

UNDP's work on plastic pollution

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Who we are

The UN Development Programme is the UN's lead agency on international development.

We work in 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

We help countries develop policies, leadership skills, partnerships and institutional capabilities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



Why do we work on plastic pollution?



Plastic pollution fuels the climate crisis.



By 2050, emissions from plastics could take up 15% of the global carbon budget.

Plastic pollution harms human health.



Plastics are associated with 13,000+ chemicals, many of them harmful to human health.

Plastic pollution threatens biodiversity.



Plastics account for at least 85% of total marine waste, harming ecosystems and marine life.

Plastic pollution deepens inequalities.



Plastic pollution affects low-income countries and low-income communities the most.

Addressing plastic pollution is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Source: Combatting Plastic Pollution for Sustainable Development: Insights from UNDP's Work on the Ground (2024)

How can we tackle plastic pollution?



Reduce the production and use of problematic and avoidable plastics.



Promote transparency throughout the plastic lifecycle.



Eliminate the use of harmful chemicals in plastics.



Improve waste management systems.



Boost eco-design, sustainable alternative materials, and circular business models.

We support countries to...



Develop and improve policies and regulation.

*including single-use plastics bans and Extended Producer Responsibility.



Pilot and scale up sustainable solutions.

*including reuse and refill systems and sustainable local alternatives.



Leverage public and private financing.



Mobilize public awareness and participation.



Strengthen capacity and knowledge systems.

Our 2030 goals



100

Support
100 countries
on policy, regulation
and institutional
strengthening.

100

Support
100 cities/islands
to develop and
implement zero
waste systems.

100

Mobilize
100 million people
to take action and
shift behaviors.

UNDP's work on plastic pollution



200+

large-scale projects
(2024)

1,000+

supported community
initiatives (2024)

132

countries across
the globe

50+

partners, including GEF,
government donors and
private-sector entities.

**\$1.4
billion**

total value

Thematic areas

- chemicals and waste
- biodiversity
- climate change
- international waters
- land degradation
- circular economy

Focus

- upstream (use reduction, bans, alternatives)
- midstream (product design, reuse/refill)
- downstream (waste management)

UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC)



- 1966 UNDP initiated assistance programmes in Korea.
- 1997 Korea started supporting UNDP projects for developing countries.
- 2010 Korea joined OECD-DAC.
UNDP closed its Country Office in Korea.
- 2011 UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC) was established.
- 2025 Implementation year of 2023-2026 Work Programme

USPC's Vision is to serve as the “facilitator of innovative development cooperation” to help drive progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

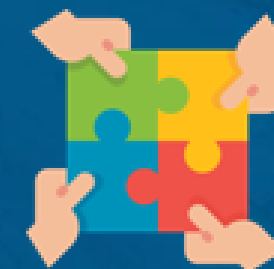
USPC's SDG Partnerships provide partner countries with peer-to-peer knowledge exchange opportunities and country-level implementation support for innovative means to achieve their SDG-related challenges, based on Korean development know-how in the following thematic areas:



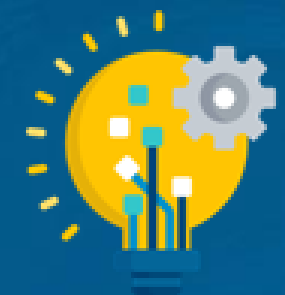
Area 1
Green Recovery and Transition



Area 2
Governance and Gender



Area 3
Development Cooperation



Area 4
Private Sector Development & Engagement

USPC's work on plastic pollution



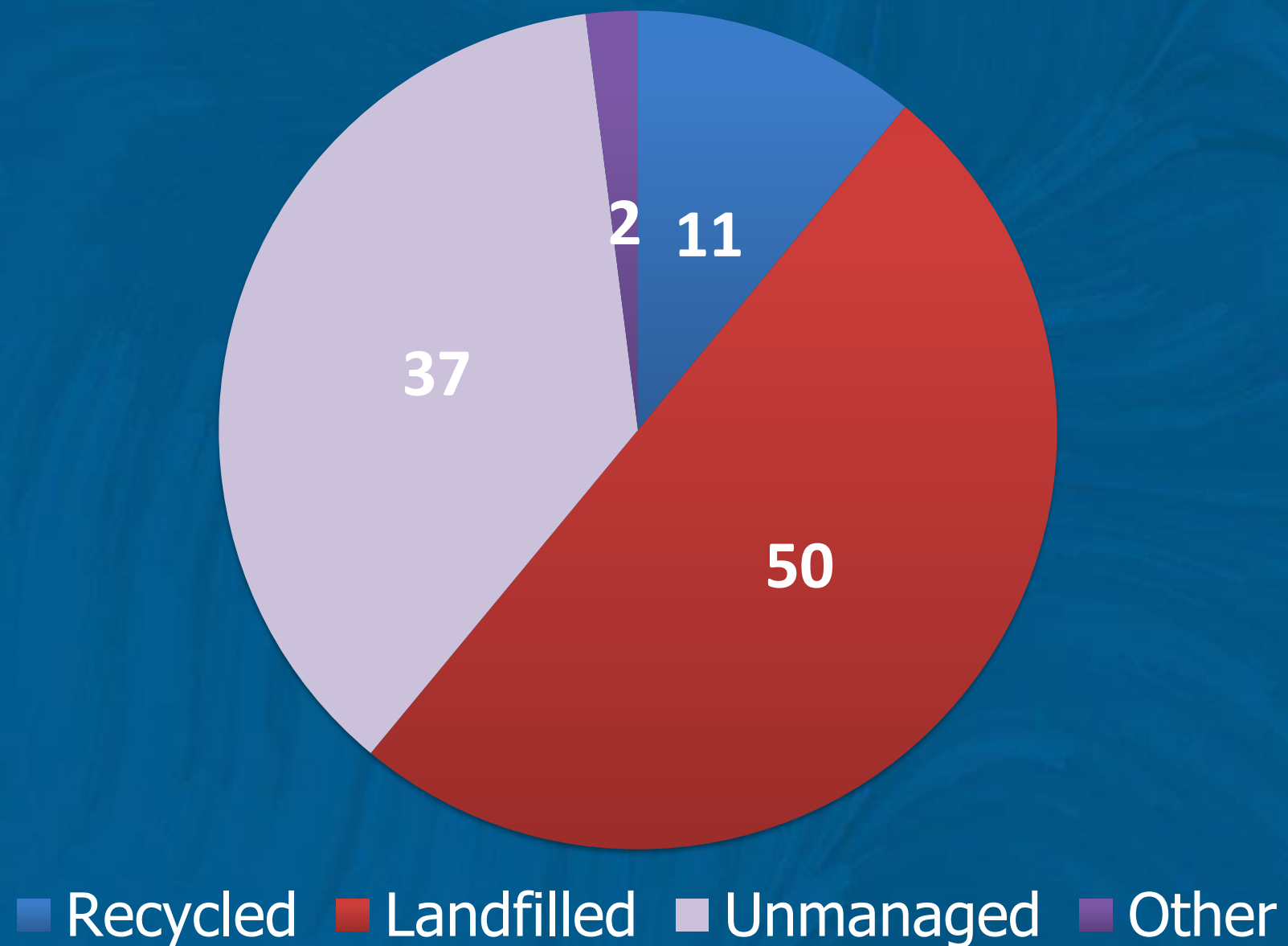
Pilot Project on Circular Economy & Plastics Management in Costa Rica

Why do we work on plastic pollution in Costa Rica?



Despite being a regional leader in waste management, Costa Rica faces structural challenges:

Waste Management in Costa Rica (%)



Limited Infrastructure

Gaps in Governance

Low Public Awareness

Source: Combatting Plastic Pollution for Sustainable Development: Insights from UNDP's Work on the Ground (2022)

How can we tackle plastic pollution in Costa Rica?



Knowledge Exchange
with Korean Experts



Comprehensive
Feasibility Study



Gender Analysis &
Participatory
Design



How can we tackle plastic pollution in Costa Rica?

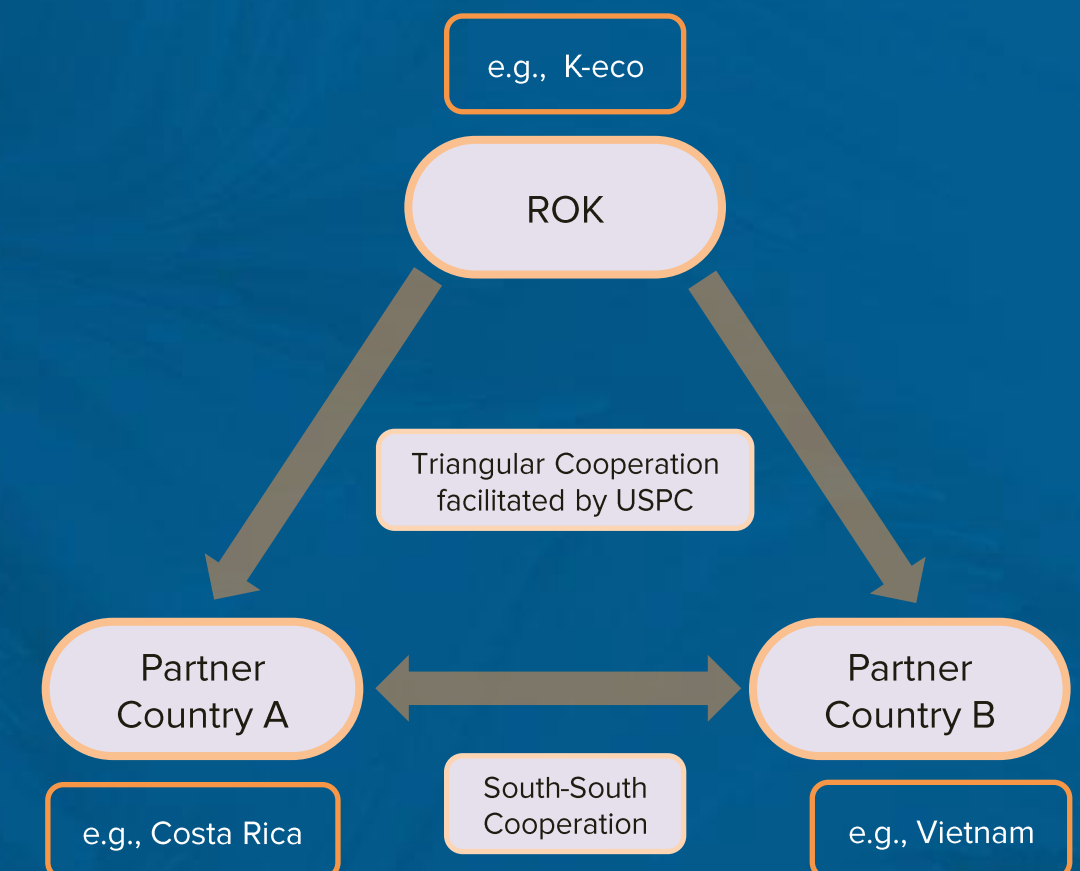


UNDP Strategy 2022-2026

“South-South and triangular cooperation are integral to how UNDP works and thinks about the future of development, as UNDP connects countries and applies their knowledge and experience to advance sustainable development.”

USPC's Two-phased TrC/SSC approach

- TrC is achieved by sharing ROK's knowledge in sustainable forestry with partner countries.
- SSC will be achieved by ensuring partner countries pass acquired knowledge to other partner countries, leading to a “multiplier effect”.



We support Costa Rica to...



Enhance local actors' capacity for circular economy.

*knowledge exchange with the Republic of Korea.



Develop technical insights

* establishing a shared plastic recovery and transformation facility.



Incorporate a gender perspective



Implement complementary circular economy strategies co-developed by the private sector and institutions.

Why work with us?



On-the-ground presence: Active in 170 countries and territories, UNDP leverages extensive local knowledge and deep-rooted connections with governments, communities, and partners at all levels.



Powerful partnerships: Collaborating with a diverse range of stakeholders, including UN agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and foundations, to drive global, national, and local action.



Strong safeguards: Proven measures to ensure gender considerations and social and environmental protections are integrated into the project from the outset.

Learn more about our work



Combating Plastic Pollution for Sustainable Development: A snapshot of UNDP's work in 12 countries



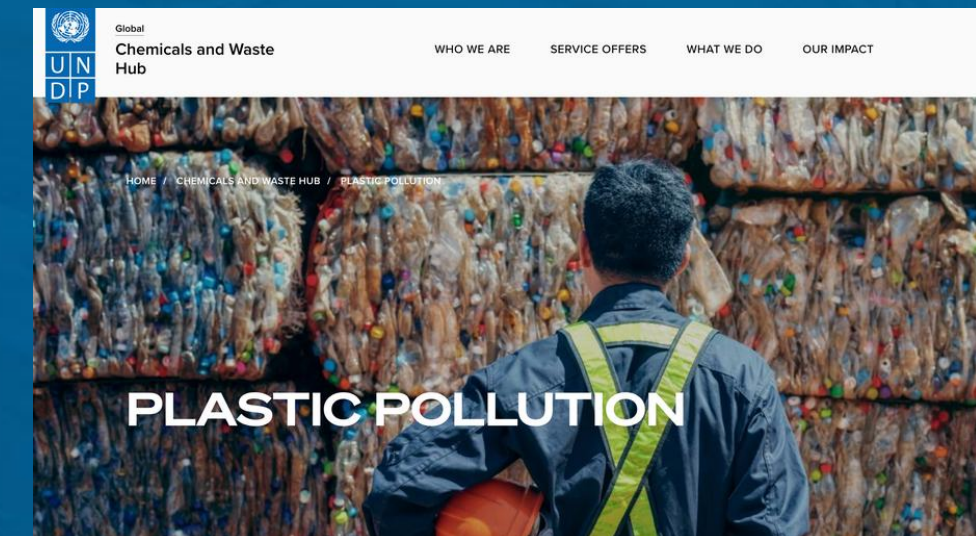
Useful resources



[Plastics 101: A quick guide to the plastics negotiations](#)



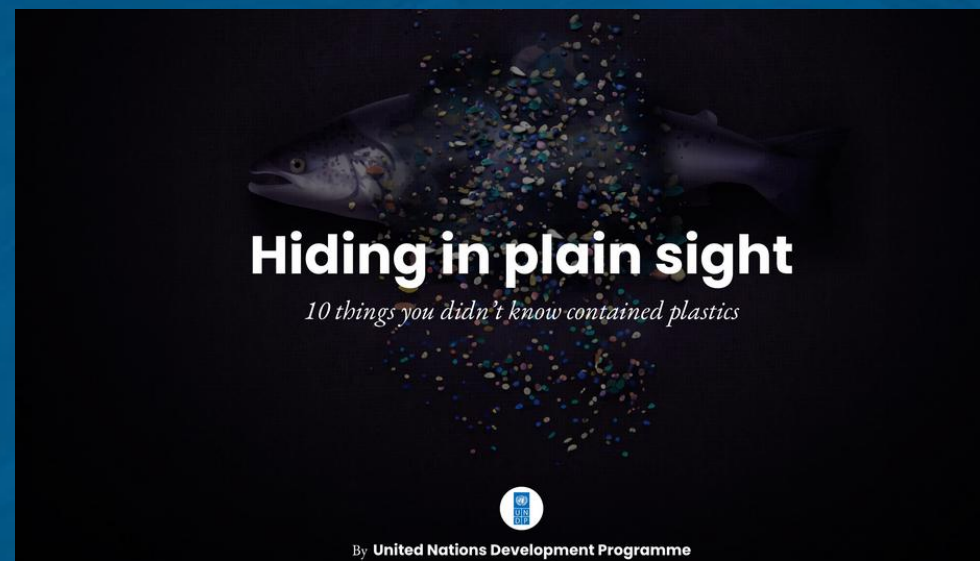
[UNDP Explainer: plastics and climate change](#)



[UNDP plastic website](#)



[UNDP Story: Popping the bottle](#)



[UNDP Story: Hiding in plain sight](#)



[Seoul Policy Centre | United Nations Development Programme](#)



Thanks for listening!



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<https://www.undp.org/policy-centre/seoul>