

New evidence finds current policies not working to end plastic pollution

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A new report examining the effectiveness of global plastic policies concludes that current approaches to policy making will not produce the step change needed to tackle the global plastic pollution crisis.

The findings from the University of Portsmouth's Global Plastic Policy Centre (GPPC) were unveiled today at the UN Environment Program Marine Debris Conference in Busan, South Korea.

Researchers analyzed the effectiveness of more than 100 [plastic](#) policies from around the world, and evaluated the factors that inhibit or enhance policy effectiveness. These include policies such as bans or taxes on certain [plastic products](#); consumer behavior campaigns; recycling and waste management strategies; private sector initiatives, business model adaptation; and increasing producer responsibility.

The results showed an overwhelming lack of evidence and monitoring of policy effectiveness, which means that the development of effective plastic policy-making often happens in an evidence vacuum.

Antaya March, senior research associate from the University of Portsmouth's Revolution Plastics initiative, said, "Attempts to develop and implement effective plastics policies are hindered by a lack of knowledge on the performance of existing policies. Without comprehensive evidence and data, it is impossible to implement effective plastic management."

The report also showed that in the majority of cases, plastic policies were developed with limited regard for the wider policy landscape, the full plastic lifecycle or what was being implemented in other locations.

Professor Steve Fletcher, Director of the GPPC, said, "We need a broad range of policies that interact with one another, support each other, and also consider climate, health, biodiversity loss and economy because they're intrinsically connected. Current plastic policy tends to be rather fragmented—for policies to work there needs to be a systemic change.

"Policies to tackle plastic pollution are failing to reflect or effectively

handle the scale of the problem. The need for effective policy is especially critical given the mandate agreed at UNEA 5.2 to develop an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution. Through this extensive research we can provide independent, evidence-based analysis and advice on plastics policy."

The results of the research form the heart of the recently launched GPPC—a unique online inventory of plastic policies that is easily searchable. Free to all, it is a "one-stop shop" of independent, evidence-based plastics advice. The new website is a knowledge sharing platform that gives the latest guidance to anyone with an interest in plastics policy.

The website is designed to give governments and businesses the evidence needed to make informed, evidence-based decisions around plastic policies. It is also aimed at giving citizens the knowledge to understand the actions their governments are taking. It will ultimately increase the accountability of policy makers, in both government and businesses, by identifying strengths and weaknesses of plastic [policy](#) action.

More information: The GPPC online platform can be viewed at www.plasticpolicy.port.ac.uk

[UN Environment Program Marine Debris Conference](#)

Provided by University of Portsmouth

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