

Resolution of the seminar

Marine litter is our problem. The search for solutions to minimize plastic pollution of water bodies

The 24th of May 2018

Participants: representatives of the Federal Supervisory Natural Resources Management Service (Rosprirodnadzor), Research Limnology Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute, companies Ecocentrum, Tochka Sborna, Fertoint, public organizations and movements Friends of the Baltic, RazDelny Sbor (movement that promote separate waste collection), Musora.Bolshe.Net (public organization that popularize eco-friendly lifestyle), projects NOPLASTICITSFANTASTIC, let's Do it!2018, Clean Vuoksa, etc.

The main goal of the seminar was to exchange experience and develop approaches to solve the problem of marine litter and plastic pollution. Participants noted that it was necessary to increase public awareness and cooperation of local inhabitants, NGOs, business communities, as well as support of municipalities and local government related to environmental protection.

Participants of the seminar underlined common priority challenges:

- The necessity to develop legal base for the implementation of separate waste collection and recycling
- The need for active communication of stakeholders in various parts of marine litter and plastic pollution problem
- Relevance of public awareness of marine litter, plastic and microplastics pollution and informing people about the source of it, which is overconsumption
- The importance of collaboration between NGOs and public initiative groups that work on the topic of waste

Participants shared information on each of the above mentioned problems, as well as their views on the necessary actions:

1. About legal base

In Russia, there is a law on extended liability of the manufacturer (introduced in 2014, with amendments from December 2017). Extended liability of the manufacturer implies that the manufacturer must recycle a certain percentage of the waste from its or similar products. Or, the producer can pay an environmental fee according to a specific rate. At the moment it doesn't work very effectively. On the one hand, some of the environmental fee rates (i.e. for paper) are lower than they should be. On the other hand, businesses do not know well how this law works.

What to do: It is necessary to educate businesses about the opportunities and profits of extended liability of the manufacturer. It is also necessary to simplify the licensing system for each stage of waste management, to motivate businesses to work with waste. Also, we need to adapt the environmental fee rates to the real situation and to ensure the good work of the law in question.

2. About stakeholder communication:

There are 4 main stakeholders that can influence the work with marine litter and waste management: government, society, business and science. In most cases we can see communication only between 2 stakeholders: government – society or government – business. Science is another isolated system. Scientists conduct important research to find solutions to plastic pollution, but it is very difficult for government, business and society to understand. So it is a challenge – to bring together all the stakeholders and to develop a way for them to communicate.

What to do: It is important to provide scientific information through mass media, because journalists can present the information to the public in an accessible manner. Another way is to

establish collaboration between NGOs. They know how and with whom to cooperate, they can also bring together all stakeholders. Also, NGOs are competent to summarize the problems and solutions and present them to the public. It is topical to create a platform for communication of all stakeholders.

3. *About public education:*

Nowadays, there are a lot of ordinary people who know about separate waste collection. So they will get to know about the problem of marine litter and microplastics after some time. But this knowledge is not the way to solve the problem.

What to do: It is crucial to promote the knowledge about our Planet's limited resources and humanity's limitless consumption. We should aim at the sources of garbage, the scale of our consumption, and not only the consequences, such as pollution. Popular science and citizen science may play an important role in demonstrating this idea. People will take part in research and see what the problem is and why we try to solve it.

4. *About collaboration between NGOs and public initiative groups related to waste:*

The communication between public initiative groups that work with waste in Russia is very poor nowadays.

What to do: Marine litter mostly consists of the debris that emerged from waste handling activities on land. This way, it is important for different initiative groups that work with waste to join forces, based on the existing wide ranging networks of initiative groups, such as RazDelny Sbor and Musora.Bolshe.Net. The community of NGOs and public initiative groups should exchange information, make joint activities and together promote eco-friendly life style.