

# REDUCING MARINE LITTER THROUGH LOCAL ACTION

A Toolkit for Community Engagement



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# PREFACE

In 2017, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation's (CEC) governing body approved a first collaborative project dedicated to building community solutions to marine litter in North America. The approach proposed a five-step process for communities to undertake locally to help reduce land-based marine litter, namely: 1) describe the local marine litter portrait; 2) identify and engage local marine litter stakeholders; 3) convene stakeholders to identify solutions; 4) design and implement low-cost and low-technology solutions and; 5) share and replicate successes in marine litter reduction. In this first phase, the CEC coordinated the implementation of this multi-stakeholder process in two transboundary pilot areas, the Tijuana River and Salish Sea watersheds. A series of videos and a set of brochures were developed to summarize the results (available at [www.cec.org/marinelitter](http://www.cec.org/marinelitter).)

Building on this effort, *Reducing Marine Litter Through Local Action: A Toolkit for Community Engagement* was developed by the CEC through a follow-up project initiated in 2019, under the guidance of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Mexico's *Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* (SEMARNAT) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as a practical guide for leaders wishing to implement the process in their community.





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The CEC also expresses its thanks to the many local partners who participated in the bilateral workshops which took place in Imperial Beach, California and Burnaby, British Columbia, in May 2018, as part of the first project.



# ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this toolkit is to help North American urban, suburban and rural communities located inland or in coastal areas to mobilize and coordinate efforts to reduce and prevent improperly disposed trash from becoming marine litter. The toolkit was developed as an accessible resource for local organizations, community leaders and anyone passionate about leading local or regional initiatives to address marine litter. It is intended as an introduction to organizing, building and sustaining momentum around community actions and initiatives to reduce land-based marine litter.

### WHAT IS MARINE LITTER?

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, marine litter is any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material discarded, disposed of or abandoned in the marine and coastal environment.<sup>1</sup>





### MARINE LITTER: MORE THAN A COASTAL ISSUE

Research shows that over 80 percent of litter found in the ocean originates from land<sup>2</sup>. Marine litter is therefore mostly comprised of everyday consumer goods that travel through watersheds and reach the ocean because of inadequate waste management, illegal dumping or littering on land, among other causes. Even items littered in communities located far from the coast can travel, transported by wind or through streams, rivers and storm drains, all the way to their last stop: the ocean. Once in the environment, litter accumulates and negatively impacts ecosystems, communities, infrastructure and economic activities.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS PART OF THE SOLUTION

Marine litter is a complex problem that requires actions at all levels to address its different causes. This toolkit focuses on community engagement as one of the tools to apply to address marine litter. Engaging with your community locally is a key part of the solution, as it builds awareness, puts action in motion and generates momentum to implement other tools and solutions more broadly. Marine litter reduction will be achieved through a broad range of actions, involving different levels of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and any others who can be part of the solution and who share a common goal: making a difference for our communities and oceans.

# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

While each section can be read on its own, this toolkit was designed as a step-by-step guide. It contains four sections:



## **PART I: DEFINING YOUR VISION AND SETTING GOALS**

This section addresses the importance of planning and future thinking. Central to this discussion is the significance of collaboration, leadership, engagement and the collection of baseline information and data.

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## **PART II: BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

This section highlights five different engagement activities to consider at different times during your community engagement process, from its beginning to later on, when your project concept is more developed. The events include pop-ups, watershed visits, community cleanups, Town Halls and workshops.

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## **PART III: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS**

This section explains how to create a clear and concise prospectus and action plan. You can refer to this section for step-by-step advice on how to prepare each document, along with guidance on how to garner local support for selected interventions.

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## **PART IV: NEXT STEPS**

This section explains the importance of metrics and measurement, and it provides tips and key lessons learned to sustain momentum and achieve results in the long term.



# **PART I: DEFINING YOUR VISION AND SETTING GOALS**



# GOAL SETTING

As a leader, you should be clear and concise about your goals in order to more easily acquire resources, establish plans, build energy and make tangible progress towards those goals. People are busy and other issues are competing for their attention. Thus it is crucial to communicate your goals effectively. Be sure to learn about what others in your community are already doing. Ask around and attend meetings of different local groups to see if others are already collecting data and information about litter in your community. This would present opportunities to partner or ensure that you are not replicating existing efforts.

## STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR VISION

Begin by asking yourself: “What are we hoping to achieve and what will be the end result if we are successful in our efforts?”

The answer will define your vision and will be the foundation of every task, every activity and every request for resources.

## STEP 2: SET YOUR GOALS

Goals are both qualitative and quantitative statements about what you hope to achieve. Be sure to set short and long-term goals. Each goal should be clear and supported by measurable outcomes. Goals will tell your community what you are trying to achieve.



# ENERGIZING CITIZENS AND NGOS

Citizens and non-governmental organizations provide essential energy for most interventions needed to prevent marine litter. Both are often active members of the community and most connected to the places that are littered. They have the strongest interest in a litter-free environment from the perspectives of quality of life, economics, and health.

Because they are entrenched in the local context, they are connected to other interested community members, organizations, and businesses. Their pre-established networks energize new initiatives and could spotlight local leaders who might emerge as project champions.

Local thought leaders will help you refine your goals and ensure your ideas are well adapted to the local context. Leaders can connect you with local government officials and private sector companies willing to provide staff or resources to support your effort. Local organizations can also point you toward known litter hotspots in the community.

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**Key:** Tap into local interest early in the process. Use it to create momentum and action.



# ENERGIZING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local governments are invaluable project partners and conveners. Their pre-established networks, infrastructure and access to financial resources can help jump-start new initiatives to reduce and prevent marine litter.

**Key:** Identify local government decision-makers early in your process. They are committed to mobilizing people and resources to support the broadly accepted goal of maintaining and improving your community. In addition to elected officials, decision-makers could also be people working in:

## ✓ **Municipal Government**

- Mayor's Office
- City Manager's Office
- Public Works
- Sanitation
- Water
- Solid Waste Management
- Parks
- Sustainability

## ✓ **County or regional authorities**

- ✓ **State or provincial government**
- ✓ **Other relevant entities**



Try asking these decision makers and thought leaders to connect you to resources and groups who can help describe the litter problem in your community, including litter hotspots or issues of special concern.



## ENERGIZING LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Requesting support from local leadership may be challenging as there are limited resources and many priorities. Be as specific as possible in making requests for time, resources or data from local officials. Common requests include:

- ✓ Help to bring community members together
- ✓ Space for hosting meetings
- ✓ Technical assistance to solve specific problems
- ✓ Funding for various initiatives
- ✓ Permit requirements for catchments and litter control technologies
- ✓ Data concerning hotspots, municipal services and waste characterizations

**Key:** Be sure to address the proverbial “What’s in it for me?” Be certain to highlight the benefits that can accrue from their involvement. For example, a cleaner community yields environmental, economic and social benefits that align with local leadership’s core values and mission.

Above all else, consult with local officials to validate individual and collective visions and goals.



# PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Local government typically oversees litter and waste management matters; however, their efforts toward a trash-free environment need the support of numerous other members of the community to be successful. The key to success in preventing marine litter is identifying a project champion.

## OTHER KEY ROLES

### Stakeholders

The individuals and organizations affected by litter in the community and who can be part of the solution.

### Supporters

The individuals, groups, philanthropists and environmentally-responsible companies who contribute labor, financial support or other resources.

### Conveners

Those who bring people together in a safe space, typically local government officials.

A project champion is the official or unofficial leader of an intervention, the person who takes on the responsibility for ensuring that human and financial resources come together and that they are distributed in ways that move the project along. The project champion:

- Makes sure the right people are engaged at just the right time so that the intervention is successful
- Guides all efforts from project inception through implementation
- Is the energy and passion behind the project
- Is seen as a leader in the community

Often, the project champion is someone from the private sector or a local NGO, but it can be any engaged community member able to coordinate effectively with local or political leaders. Project champions who work in local government can help validate your vision. Given the scope and magnitude of a project, there may be a need for two to three champions, each with clear responsibilities.

## PROJECT CHAMPIONS

The project champion becomes the leader of the effort, the project manager, and the driver behind activities that achieve the vision and goals. Most marine litter control activities lack government funding and are driven by volunteers. Project champions bring these aspects together and should bring passion, leadership, resourcefulness, inspiration and persistence to the effort.

Best practices for project champions include:

- ✓ Organizing community events and bringing interested parties together to build excitement and create momentum. Suggested community events are explored in [Part II](#).
- ✓ Communicating regularly to welcome new partners, address progress toward goals, create space for partners to contribute ideas and explore future activities.
- ✓ Using social media to get your message out through multiple channels. Hashtags or other branding can raise interest in your activities, help people ask questions and gain insights.

The project champion should make efforts to collect contact information and connect with each individual or organization on a personal basis. While local government involvement is essential, engaging key community members will help achieve litter reduction goals.



# FINDING PARTNERS AND LEVERAGING ENTHUSIASM

## STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS

Every process for finding and engaging partners begins by answering two questions:

### 1. What do you need help with?

This could be anything from financial support to labor or volunteer support, technical assistance or policy expertise.

### 2. What potential partners are best positioned to help you achieve your goals?

There are many ways to identify potential partners in your community. Consider who is respected as a thought leader or who is most affected by litter (think tourism boards, wildlife conservation organizations or real estate groups to name a few). Also consider what local businesses or residential areas are close to litter hotspots and what governmental, non-governmental or philanthropic organizations might share the same vision and goals as you do. Some of the event formats described in [Part II](#) are effective at building the relationships and contacts needed for raising funds and enlisting human resources.

Next, build a contact list and start creating an outreach strategy to guide your communication with potential partners. The strategy can take many forms, but needs to answer the following questions:

- ✓ Who are your potential partners and where can you find them?
- ✓ What is your goal in engaging with each partner?
- ✓ What is your timeline for partner involvement?
- ✓ What level of funding do you need?
- ✓ What is the best way to involve and engage each partner?
- ✓ Where do they live or operate?
- ✓ How can you best connect each partner to where they live or operate?
- ✓ What information does each partner need to support your effort and how should you communicate it?



### STEP 2: MAKE YOUR CASE

No one likes litter and no one objects to efforts to control marine litter in their local and regional contexts. Generally, people will be willing to support your goals and actions; however, it remains crucial to make your case in a powerful and engaging manner. To develop your case, it can be useful to build out a prospectus, as described in [Part III](#).

To make an effective case for support:

- ✓ Describe the marine litter problem you are looking to solve
- ✓ Show your partner how your initiative will help them achieve their goals
- ✓ Find points of shared interest
- ✓ Define what you need, why and when you need it
- ✓ Detail your tasks and milestones

### BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Anticipate potential barriers to participation. Some are tangible and others are perceived. Remember, some might see marine litter as an overwhelming problem that one person cannot solve. That mindset needs to be changed by showing how the issue is personal, relatable and solvable by getting many different people to work toward the same goal.

### STEP 3: SUSTAIN AND LEVERAGE SUPPORT

Project goals naturally evolve as partnerships and interactions with the community expand. Be sure to communicate the evolution of goals, objectives, and tasks to all partners when that occurs.

Many of your partners will be volunteers. Sustaining energy can be a challenge. Try to identify and understand what motivates your supporters and recognize their contributions.

- ✓ Thank supporters and share personal examples of meaningful contributions that reinforce your goals.
- ✓ A hand-written thank you note can build a sense of belonging and loyalty.
- ✓ Talk with partners about how to publicize or share recognition. Some might appreciate public acknowledgement.
- ✓ Recognize progress and effort on social media and through other digital communications platforms.

### BUILDING CONNECTIONS THROUGH SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

Schools and academic institutions can be powerful program supporters. Your partners in local government and NGOs may have established relationships with these groups that you can rely on to build your own networks. School websites may include information on how to involve their students or staff in volunteering. Be sure to consult administrators before reaching out to staff.

# COLLECTING BASELINE INFORMATION

Most marine litter reduction initiatives begin with one or more community members recognizing marine litter as an issue. Remember, just because you recognize the problem doesn't mean that others will have noticed, considered, or understood the extent of its impact. Collecting and presenting data about the state of litter in your community can help present the problem and ensures that your perception is based on evidence. Metrics and measurement are explored in greater detail in [Part IV](#).

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## WHAT IS BASELINE DATA

Baseline data provide a measurement on the state of litter in the geographic area you are targeting before the start of an intervention. It will serve as a basis for comparing before and after.

Detailed tracking and documentation of data allow to measure your degree of progress.

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## WHAT TYPE OF DATA TO COLLECT

- ☑ Walk or drive through your community or area of interest. Using a scale of one (clean) to five (highly littered), rate different sites and document your findings using a [mapping tool](#). Be sure to record the number of sites rated at four or five on the scale; these are litter hotspots.
- ☑ Conduct an analysis of the volume and type of litter on a given day each month.
- ☑ Conduct an analysis of the volume and type of litter at specific points throughout the watershed.
- ☑ In each instance, return monthly to each litter hotspot for comparative analysis.

## COLLECTING BASELINE INFORMATION

### CREATE A RICHER DATASET

- ✓ Track the number of rainy days and volume of precipitation.
- ✓ Track local government funding and efforts to control litter. Some communities might address litter seasonally in ways that can distort your data.
- ✓ Explore seasonal population and demographic changes. Are there more recreational or tourism activities impacting your data?
- ✓ Attempt to identify sources of marine litter in hotspots in your area.

### KNOW THE EXISTING CONDITIONS, INCLUDING:

- ✓ Who hauls and disposes of trash and other waste in the community and how often
- ✓ What other groups or organizations are addressing litter and how
- ✓ Who is cleaning up litter in watersheds and what are they doing with the collected trash
- ✓ Whether there are active campaigns against litter and whether they are impactful

### REMEMBER TO:

- ✓ Compile and document results as a resource for interested parties
- ✓ Provide your contact information to others seeking similar data
- ✓ Use your findings to connect and collaborate with ongoing efforts
- ✓ Work with project champions to validate your vision and goals with the data
- ✓ Use data to adjust your plans and actions
- ✓ Use consistent measures and metrics to establish baseline data (mass, volume, counts)





# TAKEAWAYS

As you move forward in the engagement process, there are a number of different events and tools that can assist you to bring the efforts of your visioning and goal setting process to life. As you embark on your own litter reduction projects, keep these key foundational steps in mind:



**Identify local government leaders**  
who have a vested interest in,  
or a responsibility for,  
managing litter.



**Seek (or be) a project champion**  
impassioned by the issue and  
able to engage the community  
and political leadership.



**Build partnerships and alliances**  
Work with the public, private,  
non-governmental and philanthropic  
sectors in order to amass energy  
and financial resources.



**Collect baseline data**  
and additional information to advance  
the process. Build a case for project  
expansion and resources. Be willing  
to adjust your approach.

# PART II: BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER



# BUILDING ENERGY AND PLANNING EVENTS

People who have invested time, money, or emotional energy in an issue will be more concerned about its progress in their communities. When community members are connected to the environment they live and work in, they raise the individual and collective standards of care and concern.

This section provides insight on how you can easily plan and convene different events to educate others about the importance of a litter-free environment. People energized about the issue will be much less likely to litter and will act as amplifiers among their family, friends and colleagues.

The community events explored in this section work to connect people to their environment, helping spread awareness about the issue and reducing littering behavior. You can design them to:

- ✓ Create innovative solutions to the marine litter issue
- ✓ Develop plans to implement progressive change
- ✓ Mobilize action and resources



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Earth Day:** April 22











**World Environment Day:** June 5

**World Oceans Day:** June 8

**World Clean Up Day:** mid-September

## ENGAGEMENT LEVEL AND KEY OUTCOMES

Each event outlined in this section works to generate different outcomes or approaches to addressing litter. While we suggest a general timeline for events in the table below, the events need not happen in the order listed. Depending on your project needs, you can select and sequence your events to make the most impact.

TYPE OF EVENT	KEY OUTCOME	DURATION	RESOURCE INTENSITY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	SUGGESTED TIMING IN PROJECT TIMELINE
<b>Pop-Ups</b>	Meet potential supporters	1-8 hours			Early
<b>Watershed Visits</b>	Put litter in context	2-4 hours			Early-Middle
<b>Community Cleanups</b>	Build willingness to address litter	2 hours			Middle
<b>Town Halls</b>	Present information and exchange data	2 hours			Varies
<b>Workshops</b>	Translate ideas into concrete plans	3 – 5 hours			Varies



## BUILDING ENERGY AND PLANNING EVENTS

- ✓ **Pop-Ups:** The pop-up format is ideal for creating quick hit awareness in your community. The mobility of a pop-up helps identify a wider, more diverse set of supporters and stakeholders, many without strong prior interest in environmental issues but who could take part in future actions.
- ✓ **Watershed Visits:** Watershed visits enable local stakeholders to see how litter accumulates in creeks, streams and rivers. Local government leaders can trace the flow of litter from parks and streets to local waterways, where it can easily travel to larger rivers, lakes or the ocean. Seeing and understanding firsthand the link between littering on land and the accumulation of trash in oceans is one of the more powerful means to stimulate behavior change.
- ✓ **Community Cleanups:** Community cleanups heighten the emotional and physical connection of people to their environment. An investment of time and physical energy elevates a person's commitment. These events are opportunities to brainstorm about other solutions and they generate energy and willingness to participate in long-term litter control efforts.
- ✓ **Town Halls:** Town Hall events can often generate strong momentum. Coupled with a good, multi-pronged public outreach strategy, including digital, print and other media, these events can draw significant participation.
- ✓ **Workshops:** This is where the most impassioned people come together in a forum designed to address specific themes and create implementable solutions. The workshop should have a clear structure and lead to the development of a strategy with actionable tasks, to be guided and executed by project champions and emerging leaders.

In the following pages, you will learn tips and tools for successfully holding each type of event.

### HOLDING ECO-FRIENDLY EVENTS

To organize any engaging event, you will need materials and supplies. For some events, you can offer promotional items to help with visibility and branding. Be sure that the goods you use are eco-friendly and don't contribute to the litter problem.

- ☑ Limit the number of handouts and distribute information digitally where possible.
- ☑ If you are giving away products, align the products with your mission. Consider giving out litter collection bags, reusable water containers, reusable straws, calendars or other eco-friendly items.
- ☑ Work with partners and contributors to reduce the carbon footprint of your event.



# POP-UPS

## WHAT IS THIS EVENT?

**Pop-ups** are dedicated tables, booths or tents at larger, more diverse local events that allow organizers to meet members of their community—residents, community organizers, the media and business professionals—where they are. Pop-ups can pique curiosity and get people to ask what you are doing here. This is a way to broaden the traditional reach of your efforts.

**TIME:** 1-8 hours | **Who leads:** Two or three organizers

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Raise awareness
- ✓ Listen to different perspectives
- ✓ Provide opportunity for knowledge exchange
- ✓ Understand litter in your neighborhood
- ✓ Build volunteer base

## POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS

- ✓ Certain events or places require a license, permit, registration or insurance, which can incur costs

## WHY HOLD THIS EVENT

Pop-ups provide community leaders the opportunity to creatively use public space to inform, generate excitement about future actions and build contact lists. Litter is everywhere. When given the opportunity to discuss litter and, more importantly, when given the chance to do something about it, many people in the community will be willing to support your efforts. Pop-ups are a great way to build greater awareness and direct energy, encouraging people to change their behaviors and take personal responsibility. A pop-up tends to be an early step to bring people together afterwards in a more structured format, eventually moving communities towards a consensus on how best to address marine litter.

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND THIS EVENT?

Use pop-ups to create an experience for one-on-one interaction that allows for real-time feedback. Pop-ups have the power to build awareness and can attract young audiences. Make sure to have a marketing strategy that uses social media and other digital media to get the word out.

- ✓ Nearby residents
- ✓ Nearby businesses
- ✓ Media
- ✓ Educators
- ✓ Youth representatives and organizations
- ✓ Community service organizations
- ✓ Influencers

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### HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT

Develop a detailed media and word-of-mouth marketing strategy to create excitement about the event. Other forms of marketing to consider are newsletter sign-ups and private social media groups. You can also have multiple pop-ups in different locations such as a college campus, a farmers market, or in front of a high-traffic space such as a grocery store.

#### Consider

- ✓ Posting on social media
- ✓ Creating and handing out flyers
- ✓ Using newsletters to inform people about your event
- ✓ Using email and advertisements
- ✓ Using signage such as lawn signs and community posters
- ✓ Promoting the event by word-of-mouth



## POP-UPS

### WHERE CAN YOU HOLD THE EVENT?

- ✓ Fairs and festivals
- ✓ Retirement communities
- ✓ Libraries
- ✓ Schools and universities
- ✓ Recreational centers
- ✓ Community events

### HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Pop-ups are exciting and creative events that build awareness and encourage constructive dialogue and feedback. They're a great way to interact with the community and conduct cause-based research to better understand the community's demographics, desires, concerns, and opinions about solutions. Using public locations makes the event easily accessible to a wide audience. Consider a pop-up partnership with local activists or groups to increase awareness and share resources.



## PREPARING FOR YOUR EVENT



### TOTAL PLANNING TIME

Two months are needed to plan an effective pop-up event. Do informal market research to identify where the group you want to reach tends to gather. Identify a partner to work with. Obtain required permits and licenses. Implement a media strategy.

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### FINDING A VENUE

Find an event or place that already attracts your target audience, such as a municipal fair or a community center.

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### CREATING MATERIALS

Informational handouts, details about upcoming events, and resource guides should be made available. Promotional items are useful for drawing traffic to your pop-up event. Branded goods from advocacy groups and pop culture draw people in.





## POP-UPS



### ORGANIZING THE ROOM/ AREA

Set up a single table or booth or install a tent with two to four tables and very limited seating. People will generally mingle and migrate from table to table and engage with those staffing the event. Have a sign-up sheet requesting name, email and phone number for people who want to be part of the effort.

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### BUILDING AN AGENDA

Assume you have less than five minutes to interact with each person. This will help you keep your communication concise and to the point. Make sure you have three simple talking points or key messages, based on main issues such as where the litter is and where it goes; what the impact on the community is and how to help.

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### TESTING YOUR APPROACH

Test your key talking points, what you're asking people to do, how you want people to participate and how you will collect contact information.



## WHAT MATERIALS DO YOU NEED?



Tables/chairs



Flyers or handouts,  
and eco-friendly  
promotional items



Storyboard  
or posters



Canopy, marquee  
or tent (if wanted)



Snacks/  
beverages



Signup sheets  
to collect contact  
information to  
create a database  
of volunteers

### SAMPLE ACTIVITY: STUMP THE EXPERT

**Time:** Minutes

Participants can ask the expert any question related to local litter. The expert has 30 seconds to use any online or print resource to answer the question. Participants are awarded a prize if they can stump the expert.

**Objective:** This is a fun and stimulating way to foster conversation between citizens and experts.

**Resources needed:** Internet connection or printed references; prizes.



# WATERSHED VISITS

## WHAT IS THIS EVENT?

This is a **site visit** or field trip to a local waterbody that offers volunteers and community members to see the problem of litter in our watersheds firsthand (Seeing is believing) and creates the chance to form an emotional connection with your cause.

**TIME:** 2-4 hours | **Who leads:** Organizers and the expert

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Connecting people to where they live
- ✓ Making marine litter local
- ✓ Seeing litter in everyday spaces

## POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS

- ✓ Watershed visits require public access or prior approval to visit the site. Organizers should survey the site ahead of time.
- ✓ Weather and seasonal issues may affect the ability to hold watershed visits.

## WHY HOLD THIS EVENT?

Watershed visits help raise awareness of litter sources and are a highly effective means of connecting people with their environment. Visits help educate community members about local litter impacts and can be a first step towards promoting anti-littering behavior.



### WHO SHOULD ATTEND THIS EVENT?

Watershed visits are inclusive and fun tours designed to show community members the impact of littering on the waterbodies and natural areas that they frequently use. Spend time learning about where litter in your community flows. Reach out to businesses and organizations in the area to learn more about their relationship to litter and the watershed, as well as discover others who might be interested in your event.

- ✓ Nearby residents
  - ✓ Nearby businesses
  - ✓ Watershed users
  - ✓ Members of local government
  - ✓ Community organizations
  - ✓ Students or education groups
  - ✓ Outdoor groups such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts or volunteer litter cleanup groups
  - ✓ Partner organizations
  - ✓ Media
- 

### HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT

Communicate directly with local businesses, officials and schools, emphasizing your outdoor, interactive, and community-oriented event. Let people know that you will be touring a local waterbody to better understand where community litter is coming from and where it goes.

- ✓ Discuss the event directly with watershed users
- ✓ Announce the meeting to interested community organizations
- ✓ Post the event on social media
- ✓ Let schools know about your educational activity

### WHERE CAN YOU HOLD THE EVENT?

- ✓ Public parks featuring rivers and streams
- ✓ River walks
- ✓ Identified litter hotspots
- ✓ Libraries with the ability to show virtual tours of local or regional watersheds

### HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Watershed visits are a way to stimulate an emotional connection between people, their environment and the actions they can take to protect and preserve nature. By understanding their negative and positive actions, people can learn valuable lessons about the impact of everyday litter migrating to watersheds and ultimately traveling vast distances to major waterbodies. Bringing together citizens who use watersheds in different ways creates space for new and relevant conversations.

Look for meeting locations where all attendees can comfortably gather and talk. Local service organizations, youth groups, schools, and businesses are always looking for educational events. Plan a watershed visit that educates participants about where water is flowing from and where it is going.

See if participants need help getting to the location.



### WHAT IS NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT?



#### **TOTAL PLANNING TIME**

Start planning a watershed visit at least three months in advance. Give yourself time to scout an appropriate site and work with local residents and businesses to get the word out.

---



#### **FINDING A VENUE**

Look for a publicly accessible point along a waterway that allows attendees to do a little exploring and learn more about litter in their local waterways. Remember, this event should not be laborious; it should be enjoyable for everyone.

---



#### **CREATING MATERIALS**

Create flyers that publicize your event to local groups and businesses.

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#### **ORGANIZING THE ROOM/AREA**

Visit the site with staff responsible for managing the event two weeks before to make sure everyone is familiar with the area. Use the visit to identify areas where litter is seen, areas to avoid, the path you will take and stops you will make as well as natural points of interest and anything else worth highlighting for the group.

---



#### **TESTING YOUR APPROACH**

Do a practice trip a week in advance to help plan for a smooth, informative visit. Start where your group will meet, follow the planned path and make your planned stops along the way to organize what information you will provide and discuss along the way.



### WHAT MATERIALS DO YOU NEED?



An agenda



Transportation for  
those who need it



Megaphone

#### SAMPLE AGENDA

- ✓ Welcome participants
- ✓ Have you or the site manager describe the litter problem at the site and how it affects use and costs
- ✓ Introduce members of the local community to talk about how they use the watershed and where they see litter
- ✓ Provide watershed information, such as where the water comes from, where it goes and other educational information
- ✓ Guided walk of the site
- ✓ Next steps and close

## SAMPLE ACTIVITY: GUIDED TOUR

**Time:** One hour

Bring a local expert, naturalist, birding expert or site manager on board to provide a walking tour of the site. This is an interactive, educational tour that focuses both on the ecology and wildlife of the area as well as the impacts of humans and development on that area. Start at the designated staging area and discuss the effects of land development and the built environment. Walk towards the local waterbody, pointing out habitats for wildlife and the different kinds of fauna. Have the tour leader discuss the human impact on insects, birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals and particularly the impacts of litter. When touring near the waterbody, lead a discussion of how litter flows from elsewhere in the watershed to where you are and where litter might go from there.

**Ask:** Suggest that participants spot litter as they move through the tour and discuss how pollutants move through the environment and into the food chain. Ask participants where they think litter reaches its final resting place in the marine environment.

**Objectives:** Connect local litter with broader regional perspectives and define the impacts of litter on the local environment.



# COMMUNITY CLEANUPS

## WHAT IS THIS EVENT?

**Community cleanups** are rewarding, interactive ways to get members of your community actively involved in litter cleanup efforts, while also teaching stakeholders about the types and sources of litter and litter hotspots.

**TIME:** 2 hours | **Who leads:** Two organizers

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Connect people to where they live
- ✓ Identify sources of litter and litter hotspots in their community
- ✓ Educate stakeholders about where litter travels outside their community
- ✓ Listen to different perspectives about how litter affects people

## POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS

- ✓ Weather and the season impact the ability to hold community cleanups
- ✓ Availability of equipment bags, pickers and gloves
- ✓ Access to data collection apps or recording materials
- ✓ Space for depositing and sorting litter

## WHY HOLD THIS EVENT?

Community cleanups help members of the community recognize the scale of the litter problem and identify local hotspots. They create an outlet for teaching participants about where local litter starts and where it migrates to. Cleanups bring together diverse groups in ways that foster team building, inspire behavior change and lead to other, more robust environmental actions. Combining cleanups with litter surveys allow participants to gather information about local litter. More importantly, it provides them with evidence of their local litter issue so they can target their control efforts. For example, people might have believed that drinking straws were the issue, but will then notice that cigarette butts are a bigger problem. It also allows them to track data and provide incentives for greater participation and increased effort.

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND THIS EVENT?

Use community cleanups to bring together community members of all kinds. Join stakeholders already committed with those who might pitch in if they had a chance to learn more about litter and its impacts. Invite groups who might see the connection between their own organization's mission and environmental stewardship or community engagement as means to give back to the community. Generate interest in the event by inviting local celebrities and known personalities.

- ✓ Nearby residents
- ✓ Nearby businesses
- ✓ Community organizations
- ✓ Members of local government
- ✓ Local chapters of environmental NGOs
- ✓ Students or education groups
- ✓ Neighborhood cleanup and litter removal groups
- ✓ Local celebrities or known personalities
- ✓ Media

---

### HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT

- ✓ Make announcements to local service groups
- ✓ Work with schools and religious institutions
- ✓ Publicize prizes
- ✓ Post on social media

Reach out and speak with thought leaders in service organizations, youth groups, religious groups, schools and businesses all of whom might be interested in participating. Ask if your event can be put on their organization's calendar. Be sure to announce starting time, meeting location and any gear they should bring, from good shoes to sunscreen. Note any prizes or contests that will be part of the event. Consider creating a social media page you can direct people to for more information and reminders of upcoming events.



### WHERE CAN YOU HOLD THE EVENT?

- ✓ **Litter hotspots:** Work with local government leaders to identify roads, shopping plazas, walking paths, streams, public transportation centers and other places where litter collects.
- ✓ **Local litter and waste organizations:** Work with local leaders and organizations to identify spaces to hold activities before and after the cleanup itself.

### HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Lead conversations with neighbors and explore different sites to assess the magnitude of the litter problem. Community cleanups raise awareness of litter and become a gateway to make cleanup and litter prevention a habit.





# WHAT IS NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT?



### TOTAL PLANNING TIME

Make sure you have at least 45 days to plan a community cleanup. Taking the time to find the right location for the cleanup is essential. It also takes time and effort to get the word out to local groups.

---



### FINDING A VENUE

Talk to businesses and government leaders to find out where litter is prominent and what places are important to clean up. NGOs are great partners to help identify community-run facilities to host your group before and after the cleanup itself. Visit multiple locations to see what possible sites are accessible, safe and suitable for addressing large groups.

---



### CREATING MATERIALS

Create flyers and digital messaging to publicize your event to local groups and businesses. Include information on how data will be collected so that people can upload apps and test the technology before the event.

---



### ORGANIZING THE EVENT

Do a walkthrough of the area ahead of time to identify places and points of interest as well as private property, dangerous spots or other areas to avoid. Find a specific and central meeting location. Provide detailed directions for those arriving by car, public transportation or on foot. Additionally, arrange for litter collection with the municipality at the end of the event.



### PLAN YOUR AGENDA

Make sure you:

- ✓ Welcome participants
- ✓ Set aside time to talk about the marine litter lifecycle
- ✓ Ask participants why they find litter control important
- ✓ Inquire about where they see litter in their neighborhoods
- ✓ Set specific times for when litter cleanup begins and ends, including any post-cleanup activities



### TESTING YOUR APPROACH

- ✓ Make sure your site is conducive to a cleanup event
- ✓ Rehearse your talking points
- ✓ Meet with event leaders beforehand and do a test run of your litter cleanup event
- ✓ Make sure you have all the necessary equipment and materials
- ✓ Get very familiar with the app or data sheets used

### SAMPLE AGENDA

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ✓ Welcome participants<br>—be sure to have directional signage showing where the cleanup starts! | ✓ Community cleanup activity                               |
| ✓ Short presentation on the marine litter lifecycle  | ✓ Collection, logging data and disposing of litter         |
| ✓ Community conversation on local litter issues  | ✓ Reflection on success of the event and lessons learned   |
| ✓ Guidelines and instructions for collecting litter and logging data                             | ✓ Next steps and close<br>—remember to thank participants! |

### WHAT MATERIALS DO YOU NEED?



Gloves



Litter cleanup bags  
and other large litter  
receptacles



Litter pickers



Data collection app



Prizes



Data sheets

### SAMPLE ACTIVITY: COLLECTING DATA WITH AN APP

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Ask:** Participants will be asked to download the app that has been selected and tested in advance by your project team.

**Objective:** Data collection will allow community leaders to collect baseline data, track cleanup efforts and trace long-term progress in reducing the flow of litter.

**Resources needed:** Set aside time ahead of the cleanup to survey available apps to select the best one for your event and community. For a non-exhaustive list of apps, see [Appendix](#).

# TOWN HALLS

## WHAT IS THIS EVENT?

**Town Hall** meetings allow community members to express opinions on matters of public concern and interest. Generally, Town Hall meetings do not result in immediate action but are key to gaining credibility for litter prevention and other projects or initiatives.

**TIME:** 2 hours | **Who leads:** Two to three organizers and a facilitator

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Share ideas
- ✓ Interact with community decision makers
- ✓ Hear different perspectives
- ✓ Bring the community together

## POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS

- ✓ Town Hall meetings may involve difficult conversations where people express frustrations and concerns regarding a range of issues.
- ✓ It is important to secure a space that is accessible and neutral for as many members of the public as possible.

## WHY HOLD THIS EVENT?

Town Hall meetings create a safe and open space for dialogue knowledge exchange, and for expressing concerns or frustrations the community might have about a specific issue related to litter. They also provide a great opportunity to begin the process of changing attitudes and behaviors by presenting data and exposing people to different views.



### WHO SHOULD ATTEND THIS EVENT?

Town Hall meetings bring together community members and create an opportunity to engage with those who may not otherwise seek out information about the topic. This can result in more members of the community getting involved in litter-related initiatives and could possibly cultivate project champions. Town Halls provide a forum for voices to be heard, especially marginalized individuals and groups.

- ✓ Community members
- ✓ Local representatives
- ✓ Elected officials
- ✓ Members of religious groups
- ✓ Community organizations
- ✓ Students or education groups
- ✓ Indigenous elders / representatives
- ✓ Philanthropic or non-governmental organizations
- ✓ Media

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### HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT

Collaborate with community leaders, local organizations, and other partners to help plan the event and reach a wider, more diverse audience. Partners can use their networks to increase attendance and participation and they can also help with securing free services such as space, refreshments, free promotional materials, and audiovisual equipment. It is important to recognize partners as sponsors of the event to build credibility.

- ✓ Use city message boards or local public television advertisements
- ✓ Include information on public calendars
- ✓ Post on social media
- ✓ Promote the event using reusable or recyclable signage
- ✓ Send emails and newsletters



### WHERE CAN YOU HOLD THE EVENT?

Planning ahead to secure an appropriate location is critical. Town Halls are best conducted in public venues like city halls, libraries, auditoriums or recreational centers.

### HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

Town Hall meetings can at times get side-tracked by wide-ranging discussions and unstructured commentary. Engaging a professional facilitator can help lead conversation and organize discussion in ways that ensure the group is moving toward productive outcomes.

Organizers may wish to provide a range of engagement opportunities, including large group discussions,

small group discussions, written commentary and even online feedback. Not all participants are comfortable working in a large group setting and it is always best to make accommodations for all types of participants. Organizers may wish to involve spoken or sign language interpreters in order to create a more inclusive environment.



# WHAT IS NEEDED FOR YOUR EVENT?



### TOTAL PLANNING TIME

Make sure you have allocated at least two months to plan a Town Hall meeting. This will ensure the proper venue has been selected; a public notice has been created; and all arrangements have been made for audio-visual support, refreshments and personal contact with community organizers has been established. Personal contact may include asking questions about what they might want on the agenda and how shared goals might be achieved. A two-month horizon also allows to create an agenda and send preparatory materials in advance so participants can read them beforehand.

---



### FINDING A VENUE

Finding the correct location for the event is important and should be determined early in the planning process. Allocate ample time to secure a location that:

- ✓ Is easily accessible and neutral
- ✓ Does not symbolically represent oppression or trauma
- ✓ Is large enough to handle the size of an expected crowd
- ✓ Can provide proper technology, including microphones for participants and
- ✓ Results in the best public turnout

## TOWN HALLS



### CREATING MATERIALS

Create a digitized meeting package with limited hard copies to distribute prior to the event. The package should include the media package, a fact sheet with easy to understand statistics and data about the issue, biographies of the speakers and any reports or case studies you would like to present.

---



### ORGANIZING THE ROOM/AREA

Organize the room so it supports collaboration, knowledge exchange and dialogue. This can be done by having a stage for presentations and round tables around the room to encourage constructive discussion. Add an idea marina —a place to dock great ideas or conversations for later.

---

## WHAT MATERIALS DO YOU NEED?



Agenda and  
sign-in sheets



Handouts



Suggestion Box

### SAMPLE AGENDA

- ✓ Welcome and introductions
- ✓ Ground rules
- ✓ Presentations and knowledge exchange
- ✓ Audience engagement
- ✓ Q&A / Comments from the public
- ✓ Identifying action items and next steps
- ✓ Wrap up and adjourn

### SAMPLE ACTIVITY: INTERACTIVE MAPPING

**Time:** 5 minutes/throughout

Create a map of your community and place it in a prominent and accessible place in the room. Set markers or stickers beside the map.

**Ask:** Request attendees use the stickers or markers to pinpoint spots in the community where they frequently see litter. Ask participants to think about what the map and pinpoints say about litter sources and litter hotspots.

**Objective:** Crowdfund a litter hotspot map and begin conversations about why litter is being encountered where it is. Use the map to identify other stakeholders, plan community cleanup, and target future efforts.

**Resources needed:** Community map, stickers or markers.



# WORKSHOPS

## WHAT IS THIS EVENT?

This is an interactive **collaboration** or knowledge exchange session.

**TIME:** 3-5 hours | **Who leads:** One to three organizers and a facilitator

## KEY OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Defining the problem
- ✓ Energizing the community
- ✓ Prioritizing solutions
- ✓ Planning implementation

## POTENTIAL CONSTRAINTS

- ✓ Limited number of participants
- ✓ Finite financial resources

## WHY HOLD THIS EVENT?

Workshops create an opportunity to get people going by providing a place for people to commit resources, time and effort. Workshops are ideal for setting priorities and developing a broad range of community actions and then collaborating to develop prospectuses and action plans.



## WORKSHOPS

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND THIS EVENT?

- ✓ Local decision-makers
  - ✓ Educators
  - ✓ Community organizations
  - ✓ Business leaders
  - ✓ Media
  - ✓ Sector representatives such as youth groups, tourism boards and others
- 

### HOW TO GET THE WORD OUT

- ✓ Send invitations by e-mail or newsletter group
  - ✓ Announce your workshop at municipal events
  - ✓ Make announcements at other community group meetings
  - ✓ Reach out directly to community leaders and experts
- 

### WHERE CAN YOU HOLD THE EVENT?

- ✓ Community centers are well known locally and a place where people generally feel comfortable
  - ✓ Municipal or community venues that can accommodate your workshop free or at low cost
- 

### HOW TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUR COMMUNITY?

Be sure that you are reaching out to key stakeholders and decision makers. Allow the experts and leaders at your meeting to represent the different interests and socio-economic groups in your community. If necessary, this may mean using technology or translating your presentation into different languages.

# PREPARING FOR YOUR EVENT



### TOTAL PLANNING TIME

Make sure you have allocated two months to plan a workshop. This will ensure you secure the right place for the event and that your date and location are convenient for community leaders.

---



### FINDING A VENUE

Find the right size location, ideally for 25-40 people, that lends itself to constructive conversation and dialogue.

The venue should be equipped with an audio/visual system and internet access.

Make sure your venue will allow food and beverages.

---



### CREATING MATERIALS

Create a digitized meeting package distributed a week prior to the workshop. The package should include a problem statement and several potential solutions. Fact sheets are helpful and should be designed to provide statistical data. Worksheets can help structure conversations about action steps, resource needs and measuring results.



## WORKSHOPS



### ORGANIZING THE ROOM

It is important to organize the room to facilitate collaboration, knowledge exchange, dialogue and question and answer sessions. This can be done by having a stage for presentations and round tables in the room to encourage constructive discussion.

---



### TESTING YOUR APPROACH

Test the agenda with key leaders in the community and work with them on how to conduct small group sessions and establish your talking points. Do a dry-run of your small group sessions and your major talking points.

---

## WHAT MATERIALS DO YOU NEED?



Agenda



Name tags, pens,  
markers and  
notebooks



Flip charts



Snacks/beverages



Methodology  
to set priorities



Prospectus and Action  
Plan Template  
(See [Part III](#))



### SAMPLE AGENDA

- ✓ Welcome and introductions
- ✓ Ground rules
- ✓ Presentations and knowledge exchange
- ✓ Small group breakout sessions
- ✓ Identifying action items and next steps
- ✓ Wrap up and adjourn

### SAMPLE ACTIVITY: PROJECT PLANNING EXERCISE

**Time:** 3 hours

**Ask:** Take a project concept and develop it:

- ✓ Objectives
- ✓ Tasks
- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Staffing needs
- ✓ Performance measures

**Objective:** Develop a shovel ready project that reduces or prevents the flow of litter and trash

# TAKEAWAYS

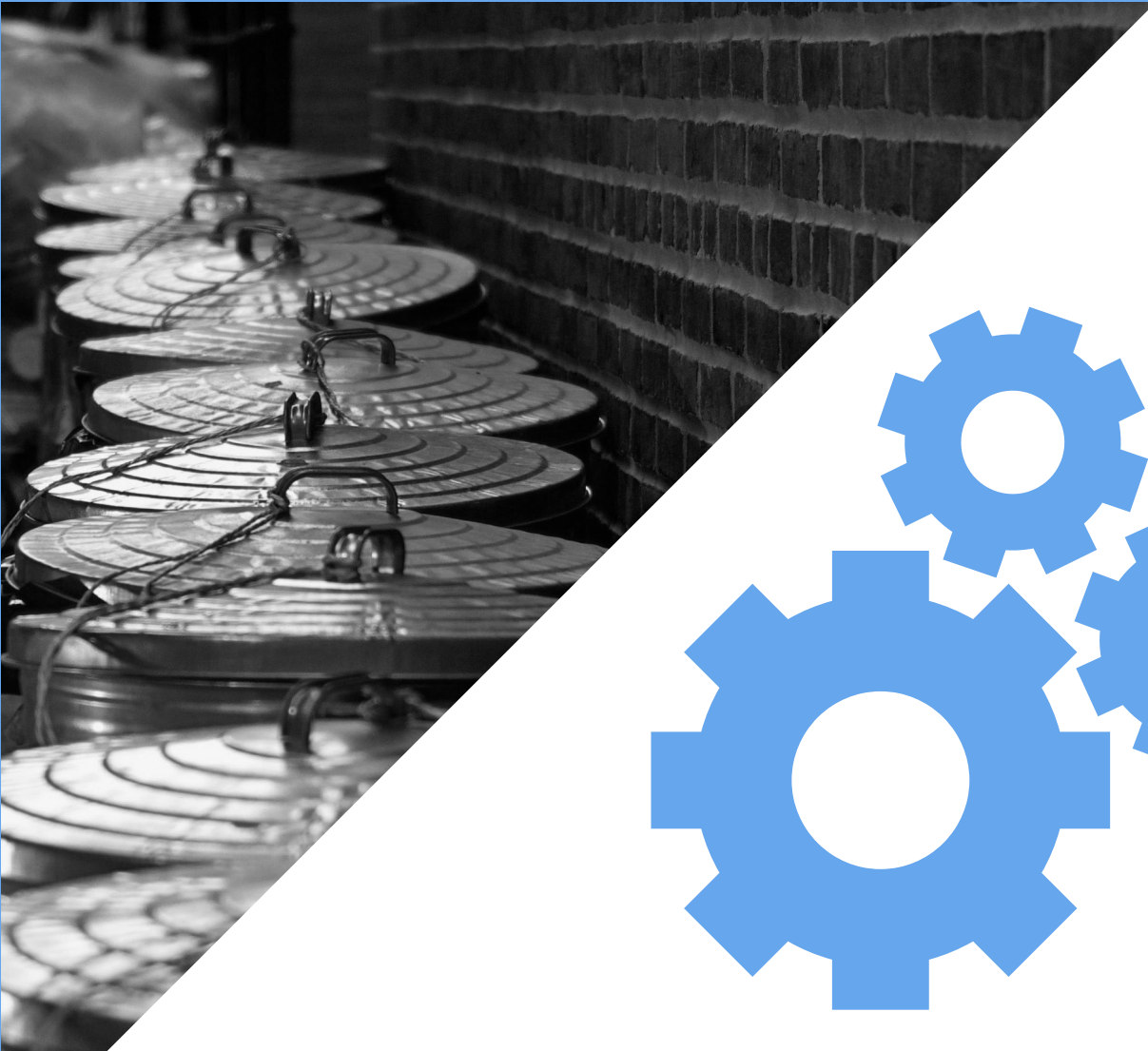
In this section, you will learn about the different events community leaders can call on to:

- ✓ Educate stakeholders
- ✓ Design innovative solutions to the marine litter issue
- ✓ Develop plans to implement progressive change
- ✓ Mobilize action and resources

## REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING KEY POINTS:

1. When deciding on the type of event you want to organize, ask yourself the following questions:
  - ✓ Will this event help me reach my goals and objectives?
  - ✓ What do I want to achieve?
  - ✓ How many community members do I want to engage?
  - ✓ How much time do I have to prepare for the event?
2. Start the planning process early and develop a to-do list that identifies roles, responsibilities and the expected duration of each task.
3. Partner with other community leaders, NGOs, and contributors to reduce cost and reach a wider network.

# PART III: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING SOLUTIONS



# AN OVERVIEW

This section helps you acquire resources and develop step-by-step tasks for achieving your litter prevention goals. In particular, the section focuses on two main deliverables you should develop in order to advance your efforts: (1) a project prospectus that provides a written summary of resource needs and uses, and (2) an action plan detailing the tasks and activities.





# BUILDING A PROSPECTUS

## WHAT IS A PROSPECTUS?

A prospectus is a marketing tool used to raise funds and enlist human resources.

The project prospectus focuses on resource needs and explains how resources will be used and managed. Think of the project prospectus as a sales pitch to potential partners, stakeholders and volunteers.

## SECTIONS TO INCLUDE IN A PROJECT PROSPECTUS

- ✓ Problem statement
- ✓ Vision
- ✓ Goals and timeline
- ✓ Resource needs  
—staffing and budget
- ✓ Partners
- ✓ Duties and responsibilities

Efforts to reduce or prevent the flow of marine litter are most successful when funding is provided by a combination of public, private and philanthropic entities forming partnerships otherwise known as P4, standing for public private people partnerships. Their effectiveness is based on these three sectors of the economy often appealing to different audiences and diverse supporters.

Be attentive to budget and grant-making cycles that may differ across sectors and organizations. It is always best to develop tracking documents that include target organizations, their missions and their annual budget and funding cycles. Early engagement is a key to success. You may have a great project, but if you aren't asking for support at the right time, the funding request may be delayed or outright rejected. It is often possible to work with program leads in funding organizations before their funding processes begin. This will help you gain insights as to what the resource community is seeking and how to position the project in a way that meets not only your needs, but theirs as well.

## BUILDING A PROSPECTUS

When talking to potential funders or partners explain how your project aligns with their vision and mission. Remember, many other groups are also asking for support. It will be easier to raise funds and resources if you are able to present a clear goal, specific plans and measurable outcomes to funders and show them how your initiative can help them achieve their own goals.

## KEYS TO SUCCESS:

- ✓ Early engagement
- ✓ Understand partners' respective missions
- ✓ Clearly explain how the project aligns with their mission
- ✓ Explain what value partners receive by supporting your effort



# BUILDING AN ACTION PLAN

## WHAT IS AN ACTION PLAN?

An action plan is a management tool to keep projects moving in a timely and cost-effective manner. It identifies milestones and when they should be achieved, and it details how metrics and measures (explained in [Part IV](#)) will be considered and consistently tracked through the project.

Project champions are often project managers and so this tool may include every aspect of implementation and execution.

## SECTIONS TO INCLUDE IN AN ACTION PLAN

- ✓ Problem statement
- ✓ Vision
- ✓ Goals
- ✓ Tasks, milestones and assignments
- ✓ Project timeline (or Gantt chart)
- ✓ Metrics and measurement
- ✓ Budget

## ASSIGNING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

One major component of the action plan is the assignment of roles and responsibilities. When designing an action plan, think about who should be responsible for what in the following groups. List out anticipated tasks and timelines for completing tasks.

- |                                |                     |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| ✓ Project champion             | ✓ Fiduciaries       |
| ✓ Fund raisers                 | ✓ Technical experts |
| ✓ Project sponsors and funders | ✓ Team leaders      |

Volunteers or supporters playing other roles should receive clear direction as to tasks and milestones as well as timelines for completion. Monthly or more frequent meetings or conference calls allow for adequate management and flexibility.



# GENERATING SUPPORT

Local efforts to improve litter control and address marine litter issues tend to be voluntary. Energy and resources tend to ebb and flow as community priorities shift across the spectrum of social issues. Those engaged in litter control and marine litter reduction tend to stay motivated for a variety of reasons, both intrinsic and extrinsic. People are *intrinsically* motivated when they personally find reasons to do something and pleasure in doing it. People are *extrinsically* motivated when outside factors influence their desire to participate.

## INTRINSIC REINFORCERS

- ✓ Feels good
- ✓ Naturally satisfying
- ✓ Fun
- ✓ Experiencing new things

## EXTRINSIC REINFORCERS

- ✓ Recognition (praise, fame)
- ✓ Rewards (cash, prizes)
- ✓ Competition
- ✓ Peer/social pressure





## GENERATING SUPPORT

Project champions should try to understand the motivations of each person involved in implementing the action plan and organize accordingly. By weaving in opportunities for a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, the team will inevitably work harder and more effectively.

Not everything is within your control. Interventions can move in a positive or negative direction because of any number of human and systemic factors. Consider these elements and how they might impact your action plan and timelines:

### HUMAN ELEMENTS

- ✓ Competing demands
- ✓ Illness
- ✓ Job responsibilities
- ✓ Over-extension
- ✓ Not a relatable issue
- ✓ Volunteer fatigue

### SYSTEMIC ELEMENTS

- ✓ Population growth
- ✓ Economic growth
- ✓ Change in land cover  
(roofs, parking lots, roads)  
from development
- ✓ Weather —wind, rain  
and stormwater run-off

Your project champion should compare these elements against your goals and progress. For example, if you find that volunteer support decreases in months where multiple meetings are held, it might be caused by human elements such as competing demands and over-extension.

# TAKEAWAYS



This section focuses on how you can acquire resources and implement project management techniques to successfully achieve your goals and objectives.

Remember the following suggestions as you start your initiative:

1. Engaging with local communities to reduce marine litter and producing lasting results means you need to develop a convincing project prospectus and a task-oriented action plan to acquire funding, garner support from stakeholders, and build a network of volunteers and supporters.
2. While developing a prospectus and action plan, reflect on your vision, goal, timeline, and resources needed. Make sure all are well aligned and consistent.
3. Generate support by adapting to shifting motivators and being flexible.

# PART IV: NEXT STEPS



# IMPORTANCE OF METRICS AND MEASUREMENT

This section explains the importance of metrics and measurement and provides tips and key lessons learned to sustain momentum and achieve results in the long term. It is important to monitor success and progress by tracking a set of agreed upon metrics and measurements. Use an established protocol to collect baseline data and measure progress as one or more interventions are implemented. By consistently collecting and analyzing data, project champions, leaders and partners can evaluate progress and adapt their plans accordingly.

## HELPFUL ITEMS TO TRACK IN YOUR DATA COLLECTION:

- ✓ Litter and marine debris types (plastic, paper, glass etc.)
- ✓ Where different types of litter and marine debris are found
- ✓ The quantity (volume, weight, number of items) of litter of various types
- ✓ Number of participants

In [Part I](#), we suggested you collect baseline data to understand the current levels of litter in your community. Now that you have started to take action, it is helpful to assess your successes in relation to where you started. By comparing your baseline data with new data collected after your initiative has been implemented, you will be able to see how the litter portrait has evolved.

Digital tools can make data collection and aggregation easier. Several free apps are available.

The selection of the app or tool to measure progress or change depends on the type of baseline information that could be obtained or generated prior to the execution of a community action project. Project champions should encourage the consistent use of the same set of metrics throughout the project, from baseline information data collection to project conclusion. For a list of the more popular apps and a brief assessment of each, please go to [the Appendix](#).



## METRICS AND MEASUREMENT

Data tracking can help create transparency and accountability, while inspiring those who are following results to change behaviors. Determining the tracking tools can be a fun and engaging exercise. You can engage your entire team in selecting the apps and tracking methodologies to further increase interest and buy in. A simple search of key terms can educate and inspire your team.

Many of these apps will provide instruction on how and what to count. For example, how does one count fragments of Styrofoam? Is half a clamshell container found in one place and the other half found elsewhere considered one container or two? Certain apps will allow the user to photograph the litter collected while others will not.

The most important aspect of measurement and metrics is accuracy. And while it sounds rather simple, the most important aspect of accuracy is whether or not your team is using the tool you chose for measurement in a consistent manner, individually and across users. Those implementing your projects need to have the tools and the capacity to record and enter data, based on common definitions and interpretation. Otherwise, the information will not be collected, leaving you unable to measure the impact of your efforts, or be inaccurate, leading you to the wrong interpretation. Make sure your team and all participants have access to the required technology and fully understand how to use it.

Your project champion should also keep track of other important metrics to measure the success of specific activities. These metrics can include funding levels, number and breakdown of participants by category, the size of mailing and distribution lists, and feedback from participants themselves (through an online survey, for example). While your metrics may not be exhaustive, any information collected in this way can be useful to help improve future actions.

# FINAL TIPS

## HOW TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING AND ACHIEVE RESULTS

The steps outlined in this toolkit build on one another to create self-sustaining momentum, energy, and capacity to address marine litter through community engagement. This energy should be channeled to encourage, produce and build ownership of piloted and implemented solutions. In the end, it's all about results.

*Results are encouraged* by collecting baseline information and data on litter in your community, as well as the litter that is produced as a result of individual behaviors. In turn, this information can be used to identify manageable solutions.

*Results are produced* by organizing events that bring people together to make them aware of marine litter, listen to their concerns and involve them in identifying, supporting and implementing manageable solutions.

*Results are owned* by using the engagement tools and techniques highlighted throughout this toolkit and by creating long-term, sustainable efforts that can lead to both individual and collective change.

## LINKING TO THE BIGGER PICTURE

As you get ready to begin engaging your community to reduce marine litter, keep this in mind:

### **1. Community engagement is only one part of the solution.**

Engagement can help prompt your community to implement other complementary approaches to litter and marine litter issues, including for example educational programs in schools and universities, regulatory approaches or Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) initiatives for companies producing throw-away items that often end up as litter in your community. In the same way, it is not possible to rely solely on litter ordinances or fines to make a meaningful impact. Marine litter is a global, multi-layered problem requiring a multi-faceted approach to solving it.

- 2. Make the problem relatable and personal.** Most people know they shouldn't litter and reminding them of this fact may not help them change their behavior. Engagement efforts can help build a positive anti-littering culture in the community, but it will not lead to a change in behavior for every individual. Most inland citizens never consider that their everyday trash can end up in local water bodies, much less in the ocean, which is not a part of their immediate living environment. The key is to link the issue to your local context, focusing on creating emotional or social connection to place. By making marine litter solutions personal, you can help change behavior for lasting success.

Keep in mind the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of target audiences in your community and not just active environmentalists. How can you make action easy for everyone?

- 3. Remember that progress can be slow.** Don't get discouraged if data initially show only marginal improvements to the state of litter in your community. Repeated engagement efforts over the years (such as yearly cleanup events) can have a cumulative effect over time and lead to lasting change through increased community awareness and exposure to the issue. Stay motivated by celebrating your successes with others and reaching out to people leading similar efforts in other communities, to share good practices, challenges you've faced and lessons learned.
- 4. Stay optimistic!** Local stakeholders want to make a difference in their community and are prepared to do some work. You don't have to have all the answers! When provided with reliable information as well as structure that allows for learning, collaboration and effective communication, most stakeholders will rally to your cause and agree to be a part of the solution.

# APPENDIX

## DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES AND TOOLS

There are a number of data collection methodologies and tools that can assist in measuring and tracking data, including the 9 listed below.

- ✓ [\*Volunteer Ocean Trash Data Form and Clean Swell\*](#) by the Ocean Conservancy International Coastal Cleanup
- ✓ [\*Marine Debris Tracker\*](#) by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- ✓ [\*Litterati\*](#) by Litterati
- ✓ [\*Marine LitterWatch\*](#) by the European Environment Agency (EEA)
- ✓ [\*CreekWatch\*](#) by IBM Research
- ✓ [\*Pirika\*](#) by Pirika, Inc.
- ✓ [\*ETAP: Escaped Trash Assessment Protocol\*](#) by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- ✓ [\*Community Appearance Index\*](#) (previously referenced as Litter Index) by Keep America Beautiful
- ✓ [\*Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup\*](#) by Oceanwise and WWF-Canada



### VOLUNTEER OCEAN TRASH DATA FORM AND CLEAN SWELL BY THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP

The International Coastal Clean Up takes place every September and is one of the world's largest annual environment-focused events and volunteer efforts for oceans and beaches. It is a global movement that encompasses six million volunteers in 90 countries. Both the data sheet and the app were developed to help volunteers record and track the litter and trash they pick up at the event or at any other time.

The *Trash Data Form* provides a step-by-step graphical guide to picking up trash and collecting, organizing and analyzing data in a consistent and methodical way. *CleanSwell* is a free, multi-language app for recording litter cleanup. Users can see data collected from every corner of the world. The Ocean Conservancy also provides introductory videos and tutorials.

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### MARINE DEBRIS TRACKER BY THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA)

This app assists in tracking and collecting data for users collecting litter both on the coast and inland. The interactive app shows data from other users and total amount of litter collected. It also provides guides on tracking marine litter, geo-tracking and documenting efforts.

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### LITTERATI BY LITTERATI

Developed by a NGO in partnership with data scientists, individuals, researchers and corporations, *Litterati* provides users with measurable actions to create a litter free world. Users can geo-tag photos, categorize collected litter, allow users to participate in local and global challenges, and partake in stories about the impact of marine litter across the globe.

### MARINE LITTERWATCH BY THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY (EEA)

Organized community groups and members of the public can use this app to upload data on the litter they find on their beaches and in their waterways. The EEA uses uploaded data to better target policy responses to marine litter. Along with the app, users can access a web portal for managing and organizing events and data. Other groups and individuals are displayed to help facilitate partnership building.

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### CREEKWATCH BY IBM RESEARCH

*Creekwatch* helps community members monitor the health of their local watershed by having users take pictures of their local waterway and then automatically aggregating the data and sharing it with water control boards. The app helps watershed groups and other stakeholders track pollution, manage resources and plan watershed programs.

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### PIRIKA BY PIRIKA, INC.

Recognizing the global litter problem, the creators developed an app that measures the global distribution of litter and uses the collected data to inform effective solutions. The app provides free data visualization services for cleanup efforts of companies, organizations and community groups and it allows them to create their own cleanup activity webpages.

### **ETAP: ESCAPED TRASH ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL BY THE US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)**

This assessment protocol assists stakeholders to standardize methodologies for sampling and analyzing trash pollution. Through the assessment, stakeholders can gather necessary site characteristics and data on trash in the environment to develop effective source reduction efforts. ETAP includes a card for categorizing and analyzing collected items for adaptive management.

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### **COMMUNITY APPEARANCE INDEX (PREVIOUSLY REFERENCED AS LITTER INDEX) BY KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL**

This is termed a windshield survey and helps users assess local geographies based upon litter volumes and densities. Users can take findings from the tool to help set goals and objectives for developing and implementing litter reduction and improvement programs in those areas that most need attention.

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### **GREAT CANADIAN SHORELINE CLEANUP BY OCEANWISE AND WWF-CANADA**

The Shoreline Cleanup is a direct-action conservation program that encourages Canadians to keep their shorelines free of litter. The program provides step-by-step techniques to lead school, youth, workplace and community cleanups. For each cleanup event, the program provides a litter data card, customizable poster to advertise the event, a site coordinator guide and waiver form. The Shoreline Cleanup also presents activities and free webinars teaching about the negative impacts of plastic debris and other forms of litter and advising how to keep a healthy environment.

## APPENDIX

### END NOTES

1. "Marine Litter," United Nations Environment Programme, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/oceans-seas/what-we-do/working-regional-seas/marine-litter>.
2. Sherrington, Chris. Plastics in the Marine Environment. Rep. Eunomia, June 2016. [www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/plastics-in-the-marine-environment/](http://www.eunomia.co.uk/reports-tools/plastics-in-the-marine-environment/)

### PHOTOGRAPHY

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