



Integrated Plastics Recovery and Recycling project : Kenya

Converting plastic waste into raw materials for plastic poles

Project description

The initiative, established in 2009, is unique as it recycles dirty plastic containers (polythenes) using a novel technique and converts them into plastic poles. The poles are then used as fences or as other construction materials within the building sector.



Business model

No other plastic recycler is known to be able to recycle dirty polythenes (LDPE) that litter the environment without first undergoing a washing process. It is thus a process that minimises resource use.

Plastic waste, collected by community members, is used as the raw material for durable and sustainable plastic poles. These provide an alternative to timber as a building material and thus help to conserve forests.

The main market for the recycled plastic poles is the construction sector and those in the business of fencing.

Scaling up activities

- Mobilise and organise the community to collect, sort and recover plastics through education and awareness-raising
- Mobilise other stakeholders to support the initiative (including Government to create conducive policies, donors to fund the mobilisation and production, relevant industries able to help with technical expertise)
- Improve production capacity by upgrading machinery
- Strengthen the sales and marketing portfolio.

Immediate needs

- Financial assistance to purchase machinery to boost production and enhance plastics recycling
- Support campaign to aid in sorting waste at source and removing plastics from the environment.





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Partnership

- ❶ **Destiny Africa**, a national NGO, has established itself as a key player in environmental issues, especially in solid waste management (SWM).
- ❷ **Green Africa**, a newly registered company affiliated to Destiny Africa, has adopted this social business model after several years of involvement in SWM and experience of the many challenges and high failure rate of community-based mobilisation for recycling.
- ❸ **Eco-plast**, established to recover and recycle plastics from established plastics manufacturers, deals with clean polythenes and offers technical support to the partnership.



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: The initiative creates employment and generates community participation for marginalised youth and women in urban Kenya.

Environmental impact: Recycled poles contribute to protecting the environment as they conserve forests and reuse non-biodegradable pollutants. The use of plastic rather than wooden poles contributes to mitigating climate change.

Economic impact: The project also benefits a large number of poor garbage collectors by improving their livelihoods. Over 200,000 'green' jobs will be created in the first year.

Contact

George Mahinda

Email: destiny.africa@gmail.com

SEED Partners

SEED is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other current partners are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature); and the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.



About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: www.seedinit.org

SEED Secretariat

info@seedinit.org