

CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN

FACT SHEET — MALDIVES

As an island nation, the Maldives faces a unique set of challenges in managing a rapidly growing volume of waste across its more than 1,200 islands. The country's dispersed geography, limited land for waste storage, its densely populated capital city, and a host of other unique challenges require the Maldives to develop a solid waste management system and circular economy that can help the country more sustainably manage its waste, as well as the marine debris generated from other countries that is carried in by currents.

The Maldives' total land area (115 sq mi) makes it the smallest country in Asia and also one of the most geographically dispersed. This dispersion has proven challenging for solid waste management; models deployed range from central and regional waste management dump sites to hybrid systems for resorts, to informal practices for local communities.

From 2019-2023, USAID's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean program piloted new, coordinated systems to address the Maldives' waste management challenges and reduce the flow of plastics into our oceans.

- Baa Atoll** is a UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve, revered for its marine biodiversity. Here, USAID worked with local partners to strengthen the island's waste management system by: increasing recycling rates through a new system for regular plastic collection and compacting stations; improving waste collection services and opportunities for women to earn additional income by engaging with Women's Development Committees; and promoting reuse and reduction of waste amongst local households, guesthouses, and cafes. Grantee, Soneva Namoonaa, also worked with the local Atoll Council to audit current waste management systems, address system gaps, and pilot an island waste management model that can be replicated across Baa Atoll and other island communities.
- Greater Malé's** residents generate more than twice the amount of waste of those on the nation's other natively inhabited islands. USAID worked with local partners in **Hulhumalé**, an island in North Malé Atoll, to develop an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan and build capacity for its implementation, including funding, social and behavior change, and gender equality components. Program grantee the Small Island Geographic Society worked with local businesses, residents, and policy makers to pilot and advance single-use plastics alternatives in support of the Maldives' target to phase out single-use plastics in 2023.

Program Impacts

180+ metric tons of waste safely managed

25+ metric tons of plastic prevented from leaking into the environment—the equivalent of nearly 2.8 million plastic bottles

412,000+ individuals with improved solid waste management services



Photo: Soneva Namoonaa for USAID Clean Cities, Blue Ocean / Maldives

Details on program activities, implementing partners, and grantees can be found on the program website, listed below.

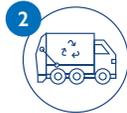
Our Local Systems Approach

In the Maldives, USAID designed and implemented holistic strategies to address each step in the waste value chain—from production to end use—prioritizing the most inclusive, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable solutions. The program leveraged local, national, and international technical expertise, paired with its grants program to test, scale, and share locally-led, innovative, and proven solutions.

USAID's Five Building Blocks for Reduced Ocean Plastic Pollution:



Data-driven policies for circularity



Effective solid waste services and investment



Green jobs and local innovations



Sustained behavior change to reduce single-use plastics



An inclusive, just, and equitable system

Impacts and Results

In the Maldives, program impacts include:



Over **180 metric tons of waste safely managed** through program technical assistance and grantee activities, with nearly half recovered or diverted from disposal. Of this, **over 25 metric tons of plastic and other low-value waste**—the equivalent of nearly **2.8 million plastic bottles**—were prevented from leaking into the environment.



Over **460 individuals (63% women) trained** from local government, informal waste sector, and local organizations to build local capacity for solid waste management planning and programs.



More than **412,000 individuals with improved solid waste management services**, including through new programs like regular plastic waste collection and strengthened capacity of waste management organizations.



5 new solid waste management policies supported to update island waste management plans and support the phase-out of single-use plastics.

About CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN

Clean Cities, Blue Ocean is USAID's flagship program to combat ocean plastic pollution under the Save our Seas Initiative. The five-year (2019-2024), \$53 million program works at the global level and in specific, rapidly urbanizing focal countries to target ocean plastics directly at their source. By strengthening waste management and advancing or building circular economies, city by city, USAID builds sustainable solutions that reduce ocean plastics while empowering vulnerable populations and mitigating pollution that affects human health and our climate. The program is implemented by Tetra Tech, in partnership with a consortium of organizations that include the International City/County Management Association and The Manoff Group. Other partners include national and local government, members of the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and local women's and youth organizations.

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