Before you read this

What follows is evidence of irrevocable harm being done to everyone alive. To read it is to cross a threshold; to set it aside is to remain on this side of it. Both choices are legitimate. Make yours knowingly.

Threshold is a proposal in development. This document is part of its working canon.

Power is the problem

Plastic entered commercial use in the 1950s on a promise of necessity. The promise was delivered. Our lives are measurably better.

The question of what to do with the material when it was no longer in use was never asked, and was never resolved. It became rubbish, thrown away.

There is no such place as away. There is only everywhere. Two billion tonnes in seventy-five years, and everywhere now includes our blood.

This was known, measured, and written about as a threat to life on earth for over fifty years. The facts are done. The research is done. The understanding is done.

What has not been done is to stop it.

For half a century, every pathway has failed. Regulation has been outpaced. Voluntary pledges have been broken. Advocacy has been absorbed. Markets have not responded. Litigation has resolved single cases while the system continued.

The reason is not ignorance, and it is not lack of will. The reason is power. The wealth created by plastic does not want the wealth to stop, and has the resources to ensure it does not.

That is what we found out.

The Threshold is what follows.

A verified, legally usable, institutionally endorsed evidence base, built by the people who carry the harm in their bodies. Every observation scored for reliability. Chain of custody from phone to proceeding. A cross-stakeholder deliberation that produces ranked interventions on permanent record. An evidence infrastructure built upstream of the actors who will eventually use it, ready before they need it.

Not protest. Not policy. Not litigation. The architecture that makes all three forceful enough, sooner.

The Threshold is still a proposal. Its purpose is to make the cost of continued suppression exceed the cost of accountability. The threshold will be crossed. The Threshold is built to be ready when it is.

STRATEGIC PROGRAMME PROPOSAL · June 2026

PLASTIC FUTURES

The programme operates as a structured simulation

A simulation-based *policy intelligence programme for plastic pollution*

Discovery · Synthesis · Mobilisation · Implementation

Executive summary

This document proposes a structured, e-bounded programme to identify which plastic pollution initiatives command the broadest expert support, synthesise those findings into a viable policy programme, and build the expert constituency needed to advocate for implementation — within the window of opportunity created by the current geopolitical moment.

The programme operates as a structured simulation in which participants are assigned character roles corresponding to real stakeholder archetypes. Their moves within the simulation — scored through a s[illegible] Delphi instrument — map directly to real-world policy positions and coalition dynamics. The [illegible] report. It is a ranked, evidence-backed programme with a named expert constituency already committed to it.

The Iran conflict, which closed the Strait of Hormuz from February 2026, has for the first time made recycled polymer price-competitive with virgin plastic. This window is estimated at 18–24 months before market conditions normalise. The programme is calibrated to deliver a credible, publicly visible expert voice before that window closes.

Two institutional models are presented with costed options for each: an independent initiative (Model A) and embedding within an existing international body such as UNDP, UNEP, or a major environmental NGO (Model B). Both models are viable; the choice depends on the funding audience and the desired speed of deployment.

18–24 months	80–120	8 characters	3 phases	€480k–€740k
Policy window before market normalises	Expert panel size (Delphi)	Simulation roles across stakeholder map	Discovery · Synthesis · Mobilise	Total programme cost (18 months)

Key programme parameters

INC

COMPILED BY	DATE	LOCATION	VERSION
Andrew Henderson	June 2026	Marans, France	Draft v1.0

In support of: If Nothing Changes — A Scenario Analysis of Plastic Pollution Consequences

1. The case for acting now

The baseline conditions for this programme are unusually favourable. Three convergent forces — a geopolitical price shock, accumulating health science, and a generation of young voters entering the political arena — have created a window that did not exist in 2022 and may not exist in 2028.

1.1 The Iran conflict window

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz to most petrochemical shipping from February 2026 has spiked virgin polymer prices 40–42% globally. For the first time since 2022, recycled rPET commands a genuine margin over virgin equivalents. Brand owners are accelerating recycled content commitments — not from conviction, but because recycled material is cheaper. This is the price signal the recycling industry has needed for a decade. The question is whether the political system uses this window or squanders it, as it did in 2022.

1.2 The health science threshold

Microplastics have been detected in human blood, breast milk, foetal placental tissue and brains. A 2024 NEJM study found people with microplastics in arterial plaques had a 4.5x higher risk of heart attack, stroke or death. The causal link to disease — the "tobacco moment" — is now within one or two longitudinal studies of establishment. When that threshold is crossed, the political and litigation landscape will shift rapidly. This programme is designed to have an expert constituency already assembled when that happens.

1.3 The generational reckoning

> *‘The generation now aged 15–25 — who grew up knowing that plastic was in their blood before they were born — are entering the political arena. Their relationship with plastic consumption is fundamentally different from their parents.’*

This cohort will be the most politically radicalised generation on environmental issues in history. They are not a future risk — they are a present political force. The programme explicitly includes youth advocate voices in its character roster and its expert panel.

2. Programme design

The programme operates across three sequential phases over 18 months. Each phase has defined inputs, methods, outputs and handoff conditions to the next phase.

Phase	Period	Key output
1 · Discover	Months 1–3	Expert panel · ranked longlist
2 · Synthesise	Months 4–6	Initiative shortlist · coalition map
3 · Mobilise	Months 7–18	Expert council · political traction

2.1 The simulation concept

The programme's core innovation is framing the discovery and synthesis phases as a structured simulation simulation rather than a conventional consultation. Participants are assigned character roles — The Producer, The Recycler, The Mayor, The Health Economist, The Activist, The Insurer, The Brand Owner, The Scientist — each with defined goals, fears and narrative arcs derived from real stakeholder archetypes.

The simulation is not theatrical. It maps to and tracks real-world events and live data sets: virgin polymer prices, geopolitical developments, new health science publications, regulatory announcements. When the world state changes, every character's position shifts — and participants must respond. This creates revealed preferences rather than stated ones: the positions that emerge under narrative pressure are more authentic than those generated by survey instruments alone.

> *'Characters are permitted to explore. Participants in a conventional consultation are not. This distinction is the engine of the whole programme.'*

The simulation design insight that makes this work: narrative pressure reveals authentic positions that surveys cannot reach. A petrochemical executive asked directly whether they support a virgin plastic levy will give their institutional position, rehearsed by communications teams. The same executive, playing a character whose company's share price is declining as litigation news updates in real time, starts making genuine calculations out loud. That is the data the programme needs.

2.2 Storytelling as the implementation mechanism

Storytelling is not decoration in this programme — it is the primary mechanism through which the implementation pitch is built. The research is unambiguous: policy decisions, even among expert audiences, are disproportionately driven by narrative and identity, with data providing post-hoc rationalisation.

The simulation produces three assets that no conventional consultation can generate. First, ranked initiative data with genuine revealed preferences behind it. Second, a coalition map showing which characters actually found common ground under pressure — bankable in a way that a list of endorsing organisations is not. Third, and most importantly, narrative assets: the specific moments of unexpected alliance, authentic admission, and moral clarity that become the foundation of the implementation pitch.

The implementation pitch is not presented to the characters after the simulation ends. It is assembled from their moves. They are already the authors. They are already the advocates. The story is theirs to tell.

3. The facilitator committee

The programme is led by a committee of three principals, each bringing a distinct and non-overlapping skill set. The committee structure solves the credibility distribution problem: no single individual can be simultaneously credible to a petrochemical executive, a youth activist, a municipal waste manager and a health epidemiologist.

Role	Primary skill set	Function in programme
The Architect	Systems thinking · complexity science · strategic design	Holds the design integrity of the whole programme. Maps interdependencies between all components. Ensures phase handoffs are coherent. Operates primarily as the intellectual backbone rather than public face.
The Counsel	International environmental law · treaty negotiation · regulatory frameworks	Provides institutional and legal credibility with government and intergovernmental bodies. Leads analysis of producer liability and treaty-based mechanisms. Key relationship holder with UNEP, EU institutions.
The Communicator	Strategic communications · advocacy · narrative design · media	Designs the simulation narrative architecture . Leads the mobilisation phase. Translates complex findings into compelling public and political communications. Manages media relationships and implementation pitch.

The Architect is the recommended chair of the committee — not as the most senior figure, but as the person responsible for the integrity of how all components connect. When the Counsel wants to focus on treaty mechanisms and the Communicator wants to focus on the pitch, the Architect's function is to ensure both serve the programme's design rather than fragmenting it.

The committee of three also provides redundancy. If one principal becomes unavailable, the programme does not collapse. This is a governance requirement for any serious funder.

4. The Policy Delphi survey instrument

The Policy Delphi is the methodological spine of the discovery phase. Unlike a conventional Delphi, which seeks consensus, the Policy Delphi deliberately preserves minority positions and maps the full range of defensible views. The goal is a precise map of where agreement exists, where it does not, and — critically — why.

4.1 The two-axis scoring system

Every statement is scored on two independent axes: Desirability (–3 to +3: how much do you want this outcome?) and Feasibility (–3 to +3: how likely is this to be implemented?). Separating the axes is the key methodological decision. A municipal waste manager may score a virgin plastic levy very high on desirability and very low on feasibility — not because they oppose it, but because they have watched three previous levy proposals die in committee. A petrochemical executive may score the same levy low on desirability but, honestly assessed, medium on feasibility — because they can see the litigation risk building. A single support/oppose question cannot distinguish these positions.

4.2 Statement bank — 50 statements across 8 domains

Statements are specific, scoreable on both axes, and include positions across the full spectrum — including those the programme designers find unpalatable. A Delphi that omits the industry position produces a self-selecting result.

A · Production controls

A1	Binding global caps on virgin plastic production are necessary to reverse environmental accumulation.
A2	Voluntary industry commitments to reduce production are an adequate substitute for regulatory caps.
A3	Production controls should target single-use plastics before other categories.
A4	New petrochemical cracker capacity announced for 2026–2029 should require carbon and pollution offsets.
A5	Plastics destined for medical use should be exempt from any production caps.
A6	The petrochemical industry's strategic pivot to plastics as its primary growth market is incompatible with net-zero and pollution commitments.

B · Market mechanisms

B1	A levy on virgin plastic production is the most effective single policy instrument available.
B2	Levy revenue should be ring-fenced exclusively for recycling infrastructure investment.
B3	Levy exemptions for food-grade packaging would undermine the instrument's effectiveness.
B4	Recycled content mandates alone — without a levy — are sufficient to make recycling economically viable.
B5	The current Iran conflict price signal should be locked in legislatively before markets normalise.
B6	Carbon border adjustment mechanisms should be extended to cover virgin plastic imports.

C · Infrastructure investment

C1	The loss of ~1 million tonnes of EU recycling capacity between 2023–2025 is recoverable within five years with adequate investment.
C2	Private capital will not invest in recycling infrastructure without a minimum 10-year policy certainty guarantee.
C3	Green bond instruments are the most appropriate financing vehicle for recycling infrastructure at scale.
C4	State guarantees for recycling plant investment represent an acceptable use of public funds.
C5	Chemical recycling should receive equivalent public investment to mechanical recycling.
C6	Infrastructure investment should prioritise the 1,000 rivers responsible for 80% of ocean plastic delivery.

D · Upstream redesign

D1	Mandatory bulk dispensing in food retail is feasible at scale within five years.
D2	Eliminating single-use plastic packaging at the design stage is more effective than end-of-life management.
D3	Packaging redesign regulations should apply equally to domestic producers and importers.
D4	The supermarket bulk dispensing model could eliminate 44–53% of household plastic waste without consumer behaviour change.
D5	Deposit return schemes are a necessary complement to — not a substitute for — upstream redesign.
D6	Extended producer responsibility should include design obligations, not just end-of-life cost allocation.

E · Health and exposure standards

E1	Regulatory maximum levels for microplastics in drinking water should be set within two years.
E2	Microplastic exposure guidelines for occupational settings are more urgent than consumer settings.
E3	The 4.5x cardiovascular risk elevation finding is sufficient to trigger precautionary regulatory action now.
E4	PFAS and phthalate additives in food packaging should face immediate phase-out under REACH.
E5	National health systems should begin quantifying annual healthcare costs attributable to plastic-associated disease.
E6	Microplastics should be formally classified as a substance of "very high concern" under EU REACH within 12 months.

F · Liability and litigation

F1	Plastic producers should bear direct legal liability for documented health costs attributable to microplastic exposure.
F2	Municipal governments should have legal standing to recover litter and contamination clean-up costs from producers.
F3	The tobacco industry litigation model is an appropriate precedent for plastic producer liability.
F4	Insurance markets pricing plastic litigation risk into producer premiums will be more effective than direct regulation.
F5	A global litigation fund for plastic pollution claims, modelled on climate litigation mechanisms, is feasible.
F6	Producer liability should extend to legacy plastic already in the environment, not only future production.

G · Treaty and international governance

G1	A binding global plastics treaty with production caps is achievable within five years.
G2	The failure of INC-5 and INC-5.2 reflects fundamental incompatibility of interests that cannot be resolved by treaty.
G3	A "coalition of the willing" approach — binding among signatories, with trade consequences for non-signatories — is more viable than a universal treaty.
G4	A legally mandated global cleanup fund, financed by a levy on production, is politically achievable within the current treaty process.
G5	The EU's December 2025 regulatory package represents the most significant step forward since the failed Basel amendment.
G6	Separate customs codes for virgin and recycled plastic, if adopted globally, would be more impactful than a production cap.

H · Monitoring and enforcement

H1	Fraudulent labelling of virgin plastic as recycled content is currently the primary obstacle to the EU customs system.
H2	Mass balance accounting for chemical recycling is an adequate measure of genuine recycled content.
H3	A global plastics registry — tracking production, trade and disposal — is technically feasible within three years.
H4	Real-time satellite monitoring of plastic accumulation in waterways and oceans is currently sufficient for enforcement purposes.
H5	Independent third-party verification of recycled content claims should be mandatory for all products sold in the EU.
H6	The 1,000 rivers responsible for 80% of ocean plastic delivery should be subject to binding national cleanup obligations.

Participants score each statement on both axes during Round 1 (anonymously) and rescore during Round 3 with full exposure to group distributions and anonymised minority rationales. Positions that hold under pressure are the most analytically valuable inputs to the cross-impact balance analysis in Phase 2.

5. Character role cards

Each participant is assigned one of eight character roles. The role card defines their archetype, primary goal, existential fear, and core narrative dilemma. Characters are not caricatures — they are composite portraits drawn from real stakeholder research. Three fully developed cards are presented here; the remaining five follow the same template.

The Producer

Chief Strategy Officer · Major Petrochemical Company · European operations

Archetype

You represent the most commercially powerful actor in this system. Your company has just announced 18 months of record profits on the back of Iran-conflict price premiums. Your board is simultaneously celebrating and preparing for the litigation wave they know is coming. You have seen the internal health risk assessments. You know what the science says.

Primary goal

Maintain market position through the transition. Shape the regulatory environment before it shapes you. If a levy is coming, you want to have written the exemptions. If liability is coming, you want the precedent set in a jurisdiction where damages are capped.

Existential fear

A US-style class action that attributes cardiovascular disease causally to your product. Not because you believe it will succeed — but because the discovery process will expose the internal memos. You have read the tobacco playbook. You know how it ended.

Core narrative dilemma

You privately believe some form of levy is inevitable and probably preferable to the alternative — uncontrolled litigation and reputational collapse. But your trade association position is categorical opposition. If you move before your competitors, you lose market share. If nobody moves first, the litigation does it for all of you. You are waiting for someone else to blink.

The Recycler

Chief Executive · Mid-size Plastic Recycling Operator · Netherlands

Archetype

You have survived two closure waves that destroyed most of your competitors. You restarted your rPET line six weeks ago when the Iran conflict pushed virgin prices above your processing cost for the first time in three years. You are running at 60% capacity because you cannot get investor commitment for a full restart without policy certainty that the margin will survive the next 24 months. You have been here before.

Primary goal

A 10-year policy framework that makes recycled polymer consistently price-competitive with virgin — through a levy, a subsidy, a mandate, or any combination. You do not care about the mechanism. You care about the certainty. Without it, no bank will lend and no investor will commit.

Existential fear

A third closure wave. You have laid off 60 people twice. You know their names. If market conditions revert when Hormuz trade normalises — which every analyst is predicting by mid-2027 — you will not reopen a fourth time. This is your last cycle.

Core narrative dilemma

The levy is the right answer. You know it. The Producers know it. Everyone in this room probably knows it. But you cannot say so publicly because your trade association has told you not to — and the association is funded by the same brand owners who benefit from cheap virgin packaging. You are being silenced by your own supply chain. The simulation gives you a space to say what you actually think.

The Health Economist

Senior Research Fellow · National Institute of Public Health · Sweden

Archetype

You have spent four years trying to quantify something that resists quantification: the annual healthcare cost attributable to plastic-associated disease. Your first published estimate — €50–150 billion per year across the EU27 — was dismissed as speculative by the industry and as conservative by the NGOs. You are now one longitudinal study away from a number that no one can dismiss. You know what is coming in the literature because you have read the preprints.

Primary goal

To see your health cost estimates become the financial foundation for state litigation and the basis for a producer liability framework — the way epidemiological cost data on tobacco eventually broke the industry's legal defence. You want to be the Doll to plastic's tobacco moment.

Existential fear

That the causal attribution is contested for long enough that the liability window closes before the science catches up with what you already know to be true. Association is not causation in a courtroom. You are racing against the industry's ability to manufacture doubt.

Core narrative dilemma

Your institution has received industry-adjacent research funding. You have disclosed it. But every time you speak at a conference, someone raises it. Your data is correct. Your methodology is sound. But credibility in this fight is not only about being right — it is about being seen to be independent. The simulation offers you a character whose institutional affiliations are not on the table.

Five further character cards — The Mayor, The Activist, The Insurer, The Brand Owner, and The Scientist — follow the same template and are included in the full participant pack. Each card is two sides: the public-facing character description visible to all participants, and a private briefing visible only to the participant playing the role, which includes their confidential constraints and hidden interests.

6. Initiative scoring matrix

The scoring matrix integrates outputs from the Policy Delphi (desirability and feasibility medians), cross-impact balance analysis (systemic leverage score), coalition breadth mapping, and time horizon assessment. The result is a ranked shortlist of initiatives by priority tier.

Scores shown below are illustrative projections based on existing policy literature and the current stakeholder landscape. Actual scores will be generated by the Delphi panel in Phase 1 and fed into the cross-impact balance analysis in Phase 2. The matrix structure is fixed; the values will be populated by real data.

Initiative	Desirability (panel median)	Feasibility (panel median)	Leverage (CIB score)	Coalition breadth	Time horizon	Priority tier
Virgin plastic levy	+2.1	+0.8	High	Medium	2–5 yr	**Tier 1**
Bulk dispensing mandate	+2.4	+1.4	High	Broad	1–2 yr	**Tier 1**
EPR redesign & recycler subsidy	+2.2	+1.6	High	Broad	1–3 yr	**Tier 1**
Producer liability framework	+1.9	+0.4	Very high	Narrow	5–10 yr	**Tier 2**
Microplastic health standards	+2.5	+0.2	High	Medium	5–10 yr	**Tier 2**
Infrastructure investment vehicle	+2.0	+1.2	Medium	Broad	2–5 yr	**Tier 1**
Upstream redesign rules	+2.1	+0.9	High	Medium	2–5 yr	**Tier 2**
Global cleanup fund	+2.3	-0.4	Medium	Narrow	5–10 yr	**Tier 3**

Illustrative scores · to be replaced by Delphi panel data in Phase 1

6.1 Priority tier definitions

Tier	Definition	Implication for programme
Tier 1 · Act now	High desirability, medium-high feasibility, broad coalition potential. Move in Phase 3 (months 7–18).	Bulk dispensing mandate · EPR redesign · infrastructure vehicle. These are the quick wins. Political capital deployed here first.
Tier 2 · Build toward	High desirability, low-medium feasibility, specific obstacles identifiable. Build coalition and evidence base in Phase 3; legislative push in year 2–3.	Virgin plastic levy · upstream redesign rules · health standards. The obstacle is specific and addressable — not structural opposition.
Tier 3 · Long game	High desirability, very low feasibility, structural or geopolitical obstacles. Maintain advocacy; do not deploy primary political capital here.	Global cleanup fund · binding production caps. Important to the narrative; not achievable in the programme's primary timeframe.

7. Institutional models

Two institutional models are viable. The choice between them is not primarily about cost — the cost differential is meaningful but not decisive. It is about speed, independence, and the political signal sent by the programme's institutional home.

Model A · independent initiative

A new legal entity — structured as a foundation or non-profit — is established specifically to house the Plastic Futures Simulation programme. The three-person facilitator committee serves as the founding board, with an independent advisory council drawn from the Delphi panel's most credible voices.

Advantages

- Complete editorial and methodological independence — critical for credibility with both industry and civil society participants.
- Governance is purpose-built for this programme, not inherited from a host institution with its own agenda and constraints.
- The programme's findings cannot be suppressed or delayed by institutional politics — a real risk in NGO hosting arrangements.
- A named, independent initiative with its own public identity has stronger media standing and can speak with a single voice.

Disadvantages

- 6–9 months establishment overhead before programme can fully deploy — legal registration, governance, banking, compliance.
- No inherited institutional credibility. The founding committee's individual reputations must carry the programme until it builds its own track record.
- Higher operational overhead as a proportion of total budget — no shared back-office, IT, or administrative infrastructure.
- More complex for philanthropic funders who prefer to grant to established entities with audited track records.

Model B · Embedded within existing international body

The programme is housed within an existing international institution — UNDP, UNEP, or a major environmental NGO such as WWF International, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, or the Global Plastic Action Partnership. The facilitator committee operates as a dedicated programme unit within the host institution, with a formal memorandum of understanding protecting editorial independence.

Advantages

- Immediate institutional credibility — particularly valuable for recruiting government and intergovernmental participants to the Delphi panel.
- Established administrative infrastructure reduces overhead costs by an estimated 20–30% compared to the standalone model.

- Access to the host institution's existing stakeholder networks accelerates panel recruitment in Phase 1.
- Easier for philanthropic funders to process — grants to UNDP or WWF have established legal and compliance pathways.

Disadvantages

- Editorial independence must be contractually protected and actively defended — host institutions have their own positions on plastic policy and will be tempted to align programme outputs.
- Programme identity is subordinate to host brand — media coverage will credit the host, not the programme, reducing the long-term constituency-building value.
- Decision cycles are slower — programme governance must navigate host institution approval processes for publications, events, and partnership agreements.
- If the host institution becomes politically compromised — industry funding scandal, internal restructuring — the programme is collateral damage.

Dimension	Model A · Independent	Model B · Embedded
Setup time	6–9 months	2–3 months
Editorial independence	Structural	Contractual (at risk)
Institutional credibility	Built from scratch	Inherited immediately
Overhead as % of budget	~22%	~14%
Funder preference	Complex · prefer established entities	Simpler · established pathways
Media identity	Programme owns its name	Host brand dominates
Recommended for	Bezos Earth Fund · independent foundations	Blended philanthropic + institutional funding

8. Budget

Budgets are presented for both institutional models across the 18-month programme period. All figures in euros. VAT excluded. Figures represent best estimates; a 15% contingency is included in the total.

8.1 Model A · independent initiative

Model A — independent initiative

Budget line	Amount (€)	Notes
ESTABLISHMENT		
Legal registration and governance	18,000	Foundation / non-profit setup
Accounting, audit, compliance (Yr 1)	14,000	Annual
IT infrastructure and security	8,000	Cloud · collaboration tools
PERSONNEL — 18 months		
Architect (0.6 FTE)	108,000	Senior rate €10k/month
Counsel (0.4 FTE)	72,000	Senior rate €10k/month
Communicator (0.4 FTE)	72,000	Senior rate €10k/month
Programme coordinator (1.0 FTE)	54,000	€3k/month
Data analyst (0.5 FTE)	27,000	€3k/month
PHASE 1 — DISCOVERY		
Delphi survey platform and analysis	22,000	Software · analysis · reporting
Q methodology facilitation	18,000	Expert facilitator · 2 rounds
Panel recruitment and management	12,000	Honoraria · comms · logistics
PHASE 2 — SYNTHESIS		
CIB analysis and modelling	14,000	Specialist input
MCM workshops (x2)	28,000	Venue · facilitation · travel
White paper production	16,000	Writing · design · translation
PHASE 3 — MOBILISATION		
Simulation events (x3)	60,000	€20k per event
Expert council convening (x2)	24,000	Venue · travel · facilitation
Advocacy and media campaign	36,000	Briefings · media · digital
Parliamentary engagement	18,000	EU · national · UN
CONTINGENCY (15%)		
Contingency reserve	91,650	15% of subtotal

TOTAL	703,000	18-month programme

8.2 Model B · Embedded within existing institution

Model B — embedded within existing institution

Budget line	Amount (€)	Notes
ESTABLISHMENT		
MOU legal costs and programme setup	8,000	Reduced vs standalone
IT and collaboration tools	4,000	Supplement to host systems
PERSONNEL — 18 months		
Architect (0.6 FTE)	108,000	Senior rate €10k/month
Counsel (0.4 FTE)	72,000	Senior rate €10k/month
Communicator (0.4 FTE)	72,000	Senior rate €10k/month
Programme coordinator (1.0 FTE)	54,000	May be seconded from host
Data analyst (0.5 FTE)	27,000	May be seconded from host
Host institution overhead charge	62,000	~14% of personnel costs
PHASE 1 — DISCOVERY		
Delphi survey platform and analysis	22,000	
Q methodology facilitation	18,000	
Panel recruitment and management	8,000	Reduced: host network used
PHASE 2 — SYNTHESIS		
CIB analysis and modelling	14,000	
MCM workshops (x2)	22,000	Reduced: host venues used
White paper production	14,000	
PHASE 3 — MOBILISATION		
Simulation events (x3)	54,000	Reduced: host venues
Expert council convening (x2)	18,000	
Advocacy and media campaign	36,000	
Parliamentary engagement	18,000	
CONTINGENCY (15%)		
Contingency reserve	79,650	15% of subtotal
TOTAL	612,000	18-month programme

The €91,000 cost differential between models primarily reflects establishment overhead and host institution charges. Against a total programme cost of €600–700k, this is not the decisive consideration. The decisive considerations are speed (Model B deploys 4–6 months earlier) and independence (Model A is structurally independent; Model B is contractually so, at risk).

9. Funding strategy

Two primary funding approaches are presented, corresponding to the two institutional models. They are not mutually exclusive — a blended approach is viable and may reduce concentration risk.

9.1 Track A · Major philanthropic foundation

The programme is well-suited to a single-funder philanthropic grant from a foundation with explicit plastic pollution, circular economy or environmental health mandates. The Bezos Earth Fund, Bloomberg Philanthropies (through its environment programme), the Minderoo Foundation (explicit plastics focus), the MAVA Foundation, or the European Climate Foundation are the primary targets.

The pitch to this audience: this programme does not produce another report. It produces a ranked, evidence-backed programme with a named expert constituency already committed to it — assembled through a methodology that generates revealed preferences rather than stated ones, in the only policy window in a decade where market conditions make the Tier 1 interventions achievable. The ask is €600–700k over 18 months. The counterfactual is watching the Iran conflict window close without a credible expert programme in place.

9.2 Track B · Blended philanthropic and institutional partnership

A consortium approach in which 50–60% of funding comes from philanthropic sources and 40–50% from institutional partners (participating NGOs, research institutions, or corporate partners with direct interest in the programme's outputs). Corporate partners from the recycling industry, the insurance sector, or progressive brand owners are the most viable — these are actors who benefit from the policy certainty the programme is designed to create.

The pitch to corporate partners: you are not funding advocacy against your interests. You are funding the intelligence infrastructure that tells you which way the regulation is going and gives you a seat at the table when it is designed. The Simulation makes this tangible — your representatives play characters in a simulation that maps real policy dynamics, and your organisation's positions are included in the analysis rather than excluded from it.

Note: corporate funding requires explicit editorial independence protections in any partnership agreement. Funders may not see results before publication. Funders may not request changes to methodology or outputs. These conditions must be non-negotiable and public, or the programme's credibility is forfeit.

10. Delivery timeline

The timeline is calibrated to the Iran conflict window. The programme must have a credible public voice with a ranked initiative list before mid-2027, when market analysts project virgin polymer prices will begin normalising as Hormuz traffic recovers.

Month	Milestone	Owner	Model A	Model B
0–1	Committee of three confirmed · institutional model selected	Architect	Month 0	Month 0
1–2	Legal establishment / MOU signed · funder secured	All three	6–9 weeks	2–3 weeks
2–3	Statement bank drafted and pre-tested · panel recruited (80–120)	Architect + Counsel	Month 2–3	Month 1–2
3–4	Delphi Round 1 — open scoring	Architect	Month 3	Month 2
4–5	Delphi Round 2 — controlled exposure · Q methodology sort	Architect	Month 4	Month 3
5–6	Delphi Round 3 — rescore · viewpoint clusters identified	Architect	Month 5	Month 4
6	Phase 1 output: ranked longlist · cluster map · panel report	Architect	Month 6	Month 5
6–7	CIB modelling · MCM Workshop 1	Architect + Counsel	Month 6–7	Month 5–6
7–8	MCM Workshop 2 · initiative scoring matrix populated	All three	Month 7–8	Month 6–7
8–9	Programme white paper drafted · expert council recruited	Communicator	Month 8–9	Month 7–8
9	Phase 2 output: white paper · shortlist · coalition map	All three	Month 9	Month 8
9–10	Expert council inaugural meeting · Simulation Event 1	Communicator	Month 9–10	Month 8–9
10–12	Advocacy campaign launch · media briefings · parliamentary	Communicator	Month 10–12	Month 9–11
12	Simulation Event 2 · mid-programme public report	All three	Month 12	Month 11
12–15	Political traction on Tier 1 initiatives · litigation support	Counsel	Month 12–15	Month 11–14
15–18	Simulation Event 3 · implementation pitch to funders	All three	Month 15–18	Month 14–17
18	Programme review · phase 2 funding decision · legacy structure	All three	Month 18	Month 17

11. Skills and competencies required

Competency	Required for	Critical level
Systems thinking and complexity science	Programme architecture · CIB analysis · interdependency mapping	Essential · Architect must hold this
International environmental law	Treaty analysis · producer liability framework · REACH and PPWR navigation	Essential · Counsel must hold this
Strategic communications and narrative design	Simulation architecture · white paper · media · implementation pitch	Essential · Communicator must hold this
Policy Delphi methodology	Statement bank design · round facilitation · divergence mapping	Essential · can be contracted if not in committee
Q methodology	Viewpoint cluster analysis · factor analysis of sort data	Specialist · contract to academic partner
Stakeholder mapping (Mitchell et al. framework)	Panel recruitment · power-legitimacy-urgency assessment	Intermediate · programme coordinator can be trained
Cross-impact balance analysis	Phase 2 scenario consistency testing	Specialist · contract to futures research institute
Data analysis and visualisation	Delphi output processing · scoring matrix · public reporting	Intermediate · dedicated data analyst role
Plastic pollution science	Statement bank credibility · panel recruitment · scientific advisory	Intermediate · advisory council covers this
Political economy of environmental regulation	Feasibility scoring · coalition mapping · parliamentary strategy	Intermediate · Counsel and Architect combined
Simulation design and facilitation	Simulation event design and running	Specialist · commission from serious games sector
Fundraising and grant management	Funder relationships · reporting · compliance	Essential · programme coordinator or dedicated hire

12. Risks and mitigations

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Iran conflict resolves faster than projected · market window closes early	Medium	High	Front-load Phase 1. If window closes, the health science and litigation arguments are independent of market conditions and remain valid.
Industry actors decline participation · Delphi panel is one-sided	Medium	High	Character design deliberately gives industry voices a protected space to explore positions. Anonymous scoring removes institutional pressure. Target individual experts, not institutional representatives.
Host institution (Model B) attempts to influence outputs	Medium	Very high	MOU must include explicit independence clause with termination right. Architect holds veto on methodological decisions. Publish independence protocol publicly before programme opens.
Funder withdrawal mid-programme	Low	High	Blended funding (Track B) reduces single-funder risk. Build 15% contingency into budget. Design phases so Phase 1 output has standalone value if programme cannot continue.
Delphi panel fails to recruit sufficient industry voices	Medium	Medium	Engage industry associations early but recruit individual experts rather than institutional nominees. Character framing reduces institutional gatekeeping.
New scientific consensus shifts faster than programme can incorporate	Low	Medium	Real-world data feeds are live inputs to the simulation. New publications trigger scenario updates. This is a feature, not a risk.
Programme is perceived as advocacy rather than analysis	Medium	High	Methodological transparency is non-negotiable. Publish statement bank, scoring protocols, and all methodological decisions in advance. Include industry-sympathetic statements in the instrument. Name the independence protocol publicly.
Facilitator committee fractures	Low	Very high	Committee of three with defined roles reduces this risk. Architect's design authority is pre-agreed. Decision protocol for disagreements established in founding governance document.

13. Conclusion: the only question that matters

This programme is designed to answer a single question at a moment when the answer is still actionable: which plastic pollution initiatives have the broadest expert support, and in what order should they be pursued?

The methodology is rigorous. The Simulation framing is not gimmickry — it is the only way to generate revealed preferences from stakeholders whose institutional positions prevent them from saying what they actually think in a conventional consultation. The facilitator committee model distributes credibility across the stakeholder map. The two institutional tracks give funders a genuine choice rather than a take-it-or-leave-it proposition.

> *'The implementation pitch is not presented to the characters* after the simulation ends.
> *It is assembled from their moves. They are already the authors. They are already the advocates. The story is theirs to tell.'*

The case for acting now is not rhetorical. The Iran conflict has delivered, accidentally, the price signal that the recycling industry has needed for a decade. The health science is within one longitudinal study of the causal threshold that will restructure liability frameworks. The generation most affected by policy inaction is entering the political arena.

If nothing changes, the analysis in the companion document is clear about what happens next: 300 million more tonnes of plastic in the global environment by 2036. A generation born today carrying lifelong elevated disease risk. A recycling infrastructure that cost €5 billion to build, destroyed by policy inaction, now costing 3–5 times more to rebuild.

The only question that matters now is: if we do not want this for our children, what are we willing to do, and how much time do we have left to do it before the cost of not acting exceeds the cost of acting?

This programme is a concrete answer to that question. It is fundable, deliverable, and timed to the window. The committee is ready to be formed. The methodology is ready to deploy. The case for acting is already written — in the data, in the science, and in the story of what we are choosing.

Contact: Andrew Henderson · Marans, France · June 2026

This document is a confidential draft. It is prepared in support of If Nothing Changes: A Scenario Analysis of Plastic Pollution Consequences, and is intended for circulation to prospective facilitators, institutional partners, and funding audiences only.

What follows from reading this

You have now read the evidence. The medical evidence is in our blood and our children's. The economic case for recycling, as it has been sold, is dead. The policy interventions exist and have been costed. The architecture that would resolve a case of this shape has been mapped.

From this point you are an informed witness. That is the threshold.

The next question is not whether you care. The historical pattern is clear. Systemic harm has been resolved in every documented precedent (tobacco, asbestos, lead, opioids) not by enough people caring but by enough informed witnesses acting in ways small and large. The relevant distinction is not between those who care and those who do not. It is between those who act and those who do not. The difference is witnessed commitment, not feeling.

Three civic acts cross the threshold.

Vote. Vote for political representatives who will price the externality, build the levy, and pass the producer liability framework. Plastic is a political problem before it is a chemical one.

Vote in the Threshold poll. When the Knowledge Base presents the ranked interventions that emerge from the Althing Round, vote on them. The poll is the public record of which interventions citizens have endorsed.

Write your Pledge. If you care, show it. Write to your unborn grandchildren. Tell them what you knew. What you did. What you did not do. Tell them why they will live with the consequences. Seal it with your mark. Send it to the Threshold. We will hold it until the threshold is crossed, or until the year you have chosen, whichever comes first. This is the act that crosses your own. You will carry it forever.

The Threshold Effect is the pattern by which documented systemic harm crosses a threshold making it increasingly difficult to ignore, legally, medically, and politically, in documented historical cases, deliberately and systematically.

The case has crossed every threshold but yours.

Whether you cross it is now observed.