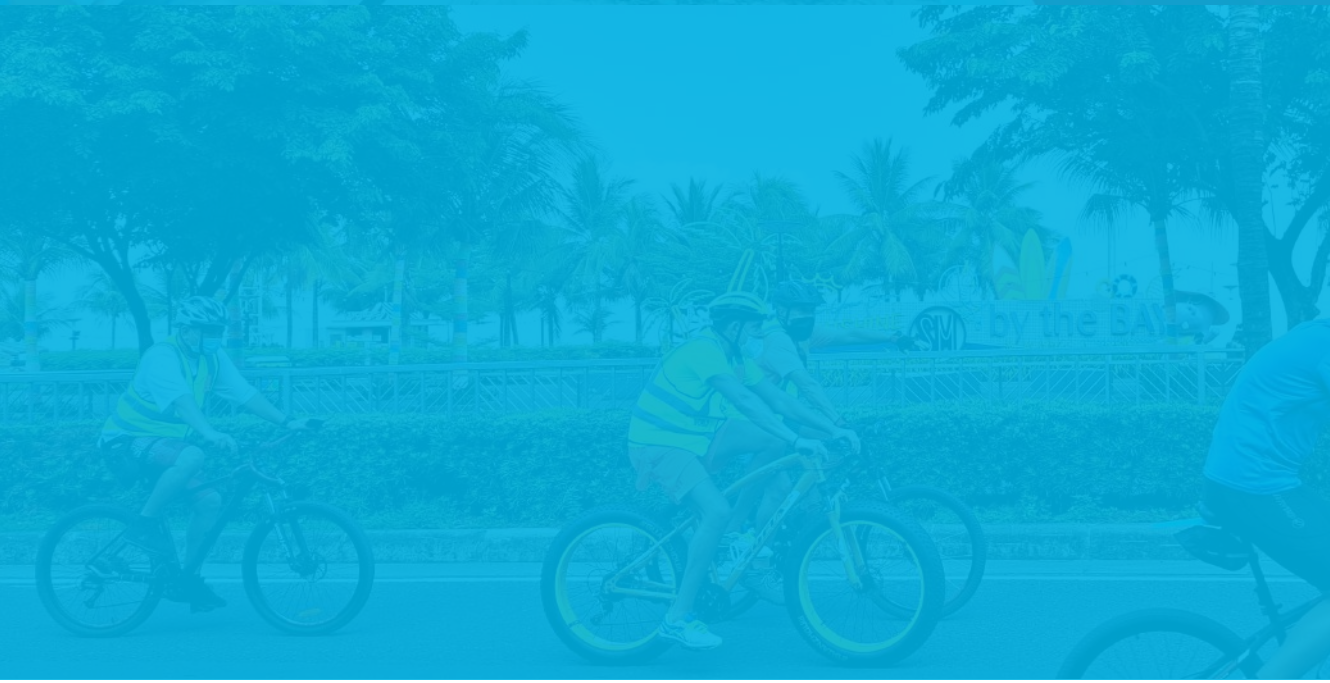




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UN-Habitat Philippines Country Report 2023



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Aerial shot of Ormoc City. | City Government of Ormoc

01

Urban Context and Challenges

The Philippines was among the fastest growing economies in Southeast Asia for nearly two decades prior to COVID-19. This enabled the country to significantly reduce poverty and improve living conditions. The pandemic, however, led to economic contraction and increased unemployment, and exacerbated inequalities.

More than half of the 109 million Filipinos are living in urban areas; urban growth is concentrated in the 16 most populous cities.

With a population of 109 million, the Philippines is also rapidly urbanizing. The level of urbanization has been steadily increasing in the past decades, from 45.3% in 2010, to 51.2% in 2015, and 54% in 2020. Population is unequally distributed among urban areas, with urban growth concentrated in the top 16 populous cities.

The rapid rate of urbanization poses challenges in human settlements and urban development. Population growth results in uncontrolled urban expansion, thus straining resources and basic services within its peripheries. Housing needs is projected to increase from 6.5 million housing backlog in 2022 to 22 million by 2040. Informal settler families (ISFs) are estimated at 3.7 million, half a million of which are living in slums and high-risk areas in Metro Manila or National Capital Region. Inadequate infrastructure and service delivery such as water, sanitation, transportation, energy, and waste management are evident.

The Philippines is number 1 in the World Risk Index (WRI) 2022. The WRI measures countries' disaster risk from extreme natural events and the effects of climate change based on each nation's exposure to disasters such as storms, flooding, droughts, and sea level rise; and vulnerability—or its susceptibility, ability to cope, and ability to adapt to these events. Annually, an average of 22 tropical cyclones enters the Philippine Area of Responsibility of which around six or seven cause damage. From 2011 to 2018, the estimated cost of damages due to disaster is P388 billion. The country's archipelagic nature and geographic location have made it highly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

In addition, a 2021 study tagged the Philippines as the number one marine plastic-polluting country in the world with seven of its rivers identified in the top 10 most polluting sources. This is following a 2015 study that ranked the country third largest contributor of plastic pollution. This prompted the Philippine government to develop the National Plan of Action on Marine Litter, adopted in 2021 with an overall goal of "Zero Waste to Philippine Waters by 2040". In 2022, the country also enacted the Extended Producer Responsibility Act, which amends the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 and mandates obliged enterprises to be responsible for post-consumer waste.

Against the grim backdrop of unguided rapid urbanization, coupled with the impacts of climate change and COVID-19, opportunities are open for more sustainable development. In 2019, the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) was created, serving as the primary government entity responsible for the management of housing, human settlements, and urban development. The agency, with technical support from UN-Habitat, has led several policy initiatives including the National Urban Development and Housing Framework, National Housing and Urban Development Sector Plan 2040, and the Resilient and Green Human Settlements Framework.

Moreover, the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 highlights establishing livable communities by upgrading and planning human settlements, and accelerating climate action and strengthening disaster resilience among its key strategies. This track of the PDP opens more doors for cooperation and engagement with the Philippine government.



22

average number of tropical cyclones that enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility each year

Against the grim backdrop of unguided rapid urbanization, coupled with impacts of climate change and COVID-19, opportunities are open for more sustainable development.

AT A GLANCE



109,035,343
population as of 2020



7.6% gross domestic product full year growth in 2022



95.2% employment rate as of 2023



3.7 million
informal settlers families; half a million are in slums and high-risk areas

16 most populous cities where urban growth is concentrated

70% of cities and urban centers are located along the coasts



Number 1

country most affected by climate and conflict-related risks according to World Risk Index 2022

4th

among countries most affected by extreme weather events from 2000 to 2019

Php68.8 billion

cost of damage due to natural extreme events and disasters in 2021

Ranks as **TOP** global contributor of marine plastic litter according to various international studies



A coastal community in Legazpi City. October 2022. Legazpi City, Albay. [City Government of Legazpi]

02

Country Programme Portfolio

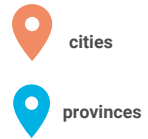
UN-Habitat supports partners in the Philippines by developing policies and technical capabilities, building capacities of national and local government, and piloting innovative approaches with communities and experts.

The country programme's 2023 portfolio includes projects on climate resiliency through risk-informed planning, building institutional and community resilience, and helping achieve climate and biodiversity targets; improved urban environment through marine plastic litter reduction; and post-disaster recovery for vulnerable populations.

Portfolio Summary

project	duration	funding agency	budget (USD)
Provincial Climate Risk Diagnostics (PCRD)	2022-2023	The World Bank	400,000
Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disasters and Climate Change in the Philippines (SHIELD)	2022-2027	Australian Embassy in the Philippines	1,300,000
Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND)	2023 (Phase 1: project preparation), 2023-2029 (Phase 2: implementation)	German government's International Climate Initiative (IKI)	4,000,000
Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities Initiative (HOCCI)	2020-2023	Government of Japan	3,000,000
Supporting Blue-Green Recovery, Strengthening Resilience and Promoting Sustainable Growth in Philippine cities and communities through Nature-based Solutions and Circular Economy	2023-2024	Government of Spain through Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)	400,000
Total portfolio budget			9,100,000

UN-Habitat works with seven cities, 17 provinces, and two regions including the National Capital Region and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao



Under its climate resiliency program are three projects, the Provincial Climate Risk Diagnostic (PCRD) Project, Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disasters and Climate Change in the Philippines (SHIELD) and Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND).

PCRD seeks to develop a comprehensive, robust, and accessible data repository and analytics application for provincial local government units to aid in risk-informed planning, decision-making, and investment programming. PCRD supports the continued work of the national government's Risk Resiliency Program (RRP), led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). UN-Habitat in partnership with the DENR and funded by the World Bank under the "Accelerating Climate Investment in the Philippines" component of the RRP, developed the PCRD Tool and piloted its use in the provinces of Bukidnon and Southern Leyte.





PCRD workshop for SHIELD. March 2023, Northern Samar. [UN-Habitat]

Meanwhile, SHIELD aims to support the Philippine government in building institutional and community resilience to climate change and all types of hazards.

The 6-year program (2022-2027) is funded by the Australian Embassy in the Philippines and implemented by the United Nations Development Program and the Department of the Interior and Local Government, with consortium partners including UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat leads the efforts in working with provinces in preparing risk and resilience-informed plans, investment programs, finance accessing, and technical support to national government agencies in harmonizing procedures and requirements for local resilience planning.

TRANSCEND, on the other hand, aims to support the Philippines in achieving its Nationally Determined Contributions and post-2020 Biodiversity Framework targets.

The project is funded by the German government's International Climate Initiative (IKI) and is implemented by a consortium led by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). As a consortium member, UN-Habitat leads one of the four project outcome areas which is on ecosystem-based adaptation, leveraging its experience and knowledge from other climate resiliency projects.

Currently in the project preparation phase, the consortium is shaping the project outcomes and activities in close cooperation with government partners to ensure the needs and political priorities of the Philippine Government in the context of climate change and biodiversity are addressed.



The SHIELD program must prioritize the most vulnerable families and communities to make resilience building relevant."

Eastern Samar Governor Ben P. Evardone



Waste characterization. February 2021, Cagayan de Oro City. [City Government of Cagayan de Oro]

For improved urban environment, the country programme is implementing the Healthy Oceans and Clean Cities Initiative (HOCCI), which aims to reduce marine plastic litter by strengthening government capacities to localize the National Plan of Action on Marine Litter (NPOA-ML).

HOCCI is funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by UN-Habitat in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Calapan, Davao, Legazpi, Manila, and Ormoc. Through HOCCI, the six cities developed the first City Plans of Action on Marine Litter in the country; and demonstrated local solutions to reduce marine plastic litter. The project likewise worked with national decision-makers to develop policy papers on behavioral change in plastics circularity, extended producer responsibility, waste management infrastructure gap assessment, and guidelines to plan and implement local actions to support the NPOA-ML.

Building on the country programme's solid experience in post-disaster and post-conflict resettlement using the People's Process, UN-Habitat Philippines is also implementing the Supporting Blue-Green Recovery, Strengthening Resilience and Promoting Sustainable Growth in Philippine cities and communities through Nature-based Solutions and Circular Economy (RRSG thru NBS-CE) project.

The recovery project, with demonstration in Surigao City and funded by the Spanish Government through the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), aims to improve the living conditions of the Badjao, nomadic sea-based indigenous people of Mindanao, who were displaced due to the Typhoon Rai in December 2021. The project will implement appropriate and resilient nature-based solutions, and circular economy, favoring the humanitarian-development nexus, environmental sustainability, and adaptation to climate change.

Using the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approach, RRSG thru NBS-CE aims to demonstrate a model community for the indigenous people.



Aerial view of post-Typhoon Rai damage. December 2021, Surigao City. [OCHA]



PCRD tool workshop. October 2022, Bukidnon. [UN-Habitat]



SHIELD orientation with Bangsamoro Planning and Development Authority. January 2023, Tawi-tawi. [UNDP Philippines]

FROM THE GROUND

"We are grateful to UN-Habitat and the Government of Japan for being selected as one of their community partners who were granted capital for our small enterprise."

We were also supported through technical assistance such as trainings and workshops to increase our capacities in running our social enterprise."

*Welma Fernandez
President, Women Waste Warriors*



Manila, the Capital City of the Philippines, is strategically located along where Pasig River drains into the Manila Bay. These two water bodies are said to contribute the most marine plastic litter from the Philippines. But rather than being discouraged, this inspired Barangay 412 Women Waste Warriors (3Ws), a legally-recognized and women-led community organization in Manila, to maximize the existing skills of their members to produce washable cloth diapers that contribute to the reduction of single-use plastic.

3Ws recognized that disposable diapers are the third largest single-use consumer items and make up 30% of the total non-biodegradable waste in the world. On average, a child is said to use around 3,800 disposable diapers until age three. With washable cloth diapers, a child may only need 24 pieces to last up to 3 years, therefore producing significantly less waste while also saving on aggregate costs. With this, aside from the positive impacts for the environment, the women of 3Ws also run a livelihood that increased the average daily income of their members by over 30%.



3Ws cloth diaper making,
City of Manila
[Jovelle Briones]

Click [here](#) or scan below
to watch the video and
learn more about Women
Waste Warriors





Aerial view of Legazpi City. [City Government of Legazpi]

03

Project Proposals



PROPOSAL 1

Circular Cities Initiative: Accelerating Sustainable Food and Packaging Waste Management through Extended Producer Responsibility Readiness and Public-Private-People Partnerships in Urban Systems



PROPOSAL 2

Protecting Marine Biodiversity Areas from Marine Plastic Litter



PROPOSAL 3

Democratizing and Strengthening the Spatial Planning and Implementation Capacities of Bangsamorro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao for Resilient Development and Peace



PROPOSAL 4

Advancing Low-Emission Urban Development in the Philippines

PROPOSAL 1:

Circular Cities Initiative: Accelerating Sustainable Food and Packaging Waste Management through Extended Producer Responsibility Readiness and Public-Private-People Partnerships in Urban Systems



Project partners

- Food and Agriculture Organization
- UN-Habitat Country Office in another ASEAN country (tbc)
- League of Cities of the Philippines
- Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability
- Industrial Technology Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Obligated and Volunteer Enterprises
- Producer Responsibility Organizations
- Universities/think-tanks



Project duration

3 years



Project location

A city in Metro Manila plus at least three other cities in the Philippines; triangular cooperation with another city from Southeast Asia and/or from a developed country



Estimated budget:
USD 3.8M



Intended Beneficiaries:

- City governments, including city planning, environment and finance departments
- Startups, micro, small and medium enterprises (SMSMEs)
- Research and development institutions
- Food service industry value chain actors
- EPR-obligated enterprises (OEs);
- Communities and community-based organizations
- Recyclers and service providers, including vulnerable groups, including informal sector



PROJECT CONTEXT

With cities being the centers of resource consumption and waste generation, there is a need to redesign our urban resource management strategies

In 2020, 58.93 million or 54% of Filipinos lived in urban areas. About 52.3% of municipal solid waste is biodegradable; specifically, 45.1% is food waste. Meanwhile, plastic waste comprises 15% of the total waste – roughly one-third have negligible recycling market. With cities being the centers of resource consumption and waste generation, rapid urbanization and climate change impacts prompt the need to redesign urban resource management strategies to sustain urban metabolism and reduce ecological footprint.

National policies recognize this need as waste management is a highly devolved function by law. The Philippines' Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Act became effective in August 2022 requiring obliged enterprises to recover their plastic packaging footprint by 20% in 2023 and progressively increased to 80% by 2028 and beyond.

At the international level, the UN Environment Assembly is set to forge a legally binding agreement by 2024 to end plastic pollution. The UN likewise called for the reduction of food loss and waste during its 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, specifically proposing Action Track 2 (of 5): Shifting to Sustainable Consumption Patterns. However, technical capacities to apply suitable solutions to EPR-based plastics circularity and food waste nutrient recycling within the urban nexus of food security and environmental quality management in the Philippines remain limited.



Food waste. [Recycling Track Systems]

45.1% of total municipal waste is food waste, while 15% is plastic waste

OBJECTIVES

The proposed project aims to accelerate circular economy solutions in the food and packaging sectors through an urban nexus systems approach guided by normative principles of the 2030 Agenda. This is envisioned to contribute to the national and international discourse on food loss and waste reduction, marine litter prevention, circular economy, EPR readiness, and basic urban services provisioning. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Promote the use of urban nexus and systems approach to sustainably reduce food and packaging wastes in local contexts;
2. Build capacities and establish public-private-people partnerships within the value chains in line with scaling up EPR;
3. Support the implementation of priority circular economy projects, including digital transformation technology applications, of cities, communities, and SMSMEs; and,
4. Upscale local experiences to national and international levels through policy inputs and best practice replication.

DESCRIPTION

Considering the large fractions of post-consumer waste generated in the Philippines, the reduction and circular management of food scraps and packaging waste are the most logical pathways to demonstrate technological and systemic solutions to sustainable urban resource management and urban basic services provisioning.

This project focuses on food loss avoidance, biowaste treatment in space-constrained urban areas, returning nutrients back to the soil, and reducing greenhouse gases. It will also support alternatives to existing practices in the use of plastics, how to reuse and recycle post-consumer packaging, divert these away from landfills, vertically integrate local initiatives to national EPR policy, and support global ocean pollution prevention efforts. Cleaner production and innovative nature-based solutions will support food-environment-green economy nexus strategies that fill untapped inter-dependencies between sectors with potential for resource and energy efficiency. These will be pilot tested in selected partner cities, upscaled through the development of knowledge products and policy recommendations, and contribute to international discourse on ending plastic pollution and reducing food loss and waste.



STRATEGY

Strategy 1: Systems mapping of packaging and food waste generation and management within the urban nexus, including stock-taking of baselines, policies, plans, EPR contributions and identification of gaps and opportunities

Strategy 2: Capacity building and matching sessions between city stakeholders, communities, SMSMEs, digital service resources, technology providers, and investors.

Strategy 3: Incubation of priority technological, including cleaner production and nature-based, packaging circularity, and nutrient recycling solutions to generate locally replicable technologies and practices.

Strategy 4: Development of policy/white papers and knowledge products for vertical integration and wider regional best practice sharing



Waste sorting in a junkshop.
[City Government of Cagayan de Orol]

1. At least three (3) local-level urban systems maps, inventory of existing initiatives, and gap assessments for packaging and food waste value chains
2. Improved capacities (number and person-days) of urban resource management stakeholders, including government personnel, private sector, communities, and vulnerable groups
3. At least eight (8) pilot projects on circular city and community initiatives, specifically reducing food and packaging waste, supported and demonstrated with cost recovery mechanisms and digital transformation applications
4. At least three (3) knowledge products or policy papers developed, which may include: circular economy in the urban nexus; monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and verification of urban resource management approaches; greenhouse gas and climate resilience contributions of food and packaging waste management; and/or implementation guide for circular cities



EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation
Buy-in of the industry, small businesses stakeholders is high	Meaningful private sector participation in government initiatives may derail with mistrust	Work with industry associations at national and city levels; align with EPR as private sector driving force; use People's Process in identifying solutions
Innovative circular economy solutions are limited in the country	Momentum to adopt and localize solutions may be impeded without partners seeing potential cases	Partner with international think-tanks or universities to design or suggest suitable solutions
Partners would be able to configure solutions through an urban nexus approach	Partners may revert to sectoral or jurisdictional silos in implementation	Adopt multi-stakeholder participatory processes and establish common grounds; employ systems thinking to advance circular thinking; adopt a spatial or local/geographic integrated approach

PROPOSAL 2:

Protecting Marine Biodiversity Areas from Marine Plastic Litter



Project partners

- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Biodiversity Management Bureau and Environmental Management Bureau)
- Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape Protected Area Management Board
- Verde Island Passage Marine Protected Area Network
- Provincial, City, Municipal Governments upstream of SBPS and VIP
- Department of the Interior and Local Government
- League of Provinces of the Philippines
- League of Cities of the Philippines
- Extended Producer Responsibility-Obligated and Volunteer Enterprises
- Producer Responsibility Organizations
- An international partner think-tank/specialist organization
- ASEAN Center for Biodiversity



Project duration

2.5 years



Project location

Philippines: Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape, Verde Island Passage Marine Corridor and neighboring provinces, cities and municipalities



Estimated budget:
USD 4.5M



Intended Beneficiaries:

- Marine protected area board or network
- City, municipal and provincial governments, including planning, environment and finance departments
- Communities and community-based organizations
- Key actors along the waste value chain
- Vulnerable groups, including informal sector



PROJECT CONTEXT

Various studies tagged the Philippines as either the Top 3 or Top plastic-polluting country to world's oceans. These drew global and national attention on marine litter reduction and sustainable consumption and production, prompting the Philippine government led by DENR to develop the National Plan of Action on Marine Litter (NPOA-ML). Strategy 10 of the NPOA-ML encourages local actions at various jurisdictions.

Various studies have tagged the Philippines as one of the top plastic-polluting countries to world's oceans, prompting the Philippine government to develop the National Plan of Action on Marine Litter.

On the southernmost part of Mindanao Islands lies the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS) listed by DENR as a Key Marine Biodiversity Area having coral resources covering 2,293 hectares with 411 reef and 11 seagrass species. However, it is being threatened by marine pollution: fly tipping areas are present, microplastics persist, and traces of microplastics have been confirmed in fish, mollusks, and beach sediments across its 224-kilometer coastline.

Similar issues are currently being faced by the Verde Island Passage (VIP) Marine Corridor, an area considered as the center of marine shorefish biodiversity. Additional threats also dace the corridor due to a recent oil spill from a vessel that sunk in March 2023.

At the ASEAN, marine litter issues are being coordinated among the Coastal and Marine, Chemicals and Waste, and Sustainable Cities Working Groups, which mirror the horizontal coordination for marine protected areas at the national level and at the Marine Protected Area (MPA) level such as SBPS as reflected in their current PAMP 2020-2024.

Furthermore, key actors such as vulnerable groups are often left behind in planning and implementation processes. These groups have the potential to form social enterprises, which the UN recently recognized as vital players in building social and solidarity economies.



Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape. [DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau]

SBPS coral resources cover 2,293 hectares with 411 reef and 11 seagrass species

OBJECTIVES

With an end goal of contributing to the sustainable reduction of plastic pollution in a marine protected area, this project aims to:

1. Enhance data collection, management, sharing, and monitoring;
2. Improve marine protected area and land-based waste management governance;
3. Integrate the marine litter, protected area, and waste management lenses into sectoral SBPS and VIP MPA network plans;
4. Demonstrate circular economy, waste diversion, and other customized marine litter management actions, including digitalization, in selected local governments, communities, and social enterprises within the SBPS jurisdiction; and,
5. Promote good practices and investments in the reuse and recycling of plastic packaging and other types of waste as model for other protected areas in the country and in ASEAN.

DESCRIPTION

This initiative proposes a comprehensive response to reducing the amount and impacts of waste, specifically plastics, in MPAs, which are often perceived as recipient of land-based sources of mismanaged waste. Integration of marine litter lens in protected area management plan, ridge-to-reef approach in governance, vertical alignment and horizontal coordination among sectoral councils, and actual demonstration of technical and social enterprise projects are key to sustainably manage SBPS and VIP. This response can also apply to other protected areas in the Philippines and across the BIMP-EAGA and ASEAN region.

The project will support the direct stakeholder local governments around the Sarangani Bay coastline, including the urban conglomeration around General Santos City, the Provinces of Sarangani and South Cotabato, which has an urban cluster around Koronadal City and are riverine sources of marine litter.

At the VIP, the project will collaborate with the Provinces of Batangas, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, and Romblon, including the urban clusters around the cities of Calapan and Batangas.



STRATEGY

Strategy 1: Waste leakage assessment baselining; systems mapping of governance and coordination structures between waste and protected area management sectors; stock-take of existing initiatives; and gap identification

Strategy 2: Modelling of horizontal coordination between Protected Area Management Board/Network and Local Solid Waste Management Boards

Strategy 3: Integrated protected area and waste management planning

Strategy 4: Demonstration of circular economy and waste diversion pilot projects in selected LGUs and communities.

Strategy 5: Knowledge management and capacity building for vertical-horizontal integration and wider regional best practice sharing



Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro. [City Government of Calapan]

1. SBPS and VIP systems landscape for marine litter reduction and management established
2. SBPS's and VIP's Integrated Protected Area Management Plan with circular economy and marine litter lens or Protected Area Plan of Action on Marine Litter (PAPOA-ML)
3. At least three (3) policies or plans adopted at provincial, city or municipal levels to localize or mainstream SBPS and VIP's PAPOA-ML
4. At least six (6) pilot projects on local circular economy and waste management initiatives supported and demonstrated within SBPS and VIP, taking into account opportunities to empower local social enterprises and infuse digital applications
5. Improved capacities (number and person-days) of SBPS and VIP stakeholders, including government personnel, private sector, communities, and vulnerable groups including the informal sector
6. At least three (3) knowledge products or policy papers developed, which may include: NPOA-ML localization guide for marine protected areas; marine litter reduction-focused ridge-to-reef approach; updated national protected area management planning guidelines; model governance setup for protected area and waste management



EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation
Areas contributing to riverine and marine plastics draining into SBPS and VIP meaningfully participate in the initiative	Lack of capacities and appreciation of roles beyond agency mandates restrain cross-sectoral cooperation	Adopt the People's Process and joint capacity building and planning approaches to inform and involve all relevant actors
Memberships to sectoral boards have striking commonalities; only presiding chairs differ.	No concrete model yet of strong governance mechanism between protected area and waste management boards	Implement a systems or ridge-to-reef approach and identify common grounds for cooperation; establish a governance model in the MPA
Although SBPS has been officially legislated as an MPA, the proposal to declare the VIP Marine Corridor is still with Congress	Better financing is allotted for officially declared MPAs such as SBPS. In the case of VIP, at least 42 smaller MPAs exist but not yet consolidated	Consider VIP MPA Network as entry point of partnerships

PROPOSAL 3:

Democratizing and strengthening the spatial planning and implementation capacities of Bangsamorro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao for resilient development and peace.



Project partners

- Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)
- Bangsamoro Planning and Development Authority (BPDA)
- Possible Donors: European Union, Islamic Countries, Government of Japan



Project duration

3 years



Project location

Southern Philippines (conflict areas in transition to autonomy)



Estimated budget:
USD 5.0M



Intended Beneficiaries:

- Total BARMM population of 4.94 million
- Two (2) planning and development policy oversight bodies of BARMM namely the BPDA and Regional Land Use Committee
- Six (6) provinces, and three (3) cities in BARMM



PROJECT CONTEXT

To support BARMM's transition to autonomy, capacity building interventions on localizing the regional development plan is needed.

The chronic armed conflict in Muslim Mindanao (Southern Philippines) and the continuing impacts of climate change and natural disasters compromise the development potentials and human security of the region. In pursuit of lasting peace and ending the protracted armed conflict in Muslim Mindanao, the Republic of the Philippines has established the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in 2019, through the Bangsamoro Organic Law. The law provides comprehensive autonomy and basic structure of government for Bangsamoro people of BARMM, which is the largest region in the Philippines in terms of land area.

BARMM has identified 12 development agenda items in its comprehensive development plan including the integration and harmonization of regional development plan (spatial and sectoral). To support this plan, UN-Habitat and UNDP is implementing a joint program to support the BARMM in preparing its Regional Spatial Development Framework (RSDF) with peace-promoting methodologies and climate resilience building measures.

The RSDF formulation process is expected to be completed by first quarter of 2024 in collaboration with the Bangsamoro Planning and Development Authority. To ensure the institutionalization and implementation of the RSDF, the BARMM will need additional technical assistance in the form of capacity building interventions. The interventions will focus on localizing the regional plan with provincial and city level plans and providing specialized inputs on spatial profiling, climate risk-based planning, investment structuring and financing, and local policy support.

The conflict, climate change, and disaster nexus are highly evident in the BARMM. The transition process towards autonomy and the capacity building support for localizing the RSDF are crucial elements in promoting peace and achieving resilient development in the whole region. The support to BARMM is likewise underscored in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for the Philippines (2024-2028).



Marawi City, Lanao del Sur, BARMM. [UN-Habitat]

The conflict, climate change, and disaster nexus is highly evident in BARMM.

OBJECTIVES

The project aims to address the deformities in spatial planning and urban development management and support the overall peace and development transition process of the BARMM. It also intends to integrate needed climate change actions at the local level. The project will contribute to SDG 11, 13, 14, and 15.

At the UN-Habitat level, the project is attributable to all of the “Change Drivers” (policy, planning, governance and legislation and financing mechanisms) and promotes the agency’s three focus areas namely:

1. Reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum;
2. Enhanced shared prosperity for cities and regions; and,
3. Strengthened climate action and improved urban environment.

DESCRIPTION

The project is a technical assistance for localizing urban development planning (provincial and city/municipal governments), climate and disaster resilience, and peace making. The project will be implemented in a 3-year period in partnership with the Bangsamoro Planning and Development Authority (BPDA).

Key project activities/components will cover spatial profiling (with GIS provisions), urban systems planning, stakeholder and vulnerable groups’ participation, and land use and human settlements regulatory framework development.

To demonstrate multi-level operationalization of the RDSF, support to the enhancement/development of Provincial Development and Physical Framework Plans in six provinces and Comprehensive Land Use Plans in three cities will be provided.



STRATEGY

The project strategy will employ a mandate-based capacity building approach and will take off from the ongoing technical assistance of UN-Habitat in the preparation of the “Spatial Development Framework” of the whole Bangsamoro autonomous region. It will support the BARMM in localizing and implementing the regional scale spatial development framework into provincial and city-level plans, and capitalize on the initial gains of the peace transition process.

The project will work closely with the BPDA and RLUC in improving its planning and land use policy regulations and guidance to ensure sustainable and resilient development in the region. The project will apply UN-Habitat’s knowledge and tools on the following key areas:

- Territorial planning with climate and disaster risk assessment
- Urban planning and design: guiding and managing urban systems agglomeration, connectivity, and sustaining growth
- Integrating conflict-sensitive planning and climate risk and disaster resilience building
- Urban governance and policy support
- Investment programming and municipal/city financing
- Knowledge management and innovation



1. Improved and risk-informed spatial profiles and urban development plans of six (6) provinces and three (3) cities.
2. Increased capacities of Bangsamoro Planning and Development Authority (BPDA) and the Regional Land Use Committee (RLUC) on spatial planning and urban management.
3. Enhanced participation of stakeholders and vulnerable groups in spatial and development planning.
4. Improved policies/legislations on land use and development controls and human settlements planning and management.



EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation
Change in political leadership of the BARMM	Might trigger change in priorities and sustainability of the project	Ensure a mandate-based intervention within the bureaucracy of the regional and local government structure. Capacitate permanent and non-political term positions. Integrate policy and local legislations to protect and sustain project gains against possible impacts of political leadership change.
Stakeholder and vulnerable groups' participation	Undermining and low participation from non-state entities and vulnerable groups will limit the inclusiveness and ownership of the project.	Integrate and ensure sufficient space and time for multi-stakeholder dialogues and consultations. Maximize co-creation of project activities with stakeholders. Incorporate gender markers in the project design for monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
Conflict-sensitive and climate risk-informed planning at the core of the whole project management cycle	Shortfalls in comprehensively integrating climate change and peace promoting methodologies will compromise the realization of project purpose.	Integrate conflict sensitive approaches and risk-informed planning tools in the project. Ensure that the locations and people previously affected by the armed conflict are included in the project activities. Maximise dialogues with community-based organizations and local NGOs.

PROPOSAL 4:

Advancing Low-Emission Urban Development in the Philippines



Project partners

- Department Human Settlements and Urban Development
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Department of Energy
- Climate Change Commission
- League of Cities of the Philippines
- League of Municipalities of the Philippines
- Private sector organizations from the energy, transport, and waste sectors
- Bilateral and multilateral organizations
- Global Covenant of Mayor for Climate and Energy
- World Research Institute
- United Nations Development Program
- United Nations Environment Programme
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization



Project duration

3 years



Project location

Philippines: key cities in the islands of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao



Estimated budget:
USD 2.8M



Intended Beneficiaries:

- 12 City and Municipal Local Government Units
- Approximately six (6) million people as direct beneficiaries from the 12 cities



PROJECT CONTEXT

The Philippine government has shown commitment to the fight against climate change at various levels of governance. As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, the country has committed to ambitious emission reduction goals in line with a 2°C pathway. Effectively achieving its climate ambition would however entail that climate initiatives be inextricably linked with sustainable urban development approaches. The country's rapid urbanization, coupled with a high population growth rate, has led to increased energy consumption, waste production, and congestion in urban areas, all of which contribute to GHG emissions.

OBJECTIVES

The project aims to support the Philippines achieve its mitigation targets as outlined in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). With the policy shifts since the passage of the Climate Change Act, including those in the sectors of energy and transport, there is a robust enabling environment for GHG mitigation activities across the country.

This project will support localizing the NDC at the city level and put the country's ambition into concrete actions that leverage the realities of the urban setting and its population.

Effectively achieving the Philippines' climate ambition would entail that climate initiatives be inextricably linked with sustainable urban development approaches.



With the policy shifts since the passage of the Climate Change Act, including those in the sectors of energy and transport, there is a robust enabling environment for GHG mitigation activities across the country.

DESCRIPTION

The project will support:

1. Established cities, for instance in Metro Manila, to leverage their strong economies for investing in sustainable infrastructure and transport/mobility systems;
2. Rapidly growing cities and urban centers to address the challenge of balancing economic development with sustainability by incorporating investment strategies and concrete action on emissions avoidance, that likewise deliver risk resilience, in their development plans; and
3. Emerging urban areas to foster innovation and education that will support systems and behavioral change in cutting and avoiding GHG emission from tourism activities.



STRATEGY

Collaborative Planning: Building on the Filipino tradition of *'Bayanihan'*, the project will foster a spirit of community participation in urban planning. By leveraging the Philippines' high social media engagement rates, the project will create digital forums where local stakeholders can contribute to planning discussions. GIS technology, in tandem with locally sourced data, will be used to develop spatially accurate city planning models, taking into account the unique geographic and climate factors of each city.

Private Sector Engagement: Capitalizing on the Philippines' growing tech sector, the project will encourage partnerships with local startups to develop green technologies tailored to the country's climate and urbanization challenges. Industry leaders in the energy and mobility industry will be engaged in the Philippine Urban Forum to discuss with urban stakeholders and draw up commitments for inclusive solutions that will support community-level climate mitigation efforts. Mitigation incentives in line with existing Philippine tax laws and regulations to promote green practices will be explored.

Policy Advocacy and Formulation: This will involve advocacy for and development of local ordinances that favor sustainable development, echoing the national government's "Green Jobs Act" at the city/municipal level.

Capacity Building and Education: The project will partner with leading Philippine academic institutions, such as the University of the Philippines and Ateneo de Manila University, to deliver climate change education for officials and community leaders. For behavioral change, the project will incorporate citizen science initiatives into local school curriculums, connecting academic learning with real-world data collection and analysis to build Filipinos' deep appreciation of the need to avoid and manage emissions.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation: Drawing on the country's established community-based monitoring system (CBMS), the project will implement a city-level monitoring system that involves local communities in tracking environmental changes and the success of implemented measures. An adaptive management approach will be used, where strategies are adjusted based on M&E results.

Knowledge Exchange: Cities will be encouraged to share experiences through the Philippine Urban Forum, league conventions, and digital platforms. This strategy aims to foster a learning network of resilient and low-emission cities in the Philippines, with the project cities serving as living laboratories for innovation and adaptation.



EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The project will contribute 25% emission reduction and avoidance from partner cities against their combined baseline.

This GHG mitigation result will also deliver co-benefits to 30% climate resilience measured by a resilience index incorporating physical, social, and economic factors.

Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation
Key stakeholders, including local government units, community leaders, and private sector entities, will actively participate in the project and support the implementation of GHG mitigation measures.	Lack of interest from stakeholders and loss of interest to engage in climate mitigation actions.	Conduct regular consultations, workshops, and awareness campaigns to engage stakeholders at all levels, ensuring their active involvement in the project's design and implementation. Foster partnerships and collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, private sector entities, and academic institutions. Implement targeted communication and awareness campaigns to educate and engage communities on the benefits of GHG mitigation, emphasizing the co-benefits of reduced emissions, improved air quality, enhanced livelihoods, and community resilience. Utilize various communication channels, including digital platforms, traditional media, and community-based events.
National and local governments will continue to prioritize climate change action, providing policy support and an enabling regulatory framework for the implementation of sustainable practices.	Potential changes in national or local government leadership, which could result in shifts in policy priorities or reduced support for climate change initiatives.	Maintain strong advocacy efforts and engage with key decision-makers to ensure sustained political commitment to climate action.
Technologies and innovations identified for GHG mitigation strategies, such as renewable energy systems, sustainable transport solutions, and urban planning tools, are technically feasible and can be effectively implemented in the target cities.	Unforeseen technical challenges or limitations in implementing specific GHG mitigation measures, such as technology failure or insufficient expertise.	Conduct thorough feasibility assessments, pilot testing, and capacity building activities to address technical challenges and build local expertise.
The project will secure the estimated funding amount of \$2.5 million over three years from donor agencies and funding partners who recognize the importance of climate change mitigation and urban resilience building.	Risk of budget constraints or delays in securing project funding, impacting the timely implementation of planned activities.	Diversify funding sources, engage in proactive fundraising efforts, and establish clear financial management and monitoring systems.

**A better quality of life for all
in an urbanizing world**



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