



'Rethinking Plastics – Circular Economy Solutions to Marine Litter' in Vietnam

Marine litter – a growing global challenge

Driven by rapid urbanisation, economic development and changing consumption and production patterns, the amount of **single-use packaging** is rapidly increasing worldwide. At the same time, **waste management systems** still lack effectiveness in terms of environmentally sound collection, sorting, recycling, energy recovery and disposal of packaging waste.

These trends significantly contribute to a **rise of marine litter** – a threat to marine ecosystems, fisheries, and human health as well as the tourism sector. About 60 to 90% of marine litter consists of plastic with data from 2010 suggesting that between 5 to 13 million tons of plastic waste find their way into the sea every year.

Joining efforts for a circular economy

Governments, businesses, academia, civil society and consumers increasingly recognise the **need for action**. **Initiatives** have emerged to reduce plastic leakage into the ocean and to support a circular economy for plastics, for instance, at the level of the **G20** and the **UN**, by the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** and in the **EU** with, amongst others, the European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy and the new Circular Economy Action Plan as part of the European Green Deal. Continuous exchange and deepened cooperation between the EU and partner countries in East and Southeast Asia thus provide mutual opportunities, especially as **East and Southeast Asia** belongs to the major hotspot regions worldwide for plastic waste leakage into the ocean and its potential impacts on biodiversity.

Objectives and areas of action in Vietnam

The project '**Rethinking Plastics – Circular Economy Solutions to Marine Litter**', co-funded by the European Union and the German Government, supports a transition towards sustainable consumption and production of plastics in East and Southeast Asia. With these efforts, it contributes to a significant reduction of marine litter and also strengthens the cooperation between the EU and countries in the region.

In **Vietnam**, Expertise France implements the project in **close collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)** who has developed a National Action Plan (NAP) on Marine Plastic Debris Management and has revised the National Law on Environmental Protection (LEP), approved by the National Assembly in November 2020. The project is active in the following areas in **Vietnam**:

1) **Enhancing policy dialogues** between the EU and Vietnam as well as with regional organisations and the other partner countries concerning circular economy, plastic production and management

2) **Management of plastic waste**: Jointly with MONRE, the project is developing several activities to foster exchange and support policy development, e.g. on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) with a Policy Brief on EPR in the packaging sector and an EPR handbook for packaging for public authorities, the private sector and civil society. It also assesses the role of the informal sector in Vietnam (e.g. in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Vinh, Nha Trang, Danang and Buon Ma Thuot).

3) **Sustainable consumption and production of plastic**: Exchanges and activities include, for example, reducing single-use plastic bags in supermarkets, design for reuse and recyclability, alternatives to plastics, standards for plastic bags and waste recycling as well as sustainable production for recycling enterprises

4) **Reduction of litter from sea-based sources**, for example through improved ship waste management with port reception facilities for waste from ships and the test of fishing-for-litter schemes with the fisheries sector

5) **Increasing awareness** of public authorities, the private sector, citizens and school children about sustainable consumption and production of plastic and the impacts of littering on the environment

The project provides support and advice to its political partners, implements joint activities, and supports in total four pilot projects in Vietnam to test new approaches or up-scale best practices for plastic waste management, sustainable consumption and production of plastic and litter reduction from sea-based sources. Knowledge exchange is further stimulated, for example, through workshops and conferences, webinars, training courses and study trips.

'Rethinking Plastics' – Key Facts

Partner countries: China, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

Duration: May 2019 to April 2022

Regional Budget: 10 million EUR

Commissioned by: European Union (EU), German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Implemented by: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, Expertise France (EF)

Web: beatplasticpollution.eu/rethinking-plastics



Co-funded by the European Union



Implemented by



VIETNAM – Plastic Waste Management Pilot Project: Enhancing plastic packaging collection, sorting and recycling

The context

Vietnam is currently facing an increasing production and consumption of plastics, especially in the packaging sector and more and more concerns arise related to plastic waste management. The solid waste management is fragmented into six ministries and regulated through different legislations, including the National Law on Environmental Protection (LEP). The review includes approaches such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging, in which companies that put packaged products on the market assume responsibility for their collection, sorting and recycling. In Ho Chi Minh City with its 8.6 million inhabitants, 9.100 tons of domestic solid waste are collected per day based on 2017 data. Waste management in the city is a complex, fragmented system, which involves heterogenous actors from the public and private sector. Knowledge and available data on the formal and informal sector organisation, effective sorting and recycling are still limited.

To test new approaches and up-scale best practices, the 'Rethinking Plastics – Circular Economy Solutions to Marine Litter' project, funded by the European Union and the German Government, provides financial support to a pilot project on plastic waste management in Ho Chi Minh City.

Objectives and approach

The pilot, implemented by IRD and HAU, aims to **increase the collection, sorting and recycling of plastic packaging in Ho Chi Minh City to reduce its environmental leakage**. To reach this objective, it works on determining how much and what kind of plastic is

collected, how and by whom it is transferred and processed or when it is leaked into the environment. Finally, it assesses if and how the plastic waste is recycled and what would be needed to enhance recycling. In addition, the project investigates how segregation at household level can be improved. A better cooperation between public and private stakeholders and the formal and informal sector will enhance the understanding of the plastic value chain and related data. Involved stakeholders therefore include producers and consumers, as well as collectors, businesses, transporters of packaging and recyclers. With these data and experiences, the pilot project can also contribute knowledge about suitable options for the development of a legal framework for EPR for packaging in Vietnam.

The pilot project focusses on **(1) Creating a guideline** dedicated to classify and measure plastic packaging collection and recycling in rural and urban areas; **(2) Improving waste sorting at source** by consumers; **(3) defining best practices for plastic packaging**.

Planned activities

The activities are conducted in pilot sites at ward level of an urban district, a peri-urban district, and a rural district in Ho Chi Minh City. In each site, the project collects data on plastic packaging waste, e.g. through a smartphone app. It evaluates and maps the stakeholders involved in plastic collection, sorting and recycling and works on improving the sorting at source on household level. The knowledge and awareness of consumers is enhanced through information and cooperation with local organisations. Workshops will be organised to define what kind of logistic structure would in addition be supportive. Furthermore, the pilot project will identify and assess the packaging, which is not yet sorted and collected, to introduce new plastic packaging solutions with a better value and a higher recyclability.

Location: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Title: Enhancing the plastic packaging collection, sorting, recycling by both formal and informal sector

Implementing organisation: Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)

Further project partner: Hanoi Architectural University (HAU)

Project start: September 2020

Project duration: 18 months

Budget: 165.000 EUR

More information: www.ird.fr/vietnam



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