Microplastics are any synthetic solid particle or polymeric matrix of plastic origin, with regular or irregular shape and with size ranging from 1 µm to 5 mm, of either primary or secondary manufacturing origin, which are insoluble in water.

Generally, microplastics can be classified into two key groups:

- **Primary microplastics** are practically manufactured for a specific purpose, such as Voyager (e.g. paints, abrasion of tires and other weathering processes, waste, photo-degradation or other weathering processes from degradation of larger plastics produced indirectly) or pellets for industrial applications including manufacturing of plastics for cosmetics and personal care products (e.g. shower gel, toothpaste) for companies like L’Oréal, Unilever and Procter & Gamble. These microplastics are often added to products and are not intended to be shed or released into the environment.

- **Secondary microplastics** are plastic particles (< 5 mm) from degradation of larger plastics, such as plastics from single-use packaging, microbeads in face cleansers and shower gels, photo-degradation or other weathering processes resulting in microplastics being released into the environment, through strong winds, tides and currents.

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