

THE OCEAN

Policy in practice

SMARTPHONE APPS AND PLASTIC

Country: [Netherlands](#)

Tags: [Microplastic](#) | [Plastic](#)

Theme: [Pollution](#)



Responsible consumption and production



Life below water

Policy in practice

Various existing and emerging digital solutions, such as smartphone apps, can help facilitate information flows throughout the plastics supply chain. In principle, these tools enable end consumers to make better-informed purchasing decisions, thereby potentially favouring alternatives with less health and environmental impacts on the market and sending a market signal to producers and designers about consumer preferences.

One example is the Beat the Microbead app, through which consumers can verify whether a product contains plastic microbeads by scanning the barcode with their smartphone camera. The app was initiated by the world-wide campaign with the same name, launched in 2012 by the Amsterdam-based NGO Plastic Soup Foundation, sponsored by the UN. In late 2017, the Foundation also launched the My Little Plastic Footprint app, intended to help consumers reduce their personal plastic footprint by, for instance, providing information about the issue of plastic waste and encourage consumers to join pledges related to their plastics consumption.

Source report

[Watkins, E., et al. \(2019\), "Policy approaches to incentivise sustainable plastic design", OECD Environment Working Papers, No. 149, OECD Publishing, Paris](#)

Key policy message

Digital solutions can help facilitate information flow throughout the supply chain, enabling consumers to make informed purchasing decisions.

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