



USAID
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FROM CITY TO SEA: STOPPING OCEAN PLASTIC POLLUTION

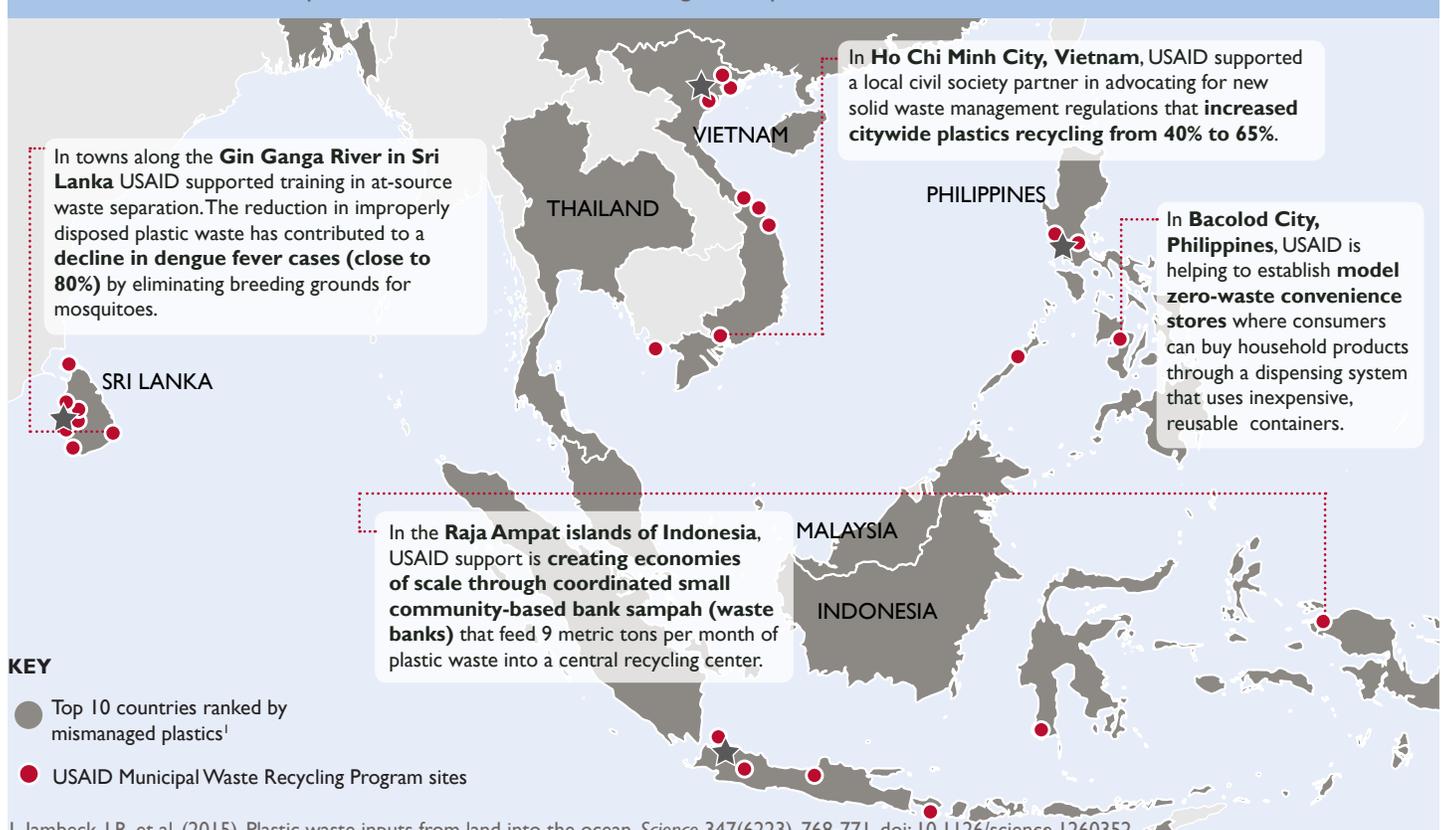
Ocean plastic pollution has reached a crisis level, threatening the world’s delicate marine ecosystems, major industries such as fishing and tourism, food security, and ultimately human health. Every minute, the equivalent of an entire garbage truck of plastic makes its way into the world’s oceans—roughly eight million tons annually. By 2050, there may be more plastic in the oceans than fish by weight.

USAID’S APPROACH TO REDUCING OCEAN PLASTICS

Stopping plastic pollution at the source is the most effective way to address this challenge. The majority of plastic ocean debris comes from rapidly urbanizing coastal cities in the developing world—where waste management systems, infrastructure, and governments struggle to keep pace with growing populations and increasing amounts of trash.

The 2018 Save our Seas Act encourages U.S. agencies to work with countries that discharge the largest amounts of solid waste into our oceans. In response, USAID is leveraging its extensive networks, expertise, and experience across the developing world to improve waste management and plastic recycling in cities in key countries that are among the largest contributors to the problem. USAID uses a collaborative, cross-sectoral approach in working with cities and local governments, promotes locally-led solutions, and engages the private sector in addressing the plastic waste challenge.

Examples of USAID’s work on addressing ocean plastic waste in South and Southeast Asia.



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

A FOCUS ON CITIES AND LOCAL SYSTEMS

Waste management is typically the responsibility of local governments. Solving the problem of ocean plastics requires strengthening local waste management and recycling systems. USAID builds the capacity of local governments who need to promote 3Rs—reducing, reusing, and recycling—while better monitoring and managing their solid waste. USAID also improves collaboration among the local actors responsible for waste management and recycling. USAID supports training independent waste collectors and connects them to the recycling value chain, and engages community-based organizations, women’s organizations, schools, and small businesses who are instrumental in creating behavior change.

PARTNERING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector is involved in all stages of waste generation, collection and processing so they are a key stakeholder in reducing and better managing plastic waste. Waste management solutions offer tremendous potential for innovation, economic growth, and job creation. Recognizing this opportunity, USAID partners with the private sector to identify market-driven solutions to strengthen the plastics recycling industry value chain while empowering women and youth, building social inclusion, and strengthening resilience.

MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM

USAID’s five-year (2016-2021) Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP) reduces land-based sources of ocean plastic waste in four of the top five contributing countries—Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Through MWRP, USAID provides 30 grants and technical assistance to a variety of local actors, such as NGOs and recycling entrepreneurs, for innovative, local, and sustainable solutions to improve solid waste management and waste recycling efforts in and around targeted cities. As a result, people across the four countries are benefiting from cleaner and healthier cities with improved waste management services. Having recognized their effectiveness, local governments plan to extend and replicate these approaches.

PARTNERSHIP WITH CIRCULATE CAPITAL

In June 2019, USAID launched an agreement leveraging more than \$100 million in a private-sector investment strategy managed by Circulate Capital and funded by multinational companies, including PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, Dow, Danone, Unilever, and Coca-Cola. USAID provides a \$35 million, 50 percent loan-portfolio guarantee through the Development Credit Authority (DCA), which will be used



PHOTO: NGUYEN MINH DUC FOR USAID

In Ho Chi Minh City, USAID provides independent waste collectors, including Pham Thi Thanh Ngoc and her husband Nguyen Thanh Liem, with support and training. The couple now recycle 360 kilos of waste per month—about one-third of it plastic. Recycling provides the couple with approximately \$53 net per month—12% of their monthly income of \$436.

“Before the training sessions, I just knew that plastic bags did not decompose – now I know how clearly they destroy the environment. Now, I collect it, sell it to junk-shops and get income as well.”

- Pham Thi Thanh Ngoc

to incentivize private capital investment in the recycling value chain in South and Southeast Asia.

Circulate Capital will make loans to recycling companies and other entities in the recycling value chain working to reduce improperly disposed municipal solid waste and encourage new investment in the sector. At least 50 percent of the total facility must be used for loans in the four countries that align with USAID’s MWRP (Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam and Sri Lanka).

CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN PROGRAM

In August 2019, USAID awarded Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) - the Agency’s global flagship program for combating ocean plastics pollution. With an investment of \$48 million, CCBO is global in scope, with an initial focus on key countries in Asia and Latin America. CCBO will build capacity and commitment for the 3Rs—reduce, reuse, and recycle—and improved solid waste management in areas that are at the heart of the global plastic pollution crisis. Partnership with the private sector at all levels is central to CCBO as an effective way to create sustainable change.

For more information, contact oceanplastics@usaid.gov