



POLICY OPTIONS TO ELIMINATE ADDITIONAL MARINE PLASTIC LITTER

BY 2050 UNDER THE G20 OSAKA BLUE OCEAN VISION

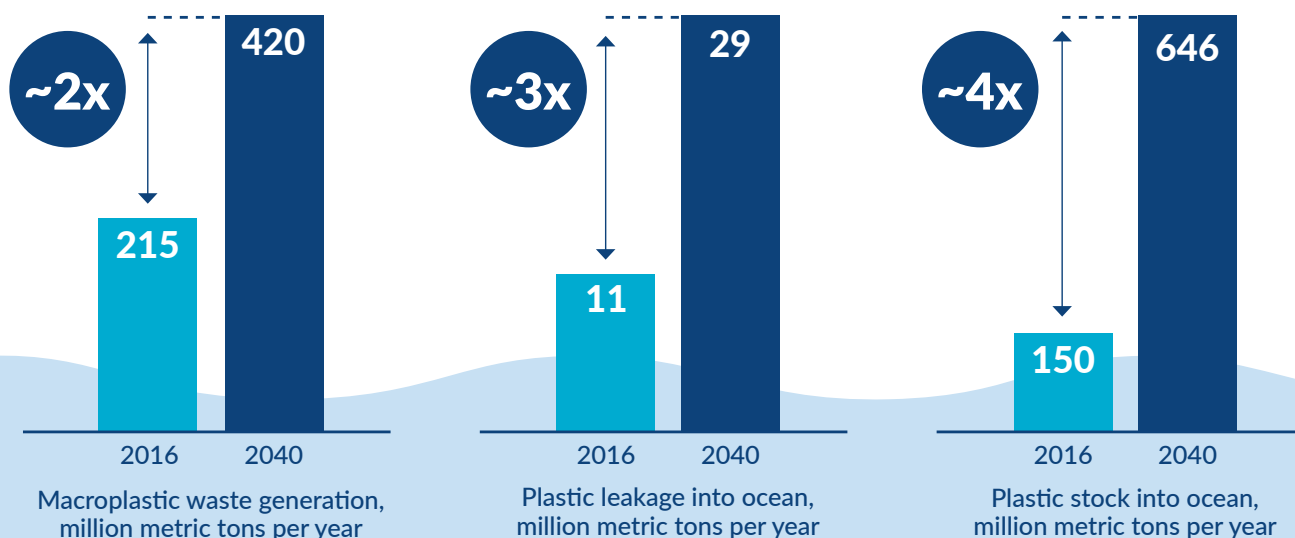
A worsening situation: An update on marine plastic litter

Plastic litter entering the ocean is increasing, the impacts of plastic pollution on marine and coastal ecosystems are worsening, and our increasing understanding of the negative impacts of plastic pollution on human health is creating greater urgency to act.

The annual discharge of plastic into the ocean is estimated to be 11 million tonnes (Lau et al 2020). New modelling by SYSTEMIQ and The Pew Trusts shows that under business as usual conditions, by 2040 municipal solid plastic waste is set to double, plastic leakage to the ocean is set to nearly triple and plastic stock in the ocean is set to quadruple (see below figure).

Current policies do not reflect the scale of the problem

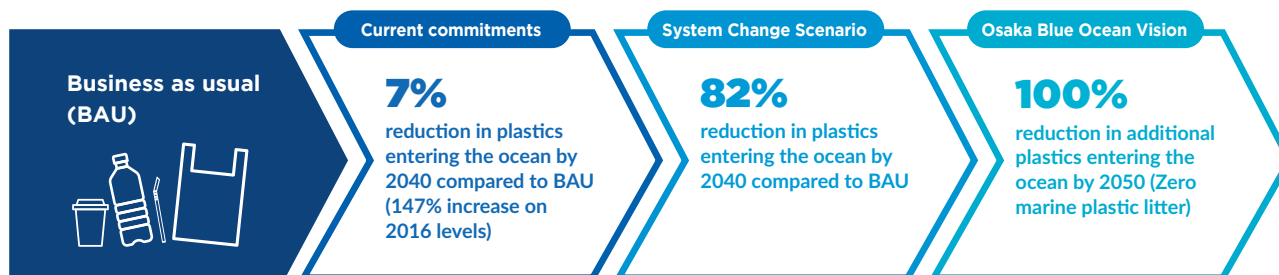
Modelling indicates that current government and industry commitments will only have reduced marine plastic litter by 7% in 2040 compared to business as usual (SYSTEMIQ and The Pew Charitable Trusts 2020). Globally, national plastics policies are rare and tend to focus on banning or taxing individual plastic items rather than focusing on systemic change of the plastics economy. The current policy mix will not deliver the changes needed to reduce additional marine plastic litter to zero. However, through an ambitious combination of interventions using known technology and approaches marine plastic litter entering the ocean can be reduced by 82 per cent compared to business as usual by 2040 (SYSTEMIQ and The Pew Charitable Trusts 2020).





Delivering the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision

The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision aim of **net-zero marine plastic litter entering the ocean by 2050** is ambitious and has the potential to promote systemic change in the plastics economy. However, as the modelled evidence shows, in order to achieve systemic change, **urgent and concerted action is needed**.



Policy options towards delivering the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision



1. To deliver the necessary changes for the plastics economy, the G20 should accelerate its work on marine plastic litter as a priority. Now is not the time to lose focus. Action now will prevent the need to do more later.



2. Greater coordination of marine plastic litter reduction policies is urgently needed. Instead of isolated actions and bans, coordinated reform of regulatory frameworks, business models, and funding mechanisms, such as establishment of a platform to coordinate and share of analysis of existing successful techniques, is needed.



3. A step change in international and national policy ambition is necessary to achieve the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision. The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision will only be achieved by adopting more progressive policy targets, shaped globally but delivered nationally.



4. Actions that are known to reduce marine plastic litter should be encouraged, shared and scaled up immediately. These include moving from linear to circular plastic production and consumption by designing out waste, incentivising reuse, and exploiting market-based instruments. These will generate 'quick wins' to inspire further policy action and provide a context that encourages innovation.



5. Supporting innovation to transition to a circular plastics economy is essential to achieving the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision. While many technical solutions are known and can be initiated today, these are insufficient to deliver the ambitious net-zero target. New approaches and innovations are needed.



6. There is a significant knowledge gap on the effectiveness of marine plastic litter policies. An urgent and independent program to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of plastics policies is required in order to identify the most effective solutions in different national and regional contexts.



7. The international trade in plastic waste should be regulated to protect people and nature. Transboundary movement of waste plastics to countries with insufficient waste management infrastructure could result in significant plastic leakage to the natural environment. The Basel Convention has made an important initial step towards making global trade in plastic waste more transparent and better regulated.



8. COVID-19 recovery stimulus packages have the potential to support the delivery of the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision. Measures to reduce marine plastic litter will generate jobs in Greentech and Bluetech sectors and support the delivery of the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision.

