Discussion Paper

Corporate Plastic Waste Disclosures: Towards a Universally Accepted Framework

PREVENT
Waste Alliance

1. Abstract

Standardized corporate plastic waste disclosures can meaningfully accelerate the transition to a circular and low-carbon economy for plastics. As business leaders better understand the environmental, social, and financial consequences of plastics used in their value chain, opportunities for improvement become easier to decipher. In this discussion paper, we summarize the existing frameworks for corporate plastic waste disclosures and provide recommendations for their improvement. We conclude that existing frameworks already provide a good starting point for universal acceptance. However, their credibility should be further, better account for the full lifecycle of plastics and be more accessible for smaller and medium-sized businesses.

2. Introduction

Humanity is producing and consuming plastics at an astonishing rate. During the last sixty years of production, hundreds of millions of tons have been introduced into circulation and global demand is expected to surge over the coming decades (Lau et al. 2020). While plastics are a unique group of materials that provide many benefits, the **negative consequences of mismanaged plastic waste** are increasingly entering the limelight (Geyer et al., 2017).

Acknowledging this challenge, representatives from 175 UN member states have recently signed a resolution to work towards a **global legally binding framework** (UN, 2022). Once developed and approved, a Global Treaty to End Plastic Pollution could come into force in 2024 and catalyze further action towards a world without plastic waste.

In addition to public sector commitments, the **private sector is increasingly seeking solutions** to do its part and ensure that plastics do not wind up polluting our planet (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021). However, although many businesses have been working on improved material and product design, there's still a massive gap between the number of plastics produced and used as well as the proportion that is effectively kept in the loop (SYSTEMIQ, 2022).

Over the last years, corporate decision-makers have been **struggling to design out waste from their value chains.** One reason is the limited availability of standardized frameworks that guide corporate action and reward improvements over time. Furthermore, the lack of corporate accountability are likely hindering capital allocation toward circular systems and waste management infrastructure (Google, 2022).

Recognizing the necessity for increased transparency and accountability, **various non-profit organizations and industry associations** have started developing plastic waste disclosure frameworks (IUCN, 2019), and have built upon these with plastic pollution identification methodologies to inform national interventions for effective elimination (IUCN et al., 2020). As corporate decision-makers start to measure their company's plastic footprint, circular action strategies become easier to identify, and tracking progress over time can be simplified.

3. Existing Disclosure Frameworks

Despite the absence of an universally accepted framework for corporate plastic waste disclosures, dozens of companies are **already measuring and reporting their footprint and circular economy progress journey.** The five most widely used frameworks for corporate plastic waste disclosures (see Table 1) differ in four main areas:

- **Approach:** While some frameworks aim at measuring the plastic leakage that can be associated with a company (e.g., Plastic Leak Project), others prioritize measuring progress towards a predefined set of reduction, reuse and recycling targets (e.g., The New Plastic Economy Global Commitment).

- **Measurement Boundaries:** While some frameworks suggest detailed plastic waste disclosures along a company's value chain (e.g., 3RI Guidelines for Corporate Plastic Stewardship), others prioritize the integration of general waste disclosures into the broader sustainability reporting landscape (e.g., GRI 306: Waste).

- **Disclosure Mechanism:** While some frameworks provide a digital platform for disclosures (e.g., The New Plastic Economy Global Commitment, ReSource Footprint Tracker), others are typically used for internal measurements and risk management purposes (e.g., Plastic Leak Project).

- **Strategic Integration Potential:** While some frameworks have a strong niche focus on quantifying the negative externalities of plastic pollution (e.g., Plastic Leak Project), others specify strategic integration opportunities into broader circular economy and sustainability frameworks (e.g., 3RI Guidelines for Corporate Plastic Stewardship).

	Background Information	Approach	Measurement Boundaries	Disclosure Mechanism	Strategic Integration Potential
3R Initiative	The Guidelines were developed by 3R Initiative members and South Pole, Quantis and EA	Guidelines for wider integration of plastic footprint measurements into stewardship strategy (measure, reduce, communicate)	Full value chain: product, packaging, operations & supply chain → upstream, operational, and downstream lingo (voluntary inclusion of microplastics → use of classifications by "scopes")	No disclosure platform available, methodology mainly used to communicate progress and achievements within and beyond value chain	Good integration potential into wider sustainability strategy, suggestion for reduction initiatives and comment on plastic credits (alignment with standards such as Verra, and BVRio's Circular Credit Mechanism)
ReSource Footprint Tracker Plastic	Built by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and used as an official reporting instrument ReSource Plastic and the U.S. Plastics Pact	Provides a clear framework for corporate plastic inventory assessments and offers a digital tool to streamline internal and public disclosures	Mainly focused on product, packaging, and operations. No specific inclusion for indirect waste generation (upstream at supplier and downstream at retailer). Mainly focused on single-use plastic packaging but can also capture reusable packaging and durable plastics. No inclusion of microplastics	Data submitted via spreadsheet to the ReSource Footprint Tracker web platform and disclosed publicly through the annual Transparent report. Also used for U.S. Plastics Pact reporting and collective disclosure through an annual progress report	Good integration potential with corporate sustainability strategies, limited provision of recommendations for plastic waste mitigation and no comments on the use of plastic creditsW
Plastic Leak Project	Co-founded by Quantis and EA in partnership with 35 public, private and scientific organizations. Partially integrated into 3R Initiative	Technical manual of how to account for mismanaged plastics and flows to nature	Not providing any guidelines for boundaries of plastic inventory, but rather for the accounting of leakage → consideration of durable plastics (incl. microplastic losses and releases)	No disclosure platform available, but can be used by companies for voluntary sustainability reporting	Good integration, no directly attached recommendations for mitigation and integration with plastic credits
Global Commitment Progress Report	Led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme. Global Commitment mobilized over 500 signatories	Disclosure framework for reporting progress towards the plastic-specific goals defined by The Global Commitment	Mainly focused on product, packaging, and operations. No specific inclusion for indirect waste generation (upstream at supplier and downstream at retailer). Sole focus on single-use plastic packaging, no inclusion of durable plastics/microplastics	Disclosure platform available with detailed information about progress journey towards the Global Commitment targets	Strong integration potential with the alignment of reporting framework with EMF's Global Commitment
Global Reporting Initiative	"GRI 301: Materials" and "GRI 306: Waste" ask companies to disclose information that is related to plastic use and plastic waste stewardship	"GRI 301: Materials" and "GRI 306: Waste", material agnostic – no plastic specific metrics. Both standards consider the entire material flow of plastics	Providing clear material flow and boundary for waste accounting → material agnostic and not extremely specific in terms of metrics and breakdown (relatively high level – e.g., recycling rate for materials general)	No separate disclosure platform available but providing a full framework for integration with wider sustainability scope	Relatively high level to provide plastic-specific insights for enhanced sustainability commitments

Table 1: Comparison of the five major corporate plastic waste disclosure frameworks (PREVENT Waste Alliance, 2022)

3.1 3R Initiative's Guidelines for Corporates

Summary: Organized as a multi-stakeholder initiative including PREVENT members BVRio, Danone, Nestlé and Veolia, the 3R Initiative (in short 3RI) is developing a market-based approach to scale up collection and recycling as well as to increase accountability for plastic waste reduction efforts around the world (3R Initiative, 2021). As one of their flagship projects, 3RI published their Guidelines for Corporate Plastic Stewardship in 2020 to complement the launch of Verra's Plastic Waste Reduction Standard and the Circular Action Hub. Their Guidelines for Corporate Plastic Stewardship focus on the monitoring and reporting of corporate plastic footprints and communicating reduction/mitigation efforts.

Metric type	Metric name	Unit	Possible source	Mandatory	Optional	Future	Comment
Macroplastic **use**	Total **plastic use** including upstream, operational and downstream activities	kg/y	Company data		✓		
Downstream macroplastic **waste**	**Total plastic waste** (packaging or product sales volumes) generated downstream of a company's own operations (**upstream-downstream** and **operational-downstream**)	kg/y	Company data	✓			
	Recycled and non-recycled content of plastic waste generated by downstream activities	%	Company data, estimation according to ISO 14021	✓			
Downstream macroplastic **end-of-life**	Waste management: share of incineration, landfill, recycling	kg/y , %	National statistics, World Bank (2018), National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hotspotting and Shaping Action (2020)	✓			
	Mismanaged waste	kg/y	Recalculated based on waste management data, Plastic Leak Project (PLP), ReSource Footprint Tracker	✓			
Downstream macroplastic **leakage**	**Macroplastic leakage** (based on mismanaged waste and plastic residual value)	kg/y	PLP or other methodology	✓			
Macro- and microplastic **leakage** including **upstream, operational and downstream activities**	**Microplastic leakage**	kg/y	PLP or other methodology		✓		
	Macro- and microplastic leakage **in oceans**	kg/y	PLP or Joint Research Center (JRC)		✓		
	Macro and microplastic leakage **in other compartments**	kg/y	PLP		✓		
	Plastic leakage **after one year (fate)**	kg eq/y	PLP			✓	Not mature enough, prone to change in coming years
Macro- and microplastic **leakage impact**	Plastic leakage impact on human health and ecosystem quality	Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), Potentially Affected Fraction (PAF), etc.				✓	No quantitative method available
Other environmental impacts associated with plastic use	LCA metrics such as CO$_2$e	kg CO$_2$e, etc.	Carbon footprint based on IPCC (2013) Global Warming Potential (GWP)		✓		LCA methods

Can be referred to as a footprint (left side vertical label)

Table 2: Metrics used in company plastic accounting – life cycle impact assessment and life cycle assessment inventory (3R Initiative, 2020, p. 12)

Strengths: Thanks to the multi-stakeholder initiative and support of multinational brands as well as well-known consultancies, the 3RI Guidelines for Corporate Plastic Stewardship provide a robust framework for corporate plastic waste disclosures. The Guidelines also go a step further by suggesting how plastic disclosures can be embedded into a holistic circular action strategy.

Weaknesses: Despite the finely structured value chain categories and metrics for corporate plastic accounting, the 3RI framework is relatively complicated to use and lacks direct disclosure support.

3.2 ReSource Footprint Tracker

Summary: Built by the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) and used as an official reporting instrument for the U.S. Plastics Pact, the ReSource Footprint Tracker provides a common language and set of metrics for understanding corporate plastic action (ReSource Plastic, 2020). Their tracker measures the plastic footprints and waste mitigation efforts of ReSource Plastic members to impart data-driven insights used to help their members maximize and multiply the impact of plastic waste activities.
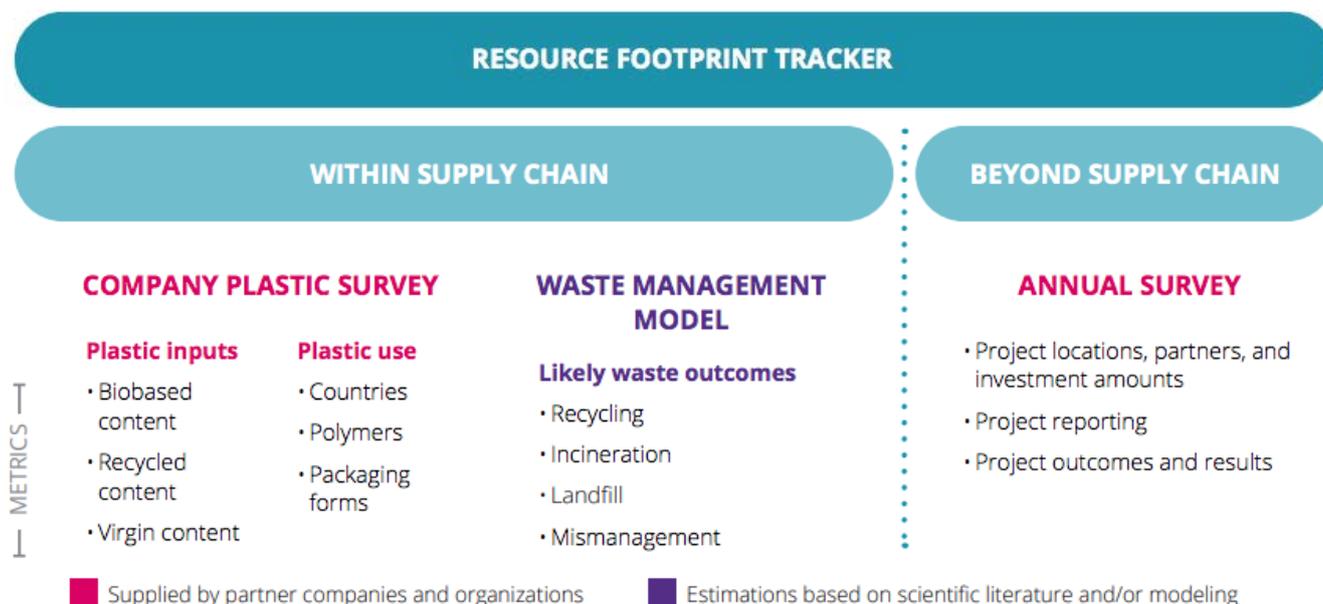

Figure 1: ReSource Footprint Tracker data components (ReSource Plastic, 2020, p.1)

Strengths: The Resource Footprint Tracker's comprehensive plastic assessment survey as well the underlying methodology are available online. Especially for larger companies that have a team of internal sustainability experts, this open-source framework allows for independent analytics and disclosures. Furthermore, companies who wish to become paid members of ReSource Plastic receive access to the full ReSource Footprint Tracker web tool and interactive dashboard as well as strategic advising. Definitions and guidance are aligned with EMF's Global Commitment and Plastic Pact Network, enabling it to be used as a reporting instrument for Pacts, as in the case of the U.S. Plastics Pact.

Weaknesses: For small and medium-sized businesses, the ReSource Footprint Tracker assessment is relatively time-consuming and requires a considerable amount of background knowledge. Although strategic advising is available for members, the paid options are not accessible to companies of all sizes and tend to be restricted by geography.

3.3 Plastic Leak Project

Summary: The Plastic Leak Project (PLP) was co-founded by Quantis and EA in partnership with 35 public, private and scientific organizations (Quantis & EA, 2020). PLP delivers an advanced methodology to map, measure, and forecast plastic leakage along a company's value chain. Following rigorous testing of the methodology through pilot projects with Arla Foods and textile brand Sympatex Technologies, the full PLP methodological guidelines are now publicly available.[1]
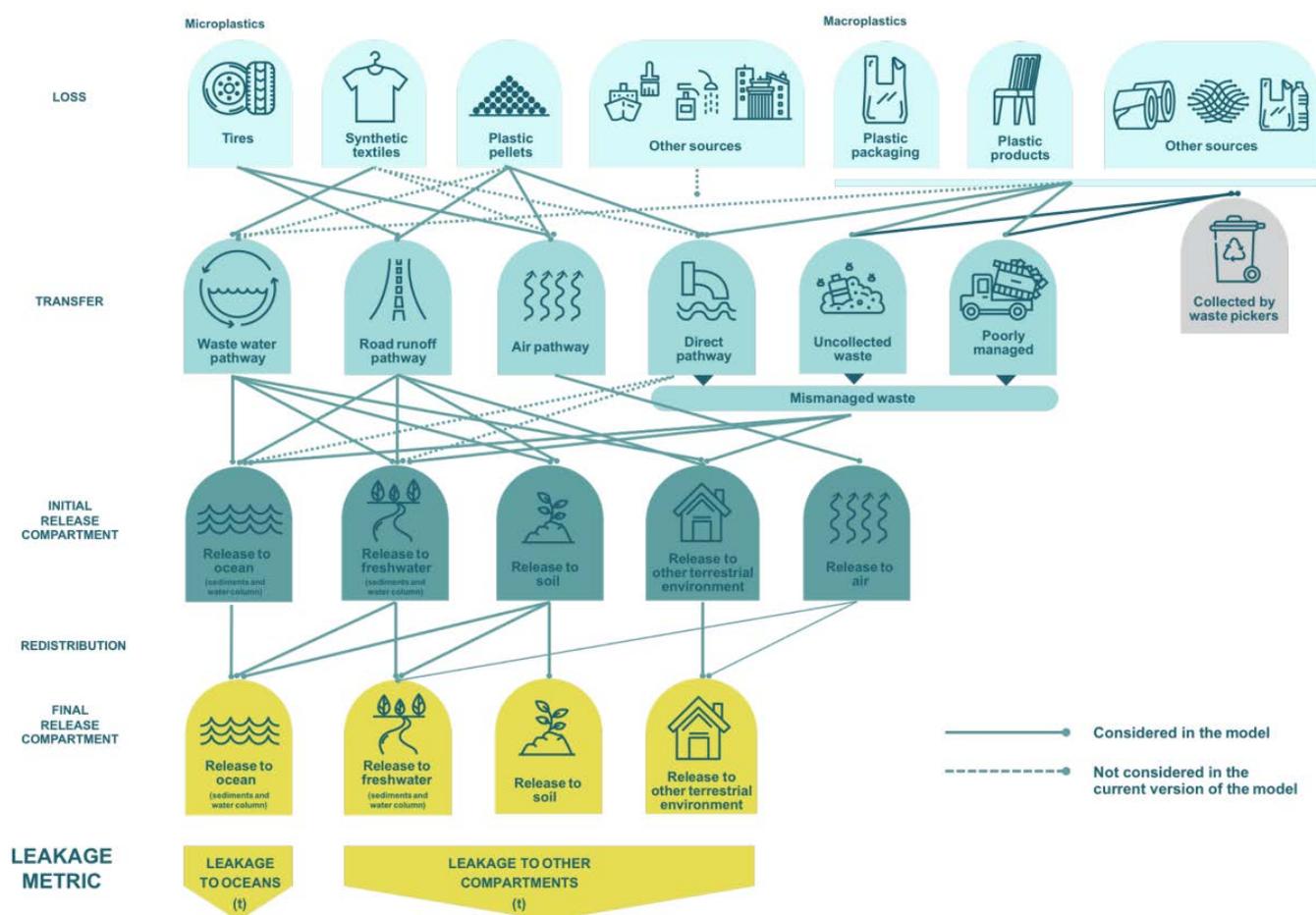

Figure 2: Key stages of the leakage modelling | detailed view (Quantis & EA, 2020, p. 30)

Strengths: PLP provides a very detailed framework for an material flow analysis that can be used for corporate plastic waste disclosures. Their strong focus on end-of-life treatments and plastic leakage help companies identify plastic leakage hotspots and quantify the negative impacts of mismanaged plastic waste. In addition to the conceptual framework, Quantis and EA also provide optional consulting support to complete the technical assessment and streamline disclosures.

Weaknesses: PLP is a rather technical framework that requires substantial time and financial commitment to unleash its full potential. Whereas multinational companies definitely benefit from a holistic understanding of their plastic flows, smaller and medium-sized businesses would need to accept a steep learning curve when engaging with PLP.

1   https://quantis-intl.com/strategy/collaborative-initiatives/plastic-leak-project/

3.4 The Global Commitment

Summary: Led by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, in collaboration with the UN Environment Programme, the Global Commitment unites business, governments and other organizations behind a common vision of a circular economy for plastics. In particular, it provides a framework to disclose a suite of quantitative and qualitative metrics that help assess a company's plastic stewardship strategy (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021). The Global Commitment has already mobilized over 500 signatories that are determined to start building a circular economy for plastic. These include companies representing over 20% of all plastic packaging produced globally (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021).
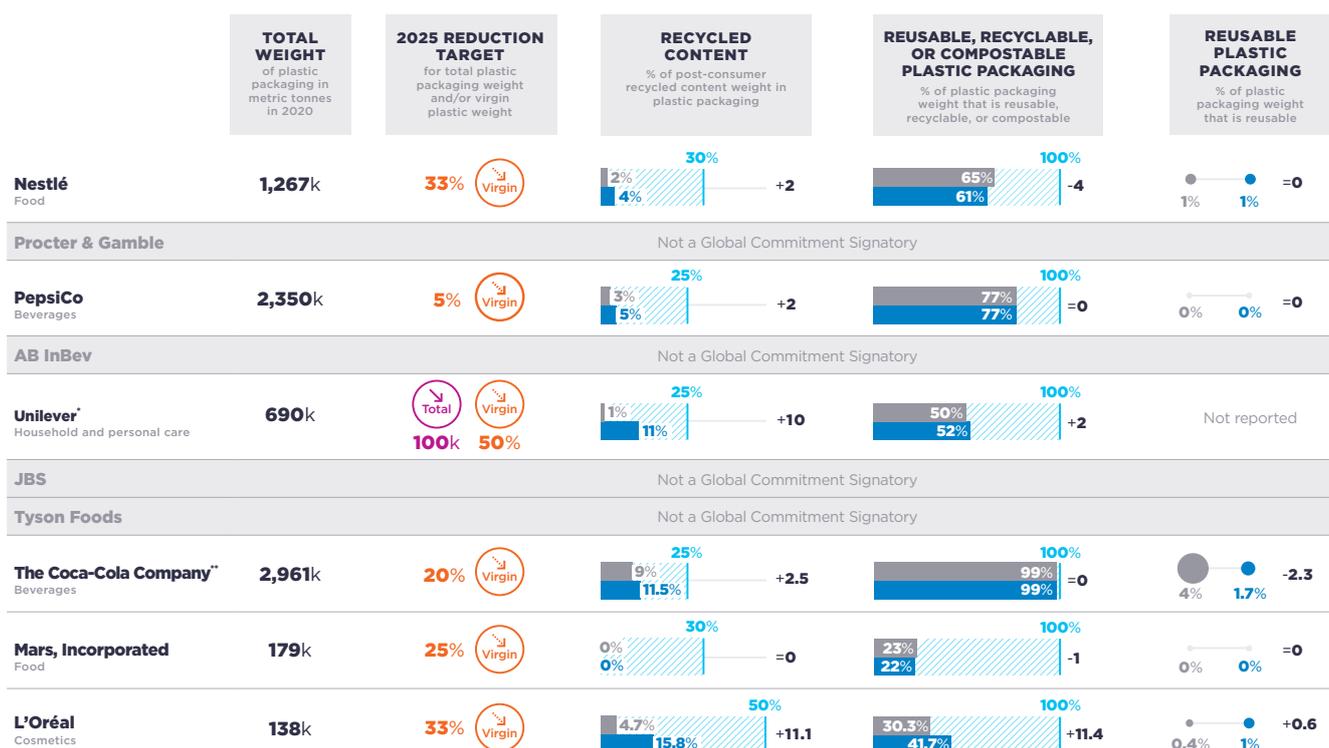
	TOTAL WEIGHT of plastic packaging in metric tonnes in 2020	2025 REDUCTION TARGET for total plastic packaging weight and/or virgin plastic weight	RECYCLED CONTENT % of post-consumer recycled content weight in plastic packaging	REUSABLE, RECYCLABLE, OR COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC PACKAGING % of plastic packaging weight that is reusable, recyclable, or compostable	REUSABLE PLASTIC PACKAGING % of plastic packaging weight that is reusable
Nestlé Food	1,267k	33% (Virgin)	30% / 2% / 4% / +2	100% / 65% / 61% / -4	1% / 1% / =0
Procter & Gamble			Not a Global Commitment Signatory		
PepsiCo Beverages	2,350k	5% (Virgin)	25% / 3% / 5% / +2	100% / 77% / 77% / =0	0% / 0% / =0
AB InBev			Not a Global Commitment Signatory		
Unilever* Household and personal care	690k	(Total) 100k / (Virgin) 50%	25% / 1% / 11% / +10	100% / 50% / 52% / +2	Not reported
JBS			Not a Global Commitment Signatory		
Tyson Foods			Not a Global Commitment Signatory		
The Coca-Cola Company** Beverages	2,961k	20% (Virgin)	25% / 9% / 11.5% / +2.5	100% / 99% / 99% / =0	4% / 1.7% / -2.3
Mars, Incorporated Food	179k	25% (Virgin)	30% / 0% / 0% / =0	100% / 23% / 22% / -1	0% / 0% / =0
L'Oréal Cosmetics	138k	33% (Virgin)	50% / 4.7% / 15.8% / +11.1	100% / 30.3% / 41.7% / +11.4	0.4% / 1% / +0.6

Figure 3: Progress on plastic packaging by top FMCG companies since 2018 (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021, p. 9)

Strengths: The Global Commitment and its annual progress reporting mechanism is the most advanced framework for corporate plastic packaging and waste disclosures. Built around a common vision and six specific targets described by the New Plastics Economy initiative, signatories are asked to disclose their annual progress towards the target publicly, with some additional metrics can be disclosed in a private format. Today, hundreds of signatories are working towards the same objective, providing evidence of where progress is possible, but also where voluntary initiatives are not enough and that a stronger policy intervention is needed (e.g., to level the playing field, bring harmonization and common standards). Public disclosures are available online[2] and can be used by a suite of stakeholders to inform their decisions.

Weaknesses: The Global Commitment can provide useful insights on where progress can be made, but it misses an overall understanding of the plastic use across and along the value chain.

---

2   https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/global-commitment/signatory-reports

3.5 Global Reporting Initiative

Summary: As a provider of the global best practice for impact reporting, the Global Report-ing Initiative's (GRI) mission is to deliver the highest level of transparency for organizational impacts on the economy, the environment, and people (GRI, 2022). As part of the GRI Sus-tainability Reporting Standards, "GRI 301: Materials" and "GRI 306: Waste" ask companies to disclose information that is related to plastic use and plastic waste stewardship. GRI 301 disclosures can provide information about an organization's impacts related to materials, and how it manages these impacts. GRI 306 disclosures are designed to help an organiza-tion better understand and communicate its waste-related impacts, and how it manages these impacts.
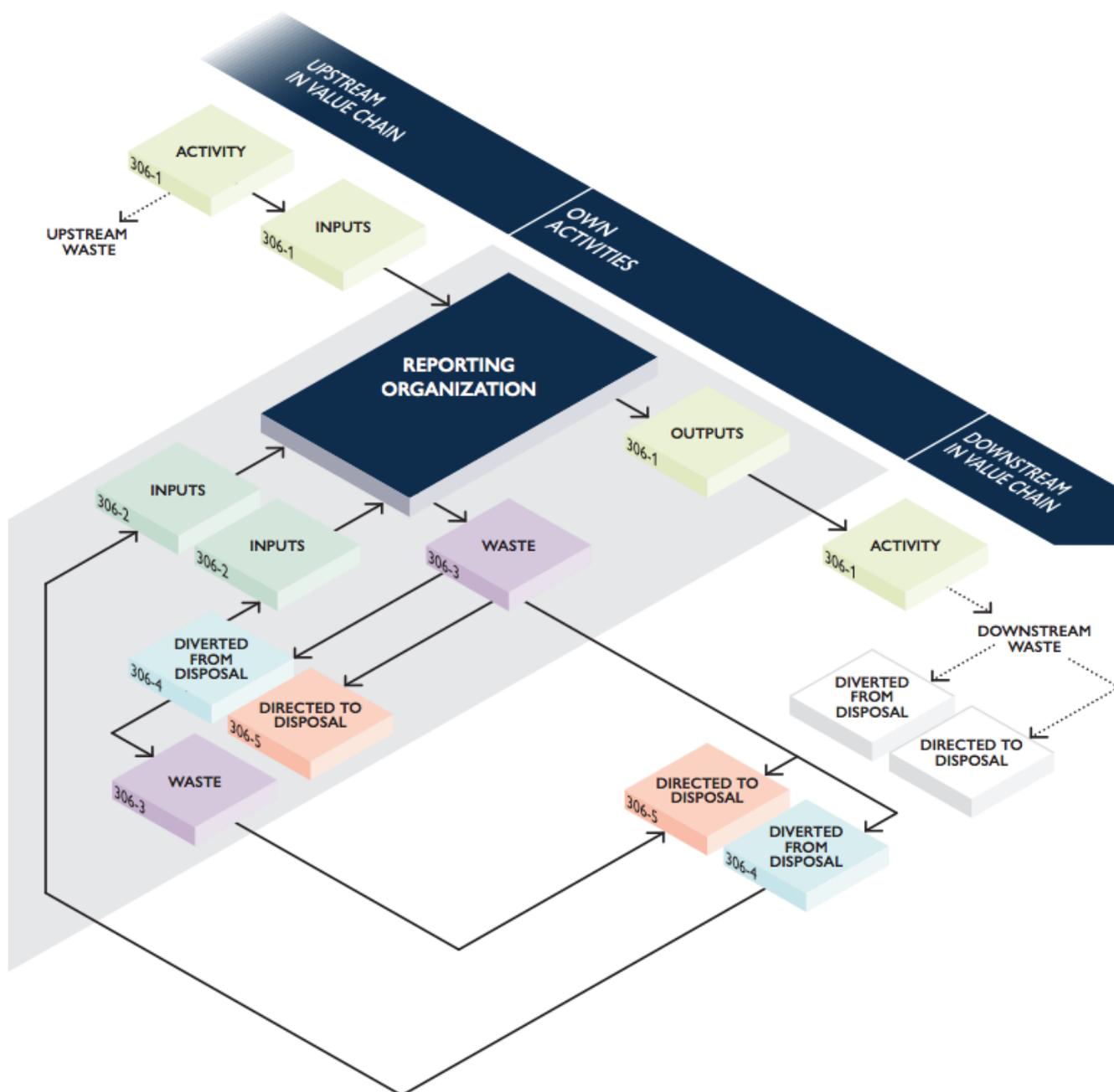
Figure 4: Process flow generic example (GRI, 2020, p. 16)

Strengths: Both Standards, GRI 301 and GRI 306, are material agnostic and can easily be integrated into the holistic GRI framework for corporate sustainability management and disclosures (e.g., aligning plastic stewardship with climate action, social capital, and governance). The GRI Standards are the only global standards with an exclusive focus on impact reporting for a multi-stakeholder audience - making it an essential factor in the shaping of a reporting structure (GRI, 2022).

Weaknesses: GRI's general mission to standardize impact reporting comes with a limitation to focus on niche sectors that require granular assessments and special metrics. In the case of corporate plastic waste disclosures, GRI 301 and GRI 306 can be used as guardrails. However, the two standards require complementary metrics and disclosure support to provide the information decision-makers need to accelerate a world without plastic waste.

4. Discussion

4.1 Opportunities of Plastic Waste Disclosures

The measurement and disclosure of a company's association with plastic waste can **help inform internal and external decision-making processes and/or stakeholders.** Internal decision-makers can use plastic waste-related data to surface cost reduction opportunities, reduce reliance on finite resources and mitigate risk of raw material price fluctuations. External stakeholders would benefit from increased transparency in various ways: Firstly, investors could receive insights into the risk exposure of a potential investee regarding upcoming plastic legislation. Secondly, consumers could benchmark the voluntary and mandatory circular economy initiatives of their favorite brands more easily. Thirdly, policymakers would get access to the information they need to institutionalize effective incentive structures, develop physical infrastructure, and design other mechanisms, such as design standards and other supportive legislation.

Additionally, plastic waste disclosures could meaningfully **expand the scope of current sustainability disclosure frameworks.** While the initial focus on measuring and disclosing greenhouse gas emissions made sense, we should now fast-track additional thematic areas such as waste that help track our progress towards regenerating our planet. Especially, because of the vast potential the circular economy transition holds in the race to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The current momentum for plastic action could provide an unprecedented opportunity to fast-track the inclusion of waste data in corporate sustainability reporting frameworks. During this process, the alignment with the climate action evolution does not have to be limited to the measurement frameworks (i.e., GHG Protocol), but could also help model a science-based trajectory targeting a world without waste (i.e., Net-zero for Nature SBTi). Once drafted for plastics, the framework should be replicable for other material types to create a holistic view of corporate circular economy stewardship (similar to what happened with CO_2 for the establishment of corporate GHG inventories).

4.2 Limitations of Plastic Waste Disclosures

Despite the obvious need for additional transparency, it is important to emphasize that corporate plastic waste **disclosures are only one piece of the solution puzzle.** Disclosures can make strategy development and capital allocation more efficient. Yet, they are merely a tool to inform decisions that will ultimately transform products and systems (3R Initiative, 2021). Both, strong frameworks and technologies, would be critical to achieve a circular economy for plastics. The frameworks would guide corporate strategy and capital deployment, and innovative technologies could build the chemical and physical infrastructure needed to change today's industries for the better.

Furthermore, the measurement boundaries and **business activities differ substantially by industry sector.** Ideally, the framework for plastic waste disclosures should be industry agnostic and allow for industry-specific adjustments for measurement and disclosure practices. Also, in the absence of a universally accepted framework, it is likely that, besides mandatory disclosures for extended producer responsibility (EPR) compliance, **most companies will continue prioritizing the internal use of this information over making it publicly available.**

Unfortunately, the current **data availability and accuracy leave a lot to be desired.** Although primary data collection and secondary data-sharing efforts are constantly improving, the lack of existing standards and large-scale accounting systems still impose substantial limitations on the global progress towards a circular economy (SYSTEMIQ, 2022). Besides restricting the feasibility of corporate plastic waste analytics, the partial absence and limited granularity of data make it difficult to verify corporate claims and disclosures.
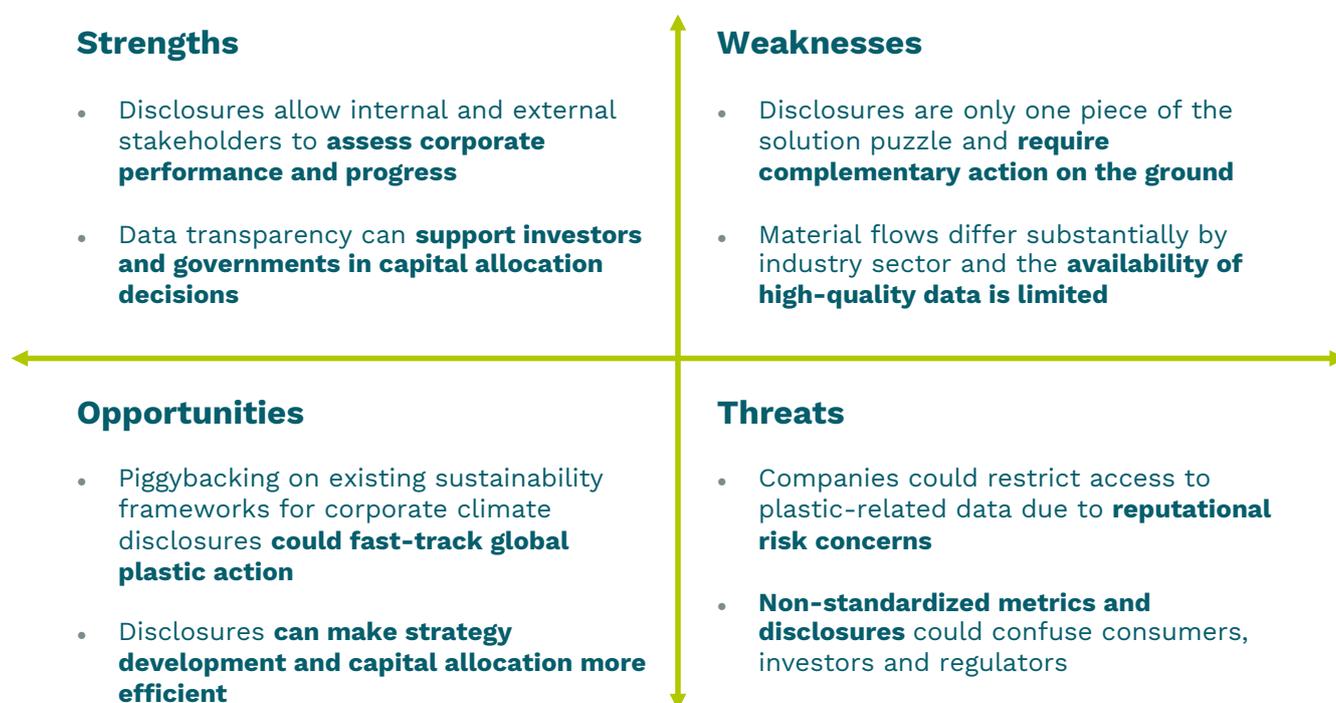
Strengths

- Disclosures allow internal and external stakeholders to **assess corporate performance and progress**

- Data transparency can **support investors and governments in capital allocation decisions**

Weaknesses

- Disclosures are only one piece of the solution puzzle and **require complementary action on the ground**

- Material flows differ substantially by industry sector and the **availability of high-quality data is limited**

Opportunities

- Piggybacking on existing sustainability frameworks for corporate climate disclosures **could fast-track global plastic action**

- Disclosures **can make strategy development and capital allocation more efficient**

Threats

- Companies could restrict access to plastic-related data due to **reputational risk concerns**

- **Non-standardized metrics and disclosures** could confuse consumers, investors and regulators

Figure 5: SWOT Analysis (PREVENT Waste Alliance, 2022)

5. Recommendations

5.1 Piggyback on Corporate Climate Disclosures

Instead of reinventing the wheel, **piggybacking on existing sustainability frameworks for corporate climate disclosures could fast-track global plastic action.** As one of the major frameworks for corporate climate disclosures, The GHG Protocol first published its Corporate Standard in 2001. Today, it provides the accounting platform for virtually every corporate GHG reporting program with more than 85% of companies worldwide using the Corporate Standard when reporting to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) (Russell, 2014, WRI & WBCSD, 2017).

Building upon the existing plastic waste disclosure frameworks, a **"Waste Protocol"** that resembles the GHG Protocol could provide a universally accepted framework for corporate waste reporting and disclosure programs. Similar to carbon dioxide emissions, which were the key drivers for the development of The GHG Protocol, plastic waste could inform the development of an accounting framework that ultimately applies to other waste types as well. An **integration of "corporate waste disclosures" into established corporate sustainability reporting platforms** such as CDP and GRI could further accelerate transparency.

5.2 Consider the Full Lifecycle of Plastics

A universally accepted framework for corporate plastic waste disclosures **should include the full lifecycle of plastics** – ranging from plastic production to the treatment after use (see Figure 6). The majority of today's existing frameworks fall short in the inclusion of plastics across their full lifecycle and typically provide very limited granularity that restricts the identification of improvement potential.
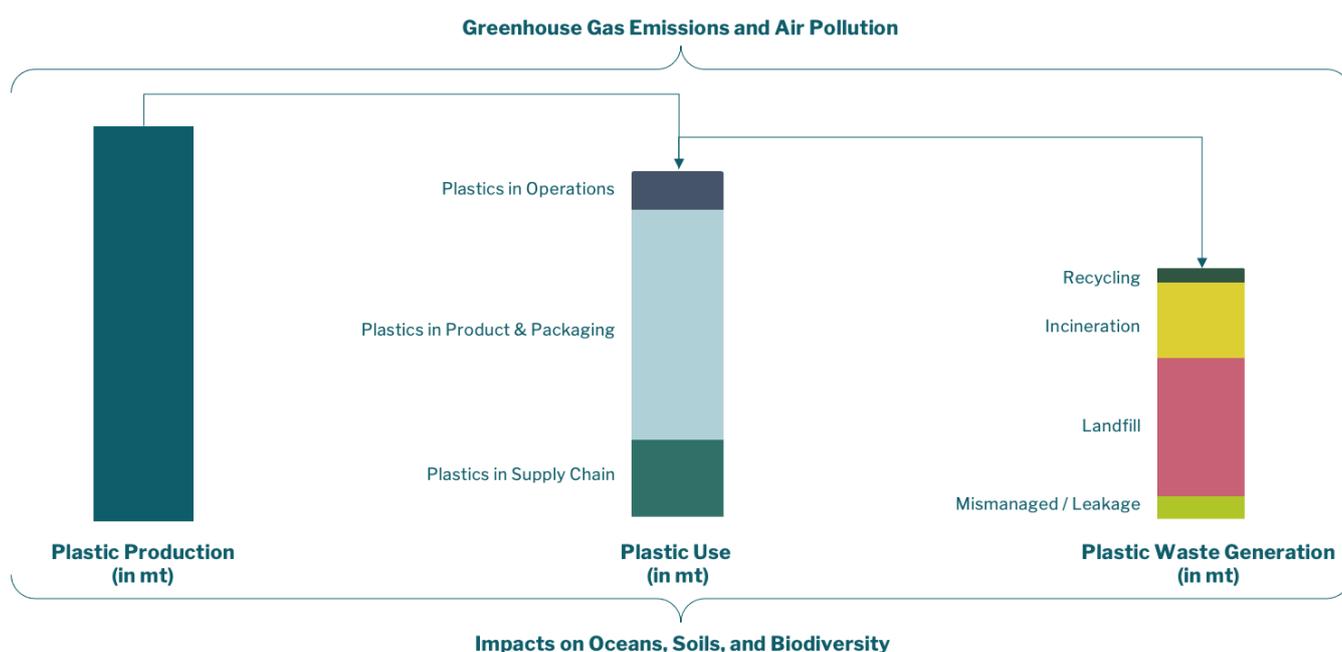

Figure 6: Visualization of material flow analysis of plastics (PREVENT Waste Alliance, 2022)

Governments and the public sector have a key role to play when it comes to providing the guidelines and tools to be used by companies for measuring their plastic-related performance. Amongst other benefits, their datasets and insights help understand the waste flows that are associated with a company, a sector, or a specific city/region. A number of important initiatives are underway to monitor plastic pollution and complement national reporting.[3] Of the 35 tools available for assessing plastic leakage, about seven seem to be more widely used (see Figure 7).

Plastic methodologies along the value chain — for governments
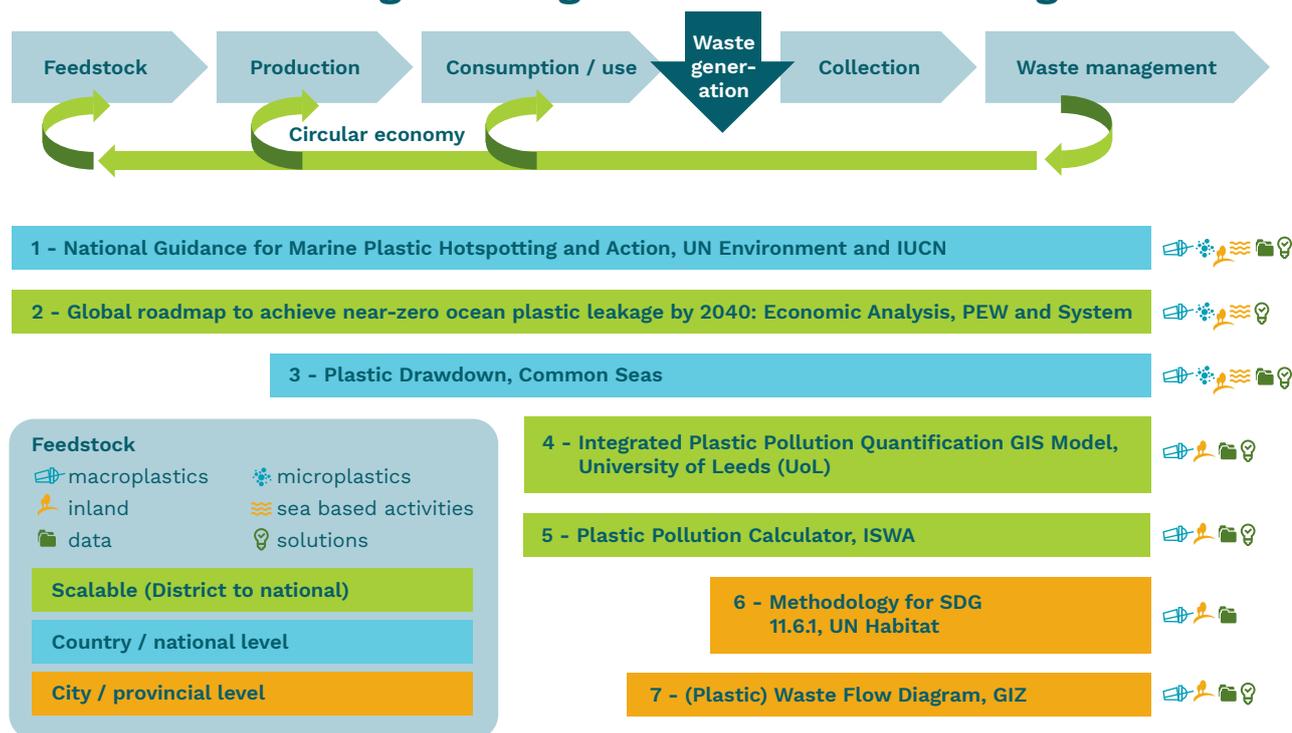
Figure 7: Plastic pollution modeling methodologies for countries and cities (UNEA, 2019)

5.3 Enhance Collaboration

To achieve a universally accepted framework for plastic waste disclosures, increased **collaboration between expert organizations** is essential. Such collaborative efforts should start with the definition of a common north star and be amplified by burdenless access to data and information.

Once the experts who have been working on the existing frameworks, plastic producers and recycling associations join forces, an evolution that follows the trajectory of global greenhouse gas disclosure frameworks becomes more likely.

Furthermore, **collaborative efforts between policymakers and the private sector** are key to ensuring the efficacy of disclosure frameworks. As most of the existing frameworks require

---

3   National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hotspotting and Shaping Action developed by the IUCN, UNEP, and the Life Cycle Initiative; the Minderoo Foundation Plastic Waste Makers Index; Guidelines For The Monitoring And Assessment Of Plastic Litter In The Ocean (developed by Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection); and the Back to Blue Plastics Management Index (Economist Impact and Nippon Foundation).

specialized expertise to be implemented by businesses, corporate plastic waste disclosures have historically been more accessible to larger organizations. However, to capture the potential of large-scale adoption of plastic waste disclosures, **small and medium-sized businesses should not be left behind**. Generally speaking, smaller businesses require frameworks that are available at low cost and reduce the administrative burden to an absolute minimum.

Similar holds true for businesses in less developed regions, where environmental legislation is widely absent, and the proportion of mismanaged plastic waste is high. Hence, collaborative efforts between policymakers and the private sector should harness diversity and inclusion to provide practical frameworks and tools for businesses in these regions.

A universally accepted framework should also ensure that disclosures are n**ot limited to the reporting of metrics with a negative connotation (e.g., plastic waste generation in metric tons, % of plastic leakage)**. Instead, businesses should be rewarded for their progress and transparency (e.g., reverse logistics, packaging design optimizations). Especially in markets that lack mandatory disclosure frameworks, voluntary actions should be rewarded by simplifying the sharing of such information with relevant stakeholder networks.

Universally Accepted Framework

1. Piggyback on Corporate Climate Disclosures

Building upon existing sustainability frameworks for corporate climate disclosures (e.g. GHG Protocol and CDP) could fast-track global plastic action.

2. Consider the Full Lifecycle of Plastics

Corporate plastic waste disclosures should include the full lifecycle of plastics – ranging from plastic production to the treatment after use.

3. Enhance Collaboration

To achieve a universally accepted framework for corporate plastic waste disclosures, increased collaboration between expert organizations is essential.

Figure 8: Recommendations and Conclusion (PREVENT Waste Alliance, 2022)

6. Conclusion

With the recent push for more ambitious climate strategies and ESG disclosures, we now have the opportunity to establish a universally accepted framework for corporate plastic waste disclosures. This can be achieved by building upon the existing frameworks and further aligning them with each other. Piggybacking on the recent progress of corporate climate disclosures, ensuring accessibility for small and medium-sized businesses, and fostering collaboration across stakeholders are other measures to amplify the potential of plastic waste disclosures. Along this journey, the PREVENT Waste Alliance will continue to engage stakeholders and be a force for inclusive collaboration.

7. Outlook

In early March 2022, leaders from 175 nations endorsed a historic resolution to end plastic pollution and forge an **international legally binding agreement by 2024.** This agreement is seen as the most important international multilateral environmental deal since the Paris Agreement in 2015.

To prepare for impending legislation and align with stakeholder expectations, corporate leaders are well-advised to start measuring, reducing, and disclosing their plastic waste sooner rather than later. With **plastic taxes** being introduced in the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain, the EU Single-Use Plastic Directive, and **Extended Producer Responsibility schemes (EPR)** gaining ground across the world, plastic waste measurements and disclosures are increasingly becoming a mandatory job to be done. In this context, **harmonization and inclusion of national registers** of importers and producers and relevant processes how to collect, store and process data, such as information provided by companies on the amount of packaging they introduce to a national market, are relevant (PREVENT Waste Alliance, 2020).

To support holistic corporate action related to plastic waste mitigation, plastic waste disclosures are an important **starting point to enter discussions about voluntary and mandatory EPR schemes**. As discussed in the PREVENT discussion paper "Plastic credit schemes and EPR – risks and opportunities" and the ValuCred report "Plastic Credits Friend or Foe?"[4], **transparent disclosures and corporate accountability are key to avoid unintended consequences**.

The vivid discussions within the PREVENT working group have highlighted the urgent need for further analysis, standards and regulations. A common framework for plastic waste disclosures will be crucial in order to ensure comparability of metrics and to effectively integrate corporate insights into holistic action plans that systematically stop plastic pollution. Moreover, a better understanding of the role plastic-related disclosures could play in already established sustainability and ESG reporting frameworks will bring us closer to improved transparency, corporate accountability, and eventually, a circular economy for plastics.

---

4   PREVENT Waste Alliance (2021). Retrieved from https://prevent-waste.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/PREVENT_Discussion-Paper_Plastic-credit-schemes-and-EPR.pdf ValuCred (2021). Retrieved from https://prevent-waste.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Plastic-Credits-%E2%80%93-Friend-or-Foe.pdf

Bibliography

Ampliphi (2021). Plastic Footprint: A Holistic Overview.
Retrieved from https://ampliphi.io/plastic-footprint/

Brandes, M. & Duncan, J. (2022). These countries are measuring plastic pollution – as the first step to tackle it. World Economic Forum. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/03/how-to-manage-plastic-pollution-by-measuring-it

Cabernard, L., Pfister, S. & Hellweg, S. (2019). A new method for analyzing sustainability performance of global supply chains and its application to material resources. Science of The Total Environment, Volume 684, pp. 164-177.

ClientEarth (2021). Material issues - Big Food and the rise of plastic-related risk. Retrieved from https://www.clientearth.org/media/4wdgdxyn/material-issues-big-food-and-the-rise-of-plastic-related-risk.pdf

Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2021). The Global Commitment 2021 Progress Report.
Retrieved from https://ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/global-commitment/overview

Geyer et al. (2017). Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made. Science Advances.
Vol 3, Issue 7. DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.1700782

GIIN (2020). Percent Recycled Materials.
Retrieved from https://iris.thegiin.org/metric/5.1/pd9364/

Google (2022). Closing the Plastics Circularity Gap. Retrieved from
https://www.gstatic.com/gumdrop/sustainability/closing-plastics-gap-full-report.pdf

GRI (2020). GRI 306: Waste 2020. Retrieved from
https://www.globalreporting.org/standards/media/2573/gri-306-waste-2020.pdf

GRI (2022). ESG standards, frameworks and everything in between. Retrieved from https://www.globalreporting.org/media/jxkgrggd/gri-perspective-esg-standards-frameworks.pdf

Grönman et al. (2019). Carbon handprint – An approach to assess the positive climate impacts of products demonstrated via renewable diesel case. Journal of Cleaner Production. Volume 206, pp. 1059-1072.

IUCN (2019). Review of plastic footprint methodologies.
Retrieved from https://www.iucn.org/content/review-plastic-footprint-methodologies

IUCN (2020). The marine plastic footprint.
Retrieved from https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/2020-001-En.pdf

IUCN, EA & Quantis (2020). National Guidance for plastic pollution hotspotting and shaping action, Country reports. Retrieved from https://plastichotspotting.lifecycleinitiative.org/pilots/

ISO 14051:2011 (2018). Retrieved from https://www.iso.org/standard/50986.html

Lau et al. (2020). Evaluating scenarios toward zero plastic pollution. Science. Vol 369, Issue 6510, pp. 1455-1461. DOI: 10.1126/science.aba9475

Lopez-Aguilar, J.F., Sevigné-Itoiz, E., Maspoch, M.L. & Peña, J. (2022). A realistic material flow analysis for end-of-life plastic packaging management in Spain: Data gaps and suggestions for improvements towards effective recyclability. Sustainable Production and Consumption Volume. pp. 209-219.

Kahlert, S. & Bening, Catharina R. (2022). Why pledges alone will not get plastics recycled: Comparing recyclate production and anticipated demand. Resources, Conservation and Recycling. Vol. 181.

Paula et al. (2018). Retrieved from https://www.handprint.fi/carbon-handprint/

PACE (2020). The Circular Action Agenda for Plastics.
Retrieved from https://pacecircular.org/action-agenda/plastics

PEW Trusts & SYSTEMIQ (2020). Breaking the Plastic Wave. Retrieved from
https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2020/07/23/breaking-the-plastic-wave-top-findings

Plastic Disclosure Project (2013). Plastic Disclosure Project.
Retrieved from https://www.unep.org/resources/report/plastic-disclosure-project/

Pisharody, A. & Lerpiniere, D. (2022). Toolkit for the development of an inventory of plastic waste. Basel Convention, UN Environment Programme & Resource Futures.
Retrieved from http://www.basel.int/Countries/NationalReporting/Toolkitsforwasteinventory/tabid/9043/Default.aspx

PREVENT Waste Alliance. (2020). EPR Toolbox. Factsheet 04: How can a register of obliged companies be established?. More information: https://prevent-waste.net/en/epr-toolbox/

PRI (2021). Engaging on plastic packaging: Fast-moving consumer goods.
Retrieved from https://www.unpri.org/plastics/engaging-on-plastic-packaging-fast-moving-consumer-goods/7919.article

Pucker, K.P. (2021). Overselling Sustainability Reporting. Harvard Business Review. 05-06 2021. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2021/05/overselling-sustainability-reporting

Quantis & EA (2020). The Plastic Leak Project. Retrieved from
https://quantis-intl.com/strategy/collaborative-initiatives/plastic-leak-project/

ReSource Plastic (2020). ReSource Footprint Tracker. Methodology Overview.
Retrieved from https://resource-plastic.com/more

Ruffo, S. & Martin, E. (2020). Measuring Our Success: How Better Data Can Help Keep Plastic Out of the Ocean. The Circulate Initiative. Retrieved from https://www.thecirculateinitiative.org/_files/ugd/77554d_3988c2df74ce4d99891ddf388c99c62b.pdf?index=true

Russell, S. (2014). Looking Back on 15 Years of Greenhouse Gas Accounting. Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Retrieved from
https://ghgprotocol.org/blog/looking-back-15-years-greenhouse-gas-accounting

Science Based Targets Network (2020). Science-Based Targets for Nature. Initial Guidance for Business. Retrieved from https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SBTN-initial-guidance-for-business.pdf

SYSTEMIQ (2022). ReShaping Plastics.
Retrieved from https://www.systemiq.earth/reshaping-plastics/

UNECE (2021). Conference of European Statisticians Framework on Waste Statistics.
Retrieved from https://unece.org/statistics/publications/conference-european-statisticians-framework-waste-statistics.

UN, IUCN & Lifecycle Initiative (2021). National Guidance for Plastic Pollution Hotspotting and Shaping Action. Retrieved from https://plastichotspotting.lifecycleinitiative.org

UNEP (2014). Valuing plastic: the business case for measuring, managing and disclosing plastic use in the consumer goods industry.
Retrieved from https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/9238

UN (2022). Nations sign up to end global scourge of plastic pollution.
Retrieved from https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113142

WRI & WBCSD (2017). Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Companies and Organizations.
Retrieved from https://ghgprotocol.org/companies-and-organizations#:~:text=GHG%20Protocol%20standards%20and%20guidance,program%20based%20on%20GHG%20Protocol

WWF & Accenture (2020). Integration of Plastics Impact Evaluation into ESG Assessments.
Retrieved from https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_plastics_impact_esg_report_2020_v13.pdf

WWF & Greenview (2021). Hotel Waste Measurement Methodology v1.0.
Retrieved from http://hotelkitchen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/HotelWasteMeasurementMethodology_SEP2021_v1.0.-1.pdf

Zhu, X. & Rochman, C. (2022). Emissions Inventories of Plastic Pollution: A Critical Foundation of an International Agreement to Inform Targets and Quantify Progress. Environ. Sci. Technol. 2022, 56, 6, pp. 3309–3312.

3R Initiative (2021). Guidelines for Corporate Plastic Stewardship.
Retrieved from https://www.3rinitiative.org/guidelines-for-corporates