Circular Economy Webinar
Session 14 Summary: Circular Solutions to Address Plastic Pollution in the Maritime Industry

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Speaker: Czarina Constantino-Panopio, Project Manager, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – Philippines
WWF-Philippines has been working as a national organization of the WWF network since 1997. The organization has effectively executed a range of conservation initiatives aimed at safeguarding Asia's most biologically significant ecosystems. WWF-Philippines works with governments and businesses to enhance water management practices and ensure the preservation of vital watersheds.

Key Takeaways

1. **The maritime industry is a significant contributor to plastic waste.** There is a substantial amount of plastic waste generated onboard ships, with an estimated 1.75 billion plastic bottles used annually. There is a lack of awareness and knowledge about waste management practices among ships, leading to uncertainty about the fate of waste generated onboard.

2. **The misalignment in plastic regulations between port areas and local government units in the Philippines creates inconsistencies in the use of single-use plastics,** causing coordination issues and the need for better cooperation between different governing bodies.

3. **The Clean Port, Clean Ocean Project aims to reduce at least 50% of plastic waste leakage in three ports: Manila North Port, Batangas Port, and Port of Brisbane.** The project started in October 2020 and spans three years.

4. **The project focuses on three types of waste: port-generated waste, vessel-generated waste, and community-generated waste.** The inclusion of community-generated waste recognizes the impact of nearby communities on port waste and considers their involvement in the project.

5. **The project report consolidates various solutions implemented in different ports, providing an overview of scalable and adoptable options.** The aim is to assess the environmental, social, and economic impacts of each solution and identify opportunities for implementation or adaptation in the Philippines.

6. **Solutions to address plastic waste in the maritime industry include initiatives to:**
    - buy back or recover fishing gear and transform it into new products,
    - align waste management systems between ports and ships, which is essential to facilitate proper waste segregation and recovery, and
    - provide incentives and establish partnerships to support island communities in waste recovery efforts.

7. The project implemented several solutions in the project sites of Manila North Port, Port of Batangas, and Port of Hope Bay, governed by the Philippine Ports Authority. **This included a ban on single-use plastics, including plastic spoons, cups, stirrers, and straws, within the ports.**

8. **Social and behavioral change is a vital component of implementing solutions in the maritime industry.** Educating and engaging passengers, vendors, and employees is necessary to reduce the use of unnecessary plastics and facilitate a shift in their mindset and habits.

9. **Integrated Coastal and Cruising (ICC) is being developed as a self-reporting mechanism for plastic waste monitoring.** It is a citizen science platform where seafarers, passengers, or anyone on board ships can report plastic waste sightings or conditions. The platform aims to collect data from seafarers to report on plastic waste at sea. The solution was in the prototype stage at the time of discussion and may have progressed further since then. It has been piloted in Manila, Philippines.

10. **The incentive program with environmental points has been well-received both by the employees and businesses.** Employees can use the environmental points to purchase goods, and businesses are supportive of the program as it encourages waste segregation and provides benefits to users.

Watch the Recording here.