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SUPPORTING WASTE MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY INNOVATION

A Toolkit for the Waste & Circular Economy in Kenya

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A Toolkit for the Waste Circular Economy in Kenya

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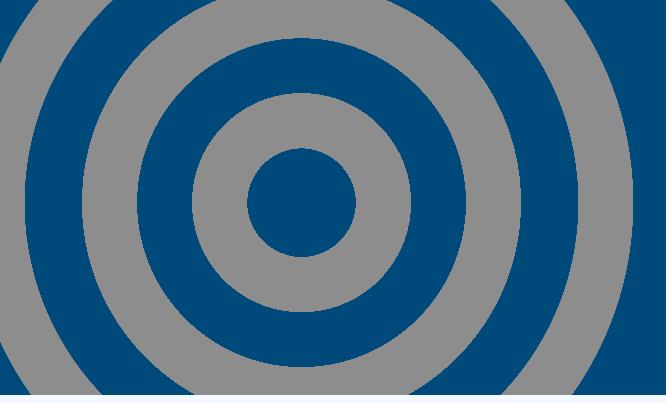
► Contributors

This toolkit is an outcome of the Climate and Environment Action Lab pilot facilitated by the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs – ANDE in Kenya from 2024 to 2025. The ANDE Action Lab and the production of this toolkit was made possible with generous support from IKEA Foundation.

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FOREWORD

Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)

The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) is a global network of organisations that propel entrepreneurship in developing economies. ANDE members provide critical financial, educational and business support services to small and growing businesses (SGBs) based on the conviction that SGBs will create jobs, stimulate long-term economic growth and produce environmental and social benefits. Ultimately, we believe that SGBs can help lift countries out of poverty.

As global populations soar and urbanisation expands, managing increasing volumes of waste requires more innovative, effective solutions. ANDE recognises the crucial role informed investors play in overcoming these environmental challenges. With support from IKEA Foundation, we've developed knowledge products spotlighting best practices in programming within the waste management and circularity sectors in Kenya and India, aimed at catalysing impactful environmental and economic growth.





FOREWORD

As we navigate the complexities of the modern world, it has become crucial to rethink our approach to waste management and embrace the principles of the circular economy. The shift towards sustainable and innovative waste management practices is not just an option, but an imperative for the preservation of our planet and the well-being of future generations.

This toolkit, entitled Supporting Waste Management and Circular Economy Innovation, provides a comprehensive and practical guide for investors, enterprise support organisations and innovators to help them adopt and implement sustainable waste management solutions. The tools, strategies and case studies presented within these pages offer a roadmap for fostering innovative approaches that not only minimise environmental impact but also create economic opportunities.

ANDE is thrilled to see the dedication and commitment with which this toolkit has been crafted, and we are confident that it will serve as a valuable resource for all those seeking to make a meaningful contribution to a more sustainable and circular future.

Access to Green Finance Project

ANDE, in partnership with the IKEA Foundation launched the second phase of its project supporting green entrepreneurship in India and Kenya in 2024.

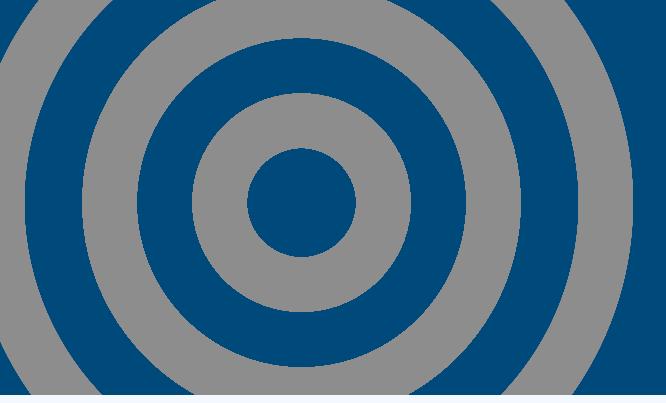
This innovative project aims to increase the financing available to early-stage enterprises operating in the waste management and circular economy sectors. It marks a significant stride towards a greener, more inclusive economy where entrepreneurs in India and Kenya can flourish and generate quality employment opportunities in the waste and circularity sector.

The Action Lab

ANDE's Action Lab model pioneers a participatory design approach to address complex challenges in the SGB sector by convening a diverse group of stakeholders to collectively identify systemic issues and develop solutions. The lab aims to develop testable solutions, leading to fundable pilot projects grounded in evidence-based strategies.

With support from IKEA Foundation, ANDE facilitated a Climate and Environment Action Lab in Kenya that took place in 2022-2023. The outcome of this Action Lab was ready-to-fund initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacity of waste-sector businesses, with a specific focus on organic waste, through effective technical assistance, business development services and access to early-stage capital.

This toolkit, along with an acceleration program dubbed the Waste Innovator Program, are the results of a pilot implementation of the solutions identified through ANDE's Action Lab model in response to small business challenges identified in the waste sector.

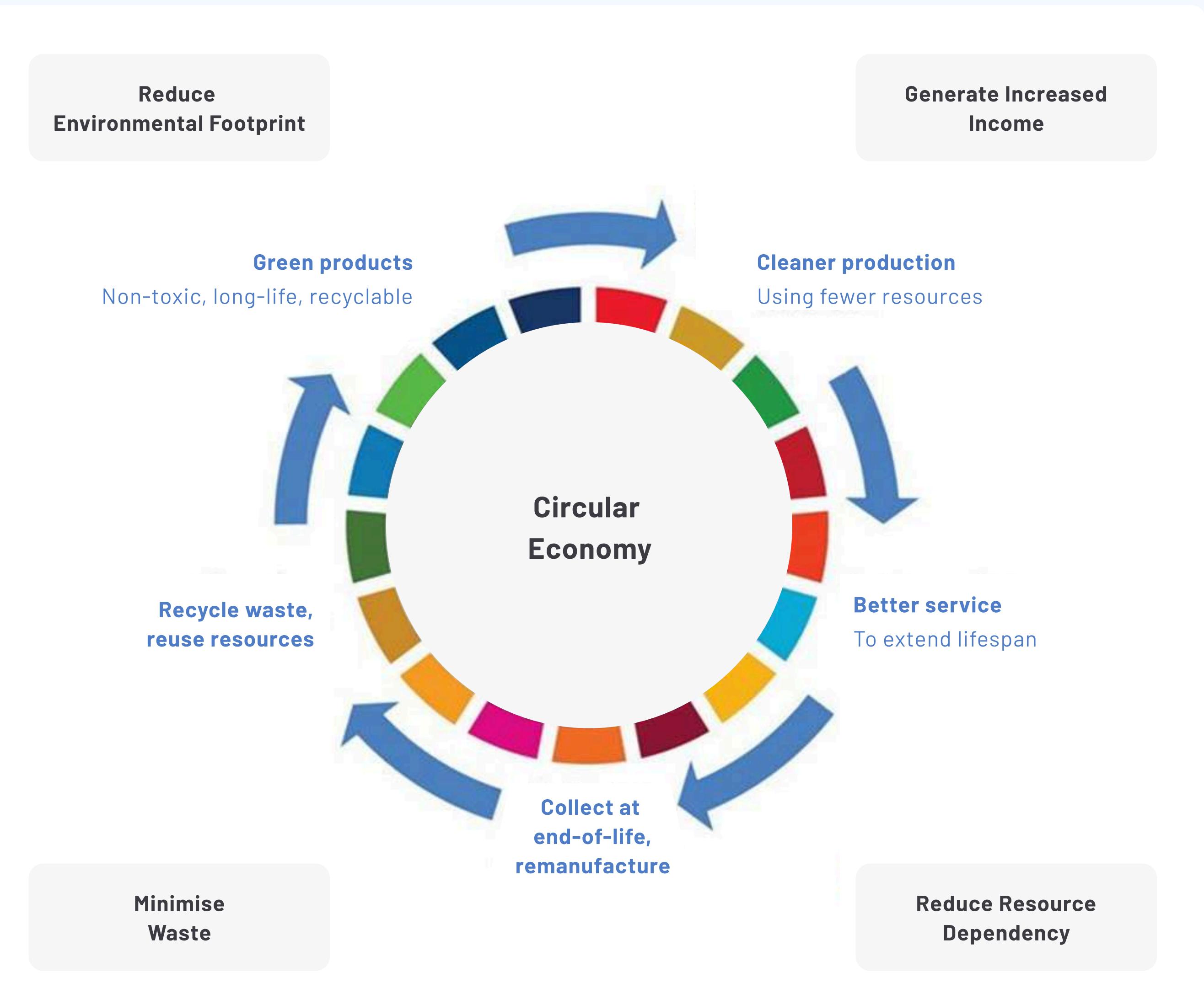


WHAT IS THIS TOOLKIT ABOUT?

This toolkit is a comprehensive resource designed to provide practical, action-oriented guidance and tools for investors, enterprise support organisations (ESOs) and innovators. It is designed to help stakeholders design, implement and scale sustainable waste management solutions across various contexts.

► Key components of the toolkit include

- ✓ An overview of waste management and circular economy principles.
- ✓ Practical models for integrating circular economy principles into business support programmes and investment decisions.
- ✓ Case studies highlighting successful waste management and circular economy initiatives.
- ✓ Best practices for forging effective collaborations between innovators, funders, government agencies and community stakeholders.
- ✓ Resources and frameworks for supporting waste management solutions.



RELEVANCE OF THE TOOLKIT

The toolkit is highly relevant in today's context as the world faces increasing environmental challenges and needs sustainable solutions. With waste management being a critical issue impacting ecosystems, human health and the economy, this toolkit provides essential guidance and resources to help individuals, organisations and communities transition towards more sustainable practices.

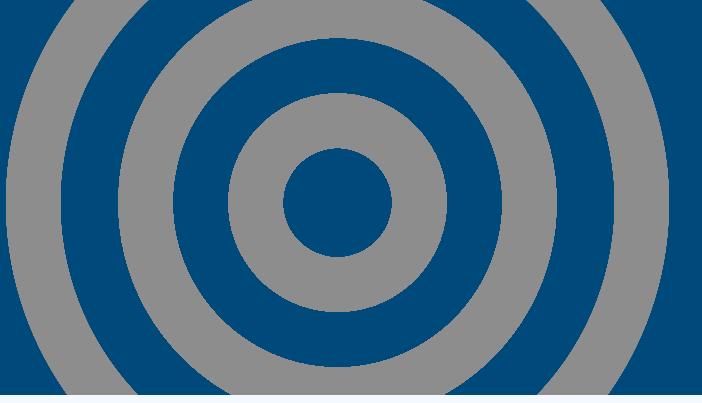
By embracing the principles of the circular economy and highlighting innovative waste management strategies, the toolkit enables users to reduce waste generation, promote resource efficiency and drive economic growth through ethical and environmentally friendly means. In a time where sustainability is a global priority, this toolkit serves as a valuable resource, empowering stakeholders to take meaningful actions to create a more circular and sustainable future.

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The toolkit is designed as a comprehensive **resource hub** for small and growing businesses and enterprise support organisations (ESOs) – including incubators, accelerators, communities and individual champions – engaged in circular economy initiatives. It specifically supports small and growing businesses (SGBs) participating in waste and circular innovation programmes.

It provides actionable insights and **best practices** on key elements such as recruitment strategies, application processes, programme duration, targeted waste and circular value chains, curriculum design, strategic partnerships, available resources, funding sources and amounts, cohort size and alumni engagement approaches.

Gladys Kivati
CEO
Sustainable Business Consulting



WHO CAN USE THE TOOLKIT?



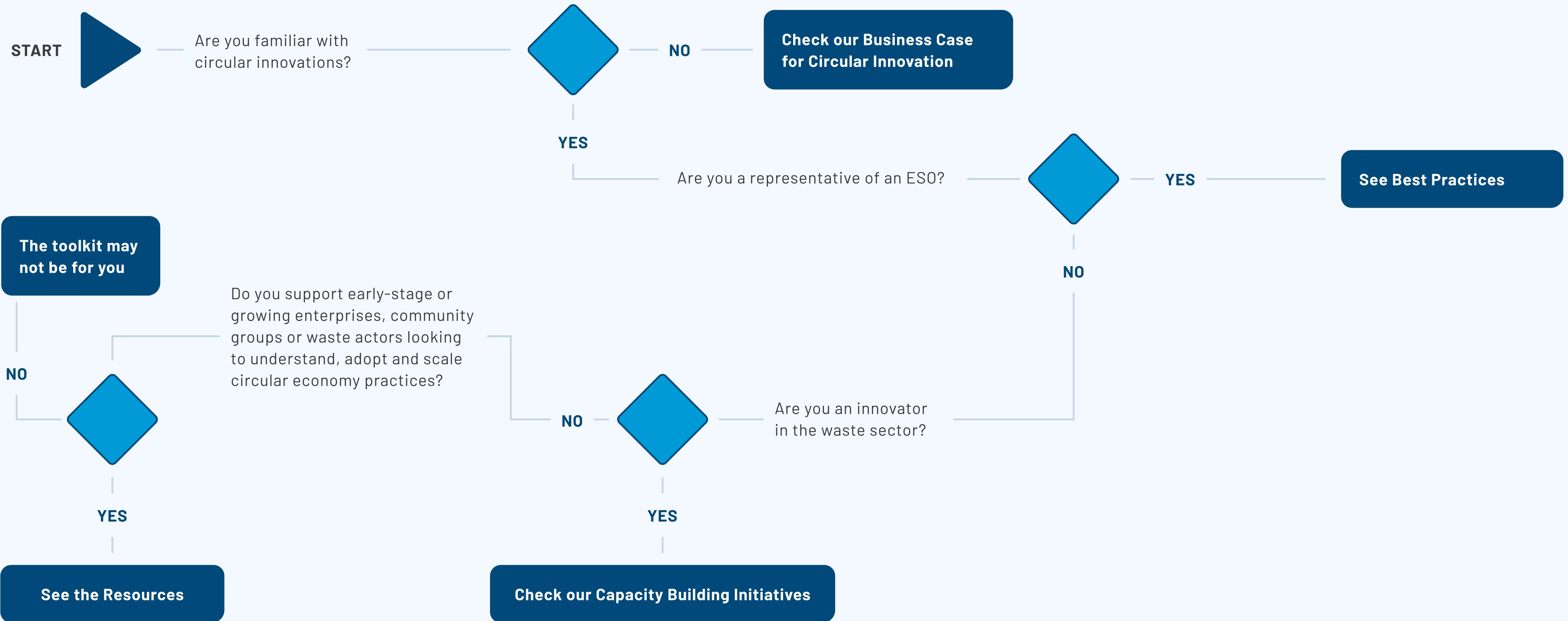
Intermediaries & Enterprise Support Organisations (ESOs)

ESOs, including business incubators, accelerators and innovation hubs, play a critical role in fostering the growth and success of startups and small to medium-sized enterprises in the waste management sector. These organisations provide invaluable support, guidance and resources to help entrepreneurs and businesses develop innovative solutions and navigate the complexities of the waste industry. The toolkit is essential for startup ESOs as it equips them with the necessary resources to offer targeted assistance to waste management enterprises, helping them access valuable information, best practices and tools to drive their businesses forward and contribute to a more sustainable future.



Innovators in the Waste Sector

Innovators in the waste sector encompass a wide range of organisations and individuals, including entrepreneurs, researchers, engineers and inventors, who are dedicated to developing and implementing groundbreaking solutions for waste management and sustainability. These innovators are at the forefront of driving positive change in the waste industry through the introduction of new technologies, processes and business models. The toolkit is highly relevant for these users as it provides them with a wealth of resources, case studies and guidance to support the development and implementation of innovative solutions, thereby accelerating their impact and contributing to the advancement of sustainable waste management practices.

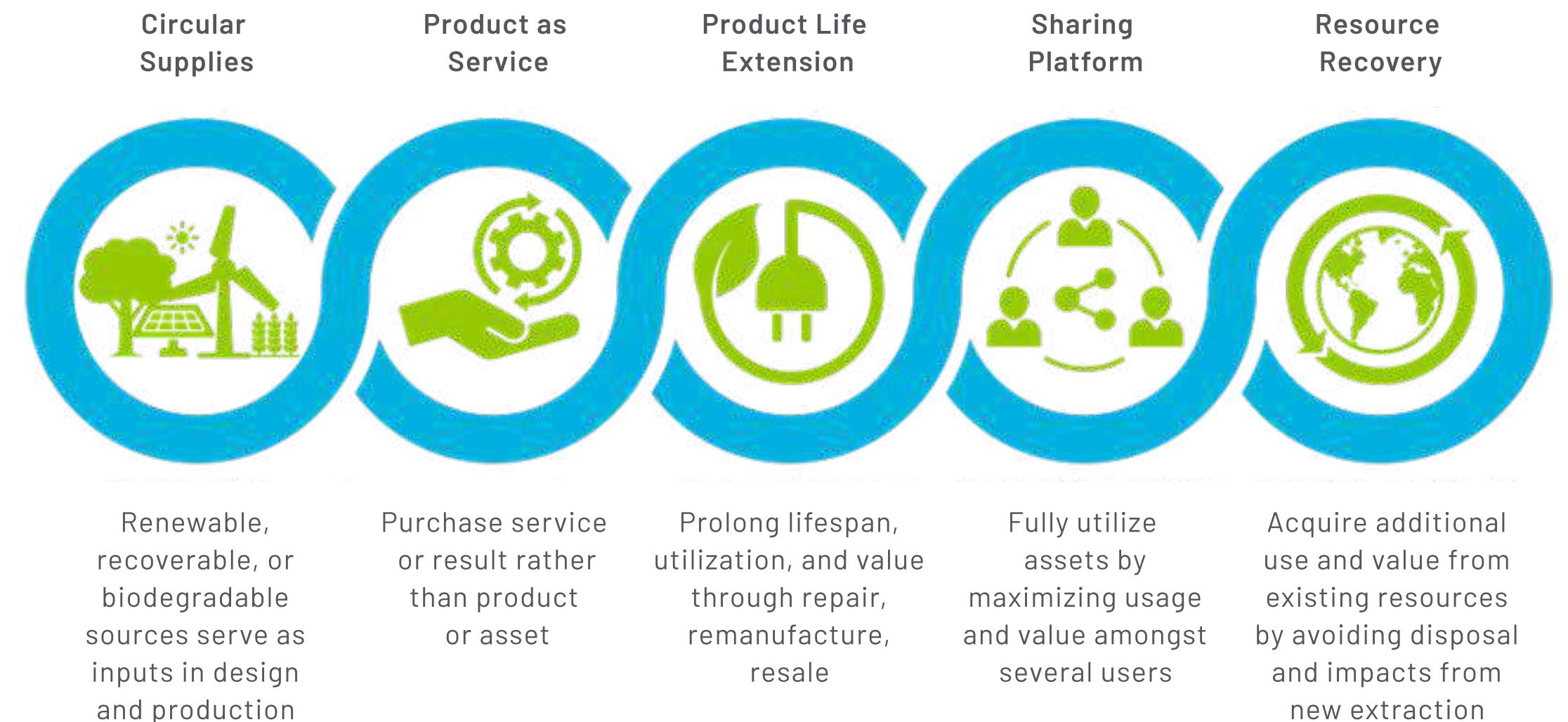




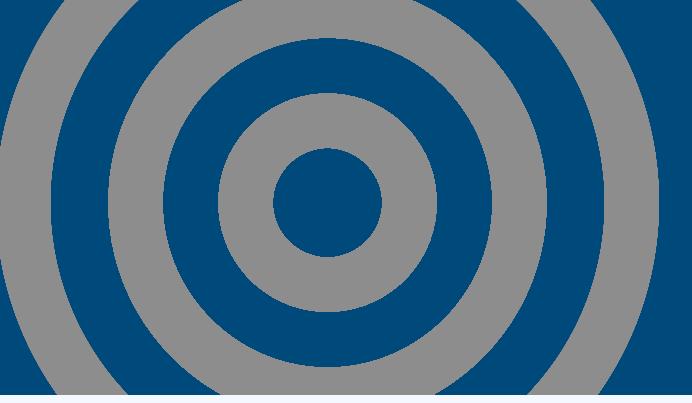
Waste management involves the systematic collection, transportation, processing, recycling and disposal of waste materials generated by human activities. The primary objective of waste management is to effectively and sustainably handle waste in order to minimise its environmental impact, reduce health risks, conserve resources, and promote a cleaner and healthier living environment.



FIVE BUSINESS MODELS OF CIRCULARITY



Circularity innovation refers to the development and adoption of new ideas, products, services, processes or technologies that contribute to advancing the principles of a circular economy. Circular economy principles aim to reduce waste generation, promote the reuse and recycling of materials, and create a closed-loop system where resources are kept in use for as long as possible. Circularity innovation in waste management focuses on implementing strategies that prioritise resource conservation, waste reduction and the transformation of waste into valuable resources through innovative solutions and technologies.



Supporting waste management and circular economy innovations is necessary for businesses to realise cost savings, ensure regulatory compliance, mitigate risks, enhance their brand reputation, and drive innovation and competitiveness. By leveraging the resources and guidance provided in the toolkit, businesses and their ESOs can position themselves as leaders in sustainability, drive positive environmental impact, and create long-term value for both their stakeholders and the planet.

Waste Generation and Environmental Impact

- Kenya generates **22,000–24,000 tonnes of waste per day**, with **Nairobi alone contributing about 2,400 tonnes daily** (NEMA, 2021).
- **Only 8–10%** of this waste is recycled; **60%** ends up in open dumpsites or is burned (UNEP, 2022).
- **Open burning** and unmanaged waste contribute to **air pollution**, greenhouse gas emissions and public health risks.

Missed Economic Opportunities

- Kenya loses an estimated **KES 30–50 billion per year** due to poor waste management practices (e.g., lost value in plastics, organics, metals) (World Bank & KEPZA, 2021).
- The **plastics circular economy** alone could generate over **50,000 jobs** and contribute **KES 3.5 billion** annually (World Bank & KEPZA, 2021).
- Waste is wealth: better recovery of materials can **unlock value across agriculture, construction, packaging and manufacturing**.

Jobs and Informal Sector Inclusion

- Over **60,000 informal waste pickers** rely on waste for livelihoods in Kenya (WIEGO, 2020).
- Circular approaches – like community recycling hubs, upcycling cooperatives and composting businesses – offer **inclusive green job creation**, especially for youth and women.
- Transitioning to a circular economy can help **formalise the informal sector** and improve working conditions.

Regulatory Drivers and Compliance

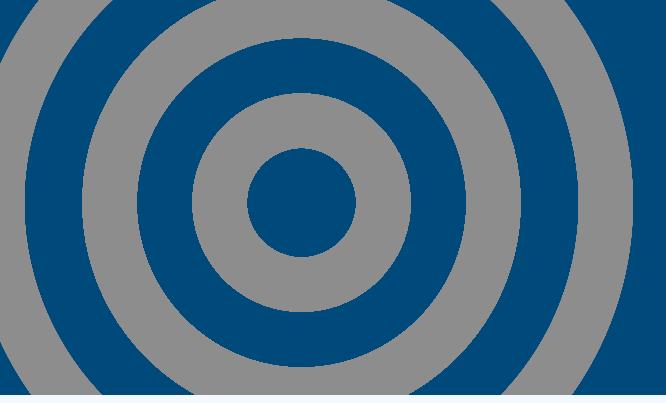
- Kenya banned **single-use plastic bags** in 2017, becoming a global leader in plastic regulation.
- The **Sustainable Waste Management Act, 2022** (GoK 2022), mandates:
 1. County-level **Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs)**
 2. **Producer Responsibility Organisations (PROs)**
 3. Mandatory waste segregation at source
- Businesses must now **adopt circular practices** or risk penalties, closure or loss of market access.

Market and Brand Advantage

- **72% of Kenyan consumers** are concerned about environmental issues and prefer **eco-friendly brands** (IPSOS Kenya Survey, 2021).
- Companies like **Twiga Foods, Mr. Green Africa** and **Gjenge Makers** have built successful business models by embracing waste circularity.
- Early adopters of circular practices gain **brand loyalty, investor interest** and **export readiness**.

Innovation and Competitiveness

- Kenya is home to over **100 circular economy startups**, many in:
 1. Agri-waste reuse (e.g., insect-based animal feed)
 2. Plastic recycling (e.g., eco-bricks, pellets)
 3. E-waste recovery (e.g., WEEE Centre)
- Support for these innovations through toolkits, incubators and partnerships can **accelerate national green growth goals**.



Redesigning Inputs



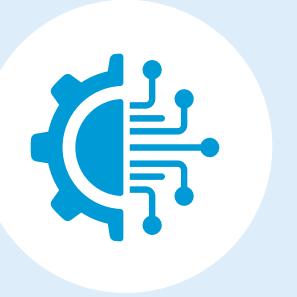
Investing in the Materials of the Future

This cluster targets the transition from fossil-based raw materials to sustainable alternatives. Key opportunities include:

- Bio-based and biodegradable materials
- Recycled content innovation
- Sustainable packaging and alternative proteins

Investments here support the foundation of a circular economy by redesigning supply chains around renewable, regenerative materials.

Enabling Technologies



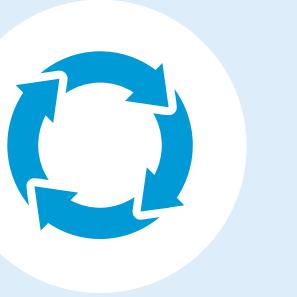
Accelerating Circular Infrastructure

Technology is a critical enabler of scalable circular solutions. This investment area includes

- AI and data analytics for real-time resource efficiency
- Blockchain and traceability for transparent supply chains
- Product-as-a-service (PaaS) models, shifting ownership to usage
- Automation and robotics for enhanced recycling and remanufacturing

These innovations unlock circular business models and make them commercially viable at scale.

Circular Use



Extending Product Lifespan and Utility

This cluster taps into emerging consumer trends that favour access over ownership and longevity over disposability. Priority investment areas include:

- Sharing and rental platforms (e.g., mobility, apparel)
- Refurbishment and repair services that extend lifecycle value
- Modular and durable product design

These models reduce material throughput while creating recurring revenue streams.

Loop Resources



Transforming Waste into Wealth

Focused on resource recovery and waste valorisation, this cluster includes:

- Advanced recycling technologies (mechanical and chemical)
- Industrial symbiosis systems that repurpose waste between sectors
- Bio-waste solutions such as composting and bioenergy

These innovations close the loop, converting waste into valuable secondary materials and energy.



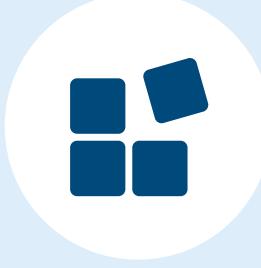
Supporting enterprise support organisations in implementing best practices for waste management and circular economy innovations is crucial for promoting sustainable business practices and driving environmental impact.

► Who are these best practices for:



Starters

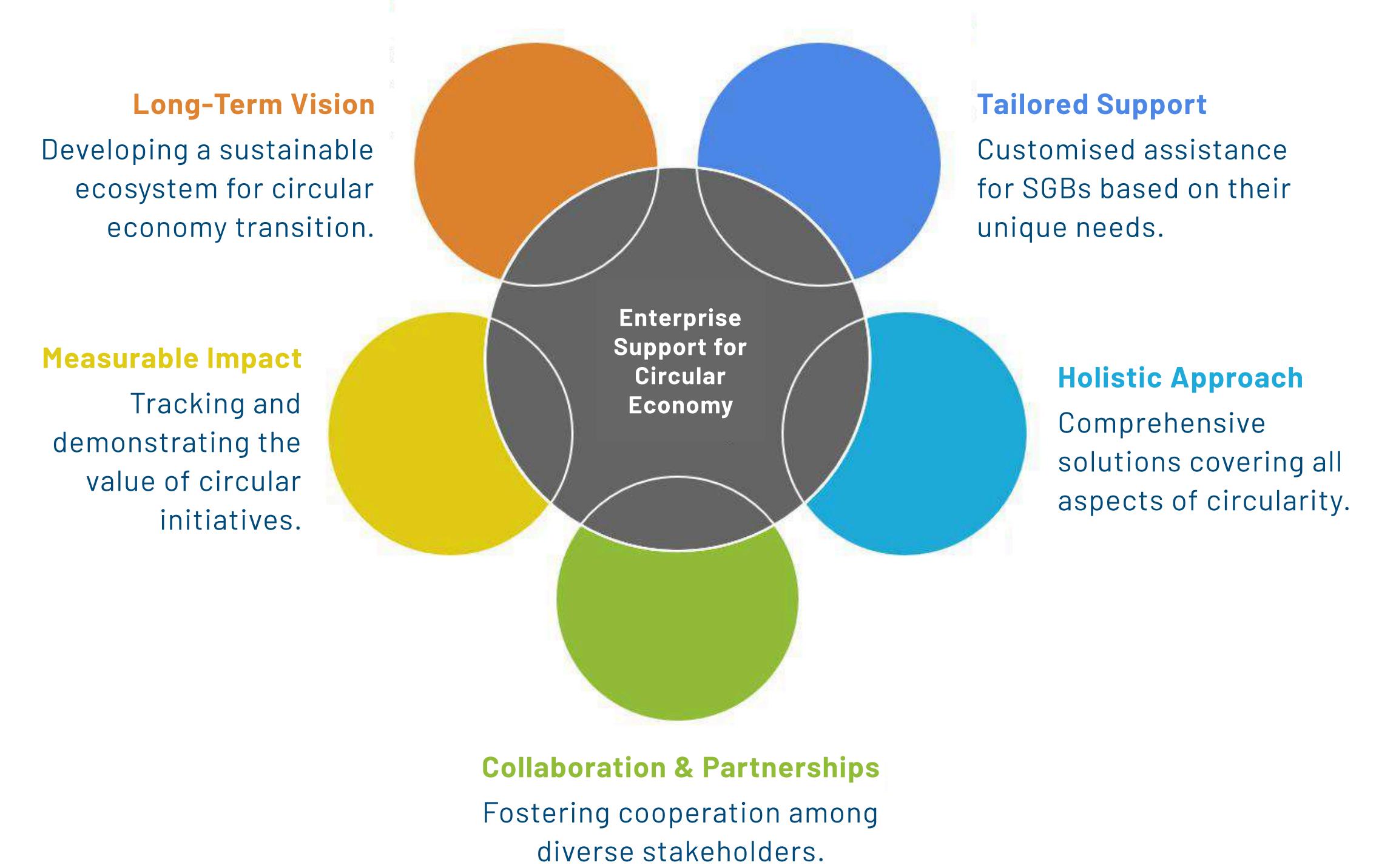
Support ESOs to introduce SMEs to the basics of the circular economy (CE). The toolkit provides simple examples to help ESOs attract and onboard early-stage businesses, while offering best practices for designing programmes that guide waste management startups and circular enterprises.



Builders

Enable ESOs to work with SMEs already practising sustainability but wanting to scale or diversify. This track uses case studies and real-life examples to help ESOs inspire growth, tackle operational challenges and strengthen programme design for SMEs in circularity.

Foundations for Circular Economy Support





In this toolkit, six categories of best practices are considered for ESOs, SGBs, communities and individuals in the waste management and circular innovation ecosystem

1

Programme Design

This refers to the process of planning and outlining the structure, objectives, activities and scope of a waste management and circular innovation support programme. The design phase involves identifying the specific needs and requirements of enterprise support organisations, determining the key focus areas, setting clear goals and objectives, and creating a comprehensive roadmap for the implementation of the programme.

2

Recruitment Strategy

In the context of waste management and circular innovation programmes, a recruitment strategy involves the development of a systematic approach to identify, attract and select suitable participants, stakeholders and partner organisations for the programme. This may include conducting outreach activities, leveraging existing networks and utilising targeted communication channels to engage and recruit relevant enterprises, experts and other stakeholders.

3

Programme Implementation

Programme implementation encompasses the execution and operationalisation of the waste management and circular innovation support programme. This phase involves carrying out the planned activities, delivering training and assistance, providing resources and tools, and facilitating the engagement of participating enterprise support organisations in line with the established programme design.

4

Monitoring and Tracking

Monitoring and tracking involves the continuous assessment, measurement and analysis of key performance indicators and progress metrics related to waste management and circular innovation programmes. This practice enables enterprise support organisations to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions based on real-time data and feedback.

5

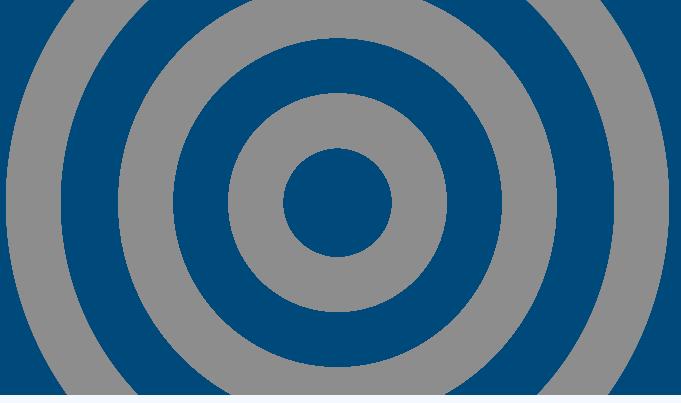
Post-Programme Support

Post-programme support focuses on providing ongoing assistance, guidance and resources to participating enterprise support organisations after the formal conclusion of the waste management and circular innovation programme. This may involve offering access to additional mentorship, networking opportunities, sustainable funding avenues, or knowledge-sharing platforms to sustain the momentum and impact of the programme.

6

Ecosystem Management

Ecosystem management encompasses the collaborative involvement of diverse stakeholders, including businesses, government entities, industry experts, academia and community groups, to create a supportive and interconnected environment for waste management and circular innovation initiatives. Enterprise support organisations can leverage ecosystem management to foster partnerships, knowledge exchange and collective action to drive sustainable practices and encourage a circular economy mindset within the broader business community.



PROGRAMME DESIGN

This includes the development of a programme tailored to the unique needs of waste and circular economy SMEs and innovators. It entails customisation to the specific needs of waste innovators (e.g., recycling technologies, sustainable materials).

► Key Insights on Circularity Needs

- ✓ 12-month structured model with clear milestones
- ✓ Early key actions – life cycle assessment by month 2, pilot by month 4
- ✓ Peer learning for cross-waste stream innovation
- ✓ Expert mentorship in design, policy, R&D, and digitisation
- ✓ Evidence-based tracking with circular metrics
- ✓ Systemic change focus for circular transformation

Case Studies on Programme Design

[Circularity needs](#) | [Sector-specific expertise](#) | [Technology driven](#) | [Impact focused](#)

Programmes tailored to address the specific challenges and opportunities within circular innovations and waste management. This involves creating specialised tracks or modules that focus on areas such as recycling technologies, sustainable materials and waste-to-value solutions.

► Case Study

Nesta Accelerator

Nesta's accelerator programme design embodies best practices that are directly transferable to the needs of circular economy ventures. The clear duration and intensity of its structured 12-month model provides enough time for meaningful innovation, such as completing a life cycle assessment by month two and launching a pilot by month four, while maintaining focus and momentum. The emphasis on peer-to-peer learning breaks down silos, enabling cross-pollination between diverse waste streams; for example, plastic upcyclers can adapt supply chain strategies pioneered by food waste processors. Through mentor and investor alignment, ventures gain targeted guidance and funding readiness from experts in industrial design, waste policy, sustainable materials, R&D and supply chain digitisation, critical fields for scaling circular solutions. Finally, Nesta's strong emphasis on evidence and measurement, using frameworks like the Standards of Evidence, enables robust tracking of outcomes metrics, which in a circular economy accelerator could include tonnes of waste diverted, CO₂e avoided and resource efficiency gains. This combination of structure, collaboration, expertise and measurable outcomes makes the model exceptionally suited to accelerating the systemic changes required in a circular economy.

NESTA ACCELERATOR
Powering Grassroots Circular Economy Innovation in Kenya's Waste Sector

Empowers entrepreneurs to transform waste into viable, scalable ventures through a structured, multi-stage program.

IDEATION STAGE
Sourcing early-stage innovators with circular business concepts

VALIDATION STAGE
Developing prototypes and product-market fit

GROWTH & SCALING STAGE
Supporting impact expansion, partnerships, and finance

IMPACT 60+ circular startups 3,800+ tonnes diverted 680+ green jobs 70% created led by women or youth



PROGRAMME DESIGN

This includes developing a programme tailored to the unique needs of waste and circular economy SMEs and innovators. It covers sector-specific expertise and a sustainability focus (sustainability and circular economy principles).

► Key Insights on Sector-Specific Expertise

- ✓ Sector-specific training for entrepreneur support organisations (ESOs) focused on circular agribusiness needs
- ✓ Circularity toolkit to diagnose business needs, design interventions and track impact
- ✓ Blended learning combining virtual and in-person sessions for flexibility and depth
- ✓ Capacity building for ESOs and coaches on policy, fundraising, impact measurement and tailored SME support

Case Studies on Programme Design

[Circularity needs](#) | [Sector-specific expertise](#) | [Technology driven](#) | [Impact focused](#)

Focused exclusively on the waste and circular economy sectors, these programmes provide specialised resources, expertise and networks to address industry-specific challenges and opportunities.

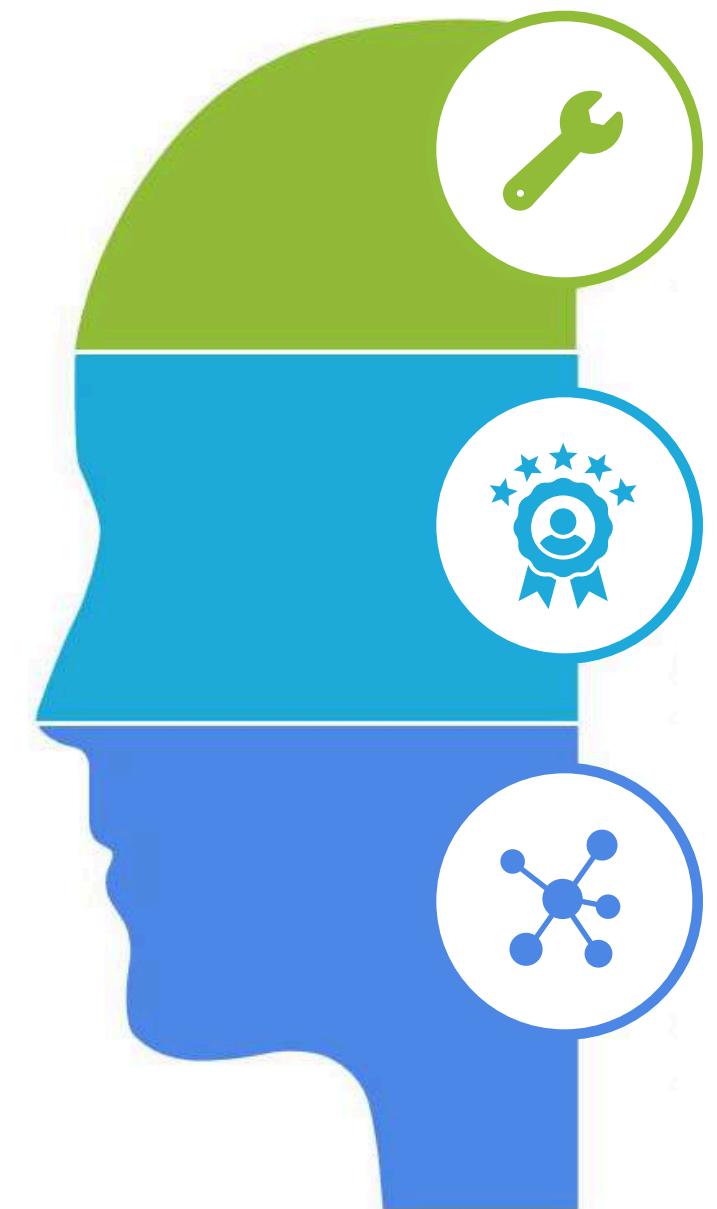
► Key features include

- ✓ **Specialised mentorship:** Experts in waste management, recycling technologies and circular business models.
- ✓ **Tailored curriculum:** Workshops and training modules specific to circular economy principles.
- ✓ **Industry partnerships:** Collaborations with key stakeholders like municipalities, recycling firms and manufacturing.

► Case Study

O-Farms Circular Toolkit

O-Farms is strengthening circular agribusiness expertise by training entrepreneur support organisations (ESOs) through a mix of virtual and in-person sessions for business diagnosis, intervention design and impact tracking. The programme equips entrepreneur support organisations (ESOs) and business coaches with tailored support strategies and sector-specific skills in circular economy policy, fundraising and impact measurement. By building deep industry knowledge and addressing ecosystem challenges, O-Farms ensures ESOs are well-prepared to meet the unique needs of circular agri-SMEs in East Africa, enabling sustainable and scalable growth across the sector.



Specialised Resources

Provides industry-specific tools and materials

Expertise

Offers expert knowledge and guidance (training-of-trainers sessions for ESOs)

Networks

Facilitates connections and collaborations



PROGRAMME DESIGN

This includes the development of a programme tailored to the unique needs of waste and circular economy SMEs and innovators.

► Key Insights on Technology-Driven Programmes

- ✓ R&D access – labs, prototyping, real-world testing
- ✓ Accelerator support from concept to market
- ✓ Expert mentorship in engineering, science and supply chains
- ✓ Open-source tools for industry collaboration
- ✓ IP protection enabling patents and licensing
- ✓ US\$1B+ follow-on funding for portfolio companies
- ✓ Billions of single-use items diverted from landfills

Case Studies on Programme Design

[Circularity needs](#) | [Sector-specific expertise](#) | [Technology driven](#) | [Impact focused](#)

Emphasise the development and scaling of innovative technologies that address waste and circular economy challenges.

► Key features include

- ✓ **Access to R&D facilities:** Laboratories, prototyping equipment and testing environments.
- ✓ **Technical mentorship:** Guidance from engineers, scientists and technology experts.
- ✓ **Intellectual property support:** Assistance with patenting, licensing and protecting technological innovations.

► Case Study

[Closed Loop Partners-\(Circular Insights Lab\)](#)

Closed Loop Partners (CLP) is an investment firm and innovation hub, demonstrating best practice in developing and scaling circular economy technologies through its Center for the Circular Economy and targeted accelerator programmes. By providing innovators with access to R&D facilities, including laboratories, prototyping equipment and real-world testing environments, CLP enable rapid refinement of solutions such as compostable and recyclable coffee cups piloted through the NextGen Consortium, which has advanced over 12 global innovations from concept to market. Startups receive tailored technical mentorship from engineers, scientists and supply chain experts. While fostering industry collaboration through open-source tools like the Reusable Packaging Playbook, CLP also ensure ventures retain control over their intellectual property (IP), enabling many to secure patents and licensing deals. This integrated approach has helped portfolio companies collectively raise over \$1 billion in follow-on funding and positioned scalable solutions capable of diverting billions of single-use items from landfills annually.



WASTE CIRCULARITY PROGRAM DESIGN

The Circular Innovation Lab (CIL)

Purpose

To support the development and scaling of innovative technologies that address waste and circular economy challenges

Key Features



Access to R&D Facilities

- Laboratories
- Prototyping equipment
- Testing environments



Technical Mentorship

- Guidance from engineers, scientists, and technology experts



Intellectual Property Support

- Assistance with patenting, licensing, and protecting technological innovations

Case Example: GreenCycle Technologies



Developed a biochemical process to convert food waste into biodegradable polymers



PROGRAMME DESIGN

This includes the development of a programme tailored to the unique needs of waste and circular economy SMEs and innovators.

► Key Insights on Impact-Focused Programme Design

- ✓ Impact tracking – toolkits with lean data, visualisation, reporting
- ✓ Sustainability embedded – design-thinking, co-creation, sector guides
- ✓ Impact-linked funding – awards, €15K grants, Catalyser support.
- ✓ Metrics – waste, water, carbon (Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol) & IRIS+ social indicators
- ✓ Human stories – captured via interviews and case documentation

Case Studies on Programme Design

[Circularity needs](#) | [Sector-specific expertise](#) | [Technology driven](#) | [Impact focused](#)

Prioritise social and environmental impact alongside business growth, supporting startups that aim to generate measurable positive outcomes in waste reduction and resource efficiency.

► Key features include

- ✓ **Impact measurement:** Tools and frameworks to assess environmental and social impact [e.g. visualization dashboards, water footprint calculators etc].
- ✓ **Sustainability integration:** Embedding sustainability into business models.
- ✓ **Impact-focused funding:** Access to investors prioritising impact alongside financial returns

► Case Study

Circular Economy Catalyst

Since launch, Circular Economy Catalyst (CEC) has supported enterprises in India and Kenya to target the reduction of 120,000+ metric tons of waste, save 800,000+ m³ of water, and create 8,500+ jobs. CEC integrates impact tracking directly within its enterprise toolkits deploying lean data collection, visualisation and reporting tools to enable entrepreneurs to monitor environmental and social performance as they scale. Sustainability is embedded into business models through design-thinking and co-creation workshops, sector-specific business model taxonomies and replicator workbooks, which guide ventures from ideation through execution with circular economy principles at the core. Impact-focused funding is delivered via the Circular Economy Awards accelerator support and matching grants (up to €15,000) for winners and tailored Catalyser development and smaller grants for runners-up, helping businesses invest in scaling while maintaining focus on positive outcomes. Environmental performance is monitored through waste diversion metrics (measuring tons of waste prevented, reused or recycled), water footprint calculations (quantifying cubic meters saved) and carbon footprint assessments aligned with the GHG Protocol. Social impact is tracked using IRIS+ metrics from the Global Impact Investing Network to capture standardised indicators such as jobs created, livelihoods improved and inclusion outcomes. Qualitative methods, including beneficiary interviews and case documentation, complement these metrics to show the human dimension of change. This combination enables CEC to report concrete results while ensuring startups can clearly demonstrate their contribution to both environmental sustainability and community well-being.



RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION STRATEGY

Recruitment gives an opportunity for ESOs to find, screen and select participants for a particular programme. Best practices cover approaches to targeted outreach, selection criteria, digital campaigns and application processes.

► Key Insights on Thematic Recruitment

- ✓ Themed rounds targeting specific waste streams
- ✓ Capital aligned to high-impact, scalable solutions
- ✓ Tailored due diligence per theme
- ✓ Synergy among similar portfolio companies
- ✓ Boosts impact and returns while driving systemic change

Case Studies on Recruitment Strategies

[Thematic recruitment](#) | [Industry partnerships](#) | [Challenges & competition](#) | [Targeted outreach](#)

► The key strategies in thematic recruitment include:

- ✓ **Launch recruitment campaigns that specifically call for startups working within predefined themes:** This ensures that the programme attracts businesses aligned with its expertise and resources. For instance, themes could include plastic recycling, electronic waste (e-waste) management, sustainable packaging, composting solutions, textile recycling and upcycling.
- ✓ **Organise themed webinars and workshops:** Host online and offline events focused on specific waste and circular economy topics to engage potential applicants.
- ✓ **Use clear messaging in application calls emphasising the thematic focus:** For instance, an accelerator might announce a "Plastic Waste Solutions" cohort, inviting startups innovating in plastic recycling or reduction.

► Case Study

Circularity Capital

Circularity Capital structures its investment process through themed investment rounds, each focused on a specific waste stream or circular economy aspect, such as packaging waste, textile recycling, food and bio-waste or e-waste. This targeted approach enables the firm to align capital deployment with the most pressing circularity challenges while attracting businesses that offer high-impact, scalable solutions within those niches. By concentrating on defined themes, Circularity Capital applies tailored due diligence, maximises environmental and economic returns and fosters synergy among portfolio companies working on similar issues. This thematic investment model not only enhances portfolio relevance and impact but also contributes to systemic change within key sectors of the circular economy.

Systemic



Systemic Change

Use thematic recruitment to accelerate systemic change.

Foster Collaboration

Build synergy among portfolio companies for knowledge sharing.

Tailored Evaluation

Conduct due diligence based on sector-specific criteria.

Align Capital with needs

Direct investments to high-impact, scalable circular businesses.

Themed Investment

Target specific circular economy sectors to address waste and resource challenges.

Specific



RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION STRATEGY

Recruitment gives an opportunity for ESOs to find, screen and select participants for a particular programme. Best practices cover approaches to targeted outreach, selection criteria, digital campaigns and application processes.

► Key Insights on Industry Partnership

- ✓ Partnering with business associations like the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) to reach business networks
- ✓ Engaging corporations (Unilever, Coca-Cola, TakaTaka) for challenges, mentorship and pilots
- ✓ Linking with universities (University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), the Technical University of Kenya) to attract student innovators

Case Studies on Recruitment Strategies

[Thematic recruitment](#) | [Industry partnerships](#) | [Challenges & competition](#) | [Targeted outreach](#)

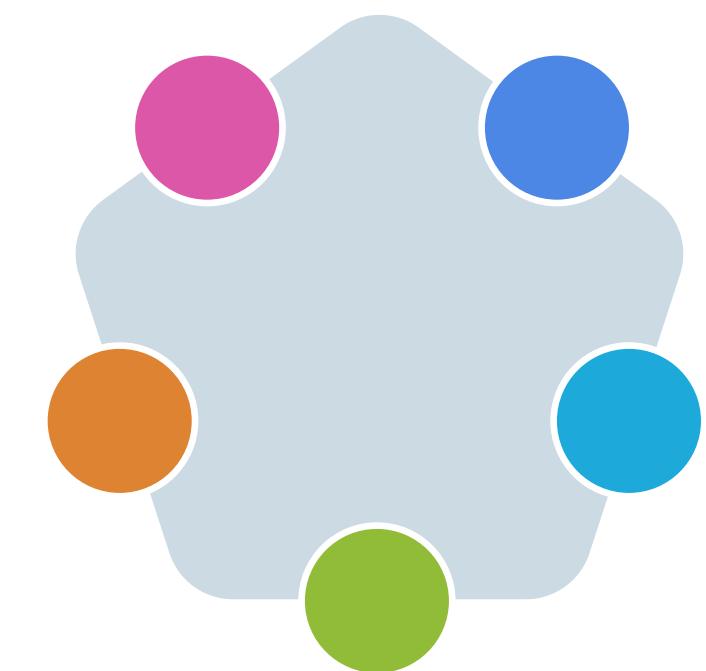
► Key strategies include:

- ✓ **Collaborate with relevant associations:** Utilise their networks to reach potential applicants and stakeholders.
- ✓ **Engage with corporate partners:** Collaborate with corporations in waste-intensive industries (e.g., manufacturing, packaging) to source challenges and provide mentorship.
- ✓ **Utilise academic and research networks:** Tap into their innovation hubs and student networks for potential candidates.

► Case Study

Green Biz Programme

The Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC), a leading enterprise support organisation, implemented a strategic recruitment and selection approach to attract circular economy startups under its GreenBiz and AgriBiz programmes. By collaborating with key associations like KEPSA, the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and ECOFAIR Alliance, KCIC tapped into industry networks to source relevant applicants. Partnerships with corporations such as Unilever Kenya, Coca-Cola Beverages Africa and TakaTaka Solutions provided real-world waste challenges, mentorship and pilot opportunities, while academic linkages with the University of Nairobi, JKUAT, and the Technical University of Kenya helped attract innovation-driven student startups. This ecosystem-based strategy led to over 650 circular economy applications, with 45 startups selected, 65% of which were youth or women-led.



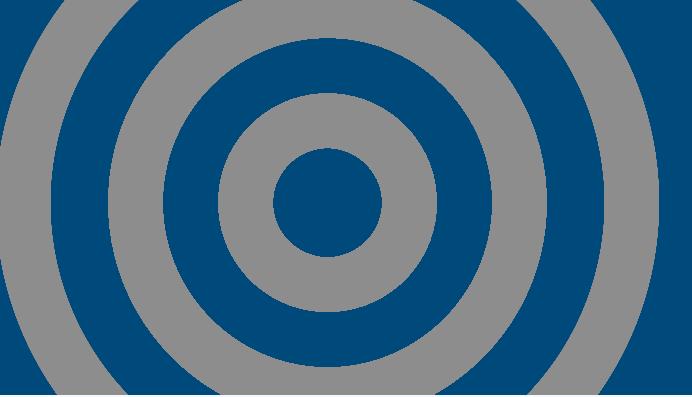
● **Industry Associations**
Leveraging industry bodies to reach relevant startups

● **Corporate Collaboration**
Engaging companies for challenges and mentorship

● **Academic Linkages**
Partnering with universities to attract student entrepreneurs

● **Ecosystem Approach**
Combining networks for stronger support

● **Inclusive Focus**
Prioritising youth- and women-led startups



RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION STRATEGY

Recruitment gives an opportunity for ESOs to find, screen and select participants for a particular programme. Best practices cover approaches to targeted outreach, selection criteria, digital campaigns and application processes.

► Key Insights on Challenges & Competition

- ✓ Global open call targeting five value chains
- ✓ 650+ submissions narrowed to 13 winners with high-impact circular solutions
- ✓ Pitch & selection process linked to €10,000 funding and a six-month accelerator
- ✓ Post-challenge support focused on business refinement, mentoring and seed funding
- ✓ Focus on scalable, design-driven circular innovations with real environmental impact

Case Studies on Recruitment Strategies

[Thematic recruitment](#) | [Industry partnerships](#) | [Challenges & competition](#) | [Targeted outreach](#)

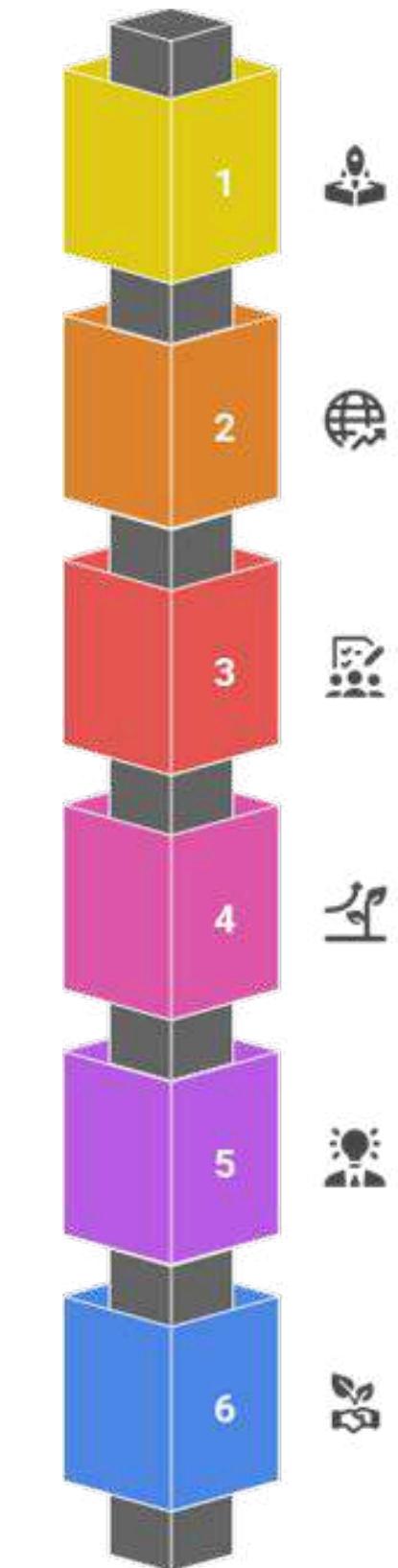
► Key Strategies

- ✓ **Host thematic hackathons:** Organise hackathons focused on solving specific waste-related problems, such as developing new recycling technologies or creating platforms for waste tracking.
- ✓ **Pitch competitions:** Conduct pitch events where startups can present their waste and circular economy solutions to a panel of judges.

► Case Study

Make it Circular Challenge

Launched by What Design Can Do (WDCD), the Make It Circular Challenge was built around five thematic value chains – What We Eat, Wear, Buy, Build, and Package – to find targeted, high-impact circular economy solutions. The open call drew over 650 submissions globally, from which a jury selected 13 winning startups, which each received a €10,000 award and an intensive six-month accelerator programme delivered with Impact Hub Amsterdam. These winners showcased practical innovations across biodegradable packaging, bioplastics, upcycled goods, textile recycling and agro-waste repurposing, with examples including Saathi (biodegradable sanitary pads), Rethread Africa (maize husk textiles), CoolBricks (cow-dung bio-bricks) and Balena (compostable bioplastic). Post-challenge support helped participating enterprises refine business models, secure design and mentoring, and access seed funding, thus laying the groundwork for scalable circular solutions grounded in creative design and environmental impact .



Challenge Launch

The Make it Circular Challenge is initiated to attract innovative circular economy solutions.

Global Submissions

Over 650 submissions are received from around the world, showcasing diverse ideas.

Jury Selection

A jury selects 13 winning startups based on their potential impact and innovation.

Accelerator Program

Winners participate in a six-month intensive programme to refine their business models.

Innovation Showcase

Startups present their practical innovations in biodegradable packaging and more.

Post-Challenge Support

Ongoing support helps startups refine models and secure funding for scalability.



RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION STRATEGY

Recruitment gives an opportunity for ESOs to find, screen and select participants for a particular programme. Best practices cover approaches to targeted outreach, selection criteria, digital campaigns and application processes.

► Key Insights on Targeted Outreach

- ✓ Thematic tracks targeting key sustainability areas
- ✓ Selection for fit and scalability of solutions
- ✓ Tailored mentorship per track
- ✓ Curated funding and pilot links with corporations
- ✓ Strong startup/industry match for impact
- ✓ Systemic change focus in circularity

Case Studies on Recruitment Strategies

[Thematic recruitment](#) | [Industry partnerships](#) | [Challenges & competition](#) | [Targeted outreach](#)

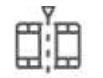
► Key strategies:

- ✓ **Utilising niche social media groups:** Engage with LinkedIn groups, Facebook communities and forums dedicated to waste management and the circular economy.
- ✓ **Use online platforms:** To achieve targeted outreach.

► Case Study

Plug and Play APAC

Plug and Play's Circular Economy Accelerator adopts a thematic recruitment approach by organising startups into specialised tracks that align with pressing sustainability challenges and industry needs. Each track focuses on specific themes such as circular packaging, sustainable materials, waste valorisation, plastic alternatives and resource efficiency. Startups are selected based on their alignment with these focus areas and their potential to scale impactful, market-ready solutions. This thematic structure enables Plug and Play to tailor mentorship, funding opportunities and pilot engagements with corporate partners that are actively seeking innovations in those domains. Through this targeted approach, the accelerator ensures a strong match between startups and industry players, fostering collaboration that drives systemic change in sustainability and circularity.



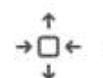
Thematic Alignment

Startups are categorised into specialised tracks



Innovation Assessment

Startups are evaluated for their innovative solutions



Market Potential

Startups are assessed for their scalability and market impact



Team Expertise

Startup teams are evaluated for their skills and experience



Impact Evaluation

Startups are judged on their environmental and social impact



PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Programme implementation encompasses the execution and operationalisation of the waste management and circular innovation support programme. This phase involves carrying out the planned activities, delivering training and assistance, providing resources and tools, and facilitating the engagement of participating enterprise support organisations in line with the established programme design.

► Key Insights on Structured Curriculum

- ✓ Strong partnerships (e.g., NITA, private sector) boost credibility and reach
- ✓ Modular training ensures structured, progressive learning
- ✓ Hands-on practice at recycling sites links theory to real-world skills
- ✓ Accreditation and evaluation guarantee quality and recognition
- ✓ Inclusive focus on youth and women expands impact

Case Studies on Programme Implementation

[Structured curriculum](#) | [Access to facilities](#) | [TA+ funds](#) | [Peer-to-peer engagement](#)

A structured curriculum is a comprehensive and organised plan that outlines the learning objectives, content, activities, assessments and resources for a particular course or educational programme. It provides a clear framework for guiding the teaching and learning process, ensuring that all essential topics and skills are covered in a logical and progressive manner.

► Case Study

NITA

In Kenya, the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), in partnership with Mr. Green Africa and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), implemented a structured, modular training curriculum focused on building practical skills in waste circularity. The programme featured clear learning objectives and six progressive modules covering policy, material handling, recycling technologies, and circular business models, along with hands-on activities at operational recycling sites. Assessments, continuous evaluations and NITA-certified accreditation ensured credibility and impact. As a result, over 1,200 trainees – 72% of them youth and women – were equipped for employment or entrepreneurship in the circular economy, with more than 950 tonnes of waste diverted through learner-led initiatives.

Hands-on Activities

Operational recycling site experience



Modular Training

Structured curriculum for practical skills



Assessment & Accreditation

Continuous evaluation and NITA certification



PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Programme implementation encompasses the execution and operationalisation of the waste management and circular innovation support programme.

► Key Insights on Access to Facilities

- ✓ Facility access: Production spaces, sorting bays and processing equipment
- ✓ Hands-on innovation: Prototyping and product development in real settings
- ✓ Advisory support: Guidance on materials, compliance, markets and efficiency

Case Studies on Programme Implementation

[Structured curriculum](#) | [Access to facilities](#) | [TA+ funds](#) | [Peer-to-peer engagement](#)

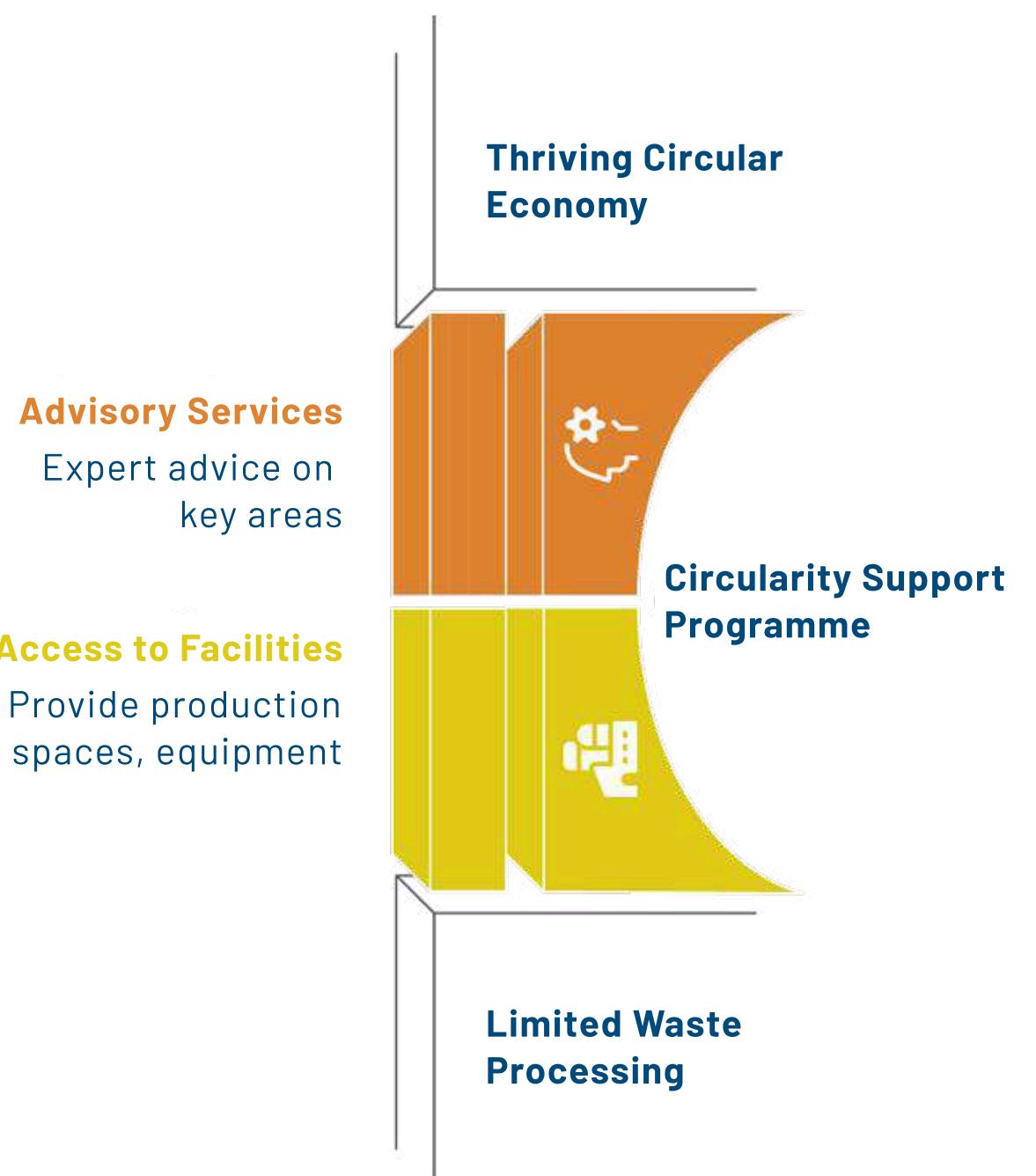
► The approach has two main perspectives:

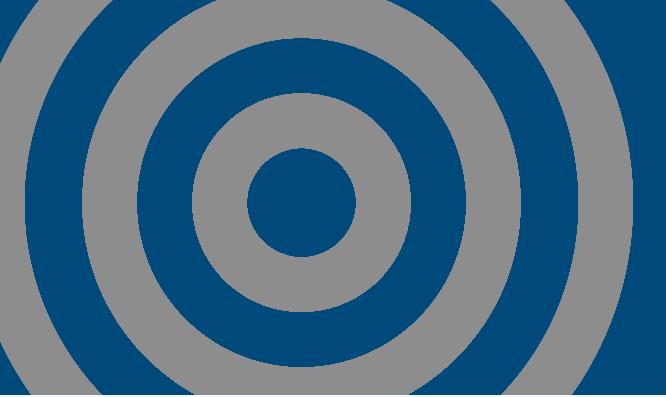
- ✓ **Access to facilities:** Access to facilities refers to the availability and utilisation of the physical spaces or resources needed to perform specific activities or services.
- ✓ **Advisory services:** Play a crucial role in providing valuable insights and recommendations to clients across various fields. These services encompass a wide range of consultative support and guidance aimed at assisting individuals or organisations to make informed decisions and optimise their operations.

► Case Study

Gjenge Makers Project

In 2023, Gjenge Makers, a Kenyan social enterprise specialising in converting plastic waste into durable construction materials, partnered with local governments and innovation hubs to implement a waste circularity support programme with a dual focus on access to facilities and advisory services. The programme provided startups and informal waste actors with access to production spaces, sorting bays and equipment for plastic processing, enabling hands-on innovation and prototyping. Simultaneously, participants received tailored advisory support from circular economy experts, covering areas such as material selection, compliance with the Waste Management Act, market linkages and operational efficiency. This combined approach empowered over 200 youth and women entrepreneurs, improved the quality and volume of recycled products, and fostered more informed, sustainable business decisions across Nairobi's growing circular economy ecosystem.





PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Programme implementation encompasses the execution and operationalisation of the waste management and circular innovation support programme.

► Key Insights on TA+ Funds

- ✓ Blended financing: Grants, debt and equity for circular startups.
- ✓ Technical assistance (TA): Support on financial literacy, business models, investment packaging and compliance.
- ✓ De-risking: Credit guarantees and investor linkages.

Case Studies on Programme Implementation

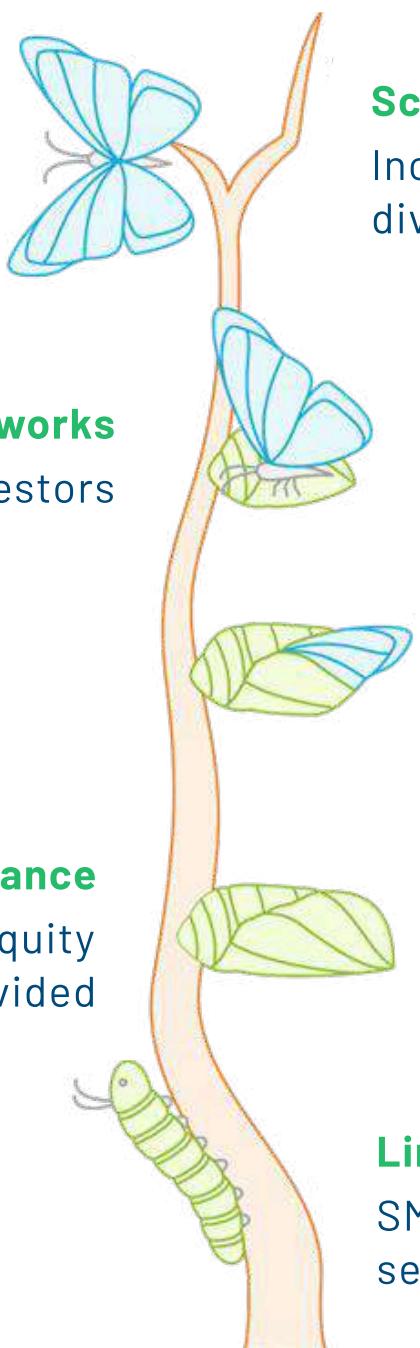
[Structured curriculum](#) | [Access to facilities](#) | [TA+ funds](#) | [Peer-to-peer engagement](#)

The aim is to assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to access a variety of financial resources and investment options to support their operations and growth, such as alternative financing, equity, grants and subsidies, credit guarantee or debt. To support the utilisation of the funds, the programme would offer technical assistance (TA) through other modalities.

► Case Study

Kenya Climate Ventures

Kenya Climate Ventures (KCV) implements targeted programmes to support SMEs in the waste circularity sector by enhancing their access to finance and investment readiness. For example, one of its recent initiatives provided a blended financing model, offering grants, debt and equity funding to high-potential circular startups working in plastic recycling, composting and e-waste recovery. To complement the financial support, KCV offered technical assistance in the form of financial literacy training, business model refinement, investment packaging and compliance with environmental regulations. Additionally, selected SMEs were linked to credit guarantee schemes and investor networks to de-risk financing and expand their capital base. As a result, over 25 SMEs accessed more than KES 150 million in funding, enabling scale-up of operations, job creation and increased waste diversion across several counties in Kenya.



Scaled Operations

Increased waste diversion and job creation

Investor Networks

Linking SMEs to investors

Technical Assistance

Training and business model refinement

Blended Finance

Grants, debt, and equity funding provided

Limited Access

SMEs struggle to secure funding



PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Programme implementation encompasses the execution and operationalisation of the waste management and circular innovation support programme.

► Key Insights on Peer-to-Peer Engagement

- ✓ Peer learning: Shared learning and co-creation across value chains
- ✓ Workshops: Capability-building and data strategy sessions
- ✓ Networking: Ecosystem events for collaboration
- ✓ Knowledge products: Data-sharing playbook and policy guidance

Case Studies on Programme Implementation

Structured curriculum | Access to facilities | TA+ funds | Peer-to-peer engagement

This involves an approach where enterprises within the circular economy ecosystem collaborate, share knowledge and exchange experiences to collectively enhance their skills, capabilities and understanding of circularity principles and practices. This form of engagement fosters a supportive network where SMEs can learn from each other, leverage their collective expertise and address common challenges related to sustainable resource use, waste management and business innovation.

► Case Study

Nordic Circular Accelerator

The Nordic Circular Accelerator, a year-long, free accelerator, guides cross-sector circular collaborations across the Nordics. Selected initiatives participate in 11 sessions (capability-building, data strategy workshops and three ecosystem networking events) designed to foster shared learning and co-creation. Through peer learning circles, teams engage with industry experts and other collaborators to harmonise data practices, co-develop digital tools and align circular initiatives across value chains. The accelerator culminates in a data-sharing playbook and policy guidance to institutionalise collaboration and support continuous innovation at scale.

Ecosystem Networking Events

Foster shared learning and co-creation

Peer Learning Circles

Engage with experts and collaborators

Siloed Circular Initiatives

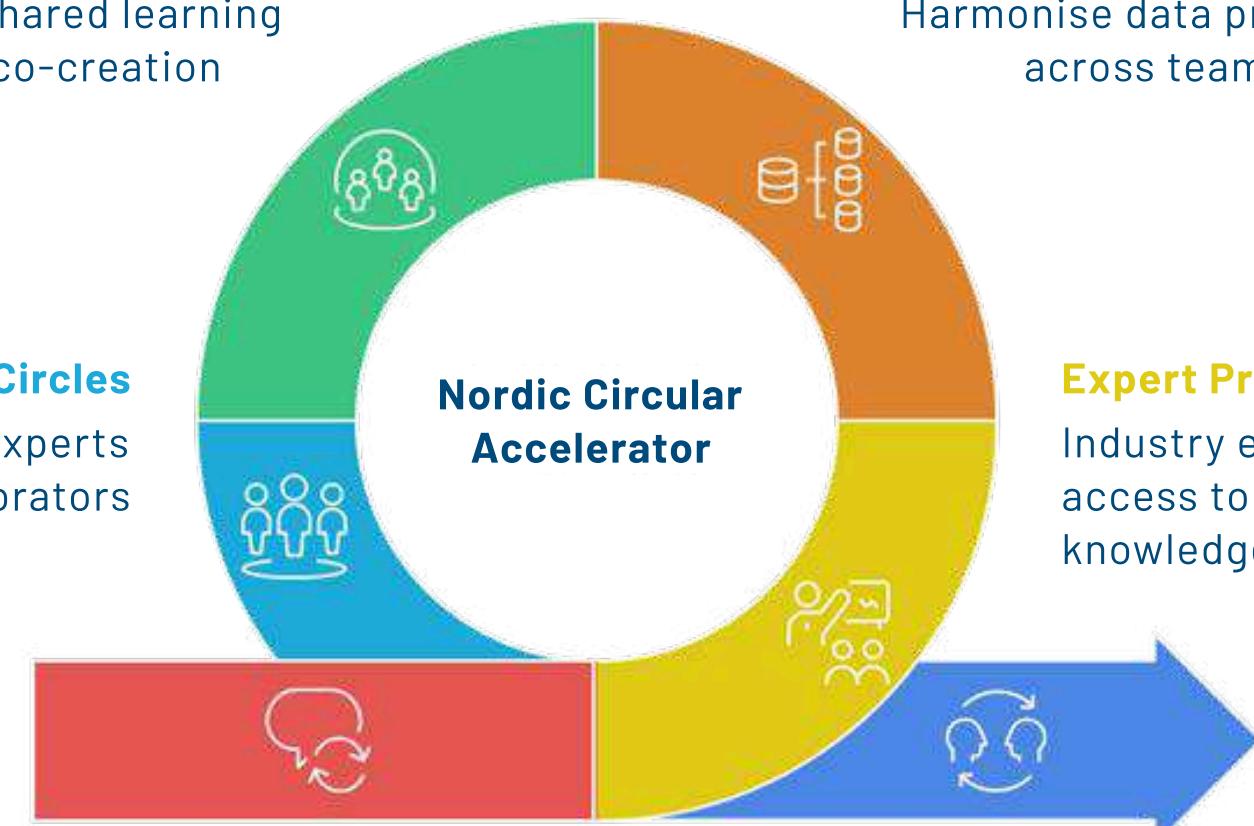
Initiatives lack cross-sector collaboration

Data Strategy Workshops

Harmonise data practices across teams

Expert Presentations

Industry experts provide access to cutting-edge knowledge and insights





MONITORING AND TRACKING

Monitoring and tracking involves the continuous assessment, measurement and analysis of key performance indicators and progress metrics related to waste management and circular innovation programmes.

► Key Insights on Clear KPIs

- ✓ Waste reduction: % landfill diversion
- ✓ Resource efficiency: Tonnes recycled/day or month
- ✓ Business performance: % circular revenue growth/year
- ✓ Lifecycle impact: Thousands of tonnes CO₂ reduced/year
- ✓ Supply chain: 100% digital waste traceability
- ✓ Customer impact: % clients improved segregation
- ✓ Financials: US\$ revenue from circular operations
- ✓ Compliance: Full regulatory alignment

Case Studies on Monitoring and Tracking

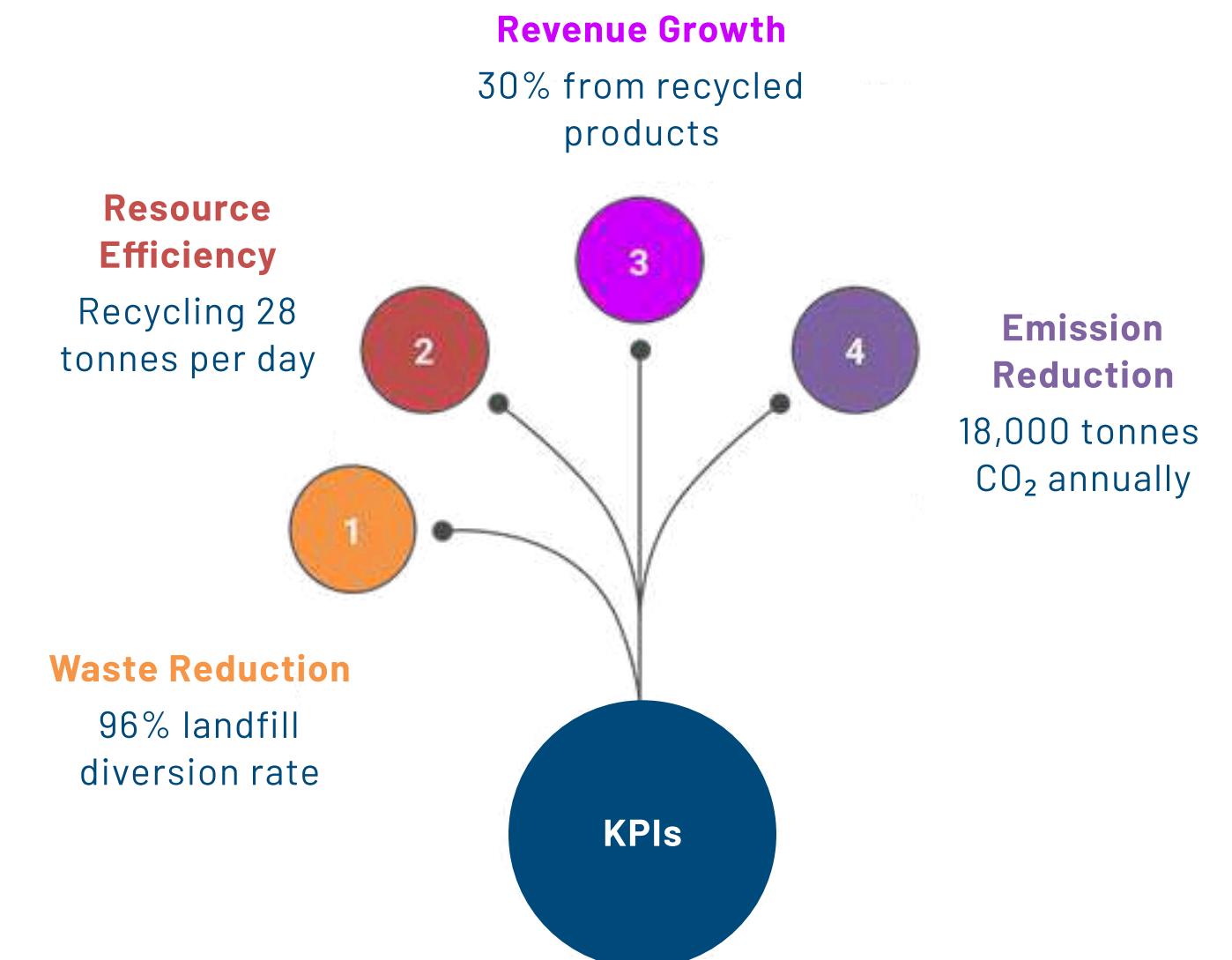
[Clear KPIs](#) | [Metrics beyond financials](#) | [Long-term tracking](#) | [Documenting success](#)

Setting clear key performance indicators (KPIs) is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of sustainable practices, measuring progress towards circular economy goals, and ensuring accountability in environmental and economic performance. Key metrics include waste reduction, resource efficiency indicators, circular business model performance, product lifecycle impact, supply chain sustainability measures, customer impact assessments, financial performance in circularity, and regulatory and compliance tracking.

► Case Study

TakaTaka Waste Solutions Recovery

In 2022, TakaTaka Solutions, a leading Kenyan waste management social enterprise, implemented a comprehensive monitoring and tracking framework anchored in clearly defined KPIs to measure progress towards circular economy goals. These KPIs covered eight key areas: waste reduction (achieving a 96% landfill diversion rate), resource efficiency (recycling 28 tonnes per day of post-consumer waste), circular business performance (30% revenue growth from recycled product lines), product lifecycle impact (reducing lifecycle CO₂ emissions by 18,000 tonnes annually), supply chain sustainability (tracking and tracing 100% of waste collected via a digital system), customer impact (85% of serviced clients reported improved waste segregation), financial performance in circularity (KES 120 million in revenue from circular operations), and regulatory compliance (100% alignment with National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and county waste regulations). This data-driven approach enabled TakaTaka Solutions to enhance operational efficiency, build trust with partners and demonstrate strong, quantifiable circularity outcomes.





MONITORING AND TRACKING

Monitoring and tracking involves the continuous assessment, measurement and analysis of key performance indicators and progress metrics related to waste management and circular innovation programmes. This practice enables enterprise support organisations to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions based on real-time data and feedback.

► Key Insights on Metrics Beyond Financials

- ✓ Enterprises in the circularity sector monitor and track their progress, identify areas for improvement, communicate their sustainability performance and drive continuous innovation

Case Studies on Monitoring and Tracking

[Clear KPIs](#) | [Metrics beyond financials](#) | [Long-term tracking](#) | [Documenting success](#)

It is important to consider metrics beyond financials to build towards sustainable entrepreneurship.

► This includes:

- ✓ **Circularity indicators:** Utilising the Circularity Indicators Framework to assess the circular performance of participating businesses across various dimensions, such as materials, product design, and business models.
- ✓ **Case-specific metrics:** Measure reductions in waste generation, resource efficiency improvements and revenue growth from circular products or services.

► Case Study

Waste to Work Initiative

Since November 2022, VSO's From Waste to Work initiative, run in partnership with TakaTaka Solutions and International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI), has empowered nearly 1,031 youth waste pickers across Nairobi and Mombasa, aiming to include 3,900 young people organised into business clubs. The programme goes beyond financial outcomes to emphasise circularity and environmental indicators. It leverages the Circularity Indicators Framework to monitor material reuse, product design improvements and circular business models. Specific metrics include the collection of 6,000 tonnes of waste and the avoidance of 4,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions, alongside measuring increases in revenue from circular products and improvements in resource efficiency with 60% of startups led by young women. This multi-dimensional reporting enables VSO to assess environmental impact, enterprise growth and inclusivity, thus delivering a holistic model for sustainable entrepreneurship scaling in the circular economy sector.

Promote Inclusivity
Support female-led startups

Improve Efficiency
Enhance resource use in startups

Increase Revenue
Boost income from circular products

Empower Youth
Train and organise young waste pickers

Collect Waste
Gather and process waste materials



Reduce Emissions
Lower CO₂ emissions through waste reduction



MONITORING AND TRACKING

Monitoring and tracking involves the continuous assessment, measurement and analysis of key performance indicators and progress metrics related to waste management and circular innovation programmes.

► Key Insights on Long-Term Tracking

- ✓ Robust data systems and LCA tools for impact measurement
- ✓ Track clear outcomes, e.g., circular investments, CO₂ avoided, commitments adopted
- ✓ Use third-party verification for credibility
- ✓ Foster continuous improvement via peer learning and innovation
- ✓ Build ecosystems linking corporations, startups and governments for wider market/policy shifts

Case Studies on Monitoring and Tracking

[Clear KPIs](#) | [Metrics beyond financials](#) | [Long-term tracking](#) | [Documenting success](#)

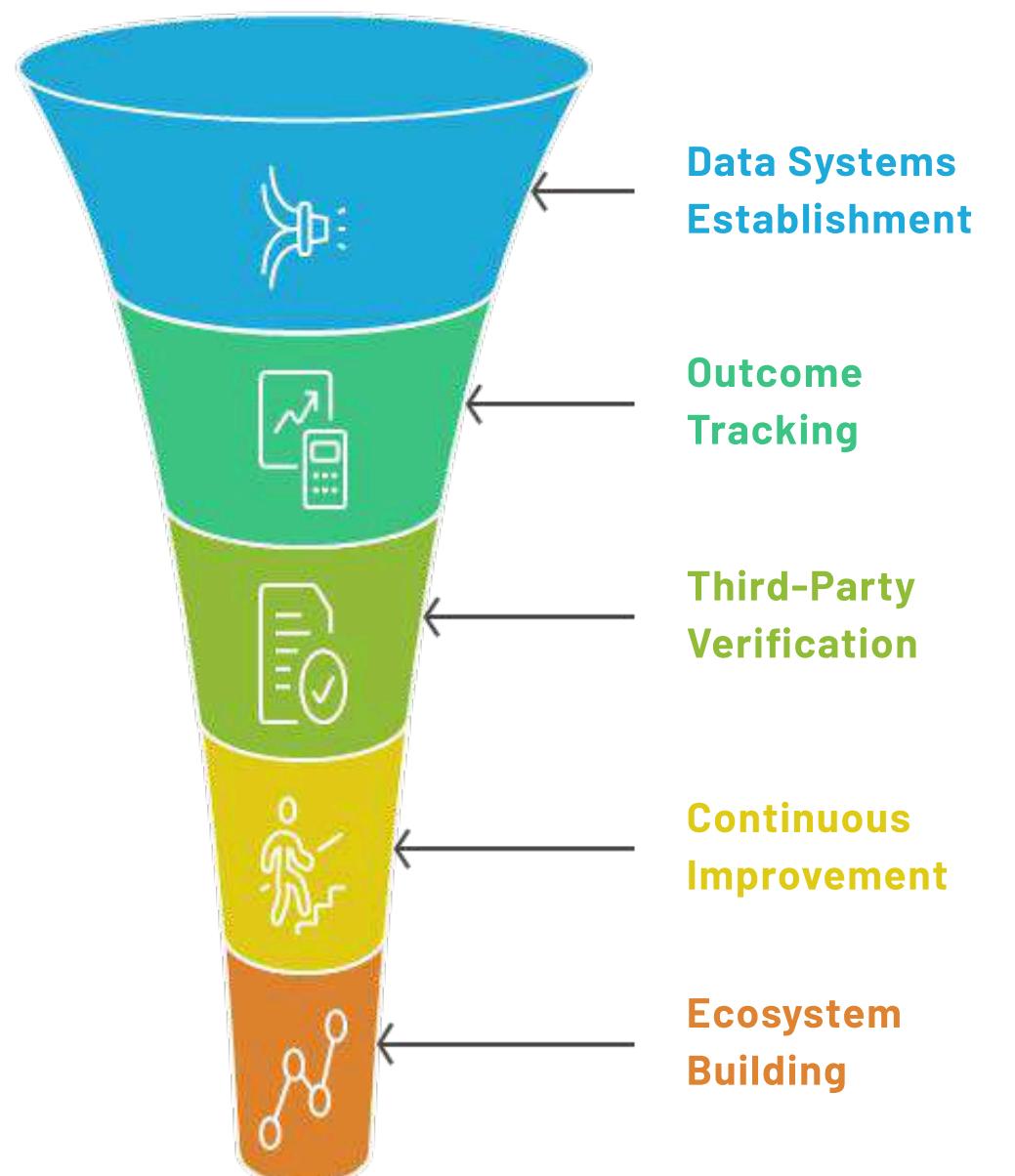
This involves establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the environmental, social and economic impacts of sustainable practices over extended periods. For instance, setting up clear data management systems, integrating sustainable reporting frameworks, setting up life cycle assessments, promoting a culture of continuous improvement, considering third-party verification and capacity building. In practice, support organisations can include tracking alumni and promoting engagement events.

► Case Study

[Ellen MacArthur Foundation CE 100 Programme](#)

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Circular Economy 100 (CE100) programme stands out globally for establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that track the environmental, social and economic impacts of circular practices over time. Through clear data management systems, life cycle assessment tools and sustainable reporting frameworks, CE100 supports members, including corporations, governments and startups, to embed circularity into core operations. Key outcomes include mobilising over US\$ 400 million in circular investments, avoiding 3.4 million tons of CO₂ emissions and enabling 55% of participating corporations to adopt measurable circular commitments. The programme also integrates third-party verification and fosters a culture of continuous improvement through peer learning platforms, alumni engagement events and collaborative innovation projects. These efforts have created a global ecosystem of practice, advancing not only enterprise-level sustainability but also policy and market shifts towards a circular economy.

Circular Practices Implementation



Enhanced Circularity Impact



MONITORING AND TRACKING

Monitoring and tracking involves the continuous assessment, measurement and analysis of key performance indicators and progress metrics related to waste management and circular innovation programmes.

► Key Insights on Documenting Success

- ✓ Interactive dashboards for real-time impact
- ✓ Annual sustainability reports for accountability
- ✓ Case studies and stories to humanise impact
- ✓ Visual mapping of key outcomes
- ✓ Third-party certifications for credibility
- ✓ Transparent reporting to engage stakeholders

Case Studies on Monitoring and Tracking

[Clear KPIs](#) | [Metrics beyond financials](#) | [Long-term tracking](#) | [Documenting success](#)

This is essential for demonstrating the impact of sustainable practices, driving stakeholder engagement and inspiring further innovation. It is important to document case studies and success stories, use visual impact mapping, produce annual sustainability reports, list certifications and awards, or host interactive online platforms.

► Case Study

[Mr. Green Africa Events and News](#)

In 2023, Mr. Green Africa, a pioneering Kenyan circular economy enterprise, strengthened its monitoring and tracking efforts to demonstrate the impact of its sustainable waste management practices and drive broader stakeholder engagement. The company developed an interactive online impact dashboard, published a comprehensive annual sustainability report and documented multiple case studies and success stories showcasing the journeys of informal waste collectors integrated into the formal economy. Through visual impact mapping, Mr. Green Africa illustrated the diversion of over 10,000 tonnes of plastic waste, the reduction of 25,000 tonnes of CO₂e emissions, and the creation of over 3,000 green jobs. The enterprise's transparent reporting practices earned it B Corporation certification and recognition from the World Economic Forum's Circulars Accelerator. These tools not only validated the company's impact but also inspired innovation among peers, increased investor confidence and deepened engagement across corporate, community and policy stakeholders.





POST-PROGRAMME

Post-programme support focuses on providing ongoing assistance, guidance and resources to participating enterprise support organisations after the formal conclusion of the waste management and circular innovation programme.

► Key Insights on Mentorship

- ✓ Establish alumni mentorship networks for ongoing guidance
- ✓ Provide continuous technical advisory support expert clinics or office hours
- ✓ Facilitate investor and market linkages beyond the programme
- ✓ Support impact tracking and feedback sharing with mentors
- ✓ Create peer-to-peer alumni forums for collaboration and shared learning

Case studies on Post-Programme Support

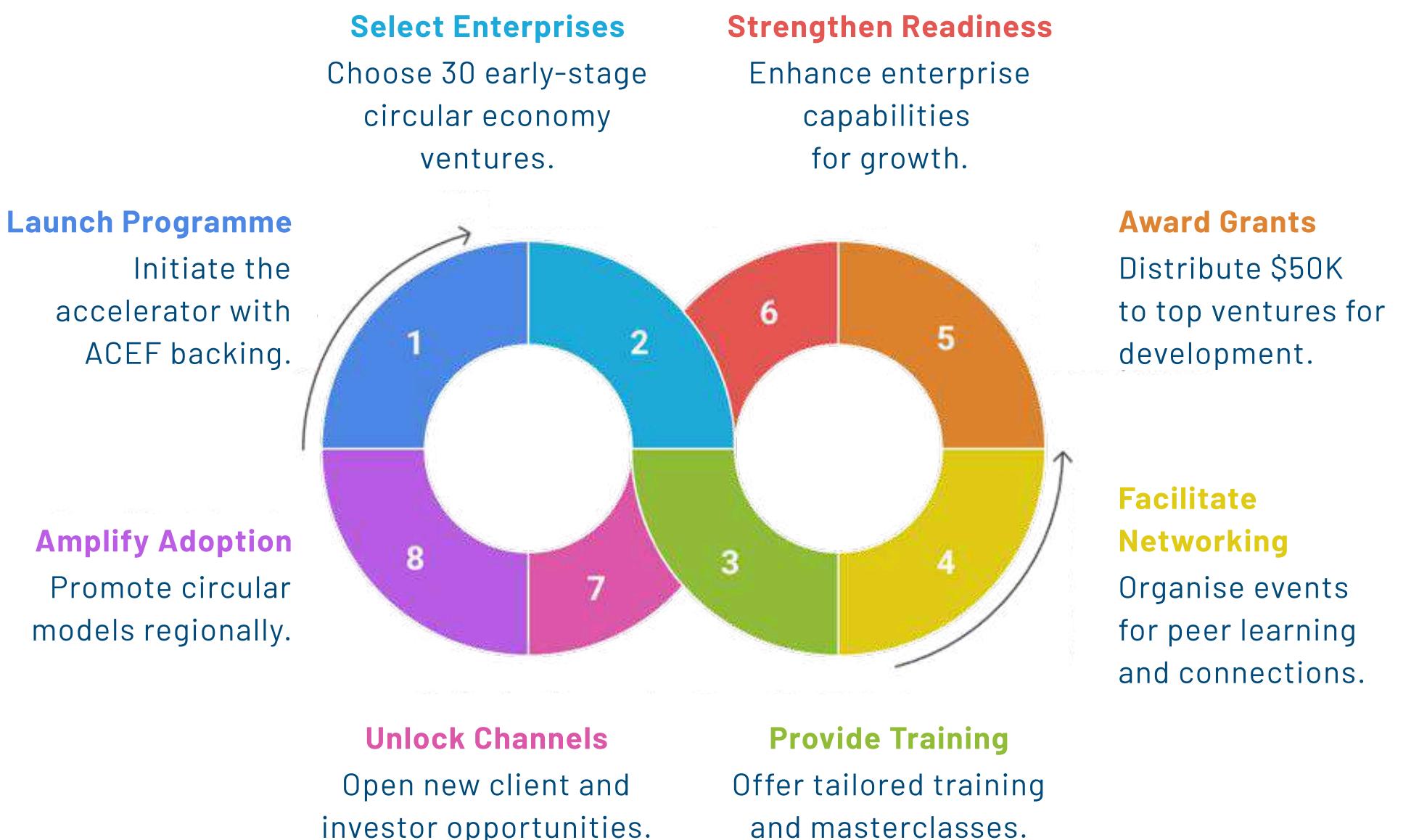
[Mentorship](#) | [Networking](#) | [Investment](#) | [Monitoring](#)

Provide ongoing mentorship, training and capacity-building support to enterprises in the circularity sector to help them scale sustainable practices effectively.

► Case Study

[AfriCircular Innovators Programme](#)

The AfriCircular Innovators Programme, launched in 2024 and backed by the African Development Bank's Africa Circular Economy Facility (ACEF), is a multi-phase accelerator supporting 30 early-stage circular economy enterprises from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Rwanda. Over six months, participating SMEs receive tailored training, masterclasses, technical coaching, peer learning and networking opportunities, including marketplace events, investor roundtables and niche demo days. The top 10 ventures were awarded grants totaling US\$50K for product development and market exploration. This structured combination of capacity-building, financial support and facilitated connections strengthens enterprise readiness, unlocks new client and investor channels and amplifies regional adoption of circular models.





POST-PROGRAMME

Post-programme support focuses on providing ongoing assistance, guidance and resources to participating enterprise support organisations after the formal conclusion of the waste management and circular innovation programme.

► Key Insights on Networking

- ✓ Curated networking events tailored to local priorities
- ✓ Structured formats (speed-dating, 1:1 meetings) for high-value connections
- ✓ Facilitated follow-up to convert leads into partnerships
- ✓ Alignment with funding opportunities to drive implementation

Case studies on Post-Programme Support

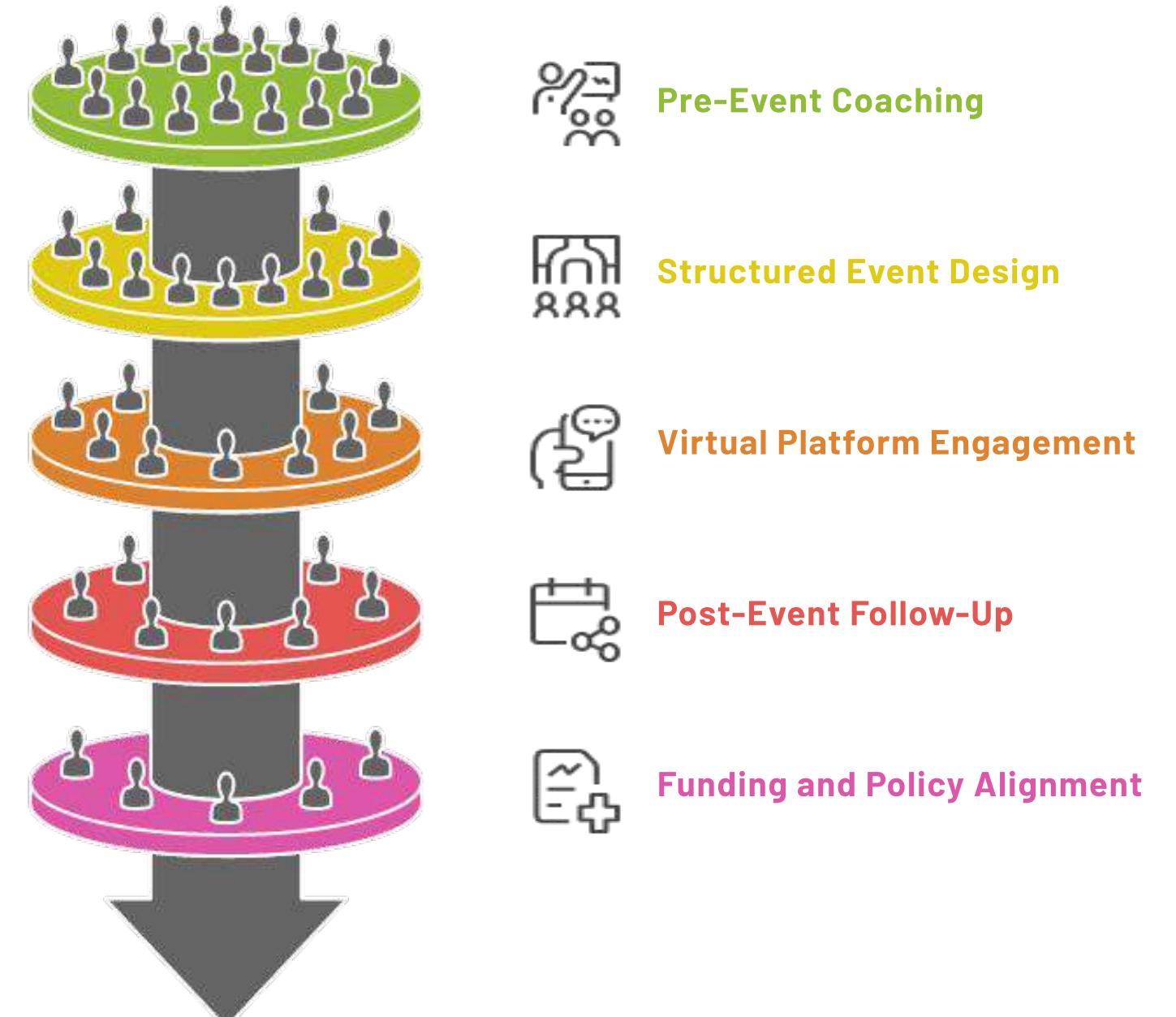
[Mentorship](#) | [Networking](#) | [Investment](#) | [Monitoring](#)

Facilitate networking events, partnerships and collaboration opportunities for enterprises in the circularity sector to connect with industry peers, investors, potential clients and other stakeholders for post-programme support.

► Case Study

Meet the Borough

ReLondon partnered with the London Borough of Hounslow to host a targeted online networking event called "Meet the Borough", designed to connect circular-economy SMEs with key local government departments. ReLondon handpicked 20 innovation-driven SMEs from its portfolio and prepared them with coaching to align their offerings with the borough's sustainability priorities – ranging from retrofitting buildings to community waste initiatives. Through a mix of curated presentations and speed-dating sessions on a professional virtual platform, participants engaged in over 40 one-to-one meetings and exchanged hundreds of messages. The event generated at least four emerging public-private partnership opportunities, with government staff noting that it created connections that "would be difficult or take much longer to make on our own". Through structured facilitation, post-event follow-up and alignment with local green-recovery funding, the approach showcases how ESOs can catalyse meaningful collaboration and post-programme support in the circularity sector.





POST-PROGRAMME

Post-programme support focuses on providing ongoing assistance, guidance and resources to participating enterprise support organisations after the formal conclusion of the waste management and circular innovation programme.

► Key Insights on Investment Support

- ✓ Provide follow-on funding opportunities beyond demo day
- ✓ Maintain investor readiness coaching for scaling phases
- ✓ Facilitate continuous exposure to investor networks
- ✓ Blend capital with technical and strategic support
- ✓ Encourage peer learning among portfolio companies

Case studies on Post-Programme Support

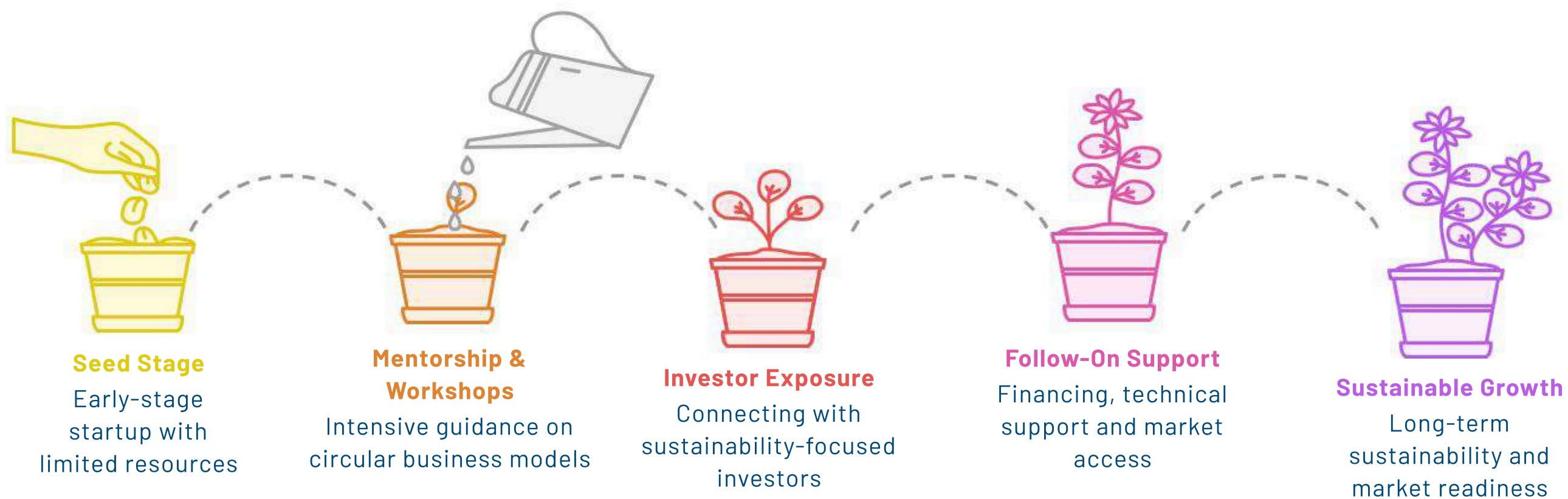
[Mentorship](#) | [Networking](#) | [Investment](#) | [Monitoring](#)

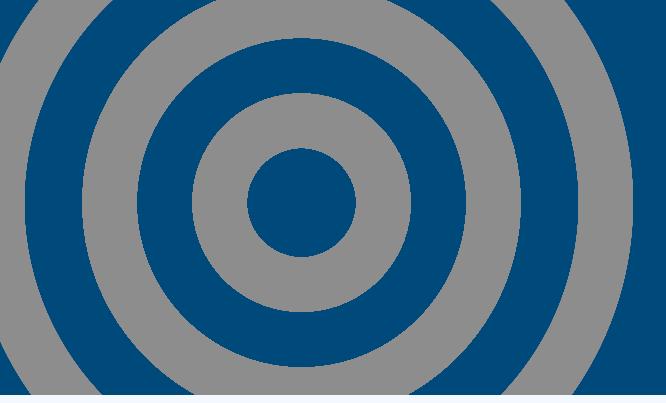
Provide access to funding, financing and investment support for enterprises in the circularity sector to help them overcome financial barriers and sustain their operations post-programme.

► Case Study

[Katapult Africa Accelerator](#)

The Katapult Africa Accelerator, a pan-African impact investment and acceleration programme, targets agritech, foodtech and climate-tech startups, including circular economy innovators. The programme blends a significant early-stage investment (US\$150K–500K equity), 90 days of intensive mentorship and workshops, real-world investor readiness support and exposure through an “Investor Day” pitch event. Post-programme, Katapult offers follow-on funding and scaling support, reinforcing continuous capacity building beyond demo day. This investment-first model ensures ventures benefit from deep investor insights, peer learning, high-impact network access and downstream technical support.





POST-PROGRAMME

Post-programme support focuses on providing ongoing assistance, guidance and resources to participating enterprise support organisations after the formal conclusion of the waste management and circular innovation programme.

► Key Insights on Monitoring

- ✓ Measure impact and effectiveness
- ✓ Identify gaps and challenges
- ✓ Apply lessons to improve programmes
- ✓ Inform policy and ecosystem growth

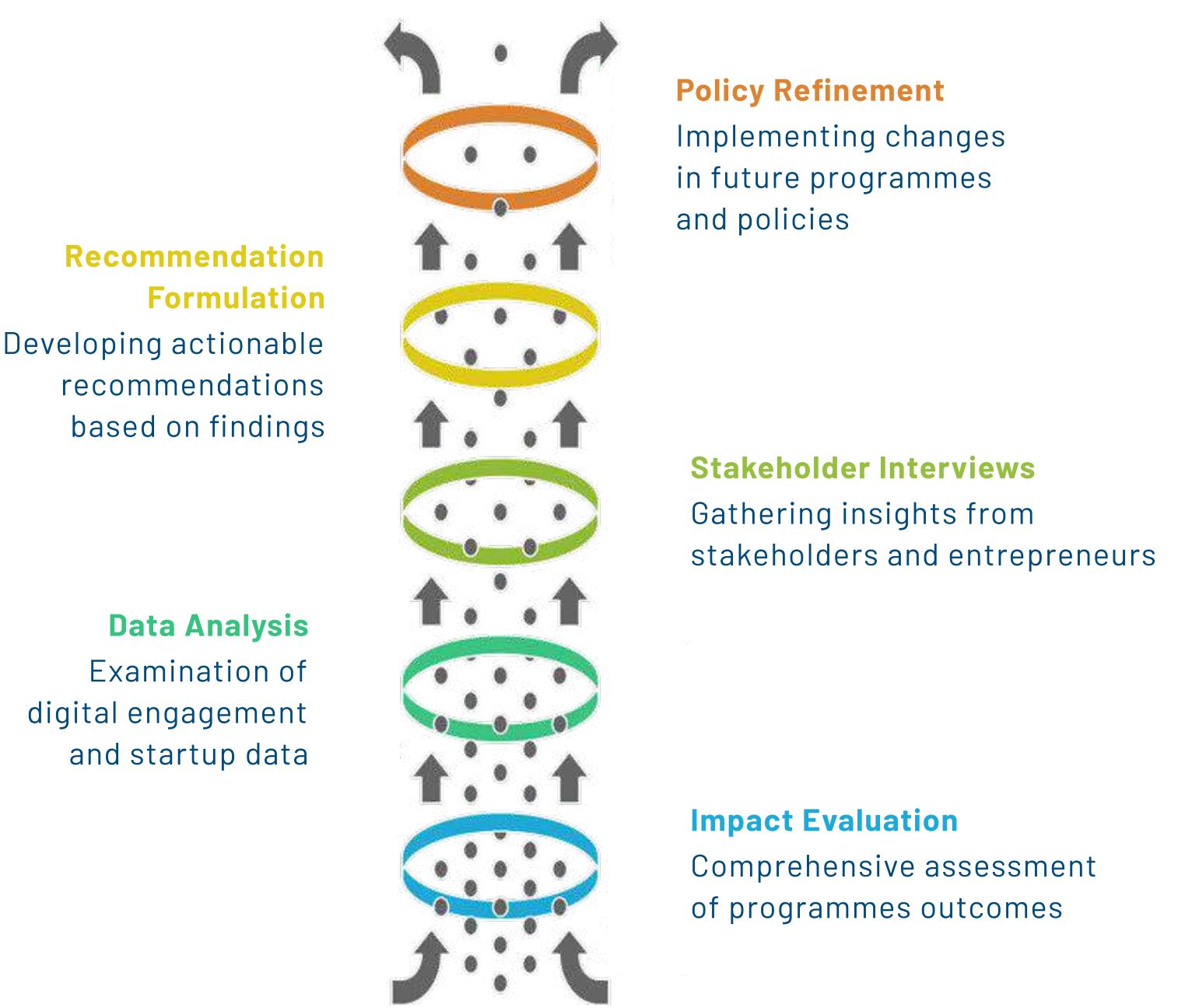
Case studies on Post-Programme Support

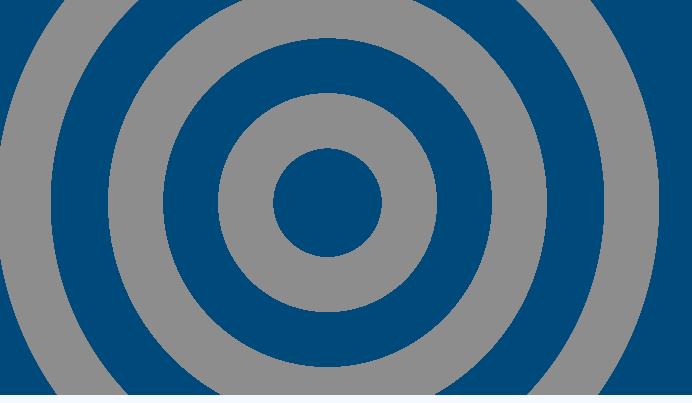
[Mentorship](#) | [Networking](#) | [Investment](#) | [Monitoring](#)

Offer post-programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) support to assess the impact, effectiveness and scalability of circular economy initiatives, identify challenges and provide recommendations for continuous improvement.

► Case Study

The Circular Lagos initiative, led by GIZ-SE DIN in collaboration with DevAfrique and the Lagos State Government, offers a strong example of post-programme M&E driving learning and scale in a circular economy context. After delivering a year-long incubation programme, hackathons and public awareness campaigns aimed at growing the circular entrepreneurship ecosystem in Lagos, the programme commissioned a comprehensive impact evaluation. DevAfrique applied a mixed-methods approach – tracking digital engagement, analysing startup performance data and conducting in-depth interviews with stakeholders and entrepreneurs. The evaluation identified key areas of success, such as the increased visibility of circular solutions and improved entrepreneurial readiness, as well as challenges including limited financing options and capacity gaps among local actors. Recommendations from the M&E exercise were directly used to refine future programme cycles, institutionalise local ownership of innovation clusters and inform Lagos State's broader green economy strategy. This case demonstrates how structured post-programme evaluation can turn learning into actionable policy and ecosystem development.





ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Ecosystem management encompasses the collaborative involvement of diverse stakeholders, including businesses, government entities, industry experts, academia and community groups, to create a supportive and interconnected environment for waste management and circular innovation initiatives.

► Key Insights on Advocacy

- ✓ Engage regulators to shape supportive policies
- ✓ Mobilise businesses to advocate and raise compliance awareness
- ✓ Foster public-private collaboration for a stronger circular economy ecosystem

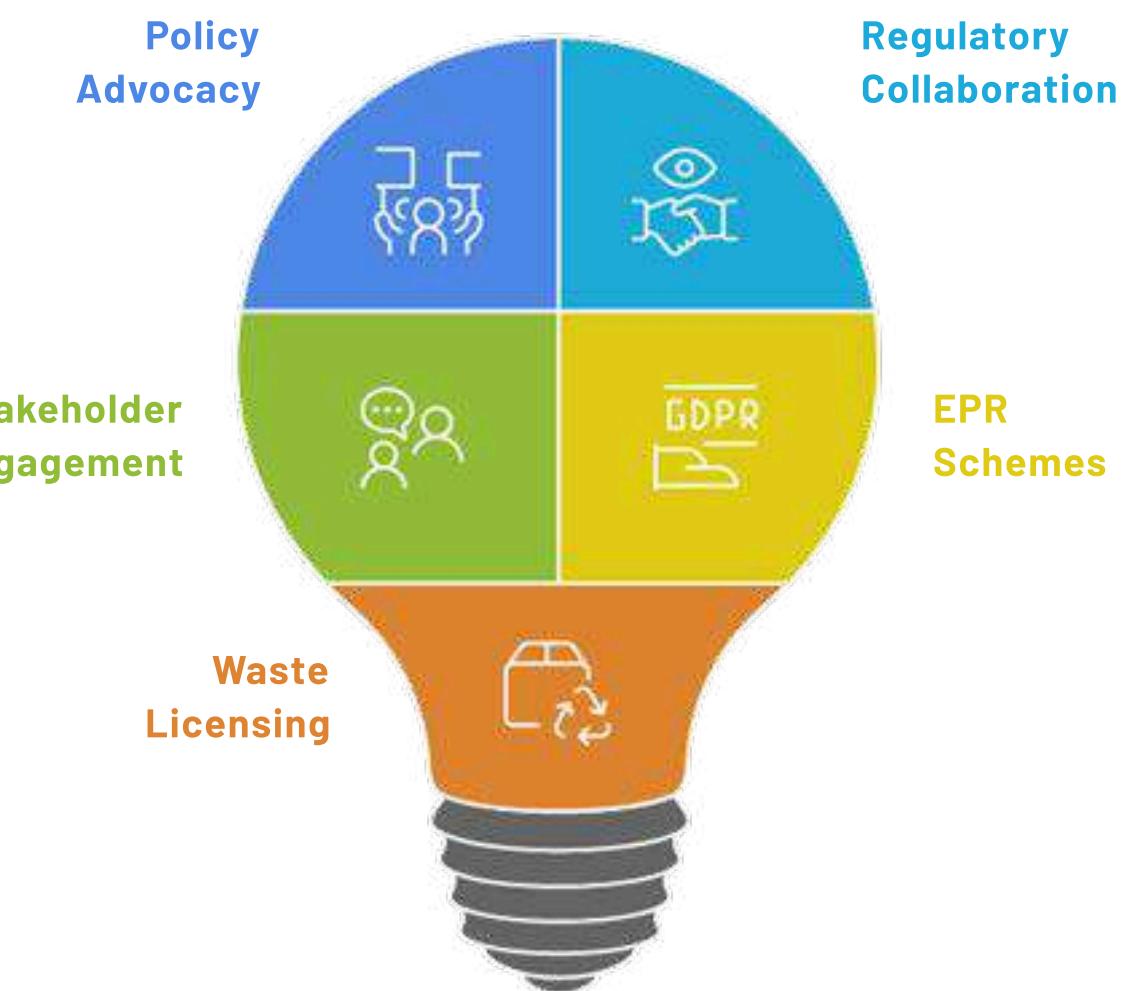
Case Studies on Ecosystem Management

Advocacy | Engagement | Up-skilling | Value chain dev.

► Case Study

KAM

In 2023, the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), through its Sustainable Waste Management Programme, led a coordinated ecosystem management initiative aimed at advocating for supportive policies and fostering collaboration among regulatory and government actors to advance circular economy practices. Working closely with the Ministry of Environment, NEMA and county governments, KAM facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogues that shaped the implementation of Kenya's Sustainable Waste Management Act (2022) and contributed to the development of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations. As a result, over 150 manufacturing enterprises were sensitised on circular compliance requirements, five sector-specific EPR schemes were launched (including plastics, e-waste and textiles) and waste licensing processes were streamlined in three counties. This policy advocacy and public-private collaboration laid the groundwork for an enabling environment where circular businesses can thrive, ensuring more coordinated waste flows, accountability in resource use and improved investment confidence in Kenya's growing circular economy ecosystem.



ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Ecosystem management encompasses the collaborative involvement of diverse stakeholders, including businesses, government entities, industry experts, academia and community groups, to create a supportive and interconnected environment for waste management and circular innovation initiatives.

► Key Insights on Engagement

- Create collaborative platforms to unite government, businesses, academia and civil society
- Map stakeholders and build capacity for circular entrepreneurs
- Foster joint ecosystems to scale innovations and influence policy and procurement

Case Studies on Ecosystem Management

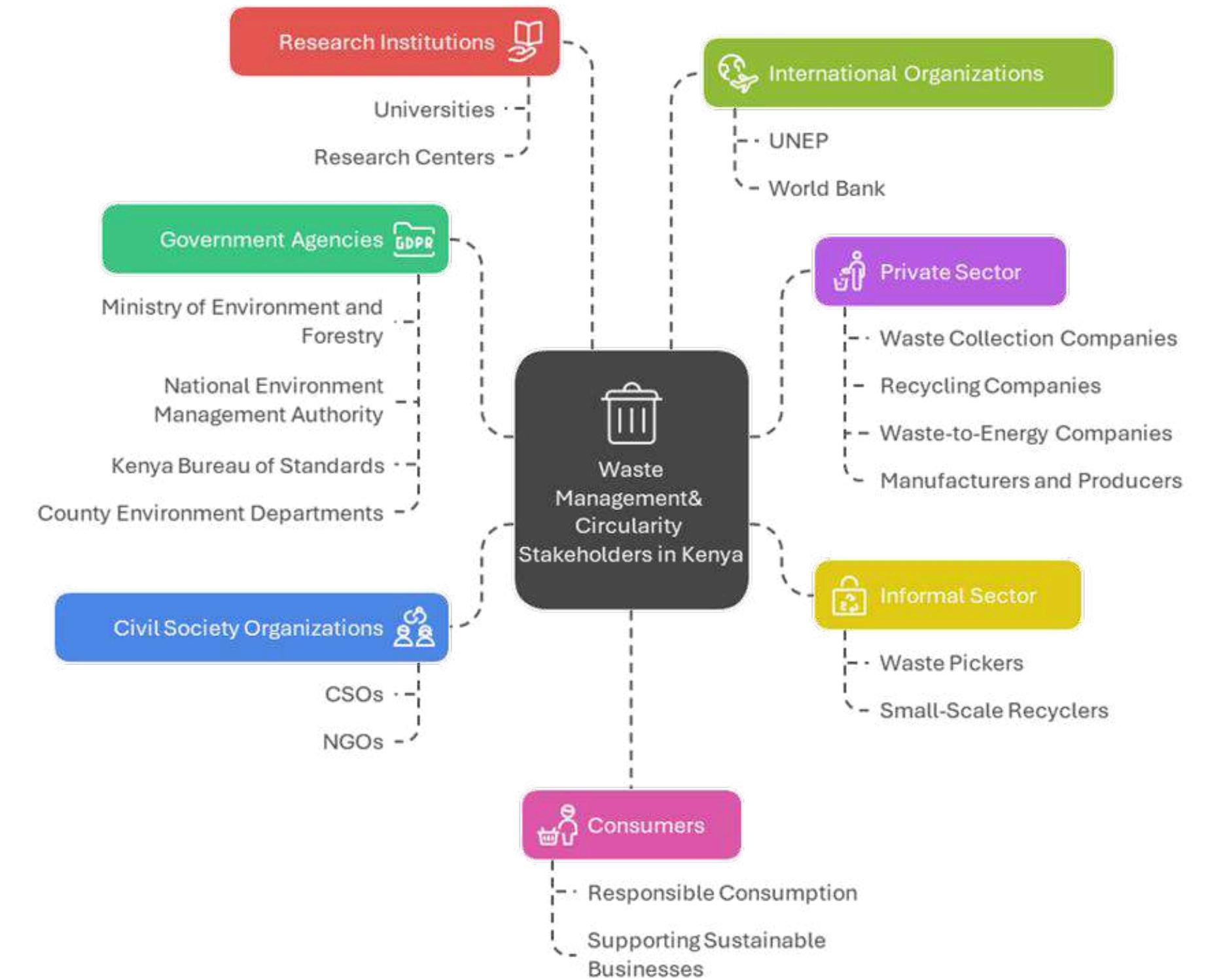
Advocacy | Engagement | Up-skilling | Value chain dev.

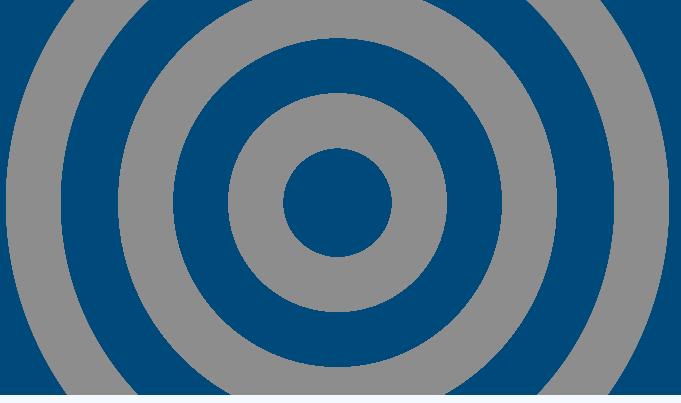
Facilitate collaborative platforms, partnerships and stakeholder engagements to bring together government, businesses, academia and civil society to drive collective action for circularity.

► Case Study

Innovation Cluster

A partnership between Climate KIC and GrowthAfrica, supported by the IKEA Foundation, launched a three-year Innovation Cluster in Nairobi to address urban waste and promote circular economy solutions. The cluster aligned government agencies, SMEs, academia, NGOs and investors through a phased approach – starting with stakeholder mapping, progressing to capacity-building for circular entrepreneurs, and culminating in a joint ecosystem for scaling innovation and influencing procurement and policy.





ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Ecosystem management encompasses the collaborative involvement of diverse stakeholders, including businesses, government entities, industry experts, academia and community groups, to create a supportive and interconnected environment for waste management and circular innovation initiatives.

► Key Insights on Up-Skilling

- ✓ ESOs are contributing to circularity ecosystems, driving systemic change and propelling the transition towards a more sustainable and regenerative economy

Case Studies on Ecosystem Management

Advocacy | Engagement | Up-skilling | Value chain dev.

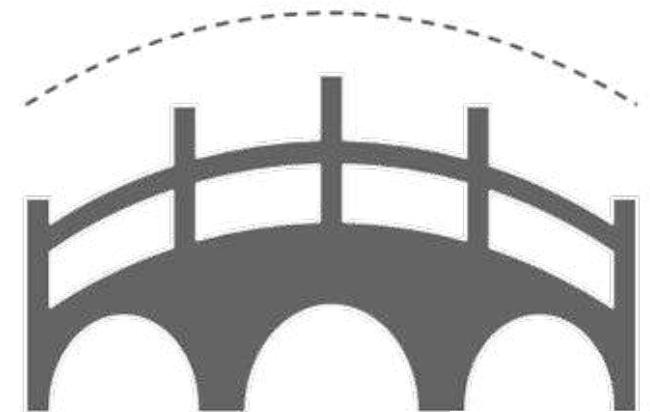
Provide training programmes, workshops and capacity-building initiatives to equip stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to implement circular economy principles effectively.

► Case Study

Circular Economy Catalyst

The Circular Economy Catalyst, a partnership between SEED and adelphi funded by the IKEA Foundation, is designed to support and scale circular economy enterprises in Kenya and India. Through this initiative, tailored technical training programmes are developed and delivered to address the unique needs and challenges faced by circular enterprises, such as waste valorisation, resource efficiency and business model innovation. The Catalyst offers hands-on capacity building, mentorship and enterprise coaching, ensuring that each enterprise receives support aligned with its growth stage and sector-specific demands. By focusing on practical solutions and market-relevant skills, the programme enhances the ability of circular enterprises to become financially sustainable, environmentally impactful and investment-ready.

Circular Enterprise Challenges
Limited skills hinder growth.



Sustainable Circular Enterprises
Financially sound, environmentally impactful, investment-ready.



ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Ecosystem management encompasses the collaborative involvement of diverse stakeholders, including businesses, government entities, industry experts, academia and community groups, to create a supportive and interconnected environment for waste management and circular innovation initiatives.

► Key Insights on Value Chain Dev.

- ESOs central to the development of the circularity value chain. Through various networks, policy support and partnership management, the ESOs can enhance success of the value chain.

Case Studies on Ecosystem Management

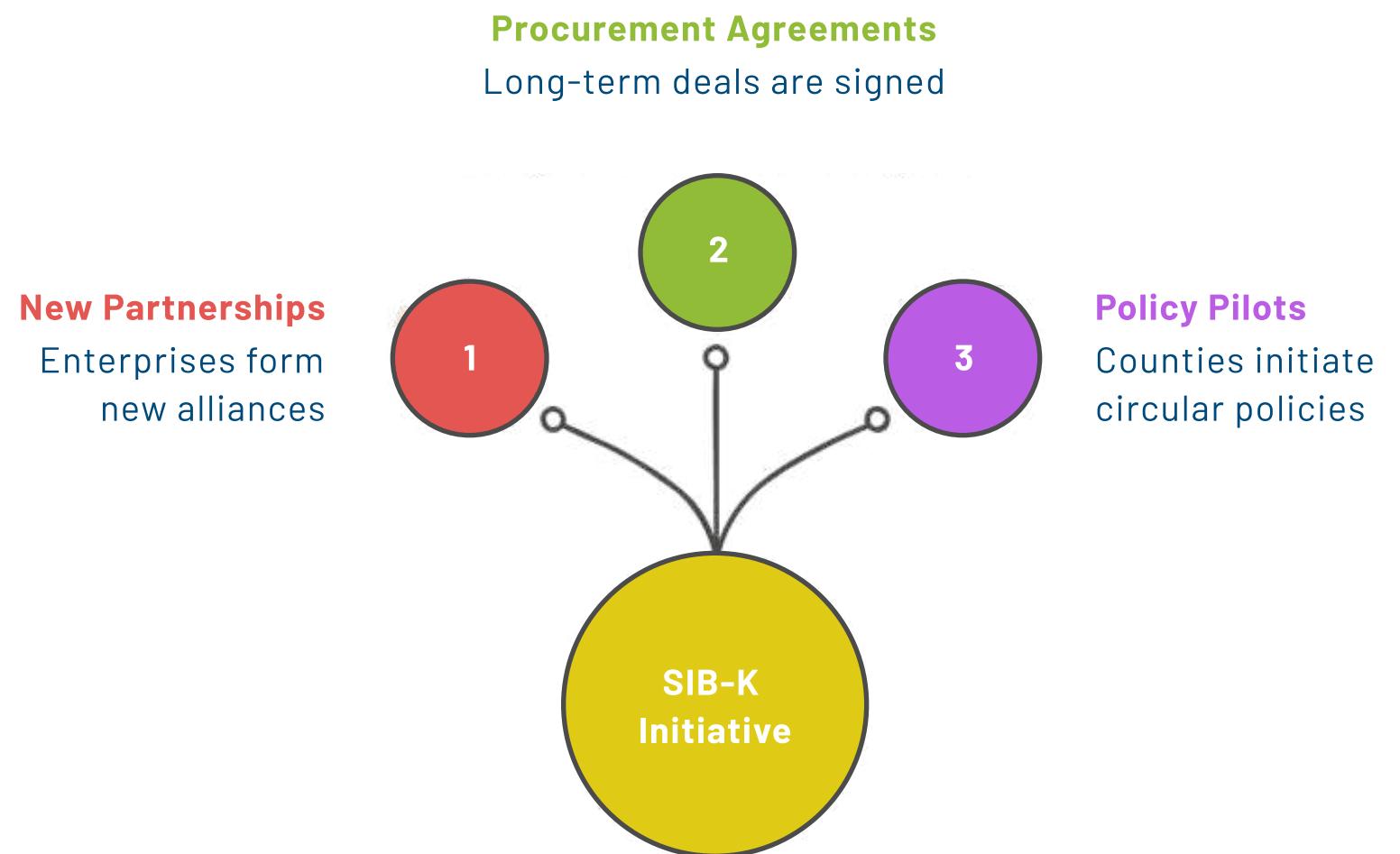
Advocacy | Engagement | Up-skilling | Value chain dev.

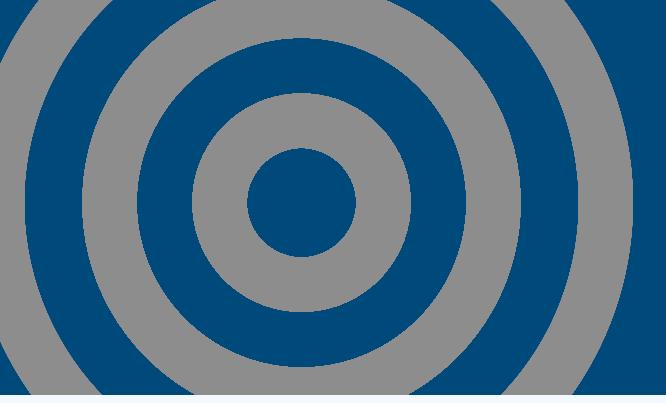
Facilitate access to markets, promote circular value chain development and connect circular economy enterprises with potential customers, suppliers and off-takers.

► Case Study

[Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya Hosts the 9th Circular Economy Conference and Awards](#)

In 2023, Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya (SIB-K), with support from the Netherlands Embassy and in partnership with the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), spearheaded a national initiative to strengthen market access and circular value chain integration for waste-focused enterprises. Through its flagship Kenya Circular Economy Conference and Expo, the programme brought together over 400 stakeholders including circular startups, corporate off-takers, retailers and procurement managers. SIB-K facilitated business-to-business matchmaking, hosted value chain roundtables in sectors like plastic, organics and textiles, and launched an online Circular Marketplace Platform that enabled SMEs to showcase sustainable products and connect with buyers. As a result, over 60 enterprises formed new supplier or offtake partnerships, 12 long-term procurement agreements were signed, and five counties initiated pilot circular procurement policies. This ecosystem approach significantly enhanced the visibility and commercial viability of circular economy enterprises in Kenya, helping to embed sustainability within mainstream market systems.





This toolkit considered five modalities/approaches for capacity building for innovators in the waste ecosystem.



Technical Training and Workshops

Providing practical training sessions on waste management best practices, recycling processes and circular economy principles to enhance innovators' skills and knowledge.



Entrepreneurship and Business Development

Offering guidance on developing sustainable business models, accessing funding opportunities and understanding market dynamics specific to the waste management sector.



Innovation and Technology Adoption

Introducing innovators to innovative technologies and digital solutions that can improve waste tracking, resource recovery and sustainable product design.



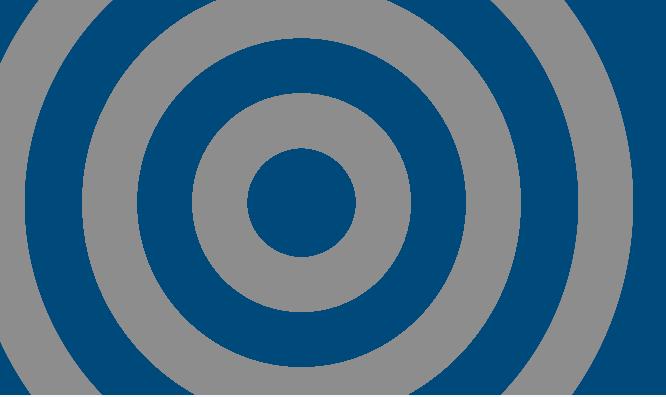
Collaboration and Networking

Facilitating connections with potential partners, industry experts and stakeholders to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing and opportunities for growth and expansion.



Communication and Advocacy Skills

Developing effective communication, advocacy and storytelling skills to raise awareness, engage stakeholders and garner support for waste management and circular economy initiatives.



TECHNICAL TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

Providing practical training sessions on waste management best practices, recycling processes and circular economy principles to enhance innovators' skills and knowledge.

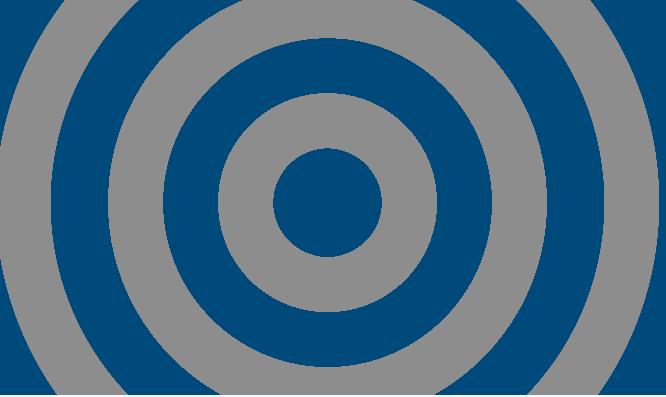
[Tailored programme](#) | [Hands-on skilling](#) | [Demo projects](#)

Design and deliver customised technical training programmes that cater to the specific needs and challenges faced by circular economy enterprises.

► **Case Study**

Shared Value Hub Sector of Focus

In 2023, Shared Value Hub designed and delivered a series of customised technical training workshops tailored to the unique needs of circular economy enterprises operating in the waste sector. These trainings addressed practical challenges such as material flow optimisation, waste-to-resource technology adoption, compliance with the Sustainable Waste Management Act and eco-design for product circularity. Conducted across five regions, the programme reached over 120 enterprises, including recyclers, composters and upcyclers, and offered sector-specific modules for plastic, e-waste and organic waste. Outcomes included a 35% increase in process efficiency among trained businesses, 40 enterprises adopting new circular technologies and 22 startups developing improved circular product designs post-training. The programme's success demonstrated how tailored technical support can empower SMEs to overcome operational bottlenecks and scale sustainable waste solutions effectively.



TECHNICAL TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

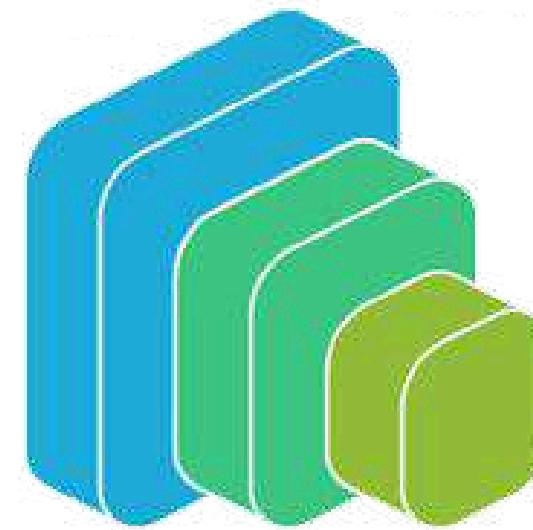
Providing practical training sessions on waste management best practices, recycling processes and circular economy principles to enhance innovators' skills and knowledge.



Skill Application
Participants applying learned skills in their ventures



New Ventures Launched
Entrepreneurs starting new waste-to-product businesses



Income Improvement
Community groups enhancing income through resource recovery

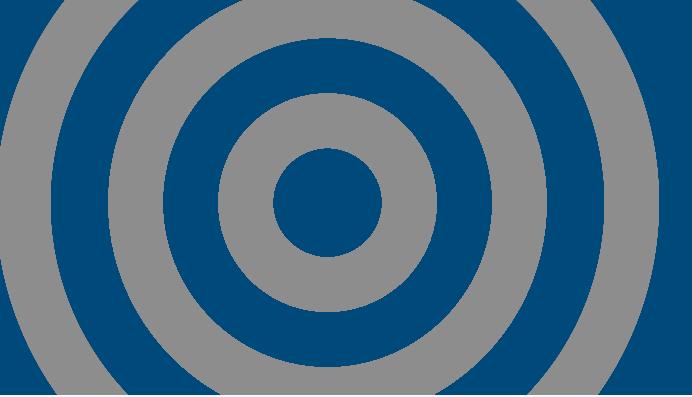
[Tailored programme](#) | [Hands-on skilling](#) | [Demo projects](#)

Conduct practical, hands-on training sessions that allow entrepreneurs and practitioners to acquire technical skills and apply them in real-world scenarios.

► Case Study

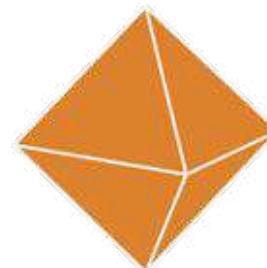
[The Inaugral Eastern Africa Waste Is Wealth Conference](#)

In 2023, TakaTakani Mali, a programme supported by SNV Kenya and the Council of Governors, implemented a series of practical, hands-on technical trainings targeting entrepreneurs and waste practitioners across urban and peri-urban counties in Kenya. The workshops were designed to build capacity in areas such as plastic waste processing, compost production, e-waste dismantling and safe waste handling techniques. Delivered in collaboration with local recyclers and innovation hubs, the sessions included live demonstrations, use of recycling machinery and supervised application of circular techniques in real operational environments. Over 250 participants were trained, with 68% reporting immediate application of skills in their businesses or community waste initiatives. Notably, 30 enterprises launched new waste-to-product ventures within three months, while 10 community groups improved income generation through enhanced resource recovery. The programme's experiential approach significantly improved technical confidence and accelerated the adoption of circular practices at the grassroots level.

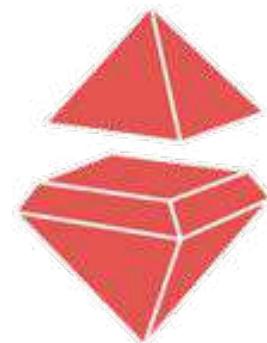


TECHNICAL TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS

Providing practical training sessions on waste management best practices, recycling processes and circular economy principles to enhance innovators' skills and knowledge.



Technology Transfer
Workshops and live demonstrations



Adoption of Technologies
SMEs and enterprises implement solutions



Fabrication Partnerships
Local production of circular equipment

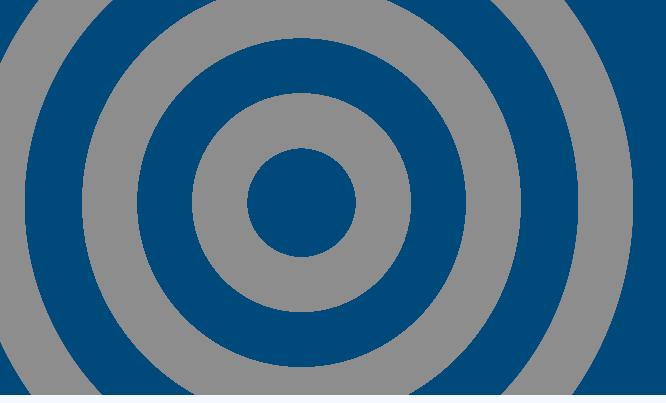
[Tailored programme](#) | [Hands-on skilling](#) | [Demo projects](#)

Facilitate technology transfer initiatives and showcase best practices through demonstration projects to promote the adoption of innovative and sustainable technologies.

► Case Study

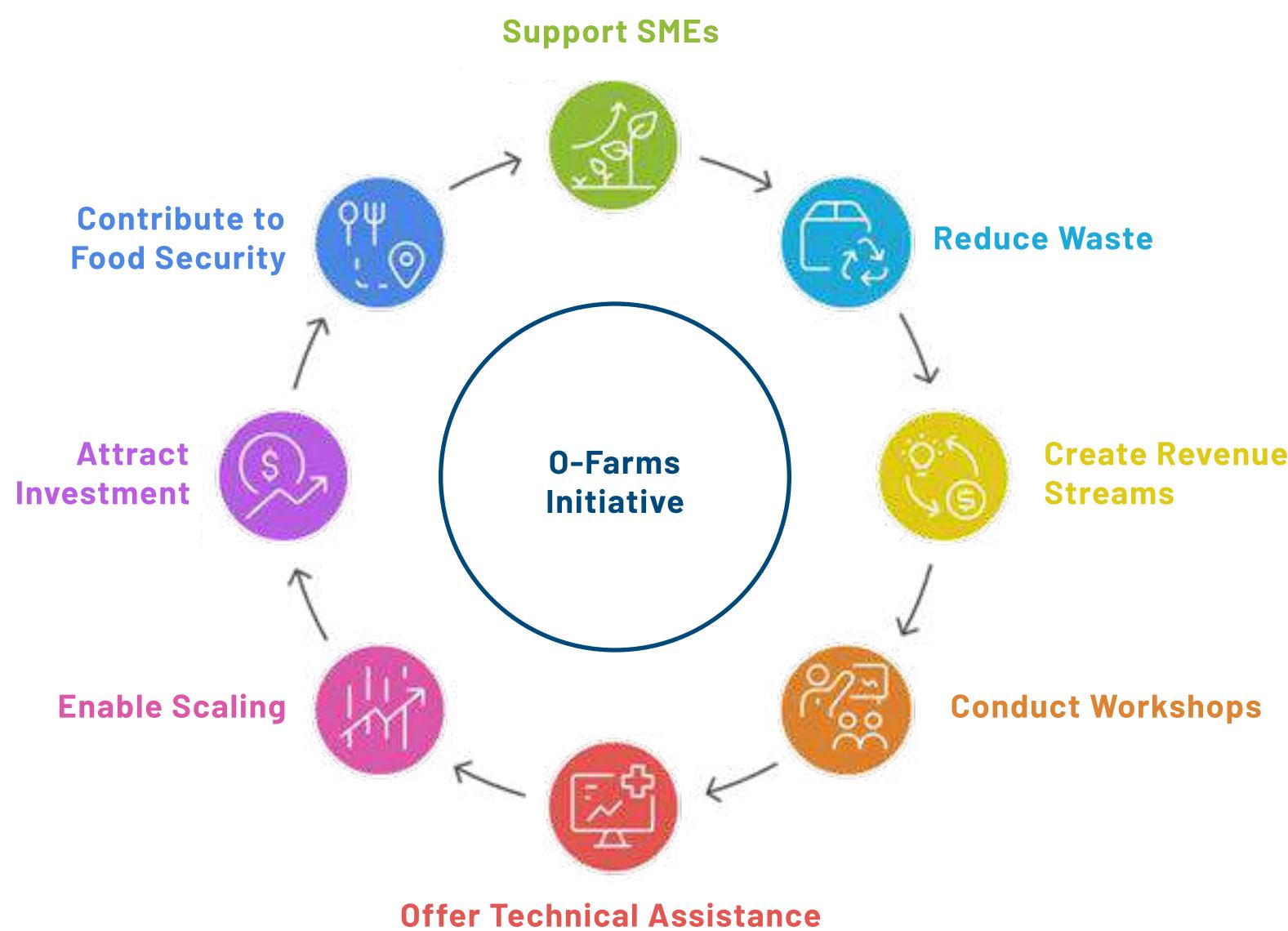
KIRDI Strategic Plan 2023-2027

In 2023, the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI), in partnership with UNIDO and Strathmore Energy Research Centre, launched a targeted technology transfer and demonstration initiative aimed at promoting innovation in the waste circularity sector. The programme facilitated technical workshops and live demonstration projects showcasing sustainable technologies, such as low-energy plastic extruders, decentralised composting units and mobile e-waste processing kits. Held in Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa, the initiative reached over 180 SMEs and community-based enterprises, providing practical exposure to circular production methods and machinery. As a result, 45 enterprises adopted new waste-to-resource technologies, and five localised fabrication partnerships were formed to ensure affordable access to the showcased equipment. The programme not only accelerated technology diffusion but also enabled the replication of successful circular models across counties, significantly boosting the sector's innovation capacity and environmental impact.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Offering guidance on developing sustainable business models, accessing funding opportunities and understanding market dynamics specific to the waste management sector.



[Business models](#) | [Investment readiness](#) | [Market linkages](#)

Organise workshops that focus on enhancing business model innovation capabilities, exploring new revenue streams and integrating circular economy principles into existing business models.

► Case Study

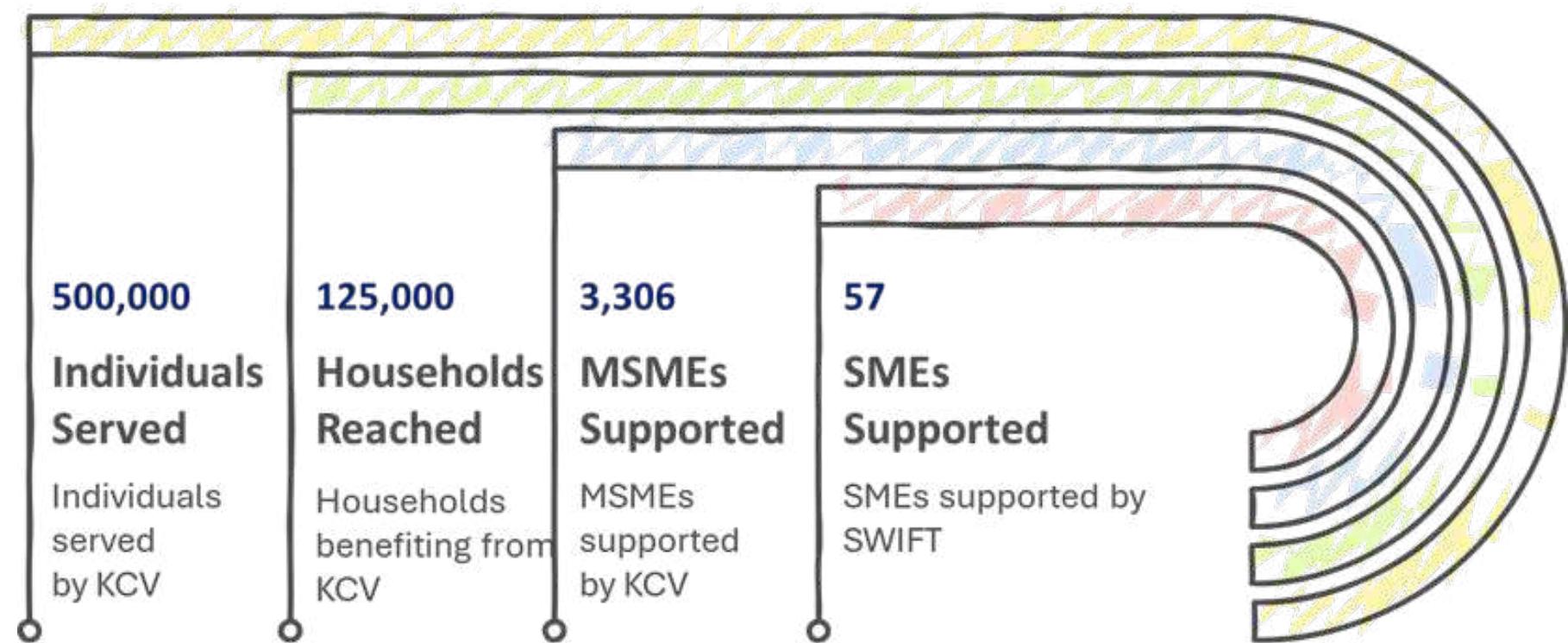
O-Farms Accelerator Programme

O-Farms is Africa's first accelerator programme dedicated exclusively to circular agribusiness, aiming to make circularity a core driver of rural development and sustainability. Led by Bopinc and Village Capital and funded by the IKEA Foundation, the initiative supports innovative agribusiness SMEs in Kenya and Ethiopia that reduce agricultural waste and create new revenue streams through circular models. A core component of O-Farms is organising capacity-building workshops focused on business model innovation, integrating circular economy principles and identifying alternative income pathways. For example, through its collaboration with E4Impact in Nairobi, O-Farms trained 20 circular enterprises over two years, offering tailored technical assistance, coaching, peer learning and seed grants of up to €50,000. These efforts have enabled SMEs to scale sustainably, tap into new investment opportunities and actively contribute to food security while conserving natural resources.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Offering guidance on developing sustainable business models, accessing funding opportunities and understanding market dynamics specific to the waste management sector.



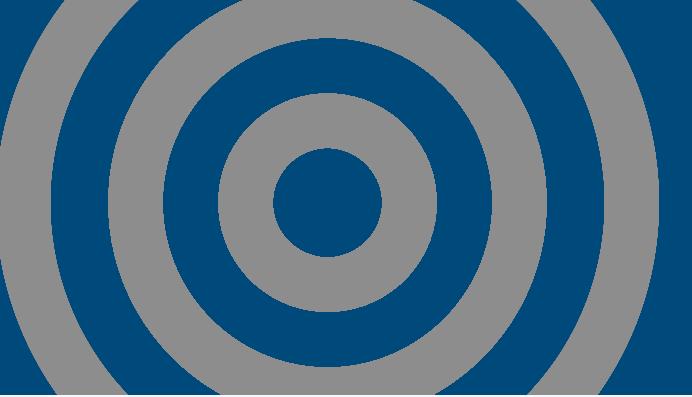
[Business models](#) | [Investment readiness](#) | [Market linkages](#)

Provide capacity building support on accessing finance, investment readiness and financial management to help enterprises secure funding for scaling their circular economy initiatives.

► Case Study

Kenya Climate Ventures

Since its inception in 2016, Kenya Climate Ventures (KCV) has combined investment and capacity building to strengthen over 23 climate-smart, women-inclusive ventures in Kenya, deploying around US\$4 million to date. Serving more than 500,000 individuals and 125,000 households, KCV's portfolio has avoided approximately 527,000 tons of CO₂ emissions, recycled 4.2 million tons of agri-waste and supported 3,306 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Its approach uniquely blends tailored workshops – covering financial modelling, pitching, investor engagement and sustainable revenue planning – with individual coaching and investor matchmaking sessions to improve MSMEs' financial management and investment-readiness. A gender lens is central to its strategy, as over 55% of supported companies are women-led. KCV's use of a US\$3.1 million revolving facility has catalysed nearly US\$9.8 million in follow-on capital, with its portfolio leveraging more than US\$63 million and generating US\$83 million in revenue. Furthering its impact in the waste sector, the IKEA Foundation-funded SWIFT programme (US\$5.1 million) is currently supporting 57 SMEs and aiming to expand to 110, create over 2,000 direct jobs, reach 5,000 household beneficiaries, and generate US\$10 million in enterprise revenues by 2027.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Offering guidance on developing sustainable business models, accessing funding opportunities and understanding market dynamics specific to the waste management sector.

[Business models](#) | [Investment readiness](#) | [Market linkages](#)

Facilitate market connections, partnerships with value chain actors and business development support to help enterprises navigate supply chains, access new markets and create mutually beneficial collaborations.

► Case Study

[Waste to Value Accelerator](#)

In 2020, the Waste-to-Value Accelerator, launched by the BESTSELLER Foundation in partnership with Intellicap across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda, selected six startups from over 400 applicants to pilot innovative waste-to-value solutions. Each received tailored technical assistance, focusing on issues including market development, business strategy, operations and financial planning, alongside access to up to US \$100,000 in convertible debt. A core element of the programme was curated matchmaking sessions that connected participants like Zijani, Yo-Waste and Gjenge Makers with aggregators, municipal authorities, corporate waste buyers and input suppliers, enabling them to secure supply contracts and pilot projects.



INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Introducing innovators to innovative technologies and digital solutions that can improve waste tracking, resource recovery and sustainable product design.

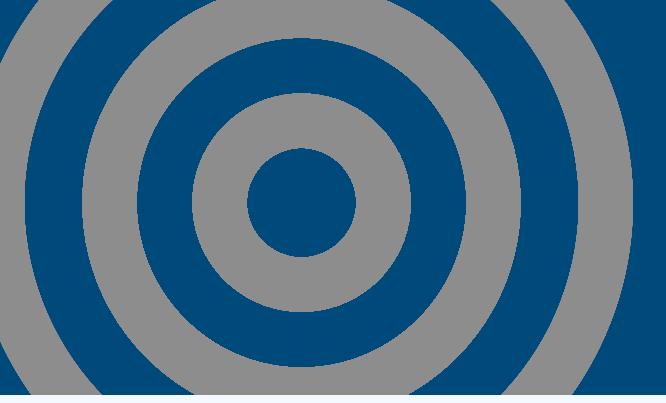
[Innovation challenge](#) | [Matchmaking](#) | [Validation support](#)

Organise innovation challenges, hackathons and co-creation workshops to stimulate creativity, drive cross-sector collaboration and foster the adoption of cutting-edge technologies for circular solutions.

► Case Study

[AfriCircular Innovators Programme](#)

Over six months, the AfriCircular Innovators Programme brought together 30 early-stage circular startups from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Rwanda to participate in innovation sprints, co-creation workshops, peer learning circles and demos. Through curated workshopping, startups shared prototypes, exchanged insights on material reuse and business modelling and collaborated with mentors. The journey culminated in a regional Demo Day, where the top 10 ventures received grants totaling US\$50,000 for market expansion and circular product development. This multi-modal approach not only stimulated creativity but also secured follow-on funding, drove cross-sector collaboration and strengthened the circular innovation ecosystem across East Africa.



INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Introducing innovators to innovative technologies and digital solutions that can improve waste tracking, resource recovery and sustainable product design.

[Innovation challenge](#) | [Matchmaking](#) | [Validation support](#)

Establish technology scouting platforms, matchmaking events and innovation hubs to facilitate the identification, evaluation and adoption of relevant technologies that support circular practices.

► Case Study

[Circularity Capital](#)

The Circular Economy Accelerator by Circularity Capital exemplifies how technology scouting platforms, matchmaking events and innovation hubs can accelerate the identification, validation and adoption of circular solutions. The accelerator systematically scouts high-potential circular startups, such as those offering AI-enabled waste tracking, product-as-a-service models or recycled material innovations, and connects them with investors, corporations and technical experts through curated matchmaking events. These interactions help bridge knowledge and trust gaps between SMEs and solution providers, while the programme's innovation support services, ranging from pilot funding to strategic advice, enable startups to refine and scale their technologies in real-world settings. Through this model, companies like Winnow (AI food waste reduction), Grover (a product rental platform), and Shark Solutions (recycled glass laminates) have successfully commercialised and expanded their circular innovations. The result is a proven ecosystem approach that reduces adoption barriers, builds investor confidence and drives measurable outcomes in waste reduction, resource efficiency and circular value chain integration.



INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

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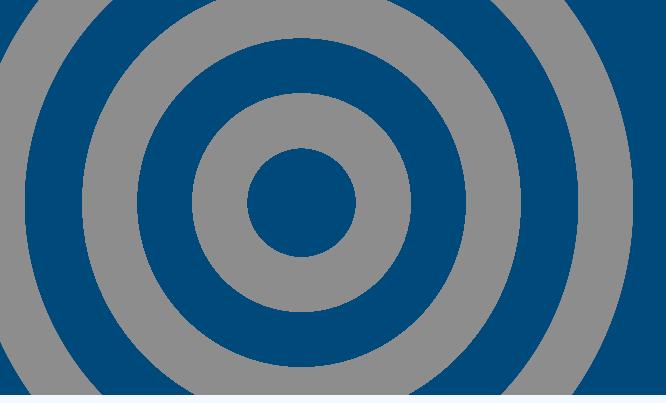
[Innovation challenge](#) | [Matchmaking](#) | [Validation support](#)

Provide resources, infrastructure and technical assistance for pilot testing, prototyping and validating new technologies and innovations in real-world settings.

► Case Study

[Circular Economy Acceleration Programme](#)

Impact Hub Kigali's Circular Economy Acceleration Programme in Rwanda is a powerful example of how infrastructure, expert support, and financial incentives can accelerate circular innovation. Over six months, the initiative provided customised technical assistance, including workshops on product-journey mapping, circular business modelling and material reuse, alongside dedicated prototyping space and US\$3,000 seed grants per startup. The programme selected six pioneering startups operating across agriculture, manufacturing, tourism and health – such as Kosmotive (reusable sanitary pads), CropTech (solar-powered maize processing) and Sanit Wing (avocado-based cosmetics) – and supported them in testing and refining real-world circular solutions. These ventures also benefitted from one-on-one coaching, peer learning sessions and high-visibility Demo Day events that connected them with investors like the BESTSELLER Foundation. Collectively, this multifaceted approach fostered innovation, built capacity and laid the groundwork for ecosystem growth – showcasing a scalable model for circular economy hubs in Africa.



COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING

Facilitating connections with potential partners, industry experts and stakeholders to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing and opportunities for growth and expansion.

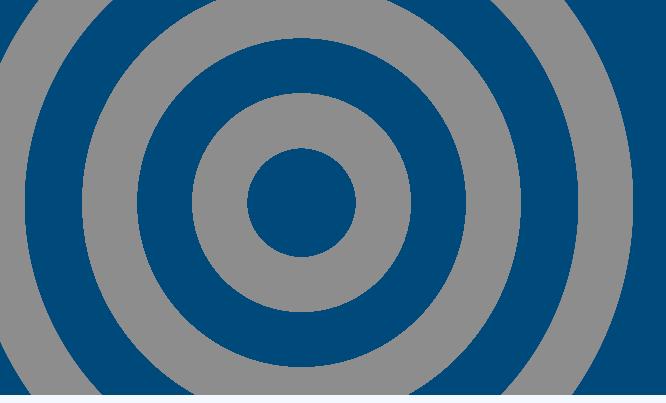
[Partnerships](#) | [Industry networks](#) | [Events](#)

Establish strategic partnerships with other industry stakeholders, such as government agencies, academic institutions and private sector organisations. ESOs and their partners can leverage each other's resources, expertise and networks to support entrepreneurs and promote economic growth.

► Case Study

Smart Duka Program

Through its Smart Duka programme, TechnoServe has collaborated with TakaTakani Mali and Mr. Green Africa to address Nairobi's growing waste management challenges by empowering micro-retailers to adopt sustainable practices. This strategic partnership model brought together private sector actors, waste innovators and urban retail networks to co-deliver practical training on waste segregation, safe storage and responsible disposal. The programme has reached over 1,200 micro-retailers, particularly small-scale kiosks (dukas), helping them reduce environmental impact while also linking them to waste-to-value supply chains led by Mr. Green Africa's plastic recycling infrastructure. Beyond training, the collaboration leveraged each partner's core strengths – TechnoServe's entrepreneurship expertise, Mr. Green Africa's tech-enabled recycling, and TakaTaka ni Mali's community-based mobilisation – to drive broader awareness and behaviour change at the grassroots level. This model demonstrates how ESOs can facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships to scale circular economy practices, promote inclusive economic growth and strengthen Kenya's waste-to-income ecosystem.



COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING

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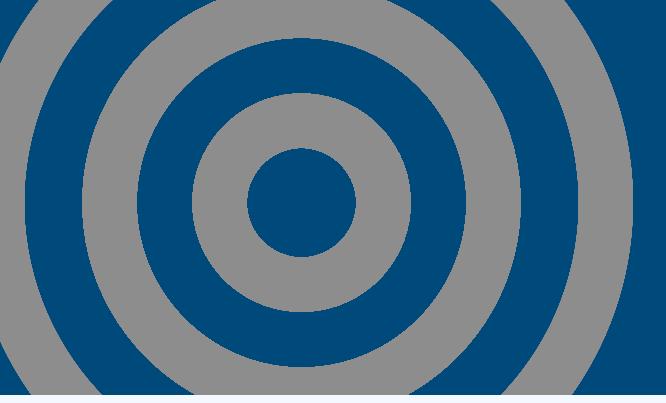
[Partnerships](#) | [Industry networks](#) | [Events](#)

Create industry-specific networks or clusters where entrepreneurs can collaborate, share knowledge and access support services.

► Case Study

ACEA

The African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA), a government-led coalition hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB), has been actively convening country-level circular economy clusters and innovation hubs since its launch in 2016. Backed by the AfDB's Africa Circular Economy Facility (ACEF), ACEA supports national roadmapping in countries like Benin, Ethiopia, Chad and Cameroon, embedding circularity into priority sectors such as plastics, construction and agriculture. Through forums like the World Circular Economy Forum 2022 in Kigali and 2025 in São Paulo, ACEA convened multi-stakeholder clusters entrepreneurs, governments, investors and researchers for peer exchange, workshop co-design and innovation challenges. These platforms have enabled emerging circular SMEs (in sectors such as plastics and e-waste) to access policy insights, share technical know-how and join national clusters that offer ongoing matchmaking, mentorship and access to ACEF-backed grants and pipeline funding. By fostering structured sector networks across plastics, e-waste and agri-circularity, ACEA has boosted business-level collaboration, investment flow and scalable pilot implementation while anchoring circular principles into policy frameworks.



COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING

Facilitating connections with potential partners, industry experts and stakeholders to encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing and opportunities for growth and expansion.

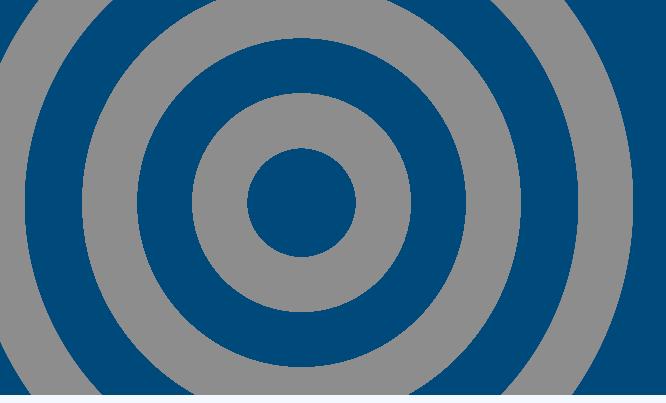
[Partnerships](#) | [Industry networks](#) | [Events](#)

Hosting events such as workshops, forums and networking sessions can also be an effective approach to promote collaboration among entrepreneurs and support organisations. These events provide opportunities for entrepreneurs to connect with potential partners, investors and mentors and create a platform for sharing best practices and building relationships within the ecosystem.

► Case Study

[The Africa International E-Waste Conference](#)

The Africa International E-Waste Conference, held in October 2024 in Nairobi, serves as a leading example of how collaborative events can promote innovation, networking and partnership in the circular economy sector. Organised by the WEEE Centre Kenya in partnership with KEPSA, Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya, ICT Authority, and NEMA, the conference brought together over 800 participants, including entrepreneurs, recyclers, investors and policymakers. It featured workshops on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), financing for e-waste solutions and policy innovation, while also showcasing cutting-edge recycling technologies and circular business models. Through curated matchmaking and networking sessions, the event catalysed over ten pilot collaborations, linking waste-tech SMEs with county governments and development partners. This conference not only elevated the visibility of e-waste enterprises but also strengthened the regional ecosystem by fostering continuous dialogue, best-practice sharing and a community of practice committed to scaling sustainable waste management solutions across Africa.



COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY SKILLS

Developing effective communication, advocacy and storytelling skills to raise awareness, engage stakeholders and garner support for waste management and circular economy initiatives.

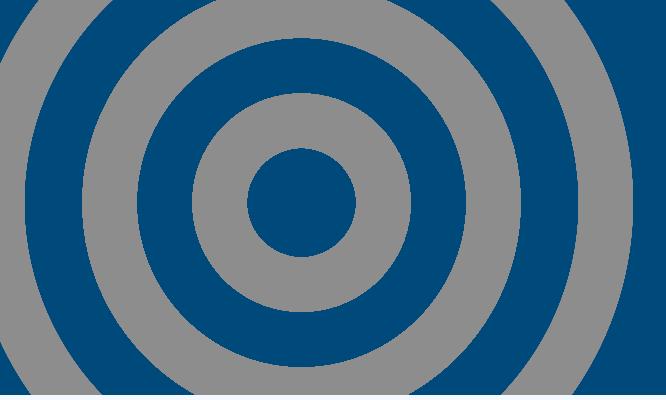
[Training](#) | [Digitalisation](#) | [Media engagement](#)

Provide training programmes for entrepreneurs and support organisations on effective communication strategies, public speaking and advocacy techniques.

► **Case Study**

[UNCTAD](#)

In November 2023, the United Nations Conference on Training and Development (UNCTAD), in collaboration with Africa 21 and UNESCO, organised a specialised communications training workshop for 20+ East and West African journalists in Nairobi focused on plastics pollution and the broader circular economy. The week-long programme equipped media professionals with sustainable reporting frameworks, advocacy storytelling techniques and first-hand exposure to circular economy initiatives. By empowering journalists as change agents, the initiative significantly improved the quality and frequency of circular economy coverage, shaping public discourse and influencing policy engagement across national and regional platforms.



COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY SKILLS

Developing effective communication, advocacy and storytelling skills to raise awareness, engage stakeholders and garner support for waste management and circular economy initiatives.

[Training](#) | [Digitalisation](#) | [Media engagement](#)

Empower entrepreneurs with digital marketing and branding skills to effectively promote their products or services and reach a wider audience. Enterprise support organisations can offer workshops or online courses on social media marketing, content creation and branding strategies to help entrepreneurs enhance their online presence and attract customers.

► Case Study

GPAP

Since its launch in 2018, the Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP), a multi-stakeholder initiative of the World Economic Forum, has enabled waste-focused SMEs to bolster circular practices by adopting digital tools for plastic waste segregation, tracking and recycling operations. Participating enterprises receive support through matchmaking events, access to technology platforms and capacity-building workshops that cover branding, social media strategies and investor engagement, helping them elevate their online presence and attract funders. GPAP's coordinated efforts in 25 countries have mobilised over US\$3.1 billion in investments and improved livelihoods for more than 12,000 informal waste workers, tying digital-first promotion strategies to measurable environmental and social impact.



COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY SKILLS

Developing effective communication, advocacy and storytelling skills to raise awareness, engage stakeholders and garner support for waste management and circular economy initiatives.

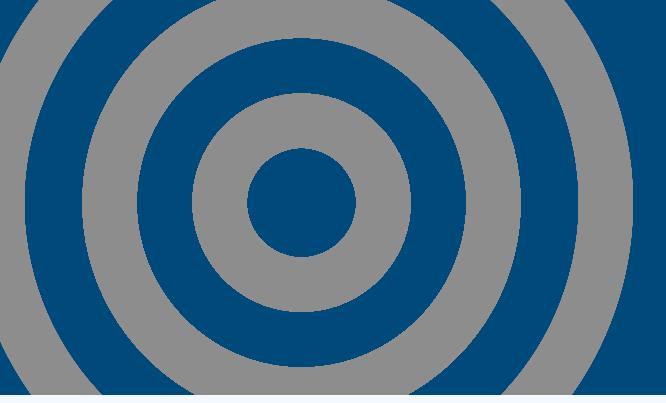
[Training](#) | [Digitalisation](#) | [Media engagement](#)

Encouraging entrepreneurs to engage with the media can also be a powerful advocacy and communication strategy. Enterprise support organisations can provide media training sessions, connect entrepreneurs with journalists or influencers and support them to craft compelling stories about their businesses or industry issues. Entrepreneurs who effectively engage with the media can raise awareness about their businesses, attract potential customers or investors and advocate for policy changes.

► Case Study

Fashion for Good

Fashion for Good, headquartered in Amsterdam, is a global accelerator and innovation platform supporting startups in sustainable fashion and circular textiles. As part of its broader outreach and advocacy strategy, Fashion for Good actively engages influencers, bloggers and fashion journalists to amplify the visibility of startups within its portfolio. Through curated press briefings, launch events and partnerships with ethical fashion voices, they help early-stage enterprises gain exposure on platforms like Vogue Business, Business of Fashion and Eco-Age. For instance, their Fashion for Good Museum not only showcases startup innovations but also invites digital creators to co-create content, driving public interest and consumer awareness around circular materials and zero-waste design. SMEs participating in the accelerator benefit from dedicated storytelling workshops, media visibility coaching and influencer matchmaking, enabling them to craft compelling narratives around impact and innovation. This approach has helped ventures like Orange Fiber, Infiniti Fiber, and Worn Again Technologies attract both customers and investors, while shaping the narrative on sustainable fashion globally.



TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Why the Proposed Training Programme?

Kenya generates over 22,000 tonnes of waste daily, with only 10% recycled, highlighting a critical need for improved waste management and circular practices. The Sustainable Waste Management Act (2022) and a growing green economy offer significant opportunities – the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates a potential to create 45,000 jobs and contribute KES 30 billion annually to GDP through circular economy models. However, many SMEs lack the skills and tools to scale sustainably, meet compliance standards or access green financing. This training programme addresses those gaps by equipping enterprises with practical knowledge in circular operations, technology adoption and investment readiness – ultimately enabling them to unlock growth, resilience and impact. The proposed programme is designed from a combination of industry best practices from various members of the ANDE Action Lab. This is an example of a training programme that toolkit users can utilise as is or contextualise to various programmes and purposes for the circularity and waste management sector.

Programme Title

Scaling Waste and Circular Economy Businesses: Investor-Ready Strategies for Sustainable Growth and Impact

Programme Objective

The programme focuses on equipping waste and circular economy businesses with the knowledge, tools and strategies needed to scale their operations while maintaining sustainability and maximising their impact. It delves into designing scalable business models, building strategic partnerships, increasing operational efficiency, leveraging technology and accessing resources for growth.

Programme Expected Outcomes

Participants completing the programme will be able to integrate sustainable waste management practices into their SME operations, effectively applying the principles of waste hierarchy, segregation, treatment and disposal. They will also be knowledgeable about the regulatory requirements governing waste management in Kenya, enabling them to comply with environmental standards and contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment.

Programme Modules

MODULE 1: Introduction to the Circular Economy and Waste Management

MODULE 2: Building a Scalable Circular Business Model for Waste SMEs

MODULE 3: Navigating Legal and Regulatory Requirements for Circular Waste Enterprises

MODULE 4: Supply Chain Optimisation and Technology Utilisation in the Circular Economy

MODULE 5: Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations for Scale

MODULE 6: Investment Readiness and Access to Finance for Circular Waste Enterprises

MODULE 7: Monitoring, Reporting and Impact Measurement

Training Programme for SMEs

[Module 1](#) | [Module 2](#) | [Module 3](#) | [Module 4](#) | [Module 5](#) | [Module 6](#) | [Module 7](#)

► Title

Introduction to the Circular Economy and Waste Management

► Objective

Understand the importance of waste management for SMEs in Kenya and the fundamentals of the waste hierarchy.

► Brief

This module provides an overview of the circular economy, defining its principles and exploring its global and local landscape. It highlights how waste SMEs can tap into circular economy opportunities by utilising waste streams, promoting resource efficiency and contributing to sustainability. The module also addresses key challenges faced by waste SMEs, including waste management issues, regulatory compliance, technology adoption and market demand. By the end of the module, participants will have a solid understanding of circular economy concepts and be able to identify opportunities for aligning their waste enterprises with those principles to drive sustainability and enhance value creation.

Programme Modules

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► Title

Building a Scalable Circular Business Model for Waste SMEs

► Objective

Guide waste SMEs to develop scalable business models within the circular economy and business model innovations, including closed-loop systems, recycling and product reuse.

► Brief

This module is designed to guide waste and circular economy SMEs to develop innovative and scalable business models that are sustainable and impactful. The module includes examples of successful circular models in waste management to provide real-world insights. By the end of the module, participants will have the skills to create and implement scalable circular business models, along with a solid understanding of how to structure operations that support sustainability, efficiency and long-term growth in the waste sector. Participants will also be equipped with the tools and frameworks needed to rethink and innovate their business models, enabling them to tap into new market opportunities, enhance operational efficiency and drive long-term sustainability in their waste and circular economy enterprises.

Programme Modules

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Training Programme for SMEs

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► Title

Navigating Legal and Regulatory Requirements for Circular Waste Enterprises

► Objective

Provide an overview of the legal and regulatory environment for waste management and circular economy businesses, including waste disposal laws, recycling regulations and environmental compliance.

► Brief

This module aims to provide waste SMEs and circular economy innovators with a comprehensive overview of the legal and regulatory landscape that governs waste management and circular economy businesses. It covers essential laws related to waste disposal, recycling regulations, environmental compliance and the legal frameworks affecting circular business models. Participants will gain insights into the critical regulations that impact their operations both locally and internationally, helping them ensure their businesses operate within legal frameworks and remain compliant.

Programme Modules

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Training Programme for SMEs

[Module 1](#) | [Module 2](#) | [Module 3](#) | [Module 4](#) | [Module 5](#) | [Module 6](#) | [Module 7](#)

► Title

Supply Chain Optimisation and Technology Utilisation in the Circular Economy

► Objective

Provide waste SMEs with strategies for scaling operations, optimising supply chains and enhancing operational efficiency as well as exploring automation, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT) and blockchain for efficient waste tracking and recycling.

► Brief

This module equips waste SMEs with strategies for scaling operations, optimising supply chains and improving operational efficiency. It covers best practices in waste logistics, collection, processing and distribution to help businesses meet growing demand while reducing costs. The module also explores advanced technologies like automation, AI, the IoT and blockchain, which can enhance waste tracking, recycling and overall management. Participants will gain insights into emerging trends in the circular economy, such as digital platforms, product-as-a-service models and reverse logistics, and learn how these innovations can be utilised to create new business opportunities.

Programme Modules

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► Title

Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations for Scale

► Objective

Guide waste SMEs on how to form strategic partnerships and collaborations to scale their businesses, including working with other circular economy stakeholders, government agencies and municipalities, and NGOs.

► Brief

This module aims to guide waste SMEs on how to form strategic partnerships and collaborations that can help scale their businesses. It will focus on how to effectively collaborate with key stakeholders in the circular economy ecosystem, including other businesses, government agencies, NGOs and community organisations. The module highlights how such partnerships can provide valuable resources, market access and innovation to drive business growth and sustainability. Additionally, participants will gain insights on how SMEs can influence policy and contribute to creating a supportive environment for circular economy initiatives.

Programme Modules

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► Title

Investment Readiness and Access to Finance for Circular Waste Enterprises

► Objective

Provide waste SMEs with strategies for scaling operations, optimising supply chains and enhancing operational efficiency while also exploring best practices in waste logistics, collection, processing and distribution.

► Brief

This module focuses on equipping waste SMEs and circular economy businesses with the tools to develop compelling investment propositions that attract financiers and investors. The module also provides insights on accessing various funding sources, such as government grants, venture capital and impact investment, and best practices for crafting compelling funding proposals that address both financial and impact goals. By the end of the training, participants will understand how to position their waste enterprises to attract the right investors, how to develop an appealing investment proposition, and the steps needed to secure funding for growth and sustainability.

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► Title

Monitoring, Reporting and Impact Measurement

► Objective

Learn how to measure and report on the impact of waste management activities.

► Brief

The module focuses on the critical aspects of tracking, reporting and leveraging waste data to drive business growth and secure funding. It provides guidance on the key metrics to track, including waste reduction, resource recovery, energy savings, carbon footprint and financial performance, to assess the impact of circular initiatives.

The module also covers best practices for creating transparent and compelling impact reports that effectively communicate these results to investors, donors and other stakeholders. By the end of the module, participants will gain the skills to track relevant waste data, generate insightful reports and raise funds by showcasing the positive impact of their initiatives.

Programme Modules

MODULE 1: Introduction to the Circular Economy and Waste Management

MODULE 2: Building a Scalable Circular Business Model for Waste SMEs

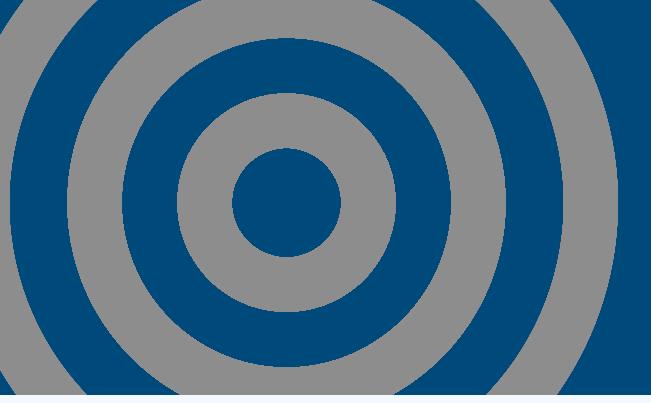
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WASTE-TO-VALUE ENTERPRISES (CIRCULAR RESOURCE RECOVERY)

Definition

Transforming waste into valuable raw materials or resources for new production processes.

Example

Extracting precious metals from electronic waste, converting food waste into animal feed or organic fertilisers.

Resource Name	Website	What It Is	Why It's Useful	Entrepreneur Usability
Gjenge Makers Ltd.	www.gjengemakers.com	A Kenyan company converting plastic waste into eco-friendly construction materials.	Demonstrates local success in plastic-to-value transformation.	Learn from their business model, tech approach, and funding journey.
Mr. Green Africa	www.mrgreenafrica.com	A plastic recycling company integrating informal collectors into a formal value chain.	Offers tech-driven insights on sourcing, sorting and logistics.	Partner on waste collection or study their circular sourcing system.
WEEE Centre	www.weeecentre.com	Specialises in e-waste recycling and circular resource recovery.	Provides access to safe processing of electronics and data security.	E-waste startups can learn or outsource processing and compliance.
Precious Plastic	www.preciousplastic.com	Open-source tools, blueprints and business models for plastic recycling.	Provides free designs and global community support.	Ideal for prototyping and setting up DIY plastic recovery micro-enterprises.
Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC)	www.kenyacic.org	Provides business incubation, proof-of-concept funding and market support.	Supports climate-smart and circular innovations.	Apply for funding, technical training and market linkage support.
TakaTaka Solutions	www.takatakasolutions.com	Full-service waste management firm offering recycling and composting.	Example of a scalable model across different waste streams.	Collaborate for organic waste recovery or observe logistics systems.
Circular Innovation Lab – KEPSA	www.kepsa.or.ke	Platform supporting circular startups through pilots and innovation hubs.	Offers access to policy, pilot testing and investor linkages.	Participate in calls for proposals or use lab spaces to test waste-to-product solutions.

Waste-to-Value Enterprises

Circular Product Design and Manufacturing SMEs

Waste Reduction and Prevention Innovators

Waste Data and Technology SMEs

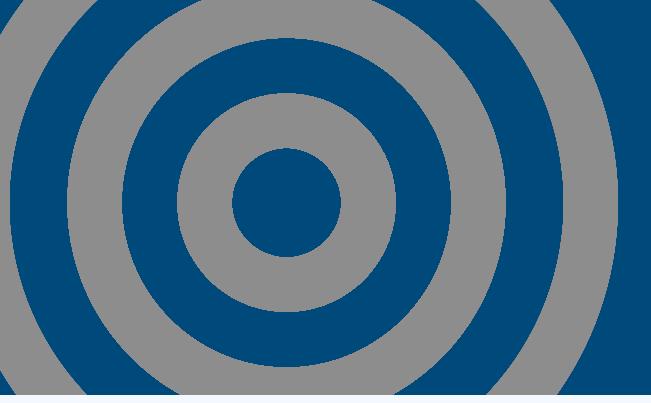
Reverse Logistics and Waste Collection SMEs

NOTE

These are case studies and examples of various types of enterprises that toolkit users can learn from. The focus is on publicly available resources.

ANDE - KENYA INVESTMENT GUIDES

<https://andeglobal.org/green-growth-access-to-green-finance-research-insights/>



CIRCULAR PRODUCT DESIGN AND MANUFACTURING SMES

Definition

Developing products that are inherently circular, designed for reuse, repair or disassembly at the end of their life cycle.

Example

Modular furniture that can be easily disassembled and reconfigured or clothing made from fully recyclable materials.

Resource Name	Website	What It Is	Why It's Useful	Entrepreneur Usability
Circular Design Guide (IDEO + Ellen MacArthur Foundation)	www.circulardesignguide.com	A free step-by-step toolkit to integrate circularity into product and business design.	Helps design products that are modular, repairable or recyclable.	Ideal for product developers, designers and SMEs building circular product strategies.
Cradle to Cradle Certified®	www.c2ccertified.org	A globally recognised certification for safe, circular product design.	Validates that a product is designed for circularity across materials, manufacturing and end-of-life.	Useful for SMEs targeting green consumers or export markets.
Enviu	www.enviu.org	A global impact incubator that builds circular ventures in fashion, plastics and food.	Brings together corporations, startups and investors to co-create scalable circular businesses.	Entrepreneurs can apply for venture-building support or join industry programmes.
Kenya Climate Ventures (KCV)	www.kcv.co.ke	Investment fund for climate-smart innovations, including circular manufacturing.	Provides seed and growth capital for circular product startups.	Entrepreneurs can pitch for funding and mentorship on circular scaling.
Disruptive Design Method (UnSchool of Disruptive Design)	www.unschools.co	A design-thinking methodology tailored for sustainability and systems change.	Teaches how to rethink products for end-of-life and circular business logic.	Entrepreneurs in early-stage product development or curriculum creation can benefit.
Circular Economy Club (CEC) Nairobi	www.circular.eco	A global network of circularity experts with active chapters in Kenya.	Connects local businesses to peers, consultants and case studies.	Useful for accessing free events, local mentorship and knowledge-sharing.

Waste-to-Value Enterprises

Circular Product Design and Manufacturing SMEs

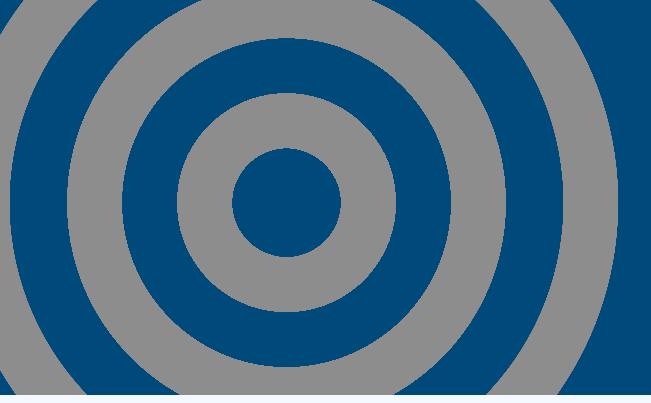
Waste Reduction and Prevention Innovators

Waste Data and Technology SMEs

Reverse Logistics and Waste Collection SMEs

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WASTE REDUCTION AND PREVENTION INNOVATORS

Definition

Developing solutions that prevent waste generation at the source by enabling efficient use of resources or promoting sustainable consumption.

Example

Startups creating zero-waste packaging, food-saving technologies, and refill or sharing platforms that reduce consumption.

Resource Name	Website	What It Is	Why It's Useful	Entrepreneur Usability
Think Beyond Plastic™ Innovation Center	www.thinkbeyondplastic.com	A global innovation platform for reducing plastic waste through sustainable design and consumption models.	Offers accelerator support and innovation challenges for source reduction.	Entrepreneurs targeting sustainable packaging or reusable systems can access technical support and funding.
Go4SDGs – Green Industry Platform	www.greenindustryplatform.org	Platform supporting SMEs with sustainable practices including cleaner production and eco-efficiency.	Provides templates, guides and policy access to promote resource-efficient industries.	Entrepreneurs can benchmark or build partnerships with green industry leaders.
Kenya Extended Producer Responsibility Organisation (KEPRO)	www.kepro.co.ke	Non-profit that facilitates producer responsibility systems for packaging and plastic.	Enables businesses to take responsibility for reducing waste from their products.	Useful for SMEs manufacturing products to ensure compliance and eco-design incentives.
Zero Waste Alliance Kenya	www.zerowastekenya.org	Advocacy and support platform promoting zero-waste models.	Provides events, community and advisory services for innovators promoting upstream waste reduction.	Great for entrepreneurs focusing on compostables, bulk retail or minimal-waste supply chains.

Waste-to-Value Enterprises

Circular Product Design and Manufacturing SMEs

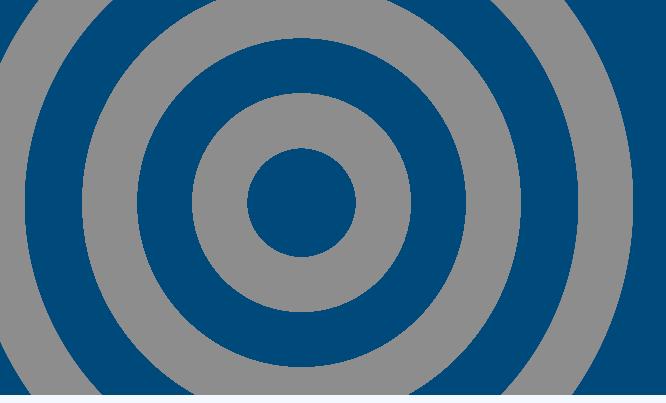
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WASTE DATA AND TECHNOLOGY SMES

Definition

Using data analytics, artificial intelligence and the IoT to optimise waste management and enable the circular economy.

Example

Companies offering waste tracking platforms, smart bin technologies or AI-powered material sorting systems for recycling plants.

Resource Name	Website	What It Is	Why It's Useful	Entrepreneur Usability
Circularise	www.circularise.com	A blockchain platform for supply chain transparency, circular material tracing and data security.	Free and open-source software for life cycle assessments (LCA) and environmental data modelling.	Ideal for tech-enabled product designers, e-waste startups and compliance-oriented exporters.
Wastezon	www.wastezon.com	Rwanda-based tech platform using AI and blockchain to facilitate efficient e-waste recovery.	Offers a data-driven resale and tracking ecosystem for recovered electronics.	Entrepreneurs can replicate similar business models in Kenya or collaborate cross-border.
Recykal	www.recykal.com	India-based waste commerce platform integrating waste generators, recyclers and authorities.	Known for its digital waste tracking and analytics systems, ideal for scaling tech-SMEs.	Kenyan innovators can learn from their circular marketplace and data-driven reverse logistics.
OpenLCA	www.openlca.org	Free and open-source software for life cycle assessments (LCA) and environmental data modelling.	Helps SMEs model the environmental impacts of products using international datasets.	Excellent for data-literate startups doing sustainability reporting or eco-design validation.

Waste-to-Value Enterprises

Circular Product Design and Manufacturing SMEs

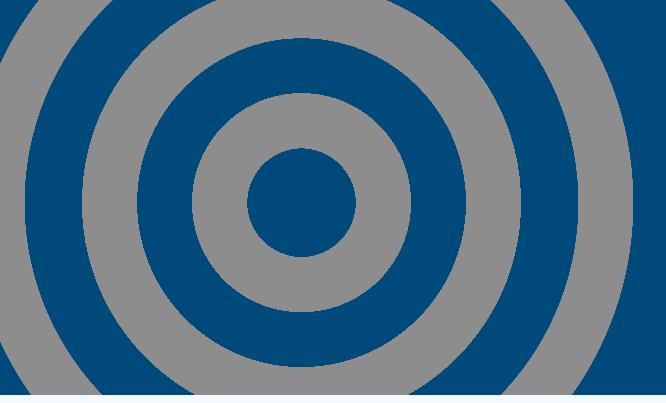
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REVERSE LOGISTICS AND WASTE COLLECTION SMES

Definition

Efficiently managing the collection, transportation and sorting of waste to ensure it can be recycled, upcycled or repurposed.

Example

Companies that provide waste collection services specifically for recyclable materials, such as e-waste or plastic bottles.

Resource Name	Website	What It Is	Why It's Useful	Entrepreneur Usability
TakaTaka Solutions	www.takatakasolutions.com	A Nairobi-based waste management company offering door-to-door waste collection and material recovery.	One of Kenya's most integrated and successful reverse logistics firms.	Great case study for replication; SMEs can learn routing, recovery and community integration.
Mr. Green Africa	www.mrgreenafrica.com	A Kenyan recycling company that integrates informal waste pickers into formalised supply chains.	Provides logistics, traceability and ethical material sourcing to buyers like Unilever.	Useful for SMEs wanting to formalise waste collection and improve livelihoods in the process.
WEEE Centre	www.weeecentre.com	Kenya's premier e-waste collection and reverse logistics provider.	Handles large-scale sorting, tracking and recycling of electronic waste.	Ideal for electronics-focused logistics and reverse flow entrepreneurs.
Winnow	www.winnewsolutions.com	A tech company that tracks food waste in commercial kitchens using AI-enabled bins.	Applies reverse logistics in kitchens to reduce organic waste and food loss.	Useful for food sector waste logistics, especially restaurant/retail-facing entrepreneurs.
Wastezon (Rwanda)	www.wastezon.com	Platform connecting e-waste sellers to buyers, with logistics tracking and secure transport.	Shows cross-border best practice in reverse logistics for electronics.	Offers inspiration for circular e-commerce logistics models in East Africa.

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ENTREPRENEURS**
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