

Event Report: PROMAR at ISWA World Congress 2025

Overview

The **ISWA 2025 World Congress** took place in **Buenos Aires, Argentina from October 27-29**, bringing together leading experts, practitioners, and policymakers from the global waste management community. This year's congress was held under the motto:

"Towards a Wasteless Future or a Wasteful Planet?"

The choice of Buenos Aires as the host city placed a strong thematic emphasis on **waste management challenges and opportunities in Latin America**, a region undergoing significant transformation in how it addresses solid waste, recycling infrastructure, and circular economy strategies. Ideal for PROMAR, which is active in Latin America and the Caribbean.

adelphi and the **PROMAR project** were represented at the congress by **Richard Berner**. Richard contributed to the programme through both a **poster presentation** and an **oral presentation**, showcasing PROMAR's work and findings to an international audience.

Some Key Takeaways

Marine plastic pollution is an acute challenge for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) due to isolation, limited waste systems, and reliance on imports. PROMAR, funded by Germany's BMUV, tackles this through upstream measures centered on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Building on Phase I (2021–2025) in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Colombia, Phase II scales to St. Kitts and Nevis, the British Virgin Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, and Guyana, tailoring approaches to SIDS realities and aiming for systemic change in waste governance.

- **Problem context:** SIDS face heightened vulnerability from marine plastics, compounded by small markets, fragmented waste streams, and constrained infrastructure.
- **PROMAR approach:** Prioritizes upstream solutions, with EPR shifting waste management responsibility and costs from government to producers.
- **Capacity building implemented in the countries:** Six interactive modules (EPR basics, design options, complementary measures, institutional/legal implementation, case studies), enabling participants to cascade training.
- **Hands-on activities:** Stakeholder mapping, policy prototyping tailored to country context, and development of national EPR roadmaps with industry and policy makers from the countries
- **Expected outcomes:** Stronger dialogue and collaboration, practical governance and legal strategies, and actionable pathways to adapt EPR for SIDS—driving systemic change in waste governance.

Conclusion

The ISWA 2025 Congress in Buenos Aires provided a valuable platform for adelphi and the PROMAR project to share insights, connect with international peers, and contribute to the global discourse on sustainable waste management. The congress reaffirmed that the path towards a "wasteless future" requires bold policy action, inclusive approaches, and strong international cooperation — areas in which PROMAR continues to make meaningful contributions.

Fig. 1 Richard Berner representing PROMAR at ISWA Congress.





The PROMAR project aims to prevent marine litter in the Caribbean Sea by promoting circular economy solutions in the Caribbean.

The first phase of the project ran from 2020 – 2024 in Costa Rica, Colombia and the Dominican Republic and the second phase from 2024 – 2026 in the British Virgin Islands, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago and Saint Kitts & Nevis.

Financed by the **German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action and Nuclear Safety**, the project is led by **adelphi** in collaboration with the United Nation Environment Program (UNEP CCS)

TOOLBOX
AGAINST
MARINE LITTER



Reach it here!



Phase II Project Countries



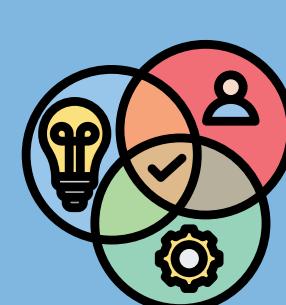
Project Goals



Implement circular economy pilot solutions to achieve a measurable reduction in plastic waste entering the aquatic environments.



Establish a regional monitoring and information platform for plastic pollution and marine litter (via GRID Geneva).



Strengthen political partners' capacities to develop and/or implement Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems and/or other policy instruments for managing packaging waste and support their contributions to regional and international dialogue processes (INC).



Increase public awareness to avoid, collect and intercept marine litter in coastal areas.

Key Advancements in Phase II

Policy Briefs & Policy Dialogues

- All 5 project countries have published policy briefs on marine litter and plastic waste management. These policy briefs address the political framework of marine litter and waste management in the countries. They present the current situation in regard to marine plastic pollution, highlights challenges and opportunities and makes initial recommendations. They served as an input paper for the policy roundtables with stakeholders from politics, industry and civil society in the PROMAR project countries.
- 4 of the five project countries have hosted National Policy Dialogues on Marine Litter Prevention & Capacity Building Workshop on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Circular Economy Solutions



Selection of Demonstration Sites; Installation of River Booms

- Demonstration sites have been identified in all countries and data collection; sampling and monitoring activities has begun.
- For example;** In Guyana, locally constructed Riverbooms were installed at the three selected demonstration sites; Mon Repos/Good Hope, Lusignan/Annandale and Triumph. In the month of September, a total of 4,900kg of litter was trapped and prevented from entering the sea.

Beach Data Sampling

- Beach Data Samplings have been ongoing in all countries. Baseline sampling activities are conducted to establish a reference point or benchmark of the current state before any changes or interventions occur.



Beach Clean-Ups & School Engagements

- The project involves extensive awareness-raising measures in all project countries. These are carried out through educational events in schools and beach clean-ups, which not only collect litter but also aim to raise awareness among the community as a community event.

