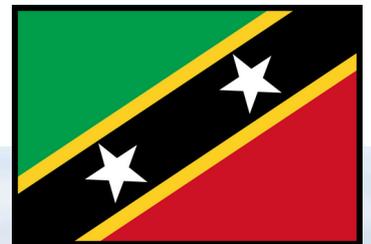


# Policy Solution Prototypes

(Output Paper)

## Saint Kitts and Nevis

### Prevention of Marine Litter in the Caribbean Sea



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# 1 Introduction

The PROMAR (Prevention of Marine Litter in the Caribbean Sea) project was launched to counter the influx of plastic waste - particularly single-use packaging - into the Caribbean Sea, while promoting circular economy solutions across the region. Funded by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Protection, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN), the project is implemented by adelphi research, the United Nations Environment Programme Cartagena Convention Secretariat (UNEP CCS). National implementing partners include local non-governmental, research and academic institutions in Guyana, Suriname, St. Kitts & Nevis, Trinidad & Tobago, and the British Virgin Islands.

The Caribbean region grapples with a major plastic pollution crisis, degrading coral reefs and beach environments, and elevating clean-up costs, deterring tourists, and weakening marine-based livelihoods. In Saint Kitts and Nevis, beaches and scenic coastlines, which form the core of the tourism sector, can be found littered with plastic debris, threatening the country's appeal as a premier dive destination and undermining ecosystems that draw visitors. Meanwhile, fisherfolk are catching fewer fish due to this challenge, as well as adjacent pressures, including rising sea temperatures caused by climate change.

Policy intervention on behalf of the national government is needed due to the scale and severity of the problem, which exceeds the capacity of local waste management and landfill operations, and forms part of the third work package under the PROMAR project. The primary economic sectors critically rely upon abundant and healthy natural ecosystems and are currently under threat. Moreover, plastic waste poses an array of public health risks, ranging from the infiltration of microplastics into water systems to the risk of mosquitoes and other disease-carrying vectors breeding in standing water collected in plastic waste.

On 11-12 June, the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College, with the support of adelphi and UNEP CCS, hosted a National Dialogue on Marine Litter Prevention and Plastic Waste Management in St. Kitts & Nevis. The two-day interactive dialogue offered an opportunity for local stakeholders across business, government, and civil society to discuss the challenges and potential policy solutions to address plastic pollution in the twin-island state.

Through group work across the two days and by harnessing co-creation methodology, participants:

- 1) Defined local challenges
- 2) Prototyped solutions
- 3) Presented potential ways forward through public showcasing.

Approximately 35 participants from politics, industry, and civil society took part in the two-day event. The discussions aimed to address core themes such as awareness and education, enforcement and regulation, political will, cohesion and incentives, and circular economy infrastructure solutions. To explore these themes, the first day featured a workshop on problem identification and policy prototyping regarding marine plastic pollution, while the second day focused on a capacity-building workshop covering EPR and deposit refund schemes.

Regarding the first day, the following policy challenges that lead to marine plastic pollution in Saint Kitts & Nevis were identified:



Fig 1: Identified policy challenges

With an aim to advance the enabling environment, the purpose of this paper is to summarize and visualize the policy solution mechanisms, namely **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and Deposit Refund Schemes (DRS)** collaboratively developed for consideration and future implementation by policy and decision makers in St. Kitts & Nevis.

## 2 Policy Prototyping Groupwork

### Group 1: Addressing Lack of Law Enforcement and Legislation

This group focused on the problem of **weak enforcement** and perceived insufficient legal frameworks for plastic waste management in Saint Kitts & Nevis. There is already a plastic ban in the country, but its enforcement by authorities is problematic.

Their solution was to establish a dedicated Environmental Enforcement Task Force, supported by new legislation mandating compliance for producers, retailers, and consumers. The mechanism involves passing comprehensive waste management laws, setting up a monitoring and penalty system, and training local enforcement officers. Key stakeholders include the Ministry of Environment, the national police, local government councils, and community leaders. The group emphasized the importance of public awareness campaigns to build support for the new regulations.

### Group 2: Tackling Insufficient Recycling Infrastructure

Group 2 addressed the lack of recycling facilities and limited access for residents. Their proposed solution was to develop a network of community-based recycling centers, starting with pilot sites in some highly polluted areas, e.g., by the seashore in Basseterre. The mechanism includes public-private partnerships for funding and operation, incentives for local entrepreneurs to manage collection points, and integration with schools for educational outreach. Stakeholders involved are the Ministry of Sustainable Development, local businesses, NGOs, and international donors. The group also suggested introducing a small environmental fee on imported packaging to help finance the infrastructure.

### Group 3: Combating Illegal Dumping and Littering / Awareness

This group tackled the persistent issue of illegal dumping and widespread littering, especially in tourist and coastal zones. Their solution was a public engagement campaign, “Clean & Proud Saint Kitts,” combining education and incentives. The mechanism features a mobile app for reporting illegal dumping, community clean-up events, and a rewards system for responsible waste disposal. Stakeholders include the Ministry of Tourism, Labour, Civil Aviation and Urban Development, local schools, media outlets, and the Taiwanese initiative on the island. The group highlighted the need for visible recognition of “clean champions” and collaboration with the hospitality sector to reinforce positive behaviors.

### Group 4: Overcoming Lack of Political Will and Coordination

Group 4 addressed the challenge of fragmented responsibilities and limited political drive for systemic change. Their solution was to create a National Marine Litter Coordination Council, bringing together representatives from all relevant ministries, the private sector, and civil society. The mechanism involves regular inter-ministerial meetings, shared targets for waste reduction, and joint funding applications for international support. Stakeholders are the Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Finance, Chamber of Commerce, environmental NGOs, and youth groups. The group proposed annual progress reports and a national “Plastic-Free Pledge” to maintain momentum and accountability.

### 3 Group exercise: Establishing a Deposit Refund Scheme in St. Kitts & Nevis

- Focus: Coordination of stakeholders to establish a Deposit Refund Scheme in St. Kitts & Nevis.
- Ecosystem Impact: Retain single-use plastic bottles and/or food containers in a closed loop system and mitigate leakage into the environment.
- Challenge: Existing legislation does not mandate DRS and there is a lack of practical solutions and innovation champions in the country.

#### 3.1 Background

St. Kitts and Nevis is confronted with considerable challenges in the management of marine litter, with profound ramifications for the environment, economy, and human health. The nation produces approximately 32,363 metric tons of waste per annum, equivalent to 1.67 kg per person per day, which is considerably higher than the Latin American and Caribbean average of 0.99 kg (St. Kitts & Nevis Information Service, 2022). Despite this high rate of waste generation, residents have limited access to recycling services, and the islands' landfill capacities are already strained. (Ministry of Sustainable Development, Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, 2023; St. Kitts & Nevis Information Service, 2022).

The existing National Waste Management Strategy does not cover Deposit Refund Schemes nor does the recently announced Plastic Waste Reduction and Environment Protection Act, which aims to reduce the amount of waste generated through single use plastic items.

An opportunity exists to create legislation to enable an effective deposit refund scheme, though a regulatory gap persists and stakeholder buy-in is needed.

#### 3.2 Solution Overview

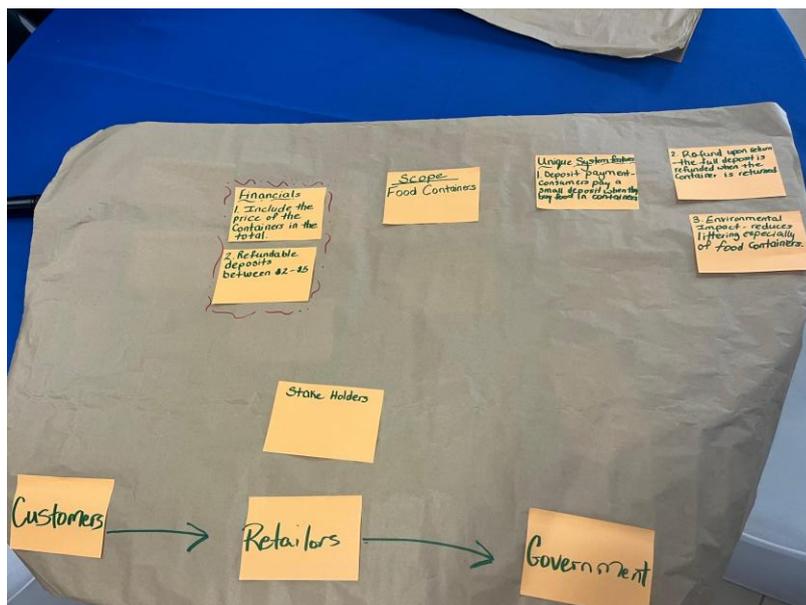


Fig 2: Solution mapping

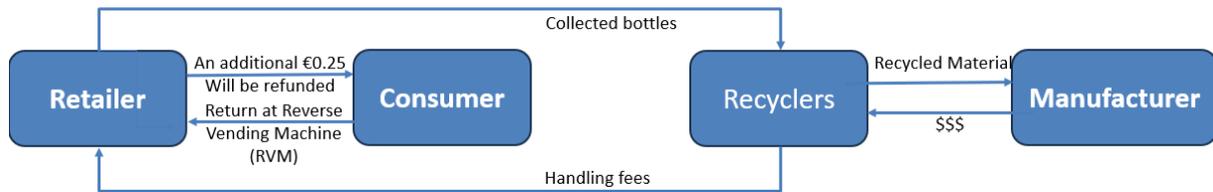


Fig 3: DRS refund scheme (Source: adelphi)

The proposed policy solution aims to engage key value chain actors as well as government representatives and the public, to pursue an effective deposit refund scheme.

A DRS, for e.g., PET bottles, establishes a mandate or an imperative for companies to establish take-back systems, and creates a financial incentive for consumers to bring back the bottles.

### 3.3 Key Feature/Impact

An effective DRS in St. Kitts and Nevis has the potential to lead to reduced plastic pollution and improved collection rates while also protecting the marine environment. It can also encourage a culture of responsibility and engagement, while creating a mechanism for behavioral change. Ultimately, a cleaner environment will also lead to economic impacts through tourism competitiveness, cost savings for waste management and job creation through new roles in e.g., collection and logistics.

### 3.4 Foreseen Challenges

There are several challenges or risks that should be considered, as outlined below.

- At present the legislation does not exist to mandate importers, producers, and retailers to participate in the scheme and to enforce compliance.
- Recycling facilities are nascent on both islands and externally funded by the Taiwanese government. In the longer term, locally led recycling will need to be sustained for the DRS to be effective.
- Social acceptance and cultural factors may inhibit immediate adoption, and an adaptation period will be needed, along with awareness raising campaigns.

## 4 Recommendations

St. Kitts and Nevis would benefit from piloting a Deposit Refund Scheme for a single waste stream e.g., plastic PET bottles, as a lower-hanging fruit. Implementation should follow extensive stakeholder consultation and be rolled out gradually, like the existing ban on certain types of single-use plastics. Institutional support and leadership will be required from key government agencies including the respective solid waste authorities on both islands, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the Department of Environment, among other actors.

The country should leverage the PROMAR initiative, and the existing recycling project led by the Taiwanese government, and the IUCN Closing the Caribbean Plastic tap project, among others, to understand how resources could potentially be pooled and/or if DRS could be pursued as a collective initiative. Additional resources may also be needed for e.g., stakeholder consultation, baseline data (if not fully established), infrastructure mapping, etc. Development banks, climate/environment funds may be able to finance initial start-up costs.

Public education and outreach will be critical to ensure the population is aware of this work and that there is a due consultation process. Community meetings, church groups and schools provide opportunities for education and awareness-raising both on the challenge of plastic pollution and the DRS as a solution.

Dedicated roles should be established, for example with a system operator managing registration and logistics and ensuring compliance. The government needs to set a legal framework to achieve recycling rates through DRS. Through a phased approach, monitoring and evaluation will be critical to ensure both compliance and alignment with longer-term waste management and policy goals.



Fig. 4: Group photo of participants and facilitators

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