



Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework for Recycled Plastics

Part I: Themes, Definitions, and Indicators

May 2024



Shift

About this Publication

The Circulate Initiative

The Circulate Initiative is a non-profit organization that was established in 2019 to solve the ocean plastic pollution challenge and build circular and equitable economies across emerging markets. We believe that preventing plastic waste leakage into the ocean and advancing circularity across emerging markets require a focused and systemic response. The Circulate Initiative delivers cutting-edge research and builds high-impact programs and partnerships to address system-level barriers in the circular economy and drive collective action with corporations, investors, and policy-makers.

The Responsible Sourcing Initiative

The Responsible Sourcing Initiative (RSI) aims to mobilize all stakeholders across the plastics waste value chain to support recycled plastics, while safeguarding human rights and promoting environmental stability. The initiative addresses the “how” for companies seeking to improve human rights across their plastic waste value chain by taking measurable action while committing to a harmonized responsible sourcing framework. The Circulate Initiative is the author of this report and has worked in collaboration with Shift towards the development of the Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework.

Shift

Shift is the leading center of expertise on the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs). Shift is a non-profit, mission-driven organization whose global team of experts works with business, financial institutions, and standard setters to build a world where business gets done with respect for people’s dignity. Shift has conducted the consultations with Working Group members and supported the development of the Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework Part I by The Circulate Initiative.



In support of the Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework

"This harmonized framework is a crucial step towards inclusive and equitable sourcing practices in the plastics recycling value chain. By aligning our efforts to adopt this framework, we can better support the inclusion of workers in the informal economy in the plastics value chain at scale, ensuring that economic growth and sustainability go hand in hand. We commend The Circulate Initiative for their commitment to responsible sourcing and are enthusiastic about the positive changes this framework will bring to the sector. We urge joint action now."

Sonia Dias

Waste Specialist, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)

"As an investor in solutions across the recycling value chain, Circulate Capital is committed to scaling models that protect human rights and improve livelihoods. Implementing this framework will help us bring greater transparency, de-risk investments, and make progress on the plastic pollution challenge. For these reasons, we call on all investors to join us in adopting the harmonized framework."

Rob Kaplan

Founder and CEO, Circulate Capital

"From our perspective as a recycling and waste management company, this framework is pivotal as it integrates the principles of safeguarding human rights with responsible business practices, both of which are crucial for the plastics recycling sector. We believe that adopting this framework will drive significant improvements in the sourcing practices of plastics value chain businesses globally, fostering a more sustainable and circular economy. We are excited to partner with The Circulate Initiative in our collaborative efforts."

Keiran Smith

Co-Founder and Group CEO, Mr. Green Africa

"Unilever is a founding member of the Fair Circularity Initiative, a group of businesses collectively working to ensure the human rights of workers within the informal waste sector are respected and that their critical role in circular value chains is recognised. Unilever has opened up its own human rights framework for plastics value chains to support the development of the Harmonised Responsible Sourcing Framework. With this, Unilever aims to drive a collaborative and aligned industry-wide approach which reduces duplication and maximises efforts to transform the global plastics supply chain. Unilever has also shared key learnings from their own work to support the wider peer group as this common industry framework is finalised."

Yih-Ling Pan

Head of Social Sustainability – Business Operations, Unilever

"HP supports the harmonized responsible sourcing framework developed by The Circulate Initiative and Shift. The framework is critical as it provides guidance to all stakeholders in the recycled plastics value chain on improving human rights practices, paying attention to informal waste workers. This framework aligns with HP's focus on human rights, supporting a culture of inclusion and advancing social justice for all workers in the value chain; we encourage all stakeholders in the recycled plastics ecosystem to implement the framework."

Hayley Whatarau

Global Human Rights Manager, HP Inc.

"The Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework acknowledges waste pickers as essential rightsholders and outlines the engagement steps. It is an outcome of a long discussion with the waste pickers organizations. We at the Alliance of Indian Waste Pickers welcome the framework and look forward to its implementation."

Kabir Arora (Qabeer Jalandhari)

The Alliance of Indian Waste Pickers



“First Mile has been investing in workers across the recycling value chain and delivering solutions to improve livelihoods and working conditions for workers and collectors globally. Having built various responsible sourcing frameworks, tools to support companies to apply the Fair Circularity Principles in their value chain, and contributed to the harmonized responsible sourcing framework, we are deeply encouraged by the groundswell of support and excitement to speak the same language and move in the same direction in the effort to improve conditions for informal workers globally. As we implement the framework, we encourage all participants of the value chain to join us in action.”

Vivien Luk

Executive Director, First Mile

“Members of the Fair Circularity Initiative have made commitments to implement the Fair Circularity Principles to benefit waste pickers. With this publication of the Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework for Recycled Plastics by The Circulate Initiative, we see a great step forward to providing guidance on implementation of responsible sourcing practices. We see the harmonized framework as very comprehensive and an important step forward to accelerate implementation of the Fair Circularity Principles.”

Members of The Fair Circularity Initiative

“The harmonized responsible sourcing framework provides guidance for companies on how to apply the Fair Circularity Principles (FCPs) in their value chains. Tearfund convened the four founding member brands of the Fair Circularity Initiative to launch the initiative and to commit to the FCPs. As other brands now join the initiative and make the same commitments, we are delighted to support this framework as a key step forward in seeing the FCPs adopted and advanced. Tearfund is proud to have contributed to the harmonization process and calls upon all stakeholders in waste and recycling value chains to adopt the framework and ensure that the human rights of waste pickers are respected.”

Mari Williams

Senior Policy Associate, Tearfund

“The harmonized responsible sourcing framework is instrumental and complements our aim to ensure that the circular transition is just, creating decent, dignified, and green jobs in the recycling and waste management industry. With the launch of this framework, we can implement responsible sourcing in practice throughout the plastics recycling value chain. We look forward to implementing the framework with our partners in Viet Nam and sharing our learnings with all stakeholders. We urge all partners in the recycled plastics industry to join us and utilize the framework to improve the social protection and livelihoods of informal waste workers and responsible sourcing practices in their supply chains.”

Patrick Haverman

Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Viet Nam

“Informal waste workers are vital in sustaining a global circular economy. However, they often face unsafe working conditions and a lack of pay fairness. In 2023, we joined forces with The Circulate Initiative to mobilize stakeholders across the value chain toward promoting a harmonized responsible sourcing framework that supports the responsible collection, sorting, and recycling of plastic waste while helping safeguard and advance the human rights of informal waste workers. The framework serves as an important guide for the stakeholders who are ready to unite efforts toward improving the lives and livelihoods of millions of informal waste workers around the world.”

Paul Lalli

Senior Vice President Global Human Rights and Labor and Employee Relations, The Coca-Cola Company



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I. Foreword



The world is facing a plastic pollution crisis – in 2019, an estimated [22 million tonnes](#) of plastic leaked into the environment, and this is projected to double by 2060. There are an estimated 20 million¹ waste pickers that account for roughly 60%² of plastic collected globally. The experience of these individuals – shaped by persistent marginalization, lack of social safety nets, vulnerability to human rights abuses, gender inequality, child labor, and insufficient incomes – cannot be ignored in the broader pursuit of a circular economy for plastics.³

To address the plastic pollution crisis, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has convened member states four times since 2022 to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. Emerging legislation around the world, including in the [European Union \(EU\)](#), will require companies to evaluate and report on the social and environmental impacts and risks in their supply chains, including for recycled plastic.

Buyers of recycled plastic generally do not understand the origin of the material, nor the conditions under which it is collected and processed. Companies in sectors including food and beverage, textiles, and electronics have decades of experience evaluating human rights across their supply chains, for example, finished goods manufacturers, but few have extended their due diligence back to the source of recycled plastic.

The lack of unified definitions, criteria, and key indicators for measuring success in responsible sourcing of recycled plastics prevents intentions and commitments from turning into strong actions on the ground. It is also a barrier to greater transparency in plastics recycling value chains. Increasingly, overlapping principles, standards, and frameworks emerged, which created confusion and an administrative burden for companies in the plastics recycling value chain.

¹ International Labour Office. (2013). Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs [online]. Available from: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_207370.pdf [accessed May 20, 2024].

² Systemiq. (2020). Breaking the Plastic Wave: A Comprehensive Assessment of Pathways Towards Stopping Ocean Plastic Pollution [online]. Available from: <https://www.systemiq.earth/breakingtheplasticwave/> [accessed May 15, 2024].

³ Dias, S. and Samson, M. (2016). Informal Economy Monitoring Study Sector Report: Waste Pickers [online]. Available from: <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/Dias-Samson-IFMS-Waste-Picker-Sector-Report.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].



In May 2023, The Circulate Initiative launched the Responsible Sourcing Initiative (RSI) to make responsible sourcing a reality for plastics recycling supply chains. In this report, we share Part I of the Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework for Recycled Plastics (harmonized framework). This is the result of our work with Shift over the last nine months to engage a range of stakeholders from across the recycled plastics value chain and conduct a thorough review of existing responsible sourcing frameworks for plastics and other sectors. Part I of the harmonized framework includes themes, definitions, and indicators that companies and other stakeholders can begin to use to better understand and evaluate their recycled plastics supply chains. Part II – to be published in 2025 – will include implementation guidance and tools that will help companies and other stakeholders meet the indicators and improve human rights over time. In full, the framework will allow companies to more efficiently evaluate and address human rights conditions in the recycled plastics supply chain and meet the growing demands of regulators around supply chain environmental and social issues.

We are encouraged by the growing number of multinational companies that have made commitments to use higher volumes of post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic. Yet, we know that progress is slow, as evidenced by the most recent reporting from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and UNEP.⁴ Increasing the volume of plastic recycled globally is critical for these companies to meet their goals and to solve the global plastic pollution crisis. Addressing human rights in the recycled plastics value chain and improving the livelihoods of informal waste workers is essential to meet their goals and comply with legislation.

We will further refine the harmonized framework through on-the-ground projects in select geographies and ongoing expert engagement. We welcome your feedback and participation in this important work. You can reach out to us via responsiblesourcing@thecirculateinitiative.org.



Annerieke Douma

Director of Programs, The Circulate Initiative

⁴ Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (2023). The Global Commitment 2023 Progress Report [online]. Available from: <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/global-commitment-2023/overview> [accessed April 15, 2024].



II. Executive Summary

The Circulate Initiative's Responsible Sourcing Initiative (RSI) seeks to help ensure fully transparent, equitable, and robust plastics recycling value chains that safeguard the human rights of all workers including waste pickers across the value chain. The development of a harmonized responsible sourcing framework (harmonized framework) is a key step to ensure that companies know how to put the Fair Circularity Principles (FCPs)⁵ into practice by converging efforts in line with international standards. The FCPs⁶ apply the expectations of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) to the informal waste sector, and call on all companies in plastics recycling value chains to “take appropriate steps to prevent, mitigate, and remedy impacts they cause or contribute to, and seek to prevent and mitigate impacts that may be linked to their operations, products or services, in line with their human rights responsibility.” Actors across the plastics recycling value chain must recognize the critical role of the informal waste sector as part of their own value chains.

The harmonized framework should be seen as the core of what responsible sourcing means in the plastics recycling value chain. We intend it to be adopted by stakeholders across the value chain; for example, investors in the recycling sector and buyers of recycled plastic, including brands, recycling companies, and other organizations that aim to implement responsible sourcing practices in their value chains. We acknowledge that stakeholders may have additional requirements based on their roles in the value chain, their own codes of conduct, or their own supplier management programs, and thus may tailor the harmonized framework to their specific needs.

The harmonization process is based on a thorough review of existing responsible sourcing frameworks and a participatory process through which we engaged over 40 organizations representing stakeholders from across the plastics recycling value chain. We did so not only to avoid a duplication of efforts, but also because we are working towards wide adoption of the harmonized framework. We established a working group to help align on the themes, definitions, indicators, and tools of the harmonized framework, which is divided into two parts. Importantly, the harmonized framework is grounded in the perspectives of waste workers and is designed to focus on their needs and aspirations.

Part I: Themes, definitions, and indicators. Part I of the harmonized framework includes themes, definitions, and indicators (minimum and advanced). The indicators apply to formal waste sector workers employed by participants in the recycled plastics value chain, as well as informal waste sector workers and waste pickers. We intend that they guide the collection of actionable information for responsible sourcing in the plastics recycling value chain, and that they can be prioritized for local contexts, as well as for specific categories of value chain participants based on their needs.

Part II: Implementation of the harmonized framework. Part II of the harmonized framework will include additional implementation guidance and tools to help companies and other stakeholders in the recycled plastics value chain to understand where to start and how minimum and advanced indicators can be met over time. Part II describes the phases and tools of a comprehensive responsible sourcing program to implement responsible sourcing practices and points to existing tools available to value chain participants.

Next steps. By mid-2025, the RSI will publish Part II of the harmonized framework and work with partners to build on and align existing tools for responsible sourcing with the indicators identified in Part I. This harmonized framework is intended to be a living document that can be refined over time, based on lessons learned through field testing. Companies, investors, and other stakeholders that adopt this harmonized framework will continue to provide feedback, alongside the learnings from the RSI implementation projects in multiple geographies. The RSI will incorporate these learnings into future iterations of the harmonized framework.

⁵ Fair Circularity Initiative. (n.d.). Fair Circularity Principles [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/fair-circularity-principles/> [accessed April 10, 2024].

⁶ Shift. (2022). Principles for Corporate Engagement on Human Rights with the Informal Waste Sector: Executive Summary [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Principles-for-Corporate-Engagement-on-Human-Rights-with-the-Informal-Waste-Sector.pdf> [accessed April 10, 2024].



III. Context

A distinct feature of the plastics recycling value chain is its extension through multiple tiers of business activity that includes both formal and informal workers and waste pickers. Informal waste workers often face significant human rights impacts. “While not all of these impacts and factors will be relevant to all waste pickers across all contexts, impacts on waste pickers’ human rights are often extremely severe.”⁷

Common human rights impacts experienced by workers, both employed and informal workers, in the recycled plastics value chain include (but are not limited to):

- An inadequate standard of living
- Lack of respect for freedom of association
- Lack of recognition and social stigma
- Marginalization and discrimination
- Exclusion from social and financial services
- Child labor
- Negative impacts on workplace health and safety
- Lack of decent working conditions

Under the harmonized framework:

Waste pickers can be described as people who participate (individually or collectively) in the collection, separation, sorting, transport, and sale of recyclable and reusable materials and products (paper, plastic, metal, glass, and other materials) in an informal or semi-formal capacity, as own-account workers, in a cooperative or social and solidarity economy setting, and as workers who subsequently achieved formal work arrangements through their organizations.⁸

Informal waste sector workers are defined as workers in the waste and recycling sector whose remunerative work (i.e. both self-employment and wage employment) is not registered, regulated, or protected by existing legal or regulatory frameworks, as well as non-remunerative work undertaken in an income-producing enterprise. Informal workers do not have secure employment contracts, workers’ benefits, social protection, or workers’ representation.⁹

Formal waste sector workers are individuals who are employed by public service providers and private waste and recycling companies that are officially recognized by state authorities.

Although waste pickers are also informal workers, due to their unique role in the recycling value chain and the need for specific programs and actions to ensure responsible sourcing from waste pickers, this harmonized framework differentiates between waste pickers and informal waste sector workers.

This operating context requires actors in the recycled plastics value chain to assess and manage human rights risks in ways that address impacts to both formal and informal workers as well as waste pickers. Doing this effectively may require modifications to existing tools and approaches for responsible sourcing, such as corporate supply chain policies, human rights due diligence, management systems, and remediation for affected individuals.

⁷ Shift. (2022). Principles for Corporate Engagement on Human Rights with the Informal Waste Sector: Executive Summary [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Principles-for-Corporate-Engagement-on-Human-Rights-with-the-Informal-Waste-Sector.pdf> [accessed May 2, 2024].

⁸ International Alliance of Waste Pickers (IAWP). (2024). Recommendations for Member States Regarding the Revised Zero Draft [online]. Available from: https://globalrec.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/position-revised-zero-draf_inc4_iawp_v01_english.pdf [accessed May 24, 2024].

⁹ International Labour Organization, n.d. Informal economy workers [online]. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/resource/45-informal-economy-workers> [accessed May 24, 2024].



Responsible Sourcing Defined

Responsible sourcing means that all participants in the recycled plastics value chain:

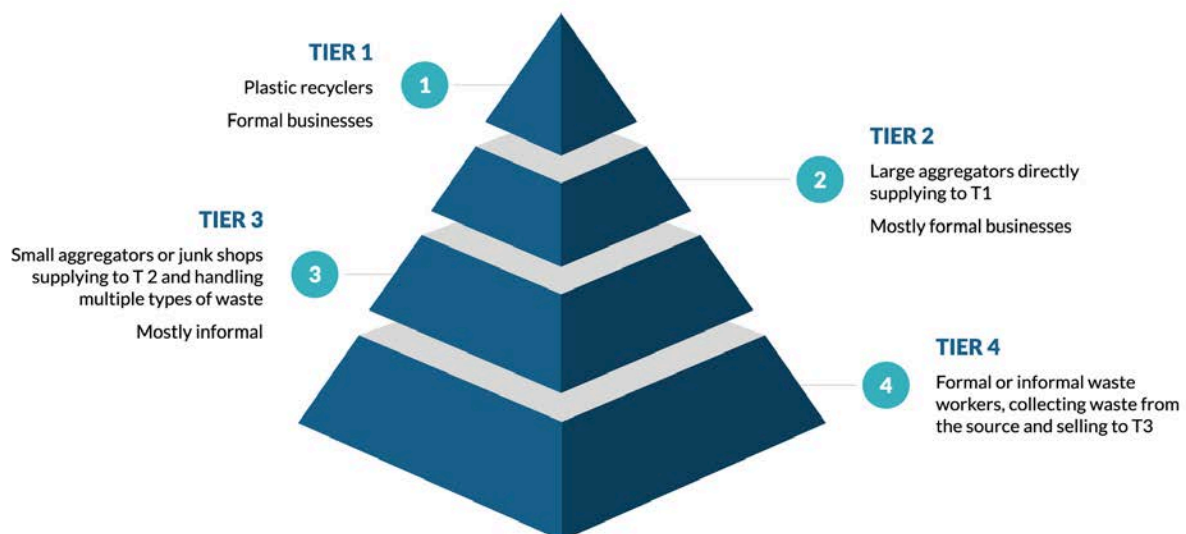
- Are meeting their responsibility to respect human rights in their own operations and throughout the value chain, including the informal waste sector and waste pickers
- Recognize the informal waste sector as part of their own company's value chain
- Take action across all tiers of the recycled plastics value chain, from the global brands that use recycled plastics to the aggregators that receive materials and contract services from informal waste sector workers and waste pickers

Increasingly, international regulations, awareness of human rights challenges, and reputational risk are driving buyers of post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic (e.g., brands) to expand existing policies and processes and develop new ones to go beyond the first tiers of the recycled plastics value chain. Due diligence that addresses the human rights impacts experienced by informal waste sector workers may include, for example:

- Baseline assessments of the volume of recycled plastics collected and used in a company's value chain
- Documentation of the traceability of products and supplier relationships
- Human rights assessments of value chain participants
- Measuring progress against key performance indicators
- Capacity building, training, and reporting based on the findings

In Figure 1, we illustrate the different tiers across the plastics recycling value chain.

Figure 1: Illustration of tiers in the plastics recycling value chain





IV. Principles and Considerations for Harmonizing Frameworks

In our approach to developing the harmonized framework, we took the following principles and considerations into account.

Principles:

The harmonized framework:

- Is informed by the perspective of waste workers and waste pickers, considers their context and capabilities, and is designed to focus on their needs and aspirations
- Puts the FCPs into practice
- Builds on the common elements of existing responsible sourcing frameworks and tools, and considers best practices and lessons learned
- Is developed through a collaborative and participatory process to build trust among the stakeholders and to ensure buy-in and adoption across the sector
- Is action-oriented and includes harmonized definitions, indicators, and implementation guidance

Key considerations:

- The unique situations, needs, and vulnerabilities of informal waste sector workers, as well as waste pickers, and understanding the root causes of risks for them
- The need to address pitfalls and unintended consequences of responsible sourcing programs
- The need to understand the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the value chain and how they can leverage their influence to address human rights impacts; for example, the role of buyers of recycled plastics (e.g., brands) and investors to leverage purchasing and economic power

Participatory and Multi-stakeholder Process

Figure 2 below outlines the process taken by Shift in the development of the harmonized framework. It shows how the UNGPs and FCPs have informed the harmonization of the framework and how a thorough understanding of existing responsible sourcing frameworks was instrumental in aligning their commonalities, which led to the conceptual framework of key thematic areas, definitions, and indicators outlined in Part I. This participatory process took place between September 2023 and May 2024.



Figure 2: Illustration of the participatory process towards harmonization of standards and frameworks



Stakeholder Consultations

To ensure that the perspectives of different stakeholders were taken into account in this harmonized framework, The Circulate Initiative and Shift convened a series of consultations with a range of stakeholders:

- Companies and consultants actively working on responsible sourcing
- Investors
- Recyclers
- Aggregators
- Civil society organizations
- Informal sector organizations representing waste pickers¹⁰

We include a full list of the organizations that we engaged in Annex 2.

Review of Existing Responsible Sourcing Frameworks

The Circulate Initiative identified a number of responsible sourcing frameworks that are specific to recycled plastic, some of which are in the public domain, and others not. These included:

- Unilever, Global Human Rights Framework for Plastics Value Chain¹¹
- Tearfund, [Human rights due diligence toolkit](#) (October 2023)
- Circulate Capital, Responsible Supply Chain Management Framework (April 2023)¹²

¹⁰ Annex 2: Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework Working Group Members.

¹¹ Not publicly available.

¹² Not publicly available.



- NextWave Consortium, [The NextWave Plastics Framework for Socially Responsible Ocean-Bound Plastic Supply Chains](#) (2021)
- Inclusive Waste Recycling Consortium (iWrc), iWrc University – [A Social Assurance Framework](#)

We also reviewed a number of responsible sourcing frameworks from other sectors (e.g., apparel/footwear, handmade goods, and agriculture) that have relevance for the informal waste sector. These include:

- Social & Labor Convergence Program, [Social & Labor Convergence Program](#) (2024)
- Responsible Business Alliance Foundation, [Responsible Business Alliance](#) (2024)
- Fair Labor Association, [Fair Labor Accreditation](#) (2022)
- Social Accountability International, [SA8000:2014 Standard](#) (2014)
- The Nest, [Ethical Handcraft Program](#) (2019)

In developing the harmonized framework, Shift evaluated the above frameworks to identify common themes, definitions, and indicators. This analysis and the perspectives gathered from stakeholders form the foundation for the harmonized framework.



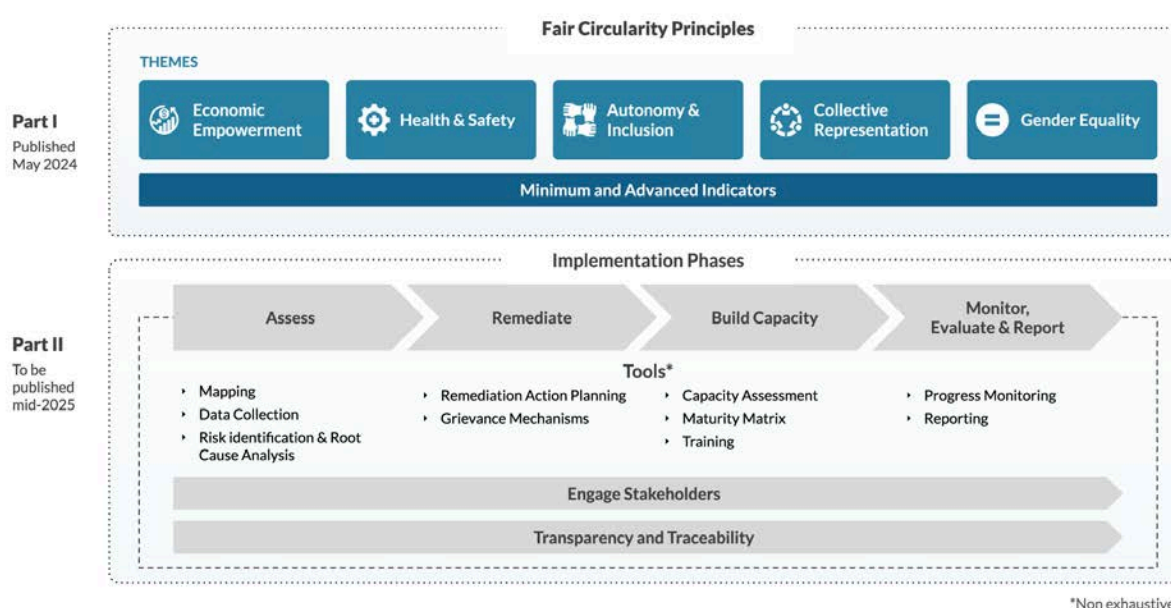
V. Overview of the Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework

The harmonized framework is presented below in figure 3, and is divided into two parts:

Part I includes key thematic areas, definitions, and minimum and advanced indicators aligned with international standards.¹³ This is the portion of the harmonized framework that is outlined in this document.

Part II will include tools and methods needed to implement responsible sourcing practices in line with the indicators, and is described in more detail in chapter VII. Over the course of the next year (by mid-2025) we will publish the tools and methods.

Figure 3: Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework



Fair Circularity Principles

The harmonized framework is aligned with and grounded in the FCPs, which apply the expectations of the UNGPs to the informal waste sector. Members of the Fair Circularity Initiative (FCI) – Unilever, The Coca-Cola Company, Nestle, PepsiCo, and Tetra Pak – have committed to adopt and advance the FCPs in their value chains in collaboration with waste picker organizations.

Under the UNGPs, companies have a responsibility to respect human rights throughout their operations and value chains¹⁴; i.e., to prevent and address actual and potential impacts with which they are or may be involved, in line with the nature of that involvement. Companies must carry out human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how they address impacts with which they are involved and take specific action. Over time, we expect more companies to report on their progress towards aligning policies and activities to the FCPs. Companies will also work to develop policy guidance based on the FCPs.

¹³ Encompasses all internationally recognized human rights, including those set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

¹⁴ UNGPs, Principle 17.



The FCPs call on all companies in plastics recycling value chains to “take appropriate steps to prevent, mitigate, and remedy impacts they cause or contribute to, and seek to prevent and mitigate impacts that may be linked to their operations, products, or services, in line with their human rights responsibility. Companies across all tiers and sectors of these value chains must recognize the informal waste sector as part of their value chains. Human rights impacts experienced by waste pickers are clearly within the scope of those companies’ responsibility to respect human rights under the UNGPs, which extends throughout their value chain. The severity of human rights impacts and the vulnerability of informal waste sector workers suggest that, for many of these companies, human rights impacts in the informal waste sector should be addressed as a salient human rights issue.”¹⁵

¹⁵ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 7



VI. Part I: Themes, Definitions, and Indicators

Part I of the harmonized framework includes themes, definitions, and indicators (minimum and advanced) that focus on the needs of all workers, and more specifically, on the needs of informal waste sector workers and waste pickers. Value chain participants can begin to use Part I of the harmonized framework to responsibly source recycled plastics.

The indicators cover all tiers in the supply chain, based on the local operations and systems, and apply to all workers in the plastics recycling value chain, including informal waste workers and waste workers. The harmonized framework aims to support and encourage organizations to improve visibility beyond their immediate suppliers.

The harmonized framework is a first version and is intended to be a living document that can be refined over time, based on lessons learned through application in the field. The RSI and other implementers will collect information to allow for continuous improvement of the harmonized framework.

Themes

Through the approach described above, we identified five thematic areas for responsible sourcing:

	<p>Economic Empowerment</p> <p>All waste sector workers, including waste pickers, have the right to a standard of living that is adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families, including adequate food and nutrition, clothing, housing, and access to medical care when necessary.</p>
	<p>Health and Safety</p> <p>All waste-related work should take place in a safe and healthy working environment in which risks are identified and reduced in order to prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses.</p>
	<p>Autonomy and Inclusion</p> <p>All waste sector workers, including waste pickers, should be treated equally, with respect and dignity, and without any form of discrimination, and there should be no restrictions on the freedom of a worker.</p>
	<p>Collective Representation</p> <p>All waste sector workers, including waste pickers, have the right to freedom of association, to form and/or join trade unions, and to bargain collectively.¹⁶</p>
	<p>Gender Equality</p> <p>Gender equality is a fundamental human right, aimed at ensuring equal participation of all waste sector workers and waste pickers, including both women and men in civil, political, economic, social, and cultural life, without discrimination.</p>

¹⁶ International Labour Organization. (2022). ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work [online]. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/ilo-declaration-fundamental-principles-and-rights-work> [accessed April 22, 2024].



This framing of the key thematic areas is informed by the perspectives and needs of informal waste sector workers and waste pickers. Prioritizing positive outcomes for waste sector workers helps to highlight the human rights risks facing both formal and informal waste sector workers, including waste pickers, as well as the conditions that contribute to these risks. Child labor, for example, is viewed through the lens of economic empowerment, as this provides important context for strategies to address the root causes of child labor by improving the economic situation of waste sector workers.

These thematic areas can also overlap. Excessive working hours, for example, can be both a result of insufficient income and a cause of health and safety impacts. In this way, the categories of adversely affected human rights commonly included in corporate human rights standards are captured across these five themes for the recycled plastics value chain.

Indicators

The indicators articulate objectives for what responsible sourcing seeks to achieve in the recycled plastics value chain,¹⁷ and should be used by value chain participants to track and assess progress against these objectives. “Given the diversity and localized nature of plastics recycling value chains – and how the informal waste sector is positioned within those value chains – effective approaches will need to be informed by, and tailored to, local contexts.”¹⁸ At the same time, local approaches should be guided by global alignment on principles and indicators and engagement with actors throughout these value chains. Indicators apply both to formal waste sector workers employed by participants in the recycled plastics value chain, as well as informal waste sector workers, including waste pickers.

Drawing from the reviewed frameworks and inputs from the working group that was established as part of the participatory process, we identified key indicators for each thematic area and grouped them into two categories, minimum and advanced indicators.

- **Minimum indicators** serve as the foundational goals necessary for a responsible value chain. These are the essential benchmarks that all participants in the value chain should strive to achieve within a three- to five-year timeframe. They are designed to safeguard the rights and safety of waste workers in the plastics recycling sector. Achieving these indicators is the first step towards creating a responsible supply chain. In specific contexts, a subset of minimum indicators is likely to be prioritized based on the working conditions and material concerns of the workers.
- **Advanced indicators** demonstrate positive outcomes for people beyond the minimum indicators that all value chain stakeholders should seek to meet in order to continuously improve human rights for informal waste sector workers over a five- to ten-year period and beyond. Advanced indicators focus on achieving outcomes that contribute to long-term robust, transparent, and inclusive value chains that meet human rights standards for all workers.

¹⁷ Shift. (2021). Indicator Design Tool [online]. Available from: https://shiftproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Indicator-Design-Tool_Shift.pdf [accessed April 10, 2024].

¹⁸ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 7.



1. Economic Empowerment

DEFINITION

All waste workers, including waste pickers, have the right to a standard of living that is adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families, including adequate food and nutrition, clothing, housing, and access to medical care when necessary.

Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, clothing, and other essential needs, including provision for unexpected events.¹⁹

KEY ELEMENTS

- Workers' livelihoods and wages enable them to provide for food, water, housing, education, and other essential needs for themselves and their families.
- Children involved in the informal waste sector work are not deprived of their childhood, potential, and dignity, nor exposed to conditions harmful to their physical and mental development.
- Workers in informal sectors, and waste pickers, get access to financial services from institutions, including banks, microfinance institutions, or co-operatives.

For informal waste sector workers and waste pickers, some of the root causes that can affect their enjoyment of this right include:

- Inadequate income
- Lack of bargaining power in price setting
- Income instability (frequent fluctuations in income)
- Economic insecurity (in the event of sickness, disability, old age, etc.)
- Exclusion from social services, banking systems, formal work, or education

As per the Global Living Wage Coalition: "A living income is the net annual income required for a household in a particular place to afford a decent standard of living for all members of that household."²⁰ Wages and prices paid for recycled materials may be too low to enable workers to earn an adequate income, which in turn is likely to lead to excessive working hours. Incomes may fluctuate, impacting workers' capacity to meet regular payments such as rent, and to plan and save.

For waged workers, "a living wage"²¹ is the remuneration received for a standard workweek by a worker in a particular place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living for the worker and her or his family." Workers employed in formal settings may also be impacted by low earnings.

Workers in informal sectors, including waste pickers, often lack access to formal banking systems. The lack of financial inclusion serves as a further barrier to stable and secure income, as more formal parts of the economy are often not equipped to engage with the informal sector.²² In some cases, informal workers may lack access to identity cards, citizenship status, and/or household registration. Waste pickers are often excluded from the social safety net, including social

²⁰ Global Living Wage Coalition. (n.d.). Living Income [online]. Available from: <https://www.globallivingwage.org/about/living-income/> [accessed May 20, 2024].

²¹ Global Living Wage Coalition. (n.d.). What is a Living Wage? [online]. Available from: <https://www.globallivingwage.org/about/what-is-a-living-wage/> [accessed May 20, 2024].

²² Shift. (2022). Principles for Corporate Engagement on Human Rights with the Informal Waste Sector: Executive Summary [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Principles-for-Corporate-Engagement-on-Human-Rights-with-the-Informal-Waste-Sector.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].

¹⁹ The Living Income Community of Practice. (n.d.). Available from: <https://www.living-income.com/> [accessed May 20, 2024].



1. Economic Empowerment

security and healthcare, exacerbating their economic insecurity.

“In certain contexts, child labor is a feature of the informal waste sector. Although not all child work constitutes prohibited child labor, where children are present in this sector they are often engaged in hazardous work and/or are unable to access education as a result. Children may accompany their parents to work because this is deemed safer than leaving them at home, or because they lack access to affordable and convenient childcare. Even where children are not working, they may still be at risk when accompanying parent or guardian reclaimers, with impacts on their safety and/or education.”²³

²³ Shift. (2022). Principles for Corporate Engagement on Human Rights with the Informal Waste Sector: Executive Summary [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Principles-for-Corporate-Engagement-on-Human-Rights-with-the-Informal-Waste-Sector.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].



1. Economic Empowerment

Minimum Indicators

- 1.1. Working hours comply with local laws and regulations for workers in formal settings.
- 1.2. Wages are accurately calculated and recorded.
- 1.3. Information is collected on the price paid to informal waste workers, including waste pickers, and their working hours.
- 1.4. Wages and living income are assessed against wages.
- 1.5. Employed workers are paid in accordance with the local minimum wage standards.
- 1.6. Fair and transparent weighing and pricing methods are in place.
- 1.7. All workers are paid consistently, directly, and on time.
- 1.8. A system is in place and enforced for age verification.
- 1.9. If child labor exists, efforts are being taken to address the root causes, prioritizing any children who are engaged in hazardous work.
- 1.10. All workers have access to social and financial services.

Advanced Indicators

- 1.11. Adequate and effective compensation policies and practices are in place.
- 1.12. Employed workers are paid the living wage for their location.
- 1.13. Measures are in place to ensure that informal workers are able to earn a living income.
- 1.14. All workers are able to negotiate on prices and wages.
- 1.15. Working hours are monitored to ensure local and international compliance.
- 1.16. All workers have access to job-related education and training.
- 1.17. Informal waste workers and waste pickers have access to facilities to sort, store, and aggregate materials.
- 1.18. Effective processes are in place to follow up on children removed from working in the waste sector.
- 1.19. School-age children of workers are enrolled in school.



2. Health and Safety

DEFINITION

All waste-related work should take place in a safe and healthy working environment in which risks are identified and reduced in order to prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses.²⁴

KEY ELEMENTS

- Workers are aware of the health and safety risks of their work environment and have access to adequate measures to protect themselves at work.
- Potential risks for all waste workers, including waste pickers, are identified and reduced in order to prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses.

“Poor health and safety conditions while collecting waste frequently results in injuries and even, in some cases, fatalities for waste workers.”²⁵ Waste pickers commonly work excessive long hours, often seven days a week without rest, impacting their health and safety. Waste workers often do not have access to bathrooms and basic sanitation, which may disproportionately impact women. Waste pickers may also be subject to harassment and intimidation. Environmental conditions affect worker health and safety. Waste sector workers may be exposed to extreme temperatures and weather, and air and water pollution.

At landfills, those collecting waste often face dangerous environments without adequate personal protective equipment and are frequently exposed to hazardous substances, putting them at risk for skin, respiratory, and other diseases. Moreover, the lack of access to proper sanitation facilities and long working hours can be especially challenging for women. Decent working conditions, including reasonable working hours, are often not possible for waste workers and contribute to their daily challenges and physical exhaustion. The irregular and unprotected nature of their employment means that many waste workers do not receive health benefits or insurance, leaving them vulnerable to financial instability in the event of health issues. The lack of support and protection highlights the critical need for improved conditions and regulations to safeguard the health and well-being of waste workers.

²⁴ A safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental principle and right at work under ILO standards.

²⁵ Shift. (2022). Principles for Corporate Engagement on Human Rights with the Informal Waste Sector: Executive Summary [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Principles-for-Corporate-Engagement-on-Human-Rights-with-the-Informal-Waste-Sector.pdf> [accessed April 10, 2024].



2. Health and Safety

Minimum Indicators

- 2.1. All workers and waste pickers have access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- 2.2. All workers and waste pickers are trained on safe work practices, including fire and hazardous material safety and communication, natural hazards and disasters, and foreseeable emergencies.
- 2.3. All workers have access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and changing facilities at the workplace.
- 2.4. First-aid equipment, as well as emergency and medical services, if necessary, is available to all workers, and practices are in place to prevent and treat worker injury and illness.
- 2.5. Work-related injuries, illnesses, and safety incidents (including those related to physical, psychological, or sexual violence and harassment) are recorded and resolved.
- 2.6. Worker exposure to harmful environmental conditions (e.g., extreme temperature and weather, air, and water pollution) is monitored and assessed.
- 2.7. Locations where work takes place comply with applicable health and safety regulations, including building safety, emergency preparedness, and managing hazardous and waste materials.

Advanced Indicators

- 2.8. All workers and waste pickers use appropriate personal protective equipment.
- 2.9. If provided by employers, worker accommodations are safe, well-maintained, and appropriate for the number of residents.
- 2.10. All workers have accident insurance that covers medical treatment for work-related injuries and illnesses.
- 2.11. All workers have access to healthcare.
- 2.12. Active steps are taken, as a result of tracking and resolutions of injuries, to reduce and prevent worker accidents and injuries.



3. Autonomy and Inclusion

DEFINITION

All waste sector workers and waste pickers should be treated equally, with respect and dignity, and without any form of discrimination, and there should be no restrictions on the freedom of a worker.

KEY ELEMENTS

- No worker should be required to perform forced or compulsory labor under threat of penalty.²⁶
- In places where waste pickers work informally, they should be free to choose when and where they work, and to whom they sell materials.
- Informal waste sector workers, and waste pickers, should be included as relevant stakeholders in policy-making processes.

Penalties that drive forced or compulsory labor may comprise sanctions, including imprisonment, the threat or use of physical violence, psychological coercion, [and] restrictions on the freedom of a worker, including preventing them from moving freely outside the work site.²⁷

Workers might also face threats of harm directed towards their families or the possibility of being reported to authorities if they lack documentation. Additionally, employers might retain personal identity documents or delay payment of wages, creating a situation where workers feel compelled to continue working in the hope of eventually receiving their dues. These coercive tactics may lead to fear and dependency, undermining the dignity and autonomy of the workers.

Centralized schemes may lead to unintended consequences for those waste pickers who prefer to be self-organized and work when they want. Where schemes are designed to increase tonnage, they may lead to informal waste pickers being excluded.

Informal waste sector workers are at risk of discrimination from the social stigma connected to their work. Waste pickers have noted that they are often perceived as ‘lesser’ members of society and are frequently either ignored or mistreated by others – discriminatory conduct which is perceived as acceptable and normal in many societies. “This loss of basic human dignity is fundamentally what human rights harms are about, and it is both a cause and effect of impacts related to livelihoods, health and safety, and other working conditions. It can also affect waste pickers’ access to recyclable materials.”²⁸

The FCPs call for corporate value chain participants to advocate for the inclusion of informal waste sector workers as relevant stakeholders in policy-making processes that may affect their livelihoods²⁹ and to promote greater integration of the informal waste sector into formal value chains.³⁰ Unintended

²⁷ United Nations Global Compact, Business & Human Rights Navigator. (n.d.). Forced Labour [online]. Available from: <https://bhr-navigator.unglobalcompact.org/issues/forced-labour/> [accessed May 24, 2024].

²⁸ Shift. (2022). Principles for Corporate Engagement on Human Rights with the Informal Waste Sector: Executive Summary [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Principles-for-Corporate-Engagement-on-Human-Rights-with-the-Informal-Waste-Sector.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].

²⁹ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 8.

³⁰ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 9.

²⁶ Freedom from all forms of forced or compulsory labor is a fundamental right under ILO standards.



3. Autonomy and Inclusion

consequences of formalizing waste sector value chains can include individual workers losing access to waste through higher barriers to entry and reduced income for individual workers and waste pickers.

Minimum Indicators

- 3.1. All workers enter into employment freely, and deposits or fees in exchange for employment are prohibited.
- 3.2. Informal waste sector workers and waste pickers are free to choose when and where they work.
- 3.3. No forced labor is used, whether in the form of trafficked labor, indentured labor, bonded labor, or other forms including mental and physical coercion, and slavery, nor under any other threat of penalty.
- 3.4. All workers can report forced labor and are protected from retaliation for doing so.
- 3.5. All value chain actors, including waste pickers, are free to choose to whom they sell the materials they collect.
- 3.6. Informal waste workers and waste pickers workers are recognized, have access to identification cards, and retain possession of their original identification paperwork.
- 3.7. Informal waste sector workers and waste pickers are aware of the available opportunities and their rights in the process of formalization.

Advanced Indicators

- 3.8. Intervention processes are in place to protect and assist reported victims of forced labor.
- 3.9. There are pathways for informal waste workers and waste pickers to work formally if they choose, including access to social or labor protections and being recognized in contracts.
- 3.10. Steps are being taken to address social stigma experienced by informal waste sector workers and waste pickers.



4. Collective Representation

DEFINITION

All waste sector workers and waste pickers have the right to freedom of association, to form and/or join trade unions, and to bargain collectively.³¹

KEY ELEMENTS

- Businesses recognize the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively.

Recognition of the right to collective bargaining is key to the representation of collective interests. It builds on freedom of association and renders collective representation meaningful. The lack of collective representation of informal waste sector workers can be a barrier to promoting rights-respecting practices in the informal waste sector.

The acknowledgment of the right to bargaining is essential for effectively representing waste workers' interests and is also foundational to the freedom of association. Collective bargaining makes such associations very effective by enabling workers to negotiate the terms of their employment collectively and ensuring that workers' voices are heard. Without the ability to engage in collective bargaining, these workers remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuses. Not all waste pickers seek collective representation in the form of cooperatives, associations, or trade unions. "However, when they do, they may face barriers to organizing themselves into collective enterprises, including the financial resources required to organize. The ability to organize is often understood as an enabling right, which, if addressed, should help to prevent and address other human rights impacts."³²

Organized groups are better positioned to influence policy changes that can lead to improved working conditions and legal protections.

³¹ International Labour Organization. (2022). ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work [online]. Available from: <https://www.ilo.org/ilo-declaration-fundamental-principles-and-rights-work> [accessed May 20, 2024].

³² Shift. (2022). Principles for Corporate Engagement on Human Rights with the Informal Waste Sector: Executive Summary [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2022/11/Principles-for-Corporate-Engagement-on-Human-Rights-with-the-Informal-Waste-Sector.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].



4. Collective Representation

Minimum Indicators

- 4.1. All workers are aware of and can freely exercise their right to form or join a union of their choice, to seek representation and collectively bargain, and do so without fear of intimidation or harassment.
- 4.2. Where local law sets restrictions on the rights of waste workers to join trade unions, alternative forms of worker representation are recognized.
- 4.3. Mechanisms are in place for employed workers to report an issue or complaint at work.
- 4.4. Information is collected on whether informal waste sector workers and waste pickers belong to a trade union, waste picker organization, or association.
- 4.5. Steps are taken to make informal waste sector workers and waste pickers aware of their rights as workers, including to organize and bargain collectively.

Advanced Indicators

- 4.6. All workers, including waste pickers, have access to, and the opportunity to belong to, a trade union, waste picker organization, or association.
- 4.7. Informal waste sector workers, including waste pickers, are recognized by local government or formal waste management structures.
- 4.8. Confidential mechanisms are in place for informal waste sector workers to report an issue or complaint about their working conditions, and they are aware of how to access them.
- 4.9. Outcomes of filed grievances, including remedy, are monitored, addressed, and reported.



5. Gender Equality

DEFINITION

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, aimed at ensuring equal participation of all waste sector workers and waste pickers, including women and men in civil, political, economic, social, and cultural life, without discrimination.

KEY ELEMENTS

- All waste sector workers, including waste pickers, are free from discrimination, harassment and abuse, with particular attention paid to the rights of workers most at risk.
- Interventions for all workers and waste pickers recognize the different experiences of workers based on gender, and the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration.

Women waste pickers experience multiple levels of discrimination. While waste pickers face numerous challenges, women waste pickers face the added burden of having to deal with the replication of hierarchical gender relations at home, in the workplace, and in their respective communities. Women might not be allowed access to recyclables with the highest values, therefore earning less than men; they may not always have access to restroom facilities; and they may not occupy positions of authority within their cooperatives or communities. Adopting a gender lens approach to waste picking can help reveal the gendered dimensions of waste picking activities, particularly in light of the fact that many cooperatives and associations are composed of women waste pickers.³³

The FCPs call for informal waste sector participants to “apply a gender lens in efforts to address human rights impacts.”³⁴ Members of the FCI, for example, have committed to consider gender in their human rights programs related to waste pickers.³⁵

³³ Dias, S., Matos, M., and Duarte, M. (2015). From Theory to Action: Gender and Waste Recycling: A Toolkit for Teachers, Researchers and Practitioners [online]. Available from: <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/Dias-Ogando-gender-and-waste-toolkit-book-one.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].

³⁴ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 6.

³⁵ Fair Circularity Initiative. (2023). Reporting requirements against the Fair Circularity Principles [online]. Available from: <https://faircircularity.org/app/uploads/2023/12/Member-Reporting-Requirements-FCI.pdf> [accessed April 10, 2024].



5. Gender Equality

Minimum Indicators

- 5.1. Systems are in place to identify and prevent physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal harassment, abuse, or other forms of intimidation.
- 5.2. Workplace and hiring policies prohibit gender-based discrimination and all forms of sexual harassment.
- 5.3. Periodic training is conducted to prevent gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.
- 5.4. Confidential mechanisms are in place for employed workers to report instances of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.
- 5.5. Parental leave following the birth of a child is extended to employed workers in accordance with local law.
- 5.6. Gender-disaggregated data is collected related to workforce participation and equal pay.
- 5.7. Steps are taken to ensure that the perspectives of women are heard and incorporated into projects and interventions.

Advanced Indicators

- 5.8. Processes are in place to protect and assist reported victims of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.
- 5.9. Measures are taken to ensure equal pay and equality of opportunity for women waste sector workers.
- 5.10. Steps are taken to ensure that women and men have equal access to waste material.
- 5.11. Confidential mechanisms are in place for informal waste sector workers to report instances of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.
- 5.12. Any projects or interventions by value chain participants to improve the lives of informal waste pickers identify the approximate percentage of women waste pickers present and address their needs.



VII. Part II: Guidance to Operationalize the Harmonized Framework

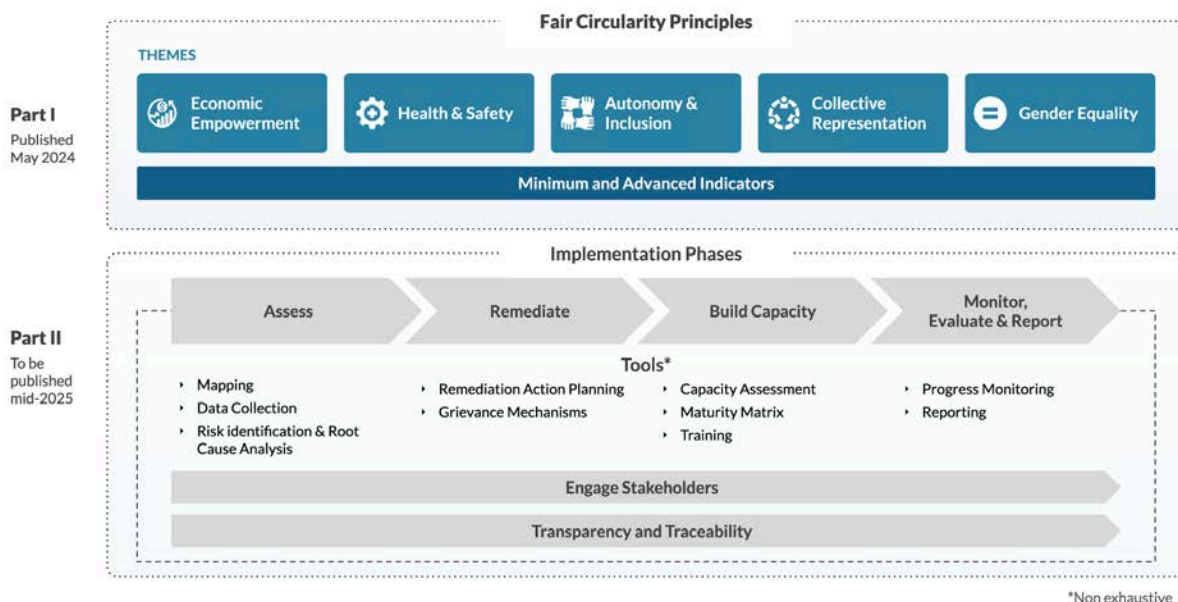
Operationalizing the harmonized framework requires additional implementation guidance, tools, and methods to help stakeholders in the recycled plastics value chain assess the conditions and status of workers and understand which elements to prioritize when developing and implementing a responsible sourcing program. This section outlines the key considerations that will help users successfully implement the harmonized framework.

Depending on their role in the value chain, stakeholders will incorporate components of this harmonized framework in different ways. In line with their responsibility to respect human rights, buyers of recycled plastics (e.g., brands), for example, may leverage their purchasing power and extend their due diligence and supply chain management systems to foster responsible sourcing across all tiers of their value chain, including those that reach the informal waste sector workers and waste pickers. Depending on the unique context and roles of stakeholders in the value chain, users may wish to customize this harmonized framework.

Responsible sourcing calls for value chain participants to address the impacts with which they are involved and take action to address these impacts consistent with the UNGPs. For companies across the recycled plastics value chain, impacts on informal waste sector workers are likely to be among their most salient or severe human rights impacts that should be prioritized for remediation. There are, however, limitations on the capacity of stakeholders to address all human rights risks and issues together and at once. This will take time, given the systemic nature of the issues. When implementing the harmonized framework, it is unlikely that all minimum indicators will be met immediately. We therefore see remediation based on prioritization of the most salient issues and continuous improvement.

The figure below outlines the key phases to implementing responsible sourcing practices based on the harmonized framework.

Figure 3: Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework



Each phase of implementation makes use of different tools and methods. Within each phase below, we describe tools and how they can help users get started in the different phases of implementation. Annex 3 includes tools that are already available.



Tools to be used in implementation:

- Mapping
- Data Collection
- Risk Identification and Root Cause Analysis
- Remediation Action Planning
- Grievance Mechanisms
- Capacity Assessment
- Training
- Maturity Matrix
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

Cross cutting

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Transparency and Traceability

Phase 1: Assess

The assessment phase includes mapping of the value chain, identifying risks, and analyzing the root causes of the conditions experienced by informal waste sector workers and waste pickers. It also includes data collection to create a baseline for performance and to identify remediation actions. Mapping and data collection help participants develop a shared understanding and take action to:

- Trace recycled plastics
- Provide transparency on the value chain and human rights risks
- Identify risks to people working in, and affected by, the plastics recycling value chain
- Assess the capacity of value chain participants
- Measure progress against defined standards
- Identify and meaningfully engage informal waste sector workers and waste pickers

Tool: Mapping

Responsible sourcing starts with a thorough mapping of local plastics recycling supply chains to understand the actors in those supply chains, the impacts they experience, and the national and local policies that shape conditions for the value chain, including informal waste workers.³⁶ Such mapping provides participants with a clear picture of the value chain all the way up to the first point of collection.

³⁶ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 7.



Tearfund's Plastic Value Chain Mapping Tool³⁷

Tearfund's Plastic Value Chain Mapping Tool outlines a participatory process for identifying, engaging, and collaborating with informal waste sector workers, by using formal actors in the recycling value chain and organizational bodies representing waste pickers as intermediaries to gain access to informal workers.

Tool: Data collection

Collecting accurate data about the plastics recycling value chain is a critical element of responsible sourcing. It should include information on where participants are located and where materials are sourced, such as the material volumes collected and sold, the income or payments received, participants' management capacity, and the challenges and needs experienced. This is essential for understanding working conditions and any adverse human rights impacts connected to the plastics recycling value chain.

Turning Indicators into Questions

Measuring progress against indicators often takes the form of questions to value chain participants and affected individuals. Indicator questions can be open or closed questions (yes/no) customized to address specific local contexts (e.g., geographies, municipalities) and value chain participants (e.g., aggregators, recyclers, informal waste sector workers). Effective indicator questions will take into account the dynamic nature of informal waste work, which is different from sectors where work takes place in a defined location (e.g., factories, farms). For example:

Indicator: Where local law sets restrictions on the rights of waste workers to join trade unions, alternative forms of worker representation are recognized.

Potential questions: What alternative forms of worker representation, association, and bargaining are active and allowed? Do you belong to a union or workers' association?

Social & Labor Convergence Program (SLCP) Worker Engagement Tool³⁸

SLCP Worker Engagement Technology (WE Tech) consists of a set of 20 questions that are used to engage workers about their personal experience working at a facility. The questions are a subset of the Data Collection Tool and are in the form of a digital survey sent to workers via their mobile phones. Workers can choose to take the survey on-site or off-site, and all responses are 100% anonymous.

Tool: Risk Identification and Root Cause Analysis

Assessments aligned to the harmonized framework will help participants to identify the risks of adverse human rights impacts throughout their operations and linked to their business relationships.

³⁷ Tearfund. (2023). Respecting the rights of informal waste sector workers: A human rights due diligence toolkit. Stage 1: Establishing a human rights policy and governance framework [online]. Available from: <https://res.cloudinary.com/tearfund/image/fetch/https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/tools-and-guides/2023/2023-tearfund-human-rights-due-diligence-toolkit-stage-1-en.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].

³⁸ Social and Labour Convergence Program (n.d.) Worker Engagement Technology (WE Tech). Available at: <https://slconvergence.org/we-tech> [accessed: May 20, 2024]



Proper identification of risks should consider the root causes that lead to the adverse human rights impacts, which for informal waste sector workers are often systemic in nature. These human rights challenges are not likely to be caused by a single actor or business decision, though such decisions may heighten the risk of negative impacts if they are not informed by analyzing the root causes. Root cause analysis in this context involves identifying the fundamental reasons behind human rights violations occurring throughout the value chain. For example, children may accompany their parents to work because this is deemed safer than leaving them at home, or because they lack access to affordable and convenient childcare.

Risk identification includes companies examining their own business practices and the role they may play with regard to specific impacts. According to the FCPs, “[companies] should also examine how broader market conditions may create structural economic barriers to rights-respecting practices and be prepared to work with others to address these factors.”³⁹

Tearfund’s Risk Matrix and Root Cause Analysis Tool

If various human rights risks are found in the value chain, a systematic method can be used to prioritize them and decide on the right mitigation actions. The Risk Matrix Tool from Tearfund focuses on how severely workers could be harmed and evaluates each risk by how severe and likely it is.

Phase 2: Remediate

Planning, designing, and implementing remediation interventions of the most salient issues in the recycling value chain go together with capacity building of all stakeholders engaged to support implementation and sustain outcomes.

Tool: Remediation Action Planning

Based on the assessments described above in Phase 1, stakeholders can then design, plan, and implement remediation interventions for the most salient issues in the recycling value chain. These may include providing compensation, rehabilitation, support organization of informal waste sector workers or other appropriate measures to address human rights impacts. It is critically important to ensure that remediation solutions are accessible, effective, and fair.

Tearfund’s Collaborative Action Planning and Implementation Tool⁴⁰

Tearfund’s Collaborative Action Planning and Implementation Tool integrates the FCPs, and is designed to address human rights impacts within plastics value chains, focusing on informal waste sector workers. This tool assists companies in developing and executing corrective and preventive action plans based on earlier assessments of waste material flows and human rights impacts identified. Its primary objectives include the implementation of effective interventions to mitigate identified risks and the continuous monitoring of these interventions’ progress and effectiveness.

³⁹ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 10.

⁴⁰ Tearfund. (2023). Respecting the rights of informal waste sector workers: A human rights due diligence toolkit. Stage 2: Participatory human rights assessment and analysis tool [online]. Available from: <https://res.cloudinary.com/tearfund/image/fetch/https://learn.tearfund.org/-/media/learn/resources/tools-and-guides/2023/2023-tearfund-human-rights-due-diligence-toolkit-stage-2-en.pdf> [accessed May 20, 2024].



Phase 3: Build Capacity

Building the capacity of all stakeholders in the value chain is based on capacity assessment and the needs of the stakeholders. Training will vary based on which remediation solutions are implemented, the capacity of the stakeholders, and how the results of remediation are to be measured and evaluated.

Tool: Capacity Assessment

When implementing the harmonized framework, participants should assess the capacity of value chain actors to conduct and/or contribute to assessment, remediation, monitoring, and evaluation. This understanding can then be coupled with capacity-building efforts to support stakeholders based on their needs.

The harmonized framework will contain methods to assess the quality of data being provided. Data can be collected, for example, through self-assessment or independent verification. Before implementing the harmonized framework, participants will be assessed on their capacity to conduct and/or contribute to human rights due diligence, to remediate these impacts, and to measure impacts.

Maturity Rubric from the NextWave Plastics Framework for Socially Responsible Ocean-bound Plastics Supply Chains⁴¹

NextWave Plastics Framework for Socially Responsible Ocean-bound Plastics Supply Chains⁴² incorporates a maturity rubric to help companies evaluate the ability of value chain participants to assess, participate in remediation, or monitor progress against specific indicators, where a value chain participant's capacity might be categorized as low, medium, or high. For example, a "low maturity" supply chain participant may have minimum/no capacity to trace its suppliers, increasing the potential risk that there are little or no protections for informal waste workers, whereas a "high maturity" participant might demonstrate consistent traceability and documentation for all of its suppliers, therefore indicating lower risk of harm to informal waste workers.

Tool: Training

Implementing responsible sourcing in line with the harmonized framework requires participants to have capacity, which they often do not have. Parties will thus have to help build their capacity in order to participate, for example through training, toolkits, consultation, and other approaches.

Opportunities for capacity building include helping value chain participants improve their management practices and operating models, and providing worker education (e.g., basic rights awareness) at all tiers of the value chain, including for informal waste sector workers. Capacity-building tools can be customized to address different standards and local contexts.

⁴¹ NextWave Plastics (n.d.) Social Responsibility. Available at: <https://www.nextwaveplastics.org/social-responsibility> [accessed: May 20, 2024]

⁴² NextWave. (n.d.). The NextWave Plastics Framework for Socially Responsible Ocean-Bound Plastic Supply Chains [online]. Available from: <https://www.nextwaveplastics.org/social-responsibility> [accessed May 20, 2024].



Inclusive Waste Recycling Consortium (iWrc) University⁴³

iWrc University is an initiative by iWrc, a collaborative platform that connects businesses with socially responsible recycling cooperatives, tailored specifically for cooperative members and autonomous waste pickers. The iWrc University has created exclusive content to improve the capabilities, productivity, and dignity of individuals in the recycling sector, enabling them to be more effectively integrated into the supply chain, while mitigating various risks associated with their daily tasks. The content is delivered directly through short videos covering essential topics like health and safety, child labor, forced labor, risk identification, fair trade, and cooperativism. It helps with continuous capacity building in an interactive and innovative manner.

Phase 4: Monitor, Evaluate, and Report

The harmonized framework is intended to be used to monitor and measure progress by value chain participants. The indicators described above in Part I serve as the basis for measuring and tracking progress.

Monitoring and measuring progress is an integral phase of implementation, in which all interventions should be assessed against the indicators of the harmonized framework. It includes a systematic tracking of progress and outcomes, thorough analysis of data collected, and detailed reporting of findings. The insights gained are instrumental in understanding the impact of the interventions and identifying successful practices, as well as areas needing further improvement.

Lessons learned feed back into the evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of the interventions, refine approaches, and guide the development of subsequent remedial actions. This feedback loop is crucial for continuously enhancing the efficiency and impact of responsible sourcing practices. This process also promotes transparency and accountability, essential for building trust among stakeholders through an informed approach for organizations to adapt and plan more effective future interventions.

The harmonized framework includes several enablers that cut across all phases:

Stakeholder Engagement

Systematic stakeholder engagement is critical across all phases of the harmonized framework and is essential to ensuring the most meaningful outcomes for informal waste sector workers as well as waste pickers. The plastics recycling value chain includes a variety of stakeholders – brands, recyclers, aggregators, informal and formal workers, waste pickers, investors, non-governmental organizations, governments, and others – and any attempt to transform the system requires the meaningful engagement of all of them.

Meaningful participation of workers, especially informal waste sector workers,⁴⁴ is central to respecting their human rights, yet they are often excluded. For example, waste pickers are often marginalized and excluded from policy-making processes and programs that affect them, including those that could potentially threaten their livelihoods. While the UNGPs prioritize direct engagement by companies with affected stakeholders (or their legitimate representatives) whenever possible, there are significant challenges to meeting this expectation with informal waste workers.

Nevertheless, companies and other actors throughout the recycled plastics value chain should take steps to ensure that supply chain assessments, remediation action plans, and progress monitoring and evaluations are credibly

⁴³ iWrc University (n.d.). Available at: <https://iwrc.world/iwrc-university/> [accessed: May 20, 2024]

⁴⁴ The Fair Circularity Principles, Principle 5.



informed by the perspectives of waste workers, waste pickers and other affected stakeholders. Effective actions, including stakeholder education, participatory decision-making, and grievance mechanisms, also rely on meaningful engagement with waste workers and waste pickers. In short, they should have opportunities to meaningfully participate in all phases of the implementation process.

Transparency and Traceability

Traceability in general describes the process of tracing the origins, movement, and evolution of products and materials. Establishing traceability of both materials (e.g., material flow analysis) and human rights, as well as a baseline understanding of workers' presence and activities, is vital to successful implementation through every phase of the process.

Transparency relates directly to relevant information that has been made available to all elements of the value chain in a standardized way, which allows for common understanding, accessibility, clarity, and comparison.⁴⁵ Traceability is key to making supply chains transparent, and is part of all phases of implementation, from effective assessment and remediation to having visibility throughout a responsible sourcing process, and monitoring progress over time.

CleanHub traceability tool

CleanHub's waste tracking technology creates a transparent audit trail, keeping plastic out of the sea by collecting, tracking, and recovering it with full transparency. Proof of work with real-time data is uploaded via the CleanHub app throughout the collection, sorting and processing of plastic waste while also tracking international social compliance standards.

Roles and responsibilities in implementing the harmonized framework

Responsibility for implementing the harmonized framework in the waste sector is shared among multiple actors, each of whom plays a unique role in driving positive change towards more sustainable and responsible waste management practices. Collaboration and cooperation among these actors are essential to effectively address the complex challenges associated with waste management and promote environmental sustainability.

Value chain participants are expected to conduct human rights due diligence to identify the risks of adverse human rights impacts throughout their operations and linked to their operations through business relationships.

Under the UNGPs, companies have a responsibility to prevent and address actual and potential impacts with which they are or may be involved, in line with the nature of that involvement.⁴⁶ This means if:

- A company causes an impact, it should prevent or mitigate the impact and remediate any harm.
- A company contributes to an impact, it should prevent or mitigate its contribution and contribute to remediating the harm.
- A company's operations are linked to an impact that it does not cause or contribute to, it is expected to leverage its resources to prevent or mitigate the impact, and consider using its leverage to remedy the situation.

⁴⁵ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). (2020). Draft Call for Action [online]. Available from: https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/SustainableTextile/2020_April_Webex/Draft_Call_for_Action_V1_20April2020.pdf [accessed May 19, 2024].

⁴⁶ United Nations. (2012). The Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights: An Interpretive Guide. UNGP 19 and 13 [online]. Available from: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/publications/hr.puB.12.2_en.pdf [accessed May 12, 2024].



Stakeholder roles and responsibilities differ in supporting the implementation of responsible sourcing practices. Individual stakeholders have to take responsibility according to their sphere of control or influence to contribute to the overall implementation and integrity of responsible sourcing within or with the plastics recycling value chain.

Brands and other buyers of recycled plastic must work to ensure that the products they manufacture and sell are produced and disposed of responsibly. They play a crucial role in setting sourcing standards, engaging with suppliers, and promoting sustainable practices throughout the value chain.

Recycling companies are responsible for managing waste materials, sorting, processing, and recycling them into new products or materials. They need to adhere to responsible sourcing principles in their operations, including ethical sourcing of recyclable materials and ethical business practices.

Civil society organizations can ensure that the voices of informal sector waste workers, waste pickers and marginalized groups are heard in the plastics value chain operations. They may also help companies in understanding the social impact of their operations, foster engagement with the informal actors and waste pickers, and build their capacity to ensure they become transparent and socially inclusive.

Aggregators across the waste value chain supply materials to the recycling companies, including waste collection companies and sorting facilities, and often purchase materials from informal waste workers as well as waste pickers. Both large and small aggregators are responsible for continuous integration and alignment with responsible sourcing practices, both upstream and downstream.

Informal sector waste workers and waste pickers are individuals or groups who are involved in recovery of recyclable materials from waste streams, often informally. They play a vital role in waste management by diverting materials from landfills and contributing to recycling efforts. Although they have limited control due to their position in the supply chain, they can adopt improved collection practices and participate in training and capacity-building initiatives designed to elevate their understanding and application of their rights.

Government agencies and regulatory bodies are responsible for setting and enforcing regulations related to waste management, environmental protection, and labor standards. They play a critical role in ensuring compliance with responsible sourcing requirements, monitoring industry practices, and addressing any violations or non-compliance.

Investors (public and private) are driving growth and scale of formal recycling systems. The investment process – from due diligence and deal structuring, to portfolio management and exits – presents a unique opportunity to influence value chain actors towards responsible supply chain management, protection of human rights, greater integration of the informal sector into formal systems, and improved livelihoods throughout the value chain.



Next Steps: Tools and Methods for Implementation

The harmonized framework is a living document, and we are accepting feedback through our website. We will consult experts and other organizations to provide feedback based on their implementation experience and continue to improve the harmonized framework.

Following this publication, we will work with our partners to assess whether existing tools can be used to implement responsible sourcing practices using the harmonized framework and to develop new tools as needed. Over the course of the next year, we will publish a set of tools and methods to implement and ensure alignment with the harmonized framework. We will do this in collaboration with implementation partners of the Responsible Sourcing Initiative. We thank our partners for making their tools available and for their collaborative ethos, which contributes to the acceleration of responsible sourcing practices in the plastics recycling value chain.

The Responsible Sourcing Initiative will implement the harmonized framework, test existing tools, and develop new tools in four geographies: India, Indonesia, Kenya, and Viet Nam. We will integrate these learnings into future iterations of the harmonized framework.

We call upon investors and companies to adopt the harmonized framework and share feedback with us.

Businesses with an interest in responsible sourcing can register at our website:

thecirculateinitiative.org/responsible-sourcing



VIII. Definitions and Key Terms

Child labor	Exploitative work that deprives children of their childhood, potential, and dignity and impedes physical and mental development (International Labour Organization, What is child labour?).
Forced labor	Work or a service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered himself or herself voluntarily (International Labour Organization, What is forced labour?).
Formal waste sector workers	Individuals who are employed by public service providers and private waste companies that are officially recognized by state authorities.
Human rights	Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of identity factors or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and more (United Nations, Human Rights).
Informal waste sector workers	Informal waste sector workers are defined as workers in the waste and recycling sector whose remunerative work (i.e. both self-employment and wage employment) is not registered, regulated or protected by existing legal or regulatory frameworks, as well as non-remunerative work undertaken in an income-producing enterprise. Informal workers do not have secure employment contracts, workers' benefits, social protection or workers' representation.
Living wage	Remuneration received for a standard workweek by a worker in a particular [time and] place sufficient to afford a decent standard of living [that includes] food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transport, clothing, and other essential needs, including provision for unexpected events (Global Living Wage Coalition, What is a Living Wage?).
Living income	The net annual income required for a household in a particular place to afford a decent standard of living for all members of that household. Elements of a decent standard of living include food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, clothing, and other essential needs, including provisions for unexpected events (Global Living Wage Coalition, Living Income).
Plastics recycling value chain	The plastics recycling value chain includes users, collectors, aggregators, recyclers, resin producers, and suppliers.
Responsible sourcing	All participants in the recycled plastics value chain are meeting their responsibility to respect human rights in their own operations and throughout the value chain, including the informal waste sector. All value chain participants recognize the informal waste sector as part of their own value chains.
Traceability	The ability to identify and trace the history, distribution, location, and application of products, parts, suppliers, and materials.
Value chain	A company's value chain includes upstream activities, such as sourcing and supply chains, and downstream activities, such as retail sales, customer use, recycling, and waste disposal.
Waste pickers	Waste pickers can be described as people who participate (individually or collectively) in the collection, separation, sorting, transport, and sale of recyclable and reusable materials and products (paper, plastic, metal, glass, and other materials) in an informal or semi-formal capacity, as own-account workers, in a cooperative or social and solidarity economy setting, and as workers who subsequently achieved formal work arrangements through their organizations. ⁴⁷

⁴⁷ International Alliance of Waste Pickers (IAWP). (2024). Position on Revised Zero Draft for INC-4 (English) [online]. Available from: https://globalrec.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/position-revised-zero-draf_inc4_iawp_v01_english.pdf [accessed May 24, 2024].



Acknowledgements

Special thanks

The Circulate Initiative thanks the Harmonization of the Responsible Sourcing Frameworks Working Group members who participated in the consultations on this harmonized framework, and acknowledges Shift for their support in conducting the consultations and developing this harmonized framework.

The Circulate Initiative would like to acknowledge the support of Circulate Capital, Unilever and other brands, and the NextWave Plastics Consortium, who opened up their human rights and responsible sourcing frameworks to support this harmonization process. Without their transparency and contributions, we would not have been able to publish this comprehensive harmonized framework. A special thanks to First Mile for bringing their experience in developing frameworks, implementing responsible sourcing practices into this framework, and supporting the harmonization process.

This work was made possible with support from:



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Annex 1: Summary of the Fair Circularity Principles

1. Recognize the critical role of informal waste sector workers in plastics waste and recycling value chains.
2. Acknowledge the responsibility to respect the rights of informal waste sector workers by preventing and addressing human rights impacts experienced by those workers, in line with the nature of the company's involvement.
3. Engage all partners in plastics packaging recycling value chains towards coherent and comprehensive approaches.
4. Engage government actors to create enabling environments for rights-respecting business practices.
5. Engage meaningfully with informal waste sector workers.
6. Apply a gender lens in efforts to address human rights impacts in the informal waste sector.
7. Drive local approaches, tailored to local contexts.
8. Advocate for the inclusion of informal waste sector workers as relevant stakeholders in policy-making processes that may affect their livelihoods.
9. Promote greater integration of the informal waste sector into formal value chains.
10. Identify and address barriers to promoting rights-respecting practices in the informal waste sector.

Read the FCPs in full [here](#).



Annex 2: Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Framework Working Group Members

Organizations

- African Reclaimers Organisation (ARO)
- Circulate Capital
- Dell
- Ecosattva
- Hasiru Dala
- Hasiru Dala Innovations
- HP Inc.
- IKEA
- InclusEO
- Independent Consultants
- Inclusive Waste Recycling Consortium (iWrc)
- Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP)
- L'Oreal
- Minderoo Foundation
- Mr. Green Africa
- Procter & Gamble (P&G)
- Prevented Ocean Plastic Southeast Asia (POP SEA)
- ReCircle
- Recykal
- Saahas Zero Waste
- Tearfund
- The Coca-Cola Company
- The International Alliance of Waste Pickers (IAWP)
- UNDP Viet Nam
- Unilever
- Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)



Annex 3: Existing Responsible Sourcing Tools and Resources

Data Collection and Assessment Tools

Tool	Features	Source
Plastic value chain mapping tool		Tearfund
Participatory human rights assessment and analysis tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection spreadsheet 30 questions across 11 issues 	Tearfund
Collaborative action planning and implementation tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritization of human rights risks based on severity, likelihood Root cause analysis 	Tearfund
Diagnostics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 key questions (p. 39) Goal-specific considerations (26+) (pp. 42-45) 	NextWave Consortium
Data Collection Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tool, protocol, guidance 	S&L Convergence
Converged Assessment Framework (CAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converged Assessment Framework Data Collection Tool 	S&L Convergence
Worker Engagement Technology (WE Tech)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worker survey via automated pre-recorded calls or an online survey (mobile phones) CAF Tool questions 	S&L Convergence

Maturity Matrix Tools

Tool	Features	Source
Maturity Rubric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low, medium, high Cross-referenced by key goals (pp. 20-29) 	NextWave Consortium
Success metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes/no questions to evaluate supplier maturity (pp. 30-36) 	NextWave Consortium

Capacity-building Tools


Tool	Features	Source
iWrc University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42 modules (basic assurance, social assurance, management) Digital platform Two-way communication 	iWrc
Worker Engagement Technology (WE Tech)		S&L Convergence

Remediation Tools

Tool	Features	Source
Collaborative action planning and implementation tool		Tearfund



Annex 4: List of Indicators

	Minimum Indicators	Advanced Indicators
 1. Economic Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1. Working hours comply with local laws and regulations for workers in formal settings.1.2. Wages are accurately calculated and recorded.1.3. Information is collected on the price paid to informal waste workers, including waste pickers, and their working hours.1.4. Wages and living income are assessed against wages.1.5. Employed workers are paid in accordance with the local minimum wage standards.1.6. Fair and transparent weighing and pricing methods are in place.1.7. All workers are paid consistently, directly, and on time.1.8. A system is in place and enforced for age verification.1.9. If child labor exists, efforts are being taken to address the root causes, prioritizing any children who are engaged in hazardous work.1.10. All workers have access to social and financial services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.11. Adequate and effective compensation policies and practices are in place.1.12. Employed workers are paid the living wage for their location.1.13. Measures are in place to ensure that informal workers are able to earn a living income.1.14. All workers are able to negotiate on prices and wages.1.15. Working hours are monitored to ensure local and international compliance.1.16. All workers have access to job-related education and training.1.17. Informal waste workers and waste pickers have access to facilities to sort, store, and aggregate materials.1.18. Effective processes are in place to follow up on children removed from working in the waste sector.1.19. School-age children of workers are enrolled in school.



Minimum Indicators

Advanced Indicators



2. Health and Safety

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>2.1. All workers and waste pickers have access to appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).</p> <p>2.2. All workers and waste pickers are trained on safe work practices, including fire and hazardous material safety and communication, natural hazards and disasters, and foreseeable emergencies.</p> <p>2.3. All workers have access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and changing facilities at the workplace.</p> <p>2.4. First-aid equipment, as well as emergency and medical services, if necessary, is available to all workers, and practices are in place to prevent and treat worker injury and illness.</p> <p>2.5. Work-related injuries, illnesses, and safety incidents (including those related to physical, psychological, or sexual violence and harassment) are recorded and resolved.</p> <p>2.6. Worker exposure to harmful environmental conditions (e.g., extreme temperature and weather, air, and water pollution) is monitored and assessed.</p> <p>2.7. Locations where work takes place comply with applicable health and safety regulations, including building safety, emergency preparedness, and managing hazardous and waste materials.</p> | <p>2.8. All workers and waste pickers use appropriate personal protective equipment.</p> <p>2.9. If provided by employers, worker accommodations are safe, well-maintained, and appropriate for the number of residents.</p> <p>2.10. All workers have accident insurance that covers medical treatment for work-related injuries and illnesses.</p> <p>2.11. All workers have access to healthcare.</p> <p>2.12. Active steps are taken, as a result of tracking and resolutions of injuries, to reduce and prevent worker accidents and injuries.</p> |
|--|---|



Minimum Indicators

Advanced Indicators



3. Autonomy and Inclusion

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1. All workers enter into employment freely, and deposits or fees in exchange for employment are prohibited.3.2. Informal waste workers are free to choose when and where they work.3.3. No forced labor is used, whether in the form of trafficked labor, indentured labor, bonded labor, or other forms including mental and physical coercion, and slavery, nor under any other threat of penalty.3.4. All workers can report forced labor and are protected from retaliation for doing so.3.5. All value chain actors, including waste pickers, are free to choose to whom they sell the materials they collect.3.6. All workers are recognized, have access to identification cards, and retain possession of their original identification paperwork.3.7. Informal waste sector workers are aware of the available opportunities and their rights in the process of formalization. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">3.8. Intervention processes are in place to protect and assist reported victims of forced labor.3.9. There are pathways for informal waste pickers to work formally if they choose, including access to social or labor protections and being recognized in contracts.3.10. Steps are being taken to address social stigma experienced by informal waste sector workers and waste pickers. |
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Minimum Indicators

Advanced Indicators



4. Collective Representation

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>4.1. All workers are aware of and can freely exercise their right to form or join a union of their choice, to seek representation and collectively bargain, and do so without fear of intimidation or harassment.</p> <p>4.2. Where local law sets restrictions on the rights of waste workers to join trade unions, alternative forms of worker representation are recognized.</p> <p>4.3. Mechanisms are in place for employed workers to report an issue or complaint at work.</p> <p>4.4. Information is collected on whether informal waste sector workers and waste pickers belong to a trade union, waste picker organization, or association.</p> <p>4.5. Steps are taken to make informal waste sector workers and waste pickers aware of their rights as workers, including to organize and bargain collectively.</p> | <p>4.6. All workers, including waste pickers, have access to, and the opportunity to belong to, a trade union, waste picker organization, or association.</p> <p>4.7. Informal waste sector workers, including waste pickers, are recognized by local government or formal waste management structures.</p> <p>4.8. Confidential mechanisms are in place for informal waste sector workers to report an issue or complaint about their working conditions, and they are aware of how to access them.</p> <p>4.9. Outcomes of filed grievances, including remedy, are monitored, addressed, and reported.</p> |
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Minimum Indicators

Advanced Indicators



5. Gender Equality

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>5.1. Systems are in place to identify and prevent physical, sexual, psychological, or verbal harassment, abuse, or other forms of intimidation.</p> <p>5.2. Workplace and hiring policies prohibit gender-based discrimination and all forms of sexual harassment.</p> <p>5.3. Periodic training is conducted to prevent gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.</p> <p>5.4. Confidential mechanisms are in place for employed workers to report instances of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.</p> <p>5.5. Parental leave following the birth of a child is extended to employed workers in accordance with local law.</p> <p>5.6. Gender-disaggregated data is collected related to workforce participation and equal pay.</p> <p>5.7. Steps are taken to ensure that the perspectives of women are heard and incorporated into projects and interventions.</p> | <p>5.8. Processes are in place to protect and assist reported victims of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.</p> <p>5.9. Measures are taken to ensure equal pay and equality of opportunity for women waste sector workers.</p> <p>5.10. Steps are taken to ensure that women and men have equal access to waste material.</p> <p>5.11. Confidential mechanisms are in place for informal waste sector workers to report instances of gender-based discrimination, harassment, or abuse.</p> <p>5.12. Any projects or interventions by value chain participants to improve the lives of informal waste pickers identify the approximate percentage of women waste pickers present and address their needs.</p> |
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Disclaimer

Responsibility for the information and views set out in this publication lies with The Circulate Initiative. Members of the Harmonized Responsible Sourcing Working Group and funders endorse the overall approach and findings. However, not all statements in this publication necessarily represent their individual views, and they cannot be held accountable for any use that may be made of the information contained or expressed herein. It is important to note that nothing in this harmonized framework should be construed as implying any new legal obligations. This document is intended to be a dynamic resource, evolving as it incorporates new insights and adapts to changes within the field of recycled plastics.