

Private waste management markets

This is an intervention summary from the MSD for employment (MSD4E) landscape assessment.

CEDIS aims to reform the waste management market so that it becomes a viable and safe employment opportunity for waste pickers. This requires changing local by-laws to legalise the operation of private waste pickers and aggregators, and to make land available to aggregators. Aggregators also need to adopt new business models that increase trust, safety, information flow, and reliability with waste pickers. If successful, this can drive a competitive waste management sector that creates better quality opportunities for workers.

Background information

Project	CEDIS, Zimbabwe
Funder	Sida
Implementer	Mercy Corps
Contact	Lungani Fengu (lfengu@mercycorps.org)
Rural or urban?	Urban
Sectors	Waste management
Intended employment outcomes	Job creation Access to work Job quality
Target group (end beneficiaries)	Women (70% 18-35)
Cross-cutting priorities	WEE, rural-urban linkages
Years of operation	2023-26

What constraints did the intervention aim to address?

Restrictive regulatory functions in the waste management market system, such as land access and legal roles for private aggregators, cause the operations of private sector actors to be illegal. This limits the potential for formalisation, investment, and upgrading, and increases exposure to corruption and bribe-seeking.

The core labour market for waste pickers is fragmented and disorganised, characterised by weak and informal relationships between aggregators and pickers.

Which market actor partners did the intervention work with?

1. Government agencies [council managing bylaws, Environment Management Authority (EMA)]

2. Private processors
3. Private waste aggregators
4. Waste pickers

What were the intended behaviour changes for these partners?

1. **Government:** Change by-laws to create incentives for private sector participation. Develop standard plans for waste management with clearly defined roles for all actors.
2. **Aggregators/processors:** Provide and use information on product details, which can be fed back to pickers. Formalise relationships with pickers to be more consistent, build trust, and address stigmatisation. Create mini collection centres.
3. **Waste pickers:** Participate in more organised schemes with clearer terms of employment.

How sustainable are these behaviour changes?

Regulatory changes could significantly strengthen sustainability in the waste management sector. For the government, the incentives include a reduced budgetary burden as the private sector takes on a larger role in managing recyclable waste. This shift means fewer government-employed pickers and waste trucks, leading to cost savings. Additionally, the environment benefits from a cleaner landscape, and there is less strain on landfills and dumpsites.

In theory, providing reliable and consistent market information, along with fostering better and more trusting relationships between aggregators and waste pickers, supports sustainability. These improvements create a commercial incentive for private sector aggregators. While market information and stronger relationships are likely to sustain these incentives, it remains too early to make definitive conclusions.

What were the intervention's key results?

While the intervention is still in its very early stages, some initial results are:

- In Bulawayo City, there has been an improved working relationship among the EMA, Bulawayo City Council, and waste aggregators.
- Skies Waste Recycler has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the EMA, resulting in the EMA allocating free land for Skies to establish more waste aggregation points.
- EMA and Skies jointly conducted a road drive to mobilise waste pickers, leading to Skies registering more waste volume. Additionally, more waste pickers are now equipped with safety equipment.

<i>Has a third party been involved in measuring these results?</i>	No
<i>Is the partner behaviour change the sole/major/minor contributing factor towards the employment-related outcome you've reported? (i.e. are there other contributing factors?)</i>	Major
<i>Results chain available?</i>	No

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