



INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION
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COMISIÓN OCEANOGRÁFICA INTERGUBERNAMENTAL
МЕЖПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННАЯ ОКЕАНОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ
اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات
政府间海洋学委员会

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WESTPAC-ECNU International Workshop

“Stem the tide of Asia’s riverine plastic emission into the ocean”

20-22 November 2023, Sanya, Hainan, China



The UNESCO/IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) and the East China Normal University (ECNU) are pleased to invite you to join this event that will take place on 20-22 November 2023, Sanya, Hainan, China.

1. About the event

Plastic pollution has been attracting ever increasing global attention and actions. Plastic, including microplastic, is the most prevalent type of marine debris in our coasts and oceans. This transboundary environmental challenge needs to be addressed urgently through concrete actions at all levels involving international coordination and cooperation, scientific research and technology innovations, local actions, citizen and corporate commitment. Plastic and microplastic pollution have been at top agenda of a number of national and international agreements and frameworks, emphasizing the urgency to intensify efforts in researching their sources, transport and impacts. Notably, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed in 2017 a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) to gather ocean stakeholders worldwide and catalyze ocean science solutions to sustainable development of the ocean, and the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) in 2022 unanimously approved a historic resolution to develop an internationally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Rivers are recognized as major pathways for land-based plastic transported to the ocean. Based on previous model results, the rivers in the Asia-Pacific accounted for more than half of the global riverine plastic waste. However, arguments have been mounting about the modelling results due to the lack of reliable in-situ observations. To serve the needs of Member States in the region to better understand the status of river inputs of plastic waste into the ocean, and to generate timely data, information and knowledge needed to formulate and implement technological, behavioral, and policy solutions, the Sub-Commission together with its Member States and their institutions in the region developed and registered in 2022 a UN Ocean Decade Action- UN22. Stem the tide of Asia’s riverine plastic emission into the ocean. This Decade Action was built on the past achievements that the Sub-Commission has been making since 2017 in marine microplastic research and monitoring, capitalizing on the well-established network and enhanced national and regional capacity for plastic research and monitoring, and the ever-increasing commitment of Member State to combating marine plastic pollution in the region.

2. Objectives

The workshop will feature invited presentations on the first day, covering a wide range of plastic-related topics, including instrument development, scientific review, Innovations and technologies, citizen science, and business/private sector engagement. The workshop will eventually focus on the development of the UN Decade Action 22. All project partners will be invited to share their efforts and thoughts, and jointly formulate an actional plan for the next two years even beyond.

Specifically, the workshop aims to

- Share the latest science and technology, management, and policy movement on combatting plastic pollution, including the development status of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment;
- Identify key scientific knowledge gaps needed to be filled, to inform the key elements of the instrument negotiated by Member States;
- Kickoff the Ocean Decade Action- UN 22, catalyze and strengthen partnerships in further developing and implementing the Action.

3. Who shall participate in?

This workshop will convoke experts, researchers, students, and government representatives from within and outside the region who are willing to engage in the development of the UN Decade Action, and conduct plastic research, monitoring, and mitigation in the region.

Priority will be given to these participants in the WESTPAC plastic activities, particularly those conducting monitoring and research in their selected pilot sites and already engaged in the initial development of the UN Decade Action. Other experts who are interested to join the network or develop collaborations, will be welcome. Again, they should have experience conducting plastic and microplastics related research and monitoring and/or be able to lead and carry out monitoring and research in their countries for moving forward.

We encourage all participants to actively engage in the discussions, share their expertise, and foster meaningful collaborations.

4. How to register or apply for financial assistance?

For anyone who is interested to join the event, please fill in and submit the online [Registration Form](#), preferably no later than 30 September 2023.

There is a very limited resource in support of the international travel of some colleagues, particularly those from developing states. A joint committee will be established to select the most suitable participants that would be provided financial support. The selection will be made mainly based on the applicant's CV, his/her work experience, and his/her engagement in WESTPAC or other relevant international programmes. Again, priority will be accorded to those who are conducting monitoring and research in the Marine Plastic Programme. Updated information on the workshop will be made available, in due course, at the WESTPAC website (<http://ioc-westpac.org>)