



Global Plastics Data Tracker

GOAP's data portal for global plastics data sources

The United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 14 ([UNEA-5.2/Res 14](#)), adopted in March 2022, calls for a "comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic." However, a persistent lack of data to inform indicators of progress has hindered the global and national decision-making needed to mitigate plastic pollution, encourage sustainable practices, and support circular economy initiatives.

Significant knowledge gaps exist in understanding how plastic moves through global economies and environments – specifically, countries are not publishing data related to plastics production, consumption, trade and waste generation. These data gaps hinder the ability to establish meaningful national action plans, track progress, identify effective interventions, and allocate resources efficiently.

As negotiators gather at INC-5 in Busan, South Korea, ensuring strong data provisions becomes crucial. Without fundamental data elements, the treaty risks becoming well-intentioned but ineffective. Only through comprehensive data collection and monitoring can we effectively manage plastic pollution and create a more sustainable future.

Further explanation on the importance of plastics data can be found in our blog on [The Blind Spot for the Global Plastics Treaty: Why Data Matters](#) .

Global Plastics Data tracker

Historically, national-level plastics data has not been easily accessible via a single data platform – making it hard for organisations to identify where there are gaps in global reporting of plastics data. The Global Plastics Data tracker addresses this by providing easy access to the sources of individual data points for each country, across the whole supply-chain.

GOAP has developed the Global Plastics Data Tracker to identify the gaps in plastics data reporting, and to identify areas where data reporting is being advanced. This information will help countries understand where progress can be made within jurisdiction, and help countries more easily learn from other jurisdictions, by observing what others are doing to collect and present plastics data. This information will also help non-governmental organisations better target support for countries, help international groups monitor progress and facilitate more detailed analysis on flows of plastic.

The Tracker identifies data relevant to the full lifecycle of plastics in line with [the Plastics Data Checklist](#):

- Data on the **production and consumption** of plastics are essential to quantify plastic flows, understand the scale of plastic use and identify areas for reduction.
- **Trade** data helps track the transboundary movement of plastics, which is crucial for understanding global distribution patterns.
- **Waste generation, treatment, and trade** data are critical for evaluating current management practices and identifying areas for improvement.

Using the Global Plastics Data Tracker

The Tracker refers only to Government published data and statistics for all aspects of the supply-chain. Each data point has been assigned a "Data score" which indicates how suitable the data is for informing annual flows of plastic in the country. The highest data



scores are assigned to the data points that report plastic-specific data and are reported annually. Lower data scores are given to data points that do not publish plastic-specific data, and/or have published data infrequently. The scores are used to communicate where progress can be made in plastics data reporting.

A full breakdown of the data score descriptions is listed below.

Description	Data score
<i>All categories:</i> Data published annually (split by plastics)	*****
<i>All categories:</i> Irregular publication of data (split by plastics) <i>Consumption only:</i> Plastics production data not split by virgin/recycled content	****
<i>All categories:</i> Data published annually (not split by plastics) <i>All categories:</i> Data not published since the end of 2018, but was previously published annually (split by plastics)	***
<i>All categories:</i> Irregular publication of data (not split by plastics) <i>All categories:</i> One off publication (split by plastics) <i>All categories:</i> Plastics data published annually, but not provided in tonnage format	**
<i>All categories:</i> One off publication (composition only) <i>All categories:</i> One off publication (not split by plastics) <i>All categories:</i> One off regional publication	*
Not found	

Key takeaways from the Plastics Data Tracker

Whilst the Global Plastics Data Tracker evidences that significant progress is required to fill data gaps, the tracker also shows that governments with varied infrastructure and resources do actively report plastics data – for example, India and Vietnam report against approx. 65% of the data categories and Samoa and Mauritius report against 60% of the data categories. This indicates that through using data collection strategies, methodologies (proxies and samples) and digital systems, it is possible for countries to report data, providing they receive the appropriate support to do so (e.g., capacity building and knowledge sharing).

OECD countries (of which there are 38 members) at a minimum annually report the amount of plastics that they produce and the amount that is incinerated, landfilled or sent for recycling. Out of the OECD countries, 22 are EU member states and therefore must report comprehensive data including packaging waste, single-use plastics, recycling rates, and waste treatment methods through standardised EU frameworks. The other 16 OECD countries have no uniform requirements but typically track basic metrics like waste generation and recycling rates through national systems.

Most non-OECD countries do not seem to have structured plastics data that is routinely reported. The exception is those who are EU member states – of the non-OECD countries analysed, only EU member states have reported data in some form for every category. Analysis of all other non-OECD countries (non-EU member states) shows that many countries have no plastics-related data published on their websites at all, and other countries have irregular data published, or have aggregated data at a material-level e.g., “total waste”, as opposed to “total plastics waste”. This is likely to be because other countries are not bound by commitments or legislation to report on data relevant to the plastics life cycle – and countries are unlikely to do this voluntarily given the infrastructure and human resource required.

The Tracker shows that OECD countries typically report more plastics data than non-OECD countries - on average OECD countries reported against 80% of the 15 categories, whilst non-OECD countries on average reported against 37% of the categories (with the majority of data reported by non-OECD countries being trade data).



Data on 'Plastics Waste Trade' is the most comprehensively reported (with approx. 80% of countries assessed reporting at least partial data for plastics waste imports/exports). The categories with the least published data were plastics production and consumption, with less than 20% of countries publishing data for these categories.

No country currently annually publishes plastics data across all metrics in the supply chain, and many do not report against any of the metrics.

Many countries are in the process of developing their plastics data. These efforts are often driven by the need to better understand plastic flows, comply with international standards, and meet environmental goals. For example, Indonesia is developing a [National Plastic Action Partnership](#) and is exploring the development of a digital tracking system for waste data. In Ghana, the Government have also acknowledged the need for more/improved data in their [National Solid Waste Management Strategy](#), which includes plans for baseline data collection, waste characterization studies in major cities, and implementing waste tracking software in municipalities.

Divergences in data collection and reporting approaches

Current data practices showcase regional diversity in terms of data collection methods, definitions, and reporting systems. Countries and individual regions brings unique strengths to plastics data management, demonstrating various innovative approaches to capturing and measuring plastics flows. However, these divergences also make comparisons challenging.

For example, across South East Asia, different measurement approaches highlight how regions adapt to local contexts. Vietnam for example, demonstrates leadership in inclusive measurement by incorporating informal sector collection in recycling rates, while Thailand has developed robust systems focused on formal recycling facilities only.

The Philippines exemplifies how regions adapt measurement approaches to local systems, with Metro Manila implementing volume-based measurements while other regions use weight-based systems. Similarly, in Brazil there are examples of divergences at a regional level - São Paulo has developed a detailed EPR reporting system that provides comprehensive data, while other states have implemented approaches adapted to their local contexts and capabilities.

These diverse approaches create opportunities for developing more harmonised systems. By learning from different measurement methodologies and building on existing data collection strengths, future frameworks can maintain local flexibility while establishing more standardised reporting. The focus should be on creating [inclusive systems that capture both formal and informal sectors](#) and working towards more standardised definitions, while establishing complementary central and local reporting mechanisms.

It is therefore critical that the Global Plastics Pollution Treaty creates pathways to improve data collection over time, recognising countries have different starting points and capacities, and supported by new and additional and accessible support will be critical to the long-term success of the regime.