

A joint European and African research & innovation agenda on waste management.

Waste as a resource: Recycling & recovery of raw materials (2014-2020)

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Abstract

Europe has the know-how, technology and legislative experience that could be of value to African countries as they build up their recycling structures, frameworks, and value-chains. Such a recycling partnership would promote a sector with a high potential of job creation and growth that would contribute to a sustainable supply of raw materials at lower prices and a safer environment. Waste management presents a very real challenge for many countries, as it does on the African continent. Levels of waste service delivery vary greatly within and between countries and waste management facilities, such as waste disposal sites, are often not designed or operated according to set standards. There is still much to be done in achieving the level of waste management on the continent that will result in a reduced impact of waste on the environment and on human health. The need to improve the way in which waste is managed also presents many opportunities for Africa. It is possible to leapfrog outdated approaches being used elsewhere in the world, and create the space for local innovation as well as local economic development and job opportunities. A research and innovation partnership between Africa and Europe, supported by a joint high-level Europe-Africa Waste Research and Innovation Agenda, provides the platform for addressing these basic waste management practices in our municipalities, in innovative ways that will realise the potential provided by waste as a renewable resource and thus grow the waste economy in Africa.