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# Sustainable Waste Management in Kenya.

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In Kenya, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has taken the lead in promoting this transition as the concept of a circular economy gains traction as a sustainable solution to waste management concerns. NEMA's holistic approach to circular economy promotion is transforming waste management methods and fostering a more sustainable, resource-efficient, and economically viable future.

Unlike the traditional linear economy, which extracts, uses, and then discards resources, the circular economy emphasizes waste reduction, reusing materials, and recycling goods, resulting in a closed-loop system. NEMA understands that implementing this strategy is both environmentally and economically beneficial.

### **Waste Management in Kenya**

The regulatory framework, the regulated community, which includes waste generators and waste service providers, and the regulators compose Kenya's waste management ecosystem.

### **Policy and Regulatory Framework**

Kenya's waste landscape includes the following regulatory instruments:

- a) The Environmental, Management and Coordination Act 1999 prescribes the management of waste in Kenya.
- b) The Environmental Management and Coordination (Waste Management) Regulations 2006, which outline the obligations of waste generators, collectors, transporters, and disposal facility standards.
- c) National Solid Waste Management Strategy 2015, based on the zero waste principle and minimum disposal site requirements.
- d) Circular Economy Initiatives in the National Sustainable Waste Management Policy 2021:
- e) The Sustainable Waste Management Act of 2022, which calls for circular waste management measures.
- f) The proposed Sustainable Waste Management (Extended Producer Responsibility) Regulations for 2023.

N.B: The circular economy concept calls for things to be recycled, reused, and repurposed to reduce waste output.

### **Promoting Innovation and Research**

NEMA supports research and innovation initiatives that explore novel ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste. Through partnerships with academic institutions, businesses, and research organizations, NEMA fosters the development of sustainable technologies and processes that contribute to waste minimization and resource recovery.

### **Building Capacity and Raising Awareness**

NEMA conducts community outreach programs, workshops, and training sessions to educate citizens, businesses, and local governments on the advantages of the circular economy and how to apply sustainable waste management methods. NEMA is promoting a culture of responsible consumption and waste reduction by empowering citizens with knowledge. Adoption of sustainable waste management practices is promoted through recycling.

### **Partnerships and collaboration**

Recognizing the complexities of waste management issues, NEMA works extensively with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private sector companies.

These partnerships leverage expertise and resources to implement large-scale circular economy projects. NEMA's involvement in global networks allows Kenya to tap into a wealth of knowledge and experience, accelerating its progress towards a circular economy. Partnership with Kenya Association of Manufacturers, Kenya Private Sector Alliance, Kenya Association of Waste Recyclers. NEMA has undertaken joint training, awareness, and education forums.

### **Monitoring and Enforcement.**

The authority analyzes and assesses the impact of its policies and activities to ensure that they are in line with the aims of waste reduction, resource efficiency, and long-term economic growth.

Monitoring waste management activities to

guarantee adherence to various legislation, standards, and license terms.

Inspections, audits, and the issuance of orders are used to carry out enforcement actions such as imposing penalties or closing down non-compliant enterprises.

NEMA maintains a dynamic approach to waste management by measuring outcomes and making data-driven decisions.

### Licensing

- a) The licensing of waste service providers in the country to ensure effective waste management and environmental protection.
- b) This process involves regulatory, oversight and authorization to individuals or companies that engage in waste collection, transportation, recycling, disposal, and other related activities.
- c) The goal is to maintain high standards of waste management, minimize environmental pollution, and promote sustainable practices.
- d) Application and Eligibility: All Waste service providers must obtain licenses from NEMA.
- e) The process is digitalized with submission of comprehensive application that outlines their proposed waste management activities.
- f) The application typically includes details about the type of waste to be managed, methods of collection and disposal, recycling strategies, and other relevant information.
- g) The licenses validity is commonly 12months except for export permit where licenses are issued per consignment.
- h) The licenses are subject to conditions to ensure sustainable waste management practice.

### Ban on plastic Bags.

Ban on plastic bags used for both commercial and household packaging 2017.

The clearance of primary industrial plastic packaging requires the manufacturers and users of Plastic packaging to put in place take back schemes.

The ban on single use plastic in protected 2018.

The PET and MoECCF worked on a FoC on management of PET waste and this saw the establishment of PETCO Kenya a producer Responsibility Organization to Manage PET products.

The Bakers sector under negotiated

compliance established extended producer responsibility scheme namely Kenya Extended Producer Responsibility Organization (KEPRO).

KEPRO initial mandate was to execute EPR obligations on behalf of all bakers

KEPRO encountered great challenges due to free riding.

KEPRO expanded her scope to cover other plastic packaging for non-hazardous products.

The existence of KEPRO and PETCO without commensurate regulatory framework resulted to a myriad of challenges.

### Outputs of the ban on plastic bags.

- a) The ban necessitated the establishment of voluntary EPR schemes.
- b) This led to formation of KEPRO for bread packaging in 2019.
- c) The need for legal framework on mandatory EPR.
- d) Development of National Sustainable waste Management policy 2021.
- e) The Sustainable Waste Management Act 2022.
- f) Development of EPR regulations (still in draft awaiting gazetment) to provide for mandatory EPR schemes.
- g) EPR schemes including KEHAPRO (for hazardous products), EPROK (Electrical and Electronic Equipment), PAKPRO (for packaging for non-hazardous products).

### FoC 2018

The FoC was signed on 17 May 2018 for a period of three years.

The responsibility of the private sector under the FoC includes the manufacturer's responsibility for PET post-consumer waste in the Kenya environment:-

- a) Establish and implement the agreed Take Back and Extended Producer Responsibility schemes for PET Bottles- PETCO Kenya
- b) Undertake clean-up activities on PET waste Bottles before the schemes are fully implemented in partnership with the ME&F and relevant agencies.
- c) Conduct awareness campaigns to support the established schemes' implementation, re-cycling, and up-cycling.
- d) Support research to be undertaken under this Framework of Cooperation.

See QR code for the report on FoC.

## Challenges to sustainable waste Management in Kenya.

**Inadequate Infrastructure:** One of the primary challenges is the lack of proper waste management infrastructure, including waste collection, transportation, and disposal facilities. Many areas, especially in informal settlements, lack consistent waste collection services, leading to improper disposal and littering.

**Rapid Urbanization:** Kenya's rapid urbanization has resulted in increased waste generation, putting additional strain on already limited waste management resources. Urban areas face difficulties managing the growing volume of waste while ensuring environmental sustainability.

**Limited Public Awareness and Education:** There is often a lack of awareness and education about the importance of proper waste disposal practices among the general public. Insufficient knowledge about the negative impacts of littering and improper waste disposal can contribute to a culture of neglecting waste management responsibilities.

**Inadequate Enforcement:** Although waste management regulations exist, enforcement can be weak due to various reasons, including limited resources, corruption, and insufficient penalties for violations. Lack of strict enforcement can lead to non-compliance and continued littering.

**Lack of Funding:** Adequate funding for waste management initiatives is often lacking.

This limits investments in waste collection infrastructure, recycling facilities, and public awareness campaigns.

**Plastic Pollution:** Single-use plastics, which are a major source of pollution, continue to be widely used and discarded. The presence of plastic waste in the environment poses a significant challenge due to its persistence and harmful effects on ecosystems.

**Informal Waste Sector:** While the informal waste sector plays a role in waste collection and recycling, it lacks proper regulation and integration into formal waste management systems. This can lead to inefficiencies, unsafe working conditions, and limited oversight of waste handling practices.

**Lack of Segregation and Recycling:** Proper waste segregation at the source is often lacking, making recycling efforts more challenging. Without proper separation of recyclable materials, the potential for resource recovery is reduced.

**Landfill Management:** Existing landfills are often poorly managed, leading to environmental pollution, groundwater contamination, and health hazards for nearby communities.

**Lack of Integrated Approach:** Waste management in Kenya often lacks an integrated approach that considers the entire lifecycle of products, from production to disposal. This approach is necessary to promote waste reduction and sustainable consumption patterns.



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