

# Framework for the Development of Guidelines on Waste Picker Integration

Based on SACN Waste Picker Integration Workshop,  
April 12-13, 2016

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## 1. Background

On April 12-13, 2016 the South African Cities Network (SACN) ran a workshop as part of its investigation on waste picker integration. The workshop was hosted by the City of Johannesburg. Participants included representatives from the waste management divisions in SACN member cities, representatives from the South African Waste Pickers Association (SAWPA), waste pickers involved in integration projects in SACN cities, the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Women in Informal Employment, Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and groundWork. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Melanie Samson of the University of the Witwatersrand. Dr. Sonia Maria Dias, WIEGO's Waste Sector Specialist, was an expert resource person.

At the workshop municipal officials and waste pickers discussed their experiences of waste picker integration initiatives. Dr. Dias provided insight into policy on waste picker integration in Brazil and other countries, as well as the processes used to develop these policies. Based on these inputs, as well as discussion on participants' experiences trying to integrate waste pickers in South African municipalities, the participants identified some principles that should underpin waste picker integration, areas that should be included in guidelines, and the type of process that should be used to develop, implement and oversee waste picker integration guidelines in South Africa. A copy of the full workshop report is available from the SACN on request.

As a key output of the SACN workshop process, Dr. Samson was tasked with developing a framework for the development of national guidelines on waste picker integration. This document draws on the workshop report as well as a review of international literature on waste picker integration to elaborate a proposed framework for the development of guidelines on waste picker integration in South Africa. The framework can be drawn on and modified in both the national process to develop guidelines on waste picker integration, as well as local processes to integrate waste pickers that continue while the national guidelines are being developed. It is acknowledged that a process of developing national guidelines rests with DEA as the custodians of policy and regulation in the waste sector, hence the plan to hand over the framework for further consideration as an input towards the development of the guidelines.

## 2. Principles and pillars for success

The principles and pillars described below underpin the development, content and implementation of the Guidelines on Waste Picker Integration

### 2.1 Principles

1. **Respect and recognition** - Waste pickers are respected and valued.
2. **Inclusivity** – All relevant stakeholders are included.
3. **Equity** – The process must be equitable. This means that waste pickers and other structurally disadvantaged groups will receive necessary support to participate equally and meaningfully.
4. **Redress of gender, race, national, class, ethnic etc. power relations** - The process is attentive to and redresses inequalities based on gender, nationality, race, class, ethnicity etc.
5. **Holistic and comprehensive understanding of waste and integration** - Waste is understood as both physical and social. Waste picker integration is seen as a social, cultural, economic, environmental, political, and technical process that addresses waste picking as part of the larger municipal waste management system and recycling economy. The guidelines address all phases of the waste picker implementation process – planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and revised planning.

6. **Formalisation** - Waste picker integration at local level is formalised in written agreements.
7. **Improved status and conditions** - Integration improves the lives, livelihoods, working conditions, and economic, social, and political status of waste pickers. Integration does not make waste pickers worse off and any negative effects are mitigated.
8. **Job protection and creation** – Existing waste pickers are integrated, and waste picker integration does not undermine municipal waste management workers.
9. **Payment for service and savings** - Waste pickers paid for their environmental service and contribution to municipal savings.
10. **Increasing recovery** - Waste picker integration supports increases in recovery of recyclable and reusable materials.
11. **Commitment to shifting mind-sets and actions** – Awareness that waste picker integration is a social and cultural process that involves changing the mind-sets of government officials, elected representatives, business, waste pickers, and residents.

## 2.2 Pillars for Success

1. **Participation** - The process to develop, implement and evaluate waste picker integration is driven by an inclusive stakeholder committee including all relevant stakeholders (waste pickers, municipalities, provinces, all relevant national departments and agencies, NGOs, academics, business, unions, communities).
2. **Meaningful engagement** – The waste picker integration process is based on meaningful engagement of all stakeholders. Meaningful engagement requires:
  - a. **Respect** – Respectful engagement between all stakeholders
  - b. **Awareness of power relations** – Stakeholders are cognisant of unequal power relations based on race, gender, occupation, nationality, ability etc and actively work to redress these inequalities in the engagement process.
  - c. **Transparency** - Dissemination of relevant information to all stakeholders in forms they can understand.
  - d. **Support** - Support for waste pickers to participate.
  - e. **Commitment** - Commitment of all stakeholder representatives to the collective process.
  - f. **Accountability** - Stakeholders report back to constituencies and receive mandates.
  - g. **Honesty** - Honesty and openness of all parties.
  - h. **Consistency** - Consistent participation by representatives.
3. **Proactive government** - Government is responsible for catalysing and supporting waste picker participation. This includes supporting the formation of democratic waste picker organisations that can mandate representatives.
4. **Build on what exists** – Approaches to waste picker integration should build on what already exists.
5. **Evidence based** – Integration initiatives and guidelines are informed by adequate research on the local waste management system, recycling economy, effects on waste pickers' lives and livelihoods, and South African and international experiences integrating waste pickers.
6. **Flexibility and local relevance** - Guidelines provide a framework within which there is scope for flexibility at local level to develop contextually specific approaches to waste picker integration.
7. **Long-term view** - Waste picker integration is understood as a process that requires short, medium and long term goals and that develops and evolves over time.
8. **Piloting** – Waste picker integration initiatives are piloted and evaluated.

9. **Enabling legal environment** - Legal infrastructure revised to support waste picker integration. This includes bylaws, landfill permits, policies and legislation.
10. **Financial support** – Sufficient funding is made available from government and industry to ensure successful implementation of waste picker integration.
11. **Policy and programme integration** - Waste picker integration is included in all relevant local planning documents, such as Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) and integrated social waste management plans (ISWMPs). The policies and programmes of different spheres of government are aligned.
12. **Appropriate Skills** - Waste departments have staff with relevant skills to engage and integrate waste pickers.
13. **Education** - Education is conducted for government officials and residents to change mind-sets and galvanize support for successful implementation of waste picker integration.

### 3. Areas to be included in waste picker integration Guidelines

Waste picker integration is not just a technical issue and should be understood as a social, political, economic, and technical process. Successful integration initiatives must be well planned and comprehensive. Guidelines for waste picker integration must therefore include sections focusing on 10 key areas. These areas are listed below, with some examples of the kinds of issues they need to address:

1. **Conceptual Framework** - How do we understand waste, waste management systems, integration, cooperatives, formalisation etc? What kind of waste system do we want?
2. **Decision Making Framework** - How will stakeholders be involved in decision making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation? How will this be institutionalised? How will respectful relations and trust be fostered between stakeholders? How will evidence be used to inform decisions? How will disagreements and disputes be resolved?
3. **Data Gathering Framework** – What data is needed to inform waste picker integration? How will relevant data be gathered? Who will be gathering the data? How will stakeholders be involved in this process?
4. **Structural Models** – What are the different ways in which the waste pickers can be integrated, i.e. as individual waste pickers, employees, cooperatives, SMMEs etc.? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each modality? How do they relate to and affect each other? Can they be phased?
5. **Legal and Policy Framework** – How can waste picking be recognised as a profession? How will integration be institutionalised? What policy, legislation and bylaws need to be amended or created? What types of contracts should be put in place with waste pickers? What kinds of agreements must be negotiated at local level? What mechanisms are required to include non-South African waste pickers?
6. **Operational Framework** – How will integration be operationalised? What role should piloting play? Which municipal departments must be involved? Which provincial and national departments must be involved? What technology, equipment and infrastructure is required? How will the municipality relate to waste pickers, buyers, recycling companies etc? How will waste pickers be assured access to municipal officials and decision makers? How will municipal waste workers relate to waste pickers and the new integrated system? How will waste picker integration relate to extended producer responsibility? How do we ensure that women, non-South Africans etc are included and participate meaningfully?
7. **Economic and Financial Framework** – How will integration be financed? What role should producers play in financing integration? What financial mechanisms need to be created to support waste picker integration? What payments will waste pickers receive for the environmental service they provide? Will municipalities/government support prices? How can municipalities assist waste pickers

with market information? How will the system be made viable? How will any waste pickers who are displaced be compensated?

8. **Capacity Building Framework** – How will the municipality gain the skills it needs to engage waste pickers and successfully implement waste picker integration? How will waste pickers be supported to build the skills they need to successfully participate in integration initiatives, improve their livelihoods and working conditions and move up the value chain? How will government support waste pickers in developing functional, democratic organisations?
9. **Public Education and Outreach Framework** – How will residents be encouraged to support waste picker integration, separation at source, and recycling initiatives? How can traditional media and social media be used to support waste picker integration? Who will be responsible for public outreach and education?
10. **Monitoring and Evaluation Framework** - How will the integration process be monitored and evaluated and revised on the basis of these processes?

## 4. Proposed process to develop national Guidelines

In the workshop Dr. Dias emphasised that the success of the Brazilian model was that it was driven by a stakeholder committee responsible for drawing on members' own experiences, conducting its own research, analysing research presented by others, and collectively developing the national policy and guidelines for waste picker integration. Workshop participants agreed that it would be important for us to adopt a similar, stakeholder driven process to developing the national guidelines, and that the development of the guidelines should draw on existing practices and experiences. DEA affirmed its commitment to taking a participatory approach to the development of the national guidelines, which will also draw on the CSIR-DST-DEA funded Wits research project. Having a stakeholder forum like the one in Brazil would provide a useful mechanisms for integrating academic research from Wits and other universities and research bodies, stakeholder research, and municipal and waste picker experiences of integration initiatives.

### 4.1. Proposed Process

It is proposed that DEA establish a stakeholder Working Group to oversee the development of the national guidelines over the next three years. The Working Group should include representatives from municipalities, waste pickers, provinces, DEA, other relevant government departments (for example DCoG), NGOs, CSIR, SALGA, business, unions, academics, and communities. The Working Group could meet 3-4 times per year for workshops where it would: receive inputs from the CSIR-DST-DEA research project and other relevant research projects; receive inputs on international experience; receive inputs from the SACN-SALGA workshops on waste picker integration (see "Proposal for Future Research and Activities"); develop common understanding; interrogate key issues, and agree on relevant sections of the guidelines. The Working Group will receive support from the CSIR-DST-DEA research project, which will be responsible for developing the draft guidelines based on the work of the Working Group. At the end of the three years, the draft guidelines could be presented at a national workshop hosted by DEA for all interested parties. The draft guidelines would then be finalized.

At the first meeting the Working Group should agree on: 1) the principles to underpin the guidelines; 2) a framework for the guidelines that sets out areas to be included; and 3) the process for developing the guidelines. The SACN workshop report and this Framework document can provide an important base for these discussions. In addition, as not all members of the committee will have participated in the SACN workshop, the first workshop should draw on inputs about international experiences, focusing specifically on the processes used to develop national guidelines as well as the content of the guidelines.

Subsequent meetings/workshops should focus on specific sections of the guidelines and will be informed by: the Wits research; other relevant academic and policy research; any research conducted or commissioned by

the committee and stakeholders; the reports from the SACN-SALGA workshops proposed in the “Proposal for Future Research and Engagements to Support Waste Picker Integration”; and stakeholder knowledge and experiences. At the end of each meeting the stakeholder committee should commit to the next series of activities and deliverables in order to ensure continual development of the process and on-going stakeholder commitment and support.

Process facilitators should ensure that formal and popular reports on the meetings and workshops are produced, disseminated to committee members, and placed on relevant websites. Stakeholders should be responsible for reporting back to their constituencies throughout the process, and a national workshop open to a wider range of participants should be held at the end of the process. Waste pickers may require support to report back to their constituency and obtain mandates so as to ensure their meaningful participation.

Once the drafting process is complete the Working Group can be converted into a standing committee to oversee monitoring and evaluation of waste picker integration and the development of new policies and programmes related to waste pickers.

## 4.2. Timeline

If the above process is adopted DEA will need to develop a detailed timeline for the activities and key deliverables. As an initial sketch of the implementation process, the timeframes could be as follows:

July – August 2016	Development of detailed process plan and commissioning relevant work
Sept 2016	Confirmation of delegates on Stakeholder Committee
October 2016	Working Group Meeting/Workshop #1 – Agree on principles, framework and process
2017-2018	Two - Three Working Group Meetings/Workshops per year, timed to coincide with inputs from research processes and SACN-SALGA workshops
April 2019	Open Stakeholder Workshop to Review Draft Guidelines
June 2019	Final Guidelines

## 4.3. Source of Funding

DEA will need to allocate/raise funds to cover: process design and management; workshop design and management; stakeholder participation in meetings; facilitators; and production of formal and re-purposed reports of meetings and workshops. The development of draft guidelines based on these outputs can be covered under the existing CSIR-DST-DEA funded Wits research project.