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# PLASTIC POLLUTION AND MONITORING IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS

*Circular Economy Forum (17-18 June 2025)*

*Digitalization and Innovation: Data Collection and Management*

*Ana Kumarasamy, Associate Programme officer (UNEP-COBSEA)*

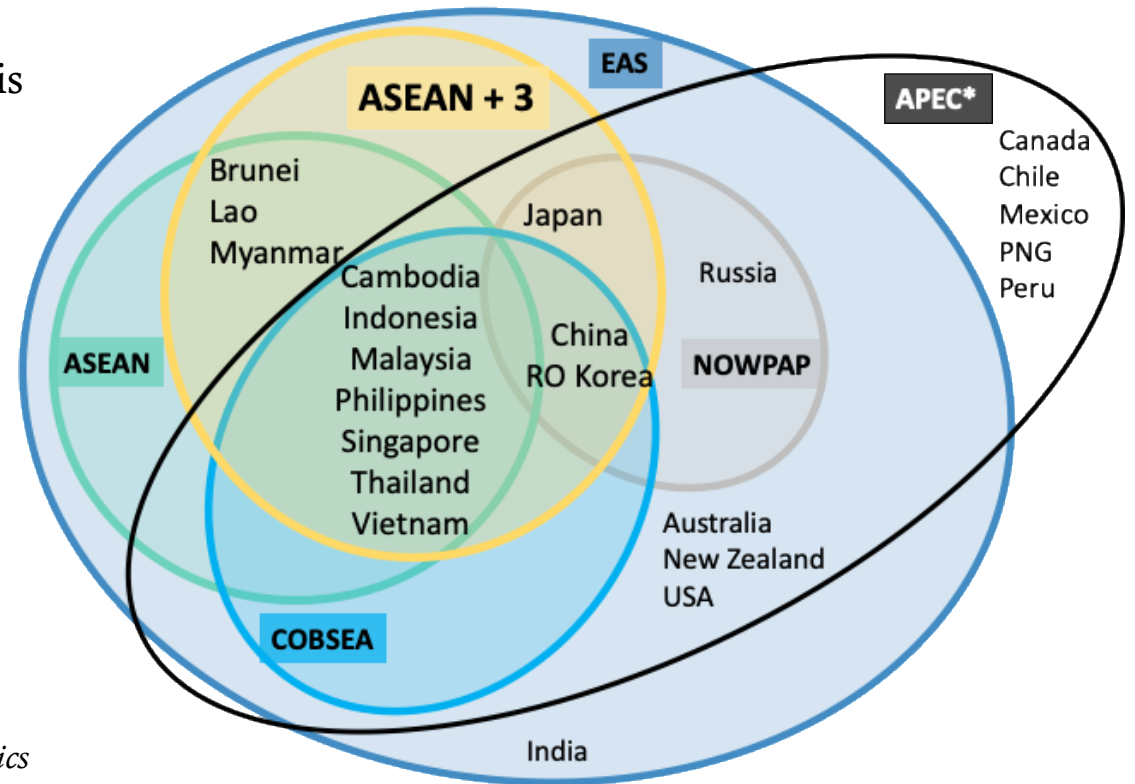
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## REGIONAL MARINE LITTER FRAMEWORKS IN EAS

- **COBSEA** - Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI 2019 [2008])
- **ASEAN** - Regional Action Plan on Combatting Marine Debris
- **APEC** - Roadmap on Marine Debris



Source:

COBSEA & NUS (2020): *Status of Research, Legal and Policy Efforts on Marine Plastics in ASEAN+3: A Gap Analysis at the Interface of Science, Law and Policy*

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# COORDINATING BODY OF THE SEAS OF EAST ASIA (COBSEA)

## **East Asian Seas Action Plan 1994**

Intergovernmental body aimed at protection and sustainable development of the marine & coastal environment of East Asian Seas

## **Regional Seas**

One of 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Actions Plans

## **COBSEA Participating Countries**

Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam

## **Secretariat**

Hosted by Thailand (in Bangkok), administered by UNEP

[www.cobsea.org](http://www.cobsea.org)

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# COBSEA REGIONAL ACTION PLAN ON MARINE LITTER

Adopted by IGM 24 (2019), aligns with UNEA & 2030 Agenda

Guides coherent action at national & regional level toward global goals:



**ACTION 1:** prevent and reduce marine litter from **land-based** sources



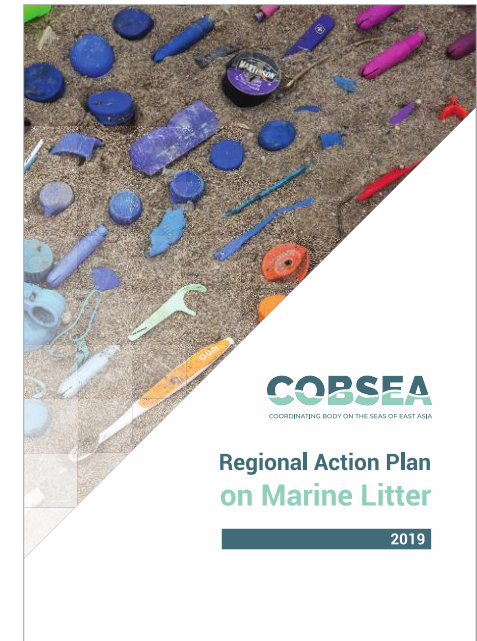
**ACTION 2:** prevent and reduce marine litter from **sea-based** sources



**ACTION 3:** strengthen **monitoring** and assessment



**ACTION 4:** create **enabling conditions** for action (knowledge sharing, regional coordination, outreach & education, research)



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# MONITORING EFFORTS IN EAS

**Aim:** Strengthen and harmonize monitoring and assessment for evidence-based action

In partnership with Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), with funding from *inter alia* Government of Sweden under SEA circular

## **Regional Guidance on Harmonized National Marine Litter Monitoring Programmes**

- Adopted by IGM 25 (2021), Expert Group on Monitoring
- Regional inventory of monitoring efforts, global best practices, quality standards
- Guidance for robust and comparable data collection based on existing efforts and capacities in line with regional and global guidelines (GESAMP)

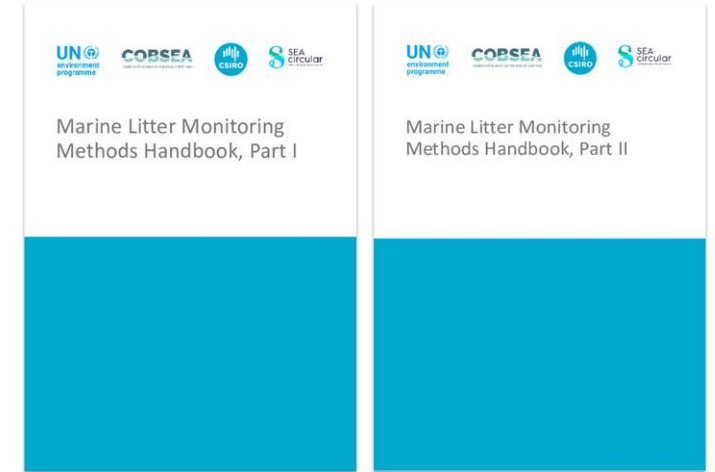


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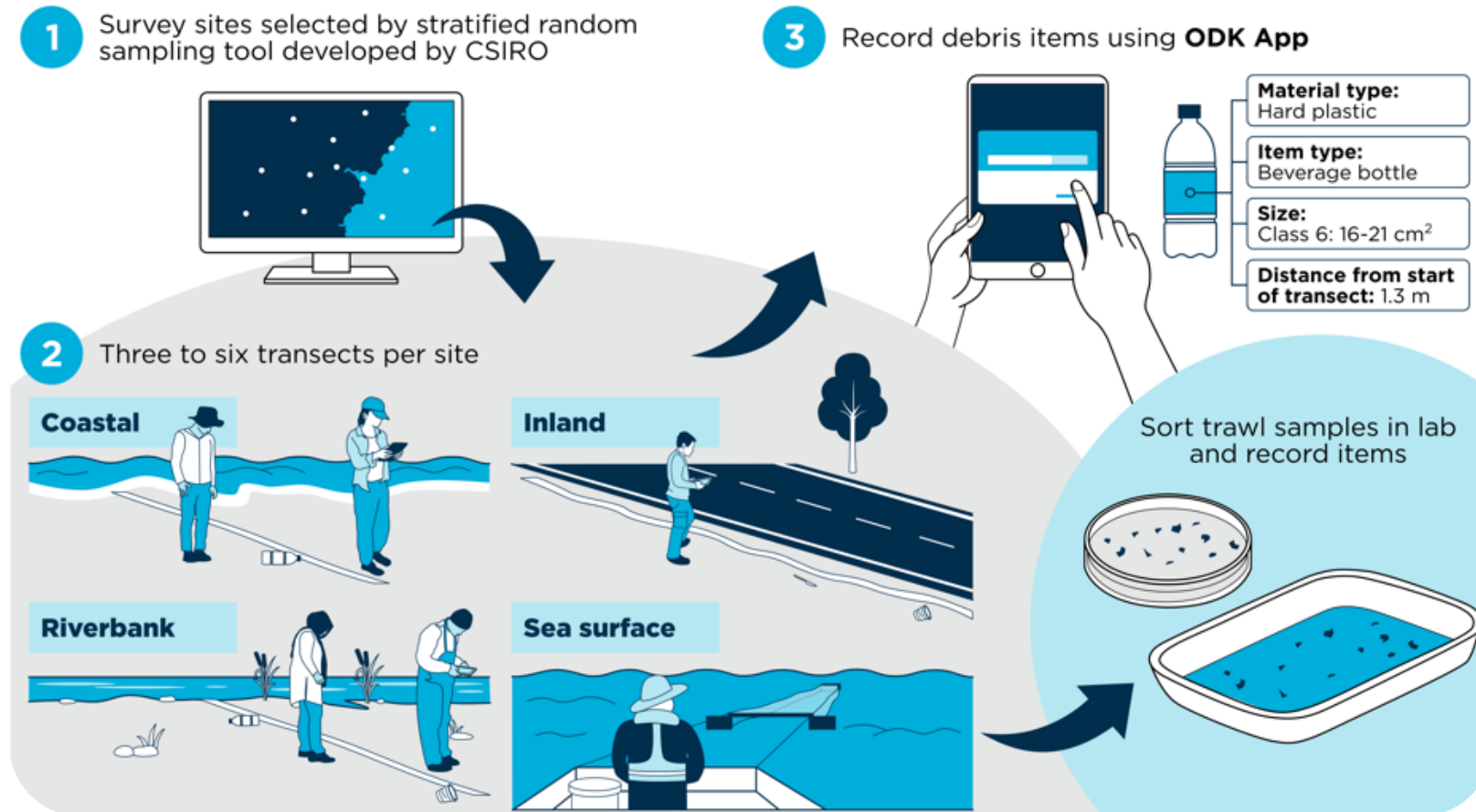
# MONITORING EFFORTS IN THE EAS

## Building Capacity on Marine Litter Monitoring

- Regional training of trainers in Phuket, Thailand in July 2022
- National training of trainers in Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam (2022-2024)
- Regional training on marine litter data analysis, Bangkok in September 2023/2024
- Training modules on marine litter monitoring methods
- Training modules on marine litter data analysis (coming soon)





# APPROACH – CSIRO



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# APPROACH – CSIRO

Inland	River	Coastal	Trawl
			



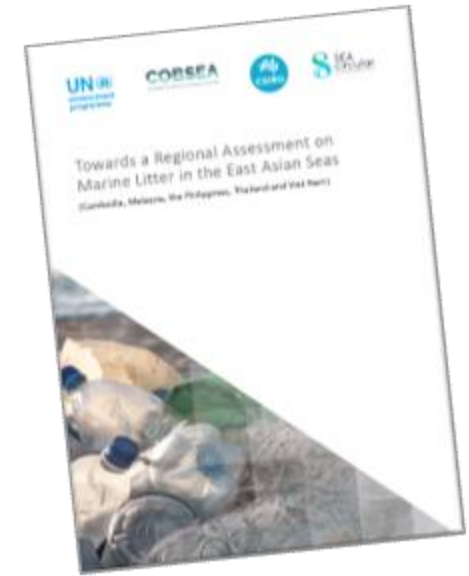
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# MONITORING EFFORTS IN THE EAS

## TOWARDS A REGIONAL ASSESSMENT ON MARINE LITTER IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS

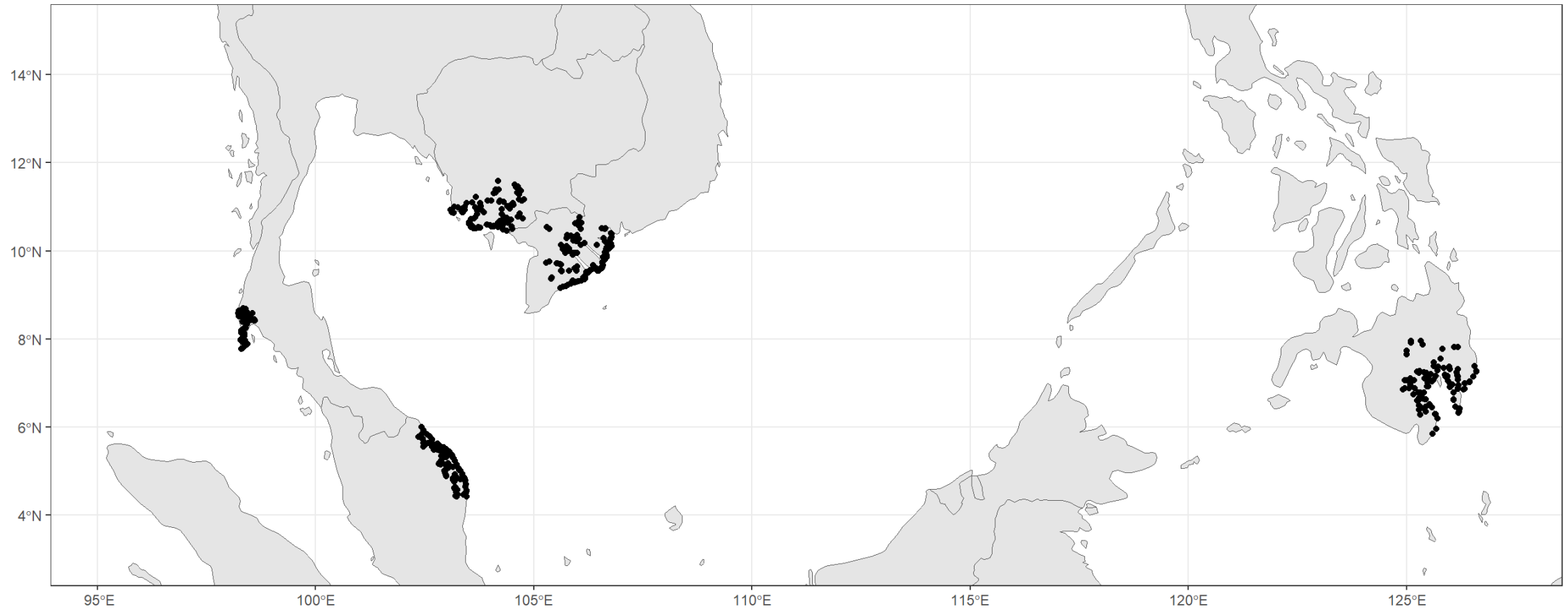
(Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam)

- Result from collaboration and coordination between participating countries.
- First-of-its-kind providing harmonized on-the-ground evidence at the national level
- Survey data from Cambodia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam
- 1474 transects (540 inland, 430 riverbanks, 369 coastlines, 135 trawl samples)

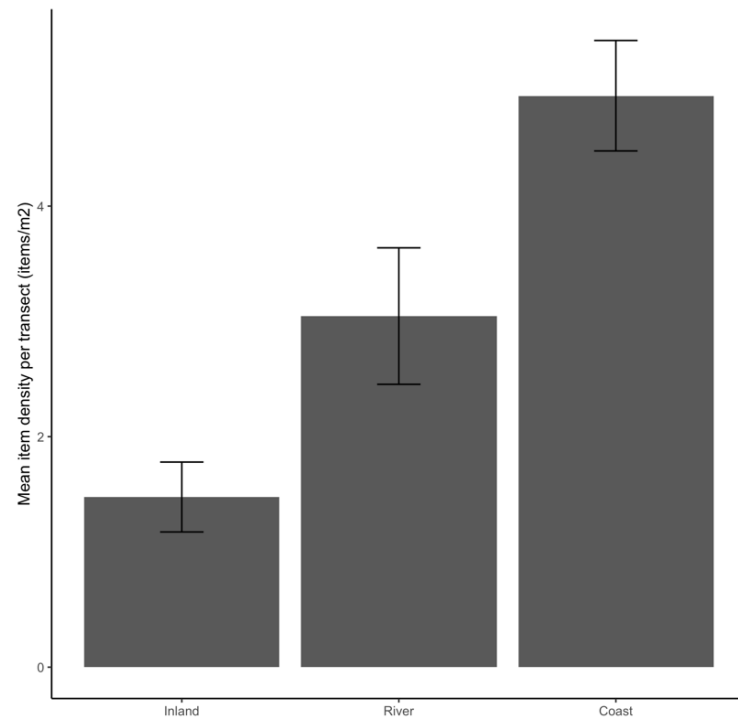


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# 5 REGIONS ACROSS 5 COUNTRIES

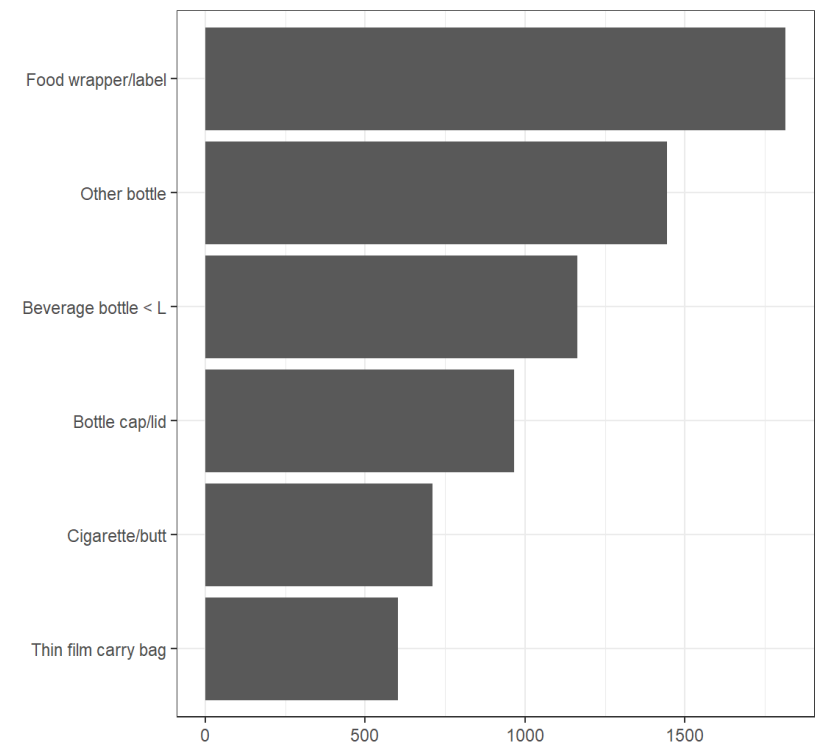


# DEBRIS HIGHEST ALONG THE COAST

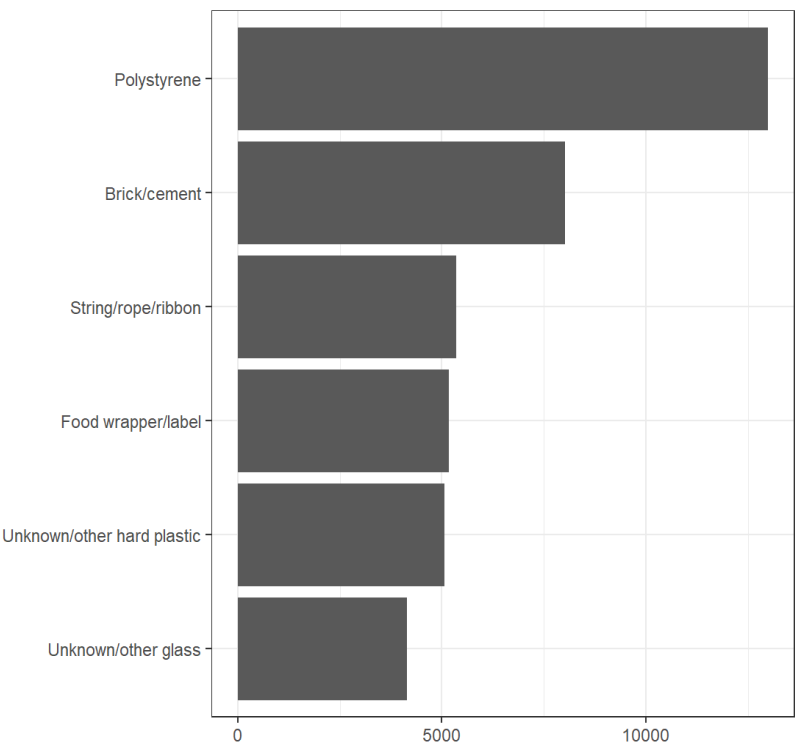


# TOP 6 ITEMS

Whole



Fragmented





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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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# MA-RE DESIGN PROJECT (GIZ, WWF, AND UNEP COBSEA)

WWF-Led beach cleanup in Trang (29 March 2024) and Koh Tao (12 Feb 2025) and School Projects



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## Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia

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