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# SMC doubles Pasig River clean-up budget to P2 B

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by [James A. Loyola](#)

Diversified conglomerate San Miguel Corporation (SMC) has committed to double to P2 billion the budget for its ambitious, five-year project to clean up and rehabilitate the Pasig River.

The project is in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), other national government agencies, and Metro Manila mayors, and was officially launched yesterday.

“The project is set to become the largest ever river rehabilitation project in the country,” said SMC President Ramon S. Ang.



SMC President Ramon S. Ang

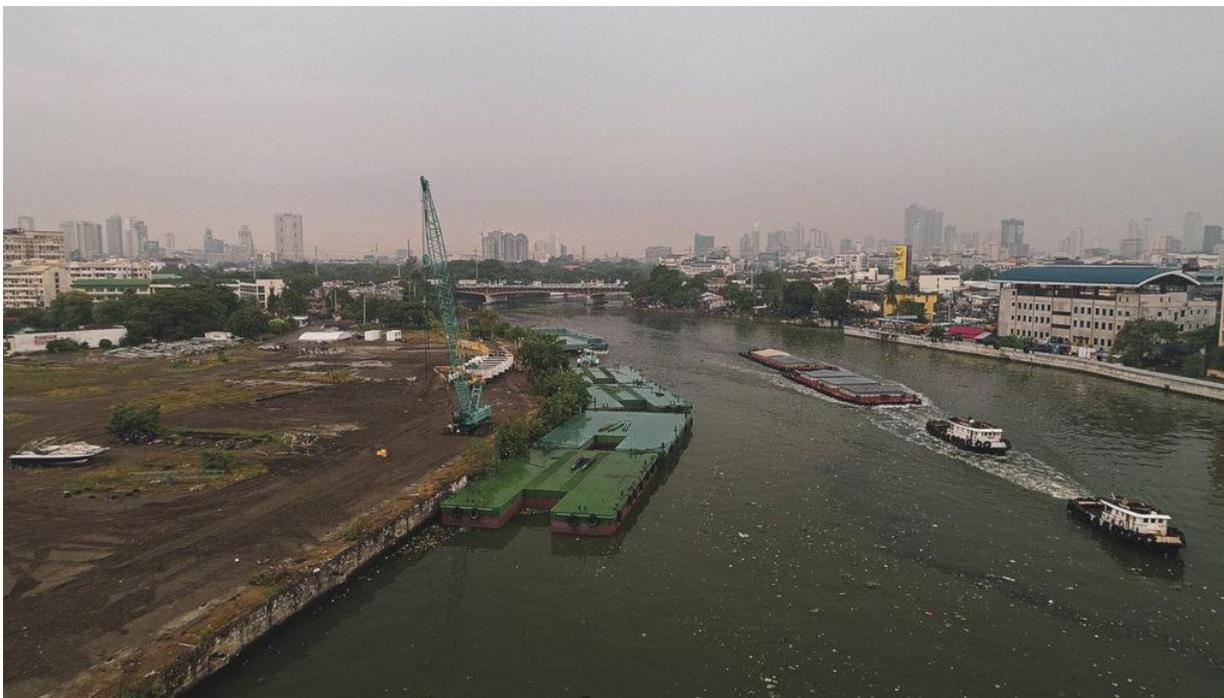
He noted that, “There have been many cleanup efforts in the past, and government has successfully implemented a number of programs these past few years. But decades of pollution and compounding problems that have rendered the river biologically dead since the 1990s are too significant and complex to overcome—even for the best-intentioned advocates and organizations.”

“We hope that with the resources and technical know-how that we are bringing into the effort today—along with the continued support of our national government agencies and local government units—we can all make a bigger difference,” Ang added.

To further underscore the problem of pollution in the Pasig River, Ang cited a study published by OurWorldinData.org last May, that Pasig River has emerged as the top plastics polluter of oceans in the world.

“Solid waste in our rivers is a serious issue, not only because it endangers our oceans, marine life, and traditional fishing grounds—which are a source of food and livelihood for our countrymen—but also because they worsen our flooding situation,” Ang said.

He pointed out that, “Silt and accumulated garbage have made the Pasig river shallow and restrict the flow of water, worsening the flooding situation in Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati and Pasig. Our goal is to remove years-worth of wastes and increase Pasig River’s carrying capacity to divert floodwaters to Manila Bay and make it more conducive to marine life over the coming years.”



San Miguel Corporation formally launched its P2-billion Pasig River rehabilitation initiative, which will extract 50,000 metric tons of silt and solid waste per month from the historic river, or 600,000 metric tons per year, using advanced and specialized equipment. The project is supported by the DENR, DPWH, DILG, the Philippine Coast

Guard, and Metro Manila local governments, including Manila, Mandaluyong, Makati, and Pasig.

The company is targeting to remove some 50,000 metric tons of waste from the Pasig River per month, or 600,000 metric tons of waste per year, using advanced and specialized equipment, which the company has already acquired.

Ang said that, “Our experience in dredging the Tullahan for a year has allowed us to determine the most effective approach and best equipment to be used. In Tullahan, we were able to extract over 260,000 metric tons of silt and solid waste so far and the dredging has reduced the heavy flooding in the cities of Navotas, Malabon, and Valenzuela.”

A bathymetric survey or depth survey used to determine the topography and characteristics underwater of the Pasig River showed that some parts of the river have become shallower and measure only one to two meters in depth while some parts will have to be widened.

“We are coordinating with the DPWH to develop a dredging plan that will establish the target depth that will best handle heavy rainfall during extreme weather and minimize flooding,” he said.

Cleaning the Pasig River, according to Ang, also bears historical significance for San Miguel. In 1890, La Fabrica de Cerveza de San Miguel was established along the banks of Pasig River, on Malacanang Street in the San Miguel district of Manila. The original site is now part of Malacanang Palace grounds.

<https://mb.com.ph/2021/06/09/smc-doubles-pasig-river-cleanup-budget-to-p2-b/>