

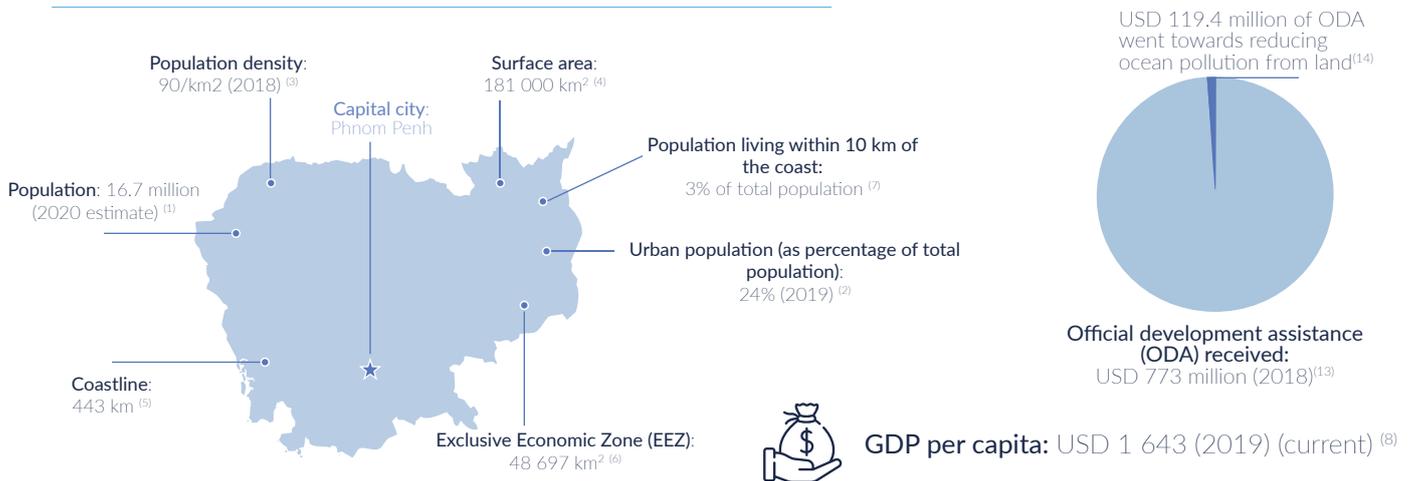
CAMBODIA

Cambodia promotes the 4Rs framework to tackle marine plastic waste.

Millions of tonnes of plastics enter the ocean every year, with tremendous environmental, economic and social costs that are difficult to quantify. However, the marine plastics pollution problem cannot be solved just by cleaning up the ocean. Most marine plastics are not discarded directly into the sea but derive from land-based sources. They end up in the sea due to a multitude of reasons, such as the inadequate filtering of wastewater, improper or illegal disposal, or unexpected natural disasters. Land-based initiatives are therefore essential to addressing marine plastics pollution.

The OECD stands ready to help develop policy advice and financing strategies to address marine plastics pollution in Southeast Asia, a region where this problem is particularly acute.

Figure 1. Cambodia: Key demographic, geographic, and economic indicators



In Cambodia, several government ministries and agencies are involved in addressing marine plastics pollution:

- **At the national level,** the Ministry of the Environment establishes guidelines on solid waste management (SWM) including the disposal, collection, transport,

storage, recycling, minimising, dumping, and monitoring of SWM plans ⁽⁹⁾. The Ministry of Commerce issues permits for the export of household waste ⁽¹⁰⁾. The Ministry of Economics and Finance establishes waste collection fees ⁽¹¹⁾, and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport implements various international donor projects relating to solid waste management ⁽¹²⁾.

1. United Nations Population Division. (2019). *World Population Prospects 2019*.
 2. United Nations Population Division. (2018). *World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision*.
 3. United Nations Statistics Division. (2019). *Demographic Yearbook 2018*.
 4. United Nations Statistics Division. (2019). *Demographic Yearbook 2018*.
 5. CIA. (2020). *The World Factbook*.
 6. Flanders Marine Institute (2019)
 7. OECD. (2020). *OECD Statistics (OECD calculations based on Florczyk et al, 2019)*. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/062975
 8. World Bank. (2020). *World Development Indicators Database*.
 9. Royal Government of Cambodia. (1999). *Anukret on Solid Waste Management*. <https://cambodiantr.gov.kh/kcfinder/upload/files/SubDecree%20No.%2036%20Solid%20Waste%20Management%20-%20EN.pdf>
 10. Royal Government of Cambodia. (1999). *Anukret on Solid Waste Management*. <https://cambodiantr.gov.kh/kcfinder/upload/files/SubDecree%20No.%2036%20Solid%20Waste%20Management%20-%20EN.pdf>
 11. SEA Circular. (2020). *Country Profile: Cambodia*.
 12. Akenji, L., Bengtsson, M., Kato, M., Hengesbaugh, M., Hotta, Y., Aoki-Suzuki, C., . . . Liu, C. (2019). *Circular Economy and Plastics: A Gap-Analysis in ASEAN Member States*. https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/policyreport/en/10382/FINAL_CE+and+Plastics++A+gap+analysis+in+ASEAN+Member+States_1004.pdf
 13. OECD. (2020). Detailed aid statistics: Official and private flows. OECD International Development Statistics (database). doi:https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00072-en
 14. Sustainable Ocean for All Initiative based on OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System database.

• **At the sub-national level**, provincial administrations and the Phnom Penh Capital Administration establish SWM plans ⁽¹⁵⁾. Municipal government authorities implement waste management policies and deliver waste management services ⁽¹⁶⁾. Municipalities have been encouraged to take over more of the role from the provinces.

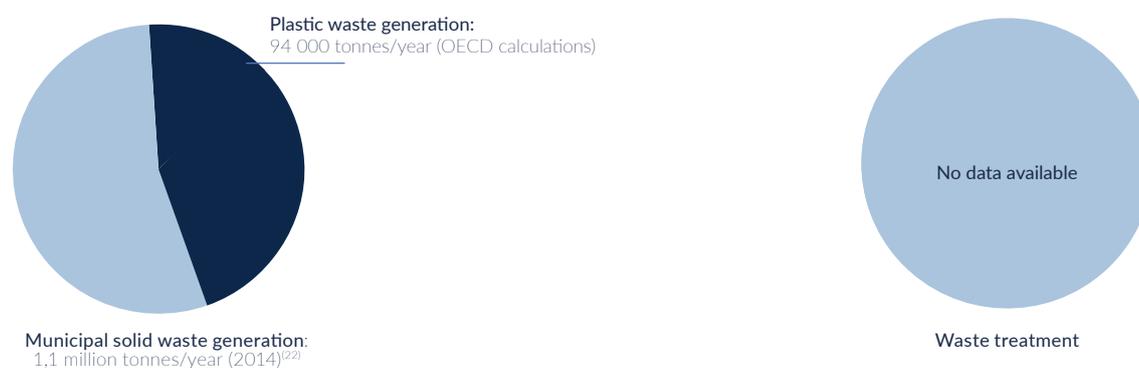
Government Policies

A National Waste Management Strategy Action Plan to address solid waste is currently under development in partnership with UNEP, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, and the Cambodian

Ministry of Environment ⁽¹⁷⁾. The overarching goal of the plan will be to improve public health, social security, and the urban environment. With regard to plastics, the plan states that “segregation of organic and plastic waste at source for recycling will be promoted in order to improve waste collection coverage in urban areas and minimize the amount of waste in landfills”. ⁽¹⁹⁾

The **National Environment Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2023** - which deals with environmental management in general calls for the implementation of the 3Rs, volume-based waste collection fees, as well as promoting the modernization of waste management operations. ⁽²¹⁾

Figure 2. Cambodia: Waste and plastic waste statistics at the national level



Waste Management Targets for Phnom Penh

Whereas national targets for waste reduction and management do not yet exist, at the municipal level, specifically for the capital city of Phnom Penh, the **Phnom Penh Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan (2018-2035)** has been published, in collaboration with UNEP, the Phnom Penh Capital Administration, and the Institute for Global Environment Strategies (IGES). ⁽²³⁾ The Action Plan is categorized into four “Action Areas” which are: improvement of waste collection, promotion

of recycling, improvement of management of final disposal site, and management of special waste. Under each of these Action Areas, several **targets** exist, which include ⁽²⁴⁾:

- Improving the waste collection rate to 90% of all waste by 2023, increasing to 100% by 2035;
- Improving the recycling rate of non-organic waste to 50% or more by 2023, increasing to 95% or more by 2035;
- Limit the waste generation per capita to 1.0kg/day by 2023, continuing to 2035.

15. Royal Government of Cambodia, (1999). *Anukret on Solid Waste Management*. <http://cambodiantr.gov.kh/kcfinder/upload/files/SubDecree%20No.%2036%20Solid%20Waste%20Management%20-%20EN.pdf>

16. Royal Government of Cambodia, (1999).

17. UNEP, (2017). *Waste Management in ASEAN Countries*. <https://environment.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Summary-Report-Waste-Management-in-ASEAN-Countries-UNEP.pdf>

18. ERIA Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (2020) *Action Plans and Roadmaps: Cambodia*. <https://rkcmpd-eria.org/goodpractices/26/plan/cambodia>

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. *Phnom Penh Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2035* (2018)

22. World Bank, (2018). *What a Waste Global Database*.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

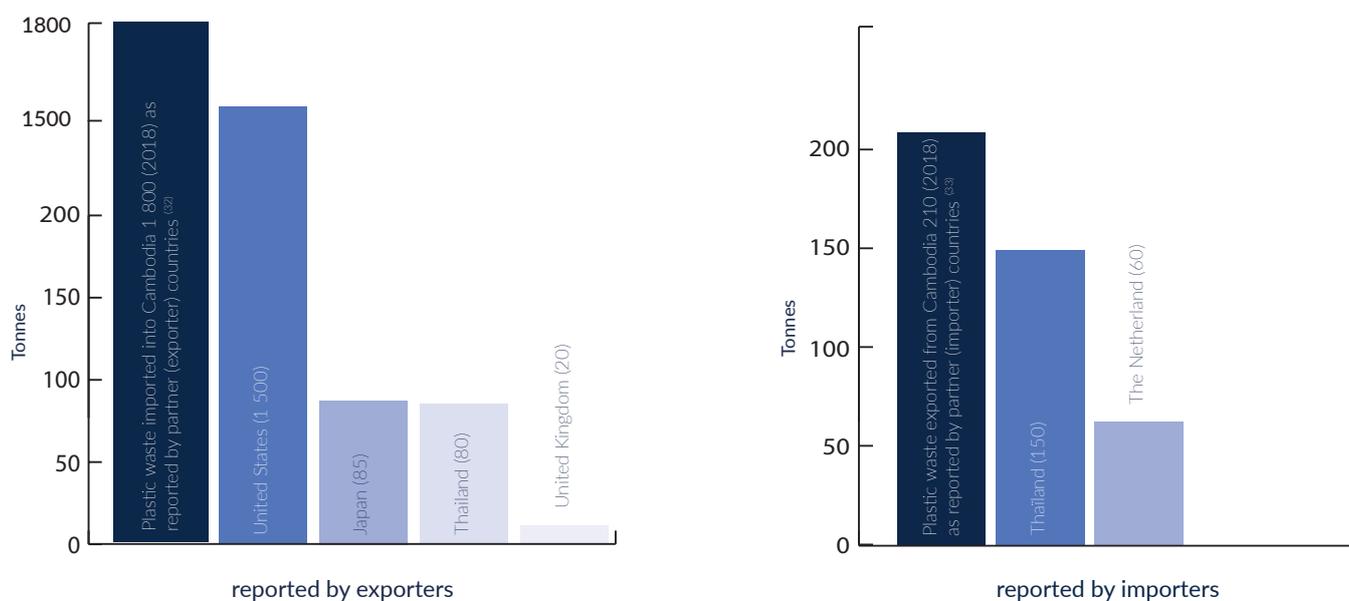
Waste collection and disposal

There are challenges with waste collection, disposal, and recycling in Cambodia. Separation at source is mandatory, but is estimated to be less than 50%⁽²⁵⁾. Waste collection, transportation and disposal are performed by private companies under local government supervision⁽²⁶⁾. While private contractors mainly serve the larger population centres in partnership with local authorities, most of the waste collection is done informally, through individual waste collectors (known as “Etchays”) in smaller

communities⁽²⁷⁾. Some towns/cities still lack solid waste collection services⁽²⁸⁾. Lack of financial incentives limits private sector initiatives.⁽²⁹⁾

There is an overall lack of domestic recycling infrastructure, and waste is often exported to Thailand or Vietnam for recycling.⁽³⁰⁾ The waste that is left behind is often treated by means of incineration, or disposal in dumpsites. A few local NGOs currently process waste by recycling. *Rehash Trash*, an NGO in Siem Reap, educates disadvantaged families to upcycle plastic bags.⁽³¹⁾

Figure 3. Cambodia: Key plastics waste trade indicators
Major exporters and importers of plastic waste



25. Borongan, G., & Huno, S. (2020). Capacity Mapping for Monitoring and Assessment of Plastic Pollution in the Lower Mekong. <http://www.rccap.ait.asia/Publications/CapMapPlasticPollution.pdf>

26. Borongan, G., & Huno, S. (2020).

27. Akenji, L., Bengtsson, M., Kato, M., Hengesbaugh, M., Hotta, Y., Aoki-Suzuki, C., . . . Liu, C. (2019). *Circular Economy and Plastics: A Gap-Analysis in ASEAN Member States*. https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/policyreport/en/10382/FINAL_CE+and+Plastics++A+gap+analysis+in+ASEAN+Member+States_1004.pdf

28. Borongan, G., & Huno, S. (2020).

29. GIZ. (2019). Partnership Ready Cambodia: Waste management. https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/GBN_Sector%20Brief_Kambodscha_Waste_E_WEB.pdf

30. GIZ. (2019).

31. Akenji, et al., 2019

32. UN Comtrade (2020), *UN Comtrade Database International Trade Statistics*.

33. Ibid.

Measures to address marine plastic waste

There is little information on the current status of marine plastic pollution in Cambodia.⁽³⁴⁾ Furthermore, the legal framework specifically targeting marine debris management is not developed in Cambodia. However, as regards plastic waste more generally, in 2017, [Sub-Decree No. 168 on the Management of Plastic Bags](#) was issued by the Ministry of Environment. It aims at reducing the number of plastic bags through placing controls on importation, production, distribution and the use of plastic bags.⁽³⁵⁾

However, since 2018, the Government of Cambodia has promoted the 4Rs – Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle – framework to tackle plastic pollution and in November 2019 a specific project on 4Rs and marine plastic litter was launched by the Cambodian Ministry of Environment, the National Council for Sustainable Development and UNDP with the financial support from Japan.

Financial incentives are in place to help reduce plastic waste. For example, supermarkets and shopping malls charge KHR 400/bag (~USD 0.10/bag) as of 2017, reducing distribution of plastic bags by 30%.⁽³⁶⁾ While there is no national general fee for plastic bags, vendors are urged to stop providing free plastic bags to consumers on a voluntary basis.⁽³⁷⁾ The government believes

introducing a complete ban on plastic bags would be difficult.⁽³⁸⁾ There is a tax exemption on the import of biodegradable or bioplastic bags.

[GoGreen Cambodia](#) regularly organises city **clean-ups** to promote environmental awareness. [Cambodian Education and Waste Management Organisation](#), an NGO, organises the clean-up of Siem Reap River and Stung Sangke River in Battambang and collects approximately 500 kg/month of waste (including from other activities, such as buying from informal collectors) and sends HDPE and LDPE plastics to Germany for research purposes.⁽³⁹⁾

Education and awareness-raising efforts in Cambodia include loudspeaker systems and billboards in some municipalities informing households about the consequences of dumping waste on the roadside⁽⁴⁰⁾. A plastic reduction campaign is to be launched in Battambang province focusing on the 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle) and promoting the use of multi-use or environmentally-friendly bags. This initiative is planned to be rolled out into Siem Reap and Preah Sihanouk provinces as well.⁽⁴¹⁾ In addition, the Cambodian Education and Waste Management Organisation (COMPED) has been working in conjunction with the German environmental NGO [One Earth One Ocean \(OEOO\)](#) on a plastic recycling project in Battambang Province, alongside bi-monthly awareness-raising campaigns, and the recovery of plastic litter from Sangke River.⁽⁴²⁾

34. Lyons, Y. et al (2019), *A review of research on marine plastics in Southeast Asia: Who does What?* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-review-of-research-on-marine-plastics-in-sea-who-does-what>

35. SEA Circular. (2020) *Country Profile: Cambodia*.

36. GIZ. (2019).

37. Vara, D. (2019). Ministry campaign tackles plastic. *The Phnom Penh Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/ministry-campaign-tackles-plastic>

38. GIZ. (2019).

39. Chakrya, K. S. (2020). Siem Reap River gets cleaned up thanks to Comped. *Phnom Penh Post*. Retrieved from <https://phnompenhpost.com/national/siem-reap-river-gets-cleaned-thanks-comped>

40. GIZ. (2019).

41. Vara, D. (2019).

42. Akenji, L. et al (2019). *Circular Economy and Plastics: A Gap-Analysis in ASEAN Member States*. https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/policyreport/en/10382/FINAL_CE+and+Plastics+-+A+gap+analysis+in+ASEAN+Member+States_1004.pdf