

Mapping the Plastic along Hai Phong's Urban and Coastal Margins

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SUMMARY

Concern over plastic pollution in the ocean is growing. Plastic is ubiquitous in the ocean, increasing rapidly, and affecting wildlife, economies, and potentially human health. Recent modeling suggests that approximately 8.4 million tons of plastic flow to the ocean each year, primarily from major urban centers, with more than half of the 10 top polluting countries located in the Asia Pacific region. However, there has been very little data collected to empirically document the existence of these extensive plastic plumes around major urban centers and to validate the model estimates of mismanaged waste. Understanding the transport of plastics from land into marine systems is critical for modeling the distribution and trends of plastic in the ocean, estimating its impact on regional economies near sources, and clarifying the magnitude of this pollution to the public, to industry, and to policy-makers. With a robust, comparable baseline of information, we can then evaluate policy effectiveness and change through on-ground activities at local, national and international scales. We have been working with GreenHub in Vietnam to map plastic pollution on land, along rivers/watercourses, along the coastline and in the nearshore ocean to quantify waste leakage into the environment. We will discuss our partnership, methods, training, capacity building and some results from this important collaborative project.

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