



**Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation**

2023/MRT/JMS/2

**APEC Non-Binding Guidelines on Services That
Support the Clean-Up of Marine Debris -
Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting 2023**



**Ministers Responsible for Trade
Meeting
Detroit, United States
25-26 May 2023**

Annex 2: APEC Non-Binding Guidelines on Services that Support the Clean-up of Marine Debris

Consistent with the commitments set out in the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040, the Aotearoa Plan of Action and the Bangkok Goals on Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy to support efforts to address global environmental challenges;

Mindful of the goal set out in the APEC Roadmap on Marine Debris, taking into account member economies' respective internal circumstances, to increase access to financing and to facilitate private-sector engagement to promote investment, trade and market creation in industries and activities that enable marine debris management and prevention; and to promote sustainable waste management, and reduction and prevention of leakage of waste from land- and sea-based sources.

Noting relevant APEC work on environmental services, including the APEC Environmental Services Action Plan Final Review and the APEC Reference List of Environmental and Environmentally Related Services;

Also noting APEC's work on services trade, including through the APEC Services Competitiveness Roadmap and its Mid-Term Review, to ensure an open and predictable environment for access to services markets by addressing restrictions on trade and investment in services;

Without prejudice to APEC economies' positions in the WTO, the UNEP Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on plastic pollution, or in other forums;

APEC economies are encouraged to implement the following non-binding guidelines:

1. Reduce barriers to marine debris clean-up services^[1] and providers

1.1 APEC economies will endeavor to promote trade and reduce barriers to marine debris clean-up services, in accordance with individual economies' domestic laws and regulations, to advance the following objectives:

- i. To facilitate trade and investment in marine debris clean-up services and to support the transition to a circular economy
- ii. To support the development of a market for marine debris clean-up services
- iii. To strengthen regional coordination and collaboration, on marine debris clean-up services
- iv. To support and complement initiatives to address marine debris in other forums, including in the WTO Informal Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade and the UNEP negotiations on an international, legally-binding instrument on plastic pollution.

2. Good regulatory practice

2.1 APEC economies will endeavor to implement domestic regulation of marine-debris clean-up services that is consistent with the APEC Non-Binding Principles for Domestic Regulation of the Services Sector, including in relation to transparency, administrative efficiency, consultation with stakeholders, and coordination between multiple authorities in each economy.

2.2 The APEC Group on Services will continue working to strengthen collaboration with relevant APEC fora on marine debris clean-up services. In taking forward work in line with these non-binding guidelines, the GOS will consult with the relevant APEC fora, including the Chemical Dialogue, the Oceans and Fisheries Working Group, the Life Science Innovation Forum, the Human Resource Development Working Group, the Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance and the Market Access Group, as appropriate.

3. Market development

3.1 APEC economies will work together to facilitate the transition to a circular economy and the development of a market for marine debris clean-up services, including by reviewing unnecessarily restrictive regulations and by considering collaboration on activities such as developing best practice guidelines.

3.2 APEC economies will work to bolster private sector engagement on marine debris clean-up services, including through potential public-private partnerships, innovative funding mechanisms and engagement with private investors and NGOs to help scale up actions.

3.3 APEC economies will look to strengthen supply chains relating to marine debris clean-up services and explore the potential role for relevant mechanisms, including plastics credits.

4. People movement and skills

4.1 APEC economies are encouraged to work to facilitate the mobility of marine debris clean-up services providers and researchers.

5. Access to port facilities and maritime issues

5.1 APEC economies will consider how to facilitate access to ports for marine debris clean-up services providers' vessels, including through non-discrimination in access to, and payment for, port services and by reviewing requirements to have a local office, following relevant domestic regulations and international commitments.

5.2 APEC economies will examine barriers to chartering vessels by marine debris clean-up service providers.

5.3 APEC economies will work to make rules applicable to research vessels more consistent across the region.

6. Supporting environmentally-sound management of marine debris

6.1 APEC economies are encouraged to review measures relating to the management of plastic litter and abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear collected by marine debris clean-up services providers for proper waste handling including collection, sorting, recycling or disposal, with a view to reducing or eliminating unwarranted restrictions.

6.2 APEC economies will consider how to improve access to local solid waste management facilities, including recycling facilities, for marine debris clean-up services providers, including for marine debris collected outside their territories (in accordance with the Basel Convention), as well as how to strengthen end markets for plastic waste and scrap, while promoting proper waste management methods.

6.3 APEC members will look at ways to assist economies, including small island economies, that are unable to achieve economies of scale in their solid waste management systems.

7. Temporary entry of specialized equipment being used for marine debris clean-up services

7.1 APEC economies will consider facilitating the temporary entry of specialized equipment being used by services providers to clean up marine debris and for associated research activities.

7.2 APEC economies will consider opportunities for cooperation on equipment used by marine debris clean-up services through the Environmental Goods Work Plan and in ongoing discussions on developing recommendations for potentially producing a voluntary, non-binding reference list of new and emerging environmental goods and technologies relevant to addressing marine debris pollution.

8. Innovation and research

8.1 APEC economies are encouraged to support innovation, research and development to enhance marine debris clean-up services, as well as to consider collaborating on guidelines, best practices and internationally-recognized standards, where appropriate.

8.2 APEC economies will work together to understand better the costs and benefits of transitioning to a circular economy approach to plastics waste management, and to exchange views on best practices in line with the *Bangkok Goals on Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy*, adopted by APEC Leaders in 2022.

8.3 APEC economies will encourage collaboration across sectors, industry and academia to develop services approaches to cleaning up marine debris and to promote the reduction and prevention of marine pollution.

8.4 APEC economies will consider working to promote an enabling environment for new and emerging technologies used by marine debris clean-up services and associated research activities.

9. Inclusive trade and growth

9.1 APEC economies will reflect inclusive and equitable development approaches in formulating policies that affect marine debris clean-up services.

9.2 APEC economies will seek to promote cooperation and coordination across economic, environmental, social and other policies related to marine debris clean-up services and will consult, as appropriate, with relevant stakeholders, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, women, coastal communities and Indigenous Peoples.

10. Capacity building

10.1 APEC economies will look to support marine debris clean-up services through capacity building initiatives, increased understanding of best practices, voluntary technology transfer and facilitated access on mutually-agreed terms where appropriate, and skills development, based on the respective needs of APEC economies.

11. International cooperation

11.1 APEC economies will collaborate with international organizations to address marine-debris, with a view to developing complementary approaches.

11.2 APEC economies will support cooperation and dialogue on financial, scientific, technological and other issues to promote coordinated efforts on marine debris clean-up.

11.3 APEC economies will consider using regional and other agreements to which they are parties to facilitate trade and investment in marine debris clean-up services.

11.4 APEC economies that have not already taken commitments under the GATS on remediation and/or collection services could consider doing so.

11.5 APEC economies that have taken commitments under the WTO Joint Statement Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation will work to promote the implementation of those disciplines to facilitate trade in services in the APEC region, including marine debris clean-up services.

^[1] These non-binding guidelines relate to services that support the clean-up of marine debris from beaches, rivers, coastal areas and the open ocean. UNEP defines marine debris as any persistent manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment.