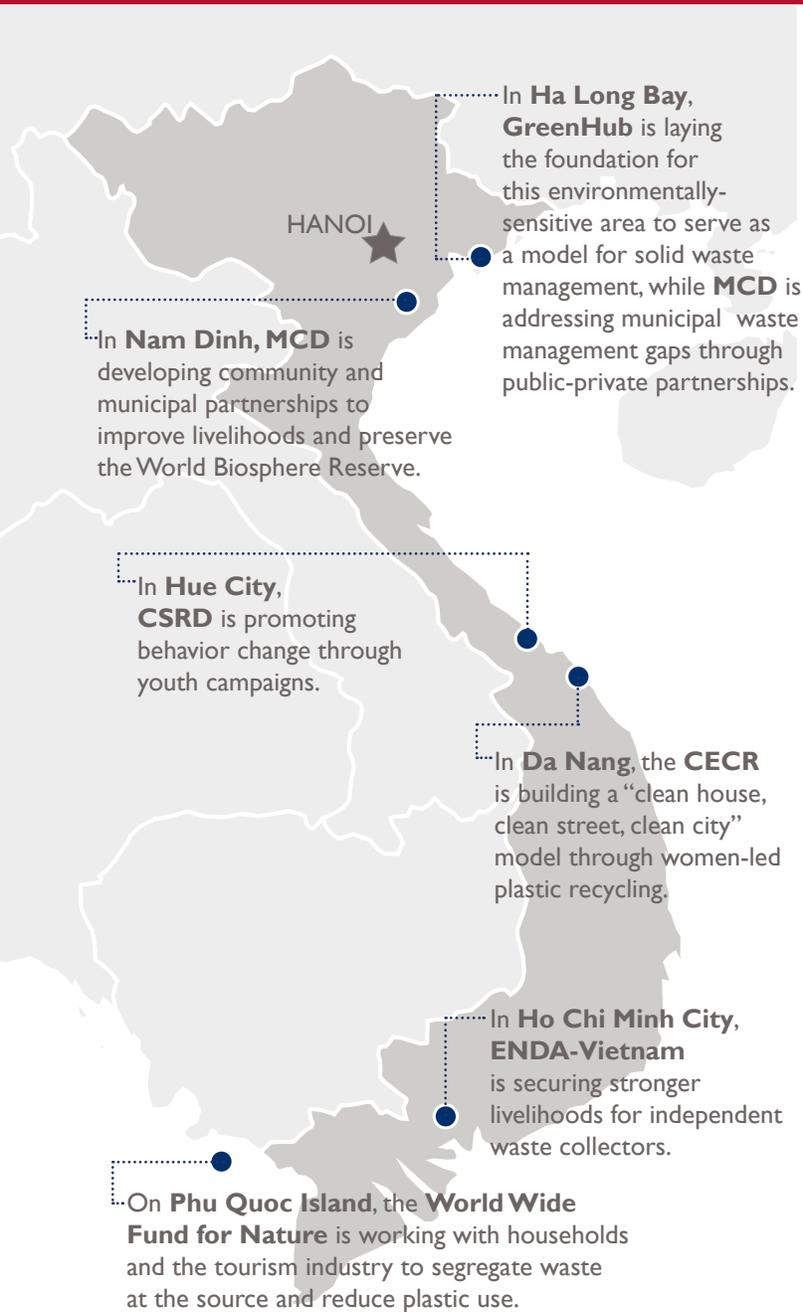




CLEANER COMMUNITIES, CLEANER SEAS

THE MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM



THE CHALLENGE

The global crisis of ocean plastic pollution - each year eight million metric tons of plastic pour into the ocean - has local origins in poor waste management in cities of the developing world. Vietnam is the **world’s fourth largest plastic polluter**¹ to the marine environment, contributing approximately 730,000 metric tons annually.

In Vietnam, rapid urbanization and industrialization have led to economic growth; however, with this growth has come **10 to 16 percent annual increases** in urban waste generation. Municipalities’ ability to manage waste has lagged, leading to negative consequences: uncollected waste is frequently disposed into rivers and seas, polluting marine resources and endangering community health. These challenges threaten Vietnam’s economic development, tourism industry, and cultural heritage, and exacerbate the global crisis of ocean plastic pollution.

THE USG APPROACH

The 2018 Save our Seas Act encourages US agencies to work with countries like Vietnam that discharge the largest amounts of solid waste into our oceans. Stopping pollution at the source is the most effective way to address this challenge while reducing the impact of plastic waste pollution on national and global economies.

A five-year (2016-2021) USAID-funded initiative, the Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP), works in Vietnam, as well as Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Indonesia, to reduce and prevent land-based sources of ocean plastics pollution. The program provides grants and technical assistance to local organizations for improving solid waste management and increasing waste recycling.

1. Jambeck, J.R. et al. (2015). Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. *Science* 347(6223), 768-771. doi: 10.1126/science.1260352

THE IMPACTS OF THE MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM IN VIETNAM

With an investment of **\$1.4 million** funded through US assistance, **seven MWRP grantees** are undertaking innovative approaches to improving solid waste management in cities across Vietnam. MWRP grants have directly benefited **1.4 million individuals** who receive improved solid waste management (SWM) services or who engage in improved SWM practices. These efforts are anticipated to create cleaner, safer communities for over **6.2 million residents** in areas where MWRP works, ultimately contributing to cleaner oceans worldwide.

While MWRP activities are ongoing through 2021, it has already made impacts in:

- **Partnering with the Private Sector:** Across Da Nang, Ha Long Bay, and Phu Quoc, MWRP is engaging across the private sector with fisherfolk, market vendors, tourist services, hotels, and restaurants to increase recycling and incorporate sustainable waste reduction and management practices into their businesses. In Ho Chi Minh City, MWRP is improving the livelihoods, health and working conditions of **1561 Independent Waste Collectors**. In Ha Long Bay and on Phu Quoc Island, MWRP is connecting private sector enterprises to municipal partners to generate innovative approaches to waste management and form new partnerships.
- **Empowering Women:** In Da Nang, MWRP collaborates with the Women's Union to **collect over 17 metric tons per month** of plastics that previously went uncollected. This inclusive approach invites representatives from the Women's Union to project planning meetings and district-level meetings, and works with **female neighborhood leaders to ensure community buy-in**. In Ho Chi Minh City, MWRP has promoted women's leadership: women have been elected to lead two of the nine IWC unions/cooperatives since the start of MWRP, **increasing women's leadership from 0 to 22 percent**.
- **Effectively Managing Costs:** The local system approach of MWRP activities reduce plastic pollution while effectively managing costs. The Da Nang local government estimates that it saves **\$4.73 per cubic meter of waste** in reduced haulage and landfill costs, amounting to **\$88,000 in savings each year**. In Nam Dinh, bamboo waste traps provide a low-cost solution to solid waste capture in rivers.
- **Scaling Solutions:** In Nam Dinh, MWRP designs and pilots alternative models to collect and treat solid waste, identifying the most effective to replicate and scale. In Da Nang, the participatory, household-based approach



PHOTO: NGUYEN MINH DUC FOR USAID

In Ho Chi Minh City, Pham Thi Thanh Ngoc and her husband Nguyen Thanh Liem work as independent waste collectors. MWRP supports their work by providing accident and health insurance and training on occupational safety and gender equality.

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[MWRP's] work in the harbor with over 1500 fishing boats has been very successful and helped Danang province. It was the most polluted in this region in Vietnam. Now, MWRP helps fishing crews understand they should not pollute the seas but rather bring back plastics bags and nylon gear. My staff collects these plastics from the boats.

- DR. VINH DANG, HEAD OF PLANNING,
DA NANG MUNICIPAL EPA/DONRE

of “clean house, clean street, clean city” works closely with women heads of household to promote household behavior change and then scale up city-wide. Early successes have led the city to replicate this approach in other neighborhoods with their own financial resources.

- **Developing Effective Policies:** In Ho Chi Minh City, MWRP works closely with the municipal government to ensure local policies improve community recycling and economic outcomes for participants. As a result, new solid waste management regulations have **raised monthly incomes for waste collectors from USD 130 to USD 215** and **increased city-wide plastics recycling from 40% to 65%** since the project's start. By collaborating closely with the Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands and the municipality of Da Nang, MWRP grantees ensure close alignment between program goals, city development priorities, and national action plans for ocean debris management.