

Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty Combined Responses to Chair's Guiding Questions

23 September, 2026

This statement is submitted on behalf of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty - a diverse international network of 450 independent scientific and technical experts across 70 nations, contributing scientific knowledge to achieve an effective global plastics treaty.

Summary

Although the guiding questions may serve as a useful start to enable discussions at the upcoming HoDs meeting in Bangkok, we would first like to highlight that all of the elements required in future instruments to ensure its effectiveness are NOT addressed by these guiding questions.

The current Aid to Negotiations (AtN) does not adequately reflect the mandate laid out in the UNEA 5/14. An effective global plastics treaty must be founded on legally binding obligations across the full plastics life cycle, supported by robust criteria, monitoring, reporting, transparency, periodic evaluation and independent scientific oversight. In addition, it is crucial to ensure discussions for provisions across the full life cycle of plastics are included in the negotiations.

However, none of the guiding questions enable direct discussions relating to production, chemicals of concern, monitoring, or health, even though scientific evidence clearly shows that it is crucial these elements are prominent within this instrument to effectively address plastics pollution.

While we welcome the ability to submit our comments to the guiding questions, clearer observer participation modalities should be agreed upon in Bangkok to ensure a more transparent and inclusive negotiating process going forward, in particular via provisions to facilitate interaction between observers and delegates.

The Scientists' Coalition provides opportunities for member states to discuss any aspects of relevance to the plastics treaty confidentially via bilateral meetings under Chatham House Rules or in public webinars.

Please contact the Scientists' Coalition Secretariat to arrange a meeting:
secretariat@scientistscoalition.org

Guiding questions for the Bangkok HoDs meeting

Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty

The guiding questions

✓ A useful starting point for discussions at the upcoming HoDs meeting in Bangkok

✗ Cannot address all the elements essential to an effective instrument

What an effective treaty needs

Legally binding obligations across the full plastics life cycle

supported by robust

Criteria

Monitoring

Reporting

Transparency

Periodic evaluation

Independent scientific oversight

Gaps in the current approach

✗ The current Aid to Negotiations (AtN) does not adequately reflect the UNEA 5/14 mandate

✗ No guiding question enables direct discussion of:

Production

Chemicals of concern

Monitoring

Health

Science shows these elements must be prominent in the instrument to effectively address plastic pollution, and discussions on full life-cycle provisions must be encouraged in negotiations

Comments on Guiding Questions as a starting point for Cluster Discussions

Short cut to:

- [Cluster A: National plans, reporting, implementation and compliance, information exchange, effectiveness evaluation](#)
- [Cluster B: Releases and leakages, existing and legacy plastic pollution, plastic waste management, plastic products design, plastic products](#)
- [Cluster C: Capacity-building, technical assistance, technology transfer, including international cooperation; Financial resources and mechanism](#)
- [Cluster D: Preamble, Objective, Principles and approaches, Definitions, Just transition, Public information, awareness, education and research, Secretariat, Final provisions](#)

Cluster A: National plans, Reporting, Implementation and compliance, Information exchange, Effectiveness evaluation

1. What purposes are national plans expected to serve as a contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the instrument?

Responses

National plans serve multiple important contributions towards achievement of the objectives of the instrument. However, they should never serve as a proxy for a legally binding treaty (i.e. they should not stand alone as a set of nationally determined commitments). This is because national plans enable implementation of Parties' treaty obligations, but they cannot replace the efficacy of a legally binding agreement anchored in global commitments and cooperation.

These plans will need to include all aspects of the plastics life cycle including production and trade volumes in plastics (e.g., as pellets), product manufacture, plastic products, chemicals and waste, releases and leakages across all phases of the life cycle, levels of pollution in the environment and organisms, managed and mismanaged waste, and removal of legacy plastics. National plans will be required to include reliable and comparable national monitoring and reporting on all obligations laid out in the treaty to increase transparency and facilitate a just transition.

National plans should be reviewed by an independent scientific body to ensure methodologies and reporting are comparable across Parties; to evaluate the extent to which the obligations laid out in the instrument are effectively implemented at national level; and to determine whether national measures are sufficient to meet the global objectives/obligations laid out in the instrument. The scientific body could also review and provide guidance on any requests for national level requests for exemptions to Annex listings in the treaty (e.g. listings of problematic products, chemicals of concern etc). The scientific body would report back to future COP (e.g., through global stocktakes).

Further reading

- [Monitoring plastic pollution in the context of the Global Plastics Treaty](#)
- [Plastic Pollution at each Life Stage](#)

2. How could provisions on reporting, implementation and compliance, information exchange, and effectiveness evaluation support the overall implementation of the instrument, and what is the relationship between these articles?

Responses

Firstly, it is important that each of these provisions are treated as a closed loop, and that they start with criteria, standards, and monitoring, while acknowledging that one feeds into another. For example, criteria enable standards; standards enable monitoring; monitoring enables reporting; reporting enables compliance and the evaluation of the effectiveness of national plans and global instruments; the outcome of those evaluations should loop back to periodically reassess all elements starting with criteria.

Science-based globally harmonised criteria are the critical foundation and are missing from the guiding question and the AtN. A set of criteria is required to evaluate the effectiveness of the instrument. Criteria are fundamental as they will enable establishment of globally and nationally harmonised standards (e.g. for product design, assessment, monitoring and reporting). These standards enable reporting on compliance assessments and effectiveness evaluation of national implementation, and the periodic evaluation of the effectiveness of the instrument overall. The outcome of those evaluations should loop back to enable periodic reassessment of all these critical links in the chain, starting with the criteria.

The AtN does not support the aforementioned closed loop system needed for an effective instrument. The inability for the future instrument to operate as an effective closed loop system is further exacerbated by the lack of appropriate provisions for mandatory transparency. Without such transparency, accurate data (including production and consumption data) will not be available and this will significantly challenge establishment of robust criteria, as well as all of the steps in the closed loop system, and will result in heavy reliance on voluntary self-determined national reporting.

Further reading

- [Response from the Scientists' Coalition on the Aid to Negotiations, September 2026](#)

3. What will be the role of information exchange in the overall implementation of the instrument and how can it contribute to its effectiveness?

Responses

Information exchange has a critical role in maximising efficiency, reducing costs and ensuring effective implementation of the treaty. For example, information exchange on transboundary pollution and trade in unsafe and sustainable products or waste. However, parties need to trust in the information exchanged and this is compromised when criteria, standards, assessment, monitoring, reporting and evaluation are weak. Without all the necessary provisions to ensure analytical rigour, public trust in the information and the mandate is diminished. In addition, there need to be checks and balances on the quality of the information shared and accessibility issues need to be addressed. The future instrument should encourage investment in clearinghouse functions to facilitate reporting and information exchange, such as public global data platforms and observatories

There are currently no obligations in the AtN for transparency, including economic data and sociocultural baselines. For example, Article 5.1b links the availability of product information to safety, circularity, and the environmentally sound management of plastic waste, but critical information should also be available across the full lifecycle. Supply chain actors require access to relevant and accurate information about the plastic chemicals, materials, products they manufacture, use, handle, consume, release, emit, and dispose of. Without access to relevant and accurate information, members cannot meet their obligations to the future instrument.

Transparency to support criteria and subsequent annex listings of the most problematic and avoidable plastic chemicals and products are essential for accurate and regular monitoring and reporting. Harmonised and standardised obligations to disclose plastics information will ensure a level playing field, encourage innovation of safer and more sustainable products and technologies, and help ensure the effectiveness of the instrument overall while upholding the human right to information.

Similarly, the AtN text offers no safeguards to ensure that petrochemicals, plastics, and waste management industries do not unduly influence the implementation of the future instrument. The global community has the right to know who is informing decision makers, and to be reassured that regulators are not benefiting financially or otherwise from industries who are invested in plastic production. The Compilation of draft text UNEP/PP/INC.5/4 (9 July 2024) included the following bracketed text in Part IV (2) OP4 bis in relation to

the subsidiary body: "The committee and its members shall be independent, transparent, and free from conflicts of interest". Inclusion of similar text will be essential to safeguard transparency, and avoid conflicts of interest in the implementation of the treaty. We suggest this obligation should be reinserted to ensure effective implementation.

Further reading

- [Response from the Scientists' Coalition on the Aid to Negotiations, September 2026](#)
- [Reaching agreement on priorities for the Global Plastics Treaty: The role of independent science in helping negotiators find common ground - Scientists' Coalition](#)
- [Towards an Effective Science-Policy Interface for the Global Plastics Treaty - Scientists' Coalition](#)

Cluster B: Releases and leakages, Existing and legacy plastic pollution, Plastic waste management, Plastic products design, Plastic products

1. What considerations should guide decisions on determining which plastic products will require possible global measures, actions or cooperation?

Responses

Exemptions: For effective delivery of its mandate, the scope of the treaty text will need to be sufficiently broad to capture all sources of plastic pollution, alongside provisions for Parties to apply for temporary exemptions. The purpose of an exemption provision in multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) is to balance environmental goals while addressing capacity gaps and special circumstances so that as many countries as possible can join and comply with the treaty.

Parties may apply for timebound exemptions, for example, from one or several items on a banned list of hazardous and unsustainable products where they are currently considered essential for the health, safety and critical functioning of society and where they currently lack access to safer and more sustainable alternatives. Timebound exemptions offer the opportunity to stimulate trade in safer and more sustainable products where none currently exist in a jurisdiction. By contrast, if the scope of the treaty is limited to a negative list, this will derail current reduction initiatives, stifle opportunities for innovation of safer, and more sustainable products, compromise the ability of the instrument

to respond to changing national circumstances and thereby obstruct a just transition. An Article within the treaty text outlining the process for exemptions to be considered during implementation of the future instrument could complement a just transition. For example via timebound exemptions supported by the instrument's financial, capacity-building, and technical mechanisms and analysed by an independent scientific body.

Plastic product design and plastic products: All plastic products have the potential to cause plastic pollution. Prioritization of products or product groups for specific measures could be guided by including provisions for the following: development of criteria and standards guided by an independent expert group, a listing mechanism, binding obligations, and transparency and traceability.

The foundations of an effective treaty are **science-based criteria for transparency, essentiality, safety, and sustainability across the full-life-cycle** of plastics. These criteria will facilitate globally and nationally harmonised standards, leading to effective assessment and monitoring which is required to deliver effective reporting. These criteria should be developed ahead of the first COP, guided by an independent scientific body and applied across the full life cycle of plastics including plastic chemicals, and to plastic alternatives and non-plastic substitutes to avoid regrettable substitutions. The assessment of essentiality of a product or material can be determined by drawing from, and adapting, the essential use criteria as applied in the [Montreal Protocol](#). For example by defining it as being necessary for the health, safety, or critical for the functioning of society and where no alternatives that are acceptable from the perspective of safety and sustainability are available. Ensuring actions are taken from the design phase will be critical to ensuring safer and more sustainable use of plastics, since decisions at this stage determine the circularity of the material as well as its impacts on human health and the environment. A subsequent requirement for transparency and traceability will also be key; for example transparency for the chemicals present in plastics and plastic products since many have been identified as chemicals of concern.

The regulation of chemicals of concern, including in plastic products, delivers substantial health, environmental and economic benefits. The release of chemicals from plastics throughout the life cycle is a major contributor to the overall adverse impacts of plastics on human health and the environment. Clear scientific evidence links plastic chemicals to reproductive, neurodevelopmental, immune, and metabolic disorders in humans, incurring substantial economic, environmental, and health costs. The scope should allow for reducing the most harmful chemicals of concern in all plastics. From a scientific perspective, regulating groups of chemicals of concern in all plastics

is the most efficient way to protect human health, as opposed to product-specific regulation. Evidence-based criteria are key to providing clarity on which chemicals of concern are regulated under the treaty. In combination with an efficient listing mechanism for new chemicals, these criteria will allow for a 'start- and-strengthen' approach to the treaty and for flexibility as new scientific evidence emerges.

A subsidiary body with experts free of conflicts of interest can guide the development, implementation and review of criteria. Globally binding obligations that cover the production, trade, and use of plastics across the full life cycle, including chemicals of concern, will ensure accountability and a level playing field to support innovation in safer and more sustainable systems, materials, products, and technologies.

Plastic waste management: Global measures should be designed with waste management in mind. These considerations cannot be limited to recycling as the evidence clearly shows that recycling alone cannot end plastic pollution. Reducing production and consumption of plastics should be prioritised, but comprehensive waste management must also be ensured. A cohesive design, use, and post-use management strategy will be needed. An overreliance on a single technology must be avoided. Rather, a range of responses will be needed to match the scale and complexity of the problem. Any waste technology transfer should only be done with free, prior, and informed consent."

Omissions from the Aid to Negotiations: The AtN does not include provisions for the establishment of criteria and standards to assess the safety and sustainability of waste management. Therefore, there is no way to assess the environmental or social responsibility of any form of waste management. Requirements regarding transparency, traceability, and trackability, monitoring, and reporting of plastic chemicals, plastic products and plastic waste are also lacking. Obligations to disclose the chemical composition of plastic products and a global watch list of chemicals could offer effective ways to improve the safety of plastics including post-consumption plastics.

Further reading

- [Response from the Scientists' Coalition on the Aid to Negotiations, September 2026](#)
- [Plastic Chemicals](#)
- [Article 5 of the draft global plastics treaty text \(Plastic Product Design\)](#)
- [Waste Management](#)
- Scientists' Coalition Rapid Response – Implications of exclusions from the treaty scope and the need for a provision outlining approaches for

exemptions during implementation (under review and available shortly, please contact secretariat@scientistscoalition.org)

2. What type of enabling factors should be considered to address existing and legacy plastic pollution, including the process to identify and evaluate the locations or accumulation zones and subsequent remediation efforts?

Responses

Legacy plastic pollution refers to existing plastic pollution that is often highly fragmented and embedded in nature, including in the form of micro and nano plastics. There are currently no feasible methodologies or technologies for the removal of micro and nanoplastics from the environment, from humans or other organisms.

Plastic removal and remediation activities can cause harm to aquatic and terrestrial life if (i) organisms are captured, disturbed, killed, or injured in the process; (ii) habitats together with organic matter and nutrients can be removed or destroyed; (iii) removal causes the remobilization of sequestered waste; and (iv) secondary micro- and nanoplastics and chemicals may subsequently become dispersed in the environment. A precautionary approach weighs the potential negative consequences of plastics removal against the potential benefits and identifies ways to prevent or mitigate risks. Such analyses must also factor in greenhouse gas emissions from plastics removal and remediation activities. In addition, the management options for collected legacy plastics are minimal because these are typically degraded and biofouled, and may contain a range of chemicals and adsorbed co-pollutants, making them unsuitable for recycling. Landfill or thermal treatment, dumping and open burning are common endpoints, and yet all of these have the potential to result in further pollution.

Enabling criteria would include globally harmonised removal and remediation standards to ensure the environmental benefits of removal activities outweigh environmental costs. Removal activities should be socially just, transparent, and comply with health and safety standards and responsible handling of collected waste. Evidence-based criteria, environmental and social baselines, monitoring and reporting on the types and quantities of waste removed, and guidelines, developed by a body or bodies of independent experts would ensure that existing and legacy plastic pollution is removed and sites remediated in a safe and environmentally sound manner, with health, environmental and socio-economic benefits justifying financial costs. Priority

areas for plastics removal and remediation may be based on (i) the amount of plastic pollution (e.g., accumulation areas due to environmental characteristics or human activities), (ii) type of plastic pollution, (iii) threat to specific habitats or biota, (iv) ecosystem functions and services, (v) risk of mobilization and dispersion of chemicals or micro- and nanoplastics, and (vi) repeated translocation of stranded plastic debris. Adequate reporting data may help identify new sources of pollution and associated hazards, monitor temporal trends in response to treaty provisions, and to identify areas requiring additional strengthening and support.

Further reading

- [Removal of Existing and Legacy Plastic Pollution](#)

3. How can Parties cooperate in the implementation of effective waste management policies, taking into account the different national circumstances and needs?

Responses

See also earlier comments regarding waste management considerations in the regulation of products ([cluster B, question 1](#)).

The safest, most just, and sustainable waste management solutions will require local solutions guided by global standards to ensure all Parties meet their obligations to the instrument. Local solutions reflecting national circumstances and needs will also require support from the treaty including financial, capacity building, and technical support and transition with free prior informed consent to ensure a just transition. A just transition for workers in the plastics supply chain, including waste management, should include protection of human and labour rights, access to social services and healthcare programs, fair remuneration, inclusive extended producer responsibility systems, and the provision of capacity, financial and technical support to establish or strengthen safe and sustainable reuse, repair, and recycling facilities. The establishment of a dedicated just transition fund may support implementation and channel resources to safeguard livelihoods and communities disproportionately impacted by plastic pollution and corresponding control measures. International cooperation will be essential to ensure transparency and monitoring on the types of, and risks associated with any waste that is traded or exported; this could be linked to Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS codes).

Further reading

- [Waste Management](#)
- [Towards a Just Transition Away from Plastic Pollution](#)

Cluster C: Capacity-building, technical assistance, technology transfer, including international cooperation; Financial resources and mechanism

1. What elements must be considered to ensure that all available financial sources, including public finance, are effectively mobilized for the implementation of the instrument?

Responses

The financial mechanisms should draw on lessons learned from other MEAs. It should move beyond offset-centred, outcome-based financing models and support systemic transformation through adequate, predictable and needs-based finance, sustained technical support and alignment with national implementation strategies. It should mobilize new resources while redirecting existing financial flows and harmful subsidies, and applying the polluter pays principle to mobilize contributions from relevant economic actors.

The financial mechanism should be grounded in core environmental principles, equity and fundamental human rights, and finance the implementation of the future treaty across the full plastics lifecycle, from resource extraction to waste management. However, prioritizing the financing of upstream measures (polymer production reduction, chemical simplification, safer and more sustainable product and system design) will be more effective in reducing releases and leakages, than at the waste management phase (recycling, incineration, waste transport and trade and remediation). Fees and balancing funds could mobilise resources to support capacity-building and enable a just transition for low-income countries and affected communities. Funding should facilitate compliance, particularly for low-capacity countries facing disproportionate plastic pollution burdens, including from ocean currents or waste imports from wealthier nations. Simplified and direct-access modalities should also enable resources to reach the most vulnerable populations, such as waste pickers, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, building on precedents such as the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund and the Cali Fund. Reporting, transparency, and verification requirements should ensure accountability without creating excessive coordination burdens for recipient countries.

In addition, it will be essential to remove subsidies enabling the production of plastics which keep the costs artificially low. Removal of these subsidies would help push the plastics industry to innovate towards producing safer and more sustainable plastics.

Further reading

- [Science-Based Priorities for INC-5.2](#)
- [Plastic Pollution at each Life Stage](#)
- [Cutting Plastic Pollution at the Source – The Case for Upstream Solutions](#)
- [Primary Plastic Polymers – Urgently needed upstream reduction](#)
- [The plastics treaty finance mechanism - International Alliance of Waste Pickers](#)

2. What role should the private sector have in facilitating the mobilization of financial resources, capacity building and technical assistance, and what elements could be considered under the financial mechanism to promote such a role?

Responses

The private sector has a key role to play in mobilisation of additional resources capacity-building, technical assistance and innovation under the instrument, for example via investment in circular business models, reuse systems, support for Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), EPR schemes and waste management infrastructure.

Funding designs from other multilateral environmental agreements provide interesting precedents. For example, the Special Fund under the BBNJ Agreement will be partially funded by monetary benefits arising from the utilization of marine genetic resources from areas beyond national jurisdiction, and associated digital sequence information. While its underlying benefit-sharing rationale differs from the plastics context, a similar approach could be adapted under the instrument to operationalize the polluter pays principle, for example through contributions linked to plastic production or pollution.

Importantly, private finance should complement, rather than substitute, predictable public finance and international implementation support. Its mobilization should be subject to clear safeguards, transparency and independent governance to prevent conflicts of interest, industry capture and greenwashing, and to ensure that investments are aligned with treaty priorities rather than primarily with commercial returns. Particular attention should be

given to avoiding technological and financial lock-ins, inequitable risk-sharing in blended finance, and the diversion of resources towards commercially attractive downstream interventions that facilitate linear production and consumption at the expense of prevention, reuse, capacity-building and just transition.

The AtN text offers no safeguards to ensure that petrochemicals, plastics, and waste management industries would not unduly influence the implementation of the future instrument. The global community has the right to know who is informing decision makers, and to be reassured that regulators are not benefiting financially or otherwise from industries who are invested in plastic production. By contrast to the AtN the Compilation of draft text UNEP/PP/INC.5/4 (9 July 2024) included the following bracketed text in Part IV (2) OP4 bis in relation to the subsidiary body: “The committee and its members shall be independent, transparent, and free from conflicts of interest”. Inclusion of similar text will be essential to safeguard transparency, and avoid conflicts of interest associated with the administration of any private sector finance in the implementation of the treaty.

Further reading

- [Response from the Scientists’ Coalition on the Aid to Negotiations, September 2026 - Scientists' Coalition](#)

3. What provisions related to technology transfer could foster international cooperation, considering the capacity differences between countries?

Responses

Technology transfer with free prior informed consent, capacity building and financial assistance will be essential to ensure parties effectively meet treaty obligations and support the treaty's goals to reduce plastics pollution and its negative consequences. Prioritizing technology transfer that contributes to effective upstream measures (including polymer production reduction, chemical simplification, safer and more sustainable product and system design) will be more effective in reducing releases and leakages, than technology transfer aimed remediation, for example via the clean up of legacy plastics. In addition, it will be key to include measures that enable Parties to assess materials and products, including alternatives and substitutes for essentiality, safety, sustainability, and transparency and to establish monitoring protocols including for transboundary pollution. In order to foster international

cooperation and recognise capacity difference, any provisions should emphasise equity and support a just transition.

Further reading

- [Reaching agreement on priorities for the Global Plastics Treaty – The role of independent science in helping negotiators find common ground](#)
- [Cutting Plastic Pollution at the Source – The Case for Upstream Solutions](#)
- [Plastics Alternatives and Substitutes](#)

Cluster D: Preamble, Objective, Principles and approaches, Definitions, Just transition, Public information, awareness, education and research, Secretariat, Final provisions

1. Which principles and approaches could be useful in guiding the effective implementation of the instrument, and how could these be best reflected in the instrument?

Responses

We welcome the AtN text's acknowledgement that there are critical linkages between the global plastics treaty and international human rights (UDHR, UNDRIP, the right to a healthy environment) in the preambular section. However, the text would be strengthened if there were substantive obligations tied to these rights, and reflected in specific articles. That is, the implementation of the treaty needs to be guided by the existing international environmental principles and human rights, especially taking into account the potential for this instrument to support the operationalisation of human rights, including human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and the human right to information and science, throughout the substantive articles.

We also welcome text in the preambular section that emphasises “the importance of science-based decision-making and the contributions of scientific, economic, social and technical information, including traditional knowledge and the knowledges, sciences and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and local knowledge systems” while noting with disappointment the conflation of Indigenous Peoples with local communities, contrary to repeated guidance from the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Plastics (IIPFP). We welcome additional text that ensures opportunities for regular contributions of information to the COP from all these legitimate knowledge sources.

However, in Art 2 Principles and Approaches, we note the lack of reference to the communities bearing disproportionate burdens of plastic pollution including Indigenous Peoples, women and children, frontline and fenceline communities, future generations (which are not acknowledged in the AtN), waste pickers, and informal waste workers.

We note that the waste hierarchy is no longer a guiding principle for the AtN text as a whole. While waste hierarchy principles were designed to prioritise upstream measures over waste management (prevention and reduction), the AtN, relegates the waste hierarchy to one, bracketed, reference in Article 7.

It is crucial that the article on Objective meets the mandate within UNEA resolution 5/14: to include the protection of human health taking a full life cycle approach. Currently, the AtN does not reflect the level of effectiveness needed to fulfil this mandate. Instead, it currently risks a narrowing of the treaty's scope to focus on waste management, rather than enabling comprehensive responses across the full lifecycle starting at extraction and production (supply). Robust scientific evidence clearly shows that, while knowledge gaps remain, there is clear and unequivocal evidence that plastics have already exceeded the planetary safe operating space for novel entities. In its entirety, the AtN reflects the bracketing in the objective, and puts too much focus on downstream interventions. Without legally binding obligations across the full life cycle, the ecosystems of future generations will become increasingly burdened by toxic and persistent plastic chemical and material exposures which also drive climate change and biodiversity loss. The efficacy of measures across all stages of the life cycle will be compromised as long as the treaty excludes binding upstream measures based on evidence-based definitions, as well as criteria for chemicals of concern and microplastics, and transparency requirements across the supply chain. The text further omits effective mechanisms to assess, report, monitor, and evaluate compliance with these criteria.

Further reading

- [Response from the Scientists' Coalition on the Aid to Negotiations, September 2026](#)

2. How can actions related to public information, awareness, education, and research support implementation?

Response

Delivering the ambition mandated by UNEA 5/14 will require independent evidence spanning the full life cycle of plastics including feedstock extraction, product design and innovation, trade, as well as consumption, waste

management, pollution prevention, and safe and sustainable removal of legacy plastics. This evidence will be essential to 1) ensure that concepts and definitions are supported by robust science and are applied consistently across the substantive articles; 2) help negotiators find much needed common ground on which to build an effective treaty; 3) identify additional data requirements for effective implementation and; 4) develop monitoring approaches to evaluate progress against the goals of the treaty.

Development of science that includes open data to plastics and plastic pollution topics will help experts inside and outside the any institutionalized or ad hoc science-policy interface and other stakeholders in tracking plastic pollution in different environments through multi-scale lenses (local, regional, global) and across life cycle stages of plastics. Development of citizen science, availability of free global satellite imagery and open-source GIS tools will reduce the financial burden of research in countries with limited funding and monitoring prospects. Moreover, scientific contributions from a wide range of fields, including from environmental, behaviour change and communication studies, will inform the synthesis, evaluation, and communication of complex information in publicly accessible formats and multiple languages needed to ensure effective implementation of the substantive provisions of the instrument and achieve the objective of ending plastic pollution.

Mandatory transparency and traceability obligations spanning the full plastics lifecycle are needed on top of mandatory monitoring and reporting obligations. Without these, the information needed for robust research and the information shared with the public (and therefore, public awareness) is likely to be absent, incomplete, or inaccurate with regrettable outcomes for implementation and the effectiveness of the treaty. Transparency, for example, will require clear labelling and accessible information along the supply chain enabling the transfer of relevant information directly to the public and all supply chain actors, as well as the communities most exposed to plastic pollution. Mandatory transparency and traceability obligations are also needed to uphold the human rights to information, science, and to a safe, clean and healthy environment.

Regular guidance from scientists and experts who are free from conflicts of interest with the plastics and petrochemical industries will enable exchange and integration of the best available science and information into policymaking as well as to support public information awareness and education. An effective science-policy interface or expert groups should have the capability to interpret complex plastics science for non-specialists and establish open-access platforms so the best available science is equitably available; and

should conduct horizon-scanning to capture emerging issues and information gaps as they arise.

Science contributions, including from environmental, behaviour change and communication studies, will inform the synthesis, evaluation, and communication of complex information in publicly accessible formats and multiple languages needed for treaty effectiveness.

Further reading

- [Monitoring plastic pollution in the context of the Global Plastics Treaty](#)
- [Reaching agreement on priorities for the Global Plastics Treaty – The role of independent science in helping negotiators find common ground](#)

3. Considering the progress achieved so far in the discussions related to issues such as the Secretariat and definitions, does the current formulation in the Aid to Negotiations reflect the level of detail required?

Responses

We find multiple deficiencies in the AtN and have referenced many of these above. Overall, the AtN does not reflect the level of effectiveness and ambition needed to fulfil this mandate, instead it risks a narrowing of the treaty to waste management rather than enabling comprehensive responses across the full life-cycle starting at resource extraction and production (supply).

Science-based definitions and criteria are needed to guide the strengthening of the text. The Chair's Assembled text (UNEP/PP/INC.5/CRP.1, 8 August 2025) included, for example, 'plastic', 'plastic products', and 'plastic pollution' but this is not included in the AtN. Microplastics are referenced in the AtN (Art 5.1a.ii, Art 6.1) but they are not defined. In addition, it is unclear whether this nomenclature includes primary and secondary microplastics, nanoparticles, pellets, flakes, and powders. Our experience has been that members can take different views on the definition of key terms and they, therefore, negotiate based on varied and sometimes non-scientific interpretation. The availability of a short list of independently established science-based definitions for terms such as 'plastic(s)', 'plastic pollution', 'plastic products' 'plastic waste' would enable members to find common ground for ongoing discussions based on robust scientific evidence.

We are not necessarily suggesting that a list of definitions should be included in the treaty text but that an independent science body free of conflicts of interest should be available to members to ensure they are accurately

interpreting these key definitions based on robust science and making fully informed and evidence based decisions.

The availability of periodically reviewed science-based definitions will also be critical in the implementation of the treaty. We note bracketing of 1(e) 'The use of the best available science and scientific information'; 1 (f) 'The full, effective and meaningful engagement of Indigenous Peoples and.....local communities...'; and 1(g). The treaty will need to be guided by the specific needs, science, and expertise of those most affected by plastic pollution, who often have the least means to protect themselves. If these brackets remain, the treaty will not be grounded in the best available science. The result will be a treaty that rejects the full, effective, and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, as well as the most vulnerable communities. In addition, it will lack the financial, technical, and capacity support for developing countries critically needed for just transition. The result will be an ineffective treaty guided by a few powerful vested interests that benefits a privileged few rather than a treaty that best serves the common good guided by the best available science.

Further reading

- [Response from the Scientists' Coalition on the Aid to Negotiations, September 2026](#)
- [Article 2 of the draft global plastics treaty text \(Definitions\)](#)
- [Addressing Microplastic Pollution via the Global Plastic Treaty](#)

The Scientists' Coalition provides opportunities for member states to discuss any aspects of relevance to the plastics treaty confidentially via bilateral meetings under Chatham House Rules or in public webinars.

Please contact the Scientists' Coalition Secretariat to arrange a meeting:
secretariat@scientistscoalition.org