

Regional Webinar

Marine Litter Monitoring Tools: Site-selection and Visualizing Data

Date: 17 November 2025, Monday

Time: 13.00-14.00 Indochina Time (Bangkok)

Format: Online Webinar (not recorded)

Background

Marine litter and plastic pollution remain one of the largest challenges in the East Asian Seas Region, driven by rapid development, waste management infrastructures, and high plastic usage. Monitoring and assessment remain critical to support the development, tracking, and evaluation of waste policies and management interventions. The COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter adopted in 2019 and the ASEAN Regional Action Plan for Combatting Marine Debris (2021-2025) seek to highlight cooperation and strengthen policy responses to marine litter and plastic pollution.

To strengthen and harmonize marine litter efforts in the region, COBSEA participating countries endorsed [“Regional Guidance on Harmonized National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes”](#) and [“Towards a Regional Assessment on Marine Litter in the East Asian Seas \(Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam\)”](#).

In partnership with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) through the SEA circular project with funding from the Government of Sweden, national baseline surveys were conducted in Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam in 2022-2024. Training on marine litter monitoring methods was provided at regional and national levels, and national focal agencies and technical partners identified additional capacity-building needs on data analysis and strengthening data comparability to track the effectiveness of interventions over time.

Simultaneously, CSIRO has embarked on a world first project which aims to quantify how and where plastic and other waste is leaking to the environment and to identify interventions that may be successful in stemming the flow of plastic pollution from land to the sea. The primary objective of the project is to use field sampling and mathematical modelling to document the distribution of plastic pollution on land, along riverbanks, on the coast, and in nearshore marine environments. The focus is on areas influenced by major urban centres and surrounding areas that have been identified

as having significant waste mismanagement resulting in losses to the coastal and marine environment.

Webinar objectives

This Webinar will highlight regional findings that examine plastic waste leakage to the environment. It will also showcase a beta-version of CSIRO's new online tool which has two components:

- 1) Site Selection Tool: assists in identifying optimal locations for plastic waste surveys and can be used to design future national baseline surveys.
- 2) Data Visualization Tool: enables country participants to view and interpret data from national baseline estimate surveys. (Note: This tool is password-protected to ensure data confidentiality.)

The webinar will provide a platform for feedback to ensure the tools are relevant to country-specific contexts.

Draft agenda

14.00-14.05	Opening by COBSEA Secretariat
14.05-14.10	COBSEA Marine Litter Monitoring and Assessment
14.10-14.20	CSIRO Presentation of recent developments in marine litter and plastic pollution monitoring
14.20-14.40	Demonstration of the site selection and visualization tools
14.40-15.00	Q&A

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Coordinating Body of the Seas of East Asia (UNEP-COBSEA) are pleased to invite interested participants to join an upcoming regional webinar showcasing recent developments on marine litter and plastics research and data harmonization, including the new Rshiny site selection and visualization tool.