

Building from what exists: Lessons from Waste Picker Integration in South Africa

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INC 53 IN 2047:

**THE PLASTIC TREATY HAS
FINALLY BEEN AGREED UPON,
WITH ALL MEMBER STATES
AGREEING TO SET UP VENUS
AS A PLASTIC WASTE DUMP SITE**

Forging a way forward after INC 5.2

- We need a binding treaty that includes reductions in production and harmful chemicals + just transition
- Some hopeful developments – more than 114 countries supported IAWP positions on waste pickers
- While we fight for a treaty, we can implement waste picker integration in our countries and build African Circular Economies that are clean, secure and improve existing self-made jobs, and reduce GHG emissions



African circular economies must build from what exists



Waste Picker Integration Guideline

- 2008 Waste Act – recognized waste picking
- 2011 NWMS – guidance on integration
- 2016 – 2019 – Participatory evidence-based policy process to develop the Waste Picker Integration Guideline
- including waste picker organisation, industry associations, national and local government and NGOs.
- Released in 2020
- Available at:
<https://wastepickerintegration.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/DFFE-and-DSI-Waste-Picker-Integration-Guideline-for-South-Africa.pdf>



Waste picker integration

- is the creation of a **formally planned recycling system** that **values** and **improves** the present **role of waste pickers**,



- **builds** on the **strengths of their existing system** for collecting and revaluing materials,



- **includes** waste pickers as **key partners** in its design, implementation, evaluation, revision, and



- **includes** the integration of waste pickers' **work**, as well as the **political, economic, social, legal and environmental integration** of waste pickers.



Waste Picker Integration Principles

1. Recognition respect and redress
2. Value waste pickers' expertise
3. Meaningful engagement
4. Build on what exists
5. Increased diversion and cost effectiveness
6. Evidence-based
7. Enabling environment
8. Improved conditions and income
9. Compensation for services and savings
10. Holistic integration



7 steps for waste picker integration



SA Waste Picker Registration System



Mobilisation



Card distribution

- SAWPRS developed through participatory process with wps leading
- Meaningful engagement with technical team
- Registration requires registrar and verifier (must be a wp)
- Led by wps



EPR Regulations – May 5, 2021 Amendments

5A1(m) – The Producer Responsibility Organisation must integrate informal waste collectors, reclaimers and pickers into the post consumer collection value chain.

5A1(p) compensate waste collectors, reclaimers or pickers, who register with the National Registration Database, for collection services and environmental benefits, through the collection service fee by November 2022. The collection service fee and the National Registration Database shall be reviewed annually by the national Department responsible for Environmental Affairs;



How payment and traceability work

- The waste picker registers on the South African Waste Picker Registration System
- The waste picker registers on a weight tracking system and a payment system
- The waste picker sells to a buyback centre that uses an approved weight tracking system
- When the waste picker sells to the buyback centre, the information on how many kg they sold of each material is sent to the relevant PRO
- The PRO pays the waste picker directly via an electronic payment system



Challenges in implementation

1. PRO non-compliance – little effort to set up systems to pay waste pickers already registered on SAWPRS
2. To date, no penalties for non-compliance
3. As PROs not legally required to make joint decisions with wp organisations, lack of meaningful engagement and lack of strategic focus for integration projects.
4. Lack of alignment with the Waste Picker Integration Principles.



Lessons – Foundation for integrated EPR

1. Participatory, evidence-based approach to policy development. Prioritize the knowledge and experience of waste pickers and other stakeholders. Partnership with academics is important.
2. Agree on waste picker integration principles and the definition – use SA principles as a reference
3. All other party representatives spend a day working with wps



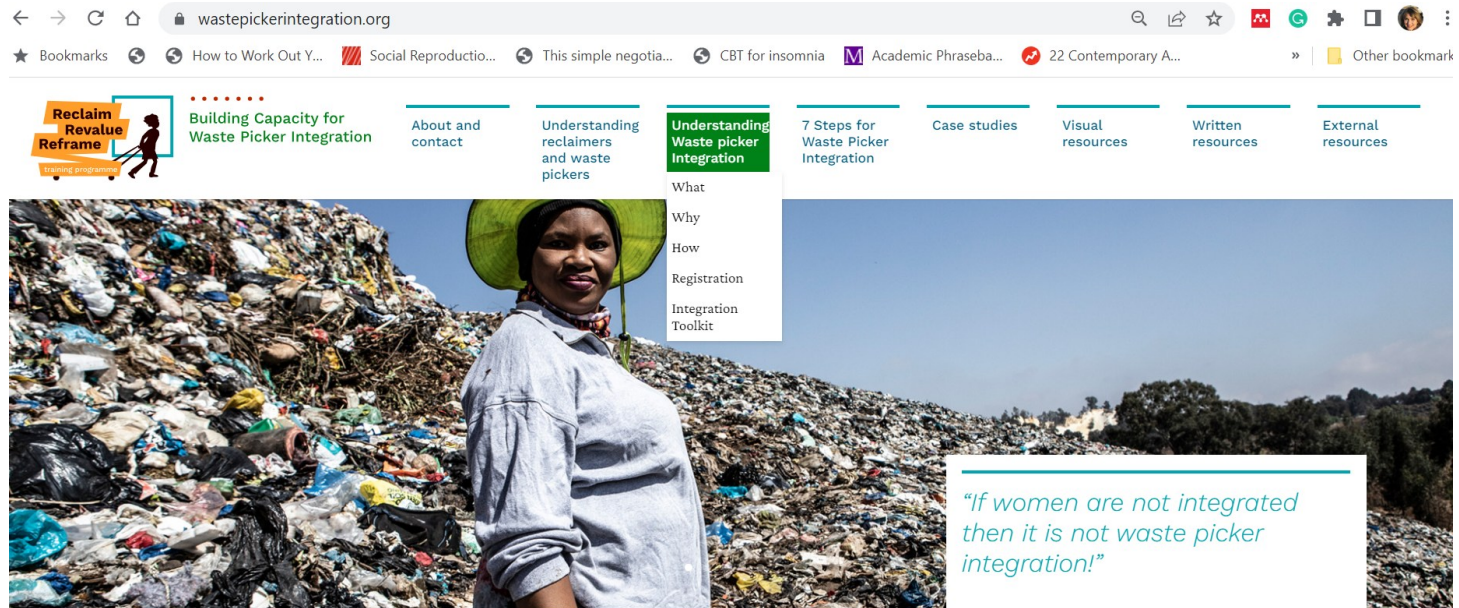
Lessons – EPR Legislative Requirements

1. One PRO per material
2. PROs must fund waste picker integration, registration and wp organisations and pay a service fee
3. PROs must abide by negotiated wp integration principles
4. PROs must be required to make joint decisions with wp organisations on all aspects related to wp integration. Include dispute resolution mechanisms.
5. Transparency and public availability of plans, budgets, reports, and data
6. Strong monitoring by government and enforcement of stiff penalties.



UNIDO Reclaim, Revalue Reframe Project and Website

www.wastepickerintegration.org



This website

Who are reclaimers?

What is integration?



Thank you!

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