

## **Third Party Evaluator's Opinion on Subic Bay Freeport Environment Management Project**

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The Subic Bay Freeport Environment Management Project was intended to rehabilitate existing landfills and to procure waste treatment equipment at the SBFZ, located at a former US military base, and the adjacent city of Olongapo, in order to handle increasing volumes of garbage as well as to improve the collection and disposal system, and thereby promoting investment in the SBFZ and contributing to improvements in the living and sanitary conditions of the local residents.

### **Impact**

The Subic Bay Freeport Zone is known in the Philippines to be one of the most successful waste management and garbage collection program. As a frequent destination for study tours and cross visit on waste management, SBFZ has impressed visitors to be quite clean and garbage-free. These impressions have been corroborated by the results of the beneficiary survey conducted by an external evaluator which show that there is substantial decrease in street stench which is due to the effective and efficient garbage collection efforts started by the project. Moreover, about a half of the respondents in the beneficiary survey state that illegal dumping in rivers, etc. have either “substantially improved” or “improved.” The results have contributed to the improvements of the quality of marine and fresh water within the SBFZ to the reduction of mosquitoes and other sanitary pests. The positive effects that resulted from this waste and garbage collection efforts impacted on the increase in the investment portfolio of the SBFZ, where 9.1% of companies pointed to “waste collection services” as one of the reasons for locating their business in SBFZ and 39.1% of the companies polled gave “infrastructure” (including garbage collection facilities) as one of the reasons for doing business in SBFZ. The increase in the number of investors locating in the SBFZ have brought in substantial increase in the value of investments from US\$ 2.59 million in 1998 to US\$ 4.16 million in 2003. During the same period also, the number of companies investing in SBFZ rose from 304 to 640. Garbage separation and recycling activities were enhanced as a result of the information, education and communication (IEC) activities undertaken by the SBMA, which demonstrate the political will and good governance. The entire garbage collection and waste disposal system has substantially improved as evidenced by the increase in the garbage collection from around 24 tons/day before the project implementation to approximately 120 tons/day post-completion. This increase on the volume of garbage collection has impacted on the income-generation activities of socially vulnerable residents called scavengers, who make cash out of trash.

### **Sustainability**

Revenues from fee-based collection of waste can sustain the operation and maintenance cost of the facilities and equipment bought by the project. The SBMA has the technical capacity necessary to operate and maintain the facilities and equipment on a sustainable basis. However, the Ecology Center of SBMA, which is the institution specifically tasked to carry out operation and maintenance, has yet to establish a system for monitoring the quality of the wells and the river water in the surrounding areas on a regular basis. This is an integral part of ensuring that the landfill and other waste disposal facilities is really working. Also, ensuring that the leachate will not seep out of the landfill or if it does, this will be properly treated and efforts to mitigate negative effects on the environment are both expensive and would pose problems on sustainability.