

Quantifying Flows of Plastic and Other Debris from Land-Land Based Sources to the Ocean in Vietnam

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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. The rapid economic growth, industrialization and consumer market expansion in Vietnam have been accompanied by a significant expansion in the import, export, production and use of plastics. There is a growing use of many different plastic products across many sectors and services in the daily lives of Vietnamese citizens.

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. CSIRO is undertaking the world's largest marine pollution survey "Quantifying flows of plastic and other debris from land-land based sources to the ocean", working with countries across the globe to help them assess and reduce the amount of litter entering the oceans. Greenhub has collaborated with CSIRO's plastic pollution program in Vietnam on the Red River Delta plastic waste survey plastic waste survey recently undertaken in conjunction with CSIRO. This presentation and paper will map plastic pollution on land, along rivers/watercourses, along the coastline and in the nearshore ocean to quantify waste leakage into the environment and some results from this important collaborative project to guide future corrective actions in Vietnam for monitoring program in Vietnam.

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