

GLOBAL  
PLASTIC ACTION  
PARTNERSHIP

8 April 2022

# Eradicating plastic pollution: *Leveraging Trade*

Kimberley Botwright  
World Economic Forum

# What is the Global Plastic Action Partnership?

The Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) is a multistakeholder platform at the World Economic Forum that aims to shape a more sustainable and inclusive world through the eradication of plastic pollution.

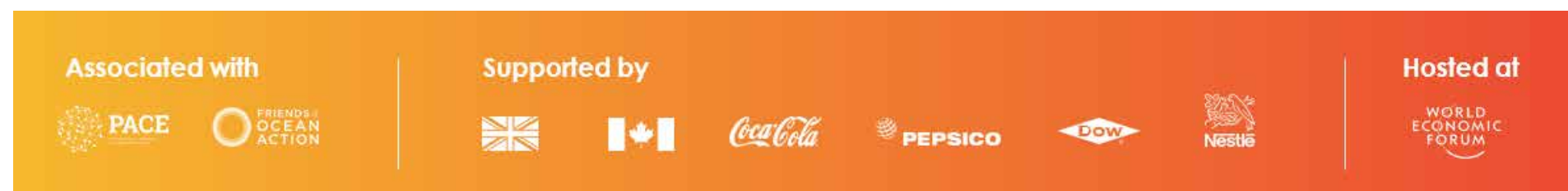
Through its impartial global and national platforms, it is uniquely equipped to bring together public, private and civil society leaders to develop joint solutions to the plastic pollution crisis that are both pragmatic and ambitious.



*GPAP is an excellent example of global cooperation to build a sustainable future for our next generation. It is already having a global impact, especially in plastic pollution hotspots in Asia and Africa. Canada is proud to stand behind these efforts.*

**The Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson**

Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Canada



# Country pipeline

Additional, cross-cutting collaborators include:  
 SYSTEMIQ, UpLink, Second Muse, The Circulate Initiative,  
 The Alliance to End Plastic Waste, and more.

 Existing partnerships

 Emerging partnerships

 Target partnerships



Country	Key collaborators
Bangladesh	2030 WRG
Ghana	World Bank, WRAP, UNIDO
India	WEF, C4IR, WRAP
Indonesia	WWF, WRI, ADB, World Bank
Mexico	UNEP, WWF
Nigeria	World Bank, ACEA
Pakistan	WWF
South Africa	WEF Trade & Investment Team, WRAP
Thailand	WWF
Viet Nam	UNDP

# How a global treaty can provide an effective multilateral framework

- The most effective way to tackle plastic waste is to measure it first. For GPAP, this has meant **a focus on national-level analyses**, building multistakeholder platforms and developing **evidence-based action roadmaps**
- Countries increasingly see the benefits of investing in transparency and evidence to inform their actions
- The resolution may offer **an unprecedented opportunity to harmonize measurement methodologies** and to align across insights that are already available
- Complementary processes, such as the Informal Dialogue on Plastic Pollution and Environmentally Sustainable Plastics Trade at the WTO, are critical in supporting the international negotiation process for a treaty on plastic pollution
- Trade can play an important role in enabling countries to meet their national objectives on plastic waste in pollution and to this end, have created a **dedicated program of work to support governments to better align their circularity and trade agendas**
- Centered upon a suite of country-level analyses and dialogues on trade's role in fostering greater circularity in plastics, this work will be of key importance to **ensure policy coherence at national-level**. It will furthermore be critical in supporting the **economic and development dimensions that need to be addressed** within the context of the forthcoming resolution



# Why trade and global value chains are part of the solution

- **Companies are increasingly responding to the plastic pollution crisis** through alternative packaging and redesigning materials, setting recycling targets, upgrading waste management systems etc.
- **Production and consumption patterns are global**, including around plastics, as plastics trade accounts for 5% of global trade, even excluding embedded plastics in packaging.
- **Plastic action thus needs to take place across sectors and value chains.** Trade policy is a comprehensive tool to achieve cross-sectoral impact and scale.



## How can this benefit development?

In developing countries, plastics play a key role, whether as a part of exports, economic activity, or social benefits. There is a need to:

- ∅ **Better manage plastic waste**
- ∅ **Transition plastic-related exports, identify alternatives**
- ∅ **Sustainably shift plastic-linked economic activities**

# Why is global trade policy relevant?

Production and consumption patterns are regional or global.

Trade rules shape the flow of resources.

Trade and environmental policy are crucial to avoid waste dumping.

Trade rules could also be optimized for shifting to more circular plastics use.

Global research undertaken by GPAP and the World Economic Forum's Trade and Investment Platform identified four types of barriers in the trade system for incentivizing circular plastic models (involving reduction, recycling and re-use activities).

These include different regulatory requirements; diverging standards between markets; investment challenges around waste management; and outdated border procedures.

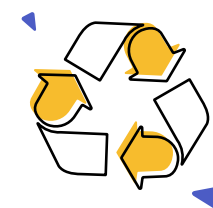
Our community suggested 3 areas to further explore for governments to use trade policy to help tackle plastic pollution:



*Tailor border measures to improve accuracy and efficiency*



*Tackle behind the border issues holding back investment and best practices*



*Increased transparency for market actors*



# How trade policy can complement existing efforts on plastic waste

- Regional cooperation is stipulated within the draft resolution agreed upon at UNEA. **Free trade agreements and regional economic cooperation forums** provide an excellent vehicle for addressing cross-border barriers to circular plastic economies like...
  - Harmonizing standards on plastic waste, recycled plastic and substitutes
  - Creating regional recycling hubs for better waste management
  - Using export markets to incentivize the switch to alternatives
  - Eliminating and/or reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers on green goods – plastic substitutes, recycling technology etc.
  - Formulating green FDI policies to promote investment on recycling technologies and manufacturing of plastic substitutes
  - Creating economies of scale for relevant services



# Supporting governments to better align their circularity and trade agendas

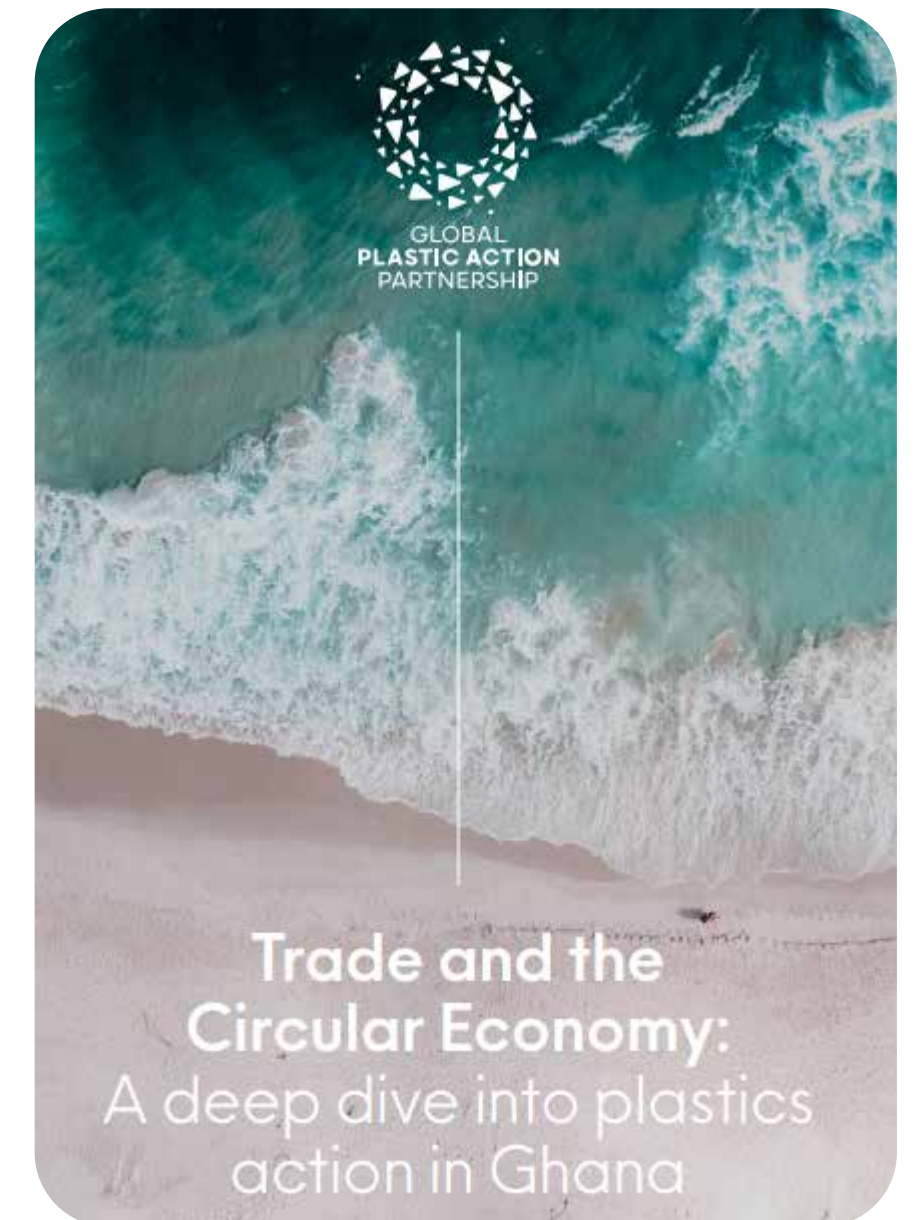
Our program of work centers upon a suite of country-level analyses and dialogues on trade's role in fostering greater circularity in plastics.

## Key findings from our pilot study in Ghana

- ∅ A need to urgently reduce plastic packaging as 70% of plastic input materials in Ghana are used to this end
- ∅ Control plastic waste trade to keep out hazardous plastic; a need to equip border officials with know-how and more efficient processes
- ∅ Facilitate imports of relevant goods for upstream and downstream circular plastics
- ∅ Attract investment and services in waste management through liberalization

## The road ahead

- ∅ Ongoing trade case study in South Africa and forthcoming national-level workshops
- ∅ Exploring additional case studies in Southeast Asia and Latin America
- ∅ Feeding into multilateral dialogue (WTO Informal Dialogue on Plastics Pollution, forthcoming negotiation process for a resolution on plastic pollution, etc.)
- ∅ Looking for interested parties with whom to collaborate





# Thank you

[kbot@weforum.org](mailto:kbot@weforum.org)

[www.globalplasticaction.org](http://www.globalplasticaction.org)