38" could be amended/revised to specifically address marine plastic litter Monitor the progress of the comprehensive review of the STCW (International Convention on Standards and Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers) and Code to ensure familiarization of all seafarers of the minimum requirements with regard to marine plastic litter	MEPC	HTW / PPR	Short-term	

	Outcome	Measures	Parent organ	Coordinating/ Associated organ	Time frame*	Associated partners
15	Improved understanding of the contribution of ships to marine plastic litter	Consider extending the reporting requirement in regulation 10.6 of MARPOL Annex V to include reporting data on discharge or accidental loss of fishing gear by the flag State to IMO via GISIS or other means if appropriate	MEPC	PPR / III	Short-term	
16		Encourage Member States and international organizations that have conducted scientific research related to marine litter from ships to share the results of such research, including any information on microplastics from ships or the areas contaminated by marine litter from ships	MEPC	PPR	Continuous	
17		With regard to the IMO Study on marine plastic litter from ships, decide how to progress the work through proposals either identifying priority sub-projects or providing revised terms of reference, taking into account MEPC.1/Circ.894	MEPC LC/LP	PPR	Short-term	GESAMP, FAO, UN Environment, RFMOs, World Oceans Assessment, Regional Seas Conventions
18	Strengthened international cooperation	Make information available to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)	MEPC LC/LP	PPR	Continuous	
19		Continue work with other United Nations bodies and agencies, as well as with international forums, which are active in the matter of marine plastic litter from shipping, such as through the Global Partnership on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter (GP3ML)	MEPC LC/LP	PPR	Continuous	

APPENDIX

COMPLETED ACTIONS AS OF THE 2025 REVIEW OF THE INITIAL ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS MARINE PLASTIC LITTER FROM SHIPS (RESOLUTION MEPC.310(73))

Outcome	Measures
Reduction of marine plastic litter generated from, and retrieved by, fishing vessels	Consider the development of best management practice to facilitate incentives for fishing vessels to retrieve derelict fishing gear and deliver it to port reception facilities, in collaboration with FAO
	Consider the issue of waste that has been collected during fishing operations building on experience gathered from established projects
	Review the application of placards, garbage management plans and garbage record-keeping (regulation 10, MARPOL Annex V), for example making the Garbage Record Book mandatory for ships of 100 GT and above
Reduction of shipping's contribution to marine plastic litter	Review the application of placards, garbage management plans and garbage record-keeping (regulation 10, MARPOL Annex V), for example making the Garbage Record Book mandatory for ships of 100 GT and above
	Consider the establishment of a compulsory system of formatted declarations of the loss of containers and the means on board to easily identify the exact number of losses Also, consider establishing an obligation to report through a standardized procedure the loss of containers
	Consider ways to communicate the location of containers lost overboard based on additional information to be provided by interested parties
Improvement of the effectiveness of port reception and facilities and treatment in reducing marine plastic litter	Consider the development of tools to support the implementation of cost frameworks associated with port reception facilities, taking into account the need to not create disincentives for the use of port reception facilities, the potential benefits of cost incentives that provide no additional fees based on volume and identifying waste types that can be reduced, reused or recycled through schemes that identify waste revenue
	Further consider the impact on small island developing States and on remote locations such as polar regions when planning for the disposal of waste to land-based facilities

Outcome	Measures
Enhanced public awareness, education and seafarer training	Consider tasking the HTW Sub-Committee with reviewing chapter III of STCW-F (Basic safety training for all fishing vessel personnel) to ensure that all fishing vessel personnel, before being assigned any shipboard duties, receive basic training on marine environment awareness oriented on marine plastic litter including abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG)
Improved understanding of the contribution of ships to marine plastic litter	Invite Member States and international organizations to undertake studies to better understand microplastics from ships
Improved understanding of the regulatory framework associated with marine plastic litter from ships	Consider the development of a regulatory framework matrix for the purpose of a gap analysis
Targeted technical cooperation and capacity-building	Address implementation issues related to the Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships in the context of IMO technical cooperation and capacity-building activities
	Consider the establishment of externally funded major projects under the auspices of IMO in support of the Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships

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