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Cefas

South African Communications and Outreach Report

Commonwealth Litter Programme - South Africa



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Issue Date: March 2020



Cefas Document Control

Date first submitted:	27/03/2020
Project Manager:	Principal Investigator: Thomas Maes Project Manager: Julia Baker Country Lead: Fiona Preston-Whyte
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Approved by and date:	Fiona Preston-Whyte 27/03/2020
Version:	Final
Recommended citation of this report:	Cefas (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science), 2020. South African Communications and Outreach Report, Commonwealth Litter Programme, South Africa.

Acknowledgments:

Thank you to Fiona Vogt for her work on planning, coordinating and delivering many of the CLiP communications outputs. Thank you also to the wider CLiP team and our project partners in the development of these outputs.

Version Control History			
Version	Author	Date	Comment
1	Kyle Briggs	27/03/2020	Initial draft with advice from Fiona Vogt and Denise Doran

Executive Summary

The Commonwealth Litter Programme (CLiP) is an initiative delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and funded by the United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It supports developing countries across the Commonwealth in preventing plastics from entering the oceans.

This report documents the outreach and public communications activities of the Commonwealth Litter Programme (CLiP) in South Africa during the southern hemisphere spring and summer of 2019.

The potential for outreach was explored by desk research, workshops and face to face meetings with the South African government, businesses and Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs). Based on these discussions, the decision was taken to partner with local organisations to ensure outreach was targeted, tailored and authentic.

CLiP also worked with local partners to generate coverage of marine litter issues in mass and social media. Contact was made with newspapers and radio and television channels to publish articles and news items covering key moments, such as the launch of the project in country, the contest and conference.

Online activities were focused on Facebook as the social media platform with the highest levels of use among South African population. Posts were designed to make issues relevant to communities and demonstrate direct engagement of the team with both the government and local society. A key component in this was interaction with stakeholders through the Facebook platform. Social media activities were supported by the Cefas CLiP website which acts as a repository for outreach materials and news.

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1 Introduction

The Commonwealth Litter Programme (CLiP) is an initiative delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and funded by the United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It supports developing countries across the Commonwealth in preventing plastics from entering the oceans.

This report covers the communications and outreach covered by CLiP that was not included in specific outreach activity reports produced by subcontractors. Thus, this report covers the following:

- Section 2) Webinar delivered through the African Waste Academy's third series webinar.
- Section 3) Beach outreach with a mobile laboratory delivered in partnership with Waves for Change and Sea Change.
- Section 4) Keynote talk given at the Independent Education Board (IEB) conference delivered in partnership with Sustainable Seas Trust.
- Section 5) Communications and outreach run through the social and mainstream media.

The communications and outreach work undertaken as part of CLiP's South Africa phase excluded by this report, apart from the inclusion of their traditional and social media statistics in Section 5, are:

- 1) Marine Litter Exhibit for Marine Week 2019 - delivered and reported by the South African Association for Marine Biological Research (SAAMBR, 2020) on behalf of CLiP.
- 2) Community outreach and removal/reduction pilot study - delivered and reported by Green Corridors (2020a) on behalf of CLiP.
- 3) STEM Innovation conference: STEM the tide of plastic waste in Africa - delivered and reported by Sustainable Seas Trust (SST) in partnership with CLiP (SST, 2020a).
- 4) The STOMP awards (STamp Out Marine Plastic Pollution) study - delivered and reported by Green Corridors (2020b) on behalf of CLiP.
- 5) Education workshop - delivered and reported by SST with support from CLiP (SST, 2020b).

- 6) Wavescape Surf and Ocean Festival sponsorship – delivered and reported by Wavescape (included as Appendix 1 of this report).

Each of the above separate reports will be made available on the CLiP website.

2 African Waste Academy Webinar

As part of the African Waste Academy's webinar third series, Fiona Preston-Whyte and Dr Adil Bakir delivered a webinar entitled 'Data, in support of institutional and individual behaviour change regarding marine litter', on 25th June 2019 to nine live attendees. This webinar was recorded and made publicly available the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pojU5yA9PvY&t=2s>

As of the 24th March 2020, it has had 44 views. **Error! Reference source not found.** s hows the invite utilised for the webinar.

**AFRICAN WASTE ACADEMY
WEBINAR SERIES 3**

Sustainable Seas Trust's African Waste Academy cordially invites you to attend the following webinar:

DATA, IN SUPPORT OF INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE REGARDING MARINE LITTER

The Commonwealth Litter Programme (CLIP) is a global programme encompassing scientific monitoring, education and the ultimately the reduction of marine litter. Linking Europe, the Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa with comparable results on both macro and micro litter studies. This collaborative programme aims to reduce the amount of litter entering the marine environment, through fostering knowledge transfer of expertise and practical solutions locally, regionally and globally. Thus, contributing towards making our oceans cleaner, healthier and more sustainable. During this webinar we will present the data results of the Pacific and Caribbean leg of the project showing the support of data in policy decisions, as well as focusing in on our micro plastic technique, comparing the results between United Kingdom and South Pacific waters.

Fiona Preston-Whyte and Dr Adil Bakir
Marine litter data analyst and Marine litter scientist
[Cefas](#)

21st June 2019
15:30 SAST (GMT+2)

PLEASE RSVP TO
Stephanie Martin at steph@sstafrica.org.za

Please **RSVP by 14 June 2019** to receive the webinar links and post webinar information.

For more information on our projects visit: [www.sstafrica.org.za](#)

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SST **AFRICAN MARINE WASTE**

Image 1 - Invite to the African Waste Academy's third series webinar

3 VIP visit - Beach outreach with mobile laboratory

On 24th September 2019, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (as per their titles at the time of the event) were hosted during a demonstration of the CLiP laboratory on Monwabisi Beach. This event was developed in partnership with Waves for Change and Sea Change. The partnership was organised by the British High Commission and included a VIP visit by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (Prince Harry and Megan Markle), with a follow up reception at the Commissioner's house in Newlands.



Image 2 - The Duke and Duchess of Sussex learning about CLiP in the mobile laboratory.

The visit provided further media reach for CLiP in South Africa and the United Kingdom, as well as important introductions to further Marine Based Non-Government Organisations (NGO's) in South Africa, the connections of which have been utilised for the STEM Innovation conference: STEM the tide of plastic waste in Africa.

4 Independent Education Board (IEB) conference

In partnership with SST, CLiP and SST prepared a keynote lecture on marine litter for the Independent Education Board (IEB) Life Science Matric Teachers Conference. This was organised by CLiP, presented by Nozi Mbongwa and Toshka Barnardo of SST on 1st February 2020. The lecture split the time between SST and CLiP's scientific data and education effort used to combat marine plastics in South Africa, and regionally. The event was attended by about 315 South African Matric Life Science educators.

Post-lecture feedback included:

The organizer, Hannelie Caine wrote *"Thank you so much, the teachers were SO IMPRESSED by the presenters. Thank you for sending such clued-up presenters. They really made the day so much more worth it...."*

Jenny Page, an educator said, *"Plastic talk was AWESOME. They are doing so much and are so inspiring that I wanted to join them"*.



Image 3 - Photographs of the delegates and lecture by Nozi Mbongwa and Toshka Barnardo

5 Public communications

Communicating messages about our scientific findings and practical solutions to communities plays a vital role in the reduction of marine litter. This is because advances in understanding of science and changes in policy will only result in positive changes if the behaviours in the population also change (Veríssimo, 2013). It has been demonstrated that outreach campaigns have a greater effect on reducing plastic pollution than improvements to waste facilities (Willis et al., 2018). A successful outreach campaign for marine litter provides information on the problems marine litter poses to humans and the environment, identifies solutions, and empowers individuals and communities to work towards these solutions (Hartley et al., 2015).

Many organisations in South Africa are already doing great work on communicating the importance of reducing the reliance on single use plastic. In the duration of the CLiP South Africa phase it would not be possible for the programme to match their existing efforts and networks. Therefore, in South Africa communications were largely delivered in partnership with local subcontractors to ensure efforts were complementary, considered and authentic, with a legacy of networks created in-country.

For the purpose of this section, statistics for the South African phase of CLiP refer to the period of 01/09/2019 to 31/12/2020.

5.1 Traditional media

Traditional media were used by sharing updates with South African newspapers, television and radio stations for their own audiences to help engage with the 31% of the country not yet online¹.

To secure press coverage in these media, the CLiP team drafted press releases to share information about CLiP aims and activities, to raise awareness of issues and demonstrate that the local communities and governments are engaged to act to reduce marine litter.

¹ DataRePortal.com; accessed 25/03/20

5.1.1 Newspapers

News articles were published on the VIP visit, the contest, the conference and other outreach activities. These were generated based upon press releases from the CLiP team and project partners distributed to targeted media outlets.

The press releases and associated traditional media coverage were an important part of outreach and were timed to coincide with the start of in-country work, the beginning of laboratory training, the contest launch, the Department of Environmental Affairs Plastic Colloquium and the STEM Innovation conference: STEM the tide of plastic waste in Africa. Press releases were created in collaboration with local partners and targeted specific national newspapers and radio stations with detailed programme updates that they could adapt to share with their audiences. Coverage in newspapers and radio engaged local communities on issues related to marine litter by providing updates on programme activities and highlighting national government engagement and intention, thus paving the way for the implementation of action plans.

5.1.2 Television and Radio

The CLiP team produced four press releases on activities in South Africa which were taken up in various news outlets in the country. Partners and subcontractors distributed an additional 6 releases on specific work elements (e.g. the STOMP awards, STEM Innovation conference: STEM the tide of plastic waste in Africa).

In total, there were 268 pieces of coverage in the local, regional and international press about the Commonwealth Litter Programme during the South Africa phase (Table 1), generated and recorded by Cefas, SST (2020a), Green Corridors (2020b), SAAMBR (2020) and Wavescape (Appendix 1) details of these can be found in the relevant reports. Please note Table 1.2 is not a complete list of outlets as Green Corridors (2020b), SAAMBR and Wavescape had additional media monitoring which picked up more articles in local outlets not covered by the Cefas media monitoring that generated this table.

Table 1 - Traditional media articles secured through different partners

Organisation	Number of articles
Cefas (and United Kingdom government)	55 total: 1 television 54 online
Sustainable Seas Trust (STEM conference)	1 total: 1 online
Green Corridors (STOMP contest)	70 total: 10 television 8 print 52 online
SAAMBR	12 total: 2 print 1 radio 9 online
Wavescape	130 total: 40 print 22 television 68 online
Total	268 total: 50 print 33 television 1 radio 184 online

5.2 Online presence and social media

South Africa is increasingly online and connected, with internet usage as high as 69% of the population² compared to the global average of 59%³.

Social media usage is growing rapidly, increasing by 19% between April 2019 to a total of 37% of the population being active on social media in January 2020. Facebook is the most used social media platform with 45% of the population over 13 years old reported to be active monthly users, followed by Instagram with 9.1% of South Africans over 13 years old active monthly¹.

Twitter is used by 5.2% of the population over 13 in South Africa¹, but could also provide a useful social media platform for communicating project outcomes within the wider global scientific community (Collins et al., 2016). Therefore, the focus was on Facebook engagement with limited and selected posts on Instagram and Twitter to reach specific younger audiences, particularly for the contest.

Digital and social media play an important role in outreach as they are a cost-effective way to reach a significant percentage of the population who are members of social networks in an accessible, convenient way.

5.2.1 CLiP Facebook

The social media approach was primarily focused on Facebook as this is by far the most used social media platform in South Africa (45% of South Africans over 13)⁴. The Facebook page was used to build followers who would gain an interest in the programme, but also in wider marine litter issues to encourage personal and community responsibility to address issues and reduce marine litter where possible.

Social media posts were designed to make the issues relevant to those communities and demonstrate direct engagement of the team with both the government and local society efforts, highlighting outreach events and beach cleans, and examples of the UK and South Africa collaborative efforts. Social media also involved engaging with the CLiP sub-contractors so that all aspects of the programme were represented in the Facebook

² DataRePortal.com; accessed 25/03/20

³ DataRePortal.com; accessed 25/03/20

feed. In particular, the Sustainable Seas Trust and Green Corridors used their social networks to promote the conference and contest.

During the time in South Africa, the Commonwealth Litter Programme Facebook page was a key part of CLiP outreach, with good interaction from people across both South Africa and previous CLiP countries.

The average engagement rate for a Facebook page post in South Africa is 3.13%¹. During the South Africa phase, the CLiP Facebook made 84 posts and achieved a reach of 366,048 timelines and 33,741 engagements with an average engagement rate of 9%. This is well above the average for a page's posts in South Africa which suggests messages were interesting and engaging to viewers.

5.2.2 Other Social Media

Twitter and Instagram were also used as social media platforms but were used more to promote the programme rather than as outreach to South Africans. The general Cefas Twitter and Instagram accounts were used to highlight key milestones such as the VIP visit and STEM Innovation conference: STEM the tide of plastic waste in Africa.

Cefas Twitter and Instagram accounts were used to promote the activities, but these audiences tend to be more European, so were less directly useful in community outreach. Cefas tweets related to the CLiP South African phase reached 67,748 timelines and scored 2,174 engagements. The Cefas Instagram reached 819 people and 75 engagements.

Social media outreach was also co-ordinated with the Defra and the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), enabling a greater reach.

Much of the success of the outreach activities came from partnerships with local subcontractors and their online audiences.

Sustainable Seas Trust used their existing strong Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn networks to promote the STEM Innovation conference: STEM the tide of plastic waste in Africa. Their Facebook posts reached 6,860 and had 627 engagements. Instagram posts about the conference achieved a reach of 3,299 people and 971 engagements. Tweets reached 3,456 people and accumulated 89 engagements. LinkedIn posts reached 1,927 people and 27 engagements.

Green Corridors set up Facebook and Instagram accounts to promote the STOMP contest. These posts reached more than 500,000 people and achieved 115,137 engagements across the platforms. More information including a detailed breakdown can be found in the STOMP contest report.

In total across the Cefas, SST and Green Corridors social media channels over 947,485 timelines were reached with 152,481 engagements for an overall engagement rate of 16% (Table 2).

Table 2 - Social media reach and engagement by partner

Organisation	Reach	Engagement
Cefas	434,615	35,990
Sustainable Seas Trust (STEM conference)	12,870	1,714
Green Corridors (STOMP contest)	>500,000	115,137
Total	>947,485	152,841

5.2.3 Websites

Other online outreach took the form of the www.cefas.co.uk/clip website where information about the programme and links to press releases were provided. The website is used as a source of information on the programme, hosting infographics, news updates and details of the CLiP initiative. Content continues to be added as it becomes available, including conference presentations, reports and information about the winners of the STOMP contest. The CLiP website brings together all of the outreach and many scientific outputs enabling interested parties to explore the work delivered on one platform. During the South Africa phase, the CLiP website counted 2,237 page views and 1,755 unique page views.

The STOMP contest website set up specifically to drive entries to the competition recorded a further 39,412 page views and 13,235 unique page views.

6 Wavescape

The 'Cefas and CLiP at the Wavescape Surf & Ocean Festival' can be found in Annex 1. The report details the impact of CLiP support for the Wavescape Surf and Ocean Festival and associated publicity in raising awareness of the programme and marine litter issues.

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8 Appendix 1 - Cefas and CLiP at the Wavescape Surf & Ocean Festival



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