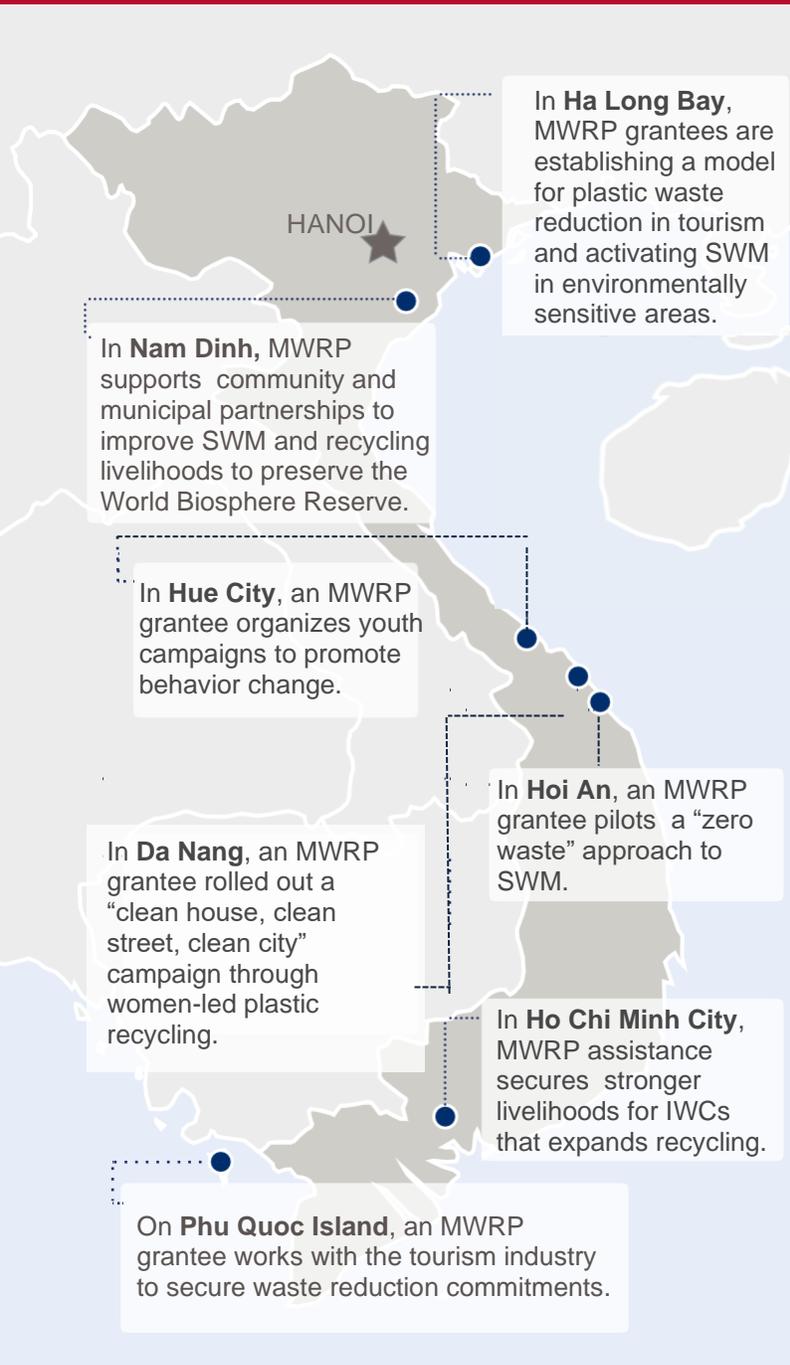




# PARTNERING WITH CITIES TO REDUCE OCEAN PLASTICS

## THE MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM | VIETNAM



### THE CHALLENGE

The global crisis of ocean plastic pollution—each year **eight million metric tons** of plastic—originates partly in poor local waste management in cities of the developing world. Vietnam, as the world’s fourth largest plastic polluter<sup>1</sup> to the marine environment, contributes approximately **730,000 metric tons** annually.

In Vietnam, rapid urbanization and industrialization spark economic growth yet generate **10 to 16 percent annual increases in urban waste**. Municipalities’ ability to manage waste lags, leaving negative consequences: uncollected waste frequently goes into rivers and seas, polluting marine resources and endangering community health. These challenges threaten Vietnam’s economic development, tourism industry, cultural heritage, and the environment.

### THE U.S. GOVERNMENT APPROACH

The 2018 Save our Seas Act encourages U.S. agencies to work with countries, like Vietnam, that discharge the largest amounts of solid waste into our oceans. Stopping pollution at the source while reducing plastic waste is the most effective way to address this challenge.

The Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP), a five-year (2016-2021) USAID-funded initiative, works in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Indonesia to reduce and prevent land-based sources of ocean plastic pollution. MWRP provides grants and technical assistance to help local organizations improve solid waste management (SWM) and increase waste recycling.

## IMPACTS OF THE MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM IN VIETNAM

With a **\$1.5 million** USAID investment, **eight MWRP grantees** support market-driven, women-led, locally-scalable, and government-endorsed improvements to SWM in seven cities across Vietnam. These grants have directly benefited **nearly two million individuals** via improved SWM services and practices. The MWRP grantees create **cleaner, healthier communities** and reduce ocean plastic by:

**Reducing Plastic Waste with the Private Sector:** Across Da Nang, Hoi An, Ha Long Bay, and Phu Quoc, MWRP grantees engage with fisherfolk, market vendors, tourist services, hotels, and restaurants to increase recycling and incorporate sustainable business waste reduction practices. MWRP grantees **connect the tourism industry to municipal partners** to reduce single-use plastic waste, create waste collection systems in open waterways frequented by tourists, and offer new waste management technology to aquaculture entrepreneurs.

**Empowering Women and Independent Waste Collectors:** With MWRP support, more than **12,600 women received training** on SWM and 579 women earned SWM decision-making positions. In Da Nang, MWRP's grantee collaborated with the Women's Union to recycle **more than 42 metric tons** of plastic waste that previously went uncollected. Engagement of **female neighborhood leaders** helped gain community buy-in on improved SWM.

An MWRP grantee in Ho Chi Minh City improved the livelihoods, health, and working conditions of **1,948 IWCs**, including successfully advocating to **double IWC fees** paid by households. Empowering women and IWCs helped initiate **waste segregation in more than 68,600 households and establishments** across all MWRP target cities and led to **1,123 metric tons of plastic waste diverted** from ocean disposal.

**Creating Cleaner Cities Locally, Scaling Up:** In Da Nang, an MWRP grantee's successful **participatory, household-based model**, "clean house, clean street, clean city," has drawn national attention. Leaders from other coastal provinces including Khanh Hoa (population 1.3 million) have expressed interest in replicating the project model. In Nam Dinh, MWRP supports piloting of alternative technologies to collect and treat solid waste.



PHOTO: NGUYEN MINH DUC FOR USAID

Mr. Du, an IWC in Ho Chi Minh City. MWRP has improved collectors' occupational safety, successfully advocated to double IWC incomes, and expanded the recycling market.

In Ho Chi Minh City, with MWRP support, nine women were elected to leadership positions in nine unions/cooperatives serving independent waste collectors (IWCs), increasing IWC management posts held by women from 0 to 22 percent.

MWRP's local systems approach reduces plastic pollution while effectively managing costs. The Da Nang local government estimates it **saves USD 4.73 per cubic meter of waste** in reduced haulage and landfill costs, amounting to **USD 88,000 in savings each year**. In Nam Dinh, bamboo waste traps provide a low-cost solution to solid waste capture in rivers.

**Developing Effective Policies:** MWRP's work in Da Nang has significantly impacted local and national policies. According to a local official, "Da Nang was the most polluted port in this region in Vietnam. Now, fishing crews understand they should not pollute the seas." MWRP's support, through 10,730 hours of technical assistance across Vietnam, has led to 12 new laws, policies, plans, and regulations that **informed the country's new national action plan for ocean debris management**.

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