



REDUCING MISMANAGED PLASTIC WASTE BY ORGANIZING INDEPENDENT WASTE COLLECTORS

Independent waste collectors (IWC) are entrepreneurs who play a key role in addressing limitations of the government-run solid waste management (SWM) system in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) – home to ~13 million people. The IWCs collect recyclable materials from narrowly built, otherwise inaccessible neighborhoods to minimize the volume of recyclable waste going to landfills. These activities are critical to reducing the overall cost of waste collection for municipal governments, yet IWCs have minimal access to protective gear and services, such as health care.

BUILDING STRONGER INDEPENDENT WASTE COLLECTOR COOPERATIVES

USAID’s Municipal Waste Recycling Program strengthens SWM by supporting IWC cooperatives with skills training and the development of inter-cooperative networks for more effective government advocacy, under a project grant with *Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde* (ENDA). Cooperatives serve a majority of waste collectors and are recognized by local government authorities as legitimate counterparts, making cooperatives a key platform for facilitating efforts to gain more secure livelihoods.

ADVOCATING FOR HEALTHIER LIVELIHOODS

ENDA’s project directly benefits more than 1.5 million people and supports 1,948 IWCs (about 46% of the city’s waste collector population) with protective gear and accident insurance, and advocates on behalf of all 4,200 IWCs in HCMC for higher salaries, access to health insurance, and city acceptance of the motorized tricycles IWCs use for transportation. ENDA also reduces stress on the city’s waste management system, by helping 33,111 households and establishments start segregating their waste. By formalizing the linkages in the plastic value chain between IWCs, local and national level buyers, and local governments, ENDA has redirected 834 metric tons of plastic waste from disposal in the ocean.

HIGHLIGHTS TO DATE

- 815 Independent Waste Collectors have gained access to **health care**.
- 1,948 Independent Waste Collectors acquired **occupational health gear, accident insurance, and safety training**.
- 8,700 community members participated in more than 28,100 hours of awareness raising activities about **waste separation, and the health and environmental effects of ocean plastics**.
- ENDA’s sustained advocacy and more than 7,200 hours of technical assistance to local governments contributed to the passage of **two milestone Solid Waste Management ordinances**:
 1. Decision 44/2018 – **Waste segregation at household level is now mandatory**. Independent waste collectors can report households who do not segregate their waste, resulting in fines of up to \$800.
 2. Decision 38/2018 – **Independent waste collector fees paid by households doubled** from \$1 per month to \$2 per month, **increasing monthly income by about 65%** as compared to 2017.

PROJECT: Towards Higher Effectiveness for Informal Sector Waste Pickers in Plastic Waste Recycling

DURATION: October 1, 2017 – June 30, 2020 | **IMPLEMENTER:** Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde (ENDA)

LOCATION: Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam | **BUDGET:** \$243,527