

# Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

This is an internal document prepared for and by the Secretariat team of the [Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty](#) to address potential questions you may receive from the public (media, government officials and civil society organisations) in relation to this topic.

It reflects the current thinking and in some cases, where indicated, the responses are preliminary and based on generic principles, with further work ongoing to determine the final approach.

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## The Coalition

### 1. Why have we joined forces to build this Coalition, what is our vision and our objectives?

The Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty - convened by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WWF - gives voice to [more than 200 organisations](#) across the plastics value chain, financial institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These organisations have endorsed the [Coalition's vision](#) for a circular economy in which plastic never becomes waste or pollution, and the value of products and materials is retained in the economy.

These organisations see the global treaty to end plastic pollution as an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate progress towards a circular economy, including coordinated efforts for the reduction of plastic production and use as well as prevention or remediation of hard to abate sources of plastic pollution.

By working together we aim to bring a clear and amplified voice of businesses and key NGOs to the treaty negotiations and inform the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee (INC) to develop an ambitious and effective legally-binding treaty.

### 2. What are the Coalition's aims?

To end plastic pollution.

To achieve this, leading businesses want a treaty with legally-binding global rules and measures to drive change on a global scale. We need harmonised regulations on reduction, circulation, and prevention alongside remediation.

The Business Coalition aims to engage with treaty negotiators to advocate for our policy recommendations, with the goal of seeing them incorporated into the treaty.

We have a rare and real opportunity to make a positive change to our world by reassessing how we make, use, and think about plastic. The Coalition wants to ensure this opportunity is not missed.

### 3. What is the name of the Coalition? Does it have its own logo?

The name of the Coalition is 'Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty', accompanied by the tagline 'No Time to Waste'. The coalition has its own logo and visual identity.

### 4. Does the Coalition have an expiry date?

The Coalition was launched on the 21st of September 2022, ahead of the first round of multilateral negotiations in Uruguay in November 2022. It will remain active until the negotiations on the treaty conclude, which is expected at the earliest by the end of 2024. After the treaty text has been adopted and is open for ratification, the Coalition will assess further opportunities for impact.

## 5. How is the Coalition financed?

There are no membership fees associated with joining the Coalition and, to date, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WWF, along with philanthropic funders such as the Astra Foundation, have exclusively funded the work of the Secretariat of the Coalition.

While the Secretariat's work on policy development is funded by WWF and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, individual companies have provided voluntary financial contributions to support the Coalition's communication and advocacy efforts to ensure that the agreed-upon policy recommendations will have the biggest impact possible. This includes funding specific events such as receptions of the Business Coalition during the INCs, translation of Business Coalition materials into other UN languages than English, and partner organisations who are convening host Business Coalition meetings and workshops in key countries.

## 6. What is the relationship with the [High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution \(HAC\)](#)?

There is no formal connection between the Business Coalition and the HAC. Both coalitions are supporting ambitious positions for the treaty. Other government coalitions might form in the future, and we are open to engage with them too.

In our engagement with government delegations before, during or after INC meetings, we have reached out to a broad set of countries, including both HAC and non-HAC members. We are regularly contributing to webinars and discussions organised by different stakeholders, including HAC governments and international organisations such as UNEP or the OECD.

## The common vision and policy recommendations

### 7. What specifically are the supporting organisations endorsing?

[The Vision Statement](#) has been developed through an intensive consultation process, engaging with prospective Coalition supporters, members and advisors such as relevant business and environmental organisations via online surveys, webinars, and working group meetings. It contains:

- A common vision on how to effectively address the plastic pollution challenge at a global scale
- Three main global outcomes where progress must be made
- Key elements of a global plastics treaty that we support

All organisations listed on our website had to ask their executive or senior leadership to endorse the Vision Statement. For companies this requires C-level support/ sign-off.

## 8. Why is the Coalition's vision defined as: "a circular economy in which plastic never becomes waste or pollution, and the value of products and materials is retained in the economy"?

Our Coalition believes that a circular economy approach that tackles all steps of the value chain is the most promising, proven pathway to ending plastic pollution while contributing to the global efforts to combat the climate and biodiversity crisis.

Preventing plastic pollution is not just about improving waste management, but rethinking what is put on the market and building solutions that prevent plastic waste from being created in the first place.

In our vision statement, we aim to capture the need for both upstream and downstream policies that help achieve our desired global outcomes (see below) and are adaptable to local conditions

## 9. What are the global outcomes that the Coalition would like to see?

To progress towards a circular economy for plastic, our Coalition believes that progress must be made in three areas:

### REDUCTION of plastic production and use through a circular economy approach

- Reduction is critical because recycling alone is not a viable solution to this crisis. **We must reduce our use of all virgin plastics** – with a particular focus on those produced from fossil fuels – if we are to play our part in seeking to stay within the 1.5 degree climate pathway.
- We must prioritise **eliminating problematic plastic applications** with a high probability of leaking into the environment and **reduce our demand for short-lived products** that cannot be circulated in practice and at scale.
- We must ensure **chemicals and pollutants that pose a risk to human health and nature are not recycled**, and the processes for keeping plastic within circulation are effective and safe.

### CIRCULATION of all plastic items that cannot be eliminated

- **Establishing and enforcing globally harmonised standards** is key to ensuring all plastics are safe to be used, reused, and recycled.
- **Mandatory design for recycling requirements** must be coupled with **targets for scaling of systems and infrastructure** to keep plastics in circulation for longer at their highest value, and so reducing leakage into the environment.
- Establishing **Extended Producer Responsibility policies** that require all industry players who introduce packaging and other short-lived products to the market to fund their after-use collection and treatment is a crucial tool to help us tackle plastic pollution.
- **Informal waste workers play an important role** in collecting, sorting, and recycling plastic waste. The treaty must protect and respect their livelihoods, their health, and their human rights as it enables a safe and just transition to a circular economy.

**PREVENTION and REMEDIATION:**

- **Robust waste management practices are required.** Effective regulatory and financial incentives are needed to promote the uptake of circular economy solutions at the local level.
- **We should not ignore existing plastic pollution** – we need tools to tackle the micro and macro plastics that are already polluting our environment.

**10. Your first outcome is to reduce plastic production and use through a circular economy approach, but shouldn't we eliminate plastic altogether, including looking at bans and production caps?**

- Plastic is a material that serves important purposes across many sectors, including healthcare, construction, food packaging, energy and transportation, and is valued for its consumer benefits – affordability, convenience, flexibility, and durability
- However, the scale of the problem is such that we cannot “recycle our way out” of the plastic pollution problem. Even if we were to deploy all downstream solutions focusing on collecting and better managing waste concurrently, this would not be sufficient to end plastic pollution
- Elimination, Reuse and Substitution will all have to play a part in the solution. As a result, we see ‘Reduction of plastic production and use’ as a prerequisite to allow the world to catch up with building infrastructure and systems for circulating the remaining plastics in our economy and avoiding that they end up in nature. These points are mentioned subsequently in points 2 and 3 of the global outcomes that we would like to see.
- Given current growth projections for the overall production and use of plastics globally, it is clear that by banning a few SUP items we will not achieve the necessary level of reduction as projected in the ambitious policy scenarios under projections in both the OECD Global Plastics Outlook and the Pew/Systemiq Breaking the Plastic Wave study.
- In order to continue using plastic where it is needed, we must use circular economy approaches to reduce the amount of plastic we produce and use, focusing on reducing plastics that have high-leakage rates, are short-lived, and/or are made using fossil-based virgin resources.

**11. Will your Coalition advocate for specific policies e.g. to ban sachets or promote reuse?**

The Coalition has developed detailed policy recommendations for the key areas in which we feel businesses can contribute to an ambitious and effective treaty, and inform the negotiations.

We aim to bring a level of ambition into our advocacy efforts that is aligned with our vision and desired outcomes that the treaty should support, building on the latest available science and evidence from existing initiatives. This also includes specific policy actions needed for example on eliminating problematic plastic applications with a high probability of leaking into the environment and promoting reuse options and new delivery models.

For more details please see the Coalition's policy recommendations for INC2, which took place in May 2023 in Paris [here](#). We have also developed more detailed policy briefings on the following topics:

- [Restrictions and phase-outs](#)
- [Reuse policies](#)
- [Product design](#)
- [Extended Producer Responsibility](#)
- [Waste management](#)

## Supporting organisations

### **12. Who has endorsed the common vision for an effective and ambitious Global Treaty to End Plastic Pollution?**

We already have [more than 200 organisations](#) from 41 countries around the world endorsing our [common vision](#)

These organisations are businesses from across the plastic value chain, including plastic converters & producers, brand owners and retailers, and financial institutions. In addition, business groups and NGOs such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the Consumer Goods Forum, and the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) have endorsed the vision statement of the Coalition.

### **13. Who can express their interest in supporting the Coalition? Can oil companies join the Coalition?**

We are calling on businesses across the plastics value chain, and financial institutions, as well as key non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to get in touch with the Secretariat if they are interested in supporting our Coalition via this online [application form](#) on our website. Any organisation joining the Coalition will have to provide leadership endorsement of the [Vision Statement](#).

More detailed eligibility criteria have been defined as part of our formal onboarding process. We will carry out due diligence before accepting new members of the Coalition to ensure that:

1. All participating organisations must have a high level of ambition for the treaty and support legally-binding global rules and measures to drive change on a global scale - through harmonised regulations on reduction, circulation, and prevention alongside remediation.
2. All participating organisations must not actively advocate for positions in the treaty negotiations that directly oppose the vision, outcomes and objectives of the Coalition, either directly or through membership in a competing initiative, association or group.
3. Business initiatives, associations or groups must have a demonstrable track record of commitments and progress towards a circular plastics economy.

4. NGO participants of the Coalition must have a dedicated business engagement team and a track record of working with business on environmental issues through multi-year partnerships.
5. An organisation which is involved in extraction of fossil fuel hydrocarbons cannot be part of the Coalition;
6. An organisation that is directly involved in the production of plastics must be a signatory of the EMF Global Commitment and/or a member of WWF ReSource Plastic to demonstrate commitment and credible progress towards a circular plastic economy.

#### **14. What are the actions that Coalition supporters and members will undertake?**

There are three main levels of engagement within the Business Coalition and the level of participation varies according to each level.

1. Coalition Supporters
  - Who: Any organisation that meets the Eligibility Criteria
  - Role: Have access to all insights and materials developed by the Business Coalition. They support advocacy and communications plans through their own channels.
2. Coalition Members
  - Who: Eligible business from the plastic value chain, financial institutions, and NGOs willing to engage on a more regular basis.
  - Role: Guide the development of policy recommendations through online questionnaires. Actively supports advocacy and communications plans.
3. Policy Working Group
  - Who: Nominated NGOs and business members committing to a high-level of engagement.
  - Role: Co-creates policy recommendations and advocacy plans, co-chaired by business members in collaboration with the Coalition's Secretariat.

In addition, there is a fourth group, the Advisors. There are two types of advisors - topic specific and permanent.

- Who: A limited number of invited representatives from business associations, academics, consultancies, individual experts
- Role: Supports the Policy Working Group on areas of expertise when invited by the Secretariat.

#### **15. What if organisations want to exit the Coalition later on?**

Organisations will be able to leave the Coalition at any time should they decide to do so. The exact process for leaving the Coalition will be determined and announced as part of the formal Coalition Sign Up Pack.

## Coalition setup

### **16. What is the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's and WWF's role in the Coalition?**

Ahead of the Coalition launch, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WWF convened businesses and business associations across the plastics value chain, and financial institutions, as well as key non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to align around a common vision. Through the creation of online surveys, webinars and working group meetings, the main purpose was to consult on and create alignment on the Vision Statement for the future Coalition.

After its launch in September 2022, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WWF staff formed the Secretariat for the Coalition that is responsible for the operational management of the Coalition's activities, including the provision of key functions required to meet the Coalition's objectives (policy development, member recruitment, coordination of advocacy activities, public facing communications).

### **17. How are policy recommendations and insights developed? What are the principles for decision-making in the planned coalition?**

The process for how policy recommendations are drafted, consulted and adopted by the Coalition I follows a set of principles to ensure that:

1. Policy recommendations are aligned with the [Vision Statement](#)
2. Policy recommendations have high levels of support from Business Coalition members, who are both business and non-governmental organisations
3. All member organisations have the opportunity to provide input on the development of policy recommendations, through, for example, questionnaires and webinars
4. The decision-making process to adopt policy recommendations balances inclusivity with efficacy and agility and is overseen by the Secretariat along with the elected industry co-chairs.
5. It is publically clear that every effort has been made to reflect the position of the majority of all Coalition supporter organisations.

### **18. Why are NGOs involved in the decision-making of a business coalition?**

Including key NGOs and supporting business groups next to individual companies in the development of policy recommendations is a key differentiator and strength of our Coalition. By working closely together and creating alignment around our common ambitions, we believe we are able to amplify our key messages and inputs and have a greater chance of seeing our recommendations incorporated into the treaty.

## Credibility and reputation

**19. There are already a number of business coalitions and alliances working on plastic issues, how are you different? Why do we need another Coalition?**

This Coalition is specifically set up to provide input into the treaty negotiations. Similar to other business coalitions such as [Business for Nature](#) and [We Mean Business](#), this Coalition aims to bring a strong and credible representation of businesses committed to raise the bar of ambition in the treaty discussions and amplify clear messages from both individual businesses and NGOs to the government negotiators. We will work with other coalitions and initiatives who are aligned with our common vision focusing on the treaty from a business perspective with the aim of coordinating our activities as far as possible.

**20. Is the Coalition representing the whole plastic value chain? Petrochemical companies and plastic producers seem to be missing.**

[More than 200 organisations](#) are already backing the Coalition. We will look to expand our representation across all steps in the value chain of plastics, while applying an extra level of scrutiny if they are really committed to support our common vision on what the treaty should ultimately help to achieve.

Organisations that are directly involved in the conversion and production of plastics must demonstrate commitment and credible progress towards a circular plastics economy.

**21. The companies supporting the Coalition are primarily from western markets and of large size. How will you bring representation from different geographies and different company profiles?**

Businesses headquartered in Chile, Brazil, Singapore, Mexico, Colombia, South Africa, Nigeria, Vietnam, Estonia and India are counted amongst the [Business Coalition's members and supporters](#). It is explicitly stated as one of the objectives of the future Coalition to work towards a more diverse representation with members and supporting organisations coming from different geographies, sizes and sectors from across the plastics value chain, including financial institutions. This is also reflected in the ways of working on policy insights and recommendations, reflecting the relevance of markets e.g. in Asia, Latin America and Africa to tackle the global plastic pollution challenge and accelerate solutions.

We are also proactively inviting organisations that are part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's [Plastics Pact Global Network](#), present across five different continents, to join the Business Coalition. Plastics Pact members - businesses from the plastics value chain in various countries - are already publicly committed to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's vision and are working towards a circular economy at a national level, so we aim to have many of them endorse the Business Coalition as well.

**22. The economic outlook is difficult at the moment - revenues are under pressure in many sectors. Is now the time to be asking business to sacrifice profits in pursuit of green goals?**

We can't afford *not* to change. Delaying simply means bigger costs await us further down the road. We can't use economic headwinds as an excuse to avoid change - they are the reason we must drive forward with change. They are evidence that the current system is not working.

Leading businesses recognise there's an opportunity here. A global treaty can bring benefits to businesses by harmonising policy efforts, enhancing their investment planning, stimulating innovation, and coordinating infrastructure development.

**23. Governments with limited ambition for the treaty are part of the negotiations. Coalition supporters may have commercial interests in those countries, will this deter the Coalition to state positions that differ from the positions of those countries?**

Our ways of working in the Coalition have been designed to avoid this situation. The process of developing policy insights and positions is organised independently from individual companies' interest in specific geographies. They are guided by the shared ambition as defined in the [Coalition's Vision Statement](#).

The work of the Coalition at the global level might be complemented by regional or national dialogues on the global plastics treaty, where advocacy efforts would be coordinated in alignment with the policy insights and positions developed by the Coalition. The use of existing national plastics initiatives and platforms would then allow other stakeholders to raise different points of views.

**24. Why are businesses calling for laws and regulations? Isn't that evidence industry-led voluntary action has failed?**

We have learnt a lot and made progress through the voluntary actions of businesses and governments to date, but unfortunately these solutions are not being developed fast enough and/or at the required to turn the tide on plastic pollution. The current patchwork approach of national rules and regulations makes it difficult to drive change on a global scale. This is where a treaty with common obligations can help to raise the bar for all companies and provide the impetus for systems change.

That's why the Business Coalition is calling for legally-binding global rules and measures. This is what will allow us to play our part in driving change on a global scale.

That is not to say companies should wait for policy certainty before taking action on plastic pollution, there are many areas where companies can drive progress today and we need to keep the pressure on all companies to engage proactively. Ultimately, a strong treaty will help to pull up the laggards but leading companies must continue to push beyond regulation, recognizing that regulation is slow and might not address many of the challenges that we face right now.

**25. Business caused these problems. Why should they be involved in finding a solution?**

Companies have the skills, capital, and expertise to drive change on a global scale. If we want to end plastic pollution, we need legally-binding global rules and measures – and we need businesses.

Leading businesses, empowered by a robust treaty, will be able to invest with confidence, drive innovation, and help us all end plastic pollution.

**26. When will our seas be free from plastic pollution? What year will it be a reality?**

It will take time. But we know a robust, ambitious, legally-binding global treaty can bring forward that date by decades.

We all want to see the flow of waste plastics stopped. We also want to see action to tackle existing plastic pollution, that's why the Business Coalition is calling for this treaty to include tools to address the micro and macro plastics that are already polluting our environment.

**27. Is the UN negotiation process fair? Are businesses getting a louder say in negotiations due to their financial size?**

The process is run by the INC secretariat supported by UNEP. The Business Coalition strongly supports that the negotiation process must be transparent and offer fair access to all stakeholders groups.

For example, the Business Coalition recognises the important role informal waste workers play in collecting, sorting, and recycling of plastic waste.

They need to be part of the negotiations because the treaty must protect and respect their livelihoods, their health, and their human rights.

We want global rules and measures to drive change on a global scale. And to achieve that we will need to ensure the negotiations involve as wide a range of stakeholder groups as possible.