

# Trash Trapping Project Checklist

This checklist will guide you through the key steps to make your trash trapping program a success. The steps are a guideline of what to expect and can be completed in a different order to how they are listed below. For example, some projects may begin with stakeholder collaboration, others will begin with identifying suitable locations. However, thorough project planning must be carried out before purchasing and installing a trap to ensure that your project has a positive impact and is sustainable.

## **Identify Suitable Location(s)**

Begin with an understanding of pollution sources, accumulation points and the most common types of trash in your local environment to inform the best location for your new trash trap. Use the ITTN visual audit protocol to quantitatively compare areas of trash accumulation and identify hotspots for trash trap installation. The visual audit can be carried out multiple times throughout a year or season to understand how litter accumulates and moves over time and in changing weather conditions.

## **Assess Environmental Conditions**

Once suitable locations are identified, make a note of relevant environmental conditions that may affect trash trap function or efficacy, for example the amount of aquatic vegetation, wind, water currents, and seasonal freezing of a water body. Some of this information may be available via local watershed assessments carried out by NGOs or government bodies.

## **Choose A Trash Trap**

Refer to the ITTN Device Directory for more information on many of the trash traps currently in use around the world. Consider cost, efficacy, environmental conditions (including potential interactions with biota and removal of organic matter), infrastructure requirements such as a nearby power source, and how the size or positioning of a trap may affect other activities such as vessel navigation or dock maintenance.

## **Consider Potential Interactions with Biota**

In addition to anthropogenic debris, trash traps may also capture biota (e.g., macrophytes, algae, animals). The likelihood and impact of this will depend on the location, design of the trash trap and local environment. Efforts should be made to prevent negative impacts. Investigate the biota in your chosen location and consult with local conservation organizations to ensure that the chosen device and location do not pose a risk to wildlife, including ecologically important or sensitive species and their habitats.

## **Reach Out for Information**

Contact device manufacturers for information on purchase and installation. It can also be useful to reach out to other groups that may have already carried out similar work, and ask questions related to their experience with a certain device, mechanics, cost and logistics of installation and maintenance.

## **Collaborate With Relevant Stakeholders**

Identify and contact stakeholder groups e.g., NGOs, local government, marina staff, businesses, Indigenous groups and other waterway users. Provide the opportunity for other stakeholders to engage with the project and share information. You may also require permission from local authorities for the installation of a trash trap. With multi-stakeholder collaboration, identify the roles and responsibilities of each group e.g., purchase and installation, general maintenance, data collection and local education and outreach. Ensure that all stakeholders are clear on their roles and responsibilities, including the time frame of this commitment.

- Purchase a Trash Trap or Make Your Own**

Commercial trash traps range in price from approximately \$500 USD upwards. Additional costs from device manufacture, shipping, customs, installation and maintenance should also be considered. It may be necessary to seek out external funding or financial assistance to purchase a trash trap and carry out long-term maintenance. Alternatively, you can design and make your own trash trap, which is often the most low-cost and low-technology option. Some examples of DIY trash traps are included in the ITTN Device Directory.
- Plan For Waste Management**

Decide how to manage the debris collected by your trash trap and consider ways to increase circularity. Options will differ for each local scenario and may require the separation of organic debris, recyclable and non-recyclable waste. Arrangements can be made with local waste management facilities or recyclers to collect the debris. Local artists may also have an interest in using some of the debris for their work.
- Trash Trap Installation**

Prepare for installation with the device manufacturer and/or other relevant stakeholders. Vehicles, equipment or tools may be required for device transport and installation. If you are making your own trash trap, ensure you have all materials and team members required for building and installation.
- Maintenance and Data Collection**

Once your trash trap is ready to use, document the waste collected using the ITTN data collection protocols. Collecting data allows you to measure your impact, monitor the local environment, and inform upstream solutions via targeted source-reduction. Ideally, the simple protocol should be completed each time your trash trap is emptied, and the detailed protocol should be completed 5-10 times per year. Data can be recorded and submitted to the ITTN via the [Clean Swell App](#) (available via the App Store or Google Play) or by emailing completed datasheets to [info@trashtrapnetwork.org](mailto:info@trashtrapnetwork.org). If the protocols require adaptation for use with your trash trap, do not hesitate to contact us for guidance.
- Local Outreach and Engagement**

Trash traps create unique opportunities for local outreach and education and we encourage you to share your initiative and celebrate your work! This can come in the form of community events, volunteer opportunities, educational programs, signage or artwork. Share information about your trash trap, how it works and the trash it collects with volunteers, community groups, schools and members of the public (of all ages). For additional resources, the ITTN website has created a guide for educational activities, as well as a poster to display near the trash trap.
- Maintain Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities**

Trash trapping projects are often long-term commitments. To ensure that all stakeholders are effectively collaborating it is often beneficial to schedule check-ins and/or meetings to revisit roles, responsibilities and discuss any issues or concerns in running and maintaining the trash trap device. This can include positioning of the trash trap, e.g., if local vegetation is being collected by the trap, or if local wildlife is negatively affected, the device may need to be moved to a different location.

If you would like further information or have questions regarding the steps outlined in this checklist, please email us at [info@trashtrapnetwork.org](mailto:info@trashtrapnetwork.org).