



WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING SYSTEMS IN LESOTHO

Date: 17 June 2026

Venue: Lancers Inn Maseru

Topics covered

- ▶ Current waste management situation
- ▶ Gaps in collection, recycling and financing
- ▶ Role of Municipalities and the informal sector
- ▶ Way forward

Background

Reasons for waste generation:

- ▶ Rapid urbanization
- ▶ Population growth
- ▶ Changing consumption patterns

NB: Waste generation remains a **major environmental and public health challenge**

Waste Types and characteristics

Waste types & Characteristics

- ▶ Organic waste :
- ▶ Plastic waste
- ▶ Paper and cardboard,
- ▶ glass,
- ▶ Metal
- ▶ Construction and demolition rubble
- ▶ Healthcare waste
- ▶ E-waste
- ▶ Industrial sludge

Waste Collection Strategy

Five-legged waste mgt strategy

- Force account –
- Community contracting –
- Lease contracting – MCC engages private companies
- Freelancing - Private companies
- Community day campaigns

Activities Involved

- Litter picking , street sweeping, collection, transportation, etc

Waste disposal situation

**No Landfills in the Country, Only
dumpsites**

Dumpsite Challenges - Case of Ts'osane dumpsite:

- Insufficient management funds, hence poor management
- Upstream of the Maqalika Dam catchment
- Unlined,
- Spontaneous combustion (Fires), NO LFG management
- Leachate management problems

Recycling Industry in Lesotho

- **Focuses mainly recovery, No Recycling Plants,**
- **Actors: waste pickers, private collectors & small recycling companies**
- **Materials recovered:**
 - Plastic bottles,
 - Cardboard and paper
 - Glass bottles
 - Aluminium cans
 - Scrap metals

Gaps in waste collection

Limited coverage (35 – 40% of 138 sq. km of MCC)

Consequences:

- Illegal dumping
- Waste burning
- Waste accumulation in public spaces
- Proliferation of pests

Gaps in waste collection cont...

Infrastructure constraints:

- Insufficient collection vehicles (compactor trucks, skiploaders, tractors etc.)
- Limited number of waste skips
- Inadequate human resources

Gaps in recycling systems

No separation at source

Most waste that is collected, is mixed at source.

Consequences:

- Low recovery rates
- Contamination of recyclables
- Increased recycling costs

Gaps in recycling systems Cont...

Limited or no recycling infrastructure:

Such as:

- No MRF facilities/ Buy-back centres... HOWEVER, Lesotho Gov & UNIDO Co-funded Pilot projects will soon be up and running
- No Plastic processing plants
- No Composting facilities
- No Waste sorting centres

NB: Most recyclables are exported to RSA for processing.

Public awareness challenges

Limited public knowledge on:

- Waste separation
- Recycling benefits
- Proper waste disposal
- Circular economy principles

NB: Compounded by a headstrong community

Financing gaps

Limited Municipal/Council Budget, which affects the following:

- Procurement of fuel for refuse collection vehicles
- Ability to procure new refuse collection
- Procurement of adequate refuse collection vehicles and equipment
- Vehicle maintenance
- Dumpsite operations
- Public awareness initiatives

Financing gaps cont...

Dependence on external funding:

Most Council waste management programmes rely on:

- Central government funding
- Donor support, and
- Development partner projects

Role of Municipalities

- Implementation of Waste management Policies
- Public education and awareness
- Enforcement , THOUGH CRIPPLED BY ABSENCE OF THE BYE-LAWS
- Strategic planning

Contributions of informal sector

Waste pickers and informal recyclers:

They form the backbone of recycling activities in Lesotho.

➤ **Economic contributions are:**

- Employment creation
- Income generation

Contributions of informal sector cont...

► Environmental contributions

- Salvage recyclables from the waste streams and disposal sites
- Conserve resources
- Elongate the lifespan of waste disposal facilities
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Improve cleanliness

Recommendations

- ▶ Prioritization of waste management activities
- ▶ Improvement of waste collection services
- ▶ Injection of adequate financing to strengthen the recycling industry in the Country
, and
- ▶ Support informal sector in the waste management industry

THANK YOU