

Piloting of a national Informal Reclaimer Registration System to inform reclaimer integration in South Africa

Technical report: Participation and partnership in the development and piloting of the South Africa Waste Picker Registration System (SAWPRS)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Waste picker registration is a central component of waste picker integration and is prioritized in the *Waste Picker Integration Guideline for South Africa* (the Guideline). This Technical Report reports on the collaborative, participatory process employed to develop and pilot the South Africa Waste Picker Registration System (SAWPRS) between May 2021 and June 2022.

The Partnership and Piloting project was led by the University of the Witwatersrand, with support from Sticky Situations, as part of a larger project led by CSIR to develop the SAWPRS. The primary objectives of the Partnership and Piloting project were to: 1) ensure meaningful stakeholder input into the design of the SAWPRS online system; 2) ensure that the SAWPRS system met stakeholders' requirements, and; 3) develop and pilot a system to register waste pickers to be refined and used in the roll-out of waste picker registration.

The project was guided by the Waste Picker Integration Principles established in the Guideline. Additional guiding principles stated that: piloting and registration should be led by reclaimers/waste pickers; the pilots should be part of meaningful integration in municipalities; metropolitan municipalities should be active participants in the pilot; all reclaimers, regardless of nationality, should be registered; and only essential data should be gathered.

Stakeholders participated in the development of the SAWPRS through a series of stakeholder discussions, and subsequently through a Technical Advisory Committee. This engagement provided the CSIR SAWPRS Development Team with in-depth insight into stakeholder requirements for the system, demystified the online system for stakeholders, and resulted in a simple, functional system with stakeholder support. Waste picker input into the design was essential in ensuring that questions posed and answer options were relevant, would elicit the required information, and would minimize risks of non-reclaimers being registered on the SAWPRS.

There were four pilot sites - the City of Johannesburg, Msunduzi, the City of Cape Town (CoCT), and Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM). The first two pilot sites were selected respectively by the African Reclaimers Organisation and the South African Waste Pickers Association. Commencing the pilot with waste picker organisations ensured that the project benefited from their expertise and better ability to connect with and encourage other waste pickers to register. Waste pickers trained in these first sites then served as experts in the remaining two sites, where they led mobilisation and supported local registration teams.

Piloting in each site was conducted collaboratively with the relevant partner institutions in six phases: 1) planning; 2) mobilization; 3) training; 4) registration; 5) evaluation; and 6) card distribution. Registration was more challenging in CoCT and BCMM, where reclaimers are generally not organized. As a result, more intensive preliminary work was required to locate, engage, and mobilise reclaimers for registration. A total of 994 reclaimers were registered and verified in less than ten days of registration work: 226 in Johannesburg, 256 in Msunduzi, 381 in the City of Cape Town, and 131 in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality.

Other project outcomes included: the incorporation of waste pickers' and other stakeholders' knowledge and requirements in the SAWPRS; the design of a three-phase process to implement waste picker registration in South Africa (mobilization, registration, and card distribution); the development of a training methodology and workshop to train waste picker registration; increased

understanding of waste picker integration and registration by municipal officials; and the establishment of relationships between waste pickers and municipal representatives in the two metro pilot sites.

Key lessons included: waste picker registration is a process, not an event; successful registration hinges on central involvement of and leadership by waste pickers; reclaimers and other stakeholders must be involved in “technical” processes; conscious attention must be paid to adhering to the Integration Principles; building trust and establishing legitimacy are essential to encourage reclaimers to register; and registration programme management by professionals with experience working with waste pickers and in informal areas is important for successful integration. A number of lessons were also identified regarding municipal participation in registration and integration.

The report finds that the participatory, partnership approach to developing and piloting the online SAWPRS system and on-the-ground registration process, and the foregrounding of the knowledge and skills of waste pickers in these activities, contributed significantly to the successful design of a user-friendly, context appropriate SAWPRS and registration process that are now ready for national implementation.

The report includes five key recommendations:

1. There is a pressing need to develop an offline SAWPRS app so that registration can be conducted in areas with poor internet connectivity.
2. A coordinated national waste picker registration campaign should be launched as a matter of urgency. This campaign should be co-governed by stakeholders with reclaimers continuing to play a leading role.
3. A co-governance committee should be established to oversee waste picker registration in the country, as well as integration more generally.
4. The EPR requirement that industry pay reclaimers registered on the national registration system starting in November 2022 is a key driving force behind the need for swift expansion of registration of reclaimers on the SAWPRS. However, this is only part of the work that must be done to ensure that such payments are made. There is an urgent need to reach agreements on how reclaimers will be paid the EPR service fee, how it will be calculated, the level for the first year, and how payments systems will be linked to the SAWPRS. The lessons and recommendations from the piloting of the SAWPRS are directly relevant to these processes, which should adopt the partnering and co-governance approach and retain waste picker leadership on issues related to waste pickers and waste picker integration.
5. Agreement must be reached on the long-term hosting and co-governance of the SAWPRS.

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ARO	African Reclaimers Organisation
BCMM	Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality
CoCT	City of Cape Town
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DEFF	Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (now known as the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment)
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PI	Primary Investigator
PRO	Producer Responsibility Organisation
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SAWPA	South African Waste Pickers Association
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UJ	University of Johannesburg

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1 Introduction

The South African government's *Waste Picker Integration Guideline for South Africa* (the Guideline) highlights the importance of waste picker registration to the implementation of waste picker integration in the country (DEFF and DSI, 2020). Waste picker registration provides waste pickers with the respect and recognition that they merit for the important work that they do. It also facilitates the achievement of a number of other aspects of integration, such as payment of waste pickers for services provided, negotiation of better access to recyclable materials, recruitment of waste pickers to participate in integration programmes, and development of better relationships with residents, businesses and security companies. In addition, waste picker registration enables the generation of more accurate data to improve the design of waste picker integration programmes.

This Technical Report reports on the innovative collaborative approach employed in a project led by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) to develop and pilot the South Africa Waste Picker Registration System (SAWPRS). The project officially began in 2021 and was completed in June 2022. As discussed below, the process to develop the SAWPRS began several years prior during stakeholder collaboration to develop the Guideline.

The report finds that the participatory, partnership approach to developing and piloting the online SAWPRS system and on-the-ground registration process, and the foregrounding of the knowledge and skills of waste pickers in these activities, contributed significantly to the successful design of a user-friendly, context appropriate SAWPRS and registration process that are now ready for national implementation.

The report includes ten sections: 1) Introduction; 2) Background – Towards the development of the SAWPRS; 3) Project overview; 4) Collaborative system design; 5) Participatory design of the SAWPRS; 6) Pilot structure and approach; 7) Challenges and revisions; 8) Outcomes; 9) Lessons; and 10) Recommendations.

2 Background – Towards the development of the SAWPRS

Between 2016 and 2019, the then South African Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) convened a multi-stakeholder Working Group to collectively develop the *Waste Picker Integration Guideline for South Africa* (DEFF and DSI, 2020). The Working Group included representatives from waste picker organisations, industry associations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), several national government departments, and municipalities. The Working Group identified the importance of registration in waste picker integration, and registration is highlighted as an important integration activity in the Guideline.

The Working Group did not develop a registration system as this fell beyond its scope. However, it began to develop a framework for registration by noting that:

- i. Registration is a fundamental component of waste picker integration, aimed at improving the livelihoods of all informal waste reclaimers in South Africa
- ii. Registration of waste pickers will help to gather much needed data on the location, quantities and types of recyclables collected in South Africa

- iii. When waste pickers are involved in designing and running registration campaigns, and when there is a clear benefit for waste pickers, registration has a greater chance of success
- iv. When waste pickers work on registration they are forfeiting their daily income, so the registration campaign should include a budget to pay them for their work
- v. Registration should be coordinated at a country level, as informal reclaimers move between municipalities and provinces
- vi. To allow for registration, without discrimination of foreign nationals, the national registration system should be hosted by an entity outside of Government
- vii. Waste pickers are often wary of registering as they do not trust municipalities and industry, and are fearful of what will be done with their information
- viii. There is currently an ad hoc approach to registering reclaimers in different municipalities and provinces in South Africa, many of which have failed (CSIR and Wits University, 2021).

Subsequently, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) convened a national COVID-19 Rapid Response Working Group on COVID-19 and the waste sector. Project #1 of this initiative focused on waste pickers and COVID-19. It included the stakeholders who were represented on the Guideline Working Group, as well as additional NGOs and academics.

The pandemic made the development of a national registration system an even greater priority, as government and industry struggled to reach reclaimers to provide them with support. Through a series of online meetings, the Project #1 Committee fleshed out additional preliminary agreements on key aspects of the future registration system, including information fields to be included in the system, information to be displayed on the registration card, the need for a verification process to ensure that people registered are legitimate reclaimers, and the technical requirements for the system. Particular effort was made to ensure that the two main waste picker organisations in the country (ARO and SAWPA) provided inputs, were part of the decision-making process and concurred with decisions taken.

On the basis of these agreements, Professor Linda Godfrey from the CSIR developed a concept note that was used to secure funding from National Treasury's City Support Programme (CSP) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) for the development and piloting of the SAWPRS. Additional funding was secured from UNIDO, as part of an ongoing waste picker integration training and capacity building programme funded by the Government of Japan.

3 Project Overview

3.1 Project partners and responsibilities

The SAWPRS was developed and piloted through a collaboration between the CSIR and the University of the Witwatersrand. Professor Linda Godfrey of the CSIR was the primary investigator (PI) and programme lead. Professor Melanie Samson of the University of the Witwatersrand (subsequently the University of Johannesburg) was the PI for the "Partnership and Piloting" component of the larger project, which is the subject of this report. The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) team was responsible for ensuring stakeholder participation in the

development of the online system and employing a collaborative approach to pilot the SAWPRS. Andries Mkhathshwa from Sticky Situations oversaw the practical implementation of the pilot.

3.2 Project objectives

The primary objectives of the Partnership and Piloting Project were to:

1. ensure meaningful stakeholder input into the design of the SAWPRS online system
2. ensure that the SAWPRS system met stakeholders’ requirements, and
3. develop and pilot a system to register waste pickers to be refined and used in the roll-out of waste picker registration.

3.3 Project principles

The project was guided by the 10 Waste Picker Integration Principles in the Waste Picker Integration Guideline, as well as additional principles developed to guide this specific project.

Table 1 provides an overview of how the project gave meaningful effect to the Waste Picker Integration Principles, with a focus on Principles #1, #2, #3, #7, and #9 due to their particular relevance to this project.

Table 1: Operationalizing the Waste Picker Integration Principles

Principle	Operationalization
1. Recognition, respect and redress	Engaged as leading, knowledgeable, important actors in the sector; prioritized inputs and feedback; on Technical Advisory Committee; engagement with software development; lead registration piloting; training local reclaimers/wps and municipal officials
2. Value waste pickers’ expertise	Experts on how to design registration, what data should be gathered, how to build trust and recruit for registration, how to confirm someone is a reclaimer, how to limit fraud; lead registration piloting; revisions based on their evaluations and proposals
3. Meaningful engagement (of all stakeholders, reclaimers prioritized)	See Section 4 – Collaborative System and Pilot Design
7. Enabling environment	Paid for airtime, data, transport. Attention to improving ability to meet reclaimer registration team members’ needs.
9. Compensation for services and savings	Paid stipend for lost earnings

The following additional principles (which are aligned to the Guideline Principles) were adopted to guide this project:

1. piloting and registration should be led by reclaimers/waste pickers
2. the pilots should be part of meaningful integration in municipalities
3. metropolitan municipalities should be active participants in the pilots
4. all reclaimers, regardless of nationality, should registered
5. only essential data should be gathered.

As people who were not waste pickers had been registered in previous national and local government registration initiatives, stakeholders prioritized the need to minimize this risk. Ultimately, this was accomplished by creating a requirement that a waste picker verifier must be part of every registration, as well as the inclusion of locally specific questions to screen applicants before proceeding with the registration process. Stakeholders acknowledged that it is not possible to completely eliminate the possibility of non-reclaimers registering on the system.

3.4 The SAWPRS

The SAWPRS is an online registration system. Only waste pickers who currently collect and sell recyclable materials as individuals or members of a cooperative may be registered. A potential applicant must correctly answer locally specific screening questions to confirm that they are a waste picker before they can be registered. Registration is done using a handheld device (cell phone or tablet) by a registrar and verifier who work together. The verifier is present when the registrar enters the applicants' details. Once the registrar has completed all fields, the verifier logs into the same handheld device to review the information and ensure it is correct before approving the registration. A representative nominated by any stakeholder group can be a registrar, but only waste pickers can be verifiers. After registration, registered waste pickers receive SAWPRS identification cards that include their names, photo, a unique person identification number, and a bar code.

3.5 Selection criteria and pilot sites

At a stakeholder meeting held on May 24, 2021 to agree on key aspects of the pilot project (see Section 4 and Annexure 1 below for further details), stakeholders agreed that the registration system would be piloted in four sites.

There were two types of pilot sites:

1. The two main waste picker organisations, SAWPA and ARO, each selected one pilot site. These were Msunduzi (SAWPA) and the City of Johannesburg (ARO).
2. Two metropolitan municipalities (City of Cape Town and Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality) were selected by the City Support Programme based on applications received after a briefing with metros held on 07/12/2021.

The piloting began in the sites selected by ARO and SAWPA so that:

1. reclaimers would be the first to be trained and lead the pilot
2. the pilot could benefit from their in-depth knowledge of reclaimers and their work, as well as their greater ability to connect with reclaimers and create the trust required to encourage reclaimers to register, and
3. there was a pool of trained reclaimer Registration Team Members who could provide leadership and support during the registration in the final two sites, where reclaimers are less organized.

Table 2 presents the registration sites in each of the pilot municipalities. The pilot sites in the two metros were selected by the municipality in discussion with the waste picker organisations and the Wits team.

Table 2: Registration Sites in Pilot Municipalities

Municipality	Pilot Sites
City of Johannesburg (ARO)	Marie Louise Landfill, Central Business District, Alexandra
Msunduzi Local Municipality (SAWPA)	Msunduzi Landfill
City of Cape Town (CoCT & ARO)	Retreat, Khayelitsha, Pinelands
Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCCM, SAWPA & ARO)	Berlin Landfill, Merrifield, Southernwood.

4 Collaborative system and pilot design

In keeping with the Waste Picker Integration Principles, the Partnership and Piloting Project prioritized facilitation of robust stakeholder engagement and leadership in all aspects of the project, including the design of the online registration system and the pilot approach. All key stakeholders were engaged, with priority placed on reclaimers (as represented by ARO and SAWPA). This was achieved through the following activities facilitated by the PI (who also facilitated the activities that preceded the commencement of the Partnership and Piloting Project):

1. **2016 – 2020:** Stakeholder collaboration to develop Concept Note and brief for SAWPRS project
2. **May 2021:** Engagement with key stakeholders to receive input into, and agreement on, the project principles, approach and methodology.
3. **August 5, 2021:** Establishment of stakeholder Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to provide direct input into the development the SAWPRS online system and to work with the CSIR SAWPRS Development Team .
4. **December 7, 2021:** City Support Programme meeting with Metropolitan Municipalities to inform them about the pilot project and request applications from metropolitan municipalities interested in participating as a pilot city.
5. **November 2021 – June 2022:** Extensive engagement with ARO, SAWPA, CoCT and BCMM to develop the detailed registration plans for their pilot site and conduct workshops for municipal officials in the two metropolitan municipalities.
6. **January to June 2022:** Updates on the pilot to the meetings of the Community of Practice on Waste Picker Integration attended by all key stakeholders.
7. **May 25, 2022:** Report-back Webinar to share project outcomes with stakeholders attended by 120 participants from 9 countries.

Annexure 1 includes detailed discussion of stakeholder engagement and leadership in these seven activities.

As this project was an organic continuation of ongoing discussions between stakeholders, a specific participatory project steering committee was not established to oversee the entire. Such a committee would have enhanced the participatory nature of the project. It is recommended that a multi-stakeholder committee be established to oversee roll-out of waste picker registration in the country and that it be guided by the same principles as the Partnership and Piloting Project.

5 Participatory design of a 'technical' system

As noted above, in August 2021, CSIR and Wits established a small stakeholder Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to work with the CSIR SAWPRS Development Team in order to provide direct input into the development of the SAWPRS online system. The TAC included representatives from ARO, SAWPA, PETCO, and the NGO GreenCape.

The CSIR SAWPRS Development Team was briefed based on the concept note and the decisions of the May 24, 2021 stakeholder meeting. The role of the TAC was to provide more in-depth stakeholder input on an ongoing basis. TAC work included reviewing draft wireframes developed by CSIR to provide input on the best ways to frame and sequence questions and possible answers so as to ensure that the information requested was appropriate, would be understood by stakeholders, and would elicit the required types of responses. The TAC also answered questions from the CSIR SAWPRS Development Team and identified additional information that should be included in the SAWPRS, as well as information that was not essential and could be excluded.

Edwin Rampine, Project Leader of the SAWPRS Development Team at CSIR emphasized the importance of the depth and extent of the collaboration and the benefits for the technical development of the system:

We work on many projects where we eventually have to deploy systems and run pilots. This project and pilots are the most well-coordinated we have had. Where the site team was communicating well with the development team, and bringing in constructive suggestions and the collaborative User Acceptance Testing made it easy for the site team, as you were involved in the process of developing, so you were using a system you contributed in building. So we made a lot of good decisions to begin with. A successful collaboration.

The in-depth engagements between the TAC and the CSIR SAWPRS Development Team therefore enabled the Development Team to develop a good understanding of the purpose of the registration system and stakeholder requirements, which resulted in a strong system that had stakeholder support before commencement of piloting.

TAC participation also demystified the technical aspects of creating an online registration system for stakeholder representatives and gave them a greater sense of ownership over the system. As discussed further below, the fact that waste picker representatives had been involved in the development of the SAWPRS helped to bolster its legitimacy amongst some waste pickers who were invited to register.

The SAWPRS is functional and easy to use. During the evaluation, workshop participants who had expressed fear during the training sessions of using a web-based registration system on smart phones reported their surprise at how easily they registered reclaimers their first day in the field. Feedback on the SAWPRS in the evaluation workshops was resoundingly positive. Registration Team members stated that the technology is user friendly and the data captured on registered reclaimers is appropriate.

6 Pilot phases

The actual registration pilot was conducted over a five day period in each pilot site (although it was four days in Msunduzi due to the smaller scale of the registration drive). Registration Week included: 1 day of training, 2-3 days of waste picker registration, and 1 day of participatory evaluation.

Registration Week was preceded by planning and waste picker mobilization, and followed by card distribution. In sum, there were six phases to the pilot process in each of the four pilot sites:

1. Planning and preparation with pilot partners
2. Mobilization
3. Training
4. Registration
5. Evaluation
6. Card distribution

6.1 Planning and preparation with pilot partners

Several months prior to the piloting of the registration system, the Wits and Sticky Situation team began meeting on a regular basis with the respective pilot partners to jointly develop the plans for the registration pilot in each location.

Key leaders from both SAWPA and ARO had good understandings of waste picker integration and the registration pilot as they had participated in the Stakeholder Working Group that developed the Waste Picker Integration Guideline, as well as the registration discussions and processes outlined in Section 2, the project stakeholder meetings, and the technical advisory committee. However, in hindsight it would have been useful to conduct workshops with the wider layer of representatives who participated in the project as Registration Team Members prior to their training during the Registration Week.

At the request of BCMM, two workshops were conducted with senior representatives from the waste management department to provide them with more in-depth understanding of the Guideline, waste picker integration, registration, and the registration pilot project. City of Cape Town officials had been active participants in national processes and discussions related to integration and registration in the years preceding the pilot, and similar workshops had been conducted with the City of Cape Town prior to the official start of the project.

As reclaimers are not well-organised in the City of Cape Town and BCMM, an experienced reclaimer organiser (the ARO Coordinator) made preliminary visits to the two metros to identify areas where significant numbers of reclaimers were working, initiate contact with them, discuss registration and integration with them, and identify both local reclaimers who could participate in the registration teams and possible registration sites. In Cape Town, additional engagement with local reclaimers occurred through a project that ARO was conducting with the WWF. The final registration sites selected in the two metros included sites prioritized by the metros where they were already working with reclaimers or had intention to do so, as well as sites identified in the preliminary visits.

6.2 Mobilisation

The reclaimer members of the Registration Teams conducted mobilisation in the selected registration areas one week prior to the registration dates. During the mobilisation weeks, the Teams sought to engage as many reclaimers as possible about integration and registration and invite them to register on the registration dates. This entailed seeking out areas where they work, sort and sell; visiting buyback centres; connecting with local community and reclaimer organisations; and meeting with local representatives, amongst a range of other activities. Registration Teams were given a formal letter from CSIR that explained the SAWPRS and invited reclaimers to participate in the pilot.

Posters advertising the registration dates, times, and locations were hung in buyback centres and other places where reclaimers would see them. A copy of a poster is included as Annexure 2. Unfortunately this was not done in all locations. Although public radio announcements were considered, it was decided that this would likely attract too many non-reclaimers who would attempt to be registered in the hope of gaining some benefit.

6.3 Training

Registration Week began with one day of training for all Registration Team Members. In CoCT and BCMM Registration Teams included representatives sent by the municipality, all of whom were interns. The CoCT training was also attended by senior representatives from the solid waste management department who were overseeing the pilot, as well as representatives from two NGOs (WWF and GreenCape).

Training was provided on integration, registration, and how to use the SAWPRS as a registrar and as a verifier (the latter role is only available to waste pickers). The Registration Teams also discussed and confirmed the plans and logistics for the registration days. A copy of the agenda for a registration workshop is included as Annexure 3.

Participants gave consistently strong feedback on the training. For example, Phelani Mkhize from Msunduzi said “This was the best workshop and training I had ever received because I had actually learnt what I was being taught, and I left the training confident to execute what was being asked”.

6.4 Registration

The registration days were an opportunity for Registration Team Members to receive on-the-job training from the Sticky Situations Team and experienced Reclaimer representatives, while also testing the online system.

During the first pilot in Johannesburg, a number of roles emerged organically as the team registered reclaimers. Subsequently, prior to beginning registration, the Registration Teams would allocate members to play the roles of – recruiters, marshals, educators, registrars, and verifiers. Marshals often served as educators, answering questions and explaining the privacy statement and informed consent to reclaimers queuing to register. Registration Team Members wore reflector vests that identified them as doing registration on the SAWPRS.

Participation in registration was strongest where good mobilization had taken place. As discussed below in Section 7, many reclaimers were initially reticent to register. Others were so excited that they ran home to get their identification documents. It became necessary to conduct registration at

each site more than once so that reclaimers who had not been aware of registration or who were initially reluctant had an opportunity to register.



Taking a registration photograph at Msunduzi Landfill.

In total, after eliminating duplicate registrations captured on the system, 994 reclaimers were registered and verified during the pilot (including 54 reclaimers registered during card distribution in Cape Town). Table 3 shows the breakdown of complete registrations (registered and verified).

Table 3: Number of reclaimers registered per municipality

Municipality	# Registered and Verified
City of Johannesburg	226
Msunduzi Local Municipality	256
City of Cape Town	381
Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality	131
Total	994

6.5 Evaluation

A participatory evaluation was conducted on the final day of each Registration Week. All aspects of the pilot were evaluated including: planning, communication, mobilization, training, registration processes, registration experiences, logistics, technology, success in recruiting reclaimers to register, and the online system. Significant time was dedicated to identifying lessons learned and improvements which could be made, which were incorporated into subsequent pilot weeks and this Technical Report. The evaluations included feedback from reclaimer Registration Team Members

on how they and other reclaimers felt to be registered and why it was important to them to be registered.

Both reclaimers and municipal representatives in the CoCT evaluation highlighted how working on the pilot together facilitated the development of better understandings and relationships between them. An intern at the City of Cape Town who was a registrar in the pilot shared that it also transformed how she appreciates and interacts with reclaimers:

I am grateful to meet reclaimers. For me I can say I was very ignorant towards reclaimers. I have learned so much. All I used to do was the sit at the computer and enter names. I have gotten to know them. I have understood their pain, other than me being there and just typing. If I went to a workshop....each and every time I go around in my community, if I see a Mercedes I would notice that. Now, for me being here, I notice reclaimers. If I am at home and see bottles, I will try to put them together to accommodate them.

Reflecting on the pilot, a senior official from the Solid Waste Management Department in Cape Town highlighted how it both addressed an important issue and helped to lay the foundation for future work on integration:

What does it mean to me? I know this is long overdue, the registration process, the recognition of the reclaimers for the work they have been doing. I hope that the road ahead is going to be clearer...I am very happy that we have initiated this process and look forward to an easier road forward.

6.6 Card distribution

Card distribution was not originally included as a pilot phase. However, once the first set of cards were printed, the challenges in distributing cards to each individual reclaimer became evident. This was particularly so for street reclaimers who, unlike landfill reclaimers, work at different locations each day.

Registration cards were couriered to local Registration Team Members to distribute. This took a number of days in each pilot site. Additional time was required in Cape Town, where large numbers of reclaimers were registered in diverse locations. A mass meeting was held in Cape Town to distribute the initial round of cards.

Card distribution also became an opportunity to register additional reclaimers who either had not been present during the original registration days or had not registered and were subsequently inspired to do so when their colleagues received their cards.



Distributing cards in Cape Town

Many reclaimers were emotional when they received their registration cards and spoke passionately about what it meant to them to be registered. Eunice Nodamthini of Cape Town said:

This registration will help me too much in my business, because everybody will know now I am registered, I have a right to do this job. Nobody can tell me anything what they wanted to tell me.

Asavela Jack, also from Cape Town, added:

Today I thought something good is going to happen to us because we are collecting recyclables. So people see us as we bring dirty things in our homes and lot of flies and diseases...and so now, when we are here, we received a good thing today. So we are happy, all of us are happy. So people will see us now, like, as human beings.

A reclaimer himself, Registration Team Member Wonderful Moyo highlighted the importance of being known to reclaimers he had registered:

Most of the reclaimers are anonymous, so other reclaimers, they are happy to know themselves by their names, who they are in case of emergency, in case anything happens. They feel happy that at least there is somewhere that their information is gathered, other than remaining anonymous.

Reclaimer Registration Team Member Eva Mokoena noted the following about doing registration:

It really made me happy because I knew that it would help change the mindset of the reclaimers, especially those with low self-esteem and give them courage that one day everything is going to be OK, because the work that we do is very important.



Yoliswa Mdzula with her registration card

7 Challenges and revisions

Six types of challenges were encountered and addressed during the piloting of the SAWPRS. These related to: 1) the SAWPRS online system; 2) technology systems; 3) logistical issues; 4) the registration process; 5) historical and contemporary exclusions and disappointments; 6) insufficient municipal knowledge about reclaimers; and 7) documentation.

SAWPRS online system

The pilot was conducted in order to test the SAWPRS and identify issues with the system. Minor technical problems were identified and addressed such as: photos printing sideways, difficulty reading the informed consent form on a smart phone, inability to see registration statistics when viewing the SAWPRS on a smart phone, the ability to register the same person twice, the same person being able to act as a registrar and verifier, and registrations being completed without photographs being taken.

Piloting also identified problems with the way that some questions were asked. For example, prospective applicants are screened on the first screen of the SAWPRS to confirm that they are currently a waste picker who either works autonomously or as a member of a democratic waste picker cooperative. Part of the screening involves asking three questions developed by waste picker registrars and verifiers that are appropriate for each specific local context. Initially, registrars were asked to tick a box indicating that the applicant had demonstrated relevant knowledge, which led to some registrars not asking each question. This was then revised so that the registrar is required to tick a box after asking each of the three questions.

After piloting and revision of the SAWPRS, all identified issues have been resolved and the system is ready for full implementation.

Technology systems

Internet connectivity was extremely poor or non-existent in a number of places where registration took place. As the SAWPRS is an online system, this meant that registration either could not take place or proceeded very slowly. This limited the number of people who could be registered and

caused frustration amongst waste pickers who had taken time away from work to be registered. Weak connectivity also meant that a significant number of registrations were interrupted and either could not be completed or could not be verified. As a result, a number of waste pickers cannot receive registration cards until they repeat the registration or verification process.

Registration teams attempted to find locations with better connectivity at registration sites. However, this was not always possible. When it was, it meant that the registration did not take place in the most convenient location. Registration teams also tested connectivity on different networks and shared phones that had better connections. However, this also slowed the rate of registration.

As discussed below, a key priority moving forward is to develop an offline SAWPRS app so that registration and verification can be conducted offline and uploaded to the SAWPRS when the device is connected to the internet.

Logistical issues

It was not always possible to secure a covered area where registration could be conducted or to secure tables and chairs for use by the registration team and waste pickers waiting to be registered. Access to ablution facilities was also sometimes a challenge. This meant that registration teams frequently worked in uncomfortable, difficult conditions.

In addition, as registration areas were often far from shops, challenges were encountered in securing meals for registration team members on several days which was particularly problematic given that some Registration Team Members were diabetic. It became necessary for teams to take all meals and refreshments with them when they were doing mobilization, registration and card distribution.

Few waste pickers own smart phones. Registration and verification therefore depended on the use of smart phones provided by the project. The limited number of smart phones therefore constrained the rate at which it was possible to register reclaimers.

Lack of electricity in many of the areas where registration occurred also meant that it was necessary to purchase power banks to recharge the phones used for registration.

The registration process

Due to the logistical and network issues outlined above, the relatively small size of registration teams, the number of roles that needed to be played by the registration team members on registration day, and their commitment to registering reclaimers, Registration Team Members felt extreme pressure to keep the registration process moving as quickly as possible. On a number of occasions, this resulted in verifiers not remaining with registrars during the registration process and only verifying registration details after they had been entered. Given the importance of verification by waste pickers to the registration process, this created a risk to the integrity of the registration system. Increased efforts were made to ensure that verifiers remained with registrars during the registration process. However, this had implications for the registration rate.

At the outset of the pilot, turnout for registration was low on the first day of registration in new areas. This highlighted the need for a stronger focus on mobilization the week prior to registration, as well as clear agreement on and advertisement of registration dates and sites. Greater emphasis was placed on outreach and mobilisation in the final two pilot sites, with positive results.

Card distribution was not initially included as an important phase in the registration process and no budget was allocated to provide waste pickers with stipends, transport, airtime, and data to enable them to distribute the cards. However, particularly in Cape Town and Buffalo City where reclaimers were not members of organisations, significant time was needed for registration team members to locate reclaimers and deliver their registration cards. Convening card distribution meetings and announcing card distribution dates assisted. Nevertheless, it was necessary to reallocate some of the budget to fund card distribution. The registration phases and roles were amended to include card distribution as a key activity. Card distribution is also a good opportunity to register reclaimers who gain confidence in the system when they see other waste pickers receiving their cards.

Historical and contemporary exclusions and disappointments

Reclaimers were reticent to register for a number of reasons, only some of which had been anticipated. Many had participated in registration programmes previously run by their municipalities, but had not received registration cards. In addition, many had registered with national government for the COVID-19 relief grant for waste pickers and had not received it. Some had also been deceived by opportunistic individuals and organisations who had taken their names and money with promises of assistance that had never arrived. Elderly reclaimers were fearful of strangers asking for their identification numbers to register them on a system that would purportedly benefit them, as their pension money had been stolen in a similar fashion. Some of their children refused to allow them to participate on these grounds.

Eva Mokoena from ARO explained the problem and the way the registration teams addressed it this way:

The challenge is that people don't believe the system and that they will be assisted, because they have been manipulated by other registrations that have taken place in the past. We have been accused for wanting their grant money and all sorts [of things]. But one needs to just smile, be patient and reassure the reclaimer about the legitimacy of this system.

Registration Team members encouraged reclaimers to trust the SAWPRS by informing them that reclaimers had been directly involved in designing the system, showing the reclaimers their own registration cards, and sharing the formal letter from the CSIR inviting reclaimers to register. As these issues emerged and strategies were discussed in the evaluations at the end of each pilot week, the strategies employed were used in the new pilot sites as relevant.

Insufficient municipal representative knowledge about reclaimers

Both metropolitan municipalities sent interns to represent them in the registration process, none of whom had previously worked with reclaimers. As a result, they lacked a sufficient knowledge base and some held negative attitudes towards reclaimers. However, as noted above, a few of these representatives experienced deep transformations in their understanding of reclaimers and commitment to waste picker integration.

Documentation

The SAWPRS requires applicants to provide some form of identification, which can be from South Africa or another country. However, many reclaimers do not have any form of identification. As a result, it was not possible to register them on the SAWPRS. As discussed below, the proposed Waste Picker Registration Campaign should include a component to assist South African and non-South African waste pickers to obtain legal identification documents from their respective countries.

Consideration should also be given to acceptance of alternative forms of identification, such as affidavits signed by local councillors, waste picker organisation representatives etc.

8 Outcomes

The project achieved its objectives of: 1) ensuring meaningful stakeholder input into the design of the SAWPRS online system; 2) ensuring that the SAWPRS system meets stakeholders' requirements, and; 3) developing and piloting a system to register waste pickers to be refined and used in the roll-out of waste picker registration.

The project resulted in:

- The incorporation of waste pickers and other stakeholder knowledge and requirements in the SAWPRS.
- Revision of the SAWPRS based on issues identified during piloting.
- The design of a three-phase process to implement waste picker registration in South Africa.
- The development of a training methodology and workshop to train waste picker registration teams to implement waste picker registration in South Africa.
- Increased understanding of waste picker integration and registration by municipal officials in CoCT and BCMM.
- The establishment of relationships between reclaimers and municipal officials in the CoCT and BCMM.
- Registration and verification of 994 waste pickers.
- Educated over 1000 waste pickers on integration and registration.
- 25 waste pickers trained as registrars, verifiers and registration team members.
- 9 municipal representatives (interns) trained as registrars and registration team members.

9 Lessons

As noted above, lessons identified during the evaluation of each Registration Week were incorporated, to the greatest extent possible, into the next rounds of the pilot. This section briefly outlines some key lessons that should inform future roll-out of the SAWPRS and other integration initiatives.

Waste picker registration is a process

Waste picker registration is a process, not an event. Significant work is required prior to, during, and after the registration day in order to ensure successful registration.

Successful registration hinges on central involvement of and leadership by waste pickers

The project established that reclaimers' knowledge, expertise, and skill in relating to other reclaimers is essential to successful implementation of registration.

Reclaimers and other stakeholders must be involved in "technical" processes.

Reclaimers and other stakeholders had knowledge that was crucial for the design of the SAWPRS online system. Stakeholders must be involved in the design of seemingly "technical" processes as these processes are, in fact, deeply social. This is an important lesson for the development of EPR waste picker payment systems.

Conscious attention must be paid to principles

Conscious attention to how to give life to the Waste Picker Integration Principles throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project meant that the project process itself advanced integration, while simultaneously designing and piloting a registration system that gives effect to the principles. However, alignment with principles can always be strengthened, highlighting the importance of ongoing critical reflection by stakeholders during integration initiatives. Explicit attention to the realization of the Waste Picker Integration Principles should form part of every integration project and programme.

Building trust and establishing legitimacy are essential

Reclaimers are hesitant to register due to negative prior experiences with municipalities and industry and are distrustful when approached by strangers, particularly if these strangers are not reclaimers. It is therefore necessary to design processes that build trust. Some ways to build trust are for reclaimers to play leading roles in designing and implementing registration and other integration initiatives and to support them in doing so.

Linked to the issue of building trust is the need to establish legitimacy for the initiative. The branded reflector vests helped to create an official identity for the project. This would be enhanced through the addition of branded banners, flags, t-shirts, and professional flyers and posters. A second way to increase legitimacy would be for applicants to receive a text message when their registration and verification are logged on the system.

Appropriate professional project management is required

Waste picker registration is a very complex initiative that combines the use of smart phones and internet technology, social mobilization of a low-income group that has been stigmatized and oppressed, and registration in informal settings that frequently have inadequate infrastructure. Effective and flexible project management by Sticky Situations was essential to the success of the pilot. Registration and integration programmes and initiatives require project management by individuals and organisations with technical and social expertise working with reclaimers and similar groups of workers/communities in informal settings.

Municipalities and registration

Registration by municipalities in partnership with reclaimers creates new respectful relationships, deepens reciprocal understanding, is a step forward in the waste picker integration process, and provides a foundation for further meaningful waste picker integration supported by waste pickers. Some key lessons related to municipalities include:

- It is important for senior waste management officials to play a leadership role in taking forward integration and registration.
- Operational waste management staff should be informed that the municipality is conducting waste picker registration in partnership with waste picker representatives and requested to facilitate the registration process.
- While municipal officials may not have time to participate in registration teams, it is important that they attend training and evaluation workshops in order to understand the registration process and outcomes.
- Previous failed municipal registrations and projects created deep mistrust of municipalities amongst waste pickers that need to be overcome.

- Municipal partnership with reclaimers to implement registration/integration strengthens the potential for success.
- People sent to represent municipalities in registration should have prior experience working with reclaimers and be supportive of waste picker integration. If they do not have prior experience, they should spend a day working with reclaimers before attending training so that they have a concrete understanding of who reclaimers are, the work that they do, and why registration is important.

10 Recommendations

The piloting of the online registration system and registration process, together with the extraction of lessons learned provide a strong foundation for the development of recommendations for the roll-out of waste picker registration in South Africa.

The key recommendations are discussed below.

1. The development of an SAWPRS app

There is a pressing need to develop an offline SAWPRS app so as to eliminate the challenges encountered in areas with poor internet connectivity. This should be a top priority.

2. Urgent need for a National Waste Picker Registration Campaign

The primary recommendation is that there is a need for a coordinated South Africa Waste Picker Registration Campaign and that this campaign must be launched as a matter of top priority. Key features of the campaign should include the following:

- It should be a national campaign to synergize efforts between different stakeholders and organisations.
- The campaign should have a clear identity/brand.
- There should be co-governance by PROs, ARO and SAWPA through a Waste Picker Registration Governance Committee.
- The campaign should be guided by and given meaningful effect to the Waste Picker Integration Principles and additional pilot principles.
- Reclaimers should continue to play leading role in registration.
- The campaign should be funded by industry as is it is essential for EPR payments to reclaimers, with additional funding from donors and government.
- The campaign must be fully and properly resourced.
- A Campaign Champion should be appointed to drive and manage the campaign. The Campaign Champion should be a skilled programme manager with experience working with reclaimers/informal workers and working in informal conditions.
- The campaign should use the registration and training processes developed and revised though the pilot.
- Non-reclaimer registrars, trainers, project managers etc. who have not previously worked with reclaimers should spend a day working with reclaimers (preferably members of their registration team) to learn more about reclaimers and their work. Organisation of these “immersion days” should be part of the campaign planning and implementation.

- The campaign should include concrete, tangible promotion of waste picker integration more generally - registration as a key step as part of integration processes.
- Campaign materials should be developed in all relevant languages.
- The registration campaign should be linked to a media campaign highlighting the contributions of reclaimers and importance of integration, and encouraging residents to get to know reclaimers and separate materials for them.
- The registration campaign should include a campaign to support South African and non-South African waste pickers to obtain identification documents from their respective countries. Consideration should also be given to acceptance of alternative forms of identification, such as affidavits signed by local councillors, waste picker organisation representatives etc.

3. Partnership, co-governance and reclaimer leadership

The project provided tangible evidence of the importance and value of the partnership approach and of reclaimers playing a leading role in the development, implementation, evaluation, and revision of waste picker integration programmes and interventions. It also provided evidence of the importance of reclaimer and other stakeholder participation in the development of technologies for use in waste picker integration. A co-governance committee should be established to oversee waste picker registration in the country, as well as integration more generally. This has important implications for the approach to waste picker integration and payment of reclaimers/waste pickers as part of Extended Producer Responsibility, which should follow the same partnership and co-governance approach as the registration pilot.

4. Linking the SAWPRS and EPR payment systems

The EPR requirement that industry pay a service fee to waste pickers who are registered on SAWPRS and collect relevant materials comes into effect in November 2022. It is crucial that swift progress be made to develop the relevant payment systems. This requires development of criteria for linking payment systems to the SAWPRS, agreement on the determination of the fee and the fee level, piloting of the proposed systems, and establishment of the systems. The lessons and recommendations from the piloting of the SAWPRS are directly relevant to these processes, which should adopt the partnering and co-governance approach and retain waste picker leadership on issues related to waste pickers and waste picker integration.

5. Long-term hosting and governance of the SAWPRS

With the completion of the pilot, long-term implementation of the SAWPRS is commencing. It is necessary to reach clear agreements on the hosting of the SAWPRS, which should be co-governed with waste picker organisations.

11 References

CSIR and Wits University. 2021. *Concept note: development of a National Informal Waste Reclaimer Registration System for South Africa (IWRRS)*, updated on 28 April, 2021. Unpublished.

Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) & the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI). 2020. *Waste picker integration guideline for South Africa: building the recycling economy and improving livelihoods through Integration of the informal sector*. Pretoria: DEFF & DSI: Pretoria.

ANNEXURE 1

PARTNERSHIP IN THE DESIGN AND PILOTING OF THE SAWPRS

Annexure 1 – Partnership in the design and piloting of the SAWPRS

In keeping with the Waste Picker Integration Principles, the Participation and Piloting Project prioritized facilitation of robust stakeholder engagement and leadership in all aspects of the project, including the design of the online registration system and the piloting process. This was achieved through the following activities facilitated by the project PI (including the Guideline and UNEP processes that predated the official start of the project).

1. 2016 – 2020: Stakeholder collaboration to develop Concept Note and brief for SAWPRS project

As noted above, collaborative design of the SAWPRS began in the Guideline process and continued through Project #1 of the COVID-19 Waste Rapid Response. All key stakeholders were actively involved in the Guideline Working Group and the Project #1 team. Working Group meetings were held in-person, while the Project #1 meetings were held online due to COVID-19 protocols and precautions. The meetings of both groups were facilitated by Professor Melanie Samson from Wits (subsequently the University of Johannesburg). Agreements were reached by consensus. In the Project #1 process, the draft Concept Note was circulated and revised several times. Separate meetings were held with representatives from SAWPA and ARO to receive their comments on the draft and additional inputs, and to ensure their support for the final draft.

2. May 2021: Engagement with key stakeholders

At the outset of the Participation and Partnering project, in May 2021 the PI held individual meetings with four key stakeholders - SAWPA, ARO, the produce responsibility organisation PETCO, and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) to discuss their perspectives on the development of a waste picker registration system and the concept note. Based on these discussions, the PI revised the 2020 proposals for consideration by the wider group of stakeholders.

3. May 24 2021: Stakeholder workshop on the development and piloting of the SAWPRS

An online meeting was convened on May 24, 2021 for stakeholder input into the design of the Participation and Piloting project. The revised proposals were circulated prior to the workshop. The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. finalise the data fields for National Registration System
2. finalise the information on the registration cards
3. finalise the Pilot process
4. finalise the registration and verification system.

Importantly, members of the CSIR SAWPRS Development Team attended the workshop which gave them deeper insight into the stakeholder requirements for the system. They were also able to comment on some of the suggestions made about what could be included in the online system and to answer questions.

The workshop affirmed the importance of wide stakeholder engagement in the project design. For example, participants identified a Gauteng regional bias in the options provided in several data fields. Participants agreed to a number of key points, including: the two phase approach to piloting starting with the waste picker organisations; payment of stipends and costs for waste pickers; the information to be printed on the data cards; the data fields (save a few that required further discussion); the need for a verification process; a waste picker representative must be present for all registrations; and all waste pickers should be registered, including non-South Africans and waste

pickers who are not members of an organisation. Robust discussion led to the identification of a number of issues related to the system design that required further discussion.

4. August 5, 2021: Establishment of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

In August 2021 a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was created to resolve outstanding issues and provide detailed input into the development of the wireframes for the registration system. It included representatives from ARO, SAWPA, PETCO, and the NGO GreenCape. The first of a number of TAC meetings was held on August 5, 2021. The in-depth engagements between the TAC and the CSIR SAWPRS Development Team enabled the SAWPRS Development Team to develop a strong understanding of the purpose of the registration system and the stakeholder requirements, which resulted in a strong system that had stakeholder support before commencement of the piloting. It also demystified the technical aspects of creating an online registration system for the TAC and gave them a greater sense of ownership over the system.

5. December 7, 2021: City Support Programme meeting with Metropolitan Municipalities

On December 7, 2021 the City Support Programme (CSP) convened a meeting with representatives from the country's metropolitan municipalities to provide them with information on the development of the SAWPRS and the planned piloting process and to invite them to submit applications to be one of the two pilot municipalities. This was important in terms of generating interest in waste picker registration and integration more generally. Three applications were received and the City of Cape Town (CoCT) and Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality (BCMM) were selected as the pilot sites.

6. November 2021 – June 2022: Extensive engagement with ARO, SAWPA, CoCT and BCMM

Once the four pilot sites were finalized, Wits and Sticky Situations engaged in extensive discussions with them about the design, planning, and implementation of the pilots. Several workshops were conducted for CoCT and BCMM to deepen their understanding of integration. Representatives of each relevant organisation were involved in all decisions related to the pilot.

7. January to June 2022: Updates on the pilot to Community of Practice on Waste Picker Integration

Throughout the piloting, the PI provided updates to the stakeholders during meetings of the Community of Practice on Waste Picker Integration, which emerged as the key site of engagement for discussions between the stakeholders on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and waste picker integration.

8. May 25, 2022: Report-back Webinar

On May 25, 2022, the full project team provided a report-back on the SAWPRS and the piloting of the system to a webinar hosted as part of the UNIDO funded Reclaim, Revalue, Reframe Training and Capacity Building for Waste Picker Integration webinar series. The webinar was attended by 120 participants from 9 countries. Participants came from waste picker organisations, NGOs, academia, local government, provincial government, national government, environmental consultancies, corporations, producer responsibility organisations (PROs), and private waste management companies.

**ANNEXURE 2
REGISTRATION POSTER**

Annexure 2 – Registration Poster

National Waste Picker Registration Pilot

Johannesburg

RECLAIMERS FROM **ALL COUNTRIES** WELCOME

WHEN CAN YOU REGISTER ?

MARIE LOUISE LANDFILL

TUESDAY 15.FEB 08:00 - 15:00

FRIDAY 18.FEB 08:00 - 15:00

At the office

JOBURG @ Remade Newtown

WEDNESDAY 16.FEB 08:00 - 15:00

FRIDAY 18.FEB 08:00 - 15:00

Delivery entrance, 103 Barney Simon St, Newtown

ALEXANDER @ Voltex Recycling

THURSDAY 15.FEB 08:00 - 15:00

FRIDAY 18.FEB 08:00 - 15:00

695 Pretoria main service road, Wynberg

CONTACT:

Andries Mkhathshwa 076 779 3704

ANNEXURE 3
TRAINING WORKSHOP AGENDA

Annexure 3 - Training workshop agenda

- **08:30** Arrival tea & coffee
- **09:00** Opening and welcome.
- **09:15** Discuss who is taking part in the program, and who is playing what roles.
- **09:30** Discuss the program for the week.
- **10:00** Demonstration of digital systems by A.Mkhatshwa.
- **10:45** Both Registrars and Verifiers learn both systems.
Practice system on dummy network tbc if possible
- **12:00** Lunch
- **13:00** Discuss coming weeks' rollout and troubleshoot challenges in advance.
- **14:30** Receive stipends, phones, travel allowances, pens/notebooks and other admin items.
- **15:00** Close

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