

Draft Final Project Closure Workshop Report- Validation Workshop of the BRS Plastic Waste Toolkits for Measuring Plastic Waste Flows

Date: Buenos Aires, Argentina – 22–23 April 2026

Participants

BCRC Argentina

- Alberto Santos Capra; Leila Devia; María del Mar Peralta and Rocío Laiz Quiroga

BRS Secretariat

- Andrea Cararo

UNITAR

- Vanessa Forti; Halina Shyla and Maximilian Schubert

Suriname- Stichting Suriname Waste Management (SUWAMA)

- Lalieta Somwaru and Humphrey Bergraaf

Suriname (online participation)- Ministry of Oil, Gas and Environment

- Wanshieka Goli and Kawiesh Debisarun

Bolivia- Ministry of Environment and Water

- Miroslava Castellon and Rocío Esprella Escobar

Ecuador- Ministry of Environment and Energy

- Jenny Marcela Arias Pastrano

Argentina- Ministry of Health

- Mariel Chervin

Argentina- Subsecretariat of Environment

- Carlos Martínez
- Irina Talamoni

Argentina- National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI)

- Cecilia Lorenzo; Cristina Inocenti; Gabriela Munizza; Natalie Cruz; Justina Garro and Jimena Etcheverry.

1. Background

The Validation Workshop of the BRS Plastic Waste Toolkits for Measuring Plastic Waste Flows was organized within the framework of the regional project *“Support the Development of a Plastic Inventory of Plastic Waste Flows in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivia, Ecuador, and Suriname)”*. The workshop was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 22 and 23 April 2026 in a hybrid format, with in-person and virtual participation from representatives of governments, international organizations, technical institutions, and regional partners.

The event was coordinated by the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South America (BCRC Argentina/CRBAS-INTI) the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The workshop represented the final regional activity of the project and aimed to validate the methodologies used, review country-level results, exchange lessons learned, and identify future opportunities for strengthening plastic waste inventories and environmentally sound management systems in the region.

2. Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop aimed to:

- Present the progress and results achieved by Bolivia, Ecuador, and Suriname under the project.
- Validate the methodologies and tools developed for estimating plastic waste flows.
- Strengthen technical capacities related to plastic waste inventories and data management.
- Facilitate the exchange of experiences, challenges, and lessons learned among participating countries.
- Discuss methodological adaptations and opportunities for improving national data systems.
- Identify future actions and next steps to strengthen plastic waste management and policy development in the region.

3. Participants

The workshop brought together representatives from:

- BCRC Argentina / CRBAS – INTI
- Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
- UNITAR
- Government representatives from Bolivia, Ecuador, and Suriname
- Argentine national institutions, including the Subsecretariat of Environment, National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI) and the Ministry of Health.

4. Opening Session and Introductory Remarks

The workshop opened with welcoming remarks delivered by Alberto Santos Capra, Director of BCRC Argentina/CRBAS-INTI. In his intervention, he highlighted the strategic importance of

regional cooperation and technical assistance for improving plastic waste management and strengthening evidence-based policymaking. He emphasized that reliable inventories and harmonized methodologies are essential tools for understanding plastic flows and designing effective interventions.

He also referred to the ongoing negotiations under the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on plastic pollution, noting that discussions continue regarding the scope of the future international legally binding instrument. He explained that one of the main challenges in the negotiations is the differing positions among countries concerning whether the agreement should address only the final stage of the plastic lifecycle or the entire lifecycle of plastics.

Andrea Cararo, Programme Management Officer of the BRS Secretariat, presented an overview of the activities carried out under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and their relevance to addressing plastic pollution worldwide.

He explained the complementary roles of the three conventions:

- The Basel Convention focuses on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous and other wastes, including plastic waste.
- The Stockholm Convention addresses persistent organic pollutants (POPs).
- The Rotterdam Convention promotes information exchange and informed decision-making related to hazardous chemicals and pesticides.

Andrea Cararo also highlighted projections indicating that plastic consumption is expected to increase significantly, particularly in developing and emerging economies, reinforcing the need for stronger waste management systems and preventive actions.

The presentation further addressed the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution established under UNEA Resolution 5/14 and summarized the main milestones reached during the negotiation process.

Special attention was given to the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments, which entered into force in January 2021 and introduced new control mechanisms for plastic waste under Annexes II, VIII and IX.

The presentation also reviewed the Technical Guidelines on the Environmentally Sound Management of Plastic Waste adopted in May 2023, which provide guidance on waste prevention, collection, recycling, transportation, disposal operations, and regulatory frameworks. He additionally introduced the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Partnership as a multistakeholder platform supporting pilot projects, technical cooperation, and awareness-raising initiatives worldwide.

5. Presentation of the Methodology and Plastic Toolkit

UNITAR representatives Vanessa Forti, Halina Shyla and Maximilian Schubert delivered technical presentations on the methodology applied under the project and the rationale behind developing national plastic waste inventories.

The speakers emphasized that plastic pollution represents both an environmental and economic challenge and highlighted the importance of robust information systems for supporting public policies, planning processes, and monitoring mechanisms.

UNITAR explained that the project sought to:

- Strengthen capacities related to plastic waste management.
- Improve technical understanding of plastic waste flows.
- Foster institutional coordination and dialogue among stakeholders.
- Promote harmonized and scientifically robust methodologies.

The presentations highlighted the importance of standardization and comparability among countries in order to support evidence-based decision-making and establish realistic policy targets.

Halina Shyla presented the Product Lifetime Methodology used to estimate plastic waste generation over time. The methodology combines data on Plastic Put on Market (POM), derived from imports, exports, and domestic production, with product lifetime assumptions to estimate when products become waste.

The BRS Plastic Toolkit was used withing the project to implement the methodology and includes two main components:

- Plastic Embedded POM Calculation Tool
- Plastic Waste Generated Calculation Tool

The toolkit integrates trade statistics based on HS codes, domestic production statistics based on CPC codes, and data on product lifetimes, polymer composition, and plastic fractions in order to estimate plastic put on the market and plastic waste generation.

UNITAR also conducted a practical demonstration of the toolkit, including explanations regarding data entry procedures, unit conversions, and interpretation of outputs.

Hands-on group work sessions allowed participants to work directly with the tool, discuss methodological adaptations, and identify opportunities for improving data quality and consistency.

6. Country Presentation – Suriname

Representatives from Suriname presented the progress achieved under the project and described the evolution of the national plastic waste inventory.

According to the presentation, Suriname had previously developed an inventory focused mainly on single-use plastics. Under the current project, the country was able to expand the scope of the inventory by incorporating approximately 200 additional plastic items and plastics in e-waste; and improving estimation methodologies.

The Suriname delegation explained that the project relied heavily on cooperation among institutions, including the General Statistics Bureau, the Tax Authority, and the Ministry of Oil, Gas and Environment.

Because systematic domestic production data were not available, raw plastic material imports were used as a proxy for estimating domestic production. The country also noted that most polymers are imported and that approximately 80% are destined for packaging applications.

The presentation showed that packaging represented the largest share of both plastic put on market and plastic waste generated between 2020 and 2024.

Lalieta Somwaru also discussed major challenges related to data collection, recycling information, and institutional coordination. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of government support in facilitating collaboration with the private sector and improving confidence, trust and transparency among stakeholders.

During the discussion session, participants highlighted the importance of establishing mandatory reporting systems in the future, noting that voluntary information-sharing mechanisms are often insufficient for obtaining complete and reliable datasets.

The Suriname delegation also stressed that inventories are dynamic tools that evolve over time through continuous institutional cooperation and methodological improvements.

7. Country Presentation – Bolivia

The Bolivian delegation presented the work carried out under the project and described the institutional and technical challenges faced during implementation.

Representatives explained that the project initially experienced delays due to governmental restructuring processes and institutional changes. However, with support from UNITAR, the BRS Secretariat, and CRBAS, Bolivia was able to resume activities and strengthen national coordination efforts.

Bolivia described the identification of key institutions responsible for providing information and the formal requests submitted to national entities such as the National Customs Authority and the National Institute of Statistics.

The country presentation emphasized that Bolivia still faces significant challenges regarding data interoperability and the absence of integrated environmental information systems. Nevertheless, important progress was achieved in harmonizing customs data, economic statistics, and production information according to the UNITAR methodology.

Bolivia also highlighted the importance of institutional strengthening and regional cooperation. Representatives noted that technical support from UNITAR, the BRS Secretariat, and CRBAS provided institutional legitimacy and facilitated collaboration among national actors.

The delegation further emphasized that regional projects create valuable opportunities for countries to exchange experiences, share lessons learned, and identify good practices that can be adapted to different national contexts.

Participants acknowledged the significant effort undertaken by Bolivia in producing results despite the institutional challenges encountered during implementation.

8. Country Presentation – Ecuador

The Ecuadorian delegation presented the methodologies applied under the project and discussed the main challenges related to data availability and methodological consistency.

Ecuador explained that previous national estimations relied mainly on import and export information and did not incorporate domestic production data.

Under the current project, Ecuador expanded the range of data sources used and explored two complementary approaches for estimating plastic waste generation:

1. Product Lifetime Methodology
2. Alternative administrative-data-based approach using municipal solid waste generation, population statistics, and plastic waste composition data.

The Ecuadorian delegation identified major challenges related to data quality, limited availability of national statistics, and inconsistencies between different information sources. The country presentation highlighted that only a limited number of CPC codes could be fully integrated into the toolkit, demonstrating the need for stronger national information systems.

Ecuador also presented several lessons learned during implementation, including:

- The need to strengthen national information systems and data standardization processes.
- The importance of adapting international methodologies to national realities.
- The existence of significant structural weaknesses in waste management systems.

The importance of combining upstream and downstream interventions across the entire plastic value chain.

The presentation additionally emphasized the importance of circular economy approaches, integrated policy measures, and institutional coordination for reducing plastic pollution and improving waste management performance.

9. Group Work Sessions and Technical Discussions

The workshop included practical group work sessions focused on data compilation, methodological adaptations, and optimization of the Plastic Toolkit. Participants worked collaboratively to review country-specific datasets, discuss methodological limitations, and identify opportunities for improving future applications of the tool.

The discussions highlighted several common challenges across countries, including:

- Limited availability of reliable national statistics.
- Lack of interoperability among institutional databases.
- Difficulties in obtaining information from the private sector.
- Inconsistencies between customs, production, and waste management data.
- Limited data regarding recycling and informal waste management activities.

At the same time, participants agreed that the project significantly strengthened technical capacities and promoted institutional dialogue among key actors involved in plastic waste management.

The group work sessions also reinforced the idea that plastic waste inventories are not static exercises but evolving systems that require continuous updates, institutional cooperation, and methodological refinement over time.

10. Conclusions and Next Steps

The workshop successfully achieved its objectives by validating methodologies, presenting country-level results, and strengthening regional technical cooperation related to plastic waste inventories and management systems.

The event demonstrated that, despite important national challenges, participating countries made significant progress in improving data collection, institutional coordination, and understanding of plastic waste flows.

Several key conclusions emerged from the workshop:

- Reliable and harmonized data are essential for evidence-based policymaking.
- Strong institutional coordination is necessary for effective plastic waste management.
- Long-term technical assistance and capacity-building remain critical.
- Standardized methodologies facilitate comparability and regional learning.
- Regional cooperation creates important opportunities for exchanging experiences and strengthening national capacities.

Participants also emphasized the need to continue improving national information systems, strengthening collaboration with the private sector, and expanding the use of standardized methodologies in future projects.

As part of the agreed next steps, UNITAR will continue supporting the participating countries through the finalization and revision of the country reports based on the feedback, comments, and recommendations received during the workshop sessions. The revised country reports will incorporate the observations and technical inputs provided by participants during the discussions and validation exercises, with the objective of improving the quality, consistency, and accuracy of the final outputs.

The workshop concluded with final remarks from BCRC Argentina/CRBAS and UNITAR, who reaffirmed their commitment to supporting participating countries in future activities related to plastic waste inventories, policy development, and implementation of the BRS Conventions.

Annex I – Photographic Record of the Workshop







