

# Key findings and recommendations

Having analyzed the current situation with plastic waste generation and management, several key conclusions and recommendations can be made to improve the current situation in this area in Uzbekistan:

## 1. Growth of the processing industry and the need to expand infrastructure

An assessment of statistics on plastic production and recycling shows that the recycling industry is developing: the number of enterprises and their capacities are increasing, which contributes to the growth of plastic waste recycling. Nevertheless, the existing infrastructure does not yet meet all the needs of the country, especially in regions with high population density and plastic consumption. It is necessary to continue investing in the creation and modernization of processing plants, with a special focus on regions with high consumption levels, and support small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in processing by providing tax incentives, subsidies and government programs.

## 2. Problems with availability and reliability of statistics

Based on the data provided by the authorized bodies, the tendency of insufficient reliability and fragmentation of statistical data in the sphere of plastic waste management was revealed. Limited access to complete statistics makes it difficult to accurately assess the current situation and the effectiveness of the implemented measures. To ensure access to more accurate statistics for public authorities, private sector and research institutes, it is necessary to introduce a system of mandatory reporting and data exchange on plastic waste generation, utilization and recycling. The development of a digital platform for data collection and monitoring will help to track the dynamics of plastic waste management in real time and facilitate informed planning and control.

## 3. Legislative initiatives and regulatory oversight

Examination of legislative documents showed that Uzbekistan has already adopted laws and policies to improve waste management, such as

Solid Waste Management Strategy for 2019-2028. However, to achieve effective implementation, the regulatory framework needs to be strengthened and monitored, and the principle of extended producer responsibility (EPR) needs to be introduced. Additional regulations should be developed to incentivize separate waste collection and increase recycling. The introduction of the EPR principle will make it possible to oblige companies to participate in the collection and recycling of plastic products they produce, increasing the responsibility of businesses for environmental consequences.

It is also necessary to strengthen control over compliance with environmental standards at all stages - from production to disposal - in order to minimize the negative impact on the environment.

#### **4. Low level of environmental awareness of the population**

Analysis of questionnaires and surveys shows that the level of public awareness of plastic waste and recycling issues remains low. Insufficient knowledge about ecology and lack of educational programs make it difficult to involve the society in separate collection and recycling of waste. Launching national information campaigns highlighting the importance of separate waste collection and recycling using television, social media and other mass channels will help raise awareness. The inclusion of environmental and separate waste collection topics in school and university curricula will help to develop an informed attitude towards the environment from an early age.

#### **5. Increased use of sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics**

The analysis showed that the adoption of sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics has been slow, and manufacturers need support to switch to sustainable materials. Introducing financial incentives and subsidies for companies introducing sustainable substitutes for single-use plastics would help accelerate the transition to more sustainable consumption patterns. Supporting research initiatives and developing national standards for sustainable materials will allow businesses to adapt more quickly to new requirements and offer environmentally friendly products on the market. It is also important to create a national register of the chemical composition of plastics, introduce mandatory product certification and raise awareness among the public and businesses of the risks of toxic additives such as phthalates and bisphenol-A, which can end up in recycled materials and goods.

To summarize, it should be noted that the problem of plastic waste management in Uzbekistan requires an integrated approach combining the development of recycling infrastructure, improvement of legislation, raising environmental awareness of the population and stimulating the use of sustainable alternatives.

Despite positive trends in the development of the recycling industry and the implementation of strategies, significant challenges remain, such as fragmented statistics, low levels of public engagement and insufficient availability of green solutions. Implementing recommendations to address these challenges will not only minimize the negative environmental impact of plastic waste, but also create a more sustainable and environmentally responsible economy, ensuring the well-being of future generations.

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