

# Supporting a Sustainable Waste and Circular Economy in Rwanda

Fostering Circular Economy (CE) approaches in policy and regulatory frameworks, the private business environment, entrepreneurship efforts and municipal waste management regarding sustainable prevention and handling of waste. Supporting the cooperation between public and private actors for a circular economy in the waste sector.

## Confronting the challenge

Around 1.5 million tonnes of solid waste are generated in Rwanda every year, up to 75% of which is organic. According to the National Institute of Statistics Rwanda (NISR), the Rwandan population is projected to grow from approximately 13.6 million today to 17.6 million by 2035, with respective knock-on effects in terms of the volumes of waste generated. The most recent NISR survey of 2020 revealed that only 12.1% of households have access to waste collection services nationwide and that the principles of circularity are only applied in isolated instances. Less than 4% of waste is recycled. Rwanda's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from waste are estimated at 0.64 megatons CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e), equivalent to 12% of Rwanda's total GHG emissions.

Furthermore, poor development in the Waste Management (WM) sector and circular economy harbours significant risks for overall public health and the environment. Water pollution and illegal waste dumps lead to a lack of hygiene and are breeding sites for vector-borne diseases.

The Government of Rwanda has identified the poorly developed waste management sector and circular economy as obstacles to development and has therefore made it a priority in their development agenda. In addition to key documents at the strategic level, cooperation with the private sector is essential to address current waste management practices and work towards a circular economy, which ultimately leads to overall GHG reduction and economic transformation.

## Our approach

The GIZ Waste and Circular Economy (WCE) project aims to enable public and private actors to implement circular economy practices in Rwanda's waste sector. It is part of the Rwandan-German Climate and Development Partnership that was signed by the Environmental Ministers of both countries in March 2022. One of the project's key instruments is needs-based capacity development. The support aims to enhance and increase technical and organisational capacities and skills within the structures relevant for implementing approaches of a circular economy in waste management.

Project name	Supporting a Sustainable Waste and Circular Economy in Rwanda
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project country	Rwanda
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Environment (MoE)
Duration	09/2022 – 08/2026

## Supporting public institutions

Through its support to the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA) and subordinate institutions, the WCE team provides these relevant state actors with technical and process-related advice regarding the development of instruments for implementing and operationalising policies, strategies, and plans for circular waste management. A specific focus lies on the cooperation between the public and private sector, which is taken



Left image: Participants brainstorming at one of the WCE project's workshops in April 2023.

Right image: Waste at the Nyamata dumpsite in December 2022. The dumpsite is planned to be upgraded to a modern landfill to treat solid waste.

into regard through initiating and moderating dialogues between state institutions and private enterprises.

### Enabling the private sector

The WCE project is supporting private enterprises to develop financially viable business models and access finance for inclusive, climate-smart waste management and a circular economy. A major enabling factor is an improved financial environment for WCE activities, including setting up subsidized target programs and a higher educational level of financial institutions and intermediaries for the specific needs of WCE business approaches. An improved regulatory framework, for example by enforcing common standards in waste management, would also create further markets for WCE services.

The project is providing training measures to develop entrepreneurial capacity. In partnership with Rwanda Green Fund, a call for ideas was launched in September 2023 to support 30 companies with coaching by Impact Hub Kigali to enhance their business cases. Ten of the 30 companies will receive grants (of up to 50,000 EUR / 60M RWF) to finance their circular solutions. Furthermore, companies in selected value chains, such as the agri-food value chain (incl. banana, dairy, coffee, maize, and rice) have been trained on circular processes and are being coached to apply circular approaches to their own businesses. In addition, WCE is offering training to financial intermediaries, incl. commercial banks, to better understand and analyse WCE business models, as well as direct support in evaluating business proposals from these sectors.

### Piloting in satellite cities

Finally, the WCE project is piloting national strategies and plans for circular waste management in Rwanda's three satellite cities: Bugesera, Muhanga, and Rwamagana. Action plans have been developed for each satellite city together with the respective municipalities. These serve as a basis for awareness raising campaigns, waste separation at household level and separate collection (organic and non-organic waste) by waste collection companies. The project is supporting the satellite cities to set up a composting facility in each city for the organic waste collected from households. During the pilot phase, 200 households per city are being engaged and the experience will be fed into the national dialogue process. Upon completion of the pilot, it is planned to be upscaled to the entire cities in the near future.

## Dimensions of sustainability

### Governance

The thematic orientation to climate-smart waste management solutions in a circular economy supports the strategic interface between the waste sector and international climate efforts. As such, the project contributes to Rwanda's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). The dialogue between public institutions and the private sector aims to firmly embed the WCE approach within the institutional landscape and sector over the medium to long term.

### Economic

The promotion of climate-smart circularity approaches in the waste management sector supports Rwanda's economic transition in its path to becoming a green economy. The project also strengthens the structures for Rwanda's financial autonomy to implement national development plans by increasing the percentage of private-sector investments in the circular economy. Circular waste management activities modernise the Rwandan economy, foster the private sector's potential for innovation, job creation and promote the Rwandan economy's resilience.

### Environmental

By strengthening circular economy approaches, the project reduces waste-related GHG emissions and waste-generated pollutants in air, water, and soil. Furthermore, the project contributes to reducing the volume of river-borne waste carried to the sea (marine litter) as well as Rwanda's GHG emissions, since waste is a major source of emissions.

### Social

The project supports Rwanda's government to create the necessary conditions to improve the quality of life of those burdened by inadequate access to sustainable waste management solutions and circular economy approaches. The project implements the 2030 Agenda principle LNOB (leave no one behind) and provides particular support to female experts and managers in capacity development measures to increase their social participation. By lowering the emissions of waste-generated pollutants, it also reduces the public health risks associated with environmental pollution.



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