Position Paper on Ocean Bound Plastic (OBP) – Annex A

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Definition of ocean bound plastic

1. The term ocean bound plastic (OBP) is currently used as an "umbrella term" covering a broad range of plastic disposed in the environment. There is no one international, standardised or widely accepted definition.

2. The concept of and term OBP itself is based on a publication by Jambeck et al. (2015), in which a detailed model was used to estimate the amount of plastic waste generated annually by populations living within 50 km of a coastline. However, it should be noted that even though this publication has been used to loosely define OBP, the term was not actually used in the publication itself.

3. Further examples of defining OBP include a) abandoned plastic waste of all size that is located within 50 km from the shore in areas with poor or non-existing waste management systems, b) plastic waste in uncontrolled or informal dumps if located within 50 km from shore, c) abandoned plastic waste located within 200 m from rivers/streams and d) plastic that is located within 50 km from an ocean coastline or a major waterway or e) more generally as plastic that would otherwise end up in the ocean or coastal areas at risk of plastic pollution (Zero Plastic Ocean; Prevented Ocean Plastic; Tide).

4. The term OBP generally refers to plastic originating from countries with poor waste management infrastructure and/or existing infrastructures which are often overwhelmed by population growth or tourism. However, the initial publication by Jambeck et al. (2015) considered coastal countries all over the world, including the USA and European countries. According to the authors, countries with good waste management systems however contributed significantly less to the overall amount of plastic emissions entering the ocean.