# GOVERNING PLASTICS NETWORK - POLICY BRIEF

**COUNTRY: RWANDA**

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**Project Information**

The Governing Plastics Network is a project jointly created by the University of Nairobi in Kenya and the University of Surrey in the UK.

**Funding partners:** UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and the UKRI/GCRF, AHRC, EPSRC and UGPN.

**Project Objectives:** To help national partners to improve plastic pollution governance by identifying best practices on communication strategies and governance structures.

**Key activities:** 1) Map key national stakeholders and identify the most influential. 2) Analyse key stakeholder communication strategies and how they have affected the country’s governance. 3) Analyse the country’s governance frameworks relating to single use plastic and identify opportunities for improvement.

**Global Project Results**

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| **Diagnostic:** Despite the advanced legal frameworks in single use plastic there are two main implementation problems: 1) Cultural adherence 2) Law enforcement.**Successful cases:** The project identified two types of campaigns that work well: 1) National/regional entrepreneurs that have become key plastic celebrities; 2) international NGOs that define local/global messages focused on refusing plastics and promoting alternative entrepreneurship ideas. |
| **Implications for policy and recommendations:**- Establish a network of key plastic ambassadors (including NGOs and key entrepreneurs)- Work on local but unified messages related to refusing plastics, promoting a shift to a circular economy and the possibilities of using alternatives to plastics.- Support key symbolic material: involve civil society and artist in creating a new anti-plastic symbology. |

**National Project Results**

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| **Diagnostic:** Rwanda has taken measures to better manage and reduce the use of plastics, including adoption of the law no 17/2019 of 10/08/2019 relating to the prohibition of manufacturing, importation, use and sale of plastic carry bags and single-use plastic items. The transition to a circular and eco-efficient economy is promoted through the National Policy on Environment and Climate Change of 2019 and the Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy of 2011 and is under revision since 2020. In addition, a large number of policy instruments – ranging from awareness campaigns to inspections and penalties in the form of fines and confiscation of plastics that are legally prohibited– are applied. The country has also been successful in significantly reducing the plastic bag waste by enforcing the law through joint-monitoring and inspection by different institutions (e.g. Rwanda Environment Management Authority, Rwanda National Police, and local administrative entities). The country uses different communication channels to raise awareness about the dangers of plastic pollution. However, the effective awareness campaigns on the dangers of plastic bags and single-use plastics require the use of different communication channels, focusing on community-based awareness campaigns (e.g. *Umuganda, Umugoroba w’umuryango).* Rwanda promotes cleaner production through Cleaner Production & Climate Innovation Centre (CPCIC) which offers advisory services on adoption of cleaner production and climate resilient technologies and supporting businesses in transition to alternatives. However, despite a special attention paid to plastic pollution prevention in Rwanda, there are still limitations:1. The current policy and legal framework does not cover all plastics.
2. The existing communication strategy reaches the public in a limited way.
3. There is limitation in recording data on enforcement.
4. Alternatives such as recycling, circular economy activities are considered, but still limited mainly due to lack of technical and financial resources. This area needs more focus in the future.
5. Tailoring suitable communication products and channels to specific audiences still limited.

**Successful cases:** Two case studies were identified in Rwanda. These include Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) and Cleaner Production & Climate Innovation Centre (CPCIC).1. **Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA)**

As a public institution responsible for advising the government on policies, strategies and legislation related to the management of the environment and an enforcing agency, REMA has undertaken different successful initiatives or activities related to plastic pollution prevention and utilised various communication strategies to influence policy and behaviour change as illustrated below:* High-level conference addressing plastic pollution of 29 May 2018

https://rema.gov.rw/index.php?id=77&tx\_news\_pi1%5Bnews%5D=4&tx\_news\_pi1%5Bday%5D=30&tx\_news\_pi1%5Bmonth%5D=5&tx\_news\_pi1%5Byear%5D=2018&cHash=e3cc36b34a5d87d3692fb0fbce434138* Beat plastic pollution walk of 3 June 2018 https://www.flickr.com/photos/rema-rwanda/40863461080/ and <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rema-rwanda/28799153618/>
* Direct communication with the public during inspection and monitoring of the implementation of the current plastic law (e. g: 10-11 September 2020)
* https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/181672 or <https://rema.gov.rw/index.php?id=77&L=0&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=6&tx_news_pi1%5Bday%5D=5&tx_news_pi1%5Bmonth%5D=6&tx_news_pi1%5Byear%5D=2018&cHash=80174194e9940a0a64bb807394902b30>
* <https://www.rema.gov.rw/index.php?id=77&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=86&tx_news_pi1%5Bday%5D=10&tx_news_pi1%5Bmonth%5D=9&tx_news_pi1%5Byear%5D=2020&cHash=319b07b2c942d44e4a07bd8d19db9399>
* Collaboration with different public and plastic institutions in the fight against plastic pollution <https://rema.gov.rw/index.php?id=77&L=0&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=90&tx_news_pi1%5Bday%5D=15&tx_news_pi1%5Bmonth%5D=10&tx_news_pi1%5Byear%5D=2020&cHash=e9b19c04d76315c091c4b0859249ce3a>
* Sensitization of laws and regulations governing plastics among the public using different communication channels: direct presentations, mass media (TV, Radio, etc.)
* Rema played a major role in adoption of Law no 17/2019 of 10/08/2019 relating to the prohibition of manufacturing, importation, use and sale of plastic carry bags and single-use plastic items.
1. **Cleaner Production & Climate Innovation Centre (CPCIC)**

CPCIC provides policy guidance based on interactions with the private sector especially with regards to regulatory requirements. Some examples include the following: * CPCIC organized a workshop on “Identified Industrial Symbiotic Exchanges for Circular Economy projects”, 3 March 2021 with the following achievements:
1. It identified available opportunities in different industrial symbiosis including those related to plastic waste management such us turning plastic waste to plastic paves or to polythene tubes and PET bottles waste to PET pre-forms.
2. It has also identified potential industrial symbiosis including PET bottles waste to plastic recycling.
* CPCIC used various communication channels including direct presentations and discussions, mass media (tv, radio, press), social media (twitter, flikr) and street advertisement (banner) and this has contributed to legal and policy framework implementation and enforcement, and contributed to behaviour change.
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| **Implications for policy and recommendations:**1. **Revise existing plastics related laws or regulations to cover the management of all plastics in their entire life cycle from manufacturing to disposal.**
2. **Conduct regular communication activities related to plastics management and governance through tailoring suitable communication products and channels to specific audiences:**
3. Mass media campaign (broadcast and online) using super media, radios – focusing on the ones with programmes in Kinyarwanda, e.g.: Kubaza bitera Kumenya on RBA, Ubyumva ute? On KT Radio, Rirarashe on TV1, Community radios (e.g. Rubavu, Nyagatare, etc.)
4. Supplementary sponsored articles and news coverage through leading newsletters such as Imvaho Nshya, Newtimes, Igihe, Kigali today, Umuseke
5. Monthly email updates for stakeholders
6. Feature stories, profiles, infographics
7. Audio: Podcasts, audio documentary
8. Visuals such as Youtube
9. Organising an interactive online platform and/or webinar to enhance dialogue and debate on plastic pollution among key stakeholders on regular basis
10. Cultural activities - traditional dances, plays and drama on plastic governance, e.g. Using *Urunana* preventing plastic pollution
11. Community-based awareness campaigns (e.g. *Umuganda, Umugoroba w’umuryango, inteko z’abaturage*).
12. **Regularly record data on enforcement of plastics related laws and regulations**
13. **Provide trainings in plastics recycling and circular economy**
14. **Provide more incentives to innovative projects** contributing to management or reduction of plastic waste.
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