

Article type: Future Directions

Limits: The total length of this article type should be 2,500 words.

Upon submission, select relevant topics and subtopics (maximum 5 selections).

Description: Future Directions articles should present a concise, evidence-based synthesis of an important plastics-related challenge or opportunity and identify the most credible priorities for future action. They are not intended to be conventional review articles or opinion pieces. Instead, they should combine critical synthesis with forward-looking recommendations that are firmly grounded in the available evidence.

Main text components:
Articles should be structured around the following five sections.

1. Why does this matter? (200–300 words)
Begin by introducing the topic and explaining why it deserves attention. Establish the importance, relevance, and timeliness of the topic without attempting a detailed literature review.

2. What does current evidence tell us? (500–600 words)
Provide a concise, critical synthesis of the current evidence about the topic. Rather than reviewing individual studies, explain what the collective body of evidence tells us about the topic, including areas of broad agreement, important uncertainties and significant gaps in knowledge.

3. What is preventing progress? (200–300 words)

Having established the current state of knowledge, identify the main factors limiting positive progress. These may include scientific or technical uncertainties, methodological limitations, gaps in evidence, policy or governance barriers, institutional constraints, implementation challenges, or other factors relevant to the topic.

4. Future directions (900–1000 words)

This is the defining section of the article. Authors should identify up to five recommended evidence-based actions, or *future directions,* that have the greatest potential to advance research, innovation, policy or practice to address the challenge identified. Each future direction should be clearly explained and evidence-based. Authors should indicate why each future direction is a priority, what progress would involve, and, where appropriate, who should be responsible for delivering each future direction.

5. Closing comments (200–300 words)

Authors are encouraged to conclude the article by looking beyond the immediate recommendations and reflecting on the future evolution of the field. This might include what successful progress might look like, how priorities may change over time, and the wider implications of pursuing the future directions identified in the article.

Each article title should carry the prefix **“**Future Directions for-“