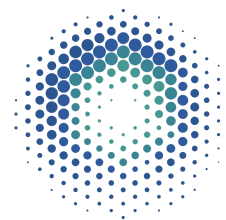


Zero Waste Europe submission: Part A - Scope and Principles



TEMPLATE FOR SUBMISSIONS (part a)

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Elements not discussed at INC-2

1. Scope

What is the proposed scope for the future instrument?

Which types of substances, materials, products and behaviors should be covered by the future instrument?

Proposed scope:

All plastics should be covered, including:

- all the major sectors where plastics is used: packaging and single-use items, textiles, built environment and automotive
- Substances, materials and products should be covered

Plastics should be covered across its **full lifecycle** from production to disposal, incl. social and health impact.

Explanatory Text:

In order to address plastic pollution in a holistic way and make plastic compatible with life on earth, action has to take place at all levels of the supply chain, from extraction to end-of-life and involve all the major sectors using plastics: packaging and single-use items, textiles, built environment and automotive.

As plastic is currently 99% sourced from fossil fuels, the environmental, health and social impact associated with plastic pollution must stem from the extraction of these fossil fuels, throughout refining processes, resin and polymer manufacturing as well as product use, reuse, recycling and disposal.

2. Principles

What principles could be set out in the future instrument to guide its implementation?

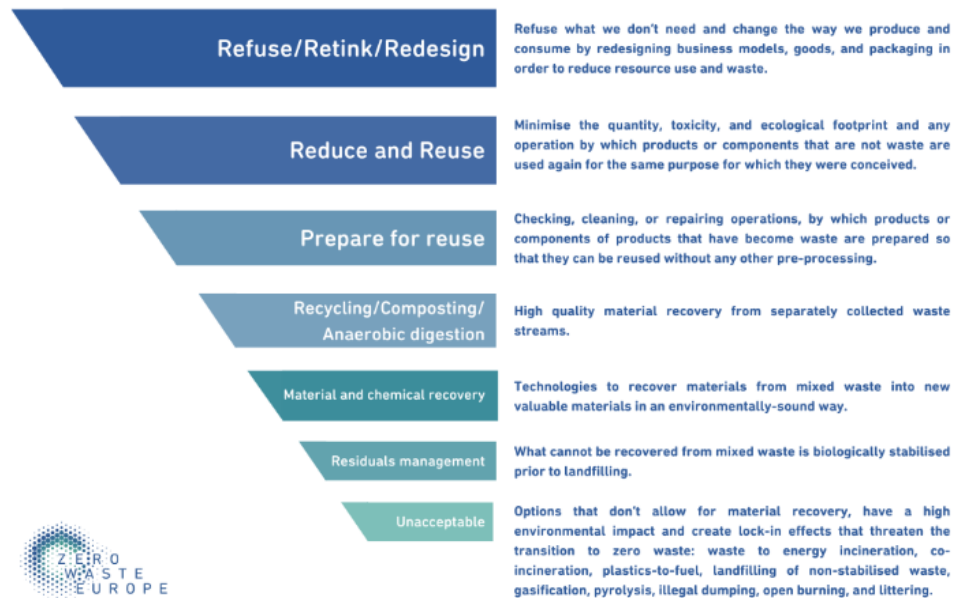
Proposed principles:

- Principle of prevention & zero waste hierarchy
- Planetary boundaries
- Precautionary principle
- Human rights incl. rights to a safe, clean and healthy environment, and environmental justice
- Polluter pays principle

Explanatory Text:

- **Principle of prevention & zero waste hierarchy**
Unlike the traditional waste hierarchy - which pivots around recycling and extracting energy from waste - the zero waste hierarchy focuses on resource management and ensures that the value of our resources and energy is preserved in the economy for the new generations.
The zero waste hierarchy applies the prevention principles to e.g. materials such as plastics and take into account their design during the production phase, underlines the importance of reuse and repair to extend the use phase, while also covering waste management.

Zero Waste Hierarchy



- **Planetary boundaries** - In 2009, [nine quantitative planetary boundaries](#) within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come have been identified. Crossing these boundaries would mean risking generating large-scale irreversible damages. Plastics are 'novel entities', but also contribute to eroding all other boundaries¹. The global plastics treaty should have at its core to circumscribe plastic use to the planetary boundaries.
- **Precautionary principle** as set out in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) is an "approach to risk management, where, if it is possible that a given policy or action might cause harm to the public or the environment and if there is still no scientific agreement on the issue, the policy or action in question should not be carried out. However, the policy or action may be reviewed when more scientific information becomes available"
- **Human rights** - Given the interdependence of human rights and environmental protection, it is crucial that human rights are taken into account in the global plastics treaty, including - but not limited to-
 - the right to a **safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment** and the prohibition on discrimination regarding the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment (**environmental justice**).

¹ Plastics Pollution and the Planetary Boundaries framework, Villarrubia-Gómez et al. (2022)

- In addition, a **just transition** ensures those most affected by plastic pollution do not bear the costs of the transition and are enabled to take part equitably in emerging economic opportunities.

The [UN Framework Principles on Human Rights](#) and the Environment already provides an overview of human rights relevant for environmental protection (UN Doc. A/HRC/37/59, 2018).

- **Polluter pays principle** requires polluters to bear the environmental and social cost of their actions. In other words, “the waste producer and the waste holder should manage the waste in a way that guarantees a high level of protection of the environment and human health”.

See the [1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#) and the [EU Waste Framework Directive](#) where this principle has for example been embodied at the European Union level.