

HOW TO MAKE SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BANS WORK?

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BRIEFER 2

NO TO SINGLE USE PLASTICS

- Plastic spoon, fork and knife
- Plastic cups
Lower than 0.2 mm thickness
- Plastic stirrer
- Plastic straw
- Plastic bag
- Styrofoam products

Single use plastics cause lasting harm. It's estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans.

The ocean is not your waste bin.
AVOID USING SINGLE USE PLASTICS.

Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) MC No. 11-2021 regarding the Ban on the Use of Unnecessary Single-Use Plastic Products

<https://plasticceans.org/the-facts/>

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BRIEFER INTRODUCTION

Plastic pollution is a pressing environmental issue that demands collective action to safeguard our oceans and marine life. To address this problem, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) implemented a three-year project named “**Clean Ports, Clean Oceans: Improving Port Waste Management in the Philippines**” (hereinafter “the project”), in partnership with the Grieg Group and funded by the Grieg Foundation, under the No Plastic in Nature Initiative.

The project that aimed to reduce plastic waste leakage in three ports in the Philippines - Batangas, Cagayan de Oro, and Manila North, conducted baseline studies on the generation and management of waste, including plastic waste, in the three ports and at the national level. The studies revealed a significant amount of single-use plastic products generated, which prompted initiatives targeted to the reduction of such products.

This brief, published by WWF-Philippines, aims to share the project’s valuable insights on providing support for the implementation of the single-use plastic ban in ports under the jurisdiction of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) in the Philippines. By effectively communicating the ban to various port stakeholders, employing strategic implementation approaches, and tracking progress through monitoring, the project sought to achieve significant plastic waste leakage reduction and safeguard the marine environment.

TARGET STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging with the relevant entities, especially those with significant roles in the waste management and decision-making processes, is crucial to work on the implementation of policies and laws and ensure lasting outcomes.

The target stakeholders in the Philippines regarding the implementation of the ban on single-use plastic products may include:

1

National Government Agencies

Department of Environment and Natural Resources –
Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB)

2

Philippine Ports Authority (PPA)

3

Port Management Offices (PMO)

4

Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA)

5

Philippine Coast Guard (PCG)

6

Terminal Operators

The collaborative efforts of the stakeholders are a crucial aspect for the implementation of the legal framework.

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE PLASTIC BAN AT PORTS

There are various policies and laws that have been adopted at the global, regional, national, and local levels in recent years to address plastic pollution and marine litter. **Bans have been a crucial aspect** of some of these policy and legal frameworks.

At the international level, significant developments related to marine litter have emerged. The **International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)**, notably in Annex V, known as the “Regulations on Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships”, strictly prohibits the disposal of all forms of plastic into the sea, reinforcing the maritime community’s commitment to curbing plastic pollution. Furthermore, in response to the detrimental effects of plastics on marine life, biodiversity, and human health, the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** introduced resolutions, such as MEPC.310(73) in 2018 on the “Action Plan to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships” and MEPC.341(77) in 2021 on the “Strategy to Address Marine Plastic Litter from Ships”. These resolutions lay out a comprehensive strategy and an action plan aimed at reducing the contribution of shipping industry to marine plastic litter and enhancing the effectiveness of port reception facilities. These international endeavors underscore a broader commitment to address marine litter comprehensively.

In a historic decision at the fifth **United Nations Environment Assembly** in March 2022, member states agreed, through the resolution 5/14 entitled “End Plastic Pollution: Towards an Internationally Legally Binding Instrument”, to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) with the aim to develop an international legally binding agreement on plastic pollution by 2024. In the INC-2 meeting held in Paris in 2023, the representatives discussed the objectives, substantive obligations, means of implementation, and implementation measures. Banning specific products was one of the options presented in the document “Potential Options for Elements towards an International Legally Binding Instrument, based on a Comprehensive Approach that Addresses the Full Life Cycle of Plastics as called for by United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 5/14” for INC-2.

At the national level, several countries have banned single-use plastic products in ports or onboard ships. India is one of them. **In India, a single-use plastic ban is materialized through the Directorate General of Shipping's (DGS) Order No. 05 of 2019.** The order imposes a ban on single-use plastic items onboard ships when such ships are in Indian waters. While originally slated for full implementation on January 1, 2020, a pragmatic decision to postpone its implementation underscored the authorities' recognition of the necessity to provide the maritime industry with adequate time for logistical adjustments [1]. Key facets of India's law include a clear definition of single-use plastics as items made entirely of plastic and used only once before being discarded. This definition encompasses a wide spectrum of items, ranging from commonplace plastic cups and cutlery to more intricate polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles and polystyrene (PS) containers. India's policy takes a progressive approach, moving beyond a static prohibition. It initiated a 50% reduction of single-use plastics for cargo ships in April 2020 and passenger ships in June 2020. Subsequently, this approach escalated to a 90% reduction in single-use plastics for cargo ships in October 2020 and passenger ships in December 2020. This pragmatic strategy establishes incremental targets for cargo and passenger ships, recognizing the necessity for gradual adaptation.

Turning the focus to the Philippines, the cornerstone of the initiative is the coming into force of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) Memorandum Circular No. 11-2021 which places a ban on the unnecessary use of single-use plastic products in all ports and port facilities under PPA's jurisdiction, including all offices and establishments inside the ports. The list of banned plastic items includes plastic cups, drinking straws, coffee stirrers, spoons, forks, knives, and thin-filmed sando bags. In addition to the list, the Port Management Office Memorandum Order No. 001-19 prohibits another array of single-use plastic products, including PET bottles, PS containers, *doy* or tetra packs, and balloons in the port vicinity. PPA has communicated the ban and is working on the regulations to define additional details and guidelines for the implementation of the ban.

[1] Gard (2020) New implementation strategy for India's single-use plastic ban. Retrieved from <https://www.gard.no/web/updates/content/29011545/new-implementation-strategy-for-indias-single-useplastic-ban>



Under the project, WWF–Philippines provided recommendations for the development of the implementing rules and regulations for the ban on unnecessary use of single-use plastic products for ports and port facilities. The implementing rules and regulations will provide guidance to port management offices for the implementation of the ban. In the absence of these rules, port management offices had to initiate their own actions to implement the ban based on their own understanding. WWF-Philippines also collected updates from the partner sites in Port of Batangas, Port of Cagayan de Oro, and Manila North Port during the implementation of the ban in the respective ports.

While the port-level approach provides a comprehensive solution, **the landscape remains a patchwork of regulations**. Vessels often travel between coastal cities and countries, and the lack of harmonization between the policies and legislation at the national and local levels can lead to disparities in implementation, confusion among stakeholders, and undermining of the implementation of the ban. By aligning the city policies where the port is located with the port’s single-use plastic ban, a unified and consistent front can be presented, maximizing the ban’s impact and minimizing compliance issues.



Batangas City, where the Port of Batangas is located, demonstrates its commitment to combat plastic pollution by enacting a ban on a significant portion of the port-listed single-use plastic items, including plastic bags, straws, cups, thin take-out containers, utensils, and stirrers, as part of their Environment Code. This aligned policy reinforces the effectiveness of the single-use plastic ban in the port and contributes to the city’s broader efforts towards environmental preservation.

EMPOWERING CHANGE THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Catalyzing transformation requires more than policy alone – it demands the power of effective communication. To achieve this, tools such as information, education and communication (IEC) materials can be used. The materials should be tailored to the target audience.



Under this project, WWF developed a large IEC campaign. A well-crafted communication strategy served as a guiding force for the entire campaign.

The IEC campaign was tailored to target port employees, utility workers, passengers, vendors, and other businesses within the port facilities for behavioral change through proper waste management. Several types of materials were developed. The IEC poster presented the banned plastic items alongside compelling statements to refrain from the use of single-use plastics and quantitative data highlighting the impact of plastic waste leakage on the environment.

The development of videos for port facilities captured public attention to echo the significance of the ban across maritime channels as displayed in various strategic port facilities.

Effectively curbing single-use plastics within port premises demands a holistic approach that extends beyond the ban itself. **While the single-use plastic ban lays a crucial foundation, its efficacy is inherently intertwined with proper waste segregation policies and actions.** The production of roll-up banners and waste bin labels encouraged stakeholders to reduce waste and to conscientiously segregate their waste.

Active stakeholder engagement through consultations, workshops, and awareness training facilitated a smoother understanding of the single-use plastic ban and its objectives. The PPA serves as the technical working group, collaborating closely with the PMOs and engaging terminal operators for the implementation of the single-use plastic ban. The port employees and utility workers were also involved in awareness programs to help them be familiarized with the ban and with proper waste management practices.

GEARING-UP A SYSTEM-READY PORT FOR BAN IMPLEMENTATION

Institutionalizing a comprehensive ban on single-use plastic products within port premises necessitates a holistic approach that extends beyond the mere formulation of policies. A critical component of successful implementation is the establishment of a system-ready environment that seamlessly integrates sustainable practices and alternatives. This approach empowers port facilities to not only implement the single-use plastic ban but also to cultivate a culture of environmental responsibility. As such, port stakeholders are prompted to actively engage in the transition towards more eco-conscious practices.

- **Promotion of viable alternatives:** central to achieving an effective ban implementation is the exploration and promotion of viable alternatives to replace banned single-use plastics. By actively promoting and supporting the adoption of sustainable alternatives, such as utensils made from eco-friendly materials, and paper bags, port stakeholders can embrace these options as viable substitutes to the banned plastic items. Emphasizing the environmental benefits and long-term cost savings of these alternatives can motivate individuals and businesses to make the switch, driving a significant reduction in the use of single-use plastics within the ports.
- **Encouraging plastic alternatives:** beyond the immediate transition to alternative materials, the incorporation of reusable items is a key facet of a system-ready port for ban implementation. Establishing accessible refilling stations, such as water refilling stations catering to reusable drinking containers, exemplifies a practical and sustainable approach.



In the Port of Cagayan de Oro, several alternatives to single-use plastics have already been observed among port employees, utility workers, passengers, and vendors, which include the use of paper bags, paper straws, paper cups, and paper meal boxes or bowls. Additionally, some stakeholders have embraced the adoption of reusable containers and utensils, reflecting their commitment to reducing plastic waste and embracing more sustainable practices within the port premises.

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- **Streamlined monitoring and reporting:** to track the progress of the ban implementation and efficacy, a streamlined monitoring and reporting system is vital. Implementing a standardized reporting mechanism across all ports ensures consistent data collection and accurate assessment. Regular updates and transparent communication of compliance levels and enforcement actions reinforce accountability and drive continuous improvement.
 - **Strengthening staff training and awareness:** investing in comprehensive training programs for port staff and employees is a pivotal element in preparing a system-ready port. It is crucial that all personnel are well-versed in the specifics of the single-use plastic ban, its rationale, and the proper procedures for implementation and engagement. This empowers the staff to serve as effective advocates for the ban and equips them with the knowledge needed to address inquiries from passengers, vendors, and other stakeholders. Regular awareness campaigns and workshops can further reinforce this understanding and foster a sense of collective responsibility.
 - **Collaborative partnerships and engagement:** establishing collaborative partnerships with local government units, non-governmental organizations, and community groups can significantly amplify the impact of the single-use plastic ban, even beyond the port boundaries. These partnerships facilitate the exchange of resources and innovative ideas to enrich the ban's implementation strategies. Engaging local schools and youth groups through educational initiatives also contributes to building a sense of shared commitment to a plastic-free maritime environment. Such collaborative efforts extend the reach of the ban's message and mobilize a broader network of change-makers.
 - **Integration of waste management infrastructure:** anticipating that full compliance with the single-use plastic ban might not be immediate, it is essential to establish flexible waste management infrastructure capable of handling the banned plastics, together with other waste categories, to facilitate proper disposal and recycling of materials. Even as behavioral shifts take time, having robust systems in place ensures that the prohibited single-use plastics are efficiently collected, segregated, and processed. This infrastructure includes proper labeling for segregated waste types, designated storage areas, mechanisms for safe disposal or recycling. Having a well-prepared waste management framework can effectively manage the phased reduction of single-use plastic products.

TRACKING SUCCESSES AND IDENTIFYING GAPS THROUGH MONITORING PROGRESS IN SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAN IMPLEMENTATION

Monitoring plays a pivotal role in the success of implementing a single-use plastic ban within ports. It is a way of ensuring consistency in the ban implementation and in gathering information that would improve the policy.



Under this project, WWF-Philippines monitored the impact of the implemented interventions, including measuring the level of implementation of the single-use plastic ban. The following aspects were assessed:

- **Port-city policy alignment:** the level of alignment between the policies of the port and the city where the port is located was determined to ensure consistent and coordinated actions. The number of overlapping banned plastic items in both port and city regulations acted as a litmus test for alignment.
- **IEC efforts:** the presence and effectiveness of IEC materials were assessed as a gauge of communication within port premises.
- **Stakeholder participation:** a visual appraisal of waste provided a real-world snapshot of stakeholder participation. The presence of banned single-use plastics in bins provided the level of the stakeholder's compliance to the ban. The efforts of the stakeholders to refrain from the use of banned plastic items and to use plastic alternatives were documented.
- **Compliance monitoring:** the diligent oversight of the compliance mechanism, encompassing both frequency and encouragement to support the ban, was a cornerstone of successful implementation. Regular monitoring underpinned the ban's effectiveness and enabled swift action for non-compliance.
- **Use of alternatives:** the integration and prevalence of alternative materials to replace the banned single-use plastics was also observed. Observations and interviews informed this assessment, gauging the extent to which businesses and stakeholders adopted alternative solutions.



Navigating Obstacles for Change: Challenges in Implementation of Single-Use Plastic Ban

The implementation of a revolutionary ban on single-use plastic in Philippine ports to protect marine ecosystems has presented several key challenges during its implementation.

- **Alignment of policies:** a pivotal challenge was to ensure seamless alignment between the port policy on single-use plastic ban and the corresponding policies of the cities surrounding the ports, especially when vessels traveled between coastal cities. Differences or lack in regulations could potentially lead to confusion among stakeholders and hinder the ban's effectiveness. To address this challenge, close coordination and cooperation with the local government units and relevant authorities is needed to work towards a harmonized approach to waste management.
- **Enforcement:** port authorities and operators, while supportive of the ban's intent, often lacked the necessary enforcement power due to the absence of specific measures for non-compliance since the existing port policies have not indicated any such measures. This led to the possibility of non-compliance with the ban, undermining its impact. Collaborating with maritime stakeholders and relevant government agencies to explore feasible incentives or penalty frameworks with sufficient public consultation can empower port authorities to take decisive enforcement action.
- **Lack of monitoring:** monitoring is essential but can be a challenge due to the lack of human and financial resources in the ports. Despite the requirement for ports to submit monthly compliance reports, monitoring the single-use plastic ban posed a considerable challenge. Many ports did not regularly submit their compliance reports, leading to a lack of comprehensive data on ban enforcement and effectiveness. This hinders the project's ability to assess the progress accurately and identify areas for improvement. To tackle this issue, a unified and simplified monitoring guide should be utilized across all port management offices to ensure regular data reporting.
- **Consumer preference and limited availability of alternatives:** the consumer preference for convenience and affordability intertwined with the unavailability of viable alternatives to replace banned single-use plastics are identified as a challenge during the implementation of the ban. In such cases, some stakeholders, especially passengers, were accustomed to the convenience of buying products in small retail packaged in disposable plastics, making behavioral change a complex task. Advocating for the development of cost-effective alternatives employed with a comprehensive education and awareness campaign can overcome this limitation.
- **Limited understanding and lack of awareness:** inadequate awareness and understanding of the single-use plastic ban among port passengers, employees, utility workers, vendors, and other businesses have contributed to non-compliance. The importance of transitioning away from single-use plastics and the ecological significance of the ban may not have been fully communicated or comprehended, hampering voluntary adherence. Addressing this challenge requires intensified educational efforts, including targeted communication campaigns, workshops, and awareness sessions to increase knowledge and understanding of the ban's objectives and benefits.



In the project, collaborative efforts between WWF-Philippines and port authorities facilitated the seamless implementation of the monitoring. Monitoring employed a combination of on-site observations, structured interviews, and cross-referencing of data sources to establish a comprehensive view of the ban's progress. The developed assessment form aided data collection, offering a standardized framework that allowed for consistent data capture.

Despite its robustness, the monitoring criteria faced certain challenges that influenced the breadth of its assessment. One notable limitation stemmed from the reliance on snapshot observations, which inherently provided a momentary snapshot of compliance rather than a continuous and exhaustive evaluation. Additionally, the variability in compliance reporting practices across different port management offices contributed to data inconsistencies.

For entities seeking to conduct monitoring, several recommendations emerge from the project's experience:

- Fostering a collaborative relationship between project implementers and port authorities is crucial. This ensures that the monitoring criteria align with the operational realities of the port environment.
- Establishing clear and uniform reporting guidelines also enhances data consistency and enables accurate cross-comparison.
- Recognizing these inherent monitoring limitations, such as the reliance on snapshot observations, informs its appropriate application and interpretation.

Case Study: Implementation of Single-Use Plastic Ban in Philippine Ports



Several best practices have been observed during the implementation of the single-use plastic ban at the three selected ports at Port of Batangas, Port of Cagayan de Oro, and Manila North Port.

- **Intensive campaigns and awareness programs:** various IEC materials are strategically posted throughout the ports, including passenger terminal entrances and business stalls. This approach aims to create a visible impact on passengers, employees, and stall caretakers, raising awareness about the current ban.
- **Capacity building:** port employees, including janitorial services, have actively participated in workshops focused on waste reduction initiatives and promoting awareness of the single-use plastics ban implementation.
- **Collaboration with NGOs:** WWF-Philippines has been working in conjunction with the PPA and port management offices to provide sustainable solutions in reducing plastic leakage from the ports. This collaboration includes the provision of IEC materials, segregation bins, and infrastructure for collection events to enhance waste recovery efforts.
- **Review of the ban:** the PPA is continuously reviewing the policy to consider the inclusion of more single-use plastics to be banned in the ports.



CONCLUSION

The journey to make single-use plastic ban work in the Philippine ports reflects the formidable impact of concerted efforts within the Philippine maritime sector. The project demonstrated that collaboration among key stakeholders can propel a tidal wave of progress in reducing plastic waste leakage into nature. Learning from these experiences with steadfast monitoring and evaluation exemplifies a dedication to a plastic-free marine environment, offering a blueprint for other domains to navigate a similar course toward sustainability.