



USAID
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CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN

MALDIVES



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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, although it is one of the most geographically dispersed countries in the world. This dispersion has proven to be extremely challenging for solid waste management and has led to a number of models being deployed that range from central and regional waste management dump sites, hybrid systems for resorts, and a series of informal practices for local communities. While some have operated with success, USAID's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO) program is piloting solutions to build coordinated systems to avert irreversible damage to our oceans, reduce plastic and waste-linked contributions to the climate crisis, and advance other priority development objectives.

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

COUNTRY STATS

Over **750** metric tons of waste generated each day

280,000 plastic bottles used per day in Malé alone

104 million plastic bags imported each year



Baa Atoll is a UNESCO-designated Biosphere Reserve, revered for its marine biodiversity. Here, USAID is working with local partners to strengthen the island's waste management system by creating a system for regular plastic collection, engaging with Women's Development Committees to increase opportunities for additional income through new and improved waste collection services, increasing recycling rates through the development of compacting stations, and promoting reuse and reduction of waste by local households, guesthouses, and cafes.

Malé's residents generate more than twice the amount of waste of those on the nation's other natively-inhabited islands, with much of the waste sent to Thilafushi landfill—a former lagoon that is now known as "Rubbish Island." In Malé, USAID is working with local partners to promote more sustainable household waste practices that reduce the use of single-use plastics and aim for plastic-free lifestyles.



OUR LOCAL SYSTEMS APPROACH

In the Maldives, USAID is designing and implementing holistic strategies that 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 leverages local, national, and international technical expertise, paired with its grants program to test, scale, and share locally-led, innovative, and proven solutions. Where possible, the program learns from and expands upon the success of proven initiatives by local government and non-governmental organizations.

The program's work supports **USAID's Five Building Blocks for Reduced Ocean Plastic Pollution:**



1. **Data-driven policies for circularity**



2. **Effective solid waste services and investment**



3. **Green jobs and local innovations**



4. **Sustained behavior change to reduce single-use plastics**



5. **An inclusive, just, and equitable system**

IMPACTS AND RESULTS

In the Maldives, program impacts (to date) include:



Over **60 metric tons** of waste safely managed through program technical assistance and grantee activities, with nearly half recovered or diverted from disposal.



Over **400 individuals** trained from local government, informal waste sector, and local organizations to build local capacity for solid waste management planning and programs.



More than **425 households** in the islands of Kendhoo, Kudarikilu, Kamadhoo, and Dhonadu with improved solid waste management services through new regular plastic collection services, improved knowledge around household waste collection and the 3Rs, and partnerships with local governments.

ABOUT CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN

Clean Cities, Blue Ocean is USAID's flagship program to combat ocean plastic pollution. 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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