

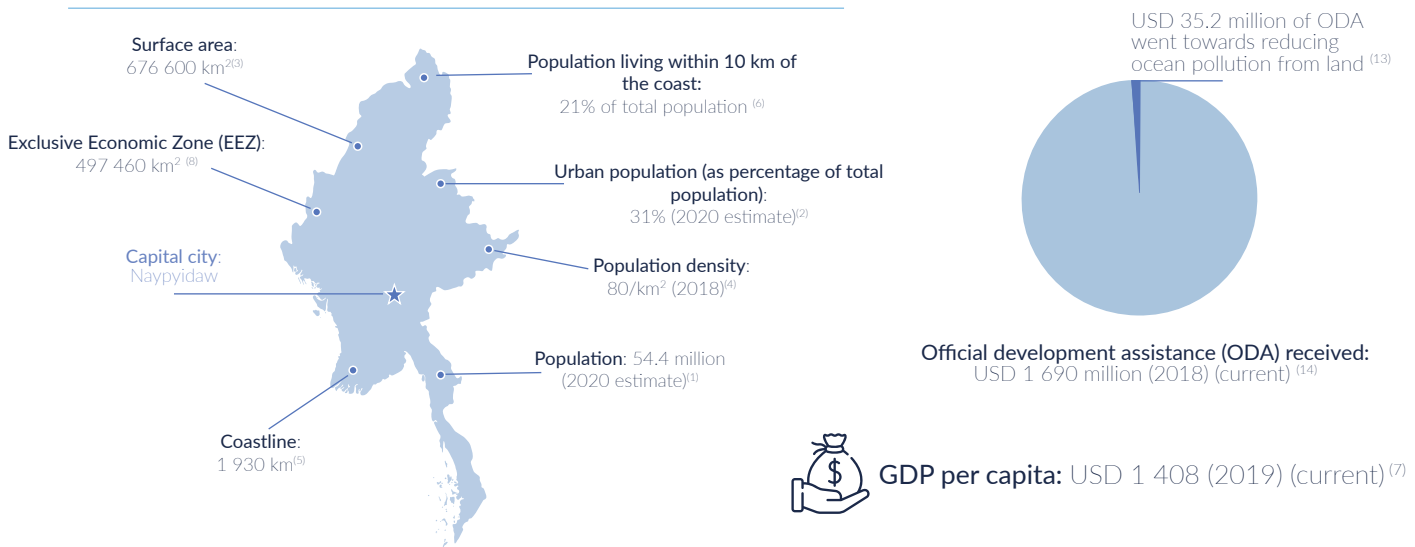
# MYANMAR

Myanmar is just starting to develop plans to tackle marine plastics pollution.

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. Myanmar: Key demographic, geographic, and economic indicators



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

- **At the national level,** the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (MONREC) has responsibility for pollution, policy, regulations and standards <sup>(9)</sup>. The Environmental Conservation Department (ECD), under the MONREC, is the enforcement arm of the ministry. It plays a key role in the carrying out of policies and

action plans in cooperation with stakeholders at the subnational level, and organizes conferences, and workshops on solid waste management <sup>(10)</sup>. The Ministry of Industry coordinates private sector industries both to prevent pollution as well as prevent degradation of the natural environment caused by industrial waste <sup>(11)</sup>. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the management of waste generated from healthcare, including the separation, storage, transportation, handling, and proper disposal. <sup>(12)</sup>

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).
5. CIA (2020), *The World Factbook*.
6. OECD (2020), OECD Statistics (OECD calculations based on Florczyk et al, 2019), <http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/062975>.
7. World Bank (2020), *World Development Indicators Database*.
8. Flanders Marine Institute (2019)
9. Jain, A. (2017), *Waste Management in ASEAN Countries: Summary Report*, <https://environment.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Summary-Report-Waste-Management-in-ASEAN-Countries-UNEP.pdf>
10. Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (2019), *Overview of Solid Waste Management in Myanmar*.
11. ERIA Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (2020), *Ministries and Coordination Mechanism: Myanmar*. <https://rcmpd-eria.org/goodpractices/26/ministries/myanmar>
12. Ibid.
13. OECD (2020), "Detailed aid statistics: Official and private flows", *OECD International Development Statistics (database)*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00072-en>
14. Sustainable Ocean for All Initiative based on OECD/DAC Creditor Reporting System database

- **At the subnational level**, the City Development Committees (CDC) in each municipal township is responsible for waste management within its own territory <sup>(15)</sup>. City Development Committees in major cities, such as the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), the Mandalay City Development Committee (MCDC) and the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee (NCDC), are responsible for waste collection and wastewater treatment within those cities.

### Government Policies

The National Waste Management Strategy and Master Plan for Myanmar (2018 – 2030) <sup>(16)</sup> was adopted and launched in January 2020, in collaboration with the UNEP and Japan/IGES. As a holistic and integrated guiding document that seeks to address waste management in all its forms (solid waste, liquid waste / wastewater, and gaseous emissions) it is the first document of its kind being formulated for Myanmar. The country has a series of relevant targets as part of this Master Plan <sup>(18)</sup>, including the following:

- ensuring a sound waste collection service for 70%
- of citizens by 2020 and reaching 100% by 2030;
- mandating the operation of environmentally-sound disposal facilities while banning the uncontrolled dumping or burning of waste in 100% of townships by 2030;
- mandating the development of city waste management strategies and action plans containing actual waste reduction targets by the township development committees; to cover 50% of all townships by 2025; and 80% by 2030;
- waste recycling targets for industrial, medical and other waste in; 35% of cities/townships by 2025; and 60% by 2030;
- conducting full cost accounting and establishing cost-reflective tariffs for waste management services in 100% of townships and cities by 2030;
- implementing awareness-raising programmes with a 100% increase in cities/townships by 2030 over 2018 levels;
- increasing the coverage of environmental education programmes to 100% of schools by 2030 from a 25% baseline in 2018.

**Figure 2. Myanmar: Waste and plastics waste statistics at the national level**



### Waste collection and disposal

Waste collection and disposal is primarily the responsibility of the City Development Committee, established throughout major population centres of the country, through its Department of Pollution

Control and Cleansing, which is responsible for implementing waste collection. In addition to carrying out waste collection, the Department of Pollution Control and Cleansing collects payments and provides

15. Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia (2019), *Overview of Solid Waste Management in Myanmar*.

16. ECD, MONREC (2018), National Waste Management Strategy and Master Plan for Myanmar, [https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication\\_documents/pub/policysubmission/en/10850/Final-Myanmar\\_WMSAM\\_0829.pdf](https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/policysubmission/en/10850/Final-Myanmar_WMSAM_0829.pdf).

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

18. Jain, A. (2017).

19. Hoornweg, D. and P. Bhada-Tata (2012), *What a Waste: A Global Review of Solid Waste Management*, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17388>.

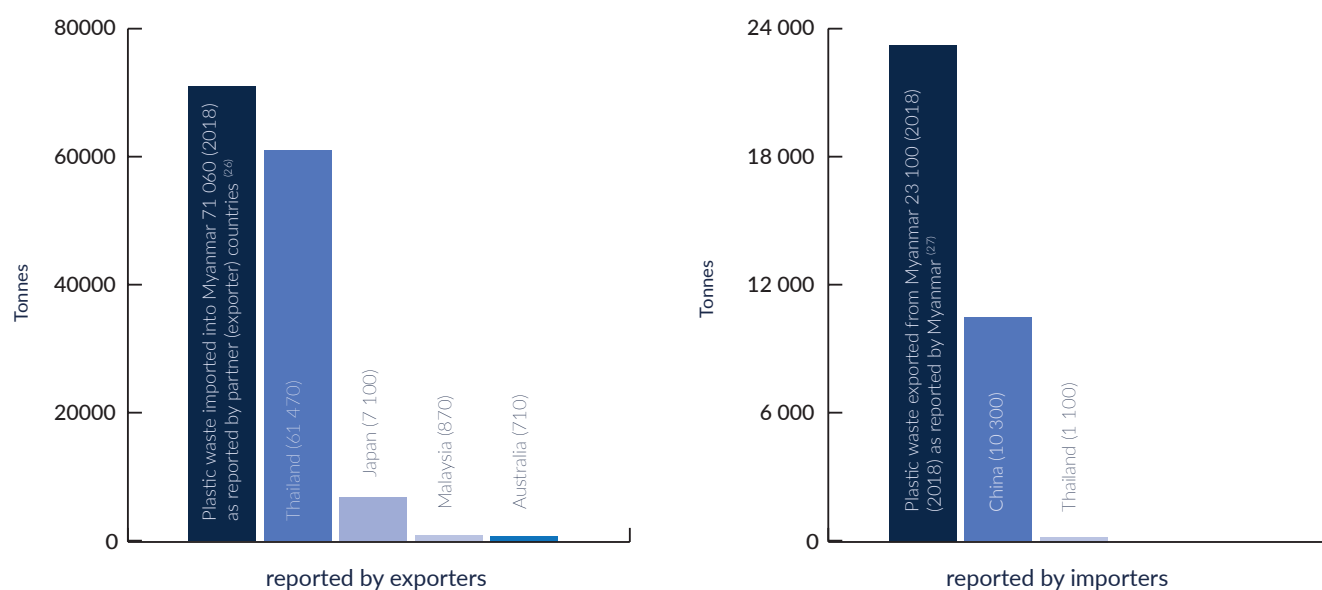
appropriate waste bins for segregation <sup>(20)</sup>. The types of wastes segregated and managed include household, industrial, medical, and hazardous wastes <sup>(21)</sup>.

The private sector – both formal and informal—is also directly involved in the collection, transportation, and disposal of waste in major population centres <sup>(22)</sup>.

The majority of waste collection is carried out by the informal sector, and there is little to no separation at the source <sup>(23)</sup>. The main method of disposal is either incineration or disposal in dumpsites <sup>(24)</sup>. Infrastructure for recycling is not developed and few recycling facilities exist in the country <sup>(25)</sup>.

### Figure 3. Myanmar: Key plastics waste trade indicators

#### Major exporters and importers of plastic waste



#### Measures to address marine plastic waste

The National Plastic Action Plan for Myanmar is currently under development, in partnership with ADB, spearheaded by the Environmental Conservation Department <sup>(28)</sup>. As part of the Action Plan the World Bank conducts a series of scientific field surveys to reduce and prevent plastic pollution and to improve plastic waste management systems in Myanmar. <sup>(29)</sup>

The manufacture, import, trading and distribution of HDPE (High-density Polyethylene) plastic bags is banned in some municipalities, including Yangon (2011) and Mandalay (2009). LDPE (Low-density Polyethylene) bag use is still permitted. <sup>(30)</sup>

Compared to other ASEAN member states, little is known about the current status of marine plastic pollution in Myanmar. <sup>(31)</sup>

20. Ibid.

21. ERIA Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris (2020), Ministries and Coordination Mechanism: Myanmar. <https://rkcmpd-eria.org/goodpractices/26/ministries/myanmar>

22. 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>

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

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

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

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

29. Ibid.

30. 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](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).

31. Lyons, 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>

**Voluntary clean-up initiatives** have been started by local government, and select NGOs, which aim to clean up coastal areas in Myanmar, such as Napali, Chaungtha and Ngwe Saung beach. <sup>(32)</sup>

**Education and awareness-raising** efforts are needed, as there is currently limited awareness amongst the public. **Thant Myanmar**, a grassroots organisation, conducts a variety of training activities (inter-school competitions, raising awareness in schools and universities, raising awareness amongst parents/teachers). <sup>(33)</sup> Other efforts include those from the private sector (e.g., sustainability consultants) or art collectives. <sup>(34)</sup> Foreign firms, like **Conyat Create** (consulting firm) and **Green Lotus** (think-tank)

carry out projects to educate the public on reducing plastic pollution and to address climate change in Myanmar <sup>(35)</sup>. In the hospitality sector, a group of restaurants and bars in Yangon launched a campaign titled “Straws Suck”, aimed at stopping the practice of serving single-use plastic straws to customers. <sup>(36)</sup> **Myanmar Ocean Project**, a non-profit organization, tackles abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG), training local communities, conducting surveys and clean-ups, and other awareness-raising initiatives. <sup>(37)</sup> In the culture sector, an art studio and gallery called “Wired 39” collaborated with a group called “Beat Plastic Pollution in Myanmar” to create an art installation made from collecting plastic bags and bottles. <sup>(38)</sup>

32. G20 Osaka Blue Ocean Vision (2021), <https://g20mpl.org/partners/myanmar>

33. Thant Myanmar, <https://www.thantmyanmar.com/en>

34. Akenji, L. et al. (2019)

35. Ibid.

36. ECD, MONREC (2018), National Waste Management Strategy and Master Plan for Myanmar, [https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication\\_documents/pub/policysubmission/en/10850/Final-Myanmar\\_WMSAM\\_0829.pdf](https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/policysubmission/en/10850/Final-Myanmar_WMSAM_0829.pdf).

37. Myanmar Ocean Project, <http://www.myanmarocean.org/>

38. ECD, MONREC (2018), National Waste Management Strategy and Master Plan for Myanmar, [https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication\\_documents/pub/policysubmission/en/10850/Final-Myanmar\\_WMSAM\\_0829.pdf](https://www.iges.or.jp/en/publication_documents/pub/policysubmission/en/10850/Final-Myanmar_WMSAM_0829.pdf).