



International
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E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province

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First published 2026.



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ISBN: 9789220437414 (print); 9789220437421 (web PDF)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54394/00034802>

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Cover Photo by: Makungu Baloyi

Printed in South Africa

Acknowledgements

The **E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project** represents the successful collaboration of government, development partners, industry, educational institutions, municipalities, and young entrepreneurs working together towards a common vision of promoting decent work, environmental sustainability, and inclusive economic development.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) extends its sincere appreciation to the **Government of Japan** for its generous financial support and unwavering commitment to advancing youth employment, the circular economy, and sustainable development in South Africa. This investment has enabled the implementation of innovative interventions that have empowered young people while strengthening the province's e-waste management ecosystem.

Special recognition is extended to the **Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE)** for its strategic leadership, policy guidance, and continued support in strengthening the national e-waste management framework. We also acknowledge the **Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET)** for its provincial leadership, coordination of the Project Steering Committee, and commitment to ensuring the long-term sustainability of project outcomes.

Our sincere appreciation is extended to the **EPR Waste Association of South Africa (EWASA)** for its technical expertise, industry leadership, and commitment to providing ongoing post-project mentorship and support to beneficiary enterprises. The project equally benefited from the valuable contributions of **Canon South Africa**, whose partnership strengthened community awareness and environmental education initiatives.

We gratefully acknowledge the participation and commitment of the **district and local municipalities across Limpopo Province**, whose collaboration created an enabling environment for project implementation, community mobilisation, enterprise establishment, and the promotion of sustainable e-waste management practices within their respective jurisdictions.

The project team also expresses its appreciation to the **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges, the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA), the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)**, industry experts, trainers, and technical specialists whose expertise contributed to the development of training programmes, curriculum, and capacity-building initiatives that will continue to benefit future generations of entrepreneurs.

We acknowledge the dedication of the members of the **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** for providing strategic oversight, guidance, and collaborative leadership throughout the implementation of the project. Their commitment ensured that project activities remained aligned with national, provincial, and local development priorities.

Most importantly, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the **22 youth entrepreneurs** who embraced the opportunity with determination, resilience, and innovation. Their commitment to building sustainable e-waste recycling enterprises demonstrates the transformative potential of investing in young people as agents of environmental stewardship and economic growth.

Finally, we thank every stakeholder, partner organisation, community representative, implementing team member, and supporter who contributed their knowledge, resources, and time to making this initiative a success. The achievements documented in this report are the result of a shared commitment to creating green jobs, promoting decent work, advancing the circular economy, and building a more sustainable future for the people of Limpopo Province.

Foreword

The transition to a greener and more sustainable economy presents one of the greatest opportunities of our time to create decent work, particularly for young people. As technological advancement accelerates across the world, the responsible management of electronic waste has emerged as both an environmental imperative and a powerful driver of inclusive economic development.

It is therefore with great pride that I present this Final Report of the E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project, implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in partnership with the Government of Japan, the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE), the EPR Waste Association of South Africa (EWASA), municipalities, TVET institutions, and numerous local stakeholders.

This initiative demonstrates how environmental sustainability and employment creation can be advanced simultaneously. Over a relatively short implementation period, the project has established a practical model for transforming a growing environmental challenge into meaningful economic opportunities for young women and men. Through technical training, entrepreneurship development, policy support, institutional strengthening, and infrastructure investment, the project has laid the foundation for a more inclusive and sustainable e-waste management ecosystem in Limpopo Province.

The achievements documented in this report are significant. Twenty-two youth entrepreneurs have been equipped with technical and business skills, supported to establish enterprises, and linked to a growing circular economy sector. The project has contributed to the creation of new jobs, strengthened local capacities, enhanced public awareness of e-waste management, and supported the development of systems and partnerships that will continue to generate impact beyond the life of the project. These outcomes affirm the potential of green economy interventions to address youth unemployment while safeguarding environmental resources for future generations.

Importantly, this project has shown that sustainable change requires more than training alone. Success depends on building an enabling ecosystem that includes supportive policies, strong institutions, access to markets, compliance with occupational safety and environmental standards, and sustained partnerships among government, business, training institutions, and communities. The collaboration demonstrated throughout this initiative offers valuable lessons for future efforts to advance just transitions and inclusive economic development.

The ILO is particularly encouraged by the strong commitment shown by national, provincial and municipal partners, the dedication of implementing stakeholders, and above all, the determination and resilience of the young entrepreneurs who embraced this opportunity. Their stories reflect the transformative power of investing in people and providing pathways to productive employment and enterprise development.

The successful delivery of project results within a highly compressed timeframe reflects the strong leadership of Project Manager Ms. Cebisile Nyambe and the dedicated efforts of the project team namely, Ms. Makungu Baloyi, Mr. Darryl Crossman, Mr. Thomas Nkosi- Dlamini and Mr. Abel Moaga. Their proactive engagement with implementing partners and key stakeholders was instrumental in ensuring effective coordination, timely execution, and the achievement of project objectives.

While important challenges remain, particularly in expanding market access, strengthening enterprise sustainability, and supporting business growth, the foundations established through this project provide a solid platform for future progress. The sustainability arrangements outlined in this report, including continued mentorship and institutional support, will be critical in ensuring that the benefits achieved are consolidated and expanded.

On behalf of the International Labour Organization, I extend our sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan for its generous support and unwavering commitment to promoting decent work and sustainable development. I also thank all project partners whose collaboration and leadership have made these achievements possible.

As we look ahead, the experience of Limpopo Province offers a compelling example of how circular economy approaches can contribute to environmental stewardship, social inclusion, and economic resilience. The ILO remains committed to supporting initiatives that place decent work at the centre of sustainable development and create opportunities for young people to shape a greener and more prosperous future.



Alexio Musindo

Director: International Labour Organization (ILO) - DWT CO - Pretoria

Acronyms and Definitions

CIPC	Companies and Intellectual Property Commission
DFFE	Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EWASA	EPR Waste Association of South Africa
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ILO	International Labour Organization
LED	Local Economic Development
LEDET	Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism
LGSETA	Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSC	Project Steering Committee
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SAPS	South African Police Service
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment



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Executive Summary

The E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project was a one-year initiative implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with financial support from the Government of Japan, covering the period 24 March 2025 -23 March 2026. The project aimed to promote decent and productive employment for youth, particularly women, through the development of inclusive and environmentally sustainable e-waste management systems and the establishment of youth-led e-waste recycling and upcycling enterprises across Limpopo Province.

Implementation was structured around two outcomes. These were; strengthening the enabling environment for e-waste management (Outcome 1), and developing youth skills, employment, and entrepreneurship in e-waste recycling (Outcome 2). Despite commencing full operations in July 2025, the project achieved strong results across both outcome areas by the close of the project period in March 2026.

Under Outcome 1, the project supported the promotion of the new e-waste policy and regulatory framework developed in August 2025. Occupational Safety and Health guidelines were developed and validated. A guidance note was developed to assist municipalities and partners to implement e-waste management systems that included an analysis of Public-Private Partnership e-waste collection systems. Community awareness activities comprised five outreach events reaching 520 direct participants across the project period, exceeding both the event target of four and the attendance target of 500. Four social media products were developed, that doubled the target, and achieved a broadcast and digital reach of 1.2 million people. The close-out and handover event on 20 March 2026, was attended by approximately 200 participants representing government, municipalities, implementing partners, and beneficiaries. It coincided with Global Recycling Day.

Under Outcome 2, all 22 targeted youth entrepreneurs were selected, trained in technical e-waste recycling skills, and graduated from the ILO Start and Improve Your Business programme. The Training of Trainers activity exceeded its target, capacitating 13 trainers against a target of 7. Fortythree (43) key stakeholders including TVET college lecturers and municipal representatives were trained against a target of 30. The e-waste recycling TVET curriculum was developed and integrated into one college, with the accreditation process underway at further institutions. All 22 workstation containers and tools of trade are being deployed across 22 municipalities. Twenty-two beneficiaries completed cooperative development training, and 22 individual business plans were produced through the SIYB programme.

The final beneficiary survey, administered in March 2026, confirmed that 11 of 22 respondents (52 percent) were operating e-waste businesses, with a further 10 in the process of establishment. Collectively, the surveyed enterprises employ 165 people and have created 58 new jobs since project commencement. The cohort supports 118 household dependants, with an estimated indirect reach of approximately 885 additional individuals across all staff. Sixteen beneficiaries (76 percent of respondents) had achieved CIPC business registration, 13 (62 percent) had opened business bank accounts, and 4 (19 percent) had accessed credit facilities. Income generation remains uneven, with 48 percent of respondents reporting no income at the time of the final survey, reflecting the early-stage nature of most enterprises and the infrastructure, licensing, and market access constraints that post-project support will need to address.

Sustainability is anchored through clearly defined post-project institutional roles. EWASA will provide up to two years of structured aftercare and mentoring to all beneficiary enterprises. LEDET assumes the role of PSC convener and provincial oversight body. Municipalities retain enabling and stewardship responsibilities through their waste management, LED, and youth support structures. DFFE provides regulatory assurance, particularly on hazardous waste management and licensing.

22	165	58	22
Youth entrepreneurs supported	Total employees across enterprises	New jobs created	Municipalities reached
25	43	620	220
Trainers capacitated (target: 7)	Key stakeholders trained (target: 30)	Event participants (target: 500)	Close-out event participants

1. Project Background and Context

The E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project was implemented by the ILO with financial support from the Government of Japan. The project responded to provincial demand for improved e-waste management, green job creation, and youth economic empowerment, while addressing the environmental and health risks associated with unmanaged electronic waste. South Africa generates an estimated 350,000 tonnes of electronic waste annually, and Limpopo Province faces structural challenges in managing this waste stream, including limited infrastructure, high transport costs, and the predominance of informal and often hazardous handling practices.

Before the project, communities across Limpopo's twenty-one municipalities were exposed to the consequences of unmanaged e-waste daily. In the absence of managed disposal infrastructure, the most common response was burning cables incinerated to recover copper, plastic casings melted to reach metal components, releasing dioxins, furans, and heavy metal compounds that contaminate soil, water, and the health of nearby communities. In Greater Tzaneen, e-waste contamination threatened soil and water systems underpinning the regional farming economy. In Thulamela, community members burned cables without understanding the toxicity of the resulting fumes. In Mollemole, a young woman was dismantling and extracting materials using methods she would later learn were actively damaging her own health. These were not isolated cases, but a pattern repeated across the province, in communities that were being harmed by a waste stream they could not yet manage or convert into productive opportunity.

The project was designed to address this gap directly by professionalising e-waste handling, establishing youth-led micro-enterprises operating in compliance with environmental and occupational safety requirements, and connecting emerging enterprises to the formal regulatory, institutional, and market structures of the national e-waste system. Project governance was provided through a multi-stakeholder Project Steering Committee comprising LEDET, DFFE, district and local municipalities, TVET colleges, Canon, EWASA, and ILO, which convened nine times across the project period to provide strategic oversight, validate key deliverables, and ensure alignment with national, provincial, and municipal priorities.

1.1. Project Objectives

The project aimed to promote decent and productive employment for youth, especially women and persons with disabilities, through the development of inclusive and environmentally sustainable e-waste management systems and the creation of youth-led e-waste recycling and upcycling enterprises in Limpopo Province. The project was structured around two outcomes. Outcome 1 was expected to result in a strengthened e-waste management system and policy framework; while Outcome 2 was expected to yield increased youth skills, employment, and entrepreneurship in e-waste recycling.

Implementation was sequenced to establish the institutional, technical, and operational foundations required for effective enterprise rollout in the first phase (July to December 2025), with later-stage investments in infrastructure deployment, cooperative development, and market linkage concentrated in the close-out phase (January to March 2026).

1.2. Implementation Overview

1.2.1. Project Timeline and Key Milestones

Implementation proceeded across two phases. The first phase, covering March to December 2025, focused on establishing the enabling environment, completing training, and initiating enterprise development. The second phase, covering January to March 2026, concentrated on infrastructure deployment, system consolidation, cooperative and refresher training, and formal handover.

Key milestones across the full project period

- ▶ Formal project launch, 3 September 2025
- ▶ International E-Waste Day community awareness activities, 14 October 2025
- ▶ Training of Trainers for TVET colleges, week of 17 February 2026
- ▶ System Strengthening Priority Pathways Intervention, Tzaneen, 10–11 February 2026
- ▶ E-Waste Ecosystem Strengthening Workshop, Polokwane, and 7th PSC Meeting, 12 February 2026
- ▶ Container and tools-of-trade being delivered to all 22 beneficiary sites, March - April 2026
- ▶ Municipal officials study tour, Johannesburg (two cohorts), 3–7 March 2026
- ▶ TVET benchmarking study tour, KwaZulu-Natal, week of 10–14 March 2026
- ▶ Cooperative and refresher technical training for beneficiaries, week of 2–14 March 2026
- ▶ Final beneficiary follow-up survey administered, 12–13 March 2026
- ▶ Global Recycling Day event, Thabazimbi, 18 March 2026
- ▶ Final 9th PSC Meeting
- ▶ End-of-project handover celebration, 20 March 2026

1.2.2. Governance and Oversight

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) convened nine times across the project period, providing continuous strategic oversight and enabling adaptive management at key decision points. The PSC brought together LEDET, DFFE, district and local municipalities, EWASA, TVET colleges, and ILO, ensuring multi-stakeholder ownership of outputs and post-project sustainability mechanisms. The 9th and final PSC meeting, held on 20 March 2026, endorsed the project's results, confirmed postproject institutional arrangements, and formally received the project handover package.

An external end-of-project evaluation was commissioned through the ILO Geneva evaluation unit. The evaluator selection process was initiated during the close-out phase, and the evaluation will be reported separately, providing an independent assessment of project effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability.

2. Project Results

Outcome 1: Strengthened E-Waste Management System and Policy Framework

Output 1.1: E-Waste Policies Evaluated and Enhanced

The project strengthened the provincial policy and regulatory environment through the promotion of the recently gazetted WEEE Policy at strategic events to inform all levels of constituents of their roles and responsibilities related to E-waste. A guidance note was developed to assist municipalities and partners to implement e-waste management systems. It included an analysis of Public-Private Partnership e-waste collection systems. Occupational Safety and Health guidelines for e-waste recycling were developed and validated through multi-stakeholder consultation, equipping beneficiaries and municipalities with a practical compliance reference tool. Environmental compliance guidance confirmed that expanded registration certificates rather than full EIA processes applied at the operational scale of the project, and LEDET confirmed readiness to support beneficiaries through the registration process.

Output 1.2: Community Awareness on E-Waste Recycling

Community awareness activities were implemented across the project period through a campaign model anchored by high-visibility events and embedded within existing municipal platforms. Five outreach events were delivered against a target of four, reaching 620 direct participants against a target of 500, with both indicators exceeded. Five events were staged. These were the formal project launch in September 2025, International E-Waste Day activities in October 2025, a local school-based awareness campaign in BelaBela, and two closeout phase events including Global Recycling Day in Thabazimbi on 18 March 2026. Four social media products were developed, doubling the target of two, and achieved broadcast and digital reach of 1.2 million people. Two knowledge products were produced against a target of two.

All 22 beneficiaries were selected through a structured, PSC-validated targeting and selection mechanism with deliberate emphasis on youth and gender inclusion. The process achieved the total target of 22 beneficiaries, with the specified gender and disability profile. Under partnership activity, two MOUs against a target of six were concluded. The tripartite MOU between DFFE, LEDET and ILO was signed covering all 22 participating municipalities, and beneficiary municipality MOUs are carried forward as a priority for post-project formalisation. A guidance note was developed to assist municipalities and partners to implement e-waste management systems. It included an assessment of various options for collecting and processing of E-waste based on the local conditions. The guidance note has been handed over to EWASA to spearhead its finalisation and implementation in their postproject activities.

Outcome 2: Increased Youth Skills, Employment and Entrepreneurship in E-Waste Recycling

Output 2.1: E-Waste Recycling Skills Developed in Limpopo Province

A Training Needs Assessment was completed, providing the evidence base for curriculum design and training delivery. Training of Trainers activities were delivered in the week of 17 February 2026, capacitating 13 trainers against a target of seven, thus exceeding the output indicator. Technical ewaste recycling training

was delivered to all 22 beneficiaries, achieving the full participant target. A refresher, and on-site workstation training components were integrated into the close-out phase respectively, consolidating skills at the point of infrastructure deployment.

A model e-waste recycling TVET curriculum was developed and submitted to LGSETA and QCTO. At the time of reporting, one TVET college had completed the integration process, with further accreditation at various institutions underway. A TVET benchmarking study tour to KwaZulu-Natal in the week of 10 to 14 March 2026 exposing Limpopo college lecturers and LEDET officials to the Green Able toner recycling facility in Pinetown, and to a college already delivering a circular economy programme, supporting curriculum replication planning was undertaken. Training of key stakeholders, comprising TVET college lecturers and municipal representatives, reached 43 participants against a target of 30, thus exceeding the indicator by 43 percent.

Output 2.2: Business Skills Developed for Targeted Youth

All 22 beneficiaries completed the ILO Start and Improve Your Business programme, thus achieving the full participant target. Two SIYB training events were delivered against a target of one, and the programme produced 22 draft business plans. Cooperative development training was delivered to all 22 beneficiaries, fully achieving the target. The final survey confirms that 16 beneficiaries finalised the registrations of their companies, 13 (59 percent) have business bank accounts, and 4 (18 percent) have accessed credit facilities, against a target of 22 for each indicator. All 22 beneficiaries received business development support and mentorship. An operational manual for small-scale e-waste management was completed and formed part of the project handover package. One market linkage MOU was concluded against a target of four, with EWASA and the 22 beneficiary-municipality arrangements identified as the pathway to closing this gap in the postproject period.

2.1 Infrastructure Deployment

All 22 workstation containers and associated tools of trade and PPE were being delivered to beneficiary sites across 22 municipalities in Limpopo Province. Delivery was sequenced according to verified site readiness, confirmed municipal logos, and readiness letters, commencing in March 2026 and completing within April 2026 under supervision of the PSC. Municipal officials study tours to Johannesburg, structured across two cohorts in the week of 3 to 7 March 2026, contributed to the 43 key stakeholders trained under the project's capacity development activities.

The project is estimated to have supported 885 people indirectly through enterprise employment and household income effects.

2.2 Consolidated Results Summary

Output / Activity	Indicator	Result	Target	Status
Outcome 1: Strengthened E-Waste Management System and Policy Framework				
Output 1.1	Strategic documents produced	4	4	Achieved
Output 1.1	MOUs / IAs concluded (sector partners)	2	6	Partially achieved
Output 1.2	Community awareness events held	5	4	Exceeded
Output 1.2	Direct participants reached at events	520	500	Exceeded
Output 1.2	Social media products developed	4	2	Exceeded
Output 1.2	Social media reach	1,200,000	—	Noted
Output 1.2	Knowledge products produced	2	2	Achieved
Output 1.2	Beneficiaries selected	22	22	Achieved
Output 1.2	Collection systems guideline produced	1	1	Achieved
Outcome 2: Increased Youth Skills, Employment and Entrepreneurship in E-Waste Recycling				
Output 1.2	Partnership MOUs signed	2	6	Partially achieved
Output 2.1	TNA report produced	1	1	Achieved
Output 2.1	Trainers trained (ToT)	13	7	Exceeded
Output 2.1	Youth trained — technical skills	22	22	Achieved
Output 2.1	Key stakeholders trained (TVET + municipal)	43	30	Exceeded
Output 2.1	TVET curriculum developed	1	1	Achieved
Output 2.1	TVET colleges with integrated curriculum	1	1	On-going
Output 2.1	Youth trained — SIYB programme	22	22	Achieved
Output 2.2	CIPC registered at close-out	16/21 (76%)	22	Achieved
Output 2.2	Business bank accounts at close-out	13/21 (62%)	22	Partially achieved
Output 2.2	New jobs created	58	—	Noted
Output 2.2	Total employment across enterprises	165	—	Noted
Output 2.2	Market linkage MOUs concluded	[TBC]	4	On-going

Note: MOU indicators reflect partial achievement at project closure, with post-project formalisation pathways identified through EWASA and beneficiary-municipality arrangements. 'Noted' entries reflect outcomes captured through the beneficiary survey that were not logframe targets but carry evidential weight for the final report.

3. Lessons Learned

3.1. Policy Strengthening Requires Practical, Implementable Engagement

Municipal and provincial participants respond more readily to practical recommendations aligned with existing mandates and planning cycles than to comprehensive reform frameworks that are difficult to operationalise. Early engagement and iterative validation through the PSC were critical in reducing institutional resistance and clarifying feasible pathways for adoption. The System Strengthening Priority Pathways Intervention demonstrated the value of structured multi-stakeholder engagement that moved beyond strategic dialogue to produce actionable collection system options and MOU frameworks that municipalities could engage with directly.

3.2. Sequencing and Readiness Determine Infrastructure Effectiveness

Differences in beneficiary preparedness, municipal capacity, and site availability mean that uniform rollout is neither realistic nor desirable in a geographically dispersed programme. Early beneficiary verification and site assessments reduced the risk of misallocated assets and allowed the project to concentrate resources where conditions were most conducive to success. The phased container delivery process confirmed that sequencing based on verified readiness rather than administrative convenience yielded more durable deployment outcomes.

3.3. Skills Development Must Be Linked to Enterprise Realities

Beneficiaries valued applied learning, mentoring, and peer exchange over stand-alone training. The December 2025 survey confirmed that business formalisation, access to finance, and market linkage were more binding constraints than basic skills acquisition by the end of the initial training phase. The close-out phase decisions to prioritise cooperative development training, on-site workstation training, and market linkage support directly reflect this finding and validate the project's adaptive management approach.

3.4. Community Awareness Is Most Effective When Embedded in Municipal Platforms

Awareness activities that leveraged existing municipal programmes achieved greater reach and legitimacy at lower cost than standalone campaigns. The school-based campaign with Canon South Africa and the integration of awareness activities into International E-Waste Day and Global Recycling Day provided international legitimacy while enabling local contextualisation.

3.5. Post-Project Sustainability Requires Institutional Anchoring from the Outset

The project's sustainability architecture was most effective where post-project roles were defined early and engaged iteratively throughout implementation. The EWASA implementation agreement, the progressive integration of LED units, and the formal handover package for LEDET and DFFE; all reflect a principle of institutional anchoring rather than terminal handover. Future programmes in this sector should formalise post-project roles within implementation agreements from the inception phase rather than as a close-out activity.

4. Risks and Adaptive Management

The project maintained active risk management across the full project period. The MEL framework, PSC oversight, and beneficiary survey data collectively enabled early identification and proportionate response to risks across system, enterprise, and inclusion levels. Three adaptive management decisions with material impact on project direction are noted.

Firstly, the Japan study tour participant configuration was revised to prioritise TVET college lecturers over individual beneficiaries, in order to embed knowledge in institutional stakeholders with greater durability. Secondly, the container delivery process was restructured on a readiness based sequencing model, reducing the risk of misallocated assets. Thirdly, cooperative development training and market linkage support were elevated as close-out phase priorities in direct response to the December 2025 survey finding that income generation constraints, rather than skills gaps, were the primary barriers to enterprise sustainability.

4.1. Residual Risks Entering the Post-Project Period

Municipal capacity constraints remain the primary system-level risk, with uneven uptake of policy recommendations and MOU commitments across municipalities. Mitigation relies on the EWASA district focal coordinator structure, LEDET's PSC convener role, and the practical tools produced by the project. At enterprise level, the 48 percent of beneficiaries reporting no income at close-out represents a significant sustainability risk, with infrastructure gaps in transport, storage, and purchasing capital compounding the challenge for microenterprises in early establishment. These structural constraints require continued engagement by EWASA, municipal LED structures, Producer Responsibility Organisations, and DFFE beyond the project lifecycle.

4.2. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The MEL system was actively used to support adaptive management across the full project period, combining output tracking through a central dashboard, three-round beneficiary survey evidence, PSC review cycles, and structured reflection at key implementation transitions. The system operated in line with Results-Based Management principles and drew on outcome harvesting and utilisation-focused evaluation approaches to ensure that evidence was actionable rather than merely documentary.

The three-wave survey framework constituted the most significant MEL innovation of the project period. By framing successive rounds as baseline, diagnostic, and outcomes harvesting exercises, the framework generated a longitudinal picture of enterprise trajectory that a single end-line survey could not have produced. The findings from each round directly shaped implementation decisions in the period that followed, demonstrating the practical utility of adaptive learning as a management tool rather than a reporting requirement. An external end-of-project evaluation was commissioned through the ILO Geneva evaluation unit and will be reported separately. Findings and recommendations will be made available to LEDET, DFFE, and EWASA as part of the post-project knowledge base.

5. Project Close-Out and Handover

5.1. Close-Out Event — 20 March 2026

The end-of-project handover and close-out celebration was held at the Modimolle-Mokgophong, beneficiary site in Waterberg District on 20 March 2026, coinciding with Global Recycling Day. Approximately 200 participants attended, representing the Government of Japan as donor, LEDET, DFFE, district and local municipalities across Limpopo Province, EWASA, TVET colleges, ILO leadership, and the full beneficiary cohort. The event formally marked the transition from project implementation to post-project sustainability.

The event served both a symbolic and practical function. As a symbolic transition, it provided a public platform for the donor, implementing agency, and provincial partners to affirm the project's contribution to decent work, environmental protection, and inclusive local economic development in Limpopo. As a practical handover, it was the occasion at which the formal project materials package was received by LEDET, DFFE, and EWASA as the primary post-project custodians.

5.2. Handover Package

The following documentation was formally handed over at the close-out event:

- ▶ Operational manual for small-scale e-waste management
- ▶ Occupational Safety and Health guidelines for e-waste recycling
- ▶ E-waste collection systems guideline
- ▶ Municipal e-waste IDP integration guidance note
- ▶ Public-Private Partnership assessment report
- ▶ Standard business plan template for e-waste recycling enterprises
- ▶ Stories of Change knowledge product (19 beneficiary profiles)
- ▶ Signed MOUs between project partners (2 formal MOUs; beneficiary-municipality MOUs carried forward)
- ▶ Final beneficiary survey report (three-wave framework)
- ▶ Accreditation of the e-waste training programme by Waterberg TVET College

6. Sustainability Architecture and Post-Project Commitments

The sustainability architecture built into this project's design is deliberate, and the handover of 20 March 2026 makes that architecture operational. Each institution participating in the close-out process carries a distinct and defined role in what comes next. EWASA has committed to up to two years of structured aftercare and mentoring for beneficiary enterprises, focused on compliant operations, business development, and integration into national Extended Producer Responsibility systems. That commitment is not a courtesy. It is the institutional bridge that will determine whether the enterprises established under this project survive, grow, and find their footing in formal markets. LEDET and DFFE will continue to provide regulatory oversight and support the final steps to full licensing for those enterprises that have not yet completed the compliance journey.

The project's TVET college partners carry a responsibility that extends well beyond the twenty-two people who passed through this programme. The training infrastructure developed during implementation, comprising the curriculum content, the industry relationships, and the trainer capacity now embedded across multiple institutions, does not close when this project does. It is now part of the institutional landscape of Limpopo Province. The mandate going forward is to continue deploying it; to raise awareness of e-waste as both an environmental and economic issue, and to equip the next generation of young entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge to enter this sector safely, compliantly, and with a realistic prospect of building a viable business. The pipeline of future operators depends on that ongoing investment in skills development and sector orientation.

The role that falls to municipal partners is a dual one. The first dimension is regulatory, viz. implementing the policy frameworks developed under this project, enforcing compliance standards, and ensuring that e-waste is managed according to the environmental and occupational safety requirements now in place. The second dimension is equally consequential. Municipalities are positioned to make it materially easier for new entrepreneurs to enter this space. Streamlined licensing processes, municipal sites accessible for collection and temporary storage, procurement decisions that give preference to compliant local operators, and Local Economic Development programmes that actively support enterprise formation in the green economy are each, individually, a lever. Every barrier reduced at the municipal level is another young person who can convert ambition into a functioning business.

What this project has produced, beyond the twenty-two enterprises and the employment outcomes documented in this report, is a proven model. The model is a workable, replicable approach to converting e-waste into youth employment, tested across the full geographic breadth of Limpopo Province, adapted to different municipal contexts, and grounded in verified outcomes. The OSH guidelines, the business development methodology, the compliance pathways, the market linkages, and the TVET curriculum are indeed documented, transferable assets. This project has established what is possible. The work ahead, for every institution that participated in its governance and implementation, is to extend that possibility to every municipality that chooses to take it up.

7. Conclusions

The E-Waste for Youth Employment in Limpopo Province Project has demonstrated, across its full implementation period, that youth unemployment and environmental degradation are connected problems with a connected solution. Investment in the knowledge, skills, compliance support, and market access that enable young people to build enterprises from the province's unmanaged ewaste stream produces outcomes at multiple levels simultaneously. These outcomes include reduced environmental harm, meaningful employment creation, strengthened institutional systems, and a documented contribution to the national Extended Producer Responsibility framework.

The project met or exceeded the majority of its output targets within a compressed implementation period. Community outreach events exceeded their target, reaching 520 participants across five events. Social media products doubled the target and achieved a reach of 1.2 million people. Training of Trainers was delivered at nearly double the planned scale, with 13 trainers capacitated against a target of 7. Key stakeholder training reached 43 participants against a target of 30. The TVET curriculum was developed and integrated into one college, with further accreditation underway. All 22 beneficiaries were trained in technical skills, completed the SIYB programme, received cooperative development training, and produced individual business plans.

At the time of the final survey, 52 percent of enterprises were operational, 165 people were employed, 58 decent new jobs had been created, and the project's estimated indirect reach was confirmed at 885 people. These results sit alongside a clear-eyed assessment of what remains incomplete. Nearly half the cohort had not yet generated income from e-waste activities at the close of the project period.

Infrastructure gaps in transport, storage, and purchasing capital constrain scaling for a substantial segment of the group. Sector-specific licensing remains out of reach for most enterprises. These constraints are structural rather than individual in nature, and their resolution will require sustained engagement by the PSC including EWASA, municipalities, LEDET, and DFFE across the post-project period.

The project's sustainability architecture is designed to support this transition. EWASA aftercare, municipal stewardship, provincial oversight, and the formal handover package collectively constitute an institutional foundation that is substantively more robust than a terminal project handover. Whether that foundation is sufficient will depend on the quality and consistency of postproject engagement by all parties, and on the degree to which the policy and regulatory environments continue to develop in ways that support emerging micro-enterprise participation in the e-waste sector.

What is already evident is that twenty-two young people in twenty-one municipalities across Limpopo are now engaged in a sector that is good for the environment, viable as a livelihood, and capable of employing others. That is the core result of this project. The task for the partners who remain is to ensure that it holds.

Annex A: Results on Log-Frame

Results chain	Indicators	Result	Progress	Comment
Impact (Development Objective)				
Number of people supported through the project (indirect)	Number of jobs supported	165		
	885			
Outcome 1: Strengthened E-Waste Management System and Policy Framework	1 Official Acceptance of Policy recommendations	NA		National WEEE policy developed and project supported dissemination
Output 1.1: E-waste policies evaluated and enhanced	2 No. Policies reviewed	NA		National WEEE policy developed and project supported dissemination
Activity 1.1.1 Create awareness on new e-waste Policy and regulatory Framework	Number of events Target 1	1	100%	
Activity 1.1.2 Assess the potential for Public-Private Partnerships to develop sustainable e-waste management.	4 No. of MOUs	3	75%	This has been developed into a guidance note, which has been handed over to EWASA with oversight from the PSC
Activity 1.1.3 Develop a standard Business Plan for e-waste recycling.	1 No. Business Plan	22	100%	
Activity 1.1.4 Conduct a strategic Environmental Impact Assessment of e-waste recycling.	1 No. Study	As needed		These are not necessary based on the scale of the beneficiaries' enterprises, see PSC minutes
Activity 1.1.5 Develop Occupational Safety and Health Guidelines for e-waste recycling.	1 No. Guidance note	1	100%	
Output 1.2: Creation of community awareness on e-waste recycling.	2 Municipalities adopt e-waste management system	TBC		While recommendations and guidelines have been developed, this will occur beyond the life cycle of the project. The PSC will follow this up going forward
Activity 1.2.1 Community engagement: Outreach Campaigns and Engagement with Community Leaders and Social Partners.	4 No. Events	5	Exceeded	
Activity 1.2.2 Beneficiary selection and induction with participation of social partners.	No. of beneficiaries selected for training Target: 22 (60% women and 40% men)	22	100%	
Activity 1.2.3 Development of e-waste collection systems.	1 No. Guideline	1	100%	
Activity 1.2.4 Creating partnership with local authorities (Municipalities, provincial departments), mining and other companies and relevant sector ministries.	6 No. MoUs	2	33%	LEDET MOU covers all 22 municipalities, further the beneficiaries and the municipalities will have MOUs in place going forward, which will add another 22 MOUs to this indicator
Outcome 2: Increased Youth Skills, Employment and Entrepreneurship in E-Waste Recycling	Curriculum adopted by at least 2 TVET Colleges	1	50%	One has completed this process and others within the province have expressed interest to follow suit.
Output 2.1: E-waste recycling skills developed in Limpopo Province.	7 Lecturers and 22 youth's graduates.	13 Lecturers 22 youth		Exceeded
Key Activities:				
Activity 2.1.1 Conduct an e-waste recycling Training Needs assessment.	1 No. Report	1	100%	
Activity 2.1.2 Undertake Training of Trainers.	7 No. Trainers	13 Trainers	Exceeded	

Results chain	Indicators	Result	Progress	Comment
Activity 2.1.3 Deliver Technical Training of targeted youths & provision of tools of trade.	No. of youth trained (disaggregated by sex and age) Target: 22	22	100%	
Activity 2.1.4 Develop model e-waste recycling TVET College curriculum.	1 No. Curriculum	1	100%	
Output 2.2: Business Skills developed for targeted youth to enable them to start their own small e-waste recycling business training.	22 Youths graduate from the SIYB Training	22 Youth	100%	
Activity 2.2.1 Develop targeting and selection mechanism with local authorities	1 No. Guideline	1	100%	
Activity 2.2.2 Deliver ILO Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Training to selected youth.	No. of persons who have completed the SIYB training (disaggregated by sex and age) Target: 22	22	100%	
Activity 2.2.3 Provide business development support and mentorship, including registration of Companies and Bank Accounts for the targeted youth, as well as facilitating access to finance (Credit facilities, guarantee, etc.)	No. of youth receiving business development support and mentorship, including: i) Support to register a company; ii) Support to establish a bank account; iii) Support to access finance Target: 22	16 13 6	100%	
Activity 2.2.4 Develop an operational manual for small scale e-waste management.	1 No. Manual		100%	
Activity 2.2.5 Create market linkage: with public and private investment programmes, aggregators, wholesalers and retailers.	4 No. MoUs	1	25%	LEDET MOU covers all 22 municipalities, further the beneficiaries and the municipalities will have MOUs in place going forward, which will add another 22 MOUs to this indicator

Annex B: Beneficiary Enterprise Status at Close-Out (March 2026 Survey)

Beneficiary	Municipality	Status	Employees	Income (reported)
Kgodiso Moime	Fetakgomo Tubatse	In establishment	0	None
Maja Mahlogonolo	Polokwane	Operational	5	R2,200–3,000/mo
Christopher Madaba	Musina	In establishment	10	R1,440–5,450/mo
Sweetness Mathabathe	Makhuduthamaga	In establishment	1	R500–1,100/mo
Motsatsi Kgohlwane	Maruleng	Operational	0	None
Faith	Ba-Phalaborwa	In establishment	3	None
Sephodi Maluleka	Bela-Bela	In establishment	1	None
Martin Mokwele	Blouberg	In establishment	1	None
Anza Muntswu	Thulamela	Operational	17	R5,000–40,000/mo
Tshepang Ndzayo	Molemole	In establishment	4	R3,000–5,000/mo
Afetseng Ferreira	Thabazimbi	Operational	6	R2,000–5,000/mo
Shiluva Chauke	Greater Tzaneen	Operational	0	None
Alphina Ngoepe	Lephalale	In establishment	1	None
Sebotso Mohlamonyane	Elias Motsoaledi	Operational	3	None
Takatso	Mookgophong-Modimolle	In establishment	1	None
Emanuel Miyambo	Collins Chabane	Operational	5	R6,456–8,950/mo
Movha Ramovha	Makhado	Operational	13	R6,456–8,950/mo
Thabang Nkogatse	Ephraim Mogale	In establishment	2	None
Thabiso Hlongwane	Lepelle-Nkumpi	Operational	88	R850,000–900,000/mo
Sydney	Greater Giyani	Operational	3	R3,000–4,000/mo
MADISH	Mokgalakwena	Operational	1	Irregular

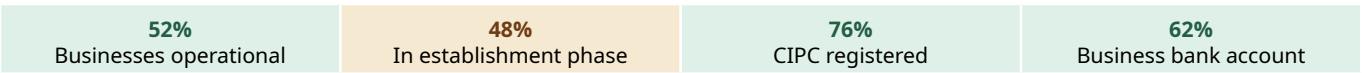
Annex C: Beneficiary Survey Findings

5.1 Survey Design and Longitudinal Framework

The project implemented a three-round beneficiary survey framework designed to track enterprise development, compliance progress, and employment effects across the implementation period. The first round, conducted in December 2025, established a mid-stream baseline of beneficiary progress following initial training. The second round, conducted in January 2026, focused on diagnosing system readiness and constraints at the enterprise and institutional levels. The third and final round, administered on 12 to 13 March 2026, one week prior to the close-out event, constituted the results and outcomes harvesting round, capturing enterprise status, employment creation, income levels, compliance attainment, infrastructure access, and the quality of relationships with municipalities and market participants. Twenty-one of 22 beneficiaries responded, providing coverage across 21 local municipalities.

5.2 Enterprise Status at Close-Out

Eleven respondents (52 percent) confirmed that their e-waste enterprise was operational at the time of the final survey, while ten (48 percent) described themselves as being in the process of establishment. No respondent indicated an intention to discontinue, reflecting that the full cohort retains commitment to enterprise development. The distinction between operational and inestablishment enterprises is substantively meaningful Those in establishment continue to face barriers to income generation and formal market engagement, and several had not yet secured the licences required for compliant operations.



5.3 Compliance and Licensing

CIPC business registration is the most widely held compliance credential, with 16 respondents (76 percent) reporting registration or a submitted application. Business bank account separation has been achieved by 13 respondents (62 percent). Progress on sector-specific licensing is considerably less advanced. Six respondents (29 percent) hold a SAPS Second-Hand Goods Dealer Certificate, four (19 percent) hold a Hazardous Waste Transport Licence, and only two (10 percent) hold a Hazardous Waste Storage Licence. Four respondents report access to credit facilities. These figures identify a clear priority for post-project support, as sectorspecific licences are prerequisite conditions for legitimate formal market participation.

5.4 Employment and Household Reach

The 21 surveyed enterprises collectively employ 165 people, an average of approximately 7.9 employees per enterprise. This figure is influenced substantially by two larger and more established enterprises: one in Lepelle Nkumpi reporting 88 employees and one in Makhado reporting 13. Excluding these two respondents, the remaining 19 enterprises employ a combined 64 people, averaging 3.4 employees per enterprise. Fiftyeight new jobs have been created since project commencement, with 14 respondents attributing at least one new job to their enterprise expansion.

Each respondent supports an average of 5.6 family members, yielding a combined household support reach of 118 individuals. The project’s total estimated indirect reach, encompassing household dependants of both direct employees and project-generated new jobs, is confirmed at 885 people.

165 Total employees	58 New jobs created	118 Household dependants supported	885 Estimated indirect reach
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5.5 Income Generation

Income outcomes remain uneven across the cohort, consistent with the expected trajectory of newly established micro-enterprises in a regulated and capital-intensive sector. Ten respondents (48 percent) report no income from e-waste activities at the time of the final survey. Six respondents (29 percent) describe their income as small and irregular, four (19 percent) as regular but low, and one (5 percent) reports regular and stable income. The aggregate reported income across ten income-generating respondents was R1,184,500 in January 2026 and R1,141,596 in February 2026. These totals, however, are heavily influenced by two outlier enterprises. Excluding these two, the remaining eight income-generating enterprises reported average monthly income rising from R4,312 in January to R7,700 in February, a possible early signal of growing market relationships and the effect of close-out phase business development support.

5.6 Operational Infrastructure

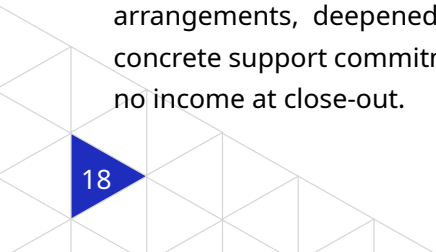
Infrastructure access represents a persistent and structural constraint. Eleven respondents (52 percent) report access to transport for gathering e-waste from collection points, while only eight (38 percent) have storage facilities and eight (38 percent) have the financial resources to purchase e-waste from the public. The convergence of these gaps across transport, storage, and purchasing capital means that a segment of the cohort faces compounding constraints that will require targeted post-project support to resolve.

5.7 Municipal Relationships and Market Visibility

Municipal relationship quality is notably positive across the cohort. Eight respondents (38 percent) describe the relationship with their municipality as very good, nine (43 percent) as good, and four (19 percent) as fair. No respondents selected poor or very poor, and none indicated no contact. Respondents identified community events (86 percent), municipal support (86 percent), social media (76 percent), and referrals (67 percent) as the most effective channels for improving business visibility, reinforcing the importance of continued municipal engagement and cooperative enterprise promotion.

5.8 Cohort Profile and Post-Project Implications

The cohort exhibits significant internal heterogeneity. A small sub-group of more established enterprises, operating at commercial scale and employing larger workforces, co-exists with a larger group of microenterprises in early establishment. Aggregate statistics are sensitive to outlier effects, and post-project support design should be calibrated to this differentiated profile. Priority areas identified through the survey include acceleration of sector-specific licensing support, facilitation of cooperative and aggregation arrangements, deepened municipal LED engagement to convert the broadly positive relationships into concrete support commitments, and targeted income stabilisation support for the ten respondents reporting no income at close-out.



Annex D: Stories of Change

The quantitative results of the project are complemented by nineteen documented stories of change drawn from narrative profiles completed by beneficiaries themselves. Read together, these accounts reveal patterns of transformation that aggregate statistics cannot fully communicate.

The most consistently reported transformation is the shift from informal, unstructured, and often hazardous practice to compliant, safe, and commercially viable operation. Before the project, several beneficiaries were actively using methods that were damaging their health and their environment, not through recklessness but through the absence of any alternative. Cables were burned to recover copper. Plastic casings were melted. Materials were extracted without protective equipment. The project addressed each of these gaps in sequence, viz. safe dismantling procedures, regulatory knowledge, SAPS licensing, CIPC registration, market access, and cooperative formation skills.

A second pattern concerns confidence and self-perception. Multiple beneficiaries describe the project not merely as a source of technical or business knowledge but as an experience that shifted how they understood their own capacity. Sephodi Maluleka, at eighteen years old, articulates an ambition to build the largest e-waste recycling company in Limpopo. Afetseng Ferreira writes of gaining a sense of purpose. Tshepang Ndzayo, who had previously operated using methods she later learned were damaging her own health, now leads Setsubeni Holdings (Pty) Ltd as a compliant enterprise committed to environmental accountability.

At the far end of the development spectrum, Thabiso Hlongwane of Greener Pastures Recycling Company arrived at the project already operating a diversified recycling business with client relationships and operational discipline. What he did not have was e-waste. The project provided the specific technical, compliance, and market-access layer that e-waste requires, including direct exposure to Desco Electronic Recyclers and Red Tech Recycling during industry visits. His trajectory, towards partnerships with refineries and specialised e-waste processors, represents the furthest point along the development pathway the project supported.

Selected beneficiary voices

"You are not only the leaders of tomorrow. You are the change-makers of today." — Tshepang Ndzayo, Setsubeni Holdings, Molemole

"E-waste is not trash. It is an opportunity to create jobs, recover resources, and protect our planet for future generations." — Thabiso Hlongwane, Greener Pastures Recycling, Lepelle- Nkumpi

"Let us clean our environment and turn waste into job opportunities." — Thabang Nkogotse, Ephraim Mogale

The nineteen stories collectively demonstrate that youth unemployment and environmental degradation, two of the most persistent structural challenges in Limpopo, are not separate problems requiring separate solutions. They are connected problems with a connected solution viz. investment in the knowledge, skills, and market access that enable young people to build enterprises from the waste streams that would have otherwise damage the places they live in. The full Stories of Change document is produced as a separate knowledge product and forms part of the project handover package.





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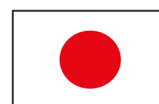
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