THE WORLD BANK GROUP AND THE MARINE PLASTICS AGENDA







CONTENTS

| THE WORLD BANK GROUP'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE | 4 |
|--|--------|
| Crafting Solutions to Plastic Pollution Unpacking the Challenge: Multisectoral Local, Regional, and Global Engagement | 4 4 |
| WHAT THE WORLD BANK GROUP IS DOING | 5 |
| 1. Analytics | 5 |
| 2. Policies | 8 |
| 3. Investments | 11 |
| 4. Working Across Sectors: Fisheries and Tourism | 13 |
| 5. Convening Power Through Partnerships and Knowledge Sharing | 14 |

Tackling marine plastics and keeping our ocean healthy is directly linked to the World Bank Group's mission of creating a world free of poverty on a livable planet, as billions of people, especially the poorest, rely on the ocean for jobs and food. The World Bank Group supports countries around the globe and across a broad array of sectors in their efforts to address plastic pollution from source to sea, at every stage of the lifecycle, from stopping leakages into the environment, to enabling a circular economy.

THE ISSUE OF PLASTIC POLLUTION



Plastic pollution is everywhere - in the air we breathe, in the Arctic ice, in water, and in the fish we eat, with costs to the environment, biodiversity, livelihoods, and possibly our health. There is no silver bullet to solve this crisis, and interventions are needed at every stage of the lifecycle. While solid waste management is a priority in the short term, transitioning to a circular economy is the long-term solution.





SCALE OF THE PROBLEM



MILLION MT OF PLASTICS ARE PRODUCED EVERY YEAR

(MINDEROO, 2021)



OF TOTAL MARINE WASTE IS ACCOUNTED FOR BY PLASTICS

(UNEP, 2022)



OF MACROPLASTIC LEAKAGE IS CAUSED BY MISMANAGED PLASTIC WASTE

(OECD, 2022)



OF PLASTICS ARE PRODUCED WITH FOSSIL FUELS (OECD, 2022)



JOBS COULD BE GENERATED BY A NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY BY 2040

(UNEP, 2022)

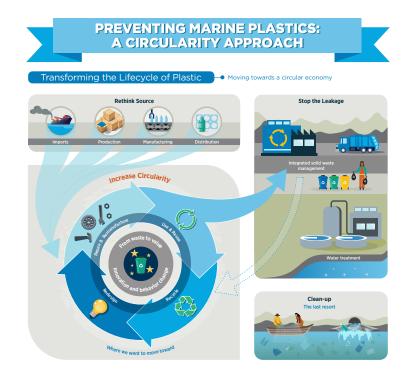
- Global plastic production and consumption has grown exponentially since the 1950s and is set to triple by 2060 if business continues as usual (OECD, 2022).
- Almost two-thirds of all plastic waste comes from applications with lifespans
 of less than five years: packaging (40%), consumer products (12%) and textiles
 (11%). (UNEP, 2022)
- The mismanagement of plastic waste has led to contamination of the entire marine environment, from shores to the deepest ocean sediments. (UNEP,2022)

THE WORLD BANK GROUP'S COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

CRAFTING SOLUTIONS TO PLASTIC POLLUTION

The prevention of plastic pollution provides an opportunity for creating a circular economy model to build a more sustainable and inclusive economy with a triple dividend on jobs, climate change, and social benefits.

Governments alone cannot do it all, and the private sector has a key role. Governments can enact regulations and implement policies enabling the transition, while the private sector can contribute through increased financing or innovation in redesign and new materials. There is a need for new policies, behavior change by consumers and industry, investments, and innovation in financing, technologies, and partnerships between the private and public sectors.



The World Bank Group is uniquely positioned to tackle this issue, with decades of experience in financing pollution prevention projects, providing technical expertise, and bringing together key players to transform plastic pollution challenges into opportunities to achieve green, resilient, and inclusive development.

UNPACKING THE CHALLENGE: MULTISECTORAL LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Responding to this crisis is a priority for the WBG, with the World Bank having projects worth more than **US\$2.5 billion** in the pipeline with components focused on plastic pollution prevention, marine litter and waste management.

Support to client countries has included financing from trust funds, including PROBLUE, an umbrella multi-donor trust fund administered by the World Bank that supports the sustainable and integrated development of marine and coastal resources in a healthy ocean. In its efforts to assist countries and regions in preventing plastic pollution, **PROBLUE** has so far committed more than **US\$ 50 million** in over **100 activities** across 60 countries. These activities also take into account the impacts on biodiversity and climate change, and actively promote gender equality and social inclusion.

WHAT THE WORLD BANK GROUP IS DOING

1. ANALYTICS



Metrics/Monitoring

We cannot manage what we cannot measure. Data scarcity is the first bottleneck that countries face when starting to strategize for managing plastic pollution. The World Bank is investing in data on marine pollution sources, pathways, and impacts, and working with clients to track the routes of plastics from land, through rivers, into coastal waters.

For example, by focusing on new approaches and solutions, the World Bank supports the government of Cambodia to improve conditions in its riverways, where waste clogs canals and causes trash to pile up in front of people's homes and along roadways. Using drones and analysis, trash monitors can identify different types of waste to better understand and address the source of the problem. This also allows policy-makers to educate citizens about where their waste is going and design incentives to reduce the amount of plastic used in packaging.



See other metrics developed in Vietnam, Thailand, South Africa, and Pakistan.



ENHANCING RECYCLING IN MALAYSIA

In Malaysia, about 81% of the material value of the key plastic resins — approximately US\$1.1 billion per year — is lost when 1.07 million tonnes are discarded rather than recycled. Because of various systemic and market challenges, only 19% of the total material value per year is currently unlocked.

This work identified 6 interventions and outlined 28 associated actions to enhance Malaysia's collected-for-recycling rates and raise the value yield of plastics recycling from 77% to 94%, potentially unlocking between US\$ 256 million to US\$ 731 million annually. Implementing these interventions across both government and private sectors could establish a foundation for plastics circularity, strengthen demand for recycled plastics, and fortify Malaysia's plastic recycling industry.



FIGURE 2. Plastic and tin sorting recycle bin at the side of the street in Selangor, Malaysia/Shutterstock.

Market Studies

In collaboration with IFC, the World Bank has developed market studies to understand conditions to enable markets and private sector interventions. This series of studies focuses on recycling as a scalable private sector solution for diverting plastic waste away from landfills and the open environment. It adopts a comprehensive approach to the plastic value chain to engage key stakeholders, gather baseline data, develop material flow analyses, identify plastic recycling barriers and opportunities, and formulate actionable recommendations.



Technical Studies

The World Bank has been supporting the development of technical studies to gain insights into the economic and social aspects of plastic pollution, presenting examples of best practices for technical solutions, and assessing interventions in behavior change across the plastics life cycle.

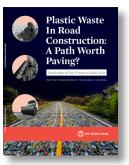
Prioritizing Behavior Change

The report *Bridging the Gap in Solid Waste Management*, explores mechanisms and policies that central authorities may orchestrate to advance public objectives, influence the behavior of waste producers and handlers, and change service level and performance at a national scale. The World Bank also developed a compendium of cases designed to help decision-makers and practitioners investigate, understand, and respond to waste management challenges in their communities through interventions considering a behavioral science lens. It uncovers and highlights behavioral tools that encourage consumers to generate less waste, use waste services, and behave more sustainably with their waste.



Exploring Innovation to Repurpose Plastic Waste

In South Asia, a World Bank report *Plastic Waste in Road Construction:* A *Path Worth Paving?* examined scientific knowledge on repurposing plastic waste for road construction while protecting human health and the environment. Though there are further unknowns that need to be vetted through rigorous scientific research, the report found that the use of plastic waste in roads can prevent a significant portion of unrecyclable plastic waste from becoming a large-scale pollutant.



Customized Technologies and Solutions

This study combines a global assessment of plastic waste management on islands, reviewing existing technologies and their viability in island contexts. The outcome is a *Technology Options for Plastic waste for Island Contexts* (TOPIC) Toolbox, piloted on five islands in Malaysia. The TOPIC Toolbox supports island decision-makers in identifying technologies and solutions tailored to their specific island context.



Estimating Plastic Waste Discharges

In the <u>Plastic Waste Discharges: From Rivers and Coastlines in Indonesia</u> study, the World Bank provided the first Indonesia-wide assessment integrating local waste data with actual hydrological conditions to tell the story of how local practices contribute to marine plastic pollution. Using a broad range of Indonesian data sources, it assessed the solid waste management practices for all 514 kabupaten/kota in Indonesia. Then, pairing that data with national rainfall, topography and river flow averages, it modeled the movement of plastic waste into the marine environment.



Economic Studies

Through economic studies, the World Bank also helps decision-makers better understand the economics of marine plastic-waste reduction, generation and its management.



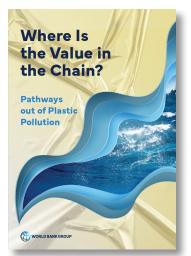
For instance, this report provides insights for policymakers from coastal countries in West Africa to better understand the factors that should be considered when developing cost-effective policies for reducing plastic waste in the marine environment. It estimates the economic cost of the externalities generated by plastic waste in the marine environment, including damage estimates for ecosystems and related sectors. Such uncompensated external costs are compared with those of the three main approaches currently used to reduce plastic pollution. The analysis then delves into the primary material source of the plastics pollution issue in West Africa: specifically, imported thin polyethylene sheets (TPSes) predominantly utilized in the production of single-use plastic (SUP) sachets, bags, and other containers.

2. POLICIES



Game-changer tools for policy decision-making

The World Bank supports finance mobilization and innovation scale up by developing tools to help governments make decisions to tackle plastic pollution at every instance of the plastics lifecycle. This process encompasses various stages, from the data collection and roadmap formulation to simulating and selecting the most suitable policy package, to finally translating national action into an outlook for clear and science-based estimation of needed capital investment, types of finance available, and insights into how to de-risk investments.



The World Bank is currently implementing the roll-out strategy for enhancing user-friendliness and uptake of the Plastics Substitution Tradeoff Estimator (PSTE) — an innovative model to support countries in setting targets by estimating the external costs of 10 plastic products and their alternatives along their entire life cycle and the Plastics Policy Simulator (PPS) tool — which is a data-driven model for policy analysis to better understand the impacts of different policy instruments and policy packages on individual economic agents and on the plastic value chain at large.

In collaboration with other partners including OECD, UNEP, UNEPFI, and GPAP (WEF), the Bank is now developing — PlastINVEST. This new tool is expected to provide countries with a clear and science-based estimation of how much capital investment will be required to deliver their national actions to deal with plastic pollution, broken down by

types of investments, by year and by asset class. This will help countries target policies and related investments to align with the upcoming International Legally Binding Instrument being negotiated within the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee created by the historic Resolution UNEA 5/14.

National Action Plans and Roadmaps

The World Bank is supporting national actions to phase out single-use plastics, and circular economy strategies across a range of countries-including helping to identify fiscal and regulatory reforms to improve waste management, expedite the transition to a circular economy, and reduce plastics use.

In Vietnam and Thailand, the World Bank has helped the governments to inform the implementation of their National Action Plans. In Bangladesh, the World Bank supported the development of a baseline study to map plastic flows. Based on the results, an action plan to reduce marine plastics was developed, which the Bank is currently assisting the government in implementing.







Assessing Circular Economy Opportunities

A circular economy for plastics can extend the life span of plastic materials, with projected net economic and job creation benefits in both developed and developing country settings. To embrace circular economy and move away from linear models of production, consumption, and final disposal toward more circular and sustainable models, the World Bank assists countries in assessing plastic value chains and identifying specific measures to facilitate this transition.





FIGURE 3.

What key questions do our tools assist decision-makers with?



PSTE

Under **WHICH** circumstances do alternatives perform better than the currently used plastic product?

WHAT are the tradeoffs of substituting products?



PPS

HOW can we incentivize players to drive the actions needed for a system change scenario (i.e., what policies need to be put in place?)

HOW will this impact different players in the system (i.e., who are the winners and losers among producers, brands/retailers, consumers, informal sector, national gov't, local gov't, recyclers, etc.)



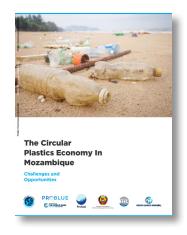
PlastINVEST

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In Mozambique, this study informed the Government's National Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter helping to assess the circular economy opportunities. It set its parameters on the upstream (pre-waste) opportunities for plastics circularity, leveraging the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's ReSOLVE Framework to map out the various levers used by organizations in their transition towards improved material efficiency.

It presents recommendations in four main categories: (i) Financing the collection, or implementing measures that increase the provision of funding to improve waste collection; (ii) Reducing problematic and unnecessary single-use plastics, or implement measures that reduce the supply of plastic and reduce the quantity of plastic waste; (iii) Designing for circularity, or implementing measures that improve the quality of plastic in the waste stream and reduce dependence on virgin materials; and (iv) Developing recycling and treatment markets, or implementing measures that increase the demand for post-consumer plastics.



Extended Producer Responsibility

Plastic waste leaking into the environment — especially from plastic packaging — remains a significant problem. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) can help to address this through improved waste collection and increased recycling rates. The World Bank supports countries such as the Philippines and other Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies in accelerating EPR implementation and operationalization.



Enabling Conditions for a Just Transition

The World Bank Group recognizes that support for the inclusion and professionalization of informal waste workers, and policy attention on how to integrate them into the solutions, can offer both environmental and social benefits (see Figure 4). The World Bank is working closely with client countries on solutions that cater a just plastics transition, because we cannot live in a world free of poverty in a world with plastic pollution.

People and Plastics

This report presents primary research data collected from informal waste workers in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, shedding light on their profile and characteristics. It also presents an overview of selected case studies of livelihood and entrepreneurship models piloted in these countries, which showcase successful cooperation between informal waste workers, local government, local communities, and private sector and/or local nongovernmental organizations to support local waste collection and processing.



3. INVESTMENTS



Informed by decades of experience working in solid waste management, the World Bank Group is supporting specific public and private sector investments in countries through projects covering many sectors, including solid waste management, urban and water, tourism, and agriculture both at the national and regional levels.

In the **public sector**, an increasing number of borrower countries have been expressing interest in additional components in plastics for their loans, and this trend is extending across various sectors including agriculture, fisheries, tourism, transport, urban, etc.

Working across Borders: Regional Engagements -

In June 2022 the Bank approved the Southeast Asia Regional Program on Combating Marine Plastics (SEA-MaP), a US\$ 20 million grant for ASEAN Member States to reduce plastics consumption, increase recycling and minimize leakages to prevent land and sea-based marine plastic pollution in Southeast Asia. In addition, two national investment projects in Cambodia and Lao PDR have joined the SEA-MaP program to strengthen policies and drive impactful investments at the country level. By working with the ASEAN Secretariat and partners at both regional and country levels, the World Bank aims to strengthen polices and regulatory frameworks governing the production and use of plastics, and support the ASEAN in establishing regional platforms to promote innovation, knowledge, and partnership.

In the South Asia Region, the Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia Project (PLEASE) was approved in 2020 for US\$ 37 million to enhance the innovation and coordination of circular economy solutions addressing plastic pollution entering South Asian Seas. The project comprises three key components: 1. Supporting Competitive Block Grant Investments to Reduce Plastic Waste; 2. Leveraging Public and Private Sector Engagement and Solutions, and 3. Strengthening Regional Integration Institutions: Focused on enhancing the capacity of regional organizations.

FIGURE 4. **WASTE NOT, WANT NOT**

South Africa's eight metros are not only home to around 68% of the country's population but also account for a significant 80% of its GDP. Despite being hubs ripe for resource recovery and circular economy initiatives, these metros allocate the bulk of their resources and funding toward collection and landfilling—the least preferable option in the waste hierarchy.

Cost inefficiencies, shrinking airspace, and the evolving landscape of policy and regulatory reform are exerting mounting pressure on metros, exacerbating their already subpar performance in solid waste management. The 2021 EPR legislation presents an opportunity for both national and metro government and lays the groundwork for the enhanced integration of South Africa's waste reclaimers. During a peer-learning workshop, the World Bank unveiled "Waste Not, Want Not: A Diagnostic of Solid Waste Management in South African Metros," convening stakeholders to exchange insights and best practices, particularly regarding the integration of waste reclaimers.

Concurrently, PROBLUE funding remains instrumental in facilitating the enrollment of informal waste reclaimers into the national South African Waste Pickers Registration System (SAWPRS), enabling them to directly access remittances from buyback centres via the EPR. As of now, thanks to PROBLUE, up to 8,000 reclaimers have successfully registered on the SAWPRS, spanning all eight metros.















STEMMING THE PLASTICS TIDE IN INDONESIA

With ocean plastics on the rise, Indonesia is engaged in its own fight against marine pollution. In 2019, the World Bank supported the Government of Indonesia with a US\$ 100 million loan for waste collection and treatment systems to halve the waste leakage into waterways and the ocean from land-based sources from participating cities and districts. The program started in an urgent hotspot, the Citarum River Watershed in West Java and is expanded to other cities and districts in Indonesia.

A pivotal component of the investments, totaling US\$ 326 million, involves the development of policy measures to improve waste collection and recover, recycle, compost, or treat waste and plastics, hence preventing plastics from entering waterways and the ocean.





FIGURE 5. New integrated solid waste treatment facility that has been constructed and is in preparation for operation in Cimahi City, Indonesia.

Photo credits: Aulia Syahrani.

Channeling Groundbreaking-Instruments: Plastic Waste Reduction-Linked Bond —

In January 2024, IBRD priced a seven-year US\$100 million, principal-protected Plastic Waste Reduction-Linked Bond. This innovative bond provides investors with a financial return linked to Plastic Waste Collection Credits, Plastic Waste Recycling Credits (collectively, plastic credits), and Verified Carbon Units (carbon credits) expected to be generated by two projects in Ghana and Indonesia, which aim to reduce and recycle plastic waste in vulnerable communities, cutting plastics leaking into nature and ocean.

In the **private sector**, the World Bank Group is actively engaging in investments through the International Finance Corporation. Notably, IFC is broadening its investment portfolio within the plastics sector, while also spearheading efforts to identify opportunities for blue financing.

Combating Marine Plastic Pollution through Innovative Financing —

In November 2020, IFC marked a significant milestone by providing its first blue loan to Indorama Ventures Limited, a global plastic resin manufacturer, to support the company's goal of recycling 50 billion polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles a year by 2025, diverting waste from landfills and oceans. A blue loan is an innovative instrument whereby the funds raised are certified and tracked exclusively for projects that support a blue economy, such as for the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health.

IFC Engagement: IFC arranged a US\$300 million financing package for Indorama Ventures Limited to increase the company's recycling capacity in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, and Brazil — countries with large coastal populations and wide gaps in their circular ecosystems.

The impact of this investment is threefold:

- 1. Creating value out of plastic waste and reducing plastic waste that would have otherwise ended up in landfills or
- 2. Recycling PET resin to displace virgin fossil-fuel based materials, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 65 % and energy consumption by up to 75%.
- 3. Financing energy efficiency, renewable energy, and water conservation investments.

Enhancing Resource-Efficient Production and Plastic Recycling

In April 2023, IFC initiated a partnership with the Equatorial Coca-Cola Bottling Company to support the beverage maker's ambitious strategy to enhance resource efficiency and plastic recycling across its operations in 13 countries in North and West Africa.

Developed with IFC's guidance, the company's sustainability strategy includes measures such as upgrading production lines for efficiency, establishing a PET collection and recycling program in Algeria, installing solar panels at bottling plants and piloting solar powered retail coolers in Ghana and Morocco.

To support these initiatives, IFC is providing a comprehensive financing package totaling €64 million. This includes a €52 million loan from IFC's own account, €8.5 million from the Canada-IFC Blended Climate Finance Program, and €3.5 million from the Alafaq Aljadida Middle East and North Africa Private Sector Development program. In addition to the investment, IFC is providing advisory services to help the Equatorial Coca-Cola Bottling Company advance its sustainability agenda.

Supporting Materials Recovery and Waste Management

In September 2023, IFC committed an eight-year corporate loan of BRL 130 million to Orizon Meio Ambiente S.A, an environmental service provider, to help promote innovative waste solutions and increase recycling capacity in Brazil, enabling a strong circular economy. This marked a milestone as the first sustainability-linked loan for the waste management sector in emerging markets.

This investment supported the construction of Latin America's largest mechanized material recovery facility (MRF) in the state of Pernambuco, along with the expansion of two leachate treatment plants in the state of Rio de Janeiro, and provided capital investments for three of Orizon's sanitary landfills. The MRF in Pernambuco operates on a dirty mixed waste stream and has the capacity to process approximately 2,000 tons of waste a day. This investment will help reduce the amount of waste going to landfills by increasing recycling rates.

IFC is also sharing its global expertise to better integrate recycling and wastewater management operations into Orizon's current processes. IFC and Orizon will continue working together to promote innovative waste solutions that will enable a circular economy and protect the environment.

4. WORKING ACROSS SECTORS: FISHERIES AND TOURISM ____



Abandoned, Lost, and Otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)

ALDFG constitutes as much as 50 % of all sea-based sources of marine debris. The Bank actively assists countries in implementing measures to prevent and manage ALDFG by targeting the life cycle stages of design and production, usage, and end of life of fishing gear. For instance, the World Bank supported baseline assessments in Bangladesh, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka; and developed studies on Management, Retrieval and Recycling of End-of-Life and ALDFG, and Options for Reducing Plastic Leakage to the Marine Environment from Capture Fisheries and Aquaculture, in Indonesia.



INSPIRING INNOVATION TO REDUCE SINGLE USE PLASTICS IN TOURISM IN SIERRA LEONE

In Sierra Leone, the World Bank, with support from PROBLUE funding, facilitated the preparation of a US\$40 million Economic Diversification Investment. Activities included a diagnostic assessment to identify use of plastics in the tourism sector and businesses producing alternatives to SUP; a policy dialogue through a public-private forum, and the support to the Ministry of Environment in the passing of the Plastics and Single Use Plastics Policy and the development of a Green Taxonomy. Work conducted also provided mentorship for small businesses, connecting suppliers of alternatives to hoteliers, and creating markets to replace small plastic bottles. The results of these activities were highlighted during the Go Circular week on Feb 20-23, 2024, with over 600 participants and 20 hotels and restaurants recognized with certificates for their efforts to minimize their plastic waste.



FIGURE 6. Go Circular Week, February 2024. Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to sustainability pioneer hotels in the country.

5. CONVENING POWER —— THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING



The World Bank Group strongly relies on the power of partnerships and remains steadfast in its dedication to collaborating with development partners. This commitment extends to actively engaging in various global forums, including the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument (ILBI) on Plastic Pollution, including in the marine environment, the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC), the Global Plastics Summit, among others. Through these platforms, the World Bank Group supports its clients and fosters meaningful connections to drive impactful solutions.

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution

The World Bank Group significantly expanded its role during the INC process, notably through the development of partnerships, collaborative events, collective initiatives and a range of knowledge products strategically aligned with the expressed needs of Member States, ensuring a demand-driven targeted support on critical topics.

At INC-1, the World Bank participated and moderated the Multistakeholder Forum in Punta del Este. At INC-2 in Paris, the World Bank launched the inaugural PROBLUE Global Engagement Forum on the topic of ALDFG, in collaboration with UNEP, FAO, UNCTAD, IUCN, WWF, Ocean Conservancy, GGGI etc. The successful event resulted in the development of a Joint Paper on ALDFG led by the Bank in collaboration with all the organizing partners, to be presented at INC-4.



Group picture at the first *PROBLUE Global Engagement Forum*. Over 40 people were attending in-person and another 40 were attending virtually.

At INC-3 in Nairobi, the World Bank organized two independent events -on key topics. The first was on ALDFG titled "Lost at Sea" organized in collaboration with FAO, UNCTAD, IUCN, WWF, GGGI, and Ocean Conservancy. The session discussed concrete actions to prevent and manage fishing gear through its lifecycle, and how the ILBI could help address this issue.

The second event focused on regional collaboration "Beyond Borders: Working Regionally to Tackle Plastic Pollution" — co-organized with UNEP and in partnership with UNCTAD, WTO, GGGI, IUCN, and WWF. The session shared knowledge on a range of regional approaches such as waste trade in the ASEAN; Legislation for single-use plastics phaseout in East Africa; Regional recycling infrastructure in Pacific SIDs, etc.

At INC-4, the Bank helped inform ongoing discussions relating to innovative and outcome-based financing and the options for the financing mechanism for the upcoming ILBI. Towards this end, the Bank organized an independent event (with PCX, RePurpose, Earth Action, and the Government of the Philippines) on Harnessing Outcome-Based Financing to address Plastic Pollution, and co-organized (with Innovation Alliance for a Global Plastics Treaty) another event on innovative financing with speakers from IFC, Earth Action, rePurpose, DeliverZero, and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States".



Group picture at the *Lost at Sea* event. Over 120 people attended the event in-person.



Group picture at the *Beyond Borders* event. Over 50 people attended the event in-person.



Group picture at the *Harnessing Outcome-Based Financing to Address Plastic Pollution* event. Over 120 people attended.





