



UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT GROUP



# Consultative Process on a Pollution-Free Planet

## Terms of Reference

Draft 28.01.2022

### A. Background

Pollution is one of the three major crises faced by our planet, together with climate change and biodiversity loss. The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) placed pollution high on the global agenda with the adoption in 2019 of a global Implementation [Plan Towards a Pollution Free Planet](#) which places UN-wide partnerships as a critical component towards its delivery.

Achieving the Implementation Plan Towards a Pollution-Free Planet requires a system-wide, coordinated approach that can target the root causes and drivers of pollution and deliver deeper, broader impacts. Many UN agencies address pollution through their mandates, expertise and operations, promoting improved environmental quality, human health and the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, supporting multi-stakeholder action in a variety of sectors and advancing efforts from the global to local level. Existing efforts could benefit from stronger synergies, common narratives, and more coordinated action for increased impact.

In September 2021, the UN Secretary General requested the Executive Director of UNEP to unite efforts across the UN system, on solutions for challenges posed by plastic pollution. The 2022 EMG report on marine litter and microplastics<sup>8</sup> showed that there is considerable expertise across a range of relevant disciplines in the UN system, which would be instrumental in increasing our impact in addressing the plastic pollution challenge.

Against this background, the EMG Senior Officials decided at their 27<sup>th</sup> meeting in October 2021 to establish a Consultative Process to prepare a UN system-wide approach on a Pollution-Free Planet. A Core Working Group on plastic pollution will be formed under the Consultative Process to prepare a response to the Secretary-General's call.

### B. Objective and scope

The purpose of the Consultative Process is to prepare a system-wide, common approach that provides a framework for collective action in support of the [Implementation Plan "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet"](#), including a common offer to support the sustainable, inclusive and just transition towards a plastic pollution-free economy, building on existing efforts undertaken by various UN and related entities.

The common approach may propose a set of outcomes and outputs at the global, regional and country level that should be achieved by the UN system through increased collaboration, as well as an



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accountability framework for mainstreaming and implementation. It may include medium-term objectives to be pursued by the UN system in partnership with governments, business and civil society.

The Common Approach may establish or reinforce coalitions of agencies in different pollution related focal areas. The common approach may also address how the UN system itself can demonstrate its commitment to a pollution free planet through its corporate functions, policies and programming.

The Consultative Process shall organize its work to undertake the following main activities:

1. Undertake a mapping of existing efforts, roles, mandates and opportunities in the UN system for strengthened efforts towards a pollution-free planet and develop an analysis of pollution-related capacity gaps;
  - a. *Map out agencies, funds and programmes of the UN system, and UN interagency arrangements, partnerships, frameworks and initiatives that can contribute to the achievement of “a pollution-free planet”;*
  - b. *Identify opportunities for further collaboration and leveraging the potential of UN agencies and their initiatives, vis-à-vis the areas of action identified in the Implementation Plan “Towards a pollution-free planet.”*
2. Develop a common approach to tackling pollution outlining more coordinated action on pollution across the UN system including through
  - a. *Creating/reinforcing issue-based coalitions on pollution;*
  - b. *Shared guidance/common approach to country analysis and joint programming;*
  - c. *Common targets and indicators for joint programming, implementation and progress monitoring;*
  - d. *Addressing pollution-related capacity gaps and priorities of countries, comprising of tools and guidance documents produced by various agencies, building on existing efforts undertaken by various agencies to this end.*
  - e. *Promoting gender responsive, disability inclusive and human rights based approaches.*
  - f. *Working with other EMG processes and inter-agency processes addressing issues related to a pollution-free planet including work under the Secretary General’s Call to Action for Human Rights and Our Common Agenda.*
3. Prepare a response to the UN Secretary General’s call on the UN system and stakeholders to unite to provide solutions to the challenge of plastic pollution
4. Facilitate knowledge sharing in the UN system on addressing specific pollution issues
5. Joint messaging for the UN system on a pollution-free planet to raise the profile of coordinated advocacy efforts and influence political priorities and behaviours at all levels.

### **C. Composition**

The Consultative Process is composed of focal points nominated by EMG members and is open to observers from non-UN entities whose knowledge, activities or expertise will be relevant and useful



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to the work of the Group. Meetings will be organised by the EMG Secretariat, primarily through electronic means. A list of members of the Consultative Process is attached as Annex I.

The Core Working Group on Plastics will include interested UN system entities through the Consultative Process. Expected outcomes and deliverables of the Core Working Group will be outlined in a separate ToR.

#### D. Approach

In addition to the Core Working Group on Plastics, the Consultative Process may establish other thematically focused working groups on focal areas covered by the implementation plan, such as air-, freshwater-, marine and coastal- as well as land and soil pollution and chemicals and wastes.

#### E. Work Plan

	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
1 <sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Consultative Process – Finalization of ToR	■										
Establishment of Core Working Group (CWG) on Plastic Pollution	■										
Key messages on plastic pollution for UNSG	■										
First meeting of CWG on plastics – agreement on deliverables and key messages		■									
Outline for SG’s summary on plastic pollution		■									
2 <sup>nd</sup> meeting of CWG on plastics - SG’s summary			■								
Second meeting of Consultative Process – discussion of Common Approach outline					■						
EMG midterm meeting				■							





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