

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ENVIRONMENTAL ALLY



The month of July is designated as [Plastic Free July](#), which is a key initiative of the Plastic Free Foundation to see a world free of plastic waste. That means it's a fantastic time to consciously focus on being an ally to the environment. But what does that mean exactly?

It takes different shapes and forms, from individual awareness and behavior change to major initiatives, technological interventions, organizational support, and community outreach. One action that's close to my heart is how [Seabin](#)™ is working to positively reduce the impact of plastic waste in water, which is aligned to BMC's sustainability practices based on the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (UN SDGs).

It Starts With Me

As a leader at BMC, and also as a member of my coastal community, I am an ally to the environment through my [local volunteerism](#) doing clean ups at my beloved beach in Portugal where I grew up, my personal practices, and my work as a sustainability advocate in the company. During my clean-up work, it's always astounding to me how many pieces of litter and debris we collect. Even further, it's alarming how much that amount has increased over time.

That's why I have changed my behavior to be more conscientious about my personal contributions to plastic and other waste. For example, I avoid purchasing many individual-use products such as wipes and sandwich bags. Instead, I find ways to use materials that are reusable, such as cloths for cleaning or wax paper wraps for packing food.

Additionally, as much as possible, I limit my use of bottled water by consistently carrying a refillable water container so that I can stay hydrated without creating waste. I also watch how often I order

take-away food from restaurants, and I bring my own shopping bags to the grocery store. Lastly, I choose to invest in the things I need and will use regularly, making every effort to not overconsume—from only buying the food I need to prevent waste and spoilage to wearing my clothes and accessories longer. I also practice a minimalist aesthetic in my home.

At BMC, the Customer Success Organization that I lead partners with Seabin, an organization dedicated to understanding the human impact on our oceans and waterways and providing education and critical impact data through its technology. You can read more about our partnership in our previous blogs [here](#).

BMC has committed to continuing our partnership with Seabin for two more years, and is already contributing to clean up efforts in [Sydney Harbour, Australia](#) and [Marina Del Rey, California](#) through the sponsorship of Seabin units that remove litter and debris from the water. As you can see in these first impact reports for Q1 of this year, the results of our two bins are compelling.

Educating Through Data

In addition to capturing waste in marinas and ports, the data yielded from Seabin's collections support research and behavior change. Seabin compiles an annual report on the impact its bins have had on Sydney Harbour and shares out that data to create awareness around the need to reduce single-use plastic and improve other marine related behaviors. From 2020 to 2022, the bins have filtered 15 billion liters of water and collected more than 100 tons of litter. Every day, [1,101 soft plastic items](#) are captured in Sydney, at an approximate rate of one plastic item every six seconds.

The data also shows how regulatory changes can have a positive impact. In June 2022, a state law was passed in Sydney to ban businesses from giving out lightweight plastic bags. Since the ban, Seabin has [measured](#) a 70 percent reduction in plastic shopping bags collected by the 34 Seabin units installed around Sydney Harbour. With more data like this, Seabin can demonstrate the impact of community action.

Seabin also uses the data to determine how debris may have ended up in the water, i.e., from deliberate littering, being blown out of bins by the wind, or garbage falling out of overfilled receptacles, which helps educate the public on how their behavior can make a difference. This awareness can also be used to advise corporations on the merits of designing better, more sustainable, and even biodegradable packaging for consumer goods like candy bar and potato chip wrappers that make up a significant portion of waste captured by Seabin units.

As you can see, there are many ways to be an ally to the environment. I'm proud to work for an organization like BMC that is taking action to help the environment and giving me the opportunity to raise awareness and support Seabin's mission for cleaner oceans and waterways.

If you'd like to learn more about Seabin, [sign up to receive the monthly newsletter](#).