



TOURISM INDUSTRY CALL TO ACTION

SOLVING FOR THE GLOBAL PLASTIC WASTE CRISIS

Every day, plastic flows into our natural environment at an unprecedented rate—a dump truck every minute into our oceans alone. In one year, this plastic waste adds up to 11 million metric tons and impacts over 2,100 species.ⁱⁱ And as this crisis spreads to every corner of the globe, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is leading the charge to unite industry leaders, the public, and policymakers to transform our material system toward a vision of *No Plastic in Nature by 2030*. While plastic can help make our hospitals safer, our food last longer, and our packages more efficient to ship, it has no place in nature.

The role of business is critical to fixing the broken plastic system and accelerating progress. Businesses are uniquely positioned to reduce waste through improved sourcing, design, and business model innovation within their own supply chains and by supporting recycling and composting system improvement efforts beyond their own supply chains. Through this lens, we find that as few as 100 companies have the potential to prevent roughly 10 million metric tons of the world's plastic waste per year.ⁱⁱⁱ Some of the world's biggest companies have already begun large-scale plastic commitments to reduce, reuse, re-source, and recycle.

The tourism industry and its key stakeholders, including destinations (national and local governments) and businesses (accommodation providers, tour operators, suppliers, etc.), have an important role in contributing to the solution for plastic pollution. Plastic waste clearly damages the aesthetic of tourist destinations, resulting in major economic costs and losses in tourism-related incomes. Tourism both impacts and is impacted by plastic pollution. Bold and ambitious action is needed, as 80% of tourism takes place in coastal areas and peak tourism season is known to result in a 40% increase of marine litter in some areas. Not only does coastal tourism contribute to marine plastic pollution, but in-land and urban tourism do as well, with large amounts of plastic polluting rivers and flowing into the ocean.^{iv}

WWF recommends the tourism industry take action to reduce plastic waste in the following ways:

- **Join WWF's [ReSource: Plastic](#) platform to turn ambitious plastic reduction commitments into meaningful, measurable action.** Using the ReSource Footprint Tracker, WWF's team helps businesses track year-over-year progress toward public commitments and provides expert guidance across a business' entire global plastic portfolio. Alternatively, small-scale local businesses are encouraged to survey their waste and determine end-of-life fate to eliminate problematic materials and transition to sustainable solutions where possible—see [Plastic IQ](#) for more information.
- **Join the [U.S. Plastics Pact](#),** a collaborative, solutions-driven consortium to unify diverse public-private stakeholders across the plastics value chain and rethink the way we design, use, and reuse plastic in the United States.
- **Sign on to the [Global Tourism Plastics Initiative](#),** an initiative led by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation within the framework of the UN's One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme. [Signatories](#) of the initiative, including businesses, governments, and civil societies make concrete and actionable commitments to be achieved by 2025.
- **Support the [Plastic Smart Cities](#) initiative in key tourism destinations.** In collaboration with WWF, these cities are taking bold actions to stop plastic pollution with a goal to reduce plastic leakage into nature by 30% in the near term.
- **Support local communities and/or countries in building up recycling capacity,** especially in areas with large amounts of tourism activities, by advocating for national extended producer responsibility policies and by creating consistent collection and sorting procedures across tourism destinations or operations.
- **Implement reuse systems wherever possible, transitioning away from single-use plastic products.** To begin, start with reuse pilots to test scalability. For more information on reuse, see key resources from the World Economic Forum's Consumers Beyond Waste Initiative: [Executive Summary](#), [City Playbook](#), [Design Guidelines](#), and [Safety Guidelines](#). Join the community transitioning to more reusable systems that work for the products you sell and the communities you serve.



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- **Advocate for the changes needed to shift from a linear to a circular economy in the U.S. and globally**, including by promoting principles of extended producer responsibility, environmental justice, and international leadership to reimagine our linear economies, as outlined in [WWF's 5-Point Roadmap to Materials Circularity](#); by joining [OneSource Coalition](#); and by [supporting a UN treaty on plastic pollution](#).

WWF is fighting for a world with no plastic in nature by 2030. It's a world where our oceans teem with marine life, not discarded nets, bottles, and bags/cups; where no human breathes the toxic fumes of burning plastic; and where every indispensable plastic product is used to make another. We need all stakeholders to think differently, to innovate, and to provide solutions that not only make us better stewards of the resources we are taking from the planet but also make sure we keep them in the system so they can be used again and again.

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Visit our program websites to learn more about how WWF is addressing the plastic pollution crisis:



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- i "Breaking the Plastic Wave: A Comprehensive Assessment of Pathways Towards Stopping Ocean Plastic Pollution." The Pew Charitable Trusts and SYSTEMIQ, 2020. https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2020/10/breakingtheplasticwave_mainreport.pdf.
- ii "Impacts of plastic pollution in the oceans on marine species, biodiversity and ecosystems." World Wildlife Fund and the Alfred Wegener Institute, 2022. https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_impacts_of_plastic_pollution_on_biodiversity.pdf.
- iii Analysis conducted by WWF using data from UNEP, Trucost, and the Plastic Disclosure Project.
- iv "Global Tourism Plastic Initiative: Tourism's Plastic Pollution Problem." United Nations One Planet Network. <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/programmes/sustainable-tourism/global-tourism-plastics-initiative/tourisms-plastic-pollution-problem>.