



PARTNERING WITH CITIES TO REDUCE OCEAN PLASTICS

THE MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM | PHILIPPINES

To clean up **Manila Bay**, MWRP collects data on plastic waste flow and circularity, expands recycling and consumer awareness in 50+ shopping malls, and improves SWM among 23,000 households in informal settlements.

In **Batangas City**, MWRP expands the zero-waste model in 30 neighborhoods.

MANILA ★

In **Puerto Princesa**, MWRP improves SWM and scales up recycling around marine protected areas.

In **Bacolod and Negros Island**, MWRP promotes zero-waste convenience stores.

THE CHALLENGE

Keeping waste out of the ocean is a challenge in the Philippines because much of the country's solid waste ends up in open dumping sites, allowing leakage into waterways. The Philippines—made up of over 7,000 islands and home to 106 million people—is the world's third largest marine plastic polluter, contributing up to 750,000 metric tons annually.¹

Currently, less than a third of Metro Manila's *barangays*² effectively implement a solid waste management (SWM) system that includes segregation at source. This challenge leads to mismanaged plastic waste and threatens livelihoods in tourism and fishing.

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT APPROACH

The 2018 Save our Seas Act encourages U.S. agencies to work with countries that discharge the largest amounts of solid waste into the ocean. Stopping pollution at the source is the most effective way to diminish the impact of plastic waste pollution on national and global economies.

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

IMPACTS OF MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM IN THE PHILIPPINES

With an investment of \$1.4 million from USAID, grantees improve SWM services and promote better household-level waste management practices among 1.3 million residents across 16 cities.

The MWRP and its grantees reduce ocean plastics through:

Supporting the Cleanup of Manila Bay: The Government of the Philippines has prioritized cleaning Manila Bay and needs reliable information and data on the bay to facilitate improved policymaking and planning of solid waste management and recycling programs. One of the MWRP grantees, University of Georgia, led by the renowned environmental engineer Dr. Jenna Jambeck, is working with the national government, local universities, and the private sector to generate reliable data using specialized tools, such as a Circularity Assessment Protocol on the origin and volume of plastic waste leaking into the bay. MWRP's grantees also support the operations of waste collectors in Metro Manila. The Program successfully organized waste collectors into **30 recycling enterprises** and facilitated their acceptance by city authorities. Another important way MWRP grantees are advancing efforts to clean up the bay is by fostering changes in waste management through informational outreach in shopping malls on reducing the use of plastic bags and waste segregation.

Partnering with the Private Sector to Achieve Impact: The Philippines is known in the region for its large shopping malls. SM Supermalls (SM) owns and operates 74 malls nationwide that welcome 4.3 million visitors a day and, through social media, reach an additional 4 million people. MWRP's grantee is partnering with SM to carry out information and communication initiatives in 50 malls around Manila Bay. Through exhibits, movies, and social media, potentially millions of mall tenants and customers are learning about the issue of mismanaged plastic waste. The country's shopping malls also generate large amounts of low-value residual plastic waste, a significant amount of which ends up in bodies of water such as Manila Bay. For that reason, another of MWRP's grantees is partnering with the national Robinsons Malls chain to specifically improve waste management in their shopping malls and to link the collected residual plastic waste to a specialized recycling facility.

Introducing Innovative Delivery and Scaling Up of Zero-Waste Approaches: The Philippines has successfully tested the zero-waste model in a number of cities. The approach emphasizes responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of materials to reduce the amount of waste that is incinerated, sent to landfills, or discharged into the marine environment. In Batangas City, MWRP's grantee is helping households who have no access to waste collection services to adopt this model instead of illegally dumping and burning



PHOTO: USAID/PHILIPPINES

The Wala-Usik Sari-Sari Store is open for business in Negros Occidental.

“I love this idea. I want a wala usik (zero-waste) sari-sari store in the center of Sipalay City.”

- Maria Gina M. Lizares, Vice Mayor of Sipalay City

trash, as is often the case. Using the zero-waste approach, residents in 30 Batangas neighborhoods have significantly reduced the amount of waste they produce. Convenience stores are another source of mismanaged plastic waste. Across the Philippines, these shops (known as sari-sari stores) are ubiquitous in every community. In Bacolod City and nearby towns, MWRP's grantee is reducing plastic packaging from consumer products by establishing eight **zero-waste convenience stores** (*Wala Usik* - “Nothing Wasted” - in the local language) where consumers buy bulk products utilizing their own reusable containers.

Developing Effective Policies and Infrastructure: Effective policies are fundamental to sustaining initiatives after project conclusion. In Puerto Princesa and Metro Manila, local authorities serving **232,600 residents in twelve poor barangays** have now implemented, with MWRP support, solid waste management plans to strengthen waste collection and increase plastic recycling. As a result of these improved policies and plans, 10,000 households are now segregating waste at source. In Manila's Barangay Baseco (population **60,000**), MWRP's grantee is coordinating with the Government of the Philippines, the Coca-Cola Foundation, and residents to build two materials recovery facilities to expand 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

2. Smallest administrative division in the Philippines, equivalent to neighborhoods in metropolitan areas.