Before you read this

What follows describes a programme in development. The evidence on plastic pollution it cites is documented, cited, and independently verifiable. The architecture it proposes was built drawing on established work in citizen science, environmental litigation, deliberative democracy, and institutional scenario design. It has not yet been tested at the institutional scale it requires. The invitation is not to accept it as it is. It is to engage with it, challenge it where it falls short, and contribute to making it better.

The Threshold Initiative is in founding development and is not yet incorporated. A fiscal sponsor, to be named, comes first; a Swiss foundation follows. Rules described here as proposed are drafted in the Canons and await Swiss counsel.

THRESHOLD | thresholdinitiative.org

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 the problem this programme is designed to address. The Threshold is what follows.

A verified, legally usable evidence base, built by the people who carry the harm in their bodies. Every observation held to a published standard. Chain of custody from phone to proceeding. A deliberation that judges possible policy initiatives and keeps every dissent 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 is built to be ready. Whether and when the threshold is crossed depends on what is built, and on who joins in building it.*

THE THRESHOLD

A global view of the programme that turns citizen observation into evidence, and evidence into the structural change that courts, governments and markets cannot ignore.

THE FOUNDING TRUTH

Plastic shouldn't be in our blood. But it is. This threshold has been crossed.

The Threshold is the institution that makes that fact increasingly difficult to ignore: legally, medically, and politically.

A personal question: before you read further

The problem: if nothing changes

Why hundreds of millions of engaged people have not been enough

The Threshold Effect: naming the pattern

The political trap: vested interest vs public will

Journalism and an evidence-hungry media landscape

What The Threshold is: the solution

The Knowledge Base: the living heart of the programme

The Independence Charter and Initiative governance

The Youth Council: a proposal

Budget, timeline and urgency

Join The Threshold

Including: Threshold Effect © Andrew Henderson, Marans, France, June 2026
Andrew Henderson | Lead Architect | Marans, France | October 2026 | v10

AUTHORSHIP AND COMPILATION NOTE

This document has been compiled by Andrew Henderson, Lead Architect of The Threshold Initiative, drawing on the body of strategic analysis, policy research, market data, and programme design work developed in Marans, France. Henderson is architect and principal author of all underlying research, programme design, and analytical frameworks reflected here. The Threshold Effect concept (including its application to plastic contamination as The Plastic Threshold) is the original intellectual work of Andrew Henderson and is credited accordingly throughout this document.

The Threshold is an independent initiative. It is not affiliated with any commercial, political, or governmental body. No funder influences its findings at any investment level.

Section A

A personal question: before you read further

You did not commission this. The people who built the plastics economy were not trying to harm you. They were solving a different problem, and the consequences were known to them long before they were known to you. That gap, between what was known and what was done about it, is what this programme exists to close.

How do you feel knowing that male fertility rates across the developed world have fallen by more than 50% since 1973, and that the leading explanation includes lifelong exposure to chemicals found in plastics?

How do you feel knowing that your children are being born with measurable plastic particles already in their blood, their lungs, and their developing brains, before they draw their first breath?

These are published, peer-reviewed clinical findings. They describe what has already been measured. This document is about what we intend to do about them.

A Microplastic particles in human cord blood, placental tissue and foetal brains

Detected in peer-reviewed studies. The children being born today are the most plastic-contaminated generation in human history. Ragusa et al. (2021), placenta. Landrigan et al. (2023), foetal brain. Multiple independent replications. A-scored: uncontested in the mainstream scientific literature to date.

B Male sperm counts in the developed world have fallen by approximately 50% over fifty years

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals in plastics are identified in current research as a significant contributing factor to the observed decline. Some reading this may not have grandchildren, not because of any choice their children make, but because of something done to them before they were born. Levine et al. (2017) Human Reproduction Update; 2022 follow-up. Direction of decline established. Grandchildren inference: D-level projection from B-level trends, stated as possibility, not certainty.

This is not a document about litter. It is a document about what we are doing to our own biology, and what the Threshold Initiative has decided to do about it.

Section 1

The problem: if nothing changes

The world is drowning in plastic. Slowly. Measurably. And with near-total political impunity.

Every year, humanity produces around 460 million tonnes of plastic. Less than ten percent is ever recycled. The rest escapes into oceans, rivers, soil, air, and into every living body on this planet, including our own.

460Mt	<10%	22Mt	4.5x	>50%
Plastic produced every year	Ever recycled globally	Leaks to environment every year	Elevated cardiac risk from microplastics	Fall in male sperm counts since 1973

> *Nobody can predict the future with certainty. But the probability that everything gets worse (absent structural action) is, based on published science and OECD economic modelling, almost certain.*

What the next decade looks like: if nothing changes

The four scenario horizons below represent the author's projections, constructed from OECD baseline data and informed by direct experience in European plastics markets and recycling economics. They are possible scenarios with high probability, not forecasts in the strict sense.

Horizon	Accumulation	Conditions
12 months | 2027	+22 million more tonnes	A brief market window from geopolitical disruption partially revives recycling, but the infrastructure to use it has been dismantled. Another 22 million tonnes escape into the environment.
2 years | 2028	+60 million more tonnes	The window closes. A second recycler collapse wave begins. Scientists establish the first direct causal link between microplastic exposure and specific disease. The first producer liability lawsuits are filed.
5 years | 2031	+150 million more tonnes	The first generation born with documented prenatal plastic exposure reaches fifteen. The word 'irreversible' appears consistently in peer-reviewed papers. Healthcare costs attributable to plastic disease reach EUR 50 to 150 billion per year in Europe.
10 years | 2036	+300 million more tonnes	Children born today carry more microplastics than any prior generation. Rebuilding the recycling capacity that could have existed in 2026 costs 3 to 5 times more. Legal settlements are restructuring the industry, decades too late.

Section 2

The consequences: health, fertility, children

This is not an environmental story. It is a human health story that happens to have an environmental cause.

Microplastics have been detected in human blood, breast milk, placental tissue, foetal organs, and arterial walls. A landmark 2024 study in the New England Journal of Medicine found an association between microplastics in arterial plaques and a 4.5 times higher rate of heart attacks, strokes, and death. This is a clinically observed association in human tissue, not a laboratory model, not an animal study, but a finding in living people. The causal mechanism is the subject of active research.

Body system	Status as of 2026	Trajectory to 2036
Cardiovascular	4.5x elevated cardiac risk: clinically observed association in human tissue; causal mechanism under active research	Risk confirmed across larger cohorts; enters standard clinical guidance
Fertility	Male sperm counts down >50% since 1973; endocrine-disrupting chemicals in plastics identified as a significant contributing factor	Continued decline; fertility treatment costs escalate
Neurological	Microplastics detected crossing blood-brain barrier: clinical concern, not yet fully causal	First paediatric data on intrauterine-exposure cohort published
Respiratory	Lung microplastic accumulation linked to elevated COPD and asthma risk	Causal link approaches clinical confirmation
Developmental (children)	First generation with intrauterine exposure; cord blood levels rising	First 10-year longitudinal data; findings unlikely to be reassuring
Reproductive (female)	Endometriosis, PCOS associations with plastic chemical exposure documented	Legal class actions initiated; clinical guidance updated

Section 3

Why hundreds of millions of engaged people have not been enough

The scale of public concern is extraordinary. The gap between that concern and policy outcome is the structural failure this programme exists to close.

700M+	800M	250M+	71%	8M
Social media users engaged	Environmental app registered users	Petition signatures on plastic	EU consumers wanting refill options	Active citizen science participants

Why the numbers have not translated into structural change

Engagement without evidence has no legal standing. A petition, however large, cannot be cited in a courtroom. It is dismissed as emotional preference. The Threshold converts public observation into evidence held to a published standard, which carries legal and institutional weight.

Engagement without constituency architecture has no institutional leverage. Two million anonymous signatures carry far less weight than ten thousand named, verified medical professionals co-signing a formal declaration, fifty city governments publishing quantified cost audits, and named pension funds formally requesting producer liability disclosure.

Engagement without coordination dissipates its energy. Millions of individually concerned people are not, without a coordinating structure, a political force. The Threshold provides that structure.

> *The question is not whether enough people care. They demonstrably do. The question is whether caring can be structured into something that courts, governments, and capital markets cannot ignore.*

Section 4

The Threshold Effect: naming the pattern

Why this keeps happening, and why naming it changes the response.

Plastic pollution is not an accident. It is the predictable outcome of a specific and recurring pattern in human industrial systems, one that has played out before, with tobacco, with asbestos, with leaded petrol. This pattern has a name, identified and named by Andrew Henderson, Marans, France, June 2026. The Threshold Effect is in development.

THE THRESHOLD EFFECT · © Andrew Henderson, June 2026

When a technology, substance, or industrial practice produces immediate concentrated benefit and deferred dispersed cost, the actors who benefit tend to suppress or delay accountability (in documented historical cases, deliberately and systematically) and to influence regulatory systems and decision-making processes, normalising the deviation from safety for as long as the cost of suppression remains lower than the cost of accountability.

This continues until a threshold is crossed: the point at which the consequences become too large, too visible, and too attributable to be suppressed further. At that moment the full architecture of harm becomes legible for the first time: the causal chain traceable, the actors identifiable, the damages quantifiable.

The threshold is not chosen. It announces itself. It is often crossed too late to prevent most of the harm. It can only determine the character of the accounting that follows.

THE ONLY INTERVENTION THAT CHANGES THE OUTCOME ARRIVES BEFORE THE THRESHOLD.

The Threshold Effect describes a pattern, not a destiny. It is not inevitable in every case, and it is not beyond interruption. It is a pattern sustained by choices, and choices, unlike natural laws, can be reversed. That is the only reason this document exists: because the sequence described here is written in decisions. And decisions can be unmade.

Harari observed that falsehood is cheap and easy to manufacture while truth is expensive, slow, and risky to establish. This asymmetry is precisely how the Threshold Effect is sustained: the counter-narrative costs almost nothing to produce; the evidence that dismantles it costs years and millions. The Threshold is designed to reduce the cost of truth, building shared verification infrastructure so that the expensive work of establishing fact is done once and the result is available to everyone who needs it: journalists, litigators, policymakers, researchers, city governments.

This is not the boiled frog. The frog does not know the water is heating. The plastic industry knew. This is not the butterfly effect; the butterfly does not intend the tornado. The consequences were foreseeable, foreseen, and deliberately concealed. The intent is what makes this a different order of moral and legal problem.

THE PLASTIC THRESHOLD: WHAT MAKES THIS INSTANCE DIFFERENT FROM ALL PREVIOUS ONES

Tobacco, asbestos, and leaded petrol all followed the Threshold Effect pattern. In each case the harm was suppressed until undeniable. In each case the harm was contained within the generation that experienced it. The damage did not cross the reproductive threshold.

Plastic contamination has crossed the reproductive threshold. Microplastics have been documented in placental tissue, cord blood, and foetal brains. The next generation arrives pre-loaded. This is the Accumulated Biological Debt: a loan taken against the biological systems of every subsequent generation, with interest compounding in the bodies of the unborn.

The debt cannot be defaulted on. It is written into biology, not balance sheets.

Section 5

The political trap: vested interest vs public will

Politicians know what the evidence says. The trap is that knowing and acting are separated by money.

The political failure to act is not primarily a failure of knowledge. The OECD has explicitly called for a plastic tax rising to $750 per tonne by 2060. The EU's own Environment Commissioner has acknowledged the industry is in 'deep crisis.' No binding production cap exists anywhere on earth.

The financial scale of the opposing interest

The petrochemical industry is the largest industrial sector on earth by capital value. As fossil fuel demand for energy declines with electrification, plastics have explicitly become its primary growth strategy. New cracker capacity coming online 2026 to 2029 in the US Gulf Coast, Middle East, and China will add more than 50 million additional tonnes of annual polymer capacity, systematically undermining any price recovery for recycled material. The lobbying budgets of major petrochemical and packaging industry associations run to hundreds of millions of dollars annually in Brussels, Washington, and other legislative capitals.

THE TOBACCO PRECEDENT: WHY THE THRESHOLD EFFECT EVENTUALLY BREAKS

For forty years, the tobacco industry maintained its product was not proven to cause cancer. That argument held, until the evidence became unassailable, the litigation became financially existential, and state governments quantified their healthcare costs.

The final US settlement recovered $206 billion. The plastic industry is approximately ten years behind tobacco on this trajectory. The Threshold is designed to accelerate the arrival of the moment when the legal and political cost of continued inaction permanently exceeds the cost of acting. The Threshold Effect is not inevitable. It is sustained by choices. Choices can be reversed.

Section 6

Journalism: a landscape hungry for evidence

The media landscape is not the enemy of this story. It is one of its most powerful amplifiers.

The problem serious journalists face is not a lack of editorial interest. It is a lack of reliable, institutionally credible, legally defensible evidence that they can cite without equivocation. The Threshold produces exactly this.

Media type	What they need	What the programme provides
Investigative print (Guardian, Spiegel, Le Monde)	Credible, legally defensible data with institutional backing	Graded Knowledge Base; published grading standard; every dissent on record
Science journalism (Nature, Science, New Scientist)	Peer-reviewed data; institutional endorsement	Academic citation pathway; graded evidence
Broadcast and documentary (BBC, Arte, Netflix)	Narrative access; programmatic structure	The Story: documentary and short films drawing on the Althing Round
Digital and independent (substacks, newsletters)	Shareable, graded evidence; weekly hooks	Signal/Noise A to F graded feed; Ledger Live counters; Pulse results maps
Local and regional press	Local evidence; local costs; local officials on record	City cost audits; geographic evidence clusters; municipal commitments
Academic and specialist (journals, policy)	Verified datasets; citation-ready evidence	The Knowledge Base as a citable structured dataset; Fact/Opinion audit trail

> *Journalism is hungry for what this programme produces: evidence that is graded, verified, and legally defensible. The shortage has never been editorial interest. It has been the evidence itself.*

Section 7

The solution: what The Threshold is

The Threshold is not a campaign. Not a petition platform. Not a charity that publishes reports. It is something that does not currently exist.

A structured, institutionally governed programme that holds evidence to a published standard, builds a public constituency behind it, and delivers both into the policy and legal systems that have the power to act. It is one Entity with three divisions. They run on different rules and different money, and they are kept apart on purpose.

Knowledge Base and App | Public

The core. Receives and protects evidence, checks its integrity, then grades it to a published standard, through contractors it oversees. The app, a free global application, feeds it. A submission coach accompanies every contribution and narrates its journey from initial review to downstream citation. A contribution that does not pass the first screen as evidence is held ungraded. Led by the Knowledge Base Architect.

Althing Round | Closed, in development

Twelve paid Members, seated as those who cause harm, those who bear it, governors and enablers, and those who know. They judge possible policy initiatives, using the Knowledge Base as material, and never see how its evidence was graded. They judge independently, then again after seeing the group unattributed. Every dissent is published. Led by the Round Architect.

The Story | Public

A documentary, a podcast and short films, each ending in a vote, a voice in the Threshold Poll, or a pledge. Led by the Media Architect. Operational budgets are overseen by the Oversight Board. Editorial control rests with the Lead Architect alone.

The Knowledge Base is the spine. Alone, it would justify the mission. The Round and the Story are built on it, though each could in principle run without it.

The chain of change: how every element connects

Each element creates the conditions for the next. A citizen's observation in a river delta can become part of a legal proceeding against a plastic producer through this chain.

Step	Stage	What happens
1	Observation becomes evidence	A citizen submits through the app. The submission is received and hash-logged on arrival. An AI system may triage it. A human reviewer decides whether it qualifies as evidence.
2	Evidence is held to a standard	Evidence is graded only when every link of its chain of custody is documented. At least two independent reviewers assign each grade. The grade can be revised on new evidence, with the original left visible. A Reliability Index, where used, is a triage instrument only.
3	Evidence enters the Knowledge Base	Each entry carries its grade. The Knowledge Base feeds the app, journalists, researchers, academics, schools, litigators, and, as sealed material, the Althing Round.
4	The Round deliberates	Twelve paid Members use material selected from the Knowledge Base and sealed before the Round begins. They see the evidence, not its grades. They judge possible policy initiatives independently, then again after seeing the group unattributed.
5	Findings reach the public	The documentary and podcast tell the story without breaching the confidentiality of the Round. Each film ends in a vote, a voice in the Threshold Poll, or a pledge.
6	The public adds institutional weight	Citizens act at six levels, from a two-minute signature to a formal investor disclosure request. City governments commission cost audits. Pension funds request producer liability disclosure.
7	Evidence enters legal proceedings	Claimants, regulators and courts decide what to do with a record that holds up. Municipal cost audits create a quantified liability database. Threshold does not litigate, lobby or enforce.

Who sits in the Althing Round

Seat	Who sits there
Those who cause harm	People from the industries and activities whose conduct is under examination.
Those who bear it	People and communities who carry the harm, including those who speak for the living world.
Governors and enablers	People who regulate, finance, insure or enable the activity.
Those who know	People who hold specialist knowledge of the evidence, such as scientists and clinicians.

The seats are not chosen to agree. They represent the full landscape of genuine positions, including positions in fundamental tension. The Round is in development; the seating rules are proposed in the Canons and await Swiss counsel.

Two distinct modes. The Knowledge Base and the Spotters network are evidence-neutral: they collect, verify, grade, and publish observations without advocacy or interpretation. What decision-makers conclude from that evidence is their determination, not the programme's. The Althing Round operates differently: it takes material from the evidence base and applies independent judgment to possible policy initiatives, the programme's deliberate contribution to the policy debate. The Threshold Effect, the pattern by which industrial harm is sustained through suppression of accountability (in documented historical cases deliberately and systematically), is the analytical framework that explains why evidence alone has historically been insufficient, and why the Round exists alongside the evidence collection layer.

Section 8

The Knowledge Base: the living heart of the programme

The Knowledge Base is the intelligence at the centre of everything.

Every element of The Threshold feeds into, and is fed by, a single central structure: the Knowledge Base. It is not a library. It is a living system, continuously updated by every submission that passes through the verification pipeline, every academic paper ingested by the analysis layer, and every public Pulse question answered by hundreds of thousands of citizens. The record is hashed on arrival and held at two independently governed sites, in Geneva and near Reykjavik. Neither site alone is the authoritative record.

Written claims in the Knowledge Base carry a Fact/Opinion score from A to F. An F-scored assertion is not removed; it is published with its score visible. This is itself valuable data: it shows where a stakeholder's position is built on assertion rather than evidence. The system does not claim to determine absolute truth. It claims something more modest and more durable: that every piece of evidence it holds can be examined, challenged, and corrected, and that the patterns which survive that process are increasingly difficult to dismiss. This same A to F scale is applied to every claim made by The Threshold itself, including in this document.

User	How they access it	What they get
Althing Round Members	Sealed material selected from the record	Evidence and context for deliberation; never the grades
Citizen Spotters (the app)	Via the app Knowledge Base search	Context for their own submissions; how their evidence fits the wider picture
Schools and students	Via the Guided Knowledge Layer: age-filtered, classroom-safe	Downloadable Evidence Briefs; structured evidence for critical thinking curriculum
Journalists and investigators	Via the public Knowledge Base with Fact/Opinion audit trail	Citable, graded evidence with full provenance
Academic researchers	Via structured data feeds for institutional partners (later stage)	A structured citizen science dataset on plastic pollution
Policymakers and legislators	Via published policy briefs and the white paper	Findings of the Round; evidence graded
Legal teams and litigators	Via the evidence record; an opt-in witness pipeline is a later stage	Graded evidence with full chain of custody
Medical professionals	Via the Global Medical Declaration evidence base	Scientific foundation for the named professional declaration
City governments	Via the plastic cost audit methodology	Standardised framework for quantifying plastic externalities
Institutional investors	Via The Poll Level F evidence summaries	Structured evidence for formal producer liability disclosure requests

> *The Knowledge Base is what makes The Threshold different from everything that has come before. It turns dispersed observation into structured intelligence. It is the difference between noise and signal, and it belongs to no one except the evidence itself.*

Section 9

Initiative governance: the Independence Charter

The Threshold cannot be sold, pivoted, or influenced. Its independence is not a promise. It is a structural commitment, written into the Canons and proposed for counsel to test before the Swiss entity is formed.

A platform whose outputs may enter legal proceedings, whose evidence is cited in parliamentary briefings, and whose findings are used to argue for binding regulation cannot afford to be commercially compromised. Its credibility is its primary asset. Credibility requires independence.

THE THRESHOLD INDEPENDENCE CHARTER

1. No funder influence	No funder receives any influence over findings, grades, or outputs at any level. No government or multilateral body funds the core or sits in governance. No funder ever holds a key.
2. Evidence governs conclusions	All conclusions belong to the evidence. If evidence contradicts a funder's position, it is published unchanged.
3. Split control	No person or group holds enough control to take the institution or shut it down. The Founder holds one vote of seven. Every key is split five ways and three must act together.
4. Public correction	All errors are corrected publicly and completely within 72 hours, never quietly deleted.
5. Enforced by structure	Arbitration enforces the Oversight Board's rulings. An officer who refuses an arbitrator's ruling departs, the Lead Architect included.

The Oversight Board

The Oversight Board has seven members. A panel of three outsiders seats the first Board. The Founder holds the only permanent seat, with one vote, and cannot chair. The Board oversees the operations of the Knowledge Base and the Althing Round, never their content, never who a Member is, and never what Members decide. For the Story it oversees operational budgets only, and editorial control rests with the Lead Architect alone. It rules on whether the Canons are kept, and it cannot direct administration. No funder sits on it, picks its members or holds a key. A five-member Management Board, phased from three at first, runs the Entity. Annual financial statements are published in full.

What independence means for every contributor

- Users retain copyright over their submissions. The platform holds only a usage licence.
- Reliability Index scores, where used, cannot be reset arbitrarily or commercially influenced.
- Evidence cannot be sold or transferred to any commercial interest.
- If the Lead Architect departs, the role passes by Board election.
- No funder receives influence over findings at any investment level, ever.

Contributor protection: two layers, by the contributor's choice

At the point of submission, the contributor chooses which of two layers the item enters. The protected civic layer is anonymous, sealed and destroyable. The identified evidentiary layer is consented, disclosable and preserved, and only it is ever offered as proof. Most submissions remain civic. A source may also submit under protection, in which case the programme records that protection was granted and never the identity, unless the source later consents to disclosure.

A contributor retains ownership of what they submit. The programme does not require anyone to identify themselves in order to contribute, and it holds only what the contributor's chosen layer permits. IP addresses are stripped from server logs before storage.

If a contributor is targeted with legal action as a result of a submission, a SLAPP suit designed to suppress evidence rather than contest its accuracy, the programme intends to maintain a legal defence reserve. Legal cover is part of the Year 1 plan, and the reserve is estimated at CHF 25,000 a year and not yet placed. These are proposed safeguards, and Swiss counsel will test them.

Section 10

The Youth Council: nothing about them, without them

The client of this programme is the generations who will live with its consequences. Nothing about them is decided without them.

The Threshold proposes a Youth Council to run alongside the Althing Round, not as a symbolic addition, but with the same protocol, the same tools, and the same analytical rigour. It is a proposal. It is not yet written into the Canons, and it is not part of the founding round or its budget. Youth participants aged 18 to 30 would be selected through the same transparent process as adult Members. Their findings would be published alongside, not subordinate to, the Round's.

A note on age. For legal reasons, participant consent, contractual obligations, and the potential that programme outputs enter legal proceedings, the minimum age to serve as a Youth Council participant would be 18 years. Young people under 18 are fully engaged through the Schools and Youth layer of the public app, through supervised class submissions, and through the Guided Knowledge Layer.

Where youth and adult findings agree, the agreement is compelling. Where they diverge, the divergence would be published, explained, and given to policymakers as signal, never averaged away.

Feature	Youth Council proposal
Minimum age	18 years. Required for legal consent, contractual obligations, and protection of the legal defensibility of programme outputs.
Participants	12 young adults aged 18 to 30, selected by transparent criteria across diverse geographies and lived experience of the plastic crisis.
Process	The same process, tools and Knowledge Base access as the Althing Round. No simplified version.
Divergence protocol	Where youth and adult findings diverge, the divergence is published, explained, and presented to policymakers as signal.

> *Nothing about them, without them. The generations who will live with the consequences of our decisions have the right, not merely the opportunity, to co-govern the programme that exists to change those decisions.*

Section 11

Budget, timeline and the urgency of the moment

What it costs, how long it takes, and why the window for acting at this cost will not remain open.

CHF 3.85M	CHF 1.705M	CHF 910k	CHF 795k	CHF 2.145M
Five-year foundation budget	Founding round, Years 1 and 2	Year 1	Year 2	Years 3 to 5

The five-year build costs CHF 3,850,000. The founding round is Years 1 and 2: CHF 1,705,000. It builds the institution only: the Swiss entity, an independent Oversight Board seated by an outside panel, the Canons, legal cover and the evidence platform, with the Knowledge Base on two sites, Geneva and Reykjavik, inside the Year 1 budget. A small grading pilot, tightly limited in scope and cost, is inside the founding round to size the grading round. Year 2 adds search and access tools, recruitment, the public website, administration, structure, procedure and the running of the Oversight Board. Years 3 to 5, CHF 2,145,000, expand and run the Knowledge Base and the administration, including the Oversight Board.

Founding money and operating money are kept apart, on purpose. The Althing Round, the Story, verification, the Spotters network of public contributors (the app) and paid grading are separate operating rounds. None is costed yet, and each will be costed with the expertise that will lead it, before it is raised. The reason is independence: a founding funder pays for the institution to exist, not for any judgment it later reaches.

The three converging forces: why now

The market signal. Global conflict disrupting major shipping routes from early 2026 caused virgin plastic prices to surge 40 to 42%. For the first time in three years, recycled plastic is price-competitive. This window will close when shipping normalises, probably by mid-2027.

The health science. The scientific community is within one or two large-scale studies of establishing a direct causal link between microplastic exposure and specific diseases. When that link is firmly established, the regulatory and litigation consequences will accelerate at a speed that will overwhelm any unprepared evidence infrastructure.

The generational shift. The generation now aged 18 to 25 are entering political life with measurable plastic loads present in their bodies before birth. They are the most politically engaged generation on environmental questions in recorded history.

THE COST OF WAITING: CUMULATIVE INACTION

12 months of inaction: +22Mt to environment | estimated reversal cost EUR 30 to 50 billion

2 years of inaction: +60Mt | recycling window closed; infrastructure rebuilding cost 2x

5 years of inaction: +150Mt | causal health link legally established; litigation begins without full evidence infrastructure

10 years of inaction: +300Mt | rebuilding recycling capacity costs 3 to 5x the 2026 price

Section 12

The call to action: join The Threshold

Nobody can say with certainty exactly what tomorrow holds. That is not the point.

The direction of the current trajectory, absent structural change, is documented, measured, published, and confirmed by independent scientific and economic bodies. The ranges and projections carry genuine uncertainty. What they share is a direction: without intervention, things get worse. The rate at which they get worse can be debated. The direction, however, is strongly supported by the weight of current evidence.

> *The plastic crisis is not unsolvable. It is unsolved, because those who benefit from the current system have more organised power than those who are harmed by it. The Threshold is a systematic effort to reverse that imbalance using the one resource that cannot be lobbied away: the number of people who are already angry, and who need a structure that turns their anger into something courts and governments cannot ignore.*

JOIN THE THRESHOLD

The Threshold exists because the evidence demands action and action requires a structure that makes concern increasingly difficult to ignore.

You do not need a scientific background. You do not need to be an expert. You need five minutes and the willingness to be part of something that matters.

Follow the work. Submit what you see when the app opens. Write to your representative. If you are a doctor, sign the medical declaration. If you run a city, commission a cost audit. If you manage institutional money, request producer liability disclosure.

The evidence is building. The constituency is forming. The only thing missing is you.

Six ways to take part: from two minutes to institutional commitment

Level	For	What it does	Time
A Sign	Everyone	Your name on the programme's public evidence record	2 minutes
B Write	Everyone	The app writes a personalised letter to your elected representative. You send it.	5 minutes
C Declare	Medical and health professionals	Named co-signatory on the Global Medical Declaration on Plastic and Human Health	10 minutes
D Audit	Mayors and council officials	Commission a plastic cost audit for your city using the programme's published methodology	1 meeting
E Commit	Retail and procurement executives	Public tiered commitment to reduce single-use plastic with named accountability	1 meeting
F Disclose	Institutional investors and insurers	Formally request plastic producer liability disclosure from companies in your portfolio	1 letter

What the Threshold holds, it holds for you. What you bring to it, none of us could bring alone.

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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. In your own words. Write to your unborn grandchildren. Tell them what you knew, particularly about the consequences of plastic and when you knew. What you did, and what you did not do. What you felt and what you hope, in spite of everything, they will inherit. Seal it with your mark. It will be held in the Threshold Knowledge Base, protected and permanent, until the threshold is crossed, or until the year you choose to have it opened and by whom.

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 Threshold Effect is in development.

The case has crossed every threshold but yours.

Whether you cross it is now observed.

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