

CLEAN CITIES, BLUE OCEAN

FACT SHEET — SRI LANKA

As a densely populated island nation of over 23 million (2023), Sri Lanka faces unique challenges in managing its solid waste. Over the last decades, waste management systems in the country have struggled to keep pace as urban populations have grown, while local government resources have remained static. A 2020 report estimated that, across the country, only 20% of households had access to public waste collection services, while 47% burned their waste, 23% disposed of it in their communities or natural environments, and about 8% practiced backyard composting for organic waste. From 2019-2024, USAID's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean program piloted solutions in Sri Lanka to build coordinated waste management systems with increased local government capacity to reduce ocean plastic pollution.

At the national level, USAID supported Sri Lanka's national government to build a more sustainable, circular economy that fully engages the private sector as key players in the fight against ocean plastic pollution through Extended Producer Responsibility legislation. USAID also piloted solutions in the following three engagement sites:

- In **Colombo**, USAID partnered with leading companies to reduce their plastic footprint; engaged local and national government authorities to design and launch three plastic recovery centers in the Kaduwela Municipal Council; and strengthened the local authority over the management of plastic waste.
- In **Galle**, USAID partnered with local grantees to improve solid waste management planning to move the city towards a circular economy—including, developing an Integrated Solid Waste Management Action Plan that formalizes the role of the informal waste collector and the services they provide—as well as improving waste services, like waste collection, and critical waste facilities, including Material Recovery Centers.

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

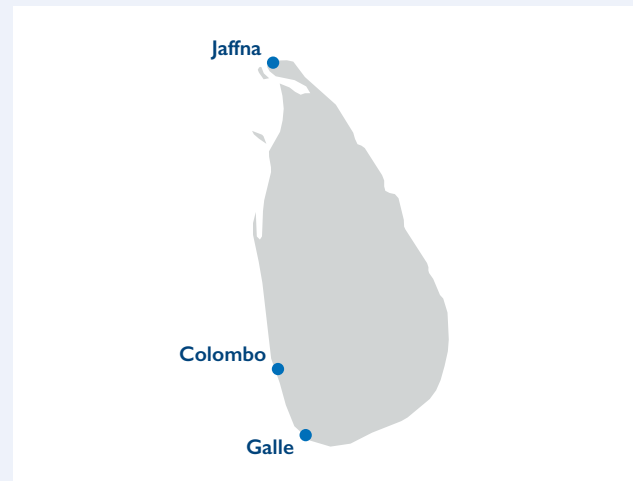


Program Impacts

13,500+ metric tons of waste safely managed

4,600 metric tons of plastic prevented from leaking into the environment—the equivalent of nearly half a billion plastic bottles

830,000+ individuals with improved solid waste services



- In **Jaffna**, USAID worked with local grantees to improve recycling rates across the district, strengthened logistics for collecting and processing the recycled waste, and built the capacity of local authorities to manage the resulting increased volume of recyclables.

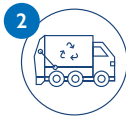
Our Local Systems Approach

In Sri Lanka, USAID designed and implemented 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 leveraged local, national, and international technical expertise, paired with its grants program to test, scale, and share locally-led, innovative, and proven solutions.

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 Sri Lanka, program impacts include:



Over **13,500 metric tons of waste (including 4,600 metric tons of plastic—the equivalent of nearly half a billion plastic bottles) safely managed** and prevented from entering into drainage canals, rivers, streams—and ultimately the ocean.



Over **4,600 people** trained from local government, informal waste sector, and local organizations to build local capacity for solid waste management planning and programs, representing 215 entities (130+ micro-enterprises).



Over **830,000 people benefiting from improved solid waste services** or programs through government entities, local organizations, and businesses.



Eighteen innovations developed to improve waste collection, management, and policy—including Sri Lanka's first Extended Producer Responsibility system and supporting online reporting platform to track private sector production and recovery.



Over **\$1.2 million in grant funding and in-kind support awarded** to local organizations and governments to implement effective, locally-led solutions.

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.

Contacts

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