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CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN PHILIPPINES

KEY FACTS

3rd largest contributor to global ocean plastic pollution

Generates an estimated **2.7** million tons of plastic waste each year

Approximately **20%** of plastic waste in the Philippines leaks into the ocean

THE CHALLENGE

In the waters around the more than 7,500 islands of the Philippines, large amounts of plastics are being leaked each day, driven by rising consumer consumption, dependencies on single-use plastics, and ineffective waste management systems. The Philippines estimates that 74% of this leakage is from waste that has already been collected—a strong indication that local, systemic change is needed to change the ways in which waste is being generated, managed, and treated long term.

National laws, such as the Republic Act (RA) 9003/ Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, and local regulations around solid waste management have been in place in the Philippines for many years. However, local government units that are responsible for waste management face inadequate financial resources, limited capacities for enforcement, and low public awareness of the harmful impacts of plastics in the environment. Across the Philippines, its more than 42,000 local villages and districts, called barangays, struggle to keep pace with the volumes of waste being generated, including the more than 163 million single-use plastic “sachets” that are used each day for common consumer goods. **More sustainable production and consumption habits, enhanced infrastructure, and alternative markets for recycled and reusable products are critical** if the Philippines is to implement the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) and a more robust waste collection, recycling, and disposal system for healthier cities and seas.

USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean’s (CCBO) engagement in the Philippines comes at a pivotal time for progress on plastic pollution. In many cities, communities have begun

to take action as plastic pollution has become one of the top priorities for governmental and grassroots efforts. With increased, coordinated efforts among government, private sector, and local communities, the Philippines can achieve meaningful, sustainable impacts.

OUR APPROACH

To address these challenges, USAID’s (CCBO) program offers **state-of-the-art international technical expertise** and **sustainable, locally-led solutions through its local grants program**. CCBO seeks to develop, test, and implement new models that promote the 3Rs and enhance solid waste management (SWM); facilitate partnerships and investment around key needs, such as infrastructure; and strengthen local systems to build the Philippines’ resiliency and self-reliance. Where possible, CCBO seeks to learn from and expand on the success of proven initiatives by local government, non-governmental organizations, and the USAID Municipal Waste and Recycling Program.

CCBO’s four, guiding objectives are to:

- **Promote 3R practices and strengthen local and regional markets** for recycled plastics;
- **Build social and behavior change** for 3R’s and sustainable SWM;
- **Increase capacity and effective governance** for SWM and recycling systems; and
- **Facilitate public-private partnerships** and multi-stakeholder alliances to bolster the program’s impact, scalability, and sustainability.

Informal waste collectors (IWCs), of which a large portion are women, play a significant role in SWM in the Philippines. Through waste collection and sorting, they divert waste away from landfills and contribute to communities’ local economies, public health and safety, and environments. Despite their critical roles, they are commonly underrepresented, face poor working conditions and social stigmas, and women working in the sector earn far less than their male counterparts. Across its approach and activities, CCBO works to support and enhance the livelihoods of IWCs, as well as

advance women's economic empowerment as part of the Women's Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative by improving social and economic conditions that impede women's ability to work successfully in SWM and recycling jobs.

ENGAGEMENT SITES

In the Philippines, CCBO is piloting solutions to stop the flow of plastic pollution to the waters within and surrounding the country, including Manila Bay and the Philippine, Sulu, Celebes, and West Philippine Sea, through work in:

- **Las Piñas City** - A rapidly urbanizing residential-commercial center located in Metro Manila along the coast of Manila Bay, which is now known as one of the most polluted bays in the world and a priority cleanup site for the Philippines government.
- **Batangas City** - A coastal city on the island of Luzon that stands as a significant center for marine biodiversity and tourism.
- **Iloilo City** - A highly urbanized city on the southeastern tip of Panay island that is a rapidly developing tourist hub, biologically significant marine area, and aspiring leader of clean, sustainable Philippine cities.

ACTIVITIES

CCBO will help partners in its engagement sites to design and implement holistic strategies that address each step in the waste value chain—from production to its end use—prioritizing the most inclusive, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable solutions. In the first year of the project, CCBO will:

- Conduct critical **site-level research** to understand engagement sites' specific challenges in SWM and enforcement, behavior change, and barriers to private sector investment;
- **Award grants** to local partners to begin implementing effective, locally-led solutions to achieve program objectives; and
- Provide **additional technical assistance and capacity building** support using international and local program staff.



CCBO works to improve conditions that impede women's ability to work in SWM jobs. Credit: MWRPI Ouie Sanchez

ABOUT CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN

USAID's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean is a five-year global program (2019-2024) to combat ocean plastic pollution. CCBO is the Agency's flagship program on ocean plastic pollution, working at the global level and in specific, rapidly urbanizing focal countries to target ocean plastics directly at their source. The program is implemented by Tetra Tech, in partnership with a consortium of organizations that include the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), The Manoff Group, and Ocean Conservancy. Other partners include national and local government, members of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and local women's and youth organizations.

Sources:

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McKinsey & Company and Ocean Conservancy, *Stemming the Tide: Land-based Strategies for a Plastic-Free Ocean*, 2015.



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