

MARINE LITTER IN COSTA RICA

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Abstract

Costa Rica has two coasts: Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, with abundant natural resources. However, they are severely threatened due to resources abuse and anthropogenic activities. Due to the above, the government of Costa Rica embarked in the formulation of the National Marine Litter Plan, with the participation of actors from all sectors.

The development of the baseline showed major contribution to marine litter from **land-based sources**. In 2019, around 360 620 Tons were not collected. Given the limitations of information, it cannot be affirmed that all uncollected waste is leaking into the environment. **Marine sources** are also contributing to the problem. The fishing sector, tourist services in the ocean, and cargo ships in ports, docks, and marinas are the most important sources of marine pollution including waste left on the beaches. The total amount of marine waste generated is unknown.

A National Plan for Marine Litter 2021-2030 has been prepared with 6 strategic pillars which are related to the prevention and management of land and marine-based waste sources, education and communication, regulation, research-innovation and monitoring and finances and cooperation.

These 6 pillars have specific objectives, expected results, goals, strategic actions, indicators, resources needed and responsible institutions for the development of the activities and timeline.

Conclusions

- Solid waste management from land sources has shown an important progress in the last 10 years. Legislation, private sector participation, awareness campaigns, among others have proved to influence waste reduction. Despite these advances, there is still open dumping in public places, from where the waste moves into water bodies.

- The amount of recyclable waste collected is very small, so greater efforts must be made to increase its recovery, allowing a greater transformation of materials. Recycling companies, face a series of financial, institutional, and technological barriers, among others, that limit their growth.
- There is a lack of knowledge of the impact of marine litter due to absence of standardized data.

Keywords: Marine litter, Baseline, National Plan