DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

NO. 6972 **19 December 2025**

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT: WASTE ACT, 2008 (ACT NO. 59 OF 2008)

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (NWMS) 2026

I, Willem Abraham Stephanus Aucamp, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, hereby in terms of sections 6, 72 and 73 of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008) publish the draft National Waste Management Strategy 2026 (draft NWMS 2026) for public comment, as set out in the Schedule hereto.

The draft NWMS 2026 provides government policy and strategic interventions for the waste sector and is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030, adopted by all United Nations (UN) member states in January 2016. It is also responsive to South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 which is our country's specific response to, and integration of the SDGs into our overall socio-economic development plans leading to zero waste in landfills; cleaner communities, well managed and financially stable waste services, and a culture of zero tolerance of pollution, litter and illegal dumping. The draft NWMS 2026, has the following Strategic Pillars:

(a) Circular Economy and Waste Minimisation;
(b) Effective and Sustainable Waste Services;
(c) Capacity Building and Awareness; and
(d) Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement.

The draft NWMS 2026 has prioritised, in addition to the existing prioritised waste streams, the following waste streams:

(a) Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs);
(b) Organic waste;
(c) Clothing and Textiles;
(d) Automobiles;
(e) Coal ash;
(f) Construction and Demolition waste; and
(g) Food waste.

Members of the public are invited to submit written input and comments to this Notice within 60 days from the date of publication in the Government *Gazette* or newspapers, whichever date occurs last, to the following addresses:

By post to:
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Should the 60-day written comment period overlap with the period from 15 December 2025 to 5 January 2026, this period will be excluded from the reckoning of days.

Any enquiries in connection with this Notice can be directed to Mr Thabo Magomola or Mr. Kgauta Mokoena on 012 399 9828 or 012 399 9825 or E-mails: TMagomola@dffe.gov.za or KMokoena@dffe.gov.za The Government Notice can be accessed at http://sawic.environment.gov.za/ under "Draft documents for comment"

Comments received after the closing date may be disregarded.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment comply with the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013). Comments received and responses thereto may be collated into a comments and response report which will be made available to the public as part of the consultation process. If a commenting party has any objection to his or her name, or the name of the represented company/ organisation, being made publicly available in the comments and responses report, such objection should be highlighted in bold as part of the comments submitted in response to this Government Notice.

WILLEM ABRAHAM STEPHANUS AUCAMP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

SCHEDULE

DRAFT NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2026

forestry, fisheries & the environment
Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Draft National Waste Management Strategy 2026

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Reviewed by OECD, University of Stellenbosch and International Solid Waste Association (ISWA).

First draft was developed on 29 August 2025 in Limpopo Province, Mookgophong, in terms of section 6 of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act, 2008 (Act No. 59 of 2008)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past five years, progressive steps have been taken and important milestones acheived by other key actors in South Africa's Circular Economy (CE). The include the regulated industry through their Product Resposibility Organisations (PROs), the informal sector led by recognised waste picker orginations, NGOs, academia, and importantly, country's citenzry independantly and collaboratively working towards improving recognised key impact areas i.e. waste minimisation, municpal collection services, increasing recycling rates and promoting economic opportunities in the sector rates by diverting waste from landfills and exploring altetnative waste treatment options.

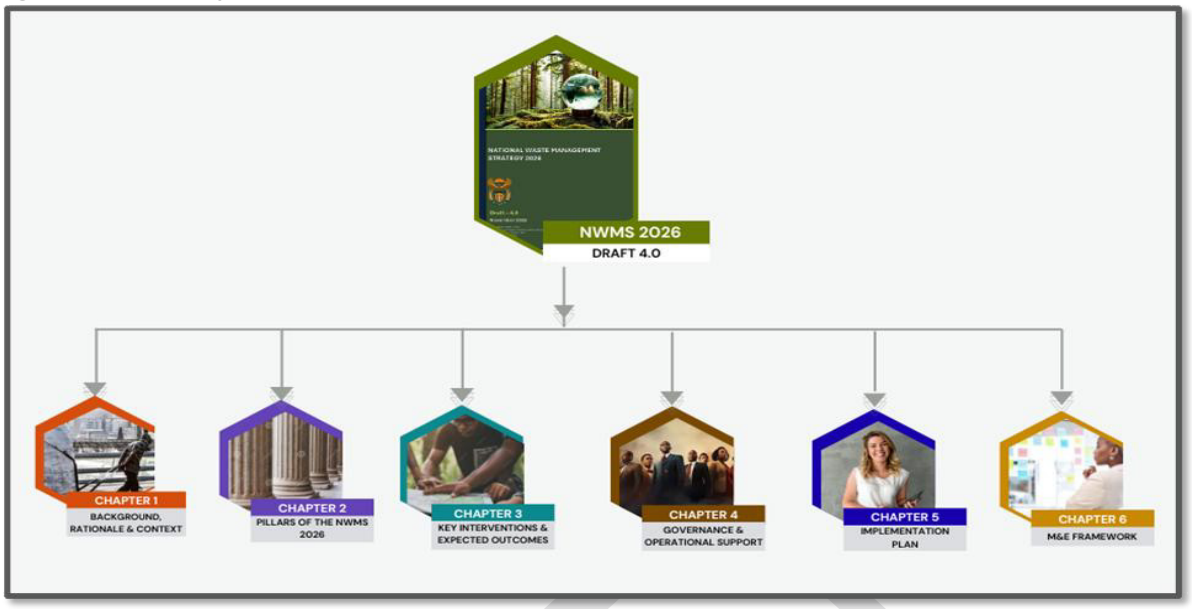
It is widely acknowledged that beyond the existence of an enabling regulatory regime, coupled with impactful stakeholder support, and the availalbility of the required programme funding package, a dramatic improvement in the status quo and the diffusion of 'game-changing' innovation is crititical to enable efficient waste management. (Stubbs, K Stubbs, K, 2022) As it stands, the current waste volumes collected by municipalities is an estimated 12.7 million tonnes of municipal waste annually, with 3.67 million tonnes uncollected (UNEP,2024). In the last year, approximately 10% of South Africa's 122 million tonnes of total waste was diverted from landfill, (WWF,2024). In comparison to the State of Waste 2018 recording of 107 million tonnes of waste generated with an 35% diversion rate, there has been a net 15 million tonnes increase in the amount waste generated compared to a 25% decrease in waste diversion over the period

In response to this cited problem statement, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), hereafter referred to as the ''Department" through the stewardship of its Minister who is empowered by the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 2008 (Act no. 59 of 2008) , as amended), hereafter referred to as the The Waste Act and the National Waste Management Strategy (NWMS) have endeavoured to provide regulatory leadership and programmatic support over South Africa's waste and Circular Economy (CE).

The NWMS 2026 provides government policy and strategic interventions for the waste sector and is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030, adopted by all United Nations (UN) member states in January 2016. It is also responsive to South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 which is our country's specific response to, and integration of the SDGs into our overall socio-economic development plans. zero waste in landfills; cleaner communities, well managed and financially stable waste services, and a culture of zero tolerance of pollution, litter and illegal dumping. The NWMS 2020 was developed to implement the objectives of the Act, promote sustainable waste management, a Circular Economy (CE), Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and align the waste sector with national and international goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a just transition, and inclusive economic growth.

As the NWMS is limited to a five-year life cycle, the Department in August 2025, along with representatives of Provincial and Municipal authorities as well as other key sector partners including the private sector, academia, research bodies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has initiated the *Review and Update of the NWMS 2020*. The mentioned parties collaborated in an intensive project aimed at conducting a critical assessment of the progress made and challenges experienced by the sector in implementing the 2020 iteration of the strategy, producing a Status Quo Assessment that provided both an analysis of the NWMS 2020 and established a baseline towards crafting key implementation areas and linked initiatives for the NWMS 2026.

Figure 1: NWMS Chapter Structure



The NWMS 2026 consists of six chapters and is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1:** Provides the background, context and rationale supporting this study.
- **Chapter 2:** Pillars of the National Waste Management Strategy 2026.
- **Chapter 3:** Consists of a situational analysis, seeks to contextualise the waste management environement, within the context of new and emerging challeneges and the extent to which implementation NWMS 2020 have been adequately resonsivde to challenges and opportunities facing the waste sector in South Africa.
- **Chapter 4:** Provides a presentation of the recorded implementation performance of the NWMS 2020. This section provides both a quantitative and narrative report of the achievements and challenges experienced by the implementing agents in execution the strategy.
- **Chapter 5:** Presents findings drawing on the evidence and analysis provided in the progress review of the NWMS 2020 and the situational analysis to develop a set recommendations and guidance for the revised and updated NWMS.
- **Chapter 6:** Presents the Monitoring and Evaulation Framew NWMS 2026.

The NWMS 2026, has the following Strategic Pillars;

1. Circcular Economy and Waste Minimisation
2. Effective and Sustainable Waste Services
3. Capacity Building and Awareness
4. Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement

And the NWMS 2026 has prioritised, in addition to the existing prioritsed waste streams, the following waste streams have been added; 1.Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs), 2.Organic waste, 3.Clothing and Textiles, 4.Automobiles, 5.Coal ash, and 6.Construction and Demolition waste for appropriate management measures to be put in place in the next 5 years.

Abbreviations

AHP	Absorbent Hygiene Products
CBO	Community Based Organisation
C&D	Construction and Demolition
CFL	Compact Fluorescent Lamp
CNG	Compressed Natural Gas
COGTA	Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
DoH	Department of Health
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DoT	Department of Transport
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
DMPR	Department of Minerals and Petroleum Resources
DPWI	Department of Public Works and Infrastructure
DSTI	Department of Science, Technology and Innovation
DTIC	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
EHP	Environmental Health Practitioner
EMI	Environmental Management Inspector
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HCRW	Healthcare Risk Waste
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IWMP	Integrated Waste Management Plan
IndWMPs	Industry Waste Management Plans
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MiG	Municipal Infrastructure Grant

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRF	Material Recovery Facility
MSW	Municipal Solid Waste
NCC	National Consumer Commission (NCC)
NCPC-SA	National Cleaner Production Centre of South Africa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPSWM	National Pricing Strategy for Waste Management
NT	National Treasury
NWMS	National Waste Management Strategy
NEM: WA	National Environmental Management Waste Act, 2008, as amended in 2014
NPA	National Prosecuting Authority
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PROs	Producer Responsibility Organisations
RDF	Refuse Derived Fuel
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SACN	South African Cities Network
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAPS	South African Police Service
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SAWIC	South African Waste Information Centre
SAWIS	South African Waste Information System
SEIAS	Socio-Economic Impact Assessment Study
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
SMME	Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise
SoWR	State of Waste Report
Waste RDI	Waste Research, Development and Innovation (Roadmap)
WEEE	Waste, Electric and Electronic Equipment
WMO	Waste Management Officer
WtE	Waste to Energy

Glossary of Terms

Anaerobic digestion	Anaerobic digestion is a sequence of processes by which microorganisms break down biodegradable material in the absence of oxygen
Biogas	Refers to the mixture of gases produced by the breakdown of organic matter in the absence of oxygen (anaerobically), primarily consisting of methane and carbon dioxide.
Biomass	Refers to plant or animal material used for energy production (electricity or heat), or in various industrial processes as raw substance for a range of products.
Circular Economy	An economy that is restorative and regenerative by design and aims to keep products, components, and materials at their highest utility and value at all times, distinguishing between technical and biological cycles. https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept
Extended Producer Responsibility	Refers to an environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life"
Industrial Symbiosis	Refers to a resource efficiency approach where unused or residual resources (Material, energy, water, waste, assets, logistics, expertise etc.) of one company are used by another, resulting in mutual economic, social and environmental benefits.
Materials Recovery Facility	A specialized plant that receives, separates and prepares recyclable materials for marketing to end-user manufacturers.
Recyclate	Refers to raw materials that are sent to, and processed in, waste recycling plants or materials recovery facilities.
Refuse Derived Fuel	A fuel produced from various types of waste such as municipal solid waste (MSW), industrial waste or commercial waste.
Waste Beneficiation	Refers the treatment of waste to improve its physical or chemical properties to use it as a raw material into production processes and extracting economic value.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

1.1 RATIONALE FOR THE REVISION OF THE NWMS 2026

The management of waste in South Africa falls within the mandate of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) and the provincial government departments responsible for the environment. The South African Constitution (RSA, 1996) assigns the responsibility for refuse removal, refuse dumps and solid waste disposal to municipalities (Section 156(1)(a) read with Schedule 5). This mandate is derived from Section 24 (Environment) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) which states:

"Everyone has the right –

(a) to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing; and
(b) to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that –
    (i) prevent pollution and other degradation;
    (ii) promote conservation; and
    (iii) secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development."

To give effect to this mandate, the DFFE has developed and promulgated policies, legislation, strategies and programmes. Key amongst these is the National Environmental Management: Waste Act 59, 2008 (hereinafter referred to as "the Waste Act") and the NWMS of 2020. The NWMS is a statutory requirement of the Waste Act.

The NWMS provides a coherent framework and strategy for the implementation of the Waste Act and outlines government's policy and strategic approach to waste management within the South African government's context and agenda of socio-economic development that is "equitable, inclusive, sustainable and environmentally sound".[1]

This current NWMS 2026, which revises and updates the 2020 strategy, also achieves the following:

- Assimilates our strategic approach to waste management with the commitments and directives of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (hereinafter referred to as "the SDG's") and South Africa's National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (hereinafter referred to as "the NDP");
- Unequivocally locates waste management as one of the key underpinnings of South Africa's economy and social fabric;
- Integrates and provides an enabling environment for the DFFE's 2017 Chemicals and Waste Economy Phakisa and government's 2019 Good Green Deeds Programme; and
- Aligns with the ongoing development of the National Circular Economy Action Plan, ensuring that waste management and circular economy principles are integrated for a sustainable, resource-efficient future. For its part, the revised NWMS 2026 will contribute to accelerate the shift in production and consumption models in order to reduce waste and preserve natural resources, biodiversity and the climate.

allow to secure long-Term Financial Sustainability for waste services while using taxes and incentives to reduce waste and promote circular economy goals. The NWMS 2026 takes into account applicable and relevant feedback provided during public consultation processes held on the draft version. It also takes into account progress, challenges and lessons learnt from the implementation of the 2020 NWMS and as stated above, the political, social, environmental and economic context within which the waste sector operates and impacts on.

[1] DFFE Budget Policy Statement 2019/20, Minister Barbara Creecy, July 2019.

1.2 CONTEXT

Also key to the NWMS 2026 is the development and the livelihoods, not just development but sustainable development as stated by the former United Nations General Assembly on Circular Economy and the management of plastics and marine pollution in the UNEA 5.2. B (AUC) developed a comprehensive Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) and implementation strategy for the entire continent. The project was supported financially by the European Union (EU) Delegation to the African Union. The CEAP is aimed at providing a vision, guidance, and alignment for the African regions and countries on their circular economy journey. The Continental Circular Economy Action Plan was officially adopted by the African Union Ministers during the 5th Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environment between 14th and 18th November 2024.

> "Every year across the globe more than two billion tonnes of municipal solid waste is generated" UNEP | Beyond an Age of Waste - Global Waste Management Outlook 2024

The global surge in municipal solid waste (MSW), driven by rapid urbanization and economic growth, poses a severe threat to climate stability, environmental health, and public safety. Mismanaged waste – particularly in developing regions like sub-Saharan Africa, results in pollution, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and resource depletion. Traditional disposal methods, such as landfilling and open dumping, are no longer sustainable and demand urgent replacement with circular and integrated waste management systems. The G20 Presidency, 2025 Technical Paper on Waste Management and Waste to Energy evaluated the global waste management landscape, emphasizing the promise and challenges of waste-to-energy (WtE) technologies as part of the transition toward sustainability.

Leading international organizations such as the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have warned of the profound risks posed by mismanaged waste. Both emphasize that improper disposal practices represent a major global threat to human well-being, ecosystem integrity, and climate stability.

The Global Waste Management Outlook 2024 (UNEP, 2024) reports that as of 2020, about 38% of global MSW disposal was uncontrolled (dumping and open burning). Regional distribution of MSW disposal paints a starker picture for the African continent with, for example, about 85% of MSW disposal in sub-Saharan Africa being uncontrolled disposal.

Effective waste systems prioritize prevention, reuse, recycling, and energy recovery, reducing reliance on landfills and uncontrolled dumping. In many G20 countries, this shift is guided by circular economy policies that address the full lifecycle of materials. Policies such as EPR, plastic bans, and eco-design are central to upstream waste reduction (European Commission, 2020; UNEP, 2024). In South Africa, advancing source segregation, improving collection coverage, and modernizing recycling infrastructure are foundational. Integration of informal waste workers through cooperatives and digital platforms is critical for enhancing recovery rates and achieving social equity (UNEP, 2024).

1.2.1 THE WASTE LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The total domestic waste generated by households in South Africa is estimated at 12.7 million tonnes per annum, and approximately 3.67 million tonnes of this waste are not collected and treated through formal waste collection systems (CSIR 2020). These trends, coupled with limited growth in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), are associated with increases in waste generation. In the absence of aggressive strategies to avoid generating waste, the total volumes of waste generated will increase in

future, which will in turn require greater effort in waste diversion simply to maintain the current rate at which landfill airspace is depleted which is already recognised as being unsustainable.

South Africa is experiencing severe constraints in terms of the availability of landfill space, as well as challenges in operating and decommissioning landfills in a manner that is compliant with licensing conditions. Commissioning and operating new landfills is a significant cost for local government and is often resisted by communities neighbouring potential sites. Furthermore, once disposed of to landfill, waste is no longer economically productive, and, in the absence of landfill gas capture, landfills generate methane which is a potent Greenhouse Gas (GHG).

For these reasons, diverting waste from landfill is a key imperative for the country's NWMS. Waste generation and management challenges differ between **urban** and **rural areas**. Urban centres tend to produce higher volumes of packaged and commercial waste, often supported by formal collection systems, while rural and traditional areas experience limited or no waste services, with scattered settlements relying on informal or community-based disposal practices. South Africa's strategy for diversion of waste from landfill is based on building a secondary resources economy around the beneficiation of waste as part of the circular economy. This is through among others, the recycling of paper, glass, plastics, metals, tyres, power generation byproducts (such as coal ash from Eskom), waste oils, pesticides, batteries, lighting equipment, WEEE, and recovery of construction and demolition waste to replace virgin materials with recycled content substitute recycled content for virgin materials. The treatment and recovery of soil nutrients and energy from organic waste by composting and energy recovery.

Due to the large quantities of organic waste currently disposed to landfill, composting and Waste to Energy projects such as Biogas production, bio-refinery technologies, and the conversion of residual waste into energy, have a potentially important role to play in diversion. Research indicates that the least problematic waste to energy projects focus on residual waste, with biogas generation through anaerobic digestion being particularly significant for organic waste. While alternative treatments like pyrolysis and incineration may be applied to plastics and other non-recyclable waste streams, recycling remains the preferred approach for these materials.

Province/ Management Option	Hazardous Waste Exporter	Hazardous Waste Generator	Waste Disposal	Waste Recovery or Recycling	Waste Treatments	Grand Total
Eastern Cape	4	602	74	78	14	**772**
Free State	4	331	85	17	3	**440**
Gauteng		2 609	51	452	109	**3 221**
Kwazulu-Natal	10	1 311	71	190	26	**1 608**
Limpopo	6	337	62	43	10	**458**
Mpumalanga	3	631	96	83	25	**838**
North West	1	308	47	40	10	**406**
Northern Cape	6	222	65	26	8	**327**
Western Cape		11 761	83	204	42	**12 090**
Grand Total	**34**	**18 112**	**634**	**1 133**	**247**	**20 160**

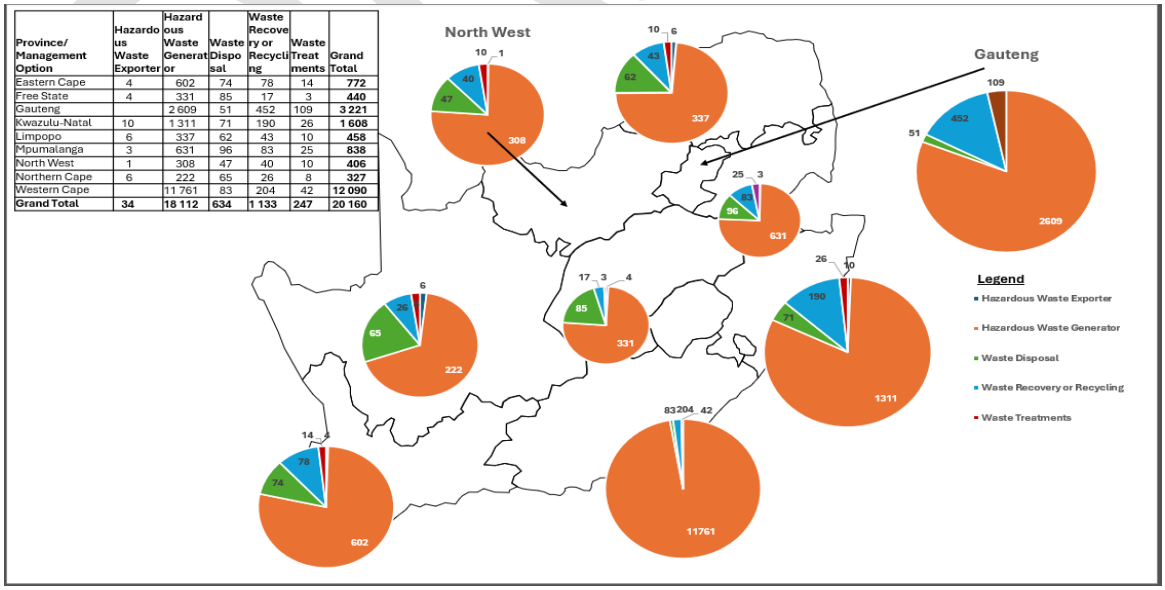


Figure 1: Status of SAWIS-registered activities

Figure 1 above shows an overview of the total registered waste management activities across all nine provinces in South Africa. Over 20,000 activities have been registered on the South African Waste Information System (SAWIS) since its inception during the pilot phases and after the promulgation of the National Waste Information Regulations, which govern the registration, data collection and reporting of waste data. This includes all waste management activity applications for registration processed under the Gauteng Waste Information System (GWIS) and the Western Cape's Integrated Pollutant Waste Information System (IPWIS), respectively. Waste management activities in these two provinces record and report waste data directly to their respective systems.

Activities listed in Annexure 1 of the National Waste Information Regulations, 2012, are required to register with the SAWIS or the relevant provincial Waste Information System established under Section 62 of the Waste Act (see Figure 1). The provincial systems provide the necessary data to the SAWIS.

Of the 20,160 registered activities, 18,112 are hazardous waste generators which, under the NWIR, are not required to submit waste data to the SAWIS as their quantities must be accounted for and reported by the waste managers, either through recovery, recycling, treatment, export, or disposal of such waste. Only about 2048 registered activities are required to report waste data to the SAWIS and the intermediary provincial systems. However, the reporting rate to the SAWIS is approximately 30%, indicating limited compliance despite efforts through capacity building and training on data collection and reporting to the registered facilities.

1.2.1.1 General Waste

General waste arising consists of biomass and organic waste, making this the largest single general waste type. The next single largest general waste type, at 13%, consists of construction and demolition waste. While South Africa has made progress in relation to recycling paper, plastic, glass and metals there is still substantial scope to increase recycling rates. Furthermore, as the South African economy continues to develop, the relative importance of waste streams such as Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) will increase.

Pollution of the coastline and oceans by plastic debris, including microplastic and nanoplastics, is causing widespread and severe negative impacts on marine biodiversity. It is essential that South Africa, with its coastline spanning over 3,000 km, collaboratively with the international community to find practical solutions, firstly to reduce the influx of plastic waste into the environment, and secondly to address existing pollution. This will include working with the global community on the development of a globally binding treaty on plastics pollution, marine litter, including the environment

The following Table 1 indicates the various types of general waste as per the Waste Act classification system and the total tonnages that are handled in the country.

Table 1: General waste by management option in 2017 (SoWR, 2018)

Waste type		Local generation	Imports	Exports	Total tonnage managed	Storage / stockpile	Recycling / recovery	Treatment	Disposal	LOC
GW01	Municipal waste	4 821 430			4 821 430	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
GW10	Commercial and industrial waste*	360 884			481 179	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
GW14	Fly ash and dust	4 346 080			4 346 080	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	96.9%	
GW15	Bottom ash	6 489 080			6 489 080	0.0%	3.1%	0.0%	96.9%	
GW16	Slag	4 859 025			4 859 025	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
GW20	Organic waste	19 247 851	4 048	298	19 251 600	0.0%	49.2%	0.2%	50.8%	
GW30	Construction and demolition waste	4 482 992			4 482 992	0.0%	52.0%	0.0%	48.0%	
GW50	Paper	2 211 225	57 855	129 374	2 139 706	0.0%	58.0%	0.0%	42.0%	
GW51	Plastic	1 113 362	6 748	20 856	1 099 254	0.0%	43.7%	0.0%	56.3%	
GW52	Glass	2 752 636	38 378	11	2 791 003	0.0%	71.2%	0.0%	28.8%	
GW53	Metals	4 035 929	24 168	527 037	3 533 059	0.0%	80.0%	0.0%	20.0%	
GW54	Tyres	174 640		12 473	162 167	76.4%	23.6%	0.0%	0.0%	
GW99	Other	729 615			729 615	0.0%	9.0%	0.1%	91.0%	
	TOTAL	**55 624 746**	**131 196**	**690 050**	**55 186 188**	**0.2%**	**34.5%**	**0.1%**	**65.2%**	

*Note that percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding off.
**Note that level of confidence (LOC) of the values in the last column is indicated by the intensity of shading, i.e. high level of confidence in dark shading

As shown above, organic waste contributes to more than 50% of the total of general waste disposed in the country and has a comparative recycling rate of 49%. This waste stream should therefore be prioritised for waste prevention and diversion from landfill. Research indicates that almost one third of all organic waste consists of food waste.

While there is certainly room for improvement, in comparison with many other developed countries South Africa has relatively high rates of recycling for paper, plastics, glass, metals and tyres. At 43%, plastic has the lowest recycling rate and is also associated with significant environmental impacts. Plastic pollution of the terrestrial, coastal and marine environment is an issue of particular concern, with much of this derived from single-use plastic used in consumer packaging.

Although construction and demolition waste is a relatively large waste stream, numerous reuse options have been identified, and a certain amount of this waste is used as landfill cover. However, in some municipalities, landfills may receive more C & D waste than necessary for use as landfill cover, often due to improper disposal by producers. This construction and demolition waste is frequently subject to illegal dumping and hence, it is a priority waste stream.

Similarly, coal ash, particularly fly ash and bottom ash produced from coal-fired power generation, presents a significant opportunity for reuse in construction materials such as cement, bricks, and road base. The reuse of these ashes must comply with applicable environmental regulations to ensure safety and can contribute meaningfully to waste diversion and resource efficiency goals.

1.2.1.2 Hazardous Waste

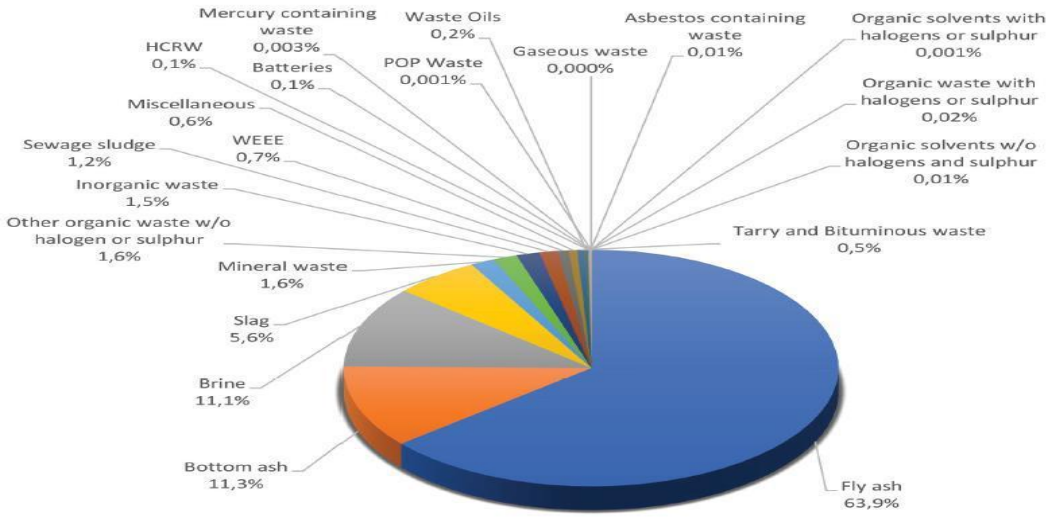
Hazardous waste streams are not only prioritised in terms of their volume, but also in terms of their toxicity and the environmental risks associated with their treatment and disposal. Asbestos, oils, mercury, lead, Health Care Risk Waste (HCRW) and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are of special concern in relation to toxicity and environmental risks. South Africa generated almost 67 million tonnes of hazardous waste in 2017 and over 93% of that was landfilled. The following Diagram 1 indicates the % contribution of each category of hazardous waste to the total tonnes.

Waste prevention is therefore a priority in relation to hazardous waste, both in terms of amount and toxicity of waste that is disposed to landfill.

By far the biggest contributor to hazardous waste by tonnage is fly-ash at almost 66% of the total, together with bottom ash (9%), wastes from the generation of electricity from coal contribute 75% of the total volume of hazardous waste. However, significant opportunities exist for the beneficiation of fly-ash, which, once it is excluded from the definition of waste, it will not be waste as it also has beneficial use, Slag, Brine, Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) emanating from healthcare facilities are priority waste streams of concern both in terms of tonnage and environmental risks.

Although the tonnage of WEEE is relatively low, recycling rates for WEEE were less than 10% in 2017. This contrasts with lead acid batteries where measures to support EPR have been in place for some time, and much lower rates of disposal to landfill are achieved. This is of concern since WEEE shows the fastest percentage growth in volume, and it includes reusable components and materials that are both potentially economically valuable and environmentally harmful.

Diagram 1: A Diagram Showing the Hazardous Waste by Management Option in 2017 (SOWR, 2018)



1.2.1.3 Waste Prevention

In terms of the hierarchy of waste management practices, waste prevention interventions have the highest priority and should be the first to be applied to any waste stream. The main economic driver for waste prevention is the avoidance of the costs to businesses and for the public sector, especially local government, the economic driver is to reduce costs associated with waste collection and disposal.

Waste prevention involves interventions designed to reduce waste generation before substances, materials and products are discarded i.e. before they finally become waste. This includes interventions around the raw material selection, design and packaging of products, cleaner production, and industrial symbiosis. Cleaner production aims to reduce environmental impact through the manufacturing process to end of life, whilst industrial symbiosis enables companies to exchange their waste as raw materials. In this case, waste of one company is a resource for another.

The following are important enablers for the development and implementation of effective waste prevention policies, action plans and initiatives:

- Ecodesign is a holistic design approach that integrates sustainability into the entire product lifecycle to minimize environmental impact, from raw material extraction to disposal. It is a key strategy within the broader framework of design for environment (DfE) and sustainability, focusing on reducing resource use, waste, and emissions through thoughtful design choices that enhance durability, recyclability, and energy efficiency;

- Measures to support public and private investment in Extended Producer Responsibility that involve producers taking physical and/or financial responsibility for products post consumption;
- Incentives to motivate behaviour change, particularly the internalization of social and environmental costs of waste to ensure producers and consumers take responsibility for preventing waste;
- Environmental awareness amongst consumers and producers in relation to product design and raw material selection, manufacture, use and end of life;
- WtE is integrated in IWMPs of metros and WtE as a treatment method strictly for residual waste, only after minimization, reuse and recycling options have been exhausted

Strengthen skills of waste management personnel in local government sphere

- Strong institutional arrangements that can evolve decision-making processes through increased collaboration and consultations with key stakeholders in government, the private sector, research institutions, and civil society supported by a bedrock of scientifically generated data and methodologies
- Efficient dissemination of new, growing information to both public and private sectors that help reveals the benefits of waste prevention actions, including cost-savings, and avoided costs;
- Circular Economy Framework, implementation of circular economy principles that focus on reduction of waste by maintaining products and materials in use as long as possible;
- Technology and innovation play a significant role in waste prevention by developing new methods for more efficient production and resource management; and
- Source reduction by changing consumption, production and distribution habits.

Factors that impede waste prevention not limited to awareness include:

- The low cost of landfilling is a major issue since it encourages waste generation, as it is currently convenient to landfill;
- Lack of incentives to motivate action in manufacturing processes and consumers;
- Perception that littering and dumping create employment;
- Lack of information on waste streams; and
- Commercial pressure to shorten innovation and product development cycles.

In South Africa, there is a perception that products containing recycled or reused content are of lower quality than those made from virgin material, which limits their market demand. This perception is compounded by global concerns, such as in Europe, where recycled PET bottles are associated with microplastics, highlighting the challenges of ensuring both quality and consumer confidence in recycled materials. Limited infrastructure for waste separation and collection, which prevents efficient diversion of waste from landfills and limits recycling opportunities.

The Waste Act provides for the commissioning and approval of EPR as a policy approach for promoting the implementation of waste management hierarchy in relation to particular waste types and generators. The Waste Act further supports circular economy and EPR as a policy approach to enforce the waste management hierarchy, encouraging producers to design products that reduce waste generation in the long term and promote responsible end-of-life management.

1.2.1.4 Food Waste

The main drivers for food waste include population growth and urbanisation, which require both increased agricultural production and more complex distribution, processing, and retail value chains to be in place. Changes in diet and food preferences in middle-income countries such as South Africa tend towards more resource intensive production. A key challenge in food waste prevention was it's exclusion from the general classification of waste, resulting in its underreporting and lack of accurate accounting, but this will now be address through the implementation of the Food Loss and Waste Strategy that Cabinet approved in November 2024. Other constraints include lack of capacity and awareness on the impact of food waste and the disparity in service between urban and rural areas.

About one third (33%) of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted. Approximately half of the 33% loss which is 16.5 take place during harvesting, with processing, packaging, distribution and retail accounting for a further 45% of wasted food – the remaining 5% of food waste is the responsibility of consumers.

The impact of food waste includes waste of resources such as water and energy through the supply chain, socio economic impact in respect of food security; it is estimated that 26% go to bed hungry and environmental impacts associated with waste and emissions of harmful gases.

Due to the growing environmental but also social and economic concerns, food waste is increasingly acknowledged as an urgent issue among governments, businesses, NGOs, academics, and the general

public. In response, there is a mounting evidence base on the quantities of food wasted and the related emissions along the food production-consumption chain.

1.2.1.5 Waste Services

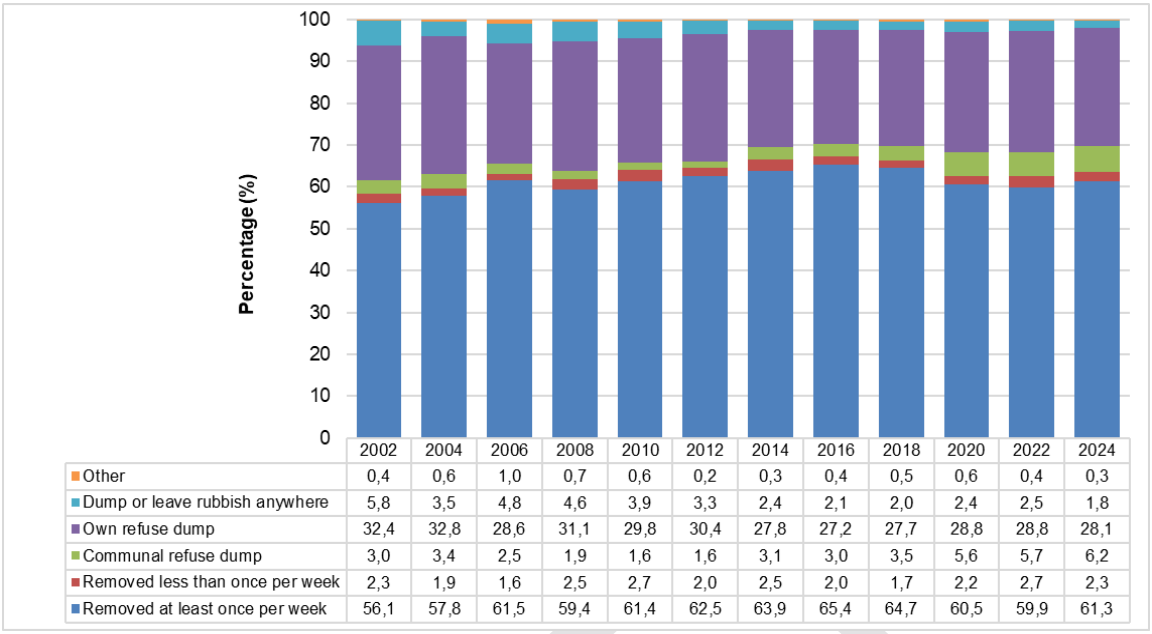
Since, the implementation of the 2020 NWMS has seen some improvement in waste collection and disposal services, including a successful programme to license landfills site. While there is initiation of separation at source programmes in some metropolitan areas, significant backlogs in the delivery of waste services remain. These backlogs tend to reflect historical inequalities – being particularly acute in informal settlements and rural or peri-urban communities. Rural areas refer to parts of the country with low population density, dispersed settlements, and limited access to formal waste services. These include traditional authority areas, farming communities, and former homeland regions, where tailored, decentralised waste management solutions are needed due to infrastructure and service delivery constraints.

DFFE has reported that South Africa faces the following challenges with respect to waste management:

- Littering and illegal dumping;
- Low levels of separation at source;
- Lack of infrastructure for recycling;
- Lack of a recycling culture;
- Backlogs in waste service delivery;
- Inconsistent waste collection;
- Pertinent challenges due to non-compliance to permit conditions;
- Burning in landfills;
- Lack of support and cooperation for service providers working with waste in some municipalities;
- Lack of education and awareness in some districts;
- Waste sector not prioritised in some municipal IDP and budgeting;
- Insufficient integration of the informal sector in formal waste management processes and underdeveloped buy-back-centres and insufficient support for waste pickers; and
- Municipalities not utilizing and maintaining the Buy Back centres developed by DFFE.

The reality is that many if not most local government authorities are currently struggling to simply maintain basic service levels and that there is relatively little technical or financial capacity outside the metros to leverage service delivery to support beneficiation of waste. Furthermore, economies of scale and distance mean that in the absence of provincial and national intervention, it is often difficult for smaller and more rural municipalities to unlock value within the waste streams for which they are responsible, underscoring the need for a regional approach to planning and accounting of the full costs of waste management led at the district and provincial level. Currently, most municipalities implement the least cost method of collection and disposal as a minimum requirement and find it difficult to implement an integrated waste management system as per the waste hierarchy.

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of household refuse removal for even years between 2002 and 2024

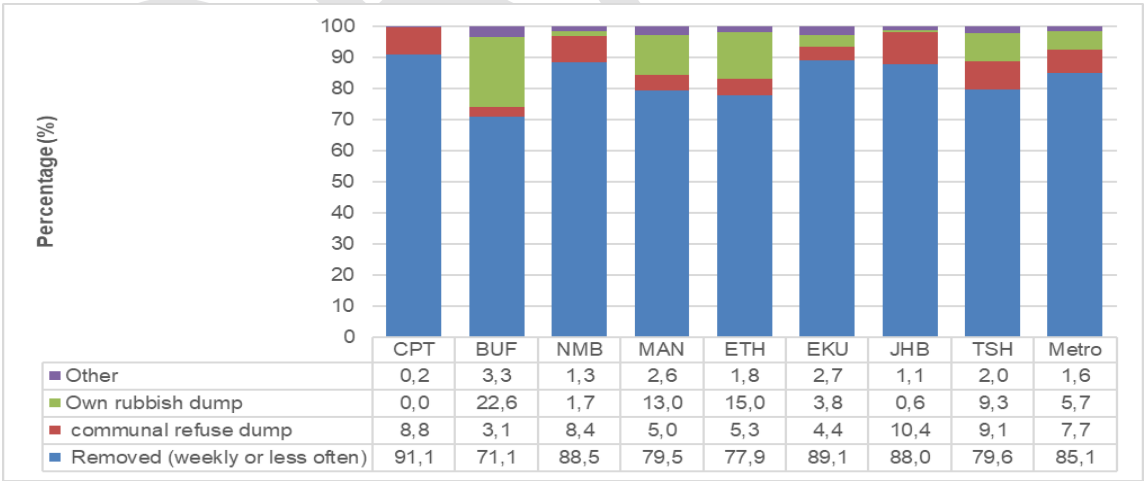


	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Other	0,4	0,6	1,0	0,7	0,6	0,2	0,3	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,4	0,3
Dump or leave rubbish anywhere	5,8	3,5	4,8	4,6	3,9	3,3	2,4	2,1	2,0	2,4	2,5	1,8
Own refuse dump	32,4	32,8	28,6	31,1	29,8	30,4	27,8	27,2	27,7	28,8	28,8	28,1
Communal refuse dump	3,0	3,4	2,5	1,9	1,6	1,6	3,1	3,0	3,5	5,6	5,7	6,2
Removed less than once per week	2,3	1,9	1,6	2,5	2,7	2,0	2,5	2,0	1,7	2,2	2,7	2,3
Removed at least once per week	56,1	57,8	61,5	59,4	61,4	62,5	63,9	65,4	64,7	60,5	59,9	61,3

Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024

According to Figure 2, household waste was collected at least once a week (61.3%) or less than once a week (2.3%) across South Africa. Over one-third (34.3%) of households used communal or household waste dumps, while 1.8% of households had no infrastructure at all. The use of communal waste dumps has been steadily growing over the five years before the 2024 survey, rising from 3.0% in 2016 to 6.2% in 2024.

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of household refuse removal by metropolitan areas, 2024

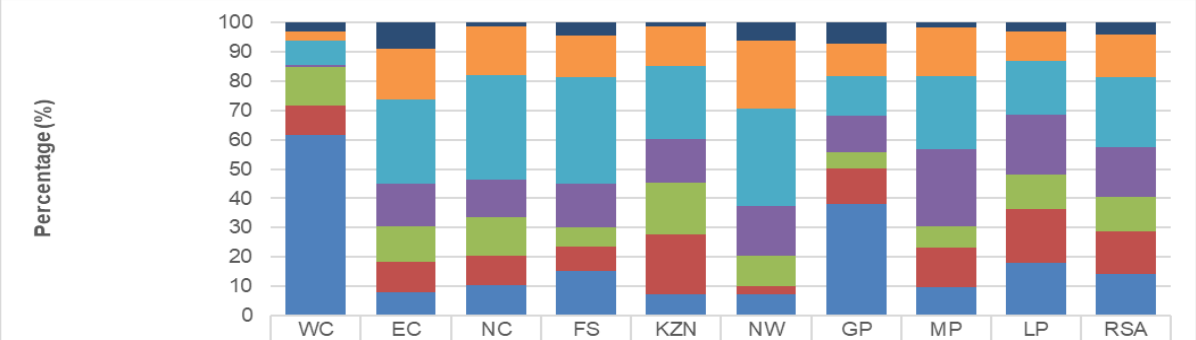


	CPT	BUF	NMB	MAN	ETH	EKU	JHB	TSH	Metro
Other	0,2	3,3	1,3	2,6	1,8	2,7	1,1	2,0	1,6
Own rubbish dump	0,0	22,6	1,7	13,0	15,0	3,8	0,6	9,3	5,7
communal refuse dump	8,8	3,1	8,4	5,0	5,3	4,4	10,4	9,1	7,7
Removed (weekly or less often)	91,1	71,1	88,5	79,5	77,9	89,1	88,0	79,6	85,1

Source: GHS 2024

As seen in Figure 3, 85.1% of metropolitan households have their waste collected at least once a week or less frequently, which is significantly higher than the national average of 63.6%. The cities with the highest rates of waste removal were Cape Town (91.1%), Ekurhuleni (89.1%), and Nelson Mandela Bay (88.5%), while Buffalo City and eThekwini had the lowest, 77.9% and 71.1% respectively.

Figure 4: Percentage distribution of households that burn some or all of their solid waste by province, 2024

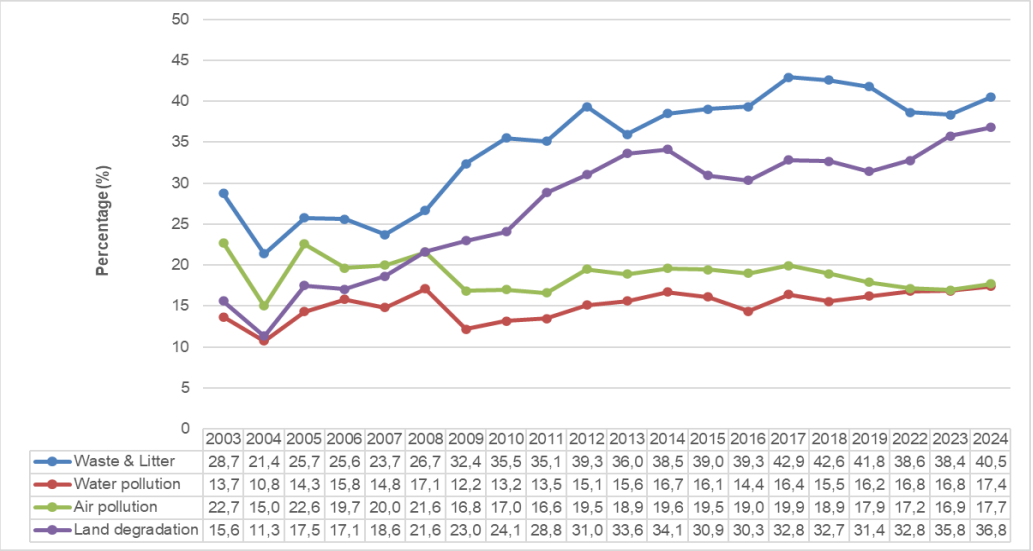


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Everyday	3,3	9,3	1,5	4,5	1,4	6,4	7,3	2,0	3,3	4,3
A few times per week	3,2	17,1	16,6	14,4	13,5	23,0	11,1	16,6	10,1	14,4
Every week	8,2	28,8	35,5	36,0	25,0	33,0	13,3	24,7	18,2	24,0
Every few weeks	0,7	14,3	12,8	15,1	14,8	17,1	12,4	26,0	20,2	17,0
Every month	13,0	12,2	13,0	6,4	17,6	10,2	5,7	7,5	11,8	11,7
Less regularly	10,0	10,3	10,0	8,3	20,6	2,9	12,2	13,3	18,5	14,2
Never	61,7	8,1	10,6	15,3	7,3	7,4	38,0	9,8	18,0	14,5

Source: GHS 2024

Burning household waste is common and poses serious health and environmental risks. It releases harmful substances that can impact human health, especially for those with respiratory or heart issues, while also contributing to air pollution. In South Africa, 85. 5% of homes burn their waste. Western Cape and Gauteng have lower rates of burning waste, with 61. 7% and 38. 0% of households, respectively, not engaging in this practice. In contrast, KwaZulu-Natal, North-West, and Eastern Cape show higher burning rates. Nationwide, 24. 0% of households burn rubbish weekly, 17. 0% every few weeks, and 14. 4% a few times a week. This is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 5: Percentage (%) distribution of households that experience specific kinds of environmental problems, 2003–2024



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2022	2023	2024
Waste & Litter	28,7	21,4	25,7	25,6	23,7	26,7	32,4	35,5	35,1	39,3	36,0	38,5	39,0	39,3	42,9	42,6	41,8	38,6	38,4	40,5
Water pollution	13,7	10,8	14,3	15,8	14,8	17,1	12,2	13,2	13,5	15,1	15,6	16,7	16,1	14,4	16,4	15,5	16,2	16,8	16,8	17,4
Air pollution	22,7	15,0	22,6	19,7	20,0	21,6	16,8	17,0	16,6	19,5	18,9	19,6	19,5	19,0	19,9	18,9	17,9	17,2	16,9	17,7
Land degradation	15,6	11,3	17,5	17,1	18,6	21,6	23,0	24,1	28,8	31,0	33,6	34,1	30,9	30,3	32,8	32,7	31,4	32,8	35,8	36,8

Source: GHS 2024

According to Figure 5, littering and waste disposal issues (40.5%) and land degradation and soil erosion (36.8%) were the two environmental concerns that most families were worried about in 2024. There has been a significant rise since 2009, when 32.4% of households indicated having issues with waste and litter. The proportion of households that believed air pollution was a concern dropped from 22.7% in 2003 to 17.7% in 2024. This coincides with the transition from wood and coal to electricity as the primary energy source.

There is a real need for behavioural and attitudinal shifts in relation to litter and illegal dumping, and greater awareness of the environmental hazards and impact of waste, and a need to recognise and address the very different circumstances and waste management challenges that exist between and within local government authorities. Challenges with waste infrastructure and delivery of waste collection services and the problem of litter and illegal dumping are very different in densely settled rural areas and sparsely populated rural areas and differ greatly between middle-class suburbs and informal settlements. There is a need to shift resources towards where they are most needed and adopt flexible approaches to service delivery that incorporate the informal sector while addressing local needs.

1.2.1.6 Waste collection including separation at source

Separation at source consists of separating waste into similar waste streams or categories for separate collection. This can be done by use of separate bin services or kerb-side collections, or through direct delivery of specific wastes to drop-off facilities. Waste separation may be conducted for any waste, including municipal solid waste, commercial and industrial waste, and construction and demolition waste. The benefits of separation at source include:

- Provision of more homogenous and higher value waste streams, allowing for better resource recovery;
- Reduces contamination of waste streams;
- Support the diversion of waste from landfill;
- Improved efficiency in waste management processes allowing for more targeted and cost-effective collection, sorting and processing recycling for municipalities;
- Enhanced potential for local job creation in sorting, recycling and resource recovery, particularly in the informal sector; and
- Increased compliance on waste streams prioritised for EPR, as it ensures that recyclable materials are properly segregated and processed.

Various waste reduction strategies have been attempted in most cities and countries in the field of municipal solid waste integrated management. The key to the success of such strategies has generally been found to be source separation – it is considered an effective means of reducing waste and enhancing recycling. Achieving successful waste separation at source depends on:

- Willingness and good practices among residents in urban, rural, and semi-rural residential areas;
- Market acceptance and incentives for the parties involved i.e. the consumers, investors and businesses;
- Technology acceptance with respect to facilities and infrastructure that encourage the residents to adopt waste separation behaviour;
- Education and awareness campaigns to foster understanding about the environmental and economic impacts of waste separation. These campaigns will target residents, businesses, and other institutions to build long term waste management behaviour; and
- The implementation of South Africa's EPR policy further supports waste segregation by incentivising producers to design products for recyclability and take responsibility for the waste generated, thereby encouraging market acceptance, promoting technology adoption, and motivating both businesses and consumers to actively participate in waste reduction and recycling efforts.

The Waste RDI Roadmap has noted the following as major obstacles for separation at source:

- A lack of end-markets for certain recyclables as a consequence of constraints in manufacturing capacity, and markets are subject to global economic trends and cycles;
- Linked to this, there are a limited number of recycling processors, and challenges related to achieving the economies of scale necessary for effective recycling, particularly in areas with geographical and demographic constraints. This limits the capacity to process commercial volumes of recyclables and hinders the success of waste separation at source;
- Landfilling may be a cheaper option in the short term;
- Policy, legislation and regulation is either rigid, not implemented in the way it was intended or contains loopholes that lead to unintended consequences; and
- Lack of implementation, monitoring of, and reporting on waste management plans by local government and industry, linked to a lack of reliable data on waste streams in terms of types and volumes.

The NWMS 2026 promotes separation at source through a concerted effort to raise public awareness and private sector investment in the delivery of infrastructure and services such as kerb-side collection, drop-off centres and buy-back centres linked to a national awareness campaign around recycling, EPR programmes, and where feasible, economic incentives. This will need to be tailored to the different circumstances experienced by communities. There is scope for innovation and a variety of different models and tools to be developed for engaging the informal sector (waste pickers) that accomplish separation at source.

Household hazardous waste including household hazardous packaged goods and expired medication is waste that has substantial or potential threats to public health or the environment. Hazardous waste management is a complex interdisciplinary field that continues to grow and change as global conditions and the state of knowledge changes. Currently guidelines issued by the DoH for the management of medical waste are in place, although capacity to implement them in hospitals and clinics is uneven. Biomedical waste is expected to be disposed through incineration however some finds its way to municipal landfill sites, illegal dumps and within sewage systems. Inadequate knowledge and societal habits and attitudes still dictate against hazardous waste management; current hazardous waste disposal in home health care needs better regulation and greater public awareness.

Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHP) waste, particularly disposable infant diapers, represent a growing problem in relation to household waste disposed to landfill. Not only are they significant in terms of volume and the amount of time they take to degrade, but they represent a health risk, particularly in unlined landfills and to waste pickers. Potentially, these risks can be mitigated both through product design measures and through recycling and alternative waste treatment options. Recycling of waste diapers requires consumer awareness and measures to separate these products at source which may be difficult to achieve in some circumstances. This should be preceded by safe collection and disposal and the implementation of the AHP Strategy that South Africa had developed.

1.2.2 ALIGNMENT TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted in 2015 by all United Nations (UN) Member States, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There are Seventeen (17) SDGs which individually and collectively focus on ending poverty, protecting our environment and planet, and improving the social and economic lives of all people.

The NWMS 2026 is explicitly responsive to Sustainable Development Goal 12, i.e. “Responsible Consumption and Production”. However, since all the SDGs are interconnected, the NWMS 2026 is also responsive to other SDGs. A summary of only the SDGs that the NWMS 2026 contributes to is provided in the following Table 2.

Table 2: SDGs and the contribution of the NWMS 2026

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	CONTRIBUTION OF THE NWMS 2026
SDG 1: No Poverty	Through waste management science and technologies that advance sustainable development.
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	Through eradicating food waste.
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being	Through minimising waste related environmental factors that contribute to ill-health and preventable diseases.
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	Through: • Minimising the discharge of wastewater from human activities into rivers/oceans/dams; and • Supporting sustainable management of water to better manage food production, energy and climate change. • Enables the reduction of plastic waste by promoting sustainable water consumption practices, such as reducing reliance on single use plastic bottles and encouraging the use of reliable containers.
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	Through supporting clean energy infrastructure and technologies that reduce greenhouse gases which cause climate change, harms peoples' health and well-being and damages the environment.
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Through: • Entrenching waste management as a key 'circular economy' (see sub-section 4.2 below) component towards fully sustainable development; • Creating and promoting decent work opportunities in the waste sector and its downstream opportunities e.g. waste beneficiation; and • Promoting the waste management sector as a key contributor to overall economic growth and development.
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	Through promoting and supporting sustainable industrialisation that is premised on efficient use of natural resources to improve peoples' standard of living without damaging the environment.
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	Through supporting the development of cities and communities in ways that do not harm the environment and that reduces carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	Through: • Ensuring sustainable production and consumption patterns; • Implementing initiatives that reduce waste, promote re-cycling, re-use; and • Implementing public awareness initiatives.
SDG 13: Climate Action	Through implementing actions that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build climate resilience, promote renewable energy.
SDG 17: Partnership for Goals	Through implementing actions that will reduce the effects of plastics pollution through a future plastics treaty. SDG 17 emphasises the importance of global cooperation partnerships and resource mobilisation to achieve the sustainable development goals.

1.2.3 ALIGNMENT TO THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: VISION 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) is "a plan for the country to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 through uniting South Africans, unleashing the energies of its citizens, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capability of the State and leaders working together to solve complex problems"[2]. This critical plan, issued in 2012, is aligned to the global commitments of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs mentioned in the previous sub-section.

[2] National Development Plan: Vision 2030, Our Future-Make it Work

The NWMS 2026 is directly aligned to Chapter Five (5) of the NDP, i.e.: ensuring environmental sustainability and an equitable transition to a low-carbon economy. This is critical when faced with the reality that climate change and environmental degradation impacts mostly on the poor.

Reducing carbon emissions is key to mitigating climate change, as is sustainable socio-economic development to ensuring the stability of the country's natural resources, systems and environment. Thus, the NDP proposes that we "break the links between economic activity, environmental degradation and carbon-intensive energy consumption" and address the legacies of the past when "resources were exploited in a way that was deeply unjust and left many communities excluded from economic opportunities and benefits while the natural environment was degraded".[3]

In Chapter Five (5), Vision 2030 for South Africa is described as "By 2030, South Africa's transition to an environmentally sustainable, climate-change resilient, low-carbon economy and just society will be well under way: …"[4]. Included in the proposed actions to achieve this vision is investing in consumer awareness, green product design, recycling, waste-to-energy for non-recyclable waste as identified as a residual stream that must be managed differently as renewable energy and other such initiatives that can result in a zero-waste society while building a greener and more environmentally sustainable economy.

The NDP further acknowledges the contribution the waste management sector makes to reducing unemployment, poverty and income inequality; that behaviour change and social values in respect of environmentally responsible consumption is required; and that waste management is an important utilities element of building sustainable communities.

Specifically, the NWMS 2026 responds to the NDP directive of "implementing a waste-management system through the rapid expansion of recycling infrastructure and encouraging the composting of organic domestic waste to bolster economic activity in poor urban communities" and to the need to "cut down on solid waste disposal".[5]

Implementation of the NDP is realised through Five Year Implementation Plans and Integrated Monitoring Frameworks at a national level, each province's Growth and Development Strategies, and from 2030, the Integrated Development Plans of Metropolitan and District Municipalities. The national level Plan and Framework is formulated as the country's Medium Term Development Plan (MTDP).

1.2.4 ALIGNMENT TO THE MTDP PRIORITIES FOR THE 7th ADMINISTRATION

The Government of National Unity (GNU) is actioning the following strategic priorities over the next 5 years. These are the following:

- Inclusive growth and job creation; (Apex priority)
- Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living; and
- Build a capable, ethical and developmental state.

Emanating from the strategic priorities, the Big 6 Priorities for the environment sector were identified. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment has subsequently adopted the revised vision, mission and values. Furthermore, the impact statement and outcomes that the DFFE seeks to realise over the next 5-year period, aligned to the Big 6 Priorities have been identified.

[3] National Development Plan: Vision 2030, Our Future-Make it Work
[4] National Development Plan: Vision 2030, Our Future-Make it Work
[5] National Development Plan: Vision 2030, Our Future-Make it Work

The Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan were approved by the Minister in March 2025 and tabled in Parliament in early April 2025, and were adopted by Parliament. The targets on the Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan are linked to the GNU strategic priorities, 2024 - 2029 Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP), 2025 State of the Nation Address (SONA) and the Big 6 Priorities.

These high-level priorities are further unpacked into outcomes and interventions in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2030. The DFFE further disaggregates the national priorities and MTDP outcomes and interventions into departmental specific initiatives that are explained in its 5-year Strategic Plan for the period of the 7th administration.

The following Table 3 lists only the national priorities and NDP outcomes that the NWMS 2026 responds to, as well as what this response is.

Table 3: Government of National Unity (GNU) Priorities, NDP Outcomes and NWMS 2026 response

GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY PRIORITY	NDP OUTCOME	NWMS 2026 RESPONSE[6]
• Inclusive Growth and job creation (Apex priority) • Reduce poverty and tackle the high cost of living • Build a capable, ethical and developmental state	• Green House Gas emission reduction, • Just Transition to a low carbon economy, • Municipal preparedness to deal with climate change, and • Enhanced national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063.	• Implementation of the Chemical and Waste Economy Phakisa • Implementation of the Oceans Economy Phakisa • Just transition to a low carbon and circular economy • Environmental Management Education and Awareness campaigns in schools including on waste management • Advancing the SDGs in ten area of waste management • Supporting the implementation of waste management programmes of local government

1.2.5 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND MULTI-LATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS (MEAs)

The legislative framework, cooperation agreements and MEAs that inform and guide the approach and directives of the NWMS 2026 is listed in the following Table 4.

Table 4: Legislative Framework and MEAs

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK	MULTI-LATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS
• The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 • The National Development Plan • National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) • The Waste Act • NWMS • Municipal Systems Act 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) • The Waste Act National Domestic Waste Collection Standards 2009 • Industry Waste Management Plans • Waste Tyre Regulations (Stockpile abatement plans) • The Regulations regarding the control of the import or export of waste 2008 • South Africa's Foreign Policy • Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) • List of waste management activities that have, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the environment 2013	• Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal • Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) • Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade • INC on plastics treaty and marine litter,

[6] DFFE Final Strategic Plan 2019/20 – 2030/24

• Waste classification and management Regulations • Norms and Standards for the assessment of waste for landfill disposal • Norms and Standards for the disposal of waste to landfill 2013 • National Standards for the extraction, flaring or recovery of landfill gas 2013 • Regulations regarding the exclusion of a waste stream or a portion of a waste stream from the definition of waste • Regulations for the control of import and export of waste • List of Waste Management Activities that have, or are likely to have a detrimental effect on the environment, 2013 & 15 • National Waste Information Regulations, 2012 • Waste classification and management Regulations, 2013 • Regulations regarding the planning and management of residue stockpiles and residue deposits, 2015 • Compulsory specifications for plastic carrier bags and plastic flat bags, 2003 • Waste Tyre Regulations, 2009 • National Pricing Strategy for Waste Management, 2016	including the environment. • Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer • Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) • Minamata Convention on mercury • Decisions from International Cooperation Agreements such as African Ministers Conference (AMCEN), African Union (AU), BRICS, South Africa – European Union (SA-EU), etc

The G20 Presidency, 2025 indicates that the shift towards integrated waste management and circular economy is contributing to the diversion of waste away from landfill. Furthermore, effective waste systems prioritize prevention, reuse, recycling, and energy recovery, reducing reliance on landfills and uncontrolled dumping. In many G20 countries, this shift is guided by circular economy policies that address the full lifecycle of materials. Policies such as EPR, plastic bans, and eco-design are central to upstream waste reduction (European Commission, 2020; UNEP, 2024). In South Africa, advancing source segregation, improving collection coverage, and modernizing recycling infrastructure are foundational. Integration of informal waste workers through cooperatives and digital platforms is critical for enhancing recovery rates and achieving social equity (UNEP, 2024).

1.3 PURPOSE, SCOPE, KEY PRINCIPLES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This NWMS 2026 is also responding to pollution, waste management practices and the legacy relating to the socio-economic conditions of the people of South Africa. Hence, the purpose, scope, key principles and expected outcomes are based on the following;

1.3.1 PURPOSE

The overall purpose of the NWMS 2026 is to provide government's policy and strategic interventions for the waste sector and an enabling environment for implementation of the 2017 Chemicals and Waste Phakisa projects.

More explicitly, the NWMS 2026 gives effect to the objects of the Waste Act and thus provides for:

- Institutional arrangements and planning matters i.r.o waste management;
- National norms and standards that regulate waste management by all spheres of government;
- Specific waste management measures;
- Licensing and control of waste management activities;
- Remediation of contaminated land;
- National waste information system;
- Compliance and enforcement;
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all waste management stakeholders;
- A high- level implementation plan with targets, timeframes and accounting and reporting arrangements; and
- A monitoring and evaluation framework.

1.3.2 SCOPE

The NWMS 2026 applies to:

- All organs of the State that have a responsibility for waste management;
- Private sector organisations, including Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME's) and Co-operatives (Co-ops) that are involved in, and constitute the waste management sector;
- Civil society organisations involved in waste management, environmental awareness, environmental sustainability and sustainable development; and
- Academia and research institutions that are involved in waste management, research and academic work relating to the Four Pillars of the Strategy.

1.3.3 KEY PRINCIPLES

The following Table 5 lists the key principles underpinning the NWMS 2026 and provides a brief explanation of each principle.

Table 5: Key Principles underpinning the NWMS 202

PRINCIPLE	EXPLANATION
Waste Minimisation	This refers to avoiding the amount and toxicity of waste that is generated and, in the event that waste if generated, the reduction of the amount and toxicity of the waste that is disposed.
Waste Prevention	This refers to avoiding the generation of waste and avoiding toxicity in waste.
Waste as a Resource	This refers to beneficiating waste through re-use, recycling, treatment and recovery to reduce the amount and the toxicity of waste disposed of.
Sustainable Strategic Partnerships	This refers to government establishing and sustaining collaborative working relationships with non-government role-players involved in the management of waste, i.e. private sector, academia, civil society organisations and other development funding institutions.
Environmentally sound socio-economic growth and development	This refers to ensuring that the intent and commitments of the SDGs, NDP are continuously integrated and aligned to all environmental protection considerations, and that environmental protection programmes contribute to improving the socio-economic lives of people. **Equity and Inclusion**: *"Ensure that all waste management interventions, including those funded through EPR schemes, address the needs of rural, peri-urban and traditional communities, and promote inclusive service delivery.*

1.3.4 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The following are the outcomes that will be achieved through effective and efficient implementation of the NWMS 2026 by all stakeholders from all sectors of society:

- *Prevent waste, and where waste cannot be prevented ensure –*
  40% of waste from diverted from landfill within 5 years; 50% within 10 years; and at least 60% within 15 years leading to Zero-Waste going to landfill;
- All South Africans live in clean communities with *waste services that are well managed* and financially sustainable; and
- Mainstreaming *a culture of compliance* resulting in zero tolerance of pollution, litter and illegal dumping.
- Promoting capacity building and raising a*wareness about waste management practices.*

1.4 STRATEGIC APPROACH

The strategic approach to the NWMS 2026 is guided by the experiences and lessons from both national and other spheres of government in relation to waste management and opportunities that are emanating from addressing waste related challenges. This reinforces the country's response to global issues, while also allowing an opportunity for collaboration of all stakeholders in finding solutions in waste management and in implementing a circular economy.

The strategy recognises that many rural and traditional areas fall outside the reach of formal municipal waste collection services. These areas require tailored solutions aligned with local realities, including community-based approaches, decentralised infrastructure, and support for informal and small-scale waste enterprises.

1.4.1 INTRODUCTION

The strategic approach of the NWMS 2026 is informed by the:

- Context outlined in Section 2 of the strategy;
- Purpose, key principles and expected outcomes outlined in Section 3 of the strategy;
- Circular economy;
- Waste management hierarchy of the DFFE;
- Critical assessment of the 2020 NWMS; and
- CWE Phakisa and the Good Green Deeds Programme.

1.4.2 THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

A circular economy redefines economic growth by moving away from a take-make-waste industrial model to one that decouples economic activity from the environment and supports a just transition to renewable energy sources. South Africa has hosted the G20 Presidency in 2025 and Circular Economy and EPR was one of the Sub-priorities under the Priority on Chemicals and Waste Management.

The three key principles of a circular economy are: design out waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use and regenerate natural systems. The DFFE's Chemicals and Waste Phakisa is a key component in the circular economy. Thus, it stands to reason that the circular economy is pivotal in the strategic approach of the NWMS 2026.

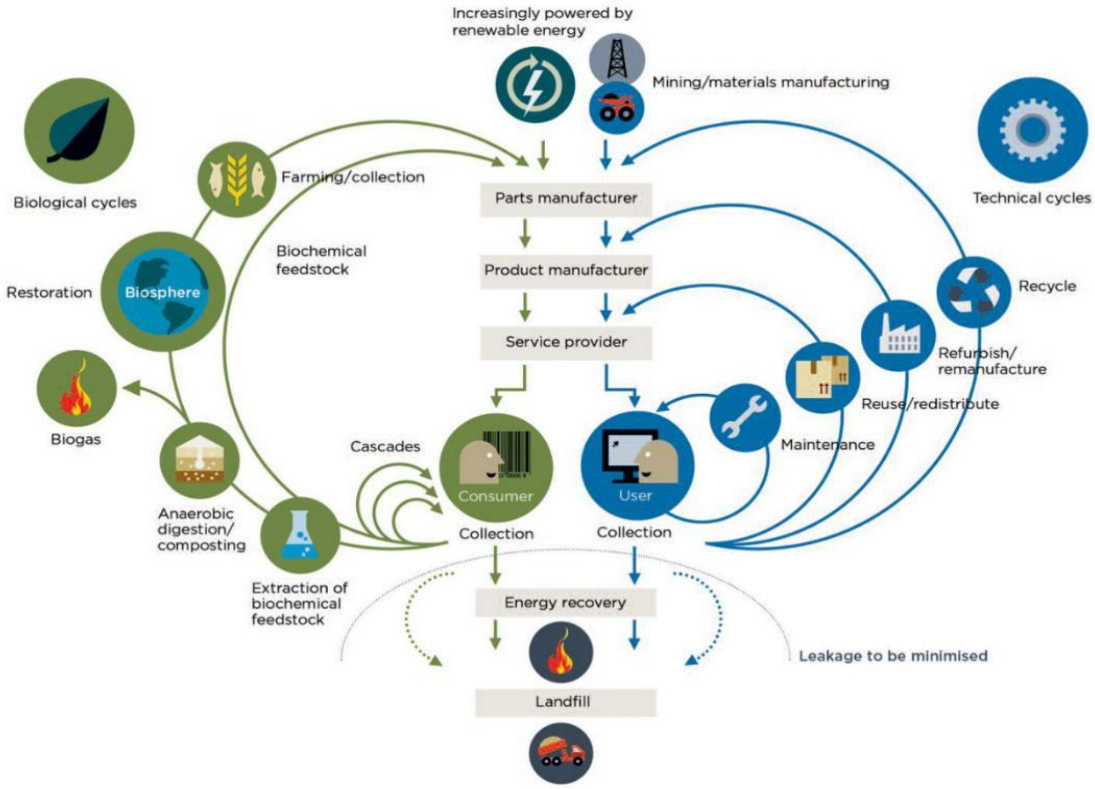
The Ellen MacArthur Foundation states that transitioning to a circular economy requires moving beyond adjusting reduce the negative impacts of a linear economy to making adjustments that build long-term resilience, generates business and economic opportunities and provides environmental and societal benefits.[7]

The concept of the circular economy is a useful way of understanding implementation of the waste management hierarchy in terms of its contribution to the green economy and other measures of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). A circular economy consists of "closing the loop" between resource extraction and waste disposal by the application of waste avoidance, reuse, repair, recycling,

[7] https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/concept

and recovery throughout the economic cycle to minimise waste generated and reduce demand for virgin materials as production inputs, as illustrated in the following Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: Butterfly Diagram on Circular Economy 2020 *Source: National Waste Management Strategy*



The Two (2) strategic entry points of the waste sector into waste minimisation and the circular economy is waste prevention and waste as a resource, as briefly explained below.

- **Waste Prevention** – this emphasises avoiding and reducing waste before substances, materials and products are discarded i.e. before they become waste through a focus on the design and packaging of products and cleaner production. Products' environmental impacts are determined at the design phase, while the linear pattern of "take-make-use dispose" can be eliminated if manufacturers of products adopt circularity in the design phase. In terms of the hierarchy of waste management practices, these interventions have the highest priority and will be the first to be applied to any waste stream. The main economic driver here is to avoid the costs to businesses and the public sector associated with waste collection and disposal. An additional opportunity lies in promoting the distribution and use of in-bulk products, which reduce the need for single-use packaging and offer scalable waste prevention benefits in both urban and rural areas, particularly for household and personal care products.

- **Waste as a Resource** – this focuses on stimulating a secondary resources economy based on recycling and recovery of materials and energy from waste i.e. interventions that take place after a product or material has become waste. Circularity can deliver substantial material savings throughout the value chains and production processes, generate extra value, transformation of industry towards climate-neutrality, long-term competitiveness and unlock economic opportunities. In terms of the waste management hierarchy practices, recycling of waste, reuse and recovery of materials is prioritised over recovery of energy from waste. The main economic driver lies in exploiting the full potential value of waste.

Having these entry points as part of South Africa's strategy for waste minimisation and implementing the circular economy will result in the diversion of waste from landfill and the displacing of demand for virgin materials. The circular economy can significantly reduce the negative impacts of resource extraction and use on the environment and contribute to restoring biodiversity and natural capital. The key challenges for sustainable waste management in a circular economy are the durability, recyclability and reparability of products, the reduction of food and packaging waste that are discarded every year and the massive encouragement of avoidance of waste at household and industry level.

The NWMS is predicated on the insight that while waste is an environmental concern, it is also an important sector in which technology and innovation have a crucial role to play in creating a secondary resources economy. For this reason, the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI),the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Department of Minerals and Petroleum Resources (DMPR), Department of Human Settlements (DHS), Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) among others are critical partners in its implementation.

The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

The EPR System is a digital platform designed to manage the registration, reporting, and compliance monitoring of Producers and Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs). Producers and PROs that are registered with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment can be viewed by using the search functionality from the homescreen of the EPR system. The table below shows the total number of Producers and PROs registered per sector to date.

Count of EPR Registration Number	Column Labels		
Row Labels	Producer	Product Responsibility Organisation	Grand Total
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Sector	306	13	319
Lighting Sector	83	8	91
Lubricant Oils Sector	46	9	55
Paper and Packaging Sector	1437	50	1487
Pesticides Sector	112	1	113
Portable Batteries Sector	25	5	30
Grand Total	**2009**	**86**	**2095**

Table 6: Producer and PRO registrations per sector

At the time of extracting the data, a total of 2009 Producers were registered with the Department and 86 PROs were registered on the system.

The paper and Packaging Sector accounts for the largest number of Producers and PROs registered. Registrations are ongoing. Once registered, producers who implement their own scheme and PROs are able to submit EPR reports as required in terms of the Regulations.

South Africa recognises the Deposit Refund Systems as part of the EPR. As a result, only the Deposit Refund System for packaging products that have not met their EPR collection and recycling targets is considered as fulfilment of their obligations in terms of the EPR Regulations.

Efficient and innovative approaches to the delivery of waste collection and disposal services are critical to leveraging the economic value of waste through increased rates of reuse, recycling and EPR. This also applies to the application of alternative waste treatment technologies such as composting and waste to energy. This requires municipalities to work more closely with private sector partners and the informal sector in separating and managing waste streams. It also needs to involve a greater focus on EPR, particularly in relation to product design, packaging and the funding of waste management programmes as guided by the National Pricing Strategy for Waste Management (NPSWM).

Waste minimisation is performed through different stakeholders including by waste pickers who play the crucial first step in extracting recyclable and reusable materials from the waste stream and initiating their revalorisation. Part of the value chain, is the private sector that generate revenue by reusing and recycling waste or to reduce production costs.

In the absence of formal systems for separation at source of recyclables, an informal sector comprised of waste pickers has emerged that contributes significantly to the collection of recyclables. While there is some informal reuse, repair and refurbishment, the processing of recyclables for use in manufacturing is undertaken as a private sector including buy-back centres. Consequently, the secondary economy around waste as a resource involves both informal and formal actors.

It unfortunately remains true that in general communities where domestic waste collection is minimal or waste services are not provided remain more likely to live in communities in which human health and dignity are impaired by litter and illegal dumping.
In relation to waste services, an important issue highlighted in the Phakisa planning process for the chemicals and waste sector is the need for tighter integration between Industry Waste Management Plans and Integrated Waste Management Planning at the provincial and local level. One of the lessons learned from the 2020 NWMS is the need to recognise the very different constraints which different categories of local municipality experience in developing and implementing IWMPs, and the need for effective provincial planning, coordination and oversight of integrated planning in relation to waste management infrastructure. This is especially relevant since the boundaries of commercial viability for waste infrastructure do not necessarily mirror administrative boundaries. This calls for a more supportive role of provincial government in supporting municipalities.

While the NWMS recognises that progress towards a circular economy cannot be driven only based on a top-down, inflexible legislative regime, it is also the responsibility of the DFFE to ensure that the regulatory regime for waste management is effectively enforced to protect human health, dignity and the integrity of the environment. The capacity and willingness to enforce waste regulations is a pre-requisite for creating a culture of compliance.

The safe disposal of all waste, hazardous and non-hazardous needs to complement extended producer responsibility in addressing the environmental damage caused by waste, such as marine plastics pollution, pollution of freshwater sources, and greenhouse gas emissions.

1.4.3 THE WASTE MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY

The following Diagram 3 illustrates the waste management hierarchy of the DFFE. The hierarchy is premised on three (3) of the key principles of the NWMS 2026, namely waste minimisation, waste prevention and waste as a resource. In her G20 Presidency, South Africa has prioritised Waste

Management and Waste to Energy as one of the Three Sub-priorities under the Priority on Chemicals and Waste Management. The significance of the principle of waste hierarchy was also emphasised in the G20 deliberations during South Africa's Presidency. Indeed, In line with international best practices and the growing imperative to reduce landfill dependency, South Africa acknowledges the need to formally integrate Waste-to-Energy (WtE) into the national waste management hierarchy. As landfill space becomes increasingly constrained and residual waste continues to pose environmental and logistical challenges, WtE offers a complementary solution for managing non-recyclable, non-compostable waste streams. The revised strategy recognises WtE as a distinct recovery pathway—situated below recycling but above final disposal—thereby providing a legal and policy framework that prevents misclassification of WtE as a default disposal option. To ensure clarity and regulatory certainty, the strategy outlines acceptable technologies, including controlled incineration, pyrolysis, gasification, and anaerobic digestion, and mandates their alignment with environmental and public health safeguards. This approach aims to position WtE within a circular economy framework while upholding South Africa's obligations under climate, energy, and waste reduction commitments

The Waste Outlook Report 2024 focuses on Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), which is the waste generated by householders; retailers and other small businesses; public service providers; and other similar sources. Managing MSW is generally a local service and is commonly the responsibility of local government. MSW is only a (comparatively small) part of the story, since enormous amounts of non-municipal waste are generated each year, for example

- Construction and demolition waste
- Industrial waste, such as Ash
- Food waste
- Healthcare waste
- Pharmaceutical waste
- Absorbent Hygiene Products
- Organic waste

Data is severely lacking for these other waste streams. Quantities vary significantly according to whether a country's economy is primarily agricultural or industrial, and its level of urbanisation. Healthcare waste is usually only a fraction of municipal waste but may be more hazardous. These other types of waste may be mixed with MSW, particularly where formal waste management systems are not fully implemented (for example, demolition waste or healthcare waste may be disposed of in a municipal waste landfill or dumpsite). While is not going to municipal landfill Sites, Ash is also another priority waste stream for urgent interventions during the period of implementing this strategy. While with its own limitations, the South African Waste Information Centre receives data on waste diversion on already prioritised waste streams which are the following;

- Paper and Packaging
- Lighting
- Electronic waste
- Pesticides
- Lubricant oils, and
- Portable batteries

Diagram 3: Waste Management Hierarchy

Using scenarios to estimate the impacts of different municipal solid waste management approaches to 2050 To assess the potential impacts of MSW management to 2050, three scenarios were developed.
01 Waste Management as Usual Waste generation and waste management practices continue as today, with waste generation projected to grow fastest in regions without adequate waste management capacity.
02 Waste Under Control A midway point, with some progress made towards preventing waste and improving its management.
03 Circular Economy Waste generation decoupled from economic growth, with the global MSW recycling rate reaching 60 per cent and the remainder managed safely.

1.4.4 CHEMICAL AND WASTE ECONOMY (CWE) PHAKISA AND THE GOOD GREEN DEEDS PROGRAMME

The CWE Phakisa is a Presidential programme designed to support the implementation of the NDP and boost the national economy through developing the waste management sector by unlocking economic opportunities and reducing unnecessary negative environmental impacts. The main objectives of the CWE Phakisa are:

- Waste diversion to landfill;
- Job creation and SMME development;
- Reducing negative environmental impacts;
- Formalization and protection of informal workers;
- Accelerate innovation and commercialise existing R&D; and
- Contribution to South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and economic transformation.

There were 20 initiatives that were identified in CWE Phakisa in 2017. While the key focus of the CWE Phakisa is on diversion of bulk industrial from going to landfill and removal of hazardous waste from the environment, relevant initiatives in the municipal waste management sphere include:

- Unlocking challenges and opportunities in e-waste;
- Separation of waste at source;
- Increasing plastic recycling rates through the Introduction of materials recovery facilities and pelletisation plants;

- Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste recycling by supporting the development of enterprises producing building aggregates and other construction inputs from C&D waste;
- Improving the packaging guidelines through compilation and update of packaging design guidelines; and
- Support the development of SMMEs in the waste management value chain.

The CWE Phakisa is a demonstration of South Africa's commitment to the implementation of circular economy, while creating jobs and diverting waste from going to landfill sites.

The Good Green Deeds Programme focuses on mobilising South Africans to become more environmentally conscious by managing waste responsibly and keeping their neighbourhoods green, clean and safe. The overall objective of the programme is a Clean South Africa free of litter and illegal dumping, i.e. a cleaner and more environmentally presentable country.

Focusing specifically on the environmental impacts of municipal waste growth and ma agreement, its influence on the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Waste and the triple planetary crisis Climate change Transporting, processing and disposing of waste generates CO2 and other greenhouse gases and airborne pollutants that contribute to climate change. Methane is released from the decomposition of organic waste in landfills and dumpsites (UNEP and Climate and Clean Air Coalition [CCAC] 2021), with short-term effects on global warming (UNEP and Climate and Clean Air Coalition [CCAC] 2021). The open burning of waste releases black carbon (soot).

When black carbon settles on the surface of sea ice it contributes to the acceleration of sea ice melting by absorbing rather than reflecting sunlight. Black carbon has a strong contribution to current global warming, second only to the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration n.d.).

Biodiversity loss indiscriminate waste disposal practices can introduce hazardous chemicals into soil, water bodies and the air, causing long-term, potentially irreversible damage to local flora and fauna, negatively impacting biodiversity, harming entire ecosystems, and entering the human food chain. The long-term pollution of land and aquatic ecosystems by waste has been recognised as one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss and puts the integrity of entire ecosystems at risk (Tovar-Sánchez et al. 2018; UNEP 2021a). Working in waste management can carry severe health risks, especially under certain conditions such as in informal settings and at dumpsites, and when handling healthcare waste and dismantling e-waste (Zolnikov et al. 2021a; Sara, Bayazid and Quayyum 2022

Pollution Between 400,000 and 1 million people die every year as a result of diseases related to mismanaged waste that includes diarrhoea, malaria, heart disease and cancer (Williams et al. 2019). Waste disposed of on land can cause long-term pollution of freshwater sources by pathogens, heavy metals, endocrine-disrupting chemicals and other hazardous compounds (Kuchelar and Sudarsan 2022; Thives et al. 2022). Open burning of waste releases Unintentional Persistent Organic Pollutants, "forever chemicals" that can be carried long distances in the air, persist in the environment, biomagnify and bioaccumulate in ecosystems, and have significant negative effects on human health and the environment (Stockholm Convention 2019; (WHO 2020; UNEP n.d.a).). 2017; UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre [UNEP-IETC] and GRID-Arendal 2019c).

The health impacts are understood to be differentiated by gender and age, and more data is needed in this regard to better manage the risks and outcomes (Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management [SAICM] Between communities and countries, varying quantities and compositions of municipal waste are generated, and different approaches to its management have been adopted. One universal truth stands, however: the best approach is to not generate the waste in the first place.

CHAPTER 2: PILLARS OF THE NWMS

STRATEGIC PILLARS OF THE NWMS 2026

The Four (4) Pillars of the NWMS 2026 can in the context of the strategy, the purpose, expected outcomes and performance indicators be described as follows;

2.1 PILLAR 1: CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WASTE MINIMISATION

2.1.1 Strategic Thrust

The strategic thrust of this pillar is:

- Promoting waste prevention through sustainable product design and reduced material consumption;
- Minimising the impact of waste and especially plastic packaging in waterbodies and human settlement environments;
- Increasing re-use, recycling, recovery and alternative waste treatment;
- Maximising the role of the waste sector in the circular economy; and
- Municipalities supporting recycling initiatives which are part of the integrated waste management services, particularly in relation to infrastructure provision, separation of waste at source, and collaboration with EPR Schemes;

Expanding waste prevention to include rural and traditional authority areas Participation and strengthening collaboration with informal sector, provincial authorities, local authorities, industry, civil society and other role players in circular economy implementation and EPR.

A critical enabler of this pillar is the building of long-term collaboration and partnership between national government, provincial government, municipalities, the private sector and civil society.

2.1.2 Expected Outcome/s

The long-term goal is ”Zero non-residual waste going to Landfill through enhanced recycling, recovery, and waste diversion including separation at source.”

2.1.3 Pillar 1 Focus Areas

Waste Minimisation has two (2) strategic entry points: namely Waste Prevention and Managing Waste as a resource as depicted in the Diagram 4 below, and the focus areas of Pillar 1 located within these entry points are explained in Table 6.

Waste minimisation starts with smarter design. This includes promoting **Design for Environment**, which reduces environmental harm during a product’s life cycle, and **Design for Circularity**, which ensures products and packaging can be reused, repaired, or recycled. These approaches are essential to reducing waste generation at source and supporting a circular economy.

Diagram 4: A Diagram Showing the Waste Minimisation Activities

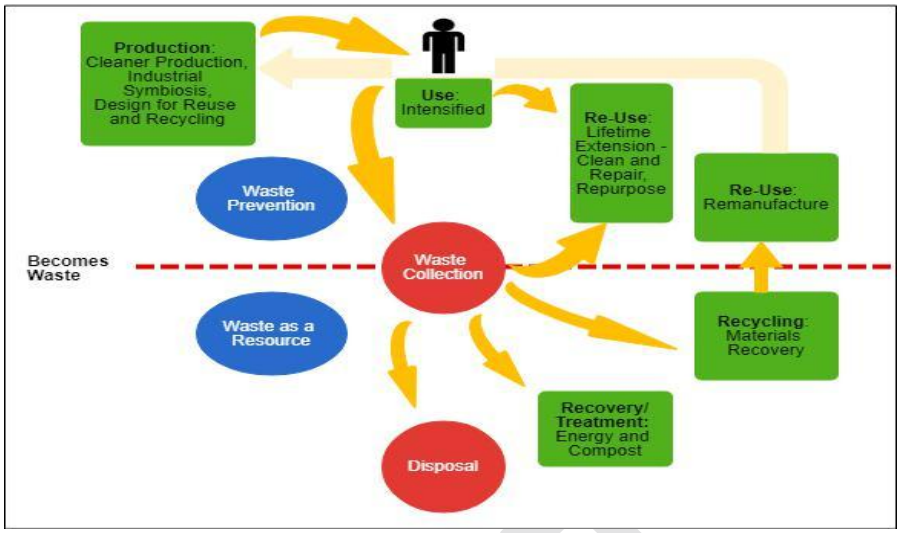


Table 7: Pillar 1: Focus Areas

FOCUS AREAS	ENCOMPASSES AND INCLUSIVE OF WASTE MINIMISATION
Create an enabling environment	• Waste management principles and measures that supports waste prevention, extended producer responsibility, circular economy and waste beneficiation by the private sector - including in the areas of resource extraction, product design, production and manufacturing, retail and consumption; this includes enabling refill and in-bulk product distribution systems to reduce single-use packaging such as in household and personal care sectors • Measures that facilitate innovation, new technologies, opportunities and for entrepreneurship in the sector; • Align policy and regulations across different government departments that impact on the management of waste in different sectors to simplify, consolidate and accelerate processes for environmental authorisations; • Measures (e.g. incentives or subsidies) primary for EPR schemes that enhance the commercial viability of recycling and beneficiation including by addressed the major costs associated with transporting waste especially from local municipalities; • Appropriate Economic Instruments (EI) such as Advanced Recycling Fees (ARFs) in the context of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes; and • Recognise and classify food waste is general waste which can then be reported and accounted for.
Build sustainable partnerships with all government and non-government role-players	• Partner with private sector organisations in the development and implementation of the afore-mentioned measures, and the co-regulation of waste streams wherever appropriate; • Enhance the capacity of local government structures to implement their waste collection and disposal mandate within the context and framework of the afore-mentioned principles; and • Provide oversight of local government to improve waste management performance.
Minimise general waste streams from landfill	• Prioritise streams based on Table 1 in Section 2.1 of this Strategy, as follows o Organic waste (contributes more than 50% of general waste disposed and has a comparative recycling rate of 49%. Recycling of paper, plastics, glass, metals and tyres. (currently recycling of plastics has the lowest recycling rate at 43% yet is associated with significant environmental impacts, and o Construction and demolition waste (large waste stream with numerous reuse options already identified including as landfill cover).
Minimise hazardous waste streams	• Prioritise based on Diagram 1 in Section 2.1 of this Strategy, in terms of their volume, toxicity and the environmental risks associated with their treatment and disposal, as follows: o Waste from the generation of electricity from coal (contributes 75% of total volume of hazardous waste - Fly-ash @ 66% and bottom ash @ 9%), o Slag (5.6%) and Brine (11.1%), and

	○ Waste, Electric and Electronic Equipment (recycling rates were less than 10% in 2017 but shows the fastest percentage growth in volume)
Advance cleaner production and EPR	• Collaborate and partner with the National Cleaner Production Centre of South Africa (NCPC-SA) to promote implementation of resource efficiency, cleaner production methodologies, reducing energy, water and materials usage and improving waste management by industry; • Enhance the work of the Waste Management Bureau i.r.o.: ○ implementation of matters delegated to it, ○ promoting and facilitating minimisation, re-use, recycle and recovery of waste, ○ providing specialist support and advice for waste management plans, tools, instruments, processes, systems, norms and standards and capacity building programmes, ○ Develop and implement EPR schemes in partnership with the Waste Management Bureau, and ○ The objective of EPR schemes is to prevent the targeted products and materials from being disposed as waste.
Implement Food Waste Strategy	• Develop and implement a focused strategy on preventing food waste that: ○ includes increasing awareness on the impact of food waste, ○ is aligned to implementation of the Chemicals and Waste Economy (CWE) lab outcomes, ○ strongly integrates different disciplinary perspectives, and ○ maps the determinants of food waste generation to deepen the understanding of household practices and helps design food waste prevention strategies.
Advance Waste as a Resource	• Expand the collection of recyclables in secondary cities, small towns and rural municipalities; • Increase co-ordination and planning of waste streams and infrastructure at district and provincial level; • Generate additional revenue e.g. through fiscal support/conditional grant from National Treasury, subsidies from EPR measures and infrastructure, etc.; • Implement the CWE Phakisa outcome i.r.o. waste infrastructure, promoting separation at source, establishing Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) plants, and increased recycling and beneficiation of industrial waste, construction and demolition waste and WEEE; • An **End-of-Waste procedure** will be developed to define when certain treated waste streams, such as coal ash or compost, can cease to be classified as waste and be used as secondary raw materials. This will support safe reuse, encourage investment in beneficiation, and promote a circular economy. • Advance organic waste as a resource in the form of: ○ Composting – large scale commercial operations and community level and home composting initiatives that can be linked to job creation and food security initiatives, ○ energy recovery (production of biogas from anaerobic digestion), ○ recovery of biogas/landfill gas from existing landfills to generate electricity and/or be treated and upgraded to the standard of compressed natural gas (CNG) and as transport fuel; and • Advancing beneficiation of construction and demolition waste in the form of: ○ landfill cover, ○ crushing and recycling to create bricks, ○ aggregate in the construction of roads, and ○ developing norms and standards for the beneficiated products ○ Advance waste as a resource by promoting recycling, recovery and the circular economy, including strengthening the network of buy-back-centres that facilitate material aggregation, provide livelihoods, and enable effective EPR implementation.
Increase technical capacity and innovation for beneficiation of waste	• Support technological innovations in relation to industrial processes; • Support innovations in relation to conceptualising, planning and delivering waste services; • Finalise policies on recovery of energy from waste; • Conduct further research into energy recovery applications for paper and plastic;

	• Conduct research into the desirability and feasibility of alternatives to plastic for single-use applications; and for coal ashes • Increase the number, and build the capacity, of waste engineers working in local government; and • Develop and implement initiatives that leverage waste beneficiation;

2.1.4 Strategic Role-players

Key strategic role-players i.r.o Pillar 1 include the DFFE, Provinces, Municipalities, DSI, DTIC, CSIR, NCPC-SA, TIA, DMPR, DALRRD, DFFE, Waste Management Bureau, Provinces, Department of Public Works, Department of Transport, National Treasury, Universities, Department of Health, PROs, private sector organisations/representative structure, civil society organisations, federations of retailors in the food industry, Waste Pickers, federations of the food industry producers.

2.2. PILLAR 2: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE WASTE SERVICES

2.2.1 Strategic Thrust

The strategic thrust of this pillar is:

- Recognising and addressing the very different circumstances and waste management challenges that exist between local government authorities;
- Developing and implementing flexible approaches to service delivery, including the integration of the informal sector and the strengthening of buy-back-centres (BBCs) as decentralised nodes that support both municipal service delivery and EPR implementation;
- Guiding public investment and partnerships with the private sector in waste management infrastructure and projects;
- Ensuring that the delivery of waste services contributes to sustainable development.
- Instil Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the waste sector;
- Promoting financially sustainable service delivery models, including improved revenue collection and funding mechanisms tailored to local contexts;
- Promoting equitable access to waste services in underserviced and rural areas, where infrastructure and capacity constraints are often more pronounced;
- Expanding waste collection coverage to include rural and traditional authority areas, through community-led or decentralised models; and
- The NWMS 2026 allow metros to identify WtE as part of service delivery mechanisms for treating residual waste streams and NWMS promote PPP models with contractual service standards linked to energy recovery emissions performance.

A critical enabler of this Pillar is the building of strong co-operative governance relationship between the three spheres of government and specifically local government.

2.2.2 Expected Outcome/s

2.2.3 Pillar 2 Focus Areas

The focus areas of Pillar 2 are explained in the following Table 8.

Table 8: Pillar 2: Focus Areas

FOCUS AREAS	ENCOMPASSES AND INCLUSIVE OF EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT WASTE SERVICES
Integrated Waste Management Planning	• Planning of waste management infrastructure, to cater for growing populations, for example sewer connections, landfills with MRFs and drop-off centres; • Reviewing and adjusting municipal budgets towards effective and sustainable waste services; • Strengthen the role of National and provinces in terms of integrated planning, review and monitoring of local government integrated waste management plans, and reporting requirements ; • Five (5) year Provincial Integrated Waste Management Plans approved by the Minister of DFFE and reported on annually; • Develop and update waste management planning tools, as and when needed; • Strengthen support to municipalities to improve waste services provision; • Improving financial sustainability of waste services, including appropriate tariff setting, revenue collection, and funding models; • Development, maintenance and upgrading of waste infrastructure to support equitable and efficient service delivery; and • Develop a national waste tax framework and Design a landfill tax.
Producers to be involved in the cradle to cradle management of their waste in conjunction with Municipalities.	• Generate additional revenue e.g. through levies or other EPR measures and engaging with National Treasury (NT) for financing public investment in drop-off/buy-back centres; • Integrate IWMPs and implementation of EPR and the circular economy in identified waste streams such as the packaging industry; • Support Provinces and the private sector to plan recycling infrastructure based on modelling of waste volumes and transport costs; • Develop a full cost accounting model of waste services and infrastructure that considers social and environmental costs and benefits; • Develop and implement guidelines for the recognition, planning, and operation of drop-off centres and buy-back-centres as part of local waste infrastructure to support recycling, public access, and integration of the informal sector; • Develop and implement innovative models through EPR and other approaches and tools to engage the informal sector (waste pickers) in the delivery of separation at source; and • Support capacity development in waste innovation, disseminate information about new approaches, share lessons learned and leverage existing forums.
Waste Collection	Expand waste services to rural areas • Implement separation at source initiatives; and • Implement community led or decentralized collection models.
Environmentally Sound Management of household hazardous waste	• Implement the household hazardous waste management strategy.
Management of absorbent hygiene products waste	• Develop product design measures that minimises waste generation, reduces impact on the environment and can be beneficiated post-consumer use; • Consider exploring possible waste management measures, for example S14, S18, or S28; and • Develop norms and standards for safe management of AHP.

2.2.4 Strategic Role-players

Key strategic role-players i.r.o Pillar 2 include the DFFE, Provinces, Municipalities, NT, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), brand owners, PROs, Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), the South African Cities Network (SACN), Universities, the DSI and Innovation Hub through the Waste RDI Road Map, private sector organisations, Waste pickers, and civil society organisations.

2.3. PILLAR 3: CAPACITY BUILDING AND AWARENESS RAISING

2.3.1 Strategic Thrust

The strategic thrust of this Pillar is:

- Enhancing waste management awareness and behaviour change.
- Promote awareness campaigns with different stakeholders.
- Strengthening institutional capacity at national, provincial and municipal level.
- Fostering the active participation of NPO's, business entities and traditional leaders.
- Promote collaboration and partnerships for joint awareness programmes.

2.3.2 Expected Outcome/s

- Enhance education and awareness while promoting advocacy in environmentally sound management of waste;
- Improved Public Awareness and Behaviour;
- Partnerships and Collaboration through active partnerships between government, private sector, NGOs, and communities delivering joint awareness campaigns; and
- Industry-led initiatives under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) contributing to public education and waste minimisation.

2.3.3 Pillar 3 Focus Areas

Pillar 3 focuses on capacity building; education and awareness in terms of promoting, protecting waste recycling and preventing pollution; littering and illegal dumping through changes in behaviour; perception and attitude that lead to clean environment, a culture of compliance with acceptable local and international standards taking root amongst citizens, businesses and government. The focus areas of Pillar 3 are explained in the following Table 9.

Empowering the local communities to become better equipped to address environmental issues

Table 9: Pillar 3: Focus Areas

Focus Areas: Capacity Building And Awareness Raising

Public Awareness and Behavioural Change

- Nationwide education campaigns on anti-littering and illegal dumping in (schools, and communities).
- Promoting separation at source, recycling, and anti-littering behaviour in schools and communities.
- Embedding waste management into the national school curriculum including the Early Learning Centres.
- Awarding the cleanest municipalities

Community Participation

- Awareness campaign using all forms of media at national, provincial and local levels;
- Presidential /Ministerial Led and clean-up campaigns and rehabilitation of illegal dumps in communities and next to schools;
- Implementing the national communication and awareness campaign across all media; and
- Build stakeholder partnership to raise awareness of marine and coastal pollution in and around riparian and coastal environments as well as the business community.

Training new entrants

- Encouraging the provision of training for new entrants into the waste sector for increasing the capacity supply from a pool of well qualified graduates.

Continuous staff development

- Promoting continuous staff development in order to keep up to date with latest developments in waste management.

2.3.4 Strategic Role-players

Key strategic role-players i.r.o Pillar 3 include the DFFE, Provinces, Municipalities, Community Radio Stations, Government Agencies such as PROs, Media houses, South Africa's NPA, Bus Companies, South African Taxi Industry, South African National Road Agency (SANRAL), and the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), COGTA, SALGA, NT, Ministers, MECs, Mayors, Faith Based Organisations, Traditional Authorities, Early Learning Centres, Department of Basic Education (DBE), Department of Higher Education (DHET), Waste Pickers, Private Sector Organisations; etc

2.4. PILLAR 4 COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

2.4.1 Strategic Thrust

The strategic thrust of this Pillar is:

- Mitigating and preventing the environmental and social damage caused by waste due to non-compliance;
- Increasing compliance to local, provincial, national and international legislation and standards;
- Mitigating and preventing pollution, littering and illegal dumping of waste;
- Improving the visibility and appreciation of the socio-economic and environmental benefits of compliance, effective waste management and environmentally compliant infrastructure.
- Strengthening institutional capacity, intergovernmental coordination, and resource allocation for effective monitoring of compliance and enforcement at national, provincial and municipal level

2.4.2 Expected Outcome/s

2.4.3 Pillar 4 Focus Areas

Pillar 4 focuses on managing the environmental impact of waste and preventing pollution; littering and illegal dumping through changes in behaviour; perception and attitude that lead to a culture of compliance with acceptable local and international standards taking root amongst citizens, businesses and government.

The focus areas of Pillar 4 are explained in the following Table 10.

Table 10: Pillar 4: Focus Areas

FOCUS AREAS	ENCOMPASSES AND INCLUSIVE OF COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT
Compliance promotion and visibility	• Is a distinct phase within the regulatory cycle and thus separate from the compliance and enforcement phases; and • Publicise success stories of compliance and enforcement.
Waste Services Infrastructure Provision	• Increasing access to municipal infrastructure e.g. relevant infrastructure to discourage illegal dumping;

	• Presence of public bins that are regularly emptied; • Municipal cleaning of streets, particularly in commercial business districts; and • Reducing time frames for issuing waste management licenses.
Enforcement	• Consistent implementation of by-laws on littering and illegal dumping; • Application of other compliance measures to address other contraventions and non-compliances; • Enhancing capacity to enforce the Waste Act and International Agreements; • Increase the number of Environmental Management Inspectors (EMIs) actively involved in monitoring compliance with and enforcing the Waste Act; • Local government authorities to regularly report their compliance and enforcement activities as a condition to their designation as EMIs; • Invest in national legal, compliance and enforcement protocol for waste and investigatory capacity to provide strategic support to EMIs in high profile enforcement cases; • Continue engagements with relevant role-players related to enforcement of waste legislation, including international organisations; • Promotion of cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies including community policing forums; and • Decentralisation of compliance and enforcement function on waste management.
Improved monitoring, reporting and compliance and enforcement	• Improve monitoring mechanisms for data collection, reporting and compliance and enforcement at national, provincial and municipal spheres of government.
Reduce littering and illegal dumping	• Measures to reduce littering and illegal dumping to be included in all integrated waste management plans and annual performance reporting. and should include targeted awareness and community participation in waste management and prevention of littering; • Leveraging national media and DFFE budget that is available for community-based initiatives around litter and illegal dumping that is focused on micro-grants for equipment and training; and • Ensure that all municipalities develop and adopt by laws to address littering and illegal dumping.
Ensure municipal landfill sites and waste management facilities comply with licensing requirements	• Develop and implement a strategic approach to addressing non-compliant municipal landfill sites including the application of fiscal measures such as a landfill tax intended to correct the cheaper rate of landfilling, while generating revenue for improving compliance, monitoring and developing alternatives to disposal to landfill.
Strengthened capacity for compliance and enforcement	• Strengthening institutional capacity, intergovernmental coordination, and resource allocation for effective monitoring of compliance and enforcement at national, provincial and municipal level

2.3.4 Strategic Role-players

Key strategic role-players i.r.o Pillar 4 include the DFFE, Provinces, Municipalities, compliance monitoring and enforcement agencies such as INTERPOL, South Africa's NPA, SAPS, South African Revenue Service, Bus Service Companies, South African Taxi Industry, South African National Road Agency (SANRAL), and the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC), COGTA, SALGA, National Compliance Forum, Private security companies, Municipal Leadership, Company leadership, Waste pickers and NGOs/whistleblowing.

CHAPTER 3: EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND KEY INTERVENTIONS

3.1 EXPECTED OUTCOMES AND KEY INTERVENTIONS

The Four (4) outcomes of the NWMS 2026 is a reflection of the revised Four (4) Pillars that were in the 2020 NWMS with a refinement of the previous Pillar 4 on Compliance, Enforcement and Awareness to Third (3rd) Pillar which is Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement and the Fourth (4th) Pillar which is called Capacity Building and Awareness Raising. Likewise, the actions linked to achieving each outcome in the NWMS 2026 replaces the targets of the NWMS 2020.

The outcomes as expressed in Section 5 above, are:

- OUTCOME 1 – Pillar 1*:* Prevent waste, and where waste cannot be prevented ensure that *waste is diverted from landfill within 5 years;*

  This outcome is supported by Pillar 1 which focuses on waste minimisation and waste prevention, including measures such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and industrial symbiosis. It consolidates elements of Pillar 1 from the NWMS 2020. Furthermore, it provides for the integration of the informal sector, development of waste infrastructure, maintenance and financial mechanisms for municipalities. It enables economic growth and opportunities for incentives for circular economy implementation for national, provincial, local government and other role players from industry, research institutions, academia, etc

- OUTCOME 2 – Pillar 2*: All South Africans live in clean communities with waste services that are well managed and financially sustainable.*

  This outcome is supported by Pillar 2 focuses on the effective and efficient delivery of waste services including separation of waste at source, integrated waste management planning and reporting, provincial IWMPs, provincial oversight and reporting on local IWMPs and improving the quality of waste sector information. Producers would support separation at source through disbursement of EPR fees towards post-consumer waste collection and towards waste reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery. Enable the participation of informal sector, development of waste infrastructure development, maintenance and financial mechanisms for municipalities and incentives for circular economy implementation.

- OUTCOME 3 – Pillar 3:
  3.2: Enhance education and awareness while promoting advocacy in environmentally sound management of waste

- OUTCOME 4 – Pillar 4:
  3.1 Mainstreaming a culture of compliance resulting in zero tolerance of waste pollution / Zero tolerance against waste pollution

These outcomes are supported by Pillar 3 which focuses on improving levels of compliance with the Waste Act by addressing the issues of littering and illegal dumping. It consolidates elements of Pillar 1 from the NWMS 2020.

The following Table 10 provides the key interventions that will be implemented in respect of each of the Four (4) Outcomes.

In addition to the giving effect to the SDG's, NDP and national socio-economic development and MTDP priorities, the interventions also respond to the following objects of the Waste Act:

Outcome 1:

- Minimising the consumption of natural resources;
- Avoiding and minimising the generation of waste;

- Reducing, re-using, recycling and recovering waste;
- Treating and safely disposing of waste as a last resort;
- Preventing pollution and ecological degradation; and
- Securing ecologically sustainable development while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

Outcome 2:

- Promoting and ensuring effective delivery of waste services; and
- Achieving integrated waste management reporting and planning.

Outcome 3:

- Provide for compliance with the measures set out in paragraph (a)- generally, to give effect to section 24 of the Constitution to secure an environment that is not harmful to health and well-being.

Outcome 4:

- Ensure that people are aware of the impact of waste on their health, well-being and the environment.

Table 11: NWMS 2026 Outcomes and Actions

STRATEGIC PILLAR	OUTCOME	KEY INTERVENTIONS
Waste Minimisation	Prevent waste, and where waste cannot be prevented ensure that *waste is diverted from landfill within 5 years;*	• Prevent waste generation through cleaner production, industrial symbiosis and extended producer responsibility; • Implement Food Waste Strategy; • Increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates; • Divert organic waste from landfill through composting and the recovery of energy; • Explore banning of the organic waste from going to the landfill sites through legislative instruments; • Divert construction and demolition waste from landfill through beneficiation; and • Increase technical capacity and innovation for beneficiation of waste.
Effective and Sustainable Services	All South Africans live in clean communities with waste services that are well managed and financially sustainable.	• Separate waste at source; • Safe and environmentally sustainable disposal of hazardous household waste; • Cities Support Programme Implementation; • Effective integrated waste management planning; and • Community led or decentralized services in rural areas.
Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement	Mainstreaming a culture of compliance resulting in zero tolerance of waste pollution / Zero tolerance against waste pollution, littering and illegal dumping.	• Enhance capacity to monitor compliance and enforce the Waste Act and International Agreements; and • Ensure municipal landfill sites and waste management facilities

		comply with licensing requirements.
Capacity Building and Awareness Raising	• Enhance education and awareness while promoting advocacy in environmentally sound management of waste • Improved Public Awareness and Behaviour • Promote collaboration through active partnerships between government, private sector, NGOs, and communities delivering joint awareness campaigns. • Industry-led initiatives under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) contributing to public education and waste minimisation. • Strengthen Institutional and Technical Capacity in local municipalities	• Enhance education and awareness while promoting advocacy in environmentally sound management of waste; • Enhance capacity to create awareness about waste services, monitoring compliance and enforcing the Waste Act and International Agreements; • Improved Public Awareness and Behaviour; • Promote collaboration through active partnerships between government, private sector, influencers, NGOs, and communities delivering joint awareness campaigns; • Industry-led initiatives under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) contributing to public education and waste minimisation; and • Strengthen Institutional and Technical Capacity in local municipalities.

The actions associated with each intervention is presented in the NWMS 2026 Implementation Plan in the following section of the strategy.

CHAPTER 4: GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

4.1 GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

Improving the quality and reliability of data on waste streams and addressing challenges in the financing of waste services and infrastructure, which are closely related, is critical to the successful implementation of the revised NWMS.

4.1.1 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Collection of waste data enables proper recording and tracking of waste in the value chain. This allows for evidence-based planning of service requirements and infrastructure provision for integrated waste management and can be used to inform both public and private investment. The South African Waste Information Centre (SAWIC) serves as a central repository of waste data that is being incrementally developed and implemented.

While in principle the Waste Act requires all licensed waste management activities to be registered on SAWIS and reporting on waste quantities on a regular basis, and progress has been made in establishing SAWIS under the South African Waste Information Centre (SAWIC), in practice significant gaps exist in terms of mechanisms for enforcing compliance as well as in the design of the reporting framework. This has resulted in both under-reporting to SAWIS and inconsistencies in the data currently stored.

While SAWIS is intended to provide a national repository of waste information, the Waste Act provides for creation of provincial Waste Information Systems that must at least contain the information required in the national repository and empowers provinces to request this information from municipalities.

Improving the quality of information in the SAWIS requires an investment in upgrades to the SAWIS itself to improve ease of use, reporting templates and data integrity to ensure consistent data formats and mitigate the risks of double-counting along the waste value chain. This needs to be complemented by regulatory interventions to make reporting to SAWIS mandatory that are coupled with a training and outreach strategy to improve capacity to report, particularly on the part of municipalities.

The DFFE in consultation with the provinces must upgrade the South African Waste Information Centre (SAWIC) to improve ease of use, reporting templates and data integrity to ensure consistent data formats and mitigate the risks of double counting along the waste value chain.

Currently, data on provincial and local IWMPs is limited to recording whether they exist or not. There is a need for reporting templates on the implementation of IWMPs to be designed and integrated into the SAWIS.

SAWIS reporting is reportedly at 33%, an area that challenges the sector to think about solutions to this and why there is this low level of reporting.

4.1.2 FINANCING OF WASTE SERVICES

The provision of waste service is a capital intensive function as it requires adequate infrastructure such as landfill sites which are expensive to establish and operate. At the same time ongoing operational expenses are significant due to the high cost of vehicles and the maintenance and fuel costs. Many municipalities do not have adequate landfill sites nor sufficient waste vehicle fleets to reliably provide collection services on a weekly basis.

Although the DFFE has provided tariff guidelines to assist municipalities in determining cost-reflective tariffs, the proposed methodology has proved to be time consuming and cumbersome and in many

cases its application results in suggested tariff increases that would be politically unsustainable, particularly in municipalities with a large percentage of poor and indigent households.

At the same time, environmental levies on waste such as the plastic bag levy yield significant revenues to the national fiscus that have not been effectively ring-fenced for waste management. Breaking the vicious cycle of underinvestment in waste management requires partnership with the private sector to invest in waste minimisation measures that extend the life of municipal landfills and create opportunities for private sector involvement in separation at source and recycling that reduce the costs of delivering waste collection services for municipalities. Relatively small catalytic investments in recycling infrastructure such as drop-off centres and material recovery facilities by National Treasury have the potential to not only reduce waste management costs for local municipalities, but also to improve the economic efficiency of large MIG grants for landfills.

The implementation of the NWMS 2026 will require other sources such as private sector, donor funding and revenue from the EPR fees to complement what the state will be able to provide. This include other economic instruments identified in the DFFE, National Pricing Strategy for Waste Management Charges, 2016.

4.2 CONSULTATION

A communication plan is critical to the successful implementation of the NWMS which will involve a range of stakeholders such as different governmental departments, local, provincial and national government, industry associations, the private sector, academic institutions, and the general public including women, youth and people living with disabilities. For strategic plans to be effectively implemented, they rely upon the input and commitment of a wide range of organisations, government and industry who need to be involved and informed in the process from its earliest stages to the generation of results.

The importance of communication sometimes is overlooked or underestimated during the creation and implementation of a strategic plan. While those involved in the planning effort may be aware of what is going on, those outside of the process are often uninformed and uninvolved. Effective communication ensures that all stakeholders are aware of the plan, its importance and how they might be impacted. After all, to achieve success, the NWMS will rely on the activities of all stakeholders - not just the DFFE.

Communication also plays a vital role in monitoring and evaluation. Continuing to communicate with multiple stakeholders as the plan is implemented, to share updates on progress, roadblocks and changes to the plan, helps to keep the plan alive. As governmental departments or associations are assigned responsibility for achieving certain plan objectives, they should also be required to report on their progress on a regular basis. The following activities are suggested for successful communication to support the implementation of the NWMS:

4.2.1 Publicise the NWMS

This will involve developing and distributing printed booklet versions of the 3rd NWMS and amended the Waste Act across all spheres of government, to industry associations and civil society and ensuring availability of a pdf version of both documents on relevant websites and social media platforms e.g. DFFE; SAWIS; DTIC; DSI; DoE; DoH; DHS; DWS; DALRRD; CSIR; Academia, Civil Society Organisations, Companies, Industry Associations; Provincial and Municipal websites etc.

4.2.2 Integrate the NWMS into local planning

Develop and issue guidelines for municipalities in interpreting, applying, and implementing the National Waste Act and the NWMS in their IWMPs and IDPs. This will be accomplished in partnership with SALGA and will target metropolitan, district and local municipalities, and will be followed through with an annual report on progress and case studies.

As a transitional arrangement, the IWMPs under implementation at the time of coming into effect of the revised NWMS will remain in place and effective until their period of review is due. This transitional mechanism is meant to avoid any abrupt changes when a new and revised NWMS comes into effect. Therefore, the revision of the NWMS does not suspend the implementation, review and endorsement of any IMMP in place at the time of the review of the NWMS.

4.2.3 Integrate the NWMS into the National Waste Awareness Campaign

Integrate the NWMS into social media activity as part of the National Waste Awareness Campaign. The target audience for this will include schools, tertiary education, and the general public including women, youth and people living with disabilities.

The awareness raising will involve undertaking workshops around the understanding, application and implementation of the NWMS 2026 across South Africa. The DFFE will run workshops in each province with all district and local waste management officers based on a 'train the trainer' approach that will provide them with the skills and media to run workshops within their municipal structures and communities.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan:

- Provides a concise summary of the key interventions and actions to achieve the Four (4) outcomes of the NWMS 2026;
- Includes pillars, performance indicators, targets and timelines for each action; and Authorities / Organisations responsible for implementation.

Where relevant, the outcome targets for the NWMS 2026 use the 2018 State of Waste Report as the baseline. For instance, this means that the target for reducing waste disposal to landfill by 40% within 5 years will be measured against the total volumes of general and hazardous waste disposed annually in 2017 as recorded in the 2018 State of Waste Report.

The implementation of the strategic will be focused abut not limited to the following prioritised waste streams;

1. Absorbent Hygiene Products (AHPs),
2. Organic waste,
3. Clothing and Textiles,
4. Automobiles,
5. Coal ash,
6. Food waste, and
7. Construction and Demolition waste.

The implementation of the strategy include taking forward the outcomes of the National Circular Economy Action Plan, the recommendations from the Food Waste and Loss Strategy, the recommendations from the AHP Waste Strategy, the recommendations from the E-waste Policy, the recommendations from the G20 Technical Papers, the review and recommendations from the National Pricing Strategy, the consideration and commitment by the National, Provincial, and Local authorities working with other strategic partners to support the recycling enterprises in waste and circular economy. A resource mobilisation drive to be undertaken as part of implementing the strategy.

PILLAR 1: CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WASTE MINIMISATION

OUTCOME 1: 40% *of collected waste diverted from landfill within 5 years; 50% within 10 years; and at least 60% within 15 years leading to Zero-Non residual Waste going to landfill.*

KEY INTERVENTION	ACTION/S	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETS	TIMELINE	IMPLEMENTING AGENT/S
Prevent waste generation through cleaner production, industrial symbiosis and extended producer responsibility	Develop and implement EPR schemes for priority wastes Encourage the domestic reuse of recycled materials, particularly PET, through the implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes that include recycled content targets. Promote the development of local capacity to produce food-grade recycled PET to reduce reliance on virgin plastic and retain material value within South Africa's circular economy Set sector specific targets (hospitality, construction and energy sector)	(i) One pilot or feasibility study for EPR schemes for AHP and the South African context. (ii) Two EPR schemes developed and approved for implementation (iii) Number of EPR schemes achieved performance targets for each year. (iv) Deposit Refund System (DRS) implemented (v) EPR Monitoring Programme	(i) AHP and pharmaceutical EPR schemes developed and approved for implementation; (ii) Six (6) x EPRs for WEEE, Paper and Packaging and lighting, lubricant oil portable batteries and pesticides; (iii) % Reduction of waste disposed to landfill (as per outcome 1); toxicity of waste streams; waste in manufacturing and across its value chain; (iv) DRS targets for collection and recycling for packaging products / EPR collection and recycling targets (Considered for fulfilment of the obligations in terms of the EPR Regulations) (v) Independent EPR Monitoring Agency established	2026-2031 2026-2031 2026-2031 2026-2031 2026-2031	DFFE Provinces Municipalities PROs Producers
	Strengthen the capacity and national reach of the NCPC-SA through establishing waste symbiosis programmes in all provinces. Provide technical support Facilitate synergies	(i) Number of Provinces with well established Industrial Symbiosis Programmes (ii) Increase the training and technical support provided by NCPC-SA with a special focus on women, youth and	(ii) a. 5 x provinces – Gauteng, KZN, E. Cape, Mpumalanga, North West b. 3 x provinces – Free State,	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030 (iii) 2030	NCPS-SA DFFE, DSI (TIA and Waste RDI Roadmap), provinces, industrial development zones, business chambers and industry associations

	Enhancement of the ISP platform Develop new bankable projects Investigate existing environmental/credit programmes to promote scaling and sustainability of ISP	people living with disabilities (iii) Number of tons diverted from landfill	Limpopo, N. Cape (ii) 15 of training and technical support programmes implemented by the NCPC-SA (ii) 1.5 million in 5 years (ii) 100% Synergies (ii) 2x bankable projects per province		
	Minimise the production and retail of single-use plastics for consumption within the country and replace the products with bio-degradable alternatives	Single use plastics to be covered by generic reference to the National Pricing Strategy for Waste Management	80% reduction in production of single use plastics not covered by deposit scheme under the National Pricing Strategy	2030	DFFE DTIC, DSI (TIA and Waste RDI Roadmap), Producers and other affected industries
	Standardise design and packaging of sustainable products that reduces production of waste, maximises resource recovery for recycling or re-use and supports consumption of materials and products with a prolonged life, including packaging formats designed for reuse, in-bulk distribution, and refill systems	(i) Waste Streams that utilise most resources with high potential for circularity identified (ii) Circular economy principles implemented across the waste management value chain (iii) Number of pilot projects established in partnership with producers or PROs to test standardised in-bulk and refill distribution systems, including at least one project in a rural municipality.	(i) and (ii) National Circular Economy Action Plan developed and implemented At least 3 pilot in-bulk/refill systems implemented in different provinces, including at least 1 in a rural or peri-urban municipality, with packaging waste reduction data reported annually by participating producers or PROs	(i) and (ii) 2030	DFFE DTIC, industry associations, research institutions,
Prevent Food Waste	Implement a strategy for reducing food losses and waste prior to retail	(i) Marketing and labelling standards reviewed and revised (ii) Consumer Awareness Campaigns implemented	Marketing and labelling standards reviewed and revised. (ii) One Campaign per year	(i) 2027 (ii) 2026-2031	
	Improve consumer awareness and standards for labelling and marketing of perishable foodstuffs and “ugly” fruit and vegetables	(iii) Consumer awareness raising	(i) 1 x set of Revised standards adopted and implemented	(i) and (ii) 2030	SABS DFFE, DoH, food retailers, DTIC, National

					Consumer Commission (NCC)
	Develop guidelines, norms and standards for redistributing surplus foods and composting of spoilt foods	(i) Guidelines/Norms and Standards developed and implemented (ii) Reduction in food losses prior to retail and food waste in the retail sector	(i) 1 x Guidelines/ norms and standards adopted and implemented (ii) 30% reduction in food waste	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030	DFFE DoH, food retailers, the hospitality sector and NPO's
Increase re-use, recycling and recovery rates	Develop and implement a public procurement framework to support recycling, encompassing requirements for recycled content	Conduct feasibility on recyclate content on Single use plastics and construction and demolition by government. Implementation of the public procurement	Feasibility study Achievement of procurement targets for recycled content in the public sector 1 x Procurement targets gazetted	2026-2027 2029	DFFE NT, COGTA, SALGA and Municipalities
	Establish MRFs and Recyclate processing plants as Public Private Partnerships based on regionally integrated waste management planning	Number of new MRFs and recyclate processing plants established Develop a directive for landfills to have MRFs	Strengthen recyclate processors (consider rebates on those using the recyclates) Performance report on the implementation of the IWMP Number of landfill authorisations (renew, review, variation, etc) issued with MRFs.	2026 2030 2030	DFFE. Producers, Provinces, local government, SALGA, COGTA, NT
	Mandate the six existing EPR scheme to develop implement and maintain industry standards that align technology requirements between primary producers and recyclers of all materials, by ensuring that the design and packaging of products maximise the value of the materials that circulate within the economy	(i) Number of Standards developed and implemented (ii) % Increase in materials recovery and recycling rates	(i) 1 x Industry standards adopted and implemented (ii) 70% of paper recycled, 60% of plastic recycled, 90% of glass recycled, 90% of metals recycled and 40% of fly-ash recycled	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030	PROs DFFE Waste Bureau, DTIC, Research Institutions, NGOs, SABS, industry associations/partners, DSI, Innovation Hub, DoE, Eskom, Transnet and Producers
Divert organic waste from landfill through composting and the recovery of energy	Develop and implement an enabling environment to produce biogas through anaerobic bio-digestion of organic waste treating sewage and organic domestic waste	(i) Sector or waste stream specific Statutory and regulatory framework developed (ii) Number of biogas projects involving organic waste	(i) 1 x Strategy and Regulatory framework adopted and ready for implementation (ii) number of projects registered and operating.	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030	DFFE DMRE, DSI, DHSWAS, Biogas Association

	Consider the separation of organic waste (food waste) at facilities like hospitals, schools,	(iii)	Volume of biogas produced from waste	(iii)	10% biogas produced from organic waste annually	(iii)	2030	
	Develop and implement biogas digester projects geared towards cafeteria and similar facilities in varsities and training institutions.	(i) (ii)	Number of MoU's signed Number of higher learning and training facilities with biogas digesters	(i) (ii)	1 x MoU with DHET and other government institution signed and implemented 50 institutions have biogas digesters	(i) (ii)	2030 2030	DFFE DBE, DMRE
	Include and implement organic waste technologies in local government IWMPs	(i) (ii) (iii)	Number of municipalities with IWMPs that incorporate organic waste technologies/strategies % of the approved IWMPs aligned to the strategy/technology implementing organics waste technologies Number of new composting projects identified and implemented	(i) (ii) (iii)	All Municipalities 100% of approved IWMPs to include organic waste technologies/strategies (chipping, mulching, and composting). 50% of the approved municipal IWMPs that have organic technologies are implemented35 projects	(i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	2030 2030 2030 2030	DFFE Provinces, local government, SALGA, COGTA, other stakeholders
Divert construction and demolition waste from landfill through beneficiation	Develop and implement best practice guidelines and standards for the re-use of C & D waste and coal ashes in roads and other building materials e.g. bricks Separate the gypsum board from the general C&D	(i) (i) (i) (i)	C & D waste only disposed to landfill as cover Number of C & D Beneficiation Monitor compliance by construction Waste reporting from SAWIS (reporting and recovered C&D waste).	(i) (i) (i)	Re-purpose the C&D waste. 70% of C&D diverted from landfill 100% C&D containing gypsum product diverted from landfill. 60% compliance in five years	(i) (ii) (iii)	2030 2030 2030	DFFE SANRAL SABS Construction Industry Association
Increase technical capacity and innovation for the beneficiation of waste	Promote research and Innovation in the waste sector **Develop technical norms and guidelines for the safe use of secondary materials**, such as coal ash, recycled aggregates, and compost, in construction and related applications. These guidelines will support engineers, municipalities, and the private sector	(i) (ii) (iii)	Number of Research & innovation partnership MoU's signed and implemented by government, research institution and DFIs Number of waste beneficiation projects supported Number of research reports published annually	(i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	10 x Research & innovation partnership MoU with DSI signed and implemented 25 projects supported 2 research reports published annually 2 x Waste management training provided through institutions of higher learning	(i)	2030	DFFE DSI (TIA and the Waste RDI RoadMap)

	Review and update or developed new legislation/instruments to keep abreast of technical developments and remove unnecessary regulatory barriers to the uptake of new technologies	Number of instruments reviewed and/or developed	4 Instruments adopted and implemented	2030	DFFE DSI (TIA and the Waste RDI Roadmap), DPME
	Increase technical capacity and skills in the waste sector	(i) Number of waste management graduates prioritising women, youth and people living with disabilities (ii) Number of waste management professionals in the public sector	(i) 120 new graduates prioritising women, youth and people with disabilities (ii) 20 waste management professionals in public sector prioritising women, youth and people with disabilities	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030	DSI (TIA and the Waste RDI Roadmap) Tertiary institutions

PILLAR 2: EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE WASTE SERVICES

OUTCOME 2: ***All South Africans live in clean communities with waste services that are well managed and financially sustainable***

KEY ACTION	SUB-ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETS	TIMELINE	IMPLEMENTING AGENT/S
Waste picker integration	Improving waste diversion from landfill	(iii) Number of waste picker integration programmes implemented at municipalities. (iii) Number of integration programmes implemented (iii) Waste pickers registered to the programme	(i) Waste volumes diverted from the landfill	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030 (iii) 2030	Province Municipalities Waste Pickers
	Separate collection of post-consumer waste of products identified for EPR	(i) % of waste collected	(i) Aligned with the target set in respective Notices	(i) 2030	Producers
	Public online and annually update guidelines, case studies and planning tools on separation at source for municipal managers	(ii) Number of downloads of annual updates (iii) Percentage of households separating at source	(ii) 100 downloads per update (iii) 50% of households in municipalities implementing services	(ii) 2026-2030 (iii) 2030	Waste Bureau, Waste RDI Roadmap, COGTA, SALGA and municipalities
	National Awareness campaign on recycling and waste management	Number of Good Green Deeds programme activities implemented on an ongoing basis	20 of Good Green Deeds activities	2026-2031	DFFE Provinces, municipalities, COGTA and SALGA
Safe and environmentally sustainable disposal of hazardous household wastes	Develop and implement a strategy for the safe disposal of household hazardous waste that includes a communication and awareness plan and EPR as core components	(i) Strategy developed and implemented (ii) Percentage reduction of hazardous wastes in general landfill sites	(i) Develop systems in dealing with chemicals waste (ii) Cleaning fund/contamination fund (iii) Remove the agric-chemical waste through PRO.	(i) 2030 onwards (ii) 2030 (iii) 2030	DFFE, DoH, DTIC, Industry Associations, Producers through EPR schemes
	Develop and implement a strategy and standards relating to the design and disposal of AHPs such as baby	(i) Strategy developed and implemented	(i) National awareness strategy initiated (ii) Proposed AHP EPR	(i) 2030 onwards	DFFE DoH, Private Sector, DTIC SABS

	and adult diapers, feminine care products	(ii) Percentage reduction in disposal of AHPs to landfill		(ii) 2030	
Effective integrated waste management planning that includes strategies to expand waste collection coverage in rural	Development and implementation of 5-year provincial and municipal integrated waste management plans aligned with other functions within municipalities and amongst other government departments. Development and implementation of 5-year provincial and municipal integrated waste management plans, aligned with other government functions, and inclusive of rural and traditional authority areas	(i) Alignment of IWMP with other functions within the municipalities and other government department. (ii) Number of provinces to have updated IWMPs (iii) Number of municipalities to have updated IWMPs (iv) Number of municipalities with IWMPs reporting on SAWIS (v) Number of guidelines and reporting standards for provincial and municipal IWMPS, updated (vi) Review of the DWCS (vii) Number of villages per province incorporated into formal waste collection services. (viii) Percentage of households receiving waste collection services in compliance with DWCS (ix) Percentage of IWMPs reflected in municipal budgets	(i) Biannual engagements between municipalities and other government departments. (ii) All (9) updated provincial IWMPs adopted and implemented (iii) All updated municipalities IWMPs adopted and implemented (iv) All municipalities (i) 1 x Guidelines and reporting standards updated. (ii) DWCS reviewed and revised. (v) At least 5 villages per province incorporated into formal waste collection services by 2031, prioritising traditional authority areas and communities without existing municipal waste collection coverage. (vi) 95% of households (vii) 80% of IWMPS in municipal budgets (viii) All municipal IWMPs submitted to provinces for approval	2030 2030 2030 2030 (iii) 2030	Provinces Municipalities DFFE SALGA COGTA
	Improve collection, reporting and dissemination of information on SAWIS	(i) increase in reporting on SAWIS.	(i) 30% increase in reporting	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030	DFFE, Provinces, municipalities, SALGA, and COGTA

		(ii)	Training on compliance to waste information regulations	(ii)	20 Training interventions per annum		
	Build capacity in integrated waste management planning	(i)	Number of capacity building programmes implemented per annum	(i)	35 of capacity building programmes implemented per annum	(i) 2030 (ii) 2030	DFFE Waste Bureau, Waste RDI Roadmap, SALGA, COGTA, Universities with waste management programmes, provinces and municipalities
	Municipalities to include provisions for recycling drop-off/buy back/storage centres in their IWMPs, supported by provinces, fiscal mechanisms / EPR schemes.	(i) (ii)	Number of feasibility studies completed per province for the established for new recycling drop-off/buy-back/storage centres Number of new recycling drop-off/buy-back/storage centres established	(i) (ii)	1 feasibility study completed per province for new recycling drop-off/buy-back/storage centres . 5 (number of centres established per province.	(i) 2030	DFFE Waste Bureau, Waste RDI Roadmap, NT, SALGA, Provinces, Municipalities, SALGA, COGTA and Producers through EPR schemes

PILLAR 3: CAPACUTY BUILDING AND AWARENESS

- **OUTCOME 3.1 :** Enhance education and awareness while promoting advocacy in environmentally sound management of waste.
- **OUTCOME 3.2:** Improved Public Awareness and Behaviour.
- **OUTCOME 3.3:** Promote collaboration through active partnerships between government, private sector, NGOs, and communities delivering joint awareness campaigns.
- **OUTCOME 3.4:** Industry-led initiatives under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) contributing to public education and waste minimisation.
- **OUTCOME 3.5:** Strengthen Institutional and Technical Capacity in local municipalities

KEY ACTION/ KEY INTERVENTION	SUB-ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETS	TIMELINE	IMPLEMENTING AGENT/S
Enhance education and awareness while promoting advocacy in environmentally sound management of waste	Review and implement a national awareness campaign about litter and illegal dumping (e.g. cleaning and greening campaign)	Number of **nationwide campaigns** conducted annually	Conduct **2 nationwide awareness campaigns annually** (Including Cleanest Town Competitions, radio, TV, social media, community events including Faith Based Organisations events and Minister, Deputy Minister, MEC, Mayor and Councillors' events.	2028 2030	DFFE Provinces Municipalities SALGA PROs Traditional Leaders Faith Based Organisations
	Awareness and Education	Number of awareness initiatives conducted through waste management Number of awareness initiatives conducted at schools (ECD-Tertiary Institutions) Establish local financing models such as pay as you throw Training of Waste Officials Partnerships for E-waste recycling	2 education and awareness initiatives conducted Schools participating in waste awareness initiatives annually. educational workshops, seminars, or campaigns conducted in schools. Promote the Waste RDI Sachi Chairs initiative. Establish a Waste Management Training Programme/ Summer School / Winter School Implement ICT/EduTech Waste/Batteries in schools projects,	2028 2030 2026 - 2031	Government Departments, Ward Councillors, Liquor Board, Faith Based Organisations Traditional Leaders and PRO's NRF, Universities and DFFE Universities, DFFE, DHE; Universities South Africa; Waste Management Industry Stakeholders (Local and International)

		Raising awareness in schools	Educational Programmes on awareness raising Antilittering campaigns Workshops on awareness raising and partnerships MoUs/Protocols on Working together.	2031	DBE-DFFE, Gov. Departments, DSTI, Industry
Improved Public Awareness and Behaviour	Community awareness activities and forester community engagements	Number of public awareness programs. number of media coverage (community radio stations; Television soaps and dramas) Review of the strategy and the timeline thereof.	Monthly public awareness programmes converged through media coverage	2030	Influencers and script writers Government departments Ward Councillors Traditional Leaders Faith Based Organisations
Promote collaboration through active partnerships between government, private sector, influencers, NGOs, and communities delivering joint awareness campaigns.	Co-develop annual joint awareness campaign themes (e.g., "Zero Waste Communities") with all sectors represented	Number of joint planning meetings held annually with government, private sector, NGOs, and community representatives. Percentage of identified stakeholders actively participating in campaign design.	Quarterly joint awareness campaigns Revitalise, Promote and Sustain the Cleanest Town Competitions	2026 – 2030 2028 2030	Influencers and script writers Government departments, Provinces, Municipalities Ward Councillors Traditional Leaders PRO's Private Sector NGOs Waste Pickers
Industry-led initiatives under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) contributing to public education and waste minimisation.	Require producers to run nationwide campaigns (TV, radio, social media, product packaging) on recycling, waste minimisation, and correct disposal.	Number of producer responsibility organisations (PROs) implementing nationwide education campaigns annually. Percentage of producers complying with the EPR requirement to fund and run awareness campaigns.	Quarterly nationwide campaigns (TV, radio, social media, product packaging) on recycling, waste minimisation, and correct disposal.	2026 - 2031	PRO's Waste Pickers Private Sector Government Departments NPO's Influencers (Social Media) DSBD e.g (Tuck Shop and Taverns)

Strengthen Institutional and Technical Capacity in local municipalities	Develop and roll out training programmes for municipal officials, landfill operators, and compliance officers.	Number of municipal officials trained annually in waste management Number of institutions that produced the graduates in waste management Percentage of municipalities with a dedicated waste management unit or officer.	Municipal officials trained annually in waste management 50 graduates produced in waste management 1 waste management officer per local municipality 2 waste management officer per district/ metro and province	2030 2030 2030	COGTA, SALGA, DFFE, National Treasury, Provinces and Municipalities.

PILLAR 4: COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

OUTCOME 4.1: Mainstreaming a culture of compliance resulting in zero tolerance of waste pollution/Zero tolerance against waste pollution.

KEY ACTION/ KEY INTERVENTION	SUB-ACTIONS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	TARGETS	TIMELINE	IMPLEMENTING AGENT/S
Reducing pollution, littering and illegal dumping	Update and train municipal officials on the model by-law focusing on Waste management. Register waste transporters on SAWIS.	Model by-law updated and training provided to municipal officials. Waste transporters registered on SAWIS.	Model by law updated Training of municipal officials on model by-law provided. Waste transporters registered on SAWIS.	(i) 2028 (ii) 2030 2027 2028 - 2030	DFFE
	Develop and implement Rehabilitation plan for illegal dumping sites	(i) Rehabilitation plan for illegal dumping sites developed and implemented.	Identify illegal dumping sites hotspots. Development of the plan Implementation and monitoring of the plan.	2027 2028 - 2030	DFFE, Provincial authorities, municipalities and PROs.
Enhance capacity to monitor compliance and enforce the Waste Act and International Agreements	• DFFE and/or Province with SAPS • DFFE and/or Province with NPA • DFFE and/or Province with municipality (peace officers and EHPs) • DFFE and/or Province with PDoH (EHPs: HCRW) on increasing	Number of training programme developed and implemented.	Training needs analysis and development of training programme. Identify officials needing training Implementation of the training programme	(i) 2026 2027 - 2030	DFFE (CWM/RC&SM), Provinces, SAPS, NPA, Municipalities Interpol DFFE

	enforcement of Waste Act and municipal by-laws relating to pollution, littering and illegal dumping develop and implement training programme for compliance monitoring and enforcement.			2027 – 2030.	
	Increase the number of EMIs dedicated to monitor compliance and enforce the Waste Act	Number of EMIs appointed /designated	• At least 1 EMI per metro district • All districts • All national, provincial and local municipalities	(i) 2030	DFFE Compliance and Enforcement.
		Number or percentage of additional Waste Management officials trained on EMI and designated	30%	2027	DFFE; Provinces and Municipalities
Ensure municipal landfill sites and waste management facilities comply with licensing requirements municipality is responsible	Develop mechanisms to enforce compliance to license, norms and standards, exclusions and exemptions conditions.	i. % of municipal landfills complying with licensing conditions for approvals of waste management licensing, exemptions and exclusions regulations reviewed, amended and implemented. i. Municipal landfill operators trained on landfill management. iv Establishment of environmental monitoring committees for all licensed (Defining the technical descriptor and parameters) (Governance & Operational Support to include targets to improve landfill compliance)	(i) 55% (ii) 80% (iii) 90% (iv) 10% MIG to allocated for Operations and maintenance (O&M). Approvals of waste management licensing, exemptions and exclusions regulations reviewed, amended. Training needs analysis and development of training programme. Identify landfill site operators needing training Implementation of the training programme for Waste Management Officers	(i) 2026 (ii) 2028 (iii) 2030 2030 2027 – 2031 2026-2031	SALGA and municipalities. DFFE DFFE, Provinces, Municipalities and PROs. Universities, Industry organisations, Business, and other Training Institutions (Both local and International)

CHAPTER 6: MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Whilst the Waste Act requires that the NWMS be revised every 5 years, the 2026 NWMS presents the following monitoring and evaluation measures:

- Annual reporting systems will be established to review progress – and where necessary, to adjust targets or actions based on new information or new developments within the sector;
- Provinces will provide DFFE with annual progress reports regarding implementation of provincial IWMPs. The Provincial Report must reflect progress in the implementation of IWMPs by local government, who will report annually to the relevant provincial Member of Executive Council (MEC). SAWIS will develop guidelines for provinces and local government on the content and format of annual reporting on IWMPs;
- Databases that record compliance and enforcement activities, such as the National Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Report will also be utilised for reporting; and
- The DFFE is responsible for monitoring the implementation of EPR schemes developed by industry. Reporting requirements for these plans will be aligned with SAWIS.

Effective reporting on the implementation of IWMPs and EPR programmes should provide a steadily improving picture of the status and outcomes of both private and public investments in waste management services and infrastructure. The DFFE will also work with the private sector at sector and sub-sector level to identify and address unnecessary regulatory barriers related to current challenges experienced by industry.

Several national departments have a significant role to play in the implementation plan of the NWMS 2026. The DFFE will establish the relevant institutional mechanism for ongoing engagement with these departments and government entities and where required, develop MoUs to provide for transparent reporting and intergovernmental cooperation around the relevant aspects of the NWMS 2026.

APPENDIX 1: STATUS QUO ASSESSMENT OF THE NWMS 2020

Due to its nature and timing, the NWMS 2020 was focused on giving effect to the legislative imperatives and regulatory measures described in the Waste Act. A central aspect of the project scope of work involved in the revision of the NWMS was the critical evaluation of the extent to which the objectives of the Waste Act have been achieved, and the extent and impact of the regulations and measures accomplished in terms of the Waste Act.

The purpose of the NWMS is to achieve the objects of the Waste Act, which are:

- To reform the law regulating waste management in order to uphold the provision of Section 24 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa by providing reasonable measures for the prevention of pollution and ecological degradation and for securing ecologically sustainable development;
- To provide for institutional arrangements and planning matters;
- To provide for national norms and standards for regulating the management of waste by all spheres of government;
- To provide for specific waste management measures;
- To provide for the licensing and control of waste management activities; to provide for the remediation of contaminated land;
- To provide for the national waste information system; and
- To provide for compliance and enforcement.

•The NWMS 2020's 3 Strategic Pillars and associated targets are supported by as detailed Implementation plan which has been delineated into 12 key interventions.

•The implementation of NWMS 2020 has achieved several milestones and success. However, there have also been a number of familiar challenges.

•These challenges relate to a lack of buy-in or commitment by certain stakeholders, slow reporting from some of the implementing agents, and

•Insufficient resources, including funding, to implement capital-intensive projects.

The Status Quo Analysis of the NWMS 2020 indicated that the performance on;

- Waste minimisation pillar is 40% with 10% in progress;
- Effective and sustainable waste services pillar is 70% with 10% in progress; and
- Compliance, enforcement and awareness pillar is 40% with 10% also in progress.

This technical makes 50% for the average performance on the implementation of the NWMS 2020.

NWMS 2020 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD FIGURE 1

1. Waste Minimisation:	2. Effective and Sustainable Waste Services:	3. Compliance, Enforcement and Awareness:
Red Flags : ▶ Circular Economy Plan still to be developed. ▶ Development Green Public Procurement Framework is significantly behind. ▶ MRF Implementation behind schedule ▶ School Biogas Projects lagging behind ▶ Data regarding wast mgt graduates not provided	• **Red Flags :** ▶ Waste Picker Integration Implementation requires confirmation regarding partnership Papers' ▶ No indication that Municipalities have included organics in their IWMPs	**Red Flags :** ▶ MoU with SAPS to be finalised ▶ Develop financial mechanisms to enforce compliance to license conditions delayed •

NWMS DASHBOARD 2

1. Waste Minimisation:	2. Effective and Sustainable Waste Services:	3. Compliance, Enforcement and Awareness:
Target: •45% of waste from diverted from landfill within 5 years; 55% within 10 years; and at least 70% within 15 years leading to Zero-Waste going to landfill. **Progress:** •Currently waste diverted from landfill is 21,59%. •**45% in 5 years (2025) unlikely**	**Target:** •All South Africans live in clean communities with waste services that are well-managed and financially sustainable **Progress:** •Waste collection services has decreased to 63% in 2022 across, households/ communities in South Africa	**Target:** •Mainstreaming of waste awareness and a culture of compliance with zero tolerance of pollution, litter and illegal dumping **Progress:** •The Department has issued over: •349 PCNs since the NWMS implementation •104 CNs since the NWMS implementation • •The Municipal Cleaning and Greening Programme was launched in November 2023 •It aims to clear 7 251 illegal dumping hotspots in communities across our country. •As of September 2023, 1 299 sites had already been cleared.