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Zettler's research investigates the relationships between microbes and the mechanisms that determine their diversity, distribution, survival and impact on local and global processes. She has been active in plastic marine debris research over the last 10 years and serves as the membership and a subsection Chair for the ASTM D20.96 Subcommittee on Environmentally Degradable Plastics and Bio-based Products. Her current plastics research interests include microbial interactions with Plastic Marine Debris and the "Plastisphere" and applying next generation technologies to updating existing Biodegradation Standard Testing Methods. She Co-Chairs the steering committee for and is the lead PI on the Horizon 2020 AtlantECO Project's (atlanteco.eu) "Plastics and Plastisphere" pillar where she is characterizing the Plastisphere microbiome and is also a member of the Dutch National Science foundation-funded research consortium on Nanoplastics: Origins, Structure, and Fate (nanoplastics.org). She has published in *PNAS*, *Nature*, *ISME*, *Environmental Science and Technology* and other top microbial ecology journals.