

Workshop on Plastics

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Last updated: September 2019

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Overview

Among the impacts which human activity has had on our living planet, pollution from plastic waste has singularly caught the attention of both the public and policy-makers. The whole range of negative effects from long-living plastic components or broken down plastics in our ecosystems are still not fully understood. While the problem with plastics is first and foremost a land-based issue, it is well-documented that vast amounts end up in the oceans. Estimates suggest that at current trends, more plastic will be in the ocean by 2050 than fish. There is little doubt that actors in the seafood market are or will be in some way affected by plastics and the members of the Market Advisory Council have signalled their strong support to delve deeper into this topic through a Workshop.

Purpose of the workshop

To bring together members of the MAC and other Advisory Councils with experts and scientists to explore in both broader and greater detail the impact of plastics on fisheries and market actors. The Workshop is also to show that the MAC, and thus all actors along seafood supply chain, recognise the importance of plastics and take the issue seriously. By gathering input at the Workshop from experts and scientists on the topic, the Workshop is to be based on the facts and figures according to the latest research, and aims to have a focus on a market perspective.

Proposed Outcomes

- To have, within the MAC and amongst its members as well as other Advisory Councils, a better and more informed level of understanding on the impact (environmental, human, economic, etc.) of plastics across the seafood supply chain
- To draft a document (the nature of which is to be decided, possibly in the form of a report of the workshop) with the purpose of summarising the outcomes of the Workshop, while also highlighting best practices for coping with and reducing plastics
- Suggested issues to be discussed:
 - Presenting the state-of-the-art of research on plastics in terms of
 - Environmental pollution,
 - Human health aspects / Food safety issues
 - Impact on marine organisms
 - Showcasing best-practice examples from seafood industry actors on reducing, replacing or avoiding plastics
 - Current alternatives and future projects to substitute the use of plastic in the seafood sector with less invasive materials or technologies (e.g. fishing gear)
 - Packaging – recycling solutions (e.g. from processing, retail)

Target Audience

- Members of the MAC and NWWAC as well as other relevant Advisory Councils
- European Commission and other relevant/interested (EU) institutions (e.g. EP)
- Experts and market stakeholders

Updated Schedule and Deadlines

- Final Terms of Reference to be adopted in September 2019 by Working Group 3
- Draft agenda and proposals for speakers to be developed by the chair of WG 3 with the help of the Secretary General, on the basis of the agreed Terms of Reference
- Planned date for the Workshop: 7 November 2019
- Meeting Venue: Rue de la Loi 102 (SCIC), Brussels
- Report of the workshop to be published in its final version by end of 2019/early 2020 at the latest

Resources, inputs and external sources

- Foreseen budget: c. 20.000 EUR
- In kind collaboration with Commission and North Western Waters Advisory Council and possibly other Advisory Councils (PelAC, North Sea AC, etc.)