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Environmental Guidelines for Small-Scale Activities in Africa (EGSSAA)

Chapter 15
Solid waste: generation, handling, treatment and disposal

Contents

The adverse impacts of waste management are best addressed by establishing integrated programs where all types of waste and all facets of the waste management process are considered together. The long-term goal should be to develop an integrated waste management system and build the technical, financial, and administrative capacity to manage and sustain it.

Brief Description of the Sector

Thousands of tons of solid waste are generated daily in Africa. Most of it ends up in open dumps and wetlands, contaminating surface and ground water and posing major health hazards. Generation rates, available only for select cities and regions, are approximately 0.5 kilograms per person per day—in some cases reaching as high as 0.8 kilograms per person per day. While this may seem modest compared to the1–2 kg per person per day generated in developed countries, most waste in Africa is not collected by municipal collection systems because of poor management, fiscal irresponsibility or malfeasance, equipment failure, or inadequate waste management budgets.

Though high- and low-value recyclables are typically recovered and reused, these make up only a small proportion of the total waste stream. The great majority of the waste (~70 percent) is organic. In theory, this waste could be converted to compost or used to generate biogas, but in situations where rudimentary solid waste management systems barely function, it is difficult to promote innovation, even when it is potentially cost-effective to do so. In addition, hazardous and infectious materials are discarded along with general waste throughout the continent. This is an especially dangerous condition that complicates the waste management problem.

Throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa solid waste generation exceeds collection capacity. This is in part due to rapid urban population growth: while only 35 percent of the sub-Saharan population lives in urban areas, the urban population grew by 150 percent between 1970 and 1990. But the problem of growing demand is compounded by broken-down

For more information…

These guidelines are intended to be a starting point for developers and managers of solid waste projects. They are designed to highlight key issues, questions to consider, and technical options. More detailed resources are cited at the end of this document. Solid waste project developers and managers should pay particular attention to *The International Source Book on Environmentally Sound Technologies for Municipal Solid Waste Management,* produced by the International Environmental Technology Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme.

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collection trucks and poor program management and design. In West African cities, as many as 70 percent of trucks are always out of service at any one time, and in 1999 the City of Harare failed to collect refuse from nearly all of its residents because only 7 of its 90 trucks were operational.

For health reasons, waste in tropical regions should actually be collected daily. This makes the challenges and costs of solid waste management in much of Africa even more daunting. It is generally the city center and the wealthier neighborhoods that receive service when it is available. In poorer areas, uncollected wastes accumulate at roadsides, are burned by residents, or are disposed of in illegal dumps which blight neighborhoods and harm public health. Where present, manual street sweeping by municipal employees or shopkeepers may help reduce these effects in the most public areas. Nonetheless, roadside accumulation in many cities has reached levels resembling those that spawned epidemics in European cities 500 years ago. Unless more effective urban waste management programs and public water supply systems are put in place, outbreaks of cholera, typhoid and plague may become increasingly common.

Recommended Frequency of Waste Collection

Tropics	Daily
Temperate regions	
Summer	Every 2 days
Winter	Every 3 days
Cool climates	
Summer	Twice a week
Winter	Once a week

Only a small amount of the region's waste is disposed of in sanitary landfills; most is deposited in open dumps or semi-controlled unlined landfills with no groundwater protection, leachate recovery, or treatment systems. The larger dumps are located on the edges of cities, towns, and villages, sometimes in ecologically sensitive areas, or areas where groundwater supplies are threatened. They serve as breeding grounds for rats, flies, birds and other organisms that serve as disease vectors. Smoke from burning refuse may be damaging to the health of nearby residents and the smell degrades their quality of life.

While the recovery and reuse of materials is generally for personal use, there are also many professional waste pickers. They are seriously threatened by disease organisms, sharp objects and other hazards in the waste, especially since they generally lack protective equipment. The high level of reuse of non-organic waste reflects the extent of poverty in the region.

Separation and treatment of organic waste is very rare. Municipal composting programs exist in some South African cities, but the few large-scale composting facilities built elsewhere are no longer operating. Anaerobic digestion to produce methane is not widely applied, and then usually uses manure, not organic waste.

While solid waste collection is generally a municipal function, some countries and municipalities are now experimenting with limited privatization of these services, with some success. Because of the poor levels of collection, many residents—from impoverished to wealthy—pay for private collection of their wastes where these services are legalized.

Municipal waste incinerators are too expensive for most communities and are not used. In any case, they are generally not practical, since most paper that can be reused from the waste stream is removed, leaving behind an organic waste that is too wet to burn. Some hospitals and

municipalities have incinerators for medical waste, but these are often not operated correctly. The HIV/AIDs epidemic has raised concerns about reuse of syringes, and efforts are being made to construct low-cost, high-temperature two-chamber incinerators to destroy syringes along with other medical wastes.

Potential Environmental Impacts from Solid Waste Management Activities

The typical municipal solid waste stream will contain general wastes (organics and recyclables), special wastes (household hazardous, medical, and industrial waste), and construction and demolition debris. Most adverse environmental impacts from solid waste management are rooted in inadequate or incomplete collection and recovery of recyclable or reusable wastes, as well as codisposal of hazardous wastes. These

An open refuse dump in downtown Segou, Mali. During the rainy season part of the dump is submerged in water, threatening the health and water supply of the surrounding area.

impacts are also due to inappropriate siting, design, operation, or maintenance of dumps and landfills. Improper waste management activities can:

- **Increase disease transmission or otherwise threaten public health.** Rotting organic materials pose great public health risks, including, as mentioned above, serving as breeding grounds for disease vectors. Waste handlers and waste pickers are especially vulnerable and may also become vectors, contracting and transmitting diseases when human or animal excreta or medical wastes are in the waste stream. (See the discussion on medical wastes below and the separate section on “Healthcare Waste: Generation, Handling, Treatment, and Disposal” in this volume.)

Risks of poisoning, cancer, birth defects, and other ailments are also high.

- **Contaminate ground and surface water.** Municipal solid waste streams can bleed toxic materials and pathogenic organisms into the leachate of dumps and landfills. (Leachate is the liquid discharge of dumps and landfills; it is composed of rotted organic waste, liquid wastes, infiltrated rainwater and extracts of soluble material.) If the landfill is unlined, this runoff can contaminate ground or surface water, depending on the drainage system and the composition of the underlying soils.

  Many toxic materials, once placed in the general solid waste stream, can be treated or removed only with expensive advanced technologies. Currently, these are generally not feasible in Africa. Even after organic and biological elements are treated, the final product remains harmful.

- **Create greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.** When organic wastes are disposed of in deep dumps or landfills, they undergo anaerobic degradation and become significant sources of methane, a gas with 21 times the effect of carbon dioxide in trapping heat in the atmosphere.

  Garbage is often burned in residential areas and in landfills to reduce volume and uncover metals. Burning creates thick smoke that contains carbon monoxide, soot and nitrogen oxide, all of which are hazardous to human health and degrade urban air quality. Combustion of polyvinyl chlorides (PVCs) generates highly carcinogenic dioxins.

- **Damage ecosystems.** When solid waste is dumped into rivers or streams it can alter aquatic habitats and harm native plants and animals. The high nutrient content in organic wastes can deplete dissolved oxygen in water bodies, denying oxygen to fish and other aquatic life form. Solids can cause sedimentation and change stream flow and bottom habitat. Siting dumps or landfills in sensitive ecosystems may destroy or significantly damage these valuable natural resources and the services they provide.

- **Injure people and property**. In locations where shantytowns or slums exist near open dumps or near badly designed or operated landfills, landslides or fires can destroy homes and injure or kill residents. The accumulation of waste along streets may present physical hazards, clog drains and cause localized flooding.

- **Discourages tourism and other business**. The unpleasant odor and unattractive appearance of piles of uncollected solid waste along streets and in fields, forests and other natural areas, can discourage tourism and the establishment and/or maintenance of businesses.

Sector Design—Some Specific Guidance

Experience and study of solid waste collection programs in various parts of the developing world have identified a set of program elements and common pitfalls as well as a number of operations strategies to meet operational requirements and avoid commonn problems. Successful program:

- Apply an integrated holistic approach that takes into account key factors affecting waste generation, storage, and final disposition;
- Securing or establish stable financing and ensure funds are used appropriately;

An illegal dump site south of Sumbe, Angola. A well-designed waste management plan can minimize illegal dumping and mitigate severe environmental damage.

- Carefully design, develop and implement privatization schemes after weighing the potential costs and benefits;
- Involve the community in waste-management decision making; and
- Build capacity of administrative and technical staff in government, NGOs and/or the private sector.

Integrated waste management

The adverse impacts of waste management are best addressed by establishing integrated programs where all types of waste and all facets of the waste management process are considered together. Despite their importance, limited resources may prevent these programs from being implemented, and only a piecemeal solution may be possible. However, the long-term goal *should* be to develop an integrated waste management

system and build the technical, financial, and administrative capacity to manage and sustain it.

Whether pursuing a holistic approach or a piecemeal one, managers should ensure that the program is appropriately tailored to local conditions and that practical environmental, social, economic, and political needs and realities are balanced. Answering the following key questions will help achieve this goal:

- Are adequate financial and human resources available to implement the policy, program, or technology?
- Is this the most cost-effective option available?
- What are the environmental benefits and costs? Can the costs be mitigated?
- Is the policy, program, or technology socially acceptable?
- Will specific sectors of society be adversely affected? If so, what can be done to mitigate these impacts?

For a detailed discussion of key objectives and issues to be addressed in municipal solid waste management strategies, see the UNDP *Conceptual Framework for Municipal Solid Waste Management in Low-Income Countries* listed under references in this document.

Financing

Sources of Funding

Possible sources of funding for construction and operations are:

- Communal or municipal funds.
- Taxes. Problem: Incorporation within local tax systemsInclusion in local taxes will not work if tax collection is deficient, or if the transfer to management committees is not secured. This form of general taxation method also dissociates waste management costs and revenues.
    - User charges (flat or graded rate). Block rate pricing could be used in solid waste— too: a low rate for a basic amount of garbage (the poor usually produce less waste) and higher rates for subsequent blocks.
    - Mixed systems and water or electricity metering provides opportunities for cross-subsidies. Water metering can be compared to measuring the amount of solid waste produced (in volume or weight). Because electricity consumption is closely correlated with waste generation, fees for waste collection can be tied to electricity use and integrated into the electrical bill. The utility company may charge an administrative fee for handling such billing.

- Vending arrangements, such as:
    - Shared private connections and sanitary blocks serving clusters of households. In this system, users pay in cash for each use. This system combines well with garbage collection depots.
    - Metered group connections paid for by a user group with its own group committee. This system is comparable to a community or group paying a private operator to collect solid waste in its area. In this case, the group is sold service from the municipal government at a bulk rate and determines its own systems for distribution and fee collection. The municipality can offer additional benefits—, for example, like exemption from certain local taxes, or a subsidy to buy equipment.
    - Concession system. A system where local private operators of solid waste collection systems (micro-enterprises) obtain a license or concession from the local government. This may or may not involve community management.
- Local revolving funds or credit circles. However, voluntary funds, however, often do not generate enough money for effective solid waste management. Other communal funds that require a communal production base may not be effective in cities.
- Lotteries and auctions.
- Raffles, bazaars, or entertainment (such as movie showings).
- Donations from prominent individuals.
- Launching community-based organizations.

Fee Collection

Willingness to pay, combined with ability to manage, are good measures to assess the feasibility of a community-based project. A service is considered affordable when a community perceives it as valuable. While this strategy will lead to the desired level of service, is not necessarily the simplest or cheapest approach from an operator perspective.

Ways to generate more revenue from fee collection include:

- Change way of payment.
- Change tariff system to reflect:
    - Level of service. Different rates could be used for collection from communal collection points, curbside or house-to-house collection..

- Type of users (domestic, institutional, commercial, industrial and gender). If men and women have their own sources of income and take part in financing arrangements as individuals, programs should avoid askingthat the same contribution from women as is asked from men and women..
- Income level.
- Property value or characteristics.
- Amount of waste to dispose (measured by size or weight of bin).

- Educate people on benefits and financial obligations. Use community meetings to review billing rate, fee collection plan, and encourage regular payment.
- Give fee collectors more personal benefit.
- Establish/enforce sanctions for non-payment.
- Fee collection by operators or respected community members rather than by government officials. Small user groups or operators can collect fees via house-to-house collection, via community meetings, via deposits on bank accounts, at government offices, or through payment in cash directly at waste disposal location. For women, payment at central places may be culturally less appropriate than home collection of fees. Payment on a savings account is also an effective strategy because women can make small deposits and poor people can join projects that require larger deposits or tariffs.
- Set fees with the assistance of community organizations. (See section on community based management of solid waste.)

Accountability and Reporting

Accountability and reporting are also aspects of financing a solid waste management project. Means of improving accountability are reporting include:

- Provide bookkeeping training, account books, water fee collection cards, etc., and employ teachers or women as treasurers.
- Avoid misuse of funds by requiring two or three committee member signatures of committee members, or one signature from someone with of the assisting NGO, to withdraw money from the bank.
- Sign a contract between the management committee and the community detailing rights and responsibilities, including

reporting, for both parties. (See section on community- based management of solid waste.)

- Communicate financial reports through
    - Bulletins distributed to households.
    - Oral reports given by the treasurer at community meetings followed by questions and answers.
    - Written reports on large sheets of paper and posted on walls in public places, particularly where people come to pay their bills.
    - Waste committee meetings dealing with financial matters and open to the community.
- Provide training in accountability to
    - Treasurers, on how to make simple summaries of costs and expenditures, and how to present these to committee and general user assemblies.
    - Committees, on how to account to the users for their performance.
    - Users, on their rights and how they can arrange for accountability (e.g., through statutory annual meetings and an independent audit committee for checking the books.)

Privatization

Privatization is the gradual process of disassociating state-owned enterprises or state-provided services from government control and subsidies, and replacing them with market-driven entities. In the context of municipal services, privatization generally implies reducing local government activity within a given sector by:

- involving participation from the private sector; or
- reducing government ownership, through divestiture of enterprises to unregulated private ownership, and commercialization of local government agencies.

Private sector participation leaves municipal resources available for urban infrastructure and equipment. Privatization of urban services also can reduce the cost of public services to consumers; relieve the financial and administrative burden on the government; increase productivity and efficiency by promoting competition; stimulate the adoption of innovation and new technology; improve the maintenance of equipment; and create greater responsiveness to cost control measures.

There are five basic modes of privatization:

1. **Concessions:** a contractual arrangement whereby a private operator is selected and awarded a license to provide specified

services over a discrete period of time in return for a negotiated fee. The concession agreement sets out the rights and obligations of the service provider, who generally retains ownership of the principle assets. This method is well suited to enterprises which provide services that are economically and socially important and need significant improvement; are large and usually enjoy a monopoly position; are politically and/or practically difficult to sell; and are in need of investment capital, e.g., trucks and bins.

2. **Management contract:** a contract placing a municipal service under private management for a specified period of time, for which the contractor is paid a fee. The fee may be based partly on performance. The private manager has extensive autonomy, as set out in the contract.

3. **Commercialization:** a process in which the city authority forms a wholly owned subsidiary. Shares of the new company are restricted, and consumer representatives, the local government and other stakeholders make up the board of directors. The ownership of assets, regulation of tariffs and quality control remain at all times vested in the municipal authority. This method is suitable for managing water supplies.

4. **Franchise:** a process in which the city authority awards, through competition, a finite-term, zonal monopoly to a private firm for the delivery of service. The private firm pays a license fee to cover the government's costs of monitoring and recovers earned revenue through direct charges to households and the establishments served. The city authority provides control over the tariff charged to the consumer. This method is suitable for solid waste management.

5. **Private enterprise/entrepreneurship:** a mode whereby the city authority freely allows qualified private firms to compete for service delivery. Individual households and establishments make private arrangements with individuals firms who compete for business. Under such arrangements, city councils license, monitor, and (as needed), sanction the private firms. Private firms bill their customers directly.

Criteria for Privatization

In deciding whether to privatize a specific aspect or portion of its service, a government needs to weigh the risks—political manipulation, changing environmental regulations, government tariff regulation, currency devaluation, inflation, and unclear taxation systems—against the economic benefits of private sector efficiency. The following criteria may be helpful in considering private sector involvement in solid waste management services (adapted from Cointreau-Levine, 1994):

- **Ease of defining outputs.** Ensure that defined, measurable outputs of the proposed service are incorporated in written performance specifications to clearly establish public and private sector deliverables. The government must have the resources and

capabilities to monitor service levels and enforce penalties for noncompliant behaviors.

- **Efficiency.** Consider reasons for public and private sector inefficiencies, including cost accountability, labor tenure, government wage scales, restrictive labor practices, personnel benefits, inflexible work arrangements, bureaucratic procurement procedures, political limitations, and hiring and firing procedures. Assess options for reducing or removing these barriers. Give preference to plans offering economies of scale.
- **Capability.** Ensure that adequate government capacity exists for planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance and oversight. Evaluate both the public and private sectors for technical and financial resources, including expertise, skills and access to capital. Private companies must possess required facilities and equipment, or have a business plan that covers them. Governments must have both the capability to monitor performance and the political will to enforce contractual or license agreements.
- **Competition.** Ideally, a privatization plan will allow for competition between a number of private firms or between the government and a few private firms. Consider possible barriers to market entry and exit, as well as economies of scale that might limit competition. Determine if financial incentives or technical assistance would result in better performance from private firms. Ensure the government's ability and commitment to conducting a competitive procurement process.
- **Duplication.** Ensure that the government has the political will to cut personnel and assets when services are privatized. Balance the cost savings from reduced staff with new monitoring and enforcement costs.
- **Risk.** In some developing countries, commercial lenders and private companies do not want to risk their money on long-term or large-scale investments that rely on government payments. Regulatory framework must exist to protect the private sector against risks such as environmental damage, currency adjustments, inflation and political changes. Local governments must be able to generate enough revenue to meet contractual agreements with the private sector and protect against economic instabilities. Plans should include provisions for loss due to corruption (kickbacks, bribes and favors).
- **Accountability.** Ensure that private sector participation will not disproportionally benefit wealthy classes. Market openings should be made available to small- and medium-size enterprises, helping to redistribute income. Government must guarantee a fair minimum wage and safe working conditions. Government should also make provisions for displaced workers, including job training and employment networking.

- **Costs.** The costs for public waste collection services must be well understood. Cost factors should be analyzed separately for the different components of solid waste service—collection, cleansing, disposal and transfer. Government must have detailed accounting information to determine whether private sector participation would be more cost-effective. A strategic planning and feasibility study should be conducted to know whether the technology offered by the private sector would result in lower costs.

These criteria help to determine the extent to which a society is open or closed to competitive market forces, whether the procurement process is straightforward or opaque, how interrelated and transparent taxation and subsidies are, and the extent to which corruption skews the system. Moving public services to the private sector will be efficient only where competition, performance monitoring and accountability exist.

Privatization: Beneficial But No Panacea

Solid-waste management (SWM) in Dar es Salaam is the responsibility of the Dar es Salaam City Council (DCC). An estimated total of 1,929 tons of waste is generated daily from households, businesses, institutions and market centers. Before the decision to privatize solid-waste collection and disposal, the City Council was only able to manage 2–4 percent of the waste generated daily.

The main reasons for this inability to manage waste collection were:

- Lack of equipment (trucks and machinery.)
- Lack of funds to replace equipment, purchase spare parts, service existing equipment and fuel them. Historically, DCC has allocated less than 8 percent of its total budget for SWM. Out of the 30 trucks and machinery donated by the Japanese government in 1987, only three were operational in 1992. In addition, the operational vehicles functioned at less than 20 percent of capacity.
- Lack of an official disposal site. The only "dump site" in the city was closed following an August 1991 court ruling in favor of residents of the Tabata area who complained of air pollution caused by burning waste dumped at the site.
- Lack of involvement of other stakeholders.

The DCC chose to try privatization to improve waste collection services. Privatization was accomplished in two phases, Phase I from 1992 to 1996, and Phase II from 1996 onwards. For Phase I, a single contractor was assigned to collect waste from 10 city wards and empowered to charge customers directly. For Phase II, four additional firms were given contracts through a process of open tendering, making a total of five contractors servicing 13 wards.

The major achievements realized during the first phase of privatization included:

- Establishment of a solid-waste management partnership advised by a multi-disciplinary stakeholder working group .
- More efficient service and revenue collection. Households responded positively to the need to pay for refuse collection. Initially, collection of solid waste improved to 70 percent of waste generated. However, this rate started to decline six months after the engagement of the private contractor, for reasons outlined below.
- 318 jobs were created for workers employed by the contractor. Also, human resources and stakeholders were used more efficiently; whereas 800 DCC workers collected only 30–60 tons per day, 318 workers under the private contractor collected 100 tons per day.

The problems identified in the first phase of privatization included:

Non-fulfillment of obligations from all parties. Under the contract, the contractor was supposed to pay the DCC the monthly costs of renting trucks, a leased depot, and the refuse disposal charges at the dump. DCC was obliged to pay revenue collection charges for the services provided by the contractor at DCC-owned premises like schools, hospitals, offices, etc. Unfortunately, neither party paid the other, and the DCC withdrew its facilities in September 1995. Also, the DCC was responsible for the public awareness campaigns among residents of the privatized area, and for prosecuting customers who defaulted on refuse collection charges (RCCs). When the defaulters were not prosecuted, the contractor's ability to collect revenue was further limited.

Lack of competition. Using only a single contractor did not result in optimal pricing for the consumer or overall system efficiency.

Poor monitoring. Staffs of both the DCC and the contractor were unfamiliar with privatization of solid-waste collection and disposal, leading to poor monitoring and oversight.

Lack of well-functioning management information system (MIS) to track payment information.

Problems within the contract agreement. Some of the items within the contract were not well elaborated, such as the period when RCCs would be reviewed, how to deal with complaints by the refuse producers, how to monitor the daily operation of the contractors, and methods of arbitration.

During Phase II, the daily solid-waste collection increased in the newly contracted wards. Solid-waste heaps were reduced, especially in open spaces and market places.

However, the constraints were similar to phase I, including inadequate payment of RCCs to the contractors. Preparations were insufficient to involve and raise awareness of people on the new strategies to clean the city and the responsibilities of individuals and stakeholders. Inadequate revenue collection prevented contractors from meeting financial targets. Contractors' equipment and facilities were inadequate, and they failed to meet promises to purchase replacements.

DCC was unable to provide an enabling environment for the contractors (e.g., information on residents liable to pay RCCs, an effective public awareness campaign). The contractors required close supervision, monitoring, support for planning, technical advice and financial assistance. All households were not treated equally in all wards.

Source: *Privatization of Municipal Services In East Africa: Governance Approach to Human Settlements Management*, UN Center for Human Settlements

Limitations of Privatization

To be successful, privatization of solid-waste management must contend with a variety of problems, including insufficient public awareness and little ability to generate the necessary public participation in planning, administering, or monitoring; managerial deficiencies and weaknesses in local authorities that make it hard to carry out policy reform measures; and lack of experienced and competent personnel to administer and manage the privatization process (see privatization story on the previous page). Municipal councils opting to privatize or commercialize their services often find that they need to upgrade all staff in accounting, auditing, information management, policy development and implementation to make these options work.

Although private solid-waste entrepreneurs work all over a city, most activity is concentrated in residential neighborhoods and biased towards middle- and higher-income households who can be relied upon to pay for services. Little or no private sector solid-waste collection activity occurs in low-income areas, due to inability to pay rather than lack of access to these areas. Large firms usually serve wealthy areas, while small firms generally serve a single, middle or lower-middle income neighborhood. Informal private sector waste entrepreneurs or "scavengers" operate in all areas.

Although popular belief states that the private sector will field better-maintained refuse collection vehicles, this is not usually the case. Unless contracts provide incentives for the private firms to invest in appropriate equipment, firms lease second-hand dump trucks that frequently break down.

Community-Based Management of Solid Wastes (CBM)

Community participation in solid waste management covers a variety of types encompasses several forms of local involvement, including:—

- awareness and teaching proper sanitary behavior;
- contributing cash, goods or labor; and andor
- participating in consultation, administration, and/or management functions.

At the most basic level, participation might be providing separated waste to the waste can be handing over separated waste at a particular time to the waste collector or granting space to park waste management vehicles. With more greater public participation, the community can cooperate with public or private entities to set payment rates for service charges. Community management, the highest level of community participation, gives the community authority and control over operation, management and/or maintenance services benefiting its members. Community management may come about through partnership with governmental agencies and NGOs.

Community- based waste managementCBM projects require institutional support and recognition in order to be successful. An integrated system - —including waste separation at the source, resource recovery, and

composting of organic waste - —requires representation of waste pickers, and integration of the community to work with alland stakeholders, including representatives of waste pickers. Local leaders are often active in managingement of the service or maintain close contact with the municipality or community management body. Women and teens can play crucial roles, such as initiators, managers, operators, political activists, educators, and watchdogs for the community.

Community-based management (CBM) can may also address the following social and management problems:

Low participation of households. Households may not participate in waste management programs because they may view solid waste management ais a low priority., They may be they are unwilling to participate in collection systems or in keeping public spaces clean, or they are unwilling to pay for service. Community Provisions for education, is often key to overcoming the best counter to these barriers, canmay be inadequate in but traditional approaches to waste management often do not provide enough for education. Community-based solutions can use preliminary research and input offrom the community to generate a list of desired services, appropriate incentives for households and servants, and systems for cleaning streets and other public places.

Management problems. Problems with traditional waste management schemes include ineffective, inefficient, or unrepresentative management, as well as lack of community accountability to the community. CBM can introduce performance control techniques, share management with an NGO, adjust or by-pass an existing management committee, orand provide incentives for managers, such as training and exchange visits.

Operational problems. With poor motivation operators are poorly motivated, due to low salaries, low status and bad working conditions, operator motivation can be low, and public service may become can often be unreliable. Finding adequate space for waste facilities and equipment is another potential operational issue. Sound CBM can addresses motivational problems by involving operators in decision-making, using special group incentives, and, in some cases, by granting exemptions from municipal taxes. Operators can be officially introduced to households and provided with identity cards to improve operator status. Space problems can be resolved by lobbying municipalities and local leaders, as well asnd conducting media campaigns in the neighborhood.

Financial difficulties. Public and private management plans often face financial difficulties caused by inadequate fee collection and inability to pay for service in low-income neighborhoods. CBM gives community input into plans for fee collection payments, incentives and sanctions for non-payment. Community input can also help waste management providers find lead to additional revenue- generating services.

Lack of municipal cooperation. If waste collection between the municipal government and private operators is badly coordinated and the

community may lose interest in trying to improve the waste situation. Extending service, mobilizing communities to lobby the municipality for assistance, involving local authorities, and structuring formal and informal opportunities for cooperation all improve municipal performance and community support for waste management plans and programs.

Capacity Building

Insufficient capacity is a fundamental impediment to sound solid waste management programs in much of the developing world. Operating an efficient, effective, environmentally sound municipal solid waste management program requires building administrative capacity for government and private sector players and technical capacity for designing, operating, maintaining, and monitoring each part of the process.

Often those people working in solid waste management—private sector companies, NGOs, and government entities—lack the technical and financial knowledge to operate efficiently. Training that builds human resource and institutional capacity at appropriate levels is essential. Peer-to-peer training for everyone from waste-pickerwaste pickers to local government officials has proven effective in extending and sustaining these programs.

Integrating the informal sector

In Rufisque, Senegal, an innovative community initiative helped extend solid waste collection services to 3,000 households by employing horse-drawn cart operators, contracted to work two hours a day to collect refuse from households. The operators were free to work the rest of the time as general haulers. The local municipality is involved in all stages of the initiative—it is regularly represented at community meetings, assigns and approves collection routes, and maintains contractual relationships with cart operators.

-UNESCO, *MOST Clearing House Best Practices Database*. June, 2000

Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Guidelines

In designing and operating integrated solid waste management programs:

- Minimize the quantity of waste that must be placed in landfills through elimination, recovery, reuse, recycling, remanufacturing, composting and similar methods.
- Manage non-hazardous wastes and special or hazardous wastes separately.
- Collect and transport all waste effectively and efficiently.
- Design sanitary landfills and ensure appropriate siting, operation, monitoring and closure.
- Establish sound fiscal and administrative management, privatizing operations with open competition, whenever feasible.

Waste minimization

Reduce, reuse, recycle. Reducing the quantity of waste that must be transported and disposed of should be a primary goal of all municipal solid waste management programs. Waste should be recovered at the source, during transport or at the disposal site. The earlier the separation, the cleaner the material, and, in the end, the higher its quality and its value to users. Incentives which integrate and foster the involvement of the informal sector—itinerant collectors, microenterprises, cooperatives—can be essential to improved waste minimization. Other tips on reducing waste include:

Encouraging recycling can help build capacity among local micro-enterprises and reduce the waste handled by landfills and dumps. (Photo courtesy of United Nations Development Programme)

- *Organize itinerant collectors and publicize prices.* In cities throughout Africa, itinerant collectors recover high-value recyclable materials at residences and small industries. Organizing collectors can improve both their standard of living and the stability of the collection services. Publicizing prices can help stimulate the market and mitigate possible exploitation by intermediaries.

- *Foster secondary markets.* The extent to which a material is recovered is dependent on the existence of local industries that can use the recovered material. Secondary markets to serve these industries do not always develop independently. Consider developing a program to identify and develop such markets where there is untapped demand.

- *Offer incentives.* A deposit system on glass bottles has maintained a high recovery rate throughout the continent. South African beverage manufacturers also issue deposits for tin and aluminum cans, which have generated high levels of reuse.

Facilitate separation at disposal site. When waste pickers are allowed access to disposal sites, significant amounts of material can be recovered. However, because they interfere with efficient operation of dumps and landfills, waste pickers are usually excluded from these sites, lowering recovery rates and causing severe economic hardship. Some sites provide a measure of structured access to waste pickers—at the Bisasar Road landfill in Durban, for instance, registered pickers from an adjacent squatter settlement are allowed into the site after hours, earning US$77

per month from this activity. At all other times, armed guards restrict access to the site. Similarly, the South African Boipatong landfill limits access to 100 registered waste pickers.

Composting and anaerobic digestion. Organics make up 30–80 percent (~70 percent on average) of the waste stream in Africa, although this varies with the incomes of the neighborhood, region or country. If this part of the waste stream could be used for compost or methane production, many adverse impacts of open dumps and landfills would be reduced. Landfills would require less space, last longer, and produce less leachate.

- *Evaluate the possibility of composting.*

  Large centralized composting efforts, designed to separate the organic component from mixed waste, have almost always failed in Africa for reasons which include poor (or absent) feasibility studies and subsequent failure to meet cost recovery expectations. The city of Accra in Ghana has a successful creative variation on this theme: a **co-composting plant** that converts human waste sludge and solid waste to compost which is then sold to recover the plant's operating costs.

  Small composting enterprises have fared somewhat better. Higher urban demand or subsidies may be necessary if composting is to become a part of integrated waste management. For example, a city could pay small composting operations for each ton of material that is diverted from landfills and base that payment on the disposal costs the city can avoid.

  Backyard composting is a third option, but may be difficult to coordinate the level of effort needed for a city-level impact. In Uganda, community-based groups are experimenting with backyard composting, using the compost in a variety of ways, from conventional agriculture to producing fishpond algae as fish feed.

- *Promote vermiculture treatment of vegetable food waste.* Small earthworm composting farms, operated by 5–6 people, have proven more successful than traditional composting facilities in developing countries, though they are not yet in widespread use in Africa. Vermiculture benefits from better quality control and the cultural perception that the final product, consisting of "worm castings," is derived from "clean" vegetable waste, whereas compost is derived from unclean "garbage." The final product is also more nutrient-rich than compost.

- *Investigate anaerobic digestion.* Anaerobic digestion can generate a nutrient-rich slurry to be used on soil and a methane-rich biogas to be used for fuel.

Collection and transfer

As noted earlier, most African city dwellers lack regular waste collection or access to disposal services, except in the better-off neighborhoods or communities. Careful consideration of the city, climate, and culture is essential to achieving universal collection at recommended frequencies. The following general insights from international experience may be valuable:

- *Use appropriate technology—regular trucks and alternative vehicles.* Specialized compaction trucks are very expensive, difficult to repair and often out of service. Moreover, compacting garbage provides little advantage, considering the density of the waste currently produced in most of the region. Regular trucks require less capital investment and are easier to maintain. They may also be better adapted to poor road conditions and can be used for other purposes if the municipality or company decides to transfer collection responsibility to others. For waste collection in hard-to-reach areas—very narrow streets, alleys, deteriorated roads—alternative collection vehicles should be considered, including semi-motorized carts, front-loaded tricycles, donkey carts, or handcarts.
- *Integrate the informal sector*. Co-operatives and microenterprises are the primary users of smaller collection vehicles and can effectively collect waste from hard-to-reach areas at a low cost. Community members are generally more willing to pay for such flexible and inexpensive services.
- *Build on the existing system*. Radical changes are often difficult to achieve, especially with limited political support, administrative and technical capacity, or financial resources. Develop new structures and processes as part of a strategy of incremental improvement.
- *Introduce transfer activities*. Transfer activities often increase efficiency, for both small- and large-scale systems. In small-scale transfer, microenterprises or cooperatives bring waste to a centralized area for pickup by private or municipal trucks. In large-scale transfer, waste is transferred from a compactor or small truck to larger trailer trucks. Both types of transfer activities save fuel, reduce wear and tear on trucks, and shorten the amount of time spent traveling to and from the landfill. The farther the landfill is from the city, the greater the benefits of large-scale transfer. However, transfer activity is virtually unknown in sub-Saharan Africa.
- *Shift to direct fee-for-service and local financing*. Most solid waste collection is paid out of tax revenues collected by national or local governments and redistributed to the municipality. Mismanagement of funds, lack of competition, and the resulting inefficiencies often result in non-payment or unwillingness to pay for services. Market-oriented systems in which residents' fees support collection and disposal services are less likely to suffer from these crippling flaws. Nevertheless, unwillingness to pay can still be a problem under such systems. One strategy for overcoming this problem, used in a number of developing countries outside of Africa, has been to link billing for

Siting guidelines for landfills

Do not site landfills:

- In wetlands or areas with a high water table
- In floodplains
- Near drinking water supplies
- Along geological faults or seismically active regions
- Within two kilometers of an airport

Do site landfills:

- Above clay soils or igneous rock
- With active public involvement
- In areas with sufficient capacity

solid waste collection to utility bills. Electricity consumption is closely correlated with waste generation, so fees for waste collection can be tied to electricity use and integrated into the electrical bill. After charging a small administrative fee, the utility passes the payments to the municipal solid waste department.

Landfills

Most of the waste in Africa is disposed of in environmentally unsound open or controlled dumps. Even using the best waste minimization practices at all stages, some non-recoverable waste will remain, making landfills necessary. The ultimate goal for land disposal should be:

- separate disposal of hazardous and non-hazardous materials; and
- construction of clean and properly sited landfills with diligent management, including leachate and methane controls, during operation and after closure

When these conditions are met, the landfill becomes a *sanitary landfill*. It is recommended that the transition from open or controlled dumps to sanitary landfills be made incrementally. The following steps are suggested:

Open dumps. If open dumps are currently being used, initial upgrades can be made with little capital investment and minimal ongoing costs:

1. Construct perimeter drains to catch runoff and leachate.
2. Minimize leaching through soil by and repeating periodically (every two months is often sufficient compacting and grading. This causes rainwater run off into perimeter drains instead of soaking in. Manual labor or heavy equipment may be used (renting heavy equipment is often the least expensive option).
3. Protect the health of waste pickers and landfill staff by providing soap, water and hygiene training.
4. Regularly test groundwater for contaminants, including bacteria, heavy metals, and toxic organic chemicals.
5. Conduct a formal environmental assessment of the current site before making further upgrades. If it is environmentally sound and has adequate additional capacity, it can be converted directly to a controlled dump. Otherwise, an appropriate alternative site for a controlled dump or sanitary landfill must be located.
6. Engage the public in decision-making. Public involvement in upgrades, siting decisions, and subsequent planning is essential. Otherwise, strong opposition that delays or halts the project may develop.

Controlled dumps. To transform an open dump into a controlled dump:

1. Fence in the active face of the landfill and hire staff to monitor and control dumping.
2. Track how much waste is delivered.
3. Compact waste before or after dumping.

4. Schedule monitoring of methane gas production, landfill composition, and surface water and groundwater conditions.
5. Develop closure and post-closure plans.
6. Seal and cover the dump in stages as its capacity to receive waste is exhausted.
7. Maintain scheduled monitoring until sampling indicates it is no longer necessary—possibly 30 years or more.

Sanitary landfills. Sanitary landfills are the only land disposal option that enables control and effective mitigation of

- potential surface and groundwater contamination;
- health and physical threats to waste pickers and sanitation workers; and
- methane emissions.

Sanitary landfills require much greater initial investment and have higher operating costs than controlled dumps. Full community involvement throughout the life cycle of the project is essential. Proper design, operation and closure also require a much higher level of technical capacity.

Siting. Siting is possibly the most difficult stage in landfill development.

1. Carry out an environmental impact assessment that addresses all siting criteria (see box at left).
2. Organize full community involvement. This is especially important given the greater expense and often greater size of sanitary landfills.

Design. To mitigate environmental impacts, sanitary landfill designs should include:

1. An impermeable or low-permeability lining (compacted clay and polyethylene are most common in developing countries; geopolymers and asphalt are prevalent in the developed world).
2. Leachate collection, monitoring, and treatment.
3. Gas monitoring, extraction, and treatment.
4. Fencing to control access.
5. Provisions for closure and post-closure monitoring and maintenance.

Leachate management. Leachate impacts can be controlled only with lined landfills.

1. Install collection systems to retrieve leachate from the bottom of the landfill.
2. Treat leachate physically, chemically, or biologically through:
    a. An off-site sewage treatment plant (adequate sewage treatment facilities are readily available in only some parts of Africa), or in a dedicated on-site treatment plant.
    b. Recirculation that sprays leachate from the bottom of the landfill onto its surface. This is a popular landfill management practice

in Africa. It reduces leachate volume by increasing evaporation, stores remaining leachate in the body of the landfill, and may accelerate degradation and extend the life of the site. However, recirculation is a new technique whose long-term effects are not yet known.

   c. Evaporation of leachate through a series of open ponds. This method requires pumping and some means for disposing of possibly toxic residues. Ponds should be designed with enough capacity to accommodate increased volume during the rainy season.

3. Monitor groundwater and surface water regularly, both down-gradient and up-gradient from the landfill. At a minimum, monitoring should include indicators of core contaminants, chemical oxygen demand, biological oxygen demand, and total nitrogen and chloride levels.
4. If it is uneconomical to recover and use landfill gas as fuel, it should be vented and flared. Currently, recovery and processing systems are both expensive and difficult to operate. These systems are economical only when the landfill generates large quantities of gas, where local or regional demand exists, or where the price for natural gas or other substitutes is high. At a minimum, buried perforated pipes that can safely vent gas should be installed, and a flaring system should be added to reduce global methane release to the atmosphere.
5. Fence in landfills to prevent waste pickers from accessing the site. This enables landfill personnel to work efficiently and protects waste pickers from exposure to harmful substances. However, it also deprives them of their livelihood. They should thus be integrated into formal collection or disposal operations by, for instance, helping them organize a cooperative and offering them structured access at the landfill gates. Also, they should be made a part of the earlier stages of the collection process, perhaps by helping them establish a cooperative that collects recyclables from industry.
6. When the landfill is full, implement the activities specified in closure and post-closure plans that were developed during design. These should include sealing the landfill and applying a final cover (including vegetation) to it, land use restrictions on both the old landfill and surrounding areas, and long-term gas, leachate, surface water and groundwater monitoring.

Incinerators

Do not construct incinerators. Incineration of municipal solid waste is rarely economically feasible for developing countries. Burning the wet waste found in Africa often requires adding supplemental fuel. Furthermore, the composition of the waste often varies a great deal between neighborhoods, which makes consistent and optimal operation difficult to achieve. Without proper controls, incinerators can be highly polluting, generating dioxins and depositing toxic heavy metals into

water bodies. The proprietary technologies involved require very large capital investments and have high maintenance costs.

Wastes Requiring Special Attention

Certain wastes merit special handling and disposal because of their dangers or volume. The best option is to minimize or eliminate the generation of these wastes by encouraging users to apply cleaner production approaches and substitute materials or change processes (see "Environmental Guidelines for Activities with Micro- and Small Enterprises" in this volume). Those that are generated should be collected and disposed of separately from one another and away from the rest of the solid waste stream.

Hazardous waste. Wastes pose a wide range of risks. They may be chronically and acutely toxic, cause cancer, trigger birth defects, explode, corrode many materials, and cut, puncture, crush, burn and infect people and animals. Hazardous wastes endanger many different classes of people, placing waste producers, collectors, landfill workers, waste pickers, and nearby residents at risk. The leachate from a landfill may be dangerous as well; its level of toxicity is directly related to the quantity and toxicity of hazardous materials mixed in with other solid waste.

Management of hazardous wastes needs urgent attention in Africa. The variety and classes of materials and sources—from households to industrial and medical facilities—makes this particularly challenging. Action is constrained by limited financial resources to deal with these problems and ignorance or unwillingness to acknowledge the risks.

Sound management of hazardous materials includes four elements: waste reduction, segregation, safe handling, and disposal. The best solution is to not generate this waste in the first place. When this is not possible, every effort should be made to minimize generation, and generated wastes should be handled cautiously to reduce risks. Producers of hazardous waste should segregate different types of materials to make recycling easier and prevent chemical reactions or explosions. Suggested best practices for accomplishing these goals in the developing world include:

- *Providing technical assistance and training* to educate decision-makers, system operators, and the public. These efforts should strengthen stakeholders' capacity to identify cost-effective waste reduction measures, and to help design and to put in place practical hazardous waste management plans. (See the Cleaner Production approach described in the "Small and Micro Enterprises" section of these guidelines.)

- *Establish incentives, disincentives, or regulations* to promote waste reduction where it is not otherwise cost-effective.

- *Establish dedicated hazardous waste recycling and disposal facilities.* Few countries in Africa operate hazardous waste treatment and disposal facilities. Thus, much of the hazardous waste generated

continues to be disposed of in dumps and landfills without any provisions for segregation, containment or treatment.

- *Develop systems to ensure that waste is not illegally dumped*. One model that provides checks on illegal dumping is the hazardous waste manifest system in the United States, where a "paper trail" (a sequence of required documents) is generated to prove that the material reached its intended final destination.

- *Explore options for contracting private sector firms that specialize in the handling and disposal of hazardous wastes.*

Medical waste. Wastes from health posts, clinics, hospitals, and other medical facilities pose serious and urgent problems in the Africa region. (A detailed discussion of impacts and appropriate mitigating measures can be found in the "Healthcare Waste: Generation, Handling, Treatment and Disposal" section of this volume.)

These wastes can contain highly infectious organisms, sharp objects, hazardous pharmaceuticals and chemicals, and even radioactive materials. Since the various forms of healthcare waste require different types of treatment, they should be segregated at the source. General waste should be segregated from hazardous material to reduce volume: sharps should be placed in puncture-proof containers, infectious waste separated for sterilization, and hazardous chemicals and pharmaceuticals segregated into separate bins.

Unfortunately, all of the available disposal options are imperfect. The most immediate threat comes from highly infectious waste. On-site treatment is generally preferred to reduce the risk of disease transmission to waste handlers, wastepickers and others. Suggested mitigation measures include:

- In rural areas, burn infectious waste in a single-chamber incinerator, if possible. This kills >99 percent of the organisms and is the best option for minimal facilities.

- In urban areas, burning is not advisable, as the fly ash, toxic gases and acidic gases pose a much greater health threat in more densely populated urban environments than in rural areas. Thus larger facilities should autoclave infectious waste. While high-temperature incineration is theoretically the best option in urban environments, in practice the equipment is rarely operated properly and disposal is highly polluting.

- In some large cities, off-site wet thermal, microwave or chemical treatment options may be available.

- The least expensive option is land disposal. If waste is to be disposed of in a dump or landfill, it should be packaged to minimize exposure, placed in a hollow dug below the working face of the landfill, and immediately covered with 2 m of mature landfill waste. Alternatively, it may be placed in a 2 m deep pit

and covered in the same manner. Waste-picking must then be prevented.

Tires, oil, and batteries. These three common automotive wastes cause difficulties throughout the continent:

- Stockpiled tires can spontaneously combust, producing prolonged, polluting fires. Reuse or retreading are the best alternatives available for reducing tire waste in developing and industrializing countries.
- Used motor oil from auto shops is often burned as fuel, contributing to air pollution. Re-refining this oil is the best alternative, but this alternative is neither readily available nor commercially feasible in most of Africa.
- Lead acid batteries should not be placed in landfills—the lead is toxic, the acid corrosive and contaminated. Lead acid batteries are often recycled in small-scale foundries that are highly polluting and located in residential areas. Recycling in large facilities that have emission and environmental controls is preferable, if this option is available.

Construction and demolition debris. Prevent disposal of construction and demolition debris in dumps or landfills, as this will greatly reduce the life of the facility. Residual lead paint, mercury switches, asbestos and PCBs can also make this debris toxic. Arrange for the return of unused construction materials, recovery of all reusable or recyclable materials, and on-site separation of different waste materials to simplify reuse. The UN Environment Programme's *International Sourcebook on Environmentally Sound Technology for Municipal Solid Waste Management* recommends the following best practices for construction and demolition debris:

- *Inventory control and allowance for return of construction material.* This ensures that unused materials will not be disposed of unnecessarily.
- *Selective demolition.* This involves dismantling, often for recovery, selected parts of buildings to be demolished before the wrecking process is initiated.
- *On-site separation systems.* Use multiple smaller containers instead of a single roll-off or compactor.
- *Crushing, milling, and reusing secondary stone and concrete materials.* There can be a tie-in to approved road construction material specifications.

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