FREE THE SEA



2025 IMPACT REPORT

A boring report of our world-changing impact.

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CHIEF OF BORING

EXECUTIVE LETTER

When people think about protecting the ocean, they rarely think about bins. Or community education. Or recycling infrastructure on land.

After eight years working in communities in Indonesia where waste systems often don't exist, I've learned something important:

Boring works.

Change isn't about glamorous campaigns. It's about the everyday systems that most people overlook. The waste systems that keep plastic out of oceans, create livelihoods, and give plastic a second life.

2025 was an important year for Free The Sea, and I couldn't be more excited about what's coming.

Our mission hasn't changed. And I'm proud of our vision to significantly increase the impact made possible by the hard work of our team and community over the past eight years.

So we can free the sea and protect its vibrancy.

Here's to boring. Because Boring Frees The Sea.

Christoph Dörn
Chief of Boring



Imagine a sea without life. Pretty dull, right?

Protecting the vibrancy of our oceans is the reason we do what we do. But the systems that keep our oceans alive are failing.

PLASTIC IS HERE TO STAY, JUST NOT IN OUR SEAS

Plastic pollution isn't a littering problem, it's an infrastructure problem. Instead of collecting what is already in the environment, we show up one step earlier.

The plastic found in nature today was somebody's household waste yesterday, and without a system to handle that waste and re-route it before it leaks, this destructive cycle repeats over and over again.

In many coastal communities across the world, households simply don't have access to reliable waste collection.

Without the infrastructure to sort, collect, and process their waste, plastic ends up dumped in nature, burned in backyards, or washed into rivers and out to sea.

That's the root cause.
And that's where we go all in.

*Beyond an age of waste: Turning rubbish into a resource, UN Environment Programme



2.8

BILLION PEOPLE HAVE NO ACCESS TO WASTE SYSTEMS.*

WE STOP PLASTIC WASTE AT THE FIRST BIN

We build waste infrastructure in underserved communities to re-route plastic away from the sea.

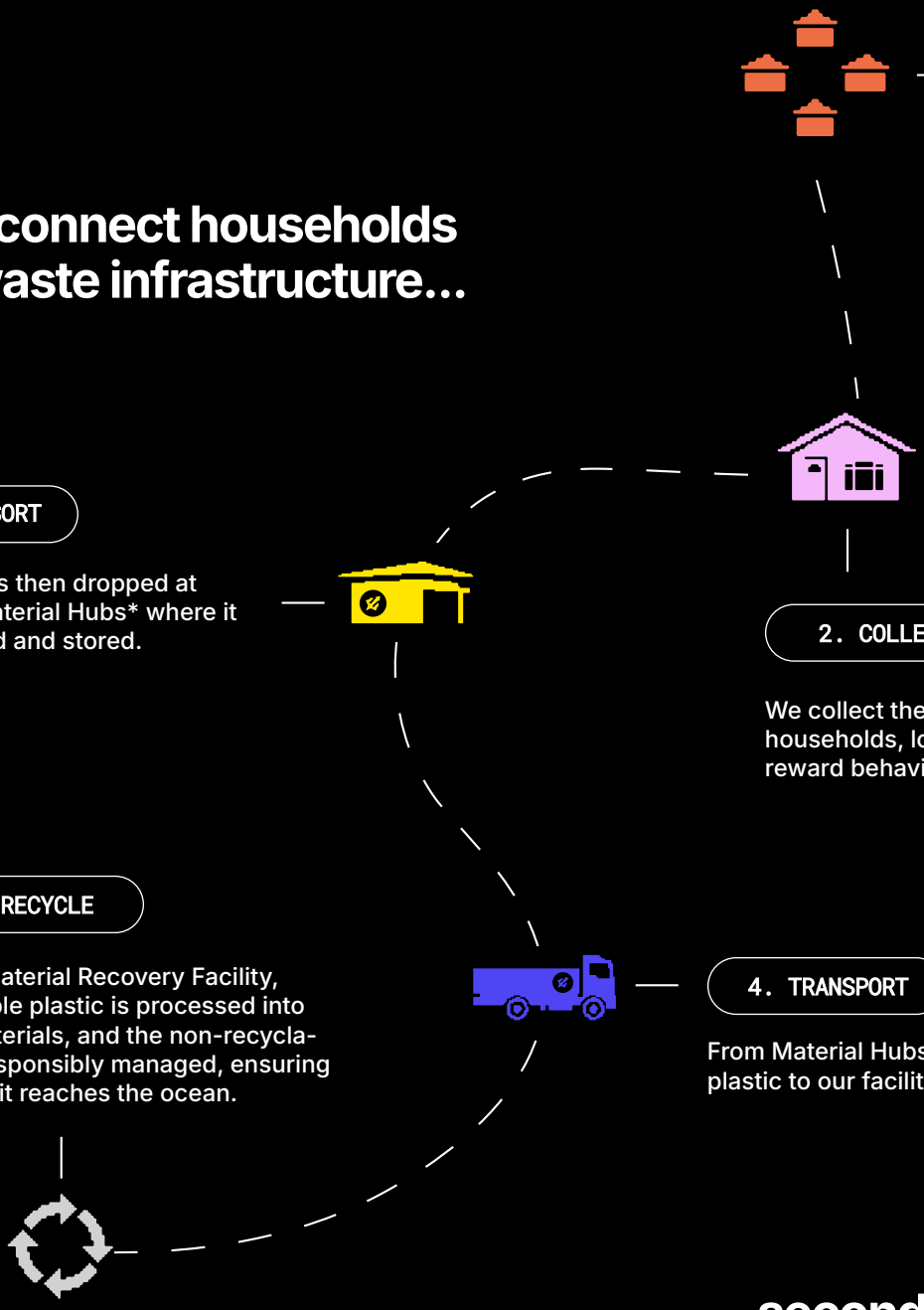
By connecting households, communities, collection systems and traceable material flows, we build solutions designed not only to remove waste, but to reduce and prevent future leakage altogether.



How we do it: building waste infrastructure from the ground up

Free The Sea works with communities to build and operate local waste systems. We make responsible waste management as easy, accessible and convenient as possible by bringing the infrastructure communities are missing right totheir doorstep, giving families a safe and reliable way to dispose of plastic and preventing it from leaking into nature and the ocean.

We connect households to waste infrastructure...



1. CONNECT

Households keep their plastic waste at home instead of discarding it.

2. COLLECT

We collect the plastic directly from the households, log their contributions and reward behavior change with incentives.

3. SORT

Plastic is then dropped at local Material Hubs* where it is sorted and stored.

4. TRANSPORT

From Material Hubs, we transport the plastic to our facilities for processing.

5. RECYCLE

At the Material Recovery Facility, recyclable plastic is processed into new materials, and the non-recyclable is responsibly managed, ensuring none of it reaches the ocean.

...and turn it into secondary raw material

*EACH MATERIAL HUB COVERS APPROX. 50 HOUSEHOLDS.

DURING 2025



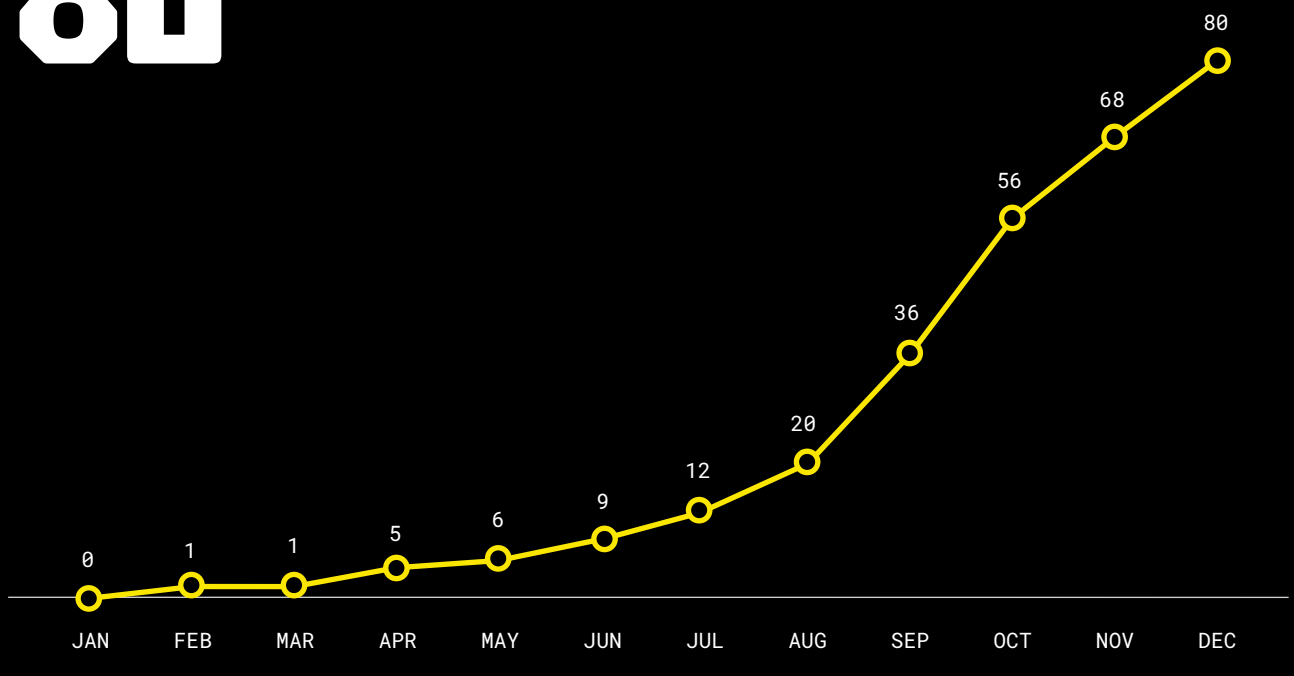
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PLASTIC KEEPERS RAN
OUR MATERIAL HUBS

Material Hubs Set Up

80

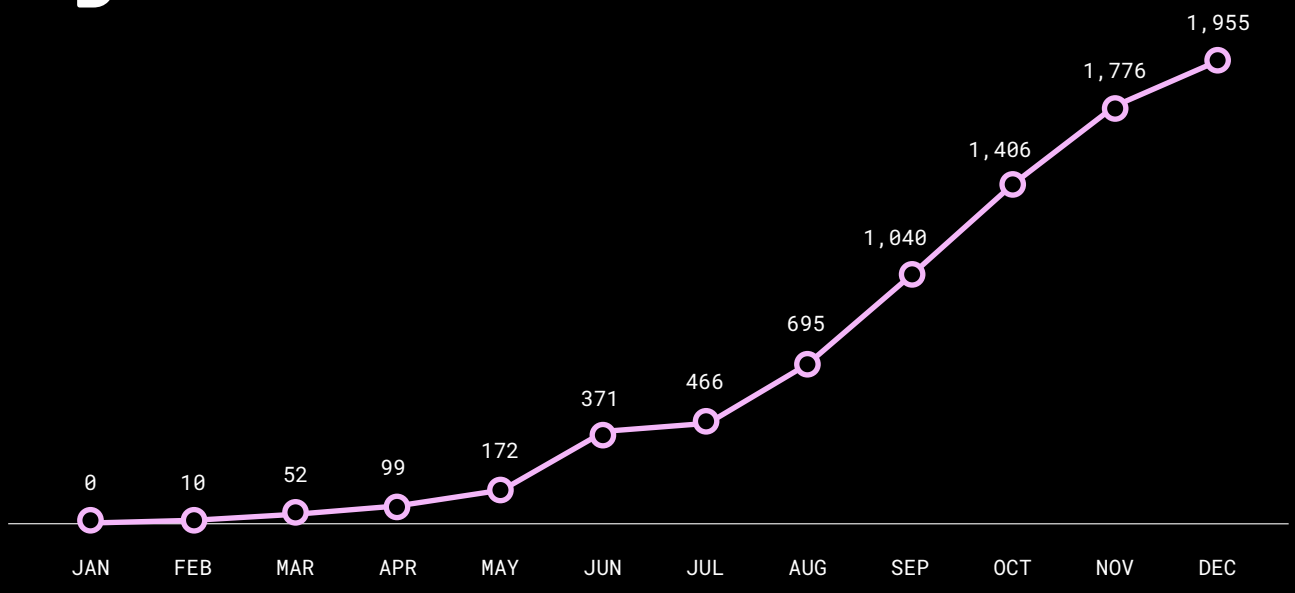
AMOUNT SET UP
ACROSS BATAM



Households Connected

1,955

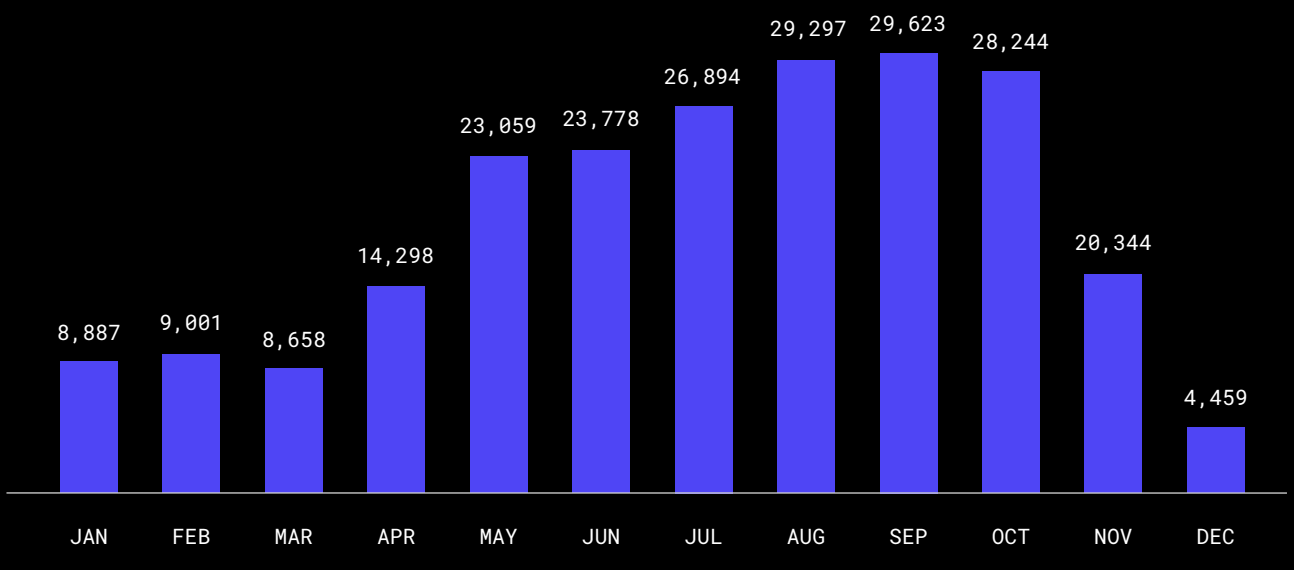
AMOUNT CONNECTED TO OUR WASTE SYSTEMS



Plastic Prevented (kg)

226,546

PLASTIC THAT WAS KEPT OUT OF THE ENVIRONMENT (PER MONTH)



2025: a new strategy for scale

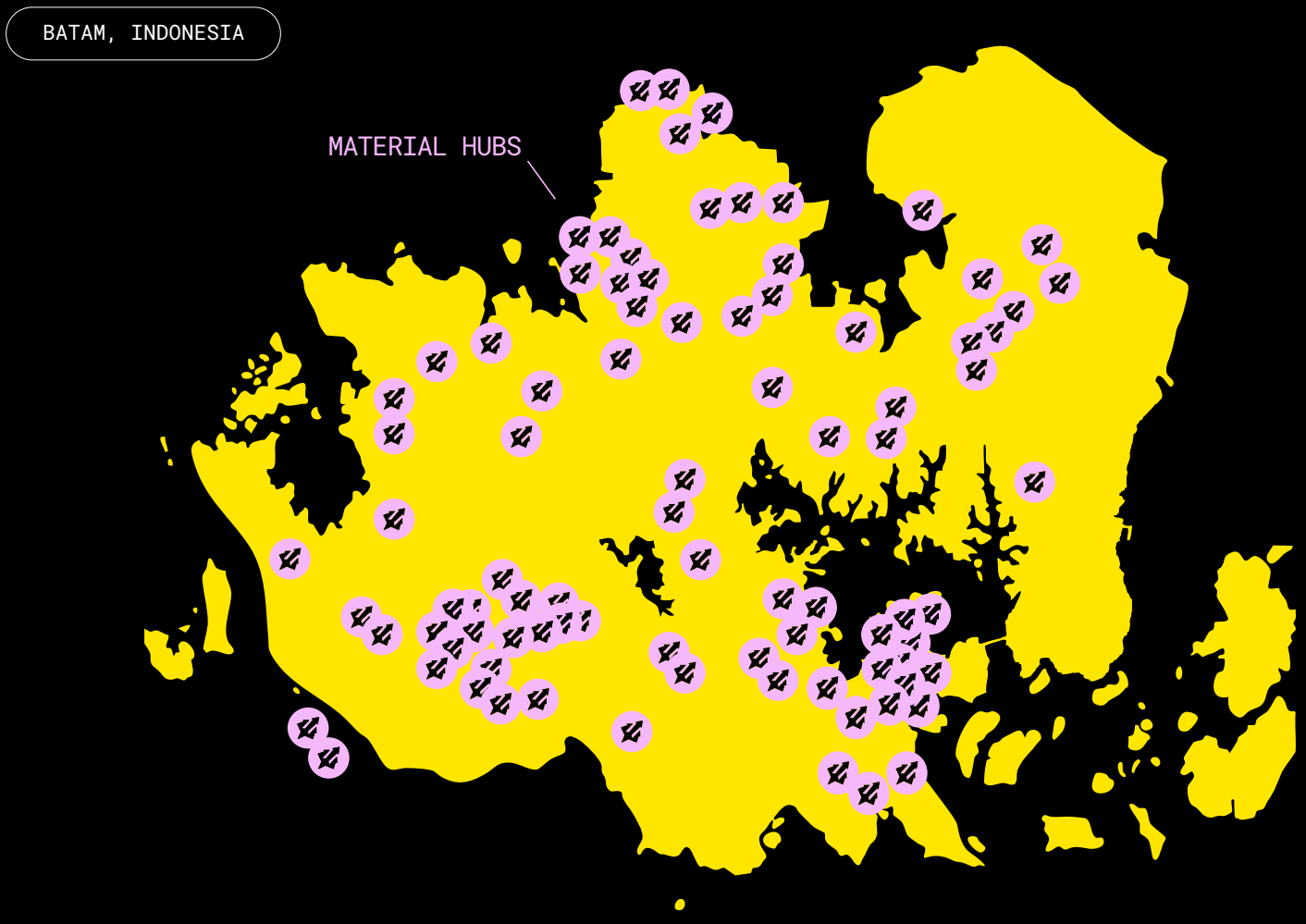
Throughout 2025, we developed, tested and continuously refined a scalable operational model designed to strengthen waste infrastructure and enable community participation, building on the learnings from our many years of experience formerly working with individual collectors.

What started years ago as a network of individual local collection centers has grown into an interconnected system directly linking households to waste management across Batam, Indonesia.

Today, households, Material Hubs, local teams and processing facilities are connected through a single operational network. This transformation has laid the operational foundation for the next stage of our growth.

In 2025, our network grew to 80 Material Hubs that connect households to waste management.

To improve operational efficiency, we also began building dedicated storage spaces at Material Hubs, allowing collected plastic to be temporarily stored before being transported by our truck fleet to our facility.



WHAT ARE MATERIAL HUBS?

Material Hubs are local physical centers and the foundation of our prevention ecosystem. They create a direct link between households and our wider waste management system.

This is where plastic collected from households arrives after pick up. At the hub, it's recorded, temporarily stored and made ready for the next step.

Material Hubs are run by community volunteers who are part of our wider Plastic Keeper network. They help activate and retain households, coordinate door-to-door collections, and keep material moving through the system.

From the Hub, material flow is tracked through our system until it reaches our processing facility.



2025 MATERIAL HUB



2026 MATERIAL HUB

MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN 2025:

MILESTONE 01

We moved from PET-only collection to **accepting all plastic types**.

MILESTONE 02

We shifted from working with individual collectors to **building scalable, community-wide systems that directly connect households to waste management**.

MILESTONE 03

We built and **strengthened our waste collection infrastructure**.

MILESTONE 04

We **expanded accessibility and participation** across Batam.

WHAT WE LEARNED:

Communities engage when the systems are designed to be simple, accessible and inclusive.

Social Impact: built into our operations, not bolted on

Our model is designed to make responsible waste management easy, rewarding, and consistent for communities.

The driving force behind our operations is behavior change, so our goal is to transform how households interact with plastic waste, moving beyond simple collection toward active, conscious engagement.

Motivation

Plastic Keepers running Material Hubs lead household support efforts, encourage good practices, and help build long-term, healthy habits around household waste.



Incentives

All types of plastic (recyclable and non-recyclable) are given a monetary value, giving households a reason to collect and return their waste instead of burning or dumping it into nature.



Social benefits

Rewards such as care packages with essential food items such as rice and cooking oil, grocery vouchers, scholarships and free health checks reinforce participation and create a sense of shared purpose.



Our Impact Program

Infrastructure on its own is just bins and concrete. Keeping people engaged and proud to be a catalyst for change is what makes our system work and become self-reinforcing.

By supporting our Plastic Keepers and rewarding their hard work through our Impact Program, we delivered the following:

64

SCHOLARSHIPS

2,350

CARE PACKAGES



4,795

GROCERY VOUCHERS

1,500

HEALTH CHECKS





509

PLASTIC KEEPERS
RAN OUR MATERIAL
HUBS ACROSS BATAM













PLASTIC KEEPERS

Plastic Keepers are everyone who keeps the system moving: the household members who set aside their waste, the volunteers who run our Material Hubs, and the teams who sort and process material at our facility.

They show up. They mobilize participation. They give plastic waste a second chance. And through our Impact Program, we recognize and reward the volunteers among them.



VOLUNTEER

“Free The Sea has greatly inspired me to care about the environment and the ocean, showing that no action is too small to make a difference”

IBU MARIA FRANZISKA,
MATERIAL HUB PASIR INDAH



WE DON'T JUST DO BEACH CLEANUPS

Infrastructure alone doesn't create lasting change either. Knowledge does. Long-term impact depends on people understanding why it matters and feeling empowered to be part of the solution.

Throughout 2025, our local team ran education and engagement programs designed to strengthen understanding around waste management and bring communities into our ecosystem as active participants, not passive recipients.

SEGREGATION TRAININGS

When we expanded to collecting all types of plastic beyond PET bottles, education became essential to keep collection running. Our teams run frequent training sessions with our Plastic Keepers to strengthen their understanding of different plastic types, material handling, and local recycling pathways.

Plastic Keepers got better at identifying what could be recycled, improving material quality and creating a more efficient collection system overall.



TRAINING AND COMMUNITY SOCIALIZATION

Beyond material sorting, our teams also facilitated additional sessions covering topics such as Ocean Bound Plastic (OBP) standards, responsible operational practices, and our Impact Code.

These sessions helped build a shared understanding of the standards and values guiding our work.



CLEANUPS AS TOOLS FOR AWARENESS

We believe prevention is the only real solution to ocean plastic. But cleanups are a great hands-on educational tool. They bring communities together and spark conversations about where waste comes from in the first place.

In 2025, our teams organized seven cleanup events, including:

- Our biggest cleanup event to date: one across eight different locations in celebration of World Cleanup Day.
- The “1,000 Steps, 1,000 Pieces of Plastic”, a cleanup in Pulau Buluh, in celebration of Indonesian Independence Day. During this event, participants were challenged to walk 1,000 steps while collecting plastic waste across the island, promoting healthy habits by staying active.
- A cleanup in a mangrove area along the beach, where children from local orphanages took part in educational activities and games as part of our “Children of the Seas” program.





CERTIFICATIONS WE'RE PROUD OF

To ensure transparency and accountability across our operations, we operate under several internationally recognized certifications. These verify that our collection, recycling, and operational processes meet strict environmental, social, and quality requirements.

OCEAN BOUND PLASTIC (OBP) RECYCLING CERTIFICATION

Certifies the collection, traceability and recycling of Ocean Bound Plastic through verified supply chains.

OCEAN BOUND PLASTIC (OBP) SOCIAL+ CERTIFICATION

Verifies that the collection work meets defined social and ethical standards, including fair and responsible working conditions.

OCEAN BOUND PLASTIC (OBP) NEUTRALITY CERTIFICATION

Verifies that non-recyclable plastic waste at risk of entering the ocean is ethically collected and treated

ISO 9001 AND ISO 14001

For quality and environmental management. These standards help ensure that our processes remain consistent, responsible, and efficient across all operations.

RECYCLED CONTENT CERTIFICATION

Verification of independent third-party validation of the recycled content percentage in our recycled plastic portfolio.

ACES AWARDS

Green Initiative Award: Recognized at the ACES Awards for our highly effective, grassroots approach to marine and coastal environments.

We directly contribute to four of the UN Sustainable Development Goals



PROTECTING THE MOST IMPORTANT ECOSYSTEM ON EARTH

Preventing ocean plastic is our main mission. Together, we can safeguard one of our planet's most vital resources, and demonstrate genuine environmental leadership.



BUILDING A CIRCULAR FUTURE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Plastic pollution is the result of broken waste systems. We connect households to responsible waste management, turning waste into value and preventing environmental harm.



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OUR OCEANS THROUGH EDUCATION

Lasting environmental change starts with knowledge. We empower households to understand the impact of plastic waste and adopt better habits, building long-term behavioral change.



BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR REAL CHANGE THROUGH COLLABORATION

We work alongside communities, local stakeholders, and impact driven organizations to scale proven solutions to transform local action into lasting, system-level change.



BORING INSIGHTS DRIVING CHANGE

We won’t make up reality and pretend building waste systems from scratch is easy work. Here are challenges we faced during 2025 and what we learned:

CHALLENGE 01

Recyclable vs non-recyclable materials

In 2025, we quickly discovered that figuring out what can and can not be recycled isn’t as simple as it sounds. Some materials appear recyclable but have no viable local processing pathway, like PET water gallons or oil-contaminated HDPE bottles.

This created confusion early on, both for households learning to separate their waste and for collection teams managing different material streams. It also revealed how complex it is to manage the full range of plastic types, each with different processing requirements and material values.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Simpler systems increase participation

Clear communication isn’t just nice to have. It’s the difference between people joining in and people giving up. We learned that simplifying the process for households, particularly by allowing non-recyclable plastics to be dropped off without additional sorting, reduced barriers to participation and helped drive collection volumes up.

CHALLENGE 02

Scaling responsibly

When we opened collection to all plastic types, the complexity of direct door-to-door collection became clear very quickly. Communities showed up, but scale came with costs: increased demand for operational capacity, extended logistics, and funding requirements. Many non-recyclable plastics are lightweight but bulky, making transportation and handling more resource-intensive than we anticipated.

This is why partnership development is now a key priority. For every new partner we bring on, we can expand the number of households connected to our system in a responsible and sustainable way.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Long-term impact requires the right partnerships

Communities are ready and motivated to participate. The bottleneck isn’t motivation, it’s financial capacity. Creating lasting impact now depends on building the right partnerships and systems, ones that let us grow without compromising quality or reliability.

Improved traceability

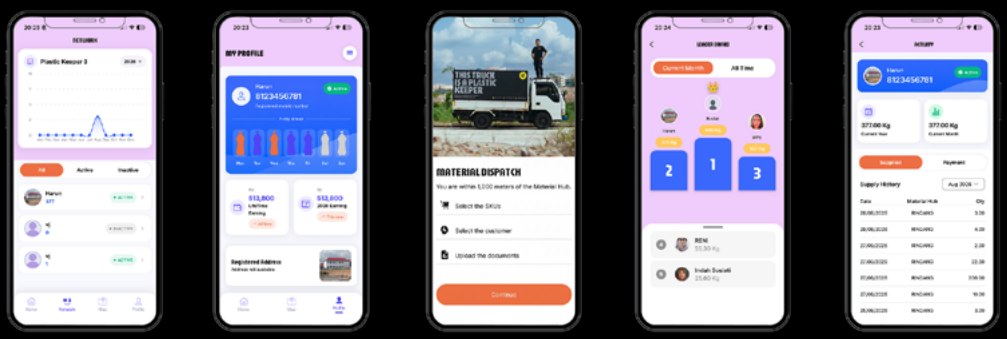
FTS MOBILE APP

FTS Mobile App

In 2025, we developed the FTS Mobile App to be used by households, Material Hub volunteers, and our internal teams. Through the app, households use their personal QR code to exchange collected plastic for incentives while tracking their own contributions, including the value of incentives accumulated and the amount of plastic they have helped prevent from entering the ocean.

For Material Hub volunteers, the app provides a centralized overview of day-to-day operations, including active and inactive households, communication with participants, pick up requests with Free The Sea, and financial tracking. By connecting all parties through this simple and intuitive app, full traceability across the journey of the waste until it arrives to our facility is secured.

The system was tested extensively on the ground throughout 2025 and is scheduled for external launch in 2026.

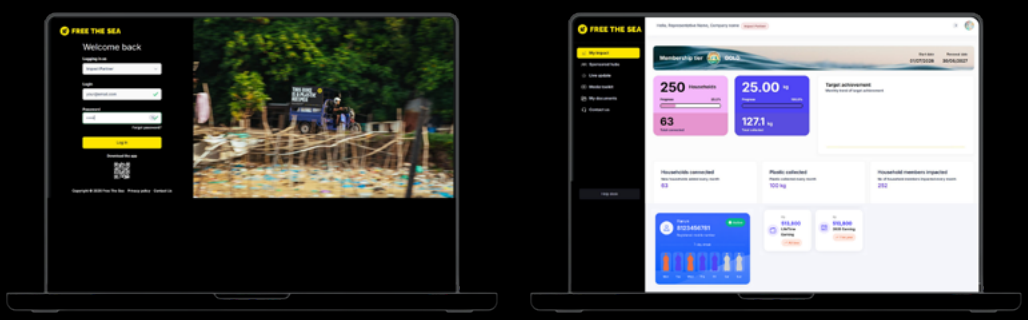


FTS IMPACT DASHBOARD

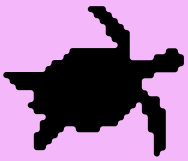
FTS Impact Dashboard

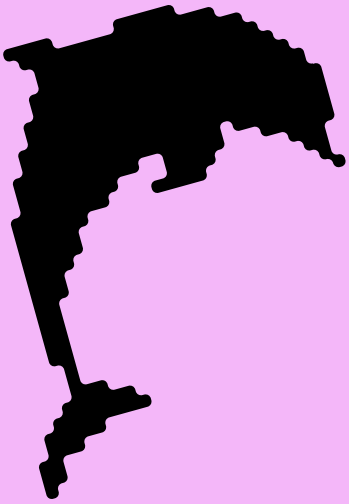
In parallel, we developed the FTS Impact Dashboard for our Impact Partners, giving them access to transparent, real-time operational data from the communities they support. Depending on the number of Material Hubs they sponsor, partners can monitor household participation, material volumes collected and the overall environmental impact generated through their contribution.

This system allows partners to clearly understand how their support translates into measurable action on the ground while strengthening transparency, accountability, and traceability throughout our ocean plastic prevention efforts.



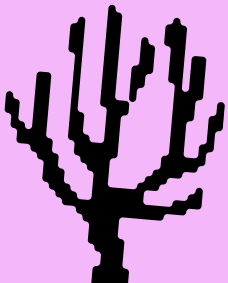
WE BREAK THE CYCLE. NOW, YOU CAN GET INVOLVED TOO











BRANDS AND IMPACT PARTNERS

By funding Material Hubs, your brand creates real, traceable impact in underserved coastal communities and meets your ESG goals with data to back it up. Every hub you sponsor connects more households to our system and keeps more plastic out of the ocean. Support the Plastic Keepers. Be boring. Transform lives. Free the sea.

OCEAN AMBASSADORS

Use your platform and share our story. Help us reach the people who have the power to scale what works.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Be a Plastic Keeper. Free the sea. Join your local Material Hub, separate your household waste and become part of a system that gives plastic a better outcome.

The sea doesn’t need bystanders.
It needs action.

BORING FREES THE SEA.

WEBSITE:

LINKEDIN:

INSTAGRAM:

FACEBOOK:

We build boring solutions that radically transform the world and free the sea.