How to establish an Internal Municipal Task Team

This tool provides a quick guide for the establishment of an Internal Municipal Task Team as required and detailed in Step 1 of the Seven Steps to Integrate waste Pickers contained in the Waste Picker Integration Guideline. This Task Team must be established so that the municipality can prepare to engage waste pickers and have a body with the relevant expertise, knowledge and authority to work with waste pickers on waste picker integration.

Ensuring that the team has the right skills and information
The types of expertise required for waste picker integration include facilitation of participatory processes, revising by-laws, engaging workers in the informal economy, understanding the waste management system and recycling economy, gender analysis, and community development.

Some of these skills might be available in other departments but also amongst NGOs and academics.

Knowledge required by task team members
Before task team members can start partnering with waste pickers for integration, it is important to have an internal educational programme. At the end of the programme, all task team members should understand:

- who waste pickers are;
- the role waste pickers play in the recycling economy and waste management system;
- the contributions waste pickers make to industry, municipalities, cities, the economy and the environment;
- why waste pickers must be respected and their contributions valued;
- how waste pickers’ and the municipality’s recycling collection systems work and relate to each other;
- how waste pickers can be harmed by official recycling programmes that do not include them or their separation outside source recycling collection system;
- what waste picker integration is;
- the Waste Picker Integration Principles;
- why waste picker integration is necessary;
- policy, regulations and guidelines on waste picker integration;
- the South African Waste Picker Registration System
- why waste pickers must be involved in the process of developing, implementing and monitoring waste picker integration;

- why all different types of waste pickers must be involved (including based on gender, race, nationality; age; part of the city where they work; whether they work on landfills or streets etc);
- that women waste pickers have some different needs, priorities and expertise that must be sought and included;
- How to work respectfully and meaningfully with waste pickers.

Establishing the Task Team
- Arrange a meeting with all relevant departments.
- Present the municipality’s obligations for Waste Picker Integration Implementation.
- Identify key role players within the municipality who will drive the actions required to develop an implementation plan.
- A senior official who has authority to make decisions in the municipality should lead the Task Team. This official should have the knowledge and responsibility to plan and to implement waste management programmes.
- Put mechanisms in place to ensure that the task team remains accountable for developing and implementing the WPIP.

Tip: Even once the team is established, a brief skills audit amongst team members will assist in determining what additional skills are needed.
Keeping the Task Team on track
- Develop a brief for the Task Team. This sets out responsibilities and commits the Task Team to working according to the Waste Picker Integration Principles.
- The brief is developed collaboratively and led by the Task Team leader.
- The Task Team develops a work plan of its tasks and, if possible, these should be aligned to scorecards to ensure that the task team obligations become part of each individual workplan for the year.
- It may help the municipality to partner with a university or other organisation or contractor to facilitate the processes of the Task Team.

Develop the internal committee members' understanding and commitment
- Municipal officials on the task team need to learn about waste pickers before they embark on the WPIP.
- List the areas of learning that are required and bring the information, experts and partners (waste pickers, municipal departments, industry, NGOs, academics) together to share knowledge.
- Some municipalities already interact with waste pickers through organisations (e.g. ARO and SAWPA) but particularly where there are no organisations, municipal officials need to find ways to connect with the waste pickers in their municipalities are.
- NGOs (such as groundWork) have been working with waste pickers over many years and can assist in these processes
- Every member of the task team should understand the contribution waste pickers make to industry, municipalities and the environment
- They must also understand the relationship between formal and informal recycling systems.
- Municipal officials should be aware of how waste pickers can be harmed by formal recycling programmes that don’t consider their recycling system.
- Municipal officials should understand why waste pickers should be partners in the planning, implementing and monitoring of waste picker integration and why all different types of waste pickers should be included (based on gender, race, age, working on streets and in landfills, parts of the city etc).
- They should also understand that due to gender divisions of labour, women waste pickers have some different needs and areas of expertise from men.