

An enabling national environment for waste picker integration

Waste picker integration in municipalities and industries does not occur in a vacuum. **The Guideline on Waste Picker Integration for South Africa** recognises that for integration to succeed, it is important to have an enabling environment at the national level. Enabling elements to facilitate integration discussed in the Guideline include:

1. Legislation and policy

There are already a large number of policies and regulations that affect waste pickers and waste picker integration in South Africa. These must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised to support integration. Since the completion of the Guideline, integration has been included as a requirement in the 2020 **National Waste Management Strategy** and the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulations.

[LINK TO: THE 2020 NWMS](#)

[LINK TO: EPR REGULATIONS](#)



2. Integrated extended producer responsibility

The Guideline recognises that the planned extended producer responsibility (EPR) system would need to include a focus on integration and develop an integrated approach to EPR.

Since the Guideline was completed, government issued the national regulations on EPR, which require industry to integrate waste pickers and pay them for their services. This payment must commence in November 2022, but in June 2022 industry is only just beginning to engage reclaimers to agree on what they payment will be, how it will be done, how the payment system will be negotiated and governed, and how collaborative decisions will be taken on other aspects of integration to be funded through EPR. It is crucial that swift progress is made, decisions are reached, and processes for moving forward are agreed and implemented.



3. Funding mechanisms

Waste picker integration requires secure funding opportunities to support programmes from government as well as private sector funding sources.

Municipalities should consider the reallocation of operational funds saved through waste pickers' diversion of waste from landfills to support waste picker integration activities.

South Africa currently does not have a national fund to support waste picker integration. However, some possible sources of funding that municipalities can seek to access are companies executing EPR, donors, the Waste Bureau, Treasury and the Waste Phakisa. It is also very important that a national funding mechanism be established to provide support to municipalities and reclaimer organisations in addition to the funds available through EPR.

4. Occupational classification

Waste Pickers should be officially recognised for the work that they do. The DFFE and the Stakeholder Working Group developed a draft job description for the work that waste pickers perform. An occupational classification should be registered for the work waste pickers perform.

5. Support for organising waste pickers and waste picker organisations

Just as workers need unions to improve working conditions, waste pickers need democratic organisations to represent themselves and develop and implement their visions for their role in the recycling industry and waste management system. One of the most important enabling mechanisms must be the provision of funding and other forms of support for reclaimers to organise, develop and sustain strong democratic organisations, and implement innovative recycling and other related initiatives. Strong democratic waste picker organisations benefit municipalities, industries, and residents, as they ensure that reclaimers are better placed to engage and negotiate with other stakeholders.

The profile of Eva Mokoena and the Recycling with Reclaimers case study provide insight into the organising work done by reclaimers.

[LINK TO: EVA'S PROFILE](#)

[LINK TO: THE CASE STUDY](#)





LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR CONTEXT:

- What funding and other resources are required to implement waste picker integration?
- What municipal resources are available for integration?
- Who are the organisations and industries in your municipal area that can support integration?
- Gather data that indicates the full savings that are achieved through the work of waste pickers in your municipal area. Monitor these savings over time.



Building Capacity for Waste Picker Integration

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