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PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF USAID'S OCEAN PLASTICS PORTFOLIO TO INFORM THE SAVE OUR SEAS INITIATIVE: FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

July 19, 2024

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PROGRAM FOR LOCAL AND URBAN SUSTAINABILITY

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Cover Photo Caption: A picture of the ocean in Phú Quốc, Vietnam.

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ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
3R	Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
BBEST	Basic Business and Empowerment Skills Training
CCBO	Clean Cities Blue Ocean
COSA	Cost of Service Analysis
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EQ	Evaluation Question
I4DI	Institute for Development Impact
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean Region
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Vietnam)
MRF	Materials Recovery Facility
MWRP	Municipal Waste Recycling Program
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
R&D	Research and Development
REFS	Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security
SBC	Social and Behavior Change
SCIL	Solid Waste Management Capacity Index for Local Governments
SOS Initiative	Save Our Seas Initiative
SOW	Statement of Work
SUP	Single-Use Plastic
SWM	Solid Waste Management
TA	Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WACS	Waste Analysis Characterization Studies
WWEE	Women in Waste's Economic Empowerment

ABSTRACT

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Save Our Seas Initiative (SOS Initiative) in 2022 to combat ocean plastic pollution globally, building on USAID's initial ocean plastics-oriented programs, the Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP) and Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO). This formative performance evaluation of USAID's ocean plastics portfolio gathered evidence from USAID activities in Peru, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Vietnam to inform future SOS Initiative decision making and program design. Findings indicate that USAID programming has empowered local actors to identify and implement local solutions, and to some extent sustain them. Additionally, technical assistance to subnational and national governments has begun the process of institutionalizing USAID's approach in many of the partner countries. A not yet fully-realized opportunity for implementing USAID's building blocks would come from expanding programming to include more upstream policy and social and behavior change (SBC) interventions to reduce single-use plastics. Challenges included shorter project timelines, regulatory and market gaps for plastic alternative products, and limited engagement with larger private sector players. In addition to strengthening waste management, the evaluation underscores the need for SBC initiatives and the integration of upstream circular economy principles in programming. Refill and reuse pilots showed potential but faced COVID-19 disruptions. Recommendations include continuing to empower local actors, combining palliative interventions such as beach cleanups and river traps with data collection to help upstream policy, funding local solutions that have a material impact on plastic reduction, strengthening policy linkages, continuing to invest in technical assistance and knowledge exchange, continuing to adapt and apply tools and training, customizing program design for small islands and underserved areas, focusing on reductions, refillables, and alternatives to tackle low-value plastics, advocating and providing technical assistance for extended producer responsibility (EPR) frameworks, and creating enabling environments for reduction policies through applied research and incentive structures.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

An estimated 11 million metric tons of plastic pollution finds its way into the world's oceans each year, posing a severe threat to marine ecosystems, major industries, and human health. In response to this crisis, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced its Save Our Seas Initiative (SOS Initiative) in 2022. Designed to support implementation of the Save Our Seas Act 2.0 of 2020 and to combat ocean plastic pollution globally, the SOS Initiative will launch 14 new country and regional programs that represent 40 percent of total global mismanaged plastic waste. It will also create significant opportunities to pool resources from the private sector and donor partners to address ocean plastic pollution.

The SOS Initiative scales USAID's Building Blocks approach to reduce ocean plastic pollution. The building blocks comprise five key interconnected conditions for an effective circular economy to address plastic pollution: (1) Effective solid waste services and investment, (2) Green jobs and local innovations, (3) Social and behavior change to reduce single-use plastics, (4) An inclusive, just, and equitable system,

and (5) Data-driven policies for circularity. Additionally, the SOS Initiative builds upon and expands the lessons of USAID's initial programs to address ocean plastic pollution:

(1) Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP), implemented from 2016-2021, tested locally-led solutions aimed to improve solid waste management (SWM) and recycling systems through 30 grants to local organizations in Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

(2) Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (CCBO), implemented from 2019-2025, is testing, scaling, and sharing inclusive and sustainable solutions to promote the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), strengthen SWM systems, and build or advance local circular economies in ten countries across Asia (Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Vietnam), Pacific Islands (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and the Federated States of Micronesia), and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (Peru and the Dominican Republic).

The purpose of this formative performance evaluation was to assess program implementation to date and provide valuable insights to inform the SOS Initiative and USAID's ocean plastics portfolio. In particular, CCBO has been a segue in USAID's program evolution from providing grants to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (an approach piloted under MWRP) to developing the capacity of key government stakeholders at the national and local level, as well as intentional engagement with the private sector for more financially sustainable solutions. Under the SOS Initiative, USAID is expanding its portfolio of programs focused on combating ocean plastic pollution and would like to understand what elements of current programs should be retained or strengthened, and what new elements should be added.

This evaluation was intended to answer four key evaluation questions (EQs) and their related lines of inquiry:

1. How effective have USAID's ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and private sector engagement (PSE) mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?
2. To what extent have USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programs enabled national or sub-national governments to develop and adopt rigorous SWM/3R plans and policies and make significant improvements in SWM/3R operations or financial investment? What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and sub-national governments?
3. Which building blocks feature in USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programs, and to what extent are the building blocks linked to one another within programs? What key lessons can be learned from USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?
4. To what extent has USAID's approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of single-use plastics (SUP) (including products and packaging)?

METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

This formative performance evaluation used a multiple case study approach, which was designed together with USAID. USAID programs in 11 countries were eligible for this study, and in consultation with USAID, evaluators ultimately selected six countries — Peru, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Vietnam — for study inclusion. Programs in selected countries tended to have a longer history of implementation, their country portfolios contained a mix of older and newer activities, and they were geographically representative of the regions in which the SOS Initiative works. Within each country, evaluators selected engagement sites for inclusion. In five of the six countries, all cities with USAID programming were included in the study. In Peru, the evaluation team sampled a subset of two of the three cities where USAID works, prioritizing for logistical feasibility and representation for a variety of implementation experiences and socio-political contexts. Across the six countries, there were 91 grants eligible for inclusion in the study, including 28 completed MWRP grants, 60 CCBO active or completed grants, and three USAID Mission-funded grants. Of these, the study included 14 MWRP grants, 57 CCBO grants, and three USAID Mission-funded grants.

This evaluation relied primarily on qualitative data. Evaluators completed a document review that included internal program documents recommended by USAID and its Implementing Partners, as well as external documents identified by the evaluation team. Evaluators conducted site visits in engagement sites, recording field observations within a structured template. USAID and the Implementing Partners helped identify a range of key informants from grantee organizations, program beneficiaries, local and national government, and the private sector, particularly individuals with deep and/or historical knowledge of program activities. In total, evaluators collected data from 303 informants, of which 42 participated in individual interviews and 261 participated in group interviews, including a mix of in-person and virtual interviews. Data was collected from September 2023 - January 2024.

Evaluators co-created an evaluation rubric with USAID that was designed to guide the evaluation team's conclusions during data analysis. USAID and the evaluation team co-created this rubric to represent an "ideal" so that progress could be tracked and described, and with an understanding that most of the highest ratings would require much more time to achieve than USAID's programming currently covers. To this end, USAID did not expect to be rated at the highest score, but sought to use the rubric as a tool to understand what it would take to move closer to a programming "ideal".

There were three primary limitations of this study: (1) Representativeness of the sample, including the fact that data was collected in the middle of implementation for some activities and could not capture the full extent of progress achieved after data collection, (2) Evaluability challenges with EQ4, and (3) Potential for inconsistency in qualitative coding. The evaluation team took steps to mitigate each limitation to the extent possible, however these limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of this study.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

EQI: *How effective have USAID ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and private sector engagement (PSE) mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?*

Findings and conclusions for EQI are organized by the three sub-criteria of the co-created evaluation rubric: (1) Identify, (2) Implement, and (3) Sustain.

Identify. Evaluators found that most solutions, networks, and partnerships were (1) Identified and implemented well to very well, (2) Locally generated, and (3) Locally appropriate. In some cases, evidence suggests that these solutions were also implemented effectively to attain their respective goals. With respect to the sustainability of completed USAID grants, or the anticipated sustainability of current grantees and activities within the Ocean Plastics portfolio, there was sufficient indication of capacity building—a leading indicator of sustainability. This was achieved primarily through USAID Implementing Partners’ robust technical assistance (TA), though evidence of sustaining solutions after the end of USAID funding was mostly weak.

Across USAID’s portfolio, interview data revealed three general ways that USAID’s approach to ocean plastics program development and implementation facilitated the inputs of local stakeholders to inform local solutions. First was USAID’s promotion of co-creation and adaptive management processes. Through co-creation, the ocean plastics programs intentionally brought together a mix of experts and stakeholders representing different levels of the system to share power in activity decision-making. Second was USAID’s focus on building organizational and technical capacity. For example, in Hulhumalé, the Maldives, one grantee described how USAID’s TA and tools enabled them to expand and improve their formative social and behavior change (SBC) research to better understand problems and potential solutions. Third was USAID’s ability to facilitate information sharing across grantees and other key stakeholders, which then could be adapted for local use.

Interviews highlighted how the empowerment of local organizations extended down to community members, particularly through community engagement and education. USAID’s model of consultative partnership with local NGOs was also reflected in the ways the NGOs engaged with informal workers to generate local solutions. In engagement sites across the portfolio, the evaluation team observed how USAID programming catalyzed networking among local actors that spanned public, private, and voluntary sectors and led to locally appropriate solutions. Further, interview participants highlighted ways in which USAID grants and training/mentoring programs empowered individual entrepreneurs and private sector enterprises to generate locally appropriate solutions by providing a holistic set of resources and training.

Evaluators found that some grant durations were insufficient for identifying local solutions focused on SBC, despite many grantees receiving no-cost extensions. Additionally, interview participants noted how local NGO grantees were sometimes unable to fully realize their growing capacity to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions due to logistical and administrative constraints. In particular, extensive procedures and delays in grant design and approval significantly extended applicants’ processing time and reduced an already tight implementation period.

Implement. There are a variety of ways by which local actors may be empowered to implement solutions. This study identified two ways that emerged from the interviews: (1) Empowering individuals or small groups to improve or start their own businesses and, (2) Providing private enterprises equipment to expand facilities. Evaluators also found compelling evidence that USAID's awareness raising efforts around SWM/3R actions were both effective at galvanizing community participation, and were well-received across country cases. Evaluators noted from site visits and interviews that challenges related to implementing local solutions existed across country cases, but were often unique to local contexts and therefore not necessarily generalizable. Key challenges documented in this study were related to the need for timely agreements between USAID and national governments to enable the credibility and acceptance of USAID programming, the difficulty of enforcing the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) where it hasn't been used before, and the challenge, in some cases, of adapting USAID tools and TA sufficiently to enable effective implementation.

Sustain. Because all the programming studied included a TA component and additional grants, the evaluation team sought to determine the extent of capacity built by looking for evidence that local actors had integrated learning from TA into their local solutions. Interviews revealed that sufficient capacity had been built in most of the sites studied, with technical and operational capacity improvements reflected in the design and implementation of locally-developed solutions. However, many respondents, including grantee staff and local government officials, anticipated that USAID's current program activities would be unsustainable once USAID funding ended due to the lack of financial resources to carry out activities. That said, a number of other engagement sites across all six countries had generated additional funds to support sustained activities post-USAID funding, by leveraging the expanded linkages, heightened credibility, and improved operational capacity created by USAID funding.

EQ2: *What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and sub-national governments?*

Findings and conclusions for EQ2 are organized by the three sub-criteria of the co-created evaluation rubric: (1) Plans, (2) Policies, and (3) Operations.

Plans. Evaluators found some evidence of SWM/3R plans being developed as well as adopted per USAID guidance. To this end, the evaluation identified three main enabling factors that facilitated the development and adoption of these plans. First, convening relevant actors from different sectors and fostering knowledge sharing among them proved to be an important internal enabler in programs supporting local and national governments that contributed to the overall SWM planning process for local governments across the portfolio. Second, interagency coordination was found to be particularly important for enabling institutionalization within government for more effective SWM planning. Finally, planning, preparation, and utilization of data and evidence was an internal enabling factor facilitated by USAID, in addition to on-site TA which local government officials and USAID grantees noted as important for landfill management and conducting formative research. In half of the country cases studied, governmental bureaucracy, low credibility in government, gaps in technical capacity, and difficulties in accessing resources were discussed by interviewees as key inhibiting factors in USAID's ability to improve SWM planning.

Policies. Evaluators found there was considerable discussion of the relevance of USAID approaches, with some degree of adoption across all six countries studied. The key enabling factors for developing and adopting SWM/3R policies identified through the evaluation included targeted stakeholder participation and longer-term USAID engagement. In particular, involvement of the private sector, legal and research-oriented expertise – all facilitated by USAID programs, led to additional TA, relationship building, and market research, exemplified by initiatives that resulted in policy framework development. Furthermore, longer-term USAID engagement provided the resources and time needed for the extensive process of researching, drafting, and gaining buy-in for national policy development.

Limited national-level engagement was noted as an inhibiting factor in some USAID programs' ability to improve SWM policy development and adoption at the national and subnational levels. In two country cases, current USAID programming did not adequately engage at the national level, with national government stakeholders expressing a desire to be involved from the beginning of activities to avoid redundancies and support collaboration between projects and donors. High government turnover was also identified as an external inhibiting factor in some USAID programs' efforts to advance SWM policy development. According to interviewees across three country cases, frequent changes in government personnel led to a lack of continuity and coordination, making it difficult for USAID to consistently engage with, and facilitate, key discussions among pivotal government actors.

Operations. Across all six country cases, there was evidence of a few or several improvements or investments made per USAID guidance. Key enabling factors for national or subnational governments' ability to make significant improvements in SWM/3R system operations or financial investment included SWM planning, data generation, financial support, and waste audits. Specifically, USAID's Cost of Service Analysis (COSA) and CCBO's Solid Waste Compliance Gap Analysis served as a mechanism for USAID ocean plastics and SWM programming to enable local governments to understand the expansive nature and complexity of SWM costs, many of which were previously unrecognized or accounted for. During evaluation site visits, numerous cases highlighted how route optimization for waste collection vehicles also emerged as a clear and powerful enabling factor for many local governments, enhancing their operational efficiency and financial investment capabilities. Furthermore, the process of conducting waste audits, analyzing the data, planning responsive solutions, and changing SWM practices proved enriching for many local governments.

Interviews and site visits confirmed that institutional policy shifts away from SUPs in the form of bans were present in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, but the widespread availability and low cost of SUPs undermines these efforts, complicating behavior change initiatives. Additionally, negative perceptions held by residents about current SWM systems made them hesitate to participate in system improvements and was a key inhibiting factor for improving government waste collection practices. Finally, funding challenges and the financial sustainability of local government SWM activities were cited by interviewed government officials across four country cases as external inhibiting factors in USAID's ability to provide government support for improvements to operations or investments. In many cases, local government stakeholders indicated that their SWM efforts were hampered by, in their perception, external factors of inadequate budgetary resources. The budgetary relationships between local and national governments were also cited as an inhibiting factor, whereby federal programs for funding are not utilized by local governments.

EQ3: *What key lessons can be learned from USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?*

Based on several key assumptions, evaluators found evidence that there is a clear relationship between each of the five building blocks in practice, such that a lack of outcomes in one building block will inhibit the achievement of outcomes in other building blocks. While recognizing that USAID's local systems approach to reducing ocean plastic pollution means that not all stakeholder actions are within their control, there is an opportunity for USAID to better integrate circular economy principles into the conceptualization, application, and continuous learning from the building blocks framework. In particular, USAID should focus more on reducing SUP demand and facilitating the effective implementation of upstream policies.

Evaluators found that the five building blocks appeared inconsistently across the evaluation data, though were evident across all six countries. It is important to note that the Building Blocks were developed several years into USAID's implementation of ocean plastic pollution programs. Findings suggest varying levels of emphasis and integration of the building blocks across countries, indicating areas where certain strategies are more or less prominent. Overall, evaluators found that while there were initiatives to facilitate linkages between building blocks, these efforts were often fragmented. The evaluation highlighted examples where synergies could be strengthened amongst all five building blocks, such as engagement with actors who work with low-value plastic solutions. USAID's building blocks also need customization for application in remote and underserved areas, especially small islands, that have specific contextual challenges. Improved coordination among stakeholders could strengthen the coherence across the building blocks, thereby enhancing the impact of USAID's ocean plastics programming. Private sector partners and grantees viewed private sector engagement (PSE) as a key link between multiple building blocks.

EQ4: *To what extent has USAID's approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of single-use plastics (SUP) (including products and packaging)?*

EQ4 was included in the evaluation with recognition by USAID that upstream ocean plastics programming is nascent, but still important to evaluate for future programming decisions. Across the evaluation's six country cases, over half of the interviews and site visits did not generate evidence that USAID programming contributed to upstream enabling environments for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUPs. While there were a number of examples of upstream efforts across country cases, they did not represent as yet a comprehensive effort to improve the enabling environment.

Despite USAID's primary focus on downstream actions such as enhancing waste management practices and recycling, evaluators did find some examples of USAID's contribution to upstream policy approaches in areas like EPR and the eco-design of products and packaging. SUP bans, for example, are an upstream policy approach that were not a key focus of the USAID programming studied in this evaluation. But in the limited engagement sites where USAID partners overlapped with these policies, interesting findings became apparent. Interviewees across Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and the Philippines saw SUP bans as challenging but effective with the right measures in place, with USAID providing important convening power to facilitate better policy making in this area.

This evaluation found some evidence of SBC efforts to reduce SUP use, but these were not the primary focus of USAID programming. While local communities have received SBC training through USAID support, it often emphasized recycling and waste separation, given the limited capacity of existing SWM systems. Interviews and site visits led evaluators to conclude that given the rate of increase in plastic pollution, waste management in the form of collection, recycling, and disposal are unlikely to be sufficient at controlling plastic pollution. The evaluation team identified an opportunity to catalyze meaningful shifts in societal attitudes and behaviors with more USAID investment in SBC to address the broader issue of SUP consumption, with the important caveat that SBC initiatives are difficult without complementary regulatory policies and competitive alternative solutions available in the market. Thus, SBC actions working congruently with these approaches are likely to be the most effective.

Only a few examples emerged during interviews and site visits that provided evidence of USAID's contribution toward plastic-alternative products and packaging, which is itself a nascent and emerging sector for upstream solutions in lower and middle income countries. Of note is the fact that the USAID Implementing Partner only received a few grant proposals in this category.

Engaging with stakeholders on upstream strategies and emerging policies is critical to the technical design, public receptivity, and implementation success of such initiatives. Given that upstream interventions and policy are such a nascent space, there is an important opportunity for USAID to play a larger convening role in stakeholder engagement and be a leader in promoting upstream approaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS

EQ1: *How effective have USAID's ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and private sector engagement (PSE) mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?*

- Empower local actors and enhance local solutions by facilitating broader and longer-term awards and streamlining award management with increased USAID Mission decision-making
- Combine palliative interventions, like beach cleanups and river traps, with data collection for informing upstream policies
- Fund local solutions that will have scalable impacts on plastic reduction

EQ2: *What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and sub-national governments?*

- Strengthen policy linkages and enforcement mechanisms across national, regional, and local levels
- Continue to invest in technical assistance for local governments, empowering them to provide improved waste services and including upstream approaches
- Promote exchange and peer-to-peer learning, along with best practices from local government capacity building
- Continue to adapt and apply the tools, formative research, training platform, and other mechanisms that enable improvements in SWM/3R systems and services

EQ3: *What key lessons can be learned from USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?*

- Enhance building block linkages by integrating upstream circular economy principles more holistically into programming
- Customize program designs when working in remote islands and underserved areas

EQ4: *To what extent has USAID's approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of single-use plastics (SUP) (including products and packaging)?*

- Focus on reductions, refillables, and alternatives as ways to tackle low-value plastics not typically recycled, while focusing future projects around upstream solutions
- Advocate and provide technical assistance for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks that support upstream activities
- Create enabling environments for reduction policies through applied research on contextually-specific incentive structures

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of this formative performance evaluation of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) ocean plastics portfolio was to assess program implementation to date and provide valuable insights to inform the SOS Initiative, which aims to address the escalating levels of plastic pollution worldwide. USAID has invested in various solid waste management (SWM), recycling, and ocean plastics programs starting in 2016, but to date, no evaluations of those programs have been conducted. This evaluation considers these programs within a broader portfolio and is therefore not an activity-level evaluation of specific programs. Evidence gathered will be used by the Green Cities Division of the Center for Energy, Infrastructure, and Cities in the Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security (REFS), USAID Mission staff focusing on ocean plastics programming, and associated Implementing Partners to inform the implementation of current and future programming under the SOS Initiative. Additional intended users include government counterparts, private sector actors, environmental groups, and other organizations or individuals associated with reducing ocean plastics, improving SWM, and enhancing circular economy efforts.

CONTEXT FOR THE OCEAN PLASTICS PORTFOLIO

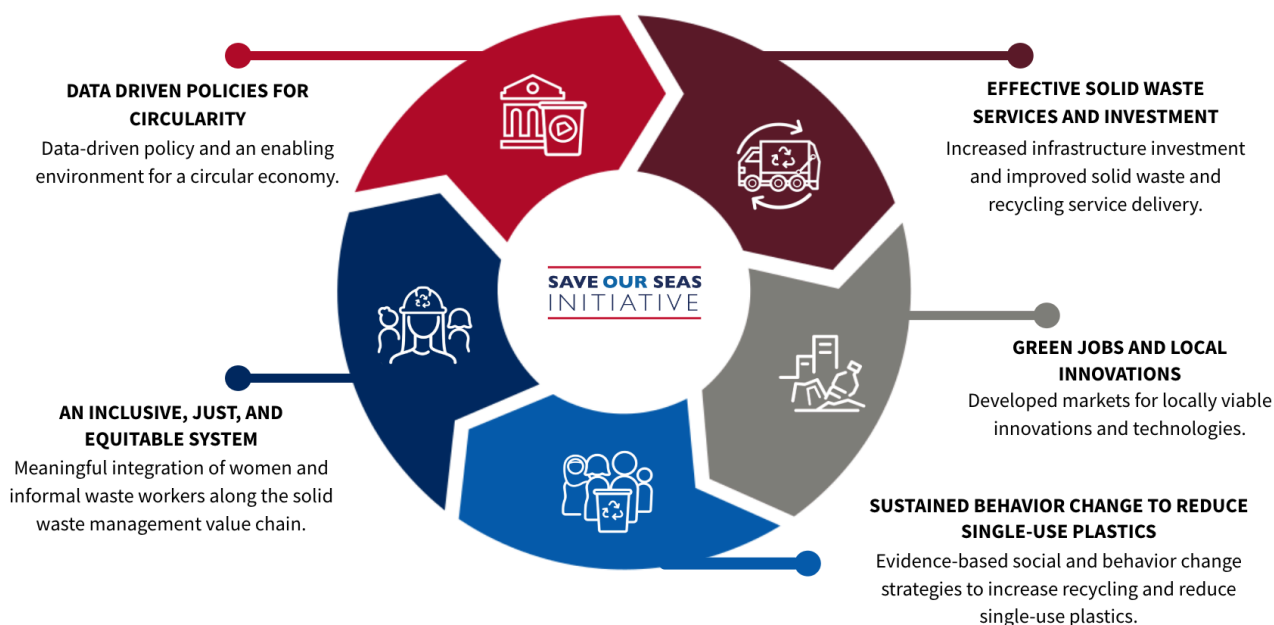
Plastic pollution is a critical global issue that requires urgent attention and concerted efforts to mitigate its impact on the world's oceans. Every minute, the equivalent of a garbage truck full of plastic is dumped into the ocean, posing a severe threat to the delicate marine ecosystems that sustain life on our planet. As demand for plastic grows, experts estimate that by 2030, this rate will increase to two garbage trucks per minute – and by 2040, three garbage trucks per minute. The consequences of plastic pollution extend to major industries like fishing and tourism, which rely heavily on the health and abundance of marine resources. Plastic pollution also jeopardizes global food security as it disrupts the marine food chain and contaminates seafood, thereby endangering the health of individuals who rely on such resources for sustenance.

Most plastic pollution arrives in the ocean from mismanaged waste, much of it from rapidly urbanizing cities along rivers and in coastal areas. In low-income countries, up to 90 percent of waste is openly dumped or burned because the countries lack effective SWM systems. Worldwide, nearly two billion people (or one in four) have no way of disposing of waste properly. In 2020, the U.S. Congress passed the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act to accelerate efforts to combat the complex challenge of ocean plastic pollution. This bipartisan legislation directed USAID to craft strategies and implement programs to prevent ocean plastic pollution. The global SOS Initiative, launched in 2022, supports comprehensive on-the-ground programming in 14 key countries that account for 40 percent of all global mismanaged plastic waste. Total funding for the SOS Initiative has reached \$138.7 million to date (in FY 2021, FY 2022, and FY 2023 funding).

Based on lessons from earlier ocean plastic pollution programming, USAID developed its “[Building Blocks of a Circular Economy: USAID’S Local Systems Approach to Reducing Ocean Plastic Pollution](#)” guidance ([Figure 1](#)). The building blocks comprise five key interconnected conditions for an effective circular economy to address plastic pollution within a local systems framework: (1) Effective solid waste

services and investment, (2) Green jobs and local innovations, (3) Sustained behavior change to reduce single-use plastics, (4) An inclusive, just, and equitable system, and (5) Data-driven policies for circularity. USAID’s guidance notes that the building blocks are not meant to be prescriptive, and USAID Missions may choose to incorporate one or multiple building blocks into programs.

Figure 1: The Building Blocks of a Circular Economy: USAID’s Local Systems Approach to Reducing Ocean Plastic Pollution¹



It is important to note that the design of activities included in this evaluation preceded the development of the building blocks (Figure 2). As such, the evaluation not only aimed to assess the effectiveness of these activities in achieving their intended outcomes, but also to determine how well they aligned with the building blocks. By doing so, the evaluation sought to identify lessons that could inform future implementation efforts.

At the time of data collection for this evaluation, USAID had implemented ocean plastic pollution activities in over 25 cities across Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Micronesia. The lowest implementing unit of these activities is typically at the city/municipal government level. USAID’s approach has largely focused on “downstream” approaches to prevent or reduce plastic pollution by improving solid waste management and recycling systems, by promoting policies and behavior change to support increased recycling, and by empowering people across the value chain, especially women and informal waste workers. To a limited extent, USAID has also supported river and beach clean-up activities. In contrast, “upstream” approaches address the root cause by focusing on reducing plastic production and plastic use.

¹ USAID (2022) [The Building Blocks of a Circular Economy: USAID’S Local Systems Approach to Reducing Ocean Plastic Pollution.](#)

This evaluation covered the following USAID programs within its SOS Initiative portfolio²:

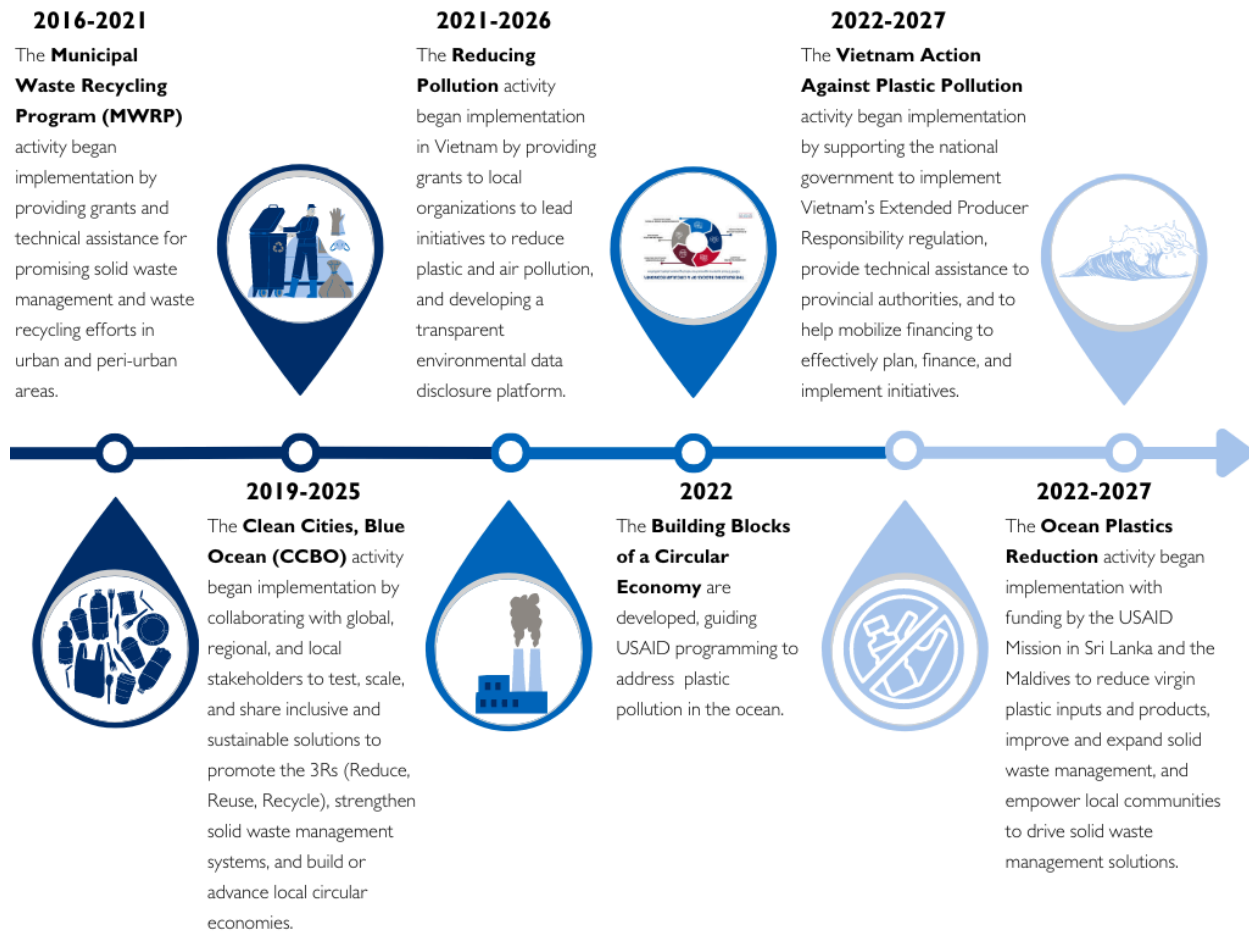
- ❖ **The [Municipal Waste Recycling Program \(MWRP\)](#)**: Active from 2016-2021, MWRP focused on addressing land-based sources of plastic waste leaking into the ocean in four countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. MWRP tested locally-led approaches to improve SWM and recycling systems in these countries by supporting 30 grantees working on (1) Private sector engagement, (2) Women's empowerment, (3) Youth engagement, (4) Behavior change, and (5) Legal and regulatory reform. Grantees included local and national NGOs, universities, chambers of commerce, and their grassroots community based organization partners. Grantees received direct funding from \$50,000 - \$250,000, and some grants leveraged indirect funding from private sector partners. Four MWRP activities focused exclusively on legal and regulatory reform, which ranged from assisting city governments wishing to regulate single-use plastic (SUP) production and consumption, to consulting on national plans to manage plastic waste, to building consensus around an implementation framework and roadmap for launching legislation on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). MWRP supported applied research to identify locally appropriate technology and improve decision-making processes for urban SWM and recycling, while fostering the private sector in market-driven solutions to reduce ocean plastics pollution and to strengthen the recycling value chain.
- ❖ **[Clean Cities, Blue Ocean \(CCBO\)](#)**: Implemented from 2019-2025, CCBO collaborates with global, regional, and local stakeholders to test, scale, and share inclusive and sustainable solutions to promote the 3Rs, strengthen SWM systems, and build or advance local circular economies. CCBO is active in ten countries: Asia (Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Vietnam), Pacific Islands (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and the Federated States of Micronesia), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Peru and the Dominican Republic). Activities include the provision of TA, tools, and formative research support to local governments; in-kind grants to municipalities, recycling and waste collectors, and aggregators for transport and collection vehicles, recycling collection center equipment, personal safety equipment, and processing equipment; and grants to local and national NGOs, universities, chambers of commerce, and their grassroots community based organization partners for a range of SWM activities. CCBO has issued grants and in-kind support to more than 43 local organizations, and in-kind support to eight city governments to implement effective, locally-led solutions totalling \$11 million.³ Grants are from 6 to 24 months and range from \$50,000 to \$250,000. CCBO also designed and implements the [Women in Waste's Economic Empowerment \(WWEE\)](#) activity in the Philippines and Indonesia, which is dedicated to empowering women through training, mentorship, and funding opportunities. This activity begins with the Basic Business and Empowerment Skills Training (BBEST) which provides participants with the fundamental skills needed for success in establishing or expanding their recycling or waste management businesses.

² The evaluation of the Ocean Plastics Portfolio included activities implemented by Development Innovations Group, Tetra Tech, RTI International, Winrock International, and Chemonics International.

³ USAID grant data as of December 2023 via [Urban Links](#).

- ❖ **Bilateral programs funded by USAID Missions in-country:** As the SOS Initiative portfolio expands, the evaluation was also able to learn from three relatively new bilateral programs:
 - [Vietnam Action Against Plastic Pollution](#) (2022-2027) supports the national government to implement Vietnam’s EPR law, provides TA to provincial authorities and helps to mobilize financing to effectively plan, finance, and implement improved SWM systems, and works at the provincial and local levels to facilitate SUP reduction action plans, roadmaps, and collective action initiatives. Initial activities target markets, retailers, restaurants, and food service companies—where demand for SUPs such as plastic bags and utensils is high—to promote alternatives to SUPs, including simple solutions such as the sale of reusable bags.
 - The [Reducing Pollution](#) activity in Vietnam (2021-2026) provides grants to local organizations to lead initiatives to reduce pollution including plastic waste and medical plastic waste, air pollution from road transportation and open burning, pollution from craft villages, and developing a transparent environmental data disclosure platform.
 - The USAID Mission for Sri Lanka and the Maldives (a binational program) funds the [Ocean Plastics Reduction Activity](#) (2022-2027) that operates in both countries to reduce virgin plastic inputs and products; improve and expand SWM, and empower local communities to drive SMW solutions.

Figure 2: Timeline of SOS Initiative Activities Included in the Performance Evaluation



EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This formative performance evaluation focused on answering four evaluation questions (EQs):

- **EQ1:** How effective have USAID's ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and private sector engagement (PSE) mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?
- **EQ2:** What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and sub-national governments?
- **EQ3:** What key lessons can be learned from USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?
- **EQ4:** To what extent has USAID's approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUPs (including products and packaging)?

The nature of the EQs range from evaluative to explanatory. For example, EQ1 and EQ4 were seeking judgments of USAID's performance implementing their ocean plastics portfolio. EQ2 and EQ3 are more explanatory in nature, seeking to uncover reasons why USAID ocean plastics programs may have been more or less effective at achieving certain outcomes. All EQs were designed to inform critical aspects of ongoing and future programming.

METHODOLOGY

This formative performance evaluation used a multiple case study approach, which was designed together with USAID. USAID programs in 11 countries were eligible for this study, and in consultation with USAID, evaluators ultimately selected six countries — Peru, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Vietnam — for study inclusion. Programs in selected countries tended to have a longer history of implementation, their country portfolios contained a mix of older and newer activities, and they were geographically representative of the regions in which the SOS Initiative works. Within each country, evaluators selected engagement sites for inclusion. In five of the six countries, all cities with USAID programming were included in the study. In Peru, the evaluation team sampled a subset of two of the three cities where USAID works, prioritizing for logistical feasibility and representation for a variety of implementation experiences and socio-political contexts. Across the six countries, there were 91 grants eligible for inclusion in the study, including 28 completed MWRP grants, 60 CCBO active or completed grants, and three USAID Mission-funded grants. Of these, the study included 14 MWRP grants, 57 CCBO grants, and three USAID Mission-funded grants.

This evaluation relied primarily on qualitative data. Evaluators completed a document review that included internal program documents recommended by USAID and its Implementing Partners, as well as external documents identified by the evaluation team. Evaluators conducted site visits in engagement sites, recording field observations within a structured template ([Appendix D](#)). USAID and its Implementing Partners helped identify a range of key informants from grantee organizations, program beneficiaries, local and national government, and the private sector, particularly individuals with deep and/or historical knowledge of program activities. USAID Missions supported the evaluation planning and data collection in each country through virtual planning meetings, in-briefs, and exit briefs. In total, evaluators collected data from 303 informants, of which 42 participated in individual interviews and 261 participated in group interviews, including a mix of in-person and virtual interviews ([Table 1](#)). Data was collected from September 2023 - January 2024.

Table 1: Summary of Evaluation Data Collected

Country	USAID Grants Studied	Individual Interviews	Group Interviews	Group Interview Participants	Site Visits
Indonesia	15	14	15	56	7
Peru	7	2	10	45	3
The Philippines	18	16	7	35	3
The Maldives	4	0	3	13	3
Sri Lanka	15	6	7	37	3
Vietnam	15	4	12	75	5
Total	74	42	54	261	24

Interview and observation notes underwent two cycles of qualitative analysis or “coding” (Figure 3). During Phase 1, evaluators used computer-based natural language processing and a large language model-based tool, AILYZE, which used descriptive analysis to summarize interview notes, conduct exploratory inductive thematic analysis, and identify relevant text for each EQ. In Phase 2, the evaluation team used these outputs for another round of manual in-depth data extraction and coding using a data extraction protocol and an evaluation rubric. The rubric contained 12 evaluation sub-criteria and a performance rating scale, both co-created with USAID (Appendix D).

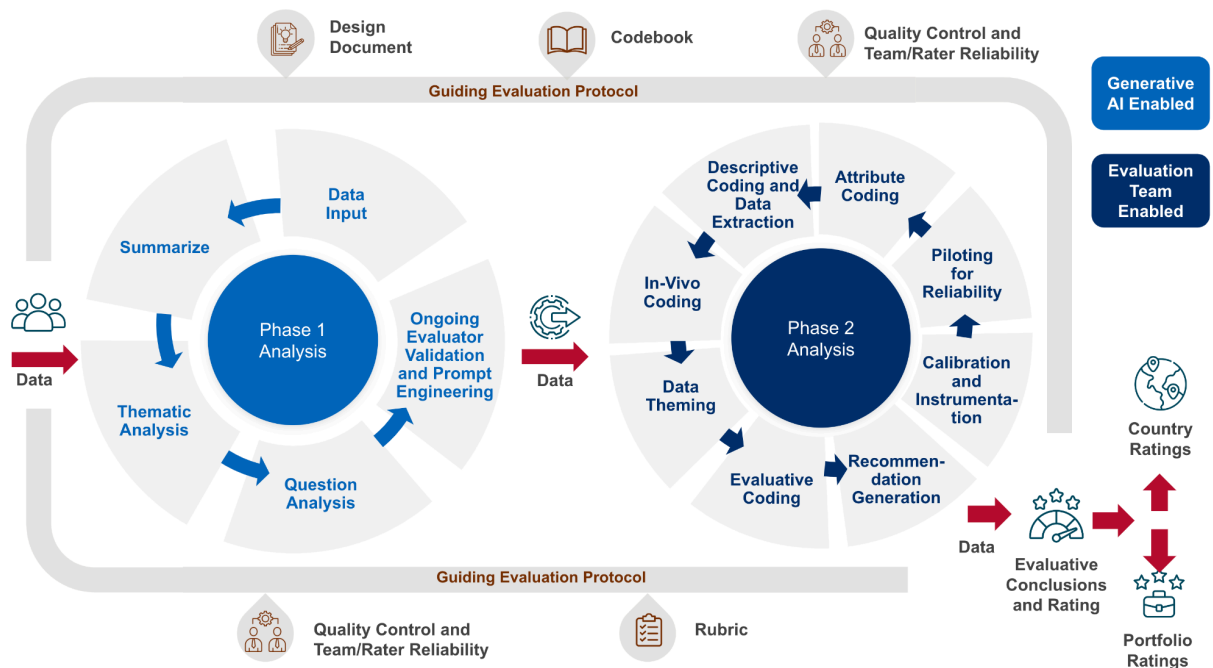
Data from each individual interview, group interview, or site observation⁴ were rated once, along each of the 12 evaluation sub-criteria. The structure of the performance rating scale varied. EQ1 and EQ2, pertaining to Empowerment and Institutionalization, used a six category rating (Excellent - Very Good - Good - Fair - Poor - No Evidence). EQ3 and EQ4, pertaining to the Building Blocks and the Upstream Enabling Environment, used a four category rating scale (Excellent to Very Good - Good to Fair - Poor - No Evidence). By country, scores were tallied and the performance level with the high frequency was designated as the overall country performance rating for each sub-criteria. In the event of ties or tallies within 1-2 counts of each other, a combined rating (such as “Good” to “Very Good”) was reported. The same approach was used among all individual interviews, group interviews, and site observations combined for portfolio-level ratings.

⁴ Site observation data were combined with group and individual interview data where applicable, except for three site observations in the Philippines, explaining the final count of 100 data collection events analyzed instead of 120.

The purpose of the evaluation rubric was to guide the evaluation team’s conclusions from the two phases of coding. USAID and the evaluation team co-created this rubric to represent an “ideal” so that progress could be tracked and described, and with an understanding that most of the “Excellent” ratings would require much more time to achieve than USAID’s programming currently covers. To this end, USAID did not expect to be rated as “Excellent” but sought to use the rubric as a tool to understand what it would take to move closer to a programming “ideal”.

As per the evaluation Scope of Work ([Appendix B](#)), the evaluation did not gather personal-level data disaggregated by sex, but considered gender issues across all EQs. The evaluation’s qualitative data was not transferred to USAID per Automated Directives System guidelines.

Figure 3: Summary of Qualitative Data Analysis Procedure



EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

There are several potential limitations to consider when interpreting the results of this study.

Representativeness of the sample: Interview participants were purposely selected for their direct involvement with the ocean plastics programs being studied. However, since the insights gleaned through interviews represent those of a non-random subset of individuals, they may not capture the full range of opinions and experiences of the individuals engaging in or affected by the ocean plastics programs. The evaluation team was also unable to interview all desired types of respondents across all of the study sites. For example, given recent elections in the Maldives and government staff turnover, USAID preferred that the team not contact national government officials and local island councils for interviews. In Vietnam, there was difficulty engaging a broad range of national government officials and NGO representatives given scheduling and logistical challenges during data collection. Generally, the evaluation team did not interview larger private sector organizations due their general unavailability at the time of

data collection. There were also some limitations with data access for closed-out programs, since current contact information was unavailable for many potential respondents. Nonetheless, the team interviewed 14 grantees of the 28 eligible grants from closed-out programs across the study countries. Among those grantees, recall may have been an issue due to the length of time that had transpired between program closure and this evaluation. Furthermore, implementation delays due to COVID-19 also had to be factored into USAID's intermediate results that the team was able to witness. That said, this evaluation carried out more than 100 individual and group interviews with over 250 informants across the 24 study sites in six countries, yielding a vast amount of qualitative data that provided rich insights about ocean plastics programming. It should also be noted that the evaluation team collected data in the middle of implementation for some activities and could not capture the full extent of any progress that was achieved after data collection.

Evaluability challenges with EQ4: EQ4 sought to explore the extent to which USAID's approach created an enabling environment for upstream efforts. From the outset of the evaluation design, the evaluation team and USAID recognized that EQ4 would be difficult to evaluate because USAID has had limited engagement in upstream efforts historically. Indeed, in many interviews, respondents were unable to provide information about USAID's upstream efforts and the enabling environment. In response, the evaluation team probed other related topics, such as USAID investments, to answer this question to the extent possible.

Potential for inconsistency in qualitative coding: The task of qualitatively coding interview notes was distributed among four evaluation team members, with each interview being coded once. This introduced the possibility of inconsistent coding approaches being used across the full set of interviews. The evaluation team took multiple steps to limit this occurrence. Immediately after field site visits and interviews, the evaluation team conducted a series of collaborative sensemaking (or interpretation) sessions to debrief on emergent themes. In addition to the standardized data extraction protocol and the evaluation rubric, evaluators also created a detailed codebook and reviewed the codebook together prior to initiating coding. The codebook was used to document any systematic decision rules or principles for common or recurring questions ([Appendix D](#)). Prior to undertaking independent coding for the full data set, the evaluation team spent time together calibrating their intercoder understanding until they were deemed sufficiently aligned by the lead evaluation specialist. The lead evaluation specialist performed intermittent quality checks to assure intercoder agreement and interpretive convergence.

To ensure the credibility of the evaluation, the evaluation team implemented several key strategies to mitigate bias. The diverse team brought a range of perspectives, minimizing individual biases. Standardized data collection instruments, including interview protocols and evaluation rubrics, ensured consistency and reduced subjective interpretation. Stakeholders were actively engaged throughout the evaluation, providing diverse perspectives and ensuring the evaluation considered multiple viewpoints. Additionally, the team maintained thorough documentation of the evaluation process, decisions, and rationales, ensuring transparency and enabling external scrutiny. These combined efforts aimed to conduct a robust process in accordance with evaluative best practices.

Widespread impact of COVID-19 on USAID programming: Across all interviews and observations, evaluators noted the significant impact the pandemic had on USAID operations writ large.

Thus, evaluators considered the COVID-19 context throughout their fieldwork and analysis. As such, this report only references the pandemic explicitly when particular impacts were shared by key informants, or as needed to inform the findings.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings and conclusions are presented below, organized by EQ. Examples were selected based on their utility for USAID decision making. In some cases this means exemplar cases are highlighted and, in others, the evaluators have selected constructive data for instructive purposes. In an effort to present the evaluation data in a balanced manner, quantitative analysis of findings accompanies narrative evidence to the extent possible.

GENDER-RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

The evaluation revealed notable gender-related impacts of USAID's ocean plastics programs. Based on interviews and site visits, USAID programming has been very effective in raising awareness of women's roles in waste management, training program participants about gender-based violence in formal and informal settings of waste collection and processing, empowering women in the WWEE/BBEST approach, and developing women entrepreneurs.

To further support gender integration program-wide, USAID developed 'Investing in Waste Management and Recycling with a Gender Lens' with Circulate Capital, a guide for investing in waste management. USAID also released a tool developed by CCBO for its partners to assess whether, and how, their own organization applies a gender lens, which could have wider applicability across global USAID programming as well.

Given the breadth and depth of gender issues, there nonetheless remains a critical need for comprehensive and context-specific support for ongoing activities to continue integrating women's empowerment into waste management. Sustained empowerment of women and youth through targeted training, mentoring, market facilitation, and integrating gender considerations into broader policy and program frameworks are essential for ensuring viable and equitable outcomes in waste management and recycling efforts. Notable examples from the evaluation include:

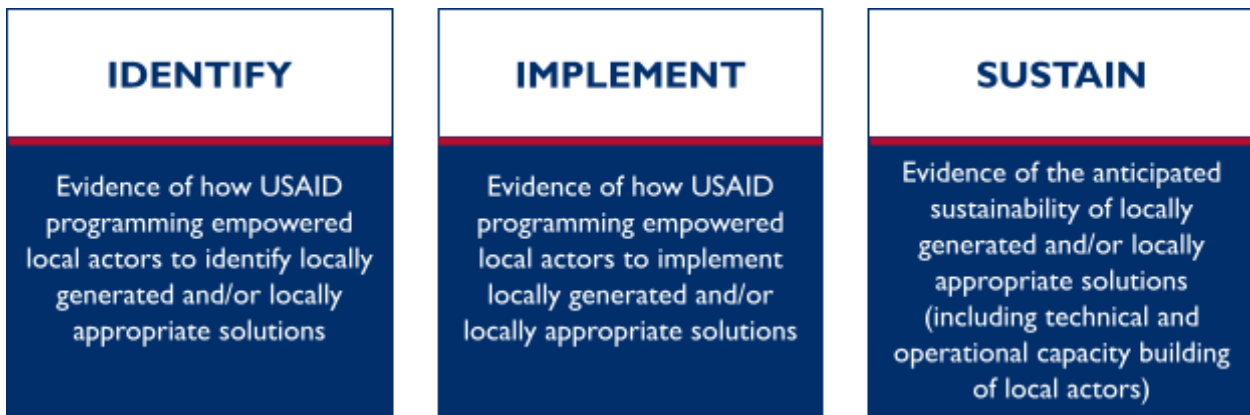
- *Indonesia and the Philippines*: evaluators found that WWEE/BBEST empowered women by enabling them to move from informal waste collection to running their own small businesses. According to interviewees, these training programs not only improved women's economic status but also raised awareness about gender-based violence and the importance of health and safety in the workplace.
- *Peru*: a USAID grantee engaged with community members involved in circular economy value chains and promoted training and business mentoring with women from neighborhood councils in order to advocate for integrating new service areas for women's development into the local government planning structure. Distinct from the WWEE/BBEST approach, the circular economy strategy in Peru did not specifically target women trainees who were already in the waste management sector (i.e. informal collectors or waste bank workers) and was not necessarily geared to establish recycling or waste aggregation businesses. Rather, the strategy

builds on the grantees’ existing work in business reactivation and financial inclusion to mentor women in circular economy business ideas. During interviews and site visits, women were enthusiastic about their ideas and the products they had created by reusing plastics for household or tourist market items. While recognizing that the training and mentoring program was in early stages, the evaluation found the commercial viability of initial products to be questionable given their quality, based on those shown to the evaluation team in two engagement sites and later seen on social media posts. This highlighted the need for more comprehensive support and market assessment before encouraging business initiatives. Evaluators noted that these steps were forthcoming in the grantee’s work plan.

EQI
How effective have USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and PSE mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATIVE CONCLUSIONS

The findings and conclusions for EQI are organized by the three sub-criteria of the empowerment rubric ([Appendix D](#)), as follows:



Along these three dimensions, evaluators found that most solutions, networks, and partnerships were (1) Identified and implemented well to very well, (2) Locally generated, and (3) Locally appropriate (see [Appendix A](#) for a summary of EQI ratings). In some cases described below, evidence suggests that these solutions were also implemented effectively to attain their respective goals. With respect to the sustainability of the completed MWRP grants, or the anticipated sustainability of CCBO and newer bilateral programs within the Ocean Plastics portfolio, there was sufficient indication of capacity building—a leading indicator of sustainability. This was achieved primarily through USAID Implementing Partners’ robust technical assistance (TA), though evidence of sustaining solutions after the end of USAID funding was mostly weak.

I.1. EMPOWERING LOCAL ACTORS⁵ TO IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS

USAID'S PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES ENABLED LOCAL ACTORS TO GENERATE LOCALLY APPROPRIATE SOLUTIONS.

Across the portfolio, interview data revealed three general ways that USAID's approach to ocean plastics program development and implementation facilitated the inputs of local stakeholders to inform local solutions. One way was through USAID's promotion of **co-creation and adaptive management** processes. Through co-creation, the ocean plastics programs intentionally brought together a mix of experts and stakeholders representing different levels of the system to share power in activity decision-making. Through adaptive management practices, local inputs and contextual information were routinely incorporated back into activities and interventions throughout the life of the awards. For example, a USAID grantee in Phú Quốc, Vietnam conducted four research activities in order to revise their activity design and re-scope their grant milestones several times. In an interview, the partner noted the unanticipated burden of these research and revision steps, but also cited how valuable the learning experience, the TA, and the resulting data were to their grant design and implementation. Across the portfolio, some local government leaders and many government departments were empowered through the results of the formative research, such as the Cost of Service Analysis (COSA) results. Regional staff under the current USAID program recalled multiple "Eureka" moments where she heard engagement site mayors and local leaders realize that they need to change policies and increase collection fees. Across all country cases, USAID provided eight modules of SWM planning for each engagement site, and assisted all local government units with their SWM plans.

Another means by which local actors were empowered to identify local solutions was by building their **organizational and technical capacity**. For example, in Hulhumalé, the Maldives, one grantee described how TA and tools enabled them to expand and improve their formative social and behavior change (SBC) research to better understand problems and potential solutions, and to make better, contextualized use of SBC mechanisms in their work.

A third way by which USAID's processes enabled local actors to generate locally relevant solutions was by facilitating **information sharing** across grantees and other key stakeholders, which then could be adapted for local use. For example:

- *Regionally, Indonesia:* USAID/Indonesia technical staff noted the importance of the USAID Ocean Plastics Community of Practice (COP) and the USAID Implementing Partner's webinar and training platform, where they learn from other USAID Missions and their Implementing Partners. Noting the value of this platform, one respondent stated, "I hope this COP and the [Implementing Partner's] learning platform don't go away with the close-out of the [current] contract."
- *Phú Quốc, Vietnam:* A grantee stated, "We like that we have access to the lessons learned and other documents from other [USAID program] countries. This is very helpful. It includes presentations and documents that we can adapt to the local context."

⁵ Local actors refer to NGO staff, local government staff, private sector partners, and intended beneficiaries such as informal waste workers and community households.

USAID PROGRAMS HAD DOWNSTREAM EMPOWERMENT EFFECTS.

Numerous interviews highlighted how the empowerment of local organizations extended down to community members, particularly through community engagement and education. USAID's model of **consultative partnership** with local NGOs was also reflected in the ways the NGOs engaged with informal workers to generate local solutions. For example:

- *Ambon and Makassar, Indonesia:* A USAID grantee used training programs and competitive events to enhance the capacity of waste bank workers and informal waste collectors. In both engagement sites, local actors utilized cultural activities and community characteristics such as competitive games and musical activities to tailor local programming. In doing so, interviews indicated that both sites were able to raise awareness among households and motivated their participation in waste segregation and recycling.
- *Puerto Princesa, the Philippines:* Interviews and site visits indicated that a grantee under the current program reflected USAID's model of empowerment by formalizing and professionalizing informal waste collectors. Collector-educators used USAID funding to conduct informal outreach with households while on their collection routes and formally through community-facing, private-sector sponsored events. Programming in the Philippines has also strengthened the capacity of other current grantee organizations to train informal waste collectors, especially women.
- *Manila, the Philippines:* A USAID grantee in the Philippines has used the WWEE training program to enable informal women waste collectors to develop professional and business skills to manage their individual and collective enterprises for waste collection. USAID's consultative process influences how the local NGO works with informal waste collectors as well, specifically with regular "pause and reflect" sessions—a light-touch but regular monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) feedback mechanism of the WWEE program. Referring to these "pause and reflect" sessions, an NGO member said, "One of the activities was asking how the women might want to implement WWEE; we look at them as partners and not just recipients or beneficiaries. We want to ensure it's tailor fit for women in the informal waste sector." This process generated the idea to create a women's manifesto for informal waste collectors, which the women plan on sharing with [the] local government. While speaking of this locally identified solution, an NGO member said, "We kind of just labeled what they wanted to express as women working in waste. The way I appreciate it is that it is a call from the women to [local government] to get their needs addressed and their voices heard."

In other engagement sites across the portfolio, the evaluation team observed how USAID programming **catalyzed networking among local actors** that spanned public, private, and voluntary sectors and led to locally appropriate solutions. For example:

- *Ambon, Indonesia:* USAID facilitated a partnership between local university researchers, community members, and the local government at various levels. Together, the partnership of local actors identified the tradition of indigenous conservation customs or bans, known as 'Sasi', and enforcement by traditional stewards or ocean and forest rangers known as 'Kewang' as part

of the solution for localizing the master plan and empowering community members to change SWM behaviors.

SMALL TO MEDIUM PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS ARE BEING EMPOWERED TO IDENTIFY LOCAL SOLUTIONS.

Across the portfolio, interview participants highlighted ways in which USAID grants and training/mentoring programs empowered individual entrepreneurs and private sector enterprises to generate locally appropriate solutions by **providing a holistic set of resources and training**. This included PPE and worker safety training; transport vehicles for improved processing, expanded volume capacity, or new production lines; funds for innovative research and development; business planning and management training; networking opportunities with potential buyers or investors; and catalytic partnerships with local governments for new or improved collection routes and services. Some illustrative examples include:

- *Semarang, Indonesia:* WWEE's BBEST training, mentoring, and in-kind resources have empowered women who had previously worked as informal waste pickers at landfills or as independent collectors. These women were linked with SWM networks and provided with equipment and new skills (both hard and soft skills) to design and launch their own businesses. According to interviewees, this not only catalyzed greater productivity among beneficiaries but also has heightened awareness about the value of women's work, the impacts of gender based violence, and the need to tailor activities to women's schedules.
- *Da Nang, Vietnam:* Many individual and small collectives of aggregators have identified locally appropriate solutions in partnership with an NGO grantee in the current program and commune representatives, based on interviews and a site visit. By tailoring mini-materials recovery facilities (MRF) or collection centers to the needs and dynamics of each of the wards, these independent operators were able to inform the design and location of the facilities that are best suited to the amount and type of materials that they collect.
- *Colombo, Sri Lanka:* A private sector grantee in the ongoing program designed a proposed solution to make upcycled notebook covers, portfolios and other products from low-value and unused plastic materials. At the time of data collection, this entrepreneur grantee had received new machinery with USAID support and was constructing a building with funds from a private foundation donor. According to interview participants, USAID programming enabled the grantee's ability to identify a local solution and develop the physical infrastructure for the basic product line, although the facility was not operating due to ongoing construction at the time of the site visit. Subsequent program data reported that the grantee was operating at full capacity and anticipated recycling up to four metric tons of plastic per year.
- *Colombo, Sri Lanka:* According to interview participants, another private sector grantee under the USAID program developed four main pilots including compostable labels for easier recycling of plastic bottles, compostable alternatives to sachets, compostable alternatives to multilayer packaging, and incorporating high quality recycled plastics into primary packaging. Upon launching their call for research grant applications, the entrepreneur grantee found few local applicants with plastic packing innovations already in development, prompting them to seek

innovators from abroad to develop contextualized proposals for linking their products with local private sector companies in Sri Lanka. This process demonstrated the potential effectiveness of engaging the private sector beyond the traditional ends of collection and recycling, to assist several Fast Moving Consumer Goods companies (FMCGs) to start transforming their packaging.

- *Pisco, Peru:* USAID programming empowered a family-owned and operated business with only a handful of employees to identify a solution for the city's first-ever household collection program. This included collaboratively designing the collection bags, route, and their collection vehicles. The evaluation identified examples across the portfolio of USAID support enabling informal waste collector groups to procure equipment, improve their collection process and routes, and set up safer recycling systems.

SOME PROGRAMS ENCOUNTERED CHALLENGES DURING THE GRANTING PROCESS AND DESIGN PHASES THAT LIMITED THEIR ABILITY TO IDENTIFY LOCAL SOLUTIONS AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, TO ACT ON THEM.

Interview participants noted how local NGO grantees were sometimes unable to fully realize their growing capacity to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions due to logistical and administrative constraints. While interviews and site visits did indicate that USAID programs empowered local actors to design and test solutions by providing TA to generate innovative ideas, explore private sector partnerships, conduct formative research, analyze and improve SWM systems and services, and strengthen basic NGO grant management skills, interview participants also noted inhibiting factors. Because most of these factors originated in the design phase or the negotiation of the NGOs' grants, they are included in this subsection. However, their impact carried through into implementation and sustainability.

Extensive procedures and delays in grant design and approval significantly extended applicants' processing time and reduced an already tight implementation period. In every country except for the Maldives, there were between 2-4 individual or group interviews (at least 15 reports across the portfolio) that cited inadequate grant timelines or challenges with delays in processing funding applications. Multiple grantees noted that the time from proposal acceptance to agreement signature was 8 to 12 months, and sometimes longer. For some, the grant development process was equal to or greater than the implementation timeline. Specifically, many grantees indicated that multi-layered approval processes were particularly time-consuming and frustrating while awaiting USAID/Washington, USAID Mission, and/or environmental compliance approvals. Others noted that significant delays were also due to national government approvals. For example:

- *Semarang, Indonesia:* One recent grantee noted that an onerous application process involving two application attempts, including one request for a redesign, resulted in a fast-tracked implementation to meet outdated project milestones before the rapidly approaching end of the USAID program. With a significantly reduced implementation period, the grantee rushed to secure government construction approval (a time-consuming process in itself), build, hire and operationalize their new factory in a matter of months in order to reach their grant milestones.

- *Nationally, the Maldives:* During an interview, a recent USAID grantee highlighted the link between USAID's grant management practices and the grantee's SBC activities. In particular, they emphasized the importance of understanding USAID's MEL requirements from the start, noting that a lack of early awareness of these standards hampered their efficiency due to unexpected staffing needs and time spent addressing MEL requirements during design phases. That said, the grantee praised USAID's online SBC workshops and global expert support, which were crucial for their formative research and SBC interventions. These included the grantee achieving a total shift from plastic water bottles to water filters in households participating in a pilot program, the development of new products such as cloth diapers and plant-based bags, and the creation of a docuseries on reducing plastic use, all of which helped the grantee secure follow-on funding from the World Bank and USAID.

Some grant durations were insufficient for identifying local solutions focused on social and behavior change. Effective SBC activities are contextualized for cultural relevance and consider local knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes. The formative research required to design such activities take time, and SBC programs themselves require longer timelines to bring about sustained change. The evaluation found that the short grant timelines were insufficient to conduct formative research and implement effective SBC activities, despite many grantees receiving no-cost extensions. For example:

- *Pisco and Mancora, Peru:* A recent grantee noted that 10-12 months implementation time for a grant is insufficient, if not unrealistic, when working with adult education and behavior change goals. "Time was really a limiting factor because awareness raising and training with adults is more complicated [than with school children, for example] and you have to do more frequent training sessions. Also, it takes time to get to know the [USAID] program, get up and running and complement the values and work already in place from other grants and TA."
- *Mancora, Peru:* According to a recent grantee interviewed, an 18-month project was deemed to fall far short of the time needed to reduce inorganic waste generated by local fishers and dumped in the ocean. The project required researching the waste materials involved, analyzing stakeholders, designing inorganic waste management models in concert with municipal stakeholders and fisher associations, procuring needed materials, educating and building awareness, piloting the model, and assessing behavior change. The interviewed grantee saw some positive results, but noted, "There's no way that a project that runs for a little over a year is going to keep people doing things differently. I know these people. I'm one of them. It's going to take 4-7 years to get them to change the way they do things and to bring their trash back to port [rather than dumping it in the ocean]." Following data collection, the evaluation team learned that the USAID Implementing Partner faced performance challenges with the grantee, indicating that these concerns might stem from the grantee's implementation approach rather than timing issues. The evaluation team noted, however, that even a two-year project without performance issues likely would not have addressed the grantee's observation since SBC is a lengthy process, requiring programming aligned with that duration.

I.2. EMPOWERING LOCAL ACTORS TO IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS

USAID EMPOWERED INDIVIDUALS OR SMALL GROUPS TO IMPLEMENT SWM SOLUTIONS BY IMPROVING OR STARTING THEIR OWN BUSINESSES.

There are a variety of ways by which local actors may be empowered to implement solutions. This study identified two ways that emerged from the interviews: (1) **Empowering individuals or small groups** to improve or start their own businesses and, (2) **Providing private enterprises equipment** to expand facilities. For example:

- *Da Nang, Vietnam:* A USAID-supported grantee enabled informal aggregators to implement localized solutions at their own collection centers or “mini-MRFs” where they are segregating and temporarily storing materials. These informal aggregators and the USAID grantee adapted the design and location of the operators’ collection centers, and also jointly decided where to install new waste collection points in the wards where local residents could safely bring their waste. This USAID grantee support allowed informal aggregators to sell at larger volumes for better prices and also enabled them to collect low-value plastics that would otherwise be burned or dumped. According to interviewees, they are now able to gather, segregate, and store these materials due to the economy of scale afforded by their collection centers.

USAID PROGRAMMING IS IMPROVING COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND CONCRETE ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT SOLUTIONS.

Evaluators found compelling evidence that USAID’s awareness raising efforts around SWM/3R actions were both effective at **galvanizing community participation**, and were well-received across country cases. For example:

- *Phú Quốc, Vietnam:* Government and resident interviewees reported that USAID awareness raising activities have improved community participation such that households are now segregating waste at source with 50% participation to date. Additionally, trash dumping on the road or in the ocean and open burning has decreased by 70%. According to interviewees, households negotiated to pay for waste collection by a private sector player not affiliated with the current USAID program. Many households were paying for this service for the first time, as trash had not ever been collected in their area.
- *Galle, Sri Lanka:* An NGO grantee shared in an interview that USAID programming has built their capacity to foster more effective partnerships among residents, waste collectors, private sector players, and the local government. The grantee noted, “This [USAID-supported] project is different from the projects we did before. It is about building cooperation and negotiating with the municipal council. This has helped build our capacity. This has [also] been a bridge between the community and the private sector. Before we started this project, everyone was working in silos. Now everyone is working together, and we are building a collaboration between all stakeholders.” Specifically, the NGO reported to evaluators that USAID programming provided TA to conduct waste assessments and to identify hotspots around the city where waste was being dumped or burned. This TA resulted in data that was used by the grantee to work with the local government to shift collection routes for more efficient waste management.

SOME LOCAL ACTORS EMPOWERED BY USAID STILL ENCOUNTERED SUBSTANTIAL IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Evaluators noted from site visits and interviews that challenges related to implementing local solutions existed across country cases, but were often unique to local contexts and therefore not necessarily generalizable. Key challenges documented in this study were related to the **need for timely agreements** between USAID and national governments to enable the credibility and acceptance of USAID programming, the **difficulty of enforcing the use of PPE** where it hasn't been used before, and the challenge, in some cases, of **adapting USAID tools and TA sufficiently** to enable effective implementation. For example:

- *Nationally, Indonesia:* An earlier USAID grantee noted that USAID had not adequately communicated about their grants to the national government due to the fact that solid waste management was not part of the existing Grant Implementation Agreement between USAID and the Government of Indonesia (during the implementation of earlier USAID programming). Without incoming directives from above, local governments did not feel obliged to support one grantee's USAID-funded activities, thus limiting the program's capacity to coordinate locally appropriate solutions. A grantee from an earlier program relayed in an interview, "We spent a lot of time having to explain to the government that our approach is tangible and replicable." The grantee created a work-around by securing an endorsement letter from the governor, providing the needed credibility to bolster their case with the local government when asking for permission or collaboration. USAID/Indonesia later ensured that the USAID-GOI UWASSH agreement was updated to include solid waste management, enabling close collaboration between USAID programs across five ministries and Bappenas.
- *Nationally, Peru:* A current federal government official, who previously held a leadership role in the current USAID program, noted in an interview that the Ministry of Environment would like to work more closely with USAID on current and future projects in order to strengthen municipal actions and collaborations. This interviewee stated, in reference to their own Ministry and other sectors of the national government, "The government wants to be at the table [with USAID] from the beginning. We really want more commitment and knowledge of the program. We can help avoid redundancies and support collaboration and articulation between projects and donors. We have a good relationship [with USAID] but really need a round table in Peru with all of the actors. We want to support the process with USAID and their local partners, but we're frustrated with the lack of engagement and advancement. Municipal capacity and processes really need a lot of improvements [and] we can help with that."
- *Ambon, Indonesia:* A USAID grantee received support to purchase a pelletizer and thereby expand the capacity of their recycling facility. Women hold the vast majority of jobs at the initial stages of materials preparation in the facility such as breaking down rigid plastic, removing labels by hand, etc. However, during a site visit, none of the women were wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). Many were working barefoot, had no hearing protection in the very noisy facility, and were sitting on the concrete floor surrounded by piles of materials to be processed. The site manager reported that enforcing the use of PPE was one of many growing pains that

were much more significant than anticipated as they expanded their scope with USAID-funded equipment. Many of the women in the center had been informal waste collectors and were accustomed to cutting, breaking, or otherwise working with materials without any PPE. Transitioning to a formal work setting with PPE and other protocols was a challenge for them and for the employer. Plans were in place to enforce safety regulations, including mandatory PPE use through a staged process of increasing enforcement, but this was an ongoing management challenge for the grantee.

- *Anonymized Country*⁶: Although there were examples of adaptive management in USAID program tool application from multiple engagement sites in this country, some Implementing Partners shared that a “one-size-fits-all mentality” in applying USAID TA and tools slowed some SBC work when the national team and government wanted to adapt tools for local contexts. For example, one national director in a current USAID program shared the difficulties that the national team faced in applying global tools in-country, to the point that this became an inhibiting factor when working with the local government. The interviewee candidly noted, “Sometimes the [USAID Implementing Partner] HQ team couldn’t care less about what’s going on in the ground. For example if I were X, Y, or Z [in the regional or home office], I would be beyond happy if I heard from the national government about how they [the national government] are using the tool and how the tools are being institutionalized. But at the beginning we had to use the tool without any adjustment or anything. Whenever I talk with X, Y, or Z in the [USAID Implementing Partner] program home office, even though we’re good friends and colleagues, what they want to instill in us is, ‘Here’s the tool and here’s how you have to use it’. But it’s different here. It takes about a year for them [the USAID Implementing Partner home office staff] to understand how it can work here.”

1.3. EMPOWERING LOCAL ACTORS TO SUSTAIN SOLUTIONS

ONGOING ACTIVITIES SHOWED GOOD PROGRESS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY WITH REGARD TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR POST-PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.

Because USAID programs typically include a TA component and additional grants, the evaluation team sought to determine the extent of capacity built by looking for evidence that local actors had integrated learning from TA into their local solutions. Interviews revealed that sufficient capacity had been built in most of the current USAID program sites studied, with **technical and operational capacity improvements** reflected in the design and implementation of locally-developed solutions. However, many respondents, including grantee staff and local government officials, anticipated that current USAID program activities would be unsustainable once USAID funding ended due to the lack of financial resources to carry out activities. Some interview participants even presented the evaluation team with lists of equipment and tools that were needed to continue improving their waste management. The USAID Implementing Partner did note that some grants were designed to test solutions and not expected to be long-term.

⁶ Evaluators have not listed the example country to preserve the key informant’s anonymity.

That said, a number of other engagement sites across all six countries had **generated additional funds to support sustained activities post-USAID funding**, by leveraging the expanded linkages, heightened credibility, and improved operational capacity created by USAID funding. For example:

- *Nationally, Sri Lanka:* Two grantees under the current program raised additional funding, in part due to USAID funding and increased connections. One grantee stated, “Even when we were working on large scale solutions, with global companies, having USAID funding really helped with our introductions and engagements with these corporations. We’re a small, new company from a small country and having USAID funding opened a lot of doors for us in terms of credibility and developing partnerships with companies.”
- *Hulhumalé, the Maldives:* A grantee under the current program reported that USAID funding opened the door to \$1.5 million in World Bank funding as part of a regional Asian ocean plastic project, which will strengthen their research on alternative, plant-based products and media programming.
- *Semarang, Indonesia:* A private sector grantee under the current program reported that USAID support had improved their organizational capacity to optimize recycling processes and improve their safety practices. Grantee staff interviewed directly linked these improvements to the creation of new partnerships with prominent entities such as Coca Cola and Indorama facilitated by the Circulate Capital Partnership.

LONG-TERM USAID SUPPORT OF SOME GRANTEES THROUGH MULTIPLE PROGRAMS ENABLED THEM TO STRENGTHEN AND SUSTAIN SOLUTIONS.

Informants from across the engagement sites studied revealed that many of the activities and solutions undertaken during earlier USAID programming had ceased following the withdrawal of USAID funding. For example, in Batangas, the Philippines, refill stores operated by one grantee closed down after USAID funding ended, in part due to COVID-19 restrictions, and in part due to market forces.

However, there were a few exceptions. In some sites, **earlier grants were followed by current USAID program funding**, giving local organizations more opportunity to strengthen and sustain their solutions. For example:

- *Semarang, Indonesia:* One grantee received both earlier and current USAID program funding and employed this continuity of funding and enhanced organizational capacity to sustain productive working relationships with private sector firms, waste banks, and municipal authorities. This resulted in expanded services, leveraged funds, and new innovations in waste management. Sustained USAID support made the grantee a more stable and respected player. USAID staff under the current program noted that, “In Semarang they [the grantee] understand how to work with the municipality, they understand the system. The key in Indonesia is to work with the system, the bureaucracy and engage the right working unit and then you can get stuff done.”
- *Nationally, Sri Lanka:* Two grantees sustained their market research, policy development, and stakeholder engagement impact over the course of earlier and current USAID grants to each organization, working together on policy analysis, the EPR roadmap, drafting EPR regulations,

developing the pilot EPR reporting platform, and catalyzing and managing an ERP stakeholder forum.

SOME GRANTEES WERE ABLE TO APPLY EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM USAID SUPPORT TO CREATIVELY IDENTIFY FOLLOW-UP FUNDING SOURCES.

Some earlier grantees applied the organizational capacity building and technical experience garnered under USAID support to **access other donors and larger programs**, including heftier roles in new USAID programs. For example:

- *Ha Long Bay and nationally, Vietnam:* After receiving funding from USAID, an earlier grantee was selected by USAID/Vietnam as an Implementing Partner and sub-awardee under two bilateral programs, supporting EPR activities and developing a toolkit on gender equality and social inclusion. An interviewee reported that, “[Earlier USAID programming] was more focused on technical capacities, but the later project helped with organizational capacity and helped us integrate our team.”

In other cases, USAID grantees and other stakeholders were motivated to continue using certain processes promoted during earlier USAID programming because they found them particularly useful. For example:

- *Thousand Islands, Indonesia:* An earlier USAID grantee described the continuity and expansion of SWM multi-stakeholder forums and roadmaps post-program, saying, “[The earlier USAID program] allowed us to convene these forums and make roadmaps for SWM. Now in that province, they’ve replicated the forum at the provincial level [higher up from local government]. The importance of our work is that we developed collective efforts as the base for the roadmap. This is different from other roadmap processes that are national or top-down.”

EQ2

What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and sub-national governments?

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATIVE CONCLUSIONS

The findings and conclusions for EQ2 are organized by the three sub-criteria of the institutionalization rubric ([Appendix D](#)), as follows:



These sub-criteria were co-developed with USAID to represent an “ideal” of institutionalization. In reality, this is a long-term process that requires a strong enabling environment to be in place. The aim of this evaluation question and accompanying rubric was to assess USAID’s progress in enabling national and subnational governments to systematize solutions to plastic pollution. The criteria indicate a government’s capacity to plan, develop and adopt policies, and implement solutions related to plastic pollution.

This portion of the evaluation used explanatory elements of theory-based evaluation to ask, “What works for whom, in what circumstances, and why?” EQ2 seeks to explain what factors are inhibiting or enabling USAID’s programs to institutionalize solutions towards committing to SWM/3R plans, policies, and operational improvements. The evaluative conclusions provide an overview of how well institutionalization occurred with details about what factors enabled or inhibited this process. The list of factors that enable or inhibit institutionalization is not meant to be exhaustive, rather the factors presented reflect those most notable as identified by respondents. Evidence presented under EQ2 should also not be considered static.

Importantly, while some factors identified are internal to USAID programming, others reflect external conditions that were out of USAID’s control.

For example, in all country cases, factors that enabled TA, tool application, and SWM planning conflicted to varying extents with external systemic factors like constrained budgets that inhibited institutionalization.

2.1. DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF SWM/3R PLANS

Among a plurality of the 100 interviews and observations analyzed, the evaluation team rated USAID programs as “Good” along a six-point scale at enabling local and national governments to develop and adopt strong SWM/3R plans ([Appendix A](#)). In these cases, each interview contained multiple examples of local governments both developing and adopting strong SWM/3R plans. Across all six country cases, there was “some evidence of plans being developed as well as adopted per USAID guidance,” as defined in the evaluation rubric ([Appendix D](#)).

ENABLING FACTORS

The three main enabling factors presented here were found in all six country cases: (1) Convening relevant actors and fostering knowledge sharing, (2) Planning, preparation and utilization of data and evidence, and, (3) On-site TA.

Convening relevant actors from different sectors and fostering knowledge sharing among them proved to be an important internal enabler in programs supporting local and national governments that contributed to the overall SWM planning process for local governments across the portfolio. Bringing together these actors with various SWM responsibilities proved to be a catalyst in convening the most appropriate stakeholders to share knowledge and work together, and in some cases, fostered perception shifts around the efficacy of stakeholder engagement in general. The programs were thus able to support the development of rigorous SWM plans. As noted by staff of the current USAID program, “Our biggest [advancement] is helping people to see the responsibilities that they have and help them [local governments] assume responsibility for the entire SWM system. With one agency overseeing it. But if not, maybe they form a committee that brings all the stakeholders together.” In the end, interviews and site visits noted that **interagency coordination enables institutionalization within government** for more effective SWM planning. For example:

- *Phú Quốc, Vietnam:* With convening catalyzed by an NGO grantee, and by together applying the planning tools and research findings, the local government, Women’s Union, Youth Union, and local residents in both the Ganh Dau and An Thoi communes have integrated SWM into their plans and budget requests. As the grantee noted in an interview, “We worked closely with [local government] to include SWM in the annual plan. If it’s in the plan, then they must allocate funding for this. It’s not an easy process. We have to sit with them and say, ‘let’s integrate SWM activities here’. Then they include this in their budget, or they could get corporate funding from the hotels and resorts.”
- *Ambon, Indonesia:* During an interview, a local government official highlighted how USAID’s training and TA opened their eyes to change their siloed perception of SWM roles and responsibilities, “The main point of, before and after training, is the changing of the paradigm, our point of view. The old way is having all SWM all under the environment office. But it is not. There is a need for integrated stakeholders to solve this problem, and provide integrated services. It must include Bappeda [the regional planning office], Ambon planning, the other government offices, and all the way to the local leaders at the village level who also have their own neighborhood regulation.”

Evaluators found that **planning, preparation, and utilization of data and evidence** is an internal enabling factor provided by USAID programming TA and tools. As staff working under the current program noted, “SWM planning started from zero in many engagement sites, not in terms of human capital or experiences of course, but in terms of even having anything written down. In other cases, earlier or partial plans had been developed but were sitting idle on shelves.” For example:

- *Puerto Princesa, the Philippines:* A USAID grantee noted, “I think one thing is the value of data analytics; the value of having baselines, the value of documentation. Having to deal with

professionals and experts in crafting policy has really encouraged us to go beyond just fulfillment, but also to document, do checks on strengths and weaknesses, and find loopholes. That's really a learning experience, in crafting policies. Part of the ten year plan that we're crafting is Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E); but everything that we've encountered with [USAID] has been a wake up call. Making an M&E plan and actually using the M&E plan have been big realizations.”

On-site TA provided by USAID was also identified as an enabling factor in USAID programmatic support for SWM planning. Local government officials and USAID grantees noted the importance of the global technical expertise provided by USAID in landfill management and on conducting formative research. For example:

- *Pisco and Mancora, Peru.* Local government representatives, local grantees, and waste collectors all noted how important it was to have USAID Implementing Partner staff on location full-time in these engagement sites and how much the program implementation improved once they were in place. Other grantees who implemented activities at the outset of current USAID programs in Peru highlighted in a group interview the glaring need for USAID programming to have staff located at the engagement sites, rather than coming and going from Lima.
- *Globally.* A team member from a current USAID program noted during an interview the importance of on-site TA locally to better enable local governments' planning capacity, “If I could do it all over again, I'd hire people who are living in the communities. Our approach is to work towards constant improvement. Starting with the status quo and heading towards an ideal SWM program.”

INHIBITING FACTORS

In half of the country cases studied, **governmental bureaucracy, low credibility in government, gaps in technical capacity, and difficulties in accessing resources** were discussed by interviewees as key inhibiting factors in USAID's ability to improve SWM planning across jurisdictions. For example:

- *Mancora, Peru.* Three interviews in this engagement site provided evidence that illustrated several of the inhibiting factors described above:
 - During an interview with a federal government official with prior USAID experience, the negative impact of local government bureaucracy on SWM planning was highlighted. The interviewee noted, “Municipal capacity and processes really need a lot of improvements. Projects like the current USAID program need to have a stronger and more active engagement role at the municipal level. Recyclers need reliable and functional [bureaucratic] systems in order to change behavior and give them a firm working environment.”
 - During an interview with an NGO grantee, the low credibility and capacity of the local government in both the previous and current administrations was highlighted as an external inhibiting factor for planning. The grantee's staff recounted that the capacity of the municipal staff to understand and carry out strategic communications related to recycling, for example, was limited. According to the grantee staff, this meant that the convening power and credibility of the municipality inhibited opportunities to raise

awareness and engagement on program issues, evidenced by low attendance by businesses and neighborhood associations at events sponsored by the municipality.

- Finally, during an interview with a local government leader, difficulty in accessing resources was highlighted as a key inhibiting factor to develop and adopt strong SWM/3R plans. While the government leader was very appreciative of USAID support, the individual noted the severe budgetary constraints of the municipality, noting the concern that sustained adoption of plans would only be possible if the local government could successfully garner additional external resources, either from donor assistance or federal Peruvian government support.
- *Da Nang, Vietnam:* While evaluators rated Vietnam overall as “Very Good” in planning, it is important to note the variation in local government technical capacity within the country. Several local government authorities recognized their own shortfalls and challenges in being able to plan effectively, with one saying during a group interview, “We have not yet established a collection system that collects segregated waste. This is very challenging and costs a lot of money. This is the very first project of this type regarding waste collection, so there is a lot of learning and awareness raising needed. In the residential buildings there are certain areas where the awareness is very low. Many of them are low income and they don’t have time to be involved. We have also had many delays regarding paperwork, especially with getting permission for the MRFs. These delays also lead to people not having as much confidence or interest in the MRF”.

2.2. DEVELOPING AND ADOPTING SWM/3R POLICIES

Among a plurality of the 100 interviews and observations analyzed, the evaluation team rated USAID ocean plastics and SWM programs as “Fair” to “Good” at enabling local and national governments to develop and adopt strong SWM/3R policies ([Appendix A](#)). Across all six country cases, there was “considerable discussion of the relevance of USAID approaches, with some degree of adoption,” as defined in the evaluation rubric ([Appendix D](#)).

ENABLING FACTORS

Targeted stakeholder participation was identified as a key enabling factor in USAID programmatic support for SWM policy development or adoption. Involvement of private sector, legal and research-oriented expertise – all facilitated by USAID programs, led to additional TA, relationship building, and market research, exemplified by initiatives that resulted in policy framework development. For example:

- *Nationally, Sri Lanka:* According to three interviewees with USAID grantee staff and local government stakeholders, private sector partnerships and collaboration facilitated by USAID grantee support have resulted in an EPR roadmap, market survey and policy research to inform SUP bans, the pending EPR law, and the EPR reporting platform, which is now used for voluntary reporting.

- *Ambon, Indonesia:* According to interviewees, current USAID program collaboration with technical experts from local universities has been instrumental in formulating a comprehensive waste management plan for the city. Drawing upon data supplied by the municipality's environmental office, these experts, accompanied by professors, conducted thorough field assessments across the city's five districts. Both the municipal authorities and academic professionals acknowledge the indispensable role of USAID in this endeavor. Not only has current USAID programming provided crucial financial support, but it has also contributed invaluable knowledge, expertise, and insights, enriching the planning process and fostering high-level discussions. Moreover, the proactive involvement of Ambon's mayor, in conjunction with the environmental office, signifies a concerted effort to enact regulatory measures aimed at decentralizing waste management processes to local governments.

Longer-term USAID engagement was an important enabling factor in USAID programming, providing the resources and time needed for the extensive process of researching, drafting, and gaining buy-in for national policy development.

- *Nationally, Sri Lanka:* Two generations of USAID grant funding under earlier and current grants enabled two NGO grantees to work on multiple facets of national policy and invest in the necessary underpinnings of collaboration between government and private sector on EPR regulations and reporting. As noted by a national government official, the years-long investments in private sector capacity building, policy research, and TA resulted in 'very helpful' products and processes including the EPR roadmap, drafting of the EPR and regulations, and the EPR reporting portal.

INHIBITING FACTORS

Limited national-level engagement was noted as an inhibiting factor in some USAID programs' ability to improve SWM policy development and adoption at the national and subnational levels. In two country cases, current USAID programming did not adequately engage at the national level, with national government stakeholders expressing a desire to be involved from the beginning of activities to avoid redundancies and support collaboration between projects and donors. During interviews, these government stakeholders emphasized the importance of stronger engagement and commitment from USAID programs to enhance coordination and effectiveness in policy development from the outset. For example:

- *Nationally, Peru:* A national government official noted, "[The current USAID program] does not help with policies at the national level, only at the municipal level."
- *Nationally, Vietnam:* USAID/Vietnam staff acknowledged during an interview that the current USAID program was successful at engaging grassroots and provincial-level stakeholders, but was not appropriately engaging with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), which has consolidated responsibility for SWM. The interviewee noted, "They [the current USAID program] had you meet with the agency for Administration of Sea and Islands (VASI) which, according to me, is completely the wrong player [i.e., is not a key stakeholder in SWM and ocean plastics]. And then you get bias [in the evaluation findings and conclusions]." In

subsequent interviews with USAID/Vietnam staff and Implementing Partners, interviewees emphasized the essential role of USAID activities in engaging with MONRE.

High government turnover was identified as an external inhibiting factor in some USAID programs' efforts to advance SWM policy development. According to interviewees across three country cases, frequent changes in government personnel led to a lack of continuity and coordination, making it difficult for USAID to consistently engage with, and facilitate, key discussions among pivotal government actors. For example:

- *Nationally, Peru:* According to multiple interviews with USAID grantees, local elections led to complete leadership and staff turnover in the three cities where the current USAID program is active. This turnover forced partners to restart with new administrations, requiring them to re-introduce the program, secure buy-in, and establish new working relationships with local government authorities and staff. Grant activities, including the development of communication strategies and environmental education campaigns, were conducted with outgoing administrations. However, the complete turnover was anticipated, underscoring the need for better timing in USAID grant implementation to ensure longer-term collaboration with local government staff who would remain in office.

2.3. SWM/3R SYSTEM OPERATIONS

Among a plurality of the 100 interviews and observations analyzed, evaluators rated USAID ocean plastics and SWM programs as “Fair” to “Good” at enabling national or subnational governments to make significant improvements in SWM/3R system operations or financial investment ([Appendix A](#)). Across all six country cases, there was “evidence of a few or several improvements or investments made per USAID guidance”, as defined in the evaluation rubric ([Appendix D](#)).

ENABLING FACTORS

SWM planning, data generation, and financial support, specifically USAID’s Cost of Service Analysis (COSA) and Solid Waste Compliance Gap Analysis, served as a mechanism for USAID ocean plastics and SWM programming to enable local governments to understand the expansive nature and complexity of SWM costs, many of which were previously unrecognized or accounted for. During evaluation site visits, numerous cases highlighted how route optimization emerged as a clear and powerful enabling factor for many local governments, enhancing their operational efficiency and financial investment capabilities. USAID programs also provided critical information to local governments on how and why to garner financial support and better plan budgets for SWM. Some of these recommendations clashed with external inhibiting factors, such as competing local government responsibilities and manageable interests, and national budgeting constraints or lack of national-local policy alignment. For example:

- *Ambon, Indonesia:* USAID’s TA applied a whole-of-government approach to enable decision makers at the village⁷-level to increase their SWM budgets. According to interviewees, this

⁷ In Indonesia, “villages”, or sub-districts, are the fourth-level subdivision and the smallest administrative division of Indonesia.

garnered unexpected, additional resources for local SWM services while building capacity and relationships in the SWM sector. A government official remarked, “It’s a process to get the villages involved in the budgeting process and then it carries on up and becomes part of the city’s budget request. In Ambon, we used the [USAID] grantee to work with villages to teach them that they can request funds for waste management and get this into the city budget. That’s \$34,000 that the villages wouldn’t have had.”

- *Phú Quốc, Vietnam:* With USAID support, the local government increased their SWM fees and improved their collection of these fees, but interviewees raised concerns surrounding the sustainability of these practices after USAID support ends. Some government officials and local partners were surprised by residents’ willingness to pay fees for waste collection services after USAID’s engagement in participatory planning and negotiations. Pilot collection routes increased waste collection to 70% of households who now pay collection fees to community members who use their own vehicles to haul waste to the dump as the local government handcarts are insufficient for road conditions and waste amounts. According to interviewees, USAID’s TA and COSA data enabled the local government and commune residents to design this system, which provides collection services to many first-time users.

Waste audits / Waste Analysis Characterization Studies (WACS) supported by USAID were identified by many local government stakeholders across four country cases as a particularly important enabling factor for improved SWM implementation. The process of conducting waste audits, analyzing the data, planning responsive solutions, and changing SWM practices proved enriching for many local governments. For example:

- *Iloilo, the Philippines:* USAID’s support helped establish bamboo waste river traps to stop plastic waste from entering the ocean. According to one local government stakeholder, the analysis of the trapped waste helped identify plastic sources and guided local government collection efforts. This practical solution not only halted plastic flow but also helped the local government identify and address long-term contributors. Based on interviews and site visits, evaluators identified this as one practical solution to stop the flow of plastic, while also working to identify and address the long-term contributors to this plastic waste.
- *Galle, Sri Lanka:* An interviewee from the Municipal Council stated that, “We didn’t have data as a municipality on waste generation, or on collection coverage. The waste audit conducted by [USAID] gave us a good set of data. It is very helpful for us to make decisions on where to put resources.”
- *Da Nang, Vietnam:* A USAID grantee remarked that the waste audit was particularly useful, leading to improvements in recycling and plastic reduction. The audit and accompanying USAID TA supported schools by helping to define the number and sizes of recycling bins needed, increasing awareness among stakeholders (e.g. local government, school leaders, staff, students, parents) about plastic pollution and introducing waste segregation and recycling at schools. According to the interviewee, these results also improved public procurement of canteen services, with plans to change contracts to reduce or eliminate SUPs at schools, marking the first incorporation of SUP regulations into vendor contracts.

INHIBITING FACTORS

Evaluators found that **easy availability of SUPs** in the broader communities is a significant external inhibiting factor in improving system operations. Interviews and site visits confirmed that institutional policy shifts away from SUPs in the form of SUP bans were present in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, but the widespread availability and low cost of SUPs undermines these efforts, complicating behavior change initiatives. For example:

- *Da Nang, Vietnam:* Despite USAID's support for requiring school canteen vendors to shift away from SUP materials, students still access SUPs from street vendors outside the school, such as domed plastic cups and straws. School officials are addressing this in their plastics education, but this external factor highlights the broader challenge of addressing SUPs on a national scale. Evaluators concluded that awareness-raising within the school alone is unlikely to reduce SUP use among students. A similar situation was observed at a school in Phú Quốc, Vietnam, where enthusiastic participation in recycling and waste segregation inside the school courtyard was contrasted by students bringing SUP products into school from vendors outside during recess.

Negative perceptions held by residents about current SWM systems made them hesitate to participate in system improvements and was a key inhibiting factor for improving government waste collection practices. In many engagement sites, grantees and community interviewees noted frustration with inconsistencies in implementing waste segregation policies. According to interviewees, households and businesses often segregate their waste, but then municipal collectors dump it all together in the collection truck. Additionally, interviewees noted that newly introduced SWM processes supported by USAID can create additional work, leading to budget and resource challenges. Without adaptive management and foresight regarding increased and changing workload, these internal issues can hinder effective SWM operationalization. For example:

- *Mancora, Peru:* Interviewees noted that the lack of public SWM services in general discouraged or suppressed residents' willingness to segregate and recycle. In some engagement sites, this was further exacerbated by climate change and floods that made it all the more difficult or impossible to complete collection routes. When referring to attempts to build community interest and participation in waste segregation and recycling, a USAID grantee noted that local neighbors responded along the lines of, "Don't come and talk to me about recycling when there's sewage in the street and I can't even get decent trash pick-up service."
- *Jaffna, Sri Lanka:* During a group interview with local community members, residents alleged corruption among the municipal workers, claiming that such workers would only collect residential trash if the residents paid the workers a "tip". Residents alleged that these tips would not go to the municipality, but instead be pocketed by workers. Evaluators triangulated this finding with the team's local translator and logistics support person who lives in another part of the city. This person confirmed that their family is also obliged to pay a "tip" to the trash collector or risk not having the household waste collected. In contrast, the USAID program team (all based in Colombo) indicated that they had not heard of this experience in Jaffna.

Funding challenges and financial sustainability of local government SWM activities were cited by interviewed government officials across four country cases as external inhibiting factors in USAID's ability to provide government support for improvements to operations or investments. In many cases, local government stakeholders indicated that their SWM efforts were hampered by, in their perception, external factors of inadequate budgetary resources. The budgetary relationships between local and national governments were also cited as an inhibiting factor, whereby federal programs for funding are not utilized by local governments. For example:

- *Galle and Jaffna, Sri Lanka:* A national SWM government official noted a federal incentive program for improved SWM wherein local governments can apply for funds, but that neither Jaffna nor Galle had applied. This program provides incentives for innovations by local governments in their provision of residential services, and uses a new ranking system to encourage local governments to improve their services. The interviewee remarked that [his office] needs to help these local governments to apply for such funds. Although this was not within the USAID supported program specifically, future USAID programs should consider supporting local governments in identifying and applying for such funding opportunities.
- *Phú Quốc, Vietnam:* According to a USAID grantee, the collectors associated with pilot collection routes would no longer receive their current project stipend after USAID programming ends. They noted that fees are insufficient to pay the collectors and, although the local government has requested increased funding for collection in its socioeconomic plan, it is uncertain whether the request will be met and therefore whether collection will continue. Furthermore, the national waste collection fee policy would also not allow the city to raise fees.

Lack of best practices in applying SWM/3R resources was noted across two country cases as undermining the effectiveness of the operationalization of USAID guidance. Site visits and interviews in Sri Lanka and Vietnam highlighted that without necessary technical capacity to implement best practices, and without improved coordination with USAID Mission staff to utilize their knowledge of local contexts and other donor investments, the benefits of provided resources may not be fully realized. For example:

- *Jaffna, Sri Lanka:* USAID-funded recycling cages were observed by evaluators at the bus station, in an engagement site, and in other public areas. However, these recycling cages were not placed next to trash bins and, as a result, were highly contaminated with trash.
- *Phú Quốc, Vietnam:* USAID-funded recycling cages and trash bins in the Ganh Dau residential area were evident during a site visit, and local residents noted their utility for disposing of small amounts of household waste and recyclables. However, the leader of a local resident group noted the significant problem the community faces with the large volume of ocean plastics and trash that washes up against the sea wall in front of their homes where the USAID-funded bins are placed. This stakeholder remarked during a site visit that some of the bins are secured in make-shift fashion to prevent them from falling into, or being blown into, the ocean. The stakeholder noted that while they use the USAID bins to dispose of the ocean-based trash that they collect at the seawall, the bins are too small and not sturdy enough to handle the amount of waste that he and neighbors collect.

- *Nationally, Vietnam:* During an interview with a USAID/Vietnam staff, they noted three concerns with the current USAID program’s purchase of bins and SWM equipment via grants: (1) Appropriate size and durability of bins, (2) Sustainability of bins and other equipment purchases, and 3) Redundancy of USAID equipment purchases vs. that of other donors. According to the interviewee, USAID bins are often too small and not sturdy enough, accountability for repair and maintenance of equipment is challenging, and in some cases, USAID’s investments in this area are poorly coordinated with other organizations who purchase larger and higher quality equipment with more permanent branding and marking [referring to a reported incident in Hue, Vietnam].

EQ3

What key lessons can be learned from USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATIVE CONCLUSIONS

The five Building Blocks of a Circular Economy: USAID’s Local Systems Approach to Reducing Ocean Plastic Pollution ([Figure 1](#)) are designed to foster a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing plastic pollution. These building blocks are critical for developing a sustainable circular economy that aims to minimize waste, maximize resource efficiency, and drive significant environmental and social impacts. USAID conceptualized the building blocks in 2021 based on a few years of experience with ocean plastics and SWM programming. Therefore, they were not expected to be equally apparent across all engagement sites and interventions. Rather, USAID was interested in learning about the ways in which the building blocks appeared on the ground, and what lessons could be identified about the interactions, synergies, and complementarities among these building blocks to inform future programming.

The evaluators assessed both conceptual coherence, i.e. how well the data align with each of the five building blocks, and programmatic coherence, i.e. how well the building blocks were integrated into programming. The aim was to:

1. **Assess Conceptual Validity:** Determine how accurately the building blocks represent actual conditions on the ground.
2. **Evaluate Coordination:** Identify instances where multiple building blocks were addressed together.
3. **Generate Insights:** Draw explanatory conclusions about the relationships and interactions among the building blocks, providing insights into their effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Based on several key assumptions,⁸ evaluators found evidence that there is a clear relationship between each of the five building blocks in practice, such that a lack of outcomes in one building block will inhibit the achievement of outcomes in other building blocks.⁹ While recognizing that USAID's local systems approach to reducing ocean plastic pollution means that not all stakeholder actions are within their control, there is an opportunity for USAID to better integrate circular economy principles into the conceptualization, application, and continuous learning from the framework. In particular, USAID should focus more on reducing SUP demand and facilitating the effective implementation of upstream policies.

3.1. BUILDING BLOCK REPRESENTATION IN OCEAN PLASTICS PROGRAMMING

The five building blocks appeared inconsistently across the evaluation data. These findings suggest varying levels of emphasis and integration of the building blocks across country cases, indicating areas where certain strategies are more or less prominent. This can inform future USAID programming by highlighting successful integration areas and identifying gaps that need addressing to enhance the overall effectiveness of ocean plastics programming. Evidence of each building block's representation in USAID programming is presented below, based on qualitative data and illustrative of the extent to which the building blocks appeared during data collection.

EFFECTIVE SOLID WASTE SERVICES AND INVESTMENT

This building block was the most represented in all country cases, with a total of 89% of data collection events (n=100) reporting activity related to this building block. Interviewees described improvements such as creating more efficient systems for collecting, aggregating, and sorting solid waste. Despite these mentions, interviews and site visits highlighted that many regions still lack adequate waste treatment infrastructure and have insufficient sanitary landfills. However, interviews in every country studied indicated that political will among municipal authorities exists to manage these problems, even as these authorities concurrently relayed numerous challenges in accessing funding, a supportive national policy environment, and technical capacity.

SUSTAINED BEHAVIOR CHANGE TO REDUCE SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

This building block was present in all country cases with a total of 75% of data collection events (n=100) reporting activity related to this building block. Interviewees, including local community members and recyclers, mentioned that USAID support has enabled behavioral changes that have increased the volume of recycled materials collected. However, a lack of quantitative data to measure this increase underscores the need for generating more robust evidence on the effectiveness of such approaches.

⁸Assumptions include: 1) *Coherence among building blocks* is crucial for effectively combating ocean plastic pollution; 2) *Synergy among building blocks* is necessary to maximize the reduction of plastic waste; 3) *Lack of coherence* can lead to fragmentation and inefficiencies in the system; 4) *Understanding building block coherence* is critical for improving the effectiveness of USAID's Ocean Plastics/SWM programming; and 5) *Strengthening building block linkages will enhance USAID's strategies*, leading to more sustainable solutions for reducing ocean plastic pollution.

⁹ Given the design of the evaluation, evaluators were not able to derive causal relationships between the building blocks.

AN INCLUSIVE, JUST, AND EQUITABLE SYSTEM

This building block was present across all country cases with a total of 67% of data collection events (n=100) reporting activity related to this building block. Evaluators noted that informal sector workers were present in the majority of engagement sites studied; some of these groups are now formalized or in the process of formalization. Interviews and site visits highlighted that challenges remain, such as the lack of integration of informal recyclers from minority groups and women, and unsafe working conditions in recycling facilities. Despite these challenges, and despite instances of violence and discrimination against women, USAID-supported gender training programs have empowered women, enabling them to take the lead in the recycling arena.

GREEN JOBS AND LOCAL INNOVATIONS

This building block was present across all country cases with a total of 64% data collection events (n=100) reporting activity related to this building block. Interviewees described technologies designed to align with local conditions and needs, ranging from simple solutions like tricycles to sophisticated recycling infrastructure. Notably, several interviewees highlighted innovations such as plastic shredders, which transform waste into flakes and pellets, as invaluable for creating the secondary raw materials that facilitate production of diverse plastic goods.

DATA-DRIVEN POLICIES FOR CIRCULARITY

This building block was present across all country cases with a total of 50% data collection events (n=100) reporting activity related to this building block. According to interviews and site visits, local governments, influenced by USAID grantees and TA, appeared to focus primarily on improving waste management and recycling rather than reducing plastic use.

SOME BUILDING BLOCKS WERE ONLY PARTIALLY UTILIZED WITHIN THE PORTFOLIO.

Specifically, evaluators found that the building blocks of *Data-Driven Policies for Circularity*, *Green Jobs and Local Innovations*, and *Sustained Behavior Change to Reduce Single-Use Plastics* could be more fully implemented across engagement sites.

- *Data-Driven Policies for Circularity*: While there was significant data-driven policy around SWM and reclamation and recovery, USAID programs focused less on policies aimed at increasing circularity. There is an opportunity to focus more on upstream policies to reduce plastic use that could more fully realize the potential of this building block.
- *Green Jobs and Local Innovations*: USAID's program design and implementation incorporated locally appropriate solutions across country cases, but innovations and technological applications of upstream design were less evident and could be a greater focus of future programming.
- *Sustained Behavior Change to Reduce Single-Use Plastics*: SBC approaches focused on households, informal waste collectors, and local government staff, but these behaviors primarily focused on increasing plastic recovery for recycling rather than reducing plastic demand. There are considerable opportunities to expand SBC programming to address upstream reduction.

As a caveat to these findings, the evaluators acknowledge that coding for these three building blocks may have been broad. For example, evaluators likely focused on any SWM-related data-driven policies, rather

than those specifically aimed at increased circularity. Similarly, coding for locally-appropriate interventions may have included general design and implementation issues, not just innovations and technology. SBC coding may have encompassed any behavior change, not just those reducing SUP demand. Consequently, coding by the complete conceptual intent of these building blocks might have resulted in lower percentages.

3.2. LESSONS ON INTERACTIONS, SYNERGIES, AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF BUILDING BLOCKS

Evaluators sought to understand the extent to which USAID has been able to facilitate linkages between the five building blocks, and describe lessons to inform future programming.

Overall, evaluators found that while there were initiatives to facilitate linkages between building blocks, these efforts were often fragmented. Improved coordination among stakeholders could strengthen the coherence across the building blocks, thereby enhancing the impact of USAID's ocean plastics programming.

EXAMPLES OF COORDINATED EFFORTS ACROSS BUILDING BLOCKS

The following sections provide examples from the portfolio where efforts were made to coordinate relationships between building blocks. These examples highlight successes in achieving coherence and integrated programming.

Private sector partners and grantees viewed PSE as a key link between multiple building blocks, including *Data-Driven Policies for Circularity*, *Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment*, and *Inclusive, Just, and Equitable System*. To promote data-driven policies, improve material circularity, and reduce plastic production with private sector partners, USAID's programs provided varying evidence of PSE success. For example:

- *Pisco, Peru*: USAID signed an MOU with the private sector for glass collection, reinforcing program continuity and complementing MOUs with other companies related to plastic initiatives. This collaboration empowered a family-operated association, increasing synergies among several building blocks, including:
 - *Inclusive, Just, and Equitable System*: Raised local collector income, diversified materials, taught women to operate motor vehicles and secure their driver's licenses, generated green economy jobs, and improved worker health and safety conditions.
 - *Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment*: Increased glass collection that would otherwise go to the municipal dump.
 - *Green Jobs and Local Innovations*: Provided suitable transportation (motorcycle and collection cages) and opportunities to purchase other appropriate equipment with increased income.
- *Ambon and Semarang, Indonesia*: USAID's partnerships with private sector grantees yielded significant results and linkages across three building blocks:
 - *Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment*: Increased volume of purchased material from collectors.

- *Green Jobs and Local Innovations*: Expanded and diversified plastic processing capabilities with USAID-funded equipment for pelletizing and flaking.
- *Inclusive, Just, and Equitable System*: Improved workplace conditions and compliance with safety regulations, enhanced livelihoods through salary increases and improved benefits, and stabilized pricing on the local market for materials from junk shops and collectors.

OPPORTUNITIES TO FOSTER SYNERGIES ACROSS BUILDING BLOCKS

The challenge of handling low-value plastics offers an example of where USAID can better strengthen synergies among the building blocks by further USAID engagement with actors who work with low-value plastic solutions.

In the long-term, USAID could combine policy interventions (*Data Driven Policies* building block) with SBC approaches (*Sustained Behavior Change* building block) to help reduce low-value plastics in the first place. In the shorter term however, evaluators noted that several USAID activities have developed innovative solutions for reusing or recycling low-value plastics. In addition to reducing the amount of this material in the waste stream, such programming has created green jobs through these innovations, or are on the path to do so once they enter into full production. In part, these local innovations, and the sustainability of the green jobs they generate, require reliable supplies of low-value plastic materials, most of which are collected by informal workers or waste pickers. USAID could do more to enhance the ability of waste pickers to safely collect and earn money from low-value plastics (supporting *Inclusive, Just, and Equitable System*) by better integrating this building block into the two other blocks of *Green Jobs and Local Innovations*, and *Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment*.

To this end, it will be critical to improve recyclability of low value-plastics and create markets for the recycled material. Until there are such reliable markets, there is little incentive for informal collectors and aggregators to focus on these low-value plastics. There is an opportunity for USAID to better involve and integrate informal waste workers into such synergistic enabling environments that can provide safe and equitable working conditions linked to green jobs and local innovations in support of more efficient SWM systems (i.e. by reducing plastic waste entering dumps and landfills). Evaluators noted instances of USAID programming linking several building blocks by addressing low-value plastics in the following examples:

- *Semarang, Indonesia*: By building a facility to produce paving bricks and other eco-construction materials from low-value plastic (seeking to replicate their successful experience at their Jakarta factory), a private sector grantee in the current program seeks to collect 21 tons/month of low-value plastic once fully operational. However, it is important to note that the grantee's business model still relies on an ongoing supply of SUPs. The production of eco-bricks or pavers made from low-value plastic thus provides other actors with an incentive for continued production or consumption of SUPs.
 - *Green Jobs and Local Innovations*: The facility will create green jobs and will also provide more reliable income for informal collectors and the over 40 waste banks that will provide materials.

- *Inclusive, Just, and Equitable System:* Importantly, this facility's purchases of low-value plastic are linked to the capacity building and women's empowerment of a fellow grantee in the WWEE/BBEST program that builds skills for women in SWM.
 - *Sustained Behavior Change to Reduce Single-Use Plastics:* There is a potential linkage to the SBC building block in that consumers could be encouraged to donate their low-value plastic to the grantee's green enterprise. During an interview, the grantee noted that they have a growing Instagram following which has catalyzed some members of the public to send their SUPs to the grantees' facility at no cost. While nascent, this example highlights potential growth and linkages with an additional building block.
- *Da Nang, Vietnam:* A grantee in the current program has designed and implemented unique mini-MRFs across seven wards of the city.
- *Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment:* According to the grantee, the new MRFs have increased collection points across the city and resulted in increased collection and diversity of recyclables, including low-value plastics.
 - *Green Jobs and Local Innovations:* The MRFs were co-designed with small-scale aggregators for specific needs. These aggregators have now expanded or modified their collection centers, and have increased the overall volume of material in their small businesses.
 - *Inclusive, Just, and Equitable System:* These MRFs provided better working conditions for informal workers in the form of safer collection and storage facilities, as well as increased income for these workers due to greater volume and diversity of materials they're able to collect.
- *Colombo, Sri Lanka:* A grantee in the current program has developed a process to produce notebook covers, portfolios, and other materials from low-value plastics. USAID provided equipment and facilitated engagement with another donor who provided construction funds for a new factory building. Although the evaluators noted the synergies among several building blocks in this example, the points below also include cautionary notes that complicate the intended benefits and synergies.
- *Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment:* While the project will re-use SUP materials, according to the grantee there are currently no connections or planned connections with the municipal SWM system or other formalized collection processes. This raises questions on supply sustainability. Additionally, the grantee noted during an interview that when the new facility is fully operational, they expect to remove 4 tons/year of low-value plastic from the waste stream. By comparison, evaluators found that a different individual collector interviewed could gather up to 7 tons/year of recyclable materials without USAID subsidies. These two collection numbers entail different mixes of plastic materials, but are nonetheless notable.
 - *Green Jobs and Local Innovations:* USAID TA supported business planning and facilitated connections with potential business partners for this grantee.

- *Sustained Behavior Change to Reduce Single-Use Plastics:* The entrepreneur indicated during an interview that they can potentially amplify their nascent social media and informal educational outreach that, in part, results in donated SUP and low-value plastic materials from students and local residents. Visiting interns from local universities are currently volunteering their time to the grantee at no cost, with the entrepreneur sharing his intellectual property and donating his time in return. These could represent opportunities for increased synergies with behavior change activities given the communication and outreach capacities of the individual grantee in the community.

Another opportunity to strengthen linkages between building blocks was in the context of underserved areas, where **USAID needs to consider specific contextual challenges, especially in small islands.**

Local actors in Sri Lanka, Vietnam, the Philippines, and the Maldives noted that increased donor activity in major urban areas could lead to overlapping funding, while remote areas have significant unmet SWM needs due to higher transportation costs and less recycling infrastructure. This process can lead to inequitable systems (affecting the *Inclusive, Just, and Equitable System* building block) and a lack of SWM (affecting the *Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment* building block) in high-need areas. For example:

- *Jaffna, Sri Lanka:* Despite successful plastic ban policies in Colombo, Jaffna faced significant challenges with plastic waste, including piles of refuse and banned materials at the MRF. Interviews and site visits indicated improvements in overall collection services but highlighted the need for more resources, indicating an opportunity for more USAID investment in this district that takes into account the linkages between all five building blocks.
- *Batangas, the Philippines:* A grantee emphasized the need for increased focus on remote areas where waste is often burned or ends up in the environment due to a lack of infrastructure.
- *Nationwide, Vietnam:* A government stakeholder noted that high-value plastics are often not collected in remote locations due to transport and volume issues, despite being collected in urban areas by informal networks.
- *Baa Atoll, the Maldives:* A grantee is developing models for remote islands to manage waste better, reducing open burning and ocean dumping through separation models, dealing with organic waste, and providing subsidized logistics and transport of waste.

EQ4

To what extent has USAID's approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUPs (including products and packaging)?

OVERVIEW OF EVALUATIVE CONCLUSIONS

EQ4 was included in the evaluation with recognition by USAID that upstream ocean plastics programming is nascent, but still important to evaluate for future programming decisions. Across the evaluation's six country cases, over half of the interviews and site visits did not generate evidence that USAID programming contributed to upstream enabling environments for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUPs. While there were a number of examples of upstream efforts across country cases, they did not represent as yet a comprehensive effort to improve the enabling environment. In an effort to present data relevant for USAID decision making, findings and conclusions presented below focus on examples that yielded evidence. Performance ratings for EQ4 are summarized in [Appendix A](#).

4.1. POLICY SUPPORT/DEVELOPMENT FOR UPSTREAM STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS (INCLUDING BANS)

Despite USAID's primary focus on downstream actions such as enhancing waste management practices and recycling, evaluators did find some examples of USAID's contribution to upstream policy approaches in areas like EPR and the eco-design of products and packaging. For example:

- *Nationally, Sri Lanka:* A USAID grantee developed an EPR roadmap and a reporting platform that is now being used for a national voluntary reporting pilot, an example of USAID's contribution to a policy-enabling environment that is beginning to bear fruit. An interviewee remarked that USAID's support has also fostered conversations around plastic pollution that have **made these organizations recognized stakeholders in national upstream dialogue**; an important, if incremental, step toward upstream policy development.
- *Nationally, the Philippines:* While data from the Philippines did not surface evidence of concrete policy development due to direct USAID support, a notable indirect contribution reported by an earlier USAID grantee was the **incubation of in-country ocean plastics specialists** that used their experience working on USAID projects as an entry point for upstream policy influence. According to the grantee, this cadre of stakeholders have now been granted seats at the table for EPR policy and national action planning.

SUP bans are an upstream policy approach that were not a key focus of the USAID programming studied in this evaluation. But in the limited engagement sites where USAID partners overlapped with these policies, interesting findings became apparent. Interviewees across Vietnam, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and the Philippines saw SUP bans as challenging, but effective, with the right measures in place, with USAID providing important convening power to facilitate better policy making in this area. For example:

- *Nationally, Sri Lanka:* Following an unsuccessful 2017 polyethylene bag ban, largely due to

insufficient consultation with private sector stakeholders, a USAID grantee co-chaired a steering committee with government stakeholders and the private sector that helped design a stepwise process solution for banning specific products. The retooled bag ban was reinstated, and other SUPs were banned sequentially. A grantee noted that USAID **helped private companies collaborate with the government on effective policy decisions**. While interviews and site visits provided evidence of reduced SUP use around the greater Colombo area in particular, banned plastic materials were still evident outside the capital, especially in Galle and Jaffna, indicating the need for improved implementation by the government.

- *Ha Long Bay, Vietnam*: An earlier USAID grantee implemented a ban on expanded polystyrene foam and other plastic fishing equipment that was polluting the bay. As was the case for Sri Lanka's bag ban, a key component of this grantee's approach was a focus on **providing alternative solutions to SUPs**. While regional bans are an important incremental step toward reducing usage, one interviewee highlighted the challenge of interconnectedness in ocean plastics policy, "We were able to do a ban in Ha Long bay with the city under [an earlier USAID activity], but if the neighboring city doesn't do a similar ban, the plastic pollution still comes into the bay. We need a national ban."
- *Nationally, the Maldives*: Interviews and site observations illuminated the **value of longer-term funding** to support the data required for policy design, local government capacity building, appropriate technological interventions, and SBC to promote upstream programming in the transition from USAID's centrally managed programs to the USAID Mission's bilateral program. USAID's initial support brought dedicated staff for small-island SWM and upstream design, allowing the USAID Mission to build on the momentum of SUP bans and local plastics reduction policies enacted by the Maldives government. Even as a relatively new bilateral program working through the challenges of new staff and new stakeholder relationships, the program has learned and applied several lessons from prior USAID activities, especially with youth and community members at the heart of the tourism and fishing economies. For example, the Implementing Partner is using many previously developed USAID tools (e.g. Trials of Improved Practices for SBC, Political Economy Analysis, and the Private Sector Landscape Analysis) to design and implement partnerships with local businesses, and to define how best to overcome resident reluctance to drink filtered water and thus eliminate plastic bottled water.

4.2. INVESTMENT IN REFILL / REUSE PILOTS

Four interviews surfaced findings related to refill/reuse pilots, and in nearly all these cases, COVID-19 either interrupted or shuttered their implementation. Half of the private sector actors interviewed were encouraged by the (incomplete) pilot results, remarking that pilots might have been successful if not for the pandemic. Findings from these interviews are highlighted below.

- *Negros Island, the Philippines*: An earlier USAID grantee developed models for refillable stores that included a toolkit and demonstrations for corporate plastic producers on the feasibility of refillable products. These **stores eventually closed due to COVID-19 and related market forces**. A compelling finding from this activity was that a majority of program participants walked away believing small-scale refill and reuse projects like the one the grantee implemented

are unsustainable from a business model perspective. During an interview, a grantee representative shared, “Our project showed that they can’t earn more with the environmental business models, not to mention consumer reception. Only pushing from an altruistic level we fall short. Where is the capital and where is the power to change it, [programming] must be through the biggest players.”

- *Hulhumalé, the Maldives:* According to a USAID grantee, they achieved a 100% user acceptance rate in the neighborhoods where they promoted water filtration systems, thus reducing plastic bottle use and improving well-being, as residents were pleased at no longer having to carry heavy water jugs to their homes or up multiple flights of stairs to their apartments. This grantee’s experience showed how USAID support created an enabling environment for a successful pilot and demonstrated the potential for going to scale with additional funding. The program was less successful in getting people to use reusable diapers or eliminate use of plastic bags, primarily due to a lack of regulatory support and market availability of alternative products, indicating an opportunity for broader systems interventions combined with SBC. According to the Implementing Partner of the new bilateral program, related activities are being integrated into their programming.
- *Baa Atoll, Maldives:* A USAID grantee established a local SWM model and sustainability framework in concert with communities and island councils. Complementing the specific activities supported by USAID to expand this NGO grantee’s model implementation to more islands, the NGO also used private sector and other donor funding to establish networks among Women’s Development Committees within the Island Councils, promoting the resale and exchange of household goods, toys, and clothes for reuse. This NGO also developed water bottling plants on the islands to reduce the use of SUPs. Evaluators found that this grantee’s model, which relies heavily on **collaboration with island communities and Island Councils**, is also influencing the design of the new bilateral program, in recognizing the importance of local engagement and building on the global program’s tools and formative research findings. This dynamic among two generations of USAID programs highlights the value of multi-year or longer-term funding.

4.3. SBC EFFORTS TO REDUCE SUP DEMAND

This evaluation found some evidence of SBC efforts to reduce SUP use, but these were not the primary focus of USAID programming. While local communities have received SBC training through USAID support, it often emphasized recycling and waste separation, given the limited capacity of existing SWM systems. Interviews and site visits led evaluators to conclude that given the rate of increase in plastic pollution, waste management in the form of collection, recycling, and disposal are unlikely to be sufficient at controlling plastic pollution. Evaluators documented widespread overwhelm among most stakeholders interviewed, underscoring the real **challenge of designing evidence-based SBC interventions that are able to meet people and systems where they are**. The evaluation team identified an opportunity to catalyze meaningful shifts in societal attitudes and behaviors with more USAID investment in SBC to address the broader issue of SUP consumption, with the important caveat that SBC initiatives are difficult without complementary regulatory policies and competitive alternative

solutions available in the market. Thus, SBC actions working congruently with these approaches are likely to be the most effective. For example:

- *Pisco, Peru*: USAID provided tricycles to a grantee to collect recyclables directly from households within local communities. While this initiative increased recycling collection rates, evaluators identified a missed opportunity for the project to also foster a deeper understanding of the imperative to reduce SUP consumption. Although households became more adept at separating recyclables, there remained a crucial gap in awareness regarding the overarching need to minimize SUP usage. Consequently, individuals may have viewed their actions solely through the lens of aiding recyclers rather than recognizing the larger ecological imperative of curbing SUP consumption.
- *Mancora, Peru*: This USAID-supported municipality has launched initiatives to promote recycling through the deployment of "environmental coordinators". These coordinators conduct household visits and organize community training events aimed at educating and sensitizing families about sustainable waste management practices. While these efforts have contributed to an uptick in recyclable materials collected by local recyclers, there remains uncertainty regarding the integration of sustainable consumption principles and plastic reduction demands into community behavioral patterns. Despite the strides made in bolstering recycling rates, evaluators did not identify any notable shift towards sustainable consumption habits and reduced plastic usage within the community, indicating a need for longer-term investments in SBC analysis and activities.

Evaluators documented limited yet instructive examples of USAID-funded programs that have utilized SBC with encouraging results. For example:

- *Hue City, Vietnam*: According to a Vietnamese Environmental Protection Agency official interviewed, the Agency recorded an 8-10% reduction of waste generation through community awareness and focus on the 3Rs. The interviewee mentioned that this was due to the help of the USAID-supported city waste action plan, and improved general awareness on waste management through the program's bin and household segregation initiatives.
- *Male/Hulhumalé, the Maldives*: A USAID grantee focused exclusively on SBC efforts to reduce SUPs by conducting research on household behaviors related to SUPs, and piloting solutions to reduce consumption and promote plastic-free living. Interviews with grantee staff highlighted that water filters were readily accepted by households, successfully converting 100% of participants from bottled water to water filters. However, reusable diapers and plant-based bags had low adoption, primarily due to poor market availability of these alternative products.

USAID support for plastic reduction-focused upstream approaches are in alignment with the general scientific consensus on the negative effects of linear plastic production on greenhouse gas emissions, ecosystems, wildlife, and human health. However, the majority of evidence collected in this evaluation suggests **SBC initiatives are difficult without complementary regulatory policies and competitive alternative solutions available in the market**. Thus, SBC actions working congruently with these approaches are likely to be the most effective.

4.4. INVESTMENT IN ALTERNATIVE PRODUCTS/PACKAGING

Only a few examples emerged during interviews and site visits that provided evidence of USAID's contribution toward plastic-alternative products and packaging, which is itself a nascent and emerging sector for upstream solutions in lower and middle income countries. The USAID Implementing Partner only received a few grant proposals in this category. Of the evidence collected, the largest share of examples were either promising but isolated cases, or instances where local traction was unclear. Success stories were tied to USAID's **contributions toward facilitating market access and government collaboration for businesses producing eco-friendly alternatives** to plastic, in addition to **fostering corporate engagement and innovation** in sustainable packaging. For example:

- *Phú Quốc, Vietnam*: A USAID grantee that makes alternative products such as grass bags, straws, and other handicrafts was the only grantee interviewed to be doing so as a for-profit business. According to this interviewee, USAID's support for new market entry has led to significant sales of biodegradable grass products, such as bags and straws, though 80% of sales were international. The grantee representative interviewed identified closer collaboration with the Vietnamese government to address cost challenges as essential for further growth, as their grass straws are currently priced at four times the cost of plastic straws and double the price of paper straws.
- *Colombo, Sri Lanka*: A USAID grantee interviewed is working to build an enabling environment through corporate connections, research on new packaging, product development, and aligning EPR policies with sustainable alternatives. They connect large, fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies with research start-ups to create alternative packaging samples for industrial testing and potential adoption, with an aim of replacing current plastic packaging. This initiative started with a Challenge Platform that targeted local startups, but it quickly became apparent that there was not a pool of local applicants with plastic packing innovations in the works. With USAID support, the grantee was able to pivot and identify international solutions. As a result, four new packaging samples are now being tested by different companies, and are spurring new interest in investment for packaging R&D. Because most FMCG R&D is currently focused solely on products, the grantee emphasized the significance of the project's ability to foster mindset shifts in private sector partners. If adopted, these samples could lead to policy changes with private sector backing.
- *Hulhumalé, the Maldives*: USAID provided TA for a grantee under the current program whose research resulted in three alternative products that went on to be tested in communities: cloth diapers, plant-based plastic bags, and water filters. USAID's support for research that results in trialing of products is an important first step for procuring appropriate materials. While the grantee generated a 100% switch among participating households from plastic water bottles to water filters, the bag product had limited success due to market availability and lack of SWM services – people still required plastic bags for their regular garbage collection/disposal. Based on these lessons, the grantee now seeks to work more closely with the local waste management agency, WAMCO, and other government agencies to reconcile misaligned policies that, in part, proved to be challenges to adoption of their innovative products.

4.5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TO ASSESS RELEVANCE/UPTAKE OF UPSTREAM STRATEGIES

Engaging with stakeholders on upstream strategies and emerging policies is critical to the technical design, public receptivity, and implementation success of such initiatives. Given that upstream interventions and policy are such a nascent space, there is an important opportunity for USAID to play a larger convening role in stakeholder engagement and be a leader in promoting upstream approaches. Evaluators found limited examples of USAID grantee involvement in activities related to engaging stakeholders for upstream discussions, and of these, not all could be attributed to USAID's support. For example:

- *The Maldives, Nationally:* A USAID grantee established a promising network of Women Development Committees to discuss upstream strategies, while another grantee convened a technical advisory committee with stakeholders from the Ministry of Environment, the private sector, NGOs, and community members to engage in dialogue about product alternatives.
- *Vietnam, Nationally:* A representative from an earlier USAID grantee recounted their involvement in the development of EPR policy, which entailed engagement with government agencies to advocate for implementation of EPR approaches. Part of this process included a multi-stakeholder forum, convening government and private sector actors.
- *Sri Lanka, Nationally:* A USAID grantee indicated that USAID's support helped facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement, including from the private sector, on a more relevant and step-wise plastic ban process. This was accomplished through dialogues between the public and private sector via consortia that met regularly on plastics and EPR policies. One of the stronger claims to USAID creating an enabling environment for maximizing stakeholder participation comes from the private sector in Sri Lanka, where a grantee stated during an interview that USAID funding has directly contributed to an emerging startup scene for plastic pollution reduction innovations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following high-level recommendations presented here emerged from the evaluation team's analysis and observations and reflect the views of team members. They are intended to trigger a longer-term process within USAID to review and reflect on the evaluation findings and identify appropriate lessons to inform future programming. USAID intends to convene workshops with USAID Mission staff and Implementing Partners, and use these recommendations as a starting point to identify appropriate next steps for ongoing and new programs under the SOS Initiative.

EQ1: How effective have USAID's Ocean Plastics/SWM-related grants and Private Sector Engagement (PSE) mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?

1.1 EMPOWER LOCAL ACTORS AND ENHANCE LOCAL SOLUTIONS BY FACILITATING BROADER AND LONGER-TERM AWARDS AND STREAMLINING AWARD MANAGEMENT WITH INCREASED USAID MISSION DECISION-MAKING

USAID should consider shifting from a heavy reliance on grants under contract to larger awards directed at national or local organizations that have demonstrated capacity, and are now poised to be potential prime awardees or major sub-awardees. USAID should encourage management of local grants locally, reduce grant development time, and extend grant implementation timelines. They should allow more flexibility for local actors to adapt their approach within Project Descriptions, especially after formative research has been completed to inform the original proposal. Evaluators found that grantees across country cases were ultimately able to do better work with longer-term funding, either by getting repeat awards, securing bilateral program funding, or leveraging funds from other donors.

1.2 COMBINE PALLIATIVE INTERVENTIONS, LIKE BEACH CLEANUPS AND RIVER TRAPS, WITH DATA COLLECTION FOR INFORMING UPSTREAM POLICIES

Solid waste service delivery remains a crucial method to reduce marine litter, but local governments face significant budgetary constraints to expand services. As an intermediate solution, USAID could support local governments, NGOs, and the private sector with palliative interventions such as river traps to prevent waste from reaching the ocean. Further, these activities trace plastic waste sources, identify communities needing improved service delivery, and target private sector companies for upstream and downstream responsibility for their products, particularly packaging. This would allow USAID to directly assess their impact on preventing ocean plastic by tracking recovery efforts and to advocate for "data-driven policy for upstream solutions" by analyzing the types of waste and identifying the main contributing companies. This would support ongoing and/or anticipated efforts like EPR policies.

1.3 FUND LOCAL SOLUTIONS THAT WILL HAVE SCALABLE IMPACTS ON PLASTIC REDUCTION

USAID should invest in or partner with organizations and private sector companies capable of significantly scaling up operations, while balancing equitable relationships with waste pickers and smaller players. The evaluation found some examples of USAID supporting local actors and solutions that, from the outset, were not on a path to significantly affect the volume of plastics in the waste stream in their area of influence, or add much value to other ongoing plastic reduction actions in the area. For example,

USAID subsidized new processing equipment and facilitated construction subsidies from another donor for a local entrepreneur who produced notebook covers from low-value plastic, but their plastic diversion rate was actually less than that of some individual collectors in the same area. Another project anticipated collecting just 40 tons of plastic waste in two years and, importantly, most if not all of this material would have been collected by other informal collectors anyway. Although USAID's focus on supporting smaller enterprises is driven by equity considerations, this should be balanced with the potential for overall impact and scale.

EQ2: What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID's Ocean Plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and sub-national governments?

2.1 STRENGTHEN POLICY LINKAGES AND ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS ACROSS NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL LEVELS

USAID's work at the local government level has yielded positive results, which can be further enhanced by stronger connections with regional and national governments. Often, local governments are unable to make institutional changes without the support of higher levels of government. Additionally, some national policies are disconnected from local and regional needs. To address these gaps, USAID should focus on creating stronger policy linkages and enforcement mechanisms across all government levels. This involves designing mechanisms that mandate national government engagement and formalizing partnerships through MOUs, rather than relying on informal agreements. Strengthening these connections will support the enforcement of both local and national policies, ensuring continuity and effectiveness amidst local political turnover.

2.2 CONTINUE TO INVEST IN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, EMPOWERING THEM TO PROVIDE IMPROVED WASTE SERVICES AND INCLUDING UPSTREAM APPROACHES

USAID programming has successfully empowered local governments and NGOs in downstream collection efforts. However, to ensure sustainability and impact, local TA needs to expand to connect local governments with the national government, facilitate private sector partnerships (strategic alliances and voluntary agreements), implement policies to reduce SUPs, and develop funding mechanisms to cover costs. USAID should continue to assist local governments in identifying additional funding sources and accessing TA through stronger collaboration with the national government, academia, research organizations, and the private sector. Efforts should focus on developing reverse logistics and EPR policies as well as upstream initiatives.

2.3 PROMOTE EXCHANGE AND PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING, ALONG WITH BEST PRACTICES FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

One of the strengths of the USAID plastic prevention portfolio is the wide range of programming and initiatives across various locations. Intra-country exchanges can enhance learning and develop best practices from local government capacity building. These exchanges are already happening and, in many cases, they were initiated organically by grantees seeking more peer learning opportunities. Given this demand and the reported satisfaction and success of these limited knowledge exchanges, USAID should

expand these complementary efforts. Developing best practices and shared learning networks can help build on existing successes and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

2.4 CONTINUE TO ADAPT AND APPLY THE TOOLS, FORMATIVE RESEARCH, TRAINING PLATFORM, AND OTHER MECHANISMS THAT ENABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN SWM/3R SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

USAID programming has developed many tools and support mechanisms that help mobilize and institutionalize SWM/3R improvements. In many cases, these have been adapted and adopted by counterpart governments and are now part of the local governments' institutional systems. Supporting regular updates and adaptations to the self-administered SCIL could be particularly effective. Local government counterparts noted during interviews the valuable learning experience of applying Cost of Service Analysis (COSA), defining collection fee structures, defining documentation protocols as part of the SWM process, and cross-sector collaboration facilitated by USAID programming. Interviews with both governmental and NGO grantees also noted the useful practical exercise of designing and conducting formative research with the strong support of USAID Implementing Partners. Learning from similar contexts through peer engagement or visits to other engagement sites with comparable development scenarios was mentioned frequently as particularly valuable by grantees. Finally, USAID Mission staff, NGO grantees, and government partners all mentioned that access to USAID's learning platform was a key asset in current USAID programming.

EQ3: What key lessons can be learned from USAID's Ocean Plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?

3.1 ENHANCE BUILDING BLOCK LINKAGES BY INTEGRATING UPSTREAM CIRCULAR ECONOMY PRINCIPLES MORE HOLISTICALLY INTO PROGRAMMING

While USAID's current approach focuses more on downstream initiatives and recycling innovations, the building blocks provide opportunities for a more holistic application of circular economy principles. To address gaps in circular economy programming, USAID should expand its approach to include more upstream initiatives that promote alternatives to SUPs, foster technological and innovative solutions for waste reduction, and support circularity beyond collection, recycling, and disposal. Key areas of focus should include SBC to reduce SUPs, EPR that encourages enhanced product design, and industrial symbiosis practices that ensure reuse or refill systems are well coordinated.

3.2 CUSTOMIZE PROGRAM DESIGNS WHEN WORKING IN REMOTE ISLANDS AND UNDERSERVED AREAS

USAID should prioritize SWM programming in remote and underserved areas with significant waste management challenges. This approach involves assessing urban coverage to avoid duplication of donor efforts, identifying regions with substantial waste volumes and critical management issues, and providing targeted assistance to local governments in less attractive regions for private sector investment. This support could include capacity building, TA, and incentivizing private sector involvement, increasing the inclusivity and equity of the SWM and circular economy system.

EQ4: To what extent has USAID's approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of single-use plastics (including products and packaging)?

4.1 FOCUS ON REDUCTIONS, REFILLABLES, AND ALTERNATIVES AS WAYS TO TACKLE LOW-VALUE PLASTICS NOT TYPICALLY RECYCLED, WHILE FOCUSING FUTURE PROJECTS AROUND UPSTREAM SOLUTIONS

Given the current underfunding of upstream programming, which has been shown to be more effective in the longer term than downstream recovery for preventing ocean plastic pollution, USAID should significantly rebalance the ocean plastics portfolio to prioritize upstream investments. At least 50% of future USAID ocean plastics investments should be oriented toward upstream solutions. This includes funding for research, development, innovation, and economic analysis to adapt plastic alternatives to local contexts, similar to effective projects in the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Priority should be given to novel and innovative strategies for waste avoidance and reduction, including trials for refillable innovations, exploring biomaterials solutions to replace SUPs, and fostering innovation ecosystems that optimize value chain scenarios to reduce SUP usage.

4.2 ADVOCATE AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FRAMEWORKS THAT EMPHASIZE UPSTREAM ACTIVITIES

Building on USAID's success in supporting EPR frameworks, future projects should broaden the focus beyond recycling and collection to encompass more upstream activities that incorporate USAID's TA and advocacy support. This includes ecodesign of products and packaging, reduction, refill systems, and adoption of plastic alternatives, including biomaterials. These efforts should incorporate local incentives and enforce corporate commitments to support robust legislation that cannot be undermined by private sector lobbying during policy development.

4.3 CREATE ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR REDUCTION POLICIES THROUGH APPLIED RESEARCH ON CONTEXTUALLY-SPECIFIC INCENTIVE STRUCTURES

USAID should contribute significantly to waste reduction policies, including SUP bans, by researching and promoting effective and context-appropriate incentive structures. This includes studying successful models from around the world to identify strategies, including SBC, that incentivize individuals, businesses, and governments to reduce their plastic use. Supporting regulations around SUP bans should be prioritized whenever there are economically viable and available alternatives. This approach moves beyond downstream activities to focus on comprehensive policy and incentive frameworks that drive substantial reductions in plastic use.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY FIGURES & TABLES

The following tables and figures summarize the evaluation team’s analysis of the six country cases using the evaluation rubric. The rubric contained 12 evaluation sub-criteria and a performance rating scale, both co-created with USAID (Appendix D).

Data from each individual interview, group interview, or site observation¹⁰ were rated once, along each of the 12 evaluation sub-criteria. The structure of the performance rating scale varied. EQ1 and EQ2, pertaining to Empowerment and Institutionalization, used a six category rating (Excellent - Very Good - Good - Fair - Poor - No Evidence). EQ3 and EQ4, pertaining to the Building Blocks and the Upstream Enabling Environment, used a four category rating scale (Excellent to Very Good - Good to Fair - Poor - No Evidence). By country, scores were tallied and the performance level with the high frequency was designated as the overall country performance rating for each sub-criteria. In the event of ties or tallies within 1-2 counts of each other, a combined rating (such as “Good” to “Very Good”) was reported. The same approach was used among all individual interviews, group interviews, and site observations combined for portfolio-level ratings.

The purpose of the evaluation rubric was to guide the evaluation team’s conclusions from the two phases of coding. USAID and the evaluation team co-created this rubric to represent an “ideal” so that progress could be tracked and described, and with an understanding that most of the “Excellent” ratings would require much more time to achieve than USAID’s programming currently covers. To this end, USAID did not expect to be rated as “Excellent” but sought to use the rubric as a tool to understand what it would take to move closer to a programming “ideal”.

Table 1: EQ1 Empowerment Sub-Criteria Ratings for Country Cases and Ocean Plastic Portfolio

Case/Sub-Criteria	Identify	Implement	Sustain
Peru	Good	Good	Good
The Philippines	Good	Good	Good
Indonesia	Good	Good	Good
Sri Lanka	Very Good	Good	Good
The Maldives	Excellent	Excellent	Good
Vietnam	Very Good	Good	Good
Portfolio	Good to Very Good	Good	Good

Note: The six-point rating scale included No Evidence, Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, and Excellent.

¹⁰ Site observation data were combined with group and individual interview data where applicable, except for three site observations in the Philippines, explaining the final count of 100 data collection events analyzed instead of 120.

Table 2: EQ2 Institutionalization Sub-Criteria Ratings for Country Cases and Ocean Plastic Portfolio¹¹

Case/Factor	Plans	Policies	Implement
The Philippines	Fair	Fair	Fair
Indonesia	Fair	Fair	Fair
Peru	Good	Poor	Fair
Sri Lanka	Fair to Good	Very Good	Good
The Maldives	Good	Good	Good
Vietnam	Very Good	Good	Good to Very Good
Portfolio	Good	Fair to Good	Fair to Good

Note: The six-point rating scale included No Evidence, Poor, Fair, Good, Very Good, and Excellent.

Table 3: Share of EQ3 Data Collection Events Coded by Building Block¹²

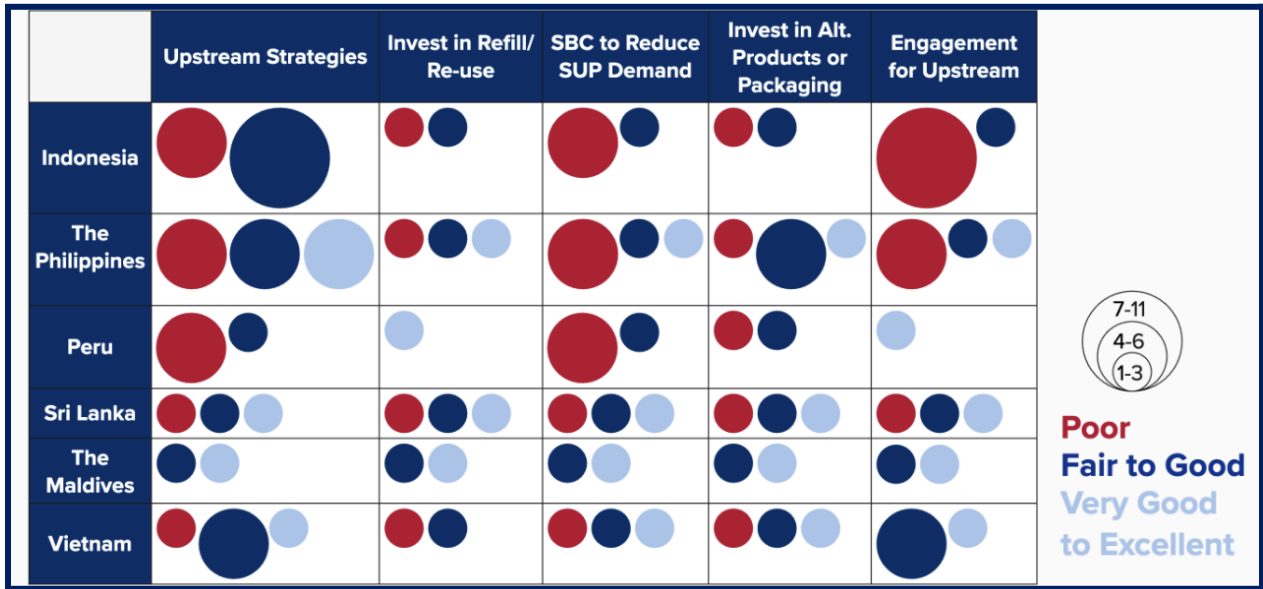
Country/Data Collection Event	Inclusive, Just and Equitable System	Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment	Green Jobs and Local Innovations	Data Driven Policies for Circularity	Sustained Behavior Change to Reduce Single-Use Plastics
Peru (n=14)	50%	86%	43%	21%	79%
Philippines (n=25)	72%	88%	72%	56%	64%
Indonesia (n=27)	81%	96%	67%	44%	81%
Sri Lanka (n=15)	47%	80%	47%	67%	60%

¹¹ This table summarizes ratings that were assessed using the evaluation rubric co-designed with USAID to measure the progress USAID programs have made in moving toward institutionalizing their approach in each country case.

¹² These percentages represent instances when evaluators deemed that building blocks were manifest/relevant/represented in discussion/observation data collection events. As shown in the table, evaluators found that all five building blocks were represented to varying extents across country cases.

Country/Data Collection Event	Inclusive, Just and Equitable System	Effective Solid Waste Services and Investment	Green Jobs and Local Innovations	Data Driven Policies for Circularity	Sustained Behavior Change to Reduce Single-Use Plastics
Maldives (n=3)	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%
Vietnam (n=16)	63%	88%	75%	56%	88%
Portfolio (N=100)	67%	89%	64%	50%	75%

Figure I: Summary of EQ4 Performance Ratings by Country & Sub-Topics (n=50)



Note: Scale number ranges described in the figure’s key represent the frequency of interview performance ratings, excluding interviews that generated ‘No Evidence’. Because of the evaluation rubric design, it should be noted that a “Poor” rating can be misunderstood as poor performance, when it’s possible this just means there is limited USAID work being done in an area.

APPENDIX B: FINAL EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WORK

STATEMENT OF WORK

Performance Evaluation of USAID's Oceans Plastics Portfolio to Inform the Save our Seas Initiative

I. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this formative performance evaluation of the USAID Oceans Plastics Portfolio is to gather evidence regarding implementation of programming within the portfolio to date. This evidence will be used by the Green Cities Division of the Center for Environment, Energy, and Infrastructure (EEI) within the Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI), USAID Mission staff focusing on Oceans Plastics programming, and associated Implementing Partners (IPs) to inform the implementation of existing programs and the design of future activities.

Additional anticipated users of the evaluation include key stakeholders in countries where USAID is implementing or plans to implement relevant activities, including USAID Missions implementing solid waste management/recycling programs using various earmarks/directives. Such stakeholders include government counterparts, private sector actors, environmental groups, and other organizations or individuals associated with reducing ocean plastics, improving solid waste management, and enhancing circular economy efforts. The evidence generated through this evaluation will likely influence key programming, policy, and resource decisions among these actors in the years to come.

II. Summary Information

Strategy/Project/Activity Name(s)	Oceans Plastics Portfolio
USAID Office(s)	DDI/EEI/Green Cities Division
Implementer(s)	The evaluation of the Ocean Plastics Portfolio will include activities implemented by Development Innovations Group (Municipal Waste Recycling Program, MWRP) and Tetra Tech (Clean Cities, Blue Ocean, CCBO), but is not an activity-level evaluation.
Cooperative Agreement/Contract #	MWRP's Contract No: AID-OAA-I-14-00066/AID-OAA-TO-16-00026 CCBO's Contract No. AID-OAA-I-14-00059/7200AA19F00016
Total Estimated Ceiling of the Evaluated Project/Activity (TEC)	MWRP's TEC: \$14.1 million CCBO's TEC: \$52.8 million
Life of Strategy/Project/Activity	The Oceans Plastics Portfolio has been active since 2016 with several activities and implementing mechanisms within it. Programs included within the evaluation include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Waste Recycling Program • Clean Cities, Blue Ocean
Active Geographic Regions	Ocean plastic pollution activities have thus far been implemented in over 25 cities across Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Peru, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Micronesia, and Kenya. The lowest implementing unit of activities is typically at the city/municipal government level.
Development Objective(s) (DOs)	N/A
Required evaluation?	No
External or internal evaluation?	External

III. Background

Globally, concern over the implications of increasing levels of ocean plastic pollution is becoming a commonplace issue for development actors. The growth of megacities around the world, and particularly in developing countries has increased the flow of plastics into the world’s oceans and necessitated USAID to develop a portfolio of programs designed to mitigate and address this growing issue. Starting in 2016, USAID has been investing in various Oceans Plastics oriented programs, but to date no evaluations of those programs have been conducted.

A. Description of the Problem and Context

Each year, 11 million metric tons of plastic pollution enter our oceans, equivalent to more than one garbage truck every minute. This rate is expected to double by the end of this decade and triple by 2040—threatening the world’s delicate marine ecosystems, major industries such as fishing and tourism, food security, and ultimately human health. Stopping plastic pollution at the source - before it enters the ocean - is the most effective way to address this challenge. The majority of plastic ocean debris comes from rapidly growing cities and towns along rivers and coastal areas in the developing world — where waste management systems, infrastructure, and governments struggle to keep pace with growing populations and increasing amounts of waste. Strengthening waste management systems and promoting circular economies in key cities in the developing world can significantly reduce the amount of plastic waste flowing into the ocean.

B. Description of the Intervention to be Evaluated and Theory of Change

This evaluation is looking holistically at the Ocean Plastics portfolio which includes a variety of implementation mechanisms running from 2016 to present. The first centrally managed program that was implemented was the [Municipal Waste Recycling Program](#) (2016-2021), which tested locally-led

solutions aimed to improve solid waste management and recycling systems through 30 grants in **four countries**: Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Lessons from MWRP informed USAID’s global flagship program in 2019, [Clean Cities, Blue Ocean \(CCBO\)](#), which was designed to implement the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act. CCBO works in collaboration with global, regional, and local stakeholders to test, scale, and share inclusive and sustainable solutions to promote the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), strengthen solid waste management systems, and build or advance local circular economies. The program is active in **10 countries** in Asia (Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Vietnam), Pacific Islands (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Peru, Dominican Republic).

In 2022 USAID announced its [Save Our Seas Initiative](#), designed to support implementation of the Save Our Seas Act 2.0 of 2020 and to combat ocean plastic pollution globally. The Initiative builds on USAID’s on the ground experience over the past six years, and scales our [Building Block](#) approach within key countries and to additional geographies for greater impact. The Initiative is set up to launch **14 new country and regional programs** in key geographies that represent 40 percent of total global mismanaged plastic waste. It will also create significant opportunities to pool resources from the private sector and donor partners. At the time of the evaluation, bilateral programs had already begun in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Vietnam, and Kenya.

USAID Ocean Plastics Programming Geographic Scope



In addition to activities under the ocean plastics earmark, **several USAID Missions** have been implementing solid waste management and recycling programs through other sources of funding. Several other Missions have also expressed interest in exploring programs to improve solid waste management and recycling, making the Green Cities Division a hub for technical expertise on this subject. Therefore, findings from this evaluation will also support Missions beyond those receiving ocean plastics funds.

This evaluation will primarily cover centrally managed activities under Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (2019 to present) and Municipal Waste Recycling Program (2016-2021), and may include initial bilateral SOS Initiative activities being implemented in Kenya (late 2022 to present). The evaluation will include grantees that began under MWWRP in 2016, but will primarily focus on those grantees that continued under the CCBO program (2019 to present) to attempt to uncover sustainability-oriented questions.

While no formal Theory of Change exists for this portfolio, the USAID's Ocean Plastics team has developed five building blocks to guide Agency programming to address plastic pollution. Together, these building blocks create the foundation for preventing additional plastic pollution using a local systems approach. This is a brief outline of what each building block entails:

1. *Data-driven policies for circularity* - promoting evidence-based policy and regulatory reforms.
2. *Sustained behavior change to reduce single use plastics* - encouraging sustained behavior change for increasing recycling and reducing demand for single-use plastics.
3. *Effective solid waste services and investment* - supporting capacity for waste collection and processing and investments in recycling infrastructure and sanitary landfills.
4. *Green jobs and local innovations* - developing markets for locally viable innovations and technologies.
5. *An inclusive, just and equitable system* - supporting all members along the solid waste management chain - including informal waste collectors - with safe working conditions, livable wages, and by empowering women and other marginalized groups.

The five building blocks are based on the Agency's global expertise in local government capacity strengthening and natural resource governance and lessons learned from USAID's first programs dedicated to addressing plastic pollution: Municipal Waste Recycling Program (2016 – 2021), Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (2019 – 2024), Circulate Capital Partnership (2019 – present).

C. Portfolio Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan

There is no formal MEL Plan for the entire ocean plastics portfolio, but activity-level MEL Plans were developed for MWWRP and CCBO. The team therefore collects performance indicator data associated with the building blocks, and this data will be available to the evaluation team. Similarly, USAID will make, at minimum, the following information available to the evaluation team, beyond what is publicly available on USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC):

- Progress reports (quarterly, annual, final, etc.) for any awards being evaluated
- Performance monitoring data for associated programs
- Any assessments or similar research conducted in advance of, or during implementation of, Oceans Plastics programming
- Grantee concept notes, initial gender assessments, and other project documents such as review checklists, organizational assessments, and progress reports.

IV. Evaluation Questions

- I. How effective have USAID's ocean plastics/solid waste management¹-related grants and private

sector engagement mechanisms been at empowering local actors² to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?

2. What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within local governments³?
3. What key lessons can be learned from USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?⁴
4. To what extent has USAID’s approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for desired upstream outcomes such as the uptake of reduce/reuse/refill strategies, including adoption of alternatives to single-use plastics?⁵

Notes on evaluation questions:

¹ USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management programs refer to activities funded by the current “ocean plastics” directive/earmark and the previous “waste and recycling” directive/earmark.

² Evaluation Questions 1 and 2 aim to better understand how well USAID’s approach has contributed to the Agency’s localization agenda. “Local actors” refer to individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments—refer to USAID’s [Locally Led Development](#) guidance for details.

³ “Local government” can refer to subnational (city, district, provincial) and national government.

⁴ In addition to understanding how the five building blocks work together, we would like to also understand if any components are missing from our building blocks approach.

⁵ USAID acknowledges potential data limitations and evaluability challenges associated with Evaluation Question 4, and requests the evaluation team explore innovative methodologies in an attempt to answer this question to the best of their ability. This question will therefore be of lower priority than Questions 1-3, but will nevertheless be critical to helping USAID understand how to improve our upstream activities.

Across all evaluation questions, USAID requires all person-level data to be disaggregated by sex; disaggregates could also include other relevant sub-groups as appropriate, such as youth or informal versus formal waste collectors. A gender-based lens should also be applied to Question 1 and Question 4 in particular, and wherever else it is relevant. It will also be important to consider the extent to which the priorities of informal waste workers have been incorporated into USAID programming throughout all five building blocks.

V. Evaluation Design and Methodology

This will be a formative performance evaluation of USAID’s ocean plastics portfolio to document lessons learned from USAID’s local systems approach to test, scale, and share inclusive and sustainable solutions to promote the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), strengthen solid waste management systems, and build or advance local circular economies. The evaluation will focus on the overall approach and not answer questions regarding the impact of programming itself. Findings from the evaluation will directly inform

the implementation of existing plastic pollution programs (centrally managed and bilateral) and the design of future activities.

Based on the evaluation questions above, USAID anticipates the evaluation will emphasize the use of secondary data from program and MEL documentation, available data from other organizations or government partners, as well as qualitative data collection methods such as key informant interviews, group interviews, and focus groups. Participants will likely include government officials, implementing partners, grantees, other donors/stakeholders working on plastic pollution, and may also include community members. The use of quantitative methods is strongly encouraged whenever possible in an attempt to make this a mixed-methods evaluation where findings can be triangulated and corroborated across multiple data collection and analysis methodologies. Ultimately, however, the determination of the appropriate design and methods will be up to the discretion of the evaluation team, pending approval from USAID in the design document.

The evaluation team, in collaboration with USAID, will finalize the evaluation methods before fieldwork begins and will submit a formal evaluation design document, including data collection instruments, for review and approval.

VI. Deliverables and Reporting Requirements

Evaluation Design Document

Within three to four weeks of the start of the evaluation, the evaluation team will submit an evaluation design to the USAID Evaluation Activity Manager (Vidya Venkataramanan, DDI/EEI/GC Plastic Pollution Advisor). The design will be shared with relevant stakeholders and partners for comment before being finalized and will become an annex to the evaluation report. USAID will aim to complete this review within 10 working days.

The evaluation design will include:

- Proposed evaluation schedule and milestones;
- Detailed evaluation design matrix that links the Evaluation Questions from the SOW (in their finalized form) to data sources, methods, and the data analysis plan;
- Draft questionnaires and other data collection instruments or their main features;
- List of potential interviewees and sites to be visited and proposed selection criteria and/or sampling plan (must include sampling methodology and methods, including a justification of sample size and any applicable calculations);
- Limitations to the evaluation design; and
- Dissemination plan (designed in collaboration with USAID)

Weekly Update Memos

On a weekly basis, or as otherwise agreed upon, the evaluation team will provide a written weekly status update providing USAID with information on progress to date, any issues encountered including plans

for resolution, and plans for the upcoming week. Any critical or urgent issues that arise will be brought to the attention of USAID immediately.

Mission In-Briefings and Exit Briefings

Based on selected Missions' preferences, the evaluation team will conduct in-briefings and/or exit briefings to inform Mission POCs about data collection plans and any preliminary observations.

Preliminary Findings and Recommendations Workshop

The evaluation team is expected to facilitate a workshop with USAID staff and evaluation stakeholders (as appropriate) where the evaluation team can present and validate preliminary findings and conclusions prior to drafting the evaluation report. This workshop should also incorporate time for collaboratively discussing preliminary recommendations to ensure the knowledge and experience of both the evaluation team and USAID are brought to bear on the recommendations, making them more actionable. This approach allows USAID to determine the most relevant and appropriate recommendations for a post-evaluation action plan while also accessing the evaluation team to fully understand the nuances of findings and conclusions which may not be fully transparent in the report itself.

Draft Evaluation Report

The draft evaluation report should be consistent with the guidance provided in Section IX, Final Report Format. The report will address each of the questions identified in the SOW and any other issues the team considers to have a bearing on the objectives of the evaluation. Any such issues can be included in the report only after consultation with USAID. The submission date for the draft evaluation report will be determined in the evaluation work plan. USAID will aim to complete their review of the draft evaluation report within ten working days, after which point the AOR/COR will submit the consolidated comments to the evaluation team. The evaluation team will then be asked to submit a revised final draft report within ten working days.

Final Evaluation Report

The evaluation team will be asked to take no more than 10 working days (or as agreed upon) to respond to and incorporate comments from USAID based on the draft evaluation report and the recommendations co-creation session. The evaluation team lead will then submit the final report to the Evaluation POC.

Other Deliverables

Given the large number of stakeholders for this evaluation and their various needs, it is envisioned that additional deliverables will be needed to disseminate learnings from the evaluation and encourage knowledge sharing. These deliverables include:

- One page brief of key evaluation findings with visuals;
- One briefer (2 pages max per briefer) per building block as appropriate, based on evaluation findings;

*Note that this timeline spans several US holidays, holidays in countries to be visited, and other important dates, including but not limited to:

- Juneteenth - June 19, 2023
- US Independence Day - July 4, 2023
- Labor Day - September 4, 2023
- End of US Fiscal Year - September 29, 2023
- Thanksgiving Day - November 23, 2023

Illustrative LOE estimates per team member in days by activity

Task	Team Lead	Subject Matter Expert	Eval. Specialist	Local Team (1-2 per country)	Total LOE in days
Document review and design document	17	14	14	7	49
Data collection	32	30	30	50	142
Data analysis	13	12	12	7	44
Draft report	17	10	10	5	42
Final report	15	4	4	0	24
Dissemination/knowledge sharing	3	2	2	5	15
Totals	97	72	72	70	316

IX. Final Report Format

1. Abstract
2. Executive Summary
3. Evaluation Purpose

4. Background and context for the Oceans Plastics Portfolio
5. Evaluation Questions
6. Methodology
7. Limitations to the Evaluation
8. Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations
9. Annexes

Annexes to the report must include:

- Final Evaluation SOW;
- Final Evaluation design;
- All data collection and analysis tools used in conducting the evaluation, such as questionnaires, checklists, and discussion guides;
- All sources of information or data, identified and listed;
- Statements of difference, if applicable;
- Signed disclosure of conflict of interest forms for all evaluation team members; and
- Relevant evaluation data or a link to the data;
- Any additional briefs, case studies, or additional mini-reports.

X. Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation

Per [ADS 201maa, Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report](#), draft and final evaluation reports will be evaluated against the following criteria to ensure quality.

Pursuant to ADS 201.3.6.9, draft evaluation reports must undergo a peer review organized by the office managing the evaluation. One purpose for the review is to ensure USAID commissioned evaluations meet the Principles and Standards of Evaluation in ADS 201.3.6.2.

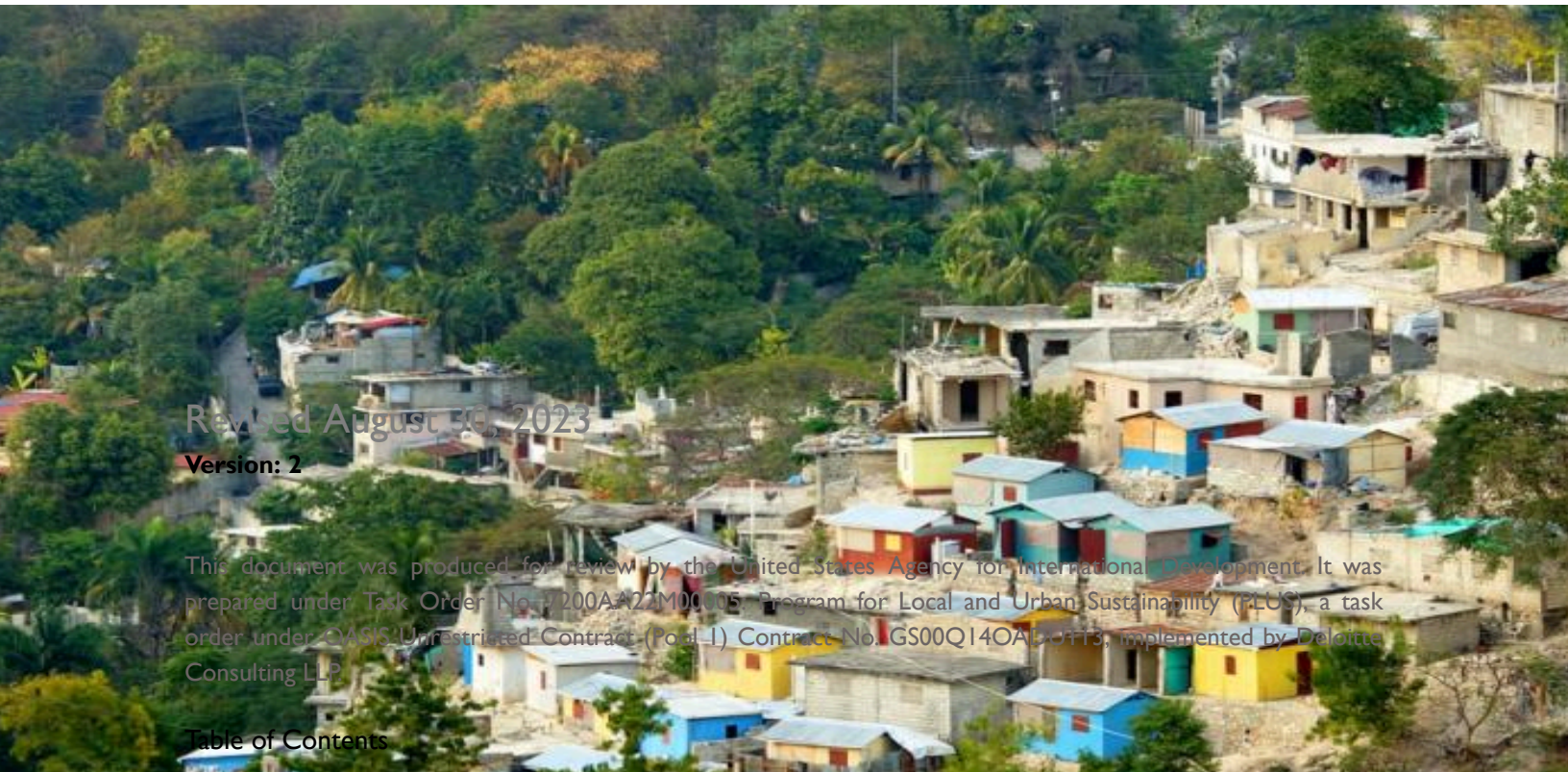
The following criteria should serve as the basis for reviewing the report. To help ensure a high-quality evaluation report, those who commission an evaluation must include the following criteria in the evaluation statement of work (SOW) to communicate USAID's quality criteria to evaluators.

- Evaluation reports should represent a thoughtful, well-researched, and well organized effort to objectively evaluate the subject of the evaluation (e.g., strategy, project, activity).
- Evaluation reports should adhere to plain language guidelines per the USAID Style Guide.
- Evaluation reports should adequately address all evaluation questions included in the SOW, or the evaluation questions subsequently revised and documented in consultation and agreement with USAID.

- Evaluations should be based on the best methods of appropriate rigor. Evaluations must produce well documented findings that are verifiable, reproducible, and on which stakeholders can confidently rely, while providing clear explanations of limitations. Evaluation methodology should be explained in detail and sources of information should be properly identified. Sufficient information on methodology and data collection should be included to allow stakeholders to make informed judgments about the quality and accuracy of the findings, and to allow other evaluators to replicate the protocol.
- Evaluations should be independent, objective, and unbiased in measuring and reporting; limitations to the evaluation should be adequately disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.). Evaluators should strive for objectivity in the planning and conduct of evaluations and in the interpretation and dissemination of findings, avoiding conflicts of interest, bias, and other partiality.
- Evaluation reports should adequately capture the situations and experiences of people of different genders. If evaluation findings or data include people-level indicators, they must be disaggregated by sex.
- Findings, conclusions, and recommendations (if any) should be specific, concise, and supported by strong quantitative and/or qualitative evidence.
 - Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay, or simply the compilation of people’s opinions.
 - Conclusions should be based on the evaluation findings.
 - If recommendations are included, they should be supported by a specific set of referenced findings, and should be prioritized, action-oriented, practical, and specific. Evaluations should be oriented to reinforcing local ownership; when possible, evaluators should include relevant local stakeholders in joint development of recommendations.

APPENDIX C: FINAL EVALUATION DESIGN DOCUMENT

**Program for Local and Urban Sustainability
(PLUS)
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF USAID’S OCEAN
PLASTICS PORTFOLIO
DESIGN DOCUMENT**



Revised August 30, 2023

Version: 2

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ACRONYMS

Acronym/Abbreviation	
3R	Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
BE	Blue Economy
CCBO	Clean Cities Blue Ocean
CE	Circular Economy
DDI	Development, Democracy, and Innovation
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DO	Development Objective
EEL	Environment, Energy, and Infrastructure
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EQ	Evaluation Question
ESR	Extended Stakeholder Responsibility
GI	Group Interview
I4DI	Institute for Development Impact
IP	Implementing Partners
ISWMAP	Integrated Solid Waste Management Action Plan

Acronym/Abbreviation	
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean Region
LOE	Level of Effort
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MLLE	Multiple Lines and Levels of Evidence
MRF	Materials Recovery Facility
MWRP	Municipal Waste Recycling Program
N/A	Not Applicable
POC	Point of Contact
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
SCIL	Solid Waste Management Capacity Index for Local Governments
SOS	Save Our Seas
SOW	Statement of Work
SWM	Solid Waste Management
TA	Technical Assistance
TOC	Theory of Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID has been investing in Oceans Plastics-oriented programs since 2016 and is expanding its portfolio within the [Save Our Seas Initiative](#) (SOS Initiative). The Initiative was launched in 2022 and is designed to support implementation of the Save Our Seas Act 2.0 of 2020 and to combat ocean plastic pollution globally. The Initiative is set up to launch **14 new country and regional programs** in key geographies that represent 40 percent of total global mismanaged plastic waste. This expanded portfolio will create significant opportunities to pool resources from the private sector and donor partners and already has bilateral programs underway in four countries, building on the Agency's earlier centrally-funded programs. These programs have their longest implementation to date in South-East (SE) and South Asia. Newer activities are underway in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) as well as initial bilateral activities in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Vietnam, and Kenya.


The Agency's Ocean Plastics team developed five building blocks as a foundation for preventing additional plastic pollution using a local systems approach. The building blocks for the portfolio are: 1) data-driven policies for circularity; 2) sustained behavior change to reduce single use plastics; 3) effective solid waste services and investment; 4) green jobs and local innovations; and 5) an inclusive, just and equitable system. To further inform application of these building blocks in new and ongoing programs, and recognizing that the portfolio has not benefited from an evaluation to date, USAID and the Evaluation Team have co-designed this evaluation to answer four Evaluation Questions (EQs) and provide valuable insights to inform the SOS Initiative and USAID's Ocean Plastics programming. Evidence gathered will be used by USAID staff focused on ocean plastics programming and related activities including solid waste management/recycling programs in the broader array of integrated urban development, as well as by key stakeholders in countries where USAID is implementing or plans to implement relevant activities. These intended users of the evaluation include USAID Missions implementing solid waste management/recycling programs, government counterparts, private sector actors, environmental groups, and other organizations or individuals associated with reducing ocean plastics, improving solid waste management, and enhancing circular economy efforts.



The Evaluation Team will conduct a multiple case study portfolio evaluation. Using a qualitative multi-method approach, the team has defined a sample of six countries, each of which serves as a case study. Given the focus of programming to date in Asia, there is more data available and lessons to be learned in this region. Thus, the six country case studies are Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Peru. Within each country, three to five cities will be analyzed across the range of USAID's ocean plastics activities in order to answer the four EQs. The team will analyze grant-funded activities, technical assistance (TA), and private sector engagement (PSE). Data collection methods include document review, pre-travel consultations, individual interviews, group interviews, and observational field site visits.



The figure below (Figure D in the main document) presents a revised methodological approach wherein partner cities are the embedded unit of analysis in each case country. Within each city, grants, TA, and PSE are embedded or sub-sub units. Figure D indicates the proposed sample of grants, TA, and PSE that can provide evidence to answer the four EQs; these are illustrative and will be finalized during country

planning discussions with USAID and the CCBO team. The recognition and response to revise the initial approach led to a stronger design. This also required significant further investment in the evaluation design phase and may require a shift from sequential data collection to semi-sequential or parallel collection.

Case Study Evidence Map

KEY			ABBREVIATIONS			
G: Grant		Three Data Source types			MWRP: Municipal Waste Recycling Program	
PSE: Private Sector Engagement		Two Data Source types			GI: Gender and Inclusion	
TA: Technical Assistance		One Data Source type			GP: Governance and Policy	
* : Bilateral Agreement		N/A			SBC: Sustained Behavior Change	
					SWM: Solid Waste Management	
Unit of Analysis		EVALUATION QUESTIONS				
		EQ1	EQ2	EQ3	EQ4	
Country	City	Data Source				Notes
 Philippines	Metro Manila - Parañaque	G(Communities Organized for Resource Allocation) TA(SWM, SRC) PSE(Nestlé)	TA(SWM), PSE (GreenCycle, Sentinel, ISRI)	TA (SWM), PSE (Nestlé)	N/A	Sampling: 18 active grants. Stratified sample = 5 (2 MWRP and 3 CCBO). Historically 22 grants total: 8 MWRP & 14 CCBO. Philippines has CCP PSE activities Overview: Total grants- 18 Included Grants: CCBO - 6, MWRP - 1, Technical Assistance Examples - 6 (1 Direct, 5 embedded in grants) Private Sector Engagement Examples - 9 (1 Direct, 8 embedded in grants)
	Metro Manila	G(HOPEX Environment Group Inc. (The Aling Tindera Program)), PSE (Pespi, SJ Johnson)	G(Phillipine League of Local Environment and Natural Resources Officers), TA(SWM, SBC, GP), PSE(Nestlé)	G(HOPEX Environment Group Inc. (The Aling Tindera Program)), TA(SBC),PSE (Nestlé)	G(Green Antz Builders Inc)	
	Batangas	TA(SWM, SBC), PSE (Nestlé)	TA(SWM)	G(World Wildlife Fund), TA (GP, SBC, SWM), PSE (INFORMAL)	G(Pure Oceans), PSE(SOLISOLI)	
	Negros Island	G(Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation (SWEEP Program)), TA(MWRP), PSE(MWRP)	N/A	G(Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation (SWEEP Program)), TA (MWRP)	G(Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation (SWEEP Program)), PSE(MWRP)	
	Iloilo City	TA(SWM, SBC), PSE(CPU)	TA(SWM, GP), PSE(Cemex)	G(Central Philippine University), TA(SBC)	G(Central Philippine University), PSE(CEMEX)	
	Puerto Princesa, Palawan	G(Project Zacchaeus Cooperative), TA(SWM), PSE(Eco Kolek, TESDA, SM)	TA(GP, SWM, GI)	TA(SBC, SWM, GI)	G(Project Zacchaeus Cooperative), TA(SBC), PSE (4EARTH)	

Unit of Analysis		EVALUATION QUESTIONS				
		EQ1	EQ2	EQ3	EQ4	
Country		Data Source				Notes
 Indonesia	Kota Semarang	G (Augmentation of Rebricks Impact; Prevented Ocean Plastic Indonesia); TA (SWM, SBC, GI); PSE (POPSEA, Circulate Capital, ReBricks)	G(Bina Karta Lestari Foundation (BINTARI)); TA (GP, SBC, GI)	G(Prevented Ocean Plastic Indonesia; Yayasan Kesejahteraan Keluarga Soegijapranata (YKKS)), TA (SBC)	G(Augmentation of Rebricks Impact)	Sampling: 17 grants total- 5 MWRP & 12 CCBO Stratified sample = 4 (2 MWRP, 2 CCBO). Overview: Total grants - 17 Included Grants: CCBO - 8 MWRP - 1 Technical Assistance Examples: 7 (1 direct, 6 embedded in grants) Private Sector Engagement Examples: 5 all embedded in grant
	Jakarta Province MWRP grant	G(Perkumpulan Gerakan Indonesia Diet Kantong Plastik (MWRP)), TA(SWM)	G(Perkumpulan Gerakan Indonesia Diet Kantong Plastik (MWRP)), TA(GP, SWM)	TA(SBC)	G(Perkumpulan Gerakan Indonesia Diet Kantong Plastik (MWRP))	
	Kota Makassar	G(POPI Makassar), TA (SWM, SBC), PSE (Circulate Capital)	G(Dinas Lingkungan Hidup; Waste4Change), TA (GP, SBC)	G(Waste4Change), TA (SBC)	G(Waste4Change), TA(SWM)	
	Kota Ambon	G(Milion Limbah Ambon (Ambon Aggregation and Recycling Center Development)), TA (SWM, GI), PSE(WBs, ISE, AKL)	G(Dinas Lingkungan Hidup (Implementation of Solid Waste Management Master Plan Development in Ambon City)) TA(SWM, SBC, GI)	TA(SBC)	N/A	
	East Java	G(Systemiq (Project STOP))	N/A	N/A	G(6)	
 Peru	Paita	G(CARE, InfoRegion, IKG), TA(SWM, SBC, GI)	G(World Wide Fund), TA (SWM, SBC, GI)	G(CARE, InfoRegion), TA (SBC, GI)	G(World Wide Fund), TA(SBC)	Sampling: 12 Grants total all CCBO Overview: CCBO - 4 Technical Assistance Examples: (9 Direct, 1 embedded in grants) Private Sector Engagement Examples: 1 direct, 2 embedded in grants
	Mancora	G(CARE, InfoRegion, IKG), TA(SWM, SBC, GP)	G(World Wide Fund), TA (GP, SBC)	G(CARE, InfoRegion), TA (SBC, GI)	G(World Wide Fund), TA (SWM, SBC)	
	Pisco	G(CARE, InfoRegion, IKG), TA(SWM, SBC)	G(CARE), TA(GP)	G(CARE, InfoRegion), TA (SBC, GI)	G(World Wide Fund)	

Unit of Analysis		EVALUATION QUESTIONS				Notes
		EQ1	EQ2	EQ3	EQ4	
Country		Data Source				
 Sri Lanka and Maldives	Sri Lanka - National	G(Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (Enhancing Extended Producer Responsibility)), PSE(EPR)	G(Public Interest Law Foundation, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce), TA(GP)	PSE(Coca-Cola)	N/A	Sampling: 18 grants total – 6 MWRP, 12 CCBO Overview: CCBO – 10 grants Technical Assistance Examples: 12 embedded in grants Private Sector Engagement Examples: 1 Direct, 2 Embedded in grants
	Colombo	G(Island Climate Initiative (Solutions to FMCG Plastic Packaging Waste)), TA(SWM, SBC)	G(Janathakshan (Informal Waste Sector actors for Cleaner Oceans)), TA(GP, GI)	G(Sevanatha Urban Resource Center)	G(Island Climate Initiative, Katana Upcycle), TA(SBC, SWM)	
	Galle	G(Capacity Building for Solid waste management in Galle), TA(SWM, SBC)	G(Human and Environment Links Progressive Organization), TA(GP, GI)	G(Galle – purchase of equipment to better manage waste collection and recycling services), TA(SWM)	N/A	
	Jaffna	TA(SWM, GI)	TA(GP, GI)	G(Jaffna – purchase of equipment to better manage waste collection and recycling services), TA(SWM)	N/A	
	Maldives	G(Soneva Namoonaa 2&3), TA(SWM, SBC)	TA(GP, SBC, GI)	G(Small Islands Geographic Society)	G(Small Islands Geographic Society), TA(SBC)	
 Vietnam	Phu Quoc	G(Public Works Pu Quoc City), TA(SWM)	G(Public Works Pu Quoc City), TA(GP)	G(Green School Model (3R/waste segregation at source)), TA(SWM, SBC)	G(Green Joy) PSE(Green Joy)	Sampling: CCBO Grants – 9 MWRP Grants – 7 and Bilateral Agreements Overview: 5 CCBO grants, 1 Bilateral Technical Assistance Examples: 13 (10 embedded in grants, 3 Direct/bilateral.) Private Sector Engagement Examples: 6 – 3 embedded in grants, 3. Direct/bilateral
	Da Nang city	G(Green School Model (3R/waste segregation at source)), TA(SWM)	G(Asian Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Transformation), TA(GP)	G(Green School Model (3R/waste segregation at source)), TA(SWM)	G(Green School Model (3R/waste segregation at source)), TA(SWM)	
	Hue	G(Environmental Protection Agency EO1), TA(GP)	G(Environmental Protection Agency EO1), TA(SBC)	N/A	N/A	
	Bien Hoa	G(Environment and Development in Action), TA(GP)	G(Environment and Development in Action), TA(SWM)	N/A	G(Environment and Development in Action), TA(SWM)	
	Ho Chi Minh/Can Tho *	G(WINROCK (Reducing Pollution))	N/A	G(WINROCK)	N/A	

Vietnam	Hanoi *	G(Works (Local Solutions for Plastic Pollution)), TA(SWM), PSE (Greenhub)	G(Works (Local Solutions for Plastic Pollution)), TA (SBC)	PSE(Works)	N/A
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Collaborative work planning with USAID and SOS Initiative partners will align the sample of illustrative grants, TA, and PSE activities with their expected utility for the evaluation, accessibility and cost for the final itineraries and sample within each country case. During data collection, the team will consult regularly with USAID on initial findings, any needed methodological adjustments and data collection progress. Following data collection, USAID and the Evaluation Team will hold a Preliminary Findings workshop. A final report and communication materials will share the evidence generated through this evaluation and will likely influence key programming, policy, and resource decisions among these actors in the years to come.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Globally, concern over the implications of increasing levels of ocean plastic pollution is becoming a commonplace issue for development actors. Rapid urbanization and economic growth, particularly in developing countries that have weak capacity for waste management, has increased the flow of plastics into the world's oceans. Responding to Congressional concern over ocean plastic pollution, USAID developed a portfolio of programs designed to mitigate and address this growing issue. Starting in 2016, USAID has been investing in various ocean plastics-oriented programs, but to date no evaluations of those programs have been conducted.

The purpose of this formative performance evaluation of the USAID Ocean Plastics Portfolio is to gather evidence regarding program implementation and to inform the design of future activities. The evaluation will focus on the overall approach and not answer questions regarding the impact of programming itself. The evaluation is also not an activity-level evaluation of these mechanisms. Rather, the evaluation will document lessons learned and provide recommendations from USAID's local systems approach to test, scale, and share inclusive and sustainable solutions to promote the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), strengthen solid waste management systems, and build or advance local circular economies. Findings from the evaluation will directly inform the implementation of existing plastic pollution programs (centrally-managed and bilateral) and the design of future activities within the Agency's [Save Our Seas Initiative](#) (SOS Initiative), designed to support implementation of the Save Our Seas Act 2.0 of 2020 and to combat ocean plastic pollution globally.

The portfolio includes a variety of implementation mechanisms running from 2016 to present:

- [Municipal Waste Recycling Program](#) (MWRP, 2016-2021). MWRP tested locally-led solutions aimed to improve solid waste management (SWM) and recycling systems through 30 grants in four countries: Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. MWRP was implemented by Development Innovations Group, and lessons learned from MWRP supported the design of the flagship program of the Ocean Plastics Portfolio, Clean Cities Blue Ocean (CCBO).
- [Clean Cities, Blue Ocean](#) (CCBO, 2019-2024), implemented by TetraTech, was designed to implement the Save Our Seas 2.0 Act. CCBO collaborates with global, regional, and local stakeholders to develop capacity for and test, scale, and share inclusive and sustainable solutions to promote the 3Rs, strengthen solid waste management systems, and build or advance local circular economies. CCBO is active in ten countries in Asia (Indonesia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Vietnam), Pacific Islands (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Federated States of Micronesia), and Latin America and the Caribbean (Peru, Dominican Republic).

This evaluation will primarily cover centrally managed activities under CCBO (2019 to present) and MWRP (2016-2021), and may include initial bilateral SOS Initiative activities in Sri Lanka, Vietnam, the Maldives, and Kenya. The evaluation will include sites with grantees that began under MWRP in 2016, but will primarily focus on sites with grantees that continued under the CCBO program (2019 to present) in an attempt to uncover sustainability-oriented questions. The regions, countries and programs within the portfolio are shown below in Table I.

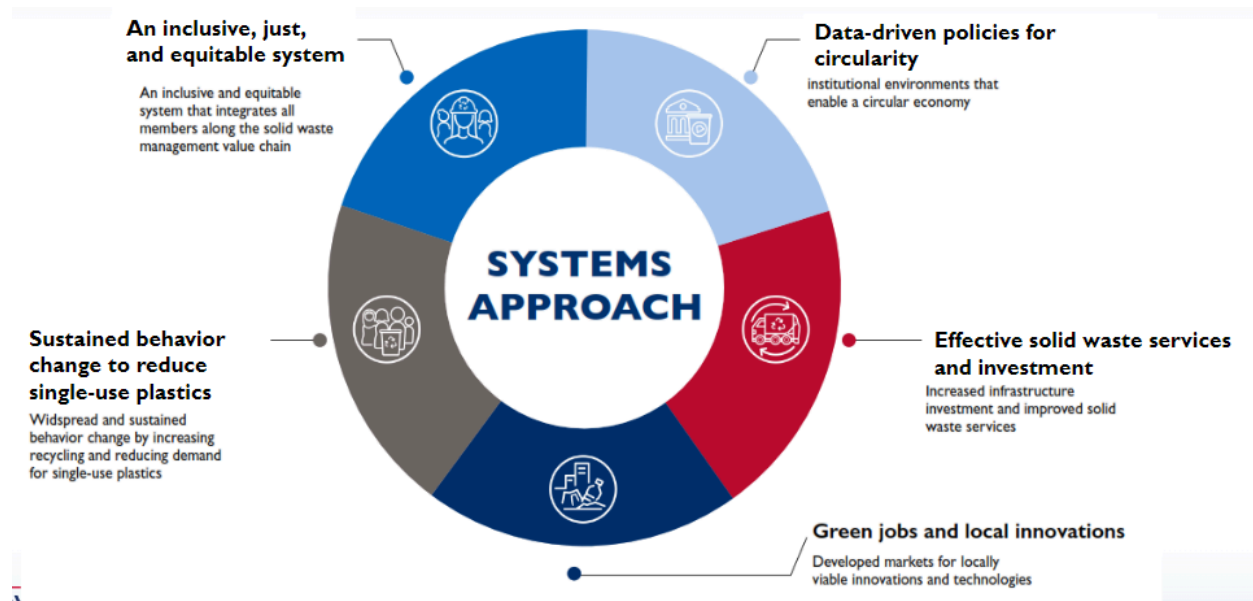
Table I: Regions, Countries, and Programs Working to Reduce Ocean Plastic Pollution under the Save Our Seas Initiative.

Region	Country	MWRP	CCBO	Circulate Capital Partnership (CCP)	Bilateral Programs
Africa	Kenya				X
Asia	Indonesia	X	X	X	
	Maldives		X		X
	Philippines	X	X	X	
	Sri Lanka	X	X	X	X
	Vietnam	X	X	X	X
Latin America & Caribbean	Dominican Republic		X		
	Peru		X		
Pacific Islands	Fiji		X		
	Micronesia		X		
	Papua New Guinea		X		

Context

Plastic pollution is a critical global issue that requires urgent attention and concerted efforts to mitigate its impact on the world's oceans. The evaluation being conducted holds significant importance as it will provide valuable insights to inform the SOS Initiative and USAID's Ocean Plastic Portfolio, which aims to address the escalating levels of plastic pollution worldwide. The SOS Initiative builds on USAID's on-the-ground experience over the past six years, and scales the [Building Block](#) approach (see below) within key countries and to additional geographies for greater impact. The Building Blocks partially serve as a guide for USAID programming regarding Ocean Plastic Pollution, in lieu of a Theory of Change (TOC), and are thus foundational to the portfolio evaluation- See figure A below.

Figure A: The Building Blocks of a Circular Economy: USAID's Local Systems Approach to Reducing Ocean Plastic Pollution



By understanding the current state of affairs and evaluating ongoing initiatives, the evaluation will enable strategic decision-making and the implementation of targeted interventions to combat plastic pollution more effectively in future programming.

Each year, a staggering 11 million metric tons of plastic pollution find their way into our oceans, which is equivalent to more than one garbage truck’s worth of plastic being dumped into the sea every minute. This alarming rate is projected to double by the end of this decade and triple by 2040, posing a severe threat to the delicate marine ecosystems that sustain life on our planet. Moreover, the consequences extend to major industries like fishing and tourism, which rely heavily on the health and abundance of marine resources. Plastic pollution also jeopardizes global food security as it disrupts the marine food chain and contaminates seafood, thereby endangering the health of individuals who rely on such resources for sustenance.

Addressing plastic pollution at its source, before it enters the ocean, is recognized as the most effective approach to tackle this complex challenge. The majority of plastic ocean debris originates from rapidly growing cities and towns situated along rivers and coastal areas in low and middle income countries. In these areas, waste management systems, infrastructure, and governance struggle to keep pace with the burgeoning populations and the escalating amounts of waste generated. As a result, much of the plastic waste ends up in rivers and eventually finds its way into the oceans, exacerbating the global plastic pollution crisis.

To curb the flow of plastic waste into the oceans, it is crucial to focus on strengthening waste management systems and promoting circular economies in key cities within low and middle income countries. By investing in improved waste management infrastructure, such as waste collection and recycling facilities, and implementing efficient disposal systems, the volume of plastic waste that enters waterways and oceans can be significantly reduced. Additionally, raising awareness among local communities about the importance of proper waste disposal and the adverse effects of plastic pollution can foster behavioral changes and responsible waste management practices.

Furthermore, the promotion of circular economies plays a vital role in mitigating plastic pollution. By adopting circular economy principles, cities can prioritize not just recycling, reusing, and reducing waste; but redesigning plastic packaging systems to minimize the demand for single-use plastics and promote the transition to sustainable alternatives. Circular economy practices also facilitate the creation of economic opportunities, job growth, and the development of innovative industries centered around recycling and resource efficiency.

The evaluation will play a pivotal role in assessing the impact and effectiveness of ongoing interventions. It will examine the outcomes of initiatives aimed at strengthening waste management systems and promoting circular economies in key cities located in low and middle income countries. By analyzing data, identifying best practices, and measuring progress, the evaluation will provide valuable insights and recommendations that guide decision-makers in refining strategies, allocating resources efficiently, and implementing evidence-based interventions to combat plastic pollution effectively. Ultimately, the evaluation will serve as a critical tool to inform the SOS Initiative and USAID's Ocean Plastics Portfolio in addressing the escalating levels of plastic pollution worldwide.

Evaluation Intended Users and Intended Uses

The evaluation is intended to inform existing activities in the Ocean Plastics Portfolio and to provide design inputs for new activities. The evaluation has three primary intended user groups, as follows: (1) USAID staff who oversee the SOS Initiative under the ocean plastics directive in the Green Cities Division of the Center for Environment, Energy, and Infrastructure (EEI); (2) USAID Mission staff working on advancing the SOS Initiative, including designing and managing bilateral Oceans Plastics programming, solid waste management/recycling programs using various earmarks/directives, and related activities in the broader array of integrated urban development; and (3) associated Implementing Partners (IPs).

Secondary intended users of the evaluation include key stakeholders in countries where USAID is implementing, or plans to implement, relevant activities, including USAID Missions implementing solid waste management/recycling programs using various earmarks/directives. Such stakeholders include government counterparts, private sector actors, environmental groups, other donors and development agencies, and other organizations or individuals associated with reducing ocean plastics, improving solid waste management, and enhancing circular economy efforts. The secondary intended use is to influence key programming, policy, and resource decisions among these actors in the years to come.

Beyond the use of evaluation findings for decision-making in implementation and design, also known as instrumental findings use, this evaluation is intended to facilitate process use—or benefits that accrue to participants who take part in evaluation activities. This process use is anticipated to take three forms: conceptual use, instrumental use, and evaluation capacity building use. That is, the Evaluation Team intends to design and iteratively consider how our initial engagement, data collection, verification, and analytical procedures support 1) new understandings about the Ocean Plastics Portfolio as well as the nature of evaluation among participants; 2) inform decisions needing to be taken about programming and design during and after the evaluation process; and 3) enhance participants' capacity to think and reason evaluatively regardless of responsibilities, roles, and relation to monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) in the Ocean Plastics Portfolio.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions that bound the scope of this evaluation were developed in a co-design process with Evaluation Managers from the Institute for Development Impact (IDI) and USAID's Green Cities Division. The Evaluation Team used the statement of work (SOW) footnotes as well as additional elaboration from the Green Cities Division during the kick-off meeting for the narrative interpretation in this section. The evaluation is designed to answer the following four EQs:

- **EQ 1:** How effective have USAID's ocean plastics/solid waste management-related grants and private sector engagement mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?
- **EQ 2:** What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID's ocean plastics/solid waste management programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and subnational governments?
- **EQ 3:** What key lessons can be learned from USAID's ocean plastics/solid waste management programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?
- **EQ 4¹³:** To what extent has USAID's approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for desired upstream outcomes such as the uptake of reduce/reuse/refill strategies, including adoption of alternatives to single-use plastics?

The Evaluation Team understands that USAID's ocean plastics/solid waste management programs refer to activities funded by the current "ocean plastics" directive/earmark and the previous "waste and recycling" directive/earmark including MWRP and CCBO. We also understand that EQ1 and, to a lesser extent, EQ2 aim to better understand how well USAID's approach has contributed to the Agency's localization agenda, where "Local Actors" refer to individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments, and where "Local Government" refers to subnational (city, district, provincial) and national governments.

Beyond definition clarity of terms in the evaluation questions, the following analysis presents the Evaluation Team's interpretation of the explicit nature of the questions as well as the methodological implications of the EQs.

The Evaluation Team understands EQ1 to be about program effects related to *localization* and will require measures of localization as well as means for attributing measures to USAID interventions. We understand EQ2 to be about understanding the reasons for the presence or lack of program effects related to institutionalization of solutions at the local government level. We understand EQ3 to be about the relationship of the building blocks of circular economies, but mostly focused on constructing guidance for implementation and design in the form of lessons learned. Finally, we interpret EQ4 to be an exploratory question about the necessary and sufficient conditions, or leading indicators, of sustainable impacts by avoiding single-use plastics; this can include but is not limited to the role of policy (e.g. banning single-use plastic bags), social and behavioral change interventions, and refill pilots through

¹³ Specificity around definitions of upstream outcomes has been provided by USAID on 8/29/2023. This has been included as Annex A.

private sector engagement. Reusing plastic waste (e.g. upcycling and conversion technologies) would fall under USAID's building blocks of improving solid waste services and promoting green jobs and local innovations. Methodological implications for these interpretations will be considered in the following section. Though not an impact evaluation, some investigation of intended outcomes is necessary to answer EQ1 and EQ2. Also, further analysis is required to understand enabling environmental factors in EQ4 and to determine the leading indicators of eventual impacts.

Finally, across all EQs, the Evaluation Team will disaggregate person-level data by sex and include other relevant sub-groups as appropriate, such as youth or informal versus formal waste collectors. A gender-based lens will be applied to EQs, and wherever else it is relevant throughout data collection and analysis. The evaluation will seek to be culturally responsive, specific, and contributive to equitable outcomes for evaluation and program participants.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Methods Overview

This multiple case study portfolio evaluation is designed to maximize the use of the evaluation process and products to inform the implementation of existing plastic pollution programs and the design of future activities. The general methodological orientation is a qualitative multi-method approach, though some quantitative data will be incorporated in analysis. The sample consists of 6 countries, with 3-5 cities in each country as units of analysis. Within each of these cities are categories of activities that correspond to each of the four EQs—grant-funded activities, TA, and PSE.¹⁴ Data collection methods include document review, pre-travel consultations, individual interviews, group interviews, and observational field site visits. Analytical procedures include qualitative coding of unstructured data with specific coding procedures for each evaluation question and specific end-to-end analytical procedures for each evaluation question including: Multiple Lines of Evidence, Realist Qualitative Analysis/Force Field Analysis, Relational Content Analysis, and Qualitative Comparative Analysis. Qualitative weight and sum methodology will be used for synthesizing observations and measures for each EQ and respective criteria. Comparison methods will be made within and between case studies and embedded units.

¹⁴ See Figure D: Case Study Evidence Map

Evaluation Design Matrix

Table 2: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Question (EQ)	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Sampling Method	Analysis Method	
EQ1: How effective have USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management-related grants and private sector engagement mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?	USAID and country-level grantees	Virtual semi-structured interviews	Purposive/ Snowball	Provisional coding	Multiple lines of evidence
	USAID and other Documents	Desk review	Purposive	Structural coding	
	Implementing partners, grantees, government officials, industry leaders	Semi-structured Interview	Purposive	Evaluative coding	
	Grantees, community members, affinity network members, private sector partners	Group interview	Stratified purposive	Evaluative coding	
	Sites of interest	Observation	Criterion/ Comparison	Memoing	
EQ2: What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within local governments?	USAID and country-level grantees	Virtual semi-structured interviews	Purposive/ Snowball	Provisional coding	Realist Qualitative Analysis/ Force Field Analysis
	USAID and other Documents	Desk review	Purposive	Structural coding	
	Implementing partners, grantees, government officials, industry leaders	Semi-structured Interview	Purposive	Thematic coding	

Evaluation Question (EQ)	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Sampling Method	Analysis Method	
	Grantees, community members, affinity network members, private sector partners	Group interview	Stratified purposive	Thematic coding	
	Sites of interest	Observation	Criterion/ Comparison	Memoing	
EQ3: What key lessons can be learned from USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming?	USAID and country-level grantees	Virtual semi-structured interviews	Purposive/ Snowball	Provisional coding	Relational Content Analysis
	USAID and other Documents	Desk review	Purposive	Structural Coding	
	Implementing partners, grantees, government officials, industry leaders	Semi-structured Interview	Purposive	Magnitude coding	
	Grantees, community members, affinity network members, private sector partners	Group interview	Stratified purposive	Magnitude coding	
	Sites of interest	Observation	Criterion/ Comparison	Memoing	
EQ4: To what extent has USAID’s approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for	USAID and country-level grantees	Virtual semi-structured interviews	Purposive/ Snowball	Provisional coding	Qualitative Comparison Analysis

Evaluation Question (EQ)	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Sampling Method	Analysis Method
desired upstream outcomes such as the uptake of reduce/reuse/refill strategies, including adoption of alternatives to single-use plastics?	USAID and other Documents	Desk review	Purposive	Structural Coding
	Implementing partners, grantees, government officials, industry leaders	Semi-structured Interview	Purposive	Protocol coding
	Grantees, community members, affinity network members, private sector partners	Group interview	Stratified purposive	Protocol coding
	Sites of interest	Observation	Criterion/ Comparison	Memoing

Theoretical Approach

Given the evaluation is intended to be used for supporting quality program design and implementation for environmental programs across cultural settings, the evaluation team will draw on evaluation approaches and methods from the pragmatic and transformative evaluation paradigms. In particular, this evaluation will give priority to utilization-focused evaluation approaches that are culturally responsive and equitable. As the EQs are also interested in producing thick, or detailed, descriptions of how and why program implementation has or hasn't been successful, elements of theory-based evaluation will be used—specifically *realist* evaluation principles that help evaluations ask what works for whom, in what circumstances and why? Finally, procedures from the *valuing* branch of evaluation theories will be integrated, in particular the general logic of evaluation and rubric-enhanced evaluation. This hybrid theoretical strategy that integrates complementary evaluation paradigms, approaches, and models, or evaluation ‘theory weaving’, is intended to craft evaluation processes and products responsive to intended user needs, the contingencies of evaluation setting and scope, and is the first of multiple types of triangulation in this evaluation.

General Methodological Orientation

As mentioned earlier, the general methodological orientation of this evaluation is a multi-method qualitative approach, with limited quantitative components. The case study design (see Figure A) is

qualitative; sampling is purposive; primary data collection methods are qualitative; and data analysis consists of specific and multiple end-to-end qualitative procedures that incorporate various qualitative first and second cycle coding methods. These collection and analysis methods result in and pair well with the primary and secondary qualitative data—interpretive, descriptive, textual, unstructured—that constitutes the majority of study data.

The use of quantitative methods will be pursued whenever possible in an attempt to make this a mixed-methods evaluation where findings can be triangulated and corroborated across multiple data collection and analysis methodologies. Quantitative components of the study will include any existing secondary program monitoring and outcome data and measures to be used in triangulation and evaluation conclusion synthesis. Quantitative components also will involve any data transformations of qualitative data in data analysis such as frequency counts or other analytical and reporting procedures for presenting qualitative information. Anticipated quantitative data will come mostly from secondary sources, aside from such data transformations.

With these anticipated uses of quantitative data, aspects of the evaluation design meet stated expectations in the SOW calling for mixed methods. We do not interpret this to mean the evaluation design can only take the form of, or adhere to strictures about, traditional mixed-method configurations and designs¹⁵ with equally yoked quantitative and qualitative study arms. Rather, the Evaluation Team interprets this expectation to mean the evaluation should consider the use of all available data types—qualitative and quantitative—for robust, triangulated, and defensible conclusions. Finally, the scope of the evaluation necessitates exceptional organizational skills in team members as well as sound data management practices and protocols. This understanding orients the evaluation’s methodological orientation as detailed below.

Valuing Process and Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria are derived from the evaluation team’s interpretation of evaluation user needs and evaluation questions:

- **EQ1:** effectiveness (localization and empowerment)
- **EQ2:** responsiveness (to context); implementation quality (mechanisms); effectiveness (institutionalization outcomes)
- **EQ3:** coherence and relevance
- **EQ4:** anticipated impact and sustainability (enabling environment)

The first three EQs—and by extension associated criteria—have been prioritized by the USAID team as per the SOW. The evaluation team proposes collaboratively establishing standards of implementation performance for each EQ closely with primary intended users through the use of qualitative scales or rubrics. Illustrative criterion/dimensional-specific scales have been offered for EQ1 and EQ2 for localization and institutionalization in Annex F: Evaluation Question Rubrics. Options for EQ3 and EQ4 can either be the use of generic standards and rubrics, or similar sectoral construct-specific scales, to those for EQ1 and EQ2. For the generic approach, qualitative scales for each criterion can be established

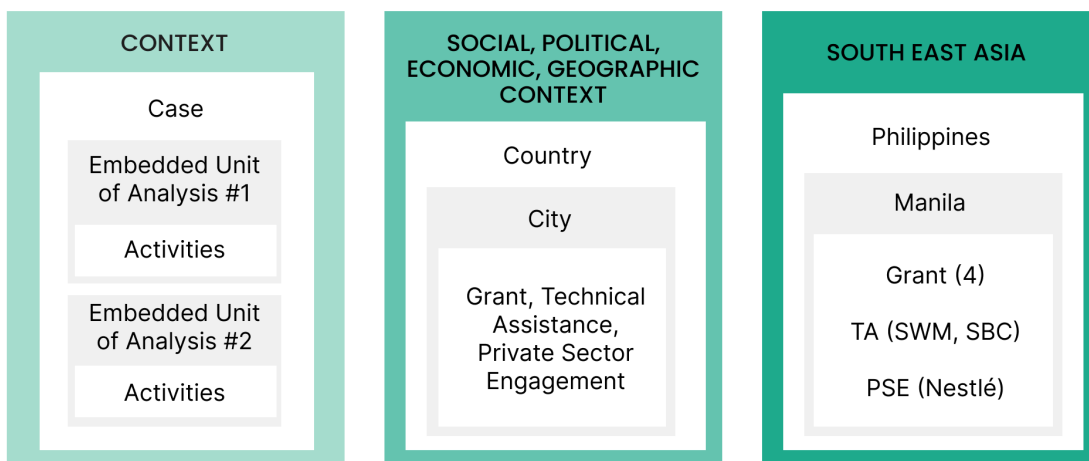
¹⁵ Such as convergent parallel, embedded, explanatory sequential, or exploratory sequential designs.

with either 3-point rubrics (low, moderate, high) or 5-point rubrics (poor, fair, good, very good, excellent), with specific indications for what determines each level of performance for coherence, relevance, anticipated impact, and sustainability.

Study Design

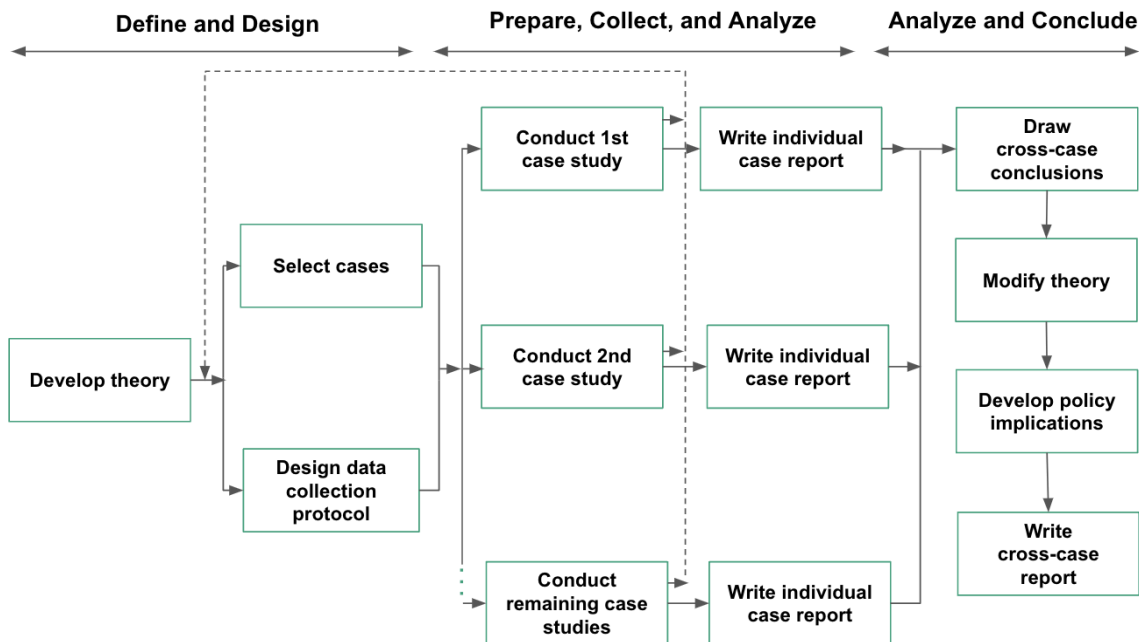
The evaluation design is an embedded multiple case study process evaluation—similar to comparative case studies or cross-country case studies. Each case is a country and each embedded unit of analysis is a city as shown in Figure B. Multiple case study designs are considered more compelling and robust than single case study designs. Embedded case study designs provide more focus for case studies than holistic designs that are susceptible to shifting focus or slippage. Embedded designs also allow for more rich comparisons across cases for insights about factors and reasons for observed differences across cases. This evaluation design enables grant-level assessment (results and dynamics) as well as data gathering on TA and PSE within the country contexts. This design also allows for cross-case conclusions and bigger picture findings for a portfolio-wide vision. In this evaluation, there are six Country Cases with Cities as the Embedded Units of Analysis including their respective Grants, TA, and PSE.

Figure B: Embedded Multiple Case Study Design Diagram



Multiple case study designs have a procedural logic that enables cross-case conclusions about key evaluation questions as represented in Figure C below. The use of multiple cases is also undergirded by a logic of replication of findings, either through *literal replication* where sets of case studies may share similar outcomes in relation to evaluation questions such as “how and why an intervention has had high quality implementation?”, or through *theoretical replication* where multiple contrasting results could be predicted or explained for anticipated reasons. This type of information is especially useful for formative evaluations where the emphasis is on ongoing and future program improvement and optimization through evidence-based decision making about program implementation and design.

Figure C: Multiple Case Study Procedure



Sample

The overall sampling frame for this evaluation is 14 contexts within the global Ocean Plastics Portfolio with their respective grants, TA activities, PSE, in-country actors, and existing relevant program documents. The general sampling methodology for the multiple case study evaluation will be purposeful or purposive sampling, specifically stratified purposeful sampling. That is, there will be multiple sampling methods for each unit of analysis including 1) country cases; 2) cities, municipalities, or metropolitan areas as embedded units; 3) program-specific grant, TA, and PSE sites and activities within those cities; and 4) data sources for embedded units such as documents, interviewees, and group interview participants as summarized in Table 2: Evaluation Matrix. The logic to this non-probability purposeful sampling procedure for case study evaluation work is to maximize literal replication (where individual cases predict similar results) and theoretical replication (where individual cases predict contracting results, but for expected reasons).

Based on the EQs above, the Evaluation Team will pursue the use of secondary data from program and MEL documentation, available data from other organizations or government partners, as well as primary qualitative data collected from methods such as in-depth interviews, group interview discussions, and observational site visits. Participants will include government officials, implementing partners, grantees, private sector partners, other donors/stakeholders working on plastic pollution, and may also include community members, where feasible.

Country Cases: Selection and Criteria

The Evaluation Team appreciates USAID's guidance in identifying the proposed SOS Initiative case study countries. In consultations with USAID and CCBO implementers at the Kick-Off meeting and

subsequently, the Evaluation Team proposed the following criteria for selecting the countries for case study site visits:

Criteria for Case (Country) and Embedded Unit (City) Country Case Selection

1. **Data Availability:** priority to those countries and cities with a longer history of MWRP and CCBO programs.
2. **Application Potential:** balancing data from longer-term projects with younger investments regarding their potential to inform new SOS Initiative designs and ongoing or future SOS Initiative activities.
3. **Feasibility of Logistics:** budget and time considerations for travel to and within country contexts.
4. **Matched Comparison Criterion:** cross-section of urban contexts with expected variation in terms of implementation success such as poor, adequate, good (which may happen at the subnational level).
5. **Contextual Maximum Variation:** variety of socio-political and cultural contexts.
6. **Regional Coverage:** for cases, representation across four regions.
7. **Continued Funding:** priority to countries with probability of continued funding under the SOS Initiative.

Further conversations with USAID, CCBO and I4DI colleagues, complemented by the team's ongoing desk review and sector expertise, were extremely useful in the country case selection process. An initial presentation of the CCBO program data and their program insights further informed the evaluation team of the depth and breadth of activities in each country, including the status of grants and their locations as they could impact field implementation and operational planning. CCBO Country Program Summaries informed the identification and sampling of TA and PSE activities. These recent and incoming Summaries will be incorporated into country work plans for final grant, TA and PSE selection within the sample range presented above.

Asia represents the bulk of programs in the portfolio in terms of investment and longevity, which lends itself toward data availability. To select countries in this region, CCBO and I4DI colleagues emphasized the logistical coordination and time required to access broadly dispersed grant sites in all countries to meet with grantees and other stakeholders. In particular, the Philippines has the most mature of the CCBO grants, which contributes to the data availability criterion. We also recognize the hefty workloads on local staff in the Philippines as they operate the regional hub and have increasing responsibilities for Pacific Islands activities. In full work plan development, the team will collaborate closely with SOS Initiative partners and USAID to ensure that the Evaluation Team's proposed visits in all countries are planned well in advance and fully respect the ongoing responsibilities of implementing partners. Additional factors related to country case selection shared by SOS Initiative partners and USAID include the very initial stages of bilateral funding in Vietnam, complementing the central funding over a longer period of time with MWRP and CCBO. These factors weigh favorably to both the data availability and the learning/design potential criteria.

Regarding data availability, we recognize that the activities in the Pacific Islands are quite nascent and, at most, a site visit would yield insights into initial partnerships of the two active grants there. Furthermore, the resources needed to travel to these potential cases vs. the relative return in data availability and learning potential moved the team’s selection criteria to other case options. Similarly, for Kenya, the currently sole African country in the portfolio, the team understands from USAID, CCBO colleagues, and the Year 1 SOS Initiative report, that the bilateral funding in Kenya is also quite nascent, raising questions as to whether a Kenya case could provide evidence to answer the four evaluation questions EQs. The relative youth of bilateral activities in Kenya indicate that there is limited formal data available from these newer activities, which do not have results or impacts to date.

In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the portfolio includes two countries—Peru and the Dominican Republic (DR). Data availability is relatively strong in both countries, albeit younger than in Asia. CCBO launched its Peru program in 2021 to improve the management of solid waste in Paita, Máncora, and Pisco to avoid further ocean plastic pollution and negative impacts on marine biodiversity. Data availability, information on grant development, and the stakeholders' engagement with the local, regional, national, and private sectors are vital insights for the USAID team. Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, USAID has supported the Government to improve solid waste management (SWM) in Samaná Province since 2020, making the DR an intuitive back-up location for Peru. In sum, these data availability concerns further encouraged the team to shift our focus on regional coverage from Africa and the Pacific Islands options in favor of Asia and LAC in country selection.

However, these factors also lend themselves to balancing multiple criteria of data availability and learning potential. For Kenya, Evaluation Team member Matt Haden (Circular Economy and Ocean Plastics Specialist) is very familiar with the national portfolio of 3R projects and policies in Kenya from his years of private sector experience in the region, and from his base in Tanzania. This provides the opportunity to ‘see’ the related programming in Kenya, adding to the lighter touch scan of the program countries that are not visited wherein the team will make maximum use of the limited ocean plastics data available to maximize learning inputs for design of new and future activities.

Based on these criteria and on extensive consultations with USAID and CCBO, the evaluation team proposes the following countries in Table 3 for conducting country case visits.

Table 3: Proposed Country Cases with Suggested Dates

Case	Country	Dates	Site Visit Team
1	Peru	Sept 11-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Lead ● Circular Economy & Ocean Plastics Specialist
2	Philippines	late Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Lead ● Senior Evaluation Specialist ● Circular Economy & Ocean Plastics Specialist

3	Indonesia	early Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Lead ● Circular Economy & Ocean Plastics Specialist
4 & 5	Sri Lanka / Maldives	mid-late Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Lead ● Circular Economy & Ocean Plastics Specialist
6	Vietnam	early Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team Lead ● Senior Evaluation Specialist ● Circular Economy & Ocean Plastics Specialist

Regarding the proposed joint Sri Lanka / Maldives field mission, we understand that Sri Lanka and the Maldives are co-located programs for management purposes. With this in mind, and perhaps more importantly, given the proximity and accessibility of the Maldives from Sri Lanka, the team proposes to visit both countries in the same trip to maximize the intended use of the evaluation. We understand there are different approaches in each country and have considered the team level of effort (LOE) needed to understand each case, as well as adjusting the number of days in-country in a combined Sri Lanka and Maldives site visit.

As per the SOW, the evaluation work plan will be developed in final form in collaboration with USAID colleagues. The team very much looks forward to presenting a more detailed timeline and draft work plan for site visits, complementing the methods detailed above and pending approval of field mission countries.

Cities as Embedded Units

Following submission of the Draft Evaluation Design document on July 21, the Evaluation Team received verbal USAID guidance on August 14 that required a significant course correction in the methodology. This entailed shifting the evaluation focus on grants as the embedded unit of analysis to cities in each case country and, within the cities, to sample based on grants, TA and PSE as sub-sub units. In addition, USAID requested that the proposed sample be organized according to EQ. The team responded by reworking the methodology accordingly as presented in Figure D. The recognition and response lead to a stronger design. This also required significant further investment in and extension of the Evaluation design phase from three to six weeks. The methodology revisions also generated follow-on implications for country visit scheduling such that the ideal of sequential data collection may have to be shifted to semi-sequential or parallel collection.

As three lessons learned during the extended design phase, the one-hour Kick-Off meeting on July 12, 2023 could have been longer to allow for more substantive engagement between the Evaluation Team and USAID. This would have given USAID staff the space to further guide the Evaluation Team on specific design ideas, preferred units of analysis, etc. Secondly, presenting the draft Evaluation Design Document in a meeting or a brief slide deck perhaps would have generated USAID feedback in a more timely fashion for more agile adjustments in the methodology. Third, travel planning for six countries

might have benefitted from being removed from the Design Document for more agile updating and adaptation as Mission confirmations were pending and shifting. Every change in dates and country sequencing required revising Table 3, Figure D and Table 5.

In reworking the methodology, the Evaluation Team benefited from detailed country program summaries provided by CCBO on August 23 and 24. The team also appreciates the helpful collaboration with the CCBO team during the evaluation design. The Evaluation Team analyzed and coded the data in the country summaries to inform the sampling and analyze any gaps in evidence per EQ as shown in Table 4 and further described below. With this improvement in the design, cities are the subunits of analysis in the country case studies. Grants, TA activities, and PSEs are further embedded as sub-sub units of analysis in each country.

As this is an *embedded* multiple case study design (as opposed to holistic), sub-units of analysis for each case will consist of different cities' grant-funded programs that fall within a prior or current grant funded programming, TA, and PSE from the programmatic portfolio for the Ocean Plastics mechanisms (MWRP and CCBO). Within many country contexts—which serve as study cases—multiple mechanisms have been, are, and will be operational, with multiple programs, IPs, and in-country partners working on discrete but complementary programs. Given there are more cities where Ocean Plastics activities are taking place for grants in each mechanism for each case, a sampling strategy is needed. As with the other units in this study of analysis, where the goal of sampling is not representative generalizability but replicability for theory building and learning, the embedded unit sampling strategy will be purposive. Specifically, matched comparison sampling will be used where a cross-section of urban contexts will be sampled with variation in program maturity (nascent, emerging, established), perceived implementation success (poor, adequate, good), among other dimensions deemed important by primary intended evaluation users including range of coverage in grant funded programming, TA, and PSE, acknowledging in many cases these are not always, if ever, mutually exclusive. Each case will have 3-5 embedded units with a total of 18-30 embedded units across the multiple cases.

Grants, TA, and PSE Activities

As previously indicated, each case study embedded unit (city) was sampled based on a handful of criteria, where the most important criterion was data availability. This criterion looks at the coverage of Ocean Plastics portfolio activities across the three main workstreams—grant-funded activities, TA, and PSE. A key assumption with this sampling approach is that the performance of city-based ocean plastic reduction efforts are predicated on circular economy building blocks manifest across the three workstreams. Figure D below provides an overview of the types of evidence, evidence sources, and evidence source locations relative to the EQs. From left to right, readers will see country names as case studies, selected cities per case as embedded units, followed by city-level activities—grants (G), technical assistance (TA), and private sector engagement (PSE). The majority of grants are through the centrally managed mechanisms (CCBO and MWRP), with the exception of some bilateral grants and associated cities in Vietnam, as indicated by *. Numbers next to grants correspond to the last number in the official grant name, which is also included in full. Technical assistance is categorized by governance and policy (GP), solid waste management systems and services (SWM), social and behavior change (SBC), and gender and inclusion (GI) work. Private sector engagement codes are accompanied with the names of partners. In most instances, the names constitute all partnerships, and in select instances the names are illustrative

given the number of partners. A section for each case study includes notes about sampling with information such as total number of active and historical grants, grant allocation by implementing partner, and additional information about direct or grant-funded technical assistance and private sector engagement. Finally, the case study evidence map is linked to a more detailed spreadsheet for anticipated logistics and coordination efforts.

Data Sources

There are more documents and informants across these cases and embedded units than can be consulted in this evaluation. Accordingly, purposive sampling strategies for artifacts and individuals will be employed. Specifically, judgment and criterion-based sampling will be used for documents by relevance and utility in answering EQs with internal documents recommended by USAID and CCBO, and external documents curated by Evaluation Team subject-matter experts. Interviewees will be sampled by judgment of the Evaluation Team, in consultation with implementing partners and USAID, based on who are historical stewards, institutional nodes of knowledge, and representatives of stakeholder groups of interest. Our sampling targets for interviewees are 7-10 interviewees per case with anywhere from 42-60 in total for the study. Group interview participants will be selected with stratified purposive sampling with intentional representation of stakeholder groups, genders, age ranges, and/or any other important identity groups that experience differential processes and effects of program implementation, TA, and PSE. Sampling targets for group interview participants are 4-8 participants per discussion (with equal representation among men and women per group), with 1 group interview per city, and 3-5 cities per case, which translates to somewhere between 72-240 total group interview participants.

Data Collection Processes and Instruments

Data collection will be sequential as the ideal approach. This will be aligned with the five Missions' schedules and availability of SOS Initiative partners. As a second option, the team will use semi-sequential data collection. The team will start data collection in Peru, piloting the data collection instrument with CCBO activities in the relatively smaller portfolio here, as compared to that of some of the Asia countries that have both MWRP and CCBO programming history with some initial bilateral investments. Subsequent field missions will be sequenced by more mature and active cases followed by cases with less active and younger programming. The following section describes the processes and instrumentation for the following:

1. **Desk Review:** modified document review template
2. **Background and Client Context Interviews:** semi-structured interview guide
3. **Field Site Visits:** observation/memoing template
4. **In-Depth Interviews:** interview guide
5. **Group Interview Discussions:** discussion guide

Desk Review

The Evaluation Team began a desk review of existing documents as part of developing the evaluation design, and will continue the review during the evaluation. The documents that have been collected and

analyzed include MWRP, CCBO and broader SOS Initiative materials; relevant USAID policies and technical documents; and appropriate scientific literature and assessments, including those related to projects funded by other donors. The Evaluation Team adapted an existing I4DI document review template to be used collaboratively in Google sheets. Additional documents will be added and further analysis will be conducted throughout the evaluation.

The following are the basic steps in the team's Desk Review:

1. **Identification of Relevant Documents:** The first step was to identify the types of documents useful for the evaluation. These include reports, strategy documents, program documents, and other relevant materials from USAID and implementing partners. The team appreciates the number and range of project documents already shared by USAID from MWRP and by the CCBO implementer. The Evaluation Team also continues to seek online documents in the experience and networks of the technical subject matter experts regarding the 3Rs, related policies and cutting-edge research. The team anticipates that additional materials will be forthcoming in site visits and in interviews.
2. **Review of Documents:** Documents are reviewed in order to garner information that is relevant to answering one or more of the four EQs. This information is initially gathered in an adapted data extraction protocol found in Annex C: Draft Generic Semi-Structured Interview Guide and then fleshed out in the Annotated Bibliography in Annex I.
3. **Bibliography:** The initial draft of a documentary and literature bibliography has been developed in Annex I to capture and track the materials reviewed. The team will use this bibliography throughout the evaluation and will include this in the final evaluation report as an Annex.

Background and Client Consultation Interviews

Prefigurative consultations with primary intended users at USAID, CCBO, and in country offices will serve to further orient the Evaluation Team to the evaluation context as well as the needs, interests, and values of intended users. These are intended to inform methodological decisions for the design and conduct of the evaluation as well as logistical and work planning activities. Distinct from the team's prior consultations with USAID and CCBO as part of the Design process, a set of interview questions will be developed and shared beforehand for these consultations as discussion points

Field Site Visits

Insights about program implementation quality can be gained through direct experience or others experience. While the majority of data about implementation will be sourced from respondents, Evaluation Team members may gain insights into the function, process, and potentially program effects throughout the field site visits. These field visits could include upcycling and recycling enterprises, waste banks/junk shops, and material recovery facilities. Failing to equip the Evaluation Team members with a way to capture insights, both descriptive and reflective during field visits would be a missed opportunity in terms of triangulating data collection and analysis methods. To facilitate reliable and commensurable field notes, an observational protocol has been developed for evaluation team members to complete for each embedded unit, or city site visit (Annex E).

In-Depth Interviews

Cases have been selected based on their potential to yield valuable insights from years of implementation experience. The Evaluation Team will seek out valuable informants who have knowledge of local, governmental, institutional, communal, and programmatic considerations that have bearing on answering evaluation questions. A Semi-Structured Interview Guide can be found in Annex C. Across all cases and cities sampled in the study, the Evaluation Team has provisionally identified an ideal cross-section of stakeholders by role to be interviewed and group interviews. They are: 1) implementing partner manager; 2) field staff; 3) community members; 4) national and subnational government officials; 5) private sector partner representatives; and 6) NGO/association representatives. We are targeting conducting individual interviews with two informants per role. Specific informants will be selected by virtual consultation with the implementing partners in-country and the USAID Mission points of contact (POCs) before field work. All interviews will be roughly one hour long. The Evaluation Team will seek support from in-country partners to be connected with informants to coordinate and schedule interview days and times.

Group Interview Discussions

Group interview discussions will be used to elicit insights from the exchange and interaction of key representatives of stakeholder groups, and to maximize in-country data collection opportunities. There will be one group interview per embedded unit, or city, with the target of 3-5 group interview discussions per case. A Group Interview Discussion Guide can be found in Annex D. The same specific roles for interviews apply to group interviews and will not be restated here. As with interviews, specific informants will be selected by virtual consultation with the implementing partner's in-country team before field work. All group interviews will be roughly an hour long. The Evaluation Team will seek support from in-country partners to be connected with informants to coordinate and schedule interview days and times, and also seek support in convening participants at municipal locations.

Data Analysis

Taken together, the EQs are well leveraged to meet the formative process evaluation needs to support decision-making in programming and design. However, as suggested earlier in the valuing process and criteria sub-section, there are important variations in the EQs in terms of their nature and scope. With this in mind, and although data sources and collection methods are constant across all EQs, the differences in questions necessitate different but complementary analytical procedures. First, as indicated in the evaluation design matrix (Table 2), there are bespoke end-to-end analytical procedures that have been paired with each EQ. Second, all primary data collection methodologies across EQs will yield unstructured text data that will be coded as a technique within each analytical procedure. However, the data that corresponds to each EQ will receive different first and second cycle qualitative coding treatments as explained in Annex G: Draft Qualitative Codebook. Brief summaries of end-to-end analytical procedures and coding strategies are listed below:

EQ1: (Localization and Empowerment) Multiple Lines of Evidence: this procedure is a systematic approach to causal inference that involves bringing together different types of evidence (lines of evidence) and considering the strength of the evidence in terms of different indicators of a causal relationship (levels of evidence). This procedure will be complemented with evaluation coding that

applies non-quantitative codes to qualitative data to make value claims about program implementation and effects.

EQ2: (Institutionalization) Realist Qualitative Analysis/ Force Field Analysis: realist qualitative analysis uses thematic coding to identify operational contextual factors, and dimensions or mechanisms of program implementation that result in varying outcomes across multiple cases. Once potential contextual dimensions and mechanisms are identified, a force field analysis can be conducted to identify driving and restraining factors to institutionalization.

EQ3: (Building Block Coherence and Relevance) Relational Content Analysis: this analytical procedure is actually a collection of similar strategies that reduce text segments to codes and pattern matches those codes to identify relationships between concepts. Magnitude coding is a strategy that codes text segments and references to categories or concepts by intensity, frequency, direction, present, and or evaluative content.

EQ4: (Anticipated Impact and Sustainability) Qualitative Comparative Analysis: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is a means of analyzing the potential causal contribution of different conditions (e.g. aspects of an intervention and the wider context) to an outcome of interest. The Evaluation Team's subject-matter experts will work with the senior evaluation specialist to develop leading indicators of impact and sustainability for this question, as well as a deductive coding schema for protocol coding of qualitative data.

Procedures That Cross-Cut EQs

Document review entails structural coding (extracting text segments and organizing by relevance to EQs) and the integration of numerical activity-level MEL data where available. Activity-level monitoring quantitative data will serve as an initial source of evidence that is then corroborated and expanded by qualitative work. Collaborative group analysis of observational site data will occur for all EQs.

Synthesis Procedures

Data for each EQ and criteria will be synthesized through a qualitative weight and sum methodology. Factual descriptions about program implementation and effects for embedded units and cases will be combined with the values, criteria, and standards through the use of evaluative rubrics.

Comparison Procedures

Portfolio implementation performances will be compared within and between cases. Within case comparison will be conducted at the embedded unit of analysis (cities) across program life cycles, between sub-national settings, intervention types, mechanisms (MWRP and CCBO), and workstreams (grant, TA, PSE). Between case comparisons will be made by regional, national, and geographic settings as well as mechanisms (MWRP and CCBO) and funding windows (centrally managed vs. bilateral). Critical comparators will be sought for each case study and potentially for each city-level activity from analogue interventions from other national development agencies for further contextualization and valuing.

Interpretation Process

Initial interpretations will be generated by field-based Evaluation Team members and then remote core team members. Member-checking—a qualitative verification procedure that seeks to confirm team interpretation of analyzed data—will be employed as needed with interviewees and potentially group interview participants depending on availability. A final verification/interpretation moment will take place during the findings and recommendation workshop session which will take place virtually with primary intended users of the evaluation. Feedback from this working session will be incorporated to the final evaluation report.

Reporting Procedures

Detailed reporting requirements and procedures can be found in the SOW in Annex A, but key deliverables and processes are summarized as followed:

- Evaluation design document
- Weekly update memos
- Mission in-briefing and exit briefings
- Preliminary findings and recommendation workshop
- Draft evaluation report
- Final evaluation report
- Other deliverables
- Submitted dataset to data library
- Submitted approved report to development clearinghouse

Facilitating Intended Use

All decisions about evaluation purpose, approach, methods, questions, criteria, and other key elements interpreted from the Scope of Work have been made in service of maximizing intended use for intended users of the evaluation. The evaluation team hopes further consultations and feedback received on the evaluation design document can confirm or fine-tune these conclusions and designs to increase utility. See section on primary intended uses for primary intended users.

Plans for Learning and Dissemination

Learning and dissemination are related to evaluation utilization. Learning is a type of utilization, often called enlightenment or conceptual use, and robust dissemination is a necessary precondition for use in decision-making. As with intended use for intended users, the Evaluation Team will focus on evaluation processes during the evaluation lifecycle that support learning and ensure the evaluation products are of high quality to warrant a robust dissemination plan. The Evaluation Team recognizes that there is a specific and prescriptive learning and dissemination strategy outlined in the SOW that will be pursued.

Triangulation

The Evaluation Team views triangulation as an essential process for ensuring the validity and credibility of evaluation processes and products. Triangulation will be attended to in four ways:

1. **Method Triangulation:** this evaluation is a multi-method qualitative evaluation that intentionally uses multiple complementary data collection and analysis techniques to defensibly make evaluative claims.
2. **Investigator Triangulation:** the Evaluation Team is composed of seasoned professionals with deep methodological, subject-matter, and agency and sector-specific experience and knowledge. All Evaluation Team members will be involved in data collection and collaborative analysis.
3. **Theory Triangulation:** the evaluation will draw on, investigate, and apply relevant social theories related to plastics and waste management, explicit and implicit program theory, and evaluation theory.
4. **Data Source Triangulation:** the evaluation employs a multifaceted purposive sampling strategy tailored to the evaluation purpose, object, and questions. This strategy will produce a rich set of qualitative data from primary and secondary sources including multiple case contexts, embedded units of analysis, stakeholder group representatives, and program roles.

Culturally Responsive, Equitable, and Gender Responsive Evaluation Principles

This evaluation will uphold principles of local ownership, ethical standards, and cultural responsiveness. Evaluators will safeguard the dignity, rights, safety, and privacy of all participants. The evaluation will be conducted according to professional standards, legal requirements, and ethical principles of justice, fairness, and equity. The Evaluation Team will consider cultural and contextual factors that may influence findings or use. Gender dynamics will be examined to ensure perspectives and experiences of all genders are reflected. Potential barriers to participation for vulnerable groups will be addressed. By upholding these principles, the evaluation aims to generate credible, actionable findings while protecting participants and reinforcing local ownership. Frequent communication and collaborative processes will ensure the evaluation meets the needs of diverse stakeholders in an ethical, equitable manner. Findings will be contextualized and inclusive of all relevant perspectives.

Contingency Plan for Data Collection

The Evaluation Team will make every effort to plan thoroughly and well in advance for the Data Collection phase through prior consultations and timely communications with local contacts, allotting for visa processing times and keeping well abreast of situational dynamics in country cases. The team's work plan and calendar include key dates in the case countries, so as to be aware of elections, holidays, planned protests, etc. that would affect the team's mobility, safety and/or ability to otherwise complete the mission's objectives. U.S. citizen team members are also expected to register with the State Department's STEP traveler registry for each country visit. The team expects to have local in-country assistance in all cases and can call on these colleagues if needed in case of emergency. Through an established WhatsApp group, the team will follow I4DI protocols for checking-in upon arrival in the country and maintaining communications with the home office.

Should unexpected situations require team members to leave a country during a field mission, personal safety is the priority and the team will take all steps in this regard, keeping in close contact with the I4DI home office for support in case of an emergency departure or in-country relocation. All team members

have committed to and are aware of responsibilities should any serious incident occur and will report the same via I4DI to USAID's Safety and Security Office.

Having to leave a country during a field mission will trigger alternate options for data collection, if this is feasible and appropriate. For example, there may well be options to recuperate in-person engagement by doing some data collection virtually for key informant interviews and even for Focal Group Discussions in some cases. As foreseen in the budget, resources could be shifted, if needed for example, for translation or local on-line facilitation services if the in-country local logistical support staff is unavailable. In some cases, the team may need to call on CCBO colleagues as needed for guidance as to the feasibility of connectivity and other logistical questions, should the team's in-country local support not be available for this purpose.

The same holds true should the team be unable to go to a selected case country. Depending on the situation in the country, virtual data collection is an option. In other situations, the team may determine that such engagement is not feasible or productive, in consultation with USAID and CCBO colleagues.

For these situations where the team is unable to go to a selected case country, the team's first option is to reschedule. Given the tight calendar and the fact that other country visits will have been completed or confirmed with no flexibility, there may be little opportunity to shift dates and reschedule. This is especially so in situations where the security, natural disaster or other conditions would not allow the team to reschedule in a timely manner. The second option is to go virtual, as described above. The third option would be to shift the case visit to another country.

The back-up plans in case the team faces this third option of having to shift from one case study country to another are as follows:

- **For LAC:** the team has proposed to visit Peru. Should this case visit have to be canceled with no virtual data collection options, the team would assess with USAID and IPs the feasibility of visiting the Dominican Republic. If this is not practical, the team will consult further on adaptively managing the methodological approach with the option of doing a lighter touch virtual and/or desk-based data collection in either country. If this situation arises, the team might be able to consider doing a lighter touch for both countries (Peru and the D.R.). Covering both countries virtually would have to be weighed in sync with the team's travel schedule and availability of Spanish-speaking team members. For the region, the team considers that being able to do in-country evaluations in only one of the two LAC countries would yield significant evidence for the four Evaluation Questions.
- **For Asia:** the team has proposed five country cases: Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Maldives. Sri Lanka/Maldives will be combined in one trip. Should travel to one of these countries not be possible, the team will consult immediately with USAID and IPs on a proposed back up plan to maximize evaluation learning through virtual methods in the selected case country. The team considers that a reduction to four of the five proposed country case visits in the region would still yield valuable evaluation results from the region for the intended users, albeit not ideal.

LIMITATIONS

Methodological

There are two classes of limitations worth noting for this evaluation—methodological and logistical. Of the methodological limitations, there are those that are specific to the case study evaluation model. In particular, there is a known issue called the “case-quintain dilemma” which refers to striking the right balance between descriptions and analysis of individual cases, and sub-units, versus the collection of cases. Case study-specific codebook templates for writing can mitigate this issue. Further, there are known limitations for case studies that focus on program implementation, namely that bias detection methods may be inadequate, varying experience with case study research among on-site observers, data management, and data quality control and validation procedures may lead to concessions in study quality. Internal evaluation team calibration efforts are planned to help address some of these known issues. For case studies focused on program effects, there are known issues with the tendency of not collecting the right amount of data, not examining the right number of sites, and unequal evaluation capacity within teams. Careful planning and consultation with primary intended users on the proposed case study and embedded unit selection may address the issues around the right number of site selections. The use of evidence rubrics will assist in collecting the right amount of data as evidence will be evaluated in the field to ensure sufficient data of an adequate quality has been collected for analysis. There are also known limitations to multiple case study designs, namely the uneven experience in skills for qualitative data collection that necessitate time and resources in training techniques such as note-taking and memoing for thick descriptions. Specific to this case study, there are potential issues with the evaluability of EQ4, which is interested in contributing factors to sustainable impact. Answering this question will necessitate the use of leading proxy indicators of sustainable impact that have clearly articulated assumptions that can be demonstrated to be met.

Logistical

There are two main categories of logistical limitations—budget and timeline constraints. For budget considerations, the evaluation country case visits are planned for two core team members and one local staff member to conduct each of the five visits. Ideally, three team members in-country are indicated for coordination and triangulation in constructing case study knowledge. Budget adjustments may allow for additional team members to join in-country case visits, pending final country approvals with potential cost savings and timeline efficiency gains from: 1) combining the travel of one or more team members into joint trips to two or three countries, thus reducing the number of trans-Pacific flights; 2) eliminating expensive travel to Pacific Island countries; 3) eliminating travel to East Africa as Kenya is not proposed as a country case; and 4) reducing anticipated domestic travel in the Philippines as most grant activities are in the Metro Manila region.

PROPOSED EVALUATION SCHEDULE AND MILESTONES

We look forward to collaborating closely with USAID and their Implementing Partners throughout the timeline steps shown below. The evaluation team recognizes that the process of evaluating a global portfolio is not a straightforward and linear one. Rather, it involves an iterative approach that requires flexibility and adaptability, especially given the proposed five country site visits. While the team will aim to adhere to the timeline, the schedule may need to be modified or adjusted as new information is

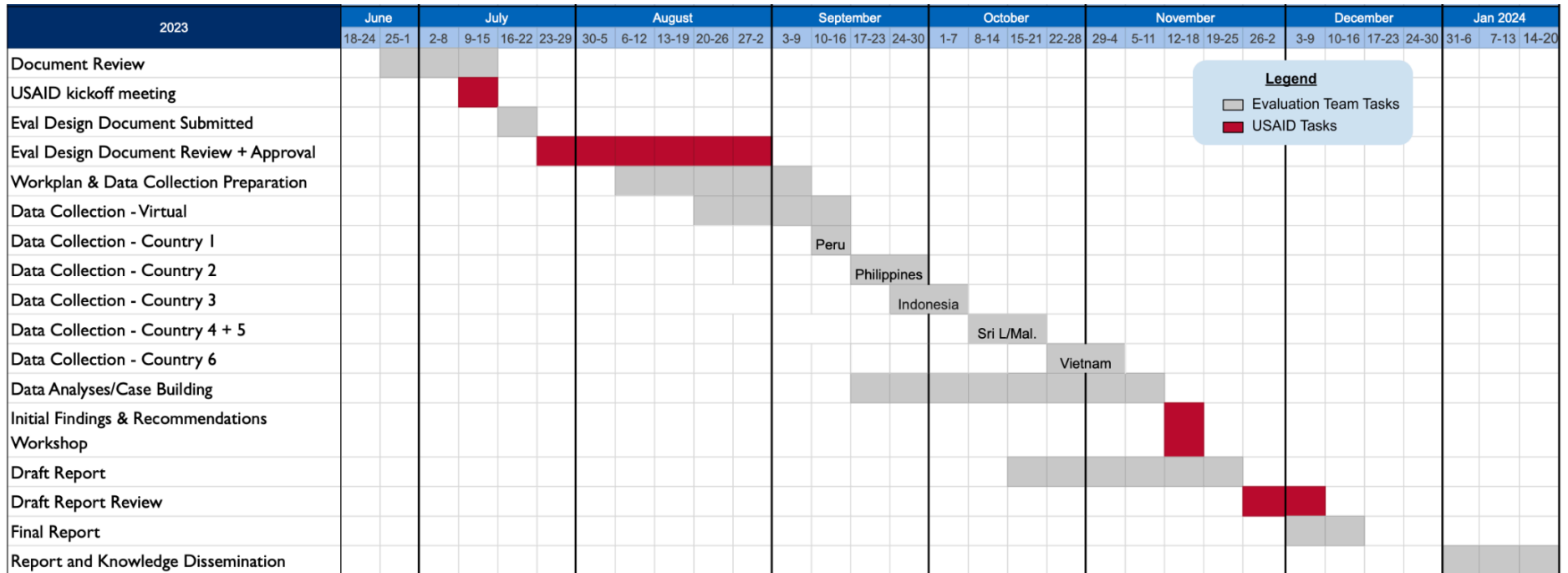
uncovered, or as unexpected challenges or opportunities arise during the evaluation process. The team will be flexible and adaptable in its approach, and is highly committed to completing the work on time- See Figure E below for the evaluation schedule.

The team will begin travel and data collection preparation right away with further contingency planning and more detailed Work Plan development. Virtual Data Collection will begin once the Design Document is approved and the country cases are confirmed, all in close coordination with USAID. Virtual Data Collection and thorough advance travel / site visit planning will continue throughout the evaluation, as the team is aware of the complexities of engaging with ocean plastics activities in six countries. Consistent with the methodological approach, the schedule proposes sequential data collection as much as possible for the country cases. This sequencing allows for process use of initial findings along the trajectory of the cases with maximized iterative dynamics. Note that Data Analysis/Case Building starts as the first team is in the field and continues throughout the data collection phase. This is a key element of the iterative process and maximizes the value of sequential data collection, continuous coding and analysis, and adaptive management along the way. An early start on analysis and case building also will yield productive engagement with USAID in the Learning Webinar / Preliminary Findings Workshop.

For the country case Data Collection, the team proposes beginning in Peru as a pilot to test and adapt the instruments while also gathering reliable data for the EQs. The Asia region will then be the team's focus, starting with the Philippines. This data-rich SOS Initiative country will provide the team with a solid base for smooth application of instruments and concurrent data analysis. Subsequent countries would be Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Vietnam.

Data collection trips are budgeted for two Evaluation Team members in each country, with potential for three team members in those countries with more complex portfolios as the team is able to consolidate trips or otherwise generate budget flexibility for this purpose. The team plans to hire local support in each country as needed for logistical, data collection, translation or other coordination. Each country visit is budgeted for six nights in the capital cities and seven nights outside the capital. The budget for time spent outside the capital includes costs for an in-country hire.

Figure E: Evaluation Schedule and Key Engagements with USAID



The team will make minimal demands on USAID Mission and SOS Initiative partners in terms of time and support needed in-country. With detailed advance planning in collaboration with USAID and partners, prior virtual introductions to key stakeholders and grantees, and with a local team member to support logistics, the team intends to operate fairly independently in-country. The team also intends to make minimal calls on local SOS Initiative partner staff for field and grantee visits, and appreciates that support when it may be needed in terms of site logistical information or additional local contacts, for example. The same holds true for grantees and key stakeholders in terms of fully respecting people’s time and other responsibilities. Again, detailed advance planning will be key to meet these objectives while at the same time remaining flexible and willing to adapt to unexpected or changing conditions and schedules. Country work plans will indicate the number of individual interviews, group

interviews, and site observations proposed for each city, along with the sample of grants, TA, and PSE sites to be visited. These plans will be further developed collaborative with USAID and SOS Initiative partners prior to in-country visits.

Prior to arrival in-country, the team will offer to provide briefings with USAID Mission colleagues either upon arrival (in-briefing) and/or out-briefings, as the Mission prefers. The team will also offer to have more in-depth meetings with Mission technical staff, at the Mission’s preference. These will be scheduled with draft agendas in advance of travel. Likewise, Individual and Group Interviews and grant site visits will be scheduled prior to arrival in-country so that the team makes the most use of the valuable time of partners, government representatives, grantees, key stakeholders, private sector partners, etc. Depending on country dynamics, accounting for urban traffic conditions, city locations, and domestic travel, the team plans to conduct 1-4 semi-structured interviews per day to reach the sample target of 7-10 semi-structured interviews per case. Draft work plans for each proposed country case are presented in more detail in Annex H: Draft Country Work Plans. These draft plans will be finalized in collaboration with USAID and SOS Initiative partners. Live versions of the Country Work Plans will be filed in a shared Google Drive folder for ongoing adaptation as needed.

Table 5: Key Milestones and Expected Dates

Milestone	Date 2023
Team Start - Team Planning Meeting	June 21
Kick-Off Meeting with USAID on Evaluation Design	July 12
Evaluation Design Document submitted to USAID	July 21
USAID approval of Design Document	Aug 29 anticipated
Travel and Data Collection Preparation	Mid August through mid September
Data collection (Virtual + 6 countries) & Analysis	Continual late August to early November
Preliminary Findings “Learning Webinar” Workshop	Week of November 12
Draft Report submitted to USAID	November 27
Final Report submitted to USAID	December 15

TEAM STRUCTURE

The evaluation team brings the requisite variety of expertise and experience to the SOS Initiative evaluation. Team members have backgrounds in evaluation of global initiatives, evaluation design, circular economy, plastic pollution (recycle, refill, re-use), PSE approaches in plastics, local governance and USAID project management. The team also includes the management experience to support the complex organization and scheduling required in an evaluation of this scope.

The evaluation team is working collaboratively with I4DI colleagues and USAID’s Vidya Venkataramanan (USAID Evaluation Activity Manager, DDI/EEI/GC Plastic Pollution Advisor). The I4DI team collaborated on co-design of the evaluation with Vidya and USAID’s Green Cities Division.

Team Members

Table 5: Core Evaluation Team Members

Name	Title	Brief Bio
Connie Campbell	Team Leader	Connie has over 25 years of global development experience including 15 years of USAID technical leadership in environment and climate change programs. She has proven expertise in program evaluations for USAID and other public and private donors. Connie brings specific qualifications in team leadership, strategic assessment and technical writing, USAID program management and Mission support, gender and indigenous issues, local systems, and participation and equity. She has USAID-related project experience in over 15 countries. PhD Anthropology, MA Tropical Conservation and Development, BS Biology and Spanish. Connie currently is in Lima, Peru and is fluent in Portuguese and Spanish.
Zach Tilton	Senior Evaluation Specialist	Zach has over 10 years of design, monitoring, and evaluation experience in development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding programs. As an evaluation consultant and PhD candidate in Evaluation, he specializes in collaborative and complexity-aware methods, meta-evaluation, evidence synthesis, technology-enabled evaluation, and evaluation capacity building. He has field and educational experience in North Africa, Europe, and the Pacific. Zach currently lives in South Bend, Indiana and is professionally fluent in Moroccan Arabic.

Name	Title	Brief Bio
Daniela Cordoba	Circular Economy and Ocean Plastics Specialist	Daniela brings to the team more than 15 years of experience in oil, mining, food, plastics and electronic industries. As a PhD in Engineering Sciences specialized in Circular Economy, she has been Project Manager in several countries in Latin America, Asia and western Africa region analyzing the public and private sectors adoption of Circular Economy practices to reduce plastic pollution. Daniela also evaluates the level of circularity in industrial processes from the eco-design and manufacturing phase to improve sustainable practices to close loops. She has assessed the plastics regulations in Viet Nam, Indonesia, and the Philippines concerning extended producer responsibility and minimum recycling content. Dani currently lives in Ecuador, she is fluent in Spanish, English, and French, and basic Portuguese.
Matt Haden	Circular Economy and Ocean Plastics Specialist	Matthew brings over 12 years of private sector solid waste management experience, the majority of which include founding and operating successful recycling and waste management companies in East Africa with teams of over 60 people. He has wide knowledge of various recycling processes, models and markets across the world and specializes in informal collection networks, ocean plastics, waste to fuel, plastic credit systems, and carbon offsetting.

Role and Responsibilities
Table 6: Roles and Responsibilities

Main Tasks	Role and Responsibilities
Evaluation Design Document	The Team Lead and Sr. Evaluation Specialist (Connie and Zach, respectively) will head up the evaluation design with Zach leading on methods. All team members conduct desk research while the subject matter experts (Dani and Matt) take the lead on grant sampling, the initial annotated bibliography, and the technical glossary. The I4DI team will directly guide strategic thinking on country selection, budget implications, and

Main Tasks	Role and Responsibilities
	<p>USAID-CCBO expectations. Additionally, the I4DI team will support document management and project administration with Connie and the team. I4DI is expected to provide a relevant template, outline, and direction on the expected level of detail of the work plan within the Design Document.</p>
<p>Data Collection</p>	<p>All team members will collaboratively conduct desk research prior to and during the evaluation. Virtual data collections will focus on Key Informant Interviews with USAID, stakeholders and implementers. Interviews will be conducted by two to four of the team members, depending on each interviews' objectives, with one team member designated as Note Taker. Interview and site visit notes will be uploaded to the I4DI shared drive within 24 hours. For site visits, a minimum of two team members will conduct the five country case visits, ensuring the appropriate mix of overall strategy, methods, and technical expertise in each country.</p>
<p>Analysis and Drafting of Report</p>	<p>The Sr. Evaluation Specialist (Zach) and Team Lead (Connie) will lead the data analysis with the technical experts, Dani and Matt. The team will call on I4DI for strategic guidance and quality control. Connie and Zach will collaboratively draft the evaluation report with key sections written by Dani and Matt. I4DI will review the draft prior to submission to USAID. With USAID feedback on the draft report, Connie will revise and finalize with support from the team and I4DI.</p>
<p>Preliminary Findings & Recommendations Workshop “Learning Webinar”</p>	<p>The Evaluation Team will develop initial findings and recommendations for discussion with USAID and their Implementing Partners (at USAID’s discretion). Connie and Zach will lead the drafting and team discussions of the findings and recommendations. With clear direction and support from I4DI, the team will develop an agenda, anticipated outcomes, and a slide deck for the workshop. The workshop will be recorded and is anticipated to be a two-hour virtual gathering. This will constitute the <i>“Learning” Webinar on the Evaluation</i></p>

Main Tasks	Role and Responsibilities
	<i>Findings and Action Plan (recorded)</i> listed in the SOW section ‘Other Deliverables’.
Glossary	A glossary of key terms will be created by the team’s technical experts, Dani and Matt, to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the concepts used in the evaluation. A draft is included in the Evaluation Design Document and will be supplemented throughout the evaluation.
Relationship Management	As Team Lead, Connie will be responsible for managing the project with I4DI direction and support, and for maintaining good relations with the client.
Report and Knowledge Dissemination	<p>With USAID’s guidance and with I4DI support, the Evaluation Team will develop the following products for sharing and promoting the Evaluation Report – this will include the ‘Other Deliverables’ in the SOW, with the exception of the ‘Learning Workshop’ (referenced above):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One page brief of key evaluation findings with visuals; ● One briefer (2 pages max per briefer) per building block as appropriate, based on evaluation findings; ● <i>“Learning” webinar on the evaluation findings and action plan (recorded);</i> ● Presentation materials that can be used by the Oceans Plastics Team and Missions in the development of new Oceans Plastics Activities.

ANNEXES

Annex A: Glossary

An initial glossary has been developed to guide and bound the evaluation work. These are working definitions that will develop further during the evaluation.

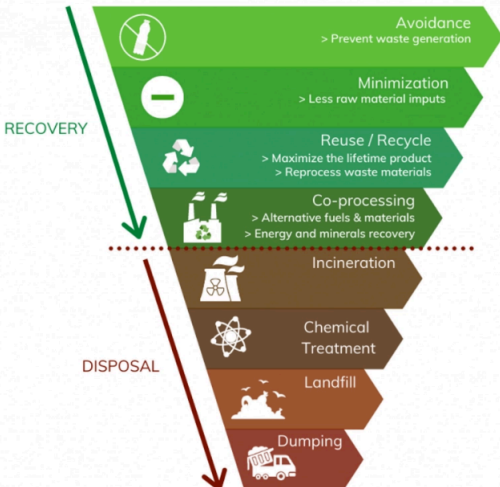
Working Definitions of Terms	
Anaerobic Digestion	The biological breakdown of organic waste materials in the absence of oxygen, producing biogas and nutrient-rich digestate.
Biodegradable	Materials that can be naturally broken down into simpler substances without causing harm to the environment.
Bioplastics	Plastics derived from renewable sources, such as plants, that are designed to be more environmentally friendly and biodegradable.
Blue Economy	The blue economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth while preserving marine ecosystems. It encompasses practices such as sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, coastal tourism, renewable energy, and marine biotechnology. By balancing economic development with environmental protection, the blue economy aims to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of the ocean and its resources.
Carbon Footprint	The total amount of greenhouse gas emissions, primarily carbon dioxide, produced directly or indirectly by an individual, organization, or product.
Circular Economy	A productive-economic system aimed to extend the lifetime of a product by designing and eliminating waste to promote the continual use of resources through the reuse, repair, remanufacture, recycling, and regeneration of technical or biological cycles.
Closed-Loop Recycling	A recycling system where a product is recycled back into the same type of product, reducing the need for raw materials. Glass back into glass is a good example of this.
Composting	The natural decomposition of organic waste into nutrient-rich compost through microbial activity.

Downcycling	The process of recycling a material into a lower-value or less desirable product. For instance instead of recycling a plastic bottle back into a plastic bottle, the material is recycled into fiber that then cannot be recycled again.
Downstream	Refers to activities and processes that occur later in the supply chain, such as distribution and disposal.
Dumpsites	Unregulated or poorly managed areas where waste is disposed of without adequate environmental controls, often resulting in pollution and health hazards. Dumpsites lack proper infrastructure and safeguards.
E-Waste	Electrical and electronic waste, including discarded electronics such as computers, mobile phones, and televisions.
Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)	Manufacturers' responsibility at the end of the lifetime product for the collection, recycling, and safe disposal of their products.
Hazardous Waste Disposal	The safe and regulated disposal of hazardous waste materials to prevent harm to human health and the environment.
Incineration	The controlled burning of waste materials at high temperatures to generate energy.
Landfill	A designated area where waste is disposed of by burying it in the ground, engineered to minimize impact.
Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)	A comprehensive analysis of the environmental impacts associated with a product throughout its life cycle.
Material Recovery Facility (MRF)	A facility where recyclable materials are sorted, processed, and prepared for recycling.
Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)	Household and commercial waste generated within urban areas, including paper, plastics, and food waste.

Ocean Plastic	Plastic waste that ends up in the ocean, often causing harm to marine life and ecosystems.
Open Burning	<p>Open burning refers to the act of intentionally or unintentionally setting fire to waste materials in an outdoor, open-air setting. It involves the combustion of materials without the use of controlled burners or incineration equipment. Open burning is often conducted in fields, yards, or other open spaces, and is often commonplace at dumpsites that are mismanaged.</p> <p>While open burning may be practiced for various reasons, such as waste disposal, land clearing, or agricultural purposes, it can have significant negative impacts on the environment, human health, and air quality. Here are some key points to consider:</p> <p>Environmental Impact: Open burning releases pollutants into the atmosphere, contributing to air pollution and the emission of greenhouse gasses, such as carbon dioxide, methane, and particulate matter. These emissions can contribute to climate change, degrade air quality, and harm ecosystems.</p> <p>Health Risks: The smoke and pollutants generated by open burning can pose health risks to individuals exposed to them. Inhalation of smoke can cause respiratory issues, aggravate existing respiratory conditions, and lead to eye and throat irritation. It can also contain hazardous substances, including dioxins, which are highly toxic.</p> <p>Fire Hazard: Open burning carries the risk of uncontrolled fires spreading to surrounding areas, leading to property damage, endangering lives, and putting a strain on emergency response resources.</p> <p>Open Burning is significantly worse than controlled incineration or waste to fuel/co-processing due to the slow temperature and lack of any filters that cause increased release of pollutants. Moreover this is no energy capture.</p>

<p>Post-consumer Recycled Content</p>	<p>The percentage of recycled materials derived from post-consumer waste used in the manufacturing of new products or packaging.</p>
<p>Recycling</p>	<p>Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into reusable materials to create new products. It is an essential component of waste management and a key strategy for reducing the environmental impact of waste. Recycling helps conserve natural resources, reduce energy consumption, minimize pollution, and divert waste from landfills.</p> <p>The recycling process typically involves the following steps:</p> <p>Collection: Recyclable materials, such as paper, plastics, metals, and glass, are collected from households, businesses, or through informal waste pickers.</p> <p>Sorting: Collected recyclables are sorted into different categories based on their material type. This step may involve manual sorting, automated sorting technologies, or material recovery facilities (MRFs) equipped with sorting equipment and machinery.</p> <p>Processing: Sorted recyclables undergo processing to prepare them for manufacturing into new products. Processing methods include shredding, crushing, and cleaning to remove contaminants, such as dirt, labels, or residue.</p> <p>Manufacturing: Processed recyclable materials are transformed into new products through manufacturing processes. For example, recycled paper can be turned into new paper products, like newspapers or tissues. Plastic bottles can be recycled into new plastic bottles or other plastic products. Glass can be recycled back into glass.</p> <p>It is important to note that recycling in general is not as good as reuse and refilling approaches. For example, when plastic is recycled it is often downcycled into single-use packaging that will not be recycled more than once. And in the process it requires a lot of energy to collect, clean and heat the plastic. Whereas refill strategies require</p>

	just the collecting and cleaning of the material so that it can be reused.
Residual Waste	Waste that remains after recycling, composting, and other waste management processes. It is typically sent to landfills or undergoes energy recovery.
Reverse Logistics	The process of managing the flow of products or materials from their final destination back to the point of origin for recycling, repair, or proper disposal.
Sanitary Landfill	A well-engineered landfill designed to safely and effectively handle waste by implementing environmental protection measures, such as liners, leachate collection systems, and gas management systems.
Single-Use Plastic	Plastic items that are designed to be used only once before being discarded, contributing to plastic waste. In many cases single-use plastics are not recycled or are downcycled.
Source Reduction	The practice of minimizing the generation of waste at the source by reducing consumption and using resources more efficiently.
Source Separation	The practice of separating different types of waste materials at the point of generation for recycling.
Upcycling	The process of transforming waste materials into products of higher value or quality. In many cases Upcycling deals with small volumes of material, creating art or furniture. For this reason is often not seen as a real solution for waste management.
Upstream	Refers to activities and processes that occur early in the supply chain, such as extraction and production.
Waste Audit	A systematic analysis of waste generation, composition, and management practices to identify areas for improvement and waste reduction strategies.
Waste Diversion	The process of diverting waste from disposal methods, such as landfill or incineration, through recycling, composting, or other sustainable alternatives.

<p>Waste Hierarchy</p>	<p>A prioritized order of waste management options based on their environmental impact. Below is a commonly used Hierarchy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE WASTE MANAGEMENT APPROACH</p> 
<p>Waste Management</p>	<p>The collection, transportation, processing, disposal, and monitoring of waste materials.</p>
<p>Waste Picker / Informal Recycler</p>	<p>An individual who collects and sorts recyclable materials from waste streams for livelihood or recycling purposes.</p>
<p>Waste Segregation</p>	<p>The act of sorting waste into different categories based on their material type, such as plastics, paper, metals, or organic waste, to facilitate recycling and proper disposal.</p>
<p>Waste Stream</p>	<p>The flow or pathway of waste materials from their generation through their disposal or recovery processes.</p>
<p>Waste to Fuel (WtF) / Co-Processing</p>	<p>Waste-to-fuel (WtF) in a cement kiln is a process where waste materials are used as a fuel source to heat the kiln in order to produce cement. The process of WtF in a cement kiln is beneficial because it reduces the amount of fossil fuels needed to heat the kiln, which in turn reduces the carbon footprint of the cement production process. Additionally, the use of waste materials as a fuel source helps to reduce the amount of waste that ends up in landfills or the environment. WtF in cement kilns is also considered as a form of thermal treatment and disposal of waste. This process is also known as co-processing, and it is considered a sustainable way of waste</p>

	<p>management as it reduces the environmental impact of waste disposal, and at the same time, produces a useful product. The main benefit over Waste-to-Energy (WTE) systems is in terms of upfront costs, as the WTE incineration plants are very expensive, whereas cement kilns generally already exist.</p> <p>There are over 150 kilns in Europe that use waste to fuel every day, with waste making up 40% of thermal energy used in the clinker-making process at EU-based cement factories. This process is accepted and recommended by both the Basel Convention and the Montreal Protocol. However, it should be noted that WtF is not as good as recycling and should be focused only on material that is non-recyclable and has a calorific value.</p>
<p>Waste-to-Energy (WTE)</p>	<p>The conversion of non-recyclable waste into usable energy through processes like incineration or gasification. It should be noted that WTE options are often the most expensive way to dispose of waste and the most expensive way to create energy. Low income countries struggle to make these systems work due to the high moisture content in the waste.</p>
<p>Zero Waste</p>	<p>A waste management philosophy aiming to minimize waste through waste reduction, recycling, and recovery. It is important to distinguish between Zero Waste to landfill and the Zero Waste Movement.</p> <p>Zero Waste to landfill is a practical solution that means all waste is recycled, composted/turned into biogas or used for energy recovery so that nothing is taken to landfill.</p> <p>However, the Zero Waste movement is the systematic redesign of all resources' life-cycles so that waste is not produced at all. This is in many ways anti-recycling, as items should be designed for extensive reuse and when finally discarded they should be reused in nature by providing nutrients to the soil. It means redesigning packaging for all products as well as the way we run our lives and businesses.</p>

Annex B: Draft Generic Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The following generic interview guide and questions are illustrative.

Semi-structured interviews use an interview guide with a mix of more and less structured interview questions. This guide can provide some consistency across interviews but still allow flexibility to ask follow-up questions. This is in contrast to structured interviews that use a standardized set of questions asked in the same order for all respondents or unstructured interviews that have no predetermined questions or framework. Each interview will have two evaluation team members. Team members can choose to have one interviewer and one note taker or have both team members work as co-interviewers for collaborative interviews. If participants consent to audio recording, notes should be in service of supporting follow-up questions during the interview or capturing insights and or additional questions during the conversation. If interviews can't be recorded, teams should opt for a dedicated note taker to attempt to capture as of the interviewees responses.

Interviewer responsibilities:

- Prepare for the interview beforehand.
- Adapt the language of the generic guide questions based on interviewee.
- Obtain informed consent.
- Take notes during the interview, marking important quotes/insights.
- Summarize key takeaways from each interview.
- Upload interview recordings, notes, and transcripts for analysis.

Introduction: (5-10 minutes)

- Thank the interviewee for their time and participation. Introduce yourself and your role in conducting these interviews. Be personable and attempt to put the interviewee at ease.
- Explain the purpose of the interview in your own words to the effect of gathering insights and perspectives from local stakeholders to inform an evaluation of USAID's ocean plastics/solid waste management programs.
- Note that participation is completely voluntary and they can decline to answer any questions or stop the interview at any time.
- Explain that the interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be audio recorded with their permission. Note that responses will remain confidential.
- Ask if they have any questions before beginning. Obtain their verbal consent to participate and record the interview.

Questions: (45 minutes)

- Ask questions clearly and remain neutral. Avoid expressing strong reactions to responses.
- Use open-ended questions to get more detailed responses. Ask follow-up questions or probes like "Could you tell me more about that?"
- Listen actively without interrupting. Be patient and allow silence for the interviewee to gather their thoughts.

- Take notes on important points made, using the interviewee's own words as much as possible.
- Ask the interviewee to clarify or repeat if you don't understand something. Don't assume.
- Watch your body language and maintain eye contact to show you are engaged.
- Keep the interview focused and gently steer back to the questions if the interviewee digresses too much.
- Provide transitions between major topics.
- Do not make promises about the program or evaluation that cannot be kept.
- Attempt to ask questions consistently across interviews, but take note of questions that land well and those that don't and consider better ways of asking the question in future interviews.

Conclusion: (5 minutes)

- Thank interviewee again for their time and responses.
- Explain next steps - responses will be analyzed along with other interviews to identify themes and inform the program evaluation.
- Ask permission to follow up if any clarification is needed on their responses.
- Provide contact information in case they have any other questions or comments to share.

Useful follow-up questions and probes

- Would you give me an example?
- Can you elaborate on that idea?
- Would you explain that further?
- I'm not sure I understand what you're saying.
- Is there anything else?
- Tell me more about that...
- What does that look like?
- How do you know?

Interview Questions and Interviewer Notes

Questions	Notes/Memos
<p>1. Please briefly describe your role and involvement with [insert specific project name] ocean plastics/solid waste management programs in your community.</p>	
<p>2. In your experience, how has this project encouraged community members to identify, implement, and sustain solutions to ocean plastics/solid waste management issues?</p> <p>[Consider a probing question like “What does that look like?” if their response was generic]</p>	
<p>3. Describe how this project has worked with local government leaders and agencies on plastic pollution prevention solutions. Have there been any policy changes?</p> <p>[Ask a follow up question about factors contributing to their description]</p>	
<p>4. What changes, if any, have you seen in your community that suggest ocean plastics/solid waste management might be improving? What role has [local government, grantee, private sector partner] played in this?</p> <p>[follow up with questions about reduced plastic demand or how observed changes</p>	

are connected to changes in behavior]	
5. What innovations or new applications of technology are you seeing in this space?	
6. What lessons learned or recommendations would you have for [local government, grantee, private sector partner] to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of their ocean plastics/solid waste management programs?	
7. How do inequalities experienced by individuals or groups in your community relate to issues in ocean plastics/solid waste management?	
8. To what extent have you seen an increased uptake of plastic waste reduction strategies like reuse and refill programs? What role has [local government, grantee, private sector partner] played in this?	
9. To what extent did the local government, grantee, private sector partner work with reducing plastic pollution from plastic producers vs from waste management solutions?	
10. Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding your experiences with [local	

government, grantee, private sector partner] initiatives?	
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Annex C: Draft Group Interview Guide

All key considerations outlined in the individual interview guide in Annex C are applicable to group interviews, though there may be some slight differences in managing interviewee responses to ensure balance in representation during the interview. Six draft questions are offered here for group interviews instead of the 10 in Annex C.

Group Interview Questions and Interviewer Notes

Questions	Notes/Memos
1. Please briefly describe your roles and involvement with [insert specific project name] ocean plastics/solid waste management programs in your community.	
2. From your experiences, how has this project encouraged community members to identify, implement, and sustain solutions to ocean plastics/solid waste management issues? [Consider a probing question like “What does that look like?” if their response was generic]	
3. Describe how this project has worked with local government leaders and agencies on plastic pollution prevention solutions. Have there been any policy changes? [Ask a follow up question about factors contributing to their description]	
4. What changes, if any, have you seen in your community that suggest ocean plastics/solid waste management might be improving? What role has [local government, grantee, private sector partner] played in this? [Follow up with questions about reduced plastic demand or how observed changes are connected to changes in	

behavior]	
5. How do inequalities experienced by individuals or groups in your community relate to issues in ocean plastics/solid waste management?	
6. To what extent have you seen an increased uptake of plastic waste reduction strategies like reuse and refill programs? What role has [local government, grantee, private sector partner] played in this?	

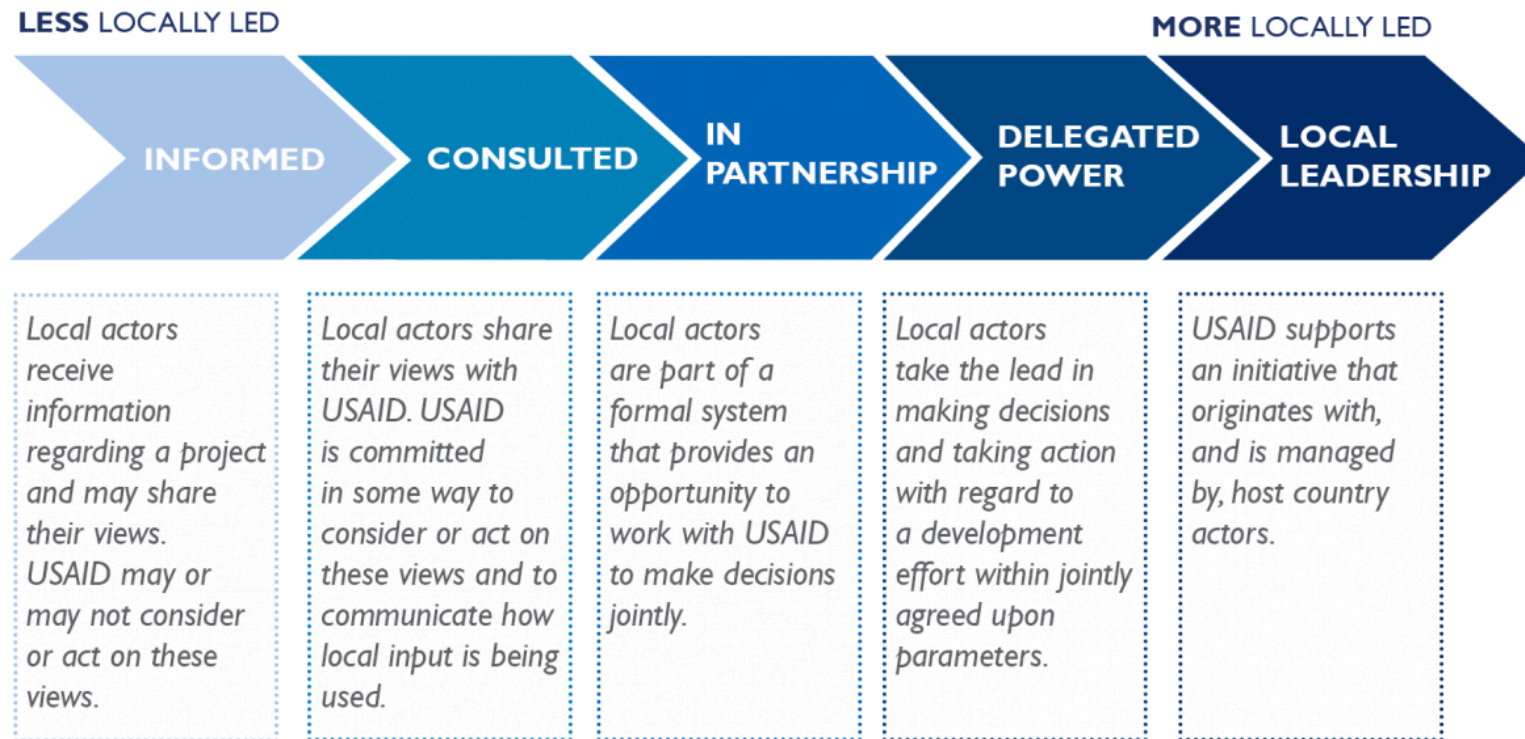
Annex E: Draft Observation Protocol

Observer:	Case:
Grant:	Site:
Date:	Time:
Duration of visit:	Participants:
Relevant documents:	(additional optional field)
Observational Notes: (what you see, hear, smell, feel, etc.)	

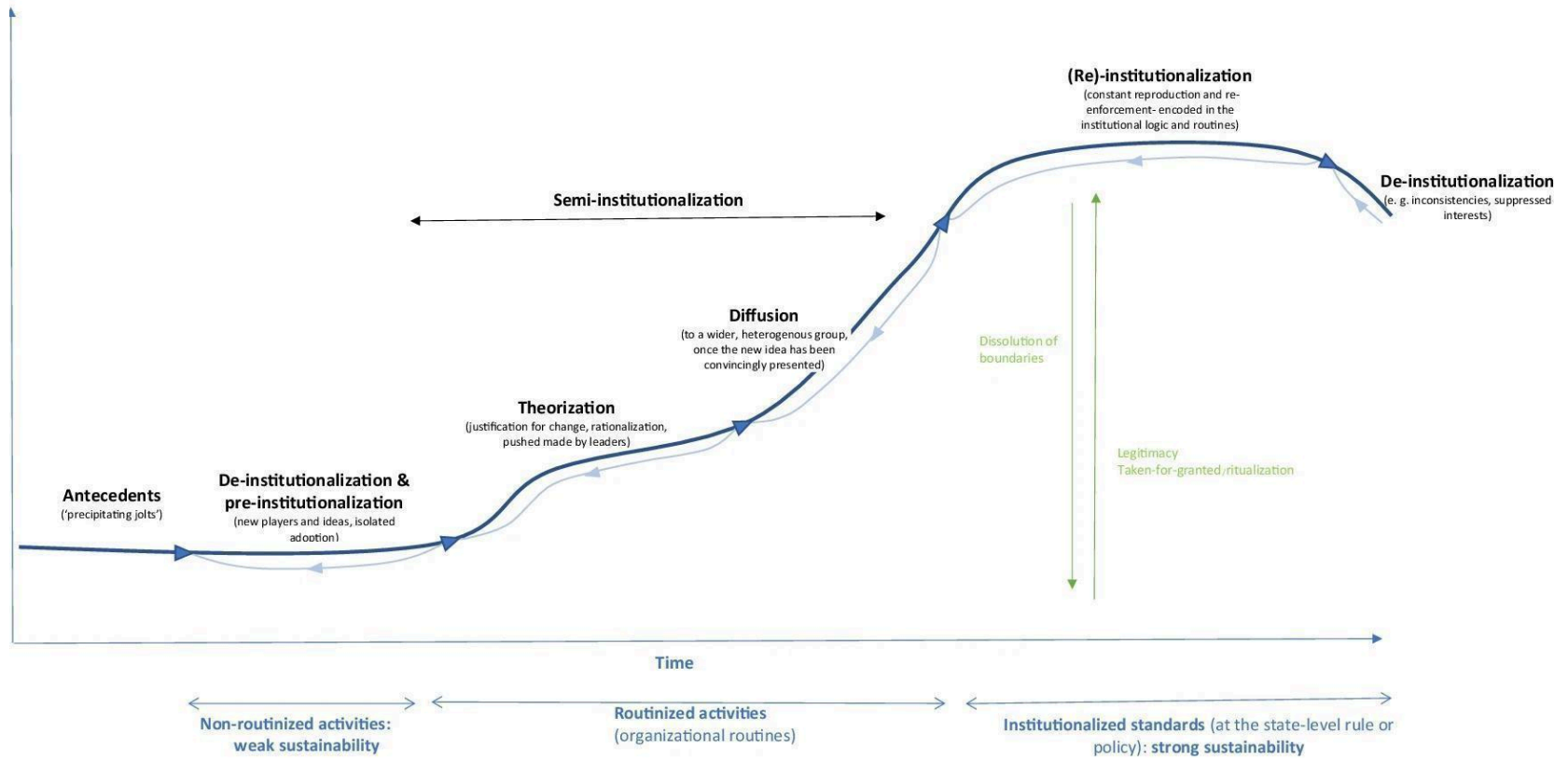
Annex D: Evaluation Question Rubrics

This annex has illustrative rubrics for evaluation questions 1 and 2. Rubrics for EQs 3 and 4 will be developed with additional inputs from the evaluation team’s subject matter experts.

EQ 1 Rubric for Localization

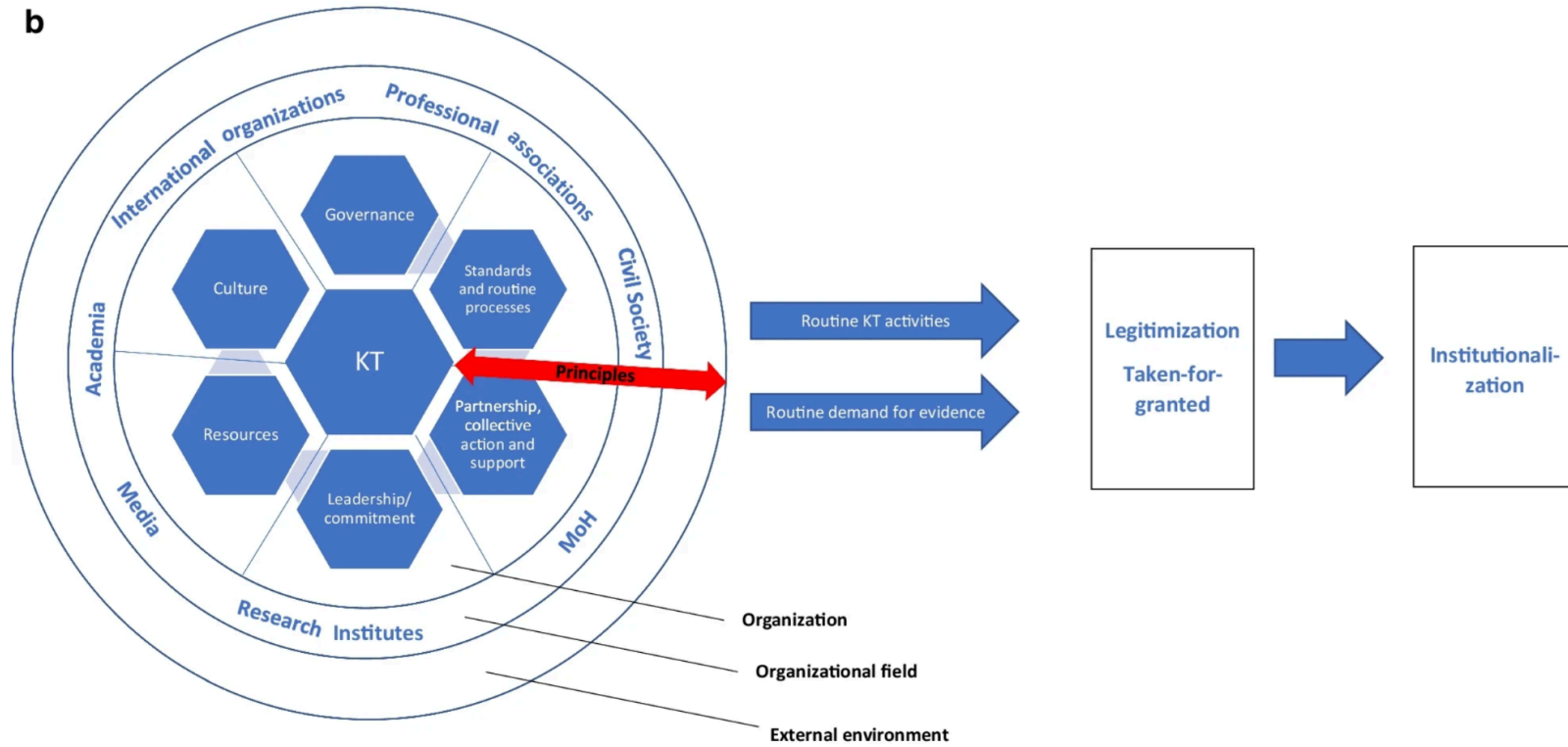


EQ 2 Rubric for expanded rubric of institutionalization of evidence-informed policy making



EQ 2 Rubric supplement for context and mechanisms of institutionalization of evidence-informed policy making

b



Annex E: Draft Qualitative Codebook Outline

An embedded multi-case study of this scale and scope with four team members who will take part in data collection and analysis necessitates conceptual and technical calibration. This codebook, now currently an outline, will eventually serve as a critical point of reference for our team to orient and calibrate the micro-facilitate techniques and consideration for data collection and analysis before and during field visits. It will be a parking lot where questions about data quality issues and or limitations are stored, discussed, and resolved for ongoing process quality improvement in the data collection, analysis, and reporting phases. It will also be a form of an audit trail in terms of the highly interpretive nature of case study development for meta-evaluative accountability.

The following working outline will serve as the basis for the evaluation codebook:

1. Brief primer on coding for case study development
2. Note on analytic memos
3. CAQDAS guidance (prefer user-friendly, options people are familiar with over robust, but unfamiliar tools to facilitate collaborative coding)
4. First cycle methods
5. Post coding transition
6. Second cycle methods
7. Post-coding and pre-writing transitions
 - 7.1. Stake's 'analysts notes while reading a case report' template
8. Evaluation team process notes and reflections on data and analysis collection procedures

Annex F: Draft Country Work Plans

These draft Work Plans illustrate the team’s initial scheduling in terms of the number of days anticipated for capital city and fieldwork. These are aligned with Figure D: Case Study Evidence Map that proposes the sample of cities (sub-units of analysis) and the grant/TA/PSE sub-units of analysis that will be evidence sources for data collection in each country's case.

The worksheet containing the Evidence Map sample, which underlies these draft Country Work Plans, is located in a shared folder. This worksheet contains the evidence gap map (EGM) in two tabs. The Overview tab presents the evidence to be sampled by EQ for each country (Cities, grants/TA/PSE). The EGM tab contains the summary evidence map for the portfolio and is reproduced in Figure D in this Design Document.

C = Capital city nights F = Field nights

The Philippines															
Action	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	Totals	Targets
Arrival in country	x														
USAID in-brief		1												1	1
Semi-structured interview		1	2	2			2		1	1	1			10	7-10
Domestic travel														0	
Group interview					1	1		1		1				4	3-5
GI participants					7	5		6		4				22	12-24
Observation site					1	1		1	1	1				5	3-5
Team iteration												x			
USAID exit-brief												1		1	1
Depart country													x		

Indonesia															
Action	C1	C2	C3	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	C4	C5	C6	Totals	Targets
Arrival in country	x														
USAID in-brief		11												1	1
Semi-structured interview		1	2			2	1			1		2		9	7-10
Domestic travel				1			1			1	1			4	
Group interview					1			1	1					3	3-5
GI participants					7			6	6					19	12-24
Observation site					1	1	1		1					4	3-5
Team iteration											x		1		
USAID exit-brief													1	1	1
Depart country													x		

Note that the Indonesia draft work plan requires further refinement and deeper consultation with USAID on activity site accessibility, etc.

The Peru field visit is pending confirmation and was being scheduled at the time of submission for the Final Design Document. Given the shorter schedule for Data Collection, due to the unanticipated and significant further investments in the Design Phase with methods revisions, the team proposes to spend 5 days in Peru. This will allow for data collection in the three partner cities and in Lima for the proposed sample of grants/TA/PSE presented in Figure D: Case Study Evidence Map.

This earlier draft considered a longer field visit, and will be revised in collaboration with USAID and CCBO in Work Planning.

Peru															
Action	C1	C2	C3	F1	F2	F3	F1	C4	F3	F4	C5	C6	C7	Totals	Targets
Arrival in country	x														
USAID in-brief		1												1	1
Semi-structured interview		1	2				1		1	1		2		8	7-10
Domestic travel				1		1		1	1		1			5	
group interview					1		1		1					3	3-5
GI participants					7		5		6					18	12-24
Observation site					1		1		1					3	3-5
Team iteration											x		1		
USAID exit-brief													1	1	1
Depart country													x		

Vietnam															
Action	C1	C2	C3	C4	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	C10	C11	C12	C13	Totals	Targets
Arrival in country	x														
USAID in-brief		1												1	1
Semi-structured interview		1	2	2		1	1	1			1			9	7-10
Domestic travel					1			1	1					3	
group interview						1	1			1				3	3-5
GI participants						7	5			4				16	12-24
Observation site						1	1	1		1				4	3-5
Team iteration												x			
USAID exit-brief												1		1	1
Depart country													x		

Sri Lanka / The Maldives															
Action	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	F1	F2	F3	F4	C7	C8		Totals	Targets
Arrival in country	x														
USAID in-brief		1												1	1
Semi-structured interview		1	2			2	1		1		1			8	7-10
Domestic travel							1	1	1	1				4	
group interview				1	1				1					3	3-5
GI participants				6	7				6					19	12-24
Observation site				1	1			1	1					4	3-5
Team iteration											x				
USAID exit-brief												1		1	1
Depart country												x			

Annex G: Initial Annotated Bibliography

This Annex presents an initial review of related documents, studies and policies for the SOS Initiative portfolio evaluation. Sources include much-appreciated collaboration from USAID and CCBO in providing activity-level program descriptions, grant information, and reports across the portfolio. Building on this initial review, the evaluation team will continue researching and analyzing resources over the course of the evaluation. A first next step will be more detailed reviews of CCBO grant-level documents as Country Cases are finalized and as we focus on the respective cities selected in each country case sample. We are still conducting analysis, particularly focused on project-level information.

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
Agency Policies and Directives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. USAID Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (here) 2. USAID Local Systems Framework (here) 3. USAID ADS 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy 	
SOS Initiative Portfolio Reports	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TetraTech - Clean Cities, Blue Ocean Quarterly Progress Report (2023) Quarter I – October 1 to December 31, 2022 (link) 2. TetraTech - Clean Cities, Blue Ocean Annual Report (2022) Quarter I – October 1 2021 to September 30, 2022 (link) 3. TetraTech - Clean Cities, Blue Ocean Annual Report (2023) Quarter I – October 1 2022 to September 30, 2023 (link) 4. USAID - Save Our Seas Initiative (2023) Annual Report (link) 	<p>These reports detail CCBO’s progress and achievements in the fiscal years 2022 and 2023. The report’s structure mirrors the program’s Work Plan—with technical progress and achievements detailed first, capped by details on CCBO’s management and operations—including contract management; organization and staffing; communications and outreach; Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning; and grants management.</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
CCBO Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (MEL)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TetraTech - Clean Cities, Blue Ocean (2023) Monitoring, Evaluation, And Learning Plan (link) 	<p>CCBO's MEL Plan was developed according to and provides details on the project's Theory of Change (TOC) and indicators to track progress towards expected results; CCBO's programmatic assumptions and risks; and data management systems and other processes that will be used to carry out MEL throughout the life of the project.</p>
Public Law	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Save Our Seas 2. Act (2020) PUBLIC LAW 116-224—DEC. 18, 2020 (link) 	
CCBO Waste Analysis Characterization Studies	<p>Peru</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. USAID-CCBO and Municipalidad de Paita (2022) Estudio de Caracterización de Residuos Sólidos Municipales de Paita (link) 2. USAID-CCBO and Municipalidad de Máncora (2022) Estudio de Caracterización de Residuos Sólidos Municipales del Distrito de Máncora (link) 3. USAID-CCBO and Municipalidad de Pisco (2022) Estudio de Caracterización de Residuos Sólidos Municipales del Distrito de Pisco (link) <p>The Philippines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MMDA, Tractebel, REECS (2021) Metro Manila Flood Management Project Component 2: Minimizing Solid Waste in Waterways: Waste Analysis and Characterization Study in Metro Manila (link) <p>The Maldives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. USAID-CCBO, Soneva Namoon and Gordon Jackson (2021) Four Islands waste audit report (link) <p>Vietnam</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. USAID-CCBO and CEDAD (2022) Solid Waste Generation and Composition 	<p>These reports evaluate the daily solid waste generation, composition and characterization from households in cities from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Peru and The Philippines. The Waste Audit and Characterization Study (WACS) is a key step towards the development of the Integrated Solid Waste Management Action Plan (ISWMAP).</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<p>in Ganh Dau Commune, Phu Quoc City (link)</p> <p>Sri Lanka</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> USAID-CCBO (2023) Waste Audit and Characterization Study (WACS) Galle Municipal Council Collaborative Action for Clean City of Galle (CACG) Project 	
CCBO - Grants	<p>Vietnam</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grant CCBO-VN006- HLC (2022-2024) Hue City, Thua Thien Hue Province, Vietnam (link) Grant CCBO-VN005-Green Joy (2022-2023) Phu Quoc city, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam (link) Grant CCBO-VN003- CECAD (2021-2023) Phu Quoc City, Kien Giang Province, Vietnam (link) Grant CCBO-VN002-ASSIST (2021-2023) Da Nang (link) Grant CCBO-VN001-Enda (2021-2023) Bien Hoa city, Dong Nai Province, Vietnam (link) Grant CCBO-VN-IKG001- Phu Quoc City (2021-2023) Public Work, Phu Quoc City (link) <p>Sri Lanka-The Maldives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grant CCBO-SL006-HELP-O (2022-2024) Galle MC Area, Galle, Sri Lanka (link) Grant CCBO-SL005-Sevanatha (2022-2024) Moratuwa MC Area, Colombo, Sri Lanka (link) Grant CCBO-SL004-Janathakshan (2022-2024) Kaduwela MC Area, Colombo, Sri Lanka (link) Grant CCBO-SL003-ICI (2021-2023) National Level (link) Grant CCBO-SL002-PILF (2021-2023) Colombo, Sri Lanka (link) Grant CCBO-SL-IKG003- Katana Upcycle Katana Upcycle (Previously named as Sustainable Polymers Pvt Ltd) (link) Grant CCBO-M002-Soneva Namoon (2021-2022) Baa Atoll, Maldives (link) Grant CCBO-M001-SIGS (2022) Small Island Geographic Society. Malé, Maldives (link) <p>The Philippines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grant CCBO-PH002-Green Antz (2020 - 2022) Barangay Manggahan, Pasig City, Philippines (link) Grant CCBO-PH003-CORA Parañaque, Metro Manila, Philippines (2020 - 2022) (link) 	<p>These grants were designed to provide technical assistance to waste management & segregation, reduce plastic or organic pollution and increase recycling in different cities in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Philippines, Peru, Pacific Islands, Indonesia and Dominican Republic.</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Grant CCBO-PH004-PCEX City of Manila, Metro Manila, Philippines(2020 - 2021) (link) 4. Grant CCBO-PH005-PZC - Puerto Princesa City, Palawan (2020 - 2022) (link) 5. Grant CCBO-PH006-EWC - Metro Manila (2020-2022) (link) 6. Grant CCBO-PH006-WWF Philippines - Batangas City, Philippines (February 2022 – January 2023) (link) 7. Grant CCBO-PH008-CPU - Iloilo City, Iloilo (August 2022 – March 2023) link 8. Grant - Iloilo City, Iloilo (August 2022 – March 2023) (link) 9. Grant CCBO-PH010-ARMDEV - Metro Manila (November 07, 2022 - March 31, 2024) (link) 10. Grant - CCBO-PH011-PLLENRO - Manila (2022 - 2024) (link) 11. Grant - CCBO-PH012-Pure Oceans - Tingloy, Batangas (November 1, 2022 - March 31, 2024) (link) 12. Grant - CCBO-PH013-CRS - Manila, Philippines (February 1, 2023 - April 31, 2024) link 13. Grant - CCBO-PH013-CRS - Manila, Philippines (February 1, 2023 - April 31, 2024) (link) <p>Peru (link)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant - CCBO-PERU RFA 1 - Paita and Máncora – Piura (August 2022- January 2023) (link) 2. Grant - CCBO-PERU RFA 2 - Pisco, Paita and Máncora. (November 2022 - April 2023) (link) 3. Grant - CCBO-PR003-CARE - Pisco, Paita and Mancora (January 2023 - March 2024) (link) 4. Grant - CCBO-PR004-CARE - Pisco, Paita and Máncora (May 2023 - March 2024) (link) <p>Pacific Island</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant - CCBO-FJ001-WRFL - Suva, Fiji (2023 - 2024) (link) <p>Indonesia</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant - CCBO-IN-IKG-007-DLH - Kota Ambon (2022) (link) 2. Grant - CCBO-IN-IKG002-DLH- Kota Makassar (August 2022 - August 2023) (link) 3. Grant - CCBO-IN-IKG003- BINTARI (April 2023) (link) 4. Grant - CCBO-IN-IKG004-YKKS - Semarang City (July 2023) (link) 5. Grant - CCBO-IN-IKG005-W4C - Makassar and Ambon City (April 2023) (link) 6. Grant - CCBO-IN-IKG004-YKKS (April 2023) (link) 	

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Grant - CCBO-IN002-BINTARI - Semarang City (April 2023) (link) 8. Grant - CCBO-IN003-W4C - Makassar, Indonesia (June 2022 – May 2024) (link) 9. Grant - CCBO-IN004-W4C - Ambon City, Indonesia (June 2022 - May 2024) (link) 10. Grant - CCBO-IN005-POPI - Semarang City (November 14, 2022 - May 30, 2024) (link) 11. Grant - CCBO-IN006-Systemiq - Banyuwangi, East Java, Indonesia (2023 - 2024) (link) 12. Grant - CCBO-IN007-MLA - Hutumuri, Leitimur Selatan, Ambon, Maluku, Indonesia (April 2023 – May 2024) (link) 13. Grant - CCBO_IN008_Rebricks - Semarang City, Central Java - Indonesia (June 2023 - May 2024) (link) <p>Dominican Republic</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant - CCBO-DR-IKG001-PROPEEP - (January 15, 2023) (link) 2. Grant - CCBO-DR-IKG002 - El Limón, Samaná Province (May 2023) (link) 3. Grants - (DR-IKG003-Samana, DR-IKG004-Las Terrenas, DR-IKG005-Ministry of Environment and DR002-FORO) had no files to review. 4. Grants - CCBO-DR001-CEBSE - Samaná - 2021 - 2022 (link) 	
MWRP Grants	<p>The Philippines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GRANT NO. A.2.1 - Puerto Princesa City (31 MARCH 2018 to 31 October 2020) (link) 2. GRANT NO. A.1.7 - Navotas and Malabon (October 2017 to November 2018) (link) 3. Grant - ECOWASTE - Manila (July 2019 -May 15, 2021)(link) 4. Grant - A.5.5 Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives Philippines Inc. (GAIA) (Coblong (Bandung, Indonesia - Hoi-ann Vietnam) (link) 5. Grant - Strengthening Ecological Solid Waste 6. Management Program in Batangas City (2021) - (link) 7. Grant - Mall Waste Recovery Program for Residual Plastic Waste - Manila (January 2020 - March 2021) (link) 8. Grant - A.214 Sweep - Seawaste Education to Eradicate Plastic - Negros (Bacolod, Sipalay, Bayawan) (March 2018 - March 2022) (link) 	

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<p>9. Grant - T.2 PRRCFI-SM Partnership for an Information and Education Campaign on Reducing Ocean Plastic (December 11, 2020 to March 11, 2021) Manila (link)</p> <p>10. Grant - P210300 “Waste to Wages Project” World Vision March 31, 2018 to August 31, 2019 Manila (link)</p> <p>Vietnam</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant - A.1.18 - Da Nang City Ocean without Plastic: Plastic Recycling in Strong Communities in a Green City (October 01, 2017 to June 30, 2019) (link) 2. Grant - A.1.9 Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde (ENDA-Vietnam) (October 2017 - June 2020) (link) 3. Grant - The Centre for Social Research and Development (CSR) Vietnam (March, 2018 - June, 2019)(link) 4. Grant A.2.6 A.2.6 Moving Toward Model Cities for Waste Management in Coastal Northeast Vietnam - Cat Ba Archipelago, Hai Phong Province; and in Ha Long Bay, Quang Ninh (March 31, 2018 to September, 30, 2020) (link) 5. Grant - A.3.8 (MCD #1 Ha Long City) “Lessons learnt from demonstrated Municipal Plastic Waste Management in World Heritage Ha Long Bay, Vietnam” (12/2018 – 31/12/2020) (link) 6. Grant - A.3.11 Nam Dinh - “Comparative pilot waterway municipal plastic waste management 7. Practices for reducing marine plastic pollution in Nam Dinh of the Red River Delta World Biosphere Reserve, Vietnam” (12/2018 – 31/03/2021) (link) 8. Grant Phu Quoc - Towards a Plastic Waste Free Island - 2018 - 2020 (link) <p>Sri Lanka/The Maldives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant - A.3.3 - Introduction of an Extended Producer Responsibility System (EPR System) for Plastic Waste Management - (on 6th of February 2019) (link) 2. Grant - A.1.11 - MUNICIPAL WASTE RECYCLING PROGRAM (MWRP) 01.10.2017 - 31.12. 2019 (West Coast of Sri Lanka - Negombo) (link) 3. Grant - A.2.3 - Lanka Upcycles (Private) Limited - Arugam Bay - APRIL 2018 - JUNE 2020 (Link) 4. Grant - A.1.10 - Community Led Polythene & Plastic Waste Management Program - Dehiwala Mount Lavinia - Western Province - 01.10.2017 to 31.03. 2020 (link) 	

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Grant - RAISING AWARENESS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN GALLE DISTRICT, SRI LANKA (October 2017 – June 2020) (link) 6. Grant - LOCAL AUTHORITIES & NETWORKS TOWARD ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION (LANTERN) (Northern Province) (APRIL 2018- SEPTEMBER 2020) (link) <p>Indonesia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grant - A.4.1.4 -"Improving Recycled Capacity of Waste Management Stakeholder Through Integration of Extended Stakeholder responsibility (ESR) Project” BINTARI - September 21, 2018 – December 31, 2020 (link) 2. Grant - A.6.13 - Plastic Bag Free City/Regency Forum - Greater Jakarta, Bandung Metropolitan, and South Borneo (2020-2021) (link) 3. Grant - MISOOL FOUNDATION - Sorong city (OCT 2018 – DEC 2020) (Link) 4. Grant - A5.25 - STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATION AND CAPACITY IN BEST WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (SOBAT)IN SOUTH SULAWESI (2020 - 2021) (link) 5. DCA Indonesia Final Report (unreadable) 	
CCBO Stakeholders Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCBO (2019) - Annual Stakeholder Report – FY 2020 (Year One) (link) 2. CCBO (2020) - Annual Stakeholder Report – FY 2021 (Year Two) (link) 3. CCBO (2023) Stakeholder Report: Strengthening USAID Building Blocks (link) 	CCBO has been developing the Annual Stakeholder Reports to identify, assess, and prioritize key partnership opportunities. CCBO shows the work with stakeholders pursuing solutions to ocean plastic pollution and addressing sustainability challenges. These documents reflect the relevant priorities and new information received through the progress of the studies.

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
CCBO Reduction Strategy Alignment Assessment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCBO (2021) 3R/SWM and Marine Debris Reduction Strategy Alignment Assessment Maldives (link) 2. CCBO (2021) 3R/SWM and Marine Debris Reduction Strategy Alignment Assessment Sri Lanka (link) 3. CCBO (2021) 3R/SWM and Marine Debris Reduction Strategy Alignment Assessment Philippines (link) 4. CCBO (2021) 3R/SWM and Marine Debris Reduction Strategy Alignment Assessment Indonesia (link) 5. CCBO (2021) 3R/SWM and Marine Debris Reduction Strategy Alignment Assessment Dominican Republic (link) 6. CCBO (2021) 3R/SWM and Marine Debris Reduction Strategy Alignment Assessment Peru (link) 	<p>These reports present the waste management strategies, schemes, and plans right at the design stage, as well as into projects at the investment stage, can help minimize and mitigate mismanaged plastic.</p>
CCBO Private Sector Landscape Analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCBO (2021) Private Sector Landscape Analysis Indonesia (link) 2. CCBO (2021) Private Sector Landscape Analysis Sri Lanka (link) 3. CCBO (2021) Private Sector Landscape Analysis Maldives (link) 4. CCBO (2021) Private Sector Landscape Analysis Peru (link) 5. CCBO (2021) Private Sector Landscape Analysis Philippines (link) 6. CCBO (2021) Private Sector Landscape Analysis Dominican Republic (link) 7. CCBO (2021) Private Sector Landscape Analysis Vietnam (link) 	
CCBO Workshops	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCBO P&R Session #1 Key Themes & Notes Country Knowledge Exchange - May 10, 2022 (link) 2. Partnership Categories Worksheet for CCBO Pause and Reflect May 17th Session (link) 3. CCBO P&R Session #3 Key Themes & Notes High Ambition May 26, 2022 (link) 	<p>The CCBO workshops brought together all of the countries in order to share experiences, challenges, best practices and develop partnerships across countries. The final workshop was to help articulate the ambitious goal for CCBO's impact.</p>
Circular Economy and Plastics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aurisano, N., Weber, R., Fantke, P. (2021) Enabling a circular economy for chemicals in plastics (link) 2. Biona, J., A. Gonzaga, A. T. Ubando and H. C. Tan (2015) A comparative life cycle analysis of plastic and paper packaging bags in the Philippines. (link) 3. Bucknall David G (2020) Plastics as a materials system in a circular economy (link) 4. Feil, A., & Pretz, T. (2020). Mechanical recycling of packaging waste. <i>Plastic Waste and Recycling</i>, 283-319. (link) 	<p>Plastics are versatile materials, but the way they are used is incredibly wasteful. A circular economy in the plastics sector will create a system that works in practice, without loss of economic value and no plastic waste or pollution. A deep dive over these reports will provide</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Hahladakis, J. N., Iacovidou, E., & Gerassimidou, S. (2020). Plastic waste in a circular economy. <i>Plastic Waste and Recycling</i>, 481-512. (link) 6. Kaur, G., Uisan, K., Ong, K. L., & Ki Lin, C. S. (2018). Recent Trends in Green and Sustainable Chemistry & Waste Valorisation: Rethinking Plastics in a circular economy. <i>Current Opinion in Green and Sustainable Chemistry</i>, 9, 30-39 (link) 7. Kenji, L., Bengtsson, M., Hotta, Y., Kato, M., & Hengesbaugh, M. (2020). Policy responses to plastic pollution in Asia: Summary of a regional gap analysis. <i>Plastic Waste and Recycling</i>, 531-567. (link) 8. Syberg, K., Nielsen, M. B., Westergaard Clausen, L. P., van Calster, G., van Wezel, A., Rochman, C., Koelmans, A. A., Cronin, R., Pahl, S., & Hansen, S. F. (2021). Regulation of plastic from a circular economy perspective. <i>Current Opinion in Green and Sustainable Chemistry</i>, 29, 100462 (link). 9. Stahel, W. The circular economy. <i>Nature</i> 531, 435–438 (link) 10. The World Bank Group (2023) West Africa Circular Economy: Realizing the Potential of Plastics (link). 11. The World Bank Group (2023) West Africa Plastics eBook (link) 12. The World Bank Group (2022) “Circular economy opportunities for sustainable growth in Thailand” (link). 13. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2015) Plastics and the Circular Economy (link) 14. USAID (2022) The Building Blocks of a Circular Economy: USAID’s Local Systems Approach to Reducing Ocean Plastic Pollution (link) 15. One Planet (2023) The One Planet network is a global community of practitioners, policymakers and experts with resources (link) 	<p>critical insights to rethink the way we make, use, and reuse plastics, essentially redesigning the system in which the material is used.</p>
<p>Consumer Behavior and Circular Economy in plastics</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Colijn, I., Fraiture, F., Gommeh, E., Schroën, K., & Metze, T. (2022). Science and media framing of the future of plastics in relation to transitioning to a circular economy. <i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i>, 370, 133472. (link) 2. Confente, I., Scarpi, D., & Russo, I. (2020). Marketing a new generation of bio-plastics products for a circular economy: The role of green self-identity, self-congruity, and perceived value. <i>Journal of Business Research</i>, 112, 431-439. (link) 3. Cordova-Pizarro, Daniela; Aguilar-Barajas, Ismael; Rodriguez, Ciro; Romero, David (2020). Circular Economy Recent Evidence of Consumer Behavior. (link). 4. Kunz N, Mayers K, Van Wassenhove LN. (2018) Stakeholder views on extended producer responsibility and the circular economy. 	<p>These scientific articles show the importance of consumers by closing circular economy models as critical actors to enable the system’s optimization. Consumer behavior tries to extend product lifespan; consumers are aware of product circularity. However, there is a lack of incentives to capitalize on this consumer interest, compounded by the limited</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<p><i>Calif. Manage. Rev.</i> 60, 45–70 (link)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Tomić, T., & Schneider, D. R. (2020). Circular economy in waste management – Socio-economic effect of changes in waste management system structure. <i>Journal of Environmental Management</i>, 267, 110564. (link). 6. George, S. (2020). Plastics we cannot live without it?. <i>Plastic Waste and Recycling</i>, 449-466. (link) 7. Testa, F., Gusmerotti, N., Corsini, F., & Bartoletti, E. (2022). The role of consumer trade-offs in limiting the transition towards circular economy: The case of brand and plastic concern. <i>Resources, Conservation and Recycling</i>, 181, 106262. (link) 8. Vidal-Ayuso, F., Akhmedova, A., & Jaca, C. (2023). The circular economy and consumer behaviour: Literature review and research directions. <i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i>, 137824. (link) 9. Walker, T., Gramlich, D. and Dumont-Bergeron, A. (2020) The Case for a Plastic Tax: A Review of Its Benefits and Disadvantages Within a Circular Economy. (link) 10. Wijetunga, T. L. (2020). Raising Awareness for Environmental Change Participatory Approaches in Solid Waste Management at Community Level in Selected Villages of Galle District, Sri Lanka. (link) 11. Philippine Reef and Rainforest Conservation Foundation (2020). Sea Waste Education to Eradicate Plastics. (link) 	<p>participation of manufacturers and distributors. A more robust initiative for CE by design should be part of the policies. The role of better eco-labeling in promoting consumers' environmental awareness is essential.</p>
Plastic Recycling and Circular Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cruz Sanchez, F. A., Boudaoud, H., Camargo, M., & Pearce, J. M. (2020). Plastic recycling in additive manufacturing: A systematic literature review and opportunities for the circular economy. <i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i>, 264, 121602. (link) 2. Darus, Nurdiana; Tamimi, Maya; Tirawaty, Silvi; Muchtazar, Muchtazar; Trisyanti, Dini; Akib, Rangga; Condorini, Dyota; and Rangi, Khair (2020). An overview of plastic waste recycling in the urban areas of Java island in Indonesia <i>Journal of Environmental Science and Sustainable Development</i>, 3(2), 402-415. (link) 3. Khadke, S., Gupta, P., Rachakunta, S., Mahata, C., Dawn, S., Sharma, M., Verma, D., Pradhan, A., Krishna, A. M., Ramakrishna, S., Chakraborty, S., Saianand, G., Sonar, P., Biring, S., Dash, J. K., & Dalapati, G. K. (2021). Efficient Plastic Recycling and Remolding Circular Economy Using the Technology of Trust–Blockchain. <i>Sustainability</i>, 13(16), 9142. (link) 4. Liu, Z., Adams, M., Cote, R. P., Chen, Q., Wu, R., Wen, Z., Liu, W., & Dong, L. (2018). How does the circular economy respond to greenhouse gas emissions reduction: An analysis of Chinese plastic 	<p>These reports present the urgency needed to develop alternative practices in plastic production that allow more sustainable manufacture and consumption patterns. Improving plastic recycling management is one of the solutions to prevent an increase in plastic pollution.</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<p>recycling industries. <i>Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews</i>, 91, 1162-1169. (link)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Raaj R. Bora, Ralph Wang, and Fengqi You (2020) Waste Polypropylene Plastic Recycling toward Climate Change Mitigation and Circular Economy: Energy, Environmental, and Techno Economic Perspectives (link) 6. Schwarz, A., Ligthart, T., Godoi Bizarro, D., De Wild, P., Vreugdenhil, B., & van Harmelen, T. (2021). Plastic recycling in a circular economy; determining environmental performance through an LCA matrix model approach. <i>Waste Management</i>, 121, 331-342. (link) 7. Nguyen Thi Hoai Linh (2020). The Informal Sector on Plastics. (link) 8. Center for Environment and Community Research (2019). Ocean without Plastic: Plastic Recycling in Strong Communities in a Green City. (link) 9. Candis 3 Marketing Cooperative (2020). Mitigating Threats to Marine Protected Areas through Reducing and Recycling Waste Materials. (link) 	
Green Jobs and Economic Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bassi F, Guidolin M. Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy in European SMEs: Investigating the Role of Green Jobs and Skills. <i>Sustainability</i>. 2021; 13(21):12136 (link). 2. Chateau, J. and E. Mavroeidi (2020), The jobs potential of a transition towards a resource efficient and circular economy, <i>OECD Environment Working Papers</i>, No. 167, OECD Publishing, Paris (link) 3. Guyot, C. (2019) Implications of the circular economy and digital transition on skills and green jobs in the plastics industry. Field Actions Science Report. Special Issue - Reinventing the future of plastics (link). 4. İlkyay Unay-Gailhard, Štefan Bojnec (2019) The impact of green economy measures on rural employment: Green jobs in farms, <i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i> (link). 5. Jens Horbach, J.; Rennings, K.; Sommerfeld, K. (2019) Circular Economy and Employment. <i>Applied Sciences</i> (link) 6. Moreno-Mondéjar, L.; Triguero, A.; Cuerva, M.(2021) Exploring the association between circular economy strategies and green jobs in European companies. <i>Journal of Environmental Management</i>, Volume 297 (link). 7. Maclean, R.; Jagannathan, S.; Panth, B. (2018) Education and Skills for Inclusive Growth, Green Jobs and the Greening of Economies in 	<p>These scientific articles highlight the advantages of the circular economy in fostering the creation of green jobs, preserving valuable resources, prolonging product life cycles, and mitigating the impacts of climate change.</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<p>Asia. Case Study Summaries of India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam (link).</p> <p>8. Mansilla-Obando, K.; Jeldes-Delgado, F.; and Guiñez-Cabrera, N. (2022) "Circular Economy Strategies with Social Implications: Findings from a Case Study" <i>Sustainability</i> (link)</p> <p>9. Schröder, P.; Albaladejo, M.; Alo, P. (2020) The circular economy in Latin America and the Caribbean Opportunities for green building resilience. Energy, Environment and Resources Programme - Chatham House (link)</p> <p>10. Sulich, A., Sołoducho-Pelc, L. (2022) The circular economy and the Green Jobs creation. <i>Environ Sci Pollut Res</i> 29, 14231–14247 (link).</p> <p>11. Tleuken A, Tokazhanov G, Jemal KM, Shaimakhanov R, Sovetbek M, Karaca F. (2022) Legislative, Institutional, Industrial and Governmental Involvement in Circular Economy in Central Asia: A Systematic Review. <i>Sustainability</i> (link)</p>	
Circular Economy, Solid Waste Management and Plastics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agaton, C. B., Guno, C. S., Villanueva, R. O., & Villanueva, R. O. (2020). Economic analysis of waste-to-energy investment in the Philippines: A real options approach. <i>Applied Energy</i>, 275, 115265 (link). 2. Bintari Foundation (2020). Improving Recycle Capacity of Waste Management Stakeholders through Integration of Extended Stakeholder Responsibility (ESR). (link). 3. Catholic Relief Services (2018). City Empowerment for Local and Market-Based Solid Waste Management Solutions. (link) 4. Center for Public Policy Transformation (2021). Strengthening Local Government Coordination and Capacity in Best Waste Management Practices (SOBAT) in South Sulawesi. (link) 5. Center for Environment and Community Assets Development (2022). Solid Waste Generation and Composition in Ganh Dau Commune, Phu Quoc City. (link) 6. Centre for Marinelifelife Conservation and Community Development (2021). Project “Comparative pilot waterway municipal plastic waste management practices for reducing marine plastic pollution in Nam Dinh of the Red River Delta World Biosphere Reserve, Vietnam” funded by USAID under MWRP (A.3.11 Nam Dinh). (link) 7. Centre for Marinelifelife Conservation and Community Development (2021). Project “Lessons learnt from demonstrated Municipal Plastic Waste 8. Charter, M. (2018). <i>Designing for the circular economy</i>. Routledge (link) 	<p>These reports recognize the potential of waste to be used as a resource in a circular economy model with the right enabling conditions. If waste is recognized as a resource, local opportunities for reuse and recovery will reduce the likelihood of careless discarding, and reveal the interests of possible waste users to the waste holder. The waste use may be employed in the formulation and evaluation of policies for industrial and municipal solid waste in a circular economy.</p>

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Ferreira, G.; Pié, L.; Terceño, A. (2018) A Systematic of Bio, Green and Circular Economy Trends in Publications in the Field of Economics and Business Management. <i>Sustainability</i> (link). 10. Iaquaniello G, Centi G, Salladini A, Palo E, Perathoner S. (2018) Waste to chemicals for a circular economy. <i>Chem. Eur. J.</i> 24, 11 831–11 839 (link). 11. Leal Filho, W., Saari, U., Fedoruk, M., Iital, A., Moora, H., Klöga, M., & Voronova, V. (2019). An overview of the problems posed by plastic products and the role of extended producer responsibility in Europe. <i>Journal of Cleaner Production</i>, 214, 550-558. (link) 12. Pires, A., & Martinho, G. (2019). Waste hierarchy index for circular economy in waste management. <i>Waste Management</i>, 95, 298-305. (link) 13. Putri, A.R., Fujimori, T. & Takaoka, M. (2020) Plastic waste management in Jakarta, Indonesia: evaluation of material flow and recycling scheme. <i>J Mater Cycles Waste Manag</i> 20, 2140–2149 (link). 14. Green Hub (2021). Moving Toward Model Cities for Waste Management in Coastal Northeast Vietnam [short called “GreenBays”] (link) 15. Hari Bhakta Sharma, H.; Raja Vanapalli, K.; Samal, B.; Sankar Ch.; K. Dubey, Bhattacharya, J. (2021) Circular economy approach in solid waste management system to achieve UN-SDGs: Solutions for post-COVID recovery, <i>Science of The Total Environment</i> (link) 16. Janathakshan Guarantee Limited (2019). Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP) - Reducing polythene and plastic pollution in western coast of Sri Lanka. (link) 17. Lehmann, S. (2018) Conceptualizing the Urban Nexus Framework for a Circular Economy: Linking Energy, Water, Food, and Waste (EWWFW) in Southeast-Asian cities, <i>Urban Energy Transition</i>, Elsevier (link). 18. HELP-O (2023). Waste Audit and Characterization Study (WACS): Galle Municipal Council. (link) 19. Jackson, G. (2021). Four Islands waste audit report. (link) 20. Metro Manila Development Authority (2021). Metro Manila Flood Management Project Component 2: Minimizing Solid Waste in Waterways: Waste Analysis and Characterization Study in Metro Manila. (link) 21. Management in World Heritage Ha Long Bay, Vietnam” Grant No: A.3.8 (MCD #1 Ha Long City). (link) 22. SEVANATHA Urban Resource Centre (2020). Community Led Polythene & Plastic Waste Management Program in Dehiwala – 	

Document Groups	Documents Analyzed	Brief Annotation
	<p>Mount Lavinia Municipal Council Area. (link)</p> <p>23. The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC). Introduction of an Extended Producer Responsibility System (EPR System) for Plastic Waste Management. (link)</p> <p>24. World Vision Philippines (2019). Waste to Wages Project. (link)</p> <p>25. Business for Sustainable Development (2021). Mall Waste Recovery Program for Residual Plastic Waste. (link)</p> <p>26. Mother Earth Foundation (2021). Strengthening Ecological Solid Waste Management Program in Batangas City. (link)</p> <p>27. the Ecological Waste Coalition of the Philippines (2019). Municipal Waste Recycling Program (MWRP) – Assessment of Plastic Pollution in Manila Bay. (link)</p> <p>28. Sylva, K. (2018). A Circular Economic Model for a Sustainable Waste Management in South Asia. In: Leal Filho, W., Rogers, J., Iyer-Raniga, U. (eds) Sustainable Development Research in the Asia-Pacific Region. World Sustainability Series. Springer, Cham (link).</p> <p>29. Sidhu, N., & Muñoz, A. (2021). A Collaborative Application for Assisting the Management of Household Plastic Waste through Smart Bins: A Case of Study in the Philippines. <i>Sensors</i>, 21(13), 4534. (link)</p> <p>30. Rajmohan, K. V. S., Ramya, C., Raja Viswanathan, M., & Varjani, S. (2019). Plastic pollutants: Effective waste management for pollution control and abatement. <i>Current Opinion in Environmental Science & Health</i>, 12, 72-84. (link)</p> <p>31. Van Ewijk, S., & Stegemann, J. A. (2020). Recognising waste use potential to achieve a circular economy. <i>Waste Management</i>, 105, 1-7. (link)</p>	

APPENDIX D: METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION, AND ANALYSIS TOOLS

DETAILED METHODS NOTE

The following methods note uses the [Checklist for Evaluation-Specific \(reporting\) Standards \(CHES\)](#) to present the “minimum, evaluation-specific elements that must be reported to make judgments about the quality of the evaluation” and theoretically replicate procedures, as needed.

Domain	Category	No.	Category Values
People/ Personnel	Evaluators	I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 evaluation team members: I evaluation lead; I methods expert; I circular economy expert; I SWM expert:
	Affiliation	Ia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connie Campbell: I4DI Zach Tilton: I4DI Dani Cordoba: I4DI Matthew Haden: I4DI
	Disciplinary Training	Ib	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connie Campbell: BS in Biology and Spanish, MA in Latin American Studies, PhD in Anthropology. Zach Tilton: BS in Peacebuilding, MA in Peace Studies, PhD in Evaluation (in process). Dani Cordoba: BS Industrial Biotechnology, Master’s in Sustainable Development, PhD in Engineering Sciences and Circular Economy. Matthew Haden: BA International Relations, Mphil in Development Studies.
	Role	Ic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External evaluation team
	Gender	Id & e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connie Campbell: Female Zach Tilton: Male Dani Cordoba: Female Matthew Haden: Male
	Ethnicity	If	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connie Campbell: white, American Zach Tilton: white, American Dani Cordoba: Hispanic Matthew Haden: white, American

	Years Experience in Evaluation or Subject Matter	lg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connie Campbell: 20 years • Zach Tilton: 10 years • Dani Cordoba: 13 years • Matt Haden: 12 years
	Languages Used	lh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English, Spanish • Translation services for the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam
	Epistemological Orientation	li	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connie Campbell: N/A • Zach Tilton: Pragmatist, Materialist • Dani Cordoba: N/A • Matt Haden: N/A
	Funder	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID
	Client	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID
	Users	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: USAID Ocean Plastics team, IPs, USAID Mission staff involved in ocean plastics programming.
	Relevant Stakeholders	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Ocean Plastics team, MWRP staff, CCBO staff, in-country Mission staff, grantees, local government staff and leaders, host country national agency staff, private sector representatives.
	Primary Stakeholders	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID Ocean Plastics team

Domain	Category	No.	Category Values
Evaluation Context and Characteristics	Evaluation Type	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative performance evaluation
	Evaluation Type	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio of ocean plastic programming
	Substantive Area	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWM; ocean plastic reduction
	Funding Type	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive
	Date Evaluation Commissioned	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2023

	Date(s) Evaluation Conducted	12a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2023
		12b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024
	Geopolitical Scope	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global
		14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-country, multi-site
	Scale	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and size of sites: six country cases, 24 engagement sites
	Political Context	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional political hostility was low. First evaluation of the program resulting in high expectations and stakes for insightful findings.

Domain	Category	No.	Category Values
Investigation Design and Methods	Evaluation Purpose	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: to determine the quality of implementation of USAID funded ocean plastic portfolio. • Secondary: use findings to improve ongoing programs and the design of future programs.
	Evaluation Approach	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Study
	Procedure(s) for Identifying Stakeholders	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iterative discussion and dialogue between evaluation team and USAID for case study and engagement site selection. • Consultation with IPs for specific stakeholder identification.
	Procedure(s) for Prioritizing Stakeholders	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders were prioritized in consultation with USAID intended users and Ocean Plastic IPs.
	Procedures for Engaging Stakeholders	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual key informant interviews, in-person individual interviews, in-person GIs, emails, virtual meetings, findings workshops, webinar presentations.

Valuing Process	22a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sources of criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ USAID Staff ○ I4DI Evaluation Managers ○ Core evaluation Team
	22b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Procedure(s) for establishing criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interpretation of EQs by core evaluation team and proposal of evaluation criteria in inception report, or evaluation design document.
	22c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Procedure(s) for prioritizing criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No differential weighting was applied to the criteria, though sub-criteria were established through the development of rubrics.
	22d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Procedure(s) for establishing standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initial rubric examples presented in the design document by the core evaluation team. ○ Working rubrics presented in a findings workshop with initial conclusions. ○ Criteria rubrics were redesigned and co-designed with USAID primary intended users and the evaluation team after initial findings workshop. ○ Small portion of rubrics were revised with USAID primary intended users during final reporting.
Sample	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6 country cases (Peru, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Vietnam) from among 14 potential countries ● 24 number of engagement sites
Sampling Procedure(s)	24	<p>Criteria for Case Country Case Selection</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Availability: priority to those countries with a longer history of MWRP and CCBO programs. 2. Application Potential: balancing data from longer-term projects with younger investments regarding their potential to inform new SOS Initiative designs and ongoing or future activities. 3. Feasibility of Logistics: budget and time considerations for travel to country contexts. 4. Regional Coverage: representation across four regions.

			<p>5. Continued Funding: priority to countries with probability of continued funding with SOS Initiative.</p> <p>Criteria for Case Country Case Selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Matched Comparison Criterion: cross-section of contexts with expected variation in terms of implementation success such as poor, adequate, good (which may happen at the subnational level). ● Contextual Maximum Variation: variety of socio-political and cultural contexts. ● Feasibility of Logistics: budget and time considerations for travel within country contexts. Almost all countries visited have a census of embedded units, meaning all sites were visited from selected countries except for a few remote sites in Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia. ● Documents: judgment and criterion-based sampling was used for documents by relevance and utility in answering EQs with internal documents recommended by USAID and CCBO, and external documents curated by evaluation team subject-matter experts. ● Interviewees: judgment based ● Group interviewees: stratified purposive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A detailed list of artifact-based data sources can be found in Annex K. Interviewees will be sampled by judgment of the evaluation team, in consultation with IPs and USAID, based on who are historical stewards, institutional nodes of knowledge, and representatives of stakeholder groups of interest. Our sampling targets for interviewees are 7-10 interviewees per case with anywhere from 42-60 in total for the study. GI participants will be selected with stratified purposive sampling with intentional representation of stakeholder groups, genders, age ranges, and/or any other important identity groups that experience differential processes and effects of program implementation. Sampling targets for GI participants are 4-8 participants per discussion (with equal representation among men and women per group), with 1 GIs per grant, and 3-5 grants per case, which translates to somewhere between 72-240 total GI participants.
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	Procedure(s) for Establishing Questions	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple consultations between I4DI managers and USAID intended users before the external core evaluation team was engaged and instructed to complete the design document.
	Procedure(s) for Prioritizing Questions	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All questions received equal priority in data collection, though limitations in data availability resulted in less priority given to EQ4 in data analysis
	General Methodological Orientation	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The general methodological orientation of this evaluation is a multi-method qualitative approach, with limited quantitative components. The case study design is qualitative; sampling is purposive; primary data collection methods are qualitative; and data analysis consists of specific and multiple end-to-end qualitative procedures that incorporate various qualitative first and second cycle coding methods.
	Research Design	28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedded multiple case study process evaluation, similar to comparative case studies or cross-country case studies.
	Data Collection Instruments	29a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk Review: modified document review template Background and Client Context Interviews: semi-structured interview protocol Field Site Visits: observation/memoing template In-Depth Interviews: interview protocol GI Discussions: discussion guide
		29b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proprietary instruments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NA

Domain	Category	No.	Category Values
Evaluative Argument and Conclusions Domain	Results	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusions to EQs presented sequentially with ratings and narrative analysis in subsections composed by evaluation rubric sub-criteria.

	Synthesis Procedures	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All data collection event debrief recordings were transcribed using OtterAI transcription services. ● Descriptive (summary), deductive (by EQ), and inductive (thematic topic modeling) natural language processing methods were applied to individual and GI notes using AILYZE software for first cycle analysis. ● First cycle analysis outputs were combined with interview/observation notes and debrief transcripts for second cycle analytical procedures by evaluation team members who participated in the collection of the specific analyzed data. ● Data were coded individually (as opposed to dual coding) through extraction procedures using a protocol for extracting observations or direct quotes from interviews and debriefs that provided evidence to answer each question; generating findings or theming observational data; evaluative coding or rating the degree to which each data collection event supported a specific evaluation conclusion; and generated micro-recommendations as applicable for each EQ for each data collection event. ● Findings were then synthesized across data collection events across the portfolio through additional descriptive coding to derive portfolio-level findings. ● Evaluation ratings were synthesized using a numerical weight and sum methodology where ratings were assigned scores and summed across data collection events for cases and across cases for the portfolio. The evaluation team developed a scoring rubric that contained the 12 evaluation sub-criteria down its left column; a performance rating scale across the top (No Evidence-Poor-Fair-Good-Very Good-Excellent); and, under each section, a description or examples for each level of performance. Each individual interview, GI, or site observation (100 in total) was scored once, along each of the 12 evaluation sub-criteria, by a member of the evaluation team. By country, we tallied the scores for each of the 12 evaluation sub-criteria. Within each, the performance level with the highest frequency was designated as the overall country performance. In the event of ties between rating categories or tallies within 1-2 counts of each other, we reported a combined rating (such as “Good to Very Good”) The same approach was used among all 100 individuals and GIs and site observations combined for a portfolio-level analysis.
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Comparison procedures	32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute comparisons were made between criteria and standards of performance as operationalized in rubrics and observed program performances; relative comparisons were made between cases within the portfolio; no external relative comparisons were made with comparable ocean plastic or SWM portfolios of other development agencies.
Interpretation Process	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial interpretation processes were conducted immediately after data collection events through core evaluation team group debriefs with 2-3 evaluation team members, which were recorded and transcribed. • Core evaluation team members conducted group virtual sensemaking sessions during data analysis procedures after field work. • Findings and conclusions were initially presented via slide deck and virtual workshop to USAID intended users; initial feedback from the workshop was integrated to a findings and conclusion draft report that was shared with USAID primary intended users; feedback from findings and conclusion draft report were integrated into complete evaluation report draft; complete evaluation draft was reviewed by USAID intended users who gave additional feedback; this feedback was integrated into final complete evaluation report draft.
Limitations	34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID and the evaluation team recognized from the outset of the design phase that EQ4 had known evaluability issues due to limited upstream programming and subsequent data availability issues. • The initial design had to be reworked significantly to focus on engagement sites as the embedded units of analysis. This required CCBO to generate six country program summaries generation for evaluation team analysis; unexpected and significant resources of timeline and team availability; and USAID re-review of the design. More substantive engagement with the USAID team from the outset (e.g. the initial kick-off session with USAID of 1.5 hours was insufficient for interaction with the evaluation team) and on the initial design ideas could have ameliorated this limitation. • There was limited validation of initial findings among evaluation participants with one initial findings workshop with core USAID intended users. • As this was the first evaluation of the ocean plastic portfolio, MWRP stakeholders likely faced recall bias or an inability to

			<p>remember details leading to less accurate information, as their programming had ended years prior to the interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● USAID was no longer in contact with some MWRP grantees since the end of funding those programs. This issue of data unavailability extended to some key stakeholder groups such as government officials in the Maldives, national officials in Vietnam, and larger private sector actors across the portfolio. ● The evaluation team of four data collectors and analysts faced issues with interrater reliability. The evaluation did not have the time or budget to justify dual coding of the over 100 data collection events across the six country cases. ● There was limited opportunity for multiple and extended sensemaking sessions after data analysis.
	Statement of conclusions	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluative and explanatory conclusions are shared within each EQ section in the findings and conclusion portion of the report. ● Questions 1 and 4 result primarily in evaluative conclusions (poor-excellent); questions 2 and 3 result primarily in explanatory conclusions (why poor to excellent). However, evaluative conclusions were needed to answer question 2. Evaluative conclusions about coherence were attempted for question 3, though these were not critical paths and not necessary to answer the descriptive aspect of question 3 focused on insights and lessons learned about the relationship between BBs.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

(This interview protocol was written before the interviews and used by the evaluation team)

Each interview will have two evaluation team members. Team members can choose to have one interviewer and one note taker or have both team members work as co-interviewers for collaborative interviews. If participants consent to audio recording, notes should be in service of supporting follow-up questions during the interview or capturing insights and or additional questions during the conversation. If interviews can't be recorded, teams should opt for a dedicated note taker to attempt to capture as of the interviewees responses.

Interviewer responsibilities: Prepare for the interview beforehand. Adapt the language of the generic guide questions based on interviewee. Obtain informed consent. Take notes during the interview, marking important quotes/insights. Summarize key takeaways from each interview. Upload interview recordings, notes, and transcripts for analysis.

Introduction: (5-10 minutes) Thank the interviewee for their time and participation. Introduce yourself and your role in conducting these interviews. Be personable and attempt to put the interviewee at ease. Explain the purpose of the interview in your own words to the effect of gathering insights and perspectives from local stakeholders to inform an evaluation of USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programs. Note that participation is completely voluntary and they can decline to answer any questions or stop the interview at any time. Explain that the interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes and will be audio recorded with their permission. Note that responses will remain confidential. Ask if they have any questions before beginning. Obtain their verbal consent to participate and record the interview.

Questions: (45 minutes) Ask questions clearly and remain neutral. Avoid expressing strong reactions to responses. Use open-ended questions to get more detailed responses. Ask follow-up questions or probes like "Could you tell me more about that?" Listen actively without interrupting. Be patient and allow silence for the interviewee to gather their thoughts. Take notes on important points made, using the interviewee's own words as much as possible. Ask the interviewee to clarify or repeat if you don't understand something. Don't assume. Watch your body language and maintain eye contact to show you are engaged. Keep the interview focused and gently steer back to the questions if the interviewee digresses too much. Provide transitions between major topics. Do not make promises about the program or evaluation that cannot be kept. Attempt to ask questions consistently across interviews, but take note of questions that land well and those that don't and consider better ways of asking the question in future interviews.

Conclusion: (5 minutes) Thank interviewee again for their time and responses. Explain next steps - responses will be analyzed along with other interviews to identify themes and inform the program evaluation. Ask permission to follow up if any clarification is needed on their responses. Provide contact information in case they have any other questions or comments to share.

Useful follow-up questions and probes: Would you give me an example? Can you elaborate on that idea? Would you explain that further? I'm not sure I understand what you're saying. Is there anything else? Tell me more about that... What does that look like? How do you know?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND INTERVIEWER NOTES

Questions	Notes/Memos
1. Please briefly describe your role and involvement with [insert specific project name] ocean plastics/SWM programs in your community.	
2. In your experience, how has this project encouraged community members to identify, implement, and sustain solutions to ocean plastics/SWM issues? [Consider a probing question like “What does that look like?” if their response was generic]	
3. Describe how this project has worked with local government leaders and agencies on plastic pollution prevention solutions. Have there been any policy changes? [Ask a follow up question about factors contributing to their description]	
4. What changes, if any, have you seen in your community that suggest ocean plastics/SWM might be improving? What role has [the grantee] played in this? [follow up with questions about reduced plastic demand or how observed changes are connected to changes in behavior]	
5. What innovations or new applications of technology are you seeing in this space?	
6. What lessons learned or recommendations would you have for [the grantee] to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of their ocean plastics/SWM programs?	
7. How do inequalities experienced by individuals or groups in your community relate to issues in ocean plastics/SWM?	
8. To what extent have you seen an increased uptake of plastic waste reduction strategies like reuse and refill programs? What role has [the grantee] played in this?	
9. To what extent did the grant work with reducing plastic pollution from plastic producers vs from waste management solutions?	
10. Is there anything else you’d like to add regarding your experiences with [the grantee’s] programs?	

EVALUATION RUBRICS (REVISED AND FINALIZED WITH USAID FEBRUARY 2024)

EQI: How effective have USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and PSE mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?

Instructions for Raters: Each data collection event in engagement sites should be able to reach conclusions for indicator IA on the extent to which the event identified solutions. If programs are mature enough to have been implemented and not just designed, then conclusions for IB and IC should be reached. For IC, sustainability here pertains to the degree of TA and capacity development.

Extent to which USAID’s grants/TA/networks and partnerships led local actors to identify locally-generated and/or locally-appropriated solutions.

Scale → Indicators/ factors	No evidence of empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Poor empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Fair empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Good empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Very good empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Excellent empowerment of local actors:
(A) Identification of locally generated and/or locally appropriate solutions	Appropriate solutions not identified	Solutions and/or networks were identified, but were not locally generated and or locally appropriate.	Solutions and/or networks/partnerships identified fairly well , but were not necessarily locally generated and/or locally appropriate.	Solutions and/or networks/partnerships identified well and were locally generated and/or locally appropriate.	Solutions and/or networks/partnerships were identified very well , locally generated, locally appropriate, and seemingly effective.	Solutions and/or networks/partnerships were identified exceptionally well , locally generated, locally appropriate, and seemingly effective.
(B) Implementation of locally generated and/or locally appropriate solutions	Attempted solutions were poorly implemented (did not achieve results) and/or were not locally generated and/or locally appropriate.	Attempted solutions were poorly implemented (did not achieve results) and/or were not locally generated and/or locally appropriate.	Solutions were implemented fairly well but were not necessarily locally generated and/or locally appropriate; and/or Networks/partnerships were established to some extent.	Solutions were implemented well and were locally generated and/or locally appropriate; and/or Networks/partnerships were established.	Solutions were implemented very well and were locally generated and/or locally appropriate; and/or Networks/partnerships were established.	Solutions were successfully implemented and were locally generated and/or locally appropriate; and/or Networks/partnerships were very successfully expanded.

Scale → Indicators/ factors	No evidence of empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Poor empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Fair empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Good empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Very good empowerment of local actors:	Evidence of Excellent empowerment of local actors:
(C) Anticipated sustainability of locally generated and/or locally appropriate solutions (including technical and operational capacity building of local actors)	None	Weak capacity building; No sustainability	Moderate indication of capacity building; Weak evidence of sustained locally generated and/or locally appropriate solutions and/or networks/partnerships (after end of USAID funding)	Sufficient indication of capacity building through local actors integrating TA learning into local solutions; Moderate evidence of sustained locally generated and/or locally appropriate solutions and/or Networks/partnerships (after end of USAID funding)	Sufficient indication of capacity building through local actors integrating TA learning into local solutions; Good evidence of sustained locally generated and/or locally appropriate solutions and/or Networks/partnerships (after end of USAID funding)	Strong indications of capacity building through local actors integrating TA into local solutions; Strong evidence of sustained locally generated and/or locally appropriate solutions and/or Networks/partnerships (after end of USAID funding)

EQ2: What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and sub-national governments?

Instructions for Raters: Each data collection event in engagement sites will have ratings for each of these sub-criteria. Rubric checkpoint 2A is specifically about whether USAID TA enabled the government to develop and adopt SWM/3R **plans** because that's a clear sign that we were able to help them act on their unique role in this system. This includes consideration of USAID tools, TA, and use of formative research data that goes into the plans. Plans do not need to be complete in order to register on the scale, as a SWM plan in development may be in the *Fair* to *Good* range, as indicated in the rubric. Rubric checkpoint 2B pertains to developing and adopting **policies**, regulations, codified standard operating procedures, ordinances, legislation, or new investments in budgets—at the local, regional, or

national level, depending on the data collection event context. Rubric checkpoint 2C pertains to the **implementation** of plans and policies **and** any **changes** from implementation such as increases in trained staff,, changes in attitudes at department, LGU, or other political levels, or other changes in conditions due to implemented plans and policies.

Extent to which USAID’s TA enabled national or subnational governments to develop and adopt strong SWM/3R plans.

Scale → Indicators/ factors	No evidence of Institution- alization	Evidence of Poor Institution- alization	Evidence of Fair Institutionali- zation	Evidence of Good Institutionali- zation	Evidence of Very Good Institutionali- zation	Evidence of Excellent Institutionali- zation
(A) Develop and adopt strong/rigorous SWM/3R plans	No evidence	Isolated discussions of plans being developed, though no plans to date.	Some evidence of any plans being developed per USAID guidance.	Some evidence of any plans being developed as well as adopted per USAID guidance.	Evidence of considerable plans developed and adopted per USAID guidance.	Strong/rigorous plans developed and adopted per USAID guidance
(A) Develop and adopt strong/rigorous SWM/3R policies	No evidence	Isolated discussions of the importance of policies, though no policies passed.	Considerable discussions of the relevance of USAID approaches	Some adoption of USAID approaches	Considerable adoption of USAID’s approach	Significant policy development and adoption
(B) Make significant improvements in SWM/3R system operations (decrease costs, increase revenue, improve efficiencies) or financial investment (infrastructure, O&M, etc.)	No evidence	Isolated discussions of improvements or investment	Evidence of a few improvements or investment per USAID guidance	Evidence of several improvements or investment per USAID guidance	Evidence of considerable improvements or investment per USAID guidance	Evidence of significant improvements or investment per USAID guidance

EQ3: What key lessons can be learned from USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five BBs to inform future programming?

Rating Instructions: This rubric is descriptive and evaluative. For the first sub-dimension, we will be coding which BBs are manifest/relevant/represented in the discussion/observation data collection event. We will then be counting BBs. For the second sub-criterion, we will be making a judgment on the extent to which CCBO/USAID appear to be attending to the linkages between BBs

Extent to which the five building blocks were present in USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM programming and led to interactions, synergies, and complementarity to inform future programming.

Scale → Indicators/ factors	No Evidence of Coherence	Evidence of Poor Coherence	Evidence of Fair Coherence	Evidence of Good Coherence	Evidence of Very Good Coherence	Evidence of Excellent Coherence
(Descriptive) How many BBs were present? Which ones?	No evidence of BBs represented.	One to five BBs represented and indicated. Numbers of BBs at an engagement site indicated from data collection events do not correspond to the degree of coherence, only the strength of linkages.				
(Evaluative aspect) Strength of linkages among the represented BBs	No evidence of BBs represented or evidence of BBs represented in isolation—with no linkages.	Limited evidence that actors acknowledge represented BBs should be interdependent with others, but no action taken to account for, coordinate, or make linkages between BBs.	Evidence that BBs are trying to work together, but there is not strong coordination. Or They are working on routing, and SBC are trying to get folks to segregate, but neither side is saying their efforts and coordination aren’t working.	Strong evidence that represented BBs that are strongly interdependent with each other. investment in the SWM building block. The SBC component is built in with the SWM improvements. Whatever plans/policies implemented are based on evidence from SBC work		

EQ4: To what extent has USAID’s approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUP (including products and packaging)?

Instructions to Raters: Make determinations for each sub-criterion for each data collection event. In effect, we are looking to rate the extent to which USAID’s approach supported the following types of upstream efforts, which collectively provide an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUP (including products and packaging).

Extent to which USAID contributed to an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUPs (including products and packaging).

Scale → Indicators/ factors	No Evidence of Contribution	Evidence of Poor Contribution	Evidence of Fair Contribution	Evidence of Good Contribution	Evidence of Very Good Contribution	Evidence of Excellent Contribution
Policy support/development for upstream strategies and action plans (including bans)	No evidence of Contribution.	Isolated example(s) of .. e.g. people discuss the need for policies but nothing concrete has emerged yet through USAID support.	Some evidence of... e.g. Through USAID, grantees, partners or our TA has resulted in some policy development / support, but it hasn't led yet to a specific policy/ban/action plan etc.		Considerable / Strong evidence of ... e.g. a plastic bag or SUP ban was drafted or enacted, or an action plan was developed.	
Investment in Refill / Reuse pilots	No evidence of Contribution.	Isolated example(s) of .. e.g. people discuss the need for refill / reuse or the appropriateness/relevance of it, but it has not resulted in concrete activities.	Some evidence of... e.g. pilots/activities have begun, but not in a systematic way that has potential for scale up or sustainability		Considerable / Strong evidence of ... e.g. pilots/activities have been well thought out and implemented (doesn't need to comment on effectiveness directly, but signs are pointing in the right direction)	
SBC efforts to reduce SUP demand	No evidence of Contribution.	Isolated example(s) of .. e.g. some basic awareness/educational activities have occurred.	Some evidence of... e.g. SBC efforts are evidence-based, locally appropriate, and not just a one-off awareness campaign. It may not have been directly targeted to reduce SUP, but that seems to be occurring as a byproduct.		Considerable / Strong evidence of ... e.g. SBC efforts are evidence-based, locally appropriate, and not just a one-off awareness campaign. It is targeted to reduce SUP.	

Scale → Indicators/ factors	No Evidence of Contribution	Evidence of Poor Contribution	Evidence of Fair Contribution	Evidence of Good Contribution	Evidence of Very Good Contribution	Evidence of Excellent Contribution
Investment in alternative products/packaging	No evidence of Contribution.	Isolated example(s) of .. e.g. people interviewed discuss the need for alternative products/packaging but nothing concrete has emerged yet through USAID support.	Some evidence of... e.g. there is a clear activity related to alternative products/packaging, but unclear how much traction it has gotten locally (in press,local government, private sector investment etc).		Considerable / Strong evidence of ... e.g. there is a clear activity related to alternative products/packaging that has gotten traction locally (in press,local government, private sector investment etc).	
Stakeholder engagement to assess relevance/uptake of upstream strategies (private sector, municipalities, communities)	No evidence of Contribution.	Isolated example(s) of .. e.g. one-off meetings have occurred with any of these stakeholders to discuss upstream strategies.	Some evidence of... e.g. USAID's efforts have resulted in more than just one-off meetings to discuss upstream strategies.		Considerable / Strong evidence of ... e.g. USAID's efforts have resulted in the formation of a committee/working group-type setup to bring different stakeholders together to discuss upstream strategies.	

DATA ANALYSIS CODEBOOK

BACKGROUND AND FIRST-CYCLE ANALYSIS

The codebook compliments a 2-hour orientation session on second-cycle coding that occurred on Jan 15th, 2024 with the core evaluation team. Analysis for the SOS Initiative evaluation started in the field and data collection phase with written memos during interviews and verbal memoing through recorded collaborative debriefs immediately after site visits and interviews.

First cycle analysis: The interview notes and debrief recordings were processed during a first-cycle coding phase with the assistance of generative AI tools for qualitative analysis. First, debrief recordings were transcribed with Otter.AI and cleaned by an analyst. Second, the interview notes were ingested by the Allyze retrieval augmented generation tool for 1) summarization, 2) inductive thematic analysis, and 3) deductive evaluative analysis, resulting in a first-cycle analysis document.

Second cycle analysis: These three document outputs:

1. the interview notes,
2. the debrief transcript,
3. and the first-cycle analysis document

are the inputs for our second-cycle analysis procedures. The second-cycle analysis procedures consist of reviewing data associated with interview and site-visits, extracting the most significant observations, identifying thematic findings, making evaluative conclusions, and if relevant, drafting potential recommendations. Team members will use a Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendation Matrix to extract and draft those evidence components which will be used in building cases and preparing oral and written evaluation reports and assets.

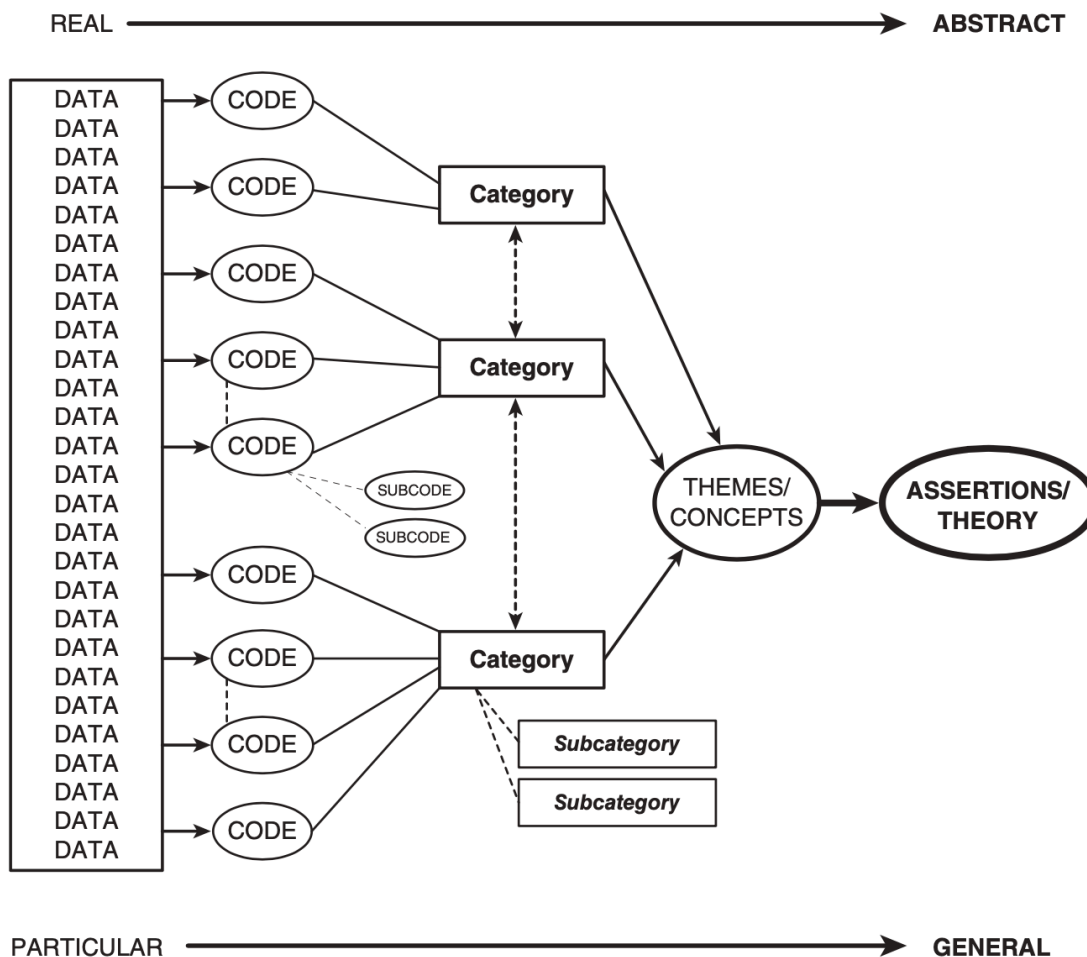
PROCEDURAL CHECKLIST

- Orient to FCR Matrix
- Navigate to specific qualitative data folder with interview data
- Open documents
 - a. Interview notes
 - b. First-cycle analysis notes
 - c. Debrief transcript
 - d. (interview recording, debrief recording, photos as needed)
- Review documents and make comments by EQ# and cross-cutting themes to help with extraction later on.
 - a. Consider this order: debrief transcripts, first cycle analysis, interview notes
- Rate the First-cycle analysis notes: Comment with a score of 0 to 5 for each section (0 being not at all helpful; 5 being extremely helpful)
 - a. Summary
 - b. Inductive Thematic Analysis
 - c. Evaluation Question Analysis
- Extract text segments by evaluation question for observations
- Theme data by insights for findings
- Make evaluative judgements for conclusions
- Suggest recommendations, if relevant. Action-oriented, verb, prescriptive. We'll work on recommendations with more attention later in the process. Ideally we'll co-create recommendations with USAID.

OVERVIEW OF CODING

What is a Code?

“A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language- based or visual data.” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4)



Data in the above figure correspond to primary team member observations from site visits and the secondary observations of our informants from our individual and GIs. **Codes** in this graphic correspond to multiple codes in our analysis in the FCR Matrix. First, columns A-F are descriptive variables of interest about the data and the data collection process applied for data management and analysis, otherwise known as ***Attribute Codes***.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Country	Interviewee Name & Title	Analyst	City (Engagement S	Stakeholder Type	Interviewee Organization Name
2	Indonesia		Dani	Ambon	Grantee	Ambon University
3	Indonesia		Dani	Ambon	Grantee	Ambon University
4	Indonesia		Dani	Ambon	Grantee	Ambon University
5	Indonesia		Dani	Ambon	Grantee	Ambon University
6	Indonesia		Connie	Ambon	Local govt	Bappeda + DLHP AMBON Gov
7	Indonesia		Connie	Ambon	Local govt	Bappeda + DLHP AMBON Gov
8	Indonesia		Connie	Ambon	Local govt	Bappeda + DLHP AMBON Gov
9	Indonesia		Connie	Makkassar	Local govt	Bappeda Makassar Local Gove
10	Indonesia		Dani	Makkassar	Local govt	Bappeda Makassar Local Gove
11	Indonesia		Dani	Makkassar	Local govt	Bappeda Makassar Local Gove
12	Indonesia		Dani	Makkassar	Local govt	Bappeda Makassar Local Gove
13	Indonesia		Dani	Makkassar	Local govt	Bappeda Makassar Local Gove
14	Indonesia		Connie	Jakarta	CCBO staff	CCBO
15	Indonesia		Connie	Jakarta	CCBO staff	CCBO
16	Indonesia		Connie	Jakarta	CCBO staff	CCBO
17	Indonesia		Connie	Jakarta	CCBO staff	CCBO

OBSERVATIONS: What we found: cut and pasted from interview notes or debrief transcript. Column I

Second, for observation column I, analysts will extract (copy and paste) text-segments (ideally 0.5-2 sentences at most) from notes and transcripts without additional commentary. This is known as ***In Vivo Coding***. Each In Vivo code (1-5 extracted observations that are deemed most significant per interview/site visit) will be grouped by one of four EQs. Grouping by EQs in column H are forms of ***Descriptive Coding***. Descriptive codes are like topics, in this case EQs.

	A	B	C	H	I	J	K	L
1	Country	Interviewee Name & Title	Analyst	Evaluation Question	Observations	Findings	Conclusions	Recommendations
2	Indonesia	Ambon University professor	Dani					
3	Indonesia		Dani					
4	Indonesia		Dani					
5	Indonesia		Dani					
6	Indonesia		Connie					
7	Indonesia		Connie					
8	Indonesia		Connie					
9	Indonesia		Connie					
10	Indonesia		Dani					
11	Indonesia		Dani					
12	Indonesia		Dani					
13	Indonesia		Dani					
14	Indonesia		Connie					
15	Indonesia		Connie					
16	Indonesia		Connie					
17	Indonesia	CCBO Gary + Rolan Gov	Connie					

FINDINGS: “What we found in our own words” Column J

“Insights, Descriptive claims”

One or multiple extracted observations will be used to generate findings in column J. ONLY GENERATE ONE FINDING FOR EACH INTERVIEW QUESTION. Identify the most significant finding for Column J. If there are 2nd or 3rd place findings that we think are really important to consider, put them in the “X-Cutting Tab”.

Findings in this instance refer to insightful summaries, inferences, or descriptive thematic claims expressed in the analyst's own words and ideally articulated as concise phrases or complete sentences. This type of coding is called ***Theming the Data***. Findings will be referred to in shorthand as the

“What?” of analysis. In other words, findings should answer the question, “What do the observations tell us?”

CODING METHODS

We will be drawing on up to six different coding methods for our second cycle analysis: attribute coding, sub-coding, descriptive coding, In Vivo coding, evaluation coding, and theming the data. Brief descriptions are drawn from Saldaña (2016) followed by application to the SOS Initiative evaluation in bold.

Attribute Coding: Entries in the FCR Matrix already have attribute codes from columns A to F. These were applied during preparation and field work stages for data management and will be used during analysis to help team members recall and orient themselves to the data and in synthesis procedures for pattern matching.

Subcoding: Sub-codes are suggested for Findings and Recommendation columns. Analysts may find codes and sub-codes useful for distinguishing between different codes of the same class, such as recommendations that are strategic or operational, or findings that pertain to culture, policy, or TA. Subcodes are not necessary, but facilitate interpretation and synthesis methods. Subcodes will likely not be apparent when first starting to code, but will emerge as similar, but different, findings and recommendations are generated from different observations.

Descriptive Coding: As opposed to applying descriptive codes to the margins of our text data, descriptive codes are technically applied when copying and pasting text segments into the observation column for the four rows for each EQ. Analysts select EQs from the dropdown menu in column H, then input 1-5 of the most significant text segments from transcripts or notes for the observation cell in column I.

In Vivo Coding: Coders will be using In Vivo coding to extract (copy and paste) the statements from informants from interview notes or from team members from debrief transcripts to cells in column I for observations. These can be phrases or complete sentences. The connection between the quoted text in the observation column and the themes in the findings column should make sense.

Evaluation Coding: Evaluation codes will be applied in the conclusion column of the FCR Matrix after observations and findings have been extracted and generated. Each EQ has a corresponding rubric for a criterion of merit, which will display dynamically in column K and correspond to EQ codes in column H. Be sure to use the rubric explanations when doing evaluation codes for conclusions.

Theming the Data: We will be using this technique to generate findings for each EQ for each interview. Observations can be themed at the manifest level, with In Vivo coding a particular phrase that captures the observation(s), or themed with some reasoning and inference by the analyst. The intent is to make meaning of the observations in a way that is useful and memorable for intended users.

FCR MATRIX AND CODING DECISION RULES AND PRINCIPLES

- **Fill all four rows.** Input something into each row for each data collection event. If there is no evidence to speak to an EQ, input no evidence, or an equivalent entry. The exception to this is there is no expectation to fill the recommendation column.

- **Four EQ rows per data collection event.** weight each EQ equally in terms of looking for evidence for each data collection event.
- **Rate First Cycle Analysis components.** please rate the “helpfulness” of the 3 AI analyses in the first cycle analysis on a scale of 0-5 like 5/5 very helpful, or 2/5 somewhat helpful, etc.
- **Use the interview tracker to troubleshoot missing analysis documents.** If you encounter missing data in the FCR Matrix, refer to the interview tracker.
- **Everyone can propose decision rules.** For new decision rules after calibration calls, add a point here in the list, and flag it with the group on WhatsApp to hear opinions/vote
- **One observation can pertain to different EQs.** The same observations can be copied into different EQ row observation cells. This is the equivalent of simultaneous coding where one statement provides evidence to answer two different EQs.
- **Consider distinguishing between interview quotes and debrief insights.** In the observations cell, quotations at the beginning of the observation can indicate quote from informant and no quotations can indicate quote from debrief transcript, if relevant. This may help us later on when it might not be clear who is making the observation. We can reword debrief insights if they are inaccurate, clumsy, or need cleaning, though only best to do this with your own insights from the debrief. Don't alter the words from your colleagues in debrief transcripts.
- **BBs can be indicated in the EQ3 observation cell.** put specific pillars in parenthesis for observations for EQ3, for later analysis of the representation of BBs.
- **Pithy findings should have explanations.** See cell J157. The finding is less useful without explanation, the explanation is less sticky without a themed finding statement. Works best with both a sticky statement and explanation
- **Explaining findings is helpful.** Like findings, recommendations can have explanations that follow the initial prescription.
- **Recommendations do not have to be fully baked.** Recommendations, or what we input into the recommendation columns can be considerations, suggestions, or questions, if they provoke thought and can lead to a recommendation by intended users. They can also be blank!
- **Cross-cutting tab also an overflow for secondary findings for EQs.** If weighing the significance of multiple potential findings is slowing things down, pick a 1st place finding to include in the main FCR matrix and put that second or third one in the cross-cutting overflow. Whatever option is quickest and may yield the most benefit. Findings in the cross-cutting can be themed by analyst, or in the form of a quoted observation. An explanation should be provided for either.
- **Jot it down first!** If you have an idea or hunch about FCRs for an interview that you either recall by memory or from notes before you open documents to analyze them, that is perfectly fine to place them in the cells as placeholders until you are able to revisit the debriefs, 1st cycle analysis, and interview notes to see if and where that hunch is supported from the observational evidence. *Importantly: a word of caution for qualitative analysis is to “be careful what you look for, you might find it” meaning prior assumptions about data may limit our potential to conduct full analysis.*

- **Ratings for EQ3 focus on building block theory not site performance.** Since EQ3 is focused on lessons learned about the BBs of circular economy model or theory, we will make evaluative conclusions about the theory and not site performance. To do this, we will first rate by the coherence of the BBs to observed conditions and the coherence of BBs to one another. Observational evidence can support the validity of the theory, while still providing evidence that the engagement site was performing poorly. This means we can have high coherence that the theory is manifest from the data, even if it is evidence of negative performance at sites.
- **Recommendations can be quotes.** We often asked informants if they had recommendations. Sometimes, they provided recommendations that were logically dependent on the observations/findings they communicated in the interview. For example, after talking about limitations of project descriptions and flexibility for grantees to adapt after findings from formative research, the SBC specialist in Indonesia recommended, “Provide more room in the PD for the grantee to adjust.”
- **Lack of evidence is not evidence of a lack.** Our methods of data collection by their nature can’t capture the full picture. When we don’t have evidence to answer an EQ due to who we spoke with, what we asked, and how we asked it, that does not automatically mean EQs get rated as poor. We added a new level to the rubrics to choose “No evidence” when there are instances of no evidence for something. Selecting “No evidence” is better practice than “No localization” or “No enabling environment.” Please review instances of no evidence for the interview’s you have conducted and select the “No evidence” option when that is the case.

FIRST CYCLE ANALYSIS PROCEDURE, PROMPTS, AND EXAMPLE OUTPUTS

First-cycle Analysis Procedure and Prompts

Navigate to ALLYZE and click "Custom Analysis"

1. Upload interview notes to ALLYZE
2. Click "Summarize" and choose the bullet points option
3. Copy and paste outputs in new Google Doc
4. Click "Conduct thematic analysis"
5. Copy and paste outputs into new Google Doc
6. Click "ask a question"
7. Copy into the question box: “1) How effective have USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management-related grants and private sector engagement mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions? 2) What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and subnational governments? 3) What key lessons can be learned from USAID’s ocean plastics/solid waste management programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five building blocks to inform future programming? 4) To what extent has USAID’s approach contributed to creating an enabling

environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of single-use plastics (including products and packaging)?”

8. Make the length of response: short
9. Adjust the instructions regarding your desired response to: Number answers to each question and provide adequately chunked (not too short or decontextualized) quotations for sources of evidence or justifications for particular answers.
10. Copy and paste the output into the google doc.

Sample First Cycle Analysis Outputs

‘Anonymized Grantee’ First Cycle Analysis

Summary

Introduction:

- The context is an interview guide for an NGO/Association representative involved in ocean plastics/SWM programs.
- The interview focuses on the representative's role, the impact of USAID's work, community involvement, government collaboration, and the effectiveness of the grantee's programs.

Role and Involvement:

- The representative started as a community-based association and then became a cooperative.
- They previously worked with ‘Anonymized Organization’ as a founder but now focuses on impact investment on the corporate side.
- They mobilize community-based associations and informal waste collectors for waste pickers.
- They provide material recovery services to empower waste pickers and improve waste management.

Impact of USAID's Work:

- USAID helped the grantee build their capacity and incorporate gender considerations, SBC activities, and work with municipal governments and the private sector.
- USAID guided the grantee on compliance, improving their ability to do logframes, logic models, hiring, procurement, and business processes.
- The grantee was able to raise impact investment and already had standards in place.
- USAID supported the grantee in analyzing community response, creating incentives for waste management, and promoting gender inclusivity.

Community Engagement and Policy Changes:

- The grantee was connected to malls and other locations through USAID, which helped increase waste segregation efforts.

- The grantee worked with local government leaders and agencies on SWM, including being part of the SWM board.
- The grantee faced challenges with bottom-up development plans and the need for more localized solutions.

Improvements and Challenges:

- The grantee learned organizational management skills and identified inefficiencies in their operations.
- They recommended growing and scaling smartly, focusing on sustainability and effective systems.
- Inequalities in the community relate to health concerns and deaths of informal waste collectors due to toxic exposure.

Plastic Waste Reduction and Innovations:

- The grantee observed an increased uptake of plastic waste reduction strategies, but more work is needed on the reduce side.
- They are exploring partnerships and new applications of technology to create a circular economy.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- The grantee highlighted the importance of co-ownership with the team, financial management, and scaling the business smartly.
- They mentioned challenges with local government development plans and the need for culturalization in waste segregation efforts.

Conclusion:

- The grantee's programs have had a positive impact on waste management, community engagement, and policy changes.
- They have learned valuable skills and lessons from working with USAID.
- Challenges include inequalities, scaling the business, and addressing cultural barriers to waste segregation.
- The grantee recommends focusing on sustainability, effective systems, and localized solutions.

Inductive Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis of the Interview with 'Anonymized Grantee'

Theme 1: Capacity Building and Support from USAID One of the main themes that emerged from the interview with 'Anonymized Grantee' is the significant role played by USAID in building the capacity of the grantee organization. USAID's support has helped the organization to incorporate gender considerations, implement SBC activities, work with municipal governments, and collaborate with the private sector. The grantee mentioned that USAID provided guidance on compliance, improved their

ability to do logframes and logic models, and supported the standardization of procurement and business processes. This support has enabled the organization to expand its capacity and improve its operations. For example, the grantee was able to mobilize communities and align their activities with environmental targets and metrics set by the local government. This has also facilitated the organization's ability to raise impact investment and attract partnerships with other stakeholders.

Theme 2: Community Engagement and Empowerment Another prominent theme in the interview is the grantee's focus on community engagement and empowerment. The organization has been successful in encouraging community members to identify, implement, and sustain solutions to ocean plastics and SWM issues. They have achieved this through various initiatives, such as capacity building programs for eco warriors, design thinking to make waste management more acceptable, and SBC activities. The grantee mentioned that they have created a safe environment for women waste collectors through gender inclusivity projects. They have also been able to mobilize communities and gain their support through branding and awareness campaigns. For instance, they have registered households and businesses that are committed to waste segregation and have gained recognition from local governors and mayors for their efforts.

Theme 3: Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement The interview also highlighted some challenges faced by the grantee organization and recommendations for improvement. One of the main challenges mentioned is the need for bottom-up development plans that are connected to the ground truth. The grantee emphasized the importance of value-add and impact-driven projects in the SWM industry. They also mentioned the need for a sustainable revenue model and the exploration of new business opportunities, such as partnerships with local companies and the development of circular economy initiatives. The grantee acknowledged the need for smart scaling and the importance of effective systems and consistent performance. They also highlighted the issue of inequalities in waste management, particularly the health risks faced by informal waste collectors due to toxic exposure.

Overall, the thematic analysis of the interview with 'Anonymized Grantee', revealed three main themes: capacity building and support from USAID, community engagement and empowerment, and challenges and opportunities for improvement. These themes provide valuable insights into the grantee organization's experiences and the impact of USAID's work in ocean plastics and SWM programs.

EQ Analysis

“Ask a question” Prompt: 1: How effective have USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and PSE mechanisms been at empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions?

2: What factors have inhibited or enabled USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM programs from institutionalizing plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and subnational governments?

3: What key lessons can be learned from USAID’s ocean plastics/SWM programming about the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five BBs to inform future programming?

4: To what extent has USAID’s approach contributed to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUP (including products and packaging)?

Length of response: short

Instructions regarding your desired response: Number answers to each question and provide adequately chunked (not too short or decontextualized) quotations for sources of evidence or justifications for particular answers.

1. The effectiveness of USAID's ocean plastics/SWM-related grants PSE mechanisms in empowering local actors to identify, implement, and sustain local solutions has been mixed. While there have been notable successes, such as the increased uptake of plastic waste reduction strategies, there are still areas that require improvement. For instance, the interviewee mentioned that the grantee's efforts were more focused on the "branding" and "consumption" aspects, rather than directly addressing the reduction of plastic pollution from plastic producers. 1 Additionally, there were challenges in terms of "localization" and the need for a more "bottom-to-top approach" in waste segregation efforts. 2
2. The institutionalization of plastic pollution prevention solutions within national and subnational governments has faced both enabling and inhibiting factors. On the positive side, the grantee's programs have worked with local government leaders and agencies, even securing a position on the SWM board with the local city [anonymized]. 3 However, there have been challenges in aligning national-level development plans with the "ground truth" and ensuring a more "bottom-up" approach. 4 This suggests that while there is recognition and engagement at the local level, there is still work to be done in integrating these efforts into broader policy frameworks.
3. USAID's ocean plastics/SWM programming offers valuable lessons on the interactions, synergies, and complementarity among the five BBs. For example, the interviewee highlighted the importance of "scaling business" and "co-ownership with team" as key factors for success. 5 Additionally, there were insights on the need for effective organizational management, addressing inefficiencies, and growing and scaling smartly. 6 These lessons underscore the multifaceted nature of addressing plastic pollution, requiring a holistic approach that encompasses various dimensions, from community engagement to business strategies.
4. USAID's approach has made notable contributions to creating an enabling environment for avoiding or eliminating the use of SUP. The interviewee mentioned that the grantee's efforts, such as the "[anonymized]" branding and the "[anonymized]" initiative, have encouraged community members to be more interested and engaged in waste segregation. 7 Furthermore, the grantee's programs have been successful in connecting with various stakeholders, including malls, restaurants, and even other islands, through platforms like TV shows and dialogues. 8 These engagements have not only raised awareness but also fostered concrete actions, such as the inclusion of the grantee in the SWM board. 9

In conclusion, while USAID's ocean plastics/SWM-related grants and PSE mechanisms have shown promise in empowering local actors and creating an enabling environment for plastic pollution prevention, there are still areas that require further attention and improvement. This includes a more

comprehensive approach that addresses the entire lifecycle of plastic, from production to waste management, and a stronger integration of local efforts into national and subnational policy frameworks.

Footnotes (quotes):

[1] Key Informant X Interview Guide.docx 10. “To what extent did the grant work with reducing plastic pollution from plastic producers vs from waste management solutions? basically none.”

[2] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “coming up with development plans at national level and not connected to ground truth, we are able to have value add and impact driven projects with in SWM industry, they have been telling people, mayor tried to create carrot stick approach, for separation, people didn’t care with the stick approach, the mental block, but because of eco collect the household surveys there are people interested, there are just some behavioral considerations. if we separate it, they will just mix-it, now they see eco warriors, now they are connected to it and they buy in. Now we just need a space, there was a lack of culturalization in segregation efforts. we were able to provide save the bay of pp, that was our SBC how to nudge coastal dwellers to separate their waste. just one example of bottom-to-top approach. I.”

[3] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “Helped to put the grantee on the SWM board with the local city Enro. So they could have a stake.”

[4] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “Biggest challenge right now are coming up the development plans that are bottom up instead of bottom down. So PZ was able to create that environment - and provide bottom up management. For example, the mayor, said won’t collect if its not separated, but it didn’t work.”

[5] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “be.. 1. scaling business 2. co-ownership with team 3.”

[6] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “programs? maybe i am scaling way too fast, we halted partnering with households because we may choke ourselves, system on consolidation, i had to fix it properly. grow smartly, scale smartly. because the brand is increasing, the waste is increasing, the nimby’s are upset, that is not part of the grant but i need to make a way, we will use revenue to build infrastructure here. we are using funds to reinvest. i need to have the business to be sustainable “don’t”

[7] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “you have genuine talks with partner, not heated convos, heavy topics to be addressed, there were inefficiencies. times schedules were not ideal, or fixed, (but ops was not delivering) when you check it yourself, it needed a lot”

[8] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “[USAID] connected us to the malls, and other locations - usaid logo helped a lot. USAID included us in a lot of dialogues about waste segregation and invited all the restaurants and really helped us to sign up more areas. We were on tv shows and they wanted to connect with us. some other islands out there that want to”

[9] Key Informant X Interview Guide Interview Guide.docx “Helped to put the grantee on the SWM board with the local city Enro. So they could have a stake”

APPENDIX E: INFORMATION SOURCES

APPENDIX EI: INTERVIEW AND SITE VISIT LISTS

Country	City	Stakeholder	Mode	Interview Type
Indonesia	Ambon	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Ambon	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Makkassar	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Implementing Partner	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Implementing Partner	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Implementing Partner	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Implementing Partner	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Implementing Partner	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Ambon and Makassar	Grantee	Virtual	Group Interview
Indonesia	Ambon	LGU	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Ambon	Grantee	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Indonesia	Ambon	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Ambon	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	National govt	Virtual	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	National govt	Virtual	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	Private sector	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Ambon	Grantee	In-Person	Key Inf. Intvw + Site Visit
Indonesia	Ambon and Makassar	Private Sector	In-Person	Site Visit

Indonesia	Thousand Islands	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Jakarta	USAID staff	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Ambon	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Indonesia	Makassar	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
Indonesia	Semarang	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Semarang	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Semarang	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Key Inf. Intvw + Site Visit
Indonesia	Semarang	Grantee	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Indonesia	Semarang	Grantee	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Indonesia	Semarang	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Indonesia	Semarang	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Iloilo	LGU	In-Person	Individual Interview
The Philippines	Iloilo	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Site Visit
The Philippines	Iloilo	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Site Visit
The Philippines	Iloilo	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Site Visit
The Philippines	Paranque	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Pasig	LGU	In-Person	Individual Interview
The Philippines	Puerto Princesa	LGU	In-Person	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	USAID staff	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Batangas	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview

The Philippines	Negros Island	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
The Philippines	Puerto Princesa	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Puerto Princesa	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	Grantee	Virtual	Individual Interview
The Philippines	Pasig City	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Pasig City	Grantee	In-Person	Site Visit
The Philippines	Metro Manila	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
The Philippines	Metro Manila	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Metro Manila	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Metro Manila	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Iloilo	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
The Philippines	Parañaque	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
The Philippines	Parañaque	Grantee	In-Person	Site Visit
The Philippines	National	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
The Philippines	National	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
Peru	Pisco, Mancora	Grantee	Virtual	Group Interview
Peru	Pisco, Mancora	Grantee	Virtual	Group Interview

Peru	Mancora	Grantee	Virtual	Group Interview
Peru	National	Private Sector	Virtual	Individual Interview
Peru	National	National govt	In-Person	Individual Interview
Peru	National	Private Sector	In-Person	Group Interview
Peru	Mancora	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
Peru	Mancora	Grantee & beneficiary	In-Person	Site Visit
Peru	Mancora	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Group Interview
Peru	Mancora	Grantee & beneficiary	In-Person	Group Interview
Peru	Mancora	LGU	In-Person	Site Visit
Peru	Pisco	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
Peru	Pisco	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Group Interview
Peru	Pisco	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Group Interview
Peru	Pisco	Beneficiary/ Community	In-Person	Site Visit
The Maldives	The Maldives	Grantee	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
The Maldives	The Maldives	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
The Maldives	The Maldives	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Sri Lanka	Jaffna	Beneficiary/Community	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Sri Lanka	National	Private Sector	In-Person	Individual Interview
Sri Lanka	National	National govt	In-Person	Individual Interview
Sri Lanka	Galle	LGU	In-Person	Individual Interview
Sri Lanka	Jaffna	LGU	In-Person	Site Visit

Sri Lanka	Jaffna	LGU	In-Person	Individual Interview
Sri Lanka	Jaffna	LGU	In-Person	Individual Interview
Sri Lanka	National	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Sri Lanka	Galle	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Sri Lanka	National	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Sri Lanka	Katana	Grantee	In-Person	Key Inf. Intvw + Site Visit
Sri Lanka	National	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Sri Lanka	National	Implementing Partner	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	LGU	In-Person	Site Visit
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	LGU	In-Person	Site Visit
Vietnam	Da Nang	LGU	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Vietnam	Hue	LGU	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	LGU	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	LGU	In-Person	Site Visit
Vietnam	National	National govt	In-Person	Individual Interview
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	Hue	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	Da Nang	Grantee	In-Person	Group Intv + Site Visit
Vietnam	National	Prime IP	In-Person	Individual Interview

Vietnam	National	Private Sector	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	National	Implementing Partner	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	National	USAID staff	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	National: Ha Long Bay	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
Vietnam	Phú Quốc	Grantee	In-Person	Group Interview
Vietnam	Bien Hoa city, Dong Nai Province, Hanoi	Grantee	In-Person	Individual Interview
WDC, CCBOhq, bilaterals,, etc.	Global	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
WDC, CCBOhq, bilaterals,, etc.	Global	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
WDC, CCBOhq, bilaterals,, etc.	Global	Implementing Partner	Virtual	Individual Interview
WDC, CCBOhq, bilaterals,, etc.	Global	Prime IP	Virtual	Individual Interview

APPENDIX E2: REFERENCES CITED

References cited in the Evaluation Report are listed here. For a list of Background Documents referenced for the evaluation, see the Annotated Bibliography in Appendix C: Evaluation Design Document

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APPENDIX F: DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORMS




**DISCLOSURE OF REAL OR POTENTIAL
CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR EXTERNAL
EVALUATIONS**

USAID Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for External Evaluation Team Members

Name	Constance E. Campbell
Title	Team Leader
Organization	I4DI
Evaluation Position	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Program for Locally-led Urban Sustainability (PLUS) Work Order 3 Save Our Seas Initiative (SOS Initiative) Contract / Task Order Number GS00Q14OADU113 / 7200AA22M00005
USAID Activity(s) Evaluated <i>(Include activity name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	USAID Oceans Plastics Portfolio
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
N/A	
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i>	
1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the activity(s) being	

- evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose activities are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the activity(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the activity design or previous iterations of the activity.
 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated.
 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated.
 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular activities and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Date	April 17, 2024
Signature	


USAID Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for External Evaluation Team Members

Name	Zach Tilton
Title	Evaluation Methods Specialist
Organization	I4DI
Evaluation Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member

<p>Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i></p>	<p>Program for Locally-led Urban Sustainability (PLUS) Work Order 3 Save our Seas Initiative (SOS Initiative) Contract / Task Order Number GS00Q14OADUI13 / 7200AA22M00005</p>
<p>USAID Activity(s) Evaluated <i>(Include activity name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i></p>	<p>USAID Oceans Plastics Portfolio</p>
<p>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the activity(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose activities are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation. 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the activity(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the activity design or previous iterations of the activity. 	
<p>CONTINUED</p> <p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular activities and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation. 	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains

proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.


Date	05/04/2024
Signature	

USAID Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for External Evaluation Team Members

Name	James Haden
Title	Ocean Plastics Specialist
Organization	I4DI
Evaluation Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number <i>(contract or other instrument)</i>	Program for Locally-led Urban Sustainability (PLUS) Work Order 3 Save Our Seas Initiative (SOS Initiative) Contract / Task Order Number GS00QI4OADUI13 / 7200AA22M00005
USAID Activity(s) Evaluated <i>(Include activity name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</i>	USAID Oceans Plastics Portfolio
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: <i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the activity(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose activities are being evaluated 	

<p>or in the outcome of the evaluation.</p> <p>3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the activity(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the activity design or previous iterations of the activity.</p>	
<p>CONTINUED</p> <p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p><i>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</i></p> <p>4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated.</p> <p>5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated.</p> <p>6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular activities and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.</p>	

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Date	4/19/24
Signature	

USAID Disclosure of Real or Potential Conflict of Interest for External Evaluation Team Members


Name	Maria Daniela Cordoba Pizarro
Title	Circular Economy Subject Matter Expert
Organization	I4DI
Evaluation Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Team Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team member
Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)	Program for Locally-led Urban Sustainability (PLUS) Work Order 3 Save our Seas Initiative (SOS Initiative) Contract / Task Order Number GS00Q14OADUI13 / 7200AA22M00005
USAID Activity(s) Evaluated (Include activity name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)	USAID Oceans Plastics Portfolio
I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

<p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts: Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the activity(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose activities are being evaluated 	<p>N/A</p>
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<p>or in the outcome of the evaluation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the activity(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the activity design or previous iterations of the activity. 	
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<p>CONTINUED</p> <p>If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:</p> <p>Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:</p> <p>4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose activity(s) are being evaluated. 6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular activities and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Date	May 14, 2024
Signature	

Appendix G: Meta Evaluation Attestation

This internal meta-evaluation addressed the evaluation process and product quality of *Program for Local and Urban Sustainability: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF USAID’S OCEAN PLASTICS PORTFOLIO TO INFORM THE SAVE OUR SEAS INITIATIVE*. A USAID Evaluation Rating Checklist¹⁶ was used to rate the quality of the evaluation report as a product. The evaluation did not meet 3 of the 37 checkpoints on this checklist (with 7 checkpoints not applicable) indicating an overall rating of ‘Excellent’. A Program Evaluation Standards Meta Evaluation Checklist¹⁷ was then used to rate the evaluation process and product and found it to be ‘Very Good’ with a score of 88%. The tables below provide summary scores and ratings. The ratings for both instruments were assigned by Evaluation Specialist, Zach Tilton, and then reviewed by Evaluation Team Leader, Connie Campbell, and PLUS Activity Manager, Lauren Ropp.

Table I: Summary Judgements of the Program Evaluation Standards Meta Evaluation

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Score & Rating	Summary Judgments & Rationale
THE UTILITY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS ALIGNED WITH STAKEHOLDERS’ NEEDS SUCH THAT PROCESS USES, FINDINGS USES, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE INFLUENCES ARE POSSIBLE.	Utility 1: Evaluator Credibility	83% Very Good	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 6: <i>Give stakeholders information on the evaluation plan’s technical quality and practicality, e.g., as assessed by an independent evaluation expert</i></p> <p>The evaluation team did list limitations in the Evaluation Design Document, but did not extend that to the technical quality and practicality of the evaluation. Additionally, a third party did not assess the evaluation’s design.</p>
	Utility 2: Attention to Stakeholders	83% Very Good	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 3: <i>Search out & invite input from groups or communities whose perspectives are typically excluded, especially stakeholders who might be hindered by the evaluation</i></p> <p>Involving grantees and various intended beneficiaries whose perspectives are not typically involved in design procedures would have met this criterion.</p>

¹⁶ Evaluation Report Checklist and Review Template via USAID Learning Lab:

<https://usaidlearninglab.org/resources/evaluation-report-checklist-and-review-template>

¹⁷ Program Evaluations Meta Evaluation Checklist via Western Michigan University:

https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u350/2014/program_metaeval_short.pdf

	Utility 3: Negotiated Purposes	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Utility 4: Explicit Values	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Utility 5: Relevant Information	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Utility 6: Meaningful Processes & Products	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Utility 7: Timely & Appropriate Communicating & Reporting	83% Very Good	The evaluation missed checkpoint 5: <i>Plan and budget evaluation follow-up activities so that the evaluator can assist the client group to interpret and make effective use of the final evaluation report.</i> There is no budgeted follow-up activities to support utilization.
	Utility 8: Concern for Consequences & Influence	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
THE FEASIBILITY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS VIABLE, REALISTIC, CONTEXTUALLY SENSITIVE, RESPONSIVE, PRUDENT, DIPLOMATIC, POLITICALLY VIABLE, EFFICIENT, AND COST EFFECTIVE.	Feasibility 1: Project Management	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Feasibility 2: Practical Procedures	83% Very Good	The evaluation missed checkpoint 3: <i>Assure that the selected procedures take account of and equitably accommodate the characteristics and needs of diverse stakeholders</i> At the time of evaluation design and planning there was not enough attention given to the diverse needs of various stakeholders and evaluation participants that influenced the choice of data collection methods.

	Feasibility 3: Contextual Viability	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Feasibility 4: Resource Use	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
THE PROPRIETY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION WILL BE CONDUCTED PROPERLY, FAIRLY, LEGALLY, ETHICALLY, AND JUSTLY WITH RESPECT TO (1) EVALUATORS' AND STAKEHOLDERS' ETHICAL RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND DUTIES; (2) SYSTEMS OF RELEVANT LAWS, REGULATIONS, AND RULES; AND (3) ROLES AND DUTIES OF PROFESSIONAL EVALUATORS.	Propriety 1: Responsive & Inclusive Orientation	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Propriety 2: Formal Agreements	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Propriety 3: Human Rights & Respect	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Propriety 4: Clarity & Fairness	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Propriety 5: Transparency & Disclosure	83% Very Good	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 4: <i>Provide all stakeholders access to a full description and assessment of the program, e.g., its targeted and actual beneficiaries; its aims, structure, staff, process, and costs; and its strengths, weaknesses, and side effects</i></p> <p>While there was some description of the program, the report's description does not rise to this standard, especially in terms of costs and side effects.</p>
	Propriety 6: Conflicts of Interests	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Propriety 7: Fiscal Responsibility	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.

<p>THE ACCURACY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION EMPLOYS SOUND THEORY, DESIGNS, METHODS, AND REASONING IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE INCONSISTENCIES, DISTORTIONS, AND MISCONCEPTIONS AND PRODUCE AND REPORT TRUTHFUL EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS.</p>	<p>Accuracy 1: Justified Conclusions & Decisions</p>	<p>83% Very Good</p>	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 6: <i>Report plausible alternative explanations of the findings and explain why rival explanations were rejected</i></p> <p>The analysis and report did not dedicate time to reporting alternative explanations and why these were rejected.</p>
	<p>Accuracy 2: Valid Information</p>	<p>83% Very Good</p>	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 6: <i>Assess and report the comprehensiveness, quality, and clarity of the information provided by the procedures as a set in relation to the information needed to address the evaluation’s purposes and questions</i></p> <p>The Evaluation Report describes evaluation limitations, but there was no systematic assessment of these limiting criteria or an assessment of the quality of the various data gathered from data collection events.</p>
	<p>Accuracy 3: Reliable Information</p>	<p>83% Very Good</p>	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 5: <i>Provide appropriate reliability estimates for key information summaries, including descriptions of programs, program components, contexts, and outcomes</i></p> <p>There were no inter-rater reliability measures given there was no dual-coding of the qualitative data. While quality checks were made by the evaluation specialist, estimates of inter-rate understanding were not estimated.</p>
	<p>Accuracy 4: Explicit Program & Context Descriptions</p>	<p>100% Excellent</p>	<p>The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.</p>
	<p>Accuracy 5: Information Management</p>	<p>100% Excellent</p>	<p>The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.</p>

	Accuracy 6: Sound Designs & Analyses	83% Very Good	<p>The report missed checkpoint 6: <i>Plan specific procedures to avert and check for threats to reaching defensible conclusions, including analysis of factors of contextual complexity, examination of the sufficiency and validity of obtained information, checking on the plausibility of assumptions underlying the evaluation design, and assessment of the plausibility of alternative interpretations and conclusions</i></p> <p>While the evaluation did attend to the first two, it did not attend to the last three points in this list.</p>
	Accuracy 7: Explicit Evaluation Reasoning	83% Very Good	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 5: <i>Identify, evaluate, and report the relative defensibility of alternative conclusions that might have been reached based on the obtained evidence</i></p> <p>The evaluation did not report on alternative conclusions.</p>
	Accuracy 8: Communication & Reporting	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
THE EVALUATION ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE THAT AN EVALUATION IS SYSTEMATICALLY, THOROUGHLY, AND TRANSPARENTLY DOCUMENTED AND THEN ASSESSED, BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY FOR ITS UTILITY, FEASIBILITY, PROPRIETY, AND ACCURACY.	Accountability 1: Evaluation Documentation	100% Excellent	The evaluation met all of the checkpoints for this sub-criterion.
	Accountability 2: Internal Meta-evaluation	83% Very Good	<p>The evaluation missed checkpoint 1: <i>At the evaluation's beginning, determine the meta-evaluation's intended users and uses (e.g., formative and summative)</i></p> <p>No such determination was made at the outset of the evaluation.</p>
	Accountability 3: External Meta-evaluation	0% Poor	The evaluation missed checkpoints 1-6: <i>Confirm through exchange with key stakeholders the need for an external assessment of the evaluation and the purposes it should serve (e.g., formative or summative); Stipulate that these and possibly additional standards will be used to assess and</i>

			<p><i>judge the evaluation; Select, recruit, and reach a formal agreement with an external meta-evaluator who possesses an independent perspective, appropriate expertise, and freedom from possibly compromising connections or interests; Assure that the external meta-evaluation is adequately planned, staffed, and funded; Provide the external meta-evaluator with access to information and personnel required to conduct a thorough, defensible meta-evaluation that serves the intended purposes; Assure that the meta-evaluation will be subjected to appropriate quality control and that the meta-evaluator will deliver as part of the meta-evaluation report an attestation of its adherence to the meta-evaluation standards</i></p> <p>No external meta-evaluation was commissioned nor budgeted for.</p>
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Table II: USAID Evaluation Rating Checklist

Evaluation Rating Checklist	YES	NO	CNP ¹⁸
Executive Summary			
1. Does the Executive Summary accurately reflect the most critical elements of the report?	X		
Program/Project Background			
2. Are the basic characteristics of the program, project or activity described (title, dates, funding organization, budget, implementing organization, location/map, target group)?	X		
3. Is the program or project's "theory of change" described (intended results (in particular the project purpose); development hypotheses; assumptions)			X
Evaluation Purpose			
4. Does the evaluation purpose identify the management reason(s) for undertaking the evaluation?	X		
Evaluation Questions			
5. Are the evaluation questions clearly related to the evaluation purpose?	X		

¹⁸ Condition Not Present

6. Are the evaluation questions in the report identical to the evaluation questions in the evaluation SOW?	X ¹⁹		
7. If the questions in the body of the report and those found in the SOW differ, does the report (or annexes) state that there was written approval for changes in the evaluation questions?	X		
Methodology			
8. Does the report (or methods annex) describe specific data collection methods the team used?	X		
9. Are the data collection methods presented (in the report or methods annex) in a manner that makes it clear which specific methods are used to address each evaluation question? (e.g., matrix of questions by methods)			X
10. Does the report (or methods annex) describe specific data analysis methods the team used? (frequency distributions, cross-tabulations; correlation; reanalysis of secondary data)	X		
11. Are the data analysis methods presented (in the report or methods annex) in a manner that makes it clear how they are associated with the evaluation questions or specific data collection methods?			X
Team Composition			
12. Did the report (or methods annex) indicate that the evaluation team leader was external to USAID?	X		
13. Did the report (or methods annex) identify at least one evaluation specialist on the team?	X		
14. Did the report (or methods annex) identify local evaluation team members?		X	
15. Did the report indicate that team members had signed Conflict of Interest forms or letters? (check if the report says this or the COI forms are included in an annex)	X		
Study Limitations			
16. Does the report include a description of study limitations (lack of baseline data; selection bias as to sites, interviewees, comparison groups; seasonal unavailability of key informants)?	X		
Responsiveness to Evaluation Questions			
17. Is the evaluation report structured to present findings in relation to evaluation questions, as opposed to presenting information in relation to program/project objectives or in some other format?	X		
18. Are all of the evaluation questions, including sub-questions, answered primarily in the body of the report (as opposed to in an annex)	X		

¹⁹ Minor differences were suggested by USAID on EQ4 to clarify the scope of upstream strategies that they wanted evaluators to study, but these did not change the actual intent of the EQ

19. If any questions were not answered, did the report provide a reason why?			X
Findings			
20. Did the findings presented appear to be drawn from social science data collection and analysis methods the team described in its study methodology (including secondary data it assembled or reanalyzed)?	X		
21. In the presentation of findings, did the team draw on data from the range of methods they used rather than answer using data from primarily one method?	X		
22. Are findings clearly distinguished from conclusions and recommendations in the report, at least by the use of language that signals transitions ("the evaluation found that.....", "the team concluded that")?	X		
23. Are quantitative findings reported precisely, i.e., as specific numbers or percentages rather than general statements like "some", "many", or "most"?		X	
24. Does the report present findings about unplanned/unanticipated results?	X		
25. Does the report discuss alternative possible causes of results/outcomes it documents?		X	
26. Are evaluation findings disaggregated by sex at all levels (activity, outputs, outcomes) when data are person-focused?			X
27. Does the report explain whether access/ participation and/or outcomes/benefits were different for men and women when data are person-focused?			X
Recommendations			
28. Is the report's presentation of recommendations limited to recommendations? (free from repetition of information already presented or new findings not previously revealed)	X		
29. Do evaluation recommendations meet USAID policy expectations with respect to being specific? (states clearly what is to be done and possibly how?)	X		
30. Do evaluation recommendations meet USAID policy expectations with respect to being directed to a specific party? (identifies who should do it)	X		
31. Are all the recommendations supported by the findings and conclusions presented? (Can a reader follow a transparent path from findings to conclusions to recommendations?)	X		
Annexes			
32. Is the evaluation SOW included as an annex to the evaluation report?	X		
33. Are sources of information that the evaluators used listed in annexes?	X		
34. Are data collection instruments provided as evaluation report annexes?	X		

35. Were any "Statements of Differences" included as evaluation annexes (prepared by team members, the Mission, the Implementing Partner, or other stakeholder)?			X
Evaluation Data Warehousing			
36. Does the evaluation report explain how the evaluation data will be transferred to USAID (survey data focus group transcripts)?	X		
SOW Leading Indicator of Evaluation Quality			
37. Does the evaluation SOW include a copy or the equivalent of Appendix 1 of USAID's evaluation policy?	X		