

Policy Solution Prototypes

(Output Paper)

Guyana

Prevention of Marine Litter in the Caribbean Sea



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1 Introduction

This output paper is part of the Prevention of Marine Litter in the Caribbean Sea (PROMAR) Project, a regional initiative aimed at addressing the persistent and growing challenge of marine litter and plastic pollution in the Wider Caribbean Region. PROMAR is funded by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) and implemented by adelphi in collaboration with the Cartagena Convention Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme. The project is currently in Phase II (2024–2026), which includes Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and the British Virgin Islands.

According to global estimates, Guyana has an average plastic waste leakage into the ocean of 1.59 kg per person per year. Guyana is clearly a priority country for marine litter prevention interventions in the Caribbean context. To discuss this topic, the University of Guyana held **the National Dialogue on Marine Litter Prevention and Plastic Waste Management** on 21 May 2025, as part of PROMAR’s third work package, which focuses on policy and capacity building. The event was moderated by Amar Munnolimath, a green and circular economy expert from adelphi.

The full-day event brought together 47 participants, including stakeholders from government agencies, civil society, academia, private waste management firms, youth organisations and international partners. Together with experts, the participants discussed how to address the complex challenge of plastic waste management in Guyana, identifying gaps in the current landscape, advancing strategies to tackle plastic waste issues, and prototyping forward-looking policy solutions based on best practices and successful models from other jurisdictions.

The National Dialogue included keynote addresses, panel discussions, group activities and policy prototyping exercises, taking into account Guyana’s priorities for waste management, marine protection and climate resilience as set out in its Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS 2030). During the panel discussions, the following challenges related to plastic waste management in Guyana were identified:



Figure 1: Challenges on plastic waste management in Guyana, 2025.

After this session, participants were divided into four working groups. The groups then defined challenge category, identified stakeholders, visualised intervention mechanisms and proposed innovative, feasible policy options. For inspiration, facilitators provided summaries of real-world case studies and global best practices to develop localised solutions. Once all this process was completed, the groups presented their outcomes in a plenary session, followed by a collective reflection and feedback round.

Therefore, this output paper aims to summarise and visualise the policy solution mechanisms that were collaboratively developed in the National Dialogue. It is expected that this document will inform national policymakers, encouraging them to implement the proposed solutions and supporting Guyana in improving its plastic waste management through collaborative and science-based approaches.



Figure 2: Participants of the National Dialogue on Marine Litter Prevention and Plastic Waste Management, Guyana, 2025.

2 Group 1: Community Development Council (CDC) Model

2.1 Background and Solution Overview

Group 1 focused on the **lack of environmental awareness** as a key challenge. They identified that this lack of awareness is a result of deep-rooted environmental apathy, especially in underserved communities, where it is reinforced by limited education, entrenched behaviours and cultural norms.

To address this challenge, they proposed the **revitalisation of Community Development Councils (CDCs)** as a solution mechanism, positioning them as environmental governance bodies at the grassroots level. Through this initiative, communities would be empowered to own and lead their waste management behaviours, and assume direct responsibility for local environmental health, which would increase their involvement and build their capacity in environmental management.

The main stakeholders involved would be community members and leaders, local businesses, NGOs, schools and faith-based institutions. Planned activities include:

- Re-mobilising CDCs to champion environmental health;
- Assigning point persons by street or block to lead community clean-ups and awareness campaigns;
- Establishing partnerships with local businesses to supply clean-up materials;
- Integrating NGOs, faith-based organisations and schools into the education loop;
- Using branded community tools (e.g. T-shirts, posters) to foster community identity and pride.

Regarding the visualisation of the solution mechanism and its ecosystem connections, the CDC would serve as the central organising body at community level. Its operational mechanism would involve:

- Formal communication with local government, Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) and Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs) on community-level environmental decisions and initiatives;
- Engagement with local businesses to secure small contributions, such as cleaning tools and garbage bags, for clean-up efforts, leveraging their reliance on community support;
- Collaboration with NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs) and religious institutions to influence policies and promote good environmental practices;
- Provision of incentives to communities to recognise and value their efforts, which the group believes would also help attract broader support for the initiative.
- Formal communication with local government, Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs)



Figure 3: Group 1 presentation, Guyana, 2025.

2.2 Next Steps

To implement the proposed solution, Group 1 identified the following next steps:

- Sensitise community members as an initial step, followed by consistent stakeholder engagement to support community development;
- Use branding and outreach tools, such as matching T-shirts, to foster a sense of belonging and excitement and to reinforce that environmental care is a shared community effort;
- Identify point persons, ideally one individual from each street, responsible for managing the cleanliness of their respective areas;
- Engage local businesses to act as suppliers for clean-up initiatives (e.g. providing cleaning tools and garbage bags).

3 Group 2: Central Waste Management Authority and Legislative Review

3.1 Background and Solution Overview

Group 2 addressed the challenge of **lack of coordination**, which they understood as being reflected in fragmented responsibilities across ministries, outdated legislation, the absence of a central authority and a lack of structured communication.

To transform this situation, they proposed the establishment of a **Central Waste Management Authority** through the enactment of the long-pending Solid Waste Management Bill (2014). This authority would provide a structured, legally backed mechanism to harmonise national efforts and reduce duplication, thereby improving efficiency and alignment in the response to marine litter and plastic waste.

This initiative would involve the following key stakeholders and functions:

- Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (MLGRD), including Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs), Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs) and municipalities, responsible for waste collection, transportation and disposal;
- Ministry of Health (MOH), responsible for developing public health and safety regulations related to waste;
- Ministry of Housing and Water, responsible for integrating sustainable waste management into urban and regional development plans;
- Ministry of Finance, overseeing the financial sustainability of the waste management authority;
- Office of the President, providing high-level oversight and political support;
- Private sector actors, supporting and participating in initiatives undertaken by the authority;
- Waste disposal companies (e.g. Cevon's Waste Management, Puran Brother's Inc., Environmental Technical Solutions Inc.), providing operational waste management services;
- Educational institutions, contributing to research, training and public awareness.

The main activities required to operationalise this authority would include:

- Reviewing and fast-tracking the Solid Waste Management Bill (2014);
- Clearly defining roles and mandates for relevant government entities (e.g. MLGRD, MOH, Ministry of Housing and Water);
- Establishing regular inter-ministerial and municipal coordination meetings;
- Developing communication protocols and performance accountability system.

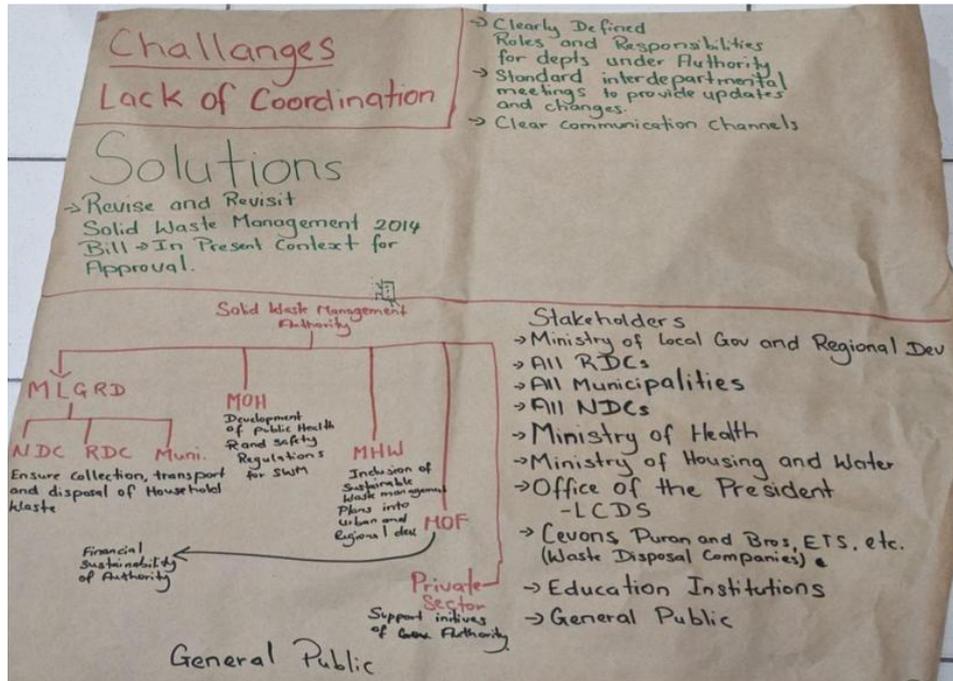


Figure 4: Group 2 presentation, Guyana, 2025.

3.2 Next Steps

According to Group 2, the following steps are required now:

- Update and adopt the Solid Waste Management Bill (2014) so that it reflects current national realities and provides a firm legal basis for the Central Waste Management Authority;
- Clarify and formalise the responsibilities of all entities operating under the authority;
- Introduce regular coordination meetings between different departments to support joint planning and monitoring;
- Establish clear and reliable communication channels and procedures to ensure timely information sharing and reduce misunderstandings.

4 Group 3: Centralised Waste Collection and Waste Segregation

4.1 Background and Solution Overview

Group 3 addressed the challenge of **lack of infrastructure**, which they linked to insufficient waste collection systems, weak recycling mechanisms and widespread indiscriminate dumping. As a response, they proposed the creation of a **Centralised Waste Collection and Segregation System**, based on community-level collection points and segregated waste bin systems.

This solution has three main goals:

- Centralised waste collection: create shared community drop-off points for routine waste disposal, reducing door-to-door collection and thereby saving fuel and streamlining operations;
- Waste segregation: introduce separate bins for different waste streams in communities to make it easier for waste management agencies to collect, sort and handle materials;
- Adequate bin provision: ensure that enough bins are installed, especially at festivals and other social events, so that people have accessible disposal options and do not resort to dumping waste in the environment.

To implement this solution, several key stakeholders would need to be involved, including importers and manufacturers, Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs), local government authorities, private sector actors (e.g. Cevons Waste Management, Puran's Disposal Inc.), government agencies (e.g. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Natural Resources), community leaders, educational institutions, media and enforcement agencies.

Together, these stakeholders would work to:

- Establish regional and local community waste hubs to optimise fuel use and operational costs;
- Provide colour-coded bins to enable segregation at source in households and businesses;
- Ensure adequate bin placement at public events and other high-footfall locations;
- Promote the integration of informal sector actors into recycling initiatives.

4.2 Expected Impacts

With the implementation of the Centralised Waste Collection and Segregation System, Group 3 expected the following impacts:

- Achieve cleaner communities and public spaces;
- Reduce marine pollution and improve public health;
- Divert waste by increasing recycling and returning materials to the circular economy;
- Improve fuel efficiency by consolidating waste collection at community points instead of individual households;
- Create jobs in waste segregation, sorting and recycling.

5 Group 4: Waste Management Authority and EPR-Based Financing Mechanisms

5.1 Background and Solution Overview

Group 4 addressed the challenge of **lack of funding**, which they linked to several underlying issues: the absence of a legislative framework that prioritises waste management in planning, infrastructure and technology; limited and fragmented data that weakens access to international financing; logistical inefficiencies and an incomplete understanding of key waste-related issues; limited corporate responsibility and weak public–private collaboration; and a general lack of multi-agency coordination.

As a response to this challenge, the group proposed the establishment of a dedicated **Waste Management Authority supported by Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes and strengthened public–private partnerships**. This solution would result in a more robust financing model that enables long-term investment in waste infrastructure, supports innovation and strengthens producer accountability.

To operationalise this solution, the group proposed the following actions:

- Create a national waste management authority with a dedicated funding;
- Introduce producer-responsibility fees for high-volume manufacturers and importers;
- Provide fiscal incentives such as tax concessions and grants to strengthen recycling SMEs and encourage private-sector investment;
- Promote deposit-refund and material return systems;
- Seek additional financing by aligning waste management efforts with the LCDS 2030 and collaborating with regional and international partners.

A wide range of stakeholders would need to be involved to make this solution viable, including the Ministry of Finance and the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Education, international donors such as BMUV and UNEP, private-sector actors and financial institutions, and community-level actors such as Community Development Councils (CDCs) and informal recyclers.

5.2 Main Steps:

In addition to the strategic actions outlined above, the group identified the following main steps required to enable the implementation of the proposed solution:

- Advocate for the legislative changes and policy support needed to establish the solution;
- Strengthen collaboration across agencies and stakeholders to ensure coherent implementation;
- Educate the public on the impacts of poor waste management and the benefits of improved systems;
- Involve the private sector, financial institutions and communities in funding, operations and decision-making;
- Expand recycling and resource-recovery initiatives to reduce waste volumes and increase material value;
- Promote circular economy practices to support long-term sustainability and economic opportunities.

6 Recommendations

The National Dialogue on Marine Litter Prevention and Plastic Waste Management held in Guyana has shown the significant potential for improving plastic waste management in the country. However, real progress will require concrete action. These actions must involve multiple stakeholders, adopt innovative approaches for policy and business, and be implemented across different areas of the waste management system. The key recommendations identified are presented below:

- **Approve the Solid Waste Management Bill:** Finalise and pass the long-pending legislation to establish clear rules for waste licensing, collection operations, tipping fees and the regulation of treatment and recycling. Updating the bill would give legal force to the National Waste Management Strategy and incorporate modern needs such as EPR, public participation and new waste-processing technologies.
- **Create a Solid Waste Management Authority (SWMA):** Establish an autonomous national body to coordinate waste management across ministries, municipalities, NDCs and the private sector. The SWMA should unify roles, standardise procedures, set targets, mobilise funding and oversee data reporting, public outreach and capacity-building efforts.
- **Scale up circular economy initiatives:** Expand pilot projects to mainstream circular business models that support product redesign, reuse and recycling, particularly in plastics, packaging and e-waste. Strengthen collaboration with academia and innovation hubs to advance research and enterprise development, while drawing on international examples such as the EU Circular Economy Action Plan.
- **Strengthen public-private partnerships (PPPs):** Encourage private-sector engagement through incentives such as tax relief, subsidies and co-financing to boost investment in recycling, resource recovery and clean technologies. Formalise PPP models for integrated collection, sorting, transport and treatment, and involve corporate actors more closely in national planning and capacity development.
- **Launch nationwide awareness and education campaigns:** Implement a coordinated national outreach effort to increase understanding of marine litter and proper waste disposal. Introduce school-based education with support from the Ministry of Education and NGOs, prioritising youth engagement, creative communication and the involvement of religious and community leaders as behavioural change champions.
- **Implement EPR schemes and producer responsibility measures:** Establish Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs) to manage collection, processing and reporting for manufacturers and importers. Develop regulations that set recovery obligations and levies for packaging, electronics and other priority waste streams, aligned with the “polluter pays” principle and supported by monitoring and labelling requirements.
- **Strengthen community-based waste initiatives:** Reactivate and resource Community Development Councils (CDCs) as key institutions for local waste management. Enable CDCs to mobilise residents, coordinate street-level initiatives and collaborate with municipal authorities, supported by clean-up campaigns, incentive programmes and partnerships with local businesses.
- **Improve local data generation and citizen science:** Create a national marine litter monitoring framework that uses GIS and digital tools such as Litta-Reporta for real-time reporting. Encourage universities, citizens and civil society to contribute to research and data collection, and establish a centralised database, ideally under the EPA or the future SWMA, to guide decision-making and reporting.

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